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AP PHOTO



North Korea Torrential rains are lashing North Korea, prompting authorities to take steps to minimize damage, state media said. The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported that the heavy rain is expected to continue in most of the country until today. It said authorities handling economic and agricultural affairs are taking measures to prevent damage.

AP PHOTO



Japan The atomic bomb that exploded over Hiroshima 75 years ago didn't just kill and maim. The survivors have also lived for decades with lingering shame, anger and fear. Many in Japan believed radiation sickness is infectious or hereditary. Some watched as loved ones died, one by one, because of radiation from the bombing, and wondered — Am I next?
More on macaudailytimes.com

Japan A governor is drawing skeptical criticism after he touted a gargling product as effective against the coronavirus, an assertion that, despite its dubiousness, emptied some store shelves of the medicine. Shares of Shionogi & Co. and Meiji Holdings Co., which make Isojin, soared in Tokyo trading Tuesday after Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura made the comments. Yoshimura referred to a study carried out by the Osaka regional government on a sample of just 41 people.

China reported 27 new virus cases on the mainland yesterday. Of those 22 were in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, whose capital Urumqi has been the center of China's latest outbreak. Measures to contain the spread, including locking down some communities and limiting public transport, appear to have been effective and reported case numbers have gradually fallen. The remaining five cases were brought from overseas.

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RUNNYREM



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Two new cases of residents breaching their mandatory confinement

OVER 100 KILLED BEIRUT UNDER DEBRIS

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AP PHOTO



800 NEW SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS ENTER INTO OPERATION TODAY

A batch of 800 surveillance cameras will enter into operation starting today, according to a decree signed by the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak. Over 500 of the surveillance cameras are located in Macau while nearly 300 are in Taipa or Coloane. The Public Security Police Force (PSP) is the authority managing these surveillance tools. The cameras will be in operation for two years and the term is subject to renewal. However, the government will be required to do an evaluation should there be grounds for continuing the service. These cameras are one part of the security authority's city watch system, which consists of four phases. Together with these 800 devices, the police force is operating 1,620 surveillance cameras in town. The government has stated that these cameras are installed in security blind spots and desolate areas where crime is concentrated and difficult to tackle.

SEWAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS ONGOING AT FAI CHI KEI

The local government began sewage improvement works at Rua da Doca Seca yesterday. The project also includes road rehabilitation works. Initiated on May 4, this is the last stage of the sewage and road work project, and will take a total of 100 working days for construction. Currently, transportation at Rua de Fai Chi Kei has been stopped. The carriage way at Rua do Cmte. Joao Beleo has been converted into a two-way traffic lane. The main construction includes repaving the concrete on both carriageways and the sidewalk, as well as the installation of a transport surveillance system. The project is expected to finish within this month. Once completed, both the sewage treatment capability and the physical appearance of the area are predicted to be better.

COMMUNITIES URGE RESOLUTION FOR HAZARD POSED BY OLD BUILDINGS

Local communities expect the Macau government to take care of dangerous building problems. The Association of Mutual Assistance of Moradores do Patane and the General Union of Neighborhood Association of Macau at the Central District hope the local government can take care of defective concrete problems and of buildings which are at risk of collapsing. Representatives of the two associations commented that there are old buildings in many of Macau's communities, which lack maintenance and pose risks of partial or even full collapse. These situations are unsafe to the public. The two community representative groups proposed that temporary site instructors be assigned to remind passers-by of the dangers, or that temporary walkways be opened to avoid such risks. In addition, they called on the concerned building owners to repair the structures. Recently, a building on Rua da Ribeira do Patane recorded defective concrete. Luckily, no one was injured. However, the community noticed that the situation had deteriorated and the pathway is now blocked.

THREE BEAUTY CENTER MANAGERS ACCUSED OF BREACHING DATA PROTECTION

RENATO MARQUES

THREE managers of four beauty centers were arrested by the Judiciary Police (PJ) on suspicion of violating the provisions of the personal data protection act, a PJ spokesperson revealed during the police forces' joint press conference yesterday.

According to the PJ report, the police received the case from the Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) on July 9, stating that since the beginning of 2019, the Office has received complaints from many citizens claiming to be continuously disturbed by phone calls from the two beauty centers advertising services and promotions.

In the reports, the citizens stated that they had never had any previous contact with the companies and had never authorized the disclosure of their personal information for such purposes.

The same people told the GPDP that they did not want to receive such calls and had clearly stated that

to the phone operator, yet the calls did not cease.

A preliminary investigation by the GPDP revealed that staff members were making phone calls on behalf of the two companies and advertising the services of the four centers located in the Areia Preta, Nam Van, and Taipa districts.

The Office also found that the companies involved in the promotion of beauty services had collected, processed, and shared citizens' personal data among the different companies without notifying the GPDP, which is one of the requirements clearly stated by the personal data protection act.

The GPDP decided to forward the case to the PJ after the centers ignored the letters sent by the Office. The letters requested explanations, as well as warning the companies of their malpractice and

ordering them to comply with the law.

During the police investigation, the PJ questioned a total of 19 people, all staff members from the two companies. Among them, three women were identified as the managers of the two companies.

The companies involved in the promotion of beauty services had collected, processed, and shared citizens' personal data

Out of the three women, aged 39, 46, and 49 respectively, two are Hong Kong residents, while the third is a local resident. The PJ has taken them into custody under the crime of breaching the provisions of Article 37 of the Law 8/2005, or the "non-compliance with obligations relating to data protection."

According to the law, the women, who were brought to the Public Prosecutions Office, face up to one year of imprisonment or a fine of up to 120 days.

In the past few years, most complaints about unlawful telemarketing practices have been related to beauty centers and salons with the GPDP fining several of these companies already.

In the most prominent case, revealed last month, a company named Hoi Sheung Sociedade Unipessoal Limitada was fined 1.08 million patacas by the personal data watchdog for data

privacy breaches during its telemarketing activities. According to GPDP, the Office recorded a total of 26 law infractions committed by the company which resulted in the hefty fine.

At the time, the Office also advised that this was not the only case as investigations are ongoing for several other companies.

Two cases of stolen property reported to police

STAFF REPORTER

Two cases involving illegal possession of lost property were reported by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) on Monday.

A local woman realized that she had lost her mobile phone worth MOP2,500 after she left her parked car on June 4.

The woman then made a lost property report to the police.

Upon checking the

closed-circuit television footage in the area, the police identified a man who lives in the same building as the victim as a suspect. The man, surnamed Se, is unemployed and in his 60s.

The phone was eventually found in his apartment, but the police did not find the victim's sim card and phone case.

In the second case, a man who had lost his Macau Pass card discovered

that it had been used to purchase goods or services on five occasions. The man informed the police that he believed it was used by whoever had acquired the card.

The total amount spent using the Macau Pass was MOP513.80, and it was mostly used for buying items and bus fares.

The police managed to track the location of the Macau Pass card through the bus fares purchased,

and intercepted the suspect at the bus stop near Avenida da República on August 2.

The suspect, surnamed Un, is a foreign worker in his twenties. He admitted that he found the Macau Pass near the Ruins of St Paul's and used the pass to buy goods and services.

Both cases were forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office, the police said.

The police also called for the public not to use or take possession of lost property, and clarified that the charge of illegal possession carries a maximum sentence of one-year or a 120-day fine.

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Two more people found to have broken quarantine

ANTHONY LAM

TWO entrants with Hong Kong ID cards are being charged for violating Macau quarantine requirements. The case was reported to the Public Prosecutions Office, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced at yesterday's press conference.

Surnamed Fong and Lai, the two male suspects entered Macau on July 23 and were sent to the Sheraton Grand Hotel for the 14-day quarantine the same night.

Fong and Lai who are cousins are aged 32 and 22, respectively.

Lei Tak Fai, head of the Public Relations Division of the Public Security Police Force (PSP), revealed at the press conference that the two were seen having a chat in a hotel corridor at around 7 p.m. on August 2 by hotel security guards, having apparently left their rooms.

Under the Contagious Diseases Prevention and Control Law, as well as supplementary measures built upon it, no person under quarantine is allowed to step outside their room, except for occasions such as obtaining their meals.

Lei pointed out that as the police have strong evidence that both Fong and Lai have breached the law, the cousins are now being detained. If convicted, they may face a maximum penalty of six months in prison or a fine of up to 60 days.

Lei reiterated that the quarantine measure in effect is not only in place to protect the individuals being quarantined, but also the entire population. The



police officer added that failure to comply may cause serious consequences. He hopes that all people will abide with the measure.

Refusal to follow quarantine regulations is a criminal offence that authorities say will likely result in prosecution.

At the same press conference, the Macao Government Tourism Office announced that the Golden Treasure Hotel, situated adjacent to the Golden Crown China Hotel, another quarantine hotel in use, was relisted as a quarantine facility from yesterday.

Meanwhile, the tourism board is also renting the Ole London Hotel to host cargo ship workers serving both Macau and Hong Kong, to ensure no inter-

actions occur with the wider community.

Recently, mainland authorities discovered that nearly 30% of masks did not meet minimum quality standards. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center was questioned about measures taken to ensure the quality of such items sold in Macau.

Dr Alvis Lo of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center pointed out that under Macau law, both importers and vendors "have the responsibility to ensure quality and safety."

On top of that, he said that the Economic Bureau conducts regular spot checks to review the quality of masks on the market. "Sometimes they conduct such

inspections in association with the Health Bureau and the Consumer Council," Lo said.

The government's centralized mask supply has entered its 20th round. Lo disclosed that the government is now sourcing masks from more than 15 countries, including mainland China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Peru, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, and Portugal.

From the start of the mask supply scheme, 1.17 million masks have been sold to Macau residents and non-resident workers, Lo added.

Lo also commented on the scientific progress that two universities have achieved regarding Covid-19.

The Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has made a leap in vaccination development in association with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and other mainland institutions. Meanwhile, the University of Macau (UM) has employed Artificial Intelligence (AI) in helping to sort out potential Covid-19 patients.

On the two developments, Lo reiterated that the MUST research is at a very early stage. The vaccine still requires three phases of testing before obtaining a green light from global health authorities, let alone entering the market.

On the UM progress, the medical doctor added that for the time being it is not as necessary in Macau given the city's relatively few cases. "It is best used in places with a large amount of cases as the AI technology can help shortlist potential patients using their lung imaging diagrams," Lo explained.

THOUSANDS OF LOCALS SIGN UP FOR ZHUHAI HEALTH INSURANCE

Over 5,000 Macau residents have signed up for Zhuhai's public health insurance in the first half of this year. According to Zhuhai's Health Security Department, between January and June, a total of 5,591 Macau and Hong Kong residents signed up for their health insurance in Zhuhai's public system, approximately 90% of which are from Macau SAR. Since July 1, 2019, Zhuhai has been implementing a health insurance policy for Macau residents living in Hengqin. The Zhuhai insurance policy grants people from Macau and Hong Kong the same healthcare security as Zhuhai locals. The Macau government is providing subsidies to Macau residents who live in Hengqin and sign up for this healthcare system. The local government has a budget of approximately MOP40,000 per person for annual subsidies.

SUNSHADE WANTED FOR CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

A member of the Islands District Community Service Consultative Council, Lei Hoi Ha, wants the local government to provide sunshades in some public areas on the islands. The islands have approximately 19 children's playgrounds spread across parks and recreational zones. Lei pointed out that the public only uses the facilities in the morning or in the evening because the weather is unsuitable during other hours. Lei hopes the government will build sunshades in the proximity of these play areas. These sunshades can consist of a specific kind of umbrella, which opens automatically to protect the people from the rain or the sun. However, when the umbrellas close, they will only occupy small spaces. Another alternative suggested by Lei is for the government to plant more trees.

MORE AEDS REQUIRED IN PUBLIC SPACES, ACCORDING TO MACAU RED CROSS

Macau Red Cross vice president Chou Kuok Hei is hoping to see more Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public spaces. Starting from April, the association has installed a total of 50 AEDs in locations such as the Macau International Airport, Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, the Border Gate, the government's public service center, and across more key infrastructure. The Macao Foundation sponsored the installation. The association will work with other government departments for another phase of installation, which will place additional AEDs in other places. The organization believes that these AEDs will help build a safe environment for both Macau residents and tourists, as well as improve Macau's emergency medical service as an international city. An AED is used to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest.

Noise report leads to discovery of illegal employment

RENATO MARQUES

DURING the joint press conference held at the Judiciary Police headquarters yesterday, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) revealed that four men accused of working illegally in Macau, had been detained.

The case occurred on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. when a neighbor called

the police complaining of construction noise coming from a shop located at the ground floor of a building on Rua do Gamboa.

Arriving at the scene, the officers found three men inside an almost empty commercial store. According to the report, one man was holding a hammer and the other two were using brooms to sweep the place.

The officer then requested that the men provide identification, acknowledging that two of them held work permits (non-resident worker cards) and the third man only had a valid passport with a tourist visa.

After some time, a fourth male arrived at the scene. He informed the police that he had asked for help to clean the store.

According to his testi-

mony, his wife had rented the shop and he had contacted one of the men for assistance to clean the place and get rid of the unwanted contents so that his wife could open the shop for operation.

The man then contacted the other two, claiming that they were his friends, to help with the task.

Although the four men claim to be friends

helping each other, the police believe that there is enough evidence to prove that the three men, who are all of Filipino nationality, had been illegally employed by the shop tenant to work in the shop.

The PSP noted that none of the three men were legally allowed to work since two of the men are blue-card holders and employees from different companies, and the third man holds only a tourist status in Macau.

The four men have been sent to the Public Prosecutions Office to be formally accused.

MACAU WILL STILL LEAD GLOBAL GAMING RECOVERY, SAYS TOURISM EXPERT

DANIEL BEITLER

MACAU will still be the epicenter of the global gaming recovery, according to local tourism and gaming expert Glenn McCartney, even as other jurisdictions are showing more advanced signs of business normalization.

The perspective comes as casino jurisdictions such as Las Vegas, Singapore and Monaco are already welcoming back patrons. Meanwhile, Macau holds its breath for China to resume issuing exit visas.

"Macau will catch up," McCartney, an associate professor of integrated resort and tourism management at the University of Macau, told Macau Daily Times on the sidelines of a talk organized by the British Chamber of Commerce in Macau. "Nevada has its problems with Covid-19 breakouts and they are now having to close down hospitality areas. [But] Macau has been very cautious with regards to its opening, and that step-by-step approach will pay off in the medium- to long-term. It will take a few more months, but eventually we will see the leaps and bounds in revenue."

Casino properties around the world are undertaking dramatic operational changes as they prepare to welcome back patrons, gradually at first and then en masse.

According to McCartney, a new emphasis on health and sanitation inside Macau casinos is not going to lead to radical chan-



Glenn McCartney, associate professor at the University of Macau

ges to the business itself.

"Some of the actions we do inside the casino will change," admitted McCartney, "but I don't see this as disrupting the industry experience. There is a lot of exchange between cards, dice and chips, and that's part of the casino experience. That won't go away, but there will be a lot more sanitizing and cleaning in casinos."

McCartney drew a comparison with air travel in the 21st century, noting that the aviation industry has thrived in the past two decades even as there have been dramatic changes to how we fly.

"Sure, we have many more measures in place when we arrive at the airport today - and the same is going to be true of casinos in a way - but we are still traveling more than ever before and boarding more planes than ever before," said the tourism and gaming expert.

McCartney said that Covid-19 will "not stop the growing numbers of people that want to come to Macau to gamble."

How this will play out in reality remains to be seen, said McCartney, adding that enforcing the social distancing requirements when tourists return is going to be a real challenge.

"I don't have the answers," he said. "There has been nobody here for months. So as people arrive, we are going to learn how to manage [our circumstances]. We are going to have to wait and see the reactions of patrons when they return to the casino floor."

These gamblers, the organization pointed out, usually gambled several times per month, spending between several hundred and several thousand patacas each time. They are known as "social gamblers," the Sheng Kung Hui said. Not all gamblers in Macau are reacting the same. When the casinos were shut for 15 days in February, compulsive gamblers showed withdrawal symptoms and developed a stronger desire to gamble.

More seriously, the association pointed out that some problematic gamblers have

developed the desire to meet "higher targets." This means that they wanted to wager more when casinos were allowed to reopen.

In the first half of the year, the problematic gambling prevention and response team at Sheng Kung Hui handled 247 counseling cases, a similar number to the first half of 2019.

Over the last two years, the organization has received 4,000 help-seeking inquiries each year through its counter-problematic gambling hotline. About one-third of the callers are aged between 25 and 30.

WYNN CONFIRMS JAPAN EXPANSION PLANS HALTED

JULIE ZHU

WYNN Resorts has ceased its pursuit of a casino license in Japan, according to the company's Chief Executive Officer Matt Maddox, who confirmed the news on earnings call this week.

Back in December, the casino operator unveiled Wynn Resorts Development Japan, an office located in Yokohama that would help the U.S.-based operator to pursue a casino license in Japan.

The company has now confirmed the closure of Wynn Resorts Development Japan amid the "unprecedented negative impact on integrated resort development."

The closure was actualized four months ago, according to a report by Inside Asian Gaming.

"We have been monitoring that situation for years and years. Back in March, we decided that until there is more clarity on what the business is going to look like, what the world is going to look like, and what the regulations really are over there, we're pretty much ceasing our efforts," said Maddox, according to the same report.

Talking about the company's Japan interest, Maddox said that Wynn Resorts was "more monitoring as opposed to being really active."

Although Wynn Resorts is no longer focused on the Japan opportunity, the com-

pany remains interested "in the Japan market and IR [integrated resort] development there."

During the company's second-quarter earnings call this week, Ian Coughlan, president of Wynn Macau, indicated that the group remained focused on the Macau market.

Coughlan believes that as long as one particular mainland province - Guangdong in this case - resumes the issuing of tourist visas to Macau, the company's business in this city can be lifted "significantly."

"We really believe the power comes from Guangdong," said Coughlan.

On Tuesday, Wynn Resorts reported the financial results for the second quarter.

Operating revenues for Wynn Resorts were \$85.7 million (683 million patacas) in the second quarter of 2020, a decrease of 94.8% from \$1.66 billion (13.2 billion patacas) in the second quarter of 2019. Operating revenues for the company's local arm, Wynn Macau, plummeted by 98.2% to just \$20.6 million (164 million patacas).

"In Macau, the authorities have begun to gradually and thoughtfully ease some visitation restrictions, and we are confident the market will benefit from the return of the Chinese consumer as we move through the back half of 2020," said Maddox.

THAILAND

POLICE OFFICER, 3 OTHERS SHOT DEAD IN GAMBLING DEN

FOUR people including a police major were killed in a shootout at an illegal gambling den in Thailand's capital, an official said on Tuesday.

Police who responded to a call about gunshots being fired at the venue in the southern part of Bangkok found the bodies of two women and two men, including police Maj. Wathaseth Sumnianspraser, according to Metropolitan Police Bureau commissioner Lt. Gen. Pakapong Pongpetra.

Gambling is generally illegal in Thailand, but small casinos with card games and gambling activities are fairly common in Bangkok, where their existence is generally an open secret.

Wathaseth was not on duty Monday night and was apparently taking part in the gambling, Pakapong said at a news conference Tuesday.

An initial investigation found that the other dead man had shot the police officer and then turned and fired wildly at the crowd, killing the two women. An unknown person then shot and killed the first gunman and fled before police could arrive from a nearby precinct, Pakapong said.

Pakapong said it seeded the gunman bore some grudge against the policeman.

Police are seeking the man who fled and also want to charge the owner of the site for hosting illegal gambling. AP

Study finds gambler behaviour changing amid new casino measures

ANTHONY LAM

THE pandemic has given some gamblers a chance to reexamine their addiction, a survey by a local organization has discovered.

Christian organization Sheng Kung Hui conducted an online survey involving 120 respondents. It found that the current requirement of providing a negative nucleic acid test result upon entering Macau casinos has offered regular gamblers an opportunity to excuse themselves from their addiction.

Laying off locals first suspected at workplaces

ANTHONY LAM

IN his recent written inquiry, lawmaker Sulu Sou pointed out that some companies are asking their Macau resident employees to take unpaid leave while continuing to employ non-resident workers in the same positions.

The lawmaker said that this practice has affected those in frontline positions, such as salespeople, security guards and waiting staff.

The latest employment survey conducted by the government's Statistics and Census Service determined the city's unemployment rate to be 3.4%, amounting to a jobless population of 9,700 people.

Similarly, 10,600 people working in gambling, construction and retail industries are facing underemployment, meaning that these workers are not being fully utilized at their jobs.

Yesterday, a report by local Chinese newspaper Macao Daily

News also claimed that local employees are being swapped out for non-resident workers in certain workplaces. It reported that a manager at a Cantonese restaurant admitted to cutting work time for local workers to strike a "balance between the local and non-resident workforce."

The owner of a retail shop told the newspaper that employers cutting the working hours of local employees was "involuntary." The owner said that it is done in order to preserve the employment of local workers, while retaining the quotas of hiring foreign labor.

In addition, the Chinese newspaper interviewed one hotel employee, who said they were accumulating increasing amounts of unpaid leave after the complete cancellation of quarantine requirements for non-resident workers from the mainland.

In the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak in the city, the government barred non-resident workers from entering Macau, before slightly relaxing the mea-

sures which require those from Guangdong to undergo quarantine before crossing the border. Currently, non-resident workers from the mainland must possess a valid Covid-19 nucleic acid negative test result and must not have been out of mainland China in the preceding 14 days in order to cross the border.

The practice is also reportedly affecting the income of local workers. The hotel worker told the newspaper that they receive only a few thousand patacas per month now. Although local workers are understanding of the challenges facing their employers, the local workforce is growing increasingly disappointed with the practice of replacing local workers with non-resident workers.

It is a legal stipulation that the working opportunities of Macau residents are prioritized over foreign labor.

In his inquiry, Sou pointed out that the practice of replacing local workers with non-resident ones in the same positions is against the



BLOOMBERG

stipulation and governance principle of "prioritizing local workers" and "the supplementary nature of non-resident workforce".

Employers, however, think otherwise. They fear that when the situation recovers, they will not have a sufficient workforce to maintain operations if they choose to dismiss non-resident workers now. That is because of fears that the government will tighten the issuance of new working permits for non-local workers.

Lawmaker Sou said it was problematic to require local employees to take unpaid leave for an indefinite period.

He stressed that employees are always disadvantaged when they are asked to take unpaid leave, ad-

ding that it takes a lot of courage to stand up and report employers' malpractice.

The lawmaker is now asking whether the government will consider amending the Labour Relations Law to allow employees to terminate their contracts with compensation after certain days of unpaid leave required by their employers.

At present, employers do not need to give notice to the Labour Affairs Bureau when they require their workers to take unpaid leave. However, the labor authority must be notified of pay deductions. Sou hopes the government can change the law so that both practices require notification submitted to the labor authority.

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Zheng Yanxiong (far right) at the plaque unveiling ceremony of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR on July 8

ZHENG YANXIONG

THIS IS THE HARDLINER CHINA CHOSE TO OVERSEE HONG KONG SECURITY

ARTIST. Propagandist. Urban planning enthusiast. Traditional Chinese medicine student. Zheng Yanxiong doesn't fit the usual mold of a top Communist Party security agent.

Zheng's eclectic background suggests someone who will bring a broad approach to running the Office for Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong, the powerful and secretive agency China created to implement a new security law in the former British colony. The office will "oversee and provide guidance" to Hong Kong authorities and be accountable to Chinese President Xi Jinping's government.

The law gives Zheng, 57, broad authority to gather intelligence, select some "complex" cases for prosecution in mainland courts and regulate foreign media outlets. That could become more important as American journalists in Hong Kong become potential targets for retaliation and tensions between the U.S. and China escalate.

Zheng has played the role of enforcer on the global stage before, helping to quiet a famous 2011 uprising against local Communist Party leaders in the fishing village of Wukan, 150 kilometers (90 miles) up the coast. During that episode, he demonstrated a distaste for the foreign media commonly expressed by party officials.

"If the foreign media could be trusted, then sows could climb trees," Zheng said at the time, though he also pointed out that

some foreign media outlets were objective and could help bring authorities' attention to unknown issues.

The law makes Zheng one of Hong Kong's most important officials alongside Carrie Lam, the city's Beijing-appointed chief executive; and Luo Huining, the head of China's Liaison Office. Already authorities have used its prohibitions against secessionism and collusion with foreign powers to bar a dozen democracy activists candidates from seeking office and arrest four students over internet posts allegedly calling for a "Republic of Hong Kong."

The decision to arrest activists over internet posts -- rather than waiting for them to act on their views -- points to a more preventative approach to identifying and monitoring perceived troublemakers and then using the law to pressure them. It's the sort of strategy Zheng mused about in a 2014 book after studying urban planning in Australia.

"What if we could manage the transparency?" Zheng wrote. "When specialized agencies are equipped with the most advanced technologies, and have a thorough grasp of online information and public opinions, as well as a clear understanding of criminals' each and every move, will we still be so passive?"

The law gives authorities the power to proactively quash pockets of dissent similar to their peers on the mainland, where surveillance, censorship and ex-

trajudicial detentions make it much harder for any opposition to organize. Authorities have already moved to ban political activity in schools and gain a tighter grip over what's being taught to the next generation.

"China's model of social governance and social management has been very focused on prevention of conflict and unrest," said Sheena Greitens, an associate professor and expert in authoritarian politics at the University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. "It's likely that Beijing is hoping that the office in Hong Kong will shift officials there toward using some of the more preventive approaches we've seen deployed in mainland China."

Chinese officials acknowledged their goal was to preempt acts of subversion and secession after handing down the legislation that created Zheng's office. "Once the offense is accomplished, the nation is already split or the state is already subverted -- how can you still apply the law?" Shen Chunyao, the head of the National People's Congress legislative affairs commission, asked a news conference last month.

SECRETIVE OFFICE

The details of Zheng's strategy will likely remain a secret, with Lam telling reporters on July 7 that a news release on the national security commission's first meeting would be the last of its kind -- the meetings were too

sensitive. The Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office in Beijing didn't reply to request for an interview with Zheng and calls to the office went unanswered.

Attempts to contact Zheng at the Metropark Hotel in Hong Kong's Tin Hau neighborhood -- where his agency set up a temporary office overlooking the frequent protest gathering spot of Victoria Park -- were unsuccessful. Two armed immigration officers refused to provide information on how to contact the office, and the four additional plainclothes security personnel doubled to eight when approached by a reporter.

"We will not encroach on any person or organization's legal rights," Zheng pledged in a July 8 speech marking the office's opening. He vowed to strengthen coordination with other mainland entities in Hong Kong including the Liaison Office and the People's Liberation Army, whose local garrison is reported to have about 6,000 personnel.

"This is a very prominent role, but at the same time it's a role where he will have to answer to some very senior people," said Dali Yang, professor of political science focusing on China at the University of Chicago. "He proved his tough side in Wukan, and he has many other characteristics such as his Cantonese and the party background which make him fit for the role."

Raised in a poor village in the southeastern Chinese city of

Shantou, Zheng is familiar with Cantonese, which is spoken in Hong Kong and much of Guangdong province. He was accepted at 16 to study at the Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine.

He cycled through various political jobs, including a stint at the South China bureau of the Communist Party's People's Daily newspaper. Along the way, he refined an interest in Chinese art and literature, publishing dozens of essays on calligraphy, painting and film, sometimes under the pen name Zheng Jingshan.

Zheng had two portraits featured at a Guangzhou art exhibition in 2016: Zheng Zhengqiu, a founding father of Chinese cinema; and Lu Xun, an early 20th century writer dubbed by late party patriarch Mao Zedong as "the saint of modern China."

Tian Feilong, an associate law professor at Beihang University in Beijing, said Zheng Yanxiong's background could help him build a positive image of the office. "There is a need to alleviate Hong Kong people's fear of the office and for the national security law," Tian said.

WUKAN UPRISING

Zheng's proved himself to be a reliable hardliner after being appointed to lead the Shanwei city party committee, which oversees Wukan. There, he oversaw a crackdown on groups of locals who had organized themselves to fight the sale of village land.

Residents were detained, including one who later died in custody, sparking a confrontation between villagers and local police that drew global media attention. The provincial government then intervened and allowed a landmark election.

In a speech, Zheng said the protesters' methods were "unreasonable and the process was out of control," even though he acknowledged that their demands were "mostly reasonable." He accused villagers of unnecessarily escalating the dispute and giving the foreign media "artillery" to attack China and the ruling party.

After the global attention on Wukan faded, the village's new elected leaders struggled to convince more senior officials to return the land and were eventually detained. Zheng, meanwhile, was promoted to run the day-to-day operations of Guangdong's party committee, the most powerful body in the country's most-populous province.

"He is loyal and he does what the top asked to be done without hesitation and without mercy, which seems a very good qualification for the job," said Steve Tsang, director of SOAS University of London's China Institute. "The intention is to make sure that the people in Hong Kong would be so sufficiently terrified that they're not going to even think about resisting." **BLOOMBERG**

Highest-level US trip to Taiwan in decades to challenge Beijing

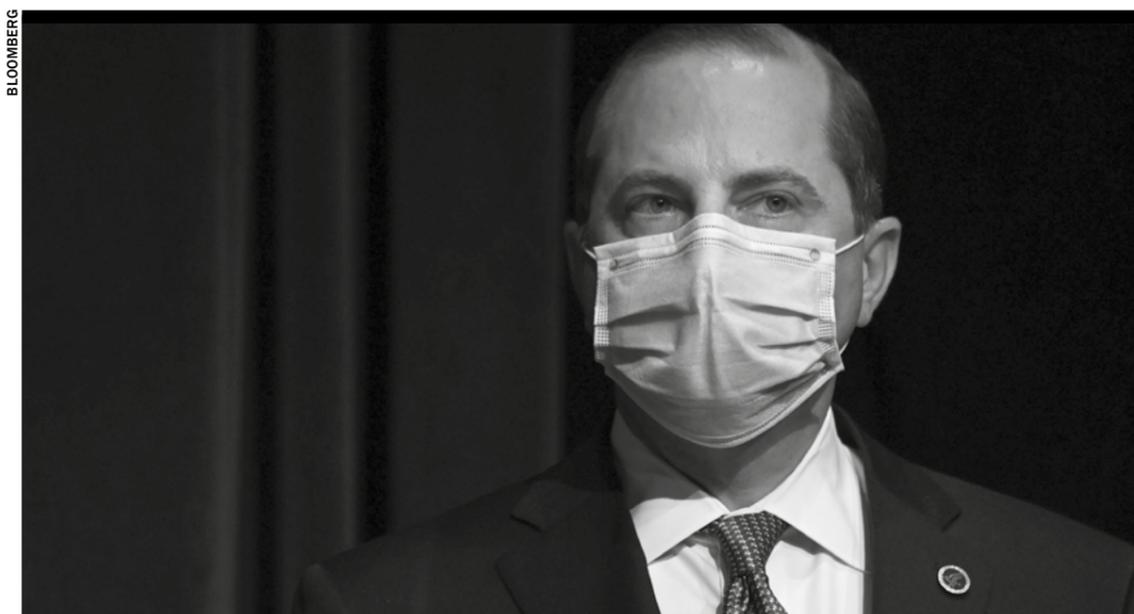
HEALTH and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar will lead a delegation to Taiwan in the highest-level visit by a U.S. cabinet official since Washington cut ties with Taipei more than 40 years ago.

Azar is scheduled to arrive in Taiwan "in the coming days" to discuss the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as supplies of medical equipment and technology, according to a statement yesterday from the Department of Health and Human Services. Azar said he would underscore "our shared belief that free and democratic societies are the best model for protecting and promoting health," according to the statement.

The announcement drew a rebuke from China, which said that it remained "firmly opposed" to official interactions between the U.S. and Taiwan. Beijing had "lodged stern representations" to U.S. officials, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a daily briefing, calling Taiwan "the most important and sensitive issue in China-U.S. relations."

"The 'one-China' principle is recognized by the international community," Wang said in Beijing, referring to the discussions that underpinned the U.S. move to establish relations with Beijing in 1979. "Attempts that disregard, deny or challenge this principle will end up in failure."

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said on Twitter she looked forward to welcoming Azar and "sharing how the #TaiwanModel



Alex Azar, U.S. secretary of Health and Human Services

works to contain the spread of #COVID19 & contribute to global health."

The visit is the latest signal of U.S. support for Taiwan in the face of an increasingly assertive leadership in Beijing. Officials in Taipei have raised concerns that China may attempt to accelerate its plans to gain control over Taiwan after imposing a national security law in Hong Kong that is being used to clamp down on democracy advocates. Taiwan's defense ministry reported a sharp increase in the number of Chinese military incursions into the island's air defense identification zone in June.

As tensions between the U.S. and China have heightened over issues such as trade and the rise of Chinese technology com-

The announcement drew a rebuke from China which remains 'firmly opposed' to official interactions between the US and Taiwan

panies in the past two years, President Donald Trump's administration has indicated its support for Taiwan. In recent months it's approved a possible \$620 million deal to supply missile parts and backed an ultimately unsuccessful bid to have the island participate in this year's World Health Assembly.

China opposes Taiwan's involvement in any organizations for which statehood is a prerequisite as it views the island as part of

its territory, a claim Taipei rejects. President Xi Jinping's government slapped sanctions on Lockheed Martin Corp. in July after the latest approval of weapons sales under Trump's administration, which has included billions of dollars' worth of F-16 fighter jets, tanks, and Stinger missiles.

Azar's trip is the first cabinet-level visit to Taiwan in six years, since then-Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy gave a speech in Taipei

in 2014. The U.S. health secretary ranks higher in the presidential line of succession than previous official visitors to the island.

"Azar's visit is a breakthrough not only because he is a high-level U.S. official, but it may pave the way for Taiwan and U.S. to cooperate further as Taiwan excels at virus containment," said Doong Sy-Chi, vice president of the Taipei-based Taiwan Thinktank. "That's an area where the U.S. can't work together with China. It's justified for Taiwan and the U.S. to discuss virus containment and related topics, and both sides can push back against China's protest."

Hailing Azar as a "friend of Taiwan," the foreign ministry in Taipei said Wednesday he would meet with Tsai during the trip. The visit "proves that mutual trust between the two sides is on a solid footing and communication is smooth," according to a statement from the ministry.

The trip comes after increasing criticism of Azar's role in the U.S. response to the coronavirus. Azar was replaced in March by Vice President Mike Pence as leader of the government's task force to combat the pandemic after repeated questions about health agencies' performance.

Azar and his delegation will be under strict controls during the visit to prevent them from accidentally importing the virus, according to Taiwan foreign ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou. They will need to test negative for Covid-19 before departure, and be tested again when arriving at Taiwan's airport via a charter flight, she said.

They will also undergo mandatory daily temperature checks in Taiwan, wear face masks at all times and maintain social distancing, she said. They will take chartered vehicles when commuting and avoid close contact with the public. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Australian leader says US-China war no longer inconceivable

AUSTRALIA'S Prime Minister Scott Morrison said yesterday his government held a less dramatic view of U.S.-China strategic tensions than a predecessor who warned of a potential "hot war" before U.S. presidential elections in November.

Former prime minister and China scholar Kevin Rudd wrote in the Foreign Affairs journal this week that the risk of armed conflict between the United States and China in the next three months was "especially high."

Morrison said his administration had expressed similar views in a defense policy update last month when



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison

he announced 270 billion Australian dollars (\$190 billion) in new warfare capability spending, including longer-range missiles.

"Our defense update expresses it differently and

certainly not as dramatically as Kevin," Morrison told the Aspen Security Forum in an online address from the Australian capital Canberra.

"But in our own defense update, we've acknowledged

that what was previously inconceivable and not considered even possible or likely in terms of those types of outcomes is not considered in those contexts anymore," he added.

Morrison disagreed with many in Washington that the United States was in a new Cold War with China. Morrison said the "circumstances are quite different."

He had no answers for how China's push for power in the South China Sea, on the Indian border and in Hong Kong should be handled.

"I'm an optimist, Australians are indefatigable optimists about these things,"

Morrison said.

"We have to take an optimistic attitude but not an unrealistic or naïve attitude. We've got to set out and wed ourselves to the objectives here and that is not the suppression or containment of any one state, it's about the productive and strategic balance that can be achieved," he added.

Australia and the United States share a bilateral security treaty as well as an alliance with India and Japan through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which China views with distrust.

Australia's relations with China, its most important trading partner, has plum-

bed new lows in part because of Australian calls for an independent investigation into the origins of and responses to the coronavirus.

Morrison said he had not met Chinese President Xi Jinping since the pair spoke on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Japan in June last year. Australia has extended an open invitation for further talks.

"I don't get hung up on these things, to be honest," Morrison said. "What matters is that the trading relationship, the economic relationship is able to be pursued. That is occurring. It has its frustrations from time to time." **AP**

OVER 100 KILLED

Lebanese confront devastation after massive Beirut explosion

BASSEM MROUE & ZEINA KARAM, BEIRUT

RESIDENTS of Beirut awoke to a scene of utter devastation yesterday, a day after a massive explosion at the port sent shock waves across the Lebanese capital, killing at least 100 people and wounding thousands.

Smoke was still rising from the port, where huge mounds of grain gushed from hollowed-out silos. Major downtown streets were littered with debris and damaged vehicles, and building facades were blown out.

An official with the Lebanese Red Cross said at least 100 people were killed and more than 4,000 were wounded. The official, George Kettaneh, said the toll could rise further.

Scores of people were missing, with relatives pleading on social media for help locating loved ones. An Instagram page called "Locating Victims Beirut" sprang up with photos of missing people, and radio presenters read the names of missing or wounded people throughout the night. Many residents moved in with friends or relatives after their apartments were damaged and treated their own injuries because hospitals were overwhelmed.

It was unclear what caused the blast, which appeared to have been triggered by a fire and struck with the force of an earthquake. It was the most powerful explosion ever seen in the city, which was on the front lines of the 1975-1990 civil war and has endured conflicts with neighboring Israel and periodic bombings and terror attacks.

Lebanon was already on the brink of collapse amid a severe economic crisis that has ignited mass protests in recent months. Its hospitals are confronting a surge in coronavirus cases, and there were concerns the virus could spread further as people flooded into hospitals.

Saint George University Hospital, one of the major private hospitals in Beirut which had been receiving COVID-19 patients, was out



of commission yesterday after suffering major damage. A physician who identified himself as Dr. Emile said 16 staff and patients, including four nurses, died in the blast. He declined to give his last name out of privacy concerns.

Interior Minister Mohamed Fahmi told a local TV station that it appeared the blast was caused by the detonation of more than 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in a warehouse at the dock ever since it was confiscated from a cargo ship in 2014.

Ammonium nitrate is a common ingredient in fertilizer but can also be highly explosive. It was used in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, when a truck bomb containing 2,180 kilograms (4,800 pounds) of fertilizer and fuel oil ripped through a federal building, killing 168 people and wounding hundreds more.

There is no evidence the Beirut explosion was an attack.

Videos showed what looked like a fire erupting nearby just before, and local TV stations reported that a fireworks warehouse was involved. The fire appeared to spread to a nearby building, triggering the explosion and sending up a mushroom cloud.

Security forces cordoned off the port area as a bulldozer entered to help clear away debris. A young man begged troops to allow him to enter and search for his father, who has been missing since the blast occurred. He

was directed to a port official who wrote down his details.

In Beirut's hard-hit Achrafieh district, civil defense workers and soldiers were working on locating missing people and clearing the rubble. At least one man was still pinned under stones from an old building that had collapsed. Volunteers hooked him up to an oxygen tank to help him breathe while others tried to free his leg.

The blast destroyed numerous apartment buildings, potentially leaving large numbers of people homeless at a time when many Lebanese have lost their jobs and seen their savings evaporate because of a currency crisis. The explosion also raises concerns about how Lebanon will continue to import nearly all of its vital goods with its main port devastated.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab, in a short televised speech, appealed to all countries and friends of Lebanon to extend help to the small nation, saying: "We are witnessing a real catastrophe." He reiterated his pledge that those responsible for the disaster will pay the price, without commenting on the cause.

There is also the issue of food security in Lebanon, a tiny country already hosting over 1 million Syrians amid that country's yearslong war.

Drone footage shot yesterday by The Associated Press showed that the blast tore open a cluster of towering grain silos, dumping their contents into the de-

bris and earth thrown up by the blast. Some 80% of Lebanon's wheat supply is imported, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department.

Estimates suggest some 85% of the country's grain was stored at the now-destroyed silos.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency quoted the Raoul Nehme, the minister of economy and trade, as saying that all the wheat stored at the facility had been "contaminated" and couldn't be used. However, he insisted Lebanon had enough wheat for its immediate needs and would import more.

Several countries have pledged aid in the aftermath of the blast, with even Israel offering humanitarian assistance. The two countries have been in conflict for decades, and Israel fought a 2006 war with the Hezbollah militant group.

The tiny Mediterranean nation's economic crisis is rooted in decades of systemic corruption and poor governance by the political class that has been in power since the end of the civil war. Lebanese have held mass protests calling for sweeping political change since last autumn but few of their demands have been met as the economic situation has steadily worsened.

Beirut's port and the customs authority are a notoriously corrupt. Like nearly all public institutions, they are controlled by Lebanon's political factions, including the Hezbollah militant group. AP

this day in history

1945 US DROPS ATOMIC BOMB ON HIROSHIMA

The first atomic bomb has been dropped by a United States aircraft on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

President Harry S Truman, announcing the news from the cruiser, USS Augusta, in the mid-Atlantic, said the device was more than 2,000 times more powerful than the largest bomb used to date.

An accurate assessment of the damage caused has so far been impossible due to a huge cloud of impenetrable dust covering the target. Hiroshima is one of the chief supply depots for the Japanese army.

The bomb was dropped from an American B-29 Superfortress, known as Enola Gay, at 0815 local time. The plane's crew say they saw a column of smoke rising and intense fires springing up.

The President said the atomic bomb heralded the "harnessing of the basic power of the universe". It also marked a victory over the Germans in the race to be first to develop a weapon using atomic energy.

President Truman went on to warn the Japanese the Allies would completely destroy their capacity to make war.

The Potsdam declaration issued 10 days ago, which called for the unconditional surrender of Japan, was a last chance for the country to avoid utter destruction, the President said.

"If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air the like of which has never been seen on Earth. Behind this air attack will follow by sea and land forces in such number and power as they have not yet seen, but with fighting skill of which they are already aware."

The British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who has replaced Winston Churchill at Number 10, read out a statement prepared by his predecessor to MPs in the Commons.

It said the atomic project had such great potential the government felt it was right to pursue the research and to pool information with atomic scientists in the US.

As Britain was considered within easy reach of Germany and its bombers, the decision was made to set up the bomb-making plants in the US.

The statement continued: "By God's mercy, Britain and American science outpaced all German efforts. These were on a considerable scale, but far behind. The possession of these powers by the Germans at any time might have altered the result of the war."

Mr Churchill's statement said considerable efforts had been made to disrupt German progress - including attacks on plants making constituent parts of the bomb.

He ended: "We must indeed pray that these awful agencies will be made to conduce peace among the nations and that instead of wreaking measureless havoc upon the entire globe they become a perennial fountain of world prosperity."

Courtesy BBC News



IN CONTEXT

The Hiroshima bomb, known as "Little Boy" - a reference to former President Roosevelt, contained the equivalent of between 12 and 15,000 tons of TNT and devastated an area of five square miles (13 square kilometres). More than 60% of the buildings in the city were destroyed.

Official Japanese figures at the time put the death toll at 118,661 civilians. But later estimates suggest the final toll was about 140,000, of Hiroshima's 350,000 population, including military personnel and those who died later from radiation. Many have also suffered long-term sickness and disability.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Seek out someone you really respect or admire and find out how they do it. If you love how they handle themselves in a meeting, ask them for pointers on how to improve your verbal communication.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

If you spend all of your energy trying to put on a show every time you encounter someone new, what will you have left over for the people who stand by you through thick and thin?



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Your impressions could be way off the mark. Something is distracting you from seeing others objectively, and you'll probably see things through a filter.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Being on your own has its merits. After all, you can do what you want, however you want to do it. But don't you miss the team spirit? If so, you need to focus on getting more involved with people.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

If there is no special someone in your life right now, the romance you feel today will show itself in one of your friendships. A thoughtful gesture will bring you almost to the point of happy tears.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

If family obligations are the center of your world right now, they might not need to be, especially if they're causing a conflict in your social life. It might be hard to balance the two worlds, but you can do it.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You can't force yourself to mix things up if you just don't feel like it. Cut yourself some slack and don't try to be perfect. No one expects it of you, so why should you expect it of yourself?



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

It might not be convenient, but it will make you feel better about yourself. If you can't return it, consider giving it to a friend who may enjoy it more than you.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your unique charm enables you to hold your own with a wide variety of people. It's a good time to connect with people who could have some exciting career opportunities for you.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Try to take a casual attitude toward any drama that pops up today. Not only will it help you persevere and get through it more quickly, but it will also keep you happier and healthier.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you keep your head down today, how are you going to see the opportunities that are parading right by you? Whether you're looking for a new opportunity, it's out there right now.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You have the opportunity to learn some valuable lessons today, but you'll have to talk with the authority figures in your life - parents, teachers, bosses, whoever it might be.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	32	thundershower
Harbin	19	26	thundershower
Tianjin	25	30	shower
Urumqi	21	32	clear
Xi'an	25	33	overcast
Lhasa	11	26	cloudy
Chengdu	25	34	shower
Chongqing	29	39	clear
Kunming	18	26	shower
Nanjing	28	34	overcast
Shanghai	27	35	overcast
Wuhan	28	36	clear
Hangzhou	27	37	cloudy
Taipei	26	31	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	30	shower
Hong Kong	27	31	shower
WORLD			
Moscow	15	26	cloudy
Frankfurt	15	29	clear
Paris	18	31	cloudy
London	17	23	cloudy
New York	23	32	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "Dancing Queen" quartet; 5- Personal quirk; 8- Starting; 12- Roseanne, once; 13- Cupressus; 15- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 16- ___ soup yet?; 17- ___ Mio; 18- Breezes through; 19- Inconsiderate; 22- Incredibly powerful mythical bird; 23- "Michael Collins" actor; 24- Trace; 26- Simple life form; 29- Punctual; 31- Actress Charlotte; 32- Tumults; 34- Move stealthily; 36- Formerly, formerly; 38- Quality; 40- Poker payment; 41- Boatswain; 43- Layers; 45- Can metal; 46- Interstellar cloud; 48- Allotted amount; 50- Appoint; 51- Moving vehicle; 52- Choke; 54- "Great" Australian landmark; 61- Util. bill; 63- Prestigious prize; 64- Olive genus; 65- Asta's mistress; 66- Agitates; 67- ___ She Sweet; 68- Actress Harper; 69- Vane dir.; 70- 24 hour periods;

DOWN: 1- Slightly; 2- Wild party; 3- Zest; 4- Conductor Toscanini; 5- Exam used to measure aptitude or intelligence; 6- Image of a deity; 7- Racer Yarborough; 8- Simile center; 9- Capital of California; 10- Hydrox rival; 11- Money-related; Abbr.; 13- Live together; 14- Pine sap; 20- Will of "The Waltons"; 21- Barflies; 25- Ike's ex; 26- Biblical brother; 27- Harbingers; 28- Main artery; 29- Willow; 30- Kind of kitchen; 31- Yank's foe; 33- ___ chi ch'uan; 35- He's a doll; 37- Big brass; 39- Makes journeys; 42- Unfeeling; 44- The closest one to us is the sun; 47- Inclines; 49- Bit of progress; 52- Fellow; 53- Burn balm; 55- Doesn't keep; 56- Diamond stats; 57- Able was ___; 58- Charles Lamb's pen name; 59- Start of a counting rhyme; 60- Solid oils; 62- ___ in Charlie;

Yesterday's solution

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

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	FOR RENT	FOR SALE	FOR RENT
<p>Fragrant Court, Ocean Gardens HK\$24,000,000 3,500 ft² 4 1/2 3 1/2</p>	<p>Cheoc Van House, Coloane \$33,000/mth 3,200 ft² 3 1/2 3 1/2 1 1/2</p>	<p>[Macau] Retail space, Aerea Preta 170 ft² \$3,200,000 (ref: 19096003)</p> <p>[Taipa] Taipa Village (2 units) 4 1/2 2 1/2 1,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)</p> <p>[Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,344 ft² \$11,000,000 (ref: 19126001)</p> <p>[Macau] One Central Stylish 2 1/2 2 1/2 1,349 ft² \$14,839,000 (ref: 19096004)</p>	<p>[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 1/2 710 ft² \$17,050/mth (ref: 20021002)</p> <p>[Taipa] Great View Apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2 2,060 ft² \$28,000/mth (ref: 20031001)</p> <p>[Coloane] Ocean Garden 4 1/2 4 1/2 3,700 ft² \$35,000/mth (ref: 18040674)</p> <p>[Taipa] Private house 2 1/2 3 1/2 3 1/2 4,266 ft² \$45,000/mth (ref: 190550065T)</p>

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The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



MODERN PHILANTHROPY. COVID-19: THE GREAT LEVELER?

"Tax us. Immediately. Substantially. Permanently."

A group of more than 80 of the world's richest people, who call themselves the "Millionaires for Humanity" and include Jerry Greenfield, co-founder of Ben and Jerry's ice cream, and Disney heir Abigail Disney, have addressed an open letter in which they call upon governments for taxation. "It is the right choice. It is the only choice" they stress. They are the millionaires who actually want to pay more money to help pay for the billions of people in new government programs made necessary by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"No, we are not the ones caring for the sick in intensive care wards. We are not driving the ambulances that will bring the ill to hospitals. We are not restocking grocery store shelves or delivering food door to door" the millionaires for humanity write, but "we do have money, lots of it. Money that is desperately needed now and will continue to be needed in the years ahead, as our world recovers from this crisis" they stress in their open letter plea for greater and immediate wealth taxation.

It is not the first time in this century that millionaire philanthropists, in an organized and symbolic action, have called for wealth distribution. Just 10 years ago, in 2010, the "Giving Pledge" concept launched to invite the wealthiest people to publicly commit to give the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. This set the tone for 21st century philanthropy, but this time Covid-19 has brought a new focus on the urgent necessity to concentrate on the reduction of inequality divide. It may be the opportunity of the century. It is a matter of civilization.

Historian Walter Scheidel, in his major contribution to the study of the history of inequality through the exhaustive research of the relationship between violence and inequality, interestingly explains that, throughout history, significant reductions in material inequality have resulted from four different kinds of violent ruptures; wars, revolutions, state failures and pandemics. In the absence of such violent ruptures, the historian claims that inequalities tend to rise. With the example of the Black Death (1340's) and using Malthusian economics, Scheidel highlights how high mortality rates brought labor scarcity which ultimately resulted in higher wages complemented by the fragmentation of property among the wealthy and chaos in the political system that significantly led to the reduction of inequalities.

Violent historical happenings such as wars or plagues have proven, from the stone age to the present day, to be great levelers. Although we are told that it is not proven that a sudden infectious disease would reshuffle the distribution of wealth and income as it has previously done in the agrarian era, what we must hope for, be it inspired by the millionaires for humanity or other philanthropists' movements, is that when historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, they say it was our generation who rose by lifting others.

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FACEBOOK'S INSTAGRAM LAUNCHES TIKTOK COPYCAT IN POLITICAL STORM

SARAH FRIER

FACEBOOK Inc.'s Instagram photo-sharing app is launching its clone of TikTok in more than 50 countries, a week after Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg defended the company's copycat strategies to U.S. lawmakers at an antitrust hearing.

The product, called Reels, lets people edit 15-second clips of videos together alongside music, just like on TikTok. It will be embedded into Instagram in the U.S. and elsewhere, the company said Wednesday in blog post. Reels is the second major Instagram feature that follows an almost identical one popularized by a competitor. Instagram Stories, the tool for posting videos and photos that disappear, was inspired by Snap Inc.

Reels isn't Facebook's first attempt at challenging TikTok. Facebook's Lasso, a separate application with similar features that was tested in limited markets, was shut down last month after it failed to win over an audience. Reels may have better luck: it's launching just as TikTok's existence in the U.S. is being challenged by President Donald Trump.

TikTok, owned by China-based ByteDance Ltd., faces either a ban in the U.S. or a potential spinoff and sale to a U.S. owner, possibly Microsoft Corp. Trump and other officials say TikTok is a threat to national security because the Chinese government may have access to data from Americans. TikTok has repeatedly denied the allegations.

"The timing happens to be coincidental in some ways," Vishal Shah, the head of product at Instagram, said in an interview with reporters. Facebook has already released Reels in other countries - including India, after TikTok's government ban there. "We had the sense that the product had a lot of potential and we learned really quickly that that was resonating with people," Shah said.

The pressure from Trump has prompted some TikTok creators to redirect their audiences to Instagram, hoping for a more stable future in case TikTok is banned. Facebook benefits from the uncertainty even as regulators probe the company for possible violations of antitrust law -- particularly its practice of buying and copying competitors. According to documents released by Con-

gress, Zuckerberg in 2012 became more interested in the practice after observing Chinese competitors move quickly to introduce new products with already-proven uses.

Reels videos will show up in the Instagram Explore tab, where people can see content from accounts they aren't already following. The benefit of building Reels within Instagram, Shah said, is the existing network of more than 1 billion users. It's more difficult to get people to download a new app than use one they already own, he said. Reels will also give Instagram users a new opportunity to get famous, beyond the following they already have.

"We have not historically been very good at helping new creators find an audience," Shah said.

ByteDance has said Facebook's copying, as well as its claims that Chinese-owned apps may not be as committed to data security or free speech, amount to "plagiarism and defamation." But ByteDance also didn't invent the short edited video format. It was popularized by Vine, the app owned by Twitter Inc., which launched in 2013 and shut down before TikTok's rise. **BLOOMBERG**

Singapore looks to broaden visitor range as tourism wanes

SINGAPORE is seeking to open the door to a wider range of business and leisure visitors to boost its hard-hit tourism sector, with the return of mass travel still a long way off amid the pandemic, according to the head of the country's tourism agency.

The industry expects more job losses in the coming months once existing government support for rent, taxes and salaries starts tapering off, Keith Tan, chief executive officer of the Singapore Tourism Board said Tuesday in an interview with Bloomberg Television's Haslinda Amin. Job losses so far in the sector have been in the "very low thousands," he said.

"Whether it is a broader range of business visi-

tors or, for example, small groups of tightly controlled leisure visitors, all these are being considered and are on the table," said Tan. He added the tourism board is discussing with the government to expand green lane arrangements, now in place with Malaysia and China, to a broader range of visitors.

Singapore's travel-related sectors, which contribute about 4% of its gross domestic product, is grappling with what could be the city-state's worst recession wrought by the coronavirus pandemic. Retail sales plunged by more than 50% in May from a year earlier, with outlets trying to woo tourists in areas like the Orchard Road shopping strip particularly hard-hit.

The country's borders remain largely shut to external arrivals. Visits in June reached 2,200, down from 1.6 million in the same month last year. The green lane travel arrangements currently only allow for business and official travel, subject to testing.

The government has launched a domestic travel campaign to support the industry, though local demand won't fill the hole left by the absence of international visitors, Tan said. These travelers contributed to almost S\$28 billion (\$20.4 billion) in tourism receipts last year.

"It will be a long while more before mass travel can resume and that ultimately stems from consumer confidence," said the tourism chief, who added

a vaccine or effective therapies are needed to combat the "fear and anxiety" many people have, even about stepping onto an airplane.

Worldwide, the industry is expected to lose \$3.3 trillion if the collapse of global leisure travel persists until March, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development last month.

Virus resurgences across Asia in countries like Vietnam and Japan have hurt hopes of an early recovery of mass travel. Still, Singapore has affirmed plans to invest in enhancing its tourism hub status, including a S\$9 billion expansion of its two integrated casino resorts by Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Genting Singapore Ltd. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

DRIVE IN

Handsome, broken Aussies connect in 'Dirt Music'

LINDSEY BAHR, AP FILM WRITER

EVERYONE is sad in the Australian indie "Dirt Music," a sprawling story about a small fishing town, an affair and the dark secrets that tie everyone together. But at least the Western Australia setting is pretty, and the people are, too.

The film stars Kelly Macdonald as Georgie, a former nurse who has taken up with a widower crayfish baron, Jim Buckridge (David Wenham) in White Point. But life in their modern seaside mansion with epic views and two well-behaved little boys doesn't seem to be enough. Georgie doesn't fit in among the townies, even with her partner being the local bigwig. She wakes before sunrise to skinny dip in the water and day drinks white wine until she falls asleep on the couch.

But on one early morning swim she spots a sad, handsome, bearded man, Lu Fox (Garrett Hedlund), out in the water poaching some of the crayfish. They have a very brief chat, him being in the middle of an illegal activity and her being naked in the water, but all it takes is one more run-in on the side of the road before they're engulfed in a full-fledged affair. It happens so quickly, you might think you've missed something. Surely they know each other, you think. (They don't. It really does happen that quickly.)

Weirdly, neither of the leads are Australian and it's hard not to wonder why they cast a Scotswoman and a Minnesotan when there are all those homegrown Hemsworths running around. But Hedlund and Macdonald have enough natural chemistry to sort of pull it off despite the gratingly simplistic dialogue that strives for lyricism but often just ends up sounding silly.

Lu is a broken man, so broken that



Garrett Hedlund (left) and Kelly Macdonald in a scene from "Dirt Music"

he can't even be bothered to give his dog a name, play music or even listen to it anymore. His past is a mystery, but something tragic happened involving a little girl, his niece, that he won't quite let himself remember fully. And Georgie can't resist him.

Unbeknownst to Georgie, Lu Fox and Jim Buckridge have a history, so when the affair is found out, things go south very quickly and what started as a sexy, sad Nicholas Sparks-adjacent romance veers into outback thriller territory before settling into a spiritual walkabout.

"Dirt Music" is based on a popular 2001 novel by Tim Winton that people have been trying to adapt for years. At one point, Phillip Noyce was going to direct, but gave up when the script never quite succeeded in capturing the "poetry of the novel." It eventually landed in "Ned Kelly" director Gregor Jordan's hands, working off a script by Jack Thorne ("The Aeronauts").

The film falls into the trap of so many literary adaptations: It tries to do too much. You can see how rich Winton's novel probably is and yearn for more information on Georgie, her family (who have a very brief, fraught and confusing introduction), Jim and

the town. But condensed into a feature film, all those side characters and atmosphere and details either get unsatisfactory nods or are brushed over completely and it makes for a confusing and jarring viewing experience.

Instead, Jordan opts for a kind of minimalist, modern Western approach with two lost characters who have to go to the edge of the earth to find themselves.

And while we can live without a deep understanding of the White Point economy and Jim's standing in it (sometimes he's drawn like a mob boss, sometimes like the most beloved man in town), it is particularly odd that the story's protagonist, Georgie, never feels like a fully drawn character. Why is she so lost? Why is she with Jim in the first place? Why does the monosyllabic Lu inspire her to blow up her life?

Answers are few in "Dirt Music" and the big reveals aren't exactly the most satisfying, but at least the landscapes are.

"Dirt Music," a Samuel Goldwyn Films release, has not been rated by the Motion Picture Association of America. Running time: 104 minutes. ★★★★★

tTUNES

TAYLOR SWIFT'S NEW ALBUM IS STRIKINGLY HEROIC

MESFIN FEKADU,
AP MUSIC WRITER

IN the years since Taylor Swift released her killer pop album "1989" in 2014, the singer has amped the production of her music, adding sounds including electronica, synth pop, R&B, dubstep, dance and even trap to her songs. Not everyone was ready for the rap style of "...Ready for It?" though it worked.

But while pop star Taylor, with all the bops and beats, is enjoyable and entertaining, her new singer-songwriter album is a welcomed return. In a time of madness, "folklore" feels like a moment to escape.

Her eighth record has a calmness and coolness reminiscent of the 2008 masterpiece "Fearless" and 2010's charming "Speak Now," as poetic lines about life are brought to life thanks to Swift's sharp songwriting, with the light but piercing production doing

its job by lifting the lyrics.

Swift is a grand storyteller, and "folklore" explores a lot. On some songs, she's singing about life before she moved to Nashville as a teen to embark on her musical career. On other tracks, she's telling the stories of others — doing it so well and vividly that you can paint the picture as the tracks play.

Frequent collaborator and one of contemporary music's best producers, Jack Antonoff, assists on most of the album, while The National's Aaron Dessner should be saluted for his massive contributions to the project. And epic vocals from Bon Iver match well with Swift's soft tone on "exile."

The 16 tracks weave into each other nicely, blending to make this folk-pop-country-Americana-guitar rock-singer-songwriter album work. Whatever the genre, "folklore" is first-class.



Taylor Swift, "folklore" (Republic Records)

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OPINION

World Views

Alex Webb, Bloomberg

APPLE, AMAZON AND GOOGLE ARE ALL PRETTY BULLETPROOF

Europe has the motivation, but not the means, to break up Big Tech. For the U.S., the inverse is true. That's bad news for anyone hoping for a full regulatory reckoning with Silicon Valley's and Seattle's giants over their monopolistic tendencies.

Washington lawmakers see their job as protecting the consumer first and foremost, while Brussels wants to make sure other companies are allowed to compete with the incumbents. Sadly for Europe, the Americans have all the power but their approach is unlikely to produce radical change (as my Opinion colleague Tara Lachapelle wrote this week).

That isn't to say the European Union is wasting its time in leading the charge against Big Tech. Congress's grilling last week of the chief executives of Apple Inc., Amazon.com Inc., Google parent Alphabet Inc. and Facebook Inc. showed that the "Brussels Effect" is in full force. The EU plays an outsized role when it comes to regulation because other regions — even the Americans — tend to follow its lead. Up to a point, at least.

As U.S. lawmakers made the case against the West Coast giants, time and again their arguments echoed efforts already well underway in Europe. When the Democratic Representative David Cicilline tackled the way Google displays news snippets in search results without reimbursing the publishers, he evoked new copyright laws proposed by the EU last year.

For two years Brussels has been looking at whether Amazon uses its marketplace data to compete unfairly with the sellers on its website; that's now a hot topic on Capitol Hill too. The market power of Apple's App Store and of virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa, both of which are the subject of new EU investigations, were also on Congress's agenda.

Tackling companies with combined annual revenue of \$782 billion, more than the gross domestic product of Switzerland, is a huge challenge, meaning competition authorities benefit from the work that's already been done elsewhere. Even the British Competition and Markets Authority's study of the digital-advertising market got a shout out from Rep. Pramila Jayapal, who cited the agency's findings on Google's dominant market share.

The European Commission does have the legal authority to try to break companies up, but no one thinks it would ever try this on a U.S. company. The political blowback would be too severe. The Americans could themselves seek breakups, and would have the power to do so, but their antitrust regime has different priorities. While the problems — and the levels of exasperation at the cavalier behavior of the companies — might be the same, the types of punishment that lawmakers have in mind are different, according to Nicolas Petit, the joint chair in competition law at the European University Institute.

That's because American antitrust law focuses on the interests of the consumer — primarily around pricing — while Europe considers the broader market dynamics and effect on competition. While Vestager probably wants to foster the creation of a company that could counterbalance Google and Facebook's might in search and social media, her U.S. peers only worry if the impact of their dominance is detrimental to consumers.

That narrower American focus limits the likelihood of far-reaching action, says Tommaso Valletti, the head of Imperial College London's Department of Economics and Public Policy, and a former chief competition economist at the European Commission. "The U.S. has, de facto, abdicated any enforcement for 20 years in this area," he told me.

In her submission to the House of Representatives' antitrust subcommittee, Vestager called for "common" policy responses, according to a document obtained by the website Euractiv. It's an admirable goal and should be the logical conclusion of investigations tackling many of the same topics. It's also a pipe dream.

[Abridged]

President Donald Trump said U.S. military generals have told him that they "seem to feel" the massive explosion that rocked Beirut, killing at least 100 people, was a "terrible attack" likely caused by a bomb.

Trump was asked why he called it an attack and not an accident, especially since Lebanese officials say they have not determined the cause of the explosion. He told reporters at the White House: "It would seem like it based on the explosion. I met with some of our

great generals and they just seem to feel that it was. This was not a — some kind of a manufacturing explosion type of a event. ... They seem to think it was an attack. It was a bomb of some kind, yes."

Trump offered condolences to the victims and said the United States stood ready to assist Lebanon. "It looks like a terrible attack," he said.

A Pentagon spokesman declined to comment on the matter yesterday, referring questions back to the White House (see p8).

VIDEO SUGGESTS EXPLOSIONS IN NORTH KOREAN CITY NEAR CHINA

A video obtained by The Associated Press shows plumes of black smoke rising from a North Korean city near the border with China amid reports that deadly explosions occurred there earlier this week.

There has been no official word from North Korea or China about what happened in the North Korean city of Hyesan on Monday. But South Korean media and outside monitoring groups reported that gas explosions in a residential area left dozens of people dead or injured. The AP couldn't independently confirm the reports.

The video acquired by AP shows orange flames and black smoke shooting into the sky from Hyesan as loud explosion-like sounds are heard. A few people can be seen watching the scene from the Chinese side of the border.

The video was provided by Wang Bo, a travel agent who said he shot it from a park in the Chinese border town of Changbai.

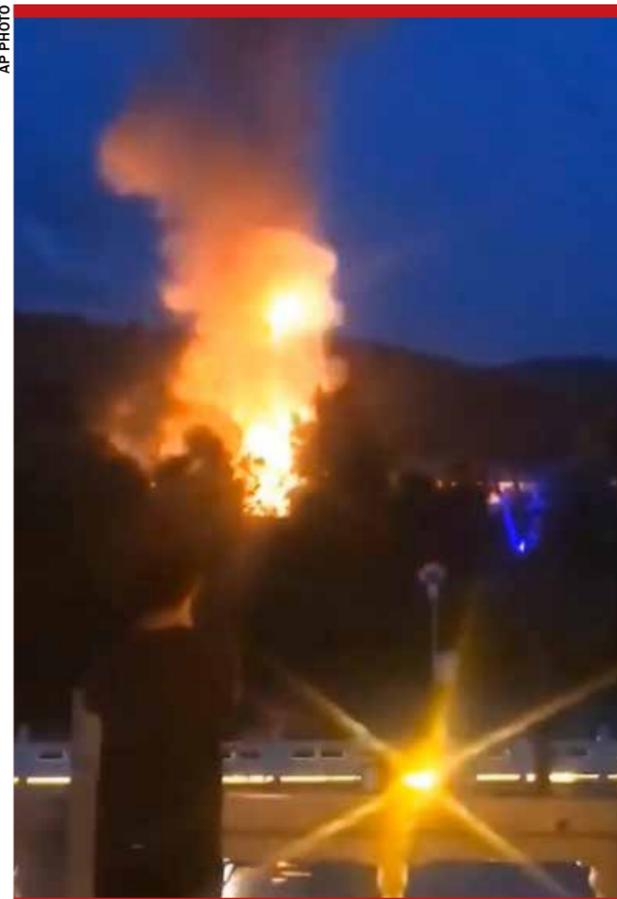
"I just saw explosions and there were a lot of on-lookers who were looking in that direction. We don't know the reason why there were explosions," Wang said.

Wang, who said he has previously visited Hyesan, said the explosions happened not far from the city's orphanage and tourism office.

Many Chinese border towns are very close to North Korea, separated only by the river border.

Wang said from Binjiang Park in Changbai where he shot the video, "in summer, we can see North Koreans swim in the river, and in winter, people can walk on the frozen Yalu River."

The Associated Press verified the location after examining other tourist videos of the park that show



the same structures and lights. Other videos of the reported explosions have been circulating on Chinese and South Korean social media.

The Seoul-based Daily NK yesterday cited unidentified sources in North Korea as saying that the explosions left 15 people dead

In Seoul, South Korea's spy agency and the Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said they couldn't immediately confirm the reported explosions. Unification Ministry spokesman Yoh Sangkey still told reporters that he felt sorry for any possible casualties.

The Seoul-based Daily NK, which specializes in North Korea news, yesterday cited unidentified sources in North Korea as saying that the explosions left 15 people dead and the death toll could rise. It

earlier reported gasoline stored at a house in Hyesan ignited and led to the explosion of a nearby liquid petroleum gas cylinder, and this caused chain explosions of gas cylinders attached to other houses.

Other South Korean media carried similar reports. Ahn Kyung-su, a researcher, said one of his North Korean refugee sources in South Korea told him that she heard from her relative in Hyesan about the reported explosions during a phone conversation on Tuesday.

North Korean state media, which rarely acknowledge deadly accidents in the country, haven't commented on the reported explosions.

But in 2017, state media reported six people died when the roof of a mine collapsed. In 2014, state media said government officials had offered an apology for the collapse of an apartment building under construction in Pyongyang, the capital. AP

New Zealand's unemployment rate showed a surprising improvement to 4% during the midst of the nation's virus lockdown, although the headline number doesn't tell the full story and joblessness is likely to increase in the months ahead. Still, the figure was far better than most people expected and came as welcome news to the government led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern ahead of a general election next month.



Australia's State of Victoria announced a record 725 COVID-19 cases and 15 deaths yesterday, while businesses in Melbourne city prepared to draw down their shutters as new pandemic restrictions are enforced. The 24-hour record was marginally higher than the 723 cases and 13 deaths reported last Thursday. Many non-essential businesses in Melbourne will be closed for six weeks.

India has reported more than 50,000 new coronavirus cases for an eighth straight day, taking the country's number of confirmed cases since the pandemic began past 1.9 million. The Health Ministry yesterday reported a spike of 52,509 new cases and 857 new deaths in the past 24 hours. The ministry said India's recovery rate among COVID-19 patients has touched 66.31%.



France As Lebanon reeled in shock a day after the massive blast in Beirut and counted the dead, nations around the world promised it would not be alone. French President Emmanuel Macron announced he would fly to the shattered Lebanese capital, and two plane loads of French rescue workers and aid were expected to touch down early today [Macau time].

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