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## HONG KONG'S GOVT UNCONCERNED OVER US SANCTIONS: MAINLAND MEDIA

BEIJING, Jun 1, 2020, China Daily. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government hit back at the United States President Donald Trump's decision to revoke the city's preferential trade status, saying US sanctions are unlikely to undermine Hong Kong's advantages under the "one country, two systems" principle, China Daily reported.



China

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The SAR regrets that the US continues to "smear and demonize" China's duty and right to introducing a national security law for Hong Kong that protects its own

territory from separatists, terror and anarchy, in light of escalating street violence, a government spokesman said in a statement on Saturday.

Hours before the statement, Trump announced the US will begin eliminating Hong Kong's special policy exemptions, including a separate customs and travel territory, the latest in a series of attempts to derail a national security law pending in

China's top legislature.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress is finalizing the draft law, which outlaws separatism, subversion, terrorism and collusion with external forces in Hong Kong.

The spokesman said those proposed sanctions and trade restrictions against Hong Kong will lead to a breakdown of a reciprocal Hong Kong-US relationship built up over the years and will only hurt US enterprises and their employees in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's trade status is guaranteed by multiple international agreements, instead of being a "gift" from another jurisdiction, the

spokesman said.

He said that Hong Kong is not worried about such threats, as it remains steadfast in the rule of law, judiciary independence, free trade policy and a level playing field for businesses.

### Limited impact

The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, which has a membership of more than 3,000 local enterprises, also expressed regret over the US

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decision.

[Published today at 09:44](#)

However, in a statement on Saturday, the association said Hong Kong's export and overall economy will be affected only "to a very limited extent" after the US revokes the city's separate customs territory status, because goods shipped from Hong Kong to the US are mostly transited from other regions that are not entitled to tariff exemption.

It pointed out that US enterprises and investors will see their interests in Hong Kong undermined by this move, given that the US enjoys its biggest trade surplus with the city and that many companies have taken Hong Kong as a gateway into the enormous mainland market.

According to the Hong Kong government, the US has had a trade surplus of more than \$300 billion with Hong Kong in the past decade, the highest among its trading partners. Hong Kong is also among its top 10 trading partners in many products, such as beef, wine and farm products. For Hong Kong, the value of goods shipped to the US accounts for less than 0.1 percent of its export total.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po wrote in his blog on Sunday that Hong Kong's role as an international financial hub has never been something that was granted by others. This role won't be compromised by the national security legislation or revocation of preferential treatment by other jurisdictions, he added.

Chan assured that the US decision will not affect the stability of the Hong Kong dollar, citing the city's ample fiscal reserves and strong backing from the nation.

Chan said that amid Sino-US tensions, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange is increasingly alluring to mainland enterprises considering re-listings as well as to mainland tech startups seeking funds from global investors.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor joined those who dispelled concerns over the impact of the national security law on Sunday.

On her social media page, Lam said, quoting China's ambassador to the US, this law is also to promise a peaceful living and investment environment for US citizens who work and live in the city.

## US ASTRONAUTS ENTER SPACE STATION IN MILESTONE MISSION

**INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION, Jun 1, 2020, AFP. NASA astronauts entered the International Space Station on Sunday (May 31) after a landmark 19-hour journey on the first crewed US spacecraft in nearly a decade, a triumph for SpaceX and private enterprise, [The Jakarta Post reported](#).**



America

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The arrival completed the first leg of the trip, designed to test the capabilities of the Crew Dragon capsule. But the mission will only be declared a success when the astronauts return safely to Earth in a few months' time.

The spaceship's hatch opened at 1:02 pm Eastern Time (17:02 GMT) as Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley carried out final procedures before crossing the threshold about 20 minutes later.

Wearing black polo shirts and khaki pants, they were greeted by fellow American astronaut Chris Cassidy, as

well as Russia cosmonauts Anatoli Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner.

The five men posed for photos and then NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine spoke to the crew from mission control in Houston.

"Welcome to Bob and Doug," said Bridenstine. "I will tell you the whole world saw this mission, and we are so, so proud of everything you have done for our country."

"It's great to get the United States back in the crewed launch business and we're just really glad to be on board this magnificent complex," replied Hurley.

Russian space chief Dmitry Rogozin

also offered his congratulations to both NASA and Elon Musk, the boss of the private aerospace company SpaceX that built the Crew Dragon capsule.

The capsule spent 19 hours chasing down the station at speeds of up to 17,500 miles per hour (28,000 kph), before carefully aligning to its target and slowing to a crawl for the delicate docking procedure, which took place over northern China.

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## and protests

During their stay Behnken and Hurley will perform more checks on the capsule to certify its readiness as the United States transitions to using the commercial sector for rides to the ISS.

The space agency has had to rely on Russian Soyuz rockets ever since the Space Shuttle program ended in 2011 -- with 2015 the original target for a replacement program.

The United States has paid SpaceX and aerospace giant Boeing a total of about \$7 billion for their "space taxi" contracts.

But Boeing's program has floundered badly after a failed test run late last year, which left SpaceX, a company founded only in 2002, as clear frontrunner.

The launch comes as the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic, and as the US faces nationwide protests after a black man died in Minneapolis while being arrested by a white police officer.

Speaking to Bridenstine, Hurley said he hoped the mission would inspire young Americans.

"This was just one effort that we can show for the ages in this dark time that we've had over the past several months to kind of inspire, especially the young people in the United States, to reach for these lofty goals," he said.

On Twitter, however, some retweeted the song "Whitey On The Moon" which was released by Gil Scott-Heron in 1970, the year after the Apollo 11 lunar landing.

The lyrics juxtaposed the injustice and economic conditions faced by black Americans with the enormous spending required for the space program.

## Rough ride

SpaceX's two-stage Falcon 9 rocket began its voyage Saturday, blasting off flawlessly in a cloud of bright orange flames and smoke from Florida's Kennedy Space Center.

"I'm really quite overcome with emotion," Musk said. "It's been 18 years working towards this goal."

Hurley and Behnken had named their capsule "Endeavour" after the retired Space Shuttle on which they both flew.

Asked by a lawmaker how the Crew Dragon's handling compared to that of the shuttle, Behnken indicated the new ship was a rougher ride.

"Dragon was huffing and puffing all the way into orbit, and we were definitely driving or riding a dragon all the way up," he said. "And so it was not quite the same ride, the smooth ride, as the Space Shuttle was."

## Jabs from Russia

While Russia saluted the United States, it also stressed Sunday it was puzzled by the frenzy unleashed by what many hailed as the dawn of a new era.

"We don't really understand the hysteria sparked by the successful launch of a Crew Dragon spacecraft," Roscosmos spokesman Vladimir Ustimenko said.

US-Russia cooperation is not expected to end once Crew Dragon goes into service.

NASA still plans to use Soyuz rockets to send some astronauts into space, with each seat costing around \$80 million.

The United States, meanwhile, hopes to revive human space exploration, which has not risen to the expectations of the early space era.

The idea of a crewed mission to Mars has been mooted since the 1950s, and NASA has commissioned numerous studies that have never gotten off the ground.

The United States now plans to return to the Moon in 2024 under the Artemis mission, establishing a launching pad to the Red Planet by the 2030s.

[Published today at 09:53](#)

## PROTESTS OVER DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD TURN VIOLENT AGAIN DESPITE CURFEWS, NATIONAL GUARD IN THE US

**MINNEAPOLIS, Jun 1, 2020, Reuters.** Looting broke out on Sunday in Southern California, a tanker truck drove into marchers in Minneapolis and demonstrators clashed with police in Boston and Washington, D.C. as the United States struggled to contain chaotic protests over race and policing, [Reuters reported](#).



### America

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National Guard troops were deployed in 15 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. as darkness fell in major cities still reeling from five nights of violence and destruction that began with peaceful protests over the death of a black man, George Floyd, in police custody.

"I hate to see my city like this but at the end we need justice," said 18-year-old Jahvon Craven as he stood on an overpass watching protesters below on Interstate 35 in downtown Minneapolis moments before an 8 p.m. curfew went into effect in that

city.

Floyd, 46, died on Monday after video showed a white Minneapolis police officer kneeling on his neck for nearly nine minutes. It touched off outrage that has swept across a politically and racially divided nation in the midst of a polarizing presidential campaign and recently released from strict stay-at-home orders during the coronavirus pandemic that threw millions out of work.

Minority communities were hit especially hard by the pandemic and those clamp-downs.

On Sunday afternoon, a tanker truck drove into a throng of demonstrators on I-35 in Minneapolis, which had

been closed to traffic. The driver was pulled from the cab and beaten by protesters before being taken into custody by Minneapolis police. It did not appear any protesters were hit by the truck.

Authorities imposed curfews on dozens of cities across America, the most since 1968 in the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, which also happened during a presidential election campaign and amid the upheaval of anti-war demonstrations.

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## LOOTING IN CALIFORNIA

In Santa Monica, upscale stores were looted along the city's popular Third Street Promenade before police moved in to make arrests. The vandalism followed a largely peaceful march earlier in the beachside city. Further south, in the Los Angeles suburb of Long Beach, a group of young men and women smashed windows of a shopping mall and looted stores before they were dispersed ahead of a 6 p.m. curfew.

In Washington, D.C., protesters set fires near the White House, the smoke mixing with billowing clouds of tear gas as police sought to clear them from the area.

Sporadic violence broke out in Boston following peaceful protests as activists threw bottles at police officers and lit a cruiser on fire. Philadelphia announced a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew after a day of protests and looting.

Several hundred demonstrators marched through downtown Miami chanting: "No justice, no peace," past a detention center where inmates could be seen in the narrow windows waving shirts.

The demonstrations brought out a diversity of people, a point one young black woman noted at a march in Culver City, California on Sunday. "It means a lot to see people other than black people joining the demonstration," said Candace Collins.

Protests spread around the globe, with events in London and Berlin on Sunday and others on Monday including in New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands.

The eruptions of violence have not let up despite the arrest on Friday of former Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, 44. He has since been charged with third-degree murder. Three other officers involved in Floyd's arrest have yet to be charged.

In New York City, police arrested about 350 people and 30 officers suffered minor injuries during clashes. Mayor Bill de Blasio said police conduct was being investigated, including widely shared videos showing a police vehicle lurching into a crowd of protesters who were pelting it with debris in Brooklyn.

De Blasio said he had not seen a separate video showing an officer pulling down the mask of a black protester to spray something in his face.

Among those arrested for unlawful assembly on Saturday night was de Blasio's 25-year-old daughter, Chiara, according to a New York Police Department source, who said she was issued a "desk appearance ticket" and released.

Protests have also flared in Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Cleveland and Dallas, where rioters were seen on video beating a store owner who chased them with a large machete or sword. Police said on Sunday he was in stable condition.

Thousands of people gathered peacefully on Sunday afternoon for a rally in St. Paul as state troopers surrounded the state capitol building. About 170 stores in the city have been looted, its mayor told CNN.

While covering the protests in Minneapolis on Saturday night, two members of a Reuters TV crew were hit by rubber bullets and a Reuters photographer's camera was smashed as attacks against journalists covering the unrest intensified. In response to the protests, Target Corp announced it was temporarily closing 100 stores, about 30 of them in Minnesota.

The administration of President Donald Trump, who has called protesters "thugs," will not federalize and take control of the National Guard for now, national security adviser Robert O'Brien said on Sunday.

Trump said on Sunday the U.S. government would designate anti-fascist group Antifa as a terrorist organization. It was not clear how many of the protesters participating in demonstrations are from Antifa.

"Get tough Democrat Mayors and Governors," Trump said on Twitter on Sunday afternoon. "These people are ANARCHISTS. Call in our National Guard NOW."

National Guard soldiers were deployed in Atlanta, Minneapolis and Los Angeles, as well as Santa Monica.

*Reporting by Brendan O'Brien and Carlos Barria in Minneapolis; Additional reporting by Peter Szekely, Maria Caspani and Sinead Carew in New York, Susan Heavey in*

*Washington, Brad Brooks in Austin, Texas, Zach Fagenson in Miami and Bill Tarrant and Dan Whitcomb in Los Angeles; Writing by Dan Whitcomb; Editing by Bill Tarrant and Stephen Coates*

[Published today at 10:05](#)

## PHUKET REOPENS PORTS, ROAD LINK

**PHUKET, Jun 1, 2020, Bangkok Post.** All entry and exit points by land and water reopened on this southern island province on Monday after Covid-19 lockdown measures were relaxed under an order signed by governor Pakapong Tawipat on Sunday, Bangkok Post reported.



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The bridge crossing at Tha Chat Chai to Phangnga on the mainland and all 24 boat landings were open to traffic.

Phuket airport remained closed to international passenger flights.

The provincial communicable disease committee had informed the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) of the province's readiness to reopen the airport, Mr Pakapong said.

However, the CAAT has extended a ban on all international flights to Thailand until June 30. Limited domestic flights are operating.

The governor said people can leave Phuket by land without restriction. However, those entering Phuket via the Tha Chat Chai checkpoint were required to have their temperature taken and download the "Mor Chana" application to support Covid-19 tracing efforts.

On Sunday, Mr Pakapong presided over the closing of one of the field hospitals opened to cope with the spread of Covid-19.

The governor said Phuket had 227 confirmed cases in total. Of these, 223 had recovered and been released, three died and another died from motorbike crash injuries. There were no patients still being treated for the disease.

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## BEIJING'S PLANS FOR SOUTH CHINA SEA AIR DEFENCE IDENTIFICATION ZONE COVER PRATAS, PARACEL AND SPRATLY ISLANDS: PLA SOURCE

**HONG KONG, Jun 1, 2020, SCMP.** Beijing has been making plans for an air defence identification zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea since 2010, the same year it said it was considering the introduction of similar airspace controls over the East China Sea in a move that was widely criticised around the world, a military insider said, [South China Morning Post](#) reported.



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condition of anonymity.

The plans for the zone were as old as those for the East China Sea ADIZ – which Beijing said it was considering in 2010 and introduced in 2013 – the source said, adding that Chinese authorities were waiting for the right time to announce them.

While Beijing might have been reticent on the subject, Taiwan's

defence ministry said on May 4 that it was aware of the mainland's plans.

An air defence identification zone is airspace over a typically undisputed area of land or water in which the monitoring and control of aircraft is performed in the interests of national security. While many countries have them, the concept is not defined or regulated by any international treaty or agency.

Military observers said the announcement of China's second ADIZ would add to its tensions with the United States and could cause irreparable damage to its relations with its Southeast Asian neighbours.

Lu Li-Shih, a former instructor at

Taiwan's Naval Academy in Kaohsiung, said that the construction and development of artificial islands – particularly the airstrips and radar systems built on Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief reefs – that had been ongoing for the past several years was all part of Beijing's ADIZ plan.

"Recent satellite images show that the People's Liberation Army has deployed KJ-500 airborne early-warning and control aircraft and KQ-200 anti-submarine patrol planes at Fiery Cross Reef," he said, referring to pictures taken by

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Israel's ImageSat International and the Asian Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington-based think tank.

It was also clear that air-conditioned facilities were under construction on the reef, suggesting that fighter jets – which need to be protected from the high temperatures, humidity and salinity in the region – would soon be deployed there too, Lu said.

"Once the PLA's fighter jets arrive they can join the early-warning and anti-submarine aircraft in conducting ADIZ patrol operations."

Li Jie, a Beijing-based naval expert and retired PLA senior colonel, said that countries normally waited to announce the establishment of an ADIZ until they had the necessary detection equipment, combat capabilities and other infrastructure in place to manage it.

But if there was an opportune time, Beijing might make the announcement sooner, he said.

"Beijing declared the ADIZ in the East China Sea even though the PLA was still incapable of detecting, tracking and expelling intrusive foreign aircraft," he said.

Another Chinese military source, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said that as well as the preparedness issue, Beijing was aware that the South China Sea was much larger than the East China Sea and would therefore require far resources to patrol.

"Beijing has been hesitant to declare the ADIZ in the South China Sea due to a number of technical, political and diplomatic considerations," he said.

"But the most practical problem is that the PLA has in the past not had the capability to scramble its fighter jets to expel intrusive foreign aircraft in the South China Sea, which is several times the size of the East China Sea, and the cost to support the ADIZ would be huge."

It was in 2010 that Chinese authorities told a Japanese delegation visiting Beijing that they were considering establishing the East China Sea ADIZ. According to a 2017 report by the CSIS, Beijing said the matter required discussion as its plans overlapped

with Japan's air defence zone.

The news angered Tokyo, which responded by establishing an ADIZ of its own, encompassing the Senkaku Islands – known as Diaoyu in Mandarin – a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea that are claimed by Japan, mainland China and Taiwan.

Tensions between Tokyo and Beijing escalated after the former bought the Senkakus from a private owner in September 2012, prompting Beijing to announce its ADIZ in November of the following year.

"China announced the first ADIZ earlier than planned because of the need to assert its sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands," Li said.

But the move was met with a backlash, with both Japan and the United States denouncing it.

While relations between Japan and China have improved in recent years, tensions between Beijing and Washington have been steadily rising, with the two sides clashing on multiple fronts – from trade and technology, to military and ideological issues.

Their relationship has come under further pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with senior officials trading accusations and insults over their respective handling of the health crisis and the possible origins of the deadly coronavirus.

Last month, US military aircraft, including EP-3E and RC-135U reconnaissance planes, conducted at least nine sorties and patrol operations over the South China Sea, according to the aviation tracking website Aircraft Spots.

While Beijing regards almost all of the sea as its sovereign territory, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei have conflicting claims.

China has sought to build closer ties with its Southeast Asian neighbours in recent years, but Drew Thompson, a visiting senior research fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, said it risked jeopardising them if it announced a South China Sea ADIZ.

"Such a declaration would severely damage China's relations with Southeast Asian states, which until

now have largely acquiesced to China's assertiveness and provocations, including land reclamation and militarisation of features," he said.

"But should China declare an ADIZ, they would be forced to choose, not between the US and China, but between their economic relationship with China and their own sovereignty."

[Published today at 12:00](#)

## RUSSIAN HEALTH MINISTRY APPROVES DRUG AVIFAVIR, A GENERIC OF THE JAPAN'S ANTI-FLU AVIGAN

**MOSCOW, Jun 1, 2020, Bloomberg.** Russia's Health Ministry granted a temporary registration certificate to the country's first Covid-19 medicine, a generic version of the Japanese flu drug Avigan, the country's wealth fund said in statement, [Bloomberg reported](#). As



### Russia

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the coronavirus continues to spread, upending economies and life around the world, drug companies have been racing to develop treatments and vaccines. Avifavir, developed by a joint venture of the Russian Direct Investment Fund and ChemRar Group, is designed to disrupt the novel coronavirus's ability to reproduce and has proven effective in clinical trials.

While an international researcher of the drug has sounded a note of caution -- joining scientists around the world who have tried to manage expectations of new treatments until

they've been thoroughly tested -- the head of the wealth fund said it was a potential breakthrough.

"Avifavir is not only the first antiviral drug registered against coronavirus in Russia, but it is also perhaps the most promising antiCovid-19 drug in the world," Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, said in the statement late Saturday. "It was developed and tested in clinical trials in Russia in an unprecedentedly short period of time, enabling Avifavir to become the first registered drug based on Favipiravir in the world."

Avifavir is a generic version of Fujifilm Holdings Corp.'s Avigan, which in a non-randomized Chinese study in March resulted in the faster clearance

of the virus than when using an anti-HIV drug. Companies around the world are considering producing it, with Glenmark Pharmaceuticals currently conducting Phase 3 clinical trials in India that might be completed as early as July.

Yohei Doi, the lead researcher on a trial of the Japanese antiviral Avigan to treat Covid-19, said it's too early to make a call on whether the drug works or not, and patients are still being enrolled.

Russia has recorded the world's third-

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highest number of Covid-19 infection cases, according to Johns Hopkins University's research center. Russian cases exceeded 405,000 on Sunday, while the reported death toll remains relatively low among some of the world's largest countries, at 4,693.

[Published today at 10:36](#)

# JAPAN EYES EASING BAN ON ENTRY FROM THAILAND, VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND

**TOKYO, Jun 1, 2020, Kyodo.** The Japanese government is considering easing its entry ban on visitors from Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, and New Zealand currently in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, a government source said Monday, [Kyodo News reported](#).



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Infections have subsided in those countries, which have strong business ties with Japan. Lifting the ban for business visitors is being eyed as a first step and

Tokyo will negotiate conditions with the four nations, according to the source.

As of Monday, Japan has imposed entry bans on 111 countries and regions including the United States, most of Asia and all of Europe. The bans are currently in effect until the end of June.

The first easing may take place this

summer after the government works out details and makes arrangements with the four countries. Japan is considering allowing entry of foreigners from the countries who have certification for testing negative for the virus, according to the source.

Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand are among the 11 members of a revised Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade pact that Japan is also part of. Thailand, which also wants to join the multilateral framework, hosts many Japanese companies, including automakers.

Travelers to Japan have plunged in recent months amid the global coronavirus pandemic.

Under the current border control measures,

foreigners, including some of those with residency in Japan, who have been to the countries on the entry ban list within 14 days of their arrival in Japan will be turned away.

A 14-day quarantine period is set for all travelers to Japan, including Japanese nationals.

Japan has so far avoided an explosive surge in coronavirus infections and fully lifted last week a state of emergency that was first declared on April 7 and covered

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all 47 prefectures at one point.

The end of the virus emergency has opened the way for a gradual reopening of the economy but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said he will carefully review the travel bans.

[Published today at 10:39](#)

## CAMBODIA'S GOVT FORGES AHEAD WITH ENFORCING STRICTER TRAFFIC RULES

PHNOM PENH, Jun 1, 2020, The Khmer Times. Interior Minister Sar Kheng said the government remains firm in its position on the strict implementation of the Road Traffic Law in order to protect the lives and welfare of the people, [The Khmer Times reported.](#)



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Mr Kheng, who is also head of the National Road Safety Committee, said this during the appointment ceremony for the new Kep provincial governor at Kep provincial hall on Friday.

The government has tightened the Road Traffic Law with heftier fines, and people across the country are participating more to obey the law, with traffic accident rates also decreasing.

Mr Kheng said some individuals, however, have taken the opportunity to criticise the implementation of the

law as being a burden on the people, while Cambodia is facing the issue of COVID-19, and have said the implementation has been carried out too quickly.

However, he said: "We have already announced that 2020 is the year targeted for strict law enforcement on the Road Traffic Law. Before that, we have also done a lot of groundwork, especially in terms of education and dissemination of the Road Traffic Law. When it was time for us to do so, some people say it is too early, without education and dissemination."

Mr Kheng said the implementation to tighten up the law has been carried out to protect the lives and welfare of the people and not to burden them.

"Whoever criticises, we do not have to care as long as we are doing our patriotic duty to serve the people," he said. "If we backtrack, no one will listen or follow rules in the future, so we have to go ahead."

"Samdech Techo [Hun Sen] and I have agreed that we are not going to backtrack, because if we do, we do not know when we will have the opportunity to implement it [traffic law]. Moreover, if foreign tourists come to our country and see traffic chaos, they would say that the country has no order."

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Therefore, I would like to call on everyone to participate in strengthening the implementation of the traffic law," Mr Kheng added.

He also advised law enforcement officers to adhere to the code of ethics , carry out their work according to the law and only stop motorists who have broken traffic rules without resorting to setting up roadblocks to check for documents from road users.

"Our law enforcement officers must behave in a gentle, respectful and professional manner. They should not take this opportunity [strict law enforcement] to check or ask money from people, which is inappropriate," Mr Kheng said.

He said that for this month up to Friday, the number of accidents fell by 15 cases, with 80 injuries fewer than during the same period in April.

At the event, new Kep governor Som Piseth, expressed his commitment to enforce the Road Traffic Law, along with other laws, and to eliminate any inaction from officials which affect and harm the people.

"We will continue to strive to effectively implement the laws, regulations, and guidelines of the government that have been issued, especially the recommendations of Samdech Techo [Prime Minister Hun Sen] to enforce the law without exception," he said.

National Police spokesman Lieutenant General Chhay Kim Khoeun said in a report yesterday that from May 1, when the new traffic rules were implemented, up to Saturday, traffic police officers nationwide checked and fined a total of 43,530 motorists, including 31,755 motorcyclists, for all types of offences.

He said the most notable violations include riding motorcycles without crash helmets, not having licence plates, ignoring traffic signs, speeding, driving without seatbelts, overloading, driving under the influence of alcohol and using mobile phone while driving.

[Published today at 10:44](#)

## VIETNAM TRADE SURPLUS AT \$1.9B

HANOI, Jun 1, 2020, VN Express. Vietnam recorded a trade surplus of \$1.9 billion in the first five months with both exports and imports slightly declining amid the Covid-19 pandemic, [VN Express reported](#).



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Exports fell 1.7 percent year-on-year to \$99.4 billion, with the biggest markets being the U.S., China, the E.U., ASEAN, and Japan, according to the General Statistics Office (GSO). Two-thirds of the exports were by foreign companies.

Smartphones and parts led with \$18 billion, down 8.8 percent, followed by computers and parts, textile and garment and machinery and equipment as 17 items saw shipments exceed \$1 billion.

Imports fell 3.7 percent year-on-year to \$97.5 billion. China was the largest

supplier, accounting for nearly 30 percent, followed by South Korea, ASEAN, Japan, the U.S., and the E.U. Over 93 percent of imports were materials used as inputs for production.

"Covid-19 in Vietnam's major trade markets has negatively affected exports and imports," the GSO said.

The index of industrial production grew 1 percent year-on-year, compared to 9.5 percent in the same period last year, as both mining and manufacturing fell due to supply chains being disrupted by the pandemic.

Although drought and saltwater intrusion have caused some

difficulties for agriculture, rice exports saw a 17 percent increase to \$1.4 billion, with a 36 percent year-on-year growth in May.

Vietnam's trade surplus, for a fourth year in a row, reached a record \$9.9 billion last year.

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## DELHI BARBER SHOPS, SALONS TO REOPEN, BORDERS SEALED FOR 1 WEEK: OFFICIAL

NEW DELHI, Jun 1, 2020, India Today. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said barbershops and salons will be allowed to reopen in Delhi, but spas will remain closed, [India Today reported](#).



India

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Kejriwal while addressing a press conference also informed that borders will continue to remain sealed for one week in the wake of rising cases in the national capital. Only essential services will be exempted, added Kejriwal.

"We will take a decision again in one week to open borders after suggestions from citizens," he added.

"Have sought suggestions on opening of borders with Uttar Pradesh and Haryana."

Delhiites can also share suggestions

on opening borders with Delhi government on 8800007722 via WhatsApp or emailing on [delhicm.suggestions@gmail.com](mailto:delhicm.suggestions@gmail.com) before 5 pm on Friday.

The Delhi chief minister added that all shops in market areas will be permitted to open in the national capital.

He added that Delhi government will implement all relaxations permitted by Centre as part of Unlock 1.0.

The Centre recently shared detailed guidelines for phased re-opening. The lockdown in specific containment zones has been extended till June 30 as part of the new plan, but major relaxations have also been allowed in

view of the economic situation.

While many have welcomed the Centre's new plan to ease coronavirus restrictions, health experts have expressed concern as number of cases in India continue to spike sharply.

India has registered over 1.9 lakh Covid-19 positive cases and over 5,300 deaths. In Delhi, there are 10,893 active cases and over 470 people have died after testing positive for the deadly virus.

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11:01

## S. KOREA CUTS 2020 GROWTH ESTIMATE TO 0.1 PER CENT AMID PANDEMIC, SEES SHARP REBOUND IN 2021

SEOUL, Jun 1, 2020, Yonhap. South Korea on Monday sharply slashed its growth estimate for the year, joining many others in a gloomy outlook for Asia's fourth-largest economy hit by a virus-triggered slump in global trade, [Yonhap News reported](#).



### Korea

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The finance ministry revised down its growth outlook to 0.1 percent from the 2.4 percent forecast late last year.

Such a sharp cut follows the outbreak of the new coronavirus that has infected more than 6 million people globally. Some 11,500 South Koreans have been infected since the country reported its first confirmed case on Jan. 20.

The sharp cut in the ministry's growth projection is still higher than those by others.

The Bank of Korea (BOK) last week

projected the country's economy will contract 0.2 percent this year, the slowest since 1998. It marks a sharp downward revision from the 2.1 percent growth forecast in February.

The ministry expects a proposed increase in its fiscal spending to help somewhat offset the economic fallout from the virus outbreak.

It has already secured over 20 trillion won in two extra budgets and is pushing for a third supplementary budget that many believe will be larger than the first two combined.

The BOK said its latest projection did not take into account the third supplementary budget.

"There clearly exist downside risks, but

the government estimate is based on the consideration of various policy measures including extra budget," Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance Bang Ki-seon said. "It will do its utmost to make sure the country's economic growth will reach the 0.1 percent target this year."

The state-run Korea Development Institute (KDI) earlier noted that the first two extra budgets alone may expand the country's GDP by 0.5 percentage point this year.

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The government said it has front-loaded 35.3 percent of its annual spending in the first three months of the year, and that it plans to execute 62 percent of its annual budget before the end of June.

It has also pledged a 250 trillion-won (US\$203.7 billion) aid package for local businesses hit by the new coronavirus.

Partly on such stimulus efforts, the government said the South Korean economy is expected to rebound by 3.6 percent next year.

Such growth, however, will not represent a complete recovery from the slump caused by COVID-19, it noted.

"The government estimated the economy to rebound to 3.6 percent growth next year. This certainly is higher than the country's growth potential. However, it must be noted that it will rebound from a low base," a ministry official said.

The BOK forecast the local economy to expand 3.1 percent on-year in 2021 under its basic case scenario.

The KDI, which estimated the country's economy will grow 0.2 percent this year, has forecast a 3.9 percent on-year expansion in 2021.

*By Byun Duk-kun*

[Published today at 11:07](#)

## OVER 414,000 CONFIRMED CORONAVIRUS CASES IN RUSSIA ON MORNING JUNE 1

**MOSCOW, Jun 1, 2020, Pan Pacific Agency.** Coronavirus infections in Russia cross 414,000 cases, officials said. 162 new deaths in a past day, according to the Russian coronavirus crisis response centre message. So, deaths toll climbs to 4855, govt claims.



Russia

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Active coronavirus cases in Russia now cross 234,000, official statistics shows today.

More detailed day-by-day statistics and interactive

visualizing you can find at the agency's virus tracker [covid19.panpacificagency.com](https://covid19.panpacificagency.com).

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## COURT APPEARANCE FOR THE FORMER MINNESOTA OFFICER CHARGED FOR GEORGE FLOYD MURDER IS MOVED TO JUNE 8

MINNEAPOLIS, Jun 1, 2020, CNN. The first court appearance for Derek Chauvin, the former Minnesota police officer charged in death of George Floyd, has been moved to June 8, according to court records, [CNN reported](#).



America

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He was originally scheduled to appear in court for a hearing on Monday. The court records indicate no specific reasoning for why the date was reset.

National Guard members have been activated in 15 states and Washington, DC.

[Published today at 11:25](#)

Chauvin remains in custody. He was charged Friday with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter -- two felonies where intent is a key element.

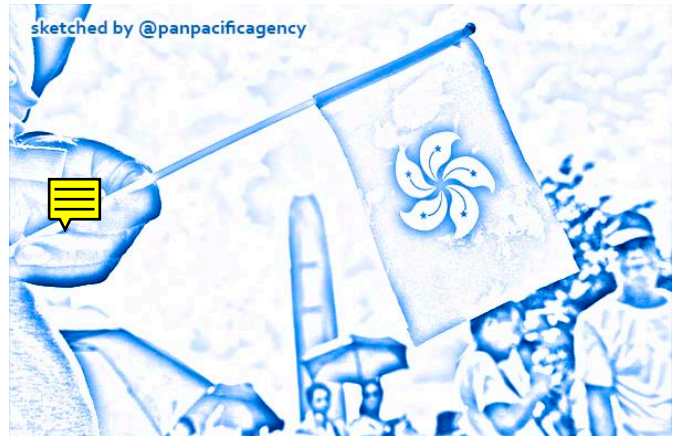
Protests erupt for a sixth day across the US over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At least 40 cities have imposed curfews and

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## [ANALYTICS] THE END OF HONG KONG AUTONOMY

After a year of protests and upheavals, Beijing is poised to put an end to Hong Kong's autonomous status. The National People's Congress (NPC) has approved a decision on new 'Mechanisms for the Preservation of National Security' in the Special Administrative Region. [Jeppe Mulich specially for the East Asia Forum](#). The



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The decision includes articles authorising national security organs of the central government to establish branches in Hong Kong (most likely the Ministry of State Security) and an article authorising the NPC Standing Committee (NPCSC) to draft a new national security law to be implemented in the city. The specifics of this law are still vague, but they will touch on four areas — secession, subversion of state power, terrorist activities and 'activities by foreign and overseas forces that interfere in the affairs' of Hong Kong.

Two things are clear: the NPC decision

is almost certainly unconstitutional with regards to Hong Kong law and neither Beijing nor the pro-Beijing political establishment in Hong Kong care much about its legality.

In a rhetorical manoeuvre similar to the frequent repetition of the Chinese Communist Party's 'core socialist values', both Beijing and the Hong Kong government have doubled down on invoking One Country, Two Systems (1C2S). The decision to impose national security law is in fact an 'improvement' on 1C2S — a way to 'ensure the enduring success' of the framework, according to official statements.

Yet if 1C2S means anything, it is the separation of the political systems of

Hong Kong and the mainland, guaranteeing judicial independence and legislative autonomy in the Special Administrative Region — the exact autonomy which the current decision is set to undermine. While 1C2S is certain to remain a favoured phrase of the establishment, the principle itself — and the rights and freedoms it was meant to guarantee — seem entirely dead, spelling the end of an era for Hong Kong.

What makes the NPC decision unconstitutional? As it currently stands, the Basic Law —

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Hong Kong's constitutional document — clearly sets out that the local legislature has the responsibility to 'enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion...' This is covered in Article 23.

Beijing is currently proposing to implement national security law in Hong Kong, drafted by the NPCSC, via Article 18. Article 18 makes clear that national (meaning PRC) laws shall not be applied in Hong Kong, with the exception of a set of laws listed in Annex III. These laws 'shall be confined to those relating to defense and foreign affairs as well as other matters outside the limits of the autonomy of the Region...'

The implementation of the laws added to Annex III can take place either via promulgation — meaning that the Hong Kong Chief Executive issues a legal notice and enacts the law — or via legislation, meaning that the laws have to go through the Legislative Council (LegCo) and be made into legislation appropriate to Hong Kong's existing legal system.

By imposing national security law in Hong Kong via Annex III, Beijing is planning to go the promulgation route and implement the law very quickly, without consulting LegCo or any other local institution. This would most certainly go against established practice. But promulgation would not necessarily be against Hong Kong constitutional law.

What does appear unconstitutional is using Article 18, rather than Article 23, to implement national security law. The areas that the proposed law touch on are explicitly covered under Article 23. These are two different articles for a reason — subversion and secession do not equate to foreign and defence affairs, as currently defined in the Basic Law.

Given that Annex III only applies to laws that fall outside the limits of Hong Kong autonomy, and that this emphatically does not include issues of national security, Beijing's move is on its face unconstitutional. It seeks to bypass existing legislative channels and reinterpret the very meaning of autonomy.

The power of final interpretation of the Basic Law lies with the NPCSC, so what is at present an unconstitutional move could swiftly be turned into legal fact by the Beijing body's

reinterpretation (or more accurately rewriting) of Articles 18 and 23. Such a move would be possible given the powers granted to the NPC, but it would also be the final nail in the coffin of Hong Kong's legislative autonomy, going against the promises made in the Sino-British Joint Declaration more than three decades ago.

Beyond the issues of constitutionality lie more immediate concerns over the consequences of the national security law. New draconian laws on secession, subversion and the interference of foreign entities in Hong Kong would likely criminalise a host of activities that are currently common practice, and which are in fact protected as rights by the Basic Law (Article 27). Freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of association are sure to be heavily curtailed. Former Hong Kong chief executive C Y Leung said as much over the weekend, hinting in an interview that vigils commemorating the Tiananmen Square Massacre are likely to be outlawed in Hong Kong going forward.

Nobody knows exactly what will come next, but one thing seems certain. While the end of Hong Kong's autonomy is upon us, the city is not ready to go silently into the night. Large-scale protests erupted over the weekend, after months of quiet during the pandemic, and more are sure to follow over the coming weeks.

*Dr Jeppe Mulich is a teaching associate of global history at the Faculty of History, The University of Cambridge.*

[Published today at 11:29](#)

## PAKISTANI GOVT SLASHES PETROL PRICE TO RS74.5 PER LITRE FROM JUNE 1

ISLAMABAD, Jun 1, 2020, Pakistan Today. In order to provide further relief to the consumers, the government reduced further the prices of petrol by Rs7.06 per litre, Finance Ministry said on Sunday (May 31), [Pakistan Today reported](#).



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The petrol prices have been reduced from Rs81.58 per liter to Rs74.52 per liter, said a press statement issued by the ministry here, adding that the new prices would be applicable from June 1, 2020.

Likewise, the prices of Kerosene Oil have been reduced from Rs47.44 per liter to Rs35.56 per liter whereas the prices of Light Diesel Oil were reduced from Rs47.51 per liter to Rs38.14 per liter.

However, the prices of High-Speed Diesel witnessed a nominal increase of Rs0.05 as it went up from Rs80.10

per liter to Rs80.15 per liter.

Despite the global trend of increasing prices of petroleum products, the government has decided to extend further relief in petroleum prices to the public, the statement added.

Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted that Pakistan has the cheapest fuel cost compared to other states in South Asia. After the federal government made another cut in petroleum prices, PM Imran Khan said in its Twitter message that the Centre has further reduced petrol, light diesel and kerosene oil prices.

He said, "Now we have the cheapest fuel cost compared to other states in South Asia. India is almost exactly

double. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & Nepal are all 50 to 75 percent more expensive than us."

Yesterday, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) had recommended a reduction in petrol price by Rs7.06/litre, kerosene Rs11.88/litre and light diesel oil (LDO) price by Rs9.37/litre for June.

The regulatory body had, however, suggested that the price of diesel should remain unchanged.

For diesel, OGRA had recommended a

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Rs0.05/litre increase to Rs80.15/litre.

It is worth mentioning that the government is charging 17% general sales tax (GST) on all petroleum products. Apart from it, the government is also collecting petroleum levy (PL) on these products, which is directly taken from consumers.

[Published today at 11:36](#)

## MOST CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS REMAIN CLOSED DESPITE EASED RESTRICTIONS IN MALAYSIA

**KUALA LUMPUR, Jun 1, 2020, Malay Mail.** Over 4,000 construction projects have remained shut despite being among the earliest sectors to reopen under the conditional movement control order (CMC), Senior Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob revealed today, [Malay Mail reported](#).



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The large number of developers opting to remain shut underscores the weak confidence among developers, as concern of mounting cost and supply disruptions render most to remain cautious and halt operations until the post-Covid-19 recovery begins.

Ismail said from up to 6,000 construction sites that were inspected by the Construction Industry Development Board, some 900 were found to comply with the Ministry of Health's standard operating procedure while 224 were found to have not.

The rest remained closed nearly a month since the government partially lifted restrictions.

"The CIDB conducted inspections on 6,000 construction sites," he said in the council's daily media brief on Malaysia's Covid-19 situation.

He said that 934 sites were found compliant while 224 were not. He added that the remaining 4,000-over sites were found to be "closed".

The construction sector is one of the largest contributors to GDP growth and was among the industries exempted from the movement control order.

But the discovery of a new infection

cluster among the sector's predominantly migrant workforce just last week have caused concerns for developers.

At the time, many already held views that resuming constructions could expose its workers to the disease, possibly increasing healthcare costs when most developers were already scratching their heads over losses incurred by project delays.

Ismail said today the large number of builders remaining shut could suggest many were not able to comply or found the health SOPs set

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by public health authorities too strict.

“They can open and resume work, but the SOP is that strict, which is why developers have not resumed construction,” Ismail said.

[Published today at 11:44](#)

## [ANALYTICS] HOW TO STAY SAFE INDOORS POST-LOCKDOWN

Staying home and maintaining social distancing have been the pivotal measures to control Covid-19 transmission across communities since the pandemic hit the world. Kohinur Khyum Tithila [specially for the Dhaka Tribune](#)



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As the general holiday is not going to expand anymore in Bangladesh, workplace and large commercial places have to come up with new strategies to prevent transmission, because new study shows people are more likely to get infected by Covid-19 in closed environments than in open-air environments.

A study conducted by scholars from Japan in April found that the primary transmission of Covid-19 was 18.7 times greater in a closed environment compared to an open-air environment.

The study titled -- Closed environments facilitate secondary transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 -- concludes: "It is plausible that closed environments contribute to secondary transmission of Covid-19 and promote superspreading events.

"Our findings are also consistent with the declining incidence of Covid-19 cases in China, as gathering in closed environments were prohibited in the wake of the rapid spread of the disease."

Risk of infection in a closed environment is higher as those are poorly ventilated; however, it can be reduced if people change their way of interaction, and follow health guidelines specially wearing masks

when indoors.

Additionally, authorities should consider a little renovation in certain areas of the workplaces and enforce mandatory health guidelines for the employees.

## Preparing the post-lockdown workstations

The government of Bangladesh will probably call off the general holiday permanently and

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both public and private offices have to operate regularly on weekdays.

Experts fear that people might get infected in workspaces and factories, if they do not strictly follow the health guidelines like wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping distance between two people even when they are indoors.

Maintaining social distance indoors is way different from maintaining social distance outdoors and in public places. The offices need to operate very differently than they did before the general holiday.

Virologist Dr Nazrul Islam of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) told Dhaka Tribune since the government has decided to call off the general holiday, people need to watch out for themselves.

All employers should ensure to keep a minimum of three feet distance from each other. Moreover, wearing masks indoors should be made mandatory for every single person in a workplace, he added.

Nobody should sit facing each other because droplets generated during speech can transmit the virus from an infected person to a healthy person.

"Respiratory viruses can be transmitted via droplets generated by sneezing or coughing. However, normal speaking could also produce droplets and infect a person in close proximity," said Dr Nazrul.

Former International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) research fellow Dr Shahriar Rozen, currently working as a senior policy lead for Alberta Ministry of Health, Canada, said that companies and organizations should continue with the work from home policy until the transmission rate falls.

"Now, we know that working from home is a feasible option for those who can," he said, adding some professionals can work from home without disrupting the daily work flow.

## Redesigning the work environment at garment factories

Garments factories need to be extra

careful because numbers of garment workers work in closed environments and a significant number of people in Dhaka city work as garment workers.

Infectious disease specialist Farhad Uddin Hasan Chowdhury Maruf of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) suggested that garment factories could run in three shifts - morning, evening, and night - to avoid crowding.

He said that the garment factory authorities can divide the employees in different groups in each shift and select a different entry time for each group.

"If one group joins work at 7am, another group can join work at 7:15am. Factories and roads will remain less crowded in this way," he said.

He added that it is the responsibility of the garment factory owners to ensure masks for the employees and provide hand sanitizers and soaps in the factories.

Covid-proofing restaurants is difficult, order food at home instead

While restaurants are resuming their regular services, people should avoid eating out at their favorite restaurants as it would require them to take their mask off inside the restaurant.

Dr Nazrul strongly recommends not to go to restaurants until the transmission rate slows down because people cannot eat with their masks on.

"I do not see any urgency to open restaurants and I do not understand why people need to eat out during a pandemic," he said in vexation.

If people want to enjoy restaurant food or support restaurant business during this pandemic, they should order foods instead, he added.

If people need to go to restaurants anyway, the least they could do is not sit across or too close to another person while eating out.

Restaurant staff, particularly those who wait tables, need to strictly follow the health guidelines like wearing a mask properly and sanitizing hands as much as they can.

Bangladesh is showing no sign of flattening the curve as the number of

Covid-19 positive cases rise with each passing day.

On Sunday, Bangladesh witnessed the record highest coronavirus deaths in a single day, as 40 more people died and the total number of deaths rose to 650. The total number of cases in Bangladesh reached 47,153 on the same day.

[Published today at 11:48](#)

## INDONESIA'S PRESIDENT JOKOWI UNDERScores EMINENCE OF PANCASILA VALUES IN TACKLING COVID-19

JAKARTA, Jun 1, 2020, ANTARA. Pancasila State ideology serves as a guiding beacon to enliven the spirit of Indonesians' nationhood, mutual care and cooperation, and brotherhood as they persist ceaselessly in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) stated, [ANTARA reported](#).



### Indonesia

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Speaking during a virtual event to commemorate the birth of Pancasila at the Bogor Presidential Palace on Monday, President Jokowi admitted to the novel coronavirus pandemic testing the endurance of Indonesians in their collective struggle.

The coronavirus pandemic has also tested the endurance of the nation's sacrifice, discipline, obedience, and mental composure in preparing apposite and swift policies to respond to challenges presented during this difficult time, he emphasized.

"In facing this test, Pancasila remains a guiding beacon to encourage us all to continue to forge ahead, stand united, adopt a caring and sharing approach, and strengthen our nationhood," the president remarked at the virtual event in which the participants comprised Vice President Ma'ruf Amin and cabinet members.

The values of Pancasila have become ingrained in the life of the entire nation to ease its common burden and rouse the fighting spirit and endurance in dealing with all difficulties and challenges, he affirmed.

Apart from Vice President Amin, others taking part in the commemorative event were Head of

the Agency for Pancasila Ideology Education's (BPIP's) Advisory Council Megawati Soekarnoputri, House of Representatives' Speaker Puan Maharani, and cabinet members.

The coronavirus disease, which initially struck the Chinese city of Wuhan at the end of 2019, has since then spread to at least 202 countries and territories, including Indonesia, with a massive rise in death toll.

The Indonesian government officially announced the country's first confirmed cases on

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March 2 this year. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has weakened the purchasing power of scores of Indonesian families, particularly those who lost their jobs.

In dealing with this difficult situation, President Jokowi has repeatedly highlighted the importance of fostering the spirit of "gotong royong", or mutual cooperation, arguing that the government cannot work alone to fight the spread of coronavirus infections.

The central and regional governments nationwide have been striving persistently to flatten the coronavirus curve by imposing healthcare protocols and social restrictions.

To break the chain of transmission, large-scale social restrictions have been applied in several other cities, including Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi.

The central government also banned homebound travel, locally known as "mudik," during the fasting month of Ramadhan and the Idul Fitri holiday season.

[Published today at 11:53](#)

## SINGAPORE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH S. KOREA, AUSTRALIA, TO ESTABLISH 'GREEN LANES' FOR TRAVEL

**SINGAPORE, Jun 1, 2020, The Straits Times.** Talks are underway with South Korea and Australia to establish "green lanes" for travel during the Covid-19 environment, said Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing on Saturday (May 30), [The Straits Times reported](#).



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the Republic.

Such arrangements allow for the restoration of connectivity and facilitation of short-term essential business and official travel between countries, subject to safeguards against the coronavirus.

Speaking at a virtual press conference on Saturday, Mr Chan said that there were several considerations that go

Singapore is also having such discussions with New Zealand and Malaysia, while China on Friday (May 29) became the first country to establish a green lane with

into deciding which countries to enter into such agreements with.

"Reciprocal green lane agreements means there must be mutual assurance of each other's test protocol and standards," he said.

He explained that a situation where there is no such trust and "everybody does their own thing", with each country insisting on testing travellers for the virus as well as giving them a 14 day quarantine, would be essentially unworkable.

This is because aside from having to undergo two tests, travellers would have to be quarantined for almost an entire month in order to travel from one place to another.

So for a green lane arrangement to work,

both countries would have to first have confidence in each other's safeguards and be able to coordinate their quarantine orders so that travellers might only need to be tested or quarantined once.

Aside from discussing necessary protocols, there is also a need to look at the health situation in each country to see when these protocols can safely be deployed.

Mr Chan added that Singapore is in simultaneous

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discussions with as many countries as possible on forming green lanes, and that such discussions are taking place at a bilateral level, not a multilateral one.

"We are happy that we have been able to swiftly work on arrangements with China, and we hope to make progress with the rest of the countries," he said.

Mr Chan was also asked how the United States' decision to end its preferential treatment of Hong Kong would affect Singapore.

He said: "We don't yet have all the details about what the US intends to do... so I won't be able to comment on that. We're closely monitoring the situation and when we have more details from the US side, then we'll be able to make an assessment. We wish Hong Kong well and we hope that they can continue to do well as one of the business hubs in East Asia."

[Published today at 11:58](#)



## PAPUA NEW GUINEA OPPOSITION LEADER RULED SUSPENDED AS CASE AGAINST PM DISMISSED

PORT MORESBY, Jun 1, 2020, RNZ. Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court has dismissed a case filed by Belden Namah questioning the constitutionality of James Marape's election as prime minister last year and says Mr Namah is still suspended as an MP, [Radio New Zealand reported](#).



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The National newspaper reported the court had ruled Mr Namah was "suspended from duty" when he was referred to the Leadership Tribunal in October 2017 for misconduct in office.

The following year the tribunal found him guilty of misconduct in office for storming a courtroom in 2012 where then chief justice Sir Salamo Injia was presiding over matters.

In the company of police officers and soldiers, Mr Namah interrupted the court session and demanded the immediate resignation of the Chief

Justice

The tribunal recommended he be dismissed from office.

However Mr Namah was granted a stay order by the National Court, continued to serve as Vanimo-Green MP and was last year elected Opposition Leader.

He filed the case against Mr Marape on 30 March.

The five-man Supreme Court bench ruled the stay order on the Leadership Tribunal did not stop Mr Namah's suspension.

[Published today at 12:05](#)

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## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE REOPENS TRADING FLOOR

**MANILA, Jun 1, 2020, The Manila Times.** The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc. (PSE) is set to reopen its trading floor today (Monday), following the transition of Metro Manila from modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) to general community quarantine, [The Manila Times reported.](#)



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“While our floorless or offsite trading from March 19 to May 29 has proven to be efficient and seamless, we decided to reopen and resume trading on the floor to convey a strong message to the investing public that things are back to ‘normal’ in the capital markets,” PSE President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon Monzon said in a statement.

Monzon added he hopes that the optics of reopening the trading floor would help restore the public's confidence needed in the recovery of the economy.

The floor serves as the trading hub of more than 60 percent of stock brokerage firms and has been closed since the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in mid-March.

“The brokers who were vacated from the trading floor upon the imposition of ECQ in Metro Manila by IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases) had to look for alternative sites where they could transfer their trading operations. This caused them to incur additional expenses for rental, employee board and lodging and connectivity costs. With the reopening of the trading floor, the brokers would finally be spared from these incremental and substantial expenses,” Monzon

explained.

The PSE assured it would strictly observe health and safety guidelines in the workplace prescribed by the IATF, and the Departments of Health, and Labor and Employment.

Aside from providing hand sanitizers and diligently disinfecting, the PSE would also do regular temperature checks on traders prior to their entry and midway through the trading session.

Traders would also be required to submit daily health declarations before entering.

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Moreover, only one trader per booth would be allowed to ensure compliance with social distancing protocols.

All those in the trading floor would also be required to wear masks all the time and no congregation in any area within the floor will be allowed.

“The above measures may be inconvenient and troublesome, but we trust the traders will understand and appreciate that all these are being done to safeguard their health and well-being,” Monzon said.

Meanwhile, the PSE would still follow shortened trading hours from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. until further notice.

“Trading hours may remain abbreviated but the PSE will do what it can as a stock market operator to support initiatives towards the country’s economic recovery,” Monzon assured.

[Published today at 12:09](#)

## TIES WITH CHINA NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT: AUSTRALIAN STATE PREMIER

SYDNEY, Jun 1, 2020, Xinhua. Premier of Australian State of Victoria Daniel Andrews maintained his strong commitment to a healthy ongoing relationship with China, stating that it has never been more important than the moment, Xinhua reported.



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Speaking to Channel Seven News on Monday, Andrews pointed out that Victoria has dozens of important agreements with China, responsible for keeping thousands of Australians in jobs.

"We take the view you want more relationships, not less. You want a good relationship, not a bad one with your biggest customer. This is all about jobs," Andrews said.

In 2018, Victoria became the first Australian state to throw its support behind the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, signing a

Memorandum of Understanding, a move which Andrews affirmed in 2019 with the signing of another agreement.

According to Andrews, during his time as the state leader, the amount of locally made and grown products being sold from Victoria to China has increased by 62 percent.

"That sort of export, that sort of trade, that sort of investment has never been more important as we push through (COVID-19) and try to repair so much of the damage that we had no choice but to do in order to protect public health," Andrews said.

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## [ANALYTICS] SECOND WAVE OR JUST RIPPLES - WHAT NEXT FOR THE PANDEMIC?

Predicting disease outbreaks has been compared by more than one weary scientist over the years to weather forecasting. You don't know exactly how big the storm will be or when it will hit, but you know it's coming. Sherryn Groch specially for The Sydney Morning Herald.



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In late 2019, the hurricane came to shore: a new kind of coronavirus never before seen in humans quickly morphed into the worst pandemic in a century. Now it seems the skies are clearing, cases are easing and the world is waking up from lockdown. It's time, as the Prime Minister says, for Australia to come out from under the doona.

Yet experts warn the storm is far from over.

Beyond Australia's borders, the global case count is still accelerating - topping 6 million by June. While

science is moving at its own record speed, there is still no vaccine or known treatment for COVID-19.

And fears are growing that countries inching out of coronavirus hibernation to rescue their economies could trigger a dreaded second wave of infections, such as the resurgence during the 1918 Spanish flu.

Here at home, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly is duly on his guard but he says our success so far in cutting off outbreaks quickly means we might see "ripples rather than a tsunami", particularly with borders still closed for "the foreseeable future".

Health Minister Greg Hunt has warned

the biggest threat now, as states roll back restrictions, is complacency - piling into the pub too early and forgetting the virus is still with us. "We remain an island sanctuary ... but the world is not out of the woods yet," he says.

So if things aren't quite back to normal yet, how long is the pandemic expected to go on? And how likely is a second wave?

## How

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## prepared is Australia for a second wave?

Right now, in the eye of the COVID-19 storm, Australia's coronavirus wards are quiet. One of them, a pop-up hospital built in just 37 days on a cricket pitch in Canberra, may even be quietly dismantled without ever seeing a patient before the year is out.

The healthcare disaster mapped out in early epidemiological models three months ago has not come to pass in Australia – at least not yet. Professor James McCaw, among the experts at the Doherty Institute in Melbourne working on such models for government, says that while Australia has so far avoided the devastating crush of COVID-19 cases seen in hospitals in other countries, he winces when he hears an Australian speak of the pandemic in the past tense. “We are still at the very start of this,” he says.

The danger is perhaps just harder to see here. It has become as invisible like the virus itself, epidemiologist Dr Craig Dalton says, because state and federal leaders acted on those models and their worst-case scenarios; under tough restrictions imposed on public gatherings and socialising, climbing caseloads plummeted before they could overwhelm hospitals. Just weeks earlier that curve had looked very different, with cases doubling every three to four days.

“People can't see what [was avoided]; they would have been even more fatigued by shutdowns if they happened earlier,” Dalton says. “But I think probably if we left it even a week later, it could have been much, much worse – disastrous.”

The measures have bought Australia time. Stocks of life-saving ventilator machines have tripled. Extra staff are being trained in intensive care. Testing has been ramped up to one of the highest rates in the world. And, alongside other early leaders in the COVID-19 fight such as South Korea and Taiwan, Australia now has an army of disease detectives finding and isolating cases.

Even large clusters, such as those spawned by the Ruby Princess cruise ship debacle in Sydney and the Cedar Meats outbreak in Victoria, have been stopped before they could spiral out of

control, McCaw says. “We think we're finding most cases,” agrees Professor Bill Rawlinson, who heads NSW's biggest COVID-19 testing lab in Sydney.

Of course, while authorities feel confident they are on top of the virus, that doesn't mean it has gone away. In fact, Australia's low infection rates could make it an unwitting victim of its own success, Kelly says, with a population less exposed, and therefore more susceptible, to the pathogen if a second wave takes hold. “But I'm more hopeful now that won't happen.”

## How is the pandemic expected to unfold?

In the US, top infectious disease expert Dr Michael Osterholm often says that a virus has its own “gravity” or momentum. If left to its own devices, it would burn through cities and towns until enough of the world's population had recovered with virus-fighting antibodies in their blood to ward off another infection. This is known as “herd immunity” and the magic number is about 60 per cent – generally more than half of a population needs to be exposed to a pathogen before transmission slows.

No country is there yet. Even those now overrun with the virus, such as the US, have reached only about 20 per cent. That means every nation is still about as vulnerable as the other to a potential second wave, Kelly and McCaw say. Questions also remain about just how protected COVID-19 survivors are from reinfection.

During the great plagues of the past, people had little choice but to let their immunity to disease build naturally. Now we have modern medicine and vaccines to speed things up – but even the most optimistic estimates put a COVID-19 vaccine discovery and rollout at between 12 and 18 months away.

In analysis published by the Centre for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, Osterholm and other experts have predicted the pandemic will last between 18 months and two years. (“About the same timeline as a vaccine,” Dalton expects.) But the virus itself is likely to hang around even longer – to be beaten back over time through vaccinations or even

perhaps to persist as a seasonal illness.

“I don't see this thing going extinct any time soon,” McCaw says.

“Viral gravity” also means that, like the ocean, outbreaks can play out in waves – an initial surge of cases might peter out, only to crash back down in another peak or torrent, and sometimes a third or a fourth, whenever the virus finds a fresh foothold.

The last time the world faced a pandemic of this scale, it was reaching the end of World War I. But it was the second wave of that strange 1918 influenza, known as Spanish flu, arriving months later that claimed the most lives. For Australia, the third wave in January 1919 (about a year into the pandemic) proved the most deadly.

During the influenza pandemics since, experts point out that all of them saw a resurgence about six months later, regardless of the season. Many, such as the 1957 flu pandemic and most recently swine flu in 2009, were even bigger than the first wave.

This is our worst-case scenario for COVID-19.

“If we relax restrictions too much, we could get a huge second wave,” McCaw says. Still, he remains hopeful for the “slower burn” scenario that Kelly is banking on, in which outbreaks flare up in smaller and smaller numbers and are put out by contact tracers.

“Those cases we've just seen with the [infected] sailors in WA, they're in quarantine now, but that could be a little ripple,” Kelly says.

This virus is more than 10 times deadlier than seasonal flu so outbreaks, when they happen, won't be nothing, experts say. All of us will need to stay on our guard in a “COVID-safe world” for some time yet – working from home more often, avoiding crowds, attempting elbow bumps instead of handshakes.

“For us, eternal vigilance may be the price of survival – as my surgery tutor used to tell me,” Kelly says. “At least until we get a vaccine. There's still a lot of hurdles for a vaccine – it's not a sprint, but it's not a marathon either. I don't think it will take three or four years. If we get one soon, then all





bets are off; it's a totally different world we'll be living in."

But if humanity doesn't get its shot of immunity before the pandemic burns out, Osterholm's research also envisions a third scenario – of more pronounced flare-ups or "mini-waves" with their own peaks and valleys, that will probably require countries to restore social restrictions, at least here and there.

## Are we already seeing the start of a second wave?

Early success stories such as Singapore, Germany, Japan, South Korea and even Wuhan, where the virus first emerged, have faced fresh clusters after the public health rules were relaxed and places such as bars and cafes reopened. Pakistan is now contemplating reinstating its own lockdown after cases doubled in the three weeks since it was lifted.

But the World Health Organisation warns we are still in the first wave of the pandemic – we are yet to see a lull world-wide. If a second surge does come, experts expect it to arrive around the end of the year, probably over the Australian summer and as winter returns to the other side of the world.

Still the bug can flare up again at any time after it has receded, the WHO stresses, so we shouldn't count on months to prepare for a second major wave either.

McCaw notes that because most of Australia's COVID-19 cases have been imported from overseas rather than caught locally, it could be argued our first wave hasn't really even taken hold yet. Dalton agrees Australia has largely stopped the first wave in its tracks – keeping control after reopening will be the challenge ahead.

Kelly says so far so good: "We're into second week of opening up of things so it's still a little early for us to tell but there hasn't been any major blips yet."

## How worried should we be about a second

## wave?

Past influenza pandemics give us cause to be on our guard. During the 1918 Spanish flu, San Francisco acted fast, shutting down while other US cities were overrun. But when cases receded, it opened up – people even celebrated in the streets, tossing their masks in the air. A second wave hit but San Francisco resisted restoring the restrictions that had worked before, put off by a newly formed Anti-Mask League. By the end of the pandemic, for all its early progress, it ranked among the worst-hit cities in America.

Likewise, when the third global wave reached Australia, going on to infect nearly a third of us, NSW lifted its shutdowns too early and then delayed reinstating them for weeks, even as cases climbed, allowing the virus to take hold.

Resurgence is common in the pandemic records, but Kelly says the fear of a larger second wave is still largely tied to 1918 and how that virus travelled around the world. Some experts argue the strain even mutated between its first and second wave to become more infectious, before eventually evolving into a milder seasonal flu. This virus, the first coronavirus on record to break out into a pandemic, is more stable than the wild genetic code of influenza, and it behaves differently.

At first, McCaw says, disease modellers around the world looked to the other two dangerous coronaviruses found in humans – SARS and MERS. But while both strains are more lethal, they are also less infectious and so never spread beyond a few dozen countries. Critically, Kelly notes, they are not known to spread undetected, without symptoms, in the way the new coronavirus (and sometimes flu) can. So most experts have instead retrofitted the behaviour of the new virus into existing pandemic flu models.

"That [initial] modelling we did in Australia was like the long-term climate change outlook," McCaw says. "Now, we're pivoting to a daily weather forecast [using] Australia data to look at local outbreaks."

While some have questioned the scale of the disaster first predicted for Australia, McCaw says even the local data now suggests there would have

been a catastrophic outbreak similar to that seen overseas if controls weren't brought in.

"This is the same virus as everywhere else. We've seen what it can do."

## How do we know it's safe to reopen?

In the vast jungle of data now growing around COVID-19, Kelly is watching one number in particular – the reproduction rate, which measures how many people on average each patient will infect. If we can keep it below one in Australia (as it is now), the virus will eventually die out.

Then there is who is getting infected and why. Fifty new cases arriving from overseas and going into mandatory hotel quarantine is not as big a concern for Kelly and his team as 50 cases scattered across Australia without a clear source. "That's when people get nervous. That means it's circulating in the community somewhere," Kelly says.

At the Grattan Institute, Stephen Duckett is working on modelling to try to measure tipping points – when a cluster could break through containment efforts. Both Duckett and Dalton are especially concerned about large workplaces as more of us return to them. Kelly agrees good ventilation as well as hand hygiene will need to come more to the fore.

Work rosters could also be staggered, Duckett suggests, with cohorts of staff cycling through the office on alternate weeks and deep cleans in between. "That way if some of them need to [self-isolate], they're already home for the next fortnight before their turn to go back in."

Public transport may be all that stands between us and the traffic jams of our nightmares, but in the era of COVID-19 how do we avoid the peak-hour sardine crush without handicapping the whole network? Some experts suggest we follow the lead of Europe and the US and make masks mandatory on board, but Kelly says solutions around ventilation, passenger limits and staggered timetables would be more effective. Australia is not officially advising people to wear masks in close quarters as they are often improperly worn and can lend a false sense of





security. But on May 29, after the National Cabinet again rejected the option of recommending masks on public transport, Chief Medical Officer Brendan Murphy said it was still reasonable for people to choose to wear them on board.

Dalton – whose early work on low-cost, commonsense interventions to stop the spread of COVID-19 earned him a shout-out from the White House and its adviser Dr Anthony Fauci in March – is now working on a paper examining reopening. He says relaxing the rules in relatively low-risk settings such as cafes with customer limits or outdoor dining is one thing. “But places like nightclubs, aged care, religious institutions, that’s where we’ve seen things go wrong [overseas].”

Duckett adds a few more to the list: “Football matches, music festivals, church choirs. They can all be ‘superspreader’ events.”

## **Will shutdowns come back if cases climb again?**

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has so far batted away the idea of a return to lockdown as the pandemic unfolds (“It’s like the emu and the kangaroo – they go forwards, not backwards”) and Hunt has also said it is unlikely states will bring back restrictions. Instead, “ring fences” of containment can be rapidly set up around an outbreak, putting a local area into its own temporary lockdown, as was done to contain a large cluster in hospitals in Tasmania’s north-west in April.

But some experts say Australia needs a well-spaced and specific framework in which to measure the impact of reopenings, similar to Germany’s “emergency brake” that considers restoring restrictions if cases reach more than 50 per 100,000 people over seven days.

Bringing back wider lockdowns in Australia can’t be taken off the table, Kelly says, but it’s not part of the plan – which is to mostly reopen Australia by July. “But we’re going slow so we don’t have to say in a month, ‘Whoops, it’s out of control,’” Kelly says. “[So] we don’t have to take out the sledgehammer again.”

While states are now easing restrictions at different paces, “none are going dangerously fast”, he says. Some have already enjoyed consecutive days without recording a new case.

Australia did not opt to try for total elimination of the virus as New Zealand famously did with its own tougher lockdown across the ditch, but Kelly says it’s possible it could be wiped out if our national borders stay up (to all, perhaps, but our Kiwi neighbours under a mooted Trans-Tasman bubble of safe travel). “Though I’m still not using the E-word [elimination] yet,” he says.

Hunt has said hard borders will remain an important part of the nation’s COVID defence going forward and Kelly adds: “Can’t imagine any time into the future we’ll be getting back to business as usual there”.

But at some point, he says, Australia will have to open back up to the world.

And the longer our lives are disrupted by isolation and economic upheaval, the more likely another wave of health problems beyond just COVID-19 will build, including suicide.

On the economic side of things, at least, analysis by MIT researchers suggests that social restrictions could actually help countries recover in the long term. US cities that locked down early and for longer periods during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic had fewer deaths and healthier economies when it was over, as local industries were able to bounce back faster.

McCaw says our state and federal leaders listened to the experts in first imposing shutdowns and it probably saved thousands of lives.

“If it’s getting away from us, we’ve proven once we can lock down – I think we can do it again,” he says. “If it’s between locking down again or having a runaway outbreak, I know what I’d pick.”

[Published today at 12:57](#)

## GOVT COULD BOOST HOME CONSTRUCTIONS AND RENOVATIONS IN AUSTRALIA'S RECOVERY PLAN

MELBOURNE, Jun 1, 2020, 9News. New home construction and major renovation projects could be boosted through cash grants under a federal government coronavirus recovery plan, [9News reported](#).



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The ailing entertainment sector is also likely to receive stimulus, with the focus shifting from economy-wide packages to targeted assistance.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison confirmed the government was considering giving householders cash grants for home renovations.

"We are more interested in the larger projects and new home builds and things like that," he told 2GB on Monday.

"We are looking at a bit of drop off in

that current home building that's going on. That's not good for tradies and not good for jobs."

He said it would be important any construction industry measures helped local tradies rather than major contractors.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said an announcement would be made soon, with the government conscious of long supply chains associated with building.

"It's not just the sparky and the plumber and the carpenter on the building site, it's also the timber mill," he told reporters in Melbourne.

"It's also the appliance manufacturer

for the new kitchen. It's also those who help with the materials that go into the bathroom."

Labor frontbencher Bill Shorten is wary of the details.

"If you offer a free grant for the price of say \$5000 dollars, then normally what happens is the cost of whatever you're providing the grant for goes up by \$5000," he told Sky News.

Mr Morrison said he had been in talks with key entertainment sector figures over the

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weekend.

"One of the challenges is going to be that the entertainment sector will find it difficult to get capital moving again because they've had to draw down on it so significantly," he said.

The government has copped heavy criticism from Labor for not doing more to help the arts sector through the crisis.

The opposition has been calling for a specific package with many missing out on JobKeeper wage subsidies.

But the treasurer said many arts workers were benefiting from the scheme.

Meanwhile, Mr Frydenberg says the market is anticipating negative growth in the March quarter when the latest national accounts figures are released on Wednesday.

He said bushfires and the onset of coronavirus restrictions were behind the expected fall.

"The Australian economy's been remarkably resilient," Mr Frydenberg.

"We went into the crisis from a position of great strength and that's going to help us out of this crisis."

[Published today at 13:15](#)

# LOCKDOWN EASED IN MOSCOW AFTER NINE WEEKS

**MOSCOW, Jun 1, 2020, BBC.** Authorities in Moscow have eased lockdown restrictions, even as case numbers continue to rise, [BBC reported](#).



Russia

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Parks and shopping centres in the Russian capital reopened and people were allowed out for walks and limited exercise for the first time in nine weeks.

President Vladimir Putin announced last week the country had passed the peak of its outbreak.

But infections are still rising, and some question lifting restrictions.

Russia reported another 9,035 confirmed cases and 162 deaths on Monday. In total the country has recorded 414,878 infections - the third

highest number in the world after the US and Brazil - and a death toll of 4,855.

Officials say the low numbers of dead is due to high testing numbers. Critics however fear the true number is far higher.

A number of other European nations are also easing restrictions on Monday:

- Primary schools reopen in Greece and England
- Restaurants, cafes and museums open in the Netherlands, with bars serving customers again in Norway

Portugal's cinemas and theatres open their doors

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- The Colosseum in Rome is once again allowing visitors, while the Grand Bazaar and Fatih mosque reopen in Istanbul

## What's happening in Moscow?

Moscow has been the epicentre of



Russia's outbreak. In May Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said he feared the capital's case number could be three times higher than reported.

Now, Mr Sobyenin has ordered a swathe of businesses to reopen in the city from Monday - including car dealerships, book shops, launderettes and shopping malls.

Parks too are allowing visitors, with new exercise rules announced. Mr Sobyenin said people would be allowed out for walks three times a week between 09:00 and 21:00 local time, using a rota system determined by their home address.

The city's residents can also go outside for exercise, but only between 05:00 and 09:00, and only if they wear a face mask.

However, authorities said a ban on public gatherings would remain in place until at least 14 June.

Some have mocked the tight rules on exercise. Comedian Maxim Galkin published a video on Instagram in which he impersonates the mayor and President Putin discussing a "breathing schedule" for Muscovites, which has been viewed more than six million times.

## Why relax restrictions now?

At one point Russia reported more than 10,000 cases a day for more than a week. Moscow alone was accounting for up to 6,000 of those cases at its peak.

The rate of infections has started to slow nationwide. On Sunday, Moscow recorded 2,595 infections.

Still, some question the decision to further lift restrictions with new case numbers still so high.

The move comes after authorities doubled Moscow's official death toll for the month of April. Journalists in the city had been accused of fake news and distortion for saying that the figure was far higher than reported.

President Putin sent some Russians back to work on 11 May, saying that although "danger remains" it was in everyone's interest for the economy "to return to normal quickly".

Since then, Mr Putin has also rescheduled the annual Victory Day parade to 24 June. Originally scheduled for 9 May, it was cancelled due to coronavirus fears.

The president is widely expected to announce a new date for a vote on constitutional reforms - also cancelled due to the outbreak - which could scrap a ban on Mr Putin running for the presidency again.

[Published today at 22:46](#)

## RUSSIA'S NATIONWIDE VOTE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO HOLD ON JULY 1: PUTIN

**MOSCOW, Jun 1, 2020, Pan Pacific Agency.** Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced the date of the nationwide vote on constitutional amendments. Voting to take place on July 1, the president said during the meeting with working group to prepare amendments.



Russia

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July 1 is the best date for voting, the chairman of the Russian Central Election Commission Ella Pamfilova said. Vladimir Putin agreed. Ms. Pamfilova also

suggested to hold vote within a week: "not only on that day on the date, but also within six days before this main day".

The vote on constitutional amendments was scheduled for April 22, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. On May 28, the Central Election Commission approved the recommendations of Russia's healthcare watchdog

(Rosпотребнадзор) on the organization of voting.

[Published today at 16:56](#)

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## 400,000 STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOL IN BEIJING

BEIJING, Jun 1, 2020, China Daily. About 400,000 students across primary, junior high and high schools returned to campus in Beijing on June 1, International Children's Day, [China Daily reported](#).



China

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These students are in grade six of primary school, grades one and two of junior high school, and grades one and two of high school.

Due to the novel coronavirus outbreak, Chinese students experienced their longest winter vacation and had lessons online.

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## MALAYSIAN AIR FORCE FORMS NEW SQUADRON FOR UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jun 1, 2020, NST. The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) has formed an unprecedented new squadron, specifically for the unmanned aerial system (UAS), [New Straits Times reported](#).



South & Southeast

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Its chief Gen Datuk Seri Ackbal Abdul Samad announced this today in conjunction with the 62nd RMAF anniversary via a 'live' social media event.

He said the new UAS formation would replace the Sukhoi Su-30MKM Flankers at the 11th Squadron, with the fighter jets now reassigned to the 12th Squadron at the Gong Kedak air base at the Kelantan-Terengganu border.

"This new UAS squadron has been formed as of today (June 1) in preparation to receive the required

assets (like unmanned aerial vehicles) soon.

"This development will definitely arouse emotions with the Su-30MKM personnel as it will involve the redocumentation of assets by the human resources department at the air force headquarters and the like.

"But I feel we do not have a choice as its implementation is in accordance with preserving historical facts," he said.

Ackbal said the RMAF hoped to regain its preventive and corrective maintenance of its assets without compromising local defence industries, something that had long been overdue for over 23 years.

These were the plans under the RMAF's

35-year 'Capability Development 2055' (CAP 55) transformation plan on new procurement, enhancement and upgrading of assets to make it a 'lean and mean' air force.

The programme entails the acquisition of the UAS, air defence radars, a maritime patrol aircraft squadron, and up to three squadrons of fighter lead-in-trainers and light combat aircraft.

Ackbal added that the year 2020 also involved the shifting and operations of new RMAF facilities,

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following the closure of the RMAF's Kuala Lumpur air base that had suitably served as a very systematic and centralised infrastructure for the air force headquarters and its units.

"The relocation of the facilities at the Kuala Lumpur air base to its new premises is in line with the aspirations of the RMAF to create a modern and conducive infrastructure.

"This is to give a positive impact to the concerned units for a better readiness of the RMAF," he said.

Ackbal added that for instance, the Air Operations Command Headquarters, Air Support Command Headquarters, Air Force Operations Centre and the Air Warfare Centre had shifted to the Subang base.

The RMAF's Education and Training Command Headquarters had shifted to the new Sendayan air base in Negri Sembilan, while the RMAF's No. 1 Division headquarters had moved to the Kuantan air base.

On another note, Ackbal said that to conform to the 'new normal', the well-being and health of air force personnel following the Covid-19 pandemic has been given serious attention.

"The advice and guidance by the government to contain the virus has to be adhered at all levels of personnel and society at all times for everyone's benefit.

"I urge all personnel to practice preventive measures as part of their daily lives.

"We need to embrace the 'new normal' in our daily lives, which is no longer the same anymore.

"It is not something difficult to adapt with but has to be done for our own good," he said.

Ackbal reminded them that although they faced some tension and challenges, they have to carry out their duties and responsibilities with full commitment and dedication.

He said once the movement control order (MCO) is lifted, all the necessary basic training would resume with the RMAF overcoming the situation successfully.

He said the 62nd anniversary theme of 'Berupaya bersiaga, kedaulatan

terjaga' (Always prepared, sovereignty safeguarded) were important air power elements in safeguarding the country's airspace and maritime borders.

In today's era, the duty spectrum of the RMAF is very wide.

Apart from possessing a credible combat power, there requires a high level of asset preparedness and formidable manpower to thwart any sovereign threats.

"The man, machine and method integration is important for a balanced synergy to remain an effective air force."

On the MCO, Ackbal said the RMAF had assiste

d other enforcement agencies like the police and also carried out 42 missions in air freighting 270 tonnes of medical and health supplies for frontliners nationwide.

Additionally, the Eurocopter EC725 helicopters carried out 20 missions to airlift 30 tonnes of food supplies to the interior regions in Sabah and Sarawak.

These are in addition to aerial surveillance to secure maritime borders in the Straits of Melaka, South China Sea and Sulu Sea.

It resulted in spotting several foreign vessels carrying hundreds of illegal immigrants attempting to encroach into Malaysian territorial waters in the Straits of Melaka.

The operations were successful in preventing the illegal entry and trafficking of the immigrants which could have posed a health risk with the Covid-19 virus.

To check on this menace, Armed Forces chief Gen Tan Sri Affendi Buang had announced the establishment of a National Task Force integrated operation codenamed 'Ops Benteng', comprising the Armed Forces and other enforcement agencies, to tighten the country's maritime and land borders.

[Published today at 21:29](#)