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'I'm in an apocalypse:' American student trapped in coronavirus-hit Chinese city



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

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First U.S. person-to-person coronavirus spread reported as WHO panel meets



Workers make protective suits at a factory, as the country is hit by an epidemic of the new coronavirus, in Chaohu, Anhui province, China January 28, 2020. China Daily via REUTERS

BEIJING/GENEVA (Reuters) - The United States reported its first case of person-to-person transmission of a fast-spreading new coronavirus on Thursday, as a World Health Organization (WHO) panel met to reconsider whether the outbreak that has killed 170 people in China should be declared a global emergency.

The vast majority of the more than 8,100 cases detected globally, according to the latest official data, have been in China, where the virus originated in an illegal wildlife market in the city of Wuhan.

But more than 100 cases have emerged in other countries, from Japan to the United States, spurring cuts to travel, outbreaks of anti-China sentiment in some places and a surge in demand for protective face masks.

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"There's only so much we can do," said an official at Kujie Pharma Co, a South Korean firm considering doubling or tripling shifts to cope with a rush of orders for "tens of millions" of masks.

Officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a conference call that the flu-like virus was confirmed in a man in Illinois, bringing the total number

of U.S. cases to six. The man's wife, who was also infected, had previously travelled to China, but he had not.

Experts say cases of person-to-person transmission outside China are especially concerning because they suggest greater potential for the virus to spread further.

The total number of infections in a health crisis that is forecast to sharply dent China's economy, the world's second-largest, has already surpassed the total in the 2002-2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic.

The WHO held off twice last week from declaring a global emergency, but was meeting again in Geneva amid growing evidence of the coronavirus' spread outside China. The outcome was expected to be announced around 1930 GMT.

Such a declaration would trigger tighter containment and information-sharing guidelines, but may disappoint Beijing, which had expressed confidence it can beat the "devil" virus.

It could also further spook markets, already shuddering at the ripple effects of damage to China's economy. [MKTS/GLOB]

Workers make protective suits at a factory, as the country is hit by an epidemic of the new coronavirus, in Chaohu, Anhui province, China January 28, 2020. China Daily via REUTERS The virus has spread "exponentially" since the Emergency Committee last met a week ago, and person-to-person spread has been confirmed in five countries in addition to China. But there has been no death reported outside China and neither has

the virus emerged in Africa, a Western diplomat told Reuters, asked about the likelihood the panel would declare an emergency.

"It is not clear that the time is ripe yet," the diplomat said. "It would be more worrying if cases had been detected in Africa where some countries might not have the capacity to detect and isolate cases."

SARS also came from China, killing about 800 people and costing the global economy an estimated \$33 billion.

Economists fear the impact could be bigger this time as China now accounts for a larger share of the world economy.

Almost all the deaths have been in Hubei province - of which Wuhan is the capital - where 60 million people are living under virtual lockdown.

"Most of the shops are closed. We cannot go out and buy food," Si Thu Tun, one of 60 students from Myanmar trapped in Wuhan, told online news outlet the Democratic Voice of Burma.

"Honestly, I have one big potato and three packs of instant noodles and some rice," he said. Myanmar plans a special flight to get the students out within three days.

Australia, South Korea, Singapore, New Zealand and Indonesia are quarantining evacuees for at least two weeks, though the United States and Japan plan shorter, voluntary isolation. The impact even reached an Italian cruise ship, whose 6,000 passengers were kept on board at the city of Civitavecchia while tests were conducted on a woman from Macau.



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Russia to evacuate citizens from China as virus toll rises

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - China faced mounting isolation from international travel curbs and flight suspensions on Saturday, with Russia to start pulling out its citizens next week, as the death toll from a spreading coronavirus outbreak rose to 259.

The epidemic has led to mass evacuations of foreign citizens as world airlines halt flights, and risks exacerbating a slowdown in growth in the world's second-largest economy.

The Russian military was to start evacuating Russian citizens from China on Monday and Tuesday, Interfax and TASS news agencies reported. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying the evacuations would be from regions that had been most affected by the outbreak.

Peskov first said that evacuation will start on Saturday but later corrected himself. Russia has already reported its first two cases of coronavirus and restricted direct flights to China.

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China's National Health Commission said there were 2,102 new confirmed infections in China as of Friday, bringing the total to 11,791. Around two dozen other countries have reported more than 130 cases. The death toll rose by 46 to 259, all in China.

The Chinese data would suggest it is less deadly than the 2002-03 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed nearly 800 people of the some 8,000 it infected, although such numbers can evolve rapidly.

Inside China, Hubei province, the epicenter of the outbreak, was under a virtual quarantine, with roads sealed off and public transport shut down. Elsewhere, authorities placed growing restrictions on travel and business.

In Beijing, counters were set up at the entrances of housing estates,



A woman wearing a face mask holds a child near a shopping mall in Beijing, China, as the country is hit by an outbreak of the new coronavirus, February 1, 2020. REUTERS/Stringer

where volunteers wearing red arm bands and masks noted down details of residents coming back from their hometowns after the Lunar New Year holiday.

"As long as I am properly protected and don't go to crowded places, I don't feel scared at all about my hometown or Beijing," said a 58-year-old migrant worker surnamed Sun.

Others were more worried.

"There will be a huge number of people returning to the city. I think it will put Beijing at risk of more infections," said Zhang Chunlei, 45, another returning migrant worker. In Hubei, the provincial government extended the holiday break to Feb. 13 in a bid to contain the outbreak, the Hubei Daily reported.

The World Health Organization, which this week declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, has said global trade and travel restrictions are not needed.

A woman wearing a face mask holds a child near a shopping mall in Beijing, China, as the country is hit by an outbreak of the new coronavirus, February 1, 2020. REUTERS/Stringer But Singapore and the United States announced measures on Friday



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Editor's Choice



Supporters of Democratic 2020 U.S. presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) wait before a campaign event in Cedar Rapids



Emma Patty runs with a sign supporting Democratic 2020 U.S. presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) before a campaign event in Cedar Rapids



2020 Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Senator Klobuchar holds a campaign event at a brewpub in Bettendorf, Iowa



Feb 1, 2020; Memphis, Tennessee, USA; Connecticut Huskies forward Akok Akok (23) dunks against Memphis Tigers guard Lester Quinones (11) during the first half at FedExForum. Mandatory Credit: Justin Ford-USA TODAY Sports



A model poses for a portrait backstage as he wears a creation by Claudina Mata during the International Flamenco Fashion Show SIMOF in the Andalusian capital of Seville, Spain February 1, 2020. REUTERS/Marcelo del Pozo



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Genano's CEO Niklas Skogster poses as he presents special air filters that will be sent to Wuhan hospitals, in Espoo



German Air Force plane, carrying evacuated citizens, returns from China's Wuhan to Frankfurt



"A lot of people are eating seafood all the time, and fish are eating plastic all the time, so I think that's a problem," says a marine toxicologist.

We've long known that the fish we eat are exposed to toxic chemicals in the rivers, bays and oceans they inhabit. The substance that's gotten the most attention — because it has shown up at disturbingly high levels in some fish — is mercury. But mercury is just one of a slew of synthetic and organic pollutants that fish can ingest and absorb into their tissue. Sometimes it's because we're dumping chemicals right into the ocean. But as a study published recently in *Nature*, Scientific Reports helps illuminate, sometimes fish get chemicals from the plastic debris they ingest.

"The ocean is basically a toilet bowl for all of our chemical pollutants and waste in general," says Chelsea Rochman, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Davis, who authored the study. "Eventually, we start to see those contaminants high up in the food chain, in seafood and wildlife."

For many years, scientists have known that chemicals will move up the food chain as predators absorb the chemicals consumed by their prey. That's why the biggest, fattiest fish, like tuna and swordfish, tend to have the

How Plastic In The Ocean Is Contaminating America's Seafood

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

highest levels of mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other dioxins. (And that's concerning, given that canned tuna was the second most popular fish consumed in the U.S. in 2012, according to the National Fisheries Institute.)

What scientists didn't know was exactly what role plastics played in transferring these chemicals into the food chain. To find out, Rochman and her co-authors fed medaka, a fish species often used in experiments, three different diets.

One group of medaka got regular fish food, one group got a diet that was 10 percent "clean" plastic (with no pollutants) and a third group got a diet with 10 percent plastic that had been soaking in the San Diego Bay for several months. When they tested the fish two months later, they found that the ones on the marine plastic diet had much higher levels of persistent organic pollutants.

food counter has consumed this much plastic, Rochman's findings do have implications for human health, she notes. "A lot of people are eating seafood all the time, and fish are eating plastic all the time, so I think that's a problem."

And there's a lot of plastic out there in the open ocean. As Edward Humes, author of *Garbology*, told *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross in 2012, the weight of plastic finding its way into the sea each year is estimated to be equivalent to the weight of 40 aircraft carriers.

be of concern.

The Environmental Protection Agency does put out advisories to warn consumers when fish get contaminated with chemicals in local U.S. waters. But a lot of our seafood now comes from foreign waters, which the EPA does not monitor. Just a tiny fraction of imported fish get tested for contaminants.

As for Rochman, she says her research in marine toxicology has persuaded her to eat seafood no more than twice per week. And she now avoids



swordfish altogether. (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/sections>)



Top items found in the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

Consider the five massive gyres of trash particles swirling around in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific oceans alone. Those gyres, Hume told Gross, contain "plastic that has been weathered and broken down by the elements into these little bits, and it's getting into the food chain."

One of those gyres is the infamous Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Fish could encounter the plastic in those gyres, but also much closer to shore, says Rochman.

Even so, the consensus in the public health community still seems to be that the benefits of eating fish — because of their omega-3 fatty acids, among other assets — exceed the potential risks. And many researchers advocating for Americans to increase their fish consumption argue that the levels of dioxins, PCBs and other toxic chemicals in fish are generally too low to



Seafood in grocery stores may have been caught in parts of the polluted ocean.

"Plastics — when they end up in the ocean — are a sponge for chemicals already out there," says Rochman. "We found that when the plastic interacts with the juices in the [fish's] stomach, the chemicals come off of plastic and are transferred into the bloodstream or tissue."

The fish on the marine plastic diet were also more likely to have tumors and liver problems.

While it's impossible to know whether any given fish you buy at the sea-

Professor David Suzuki:

"ALL LIFE DEPENDS ON THE OCEANS: oceans provide almost half the oxygen we breathe... Some threats... swirling masses of plastic garbage... Dead zones are showing up... around the globe... because of a nitrogen overdose from agricultural runoff... the very base of the marine food chain, plankton, is being threatened... fish stocks are dwindling... climate change... too much carbon... global warming... disruption of the ocean's pH balance... increasing acidity... escalating risk... risk we cannot afford to take..."

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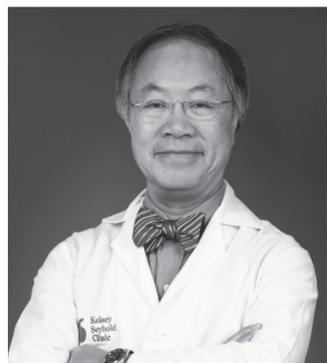
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Trump: 'We're Restoring America's Industrial Might Like Never Before'

Trump Signs USMCA Trade Deal To Replace NAFTA



Over 400 guests including farmers, CEOs and workers attended the signing of the new North American trade agreement, USMCA, at the White House on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020. (Photo/AP)

President Donald Trump, joined by from left, Senior adviser to the President, Ivanka Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of Calif., and others, signs a new North American trade agreement with Canada and Mexico, during an event at the White House, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

uct by as many as 1.2 percentage points and create up to 589,000 jobs, according to the International Trade Commission. After the trade deal was approved by the Senate on Jan. 16, by a vote of 89 to 10, Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, hailed it as a "major achievement for President Trump and a very big win for the American people." The signing of the USMCA comes nearly two weeks after Trump inked an initial trade deal with China. Combined, the two agreements encompass more than \$2 trillion worth of trade and could add as much as 1.7 percentage points to U.S. economic growth. The U.S. economy expanded at a 2.1 percent pace in the three months through September.



Trump Signs USMCA Trade Deal That Replaces NAFTA

"We're restoring America's industrial might like never before," Trump declared at a campaign rally in Wildwood, N.J., on Tuesday evening. "They're all coming back. They want to be where the action is." (Courtesy https://www.fox-business.com) Signing the trade deal into law is a rare legislative achievement for the president going into his reelection campaign. President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed his signature trade deal with Mexico and Canada into law, sealing a big bipartisan win for him during his heavily partisan impeachment trial. But the celebration on Wednesday was far from bipartisan, as Trump excluded Democrats from the ceremony despite their key role in securing the final version of the deal that passed with over-

whelming majorities in both the House and Senate. Instead, Trump used the signing of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement as a chance to keep ownership of his deal in a White House ceremony with hundreds of Republican lawmakers, Mexican and Canadian leaders, local officials, and business, industry and union leaders present.



"We have replaced a disastrous trade deal," Trump said in the ceremony on the White House South Lawn. "This is something we really put our heart into. It's probably the No. 1 reason that I decided to lead this crazy life that I'm leading right now as opposed to that beautiful simple life of luxury that I left before this happened. But I love doing it." Signing the USMCA into law is a rare legislative achievement for the president going into his reelection campaign. But Trump will not be able to say he fully delivered on his 2016 campaign promise to replace NAFTA until Canada ratifies the deal and all three countries meet many of their obligations — and that could take months. Still, Trump will take his USMCA victory lap to Michigan on Thursday, where he will host an event at an auto parts supplier to tout the benefits of the pact. Meanwhile, Democrats and many labor unions have also been largely supportive of the deal after they secured changes that make the USMCA one of the most progressive trade agreements ever negotiated by either party.



"It puts a smile on my face that he's really signing a bill that includes Democratic priorities that we've been fighting for for decades," said Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.). | Joe Scarnici/Getty Images

The pact was the product of months of negotiations between U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and a group of nine Democrats tapped by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to make changes to the original version of the USMCA that Trump signed in 2018. Democrats had been concerned over the pact's enforcement, labor, environmental and drug-pricing provisions. "It puts a smile on my face that he's really signing a bill that includes Democratic priorities that we've been fighting for for decades," said Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.), one of the Democrats closely involved in landing the final deal. (Courtesy politico.com)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The USMCA Trade Deal agreement signed last Wednesday is expected to create 80,000 new jobs tied to the auto industry and bring in up to \$30 billion of new investment in the sector. The pact will also open new markets for American wheat, poultry and eggs, among other things. "This is a colossal victory for our farmers and ranchers," Trump said at the signing ceremony. "Everybody said this was a deal that could not be done," he added, "but we got it done."

Promises Made, Promises Kept!



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