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26th July 2020

Dear All

Please find below the update 26 from HOPE.

News from HOPE

1. Pre-departure briefing.

HOPE's first online pre-departure briefing was held on Saturday, 25th with over 60 families attending this annual event. Safety was the main theme of this year's event, and a detailed PPT on how to travel, study and live safely in the UK was shared to all audience. Jessie Su, China representative from Newcastle University was invited to showcase how UK universities are preparing to welcome Chinese students in the autumn and next spring with very practical advice to all students. Zhang Dejun, the current student at Brockenhurst College also used his own experience in the UK to suggest how young students could survive this difficult time, giving much confidence to parents and their departing kids. The highlight of the event went to the awarding ceremony for the Star Student of the Year! ZHU He, who is to attend Oxford University for her MSc Organic Chemistry was the star among the stars and her on spot speech not only inspired the other ambitious students but also spoke highly of her counsellor, Amily Chen, from HOPE's Hangzhou Office.

2. The 20th anniversary celebration.

A series of events to mark this milestone of the company is planned between September 2020 and January 2021. These will include a photo competition, online education fairs, online conference on international collaboration post pandemic, charity event for autism children, Christmas party with HOPE students, parents, Chinese partner institutions, and annual staff conference. We will also invite you to join some of our events. We are very grateful to those who sent us your congratulation video clips which will be shown to the public in various occasions in the months to come!

Kind regards

Daniel Zheng

Daniel Zheng
Managing Director

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More foreign carriers resume service to Shanghai



A KLM Royal Dutch Airlines passenger aircraft lands at the Pudong airport on Wednesday. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines resumed passenger flights from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol to Shanghai on Wednesday following the relaxation of travel restrictions by the Chinese government.

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Flights to the Chinese mainland were restricted at the beginning of February in connection with COVID-19. KLM now operates one flight per week to Shanghai, and makes a stop in Seoul on both outbound and inbound flights.



Zhang Guosheng (right), economic counselor of the Chinese Embassy in the Netherlands, and Pieter Elbers (center), president & CEO of KLM, see off the first passenger flight from Amsterdam to Shanghai.

Apart from KLM, other foreign carriers such as Air New Zealand, Delta, United Airlines, Air France, Lufthansa, Swissair, Aeroflot and Turkish Airlines have also resumed flights to Shanghai.

Finnair restored flights between Helsinki and Shanghai on Thursday.

Additional airlines, such as Etihad Airways, have announced dates to restart flying to Shanghai.

Passengers on China-bound flights must provide negative COVID-19 test results before boarding, China's aviation authority has stipulated, as the government looks to further reduce the risk of imported coronavirus cases amid increased international travel.

Nucleic acid tests must be completed within five days of embarkation, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said on its website. Tests should be conducted at facilities designated or recognized by Chinese embassies in host countries, it said.

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With the reopening of the Amsterdam-Shanghai route, KLM emphasizes the importance of the Chinese market in its network, according to the carrier.

The resumption of flights to Shanghai is a cautious but positive sign of recovery, said KLM President & CEO Pieter Elbers.

KLM has taken measures to ensure that the flight is safe for both passengers and crew. For example, face masks are mandatory when boarding and during the flight. Extra sanitation equipment is available on board, such as hand sanitizer, and KLM's aircraft are thoroughly cleaned between flights. The air on board is regularly refreshed using HEPA filters.

KLM said it complies with strict requirements set by the Chinese government for the resumption of international flights. This means that passengers must complete a health declaration form online and that the temperature of passengers is checked.

Aircraft toilets are also inspected more frequently during flights. Furthermore, there are as few contact moments as possible between crew and passengers, which means there is limited catering available on these flights, KLM said.



A ground crew worker at the Pudong airport welcomes KLM's first resumed passenger flight to Shanghai

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New detections in Dalian, Urumqi

By ZHANG XIAOMIN in Dalian and AYBEK ASKHAR in Urumqi | China Daily | Updated: 2020-07-25 10:36



A medical worker administers a nucleic acid test in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Friday after new COVID-19 cases were reported in the port city.

The port city of Dalian, Liaoning province, reported nine new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and 27 asymptomatic infections from Thursday to 3 pm Friday, bringing the city's total confirmed cases to 12 since the latest outbreak was reported on Wednesday, according to local health authorities.

"All the confirmed patients have been transferred to the city's designated hospital—Dalian Sixth People's Hospital—for treatment," said Zhao Lian, deputy director of the Dalian Health Commission at a Friday news conference.

All nine new confirmed cases and 27 asymptomatic infections were discovered via organized virus screenings among close contacts of the first confirmed case reported on Wednesday and all are employees of Dalian Kaiyang World Seafood Co.

The company is a well-known local enterprise processing imported seafood and selling frozen seafood gift packages produced both at home and abroad.

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Since the new outbreak, the company has suspended operations with all employees placed under quarantine. Mass nucleic acid testing and cleaning activities were performed in surrounding areas.

Some 190,000 people are expected to undergo testing, said the local health authority. By Thursday, more than 25,000 samples were collected from nearby medium-risk areas and the test results reported so far have all come back negative.

On Thursday night, the Dalianwan area, which has three villages and 17 communities, was named a medium-risk area, together with another community — Gongrencun community of Xianglujiao in the city's Xigang district. Residential communities there have been temporarily shut down.

Citywide, the authority has suspended various cultural, entertainment and sports activities, and shut down cinemas, museums, gyms and swimming pools.

The National Health Commission has dispatched 18 experts to Dalian to assist in the outbreak response.

Despite the new cases, the long-delayed 2020 Chinese Super League will kick off Saturday in both Dalian and Suzhou, Jiangsu province, each hosting eight CSL teams.

From Saturday to Sept 28, the two groups will play in a tournament-style league in "blue zones" sealed off for the games, with no spectators allowed entry.

Nationwide, 21 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on the Chinese mainland were reported Thursday, including 15 locally transmitted ones, with 13 of the 15 in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Officials in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, said most of the confirmed cases reported over the past two days were transmitted from previous asymptomatic carriers, rather than newly infected cases.

"And 27 of the 31 confirmed cases in the past two days were found in asymptomatic carriers, and with ongoing mass screenings there will be more confirmed cases. There is no need to panic," Rui Baoling, head of the city's disease control and prevention center, told a news conference Friday.

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Urumqi reported 13 locally transmitted COVID-19 infections and 19 asymptomatic cases on Thursday, and the figure of confirmed cases climbed to 93 in the city since the latest outbreak of the virus on July 15.

As the first locally transmitted case was detected in the city's downtown, Urumqi has launched a free nucleic acid testing campaign citywide, and more than two million residents have finished sampling as of Thursday, said Mayor Yasen Sidik.

Shanghai tops in per capita consumption expenditure

By Yu Xiaoming | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2020-07-24 16:31



Girls wearing ancient costumes parade in Yuyuan Garden, East China's Shanghai, July 3, 2020. Yuyuan Garden of Shanghai started a "Food & Fun" season since the first weekend of July. [Photo/Xinhua]

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With 20,112 yuan (\$2,869) per capita consumption expenditure, Shanghai took the crown among China's 31 provincial-level regions in the first half, followed by Beijing (18,620 yuan) and Zhejiang province (15,029 yuan), Shanghai Securities News reported.

Shanghai is the only region that saw its per capita consumption expenditure exceed 20,000 yuan. During the first half of this year, the city also recorded the highest per capita disposable income, 36,500 yuan.

Shanghai earlier launched a massive campaign dubbed "May 5 Shopping Festival", as merchants gave shopping coupons to spur online and offline spending.

China's average per capita consumption expenditure stood at 9,718 yuan in the first six months, down 5.9 percent year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Tobacco and alcohol, housing, transportation and communications ranked as the top three consumption categories, accounting for 31.9 percent, 25.4 percent and 12.7 percent, respectively.

A total of nine provincial-level regions, including Hunan, Fujian, Jiangsu, Guangdong provinces and Chongqing and Tianjin municipalities, outperformed the national average.

The COVID-19 epidemic reshaped China's consumption mode to some extent, with online consumption becoming a bright spot in the first half, said Zhao Ping, director of the international trade research department at the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Academy.

As merchants gave out shopping coupons to spur consumption, and measures were unveiled to develop the private and nighttime economy, some regions have seen a narrowing of the drop in retail sales growth since the second quarter.

In South China's island province Hainan, thanks to the new duty-free policy, sales of offshore duty-free shopping reached 8.57 billion yuan during the first six months, up 30.7 percent year-on-year.



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US won't allow entry of new int'l students whose courses are entirely online

The United States will not allow the entry of new international students for the upcoming fall semester if their courses are entirely online, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement said on Friday.

In a release, the ICE said "F and M students in new or initial status after March 9, 2020, will not be able to enter the United States to enroll in a US school as a nonimmigrant student for the fall term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online."

It also said school officials should not issue a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," for a student in new or initial status who is outside of the United States and plans to take classes at an certified educational institution fully online.

A guidance issued on March 9, 2020 by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), which the ICE uses to manage foreign students and exchange visitors in the United States, has allowed schools and students to engage in distance learning in excess of regulatory limits due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The ICE said on Friday that the guidance applies to continuing F and M nonimmigrant students who were in valid F-1 or M-1 nonimmigrant status on March 9, 2020, including those previously enrolled in entirely online classes who are outside of the United States and seeking to re-enter the country this fall.

"Students actively enrolled at a US school on March 9, 2020, who subsequently took courses online while outside of the country can re-enter the United States, even if their school is engaged solely in distance learning," it added.

The announcement came less than two weeks after the ICE rescinded a new directive that could have denied international students their stay in the United States if they only attend online courses in this year's fall semester.

The directive, which came as the White House was pushing for the reopening of schools despite the pandemic, had met strong backlash from both home and abroad as well as lawsuits supported by more than 200 universities and 18 states.

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As the coronavirus pandemic continues to surge in the United States, many universities have announced plans to hold most or all classes online this fall to protect the health and safety of their students and faculty.

Rakesh Khurana, Danoff Dean of Harvard College, said in a letter to students that "any incoming student who received a Form I-20 to begin their studies this fall will be unable to enter the US in F-1 status as course instruction is fully remote."

"We abhor any policies that seek to force us to choose between our community's health and the education of our international students. The University is working closely with members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation to extend the online exemption to newly admitted students and ensure that this flexibility remains in place for the duration of the public health emergency," Khurana said. "Unfortunately, we don't anticipate any change to the policy in time for the fall semester."

Cinemas in China reboot in July

By Li Wenrui | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2020-07-21 15:00



Two moviegoers show their ticket stubs at a cinema in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei province, on July 20, 2020. [Photo/Xinhua]

Chinese movie theaters in low-risk areas were allowed to resume operation starting on Monday following an improvement in the COVID-19 epidemic situation, the China Film Administration announced last Thursday.

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Nationwide, 884 cinemas in 175 cities sold tickets on Monday. Shanghai, Hangzhou in East China's Zhejiang province and Changsha in Central China's Hunan province led the record with 1,498, 766 and 536 screenings, respectively. By 7 pm, a total of 139,000 people went to see a film.

The online booking system for the 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival saw 108,000 tickets sold within 10 minutes, and 128,000 after an hour.

A First Farewell, an award-winning movie revolving around two children in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, was among the few popular newcomers to hit theaters, while many others were re-screened box office hits, including Chinese blockbuster *Wolf Warrior II* and Disney-Pixar animation *Coco* and 2019 crime film *Sheep Without a Shepherd*.



A poster for the film, *A First Farewell*

Movies theaters under the Wanda Group began to resume business, 43 of which opened on Monday after a months-long delay.

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A guideline issued by the Chinese Film Circulation and Projection Association asked cinemas to limit their attendance per show to 30 percent capacity and sell non-adjacent tickets in every other row, according to Xinhua.

Moviegoers must make real-name reservations and wear masks, and those who do not know each other should keep a distance of at least one meter apart, the guideline read.

The regulated reopening ignites hope and worry among many industry insiders. It's still too early to say that the film industry has prevailed over the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic