



Soft lockdown in Taiwan after COVID outbreak

By Staff Our Taiwan writer Lisa Wen

Last year, Taiwan successfully fought the COVID pandemic. However, a community outbreak of COVID-19, mostly in Taipei during the last three weeks, has been recognized as the worst outbreak Taiwan has seen since the pandemic began. The year in which Taiwan seemed spared from the epidemic has passed, and we now find ourselves fighting the disease at full tilt. The total number of local cases now numbers in the thousands, and upwards of 50 deaths have been reported. Just today, May 27, 302 new domestic cases were reported.

empty shopping malls, movie theaters, MRT stations and sidewalks empty of

about, stores are still open, and schools are operating, there are significant changes.



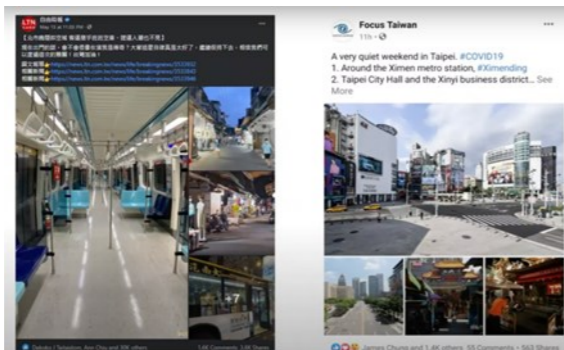
Empty stretches of Taipei's Zhongxiao East Road.

Citizens must follow the Level 3 requirements, as noted above, and almost all businesses require safety steps and signing in, indoor dining is restricted, workers are working from home more, and schools have all shifted to online and distance learning.

While Taiwan is not under official lockdown yet, these pictures are proof of Taiwan's compliance and a symbol of the people's collective will to fight against

schoolchildren as schools are closed. "I've

COVID-19. If the nation shifts to a Level 4 emergency, with sharper increase in domestic cases from unknown sources, citizens will only be allowed to leave home for essential reasons



Empty streets in Taipei

(to purchase food, receive medical treatment, or for essential work), they must observe social distancing and wear a mask at all times, all public events will be cancelled, schools will be fully suspended, and only essential service (law enforcement, medical and government services) will be open in any way. Only designated personnel may enter/exit lockdown areas, and residents must remain in their homes. Let's hope the situation does not reach this far, and stay safe at all times now.

never seen the metro so empty," said documentary producer Betty Wang, 30, who was on her way to scout filming locations.

Taiwan finds itself in a soft lockdown mode. While citizens are still allowed to move

New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih (侯友宜) announced that the city has tightened epidemic control measures, meeting what he described as a "quasi-Level 4" alert. In Taiwan's four-tier COVID-19 alert system, Level 3, where the nation currently stands, mandates mask-wearing when people leave their homes, social distancing and a limit on gatherings.

Here is a series of photos shared by Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文). Others have also posted photos of empty streets in Taipei, as well as pictures of

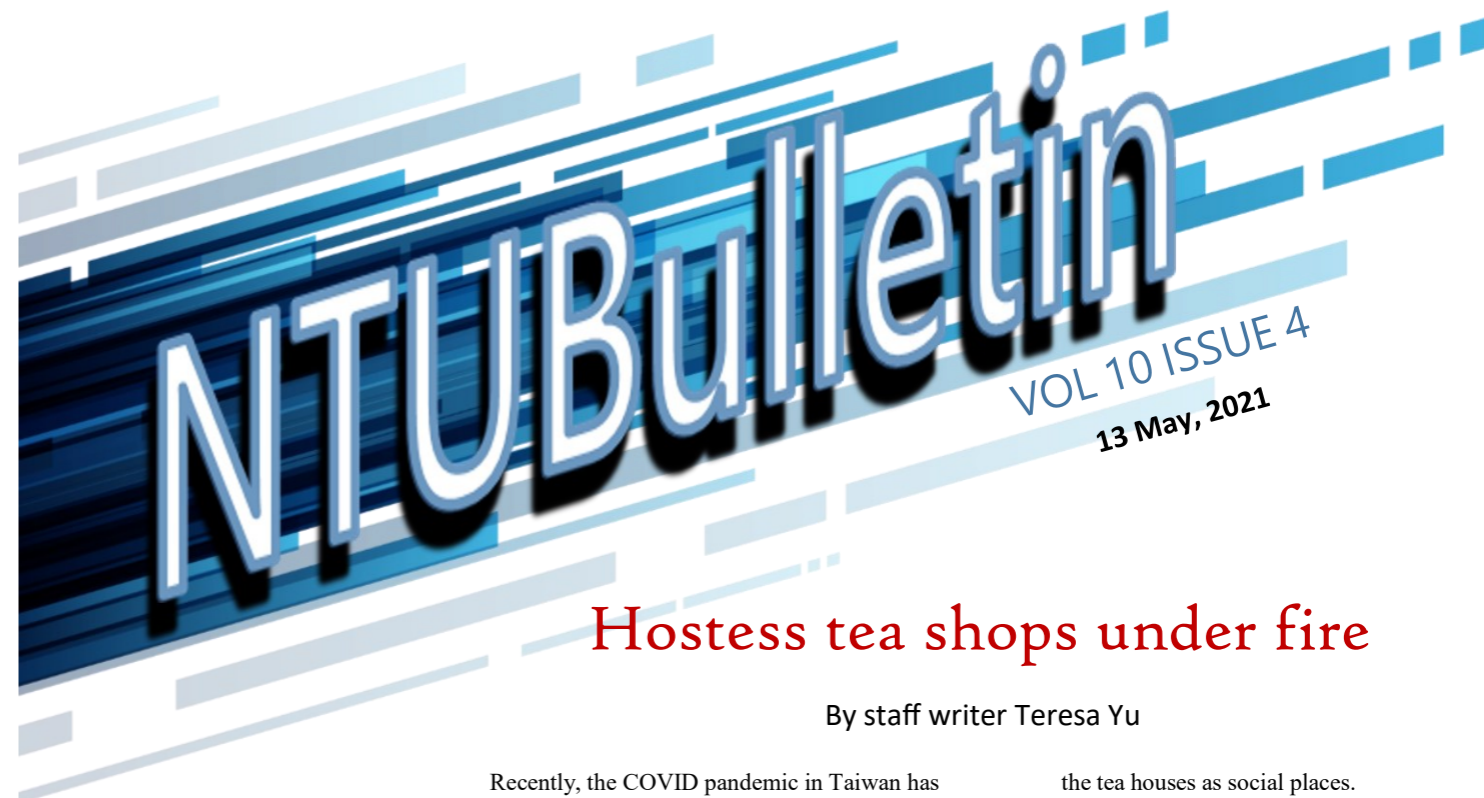
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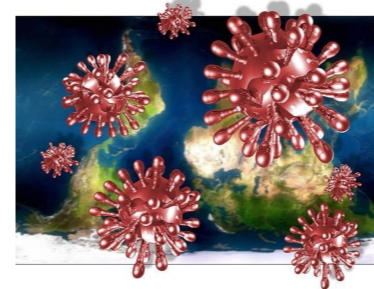
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Hostess tea shops under fire

By staff writer Teresa Yu

COVID-19...



...stay safe!

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Recently, the COVID pandemic in Taiwan has worsened, and a substantial portion of the new cases have been found to have originated in hostess tea shops in the Wanhua District (萬華). This has drawn attention to the shops. When it comes to hostess tea shops, people often associate these shops with the sex trade. Most customers are elderly men, so the shops are also called "the Grandpa shops."

A total of 172 tea parlors and hostess bars have been closed for disinfection since

this link between tea parlors and the virus was exposed. The Control Yuan has launched an investigation into the alleged sex trade in Taipei's "teahouses," as the establishments draw greater attention after they were linked to a cluster of COVID-19 infections.

However, one female posted an article recently that says that most Taiwanese do not know what these tea shops are really like, and people are judging them with tinted glasses and displaying certain prejudices. One customer told her he did not have any family members with him in his house, and he came for company. The other told her that he would feel uncomfortable if he could not see the girls in the shops during the day. She listed the following facts, hoping to clarify bias.

1. The shops often focus on elderly men who see

the tea houses as social places.

- Not every girl in the shops provides sex services. Many females sing songs in the shops. Because most of the customers are elders, girls need learn to sing songs in Mandarin, Japanese, and old Chinese. The girls in the shops often provide mental support for elders, because many of the customers do not have family members living with them.
- If a customer goes to the same hostess tea shop repeatedly, that might mean one of the girls really likes him. This does not mean a lover relationship.
- For the girls, the shops are also their home, where they support each other.
- Every hostess tea shop has one representative girl. She can be the one who sings the best, or the one most skilled in communicating with customers.

To sum up, the girls in the shops are friends to customers, and the shops are places where customers can socialize with others. It is a special and irreplaceable culture. Take a look again at Taipei hostess tea shops, and examine what they really are.

References: www.facebook.com, www.taiwannews.com



Workers disinfect a tea house (CNA photo)



Energy issues, flooding, and global warming in Taiwan



By staff writer Yoyo

In recent years, Taiwan has encountered many energy issues. For example, lack of water, global warming, and reduced electricity supplies due to excessive demand on power supplies, and problems and damage at power stations. These have significantly shown how important natural energy and “green” resources are and how we rely on such environmental energy sources.

In addition, the fast-changing climate is bringing on numerous problems in all countries, not least Taiwan. In the future, droughts, floods, and high temperatures might become normal events for people who live in Taiwan.

Water is a vital natural resource to every country and all people. Since 2020, Taiwan had experienced a lack of water resources because typhoons, which form in the summer and fall have moved to the north. Except for the rain that brought by the front and isolated shower which couldn't help much, Taiwan rarely had ways to increase water last year. Due to these factors, Taiwan has experienced a reduced water supply recently.

The situation has remained the

same this year, and reservoirs are experiencing reduced supply due to reduced rainfall. The situation is similar to last year's too. Despise the effects which happened last year, this year has no many rains to save our drying reservoirs since there barely rain in winter and spring. Because of reduced water levels in reservoirs, many people were watching the live stream of Shihmen reservoirs' wonderful raining scenery on YouTube.

An upcoming problem is flooding. How can floods and lack of water be simultaneous problems? An expert, Xu Huang-Xiong (許晃雄), notes that in the future, afternoon thunderstorms in the summer will occur less frequently, but it will rain more heavily. Heavy afternoon thunderstorms will cause flooding especially in highly developed cities like Taipei. That the two problems exist concurrently will not be strange since the rain might happen less frequently but rain intensity will only be strong enough to cause some areas to flood.

On the other hand, higher temperatures can lead to more than just citizens feeling hot. Taiwan has a variety of fruits, and the agricultur-

al industry brings great profits to Taiwan. If the temperature rises, some fruits or flowers, like the Longan, Litchi and Taiwan orchid, will be unable to grow or bloom.

In May 2019, the Longan and Litchi flowers didn't bloom due to the warm winter. Winter is the season during which many flowers bloom, but warm temperatures led to this situation. The total production of honey in this year didn't reach the 1/3 of the total production last year.

All these factors show how responsive Taiwan is to climate change. The methods to solve these issues and prevent them from becoming worse is the core question facing the nation. The human damage done to the earth might not be able to be turned back, and the only thing we can do is to reduce the damage done, while trying to solve the problems that bring these factors about.

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