

How to get tested for the coronavirus in Ukraine if you think you are infected
→ Pages 2

Vox Populi: Has the coronavirus changed your lifestyle in any way?
→ Page 3

Ukrainians working abroad face tougher times, a threat to \$12 billion in remittances
→ Page 5

Ukraine braces for downturn as the coronavirus takes its toll on the global economy
→ Page 6

The complete guide to steps Ukraine is taking to prevent spread of coronavirus
→ Page 11



Kyiv Post

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All In This Together

Ukraine joins rest of the world in trying to stay healthy, stop coronavirus pandemic that has already killed 5,000 people



A crowd of commuters walks along the platform of Palats Sportu metro station on March 12, 2020, in Kyiv. Ukraine had only three confirmed cases of the coronavirus as of March 12, but fears are high that many more people are or will become infected before the global pandemic subsides. Worldwide, 5,000 people have died and 134,000 people have been infected, but those numbers are expected to rise also. Along with health concerns, the coronavirus is already delivering an economic blow to the global economy. This print edition of the Kyiv Post is devoted to understanding the novel virus and examining Ukraine's response to a pandemic that threatens Ukraine's health and economy.




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Medical workers on March 5, 2020, carry a man in a safe box to test equipment for a new sanitary helicopter designed to help transport people infected with a virus in Poltava Oblast.

Everything you need to know about testing for coronavirus in Ukraine

By Natalia Datskevych
datskevych@kyivpost.com

To stop the spread of COVID-19, many countries, including Ukraine, have partly or entirely closed their borders, shuttered schools and banned mass gatherings.

The disease has killed 5,000 people globally while over 140,000 have been infected. And although there have been only three confirmed cases of the disease in Ukraine, there's a growing sense of alarm here too.

Meanwhile, detecting the infection is a key issue for the country, which has a population of 37 million people.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Being a respiratory infection, COVID-19 often has flu-like symptoms: high temperature (higher than 37.6 degrees Celsius), fatigue, sore throat, shortness of breath and a dry cough. It can take two weeks after the person was infected for symptoms to show.

People with mild symptoms might recover within just a few days. More serious symptoms of COVID-19 include trouble breathing, chest pain and nasal bleeding. This can lead to

pneumonia, which can cause lung failure and death.

I think I have the symptoms. What should I do?

After the first symptoms of possible COVID-19 appear, a patient should call a family doctor, an ambulance (call the number 112), or the government hotline (call the number 1545).

It's best not to go to the doctor immediately to avoid infecting other people. After excluding flu and the common cold, a doctor will send the patient to get tested for the coronavirus. In Kyiv, seven hospitals carry such tests.

According to the health ministry, patients must be tested if they recently traveled to countries with serious outbreaks of the virus or had contact with a person who is suspected to have coronavirus.

How do they test for coronavirus?

Currently, there are two types of coronavirus tests available in Ukraine: a quick finger prick test and a more precise laboratory test. The reliability of the quick test ranges from 87% to 95%.

If the rapid test gives a positive result, the diagnosis will be checked again with the advanced

test to confirm that the person has COVID-19. For this, a swab is taken from the patient's throat and sent to a laboratory.

I've heard there's a shortage of tests in Ukraine. Is it true?

There is no shortage, but, for now, tests are available only in designated state hospitals. In Kyiv, there are seven such hospitals: three for adults, three for children and one maternity hospital.

Kyiv authorities have bought 3,500 tests for coronavirus detection. According to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, by the end of the week there will be 5,000 of those.

As of March 11, only 43 Ukrainians were tested for coronavirus.

How long does it take to know the results?

The rapid test detects the virus antibodies and shows a result 10 minutes after the blood is taken. The more advanced test takes, on average, 5-7 hours to give a result. There are only nine laboratories in Ukraine that test the samples sent by the hospitals.

How much does a test cost?

State hospitals test for coronavirus for free. But one must have a doctor's recommendation to take the test.

Can I buy it somewhere and do the test for COVID-19 by myself?

Currently, no. The tests can't be bought in pharmacies or private hospitals. Only state hospitals carry them.

But, according to Deputy Health Minister Viktor Lyashko, rapid tests may appear in Ukrainian drug stores soon. Their retail prices aren't known yet. The state has been buying them

for around \$14.

If I test positive, what should I do?

Judging from the experience of other countries, it will depend on how bad the symptoms are.

After testing positive for coronavirus, a person may be either advised to self-quarantine at home or be put in a hospital for infectious diseases. Out of the three confirmed cases in Ukraine, one man was hospitalized, while two people were simply reported to be "isolated."

According to the health ministry, every oblast in Ukraine has designated hospitals to treat coronavirus patients. These hospitals have been supplied with protective equipment.

Patients in severe condition may need medical ventilators. Ukraine has only 605 of those, according to the health ministry. By comparison, Italy has over 1,000 coronavirus patients on ventilation lung support.

Does the U.S. travel ban affect Ukraine? Can I still travel to the U.S. from Ukraine?

Yes, one can fly to the United States from Ukraine if the flight doesn't have a stopover in the Schengen Area countries.

The travel ban imposed by the White House to stop the spread of coronavirus in the U.S. starts on March 13 on midnight. For 30 days, the U.S. will not allow travelers from the Schengen Area — which includes 26 European countries.

Ukraine isn't a part of the Schengen Area, but most flights to the U.S. make a connection in Europe. The options that remain are a direct flight from Kyiv to New York operated by Ukraine International Airlines or flights with stopovers in non-Schengen countries like the U.K. or Turkey. ☺

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VOX populi

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How has the coronavirus changed your life?

Editor's Note: On March 11, Ukraine announced a closure of all schools and a ban on mass events that would start the next day to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Following the new anti-epidemic measures, Ukrainians are encouraged to change their habits and adjust to the new circumstances. We asked people on the streets of Kyiv how the coronavirus changed their lives, plans and behavior.



Vadym Koreyba
lawyer
"I think there is no virus. I do not see any danger and just follow the rules of hygiene but without frenzy. I need to change my plans though. My wife and I wanted to visit Italy."



Svitlana Boreyko
computer systems engineer
"I feel no changes. I have always been disciplined, washed my hands, lived an active lifestyle and danced. I do not avoid people, I love them. Although our dancing classes were canceled today...People have to wash hands after changing dance

partners, but there are those who just avoid dancing with others."



Pauline Sahno
hotel manager
"It has changed nothing. It is like the avian flu or swine flu. People died and they will die from things like that."



Dmytro Khoroshun
musician
"The virus has changed the way I work. I am a musician, perform with a famous artist and we have fewer orders now. People do not buy tickets, for protective measures. Personally I think there is too much pressure, we just

need to be calmer and follow basic rules. The virus, however, has not wreaked much havoc in Ukraine yet."



Oleksiy Tolpigo
political scientist
"I planned to have a trip, but have to delay it for a few months. Basically, that's it. Oh, and I wash my hands more frequently. What else can I do?"



Lesia Boguslavska
works for a cruise company
"I work in the tourism industry and at the beginning of March, we would have to go to the International Travel Trade Show in Berlin. But for the first time in 54 years, it was canceled. They did not pay us money back and we do not expect to receive it soon. Our company also carries out the Dnipro River and the Black Sea cruises for international tourists. Although there were not many cancellations, we do not know what to expect."



2,000 march in Kyiv to celebrate International Women's Day

Activists participate in the Women's March in Kyiv on March 8. The march celebrated International Women's Day and demanded equal rights. One of the marchers' key demands was to ratify the so-called Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, to which Ukraine is a signatory. Unlike previous years, there were no attacks on the participants of the march. A counter-rally took place on the same day, with several dozen conservatives, mostly men, protesting against abortions.



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EDITORIALS

Worst timing possible

When the United States catches a cold, Ukraine gets the flu.

But what happens when Ukraine does virtually everything in its power to lower its immunity as America gets the flu? Unfortunately, we will get the answer to that question very soon – and it may be ugly.

On March 9, both stocks and oil prices crashed due to fears over the spread of the novel coronavirus and a conflict between Russia and Saudi Arabia over cutting oil production to support prices. The crash – deemed “Black Monday” in the press – is raising fears of a recession in the United States and possibly globally.

On March 12 in Ukraine, government-imposed quarantine measures came into effect. The country closed educational institutions and canceled mass events until April – a move that may hinder the spread of the virus, but will deliver a blow to the Ukrainian economy.

That would be bad enough. But the anti-coronavirus measures come just a week after the most tumultuous Ukrainian political news this year.

On March 4, the Ukrainian parliament, dominated by President Volodymyr Zelensky’s Servant of the People party, voted to disperse the government and appoint a new prime minister and Cabinet. The new government featured several figures of questionable repute.

The next day, parliament voted to fire Ruslan Riaboshapka, prosecutor general of Ukraine and an individual who enjoys respect from civil society and Ukraine’s Western partners.

Even without the specter of coronavirus, the Cabinet reshuffle would have been bad news. The previous government was just six months old. The abrupt shakeup, carried out seemingly haphazardly and poorly explained to the public, spooked investors in Ukrainian government bonds and made the country look unstable and unpredictable.

In 2020, Ukraine must repay \$17 billion in debt. Meanwhile, its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have come to an impasse after the country failed to make progress on issues like banking and land reform.

Numerous observers now predict that Ukraine will not receive another tranche of IMF aid. What happens then?

As Timothy Ash, an emerging markets analyst, wrote in the Kyiv Post, Zelensky had a lot going for him: political capital, Western support, strong macroeconomic conditions and falling borrowing costs. He had a great shot to enact reform.

Instead, he decided to squander it by firing a Cabinet with reformers and replacing it with what seems like a weaker team.

Turns out, the time couldn’t have been worse for that move.

On March 11, Ukraine’s new prime minister, Denys Shmygal, said that the country is ready for a global economic crisis caused by the coronavirus.

“We have more liquidity in the banks than ever before, we have high gold and foreign currency reserves, we have reserves for the planned budget, we have a rather positive dialogue with the IMF,” Shmygal said.

Given the bad news of the last two weeks, let’s hope he’s right. If not, Ukraine will be in deep trouble.

Tolerating traitors

Few sights are as revolting as Ukrainian politicians who make friendly visits to the Kremlin in the midst of Russia’s war against Ukraine.

On March 10, a group of Ukrainian lawmakers from the pro-Russian Opposition Platform party visited Moscow. The group included people like Vadym Rabinovich, an expressive politician who lives on Ukrainian television, and Rinat Kuzmin, a disgraced ex-deputy prosecutor general.

Leading them was none other than Viktor Medvedchuk, the Prince of Darkness, a personal friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin and his unofficial representative in Ukraine.

The group met with their counterparts in the Russian parliament, and Medvedchuk met with Putin separately.

The Ukrainian lawmakers claimed they went to Moscow to discuss the “ways to achieve peace” in the Donbas, where Russia has been waging a proxy war against Ukraine for six years.

Of course, the people in this self-proclaimed “delegation” don’t admit that Russia has intervened militarily in Ukraine. They are perpetrators of Russian propaganda in Ukraine, and as such, they have been calling the fighting in eastern Ukraine “a civil war” or “an internal conflict.”

Despite overwhelming evidence of Russian military presence, these Ukrainian politicians claim that it was a civil uprising by Ukrainians against Ukrainians. Which makes it strange that they would seek peace in the Kremlin.

The “delegation” had no official standing whatsoever. The real peace negotiations with Moscow are conducted by the administration of President Volodymyr Zelensky. Meanwhile, the sole purpose of such unofficial visits is to strengthen the image of the Opposition Platform as a real political force that enjoys an exclusive relationship with the Kremlin. It’s an artificial picture targeted at their pro-Russian electorate in Ukraine.

It is evident to anyone watching Ukrainian politics that the 44-seat Opposition Platform is a Russian influence group in Ukraine. It is home to shady politicians with no real views who seek nothing but personal wealth and are ready to serve the enemy that is killing their compatriots.

Zelensky knows it, too. In August, he hinted that he had evidence the Opposition Platform was funded by Russia. “It will be a very loud story that will end very badly,” he said menacingly.

But the threat was empty. Six months later, the Opposition Platform isn’t just unbothered. It is useful. On March 5, the Opposition Platform’s votes helped Zelensky’s party to sack Prosecutor General Ruslan Riaboshapka, whom Zelensky once famously called “100% my own prosecutor general” but later found disappointing.

One hopes for the best: that the Opposition Platform’s trip to Moscow and its role days earlier in firing Riaboshapka were a coincidence, and not a sign of an undercover alliance with Zelensky and his administration.

But with Ukrainian politics, one knows to expect the worst.



NEWS ITEM:
On March 10, two leaders of the pro-Russian Opposition Platform – For Life party, Viktor Medvedchuk and Vadym Rabinovich, met with Kremlin officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, to discuss peace in the Donbas as well as the implementation of the Minsk agreements. During the meeting, Medvedchuk suggested creating an inter-parliamentary Normandy format union, which highly welcomed by Putin.

NEWS ITEM:
In a March 7 interview with the Guardian, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that sometimes he wants to hang the oligarchs. Right after these words, the Ukrainian President immediately clarified that he was joking.

NEWS ITEM:
On March 11, the Russian parliament passed an amendment to the Constitution which nullifies all previous presidential terms of incumbent President Vladimir Putin. This enables Putin, whose current term ends in 2024, to potentially stay in power until 2036. The decision, however, still has to be approved by the Constitutional Court of Russia next month before it comes into force.

NEWS ITEM:
On March 8, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate organized a march dubbed Triumph of Orthodoxy in the city of Vinnytsia, some 260 kilometers southwest of Kyiv. The march was the church’s response to the global outbreak of COVID-19. At the same time, the crowd of believers did not allow an ambulance to pass by and it had to take a detour.

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Ukraine’s Friend & Foe Of The Week



Thijs Berger
There are high hopes that the Dutch prosecutor will bring a measure of justice in the trials of suspects charged in shooting down the MH17 flight in 2014, killing 298 people aboard.



Denis Pushilin
The Kremlin-backed separatist leader in Donetsk eliminated Ukrainian as an official language in the Russian-occupied eastern region, a move that will widen the divide with the rest of Ukraine.

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Ukrainians working abroad likely face more hardships

By Igor Kossov
kossov@kyivpost.com

The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic may hit Ukrainians working abroad.

Tightened border controls will block many temporary or seasonal workers from traveling throughout Europe, potentially slashing their incomes, imperiling remittances back to the homeland — which accounted for 8% of Ukraine's economy last year.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians who live in other countries on a permanent basis said that, while their livelihoods are holding up, they are worried that mass panic and restrictive measures may whittle down their incomes in the near future.

Some 4 million Ukrainians are involved in labor migration, with some 2.7 million working abroad at any one time, according to the Centre for Economic Strategy in Kyiv.

A third are circular migrants, a fifth are short-term migrants and another fifth are long-term migrants. And an estimated 10 percent are illegal. Italy — the hotspot of the COVID-19 in Europe — is the third most popular destination with 11% of Ukrainian labor migrant workers after Poland (40%) and Russia (25%).

Labor migrants

Dmitry Sologub, the deputy chairman of the National Bank of Ukraine, stated that the pandemic may reduce the volume of remittances from Ukrainian labor migrants.

"We expect a slight decrease in remittances from Ukrainian labor migrants abroad, but it will be relatively smaller than the effect of significantly reduced travel from Ukraine," he said.

According to the NBU, private transfers to Ukraine totaled \$12 billion in 2019, with a lot of it coming from Italy, Poland and other popular destinations for Ukrainian workers. However, experts told the Kyiv Post that this figure doesn't represent all the money Ukrainian workers send home. For one, a huge sum of foreign currency enters Ukraine unofficially and is not counted. On the other hand, a significant portion of foreign cashflows comes from offshore companies and not labor migrants.

Olga Kupets, a policy professor at the Kyiv School of Economics, said that countries that rely on Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans for seasonal agricultural work — demand which will start in spring — will suffer economically if border restrictions prevent large-scale labor migration.

"When the time comes for the harvest of strawberries or parsley in



A municipal employee sprays disinfectant in public areas at the Rialto Bridge in Venice on March 11, 2020 as part of precautionary measures against the spread of the COVID-19, a day after Italy imposed unprecedented national restrictions. Many Ukrainian workers are trapped in Italy, with little hope for the future but no way to return back home.

Finland, who will gather it?" Kupets said. "If there is no alternative to Ukrainians and Moldovans, it may lead to a collapse for those countries that don't let them in."

Ukrainians who travel to Poland for construction work may be facing uncertain times as well. Several Ukrainians told the Kyiv Post through social media that construction projects in Poland will soon be put on hold.

For many Ukrainians traveling to Italy on a temporary basis, the epidemic has hit them hard, said Tania Chopko, a home care worker living permanently near Verona in Northern Italy. She said that many Ukrainian workers who travel to Italy for up to three months are currently trapped behind Italy's closed borders, unable to return home in spite of their limited visa.

"I don't know what they are going to do," Chopko said.

Most Ukrainian employees who travel for temporary work go there on minibuses, which are often associated with semi-legal practices. Unverified social media reports mentioned that some drivers were giving their passengers fever-reducing medication to hide their symptoms and pass border checkpoints. This possibly allowed them to bring the infection from Italy back to Ukraine by hiding symptoms.

Kupets said that part of the blame was on Ukrainians who protest against infected people, frightening them into keeping their illness a secret.

Permanent residents

For more permanent Ukrainian residents of EU countries, the epidemic also created a wave of anxiety.

Ukrainians in Italy have been the hardest hit by the disease, which caused a nationwide lockdown. According to official statistics, close to 250,000 Ukrainians live and work in Italy, though some experts believe that number to be much greater.

Kupets said that most of these workers are women who are working as home attendants and nannies, and demand for their services should remain constant.

But Chopko begs to differ. She sees

a devastating blow to Ukrainians' livelihoods in Italy. Many home care workers, she said, may wait out until their wards' death from old age, at which point they might move back to Ukraine.

"They don't see a future here," she said.

Ukrainians living in Poland had mixed replies. Some were cautiously optimistic, expecting the Polish economy and its Ukrainian participants to ride out the difficult period.

"At the moment, small-sized business has halted, including the real estate market," said Anna Pysanchyn, who works in real estate. She said many of her clients are delaying the

closure of important deals until it is safer.

However, she believes the economy, including the labor and service sectors, will stabilize. "The epidemic does not pose an economic threat to Ukrainians," Pysanchyn said.

Multiple Ukrainians were upbeat about the healthcare guarantees and paid leave that they can enjoy in the country, which compensates for some of the difficulties of the epidemic and associated health measures.

In particular, due to the closure of children's institutions, working parents received additional paid leave from the state that both parents can share these days among themselves, said Grisha Polonsky, a financial manager for an oil and gas company in Warsaw. However, one beautician said she was fired after asking her employer about health insurance.

Several Ukrainians added that they can enjoy much better economic opportunities in Poland compared to Ukraine. People who spoke to the Kyiv Post from Poland would not consider returning to Ukraine. But some mentioned that they were worried about being able to visit and return to Poland without problems, following the massive airline cancellations and border closures.

However, others are worried much more. Anna Damarova, for example, who works as a waitress in Warsaw, said the panic has caused a sharp drop in food and restaurant service, with one establishment going from a daily turnover of about 5,000 zloty per day (\$1,300) to 1,700 zloty (\$430). She's uncertain about her future if the situation fails to improve.

"They're talking about closing the businesses," she said. "There will be firings and us — foreign nationals — will be the first to be fired." ❌

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As COVID-19 sparks economic downturn globally, Ukraine prepares to take a tough hit

By Oleksiy Sorokin and Alexander Query

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As COVID-19 shakes down stock markets around the globe, Ukraine is putting on a brave front.

Prime Minister Denys Shmygal claimed on March 11 that Ukraine was prepared for the world economic crisis very well.

"We have great liquidity in banks, high gold reserves, we have a pretty positive dialogue with the International Monetary Fund," said Shmygal.

However, with the world economy slowing down and lurching towards recession, Ukraine's economy is about to take a hit, too. It will face additional pressure from expensive foreign lending and decreasing exports.

To make matters worse, Ukraine has a new government that has been on the job for just 10 days. There is low confidence that it is prepared to take on the crisis.

"Changing the economic policy team now was a big mistake from (President Volodymyr) Zelensky," said Timothy Ash, emerging markets strategist for Bluebay Asset Management Company.

This has undermined the confidence of foreign investors, risking an outflow of portfolio investment, weakening the hryvnia, increasing borrowing costs, and hence reducing investment, growth and jobs.

The downturn in China's production has caused the world's petroleum prices to drop sharply, benefiting Ukraine in the short term. However, China's economic halt will hurt Ukraine's exports. China was Ukraine's main export market in 2019.

Moreover, Ukraine is facing increasing borrowing rates and potential withdrawal of investors as panic mounts over the pandemic's effect on the world's economy.

Since March 1, the National Bank sold more than \$1 billion of national reserves to keep the national currency from going into free fall.

The lack of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a new \$5.5 billion loan program is also hurting investor confidence and will drive up interest rates, making borrowing more expensive – if possible at all – for Ukraine.

Cheap oil is good

In early February, China began introducing drastic measures to halt the spread of the deadly coronavirus. It helped the people, but hurt the country's economic output.

As a result, China's production decreased by over a quarter. So did its oil consumption, pushing the prices down. Days later, the oil price war

between Russia and Saudi Arabia caused an additional price drop.

On March 9, futures of Brent crude oil dropped 30%, and were trading below \$29. A month prior, the price was over \$70 a barrel. Now prices vary between \$33–35.

The decrease in the world's energy prices could have a positive effect on the Ukrainian trade balance.

Economist Anders Aslund, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, told the Kyiv Post that Ukraine could save up to \$6–7 billion on cheap energy.

"Ukraine will greatly benefit from lower prices," Aslund said.

Ash of Bluebay Asset Management Company said that cheap fuel can stimulate Ukraine's economic growth.

"If we are talking about \$40 a barrel, that should save a percentage point or so off the current budget deficit," said Ash.

Ukraine's 2020 budget plan, passed in November when oil prices were still high, expects a 2.1% budget deficit.

"A narrower current budget deficit, other things being equal, should mean a stronger hryvnia," Ash said. "(This) should allow the National Bank to cut policy rates more aggressively."

But there is a downside.

The fall might also drag down prices for other commodities important for Ukrainian exports – metallurgy and agricultural products. This could hit the country's already heavy industry, says Edward Chow, a senior fellow in the Energy and National Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

"If oil prices are signaling a global recession and general commodity price weakness, this could hurt the Ukrainian economy," Chow said.

The China factor

In 2019, for the first time in Ukraine's history, China became Ukraine's top export and import partner. Ukraine exported \$3.5 billion worth of goods to China, primarily metals, ore and agricultural goods. Additionally, Ukrainian imports from China hit an all-time record of over \$9 billion.

But the numbers are expected to plummet. In February, Chinese factories were operating at 60% of their capacity, according to Bloomberg, while the overall exports fell by 17%. "There should be a hit to exports,



A woman in a mask walks past a currency exchange on March 12, 2020 in Kyiv. Ukraine's hryvnia dropped over 5% because of panic selling caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

particularly likely in the semi-finished product category, such as metals," said Ash. "This should weaken (economic) growth."

Ukraine's industrial output was suffering long before China's economic downturn. Now it is expected to get worse. In 2019, Ukraine's industrial output fell by 1.8% compared to the previous year. As of February, Ukrainian industrial output has been falling for seven months in a row, which hasn't happened in 20 years.

Ukrainian exports suffered from the straightening of Ukraine's national currency, which gained 19% compared to the U.S. dollar in 2019, and from low prices on metals and ore, Ukraine's main export commodities.

"The low oil prices will further decrease the prices of Ukraine's exports," Sergey Chuikin, managing director at Concorde Capital investment bank, told the Kyiv Post. "The decrease in prices for grain and metals will be less drastic compared to oil prices. Ukraine's budget might even win."

National Bank vs. panic

After becoming the world's best performing currency in 2019, Ukraine's hryvnia is in trouble.

The national currency has been falling, prompting the National Bank to sell \$620 million on March 10–12, in an attempt to stabilize it.

Despite that, the hryvnia lost over 5% of value in less than a week, potentially helping Ukrainian exports, yet hurting Ukraine's financial stability.

The National Bank said on March 11 that it was ready to further intervene to combat the panic disposal of the national currency. Ukrainian reserves are over \$26 billion, record high since 2012, and the National Bank has short term leverage on stabilizing the currency.

Ukraine followed the global trend, where panic selling of stocks and bonds caused international markets to lose over \$5 trillion over a span of three days.

Chuikin says that the National Bank is doing everything right. In

the wake of the crisis, Ukrainians are buying dollars and euros, depreciating hryvnia.

"The bank is smoothening hryvnia's fall to halt further panic," says Chuikin.

On March 12, the National Bank lowered Ukraine's interest rates from 11% to 10%, to stimulate business activity and prevent an economic downturn.

However, the panic continues and Ukraine has little leverage to intervene. Foreign investors are pulling out of developing markets.

The return rate on Ukraine's short term Eurobonds jumped to 7.5% from the 3.75% to start the year, meaning that Ukraine is now borrowing money from foreign investors at a doubling rate.

"Ukraine has almost lost access to international financial markets," says Aslund.

Yet, while coronavirus is the main cause of investor panic, Ukraine effectively poured fuel on the fire, by firing an investor-friendly government on March 4 and Prosecutor General Ruslan Riaboshapka on March 5.

"The president's speech and his sacking of his government caused the crisis," says Aslund. "The undermining of the prosecutor general's office aggravated the crisis."

Government & IMF

Now the new government must reassure investors that it will keep the policies of the previous government intact. Yet economic experts have serious doubts.

"(Zelensky) had the winning ticket in his hand and seems to have allowed it to blow it away in the wind," says Ash, commenting on the rapid and largely baseless government shakeup.

The economic policy team of the now-former government was able to keep inflation at 4% and ensure investors' confidence that a new deal with the IMF would be reached no later than summer, providing an additional \$5.5 billion loan and unlocking a \$1 billion loan from European financial institutions.

Getting the IMF deal approved is important for Ukraine, which has to pay out \$5 billion in foreign debt in 2020. Hlib Vyshlinsky, executive director of the Center for Economic Strategy, a Kyiv-based think tank, points out that without the IMF program, Ukraine won't be able to refinance its foreign debt, leading

to devaluation of the hryvnia and a budget deficit.

During the previous government, led by Oleksiy Honcharuk, interest rates were cut and long-delayed movement accelerated to lift a moratorium on farmland sales. Honcharuk set ambitious growth targets.

Now Ukraine's economy faces uncertainty. The law to allow farmland sales has been paralyzing the parliament for the past month, while another law, crucial to Ukraine's cooperation with the IMF, was withdrawn when the government that sponsored it was sacked.

The law proposed by the previous government would have banned nationalized banks from being returned to their previous owners. The law was demanded by the IMF to prevent PrivatBank, Ukraine's largest bank, to be returned to billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, who is accused of insider lending and bank fraud in the spectacular collapse of the bank, which he used to own before 2016. The \$5.5 billion in losses were covered by taxpayers after the state took over ownership of the bank in December 2016.

Kolomoisky denies accusations and sues back, calling the nationalization of the bank illegal.

Additionally, the new government lacks an economy minister after Tymofiy Mylovanov was sacked with Honcharuk's Cabinet.

"It is critical now that the government signs on the dotted line for an IMF program, and provide assurance in terms of who is in the (new) economy team," says Ash. "The people who buy Ukraine's debt are the same people typically who buy eurobonds. If they get hurt on their portfolios because of policy mistakes, they are not going to buy Ukrainian eurobonds."

This will result in an increase in borrowing costs, the budget deficit will be higher and Ukraine will have less money to spend on pensions, defense, teachers and healthcare provision, says Ash.

With the economic crisis looming and Ukrainian economy isn't sustainable without foreign help, the crucial question is will the new government be able to come to terms with the IMF.

"The government needs to restore sensible economic policies to regain access to international finance. The best seal of approval is to really conclude an IMF program," says Aslund. ☺

Ukrainian businesses change their workplace habits to adjust to virus

By Jack Laurenson
laurenson@kyivpost.com

Ukrainian businesses and workers have started to prepare for the economic effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which will see many Ukrainians stay home or travel less for at least the next three weeks.

On March 11, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal announced nationwide quarantine measures. He also reassured the public that the country is prepared for a possible COVID-19 crisis at home, where there has been only one confirmed case of the infection. Shmygal, however, admitted that quarantine measures may result in damage to companies' balance sheets.

Meanwhile, some businesses said they were already feeling the effects of the virus-linked market turmoil and have been taking steps to protect their employees, and provide continuity of their services.

Partial lockdown

The nationwide quarantine will last until April 3, resulting in many border checkpoints closing, some flights being canceled or suspended and schools, entertainment centers and cinemas being shut down.

Shopping malls will also implement tighter security measures amid the health concerns, and millions of Ukrainian citizens are expected to travel and socialize less.

Shmygal said that Ukraine is ready to face both a financial crisis and a coronavirus epidemic.

The prime minister also suggested that some businesses could benefit from the chaos. Businesses told the Kyiv Post that, while short term consequences are entirely bad for trade, there might eventually be some opportunities for Ukrainian business.

"On the one hand, there is a crisis, and on the other, these can be opportunities for our domestic market, for our domestic producers," Shmygal said. Other analysts have predicted the crisis could drive some types of domestic consumer demand in Ukraine — digital products, essential goods and more.

Meanwhile, the government has not announced any specific economic stimulus or measures to protect Ukrainian businesses and their workers. But the central bank stated on March 12 that it might review inflation forecasts in April if needed, and would cut refinancing on its base rates from 11% to 10%.

The regulator also said it does not plan to introduce foreign exchange limits, and that its current reserves are enough to smooth currency rate fluctuations amid the market turmoil.

Worse-affected countries have implemented strong measures to try and rally their markets, reassure investors and help consumers. In particular, the U.K. and Italy have slashed interest rates and provided debt and mortgage relief, as well as loans to small companies and paid sick leave for affected workers.



(Oleg Petrasniuk)

Employees of Ciklum, a giant information technology firm, work in the company's Kyiv headquarters on June 12, 2019. IT companies are worried about the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout, but they also see some opportunities on the horizon.

Meanwhile, hospitality businesses have been hit hard in Ukraine, and expect to be less busy because public gatherings are limited. Business travel and hotel occupancy is reportedly down across Ukraine.

At least four major business conferences in Ukraine have been postponed until the summer or autumn — Dragon Capital's Investor Conference, the Dnipro Economic Forum 2020: International Space, IT Days and the tech conference iForum. Ukraine has also limited flights into and out of the country.

Some silver linings

Three weeks of quarantine measures in Ukraine will likely mean lost wages for some Ukrainians who earn an hourly wage. The national average salary is \$460 per month.

Information technology companies are worried about the crisis too, but they also see opportunities.

"With people in self-quarantine, games and entertainment will be primary ways to pass the time and make the quarantine period more manageable," said Doug Dyer, vice president of Gaming at Innovecs, a global software development company.

"Same for social media and communications companies," Dyer said. "While this may not be a long-term situation, if it lasts more than a few months, game developers and publishers will continue to weather

the storm as new games are always going to be developed."

But tech startup entrepreneur Lidiya Terpel told the Kyiv Post that some young companies are missing out on vital conferences, competitions and events abroad, called off because of the pandemic.

Others are seeing similar disruption: "Right now we see effects on decreased traveling from clients

we handle by buying more upfront," he added.

Andrey Kolodyuk, a founder of Adventures Capital, said there are other silver linings, especially in tech, and that coronavirus will push the global economy toward more automation, and the Ukrainian IT sector will eventually benefit.

The so-called stay-at-home economy is already weathering the storm better than some businesses.

"Online and digital companies like DivanTV and Netflix will benefit as people switch from cinemas to online TV and entertainment," Kolodyuk said, adding that grocery and goods delivery firms will prosper, as will online gaming, gambling, education and the providers of e-books.

"During the global coronavirus turmoil the businesses that will benefit the most are ones that offer optimization, streaming services like Megogo, delivery apps, and distant communication tools like Zoom," said Dmytro Shvets, co-founder of the RefaceAI tech firm.

"For hardware and offline companies, it will be challenging and painful," he said.

Looking ahead, international companies may begin looking to Ukraine for more cost-efficient solutions if a global economic downturn manifests, according to Beetroot's Flodstrom.

"Ukraine is very well positioned, these effects come with a bit of a delay though," he said, referencing

the effects of previous global market crises.

Working from home

European, U.K. and U.S. officials have said that less travel can contain the pandemic, and the official advice is that workers who can work remotely from home should do so.

More Ukrainian firms have also started asking their employees to work away from the office where possible.

"We are also introducing measures for office hygiene, and work from home policies," said Flodstrom, one of multiple employers in Ukraine who have said they are implementing better sanitary measures.

"This outbreak pushes more companies to work remotely. This could create more openness for running remote teams in a positive way," the IT executive added.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, other major companies are following the example of smaller tech companies where possible as a measure to protect their employees, maintain their work and prevent the virus' spread.

Corteva Agriscience and Nestle, two major food companies with a large presence in Ukraine, told the Interfax news agency that they were placing restrictions on employee travel and encouraging remote work when possible.

"We asked employees who had traveled to regions where quarantine measures had been taken in the past 14 days to inform... and if possible, to work from home for two weeks," Nestle said in a statement. ❏

“The businesses that will benefit the most are ones that offer optimization, streaming services like Megogo, delivery apps, and distant communication tools like Zoom. For hardware and offline companies, it will be challenging and painful.”

Dmytro Shvets, RefaceAI

and team members," said Andreas Flodstrom, CEO of the Swedish IT company Beetroot, which is highly active in Ukraine.

"A few development projects connected to the travel industry are frozen and there are some supply chain issues with equipment which



'More'

Kyiv's avant-garde gallery presents a new exhibition, as it keeps introducing contemporary Ukrainian artists to local audience. Lucy Ivanova's "More" brings together a number of paintings that she has created over the last year since her last exhibition. Through the artworks, Ivanova reflected on all the experience and feelings she had over this time. However, the artist encourages visitors to not look for clues to what she portrayed but dive deep into textures and pigments.

"More."

The Naked Room (21 Reitaraska St.) March 18 - April 29. 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. Free

Editor's Note: As the Ukrainian government banned mass gatherings in the country to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, some venues canceled or rescheduled their events. Before attending any of the listed events, check if they are still happening as planned.

Friday, March 13

Live music

Root Fruit Duo (jazz, blues). Dom. 7 p.m. Free **3**

F.B.I Jazz Quintet - Moonlight (swing standards, ballads and blues of the 1930s-1950s). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400 **1**

Clubs

Avantage: Nastya Muravyova, S.A. Tweeman, Bru B2B Dolu (electronic music). Otel'. 11 p.m. Hr 250-400 **7**

Sure: Jorge Escribano, Anny Rock, Romashov, Elnur (electronic music). River Port. 11 p.m. Hr 150-300 **3**

Crest: Karina Saaakyan and others (electronic music). Crest. 11:55 p.m. Hr 300-400 **5**

Low: Tornado Wallace, Chris Stoker B2B Andy Bainbridge and others (electronic music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Hr 250-350. Visitors must be over 21 **1**

Miscellaneous

Hidden (contemporary artworks by Volodymyr Budnikov which try to hide images instead of revealing them). Ya Gallery. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free **14**

Forlorn (paintings and etchings by Pavlo Makov). The Naked Room. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free **10**

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees. Visitors must be over 16 **3**

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Only Lines Afterparty (surrealist and double-image street art by Dima Fatum). Dom. 2 p.m. - 11 p.m. Free **3**

Votes & Voices (Swiss campaign posters from 1918 to today). Tsek. 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Free **2**

Saturday, March 14

Clubs

Zenker Brothers, Igor Glushko, Lobanov K. (electronic music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Hr 250-350. Visitors must be over 21 **1**

Miscellaneous

Hidden (contemporary artworks by Volodymyr Budnikov which try to hide images instead of revealing them). Ya Gallery. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free **14**

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Forlorn (paintings and etchings by Pavlo Makov). The Naked Room. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free **10**

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia

in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

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Only Lines Afterparty (surrealist and double-image street art by Dima Fatum). Dom. 2 p.m. - 11 p.m. Free

Votes & Voices (Swiss campaign posters from 1918 to today). Tsek. 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Free **2**

Shows

Jungle Brown (hip hop, grime). Caribbean Club. 7 p.m. Hr 350-500 **3**

Erik Leuthauser (vocal jazz). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400 **1**

Theater

Ashes to Ashes (amateur play in English). ProEnglish Theater. 7 p.m. Hr 200 **15**

Sunday, March 15

Miscellaneous

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

Forlorn (paintings and etchings by Pavlo Makov). The Naked Room. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free **10**

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees. Visitors must be over 16 **3**

Shows

Dock in Absolute (progressive jazz). Caribbean Club. 7 p.m. Hr 250-750 **3**

Monday, March 16

Miscellaneous

Hidden (contemporary artworks by Volodymyr Budnikov which try to hide images instead of revealing them). Ya Gallery. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free **14**

Tuesday, March 17

Live music

Adult Jazz with Alexey Kogan. Caribbean Club. 7 p.m. Hr 270-850 **2**

Miscellaneous

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees.

Visitors must be over 16 **3**

Wednesday, March 18

Live music

Tall Guy Remez' Retro Evenings with Root Fruit (jazz, blues, rock'n'roll). Dom. 8 p.m. Free **3**

Miscellaneous

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees. Visitors must be over 16 **3**

More (paintings by Lucy Ivanova). The Naked Room.

7 p.m. - 8 p.m. Free **10**

Thursday, March 19

Miscellaneous

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

More (paintings by Lucy Ivanova). The Naked Room. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free **10**

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees. Visitors must be over 16 **3**

Shows

Stonefromthesky (electronic). Hvlv. 8:30 p.m. Free **5**

Friday, March 20

Clubs

Dot Connection: Aleja Sanchez, Bohdan, Ström (electronic music). River Port. 10:30 p.m. Hr 150-350 **3**

The Black Madonna, Roman K, SE62 (electronic music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Price to be announced **3**

Osnova 5-Year Anniversary: Jana Woodstock, Sariim, Alex Savage and others (electronic music). Otel'. 11:55 p.m. Hr 300-450 **7**

Obscure: Luizar, Yooly, Neu7ral and others (electronic music). Crest. 11:59 p.m. Hr 200-300. Visitors must be over 19 **5**

Miscellaneous

Several Stories and Objects (paintings by Lesia Khomenko exploring the conflict between people affected by the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free **13**

Voices of Love (records of the absurdist performance by Arsen Savadov for Ukrainian soldiers in the Donbas - the reenactment of Marilyn Monroe's show for the U.S. military in North Korea). M17. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100. Hr 70 for children, students, retirees. Visitors must be over 16 **3**

Construct Gender (interactive art-installation by Alevtina Kakhidze exploring the complexities of gender). NAMU. 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

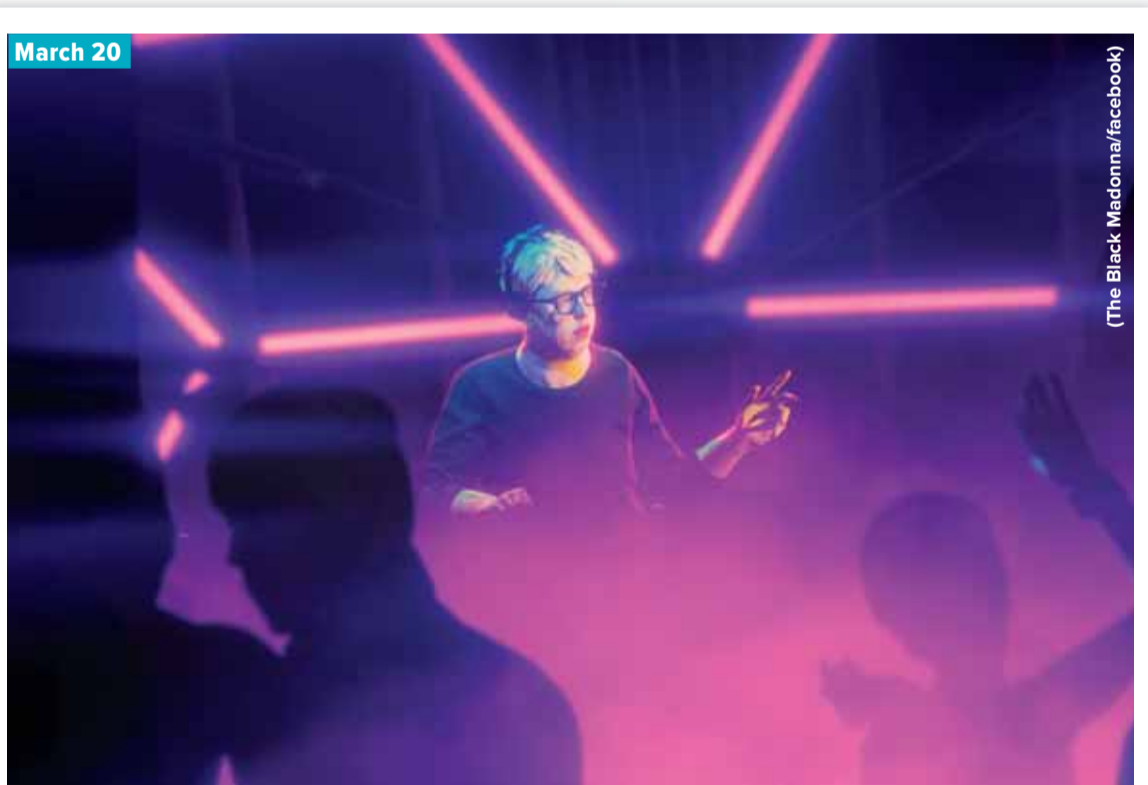
YA + GOD = A (paintings, graphics and other artworks by Lviv artist Myroslav Yahoda). NAMU. 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Hr 20-60 **11**

Environmental Conditions (contemplative water-color paintings by levgen Petrov). Tsek. 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Free

Shows

Mannerheim Line (rock). Caribbean Club. 7 p.m. Hr 400-800 **2**

Formula Karnas (jazz). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 600 **1**



The Black Madonna, Roman K, SE62

Underground electronic music club Closer will soon treat Kyiv ravers to a special lineup. One of the world's most famous DJs, The Black Madonna, will shock the venue with some wild mix of electronic genres. Famous for dynamic sets, the U.S. DJ merges all kinds of music in her sets from disco and house to techno. In 2016, British electronic dance and clubbing media Mixmag called The Black Madonna the DJ of the year. The rest of the lineup features local DJs Roman K and SE62.

The Black Madonna, Roman K, SE62.

Closer (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) March 20. 11:55 p.m. Price to be announced

By Toma Istomina

Venues

Live Music

1 32 Jazz Club (32 Vozdvizhenska St.) +38068 411 1972

2 Caribbean Club (4 Petliuryi St.)

+38067 224 4111

3 Dom Music Bar (10 Sahaidachnoho St.) +38096 011 0515

Clubs

4 Closer (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) +38067 250 0308

5 Crest (12 Khreshchatyk St.) www.facebook.com/Crest-102106651206240

6 Hvlv Bar (18 Verkhniy Val St.) +38063 443 0925

7 Otel' (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) +38063 618 0145

8 River Port (67 Nyzhniy Val St.) www.facebook.com/riverportkyiv

Miscellaneous

9 M17 Contemporary Art Center (102-104 Antonovycha St.) +38067 310 6631

10 The Naked Room (21 Reitaraska St.) +38050 014 5282

11 National Art Museum of Ukraine, NAMU (6 Mykhaila Hrushevskoho

St.) +38044 279 6462

12 Tsek Art Gallery (69 Kyrylivska St.) +38063 131 9481

13 Voloshyn Gallery (13 Tereshchenkivska St.) +38067 467 0007

14 Ya Gallery (49B Khoryva St.)

+38044 492 9203

Theater

15 ProEnglish Theater (3 Smolenska St.) +38098 256 7331

Partial list of events postponed in Ukraine to prevent the further spread of the novel coronavirus

Events	Number of participants in 2019 or capacity	Old date	New date	About the event
iForum 2020	13,300	May 20	postponed until fall	Largest Ukrainian tech conference
Kyiv Half Marathon	16,500	April 4-5	postponed	Biggest marathon in Ukraine
Kurazh March	15,000	March 14-15	April 25-26	Flea market in Kyiv
VideoZhara	18,000	May 23-24	canceled	Festival for bloggers
Public events at PinchukArtCentre	20,000 annually	Every day	Key events canceled	Top gallery of contemporary art in Kyiv
Public events at Mystetskyi Arsenal	5,000 capacity	March 19	Restricted to 60 visitors	Art exhibition center
Kyiv Post Employment Fair	1,100	March 28	May 23	Biannual career event
DTF Magazine Week	First time	March 23-29	postponed	Lifestyle, culture festival
Ulichnaya Eda	15,000	March 28-29	postponed until April	Street food festival
2020 EaP Civil Society Hackathon	60 participants + guests	April 3-4	postponed	International hackathon for civil society activists, IT specialists, designers
Upwork Expert Evenings	—	March	postponed	Networking for freelancers
John Smith Trust alumni gathering	500+	March 13-15	canceled	Alumni event for John Smith Trust fellowship programs for change-makers
Legal School	—	24 March - 26 May	postponed	Educational project by Asters law firm and European Business Association
America House Kyiv	70	Every day	postponed	Educational center
Ukraine WOW	150,000	till March 29	cancelled	The interactive exhibition with art installations about Ukraine.
Burns Night	200	March 28	Sept. 5	Kyiv Lions Club annual charity event
Dragon Capital's Annual Ukraine Investor Conferences	100-500	March 19-20	postponed	The conference brings together top Ukrainian economic and political figures, business leaders, and representatives of international financial organizations.
II International Trade Fair Coating Expo	exposition area exceeded 7 000 m ²	March 31 - April 3	postponed until November	The only specialized exhibition in Ukraine with the latest paint and varnish products, raw materials and equipment for the manufacture of coatings.
Kyiv Technical Fair	179 companies and organizations from 10 countries	March 31 - April 3	postponed	The demonstration of the latest scientific and technological achievements necessary for innovation development of Ukrainian economy.
Liga Smihu 2020	—	March 13-15	April 6-8	Ukrainian Championship of Humor
Kyiv Chestnut Run	20,000 +	May 31	postponed	It is a race for life that combines tens of thousands of people who love running and saves lives for children with heart defects.
YUNA 2020	167 nominees	March 24	postponed	National music award ceremony.

Organizers of these events and managers of these art galleries have publicly announced that they are canceling, postponing or suspending public activities due to government quarantine measures designed to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus in Ukraine. All nurseries, schools and universities will cancel classes for three weeks starting on March 12.

Source: Kyiv Post


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Government instructs schools to close, but some locals resist

By Toma Istomina
istomina@kyivpost.com

For millions of Ukrainian school and university students, the morning of March 12 was no ordinary one.

They didn't attend classes as usual, but instead stayed home and carried on with distance learning instead. They will do that for at least three more weeks due to the government's decision to shut down all educational institutions, a precaution against the novel coronavirus pandemic.

However, some local authorities, such as the ones in the eastern city of Kharkiv and western hub of Lviv, at least initially refused to follow the government's orders, posing a possible risk to public health.

The Cabinet of Ministers announced the ruling to close nurseries, schools and universities on March 11.

There have been three confirmed cases of the disease so far in Ukraine, but no deaths.

The infection, which originated in China in December 2019, has been detected in 134,000 people and has claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 people worldwide.

Schools must close

The order to close places of education was accompanied by a ban on events that involve more than 200 people and the shutdown of cinemas, entertainment centers and other venues.

Although children and youth generally have mild symptoms with coronavirus, they might still pass it along to others, while those with underlying health conditions are more vulnerable. Children are advised to follow common preventive actions, including washing hands with warm water and soap, covering coughs and not touching their faces. But since children can spread germs easily, studies suggest that proactive school closures might delay an outbreak's peak and reduce the rate of new cases.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 46 countries on three continents have announced or implemented school shutdowns on a local or nationwide scale.

Distance learning

The Ministry of Education and Science issued a statement on March 11 announcing that educational institutions of all levels and forms of ownership will have to close until April 3. They will have to cancel all classes, while teachers and professors are required to provide distance learning.

Starting on March 12, the majority of institutions, or about 5,000 schools and over 600 universities and colleges, closed down. The measure affects more than 4 million students throughout the country.

But quarantines are nothing new to Ukrainian schools. It's a rare winter when students don't miss class for a one-week or two-week shutdown amid the spread of infections such as



An employee disinfects a classroom of a school in Kyiv on March 12, 2020. Ukrainian authorities announced on March 11 they were closing schools and universities across the country for three weeks to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

the flu. In fact, just a little more than a month ago, 120 schools in Kyiv were partially or completely shut down because of the rapid spread of viral respiratory infections.

In Ukraine, the heads of educational institutions can implement a quarantine when more than 20% of their students (or of a single class) get infected.

It's not yet clear if teachers and professors will continue working, but the education ministry has recommended that all educational institutions "partially move employees to remote work."

Oksana Denshchykova, an English teacher from Sumy, a city of 265,000 people some 330 kilometers northeast of Kyiv, says that the ministry will give more instructions on March 13.

She says that teachers might have to take two weeks of vacation out of their 56-day paid annual vacation allowance, which they normally use up during the summer. The third week of the quarantine, which runs from March 23 until March 29, coincides with the official spring break, so it won't be counted as vacation.

"We're not losing anything," Denshchykova told the Kyiv Post. "We will just have to rest now and work more in summer," she said.

In order to not disrupt the educational process, teachers give students homework, while professors either

give assignments or plan to hold lectures through video conferences, depending on their subject's plan.

Denshchykova says that students will have to either send their assignments online or hand them in, which is not prohibited.

The education ministry will also postpone trial examinations known as the external independent evaluation, or EIE, which Ukrainian school graduates take to test their knowledge before taking actual tests at the end of an academic year. The trial EIE will take place in early April instead of late March.

Denshchykova believes that the quarantine will not have a negative effect on the graduates' preparation for the EIE. In fact, she says that it might actually have the opposite impact, as students will have more time to focus on the subjects they need to pass, as well as to take more private lessons, as many usually do before the tests.

Mayors disobey

Most of the local authorities supported the government's new measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Some authorities, like the Kyiv City State Administration, even implemented the measures before the Cabinet of Ministers made the decision at a national level.

However, some local authorities have liberally interpreted the government's instructions.

The head of the Odesa Oblast Administration, Maksym Kutsyi, said that the southern oblast will close schools and ban mass events, however, it will not shut down cinemas, theaters or entertainment malls.

"If necessary and the epidemic situation worsens, additional decisions will be made regarding the closure or restriction of institutions, entertainment or cultural centers," Kutsyi said during a press conference on March 12.

Meanwhile, in Lviv, a city of 724,000 people located 540 kilometers to the west of Kyiv, nurseries and schools will be open until the end of the week, while universities will close immediately.

"Thursday and Friday are a transitional period," Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi wrote on Facebook on March 11. "We understand that not everyone is able to leave their children at home immediately," he added.

Kharkiv Mayor Hennady Kernes went further, saying that the city will not close schools and nurseries at all. He said that there is no registered or even suspected case of coronavirus in Kharkiv, a city of 1.4 million people located 478 kilometers east of Kyiv.

Kernes said that parents will struggle with taking care of their children for three weeks, while they keep working.

"For many of them, it is now

becoming an ordeal," Kernes wrote on Facebook on March 11.

Following the government's ruling is not optional, but mandatory. That's why prosecutors in Kharkiv opened proceedings on March 12 into the city administration's possible violation of epidemic control rules. If found guilty, officials could face a Hr 1,700 (\$65) fine, six months of arrest or three years of prison.

Hassle for parents

The Ministry of Health recommended that employers let employees work remotely in order to decrease the risk of the coronavirus spreading — and all the more so if they have children who are now quarantined.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs set an example by allowing workers to either work from home or bring their children to the ministry if they have nobody to stay with. Many private companies appeared to be flexible, too.

Anna Diatlenko, 31, a mother of a 3-year-old girl and an IT company employee, was allowed to work remotely. Normally, Diatlenko's daughter would stay at a private nursery from 8 a.m. till 7 p.m., as both she and her husband work full time.

"Everyone is responsive because they all have children and understand everything," Diatlenko told the Kyiv Post. 🇺🇦

Better safe than sorry: Ukraine moves to outrun coronavirus

By Artur Korniienko
korniienko@kyivpost.com

On March 12, the same day as Ukraine shut schools and canceled mass events to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the country reported two new cases of the disease identified as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Now, medical experts say that the restrictions were justified.

"It's the first time that the country is working preventively (against a virus), not just trying to catch up with the situation," Viktor Lyashko, Ukraine's chief sanitary doctor, said on March 12 when the nationwide quarantine measures came into effect.

But there is a lot of uncertainty about the real scope of the disease in the country. The most common concern is that only around 51 people have been tested nationwide — exclusively those who came from hotspots for the virus abroad, such as Italy — and had flu-like symptoms.

"There are obviously more cases," said Fedir Lapiy, a pediatrician specializing in infectious diseases. "But Ukraine can't test all the sick or all who want to test. The (healthcare) system can't stand it."

Meanwhile, the government doesn't communicate to the public how to test for coronavirus: no TV ads, nothing on state websites and social networks, which only provide information on disease statistics and personal safety. Lyashko speaks about the testing algorithm and how the public can undergo tests only when pressed by journalists at daily briefings.

Designating Lyashko as a government speaker on coronavirus, creating a special hotline and Telegram channel are positive steps, said infectious disease doctor Volodymyr Kurpita, but the government's communication strategy is still "unclear and confusing."

"And when the government imposes some rigid measures (against coronavirus) without enough information, it gives the impression the authorities are hiding something," said Kurpita, who's also the former head of Ukraine's Public Health Center. "So people stop trusting these measures."

The response

Ukraine started to get ready for COVID-19 in January, when the disease became an epidemic in China: The government evaluated medical capacities and resources across the country, sent out instructions to the regions, started to train doctors, including via webinars and simulations.

In February, the government procured its first Chinese virus-related test systems for laboratories in Kyiv. And on Feb. 29, a Ukrainian returned from Italy and was immediately hospitalized with fever and coughing in Chernivtsi, a city of 500 kilometers southwest of Kyiv. His samples were sent to this Kyiv lab for testing, and two days later, the tests confirmed he was infected with COVID-19. On March 2, Chernivtsi Oblast closed all schools.



Participants attend a training session on organizing and carrying out preventative measures in case a patient is suspected of having COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, at the Oleksandrivska Clinical Hospital in Kyiv on Feb. 28, 2020.

Since then, the spread of the coronavirus has surged in Europe, especially in Italy where it has infected 12,462 and killed 827 people so far. While subsiding in its origin country China with 80,981 infected and 3,173 killed, the virus became a global pandemic — it has infected 135,000 and killed 5,000 people around the globe.

The European Union countries responded with airport and border screenings of passengers for flu symptoms. They have closed most of their flights to China and Iran, another hard-hit country, and Ukraine did the same. Italy banned mass gathering and later placed severe travel restrictions inside the country. Other EU countries are gradually following suit.

But Ukraine, having one of the smallest numbers of confirmed cases of the infection in Europe, decided not to wait. The government announced that it would impose a quarantine starting on March 12, and it would last for three weeks until April 3.

"We don't want to wait until (the virus epidemic) grows parabolically here," Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said at a press briefing following the government's decision. "We want to protect Ukrainians and Ukraine to the maximum, and pass this phase as easily as possible."

So Ukraine has closed its nurseries, schools, and universities; it banned mass gatherings of more than 200 people, except events of "state necessity" such as parliamentary meetings, and sporting events given there are no spectators.

Ukraine also imposed limits on flights to and from Italy and closed 170 out of 219 border checkpoints, including to Russian-occupied parts of the Donbas. The remaining 49 checkpoints will have thorough medical screenings and add mobile quarantine centers.

The government also allocated Hr 100 million (\$4 million) to buy personal protective equipment from Ukrainian private companies — gloves, masks, and protective suits — to supply medics and other state employees. The state has prohibited the export of such equipment until June 1; it will purchase infrared screening equipment to take the temperature of passengers at Kyiv Boryspil International Airport.

With these measures, the government says it's ready to face the coronavirus outbreak. The state has around 12,000 beds in infectious disease wards with 605 medical ventilators for patients with lung damage. There are 2,000 infectious

disease doctors and 5,000 medical workers in Ukraine.

The government also keeps procuring hundreds of coronavirus stationary test systems and thousands of rapid test kits, which take 10 minutes to give a result. On March 12, test systems were sent to seven cities: Dnipro, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Vinnytsia, Zaporizhia and Zhytomyr. Kyiv also bought additional 5,000 kits.

Late on March 12, the government reported two new cases of COVID-19 in Ukraine: an elderly woman in Zhytomyr, a city just 140 kilometers west of Kyiv; and another man in Chernivtsi Oblast, the region where the first case had been reported.

There are now three confirmed cases in Ukraine.

Is it enough?

Medical experts welcome the measures Ukraine has taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and agree that more measures should follow. However, some say that Ukraine should have reacted even more proactively.

Ivan Kondratenko, a private doctor in Dnipro who worked in state hospitals for over 18 years, says that Ukraine should have done a month ago what Israel did on March 9, when it started to require a 14-day quarantine for all people entering the state and banned entry for people coming from some affected countries altogether.

Kurpita, the former head of Ukraine's Public Health Center, says that Ukraine's underfunded infectious disease wards may not be ready to receive scores of COVID-19 infected patients and provide adequate care. The 12,000 beds would only be enough if there were no patients with other infectious diseases.

"That's why it's urgent that the government comes up with a clear algorithm for how to repurpose general wards to treat patients with COVID-19," Kurpita says.

For most COVID-19 patients who suffer only mild symptoms, the doctors should recommend that they self-quarantine and stay home, pediatrician Lapiy said. At the same time, doctors should keep in touch with these patients.

The government should also buy more medical ventilators in addition to the current 605, Lapiy said. Currently, it's unclear how many of them are in different oblasts, and there should be some available in all wards, the pediatrician said.

Kurpita and Lapiy agree that the available medical personnel — 2,000

→ page 14

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Pandemic cuts entertainment options for foreseeable future



A scoreboard shows the number of spectators attending the quarterfinal of the Ukrainian Cup between Dynamo and Alexandria soccer clubs at Olympic Stadium in Kyiv on March 11, 2020. The capacity of the stadium is 70,000, but only about 9,500 people attended the match. On the same day, Ukraine announced it would introduce a nationwide three-week quarantine starting on March 12. During the quarantine, sporting events such as soccer matches can take place as long as there are no spectators.

By Daryna Antoniuk
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The novel coronavirus has already hit Ukraine's business and travel sectors. Now that the government has canceled cultural and sporting events, closed educational institutions and suspended concerts, the epidemic threatens to derail much of daily life in Kyiv.

Kyiv has closed schools and banned mass gatherings of more than 200 people, including concerts, conferences and film screenings, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko announced on March 11. The ban will last for three weeks, from March 12 to April 3.

According to the government, these anti-epidemic measures will help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, which has already killed 4,600 people globally.

"Although no cases of the coronavirus disease have been reported in Kyiv yet, we have decided not to wait and to protect residents of the city," Klitschko said.

Universities and schools
The coronavirus outbreak will dis-

rupt the education process, as students stay home, universities postpone exams, and academic mobility programs – when teachers or students go abroad to study – come to a halt.

For a three-week period, schools and universities will try to move their classes online or modify their course syllabi to continue studies after the quarantine. All major tests and competitions like Olympiads have also been postponed until later in the year.

Authorities have also recommended that students move out of their dormitories for the three weeks.

Meanwhile, at a meeting of the Kyiv City Council on March 11, Deputy Mayor Mykola Povoroznyk contradicted the official statement, saying that these are "precautionary measures" and nobody should call them a "quarantine."

Cinemas and theaters

The COVID-19 epidemic has also hit the entertainment industry.

Kyiv's largest cinemas – Planeta Kino, IMAX, Multiplex and Oskar – have all told the Kyiv Post that they are prepared to close or at

least restrict the number of daily screenings.

The Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theater in Kyiv has also decided to postpone performances and has already canceled its annual tours.

Additionally, Kyiv authorities have announced they will send medical workers to the city's shopping malls to monitor people's health there.

"Starting on March 12, medical staff will work in every shopping center, giving medical check-ups and taking temperatures," said Oleg Ruban, the deputy head of the State Service on Food Safety and Consumer Protection. The medical workers will pay close attention to those who cough and sneeze, he added.

Economic experts are already predicting that the disruption of the entertainment sector will have far-reaching consequences for Ukraine's economy. Globally, for example, the price of entertainment companies' stocks has already dropped by 57% on average in a month and is now approaching its lowest point during 2019.

"The introduction of these drastic measures will limit budget revenues

and increase public discontent," Volodymyr Kurpita, head of state the health-monitoring body Center for Public Health, told the Kyiv Post.

Church and parliament

The restrictive measures in Kyiv won't affect events and services of state importance such as parliament sessions and public transportation, according to Klitschko.

However, David Arakhamia, head of President Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant of the People party, said that the work of the Verkhovna Rada could be suspended should one of the 424 lawmakers be infected with the novel coronavirus. Arakhamia said he is concerned about the "exotic trips" of certain lawmakers.

One lawmaker, Oleg Voloshyn, already went into voluntary home quarantine after a French lawmaker with whom he had met a week earlier was diagnosed with COVID-19. So far, Voloshyn has shown no symptoms of the illness, and his quarantine is set to end on March 12.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's former Cabinet Minister Dmytro Dubilet wrote that lawmakers should consid-

City Life

With Daria Shulzhenko
shulzhenko@kyivpost.com

Ukraine's state museum NAMU becomes a hot spot for youth thanks to Banda Agency

Kyivans are rarely surprised by the graffiti painted on the capital's buildings. But at the end of February, strange quotes appeared on the walls of Kyiv's most popular venues like the Closer nightclub or the Kyiv Food Market.

"Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' should be displayed with his ear," read one message. Outraged people started complaining.

But it wasn't vandalism. The graffiti was part of an advertising campaign created by the Ukrainian advertising agency Banda to promote a new exhibition at the National Art Museum of Ukraine, or NAMU.

Dedicated to the artwork of renowned Lviv artist Myroslav Yagoda (1957–2018), the exhibition features over 60 of his paintings and graphics. It runs through April 12.

Yagoda, known for bright and sometimes shocking paintings, had schizophrenia, which influenced his artworks' highly unusual names. "The artist should put a question mark," read another graffiti message.

Banda Agency created the campaign in which, instead of paintings, people would see only the artworks' names or descriptions. The paintings "are very psychedelic, unusual and sometimes even frightening," says Roman Gurbanov, a copywriter at Banda Agency. "We didn't want to give any spoilers of the exhibition to the audience."

Banda also used temporary paint for the graffiti, so there would be no harm done to the city.

On Feb. 23, the day after the exhibition's opening, NAMU gathered over 1,200 visitors, hundreds more than usual. "It's not every day that the state museum promotes its new exhibitions with graffiti," says Olha Balashova, deputy head of NAMU's development.

The new campaign is part of NAMU's bigger changes launched since 2017.

Rich history

NAMU, Kyiv's oldest museum, was opened in 1899. Initially, it was a private museum of antiques and arts, but became state-owned in 1919. Some five years later, it was named after the iconic Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861).

After World War II, when all of modern Ukraine was part of the



Visitors of the Book Arsenal fair held at Mystetsky Arsenal in Kyiv make purchases on May 26, 2019. Starting on March 19, the venue with a usual capacity of 5,000 people will close its doors to crowds, allowing only 60 people at a time to visit events, art exhibitions and lectures held there.

See you online! Ukrainians practice social distancing by canceling big events

page 12 —>

er having online video calls in case offline parliamentary sessions are suspended. Dubilet claims he submitted a bill to allow such meetings several months ago “without thinking of the quarantine.”

Among other things, the Kyiv City Council has recommended suspending mass church services, while sporting events such as soccer matches can take place as long as there are no spectators.

Calls for understanding

Although Prime Minister Denys Shmygal announced a nationwide

quarantine on March 11, there remains a risk that some organizers will continue to hold events. The problem is that Ukrainian legislation does not define “mass gatherings” clearly.

Lawyer Vladislav Vlasnyuk says he is sure the private sector can easily abuse the quarantine.

In a public statement on March 12, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said that organizations and institutions that refuse to comply with anti-epidemic measures will be prosecuted. He did not specify how or under which laws.

“It’s about the safety and health of the city’s residents,” Klitschko said.

In a March 12 Facebook post, Mykhailo Apostol, an advisor to Ukraine’s interior minister, called on Ukrainians to follow the rules of the quarantine. Those who violate the quarantine can face fines and up to three years in prison, he said. Should the violation lead to “serious consequences,” they could face five to eight years behind bars.

“The main thing here is people taking responsibility and being understanding, because the lives and health of our citizens depend on your actions or lack thereof,” he wrote. “In case the restrictions aren’t followed, law enforcement will receive signals from citizens and react to them.”

‘Unkept Promises’ four-part series will publish its final installment in Friday, March 20, print edition



Editor’s Note: The Kyiv Post’s “Unkept Promises” series looks at unpunished bank fraud, the lack of legal and judicial reform and the failure to hold big-city mayors accountable. The final part will look at the enduring influence of Ukraine’s oligarchs under President Volodymyr Zelensky. Its publication has been rescheduled until March 20 because of the coronavirus pandemic.



Part 1
Unpunished Bank Fraud, Feb. 14, 2020



Part 2
Nowhere In Sight, Feb. 21, 2020



Part 3
Local Elites As Entrenched As Ever, Feb. 28, 2020



Part 4
Untamed Oligarchs, March 20, 2020



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City Life

Ukraine's state museum NAMU becomes a hot spot for youth thanks to Banda Agency

page 12 —>

Soviet Union, the museum featured works of Russian artists and was called the "State Museum of Western European Art." However, it again returned to Ukrainian art in 1944.

Then, in 1994, three years after Ukraine gained independence, the National Art Museum of Ukraine finally appeared.

Since then, the museum has started promoting Ukrainian art and culture and has become home to nearly 44,000 artworks by renowned Ukrainian artists.

"This is the most representative collection of Ukrainian art in the world," Balashova says.

She said Soviet museums mainly spread propaganda, creating stereotypes about museums that linger in Ukraine to this day.

Balashova says Kyiv's creative youth has rarely attended its exhibitions, preferring European art to Ukrainian. "We try to change this attitude," Balashova says.

Winds of change

Kyiv citizens often refer to NAMU as "the building with the lions." Located at Kyiv's central Hrushevskoho Street, NAMU greets its visitors with the sculptures of two giant lions on its sides. It is a dark grey building with columns and huge wooden doors.



A visitor to NAMU museum in Kyiv takes a picture of a painting by Ukrainian artist Myroslav Yagoda on Feb. 26, 2020. The new exhibition of Yagoda's works will be held at NAMU until April 12, 2020.

And it didn't undergo any reconstruction for years.

But in summer 2018, the reconstruction of its outdoor facade finally started, at a cost of nearly Hr 70 million from the Ukrainian government. It is still ongoing.

According to Balashova, it is the first major reconstruction of the museum in nearly 70 years. The state money, however, is not enough. To

renovate the lobby inside the museum, its staff had to raise money by themselves. NAMU aimed to raise Hr 710,000 and eventually succeeded.

"It is impossible to talk about any changes and a new audience when people come to the museum and simply do not feel comfortable there," Balashova says.

The museum dropped the Soviet look in the lobby and transformed itself into a stylish and modern place in other areas. Now the lobby features light blue walls, white sculptures, bright blue tables and wardrobes.

"We go beyond the usual for museums in Ukraine," Balashova says.

NAMU was closed for more than six months during the renovation. But Balashova says it was worth the time and money spent.

Then, in March 2018, NAMU launched a new and popular retrospective exhibition of clothing by French brand Chloé called "Chloé Couture." It gathered thousands of Ukrainians who came not only for the exhibition but also to rediscover the museum.

"We realized that a line of people in front of the museum is possible even on a weekday morning," Balashova says.

New identity, new NAMU

It took NAMU around three years to become a highly popular place for Ukrainian youth.

In 2017, the museum asked Banda Agency to create a new identity and an advertising campaign that would help them to attract this new audience.

The goal for the new identity was to combine three core principles for NAMU: Ukrainian, artistic and modern.

The first options proposed by Banda failed for NAMU. But as soon as NAMU invited Banda's employees to spend some time at its premises and study its art collections, their perception of the museum changed.

In 2018, after Banda created the new identity for the museum, the National Art Museum of Ukraine became NAMU. They created a new logo to replace the old one, which was written in Ukrainian with a picture of the museum on it. Now, NAMU is written in a unique font that combines seven ancient Ukrainian types of writing. The museum's logo has become minimalist and modern, more attractive for youth. Banda also created branded posters, T-shirts, caps and socks.

The campaign became a sensa-

tion not only for its creative design and new logo, but also for its price. The museum paid a token amount for the campaign — only Hr 1,000 (\$40). "They did that almost for free," Balashova says.

Banda tries to do several free projects a year to develop design and culture in Ukraine.

"It was a challenging project," Gurbanov says. "NAMU is like the main museum of Ukraine, so we wanted to create an amazing, large-scale project for it."

Along with the new identity, NAMU's communication changed as well.

Now the museum has a Facebook profile and an Instagram following of more than 10,000 people and nearly 300 pictures and videos of and about Ukrainian art.

In 2018, NAMU also launched a special audio guide in which some Ukrainian celebrities — including singers Tina Karol and Monatik and even Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky — voiced descriptions of some of the paintings.

Although it is now available in Ukrainian only, the museum promises to translate the guide into English soon.

And its new exhibition of Yagoda artworks has become a sensation. The artist is mainly known in western Ukraine, where he was born. But NAMU wanted Kyiv citizens to discover his neo-expressionism paintings.

"We try to work with unspoken, inconvenient and not fully explored topics in the history of art," says Tetiana Zhmurko, the exhibition's curator.

"We wanted to keep up to date, deliver socially important messages and attract a new audience but still, preserve our identity as an art museum. And we did it," Balashova says. "The museum has finally come to life." ☺

YA + GOD = A.

NAMU (6 Mykhaila Hrushevskoho St.). Wed-Thurs — 10 a.m.— 6 p.m., Fri — 12 p.m.— 8 p.m., Sat — 11 a.m.— 7 p.m., Sun — 10 a.m.— 6 p.m. Hr 20-60

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

1. Ukraine shuts schools, mass events to prevent coronavirus spread
2. Ukrainian airlines cancel some flights to 16 countries due to coronavirus
3. Marc Jacobs shoots photo campaign in Ukrainian model's hometown
4. New report: Nearly 20 percent of Ukrainian trade is illicit
5. Shmygal reassures on coronavirus steps, Ukrainian economy
6. Coronavirus: 49 Ukrainians in quarantine on cruise ship near California
7. Zelensky gives Russia a year to strike deal on Donbas, hints about other options
8. These are the 10 ministers ousted in Ukraine's Cabinet shakeup
9. Business Update — March 11: Coronavirus measures, businesses prepare for 3-week slowdown
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page 11 —>

doctors and 5,000 staffers — is not enough, especially since many of them can get sick as well. Ukraine may have to mobilize interns and retired medics as Italy and the U.K. are doing.

"A volunteer movement should be mobilized just as it was during the EuroMaidan Revolution and has been since the war," Lapiy said. "Ukrainians are pure of heart and will be ready to help others."

Despite the fact that the Ministry

of Health organized centralized trainings and webinars, the readiness of doctors in facing COVID-19 may strongly vary across the country, private doctor Kondratenko said.

"The degree of preparedness of health workers depends solely on the competencies of the heads of hospitals, because neither the minister nor the deputy minister trains health workers," Kondratenko said.

Lapiy claimed that many Ukrainian doctors treated patients during the 2009 flu pandemic. They know the practice and tactics of treat-

ing patients with lung damage and will pass the knowledge to younger doctors.

In the face of danger, doctors require a lot of motivation, Kurpita said, adding that besides the moral kind, the government should also provide them with financial motivation and social benefits.

"As a citizen of my country and a doctor, I know what I can do and must do," Kondratenko said. "The rest should be on the people who get their salaries from the taxes I pay." ☺

A complete guide to Ukraine's attempt to stop the coronavirus



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Ukraine moves closer to war footing against COVID-19

- 1** A man covers his face with a scarf while walking in front of the frescos of St. Michael's Cathedral in the center of Kyiv on March 11, 2020.
 - 2** A man passes by a discarded face mask at Palats Sportu metro station on March 12, 2020.
 - 3** Two Ukrainians do an elbow bump instead of a handshake to avoid coronavirus on March 12, 2020.
 - 4** A metro station employee wears a mask in front of portraits of boxer Mike Tyson and mixed martial artist Conor McGregor at Palats Sportu metro station on March 12, 2020 in Kyiv.
 - 5** Workers disinfect a trolleybus after it arrived at a bus depot in Kyiv on March 12, 2020.
 - 6** Medical workers on March 5, 2020 test a new sanitary helicopter designed to help transport people infected with a virus in Poltava Oblast.
 - 7** A woman wears a face mask in a metro train on March 12, 2020 in Kyiv.
 - 8** Participants attend a training session on the organization and implementation of preventative measures in case a patient is suspected of being infected with coronavirus in the Oleksandrivska Clinical Hospital in Kyiv on Feb. 28, 2020.
 - 9** Two women walk in Kyiv wearing face masks on March 12, 2020.
- (Photos by Volodymyr Petrov, Oleg Petrasjuk, press service of the Ukrainian president, kyivcity.gov.ua)*

