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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw holds debate over amendment to the 2008 Constitution

THE 15th regular session of second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its 16th day meeting yesterday, debating the articles and sub-articles in the second bill to amend the State Constitution.

MP U Sai Ngon Sai Hein from Maukmai constituency opposed the proposal to amend sub-article (k) of Article number (25) in the table of bill for removing the Minister for Border Affairs from the members of the National Defence and Security Council.

He said the ministry has to collect update information about border areas for peace, stability and development sectors to provide suggestions in important affairs of the nation.

Pyithu Hluttaw Representative of Tatmadaw Brig-Gen Win Moe also objected to amendment of sub-article (b) of Article 396 in relation to recalling a representative of the Hluttaw with a minimum of one per cent out of the original voters of the electorate of the relevant constituency by submitting the complaint to the Union Election Commission.

He added the provision is fair to both the Hluttaw rep-



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN**

representatives and the voters to prevent breaching of law like high treason.

MP U Khin Maung Thi from Loilem constituency opposed the amendment of sub-article (d) of Article 6 in the Chapter 1

of the State Constitution as it is important for political parties to exercise disciplines in the path of democracy.

MP U Sai Thiha Kyaw from Mongyai constituency supported the amendment of sub-article (b)

of Article 396 from the minimum one per cent of regional voters into the 20 per cent to avoid facing against frequent complaints.

Some other amendments for sub-articles and articles were also discussed by 18 Hluttaw

representatives.

The 17th day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will convene on 4 March.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 response committee holds second meeting

THE Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) organized its second meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, in his capacity as the chairman of central committee, updated the situations of COVID-19 which has occurred in over 60 global countries, and called for effective

measures.

At the Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 19 February, China requested its partner countries to

avoid excess control measures not to hurt people to people relations, trade and investments.

Citing the instructions of Myanmar State Counsellor, the Union Minister also discussed bringing back of Myanmar illegal

migrant workers from China in coordination between the two countries and healthcare services for them at the respective areas of the country.

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State Central Working Committee of Sangha convenes regular meeting

THE 8th State Central Working Committee of Sangha held the first day of its second meeting at Maha Pasana Cave in the precinct of Kaba Aye Pagoda in Yangon yesterday.

Led by the senior Buddhist monks, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, his deputy minister and officials attended the meeting.

Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa presided over the meeting, and delivered an opening remark.

The Sayadaw explained the duties of State Sangha Maha Nayaka for purification and propagation of Sasana, while monitoring the activities of Sangha committees at State/Region and township levels to ensure observing monastic disciplines in religious affairs and education sector.

He also admonished the



The first day of the second regular meeting of the 8th State Central Working Committee of Sangha is in progress at the Maha Pasana Cave in the precinct of Kaba Aye Pagoda in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

members of Sangha to promote practicing the monastic rules among Sangha community for

perpetuation of Sasana. He concluded his speech to avoid disputes and foster unity

among the members of Sangha. Then, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko presented religious

affairs, saying the crucial role of senior monks who know well about the disciplinary rules in settling disputes.

He also appraised systematic management of Sangha committees at various levels in holding religious exams across the country.

The Union Minister finally explained accommodation and healthcare services for the monks who are attending the meeting, and wished for the health of monks and propagation of Buddha Sasana.

The meeting also took records on the demise of highly respected monks in the past 12 months, and enlisted the newly elected ones for substitutions.

Annual reports on the activities of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee were also read out by the respective monks during the first day meeting. — MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Report on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

From 4-1-2020 to 3-3-2020
3-3-2020, 8: 15 pm

1. Situation update worldwide

(World Health Organization's statement issued at 1:30 am (MST) on 3-3-2020)

Total affected countries - 65
Total cases - 88,948
Total death toll - 3,043

* The WHO has announced outbreak of disease has occurred in many countries in both imported cases and local transmission.

* 26 countries, territories or areas outside China with reported cases

Sr	Regions in the list of WHO	Countries
1.	Western Pacific Region	Republic of Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Viet Nam
2.	European Region	Italy, Germany, France, Spain, The United Kingdom, Croatia, San Marino, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Finland, Denmark
3.	South-East Asian Region	Thailand, Indonesia
4.	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Iran, United Arab Emirates, Ecuador
5.	Region of the Americas	United States of America, Canada

According to the WHO's Situation Report on 28-2-2020, the risk assessment on transmission of COVID-19 stated that the outbreak rate was defined as the Very High in China, Regional Level and Global Level.

2. Situation in Myanmar (Until 6:00 pm on 3-3-2020)

	Laboratory Test			Number of Patient
	Positive Result	Negative Result	Under test	
People under Investigation	-	47	4	51
Suspected cases	-	2	-	2
Total	-	49	4	53

3. There are a total of 53 people under investigation across Myanmar from 31-1-2020 to 3-3-2020: 19 in Yangon Region, 13 in Shan State, 9 in Mandalay Region and 12 in other Regions and States.

4. In preparation for COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Sports is carrying out:

- (a) monitoring the persons (family members and health workers) who had close contacts with the patients and prevention and control measures against the disease at the hospitals and clinics
- (b) identifying suspected cases, quarantining them and providing effective treatments
- (c) giving instructions to the health workers to strictly follow preventive measures and make public awareness programme
- (d) publishing situation reports about Myanmar and other countries in the state-owned newspapers and the Internet website of the Ministry (www.mohs.gov.mm) and social media pages (<https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfHealthAndSportsMyanmar>) and (<https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarCDC>), with taking response to the fake news
- (e) coordination with relevant government agencies to lessen socio-economic impacts resulted from COVID-19

5. Although Myanmar has not found any COVID-19 patient so far, - COVID-19 is spreading not only in China but also in Singapore, Republic of Korea, Italy, and Iran at high level

- The chances of the travellers from the countries coming to Myanmar by flights, or through border crossings from other countries are high.
 - The ministry is increasing surveillance in upward momentum at the international airports.
 - The ministry is also closely monitoring the hotels, guest houses and houses where the foreign travellers will reside.
 - Local transmission was found in some countries where new cases occurred despite no close contacts with COVID-19 patients or no previous visit to the countries with the outbreak of disease.
 - In the crowd, people can be infected the virus from COVID-19 patients and asymptomatic carriers.
6. It is also possible that some cases could be found immediately in Myanmar, the people and social organizations are suggested:
- (a) to avoid crowded areas and festivals as much as possible
 - (b) to organize only unavoidable public events
 - (c) to restrict the number of attendees to those events where strictly measures must be posed to prevent the audience with fever or respiratory disease while following advice of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Ministry of Health and Sports

COVID-19 response committee holds second meeting

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He also called for finding ways to lessen impacts of the COVID-19 on economy, trade, commerce and employment opportunities.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, in his capacity as the joint chairman of committee, presented the measures of his office against the disease in coordination with relevant ministries across the country, while it has been advised not to organize large public events where screening of disease is to be carried out very tightly.

The Union Minister alerted evolving situation of the virus in the world with the increasing death rate of 3.6 per cent like navigating the way to an uncharted territory.

According to the Situation Report of WHO, most patients (80 per cent) experienced mild illness, approximately 14 per cent in severe disease and 6 per cent in critically ill.

He also remarked the possibility of transmission would decrease due to the decline in influx of visitors from the Republic of Korea, Japan and Singapore.

Dr Myint Htwe also explained that if the cases were found in the country, the patients would be quarantined at the new hospitals which have not been operated, and Waibargi hospital would be used only for the patients with symptoms and suspected cases.

He remarked there are just little chance for spreading the disease through border crossings as there are three medium provinces of Yunnan, Hunan and Guangzhou between the Myanmar border and Hubei province which was the centre of Corona-virus outbreak.

He also explained early case detection, isolation and treatment and table top exercises of his ministries.

Officials at the meeting also discussed the control measures of their agencies with awareness



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin delivers the speech at the second coordination meeting of the COVID-19 response committee in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

programme.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin made a concluding remark on the discussions and suggested to follow the rules and recommendations of WHO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe discussed the benefits from forming the central committee in the country and availability of primers and probes received from Japan for laboratory tests on the virus.

The meeting was attended

by Deputy Ministers, government ministers from three States and Regions, Permanent Secretaries of relevant ministries, Directors-General and senior officials.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

National committee meets to promote PLWD inclusion in hotels, tourism sector

A coordination meeting at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday discussed promoting the inclusion of people living with disabilities (PLWD) in the hotels and travel sector.

National Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) Vice Chairman Dr Win Myat Aye, who is also the Union Minister of the aforementioned ministry, first gave a speech. He said the hotels and tourism business supports the socioeconomic development of the nation. He said the Union Government places as much importance on ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities as developing the hotels and tourism sector. A re-

port released by the World Bank states that the people most interested in the global travel business are persons with disabilities and the elderly. The Union Minister said the Ministry of Construction is to make public buildings and its environment more accessible for persons with disabilities. He said that as officials from the Myanmar Hotel Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Tourism Federation, 11 affiliated organizations and other relevant personnel are here, the meeting can discuss how to remove obstacles for persons with disabilities in the hotels and tourism sector.

Next, the Director-General of the Rehabilitation Department explained the implementation

process of the previous meeting's decisions, including making hotels accessible for persons with disabilities and installing wheelchair access to stairs and restrooms. At the end of the meeting, the Union Minister delivered a closing speech where he urged full cooperation between the National Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, National Tourism Development Central Committee, organizations for persons with disabilities, and all citizens. There are a total of 2,021 hotels and accommodations throughout Myanmar and a workforce of 86,406 employees working at them, yet only 51 of them are persons with disabilities. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, officials and participants of the meeting on promoting the inclusion of people living with disabilities (PLWD) in the hotels and travel sector. PHOTO: MNA

Food safety workshop held in Yangon



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivers the speech at the workshop on developing effective strategies for safety of food sold inside and outside the markets. PHOTO: MNA

A workshop on developing effective strategies for safety of food sold inside and outside the markets was held in Yangon on 2 March.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of workshop at Lottee Hotel.

In his speech, the Union Minister highlighted the dangers of banned dyes, chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, parasite eggs and other bacteria in the foods.

He also called for cooperation of State/Region governments, social affairs ministries and municipal committees together with the MoHS in taking measures on safety of foods in consumer markets.

Social Affairs Minister of Yangon Region Government U Naing Ngan Lin and Director General of the Food and Drug Administration Department Professor Dr Khin Zaw made their opening remarks on the two-day workshop.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Surveillance and investigation of COVID-19 Updates at 8 pm, 3 March 2020

- The Ministry of Health and Sports is closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 in China and other 65 global countries, with conducting surveillance at international gateways, at the public hospitals, community-based monitoring and private healthcare facilities.
- In doing so—
 - A 24-year-old man living in Sagaing Township got fever, cough, chest pain and exhaustion beginning 29 February 2020, and was taken to Mandalay General Hospital on the following day. Although he had no record on visiting the COVID-19 affected areas in the past 14 days, he was suspected with the symptoms of this virus. He was then transferred to Kandawnadi hospital in Mandalay at 6:30 pm on 2 March. Medical treatments have been provided to him as a person under investigation, and his specimens have been taken for laboratory tests at the National Health Laboratory in Yangon.
 - A 25-year-old Chinese woman, a native of Zhejiang province, who worked at a factory in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon, arrived in Myanmar on 20 February. She began suffering fever, headache, malaise and serious lethargy on 1 March, and she was taken to the outpatient unit of Waibargi hospital on 3 March. She was diagnosed with the suspected symptoms of COVID-19 and provided with medical treatments as a person under investigation.
 - A 38-year-old Chinese man, a local of Zhejiang province, who worked at a factory in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon, arrived back to Myanmar on 11 February. He also suffered similar symptoms beginning 2 March. He was taken to the Waibargi hospital on the following day. He is now getting medical treatments due to the sign of COVID-19, and laboratory tests will be done to him.
 - A 9-year-old Grade-2 school girl who lived in Kyal Gaung Town of China of Yunnan province, China, arrived in Muse for regular schooling. On 3 March, she was diagnosed with fever and sore throat at the Muse border gate. She is now quarantined at Muse People's hospital as a person under investigation, and laboratory tests will be done at the National Health Laboratory in Yangon. She was not found suffering acute respiratory disease.
- The National Health Laboratory has confirmed on 3 March that the following persons were tested negative.
 - a 29-year-old Chinese man at Waibergi hospital
 - a 37-year-old New Zealand man at Waibergi hospital
 - a 32-year-old Myanmar man at Waibergi hospital
 - a 29-year-old Myanmar man at Sittway People's hospital.
 They were in good health conditions, but they will be allowed for discharging from the hospital after the 48 hours.
- Until 6 pm on 3 March, the remaining four patients are under close monitoring for medical treatments at the respective hospitals, and they were in good health conditions.
- Three Myanmar school girls who returned from Daegu city with the highest cases of COVID-19 on 2 March were not found with symptoms of the disease. However, they are being quarantined at the Waibargi hospital for 14 days to get early treatments if they suffered symptoms of the disease and to prevent possible transmissions to their family members.
- Although there is no laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 until now, the ministry is conducting round-the-clock surveillance in upward momentum. As the COVID-19 is spreading in 64 countries, including China and some of its neighbouring countries, people are suggested to follow health awareness guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports on prevention of the disease.— MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Illegal fishing boat seized in Kawthoung

The Myanmar Navy in Kawthoung, Taninthayi Region, seized a fishing boat on charges of illegal fishing in Myanmar's waters on Monday evening.

The wooden fishing boat is from Longlon, Dawei District, and it was fishing sharks in the sea when it was caught by the navy.

The dried meat of sharks and eight fishermen on board were handed over to the local authorities. The shark is one

of the endangered species in the Myanmar's waters. — Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) ■
(Translated by TTN)



The illegal fishing boat caught by the Myanmar Navy. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)

Two Chinese fugitives from murder in Thailand arrested in Ngwehsaung

TWO Chinese fugitives, out of the four suspects who absconded from Thailand after committing murder in the Kingdom, were arrested on Lovers Island near Ngwehsaung beach resort in Ayeyawady Region on 2 March.

The Ngwehsaung Township Administrator and officials brought them to the local police station for questioning as they were hiring a motorboat to leave for Gwa Township.

The two Chinese were identified as Mr Qin Miao who is a native of Anhur without holding any passport and another one Mr Gang Gang who is a native of Shaanxi province with a passport. They have been handed over to Patheingyi Police Station after they have disclosed the names and ages of remaining two suspects who are still at large.—Mu Mu (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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No demand for seedless watermelons as China resumes fruit purchase



Merchants are evaluating the quality of watermelons on a lorry at the Muse 105th Mile border trade zone. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Nyein Nyein
CHINA has resumed purchase of watermelons and muskmelons from Myanmar, but there has been no demand for seedless watermelons so far, U Naing Win, chair of the Myanmar Watermelon and Muskmelon Producers and Exporters Association.

“Last year, a truck of seedless watermelons was priced at 60,000-70,000 Yuan. This year, there is no demand for the fruits,” he added.

“The watermelon trade is not going well, plus there is zero demand for seedless watermelons. And, the trade of varieties of watermelons can only cover transportation costs,” said U

Naing Win. Myanmar primarily exports seedless watermelons, with volumes touching approximately 500,000 tons per year, the association stated.

“Seedless watermelon production is higher than that of other types of melons,” said U Naing Win.

On account of the coronavirus outbreak, exports of watermelons and muskmelons to China have dropped, with losses pegged at US\$70 million over one month (27 January to 3 March), he said.

“At this time last year, 700 trucks of watermelons were seen at Muse gate. Only 200 trucks of watermelons are now

sent to China per day. However, traders are facing mounting losses as the watermelons are fetching a low price,” he said.

At present, the price of watermelons is ranging from 10,000-20,000 Yuan per truck. Muskmelons are fetching about 40,000 Yuan per truck. But there is no demand for seedless watermelons. In order to remedy the current situation, the association has asked growers and traders to look for information and hold discussions with fruit depots.

Myanmar exports more than 800,000 tons of watermelons and 150,000 tons of muskmelons every year.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic oil prices slide on weak global cues

DOMESTIC oil prices have registered a downward trend for the past two months on the back of falling prices in the global markets.

“Domestic oil prices have been on the decline since 10 January owing to a fall in global oil prices. The prices have dropped by around K140-215 compared with the first week of January,” said traders.

On 8 January, oil prices were pegged at around K905 per liter for Octane 92, K995 for Octane 95, and K985 for diesel and premium diesel. On 3 March, the price of Octane 92 fell to K690-740, Octane 95 to K810-855, diesel to K750-810, and premium diesel to K760-820 per liter, according to the domestic oil market.

Meanwhile, in the global markets, oil prices dipped to US\$52.57 per barrel for Brent oil and \$47.5 per barrel for WTI crude oil.

On 10 October, 2018, due

to an increase in global crude oil prices and the weakening of the Kyat against the US dollar, oil prices had touched a high of K1,065 per liter for Octane 92, K1,115 for Octane 95, K1,085 for diesel, and K1,105 for premium diesel.

Ninety per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally.

Myanmar has imported about one million tons of diesel and petrol worth nearly \$600 million over the past two months of the current financial year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar imports fuel oil primarily from Singapore, with monthly volumes touching 200,000 tons for gasoline and 400,000 tons for diesel. There are 2,000 fuel stations and 50 oil importer companies in Myanmar. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mineral exports reach \$984.7 mln as of 21 Feb

MYANMAR'S mineral exports have shown a marked increase this financial year, touching US\$984.7 million between 1 October and 21 February, an increase of \$616.9 million compared with the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

During October-February of the previous financial year, mineral exports were pegged at just \$367.7 million.

Both private and public sector mineral exports have recorded an increase in the current fiscal, with private sector exports valued at \$529.8 million and public sector exports estimated at \$454.87 million.

Due to limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals dropped significantly in the previous years. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in

2016, but after a period of two years, Myanmar's mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The Myanmar Mines Law was enacted on 24 December, 2015, but the law came into force when the rules were issued on 13 February, 2018.

The Mines Department has approved 144 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks the last two years.

At present, evaluation teams in Kachin, Kayah, Shan, and Kayin states and Sagaing, Taninthayi, and Magway regions are screening mining applications, based on the opinions of the respective departments and the region and state governments.

Myanmar's export sector

relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources has been lessening.

Of the seven export groups, exports of agricultural goods, minerals, fishery, and finished industrial goods has shown an increase, while exports of livestock, forest products, and other goods have declined in the current FY.

Export values stood at \$1.5 billion for agricultural products, \$51.9 million for livestock, \$393.8 million for fishery products, \$68.5 million for forest products, over \$3.95 billion for manufactured goods, and \$139.7 million for other goods, data from the Commerce Ministry shows. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A man refilling the car with fuel at a filling station in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

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Top Thai Brands expo to be held at Tatmadaw Hall from 12-15 March

By Nyein Nyein

TOP Thai Brands 2020, billed as the largest Thai products exhibition, will be held from 12 to 15 March at the Tatmadaw Hall in Yangon. The expo was announced at a press conference held at the Novotel Yangon Max.

The annual expo will be organized by Thailand's Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP). More than 130 Thai brands will exhibit their products at the exhibition. Electronic appliances, food products, cosmetics, consumer goods, fashion brands, and household and kitchen goods will be sold at the expo at cheap prices.

In addition, the expo will feature a Thai Food Market and lucky draws, with prizes



The Top Thai Brands Expo is scheduled to be held from 12 to 15 March at the Tatmadaw Hall in Yangon.

PHOTO: NYEIN NYEIN

including Yangon-Bangkok return tickets. The expo will also

have a Thai traditional massage show, cooking show, and perfor-

mances by famous artists. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Stimulant tablets seized in Maungtaw, Hsipaw, Minenaung

A combined team comprised of police from a local anti-drug squad in Maungtaw searched a vehicle loaded plastic bags by Saw Dularmane at U Ottama Road, East Myoma Ward in Maungtaw on 2 March and found the bags with 4,940,960 stimulant tablets worth K9.88192 billion. Dularmane who was driving the vehicle was arrested.

Similarly, a combined team comprised of police from Nantlan area Police Station searched the house of Eai Than Lay (a) San Tun from Myaungpine Village, Nantlan Village-tract, Hsipaw

Township and arrested him together with 3,800 stimulant tablets, and K150,000 in cash.

A Tatmadaw column inspected three suspected trucks near Pankaing Village, Minenaung Town, seized 19,200 litre of Hydrochloric Acid, 25,600 l of acetone and 25,600 l of ethyl acetate from the trucks. Myanmar Police Force have opened lawsuits against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. — GNLM

(Translated by TTN)



A suspect Dularmane seen together with stimulant tablets in Maungtaw. PHOTO: MPF

Tamarind fetching high price in Mandalay market due to Bangladesh demand



A tamarind tree with fruits is seen in Mandalay. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

TAMARINDS grown in Myanmar are fetching a high price in the Mandalay market on account of a drop in yield during harvest time this year coupled with a rise in demand from Bangladesh.

Tamarinds grown in Zeepingyi, Popa, Nay Pyi Taw, Pyinmana, and Pakokku areas have started to enter the Mandalay market. The price of seeded tamarinds has risen from K800 to K1,450 per viss (one viss equals 1.6 kg), while seedless tamarinds are priced at K2,850 per viss, up from K1,400 last year. Tamarinds are selling well in the market.

"Owing to unfavorable weather, the tamarind production rate dropped to one third of last year. Moreover, the tamarinds were harvested late. Tamarinds see strong trade once they enter the market. Traders are purchasing a high volume for the Bangladesh market," according to the U Soe

Win Myint commodity depot.

Myanmar tamarinds are purchased regularly by Bangladesh and India every year. China has been buying them for the last five years. More tamarinds are going to be harvested in the coming days in Yamethin and Kyaukpadaung townships. All the tamarind producing areas across the country will supply abundant tamarinds to markets in the pre-Thingyan Festival period.

Tamarind trees are mostly found in the central regions of Myanmar — Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway. They can be harvested only once a year in the summer. Myanmar people use tamarind in traditional cuisine besides making traditional medicines. Tamarind is also a lucrative export item. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trump accepts Putin's proposal to hold UN Security Council summit

MOSCOW—US President Donald Trump has accepted Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal to hold a summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russian

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters in the Finnish capital Helsinki, Lavrov said the venue and the date of the summit are likely to

be decided soon.

Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, all nuclear powers, constitute the veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council.

Among the five countries,

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is the only leader who has not supported the idea.

In January, Putin proposed

holding a summit of the five countries this year as it commemorates the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and the establishment of the United Nations.—Kyodo News ■

2,000 surgical masks stolen from French hospital

MARSEILLE (France)—Around 2,000 surgical masks have been stolen from a hospital in the southern French city of Marseille in the midst of a coronavirus outbreak, health authorities said Tuesday.

The masks were pilfered from a part of Conception hospital that is accessible only to staff and patients who have undergone surgery, the Marseille hospitals authority (AP-HM) told AFP.

"The AP-HM immediately launched an internal investigation to find the culprits," it said.

It assured that the hospital had enough masks to continue operations as normal, but that it had ordered more and taken steps to secure its stocks of both masks and sanitising hand gels.

News of the theft came as President Emmanuel Macron announced that the authorities would requisition all face mask stocks and production in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Macron said they would be reserved for coronavirus patients and health professionals.—AFP ■

Turkish President Erdogan threatens Europe with 'millions' of migrants

ISTANBUL (Turkey)—Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned on Monday that "millions" of migrants would soon head for Europe, drawing accusations from EU leaders that he is trying to pressure them into backing his incursions into Syria.

Turkey gave the green light to refugees and migrants on Friday to leave for the European Union and thousands have since massed at the Greek border, triggering fears of an influx like that which poisoned European politics in 2015. German Chancellor Angela Merkel described Turkey's move as "unacceptable" and EU migration commissioner Margaritis Schinas said nobody could "blackmail or intimidate the EU".

But Turkey, which hosts roughly four million refugees, is trying to hold off another mass influx from Syria — where government forces backed by Russian air power are advancing into the last rebel stronghold of Idlib.

Erdogan further ramped up the pressure late on Monday, saying he had turned down an EU offer of one billion euros (£1.1 billion) in extra aid for migrants, adding to a six-billion-euro deal agreed in 2016. "We don't want this money," Erdogan said at a news conference without specifying



Some 13,000 migrants massed at Turkey's border with Greece over the weekend. PHOTO: AFP

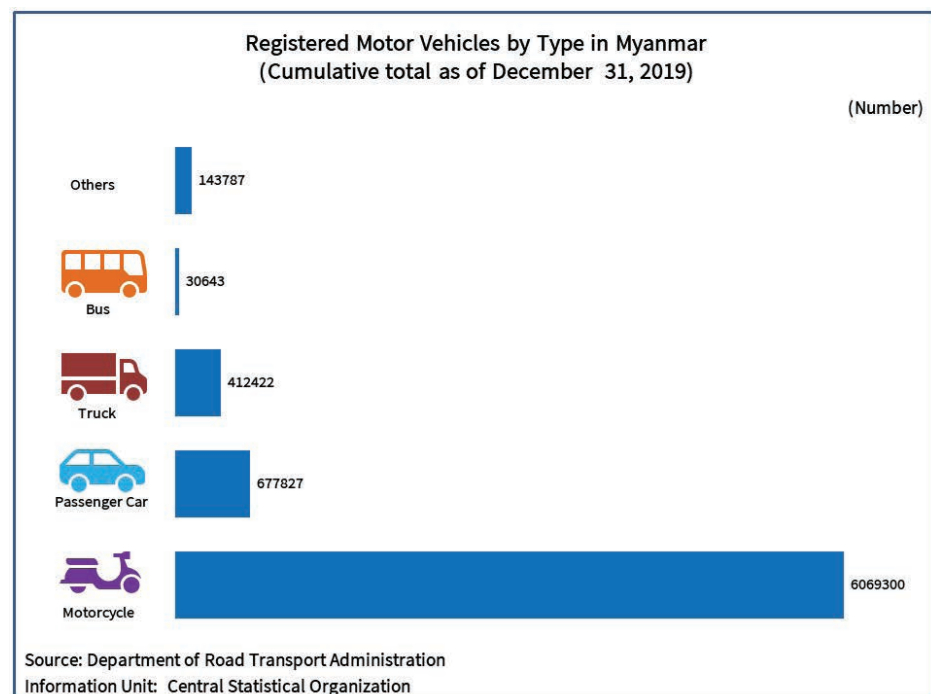
when the money was offered, or by whom.

His office later added that he had spoken to Merkel over the phone and warned once again that Europe must take a "fair share of the burden" of dealing with migrants. He claimed the numbers of migrants at the Greek border — who include Afghans, Syrian and Iraqis — were far higher than figures provided by officials and reporters at the scene,

saying "hundreds of thousands" were already there. "There will be more. Soon, this number will be expressed in millions." Greece says some 10,000 people were barred from entering the country over the weekend. Clashes broke out as police fired tear gas at the refugees, who responded by lobbing rocks. A video shared by a Turkish official, which could not be independently verified, showed a boat of migrants being

shot at and harassed by Greek coastguards. Turkey accused Greek police of killing two migrants after a video was shared of a bloodied Syrian on the border, although Athens rejected this as "fake news".

In desperation, many have sought alternative routes and Greek port police said a young boy died when a makeshift boat capsized off the Greek island of Lesbos.—AFP ■



To strengthen democracy, improve access for disabled

THE hotels and tourism sector is one of the sectors driving socio-economic development in Myanmar. The State is also encouraging the sector because it can create jobs for people living with disabilities and the aged.

According to data released by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, there are more than 2,000 hotels with over 81,200 rooms in Myanmar.

The hotels employ more than 86,400 staff nationwide. But, just over 50 of the total hotel staff are living with disabilities. This situation makes it necessary for us to look into the staggering rate of unemployment and poor pay in the disabled community.

Regulations, which can increase the employment quota for the disabled and benefit aged persons, are crucial to ensure a better future for people living with disabilities. We also need to ensure that staff living with disabilities are not paid below minimum wage.

To achieve this goal, the national-level committee for rights of disabled persons, the national tourism development central committee, and organizations working with disabled persons, and the people need to work together and listen to the voices of the disabled.

Another issue we need to work on is increasing accessibility for the disabled to improve social inclusion. We should make accessibility a priority. The disabled community often faces obstacles in terms of accessibility, something that is crucial for social inclusion.

The Ministry of Construction must adopt regulations for the construction of buildings to ensure that all buildings and surrounding areas can be easily accessed by people living with disabilities.

Public centers, mass transit vehicles, shopping malls, museums, cultural buildings, cinemas, parks, and recreation centers should be upgraded so they offer increased accessibility to people living with disabilities.

Through the above steps, we can move forward to create 'barrier-free tourism', which can ensure the safety and security of all travelers, including visitors living with disabilities.

With the boom in tourism, we can create jobs by providing vocational training to people living with disabilities and encouraging them to produce items for hotels and souvenirs for the tourism sector.

Guaranteeing the rights of each disabled person is part of the democratic reforms of the Union government.

Coronavirus: latest developments worldwide

INFECTIONS drop dramatically in China but surge abroad, the US death toll rises to six and the World Health Organization (WHO) warns we are in "uncharted territory".

Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis.

World spread

To date, more than 3,100 have died from the new virus, while more than 90,000 have been infected in 73 countries and territories around the world, according to AFP's latest toll based on official sources at 0600 GMT Tuesday.

Mainland China, excluding the semi-autonomous territories of Hong Kong and Macao, has 80,026 cases, including 2,943 deaths. Elsewhere in the world, 10,134 cases and 166 deaths have been recorded.

China reports an increase in cases coming from abroad, as the country where the disease first emerged now worries about importing infections.

South Korea remains the

hardest-hit country after mainland China, with 4,335 cases and 28 deaths, followed by Italy (2,036 cases and 52 deaths), Iran (1,501 cases and 66 deaths) and Japan (254 cases, 12 deaths). More than 700 cases have been registered on the Diamond Princess cruise ship anchored off Japan.

In Germany the number of infected people has almost doubled over the weekend, reaching 157.

France, another coronavirus hotspot in Europe, has registered some 130 people infected since late January, three of whom have died.

The 27-nation EU raised the coronavirus risk to "moderate to high".

Andorra, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Portugal, Saudi Arabia and Senegal confirm their first cases.

OECD lowers growth forecasts

The OECD lowers its global growth forecast for 2020 by half a percentage point to 2.4

percent, the worst performance since the 2008 crisis.

In China, annual economic growth is expected to reach just 4.9 percent, a 0.8 point drop from the OECD's original growth forecasts announced last November.

EU Commissioner Thierry Breton says the EU's tourism sector has lost around a billion euros per month since January and warns of a risk of recession in Germany and Italy.

Australia's central bank slashes interest rates to a record low and says it is ready to take further action to support the economy if needed.

In the Chinese enclave of Macao, casinos announce a fall in gaming revenue of nearly 88 percent in February.

Global measures

In South Korea, subject to travel restrictions by more than 70 countries, dozens of major events are cancelled.

Hong Kong postpones its Vinexpo trade fair from May to July.



South Korean soldiers wearing protective gear spray disinfectant as part of preventive measures against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, at Guryong village in Seoul on March 3, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

A sixth person dies in the northwestern US state of Washington and President Donald Trump faces criticism over his administration's preparedness.

A plane carrying UN medical experts and aid touches

down in Iran on a mission to help it tackle its outbreak, as European powers say they will send further help.

The Louvre in Paris, the world's most visited museum, is closed for a second day running

after staff again refuse to work.

In Israel, where legislative elections are taking place, special polling stations are set up for more than 5,000 Israelis under quarantine.—AFP

Peasants Day

By Lokethar

THE whole of Myanmar was annexed by the British in 1885 following the Third Anglo-Burmese war in the reign of King Thibaw. The dispute with the East India Company over Teak logs extracted by the Company was probably the immediate cause of the Third Anglo-Burmese War.

After the total annexation of Myanmar by the British, many British Companies came in to exploit the other natural resources of Myanmar including Petroleum, Silver and Gold, Tin and Tungsten, Precious Stones and so on.

The big trading companies like Steel Brothers, saw the opportunities of exporting Agricultural products, particularly Rice from Burma. It thus brought in cheap labour from Myanmar's neighbour on the west, to plant rice extensively. It proved to be a lucrative undertaking.

The local Myanmar farmers were hard put to deal with the competition. They took loans

from the money lenders to keep afloat by offering their land as security. Eventually they lost their land because they couldn't repay the debts and the heavy interests accrued. The situation was ripe for a "revolution" by the Myanmar peasants and farmers.

It emerged in the form of an "uprising" led by a Burmese "Medicine Man cum Alchemist" called Saya San (Saya is also the honorific title for an indigenous medical practitioner). He had a following of the Peasants and Farmers due to his skills.

Saya San resorted to his reputation as a "Medicine Man" promising the peasants and farmers immortality if they joined in the uprising against the British. He had the men tattooed with the mythical Galon (Garuda) bird so that they would conquer the enemy who was depicted to be the Naga (Serpent) in the mythical combat of the two where the Galon emerges as the victor. Hence the followers of Saya San came to be known as the "Galon Tat" (The Galon



Farmers harvesting paddy in thier farm in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: KO THET

Army).

The movement was branded an "uprising" by the Colonial Government and law enforcement measures to put it down were taken. However the so

called "uprising" gained further momentum even in the face of more severe action by the Police. So the Government called in the armed regiments of the British army and the "uprising" was

quelled with Saya San and many of his followers being apprehended and ultimately hanged. Such was the sacrifices made by the Myanmar Peasants and Farmers to defend their lives and rights.

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release No 9/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 29 February.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 29 February.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 5 March issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar. — GNLM

Myanmar Gazette

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(1) U Wai Lin Maung Deputy Director-General Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation	Director-General Department of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
(2) U Kyaw Win Han Deputy Director-General Department of Civil Service Affairs, Union Civil Service Board	Rector Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar) Union Civil Service Board

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). — Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Netanyahu claims Israel election win despite corruption charges

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emerged victorious Tuesday after Israel's third election in a year despite a looming corruption trial, dismaying the Palestinians who were angered by his hardline campaign pledges.

Monday's election left the veteran right-winger in prime position to form a government and end a year of political deadlock, after similar votes in April and September proved inconclusive.

The central election committee said it had counted 90 percent of the vote, with breakdowns of the result in the media showing Netanyahu's Likud party with 36 seats in Israel's 120-member parliament.

That would mark the party's best-ever result under Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the election as a 'giant' success. PHOTO: AFP

prime minister and its first to be indicted in office.

Netanyahu's bloc, which includes ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, is likely still one or two

votes short of a majority, but his party spokesman said it was confident of luring defectors.

Likud's main challenger, the centrist Blue and White party,

was projected to win 32 seats.

Counting its centre-left allies as well as the mainly Arab Joint List alliance, the anti-Netanyahu camp was expected to

control 54 to 55 seats.

While there remains no guarantee that Netanyahu can form a coalition, he hailed Monday's election as a "giant" success.

"This is the most important victory of my life," he told supporters in Tel Aviv where people danced, sang and shouted "Bibi, king of Israel," using the premier's nickname.

Netanyahu campaigned on his tough position towards the Palestinians and on expanding Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. He also pledged to annex the Jordan Valley, a key part of the West Bank that Palestinians see as crucial for their future state, if he won. Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said the exit polls showed that "settlement, annexation and apartheid had won". — AFP ■

New Zealand cops probe threat to terror attack mosque

WELLINGTON (New Zealand) — New Zealand police said Tuesday they were investigating a threat made this week against one of the Christchurch mosques where 51 Muslim worshippers were killed in a mass shooting a year ago.

Amid plans to mark the one-year anniversary of the March 15 massacre, police said the threat to Christchurch's Al Noor mosque was posted this week on encrypted messaging app Telegram.

Reports said the message showed a man in a balaclava sitting in a car outside the mosque accompanied by threatening text and a gun emoji.

"We have strong leads that we're following up and I'm confident that we will establish who this person is," Canterbury police commander superintendent John Price told Radio New Zealand, adding, "We're very close".

Al Noor was one of two mosques targeted by a self-avowed white supremacist last year in what Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described as "an unprecedented act of terror (that) shattered our small country".

The timing of the latest threat comes at a sensitive time as planning is underway for a me-

morial service in Christchurch to mark the anniversary.

Details of the service at the city's Hagley Park have not yet been finalised but Ardern is set to attend after gaining international praise for her compassionate handling of the attacks.

Ardern said Tuesday that she found it hard to believe that New Zealand's Muslim community was still being subjected to such hatred.

"I will be amongst many New Zealanders who will be devastated to see that as we head towards the one-year anniversary of a most horrific terror attack on the Muslim community, that they should then be the target of this kind of activity," she told reporters. Price said he was encouraged that a member of the public had reported the threat, saying that people were acting to stamp out such online activity when they saw it.

"That's the way we'll conquer this issue in our society, is by everyone standing up and saying this is not OK," he said.

The alleged mosque attacker Brenton Tarrant, an Australian national, is due to go on trial on June 2 facing terrorism charges plus 51 counts of murder and 40 of attempted murder over the killings. — AFP ■

Air pollution 'pandemic' shortens lives by 3 years: study

PARIS (France) — A 'pandemic' of air pollution shortens lives worldwide by nearly three years on average, and causes 8.8 million premature deaths annually, scientists said Tuesday.

Eliminating the toxic cocktail of molecules and lung-clogging particles cast off by burning oil, gas and coal would restore a full year of life expectancy, they reported in the journal *Cardiovascular Research*.

"Air pollution is a larger public health risk than tobacco smoking," lead author Jos Lelieveld of the Max Planck Institute in Mainz, Germany told AFP.

"Much of it can be avoided by

replacing fossil fuels with clean renewable energy."

Compared to other causes of premature death, air pollution kills 19 times more people each year than malaria, nine times more than HIV/AIDS, and three times more than alcohol, the study found.

Coronary heart disease and stroke account for almost half of those deaths, with lung diseases and other non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure accounting for most of the rest.

Only six percent of mortality stemming from polluted air is due to lung cancer.

"Our results show there is an 'air pollution pandemic'," said senior author Thomas Munzel of the Max Planck Institute's departments of chemistry and cardiology.

"Both air pollution and smoking are preventable, but over the past decades much less attention has been paid to air pollution than to smoking, especially among cardiologists."

The worst-hit region is Asia, where average lifespan is cut 4.1 years in China, 3.9 years in India, and 3.8 years in Pakistan. In some parts of these countries, toxic air takes an even steeper toll, other research has shown. — AFP ■



Researchers say the health impacts of air pollution from the burning of fossil fuels is significantly underestimated by authorities. PHOTO: AFP

Twitter staff told to work from home over virus fears

SAN FRANCISCO (United States) — Twitter staff across the world were asked to work from home starting Monday in an effort to stop the spread of the deadly new coronavirus epidemic.

At the same time, thousands of staff at Google's European headquarters in Ireland were told to stay away for the day after one employee reported flu-like symptoms.

The outbreak has spread across the world since emerging in central China late last year, killing more than 3,100 people, infecting over 90,000, and prompting a wave of travel restrictions.

Twitter's decision to ask its staff to avoid the office follows similar requests by governments in virus hotspots.

"We are strongly encouraging all employees globally to work from home if they're able," Twitter human resources chief Jennifer Christie said in a Monday blog post.

"Our goal is to lower the probability of the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus for us — and the world around us."

Working from home will be mandatory for employees at the company's South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan offices, Christie said. South Korea has recorded



Twitter has told staff around the world to work from home if possible to help stop the spread of the deadly coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

nearly 5,000 confirmed COVID-19 infections — the largest number outside mainland China — along with 28 deaths. More than half of the cases have been linked to the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, a secretive religious group often described as a cult.

Japan's government has urged the closure of schools nationwide and employers to give their staff permission to work remotely. Most civil servants in Hong Kong returned to work on Monday after they were asked to work from home for a month. The financial hub has recorded 100 cases of the infection.

Twitter had already announced the suspension of "non-critical" business travel and events last week. — AFP ■

Australia's newswire axed amid pressure from digital giants

SYDNEY (Australia) — Australia's only national newswire will be shuttered after 85 years of operation, with around 180 staff told Tuesday their jobs will end in June.

Staff gathered on the newsroom floor at Australian Associated Press' headquarters in Sydney were told a drop-off in subscribers in the face of free online content meant the company was "no longer viable."

"This decision's been made with very heavy hearts. It's been made on an economic and financial basis," chief executive Bruce Davidson said following the announcement.

The newswire will close at the end of June while its sub-editing business Pagemasters is set to close at the end of August.

The decision to close the wire needs approval from its owners Nine, News Corp Australia, The West Australian and Australian Community Media.

The announcement prompted concern about whether there would still be adequate scrutiny of democratic institutions.

"All news outlets have relied on AAP's network of local and international journalists to provide stories from areas where their own correspondents couldn't go, from the courts to parliament and



Staff at Australian Associated Press' headquarters were told a drop-off in subscribers in the face of free online content meant the company was "no longer viable". **PHOTO: AFP**

everywhere in between," said Alexandra Wake a journalism expert at RMIT University.

People took to social media to express their concern while there were tributes in parliament.

"They have a wonderful history in this place and when you have such an important institution such as AAP coming to an end that is a matter of real concern," Prime Minister Scott Morrison said to journalists sitting in the press gallery at federal parliament.

Members of the opposition party held up signs emblazoned with: "Thanks AAP" while their party leader read out the names of the Canberra team.

"You will leave a massive void," opposition leader Anthony Albanese said.

Originally founded by media baron Keith Murdoch in 1935, AAP became a central source of news for major outlets in Australia and overseas.

But speculation about the wire's future has persisted in recent years, following several major staff cutbacks and the closure of the company's New Zealand arm in 2018.

A merger between Nine and Fairfax further centralised the country's media which is dominated by a handful of companies, including News Corp Australia. — AFP ■

EU diplomats head to Turkey and Greece amid migrant crisis

ISTANBUL (Turkey) — The EU dispatched its highest officials to Turkey and Greece on Tuesday amid concern over a fresh migrant crisis and allegations that Ankara was trying to "blackmail" the bloc by opening its borders to thousands of refugees seeking to flee to Europe.

Rights groups accused Turkey of using migrants and refugees as bargaining chips by pushing them towards the Greek border, but also slammed Europe for failing to provide greater assistance.

Thousands have arrived at the frontier since President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced last week that it would no longer stop them trying to enter Europe.

After fierce clashes with Greek police at the official crossing over the weekend, migrants said they were being dispersed along the narrow Evros river that separates the two countries.

Braced against the winter cold, many wandered the fields along the water's edge looking for a safe space to cross.

They have faced tear gas and stun grenades from Greek

police, while unconfirmed videos appeared to show coastguards beating and shooting near migrants packed on to boats.

One Afghan migrant, 21-year-old Sinan Yilmaz, said a friend had

managed to reach Greek soil, but was quickly picked up by police.

"They took everything: their money, their shoes, and sent them back here. That's why we don't consider it, unless the doors

open," he said.

Smugglers slash prices

Turkish smugglers told AFP they are now allowed to operate freely, meaning that prices have dropped fast.

"It has become something allowed from our Turkish side. In the past we used to get them across for \$200 or \$300 per person and now we do it for \$15," said one people smuggler, who gave his name as Semih.

Erdogan claims "millions" of refugees could soon be heading from Turkey into Europe, but this is widely seen as a bid to pressure EU leaders into supporting his military offensive in Syria. Turkey already hosts some four million refugees and faces another huge influx from Syria where the regime, backed by Russian air power, is pressing a violent offensive to retake the last rebel-held province of Idlib. — AFP ■



Migrants say they are being dispersed along the narrow Evros river that separates Greece and Turkey. **PHOTO: AFP**

PM Modi can skip a meal but can't leave social media, says Maharashtra Minister

MUMBAI (India) — Maharashtra Cabinet Minister and Congress leader Aslam Shaikh on Tuesday took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said he can skip meals but cannot leave social media.

“Don't think that Prime Minister Modi can stay without media or social media. He is so much used to it that he can leave his food for one time but cannot leave the social media,” the Minister told reporters here.

“After CAA and NRC, people are trolling him across the world, they are just after him.

He knows that he has made the biggest mistake. His party ministers and MLAs have passed a resolution against the CAA and NRC in Bihar saying that they don't want these,” he added.

On Monday, Prime Minister Modi had tweeted: “This Sunday, thinking of giving up my social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & YouTube. Will keep you all posted.”

Later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he will give away his accounts to inspirational women and detailed how those wishing to “take-over” his profiles

can participate in the draw.

“This Women's Day, I will give away my social media accounts to women whose life & work inspire us. This will help them ignite motivation in millions. Are you such a woman or do you know such inspiring women? Share such stories using #SheInspiresUs,” the Prime Minister tweeted. International Women's Day will be celebrated on 8 March across the globe. Modi has called upon people to share stories of “inspiring women” who have made a difference in their spheres of life. — ANI ■

Volcano eruption forces temporary closure of airport in Indonesia



Mt. Merapi as pictured from Kalitengah Lor village in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in August 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

JAKARTA — An international airport on Indonesia's Java Island was forced to close temporarily Tuesday after a volcano erupted and spewed volcanic ash almost 11 kilometers into the sky, local authorities said.

Mt. Merapi's eruption at 7:10 am forced the closure of Adi Sumarmo International Airport in Solo, Central Java Province, from 9:25 am, according to Indonesia's air navigation operator. It reopened at 3:30 pm after the runways were clear of ash.

The Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation has not raised the volcano's alert status from level 2 on its four-level scale. There have been no reports of casualties or damage, according to National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Agus Wibowo. The last major eruption of Mt. Merapi, which dominates the landscape immediately north of Yogyakarta, occurred in 2010, killing at least 113 people and injuring about 1,800 others.— Kyodo News ■

S Korea reports 851 new virus cases, total tops 5,000

SEOUL — South Korea reported 851 more coronavirus cases on Tuesday, with the total number of cases in the second-worst-affected country after China reaching 5,186.

The Health and Welfare Ministry confirmed another 374 infections later on the day after

reporting 477 cases earlier. According to the health authorities' earlier statement, 3,600 of the cases were traced to the southeastern city of Daegu, the epicenter of the nation's outbreak, and 685 to surrounding North Gyeongsang Province. With most of the cases from Daegu linked to a branch of

a minor Christian sect known as Shincheonji Church of Jesus, a Seoul municipal official said the city plans to nullify its registration as incorporated association for neglecting the fast transmission of the deadly virus. The death toll rose to 29, up three from Monday. — Kyodo News ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SATSUKI VOY. NO. (017W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SATSUKI VOY. NO. (017W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (064 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (064 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY. NO. (2006S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY. NO. (2006S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALVAN VOY. NO. (SCY 1074)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALVAN VOY. NO. (SCY 1074) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S LAND AND SEA
INTERMODAL LOGISTICS SDN BHD LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1133W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1133W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (666N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (666N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Newgen gets patent for mark detection system and methodology

NEW DELHI (India) — Newgen Software said on Tuesday that the US Patent Office has issued a patent for its mark detection system and methodology.

The company is a global provider of low code automation platform man-

aging content, processes, and communication. Its mark detection system is used to identify marks, like tick and cross marks, on document images. These marks are generally made on hard copies during document review or verification

and hinder the extraction of useful data on the document. This invention helps to identify these marks, which are then removed before the document is sent for extraction. This results in higher extraction accuracy for such cases. —ANI

Rakuten to offer low-cost, large data mobile plan to challenge rivals

TOKYO — Rakuten Inc.'s mobile phone unit said Tuesday it will offer a mobile plan at drastically reduced prices to kick off its new services next month, as it makes an all-out bid to grab customers away from bigger rivals.

Rakuten Mobile Inc.

will charge 2,980 yen (\$28) per month for unlimited call and data services when it launches new operations on 8 April.

The cost will be less than half of the 6,980 yen or 7,480 yen charged for similar large data plans currently provided by the

market's three major wireless carriers, NTT Docomo Inc., KDDI Corp. and SoftBank Corp. To get off to a strong start, Rakuten Mobile will also offer voice and data services free of charge to 3 million customers in the first contract year. — Kyodo News ■

G7 seeks to inoculate global economy against coronavirus

PARIS (France) — Group of Seven finance ministers and central bank chiefs were set to hold coronavirus talks Tuesday as concerns grew that the epidemic could imperil the health of the global economy.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell "will lead a call with their G7 counterparts" on Tuesday, the Treasury department confirmed in a statement.

In addition to scrambling to respond to the outbreak which has now killed more than 3,100 people and infected over 90,000



Fear of the economic impact of the virus has governments and markets on edge. **PHOTO: AFP**

as it spreads around the world, governments have also sought to calm fears of widespread economic disruption that saw major stock markets lose over 10 percent of their value last week. While Tuesday's con-

ference call will be the first effort to coordinate actions by the world's top economies, officials have already been making statements seeking to reassure investors that they stand ready to cushion shocks to mar-

kets or the wider economy. "We stand ready to take appropriate and targeted measures, as necessary and commensurate with the underlying risks," European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said in a statement.

The Bank of England will "take all necessary steps" to support the UK economy from coronavirus fallout, said governor Mark Carney ahead of the G7 talks. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank issued a joint statement Monday pledging to help countries deal with the fallout from the epidemic. —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (022W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (022W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (047N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (047N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Trade
Call
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Board of Directors အစည်းအဝေးဖိတ်ကြားခြင်း

ရန်ကုန်တိုင်းဒေသကြီး၊ ဗဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ငါးထပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ အမှတ်(၁၅၀)တွင် ဖွင့်လှစ်ထားသော GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR CO., LTD ကုမ္ပဏီမှတ်ပုံတင်အမှတ်- 109039780 သည် ရှယ်ယာကိစ္စများ ဆောင်ရွက်ရန်အတွက် Board of Directors အစည်းအဝေးအား (၅-၃-၂၀၂၀) ရက်နေ့၊ နေ့လယ်(၁၁)နာရီတွင် ပြန်ကြားရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ သတင်းနှင့် စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ရုံးအမှတ်(၇) နေပြည်တော်၌ ကျင်းပပြုလုပ်မည်ဖြစ်ပါသဖြင့် ဒါရိုက်တာအဖွဲ့ဝင်များအား အစည်းအဝေး တက်ရောက်ပေးပါရန် ဖိတ်ကြားအပ်ပါသည်။

ဒါရိုက်တာအဖွဲ့

Global New Light of Myanmar Co., Ltd

Announcement

Yatanarpon Teleport Public Company Limited (YTP), in order to make settlement of the accounts of payables and receivables with related persons and companies, hereby invites all personnel and body corporates to contact the following office address not later than 4:00 p.m. on 26 March 2020, together with the complete sets of documents and evidences for settlement of the said accounts.

Yatanarpon Teleport Public Company Limited

No-25, Universities' Hlaing Campus, Hlaing Township, 11051, Yangon Region, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V WU YI SHAN

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V WU YI SHAN VOY. NO. (EM 2002) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of TMIT-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S A.N.T IMPEX PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MICK

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MICK VOY. NO. (501004) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES
(SINGAPORE) PTE, LTD

Phone No: 2301928

Open Mind: Diversity and inclusion as competitive advantage



By Selina Lomholdt

Three new hires are joining the ranks of Telenor Myanmar- Left to right - Myo Min Htet Nu Htwe Win and Wai Wai Aung and Selina Lomholdt, the Chief People Officer of Telenor Myanmar. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

DIFFERENT abilities, backgrounds and perspectives make companies understand customers better. Telenor Myanmar is making diversity and inclusion a competitive advantage through its Open Mind programme, writes Telenor Myanmar's Chief People Officer Selina Lomholdt.

This week, three new hires are joining the ranks of Telenor Myanmar. Wai Wai Aung,

Myo Min Htet and Nu Htwe Win will be working within our central staff functions. These three are experts within HR, Corporate Affairs and Finance, with a solid education and aspirations to build a career within one of Myanmar's growth sectors. Over the past six years, Telenor Myanmar has welcomed hundreds of talents keen to prove their mettle in the telecoms industry. We are fortunate to be able to select top-tier talents who

quickly demonstrate their value both here in Myanmar and within our global organization. Making sure Telenor is a great place to work is a top priority for us.

So why am I highlighting Wai Wai, Myo Min and Nu Htwe? Because despite being highly talented people with sought-after competence, their path to employment has not been a straightforward one. All three of them are born with different physical handicaps.

Because of this, each of them have struggled to find relevant employment, even with well documented qualifications.

Sensitivity: Internal

Myanmar is a highly competitive market for telecoms. Four operators are vying for customers' attention and business. All of us are trying to deliver the best possible service and the most relevant prod-

ucts by being present exactly when and where customers want to engage with us. Doing so means we need deep understanding of your customers, their needs and desires, as well as systems and structures to make sure we are able to act on those insights. When serving mass market customers, customer understanding isn't limited to a specialized segment: we need to be able to cater for a wide range of customer profiles. In Telenor's purpose statement, we emphasize this understanding: "Connecting you to what matters most. Empowering societies."

At Telenor, we care about diversity and inclusion not because we want to be nice or because it looks good, but because it is good business. According to the World Bank, 15% of the world's population, or 1 billion people, experience some form of disability.

Understanding this cus-

tomers group, what their pain points and connectivity needs are, is just as important as understanding what matters most to any other market segment.

This is why we at Telenor believe in broad representation in our employee base. At the same time, it is critical to live by a set of common behaviors that encourage inclusion — making sure that different perspectives are heard and taken into account. We work actively to promote such behaviors across our organization.

The three new hires joining us this week also matter from a societal perspective. Their gainful employment means they are taking responsibility for their own livelihoods, and are contributing back to society as tax payers and self-sufficient consumers. It is this "triple win" — for the individual, for business and

for society, that encouraged Telenor Group to launch the first Open Mind programme in 1996, in Norway. Since then, Open Mind initiatives have been introduced in Sweden and Pakistan. The programme has engaged more than 300 people and brought more than 75% of candidates permanently into the workforce. We are hopeful that the introduction of Telenor Open Mind in Myanmar, in collaboration with Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI), we can help create a movement that will inspire other companies as well.

About the author:

Selina Lomholdt is the Chief People Officer at Telenor Myanmar. She has more than 20 years' experience from HR and People Development, and has served in HR leadership roles in Telenor Denmark, Dell and Radisson SAS Hotels.w



Realme unveils the most powerful entry level smartphone: realme C3

THE fastest growing smartphone brand, “realme”, introduced its new product, realme C3, for Myanmar customers in Yangon on 25 February, 2020.

The Chinese smartphone producer-launched ‘Triple Camera, Game Monster’ - realme C3 which is the most powerful entry-level communication gadget under MMK 200,000. The realme C3 is an addition to realme’s entry level all-rounder the C series version, which has 10.2 million users across the globe and has successfully disrupted entry-level segment of smartphones. realme C3 is a superstar in 4 key areas — Performance, Battery, Display and Camera. As a first in its segment, the C3 features the world’s first MediaTek Helio G70 processor which will ensure powerful and speedy performance for both mainstream users and gamers, alike.

The realme C3 has been launched in 2 exquisite colours — Blazing Red and Frozen Blue. With first sale on February 29th, 2020, realme C3 will be available in two variants - 2GB + 32GB, priced at MMK 169,900- and the 3GB + 32GB is priced at MMK 199,900.

Triple AI Camera

realme C3 features 12MP+2MP+2MP triple rear camera setup. The rear main camera features a F1.8 large aperture and a large 1.25µm pixel size. It can zoom up to 4X and supports PDAF autofocus.

This makes the pictures clear in daylight and bright in low light & dark environments as well.

The 4CM super macro lens will give more details when users shoot tiny ob-



The launching ceremony of the realme C3 in progress. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

jects. Users can create more with the subtle. The triple rear camera also supports hardware level bokeh, which is more natural and makes the subject more prominent, whether it’s plants, animals or people.

The realme C3 has exciting features like Chroma Boost, portrait mode and slow motion video recording, which is difficult to find in this segment.

The Chroma Boost feature, through the pixel-level mapping algorithm, restores the brightness and color, giving better dynamic range, screen contrast and vivid colors.

Apart from this, the camera supports an automatic HDR mode. When turned on, one can keep the highlights and dark details in the picture to get accurate imag-

es with abundant details and more colors. The camera also supports 1080p video shooting and slow motion videos at 120 fps.

On the front, it has a 5MP Selfie camera. The selfie camera supports AI beautification function, HDR mode, portrait mode and a Panoselfie feature that can take wider selfies.

Best-in-class Performance:

The realme C3 is world’s first phone with MediaTek Helio G70 processor which is the best in this segment and has a MediaTek Gaming Technology to optimize network latency. It is an eight-core 12nm processor that clocks up to 2.0 GHz, making it one of the fastest and latest in its category.

The realme C3 is ideal for mainstream

smartphone users and elite mobile gamers with an efficient, high performance ARM Mali-G52 GPU.

The realme C3 has Antutu benchmark scores of over 1,93,000 giving the best performance in this segment, which is much higher than any phone in this segment. As for high speed connections the phone features a dual Wi-Fi, allowing the phone to seamlessly switch to the optimal band providing a faster connection.

Adding on to multimedia usage, the realme C3 has the Display Latency Optimization of MediaTek Helio G70, which gives faster response time, more accurate screen control and thus increases the fluidity of the touch screen. Further enhancing the visual experience, the MediaTek Helio G70 has Premium Picture Quality that supports True Color. With better screen contrast, the output is brighter and gives clearer picture while gaming and watching videos — giving the realme C3 an advantage of a better range of vision that other models cannot see.

The realme C3 will be available in 2 variants powered by the LPDDR4X RAM. Compared with LPDDR3, the graphic performance is improved by 20% and RAM performance by 100%. The realme C3 also features triple card slot with a dual SIM slot and a dedicated SD card slot expandable up to 256GB.

The realme C3 can not only support ultra-fast fingerprint unlocking in only 0.27 second, but also support facial recognition, which can be easily unlocked with a single click or glance, convenient to unlock and safe for your privacy at the same time.— GNLM



KIA Myanmar unveils all-new Kia Cerato sedan

KIA Myanmar has, on 21 February, revealed the all-new Kia Cerato sedan.

Kia already offered one of the widest range of cars in the Myanmar market, with a line-up of 8 passenger car models but, until now, it had a gap in its sedan range between the Kia Rio and the Kia Optima.

This part of the market is called the C-segment, or Compact Sedan and there are very few models available in Myanmar for customers who want this size of car.

The all-new Cerato offers these customers the perfect solution because it comes from a brand with a reputation for the best quality and best design and, like

all Kia’s, it’s packed with great features so it will also be one of the best value sedans in the market.

The Cerato has been styled by the brand’s design chief, Peter Schreyer, one of the world’s most respected and awarded designers so, it’s no surprise, Cerato is a very stylish sedan.

This is Kia’s third-generation Cerato which has been a huge success around the world. Whilst this latest generation retains its sporty and youthful image, it has evolved to a more sophisticated appearance thanks to a number of sleek and dynamic styling cues inspired by the Stinger Gran Turismo. It is learnt from the press release.—GNLM



The all-new Kia Cerato sedan on show at the Yangon International Motor Show. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MPT MNL Youth (U-19) 2020: MFF Youth beats Kachin United in Week-8



Players of Yandarbon FC (blue), and Southern Myanmar FC (white) vie for the ball during their match in Week-8 of of the MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-19) 2020 at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon on 3 March. **PHOTO: MNL**

MFF Youth defeated Kachin United FC 5-1 in the Week-8 of the MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-19) 2020 at Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Goals for MFF Youth were scored by Hein Htet Zaw Win at the 53th and 89th minutes, Htet Myat Lwin at the 74th and 90th

of the MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-19) 2020 at Padonmar Stadium in Yangon minutes, and Aung Pyae Phyto at the 77th minute.

In the same week, Yandarbon FC defeated Southern Myanmar FC 2-1 yesterday. The goals for Yandarbon F.C. were scored by Than Toe Aung

at the 74th minute, and Lin Min Tun at the 77th minute; The goal for Southern Myanmar F.C. was scored by Yan Naing Aung at the 24th minute.

Yaw Myay FC also beat Silvers Stars F.C. 3-1, while Ayeyawady United won over Yangon United 4-1 yesterday.

On 4 March, Myawady F.C.

will be pitted against Magwe F.C. at Salin Stadium; Shan United F.C. will take on Mawyawadi F.C. at South Dagon Stadium; University F.C. will face Hantharwady United at University Stadium; and, ISPE and Rakhine United will clash at M-3 Stadium.

All matches will be held at 4 p.m.—Kyaw Khin

After Week-8 of MPT MNL 2020, Emaka still leads top scorer list

AFTER Week-8 of the MPT Myanmar National League 2020, Hantharwady United's Emeka is still leading the top scorer with eight goals, according to the league's website. He was also the top scorer during the previous week. Emeka was followed by teammate Donald Bissa, and Sagaing United's Ella Edubat Patrick, with seven goals each, Yangon United's Emmanuel with six goals, and Southern Myanmar's Aung Myat Thu with five goals. — Kyaw Khin



Hantharwady United's Emaka. **PHOTO: MNL**

Cyclists held like hostages in UAE - team chief

PARIS (France)—The head of a French cycling team quarantined in Abu Dhabi since last week's aborted UAE Tour said on Tuesday riders felt like victims of a "hostage-taking".

Most of the 20 teams who took part in last week's UAE Tour, cut short after two Italian officials tested positive for the coronavirus, have been allowed to leave Abu Dhabi.

But three teams, Cofidis and Groupama-FDJ of France and Russian outfit Gazprom, have been held in quarantine on one floor of their Abu Dhabi hotel since the race ended Thursday. A fourth team, UAE Emirates, has opted to stay behind voluntarily.

Thierry Vittu, the Cofidis president who is with the team in the hotel, said it was like a "hostage-taking".

"We are being held against

our will at a place which is not of our choosing and for an unknown period of time," he said on Facebook.

"That last part is the worst to deal with."

Several sources said the three teams were being held in quarantine because a person on the same floor in the hotel had tested positive for the virus.

"We are treated as if we have the plague, our rooms haven't been made up in five days and we have to go to the lift to pick up sheets, soap and towels," said Vittu. Some members of the Cofidis team were struggling to cope with the conditions, he said.

UAE authorities have said they are awaiting the outcome of a second series of tests before allowing the teams to depart.— AFP ■

Tokyo could lose Olympics if not held in 2020, minister says



A picture taken on 26 February 2020 shows the Olympics rings next to the IOC headquarters in Lausanne. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO (Japan)—Tokyo risks losing the Olympics if they're postponed later than this year over the new coronavirus, a government minister said on Tuesday, adding that May looks like the deadline for the decision.

The contract for the Games

says the International Olympic Committee can withdraw hosting rights if they're not held in 2020, Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto told parliament.

Japan's government, Tokyo organisers and the IOC have all pledged to hold the Games on

schedule from July 24, but the fast-spreading virus continues to raise concerns.

"Looking at the contract once again, it says in Article 66 that the IOC holds the right to cancel the Games by deactivating the contract if... the Games are not held in 2020," Hashimoto said.

"At this moment, the Tokyo 2020 committee, the IOC and Tokyo (city government) are doing their best to make sure the Games will be held from July 24," she added.

"The government will fully support that."

COVID-19 has been detected in 76 countries, killing 3,116 and causing chaos as governments clamp down on travel. A long list of sports events have been cancelled or postponed to avoid spreading the virus. — AFP ■