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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## MoHS holds coordination meeting on preventive measures against COVID-19



Ministry of Health and Sports holds the coordination meeting 34/2020 on prevention and control of COVID-19 infection. PHOTO: MNA

**F**OREIGN visitors from the seven countries with a significant number of COVID-19 cases will be required to go into quarantine for 14 days when they arrived in Myanmar, with the measures beginning on 14 March.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe presided over the coordination meeting 34/2020 of his office on the preventive measures against the acute respiratory disease, held at the ministry's office in Yangon yesterday.

He said that MoHS is mak-

ing crucial decisions on the prevention of the virus and deaths, including the orders to ban entertainments and festivals, and advised the public to follow the government's measures against this disease.

The Union Minister also appreciated medics, nurses, health workers and laboratory staff for their benevolent attitudes in their professions, as well as local and international well-wishers for their contributions in the COVID-19 prevention works of Myanmar. As the risk of transmission is high in

closed rooms, the MoHS will discuss with the YBS operator about their air-conditioned bus in Yangon city. The ministry has also planned to use the Public Health Training School in Hlegu Township and the stadium of Theinbyu sports ground as the quarantine centres.

He also suggested using hand speakers for public awareness campaigns against the virus at the highway bus terminals of Yangon and other regions.

The ministry has instructed to install washbasins at hos-

pitals across the country.

At the meeting, health officials discussed the daily update situation reports of WHO, the ministry's surveillance on the disease, foreign news about the virus spread, the works of Public Health University in Yangon, public awareness programmes, participation of Myanmar Red Cross Society in transferring the patients, trainings for laboratory tests and accumulation of medicines and related items.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Yangon Stock Exchange makes final preparation for foreign investors

**M**YANMAR'S Yangon Stock Exchange is making last-minute preparations for foreign investors who will be allowed to trade shares on the bourse from next Friday.

Procedures started last week for foreign investors to open securities accounts so they can start trading on the first stock exchange in the Southeast Asian country, which was set up in 2015 with the support of Japanese companies.

At present, only five companies are listed on the YSX bourse, which is operated by a joint venture of the government-affiliated Myanmar Economic Bank, the Daiwa Institute of Research and Japan Exchange Group Inc.

With stock trading now limited to domestic companies or investors, Myanmar's financial authorities said in July last year they would lift the ban on trading by foreign investors, a move aimed at injecting momentum into the stagnant stock exchange.

On March 6, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, as well as the Securities and Exchange Commission issued an instruction saying, "The actual start of trading by resident and nonresident foreigners shall be set at March 20."

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## FDI touches \$2.788 bln as of 6 March

MYANMAR attracted foreign direct investment of more than US\$2.788 billion between 1 October and 6 March in the 2019-2020 financial year, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The total figure includes in-

vestments of \$84.267 million in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, under the Special Economic Zone Law.

Myanmar set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal, but we cannot measure the impact of COVID-19 at present, said U Thant Sin Lwin, secretary of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and direc-

tor-general of the DICA.

“The enterprises operating with imported raw materials will be affected to a certain extent. Sure, enterprises with a big labor force will struggle amid the COVID-19 outbreak,” he said.

According to a press statement issued recently by the DICA, 136 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the

MIC and endorsements from regional and state Investment Committees in the current fiscal and brought in a capital of over \$2.7 billion. Those enterprises will execute electricity, manufacturing, livestock and fishery, real estate development, hotels and tourism, and other services businesses.

“Infrastructure projects

such as industrial parks and urban development projects are bringing investments into the country,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

In the 2018-2019FY, FDI of \$4.5 billion flowed into Myanmar, falling short of the \$5.8-billion target by around \$1.3 billion. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Commerce Minister visits new trade center in Yangon

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint inspected the new office of Myanmar International Trade Center in Yangon yesterday morning.

He also looked into the booths of Myanmar export products and the 1<sup>st</sup> Myanmar Startup Show there.

The new MITC facility was set up at the building of the

Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, located at the corner of Merchant Road and Bosonepat Street in Yangon, to operate it as a center for encouraging trade, economy and private sector of the country in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) modality.

The center has also accom-

modated Myanmar product booths, offices of international trade promotion organizations, the office of Ease of Doing Business to help commercial firms, the Exporter Help Desk for exporters and the Young Exporter Club for collecting foreign market information. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Than Myint visits the new office of Myanmar International Trade Center in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Union Construction Minister inspects Yangon-Dala bridge project



Union Minister U Han Zaw and party inspecting the construction project of Korea-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (Dala) in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw inspected the construction project of Korea-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (Dala) in Yangon yesterday.

At the briefing room of the project's Yangon side in Lanmadaw Township, U Kyaw Kaung Cho, Deputy Director-General from the Bridge Management Department, explained the bridge project including the construction of temporary bridges and working platforms for bored piling process.

Mr Yun Ho Cho, Project Director from GS Engineering & Construction Corporation, reported on the conditions of the

project on both sides of Yangon and Dala, preparation for construction of its main bridge section, and possible environmental impacts of the project and workplace safety.

After listening to the reports, the Union Minister instructed officials to focus on workplace safety in bored piling work processes, and maintain the standard quality of the bored piling.

He also inspected preparation for bored piling at the project's Yangon side and installation of warning signals and signs on the Yangon River.

The bridge that crosses the Yangon River and connects the

Phone Gyi Road in Lanmadaw Township with Bo Min Yaung Road in Dala, is 1,867 metres long and has a four-lane motorway of 26.5 metres.

The reinforced concrete bridge with bored piles foundation and steel cables will withstand 75 tonnes.

If the bridge is completed, the travel times between Yangon and Dala, will be reduced, and the transportation between Yangon and Ayeyawady regions will also be easier through Dala, Twantay, Kawhmu, Kungyangon, Dedaye, Pyapon and Bogale townships. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discusses COVID-19 preventive measures

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held a coordination meeting at its office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday about the preventive measures against COVID-19.

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye advised the ministry's senior officers from Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and sub-national offices on the need of constant vigilance against COVID-19 which has been announced by the World Health Organization as a pandemic.

He added the MSWRR staff should be aware of the outbreak of disease in their works as the ministry is coordinating with international organizations, with following the guidelines of disease control central committee and the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Deputy Minister U Soe Aung said the staff members to mainly use email, Viber and Skype in communications with foreign persons and INGOs. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



The coordination meeting on preventive measures against COVID-19 being held at Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

# MoALI constructs new fisheries training institute in Twantay

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu inspected construction of a new fisheries training institute in Twantay Township, Yangon, yesterday.

Located in Zeebyugone village beside Maubin-Twantay-Yangon motorway, the institute is under construction with K889.54 million from 2018-2019 Financial Year. At the completion, it will confer diplomas on fisheries subjects ahead of establishing a university-level.

The Union Minister also visited the ministry's laboratory in Thakayta Township in Yangon for microbiological screening tests to detect antibiotic residues.

He instructed the officials to

track modern technologies and to maintain it as an international level facility as it has secured the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Accredited Certificate for the 4-year period from 2018 to 2020 to issue quality certificates for fisheries products of Myanmar.

The laboratory has been awarded the 16 international accreditation certificates, including for microbiology parameter, chemical parameter, nitrofurantest and heavy metal tests.

It is being upgraded and equipped with laboratory apparatuses to meet requirements for the certification period 2020-2022 while practicing the ISO/IEC new version 17025: 2017.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu attends the meeting to discuss construction of a new fisheries training institute in Twantay. PHOTO: MNA

# 56 well-wishers donate cash, medical items to prevent COVID-19



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe receives the medical equipment for Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

A total of 56 well-wishers contributed K197 million in cash and over K398 million worth of medical items to the Ministry of Health and Sports, and K17 million in cash and K188 million worth of medical items to the Yangon Region government respectively yesterday. With the aims to support the government's measures

against COVID-19, the donation was held at the office of Public Health and Medical Services Department of Yangon Region.

On behalf of the donors, Secretary U Saw Win from the Health Network and International Relations Unit of National League for Democracy, Chairman U Zaw Moe Khaing from

Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs Association, Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of Myanma Awba U Thadoe Hein explained the reasons for donations, and said to collect more funds.

Yangon Region government's Social Affairs Minister U Naing Ngan Linn and Deputy Director General Dr Tun Myint from the regional Public Health and Medical Services Department of Yangon Region expressed thanks for the donations.

In his appreciation remarks, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe said the medical items will be useful for saving lives and helpful for the health workers, while his office has been prepared for handling COVID-19 cases, with readiness of healthcare facilities and opening a bank account for the public cash donation.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

# Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award selects outstanding works

THE Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award has chosen three books, one honorary prize and one work for its 18th edition of award-giving ceremony.

'Hmat Mi Ne Tal' (Still in Memory) written by female author Kyu Kyu Thin, 'Thwal Lya Kyan Mar Tha Tet Thart' (Slim for Healthy) by Dr May Moe Nwe and 'A Concise History of Medical Education in Myanmar (1886 to 2015) by Dr Aung Than are the three award-winning books published in 2018.

'Finance and Economic Affairs' written by Sayagyi U Thein Khaing (Bank) was selected for the award.

Literary Honorary Award will be presented to Sayagyi Dr Maung Maug Nyo for this year.

The award-giving ceremony will be held soon, and anyone may contact Tin Shwe Literary House through phone number 095117638.

—MNA  
(Translated by Aung Khin)

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**Mandalay rice merchants to meet demand amidst public fears on virus**

RICE merchants in Mandalay Region said they will sell the rice sufficiently at regular price if there is shortage of the crop in the market due to excess accumulation of public out of worries about COVID-19.

General Secretary of Mandalay Region Rice Merchants Association U Sai Kyaw said the domestic consumption of rice is lower than the supply volume in Myanmar.

"We are concerned about possible skyrocketing price of rice as people are purchasing excess amount commodities, including rice," he said.

According to the figures of 2018 and 2019, the local demand of rice was only 13 million tonnes, but the paddy production of the country was around double to this amount.



A shopkeeper selling rice at a rice shop in Mandalay. PHOTO: MNA

U Sai Kyaw added that his association will supply the demand at regular prices to address shortage of the consumer crop, giving an example of their

association in dealing with paddy scarcity after the damage of cultivation lands due to heavy floods in 2015.

A local rice merchant also

remarked a large volume of rice have accumulated and there will not be out of stock despite high demand in the market.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

**Sagaing Region produces 3,000 tonnes of honey a year**

SAGAING Region has produced 3,000 tonnes of honey per year, according the Department of Apiculture in Kalay Township.

Sunflower honey from Kalay in Sagaing Region won the world's best honey award in the

international honey contest in Montreal, Canada.

"There are two types of honey in Sagaing Region— sunflower honey from Kalay and plum honey from Kani, Budalin and Yinmabin." said an official from

the Apiculture Department.

The official also said, "Sagaing Region produces 3,000 tonnes of honey a year which makes up 70 per cent of the country's total honey export."

Beekeepers has produced sunflower honey in Kalay from January to June by keeping hundreds of thousands of bee hive boxes, and produced plum honey in Kani, Budalin and Yinmabin where many plum farms are located in the year's remaining months.

A beekeeper said, "Eighty per cent of beekeepers in Myanmar keep their hundreds of thousands of bee hive boxes on the plum farms in Sagaing Region to produce plum honey."

"China and Thailand pur-

chase all of the exported plum honey, while Japan, Singapore, the United States, and European countries purchase sunflower honey." he added.

Recent honey prices in Kalay averaged K 3,500 a viss (1 viss=3.6 pounds). Six hundreds bee hive boxes can produce 60 barrels (1 barrel =158.99 litres) of honey.

Keeping bee hive boxes on sunflower plantations can boost the quality of sunflower seeds. In previous years, thirty two baskets of sunflower seeds produced a barrel of sunflower oil, but this year, only 29 baskets made up the same amount, said a local sunflower farmer in Kalay.—Chindwinthar (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



The view of honeybee farming in Kalay, Sagaing Region.

PHOTO: CHINDWINTHAR

**Police seizes narcotic drugs in five townships**

AUTHORITIES confiscated illegal drugs in five townships in two days, according to Myanmar Police Force.

On 14 March, police seized 1,223 stimulant tablets and three

mobile phones from the house of Nay Thiha Aung in Thiri Padatha Zay Street in No.10 Ward, Pyin Oo Lwin.

Similarly, anti-narcotic police intercepted the motorcycle

driven by Zin Lin Hteik (a) Lin Hteik near the Kone Mahat bridge between Kone Mahat Village and Nyaungbintha Village in Bahmo Township, and confiscated 3,900 stimulant tablets and a mobile phone. Police also arrested Pan Ei Phyu (a) Ei Kan who was involved in the case at her house in Man Phar Village in Bahmo Township.

Police in Hsipaw also arrested Thein Aung Maung who was driving a motorcycle near the oriental toll gate in Hsipaw Township after they had discovered 2,995 stimulant tablets, 0.05kg of heroin, two mobile phones and K 290,000 in cash from him.

In Mabein Township, local authorities discovered 10,300 stimulant tablets from a package dropped by an identified man who fled to the forest near Kawtaw Village after he met with them.

On 13 March, anti-narcotic police intercepted the motorcycle driven by Wa Gyi and Myint Hlaing on board near the No. 2/23 bridge on Phaungpyin- Pinlebu road in Phaungpyin Township, and seized 0.22kg of heroin and 70 stimulant tablets.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—GNLM (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



The confiscated drugs seen. PHOTO:MPF



Visitors seen at Yangon Stock Exchange in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

## Yangon Stock Exchange makes final preparation for foreign investors

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However, it is likely that only a small number of shares will be traded by foreigners at first as some listed companies, depending on industry sector, require approval from Myanmar's supervisory authorities for stock sales.

"We want to hold stocks for the long term and contribute to the Myanmar economy," said Hideki Matsushita, a Japanese

investor who opened a securities account in the name of his firm in Yangon.

The Myanmar authorities urged investors to follow the country's securities exchange law for daily trading, and securities companies to comply with the country's anti-money laundering law and counterterrorism law, as part of efforts to ensure a stable and sustained growth of the bourse. —Kyodo News ■

## Domestic investments touch K1,084 bln, \$233.47 mln in current fiscal year

DOMESTIC investments by Myanmar citizens, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, reached K1,084 billion and US\$233.47 million as of 6 March in the 2019-2020 financial year, according to a press statement issued by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

Between 1 October and 6 March in the current fiscal, 62 local enterprises were allowed to invest in various sectors, with estimated capitals of over K812.9 billion and \$151.56 million.

Domestic investments flowed into the real estate, manufacturing, hotels and tourism,

construction, industrial estate, energy, mining, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, and other services sectors, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to endorse local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.

While some projects no longer need MIC approval, businesses that are strategic

to the government require a permit from the commission. In addition, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding \$5 million and that may have a possible impact on the environment and the local community need to be approved by the DICA proposal assessment team.

With a fast-track way to set up a business in Myanmar having been introduced, investors can apply to the MIC or the state and regional Investment Committees for getting investment proposals endorsed, depending on the business type.—GNLM (Translated by Ei Myat Mon) ■

## Imports up \$1.5 bln over past five months, MOC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 October and 6 March in the current fiscal year stood at US\$9.18 billion, an increase of \$1.5 billion from \$7.65 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses groups rose significantly in the current fiscal. Over the past five months, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and airplane parts were brought into the country. Their import value was estimated at \$3.5 billion. The figure was \$1.09 billion higher compared to the same period in the previous FY. Meanwhile, Myanmar

imported consumer products worth \$1.54 billion, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed an increase of \$111.5 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make up a large share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. In the current fiscal, imports of raw materials jumped to \$3.12 billion from \$2.8 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth \$994.9 million were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector.—GNLM ■

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## Domestic oil prices slide on weak global cues; down K300 in mid-March against Jan

DOMESTIC oil prices have witnessed a downward trend for the past two months on the back of falling prices in the global markets and a slight gain in the Kyat over the previous week.

"Domestic oil prices have been on the decline since 10 January owing to a fall in global oil prices. At present, the prices have dropped by over K300 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 15 March, the price of Octane 92 fell to K520-570,

Octane 95 to K640-695, diesel to K590-640, and premium diesel to K600-650 per liter, according to the domestic oil market.

Meanwhile, in the global markets, oil prices dipped significantly to US\$35.44 per barrel for Brent oil and \$31.73 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 fiscal 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 Htet

(Translated by EMM)



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

## Coronavirus to cut foreign visitors' spending in Japan by \$9 bil.

TOKYO — The outbreak of the new coronavirus is expected to cut spending by foreign travelers to Japan by 981.3 billion yen (\$9 billion), a private research firm said in a new report, revising upward from its earlier estimate of a contraction of 624.4 billion yen.

Resona Research Institute amended its forecast as it now expects the virus impact on inbound spending from February to be prolonged by one month through June. Its rapid spread, now across about 120 countries, has led to curbs on travel and the Japanese government to impose tighter border controls.

The institute estimated for the period between February and June, sales at department stores and drugstores, popular especially among Chinese visi-

tors for duty-free products, will decrease by 397.6 billion yen, and that revenues at accommodation facilities will shrink by 259.6 billion yen.

Eateries and transportation sectors will also be hit by falls of 197.7 billion yen and 90.5 billion yen, respectively, it said in its March 11 report.

Japan restricted entry of visitors from China, the epicenter of the viral outbreak, and South Korea, which has seen a surge in infections, earlier this month, dealing a further blow to sectors that depend heavily on spending by the Asian neighbors.

"We made the latest assumption based on the premise that the global spread of the (new coronavirus) will be contained by around May but it is totally

unpredictable," said Hideyuki Araki, an analyst at Resona Research.

The falls in inbound spending will come on top of a decrease in domestic consumption as people shun crowds and opt to stay indoors.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has requested that big sports and cultural events in Japan be canceled or postponed, leading to a spate of cancellations and postponements of mass gatherings and travel across the nation.

"When deteriorated profitability at companies is added, the possibility of the country entering a recession will rise steeply," Araki said, warning also of increases in bankruptcies among small and medium-sized companies.—Kyodo ■



Tourists wearing face masks visit Osaka Castle Park in the western Japan city on Feb. 3, 2020, amid the spread of a new coronavirus.  
**PHOTO: (KYODO)**

## Apple to close all stores worldwide outside of China for two weeks



People are seen outside a closed Apple store in Toronto, Canada, on March 14, 2020. Apple will close all its stores worldwide except those in China until March 27 in response to the spread of COVID-19, said Apple CEO Tim Cook on Saturday. **(PHOTO BY ZOU ZHENG/XINHUA)**

SAN FRANCISCO — Apple will close all its stores worldwide except those in China until March 27 in response to the spread of coronavirus, said Apple CEO Tim Cook.

"Apple will be temporarily closing all stores outside of Greater China until March 27 and committing \$15M to help with worldwide recovery," Tim Cook tweeted on Saturday.

According to his statement, the company is moving to flexible work arrangements in all of its offices worldwide except China, adding that its online stores will remain open. "Team

members should work remotely if their job allows, and those whose work requires them to be on site should follow guidance to maximize interpersonal space. In all our offices, we are rolling out new health screenings and temperature checks," said Tim Cook, "the most effective way to minimize risk of the virus's transmission is to reduce density and maximize social distance."

Tim Cook said in the statement that since the infection rates in China have dramatically declined, all Apple stores in China have reopened. "I want

to express my deep gratitude to our team in China for their determination and spirit... I also want to thank our operations team and partners for their remarkable efforts to restore our supply chain."

The Cupertino, California-based U.S. tech giant also confirmed in the statement that the annual Worldwide Developers Conference will be "in an entirely new online format this year." The company expects this as an opportunity to bring together developers around the world in an innovative way.—Xinhua ■

## Coronavirus: Nike closes stores in US and some other countries

NEW YORK — Multinational sporting goods seller Nike will close its stores in the US, Can-

ada, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand for 11 days starting Monday in response

to the coronavirus pandemic, it said in a statement received Sunday by AFP.

Nike stores in South Korea, Japan and much of China will remain open, however, the statement said.

It added that its online sales would continue as usual.

On Friday, the company had encouraged its US-based employees to work from home if possible.

Nike has roughly 25,000 employees in the United States and more than 70,000 worldwide.—AFP ■



A Nike ad featuring former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick is shown in New York. **PHOTO: (ANGELA WEISS / AFP)**

## Economic heavyweight Boeing hammered by dual crises

CHICAGO — Boeing lost \$52 billion on the stock market in a week, a rout that underscores the challenges facing the aircraft manufacturer amid setbacks over the 737 MAX and the coronavirus pandemic.

But Boeing remains a business behemoth key to the American economy.

The industrial giant has lost all the gains amassed since President Donald Trump arrived in the White House in January 2017, which begs the question: Is the maker of the presidential plane, Air Force One, on solid financial ground?

For years, investors believed

the 104-year-old company was a safe bet, because it has driven multiple technological revolutions and operates in a safe and growing market, says Richard Aboulafia, aviation expert at Teal Group. But "these beliefs are being tested" with the 737 MAX crisis, he said. "Boeing is in distress and a lot of that is self-inflicted."

Short on cash?

Boeing itself helped sow doubt this week: According to AFP banking sources, the aircraft manufacturer drew on the full \$14 billion credit line it only just secured from banks last month.—AFP ■

# The virus claims a victim at the UN: personal diplomacy



The novel coronavirus has greatly complicated the work of diplomats and officials at the United Nations Secretariat in New York. PHOTO: AFP

NEW YORK — At the normally busy headquarters of the United Nations in New York, life is suddenly moving at slow speed. — very slow speed. This temple of multilateral-

ism, with its daily meetings both large and small on world conflicts and almost every other subject, is reeling from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with sweeping disruptions to work that depends heavily on diplomats seeking consensus through human contact.

“Everything gets a bit more complicated,” one diplomat said. Like a majority of the secretariat’s 3,000 New York-based employees and the hundreds of their colleagues working in the missions of the 193 member states, he has been forced to work from home.

The first report of the virus in the UN community came Thursday, with a Philippine diplomat testing positive for COVID-19, prompting the closing of that country’s mission.

A day later, the headquarters of the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef), a short

distance from the UN building, was abruptly closed after three employees developed flu-like symptoms -- even though there has been no confirmation of coronavirus.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres canceled a trip Friday to Africa and required all non-essential employees to telework until April 12.

In a letter to all UN employees obtained by AFP, he stressed the need for all to remain “calm and resolute.”

“The United Nations is facing one of the biggest challenges in our history,” he wrote, adding that the virus was having “a major impact on us and our work.”

The UN Secretariat oversees roughly 100,000 blue-helmeted troops taking part in 15 regional peace-keeping operations, and provides daily aid and assistance to millions of people around the world. — AFP

## Chaos at US airports as medical screenings jam up returning Americans

WASHINGTON — Chaos gripped major US airports Sunday as Americans returning from coronavirus-hit European countries overwhelmed authorities attempting to process the surge.

Frustrated passengers complained of hours-long lines, crowded and unsanitary conditions and general disarray in the system for screening people for symptoms of the virus.

“Very close quarters,” Ann Lewis Schmidt told CNN, describing conditions at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport (ORD). “So if we didn’t have the virus before, we have a great chance of getting it now!” Schmidt said.

US airports have been hit with a flood of Americans, many of them students, since restrictions on travel from Europe ordered by US President Donald Trump took effect at midnight Friday.

The United States on Saturday extended the ban on travel from Europe, South Korea and China to Britain and Ireland. Only US citizens and legal residents are being allowed in from those

countries, and they are then supposed to self-quarantine for 14 days.

### ‘Do something NOW’

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker said the crowds and lines at O’Hare were “unacceptable & need to be addressed immediately,” in a tweet directed at Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, who is coordinating the administration’s response to the pandemic.

“@realDonaldTrump @VP since this is the only communication medium you pay attention to -- you need to do something NOW,” he said.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot was equally scathing: “The reactionary, poorly planned travel ban has left thousands of travelers at ORD forced into even greater health risk,” she tweeted.

“@realdonaldtrump and @CBP: no one has time for your incompetence. Fully staff our airport right now, and stop putting Americans in danger.”

CBP stands for Customs and Border Patrol. Similar conditions were reported at New York’s JFK Airport and in Dallas. — AFP

## Philippines closes off capital to fight virus

MANILA — Police began closing off access to the Philippines’ sprawling and densely populated capital Manila on Sunday, imposing a quarantine that officials hope will curb the nation’s rising number of coronavirus cases.

Officers in military fatigues and armed with rifles blocked off main roads into the city of some 12 million as domestic flights to and from Manila were halted early Sunday for a month-long isolation of the capital.

Mass gatherings and school at all levels have also been called off, but delays and exceptions have led public health experts to question how effective President Rodrigo Duterte’s measures will be.

Striking steps were also being taken elsewhere in the county, with one church in the central Philippines deciding to hold its Sunday service with worshippers separated by yellow barricade tape.

The tape crisscrossed the

pews so that no two worshippers could sit next to each other.

Though the Philippines has detected a fraction of the infections seen in hot spots such as China and Italy, its confirmed cases nearly doubled in recent days to 111, with eight deaths.

“We are sorry for the inconvenience, but we have orders to follow,” said police corporal Meljayric Sajonia at a checkpoint on the southern edge of the capital. — AFP



Mass gatherings and school at all levels have been called off. PHOTO: AFP

# Preparing for gales, UV exposure in early summer months

THE beginning of the windy season will see a return of gale-force winds in the evenings in March and April, the first two months of our summer season.

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department has issued a weather warning yesterday stating that during March and April, isolated rains or thundershowers are likely in the afternoons or evenings, accompanied by strong winds, hail, thunder, and lightning, due to convective clouds created by gradually rising day temperatures across the country. The surface wind speed is expected to reach a mean of 35 to 40 km per hour.

There have been some reports of damage caused by gale-force winds recently.

Hence, people should take "full precautions" in the evenings and take "necessary action" to protect themselves and their property.

Operators of vessels in rivers in affected areas should remain on the alert for tornadoes that can occur during thunderstorms.

Gale-force winds hit parts of Myanmar every year, destroying homes, toppling trees, and causing fatalities and injuries. Most areas across the country have experienced strong winds during the day due to high temperatures.

People should stop everything and stay indoors when a storm wind hits.

Another danger in the summer season is ultra-violet (UV) rays. With daytime temperatures increasing, the UV index level will also be rising day by day.

On account of global warming, the evil effects of

natural disasters related to climate change are threatening the safety of our planet. There have been increased occurrences of natural disasters with greater destructive impact. The consequences of climate change can cause physical and mental damage.

It is clear that we need to be ready to resist and respond to natural disasters. Since 1980, the country has seen an increase in the number of natural disasters.

As the weather transitions from winter to summer, the day-time temperature will spiral upwards, and we can expect more severe weather patterns rather than normal conditions as the world warms up due to climate change.

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# Spain, France tighten controls as global deaths due to coronavirus pass 6,000

France ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses, while Spain went a step further and banned people from leaving home except to go to work, get medical care or buy food.

CAFES, shops and restaurants shut down across France and Spain on Sunday and travellers faced chaos at US airports as governments stepped up their fight against the coronavirus pandemic which has now reportedly killed more than 6,000.

France ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses, while Spain went a step further and banned people from leaving home except to go to work, get medical care or buy food.

Cases also spiked in Germany and sources told AFP that the government planned to shut its borders with France, Switzerland and Austria on Monday.

Spain and France are among the worst-hit countries in Europe although Italy, which imposed Europe's most draconian lockdown on its 60 million citizens last week, still dominates in terms of infections from COVID-19.

A spike in deaths reported in Spain from 183 on Saturday to 288 on Sunday took the global toll to 6,036 from almost 160,000 infections, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources.

Experts warn, however, that the real figure is likely to be higher as tests are not available to everyone and people can be infected without showing symptoms.

The disease has now hit all global regions, ripping up sporting and cultural calendars, causing panic in stock markets and companies -- particularly airlines -- and prompting often contradictory responses from governments.

The United States imposed a travel ban on countries in Europe's Schengen free-movement area last week, but has since said it would add Britain and Ire-



A medical worker sterilizes a beach in Kuwait City, Kuwait, March 13, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

land to the list.

China, where the disease originated, is now imposing its own crackdown on international travellers -- all will be put into quarantine on arrival -- after linking most of its new infections to those coming from overseas.

As the virus continued its global spread, the plight of existing hotspots intensified.

Iran announced 113 new deaths on Sunday taking its total to 724, the world's third-worst toll after China and Italy, and officials urged people to avoid public gatherings.

### US travel spat

The US travel restrictions threw airports into disarray with passengers complaining of massive queues as staff

battled with the new entry rules and stipulations on medical screening.

One passenger, Ann Lewis Schmidt, told CNN passengers at Chicago's O'Hare airport were held at "close quarters" when they arrived, adding: "So if we didn't have the virus before, we have a great chance of getting it now."

Similar stories emerged on social media from passengers at Dallas and New York's JFK.

Illinois governor JB Pritzker said the queues at O'Hare were "unacceptable" and demanded that President Donald Trump take action.

"The federal government needs to get its s@#t together. NOW," he tweeted.

Trump tested negative for the disease, having come into contact with several members of a Brazilian presidential

delegation who have since tested positive. Governments in Europe also struggled to respond clearly.

Britain, which had avoided crack-downs and instead tried to manage the spread and create "herd immunity", cancelled local elections and hinted that it would follow most other affected European nations and ban mass gatherings.

On the other hand, France allowed municipal elections to go ahead on Sunday even as officials imposed a drastic nationwide shutdown on all non-essential businesses and promised to progressively restrict long-distance travel.

The risk from voting for the elderly was no greater "than going shopping", insisted Jean-Francois Delfraissy, chairman of France's coronavirus science council.

Several countries have announced bans on foreigners entering their countries.

Austria banned gatherings of more than five people on Sunday, telling citizens to stay in unless absolutely necessary.

Norway announced it would shut ports and airports with international connections on Saturday before retreating a day later and saying although foreigners would be turned away the facilities would remain open.

### The isolated turn to music

The spread of the virus has spooked even those countries without significant outbreaks -- with both Australia and New Zealand saying that anyone arriving from overseas must self-isolate for two weeks.

"We are going to have to get used

to some changes in the way we live our lives," said Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Kazakhstan declared a state of emergency on Sunday despite having just eight confirmed infections.

In Africa, which has been spared the worst of the disease, half a dozen countries announced new infections over the weekend.

The announcements sparked restrictions on gatherings in Rwanda, panic-buying in the Seychelles and furious recriminations in Zimbabwe -- a country yet to register a single case.

"Coronavirus is the work of god punishing countries who imposed sanctions on us," said Zimbabwe's defence minister Oppah Muchinguri on Saturday.

Latin America has also recorded only small clusters of infections, though Colombia shut its border with Venezuela over a rise in cases there.

Chile has also taken some protective measures -- quarantining more than 1,300 people aboard two cruise ships after an elderly Briton aboard one of them tested positive for the coronavirus.

However, the cancelled events, closed schools and restrictions on movements have driven people to great lengths to avoid isolation and disappointment.

Romans have been singing to each other from their apartments, and across the US on the weekend hundreds of youngsters posted their cancelled high-school musical numbers on social media under #SunshineSongs

REFERENCE  
AFP News Updates

# Avoid Teaching to the Test

By Lokethar

TEACHING is the art and science of transferring knowledge, skills and competences to learners aimed at achievement of the learning outcomes expected to be attained at the end of the teaching session/course. The learning outcomes are usually based on the Competency Standards/ Curriculum of the course.

Teaching, as a means of transferring learning, is based on the theories of learning. It hinges primarily on creating a desire to learn (motivation) on the part of the student and the ability of the teacher to "deliver the learning". This, of course, is

guided by the learning content as in the Curriculum.

However, teaching primarily to enable the students to successfully answer the examinations/ tests relating to a course of study, particularly for a public examination, is termed "Teaching to the Test." In doing so the teacher usually selects a range of "Test Items" which are most likely to be asked in the actual examination/ test. They then "drill" the students to answer the exam questions and similar ones (clones) set by the teacher, till the students get it "right". "Teachers" practise "Teaching to the Test" for their students to score high marks in the examinations.

Many teachers will probably

need time to adjust to a more "Teaching to the Curriculum" mode. It might increase the teaching time as well. However, that is the only way the students would really get to "learn" what is prescribed by the Curriculum. At the present time, under the National Education Law, supervision of schools to ensure that teachers "Teach to the Curriculum" would be a function under "Quality Assurance of Education". But then also, the examination questions would need to be gradually designed to assess more and more, the student's "Learning to the Curriculum".

The "Teaching to the Test" practice has transferred to the practical "Skills Testing" area

as well. "Drilling" the candidate to do a particular "test-job" over and over again to be able to do it correctly within the time allowed in the practical examination to "perform" the particular "test job" seems to be the aim of some training centres.

If a practical test, is properly designed and assessed, (meaning that the whole process of performing the job is observed and evaluated at every key stage of performance ) it will mean that the candidate possesses the knowledge, skills and competences required for performing "the job". "Test Jobs" however need to be representative "samples" of the actual "workplace" jobs as far as possible. In some cases "specif-

ic operations" could be assessed as in any standardized operations tests for occupations such as the welding, turning etc. These could also be integrated into "test-jobs" for a more holistic appraisal of the total job performance.

"Drilling" to do a practical job test could be minimized if a range of test jobs for a certain level of competency assessment could be made available to choose from. This is termed a "Job Test Bank". In many countries it is the usual practice for Practical Test Centres to draw from the "Job Test Bank", for testing performance of the candidates, so as to set an "unseen" job test, to minimize the practice of "Teaching to the Test".

However "drilling" is usually resorted to in preparation for "Skills Competitions" where the "test job" drawings may be provided by the Competition Organizers and is accessible through the Internet.

The National Body responsible for overseeing of the assessment and certification of Competency could perhaps set up a "Job Test Bank" to be accessible by the Accredited Assessment Centres. The test jobs design would of course, be based on the National Occupational Competency Standards at the required level of competence.

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and Malice to none



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2020)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is a few cloud over the West central Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State and isolated in Sagaing Region, Shan, Chin, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Eastern Shan, Kayin and Mon States.

**FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Partly cloudy.

## 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](mailto: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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## US, Germany battle for virus vaccine surpremacy



US President Donald Trump (C, pictured with members of the Coronavirus Task Force at the White House) reportedly is trying to poach German scientists working on an experimental vaccine against the virus. **PHOTO: AFP**

BERLIN — The United States and Germany are vying to produce an exclusive vaccine against the coronavirus which is being developed in a German laboratory, Die Welt daily reported Saturday.

According to the paper, US President Donald Trump is trying to poach German

scientists working on an experimental vaccine against a global health threat that has now killed some 5,500 people with a view to having an exclusive licence rolled out in the United States.

Such a vaccine would be “only for the United States,” a source close to the Ger-

man government told Die Welt, though Berlin would reportedly be looking to make offers of its own to biotech firm CureVac, based in the German state of Thuringia. The company, founded in 2000, has other sites in Frankfurt and Boston.

The firm markets itself as specialising in “development of treatments against cancer, antibody-based therapies, treatment of rare illnesses and prophylactic vaccines.”

The lab is currently working in tandem with the Paul-Ehrlich Institute, linked to the German ministry of health.

It specialises in vaccine research.

“The German government is very interested in having the development of vaccines and active substances against the novel coronavirus undertaken in Germany and Europe,” a health ministry spokesman told Die Welt, adding that the government was in “intensive” talks with CureVac.

As CureVac CEO, Daniel Menichella found himself invited on March 2 to the White House to meet with Trump, his vice-president Mike Pence and representatives of pharma companies working on how to respond to the pandemic, the company revealed on its website without indicating if financial offers had been put on the table.— AFP

### NEWS In BRIEF

#### Structure of key chromatin-remodeling complex revealed

CHICAGO— Northwestern University (NU) researchers have reportedly mapped a group of proteins, or a protein complex called SWI/SNF, that plays a critical role in both gene expression and repairing damaged DNA. To determine the unique structure, the researchers used cryogenic electron microscopy (cryo-EM), a powerful technique capable of revealing the 3D shape of large protein complexes, according to the researchers' study published this week in the journal Nature.

The technique involves flash-freezing proteins at a speed where water molecules don't have time to re-organize to form crystalline ice. These protein complexes are then directly imaged by an electron microscope, and their shape can then be reconstructed in 3D through a supercomputing cluster. This is the first time that researchers have used cryo-EM to determine the SWI/SNF structure bound to a nucleosome at near-atomic resolution. SWI/SNF regulates the structure of chromatin, which comprises genetic material in a cell's nucleus and often mutates as cancer develops.—Xinhua

#### Study reveals low-dose aspirin reduces liver cancer risk

WASHINGTON — Adults who took low-dose aspirin were less likely to develop liver cancer and die from the liver disease-related causes, suggests a recent study.

The findings come from an analysis published in the New England Journal of Medicine and conducted by a team led by investigators at the Karolinska Institutet, in Sweden, and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). “Rates of liver cancer and of mortality from liver disease are rising at an alarming pace in U.S. and European countries. Despite this, there remain no established treatments to prevent the development of liver cancer, or to reduce the risk of liver-related death,” said lead author Tracey Simon, MD, MPH, the investigator in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at MGH.—ANI

## NASA Mars rover on schedule despite COVID-19 pandemic

WASHINGTON — NASA has decided to persevere through the COVID-19 pandemic for launching its newest Mars rover that was recently christened as Perseverance.

According to Fox News, the space agency has no plans to delay its upcoming Mars mission, which is scheduled to be shot towards the red planet on July 17 this year. Allard Beutel, the spokesman for NASA told Fox News in an email that “We are proactively monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, and have plans in place to

address issues as they arise,” however, “Currently, the coronavirus has not impacted the Mars Perseverance rover launch preps, and work is continuing on schedule”.

The Perseverance rover would primarily be tasked with detecting fossilized remains of extraterrestrial beings on the Martian surface.

This probe would also become the first to launch a helicopter in the martian skies, or for that matter, on any other planet, Fox News cited NASA.— ANI



A robotic rover being tested in Iceland's Mars-like terrain ahead of NASA's 2020 Mars rover mission. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Environmental light affects long-term memory in Drosophila flies

WASHINGTON — In a breakthrough study, scientists have

discovered that Drosophila, a species of fly, lose long-term

memory (LTM) of a traumatic event when kept in the dark.

The discovery confirms the role of environmental light in long-term memory maintenance. The scientists from Tokyo Metropolitan University have also identified the specific molecular mechanism responsible for this effect. LTMs are notoriously difficult to erase; this work may lead to novel treatments for sufferers of trauma, perhaps even the erasure of life-altering traumatic memories. The study was published in the JNeurosci: The Journal of Neuroscience.

It is impossible to remember everything that happens to us in a day. But a particularly shocking event may be consolidated into

our long-term memory (LTM), whereby new proteins are synthesised and the neuronal circuits in our brain are modified. Such memories may be devastating to a victim, potentially triggering post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Yet physiologically speaking, keeping a memory is far from a trivial process; active maintenance is required to keep the changes, protecting against the constant cellular rearrangement and renewal of a living organism. Despite the importance of understanding how memory works in the brain, the mechanism by which this occurs is not yet understood and is a key topic for neuroscience today.—ANI



Scientists have discovered that Drosophila, a species of fly, lose long-term memory (LTM) of a traumatic event when kept in the dark. **PHOTO: AFP**

## China-Laos railway M&E engineering enters construction phase

VIENTIANE — With the first engineering pole for overhead contact system being successfully established by China Railway Wuhan Electrification Engineering Group Co., Ltd. (WEEG), the M&E (mechanical and electrical) engineering of China-Laos railway has officially entered the construction phase on Sunday.

The year of 2020 will be crucial for the engineering construction of the M&E, railway track, station building, etc, and for the completion of the railway's civil engineering work such as tunnels, bridges and roadbed's construction, Laos-China Railway Co., Ltd., the joint venture in charge of the railway's construction and future operation, told Xinhua on Sunday.

Confronted with difficulties resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak, WEEG has tried to organize various construction resources without any delay, since this January. The Chi-



Workers plant the first engineering pole at the construction site of the China-Laos railway project in Vientiane, Laos, March 15, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

nese engineering company has managed to handle the epidemic prevention and construction preparation simultaneously, so as to ensure the project commencement on schedule.

The WEEG will well accomplish the mission of building

China-Laos railway in a safe, high-quality and efficient manner and bring benefits to the two peoples, WEEG project manager Chen Qingfeng told Xinhua Sunday at the launching ceremony held at a railway construction site in Vientiane Province, some

50 km north of capital Vientiane.

The China-Laos Railway is a strategic docking project between the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Laos' strategy to convert from a landlocked country to a land-linked hub.—Xinhua

## NEWS In BRIEF

### Beijing puts 26,000 5G base stations into operation

BEIJING — Beijing has put 26,000 5G base stations into operation, with 5G users reaching about 800,000, according to the Beijing Municipal Communications Administration.

Beijing municipal government rolled out policies in the past year to support the telecom industry by slashing the expenses in carrying out 5G infrastructure construction, said the administration in a statement. According to a report compiled by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, the 5G commercialization in China is expected to generate a direct gross output of 10.6 trillion yuan (about 1.51 trillion U.S. dollars) from 2020 to 2025, plus an indirect gross output of about 24.8 trillion yuan. Given the complexity of the current epidemic control and the economic development, it is an important and pressing task to expedite the development of 5G technology, said Chen Zhaoxiong, vice minister of Industry and Information Technology, recently.—Xinhua

## Singapore imposes 14-day self-isolation on arrivals from 12 nations

SINGAPORE — Singapore on Sunday said that anyone arriving in the city-state from 12 countries including Japan will be required to isolate themselves for 14 days as part of stepped-up measures to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

From 11:59 p.m. Monday, anyone including citizens with a recent travel history to the ASEAN group of nations, Japan, Switzerland or Britain within the last 14 days will be issued a 14-day "Stay-Home Notice," the Health Ministry said.

The ministry also advised Singaporeans to defer all non-essential travel abroad for 30 days.

In addition, all short-term visitors who are nationals of any



Visitors at Changi Airport are spotted wearing masks after Singapore confirms the first case of the Wuhan virus which has killed at least 17 and affected hundreds of people during the eve of the festive Lunar New Year. January 24, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

ASEAN country will have to submit requisite information on their health to the Singapore Overseas Mission in the country they are

resident before their intended date of travel, it said.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations comprises Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam in addition to Singapore.

In recent days, more than three-quarters of new infections were imported cases involving Singapore residents and long-term pass holders who had returned to Singapore from overseas. More than one-quarter of the imported cases were from Southeast Asian countries.

As of Saturday, Singapore has more than 200 people infected with the virus but there has been no report of any fatality.—Kyodo

## Coronavirus hits Sri Lanka's economy

NEW DELHI — Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Sunday said that his country's economy has taken a severe blow due to coronavirus and recommended SAARC member countries to formulate a mechanism to avail assistance for struggling economies to tide over the crisis. "Our economy has taken a severe blow due to coronavirus, particularly in the tourism sector. Most of our tourists are from Italy and the EU countries. Now there is a ban on their coming. Our tourism sector was just recovering after last years' April 21 terrorist attack," Rajapaksa said in the video conference with all SAARC leaders. The Sri Lankan President said that the country's export has also been adversely affected.

"I strongly recommend SAARC leaders to formulate a mechanism to assist our economies to tide over this very difficult period. I also wish to recommend that a SAARC ministerial-level route be established to discuss and coordinate regional matters in combating coronavirus," Rajapaksa said.—ANI

## Hong Kong to quarantine visitors from 26 Europe over virus scare



People wearing mask are seen inside an MTR Train on Feb. 22, 2020 in Hong Kong, China. PHOTO: KYODO

HONG KONG — Hong Kong will quarantine visitors from 26 European countries in an effort to stem the quickly-spreading coronavirus outbreak, the government said Friday.

Effective next Tuesday, travelers who visited any of the listed countries within 14 days prior to their arrival in the territory will be placed under home quarantine, according to the Health Department statement. The 26 European countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland,

Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The department had already ordered that arrivals from Japan's coronavirus-hit Hokkaido region, the whole of Italy and parts of France, Germany and Spain would be quarantined starting Saturday. In Hong Kong, the total number of confirmed cases has risen to 134, including a 16-month old baby boy whose parents were also infected. Four people have died.—Kyodo

## Israel postpones Netanyahu graft trial over virus



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trial for corruption which was due to open on Tuesday has been postponed until the end of May over concerns about the spread of coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

JERUSALEM — An Israeli court on Sunday postponed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's graft trial over coronavirus, as the premier relaunched his appeal for an emergency unity government to tackle the crisis.

Netanyahu, the first Israeli

prime minister ever indicted in office, had been scheduled to stand trial from Tuesday over alleged bribery, fraud and breach of trust — charges which he denies.

Jerusalem's District Court said in a statement that, given the coronavirus pandemic, it had

been instructed to hear "only urgent matters".

In Netanyahu's trial, "we have decided to postpone the first hearing until May 24," the court said.

Israel has 200 confirmed cases of the virus, and tens of thousands of people in home quarantine.

Netanyahu has been charged with a range of offences including receiving improper gifts and offering a media mogul lucrative regulatory changes in exchange for favourable coverage. Despite the indictments, Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party won the most seats in March 2 elections and he is aiming to form a new government.

But Likud and its allies fell short of the 61 seats needed for a majority in the Knesset, or parliament. It was Israel's third inconclusive vote in less than a year.—AFP

## UK defends virus plan as 'wartime' measures loom



The London marathon has been postponed until October 4 due to the coronavirus crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON — Britain on Sunday said its criticised plan to deal with coronavirus was designed to "protect life" in a "sustainable" manner as it prepared to unveil "wartime-style" measures to tackle the outbreak.

The government has yet to implement the kind of tough measures that continental Europe has adopted, but health minister Matt Hancock said Sunday it would announce emergency powers on Tuesday,

which are expected to include a ban on mass gatherings.

"We are absolutely ready to do that," he told Sky News's Sophy Ridge.

"We'll take the right action at the right time," he said, adding "the time is coming."

Critics have accused the government of not acting quickly enough to contain the spread, but the government has said that it is taking the advice of experts, including be-

havioural scientists, on when to deploy the measures.

"The goal here is to protect life, the measures have to be sustainable," he later told the BBC. "We will stop at nothing to fight this virus".

Other measures being considered include instructing people over 70 to stay in strict isolation at home or in care homes for four months, a Whitehall source told ITV News.—AFP

## Biden, Sanders face off in debate overshadowed by virus

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders meet on Sunday for the first one-on-one debate of the Democratic presidential primary campaign, now overshadowed by the spread of the new coronavirus.

Both men have cancelled rallies and two state contests have been postponed in the wake of the outbreak, which has killed at least 57 Americans and upended daily life across the country.

Many states and cities have clamped down on large gatherings and closed schools, which are often used as polling places, to help contain the epidemic.

Frontrunner Biden and self-described "democratic socialist" Sanders are vying to replace President Donald Trump, who was on Saturday cleared of the COVID-19 illness by his phy-

sician after meeting with members of a Brazilian delegation who later tested positive.

They will face off for two hours from 8:00 pm (0000 GMT Monday), but Democratic officials have shifted the venue from Arizona to a TV studio in Washington DC with no live audience because of infection fears.

The debate comes ahead of key electoral contests on Tuesday in Florida, Ohio, Illinois and Arizona. Officials in all four states said they would work to make conditions safe for voters.

But Georgia delayed its primary election by nearly two months on Saturday, with state Democratic Party chairwoman Senator Nikema Williams warning that the ballot risked compromising the health and safety of voters.—AFP



Both Biden and Sanders have cancelled rallies in the wake of the outbreak, which has killed at least 51 Americans and upended daily life across the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

## France to limit long-distance train, bus, plane travel over coronavirus

PARIS — France will progressively reduce long-distance train, bus and plane travel over the coming days in a bid to limit the spread of the coronavirus, the government announced Sunday.

The country, which has already shuttered cafes, restaurants, schools and universities and urged people to limit their movements, will now seek to limit long-distance travel "to the strictly necessary," ecology minister Elisabeth Borne told journalists in Paris.

Long-distance train traffic will be halved, with only "a few" international flights maintained, she said.

Deputy transport minister Jean-Baptiste Djebbari said this meant that "some flights to the United States, Africa, some domestic flights" and to France's overseas territories will be maintained.

Airports will remain open, but certain terminals will be closed — one at Orly Airport in the south from Wednesday, and two at Charles De Gaulle in the north by the end of next week.

Regarding 12,000 French nationals stranded in Morocco after the kingdom suspended air links with 21 countries, Djebbari said they were being progressively repatriated.—AFP

## Unlike 2008, world's economic doctors feud over cure

WASHINGTON — “I think the patient is stabilised,” then US president Barack Obama declared after G20 powers prescribed unprecedented remedies to steady the crisis-wracked world economy just over a decade ago.

Today, as the world fights to immunise global growth from the coronavirus pandemic and Obama's successor Donald Trump rips up the rule-book of cooperation, there has been no such collective response, and globalisation itself is ailing.

“Trump thinks all problems are external,” Charlie Robertson, global chief economist with Re-

naissance Capital in London, told AFP.

“He's always been of the view that if you can just maintain external security, you'll feel better about yourself, whether it's to do with trade or the virus,” he said.

“It does add to the anti-globalisation story.”

The outbreak risks exacerbating isolationist and populist trends already in evidence, after COVID-19 emerged in China late last year to infect much of the rest of the world.

Trump, after pursuing a trade war with China, is waging a blame game and blindsided Europeans by banning travel from the

continent to ward off the “foreign” disease.

Some countries in Europe are also shutting their borders.

“Our experience is that primarily foreigners brought in the disease, and that it is spreading among foreigners,” Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban said.

### Globalisation in sick ward

There is no scientific basis for such claims. But in concrete terms, the pandemic has exposed the reliance of many companies, from Apple to fashion chain Zara, on China as the world's foremost production hub.—AFP



In the years since the financial crisis took hold in 2008, globalisation as measured by trade flows and foreign direct investment has flatlined as a proportion of GDP. PHOTO: AFP

## Virus credit crunch risks turning firms into zombie army

PARIS — A decade of easy money sloshing around the economy may come to haunt policymakers as legions of

firms hooked on cheap credit have no buffers to make it through the coronavirus crisis without serious damage, or

outright failure.

Amid signs that banks and investors have already retrenched their lending, central banks

are trying to ensure that the flow of credit to businesses remains open.

But those loans, however soft, will still have to be paid back, and therein lies the rub as many won't be able to generate the necessary revenue.

The volume of corporate debt struck an all-time real term dollar high of \$13.5 trillion at the end of last year, according to the OECD.

Including bank borrowings, “the global (corporate) debt-to-GDP ratio ... is near a record high of 94 percent and is at, or near, all-time highs in many major economies,” Capital Economics noted in a recent report.—AFP



Central banks have lowered interest rates and undertaken steps to ensure the credit taps remain open, including the European Central Bank which unveiled a number of such measures. PHOTO: AFP

## Cuban tourism down by 12 pct as COVID-19 rages across globe: ministry

HAVANA — The Cuban Tourism Ministry said Saturday that as the novel coronavirus rages worldwide, the country's tourism industry has seen a decrease of 12 percent so far in March, with major cancellations from Canadian and Italian tour operators.

“Cuba continues to be a safe country. The island keeps open to foreign visitors. Tourists are welcome here,” Barbara Cruz, head of merchandising at the Tourism Ministry, told reporters at a news conference.

Cuba received 98 per-

cent of tourists expected to arrive in the country for the first two months of the year, she added.

“Cuba has medical personnel in all tourist facilities, and isolated areas have been set up for the treatment of suspected cases of the novel coronavirus,” said Grisel Lopez, head of quality control at the Tourism Ministry.

“Cuba complies with the International Health Regulations, and the prevention and control plan seeks to maintain high hygiene standards in tourist facilities nationwide,” she said.—XINHUA

## Saudi Aramco 2019 profit slides 20.6% on lower crude prices

RIYADH — Saudi Aramco reported Sunday a 20.6 percent drop in 2019 net profit due to lower crude prices and production levels, in its first earnings announcement as a listed company amid an escalating price war.

The world's most valuable firm also announced it was slashing its capital expenditure for this year, as the price war with Russia and the spreading coronavirus pandemic rattle energy markets.

These are the first financial results after Aramco's historic \$29.4 billion initial public offering and listing on the domestic Tadawul exchange last December. Last week, Aramco shares slipped below the IPO price for the first time.

“Net income was \$88.2 billion for the full-year 2019, compared to \$111.1 billion in 2018,” Aramco said in a statement. “The decrease was primarily due to lower crude oil prices and production volumes, coupled

with declining refining and chemical margins.”

The company also declared \$1.6 billion of impair-

ment provisions for losses associated with Sadara Chemical Company, an Aramco subsidiary.—AFP



Saudi Aramco announced a 20.6 percent drop in 2019 profits as it unveiled Sunday its first annual results since a historical IPO on the Saudi bourse in December. PHOTO: AFP

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1025 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1025 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-3-2020 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 OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS  
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# Exploring around Bawlakhe in Kayah State

By **Thiha** (the Traveller @ Thiha Lulin)



An aerial view of beautiful Nampun Creek.

**O**N my arrival in Bawlakhe of Kayah State, I unexpectedly saw ancient cultural and historical buildings catching attention of travellers. Those wishing to enjoy exploration for new destinations may prefer to pay visits to town and villages in the township rather than the urban area of Bawlakhe. So I would like to share experiences on my visits with other travellers.

## What is Bawlakhe?

It is a tranquil town where departmental offices open. Not only Kayah ethnics but also Yintale ethnic reside there. I think travellers should wonder around their villages. I seem number of those in Bawlakhe who believe in Buddhism and gods may be larger than those from other towns in Kayah State. The town passed the chieftain eras with evidence of chieftain residential houses but many parts of these houses are in degradation. I had noted down that the region was established by Chieftain Fabantmin (Po Byar). The town was named Tabawtakhe concerning Shar Creek and Takheshar Creek, and then it changed to Bawlakhe which means a town of parents in Yintale language.

## Climate

I have felt hot in Bawlakhe but cold in Loikaw. I think the town would have many rainfalls in monsoon. As the township is facilitated with earthen roads, travellers need to take care of

driving not to catch slip in monsoon.

## Saw La Phaw, the patriotic leader of Kayah State

A story about Bawlakhe is not separable with Saw La Phaw because the sites we visited are related to him. When British colonialists occupied Myanmar, Kayah ethnic Chieftain Saw La Phaw joined the anti-colonialist struggling. He opened his headquarters in Sawlon. In 1888, Sawlon headquarters was occupied by British as the Chieftain could not resist against British troops. The Chieftain who did not wish to live under colonial rule established new Sawlon Village, east of Sawlon town. Now, the village has been upgraded to Ywathit Town.

## Visit to around Bawlakhe

It would be an interesting tour due to beauty of environment and ancient cultural buildings. Young visitors can enjoy recreation at Yepyar Creek and the waterfall. Photographers will have chance to take photos on lifestyle of rural people and natural scenes.

## Sawlon Village

On my trip, I firstly paid a visit to Sawlon Village. It was established in early 1246 Myanmar era. Travellers can go to Sawlon Village through a junction of roads to Ywathit and Sawlon from Bawlakhe. The road to Sawlon Village is a one-way

earthen route. Along the route, travellers can enjoy scenic beauties on both sides with mountain ranges and creeks. It is about a 30 minutes drive way from Bawlakhe to Sawlon Village. On arrival at the entrance to the village, travellers can see a school and a monastery. Moreover, they can see a map of village hung at a tree. However, the abbot of the monastery and some villagers cannot tell Myanmar language fluently. Currently, the village is formed with about 20 houses. I have heard some houses were destroyed. In the past, the residences of the chieftains were set on fire. Sawlon Village was dubbed as Bagan of Kayah State.

## Old military camp near Sawlon Village

Travellers can pay visit to an old military camp from the village. The map of the village shows the site with a star which means the mine explosion leaving machines damaged and residents injured.

## Spring in Sawlon Village

Travellers can arrive at a spring of a creek, east to the village, which flows into a large creek we saw along the route to Sawlon Village.

## Memorial to families of Chieftain Saw La Phaw from Sawlon Village

The tomb pagodas which are memorial to families of Chieftain Saw La Phaw are in-



Ancient throne and Buddha Images.



interesting destinations for travellers. Unexpectedly, buildings at the memorial look like ancient pagodas but genuine tombs. Travellers need to go there along the pavement from the entrance to the village. Most of the local residents cannot know such a memorial. The map shows it as Mote. If travellers ask them about Moke, they can explain facts about it. Almost all the tombs were destroyed due to lack of maintenance because burglars might think something special could be stored in the tombs. Actually, these damaged

parts of tombs can bring sadness to the visitors.

### Let's enjoy recreation in Yepyay Creek

When I paid visit to Yepyay Creek in February, the water was clean and blue. I think such a creek might be Nampun Creek. Some parts of the creek shape small waterfalls and some has steady flows. As some parts of the creek are deep, visitors should not take careless moves in the creek. In fact, the places where local residents take a bath and wash clothes are safe for

swimming.

### Ywathit Town

I paid a visit to Ywathit from Bawlakhe again. I noted Ywathit Village was upgraded to sub-township and then Ywathit Town in 2014. Environs of the town are plentiful of teak and hardwood plants. Significantly, coconut palm plants are thriving in the village. Too many coconut palm plants create the town as a sea beach town. On my way to Ywathit, I passed rough hilly roads while enjoying both hilly and valley climatic conditions as



Wonderful art of carving works dated in 1250 ME.



Victory land of U Aung Zeya.



Traditional house of locals in significant style.



Interior of the Thiri Mingala Golden Monastery.



Over 150 years old Thiri Mingala Golden Monastery.

well as scene of orange plantations. As there is a checkpoint, travellers need not to be late on tour of the village. If possible, travellers should contact local drivers and tour agencies. They must pass three checkpoints of the Tatmadaw and other organizations. If officials ask them, they must respectfully give replies. Their return should not be dark.

### Ywathit waterfall

The waterfall cannot catch attention of larger number of travellers. They need to take motorboat in Thanlwin River to the waterfall in a drive of about half an hour. The motor road does not reach the waterfall.

### Thiri Mingala Golden Monastery in Ywathit

More than 150 years old Thiri Mingala Golden Monastery is located in Ywathit Town. A monk said the monastery was built in 1230 ME. There remains one of five monasteries. I saw gilt posts and ancient thrones in the monastery as well as Buddha images. Sculpturing works curved on the posts are ancient works. Some ancient teak boxes and utensils were found in the monastery. While visiting the monastery, some foreigner travellers committed stealing cases. Some ceremonies take place on the plot in front of the monastery. Despite no influent spoken skill, the abbots of the monastery give clarification as much as they can.

### Hsinswe Monastery (Nyaungkham Monastery) in Ywathit

Hsinswe Monastery, another one, was seen other side of the town. On the day when I paid visit to Ywathit, a ceremony to honour a Buddhist monk

ancient pagoda on a mound. Despite thinking that Ywathit might be a large village, I saw some development undertakings in the town. I saw some brick buildings, shops, departmental offices and hospital. The ancient pagoda and monasteries are located at the outskirts of the town. Preparations are being made to construct a gravel road to Mwedaw Pagoda, before arriving at Hsinswe Monastery. Beyond the pagoda, I saw some unidentified, damaged buildings whether these might be ancient pagodas or tombs. The victory land of King Alaungmintayar U Aung Zeya is located over there. After arranging the land of victory, U Aung Zeya conquered his enemies. Travellers may visit the chamber of Saw La Phaw on the way to Hsinswe Monastery.

### Coconut oil of Ywathit

Most of travellers buy coconut oil as gifts from Ywathit to their homes. The whole town is significantly teemed with coconut palm plants.

### How to go there

from the monastery who was one of three monks in winning the title in the entire nation took place there. The monastery was made of wood on a grand scale. The about 150 years old prayer hall of the monastery is under maintenance. Two ancient tusks are the most significant. Buddha images were wonderfully curved on the tusks. The works were created in 1250 ME. A script was mentioned on the tusks as works of Ko Shwe Thaing. I saw ancient clock towers and other utensils at the monastery.

### Ancient pagoda and buildings

Before arriving at Ywathit Town, I paid homage to an

Actually, it is slightly difficult to go to Ywathit Town on own arrangements. So travellers should rely on domestic tour agencies, automobiles and tour guides. If not, they should contact 09-970478282 of the Treasure Host on the visits to Kayah State.

In fact, Kayah State possesses the lands of natural beauties which need to be explored in addition to an interesting history. I would like to inform travellers about Bawlakhe region waiting for them with beauties.

Have a safe, secure, healthy and happy trip.

Translated by Than Tun Aung



## Myanmar National League II: Junior Lions trounce Yaw Myay FC

JUNIOR Lions FC secured a huge 11-0 win over Yaw Myay FC in the Week-7 match of the MPT Myanmar National League II 2020, played yesterday at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon.

Junior Lions have fared well in the league and managed to create solid scoring opportunities in yesterday's match.

Junior Lions got their opening goal at 10 minutes, and the goal was scored by youth player Nyi Nyi.

The second goal for Junior Lions was scored by Wai Yan Soe at 13 minutes.

Zaw Win Thein scored the third goal for the team at 17 minutes, and the fourth goal was scored by Nyi Nyi at 24 minutes.

Again, Zaw Win Thein scored the fifth goal at 32 minute.

Nyi Nyi scored the sixth goal at 41 minutes.

Junior Lions led the first half of the match by 6-0.

The second half was again dominated by Junior Lions, with players eager for more goals.

Taking advantage of weaknesses in the defense line of Yaw Myay FC, Junior Lion's Zaw Win Thein scored the seventh goal for the team at 53 minutes.

Nyi Nyi scored the eighth goal for Junior Lions at 54 minutes.

Zaw Win Thein scored the ninth goal at 60 minutes, and Nyi Nyi scored the tenth goal at 63 minutes.

Lamin Htwe scored the eleventh goal at 68 minutes.

After the big victory, Junior Lions FC is standing first on the standing table of the MNL II. The team has won all six matches it has played so far, garnering 18 points.



A Junior Lions FC striker attempts a goal in the match against Yaw Myay FC in yesterday's MNL II match at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNL**

Junior Lions will next play against Myawady FC. The team has a chance to be the half season champion if it secures a draw against Myawady. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Players treated like 'guinea pigs' over coronavirus, says Rooney

LONDON: Former Manchester United star Wayne Rooney claims the British government and football authorities have treated players like "guinea pigs" during the coronavirus crisis.

While the rest of European football was shutting down due to the growing threat of the global pandemic, Rooney is angry it took several days for the Premier League and Football League to postpone their matches until Apr 3.

It was only when Arsenal

manager Mikel Arteta and Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi tested positive for the virus on Friday that football's UK governing bodies called a temporary halt to the season.

Rooney, currently playing for second tier Derby, felt they should have acted quicker and the former England captain said he would "never forgive" the authorities if his family fell ill as a result.

"Why did we wait until Friday? Why did it take Mikel Arteta

to get ill for the game in England to do the right thing?" Rooney wrote in the Sunday Times.

"For players, staff and their families it has been a worrying week - one in which you felt a lack of leadership from the government and from the FA and Premier League.

"After the emergency meeting, at last the right decision was made - until then it almost felt like footballers in England were being treated like guinea pigs.

"I know how I feel. If any of my family get infected through me because I've had to play when it's not safe, and they get seriously ill, I'd have to think hard about ever playing again. I would never forgive the authorities."

Many matches at non-league level were going ahead as scheduled in Britain this weekend and Rooney believes Prime Minister Boris Johnson "dodged" the issue by letting football make its own decision about playing on.

The 34-year-old claimed money was key to the authorities' reluctance to cancel games.

"The rest of sport - tennis, Formula One, rugby, golf, football in other countries - was closing down and we were being told to carry on," Rooney said.—AFP ■



Wayne Rooney has criticised England's football authorities over how long they took to suspend matches in the country amid the coronavirus outbreak. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Traditional lethwei event to be held in Mawlamyine

A Myanmar traditional lethwei fight will be held on 28 and 29 March in Mawlamyine, according to officials of Myanma Lethwei.

The bouts will feature young generation local fighters, who will use the fighting style of Myanma traditional lethwei, including the various clinching techniques. All the fights will be bare-knuckled, without gloves, with only tape and gauze allowed on the hands of fighters.

On 28 March, there will be two main bouts of five rounds:

While Aung Soe Win (Doe Yoe Yar) will fight Min Kyaw Za (Zwekapin Myay), Aung Ye Lin (Tiger) will take on Aung Khe Saw (Aung Nai Thu) the same day.

There will be three main bouts of five rounds on 29 March.

While Saw Nga Ye will fight against Nhat Khat Min, Kyel Thagun (Mudon) will meet Aelthel Lay (Shwe Barlar). The event will have three and four round matches featuring youth fighters, according to the organizers.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Week-10 of U-21 Myanmar National League to start today

THE Week-10 matches of the U-21 Myanmar National League will begin today. Several interesting matches are lined up for the week.

Chin United will play against Yadanarbon FC at 4 pm today at the Padonmar Stadium. At the same time, Yaw Myay FC will take on Hantharwady United at the South Dagon Stadium, while Kachin United will take on Ayeyawady United at the Salin Stadium. On 17 March, Southern Myanmar will meet ISPE at the South Dagon Stadium. Their match is scheduled

to start at 4 p.m. At the same time, Mawyawadi will take on Zwekapin United at the Padonmar Stadium and Silver Stars will take on Chinland FC at the Salin Stadium.

At 4 pm on 18 March, Yangon United will face Myawady FC at the South Dagon Stadium, and Rakhine United will take on Sagaing United at the Yangon United Sports Complex.

The match between University FC and Magwe FC is scheduled to start at 4 pm on 8 April at the University Stadium. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■