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State Counsellor's televised message to public on prevention, control and treatment measures against COVID-19

People are the key; No matter how the government adopts sound policies, public participation is pivotal to achieve success.

Dear citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

"I'm reporting that we need to collaborate in the containment and prevention measures against the COVID-19 and to prepare for the health and socio-economic challenges we are facing ahead,

in the best way.

"The WHO has declared the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a pandemic. They further said that the viral disease can be contained systematically. A national-level central committee was formed over a month ago to meet the health and socio-economic

impacts upon our people. The committee, since then, has been working hard to prevent and solve health, social and economic difficulties and has been closely monitoring the situation.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor adopts guidelines at COVID-19 prevention central committee meeting

THE National-level Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment held a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of committee, joined the meeting together with its secretaries Union Ministers U Kyaw Tin and Dr Myint Htwe; central committee

members Union Ministers U Min Thu, Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Soe Win, U Thaug Tun, Dr Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thant Sin Maung, U Thein Swe, Dr Than

Myint, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Dr Win Myat Aye, U Ohn Maung and Nai Thet Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung; Social Affairs Ministers of Regions/States; and officials. After listen-

ing to the opening remarks of the committee's Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the secretaries and members of the central committee discussed prevention,

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Category (1) proposals to amend Constitution not passed

TWENTY-FOUR MPs were on leave at the 23rd-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session yesterday and the remaining 630 attended.

First, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win explained the ODA loans from JICA for the Infrastructure Development Project in Thilawa Area (Phase III),

U Khin Maung Win said the loan of 7.339 billion Yen will be used to install two boilers that will be powered by the heat produced by two gas turbines constructed near the SEZ in 2015. The boilers will in turn power a steam turbine that can generate 25 MW for Thilawa. The loan will have an interest rate of 0.01 per cent, a 10-year grace period and 30 years for repayment.

The Speaker called for MPs interested in debating the loan to register their name.

Next, Deputy Minister U



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convenes its 20th day meeting of 15th regular session yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

Maung Maung win and Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein explained a proposal to acquire US\$ 100 million from the International Development Association (IDA) and US\$ 10 million as financial assistance

for the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The Speaker called for MPs interested in debating the loan to register their names.

Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win then explained a proposal to acquire US\$ 350 million from IDA for the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. He said the loan would be used to replace the two old John Brown gas turbines and the H-25 Hitachi Combined Cycle CCGT of Ywama Thermal Power Plant of Yangon Region. The loan would also be used to replace transformers in sub-power stations with those that can hold a larger volume of voltage, and to purchase mobile substations that can be used when sub-power stations are under repair.

The Deputy Minister said the project period would be from 2020 to 2024 and have an interest

rate of 1.25 per cent and a 0.75 per cent service fee. The grace period would be five years and the repayment period 25 years.

The Ywama power plant supplies electricity to Hline-thaya, Shwelinban and Shwepyitha industrial zones through the Hlinethaya sub-power station, and onward to Ayeyawady Region.

The Speaker called for MPs interested in debating the loan to register their name.

Next, the Hluttaw began voting on category (1) proposals of the second bill to amend the Constitution, which includes 15 provisions. None of the proposals acquired the necessary number of votes to enact amendments.

In detail, the proposal to amend Section 115-(b) received 412 votes, Section 121-(k) received 414 votes, Section 124-(a)

received 413 votes, Section 124-(b) received 416 votes, and Section 147-(b) received 413 votes.

Section 172-(a) received 415 votes, Section 172-(b) received 416 votes, Section 188 received 417 votes, Section 196 received 416 votes, and Section 198-(b) received 414 votes.

Section 198-(d) received 413 votes, Section 204-(b) received 403 votes, Section 225 received 415 votes, Section 226-(a) received 415 votes, and Section 226-(b) received 416 votes.

The Speaker then announced that voting for category (2) proposals will commence on 17 March, 2020, during the 24th-day meeting of the 15th regular session, Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. —Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win. **PHOTO:MNA**



Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO:MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held meeting over a bill, namely Industrial Zone bill that was controversial between the two Hluttaws, at the meeting hall of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meetings was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy

Speaker and Joint Bill Committee Chairman U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, secretary, joint secretary and members of the committee and officials from Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, Union Attorney-General Office and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds the meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

The Ministry of Health and Sports is taking the leading role to contain and prevent the outbreak and spread of the deadly infectious virus in Myanmar and has been issuing health awareness information and guidelines to the people.

FROM PAGE-1

The Ministry of Health and Sports is taking the leading role to contain and prevent the outbreak and spread of the deadly infectious virus in Myanmar and has been issuing health awareness information and guidelines to the people. Travellers from the regions, where the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 are mostly seen, are also restricted from entering Myanmar for the good of our people, in a real-time manner.

After making assessments on possible economic impacts, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Commerce and other relevant ministries worked together on the prevention plans. Our government has made arrangements to publish the activities of the ministries on this issue.

After the announcement of WHO, a central committee formed on 30 January was elevated to a national-level body on 13 March for making effective responses to possible consequences in Myanmar and other areas amidst outbreak of COVID-19. I'm the chairperson of this committee. The President's Office also made a public announcement on 13 March to ban festivals and entertainment events (including construction of water-throwing pandals for the Myanmar traditional water festival) to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. Moreover, the relevant departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture are making announcements and issuing instructions as needed.

The government will reduce tax and interest rates so that the people will not suffer, to prevent unemployment, to continue operating factories and to have least impacts on the economy of the country. Loans with minimum interest rate and tax exemption plans will be arranged for the most vulnerable businesses in CMP sector, hotels and tourism and SMEs due to the COVID-19. The 2 per cent advance tax on export items will be exempted until the end of this financial year.

A fund for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 will be raised with public contributions, and that people are urged to make their contributions to this fund. I wish to inform the public that the government is focusing on long-term national interests while making measured steps to meet the needs of the prevailing situation.

As mentioned above, the ministries will continue to issue announcements, explain objectives of the instructions and adopt required plans in the future in a consistent manner.

"I'd like to present an important point that we've been containing and preventing the COVID-19 as much as we can to mitigate its negative impacts upon our nation and people. It's a simple and clear fact that people are the key; No matter how the government adopts sound policies, public participation is pivotal to achieve success.

I have said many times that we need to get the people involved. Please mark my words concerning the COVID-19.

"With respect to health, people are the key to follow the health ministry's guidelines and to avoid public gatherings. People are the key to prevent rumours and misinformation in the wake of the COVID-19. People are the key to avoid panic-buying and stockpiling the goods. There have been no confirmed



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers the televised message to public yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

- With respect to health, people are the key to follow the health ministry's guidelines and to avoid public gatherings.
- People are the key to prevent rumours and misinformation in the wake of the COVID-19.
- People are the key to avoid panic-buying and stockpiling goods.

cases of the COVID-19 in our country until the present moment. The Ministry of Health and Sports has been releasing real-time information and announcements.

"If the public gets fully involved in the containment and prevention measures against the viral disease, our implementation will surely be successful. The people are the main strength of the country. Ours is not a superpower. We have been tackling the peace, development and democracy-building processes simultaneously. We can prove that we can meet the challenge of this pandemic and compete with the resource rich big countries by showing them that we have the full strength of our people, "People

are the key".

Dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, I would like to express thanks to the people of have stood with our government in the interest of the nation and collaborated with us; organizations, civil service personnel, workers, businesspersons, intellectuals and intelligentsia at different walks of life. We will keep the people informed of the measures taken by our Government as well as what we are appealing to the people. For us to be successful in this national task, "The people are the key".—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya, Aung Khin)



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi adopts guidelines at COVID-19 prevention central committee meeting

FROM PAGE-1

control and treatment plans of relevant committees in relation to overseas trips of civil service staff, awareness programmes in ethnic languages, information to Myanmar nationals abroad through Myanmar missions in

foreign countries and raising a fund for prevention and treatments.

They also discussed release of instructions and announcements on religious events, local pagoda festivals, broadcasting religious courses on televisions and Internet pages and TV pro-

grammes for meditation courses.

The committee has arranged for entertainment programmes at homes during the Thingyan Festival, online summer training courses for teachers by using information and communication technologies (ICT), disseminating knowledge on the reasons of

quarantine, the convenience of quarantined persons and family visits to prisoners and the elderly persons at homes for the aged.

The attendees also discussed possible impacts on the business sector, finding new markets for agricultural produce, reduction of interest rates, providing support

to SMEs in the most vulnerable areas and overcoming obstacles for setting up industrial zones.

The State Counsellor gave guidelines based on the discussions after which the meeting concluded.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

UEC holds preparatory meeting for 2020 General Election



Union Election Commission Chairperson U Hla Thein addresses the meeting on voter-lists compilation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION ELECTION Commission met with its sub-commissions from regions, states, and Union council area yesterday to discuss preparations for successful holding of the 2020 General Election as it has completed the voter-lists compilation process in 2019.

UEC Chairperson U Hla Thein presided over the meeting and explained the importance of accurate voter lists and col-

lecting them into the computer system to prevent any loss, and instructed all the levels of commission to coordinate with political parties and civil organizations to help people check the voter lists.

The UEC is now collecting the number of constituencies for ethnic people with 0.1 per cent of the country's population, and it will also publish the books with the updated laws, bylaws, and

guidelines.

Chairperson U Hla Thein also explained the commission's coordination with relevant organizations such as supplying office equipment to the sub-commissions.

The UEC's Director-General presented the voter-lists compilation processes, followed by the discussions of officials from sub-commissions.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Villagers injured in fighting between Tatmadaw, AA receive treatment at Matupi Hospital

CIVILIANS injured in a fighting between the Tatmadaw troops and AA in Paletwa, Chin State, are receiving treatment at the Matupi People's Hospital, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

The statement released by the Office of the C-in-C of Defence Services confirmed that four men and four women were taken to the hospital on 15 March.

The fighting happened when the AA attacked the Tatmad-

aw's outpost near the Meitsar Village (East) and Meitsar Village (West), leaving some villagers died in the armed conflict, said the statement.

—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Tatmadaw donates aid to people, governmental staff in Paletwa Township

THE Tatmadaw donated 100 bags of rice to local people including those displaced by armed conflicts, and governmental staff in Paletwa, Chin State on 14 March, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

An officer of a local battalion handed over the aid to the head of Paletwa Township General Administrative Department U Aung Law Har and officials.—MNA (Translated by TTN)

News release on COVID-19 (8:00 pm, 16-3-2020)

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is continuously conducting surveillance on COVID-19 acute respiratory disease at international entry/exit gates, in hospital-based and community-based processes, and in collaboration with private hospitals.
2. There are 3 new quarantined patients under surveillance between 6 pm of 15-3-2020 and 6 pm of 16-3-2020.
3. On 16-3-2020, two Myanmar nationals returning from Germany and one returning from Thailand were screened at Yangon International Airport. Although they do not have high fever, display symptoms of COVID-19, or been in close contact with people with confirmed cases, they have history of traveling to nations with high infection rate and are currently under hospital quarantine.
4. As of 6 pm, 16-3-2020, ten quarantined patients awaiting their lab test results are receiving medical care at their respective hospitals.
5. The lab test results will be made public in real time.
6. As of 12-3-2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar, but nonetheless, surveillance activities are actively in progress. COVID-19 is currently spread across neighbouring China and 143 countries around the world. WHO recently declared the virus a pandemic and the general public is advised to closely follow the healthcare guidelines published by the Ministry of Health and Sports.—Ministry of Health and Sports

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Daily COVID-19 meeting proceeds with video conferencing



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe presides over COVID-19 daily meeting (35/2020). **PHOTO: MNA**

THE daily executive-level coordination meeting on COVID-19 held meeting (35/2020) through video conferencing yesterday.

First, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe thanked all medical staff working hard against the virus. He said the risk of the virus spreading will decrease as the number of travellers from entering from infected regions goes down. He said it is impor-

tant for everyone involved in the preventive measures to be systematically networked so that the donations made to combat COVID-19 are used effectively. He said they have formed an email group linking the executive, state and regional level officials in this endeavour.

The Union Minister said public health processes are going well and hospital work needs to be further promoted. He called

for all attendees to weigh in on preparations and plans related to COVID-19, including practicing treating people infected with the virus and measures in place to contain its spread.

The meeting then commenced with attendees discussing the various preparatory plans, processes, directives and other aspects in combating the coronavirus. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

MoI instructs cinemas to halt screening amidst COVID-19 concerns

THE Ministry of Information has notified cinemas across the states/regions of Myanmar to suspend screening starting from 16 March. This is done in order to prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), which was declared a pandemic by WHO on 11-3-2020. — Ministry of Information

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Bangladesh Embassy delays Independence Day celebrations

THE Bangladesh Embassy in Yangon has decided to postpone the celebration of Bangladesh's Independence Day on 26 March in Sedona Hotel, Yangon, with respect to the notification from the President's Office on 13 March after WHO declared COVID-2019 a pandemic. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Report on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

From (4-1-2020) to (16-3-2020)
(16-3-2020), 8: 15 pm

1. Situation update worldwide

(World Health Organization's statement issued at 1:30 am (MMT) on 5-3-2020)

Total affected countries	- 144
Total cases	- 153, 517
Total death toll	- 5,735
Global death rate	- 3.8%
Global cases/ death toll	

Italy, Germany, France, Spain, The United Kingdom, Croatia, San Marino, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Israel, Romania.

* According to the Situation Report -55 issued on 15-3-2020, there are 80 countries outside China with local transmission.

1. Western Pacific Region	- 10 countries
2. European region	- 36 countries
3. Middle East Region	- 11 countries
4. America region	- 12 countries
5. African region	- 4 countries
6. Territories	- 1 countries
7. Southeast Asian region	- 6 countries

The COVID-19 outbreak in Italy, Iran and Republic of Korea has 58% of the total cases and 84% of the total death toll of the countries outside China.

Though the COVID-19 infection in China has declined in last two weeks, the cases of infection in other countries increased 13 times and the countries where the virus found increased three times.

So far there are a total of 50 countries where no COVID-19 case was found. Myanmar is among these 50 countries.

2. The situation of COVID-19 in Myanmar between 31-1-2020 and 16-3-2020 is as follow:

Person Under Investigation (PUI)	- 133(131 and two suspected patients)
Negative result of COVID-19	- 123
Under Laboratory Test	- 10

3. There are a total of 133 people under investigation across Myanmar from 31-1-2020 to 16-3-2020: 54 in Yangon Region, 21 in Shan State, 26 in Mandalay Region and 32 in other Regions and States.

4. The transmission of COVID-19 can occur by passing through respiratory system and touching the bacteria on objects. Therefore, the way to prevent COVID-19 infection is to:

- cover your mouth and nose by using your hand while sneezing and coughing,
- wash your hands often with soap and water, or hand sanitizer,
- avoid festivals by those who are ill, coughing and sneezing,
- receive treatments if the symptoms and signs of fever and cough are suffered,
- make cooperation from the public after knowing the benefits of quarantine.

—MOHS

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Sr.	Countries	Since its beginning to so far	
		Confirmed cases	Death toll
1.	Republic of China	81,048	3,204
2.	Italy	21,157	1,441
3.	Iran	12,729	608
4.	Republic of Korea	8,162	75
5.	Spain	5,753	136
6.	France	4,469	91
7.	Germany	3,795	8
8.	Switzerland	1,359	11
9.	England	1,144	21
10.	Netherlands	959	12
11.	Sweden	924	-
12.	Norway	907	1
13.	Denmark	827	-
14.	Austria	800	1
15.	Japan	780	22
16.	Belgium	689	4

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Over 750,000 sit for matriculation exam on fifth day

THERE are a total of 751,154 students sitting for the Chemistry subject at exam centres locally and abroad on the fifth day of the matriculation exam for 2020.

The number of exam centres totaled 1,978 with 15 locations overseas and 1,963 nationwide.

Out of 751,154 students sitting for their exams on the fifth day, 134 are taking their exam at hospitals. Meanwhile, 15 hearing impaired persons, 133 physical disabilities persons, 64 prisoners, and 111 students from Myawady, Kayin State took their exam.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Students seen in YeU after the fifth day of the matriculation exam yesterday. **PHOTO: THAN THAN (YEU)**



AA armed group attacks security forces in MraukU, Kyauktaw townships

THE AA armed group carried out landmine and arson attacks on vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and military columns in Rakhine State, according to the reports of Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

On 13 March, two military columns, which are taking se-

curity operations during the matriculation exam in MraukU and Kyauktaw townships, were attacked by remote-controlled mines at 5,000 meter southeast of MraukU Township on Yangon-Sittway Union highway. The AA group also attacked with five remote-controlled mine near Teinnyo Village and TaungU Vil-

lage. They scattered triangular blade nails to block traffic on the Union highway.

The AA group also conducted land mine and arm attacks on the convoy of military forces near Tharzi Village on Kyauktaw-Paletwa motorway. Some soldiers died and some vehicles were damaged in armed

clashes.

The report also said that there were also some damages at a bridge on the Nyaung Chaung-Zedi Pyin villages near Aung Ba Village of Buthidaung Township due to mine explosion of AA group.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Over 100 cinemas shut down in fear of COVID-19

IN the wake of COVID-19 shock, more than 100 cinemas across the country have been temporarily closed for a short period from 16 March to 30 April, according to the public relations team of Thamada Cinema in Yangon.

"Sure, there will be no revenue due to the closedown of the cinema screening. However, it is concerned with national health. So, the cinemas have been closed. The action is to avoid public gatherings to follow the guidance released by the WHO", said a PR officer from Thamada Cinema.

At present, cinemas in Yangon planned to screen four

films in March and six in April. Depending on the situations in late April, those films will be shown in cinemas, he continued.

There are over 100 cinemas across the country, including private cinema chains Mingalar group, JCGV, Mega Ace, Paradise and many others.

At present, Myanmar's neighbouring China and Thailand are rushing to contain the spread of the virus, with the confirmed cases. Similarly, the COVID-19 cases in South Korea, Italy and Iran have surged and the death toll is increasing. So far, Myanmar has not found any COVID-19 case yet. As precaution measures, people are asked



Thamada Cinema in Yangon. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG**

to avoid mass gatherings and events. The Ministry of Health and Sports and other health organizations are releasing re-

al-time information and issuing guidance on COVID-19 for community care.—Myint Maung

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar exports over 1.37 mln tons of rice worth \$396 mln in Oct-Feb period

THE volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 October and 28 February in the 2019-2020 fiscal year has been estimated at over 1.37 million metric tons, worth \$396.29 million, according to an announcement from the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

In the current financial year, Myanmar has shipped rice to 59 foreign markets.

China is the main buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by Madagascar and the Philippines. Malaysia is the fourth-largest buyer and Guinea, the fifth-largest buyer of Myanmar rice. The European Union countries account for over 15.48 per cent of rice exports, while 37 per cent of rice grown in Myanmar goes to African countries.

In the past five months, Myanmar has exported broken rice mostly to Belgium, followed by Senegal, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Guinea. Broken rice has been placed in 52 foreign markets.

Earlier, border trade was relatively high compared to sea trade in terms of rice exports. Since the previous financial year, border trade has dropped since trade in agricultural products has been halted on account of China clamping down on illegal trade, and currently, it accounts for just 13.8 per cent of the total rice exports, while maritime trade constitutes 86.17 per cent.

Rice exports through the border gates have generated an estimated \$50.33 million, whereas income from maritime trade

touched \$345.96 million as of 28 February in the current FY, as per data from the Commerce Ministry.

At present, MRF is prioritizing domestic market stability and self-sufficiency and working towards these goals by coordinating with government departments and stakeholders in the supply chain, including exporters, traders, depot owners, and millers, according to a press statement issued by the federation on 13 March 2020.

The MRF is monitoring the impact of COVID-19 in the foreign and domestic market, and working with stakeholders in the respective regions and states to govern the market. The federation will call on the government to take systematic measures on

exports by involving exporters.

Due to a volatile dollar exchange rate in the local forex market, some exporters have halted rice purchases, causing a slight slump in the domestic market.

“At present, some people are panic-buying food and consumer goods in preparation for the possible negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, some are worrying over a possible price hike in the domestic market in the wake of the coronavirus,” said a market observer.

The government, as well as some associations, have rice reserve schemes. At present, millers and companies are distributing rice at a fair price, according to the MRF. Therefore, people need not be concerned, he said.

The MRF always checks the balance between the rice stocks and self-sufficiency in the country. Myanmar produces more than 14 million tons of rice in the monsoon and summer seasons. Only 8.5 million tons of rice are needed for local consumption and about 2 million tons of rice are used for vermicelli production, leaving an extra four million tons of rice to send to the external market.

This year, over 4 million tons of quality and low-quality rice are stockpiled.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tons of rice in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.29 million metric tons, worth \$691 million, in the 2018-2019 FY. —Ko Khant
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

COVID-19 affects mung bean market; price drops



Workers weighing the beans in bags on a weighing scale.

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

By Nyein Nyein

MUNG BEAN market has been cooling amid COVID-19 negative

impacts, and the price is sliding in the market, said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of Myanmar Pulses, Beans, and Sesame Seeds Mer-

chants Association.

At present, the main buyer India demands the mung bean, yet the traders are observing the market and gradually purchasing them. This being so, mung bean is priced at only K870,000 per ton in the domestic market, according to pulses and beans market.

“The demand from India is not that strong amidst the current situations of COVID-19. Additionally, the prices in India slightly fall. Having said that, the domestic bean market is cool to a certain extent”, said U Min Ko Oo.

Starting from 13 March, India has banned all the travellers holding tourist visa entering the country through the international border checkpoints, airports, and

ports until 15 April. Nevertheless, it does not stop Indian traders from purchasing Myanmar’s mung bean”, he continued.

“To contain the spread of coronavirus, Bodh Gaya pilgrimages are suspended for now. The authorities have restricted the docking of cruise ships at the largest container hub in the country, Chennai Port. As India is the world’s second-most populous country, the current restrictions aim to contain the spread of COVID-19. However, the ships loaded beans keep moving to Chennai and Mumbai”, said U Min Ko Oo.

The increased quota of 250,000 tons will have to reach India by April-end, 2020. At present, Myanmar has shipped over

100,000 tons, according to the association.

India recorded low mung beans yield due to erratic weather last year. Under the provincial government’s approval, more mung beans are being purchased beyond the previous quota limit, which has driven up mung beans prices to above K1.3 million per ton. However, mung beans fetched about 870,000 per ton at the present time, with a significant drop of K500,000.

The World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The businesses in Myanmar are also hit by the negative impacts of the virus.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Growers face difficulties in freight transport to export sugarcane to China

ALTHOUGH China offers sugarcane at K100,000 per ton, the growers are experiencing difficulties in freight transport as the 12-wheel trucks are not available for them, said sugarcane growers.

The trade flow to China has recovered since February-end. At present, China purchases Myanmar’s sugarcane as raw materials and offers a higher price than those in the internal market, prompting the growers to export them to China. Yet, they are facing difficulties to rent the trucks, said an exporter.

“After the trade channel has reopened, sugarcane was exported only once. The exporters

of tissue-culture banana are offering high rates in freight transport. When 25 tons of sugarcane are loaded, we give K50,000 per ton for freight transport. Meanwhile, tissue-culture banana offers a similar price (the rate is equal to pricing for 25 tons of sugarcane), just for 17 tons of loads”, he added.

Currently, local sugar millers are reducing the production rate upon the local market’s demand, driving sugarcane prices low.

With the sugar price rising in the global market, it stands at K930 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) in the domestic market. However, the millers and growers can financially do well only if it

fetches K1,000 per viss.

Moreover, government departments are combating the illicit inflow of sugar from foreign countries through the border areas, in line with the export-import law, as it can hurt the interests of local sugar millers and sugarcane growers.

To protect local sugarcane growers, re-exports needed to be banned, according to the Myanmar Sugarcane and Sugar Related Products Manufacturers Association.

Myanmar produced about 450,000 tons of sugar on 440,000 acres of sugarcane plantations in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, over 390,000 tons on 390,000 acres in



Farmers loading car with sugarcane. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)

the 2015-2016FY, over 370,000 tons on 400,000 acres in the 2016-2017FY, over 500,000 tons on 400,000 acres in the 2017-2018FY,

and 500,000 tons on nearly 500,000 acres in the 2018-2019FY. —Min Htet Aung/ Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

People are the key to overcoming any challenge

MORE than one month before the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 virus infection to be a pandemic, the Myanmar authorities took steps to overcome the possible challenges brought on by the crisis for the nation's health, social and economic sectors.

The significant steps include beefing up surveillance at international airports and border checkpoints, suspension of festivals which draw crowds, and raising awareness about the disease among the public. The authorities also shut down cinemas yesterday and declared that travellers arriving from seven countries would be quarantined for 14 days.

To reduce the impacts on the country's economy, the government plans to relax taxation and reduce interest rates to ensure the continued operation of factories, which most of our labourers rely upon for their livelihoods. Such efforts would be effective in lessening the risks to our country's economic machinery.

It is a welcome step that loans with special low interest rates and tax exemptions would be granted to vulnerable industries, such as garment factories participating in the Cutting, Making and Packing-CMP system, hotels and tourism businesses, as well as small and medium enterprises.

Also, other assistance includes relaxing the two percent pre-tax imposed on exporters until the end of this fiscal year, relieving businesses from the burdens caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

We understand that these steps have been taken to respond to the current situation and needs. But, we should not lose sight of those long-term measures to overcome the crisis, in which no one can predict when the coronavirus will be brought under control anywhere in the world.

It is worth noting by the public what steps have been taken by the government to reduce the impact on the country's people and economy, remembering that our people are the key to ensure that these steps and efforts by the government are effective and successful.

People are responsible to follow the guidelines of the health authorities.

People are the key to prevent the spreading of fakes news and disinformation about COVID-19, and to prevent actions which can cause instability and panic, such as stockpiling food unnecessarily.

Still, there is not one infected patient in our country. According to the experiences we gained in the past, we do believe that we can overcome any challenge, together with the people.

Again, today is the time to show the role of people in tackling the current challenges. To achieve success in this task, the people are the key.

COVID-19: We Will Come Through This Together

by António Guterres



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. UN PHOTO/JEAN-MARC FERRÉ (FILE)

THE upheaval caused by the coronavirus – COVID-19 – is all around us. And I know many are anxious, worried and confused. That's absolutely natural.

We are facing a health threat unlike any other in our lifetimes.

Meanwhile, the virus is spreading, the danger is growing, and our health systems, economies and day-to-day lives are being severely tested.

The most vulnerable are the most affected—particularly our elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions, those without access to reliable health care, and those in poverty or living on the edge.

The social and economic fallout from the combination of the pandemic and slowing economies

will affect most of us for some months.

But the spread of the virus will peak. Our economies will recover.

Until then, we must act together to slow the spread of the virus and look after each other.

This is a time for prudence,

not panic. Science, not stigma. Facts, not fear.

Even though the situation has been classified as a pandemic, it is one we can control. We can slow down transmissions, prevent infections and save lives. But that will take unprecedented personal, national and international action.

COVID-19 is our common enemy. We must declare war on this virus. That means countries have a responsibility to gear up, step up and scale up.

How? By implementing effective containment strategies; by activating and enhancing emergency response systems; by dramatically increasing testing capacity and care for patients; by readying hospitals, ensuring they have the space, supplies and needed personnel; and by developing life-saving medical interventions.

All of us have a responsibility, too – to follow medical advice and take simple, practical steps recommended by health authorities.

In addition to being a public health crisis, the virus is infecting

the global economy.

Financial markets have been hard hit by the uncertainty. Global supply chains have been disrupted. Investment and consumer demand have plunged – with a real and rising risk of a global recession.

United Nations economists estimate that the virus could cost the global economy at least \$1 trillion this year – and perhaps far more.

No country can do it alone. More than ever, governments must cooperate to revitalize economies, expand public investment, boost trade, and ensure targeted support for the people and communities most affected by the disease or more vulnerable to the negative economic

impacts – including women who often shoulder a disproportionate burden of care work.

A pandemic drives home the essential interconnectedness of our human family. Preventing the further spread of COVID-19 is a shared responsibility for us all.

The United Nations – including the World Health Organization – is fully mobilized.

As part of our human family, we are working 24/7 with governments, providing international guidance, helping the world take on this threat.

We are in this together – and we will get through this, together.

António Guterres is Secretary-General of the United Nations.

EU leaders to hold coronavirus videoconference Tuesday

Europe has now become what the World Health Organization regards as the epicentre of the global novel coronavirus outbreak.

EUROPEAN Union leaders will take part in a crisis video conference Tuesday to coordinate actions to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

"Containing the spread of the virus, providing sufficient medical equipment, boosting research and limiting the economic fallout is key," tweeted European Council chief Charles Michel.

The 27 EU member state leaders will hold their extraordinary summit – called by Michel – one day after the G7 holds a similar high-level video conference.

Europe has now become what the World Health Organization regards as the epicentre of the global novel coronavirus outbreak, and Brussels is trying to coordinate the response.

Several countries have taken unilateral steps to close their borders or impose stricter controls, despite calls from EU chiefs for a common approach.

Finance ministers from the eurozone single currency bloc were also to hold video talks later Monday, as the continent readies a financial package to steady the economy.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The latest developments of COVID-19 across the world are as follows:

France

The coronavirus situation in France is "deteriorating very fast," the country's director-general of health said Monday.

"The number of cases double every three days," Jerome Salomon told national radio broadcaster France Inter, saying the outbreak in the country is "very worrying."

The total number of confirmed cases in France as of Monday reached 5,923, with 126 confirmed deaths, according to the World Health Organization.

South Korea

South Korean stocks ended 3.2 percent lower Monday on rising worry about the global economic slump from the COVID-19 spreading across the globe.

The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) dived 56.58 points, or 3.19 percent, to settle at 1,714.86. Trading volume stood at 671 million shares worth 8.5 trillion won (6.9 billion U.S. dollars). It was the lowest close in about eight and a half years since October 2011.

South Korea's central bank cut interest rate to an all-time low of 0.75 percent Monday in its first emergency move since the 2008 global financial crisis in order to help the economy weather the expected global economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 outbreak across the world.

ID-19 outbreak across the world.

Iran

Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education said that over 10 million Iranians have been screened for COVID-19 symptoms, Press TV reported on Monday. Deputy health minister Alireza Raeisi said Sunday that the screening had been carried out over past four days.

Iran's has announced the infection of 13,938 people with the novel coronavirus by Sunday, of whom 724 people have died.

Bangladesh

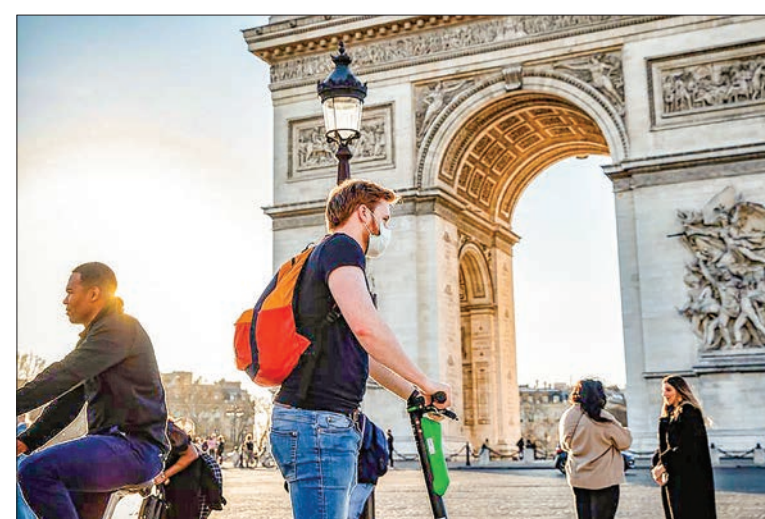
Bangladesh has decided to shut all the educational institutions in the country from Tuesday until March 31 in an effort to halt the spread of the deadly COVID-19.

The decision came as the country confirmed three more new COVID-19 cases earlier Monday, taking the total to eight.

Australia

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Monday instructed the nation to brace for more extreme coronavirus containment measures, saying a ban on nursing home visits could be introduced as early as Tuesday.

On Sunday he announced that all overseas arrivals to Australia will be subjected to mandatory 14-day self-isolation effective immediately.



A man wearing a protective mask passes by the Arc de Triomphe on the Champs Elysees in Paris, France, March 15, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

National Health Commission at a press conference.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 80,860 by the end of Sunday, including 9,898 patients who were still being treated, 67,749 patients who had been discharged after recovery, and 3,213 people who died of the disease.

U.K.

As Britain has switched from the "containment" to "delay" phase in response to the spread of COVID-19, the Downing Street hopes to create "herd immunity" to the disease instead of taking proactive and drastic countermeasures.

"Herd immunity," also called

"community immunity" or "herd protection," technically means a form of indirect protection from infectious disease that occurs when a large part of a population is vaccinated and becomes immune to infections, thereby protecting vulnerable people such as newborns, seniors and those who are too sick to be vaccinated.

The strategy has sparked debates, mostly questions and criticism, among medical professionals.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Britain reached 1,372 as of Sunday, an increase of 232 over the last 24 hours, and 14 more people died, bringing the total number of deaths to 35, according to the health department.

Japan

Japan's health ministry and local governments said Monday the number of COVID-19 infections stood at 804 in Japan as of 10:30 a.m. local time.

Of the 804 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Japan, the majority are in Japan's northernmost prefecture of Hokkaido, which has confirmed 148 cases and previously declared a state of emergency over the situation.

REFERENCES

AFP, Xinhua News Updates

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

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release No 11/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 14 March.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 14 March.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 18 March issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. — GNLM

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgement on, hear civil cases

THE Union Supreme Court convened at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday with Chief Justice of the Union Supreme Court U Htun Htun Oo and Union Supreme Court Judges passing judgements on six special civil appeal cases, along with hearing eight special civil appeal cases. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 16th March, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17th March, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State and isolated in Taninthayi Region, Shan 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: Continuation of likelihood of rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

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Spanish king distances himself from scandal-hit father

MADRID (Spain)— King Felipe VI of Spain moved Sunday to distance himself from his scandal-hit father, stripping him of his palace allowance and renouncing what he was due to inherit from him.

The announcement came after reports earlier this month in the Swiss daily Tribune de Geneve that former monarch Juan Carlos had received 100 million dollars (90 million euros) from Saudi Arabia via an offshore account.

The money was lodged in a Swiss bank account in the name of a Panamanian foundation, the paper reported, according to which \$65 million of that sum was given by Juan Carlos to his former mistress, Corinna zu Sayn-Wittgenstein.

A later report in Britain's Daily Telegraph said that 52-year-old King Felipe was also a beneficiary of the fund, which it said had been set up when Juan Carlos was still on the throne.



Juan Carlos handed over power to his son, Felipe in 2014. PHOTO: AFP

In the palace statement released Sunday, the reigning king said that in April he had made it clear to a notary that he would accept no money from the foundation in question.

He also said he had absolutely no knowledge of having been named as a beneficiary to another foundation, which according to press reports paid

millions of euros towards his father's flights in private jets.

The statement said King Felipe was renouncing any assets, shares or investments that might be either illegal or compromise the royal family's integrity.

Spanish media reports say Juan Carlos has until now received an annual allowance from

the state of more than 194,000 euros (\$216,000).

Growing pressure from the left

The reaction from leftwing parties Sunday evening suggested that for them, at least, it was not enough.

On Twitter, economist Carlos Sanchez Mato of the United Left party, called on the king to renounce everything he stood to inherit from his father — including his role as head of state.

On Tuesday, the Spanish parliament decided against launching an investigation into suspected money laundering by the former king.

Spain's hard-left Podemos party had called for it after reports earlier this month that in 2008 Juan Carlos received \$100 million from Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah via the Swiss account of an entity listed in Panama.

Podemos, which is part of the ruling coalition with Pedro

Sanchez's Socialist Party, is avowedly republican.

Juan Carlos, now 82, came to the throne after the death of the military dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 and is widely respected for having favoured a transition to democracy.

But he lost his immunity from prosecution after handing power to his son, Felipe, in June 2014 following a 39-year reign.

He resigned from public life last year after a series of scandals about his private life.

In 2012, he outraged Spaniards by going elephant hunting in Botswana at the height of the country's recession.

But he is not the only Spanish royal to have been caught up in a scandal.

In 2018, King Felipe's brother-in-law Inaki, the husband of Princess Cristina, was jailed for more than five years for siphoning off millions of euros from a foundation he ran in the island of Majorca. — AFP ■

Dutch queue for cannabis as coronavirus closes cafes

THE HAGUE (Netherlands) — Cannabis smokers aiming to keep calm and carry on despite coronavirus queued up outside Dutch "coffee shops" on Sunday after the government ordered their closure to beat the outbreak.

Customers lined up in their dozens as they tried to beat a deadline for the closure of the marijuana cafes and stockpile weed supplies for what could be weeks of lockdown.

The Netherlands' famed coffee shops have become as much a part of the country's popular

image abroad as sex clubs in Amsterdam's famed red light district, which were also ordered to shut by 6:00 pm along with all bars and restaurants.

"For maybe for the next two months we're not able to get some weed so it should be nice to at least have some in the house," Jonathan, a Dutch buyer, said outside The Point coffee shop in The Hague.

"My friend called me like five minutes ago, he saw the press conference — good friend," he told AFP. The queues built up minutes after the Dutch health

and education ministers gave a televised press conference announcing the closure of many businesses, along with all Dutch schools. Similar scenes were reported around the country, with pictures on social media of long queues outside coffee shops in the capital Amsterdam and the historic university city of Utrecht. Whereas days earlier it was supermarkets besieged with people trying to hoard toilet paper and pasta, the sudden announcement of the coffee shop closure meant there were new priorities.— AFP ■



People queue outside cannabis cafe in The Hague on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

Biden, Sanders attack Trump on virus — and spar on record

WASHINGTON (United States) — White House hopefuls Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders launched a joint attack on Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic as they faced off in a high-stakes debate Sunday, accusing the president of undermining his own scientists with misinformation.

The two rivals also sparred about their record, taking advantage of the first one-on-one format of the marathon campaign to engage in extended — though civil — policy clashes on everything from universal health care and climate change to deportations and foreign policy.

But with Biden appearing to have a good night, riding high as the frontrunner following three weeks of strong performances in multiple primaries, the 77-year-old made a splash by saying he will "commit" to picking a female running mate if he is the Democratic nominee.

Sanders said he would "in all likelihood" do the same, following the most diverse nomination contest in US history that saw no fewer than six women in the running to take on Trump in November. Going head to head

days before four large states hold Democratic primaries, the two main candidates left in the race stood six feet (1.8 meters) apart and elbow bumped one another at the start of a televised debate held with no live audience as a virus precaution.

Sanders, the 78-year-old underdog, took a stinging shot at the president, accusing him of fomenting confusion and eroding public trust in a time of crisis.

"We have to shut this president up right now because he's undermining the doctors and the scientists who are trying to help the American people," Sanders added, referring to multiple Trump statements at odds with expert views. "It is unacceptable for him to be blabbering unfactual information that is harming the American public."

Biden essentially agreed, saying: "the existential threat to the United States of America is Donald Trump." With the debate overshadowed by the fast-moving health crisis, Biden and Sanders spent the first half-hour on how to address the pandemic which has already caused almost 70 deaths and more than 3,600 coronavirus cases nationwide.— AFP ■

Fans to be asked not to watch Japan Olympic torch relay from roadside

TOKYO — The organizing committee of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has decided to request that people refrain from watching the Japanese nationwide torch relay from the roadside for some time in response to the outbreak of the new coronavirus, an official said Monday.

The Tokyo Games organizers made the decision after the Greek leg of the relay was suspended

on Friday because spectators crowded the roadway in the midst of the virus outbreak.

The organizing committee will make an announcement once it decides on the details before the domestic leg begins on 26 March in Fukushima Prefecture, north-eastern Japan.

The Tokyo Olympic flame was lit on Thursday at a ceremony in Olympia, Greece, held

in the presence of a limited number of delegations, officials and journalists in response to the virus.

The flame will arrive in Japan on Friday before it is put on public display in areas hit hard by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

The relay's departure ceremony is also expected to be held behind closed doors at the J-Village soccer training



People watch the first leg of the Tokyo Olympic torch relay in Olympia, Greece, on 12 March 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

center, which served as an emergency response

headquarters during the nuclear disaster that hap-

pened in 2011. — Kyodo News ■

Germany says virus vaccine research not for sale

BERLIN (Germany)—Germany's foreign minister said Monday the rights to coronavirus vaccine research were not for sale, following reports Donald Trump wanted the US to buy exclusive access to a potential vaccine developed by a German biotech firm.

The comments, made in an interview to media group Funke, come as scientists raced to develop a vaccine against the deadly coronavirus that has killed some 6,000 people, seen millions placed under lockdown and devastated global markets.

"German researchers play a leading role in drug and vaccine development and we cannot allow others to seek exclusive results," Heiko Maas told Funke.

Citing sources close to the German government, Die Welt newspaper had previously reported that Trump had offered "a billion dollars" to secure research into a vaccine by German biotech firm CureVac "only for the United States".

"Germany is not for sale," economy minister Peter Altmaier told broadcaster ARD on Sunday, reacting to the report.—AFP

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

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- ❖ Email Address for Application - bimsteclogo.myanmar@gmail.com
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- ❖ Detailed information including Terms and Conditions and selection process will be available at the official facebook pages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Myanmar, MOI Webportal Myanmar). The application forms can be downloaded at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's website (www.mofa.gov.mm).
- ❖ Reference Information will be available at BIMSTEC website (www.bimstec.org).
- ❖ All Myanmar citizens either individual or a team are eligible for competition.
- ❖ For more details, please contact the Sub-Regional Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Telephone Number: 067-3412447 at office hours.

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Israel's ex-army chief Gantz gets shot at forming government

JERUSALEM — Israel's ex-military chief Benny Gantz was nominated Monday to try to form a government but further talks were expected with his bitter rival, premier Benjamin Netanyahu, on an emergency alliance to fight coronavirus.

Gantz, who heads the centrist Blue and White party, called for "unity" and urged Prime Minister Netanyahu to join him as Israel seeks to end a crippling political stalemate after three inconclusive elections in less than a year.

"We must not have a fourth election," Gantz said, after he was formally nominated to attempt to form an administration by President Reuven Rivlin.

"I'll do everything to form in as few days as possible a national, patriotic and broad government."

Gantz, 60, won recommendations on Sunday from 61 lawmakers, a razor thin majority in the 120-member Knesset, or parliament.

His backers did not include Netanyahu's right-wing Likud, but Rivlin has urged the two men to work together in an emergency unity government, in order to avoid a national policy vacuum in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is possible that forming a government quickly will require interim arrangements for the coming months", Rivlin said Monday.



Israel's ex-military chief Benny Gantz won recommendations on Sunday from a thin majority of lawmakers to form a coalition government after almost a year of political paralysis in Israel. PHOTO: AFP

Squaring the circle

Gantz's path to a longer-term stable coalition is difficult given the deep divisions within the factions that backed him, which include the mainly Arab Joint List and the nationalist YisraelBeiteinu.

Rivlin officially granted Gantz 28 days to try to form a government, a task which proved impossible for any candidate following the two elections last year.

Netanyahu — Israel's longest-serving premier

and the first ever to be indicted in office, on graft charges — has insisted that voters in the March 2 election gave him a mandate to continue as prime minister.

The vote saw Likud secure the most seats but, along with its religious party allies, it fell three seats short of a majority.

Gantz has a "hollow mandate," political columnist SimaKadmon wrote in the YediotAharonot newspaper, referring to the possibly insurmountable divisions within the anti-Netanyahu camp.

Rivlin has made clear he wants a government in place soon to help Israel beat back the COVID-19 pandemic. He said politi-

cal leaders had a duty to form a government amid "the national and international emergency."

"Fourth elections are not a possibility," added Rivlin, who is largely a ceremonial figure.

Rivlin summoned Gantz and Netanyahu on Sunday for an "urgent conversation", which ended without agreement, but Likud and Blue and White said the talks would continue.

But prospects for the two men coming to terms may be remote, especially as mutual acrimony has ramped up in recent days.

A new Knesset will also be sworn in later Monday in a stripped-down ceremony due to coronavirus. — AFP ■

Thailand to enter partial lockdown to combat COVID-19

BANGKOK — Thailand's newly established ad hoc committee managing the COVID-19 situation on Monday announced a partial lockdown of the country to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The committee, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, will roll out several measures

including the shutdown of boxing stadia, pubs, bars and movie theatres, until the situation returns to normal, and the postponement of the traditional Songkran holidays from April to July.

"These measures will be submitted to the cabinet for approval on Tuesday," said Prayut on Monday.

Meanwhile, Ministry

of Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul who also serves as deputy prime minister, insisted that Thailand is still in the second phase of the outbreak. "But Thailand needs to impose stringent measures to prevent it from entering the third phase," Anutin told the media. — Xinhua ■

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Sr. No.	Name of Product	A.I	Type	Regis; No.
1.	Map Capo 6.9% EC	Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl 6.9% EC	Full	F2013-897

Now, we have to change from old distributor name "Map Pacific Company Limited" to new distributor name "Agro Green Land Chemical Company Limited".

If there has any objection on the changing of distributor name, it can be objected to the Co-Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Department, Gyogone (West), Insein Township, Yangon within 2 weeks.

Map Pacific Pte. Ltd., (Yangon Branch)
No. 29, Room – 203, 2nd Floor,
38th Street (Lower Block),
Kyauktada Township, Yangon.
Ph: 01-392168



The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Yangon City Development Committee

Invitation for Prequalification Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2

Date: 17 March 2020
Loan Agreement N^o: MY-P19
IFP N^o: MY-P19/PQ-01

- The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency toward the cost of the Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
- The Yangon City Development Committee intends to prequalify contractors and/or firms for Construction of Kokkowa Water Treatment Plant (60MGD).
 - Construction of intake facility capable of 634,000 m³/day (140 MGD) river water intake including intake gate screen, sand sedimentation pond, raw water pipe and associated facilities.
 - Construction of water treatment facility of production capacity of 272,800 m³/day (60MGD) including pre sedimentation pond, lift pumping station, dividing well, receiving well, flocculation basin, sedimentation basin, rapid sand filter, chemical facility, sludge drying bed, clear water reservoir, transmission pumping station, yard piping, associated facilities and landscaping. A part of water treatment facility may be designed by the Contractor.
 - Construction of operation buildings including administration building, accommodation buildings, chemical house, generator house, warehouse, security house and associated facilities.
 - Training and O&M
- It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in June 2020.
- Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Applicants from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.
- Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the office of Head of Department, Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation), Yangon City Development Committee from 9:30am to 4:30pm.
- A complete set of the Prequalification Documents may be purchased by interested Applicant(s) on the submission of a written Application to the address above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of MMK20,000 (Twenty thousand Myanmar Kyat). Payment shall be only by cash.
- Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address above by 4 May 2020, and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for Package No. ICB-01 Construction of Kokkowa Water Treatment Plant (60MGD) under the Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2."

U Myint Zaw Than,
Head of Department, Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation),
Yangon City Development Committee
No. 390, 12-Storey New Building, Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar
e-mail: kokkowa5@gmail.com

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Japan man faces verdict in murder of 19 at disabled care home

YOKOHAMA (Japan) — A Japanese court hands down its verdict Monday in the case of a man accused of murdering 19 disabled people at a care home in 2016, in one of the country's worst mass killings.

Satoshi Uematsu, a former employee at the facility, does not dispute his involvement in the grisly stabbing rampage that shocked Japan where violent crime is rare. He faces the death penalty if convicted.

His lawyers have entered a plea of not guilty, arguing the 30-year-old was suffering a "mental disorder" linked to his use of marijuana. But prose-



This courtroom sketch illustrated by Masato Yamashita depicts Satoshi Uematsu, accused of the 2016 murder of 19 disabled people at a Japanese care home, attending his first hearing at the Yokohama District Court in Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture on 8 January 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

cutors say Uematsu was capable of taking responsibility for the attack at the Tsukui Yamayuri-en centre in Sagami-hara town out-

side Tokyo and should be executed for his crimes.

The rampage was "inhumane" and left "no room for leniency", prosecutors

argued last month.

Uematsu's behaviour in court, including apparently trying to put something in his mouth, disrupted proceedings in the first hearing in January, with the judge calling a recess and then resuming without him. He faces six charges including murder and has reportedly said he will not appeal whatever decision the court hands down.

But he has also defended himself, arguing his actions do not deserve the death penalty. Uematsu has reportedly said he wanted to eradicate all disabled people in the horrifying attack that also left 26 people wounded.—AFP ■

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Fraudulent or unauthorised use, or actual or colourable imitation of the said mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw La Min May, H.G.P

For **PIP CO., LTD.**,

C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,

Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,

Botataung Township, Yangon,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 17th March 2020

lmm@kcyangon.com

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 17th March 2020

lmm@kcyangon.com

Stocks, oil plunge as Fed virus move fails to ease fears

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Stock markets and oil prices went into freefall Monday as interest rate cuts and fresh stimulus measures by central banks failed to lift confidence, with analysts warning that the Federal Reserve may have reached the limits of its power to fend off recession as the coronavirus spreads.

Brent North Sea oil plunged more than ten per cent to a four-year low, as a price war between major producers Saudi Arabia and Russia added to sliding crude demand caused by the virus.

The euro surged one per cent against the dollar after the Fed on Sunday slashed borrowing costs to almost zero — its second emergency cut in less than two weeks.

The US central bank also unveiled a massive asset-buying programme, similar to measures put into place during the global financial crisis more than a decade ago.

ade ago.

The Bank of Japan joined in on Monday, saying it would ramp up its bond-buying programme.

New Zealand's central bank also slashed rates to record lows in an attempt to cushion the economic blow, while the People's Bank of China has injected vast sums into financial markets to ease liquidity worries.

In joint action coordinated with the European Central Bank, Bank of England, Bank of Japan, Bank of Canada and the Swiss National Bank, the Fed moved to counteract global "dollar funding pressures" according to its boss Jerome Powell.

But traders were left unimpressed, with the virus showing no sign of letting up, while the head of the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was impossible to tell when it would peak globally.

With G7 leaders set to hold crisis videoconference talks

later Monday, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva called Monday for global governments to work together to provide massive spending as in the 2008 financial crisis to help the economy withstand the damage from the coronavirus pandemic.

Trading was halted on Wall Street just after the opening bell, with the Dow dropping nearly 10 per cent.

In afternoon trading in Europe, Paris 10.7 per cent, Milan 10.9 per cent, Madrid 11.3 per cent, Frankfurt 9.5 per cent and London 7.9 per cent.

Airlines and tourism groups were the biggest fallers after slashing capacity, with TUI down by nearly a third and British Airways-parent IAG crashing 28 per cent.

The car sector also slid as carmakers Fiat Chrysler and Peugeot-Citroen said they were halting production.

"While these (central bank)



The virus outbreak saw Chinese industrial production contract in January-February for the first time in 30 years, putting huge pressure on the world's number two economy. **PHOTO: AFP**

moves may go some way to easing any potential blockages in the plumbing of the financial markets, they won't adequately compensate for the upcoming economic shocks that are about to come our way," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

The scale of the crisis was laid bare by data showing Chinese industrial production for January and February shrank 13.5 per cent, the first contraction in around 30 years.

Meanwhile, manufacturing activity in New York state fell to its lowest level since 2009, according to the New York Federal Reserve Bank's monthly industry survey.

Equity markets continue to be whipsawed by the disease, which has now infected almost 170,000 people and killed more than 6,000 with several countries going into lockdown as Europe becomes the new epicentre of the outbreak. — AFP ■

BOJ response to coronavirus only fuels talk of its limited power

TOKYO — The Bank of Japan's additional monetary easing on Monday only added to evidence that the central bank lacks firepower to boost the economy amid the negative fallout from the coronavirus outbreak.

The BOJ unveiled a package of steps including an extra 6 trillion yen (\$57 billion) of exchange-traded fund purchases to support stock prices, but it refrained from cutting interest rates, which are already at rock bottom.

The emergency response came after the U.S. Federal Reserve on Sunday reduced its key rate to near zero, the lowest level since 2015, following a cut earlier this month.

"The BOJ's decision is not negative but has less impact compared with the Fed's move overnight," said Hiroshi Miyazaki, senior economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities Co. The BOJ's short-term policy rate has remained at minus 0.1 per cent, with longer-term rates guided around zero. Reducing them further could backfire as banks have already expressed discontent with the ultralow rates

that have put pressure on their earnings.

BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda underscored that deepening the negative rate was an option. But Miyazaki said the central bank apparently hesitated, considering the possible adverse effect on lenders.

A highlight of Monday's policy meeting was that the BOJ raised its annual target for ETF purchases to 12 trillion yen from the current 6 trillion yen — beating the market expectation of an increase to 9 trillion yen.

Tokyo stocks gained ground immediately after the BOJ's announcement of additional easing. But the rally soon lost steam, with the benchmark Nikkei ending down 2.5 per cent at 17,002.04, its lowest close in more than three years. The possible side effects of the BOJ's radical monetary easing under Kuroda since 2013 have long been discussed by market participants.

With the ETF buying, introduced in 2010 as part of a wider asset purchase program, the BOJ has stepped into the market when stock prices fall sharply. Under Kuroda, it raised the annual pur-



Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda holds a press conference in Tokyo on 16 March 2020, after a one-day policy meeting. The central bank decided to expand its asset-buying program to stabilize financial markets. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

chasing goal four times, despite criticism that the policy distorts the market's price-discovery mechanism. — Kyodo News

S Korea cuts rates to all-time low of 0.75 pct in emergency move

SEOUL — South Korea's central bank cut interest rate to an all-time low of 0.75 per cent Monday in its first emergency move since the 2008 global financial crisis in order to help the economy weather the expected global economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 outbreak across the world.

Bank of Korea (BOK) Governor Lee Ju-yeol convened an emergency monetary policy meeting, deciding to slash the benchmark seven-day repurchase rate from the previous record high of 1.25 per cent to a fresh low of 0.75 per cent. The policy rate fell below 1 per cent for the first time.

It marked the third time that the central bank took an emergency step. The BOK lowered its target rate by 50 basis points in September 2001 and by 75 basis points in October 2008 each in its past emergency moves.

The BOK said in a statement that since its latest rate-setting meeting in late February, concerns deepened over the global economic slump with the COV-

ID-19 spreading across the globe.

It noted that the virus-hit volatility in the global financial market and the plunging oil price led the central bank to take more accommodative policy stance to help ease market volatility and reduce its effect on growth and prices.

Given the "very high" uncertainties over economic and financial situations at home and abroad, the BOK vowed to leave the target rate there to relieve downside risks to the economy and volatility in the financial market.

South Korea's rate cut came a day after the US Federal Reserve slashed its key rate by a full percentage point to a range between zero and 0.25 per cent and pledged to buy 700 billion US dollars of US government and mortgage bonds for a liquidity supply.

On 3 March, the Fed lowered its target rate by half a percentage point as the COVID-19 spread to Europe and the United States. — Xinhua ■

Russian court backs Putin presidential 'reset' plan

MOSCOW (Russia) — Russia's Constitutional Court on Monday approved a package of amendments including a "reset" of President Vladimir Putin's previous terms, giving him the possibility to rule into 2036.

The approval came just two days after Putin signed the reform bill, which has faced fierce criticism from opposition figures who say it will allow the longtime Russian leader to become "president for life".

The court published the ruling on its website, upholding a wide-ranging package of reforms first proposed by Putin in January and approved last week by Russia's two houses of parliament.

A public vote on the reforms has been scheduled for 22 April but it was unclear whether that

might be delayed by the global coronavirus crisis.

Putin first proposed the reforms in January, in a shock to Russia's political establishment that was quickly followed by the resignation of his longtime prime minister Dmitry Medvedev.

The reforms included granting more power to parliament and strengthening the role of the State Council, an advisory body, leading to speculation that Putin — first elected in 2000 — could hold on to power in a new role.

Putin repeatedly denied he had any intention of staying on but then last week suddenly backed a last-minute amendment by the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, restarting the clock on previous presidential terms.

Opposition protests

His allies rallied behind the move, saying Putin, 67, deserved the chance to run for another six years in 2024, after his current term expires, and again in 2030.

The head of the upper house Federation Council said Putin had "raised Russia from its knees", while others said he was the kind of stable leader Russia needed in turbulent times.

Critics, including chief opposition figure Alexei Navalny, said Putin was securing himself at least another 12 years in power, potentially allowing him to rule longer than Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

Opposition supporters have demonstrated in recent days in a series of one-person picket protests, the only kind allowed in Russia without previous per-



Until recently, Putin had repeatedly denied he had any intention of remaining in power. PHOTO: AFP

mission.

The opposition has called for mass demonstrations against the plan but gatherings of more than 5,000 people are currently banned in Moscow over coronavirus fears.

In line with Putin's strongly conservative views, the reforms also enshrine a mention of Russians' "faith in God" and stipulate that marriage is a union between a man and woman, effectively

banning gay marriages.

The amendments ban giving away Russian territory and outlaw calls promoting such a move, as well protecting the "historic truth" about the country's role in World War II.

A number of social reforms are also included, among them a minimum wage that should not be below the subsistence level and state pensions regularly adjusted to inflation. —AFP ■

Japan eyes scaling down crown prince's April ascension rituals

TOKYO — Japan is planning to scale back events related to rituals to formally announce Crown Prince Fumihito's rise to first in line to the throne planned in April to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, the government said Monday.

The government is expected to cancel two court banquets slated for 21 April to celebrate the crown prince's ascension, the source said, adding that a formal decision will be made probably later this week.

The government had planned to invite a total of around 750 guests, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and foreign ambassadors to Japan to the banquets.

It had already been decided to reduce the number of court banquets to two in a single day from three over two days, as at the previous ascension event, even before concerns over the coronavirus outbreak spiked. The reduction was intended to cut costs and reduce burdens on participating imperial family members. The 54-year-old prince became first in line after his elder brother Emperor Naruhito ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May, 2019, a day after the abdication of former Emperor Akihito, the first Japanese monarch to



Japanese Crown Prince Fumihito speaks at an awards ceremony for the 16th Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Prize and Japan Academy Medal in Tokyo on 18 February 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

step down in over 200 years. The series of rituals called "Rikkoshi no rei" is expected to largely follow the style of the 1991 event, in which Emperor Naruhito was proclaimed the crown prince.

As its central part, two ceremonies will be performed on 19 April — the "Rikkoshi Senmei no gi" ceremony to proclaim Prince Fumihito the new crown prince, and "Choken no gi" for his first meeting with the emperor and empress following the proclamation. —Kyodo ■

Global airlines slash almost all flights as virus spreads wings

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Major world airlines on Monday axed almost all flights on a temporary basis as the worsening coronavirus crisis sparks travel bans, ravages demand and sends shares into freefall, triggering pleas to help carriers survive.

IAG, owner of British Airways and Spanish carrier Iberia, announced it would slash flight capacity by 75 percent during April and May owing to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The London-based carrier's share price crashed nearly 27 percent in mid-afternoon deals.

Other airlines tumbled, with Germany's Lufthansa erasing almost 11 per cent in value and Air France wiping out 17 per cent on similar announcements.

Britain's Virgin Atlantic added that it has decided to park 75 per cent of its total fleet — and in April this will rise as high as 85 per cent.

Virgin has reportedly called upon the UK government to inject emergency support totalling 7.5 billion pounds (\$9.2 billion, 8.3 billion euros) to help keep Britain's aviation industry flying.

In Germany, Lufthansa has been forced to scrap around two thirds of its flights in coming weeks as several countries including the United States ban travellers from Europe.

'Deteriorating at pace'

"Last week saw a rapid acceleration of the impact of COVID-19 on global aviation and tourism," Virgin Atlantic warned in a statement.

"The situation is deteriorating at pace and the airline has seen several days of negative bookings, driven by a huge volume of cancellations as customers choose to stay at home."

British no-frills carrier EasyJet warned it may have to ground "the majority" of its fleet, urging governments across Europe to help their airlines maintain access to liquidity.

EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren added: "European aviation faces a precarious future and it is clear that coordinated government backing will be required

to ensure the industry survives and is able to continue to operate when the crisis is over."

Irish budget carrier Ryanair meanwhile did not rule out a full grounding as it unveiled stinging flight cutbacks.

As part of its drastic action, IAG said it was "cutting non-essential and non-cyber related IT spend, freezing recruitment and discretionary spending, implementing voluntary leave options, temporarily suspending employment contracts and reducing working hours". IAG added that a management shake-up had been put on hold, noting that Willie Walsh would remain as chief executive. Walsh had been due to step down on March 26, to be replaced by Iberia CEO Luis Gallego. —AFP ■



Airlines are axing flights and shares are plummeting. PHOTO: AFP

MFF concludes referee workshop for 2020 football season



MFF officials, referee supervisors, referees and assistant referees pose for a group photo at the closing ceremony of the MFF Class-2 Men Referees and Assistant Referees Workshop for 2020 Football Season at Thuwunna Football Stadium in Yangon yesterday. Photo: MFF

THE closing ceremony of the MFF Class-2 Men Referees and Assistant Referees Workshop for 2020 Football Season was held at the press conference hall of the Thuwunna Football Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Intending to improve the capability of Myanmar referees and assistant referees, MFF has conducted its Class-2 Men Referees and Assistant Referees Workshop for 2020 Football Season from 12 to 16 March.

Four referee supervisors,

and 35 referees and assistant referees attended the workshop, and discussed plans and their role in improving the standard of football in Myanmar, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

—Kyaw Khin ■

Gloomy outlook for sport amid pandemic lockdown

— Silent stadiums and empty venues made for a gloomy weekend for sports fans but the fear on Monday was it could only get worse amid the widening coronavirus pandemic.

With governments opting for increasingly stringent bans on the size and number of public gatherings, most major sports events across the world have been suspended or scrapped.

What happens next may become clearer on Tuesday when

UEFA officials meet to discuss whether football's showpiece European championships, the year's biggest sporting event along with the Tokyo Olympics, should go ahead.

UEFA have already scrapped the coming week's mouthwatering round of Champions League and Europe League ties. Any hope that the Euro 2020 would be spared an increasingly Europe-wide virus lockdown was hard to sustain as the death toll

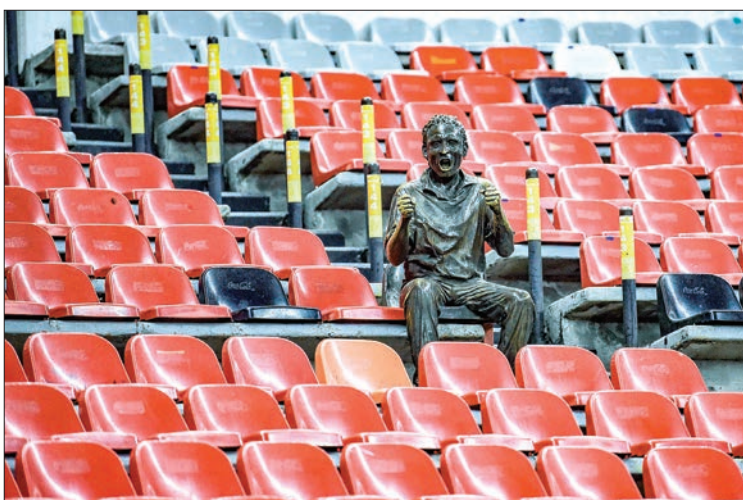
and the number of COVID-19 cases spiralled and the continent became the new epicentre of the disease.

The fact was hammered home when Chinese footballers from Wuhan, where the virus first emerged late last year, were seen fleeing back home from Europe, where they had initially exiled themselves to escape the illness.

The public mood has also apparently shifting from disappointment that sport has been sacrificed, to support for measures aimed at staying healthy and saving lives.

A social media backlash hit organisers for allowing the showpiece Cheltenham Festival to go ahead last week with more than 250,000 spectators attending, one of the few recent events escaping spectator bans. All horse racing in Britain has now been moved behind closed doors.

The shift in mood was illustrated too by the apology from Rudy Gobert, the Utah Jazz centre and the first NBA player to test positive for the coronavirus.— AFP ■



View of the empty stands before the Mexican Clausura tournament football match between America against Cruz Azul at Azteca Stadium, in Mexico City on 15 March 2020. PHOTO: AFP

MPT MNL (U-21) 2020: Yadanarbon beat Chin United 6-0 in Week-10

YADANARBON FC won Chin United 6-0 in the Week-10 match of MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-21) 2020 at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

The goals for Yadanarbon FC were scored by Nyein Chan Soe at 25th minute, Phoe La Pyae at 51st, 64th and 66th, and Ye Win Htun at 55th minute and 90+1st minute.

In the other matches of the Week-10, Hantharwady United beat Yaw Myay with a score of 4-1 at the South Dagon Stadium, while Ayeyawady United won Kachin United 3-1 at the Salin Stadium.

The goals for Hantharwady United were scored by Thura Moe at 23rd minute, Tint Naing Tun Lin at 55th minute, Hein Lin Soe at 67th minute, and Sithu Aung at 79th minute. The lone goal for Yaw Myay was scored by Lal Din Cung at 82nd minute.

The goals for Ayeyawady

United were scored by Wai Yan Oo at 6th, 9th and 34th minutes, and the lone goal for Kachin United was scored by Sein Hlaing Win at 49th minute.

The remaining matches of the Week-10 will be held on 17 and 18 March, and 8 April.

On 17 March, Southern Myanmar FC will meet with ISPE at the South Dagon Stadium; Mawyawadi FC will take on Zwekapin United at the Padonmar Stadium; Silver Stars will play against Chinland FC at the Salin Stadium.

On 18 March, Myawady will play against Yangon United at the South Dagon Stadium, and Rakhine United will take on Sagaing United at the Yangon United Sports Complex. University FC and Magwe FC will play at the University Stadium on 8 April.

All of the matches will be played at 4:00 pm on respective dates. — Kyaw Khin ■



Players of Yadanarbon FC and Chin United FC vie for the ball in the Week-10 match of MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-21) 2020 at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNL

Italian FA to request postponement of Euro 2020

MILAN (Italy) — The Italian Football Federation (FIGC) are to request that Euro 2020 be postponed amid the escalating coronavirus pandemic, FIGC president Gabriele Gravina said on Monday.

European football's governing body and tournament organisers UEFA will hold a video-conference on Tuesday to discuss domestic and competitions across the continent, as well as Euro 2020, which is due to take

place from June 12 to July 12.

Italy are set to host the opening match in Rome on June 12, in a tournament which will be played in 12 countries across Europe. "We will ask for an act of responsibility from UEFA and all the continental federations," Gravina told Italian radio. "First of all for a path that aims to protect the health of athletes and fans from all over the world, even if the epicentre of the pandemic is now in Europe. — AFP ■