

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VI, No. 337, 11<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabaung 1381 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Thursday, 19 March 2020

## Message of Greetings from President U Win Myint On the occasion of the 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mon State Day celebrations

(19 March 2020)

**Dear esteemed Mon ethnic brothers and sisters living in Mon State,**

It gives me great pleasure and honour to send this message of greetings on the occasion of the 46th Mon State Day Anniversary celebrations which falls

on 19 March. I send good wishes for auspiciousness and good fortune of all Mon ethnic nationals born of the Union.

Although Mon State was included in Tenasserim division, because of the submission made by visionary

Mon leaders, 19 March 1974, the day on which the word "Mon State" was written in the 1974 constitution was designated as Mon State Day. We have celebrated this day every year and this day marks the 46th anniversary. **SEE PAGE-3**

## Myanmar expected to finalize draft report of Universal Periodic Review in May



Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the third coordination meeting of national-level committee for implementing recommendations of Universal Periodic Review in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

**T**HE national-level committee for implementing recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) held its third coordination meeting at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vice President U Myint Swe, in his capacity as the chairman of the committee, presided over the meeting, and called for finalizing the committee's draft report in the first week of May so that it can be submitted to the meeting of UPR's working group which is scheduled to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 13 November this year.

He added Myanmar received 166 recommendations for UPR, and the line ministries were im-

plementing 12 sectors involved in these recommendations.

The Vice President appreciated the implementations of 9 resolutions made at the national-level committee's 2nd coordination meeting on 30 May last year.

Relevant ministries and agencies involved in the implementation process are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Union Attorney-General Office, the Ministry of Union Government Office, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, the Ministry of Office of

the State Counsellor, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

These national-level bodies have implemented a total of 62 tasks, out of 166 resolutions, regarding human right situations, peace, rule of law, implementation of good governance, land confiscation cases, promotion of gender equality, health and education, interfaith harmony, freedom of demonstration and peaceful gatherings, ceasefire and national reconciliation, economic development, national identification processes, internationally displaced persons and trafficking in human cases.

The Vice President also

called for the coordination of the relevant bodies to finalize the Myanmar language draft in the second week of April and its English version in the first week of May.

He emphasized the need to clear groundless accusations of the international community against Myanmar in human rights issues.

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major General Aung Thu, secretary of the committee, presented the completion status of resolutions in the first and second coordination meetings of the national-level committee.

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo, chairman of the report writing work committee, briefed on preparations made by

his work committee.

Union Ministers U Kyaw Tin and Dr Win Myat Aye, Chairman of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission U Hla Myint, Deputy Minister Major General Aung Thu, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, Permanent Secretary of UAGO Dr Thida Oo and Director-General of Anti-Corruption Commission U Htin Kyaw discussed the draft report.

The Vice President gave advice and comments to ensure coordination based on the discussions before concluding the meeting.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

# Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves single constitutional amendment

THE 25<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session was held yesterday. Union ministries submitted proposals to acquire foreign loans and MPs cast secret ballots on proposals to amend the Constitution. Of a total of 654 Hluttaw representatives, 629 attended and 25 were on leave.

First, Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win explained a proposal from the President's Office to acquire 40.604 billion Yen from JICA for the Yangon-Mandalay Railway Improvement Project's Phase III.

U Thant Sin Maung said the loan will fund the project to upgrade the Yangon-Mandalay railway, which is separated into two phases – the Yangon-Taungoo section and the Taungoo-Mandalay section. He said the loan is a time-sliced loan, given out in installments, and this is the third installment for the first section of the railway.

The interest rate is at 0.01



Hluttaw Representatives voting for constitutional amendment during the 25<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session being held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

per cent, the grace period is 10 years and the repayment period is 30 years. After the grace period, repayment needs to be every six months. U Thant Sin Maung said the upgrade would reduce the duration on the Yangon-Mandalay railway from 14 hours to less than 8 hours.

Next, Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained a proposal from the President's Office to acquire a loan of USD 125 million from South Korea's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for the transport ministry.

Speaker U T Khun Myat called for MPs interested in discussing both proposals to register their name.

This was followed by a secret ballot on category (3) of proposals to amend the Constitution, which includes 19 proposals.

The proposal to amend

Section 262-(a) (i) was the only proposal to receive more than 75 per cent of votes in favor at 591 votes while the remaining 18 proposals failed to meet the same requirements.

In detail, the proposal to amend Section 261-(c) received 237 votes in favor, Section 261-(d) received 235 votes, Section 261-(e) received 235 votes, Section 262-(a) (iii) received 229 votes, Section 262-(n) (ii) received 399 votes, Section 264-(a) received 230 votes, Section 264-(b) (i) received 226 votes, Section 264-(b) (ii) received 407 votes, Section 264-(c) received 226 votes, Section 285-(a) (iv) received 501 votes, Section 285-(f) received 407 votes, Section 285-(g) received 405 votes, and Section 286-(a) received 408 votes.

Next, the Speaker announced that voting for category (3) of amendment proposals has concluded and voting for category (4) will commence on 19 March, during the 26th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant *(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

## UEC Chairman receives delegates from ERCB's member organizations



Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein receives the delegates from Electoral Reform Coordination Body-ERCB's member eight civil society organizations in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHAIRMAN of the Union Election Commission (UEC) U Hla Thein received delegates from Electoral Reform Coordination Body-ERCB's member eight civil society organizations at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting,

the ERCB members discussed the roles they took in previous elections processes, compilation of voters' list, electoral data release and voters' awareness programmes, election monitoring, increasing women's participation in the electoral processes, and the

roles they will take in the 2020 General Election.

Members of the commission, and officials from the commission office also attended the meeting.—MNA

*Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun*

## Working Committee meets to address the impact of COVID-19 on country's economy

THE second meeting of the Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy was held at the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The meeting was chaired by U Thaug Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Members of the working committee, U Soe Win, U Thein Swe, Dr Than Myint and U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar took part in the meeting.

U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism and Deputy Ministers U Set Aung, U Bharat Singh, U Tin Latt and U Zaw Min Win, Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) also attended the meeting as guests. The Working Committee discussed measures required to address the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the country's economy, including the setting up of COVID-19 FUND from which loans could be dispersed to affected CMP enterprises and SMEs at a minimal interest rate.—MNA



The second meeting of the Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy being held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## President, State Counsellor exchange congratulatory messages with Nepali President, PM over 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties

U WIN MYINT, President and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, exchanged congratulatory messages with the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, President and the Rt. Hon. Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal,

respectively, on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal which falls on 19 March 2020.—MNA

## Message of Greetings from President U Win Myint On the occasion of the 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mon State Day celebrations

FROM PAGE-1

Although the majority of Mon ethnic nationals live in Mon State, just like in other regions of Myanmar, union born ethnic nationals are living in unity and close friendship in this state. In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which has been formed with more than one hundred ethnic national races, there has been a very good historical tradition of many union born ethnic nationals living as brothers and sisters in close friendship.

It is thus very important for all the ethnic national races to live in unity as a close-knitted family for the union to develop and endure for a long time. At the present moment, the union of Myanmar is on the path of democratic transition. For our newly established democracy to mature and endure for a long time, peace and development is very important. This is why our Union Government has been making strenuous efforts for national reconciliation, union peace and development as priority tasks.

For the attainment of enduring peace, which has been the aspiration of all ethnic national races for so

many years, our Union Government has convened the Union Peace Conference-21st Panglong, to solve political problems, which are the root causes of armed conflicts, through discussions and dialogues, and to establish a Democratic Federal Union acceptable to all ethnic national brothers and sisters.

In the Mon State, as a good result of cordial and friendly discussions between ethnic national brothers and sisters, we have been able to achieve the cessation of armed conflicts. As the cessation of armed conflicts and peace and stability have been achieved, we have seen the fruits of socio-economic progress of the people such as improvements in the political, economic, social, education, health and transport sectors to a certain extent. It is important to note the importance of working consistently for cessation of armed conflicts and eventual attainment of enduring peace.

I would also like to urge all union born ethnic national brothers and sisters to have mutual understanding, forgiveness, mutual trust and respect as you face and overcome the challenges and difficulties in building

a genuine Democratic Federal Union, with ardent determination, unflagging zeal, indomitable spirit and wisdom to determine what is right and wrong,

I believe that we can reach our goal of establishing a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union if all our union born ethnic national races strive hand in hand together, in unity and with union spirit.

May all Mon ethnic nationals and residents of Mon state have all their wishes fulfilled; may you all be able to enjoy the fruits of unity, development, progress, peace and tranquility together with other ethnic national brothers and sisters living in other parts of the Union; may you all be able to participate and strive hand in hand harmoniously with all ethnic nationals in building the Democratic Federal Union; may the Mon state and the whole Union be blessed with peace and prosperity. I give these solemn blessings as I send this message of greetings to honoUr the 46th anniversary of Mon state day.—MNA

Sd/- Win Myint  
President

## MoTC presents contingency plan for marine pollution to national disaster management committee

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications submitted its National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution to seek the approval of National Disaster Management Committee yesterday.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as chairman of the committee, delivered an opening speech at this event which was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw.

The plan includes objectives to adopt policy, system and national-level framework on guidelines for coordination among state agencies, relevant organizations and individuals to ensure minimal impacts through immediate response to marine pollutions.

The Vice President acknowledged that the plan met an objective of the Disaster Management Department to minimize loss of public lives and properties, and its task for prevention of natural disaster, awareness programmes and training courses on reduction of disasters.

The ministry has defined



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the meeting to discuss the National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

“water pollution” as a contamination caused by petroleum, its products, cooking oils and toxic chemicals leaked from vessels, offshore drillings and oil pipelines.

The Disaster Management Law 2013 has defined “a natural disaster” as a result caused by natural or man-made accidents

or negligence, chemicals or oil spills.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio also quoted an objective of the Myanmar Investment Law—to develop responsible investment businesses which do not cause harm to the natural environment and the social environment for the interest

of the Union and its citizens; paragraph 64 (d) of its rules—to carry out the investment in a responsible and sustainable manner, including by, as relevant, limiting any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts.

He also discussed response plans of the ministry to the dis-

asters at local level, sub-national level and national level, receiving external assistance in case of insufficient domestic aid.

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung presented the drafting process for the plan and its legitimacy.

Experts of natural disaster management also discussed the need of equipment to monitor marine pollution, international ocean pollutions caused by oil spills and offshore disasters, losses and damages and recovery plans.

Recommendations on the national plan were also made by members of committee and Union Ministers Lt-Gen Sein Win, U Kyaw Tin, Dr Pe Myint, Dr Aung Thu, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing and Dr Myint Htwe; Deputy Ministers Dr Min Ye Paing Hein and U Soe Aung; together with officials.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio gave advice and comments to ensure coordination based on the discussions and advised to review advantages and disadvantages in the plan.—MNA  
(Translated by Aung Khin)

## MoHS to use \$10.7 mln international funds for COVID-19 prevention measures



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe addresses the meeting to discuss the prevention and control measures against the COVID-19. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Health and Sports will use US\$ 10.7 million international funds for prevention and control measures against the COVID-19.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe unveiled the offers of Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) for \$10 million which is 10 per cent of Health system strengthening (HSS 2) grant to Myanmar, and \$0.7 million from the USAID.

He added that his office is increasing momentum of preventive measures against the pandemic, with holding regular meeting on video conferencing with local health authorities across the country.

The Union Minister also expressed thanks to the GAVI and the USAID for their assistance to Myanmar amid the crisis of COVID-19 as the country is following the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

The MoHS has also formed a team for effective use of medicines and medical equipment donated by the local well-wishers.

The Union Minister emphasized to avoid public gatherings, washing hands from 15 to 20 seconds each time, touching face with unwashed hands and dissemination of correct information.

He added the elder persons and the patients with chronic

diseases to restrict themselves from going outside, although the arrivals from foreign countries and territories with the confirmed cases have significant declined.

The Union Minister also called for finalizing the contingency plan of MoHS to meet with situations on ground, readiness of ventilators at the hospitals, healthcare at IDP camps and awareness programmes.

At the meeting, senior health officials presented the works of respective departments and local health officials briefed on the measures of their offices.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Myanmar Rice Federation strives for stable rice market



Farmers bagging paddy in a field in Ayeyawady Region. **PHOTO: GNLM/ PHOE KHWAR**

THE Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) is giving priority to controlling rice price manipulation and stabilizing local rice market, according to the federation's President U Ye Min Aung.

"In preparation for COVID-19, we are taking priority over stabilizing local rice market and ensuring sufficient rice stocks," said the federation's president.

MRF also issued a statement on 13 March, saying that they were coordinating the works of stabilizing the local rice market and ensuring sufficient rice stocks with governmental organizations, private rice merchants, rice mill owners, distributors, depots and exporters.

Summer paddy can be harvested soon, and we are also at-

tentively observing the risks in exporting rice by coordinating with governmental organizations, relevant departments, UMFCCI's rice and paddy association, other organizations and rice depots, U Ye Min Aung said.

Some people started panic-buying after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March. "I would like to request the public not to buy and store a lot of rice stocks as it is sufficient for the local market. Merchants and shops are also selling rice at reasonable prices," he added.

After analysing the situation of local rice and paddy market, the federation will issue announcements, he added.

For more information about rice issues, people can contact the Myanmar Rice Federation at 01-2301128, and 01-218266-68.—Kay Tar

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry Notification (1/2020)

10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabaung, 1381 ME  
18 March 2020

- On 18 March 2020, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations held coordination meeting (2/2020) of the working committee to remedy economic repercussions caused by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019). The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry will take the following steps to resolve the effects on the economy mentioned in that meeting:
  - CMP businesses, hotels and tourism companies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are receiving the most negative economic losses as a result of COVID-19 and will be categorized as priority sectors for remedial solutions.
  - A COVID-19 Fund will be established at the Myanma Economic Bank with a capital of K 100 billion, composed of K 50 billion from the national Revolving Fund approved by the Union Government and K 50 billion from the Social Security Fund.
  - The fund will be used to provide loans to CMP businesses, hotels and tourism companies and SMEs owned by Myanmar nationals which are suffering the most negative economic consequences, at an interest rate of 1 per cent and a loan period of 1 year. The interest rate and loan period may be adjusted on the severity of the economic loss incurred.
- Concerning the quarterly income tax and monthly commercial tax for 2019-2020 fiscal year concerning CMP businesses, hotels and tourism companies and SMEs:
  - Payments for the income tax for the second quarter due on 31 March 2020 and for the third quarter due on 30 June for the 2019-2020 fiscal year will have the payment period extended to 30 September.
  - Monthly payments for the commercial tax of 2019-2020 fiscal year that will begin on 31 March 2020 to 31 August 2020 will have the payment period extended to 30 September.
- With approval from the Union Government, 2 per cent of income tax levied in advance for export will be exempted until the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

### Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Appeal to donors

10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabaung, 1381 ME  
18 March 2020

THE Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) acute respiratory disease is transmitted easier between children and can cause severe symptoms. Donors to the ministry's training schools and departments are respectfully requested not to directly interact with the children under the ministry's care and may make donations through the concerned officials.—MoSWRR

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

### Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Appeal to donors

10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabaung, 1381 ME  
18 March 2020

THE Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) acute respiratory disease is transmitted easier between children and the elderly and can cause severe symptoms. Donors to the ministry's philanthropic centres and home for the aged are respectfully requested not to directly interact with the children and elderly under the ministry's care and may make donations through the concerned officials.—MoSWRR

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Commerce Ministry confirms surge of Chinese raw material imports from China

IMPORTS of Chinese raw materials for CMP businesses in Myanmar through 105 Mile border trade zone have significantly increased in March, according to the recent report of Ministry of Commerce.

Around 70 vehicles loaded with Chinese commodities entered Myanmar each day between 11 and 17 March, compared with 30 in the previous weeks, 40 on 23 and 24 January and 1 to 3 in the last weeks of January.

The daily number of trucks from Ruili and Kyalkhaung of China reached to 7 at the 105 Mile trade zone around 15 February.

The current value of imported raw materials has also reached to US\$2.93 million from \$1.14 million in the past.—MNA



Trucks are parking at the 105<sup>th</sup> mile border trade zone. PHOTO: MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

### News release on COVID-19 (8:00 pm, 18-3-2020)

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 13 new quarantined patients under surveillance in respective hospitals between 6 pm, 17-3-2020, to 6 pm, 18-3-2020. Their lab samples have been sent to the National Health Laboratory (Yangon).
3. The lab results of 8 of the aforementioned patients were released between 6 am to 6 pm on 18 March and show they do not have COVID-19.
4. Between 17 to 18 March 2020, six Myanmar nationals returned from Italy, a Myanmar national returned from Spain and another returned from France. The eight Myanmar nationals have exhibited no signs of high fever or acute respiratory symptoms, or have been in close contact with confirmed patients with COVID-19. However, due their travel history in countries where the virus' infection rate is high, they are being quarantined at hospitals for 14 days under surveillance.
5. Thirteen quarantined patients are still waiting for their lab results, as of 6 pm on 18-3-2020, while receiving medical care at hospitals.
6. There have been three patient deaths, with causes unrelated to COVID-19, between 17 to 18 March 2020:
  - (a) A 9-month-old infant in Myothit Township, Magway Region, began vomiting, experiencing diarrhea, fever and dozing off. The infant was treated at an external clinic but was later taken to Taungtwingyi Township General Hospital on 17-3-2020 after showing no signs of recovery. The infant was admitted to Magway General Hospital at 3:50 pm on the same day and a lab specimen was sent to NHL (Yangon). The infant passed away around 10:00 pm on 17-3-2020. A preliminary examination suggests the infant may have passed away from diarrhea, extreme dehydration from late treatment, and low blood pressure.
  - (b) A 30-year-old man from Mongphyat Township, Shan State (East), was under quarantine at Kengtung Township General Hospital experienced fever and coughing accompanied by blood from 10-3-2020 and was admitted as an inpatient on 14-3-2020. The patient passed away at 9:30 pm on 17-3-2020 and a preliminary examination and medical diagnosis show the causes of death as his chronic enlarged heart condition, hyperglycemia hypokalemia, and negative consequences from pneumonia.
  - (c) A 40-year-old man from Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region, experienced fever, coughing and difficulty breathing on 12-3-2020 and was admitted to North Okkalapa Training and General Hospital on 17-3-2020, but passed away at 9:30 pm on the same day. The patient has Down's Syndrome and preliminary examination show the causes of death as having an abnormally high white blood cell count and pneumonia. His lab result on 18-3-2020 says he did not have COVID-19. The lab results of the other two patients who have passed away and related information will be made public in real time.
7. As of 18-3-2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar; nonetheless, surveillance activities are actively in progress. COVID-19 is currently spread across neighboring China and 159 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)

### More than 900,000 students sit for matriculation exam on seventh day

A total of 904,794 students sat for the exams of Biology and Economics subjects at local and foreign exam centres on the seventh day of the matriculation exam for 2020.

For Biology subject, 203,630 students sat for the exam at 10 foreign centres and 1,777 local exam centres.

For Economics subject, 701,164 students took the exam at five foreign exam centres and local 1,972 exam centres.

Out of 203,630 Biology students, there were 59 students who took their exams

at hospitals, two students with hearing impairments, 24 students with disabilities, 11 students who took their exams at prisons, and 53 students from Myawady.

Out of 701,146 Economics students, there were 132 students who took their exams at hospitals, 20 students with hearing impairments,

30 students with hearing impairments, 148 students with disabilities, 180 prisoners, and 72 students from Myawady.—

MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Matric students wait in queue to enter their exam centre in Bamauk, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MNA

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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**Mon State government to halt Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda festival**

MON State government issued an order for closure of Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda festival to alleviate concerns for coronavirus in the country.

The announcement came after the meeting of Mon State government yesterday. The closure of the festival takes effect on 21 March.

"Although no announcement was made, the number of visitors to the Golden Rock significantly declined. Passenger vehicles to the pagoda will not run from 21 March." said U Soe Myint, Director of Mon State government.

The pagoda festival regularly ends on full moon day of Kasone, but this year's closure comes one and a half months earlier.

"Until 17 March a lot of pilgrims visited the Golden Rock, but the number of visitors to the pagoda today (18 March) significantly decreased. Only seven passenger vehicles, with some vacant seats, arrived at the pagoda this afternoon." U Soe Myint said.

Before climbing up the mountain, each visitor's health condition and body temperature were checked. The closure of the festival is part of the COVID-19 preventive measures, he added.

Ma Thida, a shop owner from



Pilgrims seen at Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, the most famous pagoda in Mon State. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

the top of Mount Kyaikhtiyo, said the shops on the mountain were preparing to close since the number of visitors dramatically decreased yesterday. She also estimated that the number of visitors yesterday was less than 300.

U Soe Hlaing, deputy head of the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda's board of trustees, said, "We have been checking the body temperature of pilgrims since 16 March. We installed hand wash basins, and

regulated passenger cars to take the disinfection procedures"

"We will implement precautionary measures in accordance with the relevant ministries' instructions." he added.

On 16 March, more than 6,000 local visitors and over 90 foreign tourists visited the Mon State's well-known Buddhist pilgrimage site.

On 17 March, the number of visitors to the pagoda declined to

some 2,400 local pilgrims and 43 foreign visitors.

People visiting the pagoda significantly decreased yesterday.

The pagoda festival is annually held from full moon day of Thadingyut to full moon day of Kasone. —Khin Yadana/Hein Htet Zaw

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

**Innwa Bank opens 66<sup>th</sup> branch in Chauk**

INNWA Bank opened its new branch in Chauk yesterday in honour of the Diamond Jubilee of the Armed Forces Day.

The bank-branch was formally opened by Magway Region Security and Border Affairs

Officials cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of Innwa Bank's new branch in Chauk, Magway Region yesterday. PHOTO MNA

Minister Col Min Oo, Head of Magway District General Administration Department U Soe Naing and managing director and officials of the Innwa Bank.

Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Kyaw Swar Lin unveiled the signboard of the 66<sup>th</sup> branch of the Innwa Bank.

The bank-branch in Chauk is providing monetary services to the local people.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

**Songkran postponement affects return of Myanmar migrants from Thailand**

MYANMAR migrant workers in Thailand are not sure to return home during Thingyan holidays as the Kingdom has postponed its Songkran festival this year to contain the outbreak of Covid-19.

The Myanmar embassy in Bangkok has advised that the migrant workers should not go back to their homes this year.

"Thai government will not give re-entry visas exemption to

migrant workers who returned to the countries of origin this year. They must pay 1000 baht when they came back here," said Ko Phoe Zaw Myint, a Myanmar migrant worker in Bangkok.

These workers also hesitated to return home because they would be put in quarantine when they arrived back in Thailand.

"We should not turn into disease carriers between the

two countries and that it will be better for us to stay here this year," Phoe Zaw Myint added.

Myanmar overseas employment agencies have suspended their work on 18 March.

"Myanmar Consulate Office in Chiang Mai has informed our citizens to be alert to announcement for the pandemic and released contact phone

numbers for emergency help," said Ma Cho Zin Thal who is working in the northern Thai city.

The Labour Ministry of Thailand announced yesterday about 60-day visa extension for its migrant workers whose labour documents will expire on 31 March.—Khin Yadana

(Translated by Aung Khin)

# Stakeholders trying hard to get sufficient supply of raw materials amid Covid-19

By Nyein Nyein

NEGATIVE impacts of Covid-19 hit harder the businesses relying on imported raw materials, said U Thant Sin Lwin, director-general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

“There are more impacts on businesses, which are based on raw materials. Some can run the operation to a certain extent for they do not use raw materials. Some may close down their factories due to insufficient supply of raw materials,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

Myanmar’s economies are relatively affected in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, he added.

“The labour-intensive enterprises will be badly battered by the Covid-19. Some jobs with a small labour force may endure the situation. This is the Covid-19 impact in regard to labour force”, U Thant Sin Lwin added.

To deal with the shortage of raw materials for the CMP garment factories in Myanmar, the Ministry of Commerce, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association and the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, the China Enterprise Chamber of

Commerce in Myanmar (CECM) have been jointly importing raw materials through border trade channels and airlines.

About 50 trucks loaded with CMP raw materials are daily entering the country through Muse checkpoint. A cargo plane of raw materials from China’s Quanzhou city arrived in Myanmar on 17 March. These are part of the emergency supplies to 11 factories, said U Min Min, director-general of the Trade Department with the Commerce Ministry.

The working committee to remedy the economic impacts of the Covid-19 was formed with nine members on 13 March, and the Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations acted as its chairperson. The committee is implementing the preparatory measures.

“We can consider the preparedness in investment in terms of tax relief, exemption, and business permits. Even the world’s economy is affected for the time being. If the government reconsider the taxation, it is a part of preparedness. If the business that does not need to rely on raw materials, yet on the agriculture and lo-



A cargo plane loaded with raw materials from China for garment factories in Myanmar landed Yangon International Airport on 17 March. PHOTO: THAN HTAIK

cal labour force are allowed to invest in the country, it will benefit the investment sector,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

The committee is working together with the relevant ministries to tackle the possible economic impacts for the short term and long term. Regarding the labour layoffs, the related official departments are creat-

ing new jobs and conducting vocational courses for long-term benefits.

Since an outbreak like Covid-19 might happen in the future it is necessary to prepare for a sufficient supply of raw materials. The public and private sectors will cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our own sources, including

weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories.

There are more than 400 garment factories in Yangon Region. About 20 factories are reported shutdown on the reason for lack of raw materials affected by Covid-19, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Investments from Hong Kong cross \$1.28 bln in Oct-Feb period

HONG Kong has emerged as the largest investor in Myanmar in the current fiscal with 35 Hong Kong-based firms pumping in US\$1.28 billion in real estate development, electricity, and garment businesses as of February-end, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Hong Kong topped the list of investors in the past five months, followed by Singapore, which invested an estimated \$525.18 million in seven projects.

Investments also flowed into the country from China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the UK, Viet Nam, Samoa, China (Taipei) and Seychelles.

Foreign direct investment

(FDI) of \$2.635 billion flowed into Myanmar during the October-February period, including an expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to DICA.

The DICA intends to reach its FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the 2019-2020 financial year.

“South-East Asian countries see investment potential in Myanmar on account of cheap labour and business opportunities. Thus, larger entities are likely to enter the country,” said U Thant Sin Lwin, director-general of the DICA.

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

“Myanmar is trying to attract foreign investment by

providing tax relief, tax incentives, investment opportunities, and fast processing of proposals. However, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations is inviting only responsible businesses to the country,” he said.

The economic interaction between Myanmar and Hong Kong has been increasing rapidly. Hong Kong emerged as the fourth largest investor in Myanmar after Singapore, China, and Thailand. Between 1988 and February 2020, 255 enterprises from Hong Kong brought in foreign direct investment of \$9.6 billion into Myanmar, according to official data on permitted enterprises provided by the DICA.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Domestic gold price drops amid global slide

By Nyein Nyein

WITH the gold price sliding in the global market, the price of the yellow metal in the domestic market is dropping, according to the local gold market.

Global gold price stood at \$1,637 per ounce on 12 March while domestic gold prices crossed K1,210,000 per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms). It fell to K1,168,000 per tical on 18 March when the price in the world market dipped to \$1,513 per ounce, as per market data.

Within six days, the global gold price dropped by \$124 and local gold price plunged by K40,000 per tical.

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic prices hit fresh highs last year, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between

17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 7 August), climbing to 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a recorded peak of K1,300,000 on 5 September.

According to gold traders, in the month of November in the current fiscal, the local gold price moved in the range of 1,219,400 (2 November) and K1,173,000 (28 November). It reached the lowest level of K1,170,800 (3 December) and the highest level of K1,197,800 (28 December). The lowest price was K1,191,600 (2 January) and the highest was K1,232,700 (8 January). The gold price touched the lowest level of K1,214,100 on 5 February and the highest level of K1,234,200 on 28 February, according to the gold traders.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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# Effective measures called key to lessen economic impact of COVID-19

**S**INCE the COVID-19 outbreak occurred in China, the infectious disease has brought concerns to employers and employees of small and medium-sized enterprises, especially CMP (Cut-Make-Pack) garment factories with high numbers of labourers.

About 20 garment factories, out of 200 in Yangon Region, have shut down, while others reduced working hours.

However, a silver lining for workers occurred on Tuesday when a cargo plane carrying some 15 tonnes of raw material from China landed in Yangon.

Also, a resumption of border trade with China, which has spiralled upward in trade volume since early March, has encouraged both employers and employees.

The import of raw materials for CMP factories gained speed in mid-March, from five to seven trucks per day in mid-February to 30 trucks per day in early March, to 70 trucks per day by mid-March.

This shows that the cooperation between business personnel

and authorities from the two countries has resulted in preventing layoffs, job losses and the collapse of the economy.

This achievement reflects how we can tackle challenges through effective collective efforts, and also revitalize employers and employees of labour-intensive industries.

Since the outbreak began in China, authorities have been keeping a watch on factories abroad affected by COVID-19, taking note of the supply chain disruptions in China, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak.

Meanwhile, labour authorities have made necessary preparations to tackle the potential challenges that may befall employers and employees of the labour-intensive garment industry.

After completing assessments on possible economic impacts, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Commerce and other ministries worked together on prevention plans.

To lessen the impact on the country's economy, the government will reduce tax and interest rates so that people will not suffer, as well as work to prevent unemployment, to continue operating factories and to reduce the harm done to the economy.

Loans with minimum interest rates and tax exemption plans will be available for the most vulnerable businesses in the CMP sector, along with hotels and tourism and SMEs, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the 2 per cent advance tax on export items will be exempted until the end of this financial year.

We are confident that the effective measures taken by the government and people would ensure that our country will not be jeopardized by the global pandemic.

# New coronavirus can survive on surfaces for hours: study

**T**HE novel coronavirus can survive on surfaces or in the air for several hours, according to a US-government funded study published Tuesday. Scientists found that the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease had similar levels of viability outside the body to its predecessor that caused SARS.

This means that factors like greater transmission between people with no symptoms might be why the current pandemic is far greater than the SARS outbreak of 2002-2003.

The new paper was published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) and carried out by scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), University of California, Los Angeles and Princeton.

The new coronavirus was detectable for up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel, and

The new coronavirus was detectable for up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel, and for up to 24 hours on cardboard.

for up to 24 hours on cardboard.

The team used a nebulizer to simulate a person coughing or sneezing, and found that the virus was detectable for three hours in the air.

The study was first posted on a medical pre-print website last week before it was peer-reviewed, and attracted much attention, including some criticism from scientists who said that it may have overstated the airborne threat.

The virus is predominantly transmitted by respiratory droplets and in this form it is viable for only a few seconds after a person coughs or sneezes.

Critics questioned whether a nebulizer accurately mimicked a human cough or sneeze.

The team behind the NEJM study performed similar tests on the SARS virus, finding the two viruses behave similarly.

But their similar viability fails to explain why the novel coronavirus pandemic has infected close to 200,000 people and caused almost 8,000 deaths, while the SARS epidemic infected about 8,000 and killed nearly 800.

"This indicates that differences in the epidemiologic characteristics of these viruses probably arise from other factors, including high viral loads in the upper respiratory tract and the potential for persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 to shed and transmit the virus while asymptomatic," wrote the researchers.

SARS-CoV-2 is the technical name for the new coronavirus.

REFERENCE  
AFP News Update

# CAPACITY-BUILDING AND SELF-LEARNING

By Maung Hlaing (Sarpay Beikman)

**I**N the 11 March issue of the *Global New Light of Myanmar*, I came across a news item entitled "Capacity-building course conducted for IPRD officers". According to the news, the trainees will be taught the subjects on writing, mobile journalism, financial rules and accounting, official letter writing, media and information literacy, media laws and library knowledge at the three-week training course.

Such a training course is needed for raw hands or novices who have decided to devote themselves to their media career. And it is quite heartening to see them study media and information literacy, mobile journalism, media laws which were out of our reach when we were in the Ministry of Information.

It was in 1980 when I joined the Sarpay Beikman. Being raw hands, we were trained by the old hands who were well-versed in English and in the subjects they were handling. They relayed both their experiences and knowledge they gained to us through on-the-job training what we call 'Capacity-Building Courses' today. Sometimes, visiting scholars such as Sayagyi Maung Htin, Tet Toe, Mya Zin and Myanmar literati who were prominent in the literary field gave lectures on journalism. Thanks to their guidance, we never felt intellectually inferior in the field of media career.

Nowadays, it is very encouraging to see that many government departments are conducting the training courses on capacity-building. Most of them conduct English language courses, expertise courses and multiplier courses in succession as part of plans to enhance human resource development. The courses will help the



GRAPHIC: BT

trainees (service personnel) assess the past, present and future. On the other hand, trainees can have the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences while attending the courses.

Having attended the courses, the trainees will be better imbued with a desire for improving the role they must play in various sectors. Capacity-building, indeed, contributes much to constant learning that paves the way for life long learning society. What I want to advise is that they should continue to resort to self-learning after acquiring knowledge from the capacity-building.

Regarding the self-learning, I read an interesting article 'Self-learning' by Lokethar that appeared in the *Global New Light of Myanmar* of 7 March 2020. In his article, the author said, "if one has a mobile phone, which almost everyone does these days, the knowledge and information one may require is" "at one's fingertip" so to speak". It is true.

Youths including service personnel are lucky enough to learn what they want to. Teenagers (even children) can take the initial step of learning computer because they are aware that in this age of worldwide education, computer is basic to everything they may acquire in the years ahead. Before even obtaining admission to institutions of higher learning, they can attend computer classes, English proficiency classes and other classes.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century sees so many golden opportunities that we lacked in our school-days. Here, I would like to recount how I built capacity through self-learning.

When I was born in Wakema, a small town in the delta, in 1948, the insurgency was at its peak as the peace and stability did not prevail throughout the nation. In those days, going to school was just like a dream for the young. When I was five, I was sent to the monastery named 'Tavatimsa' where I could pursue monastic education. I still remember that my grandpa enrolled me, offering one pyi of rice, one 25-pya-coin, and a hand of bananas to the presiding monk as a token of recognizing the value of education and my enrolment.

In the morning, monks taught us Buddhist literature and school textbooks prescribed by the government. We used to follow the monks on their alms collecting rounds after learning Buddhist literature. In this way, I became a Phoneyi Kyaunthar or a resident student of the monastery.

I could begin to learn English when I passed the fourth standard.

Although I was interested in learning of English, I had no chance of reading other English books except school text-books. In my middle and high school days, if I wanted to read English dailies, I had to go to the then Information Library (now Information and Public Relations Department) of our town. As my parents were struggling to make both ends meet, they could not afford to buy even a small dictionary. Whenever I had difficulties in reading some English papers, I had to rush to my class-teacher and asked what I wanted to know.

When I matriculated, because I could not continue my university education, I joined the then Telecommunications Department (South Burma). Most of the service personnel were anglophiles and English was officially used. To be well assimilated socially into that community, I had to build capacity to outdo the others. My choice was 'self-learning'.

I built capacity through self-learning. As there were no English proficiency classes or training courses that youths can see at every corner of the street today, I had to make friends with Indian booksellers who spoke English to have chats with them. With the help of them, I could read a lot of English books I could get hold of. Actually, my experiences of capacity-building were not better but bitter and rougher. I for one, self-learning was easier said than done.

As for youths of today, there is the motivation to 'surf the Internet' and explore areas of personal interest as well as to participate in activities with peers from around the world. Students can be encouraged to become more independent and take greater responsibility for

their own beyond-class reading practice.

Only when we build capacity through self-learning, will we be able to bring about human resource development. Only when we bring about human resource development, will we be able to see all-round development in various fields.

Of all resources, human resource is the most valuable because it is the only prowess to serve humanity with the best possible means available.

Times have changed. We have found ourselves in the 'Digital Age' in which we are building a Constant Learning Society. Today, with the help of the computer and Internet, it is encouraging that we are able to launch a new era of technology which will make us better equipped to reap the benefits in this field. In this age, constant learning, or Lifelong Learning is a 'must' that no one can ignore.

As for service personnel, they should not stay where they are. They have to train themselves through self-learning and capacity-building to build a dynamic society. Self-learning and capacity-building can create the uplift of the living standard or the quality of life of all concerned. The more the service personnel are equipped with capabilities in all spheres of human endeavours, the more successful they will be in what they strive to do.

We live to learn, or we learn to live. Choose whichever you fancy. But you cannot deny the fact that the more you spend your time in learning, the more it is beneficial to you and to the nation as well.

Let's build up our society anew through capacity building in parallel with self-learning!

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Union Election Commission  
Notification 71/2020  
10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabauing, 1381 ME  
18 March 2020

### Permission to register as a political party

THE Alliance of Myanmar's Worker and Farmer Party (A.M.W.F.P) headquartered at No 2626, Innwin 4 Street, Nandawyar Ward, Bago Township, Bago Region, has been permitted to register as a political party in accordance with Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law on 18 March 2020. The registration number of Alliance of Myanmar's Worker and Farmer Party (A.M.W.F.P) is 126.

(Hla Thein)  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission

### Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Appeal to NGOs with MoU relations to ministry

10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tabauing, 1381 ME  
18 March 2020

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) acute respiratory disease is transmitted rapidly and large public gatherings such as meetings, ceremonies and other events have been suspended from 18 March to 30 April. The ministry respectfully requests that during the implementation of MoUs in designated project sites, to avoid direct contact with local residents, beneficiaries and large gatherings. Please conduct activities through representatives and closely follow notifications issued by the ministry. —MoSWRR (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

# Pyidaungsu Hluttaw begins checking body temperature

THE Hluttaw began screening the body temperatures of Hluttaw representatives as a preventive measure against COVID-19 acute respiratory disease starting from the 25<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15<sup>th</sup> regular session.

The procedure is performed by five groups from the Public Health Department, Ministry of Health and Sports, near the Hluttaw representative inspection counter before each meeting. In addition, Hluttaw staff and media personnel are also given body temperature and other medical examinations. —Aung Ye Thwin (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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## Myanmar's booming tech industry gets film treatment

SINGAPORE-BASED Mediashock Production has collaborated with Myanmar's Skyward Film Production to document Myanmar's growing technology sector and filmed an interview on the topic between

UMFCCI Vice President Dr Maung Maung Lay and Impact Hub Co Ltd's Founder Ko Okkar Myo yesterday.

The film crew also interviewed Phandeeyar Co Founder Jes Kaliebe Petersen, Koe Koe Tech IT Social Enterprise Co Ltd CEO Michael Lwin, KBZ Pay Branch Manager Soe Ko Ko, and Flymya.com Co Ltd CEO Jett Pan on

Myanmar's developing tech sector and a demonstration of online purchasing using KBZ Pay. They will continue filming Shwedagon Pagoda, Sule Pagoda and Botahtaung jetty up to 20 March and Mediashock Production will upload the content on their YouTube page.—Tin San (FDC) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

The film crew shooting a scene at a food shop. PHOTO: TIN SAN (FDC)

### KBZ donates K100 mln to combat COVID-19

KANBAWZA BANK and Kanbawza MS General Insurance donated K100 million towards protection and treatment of the COVID-19 disease through an Escrow Account yesterday.

The Union Government has formed a national-level central committee to respond to the threat of the global pandemic and the public is providing any support they can offer in assistance.

The donation from KBZ will be used to supply emergency pharmaceuticals, medical apparatus and other necessities.—Ko Din

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

### Substitute exams to be organized for shocking students over COVID-19

YANGON University and Yangon University of Economics have favoured their students who are in fear of COVID-19 to organize substitute exams in early June, although these universities are holding regular exams for majority of students.

The universities have also announced the students who chose substitute exams need to register at admin department of respective universities on 18 and 19 March. The Yangon University of Economics also informed that hostel students will have to leave the accommodations by 20 March.

All the universities, degree colleges and colleges have begun their first semester exams for 2019-2020 academic on 18 March, and almost all the students joined the exams despite their fears for the pandemic.—Kay Tar

(Translated by Aung Khin)

### Over 300,000 students sit for 1<sup>st</sup> semester exams of higher education

THE Ministry of Education announced over 300,000 students are sitting for the first semester exams of universities, degree colleges and colleges for 2019-2020 academic year across the country.

Out of 307,752 registered students at arts/science universities, degree colleges and colleges, a total of 299,463 students join

the exams, while 8,289 were absent. At the education colleges, 10,779 students are present out of 10,782 registered students and 3 were absent. The ministry has confirmed 310,618 students reached to exam rooms, out of 318,534 registered students, while 8,292 students failed to sit the exams.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

#### Notice for Change of registration distributors

Notice is hereby given that the official registration distributor has been changed for the following pesticides distributed by Evogro Co., Ltd. to Wi Sar Ra International Co., Ltd.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration Number	Registration distributors	
					Old	New
1	Beta C 100EC	Beta - cypermethrin 100g/l EC	Provisional	P2017-3484	Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd.	Wi Sar Ra International Co; Ltd.

Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. invites objections to Co-secretary. Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days from the publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed with the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. No.(95-A), Kyaik Wine Pagoda Road, 8<sup>th</sup> mile, Mayangone Township, Yangon Region, The Republic of Union of Myanmar.

#### Notice for Change of registration distributors

Notice is hereby given that the official registration distributor has been changed for the following pesticides distributed by Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. to Evogro Co., Ltd.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration Number	Registration distributors	
					Old	New
1	Partner 60EC	Chlorfenapyr 6% + Profenofos 54%	Full	F2017-1515	Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd.	Evogro Co., Ltd.

Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. invites objections to Co-secretary. Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days from the publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed with the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. No.(95-A), Kyaik Wine Pagoda Road, 8<sup>th</sup> mile, Mayangone Township, Yangon Region, The Republic of Union of Myanmar.

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (152N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (152N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLUE LOTUS

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLUE LOTUS VOY. NO. (TS2007) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 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 WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICES PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

# Germany says virus vaccine research not for sale

BERLIN — 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.

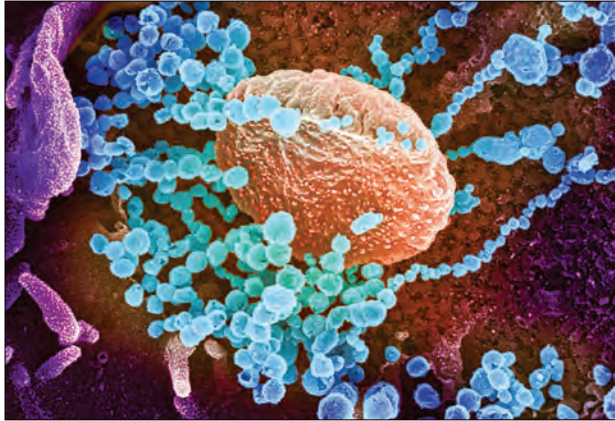
Citing sources close to the German government, Die Welt newspaper had previously reported that

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.

At a news conference, interior minister Horst Seehofer was asked to confirm the attempts to court the German company.

"I can only say that I have heard several times today from government officials today that this is the case, and we will be

discussing it in the crisis committee tomorrow," he said. CureVac said in a statement Sunday that it "abstains from commenting on speculations and rejects allegations about offers for acquisition of the company or its technology".— AFP ■



Authors of the study, say it is the first time experts have mapped the body's general immune response to the new disease. PHOTO: AFP

## Scientists map immune system's response to COVID-19

MELBOURNE — Melbourne researchers have mapped immune responses from one of Australia's first novel coronavirus (COVID-19) patients, showing the body's ability to fight the virus and recover from the infection.

Researchers at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity (Doherty Institute) were able to test blood samples at four different time points in an otherwise healthy woman in her 40s, who presented with COVID-19 and had mild-to-moderate symptoms requiring hospital admission. Published in *Nature Medicine* is a detailed report of how the patient's immune system responded to the virus. One of the authors on the paper, research fellow Dr Oanh Nguyen said this was the first time that broad immune responses to COVID-19 have been reported.

"We looked at the whole breadth of the immune response in this patient using the knowledge we have built over many years of looking at immune responses in patients hos-

pitalized with influenza," Dr Nguyen said.

"Three days after the patient was admitted, we saw large populations of several immune cells, which are often a tell-tale sign of recovery during seasonal influenza infection, so we predicted that the patient would recover in three days, which is what happened."

Working together with the University of Melbourne Professor Katherine Kedzierska, a laboratory head at the Doherty Institute and a world-leading influenza immunology researcher, the team was able to dissect the immune response leading to successful recovery from COVID-19, which might be the secret to finding an effective vaccine.

"We showed that even though COVID-19 is caused by a new virus, in an otherwise healthy person, a robust immune response across different cell types was associated with clinical recovery, similar to what we see in influenza," Professor Kedzierska said. — ANI ■

### REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

#### MYANMAR

#### South East Asia Disaster Risk Management Project

#### Project ID. P160931

**Assignment Title:** Developing and Implementing Beneficiary Studies for the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Activities under the Myanmar Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management (MM-SEA DRM) Project

#### Reference No. C4-CS7

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the South East Asia Disaster Risk Management Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds to finance the consulting services for developing and implementing beneficiary studies for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities under the Myanmar Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management (MM-SEA DRM) Project.

The objectives of this assignment are to: (i) gather and/or verify basic information and data in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) for monitoring of the flood risk reduction investments and the Results Indicators via a baseline study; and (ii) measure the impact of Project interventions using indicators in the Results Framework via a beneficiary survey.

The Consulting Services ("the Services") shall consist of carrying out a baseline study and beneficiary survey for the M&E of MM-SEA DRM Project. More details can be seen in the Terms of Reference.

The Finance and Accounts Department of Yangon City Development Committee will be implementing the Project and now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. **Interested Consultants must provide specific information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.**

The short listing criteria are: (i) Core business of the Consultant includes M&E and the Consultant has been in business for more than 10 years; (ii) Experience of more than 8 years in carrying out a baseline study and beneficiary survey for more than 3 similar projects; (iii) Experience in 1 or more projects funded by World Bank and/or other donor; (iv) Experience in Myanmar or Southeast Asia; and (v) Consultant's organization, administrative strengths, and staffing.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's [Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants \[under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants\] by World Bank Borrowers](#) dated January 2011 and revised in July 2014. ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. The "association" may take the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy. In case of a joint venture (JV), all members of the JV will be evaluated jointly for the purpose of short-listing and shall be jointly and severally liable for the assignment and shall sign the contract jointly in case of award is made to that JV. Interested consultants should clearly indicate the structure of their "association" and the duties of the partners and sub-consultants in their application. Unclear expression of interests in terms of "in association with" and/or "in affiliation with" and etc. without indicating the status of the partnership and designation of the lead partner may not be considered for short-listing.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Selection Based on Consultant's Qualifications ("CQS") method set out in the Consultant Guidelines. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday].

The Terms of Reference can be obtained through email from the address indicated below.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by **3.00 pm on April 08, 2020 (Local Myanmar Time)**.

#### Yangon City Hall

#### Yangon City Development Committee

Contact Person : U Aung Kyaw Thu (Assistant Director)

Address : Finance and Accounts Department

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Yangon City Hall

Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Postal Code – 11182,

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Tel/ E-mail : ++951388732 / [yccedba@gmail.com](mailto:yccedba@gmail.com)



Tencent, which developed the popular WeChat social media and messaging platform, says it may benefit from the pandemic as people turn to cloud-based computing and work from home. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Tech giant Tencent sees profit jump, may benefit from virus

BEIJING — Chinese Internet giant Tencent recorded a jump in profit last year and said it could be a rare beneficiary of the global coronavirus pandemic as people stay home and businesses ramp up remote working.

The Shenzhen-based behemoth, one of the largest stocks on the Hong Kong bourse, said Wednesday net profit last year rose 19 per cent to 93.3 billion yuan (\$13.3 billion).

Total revenues in 2019 were up 21 per cent at 377.3 billion yuan (\$53.7 billion), primarily driven by its international gaming and lucrative cloud services, the latter bringing in 17 billion yuan in revenues and consistently outgrowing the market.

The company said the global economic chaos caused by the spread of the deadly coronavirus,

which began in China late last year, would be a short term challenge.

Initially its fast growing cloud computing services might take a hit, it said.

But the company remained more bullish in the long term, cushioned by the expectation that many more people will turn to remote working and online health care services that often require significant cloud computing power.

“We believe enterprises will be increasingly keen to adopt cloud-based solutions over the longer term, in order to facilitate remote working and remote interactions with their customers,” chairman Ma Huateng said in the annual results statement. Figures in the annual report revealed how vital remote working apps have become during the pandemic.— AFP ■

## Fujifilm shares soar after China backs drug to treat virus

TOKYO — Shares in Japanese firm Fujifilm Holdings sky-rocketed on Wednesday after Chinese authorities said a drug produced by the company could be effective for treating coronavirus patients.

Fujifilm Holdings stock started the day untraded because of a glut of buy orders, before soaring 15.4 per cent to 5,238 yen, the highest level allowed during trade for the day.

China’s ministry of science and technology said late Tuesday that some

clinical trials have been completed on favipiravir — the main ingredient in the influenza drug Avigan, which Fujifilm markets. The trials using the drug as a treatment for COVID-19 showed “very good clinical results”, an official said at a press conference. A trial involving 80 cases conducted by a hospital in Shenzhen and a study of 120 cases led by Wuhan University’s Zhongnan Hospital both showed the drug shortened the recovery time for patients.— AFP ■

### Invitation for Bids

#### MYANMAR

#### MYANMAR SOUTHEAST ASIA DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

#### - Component 2 – Urban Flood Risk Management

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: 6080-MM

Contract Title: **Construction of Interceptors and Relief Drains for PS2 & PS3**

Reference No.: **ICB-01 (Lot 1 and Lot 2)**

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Myanmar Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contracts for “**Construction of Interceptors and Relief Drains for PS2 & PS3 (Lot 1 and Lot 2)**”.

Bidders may bid for one or both lots, as further defined in the bidding document. Bidders wishing to offer discounts will be allowed to do so, provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for implementation of priority works in some of the Yangon City Six (6) Downtown Townships, also known as Central Business District (CBD). The lots contain the following main quantities:

Lot 1:

- Relief Drains (pre-cast): (dimension (h x w): 2,400 x 2,400 mm to 3,600 x 3,600 mm)  
Total length: 1,529 m.
- Interceptors (pre-cast): (dimension (h x w): 3,000 x 3,600 mm to 4,500 x 3,600 mm)  
Total length: 1,571 m.
- In-situ cast Connection and Inspection chambers.
- In-situ cast Dry Weather Flow Interceptor.

Lot 2:

- Relief Drains (pre-cast): (dimension (h x w): 2,400 x 3,000 mm to 3,600 x 3,600 mm)  
Total length: 1,364 m.
- Interceptors (pre-cast): (dimension (h x w): 2,400 x 2,400 mm to 4,500 x 3,600 mm)  
Total length: 1,929 m.
- In-situ cast Connection and Inspection chambers.
- In-situ cast Dry Weather Flow Interceptor.

Implementation period: 730 days (each lot).

Place: Downtown Townships of Yangon City.

A margin of preference will apply.

Financial Capabilities: Construction cash flow requirements of:

Lot 1: US\$ 3.6 mill. equivalent

Lot 2: US\$ 3.6 mill. equivalent.

Specific Experiences: Contracts of same similarity (physical size, complexity, methods / technology, each of minimum value:

Lot 1: 1 contract of US\$ 23.0 mill.

Lot 2: 1 contract of US\$ 23.0 mill.

Specialized Sub-contractors are permitted for Pre-cast segments of Interceptors and Relief Drains.

Bidders may bid for any one or both lots. Bid will be evaluated lot-wise, taking into account discounts offered, if any, for combined lots. The contract(s) will be awarded to the Bidder or Bidders offering the lowest evaluated cost to the Employer for combined lots, subject to the selected Bidder(s) meeting the required qualification criteria for lot or combination of lots as the case may be.

Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank’s *Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers*, dated January 2011 and revised in July 2014 (“Procurement Guidelines”), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), e-mail of officer in charge: [dwmproject@gmail.com](mailto:dwmproject@gmail.com), copy to: [edrbproject@gmail.com](mailto:edrbproject@gmail.com), and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 9:30 to 16:30 hours at the address given below.

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the email address below. The bidding documents will be issued through email only.

Bids must be delivered to the address given in the bidding documents on or before **10:00 am (Myanmar time) on May 14, 2020**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address given in the bidding documents on 10:00 am (Myanmar time) on May 14, 2020.

All bids must be accompanied by a “Bid Security” of:

Lot 1: US\$ 600,000.

Lot 2: US\$ 600,000.

The address to request a complete set of the bidding documents is:

Attention: U Kyaw Min Oo (Assistant Director, Drainage and Wastewater Management Authority)

Street Address: New YCDC Office Building, No. (390), Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township

Floor/Room number: 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, World Bank Project Office

City: Yangon

Country: Myanmar

Telephone: +95 9 43193314

Electronic mail address: [dwmproject@gmail.com](mailto:dwmproject@gmail.com), copy to: [edrbproject@gmail.com](mailto:edrbproject@gmail.com)

Web site: [www.ycdc.gov.mm](http://www.ycdc.gov.mm)

## China to expel US journalists as media freedom row grows

BEIJING — China on Wednesday announced it would expel American journalists from three major US newspapers in one of the communist government's biggest crackdowns on the foreign press, escalating a bitter row over media freedoms.

The move against The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal came as the superpowers also feuded over the coronavirus pandemic, with US President Donald Trump provocatively branding it the "Chinese virus". Beijing said the expulsions were in retaliation to Washington's decision to cut the number of Chinese nationals allowed to work for its state-run media on American soil. "They are legitimate

and justified self-defense in every sense," the foreign ministry said of the expulsions. It said the journalists at the three newspapers must hand back their credentials within 10 days, and highlighted they would also not be able to work in the semi-autonomous cities of Hong Kong and Macau. The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC) said the move means at least 13 American journalists currently working in the country would be expelled. Beijing also ordered the papers, as well as Voice of America and Time magazine, to declare in writing their staff, finances, operations and real estate in China — rules similar to those recently imposed on Chinese state media by Washington.—AFP ■

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (206N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (206N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of TMIT/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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING  
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ANNA

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ANNA VOY. NO. (ANA-15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S SAL HEAVY LIFT GMBH

Phone No: 2301928

### Invitation for Bids

MYANMAR

MYANMAR SOUTHEAST ASIA DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

- Component 2 – Urban Flood Risk Management

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: 6080-MM

Contract Title: **Construction of Pumping Stations PS2, PS3 and Interceptor Inlet, incl. SCADA system**  
Reference No.: **ICB-02**

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Myanmar Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management Project – Component 2 Urban Flood Risk Management, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **"Construction of Pumping Stations PS2, PS3 and Interceptor Inlet, incl. SCADA system"**.

Bidders wishing to offer discounts will be allowed to do so, provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for implementation of priority works in some of the Yangon City Six (6) Downtown Townships, also known as Central Business District (CBD).

In total five (5) pumping stations are needed for the entire CBD, but two will be implemented under this contract, namely PS2 and PS3.

The pumping stations are constructed with an Interceptor inlet and include mechanical and electrical works. A SCADA systems comprising: A remotely located Master Station; local systems at the pumping stations, incl. level transmitters in the drainage network. The following Plant shall be supplied and installed:

- Pumps
- Transformers
- Emergency generators
- Electrical boards
- Screens and trash rakes
- Conveyors
- Hydraulic sluice gates
- SCADA system.

The pump stations are equipped with the following pumps and emergency generators:

PS2:

- Pumps: 6 nos. Total capacity: 6,0 m<sup>3</sup>/sec.
- Emergency generators: 2 nos. total 1,250 KVA.

PS3:

- Pumps: 4 nos. Total capacity: 2,4 m<sup>3</sup>/sec.
- Emergency generators: 2 nos. total 500 KVA.

The pump stations are equipped with local SCADA systems.

Implementation period: 730 days.

Place: Downtown Townships of Yangon City.

A margin of preference will apply.

Financial Capabilities: Construction cash flow requirements of US\$ 2.0 mill.

Specific Experiences: 2 contracts of same similarity (physical size, complexity, methods / technology, each of minimum value US\$ 12.0 mill.

Specialized Sub-contractors is permitted for Mechanical works, Electrical works and SCADA systems. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers*, dated January 2011 and revised in July 2014 ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), e-mail of officer in charge: [dwmaproject@gmail.com](mailto:dwmaproject@gmail.com), copy to: [edrbproject@gmail.com](mailto:edrbproject@gmail.com), and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 09:30 to 16:30 hours at the address given below.

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.

Bids must be delivered to the address given in the bidding documents on or before **10:00 am (Myanmar time) on June 11, 2020**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address given in the bidding documents on 10:00 am (Myanmar time) on June 11, 2020.

All bids must be accompanied by a "Bid Security" of US\$ 300,000.

The address to request a complete set of bidding documents referred to above is:

Attention: U Kyaw Min Oo (Assistant Director, Drainage and Wastewater Management Authority)

Street Address: New YCDC Office Building, No. (390), Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township

Floor/Room number: 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, World Bank Project Office

City: Yangon

Country: Myanmar

Telephone: +95 9 43193314

Electronic mail address: [dwmaproject@gmail.com](mailto:dwmaproject@gmail.com), copy to: [edrbproject@gmail.com](mailto:edrbproject@gmail.com)

Web site: [www.ycdc.gov.mm](http://www.ycdc.gov.mm)

# Turkey, Germany, France, UK discuss Syria's Idlib, coronavirus via teleconference

ISTANBUL — The leaders of Turkey, Germany, France, and Britain discussed issues, including the latest situation in Syria's northern province of Idlib and the COVID-19 outbreak, at a televised meeting on Tuesday.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson discussed the humanitarian aid to Idlib, the last rebel-held stronghold in Syria, said the state-run Anadolu agency.

The possible joint measures against the outbreak of the novel coronavirus were also on the agenda of the leaders, according to Anadolu.

Additionally, the leaders addressed the situation of illegal immigrants on the border of Turkey and Greece, it added.

Thousands of illegal immigrants flocked to Turkey's



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (1<sup>st</sup> R) attends a televised meeting with leaders of Germany, France and Britain, in Ankara, Turkey, 17 March, 2020. The leaders of Turkey, Germany, France, and Britain discussed issues, including the latest situation in Syria's northern province of Idlib and the COVID-19 outbreak, at a televised meeting on Tuesday. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

northwestern border province of Edirne after the Turkish government said it would no longer

keep them from going to Europe.

The summit between the leaders was supposed to be held

in Istanbul, but cancelled because of the spread of the coronavirus.—Xinhua ■



Former vice president Joe Biden won primaries in Arizona, Illinois and Florida to open up a commanding lead over Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Joe Biden wins Arizona for Democratic primary sweep

PHOENIX — Joe Biden won the Arizona primary over Bernie Sanders, giving him a sweep of the three US states which voted on Tuesday to choose a Democratic candidate to face President Donald Trump in November, TV networks reported.

CNN and NBC both projected the 77-year-old centrist former vice president as the winner in Arizona over the 78-year-old leftist senator from Vermont.

Biden also easily won primaries in Florida and Illinois on Tuesday to open up a commanding lead over Sanders in the contest for the Democratic nomination.

A fourth state — Ohio — had also been scheduled to hold a primary on Tuesday but Governor Mike DeWine declared a "health emergency" because of the coronavirus outbreak and voting was postponed.

Biden now has more than half of the total delegates needed to be declared the Democratic presidential candidate at the party convention to be held in July in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"We've moved closer to securing the Democratic Party's nomination for president, and we're doing it by building a broad coalition that we need to win in November," Biden said.—AFP ■

## Greece to restrict migrant camp movements in virus measure

ATHENS — Greece has said it is placing migrant camps across the country on a two-week shutdown to visitors to ward off the new coronavirus.

"Visits (to camps) by individuals and organisations are suspended for at least 14 days," the migration ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Entry will be allowed only to staff and there will be a compulsory temperature check for new arrivals," it said, adding that residents would be encouraged to limit their movements in and out of the camps.

Greece has progressively tightened restrictions on trade and public gatherings, and the national death toll from the virus now stands at five with 387 cases.

There are tens of thousands of asylum seekers in camps on the Greek mainland and islands near Turkey, and most of them are badly overcrowded.

Hundreds more arrived this month after Turkey announced it would no longer stop people from attempting to reach the EU — going against a deal reached with the bloc in 2016 — leading to days of chaos at the Greek border.

In a statement to mark four years since the deal, the Greek Council for Refugees and Oxfam said "suffering has reached unimaginable levels".

"Nothing can justify the indiscriminate detention of people seeking asylum, and Greece should not deny them a safe place during the current health crisis, nor send them back to situations where their lives and freedom are at risk," they said in a joint statement.

Oxfam migration expert Raphael Shilhav said: "While the coronavirus COVID-19 crisis is creating many uncertainties about the future, it is crucial that governments continue to protect the most vulnerable and keep to their promise to offer children safe conditions at this time."

### Alleged beatings

A number of migrants have told Turkish authorities and rights groups that they were stripped and beaten by armed men on the Greek side of the border. Athens has consistently denied using undue force in guarding its borders.—AFP ■

## NEWS In BRIEF

### Erdogan assured Turkey wants to remain member of NATO: Merkel

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Tuesday after a video conference with Turkish, French and UK leaders that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had assured that Ankara was eager to remain a NATO member.

"We talked about NATO. The Turkish president stressed that he [Turkey] wants to remain a member of NATO. We confirmed and welcomed it. Therefore, it is now more important to discuss political differences, and this was a good opportunity today," Merkel said. The conversation about the humanitarian situation in Idlib province and the possibility to improve it was useful, she said. Merkel noted that the European leaders welcomed that a permanent truce had been established in the region. Erdogan also informed the other participants of the conversation of the Russian-Turkish joint military patrols in Idlib, according to Merkel. She added that the leaders also reaffirmed support for promoting a broader political settlement in Syria. — ANI ■

### Yemen's Houthis suspend domestic bus trips over COVID-19 concerns

SANAA — Yemen's Houthi militia ordered local travel agencies in cities under its control to stop domestic bus tours between provinces for two weeks over concerns about COVID-19.

The Houthi-controlled ministry of transport ordered the agencies to stop selling tickets beginning Tuesday, according to a document seen by Xinhua.

Earlier this week, the Houthi group closed schools and universities as "a precautionary measure against the spread of coronavirus across the world." The World Health Organization said this week on Twitter that "no cases of the novel coronavirus have been recorded in Yemen." Yemen has been mired in a civil war since late 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthis seized control of much of the country's north and forced the Saudi-backed government of Hadi out of Sanaa. — Xinhua ■

## White House, Fed rolling out big plans to save US economy

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump is drawing up a massive emergency spending package while the Federal Reserve opens the financing floodgates to contain growing economic damage from the coronavirus pandemic.

After downplaying the severity of the outbreak for weeks, Trump on Tuesday called for bipartisan support to rush out immediate cash payments to American families.

“We don’t want people losing jobs and having no money to live,” Trump said at a White House press conference, adding that the package “is a substantial number. We are going big.”

With businesses shutting down nationwide due to the spreading pandemic, Americans need “cash now,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said at the White House.

“We are looking at sending checks to Americans immediately... I mean now, in the next two weeks,” he said.

He warned Republican senators on Tuesday morning that the pandemic could drive US unemployment to 20 per cent, a Republican Senate source told CNN. That would be double the worst point of the financial crisis about a decade ago.

Speaking on Capitol Hill, Mnuchin said the package could surpass \$1 trillion, in addition to \$300 billion in deferred tax payments, making it among the largest federal emergency plans ever and far surpassing assistance during the 2008 global financial meltdown. The package would include up to \$500 billion in direct payments and up to \$500 billion for small businesses, according to media reports, as well as the full \$50 billion the airline industry has requested. Mnuchin said that, for airlines, “this is worse than 9/11,” with travel virtually



US President Donald Trump (c), meeting with hotel and tourism executives, has called for bipartisan support to rush out immediate cash payments to American families. PHOTO: AFP

ceased. And while Republicans balked at a large stimulus package in 2008, over concerns about

the government deficit, Mnuchin told reporters “this is not the time to worry about it.”—AFP ■



Saudi Arabia’s economy is bracing for the worst amid the coronavirus pandemic and tumbling oil prices. PHOTO: AFP

## Oil crash piles pressure on virus-hit Saudi economy

RIYADH — From empty hotels to shuttered beauty salons, oil-dependent Saudi Arabia is bracing for a coronavirus-led economic slump on top of possible austerity measures as crude prices go into free fall.

Huge losses are expected after the Arab world’s biggest economy shut down cinemas, malls and restaurants, halted flights, suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage and locked down eastern Qatif region — home to around 500,000 — in a bid to contain the deadly virus.

The top crude exporter also faces plummeting oil prices, which slipped below \$30 a barrel this week for the first time in four years, on the back of sagging demand and a price war with Russia. The shock of this liquidity sapping cocktail of events has necessitated austerity measures

which are likely to imperil grandiose diversification projects.

Adding to the chain of events are the recent arrests of King Salman’s brother and nephew, which triggered speculation of political instability amid the government’s public silence on the royal purge.

“It’s crisis time,” said a Saudi government employee, explaining why he had begun converting part of his salary into US dollars and gold coins.

“Everything is unpredictable and we should be ready for the worst.” The central bank has shrugged off fears that plunging oil prices were straining the kingdom’s currency, pegged for decades to the US dollar.

A jeweller in Riyadh told AFP he had fielded a number of enquiries to convert “substantial amounts of cash” into gold bars and coins.—AFP ■

## IMF rejects crisis-hit Venezuela’s request for \$5 bn virus aid

WASHINGTON — The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday rejected economically devastated Venezuela’s request for a \$5 billion loan to help it cope with the onslaught of coronavirus on the country that an aid agency warned is as prepared as war-torn Syria.

President Nicolas Maduro made the request earlier Tuesday

but, in a statement hours later, the Washington-based institution indirectly cited a dispute over Maduro’s leadership in denying his petition.

In a letter to IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva, Maduro said a \$5 billion loan from the IMF’s Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) “will contribute significantly to strengthening our detection

and response systems.”

It was the country’s first loan request to the IMF since 2001.

“Unfortunately, the Fund is not in a position to consider this request,” because there is “no clarity” on international recognition of the country’s government, the Washington-based institution said in a statement.

“As we have mentioned before, IMF engagement with member countries is predicated on official government recognition by the international community, as reflected in the IMF’s membership. There is no clarity on recognition at this time,” the statement said.

More than 50 countries including the United States have not recognized Maduro for more than a year, after switching allegiance to opposition leader Juan Guaido who declared himself acting president.—AFP ■



Venezuela has 17 reported coronavirus cases, and Maduro has ordered a lockdown in the capital Caracas and six other states. PHOTO: AFP

## ADB announces 6.5 bln USD initial response to COVID-19 pandemic

MANILA — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday announced a 6.5 billion US dollars initial package to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries (DMCs) as they respond to the COVID-19

pandemic. “This pandemic has become a major global crisis. It requires forceful action at national, regional, and global levels,” ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said in a statement. He added the Manila-based bank said formulat-

ing “an aggressive set of actions to combat the pandemic; to protect the poor; the vulnerable, and wider populations across the region; and to ensure economies will rebound as swiftly as possible.”—Xinhua ■

## Germany players donate 2.5 million euros to fight virus

BERLIN (Germany)—German national team footballers said Wednesday they would donate 2.5 million Euros (\$2.7 million) to help fight the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

“We need to look after each other in times like this. We in the national team have been thinking and we are going to donate to a good cause,” said Germany captain Manuel Neuer in a video posted on Instagram.

Other players such as Bayern Munich’s Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka and Borussia Mönchengladbach’s Matthias Ginter also posted similar videos. The players did not specify what form the donation would take, but they directed their followers to the online platform “Wir Helfen”, which aims to coordinate volunteers across Germany during the crisis. “There was very quick agreement on the fact that we wanted to make a gesture as a team,” said national team director Oliver Bierhoff at a German Football Association (DFB) press conference on

Wednesday.

He said that Manchester City star Ilkay Gundogan, Real Madrid’s Toni Kroos and Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen were also among those who came up with the idea. Meanwhile, national team coach Joachim Loew called for people to change their behaviour after the crisis.

“The world is experiencing a collective burnout” he said via video link from his home in Freiburg.

“The Earth seems to be defending itself against mankind, which always thinks it can do everything and knows everything,” said Loew.

“Power, greed and profit have always been in the foreground (in recent years),” he added. “But now we have something which affects all of us, and we realise what really matters in life: friends, family and respect for others.”

“We need to show that we can be different ... and treat each other with more respect in the future.”—AFP ■



Players from Rakhine United (brown) and Sagaing United (yellow) scrabbling for the ball in the Myanmar National League U-19 match at Yangon United Sports Complex yesterday. PHOTO: MNL

## MNL U-21: Rakhine United beat Sagaing United 5-0

RAKHINE United trounced Sagaing United 5-0 in a match of U-21 Myanmar National League, played yesterday at Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon.

The winning goals for Rakhine United were scored by Myat Naing, Than Kyaw Htay, and Eric Ko.

Both teams played energetically from the kick-off to score the opening goal.

The first goal for Rakhine

United was scored by Myat Naing at 24 minutes.

The first half was ended with a 1-0 win for Rakhine United.

More goals were seen in the second half.

Than Kyaw Htay netted the second goal for Rakhine United at 62 minutes.

Rakhine United received their third and fourth goals by Eric KO and Than Kyaw Htay at 84 minutes and 85 minutes

respectively.

The fifth or final goal for Rakhine United was scored by Myat Naing at 90 minutes.

In another match of the U-19 Myanmar National League, Yangon United secured a 2-0 win over Myawady FC.

The winning goals for Yangon United were scored by Ye Htay at 49 minutes and Min Hein Htet at 87 minutes. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

## Myanmar National Team beat MNL Foreigners Team 4-3

MYANMAR National Football Squad garnered their 4-3 win over Myanmar National League Foreigners Team in their friendly match, played on 17 March at Thuwunna Stadium. The MNL Foreigners Team is made up of foreign players who were playing in the Myanmar National League football clubs.

Owing to the global spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus disease, the match was played without spectators (behind closed doors).

The winning goals for Myanmar National Football Team were scored by Yan Naing Oo, Maung

Maung Win, Myo Ko Tun, and Pyae Moe.

Myanmar team head coach Antoine Hey has already selected 23 footballers, and the training sessions for the players were conducted from 12 to 17 March in Yangon.

Though Myanmar National squad was scheduled to participate in the FIFA World Cup and AFC Asian Cup qualification, the matches have been postponed amid Covid-19 crisis, according to the instructions and announcements released by FIFA and Asian Football Confederation. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Myanmar National Football Team seen on their training session at the Thuwunna Stadium. PHOTO: MFF

## Fixtures released for U-19 Myanmar National League

THE match fixtures for the Week-10 of MNL U-19 2020 were announced yesterday by the Myanmar National League. Interesting matches will be seen this week as they are lined up.

University FC will play with Southern Myanmar U-21 FC at the University Stadium in Yangon at 4 pm on 18 March.

Shan United U-19 FC will play against the Myanmar Football Federation Youth team at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon; Chin Land FC will take on Yadanarbon U-19 FC at the Yangon United Sports Complex at 4 pm on 19 March. Yaw Myay FC

will clash with Sagaing United U-19 FC at Salin Stadium at the same time on same day.

At 4 pm on 20 March, Kachin United will take on Rakhine United U-19 at the South Dagon Stadium and Myawady FC will face Ayeyawady United U-19 FC at the Salin Stadium.

At the same time on the same day, Hantharwady United will take on Mawyawadi FC at Padonmar Stadium.

At 4 pm on 21 March, Silver Stars FC will play against Magwe FC at the Salin Stadium and Chin United will face Zwegapin United at the South Dagon Stadium at the same time on the same day. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)