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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw votes on constitutional amendment, discusses IDA loan for health sector



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convenes its 26th day meeting of 15th regular session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued voting on proposals for constitutional amendment, took records on approval of bylaws of ethnic rights protection and court file copy, and discussed taking loan and grant of International Development Association of the World Bank yesterday.

The 26th day meeting of 15th regular session was attended by 631 MPs, out of 654 total representatives, while 23 lawmakers were on leave.

At the beginning of meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U

T Khun Myat announced the donation of K12.88 million—K8.58 million by 429 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives and K4.3 million by 215 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives from their daily allowance — to the National-level Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19).

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also took record on the recommendations to ethnic rights protection bylaws of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and the court file copy bylaws of Union Attorney-General Office, which have been approved by both Pyithu

Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw.

The Speaker presented a report to the Hluttaw on restructuring of towns, wards, village-tracts and villages of Kayah state, Sagaing region, Tanintharyi region, Bago region and Shan state, for taking it as a record.

The Hluttaw then voted on proposals for amendment to 14 sections and paragraphs related to Section 436 (b), but the results failed to pass 75 per cent of supporting votes required for further amendment process.

Therefore, the sections of 301 (d-4), 310 (d-3), 319, 322 (b),

333 (d-4), 338, 339, 344, 359, 376, 396 (b), 398 (b-3-dd), 399 (f) and 402 will remain unchanged.

After the votes, MPs discussed the President's motion to the Hluttaw to get US\$100 million loan and \$10 million grant from the International Development Association of the World Bank.

MP Dr Daw Shwe Pone from Bago region constituency called for the effective use of second \$100 million loan because the first batch of similar amount received in February 2015 could be spent only 80 percent until February 2020.

MP Daw Nang Moe from

Mantung constituency pointed out interest rate and 0.75 per cent service charge for the proposed loan, and discussed proper management of the loan for necessary healthcare services.

MP Daw Khin Hnin Thit from Pantaung constituency discussed requirement of better healthcare services in the country by using the loans.

The motion was also discussed by the six representatives. The 27th day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will convene on 20 March— Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Hluttaw representatives donate daily allowance for COVID-19

THE Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaw donated a total of K 12,880,000 from their combined daily allowance towards the protection against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The donation ceremony took place yesterday at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Hall-D where the two Deputy Hluttaw Speakers handed over the donation to the secretaries of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019.

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein handed over K8,580,000 collected from per day allowance of 429 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives. Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung handed over K4,300,000 collected from per day allowance of 215 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives.

The Central Committee secretaries, Union Minister for International Cooperation U



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and dignitaries have the documentary photo taken at the donation ceremony for COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Kyaw Tin and Union Minister Htwe, received the donations of honor Dr Myint Htwe also spoke words of gratitude. —MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

MoALI, JICA sign for Agricultural Crop Value Chain Project



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu witnesses the signing ceremony on crop value Chain Project in the presence of JICA Myanmar Office's outgoing Chief Representative Mr Karasawa Masayuki and his successor Mr Sakakura Noriji in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation signed a memorandum of understanding with the Japan International Cooperation Agency for a technical assistance project to promote value chain of agricultural crops through food safety programme.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu and senior officers of his office attended the signing ceremony

in the presence of JICA Myanmar Office's outgoing Chief Representative Mr Karasawa Masayuki and his successor Mr Sakakura Noriji at the MoALI's headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Under the MoU, the project will be implemented from March 2020 to March 2024 in Hmawbi Township of Yangon and Kalaw Township of Shan State with se-

lected farmers in the designated areas where the locals and staff members will be trained for data collection, promotion of value chain for agricultural crops, cultivation processes and loan services. The project is also aimed to generate more income for the farmers and to extend it into other areas.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar border checkpoints temporarily closed to foreign nationals

FOREIGN nationals are temporarily barred entry into Myanmar through any border checkpoint starting from 19 March as a preventive measure against COVID-19, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, tourists with visas can still arrive in or depart from the international airports in Yangon, Mandalay

and Nay Pyi Taw, but still need to cooperate on preventive health guidelines.

Likewise, residents near the border with Myanmar who have border passes can still cross the border but are subject to strict temperature screening and health checks.—Kaytar

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Ministry of Border Affairs shares information on COVID-19

THE Ministry of Border Affairs has been sharing news and information on COVID-19, including how it spreads and preventive measures against it, at the universities, degree colleges and schools under the ministry since the spread of the virus.

Deputy Permanent Secretary U Soe Tun Nyo said the ministry has provided students with necessary hygiene equip-

ment and they have closed their domestic vocational schools and youth training schools according to directives from the President's Office.

He added that since their students come from many different border areas, they are arranging to teach them about COVID-19 and share it back in their hometown.—Naing Lin Kyi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

People are the key

YCDC confirms 'no closure' of markets in Yangon amid Covid-19 fears



Officials measuring body temperatures of the local people in Yangon. PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG MYINT

THE Yangon City Development Committee will not order to shut its markets in the city amid concerns over Covid-19 pandemic.

"We will not close the markets until any specific instruction comes out to do so," said U Thant Zin Tun, the Deputy Director of Markets Department at YCDC.

The department measured body temperatures of people, managed hand sanitizing at the 48 markets and conducted awareness programmes to prevent spreads of viral disease at meat markets, including live poultry market.

U Thant Zin Tun added, "We have placed hand sanitizers for

the hosts and shoppers at these market, while taking their body temperatures and erecting health education posters there."

The YCDC is making plans to expand its awareness programmes to cover all of its 184 markets in the city.—Min Thit (MNA)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Nay Pyi Taw Council issues Covid-19 prevention order

THE Nay Pyi Taw Council made an order of measures to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) in its Union Territory, dated on 18 March.

The document called for cooperation of public and private sectors in preventive measures against the pandemic.

The order has also banned organizing mass gatherings, public meetings and training courses at the offices of ministries and administration offices in Nay Pyi Taw until 30 April.

Hotels, motels and guesthouses were also instructed to postpone various occasions, including religious or social events.

Entertainments and festivals, such as Thingyan, will not be allowed during this period. Regular or weekly compulsory religious services are to be held with the least number of participants in line with the instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Universities, basic education schools, Ministry of Education's certified schools and private schools are to follow the directives of ministry, and the private dormitories are to close temporary, while nursery schools under the Social Welfare Department and its accredited kindergartens are to abide by the rules of the department.

The order seriously prohibited spread of false rumours, and strongly urged the residents in Union Territory Nay Pyi Taw to strictly follow the real-time announcements of Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent Covid-19.

People are also suggested to inform about anyone with suspected symptoms to the nearby health centre through local administrators, as a move to cooperate in preventive measures.—Kay Tar (Translated by Aung Khin)

11 returnees accepted at Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre

AUTHORITIES accepted 11 returnees from Bangladesh at the Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre and transported to their place of origin yesterday.

The authorities of the centre documented the eleven people from two families who returned on their own volition at 9:30 am, and provided them with medical check-ups and aid. The process of the accepting returnees ended at noon. They were transported to Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre by a team led by U Htay Maung, Deputy Director of the Nga Kyu

Ya Centre. The authorities of the transit centre presented food including rice, cooking oil, salt, beans and kitchen utensils to the returnees.

Afterwards, the returnees were handed over to the administrator of Nganchaung Village-tract, Maungtaw Township.—Thet Lwin Soe (Maungtaw District IPRD) (Translated by TTN)

Authorities accepting the returnees from Bangladesh at the Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (MAUNGTAW DISTRICT IPRD)



Melon exports resume in Myanmar-China border

EXPORTS of watermelon and muskmelon across the Myanmar-China border in Muse have resumed on 15 March after a delay period caused by the COVID-19, according to Myanmar Watermelon and Muskmelon Exporters and Producers Association (MWMEP).

The association's chairman, U Naing Win, said: "Around 400 trucks began operating again starting from 15 March, cargo

split equally between the two melon varieties, and purchasing from China has resumed as well".

Rumours halted buyers from China for a while on 18 March, but business resumed again in a short while. "There are many rumours circulating, so I want cultivators to listen for factual news and ask the broker's sales center they work with for any news," said U Naing Win.

Myanmar exported around

600-700 trucks of watermelon and muskmelon per day to China before the Chinese New Year and the outbreak of COVID-19.

There are approximately 100,000 acres of watermelon plantations and 35,000 acres of muskmelon plantations in Myanmar. They are mainly exported to China, followed by Hong Kong and Singapore. Exports of the melons in 2016-2017 FY reached over 660,000 tonnes for watermel-

ons (USD 76.874 million) and over 120,000 tonnes for muskmelons (USD 24.842 million).

Export numbers rose in the next financial year, with over 800,000 tonnes of watermelons sent abroad and garnering USD 77.46 million while over 120,000 tonnes of muskmelons were exported for USD 25.77 million.

Watermelon exports dropped down a few digits in 2018-2019 FY when over 750,000 tonnes of

watermelons were exported for USD 66.4529 million. Meanwhile, muskmelon exports increased to over 150,000 tonnes and garnered USD 32.2345 million.

In the latest financial year, watermelon exports reached around 320,000 tonnes from the start of the financial year until 3 February 2020 while over 36,000 tonnes of muskmelons were exported.—Min Thit

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Celebrities join Covid-19 awareness programmes of MRTV

CELEBRITIES from literary world, music, motion picture, and traditional dramatic society (Thabin) took part in production of MRTV educative programme for Covid-19.

The programme was shot at the MRTV's studio in Yangon yesterday.

Together with the senior officials of Ministry of Health and Sports, famous writers, singers and traditional dancers held talks on prevention of

the pandemic, dissemination of real news, and ensuring no panic among the public.

The programme is jointly produced by the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization, owners of movie theatres, film producers and famous artistes. It will soon be published on MRTV channel, radio and state-owned newspapers.—TT

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Celebrities hold talks on education at the MRTV's studio in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



MoE takes steps to ensure healthcare during matric exams

THE Ministry of Education has been closely following guidelines to protect against COVID-19 issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports to ensure the safety and peace of mind for students taking the matriculation examinations since 11 March.

The ministry does this by ensuring tables in the exam room are at least 3 feet apart from each other, there is good ventilation, performing health checks on students and ensuring they wash their hands properly.

MoE and MoHS have also collaborated to set up temporary clinics near the examination centres in order to provide emergency healthcare.—Soe Aung (Education)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Students wash their hands before they sit their matriculation examination. PHOTO: SOE AUNG (EDUCATION)

Over 300,000 students sit for 1st 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 304,128 registered students at arts/science universities, degree colleges and

colleges, a total of 293,399 students join the exams, while 10,729 were absent.

At the Technological Universities and Universities of Computer Studies, 35,184 students are present out of 35,970 and 786 students were absent.

At the education colleges, 10,777 students are present out

of 10,782 registered students and 5 were absent. The ministry has confirmed 339,360 students reached to exam rooms, out of 350,880 registered students, while 11,520 students failed to sit the exams.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

UCSY takes preventive measures for COVID-19

THE University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY), sprayed chemicals around the campus as preventive measures against COVID-19 and are also screening temperatures of stu-

dents and staff and placing hand sanitizers for public use.

Rector Dr Mi Mi Thet Thwin said they have arranged for hand sanitizers and face masks for students in rooms

used for examinations. The university has the rooms cleaned and disinfected before students arrive, she added.—Yadi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Over 160,000 sit for matriculation exam for eighth day

THERE are a total of 160,581 students sitting for the Geography subject at exam centres locally and abroad on the eighth day of the matriculation exam for 2020.

The number of exam centres totaled 1,558 with 5 locations overseas and 1,558 nationwide.

Out of 160,581 students

sitting for their exams on the eighth day, 22 are taking their exam at hospitals. Meanwhile, 7 hearing impaired persons, 31 visually impaired persons, 20 physical disabilities persons, 113 prisoners, and 14 students from Myawady, Kayin State took their exam.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Trade Mark Ads

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DICA: Real estate records second highest FDI share of over US\$600 mln

THE real estate sector recorded the second-highest share of foreign fund inflows at US\$601.95 million from five enterprises in October-February period, according to data released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Over the past five months, the manufacturing sector has absorbed FDI of \$432.746 million from 107 projects in the current fiscal. The livestock and fisheries sector has drawn three foreign investment projects worth \$15.5 million. The power sector has raked in \$102.4 million from six projects. One project worth \$145 million has been approved in the transport and communications sector. The hotels and

tourism sector has pulled in an investment of \$29 million from two foreign enterprises. Over \$24.85 million in FDI has been pumped into the other services sector.

Domestic investments from 89 enterprises in the real estate sector have reached K4,673 billion so far. More than 22 per cent of domestic investments made by Myanmar citizens have flowed into the real estate sector, according to the DICA.

Realtors are expecting the reduced income tax to stimulate the realty market, which has been cool for the last three years. They also anticipate the approval of a real estate service law, which would regulate informal deals and prevent buyers

and sellers from being defrauded by unscrupulous realtors, according to real estate officials.

Owing to high appraisal and tax rates, buyers and sellers have been forced to avoid paying taxes. Most dealers are informally carrying out real estate deals using only the special and general power of attorney, realtors said.

The reduction in taxes is likely to persuade traders who evaded taxes in the previous years to pay taxes and make changes in ownership, they added.

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the standard land price per square foot in Yangon's townships has been reduced by 10 per cent compared to the



Low-cost apartment buildings in Dagon Seikkan Township.
PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

year-ago period, according to the Inland Revenue Department. These prices are used for tax evaluations in real estate sales.

As per the Condominium Law, when a condominium pro-

ject developed by a citizen or a foreigner is completed, foreigners have the right to own up to 40 per cent of the units.—Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar external trade reaches over \$16 bln from October to February this financial year

FIRST five months of 2019-2020 financial year, provisional figure of Myanmar international trade showed that the total trade reached at US\$16.474 billion with \$7.748 billion export and \$8.726 billion import. At the same period of last FY, Myanmar international trade reached at \$14.050 billion with \$6.622 billion export and \$7.428 billion import.

Compared with last FY, Myanmar's trade exceeded \$2.424 billion with \$1.126 billion export and \$1.298 billion import.

Following is the external trade provisional export figure from October to February 2019-2020FY in comparison with the same period of last FY. Values are in million US\$.

Sr	Sector	From Oct to Feb 2019-2020 FY's provisional value	From Oct to Feb 2018-2019 FY's value	Exceed/decrease
1.	Agriculture products	1643.792	1346.446	297.346
2.	Livestock products	52.398	265.921	-213.523
3.	Marine products	416.994	361.586	55.408
4.	Mineral products	1005.568	406.987	598.581
5.	Forest products	73.275	74.574	-1.299
6.	Manufacture products	4408.977	3892.662	516.315
7.	Other	146.760	273.882	-127.122
	Total	7747.764	6622.058	1125.706

Following is the external trade provisional import figure from October to February 2019-2020FY in comparison with the same period of last FY. Values are in million US\$.

Sr	Subject	From Oct to Feb 2019-2020 FY (temporary)	From Oct to Feb 2018-2019 FY	Exceed/decrease
1.	Investment products	3332.225	2401.900	930.325
2.	Raw materials	3275.276	3067.274	208.002
3.	Articles of use	2118.938	1959.013	159.925
	Total	8726.439	7428.187	1298.252

— MNA

MIC grants permission for Zwegapin cable car project

MYANMAR Investment Commission (MIC) has granted permission in the first week of March to implement Zwegapin cable car project, which will take place at the foot of Mount Zwegapin in Kayin State, according to an announcement released by the MIC.

This project is 100 per cent local investment. It is granted as a business in the hotel sector, and the cable cars will be available at the foot of Mount Zwegapin in the vicinity of the Zwegapin forest, according to the MIC announcement. MIC has also permitted nine other businesses in addition to the Zwegapin cable car project. The values of all projects are worth more than US\$130 million.

Zwegapin mountain is located seven miles south of Hpa-an and is 2,734 feet above the sea level. Cable car project was started in 2018 and four compa-

nies are jointly implementing the project. Zwegapin Land & Cable Car Development Company Limited was founded with four directors in 2018. The company expected that the whole project will cost more than \$12 million.

"Zwegapin cable car will run in May 2020. Two coaches will be installed with each being a capacity of 50 passengers. The estimated four-minute ride to the mountain top will cost each passenger K5,000," said U Banya Zaw, the company Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Hpa-an, the capital city of Kayin State, is a six-hour drive from Yangon, which is why the locals go there on weekend trips. The capital is famous for its natural limestone caves and mountain trekking. It sits on the eastern bank of Thanlyin (Salween) River.—Aye Cho

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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MRDD to provide sufficient drinking water to 51 villages in Mandalay Region



Local people collecting their drinking water from the water boxer truck in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MAN-SUB PRINTING HOUSE)

TO prevent insufficient supply of drinking water in summer, Mandalay Rural Development Department MRDD is planning to provide drinking water, spending K 24 million for 51 villages in 13 townships in Mandalay Region.

The ward administrators concerned have participated in conducting of a survey of the villages, which are likely to shortage of the drinking water in summer. The survey was conducted in cooperation with civil society associations, NGOs and INGOs. The Natural Disaster Preparedness Associations

led by the related township administrators will distribute the water jointly with civil society organizations, said Director U Soe Than of Mandalay Rural Development Department.

"We are working together to survey distribution of the drinking water to the villages. Our department will support funds for fuel oil to be used in the drinking water carrying vehicles. The fund is spent from the department budget. The number of villages suffering from lack of drinking water in summer has been declining year by year since the estab-

lishment of our department. In 2016, a total of 146 villages faced with insufficiency of drinking water. In 2017 and 2018, only nine villages were suffering from the water shortage problems. In 2019 there occurred El Nino disaster in Myanmar during which a total of 66 villages encountered such problems.

Our department has developed a new software for the villages to inform that they need the drinking water. It is necessary to train them to use this application software. We reach out for their awareness to save and share the drinking

water if necessary, he added.

There are 13 villages, which lack the drinking water in summer -- Singu, Kyaukse, Tada-U, Wundwin, Taze, Mahlaing, Meiktila, Taungtha, Natogyi, Ngazun, Yamethin, Pyawbwe and Kyaukpadaung townships.

According to the survey, the Ayeyawady region tops the list of the survey which could face the lack of drinking water in summer, followed by Sagaing and Mandalay regions. —Min Htet Aung (Man-Sub printing house)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Monywa bans temporary entry for tourists at Commodity Depot

TOURISTS are temporarily banned from entering Monywa Commodity Depot in the wake of Covid-19, according to an announcement released by Monywa Commodity Depot Information Committee on 17 March.

"A decision was made at the central executive meeting held on 15 March to keep the tourists from entering Monywa Commodity Depot for the meantime to prevent the infection by the disease. We will announce the permission period depending upon the government announcement. Although we do not stop the local traders at the depot, we are still monitoring them. So they need to inform the chairman or secretary of Monywa Commodity Depot," said Chairman U Aye Kyine of the Monywa

Commodity Depot.

"Some tourists visit to observe the commodity depot while some want to know about the market conditions. Some are related to the companies. Nearly 300 traders arrive at the depot every day. They used to arrive at 10 or 11 am and go back around 1:30 pm after finishing trading," he added.

There are more than 500 traders in the Monywa Commodity Depot.

"We heard that some commodity depots are checking the temperature at their entrance gate, placing the soap for the traders to wash their hands. But the liquid soaps are difficult to buy. So, we can't afford now but we plan to do so," said U Aye Kyine.— Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Omni Focus slashes time schedules of five YBS routes

THE Omni Focus General Service Public company will slash time schedules in its five 24-hour service YBS routes for more than a month from 20 March to 30 April, according to the company's announcement.

The Omni Focus General Service Public company has been operating 24-hour service in YBS 20, 82, 83, 98 and 99 lines for the convenience of the commuters. Now, those YBS lines will be operated part time only for over one month.

The matriculation exam has been finished by now and there are also a few passengers using YBS at night. So, YBS 20, formerly operated 24 hours will

run only from 4:15 am to 10 pm and the remaining lines will run from 5:00 am to 10 pm starting from 20 March.

Further information related to YBS bus lines will be announced in time. The last departure time of YBS buses will be announced on Omni Focus YBS page, according to the Omni Focus General Service Public company.

Following the World Health Organization's declaration of Covid-19 a pandemic, the President's Office has banned public gatherings, celebrations, festivals, and events until the end of April. —Nyein Nyein

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Japanese company to purchase 1,200 tons of Seintalone mangoes

A Japanese company named YUKIOK Myanmar Co. Ltd has been signing contracts to buy 1,200 tons of Seintalone from mango growers in this season, said Secretary U Kyaw Soe Naing of Myanmar Mango Market and Technology Development Association (MMMTDA).

The YUKIOK Myanmar Co. Ltd has met with the mango-growing farmers across the country and signed contracts to purchase the mangoes, which will yield in the season of this year.

“They have entered into contracts to buy the mangoes that will yield in May. They will purchase around 1,200 tons of Seintalone mangoes. It’s a piece of good news and good opportunities for the mango growers. They will establish a factory in



A shopkeeper selling mangoes in a bazaar in Mandalay. PHOTO: THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)

Yangon and manufacture mango pastes to be exported to foreign countries. They have signed a contract with the local mango growers from Myaung Thit village, Madaya Township, Mandalay Region in March. They’re also

going to sign the contracts with mango-growing farmers from Nyaung Pin Wun from Sagaing Region and Kyaukse town. They are planning to make new agreements with mango growers from other regions. This is a chance for

the countries to have a taste of Myanmar mango,” said U Kyaw Soe Naing.

The company will set the price depending on the size of the Seintalone mango. They have offered to sell the mangoes of 200 gm to 250 gm for K 450,000, 251 gm to 300 gm for K 480,000, 301 gm to 380 gm for K 630,000, 381 gm to 450 gm for K 810,000 and above 451 gm for K 900,000.

This year, the mango growers do not need to put the mangoes in the plastic bags, which will cut the labour charges and cost of plastic bags. Myanmar mangoes are primarily shipped to China. So, mango growers are now preparing to export mangoes to China market as well. We are glad that the Japanese company is offering to buy the mangoes

and it has become one of the export markets for the local mango growers, he added.

The mango growers need to grasp their opportunities by doing the right way. It can be of benefit to the Myanmar mango market. Now, the Japanese company offered to purchase the mangoes and the local mango growers should sell only the quality fruits. If their fruits are not export-quality ones, they will be hard to find the market for the next season, said the secretary of MMMTDA.

In Myanmar mango market, Seintalone, Shwe Hin Thar, Yin Gwe and Padamyar Nga Mauk are highly demanded from foreign countries. Mango plantations cover 250,000 acres of land across Myanmar. —Than Zaw Min (IPRD)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

FDI up \$1 bln against previous fiscal

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR has attracted more than US\$2.7 billion in foreign direct investments over the past five months of the current fiscal, an increase of \$1 billion compared with the corresponding period of the previous FY, said Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

According to the DICA sta-

tistics, 136 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and endorsements from regional and state Investment Committees between 1 October and 6 March in the current fiscal, bringing in the capital of \$2.7 billion.

In the year-ago period, FDI of just \$1.7 billion had poured in from 109 enterprises.

The number of permitted or endorsed enterprises this

year was 27 higher than last year. In the wake of COVID-19, foreign direct investments flow into many types of businesses except the garment enterprises during the meantime, according to the DICA.

Four foreign businesses were given a go-ahead by the MIC, and the proposals of 21 foreign enterprises were endorsed by the respective region and state investment committees. The majority of investments are

set to flow into the manufacturing sector from 19 businesses, while other service sectors drew four projects. Additionally, hotel and livestock and fisheries sectors have attracted one project each. Those projects, with an estimated capital of \$91.469 million, are expected to create over 14,000 jobs for residents.

In the current financial year, the MIC has set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion. The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic

Relations has been inviting responsible businesses to benefit the country.

“The Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP) has been drawn up with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and it is now under implementation. As per the MIPP, Myanmar aims to reach an FDI target of \$200 billion in forthcoming 20 years,” said U Thauung Tun.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mineral exports cross \$1 bln as of 6 March

MYANMAR’S mineral exports have shown a sharp increase this fiscal, touching US\$1.03 billion between 1 October and 6 March, an increase of \$594.7 million compared with the year-ago period, according to the data by the Ministry of Commerce.

Mineral exports were pegged at just \$437 million during the corresponding period in the previous financial year.

Both private and public sector mineral exports have recorded an increase in the current fiscal, with private sector exports valued at \$577 million and public sector exports estimated at \$454.87 million.

Excavation of more than 1,250 mining blocks has been so far permitted on a manageable, small, medium, and large scale, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The exports of forest products and minerals had significantly dropped in the previous years due to the limited extraction of natural resources. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016, but after a period of two years, Myanmar’s mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the ministry.

Within two years of the implementation of the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mines Department has approved 144 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks.

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

Though the Myanmar Mines Law had been enacted on 24 December 2015 it came into force when the rules were issued on 13 February 2018.

Myanmar’s export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Since export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses have risen, it would ease the country’s reliance on natural resources.

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

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Watermelons, muskmelons get 30% price rise

WITH the resumption of sale of watermelons and muskmelons in Muse 105 Mile trade zone, the prices of watermelons and muskmelons have risen 30 per cent in the first week of March in the border area, said U Sai Khin Maung, secretary of Muse 105 Mile Fruit Wholesale Centre.

The bilateral trade between China and Myanmar has been suspended for more than 20 days because of the coronavirus outbreak in China.

He said: “The Chinese government has attempted to control the virus to be able to resume their businesses. We expected that the market condition will become better in the very near future.”

Although the trade route to China will be opened in a few days, the seven states, the virus outbreak zones, are still missing the markets.

Currently, 855-category watermelon truck (16 tons) is worth between 8,000 and 15,000 Yuan while the price of Tai-

wan AAA-AA watermelon is ranging from 20,000-32,000 Yuan per truck. The price of golden muskmelon is ranging from 2.2-3.8 Yuan per kilo while the Wukhone watermelon is ranging from 2.5-4.3 Yuan per kilo. The Chinese Yung exchange rate hit K203 today.

Though 855-category watermelon market is lost in Muse 105 Mile trade zone the price of Taiwan AAA-AA watermelon ranged from 10,000-17,000 Yuan per truck. Watermelons and muskmelons are considered export items to China and a large quantity of the fruits will be harvested until the end of May.

Myanmar exports more than 800,000 tons of watermelons and 150,000 tons of muskmelons every year. After coronavirus breakout, only 200,000 tons of watermelons and a small volume of muskmelons have been shipped to external markets in the meantime. —GNLM

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Today is not a time to panic, but to take action

WITH yesterday's suspension of tourists from crossing into the country from border check-points country-wide, Myanmar authorities are taking one more significant action to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infection from neighbouring countries.

We believe that the fewer the number of travellers arriving from Coronavirus outbreak countries, the less the possibility for the disease to spread throughout our country.

The prevention and control measures, including aggressive actions such as closing schools and cancelling events, are a disruption to our lives, but we need to ensure that the public understands that these measures are necessary for their safety.

Meanwhile, we must scale up the number of health checks to Myanmar citizens holding passports, border pass-BP and temporary border pass-TBP, who are allowed to cross at border checkpoints, and also increase surveillance at international airports.

More aggressive steps, such as limiting the size of gatherings to fewer than 50 people, closing bars, fitness centres and cinemas, and ordering restaurants to only offer take-out or delivery are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 across Myanmar. These limitations are difficult, but they are necessary.

The most important advice to offer the public is to follow WHO guidance on reducing transmissions through measures, such as proper handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and practicing social distancing.

For the authorities, they are obliged to share updated information on COVID-19 in a timely manner and with transparency through media, including social media, to ensure that people do not

become exploited by fake news and rumours.

The nation's health workers and people have been advised to follow the guidance and directives from the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The prevention and control measures, including aggressive actions such as closing schools and cancelling events, are a disruption to our lives, but we need to ensure that the public understands that these measures are necessary for their safety.

WHO's regional director has called upon Southeast Asian countries to urgently scale up all efforts to prevent the virus from infecting more people, as there are concerns about the weaker public health care systems in many countries of the region.

We need to evaluate our daily efforts at ground level and seek advice from the central government to tackle the challenges in order to prevent the epidemic striking our country.

Because COVID-19 is a new virus with no vaccine to prevent its transmission or antiviral to treat it yet, the answer is that everyone must act to combat this health menace.

It's not a time to panic. The point is that we need to take this very seriously, even though there are still no confirmed cases in our country.

ADB Announces \$6.5 Billion Initial Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 18 March announced a \$6.5 billion initial package to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries (DMCs) as they respond to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"This pandemic has become a major global crisis. It requires forceful action at national, regional, and global levels," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "With our developing member countries, we are formulating 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. Based on close dialogue with our members and peer institutions, we are deploying this \$6.5 billion rescue package to meet the immediate needs of our members."

Mr. Asakawa stressed that "ADB stands ready to provide further financial assistance and policy advice down the road whenever the situation warrants, on top of the \$6.5 billion package."

The initial package includes approximately \$3.6 billion in sovereign operations for a range of responses to the health and economic consequences of the pandemic, and \$1.6 billion in nonsovereign operations for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, and firms directly impacted. ADB will also mobilize about \$1 billion in



Most developing Asian economies are already responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in various ways. Many governments have mobilized inter-agency task forces and other coordinating mechanisms to ensure a harmonized response. PHOTO: ADB

concessional resources through reallocations from ongoing projects and assessing possible needs for contingencies. ADB will make available \$40 million in technical assistance and quick-disbursing grants.

To provide the support package to DMCs as quickly and flexibly as possible, ADB will seek adjustment in its financing instruments and business processes. Subject to approval by ADB's Board of Directors, this will include faster access to emergency budget support for economies facing severe fiscal constraints, streamlined procedures for policy-based lending, and universal procurement with flexible and faster processes.

The pandemic demands a coordinated response and strong collaboration among countries and organizations. ADB will further strengthen its close collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, regional development banks, the World Health Organization, and major bilateral funding agencies including the Japan International Cooperation Agency, as well as the US Centers for Disease Control and private sector organizations, to ensure effective implementation of its COVID-19 response.

Since its first COVID-19 response on 7 February 2020, ADB has already provided more than \$225 million to meet urgent needs of both governments and busi-

nesses in DMCs. ADB's COVID-19 response to date includes:

- 7 February 2020: A \$2 million grant to enhance infectious disease prevention, detection, and response in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Greater Mekong Sub-region;
- 25 February 2020: A CNY130 million (\$18.6 million) private sector loan to a Wuhan, PRC-based pharmaceutical distributor to enable the continued supply of essential medicines and personal protective equipment;
- 26 February 2020: A second grant window was established with an initial \$2 million allocation to help DMCs contain

COVID-19 and improve resilience. Additional financing is being mobilized for this grant window;

- 12 March 2020: \$200 million made available through ADB's Supply Chain Finance Program for companies manufacturing and distributing medicines and other items needed to combat COVID-19. Through its partner financial institutions, ADB can provide essential working capital to such companies;
- 13 March 2020: A \$3 million grant to support the Philippine government's response to COVID-19, including the purchase of emergency medical supplies and the delivery of effective health care services;
- 13 March 2020: A \$600,000 grant from the Health System Enhancement Project to finance preventive and response efforts in Sri Lanka, including disease surveillance and the provision of medical supplies and equipment;
- 13 March 2020: \$100,000 was reallocated from the Tajikistan Maternal and Child Health Integrated Care Project to finance COVID-19 prevention and mitigation, medical supplies, and equipment;
- 18 March 2020: \$1.4 million was reallocated from the Fifth Health Sector Development Project in Mongolia to procure essential medical equipment for early detec-

tion, emergency care, and management of severe respiratory diseases. ADB also approved a \$225,000 small-scale technical assistance to strengthen Mongolia's national capacity for infection prevention and control.

The financial instruments that provided the above measures are available for all ADB DMCs.

ADB's initial economic analysis and associated data files were published on 6 March 2020 in The Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on Developing Asia. It provided estimates of the impact on developing Asia—and on individual economies and sectors in the region—through numerous channels, including sharp declines in domestic demand, lower tourism and business travel, trade and production linkages, supply disruptions, and health effects.

ADB will publish updated estimates of the economic impact of the pandemic in its Asian Development Outlook 2020 to be released on 1 April 2020.

Visit ADB's website to learn more about our ongoing response.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

REFERENCE : ADB New Release



World wages 'war' on virus as China offers ray of hope

WORLD powers were on a war footing against the spiralling coronavirus pandemic on Thursday despite a sign of hope from China where zero new domestic cases were reported for the first time.

Italy extended its lockdown after suffering the world's highest single-day death toll while Europe and the United States unleashed nearly a trillion dollars to prop up the teetering global economy.

Across the planet, the death toll has risen to over 9,000 with more than 217,000 infections reported, according to an AFP

China marked a major milestone by listing no new domestic infections for the first time since the outbreak first erupted in the central city of Wuhan in December.

tally based on official sources.

As countries tried to stem the mounting crisis, Australia and New Zealand moved to seal off their borders with unprecedented entry bans aimed at halting the march of COVID-19.

China marked a major milestone by listing no new domestic infections for the first time since the outbreak first erupted in the central city of Wuhan in

December, although a spike in imported cases threatened its progress.

It appeared to have stanchied the virus with strict quarantine of Wuhan since January, meaning the number of infections and deaths in the rest of the world have surpassed those in China.

'No return to life before'

But elsewhere the pandemic was worsening quickly, with over 4,100 deaths in Europe -- exceeding the 3,400 fatalities in Asia.

Dire news came out of Italy on Wednesday which reported 475 new deaths, the highest single-day toll of any country, despite having imposed a national shutdown on March 12 that has been copied around

the world.

Italy has recorded about one-third of global deaths, while badly hit Iran also announced 149 new fatalities, raising its toll to 1,284.

France also mooted extending its own two-week lockdown as the interior minister blasted "idiots" who flout home confinement rules and put others at risk.

Bank bazooka
With countries paralysed by the pandemic and stock markets imploding, policymakers this week unleashed a wave of measures to shore up the global economy.

The European Central Bank late Wednesday announced a 750-billion-euro bond-buying scheme dubbed the "big bazooka", days after it unveiled a big-failed stimulus package that failed to calm anxious markets.

REFERENCE

AFP News Update



Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Lindamulage Nalin Kumar de Silva as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Lindamulage Nalin Kumar de Silva was born in October 1944. He holds Bachelor of Science First Class Honours in Mathematics from the University of Ceylon, Sri Lanka and Doctor of Philosophy in Astrophysics from the University of Sussex, the United Kingdom. He has served as Professor in Mathematics at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka from 2005 to 2015. He is also the member of the International Astronomical Union. He is married. —MNA



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 19th March, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 20th March, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

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

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

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Millions could die if virus allowed to spread unchecked: UN chief

UNITED NATIONS — Millions of people could die from the new coronavirus, particularly in poor countries, if it is allowed to spread unchecked, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Thursday, appealing for a coordinated global response to the pandemic.

“If we let the virus spread like wildfire -- especially in the most vulnerable regions of the world -- it would kill millions of people,” he said.

“Global solidarity is

not only a moral imperative, it is in everyone’s interests,” he said.

Guterres stressed the need for a coordinated global response to contain a “health catastrophe” that already has claimed the lives of more than 9,000 people and infected more than 217,500 around the world.

“We need to immediately move away from a situation where each country is undertaking its own health strategies to one that ensures, in full transparency, a coordinat-



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (pictured February 2020) said that “global solidarity is not only a moral imperative, it is in everyone’s interests”. **PHOTO: AFP**

ed global response, including helping countries that are less prepared to tackle

the crisis,” he said.

He urged governments to give “the strong-

est support to the multi-lateral effort to fight the virus, led by the World Health Organization, whose appeals must be fully met.”

“The health catastrophe makes clear that we are only as strong as the weakest health system.”

In terms of support for the global economy, Guterres said the focus should be on helping the most vulnerable: low income workers and small and medium size businesses.

“That means wage

support, insurance, social protection, preventing bankruptcies and job loss,” he said.

Financial facilities are needed to support countries in difficulty, he said, adding that the IMF, World Bank and other international institutions have a key role to play.

“And we must refrain from the temptation of resorting to protectionism,” he said. “This is the time to dismantle trade barriers and re-establish supply chains.”—AFP

ASEAN leaders’ summit postponed until late June amid virus crisis

HANOI — Vietnam has informed its ASEAN peers that a leaders’ summit to be hosted by it will be postponed from April to late June due to the spread of the new coronavirus, a diplomatic source said Thursday.

Vietnam, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year, plans to host the meeting in the seaside resort of Danang.

As Southeast Asian nations scramble to contain the spread of the virus, speculation was rife that the summit would have to be postponed.

A special U.S.-ASEAN summit originally sched-



Foreign Ministers from members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meet in Vietnam’s Nha Trang on Jan. 17, 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

uled for mid-March in Las Vegas has also been postponed as the virus spread

globally. ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar,

Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.—Kyodo News

Olympics could be delayed, admits athletics chief Coe

LONDON — World athletics chief Sebastian Coe admitted on Thursday that the Tokyo Olympics could be moved to later in the year by the coronavirus outbreak, but said it was too early to make a definitive decision.

Olympic bosses acknowledged on Wednesday there was no “ideal” solution as a growing number of athletes expressed concern.

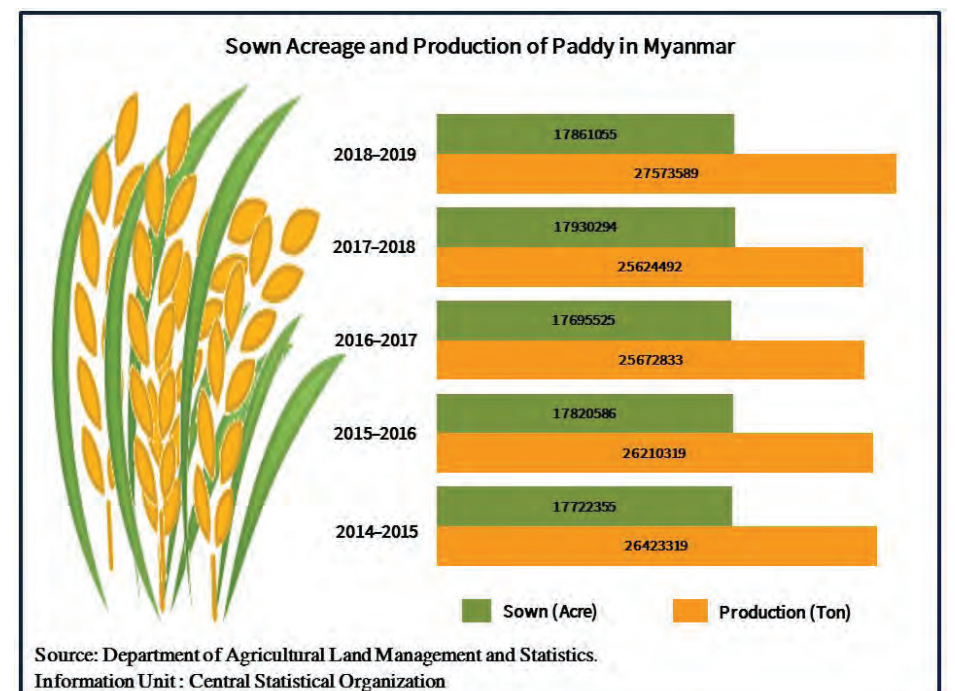
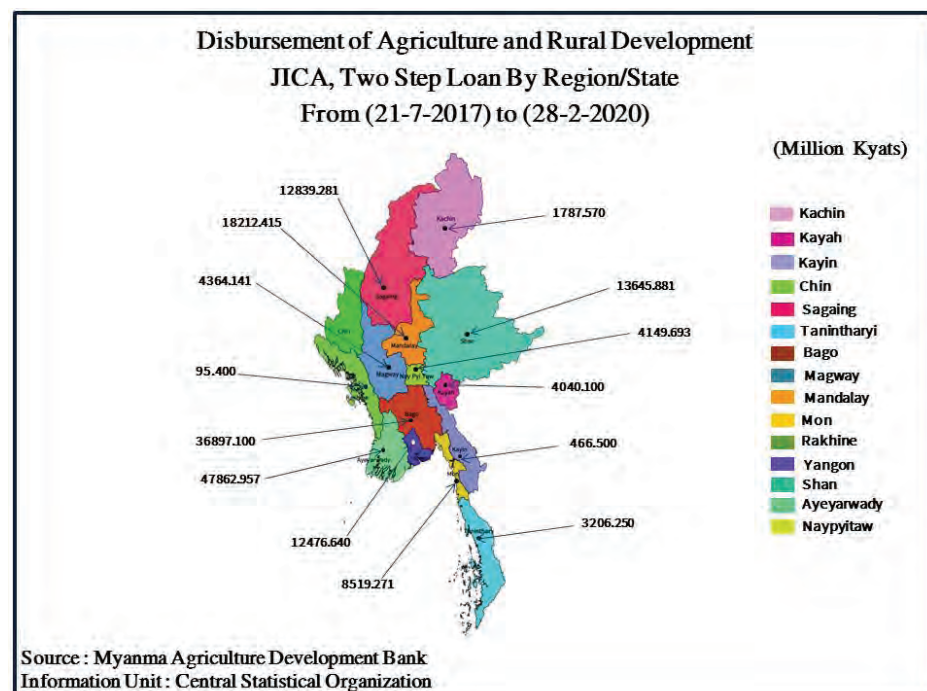
The COVID-19 pandemic is playing havoc with the global sporting calendar, forcing the postponement of Euro 2020 and a suspension of the tennis season.

International Olympic Committee chairman Thomas Bach said earlier this week that starting

on schedule on July 24 remained the organisation’s goal. But Coe, who is a member of the Tokyo Olympics Games Coordination Commission, conceded in an interview with the BBC that a delay was possible.

“That is possible, anything is possible at the moment,” said Coe when asked whether the Games could be postponed to September or October.

“But I think the position that sport has certainly taken, and it was certainly the temperature of the room in the conversation I had the other day with the IOC and our other federations, is that nobody is saying we will be going to the Games come what may.”—AFP



SpaceX plans first manned flight to space station in May

HAWTHORNE — Elon Musk's SpaceX will send astronauts to the International Space Station for the first time in May, NASA said, announcing the first crewed launch from the United States to the platform since 2011.

The tech entrepreneur's company will launch a Falcon 9 rocket to transport NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley in a first for the space agency as it looks to cut costs.

"NASA and SpaceX are currently targeting no earlier than mid-to-late May for launch," the US space agency said in a statement Wednesday.

In March, Musk's Crew Dragon capsule made a round trip to the ISS, which is in orbit more than 250 miles (400 kilometers) above Earth, with a mannequin on board, before returning to the Atlantic after six days in space.



SpaceX Dragon has made several resupply trips to the International Space Station but May's launch will be the first crewed mission. **PHOTO:AFP**

Since the last US space shuttle mission in 2011, after 30 years of service, only the Russians have been going back and forth to the ISS.

SpaceX has made the trip 15 times since 2012, but only to refuel the station.

It is not the only private company servicing NASA: Boeing has also won a contract and is developing its own Starliner capsule.— AFP ■

Thai hospitals deploy 'ninja robots' to aid virus battle

BANGKOK — Thai hospitals are deploying "ninja robots" to measure fevers and protect the health of overburdened medical workers on the frontlines of the coronavirus outbreak.

First built to monitor recovering stroke patients, the machines have been quickly repurposed to help fight the disease, which has so far killed nearly 9,000 people around the world.

They have helped staff at four hospitals in and around Bangkok to reduce their risk of infection by allowing doctors and nurses to speak to patients over a video link.

"They can stand outside the room and communicate with patients inside through the robot," said Viboon Sangveraphunsiri of Chulalongkorn University.

Later models will be designed to bring food and medicine to patients, and could also

eventually be used to disinfect hospital wards, Viboon told AFP.

His engineering team is racing to build more "ninjas" -- known as such because of their matte black exterior -- for another 10 hospitals around the country.

Thailand has more than 200 confirmed COVID-19 infections, including at least one death. More than 40 have recovered and been discharged from hospital.

Authorities recently ordered the closure of bars, massage parlours and entertainment venues to help prevent new cases.

New rules also require visitors entering the country to produce a health certificate.

Officials have so far stopped short of imposing the full lockdowns seen in other countries in a bid to contain damage to Thailand's crucial tourism sector.— AFP ■



Viboon's engineering team is racing to build more "ninjas" for another 10 hospitals around the country. **PHOTO:AFP**

Scientists establish new plant genome engineering system

CHENGDU — A joint team from China and the United States has established CRISPR-Cas12b, a new genome engineering system for plants.

Researchers from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China and the University of Maryland in the United States said CRISPR-Cas12b is efficient in gene activation and repression.

Often known as molecular scissors, the advance in CRISPR, using certain protein like Cas9 as the scissors, has revolutionized biology in recent years.

CRISPR-Cas9 is known for recognizing short DNA se-

quences and making cuts in the genome while CRISPR-Cas12a recognizes different DNA sequences, expanding the number of target sites available for editing.

The researchers reported in the journal *Nature Plants* that compared with the other two CRISPR systems, CRISPR-Cas12b enables researchers to target multiple genes in one step while retaining features of CRISPR-Cas12a.

Through tests on rice, the researchers screened the best DNA-cutting protein for genome editing, repression and activation.—Xinhua ■



CRISPR-Cas9 is known for recognizing short DNA sequences and making cuts in the genome while CRISPR-Cas12a recognizes different DNA sequences. **PHOTO:XINHUA**

Image captured by Hubble Space Telescope can reveal the origin of massive stars

WASHINGTON — NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope has captured a scene of stellar creation that sits near the outskirts of the famous Tarantula Nebula.

This cloud of gas and dust, as well as the many young and massive stars surrounding it, is the perfect laboratory to study the origin of massive stars. The bright pink cloud and the young stars surrounding it in the captured taken with the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope have the uninspiring name LHA 120-N 150.

This region of space is located on the outskirts of the

Tarantula Nebula, which is the largest known stellar nursery in the local Universe. The nebula is situated over 160,000 light-years away in the Large Magellanic Cloud, a neighbouring irregular dwarf galaxy that orbits the Milky Way.

The Large Magellanic Cloud has had one or more close encounters in the past, possibly with the Small Magellanic Cloud. These interactions have caused an episode of energetic star formation in our tiny neighbour -- part of which is visible as the Tarantula Nebula.

Also known as 30 Doradus

or NGC 2070, the Tarantula Nebula owes its name to the arrangement of bright patches that somewhat resemble the legs of a tarantula. It measures nearly 1000 light-years across.

Its proximity, the favourable inclination of the Large Magellanic Cloud, and the absence of intervening dust make the Tarantula Nebula one of the best laboratories in which to study the formation of stars, in particular massive stars. This nebula has an exceptionally high concentration of massive stars, often referred to as super star clusters.— ANI ■

Researchers build integrated model of runoff-generated debris flow

BEIJING — Chinese researchers have developed a comprehensive model of mountain runoff-generated debris flow evolution, as well as a forecasting platform.

Accurately predicting the flow of mountain runoff-generated debris involves the study of rainfall, infiltration, flow concentration, channel evolution and

disasters. The researchers from the Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences focused on the formation and propagation

processes of debris flow within a catchment and divided the process into three stages of rainfall infiltration, runoff and debris flow routing. They simulated the ex-

perimental cases and a debris flow event that occurred in southwest China's Sichuan Province in 2010 by the proposed model.—Xinhua ■

Companies hit pause button as coronavirus infects economy

DETROIT — Layoffs, cutting costs and halting dividends... companies are scrambling to adapt as the coronavirus emergency hits demand and draconian measures taken to contain the illness undercut production and demand.

With the economic impact of COVID-19 threatening the survival of many firms, governments have pledged hundreds of billions to help them limp along — or failing that, to bankroll outright rescues or nationalisation if necessary.

Here are some measures companies have taken:

Suspending production

Several industrial giants, in particular in the automobile industry, have reduced or even suspended production.

America's "Big Three"



Workers leave FCA Chrysler Warren Truck Assembly after the three Detroit automakers agreed to UAW demands to shut down all North America plants as a precaution against coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

car makers — General Motors, Fiat Chrysler and Ford — will temporarily halt operations throughout North America through the end of the month, the companies said in conjunction with the auto workers union.

Nissan suspended production at its Sunderland plant in northern England, the automaker's biggest plant in Europe, employing about 7,000 workers, and has also closed plants in Spain and Indonesia.

French giant Peugeot-

Citroen is shutting down all production sites in Europe, and Italian-US carmaker Fiat Chrysler, with which it is in the process of merging, also intends to close most of its facilities on the continent, as does Ford. — AFP ■

Foreign visitors to Japan plunge 58% in February over coronavirus

TOKYO — The number of foreign visitors to Japan plunged 58.3 per cent in February, the largest on-year drop for any month in nearly nine years, dented by travel restrictions to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, government data showed Thursday.

An estimated 1.09 million foreigners visited Japan last month, down from 2.60 million a year earlier, after China banned all outbound group travel in late January. Chinese travelers accounted for 30 per cent of all overseas visitors in 2019, the biggest among all countries and regions.

The drop in February was the fifth straight month of decline and the largest since April 2011 when the figure fell 62.5 per cent after a devastating earthquake and tsunami hit northeastern Japan the previous month, causing the Fukushima Daiichi

nuclear disaster.

The number of inbound tourists is set to see sharper drops in the coming months, as Japan recently tightened entry restrictions on people arriving from China, South Korea and Europe to curb COVID-19.

"The circumstance in March will be even more severe. We'll cooperate with other countries to expand the tourism market," Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner Hiroshi Tabata said at a press conference.

The outlook is a setback for the Japanese government, which has aimed to boost the number of annual inbound visitors to 40 million by this year when the country hosts the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

The number of foreign visitors rose 2.2 per cent to a record 31.88 million last year. —Kyodo News ■

NOTIFICATION

1. Yangon City Development Committee is upgrading its Building Construction Permit System to the online submission system (Automation System). The Pilot Phase of Yangon Building Permit System for Low and Medium Risk Buildings has been launched since 9-8-2019.
2. It has been more than 7 months since the pilot launch, during which the system has been gradually improved with the participation of the professionals.
3. This is to notify that online submission of all construction permit applications, not only for Low Risk and Medium Risk Buildings but also High Risk Buildings, will be accepted online from 15th March, 2020 onwards.
4. Notifications "that starting from 27th April, 2020, for the submission of building construction applications will be accepted online only" have already been published in Myanma Alin, The Mirror and The Global New Light of Myanmar Newspapers as well as www.ycdc.gov.mm and www.ybps.ycdc.gov.mm Websites on 5-3-2020 and 6-3-2020 respectively.
5. This is to notify again that from 15-3-2020, all Building Construction Permit Applications are accepted online at www.ybps.ycdc.gov.mm

Yangon City Development Committee

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Few tourists are seen on a street in historic Kyoto in western Japan on 3 March, 2020, amid the spread of the new coronavirus. (Kyodo)

EIA study of Appraisal Drilling in Block M9, Offshore Myanmar

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI) plans to drill an appraisal wells in Offshore Block M9 with purpose to prove the boundary and characteristic of the reservoir. This appraisal drilling campaign will support the Zawtika Gas Field Project by maintaining gas supply for future energy requirements. The campaign will include the drilling of up to seventeen (17) wells in Block M9 which is located in the Gulf of Mottama, Andaman Sea, approximately 300 km from Yangon and 195 km west from Dawei, Taninthayi coastal zone.

In accordance with the Myanmar EIA procedure (2015), PTTEPI is required to undertake an EIA study to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the proposed activity. PTTEPI with support from third-party consultants AECOM (Thailand) Limited (AECOM) and E-Guard Environmental Services (E-Guard) are currently undertaking the EIA Study for the Project. The Scoping Report has been submitted to Environmental Conservation Department (ECD).

More information about the proposed activity can be found on PTTEP's website: www.pttep.com

Questions, comments or suggestions can be informed to PTTEPI by contact the following phone number +95 (1) 652700 within 14 days after the announcement.

BOJ conducts emergency bond buying to curb rising yields

TOKYO — The Bank of Japan carried out an emergency market operation on Thursday to buy 1.3 trillion yen (\$12 billion) of government bonds in a bid to curb rising long-term yields.

The central bank said the operation was aimed at stabilizing the debt market given its recent volatility.

The BOJ has been guiding the yield on the 10-year government bond, the benchmark of long-term interest rates, at around zero per cent.

The yields rose to as far as 0.070 per cent the previous day as expectations grew that the government's planned stimulus to ease the fallout from the coronavirus would lead to a sharp increase in new bond issuance.

The BOJ bought 200 billion yen worth of bonds with one to three years to maturity, 300 billion yen with three to five years to maturity and 700 billion yen with five to 10 years to maturity. It also bought 100 billion yen of bonds which will mature in 10 to 25 years.

The BOJ decided at its pol-

icy-setting meeting Monday to pump more liquidity into the financial system by starting a new loan program for companies and boost exchange-trade fund purchases among other steps.

It is also conducting dollar funding operations in cooperation with other major central banks in the United States and Europe, providing \$30.3 billion

to markets in a three-month operation earlier in the week to ease a global shortage of dollar financing.

The ECB said Wednesday it will launch a 750 billion euro (\$682 billion) bond-buying program until the end of the year in its latest effort to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the bloc's economy.

— Kyodo News ■



Photo taken 16 July, 2019, shows the Bank of Japan building after the completion of construction to beef up its earthquake resistance. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



FILE: The cap for the Seoul branches of foreign banks will be lifted from the currency 200 per cent to 250 per cent. PHOTO: AFP

SKorea to ease foreign exchange regulations to help secure foreign currencies

SEOUL — South Korea's finance ministry said Wednesday that it will ease regulations on the foreign exchange market to help companies and financial institutions secure foreign currencies.

The ceiling on a ratio of foreign exchange forwards position to equity will be raised from 40 per cent to 50 per cent for local banks beginning Thursday, according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

The cap for the Seoul branches of foreign banks will be lifted from the currency 200 per cent to 250 per cent. Minister of Economy

and Finance Hong Nam-ki, who doubles as deputy prime minister for economic affairs, told a meeting with other economy-related ministers that the measures would help stabilize the currency swap market by inducing more foreign funds. It came after volatility increased in the foreign exchange market on worry about economic fallout from the COVID-19 outbreak across the world.

The won/dollar exchange rate jumped 17.5 won to 1,243.5 won per dollar on Tuesday, marking the highest close in about 10 years.— Xinhua ■

ECB announces 750-bln-euro pandemic emergency purchase program

FRANKFURT — The European Central Bank (ECB) on Wednesday announced a new temporary asset purchase program covering private and public sector securities that has an overall envelope of 750 billion euros (819 billion US dollars) to counter the novel coronavirus risks.

Purchases under this new Pandemic Emergency Purchase

Program (PEPP) will be conducted until the end of 2020 and will include all asset categories eligible under the existing asset purchase program, the ECB said in a statement following an emergency meeting of its Governing Council.

The program is aimed at countering "the serious risks to the monetary policy transmission

mechanism and the outlook for the euro area posed by the outbreak and escalating diffusion of the coronavirus," the ECB said.

The Governing Council will terminate net asset purchases under PEPP once it judges that the coronavirus crisis phase is over, but in any case not before the end of the year, according to the ECB.— Xinhua ■



FILE: A member of the Military Emergencies Unit (UME) carries out a general disinfection outside the Alvaro Cunqueiro hospital in Vigo, on 18 March, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ARISE VOY. NO. (0197-604 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI ARISE VOY. NO. (0197-604 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 EVERGREEN MARINE
(S'PORE) PTE.,LTD.

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (061N/S)

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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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2007S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2007S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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China reports zero new domestic virus cases for first time

BEIJING — China on Thursday marked a major milestone in its battle against the coronavirus pandemic as it recorded zero domestic infections for the first time since the outbreak emerged, but a spike in imported cases threatened its progress.

The stark reversal comes as nations across the world have shut down in a desperate effort to contain the pandemic, with more people now infected and having died abroad than in China.

There were no new cases in Wuhan — the central city where the virus first emerged in December — for the first time since authorities started publishing figures in January, according to the National Health Commission.

Wuhan and its 11 million people were placed under strict quarantine on 23 January, with more

than 40 million other people in the rest of Hubei province entering lockdown in the following days.

The rest of China also enacted tough measures to limit public gatherings.

There were eight more deaths in China — all in Hubei — raising the nationwide total to 3,245, according to the commission.

There have been nearly 81,000 infections in China but only 7,263 people remain sick with the COVID-19 disease.

The global number has shot past 200,000, with more than 8,700 deaths.

On 10 March, President Xi Jinping visited Wuhan for the first time since the outbreak began and declared that the spread of the disease was “basically curbed”. —AFP ■



Life has slowly started to return to normal in parts of China, with people back at work, factories up and running, and schools in some regions resuming. **PHOTO: AFP**

Massive Bangladesh coronavirus prayer gathering sparks outcry

DHAKA — A massive coronavirus prayer session with tens of thousands of devotees sparked an outcry in Bangladesh Wednesday as the South Asian nation reported its first death from the global pandemic.

Local police chief Tota Miah said some 10,000 Muslims gathered in an open field in Raipur

town in southern Bangladesh to pray “healing verses” from the Koran to rid the country of the deadly virus.

“They held the Khatme Shifa prayers after dawn to free the country from the coronavirus,” Miah told AFP. Organisers claimed the number of worshippers was 25,000. He said organ-

isers did not get permission from authorities to hold the session.

Photos of the gathering was widely shared on social media, with commenters slamming the massive rally. Authorities have already shut schools and asked locals to avoid large gatherings in an effort to halt the spread of the disease. —AFP ■



Police said some 10,000 Muslims gathered in an open field in Raipur town in southern Bangladesh to pray “healing verses” from the Koran to rid the country of the deadly novel coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pakistan closes border with India

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has closed its border with India near Lahore for two weeks, given the spread of the new coronavirus, the Interior Ministry said Thursday.

The move came a day after Pakistan confirmed the first death from the new coronavirus in the country, with the number of confirmed infection cases on the rise.

The ministry said in a notice that the closure of the Wagah border checkpoint is in the interest of both countries. —Kyodo News

Nepal imposes total ban on travelers from Japan, S Korea, Europe

KATHMANDU — Nepal has imposed a total ban on travelers from Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, Malaysia as well as European countries in light of the coronavirus pandemic, an immigration official said Thursday.

Nepal’s travel restrictions, upgraded late Wednesday, will apply to not just foreigners but Nepalese wanting to enter the Himalayan nation from 21 March to 12 April on direct flights from the selected countries or after transiting through them.

Among the other countries affected by the ban are Turkey and all Gulf nations. Nepali citizens who want to enter Nepal will have to do so by midnight Friday, according to Ram Chandra Tiwari, director and spokesman at the Department of Immigration.

Nepal has suspended the issuance of on-arrival visas to all foreigners due to the spread of the coronavirus, but they have had the option of entering Nepal by getting visas from their closest Nepali embassy or consulate. —Kyodo News ■

Covid-19: Every Singapore household to get free hand sanitiser

SINGAPORE — All 1.5 million households in Singapore will be provided with up to 500ml of zero-alcohol hand sanitisers for free, announced Temasek Foundation said, as the city-state reported its largest single-day jump in Covid-19 cases on Tuesday.

The sanitiser can be collected from any community club from Mar 23 to March 29 or any one of CapitaLand’s 16 participating malls from 23 March to 5 April, the Foundation said, according to state-run Channel News Asia. To avoid overcrowding, a spe-

cific collection date will also be provided to every household via pamphlets that will be distributed in the coming days. Residents must bring the pamphlet to collect their free hand sanitiser.

The collection time on weekdays will be from 3 pm to 9 pm, while the collection time for the weekends will be from 10 am to 9 pm. For those who missed the collection on the specified date in the first week, they will be able to collect their sanitisers on any day in the second week, the Foundation noted. —ANI ■

Italy virus deaths hit record as Trump goes on war footing

ROME — Italy on Wednesday reported nearly 500 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, the highest one-day official toll of any nation, as Donald Trump ordered sweeping new action against the pandemic and declared himself a war president.

With the number of global coronavirus infections shooting past 200,000, governments announced new containment measures and the US Congress approved a \$100 billion emergency relief package.

But markets took another beating and braced for grim weeks ahead.

Trump announced the deployment of military hospital ships while, in Europe, German



Gondolas sit empty in Venice's Grand Canal with Italy in lockdown to confront the dire impact of new coronavirus which, in one day, killed 475 more people in the country. PHOTO: AFP

Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a dramatic appeal to citizens.

"Not since the Second World

War has our country faced a challenge that depends so much on our collective solidarity," Merkel

said in a television address.

Dire news came out of Italy which reported 475 new deaths. More than 8,700 people have died around the world with fatalities in Europe now topping those in Asia, where the outbreak began in December in China.

Italy has now recorded more than one-third of global deaths and has shut down all businesses and public gatherings — steps that have spread across the world.

"The main thing is, do not give up," Italian National Institute of Health chief Silvio Brusafarro told reporters. "It will take a few days before we see the benefits" of containment measures, said Brusafarro.—AFP ■

UK PM denies intention to extend Brexit transition period

LONDON — British Prime Minister indicated Wednesday night that he is sticking to the timetable that will see Britain and European Union (EU) end the Brexit transition period at the end of this year.

Currently, Britain and the EU are involved in talks to reach a permanent trade deal to come into force when a transition period ends by 31 December of 2020.

Asked by an MP on whether he "recognizes the inevitable" and will extend the post-Brexit transition period, Johnson said: "There is legislation in place and I have no intention of changing it."

His response came after trade talks between the two sides were put on hold because of the coronavirus outbreak. That fueled speculation that with Europe in the grip of a pandemic, Britain may have to seek extending its links to Brussels beyond 31 December.—Xinhua ■



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (Front) attends the Prime Minister's Questions at the House of Commons in London, Britain, on 18 March, 2020. British Prime Minister indicated Wednesday night that he is sticking to the timetable that will see Britain and European Union (EU) end the Brexit transition period at the end of this year. PHOTO: XINHUA

Sanders to 'assess' campaign after primary drubbing by Biden



A voter wearing a glove holds an 'I Voted!' sticker after casting her ballot in the Florida primary. PHOTO: AFP

WASHINGTON — Bernie Sanders was talking to advisers on Wednesday as pressure mounted on the leftist Vermont senator to end his White House campaign following a drubbing by Joe Biden in the latest Democratic primaries.

As the coronavirus outbreak played havoc with the primary schedule, calls grew among Democrats for Sanders to bow out to allow the centrist Biden to focus on beating President Donald Trump in November.

Biden, 77, trounced Sanders,

78, in the three states which went to the polls on Tuesday — Arizona, Florida and Illinois — to build up an all-but impregnable lead in the number of delegates needed to head the Democratic ticket.

"The race for the nomination is over," said Democratic strategist David Axelrod, who ran Barack Obama's two presidential campaigns. "That is the reality Bernie Sanders faces."

While his hopes of winning the nomination may look increasingly dim, the senator strongly denied press reports

that he was dropping out. "Anybody who suggests that at this point we are ending the campaign is not telling the truth," Sanders told CNN.

Sanders campaign manager Faiz Shakir did say, however, that the candidate was holding talks to "assess" the future.

"The next primary contest is at least three weeks away," Shakir said in a statement. "Senator Sanders is going to be having conversations with supporters to assess his campaign.—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

UAE suspends issuing labour permits amid coronavirus outbreak

ABU DHABI — The United Arab Emirates has suspended the issuance of all types of labour permits, including for drivers and domestic workers, starting Thursday until further notice as part of the precautionary measure to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The decision, taken by the country's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, exempts intra-corporate transfer and EXPO 2020 permits, state news agency WAM reported. The decision has been taken in coordination with the National Emergency and Crisis and Disasters Management Authority amid the outbreak of the novel coronavirus that has infected 113 people in the Gulf nation.—ANI ■

Trump signs emergency coronavirus relief bill into law

WASHINGTON — United States President Donald Trump has signed a multi-billion dollar emergency coronavirus economic relief bill, hours after it was passed by the US Senate.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which was passed by a vote of 90-8 in the US Senate, provides for free testing of COVID-19, insurance, paid leave for those diagnosed with or caring for someone affected by the virus. "The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act] makes emergency supplemental appropriations and other changes to law to help the Nation respond to the coronavirus outbreak, Trump said in a statement, as cited by the Hill. This is the second such legislative passed by the US Congress to address the COVID-19 outbreak. Earlier, it had passed a USD 8.3 billion package of relief measures to fund free COVID-19 tests, meals for children who would normally receive food at now-shuttered schools, accelerated vaccine research, expanded unemployment benefits and aid for health departments in individual US states. The death toll due to the virus has crossed 100 in the US with the total number of confirmed cases over 7000.—ANI ■

MNL U-19: Yadanarbon FC secure big win over Chinland FC

A hat trick of Yadanarbon FC youth star Kaung Khant Kyaw has assisted Yadanarbon U-19 FC in celebrating their big win over Chinland FC by 4-0 in U-19 Myanmar National League match, played at Yangon United Sports Complex yesterday.

The match was a good one with back and forth efforts used by both side players.

There was an opening goal for Yadanarbon United at 13 minutes and the goal was scored by Yadanarbon youngster Kaung Khant Kyaw.

Owing to a goal loss, Chinland forced more open attacks

for their equalizer.

However, Yadanarbon found their another goal at 30 minutes and Kaung Khant Kyaw scored the goal.

The first half ended with two goals led by Yadanarbon FC.

Yadanarbon squad still dominated all the second half with overpower play and long ball passes.

Yadanarbon FC got the third goal at 50 minutes, scored by Zayar Soe.

Yadanarbon did not reduce their tempo and were eager for more goals to get their fourth or final goal at 54 minutes. Kaung



Players of Yadanarbon U-19 (blue) and Chinland (white) scabble for the ball during their MNL U-19 match at Yangon United Sports Complex yesterday. **PHOTO:MNL**

Khant Kyaw again conceded it.

Yadanarbon played defence only in later parts of the minutes while Chinland could not

get their equalizers till the final whistle.

In another match of the U-19 Myanmar National League, Yan-

gon United beat ISPE FC by 3-0 and Yaw Myay FC made a narrow 1-0 win over Sagaing United.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Ayeyawady leads U-21 Myanmar National League

THE Ayeyawady United U-21 team is currently leading the 2020 edition of the U-21 Myanmar National League, with a no-loss record in the Week-10 of the tourney, according to yesterday's statement released by the MNL.

Of the 9 matches it has played, Ayeyawady has won eight and conceded to one draw to secure 25 points.

Next to Ayeyawady is Yadanarbon with two points less than Ayeyawady, with seven

wins, two losses and one draw in ten matches played.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Sports and Physical Education (ISPE) FC is in third place with a point under Yadanarbon FC.

Next, Shan United FC is in the fourth place with 21 points from seven wins, and two losses and Myawady FC is fifth on the standing table with the same point with Shan United but with goal differences.

Chin Land FC is in the sixth place with six wins, one draw,

and three losses, and Yangon United is in the seventh place with five wins, three draws, and two losses.

There are 19 teams competing in the tourney, and Mawyawadi FC is currently at the bottom with 1 point from no wins and one draw result.

Owing to the matriculations exam being held across Myanmar this month, the fixture of University FC and Magwe U-21 FC was shifted to 8 April, according to the organizers of the



Ayeyawady United U-21 squad seen at the YUSC Stadium. **PHOTO: YUFC**

MNL defending champions' matches rearranged

THE two remaining matches of Shan United, defending champions of the Myanmar National League, have been rescheduled, according to the official statement of the team.

Football authorities from the Myanmar National League recently released an announcement on Friday that major matches of the first round of the Myanmar National League will be played in closed-doors stadiums till 30 April due to the deadly COVID-19 infection.

The week-10 match, in which Shan United will play with Southern Myanmar, has been rearranged at 4 pm on 24 March at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Similarly, the week-11

match of Shan United versus Rakhine United will be played at 4 pm on 30 March at Yangon United Sports Complex.

All the rescheduled and other corresponding league competitions will be played without spectators, and the handshakes between two team's footballers before and after the match will be prohibited. Myanmar is still not infected with COVID-19 virus, and Myanmar Football Federation and Myanmar National League are now holding the football matches under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Sports, according to the organizers of the Myanmar National League. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

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