

SUNDAY SPECIAL



Pull-out supplement

NATIONAL

Kayin State intensifies COVID-19 prevention campaign amidst increase in number of homecoming people from Thailand

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Sunday, 22 March 2020

Donors present cash, medicines, equipment for COVID-19 prevention



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe receives the cash donation for Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of 2019 Novel Coronavirus and the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe attended the ceremony to donate cash, medical equipment and medicines to Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of 2019 Novel

Coronavirus (2019-COVID) and the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday in Yangon.

U Nyan Win, secretary of the central executive committee of the National League for Democracy (NLD), on behalf of

the donors explained the purpose of the donation. Director Maung Myo Min (Yindwinphyit) of Skynet (Shwe Thanlwin media) and President of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce for Pharmaceutical and Medical

Device (MCCPMD) U Zaw Moe Khaing also gave speeches. Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Phyo Min Thein spoke words of thanks.

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Myanmar still free of COVID-19 despite rising cases in neighbours

MYANMAR still claims to have avoided the coronavirus pandemic despite being surrounded by three countries battling the virus, including China where the outbreak started. As of Friday evening, 176 suspected cases have been tested since January, with none having returned a positive result, according to the government. Additionally, 12 suspected cases are still awaiting test results, the latest health ministry update said. Although no confirmed case has been identified, the authorities are taking measures to prevent the virus from gaining a foothold in the country.

Strict temperature screening and health checks are being implemented at shopping malls, hotels and restaurants and occasionally even at parking lots since mid-February. The government led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has decided to cancel most events and celebrations involving mass gatherings, including the annual water festival Thingyan held in mid-April.

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Advertisement for INDOOR SKYDIVING MYANMAR FIRST WIND GAME. It features images of people in skydiving gear and text: 'FLYING FOR FUN', 'Tawwin Street, (9)Mile, Mayangone, Yangon.', 'Ph+95 9 340062000, 09 766699111, 09 766699222', 'Email- enquiry@indoorskydivingyangon.com'.

Centre for Myanmar Affairs Studies holds meeting

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint delivered his address at the work coordination meeting of Centre for Myanmar Affairs Studies in Yangon yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the publication of journals on general knowledge and the holding of academic seminars since its establishment on 15 June 2016 were discussed by the participants including Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) U Ye Naing and officials and resource persons of the centre, U Aye Maung (Aye Maung Kyaw), U Than Ohn (Maung Zeya) and U Ye Myint Kyaw. They also adopted its fu-

ture work programmes.

IPRD established the centre on 15 June 2016 at No 228 on Theinbyu Road with the goal of revitalizing research programmes in Myanmar and publishing research papers, and holding academic seminars. It is now distributing journals on Myanmar affairs, international affairs and ethnic affairs and holding subject-wise seminars.

After the meeting, the Union Minister inspected the project site of the national film archives in the compound of Nawadea cinema at No 102 on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yangon.—MNA

(Translated by TMT)



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses the work coordination meeting of Centre for Myanmar Affairs Studies in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Kayin State intensifies COVID-19 prevention campaign amidst increase in number of homecoming people from Thailand

KAYIN State in the southeast of Myanmar began its wide-scale COVID-19 prevention awareness campaign on 20 March, with the involvement of the personnel of the General Administration Department.

The campaign covered the work of erecting posters stating the preventive measures against COVID-19, the importance of self-care and personal hygiene, the knowledge about the potential risk of infection and the signs of infection at the crowded places in towns and at villages.

The Kayin State office of the Public Health Department has

already been readied itself for monitoring and treating suspected patients at major hospitals and township hospitals.

Major and township hospitals in Kayin State have already made arrangements to put suspected patients under treatment or surveillance. Special care wards at those hospitals are ready to admit any suspect, said Dr Kyaw Swa Myint of Kayin State office of the Public Health Department.

As the long Thingyan (water festival) holidays are drawing nearer, the number of homecoming Myanmar migrant workers

from Thailand is increasing day by day. Hence, Kayin State office of the Public Health Department is accelerating its COVID-19 prevention.

As regards the awareness campaign, we have three points. Kayin State has two critical places and one of them is the Myawady border. Besides, people leaving or entering the country through this border usually use Hpa-an as the main stopover point. So, we have been accelerating our preventive measures at those two places. We measure the body temperatures of all the arrivals at Myawady

border. Another crucial place is the border at Phaya Thonzu at Kya-in-Seikkyi. We have also made all necessary preparations there, including treatment and administrative functions. But the most important one is the Myawady border. As Thingyan is drawing nearer, the number of homecoming migrant workers is between 8,000 and 10,000 daily. As the Bridge (1) has already been shut down, they are coming back home from Bridge (2). We are checking and educating the returnees and have made arrangement for prevention, monitoring and treatment under the directives of the Union Minister for Health and Sports. We take a list of the arrivals and measure their body temperatures. Our campaign needs wider public involvement, said Dr Kyaw Swa Myint.

The best way is to stay put at home. Travelling is not good at this time, even in the country, let alone a foreign trip. Home is the safest place for returnees, and they should take care of their health. If someone has a fever, he should immediately inform the respective authorities. All should stay away from making visits to other places or joining the crowds. They should stay put at their home for at least two weeks after their arrival. That will be the safest way for them and others, he added.—Min Thit (MNA) (Translated by TMT)

About 60 doctors join forces as volunteers for COVID-19 control and treatment

ABOUT 60 physicians have listed themselves as volunteers for COVID-19 control and treatment programme to this date, according to Myanmar Medical Association (MMA).

“As doctors of the Ministry of Health and Sports have a lot of work to do, we are gathering volunteer physicians for COVID-19 control and treatment”, said U Thaug Nyunt, head of office of MMA.

Since 20 this month, MMA has been enlisting volunteer doctors who will join hands with the Ministry of Health and Sports in controlling COVID-19 and treating the patients, according to MMA.

“We join forces with the ministry as we want to prevent the spread of the virus in our country. We will be the first line of prevention against the COVID-19, in case it occurs here. People should strictly observe the directives issued by the ministry, and should not listen to the unreliable information,” said Dr Myo Zaw Win, who has joined the volunteer force for COVID-19 control and treatment programme.

MMA has branches in states and regions and membership strength of about 20,000.—Min Thit (MNA)

(Translated by TMT)



The COVID-19 awareness billboard being installed at the General Administration Office of Kayin State. PHOTO: SAW MYO MIN THEIN (IPRD)

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

“People are the key”

Out of 194 WHO-member countries, 177 are seeing COVID-19 outbreak, and only 17 including Myanmar free from cases

FROM PAGE-1

In his address, the Union Minister said Out of 194 WHO-member countries, 177 are seeing COVID-19 outbreak, and only 17 including Myanmar are free from confirmed cases. Eighty per cent of COVID-19 patients show normal symptoms and 15 per cent show severe signs. Only five per cent of the patients die of the infection.

Although there is no confirmed case in Myanmar, the country has placed serious attention in taking preventive and control measures as if the infection is found in it. Powers have already been granted to all regions and states to take action in real time. The entire country needs a quick response, as any delay may cause a lot of sufferings. Infection can be caused through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes or by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. The safest way is to carefully wash the hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds. The Ministry of Health and Sports have been disseminating every single piece of knowledge about the virus in

real-time on its Internet pages and Facebook. People should read and share the information as false news can be wiped out with the authentic information, he said.

As stated by the Stated Counsellor “People are the Key”, people should have the awareness to save themselves from infection, as it is the most effective way. The donated medicines and medical equipment including ventilators and patient monitors are much supportive in saving lives. The equipment can be also used as teaching aids for doctors and nurses. So, they will be the excellent tools to control the virus and save lives, he noted.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe, Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, U Nyan Win, NLD CEC member U Thein Oo, Speaker of Yangon Region Hluttaw U Tin Maung Tun, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein, Deputy Speaker of Region Hluttaw U Lin Naing Myint, Region Social Affairs Minister U Naing Ngan Lin and Mayor U Maung Maung Soe accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to them.

Forty-three donors presented Ks 425.6 million to the Central Committee on Prevention, Con-



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe inspects the South Okkalapa Women and Children's Hospital in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

trol and Treatment of 2019 Novel Coronavirus; and USD 10,000, over Ks 565 million, Singapore \$ 100,000, two sets of Ultra-red body temperature measuring equipment valued at USD 10,000, 13 sets of ventilators, two units of high frequency x-rays, three units of patient monitors, hazmat suits, and other equipment to the Ministry of Health and Sports; and Ks 1.5 million, over Ks 65 million worth of equipment and food, safety surgical kits, ten units of air coolers, and internet

and CCTVS worth Ks 6.7 million and USD 4400.

The value of the collective donations in cash and kind for the ministry and Public Health Department of Yangon Region is over Ks 1080 million, USD 24,400 and Singapore \$ 100,000.

In the afternoon, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe went to South Okkalapa Women and Children's Hospital, and visited the new three-storey ward where people coming back from countries where COVID-19 is

occurring and who had been in close contact with the confirmed patients are quarantined.

During the visit, the Union Minister made arrangements for managing the quarantine, overtime payments for medical staff, providing an adequate number of personal protective equipment (PPE), and fulfilled the requirements. The ward in the compound of the hospital can accommodate 100 patients. —MNA

(Translated by TMT)

Myanmar still free of COVID-19 despite rising cases in neighbours

FROM PAGE-1

It has also ordered the closure of cinemas, bars and karaoke bars until the end of April.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's administration has announced tax relief plans for small businesses and low-interest loans for the garment sector, aiming to keep factories running and to minimize the impact on the economy.

On Friday, the government suspended visas on arrival and e-visa systems temporarily for all foreign nationals as part of its stepped-up precautionary measures.

It also began enforcing a compulsory 14-day quarantine

for all travellers arriving from or having visited the United States and eight more European countries including Britain during the past two weeks.

Compulsory quarantine regulations were earlier announced for travellers arriving from China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, France, Spain and Germany.

Myanmar shares a nearly 2,200-kilometre land border with mainland China, where the coronavirus outbreak began, and a 2,400-km border with Thailand, which announced 89 more cases Saturday.

The country also shares a 1,600-km border with India, which has over 270 confirmed cases.—Kyodo News



Workers disinfect a bus, amid concerns of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Yangon on March 19, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

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Mandalay-Myitkyina air suspension train starts operations

THE first passenger train with South Korean-made passenger coaches aided with air-conditioners and air suspension left Mandalay for Myitkyina at Mandalay Railway Station yesterday afternoon. Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung and officials cordially greeted and presented gifts to the passengers of the Mandalay-Myitkyina 31 Up train that departed the station at 1 pm.

The train has 10 33-seater upper class coaches, one 44-seater ordinary class coach and a restaurant car. Per ticket prices are Ks 20,000 for upper class and Ks 10,000 for ordinary class. The cozy coaches were imported from South Korea with the loan disbursed by the country.

According to the schedule, the 31 Up train leaves Mandalay at 1 pm and arrives in Myitkyina at 7 am the next day. The 32 Down train leaves Myitkyina at 1:30 pm, and arrives in Mandalay



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung greets with the passengers on the Mandalay-Myitkyina air suspension train yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

at 7:45 am the next day. Both the up and the down trains stop at Shwebo, Kanbalu, Kawlin, Nabar, Monyin, Hopin and Moekay stations.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Thailand shuts Kawthoung-Ranong port borders

THAILAND has suspended 3 port borders, through which

bilateral trades are going on, between Kawthoung in My-

anmar and Ranong in Thailand starting from the early morning of 20 March, Thai Ministry of Public Health announced.

According to the announcement of the Ministry of Public Health (Thailand) (MoPH), Covid-19 is a very dangerous pandemic and it is quickly spreading in Thailand.

So, Thailand will suspend the crossing of the goods and the vehicles carrying the persons via border checkpoints until the situation turns back to normal. The temporary closure is aimed to control the spreading of Covid-19 in the Ranong

province of the southern part of Thailand.

The three suspended port borders are Ranong Customs Department Jetty (Lighthouse Bridge), Grand Andaman Hotel Ranong-Kawthoung (Thahtay Kyun Hotel), and 30-kilo Crossing of Ranong Province.

Thailand-Myanmar health staff are systematically checking both citizens, who are crossing the border daily through Saphanpalar passenger port terminal, to detect any Covid-19-suspected persons from both countries.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Officials conducting the immigration processes at the Kawthoung-Ranong port border. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**

MCCPMD collaborates with MoHS, FDA for medical supplies amid Covid-19 threat

"WE are now negotiating with the Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent an outbreak of the global pandemic in Myanmar and to quickly import necessary pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Moreover, the association is also coordinating with the Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)," said Chairman U Zaw Moe Khine of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce for Pharmaceutical & Medical Device (MCCPMD).

Although there have been no COVID-19 cases yet in the country MCCPMD is making arrangements to avert a shortage of medical supplies.

The related departments will assist in the import of

high-quality medicines and medical equipment to Myanmar. The association will open the office six days per week to issue import permits for the medical supplies dealers.

"We met with the officials from the affiliated organizations. People are also worried about the price of the products because of the COVID-19 crisis. So, we collaborated to control the price. We also invited the officials from the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF), Myanmar Rice & Paddy Traders Association (MRPTA), and Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association (MEODA) and the medical-related associations. What I understand is that there won't be an insufficiency of

rice and cooking oil in Myanmar. There will be enough supply for local consumption. But we may have a bit of difficulty having the medicines and medical supplies. Even though we want to import them, they won't arrive in time. Exporter countries may have some restrictions or they could not manufacture in time. We need to think about that. We have discussed such issues as how we're going to import and sell medicines and medical devices. In this case, the related ministries and federation will assist as much as they can, said UMFCCI Chairman U Zaw Min Win.

Additionally, importers and dealers of pharmaceuticals &

medical devices can request assistance in having the licence and recommendations.

For those who would like to distribute and support the medicines and medical equipment for use in prevention and response activities, treatment, and diagnosis of COVID-19, they may contact the following phone 09-420901003 of the association.

MCCPMD was founded in 1999 and it has committed to improving the health and well-being of the people of Myanmar. MCCPMD plays an industry's leading voice, organizational, educational and facilitator roles locally and internationally.—Khin Yadana

(Translated by Hay Mar)

News release on monitoring of COVID-19 (8 pm, 21-3-2020)

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports has been conducting monitoring activities on the COVID-19 acute respiratory disease, which has spread throughout China and some countries around the world, at international entry-exit checkpoints, hospital-based, community-based and in cooperation with private hospitals.

2. There have been 12 new patients for quarantine of the COVID-19 disease as of 6 pm from 20-3-2020 to 6 pm of 21-3-2020.

3. According to a report from the National Health Laboratory (NHL) (Yangon), out of the patients who were put in isolation wards, the lab results of 11 patients reveal they do not have COVID-2019.

4. The lab result of a 37-year-old male from Shwepyitha, Yangon Region, who passed away at the Magway General Hospital in Magway on 20-3-2020 shows he did not have COVID-19. Visiting Magway, he suffered from fever, coughing and tiredness and was admitted to the Magway General Hospital on 19-3-2020. While he was in

an isolation wards at the hospital, the National Health Laboratory (NHL) (Yangon) tested his case and showed that he has only liver disease and did not have COVID-19.

5. The lab result of two Myanmar nationals quarantined in South Okkalapa Maternal and Child Hospital on 21-3-2020 show they do not have COVID-19.

6. The results 11 quarantined patients returned at 8 p.m. on 21-3-2020 and show they do not have COVID-19.

7. There are currently no patients under quarantine as of 21-3-2020, and neither has there been any confirmed case of COVID-2019. Monitoring activities are continued with full momentum. COVID-19 has spread across China and 177 other countries among our neighbours and the world. The public is urged to adhere to the disease protection health information published by the Ministry of Health and Sports.—MoHS

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Myanmar issues new restrictions against visitors from countries where COVID-19 infection increases

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued new restrictions for visitors coming to Myanmar from countries where the infection rate increases amidst the outbreak of COVID-19 in various parts of the world.

According to the announcement, all travellers to Myanmar including its citizens who had stayed in or visited the USA, Switzerland, Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Denmark during the past 14 days will be under facility quarantine for 14 days beginning from the arrival date.

Foreign diplomats and staff of Myanmar-based UN agencies will be under isolated home quarantine for 14 days beginning from the day they reach Myanmar. Those people need to show the certificate issued by the relevant country that they are free from high body temperature, coughing and respiratory disorders before boarding the plane.

Myanmar has suspended visa on arrival and e-visa till 30 April from the date of announcement, and requested the cooperation of tour companies.—MNA

(Translated by TMT)

Trade centres Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son provinces to be shut down

IN efforts to prevent spread of Coronavirus infection, border trade centres in Thailand's two provinces bordering with Shan State and Kayah State will be suspended as from 21 March, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The trade centres are located in Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son provinces.

Following its largest daily increase in coronavirus infections yesterday, with 89 new

cases taking the national tally to 411, Thailand announced to shut down malls in Bangkok.

Thailand announced it will close malls in the capital Bangkok effective today as the country reported its largest daily increase in coronavirus infections on Saturday (March 21). The new cases were linked to earlier infections from a boxing match.—MNA

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Myanmar, Thailand bilateral border trade hit \$ 1.8 bln in FY 2019-2020

BILATERAL border trade between Myanmar and Thailand totalled around US\$1.88 billion as of 13 March in fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020 which started on 1 October last year, according to the figures from the Ministry of Commerce.

The country's export to neighbouring Thailand reached \$1.25 billion while its import shared \$524 million. This fiscal year's figures increased by \$175.27 million, compared to the same period in the last fiscal year. Bilateral border trade was \$1.6 billion in the previous year.

The country mainly conducts border trade with Thailand through seven bor-

der checkpoints -- Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung, and Mae Sai crossings.

During the period, the Hteekhee border crossing topped with a most bilateral border trade value of \$882.2 million.

The country's agricultural and fishery products are exported to Thailand while cosmetics, food products, and machinery and raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers are imported.

According to the ministry's data, the total trade between Myanmar and foreign countries reached over \$4.94 billion.—Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)



A Hluttaw representative fixes a hand sanitizer bottles for public inside a Yangon City Bus.
PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT



People washing their hands with sanitizer near the Sanpya Market Bus Stop to prevent from COVID-19 disease. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Japan eyeing corporate tax refunds for virus-hit companies

TOKYO — Japan plans to implement corporate tax refunds for companies that have been forced to incur losses due to the outbreak of the new coronavirus, a government source said Saturday.

The measure would mainly apply to small and midsize companies such as restaurant operators and school lunch suppliers, as well as large companies that usually are not eligible for such tax relief, the source said.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government would also enable business operators to expedite procedures for filing for tax refunds, it said.

Together with an emergency economic package it will draw up next month, the government aims to support corporate finances and bolster the Japanese economy as the spread of the pneumonia-causing virus appears likely to significantly affect global growth.

With the envisaged tax refund, the government plans to assist catering companies that have been forced to discard food for school lunches following Abe's call for schools to shut down from early this month through the end of a spring vacation in early April.

Owners of restaurants and music clubs may also apply for tax refunds due to losses from the cost of disinfection and facility renewals if customers are found to have been infected with the virus.

However, a sales slump itself will not qualify a company for a refund if it stems only from the economic fallout, according to the source.

Aside from refunds, the government is considering separate tax measures for affected small and midsize firms and individuals as part of the new emergency package.

Some lawmakers and officials were advocating a possi-



A closed elementary school in Nagoya provides an open classroom for students for self study.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

ble property tax reduction or exemption, or a cut in the consumption tax, whose rate was raised by 2 percentage points to 10 percent in October.

On March 10, the govern-

ment adopted a fresh emergency package of about 1 trillion yen (\$9.6 billion) for businesses battered by the viral outbreak, featuring 500 billion yen in zero-interest loans for small and

midsize companies falling short of cash.

The stimulus measures also involve 430.8 billion yen in actual spending under the fiscal 2019 budget.—Kyodo News ■

European stocks rise as Wall Street suffers another rout

NEW YORK (United States) — European stocks gained Friday following the latest stimulus measures, but Wall Street equities plunged again on mounting worries over the coronavirus as oil prices suffered another drubbing.

Economists continued to slash their projections as more governments institute measures to clamp down on most commercial activity, except for essential services.

On Friday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered non-essential businesses to close and banned all gatherings, a dramatic escalation of mitigation steps after the nation's most-populous state California on Thursday directed its 40 million residents to stay at home.

The Dow tumbled another 4.6 percent, or around 915 points, to end at 19,173.98, below the level when President Donald Trump was inaugurated in January 2017.

The pummeling concluded

Wall Street's worst week since 2008. "The rapidly spreading coronavirus has mobilized the nation's policy makers, resulting in massive injections of monetary and fiscal stimulus not seen since 2008 and 2009,"

Oxford Economics said in a note about the US.

"As menacing and damaging as the Great Recession was back then, it did not involve a daily mortality rate that is injecting a wartime mentality into the mindset of the nation and its leaders."

Longer impact

More analysts now view the economic hit from the virus as a drag for the foreseeable future.

"The damage is not likely to pass in a month or two," FHN Financial said in a note. "Increasingly, it appears there will be a sharp drop in global activity, followed by a period of significant weakness lasting at least two quarters, followed by a partial recovery.—AFP ■



The market swings in recent weeks have been bewildering for traders and investors. PHOTO: AFP

John Lewis to close UK department stores due to crisis

LONDON (United Kingdom) — John Lewis, one of the biggest names on the British high street, is to temporarily close its 50 UK department stores because of the coronavirus crisis, it said Saturday.

The employee-owned retailer will shut the stores on Monday for the foreseeable future, the company said in a statement.

"The welfare of our customers, communities and partners is always our absolute priority," said John Lewis chairman Sharon White.

The group-owned supermarket Waitrose, which has more than 300 stores across the country, will remain open, she added.

White said the move was done "with a heavy heart" even though the department store's website would remain operational. The move comes after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Friday that cafes, restaurants and pubs had to close to slow the spread of the virus, which has so far claimed 177 lives in Britain. Earlier this month, John Lewis cut its annual staff bonus to its lowest level in more than 50 years owing to a drop in profits.—AFP ■

China spurs funding for project construction as virus hits activities

BEIJING — China's Ministry of Finance (MOF) has taken multi-pronged efforts to spur funding for infrastructure construction as the government seeks to restore economic activities that had taken a heavy blow from the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The ministry has quickened fund allocations to local authorities for public infrastructure construction including roads,

ports and airports, MOF official Song Qiuling said at a press conference on Saturday.

It has allocated more than 250 billion yuan (about 35.2 billion U.S. dollars) of vehicle purchase taxes, 7 billion yuan of port construction fees and 24 billion yuan of development funds for civil aviation ahead of schedule.

Over 20 billion yuan has been appropriated to the China

State Railway Group Co., Ltd. to support work resumption on the railway network, according to Song.

So far, the MOF has allocated 1.85 trillion yuan worth of new local government bonds quotas ahead of schedule this year to shore up the economy, along with a wide range of tax cuts to reduce business burdens.

As of Friday, local government bond issuance reached 1.4

trillion yuan, accounting for 76 percent of the allocated quotas, Song said.

The MOF also pledged to take further efforts to stimulate the participation of the private capital.

Earlier MOF data showed China's fixed-asset investment declined 24.5 percent year on year in the first two months of 2020 partly due to the epidemic.—Xinhua ■

With churches closing, US priest offers drive-thru confessions



Father Scott Holmer holds drive-through confessionals in Maryland, with his church closed due to the coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

BOWIE (United States) — The United States has long loved its drive-ins and drive-throughs: for movies, fast food, pharmacies and banking. Now the coronavirus pandemic has added a new one: Catholic confessions.

With his church closed due to the outbreak, Scott Holmer turned to the tried-and-tested method in this nation of car-lovers.

Every day except Sunday, and if the weather permits, he sits on a wooden chair in his priestly robes in the parking lot outside his Maryland chapel and does a contact-free confession and blessing.

Two lines of traffic cones and a sign guide cars outside St Edwards Church in Bowie, a small town around 20 miles (30 kilometers) outside of Washington.

The drivers lower their windows and confess their sins to Father Holmer who, after a few words of encouragement to return to the path of the Lord, grants absolution.

Despite the drive-through's all-American pedigree, Father Holmer came up with the idea last week after seeing South Korea organize drive-through tests for the coronavirus.

"The diocese canceled all masses to tamp down the spread of the infection. But the decision about confession was kind of up in the air," he told AFP.

"So I said, I'll just get in the parking lot, and that way I can avoid getting it myself and people can avoid any transmission. It's more open air, so there's like air flow and all that good stuff."

Holmer takes care to keep a safe distance from his flock and asks parishioners to stay in their vehicles. With couples or families, each person takes their turn sitting in the driver's seat. For those wishing an anonymous

confession, the priest covers his eyes with a bandana.

'God is with us now'

On the third Friday before Lent, a day of fasting and repentance, the line of cars quickly grows long and a seminary student is pressed into service as a traffic marshal.

"It's a weird thing to think about the spiritual and the physical at the same time," admits the priest, who sometimes asks drivers to cut their engines to maintain the secrecy of the confession. "You don't want people to overhear each other so we've got to keep cars at a certain distance," he said.

He said people had been very grateful to be able to receive the sacrament. "People are so happy to see that we are still able to be on their side even if we are not able to celebrate mass," the priest said.

"There's more gratitude than there is fear. When they drive up to the priest at their

window they're feeling God is with us now."

Father Holmer says he does not believe he has been infected with the virus that is causing mass lockdowns and social distancing around the world.

Aged 40, he is not in the highest risk group in any case.

"If I get it, I'll just quarantine myself, I've been to confession myself last week, so I'm good to go," he said with a smile.

Awaiting his turn at the wheel of his car, Steven Irving praised the priest's "great idea."

"We have a young and energetic and innovative priest," said Irving, a man in his sixties who had come with his wife.

"I had an opportunity today to fulfill my religious obligations" during Lent.

The priest plans to carry on with his drive-through confessions until the church reopens.

But he misses the direct connection with his flock. "Not being able to be physically present is just brutal," he said. — AFP

Jordan's gov't urges people to stay at home as hundreds violate curfew

AMMAN — Jordan's government on Saturday asks the public not to leave their homes as hundreds of people have been arrested for violating the curfew.

Jordan's Minister of State for Media Affairs said, "We know that the curfew is a tough decision but it is for the overall good of all...we are serious about implementing the curfew and it seeks to protect all the residents of the country."

"Countries that succeeded in dealing with the coronavirus are the ones that took tough measures at the beginning such as imposing curfews and these are successful measures," he said in a statement.

Legal actions will be taken against all violators, he said.

Mukhles Mefleh, spokesperson of the Jordan Armed Forces, said a total of 392 violators were arrested.

On March 21, Jordan started imposing a curfew as part of the measures to limit the spread of coronavirus. — Xinhua

Iraqi airstrike kills dozens of IS militants in mountainous area

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi warplanes on Saturday carried out an airstrike on hideouts of Islamic State (IS) militants in a mountainous area north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, the Iraqi military said.

The Iraqi F-16 fighter jets conducted an airstrike on IS hideouts in Himreen mountain range and killed dozens of the militants, the media office of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement.

The statement gave no further details, but said that more information is to be released later.

Despite repeated military operations against the remnants of IS militants, the extremist militants are still hiding in Himreen mountain range which extends in the three provinces of Diyala, Salahudin and Kirkuk. The security situation in Iraq has been dramatically improved after Iraqi security forces fully defeated the extremist IS militants across the country late in 2017. — Xinhua

IOC chief rebuts growing calls for 2020 Olympic postponement

TOKYO — International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach on Saturday rebutted growing calls from athletes and officials around the globe for postponing this summer's Tokyo Olympics due to the coronavirus outbreak, saying it will not be easy to take such a major action.

"You can't postpone the Olympic Games like a football match next Saturday," Bach was quoted by German news agency dpa as telling SWR radio, as national Olympic committees and major federations from the United States have begun

requesting the IOC postpone the Tokyo Games, perhaps for a year.

Bach has been insisting that the IOC's focus was solely on holding a "safe" Olympics on schedule. But now, he has begun defending his position. Dpa reported Bach as saying any decision requires reliable and clear information.

Earlier Saturday, the Brazil Olympic Committee called for the Tokyo Games to be postponed for a year, citing "the notorious worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic" and

"the consequent difficulty for athletes to maintain their best competitive level."

Similarly, the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee said Friday it has asked the IOC not to hold the games until the pneumonia-causing virus is under control, especially when a total of about 234,000 people have been infected worldwide.

USA Swimming and USA Track and Field, the U.S. swimming and athletics federations have both added their voices to the growing calls for postponement.

In a letter sent to U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee CEO Sarah Hirshland, USA Swimming CEO Tim Hinchey said, "Everyone has experienced unimaginable disruptions, mere months before the Olympic Games, which calls into question the authenticity of a level playing field for all," according to the Associated Press reported.

"Our athletes are under tremendous pressure, stress and anxiety, and their mental health and wellness should be among the highest priorities," Hinchey wrote. — Kyodo News



People wearing masks are seen near the Olympic rings in Tokyo's Daiba waterfront area on 20 March 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Redoubling our efforts with bold approach to prevent COVID-19

China, the country on the frontlines of the novel coronavirus pandemic that infected 81,000 Chinese, marked a milestone on Thursday: for the first time since December, it reported no new domestic virus cases. We must acknowledge China's hard-won progress against the virus and must understand the lessons to learn from their achievements.

In an effort to prevent, control and treat the Coronavirus infection, health authorities in regions and states must take a bold approach to introduce aggressive measures.

The efforts of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea have pointed to the active participation of the people by practicing preventive methods and contributing to controlling the infection.

As the coronavirus infection outside China is rising, our people, health workers and officials should double up on our current efforts, with the mind-set that the outbreak of the disease can occur any time in our country.

In an effort to prevent, control and treat the Coronavirus infection, health authorities in regions and states must take a bold approach to introduce aggressive measures.

At the same time, we must impose travel restrictions on visitors from those countries in which there are new outbreaks and fatalities.

Myanmar migrant workers in foreign countries, especially in our neighbouring countries, are to return home before the traditional New Year in mid-April, and all authorities in regions and states are obliged to prepare for surveillance and quarantine of these workers for a two-week incubation period.

Meanwhile, it is a welcome move to prevent the infection of the disease that the Labour Department suspended sending workers to foreign countries, as of 18 March, while requesting that Myanmar migrant workers in overseas countries follow the directives of the respective countries, in an effort to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

The regional health authorities are also advised to report to the central level committee on what they urgently need, including the tools needed to diagnose the virus.

We now have the opportunity to see how China manages a possible resurgence of COVID-19 and can follow the core points of the 'Four Early's' that China practiced: early prevention, early detection, early diagnosis, and early quarantine.

In fact, the number of health workers in our country is very low, compared with other countries. But, the collaborative efforts of our health workers and professionals, along with the people, are playing an important role in preventing and controlling the spread of the infection.

With the redoubling of our collaborative efforts against the disease, we must prevent the introduction of the Coronavirus disease.

No need to be panicky

By Khin Maung Myint

THE latest outbreak of the new human infectious disease is officially named the "2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease" (where 'n' is for novel and 'CoV' is for coronavirus). This name complies with the WHO Best Practices for Naming of New Human Infectious Diseases. It is also referred as the Covid-19 in short, which emerged towards the end of 2019 in Wuhan in the Hubei Province, China had already been declared as a pandemic by the WHO. Its spread is overwhelmingly unprecedented, spurred on by the efficiency and the ease of accessibility of the modern day transportation systems to all corner of the globe. Such outbreaks are defined as epidemic or pandemic depending on whether the spread of the disease is confined in one particular area or has it crossed borders and continents, but not based on the numbers of affected or the death tolls.

Although the Ebola outbreak claimed many lives, but as it was confined to Africa, thus defined only as an epidemic. Whereas the Covid-19 has reached almost every continent and is affecting 184 countries and territories as this article is being written and although the numbers affected and the death tolls are not much, it has become a pandemic.

Unnecessary cause for panic

A few days ago, the Covid-19 had caused an unnecessary panic-buying around the world — especially in the West and some affluent countries elsewhere. As the disease had spread to faraway places like Italy, Iran, Spain, France, Australia, the US, some Asian countries and some other countries around the world, some hard-hit countries began locking down cities and eventually the whole country. People were worried they would starve if they cannot go out to buy foods or the foods might be out of stock due to the lockdown. Thus in some places, people went on panic-buying sprees. There were very ugly rampaging scenes at shopping malls and groceries where the behaviours of the populace even turned wild.

This is not the first time that the world is hit by such outbreaks of pandemic proportions. There were many in the past that were several times worse than the present one. By writing thus, I am not trying to let the people ignore the threats of this deadly virus. However, we should be rational in our views and not to be blindly led by exaggerated and dramatized media reports to become panic-stricken. Some foreign media aired video footages of people scrambling to buy food stuffs at shopping malls and groceries and the rows of empty shelves to lead the people to believe that foods are out of stock. However, in reality in such melee the staffs at those shopping



A man wearing a protective mask paint on Accademia bridge in Venice. PHOTO: ANDREA PATTARO/AFP

malls and groceries wouldn't dare to restock the shelves while the customers are still there, behaving like wild people rampaging and grabbing everything in sight. However, that situation is now under control in most countries.

It's controllable

According to the latest news as of 18 March, the situations in China was totally under control. Also a few countries had managed to find cures for the disease. First Israel declared it had found a cure and next was Germany. The new vaccines are expected to be available soon. Even our neighbour, Thailand had found the right cure using a mixture of two or more existing vaccines early on and thus there was only one Covid-19 related death up to date. Thailand has also invented a very handy and simple kit to test the disease for household use, which they will be selling at affordable price soon. Because of the advancements of the efficiency of transportation, the spread was rapid and wide and now because of the advancements of technologies in the medical field, the right cures were discovered so soon. Now China is helping others in the fight against the Covid-19 with the experiences and expertise they had gained. Credit should be given to China for the drastic and effective quarantining and locking down cities that contributed much to the speedy curbing of the spread of disease in their country. Others should copy their procedures.

Having said that, the past worst outbreaks that occurred around the world will need to be mentioned here briefly. By knowing about those past outbreaks and their intensities, people could gauge how the present situations compare to them. After reading them, hopefully

most will be somewhat relieved and definitely there will be less anxieties about the threats of the disease and people will feel more clamer and panicking will be greatly reduced.

10 of the worst pandemics in history

Antonine Plague (165 AD). Also known as the Plague of Galen affected Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, and Italy and is thought to have been either Smallpox or Measles, though the true cause is still unknown. This disease was brought back to Rome by soldiers returning from Mesopotamia around 165AD; unknowingly, they had spread a disease which killed over 5 million people and decimated the Roman army.

Plague of Justinian (541-542) it was an outbreak of the bubonic plague that afflicted the Byzantine Empire and Mediterranean port cities, estimated to have wiped out half the population of Europe, killing up to 25 million people in its year-long reign of terror. It was the first recorded incident of the Bubonic plague that killed up to a quarter of the population of the Eastern Mediterranean and at its height, it was killing an estimated 5,000 people per day.

The Black Death (1346-1353) It was an outbreak of the Plague that ravaged Europe, Africa, and Asia, with an estimated death toll between 75 and 200 million people. Thought to have originated in Asia, the Plague most likely jumped continents via the fleas living on the rats that so frequently lived aboard merchant ships.

Third Cholera Pandemic (1852-1860) Considered the most deadly of the seven cholera pandemics, this outbreak of Cholera in the 19th century lasted from 1852 to 1860. Like the first and

second pandemics, it originated in India, spreading from the Ganges River Delta before tearing through Asia, Europe, North America and Africa killing over a million people. The year 1854 went down as the worst year of the pandemic, in which 23,000 people died in Great Britain.

Flu Pandemic (1889-1890) Originally the "Asiatic Flu" or "Russian Flu". The first cases were observed in May 1889 in three separate and distant locations, Bukhara in Central Asia (Turkistan), Athabasca in northwestern Canada, and Greenland. Rapid population growth of the 19th century, specifically in urban areas, only helped the flu spread. This Flu Pandemic claimed the lives of over a million individuals.

Sixth Cholera Pandemic (1910-1911) Like its five predecessors, it also originated in India where it killed over 800,000, before spreading to the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. This Pandemic was also the source of the last American outbreak of Cholera (1910-1911). American health authorities, having learned from the past, quickly sought to isolate or quarantine the infected, and were able to get the disease under control quickly resulting in 11 deaths only in 1923.

Flu Pandemic (1918) Between 1918 and 1920 a deadly outbreak of influenza spread across the world, infecting over a third of the world's population killing 20-50 million. Out of 500 million infected in the 1918 pandemic, 25 million deaths occurred in the first 25 weeks alone.

Asian Flu (1956-1958) It originated in China in 1956 and lasted until 1958. In its two years the Asian Flu traveled from Guizhou in China to Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. Estimates for the death toll of the Asian Flu vary

depending on the source, but the WHO places the final tally at approximately 2 million deaths, 69,800 of those in the US alone.

Flu Pandemic (1968) Referred to as "the Hong Kong Flu". From the first reported case on July 13, 1968 in Hong Kong, it took only 17 days before outbreaks of the virus were reported in Singapore and Vietnam, and within three months had spread to The Philippines, India, Australia, Europe, and the United States. This pandemic had a comparatively low mortality rate, but still resulted in more than a million deaths, including 500,000 people in Hong Kong.

HIV/AIDS Pandemic (At its peak 2005-2012) First identified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1976, HIV/AIDS has truly proven itself as a global pandemic, killing more than 36 million people since 1981. Currently, there are between 31 and 35 million people living with HIV, the vast majority of those are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 5% of the population is infected, roughly 21 million people. As awareness has grown, new treatments have been developed that make HIV far more manageable, and many of those infected go on to lead productive lives. Between 2005 and 2012 the annual global deaths from HIV/AIDS dropped from 2.2 million to 1.6 million.

Conclusion

Judging on the death tolls and durations each pandemic lasted, it can safely be assumed that the present pandemic is not as dangerous as those that preceded it. Also the advancements of the medical sciences and the technologies, it is quite sure that the disease will soon be under control everywhere. Thus people should stay calm, collected, focused and abide by the emergency rules and regulations that the authorities imposed to fight the disease. Everyone must willingly subject themselves to the necessary scans and tests, observe personal hygiene by washing their hands as required and shun crowded places until the disease is totally under control. If you look closely, it will be seen that most of the past pandemics originated naturally and their spread and severities were spurred on by the humans. In the old days if there was an outbreak people flee from the affected areas causing the spread to other places.

Words of advice - do not panic, stay put, put off your travels if possible, shun crowded places, wash your hands often, especially after contacts with money and other objects that could be contaminated and quarantine yourself if necessary. There is nothing to worry about if you observe what is required of you.

4th Anniversary of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (၄) နှစ်ပြည့် နှစ်ပတ်လည်ခန့်
4th Anniversary of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation
(၄) နှစ်ပြည့် နှစ်ပတ်လည်ခန့်
(23rd March 2020)
Mekong-Lancang Cooperation National Coordination Unit (MLC-NCU-Myanmar)

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 21st March, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 22nd March, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Northern Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (60%). 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 Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Northern Rakhine States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22nd March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22nd March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22nd March, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

Pentagon successfully tests hypersonic missile

WASHINGTON (United States) — The United States announced Friday it has successfully tested an unarmed prototype of a hypersonic missile, a nuclear-capable weapon that could accelerate the arms race between superpowers.

The Pentagon said a test glide vehicle flew at hypersonic speeds — more than five times the speed of sound, or Mach 5 — to a designated impact point.

The test followed the first joint US Army and Navy flight experiment in October 2017, when the prototype missile demonstrated it could glide in the direction of a target at hypersonic speed.

“Today we validated our design and are now ready to move to the next phase towards fielding a hypersonic strike capability,” Vice Admiral Johnny Wolfe said in a statement.

Hypersonic weapons can take missile warfare, particularly nuclear warfare, to a new — and, for many, frightening — level.

They can travel much faster than current nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles at low altitudes, can switch direction in flight and do not follow a predictable arc like conventional missiles, making them much



The Pentagon says it has successfully tested an unarmed prototype of a hypersonic missile. **PHOTO: AFP**

harder to track and intercept.

Even as conventionally armed, non-nuclear weapons, they are viewed by analysts as raising the danger of conflict, because an adversary might not know how they are armed when launched.

The Pentagon is pressing to catch up with rivals Moscow and Beijing in the race to develop

hypersonics, even as it recognizes they could dangerously raise the risks of a nuclear conflict, as countries struggle to build defenses against them.

In its fiscal 2021 budget the US Defense Department requested \$3.2 billion for hypersonic programs, up from \$2.6 billion in the current year. The goal is a deployable hypersonic capa-

bility by 2023, though that could be difficult.

“Delivering hypersonic weapons is one of the department’s highest technical research and engineering priorities,” the Pentagon said.

Russia leading the race

The joint Army-Navy test was carried out on March 19

from the Pacific Missile Range facility in Kauai, Hawaii. The test was for the military’s common-hypersonic glide body, or C-HGB weapon, designed to be launched from a rocket that could be land-, air- or sea-based.

“The glide body tested today is now ready for transition to Army and Navy weapon system development efforts,” said Mike White, the assistant director of the hypersonics program.

In December, Russia declared it had placed into service its first Avangard hypersonic missile, making it the first country to claim an operable hypersonic weapon.

Russian officials claimed that in tests it had reached speeds of up to Mach 27, roughly 20,500 miles (33,000 kilometers) per hour.

China is also investing significantly in their development. Last October it displayed its DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle in its national day military parade.

The US military is meanwhile pouring money into advanced missile defense research to find ways to protect against hypersonics. — AFP ■

WADA issues dope testing guidelines amid coronavirus pandemic

MONTREAL (Canada) — The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) issued new guidelines on Friday to facilitate continued testing amid the constraints of the coronavirus pandemic.

Noting that the spread of COVID-19 had evolved into “an even greater health and societal emergency” since its March 6 communique, WADA urged Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOs) to act in accordance with restrictions placed by local health authorities “to ensure proper protection of athletes and doping control personnel, while protecting the integrity of doping control programs, particularly in the lead-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.”

WADA’s latest guidelines advise anti-doping organizations to make sure that sample collectors are free from any symptoms of illness. Collectors should also ask athletes if they have any symptoms or if they or anyone at the collection site are in the groups thought to be at heightened risk



The World Anti-Doping Agency has issued guidelines aimed at maintaining anti-doping efforts safely through the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

from COVID-19.

If test collection personnel are found to have contracted the virus, athletes they tested should be informed and vice versa, WADA said. Protective wear such as masks should be used and work surfaces disinfected, and if local conditions limit what testing can occur then ADOs should “consider focusing their testing program on targeted athletes from

high risk sports and disciplines,” WADA said.

In locations where testing programs can’t continue, WADA said, it and other anti-doping organizations and sports federations will work together “once the situation begins to return to normal” to identify gaps in testing “particularly as it relates to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.” — AFP ■

Netflix commits \$100 mn to help actors, crews thrown out of work

SAN FRANCISCO (United States) — Streaming television giant Netflix on Friday launched a \$100 million fund to help actors and production crews endure the hit to paychecks caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The fund is meant to help offset hardship in the “creative community,” with most of the money going to financially troubled workers on Netflix productions around the world, according to Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos.

“This community has supported Netflix through the good times, and we want to help them through these hard times, especially while governments are still figuring out what economic support they will provide,” Sarandos said in an online post.

Netflix is in the process of figuring out details of how money from the fund will be distributed. The Silicon Valley-based company had already committed to keeping casts and crews of suspended productions on the payroll for an additional two weeks.

“Almost all television and film production has now ceased globally — leaving hundreds of thousands of crew and cast without jobs,” said Sarandos.

“These include electricians, carpenters, drivers, hair and makeup artists and more, many of whom are paid hourly wages and work on a project-to-project basis.”

About \$15 million of the fund will go to organizations and non-profit groups providing emergency relief to out-of-work film crews and actors in countries where it has a large production base.

“What’s happening is unprecedented,” Sarandos said.

“We are only as strong as the people we work with and Netflix is fortunate to be able to help those hardest hit in our industry through this challenging time.”

The move comes amid “shelter in place” orders in California and many other areas, and the closing of many business operations that could result in a surge in joblessness. — AFP ■

Iran frees French researcher in apparent prisoner swap

PARIS — President Emmanuel Macron announced Saturday that Iran has freed a French researcher imprisoned in the Islamic republic after France released an Iranian threatened with extradition to the US.

Macron “is happy to announce the release of Roland Marchal, imprisoned in Iran since June 2019” but he “urges the Iranian authorities to immediately free” fellow researcher Fariba Adelkhah, his office said.

France has for months demanded that Iran release Adelkhah and her partner Marchal, who were detained last year accused of plotting against national security. Their trial began in early March.

Adelkhah is a citizen of both Iran and France, but Tehran does not recognise dual nationality. Iran has in recent months carried out prisoner exchanges with the US, Australia and Germany.

Marchal is due in France later Saturday, according to Macron’s office.

The Iranian judiciary’s news agency Mizan Online reported Iranian Jallal Rohollahnejad had been freed by France



Roland Marchal had been imprisoned in Iran since June 2019. PHOTO: AFP

on Friday.

Iranian state television showed images of him hugging members of his family during an emotional reunion in Tehran.

Rohollahnejad, “an Iranian engineer incarcerated for more than a year in French prisons and accused of circumventing American sanctions against Iran, has been freed today,” Mizan said.

The French Court of Cassation had on March 11 approved

“the request to extradite Rohollahnejad to the US, but the French government freed him, changing this decision”, it added.

“Taking into account the cooperation of the (Iranian) judicial system’s intention to release a French detainee through reducing sentences, the French government” freed the Iranian engineer “in an act of mutual cooperation”, according to the report.— AFP ■

Nearly one billion people confined to homes globally to curb virus

NEW YORK (United States) — Close to one billion people worldwide were confined to their homes on Saturday as the global coronavirus death toll shot past 11,000 and US states rolled out lockdown measures already imposed across swathes of Europe.

The pandemic has completely upended lives across the planet, restricting movement, shutting schools and forcing millions to work from home.

While President Donald Trump insisted the United States was “winning” the war against the virus, individual states dramatically ramped up restrictions, with New York and Illinois joining California in ordering residents to stay home.

The virus death toll surged past 11,000 worldwide, with 4,000 alone in worst-hit Italy where the daily number of fatalities has shot up relentlessly over the past week.

An estimated 900 million people are now confined to their homes in 35 countries around the world — including 600 million hemmed in by obligatory government lockdown orders — according to an AFP tally.

While the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions are the hardest hit by the virus, the World Health Organization warned that young people were also vulnerable.

“Today I have a message for young people: you are not invincible. This virus could put you in hospital for weeks — or even kill you,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

“Even if you don’t get sick, the choices you make about where you go could be the difference between life and death for someone else.”

China on Saturday reported no new local infections for a third straight day, and the WHO said the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus emerged late last year, offered a glimmer of “hope for the rest of the world”.

But there are growing concerns of a new wave of “imported” infections in the region, with Hong Kong reporting 48 suspected cases on Friday — its biggest daily jump since the crisis began. Many of them have a recent history of travel to or from Europe.— AFP ■

Australian beaches locked down as virus cases pass 1,000

SYDNEY (Australia) — Sunbathers, surfers and tourists were banned from Bondi Beach on Saturday in efforts to contain the coronavirus, which has now infected more than 1,000 people in Australia.

Lifeguards emptied the sands of daytrippers and police taped off entrances to the beach in Sydney, before closing several more of the city’s popular swimming spots.

The temporary measure comes after photos were shared online showing mostly young beachgoers packed together — drawing howls of protest in the media and from officials who have forbidden non-essential outdoor gatherings of more than 500 people.

“This is not something we are doing because we are the ‘fun police’... this is about saving lives,” New South Wales state Police Minister David Elliott told reporters.

Meanwhile a whole region — the vast Northern Territory — said it would close its borders next week, forcing arrivals from elsewhere in Australia to quarantine for two weeks.

The measures announced by the territory’s chief minister, which begin on Tuesday, were aimed at addressing fears over the safety of remote indigenous communities who may be more vulnerable to an outbreak.

Australia’s confirmed cases climbed to 1,068 on Saturday. Among them are 10 US tourists quarantined in South Australia.

The nation has taken a series of drastic steps to contain the spread of the contagion, including closing its borders to foreigners and non-residents.

At Bondi, people looked on at the desolate sands from the promenade after being told to leave the beach.— AFP ■

Air Canada to lay off more than 5,000 flight attendants: union

MONTREAL (Canada) — Air Canada plans to temporarily lay off more than 5,000 flight attendants due to the new coronavirus pandemic, their union said Friday.

The layoffs would affect 3,600 flight attendants at the flagship Canadian airline and all 1,549 flight attendants at its budget Air Canada Rouge affiliate, the union that represents the flight attendants said.

That accounts for more than half the membership of the Air Canada component of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents roughly 10,000 flight attendants.

“This has been the most challenging time any of us will likely ever experience as flight attendants,” union president Wesley Lesosky said in a statement.

Air Canada confirmed it has begun discussions with its unions on temporary layoffs, but did not say how many of its employees would be affected.



Air Canada attributes the layoffs to the “rapid evolution” of the coronavirus pandemic and the reduction in service it has caused. PHOTO: AFP

In a statement, it attributed the decision to lay off employees to the “rapid evolution” of the new coronavirus pandemic and the reduction in service it has caused.

“When conditions permit and service resumes, these employees will be recalled,” the airline said.

On Wednesday, the airline said it planned to gradually re-

duce its domestic and US transborder flights by March 31, after Canada temporarily closed its border with the United States to contain the spread of the virus.

Its international service has been reduced from 101 destinations to just six, while its cross-border operations have been cut to just 13 destinations from 53.— AFP ■

Delta warns of 80% revenue drop as US carriers fear doom

NEW YORK (United States) — Delta Air Lines on Friday warned the coronavirus pandemic will cut its second quarter earnings by 80 per cent compared to 2019, and ratings agency S&P said other US carriers faced similar fates.

“We’re now projecting our June quarter revenues will be down by \$10 billion compared to a year ago — an 80 per cent reduction,” Delta’s chief executive Ed Bastian said in a note to employees.

The hotel and travel industries have borne the initial brunt of the impact of the drastic shutdowns caused by the global virus outbreak, but worse may be ahead, Bastian said, and “recovery will take an extended period once the virus is contained.”

Amid the spreading economic carnage, Bastian said there are now 13,000 employees who have taken voluntary unpaid leave, and “we could use more.”



Delta Air Lines has taken out a \$2.6 billion loan and put some of its airlines up as collateral. **PHOTO: AFP**

That is an increase from the 10,000 he reported Wednesday had gone on leave, foregoing salary but maintaining benefits such as health insurance.

In a regulatory filing, Delta also announced it had taken out a \$2.6 billion loan that was secured by “certain aircraft.”

The virus’s spread has forced carriers to slash routes as countries shut their borders and impose movement restrictions and US airlines have asked Congress for a \$50 billion

bailout to survive the crisis.

Separately, S&P Global Ratings downgraded American Airlines credit to B from BB- due to “reduced demand from the continued spread of the virus on the company’s credit metrics.”

“While the company is reducing its capacity and some associated costs and is benefitting from the steep decline in oil prices, we expect these factors to be more than offset by its much weaker traffic,” S&P said in a statement.— AFP

Country music legend Kenny Rogers dies at 81

LOS ANGELES (United States) — Country music legend Kenny Rogers, whose career spanned six decades, has died at the age of 81, his family said late Friday.

“Rogers passed away peacefully at home from natural causes under the care of hospice and surrounded by his family,” they said in a statement.

The family said they were planning a small private service “out of

concern for the national COVID-19 emergency.”

Kenny Rogers left an indelible mark on the history of American music.

“His songs have endeared music lovers and touched the lives of millions around the world,” said the statement posted by his representative Keith Hagan.

A three-time Grammy winner who sold tens of millions of records, Rogers was known for

a string of huge hits including “The Gambler,” “Lucille” and “Islands in the Stream.”

“I’ve never considered myself a great singer, but I do have a certain way as a storyteller,” he told the Irish Examiner in 2013.

“I’ve been very lucky in finding many great songs that have had a staying power, and have lingered longer in the heart.”

Released in 1978, his album “The Gambler” was a huge international hit, going multi-platinum and the title track became his signature song.

“I do two kinds of songs,” he told NPR in 2015.

“There’s story songs that have social significance, or they’re ballads that say what every man would like to say and every woman would like to hear.” — AFP ■



A three-time Grammy winner, Kenny Rogers was known for a string of hits including ‘The Gambler,’ ‘Lucille’ and ‘Islands in the Stream’. **PHOTO: AFP**

U.S. visa service suspension expands to all embassies around world

WASHINGTON — The State Department said Friday that all U.S. embassies and consulates around the world will temporarily suspend routine visa services, expanding a previous decision to halt such services in many countries due to the spread of the new coronavirus.

Embassies and consulates will cancel all routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa ap-

pointments as of Friday. As resources allow, they will continue to provide urgent and emergency visa services, the department said.

“Our overseas missions will resume routine visa services as soon as possible but are unable to provide a specific date at this time,” it said. Services to U.S. citizens will not be affected. The latest announcement came after the department said

Wednesday it had decided to suspend visa services in countries subject to travel advisories higher than level 1, which include Japan and South Korea.

On the following day, it raised its global health advisory to level 4, the highest alert, which advises U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel and urges those who are currently abroad to return immediately.— Kyodo News ■

Rio street vendors suffer as beaches close

NEW YORK (United States) — Street vendor Jorge Martins plods the fine sand of Ipanema as he tries to sell the last of his caipirinha cocktails to tourists before Rio de Janeiro’s beaches shut down against the coronavirus.

From Saturday, when a decree by state governor Wilson Witzel comes into effect, Rio’s iconic Ipanema and Copacabana beaches will be off-limits to sunseekers.

Empty beaches seem unthinkable in Rio’s year-round sun, but the numbers of beachgoers have dropped significantly in the last week after Witzel deployed Civil Defense workers with megaphones to urge people to stay away.

Still, Martins was giving it one last go before Ipanema becomes a no-go zone: “Caipirinha, Caipirinha!” “As long as I can, I will continue to come here and try to sell cocktails.



Brazilian beach vendor Marco Conceicao offers bubble toys for sale on Rio de Janeiro’s Ipanema on 19 March 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

I still have not thought about what I will do when it is no longer possible,” Martins told AFP.

For people like him who depend on informal work for their livelihood, with no social welfare safety net, the federal government announced a monthly allowance of 200 reals (around 40 dollars, 37 euros) until the end of the crisis.

But that’s just one-fifth of the minimum wage. “What am I going to

do with that? That’s barely enough to buy bread,” said Martins, who has spent the last 32 of his 55 years working on the beach.

According to the latest official statistics, compiled before the pandemic, nearly 12 million Brazilians are unemployed, more than 11 per cent of the country’s population of 210 million.

And some 40 per cent of the working population work in the informal sector.— AFP ■

"Changing the Trade Name of Insecticide"

The Trade Name of the following Insecticide registered by Forward International Ltd., Taiwan will be changed as follow:

No.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration no	Registration type
1.	Kyan Kyaung 2.5 EC	Forlambda 2.5EC	Lambda-cyhalothrin 2.5% EC -	F2010-417	Full

Any objection regarding to this changing can be notified to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within fourteen (14) days.

Forward (Myanmar 1995) Co., Ltd.
Ph no. 095406658

Bangkok orders mall closures from Sun. amid coronavirus crisis

BANGKOK — Bangkok's metropolitan authority on Saturday ordered the closure of shopping malls and entertainment facilities in the capital to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The order, effective for 22 days from Sunday, exempts supermarkets, convenience stores and pharmacies, including those located in malls, according to a statement issued by city hall. Restaurants providing take-out and delivery are also allowed to stay open.

Violators will face a prison sentence of up to

one year or a fine of 100,000 baht (\$3,070), it said.

Bangkok's governor Asawin Kwanmuang also requested people to practice social distancing and work from home if possible.

Bangkok has a population of nearly 9 million, and of the some 5,500 Japanese companies operating in Thailand, most are based in the sprawling metropolis.

The country's health authority on Saturday reported 89 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the national tally to 411.

— Kyodo News ■

North Korea fires two 'ballistic missiles' into sea

SEOUL (South Korea) — North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Saturday, the latest in a series of such launches by Pyongyang as the world struggles with the coronavirus pandemic.

The South Korean military condemned the launches as "extremely inappropriate given the difficult situation the world is experiencing due to COVID-19... We urge them to stop immediately."

North Korea has not reported any cases of the coronavirus, which has turned into a major crisis with more than 11,000 deaths and over 250,000 infections worldwide.

There has been widespread speculation, however, that the virus has reached the isolated nation, and health experts have warned that it could devastate the country given its weak medical infrastructure and widespread malnutrition.



North Korea has not reported a single case of the new coronavirus, but there is widespread speculation that the pathogen has reached the isolated nation. PHOTO: AFP

Japan's defence ministry also confirmed the North Korean launches.

For decades, North Korea's leadership has faced international criticism for prioritising spending on its military and nuclear weapons programme instead of providing for the population — even during times of famine.

Pyongyang considers its military development necessary for security in the face of what it describes as American aggression. North Korea

is under multiple sets of punishing sanctions over its nuclear and missile programmes.

Hopes for a thaw after meetings between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump were dented as they failed to produce any substantial progress on denuclearising the Korean peninsula, and Pyongyang has since continued to refine its military capabilities, analysts say.

With the latest launch Pyongyang "continues an

international strategy of trying to normalise its missile tests", Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, told AFP.

'Draconian restrictions'

Shortly before the launch, North Korea's official news agency KCNA reported that the rubber-stamp parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, would convene on April 10. The event would involve gathering nearly 700 officials in one place, analysts said. Such events have been banned in many parts of the world to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

"North Korea would not risk holding such a large-scale national political event if the regime was not confident about preventing or containing the spread of the virus," Rachel Minyoung Lee, a senior analyst at specialist website NK News, told AFP. — AFP ■



Thai officials conduct temperature screenings at Siam Paragon Mall on 4 February 2020 in Bangkok. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (084N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (084N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-3-2020 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 KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (1117 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (1117 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-3-2020 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.

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1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (a) DATE & TIME - (26-3-2020) (09:00) A.M
YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/HARDWOOD (LOG AND CONVERSION)
(30-3-2020) (12:00) Noon
YANGON TEAK LOG ONLY
- (b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME - TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1497) TONS
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (168) TONS
(EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT)
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (186) TONS
(WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT)
PYINKADO, IN, KANYIN, HTAUKYANT, SAGAWA, TAUNGPEINNE,
THITMAGYI, YEMANE ABOUT (1165) TONS
HARD WOOD LOGS (INCLUDING 2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR)
- (c) PLACE - TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (wvm.timber.com.mm).
Contacts; Office Ph; 01-528771, 01-377296, E-mail; marketing1ppy@gmail.com

OPEN TENDER COMMITTEE
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE

Changing Distributor for Registered Pesticide

Distributor of pesticide registered by Forward International Ltd., Taiwan will be changed from Forward (Myanmar) Co., Ltd. to Sim Sim Co., Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can be notified to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within fourteen (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.	Registration Type
1.	Fortazeb 72 WP	Metalaxyl 8%+ Mancozeb 64% WP	F2010-328	Full
2.	Forwatap 50 SP	Cartap Hydrochloride 50% SP	F2010-424	Full
3.	Forfen 20 EC	Fenvalerate 20% EC	F2010-388	Full
4.	Forlambda 2.5 EC	Lamda- Cyhalothrin 2.5% EC	F2010-417	Full

Forward (Myanmar 1995) Co., Ltd.
Ph: 095406658



Loilenpi airport project is nearly 45 per cent completed and is expected to be operational in May this year. (PHOTO: IPRD)

NGO named Health and Hope (Myanmar), according to the local government. The runway of the airport will be 2600 ft in length and 100 ft in width, and it is expected to be operational in May this year. Once completed, the MAF will offer airport operation services with a maximum of three small aircrafts.

In addition, a new bridge over the Kaladan River on the Paletwa-Matupi Road in Paletwa Township, Chin State is being built by the Bridge Construction Group - 1 under the Ministry of Construction. The facility initially slated for completion by the end of March this year is set to open to traffic soon. Local people currently use two road sections as the Kaladan River crossing bridge is under construction. Construction of the bridge began in the fiscal year 2017-2018 by spending K27 billion of the

Chin State enjoys much-needed infrastructural development

By Kyaw Htike Soe

A SMALL mountain airport is being built in Loilenpi Town, Chin State and the airport project is almost 45 per cent completed while the land reclamation task has been about 70 per cent finished, according to a source from the local government. Construction of the small airport project was approved in July 2017. A feasibility study for the small airport was started in January 2018 and construction work began in May 2019.

“We embarked on the con-

struction of the airport in May 2019 and are trying utmost to finalize the project ahead of schedule. Now the retaining walls are being built and we have to remove big stones while carrying out land reclamation task. We would build a runway within two months,” said Mr Terry, an engineer for the airport construction project. Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) International, an international non-governmental organization is developing the airport with some US\$ 2.2 million in cooperation with an



The Kaladan River crossing bridge in Chin State's Paletwa Township is set to open to traffic soon. (PHOTO: IPRD)



Construction of the Surbung Airport in Falam Township, Chin State. PHOTO: MNA

Union Budget. The structure is being constructed mostly from reinforced concrete and will be 592 metres (1,942 ft) long and 7.5 metres wide. The waterway under the bridge is 115.4 metres wide, and its clearance is 15 metres at the highest water level.

The bridge will be able to withstand up to 60 tons of weight and pedestrian walkways on the structure are one meter wide each. Once completed, residents from nearby areas who once couldn't directly come to Paletwa Town by motorcar will be able to use the new facility in all seasons with greater ease and have easy access to not only Kyauktaw and Sittway Townships in Rakhine State but also Matupi, Mindat and Haka Townships in Chin State. The bridge would contribute to development of trade in the area, facilitate swift flow of commodities and reduce transportation charges. Be it what it may, road transportation will no longer be a headache for local people who once experienced travels and access barriers to other areas due to poor road transportation network.

Chin State is a mountainous region with few transportation links and remains one of the least developed states of the country. Poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation network, fewer investments, and transportation barriers are the main challenges for local people in Chin State. The local government has been attempting to upgrade basic infrastructure projects, pouring about 50 per cent of its budget into reconstruction and reinforcement of the road networks in the state, to make operational in all seasons.



SHIFT programme supports passionate youth fighting for a cause

SHIFT, a programme by international NGO Save the Children with creative partner Bridge, recently completed its first phase of sponsorships to help young people in Myanmar turn their passions into action and make a difference in society. SHIFT's goal is to amplify the voices of young people by providing them with access to financial resources, tools, funds, and mentorship networks. To do so, it conducts 3-day co-creation workshops with driven and promising groups of under-25s to help them find ways to address issues that are important to them. It then connects the groups with agency partners to design and execute social campaigns.

SHIFT was created by Andy Nilsen, Director of Advocacy, Communications, Campaigns and Media at Save the Children. Andy brought Save the Children together with Bridge, a Yangon based social impact agency, aligned on the idea that "Young people can shift the world."

"Young people have energy, optimism, and hope for the future – and they are more likely to volunteer their own time to support a cause they are passionate about," Nilsen said. "But young people are also ignored or not taken seriously by decision-makers. support, they need, they will be able to lead positive change on the issues that matter most to them also think it's important that young people engage with civics and governance early in life. Society will improve if people believe they can have a positive impact. This is very important for an emerging democracy like Myanmar, especially when you consider that 46% of the population is under 25." SHIFT sent out its first call for applications in August 2019, asking youth groups to submit a short write-up in which they pitched ideas about an issue they wanted to address, plus details including how that issue impacts young people like them, their proposed solution to tackle the issue, and their initial creative ideas to raise awareness. SHIFT selected three passionate youth-led groups – dubbed SHIFTERS – whose social campaigns it would fund. These were Air Quality Yangon, formed to educate people about air pollution; Young City Shapers, who find sustainable solutions to address waste disposal; and Colorful Girls, who conduct on-ground efforts to create a safer world for all girls.

Each campaign was carried out over four weeks by the youth

groups themselves, with support from the partners; Bridge, Doh Eain, Girl Determined, and World Learning Myanmar.

For its "now What You Breathe" campaign, Air Quality Yangon launched a two-part education campaign to provide science-backed information on the causes of air pollution and empower the public to act with the help of Dr Air Bear. They created Dr Air Bear, a giant white bear that represents the human lung. The first part of the campaign, Dr Air Bear traveled around the city gathering dust that slowly turned him darker to show a visual representation that the air we breathe in Yangon is dirty. The Air Quality Yangon team accompanied the bear as they traveled around the city sharing information to the general public about the man-made causes of air pollutions and its negative effects on health and environment. Dr Air Bear drew people in while the team enthusiastically shared their knowledge to the public who were mostly unaware of this issue. The second part of the campaign focused on encouraging people to change their pollution-causing behaviors, especially by using public transportation or walking instead of driving. An online pledge to use more public transportation was also launched garnering over 1,000 pledges promising to make significant changes

Additionally, the group sought to make up for the lack of public air quality statistics by setting up their own air quality monitoring stations around the city and making data available on their website. Following the Dr Air Bear campaign, the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology began sharing daily Air Quality Index data. "Many people are very knowledgeable and active about the environment," AQY member Thin Thinzar Soe said. "But when it comes to air pollution, they may not have discussed the fore due to a lack of information. The idea of this

movement is to give people the information and data they need to understand the issue and how bad it has become, so hopefully we can motivate them to take action about it."

Young City Shapers, a group by NGO Doh Eain, brought together 500 local residents with YCDC officials to transform a trash-filled alley into a cooperative public space with outdoor furniture hand-made from recycled materials. It set up meetings and activities, created a youth committee dedicated to maintaining the public space, and gave a speech at the screening day on the importance of reducing waste as a community. Additionally, YCS's #plastictimeoff hashtag on social media involved around 100 participants including activists and celebrities to advance the idea of cutting daily plastic use and showing the potential for a zero-waste lifestyle.

Zwe Ye Yint from Young City Shapers said "Disposable plastic is everywhere around us, sallowing up the Earth as a result of how we use it in our daily lives. Even a small step like the choice to avoid plastic once a day can make a difference and begin a cycle of change that supports a return to a healthier lifestyle.

Over the course of January 2020, a group of SHIFTERS from the NGO Girl Determined tackled the problem of harassment with an empowering song titled "Colorful Strength," written in collaboration

with local artist Youn Ni Ko, based on input from members about their experiences which was gathered from the 3-day workshop. They have released the song online and performed it for the first time in front of an audience over 600 people from Mandalay villages. The activity gained involvement from numerous celebrities, as well as interviews on radio stations and broadcast media.

"Our hope with Colorful Strength is to start a conversation about a common yet damaging behavior that affects most girls at some time in their lives. As an organization, we want to invite everyone to join our constant effort to create a safer world for all girls," said Nan Thazin Min, co-founder of Girl Determined.

SHIFT's plans for 2020 involve seeking out more passionate youth groups and build campaigns around them this year. Any youth who is interested to be a participant next year can follow SHIFT page for more upcoming information.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED.

MNL II: Myawady FC break consecutive wins of Junior Lions

MYAWADY FC broke the repeated win record of Junior Lions FC, which has already garnered six consecutive winning results in the Myanmar National League II match, in the competition played at Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Myawady beat Junior Lions by a narrow 2-1 result.

The winning goals for Myawady were scored by strikers Kaung Sithu and Phone Kyaw Zin.

Myawady FC got their opener just at 2 minutes, marked by striker Kaung Sithu.

After 1-0, Myawady FC changed their style of play to completely defensive and that caused the difficult attack to the youth strikers of Junior Lions FC.

The first half was ended by a goal leading by Myawady.

The second half saw blocking play of the Myawady FC players but they relied on counter-attacks.

Upon the misunderstanding of the Junior Lions defenders, Myawady converted their opportunity into a goal.

Myawady's striker Phone Kyaw Zin netted their second goal at 76 minutes.

After 2-0, Junior Lions changed their tactic with youth star Min Khant Maung coming into the team.

Substituted Min Khant Maung scored the team's healing goal just before the match ended but the team got no enough time for their equalizer.



A player from Myawady FC (red) dribbles the ball past Junior Lion players during yesterday's MNL II match at Padonmar Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNL**

With this winning score, Myawady FC is standing in the third place with six wins and

one loss of 18 points and Junior Lion FC is currently at the first with the same point and goal

differences with Myawady and second-placed team, Chinland FC. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Rakhine United's Thet Tun Aung to miss match against Ayeyawady

OWING to his exclusive offense, Thet Tun Aung, defend-

er of the Rakhine United, will miss the upcoming Week-10

of Myanmar National League 2020 match against Ayeyawady

United, according to the statement by the Myanmar National League.

The Rakhine United vs Magwe FC match will be played at 4 pm on 25 March at Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon.

The reason the defender will miss the match against Ayeyawady United is because he was fined three yellow cards in the previous national league matches.

Thet Tun Aung is a reliable defender of the Rakhine United and he has played all nine matches for his team.

Currently Rakhine United stands in the fifth place with 15 points earning and Ayeyawady United is still garnering the second place with 23 points secured.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Defender of the Rakhine United Thet Tun Aung carries the ball during a previous MNL match. **PHOTO: MNL**

Fixtures released for Week-11 of U-21 MNL

THE match fixtures for Week-11 of the Myanmar National League (U-21) 2020 were released yesterday, according to the statement by the Myanmar National League.

Yangon United will take on Shan United U-21 at Yangon United Sports Complex at 4 pm today. Sagaing United U-21 will play with Southern Myanmar U-21 at Padonmar Stadium on the same day at the same time.

At the same time on the same day, Rakhine United play against Magwe FC at Salin Stadium in Yangon.

Another interesting match today is Yadanarbon U-21 FC will meet Myawady FC at South Dagon Stadium.

On 23 March at 4 pm, ISPE FC will play Chinland FC at Padonmar Stadium and Chin United will meet Ayeyawady United at Salin Stadium. Silver Stars FC will play with Hantharwady United at the same time on the same day.

Next, Kachin United will compete with Yaw Myay FC at 4 pm on 24 March at South Dagon Stadium and Zwegapin United Vs University FC at University Stadium will be played at 4 pm on 21 May, the Myanmar National League stated. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Man United, Man City unite to help Manchester food banks

LONDON: Manchester United and Manchester City have joined forces to donate a combined £100,000 (US\$117,000) to help local foodbanks affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Collections are normally made at home games for both Manchester giants by fans' groups supporting foodbanks, but football in England is suspended until at least Apr 30 due to restrictions on mass gatherings due to

coronavirus.

"We are proud of the role our supporters play in helping local food banks and recognise the increased strain likely to be placed on these charities by the impact of coronavirus," the clubs said in a joint statement.

"At a time of challenge for our community, we are pleased to come together with our fans to help vulnerable members of society in a City United."

The donation will support the Trussell Trust's 19 foodbank centres in the Greater Manchester area.

United have been taken steps to try to alleviate the burden on their staff and supporters during the crisis.

The Red Devils have vowed to pay 3,000 casual staff for the remainder the season even if matches at Old Trafford are forced behind closed doors or

cancelled.

And fans who travelled to Austria for the Europa League last 16, first leg against LASK only for the game to be played behind closed doors at late notice were given a £350 (\$415) payment towards travel and accommodation.

Britain ramped up its response to the pandemic on Friday by ordering pubs, restaurants, cafes and gyms to close.—AFP ■

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Global New Light of Myanmar

NEXT GENERATION PLATFORM

22 MARCH 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Why we need a Not-to-do list?



By Kyal Sin Phu
3rd Year Honours Student
(English Specialization)
University of Yangon

In present-day society, we, human beings, are usually leading hectic lives, having tight schedules and working from sunrise to sunset since we no longer confine ourselves to only a particular career. Apart from our primary careers, most of us have secondary jobs, working part-time or freelance. It is true that on a daily basis, we all have to struggle to get all our work and duties done in time. As a result, we tend to think that we are always occupied and overloaded with excessive amounts of work, family commitments and social responsibilities. Having so many things to do makes us feel stressed and exhausted. And, we often feel that we have insufficient time to deal with the workload.

One conventional way that most of us use to manage our time so as to improve our efficiency and productivity is keeping a to-do list. In our to-do list, we write down the tasks we need to accomplish together with the deadlines, ordering the tasks and chores in terms of priorities: from the most urgent ones to less important ones. I, myself, also keep a daily, weekly and monthly to-do list like the others to complete my tasks. However, despite having a to-do list, it occasionally happens to us that we cannot cope with the work as planned, and some tasks are left unfinished. At first, I cannot figure out why it happens and how to solve this problem. However, when I read a book named **"Life Leverage"** written by Brian Tracy, I came to realize that our to-do list fails because of not having a Not-to-do list. Thus, in this article, I would like to share some insights I have learnt from this book, i.e. why we should also keep a Not-to-do list and what we ought to put in the list.

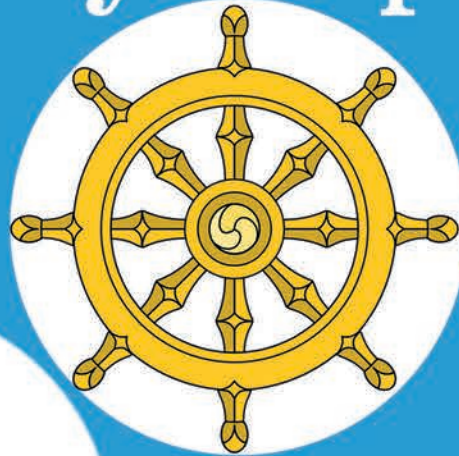
1. Using Social Media

We cannot deny that we are more likely to be distracted by social media like Facebook while we are working or studying online. For example, while searching online reading materials, students tend to enter social networking sites unintentionally and get stuck in checking notifications, replying to comments, chatting, or reading the posts on newsfeed there. In this way, they unconsciously spend a significant proportion of their time on using social media. As negative consequences, they cannot finish their assignments as planned although they have exhausted their time. Therefore, we should put using social media in our Not-to-do list in order to improve efficiency and productivity.

SEE PAGE-S-3



Shelters which you can choose in the world as your preference



By S. Shwe Lin Yaung
B.Sc, Patheingyi University

A man has to be associated with the one which is called 'Shelter' in some way. I think no one is not associated with the shelter. The meaning of shelter is safety, warmth, and interdependence. It is necessary for a man to be able to grasp the suitable and good shelter when he or she turns to the ages of a sense. That is why he or she has to pass the life which is tied with the principles of the society. There are several kinds of shelters such as the shelter of trees, that of parents, that of good kings, that of the Lord Buddha, that of teachers, etc. For an ordinary person, if he or she passes the life as an ordinary human being, he or she should stand his or her life by earning with the worldly knowledge.

Among the above mentioned five kinds of shelters, the shelter of trees is beneficial for human beings. It can give the coolness to the ones who are tired of hard work or who are hot with the glare of the sun or who are tired of their long exhausting travel. However, such coolness is temporary for the shelter-taking ones because they will not get it when they leave the shelter. It cannot be permanent for the ones although it is beneficial.

The shelter of the parents can also give the children warmth and safety. Caretaker parents will surely nurture their sons and daughters as long as they are in existence following their duties. Naturally, parents try their best for their children since they came into the world.

They prepare and arrange their children's food, shelter, clothing, and education. For the children, they need to follow the route which their parents prepared and arranged ahead of time so that they can be able to walk their lives in convenience. However, some parents are hard in earning their living and cannot be able to make the preparation and arrangement for their kids as there are in the hand-to-mouth situation. In such circumstances, the essence of life for the children is also rather harsh. Nevertheless, the shelter of parents cannot be the permanent safety for the children as they cannot be able to live in the world as long as their children do.

What is more, the shelter of the good kings is essential for a State. The State will prosper only when there is a great monarch who rules according to the ten precepts incumbent of him. The State will be like hell when it is ruled by a bad king. Although it is important for a person to encounter the governance of a good king, it is really scanty to have such kings in the world these days. Therefore, it is impossible for human beings to have permanent safety and warmth.

The shelter of the Lord Buddha is greatly beneficial for all individuals. The loving-kindness of the Lord Buddha is limitless for all living things. The Dharma of the Lord Buddha

always leads to the essence of life. For the people who are in the atmosphere of the way to escape from the world's desires and attachments, living in accordance with the admonition of the Lord Buddha and living under His shelter is the best. However, such people are a few in numbers and the remaining are still in the atmosphere of the secular world. For them, they cannot depend upon the shelter of the Lord Buddha. The shelter of the Lord Buddha can indicate a man up to the end of the trip of the cycle of rebirth but most people cannot always rely on it. Although it is the safest and noblest shelter, as people are puzzled with the worldly customs and traditions, it is like that they cannot make good progress.

The shelter of teachers is greatly significant. Teachers are like gardeners who teach the knowledge to the pupils. Knowledge can be wisdom later. Wisdom is like the gold pot that cannot be stolen by anyone. Learning the knowledge since young is the surest warranty for the future of one's life. Everyone has to dig up the gold pot which will be together with them for years.

In reality, the benefits of the five shelters mentioned above can give remarkable advantages to everyone. It is the reader's choice that one will rely upon which one because it is not possible for a man who cannot live alone without any dependence.



Job is my only golden opportunity

By Kyaw King



When the alarm rang, Ko Naung knew that it was 6:00 am and time to get up. Unlike other morning, he wasn't happy to go work. But after he had brushed his teeth, washed his face and had breakfast, he went to the job he loves and has worked since 2009.

In 2009, a year after Cyclone Nargis hit his native place, their business went worse and that led his two younger sisters to drop out of school too. Ko Naung being only a male sibling in his family moved to Yangon, together with his parents and sisters in order to earn a better living. He hired a hut in a squatter ward in Hlinethaya.

His childhood friend working in a factory in Hlinethaya helped him get a job soon after he arrived. A few months later, his two younger sisters also got jobs at different garment factories. Their elder sister took care of their parents and prepared meals for them day-to-day. They saved their salaries and bought the hut they were staying three years later. Although it was a squatter ward, the business of buying and selling land plots and houses in that area were getting well.

Although their family members are not rich and educated, their family members love each other and happy. Their neighbours have very little education and some even have no formal education. Therefore, most of the words they everyday use are offensive and abusive. Their houses also have no toilet, no electricity, and even no water to use and drink. Instead of a toilet, they discard their wastes at the back of their huts. For water, only some houses have tube well. The remaining

houses go the wells and have to carry water. There is also no monastery and also church at the place. The government schools for children are also far from them.

In the morning on 5 March, with happiness, Ko Naung went to the factory to work and receive salary. In the afternoon, his friend, told him that their boss fled from the factory. At first, he didn't believe. But later, they went to the boss's room and didn't see their boss. The staff's hopes for getting their salary faded away with what they saw. Ko Naung felt sad, but he saw many people who are more vulnerable than him. He consoled them, and returned from the factory late.

In the evening, he didn't go back home directly. Now, his elder sister is the only sibling who is living with him and his patents. His two younger sisters got married three years ago. Then, the whole family depends only on his salary. He knew that his elder sister was waiting for him. The happiest moments in his life are the periods when he gave salary to his elder sister who manage the home.

Though he is in his late thirties and his sister is in early forties, they don't get married so that they can take care of their parents. Since he arrived in Yangon, I didn't go so many places and worked only at the one factory. He tried hard at his job, and he doesn't even know how to find another job.

The next day, he knew that his company went bankrupt. It is not sure whether their salaries and compensations are to get or not. He arrived at the home around 1:00 pm on that night. He didn't know how to tell the situation to his elder sister.

His elder sister was waiting for him to have

dinner when he arrived. Their parents are in bed. He took a bath and sat for diner. He ate rice and curry in silence. His sister asked, "Are you feeling sad," "Don't feel sad and depressed, life is sometimes like this." "I already heard about your factory."

Although his elder sister said not to worry and feel sad, he isn't happy like past time. I went asleep unhappy.

He got a dream that night. In his dream, he says to his friend, "I want to get a new job."

The next mornings, he went to his friend's house and spent his time with his friend. He often says to his friend, "I don't feel sad growing up poor, but now I feels sad because I won't have any job at present to support my family." "Job is my only golden opportunity for supporting my family."

Amid the coronavirus, it is a hard time to get a new job, especially by those like he who have a little formal education.

He went back home late, and tried to act happy in front of his sister and parents. So far it was more than two weeks when he was jobless.

Every night, he still regularly screams in his dream "I want to get a new job." "This is my only golden opportunity."



FROM PAGE S-1

2. Emails and Phone Calls

While we are studying or working, we may receive incoming calls or emails. In this situation, instead of replying to emails right away, or answering the phone and talking on it for a long time at the expense of working on our assigned tasks, it is a good idea to request the sender of email or the

one who dials by saying "I am currently working. Can I get back to you a moment later after my work if it is not that urgent?" Then, we should focus on our work first. Only after the tasks are completed, we should deal with emails and phone calls.

3. Procrastination

The third factor that should be in

our Not-to-do list is procrastination, which basically means the act of delaying or postponing something that must be done. Probably because of laziness or lack of interest or motivation we, human beings, have a tendency to put off working. Thus, to beat procrastination, we should imagine a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment we will have once we get all the work done and get

down to the work as soon as possible.

In conclusion, it is a good idea to keep both To-do list and Not-to-do list, accomplishing the to-do tasks one after another without being distracted by not-to-do things. In this way, we will be able to boost efficiency and productivity of work, and yield better results.





Myanmar's last generation of tattooed headhunters

By Richard Sargent (AFP)



For the Naga in Myanmar's far north, tattoos can signify tribal identity, life accomplishments or the completion of a rite of passage

Many of the Naga tribes in Myanmar's far north have grisly histories. PHOTOS: AFP

Ngon Pok remembers his father and grandfather returning triumphantly to his tribal village in Myanmar's far north with a human head -- and the agony of the tattoo he was given to celebrate their victory. He is a proud member of the Lainong, one of dozens of Naga tribes -- many with grisly histories -- wedged in a semi-autonomous zone near the Indian border.

Ngon Pok, who believes he's around 80, gestures to his six-year-old grandson, saying he must have been about the same age when he received his tattoo. "People had to catch me and hold me down," he tells AFP, removing his jumper to reveal his chest adorned with parallel, vertical stripes and two warrior figures. Tribes and villages commonly waged war over land, and there are reports of warriors



Tribes and villages in Myanmar's far north commonly waged war over land, and there are reports of warriors hacking off their enemies' heads for trophies as late as the 1960s.



Few among the Naga in Myanmar's far north seem to lament the passing of a tattooing tradition that will soon be lost forever.

anmar, their villages so remote Christianity only made inroads here in the 1970s. The Konyak village of Longwa actually straddles the border, set on a high ridge commanding a view of both countries and is the seat of the tribe's king, whose house symbolically lies directly on the frontier. Only a handful of the village's former headhunting warriors remain, sporting formidable tattoos that cover much

Naga rarely wear the traditional tattoos associated with headhunting, but there are exceptions. Ku Myo, 35, says her parents were less than impressed after she came home aged 15 with her face tattooed. "I did it without them knowing and they beat me when they found out," she says, admitting she too would be furious if her children exhibited



Naga tribes in Myanmar's far north subscribe to a complex patchwork of customs, blending animist beliefs with various forms of Christianity brought by missionaries in recent decades -- and intertwining their warrior traditions.



The Naga tribes in Myanmar's far north would use a thorn to drive tree sap under the warrior's skin to ink a permanent reminder of his headhunting prowess -- and his family would often follow suit.

hacking off their enemies' heads for trophies as late as the 1960s. To celebrate, a thorn would be used to drive tree sap under the warrior's skin to ink a permanent reminder of his headhunting prowess -- and his family would often follow suit. Ngon Pok's wife, aged about 75, says she chose to have the

geometric designs etched on her arms, legs and face as a teenager. "It was so painful," Khamyo Pon Nyun remembers, hoisting up her skirt to expose her legs. "But I told myself if my mum and my aunts could do it then so could I," she says, adding with a smile that -- unlike

her husband -- she did not need to be restrained to withstand the pain. **Naga nationalism** The Naga consist of dozens of tribes in a region so isolated that neighbouring villages often speak completely different languages and dialects.

Divided between India and Myanmar by a border many deem as artificial, today a proud sense of nationalism unites the disparate tribes. This is one of the poorest corners of Myanmar, where many must walk for days to reach the nearest town, few children beyond primary school education and only 40 percent of villages boast electricity.

People subscribe to a complex patchwork of customs, blending animist beliefs with various forms of Christianity brought by missionaries in recent decades -- and intertwining their warrior traditions. American anthropologist and author Lars Krutak has travelled the world studying tribal tattoos, including among the Naga. "What strikes me as unique is the diversity of Naga tattooing patterns," he says, adding there are more than 20 tribes that tattoo across both sides of the border. They can signify tribal identity, life accomplishments or the



The Naga live in one of the poorest corners of Myanmar, where many must walk for days to reach the nearest town.

completion of a rite of passage. In some cases, people believed they would need the designs to transition to the afterlife, Krutak explains. **Gory tradition** One of the most feared tribes was the Konyak, now divided between India and My-

of their faces in dark blue ink with skull-like patches left bare around the eyes. Houn Ngo Kaw, 75, claims he helped put an end to the gory tradition in his village after he converted to Christianity in 1978 and admits "it's better now." Younger generations of

the same rebellious streak. But few seem to lament the passing of a tradition that will soon be lost forever. "I wanted to be one of the last tattooed warriors and I am," Konyak elder Houn Ngo Kaw says with a huge grin. "Of course I'm happy!"



SUNDAY COMICS

Mi Chuu
HTOO

Watch out! Phoethar. Don't go near the roadside gutter.

Step back! I've dropped my toy.

Mama Chwe will get it back. It seemed to drift in the current.

Eh! Found it. You see the toy.

I've got it. Here is your toy.

It's not mine!

Mine is a red power ranger. I don't want this junk.

Bang!

Eh!

PEOPLE WILL BE PEOPLE
Cartoon Maung Shwe Win

I didn't see you didn't go out, did you?

Yes.

I couldn't eat nor sleep at night.

Worries pressure me.

I don't want to see anyone either.

I don't dare go out!

How scared this infectious disease! It's better not to go out.

It's nothing to do with it. Just hiding for fear of creditor.

SUNDAY JOKE
Cartoon Maung Maung Aung 2020

Grandma! Are we going to sell something for home income?

Stop it! It couldn't be as every house's selling.

We'll lose what we have.

We'll sell what others don't have.

What! Let me hear from you.

It's 'Cetana' < benevolence >.

It's seldom nowadays customers get 'Cetana'.

That's right!

END

Healthy Food for a Healthy Lifestyle



By Phyu Min
BA (English); Dip in ELTM;
Dip in English.

We all know that health is the most important and valuable thing in life. Everybody wants to be healthy, but they may not take care of their health. However, we know the value of health only when we get ill. Health is not given to us as a gift. To be healthy, we must do several things.

One of the things to keep us healthy is eating healthy food. In fact, food is one of our basic needs. No one can live without food. But not all foods are good for health. Although some foods are delicious to eat, they may not be good for health. So, we have to know what is healthy food and what is unhealthy food. Unhealthy food can be harmful to our health while healthy food can give us good health. Thus, we should be careful of what we are going to eat so that we can live a healthy life. In fact, a healthy lifestyle is based on healthy food. Hence, we should eat healthy food for a healthy lifestyle since healthy food gives us strength and energy to lead a healthy life.

There are some groups of food we eat every day. These include different kinds of vegetables, fruits, meat, rice and home-made snacks and drinks. We must eat our food properly and regularly. The most important

point is that we must eat fresh and healthy food. To live a healthy life, we need protein, vitamins and minerals, that is, we must eat food that is rich in proteins, vitamins and minerals. Generally speaking, meat, fish, eggs and milk give us protein. Different types of vitamins can be obtained by eating various kinds of vegetables – green, yellow or red and fruits. Milk gives us not only protein but also calcium, one of the essential minerals, which makes the bones strong. Most of the vegetables and fruits give us vitamins and minerals. So, there is a saying, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”.

On the other hand, some foods are harmful to our health even though they may be tasty. Food that contains a lot of fat is not a healthy food. Fat causes hazard to our health. The half-baked food, the staple food and the over-ripe fruits are not healthy food. To eat healthy food, it must be fresh and nutritious. Furthermore, the cooking style is important to prepare healthy food. If we use too much oil or salt or monosodium glutamate in cooking meat and vegetables, it will not be a healthy food. If we eat them, we may suffer from diabetes and blood pressure.

Moreover, some foods are prepared in a wrong way, some are treated with chemicals. When we take them carelessly, we may get some diseases rather than strength. Therefore, we should also avoid chemical dyed food. These foods are harmful to our health. When someone is unhealthy, all family members and friends are unhappy and busy. As a result, healthy food is important for a healthy lifestyle.

In conclusion, when we are healthy, we can enjoy happiness and have no worries. One of the requirements to enjoy good health is eating the healthy food. Healthy food is very important in our daily life. Unless we eat the right kind of food, we won't be healthy and happy in life. Otherwise, we may suffer from some diseases and we cannot enjoy life. For these reasons, we should understand the importance of healthy food for a healthy lifestyle.

