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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Monday, 30 March 2020

## BPI factory doubles sanitizer, ethanol production

**BPI** PHARMACEUTICAL Factory (Insein) in Yangon is doubling production of hand sanitizers and ethanol to meet market demand amid COVID-19. Factory Manager Dr Khin Pyone Lwin said ethanol can be purchased freely in the pharmacy in front of the factory but hand sanitizers will be limited to one bottle per person, all at the factory imposed price with no increase.

The hand sanitizers and ethanol produced at the BPI factory meets GMP guidelines and is continued to be sold at normal prices, according to factory officials. Dr Khin Pyone Lwin said they are producing the pharmaceuticals in line with directives from the Ministry of Health and Sports, including antibiotics. Factory workers are also working under increased rotational shifts to meet production demands.

The BPI factory in Insein Township produces more than 180 different pharmaceutical products. Their hand sanitizers come in 50ml, 500ml and 4Litre bottles while ethanol is packaged in 100ml and 500ml bottles.

The presence of COVID-19 has caused imported and domestically produced hand sanitizers and ethanol to be completely purchased out of the market. —Min Thit (MNA) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Workers producing hand sanitizer at the BPI factory in Yangon. PHOTO: NAY LINN



### Public places, religious buildings in Kawthoung disinfected to prevent COVID-19

DISINFECTION of public places and religious buildings in Kawthoung, the border town with Thailand, was carried out

by spraying of disinfectant yesterday.

in Thailand, three border gates between Thailand's Ranong and Kawthoung have been closed since 20 March. Thai authorities announced that it will suspend the crossing of the goods and the vehicles carrying the persons via border checkpoints until the situation returns to normal. — Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

A jetty in Kawthoung, a border town with Thailand, is being disinfected yesterday. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)

A medical team from local No. 13 100-Bed Hospital of the Tatmadaw sprayed disinfectant in three monasteries, two mosques, one church and one Hindu Temple, and public places including jetties and bus terminals. Amid Coronavirus outbreak

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# SWRR ministry discusses needs in COVID-19 prevention



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye holds the video conferencing on COVID-19 yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye led a coordination meeting on COVID-19 yesterday.

Held with a video conference, the meeting was attended by Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, the Director-General of the Disaster Management Department and directors from Nay Pyi Taw Council and the other states and regions.

In his address, the Union Minister first thanked the staff for disseminating useful information and providing assistance in cooperation with the Ministry of Union Government Office and the Ministry of Health and Sports.

He said the departments

need to continue cooperation so that the public will fully understand the need for community-based facility quarantine of people returning from abroad.

He said staff members spreading COVID-19 awareness in IDP camps need to wash their hands regularly and acquire sufficient face masks and hand sanitizers and requested the state/regional administrators to address that fact.

Next, the Deputy Minister explained the directives issued by the national central committee to be followed by Nay Pyi Taw Council and the states/regions and to continue cooperation with local civil society organizations

from previous natural disaster mitigation processes.

The meeting also discussed the requirements in implementing processes related to IDPs and people returning from abroad and the need for decisive action and support, to which the Union Minister, Deputy Minister, Director-General and concerned officials replied.

In his closing speech, the Union Minister said the ministry will swiftly fulfill requirements in the field and called for increased cooperation between departments for providing counseling services to returnees in facility quarantine.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Water, disinfectants sprayed in Pabedan Township

WATER and disinfectants were sprayed in Pabedan Township, the downtown of Yangon, yesterday to prevent Covid-19.

The community disinfections were made along Bosoopat Street, 29th Street, 30th Street and Shwebontha Street.

The administrators of re-

spective wards led the disinfections with the participations of volunteers and the members of YCDC and Fire Services Department.

Disinfections were also carried out at the religious buildings, roadside pavements, corners of ladders at the apart-

ments and schools.

Some townships in Yangon began disinfection works in the third week of March as a preventive measures against Covid-19 pandemic.—Nyunt Ko Ko

(Translated by Aung Khin)



People disinfecting the street in Pabedan Township, Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG

## The Statement of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) on the status of its handling of complaints Statement No. (2/2020)

1. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission was reconstituted under Order No. 3/2020 dated 14 January 2020 of the Office of the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2. Since the commencement of its functions until February 2020, the Commission has received a total of 377 complaints and its inquiry team has examined 693 complaints, including the previous 316 complaints remaining to be addressed, at its 14 meetings and acted as follows:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| (a) Referring to relevant departments and organizations                                    | 69 cases  |
| (b) Advising the complainants on more appropriate remedies and other channels of complaint | 43 cases  |
| (c) Visits to scenes of violations   | 3 cases   |
| (d) Putting on record  | 207 cases |
| (e) Number of remaining cases to be examined   | 371 cases |

3. 207 complaints that do not warrant action are those under trial before a court, those cases under appeal or revision on the decision of any court, cases that have been finally determined by any court, complaints that do not meet admissible criteria and those cases that have been resolved before by the Commission. Accordingly, those cases are systematically recorded.

4. Regarding the complaints that had been referred to the relevant departments and organizations for necessary inquiry and action, 97 responses from respective departments and organizations have been received up to February 2020 as follows:

- |                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| (a) Response to complaint in 2017   | 1 response   |
| (b) Responses to complaints in 2018 | 4 responses  |
| (c) Responses to complaints in 2019 | 89 responses |
| (d) Responses to complaints in 2020 | 3 responses  |

5. To submit complaints or allegations on violations of human rights, a written complaint may be submitted in person or by registered mail and express mail to 27 Pyay Road, Hlaing Township, Yangon. Complaints may be submitted by fax or email to Fax No. 01-654678 and emails: info@mnhr.org.mm and protection@mnhr.org.mm.

6. The name of the complainant, copy of national registration card, contact address, how human rights were violated and clear and full explanation of the circumstances leading to the instance shall be necessary together with the complaint signed by the complainant. If necessary, copies of documents relevant to the circumstances of the instance, photos, voice files, video files shall be attached in full with the complaint as evidence.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission  
Date: 30 March 2020

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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# “People are the key”

## MoHS calls for public participation, understanding in measures against COVID-19

THE Ministry of Health and Sports organized the 44/2020 coordination meeting in video conferencing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, linking with regional level health authorities, to discuss updated measures against the Covid-19.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe first appreciated the strenuous efforts of health officials across the country in containment measures against the pandemic, and acknowledged effectiveness of regular video conferencing.

He advised to send medicines and medical items to the respective areas immediately.

The Union Minister asked to report updated numbers of

persons affected by the travel restrictions, the health conditions of quarantined persons and activities of health workers.

Myanmar has 8 confirmed cases and over 470 persons closely contacted with them.

He emphasized importance of coordination to avoid misunderstanding among the respective sectors as all the health workers are performing their massive tasks.

The Union Minister stressed to list the restricted areas with the returnees from Thailand, participation of locals in community based facility quarantine programme and assistance of central level to the areas such as Kaying State, Mon State and



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe attends the coordination meeting through video conferencing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Yangon Region, with a large number of returnees from foreign countries.

Health authorities also reported the updated numbers of quarantined persons in respec-

tive regions and states, legal action against a person who fled from quarantine, operating a call centre, establishing more designated hospitals for quarantine, requirement of rapid diagnosis

test kits approved by the FDA of the United States, setting up a public health laboratory in Mandalay and distribution of PPEs.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Chickpea demand up as local consumption rises

THE sale of chickpea has increased due to its local consumption going up amid the Covid-19, according to a merchant from Mandalay.

“Farmers mainly grow the peas for local market, and its early yields in January fetched K 72,000 per bag, and K 1,900 per viss (1 viss = 1.63kg).” said U Soe Win Myint (Soe Win Myint depot) in Mandalay.

The pea is being sold well, and fetched K 62,000 per bag and K 1,650 per viss at present, added U Soe Win Myint.

“Every Myanmar people eats chick pea. In our Mandalay, we always add chickpeas to the list of offertory to monks.” he said.

It is also an ingredient for most of Myanmar traditional snacks. Due to the pandemic, people purchased many peas, and its sale was going up, but its price didn't increase. More than a half of chick pea grinders

in Mandalay can operate now, therefore, the laborers working at the mills are doing well, he added. Daw Wah Wah Aung from Mana Aungmyay Township said, “The best vaccine for the Covid-19 is to stay at home. Therefore, our family stayed at home and cooked many kinds of curries with the stored chick peas, vegetables and fried fishes.”

Chickpea is cheap, and nutrient. At present, it is important to stay healthy amid the Covid-19, she added.

The pea is mainly cultivated for local consumption in Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway regions in only cool season. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A man packaging a sack of chickpea in a warehouse in Mandalay. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

### Update on COVID-19 surveillance

at 8:00 p.m., on 29-3-2020

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is performing surveillance on COVID-19, which is spreading globally, at entry/exit gates of international airports, in hospital settings, community-based monitoring, and in close collaboration with private hospitals.
2. There were 45 new patients under surveillance between 28-3-2020 (6 p.m.) to 29-3-2020 (6 p.m.).
3. Results from the National Health Laboratory (Yangon) will be continue to be uploaded in real time.
4. Of the 8 patients who tested positive for COVID-19, the patient at Teddim General Hospital, Chin State, the three patients at Waibargi Specialist Hospital, the patient at Kandaw Nadi Hospital, Mandalay, and the patient at Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital have stable health. The two patients at Waibargi Specialist Hospital are receiving medical care in separate isolated special units.
5. With the appearance of lab-tested COVID-19 positive cases in Myanmar, the confirmed people and anyone who have been in close contact with them are being discovered, quarantined and placed under surveillance. The public is advised to closely follow health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.



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Bago regional residents donate medical supplies to fight Covid-19

WELL-wishers in Bago Region have donated medical supplies to the regional committee on Prevention, Control, and Treatment of Coronavirus in a bid to help fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The locals started to donate medical items, which are necessary items for hospitals, on 26 March. On 28 March, the committee has received K4.8 million worth 60 backpack sprayers donated by Naylawun rice mill and warehouse family, K10 million worth 125 backpack sprayers by Kanbo Co., Ltd and 100 PPE (personal protective equipment), 400 rubber gloves, 33 medical goggles, and 120 masks by Excellent Fortune Foundation to help medical professionals and disinfect the regions.

Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein and U Nyunt Shwe, head of the regional committee on prevention, control, and treatment of COVID-19 gave



Well-wishers present the medical supplies to the regional committee on Prevention, Control, and Treatment of Coronavirus in Bago yesterday. PHOTO: TIN SOE (BAGO)

the certificates of honour to the donors.

As of 28 March, a total of 2,337 Myanmar nationals have returned to the region from

foreign countries, with 1,577 in Bago District, 128 in Pyay District and 632 in Thayawady District. Now, 1,103 are placed in home quarantine and 1,230,

in facility quarantine. Four people are isolated at each hospital. —Tin Soe (Bago) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Dala markets regularly cleaned, disinfected

THE Yangon City Development Committee sprayed disinfectants in Aung Zeya and Kamakasi markets in Dala Township and cleaned the area for a second time yesterday.

The task was headed by the township development administrator U Kyaw Aung and market head officer U Aung Lwin and done together with development committee members and market staff.

U Aung Lwin Oo said they are working hard to keep the markets open and regularly disinfect the markets and clean all trash from them. He said while the morning and night markets will remain open as normal, they will be closed on the upcoming Myanmar New Year's day and full moon day. He added that they



Officials spraying disinfectants near Aung Zeya market in Dala yesterday. PHOTO: MAING LINN KYAW (DALA)

are ready to close the markets if instructed to due to an emergency situation with COVID-19.

U Kyaw Aung also added that they will notify the public in advance if the markets were to

shut down.—Maing Linn Kyaw (Dala) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Illegal drugs seized in Phaungpyin Tsp

THE Drug Enforcement Division arrested two men identified as Maung Yon and Min Wai near Hman Taung Kaing forest

reserve, Phaungpyin-Pinlebu road, Phaungpyin Township, on 28 March after discovering 0.55 kilo of heroin on them. A case has been opened under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —Police Information Unit



Suspects named Maung Yon and Min Wa seen with illegal drugs. PHOTO: MPF

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



## Myanmar exports over 4,400 tons of chickpeas though prices slump

MYANMAR has exported more than 4,400 tons of chickpeas to India, Pakistan, UAE, Turkey, and other foreign markets as of the second week of March since January this year.

At present, the prices of chickpeas plunge by K10,000 per bag compared to a-month ago period, owing to the drop in foreign and local millers' demand, said an official from Mandalay Commodity Depot.

"The prices fluctuate depending on supply and demand. When the peas are loaded on the ship, the prices climb up", said a trader from the Bayintnaung market.

Currently, the prices of chickpeas range between

K70,000 and K75,000 per three-basket bag depending on varieties. The price gap against last month is the lowest of K4,500 and the highest of K10,000 per bag, according to Mandalay Commodity Depot.

The chickpeas are cultivated in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing and Ayeyawady regions and Nay Pyi Taw. There are 890,000 acres of chickpeas across the country.

The peas are cultivated in October and November and they are harvested in the January-April period. More than 550,000 tons of chickpeas have been yielded so far.—Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Farmers harvesting green peas in a farm in Magwe Region. PHOTO: SOE LIN NAING

## Singapore FDI crosses US\$526 mln in Oct-Feb period

SEVEN Singapore-listed enterprises have brought in US\$526.18 million into Myanmar in the five months of the current fiscal year 2019-2020, according to data released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Singapore companies put investments into urban development, real estate, power, and manufacturing sectors.

Hong Kong topped the list of investors in the current fiscal with an estimated capital of \$1.28 billion, followed by Singapore.

Myanmar has attracted foreign direct investment of more than US\$2.788 billion between 1

October and 6 March in the 2019-2020 financial year, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises and investments of \$84.267 million in the special economic zones, DICA stated.

"Myanmar set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal, but we can't measure the impact of Covid-19 at present," MIC Secretary-cum-DG of DICA U Thant Sin Lwin noted.

According to a press statement issued recently by the DICA, 136 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the MIC and endorsements from regional and state Investment Committees in the current fiscal. Those enterprises are set to execute electricity, manu-

facturing, livestock and fishery, real estate development, hotels and tourism, and other services businesses.

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

"Myanmar is trying to attract foreign investment by providing tax relief, tax incentives, investment opportunities, and ease and fast processing of proposals. However, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations has been inviting only responsible businesses to the country," he said.

Earlier, Singapore stood

as the largest foreign investor in Myanmar since 2012, pulling in the FDI of \$2.4 billion in the last fiscal year 2018-2019, \$724.4 million in the mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$2.16 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$3.8 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, \$4.25 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$4.29 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$2.3 billion in the 2013-2014 FY and \$418 million in the 2012-2013 FY respectively.

Additionally, Singapore emerged as the second-largest foreign investor in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, after top investor Japan.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Maritime trade up \$2.27 bln in 2019-20FY

THE value of Myanmar's maritime trade for the period between 1 October and 20 March in the 2019-2020 fiscal year totalled US\$13.49 billion, an increase of over \$2.27 billion compared to the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

While maritime exports were valued at \$5.23 billion, imports were registered at \$8.25 billion. Compared to the same period in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, imports were higher by \$1.34 billion, while exports registered an increase of \$932 million. Meanwhile, the value of trade through the border crossings was estimated at \$5.19 billion, an increase of \$501.37 million.

The country's total external trade reached \$18.68 billion, which was higher than the \$15.9 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, fishery products, minerals, livestock, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other products, while it imports capital goods, consumer goods, and raw industrial materials.

The country currently has nine ports involved in sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar's maritime trade and includes the Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port.—Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Htikhee border trade falls by \$237.78 mln as of 20 March

BILATERAL trade between Thailand and Myanmar through the Htikhee border between 1 October and 20 March in the 2019-2020 financial years sharply fell to US\$973.28 million from \$1.2 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to the Commerce Ministry data.

Over the five months period, exports through the Htikhee border stood at \$959.16 million, while imports fell short of \$14 million.

Exports of natural gas from

Taninthayi Region contributed to the enormous increase in trade through the Htikhee border in the previous fiscal, said an official from the ministry.

Earlier, the Myawady border sees the largest trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. The rise in exports through the Htikhee border boosted the value of the Myanmar-Thailand border trade in the 2018-2019FY. In the current fiscal, trade values at Htikhee border surpassed those registered at Myawady border.

Of the seven border trade points between Myanmar and Thailand, Myeik and Htikhee borders have witnessed a decrease in trade in the current financial year, while the remaining borders have reported an increase.

Trade values stood at \$68.58 million at Tachilek gate, \$589.34 at Myawady, \$199 million at Kawthoung, \$93.886 million at Myeik, \$973.28 million at Htikhee, \$12.6 million at Myawady and \$2.53 million at Maesei respectively according

to the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, and consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighboring country.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



## Two more confirmed cases of Covid-19, on Sunday total cases reach 10

1. Laboratory results of the National Health Laboratory (Yangon) on specimen from a total of 82 persons under investigation and quarantined persons at 9 pm 29 March 2020 has shown two positive cases of Covid-19 (Table 1), and the remaining 80 persons were tested negative.
2. The positive patient (Case-09) is the 44-year old man of Myanmar citizen living in Pale Myothit of Mingalardon Township in Yangon Region. He returned to Myanmar from Thailand via Myawady border town on 23 March 2020, and he arrived back to Mingalardon Township on

- 26 March 2020. He began suffering fever and cough on 26 March 2020, and was admitted to People's Hospital in Pale Myothit as a person under investigation. His specimens were sent to the laboratory and transferred to the Waibargi Special Hospital for medical treatments.
3. The positive patient (Case 10) is the 45-year old man of Myanmar citizen living in Mingalar Taungnyunt Township. He was closely contact with the positive patient (Case 05), and that he was taken to Waibargi Special Hospital for hospital quarantine on 28 March 2020 and his

- specimens were tested in the laboratory. He will be given medical treatments at the Waibargi hospital.
4. Both of these two positive patients are in good health conditions.
5. As Myanmar has found Covid-19 positive cases, persons in close contacts with these patients are under investigations, and restrictions are being placed. People are advised to strictly follow the awareness of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Laboratory results on Covid-19 (10: 30 pm, 29 March 2020 )

Sr	Age	Gender	Travel History in the previous 14 days	Hospital for medical treatment	Admission Date to hospital	Lab result on Covid-19
09	44 yrs	Male	Yes (Thailand)	People's Hospital in Pale Myothit, Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region	26 March 2020	Positive
10	45 yrs	Male	Nil	Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon Region	28 March 2020	Positive

- Remaining 80 PUIs are tested negative in Covid-19 lab results

## State agencies, trade bodies discuss measures on stability of market prices



Permanent Secretary U Aung Soe addresses the meeting on controlling surge in prices of goods and commodities amid COVID-19. PHOTO:MNA

OFFICIALS from state departments, trade bodies and merchant associations held talks to control surge in prices of goods and commodities amid Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19).

The meeting was held in video conferencing system at the headquarters of Ministry of Commerce, linking with its office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

U Aung Soe, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, explained the ministry's works for stability of commodity markets related to medicines, medical equip-

ment and household commodities. He said that the government is helping for smooth commodity flows, while some associations have joined with the government in these measures. The Permanent Secretary remarked Myanmar will not encounter shortage of commodities as the country is producing basic household commodities and even exporting these goods to foreign countries.

The National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

is chaired by the State Counsellor, and the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations is leading a committee to alleviate Covid-19 impacts on the economy, with the participations of other ministries. The Ministry of Commerce has set up a 'help desk' in Yangon to address difficulties in trades, and will take legal actions against making the prices hike in the markets. The meeting was attended by the officials and representatives from the Trade Department, Department of Consumer Affairs, My-

anmar Trade Promotion Organization, UMFCCI, Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealer's Association, Myanmar Food Processors and Exporters Association, Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Vegetable Producers' and Exporters Association, Myanmar Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Retailers Association, Myanmar Highway Freight Transportation Services Association, chairpersons of Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre and officials from relevant associations.

The heads of departments under the Ministry of Commerce, Custom Department, Yangon Region Government, Nay Pyi Taw City Development Committee, Yangon City Development Committee, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, Department of Civil Aviation, Myanmar Port Authority and Department of Health briefed on their plans for stability of market prices and designation of important commodities. —MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

## Rakhine State government holds coordination meeting over Covid-19



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu addresses the coordination meeting on COVID-19 in Sittway, Rakhine State yesterday. PHOTO:MNA

A coordination meeting over prevention, control and treatment of Covid-19 was held at the meeting hall of Rakhine State government in Sittway yesterday.

At the meeting, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu said to conduct timely measures for prevention, control and treatment of Covid-19, monitor those who returned from foreign countries, and accumulate required medical equipment for the prevention, control and treatment activities.

The Union Minister also said the attendees to make awareness for public's cooperation in home-quarantining the people who returned from

foreign countries.

Head of Rakhine State Public Health Department Dr Sai Win Zaw Hlaing, in his capacity as the Secretary of Rakhine State Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Covid-19, reported on the arrangements and requirements for prevention, control, and treatment of the pandemic.

Members of the Rakhine State committee also discussed the matters related to prevention, control and treatment of the Covid-19. The meeting came into conclusion following the Chief Minister's remarks. — Tin Tun (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



FAKE NEWS

# Why the Novel Coronavirus became a social media nightmare

THE biggest reputational risk Facebook and other social media companies had expected in 2020 was fake news surrounding the US presidential election. Be it foreign or domestic in origin, the misinformation threat seemed familiar, perhaps even manageable.

The novel coronavirus, however, has opened up an entirely different problem: the life-endangering consequences of supposed cures, misleading claims, snake-oil sales pitches and conspiracy theories about the outbreak.

So far, AFP has debunked almost 200 rumors and myths about the virus, but experts say stronger action from tech companies is needed to stop misinformation and the scale at which it can be spread online.

“There’s still a disconnect between what people think is true and what people are willing to share,” Professor David Rand, a specialist in brain and cognitive sciences at the MIT Sloan School of Management, told AFP, explaining how a user’s bias toward content he or she thinks will be liked or shared typically dominates decision-making when online.

Part of the reason is that social media algorithms are geared to appeal to someone’s habits and interests: the emphasis is on likability, not accuracy. Changing that would require Facebook, Twitter and other such companies to alter

what people see on screen.

Prompts urging users to consider the accuracy of content they are spreading on social networks are needed, said Rand, co-author of a study on COVID-19 misinformation that was published earlier this month.

### Deadly consequences

Using controlled tests with more than 1,600 participants, the study found that false claims were shared in part simply because people failed to think about whether the content was reliable.

In a second test, when people were reminded to consider the accuracy of what they are going to share, their level of truth awareness more than doubled.

That approach – known as “accuracy nudge intervention” – from social media companies could limit the spread of misinformation, the report concluded.

“These are the kind of things that make the concept of accuracy top of the minds of people,” said Rand, noting that news feeds are instead filled by users’ own content and commercial advertisements.

“There probably is a concern from social networking companies about accuracy warnings degrading the user experience, because you’re exposing users to content that they didn’t want to see. But I hope by talking about this more we’ll get them to take



A sign in Abidjan reads ‘Coronavirus - I check my sources before sharing news’ to warn people against fake news and misinformation about the virus. PHOTO: AFP / SIA KAMBOU

this seriously and try it.”

What is undoubted is that misinformation about the novel coronavirus has been deadly. Although US, French and other scientists are working to expedite effective treatments, false reports have appeared in numerous countries.

In Iran, a fake remedy of ingesting methanol has reportedly led to 300 deaths, and left many more sick.

Dr. Jason McKnight, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Primary Care and Population Health at Texas A&M University, said the sharing of

false information has an impact beyond the immediate risk of the virus itself.

“I have seen posts related to ‘treatments’ that are not proven, techniques to prevent exposure and infection that are either not proven and/or filled with a lot of misleading information, and instruction for individuals to stock up on supplies and food,” he said.

McKnight highlighted two types of danger posed by inaccurate information on the virus: that it “could incite fear or panic,” and “the potential for individuals to do harmful things in hope of ‘curing the illness’ or ‘preventing’

the illness.”

### ‘Immediate positive impact’

Facebook took a hammering over Russia’s interference in the 2016 US election. Having been accused on Capitol Hill of ignoring the allegations, Facebook conceded the following year that up to 10 million Americans had seen advertisements purchased by a shadowy Russian agency. As evidence mounted about how Russia had used Facebook to sow division, company CEO Mark Zuckerberg apologized.

SOURCE: AFP

## DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE

### Could privacy rights become the pandemic’s next victim?

DIGITAL surveillance and smartphone technology may prove helpful in containing the coronavirus pandemic – but some activists fear this could mean lasting harm to privacy and digital rights.

From China to Singapore to Israel, governments have ordered electronic monitoring of their citizens’ movements in an effort to limit contagion. In Europe and the United States, tech-

nology firms have begun sharing “anonymized” smartphone data to better track the outbreak.

These moves have prompted soul-searching by privacy activists who acknowledge the need for technology to save lives while fretting over the potential for abuse.

“Governments around the world are demanding extraordinary new surveillance powers intended to contain the virus’ spread,” the Electronic Frontier Foundation said in an online post.

“Many would invade our privacy, deter our free speech, and disparately burden vulnerable groups of people. Governments must show that such powers would actually be effective, science-based, necessary, and proportionate.”

SOURCE: AFP

## AFTER RUMOURS

# Virus fears spark Thailand prison riot

DOZENS of prisoners broke furniture and smashed windows during a riot in a Thai jail on Sunday sparked by fears of a coronavirus outbreak in the facility.

During the violence some convicts escaped from the Buriram prison where 2,000 are held, the justice ministry said. Seven have been arrested.

Local media showed footage of black smoke billowing from the facility in the country’s northeast.

“There was a group of prisoners trying to escape and were creating chaos... which

included burning down some facilities inside,” said Narat Sawetana, director general of the Corrections Department.

Mental health workers have been deployed to talk to prisoners “after some rumours were spread” about a COVID-19 outbreak in the prison, Major General Akkaradej Pimonsri said.

“The situation is under control,” he added.

Thailand has recorded 1,388 cases of the coronavirus, including seven deaths.

SOURCE: AFP



The coronavirus pandemic has led to the creation of apps and tracking systems using people’s smartphone location as part of the effort to limit contagion | © AFP/File | Tiziana FABRI



## Show respect to health workers at the frontlines in battling COVID-19 pandemic

**A**FTER the contact-tracing to find those people who had close contact with eight confirmed Coronavirus infected patients, over 470 people have been confined to facilities and home quarantined to prevent the possible spread of the infectious virus.

At the same time, thousands of migrant workers returned from Thailand and were advised to stay home or in designated locations for 14 days, and local authorities are enforcing the rules, in cooperation with the local people.

Physicians and all medical professionals are taking an enormous personal risk, for themselves and their families, in caring for the sick and enforcing the 14-day quarantine among those who returned from foreign countries.

In this time of crisis, local health authorities and administrative authorities are working on the frontline without days off, and all people are requested to understand that they are performing their duty under great pressure. The regulations to prevent the possible spread of Coronavirus are already in place, and the returnees are obliged to abide by these necessary 14-day stay at home or facility orders to serve public health. Violating the stay-at-home order could even result in being arrested. The health workers tasked with surveillance and enforcing 14-day quarantine regulations have been ordered to report their daily situation to officials. At the same time, the authorities have also increased the number of health workers in Kayin State, Mon State and Yangon Region, where the number of returnees from foreign countries are high.

When misunderstanding and disagreements occur between health workers, administrative authorities and the people, everyone should solve their problems through negotiation, as we all are working together for the same goal of overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

As many countries across the world have imposed lockdowns, asking residents to stay home and self-isolate, in an attempt to break the chain of transmission of the Coronavirus, our healthcare workers remain at the frontlines of battling the pandemic.

So, be patient with them. Be nice to them. And remember, they're under stress, too.

We're all in this together. And we will get through this together — with the help of our healthcare workers, who are very special and very essential people.

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## Latest Coronavirus updates from around the world

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologised to citizens for the sweeping 21-day lockdown that has brought the country of 1.3 billion people to a halt, leaving many migrant workers jobless and penniless.

### Pope joins UN appeal for global ceasefire

Pope Francis on Sunday joined UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' appeal for an "immediate global ceasefire", on the fifth anniversary of Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen's civil war.

"I join all those who have accepted this appeal and invite everyone to follow it by ceasing all forms of hostility, promoting the creation of humanitarian aid corridors, being open to diplomacy, and paying attention to the most vulnerable," the pope said in a message delivered after holding prayers.

### Saudi seizes 5 million illegally stored medical masks

Saudi authorities have seized more than five million medical masks that were illegally stockpiled amid the coronavirus outbreak, state media reported on Sunday.

The commerce ministry seized 1.17 million masks from a private store in Hail, northwest of the capital, after authorities Wednesday confiscated more than four million masks stored in a facility in the western city of Jeddah in violation of commercial regulations, the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

The ministry said people behind such activities would be prosecuted, and that the confiscated masks would be redistributed to the open market.

Pharmacies in the oil-rich kingdom have reported shortages of masks amid panic buying, as authorities warned against price hikes.



Saudi authorities have seized more than five million medical masks that were illegally stockpiled amid the coronavirus outbreak, state media reported on Sunday.

### Stranded Britons in New Zealand quoted £40,000 to fly home

Tourists are furious with the Foreign Office's failure to respond to Britons marooned on New Zealand, while other countries are moving much quicker.

While many European countries are going the extra mile to repatriate their citizens from around the world, with the German government chartering Lufthansa planes, Britons stranded in New Zealand are having to pay exorbitant prices to catch one out of only a few available flights home.

The Guardian reported that tourists are faced with flight tickets of up to £40,000 from Auckland to London. The UK embassy and consular services in New Zealand shut their doors last week, so desperate travellers stuck in the country have nowhere to go.

There are an estimated 6,000 Britons left on the island.

The newspaper quoted that a Foreign Office spokesperson was "working around the clock to support British travellers".

### Passengers transferred from virus-stricken cruise ship off Panama

Passengers on a virus-stricken cruise liner stranded off Central America were transferred to another ship Saturday, after the US-bound vessel was given permission to pass through the Panama Canal.

The Zaandam had been stuck in the Pacific Ocean since March 14 after dozens of the 1,800 people on board reported flu-like symptoms and several South American

ports refused to let it dock.

The ship's Dutch owner Holland America said Friday four passengers had died and two more had tested positive for COVID-19.

### Dutch government recalls 600,000 face masks imported from China

A large share of the 1.3 million face masks imported from China turn out to be defective.

Some 600,000 face masks distributed to hospitals across the Netherlands have been recalled for being defective, public news broadcaster NOS writes.

The FFP2 masks failed quality standards by not fitting well around mouth and nose, and obtaining over a faulty membrane, endangering health workers when treating patients.

Numerous hospitals took the initiative to test the masks themselves. "I immediately rejected those masks when they were delivered to us," one person from an affected hospital said to NOS.

### Egypt shuts hospitals, isolates villages to slow virus

Egypt has shuttered several hospitals and quarantined villages in an attempt to halt the rising infection rate of new coronavirus in the most populous Arab state.

A Cairo hospital was closed for sterilisation late Saturday after two COVID-19 cases were confirmed.

An official at Al-Salam hospital told AFP on Sunday: "We are currently disinfecting the hospital for the safety of everyone concerned. One patient had come in tested positive and a member of our staff was infected after".

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Police inspector Rajesh Babu, wearing coronavirus-themed helmet, speaks to a motorcyclist at a checkpoint set up to enforce the nationwide lockdown against Covid-19. (AFP PHOTO)

cerned. One patient had come in tested positive and a member of our staff was infected after".

### Netherlands tops 10,000 coronavirus cases

The number of confirmed novel coronavirus cases in the Netherlands passed the 10,000 mark on Sunday, the authorities said, as the country focuses on building up herd immunity rather than confining the population of 17 million.

A total of 771 people have died from the COVID-19 epidemic in the Netherlands and 10,866 have tested positive, the country's institute for public health and environment (RIVM) said.

### China reports slightly fewer imported cases

China reported 45 new coronavirus infections on Sunday, all but one of them imported from abroad. That compares with 54 cases the previous day, all imported.

After taking draconian steps to bring the virus spread under control domestically, China is now doing the same to prevent imported infections.

It announced this week it would drastically reduce the number of international flights into the country and banned foreigners from entering beginning Saturday.

### Australia limits gatherings to pairs

Gatherings will be restricted to just two people in Australia from Monday — down from the current limit of 10 — and playgrounds, outdoor gyms and skateparks will be closed across the country.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said all over-70s as well as indigenous people over 50, who are more susceptible to diseases, are now being strongly advised to self-isolate at home.

### India PM asks citizens for forgiveness

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologised to citizens for the sweeping 21-day lockdown that has brought the country of 1.3 billion people to a halt, leaving many migrant workers jobless and penniless.

"I believe that you will forgive me... I had to take some decisions which have inconvenienced you in various ways, especially my poor brothers and sisters," he said Sunday in a weekly radio address, arguing there was "no other way" to fight the virus.

### French expert says second study shows malaria drug helps fight coronavirus

The controversial French professor who believes the anti-malaria drug chloroquine can help beat the coronavirus, has claimed that

a new study he has conducted confirms its "efficiency" at combatting the virus.

But several other scientists and critics of microbiologist Didier Raoult, who heads the infectious diseases department of La Timone hospital in Marseille, were quick to cast doubt upon his findings.

### Record virus deaths in Spain as world hunkers down for long haul

Spain reported a national daily record of 838 coronavirus deaths on Sunday in a fresh warning to the world that long-term lockdowns may be needed to halt the deadly march of a disease that has claimed more than 31,000 lives.

A deluge of patients are overwhelming hospitals in Europe and the United States, now the focal points of a pandemic that is upending the global economy in unprecedented ways.

### Alcohol sale banned in Greenland's capital to reduce violence

The sale of alcohol has been banned in Nuuk to help reduce violence against children during the confinement period.

Domestic violence has been on the rise in the city since its lockdown.

SOURCES  
RTL; AFP



### Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2020)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of slight increase of day temperatures in Bago and Yangon Regions, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** Generally fair weather.

## Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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## The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy

“Our most vulnerable communities need to be able to access food and other essential household products. Our businesses need to have the confidence to re-invest and rebuild our economies. Protectionism of any sort impedes the road to recovery,” – APEC Business Advisory Council



### More economic pain for Hong Kong

Hong Kong's financial chief has predicted the global economy will contract in the first half of the year on the back of the coronavirus pandemic, and the city is unlikely to repeat the quick rebound it managed after the severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) outbreak in 2003.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po also said the city's retail sales results, expected on Tuesday, would continue to slump as the pandemic would weaken economies locally and globally in the coming months.

In an official blog post published on Sunday, the financial secretary warned the outbreak could inflict longer economic pain than Sars, because it would continue to hit economies for another year or until vaccines are ready in use in the middle of next year, as has been suggested by local health experts.

### To end trade-restrictive policies

The APEC Business Advisory Council urges APEC economies to put an end to trade-restrictive policies to help fight the COVID-19, warning protectionism of any sort impedes the road to recovery.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies must put an end to trade-restrictive policies to help fight COVID-19, the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) said on Saturday.

Such practices would hamper and delay recovery efforts if the engines of trade and investment could not be restarted quickly, Chair of ABAC Rohana Mahmood said in a statement released on Saturday.

“We urge APEC economies to announce a standstill on all new trade-restrictive measures for the rest of this year and to agree concrete actions to reduce protectionism going forward.”

“Our most vulnerable communities need to be able to access food and other essential household products. Our businesses need to have the confidence to re-invest and rebuild our economies. Protectionism of any sort impedes the road to recovery,” she said.

Rohana said ABAC has written to APEC trade and foreign ministers, urging them to lead

the way in removing trade barriers on essential tools needed to fight the outbreak, including medical equipment, medicines and basic protective items such as soap, disinfectant and personal protective equipment (PPE).

### Virus response fateful for EU

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte warned Saturday that the European Union could lose its purpose if it fails to come up with a strong response to the coronavirus threat.

that governments sell on markets to raise money and address individual economic needs.

More spendthrift nations such as Germany and the Netherlands are balking at the idea of joint debt.

### Data Exchange to Curb the Virus' Propagation

Under the impulsion of the World Health Organization and the European Union stressing the importance of data sharing, Dawex, the leading data exchange technology company, 26 March announced launching a

bilities to answer crisis-related complex questions, faster.

### Paid holidays at the expense of economic growth

Paid holidays announced by the Russian government to prevent the spread of Covid-19 will come at the expense of economic growth, but support for struggling businesses may offset the negative effects, analysts believe.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the nation to roll out emergency policies aimed at battling the deadly virus and its im-

crisis escalated, some countries decided to enforce protectionist measures, including export bans for certain products, to satisfy growing domestic demand.

“The worst that can happen is that governments restrict the flow of food,” Maximo Torero, chief economist of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, told the Guardian, adding that we may face the consequences of these steps soon. For example, Russia halted exports of buckwheat and other grains for 10 days starting from March 20. Neighboring Kazakhstan followed suit and introduced restrictions on shipments of wheat flour, buckwheat, sugar, several types of vegetables, and sunflower oil.

The UN official warns that protectionist measures and trade barriers only make the situation worse, creating “extreme volatility.”

Another problem is that some countries now lack the workforce to harvest the crops due in part to border closures and domestic lockdowns. As the coronavirus sweeps through Europe, farmers in France, Spain, and Italy complain that fruits and vegetables are quickly ripening and will be left to rot if the situation does not change, according to Bloomberg. Strawberry and asparagus growers are already unable to pick their crops, while everything from salad greens and tomatoes, to onions and peas could be next in line.

### Portugal warns of severe economic impact this year

Portugal's central bank, the Banco de Portugal (BdP), warned on Thursday that the COVID-19 pandemic would severely impact economic growth and unemployment in 2020, namely an over 3 percent reduction in Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and more than 10 percent unemployment.

“In the baseline scenario, a 3.7 percent reduction in real GDP is expected in 2020. It is assumed that the economic impact of the pandemic is relatively limited, which partly stems from the hypothesis that the measures taken by the authorities are successful in containing damage to the economy,” the BdP said in a statement.

### SOURCES

AFP; RT; SCMP; RTL; Xinhua



Flowers are stored prior to their destruction at a flower auction in Aalsmeer, Netherlands, on March 16, 2020. The Dutch horticultural sector is sounding the alarm about the effects of the coronavirus crisis. Because of the loss of demand, the auctions are struggling with low prices and the need to destroy the products. PHOTO: AFP

Conte aired his grievances after the 27 EU leaders could not agree on an action plan during an argumentative six-hour video conference Thursday and gave their finance ministers two more weeks to forge a policy that could please Italy and Spain.

The two countries hardest-hit by the pandemic blocked Thursday's statement because it did not go far enough.

The crux of the argument is about the extent to which the EU — facing what Italy views as an existential threat — should abandon its policy of keeping within tight budget constraints.

The bloc has already untied its purse strings in ways not seen since the 2008-2009 global financial crisis.

Conte argues that this is not enough.

Rome and Madrid want the EU to start issuing “corona bonds” — a form of common debt

COVID-19 Data Exchange initiative. The platform will be available pro bono to a large community of companies and organizations looking to contribute to the resolution of this crisis. The technology enables the exchange of vital non-personal data to hinder COVID-19's dissemination and restrain its economic impact.

Scientific communities, hospitals and healthcare operations, pharmaceutical organizations, retailers, transport & logistics companies, specialized equipment manufacturers and distributors, consulting organizations, technology companies and health tech startups, banks, insurance, global and regional health organizations, governmental agencies, municipalities and other public services will be able to securely and easily access, publish, and exchange multiple sources of non-personal data worldwide, therefore acquiring more capa-

impact on the economy. According to the plan, most Russians will get a week of paid leave, except those working in the medical, pharmaceutical, and banking sectors, as well as in government bodies, essential stores, and transportation.

The nationwide holidays and closures for one week could cost around two percent of GDP. In real terms, the losses may amount to over US\$28 billion, judging by last year's results, when the nation's GDP stood at around US\$1.41 trillion (109.3 trillion rubles).

### Covid-19 could trigger food shortage

If the Covid-19 infection does not get you thanks to government prevention measures, the downside is that these steps may deprive you of fresh food, including fruit and vegetables.

While people rushed to stock up on toilet paper and other supplies as the coronavirus



## S. Korea to impose mandatory quarantine for all arrivals from Wed.

SEOUL — South Korea announced Sunday that all people arriving in the country from overseas will from April have to spend two weeks in self-isolation, in a bid to curtail the influx of travelers carrying the novel coronavirus.

Prime Minister Chung Sye Kyun said the measure, which goes into effect Wednesday, will apply to all entrants to the country, regardless of nationality.

Speaking at a government meeting on COVID-19, Chung

said the move was required due to the increasing burden on the community stemming from the rising number of imported cases.

“In order to effectively prevent entry to the country for unimportant purposes, such as travel, we are expanding the compulsory quarantine measure to all foreigners coming in for short stays too,” he said.

Visitors without lodging arrangements will be required to stay in government-designated facilities at their own expense, he added.

A mandatory two-week quarantine is already in place for visitors from Europe on long-term visas and visitors from Japan.

The local health authorities on Sunday reported 105 new cases of the novel coronavirus in the 24 hours to the end of Saturday, bringing the national tally to 9,583.—Kyodo ■



A huge screen displays “COVID-19 OUT and Cheer up Korea” on March 27, 2020 in Seoul, South Korea. South Korea has called for expanded public participation in social distancing, as the country witnesses a wave of community spread and imported infections leading to a resurgence in new cases of COVID-19. PHOTO: KYODO

## Malaysia locks down 2<sup>nd</sup> COVID-19 red zone to curb virus spread

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia on Sunday announced that 3,918 residents of seven villages on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur will from midnight be placed under a complete lockdown after a religious school in the area was found to be a hotspot for the new coronavirus.

Defense Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said in a statement that the health ministry found 71 coronavirus cases among 274 students at the Maahad Tahfiz An-Nabawiyyah school in Hulu Langat district in Selangor state, just 22 kilometers from the Kuala

Lumpur city center.

“Due to the high number of cases in the school, the government, on the advice from the health ministry, decided to enforce the enhanced movement control order,” he said.

This is the second area placed under a complete two-week lockdown after one covering two small communities in Johor state and involving 3,570 residents, which started midnight Thursday.

Under the “enhanced movement control order,” access to the affected area is sealed, all busi-

nesses are shut, and residents cannot leave their homes at all.

Ismail said two weeks’ worth of food will be delivered to the residents by the welfare department.

The lockdown will affect 3,918 residents from 700 households in seven villages.

The tougher measure would allow health authorities to conduct door-to-door screening, Ismail said.

Malaysia reported 150 new infection cases nationwide Sunday, raising the national tally to 2,470 cases, the highest number in Southeast Asia.—Kyodo ■



This handout photo from Malaysia’s Ministry of Health shows health workers wearing protective suits as the second batch of Malaysian nationals, evacuated from Wuhan, arrive at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. PHOTO: AFP

## Chinese medical team arrives in Laos to help fight COVID-19

VIENTIANE — A team of Chinese medical experts, along with medical materials, arrived in Lao capital Vientiane by a chartered plane Sunday morning to assist Laos to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Somdy Douangdy, Lao deputy prime minister and chair of the Task Force Committee for COVID-19 Prevention and Control, and Chinese Ambassador to Laos Jiang Zaidong received the Chinese medical experts at the Wattay International Airport in Vientiane.

The Chinese medical team includes experts in various fields such as infection prevention and control, intensive care, epidemics, and laboratory testing. They also brought along with medical supplies.

The team came to Laos less than five days after the Lao side announced its first two confirmed

COVID-19 cases and asked for assistance from China.

Laos has detected eight confirmed COVID-19 cases as of Saturday afternoon.

When welcoming the Chinese experts, Lao Deputy Prime Minister Somdy said that the Lao side is heartfully grateful for the Chinese medical expert team’s coming only in five days after Laos confirmed COVID-19 cases. China’s gesture reflects the profound friendship from the Chinese side to the Lao people, he said.

The medical team, made up of top experts in China’s southwestern Yunnan Province, brought Chinese experiences and solutions to Laos’ epidemic prevention and control, said the Lao deputy prime minister, adding that the Lao government will coordinate and ensure all possible conveniences for the Chinese medical expert team.—Xinhua ■



Airport staff unload medical materials donated by China to Laos from a chartered plane at the Wattay International Airport in Vientiane, Laos, March 29, 2020. A team of Chinese medical experts, along with medical materials, arrived in Lao capital Vientiane by a chartered plane Sunday morning to assist Laos to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO: XINHUA

## North Korea fires two short-range ‘ballistic missiles’ into sea

SEOUL — North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Sunday, the fourth such launch this month as the world battles the coronavirus outbreak.

The string of weapons drills come as a prolonged hiatus in disarmament talks with the United States drags on, and despite recent overtures from Washington offering help to contain the pandemic.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North fired the

two projectiles, presumed to be ballistic missiles, from the port city of Wonsan into the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

“Such military action by North Korea is an extremely inappropriate act when the entire world is having difficulties due to the COVID-19 outbreak,” they added in a statement.

Tokyo’s defence ministry said the projectiles fell short of Japanese waters and the country’s exclusive economic zone.—AFP ■



## Israel's Netanyahu, Gantz see 'significant progress' toward unity govt



Former army chief Benny Gantz has agreed to join an 'emergency unity government' with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. **PHOTO: AFP**

JERUSALEM— Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his erstwhile rival Benny Gantz on Sunday announced "significant progress" in talks toward forming an emergency unity government amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Gantz, whose now fractured centrist Blue and White alliance had positioned itself as the alternative to Netanyahu in three inconclusive elections over the

past year, was elected parliament speaker Thursday.

The two men held talks through the night "aimed at establishing a national emergency government to deal with the corona crisis and the additional challenges facing the State of Israel," said a joint statement from Blue and White and Netanyahu's Likud party.

"Significant progress was made during the meeting," it add-

ed. "During the course of the day, an additional meeting will be held in order to come to a finalised agreement."

Both leaders have previously voiced support for a unity government to help combat the coronavirus pandemic, which has so far seen over 3,800 Israelis infected and claimed 12 lives in the country. Gantz was tasked with forming a government following the latest vote on March 2 — something he had been unable to do after two elections last year — and there was no guarantee he would succeed this time, given rifts within the anti-Netanyahu bloc.

The former chief of Israel's army, Gantz has amid the coronavirus crisis eased off his long-time opposition to working with Netanyahu, who faces graft charges.

Netanyahu, in office since 2009, was in January charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust, with the start of his trial delayed due to the pandemic—**AFP**■

## Trump gives up quarantine on New York, CDC issues travel advisory over COVID-19

WASHINGTON—U.S. President Donald Trump said Saturday he asked the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue travel advisory for the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, scaling back from an earlier suggestion to impose quarantine on those areas.

"On the recommendation of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, and upon consulta-

tion with the Governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, I have asked the @CDCgov to issue a strong Travel Advisory, to be administered by the Governors, in consultation with the Federal Government," Trump tweeted.

"A quarantine will not be necessary," he added. "Full details will be released by CDC tonight."

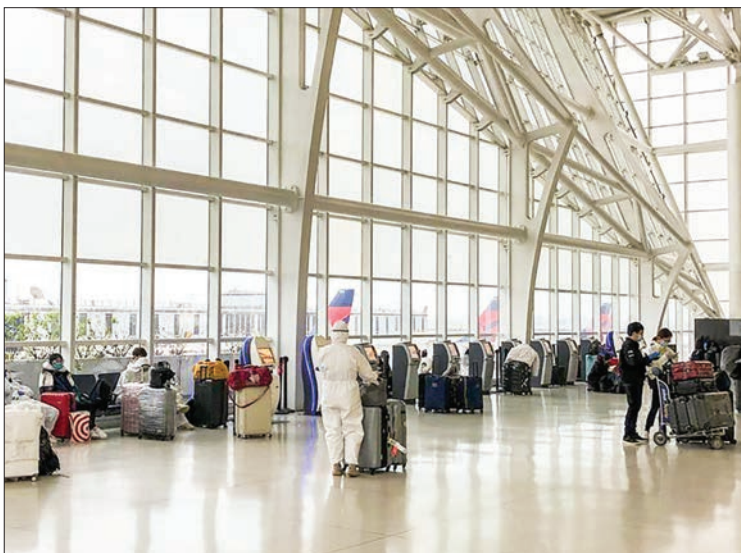
The announcement came

as the COVID-19 outbreak continued to exacerbate in the United States, with New York State having 52,318 confirmed cases — according to health authorities in the state — accounting for nearly half of the over 120,000 cases nationwide.

The CDC later posted the travel advisory for on its website, urging residents of the three states "to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days effective immediately."

"This Domestic Travel Advisory does not apply to employees of critical infrastructure industries, including but not limited to trucking, public health professionals, financial services, and food supply," it said. "These employees of critical infrastructure, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security have a special responsibility to maintain normal work schedule."

Earlier in the day, Trump said he was considering a 14-day quarantine for New York, "probably New Jersey, certain parts of Connecticut," adding the measure might not have to be taken, but "there's a possibility."—Xinhua ■



This image taken with a mobile phone on March 28, 2020 shows passengers waiting for flight check-in at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## German minister commits suicide after 'virus crisis worries'

BERLIN — Thomas Schaefer, the finance minister of Germany's Hesse state, has committed suicide apparently after becoming "deeply worried" over how to cope with the economic fallout from the coronavirus, state premier Volker Bouffier said Sunday.

Schaefer, 54, was found dead near a railway track on Saturday. The Wiesbaden prosecution's office said they believe he died by suicide. "We are in shock, we are in disbelief and above all we are immensely sad," Bouffier said in a recorded statement.

Hesse is home to Germany's financial capital Frankfurt, where major lenders like Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank have their headquarters. The European Central Bank is also located in

Frankfurt. A visibly shaken Bouffier recalled that Schaefer, who was Hesse's finance chief for 10 years, had been working "day and night" to help companies and workers deal with the economic impact of the pandemic.

"Today we have to assume that he was deeply worried," said Bouffier, a close ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel. "It's precisely during this difficult time that we would have needed someone like him," he added.

Popular and well-respected, Schaefer had long been touted as a possible successor to Bouffier.

Like Bouffier, Schaefer belonged to Merkel's centre-right CDU party.

He leaves behind a wife and two children.—**AFP** ■



Schaefer, 54, was found dead near a railway track on Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

## France steps up coronavirus evacuations from packed hospitals

PARIS— France staged Sunday its largest evacuation of coronavirus patients to date from hospitals in the hard-hit east, increasing efforts to free up intensive care units as officials brace for even more serious cases in the coming days.

Two specially modified TGV high-speed trains carried 36 patients from Mulhouse and Nancy toward hospitals along France's western coast, where the outbreak has been limited so far.

Dozens of hospital workers, flanked by police and soldiers standing guard, spent hours installing four patients in each wagon in an operation that began before dawn.

"We have to free up beds, it's absolutely crucial that we air out these intensive care units. We're still seeing an increase in patient numbers," said Francois Brun, head of emergency services at the regional hospital in nearby Metz.

The evacuations came as Germany sent a military plane for the first time to Strasbourg to bring two patients to a hospital in Ulm. In total around 80 French patients have been hospitalised in Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg, European Affairs Minister Amelie de Montchalin told France Inter radio.

She also thanked Berlin for sending France potentially life-saving ventilators "as recently as yesterday".

France has been evacuating dozens over the past week from the east, hoping to stay ahead of a crisis that Prime Minister Edouard Philippe warned would only worsen over the next two weeks.

Overall nearly 4,300 coronavirus patients are in intensive care, many with severe respiratory problems requiring ventilators that officials worry could soon be in short supply.—**AFP** ■



# Japanese airlines could see 1 tril. yen revenue fall on virus pandemic



The lack of demand for domestic flights has hit aviation firms far greater than the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, epidemic, which did not directly affect Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

TOKYO — The global coronavirus pandemic could result in a 1 trillion yen (\$9.3 billion) fall in combined revenue for the Japanese airline industry in the next 12 months, according to an estimate by a domestic aviation organization.

The Scheduled Airlines Association of Japan forecasts domestic carriers such as Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways will lose over 400 billion yen in revenue in just four months through May, much worse than the about 300 billion yen in annual revenue decline during the time of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The number of airline passengers has

been sharply decreasing around the world, with a tally by Johns Hopkins University researchers showing that around 600,000 people have been infected with the pneumonia-causing virus.

“We often see flights with passengers in the single digits,” an official of the aviation body said, in what some call an “unprecedented crisis” for the industry.

The association has requested that the government exempt airlines from paying airport charges and aircraft fuel tax.

The lack of demand for domestic flights has hit aviation firms far greater than the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome, or

SARS, epidemic, which did not directly affect Japan.

Two Japanese flag carriers, JAL and ANA, have decided to reduce domestic flights in the summer by about 20 percent after many events in the country were canceled or postponed.

“We have never seen such a sharp fall in demand for domestic flights, a source of stable income for Japanese airlines,” said an official in the aviation industry.

Travel restrictions issued by authorities in many countries have forced major Japanese aviation firms to drastically reduce international flights.—Kyodo ■

# Sinopec reports lower net profits in 2019

BEIJING — China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec), China’s largest oil refiner, saw its net profits decline in 2019, the company said Sunday.

Net profits attributable to shareholders stood at 57.59 billion yuan (about 8.1 billion U.S. dollars) in 2019, down 8.7 percent year on year, the company said in a report filed with the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

The total operating revenue came in at nearly 2.97 trillion yuan, up 2.6 percent year on year.—Xinhua ■

**စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန**  
**မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း**  
**ဆေးဝါးကုန်ကြမ်း (၃) မျိုး၊ Aluminium Foil (၂) မျိုးနှင့်**  
**PVC Reel (၁) မျိုးအဝယ်တင်ဒါ**

၁။ ဝယ်ယူမည့် ပစ္စည်းအမည်နှင့် အရေအတွက်  
စဉ် ပစ္စည်းအမည် အရေအတွက်

(၁) ဆေးဝါးကုန်ကြမ်း (၃) မျိုး

- Al-hydrogel ၅၀၀ ကီလို
- Pepsin (1:10000) ၃၀၀ ကီလို
- Caprylic Acid (or) Octonic Acid (AR) ၅၀၀ ကီလို

(၂) Aluminium Foil (၂) မျိုးနှင့် PVC Reel (၁) မျိုး

- Aluminium Foil (Printed) ၈၂၀ ကီလို
- Aluminium Foil (Plain) ၄,၀၀၀ ကီလို
- PVC Reel ၁,၆၀၀ ကီလို

၂။ တင်ဒါပိတ်ရက်နှင့်အချိန် - (၈-၄-၂၀၂၀) မွန်းလွဲ (၄:၀၀) နာရီ

၃။ ပစ္စည်းပေးသွင်းရမည့်စက်ရုံ - ဆေးဝါးစက်ရုံ (အင်းစိန်)

၄။ တင်ဒါပေးသွင်းရမည့်နေရာ - ဥက္ကဋ္ဌတင်ဒါလက်ခံရေးနှင့်စီစစ်ရေးကော်မတီ၊ မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း၊ စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။

၅။ တင်ဒါပုံစံနှင့် တင်ဒါစည်းကမ်းအသေးစိတ်အချက်အလက်များကို အောက်ဖော်ပြပါဌာနတွင် စုံစမ်းမေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည် -

တယ်လီဖုန်းအမှတ်

မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်) ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၈၈

စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၅၄

ရုံးအမှတ်(၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။

# Mafia primed to feast on Italy’s virus devastation

ROME — As Italy mourns thousands of coronavirus dead, and survivors brace for life in an economic wasteland, one rung of society looks to win big: organised crime.

“The Italian mafia can turn threats into opportunities,” top government anti-mafia investigator Giuseppe Governale told AFP. Over 10,000 people

have died in Italy of the flu-like disease, which has forced the country into a lockdown that is devastating the eurozone’s third largest economy.

From the historic Cosa Nostra in Sicily, to the immensely powerful ‘Ndrangheta in Calabria and trigger-happy Camorra in Naples, Italy’s mafias were “caught on the

back foot (by the virus), but are now organising themselves,” Governale said.

The Economist Intelligence Unit said Thursday it expected Italy’s GDP to contract by a colossal seven percent for the year. Italian experts say some 65 percent of Italian small and medium businesses are at risk of bankruptcy.—AFP ■

**PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING**

The manufacture of **SHANDONG TOP AGRI LIMITED,(CHINA)** has registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name “**AGRINAM MYANMAR CO.,LTD**”, to new distributor name “**OUR FARM COMPANY LIMITED**”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **AGRIMAN MYANMAR CO.,LTD.** Ph- Ph-09969007222

Sr.	Trade Name	A.I	Registration No.
1.	AM-Grand 5 WDG	Emamectin Benzoate 5% WDG	P2019-4624

**PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING**

The manufacture of **SHANDONG TOPAGRI LIMITED** and **ZIBO NAB AGROCHEMICALS LIMITED (CHINA)** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name “**TOPAGRI MYANMAR CO.,LTD**”, to new distributor name “**Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD**”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **TOPAGRI MYANMAR CO.,LTD.** Ph-09969007222.

Sr.	Trade Name	A.I	Registration No.
1.	NAB-Mida 70 WP	Imidacloprid 70% WP	2016-3263
2.	NAB-Friend 80 WP	Thiophanate-methyl 50% + Thiram 30% WP	F2019-1939
3.	NAB-Wonder 10 EC	Quizalofop-P-ethyl 10% EC	P2019-4602

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Sr.	Trade Name	A.I	Registration No.
1.	AM-PYRAMID 20 SL	Acetamiprid 20% SL	P2018-4080
2.	AM-ET 25 WG	Thiamethoxam 25% WG	P2018-4079
3.	AM-Pride 70 WP	Propineb 70% WP	P2019-4782
4.	Top-Fostar 80 WP	Fosetyl-Aluminium 80% WP	P2017-3412

**PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING**

The manufacture of **SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD (CHINA)** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name “**ANAWRAHTA PRODUCTION CO.,LTD**”, to new distributor name “**Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD**”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **ANAWRAHTA PRODUCTION CO., LTD.** Ph- Ph-09969007222.

Sr.	Trade Name	A.I	Registration No.
1.	BNS Quinclor	Quinclorac 25% SC	P2017-3665
2.	BNS Fome	Fomesafen 25% SL	P2017-3643
3.	BNS Atra 80	Atrazine 80% WP	P2017-3653
4.	BNS Ema 5.7	Emamectin Benzoate 5.7% WDG	P2017-3650



**I**N a tea shop at Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary (ILWS), information about illegal logging activities gets passed around. A verified tip-off from a concerned individual could often lead to the detection of areas with log piles.

This initiative from communities surrounding the lake and its forests has prompted Fauna & Flora International (FFI) to formally set up a network of informants against illegal logging and other forest crimes in January 2018, with support from the Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the German Development Bank (KfW). FFI is an international wildlife conservation organisation supporting local civil society organisations in Myanmar.

ILWS has been identified as one of the pilot sites of the SGP, an ongoing project that aims to conserve biodiversity and improve livelihoods in and around ASEAN Heritage Parks of Indonesia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam.

SGP also works to enhance the capacity of local organisations and support the collaboration of all governmental, non-governmental, academic, and private sector organizations towards biodiversity conservation.

Mark Grindley, country director of FFI Myanmar Country Programme, said activities to raise awareness on the importance of conserving protected areas are being done to persuade community members to report forest crimes to authorities.

“Initially, the network has 10 members. It grew over time with 50 participants from different age



Indawgyi Pagoda situated in the middle of Indawgyi Lake is accessible by boat. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

# Myanmar's Indawgyi Lake villagers form network vs illegal logging

and ethnic groups and professional backgrounds,” he said.

While the information received is shared right away with the management of ILWS, the informants’ identities have been

kept confidential for security reasons.

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said the contributions of the communities at ILWS prove how invaluable

community participation is in biodiversity conservation.

“Communities are our best allies in biodiversity conservation. Since they reside in and around ILWS, they have a greater stake

in the sustainable management of its resources. They are also the ones who immediately take the brunt of the effects of biodiversity loss,” Lim said.

## Law enforcement as priority

ILWS, one of Myanmar’s eight ASEAN Heritage Parks, is one of Myanmar’s high conservation value areas as it teems with the world’s most threatened species, such as the Eastern hoolock gibbon, Shortridge’s langur, Asiatic black bear, Chinese pangolin, and gaur.

Its pristine lake and evergreen forests support over 20,000 migratory water birds and the 50,000 people living in and around the area.

But this peace and calm at ILWS is often disturbed by growls of lumber mills, reverberating signs that illegal loggers are present in the area. One may follow trails of logging activities through roads built and sights of elephants carrying logs from steep mountain slopes.

Lim said illegal logging activities, among others, threaten the population and diversity of



Indawgyilake is one of the tourist attractions in upper Myanmar. **PHOTO: WIN NAING (KACHINMYAY)**



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Indawgyilake is one of the tourist attractions in upper Myanmar. **PHOTO: WIN NAING (KACHINMYAY)**



## Juventus players agree to take pay reduction in 90-million-euro cost cut



Juventus players and coach Sarri have agreed to take pay cuts. **PHOTO: AFP**

MILAN (Italy) — Juventus on Saturday announced that they had cut their players' and coach Maurizio Sarri's salaries after all Italian sport

was suspended until at least April 3 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The economic and financial effects of the understand-

ing reached are positive for about 90 million euros (\$100.5 million) for the 2019/2020 financial year," said a club statement. Over 10,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Italy, more than in any other nation. Italian champions Juventus, who led second-placed Lazio by a point in Serie A before the suspension of the season, said they had agreed a "reduction" for pay from March until June.

Juve added that should the season be finished later in the year, the players could be paid extra in those months. "Juventus would like to thank the players and the coach for their commitment at a difficult time for everyone," the Turin giants said. — AFP ■

## Badminton World Federation suspends int'l tourneys

THE Badminton World Federation (BWF) has suspended all international badminton tournaments till 12 April due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19, according to the official statement with the federation.

Tournaments affected major international tourneys plus other international Grade 3 tournaments, according to the BWF.

Four major tourneys: YONEX Swiss Open 2020 which was originally scheduled to take place at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland, from 17 to 22 March, YONEX-SUNRISE India Open 2020, which was scheduled to take place at KD Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi, India, CELCOM Axiata Malaysia Open 2020 which was scheduled to hold in

Bukit Jalil, Malaysia from 24 to 29 March, and Singapore Open 2020 in Singapore, which was scheduled to take place from 7 to 12 April have been suspended while one other international tourney named Orléans Masters 2020 which was scheduled to take place in Orleans, France from 24 to 29 March has been canceled.

A number of Badminton competitions and tourneys in England also affected as a result of the suspension fell within the COVID-19 threatening period across the globe. The Badminton World Federation will make detail fixtures and dates for the tourneys after 12 April based on safety condition from the global spreading disease. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Tokyo organizers eye July 2021 for delayed Olympics: reports

TOKYO (Japan) — Tokyo Olympics organisers are eyeing next July as a start date for the postponed Games, Japanese media reported Sunday, following the historic decision to delay the event due to the coronavirus.

Given the ongoing pandemic and need for preparation time, the most likely plan would be for the Games to begin on July 23, 2021, public broadcaster NHK said, citing sources within the organising panel.

It came after Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike raised the idea on Friday of moving the event to a less hot and humid time of year.

She argued that this would make marathons and other races easier to endure, meaning they could be held in the capital instead of in northern Sapporo city, where the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had decided to move them.

The Tokyo 2020 team led by Yoshiro Mori is currently discussing possible dates with the IOC, according to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

On Saturday, Mori told a Japanese TV station that "some kind of conclusion" would be reached within a week.

The Olympics were sched-

uled to open on July 24 this year with the Paralympics on August 25, but Japan announced last week it had secured agreement from the IOC to postpone the Games -- a decision unprecedented in peacetime.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said they would be held in around a year instead as a testament to humanity's victory over the pandemic. The decision had been seen to open options for Tokyo, with IOC chief Thomas Bach saying that "all the options are on the table" and rescheduling "is not restricted just to the summer months". —AFP ■



The Tokyo 2020 team is discussing possible dates with the International Olympic Committee, reports say. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Osaka disappointed but supports Olympic delay



Japan's Osaka says she will be disappointed not to compete in the Tokyo Olympics this year but she supports the postponement. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON (United States) — Japanese star Naomi Osaka says she's disappointed not to compete at the Tokyo Olympics this year but supports the decision to postpone the event to 2021.

The 22-year-old former world number one said on Twitter Saturday that she thinks the event will be better for moving to next year in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Sport will eventually unite us again and be there for us always, but that time is not now,"

Osaka wrote.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the International Olympic Committee agreed to postpone the Olympics after athletes worldwide expressed concern about trying to stage the spectacle amid so much uncertainty.

"Everyone knows how much the Olympics means to me and how proud I will be to participate in my home country. Of course I'm disappointed that it won't happen this year," Osaka said.

"But we'll all be ready to go stronger than ever in 2021! I support Prime Minister Abe's brave decision and the IOC 100%."

Osaka, the 2018 US Open and 2019 Australian Open champion, asked the Japanese people to stay strong.

"This is the time for people from all countries, backgrounds and races to rally together to save as many lives as we can," Osaka said.

"To me that's the Olympic spirit." — AFP ■