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Sayadaws recite parittas on flight over Myanmar for protection amidst COVID-19 outbreak

SENIOR Buddhist monks, led by Bamaw Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivanmsa, performed a mid-air recitation of parittas on a special aircraft yesterday. They recited Pali verses and extended loving-kindness on the flight around the country to prevent and stop outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

At the Yangon International Airport, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials paid respects to the monks and gave them donations.

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State Counsellor holds meeting with COVID-19 frontline warriors



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds the video conference with people at front line to prevent, control and treat Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a video conference at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with health workers and members of civil society who are carrying out anti-COVID-19 measures.

Following an opening re-

mark by the State Counsellor, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), Daw Hnin Htet Htet Naing, a midwife at the Sinkugyi Village Health Centre in Ngapudaw

Township of Ayeyawady Region, Dr Khin Rupa Soe from Hlaingthaya Township Public Health Department, U Kaung Myat Thu from the Aung Volunteers Group and U San Maung from the We Love Yangon presented short briefings regarding the home quarantine situations in

their respective areas and their anti-COVID-19 measures.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor talked about the importance of self-quarantine and social distancing, full participation in the 14-day quarantine with strong determination to overcome the

pandemic and awareness programme about the disease.

She also acknowledged that public participation in Myanmar was high and expressed thanks for this.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Sayadaws recite parittas on flight over Myanmar for protection amidst COVID-19 outbreak

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The most venerable monks left Yangon at 9 am by a special airplane of Myanmar National Airlines. Along the route on the Ayeyawady River, they chanted Parittas and Pahtana Pali verses.

The special flight landed at the Mandalay International airport, Myitkyina airport and Bagan-Nyaung U airport before they arrived back to Yangon in the afternoon.

On the way, the senior monks were welcomed and paid respects by the local government officials and Hluttaw representatives, who paid them their respects, offered them alms-food, donations and offertories.

According to the Ministry of Health and Sports, there are currently 16 positive cases

of COVID-19 in Myanmar, including imported ones, with one death.

The Myanmar authorities are conducting surveillance and tracing persons who closely contacted with the confirmed COVID-19 positive patients.

The health authorities have imposed facility quarantine on them, including those who returned from foreign countries including from Thailand which are also experiencing the Coronavirus pandemic.

Measures are being taken to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 infection since January, having reviewed and fine-tuned the strategies in response to the changing situation.—

MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)



Senior Buddhist monks, led by Bamaw Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivansa, performing the mid-air recitation of Parittas on a special aircraft yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Govt calls for youth participation in anti-COVID-19 measures



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye addresses the meeting with the representatives of youth committees from Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and regional levels yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye organized a meeting with the representatives of youth committees from Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and regional levels yesterday afternoon. At the video conference meeting, the Union Minister asked for collaboration of young people in measures against the outbreak of COVID-19, acknowledging their role in national affairs.

The government has formed the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) and an emergency response to the pandemic to enhance cooperation of state depart-

ments, the Red Society, civic societies, INGOs and the young people.

Dr Win Myat Aye added his office will coordinate the works of volunteers in dealing with respective ministries and regional governments. The members of youth committees then discussed their activities, requirements and coordination plans. In the concluding remark, the Union Minister emphasized the youth participation and the needs to strictly follow guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent them from infection of the disease.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Daily COVID-19 central-level coord meeting stresses cooperation in prevention

THE daily central-level coordination meeting on preparedness and response to COVID-19 held meeting no. 45/2020 with a video conference on 30 March.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe and the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye attended the meeting.

In his address to the meeting, Dr Myint Htwe said they had begun preparations for COVID-19 since January and have since adapted their strategies to the changing situation. He said people who have recently been to infected countries are put under quarantine either at home, in hotels or hospitals.

The Union Minister said the quarantine measures follow a checklist and urged everyone under quarantine to cooperate. He said people who have been in close proximity to people with positive cases will be tested for infection and also quarantined if deemed necessary. The Union Minister highlighted Mandalay General Hospital's decision to separate the outpatient department for people with illnesses and people coming in for checkups and asked the other state/re-

gional hospitals to adapt this measure.

Next, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye gave his address where he stressed the importance of implementing early protection against the virus and knowing how to prevent it from spreading should a person get infected. He said the Ministry of Health and Sports alone cannot monitor whether quarantined persons are following the rules, and this requires cooperation from the state/regional government and General Administration Department. Networking with civil society organizations, offering counseling services in quarantined areas, searching for people who have been physically close to those with positive cases, and raising health awareness are duties of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement as well, said Dr Win Myat Aye. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, and the permanent secretaries, the directors-general and officials from both ministries.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

“People are the key”

MoHS holds daily meeting on response to COVID-19

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe attended the central coordination meeting (46/2020) on containment and prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) via video conferencing yesterday.

Addressing the meeting, the Union Minister said there are currently 15 positive cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar, including imported ones. He said his ministry searches for people suspected of infection, finds people who have been in close proximity with positive-case patients and people returning from countries infected with the virus and puts them in quarantine. The Union Minister said containment and prevention of COVID-19 processes active include management, field inspection and practical implementation, which has assistance from departments and universities under the health ministry.

He stressed the importance of proper management of quarantine sites and ensuring people in quarantine with designated rules. He said posters with all restrictions and rules for quarantine will



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe attends the video conferencing on containment and prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) yesterday. PHOTO: MOHS

be put on public display. He added that a list of people reaching the last day of their 14-day quarantine has been compiled and arrangements are being made to issue them documents of proof of completion.

The Union Minister said peo-

ple who have completed the 14-day quarantine are in good health and do not have the virus but it is important that the public does not discriminate others for fear of infection. He said the Waibargi Specialist Hospital in Yangon Region, South Okkalapa Women and Child

Hospital and the Central Institute of Civil Service (Phaunggyi) have arranged to accommodate an increased number of patients. The Union Minister said medical superintendents and specialist doctors in all hospitals need to discuss and coordinate in med-

ical treatment for the virus and also mentioned the importance of resource mobilization.

He said the if containment, protection and treatment of COVID-19 are carefully and effectively administered in the coming 4 weeks, then serious threats will be mitigated in Myanmar.

The video conference was attended by the Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary, directors-general, central-level officials in Nay Pyi Taw and the medical superintendents, doctors and officials from their respective locations across the states/regions.

They discussed difficulties faces in implementing quarantines, appointing quarantine officers in townships, providing COVID-19 patients proper medical care in designated hospitals and difficulties arising from the process, amending treatment guidelines, forming Clinical Management Committees at the state/regional-level, and providing risk allowance to medical officials. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Updated information about COVID-19 surveillance at 8:00 pm, 1 April 2020

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is closely monitoring and conducting surveillance on the COVID-19 at international gateways, at the public hospitals, community-based monitoring and private healthcare facilities.
2. There were 36 new persons under investigation between 6 pm on 31 March and 6 pm on 1 April.
3. Laboratory results of the National Health Laboratory (Yangon) on specimen from a total of 57 persons under investigation and quarantined persons at 7:30 pm 1 April 2020 has shown one positive case of COVID-19 (Table 1), and the remaining 55 persons were tested negative.
4. The Case 16 patient is a 63-year old Myanmar woman living in Yaekyi Township, Ayeyawady Region. She welcomed back her son who returned from Dubai at the Yangon International Airport on 15 March. She stayed at a home with her son in North Okkalapa Township. After two weeks, she began suffering fatigue, and was admitted to the North Okkalapa Hospital as she got more weariness and fever on 31 March. She was isolated as the person under investigation, and her specimens were taken for laboratory tests. She will be admitted to the Waibargi hospital and is being given intensive care as she has got diabetes.
5. Out of 15 COVID-19 positive cases, 1 is at Tiddim hospital in Chin State, 10 at Waibargi hospital, 1 at Kandawnadi hospital in Mandalay, 1 at Nay Pyi Taw People's Hospital, 1 at Lashio People's Hospital. Health conditions of 14 positive patients are good and one patient at Waibargi hospital is being isolated for intensive care.
6. As Myanmar has found more COVID-19 positive cases, persons in close contacts with these patients are identified and restricted on their travels. People are advised to strictly follow the awareness of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Laboratory results on Covid-19, 8: 00 pm, 1 April 2020

Sr	Age (year)	Gender	Travel History in previous 14 days	Place for medical treatment	Quarantine/ Admission Date to hospital	Lab result on Covid-19
16	63	Female	No	North Okkalapa Hospital	31 March	Positive

AYA SOMPO to donate K 500 mln for frontline health care workers

A meeting between Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, and officials from the AYA SOMPO Insurance Company was held at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, U Myo Min Thu and officials from AYA SOMPO Insurance said they, in cooperation with AYA Foundation, wanted to donate K 500 million for the Ministry of Health and Sports' frontline health care workers, who are taking measures for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

The donation is intended to assist the health care workers who are battling on the front lines of prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, said the officials.

The AYA SOMPO Insurance also donated K 100 million worth of medicines and medical equipment including ventilators, and personal protective equipment

(PPE).

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye also expressed thanks for the donations, saying that the donation is very helpful for the health workers who are working on the front line of prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19. Officials from the ministry and donors will discuss details of the donation soon.

The meeting was also attended by Dr Soe Oo, Director-General of the Public Health and Medical Services, Permanent Secretary U Sein Win, Deputy Director-General (Planning and Finance) Daw Aye Aye Sein, Deputy Director-General (Infectious Diseases) Dr Tun Tin, Director-General Dr Nyan Win Myint, and officials from the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the AYA SOMPO Insurance Company's Manager Dr So Pyay Aung Win and officials. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Ministry of Education discusses future steps along spread of COVID-19



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi holds the coordination meeting through a video conference yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi held a coordination meeting through a video conference yesterday morning.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, National Education Policy Commission Chairman Dr Myo

Kywe, directors-general, deputy directors-general of MoE, rectors of 14 state/regional universities, deputy directors-general

of state/regional basic education officers, education directors and other officials.

In his address to the meeting, Dr Myo Thein Gyi highlighted the importance of following directives from the Ministry of Health and Sports and the directive for 50 per cent of the staff of a business or organization to come into the office.

He urged frequent and proper washing of hands, use of hand sanitizers, maintaining at least 6 feet distance from each other, and working together to spray disinfectants after working hours.

The Union Minister added that volunteering in the prevention, containment and treatment

of COVID-19 can be decided by the educational board of a university, education offices in Nay Pyi Taw and the states and regions, or relevant residential committee.

He also instructed to implement e-learning and online courses with quality education and the meeting commenced.

The Union Minister then thanked officials who organized and managed the matriculation examinations, the teachers, staff, students and their parents, and the public for their participation ensured the accomplishment of the exams amid the spread of the virus.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

MoLIP updates estimated number of Myanmar population

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population released an estimated number of Myanmar population on 1 April.

The annual population report is produced to help in drawing national policies and projects of the government and departmental offices.

Based on the country's population and the census in 2014, the new figure on 1 April 2020 has shown the country's population at 54.58 million across the country.

States/Regions	Number of people in million on 1 April 2020 for 2019-2020 FY		
	Male	Female	Total
Kachin State	1.00	0.92	1.92
Kayah State	0.16	0.17	0.33
Kayin State	0.79	1.82	1.61
Chin State	0.25	0.27	0.52
Sagaing Region	2.63	2.96	5.59
Taninthayi Region	0.74	0.75	1.49
Bago Region	2.34	2.60	4.94
Magway Region	1.80	2.13	3.93
Mandalay Region	3.08	3.46	6.54
Mon State	0.94	1.05	1.99
Rakhine State	1.59	1.75	3.34
Yangon Region	3.97	4.42	8.39
Shan State	3.20	3.23	6.43
Ayeyawady Region	3.04	3.23	6.27
Nay Pyi Taw Council	0.62	0.67	1.29
Total Population	26.15	28.43	54.58

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman inspects quarantine facilities



Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung inspects the quarantine facilities in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: NAY PYI TAW (IPRD)**

DR Myo Aung, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, inspected the quarantine facilities for those who returned from foreign countries in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and party first visited the Zabuthiri Township's Municipal Guest House No.1, which is one of the facilities for quarantining people who returned from foreign countries starting from 25 March. The facilities were prepared with the directives from Dr Myat Wunna Soe, Deputy Director-General of Public Health Department under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Other facilities for 14-day quarantine in Nay Pyi Taw are a 50-bed hospital in Dekhinathiri, a 50-bed

hospital in Pubbathiri, a 50-bed hospital in Zeyathiri, and New Aye Yar Hotel in Dekhinathiri. Those who returned before 25 March were quarantined at their homes.

At the quarantine facilities in Nay Pyi Taw, medical staff from the Public Health Department regularly checked the quarantined people's body temperatures twice a day. Officials from the General Administration Department and volunteers were also fulfilling other requirements of the quarantined people, while members of the Naypyitaw COVID-19 Volunteer Team were managing the foods for the quarantined people.

Until 31 March, there were a total of 1,650 people arriving from foreign countries in the Nay Pyi

Taw Union Territory. Out of them, 1,634 people were quarantined, one is a suspected case, and 15 were free from suspicion.

Out of the 1,634 quarantined people, 1,015 people were quarantined at their homes, 174 at hospitals, 18 at hotels, 424 at the municipal guest house, and three at schools.

Members of Nay Pyi Taw COVID-19 Control Team are regularly checking the quarantined people's body temperatures at the facilities, inspecting them whether they follow the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, coordinating their requirements, and checking their health conditions.—Nay Pyi Taw (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Eggs, poultry prices jump on rising demand in COVID-19 crisis

THE prices of poultry and eggs have slightly risen as the demand grows amid Covid-19 fears, according to the Myanmar Livestock Federation (MLF).

MLF has affirmed that there is no need for people to concern with the possible shortage of poultry and eggs in the internal market during the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, the rising demand drove the price up a bit.

The eggs are currently priced around K2,200-2,500 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg), while chicken fetched around K2,400-K3,300 per viss.

Livestock and poultry production in Myanmar has been growing 10-15 per cent annually. Most breeders are using traditional methods and some have shifted to modern methods. Moreover, integrated poultry and fish farming are widely seen in

Myanmar.

According to the MLF, at present, 1.35 million broilers are being raised for poultry production, about 1.465 million semi-broilers, and more than 2.9 million layers for eggs at integrated poultry and fish farms.

MLF stated that the industry has been producing poultry and eggs at a reasonable price to fulfill the needs of the consumers. It also helps support the country's meat sector.

MLF has asked the government to conduct a systematic analysis of integrated poultry and fish farming and move slowly on implementing a ban on that farming as it could hurt the livelihood of more than 37,980 people depending on this industry and investors.

Additionally, the local produce is now also facing pressure



A man feeding the chickens in a poultry farm in Yangon. **FILE PHOTO**

from foreign investors entering the sector. Local poultry breeding is mostly carried out on a small scale by farmers, but now invest-

ments from China, Thailand and India have entered the sector. This being so, the local breeders need to shift to modern breed-

ing methods and increase the production rate to keep up with the foreign investors.—Ko Khant
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mung bean export still far short of target amid COVID-19

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR has sought an extended deadline to April-end for exporting 250,000 tonnes of mung beans to India, yet the entire quota couldn't be reached by the deadline in the COVID-19 crisis, said Secretary U Min Ko Oo of Myanmar Pulses, Beans, and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

India has earlier set the mung beans quota at 150,000 tonnes and increased the quota limit by a further 250,000 tons on 12 December last year, according to a trade notice issued by India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

The increased quota of 250,000 tonnes was previously set to reach India by 31 March 2020. And then, the deadline has been extended to 30 April.

However, Myanmar can export approximately 150,000 tonnes of mung beans amid the COVID-19 pandemic, he noted.

"At present, we still can't estimate the exact export quantity of mung beans. However, the maximum export volume is around 150,000 tonnes", he added.

Yangon Commodity Depot is not closed in the COVID-19 crisis. Nevertheless, the trading is not active, according to the association.

"As the Commodity Depot is concerned with the food security of the people, there is no plan to shutter them. However, they avoided gathering at the depot. Some practice social distancing by contacting through mobile phone. Some avoid person-to-person contact for their own sake", he stressed.

India has recorded low mung beans yield due to erratic weather last year. Under the provincial government's approval, more mung beans are being purchased beyond the previous quota limit, which has driven up its prices to above K1.3 million per tonne. The present price of mung beans is worth K895,000 per tonne.

Moreover, India's Commerce Department has issued an announcement to import 400,000 tonnes of mung beans for the 2020-2021FY on 17 March 2020. Myanmar is the main supplier of mung beans to India. Concerning other types of beans, Myanmar has to compete against Australian and African markets, according to Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar-Germany bilateral trade exceeds \$290 mln in 2019-2020FY Q1

TRADE value between Myanmar and Germany during the first quarter of the current fiscal year 2019-2020 has reached US\$298.87 million, stated the Ministry of Commerce.

The statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce indicated that Myanmar's export to Germany surpassed its import, with \$226.985 million worth of export and \$71.89 million valued import.

Beyond regional trade regime, Myanmar has established trade links with the EU members. Germany is the biggest trade partner in the European Union, followed by France and the UK.

The main export items are rice, pulses, tea leaf, coffee, garments on Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) basis and fisheries. Meanwhile, machinery, data-processing equipment, electrical and optical goods, chemical products, motor vehicles and spare parts

and pharmaceutical products, cosmetic, food and beverages and consumer goods are imported into Myanmar.

Myanmar has reinstated EU's Generalized Scheme of Preference starting from 19 July 2013. Myanmar can enjoy GSP for export of fisheries, rice, pulses, agro-products, bamboo and rattan finished products, forestry products, apparels and finished industrial goods. Nevertheless, the EU imposed a three-year tariff on India rice (long-grain rice) imported from Myanmar and Cambodia starting from 18 January 2019.

Trade value with Germany was registered at \$821.5 million in the last FY2018-2019, \$373 million in the past mini-budget period (April-September 2018), \$584 million in 2017-2018FY, \$342 million in 2016-2017FY and \$153 million in FY2015-16 respectively.—GNLM
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

UMFCCI launches online loan service for Coronavirus-hit businesses

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) has launched an online loan system for the Coronavirus-hit businesses, according to the working committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by COVID-19.

Applications can be submitted to the UMFCCI head office, and region and state office of

the Chamber of Commerce and Industry every day during the period from 30 March to 9 April 2020, according to a notification released on 29 March 2020.

However, in a bid to avoid gathering, reduce person-to-person contact and protect from the possible spread of COVID-19, the online system has been launched.

Loan applications can be processed on <https://umfccicov->

[id19loan.mitcloud.com](https://umfccicov-id19loan.mitcloud.com).

Over 150 entrepreneurs have enquired about the loan from the COVID-19 Fund at the UMFCCI head office in two days (30 and 31 March); 50 successfully submitted applications. The priority sectors for the COVID-19 Fund of K100 billion are CMP garment business, hotel and tourism service and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The loan will be provided to enterprises that are included in the priority sectors at an interest of 1 per cent for one year.

If a business entity fails to repay the loan it can be put in the Negative List of the Credit Bureau and can be barred from taking any loans from a bank or a non-bank financial institution or a microfinance institution.

The loan must be applied

with the stipulated form and incomplete applications or applications that do not meet the requirements shall not be accepted.

For further details of the loan, people can visit www.umfcci.com.mm and contact the UMFCCI through mobile phone 01-230485, 01-2301562 or covid-19@umfcci.com.mm.—GNLM
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Myanmar-China association donates 20,000 masks to Natmouk General Hospital

MYANMAR-China Exchange and Cooperation Association has donated 20,000 masks, for the protection against the Covid-19, to Natmouk General Hospital in Magway Region.

The donation ceremony was held at the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Myanmar on 31 March.

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador Mr Chen Hai and Commercial Attaché Mr Tan Shufu of Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, Chairman U Thit Sar of the Myanmar-China Exchange and Cooperation Association, and Dr Myat Sandar Thant, representative of Natmouk township treatment department in Magway region.

At the ceremony, Chairman U Thit Sar of the Myanmar-China Exchange and Cooperation Association handed over 20,000 surgical masks worth K13 million



Well-wishers pose for a group photo to mark their donation to Natmouk General Hospital.

PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG

while Dr Myat Sandar Thant, representative of Natmouk township treatment department, received them, and returned the certificate of appreciation.

Natmouk General Hospital, established in 1982, was renovated as Myanmar-China friendship

hospital-2 by the Myanmar-China Exchange and Cooperation Association. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Su Kyi formally opened the renovated Natmouk General Hospital on 10 May 2019.

Golden City Charity Foundation also donated a set of oxy-

gen plant to be used in the treatment of the infected patients. The ceremony ended with the expression of thanks by Myat Sandar Thant, representative of Natmouk township treatment department. —Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Passenger volume slides half in Pansodan-Dala ferry



A ferry seen near the Pansodan harbour in Yangon.

PHOTO: NAING LIN KYAW (DALA)

"THE ferries run 46 times daily at every 20-minute interval. However, the number of passengers has declined by half these

days. There are also only a few passengers on board the ferries these days. The crew members are giving priority to the safety

of the passengers," Manager Daw Khin Khin Nu of Yangon Pansodan Jetty said yesterday afternoon. Passenger volume in Pansodan-Dala ferry has significantly declined these days, according to the Delta Division of the Inland Water Transport (IWT).

To prevent the Covid-19 infection, IWT is installing the basins on the ferries for passengers to watch their hands, spraying disinfectants at night, and providing safe and convenient services to the passengers.

The three 'Cherry' ferries donated by Japan are operating

between Dala and Pansodan jetties, running 46 routes per day. Normally, there are about 30,000 passengers on board the ferries. But now, the number of passengers has declined to 15,000 panicked by infection with the virus, according to the Delta Division under IWT.

The basins are installed at the Pansodan and Dala jetties for the passengers to prevent the spreading of the Covid-19. And, the ferry crew and ticketing clerks are spraying disinfectants on the boats every night. —Naing Lin Kyaw (Dala)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Over 200,000-tonne fish enters Central Sanpya market: no prices high

DURING the Covid-19 breakout, more than 200,000 fish and prawn are regularly coming into Kyimyintdine Central Sanpya

Fish Market, which has been distributing them to the wholesalers for the Yangon Region townships, said Chairman U

Mya Maung of the Central Sanpya Fish Market Committee.

"At present, fish are still entering our Sanpya fish market as usual. They are also being sold for fair prices. The price of the fish is not rising and thus not unstable because of Covid-19. The price is not fluctuating. On the other hand, the market committee is taking preventative measures against the Covid-19. In this case, the fish traders must follow the prescribed rules and regulations. Unless they do so, we will take action against them. The fish and prawn are being distributed from the Sanpya fish market across the country including Yangon region," he highlighted. The prawns are sourcing not only from Yangon,

Ayeyarwady and Bago regions but also from Thailand through Myawady and Mae Sot borders. The wild fish and raising-fish like Labeo Rohita and Mrigal carp are mainly entering the Sanpya fish market. Also, the sea fish, wild and raising-prawn are also into the market," he added.

Around 200,000-300,000 fishes and prawns are coming into the market daily, according to the Central Sanpya Fish Market Committee. Currently, Covid-19 disease prevention and control measures are being accelerated in the market and the committee is also spraying disinfectants in the market every week. —Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Fishes seen at a fish market in Yangon. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG

COVID-19 information from around the world

World faces food crisis

The heads of three global agencies warned Wednesday of the risk of a worldwide “food shortage” if authorities fail to manage the ongoing coronavirus crisis properly.

Many governments around the world have put their populations on lockdown causing severe slow-downs in international trade and food supply chains.

Panic buying by people going into confinement has already demonstrated the fragility of supply chains as supermarket shelves emptied in many countries.

“Uncertainty about food availability can spark a wave of export restrictions, creating a shortage on the global market,” said the joint text signed by Qu Dongyu, head of the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Roberto Azevedo, director of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“In the midst of the COVID-19 lockdowns, every effort must be made to ensure that trade flows as freely as possible, specially to avoid food shortage(s)” from developing, they said in their statement.

Edinburgh arts festival cancelled due to virus

Edinburgh’s five annual international festivals, including the Fringe arts event, have been cancelled because of the coronavirus crisis, organisers said on Wednesday.

“For the first time in over 70 years, the five festivals that transform Edinburgh into the world’s leading cultural destination every August are not going ahead this year due to concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic,” they said in a statement.

Russian President working remotely

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has decided to handle his duties remotely, the Kremlin said Wednesday, after the head of the country’s main coronavirus hospital tested positive following a meeting with the president.

Denis Protsenko, who met with Putin last week as the Russian leader visited the Kommunarka hospital in Moscow, said Tuesday he had been infected with the coronavirus but was feeling well.

“The president prefers these

Panic buying by people going into confinement has already demonstrated the fragility of supply chains as supermarket shelves emptied in many countries.



Photo taken on March 29, 2020 shows a rail coach modified into quarantine isolation units at a railway station in New Delhi, India. Indian railways Tuesday said it was ready to modify 20,000 coaches into quarantine isolation units to increase the quarantine facilities in the country. PHOTO: XINHUA

days to work remotely,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, shortly before Putin was due to hold a cabinet meeting by videoconference.

11-year-old Indonesian girl dies

An 11-year-old girl has become Indonesia’s youngest person to die after contracting the coronavirus, officials said Wednesday, as the country’s death toll from COVID-19 nearly tripled from a week ago.

The girl, who was also suffering from dengue fever, was admitted to hospital on Madura Island off the coast of Java on March 19.

She had a fever and breathing difficulties, and died the following day.

Tests only confirmed this week that the girl also had COVID-19.

France cracks down on movement

A man has been jailed in France for repeatedly violating strict anti-coronavirus lockdown rules, which have seen 359,000 fines issued countrywide as the outbreak death toll continues to mount, authorities said Wednesday.

Police Minister Christophe Castaner warned residents to write off any travel plans for school holidays starting this weekend, promising to punish any unwarranted movement as the country continues to evacuate dozens of critically ill patients from hospitals in overstretched

areas of the country.

UK records over 500 daily coronavirus deaths

Britain reported 563 daily coronavirus deaths on Wednesday, the first time the national toll has exceeded 500, bringing the total fatalities to 2,352, according to official figures.

“As of 5pm (1600 GMT) on 31 March, of those hospitalised in the UK who tested positive for coronavirus, 2,352 have sadly died,” the health ministry said on its official Twitter page.

Virus-testing tent thieves to get tested

Hapless thieves who stole a coronavirus testing tent in New Zealand have put themselves at risk of contracting the virus and should get tested, police have warned.

The tent was stolen from outside an Auckland hospital where it had been set up to test Kiwis for COVID-19, police said in a video posted on Facebook Tuesday.

East Health Trust chief Loretta Hansen said staff discovered the tent was missing when they arrived early Tuesday morning to begin a day of testing.

“They chopped it off at the ground level. It was bolted in by concrete, and they just chopped it off.”

UK govt promises more virus tests

Britain said Wednesday it would soon begin testing 25,000 people daily for COVID-19 as criticism of the government grew over

low numbers of testing compared to other countries.

Housing Minister Robert Jenrick told Sky TV that it was targeting 25,000 daily tests by “mid-April”, after the latest figures revealed the UK death toll was almost 1,800.

The victims included a 13-year-old boy, thought to be the country’s youngest victim.

“We think within days we’ll be able to go from our present capacity, as I say, of 12,750, to 15,000,” said Jenrick.

“And then mid-April is when we expect to be at 25,000,” he added.

Turkey sends aid to virus-hit Italy and Spain

Turkey on Wednesday sent health supplies including masks to Italy and Spain, the two European countries worst hit by the novel coronavirus, the defence ministry said.

“Health supplies prepared to fight COVID-19 together, and with the hopes of seeing brighter days were sent en route to Spain and Italy” by a military plane, the ministry tweeted in English.

An accompanying video clip showed a Turkish military A-400M cargo plane preparing to take off.

The defence ministry posted the same message in Turkish, Spanish and Italian.

1,300 asymptomatic virus cases reported

China on Wednesday said it has more than 1,300 asymptomatic coronavirus cases, the first

time it has released such data following public concern over people who have tested positive but are not showing symptoms.

Health officials also reported the first imported case from abroad in Wuhan – the epicentre where the virus first emerged late last year – heightening fears of infections being brought into China from other countries.

Of 36 new cases reported Wednesday, 35 were imported from abroad.

Russian plane heads to US with supplies

A Russian military plane carrying medical equipment has departed for the United States, the defence ministry in Moscow said Wednesday, as the Kremlin flexes its soft power amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Antonov-124, “with medical masks and medical equipment on board”, left for the US overnight, a statement said, without providing further details.

Video released by the ministry showed the cargo plane loaded with boxes preparing to take off from a military airbase near Moscow early Wednesday morning.

Workers exempted from 19-day tax rule

Cross-border commuters that live in Germany and work in Luxembourg, and that have now been subjected to home office for more than 19 days, do not have to worry about taxation in their country of residence.

Europe coronavirus death toll tops 30,000

The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 30,000 people in Europe with more than three-quarters of the deaths registered in Italy and Spain, as of Wednesday.

A total of 30,063 deaths have been recorded in Europe out of a total 458,601 cases, making it the continent that has been hit hardest by COVID-19.

The most deaths were recorded in Italy, with some 12,428 fatalities, followed by Spain with 8,189 and France with 3,523.

The latest European figures come just a few hours after the United States announced its death toll had risen to 4,076, according to a running tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Like health workers, people who follow 14-day quarantine deserve to be praised as front line warriors

HEALTH authorities have taken measures to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 infection since January, having reviewed and fine-tuned the strategies in response to the changing situation.

Today, the health authorities in regions and states, in cooperation with local administrative officials, have tightened quarantine measures with systematic facility quarantines for those who returned from foreign countries, especially from neighbouring Thailand, which is also witnessing the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease.

With the use of checklists, the regulations on facility quarantine for the returnees is to be enforced, and those who violate quarantine measures are to be punished according to the law.

In this time of crisis, resource management and mobilization is paramount to tackle the challenges, in the face of the global pandemic.

The upcoming four weeks are to be very important for our country in fighting the COVID-19 infection. Hence, if all hands from the governmental and private sectors are on deck to effectively carry out the preventive and treatment measures during the coming four weeks, we can effectively minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, after tracking contacts with confirmed COVID-19 patients, authorities are also imposing home quarantine with travel restrictions on those who had close contacts with patients, in order to prevent further infections.

At the same time, those who finish the 14-day quarantine are considered free from the virus, and people should avoid discriminating against them.

We should not forget to express our thanks to those following the rules by quarantining themselves, and to encourage them to keep up their good work in this difficult situation, instead of being subject to more aggravations.

Because they are also frontline prevention warriors helping the nation fight the disease. They are isolating themselves for the safety of the public and should not be subject to discrimination. At the same time, the news media is advised to avoid coverage which might give people the impression that a legion of quarantine breakers is running amok in public, and which can discriminate against health workers who are giving their all on the front line during the battle against the outbreak.

Today is a time when we all should have more sympathy and understanding, as the pandemic does not seem to be going away any time soon.

Fourth Year performance: Ministry of Electricity and Energy

By Khin Yadanar and Zin Oo
Photo by Tun Minn Latt (MOEE)

FULFILLING the needs of the country, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy has been working at the best in providing electricity for enough consumption, and also finding out ways and means for strengthening the nation's economy by extracting natural resources.

At a time when the incumbent government has crossed the timeline of fourth year journey, the interviews are made with the deputy ministers namely Dr. Tun Naing and U Khin Maung Win on the achievement with regard to the interest of the people carried out by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

Dr. Tun Naing, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

Question: Kindly explain the fourth year performances and the development of energy sector being carried out by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

Answer: As some of the laws related to energy sector of Myanmar were outdated with modern times, new laws are enacted.

The Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law (the "PPPL") 2017 was enacted by Pyidaungsu Httuttaw as Pyidaungsu Httuttaw Law No. 20/2017 on 1st August 2017 to repeal the Petroleum Act 1934. The PPPL contains the provisions on import and export, transportation, storage, refinery, distribution, inspection and testing of petroleum and petroleum products and issuance of relevant licences.

The relevant bye-laws have been drafted and referred to the Office of the Attorney General Union. Moreover, draft law in connection with oil and gas exploration has been referred to the Pyithu Hluttaw.

Q: Please tell us with regard to the exploration blocks and the investment situation in energy sector.

A: We have (53) onshore blocks and (51) offshore blocks, totaling (104) blocks. A total of (25) onshore blocks and (31) offshore blocks are operating under foreign investment. The foreign companies are doing fine in



Deputy Minister
Dr. Tun Naing

their business under the signed agreements.

During 2016 - 2017 the foreign firms namely the POSCO and the Woodside working in Block AD - 7 have found natural gas. Again in 2017 - 2018, the firms namely the Woodside, the Total and Myanmar Company MPRL jointly working in Block A - 6 have found natural gas. In 2018 - 2019, the companies namely the Woodside, the Total and MPRL working in Block A - 6 have found natural gas. The good news is that in 2019 - 2020, the POSCO working in Block A - 3 has struck natural gas.

The earlier findings of oil and gas in the Yedagun Block, the Gold Petrol Block and exploration by MPRL are accelerating at the production tasks year by year. Each year a total of over four million crude oil barrels (US barrels) have been extracted.

Natural gas extraction is being made at the Yadanar, the Ye Dagon, the Shwe, and the Zaw Tika offshore blocks as well as onshore drilling blocks.



Mann-Thanbayarkan Refinery.

Yearly extraction is elevated to cubic feet in million (670,362) from earlier (600,000). In addition to exploration and extraction, the construction of pipeline is underway through the investment plan.

Currently, more crude oil tankers have been deployed. The year 2017 - 2018 saw (35) crude oil tankers made different destinations, and this year it is expected (43) crude oil tankers would be deployed. In other word, the energy sector has generated revenues for the state.

Q: Tell us about natural gas exploration.

A: Natural gas is being explored and extracted from offshore areas as well as onshore blocks. The natural gas is distributed to the industrial sectors in the country. The new pipeline construction is being done every year. The old pipelines are being renovated and repaired. The yearly repair and expansion in the past was (35) miles, and that the renovation and expansion is being carried out for (70) miles.

For the convenience of the people, more extraction is being made yearly on the gasoline, the diesel oil, the aircraft fuel, and the petroleum-based charcoal.

Natural gas is being used at the kitchens of households and at hotels, kitchen areas. The state owned factories produced the natural gas, which is being managed to ensure yearly progress.

Natural gas is mainly used at the electricity generating sector. It is also used at the petroleum refinery. The LPG is being used

in liquid form, and it is instrumental in producing chemical fertilizers.

The transportation sector also used CNG as their fuel, while other industrial sectors also used CNG.

In the past, the electricity generation sector has consumed (85) per cent, and now the said sector is using (90) per cent. The second highest consumer of CNG is the transport sector, and the third-highest consumer is chemical production sector.

The main reason for supplementing CNG is for the convenience of commuters with the lesser cost of travel expenses. The CNG distribution is on the rise.

Q: Please tell us about the relaxation of the ministry for the development of private sector.

A: In the energy sector, the state owned businesses have been slowed down, but the private sector investment has been accelerated. We have allowed more work licences in the gasoline and fuel business. The work is carried out in the whole country, and now we have more than (2,700) gas shops. While we are giving out work licences, we also check the quality of products as well as right measurement. Those who breach the regulation are to be taken action, so that the public could be benefitted. Businesses without proper licenses are to be taken legal action.

Shops dealing with LPG are permitted to do business. There are seven types of businesses such as the import through tankers,

storage and distribution. We are trying to issue more permission.

Q: Please explain the traditional hand dug oil industry.

A: In our country, we have traditional hand-dug oil industry. As they are building mini oil refineries in local areas, we provided them with permissions. The number is on the rise. As they are using traditional refining methods, we need to regulate them with regards to environmental conservation. We advocate and encourage mini refinery methods through the private sector.

Scrutiny has been conducted over the proposals, and that the qualified refinery will roll out for test run soon.

Q: Please explain with regards to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in the context of private sectors.

A: The energy sector is extracting natural resources from the earth for the greater good of the nation. It may be termed as doing business for profit, but at the same time accountability and responsibility has to be taken into consideration over the socio-economic welfare of the local people.

In the past, the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) is no responsibility in the context of CSR and there was no budget allocation. Now, more CSR are on the agenda covering nine regions and states. The inbound foreign firms doing business on foreign investment have been advised to keep budget for CSR. Solar Power Plant Project has



Upper Paunglaung Hydropower Plant.

been successfully launched in Manaung Kyun in Rakhine State for generating electricity.

Q: Please explain the outstanding achievement during the incumbent government.

A: The ministry is undertaking fertilizer production industry as it covers important changes during the incumbent government. In the past, fertilizers industry sustained heavy loss every year. The volume of production was falling. We could reverse the situation by producing more in production.

Moreover, Myaung Dakar Factory and Kan Gyi Daunt Factory were losing MMK 25 billion each year in the past, and now we could manage more production with more income each year.

With regard to aircraft fuel, it was distributed by the department in the past, but due to many reasonable and sensible reasons in our country, the quality control of aircraft fuel has become more critical. Moreover, we need more foreign airlines in the country. Therefore, we worked on joint venture framework in this matter. The work programme went well, and the nation reaped revenue.

Our officers and staff members have been assigned as chemical engineers at the Laboratories at Thanlyin Oil Refinery on some research projects. Through the recycle project, the old discarded oil coming from the transformers could be re-used as high combustible fuel. More research projects are on the agenda. **SEE PAGE-10**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 1st April, 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 2nd April, 2020: Rain are likely to be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin 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 in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd April, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd April, 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 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

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Fourth Year performance: Ministry of Electricity and Energy

FROM PAGE-9

Q: Tell us more about the income of the energy sector for the knowledge of the people.

A: Companies are being managed to fulfill the tax and revenue. Therefore, the companies namely Yadanar, Yedagyn Za Ti Ka, and Shwe have fulfilled their obligation with foreign currency as well as in MMK. Therefore, the country received deserving revenue.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has three main tasks. The first one is oil and natural gas — related task. The second task is the petroleum and petroleum products trading business. The third task is petro-chemical related business. In 2019 – 2020 it is expected to earned MMK in million (1,240,000).

Q: Kindly tell us the development plan of the energy sector in the future.

A: Chemical fertilizers are an essential part that related with the public. Our factories are producing chemical fertilizers with (40) per cent nitrogen content. Our fertilizers are better in quality compared to other fertilizers. We have managed not to have a negative impact on soil fertility. The suspended chemical fertilizer factories will be repaired for functioning for the benefit of the local farmers.

In connection with the LPG sector, more emphasis is given for its efficacy in household use and also in transport sector. More options are on the agenda for the private sector with regards to the LPG. In the energy sector, advanced plans are being laid down for the advantage of the country. The vacant blocks at the onshore areas, as well as offshore areas, would be managed with transparency with a view to inviting foreign investment for the greater good of the nation.

**U Khin Maung Win,
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Electricity and
Energy**

Q: We have witnessed the improvement of electricity sector during the fourth year of the incumbent government. Please explain the working plan over the policy.

A: The state policy has laid down to enhance the social standard of the people through better



Deputy Minister
U Khin Maung Win

transportation and adequate electricity generation. We are giving priority in these sectors. This year, we could give more focus on electricity generation.

In line with the government directives, we worked on the construction of electricity generation plants, the connection of more power lines for adequate power supply for the public and the industrial sector. In December 2019, it is our pleasure and honour that the ministry can increase its nationwide power distribution to 50 per cent of the country.

Q: Tell us about the expansion plan for the future in electricity production.

A: We have set a target at 55 per cent in 2021 in the whole country. During 2025 – 2026, we targeted 75 per cent; and 100 per cent in the year 2030.

During the time frame of April 2016 to December 2019, we have generated 904 Megawatt of electricity from ten plants such as (3) hydro-power generating plants; (6) thermoelectric generator plants; and one solar energy powered plant for generating electricity.

In the states and the regions of the country, there are many KV distribution lines with substations that have been installed such as that of 230 KV; 132 KV; 66 KV; 33 KV; 11 KV; and 0.4 KV, totaling (62,692) miles.

As the distribution of power supply lines are expanded, the necessary substations are also constructed with a capacity of 230KV; 132KV; 66KV; 33KV; 11 KV; 6.6KV with the capability of (37,732) MVA. In other words, the MVA clarifies as Mega Volt Amp or Volts X Amp /1000, 000.

Q: Kindly share us with the electricity consumption in remote areas.

A: One of our main priorities is to provide electricity in the remote areas. Through the off-grid distribution system, we have provided electricity to Maungdaw in Rakhine State; Myawady and Kyar Inn Seikyi in Kayin State; Pan Saung and Nann Wun in Kachin State. We are using resources such as mini hydro power and solar power system in generating electricity.

With the use of natural resources, we could provide electricity for (34) villages in Kachin State including Putao and Ma Chan Baw; and also provided power for five local wards and three villages in Manaung Kyun in Rakhine State in 2019.

With regard to the National Electrification Project (NEP) of Myanmar, it is divided into

ADB; JICA (Japan); and KFW (Germany).

Street lights in Mandalay and street lights in Yangon have been repaired and replaced by using MMK in millions. More power substations are being constructed, and by using modern equipment a National Control Centre has been constructed in Nay Pyi Taw.

Q: In the upcoming long hot summer, what are the plans you have in hand.

A: We are planning in advance for the coming summer. We have seven projects to produce electricity through natural gas and LNG such as Kyun Chaung; Ahlon; Kyauk phu; Thanlyin; ThaKayta; Magway; and Shwe Daung with the capacity of (1166

With the improved system, the consumers could safely check one owns electricity consumption through their mobile phones. Moreover, a mobile billing system has been arranged for the public.

Q: Kindly tell us the planned programme and expected goals.

A: In the fourth year implementation, we try our best in offering to the people such as that of stable electricity transmission; that of providing full capacity of electricity; that of the use of electricity with faith and confidence; that of trust and reliance over the units and the billings. The transformers and distribution lines are being renovated for the convenience of the consumers.



Upper Yeywa Hydropower Plant Project.

Phase (I) and Phase (II). Phase (I) covers (5080) villages with (620,000) households targeted with electricity supply in September 2020. Phase (II) covers (4700) villages with (530,000) households who could enjoy electricity. At the completion of NEP (I), millions of households could enjoy electricity by the end of September 2021.

NEP (II) would commence in September 2021 covering (8,000) villages with (700,000) households, with the assistance from the World Bank through implementation of National Electrification Plan by expansion of power supply lines and the construction of substations.

Medium voltage electric power supply lines would be expanded with the assistance of

Megawatt.

Q: Kindly explain how you inspired for better services.

A: The convenience payment by the consumer and to cater satisfaction to the people in the consumption of electricity is very much vital. Therefore, the people must be free from suspicion and mistrust over the actual consumption of electricity. With a view to avoiding misinterpretation, the call centres are being opened. Call centre for Yangon is number (1717) and Mandalay call centre number (1616). Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system would be used in this connection. Moreover, Automatic Meter Reading System (AMRS) and the prepaid system are to be widely used.

AMI system is in use through the mobile phone system at four townships with successful results. People are satisfied with the new system and are happy during the fourth year performance of incumbent government.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy is trying its best to gain trust of the people, and at the same time renovating the generating plants. Moreover, the supply lines are systematically managed and the distribution is making to gain confidence of the public. As all the dealing with the public is vital, the necessary modification, the reformation, and the timely solution are being made for the sake of the people.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)

Sixty Australian newspapers to stop printing

SYDNEY — Rupert Murdoch's Australian flagship media group News Corp announced Wednesday it will stop printing around 60 regional newspapers, as the troubled sector received a fresh blow from a COVID-19 advertising downturn.

News Corp said papers in the states of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia would cease printing and move online.

"We have not taken this decision lightly," News Corp Australasia Executive Chairman Michael Miller was quoted as saying by the group's Australian newspaper title.

"The coronavirus crisis has created unprecedented economic pressures and we are doing everything we can to preserve as many jobs as

possible." "The suspension of our community print editions has been forced on us by the rapid decline in advertising revenues following the restrictions placed on real estate auctions and home inspections, the forced closure of event venues and dine-in restaurants in the wake of the coronavirus emergency," he added.

Many Australian media groups had already been shifting to focus to online content before the pandemic began.

The announcement follows a series of media closure announcements, including national wire AAP, which is due to cease work later this year.

The move has echoed a global trend.— AFP ■



Falling readerships and the rise of Google and Facebook as dominant players in advertising has made news organisations less profitable. PHOTO: AFP

COVID-19 awareness videos documented



Artists hold the small sized posters to make public awareness to stay at home amid COVID-19. PHOTO: NYEIN KO (FDC)

A programme to raise awareness of the COVID-19 was shot at the Story Board Movie Studio in Dagon Myothit (North) in Yangon yesterday.

Dr New Oo from the Victoria Film Production led the video shooting programme that is directed by Mi Bwar and Wine includes actors Academy Pyay Ti Oo, Sai Sai Khem Leng, Academy Eaindra Kyaw

Zin, Academy Paing Phy Thu, Poe Mamhe Thar, and vocalist Ni Ni Khin Zaw.

The purpose of shooting the awareness-raising videos about COVID-19 that includes the titles "Stay At Home" and "Don't Go Outside" is to increase awareness of protecting yourself, your family, your environs, your town/village, and your nation.

Ministry of Informa-

tion, Ministry of Health and Sports, and Myanmar Motion Picture Organization, in cooperation with Mingalar Co., Ltd, and Story Board Movie Studio, jointly organized the programme.

The videos will be broadcast on State-run media, private media, and online channels.—Nyein Ko (FDC) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Japan's new car sales down 9.3% in March as virus weighs on demand

TOKYO — Japan's new vehicle sales in March fell 9.3 per cent from a year earlier for the sixth straight monthly decline as the spread of the new coronavirus caused new car buyers to refrain from visiting showrooms, data from industry bodies showed Wednesday.

The vehicle sales, including trucks, buses and minivehicles, came

to 581,438 units, with the impact of the consumption tax hike from 8 per cent to 10 per cent in October last year also continuing to weigh on vehicle sales.

The margin of drop in the reported month was smaller than the 10.3 per cent marked in February.

Sales of minivehicles, which have engines no larger than 660 cc, fell 7.6 per cent to 206,483 units,

while those for larger cars declined 10.2 per cent to 374,955 units, the Japan Mini Vehicles Association and the Japan Automobile Dealers Association said.

Many municipalities, including the Tokyo metropolitan government, have called on residents to refrain from going out for nonessential purposes to curb the spread of the coronavirus.— Kyodo news ■

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MYANMA RAILWAYS INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

- Open Tender is invited for supply of the following item in Euro:
Sr No **Tender No** **Description**
1. 12(T)32/MR(ML/RBE) Wheel Steel Forged for RBE(240) Nos
Euro/19-20
Closing Date & Time- 29.4.2020 (Wednesday) (14:30) Hrs
- Tender documents are available at our office starting from 30.3.2020 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Deputy General Manager Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung, Yangon. Phone: 95-1-291985, 291994

Transferred Distributor for Registration Pesticides

Distribution and registration processes of below pesticides produced by Zagro Singapore Pte Ltd will have been transferred from Agsin Pte Ltd. (Rep Office) to Zagro Myanmar Ltd. So, if there is any protest, please protest to this address: Co-Secretary, Pesticides Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Gyogone (West), Insein within (14) days from this announcement.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Reg Type	Reg.No.
1	Megatap 50 SP	Cartap Hydrochloride 50% SP	Full	F2019-2001

Zagro Singapore Pte Ltd.
TEL : (65) 6759 1811

Transferred Distributor for Registration Pesticides

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No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Reg Type	Reg; No.
1	Benofos 50 EC	Profenofos 50% EC	Full	F2014-720
2	Cupox	Copper Oxychloride 85%WP	Full	F2019-2003

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V LORD NELSON VOY. NO. (40) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of IBTT 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 DOOYANG LIMITED

Phone No: 2301928



Mechanical ventilators needed to treat those suffering from respiratory distress due to COVID-19 are in short supply. PHOTO: AFP

Auto industry races to make ventilators during virus crisis

PARIS — The automotive industry is offering its expertise and manpower to the hospital sector as it gears up to build mechanical ventilators during the coronavirus pandemic, an initiative that is being met with some scepticism.

American auto manufacturers General Motors and Ford, French car companies PSA and Renault, Germany's Volkswagen group and Formula 1 engineers have joined the ranks in response to a massive global shortage of the vital piece of medical equipment.

As hospitals around the world face a surge of patients with breathing difficulties from COVID-19, the scarcity of ventilators has forced doctors to make life-or-death decisions.

Repurposing car factories for emergency production has drawn comparisons to World War II, when they were used to

build tanks and fighter planes.

But some experts say that in this situation, building critical care ventilators will require different techniques and procedures from what a car factory normally sees.

US President Donald Trump used wartime economy analogies to justify his appeal to the automobile industry as the country grapples with a mounting number of coronavirus cases. He ultimately used a 1950s law concerning defence production to force one of GM's plants to make ventilators.

In France, meanwhile, a consortium of industrial companies has been created — including PSA and automotive equipment supplier Valeo — to manufacture “10,000 ventilators by mid-May”, President Emmanuel Macron announced Tuesday. — AFP ■

Tata Motors reports 84 pc fall in March domestic sales amid COVID-19 lockdown

MUMBAI — Tata Motors said on Wednesday its domestic sales last month crashed by 84 per cent to 11,012 units compared with 68,727 units in March last year.

The sales in domestic and international markets during March 2020 stood at

12,924 vehicles compared with 74,679 units during March 2019. Commercial vehicle sales cracked by 90 per cent to 5,336 units from 50,917 units in March last year while commercial vehicle exports plunged by 68 per cent to 1,787 units in March 2020 from 5,619

units in the same month last year.

“Cumulatively, commercial vehicle domestic sales for FY20 at 3.1 lakh units were 34 per cent lower than FY19,” said Girish Wagh, President for Commercial Vehicles Business Unit at Tata Motors Ltd.

“Retail was 16 per cent higher than offtake for the entire year. Domestic sales in March were 5,336 units, deeply impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown as well as the planned transition to BS VI norms,” he said in a statement.—ANI ■

PUBLIC NOTICE

being U Tin Shwe (12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 016853) is holder of Business Licence of Mattress and Pillow Shop/ Business in the name of Myanmar Cotton in the 2019/2020 Financial Year

Under instruction of U Tin Shwe (12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 016853), it is hereby notified for Public Notice that :-

1. Administration, Public Relation and Information Department of Yangon City Development Committee, Yangon Region Government, Republic of the Union of Myanmar has issued business licence of Mattress and Pillow Shop/ Business in the name of Myanmar Cotton situated at No. (120), Mahabandoola Street, No. (2) Ward, Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, to U Tin Shwe only in the 2019/2020 Financial Year under Administrative Regulation, Chapter (2), Rule - 3 (Zamyinzwe) of Yangon City Development Committee.
2. Therefore, it is hereby notified to carry out business by communicating with Business Licence holder U Tin Shwe only being U Tin Shwe is holder of Business Licence of Myanmar Cotton Mattress and Pillow Shop/Business commencing from 2019/2020 Financial Year.
3. It is hereby notified for Public Notice not to carry out the business with the similar name of business by any person or mis-use this business name of Myanmar Cotton Mattress and Pillow Shop/Business and if found doing sold, it will be dealt according to Law.

Under instruction -

U CHIT KO KO
Supreme Court Advocate and Notary Public
(Sr. 2803/84)

No. (60), Ground Floor, Mahabandoola Garden Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon Region.

Phone : 01-252924, 09-264981805, 09-5101282

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SENTOSA VOY. NO. (065W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SENTOSA VOY. NO. (065W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SAM WOLF

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SAM WOLF VOY. NO. (20018) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL 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 GLOBAL MARS SHIPPING
Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HOANG PHUONG STAR

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HOANG PHUONG STAR VOY. NO. (04/20) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of WILMAR 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 BEN LINE AGENCIES
(SINGAPORE) PTE, LTD
Phone No: 2301928

In supermarket front lines, cashiers fear the worst

ROME — The customers wander around in the stores, touch the food and even lick their fingers while riffling through bills. Any one of them could have the virus, and pass it along.

Such are the nagging thoughts of grocery store workers in Italy and beyond: exhausted, under-protected and, many say, overly exposed to the coronavirus.

Around the world, where millions of people are quarantined at home,

people can still shop for food at grocery stores, heightening risk for the sector's employees.

A 48-year-old supermarket cashier who tested positive for coronavirus died in March in Brescia in Italy's hard-hit north, raising questions about whether enough was being done to protect workers.

Unions say others employed in the sector may have died without their cases being reported as coronavirus cases. Last week,

a 33-year-old supermarket security guard died of the virus in Italy.

Trapped behind checkout counters for hours at a time, or stocking shelves amidst customers on supermarket floor, workers say they are on the front lines — and insufficiently protected. "We're scared of bringing something back home with us," said Piera, a 31-year-old part-time cashier. She has worked for over a decade at a superstore in Novara, west of Milan,

the city where the security guard died. Workers who spoke to AFP asked that their last names not be used.

Shopping daily

The worries are not restricted to Italy.

"We can't compare cashiers and health workers, but let's say we're not quite yet all aware that we have to protect both of them," said Ana, a Spanish cashier in Alcorcon, outside Madrid. Piera, in Ita-



The main supermarket distribution chain has not issued specific advice to its members, leaving individual stores to take the initiative. PHOTO: AFP

ly's north, has been given disinfectant gel, gloves, and a mask, which she must wash herself for reuse. It was only last week that the store installed Plexiglass shields in front of each checkout counter.—AFP ■

Stocks suffer on Trump virus warning

WASHINGTON — Stock markets sank Wednesday after US President Donald Trump warned of "a very, very painful two weeks" to come for the United States, whose coronavirus death toll has overtaken that of China.

European equities fell hard, with London down 3.5 per cent nearing midday. Tokyo earlier closed down 4.5 per cent.

Adding to the gloom, UK banks axed billions of pounds (dollars) in shareholder dividends and stock buybacks after the Bank of England requested the move to boost liquidity as part of measures to stimulate the virus-hit economy.

Investor sentiment in Europe was also knocked by poor manufacturing survey data, jangling market nerves before Friday's

key US non-farm payrolls figures. The euro dropped against the dollar and pound. "Trump's warning is the primary driver of today's downturn," Oanda analyst Craig Erlam told AFP. "It's such a shift from his previous views on the impact of the coronavirus and finally an acceptance of how severe the situation is."

Asian bourses also dropped after a dire first quarter for markets, with traders contemplating the prospect of lengthy lockdowns as the coronavirus continues its deadly sweep across the planet. "Donald Trump reflected the mood as he warned of weeks of pain still ahead — a stark change from his rather casual approach thus far," noted Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson.—AFP ■

CAUTIONARY NOTICE

We, Carabao Tawandang Co., Ltd., a company registered under the laws of Thailand, which is located at 393 Silom Building, 7th – 10th Floor, 393 Silom Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand is the sole owner of the following trademarks:



Reg. Nos. 1440/2004, 1859/2007, 1298/2010, 5759/2013, 463/2016



Reg. Nos. 13200/2014, 1953/2017

The above trademarks were registered and recorded with the Office of Registration of Deeds in respect of the following goods in **Class 32**: Energy drinks (non-medical drinks), mineral water, aerated water, non-alcoholic beverages, fruit juices, beer, soda and sport drinks and all included in International Class 32.

Carabao Tawandang Co., Ltd. claims the trademark right and other relevant Intellectual Property right for the marks as mentioned above. Carabao Tawandang Co., Ltd. reserves the rights to take legal measures against any infringer who violates our trademark and trade name which is being illegally imported into Myanmar and distributed by other companies and distributors without our consent and authorization. Therefore, we would like to request all persons, wholesalers, and any other retailers to stop buying and selling the illegally imported and distributed products. This illegal trading, using and importing constitutes a violation of the Criminal Law, Myanmar Merchandise Marks Act, and the Specific Relief Act, which may result in an injunction, fine or imprisonment that may extend to one to three years, or with both for the infringer.

We claim the trademark, trade name, and other relevant intellectual property rights to Carabao and START in Thai, Myanmar and English. We reserve the right to take any and all available legal actions, such as sending a statement, launching a raid action, and filing Civil and Criminal Actions with the court under the applicable laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, against any infringer and/or person and/or company that violates our rights, passes off our trademark, and/or intimidates or deceives the public, including our customers, by any means, including through sales, distribution, or advertising.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, LL.B., Advocate (14833)

For Carabao Tawandang Co., Ltd.

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd., No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 2nd April, 2020.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (207N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (207N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of TMIT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR SOLO VOY. NO. (892 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR SOLO VOY. NO. (892 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (013W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (013W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/TMT 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301185



Students wearing face masks, as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, walk home from school in Singapore on 25 March, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

‘Next 2 weeks crucial’ as Singapore enters new phase of community transmission, warn experts

SINGAPORE — The next two weeks are crucial in the battle against coronavirus, experts warned a day earlier, after new clusters and infection-related cases with no known connections were reported in Singapore.

Whether this potential time bomb is defused or not is now firmly in the hands of each individual in the country, they stressed as quoted by The Strait Times. “People must decide at

this point whether they choose to cooperate and listen to the reminders on personal hygiene, physical distancing and to stay at home unless absolutely necessary, or if they continue to behave irresponsibly especially in public,” said Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean of the National University of Singapore’s Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

“Right now, it is really in the hands of ordinary citizens to act responsibly and break any

community transmission in Singapore,” “If many in Singapore refuse to follow the simple instructions, then no matter what the Government puts in place, we will see an uncontrollable outbreak,” he added.

In Singapore, the number of unlinked cases has seen an upward trend in the last few days, with the Health Ministry conducting contact tracing for 93 locally transmitted cases as of yesterday.—ANI ■

Pandemic pranks off the table on April Fools’ Day



April Fools’ Day may be a tradition but this year few are in the mood as the global death toll mounts and billions remain under some form of lockdown. PHOTO: AFP

TAIPEI — It may be the global day for pranks but with the world under assault from the deadly coronavirus pandemic many governments on Wednesday were warning against virus-themed April Fools’ jokes — some even threatening jail.

The 1 April tradition sees families, web users and corporations embrace practical jokes.

But few are in the mood as the global death toll mounts and billions remain under some form of lockdown.

Google, a company renowned for its elaborate annual stunts, told its employees it would “take the year off from that tradition out of respect for all those fighting the Covid-19 pandemic,” according to an internal email obtained by Business Insider.

The deadly outbreak has already been accompanied by a deluge of online misinformation, making it harder for governments to keep their citizens safe. Some are now threatening jail for virus pranks. Taiwan, which has been held up as a model for how to tackle an outbreak, warned people who spread false rumours that they faced up to three years in jail and a TW\$3 million fine (\$100,000). “On April Fools’ Day we can exercise our sense of humour if we have to but we can’t make jokes on the pandemic to avoid breaking the law,” President Tsai Ing-wen posted on Facebook alongside a photo of one of her cats. “I wish everybody not only a humorous but also healthy and safe April Fools’ Day.”—AFP ■

Taiwan to donate 10 million masks to coronavirus-hit countries

TAIPEI — Taiwan will donate 10 million face masks to medical personnel in countries hit hard by the new coronavirus that has infected more than 860,000 people and killed over 42,000 worldwide.

President Tsai Ing-wen told a press conference that Taiwan produces about 13 million face masks daily and the number will soon reach 15 million, making it the world’s second largest producer.

“Taiwan can help,” Tsai said.

“And Taiwan is helping.”

Tsai said the masks are intended for medical workers on the frontlines who are working around the clock to save lives in the recipient countries, which include the United States, European countries and Taiwan’s diplomatic allies, namely 15 mostly poorer countries that have official ties with Taiwan’s government.

Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said they will be the first wave of humanitarian assistance offered

to countries hit hardest by COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

Under a cooperation framework, Taiwan will provide the United States with 2 million masks plus another 100,000 more weekly. It will donate 7 million face masks to European countries, while consultations are under way to establish a supply chain of medical supplies to jointly fight the deadly virus.—Kyodo News ■



Prisoners in Taiwan have been called up to help combat the coronavirus and are working overtime to churn out protective face masks. PHOTO: AFP

COVID-19 makes Pakistan witness its biggest challenge ever, showcases weaknesses in Imran Khan’s govt

KARACHI — The number of coronavirus positive cases in Pakistan has touched 1,900 and continues to mount even as medical professionals refuse to work on the forefront, clerics don’t close mosques and children continue to play cricket on

the streets.

The highly contagious virus has infected at least 1,914 people in Pakistan while 26 others have succumbed to the infection. A gathering of more than 150,000 people was held this month on the outskirts of La-

hore by Tablighi Jamaat, one of the world’s largest proselytizing groups.

The event was eventually called off at the urging of officials, but the participants had already come, sleeping and eating in close quarters.

Thousands of people including foreign nationals are still present at Raiwind Tablighi Markaz. Tablighi activists are visiting Tablighi center through various gates after administration sealed the main gate with barbed fencing on 29 March fol-

lowing a nation-wide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Tablighi Markaz Haveli was converted into a quarantine centre on March 29 and since then as many as 23 persons have been found positive for the pandemic disease.—ANI ■



Members of the Navy display a picture of Cuban former president Fidel Castro during the May Day parade at Revolution Square in Havana, on 1 May, 2016. PHOTO: AFP

Cuba suspends May Day parade over virus worries

HAVANA — Cuba on Tuesday announced a rare suspension of its May Day parade, a fixture of the country's political calendar since the 1959 Communist revolution, as a precaution against the coronavirus pandemic.

The colorful Labor Day parade is a major showpiece event for the island's government and typically brings together more than one million people in the

capital Havana each year, according to authorities.

It was last called off in 1994 and 1995 when Cuba faced a severe economic crisis, known as the "special period," after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel told ministers in a meeting carried on state TV that this year's suspension was decided by the country's Political

Bureau, presided over by Communist Party leader Raul Castro.

Diaz-Canel asked the Workers Central Union of Cuba, which organizes the event, to offer alternatives in keeping with social distancing — suggesting the hanging of flags outside homes or a substitute "virtual parade."

Cuba has recorded 186 cases of the COVID-19 illness, with six deaths.—AFP ■

US Navy captain says carrier faces dire coronavirus threat

WASHINGTON — The captain of the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt told the Pentagon that new coronavirus is spreading uncontrollably through his ship and called for immediate help to quarantine its crew.

But Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Tuesday ruled out evacuating the ship, whose plight bears similarities to that on civilian cruise ships where the COVID-19 illness spread.

Captain Brett Crozier wrote in a four-page letter that they had not been able to stem the spread of COVID-19 through the 4,000 crewmembers, describing a dire situation aboard the vessel now docked at Guam, a US territory in the Pacific.

"We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die," Crozier wrote, according to the San Francisco Chronicle, which published a copy of the letter on Tuesday.

"The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating," Crozier wrote, referring to the ship's "inherent limitations of

space."

He asked to be able to quarantine nearly the entire crew onshore at Guam, saying keeping them all on board the ship was an "unnecessary risk."

There is little opportunity for "social distancing", which US civilians have been told to practice, among the cramped passageways and sleeping quarters of an aircraft carrier.

"Removing the majority of personnel from a deployed US nuclear aircraft carrier and isolating them for two weeks may seem like an extraordinary measure," he said. "This is a necessary risk."

Asked on the CBS Evening News whether it was time for an evacuation, Esper said: "I don't think we're at that point." —AFP ■



Coronavirus is spreading uncontrollably through the crew of the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier, its captain said. PHOTO: AFP

Bondi Beach virus testing targets backpackers

SYDNEY — Australian health officials set up a coronavirus testing clinic on Sydney's Bondi Beach Wednesday, as concern grew that COVID-19 was spreading among backpackers in the popular tourist destination.

More than 100 cases of coronavirus have reportedly been identified in the area — many linked to two massive club parties held in mid-March before the country shut down

bars, pubs and other non-essential services.

Photos shared online last week also showed mostly young beachgoers packed together on the sand after outdoor gatherings were curtailed, drawing howls of protest.

That led to sunbathers, surfers and tourists being banned from the beach, with police enforcing the prohibition.

New South Wales Health said the Waverley Council area,

which encompasses Bondi, had the highest number of confirmed cases in Sydney.

"A plausible explanation is they have come in contact with an infected backpacker before that backpacker was aware they had COVID-19," said chief health officer Kerry Chant.

Australia has recorded almost 5,000 coronavirus infections and 20 deaths, with almost half of those in New South Wales. —AFP ■

UK gov promises more virus tests as criticism grows

LONDON — Britain said Wednesday it would soon begin testing 25,000 people daily for COVID-19 as criticism of the government grew over low numbers of testing compared to other countries.

Housing Minister Robert Jenrick told Sky TV that it was targeting 25,000 daily tests by "mid-April", after the latest figures revealed the UK death toll was almost 1,800.

The victims included a 13-year-old boy, thought to be the country's youngest victim.

"We think within days we'll be able to go from our present capacity, as I say, of 12,750, to 15,000," said Jenrick.

"And then mid-April is when we expect to be at 25,000," he added. Ministers have been put on the back foot as criticism over the lack of testing grows.

There has been growing condemnation of a lack of tests for frontline health staff as well as the wider public. Even media normally loyal to the ruling Conservative Party have written about a mass testing "shambles".

Britain has so far carried out just over 143,000 tests com-

pared to Germany which is testing 70,000 people a day. As of 30 March, there have been 455 deaths in Germany. Some 25,150 people have now tested positive for the virus in Britain, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Health Minister Matt Hancock. Jenrick conceded the UK had to increase test numbers "significantly" but blamed kit shortages due to the global pandemic. Another senior minister, Michael Gove, has also blamed the lack of "chemical reagents" needed for tests kits — a claim contradicted by those representing the UK chemical industry.

Meanwhile, the family of the 13-year-old boy, Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab, from south London, said in a statement that they were "beyond devastated" at his death.

The boy, who died on Monday at King's College Hospital in London, had no underlying illnesses.

The latest UK health ministry figures show that a total of 1,789 people have died, although data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales suggested that the true toll could be 24 per cent higher.—AFP ■



Britain has been building emergency medical facilities to take the strain of an expected surge in coronavirus cases, such as this one in Llanelli, Wales. PHOTO: AFP

Youth ASEAN football tournaments postponed amid Covid-19

THE youth version of the ASEAN football tournaments has been postponed for a few months due to the global outbreak of the Corona virus COVID-19 disease, according to the statement with the ASEAN Football Federation.

Four events will be postponed to unknown dates of this year, while the AFF Women's Championship will be held in the Philippines in May, according to the statement issued by the AFF.

The three other tournaments

to be rescheduled are the AFF U18 Women's Championship, AFF U16 Boys' Championship and AFF U19 Boys' Championship, which was originally scheduled in Indonesia in June, July and August 2020 respectively.

Four other AFF events will take place as originally planned are the AFF U15 Girls' Championship in Indonesia this September, and the AFF Futsal Championship, AFF Futsal Club Championship and AFF Beach Football Championship

respectively in Thailand, later of this year.

Meanwhile, Asean Club Championships has now been rescheduled to 2021 instead of holding this year.

AFF will provide updates information about the tournaments when necessary with their following guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Ministries, Government Agencies, FIFA and Asian Football Confederation, said the source with the AFF. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Ex-Asian champions Western Sydney lay off squad, staff: reports

SYDNEY (Australia) — Former Asian football champions Western Sydney Wanderers have temporarily laid off their squad and staff, reports said on Wednesday, as the coronavirus shutdown takes a heavy toll on sport.

The Wanderers, who won the AFC Champions League in 2014, follow the lead of fellow top-flight clubs Perth Glory and Central Coast Mariners, with Brisbane Roar expected to follow suit, Australian media said.

Fairfax and News Corp newspapers both said the Wanderers had put their entire squad and staff on unpaid leave until 22

April, when the A-League is to examine when or if the season can continue. The 11-team A-League was one of the last football competitions still standing worldwide until it was finally suspended last week as Australia tightened its measures against the coronavirus. On Friday, Football Federation Australia sent home 70 per cent of its staff as it wrestles with the sudden loss of income.

And on Saturday, Australia's footballers' union threatened legal action against Perth Glory after their players' pay was stopped. The Wanderers and the A-League were not immediately available to comment. — AFP ■

Wimbledon set to be cancelled for first time since WWII



A handout composite picture released by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club on 15 July 2019, shows 2019 Wimbledon Men's singles champion Serbia's Novak Djokovic (l) and Wimbledon Women's singles champion Romania's Simona Halep (r) posing for a photograph with their trophies at the Champions Dinner on 14 July, 2019 in central London. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Wimbledon looks certain to be scrapped for the first time since World War II by tournament chiefs on Wednesday as the coronavirus wreaks further havoc on the global sporting calendar.

The cancellation of the only grasscourt Grand Slam tournament at the All England Club would leave the tennis season in disarray after the French Open was controversially moved and all events cancelled until 7 June.

Wimbledon, in leafy southwest London, is due to run for two weeks from 29 June, with Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep set to defend their singles titles.

A decision to scrap the tournament is widely expected, with the world struggling to contain the spread of COVID-19, which

has infected more than 840,000 people worldwide and killed over 40,000.

Lead-up tournaments in the short grasscourt season are also likely to be scrapped following talks on Tuesday, understood to have involved Wimbledon chiefs and the game's governing bodies.

Organisers had earlier ruled out playing the Grand Slam behind closed doors and postponing the event would also create its own problems.

Three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker on Tuesday pleaded for tournament chiefs to wait longer before making a decision.

"I really hope Wimbledon will wait until the end of April for decision!" he tweeted. "The tourney is first week of July... patience is

a virtue."

But former women's world number one Amelie Mauresmo, the 2006 Wimbledon champion, said the 2020 season would probably need to be scrapped.

"I think that we are going to have to draw a line under the 2020 tennis season," she tweeted.

The cancellation of Wimbledon could mean multiple champions Roger Federer, Serena Williams and Venus Williams have played at the All England Club for the final time. Federer and Serena will be nearly 40 by the time of the 2021 championships and Venus will be 41. Serena, beaten in last year's final by Halep, is stuck on 23 Grand Slam singles titles – agonisingly one away from equalling Margaret Court's record.—AFP ■

Beijing 2022 Olympics face 'special situation' after Tokyo delay

BEIJING (China)—Beijing 2022 organisers said they face "a special situation" after the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics means less than six months between the Summer and Winter Games.

The Tokyo Olympics are now scheduled to run from July 23 to August 8, 2021 after they were put back a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

However, with the Beijing Winter Games beginning on February 4, 2022 there is the unusual challenge of almost back-to-back Olympics.

"The new dates of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games mean we are faced with a special situation where the Summer Games and Winter Games are to be held in half-a-year," a Bei-

jing 2022 official told Xinhua news agency. "We will have a detailed assessment of how the new dates of Tokyo 2020 will affect the Beijing 2022 Games.

"In the meantime, will keep close communication with the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the Olympic family to handle the situation properly and push forward our preparation in all aspects."

China, where the coronavirus emerged in December, says that its preparations for 2022 are on schedule, despite much of the country shutting down in February in an effort to stop the spread of the disease. Beijing will become the first city to host both the Summer and Winter Games, having held the 2008 Olympics.—AFP ■



Beijing is the first city to organise both Summer and Winter Olympics. PHOTO: AFP