

NATIONAL

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe joins video conference of health ministers from ASEAN, US

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Myanmar nationals return through Myawady Friendship Bridge (2)

PAGE-3

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 16, 11th Waxing of Kasone 1382 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Saturday, 2 May 2020



Aung San Suu Kyi

State Counsellor

Message



Each one of us needs to do what needs to be done in the right way: State Counsellor

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that each one of us needed to do what needed to be done in the right way. This is what she wrote:

We pass 1 May. We are now in the fifth month from the date we first formulated and approved the health and economic programmes to respond to COVID-19.

Up to now, we can say that we have been able to contain the COVID-19 disease. 151 infected patients, 6 deaths and 28 recovered patients. When compared with other countries, we can say that our situation is among the least severe. This is because of the strenuous efforts of all relevant departments and the cooperation and participation of the people, who are the key.

Much remains to be done with much effort in the future. Healthcare programmes for the returnees which can number up to 100,000; influenza which comes with the Monsoon, dengue protection programmes; other numerous social issues; issues facing the country; all these we need to overcome.

Did you get tired reading my posting? Don't be. Issues which we think are very difficult and complex are in reality really simple. All that is needed is for each of us to do what needs to be done in the right way.

Just like my father, the monastic school boy used to conclude one of his speeches – "Appama dena, samba dei hta" (Protect and practice to perfection with intense mindfulness).

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

Total cases of COVID-19 reach 151 on Friday

COVID-19 Situation Report of Myanmar at 8:00 pm on 1 May

- Laboratory tests of the National Health Laboratory (Yangon) on the samples 155 of quarantined persons and PUIs, and those of 41 samples by the Department of Medical Research, totalling 196 persons, on 1 May afternoon, have showed that—
 - No positive case of COVID-19. (No confirmed case)
- There are a total of 151 confirmed cases in Myanmar up to 8:00 pm on 1 May.
- Out of old confirmed cases, THREE persons (Case-14, 18, 90) were tested negative for two times on 1 May, reaching the number to 31 in this group.
- TEN former patients (Case-2,8,32,33,38,41,47,50,54,58) have recovered and was allowed for leaving the hospital on 1 May. A total of 27 persons have been discharged from the hospital and are now quarantined at the designated places.
- SIX positive patients have died until now.
- The remaining 118 confirmed cases are receiving medical treatments at the

- respective hospitals. Among them, TWO persons are at the intensive care units.
- There are a total of 85 new persons under investigation from 12 noon of 30 April to 12 noon of 1 May.

• No result came out last night.

Ministry of Health and Sports

COVID-19 Laboratory results at 8 pm, 1 May 2020

Samples tested at National Health Laboratory on 1 May	155
Samples tested at Department of Medical Research on 1 May	41
COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) (new confirmed case) (positive)	0

(Translated by Aung Khin)

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Low pressure area warning issued for preparatory measures

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

National Power Grid now supplies electricity to Mawlaik

PAGE-3



BUSINESS

Total border trade value hits \$5.97 bln

PAGE-5

BUSINESS

Lower supply causes palm sugar prices up

PAGE-5



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe joins special video conference of health ministers from ASEAN, US

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe participated in the Special Video Conference of Health Ministers of ASEAN and the United States held on 30 April.

Co-chaired by Indonesia and the United States, the meeting aimed to enhance cooperation between ASEAN and the US on the response towards the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the teleconference, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe discussed Myanmar's measures against COVID-19 and expressed thanks to the US government and the USAID for their donations of PPEs for the health workers and US\$700,000.

He also talked on collabo-

ration between the offices of US CDC in Myanmar and Thailand, and offered to increase the multi-centric clinical trials or studies on COVID-19 and beyond in the country in coordination with health and research institutions between ASEAN countries and the United States.

The Union Minister suggested capacity-building courses for younger health workers with the assistance of US CDC, experts from National Institute of Health, researchers from ASEAN countries and public health professionals.

Dr Myint Htwe also explained Myanmar's efforts on fighting against the pandemic, with promoting the role of vol-



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe participates in the Special Video Conference of Health Ministers of ASEAN and the United States on 30 April. **PHOTO: MOHS**

unteers, and formation of national-level central committee on COVID-19 led by the State Counsellor with heads of government ministries.

Myanmar also agreed the Joint Statement of the ASE-

AN-US Special Video Conference's Joint Statement in response to the COVID-19.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein, Permanent Secretary Professor Dr Thet Khaing

Win, Director-General of Public Health and Medical Services Dr Soe Oo, Deputy Director-General of Public Health Dr Tun Tin and officials.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

THE Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Containment and Emergency Response Committee has opened the COVID-19 Call Centre in Yangon. It is opened daily.

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 8 am to 8 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

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Low pressure area warning issued for preparatory measures

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has informed to public about a warning of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology from its observation on a lower pressure area over the South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal still persists at 18:30 hrs M.S.T yesterday.

The weather condition was forecast to intensify into a depression during next 96 hours and it is likely to move North-Northwest wards, with being cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few clouds to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

The warning also said if the storm headed towards Myanmar, it will affect coastal regions of Rakhine, Ayayawady and Yangon, causing tidal wave, heavy rain, torrential floods, soil erosions and flash floods in mountain areas. Moreover, the inland areas will suffer other indirect impacts from the storm.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has also advised to the local people in both coastal and inland areas to make the following preventive measures:

- (1) Safe shelters are required during the storm. However, it is better to make houses and buildings resist strong wind and heavy rain as people need to stay only at home amid COVID-19 outbreak.
- (2) Emergency items, foods, water and important documents should be ready for urgent evacuation. Soaps, hand sanitizers and face masks are kept ready for COVID-19

prevention during evacuation.

- (3) Torch, candles and lighters must be in hand, along with fully charged mobile phones.
- (4) Gathering point must be set among the family members for possible separations in the disaster. Each family member must keep the contact phone number, name, ward/village, town and contact person.
- (5) Those who are living, working or doing fishing businesses near the coastal areas must be alert to the storm and tidal wave.
- (6) Inland areas may suffer indirect impacts of storms, with strong winds, heavy rain and thunderbolts.
- (7) People living near mountain steams need to be aware of flash floods, and move to safer place, if necessary.
- (8) Temporarily move to safer place to avoid soil erosion near rivers and creeks.
- (9) Follow guidelines for COVID-19 either in nearby cyclone shelters or in specific place.

People need to closely monitor the situation of possible storm and follow the disaster management of authorities in emergency period.

Information and assistance are available at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement through the hotline numbers: 067 3404666 and 067 3404777.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 responses continue at IDP camps in Kachin, Kayin, Shan

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is co-operating with relevant departments and organizations to contain, protect and treat COVID-19 in IDP camps across the nation.

The ministry supplied 3 wash basins, 3 infrared thermometers and 2 vinyl posters to three IDP camps in Waingmaw, Kachin State on 30 April. In addition, the ministry disseminated knowledge to two camps in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin

State, and gave 6 wash basins and 6 infrared thermometers to 6 camps in Muse and Kutkai townships, Shan State.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is implementing containment, protection and response to COVID-19 in addition to sharing knowledge, announcements and mental support in Nay Pyi Taw Council and states and regions.

—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Staff of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement distribute wash basin to the displaced people in a camp. PHOTO: MNA

Notification on COVID-19 prevention in IDP camps

- The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is implementing action plans to prevent, contain and treat COVID-19 in IDP camps across the nation.
- Management committees and temporary residents of the IDP camps are notified to proceed with the following guidelines:
 - Regularly and systematically wash hands with the hand basins and soaps provided in the camps.
 - Be wary of personal hygiene and minimizing contact with other persons when using public toilets and showers.
 - Be extra vigilant for the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses living in the camps.
 - To regulate camp residents from going outside and to maintain records of persons going outside for compulsory reasons. Every time they leave or enter the camp, their body temperatures should be checked, surgical or cloth-sewn masks should be worn and hands should be washed systematically.
 - Always wear fabric-woven face mask. Mark two colours for interior and exterior of face mask. Completely cover nose and mouth. Never touch mask with hand when worn on face. Remove from face using the strings attached to the mask. Clean the fabric-woven face mask thoroughly every day.
- Prevent external persons from entering the camp.
- Report immediately to authorities for unusual activities or requirements concerning COVID-19.
- Carefully read SMS messages from Ministry of Health and Sports on updates and information related to COVID-19.
- Follow patient referral procedures in case of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Connect with local general administration department, health department and philanthropic organizations to swiftly transport patients under surveillance and suspected persons to their designated locations.
- Adhere to notifications issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and local governments concerning COVID-19

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Volunteer Invitation to COVID-19 National Volunteer Steering Unit

THE Community Based Facility Quarantine process is a key role for containment of COVID-19 spread. Those who had close contacts with the positive patients and the returnees from foreign countries need to take part in this programme. Despite no symptoms, they need to stay under surveillance for a total of 28 days during incubation period — 21 days facility quarantine and the 7- day home quarantine.

Those in community based facility quarantine will require assistance of well-trained volunteers. For the specific process and time frame, the volunteers will have to perform their daily duties in inner circle or outer circle depending on the requirement and available services. They are required to work for the whole period of 21 days. They will also have to live at specific places for the 7-day recreation. They will have to do this work for a total of 28 days at least one time. They may offer their services for the next round.

It is warmly invited to spend time, labour, skills and expertise without getting any charge in this process of specific time. The list of volunteers at the local community based facility quarantine centre has been collected. The objective of the National Volunteer Steering Unit is to give training to the volunteers, to supply the quarantined persons with fundamental foods, to have sufficient relaxation and recognition of the government.

Those who want to join the volunteer programme as volunteers for a specific field, the registration can be made in the Facebook page of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement not later than 6:00 pm 5 May 2020.

The works of civil service societies and individual volunteers are well appreciated and they are requested for more cooperation.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Missing Pakistan journalist found dead in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (Sweden) — A Pakistan journalist living in exile in Sweden who has been missing since March has been found dead, police said Friday.

“His body was found on April 23 in the Fyris river outside Uppsala,” police spokesman Jonas Eronen told AFP.

Sajid Hussain, from the troubled southwestern province of Baluchistan, was working part-time as a professor in Uppsala, about 60 kilometres (35 miles) north of Stockholm, when he went missing on 2 March.

He was also the chief editor of the Baluchistan Times, an online magazine he had set up, in which he wrote about drug trafficking, forced disappearances and a long-running insurgency.

“The autopsy has dispelled some of the suspicion that he

was the victim of a crime,” Eronen said.

The police spokesman added that while a crime could not be completely ruled out, Hussain’s death could equally have been the result of an accident or a suicide.

“As long as a crime cannot be excluded, there remains the risk that his death is linked to his work as a journalist,” Erik Halkjaer, head of the Swedish branch of Reporters without Borders (RSF), told AFP. According to the RSF, Hussain was last seen getting onto a train for Uppsala in Stockholm.

Hussain came to Sweden in 2017 and secured political asylum in 2019. The Pakistan foreign ministry declined to comment when asked about Hussain by AFP. — AFP ■

Malaysia gains valuable insight on COVID-19 from Chinese expert team: officials

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia has gained valuable insight on handling the COVID-19 outbreak from the experiences shared by the Chinese medical expert team, Malaysian Health Minister Adham Baba said on Friday.

The two-week visit of the Medical Consultant Expert Team from China to Malaysia provided opportunities to government health officials as well as members from the medical faculties of several public universities to exchange experience and technical knowledge.

These include the clinical case management, infection control and prevention measures, clinical research and investigation as well as the role of traditional Chinese medicine in managing COVID-19 cases, Adham said in a statement.

The expert team has provided the Malaysian side better understanding of COVID-19 and identified areas for improvement and possible areas of collaboration with China, he said.

“The shared experiences and knowledge gained from the multiple engagements with the medical expert team has been invaluable, and provided the Ministry of Health Malaysia better understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

Adham said the Chinese expert team had also advised Malaysia on ways to prevent a rebound of cases, safeguarding of medical personnel and testing procedures among other matters, and had commended Malaysian efforts to fight the disease.

Adham expressed appreciation to the Chinese government

for extending their assistance to Malaysia through sharing of knowledge as well as donations of medical supplies during this fight against the outbreak.

He said the visit is “a testament to the close relationship between both countries”, and Malaysia looks forward to furthering collaboration with China for the benefit of the community in both countries. Health Ministry Director-General Noor Hisham Abdullah told a press conference later that the visit by the Chinese expert team has been “mutually beneficial”.

Malaysia has been learning from China in policies and action plans as China faced the outbreak earlier than Malaysia, and the Chinese experts has been positive on Malaysia’s efforts, said Noor Hisham.—Xinhua ■

Armed US protesters enter Michigan capitol to demand lockdown end

LANSING (United States) — Demonstrators, including some carrying guns, entered the capitol building in the US state of Michigan on Thursday and demanded the Democratic governor lift strict coronavirus lockdown orders, as some lawmakers reportedly donned bulletproof vests.

Dozens of demonstrators crowded the lobby of the building in Lansing, where they demanded to be allowed inside the House Chamber. State police, wearing masks, blocked them from entering. None of the protesters appeared to be wearing masks.

“Directly above me, men with rifles yelling at us,” tweeted Senator Dayna Polehanki along with a photo showing four men, at least one of whom appeared to be carrying a weapon.

“Some of my colleagues who own bullet proof vests are wearing them. I have never appreciated our Sergeants-at-Arms more

than today,” she continued.

More protesters could be seen outside carrying signs, including one depicting Governor Gretchen Whitmer as Adolf Hitler.

The demonstration, dubbed the American Patriot Rally, was organized by a group calling itself Michigan United for Liberty.

“We do not agree with or consent to our unalienable rights being restricted or rescinded for any reason, including the COVID-19 pandemic,” the group said on its private Facebook page, where it has more than 8,800 members.

“We believe that every American and every Michigander has the right to work to support our families, to travel freely, to gather for religious worship and for other purposes, to gather in protest of our government and to direct our own medical care.”

The protest comes a day after a Michigan court ruled that



Some of the protesters who entered the Michigan state capitol on April 30, 2020, demanding coronavirus lockdown orders be lifted, were armed. PHOTO: AFP

stay-at-home directives issued by Whitmer on 24 March do not infringe on residents’ constitutional rights, according to local media reports.

It was the second time this month that protesters have demanded Whitmer lift lockdown restrictions in the state, which has seen more than 3,500 people killed by the coronavirus, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. On 16 April around

3,000 protesters, some of them also armed, descended on Lansing for “Operation Gridlock,” causing a massive traffic jam around the capital building.

A day later Trump appeared to lend his support to them and scattered protests elsewhere, tweeting “LIBERATE MICHIGAN!” Whitmer, whose name has emerged as a potential running mate for presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe

Biden, shrugged those protests off, telling CNN it was “OK to be angry.” “I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again — Michigan is an extraordinary place to live because of the people who call it home. There are millions of Michiganders doing their part to slow the spread of #COVID19 every single day. We are going to get through this together,” she tweeted later Thursday, without commenting directly on the protests.— AFP ■

Judge rules against Meghan in parts of tabloid privacy case

LONDON (United Kingdom) — A London judge Friday struck out elements of the Duchess of Sussex’s high profile claim against a tabloid newspaper group for publishing a letter she wrote to her estranged father.

The US one-time actress, who with her husband Prince Harry is waging an increasingly public war with some media outlets, is suing Associated Newspapers, which owns the weekly Mail on Sunday, Daily Mail and

MailOnline.

She is claiming the news group breached her privacy, her data protection rights and copyright when, in February 2019, it printed extracts of correspondence the previous year to her

father, Thomas.

A preliminary hearing in the case, held remotely last Friday at the High Court of England and Wales because of coronavirus restrictions, saw lawyers for Associated Newspapers apply to

strike out parts of her claim.

In a summary of his judgment on the application, which sought to reject three different bases for the claim, judge Mark Warby ruled in the paper’s favour.— AFP ■

Role of individual citizens called key to overcoming all challenges

WITH the return of some 50 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand yesterday, the Union Government resumed its well-practiced acceptance process.

The government thought the number of returnees from foreign countries would exceed 100,000, with most arriving from Thailand and Malaysia.

Like parents and children, the government will accept all migrant workers, regardless of whether they sought work overseas legally, or otherwise.

After medical checks, migrant workers are being transported to their native villages, in accordance with social distancing rules, where they are placed in facility quarantine for 21 days.

With their return, our struggle begins for providing health care to migrant workers, and for their social issues, including their livelihoods.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in China, the Union Government has organized rapid responses to the pandemic.

The Union Government left no stone unturned in fighting the disease, pledging that no one would be left behind during the prevention and treatment of the COVID-19 disease.

Migrant workers, who are also our citizens, cannot be left out of planning for responding to the pandemic, amidst the gravity of COVID-19 and its impact

on society and the nation's economy.

The return of migrant workers during the spreading of the Coronavirus in our country is one of many challenges we are facing today.

Despite such challenges, we are confident that the participation of our people can overcome all obstacles. Individual citizens must do what has been outlined by authorities in the face of the crisis, which is the answer for tackling all challenges.

Why? We have witnessed our achievements in containing the COVID-19, to date. In our country, there are 151 people infected with the disease, along with six dead and 28 who have recovered from the infection. In comparison, the situation in our country is not as severe as other countries now face. No doubt, we have been successful, thus far, thanks to the public's participation and awareness.

Again, this is credited to the crucial role of public participation in preventing and containing the global pandemic.

Our country is not rich. But, the government is committed to exerting its best efforts in fighting the disease and in providing treatment to all suspected patients, whether the infection is severe or not, with the use of all possible resources to overcome outbreaks of the disease.

Hence, we would like to urge our people to remain farsighted, determined, diligent and unified.

Fourth-Year Performances of the Ministry of Commerce

By Khin Yadanan and Zin Oo
Photo Thiha Sithu

With the expectation of developing the economy of the nation, the Ministry of Commerce is shouldering the trade sector

CONCENTRATING on the development of the state economic sphere, including the private sector, the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) is doing business in top gear.

Minimizing the complex and difficult procedures of the past, the officers and staff members of the MoC are sailing along with the amended rules, regulations and laws in doing business. The journey of fourth year is being interviewed with the responsible persons including the Union Minister, and it is submitted to the esteemed readers and the people.

Dr. Than Myint (Union Minister)

Q: Please share with us the salient economic development of the ministry.

A: With the intent to support the economy of the nation, the MoC is doing business through trade. The Private Sector Development Committee (PSDC) is chaired by Vice President U Myint Swe and that the Union Minister is shouldering the position of Vice Chairman. Always keeping in touch with the private organizations and interacting with the media, the MoC is regularly reporting to the PSDC.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio is the Chairman of the Myanmar Special Economic Zones Central Committee (MSEZCC) and I am responsible as the Secretary. I



Dr. Than Myint (Union Minister)

took the chair of the Management Committee of the MSEZCC. The MoC involved in many trade development tasks including the implementation of Myanmar-China Special Economic Zones.

Q: Kindly explained over the minimizing of procedures in the MoC.

A: Priority is given for the export sector, and at the same time, the development of foreign investment is also put in the forefront, working in cooperation with the private sector. Many faceted tasks of affiliation and looping are carried out by the MoC for the development of private trade sector.

Since the previous laws and the procedures were outdated, they have been replaced with new laws and rules. Especially, enormous relaxation has been made in export permits application.

Introducing e-Commerce

through the application of online system, many hurdles have been solved for the business people. Most interesting tasks of the sub-committee are termed as "Ease of Doing Business", where cooperation is the main theme among the business people in the commerce sector, in making the functions more flexible.

Q: Please tell us the difficulties and challenges of the MoC.

A: As we have abundant natural resources and human resources, we could offer fine opportunity for trade and commerce. On the other hand, we have weakness in the infrastructure such as buildings, roads, and power supplies. We have to deal the challenges. The main export produce and items come from agricultural sector, and that the produce from animal breeding and fisheries are also in the line of export, followed by garment industry. In penetrating the international market, the export produce and items need to be in the top notch quality.

Narrow Market for Export

Weakness is found in our export products and also in the price competition, and that we need to pull down the production cost and trading cost. For instance, the production cost could be reduced, but on the other hand, the expenses in the trading process are high, posing challenges with the need of long term solution.

Export market is experiencing with narrow scope. We are exporting rice to sixty countries mainly in African continent; however, we have to rely on the neighbouring countries for the export of corn, variety of bean and pulses, and other items. When the trade policies of these countries changed, Myanmar faces difficulties in export trade.

Q: Tell us over the implementation with regard to law perspective.

A: On 15 March 2019, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed Law No. 9/2019 on the new Consumer Protection Law 2019 to promote and protect the interest of consumers over all goods and services. Moreover, the Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission (MCPC) was also formed. It has created an atmosphere of fair completion in the market.

On 24 May 2019, the Myanmar Parliament passed the Copyright Law, marking the fourth and final intellectual property ("IP") law in the country's new IP regime.

On 30 January 2019, the Myanmar Parliament passed the Trademark Law and the Industrial Design Law. The Patent Law was passed on 11 March 2019. The law also establishes the Central Committee for Intellectual Property Rights.

When the trade law is enacted during this year, more relaxation of rules is expected in the commerce and trade sectors. The upcoming laws, by-laws, and procedures would be instrumental in the control mechanism among the business people.

For the advantage of SMEs, the legislation approved a new Safeguard Law on 24 December 2019. The legislation is drafting bills with regards to "Antidumping Law" and "Countervailing Law". The laws aim to safeguard domestic manufacturers from cheap imports, and support demand for locally-made products.

Enactment of laws

The new Consumer Protection Law 2019 is to promote and protect the interest of consumers over all goods and services. It also

serves interest to producers, the traders, and all people in commerce and trade.

Q: Please share us the messages from the MoC to be conveyed to the people.

A: There are products coming from agriculture sector and industrial sector; and that the traders buy and sell these products for consumption. The surplus is exported, and that the imported goods are being managed in the country. The enormous and varied tasks are to be shouldered by all stakeholders.

Trade exhibitions are being convened in the international arena as well as in domestic sphere in promoting the commerce and trade, and that are the result of cooperation of the business community, the people, and the government.

U Aung Htoo (Deputy Minister)

Q: Kindly share us the achievement of the fourth-year performances.

A: Aspiration and main task of the MoC is for the economic development of the country through the trade. During the tenure of the incumbent government, the export is to elevate to three fold. We have witnessed progress in the export of rice, corn and maize, and also bean and pulses. We could also export livestock animals.

Q: Tell us about the national export strategy.

A: With the assistance of the WTO, we have crafted the national export strategy. First based on 2015-2019 and expanded to 2020-2025 as we have gained momentum. The export included items from agriculture, industry and services of the ICT sectors.

Q: Tell us on the relaxation being made with regards to law.

A: We have enacted such as that of Consumer Protection Law; that of the Safeguard Law; and that of the IP Law. With these laws being activated in the country, more investment is expected in the country.



U Aung Htoo (Deputy Minister)

Q: Share us on the private sector development.

A: Vice President U Myint Swe is at the helm of the committee undertaking the development of the private sector, and that the difficulties and hurdles were being resolved during several meetings, through five working committees.

Q: Tell us more about "Ease of Doing Business".

A: For the development of the private sector, the main task is to resolve the difficulties experiencing in the private sector. We are working in collaboration with the World Bank; however, we still have red tape system, tied up with corruption. In cleaning up the system, we have formed ten aid and assistance groups for the commerce sector.

All hands on deck are working for easing the deadlocks in the commerce sector; and that economic index stays at (177) without significant improvement.

Economic Indicators

Due to our efforts last year, we arrived at (165) slot, and that the improvement was seen at the establishments of companies and the allowances of permits in constructions. We are trying our best to reach the index at level (100) in the year's ahead.

Q: Please tell us about the agriculture produce management group.

A: The group is being formed under the Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits. The government

SEE PAGE-10



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 01st May, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, a low pressure area over the South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal still persists. It may further intensify into a depression during next 96 hours and it is likely to move North- Northwest wards. Weather is cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 02nd May, 2020:

Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Magway Region and Rakhine State, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing and Mandalay Regions, Kachin State and fairly widespread in Bago and Ayeyawady Regions and Shan, Chin and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of scattered to fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Kayah, Kavin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd May, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd May, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd May, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region, fairly widespread in Yangon Region.

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

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Myanmar Consumers' Rights Commission holds its first meeting.

Fourth-Year Performances of the Ministry of Commerce

FROM PAGE-9

has fixed the floor price at MMK 500,000 for (100) baskets of paddy, in a move to protect the interests of paddy farmers. MMK (15) billions have been allowed from the revolving funds.

Ayeyawady, Bago and Yangon regions have seen that the market price of paddy went below the floor pricing, and therefore, MMK (6 point 5) billions have been spent, saving and salvaging the farmers. Such act of assistance has stabilized the paddy price above MMK 500,000, giving guarantee for the farmers.

Q: Tell us about special economic zones.

A: The MoC has been entrusted with the task for the establishment of special economic zones. Currently, we have set up Special Economic Zones in Thilawa, Kyaukphyu and Dawei. A Thilawa hosts (112) companies with MMK (1 point 9) billion, it is seen as most successful zone. Dawei Special Economic Zone is under implementation with the cooperation of Thailand and Japan, and that the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone is moving ahead with the cooperation of CITIC of the PR China.

Border Economic Cooperation Zone

A MoU was signed between Myanmar and China for the establishment of border economic zone while the State Counsellor visited PR China in 2017. Currently, the Border Economic Cooperation Zone is to be realized in the areas between Muse and Shweli.

Q: Kindly elaborate on the topic of job opportunities.

A: In working with the development partners, the MoC has negotiated options for the creation of job opportunities. Cooperation is ongoing with regard to the job

creations in garment industry, the hotel and tourism industry, and the construction industry.

The employment in the garment industry has jumped from (400,000) workers to (600,000) workforce, where (95) per cent is women, thus providing advantage to them. During four years time, the CMP sector has multiplied to (10) times in its production value, reaching US\$ (5) billions.

Q: Kindly share us messages intended for the people.

A: COVID -19 pandemic brings negative impact on border trade, and that we are trying to overcome the loss and damages. The tactic on trade approach has been shifted to broader perspective, and that (15) commercial counselors have been sent abroad to develop trade.

U Aung Soe (Permanent Secretary/Director-General of Myanmar Trade Development Team).

Q: Share us on the export promotion tasks.

A: Strategy for National Export has been laid down to elevate the export volume, prioritizing on rice, bean and pulses, oil crops, fisheries products, forest products, and garment items. Income from service of the tourist industry is also accounted.

A new building for the Myanmar Trade development was constructed in Nay Pyi Taw at the cost of MMK (600) millions. Plans are on the agenda for the establishment of two trade promotion centers at the costs on MMK (200) millions each in the Kayah State and the Rakhine State, in assisting the development of state / region governments.

Q: Tell us on the achievements of Myanmar Trade Development Team.

A: Agricultural export and the application of e-commerce are



U Aung Soe
(Permanent Secretary)

on the agenda, and that the “Innovation and Entrepreneurship” would be prioritized. Export of fruits is on the brighter side, generating about US\$ (400) millions. Intended export of Myanmar handicrafts is on the agenda.

Q: Kindly explain on the export oriented programs.

A: Establishment of “Information Network” is completed to get information for export drive. The “Trade Promotion Plan” created through the Commercial Counselors is very much instrumental.

U Myint Lwin (Director-General, Department of Consumer Affairs).

Q: What were the tasks in connection with the consumers’ protection?

A: On 15 March 2019, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed Law No. 9/2019 on the new Consumer Protection Law 2019 (“CPL”) which repeals the previous Consumer Protection Law 2014. The intention of the passing of CPL is to promote and protect the interest of consumers over all goods and services.

Q: Tell us on the accomplished tasks with regards to consumers’ protection.

A: Awareness dissemination



U Myint Lwin (Director-General,
Department of Consumer Affairs)

tasks have been carried out for the people covering (5 point 32) millions, which is (10) percent of the total population of the whole country.

Q: Kindly share us on the tasks for domestic trade development.

A: For the development of internal trade in private sector, relevant groups have been formed namely the fruits development groups; the fruit zone development groups; formation of a total of (893) associations and (1994) groups; a total of (43) zones and (65) wholesale markets.

U Min Min (Director-General, Department of Trade).

Q: Please share us on the development in the foreign trade sector.

A: Myanmar foreign trade stood at US\$ (29) billions in 2016 – 2017, and it jumped to US\$ (34) billions in 2017 – 2018. Next, 2018 – 2019 saw US\$ (35) billions, witnessing yearly progressive increase.

Trade deficits were recorded as US\$ (5 point 21) billions in 2016 – 2017; US\$ (3 point 81) billions in 2017 – 2018; US\$ (1) billion in 2018 – 2019, reducing each year.

Q: Tell us on the reform process in connection with the laws and the procedures.

A: For the benefits of SMEs, the “Safeguard Law” was enacted in 2019, and that the “Antidumping Law” and the “Countervailing Law” are under draft bills.

Q: Kindly share us on the relaxations of procedures.

A: In the past, some produce and items were not allowed for exports, and now oil crops and lives animals are permitted to export, in line with the changing situations. Moreover, the import procedures are also amended. Many import restrictions being imposed in the past on foreign companies,



U Min Min (Director-General,
Department of Trade).

the INGOs, and the branch offices of foreign companies have been lifted, and allowed them for the import of office equipments.

Relaxations in many export items

In the past, the imports of fertilizers, crop seeds, pesticides, hospital equipment, machinery for constructions, agricultural machinery were not permitted for the foreign companies. Now they are permitted on the basis of investment status committed in the country.

Items in semi-finished goods and finished goods of seven groups of categories, being produced by the foreign companies and the citizens, are allowed to export beginning June 2019.

A total of (47,961) “Certificate of Origin” have been issued, which began in April 2019.

Q: Please share us on e-Government.

A: Policy guideline being termed as “Data ID Card System; Digital Card System; Digital Government Strategy; and the e-Government System” has started to roll ahead on 1 April 2019 in a bid to establish e-Government of MoC.

In conclusion, it is learnt that the Department of Trade is also upgrading its system of issuing export licenses to the Myanmar Tradenet system beginning 5 January 2020, and in this connection the relevant departments such as DICA, Customs, Internal Revenue Department, Department of Trade, and Central Accounts Office can share company information.

All in all, the Application Programming Interfaces, or APIs, have become increasingly popular with the rise of automated trading systems, and that Myanmar is poised to jump in the economic bandwagon in elevating commerce sector of the country.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Officials of the Consumer Affairs Department inspect a factory.

Coronavirus: latest global developments

PARIS (France) — Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

Low-key May Day

Workers of the world scale back traditional May Day demos amid lockdowns. Many protest online, or put on face masks and follow social distancing rules outside.

There are arrests in Turkey and the Philippines of protesters who flouted strict lockdown measures in these countries.

More than 233,000 deaths

More than 233,176 people have died worldwide since the epidemic surfaced in China in December, according to an AFP tally at 1100 GMT Friday based on official sources.

More than 3,264,200 cases have now been reported in 195 countries and territories.

In the United States, which has the highest toll, 63,019 people have died. Italy is the second hardest-hit country, with 27,967 dead, followed by the United Kingdom with 26,711, Spain 24,824 and France 24,376.



Labourers load sacks of wheat grains onto a truck on International Labour Day at a railway station during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Amritsar on 1 May 2020. PHOTO: AFP

WHO asks China to join virus probe

The World Health Organization says several investigations into the source of the virus are

going on but China is not currently involved, and it invites Beijing to participate.

Trump accuses Beijing

US President Donald Trump

says he has seen evidence the new coronavirus originated in a Chinese lab.

His statement is immediately undermined by intelligence

officials and top diplomat Mike Pompeo, who says: “We don’t know precisely where it began.”

Caution for China holiday

Millions of Chinese warily begin a five-day national holiday in one of the first post-coronavirus confidence tests for the country where the pandemic emerged.

The Forbidden City imperial palace in Beijing is among the major tourist sites re-opening after being shut for three months.

Economic repercussions

Spain says its GDP is projected to fall by 9.2 per cent in 2020, while the unemployment rate would reach 19 per cent.

France’s car market plummets 88.8 per cent in April, an even sharper fall than the 72-per cent contraction in March.

Macao’s gaming revenue is almost wiped out in April, dropping 97 per cent.

Irish low-cost carrier Ryanair says it plans to axe 3,000 pilot and cabin crew jobs, or 15 per cent of staff.— AFP ■

Malaysia eases partial lockdown, opens up most business sectors

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia announced Friday it will allow almost all businesses to reopen beginning Monday with strict health safety guidelines, after being shut for six weeks to control the spread of the new coronavirus.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, in a televised address in conjunction with Labour Day, said since the “movement control order” began on 18 March, new cases have dropped sharply and the government has increased its testing and hospital capacity with more beds, venti-

lators and protective equipment for healthcare workers.

But the partial lockdown that was scheduled to last until 12 May, with schools and businesses shut and borders closed, has hurt the economy.

“I want to mention here that the country lost around 2.4 billion ringgit (\$560 million) a day throughout the MCO period. The total losses were estimated to be around 63 billion ringgit,” Muhyiddin said.

An additional one month of lockdown would cost the economy an additional 35 billion ringgit

in losses.

“We must resolve to balance the need to revive the economy and the importance to control the COVID-19 outbreak,” the prime minister said.

“Following the Health Ministry advice, based on data collected and best practices determined by the World Health Organization, the government has decided to reopen the economic sectors with caution by enforcing strict health standard operation procedures,” he added.

Muhyiddin termed it as “con-

ditional MCO.”

Businesses where social distancing is most difficult, including cinemas, barbershops and beauty salons, massage parlors and theme parks, remain closed. Schools are still shut although daycare centers can restart with strict protocols to adhere to.

Restaurants that were only allowed to stay open for takeaway or delivery can now offer dine-in services, but seating must maintain social distancing.

Other businesses can operate as usual as long as the operators follow employees’ health screening guidelines.

The government has also eased up on outdoor recreational activities, allowing non-contact sports like running, badminton, cycling and motorsports.

While people are allowed to return to work, Muhyiddin urged employers to consider allowing them to work from home and conduct meetings online as infections continue.

Malaysia has seen new cases fall from triple digits to double digits since mid-April. As of noon Friday, it reported 6,071 total cases, out of which 4,210 patients have recovered and been discharged. The number of fatalities stood at 103. — Kyodo News

Lockdown extended in India to fight COVID-19

NEW DELHI — The Indian government on Friday extended the ongoing lockdown beyond May 3 by two weeks in a bid to fight COVID-19 pandemic, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Home (Internal Security) Affairs.

The ongoing second phase of lockdown was to end on 3 May. Now, it has been extended till 17 May. India has remained under lockdown since 25 March.

The extension of the lockdown means all schools, colleges, educational institutions, shopping malls/markets, and modes of transportation will continue to remain shut. Though, according to the new guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, some relaxations would be allowed in those areas which have no COVID-19 cases. “After a comprehensive review and in view of the lockdown measures having led to significant gains in the COVID-19 situation in the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs today ordered to extend the lockdown for a further period of two weeks beyond 4 May,” said an official press release.—Xinhua



A view of Kuala Lumpur City at dawn on Earth Day 2020 taken from the top of Kenny Hills in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 22 April 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



In this file photo taken on 18 May, 2019, former US Vice President Joe Biden speaks during the kick off of his presidential election campaign in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. **PHOTO: AFP**

Biden: alleged sexual assault 'never happened'

WASHINGTON (United States) — US presidential candidate Joe Biden on Friday emphatically denied sexually assaulting a former staffer, saying the incident she claims occurred 27 years ago “never happened.”

“They aren’t true. This never happened,” Biden said in a statement regarding the accusations made by Tara Reade, a former staffer in his US Senate office.

Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, broke a month of silence on the accusations with his statement. The 77-year-old said Reade’s then-supervisor and former senior staffers in his office “have said, unequivocally, that she never came to them and complained or raised issues.”

Reade said on a podcast in March that then-senator Biden sexually assaulted her in a Capitol Hill corridor in 1993, when she was 29.

He pinned her against a wall when she brought him a gym bag, put his hands “down my skirt” and violated her, said Reade, now 56. She has since recounted her story to other media outlets, and filed an incident report with the Washington police in early April in which she did not name Biden.

Other women have accused the former vice president of touching them inappropriately in the past, and Reade’s initial claims were similar — and less severe than her most recent allegations. Biden went on a morning news show to publicly address the claims. “It is not true. I’m saying unequivocally it never happened, and it didn’t,” Biden told MSNBC.

“I don’t know why after 27 years all of this gets raised,” Biden added. “But I’m not going to question her motive. I’m not going to attack her.”

But he stressed that “I have

a right to say, look at the facts. Check it out.”

Reade has not produced a copy of the complaint that she allegedly filed in 1993.

Biden, calling for transparency, said he has asked officials to search the National Archives, where he says any such document would now reside.

“There’s nothing for me to hide,” he said. Biden, however, resisted the idea of calling for a search among his Senate papers, which were donated to the University of Delaware, which is home state. Those documents “do not contain personnel files,” he said. Biden, who has pledged to pick a woman to be his vice president, stressed that he has worked his entire political career to improve conditions for women, including authoring the Violence Against Women Act.

He was also asked by MSNBC about comments he made during the 2018 controversial Supreme Court confirmation process for Brett Kavanaugh, who had been accused of sexual assault. Biden said at the time that when a woman comes forward with such accusations, “you’ve got to start off with the presumption that at least the essence of what she’s talking about is real.”

Asked what made things different now, Biden stressed: “Women are to be believed, given the benefit of the doubt, if they come forward and say something happened to them.”

“Then you have to look at the circumstances and the facts,” he added. “The truth matters,” he said. “These claims are not true.”

President Donald Trump, who faces Biden in the November election, faced more than a dozen accusations of sexual harassment and assault before he became president. — AFP ■

Trump points finger at China lab as WHO asks to join virus probe

WASHINGTON (United States) — Donald Trump has said he has seen evidence the new coronavirus originated in a Chinese lab, an assertion that threatened on Friday to turn a global health emergency into a diplomatic crisis.

The US president’s statement was immediately undermined by intelligence officials and top diplomat Mike Pompeo, who said: “We don’t know precisely where it began.”

But the claim — already denied by Beijing — could stir tensions even as the World Health Organization asks to be allowed to take part in a Chinese investi-

gation into the “animal origins” of the pandemic.

The lockdowns that have frozen the global economy for weeks continued to ease, with South Africa and Austria allowing some businesses to reopen from Friday, joining other parts of Europe and some US states that have begun to emerge in the last few days.

But optimistic news was tempered by a further hemorrhaging of jobs, with 30 million Americans newly unemployed since lockdown began, and Spain joining its European neighbours in confirming an economic col-

lapse.

Spain’s Finance Minister Nadia Calvino said its economy was projected to shrink by 9.2 per cent in 2020 — after growing by two per cent last year — while unemployment would jump to 19 per cent from an already high 13.8.

Underlining the slump in consumer demand, Irish airline Ryanair said it was slashing 3,000 positions, forecasting passenger numbers would not recover until mid-2022.

While death rates slowed in most of Europe, the global toll from the pandemic has now topped 230,000. — AFP ■



The hospital ship USNS Comfort passes the Statue of Liberty as it departs New York City. **PHOTO: AFP**

Afghan president, feuding rival reach 'tentative' agreement

KABUL (Afghanistan) — A bitter feud between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah appeared closer to resolution Friday after Abdullah said the two men had moved forward in talks.

“We have made progress in negotiations & reached tentative agreement on a range of principles. Work on details is underway to finalize the agreement,” Abdullah said on Twitter.

Abdullah previously served as Afghanistan’s “chief executive” under a power-sharing deal with Ghani, but lost that post following last year’s presidential elections that Ghani won amid claims of fraud.

Instead of accepting defeat, Abdullah proclaimed himself president, a title he uses to this

day, though the international community only recognizes Ghani.

The dispute has proved a huge distraction for Afghanistan at a terrible time, with the coronavirus crisis worsening daily and the Taliban stepping up attacks despite a deal they signed with the US in February.

“We hope to finalize the political agreement at the earliest so that we can pay undivided attention to tackling COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a just, dignified & lasting peace, & confronting the security & economic challenges in a spirit of national unity & solidarity,” Abdullah tweeted.

Ghani’s office did not immediately comment.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an Afghan official told

AFP that Abdullah has made a multi-pronged proposal to Ghani.

The offer would see Abdullah appointed to lead eventual peace talks with the Taliban while also getting a 50-per cent share of the government including several high-ranking positions for his allies.

Abdullah would also gain the title of “executive prime minister”, the official said, stressing that Ghani has not accepted the proposal.

On Thursday, Ghani’s second vice president, Sarwar Danish, confirmed that Abdullah would be leading the country’s peace council. “Efforts are underway to finalise an agreement with Dr Abdullah within the framework of a National Participation Government,” Danish said. — AFP ■

Police on alert in Hong Kong ahead of planned democracy rallies

HONG KONG (China) — Riot police hit Hong Kong's streets on Friday ahead of planned rallies by pro-democracy protesters who were looking to defy restrictions on gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic to voice anger against authoritarian Chinese rule.

The semi-autonomous financial hub was upended by seven months of violent protests last year, hammering its reputation for stability and leaving the city deeply divided.

Widespread arrests, the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing measures ushered in four months of comparative calm.

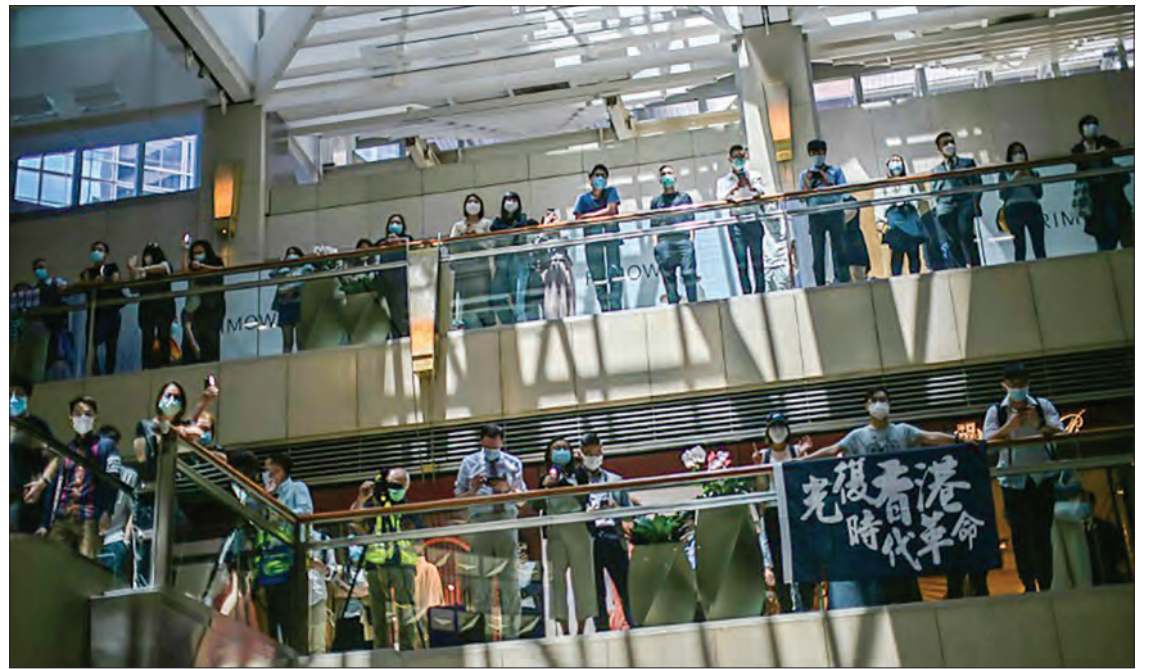
But small protests have bubbled up in the past week and activists are hoping to use May Day to muster numbers once more.

Pro-democracy unions and social media posts have called for people to gather and shout slogans in their neighbourhoods on Friday afternoon, despite a ban on more than four people gathering in public places that is aimed at halting the virus.

Police ramped up their presence across the city on Friday morning, searching primarily young passengers at subway stations and in neighbourhoods where anti-government sentiment runs high.

The South China Morning Post reported that 3,000 riot police had been placed on stand-by with rubber bullets and tear gas at the ready.

Some encrypted chat groups used by protesters fretted that protesting while anti-virus laws



Pro-democracy supporters gather at a shopping mall during a lunchtime rally in Hong Kong on 29 April. PHOTO: AFP

remain in place might lead to large numbers of arrests, raising questions over whether significant crowds would risk gathering.

The annual Labour Day often sees protests around the world but this year's are expected to be more tame given the ongoing global health crisis.

Applications by unions to hold traditional marches in Hong Kong were rejected by authorities.

But protesters are getting creative.

During brief rallies in malls earlier this week, activists en-

couraged each other to keep 1.5 metres apart and stick to small groups of four.

Riot police quickly intercepted the flashmobs, forcing them to disband as either unlawful assemblies or gatherings that breached the anti-virus measures. —AFP ■

Crude crash brings down Singapore oil tycoon

SINGAPORE — Singapore tycoon O.K. Lim built up his oil empire from a single-truck outfit through hard work and high-risk gambles, a rags-to-riches tale that made him a legend among crude traders.

But it all came crashing down when oil markets were plunged into unprecedented turmoil by the coronavirus pandemic and revealed the keen poker player appeared to have overplayed his hand.

Lim — who projected a down-to-earth image but was, according to people who knew him, a “major risk-taker” — dashed to court seeking protection from creditors for his firm Hin Leong Trading last month.

In a bombshell affidavit seen by AFP, Lim revealed the

oil trader had “in truth... not been making profits in the last few years” — despite having officially reported a healthy profit in 2019.

He admitted the firm he founded in the 1960s after emigrating from China had hidden \$800 million in losses over the years, while it also owes almost \$4 billion to banks.

Lim took responsibility for ordering the company, one of Asia's biggest oil traders, not to report the losses and also confessed it had sold off inventories that were supposed to backstop loans. Hin Leong — meaning “prosperity” in Chinese — is one of the biggest industry casualties yet of the crude market collapse, and its demise last month marks an ignominious fall from grace

for Lim.

‘Major risk-taker’

The businessman — whose full name is Lim Oon Kuin — started the company with a single delivery truck shortly before Singapore became independent in 1965. It grew into a major supplier of fuel used by ships, and its rise in some ways mirrored Singapore's growth from a gritty port to an affluent financial hub.

The firm played a key role in helping the city-state become the world's top ship refuelling port, observers say, and it expanded into ship chartering and management with a subsidiary that has a fleet of more than 150 vessels. The picture that emerges of Lim himself, now in his 70s, is complex.—AFP ■



Oil tankers are anchored off the western shores of Singapore, where tycoon O.K. Lim built up his oil empire from a single-truck outfit through hard work and high-risk gambles, a rags-to-riches tale that made him a legend among crude traders. PHOTO: AFP

Explosive from Maoist insurgency era kills 4 children in Nepal

KATHMANDU — An improvised explosive device discovered and then mistaken for a toy by four children went off in western Nepal late Thursday, killing all of them, police said Friday.

The children, aged 5, 11, 13 and 14, were grazing goats in a forest in Gairigaon village of Rolpa district, located about 400 kilometres west of the capital Kathmandu, when they found the device, said Chitra Bahadur Gurung, police chief of the district.

The explosive went off when they were returning with the cattle playing with it, Gurung said

by phone.

The police, citing preliminary investigation, said the bomb was left there during Maoists' decade-long insurgency that started in 1996.

The Rolpa area was a flashpoint between the rebels and Nepalese security forces during the conflict that left over 17,000 people dead.

The Maoists joined mainstream politics in 2006. They are now part of the ruling Nepal Communist Party led by moderate communist leader Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli. —Kyodo News ■

China's mobile game market posts strong performance in Q1 amid epidemic

BEIJING — China's mobile game sector posted robust growth of over 49 per cent in the first quarter of 2020, a report said.

The revenue of the online game market reached nearly 55 billion yuan (about 7.79 billion dollars) in the first three months, according to a report from CNG, a research agency in the sector.

Amid the epidemic, games have become an important alter-

native to offline social interaction. The surging users' demand for online entertainment greatly boosted digital consumption, said Wang Xu, co-founder and chief analyst of CNG.

Among the Top 50 of China's mobile game products, intellectual property-adapted games showed upward trend, with games adapted from novels gaining popularity, the report said.—Xinhua ■

KING Mindon placed four holy oil pots underground at four corners of Yadanabon Mandalay in 1859 AD when the royal palace was established. About 30 years later, Ohnbaung City (now Hsipaw) in northern Shan State was established with a similar event of placing four holy oil pots at its corners.

These oil pots were excavated at the corners of Hsipaw in 1992 and then these pots were refilled with oil and placed at respective sites. The places of holy oil pots were fenced in 2019 and placed tiles there by erecting the posts. Moreover, boards bear salient points of the holy oil pots in Shan, Myanmar and English languages for observation of visitors who arrive in Hsipaw.

Thanks to journalist U Sai Tha Hlaing (Sai-Hsipaw) and retired teacher U Tun Shwe, I visited the sites of four holy oil pots in Hsipaw. Among four pots, the oil pot at the Shwenyaungbin, northeast corner of the town, takes a position on the bank of Dokhtawady River and another one, southwest of the city in paddy field outside the town.

Ancient cities in Myanmar

Among ancient cities in Myanmar, Sri Kestra and Pindle (Mongmaw) were in circular shape, Hanthawady (Bago), Ketumati (Toungoo) and Pakhangyi in rectangular shape and Kalay, Pawrithat, Wakharu and Thayetkhon (Yezin) in diamond shape.

The satellite photographs

taken by U Aung Myint of the Forest Department showed ancient Inwa city was in multi-angle shape, Hanlin, Beikthano, Vesali and Danyawady in curved shape, MraukU in unidentified shape, Yadanabon Mandalay, Amarapura and Yadana Theinga Shwebo in square shape and Bagan in also square shape.

As population increased, renowned cities such as Tagaung, Mongmaw, Sri Kestra, Beikthano and Hanlin cities emerged one after another. Experts exposed ancient cities of Myanmar in successive eras through satellite images.

Hsipaw Ohnbaung

Hsipaw, one of ancient cities in Myanmar, takes a position in Kyaukme District of northern Shan State. It is 206 kilometres from Mandalay and 825 kilometres from Yangon.

The records of the Ministry of Home Affairs stated Sao Kyar Khaing (aka) Sao Hkun Seng, son of Saofa Sao Kyar Tun of Hsipaw built Hsipaw in shape of Mandalay City in March 1888. The city was established at the mouth of



A holy oil pot at the Shwenyaungbin northeast corner of the town.

Four holy oil pots in Hsipaw

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)



A holy oil pot at the southwest corner of the town.

Nampaw Creek.

Myanmar Encyclopaedia mentioned Ohnbaung Saofa opened his office in Ohnbaung City and then moved to Hsipaw. In excavating the land for construction of the city, a piece of ruby was found.

Before the time of the government of Revolutionary Council (1962-1974 AD), a town administrator managed Hsipaw. The Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs formed Hsipaw Township with 11 wards and 476 villages of 67 village-tracts on 31 August 1972.

Hsipaw Township on 2,045 square miles of land is sharing border with Lashio and Mongyai townships in the east, Kyaukme Township in the west, Yaksawk and Kehsi townships in the south and Namhsam and Namtu townships in the north.

The township teeming with hilly areas is 1,398 feet higher than the sea level. Forests take position in the township accounting for 86.34 per cent. Dokhtawady River which crosses

Hsipaw flows from the north to the south while Nampaw Creek flowing from the west to the east passes the centre of town and then joins Dokhtawady River.

According to the statistics released in September 2018, a total of 164,494 people resided in Hsipaw Township where Shan and Bamar ethnics were large population residing there together with other ethnics such as Palaung and Lisu.

The palace of Sao Ohn Kyar built in 1924 in Zatsu Ward of Hsipaw where Shan Saofas set up their palaces in the past, the Little Bagan where more than 30 pagodas in Konbaung era and Bawkyo Pagoda outside the town and Dokhtawady River are symbols of Hsipaw.

Background history of Ohnbaung

Before Hsipaw, Saofas set up palaces in Ohnbaung. The Google map shows a wall assumed that of ancient Ohnbaung City is in similar shape of a conch shell which is tip to the south.

The stone inscription of Bawkyo Pagoda mentioned King Sri Dhammasoka convened the third Buddhist synod in 235 Sasa-na era and built 84,000 pagodas and stupas across the world dedicating to perpetual existence of the Buddhism, including the pagoda near Dokhtawady River, west of Hsipaw and Ohnbaung city.

A partially collapsed brick wall was seen at the place assumed the edge of ancient Ohnbaung City. It was the place of Sanpheik Village, left of Hsipaw-Kyaukme road and east of Bawkyo Pagoda. According to the stone inscription, the site might be assumed as the end of ancient Ohnbaung City.

It can be assumed that ancient Ohnbaung City might have an area from the east of Bawkyo Pagoda and to the graveyard of Sir Saw Chei. Some parts of Ohnbaung City were collapsed ones and some, earthen works.

Holy oil pots of the city

Shan histories stated a total of 91 Saofas from first ever Saofa Hkun Hkam Zaw (485-520 Sasa-na era as well as BC 60) to last Saofa Sao Kyar Seng. But, firm evidences for the first ever Saofa were not found yet.

Sao Kyar Khaing aka Sao Hkun Seng who became the 85th Ohnbaung Saofa 143 years ago established Hsipaw in 1888 by placing four holy oil pots underground at four corners of the town with the aim of ensuring peace and prosperities of local people.

He aimed to ensure peace and prosperity of the town for a while oil from the holy pots were not dried out. These pots can store 50 viss of oil each and were placed on the three feet high brick wall.

Hsipaw was an office town for governing Hsipaw, Monglon, Mongtung and Thonze. Town plan of Hsipaw is similar to Mandalay City in shapes of residential wards on plain area and straight roads.

Saofas of Ohnbaung and Hsipaw fostered friendly relations with Myanmar kings from Hantawady, Inwa, Amarapura and Yadanabon. Ohnbaung Saofa Sao Kyar Khaing learned royal affairs, history, religious literature, Pitakat and astrology together with sons of King Mindon such as Prince Makkhaya and Prince Thonze.

Ohnbaung Saofa Hkun Kyar Tun, the 84th Saofa, passed away on 21 October 1866. His son Sao Kyar Khaing aka Sao Hkun Seng became the 85th Saofa. He arranged establishment of a new city, south of Ohnbaung, because of dense population and shortage of water in Ohnbaung.

He coordinated with advisers and Shan ethnic leaders and assigned survey officer U Myoh to build a new city. Then, he planned to resettle residents from Ohnbaung to new city.

Construction tasks of the palace started at the site of Hsipaw People's Hospital on 25 February 1888.

Four holy oil pots were placed underground at Shwen-



A holy oil pot at the northwest corner of the town.

yaungbin, the compound of Customs Department, Okkyin Ward and Myanmarat Lodge.

The Saofa took a sample of Mandalay for the new city because he grew up in the presence

of King Mindon who established Mandalay Royal Palace with placement of four holy oil pots underground at four corners.

According to the advice of State Ovadacariya venerable

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Labhavamsa from Hsipaw, holy oil pots were found in 1992.

Among the pots, a pot found in the compound of Customs Department stored oil but it was about six inches down from the brim. The pot found in the compound of Myanmarat Lodge was full of oil. The pot in Okkyin Ward was lack of oil. But, no oil pot was found at the place from Snwenyaungbin. It was assumed that Dokhtawady River might erode the land of oil pot.

The authorities filled sesame oil in the pots at full brims and replaced them in original sites at 7 am on 12 July 1992. The place from Shwenyaungbin was kept with a new pot filled with sesame.

Four holy oil pots placed in Hsipaw more than 130 years ago distinctly remain as historical evidences for Hsipaw city.

Translated by Than Tun Aung

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A holy oil pot at the northeast corner of the town.



