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Just as there is nothing as wide-ranging as COVID, there is also nothing as narrow in scope as COVID: State Counsellor



STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that just as there was nothing as wide-ranging as COVID, there was also nothing as narrow in scope as COVID. Just as it was related to everyone and everything, it was also related to each individual person. This was what she wrote:

When we make arrangements to have video discussions, the first thing we have to do is to choose a topic. We have to ask questions such as: what issues are important for the prevention of the disease? What are the people interested in; what do they wish to know? What do we need to inform them to get their participation? Sometimes, I think, what else do I wish to tell them?

Just as there is nothing as wide-ranging as COVID, there is also nothing as narrow in scope as COVID. Just as it was related to everyone and everything, it was also related to each individual person. Just as there are so many things we need to know about COVID prevention, there are a lot of things that the people wish to know. As half-baked fake news float around all over the place, as far as possible we try to discuss from many points of

view. Getting people's participation needs to be based on their understanding and comprehension, only then will it have potency.

When I think of all the things I want to say, there are so many. My father said this in one of his speeches. He said that there were so many things he wanted to say about politics. He said, "There are so many in my stomach. I am full of it." When I read this, I thought, oh, he must have had a lot to say as it was the time he was struggling for independence. Now I fully understand that there would always be a great deal to say about politics.

This COVID issue is also politics. It concerns the whole country. It is a huge issue for the country. We cannot compartmentalize and think this is health, this is social affairs, and this is economics. We need to view all of these things like politics, as a huge political challenge. We need a lot of cooperation.

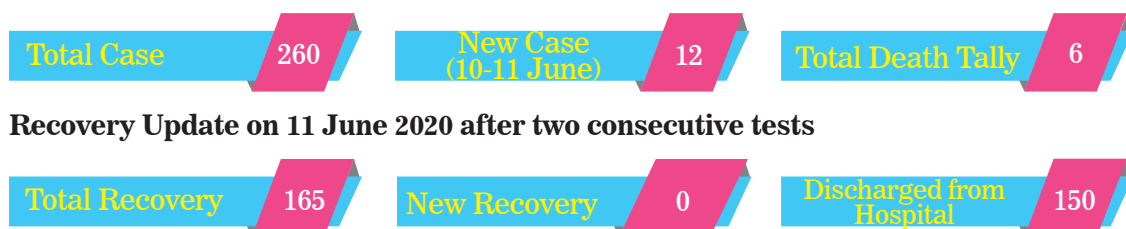
Just as my father concluded one of his speeches in the tone of a monastic schoolboy using Pali with Burmese translation: "All of you in the audience — please remember this well with seriousness and vigilance".

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

It is a huge issue for the country. We cannot compartmentalize and think this is health, this is social affairs, and this is economics. We need to view all of these things like politics, as a huge political challenge. We need a lot of cooperation.

12 new cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 11 June, total figure reaches 260

Updated at 8 pm, 11 June 2020



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Union ministries discuss National Tourism Guidelines for COVID-19 Safe Services



The National Tourism Guidelines for COVID-19 Safe Services was discussed at the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A coordination meeting for the National Tourism Guidelines for COVID-19 Safe Services was held at the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, Deputy Minister U Tin Latt, MoHS Permanent Secretary Dr Thet Khine Win, and Director-General U Maung Kyaw of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism with other

officials.

Union Minister U Ohn Maung first addressed the meeting. He said the ministry closely followed guidelines issued by the National Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and by the Ministry of Health and Sports starting from when the disease first began to spread. He said they drafted the COVID-19 Myanmar Tourism Relief Plan based on the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) and

have submitted it to the national central committee.

U Ohn Maung said the tourism industry came to a halt after entry into the country and flights were suspended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. He said there were about 400,000 entries into Myanmar in January 2020 but not even a hundred in April. He said many places were reopened step by step while following COVID-19 prevention and social-distancing guidelines from MoHS starting from factories to restaurants, to hotels and inns.

The Union Minister said the next step would be reopening pagodas and museums to restart domestic tourism. He said they wish to start a Regional Travel Bubble with Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam that are presumed to be able to contain COVID-19 to a certain degree and showing domestic tourism is ready for COVID Safe Travel.

The Union Minister said they have compiled the beta version of the Tourism National Guidelines, based on guidelines issued by MoHS, which is necessary to resume regional tourism and will add future guidelines issued by MoHS in future versions. He said there has been inquiries to Myanmar for the next tourism season as it was recently listed in Forbes Magazine's list of 7 tourism destinations after the COVID pandemic. He said business or diplomatic travellers make the bulk of current entries but when more leisure travellers begin to enter, MoHS should make obtaining health insurance a requirement.

The Union Minister said they are preparing for adventure tourism such as hiking, canoeing, rafting, bungee jumping and zip lining in Myanmar's natural environments to attract quality travellers. He said they have formed the Sports Tourism

Committee which is cooperating with MoHS to produce the Adventure Tourism SOP.

Next, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe said the rate of community and local transmissions of COVID-19 in Myanmar has decreased although there are still transmissions. He said they are reducing restrictions slowly based on the transmission rate of the disease so that businesses may resume normally. He said the most important prevention methods right now are social distancing, washing hands and wearing face masks. He said they will discuss health insurances that are not too expensive so as to deter international tourists but can still be covered by the nation.

The meeting discussed implementing and enforcing guidelines for COVID-19, a video clip to boost tourism in Myanmar that has been sent to the BBC channel, whether the Common ASEAN Health Certificate should be materialized as voiced by the Malaysian tourism ministry during the last ASEAN Tourism Minister Meeting online, and issuing the National Tourism Guidelines for COVID-19 Safe Services and related regulations.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Myanmar brings home 149 nationals stranded abroad

MYANMAR National Airlines landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon, with 149 nationals from Changi International Airport of Singapore.

Among these returnees, 132 persons were from Singapore, and the remaining 17 persons from New Zealand, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, who were stranded in these countries due to suspension of international flights amid COVID-19 pandemic.

As they arrived in Yangon, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks.

As per the directives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and in

coordination with other relevant ministries in Myanmar and the Myanmar embassies in respective countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged relief flights and chartered planes to bring back Myanmar people from foreign countries. A total of 3,534 people have been repatriated to Myanmar to date, and the eighth repatriation flight will pick up more Myanmar nationals stuck abroad from the Changi International Airport on 18 June.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar citizens queuing for their immigration processes at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Irrawaddy Green Towers donates electric generator, cash to medical research department

IRRAWADDY Green Towers Ltd donated a 200 KVA electric generator, some equipment, and K1.5 million to the Department of Medical Research, under the Ministry of Health and Sports, on 9 June.

The generator is reportedly worth K40,835,400 while the K1.5

million is intended to honour the health officials of the National COVID-19 Call Centre and the Laboratory Team by covering their food and general expenses.

The donating company's CEO Mr David Venn explained the reason for the donation at the ceremony held at the medical re-

search department's head office in Dagon Township, Yangon, yesterday. He then handed over the donations to the department's director-general, Prof Dr Zaw Than Tun, who gave certificates of honour in return.—Min Thit

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



CEO Mr David Venn of Irrawaddy Green Towers Ltd hands over the donations to the department's director-general, Prof Dr Zaw Than Tun on 9 June. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

“People are the key”

MoHS, medical professionals discuss COVID-19 surgical safety



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe holds a videoconference yesterday to discuss safety of patients in surgery during the current pandemic. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe held a videoconference with medical professionals from five medical universities, the in-charge of the National Health Laboratory, hospital superintendents, and head nurses on COVID-19 surgical safety yesterday.

During the meeting, Dr My-

int Htwe said that while COVID-19 is not a surgical disease, it is necessary to ensure the safety of patients in surgery during the current pandemic in addition to the well-being of the surgeon, anesthetist and nurses performing the surgery so that the disease is not transmitted.

The Union Minister said

drafting guidelines and regulations for safe surgery with COVID-19 is a good idea as is forming a group consisting of numerous medical professionals to finalize the drafts. He said to continue professional discussion and exchange of information through videoconferences and to adapt international COVID-19 surgi-

cal safety guidelines to Myanmar and to distribute them to medical professionals across the states and regions.

The Union Minister said that as the natural history of COVID-19 is not fully understood, everyone should be extremely careful to follow the guidelines for performing surgery when operating on people who are either suspected of having the disease or confirmed.

The Union Minister said hospitals will have to properly plan on whether a non-emergency surgery should be performed during the pandemic and to ensure there is no crowding of patients. He said medical equipment supplied by the ministry and private donors will be useful for COVID-19 and other cases in the long-term.

The Union Minister said they have detailed plans to receive suggestions from medical professionals from all branches

of medicine on the types of medicine and equipment the ministry should purchase in the 2020-2021 financial year. He said the distribution of them would also be decided by factors such as the rate of disease occurrences.

The rector of the University of Medicine-1 (Yangon), Prof Dr Zaw Wai Soe, reported the formation of a group for creating a national guidebook on COVID-19 surgical safety and its progress. The meeting then discussed procedures and precautions to follow before, during and after a surgery to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein, Permanent Secretary Prof Dr Thet Khine Win, Director-General Dr Thar Tun Kyaw of the Union Minister's office, and officials then responded to the suggestions and discussions.

—MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye talks on resettlement of IDPs in Kachin State

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye made a videoconference with the members of Kachin Government, and President Reverend Hkalam Samson and members of the Kachin Baptist Church about implementing resettlement of internally displaced persons in the region.

The Union Minister said the IDP resettlement implementation working group, formed on 8 May 2019 with the order of President Office, is coordinating with the Kachin Humanitarian Concern Committee, led by the church leaders, for the closures of IDP camps and their resettlement, together with education, health, employment and issuing family registration and national

registration cards for them.

He added that the agreement on their resettlement has been included in the resolutions of Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong.

The KBC is implementing the resettlement of IDPs with the support of the Nippon Foundation, and that the vocation training programmes for women should be included in this processes in line the guidelines of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, the Union Minister advised, and called for the cooperation of 11 women committees in Nay Pyi Taw Council and other areas.

The KBC has received US\$ 5 million from the Japanese government and the Nippon Foun-



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discusses resettlement of internally displaced persons in Kachin State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

dation and is working for the resettlement of 183 IDP families.

The Deputy Minister and the

members of Kachin State government also discussed the needs for initial phase of resettlement

such as food and water supplies and clean environments.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

41 Myanmar migrant workers return home via Kawthoung border on 10 June



A total of 41 Myanmar nationals—20 males and 21 females—arrived back home through Kawthoung border from Ranong of Thailand on 10 June afternoon, making the total number 830

Myanmar migrant workers making their immigration processes at the Kawthoung border on 10 June. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**

on this route. The scrutinizing and repatriation of Myanmar migrant workers committee in Taninthayi Region arranged the return, and members of COVID-19 emergency response committee, departmental officials and NGOs in Kawthoung Township help the returnees with foods and medical supplies.

The returnees will have to

stay at the facility quarantine for 21 days and home quarantine for 7 days.

The residents in Kawthoung Township will also be kept under such quarantines for the same period, and their swabs will be tested at the National Health Department.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

NCA-S EAOs hold press conference on preparations for 4th Union Peace Conference

THE Ethnic Armed Organizations—Signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement organized a press conference yesterday afternoon on their preparations for the 4th round of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong.

The NCA Implementation Framework Coordinator U Myo Win said, “We are working for the fourth edition of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong before the 2020 General Election. It is expected to sign the part 3 of Union Accord in the coming session. We have reached some agreements in the previous 8th the Joint Implementing Coordination Meeting (JICM) how to finalize this part.”

The 8th JICM held in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 January this year decided to sign the part 3 of Union Accord in three portions.

The first portion will include agreement on NCA implementation, the second one is to carry out phase by phase implementations on peace-making works beyond 2020 and the third portion is to adopt basic principles for the future Democratic Federal Union.

Myanmar has expected to hold the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference in the first four months this year, but the plan was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government and the NCA-S EAOs have also scheduled to hold working meetings on 23, 24 and 25 June for the fourth edition of Union Peace Conference.

U Myo Win remarked that they could organize political dialogues with the smaller number of participants due to unfavourable conditions.

Although the government



The Ethnic Armed Organizations—Signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement organizes the press conference yesterday on their preparations for the 4th round of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong. **PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG**

proposed to hold the fourth 21st Century Panglong in July, the NCA-S EAOs will suggest to postpone it to August, said the coordinator. They are also preparing

for reduction of participants in the conference with proper proportion from the stakeholders. Myanmar organized the first session of Union Peace Conference from

31 August to 4 September in 2016, the second one from 24 to 28 May in 2017 and the third from 11 to 16 July in 2018.—Ye Gaung Nyunt
(Translated by Aung Khin)

12 new positive cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 June

TWELVE new positive cases of COVID-19 were tested yesterday, making the total number of cases in Myanmar

climbs to 260, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The twelve cases include a returnee from Bangladesh,

10 returnees from India, and a person without any travel history abroad.

To date, there have been

6 deaths among the positive cases while 165 patients have been recovered, and 150 of them were discharged from

their respective hospitals.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

12 new cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 11 June, total figure reaches 260

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12 new cases of COVID-19 on 11 June 2020: Updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
249	24	Female	Momauk Township, Kachin State	No	No	People's Hospital, Bhamo	Positive	Held under quarantine
250	26	Male	Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State	No	Yes, Bangladesh	People's Hospital, Buthidaung	Positive	Held under quarantine (Buthidaung Township)
251	70	Female	Tamway Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (South Dagon Township)
252	15	Male	Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
253	10	Female	Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
254	22	Female	Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
255	17	Female	Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
256	28	Female	Tamway Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
257	24	Male	Tamway Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
258	14	Female	Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
259	15	Female	Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)
260	67	Female	Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	South Oakkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Botahtaung Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

MoHT discusses tourism plans with JICA

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) held a videoconference on the recent changes to the tourism industry, including the effects of COVID-19, and the Myanmar Tourism Master Plan on 9 June.

Director-General U Maung Maung Kyaw of MoHT first thanked JICA for supporting the Bagan Tourism Development Pilot Model project for three years as it has helped Bagan enter the list of World Heritage Sites.

The UN World Tourism Organization estimates that international tourism will drop by 60 to 80 per cent in 2020 due to COVID-19 and Myanmar's international tourist entry had dropped by 45 per cent between the months of January to April in 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year.

The Director-General re-

quested continued cooperation with the ministry as technological or financial assistance would support the implementation of the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Plan.

Next, the meeting discussed the arrangement for implementing the recovery plan for COVID-19 in addition to the Master Plan (2021-2030) with UNWTO and Luxdev as the Myanmar Tourism Master Plan (2013-2020) approaches its final phase.

They also discussed promoting Japanese tourism, each of the three phases of the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Plan, stimulus package preparations, aiming to increase tourism to Asian countries after COVID-19 as the main tourism market and increasing domestic tourism, establishing an E-commerce platform, and gathering assistance from affiliated development organizations for tourism busi-



The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the JICA hold videoconference on tourism development. PHOTO: MNA

nesses and SMEs.

JICA's Senior Representative to Myanmar, Mr Matsuoka

Hajime, then discussed possible assistance regarding the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Plan

and Myanmar Tourism Master Plan.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

670 migrant workers come back home from Thailand via Myawady border on 11 June

A total of 670 migrant workers returned home through the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) of Myawady border town in Kayin State yesterday.

They came back home on their own schedules with the approval of Myanmar Embassy in the

Kingdom.

Kayin State Hluttaw MP U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrative Department Officer U Tay Zar Aung, local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 25,304 Myanmar migrants have ar-

rived back home through this route from 1 May to date.

The latest group of returnees included 425 males and 245 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar migrant workers waiting to enter Myawady at the border bridge with Thailand. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

Supplies reach IDP camps, safe shelters for measures against COVID-19

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is providing medical and relief items to the IDP camps and safe shelters in Shan, Chin and Rakhine states for prevention of COVID-19 transmission.

Moreover, the ministry is conducting awareness campaigns and motivation works in Nay Pyi Taw council area and other Regions/States.—MNA

The table shows supplied items and IDP camps in respective areas on 10 and 11 June 2020.



Officials are providing medical supplies for IDPs. PHOTO: MNA

Items	Rakhine		Shan	Chin
	Sittway Township	Minbya Township	Namtu Township	Sami Township
	6 camps		3 camps	7 camps
	10-11 June		10 June	10 June
Hand Sanitizer bottles	1,180			
Soap Bar	2,369			
Soap Cake	3,500			
Liquid Soap	86			
Thermometer	6			
Cloth Mask	4,738			
Surgical Mask	3,500			
Hand Speaker	6		3	
Memory Stick (Campaign Audio File)	6		3	
Campaign Vinyl Sheet	17			14

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Govt buys over 34,000 tonnes of reserved rice as of 11 June: MRF

Workers unloading rice bags at a warehouse in Yangon. **FILE PHOTO**

By Nyein Nyein

THE government has reserved about 34,000 tonnes of rice over a month, according to Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service (MITS), the authorized organization of the State and MRF, implemented the rice reserve scheme on 30 April. The state has purchased over 34,000 tonnes of rice from 123 compa-

nies as of 11 June and the rice has been stored at nine warehouses in line with the set rules and regulations.

The exporters must sell 10 per cent of total export volume (25% broken, well-milled and sorted rice), stated in the export declaration as country's reserved rice.

The reserved rice must be sent to the state's warehouse. MITS, the authorized organization of the State, is to inspect and

verify the quality and quantity.

The Yangon Region government has been receiving the reserved rice proportioned by sea trade, while some percentage of the border export are being stored at the Consumer Affairs Department in Mandalay Region.

The country has a rice reserve scheme for emergency cases beyond self-sufficiency in the domestic market. Myanmar's rice export has returned

to normal in May and it intends to ship over 2 million tonnes of rice in the current financial year, according to the MRF.

The Federation has been negotiating with the government concerning the export depending on the situations of the pandemic and local and foreign markets. Additionally, MRF, its subsidiary organizations and the rice traders, are coordinating to have a much fairer price of rice for the consumers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Moreover, the local market constitutes over 70 per cent of production whereas 20 per cent go to the foreign market. This being so, there is a balance between the domestic market and the export market.

During the pandemic, the Ministry of Commerce and Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) planned to export 100,000 tonnes of rice through sea trade and 50,000 tonnes through border trade every month.

They are negotiating with ASEAN and the neighbouring countries to sell the rice through government to government (G to G) plan.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Yangon govt to sell over 30 land plots in 5 townships

By Nyein Nyein

MORE than 30 plots of land in five townships will be up for sales by Yangon Region government, varying over an acre to over 13 acres per land plot, according to Yangon Region government's Land Management Committee.

Those plots are situated in East Dagon, South Dagon, Dagon Seikkan, Shwepyitha and North Okkalapa townships.

The Yangon Region government has announced the sale of land for setting up industrial businesses and public housing. Land-use permits will be granted after paying the charges set

by the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

Those interested buyers can submit land-use applications in the stipulated format to the related YCDC offices in the respective townships during the working hours.

The application format and land data can see on the regional government's website, <https://www.yangon.gov.mm/announcements.html>. The applications can be submitted by 30 June.

For land owned by Yangon Region government, initially, land-use applications for 500 plots in Hlinethaya, Shwepyitha, and four Dagon townships;

and more than 170 plots in the Myaungtagar Industrial Zone were sold on 7 October at the office complex of the General Administrative Department (Eastern District), and interested buyers purchased 15,620 forms by 8 November, when the deadline ended, said YCDC Joint Secretary U Than.

However, only 12,158 forms were submitted, he said.

Next, more than 9,000 acres in East Dagon and Dagon Seikkan townships, which was previously marked as agricultural land, will go under the hammer, the regional government announced.

The plots that are slat-

ed to be sold were previously seized by the government, and compensation had not been awarded to their original owners. Therefore, to compensate the original farmland owners, the lands are being sold again.

At present, there are more than 3,000 cases with the Yangon Region government's Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands. Compensation of K6.9 billion has been awarded to farmers as of 28 September 2019. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, compensation of K31 billion would be provided to the original farmland owners.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

YCDC to control squatting vendors in public places

AS a measure of keeping Yangon city clean, Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is removing the squatting vendors in every township under the prevailing laws.

The street vendors are selling their products for their profit in the public areas regarding them as their own space in Ba-

han township near Shwedagon Pagoda. Therefore, the Bahan township municipal removed them and seized the chairs, tables, umbrellas, cupboards and other items owned by the street vendors following the laws.

The Bahan township municipal committee chairman U Bo Win said, "We order the

street vendors to keep their items as soon as they know our order. Now, they are selling their products for their profit in the public areas regarding them as their own space. We seized their items not because we want to get their things. They are not following the rules and also they do not ask permission from the

relevant authorities. So, we want them to conduct under the existing laws.

At present, the street vendors are not allowed to sell in 38th street, Yangon and the municipal staff are observing stand-by in that area.—Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Sino-Myanmar trade grows from May-end

TRADE between Myanmar and China through the Muse border drastically plunged in the early outbreak of coronavirus and it has rebounded starting from May-end, said an official of the Muse-Namkham Border Trade Chamber of Commerce.

“The bilateral trade currently grows compared with the previous months. More than 500 trucks of imported/exported goods are flowing in and out of the Muse border. Myanmar primarily sends green grams, butter beans, various beans, mangoes, frozen fish and other export items, while motorcycles, peanut oil, mobile handsets, construction machines and auto parts are imported, said vice president 1 U Tun Oo of Muse-Namkham Border Trade Chamber of Commerce.

It takes a week to arrive China’s Mang Weing from Muse 105-mile trade zone, driving the prices of import items up, the chamber stated. To avoid unnecessary price hike, the two countries

need to negotiate trade facilitation measures, the vice president pointed out.

At present, 20 truck drivers have been selected from two countries after coronavirus testing to conduct the border trade. The driver substitution system between Myanmar and China truck drivers are being practised at Mang Weing checkpoint. It means that China allowed only their designated drivers, who substitute the original drivers, to enter the crossing.

“The traffic congestions occur both on two sides; Muse and Kyalgaung borders, causing a long queue on the road,” said Police Deputy Superintendent Chit Sein of No 123 Traffic Police Force (Muse).

About 1,000 trucks are queuing to enter China’s Kyalgaung border crossing; and so, trucks are waiting in long queues to leave for Myanmar either. —Salai Vanro Than (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Trucks seen at the Muse Border as agricultural products are mostly transported from Myanmar to China. PHOTO: SALAI VANRO THAN (IPRD)

3 ASEAN countries propose to buy Myanmar’s rice: MoC

MYANMAR has received rice purchase proposals from three ASEAN countries -- Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

The Philippines offered to buy 300,000 tonnes of rice, while Malaysia proposed 50,000 tonnes. Indonesia is currently inspecting rice quality. They will submit purchase order if they like the quality, according to the news released by a property website iMyanmar-House.com.

Earlier, Myanmar yearly exported around 60,000 tonnes of rice to the Philippines.

Additionally, Myanmar and Malaysia are discussing to buy rice through Government to Government (G to G) agreement.

Beyond regional trade, China’s company recently reached an agreement with Myanmar’s counterpart to buy about 500 tonnes of A 12 sortexed broken rice on 3 June, according to the Ministry.

The prices of rice in the export market rose a bit in May compared with the prices of previous months, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The prices of rice currently

move in the ranges of K39,000-54,000 per 108-pound-bag of Pawsan varieties, while low-quality rice fetched 20,500-24,000. The prices are up by 2,000-4,000 per bag against previous months, MRF data showed.

Next, the country has the rice reserve scheme for emergency case beyond self-sufficiency in the domestic market. Myanmar’s rice export has returned to normality in May, according to the MRF.

The Federation has been negotiating with the government concerning the export depending on the situations of the coronavirus pandemic and local and foreign markets. Additionally, MRF, its subsidiary organizations and the rice traders are coordinating to have a much fairer price of rice for the consumers during the pandemic.

At present, local market constitutes over 70 per cent of production, whereas 20 per cent go to the foreign market. The exporters must sell 10 per cent of total export volume (25% broken, well-milled and sorted rice), stated in the export declaration as country’s reserved rice. This being so, there is a balance between domestic market and export.

The state has purchased

about 32,000 tonnes of rice from 110 companies as of 5 June and the rice has been stored at nine warehouses, in line with the set rules and regulations, MRF stated.

Between 1 October and 29 May in the current fiscal year 2019-2020, 1.965 million tonnes of rice and broken rice were shipped to foreign countries, with an estimated value of \$578.7 million. Border trade has dropped, and currently, it accounts for just 13.7 per cent of the total rice export, while maritime trade constitutes 86.3 per cent.

In the current financial year, Myanmar has shipped rice to 64 foreign markets. China is the main buyer of Myanmar rice. The country’s broken rice has been sent to 57 foreign countries, mostly to Belgium.

The country intends to ship over 2 million tonnes of rice in the current financial year, MRF stated.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.29 million metric tons, worth \$691 million, in the 2018-2019FY.—GNLM
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mango growers change species to meet market demand

THE mango growers are growing other famous mangoes such as Seintalone, Shwehintha, Myakyauk and Nandawhmine using the grafting technology to meet the market demand, according to the mango growers from Yatsauk township, Shan State (South).

“The Yinkwe species mango plantations are replaced with Seintalone species. We are changing the mango species depending upon the market demand. Currently, China purchases Seintalone and Shwehintha mango species. This is the reason why our mango plantations are replaced with famous mango species.

The villages in Yatsauk Township are replaced with other famous mango species plantations this year,” said U Kyaw Moe Hlaing from Myanma Mango Market and Technology Development Association in Yatsauk township.

While we change the mango species, we use grafting technology.

The mango trees are cut from the middle and grafted the replaced mango species.

“We are cutting the trees from the middle of the mango trees. The circumference of some trees is only that of a pencil while some are having the circumference of the human body.

The good time for changing the mango species is in June and July after picking up the mango,” he said.

After changing the species, the trees can bear the fruits in two years. It is also dependent upon the taking care of the mango farming owners.

The marketable mangoes such as Seintalone, Shwehintha and Myakyauk are grown mostly Kumae, Sintgaing and Kyaukse townships in Kyaukse district in Mandalay region. However, the tasty and marketable mangoes are started to grow across the country since the past decade.—Myint Maung Soe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Launching domestic travel with national health guidelines should open door to jump-start tourism with regional countries

As the global tourism industry struggles in the midst of this unprecedented downturn, many nations around the world are preparing for a boom in international visitors once travel is more feasible - for some countries, this could be their first opportunity to establish themselves as a prominent regional force for tourism.

Meanwhile, the Forbes Magazine has mentioned our country as one of the seven countries which have potential to become major tourist destinations in a post-COVID World.

We should start domestic travel by enforcing COVID-19 health guidelines including social distancing, hand washing and face masks wearing at domestic destinations.

We have smartly reopened the businesses, including restaurants, markets, hotels, factories and transport sector with the health guidelines in the midst of the COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on travel, with the UN World Tourism Organization estimating that international tourism could decline by up to 80% this year over 2019, putting at least 100 million jobs at risk.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international travellers to our country has decreased from over 400,000 in January 2020 to about 100 in April.

The economic carnage from two months of closures in our country is hurting our people.

We are committed to making a success of the domestic travel bubbles to ensure jobs for those who has been selling souvenirs on the street to businesses connected with travel.

Our next step should be to create "travel bubbles" with regional countries such as Laos, Viet Nam and Cambodia that have similar success in containing the coronavirus pandemic as a way to bring back visitors who stopped travelling due to the health crisis.

For regional travel bubbles, a former UNWTO director suggested to use China as an example because domestic travel within China is like international travel distance-wise. We can use his idea to launch the regional travel bubbles with the regional countries.

However, we need to balance health concerns with economic concerns. We are still fighting the pandemic as the coronavirus infection cases are still occurring.

To launch domestic travel with new strategies, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is drafting the Tourism National Guideline Beta version.

But, for travel bubbles with regional countries, we need to discuss and seek ways for developing a COVID-19 safety travel system with them.



World Day Against Child Labour - 12 June 2020

COVID-19: Protect children from child labour, now more than ever

Almost one in ten of all children worldwide are in child labour. While the number of children in child labour has declined by 94 million since 2000, the rate of reduction slowed by two-thirds in recent years. Target 8.7 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals calls for an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025. How can the world community get firmly on track toward eliminating child labour?

WORLD DAY Against Child Labour 2020 focuses on the impact of crisis on child labour. The COVID-19 health pandemic and the resulting economic and labour market shock are having a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Unfortunately, children are often the first to suffer. The crisis can push millions of vulnerable children into child labour. Already, there are an estimated 152 million children in child labour; 72 million of which are in hazardous work. These children are now at even greater risk of facing circumstances that are even more difficult and

working longer hours.

This year, the World Day is conducted as a virtual campaign and is being organized jointly with the Global March Against Child Labour and the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA).

A joint ILO-UNICEF paper on the impact of COVID-19 on child labour, to be released on 12 June, looks at some of the main channels through which the pandemic is likely to affect progress towards the eradication of child labour.

Prevalence of child labour

Children around the world are routinely engaged in paid and

unpaid forms of work that are not harmful to them. However, they are classified as child labourers when they are either too young to work, or are involved in hazardous activities that may compromise their physical, mental, social or educational development. In the least developed countries, slightly more than one in four children (ages 5 to 17) are engaged in labour that is considered detrimental to their health and development.

Africa ranks highest among regions both in the percentage of children in child labour — one-fifth — and the absolute number of children in child labour — 72 million.



COVID-19: Protect children from child labour NOW more than ever!



The COVID-19 health pandemic and the resulting economic and labour market shock are having a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Unfortunately, children are often the first to suffer. The crisis can push millions of vulnerable children into child labour.

Asia and the Pacific ranks second highest in both these measures — 7% of all children and 62 million in absolute terms are in child labour in this region.

The Africa and the Asia and the Pacific regions together account for almost nine out of every ten children in child labour worldwide. The remaining child labour population is divided among the Americas (11 million), Europe and Central Asia (6 million), and the Arab States (1 million). In terms of incidence, 5% of children are in child labour in the Americas, 4% in Europe and Central Asia, and 3% in the Arab States.

While the percentage of children in child labour is highest

in low-income countries, their numbers are actually greater in middle-income countries. 9% all children in lower-middle-income countries, and 7% of all children in upper-middle-income countries, are in child labour. Statistics on the absolute number of children in child labour in each national income grouping indicate that 84 million children in child labour; accounting for 56% of all those in child labour, actually live in middle-income countries, and an additional 2 million live in high-income countries.

Did You Know?

Almost one in ten of all children worldwide are in child labour.

While the number of children in child labour has declined by 94 million since 2000, the rate of reduction slowed by two-thirds in recent years.

152 million children between the ages of 5-17 were in child labour; almost half of them in hazardous child labour.

Almost half (48%) of the victims of child labour were aged 5-11; 28% were 12-14 years old; and 24% were 15-17 years old.

Child labour is concentrated primarily in agriculture (71%) - this includes fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture - 17% in services; and 12% in the industrial sector, including mining. Courtesy UN



Children play near an apartment complex on the outskirts of Yangon on 29 July, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

'LOCKDOWN GENERATION' OF YOUNG WORKERS

RESOLUTION FOUNDATION

Virus fallout takes heavy toll on young workers

WHEN Britain went into coronavirus lockdown on March 23, the management at Pierre's employer, a recruitment start-up in London, told staff not to worry about their jobs.

But just hours later, the 26-year-old received an email from his boss asking him to call. "I understood right away. It was fairly brutal," he told AFP.

He was then laid off with about 15 per cent of his colleagues.

Pierre is far from being an isolated case in Britain, which is gradually easing out of stay-at-home restrictions, after an outbreak that has left more than 40,000 dead.

The Resolution Foundation, which aims to improve living standards for low- and middle-income families, estimated up to 640,000 18-24-year-olds could lose their jobs this year.

That will take the number of unemployed in that age group to over one million, the think-tank said.

Its projection is backed up by the Institute of Student Employers, which said more than a quarter of companies are cutting back on graduate recruitment.

Internships are also being reduced by almost a third, it added, after questioning 124 companies.

The pattern looks set to be re-

peated elsewhere, with concerns that job losses, purchasing power

and confidence could hit young people, just as did in the 2008 fi-



Lockdowns are easing. The jobs plight for young people not so much. PHOTO: AFP

nancial crisis.

Half of the world's so-called "Millennials" -- those aged 25-34 -- and the "Generation Z" of 18-24 year olds were already feeling the effects of the global economic meltdown, according to a study by consultancy firm Kantar in May.

Other studies, including those from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Labour Organization, indicate the pandemic is worsening inequality.

Young and less qualified people are often on the frontline in the fight against the virus, the OECD noted. The ILO said one in six under-29s had stopped working since

the outbreak began and those who have kept their jobs have seen their working hours reduced by 23 per cent.

'Pretty scary'

The Kantar study indicated that a majority of young people expect to suffer the consequences of the crisis in the future -- more than any other generation.

Young women are particularly vulnerable. British group the Young Women's Trust said more than a third (36 per cent) worked in sectors hardest hit by lockdown measures, such as catering, retail, leisure and entertainment.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of Service Organizations transferred, confirmed and appointed

1. The President of Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Shwe Maw Managing Director Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise Ministry of Electricity and Energy	Director-General Department of Petroleum Products Supervision Ministry of Electricity and Energy
(b) Dr L Tu Meang Gaung Director-General Department of Ethnic Rights Ministry of Ethnic Affairs	Director-General Union Minister's Office Ministry of Ethnic Affairs
(c) U Min Aye Ko Director-General Union Minister's Office Ministry of Ethnic Affairs	Director-General Department of Ethnic Rights Ministry of Ethnic Affairs

2. The President of Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of U Than Naing Oo, Managing Director of the Electric Power Generation Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, on expiry of the one-year probationary period.

3. The President of Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Aung Thura, Deputy Director-General of Cooperative Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, as the Director-General of the same department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 11th June, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over the West Central Bay and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal, North Andhra Pradesh and South Odisha coasts (India) still persists. Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and moderate to strong elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 11th June, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Naypyitaw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Shan (South and East) and Kayah and Mon States, fairly widespread in Northern Shan, Kayah and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30 - 35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-10) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and about (5-8) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts.

China plans to launch meteorological satellite to dawn-dusk orbit

BEIJING — China plans to send a meteorological weather satellite into a dawn-dusk orbit, its developer said Thursday.

The satellite was designed and built by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, affiliated with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. It will be the world's first polar-orbiting weather satellite in a dawn-dusk orbit.

According to the academy, the satellite is undergoing final tests and is expected to come out of the factory by the end of 2020.

A dawn-to-dusk orbit is a sun-synchronous orbit in which the satellite tracks but never moves into the Earth's shadow. Since the satellite is close to the shadow, the part of the Earth the satellite is directly above is always at sunset or sunrise. As the sun's light is always on the satellite, it can always use its solar panels.

China has launched four Fengyun-1 and four Fengyun-3 polar-orbiting weather satellites,



Photo taken on Sept. 23, 2013 shows a Long March-4C carrier rocket carrying a China's Fengyun-3 satellite taking off from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center, north China's Shanxi Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

which were also developed by the academy. Four more Fengyun-3 satellites are under development.

Once the satellite is put in a dawn-dusk orbit, China will be able to update its global polar-orbiting meteorological satellite

data in four hours, improving its numerical weather forecast capacities, the academy said. —Xinhua ■

Thousands more evacuated from site of Indian oil-well blast

TINSUKIA (India) — Around 7,000 people have been evacuated from the surrounds of a deadly oil-well explosion in northeast India, authorities said Thursday, as environmentalists warned local wildlife was being hit by contamination.

Oil India engineers have been battling since May 27 to cap a blowout that this week ignited a huge ball of fire in Tinsukia district of Assam state.

Company officials said around 7,000 people living nearby have now been evacuated, after some 2,500 local residents were originally ordered out.

On Thursday the fire was still raging, and jet-black smoke could be seen billowing into the sky from kilometres (miles) away. The Baghjan oil field is adjacent to the Dibru Saikhowa National Park and the Maguri-Motapung wetlands that are home to several endangered species including tigers, dolphins and elephants.

"The Dibru river is full of dead fish. A thin film of oil has covered the river," local environmentalist Nirantar Gohain told the Times of India daily.

"Two days ago, Gangetic dolphins floated up".

Villager Kuhima Moran Das said he and his family ran for their lives after the initial blast. "Now we cannot sleep at night, we cannot eat," he told AFP. "How can we survive."

Two firefighters have been killed battling the blaze, including local hero Durlov Gogoi, who had represented Assam state at junior football.

Oil India warned Wednesday it could take a month to cap the leak. The Press Trust of India said officials had called in experts from Singapore, the United States and Canada to help tackle the fire.—AFP ■

Quantum 'fifth state of matter' observed in space for first time

PARIS — Scientists believe Bose-Einstein condensates (BECs) contain vital clues to mysterious phenomena such

as dark energy.

Scientists have observed the fifth state of matter in space for the first time, offering un-

precedented insight that could help solve some of the quantum universe's most intractable conundrums, research showed Thursday.

Bose-Einstein condensates (BECs) -- the existence of which was predicted by Albert Einstein and Indian mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose almost a century ago -- are formed when atoms of certain elements are cooled to near absolute zero (0 Kelvin, minus 273.15 Celsius).

At this point, the atoms become a single entity with quantum properties, wherein each particle also functions as a wave of matter.

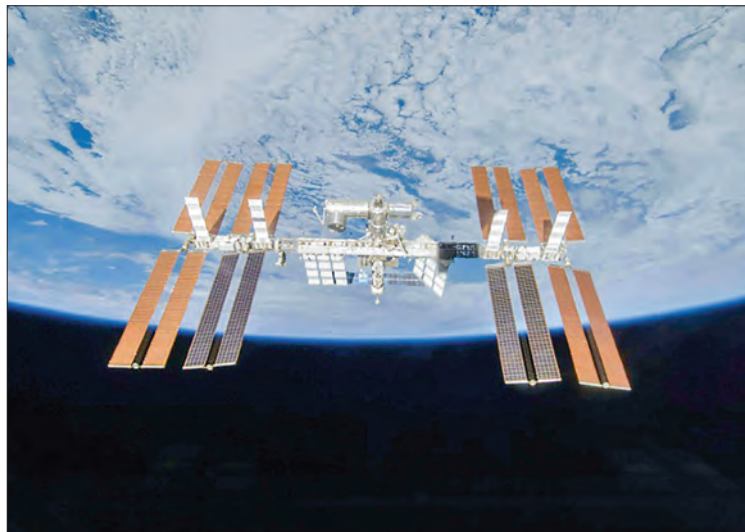
BECs straddle the line between the macroscopic world governed by forces such as gravity and the microscopic plane, ruled by quantum mechanics.

Scientists believe BECs contain vital clues to mysterious phenomena such as dark energy -- the unknown energy thought to be behind the Universe's accelerating expansion.

But BECs are extremely fragile. The slightest interaction with the external world is enough to warm them past their condensation threshold.

This makes them nearly impossible for scientists to study on Earth, where gravity interferes with the magnetic fields required to hold them in place for observation.

On Thursday a team of NASA scientists unveiled the first results from BEC experiments aboard the International Space Station, where particles can be manipulated free from Earthly constraints.—AFP ■



A team of NASA scientists unveiled the first results from Bose-Einstein condensates experiments aboard the International Space Station, where particles can be manipulated free from the constraints of gravity. **PHOTO: NASA/AFP**

Scientists grow 'model' human embryos from stem cells

PARIS — Scientists have developed a human embryo "blueprint" using human stem cells, in a breakthrough that could provide vital insight into the early stages of infant development, new research showed Thursday.

Teams from the University of Cambridge and the Netherlands-based Hubrecht Institute

said their model will allow them to observe never-before-seen processes underlying the formation of the human body.

The layout of humans -- known as the body plan -- happens through a process known as gastrulation, where three distinct layers of cells are formed in the embryo that will later give

rise to the body's three main systems: nervous, musculoskeletal and digestive.

Gastrulation is known as the "black box" period of human development as legal restrictions prevent scientists from developing embryos in the lab beyond 14 days.

The team behind the study,

published in Nature, said their model resembles an embryo between 18 and 21 days old, around the same time as gastrulation occurs. Many birth defects happen during this period, and a better understanding of gastrulation could aid our understanding of issues such as infertility, miscarriage and genetic disorders, the

researchers said.

"Our model produces part of the blueprint of a human," said lead author Alfonso Martinez-Arias, from Cambridge's Department of Genetics.

"It's exciting to witness the developmental processes that until now have been hidden from view -- and from study."—AFP ■

Trump nixes idea of renaming US bases honouring Confederate heroes

WASHINGTON — US military bases honouring Civil War Confederate leaders will not be renamed, President Donald Trump said Wednesday, pushing back on pressure to rid public places of monuments glorifying the once pro-slavery South.

“These Monumental and very Powerful Bases have become part of a Great American Heritage, and a history of Winning, Victory, and Freedom,” Trump said in a tweet.

“My Administration will not even consider renaming these Magnificent and Fabled Military Installations. Our history as the Greatest Nation in the World will not be tampered with,” he wrote.

The importance given by Trump to keeping installations like Fort Bragg in North Carolina — America’s largest military base — as they are was underlined by press secretary Kayleigh McEnany reading out the tweet and giving printed copies of it to reporters.

She called the push for



Paratroopers board an aircraft at Fort Bragg on January 4, 2020. The fort is one of many named after US Confederate generals that has come under scrutiny in the wake of anti-racism protests / © US Department of Defence. PHOTO: AFP

change an “absolute non-starter.”

Demands to rename such installations have gathered momentum in the wake of mass pro-

tests across the United States against police brutality and racism against African-Americans that were sparked by the death of George Floyd in police custody.

Ten bases honouring generals from the secessionist South, which lost the Civil War and its struggle to preserve slavery, are in the spotlight. Other sites

include Fort Hood in Texas and Fort Benning in Georgia.

Anger from anti-racism protesters has also focused on statues of southern Civil War heroes, the Confederate flag and statues of explorer Christopher Columbus, who opened the Americas to European settlement.

A statue of the navigator was beheaded in Boston, police said Wednesday. Another was toppled in Virginia.

And late Wednesday, footage from NBS affiliate WWBT showed a statue of Confederate president Jefferson Davis lying in the street in Richmond, Virginia after it was torn down from its pedestal.

Similar attacks on statues of historical figures seen by activists as celebrating racism and slavery have taken place in Britain and Belgium.

On Wednesday US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said 11 statues of Confederate soldiers or officials should be removed from the US Capitol.—AFP ■

Syria’s Assad sacks PM Khamis



Imad Khamis had been Syria’s prime minister since 2016.

PHOTO: AFP

DAMASCUS — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Thursday sacked his prime minister of four years, Imad Khamis, as the country grappled with a stinging economic crisis and renewed protests.

“President Assad issues decree number 143 for year 2020 which relieves the prime minister Imad Muhammad Dib Khamis of his position,” the presidency said in a statement.

Khamis, 58, had been Syria’s prime minister since 2016.

He is replaced by Water Resources Minister Hussein Arnous for an interim period leading to legislative polls that are scheduled to be held on

July 19.

“Assad assigns... Hussein Arnous the duties of prime minister as well as his (other) duties,” the presidency said.

“The government is continuing with its work until a new parliament is elected.”

Khamis’ sacking comes after sharp criticism of his government’s performance over its handling of the economic crisis.

The value of the Syrian pound has plummeted with dizzying speed in recent days on the informal market, sending prices skyrocketing, shuttering shops, and sparking unprecedented protests.—AFP ■

Toppled UK slave trader’s statue fished out of harbour

LONDON — The statue of a slave trader toppled by anti-racism protesters was on Thursday fished out of the harbour in the English port of Bristol, as debate raged over Britain’s past.

Authorities in the seaside town of Bournemouth were preparing to remove a small statue of Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scout movement who also supported the Nazis.

And other buildings and statues were either being renamed or decorated with new explanatory plaques, as pro-

tests sparked by the death of African American George Floyd forced Britain to take another look at its historical heroes.

Demonstrators in Bristol pulled down the statue to Edward Colston on Sunday and threw it into the water, drawing condemnation from UK officials but huge cheers from the protesting crowd.

The city council said on its retrieval that the statue was “being taken to a secure location before later forming part of our museums collection”.

Colston was a top official

in the Royal African Company in the late 17th century, which sent into slavery tens of thousands of people from West Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas.

Born into a wealthy Bristol family, he was also a member of parliament and philanthropist, funding schools, churches and almshouses across the city.

The destruction of his statue drew condemnation from the government but reignited calls across the country to remove other historical monuments.

—AFP ■

Turkish court jails US consul staffer for aiding ‘terror group’

ISTANBUL — A local US consulate employee was sentenced to nearly nine years in prison in Turkey Thursday for “aiding an armed terror group” that Ankara blames for a failed 2016 coup, in a decision denounced by its NATO ally Washington.

Metin Topuz, who worked as a liaison officer for the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Istanbul, was arrested in 2017 and was jailed Thursday for eight years and nine months, the official Anadolu news agency reported.

He was accused of making contact with police and a pro-

secutor suspected of ties to US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara says masterminded the attempted coup in 2016. Gulen rejects the accusations.

Topuz, a Turkish citizen, denied the allegations in court, the private DHA news agency reported.

A lawyer for Topuz, contacted by AFP, confirmed the sentence and said a court of appeals is due to decide whether to uphold it.

In previous hearings, Topuz told the judge that his contacts with senior police officials or

prosecutors of the time were entirely “part of my work as a translator and assistant liaison officer at the DEA.”

The Istanbul court acquitted Topuz on political and military espionage charges.

The US embassy, whose staff regularly attended the hearings in support of Topuz and his family, has often said there is no credible evidence against him.

US consul general Daria Darnel and acting public affairs officer Stephanie Kuck were present at Thursday’s session.—AFP ■

NEC to build 9,400-kilometre submarine cable to link Asian countries

TOKYO — NEC Corp. said Thursday it will build a 9,400-kilometre submarine cable that will link Japan and several other countries in Asia to meet growing demand for high-speed data connectivity.

The cable featuring multiple optical fibres will connect Japan, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, said NEC, which was assigned to construct it by the Asia Direct Cable Consortium, comprising major telecommu-

nications companies including SoftBank Corp. and China Telecom Corp.

NEC said the cable, scheduled to be built by the fourth quarter of 2022, will cater to rising demand for high-capacity data transmission driven by such technological advancements as 5G networks and artificial intelligence. It did not disclose the value of the contract with the consortium.

Data traffic has continued to grow across Asia, with more

people working online from home due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

“The ADC system provides the highest cable capacity and necessary diversity for Asia’s key information hubs, which will enable carriers and service providers to better plan their networks and services for a sustainable development,” Chang Weiguo, a co-chair of the consortium from China Telecom, said in an NEC statement.—Kyodo ■



A logo sits illuminated outside the NEC pavilion on the opening day of the World Mobile Congress at the Fira Gran Via Complex on February 22, 2016 in Barcelona, Spain. PHOTO: KYODO

Airbnb sees ‘bounce’ in travel, aims to promote local tourism

SAN FRANCISCO — Airbnb said Thursday it has seen a “bounce” in bookings as the home-sharing platform unveiled an initiative to promote short-range travel as pandemic restrictions ease.

“The travel industry, including Airbnb has been hit hard by COVID-19 and there will continue to be tremendous uncertainty,” the company said in a blog post.

“But, our booking data shows that travel is beginning to bounce back.”

Airbnb cited as a sign of recovery that there have been more nights booked for travel to Airbnb listings in the US between May 17 and June 6 than there were during the same time period a year earlier.

The home-sharing platform said it is riding a day-tripping trend with by partnering with local organizations and tourist bodies around the world including the US National Park Foundation

and the French Association of Rural Mayors.

“Tapping into the demand for nearby trips, we are updating our app and homepage to help guests rediscover the magic in their own backyards by making it easier to book local travel, including at the last-minute,” the company said.

“This includes featuring local trip ideas and highlighting nearby

getaways.”

Nearly half of the people in the US who took part in a survey commissioned by Airbnb indicated a preference to stay within a day’s drive of home once restrictions on movement are lifted.

More than half of Airbnb bookings in May were by people travelling no more than 320 kilometres (200 miles).—AFP ■



Home-sharing platform Airbnb is working to promote short-distance travel as pandemic restrictions ease. PHOTO: AFP

Disney eyes July restart for California theme parks

LOS ANGELES — Disneyland in California announced plans Wednesday to reopen next month — but at “significantly limited” capacity, and with no opportunities to hug Mickey Mouse or high-five Donald Duck for the time being.

Under the plans — which still require government approval — the resort near Los Angeles, including Disneyland and Disney California Adventure, would welcome visitors back beginning July 17.

Disneyland is the world’s second-most visited theme park, drawing tens of thousands of vis-

itors each day, but it closed in mid-March due to coronavirus concerns.

The move comes on the heels of the successful reopening of Shanghai Disneyland last month, and follows a similar timetable to the restart of Disney World in Florida, which has already received government approval.

Theme parks provide a significant portion of the Mouse House’s revenue.

Last month, Disney said the division’s quarterly operating income fell 58 per cent from a

year earlier, largely due to the coronavirus pandemic.

When the California parks reopen, all guests will need to book reservations in advance, and social distancing measures mean no parades or “nighttime spectacles” until a later date.

“While character meet-and-greets will be temporarily unavailable, characters will be in the parks in new ways to entertain and delight guests,” Disney said in a statement.

Hotels at the site would reopen the following week under the scheme.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pandemic-hit Lufthansa says 22,000 jobs to go

BERLIN — German airline Lufthansa said Thursday that it would have to slash 22,000 full-time jobs as it predicts a muted recovery in demand for travel following the coronavirus pandemic.

“The recovery in demand in the air transport sector will be slow in the foreseeable future,” the airline said.

About 100 aircraft will remain grounded after the crisis, leading to “a total of 22,000 fewer full-time positions in the Lufthansa Group, half of them in Germany”.

The posts make up 16 per cent of the Lufthansa Group’s total workforce of 135,000.

The airline said however that it would look at how it could use schemes for shorter work hours and other crisis arrangements to avoid outright redundancies.

“Without a significant reduction in personnel costs during the crisis, we will miss the opportunity of a better restart from the crisis and risk the Lufthansa group emerging from the crisis significantly weakened,” said Michael Niggemann, who heads the airline’s human resources and legal affairs departments. State-aid

Like its peers, the Lufthansa group — which also includes Swiss, Brussels and Austrian Airlines — has been brought to its knees by the restrictions introduced to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Around 700 of the group’s 763 aircraft were grounded at the peak of the lockdowns and it was forced to put 87,000 workers on government-backed shorter hours schemes.—AFP ■

Beijing has over 21,000 5G base stations

BEIJING — Beijing has so far built 21,086 5G base stations, local authorities said on Thursday.

The number of 5G users in the city has exceeded 3.1 million since the city officially kicked off 5G commercial use in 2019, according to the Beijing Municipal Communications Administration.

The Beijing branches of China Mobile, China Unicom, and China Telecom, the first batch of companies that obtained the 5G licences, have applied 5G in over 1,000 projects in the fields of industrial manufacturing, transportation and logistics, commerce and trade, and education and healthcare.

Beijing has put 3,729 5G base stations into operation so far this year.—Xinhua ■

US-China trade deal 'impacted' by coronavirus

BEIJING — Beijing and Washington need to resume strategic communications, a senior Chinese government advisor said Thursday, noting relations were "very unsatisfactory" and that the coronavirus had hit the implementation of their trade deal.

US-China tensions have been rising this year since the signing of a partial trade deal in January, with officials swapping barbs over the origin of the pandemic — which first surfaced in central China and has since ravaged the global economy.

Although both countries have committed to fulfilling the agreement's terms, analysts have flagged increasing uncertainty, a recent decline in Chinese purchases of US



Officials said last month that "good progress" was being made on creating the conditions needed to make the agreement a success. Johannes Eisele. PHOTO: AFP

soybeans, and a drop in US imports in the first few months of this year. Zhu Guangyao, a State Council counsellor, told a press briefing that "objectively

speaking, the epidemic has an impact on the implementation of this deal".

"But even under such circumstances, China has been emphasising that

both sides should work together," added Zhu, who is also a former vice finance minister. Under the deal, Beijing agreed to import an additional \$200 billion

in US products over two years, although economists question if this will happen with business activity hampered by the virus.

Officials said last month that "good progress" was being made on creating the conditions needed to make the agreement a success. Zhu said he expects the second stage of trade negotiations to touch on structural issues, stressing that the close connection between both economies comes from decades of hard work, and "decoupling will not happen just because some people say it will". But he acknowledged that the current status of the US-China relationship was "very unsatisfactory because channels of communication have been in a standstill".—AFP ■

Lebanese pound hits new low despite government efforts

BEIRUT — The Lebanese pound sank to a record low on the black market Thursday despite the authorities' attempts to halt the plunge of the crisis-hit country's currency, money changers said.

Lebanon is in the grips of its worst economic turmoil in decades, and holding talks with the International Monetary Fund towards securing billions in aid to help overcome it.

The Lebanese pound remains pegged to the US currency at a rate of 1,507 per dollar, but its value has tumbled on the black market.—AFP ■

US retailers condemn racism but critics say profiling persists

NEW YORK — As racial justice protests have swept the US, leading retailers have taken to social media to proclaim their commitment to equality.

But such statements decrying racism in the wake of the George Floyd killing have been met with incredulity by some non-white customers, who recount instances of being

quizzed by sales staff on how they make their money or watched "through the shelves" by security, as one shopper put it on Instagram.

Racial profiling — which inspired the hashtag #shoppingwhileblack — has proven a nettlesome problem that the industry has largely avoided directly engaging in recent days,

even as retailers come out publicly to condemn racism and promise greater diversity in their leadership.

Black and Hispanic shoppers have questioned companies' sincerity, saying even if they haven't been stopped by security guards, they feel routinely surveilled and unwelcome in stores in ways that white people do not.

The tension has in the past resulted in retailers making major payouts to settle profiling lawsuits.

In one of the most well-publicized incidents, Starbucks closed 8,000 stores for a day to give employees training on how to avoid implicit bias after the April 2018 arrest of two black men at a Philadelphia store.—AFP ■

Invitation for Prequalification

Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Name of Project: Myanmar Power System Efficiency and Resilience Project
Contract Title: Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant of around 300MW Net Power Capacity
Sector: Energy
Prequalification Reference No.: EPGE-PQ-01/2020
Date: June 11, 2020

1. The Government of Myanmar has applied for financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Ywama new Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) power plant and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design, Supply, and Installation of a CCGT Power Plant of around 300MW Net Power Capacity.
2. Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) intends to prequalify contractors for performance of the construction of a power plant at the Ywama site, located in the suburb of Yangon. The plant will be built using the combined cycle gas technology and the scope of works is for a full turn-key power plant; including the demolition of existing units, engineering, procurement, construction and installation of equipment, testing, and commissioning of the new power plant. The time for completion of the facilities is estimated to be of 36 months. The detailed scope of the contract is outlined in Section VII of this Prequalification Document. It is expected that the Request for Bids will be made in 2020.
3. Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures as specified in the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Applicants as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from EPGE at the address below during office hours 09.30 to 16.30 hr (Myanmar Standard Time). A complete set of the prequalification document in English language can be available by interested Applicants on the submission of a written application to the address below by email from the date of announcement. The document will be sent by e-mail.
5. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes delivered to the address below by August 20, 2020, 14:00 hr Myanmar Standard Time and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for Ywama New Combine Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant(ICB EPGE-PQ-01/2020)". Late applications may be rejected by Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE).

Attn: Managing Director
Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Phone: +95 9 2225181, +95 9 5133511
E-mail: ywamaproject@gmail.com

Announcement For In Order To Object

With regard to the amount of 36,330,436 Japanese Yen paid initially by Mr. Joe Chia Khian Meng, CEO of International Dimensions Limited, on behalf of Myanma Posts and Telecommunications ("MPT") for the project of SEA-ME-WE 3, in which MPT participated in, along with the Ministry of Transport and Communications and International Dimensions Limited ("IDL"), IDL having an address at No. 73, Tras Street # 03-02, Singapore 079012, MPT is now being asked to reimburse to U Aye Zaw Win (12/Ma Ya Ka (N) 006945) as person in charge of the Myanmar branch of IDL, the amount first mentioned above as it is claimed to be U Aye Zaw Win's personal money.

U Aye Zaw Win submitted that, on 23 August 2019, as he had advertised in the newspapers of The Global New Light of Myanmar and The Business Times in Singapore dated (30 September 2019) with regard to the matter of objection that as U Aye Zaw Win was chairman and director of the Myanmar branch of IDL, the above-mentioned amount was paid personally on his own account and as to the matter of reimbursement of said amount to him, there was no objection filed.

Since U Aye Zaw Win (12/Ma Ya Ka (N) 006945) passed away on 26 February 2020, Daw Khin Sandar Win, his surviving spouse, residing at No.257, Insein Road, Nawarat Office Center, Hlaing Township, Yangon Region, as successor, submitted for the reimbursement of such amount. Therefore, we hereby announce that if anyone wants to object regarding this matter, such objection shall be submitted personally or by letter to the following address within (14) days from the date of this announcement with original and legally binding documents.

U Thiha Aung Khaing, Higher Grade Pleader (No. 40219)
No. 43, Bo Aung Kyaw Street (Lower Block), Kyauktatar Township, Yangon, Myanmar
For Myanma Posts and Telecommunications

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COVID-19 continues to spread in south, southeast Asia, India Records Highest Single-Day Spike Of 9,996 Cases, Deaths At 357

NEW DELHI — India recorded the highest single-day spike of 9,996 more COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 2,86,579, according to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

With as many as 357 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, the death toll has increased to 8,102.

Out of the total number of cases, 1,37,448 are active, while 1,41,029 have been cured/discharged/migrated.

Maharashtra continues to remain the worst-affected state with 94,041 cases, followed by Tamil Nadu (36,841) and Delhi (32,810).

COVID-19 has continued to spread in south and southeastern Asia.

Bangladesh recorded 37 more deaths and 3,187 new cases, a senior health ministry official told a television media briefing.

The number of confirmed cases has risen to 78,052, and



FILE: With concern over the spread of new coronavirus a low number of tourists are seen at India's Taj Mahal in Agra on March 16, 2020, just before the government announced the monument's closure under measures trying to stem the pandemic's spread. **PHOTO: AFP**

the death toll has reached 1,049.

The confirmed cases in Indonesia rose by 979 within one day to 35,295, with the death toll adding by 41 to 2,000, Health Ministry official Achmad Yurianto said at a press conference.

He said 507 more people have been discharged from hospitals,

bringing the total number of recovered patients to 12,636.

Malaysia's Health Ministry reported 31 new infections after three straight days of single-digit new cases, pushing the total number to 8,369.

Health Ministry Director-General Noor Hisham Ab-

dullah said at a press briefing that of the new cases, 11 are imported and of the local transmissions, 19 are foreign nationals and one is a Malaysia citizen.

The number of coronavirus cases in the Philippines surged to 24,175 after the Department of Health reported 443 more infections on Thursday.

The number of recoveries further climbed to 5,165 after 270 more patients recovered, and the death toll also increased to 1,036 after nine more patients died.

Laos reported no new case for 60 consecutive days, and all 19 patients infected by the virus have been discharged from hospitals.

The leader of the opposition in Pakistan's National Assembly or the lower house of the parliament Shahbaz Sharif and several other politicians have tested positive, local media reported Thursday.—ANI/Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Beijing reports first confirmed COVID-19 case in nearly two months

BEIJING — A new case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Beijing, the first confirmed COVID-19 case in the capital in nearly two months, local government sources said Thursday.

The patient, 52, went to a clinic in Xicheng District on Wednesday afternoon due to intermittent fever, and was later diagnosed as COVID-19 positive.

According to the patient's own statement, he showed symptoms of fever and fatigue, but no coughing, sore throat or chest distress. The patient also said he had not left the city for the past two weeks and had no contact with people from outside of Beijing. — Xinhua

Seoul warns of 'thorough crackdown' on anti-North Korea leaflets

SEOUL — South Korea's presidential Blue House on Thursday warned of a "thorough crackdown" against activists sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border, after Human Rights Watch denounced it as "shameful" for seeking to block such activities. The leaflets—usually attached to hot air balloons or floated in bottles—criticize North Korean leader Kim Jong Un over human rights abuses and his nuclear ambitions.

Since last week Pyongyang has issued a series of vitriolic denunciations of the South over the leaflets—something defectors do on a regular basis—and on Tuesday it announced it was severing all official communication links with the South.

Moon is a former human rights lawyer and earlier this week lauded South Korean democracy activists, but his office expressed "strong regret" over the leaflet launches, adding the government would mount a "thorough crackdown" against them.

The campaigns are illegal and do not help the "efforts to achieve peace and prosperity of the Korean peninsula", said Kim You-geun, a national security official at the Blue House.

Seoul's unification ministry filed a police complaint against two defector groups Thursday over leaflet launches.—AFP

Dozens killed as south China hit by floods and rainstorms

BEIJING — Floods and mud-

slides in south China have up-



This photo taken on June 7 shows submerged streets and buildings after heavy rain caused flooding in Yangshuo, in China's southern Guangxi region. **PHOTO: AFP**

rooted hundreds of thousands of people and left dozens dead or

missing, state media reported Thursday. The bad weather has wreaked havoc on popular tourist areas that had already been battered by months of travel restrictions during the coronavirus outbreak.

Torrential downpours unleashed floods and mudslides that caused nearly 230,000 people to be relocated and destroyed more than 1,300 houses, official state news agency Xinhua reported, citing the Ministry of Emergency Management.

In southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, six people were reported dead

and one missing, Xinhua said.

Streets were waterlogged in popular tourist destination Yangshuo, forcing residents and visitors to evacuate on bamboo rafts.

The local government said more than 1,000 hotels had been flooded and more than 30 tourist sites damaged.

One owner of a family-run hotel told Xinhua that the guest rooms were submerged in 1 metre (3 feet) of rainwater.

The extreme weather has dealt a hefty blow to the region's tourism sector, which is still reeling from the COVID-19 epidemic.—AFP

Australian PM calls for racism protesters to be charged

SYDNEY — Black Lives Matter protesters should be punished for ignoring coronavirus lockdown rules Australia's prime minister said Thursday, sparking anger by also claiming slavery never existed in the country.

Tens of thousands of Australians demonstrated this week against systemic racism at home and in the United States, and more protests are planned for the coming days.

Critics have called for marches to be banned on health grounds, sparking debate over freedom of speech and the country's colonial past.

Conservative leader Scott Morrison said the protests violated social-distancing rules and hampered lifting a coronavirus shutdown, endangering the economy.

Asked during a radio interview if demonstrators should be charged, he said: "I think they should."

"I think people wanting to take this further this weekend are showing a great disrespect to their fellow Australians," he said, as Victoria state reported one demonstrator in Melbourne had tested positive for coronavirus.—AFP



Tens of thousands of Australians demonstrated this week against systemic racism at home and in the US. **PHOTO: AFP**

Burundi cabinet meets on way forward after president's death



Burundi is mourning the death of President Pierre Nkurunziza who died on Monday after 15 years in power. **PHOTO: AFP**

BUJUMBURA — Burundi convened an extraordinary cabinet meeting Thursday to discuss a way forward after the sudden death of long-serving ruler Pierre Nkurunziza left many anxious over the future of the troubled country.

Nkurunziza, who died on Monday aged 55, had been due to step down in August after his surprise decision not to run in an election last month won by the ruling party's handpicked successor. But his death has raised uncertainty and fears of a power struggle in a country that has witnessed violent political upheaval,

a refugee exodus and a bloody civil war in its recent history.

The government called a ministerial meeting to discuss "the management of the situation following the unexpected death" of Nkurunziza, who according to the government died of a heart attack after feeling unwell for two days.

"We will in particular sign the referral to the constitutional court to declare the presidency definitively vacant," a ministerial source told AFP on condition of anonymity. The meeting will be chaired by the first vice-president, Gaston Sindimwo.

Under the constitution, the president of the National Assembly, Pascal Nyabenda, should take over on an interim basis before president-elect Evariste Ndayishimiye's swearing-in in August.

The path forward will be determined not by the ministers but an innermost "crisis committee" answering to the president's office, the source said.

This group is made up of powerful generals who like Nkurunziza, who ruled for 15 often tumultuous years, emerged from the ethnic Hutu rebellion during Burundi's long civil war which ended in 2006.—AFP ■

Brussels sets out plans to reopen EU borders

BRUSSELS — Brussels on Thursday set out plans to fully reopen the EU's internal borders on June 15 and to allow travellers from Balkan countries to enter the bloc from July 1.

The recommendation to the 27 EU member states comes as restrictions imposed to slow the spread of coronavirus are eased and national governments seek to restart tourism in time for the peak summer season.

Europe accounts for just under half of the 415,000 lives claimed by COVID-19 and now the continent is trying to contain the economic fallout, fearing devastation for its crucial tourism industry.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive which is trying to coordinate the moves, said it was too early to completely abandon restrictions on travellers coming from outside the EU.

Instead it called for a "common coordinated approach", lifting the ban on non-essential travel for countries where the pandemic is at a similar level to the EU and adequate disease control

measures are in place.

The commission said restrictions should be lifted from July 1 for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia because "their epidemiological situation is similar or better than that of the EU".

"International travel is key for tourism and business, and for family and friends reconnecting," European home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson said.

"While we will all have to remain careful, the time has come to make concrete preparations for lifting restrictions with countries whose health situation is similar to the EU's."

Johansson had warned last week that not all countries agreed on the criteria for reopening borders to travellers from the rest of the world.

Tourism-dependent countries such as Greece have been pushing for a swift reopening, with Athens already announcing it will welcome travellers from a list of countries including Australia, China and South Korea from June 15.—AFP ■

Confirmed US coronavirus cases surpass 2 million mark

WASHINGTON — The number of confirmed coronavirus infections in the United States topped 2 million on Wednesday, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

The pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 112,900 people in the United States, which leads the world in the number of confirmed infections with 2,000,464, according to the latest

count from the university, based in Baltimore, Maryland.

The US continues to record around 20,000 new cases of Covid-19 every day and is struggling to come down from that plateau as the level of infections wax and wane in different parts of the country.

In Texas and North Carolina, for example, there are currently more Covid-19 patients hospital-

ized than there were a month ago.

With half a million tests performed per day, the country is the world champion in screening per capita. According to an average of 11 epidemiological models conducted by researchers at the University of Massachusetts, the number of Covid-19 deaths in the US is expected to approach 130,000 by July 4, Independence Day.—AFP ■



In Texas and North Carolina, there are currently more Covid-19 patients hospitalized than there were a month ago. Police officers patrol through downtown Dallas in horseback on May 1. **PHOTO: AFP**

Knife crime looms larger than virus in Greek refugee camp

LESBOS ISLAND (Greece) — Inside Greece's largest asylum-seeker camp on the island of Lesbos, the coronavirus is an oft-heard threat that has kept migrant facilities around the country under lockdown since March.

But knife crime is the real killer.

Whereas COVID-19 has yet to surface officially at the vastly overcrowded camp of Moria, five people have been murdered in knifings since the start of the year, including a woman and a

young boy. Ten others have been injured.

Two of the attacks were carried out in the central square of the port capital of Mytilene.

"The situation gets worse every day," says Muhammad, a Syrian stuck at Moria with his

pregnant wife and their little girl for the past seven months.

"We fear for our children. Every day there is unrest, and every night they fight with knives," he told AFP.

Tension between Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras and Tajik

are a frequent source of violence, says Nazifa, a teacher from that country.

"Yesterday, people came to our tent asking if we are Hazara or Tajik. We are neither, so both sides now consider us foes," she said.—AFP ■

MFF provides foodstuffs to players, staff for second time



Futsal team players receiving essential foodstuffs under the donation programme of Ayeyarwady Foundation through Myanmar Football Federation. **PHOTO: MFF**

WITH the help of Ayeyarwady Foundation founded by MFF president U Zaw Zaw, Myanmar Football Federation provided essential foodstuffs to futsal team players and staff working for the federation at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 10 June, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The essential goods were provided by the federation for the second time and included rice bags, cooking oil bottles,

and canned fish boxes.

President of MFF Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee, Dr Ye Mon Htut, General Secretary of the Myanmar Football Federation U Ko Ko Thein, vice president of the MFF Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee, U Naing Thaung Htike, 275 players from domestic futsal club teams and 229 staff with the Myanmar Football Federation and 40 referees attended the foodstuffs provision ceremony.

During the ceremony football authorities handed over the rice bags, edible oil bottles and canned fish boxes to the 275 futsal players, 229 MFF staff and 40 referees.

The Ayeyarwady Foundation has already provided essential goods plus medical products to hospitals and quarantined sites across Myanmar for the prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease.

Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Ancient eye-popping martial art gains popularity in modern Viet Nam

HANOI—In a sunny temple courtyard in Viet Nam, Le Van Thang pushes an iron rod hard against his eye socket and tries to make it bend – his dizzying strength honed through years of practising centuries-old martial art Thien Mon Dao.

Thang, 28, is one of an increasing number of Vietnamese to find refuge in a sport that grew out of a need to protect the country from invaders, but now offers a route to mental wellbeing in the rapidly changing Communist nation.

Practitioners of Thien Mon Dao have long taken pride in the incredible shows of strength that form part of their routines.

The eye-popping feats include bending metal against their bodies, carrying heavy objects using their throats and lying under the path of motorbikes.

Now many say they also take pleasure from how the sport – which includes elements of self-defence, kung fu and weapons training – has steered them on a new course.—AFP ■

Italian football emerges from virus crisis with cup semis in balance

ROME—This week's Italian Cup semi-final, second leg matches were set to bring football back to a nation emerging from the coronavirus crisis, but with two days until the scheduled kick-off the two matches are still awaiting government approval.

Juventus' home clash with AC Milan on Friday was supposed to be the first competitive match played in Italy since the country became Europe's COVID-19 epicentre, and the start of what the football authorities hope will be a return to normality.

More than 34,000 people on the peninsula have died because of the virus since the start of the crisis, with the vast majority in northern regions like Piedmont

and Lombardy which host Juve and Milan.

However, although the virus still persists, Italy began to gradually emerge from a stringent lockdown last month and has been slowly moving back towards regular life since, with the return of football pitched as the latest sign that the worst should be over. Public broadcaster RAI has already announced its coverage of the two last four encounters, with Napoli v Inter Milan scheduled for Saturday.

However, while Health Minister Roberto Speranza on Wednesday confirmed the dates for the semis and the June 17 final in Rome, he only said that the government was "leaning to-

wards authorising" the last three matches of the competition.

Speranza's comments at the Italian Senate come just as it appeared that weeks of squabbling between Italy's football authorities and the government had been left behind, with what will likely be a large, sport-starved TV audience ready for the two matches behind closed doors. Should, as expected, Friday's match take place fans will see a tie delicately poised at 1-1 following February's entertaining first leg at the San Siro, which saw the 'Rossoneri' leading until Cristiano Ronaldo scored a stoppage time penalty to take a draw and an away goal back to Turin.—AFP ■

Fans welcome as Djokovic event helps tennis emerge from coronavirus

BELGRADE—After being suspended for three months due to the coronavirus pandemic, top-level international tennis returns this weekend in Belgrade with a charity tournament hosted by world number one Novak Djokovic and where fans will be welcome.

The Adria Tour will be held until July 5 in Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia.

On the tournament's first stop, on Saturday and Sunday, the Serbian star will be joined by world number three Dominic Thiem.

Germany's Alexander Zverev and Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov, ranked seventh and 19th in the world respectively, are also set to take part. The ATP and WTA Tours have been suspended since March due to the pandemic and will not resume at least until the end of July.

The French Open was postponed until September and Wimbledon was cancelled for the first time since World War II.

The four tennis stars will play under regulations allowing up to 1,000 people to attend open-air sports events, which were introduced in Serbia on Monday.—AFP ■



Cristiano Ronaldo's late first-leg penalty gives Juventus the advantage going into Friday's second leg of the cup semi-final. **Alberto PIZZOLI / AFP**