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Let's come up with determined efforts to win the war against COVID, once and for all with the participation of everyone: State Counsellor



DAW Aung San Suu Kyi said "Let's come up with determined efforts to win the war against COVID, once and for all with the participation of everyone" on her Facebook page yesterday. This was what she wrote:

Let me share once again what I have shared many, many times. This is none other than the spiritual guidance given by the Venerable Pakkoku Sayadaw to my father. He said, "Don't be scared when others try to scare you. Don't take it lightly also. When others heap praise on you, don't let it get to your head. Also, don't be too modest to accept the praise." In the first part, I have repeatedly referred to COVID. I am just reminding you all not to be too scared and at the same time not to let down your guard.

This time I wish to talk mainly about the second part. When others heap praise on you, don't let it get to your head. This

is quite clear. "Also, don't be too modest to accept the praise". This was how the Venerable Sayadaw explained to his disciples; he said that if someone praised you, you should try to value and continue to maintain the good qualities that resulted in the praise. In other words, you should

"We adopted the motto "leave no one behind". That was how we used to give our explanation.

nurture your good qualities and accomplishments.

There have been some words of praise with regard to our COVID related programmes. In the beginning, there were some who did not think that our country would be able to handle such

a huge problem. Now, these very same people have recognized that how we handled the problem was appropriate and proper. This is the time when we can all be justifiably happy with elation. When they praised us, as far as I was concerned, this was possible because we knew "people were the key". This was possible because the whole country participated. We adopted the motto "leave no one behind". That was how we used to give our explanation. We recognize the fact that we have not arrived at the end of our journey. We are mindful of the fact that we should maintain the momentum of our success.

Let us all experience a bout of elation because of the praise heaped on us. Let us all join hands and work with determined efforts to win over the war against COVID once and for all so that we can all continue to be worthy of praise.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Announcement No. (118/2020)**

13th Waxing of First Waso 1382 ME
(2 July 2020)

**Informing voters abroad of the dates to get Form 15 at relevant embassies
and return the forms after being filled with the facts**

The Union Election Commission has announced the General Election will be held on 8 November (Sunday) 2020. As per the bylaw 57 (b) for parliamentary elections, the following dates are also announced:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| (1) Date for voters abroad to get Form 15 at relevant embassies to be able to cast votes in ballot papers of advance voting (Form 15 can be downloaded at the websites of Union Election Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies.) | 3 July 2020 |
| (2) Date for voters abroad to return the Form 15 to respective embassies after being filled with the facts in ballot papers of advance voting | 16 July - 5 August 2020 |

Sd/Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

"People are the key"

Announcement on advance voting process for local voters outside their constituencies in 2020 General Election

(2 July 2020)

1. The Union Election has made Announcement No. 115/2020 to hold the general elections on 8 November 2020.
2. Local voters outside their constituencies can cast their votes in the following advance voting processes:
 - (a) Heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails can contact to the sub-election commissions to get documents of Form 15
 - (b) They must return these documents to sub-commission of respective townships by 26 August 2020 after being filled by the voters.
 - (c) Sub-election commission of respective townships must send ballot papers and envelopes for advance voting to the trainings, schools, hospitals and jails by 7 October 2020.
 - (d) Advance voting must be organized at trainings, schools, hospitals and jails on their appropriate day from 8 October 2020 to 21 October 2020.
 - (e) The envelopes containing ballot papers must be sent back to sub-election commission of respective townships by 4 pm on 8 November 2020.
3. Heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails need to inform the advance voting date, prescribed in the paragraph 2(d), at least three days advance to the sub-election commission of respective townships for proper coordination.
4. It is also required to inform to the sub-election commissions about the inpatients and detainees of various reasons at the hospitals and jails of Myanmar Police Force and the Correction Department after 26 August 2020 to arrange their voting.
5. The sub-election commissions and the heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails are requested for their coordination in ensuring not to lose rights for advance voting of eligible voters outside the respective constituencies.

Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Electricity and Energy Public Notification

13th Waxing of First Waso 1382 ME
2 July 2020

1. The National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) deems it necessary to continue implementing preventive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 and made an announcement on 12 June 2020 that all directives, notifications, requests to the public, and orders issued by Union-level institutions and ministries regarding the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 until 15-6-2020 (excluding those that have been ordered to be eased) will be extended to 30-6-2020.
2. An announcement was made on 9 June 2020 for the exemption of 75 units from the electricity bills of consumption between 1 June to 15 June when COVID-19 preventive measures were increased.
3. An additional exemption of 75 units will be deducted from the electricity bill from 16-6-2020 to 30-6-2020 as COVID-19 preventive measures were also extended.
4. Thus, a total of 150 units from domestic consumption between the dates of 1 June to 30 June 2020 for residential houses, religious buildings and domestic civil society organizations (excluding embassies, UN agencies and international organizations) will be deducted from the electricity bill up to 30 June.
5. All relevant households that have consumed from 1 to 150 units of electricity will have their meter bill and service fees exempted while consumption of 151 units and above will have K11,550 for 150 units deducted from the total meter bill.
6. Domestic consumption of 151 units and above will have to make payments according the different levels of consumption rate. Local civil society organizations in the NGO category are the only type of non-domestic consumer that will have the exemption applied to them. The other non-domestic types will have to continue payments in regular rates.

Ministry of Electricity and Energy
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

National Volunteers Steering Unit holds online meeting with Shan State CSOs

THE National Volunteers Steering Unit held a videoconference with volunteers and members of civil society organizations assisting with COVID-19 measures in eastern and southern parts of Shan State yesterday.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as the steering unit's chairman, first delivered an address to the volunteers who have received certificates of honour presented by the steering unit.

The Union Minister explained the reasons of issuing certificates to volunteers assisting in COVID-19 measures in each state and region. The Union Minister also called for volunteers who have not been included in the list to submit their names. He said the General Administration Department in each state and region collaborates with his ministry in implementing the COVID-19 measures in line with the rules of Ministry of Health and Sports.

The Union Minister said that while they are unable to give badges and recognition cards to each volunteer individually and have instead handed them over to the



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye talks with volunteers and CSOs in Shan State via a videoconference. **PHOTO: MNA**

authorities in each relevant area. He said they organized this online meeting in order to meet each and every volunteer and are also focusing on discussing the challenges they face out in the field, possible solutions, and continued cooperation. He said it is an advantage to be able to host this online meeting with volunteers from far-off areas such as Monghsat, Linkay, Maukmai, Mongyawng and Mongpan.

The volunteers then discussed the need of face masks for the returnees through borders, requirement of face masks

and hand gel for students when schools reopen, having the awareness-raising campaign through IEC materials in ethnic languages, lack of food, drinking water and lavatory at quarantine centres, supplies for feminine hygiene products and disinfectant barrels, and giving priority to volunteers working in city or town gates.

The Union Minister coordinated the discussions and called on the volunteers to continue providing effective assistance while being careful of their personal safety. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Correction

PLEASE read the date for the "Law to Prevent an Increased Quantity of Imports" to be enforced as '1 July 2021' instead of '1 July 2020' in the President's Office Notification No.83/2020 which appeared on Page 2 in the 2 July, 2020 issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. —Ed

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Only working in unison can benefit all

If you wish for the country to be developed and prosperous, all of the country's resources – financial, natural and human – have to be used together for the equal development of all races.

If the Bamar does what it wants, if the Kachin does what it wants, if the Shan, Kachin and Chin do not all cooperate, there will be no benefits for anyone. Only when you try working in unison will you know its benefits.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Bogyoke Aung San at the Panglong Dinner on February 11, 1947)



Myanmar, Japan sign exchange of three agreements on assistance

EXCHANGE of three agreements regarding the provision of assistance by the Government of Japan to the Government of the Union of Myanmar took place at the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by Union Minister U Thaung Tun and Deputy Minister U Bharat Singh from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Mr Maruyama Ichiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of the Union of

Myanmar accompanied by officials from both sides.

The assistance totalling 2.199 billion Japanese Yen is earmarked for the purchase of motor vehicles and equipment for the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Water Treatment Project in Mandalay City and the Rehabilitation of River Traffic Navigation Aids on the Yangon River.

The assistance provided by Japan will promote socio-economic development of Myanmar and further strengthen bilateral ties between Myanmar and Japan. —MNA



Myanmar and Japan sign exchange of three agreements in Nay Pyi Taw on 2 July, 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Railway authorities organize coordination meeting to upgrade Yangon-Mandalay train track

OFFICIALS from Myanmar Railways held the 38th coordination meeting to upgrade Yangon-Mandalay railway yesterday.

The meeting on videoconference discussed the first phase of Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrade project (Yangon-Taungoo section), which was being implemented with Japanese ODA Loan.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, officials from the Myanmar Railways and responsible persons from the JICA Myanmar Office Yangon, the Construction Management Consultants, and the FNS-JV, TEKKEN-RN JV and Tokyu companies which are the main contractors in civil works and signalling system in the pro-

ject. The Union Minister said at the meeting that the project plays a key role in socio-economic development of the country, and that it should be finalized without delay while adhering to construction standards and safety measures, as well as following guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 in implementing the project. (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Upgrading of Yangon-Mandalay railway is discussed between the MR and Japanese companies on 2 July, 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Legal Translation Commission holds 7th meeting

THE Legal Translation Commission held their 7th meeting at the Office of the Union Attorney-General yesterday morning.

On behalf of the Attorney-General of the Union, the Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint made an opening remark at the meeting.

He said that the Legal Commission formed a work committee and working groups to translate existing laws in English language into Myanmar, and the translation has been completed for 24 laws into

Myanmar, and published them.

He also confirmed that the translated Myanmar versions are as legal as the original versions.

The Deputy Attorney-General also urged the commission members to offer suggestions with regard to the translated Myanmar versions.

Members of the Legal Translation Commission and invited guests were present at the meeting, which will continue today.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

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Tree-planting ceremony commemorates Myanmar Women's Day



Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs organizes tree-planting ceremony to mark Myanmar Women's Day on 2 July. **PHOTO: MNA**

National Committee for Women's Affairs, the deputy chair of committee, the deputy minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, chairs of the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the deputy chair of Myanmar Women and Children Development Foundation, members of Association for prevention, care and protection of abandoned children, the director-general and the deputy director-general of Department of Social Welfare joined the ceremony. The region and state women committees also organized the tree-planting ceremonies in respective areas under the rules of COVID-19.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

THE Tree-Planting ceremony for Myanmar Women's Day that falls on July 3 was held in advance in

No (13) Yan Aung Myin forest reserve near bypass road (V-4) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday in ac-

cordance with the guidelines of COVID-19.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as the chairperson of Myanmar

728 Myanmar nationals come back home via Myawady border bridge on 2 July

A total of 728 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand through No. 2 border bridge in Myawady Town, Kayin State, on 2 July.

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

The number of migrant workers who returned home from abroad through this border

has been 38,413 until now.

The latest group of returnees included 442 males and 286 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

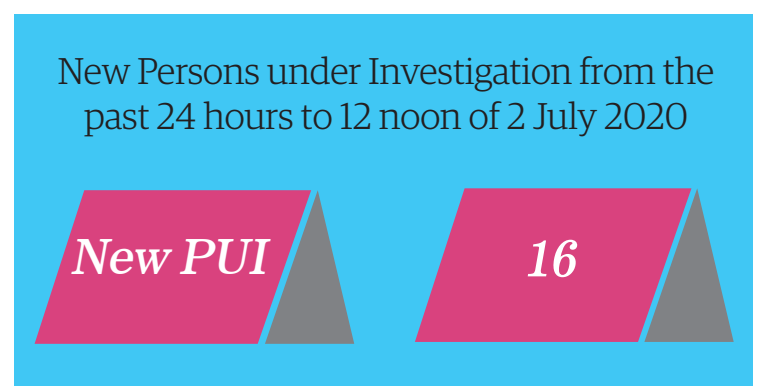
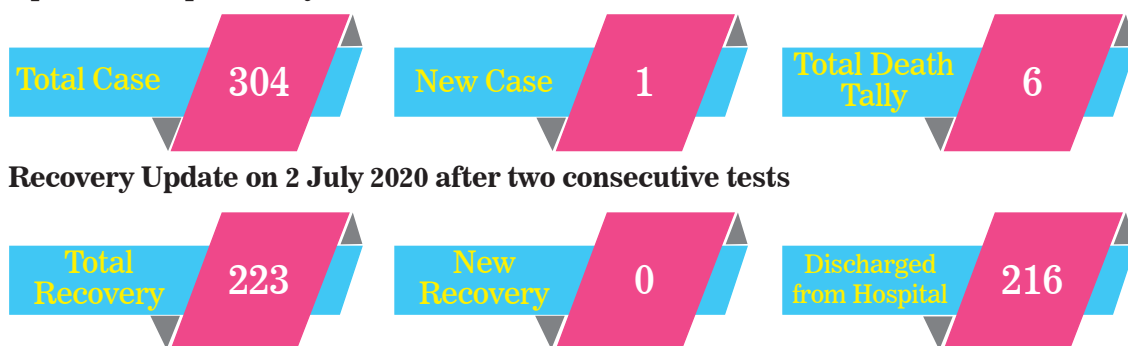
Myanmar returnees arrive back from Thailand at Myawady border town on 2 July. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**



COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 304 after one new case reported on 2 July

Myanmar's COVID-19 positive case reached 304 after one more case who returned from Thailand, was reported on 2 July, according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 304 confirmed cases, six died, 223 have recovered, 216 have discharged from hospital. —MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 2 July 2020



One more case of COVID-19 on 2 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Oversea travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
304	18	Male	Bago Township, Bago Region	No	Yes, Thailand	Bago People's Hospital,	Positive	Held under quarantine (Bago Township)

Govt, NCA –S EAOs hold fifth coordination meeting on peace process

THE government and NCA Signatories ethnic armed organizations (NCA –S EAOs) held the fifth coordination meeting on peace process at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) on Shweli Road in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

Present on the government's side at the meeting were the NRPC Vice-Chairman and Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae of the Ministry of Defence (Army), Lt-Gen Min Naung and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Pyone Cho (a) U Htay Win Aung, members of the Peace Commission Advisory Board U Hla Maung Shwe, U Moe Zaw Oo and the Director-General of the Office of the State Counsellor U Zaw Htay.

The NCA-S EAOs were represented by the Coordination of NCA implementation framework negotiation committee leader Pado Sao Sai Ngin, coordinator U Myo Win, and members of negotiation team U Hla Htay, Saw Mya Yar Zar Lin, Dr Salai Lian Hmon Sakhong, Salai Htarlar Yay, Saw Sein Win, Pado Saw Tar

Do Hmu, Pado Saw L Klu Sae, Kya Salmon, Saw Kyaw Nyunt, Nai Aung Ma Ngaw, Dr Sai Oo and Khun Myint Tun, and other representatives on videoconference.

At the meeting, the NRPC Vice-Chairman and Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo delivered an opening speech. He said that the two sides have already reached agreements on phase-by-phase work plans and implementations beyond 2020, and federal basic principles. He also suggested that the two main tasks of NCA, which are maintaining the ceasefire and engaging in political dialogues, are very important.

The Attorney-General of the Union emphasized that it is important Part III of the Union Accord to be signed at the fourth session of Union Peace Conference- 21st Century Panglong in the second week of August.

After that, Coordination of NCA implementation framework negotiation committee leader Pado Sao Sai Ngin delivered a speech, highlighting the facts that should be included in the



Fifth coordination meeting between the government and the NCA –S EAOs in progress on 2 July.
PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG

Part III of the Union Accord. He also pointed out that the fourth session of Union Peace Conference- 21st Century Panglong will need to adopt effective measures against COVID-19.

Despite strict measures and a reduced number of delegates, the Union Peace Conference- 21st Century Panglong needs

to be all-inclusive in order to get good results, he said.

Pado Sao Sai Ngin also said that both sides have already agreed to hold UPDJC and JMC meetings, so the detailed plans should be discussed in the coordination meeting.

During the meeting, the attendees made discussions on

NCA framework agreement, phase-by-phase work plans and implementations beyond 2020, federal basic principles and other relevant matters.

The fifth coordination meeting will continue on 4 July. —Ye Gaung Nyunt

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

11,802 Myanmar nationals return home from China via Lashio

LOCAL authorities in Lashio of Northern Shan State helped the returnees back from China through Muse, Kokang Self-administered Zone and Chinshwehaw border town by transporting them to the respective regions by trains starting

from 6th May.

Among 109 people yesterday, 3 persons from Kachin, 1 from Kayah, 15 from Sagaing, 1 from Naypyitaw, 16 from Bago, 18 from Magway, 20 from Mandalay, 3 from Tanintharyi, 17 from Rakhine, 9 from Yangon and 6 from

Ayeyawady.

A total of 11,802 persons have returned to Myanmar from China through border crossings from 6th May to date.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Myanmar returnees from China are making way back home via Lashio by trains. **PHOTO: MNA**

Notification on COVID-19 prevention in IDP camps

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

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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Farmers to start mobile market in Yangon region this month

THE local farmers have planned to sell their fruits, vegetables and flowers themselves onboard the mobile trucks in Yangon region, according to Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP).

The MFVP has submitted a proposal to Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) to implement this mobile market project called Yangon farmers' mobile market for the consumers to be able to buy the fresh

fruits, vegetables and flowers from their home during the pandemic period and for the local farmers to be able to sell their fresh crops. MFVP granted implementation of the project on 29 June.

Each mobile truck will contain eight to ten shops. The local farmers need to rent the cars so that they can sell their crops at more competitive prices. The local farmers from other regions can also rent limited spaces of a warehouse to keep

their cargos in, according to the MFVP.

The MFVP is also arranging to sell the crops which are almost unmarketable compared to the seasonal crops to be sold on board the trucks.

Similarly, the local farmers can hand over their crops to MFVP to sell in the market. The price of the crops is dependent upon the market price, the crops being easy to ripe and the demand.

So far, the MFVP has also

launched the e-commerce platform. The vegetables and fruits are highly demanded. People can buy the vegetables online through e-commerce mobile application which has been developed by the MFVP. The sellers can display their products through the use of the application, describing the price, quality and quantity and products' photos. The consumers can buy the goods direct online.

— Thae Cho
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Rescue work follows up as Phakant jade mine landslide kills 126

AT least 126 people were killed in a landslide that occurred yesterday morning at a jade mining site of Kyaukmyet Shwe Pyi Company (locally called 111 company) in Laku Creek, Ward-6, Wahkar village in Phakant Township in Kachin State.

A total of 126 bodies had been recovered from the site of incident, and 23 others were injured, according to the report on 3:35 pm on 2 July.

“The Laku Creek is around

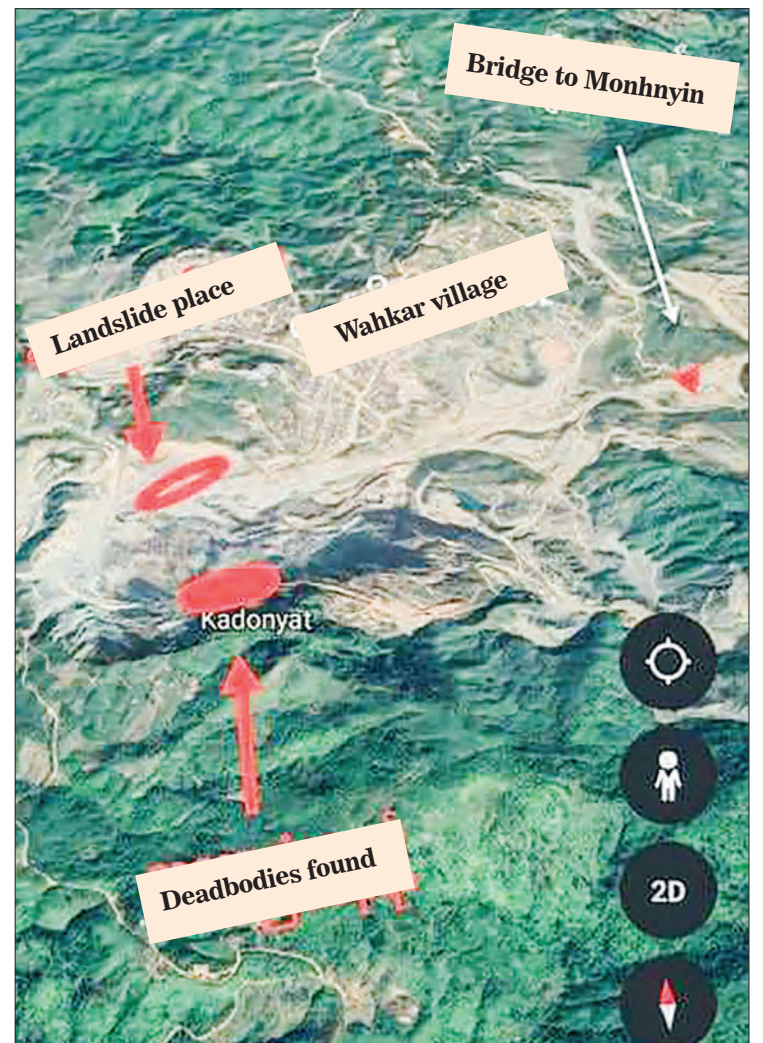
1,000 feet long. The bank of Laku Creek collapsed. The collapse was attributed to the local jade mining workers prospecting the jade. There is a lake in the landslide area. So, some are flowing along the strong currents,” said U Ma Jee Brang Mai, a social rescue worker.

The Township Administrator, members of the Township Natural Disaster Management Team, MPs, the Township Police Force, local Red Cross work-



Rescue workers and Red Cross Society members are carrying bodies of victims died in landslide of jade mine in Phakant on 2 July.

PHOTO: MNA



A map showing the deadly landslide incident at a jade mine near Laku Creek of Wahkar village in Phakant Township on 2 July. PHOTO: MNA

ers, Civil Service Societies, and Wahkar villagers continued their search for survivors and missing bodies.

The Department of Natural Disaster Management under the

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will provide necessary assistance to the family of the landslide victims.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

89 killed in motorbike accidents on YGN-MDY Highway in 2017-2020

A total of 254 motorbike accidents were reported on Yangon-Mandalay Highway in four years from 2017 to 2020, which left 89 persons dead and 290 others injured, according to Nay Pyi Taw Highway Traffic Police Force.

The motorbikes are not allowed to ride on Yangon-Mandalay Highway. However, the motorcyclists are highly killed

as a result of the disobedience of traffic rules.

Riding of motorbikes on Yangon-Mandalay highway has caused 254 cases of motorbike accidents on the Highway with 89 killed—75 males and 14 females—and 290 injured—226 males and 64 females. The losses caused by the accidents are estimated to amount to over

Ks 31 million, according to an announcement of the Highway Police Force.

“Some of the roads are earthen roads. The motorcyclists are okay to ride in summer. During the raining season, they are not allowed to ride on the road. Many lives are being lost on the highway. We don't want it to happen. So, we are giving

awareness to the local people. To be able to reduce the traffic accidents, we are providing awareness talk continuously,” said an official from Nay Pyi Taw Highway Traffic Police Force.

The motorcyclists have been prohibited from riding on the highway since 2015.—Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

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.

307 businesses receive over K14 bln COVID fund in 7th batch

By Nyein Nyein

A total of 307 businesses were approved to receive K14.556 billion from the Coronavirus Fund in the seventh batch by a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the viral disease, the committee stated. More than 3,400 enterprises have been granted over K100 billion from the fund between 9 April and 2 July, as per the committee's data.

The applicants approved by the committee will be screened in line with banking rules and procedures, and they are not eligible for the loan if they get sued by a bank. The remaining

applications are being processed, the committee stated.

The priority sectors for the fund of K100 billion are CMP garment business, hotels and tourism service and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The committee has been granting the loan to the business stricken by the pandemic from the initial Coronavirus Fund, with K50 billion allocated from the country's revolving fund and another K50 billion from the social welfare fund. The committee was formed on 13 March and Union Minister U Thaug Tun of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Econom-

ic Relations was appointed as the chairman of the committee.

The committee is responsible for measures to address the negative impacts of the pandemic situation on trade and tourism sectors; short, medium and long term measures to respond to the coronavirus crisis, together with the private sector and related associations; creation of new jobs for the laid-off factory workers; conducting vocational education to the workers; and additional measures to explore new markets to buy raw materials for CMP garment businesses in the country instead of relying on the



Domestic businesses suffer a blow from outbreak of COVID-19.

PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD

sole market—China.

Additionally, the public and private sectors need to cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories, the committee urges.

Furthermore, as the long-term strategies, the committee

will request Myanmar President office to give tax exemption and reliefs depending on the situations of the coronavirus impacts on SMEs and to provide loans to the domestic businesses at a low-interest rate.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

New company registration via MyCO surges in June: DICA

By Nyein Nyein

THE number of new companies registered at the online registry system MyCO has risen in June, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Earlier, MyCO received more than 1,000 applications from new companies every month. Following the coronavirus impacts, only 348 companies were registered in April. The number increased to 798 in May, and the figures surged to 1,314 in June.

The number of companies registered on MyCO, exceeded 80,000 in two years since the establishment of the online platform, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The registration and re-registration of companies on the

MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. Since then, 32,068 new companies and 46,377 existing companies have registered and re-registered on MyCO, bringing the total number of registered companies to 78,445 by June-end.

Normally, over 1,000 new companies are registered every month. When the online registry system was launched in August 2018, 1,816 new companies registered on MyCO. The figure stood at 2,218 in September 2018, 1,671 in October, 1,431 in November, 1,364 in December, 1,733 in January 2019, 1,419 in February, 1,108 in March, and over 1,045 in April, 1,411 in May, 1,307 in June, 1,428 in July, 1,302 in August and 1,181 in September. The figures reached a fresh new peak of 2,059 in October

2019. Then, 1,615 new companies in November and 1,772 in December 2019 were recorded, according to the data from the DICA.

In this year, the figures of registered companies stood at 1,415 in January, 1,298 in February and 1,015 in March, only 348 companies in April, 798 in May, and 1,314 in June, as per data of the DICA. At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, the DICA data stated. In addition, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the law.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law

2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

A total of 13,002 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns. The DICA has notified any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspend-

ed. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for late filing of AR, K100,000 for the restoration of the company on the register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents. If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice.

In order to revive the strike-off company, the applicant need to attach Form I-5 (Court Order for the restoration of the company to the register) for rectification.

For court order, they need to pay the prescribed filing fee. However, the strike-off action can wreak the company's reputation. Thus, the DICA has notified the companies of filing AR as regulatory compliance.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Stock trading value increases by about K100 mln in June: YSX



YSX sees an increase in stock trading last month with total value of K1.3 billion. PHOTO: MNA

THE value of shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in June slightly rose to K1.3 billion, showing an increase of about K100 million compared with trading value in May, according to a YSX's monthly report.

The trading volume also surged to 221,682 shares in June.

In January 2020, 196,836 shares worth K1.25 billion were traded on the exchange while 188,919 shares, with an estimated value of K1.48 billion, were traded on the exchange in February

and 228,913 shares valued K1.42 billion were traded in March respectively. It touched the lowest of K902 million with 173,808 shares in April. It rose to K1.2 billion with 200,416 shares being traded in May, the exchange's monthly report showed. At present, shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH) and the Ever Flow River Group Public Co. Ltd (EFR) are being traded on the exchange.

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market in

March 2020.

In June, the exchanged witnessed a small increase in share prices of FMI, MTSH and TMH. The share prices of FMI were closed at K10,500 per unit, MTSH at K3,800, MCB at K8,100, FPB at K22,000, TMH at K2,850 and EFR at K2,700 last month.

The YSX was launched three years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars.

To boost the trading, the YSX has doubled its stock trade matching time from two to four per day last year. The exchange launched 7 times matching per

day on 26 March 2020.

In addition to this, it has held promotional events to attract new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.

A total of 2.4 million shares worth K13.39 billion were traded on the YSX in 2019, a significant increase compared to the previous year, according to the annual report released by the exchange. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Enforcing rules of law called key to saving lives from preventable disasters

DISASTER and death are not the inevitable consequence of greater exposure to hazards. It is possible to stabilize disaster impacts, save lives and protect livelihoods.

Especially, in Hpakant which is notorious for the preventable landslide disasters killing migrant workers regularly.

In the jade land, we can tell why the disasters happen and where many of the risks lie and which areas where migrant workers should not search jade stones at risk of their lives.

The government ordered the mines in the region to close from July 1 to Sept. 30 because of the risk of landslides during the heavy rains of the monsoon season.

However, the disaster occurred on the morning of 2nd July, 2020 after a heavy rain in Hpakant, killing about 150 people.

It is clear that all of us can only be safe if we ensure that everyone is kept safe.

The ongoing catastrophe in the Hpakant jade-mining region of Kachin State in northern Myanmar produces a grim roll call. 21 November 2015: more than 200 workers buried in their campsite. 25 December 2015: "waste mound" kills 50. 6 January 2016: 20 killed. 25 January 2016: 100 killed. 4 April 2018: 6 killed in landslide. 4 May 2018: at least 17 dead. 14 July, 2018: at least 15 confirmed

dead, survivors believe over 100 buried. 24 July 2018: 27 "feared dead." 12 February 2019: 6 killed in "cliff collapse."

They are victims of the lure of jadeite – precious jade.

To prevent such disasters, the Union Government has been making more efforts for extending the rule of law in Hpakant, considering that the government is obliged to provide safe working conditions to migrant miners.

That's why a task force with 14 members was formed by the Union Government on 4 October, last year and tasked with 14 goals. Six sub-working groups were formed under the task force on the same day. Steps are being taken to ensure the safety of migrant miners.

Shortcomings in following of safety regulations by both mining companies and migrant squatters who search jade stones discarded by mining companies pose challenges for local authorities in saving lives from preventable disasters around jade mines in Kachin State.

Every person has the right to go to work with the expectation they will safely return home to their families when the day is done. But everyone also needs to play their part in reducing risks by following the rules and guidelines issued by the authorities.

Adaptation is key to meeting the many demands of our new COVID-19 normal

By Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia

Why innovation and adaptation are central to the South-East Asia Region's sustained COVID-19 response

CCOVID-19 is a direct threat to the health and well-being of all people in the WHO South-East Asia Region. For as long as the virus spreads, the health and well-being of the Region's near 2 billion people will be at risk, whatever the transmission scenario. WHO and its Member States in the Region must continue to dig deep and aggressively minimize transmission, responding to every case, cluster and evidence of community transmission.



Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia

But to complement such measures, we must also adapt our cities and surroundings, especially as public health and social interventions – including physical distancing – are relaxed or reapplied based on local epidemiological evidence. The need of the hour is for us all to think innovatively, and to retool our environments to meet the many demands of our new COVID-19 normal.

For example, hand hygiene facilities can be installed at the entrance to public or private commercial buildings, and at all transport locations. Workplaces can stagger hours, increase ventilation and encourage staff to work from home as much as possible. And we can all take per-

sonal measures to minimize the risk of bringing an infection home, which is especially important in multi-generational households.

Proactive efforts to protect vulnerable groups, including internal and returning migrants, are especially needed. Challenges associated with inadequate housing and access to water exacerbate the risk of the disease spreading. So too does inadequate community engagement and communication. Key WHO guidance on protecting and engaging vulnerable groups can help local authorities implement high-impact measures that are equity oriented and which can be integrated into

emergency planning ahead of the monsoon and flu seasons.

Health services, too, should be modified and strengthened, not only to treat COVID-19, but to also address the many indirect health impacts the virus is having, quite apart from its adverse effect on the provision of essential health services, which WHO is vigorously supporting Member States to minimize.

Take mental health. The uncertainty the pandemic is causing, in addition to the fear of contracting the disease, has increased the prevalence of mental health issues, which may be exacerbated by substance use or difficulties accessing mental health services and psychiatric medicines.

To help all people access the mental health care they need, health leaders can invest in appropriate services and ensure existing mental health services continue to function. Psychiatric care can be provided over the phone or online. Community support groups can continue to meet in person or virtually while observing physical-distancing guidance. Health facility administrators can ensure all health workers know where and how to access the care they need to stay mentally well and resilient.

Services for intimate partner violence require similar attention. COVID-19 has increased stress, disrupted social and protective networks and decreased access to services, all of which can exacerbate the risk of intimate partner violence. With families spending more time at home, the likelihood that a woman in an abusive relationship will be exposed to violence has dramatically increased.

To help provide the necessary care, health facilities can identify and offer information on locally available support services such as hotlines, shelters and counselling services. Health workers themselves can make a difference, for example by listening empathetically and without judgement, in addition to providing appropriate medical treatment. The use of mHealth and telemedicine to safely address violence against women must be urgently explored.

Nutrition remains a core concern. Across the Region, broken supply chains and loss of livelihoods and incomes have the potential to severely impede access to healthy diets rich in whole grains, fruit and vegetables. School closures have resulted in many children missing out on school meals. Disruptions to nu-

trition services – especially those supporting maternal and child health and nutrition – could impact millions of vulnerable people in ways both chronic and acute.

It is the duty of all stakeholders in the Region to protect the nutritional status of the most vulnerable and to strengthen the health services and programmes on which they rely. Stakeholders can adapt existing nutritional services, for example by providing digital counselling or additional take-home supplies. They can also streamline referral pathways for nutritional services and expand nutrition-sensitive social protection and community programmes.

Given the Region's rich tradition of innovation and adaptation, we have immense potential to re-tool our cities, surroundings and services to meet the many demands of our new COVID-19 normal. There is not a moment to lose. WHO and its Member States in the Region will continue to strategically respond to the pandemic, fully committed to controlling and suppressing spread, strengthening and maintaining health services, and empowering individuals and communities to stay safe, healthy and well. Our battle continues, as it must.

PANDEMIC IS ACCELERATING

More than 160,000 COVID-19 cases reported daily in past week: WHO

THE global coronavirus pandemic is accelerating, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday (Jul 1), with the number of daily cases surging beyond 160,000 every day in the past week, a record.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also told a virtual briefing that well over half of all cases recorded since the novel coronavirus first emerged in China late last year were registered in June.

"For the past week, the number of the new cases has exceeded 160,000 on every single day," he said, adding that "60 per cent of all cases so far have been reported just in

the past month."

Data provided by the UN health agency showed that the highest number of new daily COVID-19 cases ever recorded came on Jun 28, when more than 189,500 new cases were registered worldwide.

Prior to Jun 25, daily cases only surpassed 160,000 twice before, both in the preceding week, while daily cases did not pass the 100,000 mark until May 18, the data showed.

With over 511,000 deaths and more than 10.5 million known infections worldwide, the coronavirus pandemic is "not even close to being over", the WHO warned earlier

this week. Tedros reiterated that taking a "comprehensive approach" was the best way to rein in the virus.

"Find, isolate, test and care for every case, trace and quarantine every contact, equip and train health workers and educate and empower communities to protect themselves and others," he said.

"Not testing alone. Not physical distancing alone. Not contact tracing alone. Not masks alone. Do it all."

Countries that have implemented a wide range of measures, including contact tracing, isolation, physical distancing and mask wearing "have suppressed transmission and saved lives", he said. Source: AFP



Ever learned and ever dedicated,
Never disorganized and never discontented,
In the education sector
Is the Myanmar teacher.

Ever caring and ever understanding,
Never neglecting and never demanding,
In the health sector
Is the Myanmar lady doctor.

Ever active and ever energetic,
Never passive and never lethargic,
In the construction sector
Is the Myanmar woman engineer.

Ever imaginative and ever creative,
Never exhaustive and never sensitive,
Is the literary circle
Is the Myanmar woman author.

Ever amiable and ever shrewd,
Never unreliable and never crude,
In the business sector
Is the Myanmar woman entrepreneur.

Ever composed and ever impartial,
Never biased and never partial,
In the judicial sector
Is the Myanmar woman judge.

Ever undaunted and ever vigilant,
Never intimidated and never hesitant,
In the political sector
Is the Myanmar woman leader.

Ever loving and ever sacrificing,
Never complaining and never refusing,
In the daily home life
Is the Myanmar housewife.

By Professor Sein Sein Myint

(A tribute to all Myanmar women on Myanmar Women's Day, July-3)

On the occasion of Myanmar Women's Day

Women can help Myanmar emerge stronger from COVID-19 if they are given a chance

By Ramanathan Balakrishnan, Representative, UNFPA, Co-Chair of the United Nations Myanmar Country Team Gender Theme Group
Nicolas Burniat, Representative, UN Women, Co-Chair of the United Nations Myanmar Country Team Gender Theme Group

ON behalf of the United Nations in Myanmar and on the occasion of National Women's Day, we would like to present our greetings to the women and girls of Myanmar and pay tribute to all women for their contribution to the national response to COVID-19 crisis.

In the past few months, COVID-19 has changed the world and affected us all. However, the impact of the crisis has been particularly significant for women. This is true globally and this is true here in Myanmar.

Nearly 60 per cent of women globally work in the informal economy, earning less and at greater risk of falling into poverty. As markets fall and businesses close, millions of women's jobs have disappeared.

In Myanmar, women represent 60 per cent of the employee engaged in the food and accommodation services and over 90 per cent of garment workers, two sectors which have been particularly hit by the crisis. Close to 800,000 Myanmar women migrant workers are working overseas and particularly vulnerable in the current context.

We all know that in normal circumstances, when schools and daycares are open, women already bear the brunt of unpaid care work due to discriminatory social norms which make people think that care work, cooking, cleaning, child rearing is a woman's work. Unpaid care work limits women's ability to participate in the economy as well as in other public spheres including political and peace-building processes.

The COVID-19 crisis has made this worse! Currently, more than 700 million children are out of school in the Asia Pacific region due to school closures. This has forced families to find alternative solutions. And it is no surprise that the additional burden of childcare and home schooling has fallen on women, most of the time with little to no help from male family members. In Myanmar evidence is starting to emerge that one of the reasons that women small and medium



Women like Naw Bway Pa Soe Phaw a trainer with Thandaunggyi Women Group, an organization championing women's leadership and inclusion in Kayin which initiated a 10-day mask making training course in the Myine Gyi Ngu Internally displaced persons camp in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare to support the State's Cloth Mask Campaign. **PHOTO: UNIC YANGON, UNRCO OFFICE**

entrepreneurs have been more affected by the crisis is because they have had no choice but to abandon their businesses in order to care for their children during these times.

Women and girls are also at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence when movement is restricted, livelihoods disrupted and access to services and protection systems limited.

Across the region, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and India for instance have all reported significant increases in cases of domestic violence in recent months. While there is no comprehensive data for Myanmar yet, early reports coming from some civil society organizations specializing in services for survivors of violence are in line with this trend.

The COVID19 pandemic, globally and in Myanmar, also poses the risk of restricted access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls. From the access to modern methods for family planning, to adequate services for birth delivery, the disruption of services in many places or the fear of accessing services by women and girls risk the regression of precious gains achieved in Child and Maternal mortality reduction and in exercising individual Sexual and Reproductive Health rights.

We know from global ev-

idence that with conflict and increased militarization, populations face heightened risks including that of sexual violence. Continued clashes in Rakhine and Chin States, and the intensification in Rathedaung in recent days, are therefore all the more concerning and Conflicts weaken the ability of the institutions and individuals, particularly women and children in responding to and recovering from COVID-19 and contribute to new humanitarian needs, putting additional pressures on women and girls and social systems. This diverts resources from the collective efforts needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 which is why both the Secretary General and the Security Council of the United Nations have called for a global humanitarian ceasefire.

If the COVID-19 crisis has particularly affected women, it has however also highlighted once more women's leadership and the essential contribution of women to society, both globally and here in Myanmar.

In the health sector, we have seen women in laboratories, hospitals, clinics, community health centers and quarantine centers on the frontline of the fight against the virus. In Myanmar, women represent more than 75% of Myanmar health workers and first responders. Women like Daw Hnin Yi Win, a Senior Midwife from Yangon

who in addition to assisting deliveries, and providing ante-natal and post-natal care, participates in community outreach efforts to educate pregnant women on how to protect themselves and their families from the virus.

At the height of lockdown measures, we have seen in all countries women restocking the aisles of supermarkets and managing cash registers in full protective equipment, and women market vendors re-organizing wet markets to ensure social distancing and allowing us all to have continued access to food and essential commodities.

Everywhere, we have also seen women leaders, women civil society organization and women's groups organize adapt and scale up their work to support their communities.

Women like Naw Bway Pa Soe Phaw a trainer with Thandaunggyi Women Group, an organization championing women's leadership and inclusion in Kayin which initiated a 10-day mask making training course in the Myine Gyi Ngu Internally displaced persons camp in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare to support the State's Cloth Mask Campaign.

And across the world, we have seen women entrepreneurs adapting and finding new ways to support their families.

Women like Myint from Rakhine state who, when going to the local market was not an option anymore, taught herself the basics of digital marketing with the help of a friend in order to shift to online platforms to sell the multipurpose cloth bags that she produces at home.

Myanmar National Women's Day provides an important platform to recognize the specific needs of Myanmar women in the COVID-19 crisis, celebrate their leadership and contribution to the response and to commit to placing women at the center of the national recovery efforts, including the Country Economic Relief Plan.

Pursuing a gender-responsive recovery that supports women is not only the right thing to do

but it is also the smart thing to do.

Including women in the economic response to COVID-19 can indeed drive a more inclusive and faster recovery. There is strong evidence that during normal circumstances gender equality can drive economic growth and improve business performance. It is estimated for instance that if gender equality was attained in the Asia-Pacific region, if women had the same access to means of production and resources, if care work was equally shared, if women were protected from violence and if women and men were paid equally for equal work, up to 3.2 Trillion dollars would be added to the economy of Asia Pacific countries.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the United Nations in Myanmar has put women at the center of its own efforts to support the national response, including by supporting the continued provision of sexual and reproductive health services, supporting efforts to prevent and respond to gender based violence, supporting women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, supporting cash transfers for women and children, and supporting women's voice and leadership at all levels.

We have recommitted to this specific focus through our recently released Socio-Economic Response Framework.

Now more than ever, it is essential that both governments and private sector around the world leverage every possible entry point to include women in the recovery when developing their COVID-19 response plans. This will ensure that women are not further left behind, but instead contribute to accelerating economic recovery and lessen the negative impacts in the workplace, marketplace and community.

We look forward to continuing to support the efforts of the government of Myanmar and all national stakeholders in this respect.



SECURING WORLD STOCK OF REMDESIVIR

US buys almost entire supply of Covid-19 drug remdesivir

BRITAIN and Germany said on Wednesday they had sufficient stocks of remdesivir, the first drug to be shown to be relatively effective in treating Covid-19, and of which the United States has bought almost all supply.

Washington announced this week that it had purchased 92 per cent of all remdesivir production by the Gilead laboratory until the end of September – about 500,000 treatments out of nearly 550,000. Each treatment requires 6.25 vials on average.

President Donald Trump “has struck an amazing deal to ensure Americans have access to the first authorized therapeutic for Covid-19”, said Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar as the US death toll hit 128,000 – the world’s highest.

Gilead has set the price at US\$390 per vial in developed countries, or US\$2,340 for six vials used over the normal five-day course, though US private

insurers will pay US\$520 per vial.

The drug was approved in the United States on May 1 after clinical trials showing it reduced the recovery time for seriously ill Covid-19 patients by four days, and Europe is set to approve it soon.

Washington’s buy-up raised concerns about a shortage in the rest of the world, but at least two European countries said on Wednesday that they were not worried.

“The UK has been using remdesivir for some time, first in trials and now in the early access to medicines scheme. The UK currently has a sufficient stock,” the British Prime Minister’s spokesman said.

In Germany, a health ministry spokesman said “the government secured stocks of remdesivir early on for the treatment of corona patients. At the moment, there are sufficient reserves.”

The Gilead laboratory has granted royalty-free licences to nine manufacturers of generic drugs in India, Pakistan and Egypt.

They will have the right to distribute their versions of remdesivir in 127 developing countries, Gilead told AFP in a statement.

In other countries, “access to remdesivir will be prioritized first according to regulatory approvals and authorizations and the incidence of disease, and subsequently by severity of disease, to provide access to patients with the most urgent need”, the company said.

Remdesivir will be produced by Gilead factories in the United States but also by manufacturing partners in North America, Europe and Asia, “to scale up supply,” it added.

Experts say that worldwide production should increase to meet demand, but some ex-



Dr. Anthony Fauci (L), director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, says remdesivir is proven to help get coronavirus patients out of hospital. (MANDEL NGAN/AFP)

pressed concern over companies “blocking” Covid-19 drugs. “If you are worried that you or a loved one will need this drug and it won’t be available if you are not in the US, I don’t think that will be the case (and I certainly hope not),” Farasat

Bokhari, associate professor in economics at the University of East Anglia, said.

“Manufacturers in other countries are going to ramp up production. The only issue is how fast they can do it.”

SOURCE: AFP

‘CATASTROPHIC’ IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LIVE MUSIC

UK live music industry facing collapse

SOME 1,500 acts including Ed Sheeran, Paul McCartney and The Rolling Stones urged the British government on Thursday to save the country’s live music industry from collapsing because of the coronavirus.

Coldplay, Eric Clapton, Sam Smith, Rod Stewart, Liam Gallagher, Iron Maiden, Dua Lipa, Skepta and Florence + the Machine were also signatories to an open letter warning that the ongoing shutdown threatened thousands of jobs.

They cited new research

showing that live music added £4.5 billion to the British economy and supported 210,000 jobs across the country last year.

“UK live music has been one of the UK’s biggest social, cultural, and economic successes of the past decade,” they wrote in the letter to culture minister Oliver Dowden.

But “with no end to social distancing in sight or financial support from government yet agreed, the future for concerts and festivals and the hundreds of thousands of people who

work in them looks bleak.”

Britain has suffered the deadliest outbreak of coronavirus in Europe so far, with more than 54,000 confirmed or suspected deaths.

The government has been easing stay-at-home orders imposed in late March but while pubs, restaurants and museums will reopen this weekend, live music venues remain closed.

“Until these businesses can operate again, which is likely to be 2021 at the earliest, government support will be crucial to prevent mass insolvencies and the end of this world-leading industry,” the letter says.

The industry wants a clear timeline for reopening venues without social-distancing requirements, and government support that includes extending the furlough scheme for workers who have been temporarily laid-off.

Gallagher said: “Amazing gigs don’t happen without an amazing team behind the stage, but they’ll all be out of jobs unless we can get back out there doing what we love.”

SOURCE: AFP



Members of the ‘Meltham and Meltham Mills Band’ prepare to practise together for the first time since the government-imposed lockdown began in Worlow Quarry, above the village of Marsden, near Huddersfield. PHOTO: AFP

EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN

Amsterdam’s red light district reopens after Covid-19 shutdown

AMSTERDAM’S famed red light district reopened on Wednesday after a long coronavirus shutdown, with sex workers and clients having to observe new rules to prevent infection.

The Netherlands ordered all brothels closed in mid-March and had originally planned to keep them shut until September, but recently brought the date forward as Covid-19 cases dropped.

“It feels very good” to be back at work, said Felicia Anna, a 34-year-old Romanian sex worker in the Amsterdam red light district and chairwoman of the Red Light United trade union.

“During the lockdown, a lot of sex workers ran into financial trouble so we’re very happy that we can finally start our job again,” she told AFP.

Anna said there were fears that there would be few-

er clients, since many of them are tourists and the Netherlands still has a travel ban on many countries.

“But I did ask some of my colleagues and so far they said that the work is quite ok.”

“I’m totally booked” for Wednesday, added Foxy, a sex worker and activist at the Prostitution Information Centre (PIC) in Amsterdam, using her professional pseudonym.

“I had a little party when I heard” the government’s June 24 announcement that sex work could restart, added Foxy, who rents a room in a brothel outside the red light district.

While less restrictive than other countries, the Netherlands’ “intelligent lockdown” emptied the red neon-lit, street-front windows from which many of Amsterdam’s prostitutes normally beckon customers.

SOURCE: AFP

Fed officials discuss risks of additional COVID-19 waves on U.S. economy: minutes

WASHINGTON — U.S. Federal Reserve officials last month discussed the risks of additional waves of COVID-19 outbreaks on the U.S. economy as states continued reopening efforts, according to the minutes of the Fed's latest policy meeting released Wednesday.

"A number of participants judged that there was a substantial likelihood of additional waves of outbreaks, which, in some scenarios, could re-

sult in further economic disruptions and possibly a protracted period of reduced economic activity," said the minutes of the Fed's meeting held on June 9 and 10, during which the central bank expected the benchmark interest rate to remain at the current level of near zero through at least 2022.

In some adverse scenarios, Fed officials noted that "more business closures would occur", and workers would experience

longer spells of unemployment that could lead to a loss of skills that could impair their employment prospects, the minutes showed.

"Participants commented that there remained an extraordinary amount of uncertainty and considerable risks to the economic outlook," the minutes said, noting economic activity might recover more quickly "if sizable, widespread outbreaks could be avoided".—Xinhua ■



People do shopping at the Macy's flagship store in New York, the United States, on June 22, 2020. (XINHUA/WANG YING)

Japan to close aging coal-fired power plants to cut emissions

TOKYO — Japan will close the majority of its aging coal-fired power plants over the next decade as it looks to cut down on carbon emissions and shift toward using more renewable energy, government sources said Thursday.

Resource-poor Japan

relies on coal for about a third of its energy needs. Of the 140 coal-fired generators in the country, 114 are older and considered to be low efficiency. The government aims to take about 100 of them offline in stages by fiscal 2030.

Industry minister Hiroshi Kajiyama broached

the idea in a meeting on Thursday with the heads of Japan's largest electric utilities, according to an official at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Kajiyama is expected to announce the move as early as Friday.

The ministry plans to set up an expert panel to come up with ways to push electric utilities away from coal, with one option being the setting of quotas on the amount of electricity they are allowed to produce using low efficiency generators.

The government will promote solar, wind and other forms of renewable energy, which provides just 17 percent of Japan's electricity generation, as well as look to restart more of the nuclear reactors that were halted following the 2011 Fukushima crisis.—Kyodo ■



Japan will close the majority of its aging coal-fired power plants over the next decade as it looks to cut down on carbon emissions and shift toward using more renewable energy. PHOTO: KYODO

COVID-19: New normal will witness more businesses supporting CSR

NEW DELHI — All the company stakeholders and public at large is seeking to know whether their beloved brands are investing in CSR or not, as the purpose of corporate social responsibility today stands beyond merely being a legal obligation.

CSR is a necessary corporate strategy and a core business requirement in today's times. But COVID-19 has put all our CSR and crisis management theories and commitments to test. The current crisis has accentuated the motive of social responsibility towards the community even more. It has given us an opportunity to reflect on our practices and build responsible, sustainable and ethical businesses in future. During the initial phase of the nation-wide lockdown and after the announcement by Ministry of Corporate Affairs we saw

an outpouring of CSR support by the private sector for health care workers, daily wage earners, migrant workers and underprivileged communities.

In the state of unprecedented health emergency, as COVID-19 continues to spread across the country, we are likely to see a peak in the COVID cases soon. India is currently the fourth-worst hit country by COVID-19 and has recorded a total of 4,10,461 infections and 13,254 deaths, as per the government statistics. Understanding the urgency of the situation Corporates and Ngo's are wholeheartedly extending their support to the government in the fight against the pandemic. Corporate sector has stepped up their CSR efforts to combat the pandemic and many organisations are leading by example. A Delhi based CSR consultancy, Inno-

vative Financial Advisors Pvt Ltd (Fiinnovation) has been working unremittingly to foster relationships between private sector and CSOs.

Since the outbreak of novel coronavirus, Fiinnovation with its partners has undertaken various relief efforts to support the marginalized section of the community positively impacting over a million lives amidst the lockdown period. Fiinnovation is implementing interventions aimed at providing immediate relief to the ones who are adversely affected by the lockdown, by distributing ration and hygiene essentials and conducting awareness drives to educate and advise the beneficiaries on covid19, as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and World Health Organisation (WHO).—ANI ■

In the matter of the Myanmar Companies Law and FrieslandCampina Myanmar Limited [Under Sections 345 & 348]

Pursuant to Section 156 (d) of the Myanmar Companies Law the following written resolution in lieu of meeting was passed as Special Resolution, on 30th June, 2020 by the Members of FrieslandCampina Myanmar Limited.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

Resolved that the company be wound up voluntarily as members' voluntary winding-up and that Daw Hnin Su Mon (B.Com (Q), CPA, DBL, ACCA), holder of Citizenship Scrutiny Card No. 12/Ma Ya Ka (N) 114749, Senior Manager of WIN Consulting Limited of Room No. 2D, Rose Condominium, No. 182/194, 1st Floor, Botahtaung Pagoda Road, Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar, be and hereby appointed as Liquidator of the Company for the purpose of such winding-up and be authorized to carry on the business of the Company to such extent and for such period as may be necessary for the beneficial winding up thereof and be granted such other powers as may be deemed fit or proper.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Hong Diem
Director
FrieslandCampina Myanmar Limited

FrieslandCampina Myanmar Limited (Under Members' Voluntary Winding-up)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS TO CLAIM DEBTS

Notice is hereby given that the creditors of the above-named Company are required to send their names, addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their attorneys, if any, to the undersigned Liquidator at address mentioned below in person or by their attorneys to come in and prove their said debts or claims on or before 4th August, 2020 or in default thereof they will be excluded from the settlement of such debts and claims.

Daw Hnin Su Mon
B.Com (Q), CPA, DBL, ACCA
Liquidator
Room No. (2D), Rose Condominium,
No. 182/194, 1st Floor, Botahtaung Pagoda Road,
Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar.

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Business sentiment among Japan firms in Thailand worst in 35 years

BANGKOK — Business sentiment among Japanese firms operating in Thailand in the first half of this year dropped to the lowest level in 35 years as the Southeast Asian country suffered the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a Japanese business group's online survey.

The diffusion index for the January-June period of this year stood at minus 69, down from minus 24 in the preceding half-year period, according to the survey released Tuesday by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok.—Kyodo ■

Japan to build virus testing centres exclusive for int'l travellers

TOKYO — Japan plans to set up new coronavirus testing centres at three major airports in Tokyo and Osaka, as well as in central parts of the cities, as the country prepares to relax its travel restrictions, health minister Katsunobu Kato said Thursday.

The facilities mainly targeting people entering Japan from abroad are to be built at the airports, Tokyo's Haneda, Narita near the capital and Kansai in Osaka Prefecture, as early as this summer, according to government officials.

The construction of the facilities is aimed at increasing the amount of polymerase chain reaction, or PCR tests, to over 4,000 per day, with health authorities also hoping to reduce virus testing times to a few hours by using

new methods.

Airport quarantine stations currently conduct about 1,000 daily PCR tests, with results confirmed in around one or two days.

“(The centres) will probably be operated by private medical institutions and testing firms,” Kato told reporters after an inspection at Narita airport. “We, as the health ministry, will fully support them.”

The facility at the airport is expected to be under construction for two months and open in September.

According to the officials, the envisioned testing centers in central parts of the two major cities will target travellers leaving for foreign countries, while the facilities near the airport are



Combined photo shows the second terminal of Tokyo's Haneda airport (L) on April 29, 2020, when Japan was under a coronavirus state of emergency, and the same terminal on June 25, 2020, just one month after the state of emergency was lifted. PHOTO: (KYODO)

intended for both arrivals and departures.

The government is also considering issuing certificates for those who

test negative, the officials said.

Since February, Japan has been strengthening travel restrictions

for inbound visitors, as part of its border control measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease.—Kyodo ■

China takes new approach to replenish capital for small, medium banks

BEIJING — China will allow special local government bonds to appropriately support small and medium-sized banks in replenishing capital, in the latest move to strengthen financial support for enterprises.

The country will focus on improving financial

services offered to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, according to a State Council executive meeting presided over by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.

The meeting has decided to grant certain quota to local governments this year to explore new

capital replenishment channels for the banks, including subscriptions for convertible bonds.

Accounting for 99 percent of Chinese banks, small and medium-sized banks recently faced mounting pressure in terms of lending capacity and capital consumption

due to COVID-19 strains.

“It was a timely and important move for the country to innovate capital replenishment tools for small and medium-sized banks,” said Dong Ximiao, a researcher with the National Institution for Finance and Development.—Xinhua ■

Novartis pays over \$700m to settle US kickbacks case

BASEL — Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis will pay some \$729 million to settle a lawsuit brought by Washington accusing it of paying kickbacks to doctors, among other al-

legations.

The company's chief executive Vas Narasimhan described the settlements as “an important milestone on our journey to build trust with society”.

“Today's settlements are consistent with Novartis commitment to resolve and learn from legacy compliance matters,” he said in a statement.

One part of the settlement was related to the company's use of three foundations to funnel payments to cover costs for patients taking its multiple sclerosis drug Gilenya and kidney cancer drug Afinitor.

The company agreed to pay over \$51 million to settle this part of case.

And it agreed to dish

out another \$678 million to the US and some US states to put an end to allegations it bribed doctors to prescribe the company's medication.

“Through this settlement and others, the government has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that drug companies do not use kickbacks to influence the drugs prescribed by doctors or purchased by patients,” Assistant Attorney General Jody Hunt said Wednesday.—AFP ■



Novartis' headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. PHOTO: AFP

TRADEMARK CAUTION

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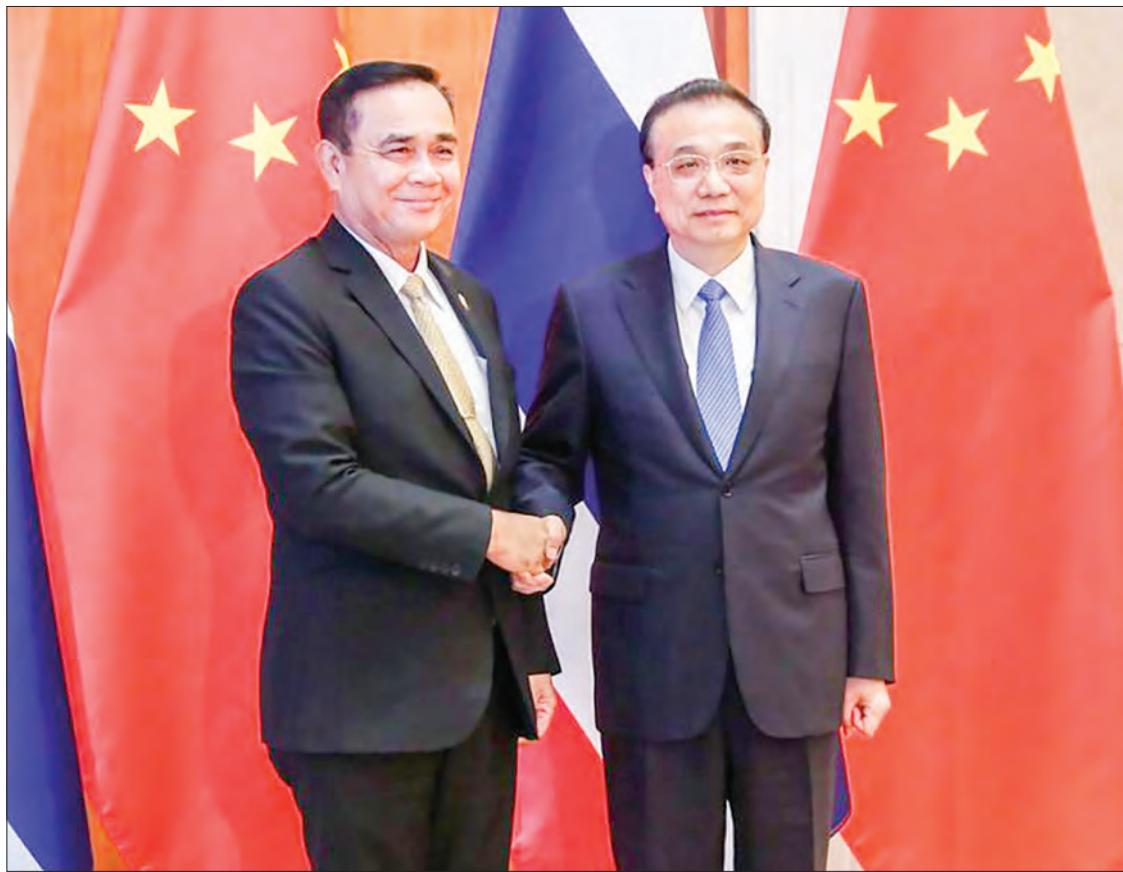


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Dated 3rd July 2020

Thai PM conveys gratitude on messages from China



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) meets with Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who is attending the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, in Beijing, capital of China, April 26, 2019. (XINHUA/LIU WEIBING)

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Thursday told the Thai media that he felt grateful after receiving good wishes and congratulatory messages from Chinese Premier Li Keqiang as the two countries celebrate the 45th anniversary of diplomatic re-

lations. Prayut said that he had conveyed his message across to leaders in China that Thailand vows to work with China in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Thai prime minister told the media that he had personally thanked his Chinese counterpart, conveying his gratitude to the Chinese people of their continuous support and donations of medical supplies and equipment in helping Thailand.

China had donated 1.3 million surgical face masks, 70,000 N95 face masks, 150,000 COVID-19 test kits and 70,000 personal protective equipment suits to Thailand to support the country's fight against the virus.

Prayut said Thailand and China have always stood together through thick and thin, and the two countries' relationship will only grow stronger, noting that the saying that "China and Thailand are one family" vividly depicts this special relationship.—Xinhua ■

New Zealand health minister quits after breaching lockdown

WELLINGTON — New Zealand's health minister resigned on Thursday after a public backlash over his breach of lockdown and his criticism of the civil servant responsible for the country's world-leading Covid-19 coronavirus response.

Outgoing minister David Clark was already under a cloud after breaking lockdown in April and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who faces an election in September, admitted his presence had become a distraction.

"It's essential our health leadership has the confidence of the New Zealand public," she said.

"As David has said to me, the needs of the team must come before him as an individual."

Clark described himself as "an idiot" in April after admitting he breached strict lockdown orders by taking a 20-kilometre (12-mile) drive to the beach with his family.

He kept his job but was kept out of the public eye, with health department director-general Ashley Bloomfield appearing alongside Ardern to give daily updates on the coronavirus crisis.

As the success of New Zealand's response became apparent – it has recorded only

22 deaths in a population of five million – the bespectacled Bloomfield became wildly popu-

lar, with fans printing his face on tea towels and posting tributes on social media.—AFP ■



If the government is re-elected, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern did not rule out another ministerial role for Clark, who plans to stay in parliament. PHOTO: AFP

South Korea police apologize over botched serial killer case

SEOUL — Police identified South Korea's most notorious serial killer Thursday and said he murdered 15 women, as they apologized for a botched, decades-long investigation that saw an innocent man jailed for 20 years.

Lee Chun-jae raped and

murdered 10 women in rural parts of Hwaseong, south of Seoul, over a five-year period from 1986, officials said.

At the time a record number of police officers for a single case were mobilized to try to find the killer, investigating some 21,000 individuals and comparing the

fingerprints of around 20,000 more without success.

The inquiry inspired Oscar-winning South Korean filmmaker Bong Joon-ho's 2003 box office hit "Memories of Murder".

Lee, 57, was only named as a suspect last year – more than 30 years after killing his first vic-

tim -- using the latest forensic techniques to retrieve DNA from long-past crimes.

Under questioning, he had admitted all 10 Hwaseong murders, as well as four others including an eight-year-old girl, police said, adding that he also raped nine other women.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Late K-pop star's ex jailed for sex video blackmail

SEOUL — The ex-boyfriend of late K-pop star Goo Hara was jailed by an appeal court Thursday for blackmailing her over sex videos that played a part in her apparent suicide.

In 2018, Goo -- a member of former girl group Kara -- told local media that her ex had threatened "to end her entertainment career" by leaking their sex videos. A CCTV clip of the couple showed the singer kneeling before him seemingly begging him not to. Goo was found dead at her home in November, and is widely believed to have taken her own life after being targeted by abusive online comments following the reports about the videos. The man, hairdresser Choi Jong-bum, was last year convicted of multiple crimes including blackmail and inflicting injuries, and was given a suspended jail term.—AFP ■

EU condemns escalating violence in Afghanistan as 'unacceptable'

KABUL — Ambassadors of the European Union in Kabul are deeply concerned about the marked escalation of violence experienced throughout Afghanistan since the Eid-ceasefire and have called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. The EU Delegation in agreement with EU Heads of Mission based in Kabul said in a statement on Tuesday that the situation has further deteriorated since May 29 when the EU Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers declared the level of violence as "unacceptable".

"The attacks by the Taliban against Afghan National Defence and Security Forces are undermining the prospect for intra-Afghan Negotiations; this must end and a full-fledged ceasefire enter into force. Violence against civilians has also continued. It is a violation of international humanitarian law, which profoundly undermines the confidence and trust necessary for peace negotiations," read the statement posted on the official twitter page of EU in Afghanistan on June 30.—ANI ■

Vladimir Putin set to stay in power until 2036

MOSCOW — Russians overwhelmingly approved a package of constitutional changes in a nationwide vote, partial results showed on Wednesday, allowing President Vladimir Putin to potentially extend his two-decade rule until 2036.

With just over 85 per cent of ballots counted after the end of seven days of voting, 77.8 per cent of voters had supported the reforms, according to election commission figures cited by Russian state agencies.

There had been little doubt of voters backing the changes, which Putin announced earlier this year and critics denounced as a manoeuvre to allow him to stay in the Kremlin for life.

But top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny slammed the results as a “huge lie” that did not reflect real public opinion.

The amendments had been passed weeks ago by Russia’s parliament and copies of the new constitution were already on sale in bookshops, but Putin had said voter approval was essential to give them legitimacy.



Members of a local electoral commission empty a ballot box at a polling station after a nationwide vote on constitutional reforms, in Moscow, July 1, 2020. **ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP**

The reforms include conservative and populist measures – like guaranteed minimum pensions and an effective ban on gay marriage – but crucially for Putin, also reset presidential limits allowing him to run twice again after his current six-year term expires in 2024.

Turnout as of 2000 GMT was about 65 per cent, the election commission said.

The Kremlin pulled out all the stops to encourage voting, with polls extended over nearly a week, the last day of voting declared a national holiday and prizes – including apartments,

cars and cash – on offer to voters.

Initially planned for April 22, the referendum was postponed by the coronavirus pandemic but rescheduled after Putin said the epidemic had peaked and officials began reporting lower numbers of new cases.—AFP ■

Top Turkey court to rule on Hagia Sophia

ISTANBUL — Turkey’s top court convened Thursday to consider whether Istanbul’s

emblematic landmark and former church Hagia Sophia can be redesignated as a mosque, a

ruling which could inflame tensions with the West.

The Council of State evaluated a case brought by several associations during a short hearing and will announce its decision on the fate of the UNESCO World Heritage site within 15 days, state broadcaster TRT reported.

The sixth-century edifice – a magnet for tourists worldwide with its stunning architecture – has been a museum since 1935, open to believers of all faiths.

Despite occasional protests outside the site by Islamic groups, often shouting, “Let the chains break and open Hagia Sophia” for Muslim prayers,

authorities have so far kept the building a museum.

Hagia Sophia was first constructed as a church in the Christian Byzantine Empire in the sixth century but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

Transforming it into a museum was a key reform of the post-Ottoman authorities under the modern republic’s founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

But calls for it to serve again as a mosque have sparked anger among Christians and tensions between historic foes and uneasy NATO allies Turkey and Greece.—AFP ■



Hagia Sophia has been a church and a mosque and is currently a museum. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Richmond removing Confederate statues, Mississippi retires state flag

WASHINGTON — A campaign in the United States to remove symbols of the pro-slavery Civil War South gained momentum on Wednesday as workers began taking down statues in the Virginia city that was the Confederate capital and Mississippi retired the state flag.

Workers in Richmond, Virginia, removed a statue of Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, a

Confederate general, after the city’s mayor ordered the “immediate removal” of Confederate monuments.

In Jackson, Mississippi, the state flag was permanently lowered from the state’s capitol and taken to a nearby museum. The Mississippi state flag was the last US state banner featuring a Confederate emblem.

Richmond Mayor Levar

Stoney said he was using his emergency powers to remove Confederate monuments in order to “expedite the healing process for the city.”

“It is past time,” Stoney said. “As the capital city of Virginia we have needed to turn this page for decades.”

The mayor said that as the Southern capital during the 1861-65 Civil War, Richmond

has been “burdened with that legacy.”

“The great weight of that burden has fallen on our residents of colour,” Stoney added. “These statues, although symbolic, have cast a shadow on the dreams of our children of color.”

“By removing them we can begin to heal and focus our attention on our future.”—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Exiled Morales pulling Bolivian political strings as polls loom

SUCRE — From exile in Buenos Aires, former leftist president Evo Morales continues to influence Bolivian politics and is plotting his party’s return to power in September elections, analysts say.

Though banned from running in the poll and facing arrest if he returns, the 60-year-old -- Bolivia’s first indigenous president -- is masterminding opposition to right-wing interim leader Jeanine Anez.

“At this time when Evo Morales is in exile, outside of power, he has become a kind of kingmaker,” political scientist Carlos Cordero told AFP.

Morales last year hand-picked economist Luis Arce as the man who can win back the presidency for his Movement for Socialism (MAS) party.

To do so he faced down grassroots members who favoured former foreign minister David Choquehuanca or young coca-growers’ leader Andronico Rodriguez.—AFP ■

West Bank under lockdown as Covid-19 cases soar

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories — The Palestinian Authority on Wednesday announced a five-day lockdown across the West Bank after a rise in coronavirus infections, as Israel saw its steepest-yet 24-hour uptick in cases.

“Starting from Friday morning, all governorates of the West Bank... will be closed for a period of five days,” Palestinian government spokesman Ibrahim Melhem said, adding that pharmacies, bakeries and supermarkets were exempt.

The latest data from the Palestinian ministry of health said that as of Wednesday night, a total of 2,686 people had tested positive for Covid-19 since the illness was first recorded in the West Bank, compared with just 1,256 a week ago.—AFP ■

Man City verdict on European ban expected week of July 13



Manchester City risk a two-year ban from Europe for breaching financial fair play rules unless their appeal is upheld. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

LONDON — Manchester City will discover whether their appeal against a two-year ban from European competition has been successful the week of July 13, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said Thursday.

“The final decision will be made during the week of July 13,” CAS secretary general Matthieu Reeb told AFP.

City were banned by UEFA and handed a 30 million euro (\$34 million) fine for allegedly overstating sponsorship revenue to hide that they had not complied

with financial fair play (FFP) rules between 2012 and 2016.

The Premier League club has steadfastly denied UEFA's allegations.

Last month CAS held a three-day hearing via video-conference due to coronavirus restrictions.

Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, City will be able to complete their campaign in the 2019-20 Champions League.

Pep Guardiola's men won 2-1 at Real Madrid in the first leg of their last-16 tie before the com-

petition was halted by COVID-19.

UEFA is planning to stage a “final eight” straight knockout format for the quarter-finals onwards in August, with all games set to take place in Lisbon.

City have an 11-point lead over fifth-placed Manchester United and seem certain to secure qualification for next season's Champions League on the field.

However, if they are excluded, whoever finishes fifth will take their place in the Champions League.—AFP ■

Guardiola eyes ‘incredible’ season end despite Premier League failure

LONDON — Pep Guardiola says Manchester City have “incredible things ahead” as he focuses on a trophy treble despite surrendering their Premier League crown to Liverpool.

Guardiola's side will perform a guard of honour to their major rivals of recent seasons on Thursday after Liverpool ended City's two-year reign as English champions last week.

A 23-point gap at the top of the table allowed Jurgen Klopp's men to win the title with a record

seven games remaining and Liverpool are on course to smash more Premier League records set by City two seasons ago.

However, City could yet have one of their most successful ever seasons. Guardiola's men have already retained the League Cup, are through to the semi-finals of the FA Cup and have a 2-1 lead from the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie against Real Madrid.

“We lost the Premier League with seven games left and more

than 20 points,” said Guardiola in a pre-match videoconference.

“The challenge this season was to try to win the Premier League again but what happened, happened because we were not as consistent as in previous seasons.

“Even doing really, really well, with the numbers Liverpool have done it was almost impossible. When that happened, all we can do is accept it. You can never win all the time, do well all the time.”—AFP ■



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

Djokovic donates US\$45,000 to Serbian town hit hard by coronavirus

BELGRADE — Tennis world number one Novak Djokovic, who last week tested positive for coronavirus, donated more than 40,000 euros (US\$45,000)

to a Serbian town badly affected by the pandemic, local media reported on Wednesday (Jul 1).

The 33-year-old Djokovic donated the money to Novi



Novak Djokovic played Viktor Troicki during an exhibition event in Belgrade last month. Both players later tested positive for coronavirus. **(AFP PHOTO/ANDREJ ISAKOVIC)**

Pazar, in Serbia's southwest, to help it fight a growing outbreak of the disease, the SportKlub TV sports channel reported.

The town declared a state of emergency in late June due to the spread of the respiratory disease.

After restricting the first outbreak of COVID-19 in early May, Serbia is now reporting a fresh surge, logging more than 200 cases daily recently compared to around 50 a month ago.

The Balkan nation was recently in the spotlight for allowing Djokovic to host a regional tournament that started in Belgrade in mid-June before a slew of COVID-19 infections forced organisers to cut it short.

Apart from Djokovic three other tennis players - Grigor

Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki - who participated in the Adria tour, as well as his coach Goran Ivanisevic, tested positive.

Players had embraced across the net, played basketball and even danced in a nightclub the week of the first leg played in Belgrade.

Djokovic was widely criticised for hosting the tournament.

The Serbian issued an unstinting apology for the now-cancelled Adria Tour, where social distancing was minimal and matches were played in front of thousands of fans.

Djokovic said he was “so deeply sorry” that the tournament “caused harm”.—AFP ■

Moreno double keeps Villarreal on Champions League path

MADRID — Gerard Moreno took his season's La Liga goal tally to 15 with a double strike as Villarreal stayed on course for the Champions League with a 2-0 win at Real Betis on Wednesday.

Villarreal are in fifth place in the table, three points behind Sevilla who occupy the fourth and final qualifying spot for next season's Champions League.

Moreno opened the scoring after just seven minutes from the penalty spot and added a fine individual goal on the half-hour mark.

Moreno's 15 goals are just two back from Real Madrid's Karim Benzema with Barcelona's Lionel Messi leading the way with 22.—AFP ■