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Tuesday, 13 October 2020

State Counsellor makes public report on control measures against COVID-19 situation

AS I report to you about the COVID-19 situation today, we cannot say that the infection rate in the Yangon region has gone down. That is why I wish to remind the people, especially those who are in the Yangon region to be extremely careful. This type of disease spreads especially in places where people gather and congregate. That is why for example we have closed down schools. The spread of infections occurs at training schools, monasteries, nunneries, and home for seniors, all those places where people meet and gather.

When we look at where the spread of infections occurs, in what kinds of situations, we need to talk about the spread of infections in the communities, wards and villages. The spread of infections occurs mainly among those who travel. Now that we are able to test drivers going long distances, we find that some who look healthy and strong have been infected. That is why let me say again. I think I have said more than 200 times. However, let me repeat again. There are many people who do not show symptoms of the disease. They have the disease but don't show

symptoms. This may be because they are fundamentally healthy. However, if the disease spreads from those who are fundamentally healthy to those whose health conditions are not good, then it could be very dangerous for them. That is why we need to think about others and those in our environment, not only about our own health. This is very important.

When we say that we need to think about those who are in our environment, after we have become infected, do we need to be anxious and worried; of course, we need to be worried to a certain degree. No matter what we say. At present, there have been fatalities among young people because of the COVID disease. When we say young people, it is not related to their age. It has to do with whether they are fundamentally healthy or not; nothing to do with age. Sometimes because the disease is not too severe, their underlying health problem may not be easily known; when they have a fundamental weakness and the infection enters their body, their body may not be in a position to resist.

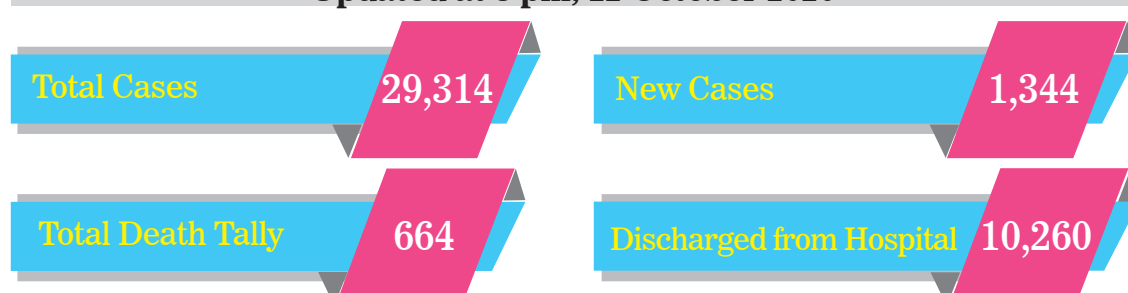
SEE PAGE-3



1,344 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 October, total figure rises to **29,314**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to **29,314** after **1,344** new cases were reported on 12 October according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **29,314** confirmed cases, **664** died, **10,260** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 12 October 2020



Daily Death toll until 8 pm 12-10-2020

18

Ministry of Health and Sports

Announcement for voters

1. Union Election Commission has published the final version of voter lists at the sub-commission offices of respective wards/village tracts and at the villages from 1-10-2020 to 14-10-2020 for 14 days after receiving requests, amendments and additions of voters on the previous editions of the lists.
2. The stay-at-home order remains in force to prohibit people from going outside for unnecessary reasons as part of control measures against COVID-19.
3. Therefore, for the voters who have difficulties due to healthcare directives based on times/areas, the UEC has published the updated voter lists until 4-9-2020 on web application findyourpollingstation.uec.gov.mm, and the mobile application findyourpollingstation.apk at Google Play to download and check the name lists.
4. However, there have been some delays in searching the names due to a large number of viewers at the same time. And that the voter lists for different regions and states can be viewed in the following web applications.

(a) Kachin State	http://bit.ly/kachin-voters	
(b) Kayah State	http://bit.ly/kayah-voters	
(c) Kayin State		http://bit.ly/kayin-voters
(d) Chin State		http://bit.ly/chin-voters
(e) Sagaing Region		http://bit.ly/sagaing-voters
(f) Taninthayi Region		http://bit.ly/tanintharyi-voters
(g) Bago Region		http://bit.ly/bago-voters
(h) Magway Region		http://bit.ly/magway-voters
(i) Mandalay Region		http://bit.ly/mandalay-voters
(j) Mon State		http://bit.ly/mon-voters
(k) Rakhine State		http://bit.ly/rakhine-voters
(l) Yangon State		http://bit.ly/yangon-voters
(m) Shan State		http://bit.ly/shan-voters
(n) Ayeyawady Region		http://bit.ly/ayarwaddy-voters
(o) Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory		http://bit.ly/naypyitaw-voters
5. Processes for searching voter lists will also be explained on the respective web applications and UEC Facebook page.

Union Election Commission

Myanmar citizens begin advance voting in Czech Republic, Australia

ADVANCE voting started at the Myanmar Embassy in Prague, capital city of the Czech Republic with 30 Myanmar citizens, and at a polling station in Melbourne city of Victoria State with 158 voters who were not possible to cast their votes at the Myanmar mission in Canberra city of Australia yesterday.

Voters who cast their advance votes at the respective 10 Myanmar embassies, 1 permanent mission and 2 consulates in foreign countries were 1,890 at Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok, 27 at the embassy in Canberra, 9 at the embassy in Kuwait, 120 at the embassy in Seoul, 1,638 at the embassy in Singapore, 59 at the embassy in Tokyo, 161 in Kuala Lumpur, and 1 at the consulate in Kunming city, as well as at the embassy in Berlin, at the embassy in London, at the embassy in Ottawa, at the permanent mission in New York and at the consulate in Los Angeles during the voting hours of local times.

The respective Myanmar missions abroad reported on 11 October that 43 voters Brussel, 28 in Berlin, 227 in London, 22 in Ottawa, 4 in Vienna, 57 in Washington, 155 in New York, 123 in Los Angeles, 79 in Fort Wayne city of Indiana State, and 35 in Moscow, totalling 773 citizens, cast their votes in line with the healthcare guidelines of COVID-19 preventive measures.

Therefore, there were a total of 4,093 advance voters on 12 October, and 773 on 11 October.—MNA

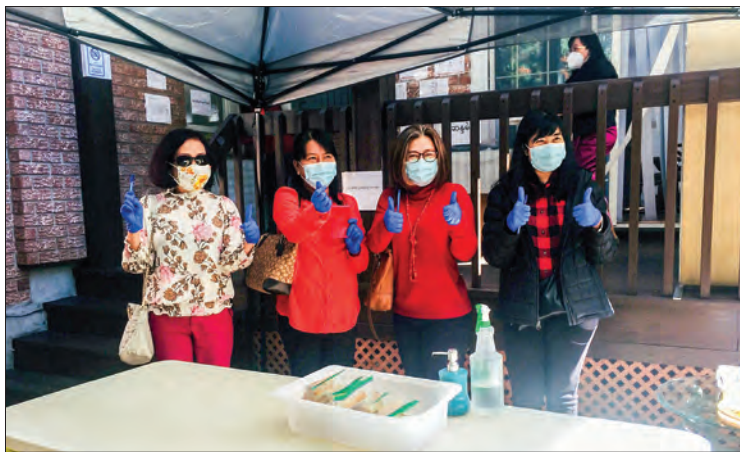
(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar citizens cast advance votes in Los Angeles on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Myanmar nationals cast advance ballots at the Myanmar Embassy in Berlin on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Four Myanmar women pose for a picture after voting at the Myanmar Embassy in Ottawa on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Myanmar nationals line up outside the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore on 12 October 2020 to cast advance votes. **PHOTO: MNA**



A total of 155 Myanmar citizens cast advance votes in New York on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



A Myanmar national casts advance ballot at the Myanmar Embassy in Canberra on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION



Advance voting process for local voters outside their constituencies in 2020 General Election

- Heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails are to contact the sub-election commissions to get documents of Form 15.
- They must return these documents to sub-commission of respective townships by 26 August 2020 after the documents are filled by the voters.
- 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.
- Advance voting must be organized at trainings, schools, hospitals and jails on their appropriate day from 8 October 2020 to 21 October 2020.
- The envelopes containing ballot papers must be sent back to sub-election commission of respective townships by 4 pm on 8 November 2020.



State Counsellor makes public report on control measures against COVID-19...

FROM PAGE-1

I had said this when I was discussing this matter some time ago. We have made plans to get the best medicines for the people. This is Remdesivir; rather difficult to pronounce. We are using this medicine for people who are suffering severely from the disease, as much as possible. However, let me say that we don't have a lot. At the moment, we can use this for our people only for a few thousand. Because we have medicines only for a few thousand, we will try to get more to the best of our ability. We also have medicines donated by India. Although we are doing our best for the health of our people, in the final analysis, the people themselves need to know how to stay healthy. That is the main thing. Therefore when we provide treatment using this medicine, we cannot guarantee 100 per cent. No matter how potent this medicine may be, there is no 100 per cent guarantee. Another thing is that at the present moment, we are not in a position to use this medicine for 100 per cent of the infected patients. We are doing as much as possible. We will try to get more of this medicine. In the end, the people themselves need to take care of their health. What I wish to remind again is not to be over-anxious. If you become over anxious and worried, your immunity will go down.

At the moment, plans are being made to allow the resumption of operations for factories and workplaces which are in a posi-

tion to do so. What do we mean by "being in a situation to resume operations". We mean factories and workplaces which are in a position to resume operations in accordance with the rules and regulations and standards and meet the "A" level criteria prescribed by the Ministry of Health and Sports. "A" level means they are safe and secure. We are working to reopen these factories and workplaces so that they could resume their operations. We are working to allow them to resume operations not only for the short-term but also for the long-term health of our economy.

At this time, if the factories, especially those operated by foreign investments, were suspended for a long time, it will not be sure that their investments remain here. The loss of investments will damage our economy and the livelihood of our workers in the long term. That is why I want these factories and workplaces to be reopened as soon as possible. However, for the resumption of operations to happen, the main thing is for these employees to follow the prescribed rules and regulations. It is the duty of owners of factories and workplaces as well as the duty of each individual worker. We have already issued guidelines spelling out in detail the kind of situation that should exist in the factories and workplaces for everyone to know. Our people will be safe if they follow the guidelines strictly. In the end, this is the thing. We will

be able to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease if the simple and straight forward rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports are followed strictly and in detail.

Our people already know that we have been conducting public awareness programmes on the containment of the disease. If possible, listen to these programmes. Only then will you know the real situation. Then you won't have to worry about unnecessary things. Some persons have a lot of unnecessary worries and anxieties. That is why we are doing these things because we want people to understand that there is no such thing as being too vigilant or too careful. Just as we have been saying so many times, our country is facing two major challenges—to hold the general elections and to overcome COVID-19 successfully. Regarding the duration of COVID-19 crisis, experts have estimated a vaccine could be produced in the near future. They say that the vaccine will be available for use. However, I do not wish to say that this is 100 per cent sure. However, many health experts have concluded that the production process has reached the final stage. Meanwhile, I want everyone to be vigilant and bear in mind that until we reach that stage, there is still a danger everyone can get infected. Those who have been discharged from hospital after recovery are still under the threat of the pandemic. Up till now, there is no guarantee

that you cannot get infected for a second time. That is why please be vigilant.

Regarding discharge from the hospital, we are making sure that patients can be discharged more expeditiously according to the standards of the World Health Organization. We want to make sure we don't go below these standards. When we say we want to discharge the patients quickly, it does not mean that we do not wish to provide treatment to the patients who have already been infected. We are saying this because we wish to be in a situation whereby we can provide more care to the new people coming in. The disease is still spread up to now. Actually, it is to offer healthcare services to the other confirmed cases. More beds are needed for new patients. Another thing is to create a situation whereby our healthcare workers, to whom we owe tremendous gratitude, can cope with their duties effectively. Although the number of positive cases is surging, our healthcare workforce is not increasing. Actually, a limited number of health workers are trying to provide proper care and treatment to increasing numbers of patients.

As I have said before, the general election is also a major challenge for the country at this time. Although this is a challenge, I want to say that this is also an opportunity for the people. The people know already that advance voting has begun in foreign coun-

tries. Today, out of 109,470 registered overseas eligible voters, a total of 50,520 citizens have cast their votes. Voting is continuing at Myanmar embassies and consulates in some countries. The elections have begun in foreign countries. Elections will begin in our country shortly. As our people know already, to ensure that people above the age of 60 can cast advance ballots in safety and effectively free from COVID infection. This will also prevent congestion at the polling booths. Those who are able to move about and walk can cast their advance votes at the office of the election commission. We can make arrangements for doing advance voting at home for those who are not able to go to the polling stations because of their health condition. Advance voting can also be cast at the hospitals and quarantine centres for ensuring the voters not to lose their voting rights. Therefore, eligible voters can cast their votes under these programmes as it is important for the future of our country, while the COVID-19 outbreak is an ongoing crisis. Another thing is this, even if not for a long time, at least for the next one to two years, just as our Union government is working to prevent economic damage, I would like to request the people to live healthily, as a way of joining our efforts.

May you all be able to live in good health. Thank you all.
(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)

Campaign speeches of two political parties for 2020 General Election will be broadcast for second time

CAMPAIGN speeches of Modern People Party and Peace and Diversity Party for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanma Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 13 October for the second time. — MNA

“People are the key”

MoALI organizes virtual meeting on production processes of monsoon paddy

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation yesterday morning organized a virtual meeting on production processes of monsoon paddy for this year via videoconferencing.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu; Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint; Deputy Ministers, the Permanent Secretaries, the Directors-General and officials of the two ministries; Myanmar Rice Federation Chairperson and other officials of the federation; and officials of the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Mechanization Department participated in the virtual meeting held via Zoom Application.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu

talked about the need to eliminate needless costs in the production processes of monsoon paddy during harvest this year. He said that his ministry will make necessary negotiations and arrangements in advance to cope with various relevant difficulties, which can be caused by travel restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting, the participants discussed growing monsoon paddy rice this year; possible paddy yields, situations related to the need of paddy field workers and skilled workers, difficulties sparked by travel restrictions, and necessary preparations and arrangements to overcome the difficulties.

This year's monsoon, it was planned to grow a total of 15.1



Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu (R) participates in the virtual meeting on production of monsoon paddy on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

million acres of monsoon paddy, and out of them, 14.7 million acres were grown by the end of September.

Areas in lower Myanmar have already begun harvesting for monsoon paddy. More than 30,000 acres in Bago Region, about 1,000 acres in Yangon Region and more than 20,000 acres

in Ayeyawady Region have been harvested by late September.

By the end of October, an estimated 350,000 acres will be harvested.

Because of changes in farming techniques and systems, paddy farmers need to harvest their crops in the same period, so many paddy-harvesting ma-

chines, transportation of them and skilled workers will be needed in the period. The meeting is also intended to make necessary discussions to respond to those challenges and to overcome the possible impacts on paddy prices, which can pose difficulties for farmers.—MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Myanmar returnees from foreign countries queue for immigration services at the Yangon International Airport on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

145 Myanmar seamen fly back home by relief flight

A relief flight by Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) bringing back 145 Myanmar seamen from Incheon International Airport (the Republic of Korea) landed at the Yangon International Airport at 9:30 pm yesterday.

The seamen needed crew-change after their contracts with various companies had expired.

The 145 Myanmar seamen — 122 from the Republic of Korea, 14 from Brazil, 1 each from UAE, Panama and Russia, and 3 each from Viet Nam and Australia — took the MNA relief flight.

As they arrived in the Yangon International Airport, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Min-

istry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged proper medical check-ups, and 7-day hotel quarantine plus 7-day home quarantine for them.

To bring back Myanmar seamen stranded in foreign nations by relief flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective nations.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

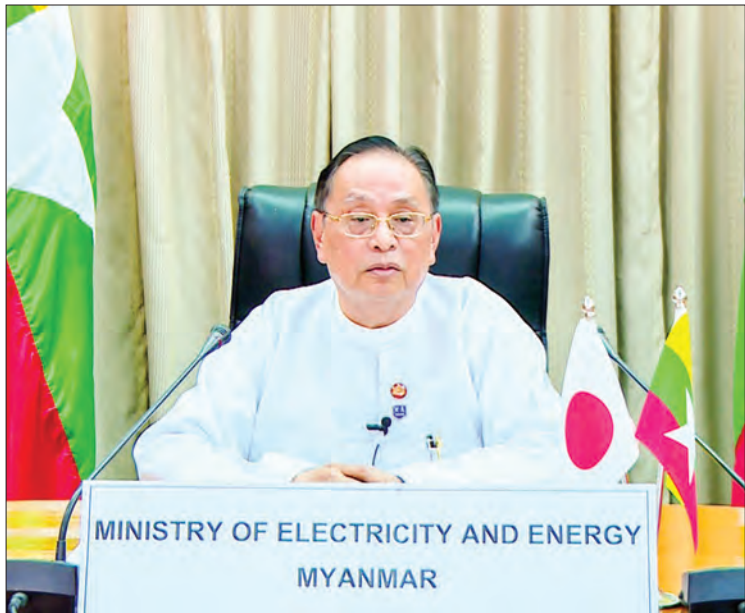
Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

Statement on adherence to healthcare guidelines in 2020 General Election

1. The Union Election Commission, in accordance with 2008 Constitution, already announced that the multiparty democracy general elections will be held nationwide on 8 November 2020 to elect MPs for third term of three Hluttaws.
2. The election process includes setting up of polling stations, coming of voters to the stations and voting at the stations. Similarly, it also includes preparations for voting in the general elections of those who are under quarantine due to COVID-19 infections, advance voting of those who are unable to come to polling stations on the election day at relevant ward/village-tract election sub-commissions on designated dates, counting votes at respective township election sub-commissions and polling stations, collecting of election results and announcing the names of elected candidates by region/state election sub-commissions.
3. Due to present COVID-19 situation, polling station heads, deputy heads and members who will perform duties at the polling stations of different levels of relevant election sub-commissions, those who will manage outside the polling stations and voters need to be careful of the successful holding of the general election not to be infected by COVID-19.
4. The Ministry of Health and Sports issued the standard operation procedure Part-I about campaigning in accordance with COVID-19 preventive and control measures for Hluttaw candidates, who will compete in the general election, on 7-9-2020.
5. Therefore, it is hereby announced that those who are involved in the election works according to paragraph-2 will have to abide by the directives included in standard operation procedure Part-II that is to be carried out in accordance with COVID-19 prevention and control measures during the general election and health guidelines issued by relevant officials depending on situations.
6. The standard operation procedure Part-II which is to be carried out in accordance with COVID-19 prevention and control measures in holding the general election can be viewed at the website of the Union Election Commission, www.uec.gov.mm, and UEC Facebook.

(Hla Thein)
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Union Minister U Win Khaing participates in LNG Producer, Consumer Conference



Union Minister U Win Khaing joins 9th LNG Producer, Consumer Conference online on 12 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing participated in the 9th LNG Producer, Consumer Conference organized by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

(METI) via videoconferencing yesterday.

During the online conference, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) Minister Mr Kajiyama Hiroshi and Qatari Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi delivered opening speeches. International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Dr Fatih Birol delivered keynote speech.

Union Minister U Win Khaing said in his video message that Myanmar's first 750-megawatt LNG-to-power plant was scheduled to open in Yangon Region in this year's April, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused delay, and the plan began producing electricity only in September.

Myanmar's current "gener-

ation mix" included hydropower (50 per cent) and natural gas (50 per cent), according to the Union Minister.

He said that global warming has an impact on hydropower plants, and Myanmar's natural gas production decreased, so Myanmar is implementing LNG-to-power projects with the help of development partners and investors.

Myanmar formed the LNG Task Force in order to efficiently implement the LNG-to-power projects.

LNG, clean fuel, will enhance Myanmar's energy security, according to the Union Minister, who said that the LNG projects will be able to provide required energy for industrial businesses and manufacturing businesses.

The Union Minister said that Myanmar's strategic location and infrastructures, which have developed in these years, can offer opportunities for investors.

Myanmar's electrification coverage rate has now reached 54 per cent. The country has aimed to increase the coverage rate to 75 per cent in 2025. The Union Minister said that the virtual conference will promote cooperation between LNG manufacturers and users.

The virtual conference was also participated by officials from Myanmar's Ministry of Electricity and Energy and representatives from foreign nations. — MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Postage stamp to be issued in commemoration of Myanmar motion picture centenary

THE Myanmar Posts under Ministry of Transport and Communications will sell K200 postage stamps to honour the 100th anniversary of Myanmar motion picture industry today.

The stamps are available at the central offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay and the local post offices in cities of re-

gions and states, commencing 9:30 am.

The postage stamps and first day covers bought on 13 October can be stamped mark and date at the Central Post Offices of Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay as a special offer.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Centenary celebrations of Myanmar film industry to be held virtually

CELEBRATIONS for the 100th anniversary of Myanmar film industry will be held virtually at Studio 1 of Myanmar Radio and Television in Yangon on 13 October.

The event will be live-streamed on MRTV Facebook page and MRTV Live at 5 pm.

It will be rebroadcast again with other programmes of the 100th anniversary of Myanmar film industry at 9 pm on 13 October.

It can also be watched on MOI Webportal Myanmar Facebook page and Myanmar Digital News Facebook page.—MNA

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Tests & Care Ayeyarwady Centre to perform COVID-19 tests

By Nyein Nyein

THE coronavirus testing is available at the Tests & Care Ayeyarwady Centre near Thuwunna Football Stadium starting from 12 October, the Ayeyarwady Centre reported.

Those frontline healthcare professionals, members of Myanmar Red Cross Society and volunteers will be prioritized in the COVID-19 testing.

The centre will be opened between 8 am and 6 pm from 15 October for those residents suffering the COVID-19 symptoms in Thingangyun, Tamway and South Okkalapa townships.

Those who want to test at the centre must fill the information through URL > <https://bit.ly/36UvIss> in advance, and they will be confirmed the appoint-

The front view of Tests & Care Ayeyarwady Centre. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

ment date for testing, QR code and patient ID through SMS.

Those who have received the patient ID can get testing at the centre as per the set appointment

date and time, presenting the NRC or employee card. However, those who have not received QR code and patient ID will not be accepted at the centre, in line

with COVID-19 health guidelines for case investigation and contact tracing.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Aung Myin Hmu, EU Myan Ku Fund to train over 400 lay-off garment factory workers

AUNG MYIN HMU, the garment industry training centre is working together with the EU Myan Ku Fund to train over 400 workers who are recently out of the jobs, affected by the COVID-19 impacts, as per the 12 October press release of Aung Myin Hmu.

The plan is designated to train the trainees for ten days, with 18 batches from 24 August until December 2020, in a bid to upgrade the existing skills and make them more readily employable.

Aung Myin Hmu trained the first batch of 21 trainees under social distancing regulations in the North Dagon Training Centre. Still, the training had to temporarily stop for the meantime, following the instruction of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Sue Tym, Programme Director - Skills Component at Aung Myin Hmu remarked: "Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic we understand from figures released by MOLIP, that over 60,000 garment factory workers have lost their jobs and around 15 garment and footwear factories have been permanently driven out of business by the crisis. Others are struggling but surviving. Factories are willing to employ those who have already worked in the industry rather than new workers. However,

Garment factory workers are making clothes at a workplace in Yangon on 26 August 2020. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

after completing their training, those that cannot go back to their old jobs or find work will be supported by Aung Myin Hmu and the EU Myan Ku Fund in finding new positions.

We have temporarily closed the centre and are disappointed that we have stopped the training for the moment. We are looking forward to training more out of work workers as soon as regulations allow us to reopen."

When the Training Centre reopens, the courses will be offered to out of work sewing machine operators, quality controllers and cutting room operators. Those who are unemployed with less than 6-month work experience are hard to be re-employed; therefore, they will be prioritized at the Aung Myin Hmu training centre.

Trainees will be given 37.5 hours optimized sewing methodology including how to use semi-automatic machines and all the functions, flow methodology and beneficial health practices in the workplace. Besides, the programme will include 15 hours of necessary skills, where the trainees will increase their abilities in communication, problems solving, nutrition and personal finance management as well as 15 hours of industrial skills, 3.45 hours on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace and 3.45 hours on environmental awareness.

"Under the EU Myan Ku Fund, we have now distributed K5.2 billion in support across 67,810 payments to unemployed garment factory workers. Workers in all the states and regions

of Myanmar have received this financial assistance. With Aung Myin Hmu, we are cooperating to ensure some of the more economically vulnerable migrant workers can use their unemployment period to gain useful skills which can help them become re-employed, getting their lives and livelihoods back on track", Jacob A. Clere, Team Leader for EU Myan Ku Fund said.

During the training, the EU Myan Ku Fund's cash support can usually cover hostel fees and essential food cost, while Aung Myin Hmu will provide lunch and pay a training stipend. Transport will also be arranged for the trainees from the hostels either in North Dagon or Hlinethaya townships.—GNLM (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

China raises driver substitution charges through Mang Weing border crossing

IN a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus, Mang Weing border checkpoint has adopted driver substitution system starting from the first week of April, and China unexpectedly scaled up charges for driver substitution on 11 October.

“China increased charges for driver substitution. Earlier, more than 20 substitute drivers were assigned to transport the goods, under the supervision of China’s authority. Now, a company is responsible for handling this. The charge for substitute driver was earlier set at 20 Yuan. The rate has now remarkably jumped to 100 Yuan. At present, five drivers are operating this. The charge is an exorbitant rate, with entry and exit fees set at K20,000 each”, said chair of Muse-Namkham Chamber of Commerce.

As China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19, the driver substitution policy has been exercised on Muse, Mang Weing and Kyalgaung border route.



Mang Weing border checkpoint has adopted driver substitution system starting from the first week of April 2020. **PHOTO: SALAI VANRO THAN (IPRD)**

The hike in driver charges hurt the traders from both sides. The traders between Myanmar and China are plan-

ning to negotiate with the price increase, he added.

Before the change in charges, about 500 trucks were

seen in border trade between Myanmar and China. The current rate delays the car and about 100 are seen per day. Con-

sequently, border trade through Muse drastically dropped. —Salai Vanro Than (IPRD)
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

FDI tops \$25 bln in incumbent government period

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR has attracted more than US\$25 billion of foreign direct investments over the past four and half years under the incumbent government, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective investment committees granted permits and endorsements to 1,032 foreign enterpris-

es between the 2016-2017FY and 2019-2020FY, with estimated capitals of US\$25.186 billion.

The FDIs stood at \$6.9 million from 158 enterprises in the FY2016-2017, \$6.119 billion from 234 businesses in the FY2017-2018, \$1.94 billion from 89 projects in the 2018 mini-budget year, \$4.5 billion from 298 enterprises in the FY2018-2019 and \$5.689 billion from 253 businesses in the FY2019-2020 respectively, the DICA’s data indicated.

The FDIs flow into the 12

sectors; oil and gas, power, transport and communications, real estate, hotels and tourism, mining, livestock and fisheries, industrial estate, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and other service sectors.

Transport and communications sector topped the investment line-up, followed by the manufacturing industry in the second place and real estate sector in the third place.

Of 51 foreign countries and regions investing in Myanmar, Singapore put the most massive investments, followed by China and Hong Kong (SAR).

MIC is prioritizing the labour-intensive businesses. In the incumbent government period, domestic and foreign projects employ over 670,000 residents, according to the DICA.

Those enterprises have created over 96,000 jobs in the FY2016-2017, 110,000 jobs in the FY2017-2018, over 53,000 jobs in the 2018 mini-budget period, over 180,000 jobs in the FY2018-2019 and 210,000 jobs in the FY2019-2020 respectively.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

MDY Region Consumer Affairs Department receives nearly 250 complaints in 2019-2020FY

MANDALAY Region Consumer Affairs Department received nearly 250 consumer complaints in the 2019-2020 financial year, with over 100 complaints regarding service, said U Zaw Min, head of Mandalay Region Consumer Affairs Department.

The department received the most complaints in the FY2019-2020 compared with the previous years. Over 30 complaints in the FY2016-2017, over 40 in the FY2017-2018 and nearly 200 in the FY2018-2019 were reported, accumulating a total of 500 complaints. The department has already handled the complaints in each FY. For the last FY2019-2020, only 11 cases are left to be solved, said U Zaw Min.

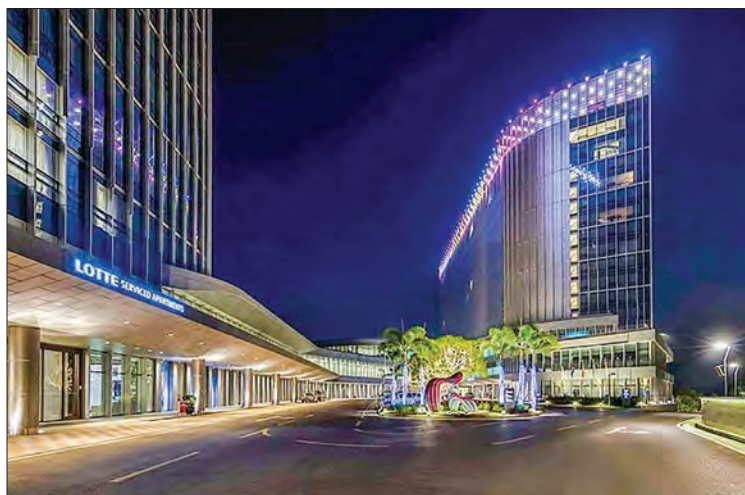
Of about 250 reports filed by the consumers, over 100 are related to service. The consumers

are dissatisfied with the service provided in the telecommunication, online shop and electricity sectors. Consumers filed the majority of the complaints in Mandalay district and Yamethin District department received the least complaint, he continued.

Mandalay Region Consumer Affairs Department is protecting the consumer rights and benefits by looking forwards to food safety and consumer product safety and trying to improve the quality of goods and service.

The consumers can complain to the Mandalay Region Consumer Affairs Department through CICC-mdy Facebook Page or www.doca.gov.mm or dial through 02-4036340. —Than Zaw Min (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Myanmar has attracted over US\$25 billion of foreign direct investments during the incumbent government.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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Containing COVID-19 impacts on rice production

WITH rice harvest season approaching, a new risk brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic threatening the harvest and post-harvest of rice lies ahead of us. Farmers will harvest their rice about the end of October. Necessary management measures should be taken now by authorities to ensure that there is no obstacle for farmers in their harvest, post-harvest and supply chain of rice due to COVID-29 health guidelines and restrictions.

Because of growing short-lived paddy and using modern cultivation methods, paddy will be ripe to be harvested in the last week of October nationwide. This situation would bring labour shortage and farmers opt to use machinery.

Additionally, we need to prescribe new measures to ensure that the price of rice cannot be buffeted by COVID-19 related travel restrictions, which can have an impact on trading.

It is the State's duty to ensure fair price and equal market share to prevent farmers from being exploited. The law has also made provisions for this.

The country set the target of 15.1 million acres of rain-fed paddy this rainy season.

The Union Government has taken quick steps to assist the poor and the needy through cash transfers. Recognizing the importance of agriculture, as part of the economic recovery plan, CERP specifically identified strategies that 'support farmers, small agri-processors, seed farmers and agri-businesses for planting and income retention'.

Activities identified included 'loan support to farmers, market connectivity and improvements in productivity through extension services. All these are expected to build resilience in the agriculture sector and thereby ensuring food security.

While on the production front there was limited impact in the early months, agriculture trade and exports have been affected significantly due to the lockdown measures, closure of borders and movement of goods. Border trade in agriculture commodities appears to have been affected significantly over the past four months, although there is a turnaround in the most recent period.

But the present risks from the COVID-19 pandemic are putting new challenges in front of the rice value-chain that is already under serious threat. As a matter of urgency, we must be cognizant of the challenges ahead of us and we must continue to pay close attention to food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and building resilience of food and agriculture systems.

Sayagyi (Uncle) Dr Aung Than Batu

By Myint Zan

Sayagyi Dr Aung Than Batu (21 June 1931 – 7 October 2020) passed away on 7 October 2020.

PROFESSOR Dr Aung Than Batu had a varied career and made contributions specifically to medical research and generally to the medical field and they are very significant. He was among many others a Professor of Medicine, Director-General of Research in Burma and served at the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office in New Delhi for many years

It is not for me to recount the achievements and contributions of Sayagyi Uncle Aung Than Batu (hereafter in respectful tone 'Uncle ATBT') but I may be allowed in a personal manner to show my appreciation and tribute to him.

Uncle ATBT (as I used to call him) was a (slightly junior colleague) of my late mother Professor Dr Myint Myint Khin (15 December 1923-19 June 2014). According to an article written in Burmese by Dr Aung Gyi, a former student of my late mother and Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Medicine in Mandalay (UMM) Uncle ATBT was among a few persons whom my mother was 'afraid of'.

In an article published within

a few days of my mother's passing away Dr Aung Gyi wrote to the effect that my mother was usually 'unafraid' of many persons and (according to Dr Aung Gyi) was the only person to respond to the then powerful Chairman U Ne Win (6 July 1910-5 December 2002) when perhaps a few decades ago in a meeting with medical doctors of UMM, U Ne Win suggested to the gathering of medical doctors to study the cultural aspects of Mandalay. Dr Aung Gyi wrote that none of the other medical doctors present dared make a comment or responded to U Ne Win. U Ne Win was astonished and pleasantly surprised that my mother, a lady doctor, responded him to the effect that (without your exhortation) 'we have done so' and 'talked him back' about the cultural places and cultural aspects of Mandalay and environs. Yet, wrote Dr Aung Gyi, among the persons my late mother was 'afraid of' was Uncle Dr ATBT. He was very meticulous in his medical research and writings and my late mother had to be 'wary' of what she affectionately called 'ATBT's rigorousness' regarding medical research and medical research papers.

I should add that the late Uncle ATBT, together with my late mother and the late Dr U Ko Ko former (retired) Regional Director of the World Health Organi-



Dr Aung Than Batu

zation Southeast Asia Regional Office (WHO SEARO based in New Delhi, India), since about the year 2007, had made concerted efforts to publish a book **History of Medical Education in Myanmar.**

My late mother and Uncle

ATBT had to persuade, urge at time perhaps cajole the medical educationists inside and outside the country to contribute articles for the book. My late mother did not live to see the publication of the book. In around December 2015 there was a book launch of

History of Medical Education in Myanmar 1886-2010 (in English). I was one of the speakers (by invitation) at the book launch.

Perhaps (arguably) modestly I am not adhering to the Biblical exhortation that when one gives donations 'do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing': I have contributed about 60,000,000 (six million) Kyats towards the production, printing and circulation of the book. The hardcover book is over 450 pages and has 32 articles from 32 educationists including by my mother, late Uncle Dr ATBT, late Uncle U Ko Ko and others. Subject to correction I understand that the book is sold in some 'outlets' for a mere 5,000 Kyats!

When my late mother passed away on 19 June 2014 within hours Uncle ATBT wrote a tribute of my late mother in English which was published in the Support Group for Elderly Doctors (SGED) newsletter of July 2014. Perhaps it never crossed Uncle ATBT's mind to send his tribute to The Global New Light of Myanmar or Myanmar Times or Mizzima!

I am also grateful to Uncle ATBT for among others (1) serving as Chair of my late father the Dr San Baw Research Prize Committee from about 1985 to 1994 (2) for being one of the speakers in the inaugural Myint Myint Khin

prize for scientific literacy held at the Myanmar Medical Association on 19 March 2014 where, at the suggestions of yours truly, the award of 1 million kyats each was given to the families of the late Sayagyi U Aye Maung (Sarpay Beikman (2 February 1914-11 May 2002) and Saya Bhamo Tin Aung (9 June 1920-23 October 1978) (3) for being one of the speakers again, where at my initiative, the second Myint Myint Khin scientific literacy award ceremony was held in May 2017. The second Myint Myint Khin literary prize was given to the founders of the Curiosity Science Magazine website namely Ko Thar Htet Aung, Dr Kyaw Swar Linn and Ko Nyan Hein Aung (as the Curiosity Magazine organizers then were).

These youngsters wrote articles on general science topics in Burmese language for the Curiosity Science Magazine web site and it is gratifying to note that (in a sense) the 'torch' of scientific literacy has been passed down from those of U Aye Maung and Bhamo Tin Aung (born in the second decade of the 20th century) to the second, if not third generation of young persons born in the last decade of the 20th century. Uncle ATBT was an octogenarian at that time who with his speech honoured those who were around 60 years junior to him.

SEE PAGE-10

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release 36 /2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 10 October.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 10 October. The full text of the press release will be reported in the 14 October issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM



POEM:

The better environment

Love planting jungles full of trees
Where kings of ferocious beasts safely breathe
And the tranquil breeze will mitigate our sufferings.

Avoid throwing litter plus wastes into the sea
Where crowds of marine life dwell in glee
And reducing erosion will alleviate our poverty.

Hate contaminating the surroundings being clean
Where systems of good drainage ring
And the beauty of human spirit will conquer everything.

Keep beautifying our earth painted green
Where crowns of human etiquette lessen the disasters
Devastating
And the better environment will increase our lives and property.

Chit San Maung (M.Ed)

(UN International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction)

Mental health, gender equality and human rights

MENTAL health is the foundation for the well-being and effective functioning of all individuals, everywhere. We have long known there are inseparable links between mental and physical health; the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that anew.

Beyond recognizing mental health as a fundamental aspect of health as a human right, studies indicate that high levels of mental disorders present a major barrier to the socioeconomic development of countries. Numerous studies have clearly shown the loss of productivity attributable to mental health challenges and the resulting negative impact on a country's progress.

Gender plays a large role in the prevalence of mental disorders, with women reporting on

average 1.5 -2 times higher rates of mood disorders, depression and anxiety compared to men. Adolescents and women who have a history of trauma and abuse are especially vulnerable. For example, these two groups have been identified in South-east Asia to most likely attempt suicide .

In the past several months, the world has faced the health threat of COVID-19, which has not only put immense pressure on health systems, but also exposed decades of mental health neglect. The pandemic has fuelled mental distress, anxiety and fear owing to the spread of the virus, physical distancing and isolation, economic and social downturns, and increase in gender-based violence and harmful practices.

This crisis is a wake-up call providing governments and civil

society alike an opportunity to confront reality instead of sweeping it under the carpet, enabling multiple stakeholders to come together to strengthen and improve mental health programmes and services. We must seize this moment.

At UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, we are working to intensify our work with development and humanitarian partners to better integrate mental health and psychosocial support into our response to gender-based violence as well as our lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services, and in the education of midwives and other health providers who support women and girls. These efforts have taken on new urgency in response to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We argue that going forward mental health care investments must be all the more directed to develop and strengthen rights-based approaches and practices that are non-violent, peer-led, trauma-informed, community-led, healing and culturally sensitive. Key principles in these efforts include first and foremost dignity and autonomy, followed by social inclusion and participation, equality and non-discrimination, consent and confidentiality, and accountability.

But for long-term success, we also need to address many of the root causes of mental health challenges, such as the social, political or existential contexts that contribute to a high prevalence of feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear and other manifestations of mental distress.

Equally important, we must openly admit and confront the societal stigma and discrimination attached to mental health issues that all too often create obstacles rather than bring about solutions. By bringing mental health challenges out of the shadows and into the daylight, we can help remove the shame which contributes to so much needless suffering.

And we need to be humble; mental health is complex and much more comprehensive understanding is needed in order not to do more harm than good.

We believe we can do all of this if we come together and work with research institutions and experts that are also guided by evidence, whose work is grounded in human rights and gender equality. This will better inform government policies and invest-

ment, opening up new pathways to optimal services across a range of settings, reaching and serving more people including women and adolescents whose health needs in general are all too often neglected - and mental health needs all the more so.

Let's pledge on World Mental Health Day to prioritize this key pillar as we seek to build back better from the pandemic, empowering millions of our fellow human beings, including women and girls, in the process. In this, we will contribute to fulfilling both the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action, in strengthening rights and choices for all, and that of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals - leaving no one behind.

SOURCE: UNFPA

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Sayagyi (Uncle) Dr Aung Than Batu

FROM PAGE-9

I have read only a few parts of **The History of Medical Education in Myanmar**. But I have read in its entirety the memoirs of ATBT entitled *Reflections of a Director-General (Medical Research)* which was published in December 2016 in both its English and Myanmar versions (in the same book). I attended the book launch in December 2016 where Uncle ATBT presented to me a signed copy of the book. Within a few days I have finished reading it. When I phoned Uncle ATBT's residence to tell him that I have read the book he was not there in his house (now Uncle ATBT is, sadly, gone) and his widow Auntie Dr Daw Khin

Khin Htwe answered the phone. I told Auntie Htwe that I have read Uncle ATBT's memoirs in its entirety.

Auntie Htwe told me on the phone that she herself had not read her husband's memoirs in its entirety (at that time). I had intended to write a review of Uncle ATBT's memoirs and so far, this has not come to pass. Instead, if this tribute 'sees the light of day' it would constitute an appreciation and a tribute to one of the torch bearers of Myanmar medical education. Dr Aung Than Batu is no more but the light from his torch is not extinguished and would continue to guide medical doctors and researchers.

I have learnt that Uncle

ATBT's memoirs (2016) as well as **the History of Medical Education in Myanmar** (2015) were considered for the National literary prize (English language in the general knowledge category) in those years but they both missed receiving the laurels so to speak. It is gratifying though that Uncle ATBT's memoirs received a gold medal and prize from the Tun Foundation in 2019. I attended the prize-giving ceremony where I met him probably for the last time.

In his memoirs, among many others, Uncle ATBT mentioned that after retirement as Director-General of the Department of Medical Research (DMRI) he had visited his daughter and her family in

the United States as much as 25 times! And in the Bibliography of his memoirs he mentioned non-medical books written by the late Carl Sagan, the late Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins as well as the Dalai Lama.

These two anecdotes gleaned from his memoirs stated how he had enjoyed his life extensively travelling even in his sunset years so to speak. On his passing away this is one of the reasons (in a sense) to rejoice at his good luck and good fortune. And among the persons whose books he had read and who arguably had inspired him the late Carl Sagan (9 November 1934-20 December 1996) and the late Stephen Hawking (8 Janu-

ary 1942-14 March 2018) did not live as long as Uncle ATBT.

As the English poet John Donne (22 January 1572-31 March 1631) wrote 'any man death diminishes me'. John Donne's beautiful, affecting if idealistic sentiments and words have reverberated (at least among poetry lovers) throughout the centuries. Sayagyi Uncle Aung Than Batu's death certainly diminishes not only his family, friends, colleagues and students but also the entire Myanmar medical community. Yet we can take solace—indeed we can celebrate—such a well-lived life and the contributions that he had made towards society.

■ ■ ■

Telescopes capture supermassive black hole devouring star

PARIS (France) — Astronomers have captured the moment a supermassive black hole shredded a star the size of our Sun, releasing images Monday showing the devastating process in unprecedented detail.

Using telescopes from the European Southern Observatory (ESO), they were able to monitor light flaring from the process—known as a tidal disruption event—from a black hole just over 215 million light years from Earth.

They observed the star being physically torn apart as it was sucked into the black hole's giant maw.

"The idea of a black hole 'sucking in' a nearby star sounds like science fiction," said Matt Nicholl, a lecturer and Royal Astronomical Society research fellow at the University of Birmingham, lead author of Monday's study.

"But that's exactly what happens in a tidal disruption event."

When a star strays too close to a supermassive black hole, it is subjected to the phenomenal strength of the black hole's gravity.

The star can be physically torn apart and its matter pulled into long strings, a process known as "spaghettification".

"When these forces exceed the star's cohesive force, the star loses pieces that rush into the black hole," Stephane Basa, a researcher from the Marseille



This handout picture released by The European southern Observatory on October 12, 2020, shows an illustration depicting a star (in the foreground) experiencing spaghettification as it's sucked in by a supermassive black hole (in the background) during a "tidal disruption event". **PHOTO: AFP**

Astrophysics Laboratory, told AFP.

"This exceptional influx of matter produces intense electromagnetic emissions, which last for several months while the debris is digested."

Basa said that around half of the star remained after the tidal disruption event.

"Only' half of its mass has disappeared," he said.

"That's already titanic."

'A monster'

While other tidal disruption events have previously been observed, the powerful burst of light they emit are often obscured by a curtain of dust and debris.

Because they discovered the event just a short time after the star was ripped apart the team

were able to pinpoint how the obscuring debris forms.

Using high powered telescopes, they observed the event as the light flare grew in luminosity then gradually faded -- a process of some six months.

Nicholl said that the observations suggested the star involved had roughly the mass as our own sun, but that the black hole was "a monster... which is over a million times more massive."

The team behind the study, published in the journal *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, said they hoped it would help scientists to better understand how matter behaves in the extreme gravity environments surrounding supermassive black holes. —AFP ■

Biggest North Pole mission back from 'dying Arctic'

BREMERHAVEN (Germany) — Researchers on the world's biggest mission to the North Pole returned to Germany on Monday, bringing home devastating proof of a dying Arctic Ocean and warnings of ice-free summers in just decades.

The German Alfred Wegener Institute's Polarstern ship returned to the port of Bremerhaven after 389 days spent drifting through the Arctic trapped in ice, allowing scientists to gather vital information on the effects of global warming in the region.

Mission leader Markus Rex said he and his team of 300 scientists from 20 countries had witnessed "a place of truly fascinating and unique beauty".

"We should really make every effort to preserve this world... for future generations and to use the small chance we still have to do so," he told a press conference.

Ahead of their return, Rex told AFP the scientists had seen for themselves the dramatic effects of global warming on ice in the region considered "the epicentre of climate change".

"We witnessed how the Arctic ocean is dying," Rex said. "We saw this process right outside our windows, or when we walked on the brittle ice." Underlining how much of the sea ice has melted away, Rex said the mission was able to sail through large patches of open water, "sometimes stretching as far as the horizon".

"At the North Pole itself, we

found badly eroded, melted, thin and brittle ice."

'Ice-free Arctic'

If the warming trend in the North Pole continues, in a few decades we will have "an ice-free Arctic in the summer", Rex said.

The Polarstern mission, dubbed MOSAIC, spent more than a year collecting data on the atmosphere, ocean, sea ice and ecosystems to help assess the impact of climate change on the region and the world.

To carry out the research, four observational sites were set up on the sea ice in a radius of up to 40 kilometres around the ship.

The researchers collected water samples from beneath the ice during the polar night to study plant plankton and bacteria and better understand how the marine ecosystem functions under extreme conditions.

The 140-million-euro (\$165 million) expedition has also brought back 150 terabytes of data and more than 1,000 ice samples.

The team measured more than 100 parameters almost continuously throughout the year and are hoping the information will provide a "breakthrough in understanding the Arctic and climate system", Rex said.

Thomas Krumpfen, sea ice physicist said: "For us the second phase is starting -- the analysis of data. A lot of data has returned with the ship and we will likely be busy with it over the next ten years." —AFP ■

Coronavirus ‘can survive for 28 days on surfaces’: study

BRISBANE (Australia) — The coronavirus that causes Covid-19 can survive on items such as banknotes and phones for up to 28 days in cool, dark conditions, according to a study by Australia’s national science agency.

Researchers at CSIRO’s disease preparedness centre tested the longevity of SARS-CoV-2 in the dark at three temperatures, showing survival rates decreased as conditions became hotter, the agency said Monday.

The scientists found that at 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit), SARS-CoV-2 was “extremely robust” on smooth surfaces -- like mobile phone screens -- surviving for 28 days on glass, steel and plastic banknotes.

At 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), the survival rate dropped to seven days and plunged to just 24 hours at 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

The virus survived for shorter periods on porous surfaces such as cotton -- up to 14 days at the lowest temperatures and less than 16 hours at the highest -- the researchers said.

This was “significantly

longer” than previous studies which found the disease could survive for up to four days on non-porous surfaces, according to the paper published in the peer-reviewed *Virology Journal*.

Trevor Drew, director of the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness, said the study involved drying samples of the virus on different materials before testing them, using an “extremely sensitive” method that found traces of live virus able to infect cell cultures.

“This doesn’t mean to say that that amount of virus would be capable of infecting someone,” he told public broadcaster ABC.

He added that if a person was “careless with these materials and touched them and then licked your hands or touched your eyes or your nose, you might well get infected upwards of two weeks after they had been contaminated”.

People ‘far, far more infectious’

Drew said there were several caveats including that the study was conducted with fixed levels of virus that likely represented the peak of a typical



An employee wearing a face mask counts banknotes behind the counter of an exchange office in Istanbul on July 29, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

infection, and there was an absence of exposure to ultraviolet light, which can rapidly degrade the virus.

Humidity was kept steady at 50 per cent, the study said, as increases in humidity have also been found as detrimental to the virus.

According to the CSIRO,

the virus appears to primarily spread through the air but more research was needed to provide further insights into the transmission of the virus via surfaces.

“While the precise role of surface transmission, the degree of surface contact and the amount of virus required for infection is yet to be determined,

establishing how long this virus remains viable on surfaces is critical for developing risk mitigation strategies in high contact areas,” CSIRO’s Debbie Eagles said.

The main message remains that “infectious people are far, far more infectious than surfaces”, Drew told the ABC. —AFP ■

France risks new lockdowns if Covid surge worsens: PM



(FILES) This file photo taken on June 3, 2020, shows on a mobile phone the tracking application StopCovid developed by the French government in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 as France eases lockdown measures taken to fight against the novel coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

PARIS (France) — French authorities could be forced to impose new lockdowns in a bid to contain another surge in coronavirus cases that is putting a strain on hospitals, Prime Minister Jean Castex warned Monday.

“If over the next two weeks we see the epidemic indicators worsen, if intensive care beds fill up even more than we expect, we

will indeed take additional measures,” Castex said in an interview with France Info radio.

Asked about the chances of new stay-at-home orders and business closures specifically, he said “nothing can be ruled out, given what we’re seeing in our hospitals.” Castex reiterated that “it should be possible” to avoid a nationwide lockdown like the two-

month one at the height of the Covid-19 outbreak in the spring.

But he said too many people were failing to appreciate that “the second wave is here,” noting that two more cities, Toulouse and Montpellier, were placed on maximum alert late Sunday because of a surge in new cases -- bringing the total to nine.

In particular he pointed to Paris and its suburbs, where agents carried out some 500 checks over the weekend to ensure bars were closed as ordered and restaurants were ensuring social distancing measures.

“In 95 cases, the agents had to hand out fines,” Castex said.

On Saturday, the national health agency reported a record of nearly 27,000 new daily virus cases on Saturday, and more than 16,000 on Sunday, with the overall death toll now standing at 32,730.

Castex acknowledged that the government’s homegrown StopCovid tracing app had been ineffective, just weeks after he admitted that he himself had not downloaded it. —AFP ■

Four of pope’s Swiss Guards test positive for Covid-19

VATICAN CITY (Holy See) — Four members of the Swiss Guards, the pope’s colourfully-dressed personal protection force, have tested positive for coronavirus, the Vatican said on Monday.

All four are showing symptoms and are currently in quarantine, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement.

“In the meantime... all the guards, either in service or not, will wear masks inside and outside in observation of proscribed health measures,” he said.

The Swiss Guards, an army created in 1506 by Pope Julius II for his protection, currently number over 100.

They are a popular tourist magnet at the Vatican, with their showy yellow, red and blue uniforms, halberds -- an axe-like weapon -- and metal helmets with ostrich plumage.

According to long tradition, Swiss Guards must all be between 19 and 30 years old and at least 1.74 metres tall. They must be practising Roman Catholic, Swiss, and unmarried. —AFP ■

UK mobilizes field hospitals as virus cases surge

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Staff at three field hospitals in northern England are being mobilized to prepare for a surge in coronavirus admissions, health authorities said Monday, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson prepared to unveil

a new three-tiered system of localised restrictions.

A string of temporary “Nightingale” hospitals were built across the UK in conference centres and stadia earlier this year as Covid-19 swept across the country. —AFP ■

Trump's Supreme Court pick in spotlight as Senate hearings start

WASHINGTON (United States) — Judge Amy Coney Barrett, President Donald Trump's conservative pick to fill a key vacancy on the Supreme Court bench, faced a Senate grilling Monday as confirmation hearings began for the lifetime appointment — which Democrats appear largely powerless to block.

The 48-year-old conservative law professor was named by the Republican president on September 26 to succeed women's rights champion and liberal justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died of cancer eight days earlier at age 87.

By law the Senate, now controlled by Republicans, is tasked with approving nominations to the country's highest court, where conservatives currently occupy five of the nine seats.

"We will have a hearing hopefully that the country will be (able to) learn more about Judge Barrett, learn more about the law, learn about the differences in judging," Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Lindsey Graham said after banging a gavel

to launch the proceedings.

Graham praised Ginsburg, and added that "we're going to fill that vacancy with another great woman," he said.

The Democrats and their presidential candidate Joe Biden are demanding that the nomination be left until after the election, but Trump wants to push ahead as quickly as possible to satisfy voters on the right.

"I believe we should not be moving forward on this nomination, not until the election has ended and the next president has taken office," Senator Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the panel, said after Graham's opening.

She also reminded Republicans that some of them including Graham had pledged in 2016 not to support moving forward with a confirmation process in an election year.

Barrett, a practicing Catholic, is well regarded by conservative Christians, who share many of her values, including an opposition to abortion and same-sex



Republican Senator from South Carolina and Senate Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham speaks as Supreme Court nominee Judge Amy Coney Barrett participates in her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, 12 October 2020. PHOTO: AFP

marriage.

The mother of seven children, including two who were adopted and one with Down Syndrome, once told a gathering of

students that "your legal career is but a means to an end, and... that end is building the kingdom of God."

In recent days, Barrett's af-

filiation to a small group of Catholics called the People of Praise, in which she reportedly held the title of "handmaid," has drawn particular attention.—AFP ■

Turkey restarts hunt for Mediterranean gas, reigniting Greek row

ANKARA (Turkey) — Turkey will redeploy the research ship at the centre of an energy row with Greece to the eastern Mediter-

anean on Monday, a decision slammed by Athens as a "direct threat to peace".

The row over gas explora-

tion in the eastern Mediterranean saw the two NATO countries stage rival military drills in August in strategic waters between Cyprus and the Greek island of Crete.

Greece claims rights over the waters around its island of Kastellorizo but Turkey says its longer coastline makes the territory a legitimate area for its vessels to explore.

The Turkish navy said the Oruc Reis ship will carry out activities in the region, including the south of Kastellorizo, until October 22 in a message sent to the maritime alert system NAVTEX late on Sunday.

The vessel will be joined in the latest "seismic survey" mission by two other ships called Ataman and Cengiz Han, the message said.

Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez delivered a defiant message via Twitter on Monday that Turkey "will continue to search, dig and protect our rights".

"If there is (natural gas), we will absolutely find it," he said.

But Greece's foreign ministry on Monday lambasted the move as a "direct threat to regional peace and security" and accused Turkey of being unreliable.

The ministry added in a statement that Ankara did not "sincerely desire dialogue".

Ankara first deployed the Oruc Reis and warships to disputed waters on August 10 and extended the mission, ignoring repeated calls to stop by Greece and the European Union.—AFP ■



(FILES) This file photo taken on August 23, 2019 in Istanbul shows a view of Turkish General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration's (MTA) Oruc Reis seismic research vessel docked at Haydarpasa port, which searches for hydrocarbon, oil, natural gas and coal reserves at sea. PHOTO: AFP

Building collapses in Nigeria, killing eight

Emergency services were clearing debris of a collapsed building on Monday in the densely populated city of Lagos in Nigeria that left at least eight people dead.

The cause of the incident, which happened on Sunday, remains unknown but building collapses are common in Africa's most populous country, where millions live in dilapidated properties and construction laws are routinely ignored. Dozens of people were helping with the clearing operation, with many victims believed to be trapped in the rubble. "When the building started falling down, no one was able to flee. No one," one witness, Femi Abalenawa, told AFP. "Emergency services didn't arrive for a while, and so people in the neighbourhood came out to help," he added. "Unfortunately, eight victims were recovered dead, six adult males and two females," the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) tweeted on Monday.—AFP ■

9 more bodies found after migrant boat sinks off Tunisia

TUNIS (Tunisia) — Nine more bodies have been recovered after a migrant boat sank off Tunisia, raising the death toll to at least 11 with several still missing, the National Guard said Monday.

National Guard spokesman Houcem Eddine Jebabli told AFP the nine were found in the water overnight, after the boat headed for Europe went down

on Sunday off the city of Sfax.

Their nationalities and point of departure were not immediately known, and the coast guard was continuing its search.

Two bodies, of a woman and a baby, were found earlier Sunday and seven people were rescued.

According to initial estimates, 30 migrants from sub-Sa-

haran Africa were on board the vessel, Jebabli said.

The number of would-be migrants trying to cross to Europe from Tunisia has been on the rise since 2017, driven by economic woes and political instability in the North African country, almost a decade after a revolution that many hoped would bring change.

The interior ministry has said it foiled 32 attempts to cross the Mediterranean and arrested 262 people between Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Since the start of 2020, more than 8,500 people have been intercepted trying to reach Europe by sea from Tunisia, the ministry said. They included 2,104 foreigners.—AFP ■

Nations delay deal on digital tax to mid-2021 amid U.S.-Europe row

TOKYO — More than 130 countries have given up on agreeing on new taxation rules this year for global tech giants like Google LLC and Apple Inc. due to disagreements over U.S. proposals and the coronavirus pandemic, with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development saying Monday it will seek a deal by mid-2021.

The countries origi-

nally aimed to release a final report by the end of the year, responding to criticism that such technology companies, also including Facebook Inc. and Amazon.com Inc., are not paying their fair share of taxes by taking advantage of low-tax jurisdictions.

“We will now focus on resolving the remaining political and technical issues,” the OECD said in a report, as differences

have emerged between the United States, which opposes targeting American companies, and European nations pressing for taxing such businesses appropriately where they make huge profits.

“We agree to swiftly address the remaining issues with a view to bringing the process to a successful conclusion by mid-2021,” the Paris-based body said.

Their work has also

been delayed due to the pandemic. But the report said the global health crisis has made such tax rules even more necessary as governments have been forced to provide unprecedented levels of financial support to their economies.

The “time will come when governments will need to focus on putting their finances back on a fair and sustainable footing.” — Kyodo News ■



Undated combined photo shows the logos of (clockwise from top L) Google LLC, Apple Inc., Facebook Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Stanford professors win Nobel economics prize for auction theory

STOCKHOLM — Stanford University professors Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson won this year’s Nobel Prize in economics on Monday for establishing a new auction format for goods and services that cannot be sold in a traditional way, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said. Auction theory is used by researchers to determine the possible outcomes of different bidding formats. The research of Milgrom and Wilson has led to new auction formats for “complex situations.” One of their formats was used by U.S. authorities in 1994 to auction radio frequencies to telecom companies.

“This year’s laureates in economic sciences started out with fundamental theory and later used their results in practical applications, which have spread globally. Their discoveries are of great benefit to society,” Peter Fredriksson, the chair of the prize committee, said in a statement.

Born in Nebraska in 1937, the Harvard-educated Wilson showed that when bidding for objects with a common value, people tend to offer less than their estimates because they are afraid of the “winner’s curse,” which refers to overpaying.—Kyodo News ■

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Imm@kcyangon.com

Dated 13th October 2020

US funding sees Covid-19 antibody trial enter next phase



A general view is pictured of the offices of British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca PLC in Macclesfield, Cheshire on 21 July 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom) — UK pharmaceuticals group AstraZeneca said on Monday it will advance trials of a Covid-19 treatment to a crucial third stage, after the United States invested \$486 million (411 million euros) in its development.

The US government's investment will see up to 100,000 doses delivered "towards the end of 2020", with the option for another one million doses next year, AstraZeneca said.

The company is enrolling 6,100 participants in two sep-

arate testing regimes of the "long-acting antibody (LAAB)" combination treatment in the United States and other countries, starting "in the next weeks".

One will evaluate its safety and efficacy "to prevent infection for up to 12 months" and involves around 5,000 participants, the company said in a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

The second will evaluate post-exposure prophylaxis and pre-emptive treatment in approximately 1,100 participants,

it added.

AstraZeneca said it is also planning additional trials to evaluate the drug in approximately 4,000 patients for the treatment of Covid-19.

"This agreement with the US government will help accelerate the development of our long-acting antibody combination which has the potential to provide immediate and long-lasting effect in both preventing and treating COVID-19 infections," chief executive Pascal Soriot said.—AFP ■

Israel, UAE leaders hold post-accord phone talk

ABU DHABI (United Arab Emirates) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the UAE's Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan have spoken by phone to build on their countries' normalization accord, Sheikh Mohammed said in a tweet Monday.

In the call initiated by Netanyahu, the two leaders agreed the deal signed at the White House on September 15 "opens the way to a new era of cooperation", he wrote.

They also discussed joint efforts to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

Netanyahu, for his part, told the Israeli cabinet that he had spoken at the weekend with his "friend" Sheikh Mohammed, who is crown prince of Abu Dhabi and effective ruler.

"I invited him to visit Israel, he invited me to visit Abu Dhabi,

but before that we'll see here a delegation from the UAE, and another delegation of ours will go there," the prime minister said.

The normalization deals signed the same day with both the United Arab Emirates and fellow Gulf state Bahrain "reflect the dramatic change in Israel's regional standing", he said.

Netanyahu said he told the prince the Israel-UAE deal would be ratified this week by his government and then in parliament.

Netanyahu also hailed the economic boon the deal would offer Israelis, as the first cargo ship from the UAE docked at Israel's port of Haifa.

The ship that arrived Monday was carrying metal, electronics and other goods with further cargo ships expected to arrive each week, a port spokesman told AFP.—AFP ■

Italy ramps up efforts to shield companies from mafia

ROME (Italy) — Italy has stepped up measures to stem mafia infiltration into companies struggling financially because of the coronavirus crisis, reports said on Monday.

Officials have issued an average of 150 "anti-mafia bans" each month so far this year, measures that prevent companies from entering into contracts with the public administration, La Repubblica newspaper reported.

The figure was a 25 per cent rise on last year, according to the paper. The efforts are part of a broader attempt to keep European Union recovery funds out of the hands of criminal groups,

a risk Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese warned of earlier this year as the pandemic began to bite.

Police are investigating about 3,000 cases of alleged fraud involving virus funds, the Sole 24 Ore said.

The southern regions of Campania, Sicily and Calabria -- where the three most powerful mafias originate -- have been the primary focus of the bans. But Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna in northern and central Italy have also accounted for a substantial number, underscoring the national reach of organised crime groups.—AFP ■

EU ready to sanction Russia over Navalny poisoning

BRUSSELS (Belgium) — The EU on Monday lined up sanctions against Russian officials over the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and against Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko over the crisis in his country.

Foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg agreed in principle to sanctions proposals made last week by France and Germany, which said Russia was responsible for the poisoning of Navalny with the Soviet-developed nerve agent Novichok, three diplomatic sources told AFP.

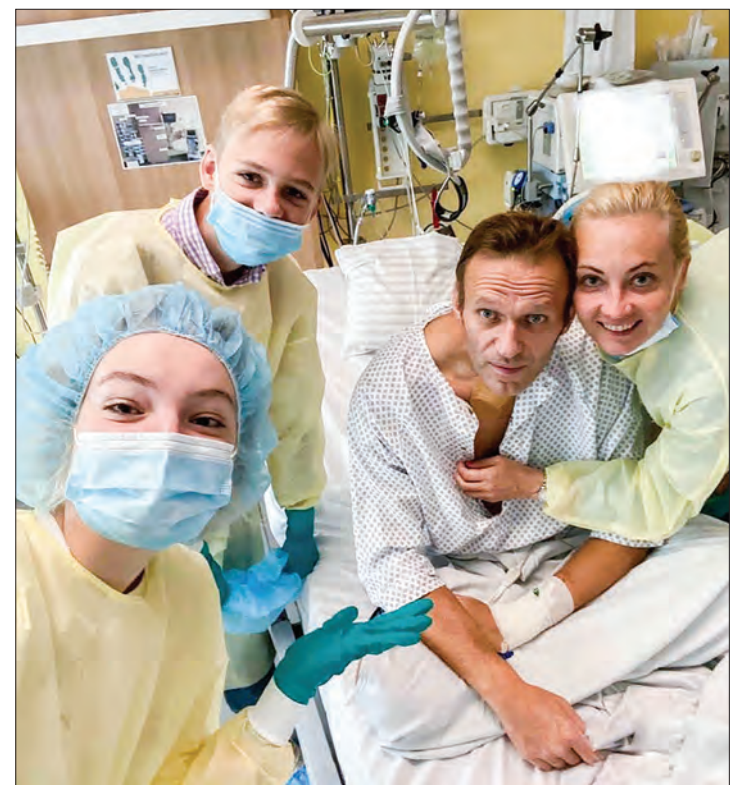
On Belarus, the ministers said they were ready to sanction strongman leader Lukashenko, as the bloc seeks to step up pressure over his regime's crackdown on protesters.

The EU has already imposed travel bans and asset freezes on 40 Lukashenko allies for rigging an election in August that returned him to power and then orchestrating a crackdown on the mass protests that have rocked the country since the vote.

The bloc had held back from penalizing Lukashenko, hoping to persuade him to open a dialogue with opposition forces to resolve the crisis.

But a fresh outbreak in Minsk on Sunday -- police using water cannon and stun grenades on protesters and making hundreds of arrests -- prompted ministers to give political approval to sanctioning the strongman leader.

In their formal conclusions on Belarus, the ministers said



This handout picture posted on 15 September 2020 on the Instagram account of @navalny shows Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny posing for a selfie picture with his family at Berlin's Charite hospital. **PHOTO: AFP**

the list of sanctioned people and entities would be put "under constant review".

"The EU stands ready to take further restrictive measures, including against entities and high-ranking officials, including A. Lukashenko," the ministers said.

As he arrived for the meeting in Luxembourg, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas had urged his counterparts to expand the sanctions list to include the strongman leader.

"The violence continues, perpetrated by the Lukashenko regime -- there are still arrests of peaceful demonstrators, so we have to consider how to proceed," said

Maas, whose country currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.

"I have suggested that we establish a new package of sanctions. And Lukashenko should be among the people who will then be sanctioned."

The EU rejected the results of the August 9 election and said it did not regard Lukashenko as the legitimate president.

The ministers' statement on Monday condemned police violence against protesters and demanded officials seek a peaceful end to the crisis through dialogue with the opposition, backing calls for new elections.—AFP ■

China to test whole city of 9m as Europe rolls out new virus rules

BELJING (China) — All nine million people in a major Chinese port city will be tested for Covid-19 following a tiny outbreak, health officials said Monday, as surging infection numbers in Europe force another round of containment efforts.

The virus has been largely brought under control in China — where it first emerged last year — in stark contrast to many parts of the world still afflicted by rolling lockdowns and high case numbers.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will on Monday announce a new three-tiered alert system for coronavirus cases in England, while German authorities shuttered Berlin bars and clubs after 11pm until the end of the month and France is believed to be mulling local lockdowns in major cities. In the United States — the world's worst-affected nation with 7.7 million infections and 214,000 deaths — President Donald Trump controversially declared himself immune after his treatment at a Washington hospital last week.

Six cases of Covid-19 were confirmed on Sunday in Qingdao — a northeastern port city of 9.4 million — prompting health officials to announce China's first mass testing in months.



A health worker takes a swab from a resident to be tested for the COVID-19 coronavirus in Yantai, in China's eastern Shandong province on October 12, 2020, following a new outbreak of the coronavirus in the nearby city of Qingdao. **PHOTO: AFP**

Five districts will be tested "within three days" and the whole city "within five days", a statement from Qingdao's municipal health commission said, although it did not give a precise figure on how many people would be tested.

China has extensive, quick test capabilities and by noon Monday the health commission said more than 277,000 people had

already been tested in Qingdao, with nine positive results.

In June large areas of the capital Beijing were subject to mass tests after the city of more than 20 million detected virus cases linked to a food market.

China has bounced back since the virus emerged, closing the country down and hammering the world's second largest economy. Hundreds of millions

travelled across the country for the "Golden Week" holiday last week as the country edges back to growth, while rapid tests and swift lockdowns have tamped down secondary waves of the virus.

The picture elsewhere in the world, however, is strikingly different as countries battle new waves and alarming spikes. — AFP ■

Malaysian cities under partial lockdown as coronavirus spreads

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia on Monday announced partial lockdown of its biggest city, Kuala Lumpur, its federal administrative capital Putrajaya and Selangor state that shares border with the two cities, after a spike

in coronavirus cases.

Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaacob said in a statement that following advice from the health ministry, a "conditional movement control order" will be imposed for two weeks from

Wednesday. More than 7 million people will be affected by the order that bans nonessential travel outside the home except to work. Businesses can still open but schools, houses of worship, entertainment venues and public parks will be closed. All sports activities and other social gatherings like weddings are banned.

Another partial lockdown begins Tuesday in the Bornean state of Sabah, which is now the epicentre of the outbreak in the country after seeing a triple-digit surge in cases since last month.

The health ministry said a total of 563 coronavirus cases were recorded within the last 24 hours nationwide, out of which 291 were found in Sabah. Two new fatalities were also recorded in Sabah bringing the total number of death cases nationwide to 159.

Illegal migrants from neighbouring Indonesia and the Philippines caught in Sabah sparked an outbreak in detention camps there that spread to the local community. Travels to and from Sabah helped spread the virus to Peninsular Malaysia.

Malaysia began imposing a nationwide partial lockdown on March 18, almost three months after the first case was recorded in the country, when cases surge into triple digits.

Its borders are still shut. But since June, following a drop in new infection cases, almost all economic sectors reopened and life seemingly returned to normal as restrictions were eased. The country is now experiencing its third wave that originated from imported cases and the prison clusters. — *Kyodo News* ■



Visitors have their temperatures checked at the entrance of a store in Kuala Lumpur on 4 May 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

NEWS IN BRIEF

US strikes target Taliban as fighting rages in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR (Afghanistan) — US air strikes targeted Taliban fighters outside a key city in southern Afghanistan over the weekend, officials said Monday, with violence in the country surging despite ongoing peace talks.

Heavy fighting erupted on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, after the Taliban attacked several outposts in the area. — AFP ■

Floods, rough seas kill 18 in Vietnam as fresh storm on the way

HANOI (Viet Nam) — At least 18 people died and more than a dozen are missing after floods submerged homes in central Vietnam and rough seas capsized fishing boats, authorities said Monday, as another storm threatened fresh downpours.

Images on state media showed entire villages under water in Quang Tri and Quang Nam, while murky floodwaters swept through the Imperial City of Hue and the tourist hotspot Hoi An over the weekend. — AFP ■

China, Cambodia vow to deepen cooperation in all areas

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen met here on Monday with visiting Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and both sides pledged to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas.

Wang said that as "an old friend" and "a true friend" of Chinese leaders and people, Hun Sen's visit to Beijing in February amid China's efforts to fight the COVID-19 outbreak composed an important chapter of China-Cambodia friendly cooperation. — *Xinhua* ■

National team's veteran footballers donate K1 mln to Ayeyarwady Centre

VETERAN players of Myanmar National Football Team contributed K1 million to the Ayeyarwady Centre yesterday, announced by Myanmar National League on social media.

Ayeyarwady Centre, built by Ayeyarwady Foundation in the Thuwunna Football Stadium in early September, is giving treatments to COVID-19

patients.

The Centre has set up a temporary facility for a total of 875 patients, and its ICU/HDU, with the installation of modern medical equipment, can hold 125 patients.

The Centre expressed its gratitude to the donor footballers for their contribution. — Kyaw Khin



Chairman of Ayeyarwady Foundation U Zaw Zaw accepts the cash donated by veteran footballers at the Ayeyarwady Centre on 12 October 2020. **PHOTO: AYEYARWADY CENTRE**

Hataoka rockets to 3rd as Kim wins Women's PGA Championship

NEWTOWN SQUARE (Pennsylvania)— Japan's Nasa Hataoka shot a final-round 64 at the 2020 Women's PGA Championship on Sunday to climb into equal-third place, seven strokes behind winner Kim Sei Young of South Korea.

Hataoka started the day at Aronimink Golf Club six shots off the pace but was unable to

haul in Kim, who won her first major in dominant fashion with a 14-under 266.

Kim, who captured her 11th win on the LPGA Tour, carded seven birdies for a tournament record-tying 63 and rewrote the overall championship scoring record. Her compatriot Park In Bee finished runner-up, five shots back at 9-under.

Hataoka got off to a spectacular start on Sunday by holing out a 5-iron approach from 188 yards to card an opening-hole eagle two. She followed that up with four birdies over her bogey-free round.

The 21-year-old Japanese said she felt she had taken "one more step" toward winning her first LPGA major.

"I felt like I had no choice but to play aggressive golf and not give up until the end. It was big that I was able to get through the round without a bogey," Hataoka said. "I did everything I could do."

Her strong play helped Hataoka cut the deficit to Kim by three strokes at one point, but the South Korean's lead was never seriously challenged in Newtown Square.

"I kept checking the leaderboard. All I could do was stack up birdies," said Hataoka, who tied with Spain's Carlota Ciganda at 7-under.

At the same tournament two years ago, Hataoka also made a late comeback with a final-round 64 before losing in a three-way playoff.

"It's frustrating that I haven't won a major yet," she said. "But I was able to climb the leaderboard each day. I hope to stay composed and just take it step by step." This year's Women's PGA Championship will be followed in December by the U.S. Women's Open, the last of the five women's majors on the calendar.—Kyodo News



Nasa Hataoka of Japan smiles after completing her final round of the Women's PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, on 11 October 2020. Hataoka finished third. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Portugal, Italy hold onto Nations League top spots as England down Belgium



France's forward Kylian Mbappe (L) and Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo react during the Nations League football match between France and Portugal, on 11 October 2020 at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. **PHOTO: AFP**

PARIS (France) — Portugal and Italy kept hold of first place in their UEFA Nations League groups on Sunday with goalless draws against France and Poland on a night of little drama, while England saw off Belgium to take the initiative in their pool.

There was not much to talk about at the Stade de France as a star-studded line up of players including Cristiano Ronaldo, Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann failed to muster much of a spectacle in the League A, Group 3 match.

The 1,000 fans gathered in the cavernous stadium just outside Paris to watch France host the reigning European champions were treated to just four shots on target as two rugged

defences cancelled out each team's attacks.

"We didn't score a goal, but we weren't here to score goals," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

"France are a great team. They have great players. It's not always possible to create opportunities."

Pepe headed home what he thought was a 74th-minute opener when he got on the end of Bruno Fernandes' free-kick but was flagged offside.

Ronaldo, chasing his 102nd international goal, was denied by a flying save from Hugo Lloris in added time. Mbappe fluffed France's best when Rui Patricio anticipated his gentle chip when one-on-one with the Portuguese stopper.—AFP