

NATIONAL

Union Minister Dr Pwint San inspects Phan Khar Myay trade centre, Magway Region

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

Electricity and Energy Ministry focuses on better supply of electricity

PAGE-4

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General Aung San film needs finalized work processes

ALL should carry on finalizing tasks on the biography film of General Aung San, urged Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko at the meeting to screen the film at the hall of the National Museum in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

The Union minister said it could be seen that the fund might be insufficient in order to continue work processes such as computer animation, editing, sound effects, final editing, colourization and music/dubbing. The Union minister pledged to arrange the availability of the fund for the film.

The government formed the General Aung San biography film production committee, which

could start the work process by September 2019. But the process was suspended for the first and second waves of the Covid-19. Consequently, it could not be implemented under the target date.

Deputy Minister U Tun Ohn and Alinkayawswa academy Bagyi Soe Moe reported on future tasks.

Officials of Red Radiance Co Ltd and Yangon Post Co Ltd, scholars and historians discussed the successful completion of the film production. — MNA

Union Minister U Ko Ko chairs the coordination meeting on General Aung San film yesterday.



26 mln fingerlings to be added into lakes, reservoir in Yangon Region this rainy season



The 250,000 young fish are added into the Nga Moe Yeik reservoir on 15 May 2021.

A TOTAL of 26 million fingerlings are projected to be added into ponds, lakes and reservoirs in Yangon Region during the rainy season, according to the chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council.

"This effort aims to effectuate sustainable development in aquaculture in order to enhance the socio-economy of the people living in rural sites of the region. It would boost the country's economic growth. It can also manage fish and prawn population amid overfishing," he pointed out when addressing at the ceremony of adding fish into Nga Moe Yeik reservoir on

15 May.

The chairman, accompanied by the council members and officials concerned from the respective departments, put 100,000 rohus (two-inches sized), 100,000 Barbus fish and 50,000 common carp into the Nga Moe Yeik reservoir at the ceremony.

Chairman U Hla Soe of the Yangon Region Administration Council, the council members and officials concerned also attended the event of Yangon city water supply projects through Nga Moe Yeik reservoir in Hlegu Township on 15 May.

At the event, U Myint Zaw Than, head of Yangon City De-

velopment Committee's Engineering Department (water and sanitation), elaborated Nga Moe Yeik Water Supply Project for Yangon city. U Kyaw Naing Oo, director of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department, explained the coordination between the departments. Moreover, Dr Zaw Win, a member of YCDC, added further water resilience projects for water security in the region to meet the needs of the growing population.

The chairman and Yangon Command Commander also observed the Nga Moe Yeik reservoir and left instructions. — San Kyaw Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn inspects islands in Kawthoung

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

Construction still continues for public rental housings, retired service personnel rental housings

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Health staff to enjoy allowances for scholar degrees, risk for communicable disease and radiation

PAGE-5

LOCAL BUSINESS

Maymyo flower sold well in Minbu (Sagu)

PAGE-7



Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-Terrorism Central Committee Declaration of Terrorist Groups

Notification No 2/2021

12th Waning of Tagu 1383 ME

8 May 2021

The Anti-Terrorism Central Committee has issued this order with the approval of the State Administration Council in exercising sub-section (e) of Section 6 and sub-section (b) of Section 72 of the Anti-Terrorism Law.

1. Unlawful Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH and National Unity Government NUG formed by CRPH constantly incited Civil Disobedience Movement-CDM participants to commit violent acts. Many riots occurred in many places of the country due to their incitements. They perpetrated bombing, arson, manslaughter, and intimidation to disrupt the state administrative machinery due to the influence of the leaders of CRPH and NUG. Moreover, NUG established People Defence Force-PDF. Violent acts occurred in the name of regional defence forces instigated by NUG and PDF. It is found that their acts to join CDM, threatening non-CDMs, inciting students and teachers not to go to schools, supporting terrorist acts and perpetrating such terrorist acts violate Section 3 (b) and Sub-section 13 of the Counter-Terrorism Law – acts with the intent to cause fear in public, to force Government or any internal and external organization to do an illegitimate act or to refrain from doing a lawful act, and other acts, stipulated by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No 23 on 4 June 2014.
2. Therefore, unlawful associations – Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH, National Unity Government-NUG, People Defence Force-PDF and all their subordinates have been declared as terrorist groups.

Chairman
Anti-Terrorism Central Committee

6 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 16 May, total figure rises to 143,065

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **143,065** after **6 new cases** were reported on 16 May 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,115** have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

It is necessary to control too much consumption of edible oils, monosodium glutamate, narcotic drugs, liquor and cigarette

SYSTEMATIC supervision must be performed to check the edible oil, whether it is refined oil or not with the aim of ensuring the people consume the healthy edible oils with quality guarantee. As Myanmar's expectant lifespan is 67.42 years, it is the lowest among the neighbouring countries. As such, it is necessary to control too much consumption of edible oils, monosodium glutamate, narcotic drugs, liquor and cigarette, harming the health conditions with a conscience. Efforts must be made for the standardization of Myanmar people's lifespan in the world with the arrangements to supply nutritious foodstuffs at fair prices, and health awareness should be raised for the people to have a healthy lifestyle.

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 11 May 2021)

Union Minister Dr Pwint San inspects Phan Khar Myay trade centre, Magway Region

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San inspected the Phan Khar Myay Trade Centre yesterday morning in Magway Region.

During the inspection tour, officials explained local products of Magway Region displayed in the trade centre, and the Union Minister instructed them to develop the local trading businesses, to increase more

employment opportunities and to connect with more foreign markets based on the trade centre.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party inspected the preparation of the Office of the Regional Director for the Consumer Affairs Department, and gave instructions for the office work and future implementations, and met with staff. —MNA



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn inspects islands in Kawthoung



UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Ohn made an inspection tour to the islands in Kawthoung District, Taninthayi Region on 15 May.

The Union Minister inspected the Nyaung Oo Phe island seen with coral reefs located about 50 feet from the shore. Many local and international tourists come and do snorkelling at its six snorkelling sites, trekking and hiking, and enjoying the sunset. The island is in the Zardetgyi village-tract, and TZK Company Limited runs a hotel business there.

During his visit to the fork island, responsible persons explained the hotel business to be run on the island. The fork island is a popular tourist destination for cruise ships and

motorboats and a hiking area for tourists to enjoy bird watching and explore the scuba diving sites around the island and underwater beauty.

The Union Minister also toured the snorkelling sites near Lal Lwe Lay Lone island, Thahtay Kyun hotel, Cape Bayint Naung, 555 Hill, Pulone Tone Tone bridge, hotel operation of the Victoria Cliff Hotel and organic farm in the hotel compound.

Apart from marine tourism activities such as scuba diving, snorkelling, exploring mangroves and relaxing on the island's beaches, plans are underway in order to develop new destinations for tourists in Myeik Archipelago, Kawthoung District, Taninthayi Region. —MNA

Electricity and Energy Ministry focuses on better supply of electricity



THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy is making efforts in order to generate electricity

from hydropower stations, solar power stations, natural gas power plants, recycling power

plants and LNG-fired power plants with various sources for ensuring safe and stable

electricity to the people, said Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Aung Than Oo at the videoconferencing coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 and 16 May.

The Union Minister noted that arrangements are being made for generating electricity yearly through hydropower projects, solar power projects and renewable energy projects with the least environmental impacts and social impacts and meet the year-wise electricity demand of the country in line with the 2030 national electri-

fication plan-NEP.

The Union minister stressed that the people had recognized the best services of the ministry without an outage of electricity. So, he urged all to maintain the excellent tradition with further effort to improve their tasks.

Officials reported on work progress in the second quarter of the 2020-2021 financial year and plans for the third and fourth quarters. Deputy Minister U Thant Sin gave a supplementary report. — MNA

Construction still continues for public rental housings, retired service personnel rental housings

THE Ministry of Construction places emphasis on the development of the urban sector with arrangements to implement the housing projects for the convenience of the local people, said Union Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay in meeting with entrepreneurs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

On arrival at the public rental housing project and retired State service personnel rental housing project in Dekkhinathiri Township, the Union minister explained that the government aims to fulfil the housing requirements of the people and service personnel in populous Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay.

In this regard, he continued that 28 buildings with 448 apartments are under construction in Nay Pyi Taw. The Union minister urged officials from Project Management Unit and private entrepreneurs to ensure timely completion of the project.

Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Maung Maung Naing pledged to provide assistance for local people and retired service personnel from housing projects to have convenient housing arrangements so as to develop Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

The Union Minister and the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman inspected the con-



struction of five-storey four-unit public housings with 614 square feet of each apartment, and five-storey four-unit re-

tired service personnel housings with 650 square feet area of each apartment.

The projects are jointly

implemented by the Department of Urban and Housing Development and the private entrepreneurs' group. —MNA

State Administration Council Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who arrive in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries with worries because of incitement and intimidation of NLD members, the extremists who support that party, CRPH unlawful association, incitement of CDM and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since after 1 February 2021 when the Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibility.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of CRPH unlawful association and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in their areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. As those who evaded from their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from evaded areas to various regions of Myanmar.
4. Information was released that if those who evaded to various areas except the persons who committed any kinds of crime wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord, the citizens abroad are to contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates without facing action taken in accord with the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Health staff to enjoy allowances for scholar degrees, risk for communicable disease and radiation

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Thet Khaing Win pledged to provide allowances for the scholar degrees and the expenditure for the dinner to the staff serving at the whole night duty at the hospital, in meeting with staff of Pyay General Hospital on 15 May.

He made field trips to Aunglan Hospital in Magway Region and Pyay General Hospital in Bago Region.

The Union Minister also promised, saying that arrangements will be made for presenting the risk allowance for the staff serving at the sections of communicable disease and radiation. He also noted that vaccination of Covid-19 would be given to the persons who did not receive the first and second

doses of vaccine as quickly as possible.

On his inspection tour, the Union minister viewed round the inpatient wards and the emergency unit at Aunglan Hospital. In meeting with health staff and town elders, the Union minister said the ministry provides necessary medicines, including snake venom, to the hospital. He stressed the need to specially take care of preventive measures for variant Covid-19 virus not to enter the country.

He also looked into the emergency patient unit, operation theatre, orthopaedic ward and maternity ward of Pyay General Hospital. He inspected the progress of building the intensive care unit with the fund of the government. — MNA



Over 200,000 outpatients provided healthcare at military hospitals to date



MILITARY hospitals and temporary emergency hospitals in the townships of regions and states

keep giving medical treatments to the people to solve their difficulties in healthcare services.

A total of 206,252 outpatients and 63,235 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date.

Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 9,647 major operations and 4,899 minor operations. The senior doctors treat the severe cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 12,334 babies, while 12,334 pregnant women were taken to the respective military hospitals.

It is reported that Tatmadaw will continue to accelerate cooperation in developing the public health care sector. —MNA

Explosives seized while investigating homemade mine explosion case in Mandalay



EXPLOSIVE materials were seized while conducting a further investigation on the homemade mine explosion case, which caused a man wounded on 15 May in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region.

The homemade mine blast happened when two men on a motorbike secretly carrying the mine arrived near Chanmyathazi southern ward administration office in Chanmyathazi township at 4:30 pm on 15 May. The blast made one of them injured on his left knee. The

injured person fled, and the motorbike driver was arrested.

After searching the arrestee's house, four batteries, two motorbike batteries, eight homemade mines made with juice cans, four old keypad phones, six old tablets, pieces of wire, one clock, one laptop and one anti-State slogan were found and confiscated.

It is reported that efforts are underway to arrest the fugitives and take legal action against the arrested one. —MNA

7 injured in homemade mine blast in Denko filling station



FIVE men and two women were injured during the homemade mine explosion in Denko filling station on Khaymarthi road, (Gagyi) ward, North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, on 15 May.

The fire was extinguished

by the fire brigade members and security forces. Two staff and five customers were reportedly injured, and two motorbikes were destroyed by fire.

According to the CCTV footage, two men arrived on a motorbike. They set off a Blue-

tooth Speaker Box, which was believed to be a homemade mine, at the base of filling station No (4) and exploded about five minutes later.

Security forces are reportedly searching for the perpetrators of the incident. —MNA

One detained for drawing anti-Government image, text in Latputta

A man was detained in Latputta town, Ayeyawady Region, for drawing anti-government image and text with black spray paint on the roadside fence on 15 May.

Soe Wunna Htut, 21, son of U Myat Toe, who lives in No 1 ward of Latputta town, Ayeyawady Region, was arrested with anti-Government posters and images and one black spray paint.

It is reported that action will be taken against him under the law.

Security forces keep arresting, under the law, those who hang and write anti-Government slogans, posters, papers on the state-owned and public buildings and spread them on the streets intending to destabilize the country. — MNA

Pagodas, other religious buildings peaceful with prayers



Kyaik Htee Yoe Pagoda seen with devotees.

PAGODAS, temples and other religious buildings across the country are alive and peaceful with prayers since the reopening on 8 February.

The country's religious

buildings and prayer halls were temporarily closed to contain the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar. They have reopened since 8 February.

It is also reported that parks

and playgrounds in cities including Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay have reopened. And markets, hospitals, flights, railways, waterways and bus lines are in regular operation. — MNA

Arson attack happens at middle school in Kalay

TERRORISTS set fire to the No (1) Basic Education Middle School in Taungphelar ward in Kalay Town, Sagaing Region, yesterday morning.

The fire brigade members, police force and security forces extinguished the fire. Two school building and school furniture were destroyed by fire.

It is reported that security forces are investigating to identify the arsonists to take effective action under the law. — MNA



Ravages are seen after arson attack on a middle school in Kalay.

Security forces confiscate weapons to be used in terrorist attacks in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Ayeyawady regions

SECURITY forces confiscated weapons and equipment to be used in terrorist attacks in KhinU Township, Sagaing Region; Yenangyoung Township, Magway Region; Mogok Township in Mandalay Region and Hinthada Township in Ayeyawady Region on 15 May.

Fifty-seven homemade bombs were seized, and they include nine diesel bottles, five

slingshots, 30 arrows, 10 iron pipes, 10 iron pipes, 100 iron balls, five lead balls, one sword, and related items used in terrorist attacks.

It is reported that security forces continue to search and identify the owners of the weapons and equipment. Those who are arrested together with them will be taken action under the law. — MNA

Tatmadaw medical team performs RDT on returnees in Mon, Kayin states



Returnees are seen receiving RDT for COVID.

DUE to difficulties to conduct necessary COVID-19 medical check-up, residents from Mon State and Kayin State who repatriated from abroad were under quarantine in Mawlamyine University.

Military doctors, nurses and medics from the Tatmad-

aw Hospital in South-East Command, in collaboration with the township administration body members and CSOs, performed Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) on a total of 101 returnees in the quarantine centre. — MNA

Terrorists attack members of security forces in Chin, Kachin states

TERRORISTS attacked the security forces in Kanpetlet township, Chin State and Bhamo, Kachin State, and one member of the security forces was injured.

On 15 May, terrorists attacked the Kanpetlet police station two times in Kanpetlet town, Chin State.

On 16 May, terrorists attacked the "Pinlone" ship

near Naungmoe village while it was on the way from Shwegu port to Bhamo town, Kachin State. A member of the security forces was wounded when a terrorists' shell exploded on the ship.

It is reported that plans are underway to comb those terrorists who attacked the security forces. — MNA

Maymyo flower sold well in Minbu (Sagu)

THE local growers from Kyaukton village, Minbu (Sagu) township, Magway region are growing Maymyo flowers. According to the local growers, the flowers are being sold well in the market, and they yield abundantly.

Flowers are not food items. However, they are essential to the Myanmar people. Every household offers flowers to Lord Buddha either at pagodas or to Buddha images seated on altars at their homes. Flowers are also used at wedding receptions, donation ceremonies, hotels, motels and other festivals as decorations.

There are many Maymyo flower species, and the flowers



The flowers yield abundantly at the same time, and they are sold for K80 per flower and K200 per handful of flowers. Maymyo flowers sell well in harvest times.

are colourful. The cultivation of the Maymyo flower takes

about five months. The cultivation of the Maymyo flower

costs K300,000 per acre, including ploughing and sowing the

seeds. The flowery plants does not need to be watered, but it is required in order to put the irrigation water. The irrigation water is needed once every five or seven days, depending upon the ground's soil moisture.

The pesticides should be sprayed when there are insects. The fertilizer is also used only when it is necessary. The flowers yield abundantly at the same time, and they at K80 per flower and K200 per handful of flowers. Maymyo flowers are sold well in harvest times. Growers are happy as it makes handsome profits, said Daw Mya Kyi, a Maymyo flower grower from Kyaukton village. — Zeyar Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

Domestic corn consumption likely to drop this year

DOMESTIC corn consumption is expected to drop this year compared to last year, said Chairperson U Min Khaing of the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association (MCIA).

Although the country consumed about 1.2 million tonnes of corn last year, the corn consumption is expected to decline this year for lack of a substantial market for livestock. Corn is one of the primary feeds for livestock.

"Last year, about 1.2 million tonnes of corn were expected to produce. But this year, we have expected only 1 million tonne because there is no strong market for the livestock breeders. Now, we have to see the production of the livestock products such as chicken and eggs. The operation of the supermarkets is not running as usual, and the livestock breeders are also reducing their livestock feeds. By reducing the livestock feeds, the domestic consumption of corn has also dropped," said U Min Khaing.

Myanmar's domestic corn consumption has also declined this year compared to that of the previous year.

According to MCIA, the country intends to reach an export target of 1.6 million tonnes of corn this year.

Currently, Myanmar has been delivering corn to neighbouring countries like Thailand and China via the land border, with a ton of corn fetching up about 8,000 Bahts.

Thailand gives the greenlight to corn imports through Mae Sot under zero tariff (with Form-D) between 1 February and 31 August. But, the shipment to Singapore, Malaysia and Viet Nam shortly stopped because of zero demand.

In the 2019-2020 financial year, the country exported 2.2 million tonnes of corn to the international market, with a generated value of over US\$ 360 million, according to the official data of the Ministry of Commerce.

Corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons — cold season, summer and monsoon. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn. — NN/GNLM

Domestic black bean price soars by K54,000 per tonne in two weeks because of dollar appreciation

WITH the rising dollar exchange rate, the price of black beans has soared by K54,000 per tonne in the domestic market in two weeks, according to Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayint Naung Brokerage).

Although the black bean price on 1 May was K888,500 per tonne, the price grew to about K942,500 per tonne on 14 May, which is an increase of K54,000 per tonne in only two weeks, ac-

ording to the bean market data.

Presently, the local dollar exchange rate was at K 1,595 per dollar on 1 May, but it upturned to K1,675 per dollar on 14 May.

Myanmar yields around 400,000 tonnes of black bean annually, and the bean is primarily exported to India. Similarly, about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas are produced yearly and exported to India as well. Since 2017, India has been setting the import quota on beans, including black beans and

pigeon peas. Myanmar has to export black beans and pigeon peas under a quota system and limit period. Consequently, according to market observers, there is no guarantee that we could get the prevailing market price this year. Following no assurance of black beans and pigeon peas in the market, the association suggested at the end-October 2020 that the local farmers grow the black-eyed beans more. — NN/GNLM

External trade drastically drops by \$5.34 bln as of 7 May

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 7 May in the current financial year 2020-2021 plummeted to US\$18.08 billion, a sharp drop of 5.34 billion compared with the corresponding period of the FY2019-2020, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

According to data released by the ministry during the same period in the previous FY, the trade stood at \$23.4 billion.

Over the past seven months, Myanmar's export was worth over \$8.97 billion, which plunged from \$11.23 billion registered a year-ago period. Meanwhile, the country's import was valued at \$9.1 billion, showing a significant decrease of \$3.07 billion compared with the last FY.

Both sea trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts. The neigh-

bouring countries tightened the border security and limited the trading time to contain the spread of the virus.

Furthermore, the current political conditions drag down the trade. At present, the traders have transaction problem triggered by the restriction of the private banks, a market observer shared his opinion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods. At the same time, it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports.

Under the National Plan-

ning Law for the Financial Year 2020-2021, Myanmar intends to reach an export target of US\$16 billion and import of \$18 billion.

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing the trade deficit, export promotion and market diversification. Since 2011, the Ministry of Commerce has adhered to its reform policy. A series of moves to liberalize and open the economy have been introduced through policy development to improve the trade environment.

The external trade stood at \$36.73 billion in the 2019-2020FY, \$35.147 billion in the 2018-2019FY, \$18.728 billion in the 2018 six-month interim period, \$33.578 billion in the 2017-2018FY and \$29.209 billion in the 2016-2017FY, respectively, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics. — KK/GNLM

Invest in education to enjoy fruits for future generations

EDUCATION is a powerful tool to shape the society. Depending on the levels of educated persons, relevant countries shape their future because those educated would steer their future.

Debashish Mridha, an American physician, philosopher, poet-seer, and author, said the best investment for poverty elimination is education. It is a universal truth. As a nature of the acquisition, the investors cannot enjoy the benefits from their investments in a short

Particularly, there are more than 1 million basic education students to attend over 2,700 basic education schools at different levels depending on locations and situations.

and ball pens distributed to the students free of charge. Relevant schools have arranged for students to wash their hands many times in line with the Covid-19 health guidelines.

Particularly, there are more than 1 million basic education students to attend over 2,700 basic education schools at different levels depending on locations and situations.

Actually, basic education teachers need to enhance their capacity for having the readiness to teach their pupils. Basic education students need to prepare their learning plans under the control of parents. School structures must be ready to admit the learning society. Hence, the authorities need to take responsibilities to create a safe and sound academic environment for all.

period. After taking adequate time, they can enjoy the fruits of their assets.

Likewise, the investment from the education sector cannot emerge the fruitful results immediately. But the benefit from the investment will come out in real-time. The governments in successive eras of Myanmar have put investments in the education sector as part of efforts to improve society.

The Ministry of Education is currently implementing the educational work procedures in line with the national education strategic plan (2016-2021). The ministry has decided not to change the school curriculums of the basic education sector used in previous governments in the coming academic year.

The Ministry of Education has clearly announced to open the basic education schools on 1 June 2021. Moreover, the period from 24 to 31 May is set as a school enrollment week for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Moreover, the ministry has announced that any charges will not be collected from students for their enrollment. And, the basic education schools have arranged to provide two reusable masks, one face shield, school textbooks, notebooks, pencils,

Learning of English and Capacity Building

By Maung Hlaing

THE Global New Light of Myanmar of 28 April 2021 issue carried a news story on the English proficiency course jointly conducted by the Ministry of Information (MOI) and the Ministry of Education. According to the news, it was the second English language course to improve the quality of MOI staff. The first course was opened at the MRTV in Tatkon. Doubtlessly, such training courses contribute much to the capacity building of the staff.

The news reminded me of the days of the early 1980s when I joined the Sarpay Beikman. As we were raw hands who needed experiences in writing, editing and translating, we had to attend the on-the-job training conducted under the supervision of the then Printing and Publishing Corporation (now Printing and Publishing Department). The visiting lecturers were Sayagyi U Ohn Pe (Tet Toe) and U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin), who were well-versed both in Myanmar and English literature. And they were also scholars with an excellent reputation for writing fiction and nonfiction literature. They taught us English and Myanmar literature, including the art of writing and translating.

Because of their benevolence in teaching, we were able to stand on our own feet in the literary arena.

Such training courses are mostly set apart for capacity building which is the essential requirement for national development and the task of nurturing young service personnel to become those who will contribute a great deal towards political, economic and social development. Naturally, experienced hands who are in their golden years want to provide more opportunities to the raw hands who were talented and eager to learn.

Prior to the Covid-19 period, it was very encouraging to see that many government departments were conducting training courses on capacity building. Mostly, they conducted English language proficiency courses, technical expertise courses and multiplier courses in succession as part of plans to enhance human resource development. The courses will help the young service personnel



assess the past, present and future, having the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences while attending the courses.

Unlike the days when we were in service, young service personnel of today are lucky enough to enjoy the privileges that we failed to do so in our days. As English becomes a bridge in the sectors of communications, technologies, education, research, and so on, many departments come to conduct English proficiency courses where trainees can learn Four Skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Regarding English learning in Myanmar, we cannot ignore the far-sightedness and goodwill of Myanmar monarchs. As I am neither authority on the English language — learning and teaching — nor a researcher, I cannot definitely tell the time when learning and teaching English began in Myanmar. According to the historical records, we found that English learning had taken root in Myanmar before the arrival of Dr Adoniram Judson, who came to Rangoon (Yangon) in 1813.

It was during the reign of king Bodaw Paya, also known as Badon Min. The king himself gave encouragement to those who were eager to learn English. In those days, Myanmar youths who came of age were called up for military service as everyone was responsible for the nation's defence. However, the young men who were

learning English were exempt from military service. Moreover, the parents of those who were learning English were also exempt from taxes and revenues levied by the government (king) in order to offer an incentive with a view to increasing the number of English learners. Until that time, even a useful English-Myanmar or Myanmar-English dictionary had not come out yet.

Another one who paved the way for learning English was the Prince of Mekhara, one of the sons of King Bodaw Paya. Because of the endeavors made by the Prince, an English-Burmese Dictionary came out in 1841. The name of the dictionary was "Dictionary, ENGLISH and BURMESE by Charles Lane, Esq, F.A.S." (For many years a resident of Ava). It was published in Calcutta by Ostell and Lepage, British Library, Tank Square, 1841. On the cover of the dictionary, we can read the message — "The whole of the Burmese Portion carefully revised by His Highness the Prince of Mekhara, Uncle to the then reigning King of Burmah (According to the original spelling).

According to the message "... carefully revised by His Highness the Prince of Mekhara," we can make a guess of the efforts made by the Prince. (The author of this article is very proud of having such a copy of this first and foremost dictionary distributed in Myanmar. Even this copy, I think,

may be reprinted.)

May I introduce you to the original Burmese (Myanmar) preface to the dictionary written in Myanmar by Prince of Mekhara to enable you to fully appreciate it:-

အထူးသော ဘာသာများစွာ သောလူမျိုးတို့တွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်လူမျိုးသည် ဟုတ်မှန်သော ထင်ရှားမျက်မှော် တွေ့မြင်သော အတတ်ပညာကိုသာ ရှာဖွေ နှိုင်းရှည်ပြီးလျှင် ရုံးစွဲမှတ်သားလေ့ ရှိသည်ဖြစ်၍ အင်္ဂလိပ်ဘာသာကို နားလည် သိမြင်ခြင်းသည် ဗဟုသုတ အရာမျက် များစွာ အကျိုးရှိသည်။ ထို့ကြောင့် ဗဟုသုတကို အလုံအလောက် မြန်မာလူမျိုးတို့အား အင်္ဂလိပ်ဘာသာ ကို မြန်မာဘာသာအားဖြင့် နားလည် သိမြင်စေခြင်းအကျိုးငှါ မကုရာမင်းသား က သင်္ဘောသွားကြီး ကပ္ပိတ်လျှင်ကို အင်္ဂလိပ်အဘိဓာန်စာရင်းအတိုင်း မြန်မာဘာသာမှန်ကန်အောင် ပြန်ဆိုပါဆို၍ မြန်မာသက္ကရာဇ် ၁၁၉၇ ခုနှစ်၊ အင်္ဂလိပ်သက္ကရာဇ် ၁၈၃၃ ခုနှစ်မှစ၍ ပြန်ဆိုရေးသားသည်။ ပြန်ဆိုအပ်သော အဘိဓာန်စာသည် ကား အင်္ဂလိပ် အက္ခရာကို ဖတ်နိုင်ကာမူ သင်ပြီး၍ ရှေ့နေ့စကား ကြည့်ရှုမှတ်သားပြီးလျှင် ထိုအဘိဓာန်စာကို အမှီပြု၍ အင်္ဂလိပ် ပညာ စာ ၄၇ မှစ၍ အင်္ဂလိပ်စာတို့ကို မြန်မာဘာသာအားဖြင့် သိမြင်နားလည် နိုင်ရာရှိသည် (မူရင်းရေးဟန်နှင့် သတိပုံ အတိုင်း)

The following is its original translation: -

"The English people search amongst different nations, having a great variety of customs, for only such branches of knowledge as are clearly apparent to the senses which after collating, they collect and commit to writing; consequently, "great knowledge" will be much advanced by an acquaintance with the English language; therefore, in

order that all Burman people, who have a desire for "great knowledge," may have the benefit of understanding the English language by means of the Burman language, the Prince of Mekhara desired Mr Lane to translate the English Dictionary into the Burman language.

By using this Dictionary, the translation of which commenced in the Burman year 1195, and the English year 1833, as a guide, having first merely learnt sufficient of the English characters as to be able to read, and by noting the context, the 45 Volumes of the Arts and Sciences, and other English Books may be understood by means of the Burman Language. (According to the original style of writing and spelling.)"

The preface to the dictionary revealed the genuine စေတနာ or goodwill of the Prince of Mekhara. According to the historical records, we know that the Prince himself was always occupied with the study of (modern) science, including astronomy and geography.

While I was reading history at the Workers' College in the late 1960s, my mentors told me that the Prince had translated the articles on science subjects, including natural sciences, from the Rees' Encyclopaedia. He

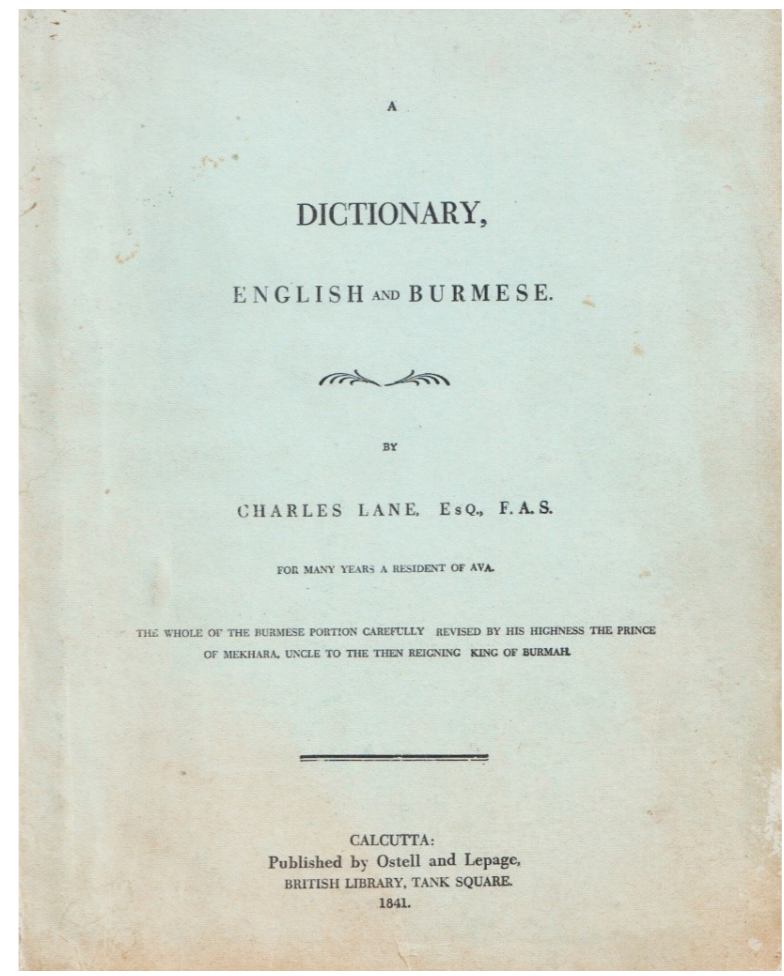
learned English from Dr Judson, and at the same time, he encouraged the talented youths of his time to learn English. (The Prince of Mekhara had received Dr Judson, who arrived in Amarapura in 1822.)

History revealed that because of the far-sightedness of King Mindon, the Royal princes, including courtiers, could learn English from Dr J.E. Marks, who was well known as Saya Hmark among the Myanmar learners of those days. In his "KING MINDON'S Strategy for Defending Independence (1853-1878), Dr Myo Myint wrote that King Mindon sent nine of his sons to the missionary school to learn English.

History has taught us that colonialists used to resort to three Ms — Merchant, Military, and Missionary — to invade a country. Myanmar monarchs took advantage of the courtiers to learn English from the Christian missionaries while the latter was operating missions in Upper Myanmar.

Myanmar monarchs did so to pave the way for human resource development through the learning of English.

Reference : မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်း အတွဲ (၁၀)၊ စာပေဓါမာန် 'ဆရာ ယုဒသန်' (တင်နိုင်တိုး)၊ စေတနာစာပေ၊ ၂၀၁၁



Public information

Yangon Region Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses. Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01 830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

သတင်းစာ ဂျာနယ် စာစောင်များကို နိုင်ငံတကာဝန်ဆောင်မှု ပံ့ပိုးလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။ 01 860 4530

Trademark Caution

The Global New Light of Myanmar

PLEASE CALL 09 251 022 355. Includes a globe icon and a QR code.

09 251 022 355

သတင်းစာပုံနှိပ်သူများအနေဖြင့် မြန်မာ့အလင်း ကြေးမုံ၊ The Global New Light of Myanmar ရောင်စုံသတင်းစာများ မှာယူပတ်စုလိုခြင်းနှင့် သတင်းစာများရောက်ရှိမှု မရှိခြင်းတို့ကြောင့် အခက်အခဲများဖြစ်ပေါ်ပါက အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ ဖုန်းနံပါတ်များသို့ ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်-

- သတင်းနှင့်စာအုပ်စီမံခန့်ခွဲရေး ဖုန်း-၀၆၇-၃၄၁၂၁၀၈၊ ၀၆-၄၃၀၃၀၃၆၂
အပြည်ပြည်ဆိုင်ရာသတင်းစာတိုက်(ဧရာဝတီမြို့နယ်) ဖုန်း-၀၆၇-၃၆၁၀၇၊ ၀၆-၄၂၇၀၆၆၆၇
မြန်မာ့အလင်းသတင်းစာတိုက်(ရန်ကင်း) ဖုန်း-၀၁-၉၅၄၄၃၁၇၊ ၀၉-၄၄၀၀၄၂၂၁၄
မြန်မာ့အလင်းသတင်းစာတိုက်(ရန်ကင်း) ဖုန်း-၀၁-၈၂၉၂၅၃၀၊ ၀၉-၄၅၀၀၂၅၅၇၀
The Global New Light of Myanmar (ရန်ကင်း) ဖုန်း-၀၁-၈၆၀၄၅၃၂၊ ၀၉-၉၈၃၉၂၅၉၃၁
ကိုယ်ပိုင်သတင်းစာတိုက်(မန္တလေး) ဖုန်း-၀၂-၄၀၃၂၇၂၅၊ ၀၂-၄၀၃၂၇၀၀
ကိုယ်ပိုင်သတင်းစာတိုက်(မုံရွာ) ဖုန်း-၀၇၁-၂၀၂၆၅၃၇၊ ၀၇၁-၂၀၂၆၅၃၇
ကိုယ်ပိုင်သတင်းစာတိုက်(မော်လမြိုင်) ဖုန်း-၀၅၇-၂၀၂၇၅၅၅၊ ၀၅၇-၂၀၂၇၅၅၆

၂၀၂၁ ခုနှစ်အတွက် အခြေခံအုတ်မြစ် ခြံမြှုပ်အလင်း ကြေးမုံ. Includes logos for Global New Light of Myanmar and Myanmar.

Files opened against health staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State










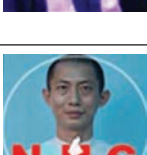
THE following nurses have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and health staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Daw Khine Zin Thant (Sister)	Kawthoung Hospital	Kawthoung, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
2	U Saw Htoo Tha (Senior Nurse)	Pyinmana Hospital	Dimawhso, Kayah State	505-a	
3	Daw Aye Aye Mar (Senior Nurse)	Lewe Hospital	Kyaukhtu, Magway Region	505-a	
4	Daw Aye Kaung (Senior Nurse)	Sao San Htun Hospital, Taunggyi	Yaksawk, Shan State (South)	505-a	
5	Daw Bae Mei (Senior Nurse)	Pasawng Hospital	Prusho, Kayah State	505-a	
6	Daw Kyi Htay (Nurse)	Hopin Station Hospital	Indawgyi, Kachin State	505-a	
7	Daw Thwe Thwe Tun (Nurse)	Myeik Hospital	Myeik, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
8	Daw Su Myat Maw (Nurse)	Shwedaung Hospital	Shwedaung, Bago Region	505-a	
9	Daw Sanda Lwin (Nurse)	Mawlaik Hospital	KhinU, Sagaing Region	505-a	
10	Daw Moe Sanda Aye (Nurse)	Mawlaik Hospital	YeU, Sagaing Region	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those nurses charged, action will be taken against the the persons who admitted them under the law for the supporting those nurse who participated in CDM and CRPH activities. —MNA

Files opened against education staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following teachers have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and education staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Dr Ei Ei Htway	Rector, Mandalay Technological University, Patheingyi Township	Kawlin, Sagaing Region	505-a	
2	Dr Myo Myint	Pro-Rector, Mandalay Technological University, Patheingyi Township	Tamu, Sagaing Region	505-a	
3	Daw Saw Win Mar	Head of Department (Finance), Mandalay University of Computer Studies, Patheingyi Township	Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region	505-a	
4	U Aye Nyein Aung	Head of Branch (Admin), Mandalay Technological University, Patheingyi Township	Kyaukse, Mandalay Region	505-a	
5	Dr Sein Mi Mi Oo	Associate Professor, Maubin University, Maubin Township	South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
6	U Thanmani Soe Aung	Associate Professor, Technological University (Maubin), Maubin Township	Thanatpin, Bago Region	505-a	
7	U Mya Aung	Lecturer, Government Technical High School (Maubin), Maubin Township	Maubin, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
8	U Sithu Lwin	Assistant Lecturer, Technological University (Maubin), Maubin Township	Maubin, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
9	U Aung Than	Assistant Lecturer, Government Technical High School (Maubin), Maubin Township	Maubin, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
10	Dr Aung Ko Ko Lin	Assistant Lecturer, Myitkyina University, Myitkyina Township	Myitkyina, Kachin State	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those education staff charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those education staff, action will be taken against the persons under the law for admitting those education staff. —MNA

Flared natural gas latest prize in bitcoin miners' energy quest

AS the value of bitcoin soars and concerns rise about the energy-intensive process needed to obtain it, cryptocurrency entrepreneurs in the United States believe they have found a solution in flared natural gas.

Profitably creating, or mining, bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies requires masses of computers dedicated to solving deliberately complicated equations -- an endeavour that globally consumes more electricity than entire nations, but for which these start-ups say the jets of flaming gas placed next to oil wells are perfect power sources.

"I think the market is enormous," said Sergii Gerasymovych, CEO of EZ Blockchain, which has six different data centers powered off natu-



A handout photo from Giga Energy Solutions shows a natural gas generator powering a bitcoin mining center in north Texas in May 2021. PHOTO:AFP

ral gas in the US states of Utah and New Mexico, as well as in Canada.

Across the country, companies like EZ Blockchain are

setting up shipping containers where racks containing hundreds of computers mine cryptocurrency, fuelled by natural gas from oil wells that otherwise

would be burned in the open.

Interest in their work has grown over the past year. Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies like ethereum and dogecoin have seen meteoric price spikes since the Covid-19 pandemic turned the global economy on its head and mainstream companies began to embrace the technology.

But a backlash has formed against the digital assets' energy usage, fueled by concerns it relies on carbon-emitting power sources that contribute to climate change.

This week, Tesla boss Elon Musk criticized bitcoin's power consumption, particularly of energy produced from coal, and said he would no longer accept the cryptocurrency as payment for his electric cars. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK still plans in-person 'last hope' COP26 climate summit

BRITAIN still plans to hold an in-person global climate summit in Glasgow later this year despite the pandemic, the event's president said Friday, calling it the planet's "last hope" of averting catastrophe.

COP26 will gather climate negotiators from 196 countries and the European Union, along with businesses, experts and world leaders in the Scottish city between November 1-12.

There has been growing speculation the landmark summit -- the biggest climate talks since the 2015 Paris negotiation -- could be held virtually as coronavirus continues to ravage countries around the world.

Some fear swathes of delegates may be unable to attend in person due to outbreaks. — AFP ■

China's Zhurong rover touches down on Red Planet

CHINA'S probe to Mars touched down on the Red Planet early Saturday to deploy its Zhurong rover, state media reported, a triumph for Beijing's increasingly bold space ambitions and a history-making feat for a nation on its first-ever Martian mission.

The lander carrying Zhurong completed the treacherous descent through the Martian atmosphere using a parachute to navigate the "seven minutes of terror" as it is known, aiming for a vast northern lava plain known as the Utopia Planitia.

It "successfully landed in the pre-selected area", state broadcaster CCTV said, launching a special TV

programme dedicated to the mission called "Nihao Mars" ("Hello Mars").

The official Xinhua news agency cited the China National Space Administration (CNSA) in confirming the touchdown. It makes China the first country to carry out an orbiting, landing and roving operation during its first mission to Mars -- a feat unmatched by the only other two nations to reach the Red Planet so far, the US and Russia.

President Xi Jinping sent his "warm congratulations and sincere greetings to all members who have participated in the Mars exploration mission", Xinhua reported. — AFP ■



A model of the Tianwen-1 Mars rover. PHOTO:AFP

Short gratitude intervention can increase academic motivation: Study



A team of researchers explored a simple strategy to increase motivation in college students by nurturing a positive emotion: gratitude. PHOTO:ANI

A team of researchers explored a simple strategy to increase motivation in college students by nurturing a positive emotion: gratitude.

The study led by researchers from Ritsumeikan University and the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), Japan, was published in the journal BMC Psychology.

Many studies have shown that even short "gratitude interventions," which are activities that increase an individual's awareness of feelings of gratitude, can have a lasting positive effect on that person's mood, satisfaction, and well-being.

However, based on previous studies, the available evidence on the effect of such interventions on academic

motivation is somewhat inconclusive.

This prompted the researchers to test the effects of a different type of gratitude intervention: daily gratitude journaling.

"Our main hypothesis was that engaging in an online gratitude journal by writing down up to five things one felt grateful for each day could make students be more aware of their academic opportunities--their 'blessings'--and help them re-evaluate their motives and goals, ultimately improving their motivation," explains Dr Norberto Eiji Nawa from NICT, first author of the study.

They recruited 84 participants, all Japanese college students, and divided them into a control group and an intervention group. — ANI ■

Kazakhstan says 350 rare antelopes killed by lightning

KAZAKHSTAN said Friday that around 350 critically endangered Saiga antelopes had been killed, probably by lightning, after villagers found their bodies in steppe land in the west of the country.

The discovery came during calving season for the Saiga, which is known for its distinctive bulbous nose.

The Kazakh ecological ministry said in a statement that lightning was the probable cause of their deaths "as there are traces of lightning strikes on the carcasses."

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), whose "Red List" is the scientific reference for threatened wildlife, lists the Saiga as among five critically endangered antelope species, with a population of around 124,000 adults.

Kazakhstan is home to the vast majority of the animals, with Russia's Kalmykia region and Mongolia hosting much smaller populations. — AFP ■

Indian state orders lockdown after 'super-spreader' election rallies

AN Indian state stricken by coronavirus after mass rallies were held for a key election ordered a two-week lockdown on Saturday in a bid to halt the spread. All offices, stores and public transport in West Bengal were told to close for 15 days after the region reported its biggest spike yet in deaths and infections.

West Bengal along with a host of southern states are bearing the brunt of a COVID-19 surge in India that has taken the nation's infection total to nearly 25 million with more than 265,000 deaths. The strain of the virus responsible has been declared a variant of "global concern" by the World Health Organization.

West Bengal accounted for 21,000 of India's 326,000 new cases reported Saturday and hos-



Narendra Modi held large rallies in the region last month. PHOTO: AFP

pitals in the state say they are swamped with patients.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi drew tens of thousands of people to rallies in the region last month ahead of state elections in which his ruling nationalist party failed to unseat

chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Banerjee also staged major rallies ahead of the polls and on Friday her brother died from coronavirus in hospital.

Many experts have said the election campaign was a "super-spreader". — AFP ■

Facing probe, Austria's Kurz sees his image dented

ONCE hailed as a "wunderkind", Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has seen his carefully built image dented amid coronavirus fatigue and an investigation into

whether he lied to a parliamentary committee on corruption.

It should have been a good month for the 34-year-old conservative — who became the

world's youngest democratically elected leader when he first took office in 2017 — with the lengthy virus lockdown easing. But prosecutors announced on Wednesday that they are investigating Kurz for giving false testimony to a committee of lawmakers probing the "Ibizagate" scandal and other graft allegations.

If charged, Kurz would be the first chancellor to have to face court while in office in the small Alpine EU member of some nine million people.

Kurz himself has dismissed the allegations, saying he expects to be charged but not to be found guilty and that he is refusing to step down, slamming what he says are efforts to unseat him. — AFP ■



Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, once hailed as a 'wunderkind' has seen his image dented. PHOTO: AFP

Portugal to open to most European tourists from Monday

PORTUGAL will open to tourists from nearly all European countries from Monday, the interior ministry said, following months of restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Travellers from EU countries with coronavirus rates below 500 cases per 100,000 residents during the last 14 days can make "all types of visits to Portugal, including even non-essential visits," the ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

It said restrictions, limited to essential trips, would be maintained for five EU countries — Cyprus, Croatia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden.

It stressed restrictions also remained on non-European countries including Brazil, India and South Africa.

"We're not opening tourism to the whole world. Restrictions remain for third countries," a ministry spokeswoman said.

Restrictions are lifted

for "passengers from the European Union, the Schengen Area and the United Kingdom," provided their rate is below 500 cases per 100,000 residents, the spokeswoman said.

The Schengen Area covers 26 European countries, most of them in the European Union.

Under the rules, all passengers above two years old heading to the country will still have to present a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours before embarking.

Airlines that allow passengers to embark without the test will face a fine between 500 euros and 2,000 euros per passenger.

The announcement came a day after Lisbon lifted restrictions from visitors from Britain, which accounted for some two million annual visitors to the country before COVID-19 hit. Portugal and Britain currently have two of the lowest virus rates in Europe. — AFP ■



TAP aircraft line up at Lisbon airport. PHOTO: AFP

Fighting resumes in southern Afghanistan as ceasefire ends

FIGHTING between the Taliban and Afghan government forces resumed Sunday in the restive southern province of Helmand, officials said, ending a three-day ceasefire agreed by the warring sides to mark the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

There were clashes on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand, which has seen intense fighting since the United States began its final

troop withdrawal from Afghanistan earlier this month, an Afghan military spokesman and a local official said.

"The fighting started early today and is still ongoing," Attaullah Afghan, head of the Helmand provincial council, told AFP.

He said Taliban fighters attacked security checkpoints on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah and other districts.

An Afghan army spokesman in the south confirmed fighting had resumed. "They (Afghan forces) started the operation... do not put the blame on us," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP.

The three-day truce initiated by the Taliban and swiftly agreed to by the Afghan government had largely held during the Eid holidays that ended on Saturday.

The calm was broken on

Friday by a blast at a mosque on the outskirts of the Afghan capital, which killed 12 people including the imam leading Friday prayers.

The Taliban denied it was behind the attack which has been claimed by the Islamic State group, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadist groups. The truce was only the fourth agreed pause in fighting in the two-decades-

long conflict.

Violence had previously surged in several provinces of Afghanistan — including former insurgent bastions Helmand and Kandahar.

It comes after negotiators from the Afghan government and Taliban said they had met in Doha on Friday to discuss speeding up peace talks, which opened in September but have made little headway. — AFP ■

Multi-billion-USD investments inked at Silk Road int'l expo

A host of cooperation deals involving investments of 158.3 billion yuan (24.6 billion U.S. dollars) were signed at the Fifth Silk Road International Exposition, which closed Saturday in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

The deals cover 72 key projects in fields including education, modern agriculture and high-tech industry.

The five-day expo has attracted more than 1,900 envoys and guests from 98 countries and regions such as Slovakia, Belgium, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan and Zambia.

Participants at the expo said that with the COVID-19 pandemic still



An exhibitor (1st R) introduces his products at the Fifth Silk Road International Exposition in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, May 11, 2021. PHOTO:XINHUA

raging across the globe, the enthusiasm of the international community in jointly promoting high-quality B&R cooperation is tantamount to a

resounding vote of confidence in the programme.

The Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by China in 2013, aims to build trade and infrastructure

networks connecting Asia with Europe and beyond along the ancient Silk Road trade routes for common development and prosperity. — Xinhua ■

Seven & i buys U.S. Speedway chain despite warning of "illegal" deal



Photo taken in February 2020 shows a convenience store (R) attached to a Speedway gas station in New York. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPANESE retailer Seven & i Holdings Co. said Saturday it has completed its \$21 billion acquisition of Speedway LLC, a U.S. convenience store chain and gas station network, despite U.S. antitrust officials saying the deal may be "illegal."

The future of Seven & i's purchase of Speedway could be under scrutiny after the acting chairwoman and a commissioner of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission said in a statement Friday, "We have reason to believe that this transaction is illegal." They said the deal raises "significant competitive concerns in hundreds of local retail gas-

oline and diesel fuel markets across the country." 7-Eleven Inc., a U.S. subsidiary of Seven and i, said in its press release the same day, that completion of the purchase was "legally allowed." Tokyo-based Seven & i said it has acquired the convenience store and fuel retail businesses of Marathon Petroleum Corp., the U.S. oil refiner that owns Speedway.

The U.S. subsidiary added that to address such competitive concerns, it divested 293 fuel outlets, and was informed that the FTC staff has recommended that the commissioners approve the deal. — Kyodo News ■

British chef Clare Smyth reopens doors after third Michelin star

DURING lockdown, British chef Clare Smyth won the ultimate accolade of three Michelin stars for her London restaurant and she is optimistic for the sector despite the current challenges.

The 42-year-old from Northern Ireland became the first British woman to be awarded three Michelin stars in January -- one of only four British chefs to have achieved the honour.

She says getting the third star for her Core restaurant was a "dream come true" adding that it was

"brilliant that it happened in such a difficult year".

Britain's hospitality sector has been hit hard by the pandemic with restaurants barred from indoor service over the winter months. During lockdown the staff at Core, which opened in London's fashionable Notting Hill neighbourhood in 2017, spent time preparing hundreds of meals for charity.

The restaurant also began offering takeaway and delivery menus, "which worked really well", Smyth says. — AFP ■



Clare Smyth says getting the third Michelin star for her Core restaurant was a "dream come true". PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Luxembourg firm aims to spur music royalties investment in Japan

A Luxembourg startup that runs a platform for investing in music royalties is looking to expand into Japan through a tie-up with the country's first royalties transaction brokerage.

ANote Music Sarl said it hopes its partnership with Tokyo-based Royalty Bank, announced in April, will spur royalty investments for Japanese music catalogues and other assets, including a rapidly growing comics and animation market that alone generates around 3.7 billion euros (\$4.5 billion) a year.

"This is a huge milestone for ANote Music as we take the next step in our continued global expansion," Marzio F. Schena, CEO and co-founder of ANote Music, said in a statement.

"We're delighted that our market leading technology assist both established and new artists looking to develop and grow, while providing investors with long term, stable income through the royalties this growth will generate," he said.

Music royalty investment is growing with the emergence of streaming services that generate more predictable revenue streams and attract wider audiences. Such investment is seen as relatively low risk, little affected by financial market movements.

Under the system, publishers, record labels, and artists seeking to raise funds sell music rights, while investors earn the chance to own shares in promising artists. — AFP ■

New China-Russia air cargo route launched

AN international air freight route linking Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, and Russia's Novosibirsk has been launched.

A Boeing 767-300F aircraft loaded with 18 tonnes of goods took off from Xi'an on Friday, kicking off operations on this new air cargo route.

Round trip cargo flights, operated by SF Airlines, China's leading air-cargo carrier, will ply once a week on the route. The cargo flights will mainly deal with outbound e-commerce logistics ordered by buyers via Russian e-commerce websites, and China's imports of general trade goods from Russia.

To date, the Xi'an Xianyang International Airport has opened 37 full cargo routes, including 18 international routes. — AFP ■

Myanma Port Authority "Notice of High Tide"

Exceptionally high spring from 20.21 feet to 20.67 feet high above the chart datum are expected to occur in Yangon River during the period of May 25th to May 28th, 2021. Please be noted that it is not serious level of tide because the highest tide level have reached up to 22 feet above the chart datum in year 2014 and 2015, and this notice is normally issued whenever high tide of Yangon River is expected to reach over 20 feet high above the chart datum in order to take precautionary measures to the public living near river foreshore area of Yangon City.

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'Yamas!' Greek islanders drink to a better tourism season

"YAMAS! Cheers to a good season," says Nikiforos Karifilakis as he pours shots of 'tsikoudia', the strong traditional Cretan spirit, a day after Greece reopened to tourists.

His beach bar is at the very end of the famous long wide sandy beach of Falasarna on the northwestern tip of Crete.

"I'm very optimistic that everything will be fine in the end and we will survive financially," says Karifilakis.

"I get positive messages from the hoteliers. People have the need to finally go out, have fun."

Greece on Friday officially joined the race to woo back tourists, hoping the sun, sand and sea will lure holidaymakers after months of lockdown and bring the country a desperately needed revenue boost after



Falasarna beach was famous for its big summer parties, which will once again not be possible this year, but some tourists have already returned. PHOTO: AFP

last year's miserable holiday season.

Before the pandemic, Falasarna beach was famous

among others for its crowded big summer parties, which will not be possible again this summer.

"The most difficult part last year was when curfew was reimposed in the middle of the tourist season and we had to

close our full bar at 11pm right at the peak of the night," Karifilakis says.

"We hope we will avoid it this time, and all restrictions will be gradually eased."

Tourists still a rare sight

The pandemic has badly hit deeply affected the Greek economy, heavily reliant on the tourism sector which accounts for more than 20 percent of GDP.

Tourism revenue plunged to 4.28 billion euros (\$5.0 billion) in 2020 from 18 billion euros in 2019, while tourist arrivals fell 76.5 per cent to just 7.4 million, according to the Greek Tourism Confederation Institute.

"We hope the season will manage to cover part of last season losses, when revenues were minimal," the mayor of Chania Panayiotis Simandirakis told AFP. —AFP ■

Stocks rebound on bargain-buying after inflation-fueled rout

BARGAIN-BUYING Friday helped major markets bounce back from some of this week's steep losses as investors bet on the US economy's recovery, despite lingering inflation fears.

Oil prices recovered after heavy losses a day earlier to end the week in the black as equities rose, but the dollar lost ground following recent gains. Bitcoin finished below \$50,000 after oscillating throughout the day.

Global stocks have been convulsed for months by expectations that a blockbuster global recovery will send prices rocketing, forcing central banks -- particularly the Federal Reserve -- to taper the ultra-loose monetary policies that have helped drive

a rally for more than a year. But in the United States, the economy appears to be "opening at a faster clip" and the price gains that come with it may not be a problem, Quincy Krosby of Prudential Financial said. "It seems as if the market is accepting that as long as it also is in concert with the economy doing better and corporate earnings doing better, it can withstand a little bit more inflation," Krosby told AFP.

Wall Street gained definitively after three back-to-back losses earlier in the week, with the Dow finishing up 1.1 per cent and the Nasdaq adding 2.3 per cent, though the indices were about the same amount lower for the week overall. —AFP ■



The US economy is recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, but shoppers took a breather in April. PHOTO: AFP

US retail sales flat in April after March surge

AFTER a rush of shopping in March, US consumers took a break in April and total retail sales were flat, according to government data released Friday.

Sales held steady at just under \$620 billion, as declines in clothing, sporting goods, furniture, gasoline and even the roaring ecommerce market were offset by gains in cars, electronics, food and health care, the Commerce Department's advance report said.

The cooling off came after a 10.7 per cent jump in March compared to February, and was far worse than the consensus among economists, which projected a modest increase.

Sales in April were more than 51 per cent higher than the same month last year, when the



Auto sales increased modestly in April, but total US retail sales were flat. PHOTO: AFP

Covid-19 pandemic first forced the near-shutdown of the world's largest economy.

Even with the influx of another round of government stimulus payments, consumers

seemed to take a pause.

Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics called the result "a modest post-stimulus hangover after the March binge." —AFP ■

Boeing must inspect older 737 jets after Indonesia crash: FAA

US aviation regulator is ordering Boeing to inspect older generation 737 jets, after the January crash of an aircraft off Indonesia that killed 62 people.

All Boeing 737-300, -400 and -500 planes will need to be examined, a total of 143 aircraft, according to a document from the Federal Aviation Administration seen by AFP yesterday.

A failure of the "flap synchro wire" missed by the autothrottle computer -- which manages the plane's thrust -- "could result in loss of control of the airplane", the document said.

An interim report from Indonesian investigators in February said the doomed jet's throttles showed an "anomaly", though it said the cause of the crash was unclear.

"The preliminary data of the ongoing accident investigation shows that it is highly unlikely that the accident resulted from the latent failure of the flap synchro wire," the FAA said.

But it said the inspection is "necessary to address the identified unsafe condition" that could be found in the planes, which were built in the 1980s and 1990s. —AFP ■

On horseback and in helicopter, Bolsonaro rallies base

FAR-RIGHT Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro rallied his base Saturday, appearing on horseback and even in a helicopter flyover, as his popularity dips and he faces harsh criticism for his handling of the pandemic which has ravaged his country.

Hundreds of trucks arrived in Brasilia early in the morning after Bolsonaro put out a call for rallies in several cities, which were meant to gather the country's conservative "soldiers", including farmers and the religious right.

Brazil, which has recorded more than 430,000 Covid-19 deaths and is notching more than 2,000 more each day, is the second hardest-hit country in the world after the United



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (C) arrives on horseback at a demonstration by farmers in Brasilia, on May 15, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

States.

Unlike America, however, it is facing difficulties in acquiring enough vaccines for its 212 million people.

Bolsonaro, who has called the deadly virus nothing more than a "little flu" and questioned the efficacy of vaccines, has seen his approval rating hit an all-time

low of 24 per cent, according to a survey published this week by the respected firm Datafolha.

The survey additionally revealed that 49 per cent of Brazilians favor his impeachment, with 46 against.

'Support of our president'

"We are here giving support to our president," said Carine de Souza, a rural producer from Mato Grosso state who was at the rally in Brasilia. "We need support, because agriculture did not come to a halt in the pandemic."

Bolsonaro flew over the rally in a helicopter and appeared on horseback to greet tens of thousands of followers who assembled on the Esplanade of Ministries. — AFP ■

Chileans vote for body to rewrite dictatorship-era constitution



Mapuche indigenous women wait to vote during Chile's elections in Temuco on March 15, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

CHILEANS head to the polls Sunday in a second day of voting to elect 155 people who will rewrite the country's dictatorship-era constitution in a bid to address deep-seated social inequality that gave rise to deadly protests in 2019.

Some 14 million people are eligible to vote this weekend in what many consider to be Chile's most important election since its return to democracy 31 years ago.

More than three million people, or approximately 20.4 per cent of the electorate, cast their ballot Saturday, according to the country's Electoral Service.

"I hope that we have a

constitution that captures the soul of our nation," President Sebastian Pinera said after casting his ballot in the capital Santiago.

Silvia Navarrete, a 35-year-old economist, was at a Santiago polling place with her young daughter in her arms. She said she had voted for a system that "works for everyone, allowing all voices to be heard" and ensuring "that rights and duties are really fair for all human beings."

And 40-year-old university professor Carlos Huertas said his ballot went to candidates who had been active in "this social revolution" — referring to the 2019 protests. — AFP ■

Rising crime takes centre stage in New York mayoral race

NEW YORK, which has long prided itself on being one of the world's safest cities, is experiencing a surge in crime, with the topic becoming a central theme of a mayoral race set to be decided in June.

Crime was endemic in the Big Apple in the 1970s and 1980s when America's largest metropolis was gripped by a budgetary crisis, but it has been on a continuous downward trend since the mid-1990s.

However, the picture has deteriorated drastically since last summer. What initially looked like a byproduct of the movement against police violence following George Floyd's murder and social dislocation caused by the pandemic appears no longer to be the case.

From knife attacks on the

subway to a surge in shootings, including in Times Square last weekend, violence is "definitely up", says John Pfaff, a criminal law professor at Fordham University.

"The spike of 2020 does run the risk of continuing into 2021," he told AFP.

"I see a huge economic uncertainty, a huge emotional stress, you have institutions that are shut down across the board.

All these things are going to contribute to violence and then that violence can be somewhat self-perpetuating going forward," Pfaff added.

New York is gradually beginning to emerge from the coronavirus crisis and unemployment is falling, but crime statistics are far from improving. — AFP ■



Mayoral candidate Andrew Yang speaks to media on May 9, 2021, a day after a shooting in Times Square. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden expresses 'grave concern' to Netanyahu, tells Abbas rocket fire must 'cease'

US President Joe Biden expressed his "grave concern" over violence in Israel and Gaza in a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Saturday while separately telling Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas that Hamas must "cease firing rockets."

Speaking on the sixth day of a paroxysm of Israeli-Palestinian violence that has left scores dead or wounded, Biden expressed his "strong support" for Israel's right to defend itself against rocket attacks by "Hamas and other terrorist groups," in his call with Netanyahu, while also emphasizing his clear concern over the deadly flare-up and casualties on both sides.

"He condemned these indiscriminate attacks against towns and cities across Israel," the White House statement said. — AFP ■

Thousands of Colombians in anti-govt march in Madrid

THOUSANDS of Colombians marched through central Madrid on Saturday in support of anti-governments protests back home which over 40 people have been killed in clashes with police.

The protesters in Madrid, many wearing the national colours or draped in the Colombian flag, marched up a main road in festive but determined mood, chanting "Democracy", "Peace and Justice" while waving "SOS" banners.

At the head of the procession, one protester had sewn his lips together.

Colombia's foreign minister Claudia Blum resigned Thursday following international condemnation of excessive force used by law enforcers against civilians engaged in anti-government protests since April 28.

Clashes between Colombian police and protesters have resulted in at least 42 deaths -- including one police officer -- and more than 1,500 injuries to date, according to official figures. — AFP ■

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MPFL 2021 to be launched with 32 teams

A total of 32 teams will compete in the upcoming 2021 Malaysia Premier Futsal League (MPFL), according to the ASEAN Football Federation.

Twenty teams will be included in the men's category, while

12 teams will be in the women's category, said officials.

"Presence of old and new teams will enhance MPFL 2021 competition that is expected to be more intense. Registration of a foreign player has been allowed

for both categories," said FAM Vice-President and Chairman Datuk Seri Rosmadi Ismail of the FAM Futsal & Beach Football Committee. "Through a screening process, FAM has had the opportunity to introduce the prop-

er structure of Futsal and also educate teams on the management and administration of Futsal teams at the national level."

"We at FAM are very grateful for the support and commitment shown by MPFL sponsors, name-

ly CUCKOO, Yoodo, Firefly, Astro, Kaki Jersi, 100PLUS and Joma, which clearly reflects MPFL's credibility to add value to our products and brands," the FAM Futsal Committee Chairman added. —GNLM ■

North Korea pull out of World Cup qualifiers



North Korea have pulled out of qualifying for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. PHOTO:AFP

NORTH Korea have pulled out of next month's qualifying matches for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the Asian Football Confederation said Sunday.

"The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed the withdrawal of the DPR Korea Football Association from the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022," the AFC said in a statement.

No reasons were given for the withdrawal but South Korean media reported earlier this month that Pyongyang had

said it would skip the qualifiers over coronavirus fears. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced most of the second round of Asia's preliminary tournament for the Qatar World Cup to be postponed until June.

The AFC said last month it would change the format of the tournaments so that each group of five nations would play in one host country. South Korea was selected as the centralised venue host for Group H, which is led by Turkmenistan and also included the two Koreas, Lebanon and Sri

Lanka.

North Korea were fourth in Asian qualifying Group H, but only a point behind Group H leaders Turkmenistan with three games still to be played before their withdrawal.

The AFC said a decision would be made later on the standings in Group H after referring the matter to FIFA's organizing committee for competitions.

The tournament doubles up as qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup, to be held in China. — AFP ■

Spotify boss says bid for Arsenal rejected, remains 'interested'

SPOTIFY co-founder Daniel Ek said Saturday a formal offer to buy Arsenal had been rejected by the Premier League club's American owners. In a statement on Twitter, the Swedish tycoon said the club's owners, Kroenke Sports and Entertainment (KSE), had rebuffed his bid.

"This week an offer was made to (KSE co-owner) Josh Kroenke and their bankers that included fan ownership, representation at the board and a golden share for the supporters," Ek said.

"They replied that they don't need the money. I remain interested should that situation ever change." Lifelong Arsenal fan Ek first expressed an inter-

est in mounting a bid for the club last month in the wake of the aborted European Super League plan.

Arsenal were one of six Premier League teams that signed up for the breakaway league, which collapsed barely 48 hours later after a massive backlash across the football world.

Arsenal fans staged an angry protest outside the Emirates Stadium demanding a change of ownership of the club.

US billionaire Stan Kroenke, through KSE, has been the Gunners' majority shareholder for a decade and took full control of the club by buying out Russian oligarch Alisher Usmanov's stake in 2018. — AFP ■



Spotify co-founder Daniel Ek says he had a bid for Arsenal rejected by the club's US owners. PHOTO:AFP

Zidane casts doubt over future as Real Madrid coach



Zinedine Zidane hinted on Saturday he could leave as coach of Real Madrid at the end of the season. PHOTO: AFP

ZINEDINE Zidane hinted on Saturday he could leave as coach of Real Madrid at the end of the season, saying he believes "there comes a time when it's the moment to change". Zidane's contract expires in 2022 but he has repeatedly refused to confirm he will still be at the club next season.

The Frenchman has a history of surprises after resigning as coach unexpectedly in 2018 before making a shock return a year later.

As a player, he initially announced his retirement from international football in 2004 before coming back for the 2006 World Cup, after which he retired for good.

"You talk about me leaving in 2006 and 2018

and it's like you think I leave because I'm shirking responsibility or that I quit when things get tough," said Zidane in a press conference. "It's not, the only thing about me is that what I do, I do to the end, and then there comes a time when it's the moment to change. For everyone, not just for me. For the club, for the good of the club, for the people.

"I don't leave because it's easy. It's not like I turn away and don't look back. No, there are moments when you have to be there and there are moments when that's it, it's finished, it's time to change. But for the good of everyone, not just for me." — AFP ■