

NATIONAL

Total number of COVID-19 cases reaches 85 on Thursday

PAGE-7

NATIONAL

New Year Greetings of Vice Presidents, Hluttaw Speakers, C-in-C of Defence Services

PAGE-4

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 1, 10th Waning of Tagu 1382 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Friday, 17 April 2020

Greetings from President U Win Myint for Myanmar New Year



President U Win Myint delivers New Year Greetings for the Myanmar New Year ME 1382. PHOTO: MNA

I urge all of you cooperate and participate to solve this problem by combatting this global pandemic in unity as a national duty as everyone has a responsibility.

New Year Day 1382 ME
17 April, 2020

I wish to extend my good wishes for good health and peace of mind on the occasion of the New Year to all esteemed citizens of Myanmar.

I am deeply saddened by the fact that because of COVID-19 global pandemic during this year's Thingyan, all of you could not move freely and have fun.

SEE PAGE-3

State Counsellor: Regarding COVID-19, interventions will begin with legal actions

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that the requirements for prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 have now become clearer and more precise and that with regard to COVID-19, interventions will begin with legal actions.

WE now have (85) confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections. Requirements for prevention, containment and treatment have now become clearer and more precise. The most important thing is the need for all to understand the prevailing situation clearly.

Regarding COVID-19, we will begin our intervention with legal actions. We will issue a statement tonight outlining what legal action will be taken according to what law on which person for what offence. This is to ensure that it will be fair, correct and the same for everyone.

Notifications and statements of the Ministry of Health and Sports will be announced in wards and villages five times daily. I want all of you to listen carefully and follow these instructions.

Another important matter relates to quarantine. Some people are really scared of quarantine. Is this because you don't like the fact that you cannot move about freely? If you are put under quarantine will you be worrying that "I will catch the virus from them if I have to stay with infected persons". Let us look at the second point. Among those who have become infected, those who got infected from family members are also not that

small in number. The reason for putting people under quarantine is to ensure that others (including family members) are not infected; it is also to make sure that once symptoms of the virus are detected, treatment can be given promptly. Just think about this – how horrible it would be if the COVID-19 virus is carried by the infected person who runs away from quarantine.

Regarding losing freedom of movement, let me share something from a person who has had this kind of experience. These things pass. When you look back what remains is the strength of "I have endured this". Please endure the three weeks with patience. This will become your strength later.

We will be implementing programmes in the coming days to give recognition and practical support to the front line health workers and quarantine volunteers who constitute a very important source of strength for all of us today.

On this last day of Thingyan, I would like to convey my good wishes to all our people who are feeling really stressed out, to have peace of mind and good health. May all your good wishes come true!

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

Gathering of five or more banned by MoHS

THE Ministry of Health and Sports issued an order yesterday banning the gathering of five or more people, in a bid to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

According to the Ministry, anyone violating the order could face punishments, as set out in the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

Full text of the order is covered on Page 3.

Myanmar enters New Year 1382 ME: Greetings of Sayadaws

**Abhidhaja Maha Ratthaguru
Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa
Chairman of State Sangh Maha Nayaka Committee**

Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic so far. No effective medicine has been found yet to cure this disease.

There was a powerful medicine that could heal a pandemic over 2,600 years ago. It can be used very frequently with a strong belief.

A concise instruction is:

- (1) Recite Yatana Sutta thrice a day
- (2) Recite Metta Sutta thrice a day
- (3) Contemplate the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha thrice a day.

By understanding the meanings,

- (1) the Yatana Sutta must be chanted loudly and clearly in the early morning, at noon and before going to bed at night.
- (2) the Metta Sutta in the early morning, at noon and before going to bed at night.
- (3) Take 10 rounds of beads in contemplating each the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha in the morning, at noon and before going to bed at night.

After each time of taking beads, it is better to share merits, in making wishes for the end of COVID-19 pandemic.

I also wish all the universal creatures for being healthy and wealthy.



In Abhidhamma treatises,

The meanings of 'sympathy' were thoroughly defined. One concept clarified that it is close to monitoring the lives of helpless people. It is also a careful consideration of people, regardless of colours, race and faiths.

The Abhidhamma also defined the term 'sympathy' as the compassion which is a noble spirit how to remove other's suffering.

About 500,000 of Buddhist monks are extending their sympathy, verbally and mentally, to all the persons in physical and mental sufferings.

1. May all beings in suffering be free from suffering.
2. May all beings in danger be free from danger.
3. May all beings in sorrow be free from sorrow.

Our sympathy is aimed for all beings, regardless of faiths. The sympathy is not for religious faith, just a practice. It is a common way to remove universal suffering. The common enemy must be fought against with the common way. The sympathy goes beyond the religious boundary. It can be generated in any faiths. Every religious leader preached the concept of sympathy. Moreover, members of every faith are performing volunteering acts of sympathy. Therefore, the sympathy is noble spirit and is a common highway to take together in removing the suffering and sorrow of human beings.

Moreover, sympathy is also a common ground in which all the global people can coexist peacefully.

Before and during the time of Buddha, people from Magadha State and Viji State staged wars for many times. While the Buddha was residing in Rajagaha city of Magadha State, a severe drought in Viji State caused starvation, leading to the outbreak of various diseases. It seemed to be more severe than the Coronavirus. Poisonous air circulated in the atmosphere. People died from inhaling the air and that they had to cover their noses. Ogres and demons intruded into the residential areas. The chieftains of Viji State failed to stop them. Finally, they had to approach the enemy king of Magadha State to invite the Buddha. They realized to face against the pandemic by declaring ceasefire as it was a common enemy. The two states consolidated for moral support of solidarity in removing the disease. The unity leads to the visit of Buddha to the Viji State.

Due to the great sympathy of Buddha and his 500 disciples, the disease was eradicated from the state. No more poison is in the atmosphere. People could breathe in the fresh air, followed by heavy rain to clean the whole city.

May our compassionate spirit remove all suffering and sorrow of the whole world totally. May all beings be liberated from all sorrow and suffering.

May all beings be blissful like a full moon.



Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Nyanissara in Sagaing Hill

Rector Sayadaw Dr Nandamala Bhivamsa

The Myanmar Era 1381 began with joyfulness, and it has ended with a shocking and terrible COVID-19 pandemic.

Every being cannot expect only pleasure. The ongoing disease has alerted miseries in our lives.

Meanwhile, the philanthropic works of Myanmar people are very impressive during the crisis.

Power of loving-kindness developed by the monks

and the laypersons, their volunteering acts, physical unity and mental harmony are believed to overcome all the difficulties.

Hate, hostility, ingratitude, selfishness, jealousy and egocentric behaviour must be realized as more dangerous diseases than the ongoing pandemic.

May all the people free from all the dangers and disease as of the ME 1382 Myanmar New Year. May all beings enjoy longevity and happiness.



Dhamma Duta Ashin Cekinda

May all people—between the parents and their offspring, the teachers and their followers, the elder and the young persons—care about and regard each other.

May all the relatives help and support each other. May all the neighbours make trust with each other. May all the diverse communities join their hands.

May all the devotees live peacefully in accordance with the teachings of respective religions. May all people extend their loving-kindness to one another, and reach all the expected destinations beyond the challenges.

(Translated by Aung Khin)

"People are the key"

Greetings from President U Win Myint for Myanmar New Year

FROM PAGE-1

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the staff implementing protection, containment and treatment procedures concerning COVID-19, the donors and civil society organizations helping out, the professionals, experts and members of the media for their assistance, and to all the citizens for closely following the directives and regulations issued during this period. I urge all of you cooperate and participate to solve this problem by combatting this global pandemic in unity as a national duty as everyone has a responsibility.

My fellow citizens,

The Union Government is working hard to address the global pandemic, COVID-19, through systematic preparations and processes. At the same time, we are implementing with unflagging zeal, the aspirations and hopes of the people, concerning rule of law, socioeconomic development, national reconciliation, internal peace and establishing a democratic federal republic, which reflects the goals and hopes of the Union Government.

The Union Government understands that now is the time for reforms to implement national peace and that is why we are speeding up reforms for sectors such as the political,

economic, education and health sectors. There are visible and intangible accomplishments in this regard.

My fellow citizens,

In this new age of globalization, our Union Government believes reforms are opportunities to build peace and prosperity and implement development across the nation. Change is not something to worry about in the 21st Century for the socio-economic development of the people. We understand that change is not a danger but is in the interests of all our citizens. That is why it is important to have genuine feelings for reform in establishing a demo-

cratic federal republic.

My fellow citizens,

Today is the auspicious day of transitioning to the New Year. We shall continue on our journey with renewed spirits and strength. In the same way, we need to step into the New Year with new thoughts and new visions for the national interest of our State.

We are working with strong will, strong determination and strengthened resolve for the success of the people's hopes and goals of the Union Government, and will continue to do so on this journey. We will take the experiences of the previous year as lessons learnt to

strive for better results in the New Year.

The nation and its citizens have the power to implement their own destinies and the people are solemnly urged to continue cooperation with the government while the opportunity still presents itself.

- May all citizens have good health and peace of mind,
- May you all be free from the danger of COVID-19
- May the Union progress and develop in peace and prosperity.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Chinese medical team calls on Union Minister for Health and Sports



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe meets with a team of Chinese medical experts assisting in combatting the COVID-19 disease in Myanmar, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A team of Chinese medical experts assisting in combatting the COVID-19 disease in Myanmar called on Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The team from China's Yunnan Province comprised of 12 medical experts who specialize in various areas including treatment, nursing, laboratory and traditional medicines, arrived Myanmar on 8th April.

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe expressed thanks to the team for sharing their experiences on prevention, control and diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 in China and in Myanmar's Yangon and Mandalay regions with Myanmar medical experts during their stay in Myanmar.

The Union Minister also offered Chinese medical experts to continue the cooperation with Myanmar experts not only for the COVID-19 disease control, containment and treatment but also for other health care services.

Mr Chen Hai, Ambassador of China, also joined the meeting with the video conference and pledged to continue closed cooperation with Myanmar's ministries concerned in prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease.

Chinese medical experts shared their experiences on assisting in testing the disease at the National Health Laboratory in Yangon, their observation at the Yangon General Hospital, North Okkalapa General Hospital, Mandalay General Hospital and

Mandalay's Kantawnadi Hospital, discussion with Myanmar experts at the Traditional Medicine Hospital (Yangon), Public Health Laboratory (Mandalay) and Traditional Medicine Hospital (Mandalay), preventive measures and their recommendations on therapies and research.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe made concluding remarks acknowledging that the recommendations by the Chinese medical team would be very helpful for fighting the global pandemic in Myanmar.

The Chinese medical team brought necessary medical supplies worth of Chinese Yuan 4,337, 334 for the Ministry of Health and Sports.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports Order No 37/2020 9th Waning 1381 ME (16 April 2020)

The Ministry of Health and Sport has issued this order under the authority of Article 21 (b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports has categorized the Coronavirus Disease 2019- COVID-19 as a disease of swift spread or the case to be reported with the Order No. 19/2020 on 28 February 2020.

2. The public must abide by orders and instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Public Health Department, regarding prevention and containment measures against the COVID-19.

3. Five or more than five persons are prohibited from gathering, except for the following reasons, in bid to contain the spread of COVID-19—

- (a) Going to and returning from office duties at the state departments/organizations
- (b) Going to and returning from the workplace for duties at the companies, factories and workshops
- (c) Buying and selling at permitted markets and shopping malls
- (d) Transports of permitted commodities
- (e) Court proceedings
- (f) Permitted measures against COVID-19
- (g) Emergency rescues and emergency cases
- (h) Going to hospital and clinic for health issue
- (i) Funeral affairs

Actions will be taken against those breaching the orders and instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Public Health Department, regarding the COVID-19, under the the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

Sd/
Dr Myint Htwe
Union Minister

(Translated by Aung Khin)

New Year Greetings of VPs, Hluttaw Speakers, C-in-C of Defence Services

No matter the difficulties that lie ahead, with the unity and collective strength of the people, by being mindful of health regulations, and with discipline and unity, I believe that we would be able to overcome this pandemic successfully:
VP U Myint Swe

Greetings to all citizens and ethnic national brothers and sisters.

May you all be blessed with good health and peace of mind.

During this auspiciousness New Year period, authorities are endeavoring hard to contain and perform emergency responses to combat COVID-19, a disease which has caused much fear and anxiety to the people. No matter the difficulties that lie ahead, with the unity and collective strength of the people, by being mindful of health regulations, and with discipline and unity, I believe that we would be able to overcome this pandemic successfully.

May all ethnic national brothers and sisters overcome the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly, achieve nationwide



Vice President U Myint Swe. **PHOTO: MNA**

peace and may all citizens attain improvement in all aspects of socioeconomic development.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

I believe that the people will remain at home to mitigate the chances of spreading the virus: VP U Henry Van Thio

I would first like to wish all of you auspiciousness and prosperity on the occasion of the auspicious New Year.

There are twelve seasonal festivals in Myanmar culture and the welcoming of the New Year during the Thingyan celebrations is the most enjoyable and most prominent festival of them all.

It is a deeply held belief that the Thingyan festival is the time when we wash away the negativity from the previous year. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all countries including Myanmar, we have not been able to celebrate the Thingyan festival this year.

However, I believe that the people will remain at home to mitigate the chances of spreading the virus and symbolically wash away the old year's negativity in their minds, as they welcome the New Year.

Take lessons from the experiences of the past year, prevent the spread of COVID-19 by resolutely making individual efforts through understanding and strong will, and warmly welcome in the Myanmar New Year of 1382 ME.



Vice President U Henry Van Thio. **PHOTO: MNA**

During the auspicious time of the New Year, I extend good wishes for the socioeconomic development of all ethnic national brothers and sisters; may you all be able to work strenuously and in unity for the formation of the democratic federal republic and national development; may you all be able to overcome difficulties and hardships successfully; may you all be safeguarded from calamities and be blessed with good health and happiness.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

I urge all citizens to adhere to health directives and regulations issued by the Union Government: Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

Dear esteemed citizens of Myanmar, Greetings! May you have good health, prosperity and be free from all dangers during the New Year.

Our Hluttaw is tasked with reviewing, amending, repealing and enacting laws to benefit the nation and its citizens, in addition to safeguarding their human rights and socioeconomic livelihoods.

COVID-19 is currently spreading across the globe, including Myanmar, and the Union Government is swiftly responding with prevention, containment and treatment procedures at the national level.

I urge all citizens to adhere to health directives and regulations issued by the Union Government and may you all be



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. **PHOTO: MNA**

safe from all dangers.

(translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

'Everyone has individual responsibility' and keep the Union spirit: Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker

May all ethnic nationals and citizens in Myanmar and Myanmar nationals overseas be blessed with good health and prosperity and be safe from all dangers.

As the old year gives way to the new year, may all the challenges and hardships serve as lessons to be learnt and be prepared for better results and be filled with new strengths, thoughts and vision moving forward.

During this path forward, may the people's wish for a democratic federal republic that brings peace and prosperity be realized as the Hluttaws from the legislative pillar strive forth for the nation and its people. The people will keep in mind 'Everyone has individual responsibility' and keep the Union spirit as they work



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. **PHOTO: MNA**

together for the new nation.

Starting from the New Year, may all the citizens of the nation from all various faiths be successful; may you all be able transition the New Year without worry and anxiety.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing makes Myanmar New Year Wishes

I would like to extend my greeting to all the national people, while making wishes for their well-being.

The Myanmar Era 1381 has ended. During this period, Myanmar people experienced both successes and challenges.

At the end of year, we began to encounter the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). I also firmly believe that we could overcome this crisis with our united efforts.

Following guidelines and instructions

would be very helpful to end this disease.

I want to express my wishes for all the people during the Myanmar New Year occasion to free from worry and delusion, and to enjoy the fulfillment of sincere desires.

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. **PHOTO: C-IN-C OF DEFENCE SERVICES OFFICE**



Myanmar New Year Wishes of Businesspersons

By Min Thit (MNA)
Photo: Nay Lin

U Aung Ko Win Patron of UMFCCI

I would like to extend my wishes for the well-being of all the national people beginning the Myanmar New Year.

Responsible attitude of individuals, in following the guidelines and instructions, could overcome the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

Capable persons and common people need to contribute their donations to support the government during the crisis.

Myanmar must adopt plans to lessen the impact of this disease on the national economy like other global countries.

I also make a deepest wish for the emergence of a modern developed nation with the public participation in the government's efforts in development of health, economy, peace, education, rule of law and security.

U Zaw Min Win Chairman of UMFCCI

I make my wishes to all local and international organizations and the affiliated organizations for their prosperity and well-being of their members.

As we all are joining hands in the development of private sector and measures against the COVID-19, I also wish for being happy and healthy of all of the people.

U Chit Khaing Myanmar Apex Bank (MAB)

I express my wishes to all the Myanmar people to overcome the ongoing pandemic. We could also gain success in the national economy in the



U Aung Ko Win
Patron of UMFCCI



U Zaw Min Win
Chairman of UMFCCI



U Chit Khaing
Myanmar Apex Bank (MAB)



Dr Khin Shwe
Chairman of Zaykabar Company



U Ko Ko Htwe
Chairman of Taw Win Family Company



U Tin Maung
Chairman of Myanmar Real Property Development Association



Dr San San Ye
Chairperson of Okka Thiri Company Limited

post-COVID-19 with the united strength.

Dr Khin Shwe Chairman of Zaykabar Company

This year's Thingyan festival was coincided with the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease. The government has advised home stay to contain the spread of disease. The pandemic slashed all the economies. It

is important to overcome this outbreak.

There are many challenges for us in the future, including to contain the disease, to prepare for short and long term plan for recovery of collapsed businesses due to the disease and to create jobs for the unemployed people who returned from Thailand. I also expect good news for Myanmar people during the auspicious Myanmar New Year.

U Ko Ko Htwe Chairman of Taw Win Family Company

May all the people being healthy and wealthy. I also wish for all to overcome the strange COVID-19 disease.

It is important to impose self-restrictions in avoiding the infection of disease.

U Tin Maung Chairman of Myanmar Real Property Development Association

ciation

May all the Myanmar people be wealthy and happy. They could resume their business only when the outbreak of COVID-19 disease ended.

People also need to abide by the guidelines and instructions of the government to contain the transmission of disease. So, let's stay at home during the suggested period.

Dr San San Ye Chairperson of Okka Thiri Company Limited

I wish Myanmar people could control the ongoing disease, and enjoy prosperity.

We could surely rebuild the economies if we try in unity with more multiple efforts.

We all need to understand why we could not celebrate the Myanmar New Year water festival this year as a measure to contain the spread of disease.

(Translated by
Aung Khin)



COVID-19 prevention processes ongoing in IDP camps

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is cooperating with relevant departments and organizations to implement protection, containment and response towards COVID-19 in IDP camps across the nation.

Yesterday, 2,823 soap bars and 5,646 masks were distributed to 1,000 households of Thetkeyyin IDP camp in Sit-

tway, Rakhine State, and to 1,823 households of Saytamargyi IDP centre with an infrared thermometer given to each centre.

In addition, counselling services are offered free of charge through 4 communication operators, from 9 am to 4 pm daily, to residents of Khananlisu Baptist IDP centre, Maw Phaung Lawwaw IDP centre and St John

Catholic IDP centre in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

Posters saying instances of domestic violence and gender-based violence can be reported by the victim or someone they trust to phone numbers 067-404222 and 067-404999 were also put up in each of the centres. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has given soap bars, masks and Infrared Thermometers to households from Saytamargyi IDP centre. PHOTO: MNA

New Year greetings from interfaith organizations

U Thaung Htaik (Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees member / Chairperson of Myanmar Interfaith Central Organization)

I pray for all brothers and sisters of different faiths in Myanmar to be free from the grips of the global pandemic and possess mental and physical wellbeing, while having the strength to bring about peace and prosperity for the nation.

I urge all citizens to adhere to the health rules and regulations for preventing the spread of the virus, so that we may all be eventually free from its grip.



U Thaung Htaik (Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees member / Chairperson of Myanmar Interfaith Central Organization)

Stephen Than Myint Oo (Archbishop of Church of the Province of Myanmar [Anglican])

Our Father in Heaven, filled with compassion, kindness and love, bless the citizens of Myanmar during the occasion of Myanmar New Year. May they possess wealth of mind and health and be free from illnesses so

that this year may be filled with auspiciousness, in the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dearly beloved people of Myanmar, the important thing to do to overcome this hardship is to remain at home in patience and gain victory upon this threat to the global population. May peace and good health be upon you.



Stephen Than Myint Oo (Archbishop of Church of the Province of Myanmar [Anglican])

Al Haj Kalifa U Aye Lwin (Myanmar) Chief Convener, Islamic Centre of Myanmar)

Let me first wish peace and wellbeing in both mind and body upon the people of Myanmar during this auspicious New Year transition. The challenges we are currently facing are steps we must undertake to achieve success. Let us use this experience to drive forth development of our



Al Haj Kalifa U Aye Lwin (Myanmar) Chief Convener, Islamic Centre of Myanmar)

nation and utilize our strength to spread peace across the globe.

Daw Kathleen Thein (Founder of Ingyin May Hindu Women's Network)

The people of Myanmar will be under the protection of Lord Krishna as we cross over from the old year to the New Year and possess lasting peace and fulfillment. May all the people



Daw Kathleen Thein (Founder of Ingyin May Hindu Women's Network)

of the nation have compassion towards each other and bring a permanent end to all internal conflicts.

On behalf of all Hindus, I pray for all the people of Myanmar and the world swiftly overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. May everyone be at peace, be at peace, be at peace.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

New Year greetings from Myanmar artistes



Actor Lu Min

Actor Lu Min

May all Myanmar citizens be free from the clutches of the COVID-19 pandemic and swiftly receive the joyous New Year. We are currently in the dangerous red zone so, please, don't be careless. Be patient and stay at home. I request



Actress Khine Hnin Wai

the public this.

Actress Khine Hnin Wai

Everyone gets happy when Thingyan approaches every year and welcome it. But people are living with anxiety this year. I wish for things to return to normal starting from



Singer Maykhalat

this New Year.

If you care for yourself and don't want to be a carrier for the virus, then please stay at home.

You can't know who has the virus when you go outside.

If you love yourself, your family and your community



Singer Nway Nway Chit Phwe

then staying in your home is a form of protecting those values.

Singer Maykhalat

I wish for peace of mind and good health to all Myanmar nationals at the turning over to the New Year. We usu-

ally see festivities every year around this time but don't bear a grudge for not having them this year.

There will be more Thingyans in the years to come, so conserve some energy for then. People are concerned about COVID-19 and it is currently a global pandemic. We will overcome it when we are united in our efforts.

Singer Nway Nway Chit Phwe

May all children of the 7 days of the week be blessed with mental wellness and physical health and enjoy lasting happiness with family and friends. May you be free from the COVID-19 pandemic. Staying at home is a form of prevention during these trying times and a means to protect yourself, your family and the world we all love.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
 သတင်းစာဖတ်ရှုလိုပါကဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။
Circulation order is in easier way. **HOTLINE 09-974424114**

Total number of COVID-19 cases reaches 85 on Thursday

Update on COVID-19 cases in Myanmar till 8:00 pm on 16 April

1. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) took laboratory tests on the 3,236 quarantined people till 16 April 2020 morning. Out of them, 85 patients were tested positive of COVID-19, while the remaining 3,151 persons were tested negative.

2. The following are the names of the hospitals where the patients with COVID-19 positive are being treated.

Sr	Hospital for medical treatment	Numbers of patients with COVID-19 positive
1	Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon	68
2	Tiddim Township People's Hospital	4
3	Lashio General Hospital	1
4	Mawlamyine General Hospital	1

5	Sao San Htun Hospital, Taunggyi	1
6	Magway General Hospital	1
7	Kengtung People's Hospital	1
8	Kalay People's Hospital	1
9	Kandaw Nadi Hospital, Mandalay	1

* Two patients who recovered from the COVID-19 positive were under quarantine for two weeks.

* So far COVID-19 death toll is four.

3. There are 119 new patients under observation between 15-4-2020 and 16-4-2020, 12 noon.

4. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) released the first batch of test results from among 102 lab specimens, 16-4-2020. All of them tested negative. — Ministry of Health and Sports

(Translated by TTN)

Announcement on free motivation services for people in Community Based Facility Quarantine, other quarantine

WHEN the 14-day quarantine programme is carried out nationwide in efforts to prevent the COVID-19 disease spread, the people in the quarantine might be under stress due to the restrictions brought by the quarantine. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is performing the motivation services, and those wishing to have consolation with the ministry

may contact it with confidence. The Social Welfare Department's employees from Nay Pyi Taw Council, Union Territory, regions and states who received a special consoling training will provide the services from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm every day.

With the coordination of the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and

Resettlement, the programme is sponsored by telecommunication operator: MPT, Mytel, Telenor and Ooredoo in this time of COVID-19 crisis.

Information related with those who receive consolation will be confidential, and will provide them with further assistance if necessary.

Contact numbers are as follow.

Sr	State/ Region	MPT	Mytel	Telenor	Ooredoo
1.	Kachin	09-889900011	09-661015555	09-770771000	09980000101
2.	Kayah	09-889900022	09-661025555	09-770772000	09980000102
3	Kayin	09-889900033	09-661035555	09-770773000	09980000103
4.	Chin	09-889900044	09-661045555	09-770774000	09980000104
5.	Sagaing	09-889900055	09-661055555	09-770775000	09980000105
6.	Taninthayi	09-889900066	09-661065555	09-770776000	09980000106
7.	Bago	09-889900077	09-661075555	09-770777000	09980000107
8.	Magway	09-889900088	09-661085555	09-770778000	09980000108
9.	Mandalay	09-889900099	09-661095555	09-770779000	09980000109
10.	Mon	09-889911177	09-661105555	09-770771001	09980000117
11.	Rakhine	09-889911188	09-661115555	09-770771100	09980000118
12.	Yangon	09-889911122	09-661125555	09-770770001	09980000112
13	Shan	09-889911133	09-661135555	09-770770010	09980000113
14.	Ayeyawady	09-889911144	09-661145555	09-770770011	09980000114
15.	Nay Pyi Taw	09-889911155	09-661155555	09-770770099	09980000115
	Head Office	09-889911166	09-661005555	09-770770100	09980000116

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Announcement for 21 days facility quarantine and 7 days home quarantine

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports had earlier announced the 14-day facility quarantine, followed by another 14-day home quarantine, for prevention of COVID-19 infection from the foreign visitors and the positive patients.
2. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that the transmission of disease is possible before two days and until 28 days of symptoms, and that the infection of disease is possible during these periods. A research conducted in China has shown that strict and systematic quarantine for 21 days could contain the outbreak of disease up to 98.7%. Moreover, some regional countries are practicing a total of 28-day for both hospital/facility quarantine and home quarantine. Especially, the 28-day quarantine period is found in the countries with only limited laboratory tests.
3. Out of 28 positive cases for COVID-19 in Myanmar, some positive patients are the imported cases and the close persons with them. Moreover, the lab tests of National Health Laboratory and the contact tracings at Regions/States have showed that some confirmed patients and some quarantined persons for more than 14 days were still tested positive.
4. Therefore, the Ministry of Health and Sports has extended the 14-day facility quarantine to the 21-day community based facility quarantine/hotel quarantine and 7-day home quarantine, totalling 28-day quarantine.

The Ministry of Health and Sports
(Translated by Aung Khin)

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Advertise with us.

Hotline: 09 974 424 114
thinthinmaygnim@gmail.com
No.150, Ngar Htet Kye Pagoda,
Bahan Tsp, Yangon.

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

Any threat to public health is a crime

AS the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 85 yesterday, the Ministry of Health and Sports has taken steps to enforce the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

In the order issued yesterday, the ministry labeled the coronavirus an "epidemic or notifiable disease" under the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law and banning the gathering of five and above, in efforts to stem the spread of the COVID-19.

This means those who fail to follow the health guidelines and to cooperate with the authorities under the law could face punishment.

Those who violate the restrictions imposed by the health authorities under the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law can face six month jail terms, fines of K50,000, or both.

The order came out after the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi posted a message to the people on her Facebook Account that the "Need for COVID-19 prevention, containment, treatment has become clearer, steps towards containment of the disease to begin with legal actions."

The people are advised to clearly understand the current situation of the Coronavirus outbreak in the country and to strictly follow the health guidelines. In this time of crisis, any threat to public

health is classified as a "crime".

The fight against coronavirus stands or falls on individuals. We should consider that everybody might carry the Coronavirus with them and could infect their own families first, then spread the infection to others if they go outside and do not follow the guidelines.

To effectively stop the source of rapid infection, we need to put in place aggressive, adequate and immediate measures.

The people are urged to act as dutiful and good citizens by following the directives of the health authorities including social distancing and quarantine measures. Besides, if a communicable disease is detected among public and private health workers after they contact an infected person, they must immediately inform the authorities.

According to the order, any gathering of five or more persons in society can be punished according to the law.

In fact, the world has faced infectious diseases before and we have come through it, just as we will get through this. It is best to be vigilant and cautious, but not to panic. "Be Calm and Wash Your Hands."

We must be concerned, but shouldn't be afraid

By Khin Maung Myint

WHEN the novel coronavirus infections first emerged in China towards the end of 2019, most of our populations were oblivious to those news. There might be some who were concerned and kept track of the developments there. As the situations there started to deteriorate rapidly and turned into an outbreak, more people came to realize the impact of that disease. Then by end February more and more people became concerned. By March, our country joined the others that had their shares of infected persons. Our first case happened to be an American of Myanmar origin, who recently returned from the States.

Enough anti-bodies

That set off the alarm and many came to get interested in the disease. Even then most were not very much concerned about it yet. Some even wrongly believed that we are immune to that disease because of our diets, which was a very ridiculous idea spread on the social media by some irresponsible persons. I don't deny that our people may be more resistant to the virus than others for some medical reasons, such as having enough anti-bodies in our blood that can fight the virus. However, that remains to be proven scientifically, so we shouldn't ignore the fact that we are also vulnerable to it and shouldn't take risks.

The growing numbers of people who are found to be infected

are testament to the fact that we are not totally immune to the disease. Thus, we must be concerned about it, but not alarmed. Because overly alarmed could lead to panic and even to phobia and cause undesirable consequences.

When the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was first recognized, some of those who are alarmed by it started demanding for total lockdown and even objected, on the social media, to the move by the authorities to bring back students from Hubei and to receive the returning migrant workers. At the same time there were heated arguments on the social media concerning those matters between those who have relatives living and working abroad and those who demanded for total lockdown. In reality to totally lockdown or not to, is the responsibility of the government to decide. Totally locking down is easier said than done, as there are many factors to take into considerations. Even in rich countries that would be quite difficult, let alone our poor country where most of the populations are still living below the poverty line. Most have to rely on their daily earnings for their livelihoods. The total lockdown would greatly inconvenience them.

Anyway, we are witnessing that the authorities are calmly and smoothly handling the pandemic efficiently until now and believe that they will continue doing so. What this indicates is that the authorities are well planned and prepared to face this dreaded disease well beforehand. Rational and unbiased persons will recognize the fact that our country



City personnel disinfect a road as a preventive measure against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Yangon, Myanmar. (AFP PHOTO)

— the government, the military and the public — are doing a relatively great job compared to other neighbouring countries. When it was really necessary the majority of the population cooperated by listening to the request to stay home to minimize the spread of the disease. There weren't many cases where force had to be used to make people stay home unlike in some of our neighbouring countries, people voluntarily complied. These attitudes are quite commendable.

A pre-new year event

Thingyan is an occasion for celebrating and rejoicing as it is a pre-new year event and at the warmest time of the year the water throwing provides a very welcome relief from the weather. Everyone, young and old enjoys Thingyan, but this year people suppressed their desires to enjoy it. To achieve that there was no need to strictly enforce it, but the public is well aware of the consequences and abide by the ad hoc instructions not to celebrate Thingyan that would attract crowds. There may be some isolated cases, like the one in Kyaington, which could be blamed on drunkenness. Hopefully, this year's Thingyan will pass

without any eventuality.

Those who had followed the unfolding of the Covid-19 outbreak in China might notice that the numbers of those infected and deaths increased at a very fast pace. While those figures were increasing, so were the numbers recovered soaring. Though not a medical professional, based on my meager knowledge gained from the past pandemics that was a very encouraging sign. The more people recovered the stronger the "herd immunity" or the "community immunity" grew and will definitely assist in the fight against the disease. If one would study China's recent experience closely, it will be seen that they took drastic actions. They immediately lockdown the city at the epicenter and quarantined those suspected of being infected, built a new hospital to treat those infected in about a week's duration. The selfless dedications of their healthcare providers and rapid response teams also contributed much to the efforts of battling the outbreak.

The most important fact is the pattern of the progress of the disease. In the beginning, the numbers of those infected and died climbed very fast, while those recovered increased slowly. After

sometimes the rates of the infected and deaths slowed down, while those who recovered gradually increased. Eventually the infected and deaths reached their peaks and started to decline and not very long afterwards, the battle against the virus was almost over in a matter of few months. Based on that trend, we shouldn't be alarmed at the rates of increase of those infected and those who died, because at one point, sooner or later, they must peak and then start to decline. Soon it will all be over and the situations will return to normal. Here, though we shouldn't be alarmed we must be concerned and cooperate unreservedly in the fight against the virus by following the requests, advices and orders laid down by the authorities and stay healthy.

Lubricated mechanism

From my personal perspective, the authorities are coping well with the situations and the medical staffs and other affiliated organizations are functioning smoothly like a well lubricated mechanism. Even in countries like the US, UK and some European countries they are barely coping. If what one Myanmar doctor working in England said on the social media was true, the

UK authorities are considering stopping treatment for those who have very little or no chance of recovering to spare equipments and medicines that are in short supply. Let us hope that such situations will never be encountered here. Even if such a situation occurs, there is no one to blame, but the nature. After all, such pandemics had happened many times before in the world and they were deemed as the natural disasters.

In conclusion, I would like to borrow the quote "People are the key". That is so true. If the people are united and stand together with the authorities, nothing is impossible. It is no time to be criticizing, condemning and blaming one another, nor it is time to be lobbying or propagandizing or instigating unrest. If you don't want to cooperate step aside, don't sabotage! Let us forget our past differences, discard our long held hatreds and grievances based on past histories and stand united to fight this dreaded killer disease and move in unison towards a united, peaceful and prosperous Federal Democratic Union. Stay home, stay focused, stay positive in mind, stay away from the virus and be healthy and safe.



Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May. 09251022355, 09974424848

MRTV, Myanmar Radio to broadcast parittas recited by Sayadaws

The parittas recited by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws will be broadcast on Myanmar Radio and Television and Myanmar Radio programmes 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm on 17 April (Myanmar New Year Day). People can listen to the parittas.—MNA (Translated by TTN)

New Year messages of President, Vice Presidents, Hluttaw Speakers and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief to be broadcast

President U Win Myint's New Year message will be broadcast on Myanmar Radio and Television on 17 April at 8 am, 12 noon, 4 pm, and 8 pm news programme.

Similarly, the New Year messages of Vice President U Myint Swe and Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing will be broadcast on Myanmar Radio and Television on 17 April at 8 am, 12 noon, 4 pm, and 8 pm after the news programme.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 16th April, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay and West Central Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 17th April, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and Chin States, isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Shan State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com သတင်းစာများပို့ရန်ပိုမိုတက်ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။ Circulation order is in easier way. HOTLINE 09-974424114

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR EDITOR

Aungthu Ya

SENIOR TRANSLATORSZaw Htet Oo
Aung Khin**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
Aung Htein,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**TRANSLATORS**Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin,
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe,
Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmdaily@gmail.com

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

www.facebook.com/TheGNLM



THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Write for us

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

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

One-year licence fees exemption granted in tourism sector

By Nyein Nyein

THE tour businesses are exempted from licence fees for one year starting from 1 April to 31 March 2021, announced the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) on 16 April.

MoHT has exempted the tour businesses from licence fees for one year to ensure the sustainable development of the hotels and tourism sector and for the sake of the travellers.

MoHT has formed the lo-

cal tourism committees in the states and regions under Myanmar Tourism Law (2018). These committees collect both new business licence fees and licence renewal fees for the hotels and the guesthouses in the tourism industry in the states and regions.

Myanmar tourism industry has adversely been affected by the outbreak of Covid-19 as in many other countries around the world. So, MoHT has exempted the businesses in the tourism

industry from the new licence fees and licence renewal fees for one year.

Besides, the hotels and tourism sector, CMP, the small and medium enterprises which are mostly affected by Covid-19 are designated as the priority sectors. A working committee to remedy the economic impacts of Covid-19 has been set up to issue loans amounting to K100 billion from the Covid-19 fund. The committee will grant one-year loans to these priority sectors with a

low interest of only one per cent.

If the businesspersons fail to give back the loans, they will have legal action taken under the existing law. In the event of failure to return the loan together with the interests due, they will be recorded on the blacklist of the credit bureau, and they will no longer receive the loans from the banks and other financial institutions, according to the working committee to remedy the economic impacts of Covid-19. (Translated by Hay Mar)

Strong winds destroy houses in 4 townships of Sagaing region

NATURAL Disaster Management Department (NDMD) in Sagaing region has provided over K4.4 million to the people of the houses destroyed by the strong winds on the evening of 12 April in four townships of Sagaing region, said Director U Sa Willy Frank of the NDMD in Sagaing region.

These houses are located in

Wuntho, Indaw, Htigyaing and Katha townships of Sagaing region. "We have provided over K4.4 million for the people of the houses and monasteries which were damaged by the strong winds on the evening of 12 April. We provided the cash on 14 April. We have provided over K4.4 million with K3.7 million for Wuntho township and over

K700,000 for Katha, Indaw and Htigyaing townships," he added.

On 12 April, strong winds blew and rains fell for more than 1 hour in four townships of Sagaing region. The roofs of over 90 houses were blown off.

Sagaing region was faced with similar situations for five times in 2020, a decline in the outbreak of natural disasters

compared to the last year, it is learnt. On the night of 15 April, some houses from Mawlaik and Kawlin townships in Sagaing region were also damaged by the strong winds. We are still surveying the damaged houses, said the director of NDMD in Sagaing region. —Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Locals follow Covid-19 prevention measures in Meiktila

MEIKTILA residents are collaborating with the authorities in the prevention and control of Covid-19 by adhering to the awareness campaigns. There were only a few people found on the road on 15 April (Thingyan Akyat).

"To prevent, contain and treat Covid-19 in Meiktila, we are raising the awareness campaigns among the residents.

We've announced that the vendors must sell their things wearing the masks. We see the locals obeying our instructions. We've also notified that family members must buy their kitchen items in turn in the local ward market to reduce the number of people going out. We're planning to introduce the same instructions to other markets in the township," said Township Ad-

ministrator U Chan Nyein Aung.

"We don't have any reported cases of taking action because people in the quarantine centres are complying with our instructions. Moreover, the officials, the health department, other relevant departments, the social organizations, the charity associations and locals are collaborating with us in the prevention, containment and treatment

of Covid-19. Now, there are only a few people found outside their homes," he added.

There are 72 quarantine centres in 380 villages from 58 village-tracts and 14 wards in Meiktila town. At present, a total of 705 people stay put in the related quarantine centres. —Chan Tha (Meiktila)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Dala Aung Zayar night market to close temporarily

AUNG Zayar night market will be closed temporarily in Dala township during Covid-19 crisis, said an official from the township municipal committee.

To prevent the Covid-19 spread, the shops from Kamarkasit market and Aung Zayar market will be open from 6 am to 12 pm for the local people from Dala township. However, Aung Zayar night market will be closed temporarily in the meantime.

"Night market is opened from 2 pm to 6 am. But, we will close the night market temporarily to prevent the people from being crowded. So, we are providing the space for the night market vendors to sell their foods safely in the morning Aung Zayar market. So, people will not need to buy food in

crowded places. When Covid-19 crisis is over the night market will be reopened as usual," said Chairperson Daw Myint Myint Kyi of Township Municipal Committee.

No.1 Yangon Region Hluttaw Representative U Tun Yin, No.2 Yangon Region Hluttaw Representative U Htway Tin and Township Municipal Committee Chairperson Daw Myint Myint Kyi provided awareness talks for the people to wear the masks and queue up with three feet away from one other. They also distributed the masks to the local people and vendors in addition to checking the temperature of the people coming to the market.

To prevent the people from being crowded, the Kamarkasit and Aung Zayar market will be

open from 6 am to 12 pm during the Thingyan period.—Naing

Lin Kyaw (Dala) (Translated by Hay Mar)



Officials providing health information to the vendors in Dala market. PHOTO: NAING LIN KYAW (DALA)

Transport difficulties cause watermelon growers to suspend harvesting

The watermelon growers are notified of five-day suspension to harvest the watermelons, as there are difficulties in freight transport from Muse border to Wanding yard, said Chairman U Soe Lwin of Watermelon and Muskmelon Producers and Exporters Association.

“The transport delay can cause damage to watermelons. The truck drivers are asked to take special care to maintain fruit quality. It takes about 4 days to reach Wanding yard from Muse gate, resulting in damages to the fruits. Therefore, the growers are asked to wait for five days to harvest the fruits,” he added.

At present, about 2,000 trucks of watermelons and muskmelons are queuing on Muse-Kyin San Kyawt route to export them to China. Only 300 of them are daily crossing the border between Myanmar and China.

“Between 8 and 11 April, China allowed only the designated driver, who substitute the original driver, to enter the Kyin San Kyawt checkpoint. On 12 April, trading has returned to normal and the original drivers can directly go to the border,” he noted.

The transport delay doubled



Trucks seen at the 105-mile trade zone in Muse, northern Shan State. PHOTO:MYO WIN TUN/ HTET MYAT

the truck fare for the route from watermelon main producer — ChaungU Township, Monya District, Sagaing Region to China's border with northern Shan State.

“Earlier, truck fare cost about K1.2 million. It hiked up to K2.5 million amid COVID-19 impacts. The growers are facing many challenges this year. Some lead to fruit losses”, said Ko Aung Ngwe San, a grower

from ChaungU Township.

As Chinese traders do not come to Muse 105th mile border in the light of Covid-19 fears, prompting Myanmar traders leaving for Wanding to sell watermelons and muskmelons, said Vice Chair U Aung Thet Oo of Muse Fruit Depot.

China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the Covid-19.

Starting from 1 April, travellers are prohibited at the borders between China and Myanmar — Mant Wain, Sin Phyu, Nan Taw, Kyin San Kyawt, Pun Sai-Kyu Koat, Manhero checkpoints. However, only trucks are allowed for trading at the Mant Wain, Kyin San Kyawt and Pun Sai-Kyu Koat crossings.

“Normally, trading is conducted at Muse border. The

Covid-19 conditions blocked the Chinese traders to come. Therefore, local traders come out of the country and sell the watermelons in the Wanding area”, said U Aung Thet Oo.

“While selling the watermelons in the Wanding area, the traders are facing certain difficulties in transportation and accommodation, coupled with market instability,” he added.

Regarding those problems, the authorities from two sides are negotiation the reports submitted by the traders, according to Muse fruit depot.

At the present time, a 16-tonne truck of watermelon is priced 15,000-40,000 depending on fruit quality and varieties, whereas muskmelon fetches 3-6 Yuan per kilogram.

Myanmar has opened four Sino-Myanmar borders; Muse and Chinshwehaw checkpoints in Shan State and Kampaiti and Lweje in Kachin State. Of them, Muse is a major cross-border trading point in Myanmar.

Myanmar exports more than 800,000 tonnes of watermelons and 150,000 tonnes of muskmelons every year.—Myo Win Tun/ Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Manufacturing sector pulls more foreign enterprises

By Nyein Nyein

MAJORITY of foreign enterprises have primarily invested in the manufacturing sector in the current financial year 2019-2020, stated the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Of 154 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 3 April of current fiscal, 121 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector. Other service sector stood at the second by attracting 12 businesses, while power sector got the third spot with six projects.

During a-year-ago period, 115 of 150 enterprises put investment into the manufacturing sector, while other service sector drew 13, and livestock and fisheries attained investments from seven businesses.

“The current COVID-19

consequences have not affected the foreign investment sector,” said DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin on 7 April.

The proposals submitted to MIC include CMP businesses. At present, such kind of labour-intensive enterprises is facing financial hardship, disputes between the employers and employees and the closure of factories. However, those cases in the industry did not hinder new investors.

The manufacturing enterprises and businesses that need large labour force are prioritized. MIC is endeavouring to clear those kinds of projects so fast that they can start running in the post-COVID-19 period, he continued.

Moreover, MIC showed readiness to accept the projects regarding the production of mask, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, in responding to the activities of prevention, control and treatment of

COVID-19.

Myanmar has attracted foreign direct investment of more than US\$3.36 billion between 1 October and 3 April in the 2019-2020 financial year, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The total figure includes investments of \$91.85 million in the Special Economic Zones, under the Special Economic Zone Law.

According to a press statement issued recently by the DICA, 154 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the MIC and endorsements from regional and state Investment Committees in the current fiscal and brought in the capital of over \$2.35 billion.

Myanmar has set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade deficit widens, exceeds \$1.47 bln in 2019-2020FY H1

MYANMAR'S trade gap is significantly increased in the half of the current financial year to more than US\$1.47 billion from \$383 million registered in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 3 April in the current fiscal, Myanmar's external trade has been increased to over \$20.3 billion from \$17.67 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at \$9.4 billion, imports were valued at \$10.9 billion. Compared to the previous fiscal, exports showed an increase of \$784 million, while imports climbed up by \$1.87 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, CMP

raw materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to cut the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports.

Myanmar's trade deficit was pegged at \$1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year; \$1.3 billion in the previous mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$5.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization.—Mon Mon

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Testing strategy

Study shows Iceland got it right with early, widespread virus testing

ICELAND has provided a textbook example of how to get out ahead of a looming pandemic: per capita, it has tested more people for coronavirus than any other country on earth and it got started a month before the first case was even confirmed in the tiny Nordic island nation.

In a study published Tuesday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers from Icelandic universities and deCODE Genetics, a subsidiary of the US biotech giant Amgen, released the results of an all-out screening programme launched on 31 January — before the disease caused by the virus had even been baptized COVID-19 and more than a month before the global pandemic was declared.

The study involved two testing drives. The first, starting 31 January, targeted people with symptoms of coronavirus infection and people who had travelled to high-risk areas — initially China and the Alps regions of Austria, Italy and Switzerland — or people who had come into contact with others who were in fact infected with the virus.

It found that as of late March, 13.3 per cent of more than 9,000 people who were screened tested positive. The first case of infection was confirmed on 28 February.

In a second testing programme that began 13 March, deCODE Genetics screened the general population of people with no coronavirus symptoms or

who had mild symptoms, such as those of the common cold, and were not in quarantine. Here, the proportion of positive cases was much lower: between 0.6% and 0.8%.

As of right now Iceland has carried out tests on 36,000 people, which is 10 per cent of its population.

That makes it by far the world leader in testing per capita — 10 times more than South Korea, which has won much praise around the world for acting quickly to test its people as the virus spread. South Korea has conducted 10 tests per 1,000 inhabitants, according to the website Our World in Data.

Many asymptomatic carriers out there

This aggressive testing programme in Iceland apparently helped slow the spread of the virus by allowing health authorities to detect people who were infected and contagious but had no symptoms or thought they just had a cold or the flu.

When people were told they had tested positive, they had to self-isolate at home until 10 days after their fever had subsided or until they tested negative for the virus. And anybody who came in contact with them had to self-quarantine for two weeks.

SOURCE: AFP



A group of doctors working with patients infected with the novel coronavirus COVID-19 wear face shields at the Intensive Care Unit of the Hospital de Clinicas in Porto Alegre, Brazil. PHOTO: AFP

Coping with PPE shortages

Nissan joins face shield making in Japan

TOKYO — Nissan Motor Co. said Thursday it will make face shields for health care workers in Japan, joining other companies outside the medical industry already helping to boost medical supplies in the fight against the new coronavirus outbreak.

The automaker said it will start producing face shields at three of its domestic production sites this month, aiming to make 2,500 units a month. It will also study ways to support companies that manufacture respirators and artificial heart-lung machines, which are also feared to run short due to the pandemic.

Nissan has already been making face shields for health care workers at its U.S. plants in Michigan, Mississippi and Ten-

nessee, supporting delivery of the face shields in Britain, and making respirators in Spain.

Its Japanese peers Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co. also embarked on face shield production for hospital workers, while electronics makers such as Sony Corp. are cooperating with medical equipment manufacturers to produce respirators.

At teleconferences held Wednesday and Thursday, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe requested that leaders of domestic companies, including Toyota, Sony, Nissan and others outside the medical sector, cooperate in increasing production of protective equipment for health workers fighting on the frontline.

SOURCE: Kyodo



Coronavirus testing equipment seen in Guadalajara, Mexico on 14 April, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Medical questions

Doctors think ventilators might harm some COVID-19 patients

A global debate has emerged among doctors treating COVID-19: When should patients who need help breathing be placed on ventilators — and could intubation do some people more harm than good?

It's one of the biggest medical questions of the day, along with how effective the antimalarial hydroxychloroquine really is, a US doctor told AFP.

The data is scarce and there aren't yet formal studies on the subject since the disease itself is so new and we don't have the benefit of hindsight.

It's also impossible to know for sure whether the patients placed on ventilators would have died anyway because of the severity of their conditions.

But a growing number of doctors have said that COVID-19 patients appear to fade rapidly when they are put on ventilators and tubes are placed down their windpipes.

In recent weeks, American hospitals have started doing what they can to delay having to use the breathing machines — which the federal government ordered 130,000 of, fearing a shortage.

The first warning signs came from Italy, where the vast majority of patients placed on artificial breathing died.

The statistics are also bad in the United Kingdom and in New York, where 80 per cent of intubated patients die, according to the state's governor,

often after spending a week or two in intensive care in which they are placed in an artificial

coma and their muscles atrophy.

At the start of the pandem-



A training ventilator at the Eppendorf University Hospital in Hamburg, 25 March, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

ic, patients who were completely out of breath were treated under well established protocols for a severe lung condition called Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS).

This condition, which prevents the lungs from taking in enough oxygen to pass on to other organs, can be triggered by infection, such as pneumonia, or by physical injury.

It's very dangerous, with studies placing the overall fatality rate at around 40 per cent.

The standard procedure for these patients is to intubate relatively early, and this is how COVID-19 patients have generally been treated.

SOURCE: AFP

G-7 leaders hold virtual summit over coronavirus, ailing economy

TOKYO — Leaders from the Group of Seven industrialized nations began a video conference on Thursday to coordinate their response to the global coronavirus pandemic and its severe impact on the world's economy.

As the number of COVID-19 infections worldwide continues to increase, the development of treatment drugs and vaccines is also

expected to be a key topic for the G-7 leaders during their second virtual summit in a month.

Since the virus was first detected in China late last year, global infections have topped 2 million with over 130,000 deaths, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

The pandemic has triggered lockdowns in hard-hit countries and

travel restrictions, resulting in a significant drop in economic activity.

Shortly before the multilateral conference, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded the coverage of his state of emergency declaration beyond seven prefectures to the entire nation, in what could be a severe blow to the world's third-largest economy.

The G-7 has pledged to "do whatever it takes, using all policy tools" to protect the economy from downside risks but the challenges are manifold with the International Monetary Fund projecting the worst economic contraction since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Italy, a G-7 member with one of the worst outbreaks in the group, is expected to suffer the sharpest drop of 9.1 per cent in real gross domestic product in 2020, compared with a 3.0 per cent contraction for the world economy overall, according to the IMF's World Economic Outlook report.

The other G-7 members are Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United States. Washington holds its presidency this year.

US President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the peak had already passed in new coronavirus infections in his country and that he would unveil guidelines for "reopening" the world's largest economy.— Kyodo News ■



Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda (r, back) and Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso hold a press conference in Tokyo on 14 April, 2020, after attending a videoconference of finance chiefs from the Group of Seven industrialized nations. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Abe closer to 100,000 yen cash handout plan amid virus outbreak

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday came a step closer to distributing 100,000 yen (\$926) each to citizens regardless of income levels as part of emergency steps to support the Japanese economy amid the coronavirus outbreak, a government source said Thursday.

Abe instructed his officials to secure funding for the scheme by revising an extra budget being compiled by the government, the source said.

The move comes amid growing pressure from the ruling coalition on Abe to take more steps to shield the economy from the pandemic. Abe had earlier sounded negative about



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks at a House of Representatives plenary session in Tokyo on 14 April, 2020, wearing a face mask amid the spread of the new coronavirus. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

such a blanket cash handout plan.— Kyodo News ■

Head of Italy's economic heartland fights lockdown

ROME — The head of Milan's economically vital Lombardy region began waging a lonely campaign Thursday to get Italy to reopen for business and follow the lead of some smaller European nations.

Attilio Fontana's messages on Facebook created a political firestorm in a country still coming to terms with a virus that has killed 21,645 and brought the economy to its knees.

Italy's official toll — believed to be substantially underreported — was the world's highest until being overtaken by the United States last weekend.

Its economic one is growing fast as well.

The International Monetary Fund expects Italy's total output to shrink

by 9.1 per cent this year — the worst peacetime decline in nearly a century.

The Confindustria big business lobby estimates that each week of the national lockdown chops another 0.75 per cent off the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP) figure.

Millions of Italians are either furloughed or suddenly unemployed.

Lombardy boss Fontana sounded like he had had enough when he posted a message outlining his 10-million-strong region's "road to freedom".

He said businesses should follow basic social distancing rules and reopen when the current nationwide lockdown expires on 4 May.

"We are not courting controversy," Fontana said in a second post that responded the chorus of political criticism his first one drew late Wednesday.

"But let's look at the substance: many other European countries already beginning to reopen. We need to start thinking

about our own future immediately."

Other European nations are eyeing ends to their own shutdowns with extreme caution.

Denmark has started reopening schools for younger children and Finland lifted a blockade of Helsinki.—AFP ■



Italy's strict confinement measures mean that much of the country's economy is at a standstill. **PHOTO: AFP**

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May. 09251022355,09974424848

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (006W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (006W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SEA LAND MAERSK ASIA
PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (024W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (024W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Asia virus latest: South Korea election win; Singapore cases surge

HERE are the latest developments in Asia related to the novel coronavirus pandemic:

Ruling party wins South Korea election

South Korea's left-leaning ruling party won a landslide election victory, results showed, after the coronavirus pandemic turned the political tide in President Moon Jae-in's favour.

His Democratic Party secured the largest absolute majority in the National Assembly since the advent of democracy in 1987 on a turnout of 66.2 per cent — the highest at a parliamentary election for 28 years.

Singapore sees more cases in worker dorms

Singapore's latest report recorded 447 new infections, a record daily increase, with the majority linked to crowded dormitories housing low-paid foreign workers. The city-state, which has registered 3,699 infections and 10 deaths, initially managed to keep its outbreak in check, but is now battling a fast-rising second wave.

Authorities are moving thousands of workers — many South Asian — to alternative accom-



South Korea's Democratic party secured an absolute majority in the National Assembly on the back of President Moon Jae-in's response to the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

modation to reduce the risk of infection.

Japan PM to expand virus emergency nationwide

Japan's government will convene a key panel of medics to advise on its state of emergency

over the coronavirus, as local media reported the prime minister would expand the measures to cover the entire country.

Shinzo Abe has already declared a month-long state of emergency in seven regions, including Tokyo.

New Zealand considers easing lockdown

New Zealand is expected to start easing a nationwide lockdown to combat the coronavirus next week, but Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned it would be far from a return to normal.

The Pacific country of five million people has been one of the most successful in containing the outbreak, with just over 1,000 known cases and nine deaths.

US, China call for cooperation as tensions rise

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and a top Chinese offi-

cial called for mutual coronavirus cooperation, signalling a bid to keep a lid on tensions between the two countries.

President Donald Trump's administration has berated China for not sharing data more quickly, and said it was freezing funds to the World Health Organization for not challenging Beijing.

Markets follow Wall Street lead lower

Asian markets fell following overnight woes on Wall Street as more negative US economic data fuelled worries about the full impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

All Blacks get 50 percent pay freeze

New Zealand's national rugby team accepted a 50 percent pay freeze and the players' association said it was preparing for the nightmare scenario of no

more professional matches this year. After the coronavirus pandemic shut down global sport, New Zealand Rugby and the players' association agreed to put on hold US\$15 million, or 50 per cent of the year's remaining forecast player spending.

China reports mostly imported cases

Following the same pattern of recent days, China reported mostly imported infections — 34 brought in from overseas, as well as 12 domestic cases.

China has successfully contained its domestic outbreak since the virus emerged there late last year but is now struggling with a new wave of cases brought in mostly by returning nationals.

Indonesia probes claims of bribes for jail release

Indonesian authorities are investigating claims that inmates or their families paid bribes to secure their freedom when thousands of prisoners were released this month to reduce overcrowding and the risk of virus outbreaks. The justice minister has threatened to fire officials who are found to have accepted kickbacks in exchange for releasing prisoners, but stressed that no cases of bribery had been proven so far.

Vietnam embraces kitchen nightmares in lockdown

Burnt bread, collapsed cakes and inedible potatoes: the kitchen failures of Vietnamese families in self-isolation are being shared online, with hundreds of thousands joining a Facebook group to commiserate over their culinary catastrophes.

SOURCE: AFP



China has successfully contained its domestic outbreak since the virus emerged there late last year but is now struggling with a new wave of imported cases. PHOTO:AFP

Taiwan donates 2 million face masks to Japan

TAIPEI —Taiwan on Thursday donated 2 million face masks to Japan for provision to frontline medical personnel to help contain the spread of the coronavirus, according to the Foreign Ministry.

The masks donated by the government to the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association will be shipped to Japan in the near future, the ministry said, in order to help Japan fight the epidemic.

The move comes after Taiwan, which has been recognized internationally for its actions in containing this pandemic, earlier

this month donated 10 million face masks to the United States, European nations, and diplomatic allies.

The Foreign Ministry said the donations are being undertaken in the spirit of "Taiwan can help and Taiwan is helping."

The donation to Japan follows requests for Taiwanese assistance from Japanese parliamentarians and private organizations.

The ministry said Taiwan hopes to strengthen cooperation with Japan on various epidemic-related issues, including

information sharing, research and development of vaccines and medicines, and exchange of medical experts.

As of Thursday, Japan has seen more than 9,800 coronavirus infections confirmed, including about 700 from a foreign cruise ship that was quarantined near Tokyo. The number of infection cases rose by over 400 on Thursday, including 149 in Tokyo.

By contrast, Taiwan has only 395 cases. On Thursday, for the second time this week, it reported no new infection cases. —Kyodo News ■



A worker inspects products at a face mask factory in New Taipei City, northern Taiwan on 9 March, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Israel MPs tasked with ending deadlock over unity govt

JERUSALEM — Israel's parliament was tasked with forming a government on Thursday after speaker Benny Gantz and Prime Minister Benjamin missed a deadline to seal an alliance, but both sides said negotiations would continue.

Israel's deeply divided 120-member parliament has no clear path towards a stable governing coalition, so the move risks prolonging the country's worst-ever political crisis.

But despite missing the Wednesday deadline, there remained a chance that Gantz and Netanyahu could agree on an emergency unity government to help Israel confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The most likely scenario remains a unity government," said Jonathan Rynhold, a political science professor at Bar Ilan University.

"But that is by no means certain."

Following a 2 March election, Israel's third inconclusive vote in less than a year, Gantz was given four weeks to form a stable governing coalition.

After he was elected speak-



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and his rival Benny Gantz are in talks to form a possible unity government. **PHOTO: AFP**

er late last month, the centrist ex-military chief pledged to form an emergency unity government with the right-wing Netanyahu who has been prime minister since 2009.

Power sharing

Gantz conceded that Netanyahu would lead that government as prime minister, at least to begin with, as Israel faces an unprecedented health crisis that has exacted a devastating economic toll. The two have discussed a range of power-sharing

options, including scenarios that would see Gantz take over as premier after 18 months, with ministerial positions split between Gantz's Blue and White alliance and Netanyahu's Likud.

After assuring President Reuven Rivlin that they were close to agreement, Gantz and Netanyahu were given until the end of Wednesday to reach a deal.

The deadline passed without any announcement of a breakthrough, although a joint statement issued on Thursday said the talks were ongoing.—AFP ■

WWII veteran, 99, raises £12 mln for UK health workers

LONDON — A 99-year-old British World War II veteran on Thursday completed 100 laps of his garden in a fundraising challenge for healthcare staff that has captured the heart of the nation, raising more than £12 million (\$15 million, 13.8 million euros).

"Incredible and now words fail me," said Tom Moore, a captain who served in India, after finishing the laps of his 25-metre (82-foot) garden with the help of his walking frame.

Moore initially set himself the goal of raising £1,000 for a National Health Service charity in time for his 100th birthday at the end of the month, after receiving treatment for a broken hip and cancer.

But his efforts — a rare bit of good news during the global coronavirus pandemic that has killed almost 13,000 people in Britain alone — have made him a star in his own country and abroad.

"Thank you all for your amazing support. It has been a memorable experience. Thank you so much," he wrote on Twitter.

The final lap of his garden



Moore originally planned to raise £1,000 for a National Health Service charity. **PHOTO: AFP**

in Bedfordshire, south England, was met with a guard of honour from the Yorkshire Regiment and broadcast live on British TV.

"I'm surrounded by the right kind of people," Moore told the BBC. "I'm feeling fine, I hope you are all feeling fine too."

Previously he has spoken of his admiration for medical staff.

"In the last war it was soldiers in uniform on the front line. This time our army are the doctors and nurses (in) uniforms," he told ITV's Good Morning Britain earlier this week.

"We will survive this." —AFP ■

Chilean author Luis Sepulveda dies of virus in Spain

MADRID — Best-selling Chilean writer Luis Sepulveda has died at a hospital in northern Spain some six weeks after testing positive for coronavirus, his publishing house said on Thursday. He was 70.

"The writer Luis Sepulveda has died in Oviedo," said a statement by Barcelona-based Tusquets, adding it "deeply regretted his loss".

Best known for "The Old Man Who Read Love Stories", Sepulveda was exiled from Chile in 1977 by the Pinochet dictatorship and travelled extensively before settling in Europe in the 1980s.

He first began showing symptoms of COVID-19 on February 25 after returning from a festival in northern Portugal and was taken to hospital in Oviedo in the northern Asturias region where he had lived for more than 20 years.

By March 10, local newspapers reported he was in critical condition, but since then, no further details have been made public at the family's request.

"Health workers gave everything to save his life but he never got over the illness. My condolences to his wife and family," tweeted Adrian Barbon, president of the Asturias region.

Born on October 1949 in Ovalle, north of the Chilean capital Santiago, Sepulveda became a political activist when he was young, first with Chile's Communist Youth, and then with the Socialists.



Author Luis Sepulveda was exiled from Chile in 1977 under the Pinochet dictatorship. **PHOTO: AFP**

In 1973, he was arrested by the Pinochet regime and jailed for treason for two-and-a-half years, but was freed after Amnesty International intervened, then spending time on the run before his exile in 1977.

He wrote some 20 novels, chronicles, stories and children's books which are known for their simple humour and depictions of life in Latin America and been translated into multiple languages.—AFP ■

For Balkan Roma, hunger is the first curse of coronavirus

TIRANA (Albania) — Inside a dark shack outside Albania's capital, 18-year-old Mirela tries to soothe her newborn with the only food she has: a can of powdered milk scrounged from a rubbish bin.

"But what to do after that?" the young mother asks, as she cradles her baby in the ramshackle home she shares with a dozen others on the outskirts of Tirana.

For Mirela and hundreds of thousands of other Roma living in slums across the Western Balkans, the first symptom of the coronavirus pandemic has been hunger.

Curfews and other lockdown measures have wiped out income for families who live hand-to-mouth, often by selling scraps of plastic and metal scavenged from bins.

Now that business is on

hold, piles of waste are festering in Mirela's neighbourhood, shrouding it in a putrid odour.

"Everything is blocked, we don't have anywhere to sell (the recyclables) and for food we also have to go through the garbage to find something to eat, like pasta and rice," said 15-year-old Vanesa Lika, another teenage mother living in the shantytown in Breglumas.

The community of around 40 Roma are still going out daily to collect bottles and cans in hopes that business will soon resume — even though they fear contamination from rummaging through other people's waste.

"We know that (the bottles) can carry the virus but there's nothing we can do," said Mirela's mother-in-law, Lindita Vogli.

"Poverty forces you to try everything." —AFP ■

Myanmar football stars make new year wishes to fans

AS part of celebrating the Myanmar New Year Day 2020, which falls on 17 April (today), Myanmar football star players from Myanmar National Clubs have made new year wishes to their football fans, according to their short videos posted on the Myanmar National League Facebook page.

First, goalkeeper of the Shan United and Myanmar National Football Team Thiha Sithu, who is doing physical exercises at his home, wished that “I am Thiha Sithu and I am playing for Shan United FC. As new year wishes for my football fans, I wish all my fans, friends and

public could be pass from the Covid-19 disease and each and every one of my loved fans be healthy, happy and prosperous”.

Also, youth player of the Hantharwady United and Myanmar U-23 Team footballer, Hein Htet Aung also wished on football fans that, “All Myanmar citizens be wealthy and healthy and possess good time while staying home with families”.

Next, Aung Kyaw Naing, the Yangon United striker, wished that “Auspiciousness to you all to Myanmar National League football fans. All my beloved fans are healthy and happy during Myanmar New Year period and

may all be free from Covid-19 pandemic. All families possess a happy time while staying home in the combatting period of the pandemic.

Then, Southern Myanmar FC striker Kaung Sithu said, “I am Kaung Sithu, a striker from Southern Myanmar FC. Amid COVID-19, all my fans need to stay home and avoid crowds. If a person needs going outside from home, he or she should wear a mask and all need to wash their hands frequently after touching any objects and have nutritious foods and supplements. I wish all my fans could fight the Covid-19 successfully. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

India seal women’s World Cup berth after Pakistan series scrapped

NEW DELHI (India) — India have qualified for the 2021 women’s World Cup after the International Cricket Council declared that the points from a cancelled series against Pakistan would be shared.

The series, part of the ICC Women’s Championship, was unable to be played after India’s governing body, the BCCI, said it could not get government clearance to host Pakistan with tensions rising between the neighbours over the disputed Kashmir region.

The ICC declared the circumstances a “force majeure” event and awarded the teams three points each.

Two other final-round series cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic — South Africa v Australia and Sri Lanka v New Zealand — also saw the six points on offer shared.

The decision means India sealed the final automatic qualifying spot on 23 points behind Australia (37), holders England (29) and South Africa (25) for the 50-over competition next year alongside hosts New Zealand.

“The technical committee concluded that the (India v Pakistan) series could not be played because of a Force Majeure event,” an ICC statement said late Wednesday. — AFP

Bernal rethinking programme to defend title at rescheduled Tour de France

BOGOTA (Colombia) — Tour de France champion Egan Bernal said on Wednesday he will reconsider his training programme so he can defend his title after new dates were announced for this year’s race.

Organisers announced earlier on Wednesday the start of the Tour was being pushed back to the end of August in response to the coronavirus lockdown in France.

“We have 4 and a half months to get back to 100 per cent,” Bernal posted on Instagram. “It is time to rethink all the training and start with more motivation than ever to get to this date in the best form.”

Bernal said his team, Ineos, “will continue to work hard, calm-

ly, with a lot of patience and intelligence, to be back on the starting line with a clear conscience having done the right job.”

The race, originally scheduled for June 27 to July 19, has been moved to August 29 to September 20 because of the ban on mass events in France.

Bernal, the first Latin American to win the Tour, has been confined in central Colombia since returning from Europe after Ineos withdrew from Paris-Nice, where he was also the defending champion, following the death of their sports director Nicolas Portal.

In the last few days, Bernal has posted videos on social media showing him training on an exercise bike. — AFP

Nadal expecting lengthy wait before tennis returns

MADRID (Spain) — Rafael Nadal thinks the global nature of tennis means there is little chance tournaments will go ahead any time soon as sport continues to be paralysed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Novak Djokovic also anticipates a lengthy delay before tennis can be played even behind closed doors, with the world number one expecting players to have to wait a “few months”.

The French Open, which Nadal has won a record 12 times, has been postponed until September, shortly after the US Open, while Wimbledon was cancelled earlier this month for the first time since World War II.

But the prospect of either grand slams at Roland Garros or Flushing Meadows being played with fans appears increasingly remote.

“Tennis is a global sport,” Nadal told Spanish radio station Onda Cero on



Spain’s Rafael Nadal is a 12-time champion at the French Open, which has been postponed this year until September. PHOTO: AFP

Wednesday night. “We go from country to country and a lot of people have to move around.

“It seems difficult to me for any big tournament to be played in the short or medium term.”

Football’s major leagues are preparing to play behind closed doors for several weeks to complete their seasons and avoid losing considerable sums of money from broadcasting contracts.

But tennis tournaments are more reliant on fans for their income, making it more complicated to stage competitions in empty stadiums.

“It is not an easy decision,” Djokovic told the same programme. “I am ready but I think we have to wait a few months.”

“If you could play behind closed doors, I would be delighted but I think it’s very difficult,” added Nadal. —AFP ■



Egan Bernal said he is going to organize his schedule so he can defend the Tour de France title he won in Paris last year. PHOTO: AFP