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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 18 April 2020

## Myanmar New Year Parittas Recitation Ceremony held at Presidential Palace to keep people safe from dangers, from COVID-19



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho offer soon to the Members of the Sangha. PHOTO: MNA

FOR the safety of all Myanmar citizens in the Myanmar New Year of 1382-ME and for winning the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, an annual Parittas Recitation ceremony was held at the Presidential Palace yesterday.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho attended the ceremony and listened to the Parittas recitation.

Members of the Sangha led by

Ovadacariya Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana Maha Withutayama Zaygone Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Dr Bhaddanta Kavisara attended the ceremony and recited the Parittas.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho presented offertories to the Sayadaws and shared the merits gained.

Following the ceremony, the President and the First Lady offered “soon” (day meal) to the Sayadaws. —MNA

## State Counsellor applauds COVID-19 front-liners at Waibargi Specialist Hospital

“ENCOURAGEMENT is essential for all the stakeholders who are in the struggle against the COVID-19 pandemic,” said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the National Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment, in her video conference call from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Those who participated in the video conference call with the State Counsellor were Specialist Professor Dr Sabai Phyu

and Senior Nurse Daw Phyu Thi, who are providing medical treatment at the Waibargi Hospital in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, and volunteer U Kaung Htet Pyae Sone from Nyaungshwe Township of southern Shan State.

They discussed the need for more medical staff, anxieties and morale of health workers and patients, accommodations and facilities for the patients at the Waibargi hospital and the role of volunteers.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi talks to the health workers from the Waibargi Specialist Hospital during the video conference. PHOTO: MNA

Today is the time to encourage each other. Individual citizens and governmental employees are to encourage each other to cooperate and remain unified in the face of the COVID-19.

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Sayadaws recite Parittas at the Presidential Palace on the New Year Day yesterday for safety of people and for protection amidst COVID-19 outbreak. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Myanmar New Year Parittas Recitation Ceremony held at Presidential Palace to keep people safe from dangers, from COVID-19



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho present offertories to a Sayadaw at the ceremony to recite Parittas on New Year Day at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Sayadaws recite Parittas on flight over Nay Pyi Taw to mark Myanmar New Year

LOCAL senior Buddhist monks recited Parittas onboard a military helicopter around Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday morning.

The recitation of Parittas was marked Myanmar New Year 1382 and performed by the members of Sangha led by Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ar Dicca Vamsa from Thiri Mingalar Weigyi monastery in Pubbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

Officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture sprinkled sacred water from the helicopter into the sky.—MNA

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*



Senior Buddhist monks recite Parittas onboard a military helicopter over Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. **PHOTO: MNA**



# “People are the key”

## State Counsellor applauds COVID-19 front-liners at ...

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In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor said the reason why she held a video conference with front-line warriors was to help and encourage the health care workers, volunteers and responsible personnel from the administrative sector participating in containment, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 on ground.

She also expressed thanks to and appreciated the staff, volunteers and workers from the administrative sector of the hospital for their participation in fighting against the infectious disease.

She continued to say that those who received acknowledgement for their efforts would gain energy though they did not work for acknowledgement.

“Today is the time to encourage each other. Individual citizens and governmental employees are to encourage each other to cooperate and remain unified in the face of the COVID-19,” said the State Counsellor

As a new year wish on this New Year Day of 1382 ME, she told the health work-



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi talks to the health workers from the Waibargi Specialist Hospital during the video conference. **PHOTO: MNA**

ers, volunteers and the people to satisfy the achievements of the past year that

they gained after tackling the challenges with unity. She wished the country's

people good health, happiness and peace. **MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)**

## President pardons over 2,700 Insein inmates

ON the occasion of the auspicious Thingyan New Year and supporting humanistic values, the President has pardoned 24,896 inmates from prisons across the nation, including over 2,700 from Insein Prison yesterday.

U Aye Thwin, Director of Yangon Region Prisons Department, said they distributed face masks to the inmates who will be released and gave them information on COVID-19. He said the Tatmadaw medical team and officials from the health department performed medical diagnostics and issued guarantees for

those without COVID-19. He said the Yangon Region government prepared YBS vehicles to send them back to the nearest point from their homes.

The government has also organized train trips for those returning near Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Pyay and Shwenyaung and the regional government provided them with food for their journey.

Ko Aung Myint Thu is a resident of ward 14 in Hlinethayar Township who was sentenced to 5 years on drug charges. He is being released after 9 months in

prison and said he is immensely happy towards the government for being pardoned. He said he won't go anywhere as the virus is still spreading across the nation and wished for things to return to normal and for the other inmates to be released soon as well.

Daw Nilar from Pazundaung Township came to pick up her son at Insein Prison, who was serving 5 years on drug charges. She said she wasn't sure he would be included in pardon but came with the hope that he would.

— Zaw Gyi  
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## President pardons 1570 Mandalay Prison inmates on New Year

On Myanmar New Year Day, the President pardoned inmates in prisons across the nation, including 1,551 domestic inmates and 19 expatriate inmates from Mandalay Prison yesterday.

Myanmar Police Force donated food and water to the people being released for their trip back home and the prison department issued them certificates showing good health and

their stipends.

As all public transportation has been suspended during the spread of COVID-19, the general administration department, Myanmar Police Force and health ministry officials organized transportation for the those with the same destination in groups. — Aye Mya (Mandalay)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Prisoners receive COVID-19 education before leaving Insein Prison yesterday. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

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**Order No. 11/2020**  
10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME  
(17 April 2020)

**Presidential Pardon**

As a gesture of marking the Myanmar New Year, to ensure the peace of mind of the people and taking into consideration the humanitarian concerns, prisoners serving jail terms in various correctional facilities across the country have been given pardon today under the Section 204 (a) of the State Constitution. The order is concerned with punishments for offences committed before the 10th Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME (17 April 2020).

(a) death sentences to be reduced to life sentence (with no release date).

(b) Life sentences without a time limit to be reduced to 40 years (excluding those who have been granted previous pardons from death sentences to the life sentences).

(c) those sentenced to more than 40 years imprisonment to be reduced to 40 years.

(d) those facing 40 years and below to have their prison terms reduced by a quarter of their prison terms.

*Sd/Win Myint*

*President*

*Republic of the Union of Myanmar*

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Office of the President**

**Order 12/2020**  
10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME  
(17 April 2020)

**Presidential Pardon**

As a gesture of marking the Myanmar New Year, to give the people peace of mind and taking into consideration humanitarian concerns, 24,896 prisoners serving jail terms in various correctional facilities across the country have been given unconditional pardon today under Section 204, sub-section (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

*Sd/Win Myint*

*President*

*Republic of the Union of Myanmar*

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Office of the President**

**Order 13/2020**  
10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME  
(17 April 2020)

**Presidential Pardon**

As a gesture of marking the Myanmar New Year and with a view to maintaining friendship with other countries and taking into consideration humanitarian concerns, 87 foreign prisoners serving jail terms in various correctional facilities across the country have been given unconditional pardon and expelled today under the Sub-section (a), Section 204 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

*Sd/Win Myint*

*President*

*Republic of the Union of Myanmar*

## Prisoners granted presidential pardon after receiving COVID-19 education, medical check-ups

In order to prevent the spread of the global pandemic COVID-19, newly released prisoners, who were granted presidential pardon on 17 April, received a medical check-up and COVID-19 prevention awareness before they were released, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

## 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)*

## Myaungmya Prison releases 309 inmates

ON Myanmar New Year Day, the President's Office issued Order 11/2020 to pardon prison inmates across the nation yesterday. As a result, 297 men and 12 women, a total of 309 inmates, of Myaungmya Prison had been released.

The Presidential pardon is usually issued at Myanmar New Year and with respect to public peace and humanitarian values. The pardon released 24,896 prisoners across the nation in line with Article 204-(a) of the Constitution.

The Myaungmya Township Tatmadaw medical



Officials providing necessary health care knowledge to the prisoner.  
**PHOTO: AUNG MIN (MYAUNGMYA)**

group arranged for the released inmates to be prevented from COVID-19. A total of 87 expatriate inmates were also pardoned on the same day.—Aung Min (Myaungmya)  
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Inmates in Kyaukse quarries released

AS the President pardons inmates across the nation on Myanmar New Year Day, 172 inmates from quarry 1 and 179 inmates from quarry 2 under Belin Prison, Kyaukse Dis-

trict, Mandalay Region, were released yesterday.

The local police force and doctor appointed to the prisons gave information on COVID-19 to the inmates and issued them

stipends and food for their trip back home on arranged cars.—Thet Maung (Kyaukse)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



# India extends bean import deadline amid COVID-19

By Nyein Nyein

INDIA has extended the deadline to import 250,000 tonnes of Myanmar mung beans until 15 May to remedy the delays caused by the lockdown rule imposed because of Covid-19 outbreak, according to an announcement by the Indian Directorate-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

Previously, India has announced that Myanmar needs to export 2019-2020 quota of 250,000 tonnes of mung beans to the country by March. When Myanmar could not export the mung beans within the deadline, India extended its deadline up to the end of April. Now, India has extended the import quota again because of the outbreak of Covid-19.

It means that India allowed importing of 2019-2020 quota of 250,000 tonnes of mung beans to

the country by 15 May. The new 2010-2021 quota of bean has been allowed to continue to import into their country.

Myanmar does not need to worry about the bean market because India has given the quota to buy the bean and extended its deadline to import the bean to the country.

Regarding the permission to import 400,000 tonnes of mung bean, the permit is granted by the Indian government in response to the request made by President U Win Myint to purchase 400,000 tonnes of beans from Myanmar during his visit to India at the end of February.

Usually, India would demand mung beans, pigeon peas, green grams and yellow peas for the quota. But this time, India announced its permission to import 400,000 tonnes of mung beans only. With the permission to



Merchants evaluating various kinds of bean at a brokerage house in Mandalay last year:  
PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

import 400,000 tonnes of mung beans in the next fiscal, it is likely that there will emerge a good bean market for the local farmers in next bean season, according to the bean traders.

After the announcement by the Indian government to purchase 400,000 tonnes of mung beans, the mung bean price goes up for a reasonable percentage in the market. On 19 March, the

directorate also announced that the import of 400,000 tonnes of mung bean allowed for the 2020-2021FY will be available from 1 May 2020 to 31 March 2021.

(Translated by Hay Mar)



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# Local, foreign investments create over 140,000 jobs in 2019-2020FY H1

By Nyein Nyein

LOCAL and foreign investments created over 140,000 job opportunities in six months of 2019-2020 fiscal year (FY), according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The foreign investment projects approved by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) have created over 130,000 job opportunities for Myanmar citizens in six months of this FY, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the official statistics of DICA.

Moreover, local investment projects, granted by the MIC, have created over 11,000 jobs for the local people in the first

six months of this FY, containing recruitment by the existing domestic enterprises, according to DICA.

Domestic and foreign businesses also have employed more than 3,600 jobs for foreign workers, including the expansion of capital by existing businesses.

Additionally, 154 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the MIC and endorsements from the regional and state investment committees in the current fiscal and brought in the capital of over \$2.36 billion. The total figure includes an investment of \$91.85 million in the Special Economic Zones under the Special Economic Zone Law, according to a press statement issued by DICA.

Myanmar has attracted foreign investment of more than \$3.37 billion between 1 October and 3 April in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Similarly, Myanmar earned K946.551 billion including \$159.53 million from 69 domestic enterprises and endorsement grants from the MIC in the first six months of this FY. Domestic investments including the expansion of capital by the existing enterprises have reached K1,211.894 billion including \$252.926 million as of April in the current FY, according to DICA.  
(Translated by Hay Mar)

# Myanmar-Thailand border trade drops by \$24.27 mln in this FY

THE value of border trade between Myanmar and Thailand has reached US\$2.13 billion between 1 October and 3 April in this fiscal 2019-2020 with the Hteekee border trade accounting for the largest volume of trade, according to the statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce.

This FY, the bilateral border between the two countries has decreased by \$24.27 million compared to the same period of last year. Last year, the bilateral

border trade hit US\$ 2.16 billion.

The country's export to neighbouring Thailand reached US\$1.49 billion while its import shared \$634 million.

Myanmar carries out border trade with Thailand mainly through Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, Hteekee, Mawtaung and Maese border checkpoints. During the period, Hteekee border was at the top with the highest bilateral border trade value of \$1.06 million.

Myanmar exports agricultural and fishery products to neighbouring Thailand and imports cosmetics, food products, machinery and raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers.

According to the ministry's data, the cross border trade totalled over \$5.73 billion with export worth \$3.78 billion and import worth \$1.94 million.—Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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**Strong winds topple houses, religious buildings in Sagaing, Magway**

DEVASTATING winds landed in Sagaing and Magway regions this week, destroying houses and religious buildings.

In Sagaing region, damages occurred at 95 houses and two monasteries in Wuntho, Katha, Indaw and Hticheint townships on 12 April; 77 houses and 3 monasteries in Kawlin, Phaungpyin, Kalaywa, Indaw, Pinlebu, Mamauk and Wuntho townships on 15 April; 56 houses in Minkin Township on 16 April.

More strong winds in Magway Region on 16 April destroyed 184 houses in Magway, 15 houses and 1 monastery in Pauk, 10 houses in Minbu and 5 houses in Salin townships.

Officials from the Disaster Management Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, together with local authorities,



Officials offering the necessary utensils to local people as winds landed in Sagaing and Magway regions this week. **PHOTO: MNA**

provided humanitarian aid worth over K14.2 million. The ministry has set up hotlines 067 3404666 and 067 340 4777 for getting disaster aid.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

**Double earthquakes damage properties in Chin State**

AN earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter Scale shook Falam, Chin State, at 6:15 pm on 16 April, with its epicenter 24 miles south of the town while another one measuring 4.1 occurred with its epicentre 25 miles southeast of Falam at 7:17 pm on the same day.

The earthquakes caused a certain amount of damage in Falam and Haka as it broke glass windows and toppled doors, cupboards and other items in addition to splitting the walls of local buildings.

The quakes also dislodged the sacred umbrella of the pagoda in Ingyin Kyun Village, Kalay Township, Sagaing Region.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettle-



Earthquake in Chin State topples the cupboards on 16 April. **PHOTO: MNA**

ment is collecting information on the extent of the damage and will coordinate with relevant departments to address the situation.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Win Naing Soe and Ei Thandar Aung seen with confiscated stimulant tablets. **PHOTO: MPF**

**Narcotic drugs confiscated in Phakant, Taunggyi**

AUTHORITIES seized illegal drugs in Phakant and Tuanggyi townships on 17 April, according to Myanmar Police Force.

A combined team including anti-narcotic drug force inspected Ma Hla Hla Thin on Hmawtaung No 1 Street, Whaykha Village, Phakant Township on 17 April and seized 1,400 stimulant tablets from her.

Similarly, Myanmar Police Force from Taunggyi Police Station inspected a motorcy-

cle driven by Win Naing Soe accompanied with Ei Thandar Aung on the Taunggyi-Mongpyin road, near Bankwe Village in Taunggyi Township on 16 April and arrested them together with 7,700 stimulant tablets.

Police have opened lawsuit against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Law, according to Myanmar Police Force.—GNLM

(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 minis-

try 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

## Three more confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Friday, total cases reach 88

1. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) reported on the morning of 17-4-2020 that after testing lab specimens of 3,505 quarantined people, 85 tested positive for COVID-19 while 3,420 tested negative.
2. The following table illustrates the hospital locations of 79 positive patients. Their health is currently stable.

Sr	Hospital name	Number of positive patients
1	Specialist Hospital (Waibargi), Yangon	68
2	General Hospital, Tiddim	4
3	General Hospital, Lashio	1
4	General Hospital, Mawlamyine	1
5	Sao San Tun General Hospital, Taunggyi	1
6	General Hospital, Magway	1
7	General Hospital, Kengtung	1
8	General Hospital, Kalay	1
9	Kandaw Nadi Hospital, Mandalay	1

Note: Two positive patients no longer have the virus and are currently under a 2-week quarantine at their homes/designated location. Four positive tested patients are dead.

3. Patient C-3, who tested positive on 24-3-2020 and was transferred to Waibargi Specialist Hospital, was retested on 6-4-2020 and 9-4-2020 and both later tests showed they no longer had the virus.
4. Patient C-9, who tested positive on 29-3-2020 and was transferred to Waibargi Specialist Hospital, was tested on 9-4-2020 and 12-4-2020 and both later tests showed they no longer had the virus.
5. Patient C-12, who tested positive on 30-3-2020 and was transferred to Waibargi Specialist Hospital, was tested on 9-4-2020 and 16-4-2020 and both later tests showed they no longer had the virus.
6. There are 132 new patients under surveillance between 16-4-2020, 12 noon and 17-4-2020, 12 noon.
7. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) released the lab results of the first batch tested on 17-4-2020 at 6 pm. Out of the 93 quarantined persons, one in Insein General Hospital, one in Yangon General Hospital and one quarantined in Kalay tested positive for COVID-19.

Ministry of Health and Sports (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## GLOBAL RESEARCH ON COVID-19

### EPIDEMIOLOGY

# Recovery from Coronavirus may not confer immunity, warn experts

EVEN as virologists zero in on the virus that causes COVID-19, a very basic question remains unanswered: do those who recover from the disease have immunity?

There is no clear answer to this question, experts say, even if many have assumed that contracting the potentially deadly disease confers immunity, at least for a while.

“Being immunised means that you have developed an immune response against a virus such that you can repulse it,” explained Eric Vivier, a professor of immunology in the public hospital system in Marseilles.

“Our immune systems remember, which normally prevents you from being infected by the same virus later on.”

For some viral diseases such as measles, overcoming the sick-

ness confers immunity for life.

But for RNA-based viruses such as Sars-Cov-2 -- the scien-

tific name for the bug that causes the COVID-19 disease -- it takes about three weeks to build up a

sufficient quantity of antibodies, and even then they may provide protection for only a few months,

Vivier told AFP.

At least that is the theory. In reality, the new coronavirus has thrown up one surprise after another, to the point where virologists and epidemiologists are sure of very little.

“We do not have the answers to that -- it's an unknown,” Michael Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's Emergencies Programme said in a press conference this week when asked how long a recovered COVID-19 patient would have immunity.

“We would expect that to be a reasonable period of protection, but it is very difficult to say with a new virus -- we can only extrapolate from other coronaviruses, and even that data is quite limited.”

SOURCE: AFP



Paramilitary members unload provisions in Kampala, Uganda, on Saturday, April 4. It was the first day of government food distribution for people affected by the nation's lockdown. Sumy Sadurni/AFP



# We can defeat COVID-19 crisis with decisive actions

ON account of global warming, the evil effects of natural disasters related to climate change are threatening the safety of our planet. There have been increased occurrences of natural disasters with greater destructive impact. The consequences of climate change can cause physical and mental damage.

The beginning of the windy season will see a return of gale-force winds in the evenings in March and April, the first two months of our summer season. Besides, isolated rains or thundershowers are likely in the afternoons or evenings, accompanied by strong winds, hail, thunder, and lightning, due to convective clouds created by gradually rising day temperatures across the country.

A gale-force wind hit some areas in Sagaing Region recently and damaged 228 houses and five monasteries.

Likewise, a strong wind hit some areas in Magway Region on 16 April, damaging over 210 houses and one monastery.

Likewise, an earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale shook Phalam, Chin State, at 6.16 am on 16 April and one aftershock with 4.1 Richter scale jolted about one hour later in the same area. The two earthquakes left some damages in Phalam and Haka.

The situation has rung alarm bells and brought into focus the need to fundamentally rethink our current disaster preparedness and public awareness.

We cannot prevent these two disasters, but we can reduce the impacts from them through our well prepared-

ness. People must be alerted to the risks of earthquakes, and people should take "full precautions" in the evenings and take "necessary action" to protect themselves and their property from the gale-force winds and lightning.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has also established hot line numbers: 067-340466 and 067-3404777 to help the victims of the above disasters.

But, the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing today, which is also a notifiable disease, can be prevented and contained through the cooperation of the people.

People are the key to defeating the COVID-19 crisis, and they should strictly follow the public health guidelines to keep the entire public safe.

Those who do not comply with the law can face fines and even prison time under Section-2 (b) of the National Disaster Management Law.

We are confident that our country can win the war against COVID-19 with decisive actions now.

... the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing today, which is also a notifiable disease, can be prevented and contained through the cooperation of the people.

## Let us chant Ratana Sutta Paritta to drive and stamp out of Pandemic COVID-19 from our world

By Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

THESE are eleven Paritta Sutta Protective Verses Lord Buddha had left for us. All these LA-Jo:4 3 Verses protect us from all disasters, conflicts starvation, armed conflicts and wars and diseases.

Ratana Sutta Paritta is especially for driving and stamping out all discern epistemic or pandemic. The background of Ratana Sutta is as follows.

In the Kingdom of Vesali in the lifetime of Lord Buddha there broke out all kinds of disasters, scarcity of rain, harvest failure, starvation. Many people died.

No one to bury dead bodies ogres came to eat dead bodies. People blamed the King for these disasters. The King requested Lord Buddha for eliminating that pandemic diseases. Lord Buddha gave Ratana Sutta Paritta to expel and stamp out that pandemic disease. With metta [loving kindness] to all beings the King and all his people chanted Ratana Sutta Paritta driving out all evils and finally saved the kingdom from all diseases — epidemic as well as pandemic.

Reproduced here is English translation of all verses of Ratana Sutta from the booklet published by the Late Rector Sayadaw Venerable Ashin U Silanandabhivamsa. Ratana Sutta is the second in the list of Eleven Paritta Sutta. Currently Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw and his associates are chanting Ratana Sutta. Let's chant together Ratana Sutta Protective Verses Corona Virus will surely be stamped out.

### Ratana Sutta (Jewel Discourse)

\* Having mind infused with compassion like the Venerable Ananda, who did protective chanting all through the three watches of the night, walking along the path between the three walls that surrounded the city of Vesali. Reflecting upon all these attributes of the Buddha. From the time the Buddha-to-be made the aspiration for Buddhahood, His practice of the thirty paramis comprising the ten paramis (perfections), the ten upa-paramis (the middle grade perfections) and the



Senior Buddhist monks, led by Bamaw Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivanmsa, performing the mid-air recitation of Parittas on a special aircraft on 1 April. PHOTO: MNA

ten paramatthaparamis (the highest grade perfections), the five great givings, the three great practices comprising practice for the world, practice for His relatives and practice for Buddhahood, and in His last birth, taking conception in His mother's womb, His birth, renunciation, the practice of asceticism, victory over Mara when He was seated on the throne under the Bodhi tree, gaining of Omniscience, turning of the Wheel of Dhamma (delivering of the First Sermon), and the nine Supramundane Dhammas.

\* Let us recite, oh good people, that Paritta whose authority is accepted by the deities in the thousand billion universes and which quickly causes to disappear the three dangers resulting from disease, non-human beings and famine in the city of Vesali. \* Whatsoever beings are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, may these beings be happy: moreover may they attentively listen

to my words. \* Therefore, oh deities, let all listen Have love for human beings. Day and night they bring offerings to you. Therefore, guard them diligently. \* Whatever treasure there be either here or in the world beyond, or whatever precious jewel is in the world of the deities, there is none equal to the Accomplished One. In the Buddha is this precious jewel. By this truth, may there be happiness. \* The serene Sage of the Sakiyas realized the Dhamma (Nibbana) which is the cessation of defilements, which is free from passion and which is deathless and supreme. There is nothing equal to this Dhamma. Also in the Dhamma is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* The supreme Buddha praised the pure concentration (that accompanies Path consciousness) and the Buddha described it as giving result immediately. There is nothing equal to that concentration.

Also in the Dhamma is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* The eight individuals praised by the virtuous constitute four pairs: they are the disciples of the Buddha and are worthy of offerings: gifts made to them yield abundant fruit. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* With a steadfast mind, applying themselves thoroughly in the Dispensation of Gotama, they got out of passions: they have attained that which should be attained. Plunging into the Deathless, they enjoy the peace that is won without expense. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* Just as a firm post sunk in the earth cannot be shaken by the four winds (winds from four directions), so, I declare, is a righteous person who thoroughly perceives the Noble Truths. Also in the Samgha

is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* However exceedingly heedless they may be, those who have comprehended the Noble Truths well taught by Him of deep wisdom. do not take an eight rebirth. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* With the attainment of the First Path, the three states namely, sell-illusion, doubt and belief in wrong habits and practices (as a way to purification), are abandoned in him. Also he abandons some other defilements. \* He is totally free from (rebirth in) the four woeful states and is incapable of committing the six major wrong doings. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* Although he may do an evil deed, whether by body, or by word or by thought, he is incapable of hiding it. The Buddha has declared this

fact that such a person who has seen Nibbana with Path Consciousness is not capable of hiding his wrong-doings. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* Graceful as the woodland grove with blossoming tree-tops in the first month of summer is the sublime doctrine that leads to Nibbana. Such a Dhamma the Buddha taught for the highest good of beings. Also in the Buddha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth may there be happiness. \* The Unsurpassed Excellent One (i.e. the Buddha), the knower of the excellent, the bestower of the excellent, the bringer of the excellent, has taught the excellent doctrine. Also in the Buddha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* Their past karma is exhausted; there is no arising of fresh karma; their minds are not attached to a future birth; they have extinguished the seed of becoming; their desire for becoming does not grow. These wise ones go out even as this lamp burns out. Also in the Samgha is this precious jewel. By this utterance of truth, may there be happiness. \* Whatsoever beings are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, all of us pay homage to the accomplished Buddha honored by gods and humans. May there be happiness. \* Whatsoever beings are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, all of us pay homage to the accomplished Dhamma honored by gods and humans. May there be happiness. \* Whatsoever beings are here assembled, whether terrestrial or celestial, all of us pay homage to the accomplished Samgha honored by gods and humans. May there be happiness. End of Ratana Sutt.

### Myanmar Gazette Heads of Service Organizations transferred, confirmed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred U Ye Naing, Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department under the Ministry of Information as Director-General of Myanmar Radio and Television of the same ministry from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on the expiry of one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
(1) U Myo Swe	Director-General Directorate of Communications Ministry of Transport and Communications
(2) U Thant Zaw	Director-General Department of Prevention and Investigation Anti-Corruption Commission Office

### Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2020)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2020:** Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin States, scattered in Taninthayi Region and Northern Shan state and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Shan (South and East) and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%). 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 (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and Chin States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2020:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2020:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2020:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay Regions.

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# Int'l community strives for economic normality as data shows steep downturn amid COVID-19

By Xinhua writers

A run of newly-released economic data on both status quo and outlook for the year have unnerved the world, as a global economic recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic seems to linger.

Racing against the clock, international organizations and various countries have rolled out a spate of actions, in a relentless effort to arrest current frailties and seek a potential, though bumpy, path back to economic strength.

## WORLD GRAPPLES WITH DATA, FORECASTS

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released Friday, China's gross domestic product stood at 20.65 trillion yuan (about 2.91 trillion US dollars) in the first

quarter (Q1) of 2020 amid the COVID-19 impact, down 6.8 per cent year on year.

"The situation of epidemic control and prevention continued to improve with a basic interruption in epidemic transmission at home," the NBS said, adding that the resumption of work and production has accelerated and fundamental industries are growing steadily.

Friday's data showed China's job market improved slightly in March, with the surveyed unemployment rate in urban areas standing at 5.9 per cent, down 0.3 percentage points from the previous month.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released Tuesday claimed that the global economy is on track to contract "sharply" by 3 per cent

in 2020. The report showed that advanced economies will contract significantly by 6.1 per cent in 2020. More specifically, the report said the US economy is expected to contract by 5.9 per cent this year; the Euro Area will see a decline of 7.5 per cent, Japan's economy will shrink by 5.2 per cent, and Britain's by 6.5 per cent.

The European Central Bank said Thursday that Eurozone industrial production fell 1.9 per cent from a year earlier in February 2020, following a revised 1.7 per cent drop in the previous month and compared to market expectations of a 2 per cent contraction.

In the Eurozone, industrial production measures the output of businesses integrated in industrial sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, mining, and utilities. In the United States, an-



Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort docked in New York as it prepares to begin assisting the medical needs of the city's citizens due to the strain on the health care system from the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

other 5.25 million jobless Americans filed for unemployment benefits for the week ending 11 April, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Thursday, bringing the four-week total of unemployed to a worrisome 22 million.

US retail sales plunged in March by the most on record, while manufacturing output slid by its most in 74 years, according to official data released Wednesday, fueling fears of a deepening recession.

Across Asia, economic growth is projected to halt to zero in 2020 for the first time in 60 years, Changyong Rhee, director of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Asia and Pacific Department, told a virtual news briefing on Wednesday.

## MORE COLLECTIVE ACTION AGAINST RECESSION

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) said Friday that it is doubling available funds under its COVID-19 crisis recovery facility to 10 billion US dollars due to high client demand.

The decision came after requests for funding exceeded the 5 billion dollars originally allocated for emergency relief, as clients require immediate assistance in areas including health infrastructure and pandemic preparedness to alleviate health care pressures.

The policy-setting body of the IMF on Thursday also pledged collective action to mitigate the health and economic impact of COVID-19.

"The fund has revamped the fund's toolkit by doubling access levels to emergency facilities, expanding the use of precautionary lines, establishing a new short-term liquidity line, and considering other options to help countries meet their financing needs," Lesetja Kganyago, International Monetary and Financial Committee chairman, told a news conference on Thursday.

(Xinhua writers Gao Pan, Xiong Maoling, Xu Yuan in Washington, Zhou Qianxian, Liu Yinglun, Zheng Xin in Beijing also contributed to the report.)



A woman cycles past a mural depicting the COVID-19 coronavirus in Bangkalan, east Java on Monday. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Fast-fashion nightmare for Bangladeshi clothes makers

ONE day Parvin was toiling to meet the fast-fashion demands of European capitals, the next she was among hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi clothes workers made instantly jobless as the coronavirus pandemic struck.

Big-name international brands have cancelled billions of dollars in orders because of the pandemic, decimating Bangladesh's most important export industry and hurting in particular rural women who dominate the workforce.

Parvin, a 28-year-old seamstress, joined thousands of workers queuing to collect final wag-

es from tables of banknotes set up at the Al Muslim factory, one of the biggest in the country that supplies some of the world's most famous labels.

The workers waited in long lines, each one metre apart in a bid to keep up social distancing, and the anxiety built as the towers of bank notes went down.

"We don't know when it will reopen," said Parvin, who collected her salary for March just before the giant complex closed its doors. She has no other means to support her family going forward, and described her situation as a "catastrophe".



A once-bustling garment factory is silent after closing due to the coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

**"Many factories have already closed. My husband is jobless."**

Making the shirts, pullovers, bras and socks for stores in wealthier nations is the foundation of Bangladesh's impoverished economy.

It accounts for 80 per cent of the South Asian nation's \$40 billion of annual exports and has played a vital role in its growth of the past two decades.

More than four million people, mainly women from poor rural villages, are employed in the sector.

SOURCE: AFP



# Asia virus latest: China revises death toll, Duterte threatens crackdown

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

## Wuhan deaths rise

The Chinese city where the coronavirus first emerged raised its death toll by 50 per cent to a total of 3,869.

The revision came as a growing chorus of world leaders suggested China had not been entirely open about the full domestic impact of the virus.

The additional deaths in Wuhan were cases that were “mistakenly reported” or missed entirely, according to the official announcement.

That also pushed the nationwide death toll up sharply to 4,632, based on official data.

Meanwhile, China’s economy shrank for the first time in decades during the last quarter.

“We are now facing rising pressure in the prevention of imported epidemic infections, as well as new difficulties and challenges for resuming work and production,” National Bureau of Statistics spokesman Mao Shengyong told a press conference.

## Duterte threatens ‘martial law’ crackdown

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to order the military and police to take control of the country’s capital if people do not start obeying a virus lockdown.

“The military and police will enforce social distancing at curfew... It’s like martial law. You choose,” he said.

The Philippines has de-



Like most airlines, Cathay Pacific has been hammered by the virus outbreak with its huge fleet of planes almost entirely grounded. PHOTO: AFP

tected about 5,660 coronavirus cases and recorded 362 deaths, but those figures are expected to climb as the nation ramps up testing.

Duterte’s remarks came as nine inmates locked up at the Quezon City Jail in Manila — which is so overfull that prisoners have to take turns sleeping in staircases and open-air basketball courts — tested positive for the virus.

About 30 other prisoners at the facility were showing virus symptoms, sparking urgent calls from rights groups to avert “catastrophe” by easing congestion.

## Hong Kong airline sheds staff

Hong Kong’s flagship carrier Cathay Pacific said it was closing its US cabin crew bases in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles with a loss of 286 jobs.

The airline blamed the coronavirus pandemic, saying it had

“virtually halted travel”.

Only three per cent of its pre-virus routes are running and in March it had just 311,000 passengers — a 90 per cent drop on the same month last year.

“As the economic impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying, a recovery timeline in our customer demand remains impossible to predict,” said Ronald Lam, Cathay’s chief customer and commercial officer.

## Australia police track cruise passengers

Australian police began contacting thousands of Ruby Princess cruise ship passengers from around the world as part of a criminal investigation into the liner, whose arrival in Sydney led to hundreds of coronavirus cases and at least 19 deaths in the country.

A questionnaire will be sent to more than 5,000 people. It follows reports a Californian man

became the first international death linked to the cruise ship.

“The questionnaire will allow us to zero in on elements of the cruise that we are interested in,” Assistant Commissioner Stuart Smith told reporters.

Police are investigating operator Carnival Australia over the circumstances that led to thousands of passengers disembarking in mid-March despite some exhibiting flu-like symptoms.

## Maldives extends strict lockdown

With seven new confirmed virus infections, the Maldivian authorities have extended a lockdown in the capital island of Male to cover the entire archipelago.

Travel within inhabited islands has been banned until further notice. The country has reported 25 cases, 16 of them foreign nationals.

A 24-hour curfew in Male, where 150,000 people live within two square kilometres (0.8 square miles), has been extended for a further 24 hours until Saturday afternoon, prohibiting anyone from leaving their homes.

## Clinical trials of Avigan

The Philippines and Japan are planning to begin clinical trials of Avigan before the end of the month, in the hope of using the anti-influenza drug as a treatment for the new coronavirus.

Philippine Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire told Kyodo News on late Thursday that arrangements are being finalized to begin testing on people afflicted with the disease as soon as possible.

“We are expediting the process, so we hope we could start before the end of the month,” she said, noting that discussions for the testing size and duration have yet to be concluded.

The Philippines expressed willingness to participate in the clinical trials for Avigan during a virtual summit held last Tuesday with leaders of Southeast Asian countries, Japan, China and South Korea.

## Japan offers \$930 virus stimulus payment

Japan will offer a cash payment of 100,000 yen (\$930) to



Supplied file photo shows Avigan anti-influenza drug. PHOTO: KYODO

every resident, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced Friday, as measures to contain the coronavirus decimate the world’s third-top economy.

“We are moving quickly to deliver cash to all people,” Abe said in a televised news conference to explain his decision to expand a state of emergency nationwide.

An initial plan to provide three times that amount to households, which have seen incomes slashed because of the coronavirus, was ditched and Abe apologised for the confusion.

Japan has seen relatively few cases and deaths compared to hotspots in Europe and the United States but a recent spike in Tokyo — which logged a daily record 201 new cases on Friday — has sparked concern.

## Virus outbreak at Philippine jail

Eighteen guards and inmates at a jam-packed Philippine prison have tested positive for the coronavirus, officials said Friday, heightening fears of a rapid spread of the illness inside the country’s jails.

Another 30 prisoners were showing symptoms inside the Quezon City Jail in the capital Manila — a facility so crowded that inmates take turns sleeping on staircases and open-air basketball courts.

The outbreak has fuelled calls from rights groups for the early release of prisoners charged with non-violent offences as well as the sick and elderly in an effort to ease congestion and lower the risk of transmission. The Philippines has a steadily rising number of confirmed coronavirus cases, with 5,878 infections and 387 deaths as of Friday.

SOURCE: AFP/Kyodo



FILE: Australian police began contacting thousands of Ruby Princess cruise ship passengers from around the world. PHOTO: AFP



# Prince William admits virus fears for Charles, queen

LONDON — Britain's Prince William on Friday revealed his concern for his father Prince Charles after he contracted coronavirus — and his worries for his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

Charles, 71, the monarch's eldest son and heir, tested positive for COVID-19 last month but recovered after a week in isolation at his home in Scotland.

"I have to admit, at first I was quite concerned, he fits the profile of somebody, at the age he is at, which is fairly risky," his oldest son Prince William told the BBC.

"But my father has had many chest infections, colds and things like that over the years and so I thought to myself if anybody is going to be able to beat this, it is going to be him."

In the end Charles had only mild symptoms, the 37-year-old said. The queen, 93, and her husband Prince Philip, 98, have been staying at Windsor Castle near London since the outbreak began. "Obviously I think very carefully about my grandparents," William added.

"We are doing everything we can to make sure they are isolated away and protected from this but it does worry me."

William and his wife Kate, the duke and duchess of Cambridge, spoke to the BBC as part of their work supporting mental health charities.

They urged people to look after their mental as well as their physical well-being during the lockdown.— AFP ■



Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate aired their concerns for the royal family with the novel coronavirus rampant. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Germany charts lockdown exit with virus 'under control'

BERLIN — Germany said on Friday a month-long lockdown had brought the coronavirus pandemic under control, announcing plans to manufacture 50 million masks a week ahead of the first steps to loosen restrictions.

Smaller shops will be allowed to reopen from Monday and some children could soon return to school within weeks, even as harder-hit European countries such as France and Britain prolong restrictions.

Europe remains in the "eye of the storm", the World Health Organisation warned Thursday, accounting for over 90,000 of more than 140,000 deaths worldwide according to an AFP tally.

However, infection numbers in Germany "have sunk significantly" and the outbreak is "under control", Health Minister Jens Spahn told reporters on Friday.

Each disease carrier in



German Health Minister Jens Spahn speaks during a press conference with the head of the Robert Koch Institute for disease control on the situation in Germany amid the new coronavirus pandemic on 17 April, 2020 in Berlin. — The coronavirus pandemic in Germany is "again under control" thanks to a month of lockdown imposed after an early surge in cases, Health Minister said. **PHOTO: AFP**

Germany was infecting less than one other person — the person-to-person rate dropping to 0.7 — according to data from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for disease control on Thursday.

So far almost 134,000 people have been infected and 3,868 have died. The figures justified a

first easing of the lockdown with a review after two or three weeks, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday.

But the veteran leader warned there was "little margin for error" and that "caution should be the watchword, not over-confidence".— AFP ■

## Romanian official appreciates anti-epidemic exchanges with China

BUCHAREST — China has accumulated a lot of useful experiences in COVID-19 patient treatment and nursing through anti-epidemic practice, and Romania hopes to strengthen mutual exchanges, State Secretary of Romania's Health Ministry Horatiu Moldovan said on Thursday.

The official highly appreciat-

ed China's active sharing of professional experiences during the Shanghai-Romania Expert Dialogue on Fighting against COVID-19 video conference hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Romania. It is well known that China's health care system has played its due role in the fight against the epidemic and by taking effective

measures, China has successfully contained the spread of the coronavirus, thereby controlling the epidemic, he said.

Two medical experts in Shanghai had nearly three hours of video conversations with experts and doctors from over 30 hospitals and research centres across Romania.— Xinhua ■

## Iran says 89 virus deaths take total to 4,958

TEHRAN — Iran said on Friday 89 more people have died from the novel coronavirus, as the country's official fatalities remained in double figures for a fourth day.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a news conference that the latest deaths brought the overall toll to 4,958.

It was the sixth day that the official fatality rate has dropped in the Middle East's worst-hit country.

Jahanpour added that 1,499 new infections had been confirmed in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 79,494 from 319,879 tests.

Of those confirmed to be infected with the coronavirus and admitted to hospital, 54,064 had been discharged after recovering.

Another 3,563 were in critical condition. Ever since the country reported its first deaths two months ago, there has been speculation abroad that the tolls are higher than officially announced.

A parliamentary report on Tuesday said the officially announced figures were based only on those hospitalized with "severe symptoms".

It said the death toll was estimated to be as much as 80 percent more and infections "eight to 10 times" higher.

The health ministry has confirmed the numbers may be higher due to limited testing.

The government of President Hassan Rouhani has struggled to contain the outbreak and keep Iran's fragile and sanctions-hit economy running.—AFP



The Iranian health ministry acknowledges that limited testing for the coronavirus may mean its figures understate the true numbers of infections and deaths. **PHOTO: AFP**



## Trump announces gradual US reopening against dire economic backdrop

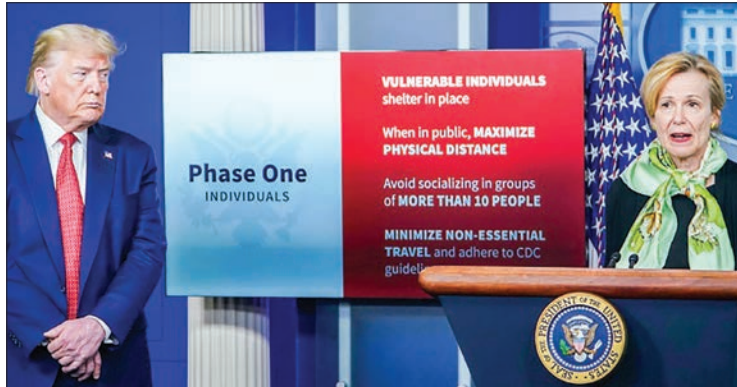
WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday announced the gradual reopening of a US economy battered by the brutal side effects of an unprecedented effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

“Based on the latest data, our team of experts now agrees that we can begin the next front in our war,” Trump told a news conference. “We’re opening up our country.”

His announcement came hours after new data showed job losses from the pandemic fallout in the world’s number one economy had reached 22 million in the past month.

New York Federal Reserve Bank President John Williams warned it will probably take “a year or two,” if not longer, for the US economy to recover its strength, as other figures showed dire damage to the home building market and manufacturing.

Trump had been campaigning for reelection in November



US President Donald Trump and government coordinator Dr Deborah Birx lay out the plan for reopening the economy. PHOTO: AFP

largely on record low unemployment and a surge in US output.

So for the Republican, the battle to stop the coronavirus and lift social distancing and the paralysis of entire industries is also a race against the political clock.

However, the recommendations issued from the White House, in conjunction with medical advisors, were a far cry from Trump’s previous hopes for a sudden, widespread end to social distancing measures.

Instead Trump described a cautious approach in which state governors, not the White House, will take the lead — also a retreat for Trump who had insisted he could dictate the pace of reopening.

“Our approach will outline three phases in restoring our economic life,” he said. “We are not opening all at once, but one careful step at a time, and some states, they will be able to open up sooner than others.”—AFP ■

## China suffers historic contraction as virus paralyzes economy

BEIJING — China’s economy shrank for the first time in decades last quarter as the coronavirus paralysed the country, in a historic blow to the Communist Party’s pledge of continued prosperity in return for unquestioned political power.

Gross domestic product in the world’s second-largest economy fell 6.8 per cent in January-March from a year earlier, according to government figures — a stunning turnabout for a generation of Chinese consumers raised on super-charged growth rates.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data marked the first contraction since the government began logging quarterly performance in the early 1990s, and a sharp reversal from the six-percent expansion during the fourth quarter of 2019.

The figure beat an 8.2 per cent decline forecast by an AFP

poll of analysts before the news was released. But economists have long harboured suspicions that official Chinese economic data is massaged for political reasons. “The actual contraction in the first quarter, especially in March, could be worse than headline numbers suggest,” Nomura analysts said Friday.

Experts warn that growth is unlikely to rebound soon, with depressed demand for Chinese goods in overseas markets that are also grappling with the pandemic. Fears of a second outbreak are also dragging on efforts to fully fire up China’s economy, a major engine of global growth.

“We are now facing rising pressure in the prevention of imported epidemic infections, as well as new difficulties and challenges for resuming work and production,” NBS spokesman Mao Shengyong told a press conference.—AFP ■

## Business insiders believe China-US trade deal to bring opportunities for American soy industry

LOS ANGELES — The sustainable and growing relationships between American soybean farmers and international customers would ensure growth of soy industry, business insiders said, adding the phase-one economic and trade agreement between China and the United States provides opportunities for growers and traders.

Over 2,000 global customers from nearly

100 countries and regions heard from industry representatives, stakeholders, and US soybean farmers at a two-day online forum organized by US Soybean Export Council (USSEC), which concluded on Wednesday.

The US soybean industry showed it remained optimistic that the country could provide supplies to world market, and China would uphold its end of the phase-one

trade deal this year despite a slight delay due to the COVID-19.

Jim Sutter, CEO of USSEC, was quoted by a press release issued by the group as saying that planting season is moving forward, and US export capacity can meet the safety and quality expectation from global customers.

“As we continue to navigate these unprecedented times, it’s more

important than ever that we demonstrate to current and potential international customers the strength of our farmers and benefits of buying US soy,” said Sutter. “USSEC has quickly adapted and changed tactics so we can show customers that our entire supply chain is working to ensure a sustainably and safely produced, reliable supply of soy for global customers.”—Xinhua



Grant Kimberley, a sixth-generation soybean farmer and marketing director of the Iowa Soybean Association, operates a seeding machine at his family farm in Maxwell, Iowa, the United States, 26 April, 2019. PHOTO: XINHUA

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (182 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (182 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-4-2020 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE  
Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WOLGAST VOY. NO. (009S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WOLGAST VOY. NO. (009S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITTT/TMT 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



# Amarapura, three tombs of kings, and Bodaw Phaya

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

**A**MARAPURA established in Konbaung era which lasted from 1752 to 1885 AD has been distinct as an old royal palace of Myanmar till today. Heritages in Konbaung era such as U Bein Bridge, Pahtotawgyi, Naypukhan Buddha Image, Kyauktawgyi Buddha Image, Shwekyetyet and Shwekyetkya located in Amarapura Township are crowded with travellers. However, most of the travellers do not notice the tombs of three kings in Konbaung era in Amarapura.

Amarapura City became royal palace in Konbaung era two times—once in the reign of King Badon from 1783 to 1823 AD and another in the time of King Thayawady from 1837 to 1857 AD.

At present, Amarapura is

included in Mandalay District of Mandalay Region, sharing border with Mandalay. Amarapura Township on 80.11 square miles of land is formed with two towns as Amarapura and Myitnge, two wards and 170 villages from 42 village-tracts.

The township shares border with Patheingyi and Pyigyidagun townships in the east, TadaU and Sagaing townships in the west, Singaing Township in the south and Chanmyathazi Township in the north.

Amarapura, the native of Pariyatti treatise compiler venerable Ashin Janakabhivamsa and venerable Mogok abbot U Vimala who established a large number of Mogok meditation centres across the nation, is famous with masterpieces of silk industries and weaving production.



Mausoleum of King Badon.



U Bein Bridge.



King Badon who established Amarapura City

King Badon called Bodaw Phaya as well as Maung Waing was one of sons of King Alaungmintayar. After assassinating nephew King Sinku, King Badon came onto the throne in Inwa on 11 February 1782 and became the sixth king of Konbaung dynasty.

King Badon drove golden and silver stakes in seven sites for the city, moat, royal palace, Shwegu, monastery, Pitakat chamber and lake on 20 December 1782 so as to establish the royal palace in Htipaungka area rounded by Taungthaman Lake, Dokhtawady River, Shwetachaung canal, Tatthay Lake and Aungpinle Lake. Starting from 14 January 1783, seven royal buildings were constructed simultaneously. The royal city was formed with 12 gates, 35 turrets and tier-roofed building on four wings.

King Badon exited Amarapura City from U Hnein Gate on the east wing on 1 June 1783 and went round the city clockwise to occupy it. The king ruled the city as the longest reign in Konbaung dynasty. The king took Raja consecration at the royal palace in Amarapura on 17 May 1783.

Professor of History Department Sayagyi Dr. Than Tun reviewed Inwa was the best royal palace in upper Myanmar. Move of the royal palace from Inwa to Amarapura caused crisis and hardships to the State and the people.

With farsightedness, King Badon ordered to enumerate a State census so as to address all issues of the country. After collecting number of the households across the nation, data on areas of towns and villages, and number of towns and villages were ordered to put them on record on the toddy palm leaves.

Thanks to census of King Badon, everybody knew there were 1,831,457 population in the main land and 170,000 in Rakhine and Taninthayi regions, totalling 2,001,467 across the nation.

Record breaker King Badon called Bodawphaya

King Badon called Bodawphaya as well as Maung Waing could break various records mentioned in Myanmar history, according to the book with title of Searching Konbaung. King Badon in the longest lasting reign in Konbaung era passed the ordinary life for 38 years and ruled the country from the royal palace for 37 years. Number of queens, lower grade queens and

royal relatives were abundant, breaking records. The king had had 54 queens and wives and 137 offspring in addition to 500 royal relatives.

King Badon possessed the widest area of Myanmar along Konbaung era. He contributed to casting the largest bronze bell named Mingun Bell and built the massive Mingun Stupa which was not completed. When he became king, he accepted the longest honorary title with 33 letters in Myanmar language—Thiri Pavara Vijaya Nantayasa Tribhavanaditaya Dhipati Pandita Maha Dhammarajadhiraja.

In classifying the two portions of Konbaung era, the first one was set from ascending the throne of King Alaungphaya to the time of King Badon till his demise. Veteran journalist U Nyo Mya remarked that the second portion comprised the time of ascending the throne of King Bagyidaw to the time of King Thibaw captured away. The first portion for 66 years in 133-year Konbaung era glittered as sunrise period and the second portion for 66 more years was similar to the sunset period of Konbaung era.

Three graves of kings

The mausoleums of three kings in Konbaung dynasty buried in Amarapura can be seen as urn pagodas. King Badon (1782-1819 AD) passed away on 5 June 1819, Saturday, and his grandson the crown prince buried the remains of king at the site, northeast of the court in the royal palace on 7 June.

The grave of King Bodawphaya took a position, north of Shwesakar Pagoda southeast of old royal palace in Amarapura. Anyone can pay visit to the grave along the circular road of Taungthaman Lake or through the gate to the military unit from the southern gate of the walls. In the 80 by 80 feet precinct of the pagoda based on the 50 feet diameter structure is not the urn pagoda of King Badon. Only the grave with tier-roofed building at the southwest corner of the platform is for the king. A stone plaque bearing salient points of the king was erected in front of the tier-roofed building.

After King Badon had passed away, his grandson King Sagaing (1819-1837 AD) ascended to the throne. The dethroned king passed away on 15 October 1846 under care of his younger brother King Thayawady. The remains of King Sagaing were cremated inside the compound of Amarapura Royal Palace.



King Sagaing's tomb.



Tomb of King Thayawady.

The brick tier-roofed pagoda of King Sagaing is located on the circular road of the lake in front of Shwelinpin Pagoda in Pyatthatkyi Village, southwest corner of Amarapura Royal Palace. The tier-roofed building of the king faces Taungthaman Lake, at the same direction of the place where his first queen Nanmadaw Mei Nu was killed into the water. However, some experts assumed Nanmadaw Mei Nu was killed at Thayettabin graveyard in Amarapura.

A sitting Buddha image was kept in the pagoda with three arches based on the 20 by 20 feet brick structure in the 40 by 40 feet precinct. A stone plaque bearing the salient points of King Sagaing was erected beside the entrance to the tomb tier-roofed building.

King Thayawady (1837-1846 AD) who dethroned King Sagaing passed away on 17 No-

vember 1846, one month later the event which King Sagaing passed away. His son King Bagan cremated the remains near the time signal drum, northeast of the court.

The tomb of King Thayawady can be seen in the centre of ancient Amarapura royal palace. Some experts assumed that as the tomb of King Thayawady close to the northward of present Basic Education High School of the military unit was similar to the tombs of royal families in Yadanabon era, the king's tomb might be rebuilt. Historical researcher Yan Naung Soe (writer Ya Naung, Dwe) wrote the original tomb was supported by four posts on the brick structure with the use of tier-roof.

King Mindon established Yadanabon Mandalay Royal Palace in late Konbaung era and moved his throne from Amarapura. As such, Amarapura remained an

ancient royal palace. Ancient buildings including pagodas and stupas built by King Badon and King Thayawady in their reigns still exist in Amarapura. As heritages and Myanmar cultural evidences in Konbaung era as past images of Myanmar history were preserved in Amarapura, ancient edifices in Amarapura including tombs of three kings in Konbaung dynasty are proving high value of Myanmar history.

(Translated by Than Tun Aung)

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## World's biggest digital concert to be streamed live: ONE Championship

IN partnership with Global Citizen, ONE Championship will stream live a biggest online concert in the world's history named ONE World: Together At Home Music Festival at 12:30 am Myanmar Standard Time on 19 April, that is the same time as 2 pm of Eastern Standard Time on 18 April, according to the ONE Championship.

The biggest online music festival will feature appearances and performances by the world's famous artists and comedians: Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon, Lady Gaga, John Legend, Billie Eilish, Alanis Morissette, Andrea Bocelli, Chris Martin, Charlie Puth, Elton John, Stevie

Wonder and Paul McCartney, according to the ONE Championship.

Aung La N Sang, Myanmar's fighting hero of ONE Championship, also stated on his official social media page that fans can tune-in on the ONE Super Application or Facebook page to enjoy the concert and can also join in raising funds to combat Covid-19 global pandemic.

The concert will pay tribute to the frontline healthcare workers and to raise funds to assist in the World Health Organization's efforts of fighting against Covid-19, according to the ONE Championship. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Yangon United president expresses new year wishes

President U Pye Phyo Tay Za of the Yangon United Football Club has expressed the new year wishes to the football fans, said the team in their statement yesterday.

The YUFC president wished that "Dear beloved fans, partners, staff, players and their families, auspiciousness to you all. May you accept my warmest wishes and regards on the special occasion of Thingyan and Myanmar New Year."

Unlike last year, people are celebrating the new year by staying at home, but Myanmar's graceful spirits of water festival cannot be lost. Thingyan represents washing away of sins from the previous year in preparation for the better towards the New Year. Thingyan brings

new hope, delight and health. I take this opportunity to wish all the members of the YUFC community, the well-wishers and friends a very Happy Myanmar New Year (Thingyan).

After the postponement of the Myanmar National League amid Covid-19, Yangon United FC is currently standing in the third place of the standing table of Myanmar National League with a total of 20 points from six wins, two draws and one loss of nine matches played while Ayeyawady United is taking the second place of 23 points with seven wins, and two draws of nine matches played.

Meanwhile, Hantawady United is leading the standing table with nine wins and one draw of ten matches played. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Team Ineos will pull out of Tour de France if not safe, says Brailsford



Team Ineos's Chris Froome (right) rides during the second stage of the UAE Cycling Tour in February 2020. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Team Ineos boss Dave Brailsford says he will pull his riders out of the rescheduled Tour de France if he feels precautions against the coronavirus are not sufficient.

Organisers on Wednesday announced that the tour would be raced from 29 August to 20 September, postponing cycling's flagship event, originally slated to start on 27 June.

The new dates follow President Emmanuel Macron's extension of a ban on large public gatherings until mid-July.

Brailsford told the Guardian he would pull out of the event if he felt that precautions against

Covid-19 were not panning out in a "measured, intelligent and responsible way".

"We would reserve the right to withdraw the team should we deem it necessary, he said.

"Whilst the race is on, we will plan to participate, but equally we will monitor the evolving nature of how things play out, as we did prior to Paris-Nice. This is a sensible, responsible and reasoned approach."

This week's announcement came as a relief to professional cycling teams and fans, with four-time Tour winner Chris Froome welcoming a "light at the end of the tunnel".

But Devi Sridhar, professor

of global public health at the University of Edinburgh and an adviser to the Scottish government on the Covid-19 pandemic, described the plan to hold the race, even in late August, as a "recipe for disaster."

"It's a painful decision but they have no choice," Sridhar told Cyclingnews. "The wise thing to do is cancel for this year.

"(The Tour promoters) have to weigh the risks against the benefits. Thousands of people from all over the world, gathered together, moving around, from town to town, this is where a virus could thrive — it could be a recipe for disaster," Sridhar added.—AFP ■

## Beaumont says 2020 international rugby season 'could be over'

LONDON (United Kingdom) — World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont believes it is a "distinct possibility" that the international rugby calendar could be scrapped this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The game's global governing body on Thursday announced details of a \$100 million relief package aimed at supporting the global game.

The organization is also exploring a way to return to playing but the current global uncertainty led Beaumont to concede it may not be possible to hold any more fixtures this year.

"That is a distinct possibility," Beaumont told The Times. "The pressures on the unions are getting greater and greater."

Beaumont is standing for re-election as chairman of World Rugby but next month's elections will see him go up against vice-chairman Agustin Pichot.

The former Grand Slam-winning England captain's bid for a second four-year term took a hit when former teammate Clive Woodward backed the ex-Bristol and Argentina skipper.

Woodward's assertion that "rugby would benefit from being viewed through the eyes of leader who is 45, not 68" rankled with Beaumont, who said: "What difference does the age make?"



World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont. PHOTO: AFP

"I played my rugby always as an amateur. Does that mean that I don't understand the professional game?"

When asked whether he needed to move faster to make changes, he said his preferred method was incremental change.

"I am evolution, not revolution," he said. "I am bidding to show a lead to colleagues, to take colleagues with me. I intend to be a leader. And I think I have been in the past."

Beaumont's running partner Bernard Laporte last week floated the idea of a yearly Club World Cup, an idea that could sound the death knell for the Champions Cup.

However, Beaumont added: "It was a misunderstanding. What I can see is a world club championship, but not an annual basis. That is the way we both look upon it."—AFP ■