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Monday, 20 April 2020



Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor

Message

State Counsellor thanks people on her FB account for combating COVID-19

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her special thanks to the people, on her Facebook Account yesterday, for their efforts in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

Following is the full-text of her message.

I would like to express my thanks to the health workers and volunteers for doing their duties with compassion.

My thanks also go to governmental staff who are performing their duties daily to keep the governmental machinery operating.

I also thank those donors who

contributed their assistance with loving kindness and *Cetana* to the areas which required their help.

I take this opportunity to thank those volunteers with golden hearts for their efforts in patiently solving social problems and conflicts.

I also thank our country's people, who are supporting and assisting the COVID-19 prevention, containment and treatment measures by maintaining their discipline and displaying understanding of the challenges in the country, and with an eye towards benefitting themselves and others.

(Unofficially translated by GNLM)

Factory inspections for complying with health guidelines begin 20 April before permission to reopen

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
Announcement for factories, workshops and departments amid Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
12th Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME
(19 April, 2020)

- Factories and workshops across Myanmar will be allowed for functioning in line with recommendations and regulations of the Ministry of Health and Sport as a move to contain the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- Therefore, the teams comprised officials of Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, together with the experts, will inspect factories, workshops and departments at the respective areas from 20 to 30 April 2020, and these work places could re-open with the approval of inspection team.
- Inspections will be conducted in the following prioritized order:
 - Pharmaceutical factories
 - Food production factories
 - Factories, workshops and departments that are ready for re-operating in line with health instructions
 - Factories and workshops with more than 1,000 workers
 - Other factories, workshops and departments

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Govt implements COVID-19 prevention plans at IDP camps, conflict shelters

UNION MINISTER for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye discussed implementation of the COVID-19 prevention plans at the camps and the conflict shelters in Rakhine State and other areas. The meeting on video conferencing yesterday was taken part by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung and officials from local government and the ministry.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discusses on video conference with Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung and officials from local government and the ministry. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discussed the preventive and response plan is being implemented since 28 March, and it has covered all the IDP camps and conflict shelters in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Chin states, and he called for preparing project reports on this programme.

He added his office has allowed addition aid to the existing social welfare fund for the elderly persons, the pregnant woman and their infants up to two years, while plans are underway to provide the cash for nutrition for the senior citizens between aged 60 and 85 during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Union Minister advised on following the guidelines of

Ministry of Health and Sports, travel restrictions, social distancing and choosing hospitals for possible cases.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu held talks on preparations for quarantine sites and hospitals, followed by the discussions of senior officials on coordination plans among local healthcare centres, hospitals, the Disaster Management Department, the Red Cross Society and social organizations on the availability of cloth face masks, soap, water and hand sanitizers, water basins, thermometers, disinfectants, cleaning toilets, supplies of foods and cash funds for pregnant women at the IDP camps in Chin and Shan states.

They also discussed awareness programmes on the disease, humanitarian aid and participations of volunteers and civil societies. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Nay Pyi Taw Council Order 36/2020

12th Waning of Tagu, 1382 ME
(19 April, 2020)

Public Announcement for Prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

- The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is transmitting in the world, while its spread is increasing in Myanmar, where the preventive efforts are being made after promoting the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment central committee into a national-level central committee on 13 March 2020.
- The following public announcement is made in the Union Territory Nay Pyi Taw for containment and prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) for those who come to Nay Pyi Taw from other areas and the vehicles which pass beside Nay Pyi Taw. The announcement will take effect in the afternoon (18:00 hour) on 19 April 2020.
 - Those who come to Nay Pyi Taw from other areas may, if necessary, require community based facility quarantine
 - The vehicles which pass beside Nay Pyi Taw will be allowed for proceeding only after careful inspection.

Sd/
Dr Myo Aung
Chairman
Nay Pyi Taw Council
(Translated by Aung Khin)

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“People are the key”

Total number of COVID-19 cases reaches 111 on Sunday

The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) announced four more cases yesterday and the addition has brought the total number of COVID-19 positive cases to 111 on Sunday.

Announcement of MOHS on 8 pm on COVID-19 results on Sunday

- The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) tested lab specimens of 4,147 people quarantined as of the evening of 18-4-2020 and 107 have tested positive for COVID-19 while 4,040 tested negative.
- COVID-19 positive Case-011 is receiving medical treatment in Waibargi Specialist Hospital and is regaining health, and so is Case-015. The third and fourth lab tests for Case-011 and the second and third lab tests for Case-015 showed they tested negative for COVID-19
- There are now 7 people who have tested negative for COVID-19 after two lab tests and they are Case-003, Case-004, Case-007, Case-009, Case-012, Case-011 and Case-015. Case-004 and Case-007 have been discharged from the hospital but remain under surveillance. The remaining 5 patients will soon be discharged as well.
- There have been 107 positive cases with 5 dead, 2 discharged from the hospital and 100 receiving medical treatment as outlined in the table at the bottom. Out of the 100 hospital quarantines, 3 are under intensive care while 97 are in stable health.
- There have been 89 new people put under surveillance between 18-4-2020, 12 p.m., to 19-4-2020, 12 p.m.
- The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) released an announcement on 19-4-2020, 6:30 p.m., that said from the first batch of 188 lab specimens tested, one person tested positive for COVID-19 and 187 tested negative.
- The new positive patients for COVID-19 will be swiftly put into hospital quarantine.

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

COVID-19 Lab results on 19 April 2020

Total number of lab specimens tested on 19 April 2020	369
Positive COVID-19 cases	4
Negative COVID-19 cases	365

COVID-19 positive patients receiving treatment at hospital

No	Hospital	No. of positive patients
1	Specialist Hospital (Waibargi), Yangon	73
2	South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital, Yangon	14
3	People's Hospital, Tiddim	4
4	People's Hospital, Lashio	1
5	People's Hospital, Mawlamyine	1
6	Sao San Tun Hospital, Taunggyi	1
7	People's Hospital, Magway	1
8	People's Hospital, Kengtung	2
9	People's Hospital, Kalay	2
10	Kandawnadi Hospital, Mandalay	1
	Total	100

Healthy stay at home guidelines

To reduce contact with and the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the public is advised to adhere to the following guidelines during the stay at home period.

- Remain indoors as much as possible and avoid crowded or public places.
- The elderly (especially those above 60 years old) and those with chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart problems, diabetes, liver and kidney issues or cancer have a higher fatality rate and are advised to remain indoors at all times.
- Do not have any guests over.
- If you have to go outside, absolutely wear a face mask.
- Every time before and after handling a face mask or paper currency and when returning home from outside, wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds. If water and soap aren't easily available, use hand sanitizers that have 60% ethanol content.
- If you have to go out for groceries, have only one family member and one to drive the car (a total of 2 people) go out, and limit going out for groceries to at least once a week.
- Maintain at least a 6-foot distance between other shoppers and store owners when going out for groceries.
- Follow these steps when returning home from outside:
 - Take out your purchased items from their bags near the doorway and put them in baskets or containers and systematically wash items that can be washed with soap and water.
 - Change your clothes when you return from outside immediately if possible, and soak them in soap for 30 minutes before washing.
 - Take care of personal hygiene by showering and washing hands. Avoid close contact with household members before changing clothes or washing hands.
- If someone has to go to a clinic or hospital, they should only be accompanied by another person and a driver.
- Regularly clean public utilities of high-rise buildings and houses such as door locks and handrails.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue or inner elbow of your arm when sneezing or coughing. Dispose the tissue in a wastebasket with a lid and wash hands for 20 seconds again.
- Practice the following tips for a healthy stay at home:
 - Avoid close proximity with family or household members as much as possible.
 - Eat nutritional food and get enough sleep.
 - Perform appropriate and non-intensive physical exercises.
 - Communicate with friends, family, relatives and other close people through phone or social media. Meditate, practice yoga or appropriate religious practices to maintain social and mental wellbeing.
- Do not listen to rumours and regularly check on news and follow guidelines by the Ministry of Health and Sports state-owned media.
- If family or household members exhibit COVID-19 symptoms such as a fever of 38° C/100.4° F, coughing, difficulty breathing or lethargy, immediately contact the nearest health department, health official or administration body.

The Ministry of Health and Sports will provide 24-hour protection for the safety of the public with regard to health issues during the stay at home period.

The public is urged to be cautious of their health and closely adhere to rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

-Ministry of Health and Sports
(19-4-2020)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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Israeli Ambassador donates medical supplies to Waibargi Hospital



Israeli Ambassador Mr Ronen Gilor poses for a group photo together with the medical officials at the Waibargi Specialist Hospital in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: THURA/MIZZIMA

Mr Ronen Gilor, the Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar, handed over PPE outfits, face masks and basic hospital equipment to Waibargi Specialist Hospital in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, yesterday afternoon.

The donation included 100 PPE outfits, 50 N95 face masks, 30 boxes of surgical masks and a thermometer, which was handed over to hospital officials. This is the first batch of donations and there are plans for additional donations, said Mr Gilor.

Waibargi Specialist Hospital currently has the highest number of COVID-19 positive patients under surveillance. — Zaw Gyi (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Industrial Zone for Plateau Fruits, Yunnan Daily donate face masks to MoI

THE People's Republic of China's the National Industrial Zone for Yunnan Plateau Fruits, and Yunnan Daily Newspapering Group (Yangon Office) donated face masks to the Ministry of Information yesterday. A ceremony to donate face masks was held at the Film Development Centre in the Golden Valley Road in Bahan Township, Yangon.

On behalf of the donors, Ko Zaw Ye Aung from the Yunnan Daily handed over 13,500 face masks to U Thein Naing, Director of Film Promotion Division

of Information and Public Relations Department. U Thein Naing accepted the masks and gave words of thanks.

On the 70th anniversary of the China-Myanmar diplomatic relations, the donation is aimed to strengthen the China-Myanmar Pauk Phaw Friendship. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Ko Zaw Ye Aung (left) hands over face masks to Director U Thein Naing (middle) at the Film Development Centre yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Over 300,000 gallons of water distributed in 11 townships in Magway Region

IN a bid to have adequate drinking water supply in the villages during summer, 300,570 gallons of water have been distributed for 3,712 households, consisted of 11,120 people, in 34 villages of 11 townships under four districts of Magway Region, according to the regional Rural Development Department.

With the contributions of the well-wishers, the Rural Development Department, Myanmar Fire Services Department, Forest Department and private motor vehicle businesses, over 300,000 gallons of water were distributed to the villages facing a shortage of water.

“Thanks to the respective

departments and donors. The department has been ensuring the adequate water supply to the villages upon information”, said U Myo Aung, head of Magway Region’s Rural Development Department.

The water purifying machines are installed at the department to fulfil the requirements of drinking water

to the locals, he added.

The villagers are urged to carry the water containers by staying six feet away from each other. The village administrators can contact the nearest Rural Development Department offices to get drinking water. —Zayatu (Magway)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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.

Watermelon trucks remain stuck in Muse-Kyin San Kyawt route

MORE THAN 1,800 trucks of watermelons and muskmelons are stranded in the long queue of the Muse-Kyin San Kyawt route, resulting in 80 per cent of loss to the growers, said a trader from Muse border.

At present, the prices of watermelons and muskmelons are plummeting. The delay in freight transport renders quality loss to the fruits. The watermelon season is going to end in mid-May.

At the present time, a 16-tonne truck of watermelon is priced 8,000-35,000 depending on fruit quality and varieties, whereas muskmelon fetches 2,000-6,000 Yuan per tonne.

High-security measures in the light of COVID-19 in China's border areas caused long queue, according to a border depot.

Earlier, the watermelon growers were 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.



Merchants are evaluating the quality of watermelons on a lorry at the Muse 105th Mile border trade zone. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The truck drivers are asked to take special care to maintain fruit quality. It takes about 4 days to reach Wanding yard from Muse border, resulting in damages to the fruits. Therefore, the growers are asked to wait for five days to harvest the fruits," he added.

At present, over 1,800 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 be-

tween 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 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 wa-

termelons 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 the 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," he added.

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

Regarding those problems, the authorities from two sides are negotiation the reports submitted by the traders, according to Muse fruit depot.—Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Bago Region to close factories until end-April in fight against COVID-19

BAGO REGION Industrial Zone Management Committee released a statement that the factories in the region will suspend its operation until 30 April in the awake of COVID-19.

Apart from those factories running for the State, other factories and workshops will be temporarily closed until April-end. The workers can receive the wages set by each factory, the committee stated.

Regarding the temporary closure of the factories, the committee has already agreed with the entrepreneurs. This action is to avoid unnecessary

risks while the confirmed case already exceeds 100 in Myanmar as of the morning of 19 April, with 5 deaths and 5 recovered so far.

The region has also announced the curfew from 10 pm to 4 am starting from 18 April, under Section 144.

Bago Region government is conducting home quarantine, facility quarantine and isolation at hospitals for those Myanmar nationals who returned the region from foreign countries. —Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

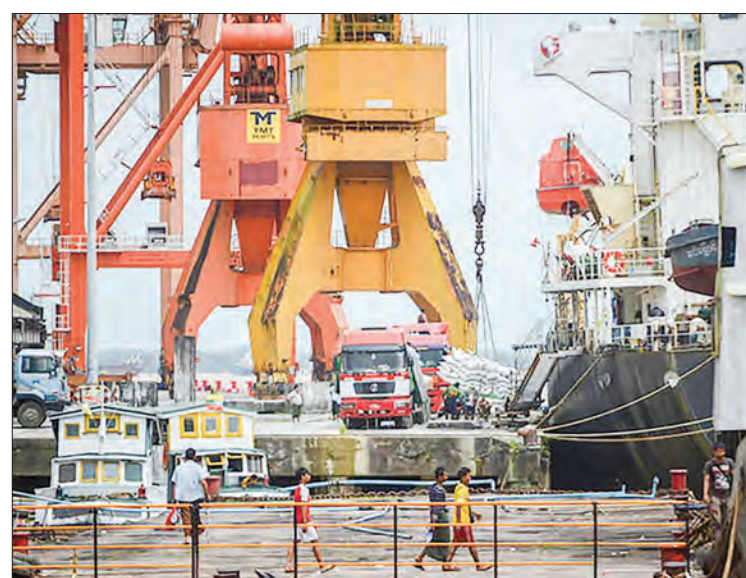
Agro exports exceed \$2.16 bln in 2019-2020FY H1

MYANMAR'S exports of agricultural products between 1 October and 3 April in the 2019-2020 financial year have risen to US\$2.16 billion from \$1.75 billion in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, which reflects an increase of \$406 million, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

In the export sector, the agricultural industry performed the best, along with the natural gas sector. The chief items of export by Myanmar in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses, corn, and rubber. Myanmar also sends fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products to other countries. Myanmar agro products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

However, the export market remains uncertain due to unstable global demand.

According to an official from the Agriculture Department, the



Rice bags load from truck to ship. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

country requires specific export plans for each agro product as they are currently being exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. Contract farming systems, the involvement of regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups are required to meet production

targets, the official said.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges, such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Coordinated, continuous international action essential for global recovery from pandemic, IMF official says



COORDINATED and continuous international action will be essential to support vulnerable countries, restore market confidence, contain financial stability risks, and spur global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior official of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said.

“As countries implement necessary quarantines and social distancing practices to contain the pandemic, the world has been put in a Great Lockdown. The magnitude and speed of collapse in activity that has followed is unlike anything experienced in our lifetimes,” Zhang Tao, deputy managing director of the IMF, told Xinhua in a recent written interview.

“At this point, there is great uncertainty about its severity and length of the economic downturn,” he said.



As the outbreak of COVID-19 worsens, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) is concentrating its total capacity on implementing preemptive countermeasures at local level to completely block infections within communities and respond to the raised crisis level of “Critical.” **PHOTO: AFP**

The global economy is expected to contract sharply by 3 percent this year in a baseline scenario as a result of the

pandemic, the worst recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s, according to the IMF’s latest World Economic

Outlook (WEO) report released Tuesday.

Advanced economies will contract significantly by 6.1

percent in 2020, and emerging market and developing economies, which typically have growth levels well above advanced economies, will shrink by 1.0 percent, the report showed.

Citing the IMF’s newly-released Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR), Zhang said the global financial system has already been “dramatically impacted” by the pandemic.

“A further tightening of financial conditions and an intensification of the crisis could threaten global financial stability. The risks to the outlook, globally, are certainly on the downside,” he said.

While advanced economies have already absorbed a severe blow, emerging markets and frontier markets could endure a crisis that causes intense economic, financial and social pain, Zhang warned.—AFP ■

White House, Democrats ‘very close’ to deal to aid virus-hit businesses



Italy will reopen some book shops and laundries on a trial basis, although it last week officially extended its national lockdown until May 3. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE White House and congressional Democrats say they could reach agreement soon on expanding funds to small businesses devastated by the coronavirus, with Democrats hoping to add money for hospitals, testing and state governments.

“We’re very close,” US Vice President Mike Pence tells talk show “Fox News Sunday” about negotiations on replenishing the Paycheck Protection Program

whose entire \$349 billion funding was exhausted by last Thursday.

“We’re going to work to expand that so that no one working in a small business in America would have to worry about missing a paycheck.”

US President Donald Trump has insisted his administration will do right by millions of American families and businesses ravaged by a pandemic that has infected 735,000 people in the

United States, 39,000 of whom have died.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin expresses hope a deal could be reached and passed by Congress in the coming days.

“I think we’re very close to a deal today,” Mnuchin tells CNN’s “State of the Union,” as he put forward a new target number of \$300 billion, beyond the \$250 billion under discussion last week.—AFP ■

China’s progress on business resumption

AMID further containment of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic, China is powering ahead in returning to work and resuming business and production. The following are the latest facts and figures:

Beijing rolled out nine measures to support micro, small and medium-sized businesses in the city, including easing the approval process for resuming work. Businesses closely related to people’s livelihood, such as restaurants, grocery shops, beauty salons, convenience stores and repair shops, can decide to resume work and production at their own discretion, according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform.

Some 3,770 tourist attractions in China have resumed operation and launched online booking access on Trip.com Group, the country’s largest online travel agency.—Xinhua ■

Over 210,000 hotel rooms secured to treat coronavirus patients

THE government has secured over 210,000 hotel rooms nationwide to accommodate those with mild coronavirus symptoms as well as asymptomatic patients as the country tries to contain the spread of the virus, a Japanese minister said Sunday.

The government has also received 120,000 face masks from companies and will provide them to hospital staff amid product shortages, economic revitalization minister Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters after inspecting the University of Tokyo Hospital where patients with severe symptoms have been treated.

Of the hotel rooms secured, the government has already concluded contracts for about 6,000, Nishimura said.—Kyodo ■



ANTHONY FAUCI

America's love affair with an elderly epidemiologist

MOVE over, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. There is a new feisty super senior in Washington who is captivating American hearts.

Anthony Fauci is everywhere these days – not just as the straight-talking coronavirus point man at President Donald Trump's daily pandemic briefings but on T-shirts, coffee mugs and, yes, even donuts.

Indeed, for many, the diminutive 79-year-old epidemiologist with a heavy Brooklyn accent is the country's new hero -- a no-nonsense scientist speaking truth to a terrified nation led by a president who sometimes has a loose grasp of the facts.

Nick Semeraro, owner of Donuts Delite in Rochester, New York, is just one of the business owners paying tribute to the doctor — and simultaneously cashing in on Fauci-mania.

Semeraro is churning out

donuts that feature a picture of Fauci on edible paper where the hole should be — his way of honoring the government's top infectious disease expert.

"I've never met a guy so admired by so many people. I have never heard one negative comment about him," Semeraro told AFP.

"In my opinion, he was like a cool calm voice in chaos," he said of Fauci's behavior at Trump's daily coronavirus briefings, which can morph from a recounting of scientific facts into something more like a campaign rally. Semeraro said demand for his treats is so high that he has had to open up extra telephone lines, and is now shipping the Fauci donuts across the country.

'In Fauci We Trust'

Fauci's craggy, bespectacled face is showing up elsewhere, too: on T-shirts with the slogan "In

Fauci We Trust" and on coffee mugs with the line "Keep calm and wash your hands."

Americans can even buy Fauci socks and candles.

Online marketplace Etsy now offers more than 3,000 items dedicated to the doctor, who has been in the public eye for decades.

On Facebook, the "Dr Anthony Fauci Fan Club" has more than 79,000 members.

A video game called "Fauci's Revenge" has lasers shooting out of his eyes to help defeat the virus.

And in the US capital, one restaurant is selling the "Fauci Pouchy" — cocktails in a pouch with a straw, for pickup and delivery, of course, in these days of the Great Lockdown.

The original is made with vodka, lemonade, elderflower and grapefruit juice.



Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Anthony Fauci looks on during the daily briefing on the coronavirus in the White House briefing room on 1 April. **PHOTO: AFP**

"They're selling out like crazy," said Rohit Malhotra, beverage director at Capo Italian Deli in Washington, which has a backroom speakeasy.

"Our highest was around 300 in a day."

'Sense and science'

Probably no one expected this soft-spoken man who first rose to prominence during the AIDS crisis in the 1980s to become a pop culture icon.

With his frequent White

House appearances, Fauci has been "propelled into everyone's consciousness," said Robert Thompson, an expert on television and popular culture at Syracuse University in New York.

Fauci is all over social media, giving live interviews in his raspy voice on Snapchat, answering questions from basketball star Stephen Curry on Instagram and talking to late night funnyman Trevor Noah on YouTube.

SOURCE: AFP

MANAGING THE CORONA CRISIS

Early action, public awareness make Portuguese "miracle"

THE isolation measures adopted by Portugal at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread public awareness give time and space for the country's health system to be able to serve all those infected with the novel coronavirus, and thus make the Portuguese "miracle," experts and analysts here believe.

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa hailed the achievement in the fight against the pandemic in Portugal as a "miracle."

"Outside, many say that what is happening in Portugal is a miracle, because we would not be prepared to face the challenge.

But we know that it is not a miracle. It is the result of a lot of sacrifices by the Portuguese. It is the fruit of all of us, we are always in solidarity and mobilized," he said in his televised national speech, announcing the second extension of the state of emergency.

Experts believe that Portugal's war on COVID-19 is suc-

cessful so far, though they said that it is still too early to declare a "win" over the pandemic.

The main factor behind Portugal's success was the "effectiveness of the containment measures implemented and the way people reacted," said Jose Gomes Ferreira, a Portuguese policy and economics analyst.

The first case of COVID-19 was detected on 2 March, and the authorities in Portugal have already started to recommend measures of social isolation.

"When WHO recommends

containment measures, Portugal started to act very early," Dulce Salzedas, a health reporter, told Xinhua.

A state of Alert was declared in Portugal before any death associated with COVID-19. Several schools closed and companies adopted the home office policy early in March, even before the government decreed the first state of emergency.

"Hospitals, until now, have not suffered that enormous pressure that has been experienced in Italy and Spain," Salzedas said.

The increase in the number of coronavirus cases has remained stable for three weeks in Portugal, which indicates that the disease has already reached its peak and is about to start to retreat.

Health Minister Marta Temido said during a daily news conference on Saturday that the average rate of contagion by COVID-19 in Portugal currently stands at 0.91, which means that each infected person infects less than one other person, thanks to the containment measures.

Commenting on the evolution of the pandemic in the country, she said that the av-

erage number of cases generated from an infected person was 2.08 between 21 February and 16 March, adding that the data collected so far "continue to make it possible to estimate that the maximum incidence has been in the past between 23 and 25 March."

Even so, the Portuguese president extended the state of emergency for the second time Thursday, which began on 18 March and will continue until 2 May.

In addition to assessing the risks of the pandemic, one of the contributing factors of Portugal's "miracle" in controlling the novel coronavirus is its geographical position.

As the country is in the extreme west of Europe, there was enough time to observe what was happening in its neighbors, close the border with Spain and suspend flights with Italy at the beginning of the virus outbreak.

As a result, there were fewer flights arriving from abroad and fewer foreigners traveling around the country, and thus the country did not have as many "imported cases" of infection.

SOURCE: Xinhua



A health worker pushes a man on a stretcher towards a triage tent for suspected COVID-19 patients, outside the Santa Maria Hospital in Lisbon, Portugal, 2 April, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Measures complying health guidelines is key to preventing COVID-19 spread at IDP camps

WHILE the coronavirus has infected 111 so far, Health authorities and regional governments are keeping a close watch on developments in regions and states. With understanding of Coronavirus infection risk at IDP camps in country, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement adopted the plan for preventing, controlling and Treating coronavirus infection in 128 IDP camps in Rakhine, Shan, Kachin and Kayin states.

Regarding the developing response plans that take into account the living conditions in IDP camps, where overcrowding can increase the risk of disease outbreaks, measures taken at the camps should be in conformity with the health guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The regional authorities are installing hand-washing stations in IDP camps and ensuring supply of clean water, hand sanitizer, face masks, disinfecting and food.

We will not wait for COVID-19 to reach camps for internally displaced persons before we act.

Upon confirmation of infection dangerous to the public health, anyone at the camp must be removed to the hospital and must be safely kept and receive proper care and attention including medical treatment. Meanwhile, authorities of the regions, where IDP camps are located, and health authorities are advised to provide the regional hospitals with necessary medicines and medical equipment in efforts to give medical care to patients in case the outbreak happens.

Besides, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is planning to provide cash assistance to expectant women, children, and people aged between 60 and 85 to ensure they have access to nutrient food. It is an investment in the care and safety of the whole displaced people. It is essential for the public health.

With the cooperation of the ICRC, volunteers and CSOs, steps should be speeded up to take measures against the COVID-19 disease at the IDP camps.

We will not wait for COVID-19 to reach camps for internally displaced persons before we act.

Ministry of Transport and Communications: Ensuring smooth travel, efficient information exchange

By Zin Oo, Khin Yadanar / Photo: Thiha Sithu

WITH the blow of its air horn, a solitary train enters Yangon Central Railway Station. There are not many passengers aboard as people have refrained from traveling during the spread of COVID-19 virus, except for important occasions. Nonetheless, the mighty locomotives continue to run for those who still needed to travel.

In addition to ensuring public Transport and private vehicles can continue traveling normally, the Ministry of Transport and Communications also had to develop communication strategies that fit in with the changing dynamics of their 4th year in the civilian government administration, especially in the early part of 2020.

The ministry operates under the motto, 'Establishing an effective, modern and affordable Transport system' and designed the National Transport Master Plan (2015-2040) to realize that goal.



Work is underway on the Yangon-Mandalay Railways to upgrade the route to ensure quick and smooth transportation.



U Thant Sin Maung (Union Minister for Transport and Communications)

Teledensity reaches 147.46%

"Telephone density was 86.5% in 2015-2016 financial year but has since reached 147.46%", said the U Thant Sin Maung. "In a population of 52 million, there are 79 million active SIM cards meaning teledensity is 47% over compared to the active population. Essentially, it means 94 out of every 100 people are able to



Puma Energy Asia Sun, a joint venture between Puma Energy and local firm Asia Sun Energy, is looking to move beyond storage services in Myanmar to include oil products distribution in the country.



Located at the northern Chin of Falam, Surbung Airport sits on the Surbung mountain range, 1830 meters above the sea level.

Chin State's gate to the skies

Situated on high elevation and surrounded by mountains and valleys, Chin State has historically been hard to access but all of that may change once the construction of Surbung Airport in Falam is complete.

"The Union Government approved for the airport, which can host ATR-72 aircraft, back in 2015-2016 financial year and we are planning to test aircraft landing in May," said Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung.

Over 2 million flights

The transport ministry's statistics show air travel increased exponentially during the fourth year of the incumbent government's administration. Both international and domestic flights in 2016 added up to about 9,200,000 but rose to 11,200,000 in 2019, an increase of 2 million flights.

Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) was transformed into a cooperation in 2013-2014 financial year to penetrate the international airline market.

There were 1,623,888 airline passengers to and from Myanmar in 2018-2019 financial year, and 664,083 passengers in 2019-2020 financial year so far.

MNA had 3 Boeing planes, 2 Embraer planes, 5 ATR planes, 4 Caravan planes and 2 Beech Craft planes in 2016 and added 4 Boeing planes, 2 Embraer planes, 11 ATR planes and 2 Caravan planes by 2020, with domestic flights to 28 towns and international flights to Singapore, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hong Kong, Chengdu and Gaya.

Improving airports

There are 69 airports across Myanmar including NyaungU Airport and 33 airports that can handle international flights and 35 airports currently not in use. NyaungU Airport was upgraded and similar expansions had been made to airports in Myitkyina, Putao, Lashio, Mongset, Sittway, Loikaw and Manaung in the current government's 4th year in office.

Tender auctions for Heho, Mawlamyine and Kawthoung airports were called with the PPP system. KBZ Co and two

Japanese companies have signed a contract to upgrade Heho Airport and discussion is under way to ink an agreement for Mawlamyine Airport.

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung said they plan to upgrade the Thandwe Airport to accommodate international travelers and expand their landing strips to meet international standards in 2020-2021 financial year. They are also cooperating with the Japanese government to upgrade Hantawaddy Airport with a feasibility study in the works.

use a smartphone."

As of 2019-2020 financial year, there are a total of 79,734,998 active telephones across the nation, covering 94% of the population and 62% of national geography. MPT, MyTel, Telenor and Ooredoo are granted Nation Telecommunication License and other four licenses are granted to 139 domestic companies and 66 foreign companies to work in the telecommunication sector.

SEE PAGE-10

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 19th April, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 20th April, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State, isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin and Kayah 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: Continuation of likelihood isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). - Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Yangon International Airport is the primary international airport of Myanmar.

FROM PAGE-9

The number of mobile centers in Myanmar has increased with 10,000 to 23,000 telecom towers constructed and the bandwidth speed of 79 million users to world has increased from 55.82 Gbps to 1144.30 Gbps. Fibre networks also increased from 23,000 to 60,000.

MR for everyone

Myanma Railways has 33 fast trains, 44 postal trains, 48 passenger trains, 17 short-trip trains and 203 circular and out-skirt trains, bringing it to a total of 345 locomotives. The train tracks for Mandalay-Myitkyina, Yangon-Pyay, Bago-Mawlamyine and Yangon circular railway are being upgraded. Phase 1 of Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrade focuses on the 256km Yangon-Toungoo track and is implemented over a 5-year period from 2017 to 2021 using a loan of Yen 112.709 billion from the Japanese government.

Phase 2 will focus on the 351km-long Toungoo-Mandalay railway and implemented over a 7-year period from 2017 to 2023 using a loan of Yen 207.281 billion from the Japanese government. The advisory group that won the tender auction for the project on 22 May 2018 created a detailed design from May 2018 to September 2019 and have called 10 tender auctions to implement the design.

The most important part of upgrading the railways was installing modern stoplights at the railroad crossings. Currently 25 crossings have been outfitted with 5 remaining, and 12 old pedestrian overpasses were fixed and 35 new ones aimed to complete construction this May.

If the entire Yangon circular railway upgrade project is complete, it will be possible to

accommodate 85,000 passengers daily, transport 263,000 passengers to their destinations and increase train speeds from 48km/h to 60km/h, reducing the 2.50 hrs for completing the entire round trip to just 50 minutes.

Purchasing locomotives and coaches from Japan have been postponed to 2023 due to the Tokyo Olympics. The Japanese government will supply 32 RBE coaches and 5 have already arrived with 21 to be delivered this June, said the Union Minister.

“The most dramatic change in the railway sector is the maintenance aspect,” said U Thant Sin Maung. “All the work used to be done with human labour but we are now using a semi-mechanized system and that has considerably sped things up. If 70 units for the system arrive from Japan within this year then we will be able to supply one machine to each maintenance crew.”

Purchasing passenger coaches

The ministry has acquired US\$ 45 million in the South Korean EDCF loan to purchase 100 new passenger coaches. They have currently purchased materials to construct 10 upper class coaches and 10 normal coaches in the first batch, and 10 upper class coaches and SKD car bodies in the second batch. The parts are at Myitnge locomotive factory and the remaining parts will arrive within 2020.

In addition, an interest-free loan of Yuan 80 million from the Chinese government will be used to purchase 28 new passenger coaches. This project was signed by the Chinese President during his state visit to Myanmar in January and will be completed in 2020.



Photo shows the Green Asia Port Terminal (Thilawa)

Increase of licensed vehicles

According to statistics from the Road Transport Administration Department, the number of licensed vehicles has increased from 5.5 million in March 2016 to 7.3 million in December 2019, showing an increase of 2.8 million licensed vehicles over the three-year period.

However, the rise in the number of vehicles also mean an increase in road accidents. Back in 2013, if there were 10,000 vehicles then there was a 9.2% chance of traffic accidents and now in 2019 it is 7.26%. There were 3700 traffic accidents in 2013 and there are 5300 now but compared to the increase in the number of vehicles, this is a drop in accident rates.

Improving water transport

The ministry implemented 186 processes to prevent erosion of embankments and 8 projects to improve water transport along the Ayeyawady, Chindwin, Sitoung and Mu rivers in 2016-2017 financial year and performed 238 erosion prevention processes and 18 water transport improve-

ments in 2019-2020 financial year.

Over the four-year period, the minister has performed 68 water transport improvement projects and 964 erosion prevention processes. Some of the processes were performed by winners of tender auctions and failed processes had been remedied, said U Thant Sin Maung.

Setting up 42 ports

Myanmar has a coastline measuring 1385 miles with 9 ports along it. Yangon port is the central port and accounts for 90% of the nation's international sea trade.

Nine more ports were constructed within the current government's administration so that there are now 42 ports in Yangon.

public convert to Unicode has reached 80% success.

Old to new post

Myanmar's postal services began back in the colonial era but has been improved and upgraded to meet modern needs and standards. There are currently 1,389 post offices across the nation and 841 of them now provide financial services. The postal service has been slowly improving itself to be beneficial to the public.

This is evidenced by the fact that while the postal service made a loss of K12 billion in 2015-2016 financial year, it was reduced to K2.7 billion in 2018-2019 financial year.

Myanmar's postal service

This increased the number of TEU containers traded in 2015-2016 financial year from 850,000 to 1.1 million in 2018-2019 financial year, an increase of 10 million tons of cargo traded to 19 million tons.

300,000 tons of rice were transported in 2015-2016 financial year and has increased to 1.2 million tons in 2019. The Union Minister said they are negotiating with Japan to acquire loans for additional ports.

Improving e-Government

The transport ministry and other ministries have been using the Government Personal Management System (GPMS) as part of the Myanmar e-Governance Master Plan designed in August 2016. This also includes using the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) to utilize emails extensively.

In 2018-2019, 20,000 Windows licenses and 17,000 Microsoft Office licenses were purchased for government ministries, emails addresses were made more secure and the push to have government departments and the

also strove to improve online shopping and mobile money experiences in the country and has become a truly beneficial service to the public.

More weather equipment

There are currently 158 automatic weather stations, 128 manned weather stations, 17 agricultural weather stations, 8 aviation weather stations, 71 water level monitoring stations, 44 water level estimation stations and 21 seismological centers providing updated weather information in real time to the public.

“All of this information concerns meeting the needs of the public and direct services provided by the ministry,” said Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung. “There are many other processes and services our ministry does that benefits that people of Myanmar. However it may be, the Ministry of Transport and Communication has always and will continue to work for the benefit of the nation's development and for the citizens of this country.”

(Translated by Pen Dali)

COVID-19: Latest Developments In Asia

Indian police order 'cave-dwelling' foreign tourists into quarantine

Six foreign tourists who tried to sit out the coronavirus pandemic in an Indian cave have been sent to quarantine at an ashram near a town made famous by the Beatles after running out of money, police said Sunday.

The four men and two women — from France, the United States, Ukraine, Turkey and Nepal — had been living in the cave near Rishikesh in Uttarakhand state since 24 March, police inspector Rajendra Singh Kathait told AFP.

They have now been moved to Swarg Ashram, where they will be quarantined for 14 days — although none have shown coronavirus symptoms.

“Before the lockdown began, they were living in a hotel in the Muni Ki Reti region but they moved to the cave after they ran out of money,” Kathait said. **Wuhan football team make emotional return to virus ground zero**

Wuhan Zall, the Chinese Super League team from the epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic, made an emotional return to the city after more than three months torn from their families.

Zall endured a turbulent 104 days on the road, including being stranded in Spain, because Wuhan was sealed off in January when the virus killed and infected thousands there.

The city is now emerging

from its weeks-long lockdown and hundreds of chanting fans met the Zall players when they arrived at Wuhan's train station late Saturday, state media said.

Wearing masks, the players had bouquets of flowers thrust into their hands while supporters clad in the team's orange colours held banners and sang.

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 percent 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.

Pakistan extends suspension of all flight operations

The government of Pakistan has extended the suspension of all domestic and international flight operations till 30 April, a statement from the country's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said Saturday.

The decision comes after the country has witnessed a regular increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases which had risen to 7,638 with 143 deaths

as on Saturday afternoon.

As per the decision of the government of Pakistan, the suspension of international and domestic flight operations as effected earlier have been extended up to 30 April, 2020, said the CAA.

Pakistan had suspended domestic and international flight operations in the country to control the spread of COVID-19 after a large number of infected patients who had recent foreign travel history were reported in



As per the decision of the government of Pakistan, the suspension of international and domestic flight operations as effected earlier have been extended up to 30 April, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

the country.

172 new COVID-19 cases recorded in Philippines

The Department of Health (DOH) of the Philippines reported on Sunday 172 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number in the country to 6,259.

According to the DOH, 12 patients have died, bringing the



death toll to 409.

The DOH added that 56 patients have recovered from the virus, bringing the total number of recoveries to 572.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will decide next week whether or not to extend the lockdown in the main island of Luzon that he imposed on 15 March, Cabinet Secretary Karlo

previous day that three sailors of the three-ship fleet were confirmed as infected.

All the more than 700 members of the fleet, which returned this month from a goodwill mission to the Pacific island state of Palau, have been quarantined.

Navy Command Headquarters Chief of Staff Vice Adm. Mei Chia-shu apologized for the outbreak, while President Tsai Ing-wen expressed regret.

China 16 new symptomatic cases

China's health authorities on Sunday reported 16 new symptomatic cases of coronavirus infections on the mainland, of which nine were imported from abroad.

The National Health Commission said in its daily report that all but one of the seven domestically transmitted cases detected in the 24 hours to the end of Saturday were reported in Heilongjiang Province.

The northeastern province on the border with Russia has recently seen a flare-up of infections. The remaining local infection was in the southern province of Guangdong, the commission said, adding that no new deaths from the virus were recorded Saturday.

Cambodia-China joint COVID-19 fight

Cambodia and China's joint COVID-19 fight is an outstanding model of cooperation and a positive step towards building a global community of shared future, said a Cambodian ruling party spokesman.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Cambodian People's Party (CPP) spokesman Suos Yara said that when China was facing the most difficult time in combating the COVID-19, Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen made a special visit to Beijing on 5 February to voice the kingdom's full support for China's fight against the virus.

When the situation of COVID-19 in China has stabilized, China has recently dispatched medical experts and supplies to Cambodia and other countries to help fight the pandemic, he said.

SOURCES: Xinhua; Kyodo; AFP



A woman (left) wearing a face mask practises social distancing amid Vietnam's nationwide social isolation effort as a preventive measure against the spread of the coronavirus at a grocery store in Hanoi on Saturday (April 18). PHOTO: AFP

Nogralas said.

The lockdown, which mandated people to stay at home and maintain social distancing, was supposed to end on 12 April but Duterte has decided to extend the period to 30 April due to the rising COVID-19 cases.

Vietnam reports no new COVID-19 cases

Vietnam has reported no new cases of COVID-19 infection in three days as of Sunday evening after it confirmed the latest case on Thursday, with the total confirmed cases remaining at 268, according to its Ministry of Health.

The country has seen 202 cases cured with no deaths reported as of Sunday evening, while there are 568 suspected cases with nearly 63,000 being monitored and quarantined, according to the ministry.

Taiwan sailors of a navy fleet tested positive

Taiwan's health authorities on Sunday said that 21 additional sailors of a navy fleet have tested positive for the novel coronavirus. The Central Epidemic Command Center announced the

Orthodox Easter services hit by virus as many stay home

ISTANBUL — More than 260 million Orthodox Christians celebrated Easter Sunday, with church leaders urging worshippers to stay at home to avoid spreading the novel coronavirus.

Yet while many watched services online or on television, some sidestepped virus fears to attend churches on the most important date in the Orthodox calendar.

In Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko, who has cast doubt on the seriousness of the pandemic and allowed events such as football matches to go ahead, visited a church without a face mask.

“I don’t approve of those who closed people’s way to church,” he said, quoted by Belta state news agency, claiming, “we experience these viruses every year”.

In Georgia, several hundred took part in a midnight mass at Tbilisi’s Holy Trinity Cathedral after the government allowed churches to open despite a cur-



Serbian Orthodox Christian priests hold a morning Easter liturgy in the crypt of the cavernous Saint Sava Temple, one of the world’s largest Orthodox houses of worship, in Belgrade. **PHOTO:AFP**

few aimed at curbing the virus.

“I could have stayed at home and watched the service on television but only here in this holy church can I find true comfort,”

one worshipper, 58-year-old Larmara Zhvania told AFP.

Orthodox Christians, the world’s third largest group of Christian believers, this year

celebrate Easter a week after Catholics and Protestants because they follow a different calendar.

Last week’s Easter cel-

ebrations took place in empty churches while Pope Francis live-streamed his traditional message from the Vatican as the pandemic that has killed more than 150,000 made mass worship too risky.

Some believers in the former Communist bloc said restrictions on attending services evoked painful memories of Soviet-era persecution.

‘We are together’

Russian Patriarch Kirill, who leads 150 million believers, held a service in Moscow’s Christ the Saviour Church without worshippers.

In a televised address, the Patriarch lamented “the terrible illness that has touched our people,” saying church closures recalled the Soviet times when people “risked their future” by going to church.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not go to a service as usual but visited a chapel at his country residence.— AFP ■

Fearful but impatient, Italy edges toward end of lockdown

ROME — Italians debated Sunday their first cautious steps out of a coronavirus lockdown that has left an estimated half of the working population seeking government support.

The Mediterranean country has been filled with rumours and speculation about when people will finally be allowed to walk the streets freely for the first time since early March.

The balmy weather is not helping government efforts to keep everyone inside in the face of a disease that has officially killed 23,227 in Italy — second only to the United States.

The number of daily fines for illegal outdoor activity is rising and police are setting up barricades along roads leading to the beaches on the western outskirts of Rome.

The growing sense that weeks of confinement were ending forced an unnamed source in Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte’s office to tell media that “nothing will change”.

But some officials seem to think that extending the strictest lockdown measures beyond their May 3 deadline might simply not work. The daily death rate has fallen to half of what it was at the

peak of the crisis and people — feeling less frightened but more stir crazy — may simply start going out.

“We must give citizens greater freedom of movement,” Deputy Health Minister Pierpaolo Sileri said on Saturday.

Conte gave little of the game away in one of his characteristic late-night Facebook posts on Saturday.

He said some activities will be allowed to resume “according to a well-structured programme that balances the need to protect people’s health with the need to resume production”.— AFP ■



Italy is full of rumours and speculation about when people will finally be allowed to walk the streets freely for the first time since early March. **PHOTO: AFP**



Sachsenhausen, just north of Berlin, is one of several former camps which were liberated by Allied forces 75 years ago. **PHOTO: AFP**

Germany marks Holocaust anniversary in shadow of virus

BERLIN — German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas pledged on Sunday to fight Holocaust denial as a trio of former Nazi concentration camps mark the 75th anniversary of their liberation in the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic.

Memorial ceremonies have had to be cancelled or dramatically scaled back for the camps at Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrueck and Bergen-Belsen.

“Over 20,000 people lost their lives in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. If we held a minute of silence for each of them, there would be silence for two weeks,” Maas said in a video statement.

“But the fight against forgetting may not be silent,” he added.

Germany assumed the chairmanship of the Interna-

tional Holocaust Remembrance Alliance last month, and Maas said it would use the year at the helm to “fight against those who deny or distort the history of the Holocaust.”

“When remembrance is vilified as a “cult of guilt” and victims reframed as perpetrators, be this in Germany or abroad, we Germans cannot remain silent,” he said. Sachsenhausen, located just north of Berlin, is one of several former camps which were liberated by Allied forces 75 years ago this week. The Sachsenhausen memorial centre, which had planned a number of events from Friday to Tuesday but has closed along with others, moved commemorations online with a series of video clips including Maas’ statement.— AFP ■

UK economy could suffer deepest recession in a century as lockdown extended

LONDON — As the lockdown in Britain remains in place for at least another three weeks without a clear exit strategy, economists said the country's economy could face the deepest recession in 100 years.

The British government announced Thursday that the current restrictive measures that aim to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus will remain in place for "at least three weeks". A big question arose over when or how the restrictions will be relaxed.

"Uncertainty around the length of the lockdown is likely to be a key factor behind the wide range of GDP forecasts for 2020," said Andrew Goodwin, chief UK economist at Oxford Economics, in a research paper published Friday.

He explained that the estimates of the scale of



The British government has warned it is still past the peak of the country's coronavirus outbreak. PHOTO: AFP

the decline in Britain's gross domestic product (GDP) in the first half year in 2020 are very sensitive to the duration of the lockdown.

In the latest forecast, which assumes the lockdown remains in place until mid-May and is then eased gradually, Goodwin expected the country's

GDP to fall by 5 per cent in 2020. The last time the economy suffered a recession on this scale was 1921.

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) also said the "once in a century event" poses major threat to Britain's economy growth, and the lockdown is causing the

largest contraction in economic activity since 1921 earlier this month.

NIESR projected in its latest paper that Britain's economy could see growth shrink by 5 per cent in the first quarter of 2020, and if a lockdown continues, by around 15 per cent to 25 per cent in the second quarter.—Xinhua ■

Cuba's private sector suffering from a lack of tourists

HAVANA — Havana is a ghost town. The American convertibles swooned over by tourists are back in the garage, while most restaurants and cafes are closed.

Cuba's private sector has been suffering since the island nation closed its borders over the coronavirus pandemic.

In the charming old building where the 1993 comedy "Strawberry and Chocolate" was filmed, a spiral staircase leads to

the deserted La Guarida, the most famous privately-owned restaurant, or "paladar", in Cuba.

"We decided to close the restaurant from 15 March," nine days before Cuba's authorities imposed their first virus-linked restrictions, said owner Enrique Nunez.

By Saturday, the country of 11.2 million people had close to 1,000 coronavirus cases and 32 deaths.

"I have friends with

restaurants in Spain, they told me what was happening, about the danger, the difficulty of continuing to serve customers in these conditions," Nunez told AFP.

His restaurant usually serves 200 people for each sitting.

Omnipresent in tourist guides, it's a must stop for many visitors, including stars such as Beyonce, Madonna or Pedro Almodovar, whose photos adorn

the walls.

"That was the main reason we took this decision. We're a very attractive site, many people arrive in Havana with the desire to experience La Guarida."

What that meant was that "we were on the front line" of potential coronavirus infections.

'Tourism was already struggling'

In this communist country where the state and its businesses dominate economic activity, the private sector has little by little managed to make its mark over recent years: it now employs almost 635,000 people, or 14 per cent of Cuba's work force.

These Cubans rent out rooms, run small restaurants or hair salons, among other activities.

"Many private enterprises were built on tourists, because no Cuban is going to go to a restaurant and spend \$100 on a meal," said economist Omar Everleny Perez.—AFP ■



Cuba's most famous privately-owned restaurant, La Guarida, has been closed for more than a month due to the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

Call for Nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2020

The ASEAN Secretariat is calling for nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2020 a prestigious regional award which aims to acknowledge the inspiring and outstanding achievements of an individual or organization in fostering the ASEAN identity, promoting the ASEAN spirit and championing the ASEAN way.

Nominees should have exceptional merit in contributing to the following designated focus areas:

- Collaboration between ASEAN Member States;
- Collaboration between ASEAN and the world;
- People-to-people engagement among ASEAN Member States;
- Economic integration and promotion of standards between ASEAN Member States; or
- Excellent contribution to ASEAN Community Building

A Judging Committee, consisting of eminent high-level members, including incumbent and former ASEAN Secretaries-General, will select a recipient who will be awarded the ASEAN Prize Trophy and a cash prize of US\$ 20,000. This year's prize will be presented during the 37th ASEAN Summit in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. In 2019, the ASEAN Prize was awarded to Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, an ardent humanitarian leader from Malaysia for her immense contributions to support humanitarian responses in ASEAN.

Submissions for ASEAN Prize 2020 are open from now until 3 July 2020. Nominee must be an ASEAN citizen or an ASEAN-based organization. The nomination form for ASEAN Prize 2020 can be downloaded at the ASEAN Secretariat Website <https://asean.org/asean-prize-1/>. The Nominee must submit the duly filled-in form to the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office No. 9, Nay Pyi Taw or dgasean@gmail.com and amns.mofa@gmail.com no later than 3 July 2020.

In the nomination form, the nominee need to elaborate within three to five pages highlighting the achievement the nominee has contributed to the building of a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community, and intra-ASEAN collaborative efforts, for the period of January 2019 to January 2020. The nominee should also share future plans in continuing the work after winning the prize. For further information, please visit the ASEAN Secretariat Website.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May. 09251022355, 09974424848

Invitation for Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC) now invites eligible firm to submit the proposal for "Spectrum Analyzer" as part of the Telecom Sector Reform Project supported by the World Bank's Loan. The deadline for submission of RFQ is May 20th, 2020 by 13:30 PM (Myanmar Standard Time).

Attention:
Director General
Posts and Telecommunications Department.
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Office Building Number (2),
Nay Pyi Taw,
Myanmar.
Telephone: +95 67 3407225
Facsimile number: +95 67 3407216
Electronic mail address: dg.ptd@mptmail.net.mm

The detailed information and requirements can be seen in the Request for Quotation (RFQ) and it can be downloaded at PTD Website: <https://www.ptd.gov.mm>.
Tender Committee
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Come and visit truly amazing Kachin land full sources of happiness (1)

By Thiha, the Traveller @ Thiha Lulin

THE traveller blogger had been to Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State on a working visit before, but nowhere was visited during that time. This time his visit to Myitkyina coincided with Thadingyunt holidays. He told about the reasons for how to accompany. He seldom makes a tour plan, but the visit to Myitkyina by 2+1 VIP car held attraction for him. He mentioned he noted the trip held attraction for him even though he thought it took him quite a long time in the car from the delta to the northernmost point of Myanmar.

Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State

Myitkyina is situated above sea level of 476 feet and it is a hill station not so high. Myitkyina is close to the existence of Ayeyawady river where Maykha and Malikha rivers flow together and become one. It was named after the town near the river. Myitkyina has been an important trading town between China and Myanmar since the eras of ancient Myanmar kings. Myitkyina is officially designated as the capital

of Kachin State on 10 January after independence was regained in 1948.

The ways how to get to Myitkyina

Myitkyina can be reached from Yangon and Mandalay by special 2+1 VIP, 1+1+1 VIP and various regular highway buses. There is daily high-class highway bus service providing from Yangon to Myitkyina. People can make a variety of choice of vehicles. There is also Manawdagun highway bus line. Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay have Jeinhawt Shwe Myay highway buses to ply to Myitkyina. People can make choices of buses to go to Myitkyina. It takes about 24 hours to get to Myitkyina. Some take a Mandalay-Myitkina train. Flight will be the best way and flight ticket is a little expensive with it taking around two and half hours.

Places of interest in Myitkyina

Travel & Tours specially arrange for travel to Myitkyina. Those who are willing to go to Myitkyina can go there of their own plan. On arrival at Myitkyina,



Kachin Manaw Festival.



Traditional clothes shops in the Myoma Market.



People's Square.



Night market.



The photo shows the downtown scene of Myitkyina.



Myoma Market (1).

they can visit all parts of Myitkyina by hiring a car. If you go by Travels & Tours, you can make friends while you are taking a highway bus. You can visit most of worth-visiting places together with the guide. It can bring savings not only in time but also in cost. Going to Myitkyina of own plan can cost more. Well, let's see where to visit across Myitkyina.

Manaw Grounds

Don't miss a chance of visiting Manaw Grounds that can be noticeably seen in the downtown when you arrive in Myitkyina. Manaw Grounds usually host ceremonial events, where the highly erected pillars are spotlighting a symbol of arriving in Kachin State. Manaw festival is annually held there and it is one of the most ancient and grandest festivals for Kachin people. Manaw festival, used to be held in January is celebrated from five to eight days. Kachin ethnic Aung La N Sang, Myanmar's world fa-



The photo shows an aerial view of Myitkyina.



Egg with sticky rice brew at the Night Market.



Ja Jubilimasat Nawkuhting Nu Church, one of the largest churches in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

mous MMA boxer, the pride of Myanmar, whose statue is set up in Manaw Sports Ground where the visitors can take photographs of impressive views. There is a restaurant at the back side of Manaw Grounds and it has won the support of the customers. The name of the restaurant is Lung Ga Pa. It faces Ayeyawady River.

Lawka Manaung Hsutaung Pyae Pagoda, Standing and Reclining Buddha Images

Lawka Manaung Hsutaung Pyae Pagoda, known as the most ancient stupa in Myitkyina, attracted the attention of the pilgrims.

The pilgrims don't forget to pay obeisance to the Reclining Buddha Image.

The Standing Buddha Image is also a worth-visiting place. The Reclining Buddha Image also has stone inscriptions written in Japanese and it was built and donated by the Japanese after

World War II at a time when they retreated because of being defeated. It is unique in that there is a small memorial erected in remembrance of fallen Japanese soldiers in WW2, and within the main hall are two paintings by a Japanese artist gifted in remembrance as well.

Hindu Temple in Myitkyina

The place I feel like taking a photograph in Myitkyina is Hindu Temple and it is situated near People's Square.

Hindu Temple gives a faint glow of golden colour. It was learnt that Hindu Temple was newly reconstructed. This Hindu Temple looks strange, bringing back the buildings existing in Jaipur of India.

People's Square

The People's Square in Myitkyina is not only a worth-relaxing site but also a worth-visiting place.

Myoma Market

There are two market—market-1 and market-2 in Myitkyina. Textile and personal goods are available in the market-1 while foodstuffs are available in the market-2. I have an excellent memory for buying traditional attire from the market-1 and Khawpoke, local eatable product from the market-2 was taken to home as gifts.

Night-market

Myitkyina is also famous for its night-market. It is a worth-visiting site for every traveller. A further fame together with the night-market is egg with sticky rice brew (Kyet-oo Gazaw).

I think it is a little strange. It is not the one that I am used to drink. It is good to drink like the rice gruel.

The buyers have to jostle for egg intoxicating brew. Foodstuff, clothing, toys and fruit can be mostly found in the night-market. Except the beverages, I have

somewhere to go at night and it is satisfactory for me.

Aungzay Yanaung Stupa, Lawka Ayechan Stupa and Thabyay Tahtaung Stupa

It is TatU Stupa and monastery that are situated near Myitkyina airport. Lawka Ayechan Stupa is located next to Aungzay Yanaung Stupa. It looks like Bag-era style.

The most remarkable sight is that numerous Buddha images are concentrated in a single place and it is also a good place to take photographs.

Ja Jubilimasat Nawkuhting Nu Church

The Christian churches are many in Myitkyina, some are age-old ones and some are newly-built ones. There is a wide variety of buildings in Myitkyina and some are high-rises. This church design looks up-to-date and it is one the largest churches in Myitkyina.

Minyat-Jameh central mosque

Minyat-Jameh central mosque is situated near the downtown of Myitkyina and it was learnt that it is the largest one. Small shops are adjacent to Jameh central mosque where is always packed with people and it is also an interesting site.

The sale centre of Kachin local products

I would like to see the places like this everywhere. But the shops should be kept neat and tidy. There is a wide variety of choice for shops and souvenirs shops are on display at the sale centre. The time I arrived was the late evening so some shops were closed. The visitors can buy all Kachin products ranging from traditional clothing to medicine herbs and foodstuffs. If the sale center is repaired a little, it will be better-looking. This place is the one that tour highway bus stop for a while. *(Translated by Htut Htut (Twantay))*

‘I should have scored more goals’ - Rooney

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Wayne Rooney may be Manchester United and England’s record goalscorer but he still believes he should have found the back of the net more often during his career, even though he was not a natural finisher.

Rooney, a teenage sensation at Everton, joined United in 2004 and went on to score 253 goals in 559 appearances during a 13-year spell for the Old Trafford club that saw the Red Devils pile up the trophies.

Rooney surpassed 1966 World Cup-winner Bobby Charlton as United’s all-time leading scorer, just as he did for England with a tally of 53 goals from 120 caps.

Despite those figures Rooney, writing in his Sunday

Times column, insisted: “I’m going to be honest — and this might surprise you — but I’m not a natural goalscorer.”

The 34-year-old, now a player-coach at second-tier Derby County, added: “I was never a Gary Lineker or a Ruud van Nistelrooy; I never looked at myself that way.

“I hold the goal records for Manchester United and England and am very proud about that — yet there have been better No 9s than me.

“How did I become a record-breaker if I wasn’t a natural scorer? Time,” Rooney explained. “I played for United for 13 years, England for 15 years. I had time to break those records — and looking back I should have scored more.”



Wayne Rooney is Manchester United’s record scorer but says he should have hit more goals. PHOTO: AFP

Rooney backed Harry Kane to break his England record, although he would like the Tottenham Hotspur strik-

er “to stay high as that No 9” after seeing him drop deeper in during the past two seasons.

“I don’t think it will take long for Harry Kane to claim my England record and it would be a proud moment for me,” Rooney said.

“I’ve never been a selfish player and it would be great for England for Harry to get there. Bobby Charlton had to wait 50 years (for Rooney to break his England record) -- I hope it’s not so long for me.

“The United record might last longer simply because players don’t stay at clubs as long as they used to.

“Mind you, if (Lionel) Messi or (Cristiano) Ronaldo came to Old Trafford for a swansong they’d probably break it in three or four years.” — AFP

Neuer ‘irritated’ as Bayern contract talks stall



Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is frustrated by stalling negotiations over a contract extension. PHOTO: AFP

BERLIN (Germany) — Bayern Munich captain and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer told German media Sunday he has become “irritated” with negotiations to extend his contract, which have reportedly stalled in recent weeks.

“All talks I have had since I have been here have been confidential... nothing has ever leaked,” the 34-year-old told Germany’s most popular daily Bild.

“But now, details about the current talks are constantly appearing in the media, and are often untrue. That irritates me. It’s not something I am used to at Bayern.”

The veteran goalkeeper’s unusually candid comments come amid widespread reports

that his current contract negotiations have hit the rocks.

If the talks fail, club captain Neuer could be free to leave Bayern in June and attract the interest of the Premier League clubs.

According to Bild, Neuer and his agent Frank Kroth are demanding a five-year deal, with a salary of 20 million euros (\$22 million) per season.

In Sunday’s interview, Kroth denied such details and said he was not “confronting the club with demands which will hit it hard in the coronavirus crisis”.

With Bundesliga matches currently suspended due to the coronavirus, Bayern have recently extended the contracts of forward Thomas Mueller and head coach Hansi Flick, both un-

til 2023.

Neuer hailed Flick as a “super coach” and said that the 55-year-old’s extension had convinced him too to stay on at Bayern.

“I want to have a contract which is a win-win situation for me and Bayern. I want to perform, be there for the team... and give 100 percent,” he said.

“The conditions have to be right (for that),” he added.

Neuer, who helped Germany win the 2014 World Cup title, has been named world goalkeeper of the year four times.

He has kept 191 clean sheets in 373 appearances for Bayern since joining from Schalke in 2011 and made 92 appearances for Germany.—AFP

Fifteen years on, how maiden Monte Carlo win sparked Nadal breakthrough

PARIS (France) _ Rafael Nadal celebrates the 15th anniversary of his first Monte Carlo Masters title on Sunday, a victory which sparked a breakthrough season, a maiden Grand Slam triumph at Roland Garros and set the Spaniard on the road to becoming one of the sport’s greatest players.

Nadal was just 18 when he beat Guillermo Coria in the 2005 Monte Carlo final.

Two years earlier, he had offered tennis a glimpse of the future when, at 16, he stunned French Open champion Albert Costa on the famous red clay on the shores of the Mediterranean.

His 2005 triumph was one of 11 titles Nadal captured that

year -- eight of them on clay at Costa do Sauipe, Acapulco, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, Rome, the French Open, Bastad and Stuttgart.

He also proved he was no slow-court bully, ending the year with hard court victories in Canada, Beijing and Madrid.

That success was also reflected in the rankings.

At the end of 2004, he was at 51; fast forward 12 months and he was the world number two.

Among his 85-trophy career haul, 11 have come in Monte Carlo including a record eight in a row from 2005-2012 and three more between 2016-2018.—AFP



Teenage kicks: An 18-year-old Rafael Nadal wins his first Monte Carlo title in 2005. Ten more have followed since. PHOTO: AFP