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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses bills, votes on constitutional amendment



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convenes its 24th day meeting of 15th regular session yesterday. **PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN**

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its 24th day meeting of the 15th regular session yesterday, attended by 631 MPs, out of 654 total representatives, while 23 lawmakers were on leave.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee Member U Zaw Win presented a report on findings and recommendations of committee on Myanmar Geo-

science Council bill sent back by the President with his remarks.

Committee member Daw Nwe Nwe Aung also read out a report on findings and recommendations of committee on the Industrial Zone bill which is a topic of controversy between the two Hluttaws.

Committee member Daw Kyein Ngie Mun also reported findings and recommendations of

committee on the bill for amending Myanmar Medical Council, which is under debate between the two Hluttaws.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat invited the MPs who want to discuss the issues to submit their names in line with the rules and regulations of Hluttaw.

The MPs later voted on proposals to amend 18 sections and

paragraphs related to Section 436 (b).

All the proposals on following provisions failed to pass 75 per cent needed for further processes—Section 232 (a) (1), adding a sub-para under Section 232 (a) (4), Section 232 (b) (1), Section 232 (j) (2), Section 232 (k), Section 234(a), Section 234 (f), Section 235 (c)(2), Section 237 (a), Section 237 (a) (4) (dd), Section 239 (a),

Section 239 (a) (4) (dd), Section 242 (a), Section 242 (a) (4)(cc), Section 244 (a), Section 244 (a) (4)(cc), adding a sub-para under Section 261 (a)(4) and Section 261(b).

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will vote on proposals for amendment of provisions related to Section 436 (b) today.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Local administration offices to form committees on anti-Covid-19 measures



Union Minister U Min Thu delivers the speech at coordination meeting with officials from Region/State General Administration Departments in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

A COORDINATION meeting of officials from Region/State General Administration Departments was held to discuss measures on prevention, control and

treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) yesterday. U Min Thu, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, presided over the

meeting at his office in Nay Pyi Taw. He discussed the formation of National-level Central Committee for COVID-19 Pre-

vention, Control and Treatment, chaired by State Counsellor, and the public announcements of President's Office, including prohibition of festivals and entertainment events (including constructions of water-throwing pandals for Myanmar traditional water festival) until 30 April, postponement of overseas trainings, meetings and study tours for civil service staff; if the civil service personnel, who have been in official overseas visits, were suspected for the virus infection when they arrived back home, they would be quarantined for 14 days; issuing directives to related departments. The Union Minister suggested the local administrators to conduct awareness programmes on the virus at respective areas, to inform about the suspected patients to nearby health centres, and to conduct surveillance

on foreign visitors and Myanmar citizens who arrived back to home through border gateways, and to coordinate with relevant departments on treatments and containment of the disease. Officers from administration offices of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Sagaing, Taninthayi, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Rakhine, Yangon, Shan, Ayeyawady and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area presented the local situations. After the report of Deputy Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of the Office of the Union Government on the working plans, the Union Minister held talks on the coordination of local offices in measures against the Covid-19. The Deputy Minister led discussions to form working committee and prevention plans.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

National Renewable Energy Committee holds 3rd coordination meeting



Union Minister U Win Khaing discusses promotion of renewable energy sector at the meeting with National Renewable Energy Committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

THE National Renewable Energy Committee organized its 3rd coordination meeting (1/2020) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Chairman of the committee and Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing, its deputy Chairmen Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu and Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi; and committee members. Union Minister U Win Khaing discussed promotion of renewable energy sector, its resources, raising awareness on energy saving through increasing electricity bill beginning 1 July 2019 and more interesting investors in electricity generation from hydro and thermal powers.

The Union Minister added the government is implementing a long-term plan to be able to generate 500 MW from hydropower projects in the next three years. In short-term plan, a total of seven thermal power plants could produce 1,166 MW soon. The proposed projects include 61 solar power projects in eight regions and state for 5,746.37 MW; 7 wind power projects in 4 regions for 1,163 MW and 6 biomass project for 200 MW in 4 regions and states. Myanmar is also promoting renewable energies to support the 2021 Energy Mix in relation to nationwide electrification programme targeted in 2030. The ministry has expected 100 per cent electrification rate

for Yangon Region, and plans are also underway to distribute electricity to the remote areas such as Myawady, Kawkareik and Hpa-an soon. Power will also reach to Mongpyin, Kengtung, Kalay and Mawlaik through 230 kV line in near future. The Ye-Dawei power line will soon be constructed. Senior officers from the departments of ministry discussed electricity generations from renewable sources. Electricity distribution of Myanmar was 34 per cent in 2016, and has increased to 50 per cent in December 2019. The National Renewable Energy Committee is implementing the target of 55 per cent this year as a part of plan for nationwide coverage in 2030.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

SWRR Ministry takes steps to close Kyauktalone IDP Camp in Kyaukpyu

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye held a video conference yesterday with the ministry's team working on ground in Kyaukpyu to close Kyauktalone IDP Camp. At the meeting, the team's lead Dr Ko Ko Naing, Director-General of the Disaster Management Department, reported on the meeting with the departmental officials at the Kyaukpyu District General Administration Department. During the trip, the team discussed building houses, roads and infrastructures for drainage system, drinking water and electricity, education

and health sector. The new place for the IDPs are located about two furlongs from the Kyauktalone IDP Camp. The team also held a negotiation with the IDPs at the camp. In the afternoon, the team reported on the negotiation with seven townselders from Kyaukpyu, and the Union minister gave necessary instructions. The team will also meet with the Rakhine State government and departmental officials in efforts to close the IDP Camp.—MNA
(Translated by TTN)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye attends the video conferencing with the ministry's team in closing Kyauktalone IDP Camp in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

Central committee holds daily meeting on COVID-19

MINISTRY of Health and Sports held the central-level daily meeting 36/2020 on COVID-19 virus prevention, control and treatment at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe has stressed the need to scale-up aggressive measures to prevent the virus infection as the situation of the COVID-19 outbreak is evolving rapidly.

The health authorities are beefing up surveillance at the international airports to find out possible virus carriers from the countries which are facing the COVID-19 outbreak and are also taking measures to lessen the number of travellers from the countries.

The Union Minister highlighted the outbreak countries' strategies to combat Coronavirus infection, stressing the need to be ready to respond possible situations of the infection after seeking permission from the

The countries facing the outbreak of COVID-19 have suspended and reduced the flights, locked down the towns, closed

the schools and banned the public gathering and postponed the international conferences.

The Union Minister has called on authorities to make more efforts for medical facilities and raising public health measures as the current window of opportunity with no infected patient can shut any time.

He welcomed daily video conferencing between the central body and region and state level health authorities, calling an effective step to prevent and control the virus infection.

The Ministry would announce the answers to the frequently asked questions about the COVID-19.

To raise health awareness about the COVID-19 among the inmates and people in conflict areas, the ministry is obliged to compile the directives for the COVID-19 prevention and to send it to the ministries concerned.

He also stressed the need to immediately scale up current efforts of surveillance with non-contact thermometers to the MPs at the Pyithu Hluttaw and



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivers the speech at the central-level daily meeting 36/2020 on COVID-19 virus prevention, control and treatment in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Amyotha Hluttaw.

He also confirmed that the Ministry would suspend or reduce its meetings and conferences, or will hold tele conference or video conferencing instead.

The Union Minister urged the health authorities to make necessary preparations for receiving the Myanmar overseas workers who will return next

month from the outbreak countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, stressing the need for the workers to practice self-initiated isolation and to inform the health authorities in case of suspected symptoms.

He also advised ministries concerned to provide hand washing facilities with hand sanitizer at the places including pagodas which attracts crowds

to prevent infection.

The meeting came to an end with discussion by the participants about regional situation, condition of patients quarantined at hospitals and kept under watch, surveillance at international airports and border gates and needs for medical equipment.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Report on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) From (4-1-2020) to (17-3-2020) (17-3-2020), 8: 15 pm

1. Situation update worldwide

(World Health Organization's statement issued at 3:30 pm (MST) on 16-3-2020)

Total affected countries	-	152
Total cases	-	167, 511
Total death toll	-	6,606
Global death rate	-	3.9%
Global cases/ death toll		

Sr.	Countries	Since its beginning to so far	
		Confirmed cases	Death toll
1	People's Republic of China	81,077	3,218
2	Italy	24,747	1,809
3	Iran	14,991	853
4	Republic of Korea	8,236	75
5	Spain	7,753	288
6	France	5,380	127
7	Germany	4,838	12
8	Switzerland	2,200	13
9	England	1,395	35
10	Netherlands	1,135	20
11	Belgium	1,085	5
12	Norway	1,077	1
13	Sweden	992	3
14	Austria	959	1
15	Denmark	898	1
16	Japan	814	24

* According to the Situation Report -56 issued on 16-3-2020, there are 82 countries outside China with local transmission.

1. Western Pacific Region - 10 countries
2. European region - 36 countries
3. Middle East Region - 11 countries
4. America region - 13 countries
5. African region - 5 countries
6. Territories - 1 countries
7. Southeast Asian region - 6 countries (India, Thailand, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh)

The COVID-19 outbreak in Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, Spain and France has 61% of the total cases and 93% of the total death toll of the countries outside China.

Though the COVID-19 infection in China has declined in last two weeks, the cases of infection in other countries increased 13 times and the countries where the virus found increased three times.

So far there are a total of 42 countries where no COVID-19 case was found. Myanmar is among these 50 countries.

2. The situation of COVID-19 in Myanmar between 31-1-2020 and 17-3-2020 is as follow:

Person Under Investigation (PUI)	-	144(142 PUI and two suspected patients)
-Negative result of COVID-19	-	135
-Under Laboratory Test	-	9
- Discharged from hospital after recovery	-	96

3. There are a total of 144 people under investigation across Myanmar from 31-1-2020 to 16-3-2020: 59 in Yangon Region, 23 in Shan State, 29 in Mandalay Region and 33 in other Regions and States.

4. The transmission of COVID-19 can occur by passing through respiratory system and touching the bacteria on objects. Therefore, the way to prevent COVID-19 infection is to:

- (a) Wash your hands often with soap and water, or hand sanitizer,
- (b) Cover your mouth and nose with your hand while sneezing and coughing,
- (c) Avoid festivals by those who are ill, coughing and sneezing,
- (d) Receive treatments if the symptoms and signs of fever and cough are suffered,
- (e) Avoid crowds and avoid holding festivals and events when COVID-19 outbreak occurs, and
- (f) People are obliged to understand the benefits of quarantine in efforts to prevent spread of virus to families and communities.

5. The Union Government has made strenuous efforts for prevention and control of the COVID-19 in efforts to reduce impacts of the epidemic on the people. The cooperation of the people from different strata and civil societies are key for responding the infectious disease. Still, there is no infected patient in Myanmar. However, people are urged to follow the directives and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent the COVID-19 infection.—MOHS

More raw materials arrive in Myanmar for garment factories

A cargo plane carrying raw materials for Myanmar garment factories landed in Yangon at 10:30 pm yesterday.

The AQ-1359 flight was loaded with 15 tonnes of raw materials from Guangzhou city of southern China.

To lessen impacts on the country's garment industry amid Covid-19 crisis, the Ministry of Commerce, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, the Chinese embassy in Myanmar and the China Enterprises Chamber of Commerce are working together to import raw materials for local garment factories under the cut-make-pack (CMP) system through Muse border checkpoints with the daily capacity of 50 vehicles, as well as by air.

Director-General U Min Min from the Department of Trade said the latest arrival of raw materials will be immediately supplied to the 11 local garment factories.

Daw Khaing Khaing Nwe,



A cargo plane carrying raw materials for garments in Myanmar lands at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: THAN HTAIK

the Joint Secretary General of UMFCCI and the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, said, "The raw commodities will be sent to the factories after Customs clearance process tomorrow. It is expected more raw

materials will arrive here soon." U San Khun, the chairman of Chinese Textile and Garment Association in Myanmar, said, "We are importing raw materials by sea, across the border and by air. Although transportation

costs for flights are high, this way is very effective and useful for supplying commodities without delay."

Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association's Chair U Myint Soe said, "This is a fruitful result of cooperation among Chinese businesspersons, their government, the Ministry of Commerce and the Customs officials. It could also reduce

unemployment rate in Myanmar garment industry, while about 20 garment factories have shut down due to the shortage of raw materials."

There are over 400 garment factories in Yangon, creating around 500,000 jobs, and the majority of these workers are young women.—Khin Yadana, Min Thit (MNA)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Workers conveying raw materials from the Chinese cargo plane. PHOTO: THAN HTAIK



Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar Press Release

Issuance of Instruction for allowing foreigner participation in daily share trading of listed companies in Yangon Stock Exchange

1. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) issued the Notification for allowing foreigner participation in daily share trading of listed companies in Yangon Stock Exchange on 12th July 2019.
2. In pursuance of the provision of that Notification the SECM released the Instruction No. (1/2020) on 6th March 2020 that Yangon Stock Exchange and Securities Companies shall have to follow. The effective date of this instruction shall be 20th March 2020 and resident and non-resident foreigners who are interested in participating of daily share trading of listed companies in Yangon Stock Exchange may contact Yangon Stock Exchange and Securities Companies for more information.

Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Press Release 11/2020
8th Waning of Tabaung, 1381 ME
(16 March 2020)

Additional statistical bulletin on drug seizures, acting on information

1. In order to prevent and eradicate the dangers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic drugs, the Office of the President has formed the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** on 26 June 2018 to systematically accept and respond to reports on drug abuses and other related cases from the general public.
2. With orders from the Office of the President, the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department relayed information on reports on drug-related offenses up to 14 March 2020 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take action, as displayed below:

Sr	Nature of report	Details on seizure and legal action taken
1	Information received of Ma Moe Moe who lives in Zaythit Village, Wuntho Township, Sagaing Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 8 March 2020, police searched the house of Ma Moe Moe, 37, daughter of U Tun Thant, who lives in Zaythit Village, Wuntho Township, and arrested her and her husband Zaw Khin, 43, son of U Set Aye, together with heroin. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Wuntho)MaYa(pa)36/2020 under Section 16(c) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
2	Information received of Daw Win Aye who lives in west Kangyi Village, Kalay Township, Sagaing Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 13 March 2020, police searched the house of Daw Win Aye (a) Win Win Aye, 50, daughter of U Chut, who lives in Kangyi Village, Kalay Township, and arrested her together with heroin. A case has been opened against her with MaMaSa (Kalay)MaYa(pa)31/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
3	Information received of Phoe La Pyae who lives in Tawma Village, Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 9 March 2020, police arrested Phoe La Pyae, 20, son of U Aung Paing, who lives in Tawma Village, Meiktila Township, together with '88/1' stimulant tablets near the district sport stadium, Yadanarmanaung Ward, Meiktila Township. Acting on a tip-off, police continued search the house of Htoo Aung (a) Htoo Lay, 18, son of U Win Maung, who lives in Yadanarmanaung Ward but police did not find any drug from him. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Meiktila)MaYa(pa)4/2020 under Section 19(a) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
4	Information received of Nagarlay (a) Min Ko who lives in No 1 Ward, North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 9 March 2020, police searched the house of Nagarlay (a) Min Ko Ko, 30, son of U Thit Min, who lives in No 1 Ward, North Okkalapa Township, and arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against her with MaMaSa (NorthOkkalapa)MaYa(pa)13/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
5	Information received of Chit Thae and Win Shwe who live in Moelone Village, Mabein Township, northern Shan State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 8 March 2020, police searched a motorcycle driven by Chit Thae, 28, son of U Khin Maung Win, and Win Shwe, 55, son of U Phoe Kyi, who live in Moelone Village, Mabein Township, on the village road, Mabein Township and arrested them together with 'WY' stimulant tablets and heroin. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Mabein)MaYa(pa)32/2020 under Section 19(a) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

6	Information received of Kyaw Ba who lives in Konemyinttha Ward, Mongshu Township, southern Shan State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 11 March 2020, police searched the house of Kyaw Ba (a) Kyaw Moe Naing, 47, son of U Maung Myint, who lives in Konemyinttha Ward, Mongshu Township, and arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. Acting on a tip-off, he bought the drugs from Min Oo, 58, son of U Tha Khin, who lives in the same ward. A case has been opened against them with NaMaSa (Loihsaunghtauk)MaYa(pa)4/2020 under Section 19(a), 20(a) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Police continued search a motorcycle driven by Min Oo on the Lupaw road, in the same ward, and arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with NaMaSa (Loihsaunghtauk)MaYa(pa)5/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
7.	Information received of Kyathi who live in No 1 Ward, Metmung Township, eastern Shan State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 11 March 2020, police searched the house of Kyathi (a) Kyathi, 38, son of U Ar Par, who lives in No 1 Ward, Metmung Township, and arrested him and other three men -- Aik Aau, 20, son of U Aik Tar, and Paytalau, 25, son of U Kya Shu, who live in Konhaung Village, Kya Shae, 25, son of U Kya Kaw, who lives in No 2 Ward -- together with 'WY' stimulant tablets and opium. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Metmung)MaYa(pa)1/2020 under Section 19(a) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

3. Out of the information sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department, so far a total of 1,026 cases have been opened files as of 14 March 2020. A total of 1,578 people, including 1,320 men and 258 women had been arrested with 7,679.1914g of heroin, 1,347.42 g of ICE, 40,404.33886 g of opium, 661.27 g of low-quality opium, 53,252.76 g of speciosa powder, 12,097.32 g of speciosa, 2.5 liters of liquid speciosa, 509,108 stimulant tablets, 10,311.67 g of marijuana, 0.1 liters of opium tincture, 520.28 g of opium blocks, 60 g of poppy seeds, 55.45 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 0.001 g of crushed ecstasy powder, 25 firearms, different kinds of 609 cartridges and one grenade. Efforts for fighting the drug trafficking have been stepped up and the department will report on further exposed cases.
4. To seize further drugs and to arrest drugs dealers, people are urged to inform the Ministry of Home Affairs, region and state governments and to inform huge cases of drug trafficking and other suspicious cases directly to the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** of the Office of the President via following contact numbers:

Contacts

Landline No. — 067-590200
Fax Phone No. — 067-590233
Email Address — antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm

Stimulant tablets seized in Myittha, Taunggyi

A combined team including anti-narcotic drug force searched the house of Ko Soe (a) Win Thant Zin who lives in Paletwel 2 lane, Shwe Thahtay Ward, in Myittha Township on 16 March and arrested him together with 1,570 stimulant tablets.

Similarly, police from Taunggyi seized 18,000 stimulant tab-

lets from the house of Khun Thein Aung who lives in Lwel Kaung Village, Taunggyi Township. Myanmar Police Force have opened lawsuits against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. —GNLM

(Translated by TTN)



Suspect Khun Thein Aung seen together with seized stimulant tablets. **PHOTO: MPF**

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Dala ferry runs regularly with 30,000 daily commuters amid COVID-19

YANGON Pansodan-Dala ferries are packed with nearly 30,000 daily commuters despite the COVID-19 concerns, said Manager Daw Khin Khin Nu, manager of Pansodan Port.

"Currently, daily commuting is regular while the entry of foreigners remarkably drops. The relevant health departments and philanthropic organizations are raising awareness for COVID-19 and giving out masks. As precaution measures, some wear masks. The ferry service normally runs 46 times per day. The service will reduce to 26 times per day during the Thingyan festival period. As the service is the only option for the local people in Dala, it keeps running on an every-day basis", she said.

The entry of foreigners at Yangon Pansodan-Dala Port was registered at 4,081 in December 2019, 4,270 in January 2020, 3,124 in February 2020 and 879 as of 16 March, totaling 12,354 passengers. Owing to the COVID-19 impacts in March, a sharp drop of foreign passengers is seen around the port.

The Pansodan-Dala Port



Passengers are seen at the Dala Port. PHOTO: NAING LIN KYAW (DALA)

is the only gateway for the local people in southern Yangon - Dala, Twantay, Kawhmu, Kungyangon townships and some townships in Ayeyawady Region to link with commercial city hub of Yangon. Three motor vessels named Cherry 1, 2 and 3, donated by Japan, have been running 46 times

per day for estimated 30,000 commuters. The port is one of the crowded places in the town.

Following the WHO's declaration of COVID-19 a pandemic, the relevant departments are directed to restrict public gatherings and events by 30 April. The COVID-19 can be rapidly and

easily transmitted through public transport and gatherings. The Ministry of Health and Sports has already released the announcements to the public to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19. — Naing Lin Kyaw (Dala)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Two airport-city shuttle bus lines slash operation time

By Nyein Nyein

THE two YBS lines with 24-hour service to the airport, operated by Omni Focus General Services Public Company, will temporarily reduce its service to 19 hours from 18 March to 30 April.

To facilitate the transportation of the daily commuters, the company has been running 24-hour shuttle bus service: Airport-Downtown and YBS line linking Airport and two high-way terminals (Aungmingala and Dagon Ayar). Those bus lines will temporarily slash operation time.

At present, the tourist arriv-

als at the Yangon International Airport is decreasing. In the night time, the passengers rarely take the shuttle service. Starting from 18 March, the shuttle buses will run between 4 am and 11 pm.

Real-time information will be provided in regards to the bus service, the Company notified.

The World Health Organization declared the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. Myanmar President's office issued the directive that restricted the public gatherings, celebrations, and events until 30 April.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



YBS buses in the downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Over 750,000 sit for matriculation exam on sixth day



THERE are a total of 750,968 students sitting for the Physics subject at exam centres locally and abroad on the sixth day of the matriculation exam for 2020.

The number of exam cen-

tres totaled 1,978 with 15 locations overseas and 1,963 nationwide.

Out of 750,968 students sitting for their exams on the sixth day, 164 are taking their exam at hospitals. Meanwhile, 15 hearing impaired persons, 133 physical disabilities persons, 64 prisoners, and 111 students from Myawady, Kayin State took their exam.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Students seen in Kayah State at the sixth day of the matriculation exam yesterday. PHOTO: RI REL (DIMAWHSO)

MoLIP sends over 27,000 workers to eight countries in February

A total of 27,330 Myanmar workers has officially taken overseas jobs in eight countries, according to the figures released by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

The majority of them went to Thailand, registering over 22,300 workers. Malaysia has employed over 4,100 Myanmar workers. Additionally, 698 of them went to Japan while 58

workers were employed in the Republic of Korea. Some were sent to Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan and Qatar.

Low employment rate and low salaries in the domestic market have forced young workers in Myanmar to seek jobs overseas, with the number of migrant labourers touching more than 5 million, said

an official from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, and Population.

“Young people are struggling to find jobs in the domestic market. Fewer job opportunities and low paid jobs are making them leave their home country for higher-paying jobs overseas. There is an economic disadvantage from the loss of young workers,” he said.

However, a total of 26,917 local job-seekers has also taken up domestic jobs in the respective states and regions. Yangon receives 17,100 employees, followed by Bago Region with 3,136 and Mandalay Region with 1,658. Over 1,200 local people were employed in Ayeyawady Region and 819 jobs are newly created in Shan State and 765, in Sagaing Re-

gion. Meanwhile, the remaining regions and states saw an influx of less than 500 new employees.

The ministry is making concerted efforts to create more employment opportunities for both domestic and overseas job hunters through online labour exchange management system. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Butter bean growers suffer price cuts in Pwintbyu Township

THE butter bean growers in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region are suffering losses during the harvest time as the price plunges nearly by half against a-year ago period, said the growers.

The residents in Pwintbyu Township are living on agriculture. The butter bean is commercially grown as winter crop. This year, the growers are battered by falling prices.

“Thanks to favourable weather and adequate water supply in the township, we cultivate various crops such as paddy, sesame, peanut, chick pea, sunflower, butter bean, banana, sugarcane and other vegetables.

The growers primarily depend on butter beans in the winter as they can be sent to external markets,” said U Than Tun Oo, butter bean grower from Yawsu village-tract in Pwintbyu Township.

Last year, it fetched a good price of K37,000 per basket. In light of this, they mainly cultivate butter beans this year’s winter. At the harvest time, it is priced at K20,000 per basket only, resulting in losses to the growers. Now, some growers rush to grow bitter melon to cover the cultivation losses of butter beans, and some are preparing for sesame cultivation as summer crop, he added.



Farmers work in the farm in Pwintbyu Township. PHOTO: YE WIN NAING, KO HTET

Myanmar’s butter beans are exported to Japan, China, Denmark, Singapore, the Republic of

Korea, Malaysia, China (Taipei) and Viet Nam.

There are over 160,000

acres of butter bean plantation both in winter and monsoon crop seasons. The butter beans are grown in June and July for monsoon growing season and harvested in October and November. The winter season is in October/November and harvest time from January to March.

The butter beans are primarily cultivated in Sagaing, Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and northern Shan states. Magway Region produces good-quality butter beans and Japan buyers prefer them. —Ye Win Naing, Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Factory operators can face legal actions unless complied with MIL

By Nyein Nyein

THE factory operators can face legal actions under the Myanmar Investment Law (MIL) if they fail to comply with notifi-

cation requirements for the closure of factories, said U Thant Sin Lwin, director-general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

At present, some CMP garment factories have shut down on the reason for the lack of raw materials due to the COVID-19 negative impacts. Even worse, some foreign entrepreneurs

are also running away from their businesses.

“The factory operators can be taken legal actions under MIL if they do not officially notify the DICA of the closure. They will face such actions as a first warning, suspending and revoking their business licences though there is no prison sentence according to the MIL. Yet, the investors will be taken actions under the investment law,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

No one faces legal actions under the MIL so far.

At present, some factories have shut down due to the lack of raw materials, resulting from the COVID-19 negative impacts. Some investors are fleeing. Those factories without official notification of closure will be inspected by a ground field inspection team”, he continued.

The news is currently spreading around 20 factories’ shutdown. However, only one factory has officially notified the DICA of its closure.

“Hua Meng Myanmar Company Limited in Kangyidauk Township, Patheingyi District had notified the DICA that the company would close down from 29 February as they were lack of raw materials for operations due to COVID-19. The news of factory closure is coming from different sources. The entrepreneurs claimed the closure of 20 factories while the labour unions mentioned 14 and Yangon Region government stated 16. We are now collecting information properly. Surely, factory closure is happening. Tracking the numbers of factory shutdown varies depending on the data collected by the relevant departments”, U Thant Sin Lwin pointed out.

In the wake of COVID-19, many types of businesses rather than the garment enterprises attract foreign direct investments during the meantime, according to the DICA.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Workers sew garment at a factory in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Urgent and aggressive measures needed to prevent COVID-19 spread

THE World Health Organization has today called upon Member states in the South-East Asia Region to urgently scale-up aggressive measures to combat COVID-19, as confirmed cases cross 480 and the disease has claimed eight lives.

Eight of the 11 countries making up the WHO South-East Asia Region have confirmed cases of COVID-19. While Thailand has 177 confirmed cases, Indonesia has 134, India 125, Sri Lanka 19, Maldives 13, Bangladesh 5, and Nepal and Bhutan with one each. These numbers, however, are increasing quickly.

To prevent the virus from infecting more people, countries throughout the world are practicing the strategies of suspending and reducing flights, locking down towns, banning crowds and suspending conferences.

Like other countries, we need to increase surveillance at our international airports and border gates, and must implement decisions made by the central body to prevent the spread of the virus infection.

Necessary preparations should be made for surveillance and imposing self-isolation on Myanmar's oversea migrant workers, who will return from outbreak countries, including Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

As there are no infected people in our country, we have been taking effective steps for over two months. Today, we need to make more efforts together, with the public, to be prepared to respond to the coronavirus infection, understanding that this window of opportunity can shut at any time.

Necessary preparations should be made for surveillance and imposing of self-isolation on Myanmar's oversea migrant workers, who will return from outbreak countries, including Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. We need to increase awareness about the disease to ensure that the public understands the situation and strictly follows the guidelines of the health authorities, as these can assist in preventing the spread of the virus infection.

Also, plans should be made to ensure that people can practice hand washing with hand sanitizers at crowded locations, including the Shwedagon Pagoda and other religious buildings.

Simple public health measures are critical. Practicing hand washing, covering the face when coughing and sneezing, and practicing social distancing cannot be emphasized enough. This alone has the potential to substantially reduce transmissions.

We need to be geared to respond to the evolving situation, with the aim of stopping the spread of COVID-19 at the earliest and minimize the impact of the virus that has gripped over 150 countries in a short span of time, causing substantial losses to the health of people, societies, countries and economies.

Urgent and aggressive measures are the need of the hour. We need to act fast and now.

Golden prospects on the Yangon stock exchange

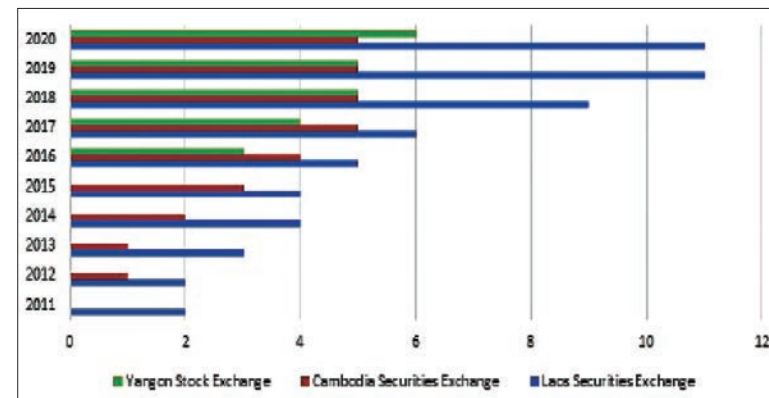
By U Pyae Phyo Aung (Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry)

Six listed companies

On 28 February, 2020, Ever Flow River Group Public Co. Ltd, a logistics company, was given approval to join the listing on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), thus increasing the total number of listed companies to six.

In comparison, the Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange was launched on 20 July 2000 and currently has 377 listed companies. Meanwhile, the Hanoi Stock Exchange has 367 listed companies after beginning to operate on 8 March 2005. Meanwhile, Laos has 11 listed companies on the Lao Securities Exchange (LSX) after opening on 10 October 2010 and Cambodia has 5 listed companies since launching its Cambodia Securities Exchange on 18 April, 2012.

Comparison of stock exchanges of Laos and Cambodia



Number of listed companies across CLMVT nations (28-2-2020)

Table with 4 columns: Country, Name of Stock Exchange, Date of Establishment, Number of Listed Company. Rows include Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand.

The Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) was launched on 9 December 2015 and has been 4 years since it began selling shares. We are only in the beginning of 2020 now and there are many options for increasing the number of listed companies on YSX.

It's easier said than done for a public company to be listed on the stock exchange, according to experiences in assessing listing applicants. Then there are rules and regulations to follow after being approved to join the listing.

This systematic organization of rules and regulations serves to increase the amount of trust placed by citizens looking to invest and investing individuals and organizations on a listed company. They are also prioritized to minimize significant losses, in comparison to the situation faced by some public companies presently. The corporate value of listed companies rise as well.

Different natures of YSX listed companies

All the listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange had to satisfy the listing criteria of YSX. People looking to invest on the stock exchange should research the different sectors that the listed companies each work in, as well as their future pros-

pects, working nature, the experience of their administrators, transparency of financial statements, and any news related to them. In addition, you must also clearly know if you want to be an investor or a trader. This will help you make smart decisions and mitigate risks.

Upon close inspection, it becomes clear that the listed companies on YSX are from different business industries. While there isn't a wide variety of industries to choose from, the addition of a new listed company is a new investment opportunity for citizens looking to invest and one more variety of industry to choose from as well. New investors will appear as well.

Table (1) shows the business industry of YSX listed companies and their opportunities for success

Table with 6 columns: Company name, Date of listing, Business industry, No. of shares, Market value (in million) (27-2-2020), Date of establishment. Rows include Frist Myanmar Investment Public Co., Ltd. (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Co., Ltd. (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank Ltd. (MCB), First Private Bank Ltd. (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co., Ltd. (TMH), and Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd. (EFR).

Myanmar's stock exchange is just beginning to develop and has many opportunities to learn from the experiences of neighboring countries. They can also meet and have honest and transparent discussions with people in the market. All it needs is some time and infrastructure to become successful.

Myanmar's investing scene is a new market. The six listed companies on YSX are peculiar. They are all established in line with the Myanmar Company Act and are of different business industries. This provides a lot of choice for investors looking to invest and could be one of the attractive points for the market to succeed.

The second noteworthy point is that, according to DICA, there are over 60,000 registered companies in Myanmar but only 260 are public companies. Many companies are preparing to enter the stock exchange listing and will enter the public investment sector too. This is why share issuance will ensure equity fencing is practiced expansively in a legal setting and can be developed quickly in a short amount of time.

The third thing are the criteria themselves. If you compare them with the criteria of other stock exchanges, you will find many differences. There are 17 criteria for YSX, including minimum number of investors, market capitalization and profit prospective. Careful scrutiny will show YSX's differences with other stock exchanges. This is a good opportunity for newly entering companies.

Table (2) shows comparison of listing criteria between YSX and stock exchange of other nations

Table with 7 columns: Criteria, YSX (Yangon Stock Ex.), HOSE (Vietnam Stock Ex.), LSE (London Stock Ex.), JPX (Tokyo Stock Ex.), SGX (Singapore Stock Ex.), SET (Thai Stock Ex.). Rows include Shareholders, Paid-up Capital, Profitability Records, Market Cap., Net Asset, MV of Shares to be listed, Floating Share, Book-keeping System, Audited Account Records, Working Capital Statement, and Corporate Governance.

Foreign ownership in a Myanmar company is permitted at 35 per cent by the Myanmar Company Act (2017). The investment and share market can grow exponentially in a short time if that fact is utilized effectively.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) loosened restrictions on brokerage business fees in 2018 and 2019 and permitted online trading in December 2017. Trading on the YSX noticeably increased on 2019.

Table (3) shows annual sales of stock

Table with 8 columns: Company, 2016 (Number of share, Value), 2017 (Number of share, Value), 2018 (Number of share, Value), 2019 (Number of share, Value). Rows include FMI, MTSH, MCB, FPB, TMH, and Total.

Note - includes block trading

The addition of a new listed company is great news for the stock market and an additional investment opportunity for citizens willing to invest. The board of directors of the six listed companies deciding to enter the Yangon Stock Exchange have to be commended as well.

YSX was able to surpass the Cambodian stock exchange with minimal errors in four years. The efforts of SECM, YSX, Securities Companies, and Japan Exchange Group (JPX) and the advisors from there are invaluable.

We must continue to work hard and reach an equal footing with the stock exchanges of Viet Nam and Thailand, while growing our strengths and resolving our disadvantages.

(Translated by Pen Dali)

U Aung Myo Myint presents Credentials to the Secretary-General of ASEAN

U Aung Myo Myint, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) presented his Credentials to Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, on 13 March 2020, in Jakarta.—MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr. Ivan Velimir Starčević as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Croatia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Kuala Lumpur in succession to Mr. Kreso Glavac.

Mr. Ivan Velimir Starčević was born in May 1954. He earned B.A. in Law in 1977, M.A. in Law in 1986 and Ph.D in 2012 from the Zagreb University.

He joined as a staff at the Croatian Parliament from 1978 to 1992. From 1992 to date, he has served in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. From 2012 to 2017, he was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Croatia to the Hellenic Republic and also served as Director for Euroasia, Eastern Partnership, Asia and Oceania at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia. He speaks English, French, German and Greek languages. Since January 2020, he has been serving as the Croatian Ambassador to Malaysia. He is married and has a child.—MNA

Weather forecast icons and Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 17th March, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 18th March, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be generally fair in Naypyitaw, Bago Region, Kayah and Kayin States and 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: Slight increase of day temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Bago and Yangon Regions.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2020: Generally fair weather.

Japan to ask visitors from Europe to self-quarantine for 14 days

TOKYO — Japan has decided to ask all travelers from about 30 European countries, including Britain, France and Germany, to self-quarantine for 14 days in response to a surge in coronavirus cases there, a source with knowledge of the matter said Tuesday.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to announce the measure on Wednesday during a meeting of a government task force on the virus, the source said.

The self-quarantine is expected to cover visitors from 26 European countries that comprise the Schengen Area and several others including Britain and Romania, according to the source. Japanese nationals will also be subject to the request.

In addition, the Japanese government is considering an entry ban on foreign travelers from Iceland and some parts of Italy, Spain and Switzerland, government sources said earlier in the day.

The decision was made after

a panel advising the government on Tuesday recommended asking travelers from Europe and Southeast Asia to self-quarantine for 14 days regardless of whether they have symptoms such as high fever or coughing.

The entry ban is expected to cover the northern Italian regions of Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Liguria. Japan has already closed its doors to five other regions in the country's north, which has seen a sharp rise in coronavirus cases, as well as parts of China, South Korea and Iran.

The Swiss canton of Ticino, which borders Italy, may also become subject to the entry ban, along with the Spanish provinces of Madrid and La Rioja as well as the Basque Country, the sources said. Foreign nationals who have been to any of the places within 14 days of arriving in Japan would be turned away, the sources said.

In policy recommendations submitted to the health ministry

on Tuesday, the panel warned that Japan is seeing a growing number of "imported" cases of the COVID-19 disease.

All travelers from Europe and Southeast Asia, including Japanese nationals, should be asked to stay at home or their lodgings, refrain from using public transport, and to be on the lookout for the onset of symptoms, the panel said.

"Border measures need to be further enhanced," Takaji Wakita, the panel's chair and head of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, said at a press conference.

The measures come as the international community steps up efforts to contain the outbreak that has spread from China to infect more than 170,000 worldwide. The United States has announced similar travel restrictions on other countries, while the European Union is mulling a 30-day ban on nonessential entry into the bloc.

— Kyodo News ■



A smaller-than-usual number of people walk in Tokyo's Ginza shopping district on 15 March 2020, amid concerns over the new coronavirus. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on 9 March 2020 in New York City. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Dow falls below 20,000 for 1st time in 3 years

NEW YORK — US stocks fell in early trading on Tuesday, briefly sending the Dow index below 20,000 for the first time in three years amid fears about the coronavirus pandemic.

As of 10 am, the 30-issue Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 19,995.33, down 193.19 points from Monday's closing. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Com-

posite Index was at 6,934.49, up 29.90 points.

The Dow soon recovered the 20,000 line, but buying momentum was weak as global financial markets remain in turmoil.

The Dow has shed nearly 10,000 points since its all-time high near 30,000 on 12 February. — Kyodo News ■

Coronavirus gives US banks a shot at redemption

NEW YORK (United States) — The economic wallop from the coronavirus offers an opening for large US banks to win back points from the public after the industry was pilloried over the 2008 financial crisis.

The industry — today flush with capital after being saved by federal bailouts in 2008 — has a chance to redeem itself amid hard times for wide swaths of the economy.

"The banks are going to try to put their best foot forward now," said Gregori Volokhine of Meeschaert Financial Services. "Everyone blamed them in 2008 for the subprime crisis."

The banks could provide leeway for imminent mortgage payments, or set aside funds targeting vulnerable companies.

In Seattle, the Pacific Northwest technology center transformed by coronavirus into a ghost-town, regional bank WaFd has announced a small business "lifeline" program that includes lines of credit for up to \$200,000 interest-free for 90 days for businesses.

The bank is also expediting lines of credit of up to \$30,000 for clients who have lost 10 per cent of their revenue due to the virus.

"Businesses are already struggling as our neighbors limit

shopping and eating at restaurants to follow public health orders to avoid large crowds," said the bank's chief executive, Brent Beardall. "We want to offer these impacted business owners a lifeline to help them make it through this crisis."

Buybacks halted

The eight largest US banks announced they will suspend share repurchases in order to keep funds that can be used to extend credit to households and businesses hammered by the downturn. "The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for the world and the global economy and the largest US banks have an unquestioned ability and commitment to supporting our customers, clients and the nation," the Financial Services Forum, which represents the companies, said Sunday. The group — which comprises JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Bank of New York Mellon and State Street — has amassed more than \$914 billion in capital buffers over the last decade. — AFP ■



More businesses are expected to need relief from banks as the economic effects of the coronavirus deepen. PHOTO: AFP

European, Asian stocks steady after virus sparks US collapse

LONDON (United Kingdom) — European and Asian stock markets steadied Tuesday following Wall Street's sharpest daily drop in more than three decades, with analysts forecasting more volatility as governments and central banks scramble to try and calm the panic.

The dollar bounced back from heavy losses against the euro on Monday, while oil prices also recovered.

European stock markets surged around five per cent in early deals Tuesday before either limiting or erasing all the gains.

"As has been the case every time the European markets have tried to rebound, it is not going to be smooth sailing," noted Connor Campbell, analyst at Spreadex trading group.

Wall Street indices collapsed Monday in their worst day since 1987, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq dropping about 12 per cent and the Dow sinking nearly 13 per cent. US futures rallied Tuesday.

In a move meant to help tame the massive volatility in the markets caused by the coronavirus outbreak, the French bourse regulator on Tuesday banned short-selling in 92 stocks for the day.

"Taking into account the significant losses in recent days on the financial markets, the Financial Markets Authority (AMF) has decided to take an urgent step," it said in a statement.

The ban order covers mostly bank and financial stocks.

Investors use short-selling to bet the market will fall, putting tremendous downward pressure on prices at a time when buying interest is virtually non-existent.

While governments and cen-



Despite attempts to soothe markets with massive stimulus pledges and rate cuts, more countries are going into lockdown bringing the world economy juddering to a halt. **PHOTO:AFP**

tral banks attempt to soothe markets with massive stimulus pledges and interest rate cuts, more countries are going into lockdown — bringing the world economy juddering to a halt.

There is a broad consensus that the disease, which has wiped trillions off market valuations, will cause a global recession, with the airline industry among the first in the firing line, leading company heads to plead for billions of dollars in state help to prevent them going under.

The Italian government Tuesday said it intends to re-nationalise the bankrupt former national carrier Alitalia under an emergency economic rescue.

"Drastic measures by the Federal Reserve and other central banks have failed to appease markets, with investors still running towards the exit door of risk assets as governments step up their radical measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak," said National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril.

The Philippines became the first country to shut down its stock market as the country goes into lockdown, and the bourse will be closed until further notice.

Sydney's stock market closed up 5.8 per cent Tuesday, a day after crashing 9.7 per cent in its worst day on record.

But after an early advance, the rest of Asia swung in and out of positive territory through the day. Tokyo ended up 0.1 per cent after a roller-coaster session, Hong Kong added 0.9 per cent and Mumbai rose 0.7 per cent, while Bangkok was slightly higher.

But Shanghai slipped 0.3 per cent, while Jakarta sank more than four per cent. Seoul, Taipei and Singapore were all down.

Wellington dipped despite New Zealand becoming the latest country to announce monetary support, unveiling a US\$7.3 billion package of measures.

That was followed later Tuesday by a 45 billion euro (\$50 billion) aid pledge by France for its businesses.— AFP ■

UN report calls for political mission in Darfur

UNITED NATIONS (United States) — A joint UN-African Union report released Monday on Sudan and Darfur called for a political mission to replace the peace operation there, raising fears by rights groups that civilians could lose all protection.

The United Nations Security Council will meet on March 26 to decide whether or not to gradually withdraw by the end of October some 7,800 troops, known as the "Blue Helmets," from the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The council was originally supposed to discuss the issue on Wednesday, but the session was suspended over concerns about the novel coronavirus.

"In Darfur, armed violence between rebel groups has declined, but the fundamental conflict drivers remain unresolved and exacerbate intercommunal tensions," the report said.

Civilian protection "is the responsibility of Sudan," the report continued.

"A post-UNAMID mechanism may provide advisory and capacity-building support," but if a mandate for the "physical

protection of civilians" were requested, then this "would require a very significant deployment, commensurate with the size of the area of operations."

Without such a mandate, "a post-UNAMID mechanism would not be in a position to provide such protection and should therefore not be expected to do so," the report added.

For the post-UNAMID period, starting in early November, the report authors recommend "the establishment of a political and peacebuilding integrated support presence, headquartered in Khartoum."

Kenneth Roth, the director of the NGO Human Rights Watch, slammed the move. "Darfur is not like the rest of Sudan," he said.

"The UN Security Council should recognize that Darfur requires a far more gradual withdrawal and keep a UN security presence on the ground to actively protect civilians," he added.

When UNAMID last expired at the end of October 2019, the Security Council unanimously extended its mission for one year with unchanged numbers until the end of March 2020.— AFP ■



UN says the conflict in Darfur between Sudanese forces and ethnic minority rebels has resulted in about 300,000 deaths and more than 2.5 million displaced people since 2003. **PHOTO:AFP**

'Elderly hour' in Aussie stores as panic-buying continues

SYDNEY (Australia) — Australia's elderly were let in early to supermarkets on Tuesday but there were still scenes of coronavirus panic buying in some areas, with reports of empty shelves and large queues.

After rushes on groceries, the country's biggest supermarket chain opened exclusively for elderly and disabled shoppers for an hour in an attempt to let them purchase essentials like toilet paper — which has repeatedly sold out and sparked several violent

incidents.

But the move prompted long queues outside several stores in Sydney and Melbourne, with reports of shoppers leaving empty-handed.

"It's day one of our dedicated shopping hour and we know it wasn't perfect across all of our stores," Woolworths Supermarkets Managing Director Claire Peters said in a statement.

Supermarkets would learn from today and continue the early hour shopping through the week,

Peters said.

Despite security guards blocking younger shoppers from entering stores, unprecedented demand still led to many items disappearing.

At Woolworth's Neutral Bay store in Sydney's north shopper sentiment about the move was mixed.

"It is important but I don't think it is the best way. The best way, I think must be delivery at home because you look at a 93-year-old coming shopping, it's

better to do delivery," 71-year-old Irie Voico told AFP as he waited for the store to open.

Another customer, who didn't want to be identified, said he was worried about bringing all the elderly together in a group where coronavirus could easily spread.

But several welcomed the move, saying the mood was good among those older shoppers turning out early to avoid chaotic scenes.

"This morning was well managed, full marks to Woolworths.

Everyone was well mannered in there," 75-year-old Max Hill said.

Robyn Swan, 73, said the mood at the store yesterday had been frantic when shelves were bare but today they had been restocked. "I've got what I wanted. I'm trying not to do the frantic shopping but I can see it's easy to do but I live on my own so I don't need to panic like my children with their grandchildren," Swan said. Australia has nearly 400 confirmed cases of coronavirus so far, with five fatalities.— AFP ■

G7 pledge to 'do whatever it takes' to safeguard economy

WASHINGTON (United States) — Leaders of the G7 industrial powerhouses pledged Monday to join forces to halt economic freefall in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which they called “a human tragedy.”

And US President Donald Trump later acknowledged the American economy “may be” headed into a recession.

As the outbreak caused more countries to shut down and brought the global economy to a screeching halt, the leaders stressed the need to join forces and move quickly to address the damage.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a human tragedy and a global health crisis, which also poses major risks for the world economy,” a joint statement from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States said.

“We resolve to coordinate measures and do whatever it takes, using all policy tools, to achieve strong growth in the G7 economies and to safeguard against downside risks,” the leaders said in a statement following an emergency videoconference.

The measures aim to “sup-



G7 leaders, pictured in 2017, say their finance ministers will talk to each other weekly as the coronavirus ravages the global economy. **PHOTO: AFP**

port immediately and as much as necessary the workers, companies and sectors most affected,” the statement said.

The G7 likewise said it would work together on “border management” following the drastic curtailment of movement across borders in an effort to slow the spread of the illness.

With market selloffs triggered by mass quarantines and travel restrictions, governments in the world’s wealthiest countries are under pressure to show they can control the situation.

Trump told reporters at the White House the impact could wash through the economy by July or August or it “could be

longer than that.”

But Trump, who frequently uses the stock market as a bellwether of his presidency, said markets could see a “tremendous surge,” once authorities gain the upper hand in the battle with the virus which he called “an invisible army.”

The G7 leaders instructed

their finance ministers to consult weekly to implement policy measures and “develop further timely and effective actions.”

Health ministers will likewise talk weekly to try to coordinate information to the public and medical know-how and equipment. The G7 leaders noted the disruption to supply chains due to transportation shutdowns, as well as the harm to families.

They called on global institutions like the IMF to “swiftly” deploy financial assistance to countries that need it.

“We are committed to working together with resolve to implement these measures to respond to this global emergency,” the leaders said. And they added they are “determined not only to restore the level of growth anticipated before the COVID-19 pandemic but also to build the foundation for stronger future growth.” In Washington, the White House called the videoconference “historic” and said the G7 leaders worked to “accelerate the national health and economic responses to the coronavirus pandemic in order to save lives and restore economic growth.”— AFP ■

US drops case against Russian firm accused of 2016 election meddling

WASHINGTON (United States) — The US Justice Department abruptly dropped its criminal case Monday against the company controlled by a confidant of Russian President Vladimir Putin that allegedly funded the campaign to meddle in the 2016 elections.

Just weeks before the trial was to begin, the Justice department announced it was withdrawing the eight-count indictment of Concord Management and

Consulting, a company owned by close Putin ally Yevgeniy Prigozhin.

Concord, which funds the St. Petersburg-based troll factory the Internet Research Agency, was part of an indictment against 13 Russian individuals and three companies — one of the major outcomes of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s 22-month investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 vote. The Internet Research Agency, Mueller charged,

actively pumped disinformation, memes and fake news into social media through false accounts to influence US voters and tilt the election four years ago to help President Donald Trump.

Like Mueller, US intelligence chiefs concluded that the Concord-run operation was one half of a sweeping campaign overseen by Putin — the other half was hacking by Russian intelligence — to help Trump and hurt his rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton.

In a filing in Washington federal district court, the Justice Department said that Concord’s tactics of trying to use US law and court procedure to pry out classified intelligence related to the evidence against it was a threat to national security.

“The government has concluded that further proceedings as to Concord, a Russian company with no presence in the United States and no exposure to meaningful punishment in the event of conviction, promotes neither the interests of justice nor the nation’s security,” it said.— AFP ■



Concord was the only one of 25 Russians and three Russian companies charged by Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller to be brought to trial. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tom Hanks released from hospital after virus quarantine

GOLD COAST (Australia) — Tom Hanks has been released from the Australian hospital where he was in isolation since testing positive for the coronavirus last week, but his wife Rita Wilson remains hospitalised, health officials said Tuesday.

The multiple Oscar-winning actor was on the Gold Coast near Brisbane to film an Elvis Presley biopic directed by Australian Baz Luhrmann when he and Wilson, both 63, came down with the disease.

Wilson, a singer-songwriter, had given concerts in Sydney and Brisbane before testing positive for COVID-19 and Australian authorities have been tracking the couple’s contacts to identify any other people who may have been infected.

Australia has so far confirmed nearly 400 cases of coronavirus, with five deaths from the disease.

The couple have posted to



Multiple Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks was on the Gold Coast near Brisbane to film an Elvis Presley biopic when he came down with coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

social media about their run-in with COVID-19, thanking their Australian carers and urging their fans to follow the advice of experts on avoiding the disease.

Hanks was believed to have returned to the penthouse apartment in the Gold Coast where the couple had been staying while he worked on the Luhrmann film, in which he was due to portray Elvis’ long-time manager, Colonel Tom Parker.— AFP ■

France locks down as global virus panic spreads

PARIS (France) — France moved into a near-total lockdown Tuesday over the coronavirus, the latest country to impose draconian restrictions affecting the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world.

European leaders also plan to ban all non-essential travel into the continent on Tuesday in a bid to stem a pandemic that has killed thousands, upended society and battered economies.

With French President Emmanuel Macron describing the battle against COVID-19 as a “war”, governments around the world are scrambling to keep the public safe with measures rarely seen in peacetime, slamming borders shut and forcing citizens to stay home. The crisis is infecting every sector of the



France has ordered most people to stay home from midday Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

economy, and global stocks have been on a rollercoaster ride, with Wall Street on Monday sinking more than 12 per cent in the worst session since the crash of 1987. Investors are still in panic mode, despite emergency interventions by central banks and governments to shore up confidence.

After the initial out-

break in a Chinese city in December, Europe has emerged as the epicentre of the virus with more deaths now recorded outside China than inside.

‘Invisible and elusive enemy’

COVID-19 has now killed more than 7,000 people worldwide, includ-

ing over 2,100 in Italy, the worst-hit country outside China, and more than 180,000 cases have been recorded in 145 countries.

In a sombre address to the nation, Macron ordered the French to stay at home for 15 days from midday Tuesday, following similar measures by other European countries. —AFP ■

Iraq names new PM as rockets hit base hosting foreign troops

BAGHDAD (Iraq) — Iraq’s president Tuesday named ex-Najaf city governor Adnan Zurfi as the new prime minister, tasked with ruling a country hit by street protests, military unrest and now the coronavirus pandemic.

The nomination came hours after two rockets hit an Iraqi military base hosting US-led coalition and NATO troops, the third such attack within a week, without causing casualties according to military officials.

Lawmaker Zurfi, 54, is the former governor of the Shiite holy city of Najaf and once belonged to the Dawa party, the longtime opposition force to ex-dictator Saddam Hussein who was ousted in the 2003 US-led invasion. President Barham Saleh said he had nominated Zurfi to replace outgoing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi, who resigned in December, at a time when Iraq has been rocked by an unprecedented wave of anti-government rallies.—AFP ■

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Dated 18 March 2020



The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) meeting (4 / 2020) was convened at the meeting room of the MIC on 6th March, 2020 in Yangon. U Thaung Tun, Chairman of the MIC, Dr Than Myint, Vice Chairman of the MIC and (9) members attended the meeting. **PHOTO: DICA**

Despite coronavirus fears, Myanmar's FDI reaches over **US\$ 2.8 billion** in current FY

By Kyaw Htike Soe

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) gave the greenlight to six investment projects worth US\$ 131.125 million and Ks. 113,810.335 million that can create up to 2,850 job opportunities for Myanmar citizens. The investment proposals in manufacturing, agriculture, livestock and other sectors were approved by the MIC during the meeting held in Yangon on 6

March, according to the press statement released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) under the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

Myanmar received an average of US\$ 500 million per month in foreign direct investment during the first four of the current fiscal year, U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the

DICA told the media early this year. He continued that the foreign investment volume was reportedly higher than domestic investments by Myanmar citizens. With steady FDI inflow in the present financial year, Myanmar is likely to meet its FDI target of US\$5.8 billion, set under the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), he added. Over US\$ 2,800 million of foreign direct investment has

been channeled into Myanmar so far. The MIC permitted 86 foreign investment projects worth around US\$ 1,300 million during the same period in the fiscal year 2018-2019.

The MIC scrutinized and gave the nod to 117 local and foreign investment projects worth more than US\$ 2.8 billion during the period from 1 October 2019 to 6 March this year. The foreign investment projects greenlight-

ed by the MIC under the Special Economic Zone Law during the same period this year were US\$ 102.64 million.

The MIC OK'd 53 Myanmar citizen-invested projects valued at more than US\$ 132 million and K743,194 million in February. The sharp increase of foreign direct investment into Myanmar attributes to the government's steps to ease regulations in an attempt to woo more foreign direct investment into the Southeast Asian country. Singapore topped the list of foreign investors in Myanmar during the period from October last to early March this year, and was followed by China and Thailand.

Singapore is the largest foreign investor in Myanmar, pouring more than US\$ 22 billion into 312 projects of the Asia's last frontier market between 1988 to date. The majority of the foreign investment from Singapore, China, Thailand, Hong Kong, Viet Nam, Malaysia and United Kingdom came to manufacturing, mining, communications, transport, tourism, agriculture, livestock, electricity generation, real estate and industrial sectors. Myanmar drew up the MIPP with the aim of attracting US\$ 221 billion of FDI within 20



Myanmar Wacoal Company Limited in Thilawa Special Economic zone. **PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN(NLM)**

years from 2016-2017 FY to 2035-2036 FY to become a middle-income country by 2036. Foreign investors are expected to pump investments into much-needed infrastructure projects in Myanmar such as telecommunications, tourism, construction, and consumer goods.

Myanmar became a key overseas emerging investment market for foreign investors due to its consumption trends, abundant young workforce and relaxed export & import relat-

ed policies. The power sector topped the FDI sector line-up in the current fiscal year, with investments of US\$ 1.02 billion, followed by the real estate sector with investments of US\$601.9 million, and the transportation and telecommunication sector with US\$145.4 million. The largest sector of foreign direct investment flowed to oil and gas sector, accounting for 26.70 per cent of the total FDI, followed by the electricity generation sector with 26.45 per cent and

the manufacturing sector with 14.03 per cent.

Nearly 1,800 foreign companies from 50 countries were given permission to make investments in 12 sectors in Myanmar. Myanmar attracted US\$ 9.4 billion of foreign direct investment in 2015-2016 FY, US\$ 6.6 billion of FDI in 2016-2017, US\$ 6.11 billion of FDI in 2017-2018 FY, US\$ 4.5 billion in 2018-2019, and is projected to receive US\$ 5.8 billion in the current financial year.



Workers at work in the production line of the Foster Electric Thilawa Co Ltd in Thilawa SEZ. PHOTO MNA



Agri First Co Ltd in the Thilawa SEZ. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)



Guston Amava Ltd in the Thilawa SEZ. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)

Samsung unveils the new Galaxy S20 & Galaxy Z Flip smartphones in Myanmar

SAMSUNG Electronics Co, Ltd released the highly anticipated new smartphones today; Samsung Galaxy S20, S20+, S20 Ultra and the Galaxy Z Flip, that bring the newest technology and features to the stage. These new phones come with impressive designs and capabilities that are unrivaled.

The Galaxy S20 series introduces a brand new camera that contains Samsung's largest image sensor producing excellent quality pictures and creating an experience with a smartphone that gives users an all-around better package. With the Galaxy Z Flip, this bold and stylish phone transports users into the future and the compact phone fits in the palm of your hand.

Both series provide for an elegant and sleek way to capture, share and experience content while being ahead of their peers. "Entering into this new decade, these new smartphones will lead users into the future and give them pro-grade cameras and capabilities that they will be hard pressed to find elsewhere.

These phones are designed for people who go the extra mile and constantly on the move while capturing the world around them. They do not allow themselves to be stopped and are living their best life. Every element of these phones was designed to think of the users and their needs, and helps them achieve it all faster and better," said Ko Zarni Win Htet, Head of Business Group at Samsung Myanmar.

The Galaxy S20, S20+, S20 Ultra will be available in the



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

market on 20th March, 2020 in Myanmar where Galaxy S20 comes in Gray and Pink, Galaxy S20+ in Black, Gray and Light Blue, while Galaxy S20 Ultra is available in Black & Gray. The Galaxy Z Flip is also available in two colour variants: Black & Purple.

In Myanmar, Galaxy S20 & Galaxy S20+ come in: RAM 8GB + 128GB internal storage, while Galaxy S20 Ultra comes in RAM 12GB + 128GB internal storage version. The Galaxy Z Flip will come with RAM 8GB + 256GB internal storage version.

Price ranges are: Galaxy S20 -1,449,000 Myanmar Kyats/ Galaxy S20+ 1,549,000 Myanmar Kyats/ Galaxy S20 Ultra 1,959,000 Myanmar Kyats and Galaxy Z Flip 8GB RAM with 256GB internal storage around 2,200,000 Myanmar Kyats respectively.

—GNLM ■

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Players of Chinland FC and Silver Stars FC vie for the ball in the Week-10 of MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-21) 2020 at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNL**

MPT MNL (U-21) 2020: ISPE beats Southern Myanmar FC 2-0 in Week-10

THE Institute of Sports and Physical Education Football Club (ISPE FC) won Southern Myanmar FC on the second day of the Week-10 of MPT Myanmar National League Youth (U-21) 2020 at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

In the other matches of the Week-10 on 17 March, Zwegapin United won Mawyawadi at the Padonmar Stadium, and Chinland FC beat Silver Stars at the

Salin Stadium with a score of 5-0 each.

On 16 March, Yadanarbon FC beat Chin United with a score of 6-0 at the Padonmar Stadium, Hantharwady United won Yaw Myay with a score of 4-1 at the South Dagon Stadium, while Ayeyawady United defeated Kachin United 3-1 at the Salin Stadium.

The remaining matches of the Week-10 will be held on 18

March, and 8 April.

On 18 March, Myawady will play against Yangon United at the South Dagon Stadium, and Rakhine United will take on Sagaing United at the Yangon United Sports Complex.

University FC and Magwe FC will meet at the University Stadium on 8 April.

All the matches will be played at 4:00 pm on respective dates.—Kyaw Khin

Japan Olympic Committee deputy head says he has coronavirus

TOKYO (Japan)—Japan Olympic Committee deputy chief Kozo Tashima said Tuesday he had contracted coronavirus, as doubts increase over whether Tokyo can safely host the Summer Games. “Today, my test result showed positive for the new coronavirus,” Tashima said in a statement, issued via the Japan Football Association, which he also heads. “I have a mild fever. Examinations showed a symptom of pneumonia, but I’m fine. I will concentrate on treatment following doctors’ advice,” he said.

Japanese officials insist that the summer Games – due to start in July – will take place as scheduled despite rising speculation that it might be postponed or even cancelled due to the virus.

Tashima said he had been on a business trip since February 28, first heading to Belfast to attend the annual general meeting of the International Football



Kozo Tashima, one of two vice presidents of the Japan Olympic Committee, said he had tested positive for coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

Association Board (IFAB). From March 2, he visited Amsterdam for a Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) meeting to give a presentation on Japan’s bid for the 2023 women’s World Cup.

And On March 3, he attended a general meeting of the same body. “In Amsterdam and in Europe in early March, the level of nervousness against the novel

coronavirus was not the same as now,” he said in the statement.

“Everyone was still doing hugs, handshakes and bises (cheek kissing).” He then travelled to the United States to watch the Japanese women’s team in action and to lobby for the women’s World Cup, before returning home on March 8. — AFP ■

MFF, MNL, MEMS conduct basic life support training

A basic life-support course was held at the meeting hall of the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

The Myanmar Football Federation (MFF), the Myanmar National League (MNL) and the Myanmar Emergency Medical Services (MEMS), in cooperation with Sea Lion Company, which was distributing Zoll AED defibrillators that are recognized by FIFA, have jointly organized the course. The training was attended by MFF’s medical staff, MNL clubs’ medical officers, and the officials concerned. The course includes not only the lectures but also practical demonstrations, conducted by the trainers.

“This course is aimed to ensure the safety of life for people, especially football players, when their hearts suddenly stop they need to be provided with emergency medical care.” explained



An official checks the body temperature of a training attendee at the basic life-support course at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

Dr Myo Hein from the Department of Emergency Medicine at Yangon General Hospital.

We can see many cases of heart attacks worldwide during football matches, therefore, this training will facilitate the trainees to save the lives of the people in emergency need, he added.

There are two methods of curing patients – pressing the patient with hands without any apparatus, and pressing the patient with a medical device called AED.

MFF Chief Medical Officer Dr Aung Kyaw Oo said, “The trainees could provide emergency treatments to the players if the players suffered from heart attack during the training sessions or competitions since they have attended the course. If the patients could be sent to the hospital after giving them emergency treatments, most of the possible death cases could be reduced.” A COVID-19 awareness programme was also conducted before the main training course. The event came into conclusion after a group photo session.—Kyaw Khin

First round fixtures of General Aung San Shield released

THE first round fixture of General Aung San Shield was released at its official lots-draw ceremony recently, according to Myanmar National League Website. There are a total of six matches in the first round, and the matches will be held on 8 and 9 April.

On 8 April, 10/Mon FC will meet with Paung Laung FC at the Thuwunna Stadium, University FC will play against Kachin United FC at

the Padonmar Stadium, and Junior Lions FC will take on Yaw Myay FC at the Sa Lin Stadium. On 9 April, Myawady FC will play against Yangon Premier League Champion, Silver Stars FC will meet with Play-Off Winner at the Sa Lin Stadium, and Mawyawadi FC will take on Happy Friendship FC at the Thuwunna Stadium.

All the matches will be played at 3:30 pm on the respective dates.—Kyaw Khin