

NATIONAL

Peace negotiators discuss implementation of agreement at 8th JICM

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Students from Wuhan discharged after 2-week quarantine

PAGE-6

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects development programmes in Hakha, Chin State



Vice President U Henry Van Thio opens the Midwifery Training School in Hakha, Chin State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

VICE President U Henry Van Thio arrived in Hakha, the capital city of Chin State, after leaving Thantlang Township, yesterday morning. The Vice President and his entourage, including Union Ministers Dr Myo Thein Gyi and U Ohn Maung, Chin State Chief Minister Salai Lian Lwal, Speaker of Chin State Hluttaw U Zo Bawi, Deputy Minister Maj Gen Than

Htut, U Kyaw Myo and U Myint Kyaing, local government ministers and officials, were welcomed by the ministers, departmental officials, ethnic cultural troupe and the local people. The Vice President and party inspected the construction of the convocation hall and archway at the Hakha University, and heard reports on the project, budget affairs, construction of Mindat

The Hakha University Campus should be developed into a learning hub and a site where students can grow local cherry plants: Vice President U Henry Van Thio.

combined university, water and electricity supply to the university and the needs at the Hakha University. Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi also added his discussions.

The Hakha University Campus should be developed into a learning hub and a site where students can grow local cherry plants, said Vice President U Henry Van Thio. He also inspected construction site of convocation hall. The Vice President also visited the construction site of Nwe Chaung dam and discussed soil surveys at the project area. SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL 60 villages in Myaing Township achieve power supply PAGE-2



LOCAL NEWS Over 7,800 people participate in MAB Run 2020 in Mandalay PAGE-4



BUSINESS Opposition from Thai growers delaying Myanmar-Thailand corn purchase MoU: ministry PAGE-5



Peace negotiators discuss implementation of agreement at 8th JICM

GOVERNMENT officials and representatives of ethnic armed organizations signed in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement held talks yesterday on implementation of No.1 agreement made in the 8th Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting on NCA.

The meeting held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon was attended by Chairman of NRPC Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, military officers from the Office of Commander in Chief (Army) Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Lt-Gen Min Naung and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Secretary of Peace Commission Retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo, Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Pyone Cho (a) U Htay Win Aung, Advisors of Peace Commission U Hla Maung Shwe, U Moe Zaw Oo and Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the State Counsellor's Office, and Peace Commission members U Hla Maung Shwe and U Moe Zaw Oo.

The EAO representatives included Head of ceasefire negotiation team Pado Saw Se Gal, Negotiator Sai Lyan and



Government officials and representatives of ethnic armed organizations hold the 8th Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting on Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. PHOTO: MNA

members of negotiation team Dr Shwe Khra, Saw Tar Malar Thaw, Khun Aung Mahn and Nai Aung Ma Ngay.

The No.1 agreement in 8th JICM covers NCA's Chapter 3- Ceasefire Related Matters, Chapter 4- Maintaining and Strengthening Ceasefire, Chapter 6—Future Tasks to be implemented during the interim period.

In his opening remark,

the Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo said the No. 1 agreement of 8th JICM, while holding Joint Monitoring Committee meetings.

The meetings of peace negotiators on 2 and 3 February at NRPC also decided to implement the No.1 agreement, with immediate discussions, selecting the topics and the ongoing plans.

In NCA, 35 paragraphs are

concerned with political issue, 55 paragraphs with military issue and 23 paragraphs with socioeconomic issues.

The Union Attorney General also emphasized observing the military code of conduct, strengthening ceasefire and creating a situation of mutual trust between the government and ethnic armed organizations, and avoiding to take the upper hand in nego-

tiations.

Negotiation team leader Pado Saw Se Gay discussed implementations of NCA between the Tatmadaw and the EAOs, fair discussions for ceasefire and supporting the peace process.

After the meeting, the Union Attorney-General said that the meeting turned out positive results, and basically agreed to hold the JMC meeting around 10, 11 and 12 March, and that it would be approved after detailed discussions.

The meetings on 17 and 18 will discuss the remaining agreements of JICM.

Peace Commission Advisory Group member U Hla Maung Shwe said, "The meeting will convene for three days. The government peace negotiators offered to resume the meetings on 10,11 and 12 March. It is expected the EAOs would agree to the offer."

He added the government is trying to hold the Peace Conference in April, but it depends on the results from 17 and 18 February meetings.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

National symphony orchestra concerts to be held this month

THE Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra Concerts 2020 will be held in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw this month.

Entry to the concerts, which will feature artistes from Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV) and Japan, will be free of charge.

The concert in Yangon is scheduled to be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on 20 February at the Novotel Hotel. The concert in Nay Pyi Taw will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on 25 February at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II (MICC-ID).

The Japanese musicians will be led by well-known conductor and composer Mr. Yunosuke Yamamoto.

For more information contact MRTV by phone at 09-5006552, 067-79086, 01-527122 Ex.308. The Japanese Embassy can be reached by phone at 01-549664-48 or by e-mail at info.cul@yn.mofa.go.jp. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

60 villages in Myaing Township achieve power supply

CELEBRATIONS were held to mark a total of 60 villages in Myaing Township of Magway region have access to power supply in coincidence with the 50 percent of national electrification in the country.

The ceremony in Myaing Township was attended by Magway Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win, Chief Legal Officer U San Lin, Regional Minister for Natural Resources, Environmental Conservation, Electricity and Energy U Myint Zaw, Regional Hluttaw MPs U Thet Naing and U Win Htay.

The Chief Minister delivered a speech at the ceremony.

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win said that total power consumption in Magway Region is just about 100 megawatt for 12,404 households in 60 villages.

In the past, some of the towns in the region achieved electricity from diesel-powered generators, and these areas could connect the national grid in 2016.

The Ministry will construct two 66 kV sub-stations in Myaing and Yesagyo townships this fiscal year, and working for electrification at 664 villages in the first phase and 386 villages in the second phase.

After completing all these projects, the power consumption in Magway will rise to 55.26 per cent from the present 35.94.

The Deputy Minister also called for coordination of the public in the nationwide electrification programme to promote socioeconomic status of the people.

The Chief Minister and party also attended similar ceremonies held at Thamankanvillage and Tegyi village of Myaing Township.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)



Officials cut the ribbon during the ceremony to mark electrification in 60 villages in Myaing Township in Magway Region. PHOTO: MNA

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VP U Henry Van Thio inspects development programmes in Hakha

FROM PAGE-1

He also looked into drilling of underground water funded by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement with the machinery assistance of Kanbawza Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation in Hakha.

The Vice President attended the opening ceremony of Midwifery Training School of the Department of Human Resources for Health under the Ministry of Health and Sports in Hakha.

At the opening ceremony, the Vice President talked about the importance of midwifery training school that can support health-care services in Chin State.

Director General Dr Tin Tin Lay from the Department of Human Resources for Health reported on the capacity of school which is located on 20.26 acre of land on Hakha-Falam motorway. The school is a two-storey RC



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects the construction site of Nwe Chaung dam. PHOTO: MNA



concrete building attached to a female dormitory, accommodating 50 trainees each academic year.

The Vice President also visited the construction site of the three-storey Chin State High Court, and heard reports on the

project.

He then proceeded to the Institute of Sports and Physical Education in Hakha, and Director-General U Myo Hlaing briefed on upgrading facilities at the institute.

After giving necessary instructions on the development of facilities and inspecting the construction project, the Vice President looked around a water supply project of Hakha.

The Vice President and par-

ty also visited the viewpoint of Hakha to observe the town's development and took helicopters to Kalay Township for the return flight to Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the Midwifery Training School in Hakha yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the construction site of the three-storey Chin State High Court. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and officials pose for a group photo with the Chin Ethnic cultural troupe at the opening of the Hakha Midwifery Training School. PHOTO: MNA

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Over 7,800 people participate in MAB Run 2020 in Mandalay

THE MAB Sayaungchel Run 2020, jointly organized by Myanma Apex Bank (MAB) and Mandalay Region Government, was held at 6 am yesterday in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay.

Acting Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Zarni Aung and Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin also attended the running event which kicked off from the Hilton Hotel Mandalay at the corner of 26th Street and 66th Street.

Over 7,800 people including students from universities and basic education schools in Mandalay, and sportsmen took part in the 5-km running event which began from the corner of 26th Street and 66th Street and ended at Shwe Mann Taung Golf Course, taking along the streets of 66th, 12th and 73rd.

All the participants at the event were presented with commemorative medals. Entertainments by well-known



People take part in the MAB Sayaungchel Run 2020 in Mandalay yesterday.
PHOTO:MG PYI TU (MANDALAY)

artists and free foods were also provided at the endpoint.

With the cash that was received by selling the run tickets, officials from MAB donated K 18.5 million for development of Myanmar education sector and K 100 million for urban development in Mandalay, and the Mandalay Mayor and an official accepted the cash.—Mg Pyi Tu (Mandalay)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Private mini-cruise ships operated in Phekhon Lake, Shan State



Local ethnic people pose for a group photo as part of launching the two mini-cruise ships in Pekhoh Lake in Southern Shan State. PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG HTWE (IPRD)

A private company operates two mini cruise ships in Pekhon Lake in southern Shan State close to the border of Kayah State.

The launch of business by the Lake Pekhon Houseboats Co.,Ltd was attended by Speaker of Kayah State Hluttaw U Hla Htway, Shan State Minister for Kayan Ethnic Affairs U Khun Aye Maung.

The private firm Lake Pekhon Houseboats is the operator of MVLPH Lity with three bedrooms for six passengers and MVLPH Cherry with six bedrooms for 15 passengers, which were built by the White Swan Boating Co., Ltd.—Maung Maung Htwe (IPRD)(Translated by Aung Khin)

Police seizes narcotic drugs in Tarlay, Mongmit, Laukkai

POLICE seized 1,260kg of stimulant tablets and a mobile phone while they searched the house of Aik Soun in Lun Kyaing Village, Minglem Village-tract in Tarlay Town, Tachilek Township on 15 February.

Similarly, a combined team including police from Mongmit also confiscated 690,000 stimulant tablets estimated K 1,380 million from a suspected Nissan Wingroad car that stopped in forest lane near the Shwe Kyauk Maw Village, Thit

Seint Village-tract in Mongmit Township.

Police from Laukkai also seized 0.0083 kg of heroin, 4,600 stimulant tablets and 0.035 kg of ICE in a search of the house of Laul Lauk Phoo in Yoneshin 6th street in Ward No.3 in Laukkai.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. — GNLM (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Confiscated drugs and sized vehicle. PHOTO: MPF

Myanmar bamboo association: Need to cut red tape to boost exports of value-added furniture

By Nyein Nyein

TO increase exports of value-added furniture produced from bamboo and rattan in Myanmar, excessive regulations need to be cut down, said U Nay Tun Min, chair of the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association.

Although the government has reduced some regulations to promote bamboo and rattan exports, there is still greater

and more rigid conformity to official rules compared with other countries, he said.

“Compared to foreign countries, there is more red tape here across the supply chain, starting from cutting of bamboo to production. The income from bamboo and rattan furniture exports is just US\$1-2 million per year. Countries like Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Thailand earn a billion as income from that sector. We are struggling

to earn even \$1-2 million. The government has reduced certain rules, but there are many procedural stages. Cutting red tape can promote exports and allow us to explore more markets,” said U Nay Tun Min.

Additionally, tax is being levied on bamboo and rattan furniture exports. Therefore, the association said it has asked for tax relief.

“A 2-per-cent tax is levied on exports, unlike in other coun-

tries. Some countries reduce value-added tax and profit tax for manufacturing firms. The government has still not reduced tax in that sector,” said U Nay Tun Min.

Besides, raw bamboo has become rare, and its price is higher than in other countries, said bamboo and rattan entrepreneurs.

At present, the association has leased 100 acres of land in Taikkyi, Yangon Region and

Minhla, Bago Region each.

It has also asked the government to allow it to lease 5,000 acres of land in western Bago for planting bamboo and hardwood.

The association is conducting courses related to bamboo selection, value-adding technology, market exploration, and bamboo and rattan cultivation.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Imports up \$1 bln as of 7 Feb, MOC reports

THE value of Myanmar’s imports between 1 October and 7 February in the 2019-2020 financial year stood at US\$7.44 billion, an increase of \$1.05 billion from \$6.39 billion recorded in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP business groups rose significantly in the current fiscal.

Over the past four months, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and airplane parts were brought into the country. Capital goods made up a large share of Myanmar’s imports in the current fiscal. Their import value was estimated at \$2.72 billion. The figure was \$726 million higher

compared to the same period in the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$1.26 billion, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed an increase of \$68.7 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY.

In the current fiscal, imports of raw material goods, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items, jumped to \$2.57 billion from \$2.36 billion registered in the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth \$875 million were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garments sector. —GNLM

(Translated by EMM)

Hteekhee trade down \$100 mln in current fiscal

TRADE between Thailand and Myanmar via the Hteekhee border gate between 1 October and 7 February in the current financial year plunged to US\$668.6 million from \$770.39 million registered in the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Over the past four months, exports through the Hteekhee gate reached \$661.29 million, while imports fell short of \$7.34 million. Exports of natural gas from Taninthayi Region had contributed to an enormous increase in exports through the Hteekhee gate in the 2018-2019FY, said an official from the ministry. Earlier, the Myawady gate saw the largest trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. The rise in exports through the Hteekhee gate last year boosted

the value of the Myanmar-Thailand border trade to more than double the amount registered in the previous year.

Of the seven border trade points between Myanmar and Thailand, the Hteekhee and Myeik gates have witnessed a decrease in trade in the current financial year, while the remaining gates have reported an increase in trade. Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighboring country. — Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Farmers loading the vehicle with corns in their farm in NyaungU. PHOTO: KO HTEIN

Opposition from Thai growers delaying Myanmar-Thailand corn purchase MoU: ministry

MYANMAR and Thailand have not yet signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a year-long purchase of corn as growers from Thailand are opposing such an agreement, according to news released online by the Ministry of Commerce.

Under a bilateral agreement between Thailand and Myanmar, corn exports were to be exempt from tax from 1 February to 31 August. Normally, Myanmar’s corn exports to Thailand are suspended for five months (September-January), according to the Myanmar Corn Farmers’ Association.

“The trade is quite slow as the prices offered by Thailand cannot cover transportation and input costs. Starting from January, Thailand’s traders purchased corn and kept it in a

warehouse located in Myawady,” it stated.

At present, Myanmar’s corn is fetching 103 baht per 15 kilograms. Myanmar produces about 11 million tons of corn per year, and half of it is consumed domestically.

Myanmar shipped over 100,000 tons of corn to other countries during October-November in the current financial year compared to 200,000 tons in the year-ago period.

As China is the major purchaser of Myanmar corn, the price is positively related to demand from the neighboring country. However, it has been one year since China suspended the importation of some agro products through the border gates, thereby forcing corn traders to turn to the Thailand

market.

Besides China, Myanmar also exports corn to India, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand. But, the volume of exports to those markets is low.

There are more than 1.9 million acres of corn plantations in Myanmar, primarily in Sagaing and Magway regions, and Chin, Kayin, Shan, and Kayah states.

As per data from the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar exported 1.5 million tons of corn, worth US\$270 million, in the 2018-2019FY; 1.4 million tons of corn, worth over \$290 million, in the 2017-2018FY; 1.2 million tons of corn, worth \$250 million, in the 2016-2017FY; and, 1.1 million tons of corn, worth \$300 million, in the 2015-2016FY.—Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Students from Wuhan discharged after 2-week quarantine



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe meets with the quarantined students in Mandalay before returning to their homes yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Fifty-nine students who were brought back to Myanmar from Wuhan, along with three health officials who arranged their return, completed their 14-day quarantine at the Kandawna-

di Hospital in Mandalay and were allowed to return to their homes yesterday. Before returning home, the students and officials, who were all found to be in good

health, met Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe at the hospital. The Union Minister, accompanied by the Mandalay Mayor and officials, greeted

the students and medical officials who had returned from Wuhan, and doctors, nurses, and staff at the hospital.

The Union Minister urged the students and officials to follow the medical instructions given by the ministry once they reach home, and to immediately contact the health department if they start feeling unwell.

The mission to bring the students back to Myanmar was launched at the request of leaders from the State after the COVID-19 virus outbreak in Wuhan, the minister said.

The ministry, epidemiologists, and medical experts then held a meeting over carrying out medical check-ups, monitoring the students in isolation, and providing them immediate treatment if they showed any symptoms of the disease, he added.

“A detailed plan to evacuate you was drawn in cooperation with related ministries,” the Union Minister told the

students yesterday.

The Kandawnadi Hospital in Mandalay was chosen and prepared, and medical equipment was provided, rooms were renovated, and medical staff was assigned to quarantine the students.

In addition, Mandalay Mayor Dr. Ye Lwin expressed the wish that students follow the medical instructions issued by the ministry when they reach their homes.

Afterwards, Dr. Than Than Myint, head of the Mandalay Region public health and medical service department, explained the medical instructions given by the ministry.

The Union Minister, the Mandalay Mayor, and Director-General (Union Minister Office) Dr. Tha Tun Kyaw also presented awards to honor officials involved in the evacuation of students from Wuhan. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Rakhine Chief Minister inspects Kinchaung bridge construction



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Minister for Electricity, Industry, Roads and Transport U Aung Kyaw Zan and district and township level officials inspecting the construction of Kinchaung bridge in Kyaukpyu, Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHIEF Minister of Rakine State U Nyi Pu inspected construction of Kinchaung bridge in Kyaukpyu Township yesterday afternoon. The inspection tour included the Minister for Electricity, Industry, Roads and Transport U Aung Kyaw Zan, district/

township level officials. The 126.7 ft long bridge is being constructed by the Bridge Special Unit (8) of the Department of Bridges under the Ministry of Construction. — Aung Than Naing (IPRD) (Translated by Aung Khin)

Development programmes in progress in Sagaing Region

THE Department of Development for Border Areas and National Races is undertaking development programmes in Sagaing Region’s townships Khamti, Pinlebu, Leshi and Nanyun. A total of K 18.338 billion was used in 2019-2020 fiscal year for construction and upgrading roads, bridges, education, healthcare, water supply, housings and religious affairs. The funds were received from Union budget, State

budgets and a grant from India, said Assistant Director U Nyi Swe. The Union budgets were used for construction of roads, bridges, one pipe culvert, 82 box culverts, 5 Bailey bridges, one school, 5 units of staff apartments, 2 water supply projects, 155 ft of earth retaining wall and 3 fences. The State budget were spent for road constructions, 14 iron-concrete reinforced bridges, 8 wooden bridges, 10 pipe culverts, 139 box cul-

verts, 1 Bailey bridge, 11 units of staff apartments, 1 library, 1 monastery, 681 sets of solar panel, 1,200 ft wastewater drainage, 420 ft of earth retaining wall and 2/3 miles of water canal for crop cultivation and 1 mile of irrigation route. The grants from India is being used for road construction, 52 box culverts, 4 Bailey bridge and 3 schools in 2019-2020 fiscal year. — Hmwe Kyu Zin (Translated by Aung Khin)



Construction Workers working on a road in Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: AYE THIDA**

UN's Guterres calls for 'transformational change' on climate

ISLAMABAD — Governments must deliver decisive actions and “transformational change” to combat global warming, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Sunday, blasting a recent climate summit in Madrid.

The so-called COP25 climate talks in the Spanish capital in December were supposed to build on breakthrough promises made at the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris.

Instead, governments equivocated and observers decried their response as inadequate and unambitious.

“Our planet is burning but too many decision makers continue to fiddle,” Guterres said in a speech he delivered in Islamabad.

“The only answer is decisive climate action... Gradual approaches are no longer enough.”

A United Nations panel con-

cluded late in 2018 that avoiding global climate chaos will require a major transformation of society and the world economy. The landmark report said global CO2 emissions must drop 45 percent by 2030, and reach “net zero” by 2050, to cap temperature rise at 1.5 degrees Celsius, the safe cap set as a goal in the Paris accord.

Guterres said that at the next climate conference, the COP26 in Glasgow later this year, “governments must deliver the transformational change our world needs and that people demand, with much stronger ambition.”

Guterres said rich countries should lead the way, including by ending “perverse” fossil fuel subsidies.

Following a year of deadly extreme weather and weekly protests by millions of young people, Madrid negotiators were under pressure to send a clear signal



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (R), pictured during a question and answer session at an event on sustainable development and climate change in Islamabad, said “too many decision makers continue to fiddle” while the planet burns **(AFP Photo/Aamir QURESHI)**

that governments were willing to intensify their efforts.

The summit was at times

close to collapse as rich polluters, emerging powerhouses and climate-vulnerable nations groped

for common ground in the face of competing national interests.—
AFP ■

Americans leave quarantined Japan ship as virus cases hit 355



More than 350 people on board the Diamond Princess have tested positive for novel coronavirus **(AFP Photo/Behrouz MEHRI)**

YOKOHAMA — Americans began leaving a quarantined cruise ship off Japan on Monday to board chartered flights home as the number of new coronavirus cases diagnosed on the vessel jumped to 355.

The evacuation came as Japanese authorities stepped up warnings over the deadly outbreak, urging citizens to avoid crowds and “non-essential gatherings.” The Diamond Princess was placed in a 14-day quarantine in early February after a former passenger tested positive for the virus. But US

authorities announced Saturday they would offer Americans on board the option to leave the ship and fly home, where they will face another 14-day isolation period. Several other governments have announced plans to remove their citizens from the ship as well.

Late Sunday and into the early hours of Monday, Americans who opted to leave were brought off the ship in groups, passing through a makeshift passport control but undergoing no health checks, American passenger Sarah Arana told AFP.

They boarded buses driven

by personnel in head-to-toe protective suits and were told that the more than a dozen vehicles would travel in a convoy.

“I am happy and ready to go,” Arana told AFP before leaving the ship. “We need a proper quarantine, this was not it.”

The US government should have intervened “much sooner, at the beginning,” the 52-year-old medical social worker said. “This was too much for Japan, and they shouldn’t have had to bear the burden,” she added. “The people of Japan did not deserve this. I am full of gratitude.”— AFP ■

Bangladesh crab farmers feel pinch as coronavirus halts exports

DHAKA — Thousands of tons of Bangladesh crabs earmarked for Chinese dining tables are being left to rot because the coronavirus has halted exports.

The Bangladesh crab industry — which involves some 500,000 mostly poor farmers — is facing its worst-ever crisis as some 90 percent of all crabs from the \$30-million market are exported to China.

Farmers told AFP not a single shipment of crabs was flown to China since exports were halted in the last week of January.

That period is usually the busiest of the year because of the Lunar New Year, where Chinese families have lavish banquets.

Many farmers had bor-

rowed from banks and money lenders at high interest rates to boost stocks ahead of the Lunar New Year.

“My stock is 70 per cent damaged and if I cannot move the rest in a day, those (the rest) will die too,” Bidyut Ghosh, a crab farmer from the southwestern town of Paikgacha, told AFP.

The crabs are harvested live and can survive for up to 10 days in the right conditions, but once taken from their ponds they can’t be returned without losing quality and condition.

Crab trader Ranjit Mondol — from in the coastal district of Bagerhat where some 12,000 tonnes or 72 million crabs were produced last year — said prices usually doubled or tripled at this time of the year.— AFP ■



Workers removing crabs from a pond at a farm in Khulna **(AFP Photo/STR)**

For the health of people, especially young adults, restrict tobacco products

THE number of deaths caused by cancer, hypertension, and respiratory diseases would be higher in the coming years if the current levels of consumption of tobacco products, including betel quid and cigarettes, do not reduce.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe shared his concerns over the issue at a recent ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw to enforce rules on smoking and consumption of tobacco products.

“If we fail to control smoking and tobacco products consumption, half the budget of the Ministry of Health and Sports would have to be spent on providing medical services to patients with preventable diseases caused by smoking and tobacco products consumption,” he said.

To improve the effectiveness of the policy on tobacco use, crowded places nationwide, including universities, should establish no smoking and betel quid chewing zones.

Designation of smoke-free areas creates a healthier environment, makes travel to that particular destination more attractive, and reduces damage to heritage sites, and the risk of stray fires.

It took researchers at least 50 years to understand that cigarettes cut the lifespan of smokers by 10 years.

Every year, more than 8 million people die from tobacco use, according to data from the World Health Organization. More than 7 million of those deaths are from direct tobacco use, while around 1.2 million are due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

Smoking and consumption of tobacco products kill more than 60,000 people every year in Myanmar.

Tobacco products, including cigarettes, can cause at least 16 different cancers of the body, including lung cancer, cancers of the mouth, larynx, pharynx, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas, liver, cervix, stomach, colon, and rectum.

According to a survey conducted by the WHO in 2014, the prevalence of risk factors for contracting non-communicable diseases was one for 94 per cent of the people and three to five for about 19.6 per cent of the people.

To make the tobacco-free policy — which is a good measure to improve people's health — realistic, we also need to impose fines on businesses that sell tobacco products to kids and in restricted areas.



Standing Together at Trying Times to Cement China-Myanmar Paukphaw Friendship

By Mr Chen Hai, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar



Mr Chen Hai, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar.

share with you some perspectives based on what I saw and heard over the past weeks.

First, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government have attached great importance to the people's lives and health. General Secretary Xi Jinping has personally steered the work in the battle against the epidemic. On January 25, the very first day of the Lunar New Year, General Secretary Xi presided over a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, and emphasized that the government should take epidemic prevention and control as the most important task at present. After that, he presided over several more such meetings to study the situation and make plans for next steps. He also inspected local communities' efforts to prevent and control the epidemic in Beijing. The CPC Central Committee established the Leading Group of the CPC

Central Committee for Novel Coronavirus Prevention and Control with Premier Li Keqiang as the group leader, and sent a task force to Wuhan, the epicenter of the epidemic, to lead the battle at the forefront. The strong leadership and scientific planning of the CPC Central Committee provided effective support for epidemic prevention and control, boosting the confidence of the entire nation.

Second, China has fully leveraged the strengths of its system for nationwide support. To block the source of infection, the Chinese government took the most comprehensive and stringent measures, including the unprecedented quarantine of Wuhan, a provincial capital city with a population of more than 10 million. More than 20,000 medical workers have been mobilized to provide emergency support for Hubei Province. Nineteen provinces and municipalities have sent medical teams to the pair-up cities in Hubei Province severely affected by the epidemic. In Wuhan, two emergency hospitals dedicated to the disease (Huoshenshan and Leishenshan) were completed at lightning speed. Besides, unprecedented high efficiency has been demonstrated in materials supply, scientific research, medical assistance and other aspects. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus commented: “The speed, scale and efficiency of China's rapid response are rarely seen in the world.” The epidemic is a big test for China's governance system and capabilities. I'm sure that

we will sum up the experience and make continuous progress in emergency management, public health and other areas.

Third, the general positive trend of the Chinese economy will not change in the long run. In the short term, the epidemic is having an impact on transportation, tourism, catering and entertainment industries, but the impact is partial, temporary and limited. New forms of digital economy, such as artificial intelligence, online education and medical services, are gradually shaping new economic growth points. At present, the restoration of economic and social order has begun in areas not severely affected in China. To minimize the impact of the epidemic on the economy, the government has taken a series of measures to secure jobs and resume production in an orderly manner, such as cutting taxes and lowering fees and increasing credit support for enterprises facing difficulties in production and operations. In the medium to long term, with the progress of epidemic prevention and control, the Chinese economy will continue to maintain a strong momentum and promote world economic growth, which I believe will be good news for the rest of the world, including Myanmar.

Fourth, epidemics know no national boundaries in a community with a shared future for mankind. The COVID-19 outbreak posed a challenge for humanity. China's strong response was not only for Chinese people, but eventually for the good of the whole world. China has been committed

to openness and transparency by sharing the genetic sequence of the virus in a timely manner. Confirmed cases worldwide excluding China account for less than 1 percent of the confirmed cases in China, showing that China has effectively prevented the spread of the epidemic beyond its borders. In the meantime, many countries and international organizations have provided great encouragement and support for China. In this community with a shared future for humanity where our interests are closely intertwined, joint efforts to effectively curb the spread of the epidemic are in the common interest of all. We must work together, treat one another with sincerity and reject narrow prejudices and discrimination. The excessive self-protection measures to shift one's problems onto his neighbors will accomplish the very opposite.

At the beginning of this year, President Xi Jinping paid a historic visit to Myanmar with historic achievements. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries agreed to build a community with a shared future together. As the Myanmar leaders stated, building a community with a shared future is a way to share weal and woe, seize the opportunities together and meet the challenges hand in hand. The Myanmar government and people gave firm support to China in the battle against the epidemic, inserting a footnote to China-Myanmar community with a shared future with concrete action. In his letter to President Xi Jinping, Myanmar President U Win Myint expressed that as a

friendly neighbor of China, Myanmar is ready to work closely with China to overcome the virus outbreak. Many Myanmar businesses and people have raised and donated materials that were in short supply in China. Some Myanmar citizens have prayed for China at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and other locations. Others have produced short video clips to cheer up Wuhan. All of these efforts have moved us deeply.

The epidemic is temporary, but the efforts to build China-Myanmar community with a shared future will last long. Our joint effort in this battle against the epidemic is another demonstration of the deep-rooted paukphaw friendship between our two countries. As close neighbors and partners who have given each other help and support, we will work with the Myanmar side to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, promote pragmatic cooperation and deepen cultural exchanges, and continue to provide support on issues concerning the Rakhine State and the peace process in Myanmar. I believe that with the joint efforts of both sides, China and Myanmar will be able to stand together at trying times and take solid steps towards a China-Myanmar community with a shared future.

(The views expressed in this article are those of the author, the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar)



Q&A: Testing for coronavirus in China

How does China test for COVID-19?

In China, the main way to test patients is using the Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) technique.

RT-PCR tests can detect the new coronavirus in patient blood or respiratory tract samples, including those taken from the nose or throat.

In a video released last week by a hospital in Wuhan — the quarantined city where the virus first emerged — medical staff demonstrated how to retrieve samples from a patient's nose.

Inserting a stick deep inside her colleague's

nostril, one of the women instructed viewers to move the instrument in clockwise and counterclockwise circles.

The depth should be "halfway between the tip of the nose and earlobe", she explained, as the mock patient's eyes pinched shut.

Once samples are collected, they are sent to labs and processed in batches.

Zhang Hongxing, head of Wuhan's health commission, said last week the city tested about 6,000 to 8,000 people daily.

Besides nucleic acid tests, another method to

confirm cases uses genetic sequencing, according to guidelines released by China's National Health Commission.

Patients test positively if the genetic sequence of their blood or respiratory tract sample has a "high degree" of similarity with that of the virus.

Who qualifies for testing?

Not everyone can be tested for the illness — patients have to be marked as a "suspected case" first.

To be counted as a suspected case, individuals have to check several boxes, including symptoms

and travel history.

Anyone who has travelled to Wuhan or neighbouring areas are considered more likely to be infected, according to NHC guidelines.

Those who have had contact with confirmed COVID-19 patients or Wuhan visitors with a fever are also higher risk.

"Suspected" patients can also show symptoms linked to the new coronavirus, such as a fever or low white blood cell count.

REFERENCE — AFP



တရုတ်ပြည်သူ့သမ္မတနိုင်ငံ၊ ဂျပန်မြို့ပုဂံတပ်ခြေပြာသော အဆုတ်ရောင်ရောင် (2019-nCoV) မိမိတစ်ဦး ကာကွယ်ပါ။

ရောဂါကူးစက်နိုင်ခြေရှိသည့် နည်းလမ်းများ

- အသက်ရှူလမ်းကြောင်းမှတစ်ဆင့် တိုက်ရိုက်ဝင်ရောက် ကူးစက်ပျံ့နှံ့စေခြင်း
- အရာဝတ္ထုများ၌ ထိကပ်နေသော ရောဂါပိုးများအား လက်နှင့် ကိုင်တွယ်ထိတွေ့ရာမှတစ်ဆင့် ကူးစက်ခြင်း

သံသယဖြစ်ဖွယ် ရောဂါလက္ခဏာများ

- လူနံနံသည့် (၁၄)ရက်အတွင်း တရုတ်ပြည်သူ့သမ္မတနိုင်ငံ၊ ဂျပန်မြို့သို့ ခရီးသွားခဲ့ခြင်း (သို့မဟုတ်) အဆုတ်ရောင်ရောင် (2019-nCoV) ဖြစ်ပွားသည့်ဟု အတည်ပြုခြင်းမရှိသည့် အတုစန့်ထိုင်ခံခြင်းတို့ ရှိခဲ့ပြီး
- ရှားခြင်း (အပူချိန် ၃၈°C / ၁၀၀.၄°F နှင့်အထက် ရှိခြင်း)
- ရောင်ဆိုးခြင်း၊ အသက်ရှူရ ခက်ခဲခြင်း၊ အားအင်ကုန်ခမ်းခြင်း

ကာကွယ်နိုင်မည့်နည်းလမ်းများ

- အဆုတ်ရောင်ရောင်လက္ခဏာ ခံစားနေရသူများနှင့် အနီးကပ်ထိတွေ့ခြင်းမှ ရှောင်ကြဉ်ပါ။
- လက်ကို စင်ကြယ်အောင် မကြာခဏ ခနပ်တုတ်ဆေးကြောပါ။
- နားချရောင်ဆိုးသည့်အခါ နားခေါင်းနှင့်ပါးစပ်ကို လုံခြုံစေအောင်နံးအုပ်ပါ။ (အဆုတ်ရောင်ရောင်(၆)ကာလီစဉ်)
- တစ်ရှူးအသုံးပြုပါက အချိန်ပိုင်းသို့ ခနပ်တုတ်ဖွင့်ပစ်ပါ။
- လက်ကို ခနပ်တုတ်၍ ပြန်လည်ဆေးကြောပါ။
- တစ်ကိုယ်ရေသန့်ရှင်းမှု ရရှိမြဲစေအောင်ရွက်ပါ။ အဟာရပြည့်ဝစွာ စားသုံးပါ။ ကောင်းစွာ အိပ်စက်အနားယူပါ။
- တိရစ္ဆာန်များနှင့် အကာအကွယ်မပါဘဲ တိုက်ရိုက်ထိတွေ့ခြင်းမှ ရှောင်ကြဉ်ပါ။

(2019-nCoV)

အဆုတ်ရောင်ရောင် (2019-nCoV) ဖြစ်ပွားသည့်ဟု သံသယရှိပါက နီးစပ်ရာကျန်းမာရေးဌာနများသို့ အမြန်ဆုံးသတင်းပို့၍ ကုသမှုခံယူပါ။

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

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17th February, 2020: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty of (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Mon State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

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N. Korea Kim makes 1st appearance in 3 weeks on father's birthday

BEIJING/PYONGYANG — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first appearance in state-run media in three weeks on Sunday, the birthday of his father and late leader Kim Jong Il.

The official Korean Central News Agency reported in the morning that Kim Jong Un visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang, where the embalmed bodies of the two former leaders — his grandfather and father — lie in state.

Speculation has grown that Kim Jong Un is refraining from inspection tours as North Korea struggles to contain the outbreak of a new pneumonia-causing coronavirus raging in neighbor China.

The last time Kim Jong Un appeared in state-run media



People offer flowers at Mansu Hill in Pyongyang, where statues of former North Korean leaders — the country's founder Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il — stand, on Feb. 16, 2020, to celebrate the 78th anniversary of Kim Jong Il's birth. **PHOTO: KYODO**

was back on Jan. 26, when it was reported that he watched a performance for celebrating

the Lunar New Year, along with his wife, Ri Sol Ju.

On Sunday's anniversary,

known as the "Day of the Shining Star" in North Korea, citizens and military personnel laid flowers and bowed before giant statues of Kim Jong Il and founder Kim Il Sung on Mansu Hill in the heart of Pyongyang, amid falling snow.

The Rodong Sinmun, the mouthpiece of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, said Kim Jong Il made North Korea a "world-class" powerful military country, but notably made no direct mention of its nuclear forces and the United States.

Spreading worldwide, the new coronavirus, which is believed to have originated late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has infected around 70,000 people and killed over 1,600 in China.—Kyodo

NEWS In BRIEF

Approval rate for Abe's Cabinet logs sharpest fall in 2 years

TOKYO — The approval rate for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet stands at 41.0 percent, a Kyodo News survey showed Sunday, down 8.3 points from the previous poll in January and marking the sharpest fall in nearly two years amid yet another cronyism scandal. In the nationwide opinion poll, conducted Saturday and Sunday, 82.5 percent said they were either "worried" or "worried to a certain extent" about the negative impact of the new coronavirus outbreak on the Japanese economy. While 63.5 percent welcomed the government's decision to prohibit some foreigners from entering Japan to prevent the spread of the virus that originated in China, 30.4 percent said it was insufficient. The survey also showed that 71.4 percent expect an unfavorable impact on Japan if Donald Trump is re-elected in the U.S. presidential election in November, while 16.7 percent anticipate a favorable impact. The disapproval rate stood at 46.1 percent, up 9.4 points, following criticism of the government's handling of documents related to publicly funded annual cherry blossom viewing parties at the center of another allegation of cronyism.—Kyodo

Algerian gov't meets with local governors to build "new Algeria"

ALGIERS — The Algerian government started on Sunday a two-day meeting themed "For a new Algeria" with local governors, Algerian official APS news agency reported. The meeting in the capital Algiers was attended by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad, other ministers and more than 1,000 central and local executives. It focuses on improvement of the citizens' living conditions through rational management of economic property, modern management of new cities and the means to reduce road accidents. During his presentation of his government's Plan of Action before the parliament on Tuesday, Djerad said one of the most important challenges of the government is to restore people's confidence in the country's institutions.—XINHUA

Flight of fancy? Aviation industry tries to go green

LONDON — From an emissions-reducing model jet that looks like something from a sci-fi movie to electric aircraft and

sustainable fuel, the aviation industry is ramping up efforts to go green as consumer pressure grows.

In an era when teen climate activist Greta Thunberg opts to travel on an eco-friendly boat and "flight-shaming" is all the rage in her native Sweden, air travel's reputation has never looked as dire.

Aviation accounts for three percent of climate-damaging carbon emissions globally, according to the European Environment Agency, and the world is experiencing record heatwaves, wildfires and storm surges made worse by rising seas.

"Sustainability" was the buzzword last week in Singapore at Asia's biggest air show — which was powered by solar panels — with manufacturers and airlines trying to outdo one

another on vows to become more sustainable.

Some environmentalists however have criticised such pledges as "greenwash", PR stunts that will do little to mitigate the damage caused by the vast quantities of jet fuel burnt every year.

"Aviation is under significant pressure to improve its sustainability image," Paul Stein, chief technology officer for engine maker Rolls-Royce, told AFP.

Airlines are "working with us to find pathways to increase the availability of sustainable fuels, look at how electrification can impact them... and also looking to more and more efficient engines and airframes".—AFP



The aviation industry has been under pressure to do more on sustainability. **PHOTO: AFP**

China's rural policy bank issues loans for spring farming preparation

BEIJING — China's rural policy bank has strengthened its financial support to preparations for spring farming to alleviate the impact of a coronavirus epidemic.

As of Feb. 10, a total of 12 billion yuan (about 1.72 billion U.S. dollars) of loans had been issued by the Agricultural Development Bank of China (ADBC) to ensure the sufficient supply of agricultural materials and smooth transportation.

Specifically, the bank allocated a total of 5.7 billion yuan of loans to support fertilizer re-

serves between Oct. 1, 2019 and Feb. 10, while the rest supporting seeds, farming machines and high-standard farmland construction were issued from Jan. 1 to Feb. 10.

The ADBC, the third-largest bonds issuer at home, had raised 42.5 billion yuan through bond issuance in late January. It has also imposed preferential interest rates for the borrowers involved in spring farming preparation in major epidemic-stricken areas to guarantee their production.—XINHUA



Fruit farmers arrange newly picked peaches at a fruit cooperative at Ledong Village of Zhongbao Township in Laoting County, north China's Hebei Province, July 30, 2019. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

France warns of bloody Brexit talks battle

LONDON — France on Sunday warned Britain to expect a bitter, bloody battle in Brexit trade talks with the EU, saying the two sides would “rip each other apart”.

Negotiations for a deal on future EU-UK relations are not due to start until next month, but London and Brussels have already clashed over rules for British financial firms’ access to the EU after Brexit.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said it would be tough to achieve Britain’s aim of agreeing a free trade deal by the end of the year, with the two sides far apart on a range of issues.

“I think that on trade issues and the mechanism for future relations, which we are going to start on, we are going to rip each other apart,” Le Drian said at the Munich Security Conference.

“But that is part of negotiations, everyone will defend their own interests.”

Britain formally left the EU



It’ll get ugly, France warns. PHOTO: AFP

two weeks ago but still trades like a member under a transition period ticking down to the end of this year.

The remaining 27 EU states are currently drawing up their mandate for the talks on the future relationship, with France in particular pushing for a strong stance, notably on the vexed question of fishing.

France and several other countries want to be able to keep fishing in British waters, while London wants full autonomy and

limited access for European fishermen.

“Let’s hope the talks are done as quickly as possible, but there are a lot of issues and some difficult points to deal with,” said Le Drian, who is from the important French fishing region of Brittany.

The bloc’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier has said the EU’s top priorities are fishing, security and maintaining fair trading conditions for European companies.—AFP ■

Merkel succession contender calls her out over slow EU revamp

BERLIN — A leading contender to succeed German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday criticised her for taking too long to respond to a French push to strengthen the EU after Brexit.

“I would like to apologise for the German government,” Armin Laschet said, casting himself as strongly pro-EU as the race to find a new leader for Merkel’s centre-right CDU party heats up.

Macron has long called for an overhaul to the European Union in response to Britain’s departure from the bloc, including deeper integration in financial and defence matters, and has repeatedly urged Berlin to champion the reforms with him.

“I would have liked a more engaged and faster answer to Macron, and a dialogue with him,” Laschet, the premier of

Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia state, said at the Munich Security Conference.

Speaking at the same gathering a day earlier, Macron said he was “impatient” at Germany’s reluctance to take up his offer to jointly spearhead EU reforms.

Laschet said Merkel’s government, an alliance between her conservative bloc and the centre-left SPD, had not lived up to the promise enshrined in their 2018 coalition agreement to create a “fresh start” for Europe.

“We’ve not seen much of that in the past two years,” Laschet said.

Looking ahead to Germany’s six-month EU presidency starting in July, he said there was an opportunity for “a new momentum” on European issues.—AFP ■

Ongoing Libya violence ‘deeply troubling’, UN says

MUNICH — The situation in wartorn Libya is “deeply troubling”, a United Nations representative said Sunday, warning that a fragile truce was hanging “by a thread” as daily life in the North African country worsens.

Speaking after talks with foreign ministers in the German city of Munich, the UN’s deputy special representative to Libya Stephanie Williams said that over 150 violations had been reported since last month’s ceasefire was agreed.

She also slammed the ongoing breaches of a much-abused

UN weapons embargo, even after foreign countries agreed in January to stop meddling in a conflict that has dragged in major regional rivals.

“The situation on the ground remains deeply troubling. The truce is holding only by a thread,” Williams said on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

“It is the Libyan people that continue to suffer the most. The economic situation continues to deteriorate, exacerbated by the oil blockade.”

Libya has been mired in

chaos since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi, with two rival administrations vying for power.

The conflict deepened when military strongman Khalifa Haftar, who controls much of the south and east of Libya, launched an assault to seize Tripoli, the base of the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez al-Sarraj.

States including Russia, France, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt support Haftar, while the GNA is backed by Turkey and Qatar.

World leaders agreed at a Berlin summit last month to end all meddling in the conflict and stop the flow of weapons into Libya, but little has changed on the ground since then.

At Sunday’s follow-up meeting in Munich, foreign ministers from over a dozen countries called the continued embargo violations “deplorable”.

They urged Libya’s warring parties, who did not take part in the meeting, to “maintain the current truce” and step up efforts to negotiate a lasting ceasefire.—AFP ■



Some say she should listen to him more. PHOTO: AFP

Israeli army says “ Hamas hacks into soldiers’ phones”

JERUSALEM — The Hamas militant group had “hacked into hundreds of Israeli soldiers’ mobile phones” by posing as young Israeli women on social media before the attempt was thwarted, Israel’s military said Sunday.

Military spokesman Jonathan Conricus told reporters that the phones of soldiers and officers were hacked by malware that extracted information from the devices and recorded conversations.

“As of now, it appears that no security damage was

caused,” the military said in a statement.

Hamas is a Palestinian Islamist movement headquartered in the Gaza Strip, a land Israel seized in a war in 1967 together with the West Bank and has controlled ever since despite international criticism.

Despite Egyptian and UN efforts to broker a truce between the two foes, low-level fighting has continued, including rockets and mortars from Gaza at southern Israel and Israeli airstrikes on Gaza. —



Libya has been mired in chaos since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi. PHOTO: AFP



Tourists wear masks in Kyoto on Jan. 30, 2020, amid the spreading coronavirus. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan may lose \$1.3 bil. in tourism revenue due to virus outbreak

TOKYO — Japan could lose \$1.29 billion in tourism revenue in the January-March period due to international flight restrictions stemming from the new coronavirus outbreak, according to an estimate by a U.N. agency.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO, attributed the estimate to reductions in Chinese air travelers, with the central China city of Wuhan being at the center of the outbreak.

Japan is followed by Thailand at \$1.15 billion.

The Montreal-based ICAO reported some 70 airlines have cancelled all international flights to and from mainland China, and that a further 50 airlines have curtailed related air operations. This has resulted in an 80 percent reduction in foreign airline capacity for travelers flying directly to or from China.

ICAO's preliminary forecasts indicate a reduction of 16.4 million to 19.6 million passengers compared to what airlines had projected for the first quarter of 2020.—Kyodo

Subaru to recall 81,260 vehicles in China

BEIJING — Japanese automaker Subaru will recall a total of 81,260 vehicles sold in the Chinese market over safety hazards, said China's market regulator.

The recall, set to begin on March 14, affects part of the imported Foresters manufactured between March 25, 2013 and Dec. 25, 2015, according to a statement posted on the website of the State Administration for Market Regulation.

In the process of driving, damper springs on the rear suspension of the affected vehicles may be corroded or fracture under some circumstances, which will affect the stability performance of the cars and pose safety risks, said the statement.

Subaru will check and fix the defective parts of all affected vehicles.— XINHUA



FILE: Photo taken on Jan. 14, 2019 shows a Ford Shelby GT500 at the 2019 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit, the United States. The annual Detroit auto show this year opened Monday and will last through Jan. 27. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

New challenges on menu for online food delivery platforms

NEWYORK — Meal delivery platform services face uncertainty following rapid growth in the United States and Europe, amid intensifying competition from successive new entrants into the market represented by the gig economy.

U.S. major platform operator Grubhub Inc., whose market value has plummeted in just over a year, reportedly has become one of the latest to consider consolidation sweeping the food delivery sector.



An Uber Eats deliverer makes his runs by bicycle in Tokyo's Minato Ward on Aug. 16, 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Service providers in the nascent delivery market connect customers with local takeout restaurants. When a user places an order with a restaurant via a mobile app, an independent online platform worker delivers the meal by car or bicycle to homes or offices.

Although there have been questions raised about the behavior or quality of delivery workers, who register the times they are available with service providers, demand for such delivery services has been on the rise in many countries, including Japan.

Venture-backed Grubhub, playing the go-between on its platform, drew the limelight as a market leader and went public in 2014. The market capitalization of the Chicago-based company once soared to \$13 billion (1.4 trillion yen) but has since plunged to \$5 billion.

The Wall Street Journal said in a recent online edition that Grubhub is considering "strategic options including a possible sale" to a competitor. U.S. ride-hailing company Uber Technologies Inc., which operates Uber Eats, is seen as a candidate to acquire Grubhub.

But the New York Post later quoted a GrubHub spokesperson as saying "there are currently no plans" to sell the company, while Wall Street skeptics say the wording leaves the door open for a sale should the right suitor approach.—Kyodo

NEWS In BRIEF

China's building materials sector sees steady growth in 2019

BEIJING —The output of China's building materials sector expanded steadily last year, official data showed.

The value-added output of the sector gained 8.5 percent year on year, 2.8 percentage points higher than the average for all industrial sectors nationwide, according to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Major building materials all posted an increase in their output. The output of cement and flat glass registered a year-on-year growth of 6.1 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively.

Prices of building materials rose 3.3 percent year on year in 2019. In December, prices of cement and flat glass increased 4.4 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively, year on year. The sector's profits climbed 7.2 percent from a year earlier to 462.4 billion yuan (about 66.2 billion U.S. dollars) last year. — XINHUA

Chinese customs support foreign trade firms in resuming business

BEIJING — The General Administration of Customs on Sunday issued 10 measures to support foreign trade enterprises to resume business in a bid to limit the impact of the novel coronavirus on the economy.

The customs will increase support to ease the difficulties of enterprises, including simplifying business registration or filing procedures.

The customs will speed up the inspection and release of imported production equipment and raw materials urgently needed by enterprises.—XINHUA

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Southeast Asia feels the burn as virus keeps Chinese tourists at home

BANGKOK — Elephant parks unvisited, curios at markets unsold as tuk-tuks sit idle: Southeast Asia is facing billions of dollars in losses from a collapse in Chinese tourism since the outbreak of a deadly new coronavirus.

From Luang Prabang in northern Laos to Pattaya in Thailand, Hoi An in Vietnam and the Cambodian casino town of Sihanoukville, takings have plummeted as Chinese travellers find themselves subject to a host of restrictions at home and abroad.

“We haven’t had any Chinese for 10 days since they closed the road from Yunnan,” says Ong Tau, 47, from behind her stall of fruit shakes in the temple-studded Laotian colonial town of Luang Prabang.

“Business is down 20-30 percent... it will get worse.”

Tour guides, mall workers and restaurant staff are all feeling the burn as Chinese — the world’s biggest travellers — stay at home in the middle of a global health crisis.

“My friend has lost four or five big tour groups... they would have paid for his low season,” said Tee, a guide in Luang Prabang, giving only one name in the tightly-controlled communist country, a mass of tuk-tuks standing idle behind him.

But in one of Southeast Asia’s least well-resourced countries, there may be one bright side to the sudden economic pain.

“We don’t know how to protect ourselves,” he added. “The government doesn’t tell people



Across Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia, tourist takings have plummeted as Chinese travellers find themselves subject to a host of travel restrictions. PHOTO: AFP

anything... so maybe less Chinese is a good thing for now.”

Loans and job losses

The slump is being felt sharply in Thailand, where tourism authorities say arrivals from Chi-

na — usually close to one million a month — have plunged by 90 percent so far this February.—AFP■

Miners welcome S.Africa’s plans to open up power generation

CAPE TOWN — South Africa’s announcement that it will open up electricity generation to other players, effectively breaking Eskom’s monopoly, has been welcomed by many, especially the mining in-

dustry, a key sector in Africa’s most industrialised economy.

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his annual state of the nation address Thursday night outlined a raft of steps that will allow

firms to generate electricity for their own use.

He admitted power cuts in recent months had had a debilitating effect on the economy and vowed to “rapidly and significantly” shore up electricity generation outside the debt-saddled Eskom.

The state-owned utility currently produces more than 90 percent of the country’s electricity.

But it has been crippled by poorly-designed coal-fired power stations, decades of mismanagement and alleged corruption under former president Jacob Zuma. Its debts amount to 450 billion rand (28 billion euros).

The mining industry — one of the largest power consumers— has for years been clamouring for legislative changes to ease up licensing to let firms produce their own electricity.

Signs that the government’s position on the issue was shifting came at a mining conference earlier this month where it indicated the laws would be reviewed.

The Minerals Council, an association of mining firms, said it was “encouraged by the president’s commitment to rapidly and significantly increase generation capacity outside of Eskom”.—AFP ■

U.S. decision to raise tariffs on EU planes escalates trade tensions: Airbus

PARIS—European aircraft producer Airbus said on Saturday that the United States government’s decision to increase tariffs on aircraft imported from the European Union (EU) further escalated trade tensions between the U.S. and the EU.

The decision of the Office of U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) “further escalates trade tensions between the U.S. and the EU, thereby creating more instability for U.S. airlines that are already suffering from a shortage of aircraft”, said the European plane maker in a statement.

The decision “ignores the many submissions made by U.S. airlines, highlighting the fact that they -- and the U.S. flying public -- will ultimately have to pay these tariffs”, it added.

The USTR issued a notice on Friday, saying the US is increasing the additional duty rate imposed on aircraft imported from the EU to 15 percent from 10 percent, effective from March 18.

This “further escalation complicates efforts to find a negotiated outcome to this dispute,” said Airbus. “This is regrettable.”—XINHUA ■



Power cuts can be dangerous for mining firms— nearly 1,000 miners were trapped underground following a power cut at the Beatrix gold mine in February 2018. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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

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

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

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

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Some foreign travellers visit Bagan Archaeological Zone in Mandalay Region by cars in groups. **PHOTO: DOHT**

Tourist arrivals in Mandalay Region surpass half million mark

By Kyaw Htike Soe

TOURIST arrivals in Mandalay Region recorded over 680,000 last year, up more than 190,000 from the same period of 2018, according to the figures from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (DoHT) under the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Mandalay Region welcomed around 500,000 tourists in 2018 with China being the biggest source of foreign travellers, accounting for nearly 48 per cent of overall tourist arrivals in the Myanmar's central region, said an official from the DoHT.

The DoHT has conducted the tourist arrival survey in Mandalay Region since 2016. "The number of globetrotters from European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom, and United States to Mandalay Region was on the increase



Tourists take photographs picturesque sunset view from the top of the Mandalay Hill. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**



Some foreign travellers visit Bagan Archaeological Zone in Mandalay Region by cars in groups. **PHOTO: DOHT**

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Tourists take photographs picturesque sunset view from the top of the Mandalay Hill. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

Muay Thai champion Toby Bindon joins Myanmar traditional lethwei

WORLD Boxing Council (WBC) Muay Thai champion Toby Bindon recently signed a contract with the World Lethwei Championship, according to an official statement issued by WLC.

Toby was also a British Sanda champion and the WBC Muay Thai champion in December, and that encouraged him to sign with the World Lethwei Championship.

Speaking about joining WLC, Toby Bindon, 26, said he wants to prove himself as the best lethwei striker.

“This is a huge test for me

and I am very excited. World Lethwei Championship is the biggest platform for bare-knuckle combat and I want to prove that I am the best striker there is. I am looking forward to having some fun inside the lethwei ring,” he said.

Toby said he chose WLC because of his love for lethwei.

“I’ve known about lethwei for a while. I came to know about lethwei after watching the Tony Jaa film Ong-bak, in which he fought in just hand-wraps or rope, so I started researching, and I came across ‘the art of nine limbs’ that is lethwei. I used to watch the footage of Dave Leduc,

and Lethwei fights with my friend Greg. I always said I’d love to compete in lethwei for the WLC,” he said.

Bindon will be competing in the light middleweight division. He is the same weight class as Myanmar lethwei star Thway Thit Win Hlaing.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Muay Thai champion

Toby Bindon (L) seen

with his World Boxing

belt. PHOTO:WLC



Than Paing goal helps Yangon United win over Southern Myanmar



Yangon United striker Than Paing (green) kicks the ball forward during the match against Southern Myanmar yesterday at the Mawlamyine Stadium. PHOTO: MNL

IN their Week-6 match of the Myanmar National League 2020, Yangon United secured a narrow 1-0 win over Southern Myanmar yesterday with a long goal scored by Than Paing. The match took place at the Mawlamyine stadium.

Yangon United lined up its usual 4-4-2 set formation with foreign players Barfo and Emmanuel in the striking position.

The match was not an easy one for former champion Yangon United as Southern Myanmar applied their massive defense skills well.

Mg Mg Win tried to score an early goal for Yangon United but the Southern Myanmar keeper deflected his attempt.

Yangon United got a free kick at 37 minutes, but Barfo’s kick was not accurate enough to change the score.

The first half ended with a scoreless draw.

Yangon United employed new tactics in the second half and substituted local striker Than Paing in place of Barfo.

After Than Paing joined in, the match was more active in the striking position.

With a close assist from Aboubacar, Than Paing scored a header at 78 minutes, the lone goal for Yangon United in the match.

Speaking about the narrow result, Yangon United head coach U Tin Maung Tun said he was not happy with the team’s performance.

Yangon United is currently in the second place on the standing table. The team will next play against defending champions Shan United on 22 February at their home stadium in Yangon.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Hantharwady United still leading MNL

HANTHARWADY United is still leading the scoring table of the Myanmar National League after winning all six of the matches it has played so far. The team has secured 18 points at the end of Week-6 of the MNL.

Yangon United is next with 16 points from five wins and one draw.

Patheingyi-based Ayeyawady United is third with the same points as Yangon United, but with difference in goals earned.

Meanwhile, defending champions of the Myanmar National League, Shan United are currently in the fourth place with 12 points from four wins and two losses.

Rakhine United is fifth with 11 points from three wins, two draws, and one loss, and Sagaing United is in the sixth place with 10 points from three wins, one draw, and two losses.

Magwe F.C., with its team of reliable local players, is standing seventh with 6 points from one win, three draws, and two losses.

Mandalay-based Yadanarbon F.C. is currently eighth with 5 points from one win, two draws, and three losses.

Twelve teams are competing in the tourney, and Southern Myanmar F.C. is currently at the bottom of the table with no wins.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Hantharwady United squad seen before a Myanmar National League match. PHOTO: HUFU