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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Myanmar, Vietnamese leaders exchange congratulatory messages on 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations

U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, exchanged a congratulatory message with Mr Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam which falls on 28 May 2020.

On the same occasion, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar also exchanged a congratulatory message with Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

## State Counsellor meets first prize winners of homemade cotton mask competition online



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets in video conferencing with first winners of homemade face mask competition yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

**S**TATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a video conference with first prize winners of her homemade cotton mask competition yesterday from the meeting room of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

She had discussions with Dr Kyaw Kyaw Win (a) Eric Yang from the United States of Amer-

ica who won the First Prize for Most Liked by the Public award, Daw Phyu Phyu Nyein Chan (Shin Nyein Mel) who won the Most Interesting Idea award, U Myo San Oo (a) Myo Gyi from Japan for the Best Creation award and Daw Kyi Kyi Win for the Best Serving the Public Interest award.

After words of greetings

from the State Counsellor, Dr Kyaw Kyaw Win presented his suggestions on how to live in line with the 'New Normal' in tandem with COVID-19 in the social, economic and education sectors, as well how to strictly comply with social distancing needs with relentless efforts.

Daw Phyu Phyu Nyein Chan, Managing Director from the

Poland Head Office of ASEAN DMA Centre, living in Kamayut Township, explained how she had established her organization to care for orphans; her feelings and aspirations as a single mother; providing assistance to pregnant women with "metta"; difficulties encountered in caring for orphans; providing awareness programmes for children about COVID-19.

U Myo San Oo (a) Myo Gyi, the Manager of Tetsu 20 Company in Japan, explained his objective in taking part in the homemade cotton mask competition; the participation of Myanmar contestants from Japan; the use of homemade cotton masks in Japan; and the employment situation in Japan amid the COVID-19 pandemic. **SEE PAGE-3**

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PYIDAUNGSU HLUTTAW

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened its 5<sup>th</sup>-day meeting yesterday, and approved the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill for 2019-2020 financial year after discussions of ministers and deputy ministers of the Union Government.

International Fund for Agriculture Development

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw explained the Eastern States Agribusiness Project (ESAP) which is financed by the Loan and Grant provided by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and partial cost sharing of the Government of Myanmar.

With US\$56.73 million loan and \$1.5 million grant of IFAD for the period from 2018-2019FY to 2023-2024FY, the project area covers Taunggyi, Hopong, Hsihseng and Kyauktalongi in Shan State, and Hpa-an, Hlaingbwe, Kawkareik and Thandaunggyi in Kayin State for promoting livelihoods of low-income rural people and small-scaled farmers, while sustaining forests and agricultural lands.

The MoALI has proposed supplementary budget of K7.667 billion for 2018-2019FY, excluding international aid and grants.

Budget for Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win explained the replacement of Class 2 analog electricity meters with the system of digital off site meter reading in 2014 as the Remote Hand Held Unit (HHU) of this method can read the electrical units more accurately before collecting the data into computer system.

He added the ministry will



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win



Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw

EDCF's \$20 million loan

MP U Myint Lwin from Twantay constituency, MP U Ohn Khin from Palaw constituency, MP U Aung Thike from Seikpyu constituency and MP Dr Sein Mya Aye from Dala constituency discussed the \$20 million loan from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea for the expansion of the Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge (Dala) project.

set a certain budget to use the Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) under the new digital system.

Prioritizing edible oil crops in export strategy

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo discussed implementation of State project on prioritizing edible oil crops in the export strategy of the country. He added the project requires fertile lands, seeds, input items, techniques and investment, and his ministry is working together with the MoALI, the Myanmar Edible Oil Millers Association (MEOMA).

Myanmar exported 50,000 tonnes of ground nuts in 2017-2018FY and has shipped about 70,000 tonnes of this edible crops up to 15 May of 2019-2020FY; the export of sesames increased from 90,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes in the corresponding period, while the cultivation of other edible crops is rising in the country to substitute imported cooking oil and byproducts.

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe,



Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win



Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo



Vice Chairman of Joint Public Accounts Committee U Aung Min. **PHOTOS: MNA**

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win and Vice Chairman of the Joint Public Accounts Committee U Aung Min discussed the bill.

U Aung Min also discussed presented each paragraph of the bill and the Hluttaw approved them with the agreements of respective ministries.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win tabled a proposal to approve the whole bill and the Hluttaw also approved it.

ADB's \$60 million loan

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win also explained the \$60 million loan proposal, put forward by the President, from the Asian Development Bank to establish a loan insurance corporation for SMEs development. The Hluttaw approved the \$60 million loan.

ADB's \$30 million loan

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win discussed the \$30 million loan proposal, tabled by the President, from the ADB, for capacity-building of health workers to handle global pandemic like the COVID-19.

Euro 33 million loan from Unicredit Bank

The Hluttaw representatives also discussed the proposal of no-interest loan of Euro 33 million, presented by the President, from the Unicredit Bank of Austria for the project to register population with electronic system which will be carried by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

MP U Tin Ko Ko Oo from Belin constituency discussed the proposal, together with five MPs.

The 6<sup>th</sup>-day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will be held on 28 May.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

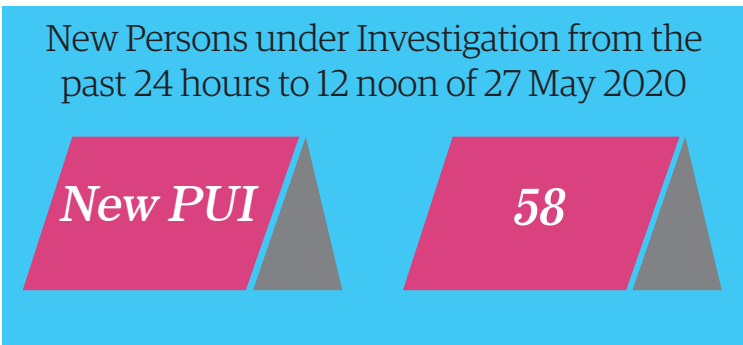
(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 in Myanmar: No new case reported, total tally stands at 206

Updated at 8 pm, 27 May 2020



Recovery Update on 27 May 2020 after two consecutive tests



Ministry of Health & Sports

“People are the key”

State Counsellor meets first prize winners of homemade cotton mask competition online

FROM PAGE-1

Daw Kyi Kyi Win from Wundwin Township explained her main reasons for entering the competition; free distribution of her homemade cotton masks; mask design and raw materials used in making the masks.

In her response, the State Counsellor said that the most challenging problem in relation with COVID-19 was social distancing as this lifestyle was not practical in daily life; a doctor has to treat not only physical but mental needs ; it was necessary to understand the mental needs to be able to treat the physical condition; presently thousands of returnees came back through the Myawady border town; according to available information, tens of thousands of Myanmar migrant workers were expected to return home from this route; the returnees who came back through the border crossings had to be transported to their respective states and regions; it was difficult to conduct medical tests on all of them, but they were held in quarantine facilities in their areas; there would be a huge challenge for the country in the coming two or three months; medical tests must be carried out thoroughly and care must be taken in controlling the disease and giving treatments to the positive cases; and that it would be difficult for the returnees once the monsoon sets in.

The State Counsellor added that it was earlier planned



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi makes discussions in video conferencing with first winners of homemade face mask competition yesterday. PHOTO:MNA

to give only one award in this competition and that all of the more than 20,000 participants should get a prize; however, arrangements were being made to send them souvenir cards; the categories of the award in this competition were the Most Liked by the Public award, the Most Interesting Idea award, the Best Creation award and the Best Serving the Public Interest award.

She continued to say that the reason society did not accept the “single mother” concept was related how the community placed a value on it; she had encountered this problem in her childhood; that she had never been taught to discriminate; they should not

feel inferior and she hoped that the community would not look down on them; the real problem was not the problem itself, the problem was not being able to find a solution.

She added that most Myanmar people could not afford to use disposable face masks, and that was why people were encouraged to make their own masks; as it was not known how long the disease was going to last, as these masks could be reused, just by having three or four of these masks would serve the purpose; masks should be worn systematically; patients should be given treatment with sympathy, and discipline should be maintained with metta (loving-kindness).

At the village and ward levels, she wished that COVID-19 preventive measures would be carried with the participation of everyone.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor said that she frequently remarked that public participation was essential for the success of any work, and that people must have community spirit without becoming too egoistic; COVID-19 was a huge challenge for all; she wanted Myanmar citizens to become united as a result of this challenge; future plans should be formulated correctly; the current situation had allowed Myanmar to show more clearly what kind of a country Myanmar was to those who had

been giving pressure on Myanmar due to many reasons; every citizen of Myanmar could help in overcoming COVID-19 by making a mask; that was why each person was important; she was very happy and encouraged to have this online meeting; she wanted to urge everyone to continue the co-operation; it was necessary to teach children at an early age how to cultivate “metta”, to understand each other, and to have compassion and goodwill.

Finally, she said she wanted everyone to participate and cooperate in this programme to overcome COVID-19.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting

PYIDAUNGSKU Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held a meeting to discuss the bill, sent by Union Government, on drawing up and submitting the budgets of Region or State Governments at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D, second floor meeting hall, yesterday afternoon.

Present at the meeting were U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, the Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Chairman of Joint Bill Committee and Chairman of Joint Public Accounts Committee, the vice chairman, the joint secretary and members of Joint Bill Committee, Hluttaw representatives who submitted amendment proposals, and officials from Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, Union Attorney-General Office and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office.—MNA

(Translated by Ye Htut Tin)



Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein seen presiding over the meeting. PHOTO: MNA

# MoPFI inks deal on infrastructure collaboration with Infra Asia



Union Minister U Soe Win (centre) joins the visual signing ceremony of collaboration agreement between MoPFI and Infrastructure Asia for development projects in Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win witnessed the virtual signing ceremony of the agreement between his office and the Infrastructure Asia yesterday for infrastructure development projects in Myanmar.

The Union Minister and Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Education and Finance Ms Indranee Rajah delivered speeches at the ceremony.

Director-General Daw Thway Thway Chit from the Planning Department and Executive Director of Infrastructure Asia Mr Seth Tan signed the agreement.

Under the agreement, the Infrastructure Asia, together with the MoPFI, will work for identifying suitable investors for infrastructure projects in Myanmar, help implement projects in the Myanmar Project Bank, bridging with service and technology support and inviting international standard tenders for the project.

The ceremony was also participated by Deputy Ministers U Set Aung and Dr Min Ye Paing Hein, permanent secretaries, departmental heads, officials from the Prime Minister's Office of Singapore, its ambassador to Myanmar and authorities of Infrastructure Asia.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Police officer from Hline Township charged with corruption

THE Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) received a report that a defendant had to pay one million kyats to associate township judge and police officer from Hline Police Station to get guarantee, according to the ACC.

The ACC investigated into the matter and discovered that Police Captain Thein Swe Myint of Hline Police Station, Yangon Region (who is now Acting Police Major, head of Hopan Township Police Station) exploited one million kyats from daughter of the defendant who charged with criminal case No 1051/2017, penal code section 295(a) on 5 March 2018. The ACC opened the file at the Hline Myoma Police Station on 25 May against Police Captain Thein Swe Myint under Section 57 of the Anti-Corruption Law.

—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

# 80 Myanmar citizens arrive back from India by relief flight



Myanmar returnees from India are queuing for immigration process at Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

THE relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon, carrying 80 Myanmar citizens stranded in Gaya and nearby areas of India due to suspension of international flights.

On arrival at the airport, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period at designated places in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently arranging flights to bring back the citizens in coordination with Myanmar Embassy in the capital of India and relevant ministries of Myanmar under the directives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Previously, a total of 95 Myanmar citizens from New Delhi and its surround areas arrived back home by a special flight on 19 May and 123 persons from Chennai on 24 May.

A total of 298 Myanmar citizens have ben repatriated from India by relief flights so far.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

## COVID-19 preventive supplies reach Kachin, Rakhine IDP camps

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is providing medical and relief items to the IDP camps in Kachin and Rakhine states for prevention of COVID-19 transmission.

Moreover, the ministry is conducting awareness campaigns and motivation works in Nay Pyi Taw council area and other Regions/States.—MNA

The table shows supplied items and IDP camps in respective areas.

| Items                              | Kachin           | Rakhine            |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|                                    | Momauk (6 camps) | Sittway (12 camps) |
| Hand Sanitizer bottles             | 864              | 16,727             |
| Soap Bar                           | 2,373            |                    |
| Lime Powder bags                   | 60               |                    |
| Thermometer                        | 12               | 6                  |
| Washbasin                          | 11               |                    |
| Cloth Mask                         | 6,712            |                    |
| Surgical Mask                      | 864              |                    |
| Hand Speaker                       | 6                |                    |
| Memory Stick (Campaign Audio File) | 6                |                    |
| Campaign Vinyl Sheet               | 6                |                    |



An official from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement hands over the medical supplies to the local people. **PHOTO: MNA**

# Myanmar Investment Commission’s work in March and April 2020

The Myanmar Investment Commission(MIC) is permitting local and foreign investments, according to Myanmar Investment Law.

The MIC had permitted in March this year total foreign investment, including increased investment, valued at US\$94.789 million, and in April this year total foreign investment, including increased investment, valued at \$624.508 million.

Foreign investments permitted during March and April of 2020 are as follows:

| Sr.   | Sector                              | March             |                        | April             |                        |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|       |                                     | No. of investment | Capital US\$ (million) | No. of investment | Capital US\$ (million) |
| 1.    | Transport and communications sector | -                 | -                      | 1                 | 109.054                |
| 2.    | Industrial sector                   | 11                | 42.585*                | 8                 | 69.560*                |
| 3.    | Housing and building sector         | -                 | -                      | 1                 | 293.864*               |
| 4.    | Hotels and tourism sector           | 1                 | 4.600                  | -                 | -                      |
| 5.    | Animal husbandry and fishery sector | 1                 | 6.834                  | -                 | -                      |
| 6.    | Other service sector                | 2                 | 40.770                 | 4                 | 139.430                |
| 7.    | Agriculture sector                  | -                 | -                      | 1                 | 12.600                 |
| Total |                                     | 15                | 94.789                 | 15                | 624.508                |

\* Increased investment was included in the investment amount.

MIC had permitted in March this year total Myanmar national investment valued at K195,477.915 million and in April this year total Myanmar national investment valued at K200,560.098 million.

Myanmar national investments permitted during March and April this year are as follows:

| Sr | Sector                      | March             |                        | April             |                        |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|    |                             | No. of investment | Capital Kyat (million) | No. of investment | Capital Kyat (million) |
| 1. | Housing and building sector | -                 | -                      | 3                 | 31108.950              |
| 2. | Industrial sector           | 4                 | 26141.091              | 3                 | 129023.860             |
| 3. | Hotels and tourism sector   | 3                 | 54421.823*             | -                 | -                      |
| 4. | Construction sector         | -                 | -                      | -                 | 12539.154*             |
| 5. | Other service sector        | 3                 | 114915.000*            | 1                 | 23248.000*             |

|       |                            |    |            |   |            |
|-------|----------------------------|----|------------|---|------------|
| 6.    | Oil and natural gas sector | -  | -          | 1 | 4640.134   |
| Total |                            | 10 | 195477.915 | 8 | 200560.098 |

\* Increased investment was included in the investment amount.

Increased number of jobs for locals created sector-wise by foreign investments during March and April this year are as follows:

| Sr    | Sector                                | Number of jobs created for local workers |          |
|-------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------|
|       |                                       | In March                                 | In April |
| 1.    | Agriculture sector                    | -                                        | 301      |
| 2.    | Animal husbandry and fisheries sector | 65                                       | -        |
| 3.    | Industrial sector                     | 14825*                                   | 5242*    |
| 4.    | Transport and communications sector   | -                                        | 69       |
| 5.    | Hotels and tourism sector             | 61                                       | -        |
| 6.    | Housing and building sector           | -                                        | 51       |
| 7.    | Other service sector                  | 40                                       | 739      |
| Total |                                       | 14991                                    | 6402     |

\* Increased employee was included in the employee amount.

Increased number of jobs for locals created sector-wise by Myanmar national investments during March and April this year are as follows:

| Sr    | Sector                                   | Number of jobs created for local workers |          |
|-------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------|
|       |                                          | In March                                 | In April |
| 1.    | Industrial sector                        | 2341                                     | 527      |
| 2.    | Hotels and tourism sector                | 94                                       | -        |
| 3.    | Housing and building construction sector | -                                        | 321      |
| 4.    | Other service sector                     | 96                                       | 45       |
| 5.    | Oil and natural gas sector               | -                                        | 43       |
| Total |                                          | 2531                                     | 936      |

MNA  
(Translated by TTN)

## 1,434 Myanmar returnees come back home through Myawady border on 27 May

A total of 1,434 Myanmar citizens returned home from Thailand through Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) of Myawady border town in Kayin State yesterday.

Among them, the 483 persons entered Myanmar by 21 buses under the arrangement of Thai government and Myanmar embassy, the 52 persons who were released from punishments in Thailand and the remaining 899 persons returned from different areas of the Kingdom in their own schedules.

Myanmar local officials helped them with medical tests

and other supplies.

Myanmar migrant works have been repatriated from Thailand since 1 May, and a total of 6,611 persons have arrived back home until now.

The latest group of returnees included 3 from Kachin, 26 from Kayah, 195 from Kayin, 144 from Mon, 70 from Sagaing, 438 from Bago, 151 from Magway, 45 from Yangon, 95 from Mandalay, 58 from Nay Pyi Taw, 49 from Shan, 24 from Thaninthayi, 36 from Rakhine and 100 from Ayeyawady respectively.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Officials helping the Myanmar migrant workers who come back home from Thailand at the checkpoint in Myawady. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR

Aungthu Ya  
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe  
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS

Ye Htut Tin  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Aung Htein  
Tun Tun Naing  
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR TRANSLATOR

Zaw Htet Oo

TRANSLATORS

Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,  
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER

Nyein Nyein Ei,  
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar  
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM

Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,  
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,  
Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe,  
Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION

(+95) (01)8604529,  
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 974424114

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 974424848  
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Number of YBS commuters increases four-fold in May

THE number of YBS commuters has increased fourfold in May compared to that of last month. On 25 May, more than 500,000 commuters used YBS buses, according to the announcement of the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).  
The daily figure of YBS commuters was about 200,000 in April. However the number has increased to over 500,000 on

25 May, using more than 3,000 buses in 124 YBS bus lines.  
Before the pandemic period in Myanmar, the YBS operated more than 4,000 buses in Yangon region daily, commuting 2.5 million passengers. This rising number of YBS passengers is less than the number in a normal situation.  
During the coronavirus disease prevention and control

period, the increasing number of YBS passengers is one of the serious issues, according to the person in charge of YBS bus lines.  
“With the increased number of passengers, more YBS buses have to be operating. In fact, the large number of commuters is disrupting the pandemic prevention and control activities,” he added. Although

more YBS buses are operating in this situation, the owners of YBS buses could not make any profit from delivering service because of fewer passengers compared to previous periods. Therefore, YRTA and the bus line owners have requested the government to reduce the price of CNG as a measure of government subsidy. —Aye Maung  
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Growers turn to produce dried mango flakes amid low demand from China



Women making the dried flakes of ripe mango pulps. PHOTO: HTET HTAR NAING (IPRD)

WITH the decline of mango demand from China because of difficulty in road transportation caused by coronavirus disease, the production of the dried flakes of mango pulp is rising, according to the dried sheet of mango pulp makers.  
“Although mangoes are purchased from China, the demand for mango has declined

this year compared to last year. Previously, we can go to China in one night. Now, we have to go to China in two days. When we reached China, the mangos are already ripe. Also, entering China has been difficult these days and the price of mango has also declined. The local mango growers are thus making the dried sheet of mango pulp.

This year, they make the more dried sheet of mango pulp. If the mango could not reach the market, we have to make the dried sheet of mango pulp. The mango growers also make the green mango as pickled mango and sour pickled mango,” said Ma Su Su, the dried sheet of mango pulp maker from Gaidton village, Hse Taung vil-

lage-tract, Patheingyi Township. Before we make the dried sheet of mango pulp, we have to clean the mango and peel it. Then, we have to circumcise the mango skin. Then, we have to blend the mango by setting fire to it to get the mango paste. When we get the mango paste, we have to oil the plastic and put the mango paste on it. Then, we have to sundry them.  
“This year, we will get the more dried sheet of mango pulp. Last year, there were only 100 or 200 visses. We cannot send the mango to other places. So, the mangos are overripe. So, we have to make the dried sheet of mango pulp. The mango growers cannot wait for road transportation to become normal,” she added.  
The dried flake mango pulps are sent mostly to Yangon region as well as to other regions. The dried sheet mango pulps are treated as a snack. If the dried pulps are kept in a cool and dry place, the flakes can be eaten the whole year. —Htet Htar Naing (IPRD)  
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Labour scarcity hinders sterculia gum production

WITH the scarcity of labour in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State during coronavirus period, the local wild almond tree (biologically named sterculia versicolour wall) growers could not produce the gum from the tree although it is time to tap the gum, according to the township wild almond tree growers.  
“We can tap the gum from the tree in April. There is no skilled labour to do this job. Last year, we hired skilled labour from other regions. This year, we could not hire them

because of restrictions imposed on movement caused by the outbreak of viral infection period,” said U Taik Sein, a local grower, who planted about 800 wild almond trees.  
“The price of the wild almond tree is varied. The high-quality gum is sold for K20,000 per viss while the normal gum, for K15,000 per viss. But, we don’t have the demand. We have to send the gum to Mandalay depot but this can cost higher transportation charges,” he added.  
There are a total of 43 acres



The sterculia gum seen on the wild almond tree. PHOTO: KYAW KYAW (MOHNYIN)

of wild almond trees in Mohnyin township. The gum from the wild almond tree is usually

tapped from April to January. —Kyaw Kyaw (Mohnyin)  
(Translated by Hay Mar)

# Insufficient stock hampers black bean export quota to India

By Nyein Nyein

WITH the changes in India’s policy on bean importation, Myanmar is unlikely to export the entire quota (400,000 tonnes) of black bean (which is called urad in India) for 2021 Fiscal Year to India within three months as there is inadequate stock in the domestic market, said Secretary U Min Ko Oo of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Earlier, India set to import 400,000 tonnes of black bean for the next fiscal year by March 2021. It changed policy and narrowed the import deadline to three-month period, according to its recent notice.

“The changes of policy reflect on the unguaranteed market for the domestic growers. The sudden change in policy burdens the growers, raising confusion,” he added.

At present, the country has around 250,000-300,000 tonnes of black bean stocks. It is un-

likely to export the entire quota of 400,000 tonnes to India, he continued.

Furthermore, it is impossible to ship all of them to India’s port within three months. India can grant import licence to Indian traders in June, the association stated.

The supply chain of Myanmar’s beans – the growers and traders are facing hardships due to short period of rapid change. The market needs to be closely observed.

“The country lays down policy for its national interest. India’s move is possible to protect their farmers as India’s beans will be harvested in September. This is why they shrank the deadline to August-end 2020. If the yield is not good in September, they will surely make an extension for the import period. If not for poor yield, the import period will end as scheduled,” he stated.

The prevailing price of black bean stands at K960,000



A worker carries the sack of black bean in a warehouse in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE PKHWAR

per tonne, while pigeon peas fetch K770,000 per tonne, a market data showed.

Myanmar is the top pro-

ducing country of black bean that India demands. Besides Myanmar, other beans such as pigeon peas, green grams and

yellow peas, are also grown in Australia and Africa, the association stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Green gram sells well in Monywa market

WITH the abundant supply of green gram, about 3,000 bags of green gram are reaching the bean trading market in Monywa town daily and about 2,000 to 3,000 bags of green gram are being sold to China and India every day, said general secretary U Zaw Moe of Monywa green gram depot.

“Around 3,000 bags of green gram are entering Monywa depots daily. The price of green gram is around K36,000-K37,000, which is the normal price. The green grams are demanded by China and India. The traders from Monywa town purchase the green gram from the local farmers and send them back to Chi-

na and India. The green grams are sent to China via Mandalay route and to India via Yangon route. Around 2,000 or 3,000 bags of green gram are being sold daily in Monywa town. Although Monywa could not supply the green gram to meet the full demand, the green grams from Shwebo, Pakokku and Ayeyawady regions can supply enough to meet the market demand,” he added.

The red peanuts, white peanuts, green grams and sesames, which has grown with the irrigation system, are entering the Monywa market as well. The current price of green gram is ranging between K36,000 and

K37,000 while the peanut price is K3,000-K3,200 per viss in the market.

“Pigeon peas and chickpeas are also marketable beans. But they are not newly harvested beans. Some buy the pigeon peas and chickpeas because they like the price or they need them. Now, the green grams are newly harvested beans and they are reaching in thousands of the bags to the market daily,” said U Tin Ko, a bean trader from Monywa town. With a high demand for green grams from China, the price of the green gram which has been declining previously is now rising starting from 20 May.

To be able to reopen the Monywa commodity depot closed temporarily because of the coronavirus pandemic, the market committee has already submitted a proposal to Sagaing region coronavirus prevention and response committee. The Monywa commodity depot will reopen after they have taken necessary measures.

“The Monywa commodity depot is conducting the coronavirus prevention and control activities and has already kept the masks, water and soaps and hand gels,” stated the general secretary of Monywa green gram depot. — Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Myanmar’s green grams are demanded by India and China. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)

## FDI crosses \$4.18 bln as of 22 May

THE foreign direct investment flowing into Myanmar exceeded US\$4.18 billion between 1 October and 22 May in the 2019-2020 financial year, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA). The total figure includes investments of \$91.85 million in the Special Economic Zones, under the Special Economic Zone Law.

Myanmar set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal, but we cannot measure the impact of coronavirus pandemic at present, said MIC Secretary and DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

“The enterprises operating with imported raw materials will be affected to a certain extent. Sure, enterprises with a big labour force will struggle amid the coronavirus outbreak,” he said.

According to a press statement issued recently by the DICA, 175 foreign enterprises have obtained permits from the MIC and endorsements from regional and state Investment Committees in the current fiscal and brought in

the capital of over \$3.15 billion. Those enterprises will execute electricity, manufacturing, agriculture, livestock and fishery, transport and communication, real estate development, hotels and tourism, and other services businesses.

“Myanmar is trying to attract foreign investment by providing tax relief, tax incentives, investment opportunities, and fast processing of proposals. However, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations is inviting only responsible businesses to the country,” he added.

“The Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP) has been drawn up with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and is in the process of being implemented. As per the MIPP, Myanmar aims to attract FDI of \$200 billion in 20 years,” said Union Minister U Thaung Tun of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

In the 2018-2019FY, FDI of \$4.5 billion flowed into Myanmar, falling short of the \$5.8-billion target by around \$1.3 billion.— GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Finding new business strategy to stay afloat during difficult times

**L**IKE other countries, we have felt the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It hits hard in the manufacturing sector comprising small and medium enterprises, the hotel industry, and the tourism sector.

The consequences of the global pandemic of the Coronavirus infection have forced some CMP (Cut-Make-Pack) garment factories with high numbers of labourers, along with employers in the hotel and tourism industries and some SMEs, to lay off employees, reduce work hours and even shut down.

At the same time, a great number of our migrant workers are returning from abroad.

To soften the blow from the COVID-19 crisis, we need to seek quick and short-term ways for mitigating the impact of this pandemic.

It includes creating job opportunities for the people and helping the SMEs which employ a huge number of people.

In this situation, regional and state authorities are advised to listen to plights of the businesses and their pandemic related woes. It is simply because, they are among those who are really suffering a lot.

We do believe that their thoughts and recommendations would be helpful for crafting a new business strategy which can increase our chances of staying afloat during these difficult times.

creating nearly 3000 jobs

Meanwhile, the Ayeyawady Region Government announced yesterday that over 48 investment projects, including 20 in 2019 have been permitted so far, and it has made efforts in anticipation of attracting investments in the region.

Investment in the regions and states are paramount for creating job opportunities for the local people and boosting the regional economy as well.

When it comes to creating job opportunities in the investment sector, we also need new business strategies which can quickly bring economic benefits to both investors and local people.

In this time of crisis, we are heartened by evidence of national and local solidarity with people helping each other, and working together to alleviate the impacts on farmers and low-income people.

We respect our people, as they are sharing the burden and risks when the country needs them.

Today is the time for us to show our compassion, loving-kindness and unity to turn challenges into opportunities.

## Viet Nam- Myanmar: Traditional friends and reliable comprehensive partners

By Mr Ly Quoc Tuan, Ambassador of Viet Nam to Myanmar

**I**N celebration of the coming 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Viet Nam and Myanmar (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020), and having experienced a short, but warm and wonderful stay in Myanmar, allow me to share some of my thoughts about the ties between our two countries:

Before Myanmar began its reform a decade ago, Viet Nam - Myanmar bilateral relationship was traditional and cordial. Thanks to the welcomed, and very significant reforms that were introduced by U Thein Sein government - including important economic reforms that have helped reduce poverty by more than 40 per cent - today, Viet Nam and Myanmar are close and trusted partners, bilaterally and multilaterally. Our relations have expanded and deepened in all fields. Our trade today is the biggest it's ever been, and is bound to continue on its upward trajectory. Our exchanges, in culture, in tourism, and in ideas have flourished. Our cooperation within ASEAN, at the UN, and other regional bodies have also taken off, helping us both to achieve the shared goal of prosperity and sustainable development.

### Political ties:

Over the past 45 years, our relations have grown in all respects, bringing benefits to both our peoples. Our political relations have expanded and deepened, as evidenced by the growing exchange between our leaders - both bilaterally and at multilateral forums. Within the past 4 years, we have had 4 top-level delegations visiting each other<sup>1</sup>, and our Heads of Governments frequently meet at regional and international forums, including ASEAN, the EAS, ARF and the UN. These visits and meetings have laid historic milestones, set new directions and created significant momentum for the further development of relations.

Today, our relations is a "Comprehensive Cooperative



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 December 2019. PHOTO: MNA

Partnership" - known as the CCP framework. This agreement was inked by both sides in August 2017 during the State visit to Myanmar by Vietnamese General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong. The CCP framework helps to promote and strengthen existing bilateral co-operation mechanisms, realize signed agreements and seek new opportunities for cooperation in line with the principles of the UN and ASEAN Charters, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and universally recognized norms of international law... It focuses on accelerating the five pillars of cooperation between our two countries: (i) Political Relations; (ii) Defense and security cooperation; (iii) Economic cooperation; (iv) Cultural, social, people exchange and other areas of common interest; (v) Cooperation at regional and international forums.

During his official visit to Myanmar in December 2019, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc also signed 4 important documents including the Plan of Action for implemen-

tation of the Viet Nam-Myanmar Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership for the 2019-2024 period<sup>2</sup>. These significant documents are instructions for the development of the relationship between the two countries with a long-term vision and increasingly deep and durable cooperation.

As part of the realization of this Plan of Action, exchange of visits at ministerial and vice ministerial levels have stepped up, taking place not only among Ministries, but also between Parliamentary Committees, and social organizations, including such organizations as the Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations, the Women's Union, or the Farmers' Association.

Defence and security cooperation have also been enhanced and deepened as a result. Discussions currently are underway to hold defence policy dialogue at the Deputy Minister of Defence and Chief of General staff levels; expansion of cooperation in potential areas such as strengthened cooperation in combatting crimes related to national security at na-

tional and regional levels are also in the pipeline. In addition, both sides have agreed to promote and maintain bilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation, the Joint Sub-Committee on Trade, and the Political Consultations at Deputy Foreign Minister level.

In order to fruitfully implement the CCP Plan of Action, culture and religion cooperation could be prioritized which in turn can further foster bilateral relations, upgrade and strengthen the CCP With that in mind, the Vietnamese embassy in Myanmar will include cultural activities and exchanges in this year's functions such as the 75<sup>th</sup> National Day of Viet Nam reception in September; commemoration of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations among others.

### Commercial relations:

Our trading relations has also seen much growth. Our trade has grown to 953 millions USD in 2019, from just 860.1 million USD in 2018. Viet Nam is currently the

become a destination of choice for regional and international investors and businesses in recent years, boasting a highly-skilled, competitive work force, business-oriented policies geared towards sustainable development, and the largest market on mainland Southeast Asia. Thanks to its comprehensive, consistent approach to reform and development for over 3 decades, its consistent, average annual growth of over 6.5% during this period, and having identified key breakthroughs for new drivers of growth: institutional, human resource, and infrastructure, Viet Nam has been an economic success story in the region, quickly becoming a hub powering not only its national development, but also that of the region.

Today, Viet Nam has trading relations with over 200 countries



Mr Ly Quoc Tuan, Ambassador of Viet Nam to Myanmar

and territories. It is among several ASEAN members taking part in new, next-generation FTAs, including the CPTPP, the EVFTA, and is also party to the current RCEP negotiations. Thanks to the developmental state mindset of its current administration, the ratification and implementation of these important FTAs have created new drivers for growth, generated further economic reforms, and increase the competitiveness of its economy. The World Economic Forum currently ranks Vietnam's competitiveness at 67/141 countries and territories.

In the post Covid-19 era, the government has also identified 5 key breakthroughs for the economy: promotion of domestic investment, exports, public investment, domestic consumption, and

SEE PAGE-10

For its part, Viet Nam has



### Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2020)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020:** Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin and Chin States, fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan and Mon States, scattered in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kayin State and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay Region and Chin State. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**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:** Thundery activities in the Deltaic areas.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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**FROM PAGE-9**  
FDI attraction. In 2019, Viet Nam attracted over 38 billion USD in FDI, and saw export surplus of nearly 10 billion USD.

**Socio-cultural exchange:**  
Our people to people relations has been on the rise as well. We saw the increasing number of Myanmar tourists, students and investors coming to Viet Nam, and roughly 48,000 Vietnamese visitors to Myanmar in 2019<sup>3</sup>. As Myanmar is undergoing a comprehensive reform, steadily moving towards a modern state that is peaceful, democratic, prosperous and open, Viet Nam firmly supports Myanmar's path of development most appropriate to its national conditions. Viet Nam looks forward to and is ready to assist Myanmar in keeping its development momentum of political stability, economic development and social harmony and that Myanmar can achieve national peace and reconciliation as soon as possible.

The Buddha has taught us: "However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act on upon

them?" As a dominantly Buddhist country, Viet Nam has showcased this teaching in a substantive and timely manner most recently through its assistance for Myanmar during the initial outbreak of Covid-19. Viet Nam has shown her support and solidarity to the Asean nations amid Covid-19 pandemic by giving her assistance of medical equipment, such as, medical masks, ventilators, test kits, and of finance support to the Association members. Myanmar's Ambassador to Viet Nam has received a donation of US\$ 50,000 from the representative of the Government of Viet Nam on April 10th 2020 in Hanoi Capital. Another donation worth of 7.5 million Kyats campaigned by the Embassy of Viet Nam in Myanmar, donated by Vietnamese community and businessmen in Myanmar, handed over to Chief Minister of the Regional Government of Yangon on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2020. These are a clear expression of our Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership between the two Governments and two peoples.

As a member of the global community of nations, the Government of Myanmar has confirmed its commitment to

the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. It has developed a comprehensive social, economic and environmental policy reform agenda, known as the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) which provides a unifying and coherent roadmap for all future reforms, and is Myanmar's national development vision, a long-term vision of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic country.

Based on our own experience with successfully realizing the MDGs ahead of schedule, and given that Viet Nam is on target to realize the SDGs with our own sets of national indicators and goals, we can offer Myanmar many lessons in realizing the MSDP, and hope to learn from Myanmar's experience as well.

**International and regional cooperation:**  
Regionally, Vietnam's embassy in Myanmar maintains close coordination with its counterparts in all cooperation aspects, to consolidate and promote ASEAN solidarity and resilience, strengthen ASEAN centrality and accelerate coordination in sustainable development, connectivity, information and communication technology. On the international

arena, Viet Nam has provided much support for Myanmar at the UN General Assembly and within the Security Council on resolutions contrary to Myanmar's common position, and will continue to lend our political support in Myanmar's interests to ensure peace, stability and development.

However, as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has put it: "Whatever help we may want from the international community now or in the future, we want to make sure that this help is tailored to help our people to help themselves." Viet Nam understands this sentiment very well given our own experience with rising out of isolation, and our intentions and actions are always guided by this maxim.

This year, as Viet Nam assumes the role of ASEAN Chairman, AIPA Chairman, and UNSC non-permanent member with a rotating presidency, and equipped with aspirations to be a more responsible regional member, it is uniquely positioned to further the interests of ASEAN and the organization's members. As such, Viet Nam looks forward to working closely with Myanmar and other members to further issues of common concern and global interests.

Viet Nam is a strong believ-

er of complying with international law, and that increased cooperation, solidarity and confidence building at the regional and global level are critical to maintaining peace and stability in the world. The principles and mandates of the UN, as well as those values espoused by the ASEAN Charter, particularly those related to sovereignty, and sovereign rights, territorial integrity, non-use of violence and peaceful resolution of disputes play key roles in preventing global conflicts and building a sustainable peace. In our region, ASEAN's success story has turned Southeast Asia from a war-ravaged and deeply divisive region into a region of amity and cooperation. ASEAN has a track record, and has proven the critical role that international/regional organizations play in maintaining, peace, security and stability in the region and the world. It is Viet Nam's goal to continue to carry on this tradition, and practice it in reality.

The bilateral relation has been time tested. Viet Nam and Myanmar has got an invaluable friendship and trust. Both countries have common things to advance forward for peace, stability, prosperity and development.

■ ■ ■

<sup>3</sup> Viet Nam received over 18 million international visitors in 2019.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

MASSIVE RESCUE PLAN

Europeans continue to heal economic wounds, infections top 2 mln

As markets and industries lick their wounds from the impact of the coronavirus crisis, European governments are turning their focus to reopening and rescuing the battered economy.

France on Tuesday unveiled a major recovery plan to revive the country's auto industry, which has been crippled by the loss of sales and production during the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown aimed to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, an online dashboard maintained by the WHO European Region showed that 2,044,870 confirmed COVID-19 cases had been reported in 54 countries, with 175,184 deaths as of 10:00 am CET (0800 GMT) on Tuesday.

**"HISTORIC PLAN" IN FRANCE**  
Following a visit to a Valeo car parts factory in northern France, President Emmanuel Macron announced an 8-billion-euro (8.78 billion U.S. dollars) rescue plan to help the recovery of the auto industry.

"The state will provide more than eight billion euros in aid to the sector," Macron said.

The president, who met with industry bosses early in the day, said the "historic plan", which aims to "face a historic situation," was based on a support package and a scrappage scheme to shift towards less polluting vehicles.

"We need to defend our industry and make France Europe's top producer of clean vehicles," with an output of one million electric and hybrid cars per year by 2025,



Into the future: A Renault EZ-Pro autonomous electric concept car turned into a food truck is presented at the Paris Motor Show in Paris. (AFP/Christophe Archambault): FILE PHOTO

said Macron.

"Bankruptcies should be avoided at all costs," he said. To help promote clean cars, he also announced a higher state bonus for the purchase of a clean vehicle by individual consumers and businesses, from 6,000 euros to 7,000 euros.

According to figures released by the French Automobile Manufacturers Committee, sales of French vehicle brands plunged by 84.2 per cent in April.

France's massive rescue plan came one day after

Deutsche Lufthansa AG said the German government's Economic Stabilization Fund (WSF) has approved a 9-billion-euro rescue package for the airline.

Lufthansa said the WSF would provide up to 5.7 billion euros in the form of "silent participation" in the company's assets, of which nearly 4.7 billion euros would be classified as equity in accordance with related financial rules.

Lufthansa was operationally healthy and profitable before the pandemic and has good prospects for the future, but it came into an existential emergency due to the coronavirus crisis, the WSF Committee, which consists of representatives of several federal ministries, said in a statement.

**EASING BORDER CONTROLS**  
In a phased approach, European countries are cautiously easing their border controls, as part of their efforts to reopen the tourism industry, which is one of the hardest-hit sectors and accounts for about 10 per cent of the European Union's economic output.

On May 13, the European Commission had offered a tourism and transport package, recommending that EU member states with "similar overall risk profiles" on the pandemic should open to tourists from each other's countries. Two days later (on May 15), Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became the first EU nations to reopen their shared borders. — SOURCE: Xinhua

# Scientists fight online virus misinformation war

PARIS — With cat photos and sometimes scathing irony, Mathieu Rebeaud, a Swiss-based researcher in biochemistry, has nearly tripled his Twitter following since the coronavirus pandemic began.

With 14,000 followers, he posts almost daily, giving explanations on the latest scientific research and, in particular, aims to fight misinformation that spreads as fast as the virus itself.

He is among a growing number of doctors, academics and institutions who in recent weeks have adapted and amplified their scientific messaging in hopes of countering what has been termed an infodemic — a deluge of information, including widespread false claims, which experts say can pose a serious threat to public health.

To cut through the noise however, it is imperative to work quickly and maximize social media engagement to get simple prevention messages across to the public, according to researchers and specialists.

“In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theories provide complete, simple, seemingly rationalistic and watertight explanations,” Kinga Polynczuk-Alenius, a University of Helsinki researcher, said.

“This is in stark contrast to the available scientific knowledge — complex, fragmented, changeable and contested — and to the actions of political decision-makers and state authorities, which appear haphazard and self-contradictory,” she added.

In February, British medical journal *The Lancet* warned that “the rapid dissemination of trustworthy information” was needed most during a period of uncertainty.

This includes transparent identification of cases, data sharing and unhampered communication, as well as peer-reviewed research, it said.

Rigorous and time-heavy scientific studies and publications, however, compete with the immediacy of social media and a public often demanding firm and

definitive answers.

“How do we communicate in this context of radical uncertainty?” asked Mikael Chambru, a scientific communication specialist at France’s University of Grenoble Alpes.

## No choice

Jean-Francois Chambon, a doctor and director of communications at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, said he had no choice but to forcefully deny a widely shared video in March accusing the institution of having “created” the new coronavirus.

“We must go to any lengths” to debunk the lies, he said.

The institute created a web page dedicated to educating the public about the virus, Chambon said.

“We realized that there was a lot of ‘fake news’ on the subject,” he added.

The Pasteur Institute currently has a combined 16,000 new subscribers a month on its social media networks, he said, compared with 4,000 before the



Doctors, academics and institutions have adapted their scientific messaging in hopes of countering what has been termed an infodemic about coronavirus. **PHOTO : AFP/FILE**

pandemic.

Jean-Gabriel Ganasia, chairman of the ethics committee at France’s National Centre for Scientific Research, agreed that the scientific community must counterattack in such situations.

“We don’t have a choice,” he told AFP.

Earlier this month, the Red Cross launched what it said was the first global network of social

media influencers to battle misinformation and spread lifesaving content about the pandemic.

The World Health Organization, meanwhile, has entered into an agreement with Facebook to transmit information directly to users via personal message services.

But it is often individual doctors and researchers who can have a strong influence online.—AFP

# Virus sparks record drop in energy investment: IEA

PARIS — The energy industry is set to suffer a record drop in investment due to the coronavirus fallout, the IEA said on Wednesday, and while renewables are likely to fare better than oil, any swift economic recovery could create a global fuel crunch.

In its annual report on energy investments, the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) estimated the plunge will be of the order of one-fifth from 2019 levels, or almost \$400 billion, as firms slash spending amid slumping demand for energy.

Shale oil producers that catapulted the United States to the world’s top crude nation stand to suffer the worst decline, the IEA said.

“All the energy sectors — oil, gas, renewables — everything is affected but the biggest impact is on shale oil,” the agency’s director Fatih Birol told AFP in an interview.

“Total oil investments we expect to decline one third this year whereas the shale industry will see a decline of about 50 per cent.”

However, spending in renewable power projects is expected to fall by only around 10 per cent for the year, the report said.

“Even though this ‘clean’ spending is set to dip in 2020, its share in total energy investment is set to rise,” it noted. But it noted “these investment levels remain far short of what would be required to put the world on a more sustainable pathway,” estimating that spending on renewable power would need to double by the late 2020s.—AFP



The field centre of the Johan Sverdrup oil field in the North Sea west of Stavanger, Norway. **PHOTO : (AFP)**

# Indian drones pursue locusts as swarms destroy swathes of crops

NEW DELHI — Huge swarms of desert locusts are destroying crops across western and central India, prompting authorities Tuesday to step up their response to the country’s worst plague in nearly three decades.

Drones, tractors and cars have been sent out to track the voracious pests and spray them with pesticides. The locusts have already destroyed nearly 50,000 hectares (125,000 acres) of cropland.

“Eight to 10 swarms, each measuring around a square kilometre are active in parts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh,” the government’s Locust Warning Organization’s deputy director K.L. Gurjar told AFP.

The insects caused massive damage to seasonal crops in both states, devastating many farmers already struggling with the impact of a strict coronavirus lockdown.

They destroyed harvests in the agricultural heartlands of neighbouring Pakistan in April, before entering Rajasthan.

Smaller swarms are also active in a handful of states

across India, Gurjar said.

A swarm of 40 million locusts can eat as much food as 35,000 people — or six elephants — according to UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization.

Residential areas in the state capital Jaipur were overwhelmed by the insects as bewildered locals banged on pots and pans to try and ward off the insects.

Experts warn the situation could worsen with more expected to reach India via Pakistan from the Horn of Africa in June.

Heavy rains and cyclones enabled unprecedented breeding and the rapid growth of locust populations on the Arabian peninsula early last year, according to the United Nations.

India has not seen locust swarms on this scale since 1993 when it experienced a widespread plague, the warning centre said.

Locusts destroy crops in some parts of Rajasthan close to the border with Pakistan most years, but it is rare for the insects to move further into the state.—AFP

# Montenegro woos tourists to Europe’s ‘corona-free’ corner

KOTOR (Montenegro) — Less than two months after detecting its first infection, Montenegro is the first country in Europe to declare itself coronavirus-free, a success story the tiny country hopes will lure tourists to its dazzling Adriatic coast this summer.

For weeks hotel staff have been raking empty beaches as the pandemic kept away visitors who would normally be arriving by plane, cruise ship and car this time of year.

But finally, there is a sliver of hope after Montenegro announced it no longer has any active cases of COVID-19.

Tourism operators have already seized the opportunity to brand Montenegro as “Europe’s First COVID-19 Free Country” in videos promoting its



A solitary cyclist rides at the eerily quiet Porto Montenegro marina. PHOTO: AFP

stunning natural beauty, with beaches snaking along the south and rugged mountains in the north.

In picturesque Kotor, a medieval walled city nestled in a mountain-ringed bay, locals have been

spared the virus entirely, with no known cases reported.

While tour agencies are still expecting a tough season, there is hope this sterling health record will soften the blow on an industry that accounts for

more than a fifth of GDP and 19 per cent of the workforce.

“Safety is something people are looking at the most,” said Ana Nives Radovic, director of the local tourism organization in Kotor. —AFP

## Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi deepen their alliance

PARIS — Struggling automakers Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi unveiled Wednesday a plan to deepen their alliance, a top global producer of cars, that only months ago seemed on the verge of breakup.

The announcement comes as the industry faces an existential crisis from the coronavirus pandemic, which has caused sales to plunge as governments have forced citizens to stay at home to slow the spread

of the virus.

The three companies announced what amounts to a push towards an integrated entity, something that political sensitivities over job losses had previously made difficult.

The carmakers said they will adopt a “leader-follower scheme to enhance efficiency and competitiveness” which involves each of them taking the lead in every region of the world. —AFP

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0129 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0129 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V VTC PLANET

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V VTC PLANET VOY. NO. (0320) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of SPW-6 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (SINGAPORE) PTE, LTD

Phone No: 2301928

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V S'HAIL AL DOHA

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V S'HAIL AL DOHA VOY. NO. (22L) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MKW where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

#### NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF CITY GOLF RESORT FOR PAYMENT OF MONTHLY FEES

1. It is found out that some members (Myanmars / Foreigners) of the City Golf Resort, Yangon City Development Committee, have failed to pay their monthly fees for various reasons.
2. According to paragraph (9) of the rules and regulations of the City Golf Resort, those members (Myanmars / Foreigners) who fail to pay their monthly fees for a period of one year, and over shall cease to be a member of the Resort, and so they are intimated to come and clear their outstanding dues by 30-6-2020 at the latest.

General Manager  
City Golf Resort

#### Invitation for Bids

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
National Electrification Project  
Credit No 5727-MM

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

Contract Title: Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Ayeyarwady and Chin

Reference No: MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W9/2020

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Ayeyarwady and Chin**

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Ayeyarwady and Chin in the following locations**

The number and identification of lots comprising this bidding process is:

- Lot 1: Ayeyarwady – 81 Villages
- Lot 2: Ayeyarwady – 73 Villages
- Lot 3: Ayeyarwady – 72 Villages
- Lot 4: Ayeyarwady – 85 Villages
- Lot 5: Ayeyarwady – 72 Villages
- Lot 6: Ayeyarwady – 72 Villages
- Lot 7: Ayeyarwady – 50 Villages
- Lot 8: Ayeyarwady – 97 Villages
- Lot 9: Chin – 7 Villages

3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank’s Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers (“Procurement Guidelines”), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Management Office (National Electrification Project), Project Manager and [nep.pmomoe@gmail.com](mailto:nep.pmomoe@gmail.com) and inspect the bidding documents during office hours [10:00 to 16:00 hours] at the address given below:

Attention: **Project Manager**  
**Project Management Office (National Electrification Project)**  
**Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy**

City: **Nay Pyi Taw**  
Country: **The Republic of the Union of Myanmar**  
Zip Code: **15011**  
Telephone: **+95 67 3431176**  
Facsimile number: **+95 673431176**  
Electronic mail address: [nep.pmomoe@gmail.com](mailto:nep.pmomoe@gmail.com)

5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 a.m (Local Time), **29<sup>th</sup> Jun, 2020**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below:

Attention: **Project Manager**  
**Meeting Room No.2, Ground Floor,**  
**Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy**

City: **Nay Pyi Taw**  
Country: **The Republic of the Union of Myanmar**  
Zip Code: **15011**  
Telephone: **+95 67 3431176**  
Facsimile number: **+95 673431176**  
Electronic mail address: [nep.pmomoe@gmail.com](mailto:nep.pmomoe@gmail.com)

7. All bids must be accompanied by “Bid-Security”

# EU unveils unprecedented 750 bn euro recovery plan



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has won the backing of Germany and France to raise 500 billion euros on financial markets to deal with the economic impact of COVID-19. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRUSSELS — European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday proposed a 750-billion-euro post-virus recovery fund for Europe and urged sceptical member states to back it.

The global coronavirus outbreak has already thrust the EU into its deepest ever recession, and Von der Leyen’s proposal would help the worst affected countries.

If passed, the proposal would be the biggest EU stimulus package in history

and could see Europe-wide taxes on plastics, carbon emissions and big tech – a major power boost for Brussels. “This is Europe’s moment,” Von der Leyen told a session of the European Parliament as she announced the plan.

“We either all go it alone; leaving countries, regions and people behind .. or we walk that road together,” she said.

“Let us put aside the old prejudices,” she urged.

The virus has killed

more than 173,000 people in Europe and put its economy in a deep freeze, with businesses only slowly reopening and tight controls on borders still stifling travel and trade.

Officially called “EU Next Generation”, the plan comes following pressure from Italy and Spain, Europe’s first victims of the outbreak that are too burdened with debts to rebuild their economies alone.

If member states accept the deal as drafted,

Italy would receive 81.8 billion euros in direct aid over the next few years, and 77.3 billion euros would go to Spain.

“Just to put this into context, this means additional EU expenditure in Italy worth roughly 5 per cent of GDP,” tweeted Lucas Guttenberg of the Dolors Institute in Berlin.

“We can safely say that the EU graduates to a small-but-serious macro player today,” he said.—AFP

## French economy making ‘cautious’ virus lockdown recovery

PARIS — Economic activity in France is making a clear if cautious recovery after lockdown measures were relaxed earlier this month but the country is still heading for a roughly 20 per cent contraction this quarter, the national statistics agency said Wednesday.

INSEE said that the French economy was currently running “at roughly four-fifths of its pre-crisis level” compared to two-thirds during the lockdown period.

France ordered non-essential businesses closed and people to stay at home in mid-March, or nearly at the end of the first quarter, in order to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

The full impact of the measures which stifled economic activity will only be seen this quarter, which lasts through June, although the restrictions began to be eased on May 11.

INSEE said it expects gross domestic product

(GDP) — the broadest measure of economic activity in a country — to fall “around 20 per cent” this quarter.

That would be “the severest recession since the creation of the national accounts in 1948”, said INSEE, which warned that the forecast should be considered with caution given the uncertainty about the pace of economic recovery in the coming weeks.

France’s GDP fell by 5.8 per cent in the first quarter.—AFP

## Don’t let patent rows hamper search for virus vaccine: UN agency

GENEVA — The UN patent agency has hailed the push to create a coronavirus vaccine and make it globally available, but warned against allowing copyright rows to overshadow and delay the process.

“What we need in the first place here is innovation,” Francis Gurry, the head of the UN’s World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), told reporters in a virtual briefing.

World Health Organization member states last



Some countries are calling for any vaccine against the novel coronavirus to be patent-free. **PHOTO: AFP**

week adopted a resolution recognizing that extensive immunization against COVID-19 would be a “global public good”, and pushing for any vaccine to be equitably and fairly distributed to all.—AFP



Lockdown measures stifled economic activity in France, in particular the important tourism industry. **PHOTO: AFP**

**The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**  
**Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation**  
**Department of Agriculture**  
**Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project**  
**Invitation for Bids – Extension of Bid Submission date**

Date: 28 May 2020  
Contract No. and Title: GD-04; Supply of Laboratory Equipment and associated Services, Lots 1 & 2  
Extended Deadline for Submission of Bids: 03 July 2020, 14.00 hours (Myanmar Time)

1. The Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (“the Purchaser”) has invited sealed bids from eligible bidders for Supply of Laboratory Equipment and associated Services, Lots 1 & 2, through the Invitation for Bids dated 8 April 2020 that had been advertised.

2. International competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB’s Single Stage One Envelope procedure and is open to all bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.

3. The bid submission deadline date is extended to 3 July 2020, 14.00 hours (Myanmar Time) **in view of the global pandemic conditions and the travel restrictions worldwide.**

4. To obtain the Bidding Documents in English, bidders should email to the contact below requesting the Bidding Documents for Supply of Laboratory Equipment and associated Services, Lots 1 & 2. The document will be sent by email:  
U Aye Ko Ko, Project Director & Dy Director General  
Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains (CFAVC) Sector Project  
E-mail: cfavc.pmu.doa@gmail.com, zarkyaw@gmail.com, soemoemas@gmail.com

**TRADEMARK CAUTION**

Notice is hereby given that Mr. Atsushi Okada, who lives at 2-6-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademark:

**MYANMAR LEGAL MHM**

Reg: IV/4623 /2020

Use in respect of-

“Credit management acceptance, Credit investigation services, Debt collection and recovery services, Debt advisory services, Debt management services, Advisory services relating to tax planning, Tax payment processing services. (Class 36)” and “Legal services; Agencies for legal procedures relating to lawsuits or other legal issues; Agencies for procedures relating to industrial property rights, preparation of expert opinions; Agencies for judicial registration or deposits; Agencies for copyright licensing (Class 45)”

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademark or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

Daw Hnin Thet Wai, Advocate (NO.13822)  
Attorney at Law, Myanmar Legal MHM Limited,  
#16-01/02, Junction City Tower, No.3A, Bogyoke  
Aung San Road, Pabedan Township, Yangon, Myanmar  
Tel: 01-9253650  
**For Mr. Atsushi Okada**

# Japan’s Cabinet approves biggest-ever extra budget amid pandemic

TOKYO — Japan’s Cabinet approved Wednesday a draft second supplementary budget for fiscal 2020 of 31.91 trillion yen (\$296 billion) to finance measures to mitigate the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The largest-ever extra budget will help cover a package of projects worth about 117 trillion yen, centring on support for small businesses reeling from the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and front-line medical staff, which will also be funded by loans from government-affiliated financial institutions and the private sector.

The Cabinet’s approval came less than a month after the enactment of the 25.69 trillion yen first extra budget for the fiscal year that started in April.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a meeting of government



File photo shows Japanese banknotes. PHOTO: KYODO

officials and ruling party lawmakers earlier in the day that Japan’s economic package will total more than 230 trillion yen when combined with measures covered by the first supplementary budget.

The Abe administration aims to have the fresh budget clear the Diet by June 12, before the current parliamentary session ends on June 17, according to the officials.

“Through the measures, the world’s biggest in size, corresponding to 40 per cent of (Japan’s) gross domestic product, I’ll defend the economy against this once-in-a-century crisis,” Abe said—Kyodo News

# Empty Japan stadiums could soon hear the sound of applause

TOKYO — A new Japanese smartphone app will allow fans to send virtual cheers and jeers to sports stadiums in the hope of creating atmosphere at matches played behind closed doors due to coronavirus.

Instrument maker Yamaha said its remote cheering system will let users tap buttons on the app to deliver cheers — or boos — via dozens of speakers placed inside grounds.

Event organizers can pre-set various types of cheers and jeers, and change the intensity levels depending on the number of users pressing their buttons — aiming to replicate the roar when

a goal or home run is scored. Even when a live audience is permitted, fans may still use the app to prevent potentially coronavirus-laden droplets flying through the air through shouting.

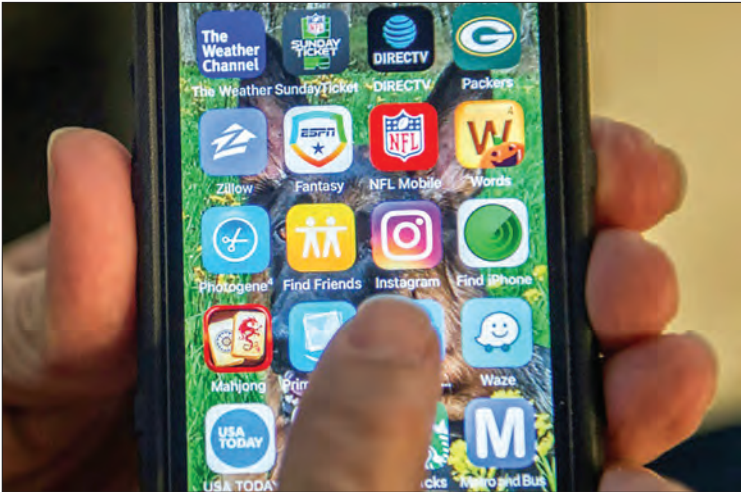
They can pick which side of the stadium to send their chosen cheer or jeer, and can remotely join chants that only designated users can begin.

The company originally planned to launch the app in later this year, but accelerated its development after the coronavirus forced sporting events to be cancelled or played without fans.

Yamaha said a recent test of

the system at a 51,000-seat stadium produced a sound similar to that of a live crowd.

The firm deployed 58 speakers at the Ecopa Stadium and invited officials from football teams Jubilo Iwata and Shimizu S Pulse to send in remote cheers and boos.—AFP



Japanese sports fans barred from stadiums because of coronavirus restrictions could be able to post-in their cheers and jeers via smartphone using a new app being developed by instrument maker Yamaha. PHOTO: AFP

# South Korea sees biggest jump in virus cases in seven weeks

SEOUL — South Korea reported its biggest jump in coronavirus infections in seven weeks on Wednesday, driven by a fresh cluster at an e-commerce warehouse on Seoul’s outskirts, as millions more pupils went back to school.

The country has been held up as a global model in how to curb the virus and has rushed to contain new infections as life returns to normal.

But officials announced 40 new cases Wednesday — taking its total to 11,265 — with most new infections from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area.

It was the largest increase since 53 infections were announced on April 8.

An outbreak at a warehouse of e-commerce firm Coupang in Bucheon, west of Seoul, has seen 36 cases so far, the KCDC added.

“It is suspected that the basic regulations were not enforced at the warehouse,” said vice health minister Kim Gang-lip.

“If quarantine rules are not implemented at workplaces, it could lead to a dreadful result of a mass infection.”

But officials said the possibility of parcel recipients being infected was low.

Social distancing rules have been relaxed in South Korea and facilities such as museums and churches have reopened while some professional sports — including baseball and soccer — started new seasons earlier this month, albeit behind closed doors.

More than two million students returned to classes on Wednesday, as part of the phased reopening of schools.—AFP



A staff member greeted students with an elbow bump as they returned to Kyungbock High School in Seoul after being closed for more than two-months because of coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hundreds protest in Hong Kong against Chinese anthem law

HONG KONG — Hundreds of people gathered for protests in Hong Kong on Wednesday to oppose legislation that, if passed, would outlaw abuse of China’s national anthem. Protesters were urged online to surround the Legislative Council at the government complex in Admiralty on Hong Kong Island, in a bid to disrupt the third reading of the National Anthem Bill scheduled to be passed next week. Police fired rounds of pepper balls to disperse the crowd in the busy Central business district as they gathered at lunchtime, while in the shopping area of Causeway Bay, about 100 people were detained as police chased away a crowd. People also gathered in the Mong Kok district in Kowloon across Victoria Harbor, blocking roads with debris and obstructing traffic.—Kyodo News

### Nepal postpones scheduled discussion on constitutional amendment to update map

KATHMANDU — The discussion to amend Nepal’s constitution to update the country’s map, earlier slated for Wednesday, now has been taken out of schedule. Nepal’s House of Representatives was scheduled to hold the discussion in the Parliament for the amendment, which has already been delayed for some time as parties decided to seek a national consensus on the matter. As per schedule published by Parliament Secretariat regarding the meeting on Wednesday, Law Minister Shivamaya Tumbahamphe will table the proposal at 2 pm (local time). The government had registered an amendment proposal in Parliament on May 22 after releasing a new political map of Nepal depicting Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura as its territories on May 18. The map was released in response to New Delhi opening a road to link India via Lipulekh with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.—ANI

# Rouhani urges Iran MPs to cooperate as parliament opens

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani urged Iranian lawmakers to “cooperate” with his government in a speech on Wednesday during the inaugural session of the new parliament following a February election swept by conservatives.

The parliament, a legislative chamber that shapes debate in Iran, had been closed for six weeks until April 7 as part of measures aimed at curbing the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Iran has been hit by the Middle East’s deadliest outbreak of the virus. Its toll stands at more than 7,500 dead and nearly 140,000 infected. “I hope that in the year that remains for this government

we will be able to cooperate and work together,” Rouhani said in the address before the newly formed parliament, or Majles.

Iran held a legislative election on February 21 and is scheduled to hold a presidential poll in around 12 months. The 11th legislature since the Islamic revolution of 1979 opened as the country’s economy gradually returns to normal from the virus outbreak.

In a sign that the fight against the virus is still far from over, however, a seat was left vacant between each deputy.

But many of the elected representatives wore no masks.

Rouhani, who is in the final year of his second and final term,



For the opening session of Iran’s new parliament, a seat was left vacant between each lawmaker in accordance with social distancing guidelines although few wore masks against the coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

called on MPs, collectively and individually, to place the “national interest above special interests”, “party interests” or “constituency interests”.

The moderate president defended the performance of his government, which has faced criticism from its conservative and ultra-conservative opponents who now form a majority in the parliament.—AFP

# French power couple lose money laundering appeal



Patrick and Isabelle Balkany had dominated politics in the wealthy Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret since the 1980s. **PHOTO: AFP**

PARIS — A French political power couple lost their appeal Wednesday against a money laundering conviction, capping a fall from grace spurred by accusations they illegally pocketed millions of euros in public funds while in office.

Patrick and Isabelle Balkany, right-wing politicians who for years governed the chic Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret, were

sentenced to prison terms of five and four years respectively.

But they were not ordered behind bars immediately pending an appeal to France’s highest court. Patrick Balkany had been released to house arrest in February because of health problems.

The two had already lost in March an appeal against tax fraud convictions after they were found guilty of using offshore accounts

to hide at least 13 million euros (\$14.4 million) in assets from the tax authorities, including luxury villas in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh and in the West Indies.

On Wednesday, the appeals court confirmed the seizure of assets as well as the payment of one million euros (\$1.1 million) in damages, saying the couple had implemented a system of “persistent fraud”. Patrick Balkany, 71, who appeared in the Paris courtroom without his wife, made no comment after the decision.

His lawyer Romain Dieudonne said he had five days to decide on a further appeal, while his wife’s lawyer Pierre-Olivier Sur told reporters the ruling was “excessive.”

The jail terms handed down last year — extremely rare for French politicians — were widely heralded as proof that the legal system no longer shirks from holding the powerful to account.—AFP

# Officers sacked after black man dies as policeman kneels on neck

MINNEAPOLIS — Four police officers in Minneapolis were sacked Tuesday as a video showing one of them kneeling on the neck of a handcuffed black man who later died sparked street protests in the midwestern US city.

Protesters, many wearing face masks because of the coronavirus outbreak, held signs saying “Justice for George Floyd” and “Black Lives Matter” during a rally near the scene of Monday’s death in custody.

In the video filmed by a bystander, a shirtless Floyd—thought to be in his 40s—is pinned on the ground by a white officer who kneels on his neck for more than five minutes. “Your knee in my neck. I can’t breathe... Mama. Mama,” Floyd pleaded.

Floyd slowly grew silent and motionless, unable to move even as the officers taunted him to “get

up and get in the car.”

He was taken to hospital where he was later declared dead.

After firing the four officers involved, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey expressed outrage as calls rose for them to be prosecuted for murder.

“What I saw was wrong at every level,” he said of the video.

“For five minutes, we watched as a white officer pressed his knee into the neck of a black man,” Frey added.

“Being black in America should not be a death sentence.”

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump said he had been retained by Floyd’s family.

In a statement, Crump said Floyd had been stopped by police over a forgery accusation, a charge often used for writing bad checks or using fake banknotes for purchases.—AFP



Protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis over the death in custody of a black man. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Africa's confirmed COVID-19 cases surpass 115,000: Africa CDC

ADDIS ABABA — The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the African continent surpassed 115,616 as the death toll from the ongoing pandemic surged to 3,479 as of Tuesday afternoon, the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said.

The Africa CDC, in its latest continental situation update report issued on Tuesday, said that

some 46,630 people who have been infected with the COVID-19 have recovered across the continent as of Tuesday afternoon.

Figures from the Africa CDC also showed that amid the rapid spread of the virus across the continent, the highly COVID-19 affected African countries include South Africa with 23,615 confirmed cases, Egypt with

17,967 confirmed cases, Algeria with 8,503 confirmed cases, Nigeria with 8,063 confirmed cases, and Morocco with 7,556 confirmed cases.

The Africa CDC said that the Northern African region is the most affected area across the continent both in terms of positive COVID-19 cases, as well as the number of deaths.—Xinhua

## Sport halls changed as quarantine sites to combat pandemic

TO combat, control and treatment of COVID-19 pandemic, sport halls and sport centres across Myanmar are being used as quarantined facilities this month, according to the Sports and Physical Educa-

tion Department of Ministry of Health and Sports.

There are a total of seventeen quarantined centres to be used as quarantined sites for suspected patients of COVID-19 from different

regions and states.

The sport halls quarantined centres were launched across Myanmar starting from 28 March and there were a total of 1,566 quarantined persons arrived and

1,379 were successfully discharged from the sites and 187 left according to the this week's data released by the department.

A total of 17 Sport centres from Kayah State, Chin State,

Mandalay Region, Rakhine State, Bago Region, Magway Region, Kayin State, Shan State, Mon State and Yangon Region helped COVID-19 suspected persons to control the pandemic.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

## Lifting Premier League trophy in empty stadium would be 'strange', says Henderson

LONDON — Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson says playing at an empty Anfield and winning the Premier League title with no fans present would be "pretty strange".

Liverpool were 25 points clear of 2019 champions Manchester City and on the verge of their first English top-flight crown for 30 years when the league was shut down by coronavirus in March.

Clubs returned to training in small and socially distanced groups last week ahead of a proposed restart in June.

Henderson lifted the Champions League trophy in a packed

stadium in Madrid last June but is preparing for a different experience this year.

"Of course it would feel different because if you win any trophy and receive it without any fans there, it would be pretty strange," he told the BBC.

The 29-year-old England international midfielder said the title race was still not over.

"We still have work to do and we still need to perform at a high level right the way until the season finishes because we want to finish as strongly as we can to make sure it is a full season," he said.—AFP



Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson lifts the Champions League trophy. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Serie A meeting Italian Government to discover fate of season



Serie A football has been suspended since March 9. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

ROME — Serie A hopes of following Germany and Spain back onto the pitch will be decided on Thursday during a meeting with the Italian government which will determine the fate of the season in football-mad Italy.

Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora will tell Italian football federation and Lega Serie A bosses if the health conditions are right to return after nearly three months.

The Italian season has

been on hold since March 9 amid the coronavirus pandemic which has killed almost 33,000 people in the country.

Football clubs returned to group training on May 19 but competitive action remains suspended until mid-June.

Indications are that Spadafora and the government's Scientific Technical Committee will agree to both the health protocol proposed and to start the season again.

In the case of a favourable decision on Thursday, Lega Serie A have scheduled a meeting for Friday morning to examine "the different calendar hypotheses" for the remaining Serie A and Italian Cup matches.

Lega Serie A bosses want competition to resume on the weekend of June 13-14, starting with four postponed fixtures — Atalanta-Sassuolo, Verona-Cagliari, Inter Milan-Sampdoria and Torino-Parma.—AFP

## Solskjaer counting on Pogba, Rashford for restart

LONDON — Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Tuesday he is confident of having Paul Pogba and Marcus Rashford fit should the Premier League season restart next month.

Pogba has missed the majority of the campaign with an ongoing ankle injury, while Rash-

ford seemed set to miss the rest of the season when he suffered a double stress fracture in his back in January.

United returned to training in small groups last week and preparations are expected to be ramped up further for a return to action when Premier League clubs vote on resuming contact

training on Wednesday.

"Hopefully now we've proved we can do this safely and we can move to the next step. It's been really enjoyable being on the training ground again," said Solskjaer.

"They (Pogba and Rashford) are looking good, they've joined training now and they've done

everything the other boys have been doing. No reaction so far, touch wood.

"When we get started, it looks like we can have a full squad to choose from."

The return of both players could be a major boost to United's hopes of ending the season on a high in three competitions.

Solskjaer's men were three points off the top four in the Premier League when play was halted due to the coronavirus pandemic in March.

The Red Devils are also still in the hunt for silverware in the FA Cup and Europa League, which UEFA hopes to complete in August.—AFP