STAY VIGILANT TO REMAIN SAFE FROM DENGUE, COVID-19

PAGE-8 (OPINION)

**NATIONAL**

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Message from Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, the Chairman of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) (26 June 2020)

PAGE-2

**NATIONAL**

Myanmar Universities' Research Conference 2020 successfully organized

PAGE-3

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 71, 7th Waxing of First Waso 1382 ME | www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com | Friday, 26 June 2020

# Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Russian officials in Moscow

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing discusses with the Director-General of Interstate Corporation Developments on a river cruise in Moscow on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited Myanmar Theravada Buddha Vihara in Moscow on 24 June afternoon during his official tour to Russia Federation to attend the 75th Anniversary of Victory Day parade of Great Patriotic War.

The Senior General and party paid homage to the presiding monk of the monastery, Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Dr Bhaddanta Iccariya, and donated offertories to the monk.

The Senior General looked into project site for construction of Sadhamma Jotika ordination hall in the compound of the monastery. In the afternoon, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held discussions with Indian Defence Minister Mr Rajnath Singh at the Metropol hotel in Moscow.

SEE PAGE-3

# Myanmar relief flights bring back 297 citizens from overseas

A relief flight by Myanmar Airways International (MAI) brought home 143 Myanmar citizens from the UAE and Bahrain through Doha International Airport and landed at Yangon International Airport at 1 am yesterday.

Another MAI relief flight brought back 111 Myanmar citizens from the Philippines and 28 Myanmar seamen from Norwegian Costa Atlantica and Viking Orion cruise ships to Yangon International Airport at 7 pm yesterday. Similarly, a special flight from Air KBZ brought back 12 Myanmar seamen and 3 citizens from Chittagong Port in Bangladesh to Yangon International Airport at 4 pm yesterday. Officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government performed health examinations on the aforementioned passengers when they landed and also arranged their 21-day quarantine period.

SEE PAGE-2

Myanmar returnees from the Philippines queuing for immigration processes at Yangon International Airport on 25 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

INSIDE TODAY

**NATIONAL**
Govt, NCA-S EAOs to hold 5th negotiation meeting next month
PAGE-4

**LOCAL NEWS**
Myinmu rural water supply project completed 97pc
PAGE-6

**BUSINESS**
Pineapple growers call for legitimate export channel to China
PAGE-7

# International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Message from Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, the Chairman of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC)

(26 June 2020)

THE General Assembly has decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. It has been 33 years the world countries have been observing this occasion annually.

In previous years, the central-level International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was held at MICC-2 in Nay Pyi Taw, while such ceremonies at Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, region and state levels were organized under the management of respective administrations; seized illegal drugs were also burnt at major cities such as Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, ceremonies were not observed at the central level, regions and states this year, however, the seized illegal drugs were burnt in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi and precursor chemicals and related materials were destroyed in Kutkai Township.

To lessen drug abuse, school children are being educated directly or indirectly; awareness teams for illegal drugs are formed at schools; educative talks and awareness campaigns with the distribution of information, education and communication materials; school curriculum, organizing educative shows and festivals and conducting capacity-building courses for teachers.

The government is eradicating narcotic drugs with controls over production and abuses. The control of production includes prevention and management, substituted development programmes, livestock, cultivation of substituted crops and control of precursor chemicals.

The control of abuses includes medical treatments, rehabilitation, educative programmes for school children, public awareness, international cooperation and social services.

The CCDAC has formed local level committees in Nay Pyi Taw Council, regions, states, districts, townships, wards and villages, with the participation of authorities, INGO, civil society organizations, religious organizations and businesspersons to conduct anti-narcotic tasks.

Moreover, the Special Anti-Drug Reporting Centre was set up by the order of the President on 22 June 2018 to support in fighting against illegal drugs. Out of reporting cases from 26 June 2018 to 20 June 2020, lawsuits were filed against 1,196 cases, with legal actions against 1,543 males, 303 females, totalling 1,846 persons.

Under the leading role of the government, Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force and anti-narcotics task forces conducted special operations. As a result, a large volume of chemicals and related materials used in narcotic drug productions were confiscated.

It is required to address the illegal drug problem in multi-sectoral approaches and means simultaneously and harmoniously.

The new version of National Drug Control Policy was developed on the basis of recommendations from the 2016 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), and the law to amend 1993 Illegal Drugs and Psychotropic Law was released in 2018. The National Strategic Plan to implement the policy has been approved and two-year action plan which is appropriate with local contexts are being carried out.

Effective measures will be needed for stronger legislative system in fighting against narcotic drugs, elimination of criminal networks which can lead to distress and social sufferings, better healthcare and human rights responses.

Non-controlled substances can cause a lot of unimaginable sufferings in medical treatments. Suitable painkillers should be ready for all persons. All the possible measures must be taken to understand the use of medicines for social and health issues such as drug-related HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, continuous healthcare for drug addicts.

The UNGASS decided to widely respond to the related issues with illegal trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs in various ways. Governments need to follow a new effective and humane way to manage the drug problem.

It should be honoured to common people for their broader participation in the reduction of risks caused by drug abuses, trafficking and abuse of drugs for ensuring more peaceful and safe lives and promoting human rights and equality.

Moreover, it is expected that the economy would decline due to the long-term COVID-19 pandemic. In taking advantages of this crisis, trafficking trend and market situations of illegal drugs are likely to change, and authorities in drug control measures need to take serious steps in their works.

The theme for the 2020 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking "Better Knowledge for Better Care" emphasizes the need to improve the understanding of the world drug problem. Despite some risks and challenges in tackling narcotic drug issues, it is believed we all together are on the right path in implementing a perfect, harmonious and interrelated approach that can lead to long-lasting means.

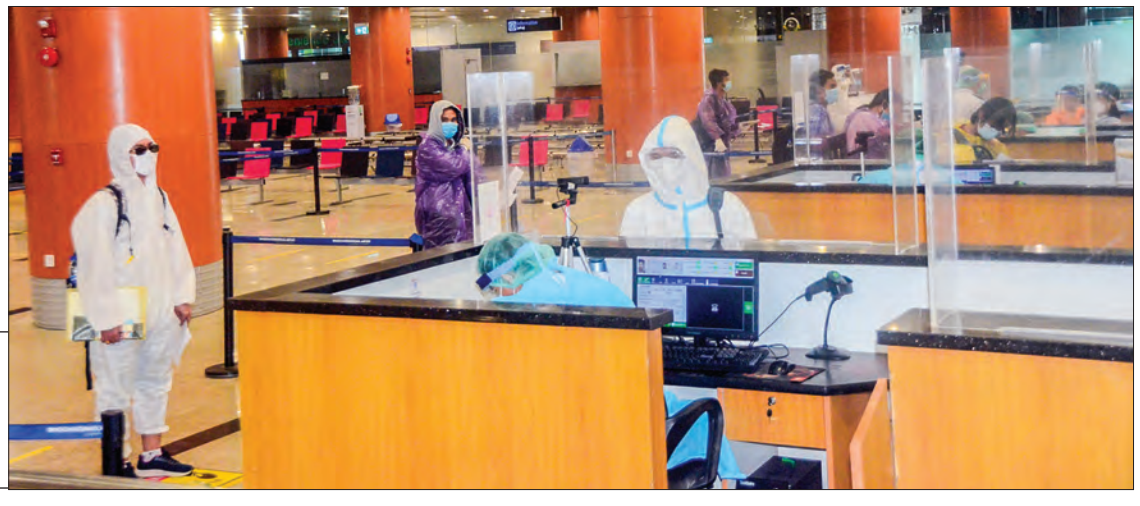
*(Translated by Aung Khin)*

# Myanmar relief flights bring back 297 ...

FROM PAGE-1

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working with Myanmar Embassies abroad and other ministries to retrieve Myanmar citizens stranded overseas due to COVID-19. The ministry has repatriated 5,325 Myanmar citizens so far, including over a thousand seamen stranded in ports of other nations.—MNA

*(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*



Myanmar returnees came back home from abroad are waiting for immigration process at Yangon International Airport on 25 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

# No new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 25 June, total figure remains at 293

**Updated at 8 pm, 25 June 2020**

| Total Case | New Case | Total Death Tally |
|---|---|---|
| 293 | 0 | 6 |

**Recovery Update on 25 June 2020 after two consecutive tests**

| Total Recovery | New Recovery | Discharged from Hospital |
|---|---|---|
| 211 | 3 | 195 |

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 25 June 2020

| New PUI |
|---|
| 24 |

*Ministry of Health & Sports*

# Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks ...

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation holds discussion with Indian military personnel in Moscow on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-1

The meeting focussed on enhancement of bilateral relations between the two armed forces, peace and stability of border area, suitable management for border region, cooperation in fighting against terrorists along the border line, progress in implementation of Kaledan project and bilateral security measures on successful completion of the project, collaboration of the two armed forces in security of Indian ocean, conducting training courses when COVID-19 pandemic could be controlled to a certain degree and stronger cooperation between two militaries.

The Senior General held interview with RT international television network of Russia at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Moscow.

In the evening, the Senior General and party attended dinner hosted by Mr Ivan Ponyakov, the Director-General of Interstate Corporation Developments.

On the Moscow river cruise, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party held a meeting with the Director-General on cooperation in development of military technologies and communications sector.

During the cruise, the Senior General witnessed urban development situations, scenic views along the river and recreation of people.

At 11 pm local time, the Senior General and party enjoyed fireworks setting off to mark the successful celebration of 75th Anniversary Victory Day parade, according to the report of Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds interview with RT international television network of Russia on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation enjoys river cruise in Moscow on 24 June evening. **PHOTO: MNA**

# Myanmar Universities' Research Conference 2020 successfully organized

THE Second Myanmar Universities' Research Conference (2020) was organized through video conferencing yesterday.

The event was opened with the national anthem followed by a speech from Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi. He said while COVID-19 has made things a little tough but they are able to convene the conference this year thanks to video conference technology.

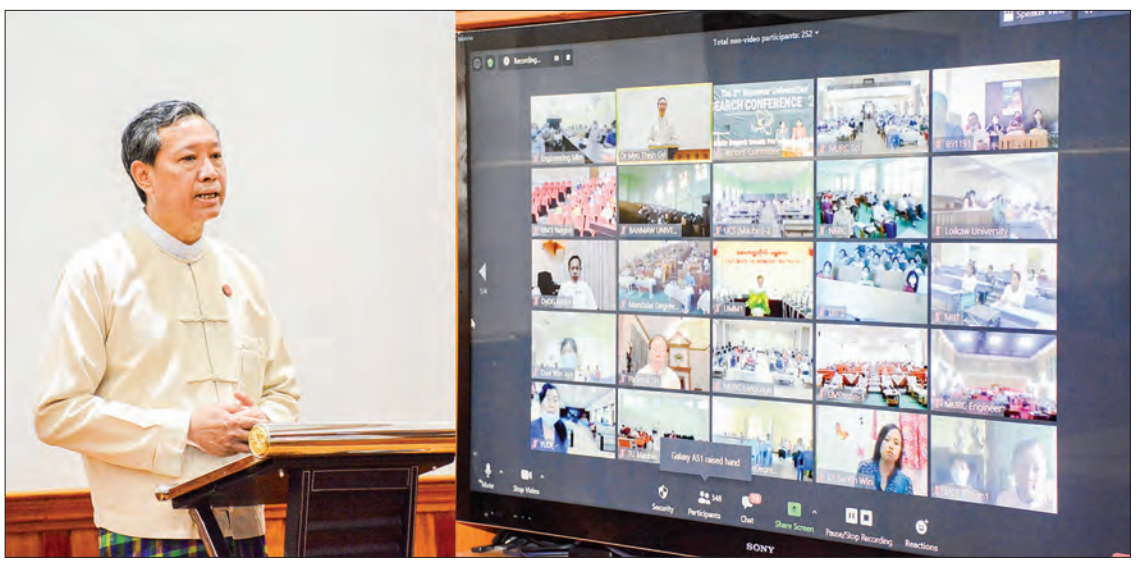
The Union Minister thanked Rectors Committee Chairman Dr. Zaw Wai Soe and Research Development Working Committee Chairman Prof Dr Htin Zaw Soe for their lead, keynote speakers Prof Dr Padetha Tin, Prof Liviu Matei and Prof Dr Aung Tun Thet, research paper speakers, and among others attending the conference.

The Union Minister said research culture is essential in universities as it is their lifeblood. He said it is important to perform research that will benefit your region and your nation and gradually the world. He said they allot permitted budgets towards research efforts, equipment and technology.

The Ministry of Education utilized over K1.4 billion towards research efforts in 2017-2018 academic year, K4.2 billion in 2018-2019 academic year, and K5.8 billion in 2019-2020 academic year. He said they discuss research papers based on quality research results and also submits them to domestic and foreign research journals.

The Union Minister said he believes promoting practical curricula based on quality research, producing graduates with the skills to compete for job opportunities, supporting businesses and services with quality research, managing university development with transparent responsibility and accountability, and cooperating with businesses will all strengthen freedom in learning and management.

The Union Minister said while the research conference coincides with the spread of COVID-19, everyone has persevered on with the help of modern technology. He said it was wonderful to see 134 research papers and 16 posters from different universities being submitted to this conference. He called for the conference to promote research culture and head towards autonomous universities.



Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi discusses at the Second Myanmar Universities' Research Conference (2020) on 25 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

Next, National Education Policy Commission Chairman Dr Myo Kwyel delivered an address and Dr Zaw Wai Soe gave the opening speech.

NASA scientist Dr Padetha Tin then started the conference with the topic 'The Importance of Research and the Role of Myanmar Universities'. This was followed by Prof Liviu Matei (Central European University) on 'University Research and National Development: A Comparative Perspective in a time of Global Crisis', and Prof Dr Aung Tun Thet on 'Promoting Research Culture'. The videoconference was attended by 3,400 people including Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, the Chairman of the National Education Policy Commission and its members, the Chairman of the Rectors Committee, its members and officials, the domestic and foreign lecturers, directors-general of Ministry of Education departments, rectors and teachers of various universities, researchers, and research paper speakers.—MNA

*(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

# Govt, NCA-S EAOs to hold 5th negotiation meeting next month

THE final day of 4th negotiation meeting between the representatives of government and NCA-S EAOs yesterday agreed to convene the 5th edition of their meeting in the first week of July.

The meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre at Shweli Road in Yangon is attended by Vice-Chairman of NRPC and Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae of the Ministry of Defence (Army), Lt-Gen Min Naung and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Pyone Cho (a) U Htay Win Aung, members of the Peace Commission Advisory Board U Hla Maung Shwe, U Moe Zaw Oo and Director-General of the State Counsellor Office U Zaw Htay.

Government and NCA-S EAOs representatives hold their 4th negotiation meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

The NCA-S EAOs were represented by Pado Sao Sai Ngin, Coordination of NCA implementation framework negotiation committee U Myo Win, members of negotiation team U Hla Htay, Saw Mya Yar Zar Lin, Dr Salai Lian Hmon Sakhong, Salai Htarlar Yay, Saw Sein Win, Pado Saw Tar Do Hmu, Pado Saw L Klu Sae, Kya Salmon, Saw Kyaw Nyunt, Nai Aung Ma Ngaw, Dr Sai Oo and Khun Myint Tun, and other representatives on videoconference.

They continued discussions on NCA framework agreement, phase-by-phase workplans and implementations beyond 2020, federal basic principles and schedules for meetings ahead of the 4th Union Conference- 21st Century Panglong which are the provisions for part 3 of Union Accord.

After the meeting, Sao Sai Ngin made a concluding remark, "We also agreed to discuss the remaining issues in the next round of meeting, and schedules for the meetings ahead of the 4th Union Conference were made."

"The 5th negotiation meeting will be organized on 2,3 and 4 July," he added.

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo said, "The JMC-U meeting will be held on 7 and 8 July, and the Conference is set to convene in the second week of August."

In the afternoon, the representatives of government and NCA-S EAOs shared the discussions to members of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) and political party representatives of UPDJC.—Ye Gaung Nyunt/Phoe Htaung

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*

# Govt officials spread awareness on killing of endemic bird species

THE Forestry Department in Mandalay Region is planning awareness raising campaigns to prevent the capture and killing of 7 bird species that are endemic to the ancient city of Bagan.

The species include the Myanmar skylark, white-throated babbler, barbary dove, white-bellied minivet, streak-earned bulbul, hooded treepie, and the Burmese prinia.

The population of white-throated babbler and six other bird species endemic to Bagan have increased since tourism halted after the spread of COVID-19.

Forestry Department Director U Zaw Win Myint said the number of birds and animals frequenting Bagan has increased since tourists stopped coming after the spread of COVID-19. He said there has also been cases of people hunting for fun or for other reasons. He said they began scouting around Bagan at the end of April to find the people killing the local animals and to dissuade them and to put up signboards to raise awareness. He said this has reduced hunting incidents.

There are 9 bird species endemic to Myanmar with the 7 species living in Bagan-NyaungU region and the other 2 species found in Nat Ma Taung (Mt. Victoria) region. They are a precious sight for birdwatchers from home and abroad, said Information Officer U Htet Tun Aung of the Bagan Tour Guide Association. He said they have put up signboards and vinyl posters to stop the hunting of these endemic species in the old Bagan site and in the city.

"With tourism at a standstill due to COVID-19, these birds have increased in numbers," said U Htet Tun Aung. "But the children and youngsters here have begun to shoot the birds with slingshots and kill them. We confiscate their slingshots and teach them about the significance of these endemic birds. We don't take any action against them as the youngsters were doing it for fun." —Min Htet Aung (Mahn Subprinting House)

*(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

# Pyay post office provides free delivery services for book donations to community centre libraries

Customers getting postal services at Pyay post office in Bago Region in June. **PHOTO: MNA**

PYAY post office of the Myanmar Posts under the Ministry of Transport and Communications in Bago Region is providing free delivery services of book donations to the libraries of community centres under the Ministry of Information.

The service is aimed to promote reading habits among the public while staff members of the post office are carrying out regular postal services and money transfer services with some private banks and mobile banking services.—Mg Shwe Win (Pyay)

# 186 Myanmar nationals return home via Tachilek border town

A total of 186 Myanmar nationals arrived back home through Tachilek Township, eastern Shan State, bordering with Laos, on 24 June.

Local authorities arranged medical checks for those returnees and vehicles for their return to homes in different aeras.

Health officials presented them medical certificates showing they are free of COVID-19, and educated them to stay quarantine and to follow directives of Ministry of Health and Sports at the respective areas.—Yar Se (IPRD)

Myanmar nationals arrive back home through Tachilek border crossing with Thailand on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

The MoSWRR is providing material and immaterial supplies to people across the country during COVID-19 pandemic. **HOTO: MNA**

# MoSWRR provides healthcare items to IDP camps for prevention of COVID-19

MINISTRY of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have been carried out prevention, control and response measures against COVID-19 at the IDP camps in cooperation with relevant departments and organization in the country.

The ministry implemented COVID-19 preventive measures at IDP camps in Rakhine state on 24, June. Officials from the ministry provided 1,092 bars of soap, 120 bottles of sanitizer, 1,720 surgical masks, 4 thermostats, 32 vinyl, 4 hand wash basins, 4 memory sticks, 408 cloth masks 4 hand speakers and 20 lime sacks to 21 IDP camps.

The ministry have been not only implementing COVID-19 preventive, control and response measures but providing psychological support in the regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.—MNA

*(Translated by YHT)*

Trade Mark Ads
Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355,09974424848

Advertise

with us/ Hot Line :
09974424848

Newspapers &
Printing Service

with us/ Hot Line :
01-8604530

# 398 migrant workers return from Thailand via Myawady border on 25 June

A total of 398 Myanmar migrant workers returned home on 25 June through No. 2 Friendship Border Bridge in Myawady Town in Kayin State, bordering with Thailand.

All of them came back home in their own arrangements with the permission of Myanmar embassy in the Kingdom.

Kayin State Hluttaw MP U Thant Zin Aung and local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

The number of migrant workers who returned home from abroad through this border has been 34,390 until now.

The latest group of returnees included 240 males and 158 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Myanmar migrant workers are queuing for medical tests at No. 2 Friendship Border Bridge in Myawady Town bordering with Thailand. **PHOTO: MNA**

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,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin 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

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

**gnlmdaily@gmail.com**
**www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**
**www.facebook.com/TheGNLM**

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

## Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm** with your name and title.

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

# Myinmu rural water supply project completed 97pc

The rural water supply project has covered 97% of its target in Myinmu Township, Sagaing Region, including this water tower.
**PHOTO:NAY LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

THE rural water supply project has been completed 97 per cent in Magyikan village and Taw Chaung Oo village in Myinmu township in Sagaing district, said Daw Htar Htar Yee, the township head of the Rural Development Department.

In order to ensure availability of the clean water in these villages, the project was started to implement in 2019-2020 fiscal year, spending K35.7 million from the Union Government fund.

"Previously, our villagers were using the rainwater collected in the pond. In summer, our villages face the water shortage problem. This is the reason why we are implementing this project to tap the underground water for self-sufficiency in the villages. The project took five months. Now, the villagers do not need to worry about the shortage of water anymore," she added.

The department has built a 120-foot high wall and installed water pumps in Magyikan village by 2 February, spending K16.6 million while a 560-foot high wall was built and water pumps were installed in Taw Chaung Oo village on 2 March, spending K19.1 million. At present, the project is completed 97 per cent, according to the record of the Myinmu Township Rural Development Department.—Nay Lin Aung (IPRD)

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

# 50pc of laying star tortoises alive in Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary

WITH over 1,000 star tortoises laying annually in Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, 50 per cent of laying star tortoises are alive, according to the Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary administration office.

"The star tortoises are mating two or three times per year. In 2019, the star tortoises laid a total of 1,150 eggs. Among them, 507 star tortoises were alive with 93 star tortoises dead. So, 50 per cent of laying star tortoises are alive," said U Aung Soe Tint, the administrator of Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary.

In 2020, star tortoises are laying a total of 130 eggs including 42 males and 97 female eggs. After raining season, they will be laying the eggs again in September. At present, there are a total of 1,025 star tortoises in Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary.

Five-year-old tortoises from Shwesettaw, Lawka Nanda, and Min Sone Taung farms are confined to and trained for one year in the star tortoises farming site, which is located 26 miles away from Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary under the WCS programme. Then, they will be released naturally to the forest. — Zayyatu (Magway)

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

A star tortoise laying eggs. **PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)**

# Dengue cases record high in Sagaing region with 3 deaths

THERE were about 300 cases of dengue haemorrhagic fever with three deaths in Sagaing region this year, which is a record high over the annual rate of dengue fever in Yangon region, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

From 1 January to 30 May, the DHF transmission rate in Sagaing region was a record high in Chaung U with 74 cases and two deaths, Yinmabin with 57 cases and Budalin with 47 cases and one death.

The DHF rate is also a record high in Mon State with 43 cases in Mawlamyine and 37 cases with two deaths in Paung town.

There were a total of 1,480 cases of DHF with eleven deaths from across the country from 1 January to 30 May, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

In the first five months of 2020, the DHF rate was a record high in Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway regions and Mon State.

As of 16 May, the DHF transmission rate in Yangon region was rampant in South Dagon with 24 cases, Htantabin with 16 cases, Shwepyitha with 15 cases, Hlinethaya with 15 cases, Dala with 14 cases, North Dagon with 11 cases, Thingangyun with 10 cases, Insein with 10 cases, Thanlyin with eight cases and North Okkalapa with seven cases.

According to the WHO, over 100 million people are infected with dengue fever across the world each year, 500,000 of whom were seriously ill, requiring hospitalization.

The half of DHF death rate is from Yangon region. The high population can be the main cause of both DHF and coronavirus diseases, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. —Aye Cho

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

# COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—**MNA**

# Pineapple growers call for legitimate export channel to China

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR pineapple growers are expecting official export channel to China, according to Myanmar Pineapple Producers and Exporters Association.

China is the main buyer of Myanmar's pineapples and it has banned importation since 16 June 2019. The Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) issued by Myanmar's Agriculture Department is required for export to China.

This being so, the association asked the Agriculture Department to issue the PC at the soonest.

Earlier, 50 per cent of pineapple production is consumed locally, and the remaining goes to China.

Therefore, Myanmar growers want legitimate trade channel to Yunnan Province, said association secretary Sai Kyaw Nyunt.

"We demand border trade with China as some Chinese brokers buy about 20 trucks of pineapples per day. If we can resume border trade with China, it is better than exporting to other countries," he added.

About 55% of pineapple fields in Myanmar can be found in Hsipaw Township. **PHOTO : NYEIN NYEIN**

At present, the Ministry of Commerce has received samples of Myanmar's pineapples to penetrate other foreign markets through Singapore, in cooperation with Myanmar Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables Producers and Exporters Association.

Myanmar yearly exports nearly 40,000 tonnes of pineapples to China. Last year, pineapple grower groups from northern Shan State lost over K700 million worth 25,000 tonnes.

This year, there are about 35,000 acres of pineapples across the country; with 55 per cent in Hsipaw Township, 17 in Lashio, nine in Tangyan, six in Hsihseng, and 13 in Namsang and other townships.

The pineapples will be abundant during its harvest season (July and August). If the trade channel is still suspended this year, growers will suffer more losses, Sai Kyaw Nyunt added.

An acre can grow around 6,000-10,000 pineapple plants and up to 15,000 plants if the advanced growing technique is used.

An acre costs approximately K1 million. Previously, an acre can earn about K2.5 million, with the price ranging K350 to 750 per pineapple. Therefore, it is a lucrative fruit for the growers.

Myanmar earlier shipped about 300-500 tonnes of pineapple per day.

Although pineapple is not listed on the green channel list of General Administration of Customs China, the association requests the government to negotiate with Yunnan provincial government for official trade.

Furthermore, pineapple growers want this sector to be listed on the priority sector of the Coronavirus Fund. The value-adding market is not uncertain for now, yet the government's long-term loan for pineapple paste, juice and vinegar businesses are required.

Additionally, the association stated that the traders need to link with exporters to send the pineapples to Singapore and other external markets in July and August.

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

# Trade deficit up two-fold in current fiscal year

MYANMAR'S trade gap has significantly widened in eight and half months of the current financial year 2019-2020 to more than US$1.7 billion from $853 million registered in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 12 June in the current fiscal, Myanmar's external trade increased to over $26.4 billion from $24.57 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at $12.37 billion, imports were valued at $14 billion. Compared to the previous fiscal, exports showed an increase of $518 million, while imports climbed up by $1.38 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, CMP raw materials, and consumer goods.

Eel is the main export product in earning foreign money, as the eels can be caught year round. **PHOTO AUNG WIN (PYAPON)**

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to cut the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports.

Myanmar's trade deficit was pegged at $1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, $1.3 billion in the previous mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), $3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, $5.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and $5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, according to the statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization.—Mon Mon

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

# YRIC clears $9.17 mln worth 3 foreign projects, K2.29 bln valued 1 domestic proposal

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee, at a video-conference held on 24 June, has approved three foreign projects from China, with an estimated capital of US$9.17 million and one domestic project worth K2.29 billion.

The projects will create over 3,000 jobs. They will invest in the production of spice; belt and bags; and manufacturing of bra cup underwear mould for local CMP enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engaging in the production of pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis.

The investments in the regions also flowing into the hotel services, and other services sectors as well. To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

According to statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states receive only a small share of investments.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or $5 million.—GNLM

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355 Call Circulation order is in easier way. Ph:0945237515

# Stay vigilant to remain safe from dengue, COVID-19

We have been experiencing outbreaks of dengue fever more frequently, especially during the rainy season, with fewer gaps in between cases.

Infection rates usually spike in the rainy season, especially in July and August.

However, infections are found year-round in Myanmar, necessitating year-round monitoring.

Just because we are battling COVID we should not forget other dangers, such as dengue and chikungunya, which strike during the rainy season.

According to the Ministry of Health and sports, from January 1st up to May 30, there have been 1,480 cases of dengue fever and 11 deaths in our country.

Sagaing Region is leading with about 300 cases and three deaths, overtaking Yangon which always sees higher number of cases than other regions in previous years.

Now, we are facing the two diseases at the same time, which will require intensive attention from the health care system to prevent great harm to the population.

There is no typically prescribed medicine to offer treatment for dengue fever, except for relief from pain. And it is worth remembering that the number of yearly deaths caused by dengue fever is higher than COVID-19 fatalities, so far this year.

> Just because we are battling COVID we should not forget other dangers, such as dengue and chikungunya, which strike during the rainy season.

This year, the problem is further complicated because the symptoms (fever, sore throat and body ache) of Covid-19, dengue and malaria, and a few other diseases such as typhoid and common flu overlap.

The challenge now would be to deal with the diseases while sticking to the social restrictions needed to combat Covid-19. This will burden the testing infrastructure.

Continuing the battle against the crippling COVID-19, and coping with the creeping outbreak of dengue fever, appears to pose a dual challenge to the health authorities. However, we are confident that the COVID-19 strategy, with the participation of the people, will be useful in the war to be waged against two diseases at one time.

The vector-borne disease is caused by the daytime bite of the Aedes mosquitoes. Its larvae are born in clean rain water that collects in littered containers, such as green-coconut shells, along with the hundreds of types of pots and cans thrown away after being used.

By using the same strategies, such as high public awareness about COVID-19, we can prevent dengue fever by eliminating dengue hot spots.

These efforts will be beefed up with the involvement of volunteers nationwide.

Citizens must also be careful and take precautions.



# COVID-19 and personal healthcare guidelines

**By Khin Maung Myint**

THE sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus towards the end of 2019 had caught most of us by surprise. The whole world was affected -- sparing almost no country, both rich and poor or developed and developing. At one time when the spread of the disease became serious the world was almost at a standstill. Most were concerned and some were alarmed about the never before known epidemic disease that had reached the pandemic level within a few days of its onset.

Given that public fitness centres are closed, there are two main ways that the public can maintain regular physical activity: through at-home exercise or outdoors while practising social distancing. **PHOTO: AFP**

During the first month of the arrival of the disease in our country, most people were scared to a certain degree that they daren't leave the houses in the beginning. Also the instructions and restriction orders to stay home and the night curfews, followed by lockdown in certain townships, turned even a large and populous city like Yangon to resemble a deserted town. Almost all traffics stopped, except for the occasional ambulances and rescue cars were seen on the road and all the people, apart from a very neglectable few ventured out in the day light hours, but during the curfew hours people abided by the orders without much enforcement needed.

It's true that the COVID-19 have many adverse effects on the life of the people. Firstly the health sector is hard pressed. Then the economy is greatly affected. Many became jobless as some businesses and factories had to shut down, even petty businesses including the street vendor and street food sellers are affected. It effects every walks of life sparing no one, so to say.

Though it is causing havocs all across the world, there are many bright sides to it. It undoubtedly contributed to the environment in many ways, which was being discussed in a previous article "Let's create a new environment beyond COVID-19 (20 June 20 GNLM)". Another bright side of the pandemic is, it has taught us many good lessons. Of all those lessons, the importance of staying fit and strong both physically and mentally to get through these difficult times is the most valuable one.

The isolations due to restrictions of travel, lockdown, stay home orders and quarantines are taking toll on the mental and physical healths of many people. The anxiety, monotony, stress and the fear of contracting the disease may have much impact on the mental health. Also, the confinements have much effects on the physical health too, as lack of exercise or physical activities have many adverse consequences.

To overcome the impact on the mental health there are a variety of ways. However, one should choose the one that suits them. Pursuance of a hobby that you can do easily and without any expense involved, such as reading or writing would work for most. Other alternatives are sewing, knitting, painting, playing musical instruments, laying computer games and watching TV, etc.. For some meditating would keep them calm and focused. As every religion has their own way of meditating, it will not be discussed in detail here.

To stay fit and healthy so as to be able to resist or fight the virus is most important. For a person to be fit and healthy, they must be both mentally and physically fit and strong. To build up your resistance and to enhance your immune system, physical exercise is the best, the cheapest and the most accessable way.

SEE PAGE-10

# Libraries turn the page on COVID-19 as they welcome readers back

LIBRARIES in Japan that were forced to close due to the coronavirus pandemic have once again unlocked their doors, but now the onus is on them to provide a safe environment for their members while ensuring any potential outbreaks are traceable.

Many libraries are taking preventive measures against infection, such as urging visitors to shorten their stays to avoid congestion, but some are still finding that visitors are unsure about the risks.

The municipal library in Kasuga, Fukuoka Prefecture, southwestern Japan, reopened after nearly three months on May 26. Even so, people are still wary of visiting out of fear of contracting the virus.

"I was looking forward to the library reopening, but I am concerned about getting the virus," said a 35-year-old mother from the city who made use of an ultraviolet light machine provided by the library to disinfect every book her 7-year-old son selected.

The machine, which resembles a large microwave, was installed in 2018. Although it has not been proven effective against the coronavirus, more visitors have been using it in recent times, according to the library.

Other measures implemented include having visitors wear masks, opening windows for ventilation, forbidding people from sitting on sofas, and installing a transparent sneeze guard partition at service desks. From June, the facility also started an electronic library offering to streamline its services.

"This is the time we have to think of services that we can continue if there is a second wave of infections that forces us to close the library again," said Kasuga librarian Yukiko Yamamoto.

On May 14, the Japan Library Association based in Tokyo drew up an infection prevention guideline for libraries around the country.

One suggestion it contained was that libraries create a visitors' log to track the names and emergency contact information of those that enter.

The log could be of great use in the case that someone visits the library while infected with the coronavirus, allowing authorities to quickly get in touch with others who may have crossed the sick person's path.

The mandate to create visitors' logs came under criticism for running counter to the association's position regarding library freedom, which states that, other than recording the fact that a book has been read, the privacy of a visitor will not be violated.

Some are worried that by recording the names and details of all who visit, libraries are potentially creating a situation where people's privacy could be compromised.

The guideline was revamped on May 26, leaving "the collection of contact information to be conducted at the discretion of each library based on necessity." "The guideline is not a hard and fast rule," said the association's standing director Takashi Suzuki. "The infection situation has to be considered case by case, and the best possible countermeasures must be devised for each one."

Photo taken on May 26, 2020, shows a machine to disinfect books at a public library in Kasuga in Fukuoka Prefecture, southwestern Japan, amid concern over a possible second wave of coronavirus infections. **PHOTO: (KYODO)**

Indeed, libraries have handled their situations in various ways. At the Nagano Prefectural Library, which reopened on May 16, those with library cards voluntarily presented them, while nonmembers were requested to write down their names and contact information on a contact form to be inserted into a sealed box.

*SOURCE: Kyodo*

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

**(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 25th June, 2020)**

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 26th June, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Naypyitaw, Lower Sagaing Region, Kachin and Northern Shan States, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan (South and East), Chin, Rakhine and Kayin States and scattered in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing and Mandalay Regions, Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26th June, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26th June, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

## Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

# COVID-19 and personal healthcare guidelines

FROM PAGE-9

What would be the best way to exercise, when we cannot go out? Doing the aerobic exercise is the answer. Aerobic is a term that includes a variety of physical exercises - walking, running or jogging, stationary running, skipping, dancing and any other form of exercise that involves vigorous movements of legs, arms and body. During the lockdown, when going out is not permissible nor advisable, one can do stationary running or in other words running on the spot and aerobic dancing. If you own a tread mill you can do the running or walking on it.

While doing the stationary running you must count the steps the moment the left foot touches the ground or the floor. To be effective you should run at a rate of at least 80 counts per minute. This aerobic exercise was designed for the air force personnels in the US back in the old days to keep them fit. I first came to know about that method back in the 1970s and started training that way on the rainy days when I couldn't go outside to do the jogging, for 20 minutes daily. It's not time consuming, but that 20 minutes proved to be as equally beneficial as jogging for a longer period.

In jogging or stationary running, the whole body is up in the air without contact to the ground between one step and the next. The impact of the body weight exerted on the knees when one foot lands on the ground could be quite great and unbearable for some. Thus, walking would be the best choice, if the situations permit, as one or the other foot is always touching the ground to support the body weight. Here, some prefer brisk walking to ordinary walking, thinking that the former is more effective. However, some health experts are of the opinion that both are equally effective depending on the distance and time taken to cover a set goal. Whatever type of aerobic exercise you choose, it would be most effective if you are able to raise your heart rate to 120 beats per minute after exercising.

To motivate people to walk, the benefits of walking should be made known to them. They are as follows : -

* Walking will improve your mood.
* It will help you burn more calories and lose weight.
* Walking can reduce your risk of chronic diseases.
* It can even delay the onset of varicose veins.
* Your digestion will improve by walking more.
* Walking can help you feel more creative.
* It can help alleviate joint pain.
* Walking more can boost your immunity.
* It can even help you live longer.
* Can help lower your blood sugar and control diabetes.
* Also your other goals will start to seem more reachable.
* Increased cardiovascular and pulmonary (heart and lung) fitness.
* Reduced risk of heart disease and stroke.
* Improves management of hypertension (high blood pressure), high cholesterol.
* Stronger bones and improved balance.
* And last but not least, you'll sleep better at night.

From my experience, setting a goal in terms of distance or number of steps will make walking more exciting. Some say 6,000 steps will be enough and some say 10,000 steps should be your goal. However, you can choose either one or in-between depending on your age, condition and capability. It will be very convenient to count your steps if you should download a pedometer or step counter application to your phone. It will automatically count the steps, measure the distance covered, the duration of the walk and the number of calories burned. As it records your activity on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, it will also act as a motivator to make you want to compete with yourself.

As for me the goals set are 6,000 steps and distance 4 kilometres, however, those goals were exceeded quite often. The set goals are not necessarily to be accomplished in one stretch, but can be spaced throughout the day. If the distance to a place where you want to go is not far, don't take your car or ride a public transport, but just walk there. These short walks will supplement to your daily number of steps and kilometres.

Some suggest that a goal of 150 minutes and a distance of 8 kilometres would be an optimum goal. In my opinion that will not be applicable to everyone. Only the younger and healthier persons would be able to do that. For the elders that would be too ambitious and totally unachievable. Thus just walking for 30 minutes a day or more on most days of the week is a great way to improve or maintain your overall health. If you can't manage 30 minutes a day, remember "even a little is good, but more is better". Walking with others can turn exercise into an enjoyable social occasion. See your doctor for a medical check-up before embarking on any new fitness programme, particularly if you are aged over 40 years, are overweight or haven't exercised in a long time. Remember: the more you walk, the healthier you get and the longer you live. Most centenarians are walkers. Don't forget to wear a mask when going out for a walk.

*****

## Google tightens privacy settings for new users

GOOGLE has begun auto-deleting new users' search data and location history on a rolling 18-month basis, CEO Sundar Pichai announced, as the tech giant moves to tighten privacy settings.

The tweak was introduced Wednesday and is the latest attempt by a big online firm to boost public trust after hefty fines were levied against Facebook and Google for privacy violations in recent years.

"We believe that products should keep your information for only as long as it's useful and helpful to you," Pichai said in a blog post, adding that the changes were designed to "keep less data by default."

When creating a new Google account, "your activity data will be automatically and continuously deleted after 18 months, rather than kept until you choose to delete it," he explained.

The tweak is the latest attempt to boost public trust after high-profile privacy violations by big online firms. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Current users can already opt in to auto-delete their data every three or 18 months -- a setting that has not changed, although existing users will be reminded of the option to do so.

Smartphone location technology has been in the spotlight as governments study or implement app-based initiatives to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, despite concerns over privacy and civil liberties.

Pinchai, also head of Google's parent company Alphabet, asserted that "privacy is at the heart of everything we do" in his blog post.

He detailed other changes including easier access to privacy settings within apps and to the more secure "incognito" mode.

New users of Google's subsidiary YouTube will also have their search data auto-deleted after 36 months, Pinchai said.

*SOURCE: AFP*

## Australian media apologizes to Chinese entrepreneur for false report

AUSTRALIAN mainstream media Seven News has publicly apologized to Richard Yuan, chairman of the Australia-China Goodwill Association, for false reporting.

Seven News, Australia's No. 1 TV network, said in its statement Wednesday on its website that a previous fake news report "Cash, Coronavirus and baby formula: The truth about Wuhan's mercy flight to Australia" published in May has been purged.

The report said Yuan, chairman of the Australia China Entrepreneurs Club, attempted to sell a shipment of medical supplies to Australian government agencies in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Yuan has advised Seven that neither he nor his Association, namely Australia China Goodwill Association (ACGA), sought to profit (nor have they profited) from the shipment of supplies, but rather intended that they be donated to local communities," it said.

"Seven accepts that this is the case and apologizes to Mr Yuan and his family," the Seven News said. The Wuhan's mercy flight, a cargo plane loaded with around 70 tonnes of personal protective equipment including face masks, medical gloves and other emergency medical aid, touched down in Sydney on April 8. It was the first flight out of Wuhan after the city lifted restrictions against the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Australia suffered from medical supplies shortage at that time, the flight organizers hoped this could provide support to local hospitals and communities to fight the pandemic.

*SOURCE: Xinhua*

# Plastic 'has entered' Antarctic terrestrial food chain

PARIS — Scientists have found bits of polystyrene in the guts of tiny, soil-dwelling organisms in the Antarctic, raising concern that microplastics pollution has already "deeply" entered the world's most remote land-based food systems.

While the infiltration of microplastics throughout the oceans is well-known, researchers said their findings provided the first evidence of contamination in the Antarctic terrestrial food chain. "Plastics have therefore entered even some of the most remote soil food webs on the planet, with potential risks for the whole biota and ecosystems," said authors of the study, published Wednesday in the journal Biology Letters.

They warned this could also be a new stressor for fragile polar ecosystems already facing threats from climate change. Scientists focused on collembolan Cryptopygus antarcticus -- small organisms commonly known as springtails that can jump in a similar way to fleas, although they are not classed as insects.They are among the few organisms adapted to survive in the harsh Antarctic conditions and are "often the dominant species" in the few areas of the region not covered by ice, the study said. They mainly eat micro-algae and lichens.

Researchers, led by scientists from Italy's University of Siena, collected the creatures from a chunk of polystyrene foam covered in a green layer of micro-algae, moss and lichens on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands. —AFP ■

# Oz tech titans to build world's tallest 'hybrid timber' tower in Sydney

The Atlassian building is designed by New York architects SHoP and Australian firm BVN. **PHOTO: ATLASSIAN/AFP**

SYDNEY — Global software giant Atlassian will build the world's tallest "hybrid timber" building for its new headquarters in Sydney, the company said Thursday.

The 40-storey structure, coming in at 180 metres (590 ft), will be constructed with timber mass -- layers of softwoods pressed together -- and will feature a glass and steel facade, topped by outdoor gardens.

The Atlassian building, designed by New York architects SHoP and Australian firm BVN, will operate on 100 per cent renewable energy and incorporate solar panels and self-shading windows in its facade.

It will use Mass Timber Construction, a technique that fuses softwoods, which Atlassian described as a key technology to lower the building's carbon footprint.

Construction is due to start next year and be completed in 2025.

Highly ecological, hybrid timber constructions have seen a burst of popularity. The Netherlands is due to begin work next year on a 140m (459 ft) hybrid timber tower in Rotterdam.

Atlassian, founded in 2001 by Mike Cannon-Brookes and Scott Farquhar, says the tower will house 4,000 staff and form the hub of a new tech precinct in the central Sydney business district.

"The space that we are building will be highly sustainable and highly flexible -- it will be purpose-built for the future of work, for tomorrow's world, not today's," Farquhar said in a statement.—AFP ■

# Sahara dust cloud looms over Cuba, Caribbean and Florida

HAVANA — A massive cloud of Saharan dust darkened much of Cuba on Wednesday and began to affect air quality in Florida, sparking warnings to people with respiratory illnesses to stay home.

The dust cloud swept across the Atlantic from Africa over the past week, covering the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico since Sunday and hitting south Florida in the United States on Wednesday, authorities there said.

Conditions over the Cuban capital Havana are expected to worsen on Thursday, specialists on the Communist-run island reported.

Francisco Duran, head of Epidemiology at the Ministry of Health, said the cloud is likely to "increase respiratory and allergic conditions".

Air quality in Miami is currently "moderate" the city's health department said, asking people with respiratory problems to stay home.

And weather forecasters for the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique warned residents that the area was suffering its worst haze in at least a decade.

Powered by strong winds, dust from the Sahara travels across the Atlantic Ocean from West Africa during the boreal spring.

But the density of the current dust cloud over Cuba "is well above normal levels," said Cuban meteorologist Jose Rubiera.

"The highest concentration over the capital will occur tomorrow," he said.

According to the Institute of Meteorology, temperatures in Cuba's eastern province of Guantanamo reached a record for the time of year of 37.4 degrees Celsius on Wednesday.—AFP ■

A man walks near Morro Castle as a vast cloud of Sahara dust blankets Havana. **PHOTO: AFP**

# 'Mystery object' in space may be smallest black hole

PARIS — A mysterious object roughly 800 million light years from Earth detected using gravitational wave sensors is either one of the smallest black holes or one of the largest neutron stars so far discovered, scientists said on Wednesday.

The Advanced Virgo detector at the European Gravitational Observatory (EGO) in Italy and two wave observatories in the US discovered the object last year and calculated it to weigh around 2.6 times our own Sun.

That places it in the Universe's "mass gap", referring to the virtually complete lack of observed objects between 2.6-5 solar masses.

They said the object formed when another unknown body merged with a large black hole around 800 million years ago, in doing so emitting a huge gravitational wave detectable on Earth.

Both neutron stars and black holes form when very massive stars burn through their nuclear fuel and explode in phenomena known as supernovae.

Stars with lighter cores tend to form neutron stars. Heavier ones however collapse into black holes, whose mass is so condensed its gravity sucks in dust and gas from surrounding galaxies.

The team behind the research, published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, said there were several possible explanations for the object's unique nature.

Chief among them is that the original object may have been a relatively small neutron star that was effectively "swallowed whole" by a black hole.

"I think of Pac-Man eating a little dot," said Vicky Kalogera, a researcher at the LIGO observatory network and a professor at Northwestern University. —AFP ■

# Google says it will pay publishers for news content

Google said they would launch "a licencing programme to pay publishers for high-quality content for a new news experience". **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SAN FRANCISCO — Google will pay partnered media publishers in three countries and offer some users free access to paywalled news sites, the tech giant said Thursday.

The announcement comes after legal battles in France and Australia over Google's refusal to pay news organizations for content.

In a blog post the firm said they would launch "a licencing programme to pay publishers for high-quality content for a new news experience" due to launch later this year.

Brad Bender, Google's vice-president of product management, said they had been in discussions with partnered publishers -- including the Spiegel Group in Germany, Schwartz media in Australia and Brazil's Diarios Associados -- for several months, "with more to come."

"Google will also offer to pay for free access for users to read paywalled articles on a publisher's site," the statement said, without offering any further details.

Bender said the programme will help publishers "monetize their content through an enhanced storytelling experience."

He added it would build on the 2018 Google News Initiative, a $300 million project that aimed to tackle disinformation online and help news sites grow financially.

It comes after growing calls for internet tech titans, notably Google, to pay for content.

A number of European and global publications -- including AFP -- have called on the European Union to adopt laws requiring internet companies to pay for the material they produce.

In April, France's competition regulator said the firm must start paying media groups for displaying their content, ordering it to begin negotiations after refusing for months to comply with Europe's new digital copyright law. —AFP ■

# Huawei loses out in Singapore 5G bid

SINGAPORE -- Nokia and Ericsson have been chosen as Singapore's main 5G network providers, telecom operators said, leaving Huawei with only a minor role as the Chinese tech giant faces growing US pressure.

Huawei has been dogged by allegations of stealing American trade secrets and aiding China's espionage efforts, with Washington pushing countries to bar the company from involvement in their next-generation networks.

Huawei has denied ties with the Chinese government.

Singtel, one of the city-state's main telecom operators, said Wednesday it had chosen Sweden's Ericsson to build its 5G network after the government gave final approval.

A joint venture that includes the country's two other major telecom operators, M1 and StarHub, announced it had opted for Nokia to build its main 5G infrastructure. However, both M1 and Starhub said that other firms, including Huawei, could have some involvement in the project. Huawei only won the contract to be a provider for a smaller, local network system, operated by TPG Telecom, a more minor player.

The Southeast Asian city-state tries to maintain good relations with both the US and China, and Information Minister S. Iswaran insisted that no company had been excluded in the selection process. "We have run a robust process spelling out our requirements in terms of performance, security and resilience," he said, adding that mobile network operators also had their own criteria. "There is a diversity of vendors participating in different parts of the 5G ecosystem, and... there remain prospects for greater involvement in our 5G system going forward."—AFP ■

# Scandal-hit Wirecard files for insolvency

ASCHHEIM — Stricken payments provider Wirecard said Thursday it is filing for insolvency, days after the high-profile German company admitted that 1.9 billion euros ($2.1 billion) were missing from its accounts.

The latest twist in a case that is fast becoming one of Germany's biggest financial scandals comes shortly after ex-CEO Markus Braun was detained before being freed on bail.

He stands accused of market manipulation and falsifying the company's accounts.

"The management board of Wirecard AG has decided today to file an application for the opening of insolvency proceedings for Wirecard AG with the competent district court of Munich due to impending insolvency and over-indebtedness," the company said in a statement. Trading in the group's shares was temporarily halted by the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, but when it resumed, the stocks collapsed to 3.44 euros. Just over a week ago, they stood at around 100 euros.—AFP ■

**PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING**

The manufacture of **ANHUI FENGLE AGROCHEMICAL CO., LTD** has registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributer name "**ROYAL GOLDEN CITIZEN CO.,LTD**", to new distributor name "**AGRO GREEN LAND CHEMICAL CO.,LTD**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **AGRO GREEN LAND CHEMICAL CO.,LTD**. Ph-09777758847

| Sr. | Trade Name | Active Ingredient | Registration No. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Fusion | Fomesafen 25% SL | P2018-4111 |
| 2. | Quee | Quizalofop-P-ethyl 10% EC | P2018-4104 |

# 1st Japan-Viet Nam flight takes off after virus restrictions eased

NARITA — Travel from Japan to Viet Nam resumed Thursday in a first step after the easing of travel restrictions imposed to fight the novel coronavirus.

The chartered flight carrying 150 passengers, mainly businesspeople, left Narita airport, east of Tokyo, for Van Don International Airport near Ha Long, northern Viet Nam.

"There's a chance that travel conditions will improve, but I wanted to return as soon as possible," said Takako Omi, 50, who works at a Japanese sewing factory in Viet Nam. "I'd like our expatriate employees there to take a break."

Omi said she had been unable to fly back after temporarily returning to Japan in March.

Japan and Viet Nam have recently agreed to gradually ease restrictions on travel between the two countries.

Viet Nam initially did not allow foreign travellers to enter, but has agreed to ease restrictions on the basis of visitors taking a polymerase chain reaction test upon arrival and a two-week quarantine in a hotel, according to the Foreign Ministry.

Check-in counters at the Japanese airport were overflowing with passengers and family members seeing them off. Travelers wore protective clothing designed to prevent the spread of the virus that they were given as they boarded the plane, according to Viet Nam Airlines, which operated the flight.—Kyodo ■

People check in at Narita airport near Tokyo on June 25, 2020, before boarding a chartered flight to Viet Nam's Van Done. A total of about 440 businesspeople will travel from Japan to Viet Nam on three chartered flights as the first step in easing travel restrictions aimed at stemming the spread of the novel coronavirus. **PHOTO: (KYODO)**

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

# Spain proposes economy minister Nadia Calvino for Eurogroup chief

MADRID — A former top EU official who was named Thursday as Spain's candidate for president of the Eurogroup, Economy Minister Nadia Calvino is a technocrat who cuts a moderate figure within Madrid's leftwing coalition government.

"I look very favourably on (her candidacy)," because it would be "not only a recognition of her work but also very good for Spain," Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said earlier this month.

In June 2018, the conservative El Mundo daily hailed Calvino's entry into government as "one of (Sanchez's) most applauded appointments".

Although she had no previous political experience, Calvino had worked at the European Commission since 2006 where she was director-general of the budget department, a major job in Brussels.

With her technocratic profile, naming her as economy minister was a bid to charm the European Union and the markets -- and it worked.

Former top European diplomat Javier Solana of Spain has described the 51-year-old as full of "energy" and "seriousness".

And France's Olivier Bailly, who served as chief of staff to former European commissioner Pierre Moscovici, described her as a "firm advocate for the European project".

A lawyer and economist by training who also speaks English, French and German, she is "a guarantee that Spain will keep increasing its weight within European institutions," Santander Bank chairman Ana Patricia Botin said.—AFP ■

Before becoming Spain's economy minister in 2018, Nadia Calvino had worked for 12 years at the European Commission. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

# Australia's Qantas cuts 6,000 jobs in post-COVID restructure

SYDNEY — CEO Alan Joyce said the three-year plan to save Australia's flag carrier from "the biggest crisis our industry has ever faced" would also see half the company's 29,000 staff remain on leave for months.

"This year was supposed to be one of celebration for Qantas. It's our centenary," Joyce said in a statement. "Clearly, it is not turning out as planned."

The coronavirus pandemic had already forced Qantas to cancel nearly all its international flights until at least October and slash domestic routes.

While domestic travel is beginning to pick up as most Australian regions have successfully contained the epidemic, the country's international borders are expected to remain closed to most passenger traffic until next year.

And a recent surge in new COVID-19 cases in Melbourne, Australia's second-biggest city, has served as a reminder that the pandemic remains a threat.

"We have to position ourselves for several years where revenues will be much lower. And that means becoming a smaller airline in the short-term," Joyce said in unveiling the "post-COVID recovery plan".

In addition to the Aus$15 billion in cost-cutting, the plan includes raising up to Aus$1.9 billion (US$1.3 billion) in equity.

The 6,000 job losses will hit both Qantas and its budget subsidiary Jetstar, while the company hopes half of the 15,000 staff placed on leave since March will be back at work by the end of the year, Joyce said. Qantas grounded around 150 aircraft in March, including most of its wide-bodied planes, and 100 of those will remain out of service for at least a year, it said Thursday.—AFP ■

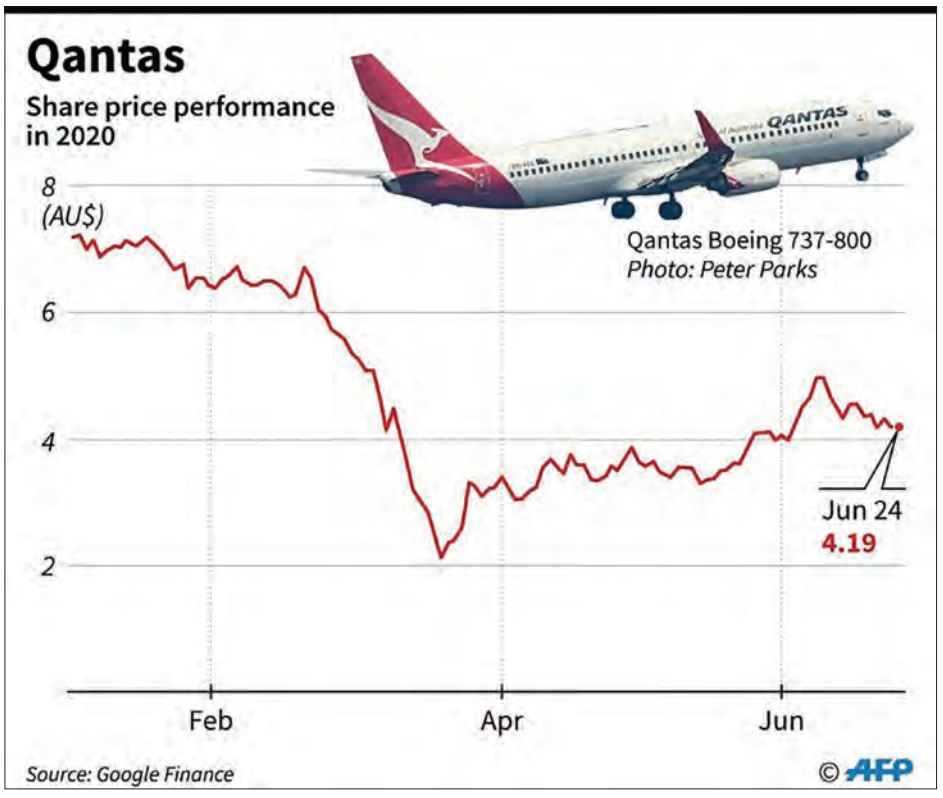



Chart showing Australian carrier Qantas share performance in 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

# EU approves huge bailout of German airline Lufthansa

BRUSSELS — The EU's top competition authority approved the massive bailout of Lufthansa by the German government on Thursday, saving one of the world's biggest airlines from bankruptcy, but under conditions.

The European Commission said an injection of 6.0 billion euros by Berlin to keep the company afloat was allowed, but that Lufthansa would have to make room for rivals at the Frankfurt and Munich airports to ensure fair competition.

The overall rescue comes to nine billion euros ($10 billion) with Lufthansa also receiving three billion euros in public loan guarantees.

"This substantial amount of aid will help Lufthansa weather the current coronavirus crisis, which has hit the airline sector particularly hard," EU competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager said.

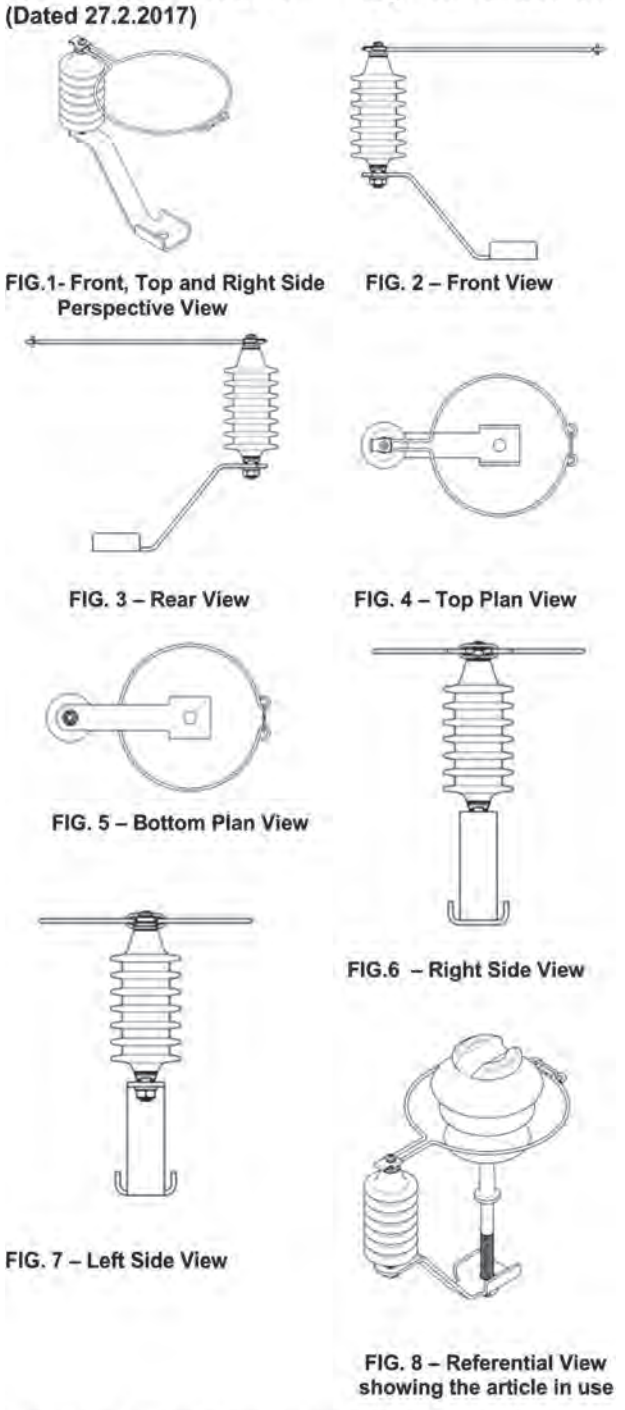
The plan is part of an overall rescue that became a reality on Wednesday, after a billionaire shareholder reversed course and backed the plan.

Heinz Hermann Thiele, who owns 15.5 per cent of Lufthansa's stock, had repeatedly voiced scepticism about the deal -- to the dismay of Lufthansa management, employees and unions.

In the massive rescue, the German government is taking a 20 per cent stake in the company, though thousands of jobs across the company will be lost.—AFP ■

**INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CAUTION NOTICE**

**ENERGY SUPPORT CORPORATION,** a company incorporated in Japan and having its registered office at 1, Aza-Kamikobari, Inuyama-shi, Aichi-ken, Japan, is the owner and proprietor of the following Industrial Design as **"LIGHTNING ARRESTER" - Reg. No. 4/1830/2017 (Dated 27.2.2017)**




The above Design is applied in **Locarno Class 13-03.**

Fraudulent or unauthorised use of the Design shall be dealt with according to law.

**Daw Htoo Htoo**, *H.G.P*
For **ENERGY SUPPORT CORPORATION**,
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon. **Myanmar.**
Dated **26th June 2020** hh@kcyangon.com

# S. Korea marks 70th anniversary of start of Korean War

CHEORWON — South Korea marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the 1950-1953 Korean War on Thursday, with reconciliation remaining elusive amid renewed tensions on the divided peninsula.

In Cheorwon, home to a former battlefield close to the Military Demarcation Line dividing the Koreas, families of those among the millions who died in the war and others attended a ceremony organized by a local government.

In the ceremony, a participant read a prayer calling for a peace treaty that would formally conclude the war, which ended only with a truce agreement.

The message is expected to be sent via diplomatic channels to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, U.S. President Donald Trump and U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Later in the day, the South Korean government was to hold a ceremony at an air base near Seoul to commemorate the war.

The remains of 147 South Korean soldiers killed in the war arrived at the air base on the eve of the anniversary. The remains were brought from Hawaii after being found in North Korea and reviewed by forensic experts.

South Korean performers wearing military uniforms release pigeons during a ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of the Korean War in Cheorwon, near the border with North Korea on June 25, 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The Korean War broke out less than two years after North and South Korea were founded, with the North invading into the South across the 38th parallel, supported by China and the Soviet Union. The U.N. forces fought alongside South Korea.

Hostilities ended July 27, 1953, with an armistice signed at the Panmunjeom border village between U.S.-led U.N. forces, North Korea and the People's Volunteer Army of China.

An estimated 10 million people are said to have become separated as a result of the war, many of whom died without being reunited with their families.—Kyodo ■

# Japan confirms scrapping US missile defence system

TOKYO — Japan has scrapped the deployment of a multi-billion-dollar US anti-missile system, the government confirmed Thursday, days after saying the programme had been suspended.

Interceptors for the Aegis Ashore system were to be placed in two regions under the costly and controversial programme.

Japan's deal to buy the system was seen in part as part of Tokyo's efforts to bolster defensive capabilities after North Korean missile launches. **PHOTO: AFP**

But the government reversed course under pressure from local residents concerned about the risks posed by a missile defence system in their backyard.

"The National Security Council discussed this matter and reached the conclusion that the deployment of Aegis Ashore in Akita and Yamaguchi is to be rescinded," Defence Minister Taro Kono told a meeting of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

"I want to deeply apologize that it has come to this."

Later Thursday, Kono said Tokyo and Washington were discussing how to fend off missile threats from Pyongyang after dropping the defence system plan.

"There's a threat coming from North Korea," Kono told reporters.

"We have been talking with the United States on how to improve our ballistic missile defence capability or integrated air-missile defence capability," he added.

"So we are trying to make maximum use of what we have contracted with the United States."

The government had originally guaranteed that interceptor missile gear would not land in residential areas near where the system was based.—AFP ■

# Indonesian president has COVID-19 protocols strictly imposed in worst-hit city

JAKARTA — Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Thursday had health protocols stringently applied in and around East Java province's capital of Surabaya which has been hardest dashed by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the country.

Although more Indonesian areas have nearly obliterated the rate of infection, still the country's second biggest city of Surabaya has recently rotated out the Indonesian capital of Jakarta in terms of the largest transmission of the disease, according to the Health Ministry and the COVID-19 Task Force.

The implementation of the health protocols, such as wearing face masks, remains low in the province, the president noted during his visit to the city.

"It was reported by the task force that about 70 per cent of the residents have not worn face masks. This is a very big figure," he told a press conference broadcast live by local television stations. —Xinhua ■

## NEWS In BRIEF

### Chinese veterans of Korean War urge peace as tensions with US mount

SHANGHAI — Chinese army veteran Yu Jihua faced the United States on the battlefield in the Korean War and the 87-year-old has no wish to see a repeat as tensions rise again between the nuclear-armed superpowers.

The 1950-53 conflict broke out 70 years ago on Thursday and just a few months later would see Chinese and US forces engaged in combat for the first time. The two giants are deeply at odds again today over a range of trade and geopolitical issues, and no one is more sensitive to that than Yu, who still suffers night terrors from the war.

"If a war is started, people all over the world will suffer," he warns.—AFP ■

### China moves back some troops, vehicles to depth areas in Galwan Valley

NEW DELHI — In the ongoing dispute along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh sector, China has moved back some of its troops and vehicles to depth areas in Galwan Valley following the meeting with the Indian side on June 22, sources said.

"On June 22, the Chinese side had given assurance that they will move back troops from front to the depth areas. In this regard, some troops and vehicles were moved back by them in the Galwan area," a source told ANI. The step was taken by both the sides as they wanted to avoid a repeat of June 15 violent face-off as the troops were in close vicinity.

The June 22 meeting between Indian Army's 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh and his Chinese counterpart took place at Moldo after which there was a consensus for mutual disengagement.

The commander-level talks were held after a violent face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in Ladakh on June 15. —ANI ■

# Russians cast early votes in ballot to extend Putin's rule

Masks and disinfectant gels have been made available to 110 million eligible voters across 10 time zones. **PHOTO: AFP**

MOSCOW — Russians were casting early ballots Thursday in a nationwide vote on constitutional reforms that could see President Vladimir Putin remain in power until 2036.

Election officials opened polling stations in the lead-up to the official voting day on July 1 to reduce the risk of overcrowding that could spread coronavirus infections.

Masks and disinfectant gels have been made available to 110 million eligible voters across 10 time zones, and Russians in Vladivostok in the Far East cast ballots wearing masks as election officials distributed ballot papers in gloves. The Kremlin reluctantly postponed the vote that was originally scheduled for April 22 as COVID-19 infections increased and officials imposed restrictions to slow the pandemic.

Putin – in power as president or prime minister since 1999 – introduced the reforms to the 1993 constitution in January.

They were hastily adopted by both houses of parliament and regional lawmakers and the outcome of the referendum is seen as a foregone conclusion.

Putin insisted that Russians vote on the changes even though a referendum is not legally required, arguing a plebiscite would give the amendments legitimacy.

### 'President for life'

Opposition campaigner Alexei Navalny has slammed the vote as a populist ploy designed to give Putin the right to be "president for life". "It is a violation of the constitution, a coup," he has said.

Among other changes, the reforms would reset Putin's presidential term-limit clock to zero, allowing him to run two more times and potentially stay in the Kremlin until 2036.

Under current rules, the 67-year-old's current term in the Kremlin would expire in 2024. —AFP ■

# Kosovo defends 'just war' after president accused of war crimes

PRISTINA — As Kosovo President Hashim Thaci rushed home Thursday to face accusations of war crimes from the 1990s conflict with Serbia, Kosovars defended the "just war" that paved their path to independence.

Thaci was the former political leader of the ethnic Albanian guerilla group, the KLA, which launched a rebellion against Belgrade more than 20 years ago when Kosovo was a southern province of Serbia.

On Wednesday, he and others were accused a slew of war crimes linked to the 1998-99 war in an indictment filed by special prosecutors at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in The Hague.

Their victims included "hundreds of known victims of Kosovo Albanian, Serb, Roma, and other ethnicities and include political opponents," said the prosecutors, who still need a pre-trial judge to approve the charges. The prosecutors said they published the charges early because Thaci and others have been trying to "obstruct the work" of the tribunal, which operates under Kosovo law but has international judges.

### 'This court is unfair'

Thaci, who was on his way home after cutting short a planned trip to the US to discuss lingering tensions with Serbia, has not yet responded to the charges. But Kosovars have come to the defence of the rebels who rose up against Belgrade in a war that cost about 13,000 lives, overwhelmingly Kosovo Albanians.—AFP ■

# Palestinians unveil Jordan Valley fund as annexation looms

RAMALLAH - Palestinian Territories — The Palestinian Authority has announced a multi-million-dollar fund to support residents of the Jordan Valley, just days before Israel intends to start annexing the strategic swathe of the occupied West Bank.

"The government has decided to establish projects to support the residents of the Jordan Valley," Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh told AFP on Wednesday.

The scheme will be implemented within days and amount to 35 million Israeli shekels ($10 million), the premier said.

The financing will largely focus on agricultural improvements, although it also includes education and health projects.

Additionally, Shtayyeh said the PA will "allocate land to all Palestinians who want to invest in the Jordan Valley."

Palestinians greatly outnumber Jewish settlers in the fertile valley, which makes up about 30 per cent of the occupied West Bank.

But Israel considers the area essential to its security and intends to take steps towards annexing it, along with Jewish settlements across the West Bank, from July 1.—AFP ■

# 'Tears of joy': Eiffel Tower opens after 104-day virus lockdown

PARIS — Tourists and Parisians ready for a workout gathered at the Eiffel Tower on Thursday as the iron monument reopened after its longest closure since World War II, a highly symbolic move as France emerges from its coronavirus lockdown.

Journalists from around the world outnumbered about 50 people, mainly French, who began the steep climb by stairs to the first two levels, as elevators and the top observation deck will remain closed because of social distancing concerns.

"I'm tearing up, but they're tears of joy. It's an emotional moment after these difficult months," said Therese, visiting from the southern French city of Perpignan.

"I'm going to climb, but slowly," said the 60-year-old, wearing the obligatory face mask. "And if I don't make it, it's no big deal!"

"It's very special to be here," said Manuel Mehl, who came "spontaneously" from Pfaffenhofen in Germany with his American wife Shanique Chintsanya.

Patrick Branco Ruivo, director general of the site's operating company SETE, said the top would reopen on July 15, though just eight people will be allowed into the elevators at a time, instead of the usual 45.

The 104-day closure cost the company 27 million euros ($30 million) in lost sales, he said, adding that visitor numbers will be tightly limited for now.

The Eiffel Tower usually receives about seven million visitors per year, some three-quarters from abroad.

The absence of crowds was no problem for Iris Wang, a 25-year-old from China. "It's more peaceful and quiet," she told AFP.

Alex, 15, visiting with his mother from the Netherlands, said: "It's my first time in Paris and it's really great to be here -- we saw the Eiffel Tower was opening today so we thought we should come."—AFP ■

As the Eiffel Tower reopens after 104 days of coronavirus lockdown, elevators and the top observation deck remain off-limits because of social distancing concerns. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Qatar confirms first virus death among World Cup workforce

DOHA— World Cup organizers in Qatar reported the first coronavirus death of a worker involved in construction of 2022 tournament venues on Thursday (Jun 25).

A source close to the Qatari tournament organizers told AFP that 1,102 cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed among workers at tournament projects with 121 infections still active.

First reported by the newly relaunched Doha News, a site popular among expatriates in Qatar, the victim was an engineer in his fifties who had no underlying medical conditions.

Qatar has one of the highest per capita infection rates in the world with 3.3 per cent of its 2.75 million population having tested positive.

Most have since recovered with only 17,591 active cases reported in the latest official statistics alongside 104 deaths.

"Sadly, on June 11, 2020, a 51-year-old specialist engineer employed by the contractor Conspel, tragically died after contracting COVID-19," the Qatari organization responsible for organizing the 2022 tournament said in a statement.

"He had worked on Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy projects since October 2019 and had no underlying health issues. We send our deepest condolences to his family and friends."

His nationality was not disclosed.

The Qatari organizers reported the first infections among its workforce on April 15 with five cases across three stadium projects.—AFP ■

Workers gather at Qatar's al-Bayt stadium ahead of the coronavirus pandemic which has claimed its first victim among the World Cup workforce GIUSEPPE CACACE. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Juventus move in for the kill in Serie A title race

MILAN — Cristiano Ronaldo's Juventus host struggling Lecce on Friday looking to take advantage of a midweek slip-up by nearest challengers Lazio and move seven points clear at the top of Serie A.

The eight-time reigning champions bounced back from their Italian Cup final defeat at the hands of Napoli and were the only one of the top three in Italy to win in the league this week with their 2-0 victory in Bologna on Monday.

Fabio Liverani's Lecce held Juventus to a 1-1 draw in the reverse fixture at home in the boot of Italy in October, and shocked Napoli 3-2 in the San Paolo in February.

But the southerners, who lie in the relegation zone, lost 7-2 to Atalanta just before the coronavirus lockdown in March and returned with a 4-1 thumping by AC Milan on Monday. A return to Serie B looks likely on this form.

Lazio host Fiorentina on Saturday filled with regret after losing their first league game in nine months, falling 3-2 at Atalanta on Wednesday after surrendering a two-goal lead.

"Unfortunately the title race gets more complicated and we regret this," said Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi. The Roman outfit last won Serie A two decades ago.

Inter Milan's title hopes stalled further in a 3-3 draw with Sassuolo on Wednesday which left them eight points behind Juventus with a tricky trip to Parma awaiting on Sunday.

Antonio Conte's men need a result to consolidate third position with Atalanta just four points behind in fourth before their game at strugglers Udinese.

### Incredible Atalanta

Atalanta have been in incredible form with 77 league goals this season -- 25 more than Juventus -- and 14 in their last three games.

"Wins like the one against Lazio give you a very important boost," said Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini.—AFP ■

Cristiano Ronaldo. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Liverpool wait on Man City slip-up to clinch long-awaited title

LONDON— Liverpool will be crowned champions of England for the first time in 30 years on Thursday should Manchester City fail to beat Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Jurgen Klopp's men moved to the brink of a long-awaited Premier League title in the style that has made them worthy champions-elect by thrashing Crystal Palace 4-0 on their return to Anfield behind closed doors on Wednesday.

Trent Alexander-Arnold, Mohamed Salah, Fabinho and Sadio Mane scored the goals as the Reds opened up a 23-point lead at the top of the table.

Should City keep the title race alive at Chelsea, a point will be good enough for Liverpool to win the league when the top two meet in Manchester on July 2.

"Tonight was a big step, that's clear," said Klopp. "We've all still got to play seven games. If we play like this it's really not nice to play against us."

City boss Pep Guardiola said on Wednesday his priority is Sunday's FA Cup quarter-final rather than prolonging Liverpool's wait and he could rest players for a trip to Newcastle at the weekend.

"Pep should play poker," added Klopp. "They are brilliant, the football they play is unbelievable.

"We are different and we have to be. There are different ways of playing football and I like them both." —AFP ■

Mohamed Salah scores Liverpool's second goal. **PHOTO: AFP**