UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin participated in the Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, which was held via video conference, on 2 March 2021 at 2:30 pm from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting was participated by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

At the meeting, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers discussed ASEAN Community building, regional efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN’s external relations and its centrality in the evolving regional architecture, and exchanged views on regional and international issues.

The Union Minister for Foreign Affairs later apprised the meeting of the voting irregularities that occurred in the general elections which were held on 8 November 2020, the five-point prioritized programme to be undertaken by the State Administration Council, maintaining law and order for public safety, additional effort to be made on COVID-19 vaccination, efforts being made to achieve lasting peace in Myanmar, Union Election Commission’s efforts to scrutinize voter lists of the general elections, and Myanmar’s commitment to continue to work closely with ASEAN, especially in the implementation of the recommendations made under the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) in Rakhine State.

The Informal Ministerial Meeting, which ended at 5:30 pm, was also participated by Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Myanmar Economic Bank

1. The state-owned Myanmar Economic Bank is committed to providing financial security to the public. It maintains the accounts of all government departments, as well as the pensions and salaries of retired persons and gratuity matters.

2. In addition to the above activities, we accept various deposits such as Savings Bank Deposits, Accounts Deposits, Fixed Deposit and Term Deposits and issue various loans and provide a full range of local and international money transfer services.

3. For the convenience of the people in depositing and cash withdrawal, we provide services for self-depositing and withdrawing money, depositing and withdrawing money through an agent and internet, with mobile phones and withdrawals from ATMs. Unnecessary withdrawals from bank accounts can be detrimental to interest rates, and the public can use banking services with confidence, such as transferring money from one bank to another in the form of payment, issuing cheques, bank account transfer and transferring money through a remittance system. We like to inform you that banking services can be used to ensure financial security without having to deal with large amounts of cash.

Myanmar Economic Bank

The Global Light of Myanmar

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting

Public Notice from Myanmar Economic Bank

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Myanmar Economic Bank
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs
   (a) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner
   (b) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)
   (c) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy

2. Economic affairs
   (a) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
   (b) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people
   (c) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State

3. Social affairs
   (a) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit
   (b) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters
   (c) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Five future programmes of State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty democracy election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.

Statement of Union Election Commission
(2 March 2021)

1. The Union Election Commission inspected the casting of votes related to the multiparty general election held on 8 November 2020 in Thazi Township of Mandalay Region.
2. According to the inspection findings, the previous election commission released 156,671 eligible voters in Thazi Township of Mandalay Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 131,682 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 14,119 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 1,024 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 16,360 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
3. Findings in the inspection were as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Township and number of polling stations</th>
<th>List of township sub-commission</th>
<th>List from immigration department</th>
<th>Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny card</th>
<th>Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC</th>
<th>Those involved in voter list two times holding one CSC</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>249 polling stations in Thazi Township of Mandalay Region</td>
<td>156,671</td>
<td>131,682</td>
<td>14,119</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>16,360</td>
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Union Election Commission

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

49 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 March, total figure rises to 141,965

Total Cases 141,965
Total Death 3,199
Total Recovered 131,534
New Cases 49
Discharged from Hospital 131,534

Updated at 8 pm, 2 March 2021
MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 141,965 after 49 new cases were reported on 2 March 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 3,199 died, 131,534 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Ministry of Health and Sports
For food sufficiency of the country

He also discussed the promotion of the agricultural sector for food sufficiency of the country, livestock and fish breeding farms, commercial production of foodstuffs.

(Extract from the speech to the management committee meeting of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 26 February 2021)

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo attends 27th ASEAN Economic Ministers’ Retreat Meeting

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo participated in the 27th ASEAN Economic Ministers’ Retreat Meeting via video conference, which was held on 2 March 2021.

In the first session of the 27th AEM Retreat Meeting, the ASEAN Economic Ministers’ interface with the representatives of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) was held. At the interface, Dr. Sri Rozaimeryanty DSLJ Haji Abid Rahman, chairman of ASEAN-BAC and the members, presented ASEAN-BAC’s priorities and initiatives for 2021 under the theme: “Recover, Strengthen, Together: Sama-sama”. U Zaw Min Win, President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry as a member of ASEAN-BAC, briefed the current trade and investment environment in Myanmar. The Ministers stressed the importance of public-private partnership in the implementation of ASEAN Economic Integration, welcomed private engagement in the COVID-19 recovery efforts in the region and encouraged to cooperate for the regional economic sustainable development.

The Union Minister informed the meeting that Myanmar would continue to implement the commitments as agreed in the regional and international agreements and the government’s efforts to facilitate trade and investment. On the comments of ASEAN-BAC members for the safety of doing business in Myanmar, Union Minister responded that the government committed to protecting the approved businesses in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations, and informed the government initiative to support the business-facing operational issues and regulatory burdens by setting up help desk as after-care service. He also stressed the development of the SMART programme to facilitate trade and investment for the better business environment.

In the second session, the Ministers exchanged views on Post COVID-19 recovery efforts in each member country, strengthening global value chains in ASEAN, the Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) under Brunei’s Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021. Ministers also discussed and gave guidance on the modalities for future entry into force provisions in ASEAN economic agreements, the preparation of post-2025 vision for the ASEAN Economic Community, the status of the review of the ASEAN – India Trade in Goods Agreement and the Framework setting out the parameters of a future ASEAN – EU Agreement.

The Union Minister updated the situation of COVID-19 in Myanmar and the implementation of the National Vaccination Programme. He also explained that Myanmar would take the measures leading to economic recovery rather than the relief measures undertaken in the past and take immediate action to review the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), and support MSMEs to restart their business. He reiterated that Myanmar would actively participate in the regional and multilateral fora and maintain commitments to honouring the existing bilateral and multilateral agreements. Moreover, the Union Minister exchanged the view on the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) with other ASEAN Economic Ministers.

The Meeting was chaired by Dato’ Dr Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Minister of Finance and Economy of Brunei Darussalam and attended by ASEAN Economic Ministers, Senior Economic Officials (SEOM) and representatives from ASEAN Countries, ASEAN Business Council members, the ASEAN Secretariat-General and representatives from ASEAN Secretariat.

The meeting will continue on 3 March 2021.—MNA

MoI discusses implementations for March

THE Ministry of Information held a co-ordination meeting on 1 March in Nay Pyi Taw. Union Minister for Information U Chitt Naing, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, departmental officials and responsible persons attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Chitt Naing said that he is pleased to see that staff under the Ministry of Information serve the country with good spirits, good discipline and enthusiasm, ingenuity and loyalty to their country and people although they are being deployed to the remote areas. He also urged to continue to be dutiful. The Deputy Minister and the departmental officials reviewed the activities in February and discussed the plans for March.—MNA
MoRAC donates rice to monasteries, nunneries in Lewe of Nay Pyi Taw

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture celebrated the rice donation ceremony at Pauk Myaing Pariyatti Monastery in Lewe Township of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Ovadasariya of Upatissanti Pagoda Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Ratthha Guru Bhaddanta Janinda of Pauk Myaing Pariyatti Monastery and Sanghas attended the ceremony in addition to the Union Minister of Religious Affairs and Culture, Permanent Secretary, Director-General of Religious Affairs, Director-General and Deputy Permanent Secretary of Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana and other officials.

During the ceremony, Union Minister U Ko Ko and other officials took five precepts from Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Janinda of Pauk Myaing Pariyatti Monastery. Then, the Union Minister also briefed the rice donation—241 rice bags for a total of 1,015 monks and 382 nuns in Pyinmana and Pobbathiri townships on 19 February, reopening of pagodas across the nation starting 8 February in accordance with the instructions of the Union Minister.

The Union Minister also delivered sermons, and the Union Minister and officials poured the water of liberation to share merits with them. The Union Minister and party donated a total of 145 rice bags for 1,019 monks and nunneries in Lewe of Nay Pyi Taw.

Request to health workers

1. It is appreciated for the strenuous efforts of the medical doctors, nurses, medical experts and other health workers at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports at the front-line in the fight against prevention, containment and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

2. As the vaccination programme of COVID-19 is being conducted for the public and the real-time healthcare services are required for the people, all the staff members at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports are strongly urged to return to their duties with taking the well-being of patients into consideration.

Ministry of Health and Sports
8 February 2021

Request to Public

1. Democracy practices have granted the public for freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason of human rights, some persons are now under pressured, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnish the image of democracy.

2. For preventing destructive actions against stability of the state, safety of the public and rule of law, it is also required to proper actions in line with the law.

3. All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of country and people.
Watermelon supply exceeds demand as about 1,300 trucks stuck in Muse depot

ALTHOUGH watermelon is fetching a good price after the Chinese New Year, about 1,300 trucks are now stranded in Muse 105th-mile zone due to China’s two-day closure of border trade. Consequently, watermelon supply exceeds the demand, said Sai Min Thu Naing from Khwar Nyo Fruit Depot.

“The price is regular after the Chinese New Year. However, the two-day holidays of trading disrupted the watermelon transport route. About 1,300 trucks were stuck in the 105th-mile zone. At present, only 150-200 trucks can enter China. So, there is no market equilibrium,” he elaborated.

China shut down the post on 25 and 28 February without a specific reason, resulting in 1,300 watermelon trucks stranded in the 105th-mile zone.

A tonne of watermelon (855 variety) now receives the maximum price of 65,000 Yuan, whereas the regular price is around 45,000 Yuan.

Additionally, about 200 watermelon trucks daily enter the Muse land border. The trucks continue to leave for China via Muse.


After the country achieves success on the Dubai market, Myanmar plans to expand its market to Hon Kong SAR, the UAE and Qatar, the association stated.

On 5 January 2021, the 105th-mile Fruit Wholesale Centre released a statement that the number of watermelon and muskmelon trucks for exports is set to govern the market.

During the previous financial year, the growers and the traders suffered the loss due to the price instability and transportation difficulties triggered by the COVID-19.

Watermelon and muskmelon will be harvested up to May-end across the country, except Kayah and Chin states.

May-end across the country, except Kayah and Chin states, Myanmar yearly exports over 800,000 tonnes of watermelon and about 150,000 tonnes of muskmelons to China, the association stated. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar mineral exports plunge by $521 mln as of 19 February

THE value of Myanmar’s mineral exports has drastically fallen to US$447 million as of 19 February in the current financial year 2020-2021 since 1 October, reflecting a severe drop of $521 million as against a year ago period, the Ministry of Commerce data indicated.

The mineral exports hit 986.6 million in the corresponding period of last FY.

The coronavirus impacts led to the slump in mineral exports this FY. The heightened COVID-19 measures also shut down the events like gem exhibition and expo, a trader said.

So far, excavation of over 1,250 mining blocks has been permitted on a manageable, small, medium, and large scale, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Due to the limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals had dropped significantly in the previous years. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016. However, after two years, Myanmar’s mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the ministry.

Within two years of implementing the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mines Department has approved more than 140 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks. Many more blocks are to be granted the permit.

The Myanmar Mines Law was enacted on 24 December 2015. However, the law came into force when the rules were issued on 13 February 2018.

The ministry undertakes the screening process of the proposals for medium and large-scale mining blocks. As per the regulatory changes in 2018, regional and state governments are given the power to process applications for artisanal and small-scale mining blocks.

Under the new regulations, foreign firms can invest in large blocks which cover up to 500,000 acres (about 202,000 hectares). In contrast, local firms can invest in all kinds of blocks. Investors can seek a permit to mine minerals such as gold, copper, lead and tin. The licences cover prospecting, exploration, and production.

Myanmar’s mineral exports have shown a marked increase in the previous FY2019-2020, touching $1.87 billion, an increase of $405.48 million compared with the year ago period, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the FY2018-2019, mineral exports were pegged at just $1.465 billion.

Myanmar’s mineral products constitute 10 per cent of overall exports. About 80 per cent of mineral products are shipped to external markets through sea trade. At the same time, 20 of them are sent to neighbouring countries through border trade channels.—KK/GNLM

Investments from Hon Kong SAR top $87 mln in 4 months (Oct-Jan)

HONG KONG SAR, the third-largest investor in Myan- mar, pumped in US$877 million with five projects as of January-end, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Hong Kong puts investment in real estate development, electricity, and garment businesses.

Singapore is the top source of foreign direct investments into Myanmar in the first four months of the current financial year 2020-2021, bringing in $378 million under 12 projects. China stood as the second-largest investors this FY, with an estimated capital of $139.354 million from 10 enterprises.

Those enterprises listed from Thailand, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, the UK, Viet Nam, Marshall Island and China (Taipei) also made investments this year.

Myanmar has attracted foreign direct investments of more than US$672.59 million in Oct-Jan of the current FY. They include expanding capital by existing enterprises and acquisitions in the Special Economic Zones, DICA’s statistics indicated.

MIC intends to reach an FDI target of $5.8 billion for the current FY2020-2021.

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

The economic interaction between Myanmar and Hong Kong SAR has been increasing rapidly. Hong Kong emerged as the third-largest investor in Myanmar after Singapore and China. Between FY2016-2017 and January 2021, 144 enterprises from Hong Kong brought in foreign direct investment of $2.5 billion into Myanmar, according to an official data on permitted enterprises released by the DICA. — HH/GNLM
Two men were killed following a head-on car crash in Mong Phyat Township in Tachilek District, Shan State (East) on 1 March evening.

A 47-year-old man and a 45-year-old man lost their lives in the accident. According to the witnesses, the crash happened at approximately 3:45 pm between Soatpan village and Saikgone village on Kengtung-Mong Phyat-Tachilek Pyidaungsu Road.

According to the investigation, Vigo, a 12-wheel vehicle, which was en route to Tachilek from Mong Phyat driven by Arr Phar, 37, with U Maw Yar, 47, U Arr Khant, 45, and Ma Arr Par, 18, on board from Tachilek, collided head-on with another Ruso 12-wheel vehicle heading to Mong Phyat from Tachilek driven by Aung Ko Min Naing, 31, from Meiktila town on Pyidaungsu Road.

The driver and the passenger from the Vigo vehicle have been pronounced dead with severe injuries at the scene. Meanwhile, the passenger named Ma Arr Par from the same vehicle was rushed to the hospital in critical condition. The Pyidaungsu Road was shut down for about an hour during the traffic crash investigation. The road was reopened later.

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Civil servants’ loyalty towards the country

By Maung Mya Tha

The current situation is under the State of Emergency. Some of the unscrupulous persons and those who do not want the country’s prosperity are committing incitement or threatening the government staff in various ways not to enter their duties to stop the State mechanism during this period.

Inseparability of government and government staff

In reality, the government staff are not the loyalists of any political parties. They are the ones who serve the duties for the interests of the State and people. The State and the government staff are inseparable and live on through thick and thin.

The high morale of government employees plays a crucial role in promoting State development. If their moral status and ability decrease, it may occur delays in State development.

There are more than 1 million government staff in the country, and it is only about 1.4 per cent of the population. The government employees are serving their duties across the nation. Every government employee lives with their families who rely solely on them. The salary and benefits of government employees are the life guarantees of their family members.

Therefore, the government staff need to consider themselves if they commit something that affects the interests of their departments, country and people due to their emotions or the incitement of other groups or people.

Most of the people, who urge the government employees not to go to work, are the ones who do not understand the existence of government staff and their family members, the nature of staff organizations, duties of government staff, rules and regulations. They are intentionally committig incitement to the government staff to stop the government mechanism.

The government servants must remain loyal to the benefits of the country and the people. During the two former government terms elected by holding the multiparty general election under the 2008 Constitution, they had to serve the duties in line with the respective government’s policies. Therefore, the government employees should carry out their responsibilities by using their utmost efforts to be good civil servants.

The government servants must take into account that their family members and relatives rely on their salaries. Therefore, I hope they will not change their career in government services that guarantee their lives, social welfare benefits, entitlement, and other opportunities with the wrong concepts.

The main aim of the transfer of power is not to refrain from the democratic pathway that all the citizens desire as there was no solution or accountability for election frauds in the 2020 general election. Similarly, the proper activities are being carried out for the State’s development step by step under the Constitution. Although there are many plans to implement to a certain extent, delays occur in the operations due to the other destructive elements. Therefore, serving the duties full of responsibilities is the best choice for a good government employee who maintains loyalty towards the country and people.

Translated.
F or the next three months, March, April and May, the people in Myanmar will be exposed to high temperature, gale-force winds and high UV index.

Especially, gale-force winds which hit the country in the evenings in March and April, the first two months of our summer season. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department of the Union Ministry of Commerce has given an early warning yesterday stating that during March and April, increasing rains or thunderstorms are likely to be in the afternoons or evenings, accompanied by strong winds, hail, thunder and lightning, due to convective clouds created by gradually rising daytime temperatures across the country. The surface wind speed is expected to reach a mean of 35 to 40 km per hour.

Hence, people should take “full precautions” in the evenings and take “necessary action” to protect themselves and their property.

Gale-force winds, which tend to follow heavy rainfall, hit parts of Myanmar every year, destroying homes, toppling trees, and causing fatalities and injuries. Most areas across the country have experienced strong winds during the daytime or at high temperatures.

People should stop everything and stay indoors when a storm wind hits.

Another danger in the summer season is ultra-violet (UV) rays. With the increase in temperature and the decrease in rainfall, the UV index level will also be rising day by day. As the weather transitions from winter to summer, the daytime temperature will spiral upwards, and we can expect more severe weather patterns rather than normal conditions as the world warms up due to climate change.

On account of global warming, the evil effects of natural disasters related to climate change are threatening the safety of our planet. There have been increased occurrences of natural disasters with greater destructive impact. The consequences of climate change can cause physical and mental damage.

It is clear that we need to be ready to resist and respond to natural disasters. We would like to remind all of you that our country has seen an increase in the number of natural disasters since 1980.

Our country has seen an increase in the number of natural disasters since 1980. The MIT report has seen an increase in the number of natural disasters since 1980. Climate change has caused a rise in the frequency and severity of natural disasters. The report states that the number of natural disasters has increased by 40% worldwide since 1999.

In addition, the intensity of these disasters has also increased. The magnitude of natural disasters has been magnified due to climate change. The report states that the intensity of hurricanes, floods, and landslides has increased by 25%. The frequency of heatwaves and droughts has also increased.

The report emphasizes the need for action to address climate change and reduce the impacts of natural disasters. It highlights the importance of adopting more sustainable practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change. The report calls for urgent action to address the issue and prevent further damage.

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Let’s strengthen the country with enhanced efficiency and capacity

By Zwe

Moreover, every employee has the right to vote as a citizen but free from political affairs. Civil service personnel have either no right to support financially or any other way to any political party for the party’s political movements or to be involved in any political party or organization.

Let me encourage all employees to be a part of the key players to move forward to the expected democratic nation with understanding and trust by individually upgrading the skills and capacity, by complying with the workplace rules and regulations respectfully and by following the employee ethics unitedly.

Civil service personnel, as well as the public, have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Government servants have to go to work as a matter of duty and are worried about the family members left at home. Many of the employees who work away from home do not return home for many months. Some employees could not even present at the funeral of their parents and relatives. However, no matter how difficult it is, they serve the country.

In fact, there is a code of conduct to observe. No employee can refuse to obey the duty to perform or break the rules to follow. Employees are devoting their time to serve the country in respective departments for the country and its people and their family.

If we look back at the history we went through, we can see that the government has never abandoned its civil service personnel but offered the salary, allowance and benefits as much as it could. They are offered a decent wage, benefits, pension and social security benefits. If they serve the country in a tranquil place, they are offered a bonus.

Although the government has not provided housing for all civil service personnel, the employees who have difficulties finding a place to live have been provided low-cost housing, staff housing and rental housing. It is obvious that the government is still providing the best possible arrangements for accommodation, even it is not fully operational. While still being reasonable, I would like to share a little bit about the code of ethics that civil service personnel should observe. There are 15 codes of ethics. Firstly, it is stated to keep the loyalty and respect of the State; the second is to respect existing laws. The third is to work for the benefit of the people.

The fourth is to carry out the duties and responsibilities honestly and completely. The fifth is to try to upgrade the skills, performance and strive for capacity building. The sixth states to follow the orders and responsibilities of the superior. The seventh is to ensure that no financial loss is made. The eighth code of ethics is to abide by the rules and regulation of the staff and the workplace regulations, orders and instructions of the organization.

The ninth code of ethics states to maintain the unity of all employees. The thirteenth states that the use of department equipment must not be used without permission. The fourteenth code of ethics states not to write or publish a book that will tarnish the State’s image, and the last one is to avoid engaging in any activity that endangers the security and safety of the State.

There are required qualifications for each position to become civil service personnel, such as educational qualifications, age, skills. When becoming one, it must comply with workplace rules, such as working time rules and regulations and the rules of conduct.

Employees are not allowed to leave the workplace or to take leave without proper reason. They must not leave work without permission during working hours. The complete performance of the duty is one of the top responsibilities of the Code of Conduct.

Moreover, every employee has the right to vote as a citizen but free from political affairs. Civil service personnel have either no right to support financially or any other way to any political party for the party’s political movements or to be involved in any political party or organization.

It is not allowed to be involved in organizations, associations, or union that are not organized according to the rules set by the State Government. It is the staff duty to prevent their families from involving in actions to attack the government directly or indirectly. It is also issued as a matter of staff policy not to engage in any discussion or incitements related to any politics.

From my point of view, for why it is forbidden to not involve in any political party movement as civil service personnel, it is because the government is always changing. However, the State’s civil service organizations never do. Besides, every employee generally performs their duties until the age of 60. If the employee organizations and employees are only expressing their personal feeling with differences in political beliefs, it can lead to the disruption of building the country, and it is believed that these rules and regulations were published.

I believe that State Employees are people who work with their skills for the country’s interest and its people. I hope they will serve the nation by staying out of activities that will harm the interest of the country and people with the staff rules and regulations.

Let me encourage all employees to be a part of the key players to move forward to the expected democratic nation with understanding and trust by individually upgrading the skills and capacity, by complying with the workplace rules and regulations respectfully and by following the employee ethics unitedly.

Translated.
Twitter to boot users who persist with Covid-19 lies

TWITTER said Monday it will start labelling misleading tweets about Covid-19 vaccines and boot users who persist in spreading such misinformation.

The one-to-many rules, earning a strike, according to the company. The second and third strikes will each result in the violating account being blocked for 12 hours.

With a fourth violation, an account will be sidelined for seven days. A fifth strike will get accounts permanently suspended, Twitter said.

Twitter late last year began calling on users to remove dangerously misleading Covid-19 claims, including suggestions that vaccines are used to harm or control people.

The service also targeted baseless claims about adverse effects of vaccines or questioning the reality of the pandemic.

Since then, Twitter has removed more than 84,000 tweets and notified some 11.5 million accounts worldwide about violations of its Covid-19 information rules. —AFP

More than 400 acts of violence against COVID health workers in 2020: report

INSULTS, beatings, arrests – health workers battling the coronavirus were subjected to more than 400 acts of violence related to COVID-19 worldwide in 2020, according to a report published Tuesday by a health NGO.

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition unveiled an interactive map that shows 1,172 violent acts and attacks occurred against health workers or facilities last year, “a minimum estimate,” according to the NGO.

More than a third (412) of the acts are directly related to COVID-19, it said, citing several examples including in Mexico, where a nurse was attacked and injured by a group accusing her of spreading the virus.

In Dakar, three social workers had stones hurled at them by residents who refused to have a coronavirus victim buried near their homes.

In Birmingham, England, a health worker was spat at and insulted by a neighbour.

The vast majority, 80 per cent, of the perpetrators of the violence were civilians, but threats also came from public authorities.

In Egypt, health workers who criticized the regime’s handling of the pandemic were arrested by security forces and accused of spreading false information and belonging to a terrorist group.

Insecurity Insight, which developed the interactive map, said the acts are directly related to the handling of the pandemic.

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The novel coronavirus has killed at least 2,539,506 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019.

At least 114,360,550 cases of coronavirus have been registered. The vast majority have recovered, though some have continued to experience symptoms weeks or even months later.

These figures are based on daily tolls provided by health authorities in each country and exclude later re-evaluations by statistical organizations, as has happened in Russia, Spain and Britain.

On Monday, 6,800 new deaths and 298,141 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on the latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were the United States with 1,336 new deaths, followed by Brazil with 778 and Spain with 467.

The United States is the worst-affected country with 514,657 deaths from 28,664,448 cases.

After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 255,729 deaths from 10,587,091 cases, Mexico with 186,152 deaths from 2,089,281 cases, India with 157,248 deaths from 11,124,527 cases, and the United Kingdom with 122,953 deaths from 4,182,099 cases.

The country with the highest number of deaths compared to its population is the Czech Republic with 193 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Belgium with 191, Slovenia at 185, the United Kingdom with 181 and Italy with 162.

Europe overall has 856,095 deaths from 37,753,889 cases, Latin America and the Caribbean 680,305 deaths from 21,441,424 infections, and the United States and Canada 536,684 deaths from 29,332,563 cases.

At least 114,360,550 cases have been confirmed, though some have continued to experience symptoms weeks or even months later.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 2,539,506 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019. PHOTO: AFP

Iraq receives first Covid vaccines, gift from China

IRAQ on Tuesday received 59,000 Sinopharm vaccines donated by China, the health ministry announced, launching a long-awaited vaccination campaign.

Health ministry spokesman Seif Al-Badr told reporters that the first delivery in the early hours meant inoculations could begin.

“The doses will be delivered to Baghdad’s three main hospitals, and maybe to some provinces,” said Badr, who confirmed the jabs were donations.

“We will start vaccinations today,” he said.

The health ministry simultaneously announced it had agreed with the Chinese ambassador in Baghdad to purchase another two million doses, with no details on payment or timing.

Sinopharm affiliate Wuhan Institute Of Biological Products says its vaccine has an efficacy rate of 72.51 per cent, behind rival jabs by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, which have 95 per cent and 94.5 per cent rates respectively.

Hours earlier, on Monday afternoon, the health ministry launched an online platform for citizens to register for vaccinations, but it had not said the campaign would begin the next day and the page was not functional on Tuesday.

It has said health workers, security forces and the elderly would be prioritized and that the vaccine would be administered free of charge, but has given few other details.

The first jabs arrived as the Iraqi government faces growing criticism of its handling of the pandemic. —AFP

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 2,539,506 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019. PHOTO: AFP

More than 400 acts of violence against COVID health workers in 2020: report

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As oil prices rally, old OPEC tensions set to rise

As members of the oil cartel OPEC and its allies meet this week to discuss adjusting output, analysts expect old tensions between oil producer giants to flare up again.

Russia and Saudi Arabia, respectively the world’s second and third largest producers of oil after the United States, had often been at loggerheads in the past, but when crude oil prices plunged due to the pandemic, they rallied to radically cut production levels and underpin prices.

Now that prices have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, at around $65 a barrel, the two heavyweights and their partners will discuss how to move forward -- and how much crude to release back onto the global market.

Scottish distillery looks to history to lift spirits

IT has survived world wars, Prohibition and The Great Depression but this may very well be the toughest time yet for Scotland’s oldest whisky maker.

The Glenturret Distillery, located on the banks of the River Turret two miles (3.2 kilometres) northwest of the town of Crieff, was established in 1763 and is a popular stop for whisky enthusiasts.

Apart from the rushing river and a distiller rolling oak barrels into a filling house, The Glenturret, which closed to visitors during the Covid-19 lockdown, is eerily quiet. Travel restrictions that came with the pandemic have caused sales to fall at the distillery, in pubs and restaurants, and at airport duty-free shops.

Zoom reports big Q3 gains, but slowing growth sinks stock

ZOOM’S videoconferencing service remains a fixture in pandemic life, but its breakneck growth is showing signs of tapering off as investors debate whether the company will be able to build upon its recent success after a vaccine enables people to intermingle again.

For now, Zoom is thriving as tens of millions of people who never heard of the service at the beginning of the year rely on its video meeting tools to connect with their co-workers, teachers, friends and family while efforts to fight contain the pandemic prevent them from going into offices, schools and most many other places. That dependence boosted Zoom’s fortunes, producing a pandemic-driven success story that was highlighted again Monday with the release of the company’s quarterly results for the August-October period.

Zoom’s revenue more than quadrupled from the same time last year to $777 million, yielding a profit of $108 million, up from just $2.2 million a year ago.

One possible reason for the reaction is that number of companies anteing up for Zoom’s subscription version of its service isn’t rising as rapidly as during the pandemic’s early stages. Zoom ended its latest quarter with 433,700 customers with at least 10 employees.

But it is a 25 per cent tariff on Scotch imposed by the United States in October 2019 and now a slow-down in exports to Europe after the end of the Brexit transition that is hitting profits the hardest.

“IT has been a really tough period for us with Covid, US tariffs and Brexit as well,” the distillery’s managing director, John Laurie, told AFP.

Covid in particular affects our tourism. Then the export markets have been impacted by Brexit and Scottish whisky tariffs in America have been really troublesome.”

Laurie said the increased paperwork and export requirements after Britain’s departure from the European single market on December 31 had delayed shipments to the bloc.

Cold weather in the United States and Covid-19 vaccine programmes have helped oil prices recover to around $65 a barrel.

Thai Airways to halve workforce under rehabilitation plan

THAI Airways International PLC said Tuesday it expects around 6,000-7,000 employees to participate in a voluntarily resignation agreement, thereby halving its workforce.

The employee reduction is part of the troubled flag carrier’s debt rehabilitation plan submitted to the Central Bankruptcy Court as ordered by the Thai government last year.

Chansin Treenuchagorn, the carrier’s acting president, said that Thai Airways employed some 29,000 workers in 2019, before reducing to 21,000 at the end of last year.

It expects a further reduction to around 14,000-15,000 positions by this year which the company considers “suitable for the airline’s future business plan,” according to Chansin.

— Kyodo

Amazon accused of race-gender bias in workplace

A lawsuit filed in US federal court on Monday accused Amazon of keeping women and Black employees down while publicly talking up the need for diversity and social justice.

Charlie Neuman, who is Black and heads Under-represented Founder Startup Business Development at Amazon Web Services, said in the suit she has been harassed, sexually assaulted, and kept from advancing to positions she deserved in the corporation.

“Like so many other Black and female employees at Amazon, Charlotte Neuman was confronted with a systemic pattern of insurmountable discrimination based upon the colour of her skin and her gender,” attorneys argued in the lawsuit.

Neuman is asking for her case to be heard by a jury, and to be awarded unspecified cash damages.

— AFP

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The priorities are well known: Russia wants to return to normal production as quickly as possible while Saudi Arabia wants to benefit from high prices a little longer,” Bjarne Sjelldrop, chief analyst at commodities research group Seb, said ahead of a ministerial level meeting Thursday at which quotas are expected to be adjusted.

“While global demand for crude is recovering, OPEC+ has ensured that its production cuts create an “artificial shortage” that supports prices, according to Stephen Innes, chief global market strategist at broker-group Axis.

Following two days of tough negotiations at 2021’s first summit in early January, the 23 members of the OPEC and OPEC+ groupings agreed to slowly increase oil supply to the world market.

For March, members have already agreed to withhold 7.65 million barrels per day (bpd), less than the 7.125 million bpd they cut in February. With vaccine campaigns underway and demand in China, the world’s largest oil importer, back at pre-pandemic levels, exactly how much oil OPEC+ will allow to be traded for April will be at the heart of Thursday’s ministerial-level debate. —AFP

Around 10,000 people are directly employed by the Scottish distilling industry. PHOTO: AFP

During the week to discuss adjusting output, analysts expect old tensions between oil producer giants to flare up again.

Thai Airways to halve workforce under rehabilitation plan

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Thai Airways to halve workforce under rehabilitation plan
Asian markets mixed on renewed fears over valuations

Asian markets struggled on Tuesday to maintain a global rebound from last week’s rout as the improving economic outlook and vaccine rollouts were offset by lingering worries that valuations may have run too far.

US lawmakers’ push to get Joe Biden’s huge stimulus through Congress in the next two weeks and Wall Street’s powerful lead – driven by a rally in tech firms – were not enough to keep spirits up, with inflation fears also hanging in the background.

A ramping-up of immunizations, falling infection rates, government and central bank support and the easing of lockdown measures have fanned expectations that the global economy will enjoy a blistering recovery this year and next, helping propel equities to record or multi-year highs.

But the bright-eyed optimism has given way in recent weeks to worries that the so-called reflation trade will send prices soaring and force officials at the Federal Reserve and elsewhere to wind in their ultra-easy monetary conditions, including lifting interest rates. —AFP

Chinese billionaires club swells as market rally offsets virus pain

More than 200 billionaires were created in China last year as booming stock markets and a flood of new listings offset the ravages of the virus pandemic, according to a global tally released Tuesday.

The size of China’s exclusive billionaire’s club has almost doubled in the past five years as the world’s number two economy continued to outpace most others, and its ability to mostly avoid the worst of the coronavirus meant it was one of the few to expand in 2020.

And the Hurun Global Rich List showed 259 people breaking into the billion-dollar bracket – more than the rest of the world combined – taking China total to 1,658, the first country to break the 1,000 mark.

In comparison, second best performer the United States saw 70 new billionaires created, taking its total to 696.

Leading the Chinese pack was Zhong Shan-shan of bottled water giant Nongfu, who entered the list for the first time with an $85 billion fortune, putting him number one in Asia and into Hurun’s global top 10. Zhong, a former construction worker, made his cash following a $1 billion initial public offering in Hong Kong last year.

However, a clampdown on ecommerce giant Alibaba saw tycoon Jack Ma fall down the pecking order. The one-time darling of China’s entrepreneurs has come under pressure from regulators, who have reigned in Alibaba and fintech arm Ant Group on anti-trust issues. —AFP

German exports to Britain slump 30% on Brexit, pandemic

THE rise in eurozone consumer prices steadied in February, official data showed on Tuesday, as the jump in energy prices sharply slowed despite the enduring pandemic.

The Eurostat agency said inflation in 19 countries that use the euro rose to 0.9 per cent last month, the same as in January.

January’s rate marked a big leap after several months of negative inflation due to the slumping demand caused by the coronavirus restrictions and restrictions to the economy across Europe.

The rise in prices in 2021 has stoked talk that the European Central Bank should consider rein in its massive stimulus programme, even if inflation remains below the ECB’s near two percent target.

A global debate over governments increasing.

The Eurozone inflation steady as energy prices recover

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A global debate over governments increasing.
Iran denies Netanyahu claim that it struck Israeli ship

The MV Helios Ray vehicle carrier is owned by HELIOS Ltd, an Israeli company registered in the Isle of Man. PHOTO: AFP

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused arch-rival Iran on Monday of a recent attack on an Israeli-owned ship, saying his country was “striking back”.

“It is indeed an Iranian act, that’s clear,” he told public broadcaster Kan, referring to the MV Helios Ray vehicle carrier, which was last week hit by a blast in the Gulf of Oman leaving two holes in its side.

“Israel is Iran’s greatest enemy. I’m determined to block it, we’re striking at it throughout the region,” he said.

Iran strongly rejected Netanyahu’s accusation.

“We strongly deny this accusation,” spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a press conference, adding that “the source of this accusation itself shows how invalid the claim is.”

The ship was sailing from Saudi Arabia to Singapore when it was hit by an explosion in the Gulf of Oman, maritime security groups and the owner said Friday. The MV Helios Ray vehicle carrier is owned by HELIOS Ltd, an Israeli company registered in the Isle of Man.

The owner of the vessel, Israeli businessman Rami Ungar, confirmed the blast in statements to Israel’s Kan state television and said it caused some damage.

“The damage is two holes about a meter and a half (five feet) in diameter,” he said, without elaborating, according to Kan.

“But it is not yet clear to us whether it was caused by missile fire or mines attached to the ship,” he added.

“We have no idea if this is an incident that is part of the tensions between Iran and the United States and if it has to do with the fact that the owner of the ship is Israeli.”

Ungar said there were no casualties among the crew and no damage to the engine.

The Israeli state broadcaster said the vessel was transporting cars from Dammam to Singapore when the blast occurred.

It suggested Iran could be behind the blast, noting the incident comes amid heightened tensions between Israel and the Islamic republic. —AFP

Merkel proposes easing some virus curbs in Germany from Monday

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel wants to allow more socializing between households from next week as part of plans to gradually loosen virus curbs in the Covid-wary nation, a draft text showed Tuesday.

A draft text seen by AFP on the eve of crunch talks with regional leaders showed that Merkel plans to propose that two households, not exceeding five adults, be allowed to get together from March 8.

Under the current rules, one household may only socialize with one other person.

The text also proposes that flower shops, book stores and garden centres should be next in line to reopen, after hairdressers were already allowed to open their doors earlier this week.

However most other shops and restaurants, as well as leisure, cultural and sporting facilities, should remain shut until March 29, according to the draft.

“We mustn’t gamble away the successes we’ve achieved,” it says.

The text has yet to be agreed by Germany’s 16 state premiers, who are due to meet with Merkel on Wednesday to decide the next steps in the fight against the pandemic. —AFP

US urges Saudis to disband force behind Khashoggi killing

THE United States on Monday urged Saudi Arabia to disband an elite unit controlled by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that Washington sanctioned over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

“We have urged Saudi Arabia to disband this group and then adopt institutional, systemic reforms and controls to ensure that anti-dissident activities and operations cease and cease completely,” State Department spokesman Ned Price said of the Rapid Intervention Force.

He also called on Saudi Arabia to take further action after last month provisionally releasing Loujain al-Hathloul, an advocate for women’s right to drive in the ultra-conservative kingdom who was jailed for nearly three years.

“We are urging Saudi Arabia to take additional steps to lift travel bans on those released to commute sentences and resolve cases such as those of women’s rights activists and others,” Price said.

President Joe Biden on Friday declassified an intelligence report that found that Prince Mohammed ordered the 2018 killing of Khashoggi, a US-based contributor to The Washington Post who was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The report found that seven of the 15 members of the hit squad that flew to Istanbul came from the Rapid Intervention Force, which it said “exists to defend the crown prince” and “answers only to him.” The Treasury Department imposed sanctions on the force — meaning any US transactions with it will be a crime — but the administration stopped short of personally targeting the powerful crown prince.

Price, following up on Friday’s release of the report, vowed that the Biden administration would put a higher priority on human rights following former president Donald Trump’s clumsy relationship with the Saudis.

“We have made crystal clear and will continue to do so that the brutal killing of Jamal Khashoggi 28 months ago remains unacceptable conduct,” Price said. —AFP

Armenia struggles through crisis as war wounds fester

ANGER caught in Mari Hovhannisyan’s throat as she demanded Armenia’s leadership resign, more than three months on from a disastrous war that saw swathes of territory lost to Azerbaijan.

“I am six months pregnant but I had to come out,” the 36-year-old told AFP, directing her fury at her country’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

“I am against this regime, against the betrayer who sold out our land, our flag, our nation, everything. He should be in jail, he can’t remain in place.”

Around her in Armenia’s capital Yerevan several thousand protesters, waving the national flag, echoed her contempt.

But at the same time, just over a kilometre away on Monday evening, the man they are targeting was defiantly plotting his own way forward in front of a far larger crowd of supporters on the city’s main square. —AFP
Chinese envoy asks for more int’l aid for Yemen

A Chinese envoy on Monday asked for more international assistance to prevent famine in Yemen.

Yemen, with the multiple challenges of violent conflict, economic crisis, COVID-19, and food insecurity, is deeply mired in a large-scale humanitarian disaster. The international community must act immediately, increase assistance to Yemen, prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis and make every effort to avoid the spread of famine, said Dai Bing, China’s deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

The entire UN system must efficiently and effectively carry out humanitarian operations, and strengthen coordination with regional countries and organizations. All parties to the conflict must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access so that humanitarian supplies can be delivered to the people in need, and vulnerable groups such as women and children can be effectively protected, he told a high-level pledging event for Yemen.

All 279 kidnapped Nigerian students released

ALL 279 Nigerian students kidnapped from their boarding school in the northern state of Zamfara have been released and are on government premises, the governor of the state told AFP Tuesday.

“I am happy to announce that the girls are free,” Dr Bello Matawalle told an AFP journalist. “They have just arrived in the government house and are in good health.”

An AFP reporter saw hundreds of girls wearing hijabs, gathered at the government premises.

Authorities initially said 317 girls were abducted “male students abducted” was 279.

Government officials had been in talks with the kidnappers -- known as bandits -- following Nigeria’s third school attack in less than three months.

A source said "repentant bandits" had been contacted to reach out to their former comrades as part of efforts to free the students. —AFP ■

Last Soviet leader Gorbachev marks 90th birthday in quarantine

MIKHAIL Gorbachev, the historic reformer who presided over the collapse of the Soviet Union, marked his 90th birthday in quarantine Tuesday and like everyone else is “tired” of virus restrictions, his spokesman said.

Congratulations poured in from around the world, with President Vladimir Putin, US leader Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel all sending their best wishes, he added.

“He is in quarantine in hospital for the duration of the pandemic,” Vladimir Polyakov, spokesman for the Gorbachev Foundation, told AFP.

“He is tired of this, like the rest of us.”

In power between 1985 and 1991, Gorbachev pushed for reforms to achieve “glasnost” (openness) and “perestroika” (restructuring) but his policies eventually led to the demise of the Soviet Union.

After the Berlin Wall fell, he won the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize for “the radical changes in East-West relations.”

Gorbachev, the first Russian leader to reach the age of 90, will mark his birthday with family and friends and has already received a “heap” of messages from around the world, his spokesman said. Gorbachev would talk to his family and friends and has already received a “heap” of messages from around the world, his spokesman said. Gorbachev would talk to his family and friends and has already received a “heap” of messages from around the world, his spokesman said.

“Victim” in it.

Paired with the musical about her that had its Broadway premiere in 2019 until the pandemic shut it down, the new film is billed as Turner’s farewell to her legions of fans.

“Tina” by Oscar-winning directors Dan Lindsay and T.J. Martin premiered Tuesday at the Berlin film festival.

It traces Turner’s six-decade career as an unlikely tri-umph over abuse and discrimination.

Paired with the musical about her that had its Broadway premiere in 2019 until the pandemic shut it down, the new film is billed as Turner’s farewell to her legions of fans. PHOTO: AFP

MUSIC legend Tina Turner is the subject of one of the most successful biopics ever made but she tells the makers of a new documentary there’s much more to her story.

“Tina” by Oscar-winning directors Dan Lindsay and T.J. Martin premiered Tuesday at the Berlin film festival.

It traces Turner’s six-decade career as an unlikely triumph over abuse and discrimination.

Paired with the musical about her that had its Broadway premiere in 2019 until the pandemic shut it down, the new film is billed as Turner’s farewell to her legions of fans.

The documentary includes emotional interviews with the singer in which she recounts her childhood of grinding pov-erty picking cotton in the Tennessee fields, her singing debut with violent husband Ike Turner and her lonely years even as the world’s top female rock star.

Friends weigh in including Oprah Winfrey, “Tina” biog-rapher Kurt Loder and Angela Bassett, who was nominated for an Oscar for her portrayal of Turner in the 1993 blockbuster “What’s Love Got To Do with It”.

Turner was famously crit-ical of the movie, refusing to watch it for several years and rejecting her depiction as a “victim” in it.

Photo taken on Feb. 14, 2021 shows a boy carrying the food donated by a charity group in Hajjah Province, north Yemen. PHOTO: XINHUA

Conflict must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access so that humanitarian supplies can be delivered to the people in need, and vulnerable groups such as women and children can be effectively protected, he told a high-level pledging event for Yemen.

All 279 kidnapped Nigerian students released

POLITICAL settlement represents the only solution to the Yemeni issue. Yemen’s sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity must be fully respected. All parties to the conflict should strive to achieve a ceasefire as soon as possible.

The international community should continue to support the role of the United Nations as the main channel of mediation, he said. It is imperative for all relevant parties to put the interests of Yemen and its people first, effectively implement the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh Agreement, carry forward the political settlement process, find a solution acceptable to all parties based on consensus reached at the international and regional levels and within Yemen, said Dai. —Xinhua ■
SHAN United have recently renewed the contracts of goalkeeper Myo Min Latt, defenders Nanda Kyaw and Hein Phyo Win for two years, according to the team statement. The three star players assisted the team in winning trophies in the 2019 and 2020 seasons. Hein Phyo Win joined Shan United at the end of the 2015 season - as a Myanmar U-18s international back then - along with Ye Min Thu, Phone Thitsaar Min, Sa Aung Pyae Ko, Zar Nay Ya Thu and Soe Lwin Lwin. “There are only senior players in the team now. Ko David and Ko Kyaw Zin Lwin play the same position as me. But I must try. I can play not only as a right-back but as a left-back as well. What matters most is the chance to play. Nobody here can take it for granted that they will be the first line-up players. Everybody has a chance to try,” said Hein Phyo Win. Myo Min Latt, who made his move to Shan United in the 2015 season, is the player who has played for this team longer than any other player in the current squad, and plus he showed his good performance as a first line-up keeper in the 2020 season in which Shan United won 11 games in a row. Nanda Kyaw, the Myanmar international defender who pitched up at the team in 2019, could play not only as a left-back but also as a centre-back and a left-winger. —GNLM

England ready to host more Euro 2020 games: Johnson

LONDON — England is ready to host extra matches for this year’s European football championships, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in an interview published on Tuesday. Johnson told The Sun of his government’s ambitions as he laid out a joint United Kingdom and Ireland bid to host the 2030 World Cup. The Euros are set to be played in 12 cities across the continent from June 11, after being postponed last year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The tabloid said British ministers are holding talks with European football’s governing body UEFA about hosting more games due to rising cases across the continent and the slow roll-out of vaccines.

Richarlison strikes to boost Everton’s top-four bid

LONDON — Everton boosted their bid to earn a top-four finish in the Premier League as Richarlison sealed a 1-0 win against struggling Southampton on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

England is ready to host extra matches for this year’s European football championships, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in an interview published on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Britain has been one of the nations hardest-hit by the virus but has already vaccinated 20 million people with at least one dose and plans to finish the whole population by the end of July. Johnson’s spokesman last week dismissed talk about England hosting the whole tournament but Johnson indicated the country could take on more than just the semi-finals and final at Wembley. “Any other matches they want hosted, we are certainly on for that!” he said. “We are hosting the Euros. We are hosting the semis and the final.”

Detained ex-Barcelona president to appear before judge

MADRID — Former Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu, detained Monday as part of a probe into last year’s ‘Barcagate’ scandal, will appear before a judge on Tuesday, a police source said.

His right-hand man Jaume Masferrer will also appear before the investigating judge leading the probe after spending the night at a police station along with Bartomeu, the sourced added.

Two other men who were also detained as part of the operation which involved a search of Barcelona’s stadium – the club’s current chief executive Oscar Grau and its head of legal services Roma Gomez Ponti – were released late on Monday.

The so-called ‘Barcagate’ scandal involves allegations that the club covered up payments made to a company called I3 Ventures, hired to boost the image of then-president Bartomeu on social media. Part of the social media campaign included criticizing current and former players, like Lionel Messi, Pep Guardiola and Xavi Hernandez. Messi described the controversy as “strange” in an interview with Catalan newspaper Mundo Deportivo. Spanish radio station Cadena Ser, which broke the story, claimed Barca paid I3 Ventures an inflated fee and put payments through in smaller amounts to avoid the club’s financial controls.

Federer pulls out of Miami Open: report

MIAMI — Defending champion Roger Federer has withdrawn from this month’s Miami Open as he works his way back to full fitness following surgeries to repair his right knee, US media reported on Monday.

The 39-year-old Swiss star, who has not played since losing in the semi-finals of last year’s Australian Open, is due to make his return from a year-long layoff at the Qatar Open in Doha next week. However the Miami Herald cited Federer’s agent Tony Godsick as saying on Monday that the 20-time Grand Slam singles champion had opted to skip the Miami tournament for scheduling reasons.