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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, pour water at banyan trees on fullmoon day of Kason

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla are pouring water on the Maha Bodhi banyan tree at the Lawka Chantha Hsutaungpyae Athin Pagoda in Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE 13th Maha Mingalar ceremony of pouring water at banyan trees on the fullmoon day of Kason, 1383 ME, dubbed as the Buddha's Day, took place at Maha Bodhi banyan trees within the precinct of Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla watered Maha Bodhi banyan trees.

The Senior General and wife, Vice-Chairman of the Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Council members and wives and congregation poured water at respective Maha Bodhi banyan trees and sprinkled scented water on them.

Moreover, families of the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) under the patronage of the Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and wife watered Bodhi banyan trees at Lawka Chantha Hsutaungpyae Athin Pagoda in Zeyathiri Township.

The fullmoon day of Kason is a significant day that coincides with the date of birth, the attainment day of the Enlightenment, and the Parinibbana of Lord Gotama and all remaining 27 Lord Buddhas. The water pouring of banyan trees in the month of Kason is a religious festival to perform meritorious deeds by Buddhists. Moreover, it is Myanmar's intangible cultural heritage. —MNA

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Religious places crowed with people on Kason fullmoon day

BUDDHISM does good deeds on the fullmoon day of Kason. The day is an important day for Myanmar Buddhists. They keep Sabbath and pour water on banyan trees at the pagodas, including Shwedagon Pagoda, according to COVID-19 health rules.

The ceremony to seek words of advice from Ovada Cariya Sayadaws of Shwedagon Pagoda and the 38th Kason water-pouring festival were conducted at the designated places of Shwedagon Pagoda starting 5 am yesterday.

Firstly, the pagoda board of trustees and staff offered 'alms' (day meals), flowers, water, oil lights and fruits to the pagoda and the first meal to the Sayadaws.

The officials and service groups took Nine Precepts from State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Tipitakadhara Pali Paragu Shwepyitha Monastery Sayadaw Baddanta Nagita.

Then, pagoda board of trustees' member U Tin Win donated the offertories to the Sayadaws.

Nyaung Done Pali Takatho Monastery Sayadaw Baddanta Pavara Bhivamsa delivered sermons on behalf of pagoda Ovada Cariya Sayadaws.

Then, the officials shared merits after the sermons of Presiding Sayadaw of Maha Withuddayone Monastery Bhaddanta Sirinda Bhivamsa.

Next, the 38th Kason water-pouring festival was organized at the Banyan tree in the southern archway of the Shwedagon Pagoda. Ovada Cariya Sayadaws delivered sermons. And Yangon Region Administration Council Chairman U Hla Soe and party, members of the pagoda board of trustees, service groups and pilgrims poured water on the Banyan tree.

Similarly, the opening ceremony for the Kason water-pouring festival was held at Botahtaung pagoda.

Yangon Region Administration Council Chairman U Hla Soe, pagoda board of trustees and service groups firstly took Five Precepts from Vice Chair of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dvipitakadhara Bhaddanta Agga Dhamma.

The Sayadaws recited Parittas, and the officials donated offertories to the Sayadaws.

Then, the officials poured water on Bodhi trees.

Moreover, the pagoda board of trustees, service groups and pilgrims poured water on Bodhi trees at Kaba Aye, Kyaik Wine and Kyauk Taw Gyi pagodas.

Yangon Northern District General Administration Department officials and staff freed 750,000 fish into Balar creek beside Yangon-Bago road in Htaukkyant Ywama ward of Mingaladon Township on the fullmoon day of Kason. —Ko Ko Zaw, Kyaw Soe Win

34 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 25 May, total figure rises to 143,296

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **143,296 after 34 new cases** were reported on 25 May 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,229** have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

Monastic education schools have been contributing much to Myanmar's education system

MONASTIC education schools have been contributing much to Myanmar's education system. As such, necessary assistance must be provided for the smooth teaching of monastic education schools. Public holidays must be considered not to harm the work process for the development of the nation.

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 21 May 2021)

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, pour water at banyan trees on fullmoon day of Kason

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State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win is pouring water on the Maha Bodhi banyan tree yesterday.

MoHA Union Minister meets families of departmental staff in Kayah, Shan states

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, member of the State Administration Council, inspected Moe Bye police station in Kayah State yesterday.

He met the police, Tatmadaw members and families to provide them with cash assistance from the SAC Chairman and the ministry.

He then met the parents, wives, children and families of police at Pekhon station and provided cash assistance.

The officials also inspected the security measures conducted at Pekhon Myoma police station and presented cash assistance to police members.

The Union Minister then went to Loikaw prison and inspected prison healthcare services, accommodation, and meals. — MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.

(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.

(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Fullmoon Day of Kason celebrated at pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw

A throng of Buddhist devotees is seen at the Uppatasanti Pagoda yesterday.

PAGODAS in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area are alive, with many people celebrating the Kason fullmoon day on 25 May. Health workers and Red Cross Brigade members have taken the COVID-19 protective measures at the celebration venues.

The fullmoon day of Kason is considered a sacred day for Buddhists.

It commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and Nibbana of Buddha.

People celebrate the Kason fullmoon day by pouring water onto the Bo trees, fasting, praying and donating foods at pagodas and monasteries across the country.

Pagodas around Nay Pyi Taw Council Area were also alive with religious prayer groups, residents, pilgrims from the surrounding regions starting from yesterday morning.

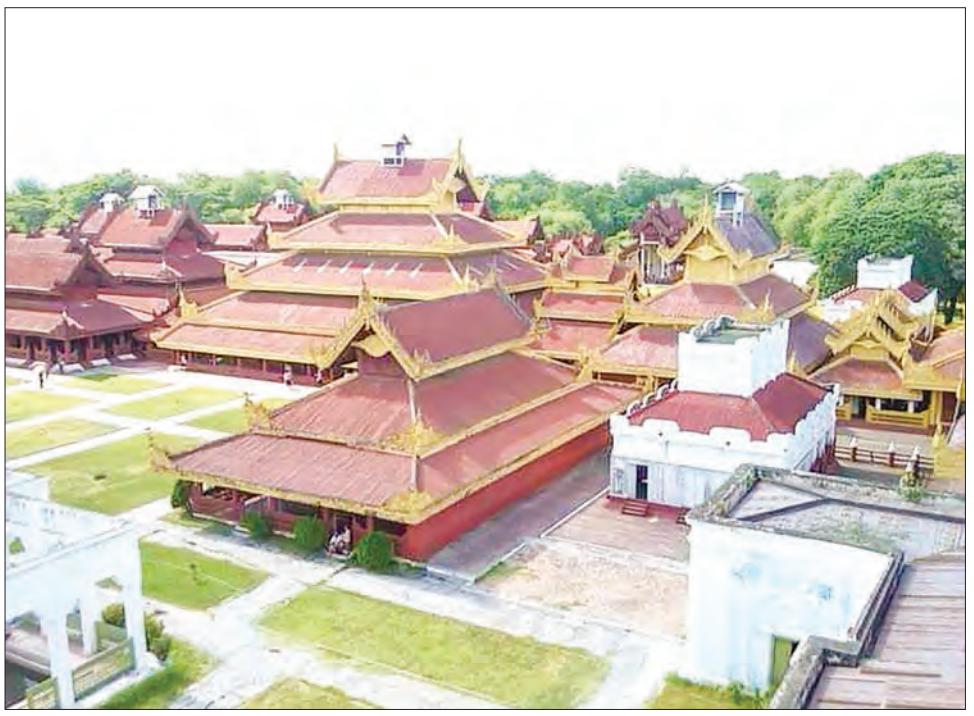
Ma Aye Myat Myat Mon, a pilgrim to Uppatasanti pagoda, said, "I go on an annual pilgrimage to the pagodas every fullmoon day of Kason.

And my friends and I clean the pagoda platform and donate soft drinks whenever we come to the Uppatasanti pagoda. I visited Maha Sakkya Yanthi pagoda and Bodh Gaya this morning. I'll visit perpetual peace pagoda this evening."

Ko Aung Thu Phyo, who visited Yan Aung Myin Shwe Lat Hla pagoda, said, "After pilgrimage this morning, we'll go to the playground for the kids. And we will go back home after pouring water onto the Bo tree at the Uppatasanti pagoda."

Health workers and members of the Red Cross Brigade were carrying out the COVID-19 measures by distributing masks, making temperature checks and educating to wash their hands to the pilgrims. Security forces were taking security measure for the safety of the people. — Lu Lin Nge/ GNLM

Mandalay reopens Mya Nan San Kyaw golden palace on 25 May



Mya Nan San Kyaw golden palace was rebuilt with a total of 89 buildings, including assembly halls and Nan Myint tower.

ACCORDING to the Director of the Archeology and National Museum Department (Mandalay Branch), Mya Nan San Kyaw golden palace in Mandalay, which was closed for more than a year, reopened on 25 May (full-moon day of Kason) following the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

Visitors will be able to visit from 7:30 am to 5 pm to the palace, and K200 for adult and K100 for a child will be collected as entrance fees. In addition to the golden palace, they can visit the stone inscription chamber, cannon museum, miniature mausoleum of King Mindon and the coin mill, he said.

Mya Nan San Kyaw golden palace was rebuilt with a total of 89 buildings, including assembly halls and Nan Myint tower. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Palin Kanthayar elephant camp to reopen in Nyaung-U

The camp has also constructed an international standard elephant museum for elephant lovers to learn about elephant history.

U Myo Min Ko, assistant manager from the Palin Kantharyar elephant camp, said that the elephant camp has reopened starting from 25 May following the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

The camp is operated under Myanma Timber Enterprise, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The camp is located near West Palin village and only five miles away from Nyaung-U Township, Mandalay Region, near Ayeyawady River.

The Palin Kanthayar elephant camp has been closed to visitors since 25 March 2020 as a precaution against COVID-19. Then, the camp officials have attempted to reopen the elephant camp. In the meantime, some renovations were done in the camp: construction of side view bridge to see sunset view of the Ayeyawady river, the building of long-legged tents along the river bank for the elephant lovers to rest well, serving the fresh food and drink on the tents, construction of treehouse to view Ayeyawady river and side view bridge from above, creating the playground and garden for visitors and creating a place to see the bath time for elephant.

The camp has also constructed an international standard elephant museum for elephant lovers to learn about elephant history. The museum displays the different characteristics between African elephants and Asian elephants and the structure of the elephant body. The elephant chorus is also showcased to help the elephants obey the orders of human.

The entrance fee is K1,000 for a person and K5,000 each for an elephant ride. For foreigners, it will cost K20,000 per person and K10,000 each for an elephant ride.

The entrance fee will also be free of charge for children and Sangha and nuns, said U Myo Min Ko.

MTE operates 22 elephant camps nationwide. The elephant lovers can feed the elephant the buffet. They could donate the money through the elephant camp's social media page. There are seven elephants — from a year old to a 27-year-old one in Palin Kanthayar elephant camp.

The authorities have already introduced elephant-based tourism. Palin Kanthayar elephant camp has now reopened in line with the COVID-19 rules and regulations formulated by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephant camp in Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Region and Wingabaw elephant camp resumed their operation from 20 May. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM

Announcement of Union Election Commission

25 May 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of Mongton, Muse, Kutkai, Monghkat, Kengtung, Mongyai and Hsihseng townships of Shan State.
2. According to the inspection, the previous election commission released 591,870 eligible voters in these seven townships of Shan State. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 488,057 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 130,530 citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 4,896 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 53,914 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
3. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on voter lists in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Township sub-commission	List from Immigration department	Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards	Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC	Those involved in voter list more than two times holding one CSC
1	Mongton	64	47,687	41,925	18,489	285	3,302
2	Muse	99	115,716	81,646	19,786	1,332	11,472
3	Kutkai	128	128,182	82,898	45,501	1,008	9,774
4	Monghkat	27	16,831	23,015	2,174	79	1,370
5	Kengtung	120	128,612	129,636	12,829	1,245	14,272
6	Mongyai	45	48,679	35,057	21,915	45	1,768
7	Hsihseng	93	106,163	93,880	9,836	902	11,956
	Total	576	591,870	488,057	130,530	4,896	53,914

4.The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Mongton, Muse, Kutkai, Monghkat, Kengtung, Mongyai and Hsihseng townships of Shan State together with the respective township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrators in accordance with Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law.

5. According to the inspection, a total of 576 polling stations in these seven townships took out 642,926 ballots and used 337,388 ballots. It left 296,907 ballots instead of 305,538 ballots. The difference was 15,346 ballots and it found 6,715 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Mongton	64	49,708	29,786	19,922	19,901	210	189
2	Muse	99	120,550	61,790	58,760	56,237	4,578	2,055
3	Kutkai	128	146,970	59,452	87,518	85,560	2,484	526
4	Monghkat	27	20,465	7,986	12,479	11,623	943	87
5	Kengtung	120	140,498	69,579	70,919	69,359	3,809	2,249
6	Mongyai	45	54,327	27,639	26,688	25,072	2,527	911
7	Hsihseng	93	110,408	81,156	29,252	29,155	795	698
	Total	576	642,926	337,388	305,538	296,907	15,346	6,715

6. According to the inspections on voter lists of these seven townships of Shan State, the numbers of eligible voters are more 103,813 than the voter lists according to the lists of citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens who had turned 18 in November 2020 of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and Hluttaw Election Law Section 6 (a).
7. There are 130,530 non-identity voters. Moreover, Hluttaw Election Law Section (15) (c) in Chapter VI, "Preparation of Voting Roll" stated, "Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time." But, there were 4,896 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 53,914persons repeated on the voter lists two times in these seven townships of Shan State.
8. The bags containing ballot receipts and voter lists used at three polling stations of Tone Aw, Phaung Saing and Namhalawt village-tracts of Muse Township were missing and it did not inspect the use/remaining ballots of these polling stations.
9. Some ward/village-tract election sub-commissions and polling stations of Mongyai Township failed to follow the Hluttaw Election Law Rules 66 (h) and returned the remaining ballots to the township sub-commission after the election. The use/remaining ballots of No (1) polling station in Manpong village-tract of Mongyai Township were found missing.
10. In Form (1) books of No (4) polling station in Tabat village-tract and No (1) polling station of Naung Mon village-tract of Hsihseng Township, it did not find the signatures or left hand thumb fingerprint of voters but the marks to cast vote.
11. Findings in seven townships of Shan State were as follows:
    (a) There were 341,463 voters and they used 337,388 ballots out of all withdrawals, which was 4,075 less than the numbers of voters.
    (b) It found 15,346 missing ballots in withdrawals and used ballots.
    (c) It found 6,715 extra ballots at some polling stations.
    (d) They did not follow the Hluttaw Election Law Rules 66(h) and separately returned the ballot receipts/remaining ballots to the township election sub-commission only after the election.
    (e) In Form (1) books, it did not find the signatures or left hand thumb fingerprint were not found but the marks.
    (f) It did not find the names of voters, voting numbers, polling station numbers, Ward/village-tracts, signatures or fingerprints on the ballot receipts used in some polling stations.
    (g) Some of the ward/village-tract election commission failed to return the ballot receipts and extra ballots in accordance with the law and so the ballots were found missing.
    (h) The non-identity voters were on the voter lists and the voters cast votes just with the certificates without any national identity cards.
    (i) They conducted measures that violate the law when they started collecting advance ballot.
    (j) They released the COVID-19 related instructions, which were not conformity with the law, to collect voter lists and advance votes when the election drew near.
12. It found voting frauds in Mongton, Muse, Kutkai, Monghkat, Kengtung, Mongyai and Hsihseng townships of Shan State. The excess/shortage ballots were found in the inspection. They failed to follow the stipulations of the Hluttaw Election Law and Rules.

Union Election Commission

Devotees celebrate the Kason water-pouring festivals country-wide yesterday

Meiktila Town, Mandalay Region

Sittway Town, Rakhine State.

Htilin Town, Magway Region.

Nyaung-U Town, Mandalay Region.

Taunggyi Town, Shan State (South).

Nyaungshwe Town, Shan State (South).

Kyaunggon Township, Ayeyawady Region.

Tachilek Town, Shan State (East).

Dawei Town, Taninthayi Region.

Bago Town, Bago Region.

Kyaukse Town, Mandalay Region.

Ann Town, Rakhine State.

Everybody needs to follow discipline in order to shape everything

DISCIPLINE is a backbone of society, playing a key role in building the nation and how to tackle the critical issues concerning the entire nationals.

No man is above discipline. Good discipline is basic to develop the nation and improve the individual citizens. So, everybody needs to abide by the prescribed disciplines without exemption.

Disciplines are adopted by relevant groups, schools, institutions, organizations and governments and so on. Specific disciplines adopted by separate organizations are concerned with those from respective arenas. Generally, people do not need to follow separate disciplines. For example, the general public does not need to abide by the disciplines adopted for any other specific arena.

> The right and wrong ways for the human depend on the disciplines. That is why the people have to choose the ways by following the disciplines for shaping everything for the country in the future.

All walks of life, including those from various sectors, have to abide by the disciplines concerning the whole human society as well as the entire nation. For example, civilians need to follow the civilian disciplines which are concerned with the whole country. Likewise, students, farmers, workers, soldiers, police, teachers, technicians, odd-job workers and others must abide by the civilian disciplines without fail.

Only when all the people forge the spirit to follow the disciplines can they march towards the goal of achieving the development of the nation. Those who break the prescribed disciplines can harm society and commit hindrances to the way leading to the goal. Movements of discipline offenders can destroy the morality of discipline followers in all measures. As such, the discipline brokers are enemies of society.

Strengthening of the society's backbone is based on the disciplines concerned with everybody. As the discipline is limit to the daily movements of humans with the aim of avoiding encroachment on others, everybody needs to deeply follow the disciplines so as to shape the brighter future of the nation as well as themselves.

Discipline is a moral practice. The right and wrong ways for the human depend on the disciplines. That is why the people have to choose the ways by following the disciplines for shaping everything for the country in the future.

■ ■ ■

Let us practise what we preach and be consistent

By Kyaw Myint Tun (Paris)

WE hope Myanmar's neighbours and other third world countries are listening and taking note of the following.

There is a famous saying, "the third hurts". And, the truth is often not allowed to be applied at the same level across the board. Certain corners of the societies, hiding under cover of "righteousness", always escape having to face the truth. Hypocrisy trumps the truth more often than not.

South American country of Chile is a beacon of stability

The constitution in Chile was approved in 1980 under the notorious Augusto Pinochet and fully effective since 1990.

Only in October 2020, 30 years after Pinochet stepped down and 15 years after his death, a national referendum was held in Chile to write a new constitution. On Sunday, 16 May 2021, the Chileans went to the polls to elect 150 architects who will draft the new constitution. Another referendum will be held in Chile in 2022 to adopt the new constitution.

Pinochet orchestrated constitution is the same constitution. The current United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet served comfortably two times as the President of Chile, first from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2014 to 2018 (Very recently!). No one rushed to change the Pinochet constitution! not even Mrs Bachelet

Chile did not become a beacon of stability by transforming the country irrationally.

Let's shout out to all these elements, especially external elements, who relentlessly lobby for the quick changes in Myanmar.

Let us say in South America

The world is seeing what is happening in the South American country of Colombia. Where are these so-called United Nations rights experts of South American descent, who are always most vocal when it comes to Myanmar? Many of them have made a living off Myanmar over the decades while doing so enabling them to travel endlessly, drop in at tropical locales for endless "discussions" and " roundtables", stopover at big think tanks in the major western countries, allowing them for sponsorships or lucrative consultancy, has anyone heard from them? But when it comes to Myanmar, it's a faraway country, and there is no harm for them. Such selective interest!

Talk about tropical locales, reports in recent days stated United Nations "Special Envoy" on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, that she plans on staying in the Southeast Asian region in the coming weeks. Who can blame her? After more than a year of being cooped up in her native Switzerland, who can blame her for wanting to remain in the tropics? This the " Special Envoy" with no experience in dealing with the political crisis of any kind and yet, still being appointed by the United Nations. And now, she's being thrust into bare-knuckle Myanmar politics. As Ms Schraner looks at the situation in Myanmar from the perspective of all that she learned in the classrooms at a prestigious university in Switzerland, let us wish her well.

Then there is the so-called United Nations Human Rights Rapporteur, who is an American and based in Washington D.C., who has been constantly in the media. Really? Who does he really report to? Are Myanmar's neighbours paying attention?

All usual suspects have come out of the woodworks in the recent weeks.

There former United Nations officials who have served in Myanmar in the past, trying to hold on to their self-appointed title as "experts" on Myanmar affairs, there are some former senior politicians, even a certain Australian former Prime Minister of a bygone era, who has no chance of any political life domestically, but desperate in trying to get an appointment with the UN. It's an opportune time to keep their names on the radar.

Can't blame them because senior appointment in the United Nations is highly coveted. These positions come with perks, like being able to hold the United Nations Diplomatic Passport and all other related privileges that come along with it.

The United Nations is very good at interfering in small third world countries under the guise of liberal slogans, and there are no checks and balances. Absolute carte blanche is accorded with no questions asked!

But, when the big powers are involved, the vice of the United Nations is nowhere to be heard, UN voices are drowned out or outright ignored by the western elements.

Just to mention one instance, what was the United Nations able to do when there was an indiscriminate attack on the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan?

Let us not also forget that the United States banned the top International Criminal Court Prosecutor from entering the country. Did the UN or anyone in the International System manage to do anything? Imagine if Myanmar or other small countries did the same? The pressure on the country will be relentless. Sanction! Embargoes! All sorts of kitchen sinks will be thrown at that country.

Shall we turn to the developments in the Middle East? Say no more!

This is the same United Nations, which has never had a woman at the top since its foundation more than 75 years ago, while at the same time preaching the advancement of women's rights around the world. Since the current Secretary-General is slated the top coronation for another five years, the United Nations will not have a woman at the top position for a while.

Instead of continuing the path of point fingers at others and endlessly proclaiming self – righteousness, the United Nations might wish to look in the mirror and reform its self-first.

Until then, let us continue to enjoy nice wording statements from the United Nations.

(The views and opinions are only those of the author).

UN chief declares 'war' on Covid as India toll tops 300,000 dead

THE UN on Monday declared the world "at war" against Covid-19, as India's death toll passed 300,000 and Japan opened its first mass vaccination centres.

But just two months ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, the United States on Monday advised its citizens against travelling there.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged governments to apply wartime logic to stark inequalities in the response to the pandemic.

Despite rapidly advancing vaccination rollouts in wealthy parts of the world, the crisis was far from over, he warned.

"Unless we act now, we face a situation in which rich countries vaccinate the majority of their people and open their economies, while the virus continues to cause deep suffering by circling and mutating in the poorest countries."

Deadly outbreaks in India, Brazil and elsewhere have pushed the global death toll past 3.4 million people, even as vaccination programmes in rich countries such as the United States, Britain and Israel have allowed them to ease restrictions.

India has witnessed horrific scenes in recent weeks with severe shortages of oxygen at hospitals and crematoriums overwhelmed, although the number of new daily infections has fallen in big cities.

But experts say the real numbers of deaths and infections in India -- fuelled by a new coronavirus variant and "superspreader" events such as religious festivals -- are probably far higher than the official figures.

"We are seeing the bodies along the river Ganges, which don't seem to be recorded as Covid deaths but are very likely to be Covid deaths," Ashoka University biology professor Gautam Menon told AFP.

Japan ramps up vaccination

India has administered close to 200 million vaccine shots, but experts say the programme needs to be ramped up significantly to bring the virus under control.

Another Asian country criticised for its slow inoculation rate is Japan, where the first mass vaccination centres opened on Monday.

"It's wonderful. I can rest easy now," Hideo Ishikawa, 73, told reporters after he got the shot.

India has witnessed horrific scenes in recent weeks with severe shortages of oxygen at hospitals and crematoriums overwhelmed, although the number of new daily infections has fallen in big cities. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japanese authorities are trying to speed up their vaccination drive with just two months until the postponed Tokyo Olympics begin.

But the US State Department on Monday warned its citizens against travelling there.

The decision was based mainly on government health advice, but also "commercial flight availability, restrictions on US citizen entry", and the difficulty of getting fast Covid test results, the advisory said.

Just two percent of Japan's 125 million population has been fully vaccinated, compared with around 40 per cent in the United States and 15 per cent in France.

Health workers pay 'ultimate price'

Speaking alongside Guterres at the World Health Organization's main annual assembly in Geneva, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he wanted 10 per cent of every country's population vaccinated by September.

He paid tribute to the estimated 115,000 health and care workers who have died from Covid-19 since the beginning of the pandemic.

"They have saved countless lives and fought for others who, despite their best efforts, slipped away," he said. Medical workers lost to the pandemic had paid "the ultimate price in the service of others". Many medics have felt "frustrated, helpless and unprotected, with a lack of access to personal protective equipment and vaccines", he added.

If the vaccine had been distributed equitably, there would have been enough for all health workers and vulnerable, older people, he argued. But more than 75 per cent of all Covid vaccines have gone to just 10 countries.

Israel's health ministry meanwhile, which has overseen one of the fastest vaccination rollouts, said Sunday that it had proposed lifting all virus restrictions on June 1, except for travellers arriving from abroad.

SOURCE: AFP

Public information

Yangon Region Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses.

Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01 830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm
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MYANMAR DAILY WEATHER REPORT

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 25 May 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the Severe Cyclonic Storm "YAAS" over the Westcentral Bay and adjoining Eastcentral and North Bay of Bengal has moved North-Northwestwards and reached over the Northwest Bay of Bengal. It is centered at about (405) Nautical miles West-Northwest of Pathein, about (280) Nautical miles West-Southwest of Sittway (Myanmar), about (110) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Paradip and about (155) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Digha (India). Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay of Bengal and weather is cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 26 May 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Chin, Rakhine, Kayin, Mon states, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Northern Shan, Kayah states, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions and (Southern and Eastern)Shan State and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with very rough seas will be experienced in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40-45)mph. Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40)mph. Wave height will be about (13 -17)feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast and about (9-13)feet in Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of thundery activities in Deltaic areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26 May 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26 May 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26 May 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Files opened against nurses who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following nurses have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and health staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH and NUG unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Hospital	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Daw Phyu Phyu Win (Senior Nurse)	Kawthoung Hospital	Kawthoung Town, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
2	Daw Phyu Pyar Aung (Senior Nurse)	Bokpyin Hospital	Thayetchaung-Town, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
3	Daw Nway Yi Hmwe (Senior Nurse)	Kawthoung Hospital	Launglon Town, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
4	Daw Wah Wah Phyo Kyaw (Senior Nurse)	Yayle Station Hospital	Zalun Town, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
5	Daw Nang Seng Hwam (Senior Nurse)	Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital	Namhkam Town, Shan State (North)	505-a	
6	Daw Yu Yu Thae (Nurse)	Kayan Station Hospital	Bago Town, Bago Region	505-a	
7	U Htin Lin (Nurse)	Kyauktaga Hospital	Wetlet Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
8	U Kyaw Thu Lin (Nurse)	Ottwin Hospital	Toungoo Town, Bago Region	505-a	
9	Daw Wah Wah Aung (Nurse)	Pyawbwegyi Hospital	Magway Town, Magway Region	505-a	
10	U Tin Kyaw Win (Nurse)	Htantabin Hospital	Htantabin Township , Yangon Region	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those nurses charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those persons and action will be taken against the persons who admitted them, under the law. —MNA

Files opened against education staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following education staff have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and education staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH and NUG unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	U Ye Lin Oo	Assistant Lecturer, Government Technological College (Mohnyin), Mohnyin Town	Mohnyin Town, Kachin State	505-a	
2	Daw Hay Marn Oo	Assistant Lecturer, University of Medicines (Magway), Magway Town	Magway Town, Magway Region	505-a	
3	Daw Thin Thin Hmwe	Assistant Lecturer, Government Technical Institute (Kyaukpadaung), Kyaukpadaung Town	Kyaukpadaung Town, Mandalay Region	505-a	
4	Daw Yu Yu Htay	Assistant Lecturer, Co-operative University (Sagaing), Sagaing Town	Sagaing Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
5	Daw Khin Thuzar Aye	Senior Assistant Teacher, BEHS(Htitheinyway) Taunggyi Town	Taunggyi Town, Shan State (South)	505-a	
6	U Yu Gyin	Assistant Lecturer, Loikaw University, Loikaw Town	Loikaw Town, Kayah State	505-a	
7	U Nay Soe Aung	Assistant Lecturer, Loikaw Education Degree College, Loikaw Town	Loikaw Town, Kayah State	505-a	
8	Daw Khin Moh Moh	Tutor, Government Technical Institute(Loikaw), Loikaw Town	Loikaw Town, Kayah State	505-a	
9	Daw Myo Myo Aung	Staff Officer, Government Technical Institute (Insein), Insein Township	Katha Township, Sagaing Region	505-a	
10	Dr Thar Htay	Professor/ Head of Department, Monywa University of Economics, Monywa Town	Monywa Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those education staff charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those education staff, action will be taken against the persons under the law for admitting those education staff.—MNA

Tatmadaw provides treatments to over 210,000 outpatients

TATMADAW keeps providing healthcare services for the patients at the military hospitals and temporary treatment hospitals in the townships of regions and states.

The Tatmadaw medical teams comprising Tatmadaw doctors, specialists, medical assistants and nurses, have been giving medical treatments to the people in order to solve their difficulties in healthcare services. A total of 219,883 outpatients and 66,538 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date.

Senior medical experts, medics, medical assistants and nurses have conducted 10,269 major operations and 5,259 minor operations.

The senior doctors gave intensive treatment the severe cases.

These hospitals managed the birth of 12,986 babies to date.

Of those, 5,269 cases are done in the caesarean section and 7,717 cases in ordinary delivery.

In addition to providing medical care to patients in need of hospitalization, Tatmadaw is making arrangements for the well-being of hospitalized patients and caregivers. — MNA

Armed insurgents destroy Hopin bridge, Mohnyin township, Kachin State

ONE was injured in Hopin, Mohnyin Township, Kachin State after an explosive device was detonated on the Hopin bridge.

Armed insurgents reportedly planted a mine the bridge, locally called Wat Kone bridge, built over Thayet creek on Hopin-Myitkyina road at around 8.30 pm on 24 May.

At the bottom of the damaged bridge, one man, believed to be from Mogaung Township who drove his motorcycle on the damaged bridge, was found unconscious with a fractured head and taken to Mohnyin Hospital by the security forces.

It is reported that another unexploded mine was found on the eastern side of the damaged bridge while the security forces were clearing the area. — MNA

Security forces take full-time security measures across the country

WITH the support of the so-called NUG government in exile and the Hluttaw Committee in exile (CRPH), the insurgents commit violent disruptions in some townships.

For national stability, public safety, the rule of law and community peace, the combined squads comprising members of the Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force and Myanmar Fire Brigade have been taking necessary security measures with patrols in townships of the respective states and regions since 14 February.

It is reported that security forces will continue performing security duties day and night. — MNA

Two village administrative officials attacked by knives

TWO village administrative officials in Yamethin Township of Mandalay Region were attacked by terrorist groups using knives with attempts to undermine administrative machinery.

At 9:30 am on 24 May, Inpaung Village Administrator U Myint Naing from South Inpaung Village and 100-household leader U Tin Zaw Win left Inpaung Village for Yamethin by motorcycle along Yemethin-Myohla road. On arrival at Magyigone Village, four male terrorists (under scrutiny) on two motorcycles attacked the two formers using knives.

In the incident, U Myint Naing and U Tin Zaw Win were seriously injured with bruises on their heads, cheeks, nose, necks and left shoulder.

They were sent to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed) via Yamethin Hospital to receive medical treatments.

Security forces are searching for four terrorists to be taken effective action under the law. — MNA

Over K77 bln loans to be disbursed to farmers to grow monsoon crops this year

MANDALAY Region Agricultural Development Bank will initially disburse over K77 billion of agricultural loans to farmers from 23 townships in the Mandalay region in order for them to grow monsoon crops starting from 26 May, according to Mandalay Region Agricultural Development Bank (MRADB).

The Mandalay Bank Branch has targeted to provide K77.109 billion loans for the cultivation of monsoon crops. The agrarian loans will be disbursed to farmers in 23 townships of the Mandalay region to cultivate monsoon paddy and other crops.

"Our ADB bank is issuing the loans for the benefit of the farmers. The bank will provide the monsoon loans for 2021 to the farmers who have already paid off the principal and interest for the 2020 monsoon loan.

K150,000 per acre for paddy and K100,000 per acre for other monsoon crops such as peanut, green gram, sesame, bamboo, chickpea, black bean, soya-bean, corn and other crops will be granted as monsoon agricultural loans.

Those who have not paid back in full will have difficulty getting 2021 loans. The bank has already collected 18.32 per cent of the loan disbursed last year. The farmers who have not paid off their last year's debts will not be qualified for a new loan this year. The bank will collect a five per cent interest rate annually. They are providing the loans with a low-interest rate," said Daw Yin Nwe, manager of the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank in the Mandalay region.

K150,000 per acre for paddy and K100,000 per acre for other monsoon crops such as peanut, green gram, sesame, bamboo, chickpea, black bean, soya-bean, corn and other crops will be granted as monsoon agricultural loans.

The 23 townships that will be provided with agriculture loans for 2021 monsoon crops are Amarapura, Patheingyi, PyinOoLwin, Madaya, Singu, Thabeikkyin, Kyaukse, Singaing, TadaU, Myittha, Meiktila, Wundwin, Mahlaing, Thazi, Myingyan, Taungtha, Natogyi, Ngazun, Yamethin, Pyawbwe, NyaungU and Kyaukpadaung townships. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/ GNLM

Man Wein border still closed amid COVID-19

CHINA shut the Man Wein checkpoint over one and half month ago, and it remains close in light of the COVID-19, vice-chairman U Min Thein of Muse Rice Wholesale Centre said.

Coronavirus cases were detected in Shweli (Ruili) and Kyalgaung precious stone market during late March. It prompted China to restrict border access at the Man Wein checkpoint, a major border crossing between Myanmar and China. At present, the number of positive cases has dropped. Lockdown on the Kyalgaung area has been eased from 4 May. However, it will be monitored for about three months. Consequently, there is no plan to reopen the Man Wein post.

"It is still closed. The border closure began on 30 March. Kyalgaung area will be kept under watch for three months even after lifting the lockdown. We still cannot confirm when the crossing will be reopened," said U Min Thein. Additionally, Man Wein border post is not available for now, according to the negotiation with Shweli's Foreign Affairs Department. The border post will resume the trade only after drawing up a detailed project report, the Trade Department (Muse 105th mile trade zone) stated.

Once China lifts the restriction, the traders will be spontaneously informed.

Owing to the Man Wein post's closure, major export items such as rice, broken rice, various pulses, fishery products, onion and chilli are delivered to China through Kyin San Kyawt post, a major crossing for Myanmar's fruit exports, U Min Thein added.

However, shipping via Kyinsankyawt post caused traffic congestion and delay. The driver-substitution system was practised in the border area during the first wave of the COVID-19 and it helps lessen the impediments to the trade. Yet, the current restriction exacerbates the border trade, the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre stated. — NN/ GNLM

Coronavirus cases were detected in Shweli (Ruili) and Kyalgaung precious stone market during late March. It prompted China to restrict border access at the Man Wein checkpoint, a major border crossing between Myanmar and China.

Myanmar iron, steel materials imports exceed $315 mln in five months

THE value of Myanmar's iron and steel imports for the construction sector is estimated at US$315.6 million in five months (Oct-Feb) of the current financial year, according to Myanmar Customs Department.

The figures stood over US$1.19 billion in the past financial year 2019-2020, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

At present, Myanmar's steel demand is estimated about 2.5 million tons per year, and 92 per cent are imported. According to MSA, the market is likely to grow up to 5.4 million tonnes per year in 2030.

If Myanmar can fulfil the requirements of local steel consumption and focus on import substitution, the steel industry will strategically contribute to the nation's interests. Steel consumption includes in calculating economy growth index, Myanmar Steel Association (MSA) stated.

Therefore, 11 executive members of MSA established MSA Public Company Limited. They are making efforts to set up iron and steel industrial zone in order to reduce the outflow of US dollar, effectuate the development of the steel industry and assist in the country's infrastructure building.

Studies for implementing iron and steel industrial zone projects are underway in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine and Mon states.

The government needs to support the steel sector by granting tax relief and land rights, controlling illegal import, making anti-dumping law come into an effort and formulating steel policy. The steel industry is pivotal in industrial infrastructure building. According to the MSA, this project needs to be implemented for future prospects of the country's economy.

China is the leading supplier of Myanmar's steel market. Iron and steel are also imported from India and the Republic of Korea. – HH/GNLM

Shanghai remains attractive to foreign investment

AS China's economy continues to recover rapidly, the country's financial hub Shanghai remains attractive to foreign investment.

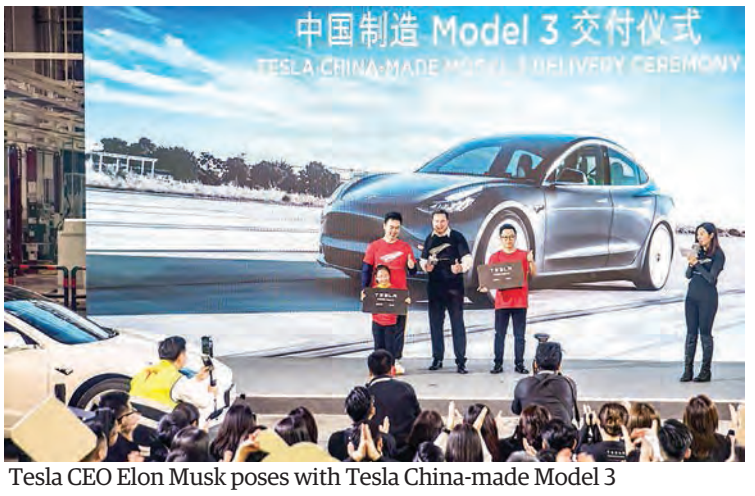
The total foreign direct investment (FDI) into Shanghai rose 20.3 per cent year on year to 7.77 billion U.S. dollars in the first four months of 2021, the municipal government said on Monday.

During the period, 20 regional headquarters of foreign-funded multinational companies were established, raising the total to 791 in Shanghai. Seven foreign-funded research and development (R&D) centres were established in the same period, raising Shanghai's total to 488.

Shanghai will continue to unswervingly promote all-round opening up and improve its business environment to support foreign enterprises in achieving greater and better development in Shanghai, Zong Ming, vice mayor of Shanghai, told a ceremony on Monday.

The Shanghai municipal government held the ceremony to issue certificates to regional headquarters and R&D centres of multinational companies. The participating companies were mainly in advanced industries such as biomedicine, smart manufacturing and high-end services.

At the ceremony, leading lubricant manufacturer Fuchs, headquartered in Germany, received certification for its R&D center in Shanghai.



Tesla CEO Elon Musk poses with Tesla China-made Model 3 vehicle owners during a ceremony in Shanghai, east China, Jan. 7, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/DING TING/FILE**

The company currently has three R&D centers globally. Its centre in Shanghai focuses on developing clean energy and improving energy efficiency.

"The automobile market is increasing in China and the demand is changing from the traditional combustion engine to the electric engine," said Kris Van Gasse, CTO of Fuchs Lubricants (China) Ltd. — Xinhua ■

German property giants announce 19-bn-euro merger

Protesters carry a banner reading 'Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen" during a demonstration against expensive rents in Berlin, on May 23, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMANY'S top property group Vonovia announced Monday plans for a 19-billion euro merger with rival Deutsche Wohnen to form a giant in the sector.

"In order to tackle both the housing shortage and climate change more robustly and efficiently, Vonovia and Deutsche Wohnen are joining forces," said a statement from the company.

The proposed deal comes after two previous attempts failed to come off, the last having been rejected by Deutsche Wohnen in 2016.

But this latest offer prices Deutsche Wohnen shares at well above their current market value, which stood at 44.99 euros on close of trade Friday on the Frankfurt exchange.

The markets in Germany are closed for a public holiday Monday.

Deutsche Wohnen shareholders will be offered 53.03 euros per share: 52 in cash and the rest as the company's dividend for the 2020 financial year, said the statement.

The previous purchase offer in 2016 saw Deutsche Wohnen oppose the merger, saying the proposed price was too low.

In Germany, where around 85 per cent of residents are renters, Deutsche Wohnen and Vonovia play a premier role in the housing sector.

The merger will give birth to a giant of more than 500,000 homes. —AFP ■

Huawei CEO calls for push into software to weather US pressure

THE head of Chinese telecoms giant Huawei has called for an all-out push into software, an internal memo seen Tuesday says, as part of an accelerating product diversification aimed at weathering US sanctions.

CEO and founder Ren Zhengfei told staff the move made sense "because in the software domain, the US will have very little control over our future development, and we have much autonomy."

The 76-year-old Ren's instructions represent the latest sign of a major strategic refocusing prompted by pressure from the United States, which views Huawei as a potential security threat.

In April, Huawei announced plans to work with Chinese automakers to make intelligent vehicles and has vowed to ramp up development of its own smartphone operating system after being cut off from Google's Android platform by US curbs.

Huawei on Tuesday posted a separate short teaser on social media indicating that the operating system, called HarmonyOS, would be launched globally on June 2. It provided no other details.

The world's leading supplier of telecom networking gear -- and until recently a top-three smartphone supplier along with Apple and Samsung -- Huawei had earlier announced a diversification into enterprise and cloud computing, and business lines related to the advent of 5G networks. —AFP ■

An internal memo suggests Huawei will mount an all-out push in the software sector. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kyuden Mirai Energy to join wood pellet fuel project in Laos

KYUDEN Mirai Energy Co., a wholly owned renewable energy subsidiary of Kyushu Electric Power Co., has unveiled a plan to engage in a wood pellet fuel production project in Laos for biomass-fired power generation in Japan.

Kyuden Mirai Energy will take part in the project undertaken by Siphandone Ratch-Lao Co. by acquiring a 20 per cent stake in the Thai-Laotian venture from Buriram Green Energy Co., a subsidiary of major Thai sugar miller Buriram Sugar Plc's, later this year.

Burriam Green Energy will remain the largest shareholder of the joint venture after the purchase with a 45 per cent stake. Ratch-Lao Services Co., a Laotian subsidiary of Thai electric power firm Ratch Group Plc, will own 25 per cent and Siphandone Bolaven Development Co. of Laos 10 per cent. — Kyodo News ■

Yahoo Japan to sell FX unit to industry leader GMO for $265 mil.

YAHOO Japan Corp. said Tuesday it will sell a subsidiary that offers foreign exchange margin trading services to industry leader GMO Financial Holdings Inc. for 28.8 billion yen ($265 million), ending its involvement in the highly competitive space.

Yahoo Japan is expected to complete the sale of all its shares in YJFX Inc. in September. YJFX will be renamed Gaika ex byGMO Inc., according to GMO, an industry leader by volume in retail foreign exchange margin trading.

Internet and e-commerce giant Yahoo Japan, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Z Holdings Corp., plans to focus its resources on growth areas such as the PayPay smartphone cashless payment service. — Kyodo News ■

Tokyo mobile data fee 2nd lowest among 6 world cities: survey

TOKYO'S monthly mobile phone data service fee for 20 gigabytes is the second lowest among six major cities in the world, a government survey showed Tuesday, following sharp price cuts by Japanese wireless carriers under government pressure.

The cost of the service in Tokyo from a representative provider was 2,973 yen ($27) per month in the latest survey conducted in March, higher only than London's 2,166 yen. In the previous survey conducted last year, the Japanese capital saw the highest rate, at 8,175 yen.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications compared the price of the most reasonable large data plans provided by wireless carriers with the leading share in six major cities -- Tokyo, New York, London, Dusseldorf, Paris, and Seoul.The German city offered the highest rate of 8,325 yen in the latest survey.

NTT Docomo Inc.'s new 5G smartphones launched in March. **PHOTO: KYODO**

NTT Docomo Inc.'s discounted plan "ahamo" launched in late March was selected to represent Tokyo in the latest survey.

For 2-gigabyte and 5-gigabyte plans, the Japanese capital offered the third lowest monthly service fee after London and Paris at 2,973 yen, the same price as the "ahamo" 20-gigabyte plan.

NTT Docomo's rivals KDDI Corp., the operator of the "au" brand, and SoftBank Corp. also launched their own discounted large data plans in March after Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga repeatedly demanded mobile service operators cut fees. — Kyodo News ■

Poland to keep coal mine open despite European court order

POLAND'S prime minister said on Monday that Warsaw would keep the massive Turow brown coal mine open despite an order issued last week by Europe's top court to suspend extraction there.

"We do not foresee the closure of the mine and we will not allow it, because this could put Poland's energy security at risk," Mateusz Morawiecki told reporters.

The premier also said Poland would seek talks with neighbouring Czech Republic, which filed the complaint against the mine located near its border, and "present new arguments to the Court of Justice" in connection with its ruling.

On Friday, the Court of Justice of the European Union ordered Poland to suspend the extraction of lignite – a low-quality brown coal – at an open-cast mine that provides around seven per cent of the country's electricity.

The order against the Turow mine comes after a complaint from the Czech Republic, which argued that the mining created a cross-border environmental hazard and breached EU law. The Luxembourg-based court ruled in favour of a Czech request to suspend mining pending a final ruling.

In operation since 1904, the mine supplies coal mainly to a local power station. Poland's largest energy group PGE, which owns both the mine and the plant, is planning to extract coal at Turow until 2044. — AFP ■

Asian markets rally as inflation fears ease, oil extends gains

EASING inflation concerns helped push equities higher in Asia on Tuesday, tracking a healthy rally on Wall Street, with traders taking heart from the global economic recovery outlook, while oil prices extended gains as Iran tempered optimism over its nuclear deal.

Bitcoin also held gains after another wild day, thanks to another supportive tweet from tycoon Elon Musk that offset fresh Chinese warnings of a crackdown on cryptocurrencies.

Tech firms led the way higher in New York as investors took heart from a number of Federal Reserve officials who insisted that an expected spike in prices over the next few months -- caused by issues including supply bottlenecks and just-freed consumers splurging cash -- would be temporary. The gains helped chip away at recent losses in the sector, which has taken the brunt of selling owing to concerns that a surge in inflation will force central banks to tighten monetary policy such as hiking interest rates.

Tech giants are more susceptible to higher rates owing to the potential effect on their future earnings and cash flow.

"Markets appear to be coming around to the Fed narrative that a burst in inflation is only likely to be temporary and therefore should not be a concern," said Rodrigo Catril, of National Australia Bank. — AFP ■

Major cruise lines to restart voyages for vaccinated passengers

THREE giants of the cruise industry will return to the seas within weeks, with Norwegian Cruise Lines on Monday becoming the latest to announce its US ships will set sail starting in early August.

After a year of crippling losses, Carnival and Royal Caribbean said late last week their first post-pandemic cruises will set sail in July, after the US Centres for Disease Control (CDC) earlier this month gave the green light to allow trips with passengers and crew who received Covid-19 vaccinations.

"We have been waiting for a very long time to announce a resumption of cruising from the US. We are so proud to be sailing for the first time in over a year from our special homeport of Seattle to the breathtaking state of Alaska," Harry Sommer, chief of Norwegian Cruise Line, said in a statement.

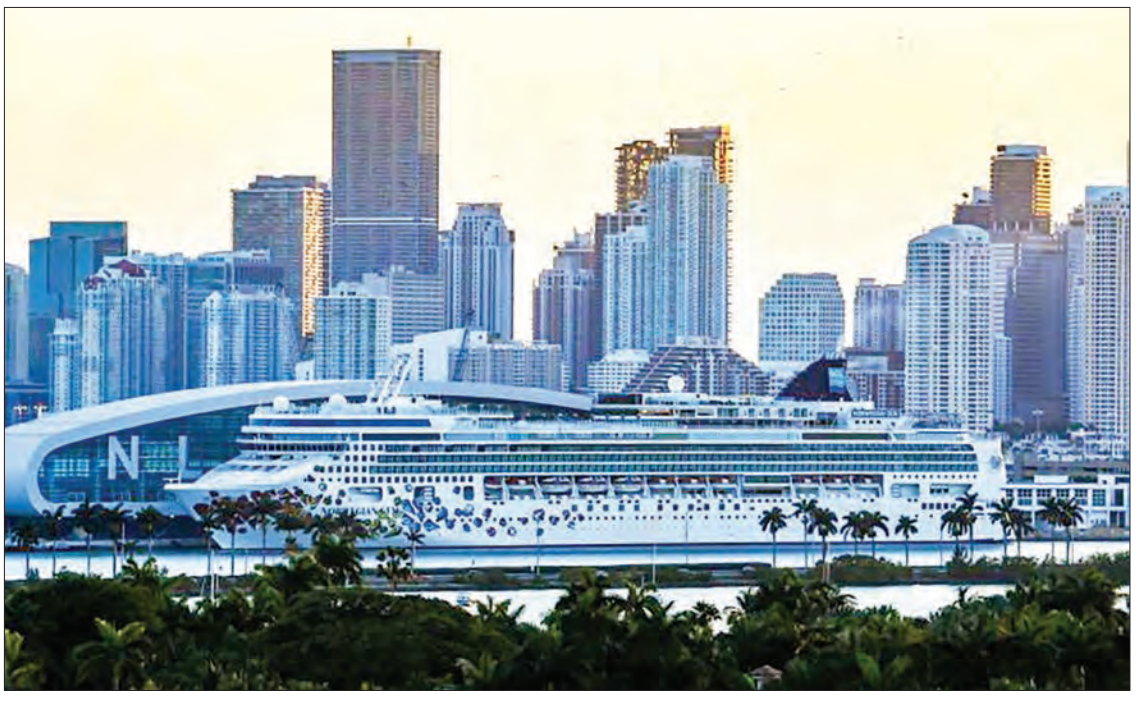
Cruise operations were suspended on March 14, 2020 when the CDC issued a "no sail order" to prevent the further spread of the coronavirus. Several ships already had deadly outbreaks on board.

Some cruise ships resumed operations in Europe and elsewhere last year, but the ban remained in place in the United States.

All three companies will offer trips from Seattle to Alaska as their inaugural cruises.

Norwegian said "all crew and passengers must be fully vaccinated to embark."

Carnival said its trips will be available to guests who received their final dose at least two weeks prior, and likewise Royal Caribbean will require vaccinations of all passengers over the age of 16, and after August 1 all those over the age of 12. Norwegian will offer week-long voyages starting August 6, while Royal Caribbean will leave port first with a similar trip July 19 and Carnival's Holland American Line will start July 24. — AFP ■


Three major cruise operators will offer Alaska voyages to vaccinated travellers starting in July. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pressure mounts on Belarus over forced landing to arrest dissident

EUROPEAN countries moved to isolate Belarus on Monday by cutting air ties after it provoked an international outcry by forcing a commercial airliner to land so it could arrest an opposition activist.

EU leaders meeting in Brussels eyed proposals to stop Belarus' state airline flying to the bloc and prevent European carriers from using the country's airspace, after several nations started closing air routes.

The Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius carrying dissident journalist Roman Protasevich was diverted while in Belarusian airspace on Sunday over a supposed bomb threat.

Accompanied by a Belarusian fighter jet — on the orders of strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko — the plane landed in the capital Minsk. There, 26-year-old Protasevich, who had been living between Lithuania and Poland, was arrested along with his Russian girlfriend Sofia Sapega.

Western leaders accused Belarusian authorities of essentially hijacking a European plane, while Minsk claimed it had reacted to secure the flight after receiving a threat from Palestinian Islamist group Hamas to blow up the aircraft.

"There will be a very strong answer because it is outrageous behaviour and Lukashenko and his regime have to understand that this will have severe consequences," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said as leaders from the bloc gathered.

Proposed summit conclusions seen by AFP envision banning state carrier Belavia from EU airspace and airports, and calling on EU-based airlines to "avoid overflight of Belarus".

Photo of Ryanair Boeing 737-8AS (flight number FR4978) parked on Minsk International Airport's apron in Minsk, on May 23, 2021.
PHOTO: AFP

The bloc is also looking to speed up fresh sanctions already in the pipeline over Lukashenko's crackdown on protests in Belarus and expand them to hit key state-run companies. The EU's push to punish Minsk came after Britain and Lithuania said they had issued instructions for their countries' aircraft to avoid Belarusian airspace, with London going further by banning Belarus's flagship carrier. Ukraine said it would halt direct flights between the two countries and over Belarus, while Scandinavian airline SAS, Germany's Lufthansa and Latvia-based regional airline Air Baltic said they would be avoiding Belarusian airspace.

'North Korea in Europe'

Berlin, London and Brussels summoned the Belarusian ambassadors, as exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya called for an independent probe, new sanctions and for Minsk to be excluded from international aviation bodies. "An act of state terrorism was carried out and now any passengers flying over Belarus in a civilian aircraft will be in danger," Tikhanovskaya told reporters in Vilnius. — AFP ■

Operating in the shadows: US Cyber Command

The Colonial Pipeline Houston Station: the FBI identified the group behind the hack of Colonial Pipeline as shadowy operation DarkSide.
PHOTO: AFP

IF the Pentagon's Cyber Command launches an online attack and nobody knows about it, does it deter anyone?

Many Americans are asking what the country's army of cyber warriors are doing after repeated attacks on US computer systems by Chinese, Russian and other hackers. The answer may have been in the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade's subtle retweet on May 14 of a security firm's scoop that ransomware extortionist Darkside had been digitally shut down.

No one knows who took control of Darkside's servers, a week after the shady Russia-based hackers forced the closure of a major US oil pipeline, causing gasoline shortages across the Eastern US. But suspicions are that the 10-year-old CyberCom may have stepped in, to punish Darkside and to signal the small army of ransomware providers operating out of Eastern Europe that they too are vulnerable.

Even as it remains quiet, CyberCom's role is hotly debated: is it to undertake strategic attacks during war, or to constantly joust online with adversaries' military and intelligence hackers, or to go after non-military hackers like Darkside, normally the purview of law enforcement?

Malware strike on Iran

The first sign that the US Defence Department was playing offense in the online world was in 2010 when it became known that a destructive, US and Israel-created computer worm Stuxnet had infected and damaged Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities. — AFP ■

Brazil captures fugitive Italian mob boss

ITALIAN mob boss Rocco Morabito has been arrested in northeast Brazil, police said, almost two years after his escape from a prison in Uruguay where he was awaiting extradition to Italy.

Morabito, considered a "capo" or captain of the 'Ndrangheta group, was captured in the city of Joao Pessoa along with another Italian "outlaw" as a result of a joint investigation with Italy, Brazil's federal police said in a statement.

Morabito is wanted in Italy on charges of drug trafficking.

"There are records of Rocco Morabito's involvement in... drug trafficking between Brazil and Europe since the 1990s," said the Brazilian police.

Brazil's Federal Supreme Court had issued an arrest warrant.

Dubbed "the king of cocaine," Morabito has been wanted since 1995 by the Italian justice system, which accuses him of illicit association and drug trafficking. — AFP ■

Malian army detains leaders, triggering condemnation, coup fears

MALIAN officers upset with a government reshuffle have detained the president and prime minister at an army camp outside the capital, triggering broad international condemnation and demands for their immediate release.

President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane lead an interim government that was installed under the threat of regional sanctions following a putsch in August, and the detentions on Monday raised fears of a second coup.

Two senior officials, who declined to be named, told AFP that soldiers had taken Ndaw and Ouane to the Kati military camp on the outskirts of the capital Bamako.

Their detentions followed a sensitive government reshuffle earlier on Monday that was designed to respond to growing criticism of the interim government.

The military kept the strategic portfolios it controlled during the previous administration in the reshuffle.

But two coup leaders -- ex-defence minister Sadio Camara and ex-security minister Colonel Modibo Kone -- were replaced. — AFP ■

Coup leader Assimi Goita (C) is currently serving as interim vice president. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ONE Championship: Full Blast fights to be launched on 28 May

A substituted event in the place of ONE women's fights named as ONE Full Blast featuring bouts of world-class fighters will be held at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore on 28 May, ONE Championship officials said.

ONE Championship stated that there would be a total of five stand fights.

In the event's main card or Bantamweight Muay Thai, Saemapetch Fairtex of Thailand will fight against Kulabdam Sor Jor Piek Uthai of Thailand.

In the co-main event or Flyweight fight, Kantaraj Agasa of India will take on Xie Wei of China.

In Welterweight kickboxing, Santino Verbeek of the Netherlands will fight with Miles Simson of Suriname.

In the Featherweight fight, Ahmed Faress of Egypt will meet Edward Kelly of the Philippines.

In the Catchweight bout of 57.7 Kg, Anthony Do of the United States will fight against Liang Hui of China.

The ONE Championship Fights will be broadcast live free on ONE Super Application and ONE.

Championship YouTube Channel said ONE Championship authorities. The first two fights will also be streamed live on the ONE Championship Facebook page, officials added. —GNLM

PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

Shepherd hailed as hero in deadly China ultramarathon race

A shepherd has been hailed as a hero in China after it emerged that he saved six stricken runners during an ultramarathon in which 21 other competitors died.

Zhu Keming was trending on the Twitter-like Weibo on Tuesday, three days after a 100-kilometre (60-mile) cross-country mountain race in the northwestern province of Gansu turned deadly in freezing rain, high winds and hail.

The incident triggered outrage and mourning in China, as questions swirled over why organizers apparently ignored warnings about the incoming extreme weather.

Zhu was grazing his sheep on Saturday around lunchtime when the wind picked up, the rain came down and temperatures plunged, he told state media.

This photo taken on May 24, 2021 shows shepherd Zhu Keming, hailed as a hero in China for rescuing six ultramarathon runners when extreme weather hit the area leaving at least 20 dead, showing the cave dwelling where he sheltered the stricken athletes near the city of Baiyin, in China's northwestern Gansu province. **PHOTO: STR / CNS / AFP**

He sought refuge in a cave where he had stored clothes and food for emergencies but while inside spotted one of the race's 172 competitors and checked to see what was wrong because he was standing still, apparently suffering cramps.

Zhu escorted the man back to the cave, massaged his freezing hands and feet, lit a fire and dried his clothes. — AFP ■

Flick to become new Germany coach after Euro 2020

Outgoing Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick will succeed his former boss Joachim Loew in the Germany dugout after Euro 2020, the German Football Association (DFB) announced on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

OUTGOING Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick will succeed his former boss Joachim Loew in the Germany dugout after Euro 2020, the German Football Association (DFB) announced on Tuesday.

"It's all gone surprisingly quickly, but I am very happy to be Germany coach from the autumn," said Flick, 56, after signing a three-year contract to succeed Loew."I am hugely excited, because I see the class of players, and especially young players, which we have in Germany." Flick, who was assistant coach to Loew when Germany won the 2014 World Cup, has long been the favourite to take over from Loew, who will leave the job after 15 years in charge later this year.

"He was top of my wish list from the very start," said national team director Oliver Bierhoff. Flick, who also worked as DFB sporting director between 2014 and 2017, has made a name for himself as one of Europe's top coaches in two glittering years at perennial Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich.

After taking over from predecessor Niko Kovac with the club in a mid-season crisis, he led Bayern to only their second ever treble in 2020. — AFP ■

Solskjaer touts Europa League as start of renewed Man Utd success

OLE Gunnar Solskjaer will attempt to win his first trophy as Manchester United manager in Wednesday's Europa League final against Villarreal, confident that victory could ignite another sustained run of success at Old Trafford.

The Norwegian, now 48, will forever be remembered for his late winner against Bayern Munich in the 1999 Champions League final, and Solskjaer is eager to further embed himself in the club's rich history.

Having helped United secure successive top-four finishes for the first time since Alex Ferguson retired after the last of the club's Premier League titles in 2013, Solskjaer hopes to now end their four-year wait for silverware in Gdansk.

"You always feel pressure to win things at Manchester United. Progress in the league shows progress. The next step is to win trophies and challenge in the Premier League as well," he said.

"Winning a trophy can give you belief but it can make you hungry for more. When you win things you just want to win more, you want to feel that sensation again of lifting trophies.

"I know my players will believe they can win it and that we can move on to better things, but when you get that taste of the first one, that's a big step in the right direction." — AFP ■

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer guided Manchester United to a second-place finish in the Premier League. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP /ANDY RAIN**