

NATIONAL

Senior General receives honorary medals of Russian Defence Ministry

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

OECD highlights Myanmar's 'considerable progress' towards improved investment climate

PAGE-3

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INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

MoPFI, MoC, MoIFER hold press briefings on 4th-year performances



PAGE-4

LOCAL NEWS

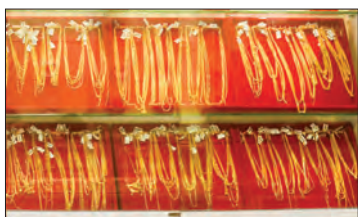
About 2,000 lamp posts to be installed in Pyigyidagun Township



PAGE-10

BUSINESS

Selling exceeds buying in local gold market



PAGE-7

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation attends 75th Victory Day parade in Russian Federation



Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends the 75th Anniversary parade for Victory Day of Great Patriotic War in Russian Federation on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

C O M M A N D - ER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, together with Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation members attended the parade held in Moscow's Red Square to commemorate the 75th Anniversary Victory Day of Great Patriotic War in the Russian Federation yesterday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Defence Minister Army General Sergei Kuzhugetovich

Shoigu, senior military and civilian officials, military veterans, presidents from 12 countries and military heads, defence ministers and senior officers from 19 countries and invited guests attended the ceremony. They were seated according to social distancing rules.

Some 14,000 troops in the parade took their positions after which Army General Sergei Kuzhugetovich inspected the military columns.

After the speech of President Vladimir Putin, military columns, units of the mechanized military divisions, led by Colonel General Oleg Solyukov, marched and saluted in formation, together with the flyover of aircraft from the Russian Air Force. The parade was also participated by about 1,400 soldiers from 13 foreign countries. The Victory Day commemorates the surrender of the Nazis in Berlin, Germany, on 8 May 1945. It was

9 May Moscow time due to the time difference. Although the 75th anniversary fell on 9 May, it was postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19. After the pandemic had been controlled to a certain extent, the event was celebrated on 24 June 2020 to honour the first celebration of Victory Day on 24 June 1945, according to the report of the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 24 June, total figure reaches 293

Updated at 8 pm, 24 June 2020



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



SEE PAGE-2

Senior General receives honorary medals of Russian Defence Ministry

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received an honorary medal 'For Strengthening Military Cooperation' conferred by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation during his visit to Moscow to attend the 75th Anniversary parade of Victory Day of Great Patriotic War.

The Senior General and party called on Deputy Minister of Defence Colonel General Alexander V. Fomin at his office on 23 June afternoon.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the enhancement of existing friendly relations and improvement of military cooperation between the two countries. They also held talks on Myanmar's participation in the International Army Games in Russia.

After the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received the medal 'For Strengthening Military Cooperation' conferred by the Deputy Defence Minister. The Senior General



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds discussions with Deputy Minister of Defence Colonel General Alexander V. Fomin in Moscow on 23 June afternoon. **PHOTO: MNA**

was also presented another honorary medal by Deputy Director Vladimir Drozhzhov on behalf of the Director-General of Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation ("FSMTC of Rus-

sia"). On 23 June afternoon, the Senior General and party visited the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces in the Patriot Park at southwestern

of Moscow. They also looked around the display of weapons, ammunition, military equipment of World War II period and computer programmes about wars in the museum near the

church, according to the report of the Office of the Commander in Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

DOC revokes Public Access Centre-PAC licence

DIRECTORATE of Communications (DOC) has permitted licences for Public Access Centre-PAC in accordance with the Section (29) of the Computer

Science Development Law. DOC issued notification (3/2015) on 12-1-2015 to change the PAC licence to services licence within 12 months. On 8 June, DOC

abolished the licences that failed to change service licences in the given time in accordance with the DOC's notification (20/2020). —MNA

MoSCO, MoLIP, MoALI to hold press briefings on 26 June

THE Ministry of State Counsellor Office, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will hold joint press briefings on their fourth-year

performances at the Office No 7 of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 26 June.—MNA

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls in Ambassador of Bangladesh

U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called in Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar, at 3:00 pm on 24 June 2020 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting, they exchanged views on

matters pertaining to bilateral relations and implementation of bilateral agreements regarding the displaced persons.

The Permanent Secretary reiterated the need to strictly adhere to the bilateral arrangements reached between the two countries for repatriation. He suggested

that both sides will coordinate for the holding of the Joint Working Group Meeting once the situation of the COVID-19 is under control.

Furthermore, the Permanent Secretary and the Ambassador also discussed border-related matters.—MNA

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 24 June, total figure reaches 293

FROM PAGE-1

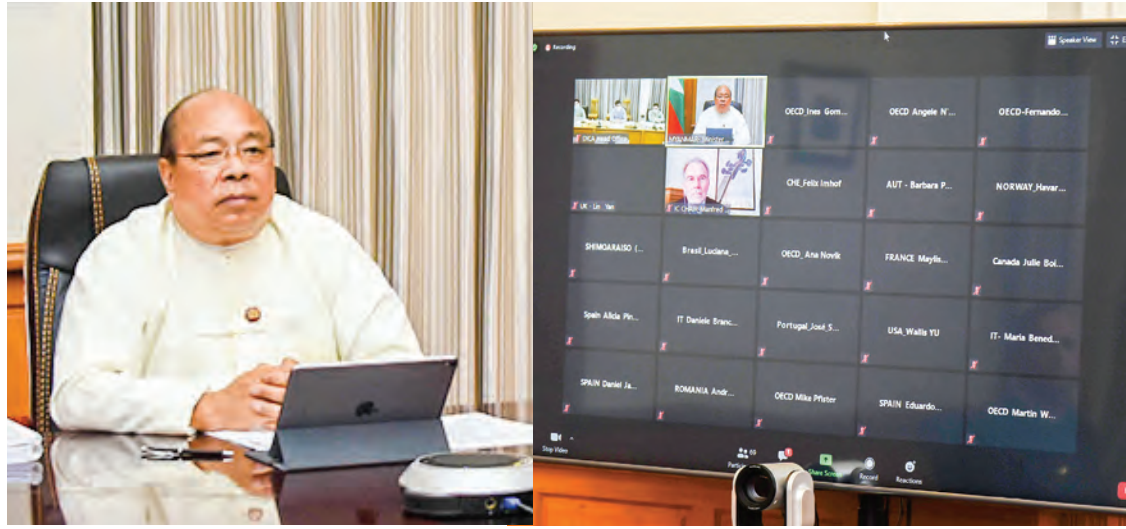
One more case of COVID-19 on 24 June 2020: Updated at 8 pm

| Case No | Age | Gender | Address | Contact with positive patient | Overseas travel history | Hospital for medical treatment | Lab result | Remark |
|---------|-----|--------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|---|
| 293 | 22 | Male | Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State | No | Yes, Bangladesh | District People's Hospital, Maungtaw | Positive | Held under quarantine (Maungtaw Township) |

Ministry of Health & Sports

“People are the key”

OECD highlights Myanmar’s ‘considerable progress’ towards improved investment climate



Union Minister U Thaung Tun makes discussions at the 2nd Myanmar–OECD Investment Policy Review (IPR) on 23 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE 2nd Myanmar–OECD Investment Policy Review (IPR) was held on 23 June at the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. In his opening remarks, U Thaung Tun,

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations welcomed the Review’s findings and noted that investment policies have been revised to ensure a level playing field for all inves-

tors and to create a favourable, predictable and friendly investment climate in Myanmar.

Investment is a cornerstone of our efforts to spur economic development. Thus, providing a

secure, conducive investment enabling environment which eases the cost of doing business, boosts investor confidence and increases efficiencies.

Since the first review, the Myanmar government has greatly expanded the areas of collaboration with the OECD. This second review continues and deepens this engagement.

U Aung Naing Oo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Mr Manfred Schekulin, Chair of OECD Investment Committee presented recommendations and opportunities for further reforms identified as part of the 2nd IPR.

Since 2014, Myanmar’s participation in the IPR process has provided the country with a comprehensive overview of global and regional investment trends,

policies and practices affecting our investment climate. Both the 1st and 2nd IPR have proposed concrete recommendations targeted towards making Myanmar a more attractive destination for quality, responsible investment.

Myanmar’s 1st IPR covered areas such as investment promotion and facilitation, financial sector reform, infrastructure development and responsible business conduct. It contributed to a range of key investment-oriented reforms, including the drafting of the Myanmar Investment Law and the Myanmar Companies Law.

The 2nd IPR covers additional areas such as connectivity, green growth supportive investment frameworks, fostering secure and well-defined land rights and enhancing the role of economic zones.—MNA

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in videoconferences of Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting and ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting

UNION Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin participated in the videoconferences of the Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting and ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting which were held yesterday at 07:30 am from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw. The Meetings were attended by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

At the Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, the Ministers discussed and exchanged views on regional and international issues, applications of external partners to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as well as promotion of cooperation between Myanmar and ASEAN in addressing the issue of Rakhine State through providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process and promoting sustainable development.

On the regional and inter-

national issues, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin stressed that the outbreak of the global pandemic and escalation of power rivalry, tension and disputes in the region were threatening the regional peace and stability, posing a greater challenge to ASEAN, and thus ASEAN unity, centrality and its roles as a primary driving force in the evolving regional architecture were crucial more than ever. He added that ASEAN should play a bigger role in stabilizing the tensions through its mechanism particularly ARF and EAS. He also highlighted that ASEAN should continue promoting the principles enshrined in TAC and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

On the issue of Rakhine State, the Union Minister apprised the Meeting of Government’s efforts in creating a conducive environment for the returnees, continued discussion with Bangladesh to commence repatriation process in accordance with the bilateral Agreements, provision of the list of

verified displaced persons to the Bangladesh side, cooperation with ASEAN in the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment, cooperation with the UNHCR and UNDP in conducting Quick Impact Projects and Pilot Projects in Rakhine State, Government’s efforts in the implementation of the National Strategy on resettlement of IDPs and closure of IDP Camps as well as COVID-19 preventive measures taken by the Government at the

IDP camps and Myanmar’s consistent position on the issue of boat people including the need to enhance cooperation in fighting human trafficking to prevent such issue.

At the 21st ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting, the Ministers discussed recent developments of the Sectoral Bodies under ASEAN Political and Security Council as well as implementation and review of the APSC Blueprint. At the 26th ASEAN Coordinating Council

Meeting, the Ministers discussed matter pertaining to ASEAN’s Cooperation and Community building efforts, preparations for the 36th ASEAN Summit and follow-up to the Special ASEAN/ASEAN+3 Summits on COVID-19.

Present also at the Meetings were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.—MNA



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in meetings of ASEAN members countries on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

MoPFI, MoC, MoIFER hold press briefings on 4th-year performances

MINISTRY of Planning, Finance and Industry, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations held press briefings yesterday on their performances during the 4th-year of present administration.

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win briefed on the ministry's economic policy, planning, finance and industrial policies in both short and long terms through five departments under the planning, 13 departments under finance and 6 departments under Industry.

The Planning Department managed to develop the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030, which will be the basic framework of national planning, while the Project Bank categorized the projects which need capital investments.

The Ministry has also established the PPP Centre to provide public services.

The deputy minister explained that the Project Appraisal and Progress Reporting Department has adopted specific time frame for strategic plans of the Central Statistical Organization drafted the five-year plan for implementing the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (2018-2019 to 2022-2023), the Central Equipment Statistics and Inspection Department inspected machinery and vehicles being used by the Union ministries, the National Archives Department collected documents from Union ministries, state departments in Yangon Region and Hluttaws of Yangon, Bago, Mon and Kayin.; the new National Records and Archives Act was passed through Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 40 on 27 December 2019; and conducted the courses of Master of Public Administration and the Master of Business Administration.

In financial sector, the Myanmar Economic Bank is giving out low-interest loans after received two step loan from Japan, the first loan of Yen5.033 billion and the second one Yen15 billion, through the Myanmar Economic Bank and the 10 private banks. The Myanmar Economic Bank is providing 1 per cent and 1 year-term loan to the hotel and tourism sectors, SMEs and the



Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry briefs on its 4th-year performances under this administration, on 24 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

CMP businesses in accordance with the instruction of COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan. Out of K100 billion fund, a total of K31.817 billion loan has been given out to 832 businesses up to 18 June 2020.

The Myanma Agricultural Development Bank borrowed K150,000 per acre for paddy and K100,000 per acre for other crops in 2018-2019 financial year. Out of K200 billion JICA Two Step Loan, the MADB has given on K196.6 billion loans to farmers to purchase agricultural equipment and other agricultural infrastructures.

The COVID-19 Special Relief Loan will be K50,000 per acre for 2020 monsoon paddy cultivation with 5 per cent annual interest, and a total of K600 billion for 12 million acres of agricultural lands for 2020.

The Myanmar Insurance worked together with the Myanma Agricultural Development Bank in weather index-based crop insurance in Pyay of Bago Region and Shwebo of Sagaing Region under the one-year pilot project, as well as premium insurances for vehicle owners and driving licenses. The Budget Department managed for allocation of emergency funds at the central organizations, Union ministries and region/state governments in 2019-2020FY, with K50 billion at the Union government, K14 billion at local governments and K36 billion at the Union ministries respectively.

The Treasury Department carried out debt management, financial management and maintaining Union fund, while selling out the Government Treasury Bonds; the Internal Revenue Department developed the Tax Administration Law, introduced tax

payment system with the MPU Debit Card in the first phase in 2015 and with Net CCT Function of the Central Bank of Myanmar in 2018, Internet Banking System of CBPay in January 2020, and Internet Banking system of AYA Pay in May 2020.

The Customs Department began transform custom services from manual system to Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System in Yangon in 2016, and in June 2018 at Myawady border trade zone, and the installation of MACCS is being carried out at the Muse border trade zone. The transform of E-form D was implemented to join the ASEAN Single Window Live Operation in December 2019, which can support international trade and attract international investments.

The Financial Regulatory Department drafted and implemented the Financial Inclusion Roadmap (2014-2020) and 2019-2030; the department also issued licence to five foreigner owned life insurance companies, three joint-venture life insurance companies and there general insurance companies in 2019; the department has secured approval from the 16th regular session of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to get US\$60 million loan from the Asian Development Bank to establish the Credit Guarantee Corporation to provide loans for MSMEs and to reduce possible losses of banks. The fully state-owned Loan Insurance Corporation will be established in 2020 and loan insurance programme will commence in 2021.

The Pension Department is working for the Central Provident Fund, the Revenue Appellate Tribunal adopted regulations of Tax Appeal Board Act in 2019; the Securities and

Exchange Commission of Myanmar is managing the Yangon Stock Exchange and six companies of securities and exchange companies.

The Directorate of Industrial Collaboration is generating over 1,000 skilled workers from six industrial training schools each year, and working to establish two technical training schools with assistance of India government in Thaton and Monywa townships. The Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection launched a SME Web Portal for the MSME Member Card Online Registration and the e-Payment System online.

The Myanma Pharmaceutical Industrial Enterprise is producing a wide range of medicines, including essential drugs, in line with WHO GMP Guideline.

The No. 1 Heavy Industrial Enterprise issued vehicle policies in May 2019 with the approval of Union government.

The ministry also suspended 2 per cent advance tax on exports, postponement of trade, income tax up to 2019-2020FY for the relief of impacts from COVID-19 and provided relief funds for the other sectors.

Dr Wah Wah Maung, the Director-General of Pension Department, explained the media questions about reform of pension system by establishing funds like in other countries, plans to draft a law to set up funds of civil service employees.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win and officials replied to the questions about X-ray machines at Yangon port, renewal of contracts for private owned X-ray machines, remarks of Auditor-General Office of the Union on the involvement of depart-

mental officials in the Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited, the situations of heavy industries, Chinese loan, progress on the investigation of steel factory in Myingyan, the estimated budget for 2020 General Election, elimination of old banknotes, the master plan for China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, Chinese investments in Myanmar, implementation of projects proposed to Myanmar for the Belt and Road Initiative projects, K20,000 cash supplies to the grass roots people, settlement of problems at the industries transferred to the private sector, welfares for staff members at these factories and privatization of more factories, reduction of interest to micro finance sector during the COVID-19 crisis.

Ministry of Commerce

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo then explained the fourth-year performance of his ministry. He said they are implementing the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2023).

The Ministry of Commerce said the trade sector had a production value of K21,638 billion in 2018-2019 financial year, contributing to 20.55percent of GDP, and an increase of 7.9percent from last year. International trade reached US\$35.02 billion during the fourth year with \$16.963 billion in exports and USD18.058 billion in imports while trade deficit was reduced to \$1.09 billion.

Myanmar managed to export 2.3 million tonnes of rice and broken rice, a major export item, in the previous year and generate \$700 million in income. They estimate to export 2.5 million tonnes this year. COVID-19 has led to requirements in food rations and also opened up new markets. Myanmar won the rice tender for 75,000 tonnes from the Philippines and will hold a government-to-government meeting for selling with Malaysia.

Corn is the second important crop and domestic consumption has increased with exports to markets in China having expanded to those in Thailand as well. Myanmar exported over 1.53 million tonnes of corn last year and also exported 1.64 million tonnes of different types of legumes in 2018-2019 financial year, generation \$1 billion in revenue.

MoPFI, MoC, MoIFER hold press briefings on 4th-year ...



The Ministry of Commerce holds press briefing on 4th-year performances under the present government on 24 June. PHOTO: MNA

FROM PAGE-4

The Deputy Minister said the export of food has curiously gone up as the nation exported 1.7 million metric ton of watermelons, muskmelons, mangoes and bananas in the fourth year, a 21 per cent increase from 2017-2018 financial year. Myanmar also increased livestock export and developed the saltwater and freshwater fish farming sector, thereby increasing exports. Myanmar exported 500,000 cattle last year and USD700 million worth of fishery products for 2018-2019 financial year. Textile and CMP exports also increased to USD4.85 billion for CMP exports in the fourth year and USD1.34 billion for other industrial finished products exported.

The ministry promoted transit trade and exported USD3.9 billion worth of natural gas through the Kyaukpyu-Kunming pipeline. With the approval of joint ventures with foreign companies for retail and wholesale, 7 retail businesses, 54 wholesale businesses and 23 retail/wholesale businesses have cropped up in the country.

The Deputy Minister explained that they have sent 10 economic counselors to 8 nations to increase exports and find new markets and will send 5 more economic counselors to 4 other nations. The ministry has organized domestic trade fairs and participated in international ones. They have also built 13 central trade centres in the states and regions.

The Consumer Protection Law was enacted in 2019 and the ministry approved 9,893 products for meeting set standards. The Agricultural Product Management Body was established to ensure farmers receive fair prices

and set the referral price for 100 tins of rice to K500,000. The Union Government has allotted K15 billion for purchasing rice and did so in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions at the referral price of K500,000.

The Deputy Minister then explained about the Special Economic Zones they were handling. He said they are in the process of setting up a company for constructing a deep sea port in Kyaukpyu SEZ and are discussing the company rules and board of directors selection. He said they are also in the process of signing land leases with the Italian-Thai company for Dawei SEZ.

The Deputy Minister then answered to a question from the media on whether there were plans to suspend trade with Bangladesh as it currently has high infection rates of COVID-19. He said the drop in border trade in Rakhine State to a point lower than usual has been going on for some time. He said Myanmar merchants do not travel to Bangladeshi ports to do trade so there is no cause for becoming infected with the disease.

Afterwards, the Deputy Minister and officials replied to questions on the progress of projects in collaboration with China, the joint border trade zone with China, how they will deal with restrictions of Myanmar products being exported, the rise in price for cargo trucks to transport cargo to the border during COVID-19, plans for the new model of cargo trading after COVID-19, progress on allowing car imports for staff with 26 years of service and those with outstanding staff awards, the initial projects for Kyaukpyu Deep Sea Port, stocking up on rice and cooking oil reserves, transferring state-owned

warehouses to private ownership, the number transferred and the current situation with reduced state-owned warehouses, and other topics.

Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations

Permanent Secretary U Aung Naing Oo of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations explained the ministry's performances for the fourth year. The ministry enforced the new Myanmar Companies Law on 21 August 2018 and implemented the electronic registration system MyCO across the nation simultaneously. This has made registering companies for efficient and reduced costs.

The result was that 46,337 companies re-registered and 31,175 companies have re-registered by the end of 19 June, making the total number of re-registration of companies registered before the new law was enacted reach 77,552.

The company law had to

make processes more streamlined while avoiding complications for companies that have to follow the law. As a result, Myanmar moved to the 70th spot on the World Bank's Starting a Business ranking for 2020. Myanmar had ranked last at 189th in the same ranking when it was first included by the World Bank in 2014. Since starting from the bottom, the nation has worked up the rankings with noticeable results.

U Aung Naing Oo then explained about the investment sector. He said the Myanmar Investment Commission has approved 189 foreign investment processes as of 23 June. The total investment value from those processes is at US\$4,307 million and MIC has currently approved of \$4.3 billion. Meanwhile, Myanmar citizens have made 87 investments, with K1.37 trillion approved by MIC, within a year as of 23 June 2020.

U Aung Naing Oo then explained the performance of the Foreign Economic Relations Department. The department is tasked with handling cooperation with United Nations institutions, including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, and WFP. The department has 5-year plans for cooperation between Myanmar and the UN from 2018 to 2022 that are estimated at USD822 million in total.

The Permanent Secretary then spoke of significant events in bilateral cooperation. He said they have signed a 5-year MoU with China on business and trade and signed another agreement for 1 billion Yuan in assistance from China in April 2019. A total of 33 MoUs on bilateral cooperation were signed when the President of China visited Myanmar back in January. Similarly, during the

President of Myanmar's trip to China, there were agreements for 4 billion Yuan in assistance to Myanmar during the previous 3 years.

During the visit from the President of the Republic of Korea, they signed a framework agreement for South Korea to loan \$1 billion to Myanmar. The government of Japan has also assisted in many sectors in Myanmar. In fact, the Japanese Ambassador and the Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations recently signed an MoU for assisting Myanmar with COVID-19. The EU has also provided valuable support to Myanmar including the financial assistance of EURO 221 million to develop the education sector, handed over after the signing ceremony on 21 March 2019.

The ministry closely cooperates with ASEAN's economic pillar as well. Thailand assumed the role of ASEAN Chair last year where all ASEAN member nations agreed on the 171 tasks for implementation. Myanmar is included in implementing 167 tasks and has completed 130 tasks so far. Of the remaining 37 tasks, 35 are to be done in collaboration with the entire ASEAN region meaning Myanmar only has 2 tasks to complete on its own.

Myanmar is actively participating in tasks concerning the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between ASEAN and its partner nations. RCEP will become the largest free trade area in the world and includes 47.4 per cent of the world's population, 32.3 per cent of global GDP, and 29.1 per cent of all global trade. It will potentially include 32.5 per cent of global investments as well.

SEE PAGE-6



The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations explains 4th-year performances under the present government on 24 June. PHOTO: MNA

Land administration committee convenes 27th coord meeting

THE Central Committee of the Administration of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands held their 27th coordination meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation yesterday.

At the meeting, Central Committee Chairman Union Minister Dr Aung Thu said every citizen has the same equal right to apply for the use of vacant, fallow and virgin lands through permitted means and pursue their business on it. He said the central committee requests a guarantee fee to ensure people pursue the businesses they claimed to do after handing over the land. The fee is returned when the proposed business is complete. He said the amount levied for the land tax during the business process is not much when compared to the investment made for the business.

The Union Minister said the people who received approval to work on those lands should pay the tax promptly as failure

to comply will bring about legal repercussions. He said the nation has provided the land for use at no cost and the success of the individual or organization in their work on that land also contributes to national economic development in one way.

The Union Minister said they are administering the land within the law to prevent it from becoming a product for sale. He said breaking this rule will cause the guarantee fee to be sent to the national budget. He said there have some delays in some administrative working committees and called for solutions to resolve it.

Next, Central Committee Secretary and Director-General U Thet Naing Oo explained the administrative process and attendees discussed each topic in detail.

The meeting discussed the tax exemption period for levying land tax for allotted lands and setting the rate for land tax in line



Land administration committee of MoALI discusses equal right of citizens to apply for the use of vacant, fallow and virgin lands. **PHOTO: MNA**

with Sections 39-(c) and 40 of the Administration of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Bylaw.

They discussed the revenue from land tax for allotted lands and amount of tax yet to be levied

between 2017-2018 to 2019-2020, progress on reviewing applications for land usage, forming a special unit for the applications, the list of the special unit for taking legal action if people fail to pay

their land tax, reports of denying land usage, and forming a separate unit for reviewing reports calling to block applications for land usage. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

ASEAN tourism development committees hold meetings on videoconference



ASEAN tourism development committees hold meetings via videoconference on progress of implementation in tourism sector on 22 and 23 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE 9th edition meeting of ASEAN Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Committee and the 9th edition meeting of ASEAN Tourism Resourcing, and Monitoring and Evaluation Committee were held on 22 and 23 June.

The first meeting was chaired by Malaysia, together with the joint vice-chairs from Laos and Thailand, while the second meeting was presided over by Cambodia, with the vice-chair of Myanmar.

The two meetings discussed mid-term monitoring on the

ASEAN tourism strategic plan and relief plan for the impacts of COVID-19.

Surveys will be conducted on recommendations of relevant committees in preparing a report to be released in ASEAN tourism forum.

Participant countries also discussed the report of ASEAN Secretariat on receiving technical and other assistance from other blocs, assessments on implementation of member countries on the targeted plans for 2020 and schemes for 2021, the balance of budget in ASEAN

Tourism fund.

The meetings approved to update report on relief plan for ASEAN tourism industry and the latest recommendations of member countries.

The meeting was joined by the Deputy Director-General, the Director and officials from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

The committee meetings are scheduled to convene in Singapore in early October 2020 if there is no serious threat of the pandemic.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MoPFI, MoC, MoIFER hold press briefings on 4th-year ...

FROM PAGE-5

Permanent Secretary U Aung Naing Oo said his ministry has the main responsibility in the working committee for remedying economic repercussions from COVID-19, as assigned by the President's Office. He said Union Minister U Thaung Tun serves as Chairman of that working committee and they instruct reducing restrictions where necessary, provide loans, and make business preparations. The working committee has held 6 meetings so far, and regularly does so, and made 78 decisions to remedy the economic reper-

cussions.

U Aung Naing Oo said they have so far handed out K86.74 billion in loans to 3,094 businesses and will continue to provide loans to remaining businesses after careful reviews.

Next, Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin answered the questions on the amount of investment from China, the sector receiving the highest investments, and progress on the One Belt One Road (OBOR) Project during the new government's administration. He said China is the second highest investor in the new government's administration period while Singapore

is at first. China has made investments worth USD 18 billion with the most finances flowing into the general sector and CMP businesses.

U Thant Sin Lwin said the ministry has not received any investment proposals concerning the OBOR Project but only through other investment models. He said his ministry and Myanmar Investment Commission do not handle the OBOR Project. Instead, it is handled by the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry.

Afterwards, Permanent Secretary U Aung Naing Oo and officials then replied to

questions from the media on whether COVID-19 has affected the action plan for promoting investment, how the ministry is assisting businesses affected by COVID-19 and whether there are special action plans prepared for resolving these issues, how Wuntho Resources Co. Ltd did not submit their project in Wuntho Township, Sagaing Region, to Myanmar Investment Commission and the ministry's remarks on that matter, what types of projects need to be submitted to MIC, assistance from Japan and the rest of the world during the COVID period, how MIC handles projects it

has approved when they become entangled in lawsuits, whether MIC can approve of mining businesses, and whether MIC has received reports on the nature of projects being implemented on property owned by the Ministry of Defence in this year.

The press conference on the Union Government's fourth year performance will continue with the Ministry of Office of the State Counsellor, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation on 26 June. —Han Myo Soe, Kaytar
(Translated by Aung Khin, Zaw Htet Oo)

Selling exceeds buying in local gold market



Gold jewellery on display at a shop in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

By Nyein Nyein

THE domestic gold market sees more sellers than buyers, said general secretary U Ohn Myaing of Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association (MGEA).

The coronavirus consequences shut down the gold market and it was reopened on 18 May. At present, pure gold fetches about K1.22 million per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms), he continued.

Meanwhile, the global gold price hit a record high of US\$1,766 per ounce. The domestic gold price does not rise as it should be when more people are selling than buying in the domestic market, he continued. "Along with the rise in global gold prices, the domestic gold price is likely to increase. However, the price cannot raise when demand is lower than supply," he added.

Following the global hikes,

the domestic market cannot raise the price owing to the ban on international commercial flights amid the coronavirus crisis and Kyat gaining against the US dollar, he noted.

A dollar exchange rate is priced below K1,400, as per data of the local currency market.

At present, despite the reopening of the gold shops, it is time for the academic year and monsoon cultivation season. Having said that, the market witnessed selling rather than buying, MGEA stated.

In early September last year, the price of pure gold reached an all-time record of above K1,300,000 per tical in the domestic market, while the price of gold was pegged at US\$1,550 per ounce in the global market. Meanwhile, the global gold price currently crosses US\$1,753 per ounce. A dollar exchange rate stands at around K1,400, as per market data.

According to gold traders, during the past four months, the local gold price moved in the range of, K1,214,100 on 5 February and K1,234,200 on 28 February. In March, it reached the lowest level of K1,148,000 (31 March) and the highest level of K1,218,600 (4 March). In April, the coronavirus pandemic risks shut down the gold market, and the market was reopened on 18 May, with the minimum rate of K1,214,100 (27 May) and the maximum rate of K1,236,000 (18 May), according to gold traders.

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs last year, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 7 August), climbing to 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a fresh peak of K1,300,000 on 5 September.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar total border trade increases over \$236 mln in this FY

THE total border trade value has reached over US\$7.87 billion in nearly nine months of the current fiscal year, up \$236 million, according to the official statistics from the Ministry of Commerce.

From 1 October to 12 June of 2019-2020FY, the total border trade value including \$5.42 billion in exports and \$2.45 billion in imports. Compared with the last FY, the export earnings down by \$17.9 million, while the import value increased by \$254 million. This time last year, the border trade was valued at \$7.63 billion.

There are 17 border trade

camps in Myanmar. Myanmar conducts trade with China through the Muse, Lwejel, Kampaiti, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung borders.

The country carries out border trade with Thailand through the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese border checkpoints. The cross-border trade camps between Myanmar and Bangladesh are Sittway and Maungtau, whereas the country trades directly with India via the Tamu, Reed and Kenglap borders.

Among all the border crossings, the Muse border sees the largest volume and value of border trade with an estimated value of more than \$3.44 billion this FY followed by Hteekhee with \$1.43 billion and Myawady with \$865 million.

Myanmar's major export items are farm, animal, marine, forest, mining, CMP and other products. Myanmar mainly imports capital goods, industrial raw materials, personal goods and CMP raw materials. —Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Domestic investments touch K1,370 bln, \$284.769 mln in current fiscal

DOMESTIC investments by Myanmar citizens, including an expansion of capital by existing enterprises, have reached K1,370 billion and US\$284.769 million as of 18 June of 2019-2020 financial year since October, according to a press statement issued by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

Between 1 October and 18 June in the current fiscal, Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective region and state investment committees gave green lights to 87 local enterprises to invest in various sectors, with esti-

mated capitals of over K1,101 billion and \$189 million.

Domestic investments have flowed into the real estate, manufacturing, hotels and tourism, construction, industrial estate, energy, mining, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, and other services sectors, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The hotels and tourism sector pulled the largest investments, followed by manufacturing and other service sectors. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

FDI tops \$4 bln as of 18 June

MYANMAR has attracted more than US\$4.4 billion foreign direct investment of more than US\$4.4 billion between 1 October and 18 June in the 2019-2020 financial year, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The total figure includes investments of \$93.057 million in the Special Economic Zones, under the Special Economic Zone Law.

Myanmar set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal. The coronavirus consequences have not affected the foreign investments so far, said DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

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

According to a press statement issued recently by the DICA, 189 foreign enterprises have obtained permits in the current fiscal and brought in the capital of over \$3.228

billion. Those enterprises will execute electricity, manufacturing, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, transport and communication, real estate development, hotels and tourism, and other services businesses.

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

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

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

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Applicants should not be frustrated by delays in dealing with land use applications

OUR country has a population of more than 51 million with a population density of 81 persons per square kilometre, which is the second lowest population density among the Southeast Asian countries, following Laos.

Land resources are the essential indispensable resource for the existence of humans and society. The difference between this vital resource and other resources is that it could not be increased and has limitations.

According to an estimate by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), increase in population and soil erosion in the land, by 2020 there will be only 0.18 hectare of cultivable land per person. This is half of cultivable land per person in 1960 and by 2050 it is estimated to be reduced by half again.

Statistics compiled in 2018 shows that there are over 47 million acres of vacant, fallow, and virgin lands in Myanmar. It is necessary to ensure that agriculture, livestock breeding, minerals production, and other lawful businesses utilize the land effectively, in accordance with the bylaw of the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law, for the economic development of the State and to create job opportunities for locals and landless citizens.

It has been found that there have been delays in dealing with the applications under some management committees, and we need to effectively tackle this.

For land that is not utilized by a business within four years, a fine would be collected by the State treasury, and the right to cultivate or use the land would be revoked.

Meanwhile, every citizen has rights to apply for land use and they need to use the land efficiently in accordance with the law to be granted with land use permissions.

The purpose of the land use policy is to help those who want to use land in accordance with the law to ensure the development of the country's economy and for the livelihood of individuals.

It has been found that there have been delays in dealing with the applications under some management committees, and we need to effectively tackle this.

For the objectives, guidelines, and basic principles of the National Land Use Policy to be truly effective, the relevant authorities, organizations, and individuals need to fully understand its contents to enable successful implementation.

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Cash For Work Project will create jobs for citizens in rural areas

By Min Min Zaw, Hannie Win (MNA), Photo: Ko Zaw (Kalay)

TO allow people living in rural areas to work for rural development themselves and receive income at the same time, the Rural Development Department is implementing the Cash For Work Project, which aims to alleviate the losses caused by COVID-19 on the lives of people living in rural departments.

"The main focus is to create some jobs so that people living in rural regions can have a form of income while their daily income sources are halted by the spread of COVID-19," explained U Khant Zaw, Director-General of the Rural Development Department.

"We also want this to be supportive towards developing infrastructure in rural regions. This is why we are implementing the Cash For Work Project. It's to allow people living in rural areas to work for rural development themselves and receive income at the same time."

Testing action plans

The project will be implemented in 3,500 villages across the states and regions. But before the project is carried out in full force, the department is running pilot projects in one village in each state or region to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the venture.

The Union Government enacted the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) on 27 April 2020 to remedy the negative impact on the nation's socio-economy by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rural Development Department is implementing Action 2.1.7 (D) of CERP by running the Cash For Work project to increase production in rural areas and develop their infrastructure.

The Director-General said they aim to begin the full project at the beginning of July. The project will last from between three to four months. They will prioritize short-term development action plans that can be completed within this period, especially for providing jobs and income to the people living in the project designated villages. That's why we select villages that have vulnerable rural populations.

The wages will be based on the minimum wage standards the Union Government has designated but they may be increased to meet regional prices according to local needs. The Director-General said this is why they have designated the minimum wage for the project at K4,800-K6,000.

Selecting three-month plans

The department is prioritizing tasks that can be completed within a short 3 months and contribute to both people's income and local rural infrastructure through public participation.

Some examples include digging up sewers and canals, cleaning dirty water, paving roads in the village, maintaining bridges, removing debris that can cause landslides, fencing water tanks and reservoirs and building them, linking water pipes, building and maintaining harbour bridges, building small-scale dams, retaining walls, sports grounds, school buildings, clinics, community halls, markets, and planting trees near water bodies and recreational areas.

The selection criteria will prioritize villages based on poverty, rate of unemployed residents or those without steady jobs, vulnerable populations, high rate of significantly affected by disease, ease of transport and regional stability, enthusiasm of local residents, unity, eager participation, the number of development requirements as shown by the Multi-Dimensional Index, and the number of people who have returned from abroad.

The department closely discusses and coordinates with Hluttaw representatives and the local Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) to select the villages for the project based on designated criteria.



U Khant Zaw, Director-General, Rural Development Department

The village administrative body and the local village development committees will be closely monitoring and managing the action plans of the project.

The department pointed out that the Cash For Work project will not be implemented in villages that have already received the Rural Development Department's Mya Sein Yaung Project or VDB projects in the current financial year. In addition, they will be careful not to have tasks coincide with plans from other ministries and will communicate effectively to ensure that.

"There are villages that are already a part of other development projects," said U Khant Zaw. "There are villages whose

processes are going smoothly. That's why we won't be putting villages with projects or doing relatively well on the top of the list."

The Director-General said they will not be considering those who own land. He said the project will allot K10 million to each of the 3,500 villages selected for the Cash For Work project.

Spreading information and training related to the project will be funded by the World Bank and the information on the selection criteria will be disseminated to the public as well.

Feedback and suggestions welcomed

The Rural Development Department aims for transparency in the implementation of the project and will incorporate a feedback mechanism to tackle challenges as soon as possible.

The department will announce phone numbers of concerned departments from the national level to the subnational and township levels in the villages selected for the project so that they may inquire more into the project and contact for suggestions, feedback or reporting issues.

(Translated by Pen Dali)

STAYING SAFE AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

The World Health Organization reminds public to remain vigilant through Mr Bean's Essential COVID-19 Checklist

THE World Health Organization (WHO), Project Everyone and Tiger Aspect Productions have partnered to launch a Public Service Announcement (PSA) using global comedy cartoon star, Mr Bean.

With cases of COVID-19 continuing to rise globally, "Mr Bean's Essential COVID-19 Checklist" is a reminder to people about the importance of washing hands, physical distancing and demonstrating kindness to their neighbours. The PSA features a cartoon sketch of Mr Bean comically tackling a pesky roller blind to finally reveal a number of essential tips to protect people against COVID-19.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, said: "COVID-19 affects every walk of human life, and we need to use all tools and avenues

at our disposal to share life-saving information with all people around the world. I am grateful for the support of the team behind Mr Bean for lending your voice and talents to spread vital advice on physical distancing, hygiene and knowing the symptoms."

The PSA is voiced by Mr Bean star, Rowan Atkinson, who created the Mr Bean character to be "a child in a grown man's body" when he was at Oxford University along with filmmaker and Sustainable Development Goal advocate Richard Curtis. Mr Bean, which was originally broadcast in the 1990s before transforming into an animated series, has since expanded on a global scale with 96 million Facebook followers globally and major fanbases across India, Brazil and Indonesia. Mr Bean also celebrates his 30th anniversary in 2020. The PSA was coordinated by Project Everyone, a not-for-profit agency

devised by Richard Curtis working to put the power of communications behind the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Richard Curtis said: "We are delighted to work with the WHO on this Mr Bean sketch and to support health messaging around COVID-19. In 2015, 193 world leaders committed to 17 Global Goals to end poverty, inequality and climate change by 2030. Good Health and Wellbeing is Goal 3 and central to achieving all of the Global Goals. It's key that we work with creative partners - and that all sectors come together to continue to get messages out about how we can tackle COVID-19 and build back a better world where the Global Goals remain the guiding plan to be achieved by 2030. I'm not QUITE sure which sector Mr Bean belongs too - but we're delighted to have him on board."

SOURCE: WHO

MR BEAN'S ESSENTIAL COVID-19 CHECKLIST!

- Keep your hands clean and don't touch your face
- Keep your distance - at least 1 metre
- Keep in touch with your neighbours.
- Keep an eye on the symptoms and the doctor and follow their advice.

Mr Bean has been drafted in to make a series of key points about staying safe and maintaining social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
 (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 24th June, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 25th June, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States and scattered in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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

About 2,000 lamp posts to be installed in Pyigyidagun Township

ABOUT 2,000 lamp posts are being planned to install in Pyigyidagun Township this year, spending from Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) budget. Currently, more than 1,000 lamp posts have already been installed on the main road of Pyigyidagun Township, said U Saw Han, a member of MCDC.

More than 1,000 lamp posts have already been installed in Pyigyidagun Township. Over 300 lamp posts are being installed while the remaining over 600 lamp posts are having the field inspection conducted in necessary wards of the township.

"We targeted to install about 2,000 lamp posts in Pyigyidagun township from MCDC budget. At present, we are conducting the installation of the lamp post along Min Gyi Yan Naung Road to 62nd street through 46th street in Pyigyidagun township," he said.

The lamp posts have already been installed on the main roads such as 62nd road, 58th road, Ka Naung road, Yaw

Installed lamp posts are seen in Pyigyidagun township in Mandalay. **PHOTO:THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)**

Min Gyi road and Thayarwady road. The remaining roads are having field inspection conducted to install the lamp posts. We will install the lamp posts in the necessary areas. Moreover, the residents also donated nearly

K100 million to install the lamp posts in the ward of the township, he added.

More than 16,000 lamp posts have been installed in Mandalay this year, a spending of the donation of the residents and MCDC

budgets. The lamp posts are being controlled from the control room and are being switched on and off by using smart street light control system. —Than Zaw Min (IPRD)

*(Translated Hay Mar)***SIM cards to be revoked by 30 June unless systematically registered**

By Nyein Nyein

THE Posts and Telecommunications Department (PTD) has announced that the systematically unregistered SIM cards will be revoked by 30 June, it is learnt.

If the SIM cards are revoked, the outstanding balance from those SIM cards will be transferred to the government's account.

To use the bonus given by the operation continuously and not to lose the balance from your phone, Telenor My-

anmar urged people to re-register their phones not later than 30 June.

According to PTD, every SIM cards must be registered with a national identity card for Myanmar citizens and passport for foreigners. The individual SIM card users can hold only two SIM cards for each operator.

All Myanmar mobile operators must follow the same instructions. The operators are prohibited from allowing the customers to use the SIM cards without approving their

national identities or allowing them to use more than two SIM cards with one national identity card.

The SIM cards which do not follow the instructions adopted by the PTD will be rerieved by 30 June 2020.

The SIM card users whose SIMs are revoked by the operator will not get any compensation. Moreover, the SIM card users are not allowed to re-register again by 30 June.

Upon completion of the re-registration, the SIM card users can use other services

such as social media account, online payments, direct carrier billing services and extra service (VAS) which are connected with their mobile phone numbers.

The SIM cards can be re-registered through online channel free of charge. Moreover, the Telenor SIM card users can register their SIM cards near Telenor stores and Telenor retail shops by bringing their national identity cards, according to Telenor Myanmar.

*(Translated by Hay Mar)***Magway Region targets 100,000 acres of crops under GAP**

THE number of acreages cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP) has targeted to increase up to 100,000 acres this year in Magway Region, on account of benefits of GAP, the Agriculture Department stated.

The region started adopting GAP in 2017 with nearly 4,000 acres, and it has covered 25 townships in the region so far. The growing acres under GAP gradually increases every

year, with 15,000 acres in 2018 and over 70,000 acres in 2019.

The acreages cultivated under GAP system grew year over year, primarily for sesame and peanut.

Under the support of Network Activities Group (NAG), Magway Region Farmer Development Association (Magway RFDA) linked the companies with over 2,000 sesame growers cultivated under good agricul-

tural practices (GAP) for necessary fertilizer input utilizing the loan from the banks, according to NAG.

The respective agriculture departments have been conducting agricultural awareness activities to benefit the growers. The growers in Magway Region have been growing interest in the GAP system as it is offered high price. They are trying to seek a GAP certificate.

The foreign markets prefer Myanmar's black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP), and purchases them after a quality assessment.

Furthermore, new soil test laboratory was opened in early 2020 in the region, to provide essential soil investigation services. — Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Powerful quake in southern Mexico kills six

MEXICO CITY—A 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck southern Mexico on Tuesday, killing six people, sending hundreds fleeing from their homes and forcing the closure of a major state-owned oil refinery. Hundreds of aftershocks were reported in the hours following the initial tremor, which was felt in Mexico City, some 700 kilometres (430 miles) distant from the epicentre in Crucecita, in Oaxaca state.

“We had to leave because there is a risk that the market will collapse. We are hardly selling anything because of the pandemic and now if the market is closed we will have a worse time,” said Juana Martinez, 60, a flower-seller in Oaxaca city.

All the deaths occurred in Oaxaca, with the majority due to the collapse of buildings. A woman died near Crucecita, and five other people died in towns located within 150 kilometres of the epicentre, officials said. The 7.4 quake struck at a depth of 23 kilometres, the US Geological



People remain outside buildings in Mexico City during a quake on June 23, 2020 amid the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. - A 7.1 magnitude quake was registered Tuesday in the south of Mexico, according to the Mexican National Seismological Service. **PHOTO: AFP**

Survey reported.

An initial tsunami warning was later reversed. There was no damage reported to “strategic infrastructure” including ports,

airports, refineries and hydroelectric plants, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said in a video published on social media.

Mexican Oil said its refin-

ery in Salina Cruz in Oaxaca had been shut down as a precaution after a fire broke out at the plant “that was immediately stifled.”—

AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US Senate committee aims to regulate UFO information

WASHINGTON—The US Senate intelligence committee is aiming to regulate a Pentagon UFO programme so that the public is better informed of its activities and the country’s intelligence branches can more easily share information.

The panel said that it “supports the efforts of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force,” officially confirming the program’s continued existence, in a provision to the annual intelligence authorization bill.

In December 2017, the Pentagon acknowledged funding a secret multi-million dollar program to investigate sightings of UFOs, although it said it had ended in 2012.

The New York Times reported at the time, however, that it was still up and running.—AFP ■

Deadly Aussie snakes, magpies seized from suspected traffickers

SYDNEY—A cache of native Australian animals -- including some of the country’s deadliest snakes and a bird known for its swooping attacks -- was seized Wednesday in raids on suspected international wildlife traffickers, police said. New South Wales police said they had searched six homes across Sydney in connection with an illegal trafficking ring spanning Australia, Asia and North America. Officers discovered three feared Australian snakes -- a death adder, a python and a red-bellied black -- as well as lizards, turtles and magpies, the black-and-white birds best known Down Under for swooping on unsuspecting cyclists, and unrelated to the coveted Eurasian magpie. Police said the raids were part of a wider investigation that began last year into a criminal syndicate operating in three continents and involved in wildlife trafficking, large-scale fraud and money laundering.—AFP ■

How NASA’s Mars Helicopter will reach the red planet’s surface

WASHINGTON—NASA’s Ingenuity Mars Helicopter will travel with the Perseverance rover through 314 million miles (505 million kilometres) of interplanetary space to get to Mars. But for the team working on the first experimental flight test on another planet, engineering the final 5 inches (13 centimetres) of the journey has been among the most challenging of all. To safely navigate those 5 inches - the distance Ingenuity will travel from where it’s stowed on the rover to the surface of Mars - they came up with the ingenious Mars Helicopter Delivery System. “Ingenuity is unlike any other helicopter ever built because powered controlled flight at Mars is unlike anything ever attempted,” said Mi Mi Aung, project manager of the Mars Helicopter at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. —AFP ■



Surface The Mars Helicopter (IMAGE CREDIT: NASA/JPL-CALTECH)

US energy laggards still not Paris compliant: analysis

PARIS—US-based oil and gas majors are lagging well behind their European counterparts when it comes to plans for cutting emissions to comply with the Paris climate deal, according to analysis released Wednesday.

The 2015 accord seeks to limit global temperature rises to “well below” two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels through sweeping cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

Prompted by national commitments as part of the Paris deal, a number of large energy companies, including BP and Shell, have recently announced plans to reach “net zero” emissions by 2050.

If a company is net zero, it is removing as many emissions as

it produces.

Market analyst Carbon Tracker looked at the plans that energy majors had announced to curb their carbon pollution, be that by transitioning away from fossil fuels or investing in new CO2 reducing technology.

It concluded that European companies such as ENI and Repsol -- which include in their reduction plans so-called Scope 3 emissions that make up the vast majority of their footprints -- as among the most Paris-friendly majors. In contrast, it said that US behemoths ExxonMobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips were failing to align their business plans with the world’s carbon budget -- that is, how much more we can pollute before the Paris goals are out of



A number of oil and gas companies have pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2050. **PHOTO: AFP**

reach. “Of the three US majors, the highest ranked company, Chevron, has committed to cut just the equivalent of 1-3 percent

in overall emissions,” said Mike Coffin, an oil and gas analyst at Carbon Tracker who compiled Wednesday’s report.—AFP ■

Ben & Jerry's joins Facebook ad boycott over hate speech

WASHINGTON—US ice-cream giant Ben & Jerry's said it will stop buying advertising space on Facebook, joining a growing list of prominent brands boycotting the social network over its perceived failure to crack down on hate speech and incitements to violence.

"As of July 1st we will pause all paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram in the United States," the Vermont-based confectioner said Tuesday. The company added it was also joining the "Stop

the Hate for Profit" initiative supported by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other rights groups. "We call on Facebook, Inc. to take the clear and unequivocal actions called for by the campaign to stop its platform from being used to spread and amplify racism and hate," Ben & Jerry's said.

It is the latest company to pledge to halt ad spending on Facebook over concerns hate



Ben & Jerry's joins a growing list of prominent brands boycotting the social network over its failure to crack down on hate speech and incitements to violence. PHOTO: AFP

speech and incitement to violence are not being moderated on the platform.

Sporting goods maker Patagonia added its name to the list Sunday, joining rivals North Face and REI and the freelance staffing agency Upwork.

The StopHateForProfit campaign comes as Facebook faces growing pressure over its hands-off approach to misinformation and inflammatory posts, including from US President Donald Trump.—AFP ■

Photo finish: end of an era as Olympus sells camera division

TOKYO—It's the end of an era: Japan's Olympus said Wednesday it is selling its struggling camera division to focus on medical equipment -- now the major portion of the storied firm's business.

Olympus has been in the camera business since 1936,

when it launched a product using the "Zuiko" lens, but it has struggled along with industry rivals as demand for traditional cameras declines, with consumers relying on increasingly sophisticated smartphone cameras.

The company said it has

signed a memo of understanding to transfer its camera business to investment fund Japan Industrial Partners, with the goal of sealing a final deal by the end of September.

The value of the sale was not specified. The firm has produced a number of famous

products, including the half-size camera Olympus Pen, the world's first micro-cassette tape recorder Zuiko Pearlcorde, and the Olympus OM-D series, a mirrorless interchangeable lens camera. The company said it had tried to cut costs and develop profitable, high-

end lenses to survive in an increasingly difficult digital camera market. "Despite all such efforts, Olympus's Imaging business recorded operating losses for three consecutive fiscal years up to the term ended in March 2020," the company said.—AFP ■

Huawei opens Shanghai flagship store as US pressure grows

SHANGHAI—Chinese telecom giant Huawei opened its second global flagship store in Shanghai on Wednesday, part of plans to strengthen its brand in its core Chinese consumer market as it faces headwinds overseas.

Hundreds of face mask-wearing customers queued up to enter the 5,000-square-metre (54,000-square-foot) store -- Huawei's largest -- located on the

city's busiest shopping street and directly across from a retail outlet of rival Apple.

Company representatives said Huawei intends to open several more such stores in China in the coming year to showcase its smartphones and other consumer tech, plans that they said were conceived before the US government launched a worldwide cam-

paigned against the firm about 18 months ago.

Huawei is the world's largest supplier of telecom network equipment and planet's number two smartphone maker.

The Trump administration accuses Huawei of stealing American trade secrets and says its telecommunications equipment could be used by Beijing for espionage.—AFP ■



Huawei's opened its second global flagship store in Shanghai. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Starbucks to open 1st sign language store in Japan

TOKYO—Starbucks Coffee Japan Ltd. said Wednesday it will open its first store in the country with sign language ability for hearing impaired customers. The store will open on Saturday in Kunitachi, western Tokyo, with 19 hearing impaired employees among 25 staff members. The new outlet will be the fifth "signing store" globally run by the U.S. coffee chain Starbucks Corp., as it is stepping up efforts to create stores with focus on diversity and inclusion. The coffee chain offers services in sign language at four stores in Malaysia, the United States and China at present. Some hearing impaired employees in Japan had sought to open their own signing store after the first such store opened in Malaysia in 2016. "I want everyone, people with or without hearing disability, to enjoy our coffee casually," Eri Otsuka, who engaged in the opening of the new store, said in sign language during an online press conference.—Kyodo ■

Johnson & Johnson told to pay \$2.1 billion over cancer-causing talc powder

WASHINGTON—A US court has upheld a verdict that talcum powder sold by Johnson & Johnson caused ovarian cancer and ordered the pharmaceutical giant to pay \$2.1 billion in damages.

The decision by the Missouri Court of Appeals cut by more than half the \$4.4 billion a jury had awarded 22 people in 2018. The court agreed that some of the plaintiffs should not have been included in the case as they were from outside the state.

But the Tuesday decision upheld the awarding of damages for the company "knowingly selling products that contained asbestos to consumers." "Because defendants are large, multi-billion-dollar corporations, we believe a large amount of punitive damages is necessary to have an effect in this case," the judgement said.

"It is impossible to place monetary value on the physical, mental and emotional anguish plaintiffs suffered because of their injury caused by defendants."—AFP ■

Argentina's double whammy of virus, recession, forces closures

BUENOS AIRES—After stuttering through two years of recession and three months of grim coronavirus lockdown, many businesses in the Argentine capital Buenos Aires have had enough and are closing their doors.

"I made the decision to auction off the contents and with the capital that comes from the sale, pay the staff and get rid of the business," Ricardo Klausner told AFP at the door of his restaurant Latekla. "The quarantine gave me time to mourn and today I actually feel very relieved" Workers were taking out crates of glasses and crockery, chairs and an industrial kneading machine from the restaurant Klausner operated for 26 years in downtown Buenos Aires, employing seven people.

"We had one of the worst Christmases in history in terms of consumption. The summer was also very bad and then we started with the pandemic. Once the coronavirus ends, the crisis will continue. "People cook at home, save, take care of their money, because they don't know what the future holds for them," Klausner said. According to a survey by the Federation of Commerce and Industry of Buenos Aires, at least 18 per cent of the 110,000 businesses in the capital have shut down since the coronavirus began. Hotels, gyms, car wash services and hairdressers have yet to be given permission to open up, and restaurants have only been authorized for deliveries, which has reduced their profits by 25 per cent, according to FECOBA.—AFP ■



Buenos Aires' business federation says that at least 18 per cent of the city's 110,000 businesses have closed down since the beginning of the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

China's central bank injects 180 bln yuan into market

BEIJING—China's central bank on Wednesday pumped cash into the banking system via reverse repos to maintain liquidity. With no reverse repos maturing Wednesday, the People's Bank of China injected a total of 180 billion yuan (about 25.5 billion U.S. dollars) into the market through seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 2.2 per cent, according to a statement on the website of the central bank.

The move is intended to maintain stable liquidity in the banking system, the central bank said.

A reverse repo is a

process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

China will pursue a prudent monetary policy in a more flexible and appropriate way, according to this year's government work report.

The country will use a variety of tools including required reserve ratio reductions, interest rate cuts, and re-lending to enable M2 money supply and aggregate financing to grow at notably higher rates than last year, said the report.—Xinhua ■

BOJ policymakers voice concerns over risk of deflation



Photo taken on May 18, 2016, from a Kyodo News helicopter shows the Bank of Japan's head office in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

TOKYO—Some Bank of Japan policymakers voiced concern at a meeting last week that the coronavirus pandemic could tip the country back into deflation, a summary of opinions released Wednesday showed.

A return to deflation would be "a considerable obstacle" to eventually achieving the central bank's 2 per cent price

stability target, one of the nine Policy Board members said during the June 15-16 meeting.

"Thus, considering this risk, it is necessary to conduct additional easing

at this point," the member said.

The central bank maintained monetary policy unchanged at the meeting, keeping short-term interest rates at minus 0.1 per cent while guiding long-term rates to around zero per cent.

Another policymaker was also worried about the country's tepid inflation, saying, "In the conduct of economic measures, it is necessary first of all to minimize the risk of deflation taking hold."

Japan's core consumer prices fell for a second straight month in May, down 0.2 per cent from a year earlier, as the global spread of COVID-19 lowered the cost of energy and accommodation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said Friday.—Kyodo ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0208-649N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0208-649N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN MARINE
(S'PORE) PTE., LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (024S/026N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (024S/026N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/TMT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CS CANDY

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CS CANDY VOY. NO. (066) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of IBTT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (213N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (213N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

China asks Japan to maintain “exclusively defence-oriented” policy

BEIJING—China on Wednesday asked Japan to maintain its “exclusively defence-oriented” policy under the war-renouncing Constitution, as some Japanese ruling lawmakers have called for Tokyo to acquire the ability to attack foreign bases.

“Because of historical reasons, Japan’s military security trends have always received the attention of the international community and its Asian neighbours,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters.

“We urge Japan to earnestly learn the lessons of history,” Zhao said, adding, the nation should “continue to follow the path of peaceful development with concrete actions.”

Japan invaded a huge swath of China since the 1930s before the end of war that lasted until August 1945.

On Wednesday, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s



Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Wednesday that under the Constitution, striking an enemy base is allowed for self-defence if there are no other means. Suga made the remarks on the same day China asked Japan to maintain its “exclusively defence-oriented” policy. **PHOTO: KYODO**

government, which is seen as right wing by China, held a meeting of the National Security Council to review the country’s defense policy.

Japan’s Chief Cabinet Sec-

retary Yoshihide Suga, the government’s top spokesman, has said that under the Constitution, striking an enemy base is allowed for self-defence if there are no other means.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Human error caused Pakistan plane crash that killed 97: initial report

ISLAMABAD—A plane crash which killed 97 people in Pakistan last month was because of human error by the pilot and air traffic control, according to an initial report into the disaster released Wednesday. The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane came down among houses on May 22 after both engines failed as it approached Karachi airport, killing all but two people on board. “The pilot as well as the controller didn’t follow the standard rules,” the country’s aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan said, announcing the findings in parliament. He said the pilots had been discussing the coronavirus pandemic as they attempted to land the Airbus A320. “The pilot and co-pilot were not focused and throughout the conversation was about coronavirus,” Khan said.—AFP ■

S. Korea trade minister seeking to become next WTO head

SEOUL—South Korea’s trade minister said Wednesday she is running to be the next director general of the World Trade Organization, joining several others eyeing the top post at the Geneva-based trade body. If successful, 53-year-old Yoo Myung Hee would be the first South Korean and woman to head the organization. Yoo’s candidacy comes as her country is involved in a dispute with Japan at the WTO over the tightening last year of Japan’s export controls on materials used by South Korean chipmakers. At Wednesday’s press conference announcing her bid, Yoo denied the impact her possible appointment as WTO director general would have on the dispute.—Kyodo ■

Pro-democracy protests mark anniversary of Thai revolution

BANGKOK—Thais on Wednesday marked the anniversary of a 1932 revolution which ended absolute monarchy with heavily symbolic events, demanding reforms to a political system dominated by the arch-royalist army.

Protesters dressed as soldiers and

a pre-dawn holographic display were among the subversive ways activists chose to commemorate the kingdom’s transition from absolutism to a constitutional monarchy on June 24, 1932.

Marking the revolution has become increasingly taboo under the government

of former army chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha.

The military describes itself as the protector of the kingdom’s unassailable monarchy, which is headed by King Maha Vajiralongkorn. He is shielded from criticism by harsh lese majeste laws.

“We will revive the soul of the Peo-

ple’s Party from 88 years ago,” said Anon Numpu, an activist lawyer who organized the rally.

After years of coups, violent crackdowns and short-lived civilian governments Thailand remains a country sharply divided.—AFP ■

N. Korea suddenly “suspends” military action plans against South

BEIJING—North Korea has “suspended” military action plans against the South, state-run media said Wednesday, but the intention of the sudden announcement is unclear and fears linger that the move would not lead to a thaw in inter-Korean relations. The decision was reached at a televised preliminary meeting of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, presided over by leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

KCNA did not elaborate on why Pyongyang decided to suspend the military retaliation against Seoul, after tensions between the two Koreas have sharply escalated since defector groups sent leaflets lambasting Kim’s rule across the border by balloon late last month. Kim has been attacking the South in an apparent

attempt to maintain his clout at home as the country’s economy has been languishing against a backdrop of the pandemic of the new coronavirus that causes the respiratory disease COVID-19. As Thursday marks the 70th anniversary of the start of the 1950-1953 Korean War, North Korea is “unlikely to readily stop provocations against the South, as Kim is believed to be worried that his influence would weaken ahead,” a diplomatic source said.

On June 16, North Korea blew up the inter-Korean liaison office in the nation’s border city of Kaesong – one of the symbols of reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. The following day, Pyongyang said its troops would redeploy to two areas that had been demilitarized under agreements with the South in retaliation for the scattering of anti-Pyongyang leaflets, sparking concern that



South Korean Army’s K-55 self-propelled howitzers move at a military training field in the border city of Paju on June 22. **PHOTO: AFP**

inter-Korean military strains would intensify. On Monday, North Korea’s state-run media

reported that the country has almost completed preparations for “the largest-ever distribution” of

propaganda material against the South, saying it has printed 12 million leaflets.—Kyodo ■

Russia holds grand WWII parade ahead of vote on Putin reforms

MOSCOW—Columns of tanks and troops will parade through Red Square on Wednesday as President Vladimir Putin oversees grand World War II commemorations to stir up patriotic fervour ahead of a vote on extending his rule.

Forced to postpone the country's traditional May 9 Victory Day celebrations by the coronavirus pandemic, Putin rescheduled the parade for just a week ahead of a July 1 public vote on controversial constitutional reforms.

Among other changes, the reforms Putin proposed earlier this year would reset the presidential term-limit clock to zero, allowing him to potentially stay in the Kremlin until 2036.

He announced the new dates for the parade and the vote—initially planned for April—last month despite Russia still recording thousands of new coronavirus cases every day.

The rate of new infections



Russian military cadets and servicemen gear up for the parade—a chance for the country to show off its military might although dozens of regions have elected not to hold events citing concerns about the coronavirus. PHOTO:AFP

has fallen in recent weeks and cities including Moscow have lifted anti-virus lockdowns, but critics accuse Putin of rushing ahead with public events to pursue his own political ends.

This year's parade, marking 75 years since the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany, will include some 13,000 troops

from 13 countries, as well as vintage equipment and the latest military hardware showing off Russia's fighting capabilities.—AFP ■

US facing 'critical' coronavirus surge

WASHINGTON—Coronavirus infections are surging across large parts of the United States, the top US infectious disease expert has warned, as the death toll in Latin America passed 100,000. The developments highlighted how far away the world remains from ending the pandemic, six months into a crisis that has claimed nearly 500,000 lives and devastated the global economy.

Even in Europe, which has been loosening travel restrictions following a brutal few months when it was the epicentre of the

pandemic, there have been major setbacks.

Germany on Tuesday reimposed lockdowns on more than 600,000 people following a cluster of infections at a slaughterhouse, while world men's tennis number one Novak Djokovic tested positive after hosting an exhibition tournament in the Balkans.

In the United States, White House advisor Anthony Fauci warned the next two weeks would be "critical to our ability to address... surgings" in Florida, Texas and other states. The United States has already

recorded more deaths than any other nation, with nearly 800 more fatalities on Tuesday taking its toll past 121,000.

However President Donald Trump, whose handling of the crisis has been widely criticised as erratic, is determined to fast-track efforts to restore normality.

He continued to stoke controversy on Tuesday, doubling down on weekend comments he wanted to slow testing because so many confirmed infections made the United States look bad.—AFP ■

Iran's Rouhani says UN watchdog risks losing independence



Tehran has expressed disappointment that the UN watchdog has not given it more credit for keeping all of its current nuclear sites open to inspection despite US President Donald Trump's unilateral abandonment of a 2015 nuclear deal. PHOTO:AFP

TEHRAN—Iran's president warned Wednesday that the UN nuclear watchdog risks losing

its independence after it adopted a resolution urging access to two sites alleged to have hosted

past nuclear activities.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency passed the resolution put forward by European states last week, calling on Iran to help clarify whether undeclared nuclear activities took place at the sites in the early 2000s.

But the Islamic republic says the IAEA's requests for access were based on allegations from its arch-enemy Israel and had no legal basis.

"The Zionist regime and the Americans are pressuring the agency to investigate something related to 20, 18 years ago. They are deceiving the agency, misleading it," President Hassan Rouhani said during a televised

cabinet meeting.

"Our expectation is that... the agency should be able to keep its independence," he added, warning that Israel and the United States were tarnishing its reputation.

Rouhani also slammed the three European parties to the Iran nuclear deal—Britain, France and Germany—for putting forward the resolution and "sully themselves for no reason" by cooperating with Israel and the US.

"We did not expect this from the Europeans," he said, while praising China and Russia—also parties to the nuclear deal—for standing against the resolution.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Germany reimposes virus lockdowns, Djokovic tests positive

BERLIN—Germany on Tuesday reimposed coronavirus lockdowns on more than 600,000 people and tennis world number one Novak Djokovic tested positive for the illness—two major setbacks in global efforts to restore a sense of normality to everyday life. The moves highlighted how quickly the virus can resurface and spread, and how much more nations will need to do to reassure people that large gatherings are safe, after several other players tested positive following a tournament hosted by Djokovic. To that end, Saudi Arabia announced the annual hajj pilgrimage will be dramatically scaled back this year, to only about 1,000 Muslim faithful who are already in the kingdom—a far cry from last year's 2.5 million. The news was not all bad: England moved to reopen pubs, restaurants, hotels and hairdressers from July 4.—AFP ■

Trump's ex-national security adviser John Bolton's memoir released

WASHINGTON—The memoir of John Bolton, U.S. President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, was released on Tuesday, days after a federal judge denied the Trump administration's request to block its publication.

"There is simply no precedent for a former top administration official publishing a book about a sitting president that is as damning as John Bolton's," a CNN report commented on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, many local analysts say the revelations of Bolton's book, titled *The Room Where It Happened*, are not likely to make much difference among most Republicans behind Trump.

Trump blasted Bolton's book on Twitter last week, calling it "a compilation of lies and made up stories, all intended to make me look bad."—Xinhua ■

Tokyo Games organizers pass on 1-year-to-go celebrations



A large clock in front of JR Tokyo Station shows a countdown to the Tokyo Olympics on April 23, 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO**

TOKYO— The organizing committee of the Tokyo Games said Wednesday they have given up on holding celebrations this summer marking one year before the delayed Olympics open on July 23, 2021.

Organizers deemed it would be inappropriate to hold any lavish events amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in the unprecedented delay of the games originally scheduled to start in the Japanese capital next month.

“We won’t be holding any special events that attract crowds of people,” organizing committee spokesman Masanori Takaya said during a press conference. As organizers work to streamline the games, they are considering sending messages of encouragement to athletes instead of holding the kind of elaborate events that took place last summer, when Tokyo originally celebrated the one-year-to-go mark.

The Olympics are slated to be held from July 23 to Aug. 8 next year, followed by the Paralympic Games between Aug. 24 and Sept. 5.—Kyodo

‘Fitter than ever’ Kane strikes to keep Tottenham in Champions League chase

LONDON — Harry Kane believes he is as fit as he has ever been after netting his first goal of 2020 as Tottenham kickstarted their challenge for a Champions League place next season with a 2-0 win over West Ham on Tuesday.

The England captain looked far more like his old self after a laboured performance in his first appearance for six months against Manchester United on Friday, and was rewarded with a goal eight minutes from time.

“I’m in good shape. I’ve been working very hard through my rehab, lockdown and training. I feel as fit as I probably ever have done before,” Kane, who had surgery on a hamstring injury prior to the season’s shutdown due to coronavirus, told Sky Sports.

“When you have been out for six months it is just getting that feeling back on the pitch. You can train as much as you want but being out here is



Back in business: Harry Kane scored his first goal of 2020 for Tottenham against West Ham. **(AFP PHOTO/ NEIL HALL)**

totally different.”

Tomas Soucek’s own goal had opened the scoring as West Ham remain precariously poised outside the relegation zone only on goal difference.

But Hammers boss David Moyes was furious the opener was not ruled out for a handball by Davinson Sanchez as he flicked a corner into Soucek’s path.

“I can’t believe they have ruled that as a goal,” said Moyes. “Who is on VAR tonight? He needs subbed I know that. That’s the rules.”—AFP ■

Man City’s Aguero sent to Spain for check on knee injury

LONDON — Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero will travel to Spain for further tests on a knee injury that threatens to his season.

The Argentine aggravated a problem that had bothered him for more than a month during the first half of City’s 5-0 win over Burnley on Monday.

He was seen clutching his left knee before and after a foul by Ben Mee that earned City a penalty at the Etihad Stadium.

After the Premier League clash, City manager Pep Guardiola admitted Aguero’s campaign may be over.

In an indication that the problem is serious, City revealed on Tuesday that they are sending the 32-year-old to see Ramon Cugat, a doctor in Barcelona.

“Sergio Aguero suffered

damage to his left knee in our recent 5-0 win over Burnley,” City said on their Twitter account.

“The striker will now travel to Barcelona to see Dr Ramon Cugat for further examination.

“Everyone at City wishes Sergio the best with his recovery.”

Cugat, who has known Guardiola since the manager’s days at Barcelona, has previously treated City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne and the club’s former defender Vincent Kompany.

“The scans I did this morning have confirmed that I have damaged my left knee,” Aguero tweeted.

“It’s a pity but I’m in good spirits and so focused to come back as soon as possible. Thank you very much for all your messages!”—AFP ■



Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero suffered a knee injury against Burnley. **(AFP PHOTO/MARTIN RICKETT)**

Djokovic tests positive for coronavirus, apologizes to other players

BELGRADE — World number one Novak Djokovic said Tuesday he had tested positive for coronavirus, the Serb star becoming the fourth player to contract the virus after taking part in his exhibition tennis tournament in the Balkans.

Djokovic, who is “not showing any symptoms” according to a statement from his spokesperson, joins Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki in testing positive for COVID-19. Djokovic said his wife Jelena also tested positive while the results of their children were negative.

“I am extremely sorry for each individual case of infection,” the 33-year-old Serb said in a statement.

“I hope that it will not complicate anyone’s health situation and that everyone will be fine,” the 17-time Grand Slam winner said, adding that he would go into self-isolation for the next 14 days.

Bulgaria’s Dimitrov, the world number 19, announced on Sunday he had tested positive after pulling out of the event, the big-

gest since the tennis season was halted because of the pandemic.—AFP ■



Serbia’s Novak Djokovic kisses the Norman Brooks Challenge Cup trophy following his victory against Austria’s Dominic Thiem in their men’s singles final match on day fourteen of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne early on February 3, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**