SAFE, RESPONSIBLE SERVICES KEY TO REVITALIZING TRAVEL SECTOR

PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 300, 14th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Wednesday, 10 February 2021

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers speech at meeting with administrative officials



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing makes the speech at the coordination meeting with the chairpersons of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, State/Region Administration Councils and Self-Administered Division/Zones in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

MEMBERS of the State Administration Council, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State Administration Councils and Self-Administered Division (or) Zones Administration Committees held a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council, delivered a speech at the meeting which was also attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing and the chairpersons of Regions, States and Self-Administered Division (or) Zones.

At the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explained his council's works to manage the ongoing situations of the country in line with the laws and carrying out the tasks in democratic ways after forming the State Administration Council.

He also talked about the ongoing situations were resulted from the negligence to Tatmadaw's repeated efforts to solve the problem of inaccurate voter lists, which have significant errors in the elections. The Senior General emphasized the importance of adherence to the 2008 Constitution, and the Tatmadaw will continue performing national duties in line with the laws. He also confirmed that council members' appointment was based on their experiences, qualifications, and administrative capabilities and are believed to be able to serve for the respective regions and people. Simultaneously, the government needs to adopt policies, and local officials should implement these policies for people's socio-economic development.

The Senior General also called for checking population by the members of respective councils comprised of immigration officials. SEE PAGE-2

21 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 February, total figure rises to 141,448

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **141,448** after **21** new cases were reported on 9 February 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **141,448** confirmed cases, **3,180** died, **128,437** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 9 February 2021

Total Cases	141,448
New Cases	21
Total Death Tally	3,180
Discharged from Hospital	128,437

Daily death toll until 8 pm 9-2-2021

3

Ministry of Health and Sports

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers speech at meeting with administrative officials

FROM PAGE-1

He also discussed the implementation of local development programmes and the five principles of future plans at all levels with the administration councils' participation at national and sub-national levels.

Then, the Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Chairpersons of Region/State Administration Councils, and chairpersons of Self-Administered Division (or) Zones reported on the formation of their councils, healthcare services, resettlement of internally displaced persons, mine clearance works, jade excavation permits for common people, organizing gems and jewellery emporium, reopening of Kampaiti and Lewjel border passes, adding more police force, issuing national scrutiny cards, the participation of legal advisors and officers in region/state councils, appointments of ward/village council chairpersons, finalizing construction project of Monywa hospital, works in administration and the rule of law, enactment of some laws required for security of the country, and other related sectors. Regarding discussions, the Chairman of State Administration Council talked about urgent actions on repatriation programme for IDPs and mine clearance works, bringing Myanmar citizens back home and coordinating with Union-level organizations to reopen border trade zones as the orders and directives remain active.

The Senior General continued to say the development gap between the regions and states, between rural and urban areas, development of socio-economic development, free from political parties, abstaining from the politics as they have earned salaries and other benefits.

He added civil service personnel do not participate in the politics in the countries with mature democracy. However, they can vote for any favourable parties. They are prohibited from taking part in politics, and legal actions will be taken against those who breach the law.

He continued to discuss the need of employment opportunities for the people, requirement of technical skills and knowledge for the job, addressing language barriers in teaching at the ethnic areas, preparations required for reopening of schools after the closure of schools since the beginning of COVID-19, development of human resources, production of quality products from agricultural and livestock breeding, smooth flow in transportation, coordination and cooperation of region/state councils in creating employment opportunities.

The Senior General was also advised to participate in local development activities and reopen religious sites under the COVID-19 regulations.

Moreover, he discussed checking family census in regions and states to get correct voter lists, issuing national scrutiny cards, repatriation of displaced persons from Bangladesh in line with bilateral agreements and the 1982 Citizenship Law, celebrations of the Union Day in respective regions and states in line with the COVID-19 rules. —MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No (43/2021)

13th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
9 February 2021

Appointment and Duty Assignment of the Union Election Commission members

The following persons are appointed as the members of the Union Election Commission in accordance with Article 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. U Saw Ba Hline — Member
2. U Soe Oo — Member

By order

Sd/ Aung Linn Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Section 144 of Criminal Procedure imposed in Nay Pyi Taw territory and townships in states/regions

THE Section 144 of Criminal Procedure have been imposed in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory and townships of States and Regions on 8 February and 9 February.

The areas for Section 144 has covered Zeyathiri, Pobbathiri, Dekkhinathiri, Ottarathiri, Zabuthiri, Tatkon, Lewe and Pyinmana townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory; 44 townships in Yangon Region (except Cocogyun Township); Aungmyethazan, Chanayethazan, Mahaaungmye, Chanmyathazi, Pyigyidagun, Amarapura, Patheingyi and Myingyan townships in Mandalay Region; Magway, Pakokku, Yesagyo, Myaing and Seikpyu townships in Magway Region; Sagaing, Monywa, Shwebo and Kalay townships in Sagaing Region; Bago, Toungoo and Pyay townships in Bago Region; Dawei, Thayetchaung, Yebyu, Myeik, Palaw, Kawthoung and Bokpyin townships in Taninthayi Region; 26 townships in Ayeyawady Region; Waingmaw, Mohnyin, Mogaung, Phakant, Bhamo, Shwegu townships in Kachin State; Loikaw township in Kayah State; Hpa-an, Myawady, Kya-in-Seikkyi townships in Kayin State; Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Ye, Thaton and Kyaikto townships in Mon State; Kengtung, Taunggyi, Tachilek, Lashio, Nawnghkio, Kalaw, Hsipaw, Muse and Kyaukme townships in Shan State.

Under this section, it is prohibited unlawful assembly, talks, using vehicles or in persons in marching around, protests, destroying and violent acts. The assembly of five or more than five persons are banned at the public areas and the curfew is also imposed from 8 pm to 4 am in the above-mentioned townships.—MNA

Section 144 imposed in Yangon Region

SECTION 144 has been imposed in the townships of Yangon Region on 8 and 9 February 2021.

In 44 townships of Yangon, except Cocogyun Township, it is prohibited from assembly, holding mass talks, procession, protests, destroying and violent acts, with the restriction on assembly of five or more than five persons in public areas of these townships, and the curfew from 8 pm to 4 am, according to the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
ကြော်ငြာရှင်များနှင့် ကြော်ငြာအေဂျင်စီများအနေဖြင့် ကြော်ငြာထည့်သွင်းလိုပါက တိုက်ရိုက်ဆက်သွယ်ဆွေးနွေးနိုင်ပါသည်။
Advertise with us.
HOTLINE
09-974424848

Tatmadaw True News Information Team: Healthcare services offered at military hospitals

THE Tatmadaw True News Information Team released a statement on 4 February 2021 that healthcare services are offered to all the national people at the military hospitals.

The statement said that some persons who are creating disturbances, aiming to destabilize the administrative mechanism and stability of the State, have incited Civil Disobedience Campaign through social networks, causing failure to perform duties among the health workers.

Doctors have vowed during their convocation that " Health and well-being of the patients will be our own issues as the first priority ; I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity and in accordance with a good medical practice; I will serve my medical profession regardless of nationality, race and social status; and I will maintain the utmost respect for human life".

It is also advised all the health workers not to follow the incitement that can jeopardize the interest of country and people, and keep their professional vows to the public.

The Tatmadaw has received the permission of the State Administration Council to solve the current healthcare problems of people across the nation by the military medics.

Therefore, people can get proper medical treatments at the nearest military hospitals.—MNA

MoFA, MoIC hold meeting on future work plans



Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin and U Ko Ko Hlaing hold meeting on the works of their respective ministries. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing held a meeting with the officials from MoFA yesterday.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin, talked about the works of ministries since 2 February and the future work plans.

He also said that the Chairman of State Administration Council has explained the roadmap and the policy on 8 February, without changing the policy of the country in line with the State Constitution.

He continued to say maintaining friendly relations with foreign countries, protecting Myanmar citizens abroad, and the tasks of civil service personnel for the development of the country.

Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing also discussed the crucial role of MoFA staff members at the front-line of the country, the works for development of country and learning the ongoing situations of the country while establishing peace, stability and unity.

At the meeting, the Permanent Secretary, departmental heads and officers reported on the future works of the country.—MNA

Union Minister U Ko Ko visits ITBMU, NUAC in Yangon



Union Minister U Ko Ko meets the staff of the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) on 9 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko visited the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and paid homage to Acting Pro-Rector of the University Sayadaw Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Kammatthana Cariya Mahadhammakatika Bahujanahitadhara Dr Bhaddanta Chekinda yesterday morning in Yangon.

During the visit, the Union Minister explained the country's current situation and activities, the conditions under which efforts will be made for the development of the religion and propagation of Buddha Sasana.

The Union Minister and party listened to the advice of the Sayadaw and looked around the university. He gave necessary instructions while the university's Pro-Rector (Admin) explained the university's teaching and management.

Afterwards, they arrived at the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon). They discussed the ethnic music and ethnic dance teaching included in the university's goal with the Rector, the Pro-Rector, Professors and Associate Professors. During the discussion, he instructed in detail the systemic teaching of ethnic music and dances.

The Union Minister also met the university staff and instructed to take responsibility and follow the civil service regulations.—MNA *(Translated by EPPA)*

Four police members injured

AFTER the declaration of state of emergency on 1 February 2021, the protests that seem to harm the stability of the State, security of people, the rule of law, community peace and tranquility occurred in some large cities of the nation. Therefore, Section 144 of Criminal Procedure and a ban on gatherings of 5 or more people have been imposed.

About 20,000 people gathered between 38th street and 76th x78th streets of Mahaaungmye Township of Mandalay Region yesterday and conducted chanting, protesting and riots.

Myanmar Police Force members requested the protestors to disperse and the protestors used obscene language and threw the things to the police. Therefore, the police members dispersed in accordance with the methods and laws.

About 2,000 people threw the stones, brick and other objects to the police. The clash left four police injured and security cars damaged. Myanmar Police Force has been conducting the security measures in line with the laws not to occur the riots in the country, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services . —MNA

Request to health workers

1. It is appreciated for the strenuous efforts of the medical doctors, nurses, medical experts and other health works at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports at the front-line in the fight against prevention, containment and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
2. As the vaccination programme of COVID-19 is being conducted for the public and the real-time healthcare services are required for the people, all the staff members at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports are strongly urged to return to their duties with taking the well-being of patients into consideration.

Ministry of Health and Sports
8 February 2021

MoC discusses consumer protection, domestic trade development and product safety



Union Minister Dr Pwint San presides over the meeting to discuss the consumer protection, domestic trade development and product safety in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Commerce held the meeting on consumer protection, domestic trade development and product safety implemented by the Consumer Affairs Department, yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister Dr Pwint San said to develop trade routes for the country's economic development, continue the activities of the ministry and the consumer protection procedures of the CICC (Consumer Information and Complaints Centres) in respective states and regions.

The Union Minister added it is necessary for the commercial attaches assigned by the ministry abroad to work to create new markets for new Myanmar products and increase exports by the respective countries and to practise project-based and results-based as the expansion of activities greatly contributes to the further development of the country's economy.

Director-General for the Consumer Affairs Department U Myint Cho and Permanent Secretary U Min Min presented the implementation of works and further activities in detail, and the Union Minister coordinated the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by the Directors-General, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Deputy Directors-General and Directors. —MNA *(Translated by EPPA)*

Military hospitals providing medical treatments to patients in states/regions

MILITARY hospitals provide healthcare services to patients with doctors, specialists and nurses from Tatmadaw in respective townships across the country. According to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, there have been 2,155 outpatients and 1,028 inpatients as of yesterday from 5 February.

Among them, 124 patients needed major/minor surgeries have been given necessary operations. Emergency patients have been provided medical care by specialists, doctors and nurses, and 72 childbirths were carried out by surgery or natural childbirth.

The officials from the respective commands encouraged and comforted the patients in providing foods. —MNA *(Translated by EPPA)*



Tatmadaw doctors and nurses are seen providing medical treatments to patients. **PHOTO: MNA**

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

MoEA Union Minister discusses successful holding of 3rd Myanmar Ethnic Culture Festival



Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint chairs the coordination meeting on the successful holding of the third Myanmar Ethnic Culture Festival on 9 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Ethnic Affairs organized a coordination meeting yesterday to hold the third Myanmar Ethnic Culture Festival by promoting the ethnic culture and tourism industry.

During the meeting, Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint highlighted the holding of the first and second festivals in 2019 and 2020 respectively and postponed the celebration. However, it was arranged to broadcast the third festival's Virtual Reality via MRTV, NRC, Web portal and Facebook platform under the COVID-19 health rules.

The Union Minister then stressed the need to give proper suggestions regarding the appropriate time to hold the Myanmar Ethnic Culture Festival (2021).

He also discussed the planned festival programmes based on Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine, Shan and six self-administered division/zones.

He instructed to operate the shows of respective ethnic people, video clips, regional documentary and community-based tourism.

He also urged the ministries to coordinate the discussion and submit the meeting's outcomes to the State Administration Council by negotiating with the Myanmar Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association.

He then emphasized the interest and socio-economic status development of ethnic people, peace in ethnic regions, tourism industry development, promotion of local production sectors and other recovery plans.

The participants coordinated the meeting, and Union Minister included the meeting. —MNA *(Translated by KTZH)*

Parts of thrones for Buddha image conveyed to Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory Area



The ceremony was held to convey the parts of thrones for Bhumi Phassa Mudra Buddha Image with religious rites to Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory Area. **PHOTO: MNA**



The modular trailer is seen conveying the parts of thrones for Bhumi Phassa Mudra Buddha Image from Myingyan to Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory Area. **PHOTO: MNA**

PARTS of thrones for Bhumi Phassa Mudra Buddha Image were conveyed by the modular trailer from Si Mi Khone of Myingyan Township to Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory Area.

A ceremony to convey the parts of stones was held with religious rites at the villages of Ngazun Township in Mandalay. Township Sangha Maha Nayaka Chairman Bhaddanta Marnita, Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Lt-Gen Kan Myint Thant, Brig-Gen Ko Ko Oo and Tatmadaw officers splashed the image with scented waters. After the opening ceremony, the parts 2 and 4 of the Buddha Image were conveyed at suitable times.—MNA

Pilgrims visit famous pagodas

FAMOUS pagodas across the nation have reopened to public starting 8 February under the COVID-19 rules.

Pilgrims and visitors including monks and nuns visit the Shwedagon and Botahtaung pagodas of Yangon Region, Maha Muni Pagoda of Mandalay Region and Uppatasanti Pagoda of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and other pagodas of regions and states accordance with the COVID-19 rules.—MNA

(Translated by KTZH)

MoHT hold coordination meeting on hotel, tourism development

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism held a coordination meeting with the department heads via videoconferencing on 8 and 9 February.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn presided over the meeting and discussed cooperation of staff members in development works, adherence to rules for the civil service personnel, and the works of ministry to help in the country's economic development.

He also said that the ministry's vital role, implementation of work plans and active cooperation of staff members for the development of the hotels and tourism sector.—MNA



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets the staff of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism to discuss hotel and tourism development. **PHOTO: MNA**

137 courses for diploma, postgraduate in medical education to be conducted

A total of 2,082 trainees will be allowed for 137 courses of diploma and postgraduate at medical universities and related universities under the Ministry of Health and Sports in 2021 academic year.

The applications for these courses shall be submitted commencing 2nd week of February.

Sr	University	Diploma	M.Sc	Doctorate	Total
1	Universities of Medicine	7	31	47	85
2	Universities of Dental Medicine	2	10	9	21
3	Universities of Nursing	1	9	1	11
4	Universities of Medical Technology	1	3	3	7
5	Universities of Pharmacy	-	4	4	8
6	University of Public Health	1	2	1	4
7	University of Community Health	-	1	-	1
Total		12	60	65	137

Ministry of Health and Sports

USD against Kyat hit around K1,410 in local market

ACCORDING to the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), the US dollar value against Kyat hit around K1,410 in the local foreign exchange market.

Although the dollar exchange rate stood at K1,335 per dollar in the local market at the end of January, the rate jumped to K1,400 per dollar on 4 February with a rise of about K100.

At present, the local exchange market has elevated because of the rumours spreading in the country on 3 February that K5,000 and K10,000 notes will be demonetized, according to the entrepreneurs.

Therefore, the CBM sold the US$6,8 million on 3 February through the foreign currency auction system. Since the start of the year, the bank has been purchasing and selling the US dollar in the auction market to keep the exchange rate stable.

Similarly, the domestic gold price skipped sharply. Although the domestic gold price was only K1,320,500 per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilogrammes) at the end of January, the gold price went up to K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February.

Therefore, the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) called an emergency meeting on 4 February and issued four decisions that not to accept the rumours that K5,000 or K10,000 notes will be demonetized; to encourage the people who are trading with fear and trading with restraint; to trade with down payment system and to comply with the COVID-19 rules and regulations set up by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) has also made a statement on 3 February that rumours were spreading in the country that K5,000 and K10,000 notes will be demonetized. The banks in the country would be closed because of the current situations in the country. So, the CBM urged the people to keep their trust in the Myanmar currency. All the banks have been instructed to provide regular service.

In the domestic market, the dollar is currently pegged at around US$1,327-1,345 in January.

This year, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August and K1,310-1,355 in September.

In the last six months in 2019, the rates were fixed at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit a record high of K1,650 in the local exchange market. —NN/GNLM

Myanmar total border trade drops by $644 mln in first 4 months

THE total border value reached over US$3.02 billion in the first four months of the current financial year 2020-2021, a decrease over $644 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

As of 22 January, the country's export via land borders amounted to $2 billion while its import shared $1.01 billion. This FY's border trade dropped by over $644 million, compared to the same period of last FY when it amounted to $3.7 billion, stated the ministry's figures.

Myanmar has opened 18 border trade camps and conducts border trade with neighbouring China through Muse, Lwejel, Kampaiti, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung with Thailand via Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese, with Bangladesh via Sittway and Maungtaw and with India through Tamu and Reed border checkpoints respectively.

Muse topped the land borders' list with the most trade value of $1.5 billion, followed by Hteekhee with $421 million and Myawady with $337 million.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufactured goods and other commodities while capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported to the country. —Zwe/GNLM



Trucks seen at 105-mile trade zone Muse, northern Shan State. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Number of companies registered on MyCO exceeds 1,300 in Jan 2021: DICA

THE number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, reached over 1,300 in January 2021, indicated the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. Typically, over 1,000 new companies are registered every month.

DICA's statistics showed that 1,370 companies registered on MyCO in January 2021.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to the DICA data.

Last year, the figures of registered companies stood at 1,415 in January, 1,298 in February and 1,015 in March, only 348 companies in April, 798 in May, 1,314 in June, 1,650 in July, 1,551 in August, 1,378 in September, 1,693 in October, 1,099 in November and 1,521 in December, as per statistics of the DICA.

In 2019, the figure stood at 1,733 in January 2019, 1,419 in February, 1,108 in March, and over 1,045 in April, 1,411 in May, 1,307 in June, 1,428 in July, 1,302 in August and 1,181 in September. The figures reached a fresh new peak of 2,059 in October 2019. Then, 1,615 new companies in November and 1,772 in December were recorded, data of the DICA showed.

When the online registry was launched in August 2018, 1,816 new companies registered on MyCO. The figure stood at 2,218 in September 2018, 1,671 in October, 1,431 in November and 1,364 in December 2018.

Besides, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation. At least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must simultaneously submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5).

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

More than 16,000 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date as per DICA's report.

Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 to restore the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice.—NN/GNLM

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hundreds infected as students return to universities

Hundreds of students and teachers including professors have been infected with COVID-19 in Tunisia after the resumption of the academic year at some universities.

The Health Minister, Faouzi Mehdi, recently declared that all Tunisian universities will reopen in February and called on students to follow COVID-19 regulations. Yet, health authorities also said they will not hesitate to shut down any campus following a COVID-19 outbreak.

According to the Ministry of Higher Education and the COVID-19 Task Force, some infection clusters have already emerged in many universities across Tunisia. Epidemiologists believe that further COVID-19 outbreaks will occur as students continue to return to campus this month. The Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Health have put in place strict COVID-19 protocols at Tunisian learning institutions to limit the spread of the virus.—AFP

N. Korea suffers supply shortage amid virus woes: Russia's envoy

Russia's Ambassador to Pyongyang said North Korea has suffered supply shortage and the number of unemployed people has increased in the country as it has taken drastic measures to prevent the novel coronavirus from entering there.

But Alexander Matsegora, who has stayed in Pyongyang, said in a recent interview with Russia's Interfax news agency that there is no possibility of economic collapse in North Korea, given that at least in the capital, there are no patients infected with the virus.

As North Korea has started to construct large-scale disinfection facilities along its border, imports from China and Russia are expected to resume in a limited manner down the road, Matsegora was quoted as saying by Interfax.—Kyodo News

Japan offers $70 mil. more to ensure poor nations' access to vaccines

JAPAN will contribute an additional $70 million to an international framework to help ensure fair access to coronavirus vaccines for developing countries, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said Tuesday.

The additional funds bring Japan's total disbursement to the Covax Facility to $200 million, part of the $300 million that Japan offered last year to Gavi, the global vaccine alliance that co-leads the facility, for five years from 2021.

"To overcome the novel coronavirus, international cooperation, especially through multilateral frameworks, is important," Motegi said in a video message at a virtual meeting of ACT-Accelerator, an international initiative to speed up the development and distribution of treatment drugs and vaccines.

Gavi said last week the Covax Facility aims to start delivery of the coronavirus vaccines developed by Pfizer Inc. and AstraZeneca Plc. to 145 countries and regions, mostly developing nations, as early as this month.—Kyodo News ■



Japan will contribute an additional $70 million to an international framework to help ensure fair access to coronavirus vaccines for developing countries. PHOTO: AFP

Austria to ease restrictions after 6 weeks of lockdown



A skier wears a face mask at Pitztal glacier, Austria on October 29. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRIA has allowed some sectors to reopen today after six weeks of lockdown, albeit with strict measures still in place.

Shops, beauty salons and hairdressers can accommodate customers once more, although clients must be able to produce a negative Covid test no older than 48 hours.

Museums, libraries and zoos may also reopen - however, hotels and restaurants will remain shut until the end of February at the earliest. Meanwhile, 165 cases of the South African variant have been confirmed in Tirol, with a further 230 suspected cases. Discussions went on deep into the night among local authorities, while the state will not loosen restrictions in line with the rest of the country until further notice. — Kyodo News ■

India disaster highlights pressure on Asia's great rivers

A glacial burst that triggered a deadly flash flood in the Indian Himalayas at the weekend was a disaster waiting to happen, and one likely to be repeated in a region transformed by climate change and unchecked infrastructure development, experts warn.

Asia is home to some of the world's biggest waterways, from the Ganges and the Indus in India to the Yangtze and Mekong originating in China, that snake for thousands of kilometres.

They support the livelihoods of vast numbers of farmers and fishermen, and supply drinking water to billions of people, but have come under unprecedented pressure in recent years.

Higher temperatures are causing glaciers that feed the rivers to shrink, threatening water supplies and also increasing the chances of landslides and floods, while critics blame dam building and pollution for damaging fragile ecosystems.

"Rivers are really at risk from development projects, dumping of solid waste and liquid waste, sand mining and stone mining," Himanshu Thakkar, from the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, told AFP.

"Climate change is a longer-term process that has already set in. The impacts are already happening.

"So in every respect, rivers are under greater threat."

The disaster in India was apparently triggered by a glacial burst, that unleashed a wall of water which barrelled down a valley in Uttarakhand state, destroying bridges and roads and hitting two hydroelectric power plants.

Dozens have been killed and more than 170 others are missing after the accident on the Dhauliganga river, which feeds into the Ganges.

Shrinking glaciers

It is not yet clear what damaged the glacier and triggered the accident, but there are suspicions that construction of hydro-power projects -- in an area that is highly seismically active -- may have contributed.

"This area is prone to vulnerability, it is not appropriate for this kind of bumper-to-bumper hydro-power development," Himanshu said.

"Proper planning, impact assessment, proper geological assessment -- this has not happened here." Patricia Adams, executive director from Canada-based environmental NGO Probe International, said dam building in such an area was simply too dangerous, as it makes hillsides unstable and causes landslides.

Some have also pointed to rising temperatures as a contributing factor. —AFP ■

Safe, responsible services key to revitalizing travel sector

OPENING pagodas across the country with mandatory health guidelines and social distancing rules came as a beacon of hope for revitalizing the travel sector.

The number of people who can be handled by the space at a pagoda and people's participation in following health guidelines would be taken into consideration.

The risk of spreading coronavirus or any other infectious disease is less as the number of visitors are restricted.

This is a right step towards revitalizing the travel sector which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the people have not yet been vaccinated, we need to double down on protection protocols, and people are urged to strictly follow the health and safety guidelines.

> Safety is at the top of the mind for travellers and services when travel services resume and travel destinations are reopened with the Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol (HSP).

Since April, tourism in the region has almost come to a temporary standstill as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Tourism has been one of the fastest and hardest hit sectors of the economy.

We must revitalize our tourism industry with safe and responsible COVID-19 services, which can guarantee the highest levels of safety from our tourism industry.

With the opening of pagodas, the authorities has taken a step forward to restore public confidence in the travel sector.

Safety is at the top of the mind for travellers and services when travel services resume and travel destinations are reopened with the Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol (HSP).

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, we still need to continue to take all necessary measures - COVID appropriate behavior by one and all - masks, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, physical distancing - and core public health measures by the authorities - detect, test, trace, isolate and treat - to prevent the virus from spreading and causing more infections and deaths.

The coronavirus will remain a problem for a long time, and it means we need to getting used to ways for living with it for the long term in our everyday lives.

To promote the travel sector amidst COVID-19, we also need to ensure travel costs-in prices of accommodation and transportation remain affordable for domestic travellers.

All hands from local authorities and associations related to hospitality sector should be on deck to put the country's economy on the road to quick recovery through the travel sector.

■■■

WHO mission to China fails to find animal source of coronavirus

THE WHO mission to China to uncover the origins of the coronavirus has failed to identify the animal source, scientists said Tuesday.

Experts believe the disease -- which has gone on to kill more than 2.3 million people worldwide -- originated in bats and could have been transmitted to humans via another mammal.

While transmission from animals was the likely route, so far "the reservoir hosts remain to be identified", Liang Wannian, head of the China team, told reporters.

He added that studies showed the virus "can be carried long-distance on cold chain products," appearing to nudge towards the possible importation of the virus -- a theory that has abounded in China in recent months.

He also said there was "no indication" the sickness was in circulation in Wuhan before December 2019 when the first official cases have been recorded.

WHO foreign expert Ben Embarak, who was based in the WHO's Beijing office for two years from 2009, backed up the assertion saying there was no evidence of "large outbreaks in Wuhan" before then.

The mission is a diplomatically knotty one, which was trailed before it began by fears of a whitewash, with the US demanding a "robust" probe and China firing back with a warning not to "politicise" the investigation.

During the closely-monitored visit, reporters were largely kept at arms' length from the experts, but snippets of their findings crept out over Twitter and interviews.

The experts spent one month in China, two weeks in quarantine and the same again on fieldwork.

But, already over a year after the virus emerged, some of it was of questionable relevance to their stated aim of finding the virus source, including a visit to a propaganda exhibition celebrating China's recovery from the pandemic.

The group spent just an hour at the seafood market where many of the first reported clusters of infections emerged over a year ago.

They also appeared to spend several days inside their hotel, receiving visits from various Chinese officials without going out into the city.

But deeper research was carried out at the Wuhan virology institute where they spent nearly four hours and said they met with Chinese scientists there including Shi Zhengli, one of China's leading experts on bat coronaviruses and deputy director of the Wuhan lab.

Former US president Donald Trump repeated a controversial theory that a lab leak may have been the source of the pandemic.

Scientists at the laboratory conduct research on some of the world's most dangerous diseases, including strains of bat coronaviruses similar to Covid-19.

Beijing is desperate to defang criticism of its handling of the chaotic early stages of the outbreak.

It has refocused attention at home -- and abroad -- on its handling of, and recovery from the outbreak.—AFP



WHO experts are visiting Wuhan, China, to seek clues about the origins of the coronavirus pandemic, under intense media scrutiny. **PHOTO: AFP**

Time to wear a better mask, experts say

AS new, more transmissible variants of the coronavirus spread, experts say it's time to consider using a medical-grade respirator, or wearing a surgical and cloth mask together.

Scientists have agreed for some time the main way the virus is spread is through the air, rather than surfaces, and there's growing evidence that small droplets from ordinary breathing and speech that can travel many meters (yards) are a common mode of transmission.

Added to this is the greater contagiousness of emerging variants, like B.1.1.7, which takes a smaller viral load to cause symptomatic Covid-19 compared to the more common strain.

Fit and filtration

Back when authorities first recommended people wear face coverings, proper masks were in extremely short supply and the public was encouraged to fashion makeshift solutions out of T-shirts or bandanas. But these are far from ideal.

Linsey Marr, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Tech, who studies airborne disease transmission, told AFP: "How well a mask works depends on two things: filtration and fit.

"Good filtration removes as many particles as possible, and a good fit means that there are no leaks around the sides of your mask, where air — and viruses — can leak through," she said, adding even a small gap could lead to a 50 percent reduction in performance.

The best materials for blocking small particles include non-woven polypropylene, which is used to make N95s and many surgical-type masks, and the HEPA filters in planes. Among fabrics, tightly woven cotton works best, she added.

Doubling up

"If you wear a cloth mask, choose one that has multiple layers, ideally one with a pocket that you can slip a good filter material into," said Marr. "Or you can double mask by wearing a surgical-type mask with a tight-fitting cloth mask over it."

Surgical masks are made of material that filters things out well, but they tend to be loose, so adding a cloth mask on top holds down the edges and reduces leaks.

Adding an additional layer improves filtration -- if one layer traps 50 percent of all particles, combining two gets to 75 percent.

But, she added: "We do not recommend wearing more than two masks. Adding more layers proves diminishing returns and can compromise breathability. It must remain easy to breathe through the layers; otherwise, air is more likely to leak in around the sides of the mask."

Masks that have a metal nose bridge help ensure a snug fit, as do straps that tighten around the head, not just the ears. Braces that improve the fit of surgical masks are now available on the market.

"You should feel the mask sucking inward when you breathe in, and if you hold your hands around the sides of the mask, you should not feel any air leaking out when you breathe out," said Marr.

Medical-grade respirators

Another option is getting hold of N95s, or their international equivalents such as KN95, FFP2 etc.

"They all provide a similar level of filtration, meaning protection of particles going in and out," Ranu Dhillon, a global health physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

Dhillon, who has been advocating in favor of better masks since last spring, is frustrated by the lack of clear messaging to the public on the value of better masks.

What's more, "there's not been a concerted push to really mass produce and mass distribute these higher caliber masks."

Health care workers have their masks professionally fit-tested every year to ensure they're making the right seal, but Dhillon doesn't see this as a major obstacle.

"To teach people to fit a mask, even if not 100 percent perfectly, but more effectively, is something that's very doable."

Masks in our future?

The key to conceptualizing the threat is to think of cigarette smoke, said Donald Milton, a professor of environmental health at the University of Maryland.

Ventilation definitely helps, but if you're between a person who is breathing and an exhaust vent, the virus will still reach you -- which makes good masks so crucial, he said.

Milton and Dhillon are cautiously optimistic that their pleas could soon become policy under the administration of President Joe Biden, and CNN reported last week the US government was working on the first official mask standards.

Prior to the pandemic, Milton and other aerosol scientists studying the flu concluded it too is transmitted from tiny droplets from ordinary speaking and breathing, and that the role of sneezing, coughing and transmission from surfaces was smaller than thought.—AFP

Union Day Objectives 74th Anniversary of Union Day - 2021

1. To work on the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, till the success of the internal peace process is achieved.
2. Development of the socio-economic life of the ethnic nationals.
3. To work for the emergence of a constitution that is in alignment and harmony with the Democratic Federal Union.
4. All ethnic nationals to work for the preservation and protection of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and perpetuation of national sovereignty.
5. To nurture and develop new generations endowed with high skills and capabilities imbued with strong Union spirit.

Union Day slogans for 2021 (74th Anniversary)

1. Equal opportunities and equal responsibilities,
   living in a peaceful, prosperous and stable Union.
2. Unity is strength, solidarity is power
   That is the heart of the Union.
3. Many fruits sprouting from one stem,
   this is our brotherhood of the Union.
4. Our Union built with brotherhood,
   Never forget Union day.
5. Drinking the same water, living on the same land,
   we are Union nationals of the same blood.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 9 February 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 10 February 2021: likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region, and Kachin and Shan states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Mandalay regions and Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR
Aungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS
Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing

TRANSLATORS
Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun,
Maung Maung Swe, Khine Thazin Han,
Ei Phyu Phyu Aung

REPORTER
Nyein Nyein Ei,

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

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

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

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

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
www.facebook.com/thegnlm

1.5 billion euros lost with Carnival half term cancellations

THE Cologne Institute for Economic Research has published a study showing the economic impact with the cancellation of the usual half term Carnival festivities in Germany. The losses, predicted to reach around 1.5 billion euros, will mainly impact the retail sector, as well as gastronomy and hotels.

The IW experts who compiled the report took into account retail and hospitality sales from past years, in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz among others.

The food sector will be hit hardest, with projected losses of around 660 million euros. Retail will lose around 330 million euros, 280 million of which will affect costume sales alone, while hotels and transport can expect to lose around 160 million and 240 million respectively.—AFP ■



The Cologne Institute for Economic Research has published a study showing the economic impact with the cancellation of the usual half term Carnival festivities in Germany. The losses, predicted to reach around 1.5 billion euros, will mainly impact the retail sector, as well as gastronomy and hotels. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Schools in Jordan gradually welcome students back to classrooms

THE Kingdom's schools on Sunday started receiving the first batch of students for the 2020/2021 second semester, according to a plan prepared by the Education Ministry and a health protocol that was approved in cooperation with the Health Ministry.

The first stage of the plan includes students of kindergartens, the first three grades and Tawjihi (the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination), where the ministry estimated the number of returning students at 773,812, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Schools on Sunday received students of kindergartens, first grade and Tawjihi, while second graders are scheduled to return to school on Monday and third graders on Tuesday.



Schools on Sunday received students of kindergartens, first grade and Tawjihi, while second graders are scheduled to return to school on Monday and third graders on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Education Ministry had announced earlier that the plan, according to the health protocol, requires providing two square metres of space for each student.

Schools that cannot provide such a distance will have to adopt a hybrid pattern of distance education and in-class education in rotation, where parents choose schooldays for their children.

According to the plan, the second stage of resuming in-class education is scheduled to start on February 21 with receiving 10th and 11th graders, followed by a third stage involving attendance of students from the fourth to ninth grades as of March 7.

Kindergarten, first grade and Tawjihi students' attendance in public schools on the first day of the second semester, on Sunday, reached 49 per cent, according to Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Najwa Qubeilat.—AFP ■

Athens zoo squeezed by Covid-19 lockdown

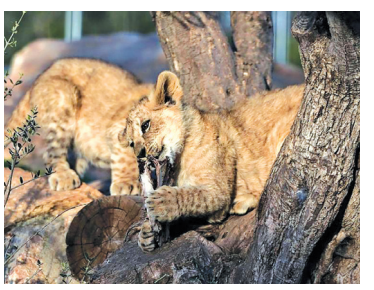
ATTICA Zoological Park has been closed twice since March of last year because of the lockdown, while the latest shutdown lasted three months.

According to the founder, the zoological park is struggling to survive as they have around 20,000-euro burden of cost per month without income amid the closure.

"We are closed to the public. But we're still open because inside we have 2,200 animals to feed. We have approximately 1.7 tons of food to distribute every day on the site," said Jean Jacques Lesueur, the founder.

Lesueur said although they gained the financial support from the government, it is far from enough, covering only a third of its monthly expenses. "We have 78 employees in total, 50 stay at home, so they are on furlough, and 28 are working here. So we've got 25 animal keepers. We have one veterinarian, so these people are full-time, and two people who are helping with the distribution of the food, the purchase of the food and the market and supplies, and things like this," said the founder.

To ease the burden, the zoo sells tickets at a special price to support the Park family with its 2,200 animals, which are valid for the whole of 2021.—AFP ■



Attica Zoological Park has been closed twice since March of last year because of the lockdown, while the latest shutdown lasted three months. Four month old lion cubs play at their enclosure at the Attica Zoological Park in Spata, east of Athens on March 23, 2014. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Write for us

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

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran starts Covid-19 vaccination campaign - Home grown jab

Iran unveils its second home-grown coronavirus vaccine project, dubbed Razi Cov Pars, developed at the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, which is linked to the agriculture ministry.

The jab, which will be the focus of Phase 1 of clinical trials, is introduced on the eve of a campaign to vaccinate Iran's 80-million-plus population, starting with Russia's Sputnik V jab, of which Tehran has bought two million doses. —AFP

Nissan upgrades annual forecast despite Q3 net loss

Crisis-hit Japanese carmaker Nissan on Tuesday upgraded its full-year forecast for the second straight quarter, as the global auto industry shows signs of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The embattled firm beat market expectations to return an operating profit for the first time in four quarters, but said net loss for the quarter expanded.

It now projects a net loss of 530 billion yen ($5.1 billion) for the fiscal year to March, smaller than its earlier estimate of a 615 billion yen net loss.

For the three months to December, its net loss expanded to 37.8 billion yen from 26.1 billion yen a year earlier.

Operating profit for the third quarter came in at 27.1 billion yen, beating market expectations of an operating loss.

Even before the crisis, Nissan was battling weak demand as well as the fallout from the arrest of former boss Carlos Ghosn, currently an international fugitive after jumping bail and fleeing Japan.

It suffered a massive loss in the previous fiscal year and its recovery has been slower than some of its rivals.

Earlier Tuesday, Honda said net profit had more than doubled in the third quarter and it revised up its full-year forecast.—AFP

Russia sees drastic increase in mortality due to Covid-19 in 2020

RUSSIA recorded a dramatic increase in mortality in 2020 fuelled by the coronavirus pandemic, according to new official figures released Monday that showed more than 162,000 virus-related deaths.

The preliminary estimates published by the Rosstat statistics agency showed that mortality had increased by 17.9 percent compared to 2019, Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova said Monday.

"This excess mortality includes mortality due to Covid," she said during a coronavirus briefing broadcast on state television.

Rosstat's figures showed that between April, when the pandemic hit Russia, and December, the country saw 162,429 coronavirus-related fatalities.

December was the deadliest month of the pandemic last year, with 44,435 virus-related deaths.



These latest figures give a much higher Covid death rate than previous official data. **PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV AFP**

According to Rosstat's breakdown, 31,550 of those fatalities were mainly due to Covid-19, while in another 12,885 the patient tested positive but the virus was not considered the main cause of death.

On Monday, health officials in Moscow, long the epicentre of Russia's outbreak, published statistics showing a large number of deaths due to the coronavirus.

In a statement, Moscow's health department said 16,546 people had died in December, an increase of 5,988 fatalities on the previous year — almost all of them were due to Covid-19.

In total, 2.12 million people died in Russia in 2020 compared to 1.8 million in 2019, according to Rosstat, with the pandemic exacerbating a demographic crisis the country has faced since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Last year, Russia's population shrank by more than 510,000 people, the largest drop since the mid-2000s, according to official statistics published in late January.

Conflicting figures

Russia has prided itself on its response to Covid-19, pointing to a low fatality rate as evidence of its success.

But for much of the pandemic Russia only published partial figures, counting only fatalities where Covid-19 was found to be the primary cause of death after autopsy.

Alexei Raksha, a demographer who left Rosstat last year, told AFP in December that the Russian health ministry and the consumer health ministry falsify coronavirus numbers.—AFP ■

Easter Island begins vaccinating residents against Covid-19

AUTHORITIES on Easter Island began vaccinating residents against Covid-19 on Monday, distributing 120 doses on the first day.

Situated 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) off Chile's coast, the island -- renowned for its ancient, giant humanoid monoliths -- has not reported a single coronavirus case in more than 300 days.

Medical personnel and people aged over 80 were among the first to receive the jabs, Easter Island mayor Pedro Edmunds told AFP.

He added that authorities estimate 8,000 people will be immunized -- about 80 percent of the island's 10,000 people.

A shipment of 1,200 doses of the vaccine produced by Chinese laboratory Sinovac arrived Thursday aboard the Chilean island's weekly supply plane.



As of February 8, 2021, Easter Island has not had a single case of Covid-19 in more than 300 days. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The island will receive a total of 16,000 doses, and the vaccination process will continue Tuesday and Wednesday for people over 70.

"The vaccine is totally reliable. Trust the science and the management that was done to have these vaccines," said Ovahe Tepano, one of the doctors who received a jab on Monday.

While mainland Chile has recorded 755,000 cases of Covid-19 with more than 19,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic, Easter Island has not recorded a single case in more than 300 days after suspending all tourist visits.

"We haven't had Covid for 312 days thanks to a decision the community supported to close the island," Edmunds said.

With no tourism, the island's main economic sector, the island's inhabitants have had to turn to an ancient Polynesian tradition based on taking care of oneself and sharing resources within the community.—AFP ■

Netherlands extends coronavirus curfew to March 2

THE Dutch government said on Monday it is extending until March 2 its night-time coronavirus curfew, the introduction of which last month sparked the country's worst riots in four decades.

The 9pm to 4:30am (2000-0330 GMT) curfew, the first in the Netherlands since World War II, had been due to end on Wednesday, but Prime Minister Mark Rutte had warned that it was likely to be prolonged.

"The curfew will be extended... This is necessary because new, more contagious variants of the coronavirus are gaining ground in the Netherlands," the government said in a statement after a cabinet meeting.

More than 95 percent of Dutch people were obeying the curfew, which was introduced on January 23 along with a limit on visitors restricted to one person per household per day and ban on flights from some countries, the government said.

The Dutch government last week extended other restrictions until March 2 including the closure of bars, restaurants and non-essential shops, although most primary schools reopened on Monday.

Three days of unrest erupted after the curfew began, with police using water cannon and tear gas against rioters in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Eindhoven and other cities.

More than 400 people were arrested. One minister called the rioters "scum", while Prime Minister Mark Rutte called them "criminals" and not genuine protesters.—AFP ■

Virus deals biggest blow to German exports since 2009

GERMAN exports fell more than 9.0 percent in 2020, official data showed Tuesday, with the coronavirus pandemic sparking the biggest drop in over a decade for Europe's biggest economy.

In a year hit by border closures and disruptions to supply chains, German exports totalled 1.21 trillion euros ($1.46 trillion) in the last 12 months, down from 1.33 trillion in 2019.

The 9.3-percent decrease is the largest blow to exports that Germany has suffered since an 18-percent drop during the global financial crisis of 2009.

Imports also fell by 7.1 percent to 1.03 trillion euros, the figures released by national statistics office Destatis showed.

That leaves Europe's largest economy with a positive foreign trade balance of 179.1 billion euros in 2020, down from 224 billion euros in the previous year.



German exports fell more than 9.0 percent in 2020, official data showed Tuesday, with the coronavirus pandemic sparking the biggest drop in over a decade for Europe's biggest economy. **PHOTO: AFP**

The initial impact of the pandemic saw German exports fall 30 percent in the spring, and recovery measures in the summer failed to bring them back to pre-pandemic levels.

The United States remained the most eager buyer of "Made in Germany" products in 2020, accounting for 103 billion euros of the total, ahead of China with 96 billion euros and France 91 billion euros).

In December alone, exports to the US increased by 8.4 percent while sales to China climbed even higher by 11.6 percent, demonstrating the flexibility of German industry even in the face of new coronavirus restrictions introduced in late 2020.

Those restrictions have been extended well into 2021, forcing the German government to revise its forecast of 4.4-percent growth in GDP down to 3.0 percent for this year.—AFP ■

Greece facing third virus wave, says health minister

GREECE is facing a third coronavirus wave, the health minister said on Tuesday as officials met to discuss tighter lockdown rules.

"The analysis I am receiving from experts... shows this third wave is coming to our country too," Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias told Open TV, ahead of an emergency cabinet meeting on the pandemic.

Greece was hit with a first wave of the virus in March last year before infections eased off, surging again in autumn prompting the government to re-impose a nationwide lockdown.

In the greater Athens area, 71 percent of intensive care beds allotted for Covid patients were now occupied, the minister said. Nearly 6,000 deaths in Greece have been attributed to coronavirus since the start of the pandemic and more than 270 people are in intensive care.

Nearly 420,000 people in the country of 11 million have received at least one vaccine dose. Greece has joined other EU states in limiting the use of AstraZeneca's vaccine to the under-65s as it awaits data on its efficacy.



Greece is facing a third coronavirus wave, the health minister said on Tuesday as officials met to discuss tighter lockdown rules. **PHOTO: AFP**

Kikilias said studies on the impact of the AstraZeneca vaccine on those aged over 70 are expected by late February. Greeks aged 60 to 64, and 75 to 79, are to receive jabs from next week in two separate groups.

Greece has been under national lockdown since November, with movement restricted between regions and people required to give a valid reason for leaving their homes.

Retail restrictions were eased for Christmas and sales season last month, a move critics say drove infections up again.—AFP ■

TUI eyes summer recovery after Q1 losses

GERMAN travel giant TUI insisted it was confident of a summer recovery despite reporting a net loss of 803 million euros in the first quarter of its fiscal year on Tuesday.

In a tourism sector devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, TUI reported an 88 percent drop in revenue to 468 million euros between October and December.

The group, which has received state support since the beginning of the outbreak, also reported an adjusted operational loss of 699 million euros, further worsening its usual negative balance in the low-season.

Yet TUI CEO Fritz Joussen said he remained confident ahead of the summer, noting as a cause for optimism the speed of the vaccination rollout in Great Britain, one of the group's key markets.

TUI has so far recorded 2.8 million bookings for summer 2021, around 56 percent of the amount recorded at this stage of 2019.

"As expected, customers will book their summer holidays much later this year than in normal years. However, demand remains strong, people want to travel," said Joussen. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Equatorial Guinea imposes curfew as virus rebounds

Equatorial Guinea on Tuesday said it would impose a curfew for the first time, limit flights and reintroduce other restrictions after cases of coronavirus rebounded in the West African country.

The tiny state, ruled by 78-year-old President Teodoro Obiang Nguema for the past 41 years, scaled back a rigorously enforced range of restrictions in August. But bars, restaurants, discotheques, casinos and other "leisure sites" will once again be closed, according to a decree read on television on Tuesday.

But places of worship, which were shut during the first wave last year, will remain open. Added to these measures is the country's first curfew, which will run from 7:00 pm to 6:00 am, as well a reduction in flights.

Domestic flights will be cut back to one per day, while international flights will be scaled back to two per week for national airlines and one per week for international carriers.

Wearing masks in public places will remain obligatory.

Equatorial Guinea, a country with 1.3 million people, has officially recorded 5,614 cases of coronavirus, of which 87 have been fatal.

But Tuesday's decree warned of the "aggressive spread of the pandemic".

According to official figures reported on state TV, there were fewer than 15 cases per week towards the end of 2020, compared with more than 50 per week currently.—AFP

WHO mission says lab leak virus theory 'extremely unlikely'

Experts from the WHO on Tuesday all but eliminated a controversial theory that Covid-19 came from a laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

"The laboratory incident hypothesis is extremely unlikely to explain the introduction of the virus into the human population," said Peter Ben Embarek, the head of the WHO mission. "Therefore is not in the hypotheses that we will suggest for future studies."—AFP

Dollar drops, as bitcoin nears $50,000

STOCK markets posted mixed results, the dollar retreated and oil steadied Tuesday, while bitcoin closed in on $50,000 for the first time as investors reacted to US stimulus and Covid vaccine developments.

Asia's main stock indices closed higher, with Tokyo posting a 30-year high, while Europe was largely stable around the half-way stage.

Wall Street ended at new heights overnight but the dollar hit a near three-month low against the British pound on Tuesday.

While stocks are benefitting from expectations of a strong economic rebound, optimism is being curtailed by delays to the huge US stimulus plan.



Stock markets posted mixed results, the dollar retreated and oil steadied Tuesday, while bitcoin closed in on $50,000 for the first time as investors reacted to US stimulus and Covid vaccine developments. **PHOTO: AFP**

President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion rescue bill is also seen as adding to global inflation worries, which are starting to be fuelled by rising oil prices and the prospect of large consumer spending post lockdowns.

While contributing to dollar weakness, the inflation outlook is helping gold, a traditional store of value.

"One can't help that for all of this optimism, the real elephant in the room is what happens if oil prices continue to rise at their current rate," noted Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

Benchmark crude contract Brent North Sea held around 13-month highs above $60 on Tuesday thanks to surging demand expectations as economies reopen.

"Oil's fundamentals are looking strong again on both (the) supply and demand side," said Edward Moya, analyst at Oanda trading group.

"Despite demand being down about five million barrels year-over-year, optimism is high that vaccine rollouts will have key parts of the global economy return to normal."—AFP ■

US forces not protecting Syrian oil fields: Pentagon

US forces in Syria are focused on fighting the remnants of the Islamic State group and are not guarding oil fields as previously ordered by ex-president Donald Trump, a US defense official said Monday.

Since a US firm contracted last year with the Kurds in northern Syria to help exploit northeastern Syria oil reserves, US troops are not involved, said Pentagon spokesman John Kirby.

The 900 US military personnel and contractors in the region "are not authorized to provide assistance to any other private company, including its employees or agents, seeking to develop oil resources in Syria," said Kirby.

The only exception is when US troops in Syria are operating under existing authorizations to protect civilians, he said, which could explain the continuing presence of US forces around the area of the oil fields.



A US Bradley Fighting Vehicle patrols near oil production facilities in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province in early February. **PHOTO: AFP**

"It's important to remember that our mission there remains to enable the enduring defeat of ISIS," he said, referring to the Islamic State.

The shift is more a change in tone by the new US President Joe Biden from Trump's policy for the decade-old Syrian civil war.

The main oil fields are in territory in the country's northeast, a region where the US-allied Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces hold sway and depend on the oil for income.—AFP ■

I.Coast cacao traders call for greater share of local market

CACAO merchants in Ivory Coast on Tuesday attacked a "monopoly" of the world's major purchasers of the raw material for chocolate, and called for local traders to get a greater share of the national market.

In Ivory Coast's latest broadside at international players in the chocolate business, the Group of Ivorian Traders (GNI) said it was time to "end the monopoly" of six corporations who dominate purchases of locally-grown cacao.

"The six multinationals who make purchases in Ivory Coast through their subsidiaries absolutely should be required to systematically allot 20 to 30 per cent of their contracts to Ivorian processors and exporters," said GNI spokesman Fabien Guei.

The six are Barry Callebaut and Ecom of Switzerland; Olam of Singapore; the US giant Cargill; and the French groups Sucden and Touton.

Together, they purchase nearly all of Ivory Coast's cacao harvest, more than 80 per cent of which is then shipped to Europe.

"This is not about driving them out of the Ivorian market but to enable Ivorian operators to be a sustainable player in marketing their country's cacao abroad, and in an fairer and more balanced way," Guei argued.—AFP ■

CHANGING DISTRIBUTOR OF REGISTERED PESTICIDE

This is a notification of the change of distributor of below insecticide, registered by **Bayer AG**, under the Myanma Pesticide Registration Board, from **JJ-PUN Trading Co., Ltd.** to **Marga Min Co., Ltd.** Any objection to this change can notify to Joint Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein, within 14 days.

Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Reg. Type	Reg. No.
Gaucho 600 FS	Imidacloprid 600 g/l FS	Amended	A 2019-125

Bayer Thai Co., Ltd. (Myanmar Branch)- PH : 01-8382710 (Ext. 40600)

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1154W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1154W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AS FENJA VOY. NO. (009W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AS FENJA VOY. NO. (009W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
သတင်းစာမှာယူဖတ်ရှုလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်။
Circulation order is in easier way.
HOTLINE 09-45237515

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
သတင်းစာ၊ ဂျာနယ်စာစောင်များ အား နိုင်ငံတကာအဆင့်မီ ပုံနှိပ်စက်ဖြင့် ပုံနှိပ်ပေးပါသည်။
Newspapers & Journal Printing Service.
Contact: 01-8604530

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
ကြော်ငြာရှင်များနှင့် ကြော်ငြာအေဂျင်စီများအနေဖြင့် ကြော်ငြာထည့်သွင်းလိုပါက တိုက်ရိုက်ဆက်သွယ်ဆွေးနွေးနိုင်ပါသည်။
Advertise with us.
HOTLINE 09-974424848

All eyes on Washington as Trump second impeachment trial starts



The US Capitol riot is at the centre of efforts to impeach and then convict Donald Trump for incitement of insurrection. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE US Senate gavels in Tuesday on Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial, with his defence team decrying it as a "brazen political act" of retribution and Democratic prosecutors arguing that the ex-president wilfully incited a violent insurrection.

The House of Representatives impeached him last month over his role in the deadly January 6 siege of the US Capitol by a pro-Trump mob, and his trial — the first of a former president — will feature the Senate's 100 members sitting as jurors.

Trump's legal team Monday denounced the case as unconstitutional, calling it "absurd" to hold the former president responsible for the violence.

But in a preview of their prosecuting arguments, Democrats accused Trump Monday of committing the "most grievous constitutional crime" in the 232-year history of the American presidency by inciting his supporters to storm Congress.

The trial occurs with much of Capitol Hill still locked down under intense security one month after the unrest.

Amid continued fears of extremist attacks, 6,000 National Guard members remain deployed in Washington, adding to the picture of a capital still on edge.

The proceedings kick off at 1:00 pm (1800 GMT). According to a bipartisan deal, there first will be up to four hours of debate and a vote on the constitutionality of trying an ex-president.

Arguments will be heard beginning Wednesday, with 16 hours provided over two days per side.

Senators will then pose questions to the two teams, and a majority vote will be needed if either side wants to call witnesses. Trump has already declined an invitation to testify.

The trial is expected to extend into next week.—AFP ■

Cuba tipped off Colombia about looming left-wing ELN rebel attack



Colombian soldiers and police patrol during a nationwide three-day armed strike called by ELN left-wing guerrillas in Medellin, Colombia on February 15, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

CUBA has tipped Colombia off about a plan by the left-wing ELN guerrilla group to attack Bogota in the "next few days," Colombia's defence minister said Monday.

"The Colombian government received from the Cuban ambassador... Jose Luis Ponce a communication with an alleged terrorist attack that was being planned for Colombia by the ELN group," Diego Molano said in a statement.

Since May 2018, Havana has hosted a delegation from the National Liberation Army, or ELN, the last active guerrilla organization operating in Colombia after the 2016 peace agreement by the main rebel group, the FARC, which was negotiated on the island.

The ELN rebels had been angling for a similar truce with then-president Juan Manuel Santos that would completely end the civil conflict that had stretched on for more than half a century.

But Santos' successor, President Ivan Duque, broke off talks after the ELN detonated a car bomb at a police academy in Bogota that killed 22 people, in addition to the attacker, in January 2019.

Cuba said in the memo, signed by its ambassador, that it had shared the intelligence with the guerrilla delegation on the island, but that the ELN representatives "expressed total ignorance" of the plot.

The ELN delegation also "reiterated that it has no involvement in the military decisions or operations of the organization," according to the memo, released by Colombian officials.

After the breakdown of the peace process, Duque demanded that Cuba extradite the rebels in its territory, which President Miguel Diaz-Canel's government opposed.

Havana argued that there are protocols signed by Colombia and guarantor countries that provide for the ex-negotiators to be safely returned to their camps on Colombian soil. —AFP ■

French Caribbean islands in dire straits as new Covid rules hit

It's February and the palm-fringed beaches of French islands in the Caribbean should be dotted with mainland tourists on mid-term holidays.

But the annual influx has slowed to a trickle in Guadeloupe and Martinique following a government decision to ban non-essential travel outside of the EU over the Covid-19 pandemic.

The move, part of a series of restrictions announced to stave off a third nationwide lockdown, caused dismay in the islands that have been part of France since the 17th century and rely heavily on tourism from the mainland.

The government insists the islands must be protected from the new, more infectious coronavirus strains that are sweeping France.

So far they have been relatively shielded from the pandemic, with Guadeloupe recording 159 deaths, Martinique 45 and the rate of new infections described by the health ministry as stable.

"We have to do everything to protect them from this new risk," Minister for Overseas Territories Sebastien Lecornu tweeted on January 28.

But travel restrictions are a blow to the economy of islands that had hoped to profit from the closure of French ski resorts — a popular destination in February — to sell more winter sun holidays. French travellers to Guadeloupe, an archipelago of nine inhabited islands that are home to 390,000 people, and Martinique, an island of 370,000 inhabitants, must now show a "compelling" motive for their trip.

This could be visiting a dying relative or a child of which the traveller has shared custody.

They also have to present a negative PCR test taken less than 72 hours before departure, self-isolate for a week on arrival, and, since last week, present a negative PCR test before returning to the mainland.

Cancellations hit 90%

The measures do not apply to islanders travelling to mainland France.

Francois Baltus Languedoc, head of the tourism committee on Martinique, which received more than 100,000 holidaymakers from the mainland in December, said the new measures spelt "an end to the tourist season, pure and simple".

Patrick Vial-Collet, president of the chamber of commerce of Guadeloupe, where he heads a hotel group, predicted a "collapse" of the local tourism sector.—AFP ■

Mandatory Covid tests in quarantine for UK arrivals

TRAVELLERS arriving in Britain from abroad will have to take two coronavirus tests during quarantine, the government is expected to confirm on Tuesday.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock is due to announce that people told to isolate at home will be required to get a test two and eight days into a mandatory 10-day quarantine period.

The new measures, which critics say come too late to curb the spread of the virus, are aimed at halting new variants.

But the health ministry said Britain's response had been informed by experts leading to "some of the toughest border regimes in the world".

"Enhancing our testing regime to cover all arrivals while they isolate will provide a further level of protection and enable us to better track any new cases which might be brought into the country, and give us even more opportunities to detect new variants," a spokesman said.

Environment Secretary George Eustice confirmed that announcements on the new quarantine regime would be made in parliament later on Tuesday.

"We have to be ever mindful of the risk of other variants entering the country," he told BBC radio.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government has been under pressure to tighten rules for international travellers, following criticism the regime was too lax. New mandatory hotel quarantine rules for travellers returning from dozens of countries deemed "high risk" from Covid-19 are due to start from February 15.—AFP ■



New mandatory hotel quarantine rules for travellers returning from dozens of countries deemed 'high risk' from COVID-19 are due to start from February 15. **PHOTO: AFP**

French far-right mayor reopens museums, defying Covid closure

A far-right mayor in France threw down the gauntlet to the central government on Tuesday by reopening his city's museums in defiance of coronavirus rules.

Arguing that the French needed access to culture despite the threat of Covid-19, Perpignan Mayor Louis Aliot, deputy leader of the far-right National Rally, officially reopened four museums that had been closed since October 30.

"There is a virus and it will be with us for a long time... There are treatments, there are vaccinations, there are precautions we can take. Let's get used to it and start by trying things out," Aliot told reporters at the Hyacinthe-Rigaud art museum.

Cultural venues across the country are desperate to reopen — even partially — to give the French some enjoyment after months without exhibitions, theatres, cinemas and live entertainment.

The Hyacinthe-Rigaud museum told AFP that roughly 50 visitors had arrived on Tuesday morning within 15 minutes of it reopening.

"There are a lot of people," a receptionist said by telephone.

The Casa Pairal museum of Catalan art and the Natural History Museum also confirmed they had reopened. The fourth — the Joseph Puig coin museum — is set to reopen on Wednesday.

President Emmanuel Macron's government, which is trying to bring down stubbornly high infection rates, ruled that all cultural establishments, bars and restaurants should remain closed after the second lockdown ended in mid-December.—AFP ■



The Hyacinthe-Rigaud art museum was among those to reopen on Tuesday with an exhibition devoted to portraits of French queens. **PHOTO: AFP**

Emirati 'Hope' nears Mars

THE first Arab interplanetary mission is expected to rereach Mars' orbit Tuesday on the most critical stage of its journey to unravel the secrets of weather on the Red Planet.

The unmanned probe — named "Al-Amal", Arabic for "Hope" — blasted off from Japan last year, the latest step in the UAE's ambitious space programme.

Here are some facts and figures about the oil-rich nation's project, which draws inspiration from the Middle East's golden age of cultural and scientific achievements.

Outsize plans

The United Arab Emirates, made up of seven members including Dubai and Abu Dhabi, has 12 satellites in orbit, with plans to launch several more in coming years.

In September 2019, it sent the first Emirati into space, Hazza al-Mansouri, who was part of a three-member crew. They blasted off from Kazakhstan, returning home after an eight-day mission in which he became the first Arab to visit the International Space Station.

But the UAE's ambitions go much further, with a goal of building a human settlement on Mars by 2117. In the meantime, it plans to create a white-domed "Science City" in the deserts outside Dubai to simulate Martian conditions and develop the technology needed to colonise the planet.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Navalny aides push EU for new Russia sanctions

Aides of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said they have pushed the EU to sanction prominent members of President Vladimir Putin's circle including business tycoons to ramp up pressure on Russia.

The move comes after the tit-for-tat expulsion of several European and Russian diplomats as tensions run high over the Navalny affair.

The head of Navalny's regional network Leonid Volkov and another associate, Vladimir Ashurkov, made the calls on Monday during a video conference with EU states dedicated to the bloc's "next steps" on Russia.

The call was hosted by Poland and included envoys from the United States, Canada, Britain and Ukraine, Poland's mission in the EU wrote on Twitter.

Volkov wrote on the Telegram messenger late Monday that he and Ashurkov had discussed "personal sanctions" against billionaires Roman Abramovich, the owner of Chelsea football club, and Alisher Usmanov.—AFP

Iran says armed forces member involved in nuclear scientist's murder

A member of the armed forces is suspected of involvement in last November's assassination near Tehran of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the country's intelligence minister said Monday.

"The person who carried out the first preparations for the assassination was a member of the armed forces," Mahmoud Alavi said in an interview with state television, without elaborating.

He said it was not possible for the intelligence ministry "to keep watch over the armed forces".

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was travelling on a highway outside the capital accompanied by a security detail on November 27 when he came under machine-gun fire.—AFP

IOC calls 2020 chief's sexist comments 'completely inappropriate'



Gaffe-prone Tokyo 2020 chief Yoshiro Mori sparked uproar when he claimed that women speak too much in meetings. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

TOKYO — Sexist comments made by Tokyo 2020 chief Yoshiro Mori were "completely inappropriate", the International Olympic Committee said Tuesday, as the row over his controversial remarks continues to simmer.

The IOC's statement came as Japanese media said organizers were planning to meet this week to discuss their response to the uproar.

Several hundred Olympic volunteers have quit since Mori last week said women speak too much in meetings. He has since apologised but not stepped down, and the IOC last week said it considered the matter closed.

But on Tuesday it released a lengthy statement citing its commitment to gender equality and distancing itself from the remarks made by Mori.

"The recent comments of Tokyo 2020 President Mori were absolutely inappropriate and in contradiction to the IOC's commitments and the reforms of its Olympic Agenda 2020," it said.

It noted Mori had apologised "and later made a number of subsequent comments".

After apologizing, Mori appeared to dig himself in deeper, however, explaining he "doesn't speak to women much".

The IOC made no reference to calls for Mori's resignation, noting only that Tokyo's organising committee "also considers his comment to be inappropriate and has reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality".

Japanese media said Tuesday the organising committee could meet as soon Friday to discuss its response as calls grow for Mori to resign.—AFP ■

Bagel-serving Barty shows hunger at Australian Open

MELBOURNE — A red-hot Ashleigh Barty said hard work during her extended off-season had primed her for an Australian Open assault after the number one seed delivered a masterclass to crush Danka Kovinic.

It was a near-flawless performance from the 24-year-old Australian, who won the first 16 points en route to a 6-0, 6-0 first-round romp in 44 minutes.

Barty entered her home Slam having won the warm-up Yarra Valley Classic in her first tournament in 11 months, after she opted to remain home during the pandemic -- even deciding against defending her French Open crown.

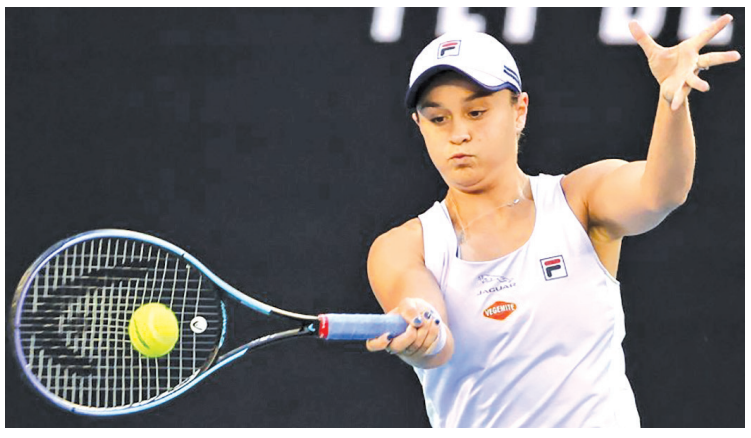
Barty enjoyed the rarity of extra family time during her breather, but also worked tirelessly on the practice courts.

"I know deep down my team and I have done the work," she said. "We've earned the right to play at this level.

"I think knowing that we've done the work during pre-season... I feel comfortable in my own skin to go out there and find a way.

"I know I've got other weapons that I can go to. I want to challenge myself to be the complete player."

Barty, hoping to break her country's 43-year singles title curse at the Australian Open, never gave 82-ranked Kovinic a chance, rolling through a lopsided first set in just 19 minutes.—AFP ■



Top seed Ashleigh Barty was in blistering form at the Australian Open. **PHOTO: AFP**

Gladbach v Man City Champions League match moved to Budapest

PARIS: Manchester City's first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie against Borussia Moenchengladbach will be played in Budapest due to strict coronavirus entry rules imposed by Germany, UEFA announced Monday (Feb 8).

The switch of venue comes 24 hours after Liverpool's match against Leipzig next week was also relocated to Budapest for the same reason.

Pep Guardiola's City will play Gladbach at the Puskas Arena on Feb 24.

"We have to presume that the travel ban for passengers from the UK to Germany, which is currently in place until 17th February, will be extended and that the Manchester City team will not be granted special permission to travel to Moenchengladbach," said Borussia CEO Stephan Schippers.

"We have come to this decision based on several conversations with the relevant authorities, politicians, the DFL and UEFA over the past week."

UEFA's regulations stipulate the home side must find a way of hosting the match or risk forfeiting it as a 3-0 defeat.

Introduced late last month the new German rules, slated to last until at least February 17, ban travellers from countries hit by new, more contagious Covid-19 variants such as the one found in Britain.



Manchester City will play Borussia Moenchengladbach at a neutral venue in Budapest when the Champions League resumes later this month. **PHOTO: AFP/PAUL ELLIS**

Though there are some exceptions for medical workers and others in key professions the new protocol contains no special provision for professional sportspeople.

"UEFA's regulations state that as the home side we are required to find an alternative venue. For several reasons, we have decided to play the game at the Puskas Arena in Budapest," said Schippers.

"We would like to thank UEFA and the Hungarian FA for their support regarding this matter.

"A last-16 Champions League tie is a huge event for Borussia Moenchengladbach, which we now cannot play in our own ground or with any fans in attendance. Nevertheless, we're pleased that we can play the game at all and we are conscious of the overall situation."—AFP ■