

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VI, No. 356, Fullmoon of Tagu 1381 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tuesday, 7 April 2020

People without regular income to be supplied with basic food starting from 10 April, 150 units of electricity bills to be exempted

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Press Release of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
14th Waxing Tagu 1381 ME
6 April 2020**

1. The National-Level Central Committee Chairperson State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has received letters from the people from all across the nation and after reviewing them have determined how best the Union Government could fulfill the needs.
2. During the long Thingyan holidays which is a very important period for the containment of COVID-19, people from the basic strata of society without regular income will be provided with 8 pyis of rice, 50 ticals of cooking oil, 50 ticals of salt, 1 viss of lentils, and 1 viss of onions for each household starting from 10 April. State/region-
3. Household electricity bills will be given exemption of up to 150 units till the end of April for the public, religious organizations and humanitarian organizations. (embassies, UN and international organizations not included).

al governments will collaborate on recording, packaging, transporting and distributing with government departments, UMFCCI, local elders, civil society organizations and volunteers to ensure there is no wastage, delay or corruption.

3. Household electricity bills will be given exemption of up to 150 units till the end of April for the public, religious organizations and humanitarian organizations. (embassies, UN and international organizations not included).

State Counsellor discusses COVID-19 measures of Bago Region through video conferencing



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discusses with COVID-19 frontline healthcare workers from Bago Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), held discussions with health workers and local authorities in Bago Region on their measures against the pandemic.

From the meeting hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw through video conferencing yesterday, the State

Counsellor reached Dr Aye Nyein, head of medical services under the Public Health Department of Bago Region, U Kyaw Thu, village tract administrator of Pyinbongyi and Chairman U Myint Aung of the Regional Transport Supervisory Committee.

They held talks on healthcare services for the deputy township administrative officer of Paukaung Township and his family members who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus, coordi-

... the ongoing crisis is a silver lining to the nation for building up unity, opportunities to turn challenges into benefits of the future ...

dination measures against the pandemic in the region, awareness campaign on directives of the Ministry of Health and Sports in coordination with relevant organizations and administrative bodies, medical supplies for hospitals and clinics and educative programmes for the rural people to lessen concerns about the returnees from foreign countries.

SEE PAGE-3

Union Minister meets with COVID-19 Clinical Management Team

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe held a discussion with the COVID-19 Clinical Management Team at the Medical Skill, Simulation and Research Centre at University of Medicine (1) in Yangon on 4 April afternoon.

The team is comprised with professors of medical universities in Myanmar.

The meeting focused on treatments for COVID-19, disease levels and transmission of the disease.

Professor/Dean Dr Zaw Lin Aung from the University of Medicine (1) in Yangon represented the team to explain treatment guidelines, preparedness for the designated hospital, future plans and adopting criteria for the positive patients to discharge from the hospital.

The Union Minister expressed his appreciation for the



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe attends the meeting with COVID-19 Clinical Management Team at the Medical Skill, Simulation and Research Centre at University of Medicine (1) in Yangon on 4 April. **PHOTO: MNA**

efforts of senior medical experts on COVID-19 measures, formation of clinic management teams at regional levels and sharing in-

formation about the discussions with the local level teams.

He also discussed modification of treatments in relation to

the changing trend of diseases, sharing successful treatments with local level clinical management teams, more tests at the

National Health Laboratory in Yangon with the participation of Department of Medical Research in Yangon, tests for patients, contacted persons and suspected or persons under investigation, early recognition of disease for specific treatments to the positive patients to control the disease.

The Union Minister added establishment of fever clinics at the outpatient department of hospitals to identify the infected person and control the disease.

The senior medical officials also discussed resource mobilization of health professionals and medical supplies, and treatments and transfers of the suspected patients at the private hospitals.

The Union Minister and party inspected training on wearing PPEs to the volunteer students of University of Nursing in Yangon—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Public contributions to the fund of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

THE government is increasing its momentum for measures against the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. For the successful implementation of these measures, the following companies, organizations and individuals have contributed cash donations until 4:30 pm from 1 to 6 April 2020.

Donors	Amount (million kyats)
1. Asia World Foundation	100
2. Construction, Housings and Infrastructural Development Bank	15.00
3. All Myanmar Gorkha Central Board	10.80
4. Maha Gandhari Yautkaw Missionary	10.00
5. RSE Examines & Supporting Team in Singapore	9.00
6. The Church of the Province of Myanmar (Anglican)	7.00
7. Karen Baptist Convention KBC	6.00
8. U Naw Memorial Baptist Church	5.00
9. PMA Care Group	5.00
10. Union Civil Service Board	4.38
11. National Unity Party	3.00
12. Myanmar Council of Churches	3.00
13. Gorkha Social Welfare Association (Myanmar)	3.00
14. Yangon YMCA (Young Men Christian Association)	2.28
15. Myanmar Christian Health Workers Association (MCHWA)	0.30
16. Individuals from 2 to 3 April	77.88
Total	261.64
Donations in USD	
MAI Airline	\$50,000
Air KBZ	\$50,000
Total	100,000

Further donations of cash and hospital supplies / equipment will be published.

National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Public announcement

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Containment and Emergency Response Committee has informed the public for their reports on the pandemic through the following 24-hour hotlines to the committee.

Telephone numbers: 0673412712 and 0673412718.

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 Containment and Emergency Response Committee
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Notification to persons who need community based facility quarantine and other quarantines

- * Community based facility quarantine measures cover those who had close contacts with COVID-19 patients and the returnees from foreign countries.
- * Despite no symptoms, these persons could automatically turn themselves into the asymptomatic carriers. They need the 14-day quarantine during the incubation period for preventing transmission of disease to the family members and community.
- * Guidelines of Ministry of Health and Sports must be strictly followed during the isolation period. The quarantined persons might suffer stresses caused by 14-day restrictions on activities. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is conducting motivation courses, and those who need words of consolation may contact the ministry for it. Volunteers are helping to get such consolation.
- * After the 14-day quarantine, the MoHS will issue certificate for quarantine completion, and they also need to follow the guidelines of this ministry to prevent COVID-19 infection again like other people although they arrived back home. —MoSWRR

(Translated by Aung Khin)

“People are the key”

State Counsellor discusses COVID-19 measures of Bago Region through ...

FROM PAGE-1

The meeting also focused on the decline of travellers, following instructions of regional government on transportation services, livelihood problems of the workers in this sector; disinfection of vehicles and other difficulties.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor said the government was making every effort to provide all the citizens, in addition to the workers of transportation sector, with the assistance in their economic and healthcare problems.

She also explained the welfare plans for transportation workers, requests to all the people not to move around for unnecessary matters—especially making family gatherings and pleasure trips during the holidays of water festival, orders have been issued for public service personnel to remain on duty—except in some important cases such as death in the family, transportation during the Thingyan holidays, welfare provisions for the workers in suspended businesses and other possible assistance.

Regarding the reduction of electricity bills, the State Counsellor said the rate of charges will be adjusted to avoid unfair losses among the stakeholders, including the state, the businesspersons and the people. She emphasized the role of public



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discusses with COVID-19 frontline healthcare workers from Bago Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

participation, including civil service staff, as the ongoing crisis is a silver lining to the nation for building up unity, opportunities to turn challenges into benefits of the future, establishing unity among common people, administrative bodies, civil service

staff and businesspersons to promote the value of the whole community, consideration about the well-being of people and developing loving-kindness and sympathy among all the people.

The State Counsellor concluded the

discussions explaining about the government’s plans for public welfare, and called for all the people to join hands and work in determined efforts with the belief: ‘All for one and one for all’.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

One more confirmed case of COVID-19 on Monday, total cases reach 22

Update of COVID-19 surveillance (8:00 pm, 6-4-2020)

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is actively surveying for COVID-19 for prevention, containment and treatment, searching for and quarantining people tested positive for the virus or who have been in close contact with positive cases and arranging hospital care if necessary, networking with local authorities for information on people returning from abroad and quarantine measures, and disseminating authentic news to the public.
2. There are 31 new patients under observation between 5-4-2020 and 6-4-2020, 6 pm.
3. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) released test results of 46 patients under observation on 6-4-2020 that showed one patient tested positive while the remaining 45 showed negative.
4. The confirmed patient (Case-022) is a 51-year-old female Myanmar national residing in South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region. She departed from the USA to South Korea with patient (Case-021) on 24-3-2020, from there to Thailand on 25-3-2020, and landed in Yangon International Airport on 26-3-2020.

She was quarantined at a hotel in Botahtaung Township in the same room with patient (Case-021) and has since been transferred to Waibargi Specialist Hospital. Her health condition is currently stable.

5. Among the 21 confirmed cases, health conditions have been stable for the virus-positive person in Teddim People’s Hospital, Chin State, the 12 people in Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon, the patient in Mandalay Kandaw Nadi Hospital, the patient in Nay Pyi Taw People’s Hospital, the patient in Shan State (North) General Hospital Lashio who was transferred from Kyaukme People’s Hospital, and the 3 people in Bago Region Pyay People’s Hospital who transferred from the general hospitals in Paukaung. The patient in Waibargi hospital and the other patient in Pyay People’s Hospital are under strict isolation.
6. Myanmar had 22 COVID-19 positive cases between 23-3-2020 and 6-4-2020. The public is urgently advised to closely follow regulations and guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Sports to protect themselves, their families and their communities.— *Ministry of Health and Sports*

Laboratory results on COVID-19, 8:00 pm, 6 April 2020

Sr	Aged	Gender	Travel History in previous 14 days	Place for medical treatment	Quarantine Date	Lab result on COVID-19
22	51 years	Female	The United States, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand	Waibargi Specialist Hospital	5 April 2020	Positive

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Mahar Mobile App donates 2000 movies for free

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint held a meeting with officials from ABC Content Solution Co Ltd (Mahar Mobile Application) yesterday and discussed the company's plan to provide over 2,000 movies for free for a month.

The plan intends to provide entertainment for people staying at home during the COVID-19 containment period. Mahar Mobile Application will be providing half of their 4,000 movie library for free for one month.

ABC Content Solution Co Ltd manages Mahar Channel, Mahar Mobile App, Piti Video, Mahar YouTube channel and Mahar Facebook Page. Mahar Mobile App is their latest venture and will have two thousand movies, including Myanmar films, free for viewing from 1 to 30 April. The company is issuing 3 million Promo Codes for this event. Type in 230320 in the Mahar Mobile App to obtain your free one-month pass.—MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint held the meeting with officials from ABC Content Solution Co Ltd (Mahar Mobile Application) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Companies, orgs, public continue donation to COVID-19 Committee



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe receives donations from well-wishers to the Department of Public Health for efficient uses in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

COMPANY, organization and individual donors donated financial assistance and hospital supplies to the National Central Committee on COVID-19 Prevention, Containment and Treatment in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Firstly, officials from Myanmar Council of Churches and the All Myanmar Gorkha Central Board explained the donation.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe then thanked the donors and said this collective support gives great strength to combating COVID-19 across the nation. He added that the medical

equipment will be beneficial even after COVID-19.

Next, the Union Minister and the directors-general of the Union Minister Office and Public Health and Medical Services Department accepted the donations and gave certificates of honour in return.

Myanmar Council of Churches donated K3 million, the Church of the Province of Myanmar (Anglican) donated K7 million, Karen Baptist Convention KBC donated K6 million, U Naw Memorial Baptist Church donated K5 million, Yangon YWCA (Young Men Christian Association) donated K2.28 million, The Salvation

Army donated K1.52 million, All Myanmar Gorkha Central Board donated K10.8 million, Gurkha Humanitarian Aid Association (Myanmar) donated K3 million, PMA Care donated K5 million, and the Construction Housing & Infrastructure Development Bank donated K15 million yesterday.

Earlier yesterday morning, Maha Gandhari Yautkaw Missionary, donated K10 million, U Htay Oo (Htay Wingabar Co Ltd) donated K1 million, U Aung Kaung + Daw Aye Aye Nwe and family donated K500,000 for combating COVID-19 as well. —MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Nay Pyi Taw Council office receives donations of PPE, surgical masks

Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Myo Aung received donations of personal protective equipment and surgical masks at his office yesterday morning.

The Office of Director at Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (IWUMD) presented 35 sets of PPE worth about K1 million and

the staff members of Construction (5) under this department 2,000 units of surgical masks worth about K1.2 million.

The items will be handed over to the Department of Public Health for efficient uses in the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory for prevention and containment. Zaw Min Lwin (IPRD)



Dr Myo Aung receives donations of personal protective equipment and surgical masks to the Department of Public Health for efficient uses in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

UMFCCI raises K150 mln for supplying food to public

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries-UMFCCI announced yesterday that it will establish a fund for supplying food to the ordinary citizens.

In the statement, UMFCCI will raise a capital of K150 million for the fund, aimed at supporting the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement said repercussions from the virus are affecting businesses and

severely impacting the income of the working class. UMFCCI will work with its affiliated associations, businesses, donors and the Union Government to supply food for the working people.

UMFCCI will coordinate with state/regional governments for this endeavour and welcomes donations in this regard from affiliated associations, executives and businesses. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Export of Monywa winter onions plummets by 70%



Trucks loaded of onions seen in Monywa. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN

WITH the decreasing demand from foreign markets, exports of winter onions from Monywa Township has dropped by 70 per cent compared to the corresponding period of last year, said Ko Han Naing Oo, an owner of Aung Kaung Pyae Onion Depot in Monywa town.

About three trucks loaded of onions were exported to border checkpoints every week in early

April last year. This year, only one truck per week is seen at the border.

Consequently, the onions are sent to only domestic markets for now.

“There are around 7,300 acres of onion plantations in Monywa Township. The onions were previously exported to China, India and Bangladesh. Now, they are distributed to Yangon,

Mandalay and Mawlamyine markets,” he added.

The onion growers, as well as traders, are experiencing market fallouts due to the current Covid-19 outbreak. As a result of this, the workers engaged in onion depots are suffering financial hardship, said a depot worker. — Myo Win Tun

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

External trade crosses \$19.5 bln as of 20 March

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 20 March in the 2019-2020 financial year was registered at US\$19.5 billion, an increase of \$2.849 billion compared with the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period in the previous FY, trade stood at \$16.7 billion, according to the data released by the ministry.

Myanmar's foreign trade has shown a 10-per-cent increase, year over year, under the incumbent government, the ministry stated.

In the current fiscal, both maritime and border trade recorded an increase compared with the year-ago period, with exports estimated at over \$9 billion and imports valued at \$10.44 billion.

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

The country's export sec-

tor relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Export earnings from CMP (cutting, making, and packaging) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

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

According to the Commerce Ministry, higher exports have helped trim the trade gap in the current fiscal. At present, Myanmar is mostly importing the goods from the main trade partner China through Muse border. However, CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling due to cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of a trade by western countries. It can harm the export sector to a certain extent, the businesspersons pointed out. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Green gram price rises from China demand

CHINA'S demand has pushed green gram price up in the recent day, showing an increase of over K10,000 per three-basket bag in the internal market, said a trader from Mandalay market.

The green gram prices jumped to K125,000 from 108,000 per bag in the domestic market, according to Soe Win Myint Depot in Mandalay.

Currently, only about 10,000 tonnes of grams remain on their hands. However, the summer green grams will enter the market in May. The price is expected to remain high due to growing demand, according to Mandalay depot. China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union also purchase green grams from Myanmar.

The export volume of green grams to India is lower compared to other countries. China prefers green grams (Shwe Wah) variety, the Commerce Ministry stated.

At present, the prices of green grams (Fair and Average Quality) move in the range of US\$800-1,000 per tonne depending on varieties.

China makes value-added products from green grams and sends them to foreign markets. Moreover, it produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

Green grams (Shwe Wah variety) from Madaya and Singu townships of Mandalay Region and Myaung and Myinmu townships of Sagaing Region are also flowing into the Mandalay market.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over 330,000 tonnes in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, over 400,000 tonnes in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tonnes in the 2017-2018FY and over 300,000 tonnes in the 2018-2019FY. Green grams are mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses' exports, green grams accounted for more than 26 per cent of the exports in the previous years.

As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country. Green grams are primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

COVID-19 causes Myanmar watermelon trucks to find new market in Wanding

By Nyein Nyein

AS Chinese traders do not come to Muse 105th mile border in the light of COVID-19 fear, prompting Myanmar traders leaving for Wanding to sell watermelons and muskmelons, said vice president U Aung Thet Oo of Muse Fruit Depot.

China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the Covid-19. Starting from 1 April, travellers are prohibited at the border crossings between China and Myanmar — Mant Wain, Sin Phyu, Nan Taw, Kyin San Kyawt, Pun Sai-Kyu Koat, Manero borders. However, only trucks are allowed for trading at the Mant Wain, Kyin San Kyawt and Pun Sai-Kyu Koat checkpoints.

“Normally, trading is conducted at the Muse border. The COVID-19 conditions have blocked the Chinese traders to come. Therefore, local traders come out of the country and sell

the watermelons in the Wanding area,” he added.

“While selling the watermelons in the Wanding area, the traders are facing certain difficulties in transportation and accommodation, coupled with market instability,” he noted.

Regarding those problems, the authorities from two sides are negotiating the reports submitted by the traders, according to Muse Fruit Depot.

At present, a 16-tonne truck of watermelon is priced K5,000-25,000 depending on fruit quality, whereas muskmelon fetches K1,500-3,500 per tonne.

About 400 trucks of watermelon and muskmelons are traded, the fruit depot reported.

Myanmar has opened four Sino-Myanmar land borders: Muse and Chinshwehaw in Shan State and Kampaiti and Lweje in Kachin State. Of them, Muse is a major cross-border trading point in Myanmar.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR EDITOR

Aungthu Ya

SENIOR TRANSLATORS

Zaw Htet Oo
Aung Khin

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR

Ye Htut Tin,
Aung Htein,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

LOCAL NEWS EDITORS

Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

TRANSLATORS

Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin,
Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER

Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM

Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe,
Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION

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

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

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

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

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

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

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



www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com 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.

Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, IPRD share COVID-19 awareness

DAW KHIN KYI Foundation and the Information and Public Relations Department are teaming up to pass awareness on COVID-19 along with reading materials rental service from mobile libraries.

Yesterday, Hluttaw representatives, local administrative bodies, medical personnel and civil society organizations to distribute pamphlets on COVID-19 and demonstrate proper use of hand sanitizers.

These activities were carried out in Kwyel Min Kya and Sitar villages of Natmauk Township in Magway Region, in Myaing Kalay, Barket, Hlaing Kabar and Pinkyi villages, the silk weaving school, prosthetic factory, government offices and wards of Hpa-an Township in Kayin State, and Gon Min Kwin village of Pobbathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw.



Officials demonstrate proper use of hand sanitizers, distribute pamphlets on COVID-19 and pass awareness on COVID-19 along with reading materials rental service from mobile libraries in Kwyel Min Kya Village, Natmauk Township. **PHOTO: THEIN NAING (IPRD)**

IPRD staff are also involved in disseminating guidelines and information on COVID-19 and monitoring.—Thein Naing (IPRD) *(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

YMCA volunteers disinfect NPE office

VOLUNTEERS from the Young Men Christian Association sprayed disinfectants in the offices of the News and Periodicals Enterprise on Theinbyu Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, yesterday.

The YMCA Volunteer Association was led by its Chairman, U San Tun Oo, and the NPE has set up wash basins with hand sanitizers for guests and passerbys.

Maung Kaung Myat, one of the volunteers, said they have sprayed disinfectants in Pazungdaung Township and helped clean the area, and shared COVID-19 pamphlets and hand sanitizers in Maha Bandoola Park. —Zaw Min Latt (MNA)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Volunteer from the Young Men Christian Association sprays disinfectants in the offices of the News and Periodicals Enterprise, Yangon, yesterday. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT (MNA)**

Newspapers to be published alternately for Myanmar New Year holidays

THE News and Periodicals Enterprise of Ministry of Information announced that daily newspapers will be published in turns during the Myanmar New Year holidays.

While the Myanma Alinn newspapers will be published on 12, 13 and 14 April, and the Mirror and the Global New Light of Myanmar will temporarily cease publishing operations during this period. While the Mirror and the Global New Light of Myanmar newspapers will resume operations on 15, 16 and 17 April, the Myanma Alinn will temporarily cease operations on those days.

Similarly, the extra pages in ethnic languages from the Sub-Printing House (Mawlamyine) will temporarily cease printing operations on 12 April, the Shwe Pyi Rakhine Ponyeik sector

from Sub-Printing House (Sittway) will temporarily cease printing on 15 April, the Rakhine Shwe Myay sector from Sub-Printing House (Sittway) will temporarily cease printing on 16 April and the extra pages in Shan ethnic language from the Sub-Printing House (Taunggyi) will temporarily cease printing operations on 16 April and will resume normal production after Myanmar New Year holidays.

Advertisements will be received at the newspaper offices, which will remain open during these holidays. All newspapers will resume normal production starting 18 April. —News and Periodicals Enterprise

(Translated by TTN)

Coronavirus: latest global developments

HERE are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis on 6 April:

Japan: state of emergency

The Japanese government plans to declare a state of emergency as early as Tuesday as new coronavirus infections spike in areas such as Tokyo and Osaka. It also proposes a massive stimulus package worth \$1 trillion (915 billion euros).

Worst recession since 1945

France could see its deepest recession this year since the end of World War II, due to the crisis, the government warns.

More than 50,000 dead in Europe

More than 1.277 million cases, including 70,009 deaths, have been reported in 191 countries and territories around the world since the virus emerged in China in December, according to an AFP tally compiled around 1100 GMT Monday based on official sources.

The pandemic has killed more than 50,000 people in Europe, including 15,877 in Italy, 13,055 in Spain, 8,078 in France and 4,934 in Britain.

Fourth daily decline in Spain

Spain sees its fourth consecutive daily decline in deaths from the virus, with 637 new fatalities recorded on Monday, its lowest for 13 days.

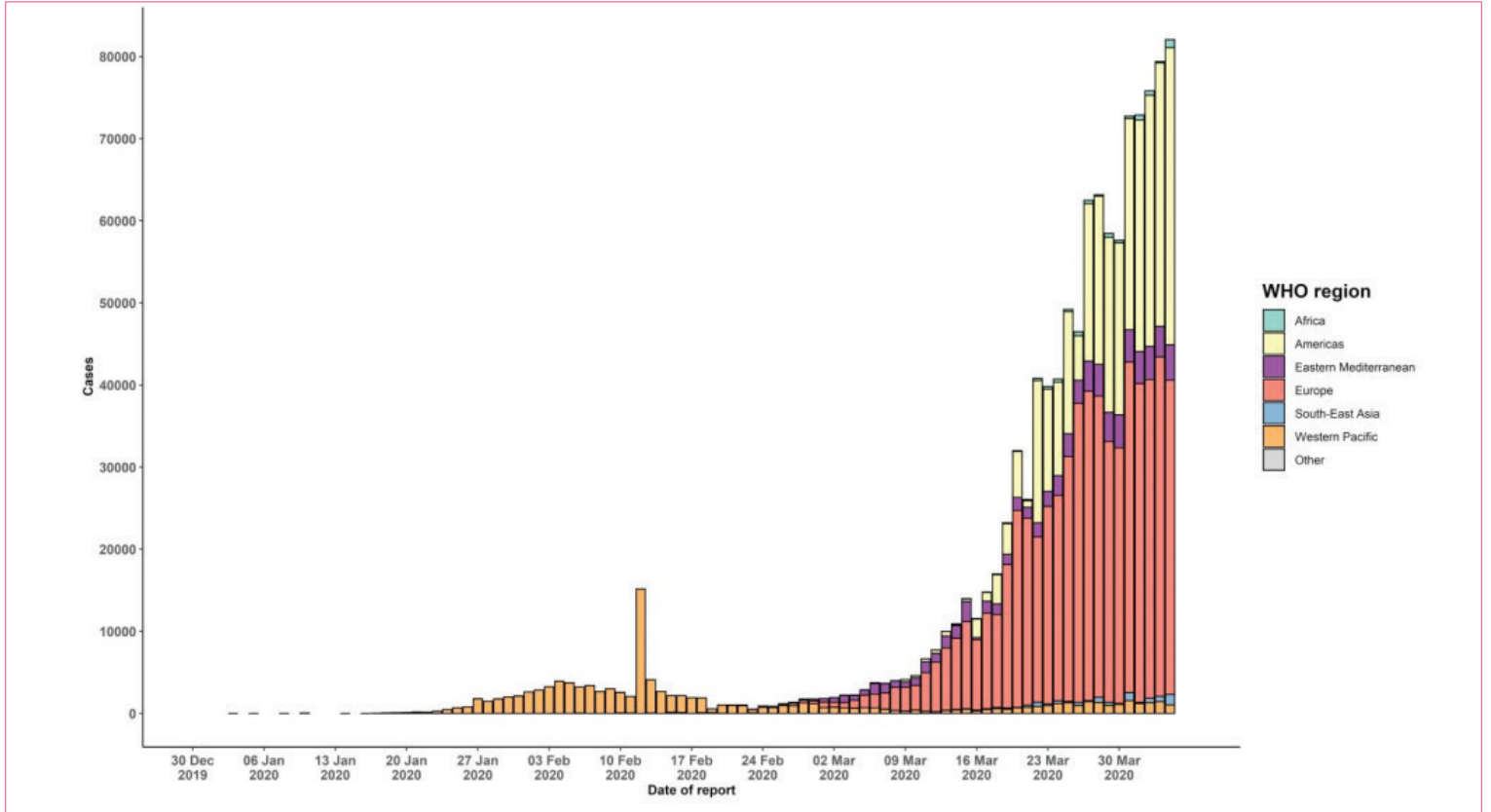


Figure 1. Epidemic curve confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 5 April 2020.

Austria to start easing lockdown

Austria could start easing its lockdown measures from 14 April, starting with smaller shops, while larger shops, hotels, restaurants and other services could also start to open their doors again in stages, the government says.

British PM Johnson 'in charge'

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson remains in charge a day after being admitted to hospital for tests after he announced on 27

March that he had tested positive for COVID-19. The Times newspaper reports that he has been given oxygen treatment.

On Sunday, in a rare special televised address Queen Elizabeth II vows "We will succeed."

Stocks rebound

Stock exchanges in Tokyo and Europe have a good start to the week, lifted by news that some of the worst-hit countries in Europe have falling death rates from the novel coronavirus.

Domestic violence warning

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urges governments to include the protection of women in their response to the pandemic, amid reports that domestic violence has surged globally in the wake of massive lockdowns imposed.

Cruise ships docks in Sydney

The Ruby Princess cruise ship, which has accounted for a quarter of all COVID-19 deaths in Australia, is allowed to dock near Sydney after weeks stranded at

sea, after 200 crew members begin exhibiting coronavirus symptoms.

US braces for 'hardest week'

As the United States' death toll races towards 10,000, including more than 4,000 in New York state, Surgeon General Jerome Adams warns: "This is going to be the hardest and the saddest week of most Americans' lives, quite frankly." "This is going to be our Pearl Harbor moment, our 9/11 moment, only it's not going to be localised." — AFP ■

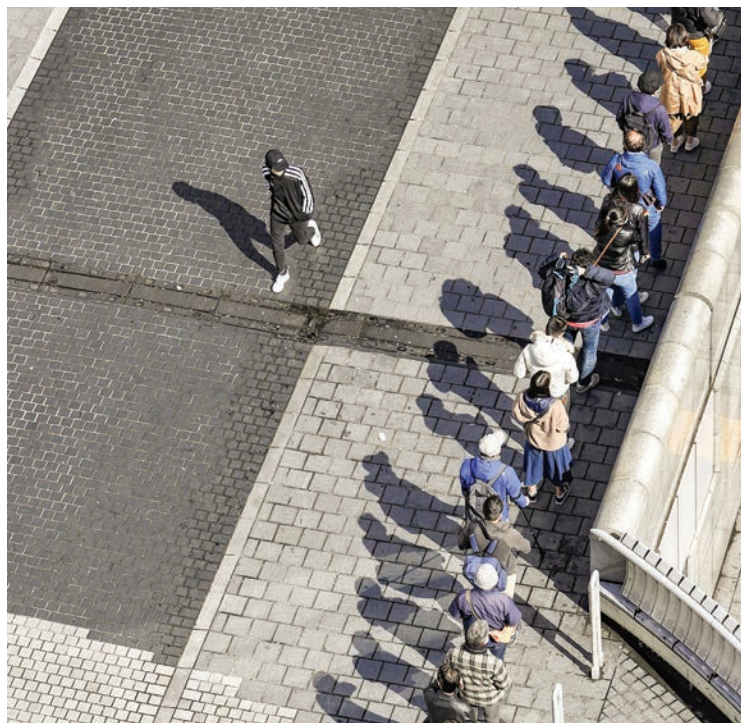
What will life in Japan under a state of emergency look like?

TOKYO — A state of emergency is set to be declared in parts of Japan most heavily hit by the spread of the coronavirus. So how will life change for residents?

In practice, not as much as you might think. People will be instructed to stay at home except to carry out important tasks such as purchasing food and daily supplies, or seeking medical care. Working from home will be encouraged but not mandatory.

Essential businesses such as supermarkets, convenience stores and pharmacies will remain open, and the government has given assurances that there is no need to panic buy or hoard everyday necessities like toilet paper.

"We're asking for the public's cooperation in reducing per-



People form a line to buy face masks at a drugstore in Osaka's Dotonbori entertainment district on 29 March 2020, amid the spread of the new coronavirus. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

son-to-person contact that could lead to transmission" of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters on Monday.

Places where people gather in large numbers such as theaters, concert halls, and sports stadiums may be ordered to close and major events canceled or postponed.

Tokyo and other densely populated areas have been acting in anticipation of such measures, with many stores and restaurants shuttering of their own accord on weekends and far fewer people on the streets than usual.

Many schools have already decided not to resume classes until the Golden Week holidays end on May 6, the same day the state of emergency is expected to be lifted. Nurseries and care

facilities for the elderly, which have so far remained open, may also be asked to close.

Public transportation will continue to operate, although there may be changes to schedules or reduced services depending on demand. East Japan Railway Co., which serves Tokyo and the surrounding area, reported a 30 percent drop in passengers on its Yamanote Line on the weekend of 28 to 29 March, when Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike asked the capital's 14 million residents to stay at home. She made the same request for the following weekend. Central Japan Railway Co., which runs shinkansen bullet trains connecting Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, will "ensure continued service even during an emergency," promised President Shin Kaneko.— Kyodo News ■

Myanmar thanks the local and international community for the outpouring of support to its efforts in combating COVID-19 Pandemic

SINCE the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by the Director-General of WHO, the confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide have now surpassed the one million mark while the global death toll has reached 64,000. As stated by WHO, even the most severe situation can be turned around and the experiences of some countries that have pushed back the virus give hope and courage to the rest of the world. One good example is the case of the People's Republic of China where the first and hardest hit regions have been brought under control and are now gradually getting back to normalcy, due to the commendable and effective control measures swiftly laid down by the Chinese Government.

In Myanmar, despite its early action with regard to surveillance and preventive measures, COVID-19 found its way into the country, and the first case was confirmed on 23 March 2020. The Government has since stepped up measures to contain importation and spread of COVID-19 by suspending the issuance of visas and all commercial flights until 13 April 2020. Special arrangements have been made to avoid disruption of trade, medical supplies and evacuation of stranded travellers.

... there is an urgent need for greater coordination and sharing of experiences and best practices among the ASEAN countries and key partners who have valuable experience in containing the spread of the pandemic, such as China, Japan and Republic of Korea.

People are the key to the success of our fight against this virus. Central to the national response is not only control and treatment but also educating people about this new virus and seeking their cooperation to strictly follow the preventive guidelines and directives. In this regard, the Government makes sure that no one is left behind. Such responsive measures cover different strata of societies, including prisoners, Internally Displaced Persons, returnees from abroad and workers coming back across the border.

As the spread of the pandemic remains on the rise across the globe, there is an urgent need for greater coordination and sharing of experiences and best practices among the ASEAN countries and key partners who have valuable experience in containing the spread of the pandemic, such as China, Japan and Republic of Korea. In this regard, Myanmar appreciates deeply the kind offer of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government to send medical teams to Myanmar to share their experiences and to donate lifesaving equipment and medical supplies which will contribute to the Government's efforts to combat the pandemic.

Myanmar would also like to express its deep appreciation to other development partners and to all those who have shown solidarity and extended their material and moral support to the government's efforts in its war against the pandemic.

We are confident that we can overcome the ongoing challenges posed by the Pandemic through four Ps, namely Political leadership, Preventive measures, Peoples' participation, and the support of our Partners from near and far.

The Government has been making rigorous efforts, within its limited capacity and resources, to contain the outbreak of COVID-19 and to mitigate its impacts on the economy under the guidance of a National Committee headed by the State Counsellor. At the same time, it is mobilising the strength of our people as well as the support of friends and partners in its struggle to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. A COVID-19 Response Fund has been established with an initial government contribution of 100 billion Kyats to mitigate economic impacts. There is also a Fund to be used for the combating of COVID-19.

There has been an outpouring of support in cash, kind and services from domestic well wishers, volunteers, development partners and the international community, including the United Nations and its Agencies. With the growing awareness about the pandemic among the public, local communities across the country are actively undertaking their own protective measures under the guidance of the National Central Committee.

Fourth-year performance of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is working with the power of the people: Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, and attendees pose for a group photo at the 3rd workshop on National Strategy for the Closure of IDP camps at the Horizon Lake View Resort Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 April 2019.

By Naing Lin Kyi
PHOTO BY THAW PHONE KHANT

ASPIRATION and preference of the people has been ascertained and considered by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and have been fulfilling the basic human rights in the process in shaping the genuine democratic system of the country.

With a view to fulfilling the rights of each citizen, the Ministry has laid out the policies, laws, by-laws, strategies, procedures, and work programs in systematic manner.

“For the successful implementation of the tasks ahead, it needs the budget and manpower. Work programmes have been laid down and sustainable development has been carried out. The budget allocation of the Ministry was MMK 18 point 5 billion in 2016–2017. In 2019–2020 the budget allowance stands out at MMK 120 point 8 billion with the increased of (7) folds. However, the statistics is tantamount to (0 point 4) per cent of the total budget of all ministries,” Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement explained.

“Manpower is necessary to implement the tasks. The number of officers and staff members has been increased from (2,900) to (4,600). In fact, the ministry needs (16,000) officers and staff members. However,

the tasks are always successful due to the active participation of the people. We could say that the ministry is working with the power of the people,” the Union Minister continued. The Ministry is formed with three departments such as the Department of Social Welfare; the Department of Disaster Management; and the Department of Relief and Resettlement. Starting from the embryo to the older age of all the citizen, the social welfare of each person has been taken care for their rights and development by the state.

Four types of rights

For the best advantage of the children, the Department of Social Welfare has enacted Child Law on 23 July 2019. The four types of advantages included such as the right to life; the right to development; the right to protection; and the right to participate.

“For the survival of the child, it is necessary to have systematic protection. The process started from pregnancy. It is termed as the ‘Maternal and Child Cash Transfer’ (MCCT) which included the cash assistance; the imparting of nutritional knowledge; the personal hygiene; and the family planning. It could be counted from the time of pregnancy to (1,000) days of the infant. If the infant is provided with correct nutrition, the child could have best mental condition for

the whole life,” the Union Minister explained.

The scheme ought to be carried out in the whole of the country, but due to budget constraint, the plan has to be selected. Based on the underdeveloped index of the child, the campaign is selected to the areas such as Rakhine State; the Chin State, Naga Self-Administered Zone, the Kayin State, and the Kayah State for 2017–2018 fiscal year and 2018–2019 fiscal year.

“In 2019–2020 fiscal year, loan from the World Bank and the national budget would be used for Ayeyawaddy Region and Shan State. Next, the campaign could be expanded to the whole country”, the Union Minister has expressed.

Child Rights

The newly enacted Child Rights Law is to protect the child from danger; and that the Early Childhood Development Law (2018) is to nurture the child in a proper way. If the development of the child is not taken up properly, then the child would have fallen into disabled group. With a view to inform the parents, the “Early Childhood Intervention” (ECI) scheme has been put up as pilot project in Yangon Region, Ayeyawaddy Region, Sagaing Region, and Mon State.

“Among the rights of the child, there is a term that spelled out ‘Right

to Protection’. In Myanmar perspective, there is no ‘parentless children’, but there is only ‘bosom less children’. The State has opened up seven child care centers in the country. In the 4th year implementation tasks, with the donation and charity from the Child Protection Association, a Child Care Center with (100) kids capacity would be opened in Nay Pyi Taw. Single mothers would be taken care in one venue,” the Union Minister described.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye.

Nurturing in line with the laws

Children are in need of pre-primary school education, and that the kids between the age of (3) and (5) numbering (1 point 4) millions are to be accommodated. However, only part of the children have been embraced in (10,000) pre-primary schools owned by the department, the self-help basis schools, and private pre-primary schools. The total number stands out (320,000) only, and that accounted only for (22) per cent. Therefore, more pre-primary school are necessary to be opened up by the government as well as the private sector.

Opening of mother's circle

With a view to establish private pre-primary schools, Early Childhood Care and Development Teacher's training courses have been conducted in Nay Pyi Taw Council Areas, and 14 states and regions for (402) occasions and nurtured (15,000) pre-primary schoolchild care teachers. When the situation is not ready to open up the pre-primary schools, a total number of (1202) mother's circle have been established. Department of Social Welfare is implementing task in connection with the youth.

“During the 4th year implementation, youth affairs policies have been laid down as strategic approach. Different programmes have been drawn in line with the states and regions, and implementation is in progress. Youth Centers are on the agenda to establish in states and regions. The first centre is established in Sagaing. With regards to juvenile offences, the youth training schools for moral education and rehabilitation have been established (4) centers such as in Thanlyin, in Nget Aw San, in Mandalay and in Mawlamyaing. When

the age of the youth has been defined as under (18) years, the number of children that needed to be protected had raised to (3) folds. The situation calls for more training schools and man power,” the Union Minister explained.

Role of the women

Role of women is vital and important in the development of a nation. The task could never be carried out only by the government, and that the cooperation of the civil societies is needed. Currently, the Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs has been formed with the participation of (11) civil societies, and functioning well.

As the protection for the women is needed “Draft Law for Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women” has been taken up for enactment. Moreover, a new legislation relating to prostitution is being drafted and that is in the pipeline. At a time, when the ageing people are on the rise on this planet, the monthly social pension has been assisted to elderly persons beginning 2017 to 2020, and that a total of (470,821) older persons have been provided with MMK (34 point 9) billion.

“Among the elderly adults, there are many able older persons remaining economically active in the community and they have been rallied round into groups. They are generally termed as “Socially Active Groups”. For economic viability, each group has been provided with MMK (1) million. With the intent to form and expand such social groups, linkages have been established with international non-governmental organizations” the Union Minister explained.

SEE PAGE-10

Myanmar Gazette

Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of U Min Min as Director-General of the Department of Trade, Ministry of Commerce, on expiry of the one year probationary period.

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release No 14/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 4 April.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 4 April.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 8 April issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar. — GNLM



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 6th April, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7th April, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

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

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
 ကြော်ငြာရောင်းချမှုနှင့် ကြော်ငြာအခမဲ့ဝင်ခံများအသုံးပြုမှု ကြော်ငြာ
 ထည့်သွင်းလိုပါက တိုက်ရိုက်ဆက်သွယ်သွေးဆွေးနိုင်ပါသည်။
Advertise with us. HOTLINE 09-974424848

Fourth year of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

FROM PAGE-9

Social Management

The Department of Social Welfare is currently establishing “Social Management Information System” with a view to implement “Electric Cash Transfer” in place of human to human cash transfer system. The system could be started in June 2020.

Department of Disaster Management has been implementing the task in creating a society with resiliency in response to natural disaster.

“The department has been officially recognized as capable in early response in the fight against natural disaster as needed by the people. The necessary response has been carried out by compiling information through the Hot Line service as well as the scrutiny of the needs by the people through the Facebook account feedbacks. It is also done through the Mobile Application on disaster management. Advanced preparations have been made for the earthquake, the severe flooding, and the devastating storms. Regarding unexpected disaster and loss due to earthquakes, advanced preparations have been laid down and approved at different levels at states and regions and down to the wards / villages. Necessary drills have been put into practise,” the Union Minister pointed out.

For rapid and quick response in case of severe flooding, rescue boats and life-saving jackets have been provided worth MMK (553 point 583) millions. Moreover, with the aid and assistance of the World Bank, US\$ 8 million have been contributed to the relief funds.

Heavy and devastating strong winds usually occurred from February to May, and that it brings disasters in regions such as Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing, Ayeyawady, Bago, and Shan States. According to past statistics, the havoc brings over (43,000) houses into destruction. In strengthening the vulnerable homes, advanced repairs have been offered, and reduced the damages.

Drinking water

During long hot summer, in fighting

against the shortage of drinking water, assistances have been provided such as distribution of potable water, sinking of tube well, installation of water purifier, building of temporary water container, and connection of water pipelines, worth of MMK (1,280 point 53) millions.

“During the 4th year plan implementation, “heat wave avoiding camps” has been opened in (44) venues in Sagaing Region and Magway Region. Under the management of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, many multi-purpose disaster shelters have been built. During the time of incumbent government such as 2016 to 2020, (138) structures of disaster shelters have been built,” the Union Minister said.

As there was (95) structures in the past, the total of shelters stand out as (233) in number. The shelters could be used as disaster shelters in bad weather condition and that in the normal time, the shelters could be used as the ward / village beneficial tasks.

“Crops being damaged due to natural disasters have been provided with seedlings, and moreover, cultivation lands have been assisted with reclamation, in addition to road and bridge repairs,” the Union Minister explained.

With a view to rapid implementation on the tasks of the ministry, the Department of Resettlement has been reorganized since two years time. As the budget allocation has been doubled, the Persons with Disabilities have been provided with assistance for one occasion. In connection with the Persons with Disabilities, respective committees have been formed in conjunction with the creation of strategic perspective. With a view to providing the Persons with Disabilities with regular assistance, necessary registrations and classification of disabilities have been made.

National Standard Operation Procedure is in the process covering the receiving, the reintegration and the rehabilitation tasks for the victims of trafficked in persons. Standard norms have been drafted for adoption to prevent from being trafficking of the persons from the Internally Displaced People.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye provides social pension of an elderly woman in Tatkon Village in Myothit Township, Magway Region on 9 December 2018.

More victims of trafficked in persons have been repatriated back year by year, and that the 4th year saw (546) persons have been accorded. In preventing the child from negative impact of migration, necessary MOU is under consideration to sign with Thailand.

Rehabilitation

With regards to the drug addicts, the Union Minister said: “We have drug addicts’ problem in our country. The rehabilitation of the drug addicts is meant to keep them away from the cycle of drug scourge. Rehabilitation for the addicts has been carried out with focus year by year and that the 4th year performance has seen (614) persons that have been rehabilitated. A total of (1,216) narcotics supervisors have been assigned as volunteers.

The Ministry is also working on land mine elimination tasks, and assisting the victims including the child soldiers who were permitted to discharge from the army.

Rakhine issue

Rakhine issue is one among the task being involved by the Ministry to a certain extent. The Ministry has undertaken the tasks of involving in various committees such as that of Regional Resettlement and Socio-economic Development Work Committee under the Rakhine State Stability and Development Implementation Committee; the Resettlement and Social Development Committee; Implementation Committee over the suggestion on Rakhine Affairs; Acceptance of Displaced People and Resettlement Committee; and the UEHRD. [The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) is a public-private partnership mechanism formed to respond to the various humanitarian and development needs of conflict-affected communities in Rakhine].

“The international community has accused and blamed Myanmar with regard to Rakhine State issues. In solving

the accusation, the Independent Commission of Enquiry - - ICOE has been formed. The Ministry is in top gear for the rapid implementation being suggested by the ICOE. The camps for the Internally Displaced Persons have been closed and that the people are to be resettled systematically. In this regard, national level strategy has been drawn and implemented,” the Union Minister explained.

Systematic Resettlement

In Myanmar, there are (128) IDP camps, and that (19) camps in Rakhine State; (84) camps in Kachin State; (2) camps in Kayin State, and the systematic resettlement has already started. The tasks are being carried for the resettlement with dignity, safe, and free from unnecessary reliance on others.

“Rakhine affairs needs a work programme on long term perspective, which includes socio-economic development and avoidance of long drawn conflict. Therefore, necessary projects have been laid down, and trying to create social cohesion. In finding the root cause of conflicts in area, the Rakhine State Advisory Commission headed by Dr. Kofi Annan has been formed. The implementation over the suggestion has been expressed in the Report to the People for (5) occasions, and that the 6th Report to the People is to be released soon,” the Union Minister said.

In working out the tasks on Rakhine State stability and development, all stakeholders must come together for cooperation with positive approach.

People are invited to join

As to enjoy the most effective advantages, the people must join hands with the government, and therefore, the MSWRR urges all the people to join hands in nation building. Help Line is active (24) hours a day to drop information and also to get information at 067 - 3404666; 067 - 3404777; 067 - 3404222; and 067 - 3404999.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye poses for a group photo at the ceremony to hand over the supplies donated by the Government of India at a port in Sittway on 21 January 2020.

US navy captain fired for voicing virus concern tests positive: report

WASHINGTON (United States) — The US naval commander whose widely publicized plea for help for his coronavirus-affected crew led to his dismissal has reportedly himself tested positive for the disease.

Captain Brett Crozier's COVID-19 test result was reported Sunday by the New York Times, just hours after US Defense Secretary Mark Esper defended the captain's firing.

Esper told ABC that Navy Secretary Thomas Modly had "made a tough decision, tough call" in deciding to fire Crozier from his command of the aircraft carrier USS Roosevelt, now docked in Guam.

Asked about a report that President Donald Trump wanted Crozier fired, Esper replied,

"This was the secretary's call. He came and briefed me ... It was the secretary's call. I told him I would support it."

The firing was widely condemned as a callous and unfair punishment of a respected officer who was looking out for the welfare of his crew when he implored his superiors to let him quickly vacate the ship after it docked in Guam.

"We are not at war," Crozier wrote in a letter that leaked to the press. "Sailors do not need to die."

But some senior Pentagon officials said Crozier erred by letting his plea go public.

Crozier "demonstrated extremely poor judgment in the middle of a crisis," needlessly worrying family members and

undermining the chain of command, Modly said.

Trump, speaking in a news conference Saturday, supported the dismissal. "He shouldn't be talking that way in a letter," he said of Crozier. "I thought it was terrible what he did."

The Times, in reporting Crozier's test result, cited two of his former classmates at the US Naval Academy. It said he had begun exhibiting symptoms before leaving the ship on Thursday.

Hundreds of sailors cheered Crozier as he left the ship, as seen in video that quickly went viral. Some called him a hero.

Democrats have also sharply criticized the dismissal.

Joe Biden, the leading Democratic candidate for president,



Captain Brett Crozier, removed after making a plea for help for his crew as COVID-19 spread on his ship, has himself tested positive for the virus. PHOTO: AFP

condemned the firing on Sunday, telling ABC it was "close to criminal."

"I think he should have a commendation rather than be fired," the former vice president said.

And a statement from Democratic leaders of the House Armed Services Committee said Crozier might not have handled the matter perfectly, but that his dismissal was an "overreaction." — AFP ■



The cardboard coffins "will be a great help in providing a dignified burial for people who died during this health emergency," the Guayaquil mayor's office tweeted. PHOTO: AFP

Ecuador city runs out of coffins amid COVID-19 crisis

QUITO (Ecuador) — Soaring numbers of COVID-19 deaths in Ecuador's second city Guayaquil have led to a shortage of coffins, forcing locals to resort to using cardboard boxes, city authorities said Sunday.

Authorities in the Pacific port city said they had received a donation of 1,000 pressed cardboard caskets from local producers, and delivered them for use in two local cemeteries.

"It's so they can meet demand," a city hall spokesman told AFP. "There are either no coffins in the city or they are extremely expensive."

Businessman Santiago Oli-

vares, who owns a chain of funeral homes, said his company was unable to keep up with demand.

"I sold the 40 that I had at the downtown branch, and 40 others from my headquarters. I had to order 10 more at the weekend and they've run out," Olivares told AFP.

The cheapest coffins currently cost around \$400.

Olivares said a 15-hour curfew in the city was contributing to the shortage of basic raw materials for coffin makers like wood and metal. Last week, residents posted videos on social media showing abandoned bodies in the

streets in the Latin American city worst hit by the pandemic.

The government called in troops to pick up 150 corpses from streets and homes earlier this week after mortuary workers in the city were unable to keep up with a backlog of removals.

The cardboard coffins "will be a great help in providing a dignified burial for people who died during this health emergency," the Guayaquil mayor's office wrote on Twitter. Ecuador reported 3,646 cases of the coronavirus on Sunday, including 180 deaths, the majority of them occurring in Guayaquil and its surrounding province of Guayas. — AFP ■

Crowd in ICoast destroys coronavirus test centre

ABIDJAN (Ivory Coast) — Residents in a working-class district of the Ivory Coast city of Abidjan on Sunday destroyed a coronavirus testing centre that was under construction, police and health ministry officials said.

Videos posted on social media, showed several dozen people dismantling the building, some of them shouting: "We don't want it!"

The incident happened in Yopougon district of the city of five million inhabitants, which is the country's commercial capital.

Locals had demonstrated against the centre because they thought it was too close to their homes and right in the middle of a residential district, one police officer told AFP on condition of anonymity. But the building, which was still under construction, had never been intended

as a treatment centre for virus patients — only as a testing centre, said a health ministry official, who also asked not to be named.

This was the first violent incident connected to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, which so far appears to have been relatively untouched by the virus, at least according to official figures.

They put the number of cases at 261, with three deaths so far.

Nevertheless, the authorities are trying to increase their capacity to treat the outbreak. President Alassane Ouattara declared a state of emergency on 23 March. Abidjan has already been placed under quarantine, effectively cut off from the rest of the country, and a nationwide overnight curfew is in force. Schools, churches and non-essential shops have been closed and gatherings have been banned. — AFP ■



The authorities have already closed shops selling non-essential items as part of measures to limit the spread of the virus. PHOTO: AFP

Coronavirus information from around the world

Coronavirus toll at 1100 GMT Monday

The worldwide number of fatalities from the novel coronavirus rose to 70,009 on Monday, according to a tally compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT from official sources.

More than 1,277,580 declared cases have been registered in 191 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December. Of these cases, at least 243,300 are now considered recovered.

The tallies, using data collected by AFP offices from national authorities and information from the World Health Organization (WHO), probably reflect only a fraction of the actual number of infections.

UN chief urges govts to protect women during virus lockdown

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged governments to include the protection of women in their response to the deadly novel coronavirus pandemic.

Reports of domestic violence have surged globally in the wake of massive lockdowns imposed to contain the spread of the disease.

British PM hospitalised with coronavirus but 'still in charge'

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was in hospital on Monday undergoing tests after suffering "persistent" symptoms of coronavirus for 10 days, but colleagues insisted he remains in charge of the government.

Johnson announced on 27 March that he had tested positive for COVID-19, becoming the most high-profile world leader

to be infected with the disease that has spread rapidly across the globe.

The 55-year-old had been self-isolating in his Downing Street flat but on Sunday evening, still suffering a high temperature among other symptoms, he was admitted to hospital on the advice of his doctor.

Officials said it was a "precautionary step" but it has raised questions about how ill the Conservative leader really is — and if he can still run the country.

US warns China not to 'exploit' virus for sea disputes

The United States on Monday warned China not to take advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to exert itself in the South China Sea after Vietnam said Beijing sank a trawler.

Amid the global focus on fighting COVID-19, China has ramped up self-described research stations and landed special military aircraft in the dispute-rife sea, according to the State Department.

Business circles welcome state of emergency to fight coronavirus

Business leaders in Japan welcomed on Monday the government's plan to declare a state of emergency for certain urban areas to fight the spread of the new coronavirus.

"I think the idea was that the declaration would be issued before the collapse of the medical system," said Hiroaki Nakanishi, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, the country's most powerful business lobby known as Keidanren.

"If the declaration is made, the public and private sectors will combine forces and deal



A municipal worker wearing protections spray disinfectant products in the street of Toulouse, southern France on 6 April, 2020, on the 21st day of a strict nationwide confinement in France seeking to halt the spread of the COVID-19 infection caused by the novel coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

with the situation thoroughly," Nakanishi said.

China to repatriate minors studying in U.S. on chartered planes

China will dispatch chartered planes to the United States to bring back underage Chinese students who wish to return home, the Chinese Embassy in the United States said on Monday.

With priorities given based on youngest to oldest, all unaccompanied students under the age of 18 studying in the United States are eligible to apply for the self-paid flights, the online notice said, adding that the decision is in line with the direct instructions of Chinese President Xi Jinping to prioritize the overseas Chinese students' health and safety.

Virus sparks boom for local farmers in import-dependent Hong Kong

After a coronavirus-fuelled wave of panic-buying briefly left Hong Kong's supermarket shelves bare, residents are turn-

ing to local producers for fresh food in a city almost entirely reliant on imports.

COVID-19 has threatened global supply chains as countries impose lockdowns and border restrictions, but for Hong Kong's dwindling farming community, the pandemic has sparked a sudden boom in business.

The twice-weekly market at Mapopo Community Farm in suburban northeast Hong Kong has doubled takings since the outbreak became a major public health issue in February.

Fans create stickers to support coronavirus-hit live music clubs

Devotees of live music clubs have designed stickers in support of venues whose business has been hit by the spread of the new coronavirus, opening a website to promote the initiative on Sunday.

Featuring the slogan "Live house never die" written in katakana characters, the stickers will be distributed to some 50 clubs nationwide where they will be sold to customers for 1,000 yen (\$9.2) to raise funds.

At least 80 on Australian liner off Uruguay with coronavirus

More than 80 passengers and crew aboard an Australian cruise ship off South America have tested positive for the coronavirus, the cruise company and officials in Uruguay announced Monday.

Uruguay's public health ministry said six passengers with "life-threatening" illness had been taken off the Greg Mortimer for treatment in Montevideo, but the rest of more than 200 passengers and crew remain stranded on the vessel anchored some 15 miles off the coast.

Dozens of doctors demand-

ing virus safety equipment arrested in Pakistan

More than 50 doctors protesting the lack of safety equipment as they battle the coronavirus were arrested Monday in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta, police and physicians said.

The arrests occurred after more than 100 doctors and paramedics rallied near the city's main hospital and then moved to protest in front of the chief minister's residence, according to an AFP reporter.

Cameroon president under fire for silence as pandemic looms

Cameroon's aged president is coming under fire for his absence from the national stage as the central African country faces a burgeoning coronavirus crisis.

A month after the first case of COVID-19 was recorded, 87-year-old Paul Biya has yet to address the nation — a silence that for supporters is a sign of gravitas but for critics one of failure.

According to official figures posted early Monday, Cameroon has 658 cases of the virus, with nine deaths, making it the second most-affected country after South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa.

DR Congo confines, disinfects business district to fight virus

Kinshasa on Monday closed off its upmarket business district for two weeks and began large-scale disinfection in a bid to root out DR Congo's main suspected source of coronavirus.

Access to Gombe, which houses the country's main institutions, banks and foreign embassies as well as upscale homes, was barricaded off to everyone except local residents and key workers, an AFP journalist saw.

France hotline urges lockdown abusers to 'call before you strike'

France on Monday opened a hotline aimed at curtailing domestic abuse in families confined together during the coronavirus lockdown — but the number is reserved for perpetrators, not victims.

The number will be open seven days a week from 09:00 am to 07:00 pm, France's Equality Minister Marlene Schiappa said on Twitter.

Source: Kyodo News, AFP



Pedestrians exercise along the embankment in central London as life in Britain continues during the nationwide lockdown to combat the novel coronavirus pandemic on 6 April 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (c) leaves his office in Tokyo on 5 April 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Abe eyes state of emergency declaration Tues. amid wide virus spread

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday he plans to declare a state of emergency as early as Tuesday in Tokyo and six other prefectures over the coronavirus outbreak amid emerging signs of widespread infections across Japan.

Abe has faced increasing calls from local governors and doctors to issue a state of emergency due to fears an explosive spike in infections would strain the health care system further.

The declaration, which will be effective until May 6, will cover Tokyo and the neighboring prefectures of Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama, as well as Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka.

“I will issue a state of emergency as early as tomorrow after seeking opinions from the advisory panel,” Abe told reporters at the prime minister’s office.

“Even if such a declaration is made, we will not implement the kind of a lockdown seen overseas,” he said. Under the Japanese law, citywide lockdowns, as seen in other countries hit hard by the coronavirus like China and France, cannot be enforced.

The declaration would still restrict people’s freedoms. Abe is scheduled to hold a press conference to explain his decision at 7 pm Tuesday, his office said.

Once a state of emergency is declared, prefectural governors can urge local residents to stay at home and restrict the use of schools and other facilities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. But people will not be punished if they do not fall into line, and business activity cannot be banned. The declaration, under a recently amended law, will come as Japan seeks to contain a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases, which poses a significant risk to people’s lives and the Japanese economy.

A growing number of cases in which transmission routes cannot be traced have raised the alarm. Abe has warned of an explosive surge if people let down their guard, having conceded that Japan was barely “holding the line” against the virus.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura have been stepping up calls on Abe to make the declaration, while the Japan Medical Association has also sought the measure. Before declaring a state of emergency, Abe first needs to consult an advisory panel of medical and public health experts who will determine whether the situation is warranted. He will have to notify parliament in advance. — Kyodo News ■

ASEAN leaders set to hold teleconference next week to combat virus

BEIJING — Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are arranging to hold a teleconference next week to discuss how to tackle the outbreak of the new pneumonia-causing coronavirus, diplomatic sources said Monday.

The telephone summit is most likely to take place on 14 April, the sources said, adding that the 10-member ASEAN bloc is also considering holding an expanded teleconference with leaders of Japan, China and South Korea.

Last month, Vietnam, which holds the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN this year, informed its fellow members that a leaders’ summit to be hosted by the country would be postponed from April to late June, a diplomatic source said.



Foreign Ministers from members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meet in Vietnam’s Nha Trang on 17 January 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae In are expected to participate in the envisioned ASEAN-plus-three teleconference.

The leaders are certain to exchange views on how to curb the virus

epidemic, implement preventive measures and treat infected patients, the sources said.

As the virus continues to spread globally, a special US-ASEAN summit originally scheduled for mid-March in Las Vegas has also been delayed.

The novel coronavirus

causing a respiratory disease called COVID-19 was first detected late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

— Kyodo News ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DAI SHAN HAI V. 2003

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DAI SHAN HAI VOY. NO. (2003) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 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 ELDER TRIUMPHANT
SHIPPING LINES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (014W/015E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (014W/015E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7-4-2020 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 UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0200-642N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0200-642N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7-4-2020 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 IZUMO V.2001

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IZUMO VOY. NO. (2001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT 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

Monster storm strengthens in Pacific, lashing Vanuatu

PORT VILA (Vanuatu) — A deadly Pacific cyclone intensified as it hit Vanuatu on Monday, threatening a natural disaster that experts fear will undermine the impoverished nation's battle to remain coronavirus-free.

Tropical Cyclone Harold, which claimed 27 lives when it swept through the Solomon Islands last week, strengthened to a scale-topping Category 5 superstorm overnight, Vanuatu's meteorology service said.

The cyclone is now packing winds of up to 235 kilometres per hour (145 miles per hour), prompting red alerts across several provinces.

It made landfall on the remote east coast of Espiritu Santo island on Monday morning and was heading directly for Vanuatu's second-largest town Luganville, which has a population of 16,500.

The slow-moving storm is expected to pass north of the capital Port Vila early Tuesday.

"For now, we don't have any reports of injury, but lots of damage," Red Cross Vanuatu secretary general Jacqueline de Gaillande told AFP.

Another concern is the impact a large natural disaster could have on Vanuatu's attempts to remain one of the world's few countries without any reported COVID-19 infections.

The nation has sealed its international borders to avoid the virus but emergency meas-

ures including bans on public meetings have been temporarily suspended so people can gather in evacuation centres.

"There have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, but a significant disaster at this time could present serious logistical challenges to delivering life-saving aid," Oxfam's Vanuatu director Elizabeth Faerua said.

- Widespread destruction -
A major international relief effort was needed the last time a Category 5 system, Cyclone Pam, hit Vanuatu in 2015.

If a similar operation were needed in the wake of Cyclone Harold, it would run the risk of importing the virus to a nation that lacks the health infrastructure to deal with even a mild outbreak.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern raised con-

cerns about the cyclone and said the Kiwi military was ready to deploy if needed, even though New Zealand is on COVID-19 lockdown.

"(Harold) looks like it's coming into the Pacific with considerable force," she told reporters.

"Our defence force is at the ready, that's the role they play regardless of what's going on in New Zealand."

Cyclone Pam flattened Port Vila, killed 11 people and left a swath of destruction that the World Bank estimated wiped out almost two-thirds of Vanuatu's economic capacity.

De Gaillande said Vanuatu's government could face a balancing act between helping cyclone-devastated communities and potentially importing the virus by allowing in international aid.—AFP ■ "We will need inter-



Cyclone Harold is strengthening and threatening Vanuatu, which is still recovering from the devastation unleashed by Cyclone Pam in 2015. PHOTO: FP



The coronavirus pandemic has forced aerospace giant Boeing to shut its factories in Washington state. PHOTO: AFP

Boeing extends factory shutdown in Washington state

WASHINGTON (United States) — Boeing has said it will indefinitely extend a shutdown at its factories in Washington state because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The aerospace giant had already halted production at its Puget Sound facility near Seattle, where the company builds the long-range 777 jet and other models, after announcing a two-week stoppage last month.

It had also shut its other major state factory at Moses Lake because of the 737 MAX grounding.

Boeing announced Sunday that the shutdown would continue indefinitely in an effort to protect staff from COVID-19, which has already claimed the life of one employee at the company's Everett facility.

"The health and safety of our employees, their families and our communities is our shared priority," Boeing's commercial

airplanes division president Stan Deal said in a statement.

Boeing was already facing significant headwinds prior to the coronavirus pandemic because of the crisis surrounding the 737 MAX, which has been grounded for more than a year following two fatal crashes.

But the pandemic has further hit the company's outlook with most commercial airline travel suspended and major carriers thrust into a life-or-death fight.

The company is seeking more than \$60 billion in federal support for the US aerospace industry in the wake of the two crises.

It announced a voluntary worker layoff plan on Thursday and said it expected "several thousand employees" to take a severance package or retire.

Boeing currently employs around 70,000 people in Washington state.—AFP ■

Somali, US forces kill 8 al-Shabab militants

MOGADISHU — Somali and US security forces on Sunday evening killed eight al-Shabab militants in the latest onslaught on the extremist group in the southern region, officials confirmed on Monday.

The Somali Ministry of Information said no civilians were killed or injured in the attack conducted by the Somali National Army (SNA) and U.S. Africa Command (Africom) in the vicinity of Mubarak.

"The Federal Government of Somalia, the SNA, Danab Brigade, and its United States partners are committed to fighting al-Shabab terrorists in order to prevent the deaths of innocent civilians," the ministry said in a

statement issued in Mogadishu.

"The efforts we take to protect and safeguard civilians dramatically contrast to the indiscriminate attacks that the coward al-Shabab regularly conducts against the civilian populace of Somalia," it added.

The drone strikes have largely targeted al-Shabab figureheads based in southern and central Somalia where the group still maintains a strong grip in some regions.

The extremists have recently stepped up their attacks against African Union and Somali forces especially in Mogadishu, targeting their bases, hotels and other public places.—Xinhua ■

Northern Mali attack leaves 20 soldiers dead

BAMAKO (Mali) — Around 20 Malian soldiers were killed on Monday in an apparent jihadist attack, officials said, in the latest bout of violence to hit the war-torn West African state.

Early Monday morning, militants attacked a military base in the northern town of Bamba, according to a local government official, who called the assailants "terrorists" and said at least 20 soldiers had died.

Another local official gave a similar account, explaining that the assailants arrived on motorbikes and in cars.

"Investigations are still ongoing on the ground because the death toll must be higher than the 20 deaths announced," the official said. Mali has been strug-

gling to contain a jihadist revolt that first broke out in the north in 2012, and has since spread to the centre of the country and neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger.

Thousands of Malian soldiers and civilians have died, despite the presence of thousands of French and UN troops.

It was not immediately clear who carried out Monday's attack.

A resident of Bamba, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, said armed men had been riding motorbikes around nearby villages since Sunday, before gathering for the dawn attack.

"We saw 23 bodies on the spot," the Bamba resident said,

describing the aftermath of the raid, adding that militants had destroyed the camp and stolen equipment. "No civilian was hurt, this was an operation against the camp," the resident added.

A Malian army official stationed in northern Mali confirmed an attack had taken place in Bamba but said there had been losses on both sides.

He added the army did not have a clear idea of enemy losses as the raiders took their casualties with them when they left.

Another military official told AFP that reinforcements had been dispatched to the area. The attack in Mali follows another in jihadist-ridden northern Cameroon on Sunday.—AFP ■

Stock markets rebound on easing virus crisis but oil dips

LONDON(United Kingdom) — Asian and European equity markets rebounded Monday as some of the world's worst-hit countries reported falling death rates, providing much-needed hope in the battle against coronavirus, but oil prices sank after a meeting of top producers was delayed.

While deadly COVID-19 continues its deadly sweep across the planet, with more than 1.25 million now declared infected and nearly 70,000 dead, news out of Europe that the rise of fatalities was easing has lifted spirits on trading floors.

Italy reported its lowest daily death toll in two weeks, while Spanish officials said deaths fell for the third straight day and France reported its lowest daily toll in a week.

In early afternoon eurozone deals, Frankfurt stocks rallied 4.5 per cent, Paris won 3.7 per cent, Madrid gained 3.0 per cent and Milan added 3.2 per cent.

'Shrugging off pessimism'

"European markets are trading higher because investors are shrugging off the pessimism," said AvaTrade analyst Naeem Aslam.

"They are focused on more optimistic things: the slowing death rate caused by coronavirus. Italy, Spain, France, and Germany have all seen declining numbers."

London jumped 2.1 per cent nearing midday, with gains capped by news that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was hospitalised for precautionary tests after suffering "persistent" coronavirus symptoms for ten days.

The pound however rose as officials insisted that Johnson was "still very much in charge

of the government".

Elsewhere, South Korea saw the fewest new cases in six weeks, Australian new infections were also dropping and Donald Trump said the US was showing signs of stabilising, despite the number of cases there passing 335,000 — the highest in the world.

Markets also shrugged off data Friday showing a massive drop in US jobs in March that added to news that millions of people had applied for unemployment benefits.

Tokyo, Sydney and Manila all rose more than four per cent, while Seoul, Singapore and Jakarta gained almost four per cent. Hong Kong jumped 2.2 per cent, while Shanghai was closed for a holiday.

OPEC delayed

Attention this week will be on a planned meeting of OPEC and other key crude producers aimed at easing a supply glut that had sent oil prices crashing.

Both main contracts had soared last week as Trump said Saudi Arabia and Russia would hold talks on ending their price war, while it also emerged OPEC would be holding a teleconference on Monday.

However, investors were dealt a blow over the weekend when the meeting was delayed to Thursday. Analysts warned there were doubts that the US would take part in them, which could be a major sticking point for Moscow and Riyadh.

But even if a deal is reached, there is scepticism that suggested cuts of 10 million barrels a day will be enough to help the oil market, owing to a collapse in demand caused by the pandemic. —AFP ■



Photo taken from Malaysia's Johor Bahru shows almost empty roads near the border with Singapore on 18 March 2020, after Malaysia imposed a two-week nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the new coronavirus. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Malaysia unveils 3rd stimulus package to aid small, midsize firms

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia unveiled a 10 billion ringgit (\$2.29 billion) stimulus package Monday targeted at small and medium enterprises to soften the impact from the coronavirus pandemic that threatens to plunge the country into a recession.

"I know the SMEs are the backbone of the country's economy. The sector employs two-third of the country's workforce and contributes 40 per cent to the economy," Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said in a televised speech.

"Thus, it is important to ensure the SMEs remain resilient to face the pressure and economic challenges affecting us at the moment."

The main feature of the government's aid this round is the 7.9 billion ringgit increase in wage subsidy to 13.8 billion ringgit, for companies with workers earning 4,000 ringgit and below.

It aims to minimize job losses as businesses are hit by the one-month lockdown to curb the spread of the virus.

This is the government's third stimulus package since 27 February, and came just 10 days after the second one that was touted as the largest stimulus package to date at 250 billion ringgit.

But the second package failed to impress the SMEs and many lamented that the wage subsidy totaling 5.9 billion ringgit announced then, or at 600 ringgit per worker, was not enough to save their business from closing down and letting the workers go.

Muhyiddin announced that companies with up to 75 workers will receive 1,200 ringgit per worker for three months and those that have 76 to 200 workers will get 800 ringgit per worker, while for companies with more than 200 workers, the wage subsidy of 600 ringgit remains.

He estimated that 4.8 million workers will benefit from this initiative and employers that opted for this scheme must maintain their workers for at least six months.

He also announced a 2.1

billion ringgit grant for micro SMEs or 3,000 ringgit each for the estimated 700,000 micro SMEs across the country.

The central bank had projected that the country's economy, at best would grow 0.5 per cent, at worst, could contract by 2 per cent this year as it grapples with the outbreak.

Malaysia has reported triple digit rise in coronavirus cases daily. As of Monday, the health ministry noted 3,793 cases with 62 fatalities. The viral outbreak that was first detected in China last December has upended global economy as countries all over including Malaysia have shut their borders, while factories are closed as people are forced to stay home to curb the spread of the virus.

The plunging oil prices have also hurt Malaysia, an oil exporting country.

Before this, Malaysia had forecast its gross domestic product this year to grow by 4.8 percent. Last year, growth hit 4.3 percent. —Kyodo News

Singapore announces new economic stimulus package to tackle pandemic

SINGAPORE — The Singapore government on Monday announced a third economic stimulus package to help tide over the impact of the coronavirus pandemic by pumping in S\$5.1 billion (US\$3.55 billion), raising the total amount committed to S\$59.9 billion, about 12 per cent of gross domestic product.

Most of the amount in the third package — about S\$4 bil-

lion — has been earmarked for providing additional support for businesses and workers.

Under the latest package, the government will pay 75 per cent on the first S\$4,600 of the monthly wage of every local worker for this month as Singapore will be under a month-long partial lockdown starting Tuesday.

Thereafter, as announced in the earlier package, the per-

centage of wages the government pays will vary based on sectors, with the 75 per cent level reserved for the worst-hit airline and tourism industry.

The government will also spend S\$1.1 billion under this latest package for a one-off cash payment of S\$600 in cash for every Singaporean, in addition to what was announced earlier.

"This is an unprecedented

budget, for extraordinary times," Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat, who is also finance minister, said in announcing the latest package in Parliament.

Under the partial lockdown, nonessential businesses have been ordered closed, while schools and universities will adopt home-based learning as the government tightens its precautionary measures due to signs

of a community spread, with a jump in the number of local transmissions. Singapore had earlier imposed border controls, with short-term visitors banned from the entering or transiting through the city-state. "The situation remains highly fluid and uncertain. The government stands ready to provide further support, should it become necessary," Heng said. —Kyodo News

British boxing great Benn reveals coronavirus heartbreak

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British boxing great Nigel Benn revealed on Instagram one of his brothers Mark has died of coronavirus.

The 56-year-old — former world champion at two weights — said Mark had been the “Joker” of the family.

It came as the number of UK coronavirus-related deaths climbed by 621 to 4,934 and in-

fections rose by 5,903 to 47,806.

“My brother Mark passed Away 2day (Covid 19), as we all were growing up Mark was the Joker of the Benn house hold,” he wrote.

“May he Rest In Peace love u Mark.”

Benn — whose 23-year-old son Conor is a promising pugilist with an unblemished record —

was one of seven boys but lost his older brother Andy when he fell out of a window aged just eight.

Benn was dubbed the ‘Dark Destroyer’ for his aggressive style and enjoyed a fierce rivalry with compatriots Chris Eubank and Michael Watson.

Benn was WBO middle-weight title in 1990 and then went on to become WBC super-middle-weight champion holding the belt

between 1992 and 1996 — losing his crown to South African Thulani Malinga. He retired from the ring in 1996 after twice failing to wrest the WBO super-middle-weight title from Irishman Stephen Collins. Benn is not the first from the sport in Britain to lose a relative due to the coronavirus.

The grandmother and father of British light-heavyweight Anthony Yarde died within a few

days of each other. The 28-year-old made an emotional appeal to the public to “just stay home” to avoid the risk of spreading the virus. “It’s serious!” Yarde wrote on social media. “People are still going out when they don’t need to. I know there’s a lot of opinions about Covid-19 and I have mine but I just know opinions ain’t worth risking your life and others. Just stay home.” —AFP

Italian union urges pay deal for lower league players



Cristiano Ronaldo’s Juventus won Serie A last year. PHOTO: AFP

MILAN (Italy) — The head of the Italian footballers’ association (AIC) on Sunday urged football authorities in the country to strike a deal to safeguard lower league players, who risk losing their livelihoods due to the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

“In Lega Pro (which manages the third-tier Serie C), Serie D and women’s football there are players who provide for their families with very low earnings,” AIC president Damiano Tommasi told Rainews24.

“We’re looking to see if the resources we can get our hands on can help give them some security... 70 percent of players in the Lega Pro have gross earnings of less than 50,000 euros (\$54,000) a year.”

“Even going beyond individual athletes, I believe we have a responsibility to protect the kit men, physical therapists, drivers and pitch-side workers.”

Tommasi spoke a day before a videoconference meeting between Serie A clubs in which player salaries — as well as potential dates to restart the league

— will be on the agenda after failing to strike a deal with the AIC.

The top-flight outfits had reportedly proposed a four-month suspension of salary payments in line with what Juventus players have already agreed with their club, an idea that was given short shrift by the AIC, who according to newspaper Gazzetta Dello Sport counter-proposed a one month stop.

On Saturday, the president of the Lega Pro Francesco Ghirelli said sides in the division could disappear in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which appeared on Sunday to be slowly abating in Italy but has still killed thousands.

“With every day that passes, there is a greater risk that entire clubs and companies could be forced out of business,” Ghirelli said in a statement. “The whole network of Serie C clubs is very close to collapse ... The very real risk is that owners could see their clubs go bankrupt. Players would then find themselves with no club and, consequently, no salary at all.—AFP ■

Fiji Rugby players, staff take 40% pay cut in response to virus

SUVA (Fiji) — Fiji Rugby said contracted players and staff had agreed to pay cuts of 40 percent Monday as part of a cost-cutting drive to remain viable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The union said staffers were also being told to use their accrued leave as rugby remains in hiatus across the Pacific nation, which is in lockdown in a bid to contain the virus.

Chief executive John

O’Connor said the union’s physical headquarters, Rugby House in Suva, had also been closed with a skeleton staff working from home to maintain operations.

O’Connor said that if the crisis continued, Fiji Rugby would consider leave without pay and “further drastic reductions”, which he did not detail.

“We hope we will not end up in such a situation, but we must keep in mind that businesses are closing, and thou-

sands of employees have lost their jobs and we must be prepared for the worst,” he said.

O’Connor said the austerity measures had been made after consultation with World Rugby, which funds the union’s high performance unit. “All unions globally are facing significant financial challenges and responsible financial decisions have to be made in order to preserve the operating ability and financial integrity of Fiji Rugby long term,” he said. — AFP ■



Fiji players and staff have agreed to 40 percent pay cuts as the union faces financial challenges due to the coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

Virus scrapped your marathon? In Japan, there’s an app for that

TOKYO (Japan) — When the coronavirus outbreak forced organisers to cancel marathons in the Japanese city of Nagoya, they turned to tech to ease the disappointment, offering runners the chance to race alone.

The Nagoya Women’s Marathon and Nagoya City mara-

thon were scheduled for March 8 and expected to attract some 20,000 runners — a potential health hazard during a global pandemic.

So instead of having racers run together, organisers have offered up two apps to allow participants to complete the

marathons alone, tracked online.

“It’s the first time the annual marathon events were cancelled, and it’s the first time we launched apps to replace the real ones,” one of the organisers of the Nagoya city marathon told AFP. —AFP ■