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You are the best protector against COVID: State Counsellor

No one wants to have the disease. No one wants to go abroad and work laboriously to earn a living.

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday "you are the best protector against COVID".

This was what she wrote:

Lately, there have been instances where people were afraid of those who have been under quarantine; some people did not want to associate with them. In fact those who have to go into quarantine do not pose a danger. Even if they had the disease, because they undergo regular medical treatment, the disease could be detected early and they could get early medical treatment. At present there are 233 positive cases and 143 persons who have been cleared of the disease.

We need to be very careful of people who are not showing symptoms of the disease although they have the disease, although they may not be in quarantine. We can catch the disease from these people. The best

way to protect ourselves is to follow the instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports. You are the best protector against COVID.

Some people get angry saying the returnees can carry the disease because of excessive concerns. No one wants to have the disease. No one wants to go abroad and work laboriously to earn a living. The majority of those who came back from the border worked under great difficulties. We should not see that the income that they got was only for them and their families. The money that enters the country helps to drive the economy; in this manner it helps the country's development. In 2019, official money transfers through the banks amounted to more than USD one billion.

All of us can be helpful to one another.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 3 June, total figure reaches 233

Updated at 8 pm, 3 June 2020



Recovery Update on 3 June 2020 after two consecutive tests



One new case of COVID-19 on 3 June 2020: Updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
233	26	Male	Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region	No	Yes, Thailand	Bago People's Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Nyaunglebin Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

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VP U Henry Van Thio chairs intellectual property central committee meeting

THE Central Committee for Intellectual Property (CCIP) held their first meeting at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as committee chairman, first delivered a speech where he said this was the first meeting of the CCIP since its formation under Section 4(a) of the Industrial Design Law, Trademark Law, Patent Law and Copyright Law.

The Vice President said as technological competition increases around the world, intellectual property becomes more important in the economic, education, social and other sectors as a global market system is being implemented. He said it will also support the development of a nation's scientific and technological cooperation, foreign trade, and investment.

The Vice President said Myanmar became a member to the World Trade Organization in 1996, joined ASEAN on 3 July 1997, and became the 176th nation to join the World Intellectual Properties Organization on 15 May 2001.

Since it is a member to these international organizations, Myanmar needs to abide by the Trade-Related Aspect of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation and the Ministry of Education drafted the intellectual property laws for Myanmar, said the Vice President.



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the first meeting of the Central Committee for Intellectual Property in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

He said Myanmar had been trying to enact intellectual property laws for more than a decade and ratified the Industrial Design Law and Trademark Law on 30 January 2019, the Patent Law on 11 March 2019, and the Copyright Law on 24 May 2019.

The Vice President said while the Ministry of Education was tasked with drafting these laws, the duty of implementing and upholding them fell on the Ministry of Commerce. He said setting up an intellectual property system requires meeting international standards and simultaneously complying with the local political, economic and educational context.

The Vice President said that rather than implementing all four of the laws at once, implementing them one after the other would mitigate the challenges faced, expending of human resources, and techno-

logical shortcomings. He said the Central Committee of Intellectual Property and agency needs to include professionals and experts and NGOs need to contribute to the formation of the system.

The Vice President said the intellectual property laws need to be implemented swiftly as Myanmar is part of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and needs to cooperate with other member nations in these sectors. He said although Myanmar is given a grace period from implementing provisions in the TRIPS Agreement until 1 July 2021, implementation needs to get the mechanism going.

The Vice President said they were in the process of forming a department for intellectual property under the Ministry of Commerce. He said they were continuing their work on the necessary bylaws, regu-

lations and directives to enforce the intellectual property laws.

The Vice President ended his speech by highlighting the importance of intellectual property rights as an economic development tool for creating jobs, developing the nation and its various sectors, and elevating innovation and creativity across the nation.

Next, CCIP Vice-Chairman Union Minister Dr Than Myint urged meeting attendees to submit their ideas to swiftly implement the intellectual property laws.

This was followed by CCIP Secretary Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo explaining processes that should be completed ahead of implementing the intellectual property laws.

Next, the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Intellectual Property explained the formation of the intellectual property agency and

department, constructing an office building for them, and the various processes involved in implementing the intellectual property laws.

Afterwards, Deputy Ministers Dr Min Ye Paing Hein, U Bharat Singh, U Aung Hla Tun and U Win Maw Tun and meeting attendees discussed the duties of their respective ministries and cooperation extended to implement the intellectual property laws.

The directors-general of the Customs Department and the Research and Innovation Department, experts, central executive committee members of UMFCCI, and chairman of the Federation of Myanmar Engineering Society made discussions through video conferencing. The website of Department of Intellectual Property was also introduced at the meeting.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

1,493 migrant workers return from Thailand through Myawady border on 3 June

MYANMAR has been making systematic arrangement for the return of migrant workers from Thailand since 1 May. The total number of returnees through Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) of Myawady border town in Kayin State yesterday was 1,493.

Among them, the 217 persons were brought back by 10 buses from Mo Chit Bus Terminal in Bangkok under negotiations of the two governments and arrangement of Myanmar embassy in Thailand, while the remaining 1,276 persons came back home in their own schedules from various parts of the kingdom. Kayin



Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand queuing for immigration processes at the Myanmar border checkpoint yesterday. **PHOTO: MAHN THAN SHWE MYINT (IPRD)**

State Hluttaw MP U Thant Zin Aung and local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 15,733 Myanmar migrants have arrived back home through this route until now. The latest group of returnees included

881 males and 612 females from different regions and states.—Mahn Than Shwe Myint (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

One more imported case makes Myanmar COVID-19 figure 233 on 3 June

Myanmar's COVID-19 figure has reached 233 on 3 June after one more imported case of the returnee from Thailand.

The last case is the 26-year-old man living in Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region.

Out of 233 confirmed cases in the country, six died, 145 persons have recovered and 132 have been discharged from hospitals, according to the report of Ministry of Health and Sports.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

“People are the key”

VP U Myint Swe presides over 73rd Anniversary Martyrs’ Day organizing committee meeting

VICE President U Myint Swe held discussions at the meeting yesterday about preparations for holding the 73rd Anniversary Martyrs’ Day which will be held on 19 July.

The meeting was held at the meeting hall of the President’s Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Vice President, in his capacity as the patron of the central committee for organizing the Martyrs’ Day, said that the event aimed to remember the martyrs, including Bogyoke Aung San, who sacrificed their lives, blood and sweat, and were assassinated on 19 July 1947 while they were striving for national independence.

This memorial event had been held annually for 73 years to keep up the national spirit of the country.

The Vice President also discussed the formation of respective committees for organizing the 73rd Anniversary Martyrs’ Day under order number 69/2020 of the Office of the President on 13 May.

The 21-member the Central Committee was established with Vice President U Myint Swe as the patron, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko as the chairman and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein as the vice-chairman, to implement three major tasks for adopting policies to hold the Martyrs’ Day, to lead work committee and se-



Vice President U Myint Swe discusses preparations for holding the 73rd Anniversary of Martyrs’ Day to be held on 19 July. **PHOTO: MNA**

curity committee and to manage security measures at the Martyrs’ Mausoleum, Bogyoke Aung San Museum and the Secretariat (former Office of the Ministers).

The 27-member Work Committee is led by the Yangon Region Chief Minister to carry out three tasks, while the 16-member Security Committee is chaired by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs to perform 12 works.

The 8-member sub-committees will also implement respective works for the successful holding of the event.

Vice President U Myint Swe gave the following directives to prevent and control Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), in addition to the common tasks of previous anniversary events.

For the 72nd anniversary, the state-owned newspapers,

radios and television channels broadcast about the Martyrs’ Day ahead of the event.

It was also honoured with laying wreaths at the Martyrs’ Mausoleum and paying tributes to the fallen national leaders, arrangement for public access to Bogyoke Aung San’s residence, the national flag flying at half-mast, displays of exhibitions and offering meals to members of the Sangha at Zabuthiri Hall of Nay Pyi Taw Council Office and the Yangon City Hall, dedicated to the fallen martyrs on 19 July.

The Vice President emphasized to strictly follow the directives and regulations for the prevention of COVID-19 in organizing the Martyrs’ Day and to discuss whether to allow public access to the meeting room where the martyrs were assas-

inated and the parliamentary meeting hall this year due to the status of the existing pandemic and ensuring strength of the Bogyoke Aung San Museum building; making sure that his belongings were displayed as was done the previous year and making sure that the garden looked beautiful and neat in the museum compound.

The Vice President also discussed the works of the Security Committee, the duties of the Ministry of Information to publish news, information articles, interviews related to Martyrs’ Day, Bogyoke Aung San speeches, songs, the record of efforts made for Independence, movies, newspapers, radio and television for the public, as well as sounding the siren at 10:37 am on 19th July.

Union Minister Thura U

Aung Ko briefed on the formation of work committees and its sub-committees for organizing the event.

Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe reported on preparations of the work committees, including invitations, offering meals to members of the Sangha, wreath laying ceremony, healthcare services and disciplinary measures at the event.

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Soe Tint Naing presented preparations for security affairs.

The members of respective committees also reported on their works for organizing the event, followed by the coordination of the Vice President on the discussions.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Well-wishers donate lab equipment to COVID-19 central committee

WELL wishers donated the lab equipment to National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the Ministry of Health and Sports in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. National Director of Kinected Myanmar Dr Naw Jar explained the steps taken to purchase and import lab equipment for the Public Health Laboratory departments in Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Taunggyi and Lashio. U Kyaw Kyaw Win, Chairman of Mandalay Urban Development Funding Committee, and Daw Nway Nway Hlaing, Director of Wai Aung Kabar Jewellery Co Ltd representing the company chairman, explained the reasons for the donation.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe, in his capacity as Secretary(2) of the central committee, said the laboratory equipment will help not only COVID-19 patients but those with other diseases

in the long run as well. The Union Minister said this upgrade to sub-national laboratories will speed up the identifying process for COVID-19 and greatly benefit prevention and control of the disease. He said the participation of civil society organizations, philanthropic groups, and members of the public continues to play an essential role. The Union Minister then accepted the donations and returned certificates of honour to the donors. Mandalay Urban Development Funding Committee donated two sets of lab equipment worth K809.2 million to the National Health Laboratory Department in Yangon and the Public Health Laboratory department in Mandalay.

The Wai Aung Kabar Jewellery Co Ltd donated three sets of lab equipment worth K924.2 million to these departments in Mawlamyine, Taunggyi and Lashio.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe receives donation of laboratory equipment by Mandalay Urban Development Funding Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister participates in COVID Action Platform Global Leaders Virtual Meeting

UNION MINISTER for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun, yesterday participated in the COVID Action Platform Global Leaders Virtual Meeting facilitated by the World Economic Forum.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Mr Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum used the opportunity to launch the new Great Reset Initiative.

The Initiative which involves a commitment to jointly and urgently re-building the foundations of the global economic and social system in support of a fairer, more sustainable and more resilient future. The Initiative also calls for a new social contract centred on human dignity, social justice and where societal progress does not fall behind economic development.

“In order to secure our future and to prosper, we need to evolve our economic model



Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun joins the COVID Action Platform Global Leaders Virtual Meeting from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

and put people and planet at the heart of global value creation. If there is one critical lesson to learn from this crisis, it is that we need to put nature at the heart of how we operate. We simply can't waste more time,” said His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

“We only have one planet and we know that climate change could be the next glob-

al disaster with even more dramatic consequences for humankind. We have to decarbonize the economy in the short window still remaining and bring our thinking and behaviour once more into harmony with nature,” said Mr Klaus Schwab.

Commenting following the Virtual Meeting, Union Minister U Thaung Tun noted that

Myanmar supported the aims which underpin the Great Reset Initiative and is committed to working with all partners – global and regional, public and private – to translate these aspirations into tangible actions at the country-level here at home in Myanmar, within our region, and further afield.

The Union Minister further stated that the Initiative

is firmly in line with the aims and aspirations set forth within our own Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, which is, in turn, aligned with the Global Sustainable Development Agenda.

The Great Reset Initiative will culminate in a unique twin summit in January 2021, convened by the World Economic Forum. — MNA ■

Isolated female 'Burmese Roofed Turtle' surprises conservationists by laying fertile eggs

Conservationists attribute success to captive breeding and release of 20 young males in Myanmar's Chindwin River

CONSERVATIONISTS from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) in Myanmar have announced that this year for the first time, an isolated female “Burmese roofed turtle” living far upstream on the Chindwin River who has never been known to produce fertile eggs, deposited a clutch of 19 eggs, 14 of which hatched earlier this month.

The Burmese Roofed Turtle (*Batagur trivittata*) is considered one of the world's most endangered turtles with fewer than five breeding females (number of males unknown) now surviving in the wild.

Conservationist attribute this change of fortune to a group of 20 captive-reared young males released into the river in late 2018. These offspring on the Chindwin River are of inestimable genetic worth. They will eventually be incorporated into our captive breeding programme to stave off the long-term genetic deterioration of the population through



Female Burmese roofed turtles. **PHOTO: MYO MIN WIN/ WCS/ TSA**

inbreeding.

Additional news about the captive population concerns a new breeding group of Burmese Roofed Turtles established in April 2019 at the Yangon Zoo with turtles initially hatched and reared at the Mandalay Zoo. Conservationists assumed these turtles were much too young to reproduce and hence, did not expect them to begin nesting for

several more years. However, less than a year after the turtles were transferred to Yangon, the females began laying eggs in an artificial sand island in their spacious outdoor enclosure. To date four eggs have hatched (more are expected) making this the first time Burmese Roofed Turtles born in captivity have successfully nested.

Once abundant in the larg-

er rivers of Myanmar, Burmese Roofed Turtles were driven to near-extinction by a combination of unsustainable egg harvesting, accidental drowning in fishing gear, gold dredging, and destruction of critical sandbanks nesting habitat. By the late 1990s, the Burmese Roofed Turtle was feared extinct until two small populations (one of which has since gone extinct) were “redis-

covered” in the early 2000s.

An aggressive conservation programme launched in 2007 by the Myanmar Forest Department in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society and Turtle Survival Alliance has now pulled the Burmese Roofed Turtle back from the brink of extinction.

Every year in February and March eggs laid by the few remaining wild females are collected from sandbanks along the Chindwin River in northern Myanmar. They are incubated at a remote riverside village until they hatch in May and June, and then the offspring are reared for 5-6 years in captivity before returning them to the river. Captive-breeding groups have also been established at several zoos and wildlife sanctuaries in Myanmar to produce additional hatching turtles for eventual release.

This work is supported by IUCN SOS – Save Our Species, the Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, and the Panaphil Foundation.—WCS ■

Over 1,000 businesses get K37 bln from Coronavirus Fund

By Nyein Nyein

A total of 1,016 enterprises have been granted K37.55 billion from Coronavirus Fund between 9 April and 2 June, according to a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic.

The priority sectors for the Fund of K100 billion are CMP garment business, hotels and tourism service and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The committee has been granting the loan to the business

stricken by the pandemic from the Fund, with K50 billion allocated from the country's revolving fund and another K50 billion from the social security fund.

Regarding Coronavirus Fund, 85 businesspersons were granted K5.696 billion in the first batch, while 113 enterprises were selected for K4.495 billion in the second batch, 111 enterprises in the third batch for K3.5466 billion, 417 in the fourth batch for K15.079 billion and 290 in the fifth batch for K8.7335 billion.

The applicants approved by

the committee will be screened in line with bank rules and procedures, and they are not eligible for the loan if they get sued by a bank. The remaining applications are being processed, the committee stated.

The committee was formed on 13 March and Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaug Tun was appointed as the committee chairperson.

The committee is responsible for measures to address the negative impacts of the coronavi-

rus pandemic situation on trade and tourism sectors; short, medium and long term measures to respond to the coronavirus crisis, together with the private sector and related associations; creation of new jobs for those employees who have been laid off at the factories; conducting vocational education to the workers; and additional measures to explore new markets to buy raw materials for CMP garment businesses in the country instead of relying on the sole market — China.

Additionally, the public and private sectors need to cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our own sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories, the committee urges.

Furthermore, the committee will request the government to give tax exemption and reliefs depending on the situations of the coronavirus impacts on SMEs and to provide loans to the domestic businesses at the low-interest rate.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

India-Myanmar border trade plunges in current fiscal year

THE value of border trade between India and Myanmar declined by US\$51.47 million between October and mid-May period of the current fiscal year owing to the closure of borders by India in wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

India has closed the borders in Mizoram and Manipur on account of the pandemic, and traders are reeling under the negative impact of the outbreak.

The cross-border trade between Myanmar and India has stopped, and the reopening of the borders would depend on the spread of the virus.

Myanmar also conducts trade with neighbouring India through Tamu, Reed, and Thantlang borders.

Between 1 October and 15 May in the current fiscal year, trade values were registered

at over \$36 million at Tamu and \$40 million at Reed. There was no trade recorded at the Htantalan border.

Over the past seven and half months since October, the India-Myanmar trade plunged to \$76.3 million from \$127.8 million recorded in the year-ago period, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar exports mung beans, pigeon peas, green grams, areca nuts, ginger, saffron, turmeric, bay leaves, fishery products, fruits, and vegetables to India, while it imports pharmaceuticals, oil cakes, electronic appliances, motorbikes, steel and other construction machines and building materials from the neighbouring country.—Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



File photo shows: Namphalong Market in India-Myanmar border near Moreh in the Tengnoupal district of the Indian State of Manipur. PHOTO: CHINDWINTHAR



A container ship seen docking, loading/unloading at Hteedan Port in Yangon.

PHOTO: PHOE PHWAR

Regional trade exceeds \$6.9 bln in H1 2019-2020FY: MoC report

THE value of Myanmar's regional trade with ASEAN countries through the sea route and land borders was estimated at US\$6.9 billion in the first half (Oct-March) of the 2019-2020 financial year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry reported that imports surpassed exports in regional trade, with exports reaching \$2.14 billion and imports valued at \$4.75 billion.

Since October, Thailand has been Myanmar's largest trade partner in ASEAN, with trade

valued at \$2.7 billion, followed by Singapore (\$2.2 billion), Malaysia (\$772.9 million) and Indonesia (\$651.4 million).

The Philippines has emerged as the nation's fifth-largest trade partner, with bilateral trade estimated at \$838.19 million.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's bilateral trade with Viet Nam was \$423.97 million, Cambodia \$16.896 million, while trade with Laos stood at \$1 million, and Brunei, less than \$1 million.

Myanmar's main export

items included agricultural and fishery products, as well as minerals, while imports included food and beverages, electronic tools, motor vehicles, and consumer goods. Apart from its main trade partner China, Myanmar's external trade was mostly carried out with regional trade partners. Trade with countries in the European Union, however, remained uncompetitive, compared with regional trade partners.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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

Online booking needed to apply for RTAD service

"THE online booking is a must in applying for the Road and Transport Administration Department (RTAD) services such as the extension of the vehicle licences, new vehicle licences and renewal of driving licences," said RTAD Regional Head U Thein Htut at a media conference held on 2 June at RTAD office in Yangon Region.

"The RTAD offices from across the country are resuming their service starting from 1 June. We are ready to resume our operation under the guideline of the Health Department. People who wish to do the extension of vehicle licences, new vehicle licences and driving licences must book online. Also, they

have to do the booking within the prescribed period. They need to show the needed evidence that they have already registered online," he stated.

When the operation starts in Myintha RTAD, only 700 vehicles will have registration service a day. The office work will be started at 8:30 am. For those who wish to do the vehicle registration, only two persons are allowed to enter the office and they also need to bring the documents of the vehicle, he added.

Also, only 160 people are allowed to take the driving trial. Only those who pass the written test will be allowed to take the trial in Ywarthagyi.

There are 1.1 million vehi-

cles across the country. Among them, half of the vehicles are in Yangon Region. Also, one-third of the driving licences out of 2.3 million is from Yangon Region.

So, the RTAD service being

provided in the Yangon Region is a herculean task. However, the RTAD service in Myintha is being provided by only a small crew of 80.—Myint Maung Soe (Translated by Hay Mar)



Half of the vehicles across Myanmar are in Yangon Region.

PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE

Affordable housing complex sold for retired civilian service personnel in Nay Pyi Taw

OUT of the retired civilian service personnel from Nay Pyi Taw, those who wish to buy the new apartments started to apply for buying the new apartments in Nay Pyi Taw, according to the retired staff housing management sub-committee.

The affordable housing complex in Nay Pyi Taw will be sold for between K22 million and K25 million.

The affordable housing complex is constructed near Myoma market on Pynmana-Taung Nyo Road, Zabuthiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw. It is a four-storeyed building. Each flat contains two bedrooms and the flat is 650 square feet wide. About 1,000 complexes are being constructed. These complexes will be sold for the staff who retired between 2019 and 2020.

A ground floor apartment is being sold for over K25 million, a first floor one for over K24 million, a second floor one for over K23 million and a third floor one for over K22 million. The retired civil staff can buy the apartments either by the cash-down system or instalment system. Those who wish to buy the apartments with the instalment system can get the

housing loans from Nay Pyi Taw development bank. They need to make initial cash down payment of 30 per cent of the flat value. Then, the remaining 70 per cent can be paid in three to five-year instalment system. With ten years, they need to pay monthly payments with interest.—Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Officials from Myanmar Red Cross Society seen donating relief items to IDPs in Sami Town in Paletwa Township, Chin State. PHOTO: MNA

Red Cross organizations provide aids for IDPs in Chin State

THE Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have recently provided humanitarian aids for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sami Town, Paletwa Township in Chin State.

The two humanitarian organizations donated food, women's personal care products, kitchen utensils, mosquito nets, materials for constructing

temporary shelters and solar lamps for 2,975 persons of 728 households at the IDP camps in Sami Town.

A total of 32 volunteers from the two organizations distributed the humanitarian items to the IDPs in Sami Township from 26 to 30 May, according to the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS).—Win Aung (Red Cross)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

More than 190,000 Rohu fingerlings released into Inn Ye Gyi Inn

FOR the sustainability of the aquatic resources and sufficiency of fish feed in Kyonpyaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, the Fisheries Department released over 190,000 rohu fingerlings into Inn Ye Gyi Inn on 2 June.

At the rohu fingerlings releasing ceremony, the regional Hluttaw representatives Mann Johnnie and Daw Thida, region-

al Fisheries Department Head Director U Saw Aung Ye Htut Lwin, District Fisheries Department Head U Aye Naing, the township administrator and the officials from the related departments, the township Fisheries Department Head and his staff, the camp heads and fisheries labours released the fingerlings into the water.

At the ceremony, a total of 190,390 rohu fingerlings were released into the Inn Ye Gyi Inn. Those fingerlings are from Pathein, Hinthada, Pantanaw fisheries camps and Taloathla and Aung Haik fisheries camps.

The fingerlings are released into the water to ensure sufficiency of the local consumption and sustainable development of the

fisheries resources. The releasing ceremony of the fingerlings is launched annually. The inland area of the inn is 900 acres wide in monsoon season and 700 acres wide in summer. With sufficiency of the fish for local consumption ensured, the surplus fish are sent to other regions.—Nay Win Myint (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

INTENSE ZONES OF TRANSMISSION

Americas tormented by COVID-19, “still a killer virus”

COVID-19 has not changed either in its transmissibility or severity so far, still plaguing many parts of the world, notably the Americas.

More than 6 million confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) globally as of Tuesday, the latest WHO dashboard on the disease showed.

The United States, the country hardest hit by the virus around the world, topped 1.8 million cases on Monday, with more than 105,000 deaths.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said his agency still hopes to continue cooperation with the United States, despite Washington’s decision last week to cut ties with it.

“INTENSE ZONES”

The WHO said that Central and South America have become “intense zones” of COVID-19 transmission, and solidarity and support are needed to help them overcome the pandemic.



A view showing a large number of parked buses due to the drop in passenger movement caused by the coronavirus outbreak, at a depot in Curitiba, Brazil. Daniel Castellano / AFP

“I would certainly characterize that Central and South America, in particular, have very much become the intense zones of transmission for this virus as we speak, and I don’t believe that we have reached the peak in that transmission,” Michael Ryan, executive director of WHO Health

Emergencies Programme, said in a press conference on Monday in Geneva. “Five of the 10 countries worldwide reporting the highest new number of cases in the past 24 hours are in the Americas: Brazil, USA, Peru, Chile and Mexico,” he said.

Brazil, now the second worst

hit country, on Tuesday morning said its confirmed COVID-19 cases have reached 526,447, while the death toll neared 30,000, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

Neighbouring Peru on Monday reported 5,563 new COVID-19

cases and 128 more deaths, bringing the total caseload of infections to 170,039 and the death toll to 4,634. Among the worst-hit areas, capital Lima has registered 103,020 cases, followed by the west-central province of Callao, with 12,495 cases, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

Chile on Monday reported a total of 105,159 cases of novel coronavirus infection, and 1,113 deaths from the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 5,471 new COVID-19 cases were detected and 59 more patients died, the Health Ministry said.

A lockdown is in effect in capital Santiago and the metropolitan area through June 5, as the region is the epicenter of the country’s outbreak.

“Clearly the situation in many South American countries is far from stable. There’s been a rapid increase in cases and those systems are coming under increasing pressure and they need our support, they need our solidarity,” Ryan said.

SOURCE: Xinhua

EXPRESSION OF CONCERN

The Lancet casts doubt over hydroxychloroquine study

THE Lancet has issued an “expression of concern” over a large-scale study of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine it published that led to the World Health Organization suspending clinical trials of the anti-viral drugs as a potential treatment for COVID-19.

In a statement, the medical journal acknowledged “important” questions over the research, after dozens of scientists issued an open letter last

week raising concerns about its methodology and transparency around the data, which was provided by the firm Surgisphere.

“Although an independent audit of the provenance and validity of the data has been commissioned by the authors not affiliated with Surgisphere and is ongoing, with results expected very shortly, we are issuing an Expression of Concern to alert readers to the fact that serious scientific questions have been brought to our attention,” The

Lancet said Tuesday.

While an expression of concern is not as severe as a journal withdrawing a published study, it signifies that the research is potentially problematic.

The observational study looked at records for 96,000 patients and concluded that treatment with hydroxychloroquine, which is normally used to treat arthritis, and chloroquine, an anti-malarial, showed no benefit and even increased the likelihood of patients dying in hospital.

Its publication last month triggered the WHO to announce it was pausing clinical trials of the drugs.

France was among the countries to also halt COVID-19 treatment with hydroxychloroquine. It has whipped up fresh controversy over hydroxychloroquine, which has been endorsed by public figures including US President Donald Trump despite concerns over its side effects and a lack of evidence that it is effective.

SOURCE: AFP



Both hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine can produce potentially serious side effects, particularly heart arrhythmia. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NEW IDEA

Malaysian university moots robot graduation ceremonies to cut virus risk

A Malaysian university is considering using robots dressed in gowns and mortarboards to act as stand-ins at graduation ceremonies to prevent coronavirus infections -- but students have blown a fuse at the idea.

A video of the planned ceremonies released by the university shows two elegantly attired, waist-high robots being handed diplomas by high-ranking university officials. The students’ faces appear on screens mounted on the robots’ heads.

Associate professor Engku Fadzli Hasan Syed Abdullah, the leader of the team at Sultan Zainal Abidin University that made the robots, said Tuesday the idea was to allow students to participate, albeit remotely.

“We would show the face of the student through the head of the robot through video conferencing,” the academic from the university in northeastern Terengganu state told AFP.

However, students were not amused at the idea and called for the university to delay the



This handout photo released by the Sultan Zainal Abidin University shows two robots wearing graduation robes during a simulation of a graduation ceremony. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY SULTAN ZAINAL ABIDIN/AFP

ceremonies originally scheduled for October and November.

“I am willing to wait one, two, three or several years but please let me go on the stage,” said Nurhazwani Sa’aid on the institution’s Facebook page.

Engku Fadzli however said the robot idea was just a plan for now and that the university would do its best to hold proper ceremonies. Malaysia has had a relatively moderate virus outbreak, with nearly 8,000 people infected and 115 deaths.

SOURCE: AFP

Adapting to new normal is best way to cope with stress from COVID-19

WITH the improvement in containing and prevention of the coronavirus, the work force of the governmental machinery will work in full-swing soon, ending the working in two shifts by practicing social distancing. The current COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost every aspect of our lives, adding increased anxiety, stress and depression and often making a bad situation worse.

Both the people and the employees of the country are feeling a sense of uncertainty and heightened stress right now- about their health and financial security amidst the pandemic.

The global pandemic has impacted not only the physical health of many individuals but their mental health as well. If you're anxious, depressed, or struggling to sleep through the night, you're not alone.

Today is the time for us to adapt to the new normal ways of life to cope with the stress from the COVID-19.

The governmental employees, especially those who have to get close contacts with the people risking their health, and possibly their lives, dealing with the public for hours each day, should remember that the old normal is gone and they would have

we can help each other by having a caring and empathetic work culture, keeping mental health as a key focus throughout this pandemic.

to get used to a very different new normal. It means we cannot expect a life as it existed before COVID-19.

Before resuming activities, we must comply with the requirements for safe guidelines directed by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

During this time of uncertainty and stress, the need to prioritize individual health and well-being is stronger now than ever, and we can help each other by having a caring and empathetic work culture, keeping mental health as a key focus throughout this pandemic.

To achieve success in prevention and containing the coronavirus individual participation is the key. They must remember that their behaviour and conduct will impact everyone around them.

In this time of the virus, it is important for everyone to look after our mental, as well as our physical health, and we all should display more sympathy and understanding, as the pandemic does not seem to be going away any time soon.

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SHIFT IN WORK STYLES

How the Coronavirus is changing working styles in Japan

THE coronavirus pandemic has opened people's eyes in Japan to the possibility of new working styles where working from home, staggered work hours, and even four-day workweeks could become the norm.

While it took the spread of the pneumonia-causing virus to push firms toward teleworking, not all employees are keen to return to the way things were now that the nationwide state of emergency has been lifted.

"From now on, I would like to work from home 80 per cent of the time," said Chihiro Oyama, 37, who is in charge of human resources development at NTT Data Corp. in Tokyo.

Oyama starts work at home at 7 am and works intensively until noon before spending the rest of the afternoon with her child. "After I got the hang of this, I was able to achieve the same results as when I was at work," she said.

She has frequent email and chat interactions online but says for her, "it is hard to have conversations that are about nothing online." Instead, she makes efforts to actively communicate with her coworkers on days when she goes into the office.



Undated supplied photo shows a sample of Bellface Inc.'s online business card. PHOTO: KYODO

After the state of emergency was declared in early April, as a general rule, employees of NTT Data were asked not to come to work. From June, the policy is to have 50 per cent or more of employees work from home and for those who do come to the office to stagger their hours.

Yuji Nomura, 39, who is involved in the development of

artificial intelligence at the company, started coming to work 30 minutes later than usual in March.

He says the later start has "relieved stress" since he can avoid crowds on public transportation. He is thinking of working from home two or three times a week and working staggered hours in the office in the future.

On May 14, the day when

the emergency declaration was lifted for most of Japan, the Japan Business Federation, or Keidanren, called on member companies to consider introducing "various working styles" including teleworking, a four-day workweek and staggered hours to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

It means the country's larg-

est business lobby advised companies that had introduced such measures as emergency steps to make them permanent.

Toshiba Corp. has begun to consider introducing a four-day workweek for office work and factories. Other major companies, such as Hitachi Ltd. and Mitsubishi Electric Corp., have said they will continue with work from home for around 50 per cent of their employees for the time being.

Tokyo-based Bellface Inc., which provides an online business conference system connecting users via smartphone or landline, has seen a rapid increase in inquiries.

In the four and a half years since it was founded, the number of companies using the system has risen from 1,300 to over 10,000 in March and April, when a free version was launched to help companies combat the coronavirus crisis.

While customers are still mainly in the Tokyo metropolitan area, take-up has increased especially in areas hard-hit by the outbreak such as Hokkaido, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures.

Business materials and business cards can be provided to customers online. The screen

position of the mouse can be determined by the other person during a business call, making it easy to explain the shared materials. Anyone can readily use the system since no pre-work, such as sharing URLs, is required, the company said.

"Time and place restrictions are eliminated," said a company official, calling it an "opportunity" for locally based companies.

One big obstacle for introducing such remote work reforms, argue some, is productivity — which seems to fall when people are away from their office.

According to a survey by the Japan Productivity Centre, although more than 60 per cent of people wish to continue working from home after the pandemic has eased, nearly the same percentage admit to seeing "a drop in work efficiency."

Many voice concerns about barriers such as the sharing of data that cannot be viewed outside the workplace and problems with the communication environment. Companies will likely be forced to decide whether to invest in equipment upgrades.

SOURCE: Kyodo

DIGITAL WAVE

Fast-Changing E-Commerce Trends In A Pandemic

BASED on a 2019 study by Facebook and Bain & Company, a global management consulting firm, digital consumers in ASEAN will be spending three times as much in 2025.

The joint study found that while consumers in Southeast Asia spent US\$125 on average on online purchases in 2018, that sum is expected to more than triple to US\$390 in 2025.

Highlighting increasing choices, better internet access and rising affluence as factors that will continue to drive more spending online, the report also predicts that Southeast Asia will be home to around 310 million digital consumers by 2025 – in comparison to 250 million in 2018 and just 90 million in 2015.

Titled 'Riding the Digital Wave: Southeast Asia's Discov-

ery Generation', the study surveyed 12,965 respondents across ASEAN's six biggest economies – Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – and interviewed more than 30 CEOs and venture capitalists in the region in an effort to learn about how the behaviours of today's digital consumers are reshaping online spending in the region. It was reported that more than 90 percent of Southeast Asians connect to the internet primarily through their smartphones, and this connectivity has ushered in a new horizon of opportunities for e-commerce players.

No longer looking at e-commerce as a platform to hunt for discounts on big-ticket items such as electronics, today's digital shoppers are increasingly going online to purchase lower-cost daily items such as groceries, clothes



This file photo shows a girl surfing for bargains on a website in Singapore. PHOTO: AFP

and personal care products. This trend can be widely seen amid the current COVID-19 pandemic.

HappyFresh and Honestbee are two of the biggest players in the online grocery delivery market in the region. With virus lockdowns implemented in various countries as a preventative measure to contain the outbreak, supermarkets such as Tesco and Cold Storage

have also jumped on the bandwagon and are relying on their delivery services as many regular customers have opted to order their groceries and necessities online. It was reported that even traditional wet market grocers have taken to online channels to hawk their products and to conduct online auctions.

The value of ASEAN's e-com-

merce sector has expanded sevenfold in just four years, rising from US\$5.5 billion in 2015 to over US\$38 billion in 2019. The sector is on track to exceed US\$150 billion by 2025.

More Choices

However, the addition of new companies and the rapid development of existing players is changing the e-commerce landscape in Southeast Asia – ultimately offering consumers more choices.

According to the Bain & Company report, 67 percent of respondents said they do not know exactly what they want to purchase before they shop online and over 40 percent have tried an online store they have never heard of before.

In Singapore alone, 75 percent of respondents said that they are either open to other brands or will buy from multiple brands when

shopping online.

"There is no longer just one way to shop and nobody shops the same way twice," said Sandhya Devanathan, Country Managing Director, Facebook Singapore.

"The key takeaway is that designing for discovery is absolutely crucial, given that customers engage with a business through multiple channels at the same time," she added.

Fast Trends

E-commerce aggregator iPrice Group recently released a report titled 'Vietnamese e-commerce industry in the time of COVID-19: Missed opportunities' which revealed that three out of four major e-commerce marketplaces in Vietnam actually experienced drops in website traffic during the first quarter of 2020.

SOURCE: ASEAN POST

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 03rd June, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea, South Bay and weak over the East central Bay of Bengal. Weather is partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 04th June, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Mon State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Bago and Yangon Regions, Kachin, Chin and Kayin States, scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Ayeyawady Regions, (Northern and Southern)Shan and Rakhine States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts and slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6 - 8)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts and about (4 - 6)feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of advancement of Southwest Monsoon into the Central Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 04th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 04th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 04th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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China, Singapore rank high in top 100 Asian universities: survey

LONDON — Chinese and Singaporean universities occupy the highest spots in a ranking of Asia's top 100 universities, a global survey showed Wednesday.

According to the Times Higher Education Asia Rankings, China led the way with Tsinghua University in first place and Peking University in second, followed by the National University of Singapore. The University of Tokyo was ranked the highest Japanese university and came seventh, up one notch from a year earlier.

Asian universities are expected to rise in international rankings as promising students enroll in their respective countries rather than studying abroad

amid the spread of the novel coronavirus, the report said.

The University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology ranked fourth and fifth, respectively.

The universities in the survey, located across Asia and the Middle East, are judged according to 13 criteria including teaching, research, citations, industry income and international outlook in terms of staff, students and research.

Fourteen Japanese universities were ranked in the survey, including Kyoto University in 12th place, Tohoku University in 30th, Nagoya University in 41st and the Tokyo Institute of Technology in 42nd place.—Kyodo ■



Photo taken on Nov. 7, 2019 shows the main building of Tsinghua University in Beijing, capital of China. PHOTO: (XINHUA/LI JING)

Confirmed COVID-19 cases mounting in South, Southeast Asia as India total infections surpass 200,000

HONG KONG — South and Southeastern Asian countries continued to report spikes in

COVID-19 cases Wednesday as India recorded its highest daily increase of 8,909 new cases,

bringing the total to cross the 200,000 mark.

The number of confirmed cases rose to 207,615 in India, and the death toll reached 5,815, said the federal health ministry.

As many as 217 new deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, added the ministry's data.

Bangladesh reported 2,695 more positive cases, bringing the total to 55,140.

A total of 37 deaths including 28 men and nine women were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 746.

In Indonesia, the total cases rose by 684 within one day to 28,233, and the death toll increased by 35 to 1,698.

The number of coronavirus cases in the Philippines surged

to 19,748 after the Department of Health reported 751 more infections.

The number of recoveries further climbed to 4,153 after 90 more patients have recovered, and the death toll also increased to 974 after eight more deaths were reported.

Malaysia recorded 93 newly-confirmed cases, pushing the national total to 7,970.

Health Ministry Director-General Noor Hisham Abdullah said at a press briefing that all the new cases are local transmissions, with 91 being foreign nationals and two are locals.

No new deaths had been reported, with the total standing at 115.—Xinhua ■



Nurses, wearing face masks as a preventive measure against the spread of the Covid-19 novel coronavirus, make the "love" gesture as they pose for a picture during a ceremony to commemorate International Nurses Day at the Selayang Hospital in Selayang, Malaysia, on May 12, 2020.

PHOTO: AFP

Virus-hit Mumbai largely unscathed by Cyclone Nisarga

MUMBAI — Coronavirus-hit Mumbai appeared to escape the worst of Cyclone Nisarga on Wednesday as the first severe storm to threaten India's financial capital in more than 70 years left it largely unscathed after ripping roofs off buildings in nearby coastal towns.

Mumbai and its surrounds are usually sheltered from cyclones — the last deadly storm to hit the city was in 1948 — but authorities evacuated at least 100,000 people, including coronavirus patients, from flood-prone areas in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The storm made landfall

near the coastal town of Alibag, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Mumbai, on Wednesday afternoon, meteorologists said.

It then crossed Maharashtra's coast, with its path veering to the east of Mumbai and gradually weakened by Wednesday evening, they added.

The cyclone brought heavy rainfall — with winds of 100-110 kilometres per hour (60-70 miles per hour) and gusts of up to 120 kph. Mumbai experienced downpours throughout the afternoon, with strong winds toppling trees in some cases. City authorities said there were no reports of injuries or deaths, though the



NDRF personnel clearing fallen trees from a road in Alibag town of Raigad district following cyclone Nisarga landfall in India's western coast. PHOTO: (AFP PHOTO)

rains caused compound walls to collapse in some neighbourhoods. The beach town of Alibag fared

worse, with the cyclone tearing roofs off homes and overturning mobile food stalls.—AFP ■

Mexican zoo saves animals endangered by virus crisis

CULIACÁN, Mexico — Kira, a two and a half year-old tiger, arrived at a zoo in Mexico's northeast in April after her owner could no longer feed her due to the coronavirus-induced economic collapse.

The imposing 130-kilogram tigress was sedated and transported in a cage by truck to her new home in Culiacan zoo in Sinaloa state.

Her owner had responded to a campaign by Mexico's Association of Zoos, Nurseries and Aquariums (AZCARM) to avoid abandoning wild animals during the lockdown.

"Abandonment happens when people can't cope with their animals any more, and in this pandemic, faced with the lack of economic resources and places to keep them, they prefer to get rid of them," AZCARM president Ernesto Zazueta told AFP.

Alongside the big cat, the Culiacan zoo also welcomed during the lockdown a python, a baby manatee and 14 green macaws, as well as 49 deer rescued from a sugar mill in Tabasco.—AFP ■

G-7 finance ministers discuss debt relief for poor nations

TOKYO—The finance ministers of the Group of Seven countries held a teleconference Wednesday, with debt relief to help developing nations fight the novel coronavirus pandemic expected to be on the agenda.

The virtual meeting took place amid growing concern over capital outflows from emerging economies, with uncertainty caused by the pandemic hitting investor sentiment.

In mid-April, the G-7 finance ministers pledged in a videoconference with their central bank governors to suspend debt payments by “the most vulnerable and poorest countries” if all of the Group of 20 economies agreed to do so.

The G-20 finance chiefs subsequently supported the

G-7 move, saying in a statement after a virtual meeting that the suspension of debt payments would start on May 1 and creditors would also consider a potential extension during this year.

The G-7 and G-20 talks followed an earlier announcement by the International Monetary Fund on immediate debt relief for 25 developing countries, including 19 African nations, to be offered through its revamped \$500 million Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust.

The IMF projected in a report released that month that the world economy will contract by 3.0 per cent in 2020 from a year earlier due to the pandemic, the worst setback since the Great Depression, which largely occurred in the 1930s.



Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso meets the press in Tokyo on May 27, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

The leaders of the G-7, which groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States as well as the European Union, agreed in

emergency telephone talks in mid-March to regularly communicate on issues related to the pandemic through their finance ministers.—Kyodo ■

Russia to never initiate use of nukes: Kremlin

MOSCOW—Russia will never initiate the use of nuclear weapons, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said regarding the country’s newly released nuclear deterrence policy on Wednesday.

The policy unveiled on Tuesday specifies the situations that could lead Russia to retaliate for foreign nuclear attacks, Peskov told a daily briefing.

On Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on the fundamentals of the country’s state policy of nuclear deterrence. “The Russian Federation reserves the right to launch a nuclear strike either in response to a similar attack or in the event of a threat to the existence of the state,” the decree reads, stressing that the policy is defensive in nature.—Xinhua ■

Spanish PM says “worst is over” while seeking final extension to state of alarm

MADRID — Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told lawmakers on Wednesday that “the worst is over” while addressing the Spanish Congress, the lower chamber of the Parliament, in a debate which will see the sixth and final extension of the state of alarm.

“It’s been three months that seemed never-ending. Today, with caution, we can say that the worst is over,” Sanchez said.

Spain had imposed the state of alarm on March 15 to control the spread of the coronavirus. The two-week extension will prolong the Spanish government’s emergency powers to June 21.

“I am proud to preside the government of a country that has shown discipline, solidarity and responsibility. Since March 11, when the global pandemic was declared, the government has had no other goal than to save lives,” Sanchez said, according to Spanish best-selling newspaper El Pais.

He also defended Spain’s strict lockdown measures. “There was no other way. We accept one of the strictest confinements in Europe. It has been terribly hard, but it has also been

tremendously effective and we are coming out of the tunnel,” Sanchez said.

Spain is currently advancing in the government’s four-stage plan to ease the restric-

tions imposed by the state of alarm, which is the first of three emergency levels a Spanish government can apply under exceptional circumstances.—Xinhua ■



People take a stroll during the time allowed by the Spanish government for exercise on 17 May, 2020 in Madrid, Spain amid a national lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. PHOTO: AFP

Italy thirsts for tourists as country reopens to Europe

ROME —Italy was the first European country to be hit hard by the coronavirus and has officially reported more than 33,000 deaths. Italy reopened to travellers from Europe on Wednesday, three months after the country went into coronavirus lockdown, with all hopes pinned on reviving the key tourism industry as the summer season begins.

Gondolas were ready to punt along Venice’s canals, lovers will be able to act out “Romeo and Juliet” on Verona’s famed balcony, and gladiator fans can pose for selfies at Rome’s Colosseum.

But there were fears many foreign tourists would be put off coming to a country still shaking off a vicious pandemic. “We hoped to see some movement from today, but have no foreign tourists



A masked gondolier hopes domestic and foreign tourists will take a punt on Italy this summer with the country facing its deepest recession since World War II

booked in for this week or next,” said Alessandra Conti, a receptionist at the Albergo del Senato hotel which overlooks the Pantheon in Rome. “We’ve got a few reservations from mid-June... (but) are still getting lots of cancellations for this summer”.

‘Smouldering’ virus

Italy was the first European country to be hit hard by the coronavirus and has officially reported more than 33,500 deaths—the third highest toll in the world. It imposed an economically crippling lockdown in early March and has since seen its infection numbers drop off dramatically. With the country facing its deepest recession since World War II, it needs foreign tourists to return, and quickly.—AFP ■

S. Korea's self-driving upstarts take on tech giants

SEOUL—In a workshop that blends a corporate office with a tool-packed garage, around 20 South Koreans are looking to take on the multi-billion-dollar giants of Uber, Tesla and Google parent Alphabet with a self-driving car of their own.

The RideFlux start-up brings together engineers who have given up well-paid jobs with some of the South's most prestigious firms to try to build a ride-sharing company for the tech-savvy nation.

Their modified Hyundai Ioniq, festooned with cameras and proximity sensors, is the first autonomous vehicle to go into regular service on public roads in the country.

For two weeks it has been shuttling customers from the airport on the tourist island of Jeju to rental company SoCar's service centre.

The five-kilometre (three-mile) route includes a U-turn, 11



Under South Korean law a safety driver has to sit at the wheel to intervene if necessary. PHOTO: AFP

pedestrian crossings and bustling airport traffic, meaning it is "laden with potential variables"

and an "optimal environment" to develop and improve AI systems, says founder and CEO

Park Jung-hee, who holds a doctorate from MIT in mechanical engineering.—AFP ■

Megabanks, cashless payment providers tie up for possible "digital yen"

TOKYO—Japan's three megabanks will join hands with East Japan Railway Co. and other cashless payment providers to study interoperable electronic money and digital currency, a cryptocurrency exchange operator said Wednesday in a project that could evolve into the introduction of the "digital yen" envisaged by the Bank of Japan.

While a number of cashless payment services such as smart cards issued by railway operators and smartphone payments services are widely available in Japan, participants are expected to study how to make their services interoperable and more convenient for customers.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0206-647N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (042N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (042N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of TMIT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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UK mulls 'air bridges' with low-risk countries



Under a plan to try to limit the spread of COVID-19, international arrivals will be required to self-isolate for a fortnight, but Britain is considering establishing "air bridges" with certain countries that would be exempt. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON—Britain confirmed Tuesday it was looking at establishing "air bridges" with countries with low rates of coronavirus, exempting them from controversial quarantine measures. Under a plan announced last month to try to limit the spread of COVID-19, international arrivals from June 8 will be required to self-isolate for a fortnight.

Ireland is currently the only country with an exemption, and business leaders and airlines have condemned the blanket approach.

"These measures will be reviewed every few weeks," said Transport Secretary Grant Shapps in a statement.

"And we are working with the transport industry to see how we can introduce agreements with other countries when safe to do so, so we can go abroad and tourists can come here."

An interior ministry statement confirmed this could involve "arrangements, known as 'air bridges' or international travel corridors".

These "would remove self-isolation measures and safely open up routes to and from countries with low transmission rates".

"Agreement would need to be made with individual countries before these measures take effect," it added.

Lorry drivers, police officers, seasonal farm workers and health-care professionals are already exempt from the quarantine plan, which will be initially reviewed after three weeks.—AFP ■

S. Korea's actions "not helpful" in resolving export spat, Japan says



FILE PHOTO: Protesters in Seoul hold up placards saying 'No Japan' during a rally against Japan's decision to remove South Korea from a 'white list' of preferred export partners on August 3, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO—South Korea's decision to reopen a World Trade Organization complaint about Japan's tightening of export controls is "not helpful" to the process of resolving the nations' differences, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told

his South Korean counterpart on Wednesday.

In a 40-minute phone call with South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha, Motegi reiterated that the move by Seoul was "extremely regrettable," according to

Japan's Foreign Ministry.

The two also discussed the lifting of travel restrictions meant to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, according to a ministry official.

On Tuesday, South Korea's Trade, Industry

and Energy Ministry said that it was resurrecting the complaint because Japan had not shown willingness to settle the dispute bilaterally despite months of talks. In July last year, Japan placed tougher restrictions on South Korea-bound exports of three key materials used to manufacture semiconductors and display panels. The following month, Japan removed the country from a "white list" of countries given preferential trading status, citing concerns over Seoul's lax rules on exporting sensitive goods.

South Korea filed the WTO complaint in September, arguing the measures were a form of political retaliation, but suspended it in November after the countries agreed to start consultations on export controls.—Kyodo ■

Invitation for Bids

Date:	3, June, 2020
Bid No. and Title:	50 (T)/ DPTSC(PTP) / 2019-2020 Design, Supply, and Installation of 230kV Mann- Taungdwingyi Transmission Line (57) miles
Deadline for Submission of Bids:	17, July, 2020, 13:00 hours (local time)

1. The Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) has allocated the financing towards the cost of the project. DPTSC intends to apply a portion of the funds to eligible payments under the Contract for which the Bidding is issued.

2. The Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) ("the Employer") invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Design, Supply, and Installation of 230kV Mann-Taungdwingyi Transmission Line (57) miles ("the Facilities"). The Facilities are all located in Magwe region.

3. International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with Single - Stage: Two-Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.

4. Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications should participate in this bidding:

- Participation in at least two (2) transmission line contracts as main contractor that have been successfully completed within the last ten (10) years, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds US\$ 30.0 million.
- For the above or other contracts executed, a minimum experience within the last ten (10) years in the following key activities:

Overhead transmission line of 220kV or higher shall not be less than (75) km route length including Engineering, Procurement, Installation on Turnkey Basis in outside bidder country as main contractor that have been successfully completed. In case of Myanmar Bidder, both outside and within Myanmar are acceptable.

- Minimum average annual turnover of US\$ 28 million calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed, within the last 3 years.

The qualification criteria are more completely described in the Bidding Document.

5. To obtain further information bidders should contact the following from 9:30-16:30 hours

(local time) except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays:

Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC)

Address : Material Planning Department (DPTSC), Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Telephone : 95 67 8104286, 95 67 3410209

Email : dg.dptsc@moe.gov.mm, ddlptp.dptsc@moe.gov.mm, dirdesign.ptp@gmail.com, sedesignptp.mepe@gmail.com,

Fax : 95 67 8104286, 95 67 3410209

6. To purchase the bidding documents in English, eligible bidders shall pay a nonrefundable fee of purchase order (bank draft) with 50,000 Myanmar Kyats.

7. Bids must be submitted to the following address above on or before the deadline: 17, July, 2020 at 13:00 hours (local time)

together with a Bid Security as described in the bidding documents.

Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC)

Address: Material Planning Department (DPTSC), Building No.

27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

8. Electronic Submission is not allowed.

9. Technical Bid will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the address above after 13:00 hr. (Local Time) on 17/ 7/2020.

10. Any request for the extension of Bid submission deadline shall not be allowed.

Tender Committee

Department of Power Transmission and System Control

Ministry of Electricity and Energy

Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Telephone 067-3410282, 3410209

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US military's South Korean civilian staff to go back to work

SEOUL—Thousands of South Koreans working at US military bases in the country, furloughed in a row over funding for the American presence on the peninsula, will go back to work this month after Seoul offered to pay their wages.

Washington has around 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea to defend it against the nuclear-armed North and protect US interests in north-east Asia.

But the security allies' relationship has been strained by the Trump administration's demands that the South pay billions of dollars more towards the cost of their presence after the previous funding pact expired last year.

Around 4,000 local civilian employees of US Forces Korea (USFK) were put on unpaid leave in April after funds to pay their salaries ran out with talks stalled on cost-sharing.

A full new deal has yet to be struck, but Seoul offered more than \$200 million to fund the cost of the civilian employees for the rest of the year, which the US Department of Defence accepted.

They will return to work "no later than mid-June", officials said. USFK Commander Robert Abrams called the decision "another positive sign of the power of our Alliance".

But it was only a "short term solution" for labour cost sharing, he acknowledged in a statement, adding it "highlights the need for an overall Special Measures Agreement for the long term".—AFP ■



US soldiers stand ahead of a grand opening ceremony of the new headquarters building for the United Nations Command and US Forces Korea at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek on June 29, 2018. PHOTO:AFP

China warns Britain interfering in Hong Kong will 'backfire'



FILE PHOTO: People protest against the United States' intervention in Hong Kong affairs in front of the U.S. Consulate General, south China's Hong Kong, Dec. 3, 2019. PHOTO: XINHNA

BEIJING—China warned Britain on Wednesday that interfering in Hong Kong will backfire, after the former colonial power vowed to give sanctuary to locals who may flee the city if a controversial security law is passed.

The United States and Britain have enraged Beijing with their criticism of planned national security legislation that critics fear would destroy the semi-autonomous city's limited freedoms.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has further angered Beijing by suggesting that it had time to "reconsider" the plan, which could soon be enacted

after the proposal was endorsed by China's rubber-stamp parliament last week.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, meanwhile, said London would not "walk away" from Hong Kongers worried by Beijing's control over the international business hub.

Johnson wrote in a column for The Times newspaper and the South China Morning Post that he would offer millions of Hong Kongers visas and a possible route to UK citizenship if China persists with its national security law.

Chinese foreign ministry

spokesman Zhao Lijian said Beijing had lodged "serious representations" with London over Raab's remarks, which "grossly interfered" in Hong Kong's affairs.

"We advise the UK to step back from the brink, abandon their Cold War mentality and colonial mindset, and recognize and respect the fact that Hong Kong has returned" to China, Zhao said at a regular briefing.

Zhao said London must "immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong's affairs and China's internal affairs, or this will definitely backfire."—AFP ■

China issuing more visas to Japanese hoping for post-virus rebound

BEIJING—The Chinese government has stepped up the number of visas being issued to Japanese citizens after limiting it for months following the coronavirus pandemic, a diplomatic source familiar with bilateral ties said Wednesday. The move is apparently aimed at bringing business exchanges between the two countries back to normal, the source said, adding China has recently issued visas to Japanese people entering Shanghai and Guangdong Province.

In China, most companies have resumed operations with the number of infections decreasing, but many Japanese citizens working in the nation have been stranded in their home country as China has restricted the entry of foreigners for the past two



People wait at a boarding area for domestic flights at Beijing Capital International Airport on May 10, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

months. With the absence of Japanese staff affecting operations at Japan-related companies in

China, Beijing may start giving preference to Japanese businesspeople when issuing visas

to shore up the economy hit hard by the spread of the virus.

But it is expected to take

some time for the families of such businesspeople as well as Japanese tourists to be able to enter China, given that flights between the countries are likely to remain limited for the foreseeable future.

A large number of workers and their families went back to Japan for the weeklong Lunar New Year holidays that began Jan. 24 and extended their stays to evaluate the situation as fears about the outbreak in China lingered in February.

In late March, the Chinese Foreign Ministry abruptly announced that it would temporarily stop allowing foreigners to enter the nation to prevent imported infection cases. The measure applies even to those who hold a valid visa or residence permit.—Kyodo ■

First Russian strikes in 3 months hit NW Syria: monitor

DAMASCUS—Russian air strikes have hit Syria's last major rebel bastion for the first time since a March ceasefire came into force, a war monitor said on Wednesday.

The Russian strikes on Tuesday evening and at dawn on Wednesday hit an area of the northwest where the boundaries of Hama, Idlib and Latakia provinces meet, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance (HTS), led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, and its hardline allies enjoy a significant presence in the area, the Britain-based monitoring group added.

Home to some three million people, the Idlib region of the northwest is controlled by HTS and affiliated rebel groups.

A Russian-backed government offensive between December and March displaced nearly a million people in the region.

Some 840,000 of the nearly one million remain displaced, while some 120,000 have returned to their home communi-



Since a ceasefire went into effect around Syria's last major rebel stronghold in March, Russia has been conducting joint patrols along the strategic M4 highway that cuts through the region and analysts say it is keen to keep jihadist forces away. PHOTO: AFP

ties since the ceasefire went into force, according to the United Nations.

The truce, which coincided with the coronavirus crisis, had put a stop to the relentless air

strikes by government forces and their Russian allies that killed at least 500 civilians in four months.

The Observatory said the latest strikes were intended to

push jihadists away from the key M4 highway in northern Syria, where Turkish and Russian forces often conduct joint patrols as part of the truce agreement.—AFP ■

Ex-Colombia president Uribe faces spying probe: court

BOGOTA—Colombia's Supreme Court on Tuesday announced it is opening an investigation into former president Alvaro Uribe in connection with illegal military spying on journalists and politicians.

A preliminary investigation has been opened against Uribe "as the possible recipient of information provided by illegal military intelligence surveillance in 2019," the Supreme Court said on Twitter.

The magazine *Semana* revealed in May the existence of a military intelligence network spying on around 130 journalists, politicians, retired soldiers and trade unionists.

One of the soldiers involved in the scandal told the magazine he had been ordered to pass on information collected on a magistrate to "a politician known to the Democratic Centre," the ruling party led by Uribe, who was president from 2002 to 2010.

"Another preliminary investigation by an anonymous coward who says that I am the beneficiary of the reports," Uribe said on Twitter.

If evidence is found, the Supreme Court can launch a criminal trial against the former head of state, who is now a senator.—AFP ■

Tropical Storm Amanda death toll rises to 26 in Central America

SAN SALVADOR—The death toll from Tropical Storm Amanda in Central America rose to 26 even as a new storm was forming in the Gulf of Mexico, reports said on Tuesday.

El Salvador and neighbouring Guatemala and Honduras were lashed by torrential rains and high winds after Amanda swept in from the Pacific on

Sunday, causing floods and power cuts.

The death toll in El Salvador, which bore the brunt of the storm, rose from 16 to 20, the environment ministry said on Tuesday.

One of seven people reported missing there was however found alive, said Carolina Recinos, a senior official in San Sal-

vador, who also said 2,000 homes were "completely destroyed."

Nearly 8,000 people were evacuated from high-risk areas and transferred to shelters.

With Tropical Storm Cristobal expected to bring further heavy rains to already waterlogged soil, the environment ministry has warned of "a high probability of many landslides

and falling rocks."

Four people died in Honduras after they were swept away by the current.

The rains caused flooding and landslides in several regions of the country, officials said. Two people were also killed and two injured in Guatemala, where authorities reported 500 homes damaged.—AFP ■

US protests defy curfews as Trump faces backlash for violent crackdown



Demonstrators take part in a protest in Uptown neighbourhood of Chicago, the United States, June 1, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

WASHINGTON—Protesters defied curfews across the United States as leaders scrambled to stem anger over police racism while President Donald Trump rejected criticism over his use of force to break up a peaceful rally.

Standoffs between police and demonstrators stretched into the night in cities from New York to Los Angeles over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed African-American man whose killing has brought once-in-a-generation protests to the nation for the past week.

But there were fewer reports of the looting and violence that had soured street demonstrations in previous nights. Tens of thousands gathered earlier Tuesday in Houston to pay a hometown tribute to Floyd, who grew up in the Texas city

and is to be buried there next week.

"Today is... about George Floyd's family -- we want them to know that George did not die in vain," Mayor Sylvester Turner told an estimated 60,000 people. A tearful Roxie Washington, the mother of Floyd's six-year-old daughter, told a news conference she wanted "justice for him because he was good."

"No matter what anybody thinks, he was good."

In New York, which on Tuesday prolonged its first curfew since World War II for the full week, AFP reporters saw hundreds refusing to go home after the 8:00 pm cutoff, instead chanting slogans and peacefully walking the streets in Manhattan and Brooklyn.—AFP ■

Myanmar's pool star Phone Myint Kyaw celebrating in his previous match of the 8 Ball Chinese Pool Super Match 2020 Tournament. **PHOTO: KO AR TI'S FACEBOOK PAGE**



Phone Myint Kyaw stands atop at Chinese 8 Ball tourney

MYANMAR'S pool star Phone Myint Kyaw (alias) Ko Ar Ti is currently standing at the first position of the 8 Ball Chinese Pool Super Match 2020 Tournament, which is being held in Chao Yang, China.

Phone Myint Kyaw has already played seventh matches in the tourney, won six matches, and faced one loss.

A loss match against Chu Bin Jie on Sunday night could not make the ranking of Myanmar's player falling down to the second place.

With a tremendous number of fans supporting him, Phone Myint Kyaw got 2,300 points, the points which are for fans surrounding him and currently

he is garnering 40,300 points, according to the tourney's organizers.

Following Phone Myint Kyaw, Yu Hai Tao is at the second place with 36,100 points and Chu Bing Jie in the third position with 29,600 points.

Next, Yang Fan is in the fourth place with 26,000 points and Liu Hai Tao in fifth place with the same point but with differences in sub-matches won in their previous matches.

Top three players including Phone Myint Kyaw will directly advance to the second round of semifinals while fourth and fifth positioned players will fight for a play-off for their hope of semifinals. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

IFAB sets new football rules for 2020-2021 season

INTERNATIONAL Football Association Board (IFAB) has had Laws of the Game changes for 2020-2021 football season, according to the yesterday statement with the Myanmar Football Federation. Some Laws and VAR Protocol were changed according to the new football rules set by the IFAB on 7 April.

In Law 1 –The Field of Play, goalposts and the crossbar may be a combination of the four basic shapes. In Law 10 – Determining the outcome of a match, yellow cards and warnings are not carried forward into kicks from the penalty mark and in Law 11 (offside), deliberate handball by a defending player is considered 'deliberate play' for offside.

In Law 12 – Fouls and misconduct, accidental handball by

an attacking player (or teammate) are only penalized if it occurs 'immediately' before a goal or clear goal-scoring opportunity.

In Law 14 –The penalty kick, an offence by the goalkeeper is not penalized if a penalty kick misses the goal or rebounds from the goal (without a touch from the goalkeeper) unless the offence clearly affected the kicker. The goalkeeper is warned for the first offence, and it will be a yellow card for any further offences. Also, the kicker is penalized if the goalkeeper and the kicker offend at exactly the same time.

Also in VAR protocol rule, only one 'TV signal' is required for a VAR-only review, according to the official statement with the International Football Association Board. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Asian football getting 'closer' to return, official says

KUALA LUMPUR—Asia's Champions League is getting closer to a return but it will have to wait until domestic competitions are back in action, a senior football official told AFP on Wednesday. Football is gradually resuming around the world after closing down because of the coronavirus, although most leagues are still yet to return. Asian Football Confederation general secretary Windsor John said: "We are approaching closer to the return of football."

"We have to wait for all the

domestic leagues to start first," added John, when asked about the return of the AFC's club tournaments. The AFC Champions League, Asia's top club competition, and the second-tier AFC Cup have both been on hold since March, along with World Cup and Olympic qualifiers.

Of the 12 countries involved in the Champions League, South Korea is the only league back in action, with four more restarting in June or July and Thailand scheduled for September.

John said the AFC was "still

in discussion" about when its competitions will restart, declining to reveal a possible date.

Time is tight for both club tournaments, with the 32-team Champions League needing to complete four rounds of group-stage matches before reaching the knock-out phase. The Champions League and AFC Cup finals are both scheduled to take place in November. Asked if there were any proposals to change the tournaments' home-and-away format to avoid potential infections, John said talks were ongoing. —AFP ■

Newcastle doctor warns of injury increase ahead of Premier League restart

LONDON—Newcastle United's doctor warned on Tuesday that Premier League clubs are preparing for "a lot more injuries" as players return to full training ahead of this month's restart. UK government guidance has paved the way for teams to resume full-contact training, with the season set to resume on June 17 after being suspended for several months because of the coronavirus pandemic. "We are expecting more injuries at this time," Newcastle doctor Paul Catterson told BBC Radio 5 Live. "The players have been running on treadmills and working indoors for eight weeks so that transition is a different stimulus for the body." —AFP ■



Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal won last year's AFC Champions League. **PHOTO: BEHROUZ MEHRI AFP**