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Message from U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the 53rd Anniversary of the founding of ASEAN (8 August 2020)

TODAY marks the 53rd Anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. On this auspicious occasion, I take a great pleasure in extending my warmest greetings and best wishes to our fellow citizens and to the peoples of the ASEAN Member States. Commemorating ASEAN Day is an opportunity for us to reflect our achievements on how far we have reached in the regional transition to become one community that is dynam-

ic, inclusive, rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centred.

A regional grouping of ten diverse nations from Southeast Asian region is striving for regional peace, prosperity and stability with the spirit of amity and cooperation. Collective strength of ASEAN is enhanced to become politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible community in effectively responding to current and future challenges

and in enhancing the opportunities as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter.

The theme of this year's Chairmanship "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN" is highly relevant to the needs of today as ASEAN has been tested its resilience and responsiveness amidst the unprecedented challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 and unsettled regional hotspot issues.

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President U Win Myint makes inspection tour to Kengtung



President U Win Myint offers robes and requisites to a monk at the Dhamodaya Paritta Monastery in Kengtung Township on 7 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Win Myint visited Kengtung Township in eastern Shan State by a special flight of the Tatmadaw yesterday.

His entourage included Union Ministers Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo from the Myanmar Police Force and officials.

SEE PAGE-3

State Counsellor launches public rental housing project in Yangon



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi drives a stake to launch public rental housing project in Dagon Myothit (South) on 7 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the stake-driving ceremony of a public rental housing project in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Yangon, yesterday.

The housing project is located beside the model special agricultural zone near the intersection of No 7 Highway and the No 2 Junction.

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PYIDAUNGSU HLUTTAW

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw goes over govt revenue, public debt for 2019-2020FY

THE 9th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 17th regular session was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Firstly, Joint Bill Committee member U Nay Myo Tun read the committee's report on the Animal Health and Development Bill, sent back with comments from the President. Fellow committee member U Zaw Win then read their report on the National Library Bill, also sent back with comments from the President. Speaker U T Khun Myat then called for MPs interested in discussing both bills to register their names.

Tax revenue for 2019-2020 FY

This was followed by Union-level officials responding to comments from MPs and to the report from the Joint Public Accounts Committee (7/2020) concerning the tax revenue for the first half of the 2019-2020 financial year.

Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Ye Myint Swe said the anticipated tax revenue for the first half was K14,958.845 million. The environmental conservation and forestry sector levied K5,738.496 million and the mining sector levied K13,422.237 million, a total of K19,160.733 million combined and a 128.09 per cent implementation success.

The ministry's management committee decided to ease tax on precious gems after a report related to COVID-19 was submitted by Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association. An amount of K4,968.956 million has been levied as of 5 August, making it 75.93 per cent of the estimated amount. The remaining 24.07 per cent is for K1,574.945 million. The Deputy Minister said once COVID-19 restrictions are alleviated, then gem shows can resume and contribute to the government revenue.

Next, Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win said the government is prioritizing effective tax management rather than increasing tax rates. He added that increasing or reducing tax rates is done with approval from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, as cited



MP U Nay Myo Tun.
PHOTO: MNA



MP U Zaw Win.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister Dr Ye Myint Swe.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Tin Myint.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo.
PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing.
PHOTO: MNA

in the 2008 Constitution. He said they are constantly working to raise awareness on proper tax payments and to create a positive taxpayer culture among the public.

Moving on, other sectors of the government revenue were explained by Deputy Minister for Office of Union Government U Tin Myint, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing and Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myint Tun.

Joint Public Accounts Committee member U Myo Win then motioned for the report to be approved by the assembly, which was approved after the Speaker received no opposition from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The tax report for the first half of the 2019-2020 financial year of Union-level institutions was also put on record.

National Strategy, Union Budget reports

Next, Union-level officials

responded to comments from MPs and a report from the Joint Public Accounts Committee on the National Strategy Report for the first half of the 2019-2020 financial year and the Union Budget Report.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw said they proposed a capital expenditure of K430.368 billion for implementing projects in the first half of the financial year but have only utilized 25.13 per cent at K108.143 billion. He said the ministry's capital budget proposal was K21 billion but they have so far received 33 per cent of it at K7.146 billion.

The Deputy Minister said they have not received the proposed amount from various grants such as from IFAD for Farm Project (Fostering Agriculture Revitalization Project in Myanmar), from Denmark-Myanmar and Mekong-Lancang projects, from East Region Agriculture and Livestock Project, and from the Canada Co-operative Association. He said this is why there is a shortfall in expected revenue.

Other aspects of the reports was further explained by Deputy Minister for Energy and Electricity Dr Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin, and Deputy Ministers for Planning, Finance and Industry U Sett Aung and U Maung Maung Win.

Joint Public Accounts Committee member U Kyaw Tint then tabled a motion for the assembly to approve both reports. The Speaker then called for the deliberation of the Hluttaw, received no opposition, and declared the reports have been approved and will be put on record.

Government debt

Next, Union-level officials responded to comments from MPs and a report from the Joint Public Accounts Committee on the Union Government's annual debt report for 2018-2019 financial year.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win said there is no more

credit remaining to withdraw from foreign loans from before 1988 and between 1988 to 2011 while there is credit remaining in certain foreign loans acquired between 2011 to 2019. He said these foreign loans fund two types of projects; the first type creates income channels for the nation while the second type supports the economy and society without creating direct income, but they all bring benefits to the nation as a whole.

The matter was further discussed by Deputy Ministers U Hla Kyaw, U Kyaw Myo and Dr Tun Naing. Joint Public Accounts Committee Vice-Chairman U Aung Min then motioned for the assembly to approve the report. The Speaker then called for the deliberation of the Hluttaw, received no opposition, and declared the report has been approved.

The 10th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 17th regular session will convene on 19 August.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION



The General Election will be held on 8 November 2020.

- Union Election Commission has announced the first edition of eligible voter lists at local offices of the commission in respective wards/village-tracts, in the villages from 25 July 2020 to 7 November 2020.
- If the name of any eligible voter is not included in the list, voter registration can be requested by filling in Form 3.
- Objection can be filed against any ineligible voter in the list by using Form 4.
- Correction for voter list can be requested by using Form 4 (c)
- Voters can cast their votes only if their names are included in the voters list.
- Cooperation is requested for at least one member of each family to check their names without fail to ensure a complete and correct voters list.
- Check the voters lists not to lose voting rights by filling up discrepancies, deleting and making corrections.

2020

General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020



Message from President U Win Myint, ...

FROM PAGE-1

ASEAN identity is created by the “unity in diversity”. The Association today is a politically stable, economically viable and people-oriented community. Continued success of ASEAN is also attracting interest from a growing number of countries to engage and establish formal partnership with ASEAN. While strengthening cooperation with Dialogue Partners and other external parties, ASEAN underscores the importance of fostering ASEAN unity and ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture.

In maintaining peace and stability in the region and beyond, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) remains a key instrument for the conduct of inter-state relations. The growing number of interested parties to the TAC demonstrates that ASEAN’s norms and values are increasingly embraced by non-ASEAN countries. ASEAN promotes its regional actions by synchronizing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

This year also marks a milestone for ASEAN as it reaches mid-term of the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. ASEAN is making significant economic progress leading to fourth largest single market by 2030. ASEAN possesses the world’s third largest labour forces providing a greater opportunity for trade, investment and regional prosperity.

Despite many achievements in community building efforts, ASEAN today faces many unprecedented challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19. Notwithstanding, ASEAN has been able to demonstrate the spirit of cohesiveness and responsiveness in addressing the global pandemic and mitigating its socio-economic impacts. ASEAN has been working to operationalize the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies and, to develop the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Public Health Emergencies.

ASEAN is also undertaking closer policy coordination to restore growth by sustaining market stability. As COVID-19 has brought about a faster shift

to digital technology and digital economy, ASEAN is fostering greater cooperation in digital transformation, particularly the digital economy.

ASEAN today is accelerating its efforts with a whole-of-community approach ensuring no one left behind in the community building. Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) plays an important role in narrowing the development gap among ASEAN Member States. Myanmar, as the Chair of the IAI Task Force for this year, is leading the formulation of the new IAI Work Plan of the next five years (2021-2025).

More integrated ASEAN Economic Community is also expected to bring greater opportunities to Myanmar in terms of inter-regional export market, investment and trade and thus creating more jobs and better life for peoples in our region and beyond.

On this auspicious occasion, I wish the peoples of Myanmar and the peoples of ASEAN Member States every success and progress in the ASEAN Community Building efforts and socio-economic development to contribute towards peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

President U Win Myint makes inspection tour to Kengtung



President U Win Myint and party view Naung Tung Lake in Kengtung Township, eastern Shan State on 7 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

FROM PAGE-1

They were welcomed at the Kengtung Airport by Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, State Hluttaw Speaker U Sai Lone Sai,

Commander Major-Gen Khin Hlaing from Triangle Region Command, the state government ministers, Hluttaw representatives, town’s elders and leaders

of ethnic literature and culture. The President and party visited Dhamodaya Paritta Monastery and paid homage to the members of Sangha.

They also arrived at Pertian Gate, input of water into Naung Tung Lake, landscaping works and upgrade of road at the lake and other development projects

in Kengtung. The President and party stayed overnight at the Amazing Kengtung Resort in Kengtung.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

State Counsellor launches public rental housing project in Yangon

FROM PAGE-1

The ceremony was also attended by Union Ministers U Min Thu, U Thant Sin Maung and U Han Zaw, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, ministers of the regional government and officials and the chairpersons of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation, Myanmar Licenced Contractors Association and the Civil and Infrastructural Development Association.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw remarked that the number of homeless persons is expected to increase as people with monthly income under K300,000, out of 15 million urban population registered in 2014, are losing their jobs and encountered an income decline unaffordable for the rental, and that the government has planned to set up 10,000 units of public rental housing in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

He added that major cities with abundant employment opportunities have commonly encountered an increasing demand for houses and that the development of residential projects could control the houseless population.

The Union Minister continued to say that urban public facilities such as markets, schools, clinics, playgrounds and amusement parks will be set up together with water supply, electricity, roads and other infrastructural structures.

While the private investments are being invited to the rental housing market, the existing project will be implemented with the capitals of the private sector under the private finance initiative system and the government will settle the costs from its extra budgets.

After this, the State Counsellor said "I'm very satisfied that we are able to implement this housing project. The reason is that this is for the livelihood of our people. First of all, to have food to eat is very important. Everyone wants to have enough food to eat. After that we need clothing to wear in accordance with our sense of respect. Next to have housing is just as important as these. We live in a house that we can afford. Everyone wants to live in a secure place in peace with one's family.

Therefore, in a country such



State Counsellor is making a speech at the launching ceremony of public rental housing project in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Yangon, on 7 August. PHOTO: MNA.



as ours which is still in the process of developing we cannot as yet say that our people have adequate food, clothing and housing. That's why we have to strive from all angles to have adequate food, clothing and housing. During times like this, the reason why housing projects such as this one are very important is that they provide a solution to the challenges we are facing because of COVID, not only for our fundamental food, clothing and housing needs.

Right from the early stages, when we were formulating programmes to prevent and control COVID, we had to think about the economic impact of this disease. As we thought about how to mitigate the impact of this disease on our economy, we began to realize that it was necessary to encourage housing projects. This is because we found out that in a housing project it is possible to work in accordance with rules and regulations for health issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

In a construction project, not only can our people get jobs, but they also have the opportunity to work in a safe place with respect to their health; this is why we encourage construction projects. I am sure all of you present here know that when we began to lift the restrictions for operations to resume, the construction industry was the first. Now when we start the programmes, as soon as we begin the construction project, job creation for the people is very widespread. Even from the very beginning, as soon as we clear the land, our people get jobs. As soon as construction begins, the people who worked on clearing operations would certainly benefit, needless to say. At every stage there are job opportunities; all skilled workers who are involved in the construction

process and workers who are not that highly skilled, all of them get job opportunities. Furthermore, we can say that this is good for our long-term development.

If we look at this place now, we can see paddy fields and farmlands. However, after this project has been implemented successfully, it will become a new town. In choosing the site for this project, a lot of thought went into the process. In a construction project, the time for planning is quite limited. We have to think very carefully. As soon as the project starts, job creation is quite rapid. I think that our success will also be quick. That is why we thank all those who have supported and assisted for the success of this project. Those who were involved in the initial planning; in our country, when we begin a project, the acquisition of land is very important. The land must be suitable, and it must not hurt anyone. If this land is owned by any department or private person, we have to settle this matter in accordance with the law in a fair and speedy manner. I think it is known to everyone that as we carry out this process step by step, we have to work with great care and caution to avoid making mistakes.

Another thing, we can say the fact that we can implement a project like this successfully is an indication of the success of cooperation and coordination. Various departments had to cooperate. Entrepreneurs and the government had to cooperate. Then, people also had to cooperate. Workers also had to cooperate. A construction project can really be successful only if everyone cooperated. That is why I want all of you to think deeply when you look at our projects, not only at the superficial level.

I want to say that this project of ours provides benefits not

only in mitigating the negative impact of COVID but it is also in line with our long-term development programmes. That is why we take great pride; this is something that is needed very much not only for the present but also for the future; something that needs to happen. I am very grateful indeed. I also encourage this. We have plans to carry out a great deal of such projects continuously.

Just as the Construction Minister has said, not only in Yangon, we plan to implement many of such projects also in Nay Pyi Taw. At the moment, we can say that it has been eight months since we have been facing the COVID disease. Why, in actual fact, it began in the first month of this year. Since it has been eight months, we are suffering from the impact not only all over our country but all over the world. Up to this time, we can say that our country can be hurt by the economic impact as well as in matters of health. However, we cannot say that this COVID problem is over. I don't want to take pride and say that up to now we were able to control this disease. I am afraid that the situation might change. However, I can see that up to now, our work has been satisfactory. But as it is now eight months, the negative impact on the economy will become more apparent. That's why I wish to say that implementing such projects at this time is very timely and in sync. I believe that there will significant benefits and significant-good results because of the timeliness.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all those who have participated and cooperated as well as the departments. I also see this ground-breaking ceremony as having full of meaning and that this act signifies the laying of a firm foundation for the future,

for the interest of our people."

Chairperson of Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation U Shein Win explained possible employment opportunities from this project and suggested the requirement of laws pertaining to rental housing to address difficulties of people while the public housing sector is developing.

The State Counsellor set a stake in the specific place of the housing project and sprinkled scented water over it.

The Union Ministers and officials drove the stakes into the ground on the respective places.

The public rental housing project will have 5,072 units of flat on 171 acres of land with the supervision of the Ministry of Construction and support of Yangon regional government. It will be jointly implemented by the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation, the Myanmar Licenced Contractors Association and the Civil and Infrastructural Development Association. The associations will construct 6,300 flats in Yangon Region and over 1,200 flats in other areas, in addition to 700 flats in Nay Pyi Taw and 3,000 flats in Mandalay Region.

Myanmar introduced public rental housing project in 1951 with very lower cost compared with the market rate for people such as civil service staff and common families.

The records of the Ministry of Construction have shown that over 9,000 flats in parliamentary democracy period, over 11,000 under the socialist government and over 14,000 at the time of democratic government were constructed. However, the demand for rental flats remains high in Myanmar. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)



The most important lesson we have learnt from COVID

Because of COVID, we are encountering many things to think about and to learn on a daily basis. The most important lesson we have learnt from COVID is that we were forced to train ourselves to have boundless vigilance.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Facebook post on 10 June 2020)

Meeting on new UN Framework for Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar

U Thaug Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Development Assistance Coordination Unit Vice-Chair yesterday met with the UN Country Team to discuss the new UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar (UN-SERF).

In his welcoming remarks at the meeting held via video conference, Union Minister, U Thaug Tun stated, "...we greatly appreciate the time, effort, and expertise invested into this comprehensive and strategic document" while noting "...the Framework aligns closely with our COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan".

Ms June Kunugi, UN Resident Coordinator ad interim and UNICEF Representative intro-

duced the UN-SERF in greater detail, highlighting how the Framework was developed in coordination with the UN Country Team and major international financial institutions present in Myanmar, and how Framework is firmly aligned both with Myanmar's country context and the UN's broader COVID-19 Global Response Framework.

Ms Dawn Del Rio, Officer-In-Charge, and UNDP Deputy Resident Representative provided a comprehensive briefing on the UN-SERF's various pillars and thematic areas, funding status, monitoring, and evaluation arrangements, and actions covered within the Framework's detailed Action Plan Matrix.

U Sett Aung, Deputy Minister of Planning, Finance, and



Union Minister U Thaug Tun joins virtual meeting on new UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar (UN-SERF). **PHOTO: MNA**

Industry noted the need to ensure continued alignment and complementarity between action plans included within the Myanmar COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP), and the UN-SERF.

U Min Ye Paing Hein, Deputy Minister of Planning, Finance, and Industry drew attention to the government's progress-to-

date concerning maternal cash transfers and lending to agricultural workers and highlighted the need to further mainstream gender equality into COVID-19 related efforts to ensure a truly representative whole-of-nation response.

Union Minister U Thaug Tun concluded the meeting stating that the UN-SERF offers a timely example of effective mul-

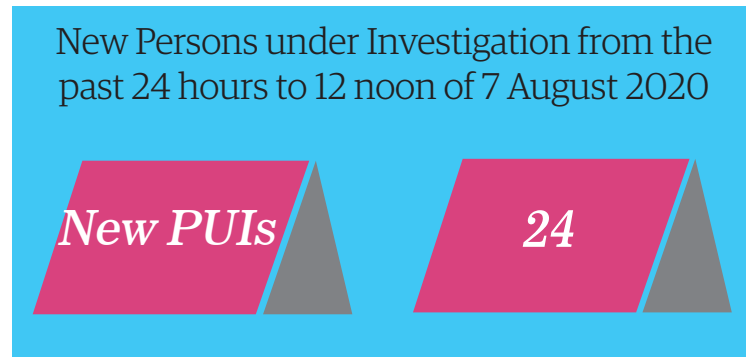
tilateral cooperation, needed now more than ever, and that, if fully funded and well implemented, would no doubt save lives, control transmission, and ease economic fallout.

The meeting was also attended by U Bharat Singh, Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Dr Mya Lay Sein, Deputy Minister of Health and Sports.—MNA

Two new cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar reported on 7 August, total figure reaches 359

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases reached 359 after 2 new cases were reported on 7 August according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Case No 358 and Case No 359 returned from India. Out of the 359 confirmed cases, six died, 309 have recovered, 296 have been discharged from hospitals and 24 were held under investigation.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 7 August 2020



Two more COVID-19 cases on 7 August 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
358	28	Male	Kalay Township, Sagaing Region	No	Yes, India	Peoples' Hospital, Kalay	Positive	Held under quarantine (Tonzong Township)
359	24	Male	Tiddim Township, Chin State	No	Yes, India	Peoples' Hospital, Tiddim	Positive	Held under quarantine (Tonzong Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

DACU, partners review progress towards finalized revised Myanmar development assistance policy, other key matters

U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU) Vice-Chair yesterday chaired a meeting between the DACU, Cooperation Partners Group (CPG) representatives, and representatives from domestic and international civil society.

The Union Minister noted that Myanmar's development progress had continued notwithstanding COVID-19, citing recent analysis by the Oxford Business Group predicting Myanmar's economy will recover faster than both global and regional averages, and the Purchasers Manufacturing Index (PMI) rising for a third successive month -- a clear sign that the sector is starting to recover.

The Union Minister also cited further examples of progress including the government's recent announcement of a new 100 billion MMK loan fund focused on the country's agriculture and livestock sector, and the Myanmar Investment Commission



Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU), Cooperation Partners Group (CPG) and domestic and international civil society hold meeting on 7 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

(MIC) having approved over US\$5 billion in foreign investment this fiscal year.

Speaking on behalf of the CPG, Mr Rurik Marsden, Head of DFID Myanmar expressed appreciation for continued progress toward finalization of the revised Myanmar Development

Assistance Policy (DAP), that the revised draft has incorporated many of the suggestions offered to date, and how this important piece of work would assist all Myanmar's partners strengthen their engagement.

Ms Pancy Tun Thein, Director of the Local Resource Centre

and Myanmar Civil Society Organizations Partnership for Aid and Development Effectiveness (MCPAD) Representative also expressed appreciation for the consultative revision process and the DAP's recognition of the valuable role played by Myanmar's vibrant and diverse CSOs.

Ms Irene Fraser, INGO Forum Director echoed comments expressed by others while nothing the inclusion of additional cross-cutting Strategic Coordination Groups (SCG) covering gender equality, disability, and statistical quality development.

A broad-ranging discussion followed with Deputy Ministers for Planning, Finance and Industry U Sett Aung and U Min Ye Paing Hein, providing clarity on the rationale behind the identification of SCGs, while noting the need to ensure continued progress in moving from sector-level planning to strategic-level planning, and how SCGs will be used to further this shift.

In his concluding remarks, Union Minister U Thaung Tun encouraged all present to continue to push forward with the finalization of the DAP and to ensure that development assistance to Myanmar continues to deliver results in the coming months and years ahead, with the greatest possible transparency. — MNA

SEA countries, WHO discuss regional healthcare challenges

HEALTH ministers of Southeast Asian countries and the regional director of WHO held a virtual meeting over sustainable basic healthcare services, plans for public health, experiences and challenges during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on 6 August.

Permanent Secretary of Health and Sports Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win joined the meeting.

During the meeting, the regional director delivered an opening speech, and the health officials from respective countries presented the distributions

of medical supplies, progress in COVID-19 vaccine production, basic healthcare system for public health and challenges during COVID-19 crisis.

Permanent Secretary Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win explained the concerted efforts of Myanmar being conducted under the guidance of the State Counsellor, like forming the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, conducting education programmes for public awareness via the website of Ministry of Health and Sports in addition to

social media and public media and resumption of vaccination programme since mid-May at the hospitals.

He also discussed the formation of advisory groups in line with the advice of the Union Minister for promoting healthcare system beyond COVID-19 period, the ongoing basic healthcare services and public health services despite some shortage of human resources, other supplies and management in healthcare services.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Myanmar health delegates join the virtual meeting over sustainable basic healthcare services on 6 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

MNHRC investigates death of two young men from Mandalay rehab centre

1. Seven young men sentenced to 2 years in prison for robbery arrived at Mandalay Community Rehabilitation Centre on 26 July 2020 and they ran away from the centre on 31 July around 11 pm. After they have been found on the same day, one of them died on that day, and another one died on 5 August.
2. According to the report, a team led by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission members U Kyaw Soe and U Kyaw Myint made investigations in Mandalay on 7 August; questioning local police officers, two young men involved in the escape and officials from the rehab centre. They also interviewed the hospital superintendent and forensic doctors who examined the bodies of young men at Mandalay General Hospital and comforted the hospitalized young man with nutrition assistance.
3. Relevant departments were reportedly undertaking the case in line with the rules and regulations of their respective departments.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
7th August 2020

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EU Myan Ku Fund assistance to factory workers reaches K4 bln

GARMENT workers who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic continue receiving financial assistance through a €5 million K7.9 billion European Union emergency cash fund, "Myan Ku". Between 1 May and 3 August, halfway through the initiative, "Myan Ku" has distributed emergency cash payments to laid-off and suspended workers, reaching 45,061 payments, equivalent to over K4 billion (or €2.5 million) in total assistance provided so far.

"Myan Ku supports us during a time when we really need it so everyone who receives such assistance from the fund will be secure for a while and they will also be happy like me. I also want to get my job back as soon as possible to support my family," said Ms Shunn Lae Nway, a garment factory quality controller who lost her job in May.

The EU Myan Ku Fund cash transfer programme has been extended until 30 November 2020. Cash transfers will continue to be provided to garment, textile and footwear industry workers who have lost their jobs. Unemployed pregnant workers, migrant workers and workers who are using their unemployment period to enroll in educational and skills training programmes can from now on benefit from this support.

The broadening of the target group will enable that the nutritional needs of unemployed pregnant workers are met. It will specifically help migrant workers and workers facing

discrimination in employment to receive essential basic support that could facilitate their return into the workforce. There is a very important gender dimension to Myan Ku. 90% of the jobs created within the garment sector employ women, who often leave quite poor conditions in their home villages behind to come to work in factories where they can earn decent salaries and provide support for their families. This provides them with confidence. An objective of Myan Ku is to safeguard these jobs, so that women who found jobs in this sector can go through this crisis and emerge with their livelihoods intact. In total, 26,578 factory workers from about 230 factories in the garment, textile and footwear industries have been enrolled and supported since the programme started. Cash transfer support has ranged from K35,000 per month to K125,000 per month. Workers who are only employed part-time in the factories and earn less than K100,000 can receive 50% matching assistance from Myan Ku.

"The factory I worked for closed without giving any severance compensation to the workers. I then received K125,000 on 15 June from the EU Myan Ku Fund. I could not believe I would receive this financial support... I feel so happy," said Ms Aye Aye Khine, a sewing operator who lost her job and received no severance pay after her employer went bankrupt and permanently closed in April 2020.—GNLM

Domestic gold price hits new record high amidst global price hike



(FILES) Saleswomen are selling gold jewellery at a shop in Yangon on 25 February 2015. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

By Nyein Nyein

WITH the record high global gold price, the domestic gold price also hit a new record on 7 August with K1,332,500 per tical, according to the domestic gold market.

Although the domestic gold price was a record high at K1,307,000 per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms) on 5 September 2019, the gold price is a new record high again.

While the domestic gold price was highly recorded at K1,300,000 per tical on 5 September 2019, the price of the global gold price has only risen to \$1,550 per tical.

With the rising of the global

gold price, the global gold market saw the gold being sold for \$20,000 per ounce on 5 August and the price continued to hike and hit a new record high at \$2,062 per ounce on 7 August.

With the rising of the global gold price, the domestic one also hit the new record. The dollar versus the kyat exchange rate was K1,373 per dollar on 7 August. At present, there is a high demand for gold in the local market, according to a domestic gold trader.

With the slightly rising of domestic gold price together with the global gold price starting from 2019, the local gold price reached K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and

21 February, K1,100,000 between 22 June and 5 August, K1,200,000 between 7 August and 4 September and, then reached an all-time high of K1,300,000 on 5 September 2019.

In April, the coronavirus risks caused the shutdown of the gold market, and the market reopened on 18 May with a minimum rate of K1,214,100 (27 May) and a maximum rate of K1,236,000 (18 May). The price was moving in the range of K1,209,600 on 6 June and K1,219,500 on 1 June. The local gold reached the lowest level of K1,216,500 (1 July) and the highest level of K1,296,500 (27 July), according to the gold traders.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Domestic investment increases by K300 bln touching over K1,500 bln in 10 months



Local investments mostly go into industrial sector in ten months of current FY. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

By Nyein Nyein

Investments of Myanmar citizens reached over K1,500 billion in ten months of this financial year (FY), an increase of about K300 billion compared to that of the last FY, according to the official statistics of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

From 1 October to 31 July in 2019-2020FY, about 113 local enterprises were given the green light to make investments in variegated sectors with an estimated capital of over K1,543.4 billion. In the same period of last FY, the domestic investors have pumped K1,260.4 billion

into 138 projects.

Although the number of enterprises granted is 25 less compared to that of the previous year, the volume of investments was larger compared to that in the last year as the businesses with large capitals have flowed into the country, according to DICA. In ten months of this FY, the domestic investments have flowed mostly into the industrial sector, followed by the real estate sector, hotels and tourism sector, other services sectors, agriculture, mining, oil and gas, transport and communications, construction, livestock and fisheries and electricity sectors.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Searching for innovative ways to create safe jobs amidst COVID-19 is a must

WITH the resumption of work in the construction sector, we must ensure a safe and controlled restart of work amidst COVID-19, as the Union Government discloses its plan to invite private investment into the real estate market.

When it comes to allowing business sectors to resume, as part of efforts to turn the economic consequences into opportunities amidst COVID-19, the construction sector has been the first to be granted permission because it can ensure that work resumes smoothly and safely, in accordance with health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The construction sector would create many job opportunities to informal workers who bear the brunt of the outbreak's economic impact.

When it comes to allowing business sectors to resume, as part of efforts to turn the economic consequences into opportunities amidst COVID-19, the construction sector has been the first to be granted permission ...

global pandemic. The economic consequences of this crisis are colossal and immensely painful, bringing job losses and disruptions at a moment that requires government intervention.

After we have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, our people, especially low-income families living in cities are struggling to feed their families.

We laud the housing projects as they will bring jobs to our workers in the informal sector during COVID-19 crisis.

The construction sector is the most important sector in providing jobs to workers in an environment safe from coronavirus infection. We would like to encourage the all stake holders to continue to support the housing construction industry which also plays an important role in solving the squatter problem which is growing day by day.

Other remaining sectors are also advised to find new and innovative ways to help our people while protecting the health of the public and the employees.

A housing project with 5,072 apartments was launched on 171 acres in Dagon Myothit (South)'s Model Agriculture Special Zone yesterday. Similar projects will be implemented in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. Hence, construction firms are required to make arrangements to reduce the risk of virus transmission between workers at different sites.

We must put the health safety measures in place first to help to ensure a safe and controlled restart of work. When we prepare to resume the construction sector, all stake holders must remain vigilant and aware of the global COVID-19 situation.

Countries, including Myanmar, that are already struggling - with poverty, conflict, and natural disasters - are not out of the woods yet.

Those industries and businesses which most of our workers rely upon, including daily-waged workers, are being impacted by the COVID-19

WHO says 'vaccine nationalism' cannot beat virus

The World Health Organization on Thursday warned against "vaccine nationalism," saying vaccine-hogging richer countries would not be safe coronavirus havens if poor nations remained exposed.

WHO CHIEF Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it would be in the interest of richer nations to ensure that any vaccines eventually produced to protect against the new coronavirus were shared globally.

"Vaccine nationalism is not good, it will not help us," he told the Aspen Security Forum in the United States, via video-link from the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

"For the world to recover faster, it has to recover together, because it's a globalized world: the economies are intertwined. Part of the world or a few countries cannot be a safe haven and recover.

"The damage from COVID-19 could be less when those countries who... have the funding commit to this.

"They are not giving charity to others: they are doing it for themselves, because when the rest of the world recovers and opens up, they also benefit."

He said the existence of the deadly respiratory disease anywhere put lives and livelihoods at risk everywhere.

Race for the vaccine

The United Nations health agency also said that multiple different types of vaccines would likely be needed to combat COVID-19.

Twenty-six candidate vac-



The United Nations health agency said that multiple different types of vaccines would likely be needed to combat COVID-19. PHOTO: AFP

cines are in various stages of being tested on humans, with six having reached Phase 3 wider levels of testing.

"Phase 3 doesn't mean nearby there," explained the WHO's

emergencies director Michael Ryan.

"Phase 3 means this is the first time this vaccine has been put into the general population, into otherwise healthy individ-

KIDS AND CORONAVIRUS

INFORMATIVE STUDY

What we know so far about COVID-19 and children

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has been censored on Facebook and Twitter after saying children are "almost immune" from COVID-19. What do the facts say?

We know for sure children are less likely to fall seriously ill from the coronavirus, and emerging evidence suggests they're less likely to be infected too.

What's less clear is how much they spread the virus once infected.

Children rarely become seriously ill

Under-18s have accounted for just two percent of hospitalized Covid-19 cases and less than 0.1% of all deaths in the United States, according to statistics from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A total of 45 children died from the coronavirus in the United States between Feb 1 and Aug 1 -- compared to 105 who died

from seasonal flu -- out of a total of 13,000 children who died of all of causes over the period.

When they do catch the virus, children are far less likely than adults to fall seriously ill.

An informative study of 2,143 confirmed or suspected cases of coronavirus among children in China found 94 per cent of cases were asymptomatic, mild or moderate.

Those children who do fall ill often have underlying conditions.

A study found all 10 pediatric patients who were hospitalized in Chicago in March and April with Covid-19 had either pre-existing conditions or co-infections.

The bottom line here is that children get sick and die from Covid-19 far less often than adults do, though that does not mean they are immune.

Some limited research indicates infants (under one) may be at slightly higher risk than older children.

It's worth emphasizing that given that children are more prone to severe cases of flu, it wasn't obvious at the start of the pandemic that children would be less susceptible to Covid-19.

There is also a highly rare, post-viral condition called Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) which can develop about a month after SARS-CoV-2 infection and causes multiple organs to become painfully inflamed.

As of July 15, the CDC had reported 342 cases and six deaths -- a death rate of under 2%. The average age was eight-years-old, and 70% of cases occurred among either Hispanic or black children.

They seem less likely to contract the virus

The next question is, are children major drivers of viral transmission? This breaks down

into two parts: 1) How easily do they become infected? 2) How much do they spread the virus once they have it?

There have now been several studies on the first part that do indeed seem to suggest children, especially younger children are infected less often.

Icelandic researchers selected just over 13,000 people for viral screening, including some 850 children under 10. The overall prevalence of the coronavirus was 0.8%, but no children under 10 were infected.

Similar surveys carried out in Spain, Italy and Switzerland all had similar results, finding children accounted for a far smaller proportion of infections compared to adults.

That said, this remains an area of ongoing study.

In the US, top infectious diseases official Anthony Fauci is leading a study into the question of infection and transmission rates among children and adults, with results expected by December.

We don't know yet how contagious children are

This is perhaps the most pressing question as authorities consider when and how to reopen schools.

If children are major spread-

ers, then they could cause fresh outbreaks within their homes and communities - and unfortunately the evidence right now on this point is mixed.

A study out of Chicago that appeared last week found that children under the age of five carry between 10 to 100 times greater levels of viral nucleic acid in their noses compared to adults.

Since this genetic material causes the virus to grow in labs, the authors suggested that children are probably important drivers of transmission.

That hypothesis merits more study but is not yet proven.

Another way of approaching the problem is through the lens of epidemiology -- that is, what happened in real life? On the one hand, spectacular clusters have erupted -- for example at a summer camp in the US state of Georgia where hundreds of unmasked children who slept together in large dorms were infected.

Israel, too has been a cautionary tale, with outbreaks in multiple schools that infected hundreds of students, teachers and relatives. Conversely, a large study in South Korea showed that children under the age of 10 infect household contacts at much lower rates than those above 10 and adults.

SOURCE: AFP

Diplomatic Relations Established between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Nicaragua

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Nicaragua, desirous of establishing friendly ties and cooperation guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of International Law in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, have established diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassadors with effect from 6 August 2020.

The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations was signed by Ambassador U Hau Do Suan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and Ambassador Mr Jaime Hermida Castillo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nicaragua to the United Nations in New York, on 6 August 2020 at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations.

The Republic of Nicaragua is the 124th country with which Myanmar has established diplomatic relations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated, 7 August 2020

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at: 11:00 hrs M.S.T on 7-8-2020)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (10:30 hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Seiktha has exceeded by about (1) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

According to the (10:30 hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Hinthada has exceeded by about (1) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

According to the (10:30 hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun has exceeded by about (1) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (3) days.

Flood condition of Ngawun River

According to the (10:30 hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ngawun River at Ngathaingchaung has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (2) days.

According to the (10:30 hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ngawun River at Thabaung has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (4) inches during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advertised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Ngathaingchaung and Thabaung to take precaution measure.



Children wearing face masks play on their scooters while their parents watch during the coronavirus pandemic on April 25, 2020 in New York City. PHOTO: AFP

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48 Myanmar returnees from China arrive in Chinshwehaw border crossing



Local authorities are helping Myanmar returnees from China at Chinshwehaw border crossing on their way back home. **PHOTO: MNA**

A total of 48 Myanmar nationals who returned from China came back home through Myanmar-China border in Chinshwehaw on 7 August.

The group included 37 males and 11 females — 17 from Mandalay, 19 from Sagaing, 2 from Magway, 1 each from Kachin and Mon States and 8 from northern Shan State. The Work Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 in Chinshwehaw sent the returnees to their respective regions and states by arranging vehicles.

A total of 14,238 returnees have been sent back to their respective places via this route to date.—Zin Zin (IPRD) (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Myanmar citizens stranded abroad arrive back home by relief flight

MYANMAR brought back a total of 174 citizens from UAE, Bahrain, Gulf nations and other foreign countries by a relief flight yesterday.

The returnees included 13 military personnel from Myanmar's Military Embassy in Pakistan while 2 citizens are from Bahrain, 109 from UAE,

8 from Kuwait, 10 from Egypt, 5 from Turkey, 2 from Cyprus, 1 from Panama, 9 from Maldives, 4 each from Brazil and South Africa, two each from Italy and Iran, one each from Switzerland, Yugoslavia and Germany.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the

Ministry of Health and Sports, and local officials helped the returnees for health inspections and arranged for 21-day quarantine.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flight and chartered flight in accordance with the instructions of

National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

DHF kills 5, infects 383 in Yangon Region as of 11 July

FIVE people died, and 383 others were infected by Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) in Yangon region over six months of 2020, according to the official figure released by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

DHF is highly reported especially in Htantabin, Dagon Myothit (South), Shwepyitha, Taikkyi and Dala townships in Yangon Region.

From January to 11 July, Yangon region saw 39 infect-

ed patients with two deaths in Htantabin, 29 patients in Dagon Myothit (South), 17 patients with one death in Shwepyitha, 15 patients with one death in Taikkyi and 15 patients in Dala townships.

In five months of 2020, Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions and Mon State are the most affected areas of DHF in the country. From 1 January to 30 May, a total of 1,480 DHF infection cases were

recorded across the country, claiming 11 deaths.

Yangon region saw 24 DHF cases in Dagon Myothit (South), 16 cases each in Htantabin and Shwepyitha, 15 cases in Hline-thaya, 14 cases in Dala, 11 cases in Dagon Myothit (North) Townships, 10 cases each in Thimgangyun and Insein, 8 cases in Thanlyin and 7 cases in North Okkalapa as of 16 May.

The figures showed that children aged between five and

nine are mostly infected by the dengue virus. Dengue fever is transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito and mostly occurs in the rainy season from June to August in the country.

People are warned to take preventive measures against DHF transmission which is caused by lack of sanitation and unhygienic water storage.—Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Yangon-Mandalay road accidents kill 7, injure 71 in July

SEVEN died, and 71 others were injured in 62 cases of road accident on Yangon-Mandalay highway in July, according to Nay Pyi Taw highway traffic police.

Regarding the highway road accidents, a total of 62 cases were reported on the high-

way. Negligence of human is the main cause of road accidents, according to the highway traffic police.

Out of 62 cases of the traffic accident, reckless driving, over-speeding, defective vehicles, flat tires and inclement weather were mainly blamed

for the traffic accidents in the country.

A total of seven persons were killed with 15 others injured in January, five killed and 26 injured in February, nine killed and 48 injured in March, two killed and 47 injured in April, six killed and 33 injured

in May, six killed and 33 injured in June, and seven killed and 71 injured in July.

In the first seven months of 2020, 320 traffic accidents were reported on Yangon-Mandalay highway, resulting in 57 deaths and 543 injuries.—Aye Maung (Translated by Hay Mar)

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Virus hastens newspapers' slide into shaky digital future

THE coronavirus crisis has weighed heavily on print newspapers already battling for survival around the world, with the number of copies sold tumbling while less profitable digital readerships surge.

Simply delivering printed papers to the shops -- or having customers come in to buy them -- has become a challenge, worsening a years-long decline in sales and advertising revenue.

"Consumption of printed newspapers has fallen as lockdowns undermine physical distribution, almost certainly accelerating the shift to an all-digital future," the Reuters Institute's 2020 annual report said.

Major dailies in Brazil and Mexico have already switched to online-only or dropped some days' editions, while in the Phil-



Major British media brands could boast of 6.6 million new online readers in the first quarter in what their industry association said was a new record. **REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE. CREDIT: AFP PHOTO**

ippines 10 of the 70 newspapers in the PPI association have shuttered.

"Times are hard. There are no advertisers and no-one

is reading us," PPI executive director Ariel Sebellino told AFP.

The archipelago nation's small local newspapers were hardest hit during lockdown as

street sales tumbled.

"The industry is under siege and we've all taken bruises," Sebellino said.

Far from affecting only

journalists, the disappearance of print papers deals out pain all up the production chain, taking in printers, paper makers and delivery people.

Major British media brands could boast of 6.6 million new online readers in the first quarter in what their industry association said was a new record.

But most have not seen the same bounce in print sales.

The coronavirus has become "the greatest threat to the global news industry since the 2008 economic crash" wrote industry publication Press Gazette -- which itself moved online-only in 2013. Between 2005 and 2018, some 250 local papers closed across Britain, while today one in three journalists' jobs are believed to be under threat. — AFP ■

Lebanon's leaders face rage, calls for reform after blast

BEIRUT — Lebanon's leadership faced growing rage after a massive explosion laid waste to large parts of central Beirut, with security forces firing tear gas at demonstrations late Thursday as international leaders called for reform.

Shock has turned to anger

in a traumatized nation where at least 149 people died and more than 5,000 were injured in Tuesday's colossal explosion of a huge pile of ammonium nitrate that had languished for years in a port warehouse.

To many Lebanese, it was tragic proof of the rot at the core

of their governing system, which has failed to halt the deepest economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war and has plunged millions into poverty.

State media reported late Thursday that security forces fired tear gas in central Beirut to disperse dozens of anti-government demonstrators enraged by the blast. Some in the small protest were wounded, the National News Agency reported.

Earlier, visiting French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to lead international emergency relief efforts and organize an aid conference in the coming days, promising that "Lebanon is not alone". But he also warned that the country -- already in desperate need of a multi-billion-dollar bailout and hit by political turmoil since October -- would "continue to sink" unless it implements urgent reforms. — AFP ■



An injured Lebanese anti-government protester in the Gemayzeh neighbourhood during the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron. **PHOTO: AFP**

New York seeks to dissolve NRA over financial mismanagement

NEW YORK — The state of New York sued the National Rifle Association and its leader Wayne LaPierre Thursday for financial fraud and misconduct, aiming to dissolve the powerful US conservative lobby.

State Attorney-General Letitia James said LaPierre and

three other top NRA officials used the dues and donations of members for years as their "personal piggy bank," spending tens of millions of dollars on themselves and cronies in violation of laws governing non-profit organizations.

The four "basically looted its assets," leaving the once wealthy

group that pumped millions into Republican political campaigns close to being insolvent, James said.

In a statement, the NRA accused James of filing the suit "to score political points" with a national election three months away. — AFP ■

Rising star shakes up Belarus strongman's re-election bid

MINSK — Belarus holds presidential polls on Sunday with a novice opposition candidate posing the greatest challenge in years to long-ruling strongman Alexander Lukashenko.

The 65-year-old authoritarian leader has headed the ex-Soviet country bordering Russia since 1994 and Sunday's polls could hand him his sixth term.

After appearing to guarantee himself a smooth path to victory by detaining and ejecting major opposition candidates, Lukashenko has been blindsided by the rapid rise of Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, by far the strongest of his four rivals in voter surveys.

She has run an effective and stylish campaign, with open-air rallies attracting thou-

sands of Belarusians around the country, chanting "change" and "freedom" while waving lit-up cellphones to a song about breaking down prison walls.

The 37-year-old English teacher and translator by profession who calls herself "an ordinary woman, mother and wife" stepped into the race at great personal risk after the detention of her husband, a popular opposition blogger, who had hoped to stand himself.

Initially uncomfortable in the spotlight, Tikhanovskaya has attracted broad support with her promise to free detained opposition figures including her husband.

She also says that if she wins she will call fresh elections that will include the entire opposition. — AFP ■



Tikhanovskaya stepped into the race at great personal risk after the detention of her husband, who had hoped to stand himself. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

US central bank unveils alternative to Facebook's Libra



Noting security concerns posed by Facebook's digital currency Libra, the Federal Reserve on Thursday revealed details of its own instant payments system. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON — Noting security concerns posed by Facebook's digital currency Libra, the Federal Reserve on Thursday revealed details of its own instant payments system.

FedNow will provide households and businesses with instant access to payments, for wages, government benefits or sales, without waiting days for checks to clear, the Fed

said. The system, which is not due to launch for two to three years, "will be designed to maintain uninterrupted 24x7x365 processing with security features to

support payment integrity and data security," the central bank said.

Facebook's announcement last year of plans to design the Libra cryptocurrency and payments system raised immediate red flags for global finance officials who expressed a barrage of withering criticism about the security and reliability of a private network.

Facebook's Libra project has "raised other fundamental questions about legal and regulatory safeguards, financial stability, and the appropriate role of private money," Fed Governor Lael Brainard said in a speech Thursday.

But the United States central bank already has experience providing reliable clearing of private payments. —AFP ■

China-EU GI agreement a milestone for bilateral economic, trade cooperation

BEIJING — The European Council recently adopted a decision to authorize the signing of an agreement between the European Union (EU) and China on geographical indications (GIs).

It is China's first comprehensive, high-level bilateral agreement on GIs, and the first major trade agreement between China and the EU in recent years, which marks a significant milestone in the deepening of China-EU economic and trade cooperation. The agreement will protect each side's 100 GIs, prevent counterfeiting of GIs, and enable

consumers on both sides to buy authentic high-quality products.

Four years after coming into force, the agreement will cover an additional 175 GI names from both sides.

According to the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU, Chinese GIs have the right to use the official certification mark of the EU, which will help them gain recognition among local consumers, facilitating the export of Chinese products to the EU, and promoting bilateral trade of agricultural products and food. —Xinhua ■



Farmers harvest jasmine flowers in a field in Liufeng village of Hengxian county, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Aug 23, 2014. Hengxian is one of the main producing areas of jasmine flowers in China, yielding some 80,000 tonnes of fresh jasmine flowers per year and producing 60,000 tonnes of jasmine tea annually. **[PHOTO/XINHUA]**

Trump order targets Chinese internet giants TikTok, WeChat

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump has announced sweeping restrictions against Chinese-owned social media giants TikTok and WeChat, his latest explosive move aimed at countering China's rising global power.

Trump on Thursday signed executive orders giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with the Chinese platforms, effectively setting a deadline for a potential pressured sale of viral video sensation TikTok to Microsoft.

The president cited national security concerns for the moves, which also threw into doubt the American operations of WeChat's parent firm, Tencent, an uber-powerful player in the video gaming industry and one of the

world's richest companies.

Trump has taken an increasingly heavy hammer to US relations with China, challenging it on trade, military and economic fronts, and Thursday's effort provoked more outrage in Beijing. —AFP ■

Japan's key economic index rises in June for 1st time in 5 months

TOKYO — A key index reflecting the current state of the Japanese economy rose in June for the first

time in five months, as the end of a national state of emergency over the novel coronavirus pandemic

paved the way for a gradual resumption of commercial activity, official data showed Friday.

The Cabinet Office's preliminary data for the coincident index of business conditions in the re-

porting month increased 3.5 points from May to 76.4 against the 2015 base of 100, registering the

sharpest rise since comparable figures became available in January 1985. —Kyodo ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2015W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2015W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-8-2020** 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.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY. NO. (1124 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY. NO. (1124 S/N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-8-2020** 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.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HAN XIN

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HAN XIN VOY. NO. (2005)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-8-2020** 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.
Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S INFINITE PROSPERITY SHIPPING PTE LTD

Takeda to supply Novavax's coronavirus vaccine candidate in Japan



Researchers work at a Takeda Pharmaceutical lab in Fujisawa, near Tokyo. (PHOTO COURTESY OF TAKEDA)

TOKYO — Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. said Friday it will produce and sell in Japan a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by U.S. biotechnology firm Novavax Inc.

Novavax, which is carrying out clinical trials for the vaccine candidate, NVX-CoV2373, will licence and transfer manufacturing technologies to Takeda, the two companies said.

Takeda, which will receive funding from Japan's health ministry, anticipates the capacity to

produce over 250 million doses of the vaccine a year.

It will secure regulatory approval in Japan to supply the vaccine.

"Nothing is more important right now than protecting the world against COVID-19. We are excited to collaborate with Novavax to bring their promising vaccine candidate to Japan," Rajeev Venkayya, president of Takeda's global vaccine business unit, said in a statement.

The announcement came as Japan is struggling to stem a resurgence

in coronavirus cases after it appeared to have brought it under control this spring without lockdowns.

NVX-CoV2373 is a vaccine candidate engineered from the genetic sequence of the virus that causes COVID-19, a respiratory disease.

Novavax said it has received funding from the U.S. government to develop an effective COVID-19 vaccine and aims to deliver 100 million doses of NVX-CoV2373 from as early as late 2020.—Kyodo ■

Vietnam's fruit, vegetable exports down in 7 months

HANOI — Vietnam earned nearly 2 billion U.S. dollars from exporting fruits and vegetables in the first seven months of this year, posting a year-on-year decline of 12.3 per cent, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on Friday.

Major export markets of Vietnamese fruits and

vegetables included China, South Korea, the United States and Thailand.

Vietnam is striving to gain 5 billion U.S. dollars from selling fruits and veggies offshore this year, said the ministry.

In the seven-month period, Vietnam spent 708 million U.S. dollars importing fruits and vegetables, down 37.7 per cent against

the same period last year, with China and the United States among the largest suppliers, according to the ministry.

Vietnam reaped a total of 3.8 billion U.S. dollars from exporting vegetables and fruits in 2019, down 1.1 per cent year-on-year, according to the country's General Statistics Office.—Xinhua ■

Chinese WeChat users fear being cut off from US friends

A US ban on the WeChat messaging platform could cut lines of communication between friends in China and America and force people to switch to a replacement, social media users said on Friday.

US President Donald

Trump has announced sweeping restrictions against Chinese-owned WeChat and TikTok, signing executive orders giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with the platforms.

Trump cited national

security concerns, which also threw into doubt the US operations of WeChat's parent firm, Tencent.

WeChat is a messaging, social media, and electronic payment platform and is reported to have more than a billion users.

It is not widely used in the US, but in China it is difficult to do without it as the platform is used by nearly all businesses instead of email.

"People might lose their means of communication," Lu Yifan, a Chinese graduate who used to study in the US, told AFP.

"I think the biggest impact... would be basically losing contact with people in China.—AFP ■



WeChat is a messaging, social media and online payment platform all in one app. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticides registered by Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Singapore) is transferring from **Farm Link Co., Ltd** to **Y Agro Solution Co., Ltd**. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within two weeks.

Sr	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Type of Reg	Reg No
1.	Max Dot 25WP	Metalaxyl 25%WP	Full	F 2017-1359
2.	AGRIMIL 63.5MZ	Metalaxyl 75gm/kg+ Mancozeb 560mg/kg	Full	F 2009 - 683

Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch). Room 209, Rangoun Business Center, No.97. West Shwe Gon Daing Road. Tele: 09-5145328

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticides registered by Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Singapore) is transferring from **Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch)** to **Y Agro Solution Co., Ltd**. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within two weeks.

Sr	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Type of Reg	Reg No
1.	NOVEL 50WP	Iprodione 500g/kg WP	Prov	2014 - 2166
2.	STUNT 250SC	Buprofezin 250g/l SC	Prov	P 2018 - 4391
3.	ULITMATE 10SC	Alpha Cypermethrin 100g/l SC	Prov	P 2018 - 4462
4.	VITASUL 80WDG	Sulfur 80% WDG	Prov	P 2019 - 4528
5.	VITATAP SP	Cartap 500g/Kg SP	Prov	2016 - 2332

Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch). Room 209, Rangoun Business Center, No.97. West Shwe Gon Daing Road. Tele : 09-5145328

Oil leaked from Japanese bulk carrier grounded on reef off Mauritius

TOKYO — A Japanese-owned bulk carrier stranded on a reef off the coast of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean since last month has started leaking oil, the cargo vessel's owner said Friday.

The Panama-flagged tanker Wakashio was found to have run aground on the reef on the night of July 25, according to the Mauritius government. The vessel belongs to Nagashiki Shipping Co. and was operated by transport company Mitsui

O.S.K. Lines Ltd., said a spokesperson of the ship owner in Okayama Prefecture.

The grounding occurred near Pointe d'Esny, an area designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, which is close to Blue Bay Marine Park, another Ramsar site.

Mauritius' environment ministry said in a statement Thursday that it is facing an "environmental crisis situation" and has

barred access to beaches and lagoons on its south-east coast, according to local media reports.

"In order to reduce the impact on the environment, we have put up a fence and commenced recovering the oil," the spokesperson of Nagashiki Shipping said. The vessel was carrying around 200 tonnes of diesel and 3,800 tonnes of bunker fuel, according to the local reports, but it is unknown how much has leaked.—Kyodo ■

Key Challenges for Myanmar on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

(Mar Lar Aung - Culture)

“The cultural heritage of a nation or region is not solely composed of monuments and museum collections, but also of living intangible expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants...” – UNESCO

(CONTINUED FROM 1-8-2020)

In accordance with the Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level in Chapter 3, there is a list of domains under the Convention.

In order to do so, it is necessary to have a proper Inventory Form for Myanmar. Firstly, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has published the 3 Cultural Heritage Handbooks (Yellow, Green and Red) since 2016.

Next, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in cooperation with UNESCO Office (Yangon), related ministries, national ethnic and cultural groups and interested people in the country to attend the national-level seminars on the basis of the UNESCO's Directive Survey. It was successfully conducted at Mingalar Thiri Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw from 17.3.2016 to 18.3.2016. As a result, the comprehensive Myanmar cultural Inventory Form has been developed. It has benefited for the better understanding and implementation of safeguarding cultural heritage and increasing the awareness of the value and sustainability of cultural heritage.

The Inventory Form is used to conduct the survey in the Regions and States to nominate the 2,289 elements in the following five domains:

No Domains	Number
1 Oral Traditional Expressions, including Language as vehicles for Intangible Cultural Heritage	104
2 Performing Arts	506
3 Social Practices, Rituals and Festive events	651
4 Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe	199
5 Traditional Craftsmanship	829
Total	2,289

(Source: Myanmar Intangible Cultural Heritage Secretariat Office)

Actions for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Myanmar; the following efforts are being made to support the development and promotion activities:

- Committee formation
- Developing Policies
- Publication of Booklets on Manuals for ICH (bilingual)
- Field Trips/ Surveys for Inventory
- capacity building of Staff

Committee formation

The safeguarding of cultural heritage is being carried out being led by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture together with cultural practitioners, civil societies, NGOs and local communities in Myanmar. The Myanmar Intangible Cultural



Buddhist nuns line up as they receive donation from the local people in Hopong. **HOTO: KHUN ARKAR TUN (KYAUK TA LONE)**

Heritage Promotion Committee is formed by Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture including Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Sports, Union Attorney-General's Office, State and Region government, expert teams of history and Myanmar language on February 10, 2015.

In addition, the Myanmar Intangible Cultural Heritage Promotion Committee was organized by the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs on March 26, 2019.

The Myanmar Intangible Cultural Heritage Promotion Committee was held its first meeting on December 29, 2017, the second meeting on July 30, 2018 and the third meeting on January 21, 2020. The Committee has been able to nominate the Intangible Cultural Heritage element, Thanaka, for the UNESCO registration. In addition, drafting laws on the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is undertaken.

The education Communities, ICH communities, and the cultural organizations are responsible for raising awareness and capacity building to safeguard and promote the cultural heritage of Myanmar which is diverse and well rooted in rich

quantity. The interested individuals and groups in Myanmar, with the intention to carry out a list of national cultural heritage elements in the states and region, have been trained by the Department of Archeology and the National Museum. Through these trainings, the local communities are now able to actively participate in the collection of national cultural heritage in the states and regions.

The Article 16, 17 and 18 of the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage at the international level which are mentioned in Chapter 4 of the Convention, the Representative List, Urgent Safeguarding List and Register of Safeguarding Practices List are defined.

The expert consultation workshop on Myanmar Thanaka was held on January 20, 2020, at the National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw), organized by the Ministry of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture for a list of representative. The workshop was attended by the Myanmar Trade Promotion Board of the Ministry of Commerce, Department of Intellectual Property of the Ministry of Education, Teachers from Departments of History and Myanmar from universities in the regions and states,

Cultural heritage experts in states and regions, Department of Traditional Medicine at the Ministry of Health and Sports, representatives from Myanmar Thanaka Association and Myanmar Thanaka Exporters Association. The workshop





gathered a wealth of information that could be put into the list of cultures represented by the Myanmar Thanaka culture. Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture; The Department of Archeology and National Museum has submit-

ted Myanmar Thanaka Culture to the UNESCO Heritage Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Living Heritage Entity, Culture Sector on March 30, 2020.

According to the International Cooperation and As-

sistance in Chapter 5 of the Convention, with the support of Norway Government, to enhance the capacity of staff at Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture to work in relation to cultural heritage, the training workshops were held in Nay Pyi Taw, from 25-11-2013 to 26.11/2013, in Mandalay, from 19.5.2014 to 24.5.2014, in Shan State Inlay area from 27.10.2014 to 3.11.2014 and in Taunggyi from 14.9-2015 to 19.9-2015. As a result of these workshops, the support of the national staff has been a great help in the implementation of safeguarding the intangible culture.

In respect of the contribution of the Cultural Heritage Fund, Chapter 6, the final part of the Convention, the contributions are made annually to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and population ratio. Myanmar has an annual heritage payment of around US \$ 300 to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage programmes.

As a result, while the government is taking the leading role to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage in line with the international policies and practices, all stakeholders, having confidence, are urged to give hand in hand with the government to the sustainability of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Myanmar.

Challenges

Ultimately, it is crucial that Myanmar has put forth a National ICH Inventory in ac-

cordance with the UNESCO convention. As recommended within the convention, future goals should encompass the adoption of a general policy aimed at promoting the function of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in society as well as incorporating the safeguarding of such heritage into strategic programmes and projects. In order to execute such initiatives, a competent body needs to be established to help safeguard the intangible cultural heritage present in Myanmar.

Furthermore, adequate research needs to be carried out to determine ICH elements in danger of disappearing and which methods can be used to curb this issue. The focal Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture is therefore strongly encouraged to adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative, and financial measures aimed at facilitating the establishment and strengthening of institutions which engage in ICH training, management, documentation, and transmission.

Access to ICH must also be ensured as the Convention reminds us that communities must identify with the ICH and the inventories on which they are based. Education, awareness raising, and capacity building are essential tools required to teach, engage, and learn from communities, groups, and individuals involved with ICH activities and transmission. We must gain their participation in all processes while tapping into UNESCO. UNESCO offers cooperation and international assistance; therefore, Myanmar has a plethora of opportunities for funding, knowledge and best practices.

- Safeguarding ICH: ensuring its viability (continued enactment and transmission) within communities/groups
- Awareness raising
- Sharing and celebrating
- Dialogue, respect for cultural diversity
- International cooperation and assistance

In this context, the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage offers an important and ongoing space for dialogue, ideas and cooperation. It proposes an empowering platform where all communities and their wisdom are on an equal footing with other developmental approaches. The Convention's consideration for existing international human

rights instruments and sustainable development lend further strength to the framework.

Integrating intangible cultural heritage into present-day debate, policies, programmes and strategies surrounding sustainable development is now a matter of urgency. In this regard, the future discussion and action with four specific dimensions are to be focused:

- (i) inclusive social development;
- (ii) inclusive economic development;
- (iii) environmental sustainability;
- (iv) Peace and security.

Each of these dimensions can be viewed from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage — as is shown in the narrated cases of the exhibition. It includes cases like, the excitement of the Frevo carnival in Brazil's Pernambuco State, which demonstrates how the diverse communities of Recife can live together in harmony and how their shared intangible heritage supports a cohesive society.

The spirit behind the surveys and field trips related to ICH Inventory and Awareness raising is that UNESCO's belief that culture should be considered a fundamental enabler of sustainability, a source of meaning and energy, a wellspring of creativity and innovation, and a resource to address challenges and find appropriate solutions.

Recommendations

It is recommended in UNESCO meetings that the integration of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage into cultural policies and training sessions on policy development in the context of broader capacity-building projects as well as in emergencies and post-disaster contexts. The activities of ICH awareness and promotion call for the involvement of stakeholders (government, civil society, communities) in the process of developing policies and initiatives related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Post Covid 19 New Normal activities. The national level focal ministry like Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has to strengthen tools for effective plan of action to improve effectiveness of its policy support. This will include the revision guidance note for facilitators and related ministries who get involved.



A vendor sells Thanaka in Bagan. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN(NLM)





Football authorities focus on Myanmar National League's preparations at the coordination meeting in Yangon on 6 August. **PHOTO:MNL**

MFF discusses preparations for Myanmar National League

FOOTBALL authorities from Myanmar Football Federation held a coordination meeting at the headquarters of the MFF on 6 August to focus on special preparations for Myanmar National League with Standard Operating Procedure, according to the MFF.

MFF General Secretary U Ko Ko Thein, Myanmar National League CEO U Soe Moe Kyaw, and officials from MFF and MNL attended the meeting.

During the meeting, football authorities discuss football matters concerned with Myanmar National League matches holding by obeying the strict Standard Operating Procedure set up by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Officials also focused on restarting the Myanmar National League matches on 22 August 2020 if government gives permission to hold the matches within a couple of weeks, arrangements

for the MNL football players to stay in the Team Camp to secure Camp Quarantine so as to prevent from the pandemic infections, to release detailed fixtures of the MNL matches to football fans when the government's permission is received and to conduct swab tests for all the MNL players in line with the guidelines by the Ministry of Health and Sports, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Woods off to solid start at PGA thanks to putting change

SAN FRANCISCO — Tiger Woods took a page out of the Champions Tour playbook on Thursday (Aug 6) to shoot a solid two-under 68 in the first round of the PGA Championship.

The 44-year-old Woods, who has battled back problems for several years, switched to a longer putter for the first major championship of the season and says he it makes him feels more comfortable over the ball.

"I've been messing around with this putter for the better part of over a year. It's difficult for me to bend over at times," Woods said.

"Before, it wasn't unusual for me to spend four, five, six hours putting, per day. I certainly can't log that with my back being fused.

"Most of the guys on the Champions Tour have gone to longer putters as they have gotten older, because it's easier to bend over, or not bend over."

While the reigning Masters champion is certainly not ready for the PGA's 50-and-over tour, the 15-time major champion - a four-time PGA Championship winner - is not getting any younger, which means he has to be willing to adapt his game.

The first indication that the putter was going spark Woods on Thursday was a 32-foot birdie putt on his fourth hole of the day, the 13th, that got him to two-under par.—AFP ■

Sevilla and Leverkusen sweep into Europa League quarter-finals

PARIS — Sevilla cruised past Roma 2-0 in a one-off Europa League round of 16 tie on Thursday while Bayer Leverkusen beat visiting Rangers 1-0 in a second-leg game to win 4-1 on aggregate and also make the quarter-finals.

The two matches were played 50 kilometres apart in the Rhineland region of Germany, which will also host the last three rounds of the competition from August 10-21.

In both games temperatures were hovering around 33 degrees Celsius at kick off.

Sevilla and Roma met in Duisburg, a neutral venue, because the first leg in Sevilla on March 12 was called off.

The coronavirus pandemic cost each team a player.

Roma were deprived of on-loan centre back Chris Smalling, recalled by Manchester United after the Serie A season ended on August 1. Sevilla were without Serbian midfielder Nemanja Gudelj, an ever-present in the



Up for the cup: Sevilla's Sergio Reguilon celebrates his goal against Roma. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

competition this season, who is in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19. The Spaniards had the advantage of a 17-day break after the end of La Liga. Roma played at Juventus in Serie A on Saturday. The Spaniards dominated and took the lead after 22 minutes. Captain and right back

Jesus Navas switched play with a cross-field pass to left back Sergio Reguilon that caught Roma flat-footed. Reguilon surged past two defenders and into

the box before sliding a low shot past Spanish goalkeeper Pau Lopez's foot. Roma did not create a dangerous chance until the 34th minute when Nicolò Zaniolo pounced on a loose ball but fired over.—AFP ■

NSW offers to host coronavirus-threatened Australian Open



America's Sofia Kenin won the women's Australian Open title in January. **PHOTO: SAEED KHAN AFP**

SYDNEY — New South Wales offered to host the Australian Open tennis Grand Slam and other major sports events in Sydney Friday as Melbourne battles a surge in coronavirus cases.

The state's deputy premier John Barilaro said he had written to sports bodies and officials in neighbouring Victoria, whose capital is Melbourne, suggesting they could help out.

Australia's world number 40 Nick Kyrgios has already voiced concern about the Australian Open, scheduled for January. The Melbourne Cup horse race

is due to take place in November and the city usually hosts the AFL grand final, another annual highlight.

"Some of these events down in Victoria are national events," Barilaro told commercial radio 2GB.

"It's important for the economy, important for the Australian psyche when it comes to sport."

"Absolutely we should be able to work with Victorians to find ways to make sure these all happen, these events are far too important in this crisis to not have," he added.—AFP ■