In this case, one person cannot be the same as the other. For me, I feel as though I enter a new world when I read. My mind penetrates the restrictions of the four walls and flies through the freedom of space; there I encounter times periods I have not known, regions I have never seen and new ideas I have never imagined before. Wouldn't it be nice if you could also see new worlds while you stay at home during the COVID restriction period?

Together with other COVID relaxation of restrictions, my Facebook posting programme will be relaxed to three times a week on the days when I don’t have any COVID-related videoconferences. However, I will pray and send “metta” to all citizens of the Union to be able to overcome all challenges in good health and peace of mind.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)
Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives donation of masks

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received facemasks donated by Jiang Nan International Company Limited yesterday. A total of 30,000 masks will be distributed to the staff members of Amyotha Hluttaw Office for prevention of COVID-19.

The donation ceremony was also attended by Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, and the director-general and the deputy directors-general of Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)
Hluttaw organizing central committee, work committees prepare for 17th regular session

THE Central Committee and Work Committees for organizing Hluttaw held a coordination meeting (3/2020) to prepare for the 17th regular session of the Second Hluttaws at Hluttaw Building, Zabuthiri Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat said that the 16th regular session of the Second Hluttaws was successfully held with cooperation of the work committees and Hluttaw office staff amid the huge challenge of COVID-19 crisis.

He added that it was already announced that the 17th regular session of the Second Hluttaw meetings would commence on 13 July 2020. The Speaker continued to say that some bills including National Planning Bill, the Union Tax Bill, and the Union Budget Bill, and the Union Tax Bill for 2020-2021 financial year will be discussed in the upcoming session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

He also said that Hluttaw representatives have already been informed that they must arrive in Nay Pyi Taw by 10 July in order to be tested with nasal swab on 11 July in accordance with the guidelines of the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, and the test results will be reported on 12 July.

The Hluttaw Speaker also highlighted the need to have cooperation among the Union Government, the relevant ministries, the work committees and the Hluttaw representatives for the 17th regular session of the Second Hluttaw meetings and, to ensure security and health of the Hluttaw representatives.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khang Tha, in his capacity as the Central Committee Patron, said that all relevant ministries, departments, organizations, and officials need to collaborate with each other in order that the 17th regular session of the Second Hluttaw to be held successfully.

Union Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, the directors-general of relevant ministries and other officials presented their plans and arrangements for the upcoming Hluttaw session, followed by the discussions work committees. The coordination meeting was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Aung, Union Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, secretaries of relevant work committees and officials from Hluttaw offices.

26th ASEAN-China Senior Officials’ Consultation held via videoconference

U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar participated in the videoconference of the 26th ASEAN-China Senior Officials’ Consultation yesterday at 8:30 am, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The 26th ASEAN-China Senior Officials’ Consultation was co-chaired by Ms Juenever M Mahilum-West, SOM Leader of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. The Meeting was attended by Senior Officials from the ASEAN Member States and the Deputy Secretary-General for Political and Security Community of ASEAN.

At the Meeting, the Senior Officials exchanged views on the developments in ASEAN and China, regional and international issues, ASEAN-China cooperation in the areas of political and security, economic, social and culture as well as future direction of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership.

Under the agenda on Regional and International Issues, Permanent Secretary U Soe Han led the discussion on ASEAN Plus Three, East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). He appreciated China for its continued support to ASEAN-led mechanisms and ASEAN Centrality. He also highlighted the developments of cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries in all sectors including in the fight against COVID-19, progress in the implementation of the Manila Plan of Action to advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the East Asia Summit Development Initiative (2018-2022), ongoing discussion on Hanoi Declaration on the 15th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit and China’s contribution to the ARF processes.

Present at the Meeting were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — MNA
Volunteers, CSOs honoured for fight against COVID-19

The National-Level Volunteer Steering Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment on COVID-19 praised the volunteers and civil society organizations which participated in the fight against COVID-19 in Kachin State yesterday. The ceremony was held at the Education College, temporarily used as a quarantine centre, Myitkyina. Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye attended the ceremony together with the officials from relevant departments. Certificates of honour for the volunteers and civil society organizations were presented through the Chief Minister of Kachin State, and badges, masks and hand sanitizers to the representatives of volunteers and civil society organizations. A total of K3,390,000 from the ministry’s fund was given to the health officials at the quarantine centre—K10,000 each for 31 pregnant women, 61 children under 5 and 21 elderly persons 60 years old and above. The certificates of honour will be given to 1,830 volunteers and 79 civil society groups.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Volunteers, CSOs honoured for fight against COVID-19

Four new cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 1 July, total figure reaches 303

Updated at 8 pm, 1 July 2020

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 1 July 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact with positive patient</th>
<th>Overseas travel history</th>
<th>Hospital for medical treatment</th>
<th>Lab result</th>
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<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hlegu Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, UAE</td>
<td>South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Dagon Myothit Township (South))</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Kayan Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Thakayta Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, England</td>
<td>South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Hlegu Township)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, England</td>
<td>South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Hlegu Township)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

You are not the only one under pressure from COVID-19, but all of society is and that fact can help to build compassion among the public. Compassion can reduce hatred between individuals and accept issues for resolving together. Anxiety can be reduced by this method and everyone should try hard to face and overcome COVID-19 issues.—Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Unit)
Myanmar takes part in 32nd Joint Meeting of UNWTO Commission

THE 32nd Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (32nd CAP-CSA) was held online on 30 June.

Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Tin Latt, the director-general, the directors-general, the directors, ministers and high-ranking officials from the UNWTO Asia-Pacific Member States, representatives from partner countries, principals from the universities of Hong Kong and Macau and senior officials from UNWTO participated in the online meeting.

Mr Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, explained works and activities, followed by the discussions of representatives from Asia-Pacific countries on resuming tourism businesses, the interventions by CAP/CSA Ministers on policy issues in response to COVID-19, and innovation and technology in tourism investment.

Deputy Minister U Tin Latt discussed Myanmar relief plan from the impacts of pandemic, the use of state budget for recovery plan in tourism industry, promotion of this business under the COVID-19 Myanmar Tourism Strategic Road Map and coordination with international organizations.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

47 Myanmar seamen brought back home from Singapore

A special flight of Myanmar Airways International landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday, with 47 Myanmar seamen who were stranded in Singapore.

They were in Singapore awaiting crew change and services on international vessels before they were brought back with the arrangement of their company from the Changi International Airport.

As they arrived in Yangon, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks.

As per the directives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and in coordination with other relevant ministries in Myanmar and the Myanmar embassies in respective countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged the repatriation of Myanmar people, including seamen stranded in foreign ports.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

158 Myanmar nationals return home from China via Lashio by train

LOCAL authorities in Lashio Township of northern Shan State helped 158 persons in their return homes in different regions and states by a train yesterday.

They came back to Myanmar from China via border towns Muse, Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Laukkai and Chinshwehaw.

A total of 11,693 Myanmar nationals have arrived back home through border crossings until 1 July.—Nang Thandar Oo (Translated by Aung Khin)

35 Thai nationals return home via Tachilek border crossing

A total of 35 Thai nationals who were working legally in Myanmar returned home through border crossing in Tachilek Township, eastern Shan state, yesterday.

Immigration officials and members of Caring and Negotiating Committee for Myanmar Citizens (CNCMC), the Tachilek-based social organization, arranged the repatriation of 24 men and 11 women in coordination with Thai immigration personnel and health officials.—Yarsae (IPRD) (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

MoSWRR carries out COVID-19 preventive measures at the IDP’s camps

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have been carrying out prevention, control and response measures against COVID-19 at the IDP’s camps in the country in cooperation with relevant departments and organizations.

The Ministry carried out the COVID-19 preventive measures at IDP’s camps in Rakhine State. Officials provided 3,181 bars of soap and 34 lime sacks to the 6 IDP’s camps in Buthidaung township, Rakhine State yesterday. The ministry have not been implementing COVID-19 preventive, control and response measures but providing psychological support in the regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.—MNA (Translated by YHT)
Traditional cart businesses get good income in Kyaukse

WITH the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) extending the suspension of all international flights till 31 July, Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) cannot fly until 1 August, according to MNA.

MNA is one of the airlines preparing to fly to Singapore, Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Hong Kong. At present, those who have bought the MNA air tickets can demand the refund from the airline, according to the MNA.

Myanmar Airways International (MAI) has announced that their international flights to Bangkok and Singapore are also suspended till 31 July, according to MAI.

However, the Guangzhou and Seoul flights will be operated as relief flights when they get permission, according to MAI. Although the Department of Civil Aviation has restricted the operation of international flights till 31 July, the domestic flights are permitted to be operated inside the country, according to the Yangon International Airport. — Thae Cho

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Mount Popa Pagoda reopens for local pilgrims

THE local pilgrims are allowed to visit Mount Popa Pagoda located in Kyaukpadaung Township in Mandalay Region starting from 30 June on condition that the pilgrims comply with the coronavirus rules and restrictions, according to the Mount Popa pagoda board of trustees.

Because of the outbreak of coronavirus, the Mount Popa pagoda board of trustees announced that beginning from 31 March, the local visitors would be allowed to visit Mount Popa only if they could produce the health certificates issued by the related township health department. So, there have been no pilgrims visiting Mount Popa Pagoda. Now, the local pilgrims are allowed to visit the pagoda in the event of abidance by the coronavirus rules and regulations, according to a member of Mount Popa pagoda board of trustees.

“Now, the pagoda board of trustees allows entry of the pilgrims. However, the pilgrims have to stick to coronavirus restrictions imposed. We are taking record of the pilgrims’ information such as their addresses or phone numbers. We are also making arrangements for keeping the water basins for the visitors to clean their hands,” he added.

To be able to prevent the spreading of the viral disease in the pagoda, the local travellers need to wear facemasks and clean their hands. The pagoda board of trustees will check the local travellers’ body temperature and allow them to visit Mount Popa Pagoda if they do not have a high fever.

The monkeys in Mount Popa area are lucky enough to have sufficient feeds because the feeds are donated by the local residents from the villages near Mount Popa. The monkeys are fed three times a day by the pagoda board of trustees. — Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April. — MNA
YANGON Region tops foreign investments among the regions and states, attracting more than 600 enterprises over the four years of the incumbent government, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Over the past four years, Yagon Region stood at the first place with 665 foreign enterprises, followed by Bago Region with 76 foreign projects at the second place and Mandalay, with 56 at the third place.

Additionally, foreign direct investments also flow into Ayeyawady Region from Kayin Region six, Kayin from five, Rakhine from four, and Kayah from two, the DICA stated.

The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engaging in the production of pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis.

The investments in the regions also flowing into the hotel services, and other services sectors as well. To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

According to statistics released by the DICA, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states receive only a small share of investments.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective investment committees have granted permits and endorsements to 905 foreign enterprises between 2016-2017 Fiscal Year and as of May-end in the 2019-2020 FY, with estimated capitals of US$22.39 billion.

The FDIs flow into the 12 sectors; oil and gas, power, transportation and communication, real estate, hotels and tourism, mining, livestock and fisheries, industrial estate, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and other service sectors.

Power sector tops the investment line-up, followed by oil and natural gas in the second place, followed by the third place. Of 51 foreign countries, Singapore put the largest investments, followed by China and Thailand.

The MIC is prioritizing the labour-intensive businesses. In the incumbent government period, domestic and foreign projects employ over 500,000 local residents, according to the DICA. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Phoe Khwar

A file photo shows workers seen on a production line at a garment factory in Hlinethaya.

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

THE prices of Myanmar rice in the export market were low in the last two months (May and June), according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The foreign market purchases Myanmar rice at the price is quite cheaper than other Asian countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam, said an official of Bayintnaung commodity depot. In June, the prices of white rice ranged US$395 to 440 per metric tonnes depending on quality, whereas the parboiled price was priced US$453 per MT. Yet, the prices are higher than those market prices of India and Pakistan, MRF’s data showed.

The price of rice currently move in the range of K39,000-54,000 per 108-pound bag of Pawsan varieties, while low-quality rice fetched K21,500-23,500 in the domestic market. The prices of quality varieties are seen flat rate in the domestic market as well, MRF data showed.

Next, the country has the rice reserve scheme for emergency case beyond self-sufficiency in the domestic market. Myanmar’s rice export has returned to normal in May, according to the MRF.

At present, local market constitutes over 70 per cent of production, whereas 20 per cent go to the export market. The exporters earlier sold 10 per cent of total export volume (25 per cent broken, well-milled and sorted rice), stated in the export declaration as country’s reserved rice.

Starting from July, the rice volume for reserve will be cut to 5 per cent from 10 per cent of total rice export.

The state has purchased about 34,000 tonnes of rice from over 120 companies as of 12 June and the rice has been stored at nine warehouses in Mandalay, Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, in line with the set rules and regulations, MRF stated.

According to the coordination meeting held on 26 June 2020, 150,000 tonnes of rice will be exported each in July and August. And, 100,000 tonnes of rice will be sent to the external market in September, totalling rice export quota of 400,000 tonnes.

MRF stated that Myanmar has shipped over 2.044 million tonnes of rice and broken rice as of 12 June since October in the current fiscal, generating US$605.907 million.

The federation has been accelerating its effort to meet the rice export target of 2.4 million tonnes in the current financial year 2019-2020. — Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

THE annual rate of inflation in Myanmar, based on the Consumer Price Index, stood at 8.35 per cent in May 2020, according to a report released by the Central Statistical Organization under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The figure has remained above 8 per cent since June 2019. The inflation rate stood at 7.28 per cent in March 2019 and gradually inclined. It reached a peak of 8.61 per cent in September and dipped in November. It touched the highest level of 8.81 per cent in December 2019 because of the high season.

Afterwards, despite the drop in fuel oil price and gain in local currency, power tariff hike led to higher inflation rate up to 9.2 per cent in February 2020. Then, it gradually declined.

The inflation rate was registered at 8.35 per cent in May 2020, and so, the month May has witnessed a small decrease of 0.48 per cent against April’s rate. The core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, was 13 per cent in February. The Myanmar Kyat weakened against the US dollar in May. The imported oil price and gold price slightly rose in May compared with April’s rates, causing food price to slightly increase.

Nevertheless, there was a remarkable increase in CPI in the household goods and maintenance, other commodities, clothing, health, education services, recreation, culture, non-food and tobacco and beverages groups. The price of telecommunications dropped.

In May, Ayeawady Region recorded the highest inflation rate at 12.79 per cent, followed by Magway Region at 12.28 per cent, and Nay Pyi Taw at 10.39 per cent. The rate fluctuated with a maximum rate of 8.66 per cent in Ayeyawady Region and a minimum rate of 0.52 per cent in Sagaing Region.

Earlier, the inflation rate was calculated based on a 2006 survey. The base year was later changed to 2012. The Central Statistical Organization conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in November 2012. To reduce the inflation rate, the concerned authorities have been making efforts on the basis of policies on finance, currency, trade, and foreign currency control, in keeping with the second five-year National Development Plan (2016-2021) and the 2019-2020 FY. — Htet Myat (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)
Livestock breeding rehabilitation during COVID period

By Min Min Zaw, Hnin Win (MNA), Photo: Poe Zaw (Kalay)

The longer COVID stretches on the more it affects livestock breeding businesses and make it hard for SMEs in that industry to recuperate. The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is increasing its efforts in livestock breeding and employment opportunities.

**Special action plans**

The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is attempting to curb the spread of veterinary diseases during COVID-19 so that farmers can go on with their business in a normal way.

The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is making preparations to ensure that the 2020 general elections meet five standards: they are free, fair, transparent, reliable, and harmonious with the people’s desire.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a free and fair election demands not only ensuring eligibility voters don't lose their votes but also that they are safe from infection of coronavirus.

When it comes to voting, we have no other choice between their health and their democracy.

Due to COVID-19, we cannot let this virus undermine our elections. Increasing voting options only strengthens democracy. Voting is a right that people have. We need to act now to hold a democratic general election.

We should be prepared for any emergency that might make voting impossible, either due to health conditions or for those who are away from their homes.

It is the duty of the government to have contingency plans in place in the event of any emergency that might affect the process of elections. There should be sufficient arrangements to ensure the safety of the people who are working in the elections.

As Digital Director (Sy)'s article points out, a reliable Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is working hard to provide the best services and assistance to the people in rural areas.

Livestock breeding is important for livelihood for people in rural areas. Despite the challenges, the government has been working to increase livestock revenue as the main source of income for rural people.

The UEC is making preparations to ensure that the 2020 general elections meet five standards: they are free, fair, transparent, reliable, and harmonious with the people’s desire.

In the elections, 230 seats would be contested in the Pyithu Hluttaw and 168 in the Amyotha Hluttaw, or 12 for each general election.

The “Boogaloo” movement (supporters pictured April 2020 in Olympia, Washington), which has adopted Hawaiian shirts as a uniform, promotes “a coming civil war and/or insurrection” against the government.

The “Boogaloo” movement is a terrorist organization that is planning to use violence to instigate violence and to cause economic disruption. It is a right that people have. There should be sufficient arrangements to ensure the safety of the people who are working in the elections.

There will be over 40,000 polling stations nationwide for the 2020 general elections. Facebook boots far-right network and boosts original news priority as it remains un- der a joint-venture system with short-video app. The disrupted network was loosely affiliated with the “Boogaloo” movement, whose followers have been accused of recent protests while heavily armed, the Silicon Valley company said.

The group is distinct from the broader “Boogaloo” movement in that it actively seeks to commit violence, Facebook said in a blog post.

This is the latest step in our commitment to ban people who proclaim a violent mission from using our platform,” Facebook said. The social network reported that it removed 220 Facebook accounts and another 95 Instagram accounts, along with 28 pages and 118 groups “that currently comprise the network.”

Facebook added that it also took down more than 300,000 pieces of content from more than 100 other pages where similar content was posted.

The Facebook Stephon Clark video was removed because Stephon was not involved in any violent behavior. The Facebook Stephon Clark video was removed because Stephon was not involved in any violent behavior. The Facebook Stephon Clark video was removed because Stephon was not involved in any violent behavior.

The longer COVID stretches on the more it affects livestock breeding businesses and make it hard for SMEs in that industry to recuperate. The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is increasing its efforts in livestock breeding and employment opportunities.

The Director-General of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is trying to ensure that the livestock industry remains stable by implementing cold chain storage and utilizing K1440 million from the Un- ion Government to implement it.

Support funds & loans

The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is also contributing to the Village Capital Raising Project that the Bu- ral Development Department will implement. In association with the World Bank, small-scale farmers and breed- ers can prepare for the monsoon season.

These farmers are currently not receiving regular income due to low sales.

The World Bank loan of US$ 2 million will be used to boost the livestock and poultry sector in townships, as part of setting up up-to-date livestock veterinary system.

The federation is working to curb the spread of livestock diseases, prevent the spread of diseases, and make it hard for SMEs in that industry to recuperate.

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Modi says growing negligence a worry amid rapid rise in virus cases

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Tuesday addressed the nation saying that although the country’s death rate from the new coronavirus is under control, citizens are becoming increasingly negligent about following safety precautions amid a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases.

“Earlier, we were very careful with respect to wearing of masks, social distancing and washing of hands for 20 seconds. But today, when we need to be more careful, increasing negligence is a cause of worry,” Modi said.

His address came a day after the interior ministry announced the second set of guidelines for the restart of economic activities, which first came to a halt in the country on March 25.

The first set of guidelines, issued by the government on May 30, outlined that economic activities in the country would be reopened in phases depending on how well the virus had been brought under control.

But since lockdown restrictions were lifted in June, cases have gone up, making India the world’s fourth-worst affected country.

“Rules were followed very strictly during the lockdown. Now governments, local bodies and citizens, need to show similar alertness...those not following the rules will need to be stopped and cautioned,” Modi said during his address.

The guidelines announced by the interior ministry on Monday indicated that the designated COVID-19 containment zones would remain under lockdown until July 31.

Schools, colleges and other educational institutions will remain closed nationwide and only be allowed to reopen after July 31, pending a further assessment of the situation.

The ministry also said that international flights, except those permitted by the ministry, metro rail, theaters and entertainment parks, will continue to be prohibited until further notice.

SOURCE: Kyodo

Eisai to start clinical trial of experimental drug for COVID-19

JAPANESE pharmaceutical firm Eisai Co. is set to start clinical trials in the United States of its experimental drug eritoran in the battle against coronavirus, with results potentially available by the year-end, the company said Wednesday.

Eisai will test eritoran, initially developed to treat severe sepsis, in conjunction with a novel anti-flu drug Avigan, also known as favipiravir.

Eisai’s clinical trials to treat sepsis ended in 2011 due to disappointing results but it hopes eritoran, designed to suppress an overactive immune response, will help treat COVID-19 patients while preventing damage to their lungs and other organs.

The project, which will eventually recruit up to 500 test patients globally, will be carried out under the international framework “Randomized, Embedded, Multifactorial, Adaptive Platform trial for Community-Acquired Pneumonia,” which develops coronavirus treatments.

Among other Japanese firms in the race for COVID-19 treatments, a Fujifilm Holdings Corp. chemical arm is conducting clinical tests of its anti-flu drug Avigan, also known as favipiravir.

SOURCE: Kyodo

COVID-19 not significantly impacting Russian army: defence minister

THE COVID-19 pandemic is not significantly impacting Russia’s armed forces, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said during a conference call on Tuesday.

“The preparation plan for the winter training period is almost completed. For the summer period, only a small part of the activities was postponed,” Shoigu said, adding that the planned rearmament of the army and navy continued despite the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the year, 776 units of the latest weapons and vehicles have been delivered to troops, including 58 airplanes and helicopters, over 140 armored combat vehicles and 510 multi-purpose vehicles, Shoigu said, adding that the navy has received a strategic missile submarine and two support vessels.

“The planned progressive development of the armed forces and a qualitative increase in the level of their condition will continue in the second half of the year,” he said.

SOURCE: Xinhua

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on Tuesday offered congressional lawmakers different views on how quickly the U.S. economy would recover from the COVID-19 pandemic amid the resurgence in cases in a number of states.

“While the unemployment rate is still historically high, we are seeing additional signs that conditions will improve significantly in the third and fourth quarters of this year,” he said, adding the recovery has been uneven across industries.

“Certain industries such as construction are recovering quickly, while others such as retail and travel are facing longer impacts and may require additional relief,” said the treasury secretary.

Acknowledging that recent economic data offer some positive signs, Powell warned that the sooner-than-expected reopening of the U.S. economy has brought “new challenges” for the country.

“While this bounce back in economic activity is welcome, it also presents new challenges, notably the need to keep the virus in check,” Powell said at the same hearing, adding the path forward for the economy remains “extraordinarily uncertain” and will depend in large part on the success in containing the virus.

“A full recovery is unlikely to occur until people are confident that it’s safe to engage in a broad range of activities. The path forward will also depend on policy actions taken at all levels of government to provide relief and support for the recovery as long as needed,” he said.

SOURCE: Xinhua
WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump has approved a plan to slash the US military presence in Germany by 9,500 troops, the Defence Department said Tuesday.

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said the move, which has sparked concerns in Berlin and in the NATO alliance, is to redeploy the troops and “will enhance Russian deterrence, strengthen and in the NATO alliance, is to redeploy the troops” said Hoffman. He gave no details on when the reductions would happen or whether the troops would be redeployed to another NATO country. He said the Pentagon would brief Congress on the plan “in the coming weeks” and then consult allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization “on the way forward.”

Pentagon officials say that if the reduction takes place, some of the troops could be sent to former Eastern Bloc countries — some on a permanent basis but most in short-term rotations — to send a message to Moscow. Worries about possible Russian expansionism surged in NATO countries after Moscow sent troops in 2014 to seize the Crimea region from Ukraine. While Polish leader Andrej Duda visited Washington last week, Trump said some of the US troops could go to Poland. “Some will be coming home and some will be going to other places. Poland would be one of those other places,” he said.

Trump complained Berlin is not spending enough on defense and is not treating the United States “badly” on trade. —AFP ■

Brazil education minister resigns over CV ‘lies’

BRASILIA—Brazil’s education minister resigned Tuesday only five days after he was appointed, amid accusations that he lied over his academic record.

Carlos Alberto Decotelli was the first black person to be appointed to the government of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. Decotelli handed in his resignation to Bolsonaro in Brasilia, said a spokesman, Paulo Roberto, capping several days of controversy. Bolsonaro named Decotelli last week as replacement for Abraham Weintraub, who resigned in mid-June after becoming embroiled in a series of controversies, including making racist anti-Chinese comments on Twitter. Decotelli had claimed he held a Master’s degree from Brazil’s Getulio Vargas Foundation, a doctorate from Argentina’s National University of Rosario and a post-doctorate from Germany’s Wuppertal University. But these claims came under scrutiny within days of his appointment, leading much of the Brazilian media to refer to him as the “future ex-minister.”

The academic credentials had been vaunted by Bolsonaro in a tweet announcing his appointment last week. As early as Friday, however, Rosario University’s rector said Decotelli had not obtained a doctorate there and had never defended his thesis. —AFP ■

Austria issues highest travel warning for Western Balkans

VIENNA—The Austrian foreign ministry on Wednesday issued the highest warning against traveling to the Western Balkan countries as coronavirus infections there have risen sharply.

The level 6 travel warning, which means travellers from those countries have to undergo a 14-day self-quarantine or present a negative coronavirus test result, apply to countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, according to a tweet from the foreign ministry.

There will be increased controls over the borders, said Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg at a press conference here. “We were able to lift the travel restrictions for 32 European countries,” he said, but the normality of freedom to travel is still “miles away.” Health Minister Rudolf Anschober said that new coronavirus infection figures in the Western Balkans are “problematic,” stressing the need for concrete measures to contain the outbreak. —Xinhua ■
EU lifts restrictions on travel from Japan, 13 other countries

BRUSSELS—The European Union on Wednesday lifted travel restrictions for visitors from 14 countries outside the bloc, including Japan and South Korea, after introducing the curbs in March in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The European Union is seeking to revive its virus-hit economy ahead of the summer holiday season by removing entry bans on countries with virus infection rates similar to, or below, that of its own.

Individual EU member nations can still impose their own measures on visitors from the 14 countries, including requiring them to quarantine. The other 12 on the list are Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uruguay. Japan has an entry ban in place for about 130 countries and regions, including the EU nations. Since the EU seeks reciprocity on the lifting of restrictions, the bloc is set to cut in Tokyo to ease its measures. Japan’s top spokesman, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, welcomed the EU’s action, saying Brussels has taken into account the fact that the number of infections appears to have peaked in Japan, and that the move was based on warm Japan-EU relations.—KYODO

Saudi triples VAT in unpopular virus-led austerity push

RIYADH—Saudis braced Wednesday for a tripling in value added tax, another unpopular austerity measure after the twin shocks of coronavirus and an oil price slump triggered the kingdom’s worst economic decline in decades.

Retailers in the country reported a sharp uptick in sales this week of everything from gold and electronics to air conditioner, television, electronic items, “Air conditioner, television, electronic items,” he said, rattling off a list of items he bought last week ahead of the VAT hike.—AFP

EUROPE / AD
2 JULY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Submission of EIA study of Appraisal Drilling in Block M9, Offshore Myanmar

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI) plans to drill an appraisal wells in Offshore Block M9 with purpose to prove the boundary and characteristic of the reservoir. This appraisal drilling campaign will support the Zawtika Gas Field Project by maintaining gas supply for future energy requirements. The campaign will include the drilling of up to seventeen (17) wells in Block M9 which is located in the Gulf of Mottama, Andaman Sea, approximately 300 km from Yangon and 195 km west from Dawei, Taninthayi coastal zone.

In accordance with the Myanmar EIA procedure (2015), PTTEPI is required to undertake an EIA study to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the proposed activity. PTTEPI will conduct this assessment in accordance with the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) and Environmental Protection and Treatment Engineering (EPTE).

Feedback to the report can be informed to PTTEPI by contact the following phone number +95 (1) 602700

US private hiring rebounds, adding 2.4 mn jobs in June: ADP

WASHINGTON — Industries hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic showed signs of life in June, hiring 2.4 million workers, payroll services firm ADP said Wednesday. The three million hires in the month were in the leisure and hospitality, trade and construction industries. “In fact, 70 per cent of the jobs added this month were in the leisure and hospitality industry,” said Ahu Yildirim, vice president and co-head of the ADP Research Institute. “In fact, 70 per cent of the jobs added this month were in the leisure and hospitality industry,” said Ahu Yildirim, vice president and co-head of the ADP Research Institute. “In fact, 70 per cent of the jobs added this month were in the leisure and hospitality industry,” said Ahu Yildirim, vice president and co-head of the ADP Research Institute. “In fact, 70 per cent of the jobs added this month were in the leisure and hospitality industry,” said Ahu Yildirim, vice president and co-head of the ADP Research Institute.

The lockdowns saw air travel plunge by 94.3 percent in April compared with the same month last year, when measured by kilometres travelled by paying passengers. IATA, the leading trade association for the aviation industry, believes the recovery in air travel is likely to be determined not only by the pace of restrictions being lifted but also by the extent health worries keep people from traveling. IATA expects the recovery to begin in domestic air travel, then extend to continental travel and finally, at the end of the year, to long-haul intercontinental flights.

It sees air travel returning to its pre-coronavirus levels only in 2023.

Most travel restrictions within Europe have been lifted and starting Wednesday nationals from 15 countries are allowed into the EU. The United States, Russia and Brazil — where the virus is still spreading quickly — were left off the list. In Europe, during the week of June 15-21, an average of 7,706 flights were recorded each day, a 78 per cent drop from the same week last year, according to Eurocontrol which manages Europe’s airspace.—AFP

Slow takeoff for aviation in Europe

Easing of COVID-19 restrictions allowed business to return to work in June, 70 per cent of which were at small firms. PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: KYODO

PHOTO: KYODO

PHOTO: KYODO
JAL to fully resume domestic flights as early as Oct

TOKYO—Japan Airlines Co. said Wednesday it is planning to fully restart its domestic flights as early as October amid signs of a recovery in travel demand, hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. JAL has already started increasing the number of domestic flights since the lifting in May of a nationwide state of emergency that saw the airline cut over 70 per cent of the flights from its normal schedule.

“We expect to recover to 80 per cent in August and fully operate in line with our normal schedule around October,” Shunsuke Honda, an executive officer, told reporters at Tokyo’s Haneda airport. He said travel demand is growing since restrictions on people’s movement across prefectures were fully lifted on June 19.

However with infection rates rebounding in recent weeks in Tokyo and other large cities, Honda said, “We would like to increase the number of flights or use larger aircraft so that we can avoid fully-booked flights as much as possible.”—Kyodo

Airbus cuts 15,000 jobs to face aviation’s ‘gravest crisis’

LEIDEN (Netherlands)—European aircraft maker Airbus said on Tuesday it is planning to cut around 15,000 jobs worldwide, 11 per cent of its total workforce, in response to the “gravest crisis” the industry has ever seen caused by the coronavirus.

The cuts are to be implemented by the summer of 2021, Airbus said in a statement, and follow a drop of nearly 40 per cent of the commercial aviation business in recent months.

“With air traffic not expected to recover to pre-COVID levels before 2023 and potentially as late as 2025, Airbus now needs to take additional measures to reflect the post COVID-19 industry outlook,” it said in a statement.

The company said 5,000 positions would be cut in France, 5,100 in Germany, 900 in Spain, 1,700 positions in Britain and 1,300 positions at Airbus’ other worldwide sites.

Airbus warned that “compulsory actions cannot be ruled out at this stage”, in an indication that some employees could be made redundant.—AFP

China’s e-commerce thrives, transactions exceeding 34 trillion yuan in 2019

BEIJING—China’s e-commerce industry continued to thrive last year despite mounting downward economic pressures and lingering trade tensions, according to a report from the Ministry of Commerce.

China led the world in e-commerce, with about 31.26 million people employed in the sector in 2019, and online retail sales reaching 10.63 trillion yuan, up 16.5 per cent year on year.

E-commerce has contributed a lot in terms of “promoting consumption, stabilizing foreign trade, alleviating poverty and boosting employment,” and played a key role in ensuring the country’s steady and high-quality development, the report said.

In 2019, online retailing contributed 45.6 per cent to the growth of the country’s total retail sales. China had more than 900 million internet users at the end of last year, with an internet penetration rate of 64.5 per cent, according to the report.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OSLO TRADER VOY. NO. (025S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OSLO TRADER VOY. NO. (025S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-7-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/TMT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Agent For: M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

Shipping Agency Department Myanmar Port Authority

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TAI PING SHAN VOY. NO. (VC 56)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TAI PING SHAN VOY. NO. (VC 56) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-7-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of WILMAR 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

Agent For: M/S REFINED SUCCESS LTD

Shipping Agency Department Myanmar Port Authority

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (044N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (044N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-7-2020 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.

Phone No: 2301185

Agent For: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Shipping Agency Department Myanmar Port Authority

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ELPIDA GR VOY. NO. (2075)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ELPIDA GR VOY. NO. (2075) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-7-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL/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.

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Phone No: 2301928

Agent For: M/S CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS CO LTD

Shipping Agency Department Myanmar Port Authority

A Japan Airlines plane unloads cargo at Naha airport near Tokyo on April 17, 2020, after flying from Shanghai without carrying passengers. JAL has used many of its passenger planes for cargo transportation as many flights were cancelled due to the coronavirus. PHOTO: KYODO
Australia to boost defence spending in “more dangerous” world

SYDNEY—Australia will invest AU$270 billion ($186.5 billion) over the next decade to upgrade its defence forces in preparation for a world that is “poorer” and “more dangerous” in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Wednesday.

Speaking in Canberra, Morrison also said the government will spend $800 million on long-range anti-ship missiles from the United States to maintain security, and deter or respond to aggression in the Indo-Pacific region.

“Even as we stare down the COVID pandemic at home, we need to also prepare for a post-COVID world that is poorer, that is more dangerous, and that is more disorderly,” Morrison said, referring to the deadly illness caused by the virus.

Australia will also add 800 personnel to its forces, the majority of them joining the navy.

Morrison also described Sino-American relations as “fractious at best,” while the country’s 2020 Defence Strategy Update said competition between the two major powers is the “principal driver of strategic dynamics in the Indo-Pacific.”—Kyodo

Protests in Indian Kashmir over civilian death during attack

SRINAGAR — Hundreds of people in Indian-administered Kashmir staged protests on Wednesday, accusing government forces of killing a man during a rebel attack which also injured 10.

“Y ou never know whether you or your friend has it,” he said into an intercom. Thailand has recorded more than 3,100 coronavirus cases and 58 deaths – a low toll considering it became the first country outside China to detect an infection, in mid-January.

Ahead of Wednesday’s nationwide resumption of classes, authorities recommended that class sizes be restricted to 20-25 students while doorknobs, desks and other areas at risk of spreading infection be sanitized frequently throughout the day.

Student Parichat Klangpaniri said she was not concerned about catching the virus, but reported feeling nervous about meeting up with classmates again after isolating for so long.

“I haven’t met anyone for a long time and the atmosphere of the classroom and internet learning is so different,” the 17-year-old said. The country’s nightlife will also come back to life Wednesday, with bars, clubs and massage parlours, which are sometimes fronts for brothels, expected to reopen in the evening. However, authorities have said there should be “no sex trade”, while extremely strict limits on social situations should be observed – such as bar patrons standing a metre apart.—AFP

China takes countermeasure against U.S. media curbs, names AP, CBS

BEIJING—China on Wednesday required four more U.S. media outlets to declare their finances and assets, as a countermeasure for Washington’s recent designation of four more Chinese media houses as the country’s propaganda apparatus.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said China has decided to ask The Associated Press, CBS, National Public Radio and United Press International to provide information about their staff, finance, operations and real estate in writing within seven days.

The announcement came after Washington late last month labeled state-run China Central Television and three other Chinese media outlets as “foreign missions” and ordered them to submit information on their employees and property holdings in the United States.

The U.S. approach is “based on Cold War thinking and ideological prejudice, which seriously damages the reputation and image of the Chinese media,” Zhao told reporters, adding Beijing urges Washington to immediately “correct mistakes and stop political suppression.”

Thailand schools reopen with strict hygiene rules

BANGKOK—Mask-wearing pupils catching up with friends at one Bangkok high school were quickly told to spread out as they headed back to lessons on Wednesday after months of distance learning due to coronavirus restrictions.

The teenagers, resuming classes along with all other public school students in the kingdom, chatted animatedly before being called to sit in widely spaced rows for the opening session.

The school principal, Arwuth Meekhamphet, warned them all to closely follow new hygiene rules, which included the face coverings and social distancing. “You never know whether you or your friend has it,” he said into an intercom. Thailand has recorded more than 3,100 coronavirus cases and 58 deaths – a low toll considering it became the first country outside China to detect an infection, in mid-January.

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Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison reacts during a press conference on March 20, 2020, in Canberra, Australia. PHOTO: AFP
Italy seizes IS-made drugs worth one billion euros

ROME—Italian police said Wednesday they had seized a 14-tonne haul of amphetamines made by the Islamic State group in Syria, calling it the biggest seizure of such drugs in the world.

The drug, in the form of around 84 million Captagon tablets hidden inside industrial goods within containers, was worth about one billion euros ($1.12 billion), and intended to be sold on the European market “to finance terrorism,” the finance police of Naples said in a statement.

“We know that the Islamic State finances its terrorist activities mainly by trafficking drugs made in Syria which in the past few years has become the world’s largest producer of amphetamines,” the statement said.

Police said three suspect containers had arrived at the port of Salerno, just south of Naples, containing large-cylindrical paper rolls for industrial use as well as industrial machinery.

Cutting open the paper rolls and metal gearwheels with chainsaws, police found them filled with tablets imprinted with two semi-circles, the symbol of Captagon. Video images taken by police showed pills spilling out of the rolls and wheels as they were forced opened. “This is the largest seizure of amphetamines in the world,” police said.—AFP

Russians set to back reforms allowing Putin to extend rule

MOSCOW—Russians are set to approve constitutional reforms on Wednesday denounced by critics as a manoeuvre to allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in the Kremlin for life.

The changes were passed weeks ago by Russia’s parliament and copies of the new constitution are already on sale in bookshops, but Putin says a nationwide vote ending Wednesday is essential to give legitimacy to the plans.

The reforms include conservative and populist measures – like guaranteed minimum pensions and an effective ban on gay marriage – but crucially for Putin will also reset presidential term limits allowing him to potentially remain in power until 2036.

The Kremlin pulled out all the stops to encourage turnout, with polls extended over nearly a week, the last day of voting declared a national holiday and prizes – including apartments and cars – on offer to voters.

Initially planned for April 21, the referendum was postponed by the coronavirus pandemic but rescheduled after Putin said the epidemic had peaked and officials began reporting lower numbers of new cases.

There is little doubt the reforms will be approved, with a state-run exit poll of more than 163,000 voters this week showing 76 percent in favour.

Results are expected to be announced after the last polling stations close at 1800 GMT. Putin says the changes are needed to ensure stability and cement Russian values in the face of pernicious Western influences.—AFP

UK PM warns Israel against annexation plan

JERUSALEM—British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Israel Wednesday against going ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank, calling them illegal and against the Jewish state’s own interests. “I am a passionate defender of Israel,” he wrote in an article published in Hebrew on the front page of Israel’s top-selling daily, Yedioth Aharonot. “So it is with sadness that I have followed the proposals to annex Palestinian territory,” he added. “I am fearful that these proposals will fail in their objective of securing Israel’s borders and will be contrary to Israel’s own long-term interests.”

Israel’s coalition government has agreed July 1 as the date from which it can begin implementing US President Donald Trump’s Middle East peace proposal, which paves the way for annexations of Jewish West Bank settlements and potentially the Jordan Valley. “Annexation would represent a violation of international law,” Johnson wrote, adding that it would also jeopardise “the progress that Israel has made in improving relationships with the Arab and Muslim world.

“I still believe the only way to achieve true, lasting security for Israel, the homeland for the Jewish people, is through a solution that allows justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians,” Johnson wrote. “I refuse to believe that this is impossible.”—AFP

Weinstein victims to receive $19 million payout

NEW YORK—Women who suffered sexual misconduct and workplace harassment by convicted rapist Harvey Weinstein are set to receive almost $19 million as part of a class action lawsuit, New York’s attorney general announced Tuesday. The payments, which need to be approved by two courts, are the result of a lawsuit brought against the ex-movie mogul — currently serving 23 years in prison — and his former film studio The Weinstein Company. “Harvey Weinstein and The Weinstein Company failed their female employees. After all the harassment, threats, discrimination, and gender-based discrimination these survivors are finally receiving some justice,” Letitia James said in a statement.—AFP
MADRID — Lionel Messi scored his 700th career goal but Barcelona suffered another blow to their La Liga title hopes after a 2-2 draw with Atletico Madrid on Tuesday. Messi chipped in a penalty to reach another astonishing milestone at Camp Nou but twice Atletico hit back with spot-kicks of their own, Saul Niguez converting both after Barca took an early lead through Diego Costa’s own goal. The result gives Real Madrid the chance to move four points clear at the top of the table if they can overcome Getafe at home on Wednesday, a formidable lead with five games left. Atletico stay third, two points ahead of Sevilla, who won 3-0 at Leganes. With a superior head-to-head, it would take a dramatic capitulation for Real Madrid not to lift the trophy from here but there is no guarantee Barcelona can finish strongly enough even to create pressure. This was their third draw in four matches and with suggestions of disharmony between the players and coaching staff, the future of coach Quique Setien looks bleak too.—AFP

Arsenal tie down Saka to long-term deal

ARSENAL tied down Bukayo Saka to a long-term contract on Wednesday, ending speculation over the highly-rated teenager’s future. Saka, 18, has made a major impact in 33 appearances in a variety of positions this season and has been a regular since Mikel Arteta became Arsenal coach in December. “Bukayo is a talented and intelligent young player,” said Arteta. “He has impressed me with his work ethic and attitude to learn and adapt, and it has paid off in his performances. “I am excited to continue working with him to develop him further, and for him to help us achieve our goals.” Saka’s previous deal was due to expire next year, with Liverpool and Chelsea reportedly keen to take advantage of any breakdown in contract negotiations. However, Saka said he is happy to remain with the club he joined at the age of eight. “London is my home. Arsenal my team,” Saka posted on Twitter. “I’m so happy to finally announce my contract extension. I love playing for this club and I’m looking forward to what the future holds. “The hard work continues so I can continue living my dream.” Saka is expected to start as Arsenal look to jump up to seventh in the Premier League with victory against bottom-of-the-table Norwich later on Wednesday.—AFP

Sixth US PGA Tour player tests positive for COVID-19

NEW YORK — American Chad Campbell is the sixth US PGA Tour player to test positive for COVID-19 as the tour heads into the fourth week of its restart after a three-month shutdown. The tour said in a statement that Campbell had withdrawn from this week’s Rocket Mortgage Classic in Detroit, where he was the first alternate, after he tested positive as part of the pre-tournament screening process. Campbell, a four-time tour winner, missed the cut at the first tournament since the coronavirus shutdown ended at Colonial three weeks ago and hadn’t played since.—AFP

Real Madrid get set to make history by ending wait for women’s team

MADRID — After 118 years, Real Madrid will launch a professional women’s team on Wednesday by absorbing CD Tacon and launching a fresh Galactico project at the club. Madrid, the best team of the 20th century according to FIFA, has so far been one of the only elite clubs to resist the creation of a female team. By taking over Tacon, the women’s club based in Madrid and created in 2014, ‘Real Madrid Femenino’ will become a reality. Approved at a meeting of shareholders in September last year, the buyout of Tacon for 300,000 euros ($337,000) will become official from July 1, when another recruitment drive will begin. According to the Spanish press, Madrid have set their sights on the game’s finest talents and some of the first signings could arrive this week. Tacon have already been expanding in preparation.—AFP

Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta (right) is a big fan of Bukayo Saka (left). PHOTO: AFP

Sixth US PGA Tour player tests positive for COVID-19

American Chad Campbell is the sixth US PGA Tour player to test positive for COVID-19 as the tour heads into the fourth week of its restart after a three-month shutdown. PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid get set to make history by ending wait for women’s team

Real Madrid, the best team of the 20th century according to FIFA, has so far been one of the only elite clubs to resist the creation of a female team. PHOTO: AFP

Lionel Messi’s 700th career goal was not enough for Barca as they drew with Atletico. PHOTO: AFP