While we still don’t have medicines or vaccines to prevent and cure COVID, we will need to change some aspects of our lifestyle even if we cannot change society as a whole in accordance with the requirements: State Counsellor

Our daily lives have changed because of the industrial revolution and the communications technology revolution; the fact that I’m able to communicate using Facebook is also the result of this change.

The term “New Normal” is something to think about. Should we say “a new mode of behaviour”; or it is because the world has changed due to COVID to the point of no return that all of us have to live in a new mode of behaviour: At this point, it is still early to make a decision.

Throughout history, all the peoples of the world had to face epidemics and pandemics; it has been estimated that more than a hundred million people died because of the plague that erupted during the 14th century. As a result of this, although there were changes in some societies in the social and economic aspects, we cannot say that people’s lifestyle changed.

Some new forms of international relations which we might say is the result of the catastrophe of the global war (Thanthantara kappa) of World War I and II, now seem to be already outdated.

Our daily lives have changed because of the industrial revolution and the communications technology revolution; the fact that I’m able to communicate using Facebook is also the result of this change.

Human beings have to learn to survive according to the needs of the situation. While we still don’t have medicines or vaccines to prevent and cure COVID, we will need to change some aspects of our lifestyle even if we cannot change society as a whole in accordance with the requirements.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)
Vice Senior General joins virtual meeting of ASEAN army chiefs

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice Senior General Soe Win joined a virtual meeting for discussing the 21st ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting and the 30th ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting yesterday.

The Vice Senior General and other ASEAN Chiefs of Army discussed update situations of COVID-19 outbreak in member countries and participation of military members in fight against the pandemic.

The member countries agreed that Brunei will host the 21st ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting online, but the 30th ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting will not be organized due to the spread of COVID-19.

Moreover, the participants decided that Myanmar will become the rotating host country for 21st ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting and the 30th ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting.

According to the report from the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Myanmar organized the 14th ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting, and the 23rd ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting in 2013.

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar discusses digital cooperation with China

AN online meeting was held between the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), government of Yunnan Province, and Mandalay Region government at 1:30 pm yesterday.

In the first session of the meeting, Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung read a message from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The message read that during the time warding off the global COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar is implementing the e-Government system to enhance administrative processes, and the country is turning the challenges and difficulties out of the pandemic into opportunities to bring public services to the digital platform.

The government is working hard to place the e-commerce system into the hands of investors, businesses and members of the public as soon as possible. Electronic technology and digital platforms became a window to living a life with the coronavirus and the new normal. Using e-commerce systems for trade and economic cooperation between Myanmar and China will allow them to function at their normal pace, reduce expenditure, make financial management easier, expand market opportunities, and reduce time and labour for carrying out tasks.

The State Counsellor’s message continued that this meeting between the governments of Mandalay Region and Yunnan Province will be a step toward digital cooperation between the two nations while controlling COVID-19. The message wished for the success of trade and business cooperation with the e-commerce system, overcoming the challenges of the pandemic, and uncovering new tasks and progress in increased economic cooperation.

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Director Mr Song Thao of IDCPC, Vice-Minister Mr Guo Yezhou, and Chinese Ambassadors Mr Chen Hai all delivered separate speeches.

The meeting was aimed for collaboration between the local governments of Mandalay Region and Yunnan Province in implementing bilateral agreements of the leaders of both nations, sharing experiences of dealing with COVID-19, strengthening regional cooperation, the BRI and China-Myanmar Economic Corridor projects, especially implementation of digital economy, e-commerce and reducing poverty.

The second session of the meeting continued afterwards.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification 130/2020
5th Waning of First Waso 1382 ME
(9 July 2020)

10 Defence Services Personnel representatives substituted for Region and State Hluttaws

According to the report presented under Section 33 of the Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw Election Law on substitution of ten Region/State Hluttaw representatives of Defence Services Personnel who were submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services for the 8 November 2015 General Election, the Union Election Commission has scrutinized and substituted the following ten Region/State Hluttaw representatives shown on the left column under the Notification 3/2016 dated on 18-1-2016, the Notification 28/2018 dated on 14-11-2018, the Notification 10/2017 dated on 16-5-2017, the Notification 10/2018 dated on 6-11-2018 and the Notification 6/2019 dated on 15-1-2019 with those shown on the right column.

Sagaing Region Hluttaw

(1) BC 38899
Major Thet Win
BC 41961
Major Hla Htut Naung

(2) BC 48766
Captain Yarzar Htet
BC 54204
Captain Yan Kyaw

Bago Region Hluttaw

(3) BC 37164
Major Pyae Phtyo Zaw
BC 38102
Major Tin Naing Win

Magway Region Hluttaw

(4) BC 51840
Captain Nay Lwin Htoo
BC 51847
Captain Hlaing Myint Tun

Yangon Region Hluttaw

(5) BC 27768
Major Aung Than Win
BC 37703
Major Myo Min Tun

(6) BC 30625
Major Nein Chan Aung
BC 42524
Major Kyaw Swar Win

(7) BC 39907
Major Hein Zaw
BC 45584
Major Kyi Pe Lin

Shan State Hluttaw

(8) BC 19065
Lt- Col Maung Maung Ko
BC 32037
Lt- Col Ye Naing Tun

(9) BC 30589
Major Soe Thu Tun
BC 29777
Major Soe Thu

Ayeawady Region Hluttaw

(10) BC 33335
Major Naing Htoo Aye
BC 38505
Major Mon Myat Thu Soe

Union Election Commission
Chairman
Hla Thein

(Translated by MNA)
Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting via Video Conferencing

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin joins the 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 9 July. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin participated in the Video Conference of the 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting at 1:00 pm yesterday from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Motegi Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Mr Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The Meeting was attended by Foreign Ministers of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand from Mekong countries.

At the meeting, the Ministers discussed and exchanged views on enhancing Mekong-Japan cooperation to effectively prevent and control the COVID-19 and to achieve the Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The Ministers also discussed ways to strengthen cooperation for post COVID-19 economic recovery in the Mekong region.

In his statement, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin mentioned that the Mekong countries have been able to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control in sharing Myanmar’s experience, he stated that Myanmar has also been able to control the virus so far attributing to its early action on monitoring since early this year and the ability to mobilize the people, volunteers and well-wishers through its “Whole-of-Nation” approach. He added that the Government has adopted the COVID-19 Emergency Recovery Plan (CERP) to cushion the financial, social and economic impact. He stressed the need to enhance cooperation between Japan and Mekong countries in their efforts for both pandemic response and economic recovery.

The Union Minister added that promoting Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in particular for prevention, control and response of public health emergencies has already occupied a place of priority under the Mekong-Japan Cooperation even before the COVID-19 outbreak, and Myanmar is also striving to achieve UHC through the implementation of the National Health Plan (2017-2021). He thanked the Japanese Government for providing Avigan tablets, prim-er and reagent for the National Health Laboratory (NHL), and 2 billion Japanese Yen assistance for medical equipment and facilities to help Myanmar’s response to the pandemic.

The 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting issued the Co-Chairs’ statement relating to the Mekong-Japan Cooperation for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Integral Strengthening of Economic Relations. According to the statement, the Ministers agreed to strengthen timely sharing of information in combating COVID-19, enhance scientific cooperation in epidemiological research and establish strong and self-reliant national healthcare systems among the member countries of the Mekong-Japan Cooperation.

Also present at the Meeting were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— MNA

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification 128/2020
5th Waning of First Waso 1382 ME
(9 July 2020)

One Defence Services Personnel representative substituted for Pyithu Hluttaw

According to the report presented under Section 33 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law on substitution of one Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Defence Services Personnel who was submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services for the 8 November 2015 General Election, the Union Election Commission has scrutinized and substituted the following Pyithu Hluttaw representative shown on the left column under the Notification 1/2016 dated on 18-1-2016 with those shown on the right column.

**Pyithu Hluttaw**

(1) BC 25804
Lt- Col Myo Khañaing

(2) BC 30563
Lt. Col Aye Shwe

His Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification 129/2020
5th Waning of First Waso 1382 ME
(9 July 2020)

Two Defence Services Personnel representatives substituted for Amyotha Hluttaw

According to the report presented under Section 33 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law on substitution of two Amyotha Hluttaw representatives of Defence Services Personnel who were submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services for the 8 November 2015 General Election, the Union Election Commission has scrutinized and substituted the following two Amyotha Hluttaw representatives shown on the left column under the Notification 27/2016 dated on 14-11-2016 and the Notification 5/2019 dated on 15-1-2019 with those shown on the right column.

**Amyotha Hluttaw**

(1) BC 38051
Major Htet Lin

(2) BC 38066
Major Tin Aung Hein

His Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

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**Photo:** MNA

**Union Minister U Kyaw Tin joins the 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 9 July.**

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(Excerpt from Bogyoke Aung San’s speech broadcast on radio on 5 April 1947)
Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe participated in the videoconference of the Constituents’ Day event, dubbed, ‘ILO Virtual Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work’ yesterday at 4:30 pm from Nay Pyi Taw.

At the event, the Union Minister delivered a speech in a pre-recorded video. ILO Director-General Guy Ryder, labour ministers, as well as leaders of workers and employers from ILO member countries, participated in the videoconference, which emphasized how to effectively respond to COVID-19’s impact on jobs.

At the event, through the pre-recorded video, the Union Minister U Thein Swe said that the Global Summit will help maintain the momentum of the World of Work, and give important guidelines. As the “UN Policy Brief: The World of Work and COVID-19” says, the government must look after health of workers and, at the same time, we carefully must take measures to sustain the momentum of businesses. Regarding how Myanmar responds to the COVID-19 crisis, the Myanmar government, together with all the stakeholders, take enormous efforts based on “a whole of nation approach” for prevention, containment and treatment for COVID-19.

He added the government has put exert efforts in line with the ILO’s policy framework to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, with forming a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by COVID-19, and raising funds for three main types of businesses that are adversely affected by COVID-19.

Interest rates, income taxes and trade taxes were reduced, while providing assistance to both employers and employees and arranging relief flights to bring Myanmar migrant workers back home.

Myanmar officials welcomed Myanmar migrant workers at border crossings, and transported them to quarantine centres in respective areas. In cooperation with ILO, Myanmar organized relevant tripartite meetings since before the first COVID-19 case of Myanmar was confirmed.

The Union Minister U Thein Swe added that Myanmar will create more jobs in agricultural sector, and nurture skilled workers in various sectors.

The Union Minister concluded his speech by saying that COVID-19 has killed many people and adversely affected the country’s economy as well as social lives, but people across the world believed to overcome the COVID-19 crisis by cooperating with each other in order to achieve better social lives. — MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Sae)

MoHS conducts review on COVID-19 measures

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe held a videoconference with the relevant officials of regions and states yesterday morning about challenges in the fight against COVID-19 in respective areas.

At the meeting, the Union Minister said that the country has 319 confirmed cases of COVID-19 cases up to 9 July and 254 recoveries. He said 59 percent of the transmissions are imported cases with the new cases also from foreign countries. Authorities have tested 88,234 people for the disease and only 0.9 per cent of people under surveillance, 0.2 per cent quarantined, 3 per cent of those who had close contact with confirmed cases, and 0.36 per cent of all lab specimens tested positive for COVID-19.

Since the inception of the disease, 19 patients underwent serious treatment with only 5 patients requiring ventilators. About 58 per cent of all confirmed patients did not show any noticeable symptoms. All patients quarantined in each hospital are currently in good health. The number of people under quarantine has gradually gone down with each week and there are currently 6,114 people in quarantine sites and 23,780 people under quarantine.

The Union Minister added that there are about 1,200 returnees per day and if the relevant ministries and organizations cooperate in quarantining them, the potential for a second wave of COVID-19 will be reduced. Therefore, the Social Affairs Ministers for each region and state should keep providing for that sector.

The ministry has also instructed to conduct surprise checks in factories and workplaces, which are given permission to reopen upon passing initial inspections, by negotiating with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, said the Union Minister.

He said there has been a decline in the use of loudspeakers to disseminate public awareness on COVID-19 and so the Regional Social Affairs Ministers should make concerted efforts to expand this activity once more. He said the in-charges of regional and state public health and medical services departments should collect the directives and health instructions of COVID-19 released by the ministry, study the daily analysis of COVID-19 to become skillful, and to be mindful of daily official e-mails sent by the ministry on COVID-19 prevention guidelines.

The Union Minister said that when State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as Chairperson of the National-Level Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, led the videoconferences with experts from respective sectors and the general public, she said the instructions and feedback from the people are important and the ministry gives equal priority as well.

The regional and state public health departments must cooperate with Myanmar Medical Association, Myanmar Health Assistant Association and Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association in conducting preventive measures against COVID-19. The Union Minister also said he wanted the 17 heads of regional and state public health and medical services departments who attended the meeting to provide their honest opinions regarding all processes for COVID-19.

Next, the Social Affairs Ministers for Yangon Region and Kayin State, and the Security and Border Affairs Minister for Mandalay Region presented their respective efforts in the fight against COVID-19. The officials of regional and state public health departments also discussed about the various preparations, processes, directives and other aspects in combating COVID-19.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein, Permanent Secretary Prof Dr Thet Khaing Win, Director-General Dr Thar Tun Kyaw of the Union Minister’s Office, and Dr Soe Oo of Public Health and Medical Services Department engaged in the discussion. The Union Minister delivered a closing speech at the end of the meeting. — MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)
COVID Fund grants K100 bln to over 3,300 businesses in 4 months

By Nyein Nyein

MORe than 3,300 enterprises have been granted over K100 billion from the Coronavirus Fund in the past four months, as per the data of a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic.

The committee has been granting the loan to the business stricken by the pandemic from the initial fund, with K50 billion allocated from the country’s resolving fund and another K50 billion from the social welfare fund. The priority sectors are CMP garment business, hotel and tourism service and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The interest rate for a one-year period is only one per cent.

Regarding the Fund, 85 businesspersons have been granted K5.966 billion in the first batch, while 113 enterprises were selected for K4.495 billion in the second batch, 111 enterprises in the third batch for K3.546 billion, 417 in the fourth batch for K15.079 billion, 230 in the fifth batch for K8.733 billion, 2,978 in the sixth batch for K49.116 billion and 387 in the seventh batch for K14.5564 billion.

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

Last 4 July, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry released a statement that the addition of K100 billion will be put into the fund to remedy the businesses hit hard by the pandemic. The fund will be provided to businesses three times, with K35 billion given out each in the first batch and the second batch and K50 billion in the third batch.

The types of prioritized businesses, loan term and rules will be released soon.

The funding will be allocated from K10 billion of the Union General Reserve Fund. And, K100 billion will be added into the second-time funding, while K50 billion will be transferred into the social welfare fund as the initial COVID fund was set up with it, the ministry stated.

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

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

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

Furthermore, as the long-term strategies, the committee will request Myanmar President office to give tax exemption and reliefs depending on the situations of the COVID-19 impacts on SMEs and to provide loans to the domestic businesses at a low-interest rate.

(Translated by El Myat Mon)

Fishery exports soar to over $700 mln in 2019-2020FY

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(Translated by El Myat Mon)

Fishery exports soar to over $700 mln in 2019-2020FY

EXPORT earnings from the fisheries sector during the period between 1 October and 26 June in the 2019-2020 financial year reached US$700.7 million, an increase of $105 million from the year-ago period, according to the statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The figures stood at just $598.7 million during a year ago period.

During the current FY, the fishery exports are expected to reach a record high. So far, over 580,000 tonnes of fishery products have been shipped to the external market. The export volume reflects an increase of 70,000 tonnes compared with those registered in the last fiscal year.

Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) expected to earn more than $600 million from fishery exports in the current fiscal year, said an official of MFF.

Myanmar exports fishery products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union.

Myanmar’s fishery exports have declined over the past three months, owing to the coronavirus pandemic impacts. However, Myanmar witnessed a large volume of exports in the post-pandemic period.

The Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) is making concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes which meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques.

There are over 247,000 acres of fish farms and 240,000 prawn breeding farms across the country.


An MFF official said the federation has asked the government to tackle problems faced in the export of farm-raised fish and prawns through G2G pacts and ensure smooth freight movement between countries to bolster exports.

According to the MFF, integrated poultry and fish farming cannot ensure food safety, which is a requirement for export. Therefore, the federation has asked for the formulation of a law to restrict that kind of mixed farming. Fish farming must be conducted as a large-scale project to get access to Project Bank loans, according to the MFF.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Chin State pulls 3 domestic investments

By Nyein Nyein

CHIN State drew three domestic investments over the four years of the incumbent government, despite zero foreign direct investments in the state according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Those businesses brought into the capital of K3.368 billion. Chin State stands at the bottom in attracting domestic investments.

Over the past four years, Yangon Region stood at the first place attracting 178 domestic investment businesses by Myanmar Citizens, followed by Mandalay Region with 177 domestic investments.

The development sector has pulled the largest domestic investments, followed by other service sectors in the second place and manufacturing sector in the third place.

MIC has been prioritizing labour-intensive enterprises among proposals.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)
Sesame plants in Magway under threat by drought

A ten-day drought in Magway Township is likely to damage the sesame plants, according to the local sesame growers. “The 45-day-old sesame plants are being faced with the problem of lack of rain this year. Now, it is the blossoming time but we could not get enough rain. Some of the plants are already damaged. This year, the local growers may be faced with the loss of profit because the yield of sesame will decline double,” said a local sesame grower.

Although Magway Township Agriculture Department received the information about the damages of the sesame, the department does not have the proper record of damage volume of sesame, according to the Agriculture Department in Magway Township.

“The land of the sesame plantation is different. We have to repair the land to suit the weather. We have to change the crops and seeds. We are also providing the awareness training, said an official from the Agriculture Department. The Agriculture Department is planning to assist the local farmers for their loss in cooperation with the civil societies organizations. —Poe Poe (Magway) (Translated by Hay Mar)

Dengue fever infects 12 in Pathein in 2 months

A total of 12 people are suffering from Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) with no reported deaths for two months in Pathein Town, it is learnt. In May and June 2020, about 12 patients in Pathein were infected with DHF and there are no reported cases of death, according to Pathein General Hospital.

Only three patients out of 12 are in a serious situation in Pathein General Hospital. Dengue fever mostly occurs in the rainy season from June to August in the country. The DHF cases are highly reported in September.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral infection causing severe flu-like illness and, sometimes causing a potentially lethal complication called severe dengue. People are warned to take precautionary measures against DHF transmission for lack of sanitation and unhygienic water storage which are blamed for causing this trouble-some infectious disease.

The global incidence of dengue has grown dramatically in recent decades. About half of the world’s population is now at risk. There are an estimated 100-400 million infections each year, WHO reports. —Aye Maung (Translated by Hay Mar)

River erosion-related displacement increases this year in Magway Region

A total of 33 erosion incidents have occurred in Magway Region with more than 1,100 people suffering from the disaster. Among them, 14 occurred in Ye-nangyaung township, eight in Minbu district and 11 in Palaukkai district, according to the Disas-ter Management Department.

—Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Waterway conservation is more important than prevention of coastal erosion in Magway Region that has seen higher number of river erosion-related displacement this year. PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)

River erosion-related displacement increases this year in Magway Region

“We have received mone-tary assistance from the depart-ment. However, we have to mort-gage our possessions to be able to buy the land. We have also lost the farmland because of the river bank erosion. We have to start our lives again, building houses and religious buildings,” said U Pho Lone, a resident facing the woes of the landslide disaster.

Although waterway main-tenance is more important than prevention of river erosion, we need to give priority to providing of assistance to the people who are suffering from the erosion. So, we have to spend budget more on the prevention of river erosion than on waterway main-tenance.

THE number of people displaced by river bank erosion has in-creased this year in Magway Region when compared to that of last year, according to the Dis-aster Management Department. Although only about 290 households were displaced by the river bank erosion in 2019, about 300 families were dis-placed from 1 April till 9 July 2020.

“The department provided monetary assistance amounting to K10,000 to each household to buy the house materials and K2,100 to each family member to buy the ration. We have already provided K20 million. As long as they are in danger, we need to support them promptly,” said U Myint Soe, the regional head of the Disaster Management De-partment.

The Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems is also conducting preventative measures to miti-gate erosion of the river banks, spending yearly the funds from the Union Government budget, the regional government budget and the emergency fund.

“A total of 33 erosion inci-dents have occurred in Magway Region with more than 1,100 people suffering from the disaster. Among them, 14 occurred in Ye-nangyaung township, eight in Minbu district and 11 in Palaukkai district, according to the Disas-ter Management Department.

—Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

(Translated by Hay Mar)
Now was not the time to become careless and carefree

It has been learnt from the news that in other countries, people thought that the worse was over but the COVID-19 second wave came in; if possible, Myanmar wants to prevent the complete occurrence of COVID-19 second wave. Myanmar does not wish to see an outbreak.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of prevention as well as treatment, the public should be informed about the things that need to be heeded and why. That was why she wanted health professionals to make people understand these things clearly. Now was not the time to become careless and carefree.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor  Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s discussions with senior health officials on 30 June 2020)

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discusses COVID-19 measures online with Red Cross society members, volunteers

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as Secretary of the National Volunteers Steering Unit, held a virtual meeting with the Red Cross Society members, volunteers, and charity workers in Ayeyawady Region, Northern Shan state, Yangon Region, Kayah State and Kachin State, discussing their experiences and requirements for the fighting against the COVID-19.

During the discussion, the Union Minister said that the country was proud to see that the people participated energetically in carrying out the voluntary works through the COVID-19 period and as those works were acknowledged; although he wanted to give the chest badges and certificates of honour individually to the volunteers and members of Red Cross Society and organizations from the regions and states discussed as per township; they stated that there was a shortage of funds to arrange foods for quarantine facilities as the time goes by, the need of surgical gown, glove and mask in welcoming and delivering the repatriated people from abroad to quarantine centres, connecting the repatriated people who came from non-official crossings with the responsible officials, the wish for careful supervision of the border crossings not to let people come illegally, difficulties in welcoming the repatriated people at the Central Railway Station and at “0-Mile” of the Expressway, the concern about the need of surgical gown, glove and mask in welcoming and delivering the repatriated people from abroad to quarantine centres, connecting the repatriated people who came from non-official crossings with the responsible officials, the wish for careful supervision of the border crossings not to let people come illegally, difficulties in welcoming the repatriated people at the Central Railway Station and at “0-Mile” of the Expressway, the concern about the need of surgical gown, glove and mask in welcoming and delivering the repatriated people from abroad to quarantine centres, connecting the repatriated people who came from non-official crossings with the responsible officials, the wish for careful supervision of the border crossings not to let people come illegally, difficulties in welcoming the repatriated people at the Central Railway Station and at “0-Mile” of the Expressway, the concern about the need of surgical gown, glove and mask, etc. The Union Minister wished to discuss their experiences and that it was an advantage by a new way to discuss with all the volunteers from the respective places in a short time.

Moreover, the volunteers and charity workers from the places which have natural disasters every year said mentioned that they wanted providing life jackets, life boats and multi-purpose buildings and to conduct the prevention process of COVID-19 if the disaster occurred.

The Union Minister said that they would support which could be done directly as fast as they could and for the negotiation with the respective departments would also be negotiated; to send the list of the people who had not received yet the certificates of honour; that he would let the responsible officials to go and do field research according to the prevention of natural disasters in respective townships; that the discussions and suggestions were very useful and he urged them to keep cooperating as the COVID-19 period had not over yet.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Human rights commission inspects Insein Prison

THE Myanmar National Human Rights Commission visited Insein Prison in Yangon Region yesterday to ensure that there was no violation of basic human rights.

MNHRC members led by U Kyaw Myint and U Kyaw Soe visited Insein Prison on 8 and 9 July and inspected the prison cells, warehouse, buildings, medical ward, canteen, water tanks, visiting rooms and preparations for COVID-19.

They then met with several inmates individually and asked them whether there had been violations of human rights, difficulties in prison visits, access to basic necessities and human rights situation in the prison. They took records and will send their findings to relevant departments for further actions.

—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
WHILE we are staying vigilant to remain safe from the coronavirus, the dengue outbreak has been looming menacingly. As the wet season looms, twelve people have died of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) in our country from January to 6 July, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Malaria and dengue outbreaks require rapid action, early warning systems need to be prompt and efficient. Detecting a dengue outbreak in its early stages makes it possible for authorities to get ahead of the dengue fever before it spreads. The cost of not preventing the disease is significantly high.

In the rainy season, we shall face challenges such as dengue, malaria, such as waterborne diseases and COVID-19, and the need to identify and mitigate other diseases such as typhoid and common flu overlap.

The regional governments will have to do their best to identify manpower and resources for following prevention guidelines. Citizens must be careful and take precautions.

General Anng San
(13 Feb 1915 -19 July 1947)

T HE repercussions of COVID-19 has stalled agricultural and livestock sector. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is implementing the small-scale agricultural support programme and Deputy Permanent Secretary U Hla Tun answered some questions regarding the project to assist local farmers.

Q: Can you tell us some of the actions plans of the ministry under the small-scale agricultural support programme?

A: The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry formulated the CERP and sent it to our ministry on 24 April 2020. Our ministry has the implementation of the project which is aimed to provide cash support to farmers, Small Agro-Processing and Dairy Units for Milk Production and Income-generation. The ministry will review submissions (a) to (d) under small-scale agricultural support programme that may not be compatible with fund requirements by following CERP criteria, for the seven departments under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

We have sent K62,141,166.16 million for the necessary actions to the Plan of Planning, August 2020 (MoPP) on 6 June 2020. MoPP made a decision at its coordination meeting on 19 June 2020 to permit K91,611.90 million for subsections (b) and (d) of action plan 2.1.3.

Q: How will you utilize the allotted funds to help farmers?

A: We will implement subsection (b) of action plan 2.1.3 that entails cash or in-kind support to smallholder farmers who have lost sales revenue or remittances from overseas and have not been able to find alternative opportunities in time for monsoon planting.

The Agricultural Development Department will work closely with production farmer associations and seed production companies to implement the rice seed programme.

The action plan aims to develop the rice seed breeding businesses in stock breeding and produce, and under. Thus, they will utilize a total of K60,770 million for subsection (b) of action plans to farmers facing financial hardships, households wishing to work on manufacturing and small-scale trading, and households affected by COVID-19.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce will implement the village capital development project, as outlined in the CERP – 2.1.7, to support the 14 localities and 2200 villages in the remaining Regions, Shan, Bhamo and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated valleys in Upper Sanguinga and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is 84%.

STATE OF THE SEA: The sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 4 (7-10 feet) off and 10 (4-7 feet) off Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak to moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10TH JULY 2020: Isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is 90%.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10TH JULY 2020: Isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is 90%.
Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population Directive for conducting surprise inspections on factories, workshops and workplaces

5th Waning of First Waso, 1382 ME (9th July 2020)

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, and a combined team of experts began inspecting factories, workshops and workplaces starting from 20-4-2020 to check whether they are adhering to regulations and recommendations of the Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent COVID-19. Those that passed the inspections were allowed to reopen.

2. Initial inspection was not carried out at some workplaces, including private businesses with a small workforce, small-scale emerging businesses and household businesses. Small task groups consisting of officials from township-level committees for containment and emergency response against COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw Council and the states and regions worked together with the General Administration Department, MoLIP and MoHS to inspect the remaining workplaces starting from 16-5-2020.

3. Factories, workshops and workplaces are required to follow regulations and recommendations of the Ministry of Health and Sports for effective prevention against the spread of COVID-19. Similar task forces comprised with township-level committees against COVID-19, the GAD, MoLIP and MoHS will continue conducting surprise inspections to the workplaces for these regulations and recommendations.

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

Certificates, titles to be conferred on Buddhist monks in congratulatory ceremony

CERTIFICATES and titles will be conferred on the Buddhist monks who completed the 72nd Tpatakanwida Selection Exam organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

The event will be held together with congratulatory ceremony at the Mahapasana Cave (Great Cave) in the precinct of Siri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda, Yangon, Myanmar, at 8 am on 1st Waxing of Second Waso 1382 ME on 20 July (Sunday).

The Department of Religious Affairs has confirmed that the monks who passed the exam have been informed to contact the exam department at Pubba Videha monastery near the Kaba Aye pagoda by 3 pm on 19 July, whether they receive or not the invitation letters for the event. — MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

55 Myanmar citizens fly back home from Taiwan (China-Taipei)

THE cargo China Airlines flight landed at the Yangon International Airport on the morning of 9 July, bringing back a total of 55 Myanmar citizens who were stranded in Taiwan (China-Taipei).

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, 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 in relief flight and charter flight in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries and brought back a total of 7,142 citizens to date. — MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Small-scale agricultural support programme for farmers coming soon

FROM PAGE-9

The Department of Irrigation and Water Management will use K1,138 million from allotted funds for repairing different types of canals in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions as they suffer damage from floods annually. The project will employ local residents.

The Agricultural Mechanization Department will use K204 million from funds and department-owned tractors to cover the cost of oil for farmers. The Small Scale Industries Department will use K600.210 million from funds to train 9,000 trainees on value-added products such as regional cuisine, accessories, electricity, clothing, weaving, wood, bamboo, handicrafts, and household items, effectively an on job training programme.

Q: Can you explain what benefits will arise from these projects?
A: The first and main objective is to ensure food security and adequate support during the economic repercussions from COVID-19. The projects will assist people living in rural areas to achieve better living standards and will use 92.611 billion from the Union budget to do so. This will create numerous benefits to 70 per cent of the nation’s population, who live in rural areas, within 3 months. While the projects themselves will be short-term, the effects will last for the long term.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
A: CERP is being implemented with funds from the Union budget and affiliated development organizations. We will use the World Bank’s loan to develop agricultural projects after COVID-19, implement market networking under CERP 2.1.7 (c), and the contract agricultural system, and upgrading laboratories for quality testing.

The EU is providing assistance of EURO 70 million for reforming the nutrition sector and we will be signing an agreement with them soon. We will be using funds from there for COVID-19 relief and rehabilitation matters as well.

(Translated by Pen Dali)
Advanced script writing course conducted in Yangon

AN advanced script writing course is being conducted at the Search for Common Ground (SFCG) beginning 7 July.

Scriptwriter Dr Aung Min from the Yangon Film School is leading the one and half month course for six staff members of MRTV, aiming to produce TV series about traditional dances of Myanmar national people.

The course is organized by the MRTV and the SFCG to present diverse cultures of national people and enhance friendly relationships among them. The SFCG is a non-governmental organization formed in 1982, and its headquarters are in Washington DC of the United States and in Brussels of the Belgium.

In cooperation with MRTV, the SFCG started production of educational and awareness programmes since 2014.—MNA  Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 319 after one new case reported on 9 July

FROM PAGE-1

Two new cases of COVID-19 on 9 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact with positive patient</th>
<th>Oversea travel history</th>
<th>Hospital for medical treatment</th>
<th>Lab result</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>318</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Tonzang Township, Chin State</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, India</td>
<td>People’s Hospital Tiddim</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Tonzang Township)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>319</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Taze Township, Sagaing Region</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Philippines</td>
<td>South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Mingalardon Township)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Myanmar Rice Federation to sell rice at discount price

MYANMAR Rice Federation will sell rice to people at discount price from its stockpiled reserve rice Eimhta which were accumulated from export companies since the last week of April and early May this year. Retail shops and factories are invited to apply for purchasing permit at the MRF for each 108-lb rice bags at K22,800. The federation will supply 200 rice bags to each shop in one time.

However, the retailers and the factory owners must sell rice at maximum price of K1,000, K1,050 or K1,100 per Pyi, depending on the ranges of location. The retail shops and factories can contact phone numbers 09694386994 and 09694386950 to the Myanmar Rice Federation and 09694386996 to the Myanmar Rice Merchants Association.—Aung Thu Ya

Translated by Aung Khin

Masked robbers hold up a home in Ponnagyun Tsp

FOUR identified robbers mugged a house in Ponnagyun Township, Rakhine State, on 6 July.

According to the Tatmadaw True News Information Team, the 4 masked robbers broke into the home of Daw Than Nu Aye in Sanpya Ward while her husband was on a business trip to Sittway. They broke down the front door around midnight and held Daw Than Nu Aye and her 8-year old son at knife point. They reportedly stole a pair of earrings, three bracelets, a necklace and three rings worth of K3.8 million and left the mother and son tied up in their home. Authorities are looking into the matter and will pursue appropriate further action.—MNA

Translated by Zaw Htet Oo

Ministry of Health and Sports

Invitation for Open tender No. (1/2020)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation: sale open tender of (5000) Metric Tons, (15) Lot of Cathode Copper by United States Dollar as follows:

1. (a) (100) Metric Tons each (5) Lot Monywa, Mine Site
1. (b) (200) Metric Tons each (5) Lot Monywa, Mine Site
1. (c) (300) Metric Tons each (3) Lot Monywa, Mine Site
1. (d) (100) Metric Tons each (2) Lot Monywa, Mine Site

2. Base price of Cathode Copper shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the LME price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses) shall be winning tender.

3. Tender Closing Date and Time is 7th August 2020 (14:00) hrs and Opening Tender is 15:00 hrs.

4. Tender documents are available from the Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No. (15), Nay Pyi Taw and details can be asked to (+95) 067 3649378 and 067 3409372 within the Office hours.

Tender Committee
Departmental of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Acknowledgement of Changing Pesticide Trade Name

The trade names of the following pesticides, manufactured by Syntech International Co., Ltd. registered at Pesticides Registration Board with the name of distributor by Farm Link Co., Ltd have been changed in reference to import and distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Trade Name (Old)</th>
<th>Trade Name (New)</th>
<th>Active Ingredient</th>
<th>Type of Registration</th>
<th>Registration No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fortime 10 EC</td>
<td>One Go</td>
<td>Quinelle-P-dhyl 12.5EC%</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>P-2017-3385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AT-Kil 25 SL</td>
<td>Two Go</td>
<td>Fumidin 25% SL</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>P-2017-3376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>AT-Pender 33EC</td>
<td>Kyo Shinn</td>
<td>Pendimethalin 33% EC</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>P-2017-3384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the above reason, in accordance with the objection of changing trade names may come and object at the Co Secretary, Pesticide, Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within 14 days.

Farm Link Co., Ltd. No. 242, Kanaung Minthargyi St., Industrial Zone (2), Hairng Thalayir T/S, Yakyoning, 09-264199400, 09-797777887, 09-783231907

Embassy of India, Yangon Tender Notice

Requirement of Manpower – one Receptionist, one Office Assistant and one MTS. Details are available in the Embassy’s website https://embassyofindiayangon.gov.in/ Tender - Tender (Embassy)’s and CPP Portal. The last date is 31 July, 2020.

Embassy of India, Yangon

Ministry of Health and Sports

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
Invitation for Prequalification - Engineering, Procurement and Construction for Overhead Power Transmission lines and Substation Extensions of Integrated LNG to Power Plant in Mee Lin Gyaing, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar


2. Scopes of Works
   2.1 Package 1
      • 350kV double-circuit overhead power transmission line from newly-built power plant to 500kV West University Substation with a length of 206km approximately, proposed conductor cross-section of 4×433/362 and overcrossing Ayeyawady River for one time at span of about 1,350m.
      • Extension of two bays in 500kV West University Substation near Y’angon, including one 500kV main transformer and five circuit breakers;
      • Extension of four bays in 230kV Pathein Substation;
      • Extension of two bays in 230kV Athoke Substation.

   2.2 Package 2
      • 230kV double-circuit overhead power transmission line from newly-built power plant to Pathein Substation with a length of 69km approximately and proposed conductor cross-section of 2×400mm2;
      • 230kV double-circuit overhead power transmission line from Pathein Substation to Athoke Substation with a length of 55km approximately and proposed conductor cross-section of 2×400mm2.

3. Only eligible Applicants with the following key qualifications should participate in the prequalification process:
   3.1 For Package 1
      - possess integrated construction qualification class A for power sector or particular construction qualification class A for power transformation and transmission, and integrated design qualification class A for power sector;
      - as designer, installer or EPC contractor in the past five years:
      - complete 500kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line (length not less than 80km) in China;
      - complete 230kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line (length not less than 100km) in China;
      - complete at least one 500kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line with large span (not less than 1km) for overcrossing obstruction in China or 230kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line with large span (not less than 1km) for overcrossing obstruction outside China;
      - complete at least four 500kV or higher voltage substations in China or at least two 230kV or higher voltage substations outside China.

3.2 For Package 2
      - possess integrated construction qualification class A for power sector or particular construction qualification class A for power transformation and transmission, and integrated design qualification class A for power sector;
      - as designer, installer or EPC contractor in the past five years:
      - complete 230kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line (length not less than 80km) in China;
      - complete 230kV or higher voltage overhead power transmission line (length not less than 100km) in China;
      - complete at least four 230kV or higher voltage substations in China or at least two 230kV or higher voltage substations outside China.

4. Applicants with the completed similar projects in M Yanmar will be preferred.

5. A complete set of Prequalification Documents in Chinese may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible applicants upon the submission of a written application together with the appendices to demonstrate the qualifications and experiences as well as the certificate of legal representative or the power of attorney of legal representative, and the effective identity certificate of legal representative or authorized representative to the Email address: luhangsong@urec.com.cn; cc: urec-mgy@urec.com.cn; from 8:00, July 8th to 16:00, July 13th, 2020 (local time).

6. Upon receipt of the specified application and appendices, UREC will send the Prequalification Documents in electronic version to the email address given by the qualified applicant.

7. The Applications for Prequalification should be submitted in the sealed envelopes before 16:00, July 29th, 2020 (local time).

8. Refer to the Prequalification Documents for details of the requirements for Preparation and Submission of Applications for Prequalification together with Security.

US judge dismisses GM suit against FCA

DETROIT — A US federal judge on Wednesday dismissed General Motors’ lawsuit against Fiat Chrysler, citing “holes” in GM’s claim that bribes by its rival to labor union officials raised GM’s costs.

In a stinging ruling, US District Judge Paul Borman, who last month called the suit a “waste of time,” issued the ruling that “dismisses GM’s Complaint with prejudice” — meaning it cannot be appealed.

GM alleged that FCA bribed auto union officials to secure an unfair advantage in labour talks and try to force it into a merger with FCA.

The judge agreed, saying there are “several separate grounds for dismissal,” adding in a comment on one of GM’s claims in the 194-page, 188-paragraph complaint that “Further scrutiny of this theory reveals additional holes in its logic.”

But GM said it would not give up.

“We strongly disagree with the District Court’s order and will pursue our legal remedies,” the company said in a statement, without elaborating.

“There is more than enough evidence from the guilty pleas of former FCA executives to conclude that the company engaged in racketeering and our complaint showed in detail how their multi-million dollar bribes caused direct harm to GM.”

General Motors lost its complaint against Fiat Chrysler after a federal judge issued a stinging ruling.

Huawei deepens ties with Europe’s biggest telecom firm: reports

BEIJING — Huawei Technologies Co. has deepened its business cooperation with Europe’s largest telecom operator Deutsche Telekom AG despite US security warnings about the Chinese tech giant, media reports said Thursday.

Germany’s Handelsblatt reported that Deutsche Telekom had agreed with the Chinese company to accelerate the introduction of “US-free” Huawei equipment, citing internal documents obtained by the business newspaper.

Deutsche Telekom depends heavily on Huawei in several fields such as 5G network, broadband and cloud services, while the United States has been pushing its allies, including Germany and Japan, to exclude Huawei from government contracts.

The German company has denied the Handelsblatt report, Reuters news agency said, but Huawei is believed to be confident that it has already created a close relationship with Deutsche Telekom.

Kyodo

TikTok’s Hong Kong exit a ‘win-win’ business move

HONG KONG — Viral video platform TikTok’s withdrawal from Hong Kong is a savvy commercial move that sidesteps thorny privacy issues but it will not shield the app completely from accusations of collusion with China, experts say.

As Facebook, Twitter and other US tech giants risk angering China by refusing to share Hong Kong user data, Chinese-owned TikTok has also portrayed an image of principle by pulling out of the territory.

The moves were triggered by China’s imposition of a security law on Hong Kong last week aimed at quashing a democracy movement, and gives police new powers to censor the internet.

TikTok’s exit from Hong Kong was partly an effort to shake off the “label of being a company that is controlled by China and shares data with the Chinese government,” Zhu Zhiqun, a political science professor at Bucknell University in the United States, told AFP.

However TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, has a similar app for mainland China called Douyin that does share users’ data with the Chinese government.

And while Douyin is not officially available for download in Hong Kong, ByteDance is happy for it to be used in the city of seven million people.

“The company does not have plans to make Douyin available on the Hong Kong app store, but Douyin has local Hong Kong users who have downloaded it in mainland China,” a ByteDance spokesman told AFP.

‘Win-win’

Leaving Hong Kong allows TikTok to focus on building its increasingly lucrative American market, while ceding only a little bit of ground to its sister app, according to tech expert Elliott Zaagman.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Deutsche Telekom had previously reported that it was sidestepping thorny privacy issues that sidesteps thorny privacy issues in Hong Kong.

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LONDON — Cranes whir above the affluent market town of Guildford, southwest of London, as Britain’s construction sector cranks back into gear after a damaging coronavirus lockdown.

Many of the nation’s builders downed tools when the government effectively shut the country on March 23, ordering the public to stay at home as the outbreak took hold.

More than three months later, restrictions are gradually being lifted and activity is picking up speed.

At Guilden Park in Guildford, construction of a new £38 million ($48 million, 42 million euros) student accommodation complex project stopped for nearly five weeks.

When completed next year, the development will comprise 533 student rooms across four six-storey buildings.

Although the government allowed some sites to carry on as normal through lockdown, Guilden Park stopped work to ensure its 75 workers could operate safely.

“There was so much focus on the new measures with COVID-19 that you could not take your eye off the ball,” said project manager Barry Kern. “Everybody realised it was not just about health and safety — it was about their families,” he told AFP at the facility.

Lithuania tests digital waters with collector coin

VILNIUS — With several countries pushing forward to introduce digital currencies, eurozone member Lithuania rolled out Thursday an electronic collector coin as a pilot project to get some real experience with virtual money.

“LBCOIN” can be purchased on the Bank of Lithuania’s e-shop by collectors from Thursday of Lithuania’s e-shop by collectors from Thursday.

Lithuania’s declaration of independence is marked by the sale of 992,400 euro coins.

It consists of digital tokens which can be traded in for a credit card-shaped silver coin worth 19.18 euros — the year of Lithuania’s declaration of independence.

The coin will have legal tender status similar to other euro collector coins but the Bank of Lithuania said its use as a means of payment will not be encouraged.

Nevertheless, the issuance of 24,000 digital tokens and 4,000 physical collector coins will hopefully provide some valuable insights.

“One of the key elements is to test this coin from the point of view of cyber security,” Marius Jurgilas, a board member of the Bank of Lithuania, told reporters.

The coin will comprise 533 student rooms across four six-storey buildings.

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Lithuania’s digital collector coin LBCOIN is not round but rectangular and made of silver. PHOTO: AFP

Japan to tighten export criteria for coal-fired power plants

TOKYO — Japan will tighten its criteria for supporting exports of coal-fired power plants amid criticism that the practice goes against global efforts to curb global warming.

“We’ve made big progress,” Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi told reporters after a meeting of a government panel on infrastructure exports.

Japan has backed coal-fired power generation projects via such entities as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The government’s conventional stance is that if a foreign country has no choice but to turn to coal as its energy source, Tokyo will extend assistance for the installation of cutting-edge power generation facilities based on the country’s request.

Energy-scarce Japan is the only nation among the Group of Seven countries pushing coal-fired power plants.

Faced with mounting global criticism, the government is taking a fresh look at its heavy dependence on coal-fired power generation, which is used to meet about a third of energy needs in Japan where most nuclear power plants remain offline after the 2011 crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi complex.

The lockdown to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus forced many construction sites to halt work. PHOTO: AFP

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The government’s conventional stance is that if a foreign country has no choice but to turn to coal as its energy source, Tokyo will extend assistance for the installation of cutting-edge power generation facilities based on the country’s request.

Energy-scarce Japan is the only nation among the Group of Seven countries pushing coal-fired power plants.

Faced with mounting global criticism, the government is taking a fresh look at its heavy dependence on coal-fired power generation, which is used to meet about a third of energy needs in Japan where most nuclear power plants remain offline after the 2011 crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi complex.

The lockdown to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus forced many construction sites to halt work. PHOTO: AFP
Millions under Australia lockdown as global cases hit 12 million

MELBOURNE — Millions of people in Australia’s second-biggest city went into lockdown on Thursday to battle another coronavirus outbreak, as the number of infections worldwide surged past 12 million.

Caseloads and death tolls have risen relentlessly in many of the world’s biggest nations, with three million confirmed cases in the United States alone. In Melbourne, five million people began a new lockdown just weeks after earlier restrictions ended as Australia battles a COVID-19 resurgence, with residents bracing for the emotional and economic costs. “The idea of not being able to see people that you love and care for is really distressing, really distressing,” said a tearful Melbourne resident, Monica Marshall, whose 91-year-old mother recently entered a care home.

“I hope that people have got the message that they really need to take notice — it’s very disconcerting watching some people on the news where they really don’t care.” With no vaccine or effective treatment available, experts have warned that social distancing is necessary to contain the virus — despite opposition in many parts of the world due to economic costs and misinformation.

Shoppers in Victoria state — of which Melbourne is the capital — stripped shelves bare on Wednesday before the lockdown began, and the country’s largest supermarket chain said it had reimposed buying limits on items including pasta, vegetables and sugar.—AFP

Tokyo to pay nightclubs to close as virus cases surge

Tokyo has seen a fresh surge of virus cases, particularly in its major commercial and entertainment districts, including the famed Shinjuku.

TOKYO — Tokyo unveiled plans Thursday to offer nightclubs subsidies to close as new coronavirus infections in the capital hit a single-day record, with many linked to entertainment districts.

Under the plan, the Tokyo metropolitan government will give 500,000 yen (US$4,660) to nightclubs and other venues — including so-called host and hostess bars — if they close for more than 10 days, local media reported.

Host and hostess bars offer guests the opportunity for flirtatious conversation with attractive companions, alongside high-priced drinks.

The bars are often used by businessmen to entertain clients.

Kaori Kohga, head of the industry association representing hostesses and clubs, gave the announcement a lukewarm reception.

“It’s a good start,” she told AFP, “but 500,000 yen per club is not sufficient to curb the cases in these districts.”

“Money may only go to clubs, not individual hostesses,” she added. “I’m afraid that the effect of the proposed subsidies may be limited.”

The measures came after a fresh surge in coronavirus cases in Tokyo, in particular in the capital’s major commercial and entertainment districts, including famed Shinjuku.

Tokyo said the number of new coronavirus infections reached a single-day record of 224 on Thursday.

“The number of cases related to night-time districts played a role to a certain extent,” Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said.

“We need to be on further alert,” she added.

Despite the record number and recent rises in cases, the government has said there is no need to reimpose restrictions and spokesman Yoshihide Suga said plans to further loosen rules on mass gatherings would go ahead on Friday.—AFP

Seoul mayor goes missing following sexual assault claim

SEOUL — South Korean police said Thursday that Seoul Mayor Park Won Soon, tipped as a possible 2022 presidential candidate of the ruling Democratic Party, has gone missing, amid reports he faced a criminal complaint of sexual assault.

Park’s daughter filed a police report at around 5:15 pm that he “had left home four to five hours ago after leaving words like a will, with his phone currently off,” according to Yonhap News Agency.

The police and the city have confirmed that Park, wearing a hat and jumper and carrying a backpack, left his official residence in Seoul early in the day and did not show up for work while he cancelled a scheduled event appearance.

Park’s former secretary is believed to have recently filed a criminal complaint with police, alleging she had been sexually assaulted by him, according to Yonhap.

Police, mobilizing drones and police dogs, are reportedly concentrating their search in the area of Gilseon Temple in Seoul’s northeastern ward of Seongbuk where his mobile phone signal was last accessed.

Park, a human rights lawyer, was first elected mayor of Seoul in 2011. He was re-elected in 2014 and again in 2018.

He has won praise for his handling of the coronavirus situation in Seoul. In a public opinion poll in May, he had a 60.5 per cent approval rating.—Kyodo

China executes man in coronavirus-rage killing case

BEIJING — A Chinese man who stabbed two people at a coronavirus travel checkpoint was executed Thursday, the Supreme People’s Court said.

Ma Jianguo was driving with friends to a village in rural Yunnan for a karaoke party when he came to a barricade blocking his path.

One member of the group tried to remove the barrier, sparking a dispute with people manning it.

Ma, aged 24, then stabbed two checkpoint volunteers several times in the abdomen, killing them, the court said in a posting on its official social media account.

At the time of the killings in February tens of millions of Chinese were under complete lockdown at home as the country grappled with a worsening coronavirus outbreak.

“During a grade-one major public health emergency response in Yunnan province, Ma Jianguo refused to abide by epidemic prevention and control policies, as well as traffic control measures,” a ruling on the court’s website said.

Since the coronavirus epidemic erupted late last year in the central city of Wuhan, China has charged hundreds of people with offences related to the crisis.—AFP

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‘Consensus’ Notre-Dame spire should be rebuilt as it was

PARIS — There is a “large consensus” that the spire of the fire-damaged Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris should be rebuilt as it was, France’s new culture minister said Thursday.

The massive 19th-century spire collapsed into the nave of the church bringing a large section of the roof with it as a blaze tore through the rafters of the cathedral in April last year.

Roselyne Bachelot told French radio that “there was a large consensus in public opinion and among those deciding” the issue for the spire to be rebuilt exactly as it was.

Her comments came hours before a commission that is set to rule on the thorny question was due to meet.

Can Trump keep his finances secret? US Supreme Court to rule on cases

WASHINGTON — Can Donald Trump refuse to hand over his financial records to Congress and New York prosecutors simply because he is president of the United States? The Supreme Court will rule Thursday on two related cases to answer this, with potentially widespread political implications.

The decision by the nine justices could lift the veil on Trump’s finances ahead of the November 3 election.

Unlike all of his predecessors since Richard Nixon in the 1970s, New York real estate mogul Trump refused to release his tax returns, despite promising to do so during his 2016 White House campaign.

Trump made his fortune a key component of that campaign, and his lack of transparency raises questions about his true worth and possible conflicts of interest.

Congressional investigations have raised questions about whether Trump has sensitive financial exposure to Russia, and also whether he has used questionable accounting loopholes to avoid paying taxes in the 1990s and 2000s.

Attorneys for Trump claim the president enjoys total immunity during his time in office, and that this is necessary so he can concentrate on his work without being “harassed” by prosecutors or lawmakers.

During the proceedings, one of the attorneys even argued that the president could shoot someone on 5th Avenue in New York and not be prosecuted until he left office — echoing a Trump 2016 campaign boast claiming that he would not lose any voters if he committed such a crime.

The cases could have long-term implications for the ability of lawmakers to scrutinize presidents, as well as test the claim by Trump’s attorneys that a president is immune from criminal investigation while in office.

Stormy problems
One of the cases before the Supreme Court relates to an investigation opened by the state of New York, and poses the specific question of the president’s immunity from prosecution. —AFP

Luxembourg’s Pierre Gramegna running for Eurozone president

LUXEMBOURG — Eurozone finance ministers, known as the Eurogroup, will elect their new president on Thursday, filling a key job just as the continent is facing the worst recession in EU history.

The job is considered one of the Europe’s key positions, along with the heads of the European Commission, EU Council and the European Parliament.

Whoever wins will be tasked with watching over a massive EU recovery plan that is still in negotiation as well as reviving stalled reforms of the single currency that is widely seen as needing fixing.

The eurozone economy is set to contract by a record 8.7 per cent this year, with mass unemployment and other dire consequences still a possibility.

51-year-old Calvino, who would become the first woman to lead the Eurogroup, has the support of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the countries of the south.

But “she also has major opposition from the Dutch and that whole gang who say ‘they’d rather die,’” said a European source.

Her opponents, mainly from free-market leaning member states, say the job requires compromise between countries of the north, who adhere to budgetary discipline, and those in the south, who are considered to be more lax. —AFP
U Zaw Zaw, president of the Myanmar Football Federation recently provided necessary cash assistance through Ayeyawady Foundation in Yangon, according to the statement with the foundation.

The MFF president donated K6.3 million to swab team from Yangon Regional Health Department as bonus for 30 health workers and K3 million to Pathein hospital for the ease of transportation during swab test to Yangon.

The foundation also provided to the quarantine camps of National Football Teams’ Apartments in Yangon for quarantined persons who were repatriated from Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines since 11 June 2020, according to the statement with the Ayeyawady Foundation.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) □

Warrix to sponsor match ball, kit supplier in Suzuki Cup 2020

WARRIX, one of Asia’s leading sports brands, will act as an official football supplier of the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020, according to the ASEAN Football Federation. Being an official match ball supplier for all matches of the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020, Warrix will supply the ball boy kits and referee kits throughout the event. It will also produce apparel, bibs and captain armbands for the tournament.

The AFF Suzuki Cup is the most important showcase of South East Asia’s great football talents, and the tournament has scheduled to be held in November and December 2020. Mr Wisan Wanasaksirisakul, Managing Director, Warrix Sport Co., Ltd., said, “We have continuously strived for innovation in our products using the latest technology as we believe in providing quality sportswear and equipment to enhance athlete performance across all sporting levels. Having sponsored various national football teams and major football clubs in South East Asia, this latest partnership with the AFF Suzuki Cup further underlines our commitment to grow and develop one of the most popular sports in the region”, he added.

Warrix also supported Myanmar Football Federation at the MFF Warrix Futsal Open Cup held in Mandalay last year.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) □

KUALA LUMPUR — Asia’s Champions League will resume in September with remaining group games played at centralized venues and a single-leg final in December, officials said Thursday following a six-month coronavirus hiatus.

The continental club championship, featuring 32 teams stretching from Saudi Arabia in the west to Japan in the East, was suspended in March after just a handful of matches as travel restrictions kicked in across Asia to contain the pandemic.

Chinese clubs Shanghai SIPG, Shanghai Shenhua and Guangzhou Evergrande are yet to play any group stage match after travel restrictions were imposed on teams from China, where the virus was first reported.

But with the pandemic starting to ease in many countries, the AFC Thursday announced new dates for the competition.

The four rounds of West Zone group stage matches for teams largely based in the Middle East will be crammed into 11 days from September 14 to 24 at a centralized venue still to be named.

The East Zone has a greater match backlog and aim to complete their group fixtures from October 16 to November 1 also in a centralized venue yet to be named.—AFP □

Pogba lauds Man Utd’s ‘beautiful’ attack

LONDON — Paul Pogba has applauded Manchester United’s “beautiful” attack, relishing his role in the team’s push for a Champions League spot after a season ravaged by injury.

The French World Cup winner’s return to fitness has been a key factor in United’s run of four wins and a draw in five games since the restart.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer’s men, who play Aston Villa on Thursday, are fifth in the Premier League, four points behind Leicester with a game in hand, four points behind leaders Manchester City and four points behind fourth-placed Chelsea.

“A beautiful attack, a beautiful football,” Pogba told talkSPORT after the 3-0 win over Brighton.

I love it, to be honest,” he added. “As disappointing as this is, our mandate to do all

Ryder Cup postponed to 2021 due to coronavirus

MIAMI — This year’s Ryder Cup golf showdown between Europe and the United States was postponed to 2021 on Wednesday, becoming the latest major sports event disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

The PGA of America, Ryder Cup Europe and the US PGA Tour announced the 43rd edition of the biennial matches, which had been set for Whistling Straits in Wisconsin on September 25-27, will instead be staged on September 24-26, 2021.

Safety concerns rose as COVID-19 cases continue to soar across the United States and no one involved wanted to stage a Ryder Cup without the passionate crowds whose cheers and songs animate an atmosphere unique in golf. “As disappointing as this is, our mandate to do all

we can to safeguard public health is what matters most,” PGA of America chief executive officer Seth Waugh said.—AFP □

Europe Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington of Ireland, left, and US captain Steve Stricker will have to wait until next year for their golf squads to meet at Whistling Straits after organizers postponed the event until 2021 on Wednesday. (AFP PHOTO/ANDREW REDINGTON)