Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Executive Order concerning Union Tax Law, its effective period

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened its third-day meeting of 17th regular session yesterday, and unanimously approved the Executive Order 1/2020 concerning the Union Tax Law and its effective period.

Executive Order 1/2020 concerning Union Tax Law

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win explained that the order is concerned with the Union Tax Law, and the four types of tax relief are granted under this law. The rights in this law are aimed for relief from the impacts of COVID-19.

The deputy minister added that his ministry has explained procedures, calculation, rules and principles in the order number 65/2020 to clarify tax relief plan in the Union Tax Law.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker decided to proceed the bill in line with the rules and regulations.

$483.8 mn loan for Bago-Kyaikhto highway project

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win explained the President’s proposed loan US$483.8 million from the Asia Development Bank for implementation of Bago-Kyaikhto highway which will link with Greater Mekong Subregion countries, Bago-Thanlyin highway, Yangon city bypass, Hantharwady International Airport project, Yangon-Mandalay highway and other regions of the country.

The project could create employment opportunities for local business firms and engineers as the local resources will be used in implementing the project as it is concerned with the Action Plan 2.3.3 under Goal 2 of COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) for prioritizing public investment and with the Goal 3 of easing the impact on labour and workers.

SEE PAGE-3
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee discusses Union Tax Bill 2020

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee organized a meeting on 2020 Union Tax Bill sent by the Union Government yesterday. The meeting was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Joint Bill Committee and Public Accounts Committee U Tun Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, Deputy Ministers for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win and U Sett Aung, Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn, the joint bill committee’s deputy chairperson, secretary, joint secretary and members, Joint Public Accounts Committee’s deputy chairperson and secretary, Pyithu Hluttaw Banking and Financial Development Committee’s chairperson, officials from the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Construction and the Attorney-General’s Office of the Union, the UMFCCI’s Vice-Chair and central executive of- ficers, officials from Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation, Myanmar Licensed Contractors Association, Myanmar Developers Associations, Myanmar Cheroot Producers Associations, Myanmar Cigarette Producers Associations, Myanmar Liquor Association and Myanmar Liquor Producers Association, and officials from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

National land law working committee holds second meeting

The second meeting of national land law working committee is in progress at the Union Attorney-General’s Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the meeting, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo said an action plan (draft) for drafting the National Land Law was created after organizing two workshops by the working committee. The process will be implemented step-by-step in accordance with the draft action plan. He also called for suggestions of the attendees to form working groups with appropriate participants to implement the tasks included in the draft action plan. Members of the working committee including Hluttaw representatives and representatives from departments concerned, civil society organizations, and farmers discussed and approved the draft action plan at the meeting. They also detailed drawing up of the draft National Land Law in accordance with the draft action plan, and timely reporting that will be made by the working groups and supporting working groups to obtain the themes and contents of the bill. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Myanmar nationals from ROK, Singapore brought back home

A relief flight of Myanmar National Airline bringing back 152 Myanmar nationals from Singapore, and a special flight from Korea Airlines bringing back 87 Myanmar seamen from South Korea landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. Myanmar seamen from foreign countries needed crew change after their contracts have expired, and the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul helped in their return to home after their shipping companies arranged to send them to Incheon International Airport.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Health and Sports and relevant ministries 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 1,762 Myanmar citizens through South Korea and 1,760 persons via Singapore to date. —MNA (Translated by EPPA)

The 73rd Martyrs’ Day ceremony 2020 to be broadcast live

THE 73rd Martyrs’ Day Ceremony will be held at the Martyrs’ Mausoleum, Bahan Township, Yangon at 8 am on 19 July 2020. The event will be broadcast live starting from 7:40 am by Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), MRTV Taingyainghta (NRC Channel), MHTV, Myawady (MWD), Skyntet Up to Date, Channel 9, MNTV, One News, Myanmar Radio and the MRTV Wehportal Facebook page. —MNA

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar remains at 339 as no new case reported on 17 July

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases remains at 339 as no new case was reported on 17 July according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 339 confirmed cases, six died, 271 have recovered, 257 have been discharged from hospitals and 17 were held under investigation. —MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 17 July 2020
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Executive Order concerning ...

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker invited the list of MPs who want to discuss the loan proposal and decided to discuss it on 27 July.

The 10 MPs discussed the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan. The 4th-day meeting of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will convene on 22 July.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

UEC holds meeting with CSOs for 2020 General Election

THE Union Election Commission (UEC) held a meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to successfully organize the 2020 General Election at the Grand Amara Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by UEC Chairman U Hla Thein and members, UEC Office’s officials, and CSOs representatives.

Speaking at the meeting, the UEC Chairman said during Myanmar’s democratic transition, UEC and CSOs are partners, adding that the commission and CSOs had successfully cooperated in the past elections. The 2020 General Election will be held on 8 November, and the designated constituencies for Hluttaw concerned were already announced, he added.

The commission has compiled voters list since 2019 so that all citizens who are aged 18 and above and who have voting rights can vote.

The voters list will be first announced for 14 days, from 25 July and 7 August. Eligible voters can ask to add their names in the voters list with Form-3 if their names are not included in the list. People can reject with Form-4 if the names of ineligible voters are included in the list. They can also ask to amend the voters list with Form-4(c) if the facts in the list are wrong.

He urged the CSOs to conduct voters awareness campaigns so that voters can view the voters list whether their names are included in the list. After amending the first voters list, second voters list will be announced for 14 days during October. The second voters list can also be amended during the announcement.

The commission is working together with the Ministry of Information, INGOs and IGOs on the voters education programmes. Over 40,000 polling stations were designated for 2020 General Election.

The commission will be operating with the Ministry of Health and Sports as the election will be held in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. Negotiation committees will be formed to settle the disputes happened during the election process.

The commission will form election security management committees and has already coordinated with ministry concerned to appoint special police for the security of the polling stations.

He added that the UEC is working together with relevant organizations in preventing spread of fake news and hate speech on social media, and the commission office is releasing accurate information about election.

The UEC has invited application for international election observation, and the 2020 General Election will be organized in line with the five norms.

He also called for cooperation of civil society organizations in the electoral processes.

The Director-General of UEC presented the preparatory works of the elections, followed by the discussions of CSOs.—MNA

(Translated by Myaw Zin Thwin)
MoLIP, ILO jointly organize coordination meeting of National Complaints Mechanism

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and the International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly organized a coordination meeting of the National Complaints Mechanism yesterday.

Union Minister U Thein Swe, Deputy Minister U Myint Kyaw, members of implementing committee for the mechanism, ILO’s Liaison Officer Mr Donglin Li and representatives of ILO office in Yangon, employers, employees and relevant ministries attended the meeting.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Thein Swe said that Myanmar carried out elimination of forced labour with the help of ILO for nearly two decades from 2002 to 2018, the government, employers and employees signed Decent Work Country Programme - DWCP (2018-2021) with ILO in September 2018 and adopted three prioritized plans.

The current implementation is concerned with the second point. According to the processes of DWCP, the ministry designed a project to eliminate the forced labour for the period from 2019 to 2021 after establishing the National Complaints Mechanism.

The national-level committee for eliminating forced labour was formed on 2 December 2019 with the members of relevant ministries and Myanmar Human Rights Commission. The National Complaints Mechanism began its functions on February this year, and opened complaint channels through some channels, including ILO, the parliament, the President’s Office and other state departments. It was announced on MRTV, Myanmar Radio, FM radios and the newspapers.

The Orientation Session was held on 27 February in Nay Pyi Taw for the committee members with the help of ILO.

The MoLIP held three coordination meetings with the Ministry of Defence and ILO to close 378 cases concerning with the Ministry of Defence, out of 217 cases.

The government has strongly emphasized the eradication of forced labour in the country.

ILO’s Liaison Officer Mr Donglin Li extended his greetings and government officials discussed Elimination of Forced Labour Project (2019-2021), and while the Director General of Labour Department discussed standardization of the NCM and explained the progress.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Deputy Minister U Bharat Singh attends Mekong-Japan Industrial & Government Dialogue and AMEICC Working Group on West-East Corridor Development


The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Saksayam Chidchob, Thailand’s Minister for Transport, and Mr Shigehiro Tanaka, Japan’s Vice Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The meeting was attended by Deputy Ministers from Mekong countries, industry representatives, Development Partners and representatives from both the AMEICC Secretariat and ASEAN Secretariat office.

During the meeting, Japan emphasized the importance of Mekong Industrial Development Vision (MIDV) 2.0 in sustaining more resilient economic growth aligned with an active response to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and outlined a way forward including the further development of a dedicated work programme. Deputy Ministers from Mekong countries then presented updates regarding their MIDV 2.0.

Myanmar’s Deputy Minister presented Myanmar’s three prioritized projects, including a proposed feasibility study for upgrading both railways and roads along the Myanmar-Thai border to enable greater trade and investment facilitation throughout the Greater Mekong Sub region (GMS). The Deputy Minister also proposed a standardization programme which would foster greater competitiveness of Myanmar’s micro-small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), currently facing a range of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, via training, technical know-how transfer, capacity building and related workshops and seminars.

Foreign Economic Relations Department Director-General and other senior officials from Directorate of Industrial Collaboration, Myanmar Railways, and Road Management Department, supported the Deputy Minister’s participation in the meeting.—MNA

Announcement of Bar Council

(CONTINUED FROM 17-7-2020)

1. The Bar Council has announced the final lists of candidates in Form 8 on 16 July 2020 for its election as per section 14 of the Council’s election procedures.

2. The following advocates will contest the Bar Council Election.

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<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Name of Advocate</th>
<th>Advocate Licence Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>U Aung Soe</td>
<td>2182</td>
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<td>U Maung Maung Soe</td>
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<td>Daw Maybel</td>
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<td>U Sein Win Chen</td>
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<td>U Robert San Aung</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Daw Khin Nu Tha</td>
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(TO BE CONTINUED)
Access to Health Fund delivers medical supplies for fight against COVID-19

MEDICAL supplies and laboratory equipment worth US$ 6.2 million to be used for measures against the COVID-19 were handed over by Access to Health Fund to the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe expressed words of thanks to the Access to Health Fund and the main donor countries, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Sweden and Switzerland.

He also said that the ministry will coordinate with the INGOs, UN agencies and donor organizations once every two months in order to ensure better cooperation with these organizations. British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Dan Chugg, Deputy Head of Mission from USAID Ms Teresa McGhie and Fund Director from Access to Health Fund Mr Oren Ginzburg explained further contributions.

The Union Minister received the medical supplies and laboratory equipment for the response to COVID-19 from the Access to Health Fund and gave the certificate of honour in return.

The Access to Health Fund has contributed to Myanmar $13.8 million dollars to date as a pledge of support for the national response against COVID.

—MNA
(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

MoI publishes 73rd anniversary Martyrs’ Day memorial books

THE Ministry of Information has published memorial books for the 73rd anniversary Martyrs’ Day. A total of 50,000 copies are in Myanmar language and 5,000 copies in English.

The books include biographies of nine fallen martyrs, excerpts from the last speech of Bogyoke Aung San in parliamentary sessions, the poem of Martyrs’ Mausoleum by Sayar Zawgyi Thakhin Ko Taw Hmine, the message from Bogyoke Aung San’s wife Daw Khin Kyi, the commemorative speech from the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the prayer from the leader of India’s independence Mahatma Gandhi, the broadcast speech of Thakhin Nu after the death of the martyrs, the literary works paying tribute to the martyrs by Sayar Zawgyi, Sayar Tin Moe, Dagon Tar Yar, and Sayar Min Thu Wun.

The memorial books published in commemoration of 73rd Anniversary Martyrs’ Day are being distributed to the Hlut-taw representatives, civil society organizations and the public since 17 July — MNA
(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

We need to be creative and innovative and figure out how to make our existing resources to be more valuable for ourselves

In times like this the challenges are huge and there is much to consider; according to the saying “necessity is the mother of invention”, our innovative brains become more active; we need to be creative and innovative and figure out how to make our existing resources to be more valuable for ourselves as well as for the whole world; our country does not exist in isolation, that was why if there is a need for a particular commodity in a certain country, as a rule we should sell this commodity if we are able to sell it, we should sell it as much as possible; we should assist others who are in need; this may be considered as humanitarian assistance apart from that it is also good for our relations among the human community; she believes that in the long term good results would come out of good intentions according to the law of karma.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s discussions with senior health officials on 24 June 2020)
K6 bln earmarked to support fish species for 150,000 acres of fish ponds

THE fisheries department will spend K6 billion to support fish species for 150,000 acres of fish ponds as the entrepreneurs are adversely affected by the outbreak of coronavirus disease, according to an official from the Fisheries Department.

The fish species will be supplied within July, August and September. The fingerling species will be distributed through 27 hatching camps under the Fisheries Department. If it is not sufficient, we will invite tender from outside, he said.

We are not ready yet. We are just formulating the plan. We need to check the need of the entrepreneurs. We are also coordinating for the tender process,” he added.

Out of 150,000 acres of fish ponds, most fish ponds are located in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions. The tender will be invited for those regions while the remaining regions and states will be supported by the fish species production camps, he further said.

The remedy process of the breeding sector impacted by coronavirus will contain a sustainable project such as animal and animal productions and constructing of a cold storage warehouse, said Director-General Dr Ye Tun Win of Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

To be able to implement those businesses, the department has already got a loan amounting to US$4 million from the World Bank. Those cold storage warehouses will be constructed in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions.

— Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

CAMPAIGN FACTORIES REQUEST MIC TO MANUFACTURE MORE PPEs, FACEMASKS

The Yangon Payment System (YPS) will be launched onboard the YBS buses on 21 July, it was learnt.

Currently, the YPS cards are being sold starting from 16 July in Yangon region. The bus lines numbers allowed to use the YPS cards are announced on the Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein’s social media account on yesterday.

The YPS cards can be applied onboard the following YBS bus lines: 43, 62, 72, 89, 96, 12, 14, 25, 30 and 28. The YPS cards will start to be used on 21 July.

This is one of the significant developments after Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) replaced the Yangon Region Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles aka Ma Ha Ta in 2016. Now, the passengers will use the YPS cards onboard YBS buses and it can solve the problem of lack of the change. YPS top-up cards will be available about ten days before the system becomes operational. It will be started with 40 bus lines, those which use a fixed bus fare.

Passengers will have to scan their cards twice while travelling on a bus. The cards will be available at a flat rate of K2,000 and can be refilled with an amount between K1,000 and K5,000.

— Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)
Bogyoke Aung San Residence Museum in Natmauk

Bogyoke Aung San Residence Museum in Natmauk was the home of his parents U Phar and Daw Suu in Magway Region. He lived in this house from 1915 to 1929. His brother U Nay Aung and mother Daw Suu continued living at the residence after U Phar passed away. The house was donated to the State after U Nay Aung died in 1973. The Minister of Culture established the house into a museum which displays the photo documents of Bogyoke Aung San from his childhood, school age, political activities and funerals in a vast array.

Documentary photos for school age display front covers of mathematic book in five standard at U Sobita school and six standard at the National High school in Yenangyoung Township, certificate for completion of matriculation class, photos of early university days, the building of Student Union and the graduation certificate.

Documentary photos for family life include the wedding invitation card of Bogyoke Aung San and Daw Khin Kyi, photos of their early marriage life, photos of family members and the handwriting of Bogyoke Aung San to his wife that requested for eating boiled pea and matzo.

Photos of political activities and national leader display brief biography of Bogyoke Aung San and an array of photos, including Thirty Comrades, meeting between Bogyoke and British Prime Minister Attlee at No. 10 Downing Street in London, public speech at the eastern side of landmark Shwedagon Pagoda and documentary photos of foreigners at the Panglong Conference.

The category of funeral photos display carrying his body to the Martyrs’ Mausoleum, military uniform on his body after death, his tomb at the Martyrs’ Mausoleum, his last home in Yangon, brief history of Bogyoke Aung San Museum, family tree of their generation and excerpts of his speech.

Bogyoke Aung San Residence Museum is seen in Natmauk in Magway Region. PHOTO : MNA

Bogyoke Aung San is seen at the Dinner Reception in London. PHOTO : MNA

Bogyoke Aung San (right), his mother Daw Suu (centre), and his wife Daw Khin Kyi (left). PHOTO : MNA

The place where he read during his visit to the residence, his bedroom, his mother’s bedroom, family bedroom, locker, fire resistant safe locker, kitchen, his mother’s weaving loom and granary.

Bogyoke Aung San Residence Museum in Natmauk will be closed during the 73rd anniversary of Martyrs’ Day as a control measure against COVID-19 this year.—Naing Lin Kyi

(Translated by Aung Khin)
Labour reforms make progress but still, need cooperation from all stakeholders

THE NEW GLOBAL LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Labour reforms make progress but still, need cooperation from all stakeholders

FROM the exercise of global power to racism, gender discrimination and income disparities, inequality continues to threaten our wellbeing and our future. We desperately need new thinking to halt and reverse it.

We often hear a rising tide of economic growth lifts all boats. But in reality, a rising tide of inequality sinks all boats. High levels of inequality have helped to create the global fragility that is being exposed and exploited by COVID-19.

The virus is shining a spotlight on inequalities of all kinds. It poses the highest risk to the health of the most vulnerable, and its social and economic impact is concentrated on those who are least able to cope. Unless we act now, 100 million more people could be pushed into extreme poverty and 200 million into severe food insecurity.

Even before COVID-19, people everywhere were raising their voices against inequality. Between 2010 and 2019, the world’s richest 1 per cent captured 27 per cent of the total cumulative growth in income. But income is not the only measure of inequality. People’s chances to live depend on their gender, family and ethnic background, race, whether or not they have a disability, health, and the triple inequalities intersect and reinforce each other across the generations, defining the lives and expectations of millions of people before they are even born.

Just one example: more than 36 per cent of 20-year-olds in countries with very high human development are in higher education. In low human development countries, that figure is 2 per cent. Even more shocking, some 17 per cent of the children born twenty years ago in those countries have already died.

The anger fueling recent social unrest is an expression of anti-racism campaign that has spread around the world in the aftermath of George Floyd’s death calling on the chorus of brave women calling out the powerful men who have abused them, in yet another sign of global disaffiliation with the status quo. And the two seismic shifts in our age — the digital revolution and the climate crisis — threaten to erode inequality and injustice even more deeply.

But it has also created a generational opportunity to build a new social and sustainable world, based on two central ideas: a New Global Deal for Social Protection and a New Global Deal for the Economy.

We need fair taxation on income and wealth, and a new generation of social protection policies, with safety nets includ- ing Universal Health Coverage and the possibility of a Universal Basic Income to extend to everyone.

To make the New Social Con- tract possible, we need a New Global Deal to ensure that pov- erty, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level. A New Global Deal must be based on a fair globalization, on the rights and dignity of every human being, on living in balance with nature, on respect for the rights of future generations, and on success measured in human rather than economic terms.

We need global governance based on full, inclusive and equal participation in global institutions. Developing coun- tries must have a stronger voice, from United Nations Security Council to the Boards of the Interna- tional Monetary Fund and the World Bank and beyond. We need a new, inclusive and balanced multilateral trading system that enables developing countries to benefit from the benefits and opportunities in the green, equitable economy.

The New Global Deal and the New Social Contract will put the world back on track to realize the promise of the Paris Agree- ment on Climate Change and achieve the Sustainable Develop- ment Goals — our globally agreed vision of peace and prosperity on a healthy planet by 2030.

We are at breaking point and we are using the power of the New Social Contract and the New Global Deal, and we can find our way to better days ahead.

UNICEF Yangon

REFORMING TOWARD THE DIGITALIZATION OF SOCIETY

Japan OKs plan promoting digitalization, telework under “new normal”

The Japanese Cabinet approved Friday its annual economic policy guideline to promote reforms toward the digitalization of society and further switching to teleworking under the “new normal” era amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Increasing the govern- ment’s effort to build “national resilience” to protect people’s lives and livelihoods from natural disasters and to minimize the damage was also included in the government’s annual economic policy guideline, having been reviewed as heavy rain for about a week since July 3 ripped through the southwestern region of Kyushu and other areas, killing over 100 people, along with widespread flooding and calms such as heavy rain and flooding in western Japan in 2018 and Typhoon Hagibis last year.

The government’s growth strategy recently approved by the Cabinet, with renunciation of the government’s past plan, has been sent to any other news or magazine publishing houses, as a model of solidarity serving in the interests of employees, would become a milestone in efforts to eliminate forced labor in our country.

The National Complaints Mechanism is that the mechanism comprises necessary stakeholders, such as employers, employees, the military and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The significance of the National Complaints Mechanism is that it is the mechanism comprises necessary stakeholders, such as employers, employees, the military and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The government sent 217 cases to ILO, abiding by the Supplementary Understanding. SUE mechanism agreed to by the ILO after the cases were settled by the governmental departments. There are some cases which have been closed by ILO, but so far as they have closed by ILO. Hence, ILO is strongly requested to close the remaining 182 cases.

The government of Myanmar’s recent achievement in labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, our labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, and the Ministry of Employment and Labour’s effort to build a “national identity card” system in pre-independence government.

The government of Myanmar’s recent achievement in labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, our labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, and the Ministry of Employment and Labour’s effort to build a “national identity card” system in pre-independence government.

We are confident that cooperation between the government and those organizations, which represent and lead the labour force across the country, as a model of solidarity serving in the interests of employees, would become a milestone in efforts to eliminate forced labour in our country.

The government of Myanmar’s recent achievement in labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, our labour sector reform including unlisting the Tatmadaw from the child soldier’s list, and the Ministry of Employment and Labour’s effort to build a “national identity card” system in pre-independence government.
India coronavirus cases pass one million

THE capital of China’s far-western Xinjiang region curtailed most flights into the city on Friday and has shut down subway and public bus services as authorities and state-controlled media said.

So far, at least five cases linked to Urumqi have been discovered, including a man who was confirmed positive after he travelled from the city to the eastern province of Zhejiang, state media said.

The infections were detected beginning on Wednesday, and news of the cases prompted state media outlets in Urumqi to issue assurances on Friday that supermarkets had ample stocks of food – an apparent attempt to discourage panic-buying.

The new cases illustrate the continuing difficulty China faces in stamping out the contagion, which emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year before spreading throughout the country and globally.

Strict lockdowns across the country and widespread COVID-19 testing largely brought the outbreak under control within Chinese borders.

But a new cluster emerged in Beijing in June, infecting more than 330 people before also being contained.

Aviation authorities announced that 89 percent of flights servicing Urumqi had been cancelled, and the metro system said the city’s single line had been shut down from late Thursday.

`tome: AFP` New virus cases spark alarm in China’s Xinjiang

Japan, Germany vow to deepen cooperation on COVID-19 vaccine development

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and German Chancellor Angela Merkel held talks on Thursday, with both sides agreeing to cooperate on the development of an effective vaccine to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Japanese government, during the 35-minute virtual meeting, Abe told Merkel that Japan will contribute to the development and distribution of vaccines via what is known as the ACT-Accelerator.

The ACT-Accelerator is a global collaborative framework led by the World Health Organization to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

Abe added that Tokyo is seeking to improve the health care system in developing countries, while Merkel responded that Germany hopes to work with Japan to that end, according to the Japanese government.

`tome: Xinhua`
Solar Orbiter gives scientists unprecedented look at Sun

WASHINGTON — NASA on Thursday postponed the launch of its $10 billion James Webb Space Telescope from March next year to October 31, 2021, blaming the pandemic and other technical challenges.

The telescope, first conceived in the 1990s, was initially to be launched in the 2000s, but its main maker Northrop Grumman has faced numerous developmental problems that have doubled its cost.

“Webb is the world’s most complex space observatory, and our top science priority, and we’ve worked hard to keep progress moving during the pandemic,” said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.

After it is launched from French Guiana, Webb will journey a million miles from Earth, away from the Sun, before assuming its orbit.

It will then unfold a five-layered sunshield until it reaches the size of a tennis court, and deploy a 6.5-meter (21-foot) mirror designed to detect the faint light of far-away stars and galaxies.

Its mission is to help solve fundamental questions about the origins of the cosmos.

Spain to cull nearly 100,000 mink with coronavirus

MADRID — Spain has ordered the culling of nearly 100,000 mink on a farm in the northeast after confirming many were carrying coronavirus, a regional minister said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters, Joaquin Olona, agriculture minister for the Aragon region, said the cull would involve the slaughter of some 92,700 mink who are prized for their pelt.

Yangtze floods force millions from their homes in central China

XINING — Vast swathes of China have been inundated by the worst flooding in decades along the mighty Yangtze River; with residents piling into boats and makeshift rafts to escape a deluge that has collapsed flood defences and turned their homes into waterways.

Heavy rains since June have left at least 141 people dead and missing, forced nearly 15 million people to be evacuated from their homes in July alone, and caused billions of dollars in economic losses, according to the government.

An AFP photographer travelled through central Jiangxi, floating past partly submerged villages and towns as rescue workers battled to repair levees and dykes as forecasters warned of yet more rain.

Waters in more than 400 rivers have exceeded warning levels, while some have reached historic highs over a period that officials say has caused the highest average rainfall levels across the Yangtze basin since 1961.

Summer rains and seasonal glacial melt in the river’s Tibetan plateau headwaters cause routine annual flooding.

Authorities are particularly concerned with Poyang Lake — China’s largest freshwater lake — in hard-hit Jiangxi province.

Water levels there have hit historic highs, prompting an effort by more than 100,000 soldiers and other personnel to rescue residents and shore up dykes and levees to prevent worse flooding.

“The Sun seems relatively calm on first viewing but when you look at it in detail you can see miniature eruptions everywhere,” he added.

Solar winds and flares emit billions of highly charged particles that impact planets, including Earth. But the phenomena remain poorly understood despite decades of research.

The largest solar storm on record hit North America in September 1859, knocking out much of the continent’s telegraph network and bathing the skies in an aurora viewable as far away as the Caribbean.

Solar ejections can also disrupt radar systems, radio networks and can even render satellites useless, though such extremes are rare.

During its first orbit, the craft — developed in conjunction with NASA — travelled around 77 million kilometres (48 million miles) from the surface, about half the distance between the Sun and Earth.

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James Webb Space Telescope launch pushed back to October 2021

WASHINGTON — NASA on Thursday postponed the launch of its $10 billion James Webb Space Telescope from March next year to October 31, 2021, blaming the pandemic and other technical challenges.

The telescope, first conceived in the 1990s, was initially to be launched in the 2000s, but its main maker Northrop Grumman has faced numerous developmental problems that have doubled its cost.

“Webb is the world’s most complex space observatory, and our top science priority, and we’ve worked hard to keep progress moving during the pandemic,” said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.

After it is launched from French Guiana, Webb will journey a million miles from Earth, away from the Sun, before assuming its orbit.

It will then unfold a five-layered sunshield until it reaches the size of a tennis court, and deploy a 6.5-meter (21-foot) mirror designed to detect the faint light of far-away stars and galaxies.

Its mission is to help solve fundamental questions about the origins of the cosmos.

Spain to cull nearly 100,000 mink with coronavirus

MADRID — Spain has ordered the culling of nearly 100,000 mink on a farm in the northeast after confirming many were carrying coronavirus, a regional minister said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters, Joaquin Olona, agriculture minister for the Aragon region, said the cull would involve the slaughter of some 92,700 mink who are prized for their pelt.

Yangtze floods force millions from their homes in central China

XINING — Vast swathes of China have been inundated by the worst flooding in decades along the mighty Yangtze River; with residents piling into boats and makeshift rafts to escape a deluge that has collapsed flood defences and turned their homes into waterways.

Heavy rains since June have left at least 141 people dead and missing, forced nearly 15 million people to be evacuated from their homes in July alone, and caused billions of dollars in economic losses, according to the government.

An AFP photographer travelled through central Jiangxi, floating past partly submerged villages and towns as rescue workers battled to repair levees and dykes as forecasters warned of yet more rain.

Waters in more than 400 rivers have exceeded warning levels, while some have reached historic highs over a period that officials say has caused the highest average rainfall levels across the Yangtze basin since 1961.

Summer rains and seasonal glacial melt in the river’s Tibetan plateau headwaters cause routine annual flooding.

Authorities are particularly concerned with Poyang Lake — China’s largest freshwater lake — in hard-hit Jiangxi province.

Water levels there have hit historic highs, prompting an effort by more than 100,000 soldiers and other personnel to rescue residents and shore up dykes and levees to prevent worse flooding.

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India's richest man takes on Amazon, Walmart in e-commerce gamble

MUMBAI — Backed by multi-billion-dollar investments from global tech giants, India's richest man is ready to rumble with Amazon and Walmart for the country's huge e-commerce market through his conglomerate Reliance. But it is far from certain that Mukesh Ambani's latest gamble will pay off in a crowded market where many suppliers are not well-versed in digital business.

The mogul has long trumpeted his ambition to revolutionize retail in the country of 1.3 billion by convincing farmers and shopkeepers to sell their goods on his new JioMart platform launched this year.

But modernizing India's creaky, inefficient supply chains will not be easy, even for Reliance, the nation's largest retailer by revenue with a portfolio including supermarkets, electronics stores and fast-fashion outlets. Google on Wednesday became the latest Silicon Valley player to invest in the digital unit of the Indian oil-to-telecoms juggernaut, following in the footsteps of Facebook and Intel. —AFP

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

Project Name : Myanmar Power System Efficiency and Resilience Project
Country : The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
IDA Credit No : IDA 6631-MM
Assignment Title : Owner's Engineer of New 300 MW CCGT power plant at Yangon Region, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Reference No. : EPGE-OE-2020

The Ministry of Electric Energy and Energy has applied for financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Myanmar Power System Energy Efficiency and Resilience Project, intends to apply part of the proceeds of the consulting services. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment are attached to this request for expressions of interest. The consulting services (“the Services”) include on the following scope:

1. Project Management
2. Design Audit and Construction Supervision
3. Testing and Commissioning
4. Training and Capacity Development
5. Environment and Social Management
6. Contract Administration

The Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

• General experience in power plant engineering and construction management, testing and commissioning for at least twenty (20) years;
• Consulting services as an Owner’s Engineer (OE) involving design audit and construction supervision and testing and commissioning for at least two CCGT projects with each minimum capacity of 200MW (net) that the firm has successfully completed in the last ten (10) years; and
• Working in at least one CCGT project in the Client’s similar country environment with minimum capacity of 200MW (net).

Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IDA Borrowers” July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest. Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Qualitative and Cost-based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information and Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained by sending the official request via email at the address below during office hours 09:30 to 16:30 hours. The TOR will be sent by email. Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below by e-mail by the close of business of Monday August 17, 2020.

Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE)
Attn: Managing Director
Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE)
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Telephone: +95 9 2225181, +95 9 5133 511
Email: ywamproject@gmail.com

Australia hopes to lure Hollywood studios with virus success

SYDNEY — Australia is hoping its success in dealing with the coronavirus will lure more big budget Hollywood productions Down Under, with the government announcing incentives worth hundreds of millions of dollars Friday.

Promising “lights, camera, jobs,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison unveiled an Aus$400 million (US$280 million) boost in cash grants for film productions, a move he said had already piqued the interest of major studios. “Jerry Bruckheimer’s outfit and Ron Howard’s outfit have already reached out to Australia on the basis of the announcement we have made today,” Morrison said.

Australia has long chased Hollywood productions by offering tax breaks and in recent years hosted a number of blockbuster movies including several Marvel movies, a Pirates of the Caribbean film and currently Baz Luhrmann’s Elvis biopic. PHOTO: AFP

The plan aims to generate 8,000 jobs a year over seven years after Australia recorded its highest unemployment rate in two decades last month.

But Morrison pointed instead to the return of more than 200,000 jobs as a sign Australia was charting a path through the pandemic.

The announcement mirrors a similar push in New Zealand where the crew filming the “Avatar” sequel was granted special exemptions from virus rules to enter the country. Australia has long chased Hollywood productions by offering tax breaks and in recent years hosted several blockbuster movies including several Marvel movies, a Pirates of the Caribbean film and currently Baz Luhrmann’s Elvis biopic.

Back in March, Luhrmann’s production highlighted dangers of the virus when Tom Hanks became the first major Hollywood star to contract COVID-19 while working on Australia’s Gold Coast.

But the plan, made on Morrison’s first visit to Queensland since the beginning of travel restrictions in the country, is the latest sign of a nation now emerging from virus shutdowns. —AFP

Notice for Change of Pesticides Trade Name

The foreign manufacture Agrinova Cropcare Pte., Ltd will import and distribute the following insecticides registered in Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board Changing trade name.

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<td>All Right 70WP</td>
<td>YAKUZA 70WP</td>
<td>Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl 13% + Pynasulfuron ethyl 7% + Quinclorac 50% WP</td>
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It is therefore announced to come and reject within 14 days to joint Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein in wishing to make any objection in respect of the said changing trading name of insecticide.

Address- Wi Sar Ra International Co., Ltd No. (33), Shwe Padauk Yeik Mon, Bayint Naung Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon Region, The Republic of Union of Myanmar.
Trump’s memoir sells nearly 1 mn copies on first day

WASHINGTON — A new book on Donald Trump written by his niece sold nearly a million copies on the first day it went on sale in the United States, its publisher said Thursday.

Mary Trump’s “Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man” is billed as the first unflattering portrayal of the US president by a family insider.

Mary, a psychologist whose father was Trump’s oldest brother Fred, accuses the president of hubris and ignorance, and says he fits the clinical criteria for being a narcissist.

The 950,000 copies sold Tuesday, including pre-orders as well as audio and digital versions, “is a company record” for the Simon & Schuster publishing house, it said in a statement.

The White House has dismissed the memoir as a “book of falsehoods”.

The president’s younger brother Robert Trump went to court to try to block publication, arguing that Mary was violating a non-disclosure agreement signed in 2001 after the settlement of her grandfather’s estate, but to no avail.

Simon & Schuster has ordered more copies printed, which will bring the number to 1.15 million and push the number to 1.15 million.

But the Constitutionality in the communist era, the carefully curated exhibits offer a highly selective history of journalism in the communist nation.

TRUMP — Mary Trump’s new book on her uncle is a bestseller. PHOTO: AFP

Germany’s top court reins in state access to online data

FRANKFURT AM MAIN — Germany’s highest court on Friday said security services had too much unfettered access to people’s online data and ordered legislation to be revised to set higher hurdles.

German intelligence services and police agencies currently have the right to ask telecom and internet companies for user info ranging from names and birth dates to passwords and IP addresses, to help their investigations in areas like counterterrorism and cyber crime.

But the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe agreed with complaints brought by privacy activists that the access to data was excessive and an unconstitutional violation of citizens’ right to telecoms privacy.

In their ruling, judges said the current powers to retrieve data were “disproportionate”.

“It cannot be permissible to indiscriminately request information on data,” they said.

Judges said they agreed that intelligence bodies sometimes need to pull personal data from smartphones or other devices to maintain public security. — AFP

Vietnam opens press museum

HANOI — Vietnam has launched a museum dedicated to the open press.

From Pulitzer Prize-winning photos from the Vietnam War to the story of the struggle over press freedom during the French colonial era, the carefully curated exhibits offer a highly selective history of journalism in the communist nation.

For museum director Tran Thi Kim Hoa, the exhibition is a proud example of the apparent liberties enjoyed by the country’s press corps.

“With the press freedom law that the French brought to Vietnam, we have always been highly aware of what freedom of the press was,” she told AFP Thursday, referencing an 1881 law that applied to France and its colonial territory, but was patchily used in Vietnam.

“The fact we were able to build this museum shows that we have press freedom.” The museum, which cost about $1 million to build, eschews exploring the careful delineation between that and cybercrime.

One visitor, Nguyen Thu Hang, a local radio and TV reporter, said she felt “very moved” by the exhibition, which captured the “spirit of journalists” in Vietnam. — AFP

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the full coordinates of the interested supplier and one or more of the reference number(s) here above.

Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an INVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ) including all useful information to prepare the Quotation(s). Only electronic copies of the ITQ will be sent to the e-mail address(es) indicated in the Expressions of Interest.

Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address below at the latest at the deadline date and time indicated in each of the ITQ listed above, after which no Quotations will be accepted.

For the ITQ comprising different Lots, Quotations will be evaluated on a Lot by Lot basis and the contracts awarded to the quotation with the lowest evaluated price per Lot.

Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the “Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credidit Grants by World Bank Borrowers” dated January 2011.

Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to: Project Director Daw Nyo Nyo Win, NCDD Project Secretariat, Department of Rural Development, Office No. 36, Nay Pyi Taw, Telephone 09-67141864. For detailed information please contact U Kyaw Swa Aung Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 0943543433 or office phone 067418637, Email: procurement@ncddminvamg.org.

For more information on the NCDD Project please also visit Website: www.cdklou RDminvamg.org.
Mural paintings in Amarapura's Kyauktawgyi Temple

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

Among mural paintings illustrated at ancient stupas and temples in various areas of Myanmar, paintings in late-Konbaung era decorated in the cave of Kyauktawgyi Temple in Amarapura are famous among researchers.

Amarapura Kyauktawgyi Temple called Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi with the title of Maha Thakyaranthi takes a position, east of Taungthaman Lake and between Taungthaman and Htantaw villages. Its map reference is between north latitude 21°53' and east longitude 96°03'.

Maha Thakyaranthi
Kyauktawgyi Buddha image was donated by King Sagaing and Gandakuti Chamber by King Bagan. King Sagaing cast a bronze Buddha image on 15 March 1827 to be kept at the four-storey monastery in west of Maha Muni Buddha Image. A marble rock conveyed by King Sagaing from Sagaing Hill arrived in Inwa on 17 May 1830.

Under the supervision of Naipyu Sithu and Shwetaung Zeya Nawrahta, the marble rock was carved into Buddha image under the title of Maha Thakyaranthi kept at the prayer hall in front of Bonkaw Monastery.

King Thayawady who took the throne of brother King Sagaing moved the royal palace from Inwa to Amarapura. He was succeeded by son King Bagan on 17 November 1846. King Bagan laid cornerstones for construction of the walls and tier-roofed brick building at the edge of Taungthaman diplomatic hall to be able to convey the Kyauktawgyi Buddha Image from Inwa to Amarapura.

On 18 August 1849, the image was conveyed to Amarapura and kept in Gandakura Chamber. The temple for Kyauktawgyi Buddha Image had been filled with bricks on 29 October 1850 and the umbrella was hoisted atop the pagoda.

Kyauktawgyi Temple
Kyauktawgyi Temple was based on the chamber together with pyramical spire. A pagoda each and three Kalasa pots were built at the corners of the terrace. Bhumi Phassa Mudra marble Buddha image was kept at the pivot of the chamber.

The temple was formed with 89 elbow-diameter circumference and 77 elbows and six mikes high, the prayer cave 20 elbows wide, ladder 10 elbows long and concrete floor and 20 elbows wide. Kyauktawgyi Buddha image was 11 elbows, two mikes and four finger-breadth high, the rug eight elbows and four finger-breadth wide, its width between two knees was four elbows, one mile and four finger-breadth, throne 21 elbows, one mile and four finger-breadth in diameter and arm three elbows, two mikes and two finger-breadth in diameter. A total of 12 gold Buddha images and 358 silver images were enshrined in the temple, according to the Myanmar Encyclopaedia.

The brick chamber for Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi Buddha image was built in design of Ananda Temple in Bagan. Four main arches were flanked by a small arche on either side. The roof of the temple was supported by brick posts in a row shaping a partition in the circular tunnel. Eighty-eight Arhat imag-
es were kept in the inner circular tunnel. The Buddha image on the throne was kept in centre of east and west arches.

The upper part of the entanc-

es were decorated with masonry crafts and flyingman statues. The backdrops were also shaped with pagodas, celestial beings, lions, crocodile and crayfish. Signifi-
cantly, the Manusha statue was supported by a crayfish at the top of ladder to the terrace.

The bridge of the brick tun-

nels was decorated with mural paintings. The pictures of merito-
rueus deeds performed by King Bagan were illustrated at four 
arches in addition to captions. These pictures bore masonry temple, meditation of hermits, cattle, asterisms, mountins, pagoda, fensed pagoda, 30-tun-

nel Pagoda in Sagaing, a fensed 
temple, mediation of hermits, hunting, boats, elephant, tiger and buffalo.

The western tunnel wall of the northern arch was decorat-
ed with black sketched paintings, buildings of royal palaces, orchestra and audiences, and people form the royal palace.

Footprint, stupa, temple and stars

The footprints of the Lord Buddha were seen on the ceiling of eastern arch and northern arch at Kyauktawgyi Temple.

Pictures of stupas and tem-

glels, flyingmen, mountains, Maha athera consisted of western pagoda in Inwa, Kyauktawgyi Temple bore moves painting techniques. Moreover, not only episodes of Buddhist story painting painting art. Preservation of mural paintings and study painting art. Preservation museal paintings in late Bagan era at Amaranpara Kyauk-
tawgy Temple were maintained and preserved to have original works till today. New generation people can find historical evidences from the mural paintings and study painting art. Preservation of murals in Amaranpara Kyauktawgy Temple can uplift cultural integrity of Myanmar.

Translated by Than Tun Aung

Reference:
Myanmar Dated History, Konbaung Dynasty (U Til-
khaddhammalankara and Dr. Than Tun)
Historical sites around Taungthaman (Ko Pyinnya, Amaranpara)
Myanmar paintings in suc-
cessive eras (Minbu Aung Kyawng)
THE Technical Committee of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) held its meeting (2/2020) at the MFF’s meeting hall in Yangon yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the technical committee’s patrons U Tin Aung (goal) and U Bunny Tin Aung, chairman U Than Toe Aung, deputy chairman U Tin Myint Aung and members, and MFF general secretary U Ko Ko Thein.

The committee’s chairman U Than Toe Aung made opening remark at the meeting.

The meeting discussed appointment of MFF technical director and preparedness for the matches of the Myanmar national football team.

MFF general secretary U Ko Ko Thein explained the implementation of the decisions made in its meeting (1/2020).

He also detailed the preparations of Myanmar national football team, U-22 men’s team, U-18 men’s team, U-16 men’s team, women national team, U-20 women’s team, U-17 women’s team, and futsal teams, and about budgets of the teams. The meeting concluded following the speech of the technical committee chairman. — Kyaw Khin

Beijing 2022 Games ‘pressing ahead’ despite coronavirus threat

BEIJING—Beijing 2022 organizers were “pressing ahead” with preparations for the Winter Olympics Friday after a senior IOC official warned the coronavirus could force the Games to be postponed.

Dick Pound, a former International Olympic Committee vice-president, told AFP that all options would have to be considered if the Beijing Games cannot be held in 2022.

Beijing is due to host the Winter Olympics just six months after the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games, which have been put back a year to July-August 2021 because of the coronavirus.

However, with the pandemic showing no signs of receding, Japanese and IOC officials have both raised fears that the Tokyo Olympics may have to be cancelled altogether.

“To get to that point, where you decide you can’t do it (Beijing) in 2022, you explore whatever options you can do,” Pound said in an interview.

“If we’re in Tokyo, things all may be ready for Beijing. On the other hand, they may not be,” he added. In a statement to AFP, Beijing 2022 said the IOC is ploughing on with both Games as planned, despite the coronavirus still claiming lives in much of the world.

“As far as we know, the position of the IOC is very clear and remains unchanged,” Beijing organizers said.

“They are fully concentrated and committed to the successful delivery” of both the Tokyo and Beijing Games, they added.

China, where the coronavirus emerged late last year before spreading worldwide, has largely brought the contagion under control despite periodic localized new clusters.

—AFP

Bayern star Thiago Alcantara set to join Liverpool: report

BERLIN—Spain midfielder Thiago Alcantara is on the verge of joining Premier League champions Liverpool after stalling over signing a contract extension at Bayern Munich, according to a report in Bild on Friday.

The paper claims Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp wants to sign the playmaker who helped Munich win the Bundesliga title and German Cup double last season, but the clubs have yet to agree a transfer fee.

According to Bild, Liverpool are not willing to pay more than 25 million euros ($28.5 million), while Bayern want around 40 million euros for the 29-year-old.

Earlier this week, there were widespread reports that Alcantara’s house in Munich is already up for sale.

With a year left on his contract, Alcantara has stalled on signing an extension, but Bayern clearly want to keep him.

“We negotiated with him and granted his wishes, but it looks like he wants to do something new at the end of his career,” Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said in early July.

Alcantara joined Bayern in 2013, when newly-arrived head coach Pep Guardiola started three years in charge by declaring “Thiago or nothing” in terms of new signings.

He won the Champions League under Guardiola in 2010/11 with Barcelona and since joining Bayern, Alcantara has won the Bundesliga title in each of his seven seasons, lifting the German Cup four times.

He has made 231 appearances for Bayern, scoring 31 goals and creating 77 more.—AFP

Serena Williams set to play inaugural Kentucky tournament

LOS ANGELES—Serena Williams will make her return to the WTA tour at a new hardcourt tournament in Kentucky in August, organizers said Thursday.

The Top Seed Open said 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams and 2017 US Open winner Sloane Stephens will be in the field when play begins on August 10. Williams hasn’t played since representing the United States in the Fed Cup in February, before the WTA tour along with most of global sport shut down amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Both the WTA tour and the men’s ATP tour are scheduled to resume in August. Williams has already said she plans to enter the next scheduled Grand Slam tournament, the US Open, which is slated to begin in New York on August 31. —AFP