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Thursday, 16 April 2020

State Counsellor reaches COVID-19 front-liners in Mon State on videoconference call



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds the video conference with healthcare personnel working to prevent, control and treat Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Mon State. **PHOTO: MNA**

“**PEOPLE** are the key in the struggle against COVID-19”, said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as Chairperson of the National Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment, in her video conference call from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw with the persons battling on the frontlines against the pandemic in Mon State yesterday.

The State Counsellor first extended her greetings, followed by discussions with U Bo Bo Win from the civil society networks in Mon State about collaborative efforts with state departments and volunteer rescue teams in monitoring and containment of COVID-19, and health services for the returnees at the community based facility quarantine.

Next, Dr Wut Hmon, deputy

head of the Mon State Health Department, presented a short briefing about the coordination work being done with the state government in fulfilling fundamental needs for preventive and containment measures, the requirements of medicines and pharmaceuticals and inviting contributions from civil society organizations and donors.

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The State Counsellor reiterated the importance of hand washing frequently, wearing face masks, getting official news on the disease and pivotal role of the people to prevent the disease from spreading.

Total number of COVID-19 cases reaches 74 on Wednesday

Update of COVID-19 cases in Myanmar till 8:00 pm on 15 April

1. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) took laboratory tests on the 2,841 quarantined people till 15 April 2020. Out of them, 74 patients were tested positive of COVID-19, while the remaining 2,767 persons were tested negative.
2. The following are the names of the hospitals where the patients with COVID-19 positive are being treated.

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SWRR ministry coordinates sanitation supplies to IDP camps

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye held the coordination meeting to continue implementing processes concerning COVID-19 in IDP camps yesterday.

The Union Minister said the Ministry of Office of Union Government, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and state/regional governments are working together for protection, containment and treatment concerning COVID-19 in IDP camps across Kachin, Rakhine, Shan, Kayin and Chin states.

He said they have notified management committees and residents of IDP camps of what

procedures to follow concerning COVID-19.

Next, Director-General Dr Ko Ko Naing of Disaster Management Department said they installed hand wash basins and distributed soap and masks in six IDP camps within Myitkyina Township, Kachin State on 15 April. He said they distributed soap and masks to 2 IDP camps in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State, soap to seven IDP camps in Paletwa Township, Chin State, soap and masks to 5 monasteries in Sittway Township, Rakhine State, and soaps and masks to IDP camps in Kutkai, Namtu and Namkhan townships, Shan State.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Officials from Kachin State Disaster Management Department raise COVID-19 awareness and distribute soap and masks in an IDP camp in Myitkyina on 15 April 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Announcement on free motivation services for people in Community Based Facility Quarantine, other quarantine

WHEN the 14-day quarantine programme is carried out nationwide in efforts to prevent the COVID-19 disease spread, the people in the quarantine might be under stress due to the restrictions brought by the quarantine. Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is performing the motivation services, and those wishing to have consolation with the ministry

may contact it with confidence. The Social Welfare Department's employees from Nay Pyi Taw Council, Union Territory, regions and states who received a special consoling training will provide the services from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm every day.

With the coordination of the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and

Resettlement, the programme is sponsored by telecommunication operator: MPT, Mytel, Telenor and Ooredoo in this time of COVID-19 crisis.

Information related with those who receive consolation will be confidential, and will provide them with further assistance if necessary.

Contact numbers are as follow.

Sr	State/ Region	MPT	Mytel	Telenor	Ooredoo
1.	Kachin	09-889900011	09-661015555	09-770771000	09980000101
2.	Kayah	09-889900022	09-661025555	09-770772000	09980000102
3.	Kayin	09-889900033	09-661035555	09-770773000	09980000103
4.	Chin	09-889900044	09-661045555	09-770774000	09980000104
5.	Sagaing	09-889900055	09-661055555	09-770775000	09980000105
6.	Taninthayi	09-889900066	09-661065555	09-770776000	09980000106
7.	Bago	09-889900077	09-661075555	09-770777000	09980000107
8.	Magway	09-889900088	09-661085555	09-770778000	09980000108
9.	Mandalay	09-889900099	09-661095555	09-770779000	09980000109
10.	Mon	09-889911177	09-661105555	09-770771001	09980000117
11.	Rakhine	09-889911188	09-661115555	09-770771100	09980000118
12.	Yangon	09-889911122	09-661125555	09-770770001	09980000112
13.	Shan	09-889911133	09-661135555	09-770770010	09980000113
14.	Ayeyawady	09-889911144	09-661145555	09-770770011	09980000114
15.	Nay Pyi Taw	09-889911155	09-661155555	09-770770099	09980000115
	Head Office	09-889911166	09-661005555	09-770770100	09980000116

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Announcement for 21 days facility quarantine and 7 days home quarantine

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports had earlier announced the 14-day facility quarantine, followed by another 14-day home quarantine, for prevention of COVID-19 infection from the foreign visitors and the positive patients.
2. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that the transmission of disease is possible before two days and until 28 days of symptoms, and that the infection of disease is possible during these periods. A research conducted in China has shown that strict and systematic quarantine for 21 days could contain the outbreak of disease up to 98.7%. Moreover, some regional countries are practicing a total of 28-day for both hospital/facility quarantine and home quarantine. Especially, the 28-day quarantine period is found in the countries with only limited laboratory tests.
3. Out of 28 positive cases for COVID-19 in Myanmar, some positive patients are the imported cases and the close persons with them. Moreover, the lab tests of National Health Laboratory and the contact tracings at Regions/States have showed that some confirmed patients and some quarantined persons for more than 14 days were still tested positive.
4. Therefore, the Ministry of Health and Sports has extended the 14-day facility quarantine to the 21-day community based facility quarantine/hotel quarantine and 7-day home quarantine, totalling 28-day quarantine.

The Ministry of Health and Sports
(Translated by Aung Khin)

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“People are the key”

State Counsellor reaches COVID-19 front-liners in Mon State on videoconference call

FROM PAGE-1

U Thein Hteik, the administrator of Zekyo Ward in Mawlamyine Township, gave a briefing on the establishment of the community based facility quarantine at the dormitory of Mawlamyine University for returnees from foreign countries and receiving supplies from private well-wishers.

In response to the discussions, the State Counsellor emphasized observance of directives and rules, importance of awareness campaigns and the government’s possible assistance.

She also gave a wide range of advice on collaboration among the administrative sector, health workers and volunteers, participation of individuals and following healthy practices.

The State Counsellor reiterated the importance of hand washing frequently, wearing face masks, getting official news on the disease and pivotal role of the people to prevent the disease



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds the video conference with healthcare personnel working to prevent, control and treat Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Mon State. **PHOTO: MNA**

from spreading.

In conclusion, she praised the works of frontline workers,

and volunteer workers in combatting the COVID-19 virus. She ended her concluding remarks

by saying “May you realize the results of your good deeds fully and speedily; may you have good

health and peace of mind in the New Year.”

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Total number of COVID-19 cases reaches 74 on Wednesday

FROM PAGE-1

Sr.	Hospital for medical treatment	Numbers of patients with COVID-19 positive
1	Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon	59 (one patient in ICU)
2	Tiddim Township People’s Hospital	3
3	Lashio General Hospital	1
4	Mawlamyine General Hospital	1
5	Sao San Htun Hospital, Taunggyi	1
6	Magway General Hospital	1
7	Kengtung People’s Hospital	1
8	Kalay People’s Hospital	1

* Two patients who recovered from the COVID-19 positive were under quarantine for two weeks.

* So far COVID-19 death toll is four.

3. There are 109 new patients under observation between 14-4-2020 and 15-4-2020, 12 noon.

4. The National Health Laboratory (Yangon) released the first batch of test results from among 128 lab specimens at 6:00 pm, 15-4-2020. All of them tested negative. — Ministry of Health and Sports

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Household food distributed to people in Rakhine State

GOVERNMENT provided five kinds of basic foodstuffs -- rice, oil, salt, bean, and onion -- for the households with no regular income in some townships in Rakhine State yesterday.

The donation of basic foodstuffs for the households in all 17 townships of Rakhine State began on 10 April, and was completed yesterday.

Hluttaw representatives, township administrators, and wards/village leaders accepted the food aid for the households at the townships' offices, and delivered them to the people.

There are a total of 261,845 households with no regular income in Rakhine State.

Sittway District has a total of 83,964 households in its four townships. Remaining 20,588

households in Ponnagyun and Pauktaw townships were distributed yesterday.

Kyaukpyu District has a total of 30,148 households in four townships. The people in remaining 1,241 households in An Township received the aid yesterday.

The basic foodstuffs were distributed to 3,050 households in Thandwe Township, and 4,854 households in Taungup Township yesterday.

Each household in all 17 townships was provided with eight pyis of rice (one pyi = 2.56 L), 50 kyatthas of oil (one kyattha = 816.46g), 50 kyatthas of salt, one viss of bean (one viss=1.6 kg), and one viss of onion.—Tin Tun (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Shan State Chief Minister offers COVID-19 preventive items, funds

SHAN State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, together with his Social Affairs Minister Dr Myo Tun and Transport Minister Khun Ye Htwe, donated the preventive items of COVID-19 and cash funds to the Department of Medical Services and Public Health

in Laikha Township in Loilem District in southern Shan State yesterday.

After the presentation by the medical superintendent of township hospital, the Chief Minister made discussions.

In addition to K500,000, the donation items included 20 sets of PPE, 1,000 face masks, 700 gloves, 2 thermometers, 12 bottles of hand sanitizer and 12 bottles of alcohol.— U Lwan Thu Naung, Township IPRD

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut offering the cash fund in Laikha, Loilem District yesterday.
PHOTO: U LWAN THU NAUNG, TOWNSHIP IPRD

Police check passersby for face masks in Kyauktada Tsp

TRAFFIC police and relevant organizations checked whether pedestrians and those in vehicles wore face masks while going outside along Anawrahta Road in Kyauktada Township, Yangon, yesterday. Police Captain Win Htay of Traffic Police Force (41), Kyauktada Township, said they worked together with local residents to disseminate health information to passersby, vehi-

cle drivers and riders but their main task is to check if people are wearing face masks when going outside. He said they give out free masks to those who don't have one, inquire their destination and reason for going outside, and explain the health guidelines issued by the Union Government.

Daw Htay Htay Yi, administrator of Kyauktada Township's ward-3, said some people will

take off their masks thinking it's safe because either there are not many people or they are travelling in vehicles while some don't wear it at all because it makes breathing difficult for them. Mask checks and health information sharing began on 13 April, especially in Kyauktada Township as it has the highest number of people travelling through it.—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



An official help a biker to wear a face mask to combat COVID-19 in Yangon. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

Notification on COVID-19 prevention in IDP camps

1. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is implementing action plans to prevent, contain and treat COVID-19 in IDP camps across the nation.

2. Management committees and temporary residents of the IDP camps are notified to proceed with the following action points:

- Regularly and systematically wash hands with the hand wash basins and soaps provided in the camps.
- Be wary of personal hygiene and minimizing contact with other persons when using public toilets and showers.
- Be extra vigilant for the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses living in the camps.
- Volunteer staff are to check body temperatures, wear surgical masks, wash hands and provide information of the virus on a daily basis.
- To regulate camp residents from going outside and to maintain records of persons going outside for compulsory reasons. Every time they leave or enter the camp, their body temperatures should be checked, surgical or cloth-sewn masks should be worn and hands should be washed systematically.
- Prevent external persons from entering the camp.
- Report to authorities for unusual activities or requirements concerning COVID-19.
- Follow patient referral procedures in case of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Connect with local general administration department, health department and philanthropic organizations to swiftly transport patients under surveillance and suspected persons.
- Adhere to notifications issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and local government concerning COVID-19.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Mandalay: Going out without face mask will face fine as of April 17

MANDALAY City Development Committee will enforce wearing face masks, with imposing fines commencing April 17 (1st Myanmar New Year).

U Kyaw San Myint, the member of MCDC, said their committee, the representatives of markets, textile merchants and well-wishers will distribute reusable face masks to the public in the

city. "Everybody is at risk of this disease. Nobody should be careless about it, and need to follow the instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports in protecting the respective communities and the country," the officer said.

The Hluttaw representatives, local authorities and volunteers are conducting awareness campaigns for wearing face masks

at present, and banning those without face masks from entering the markets.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Officials giving mask to the vendors in a market in Mandalay.
PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)



Gov't distributes basic foodstuffs in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW authorities distributed five kinds of basic foodstuffs—rice, oil, salt, bean, and onion—to the households with no regular income in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday.

Donation of basic foodstuffs for the households in eight townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area began on 10 April.

The households to be provided with foodstuffs include 5,519 households in Zebuthiri Township, 12,457 in Pubbathiri Township, 6,187 in Dekkhinathiri Township, 9,186 in Ottarathiri Township, 11,655 in Zeyathiri

Township, 27,428 households in Pynmana Township, 38,478 households in Lewe Township, and 29,918 in Tatkon Township.

Upon the basic foodstuffs donation in Tatkon Township, its administrator U Zaw Min said, "Five kinds of basic food necessities were distributed in our township today. The foodstuffs were distributed via village administrators and 100-household leaders." A total of 29,918 households in six wards and 49 village-tracts of Tatkon Township were provided yesterday. The donation in the remaining townships will be

continued. Ottarathiri Township Administrator U Naing Oo said, "More than 9,000 households in two wards and eight village-tracts in Ottathiri Township received the food aid including rice, onion, salt and bean. Oil for the over 2,000 households will be provided tomorrow."

Moreover, philanthropic organizations, well-wishers, and businesspersons are also donating basic essentials for the people in need in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.— Han Lin Naing

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A local man accepts food aid from an official of Tatkon Township. PHOTO: HTAN PHONE



Officials offering the essential foodstuff to a local people in Myawady Township. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG

Myawady Tsp continues basic supply distribution

Officials in Myawady distributed the 5 basic household supplies to 3,500 houses in the Kayin State-town yesterday, said Myawady District Administrator U Tayzar Aung.

Since the beginning of distribution on 10 April, Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung, district administrator U Tayzar Aung, township administrator U Phyo Zaw Ko Ko and officials have been assisting in the distribution process. They distributed to 848 households in Meahtawlay village-tract yesterday.

Similarly, the five household supplies were distributed to 1,300 houses in ward 3 and 1,352 houses in ward 4 of Myawady Town at a rate of 8 pyis of rice, 50 ticals of cooking oil and salt each, and a viss of lentils and onions each per household.

On 10 April, 200 households in Myawady Township received the supplies, 1150 houses received them on 11 April, 1100 received them on 12 April, 500 received them on 13 April and 2500 received them on 14 April.

—Htein Lin Aung
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Basic food necessities reach Kawlin Township

SAGAING Region officials continued distribution of basic household supplies to families without regular income in Kawlin Township yesterday.

The supplies were distributed from the administration offices to 321 households in Sett Yone Lepyin ward and 387 households in Kyaw Zayar ward 2 with assistance from Sagaing Region constituency 1 Hluttaw representative Daw Phyu Phyu Win, township administrator U Ye Myat Thein, township fire department head U Kyaw Tay and

other officials.

Similarly, Sagaing Region constituency 2 Hluttaw representative U Tin Soe, deputy township administrator U Tint Naing Win and other officials distributed supplies to 243 houses in Yin Htaik village-tract.

There are 8 wards and 54 village-tracts in Kawlin Township with a combined number of 12,547 households without regular income that will receive the five basic supplies.—Myint Tun Min (Kawlin)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Awareness campaigns conducted at three IDP camps in Namtu

DEPARTMENTAL officials, members of civil societies and volunteers joined awareness campaigns at the three camps of internally displaced persons in Namtu Township of Kyaukme district in northern Shan State yesterday.

Staff officers of the Information and Public Relations Department, the Social Welfare Department and the Disaster Management Department, together with the members of a civil society, shared knowledge on the preventive guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The Disaster Management Department provided two cakes of soap and two face masks to each family of 129 households at

the three IDP camps of Kyu Sot, Lisu and Kachin people, while the International Committee of the Red Cross distributed hand

washing basin, buckets and soap cakes.—Lu Maw (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Officials giving face masks to people at the IDP camp in Namtu. PHOTO: LU MAW (IPRD)

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Hotline: 09 974 424 114
hinthinmaygrlm@gmail.com
No.150, Ngazun Htet Kywe Pagoda,
Bahan Tsp, Yangon.

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR EDITOR

Aungthu Ya

SENIOR TRANSLATORS

Zaw Htet Oo Aung Khin

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR

Ye Htut Tin, Aung Htein, editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

LOCAL NEWS EDITORS

Tun Tun Naing (Editor), intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

TRANSLATORS

Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon, Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER

Nyein Nyein Ei, reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM

Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung, Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION

(+95) (01)8604529, Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532, Hotline - 09 974424114

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

(+95) (01) 8604530, Hotline - 09 974424848 marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmdaily@gmail.com www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com www.facebook.com/TheGNLM



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People washing hands to prevent spread of COVID-19 virus. PHOTO: MNA

DRD, UNICEF target nearly 4,000 hand wash basins countrywide

THE Department of Rural Development and the UNICEF have set up 3,520 hand wash basins, out of the planned 3926 units in 2,798 villages of 162 townships in Myanmar.

The state department and the UN agency have put the hand wash basins into places of public areas such as village markets, religious sites, healthcare centres and bus terminals, in addition to distributing awareness posters, supplying water and hand wash soaps and maintaining these materials.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar-Bangladesh border trade rises by \$296.5 mln

THE value of bilateral border trade between Myanmar and Bangladesh stood at US\$307.34 million as of 3 April in the current fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020, an increase by \$296.5 million from the corresponding period last FY, the according to the Ministry of Commerce.

In this fiscal, Myanmar has exported goods worth US\$22.439 million to Bangladesh and imported goods worth over US\$284.9 million. Compared with last FY, border exports between the two countries

increased to US\$11.85 million in the current FY whereas border import was worth US\$284.637 million.

In bilateral border trade, goods are delivered mainly through two land borders — Sittway and Maungtau. Between 1 October and 3 April of this FY, trade via Sittway crossing was pegged at US\$297.78 million, with 12.94 million in exports and 284.86 million in imports, whereas trade via Maungtau crossing reached US\$9.55 million with 9.5 million in export and 0.04

million in import.

Marketable goods at Myanmar-Bangladesh borders contain bamboos, ginger, peanuts, saltwater prawns and fish, dried plums, garlic, rice, mung beans, blankets, candy, plum jams, footwear, frozen foods, chemicals, leather, jute products, tobacco, plastics, wood, knitwear and beverages.

Myanmar has announced restrictions on border crossing through Myanmar-Bangladesh border checkpoints starting from April 14 to prevent the

spread of Covid-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, according to the President's Office.

Additionally, Myanmar has already curbed the border crossing through the land and waterway borders with its neighbouring countries such as China, India, Thailand and Laos. The borders remain open only for the smooth flow of trade, stated the announcement by the President's Office.—Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Covid19-protective masks provided free in Htantabin

A total of 1,000 masks were distributed free on 15 April to the locals in Htantabin township, Yangon North District as a Covid-19 preventative measure.

Regional-1 Hluttaw Representative U Aung Phone Kyaw

San Oo handed over 1,000 masks to the officials to distribute the masks to the residents from Ayemyo, Htein Gone, Tu Chaung, Ahsugyi, Sandayaw and Htein Hnit Pin villages. On 14 April, 1,000 masks were provided

to the locals from three villages to prevent the Covid-19 infection.

To prevent and contain the spread of Covid-19 during Thingyan holidays, the authorities, on behalf of the Union Government, have provided rice, cooking oil,

salt, bean and onion to those households with irregular income. Moreover, they have also distributed the masks to the local households.—Zin Min Htaik (Htantabin) (Translated by Hay Mar)

Narcotic drugs confiscated in Taunggyi, Tachilek

Authorities seized illegal drugs in Tuanggyi and Tachilek townships on 14 April, according to Myanmar Police Force.

Police confiscated 4,750 stimulant tablets from Thurein Soe (a) A Kyi Kaung on Taunggyi-Mingpyin road near Ban Kwe Village in Nant Haung Village-tract, Tuanggyi Township while the suspect was driving a motorcycle.

Similarly, police in Tachilek seized 14 kg of heroin worth of K 2,240, and a mobile phone from Than Kyaw Zaw (a) Tu Tu in a street in Par Shan No.3 Ward in Tachilek Township.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—GNLM (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Than Kyaw Zaw (a) Tu Tu seen with confiscated drugs. PHOTO:MPF

External trade exceeds \$20 bln as of 4 April



A cargo ship docks at the jetty in Yangon River.. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 4 April in the 2019-2020 financial year was registered at US\$20.33 billion, an increase of \$2.6 billion compared with the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period in the previous FY, trade stood at \$17.67 billion, according to the data released by the ministry.

Myanmar's foreign trade has shown a 10-per-cent increase, year over year, under the incumbent government. Myanmar targets to reach total trade value of \$34 billion and export is estimated about \$18 billion in the current fiscal, said an official from the ministry.

The Ministry of Commerce

is endeavouring to boost export, enhance value-added production, reduce export barriers and provide trade financing services.

In the current fiscal, both maritime and border trade recorded an increase compared with the year-ago period, with exports estimated at over \$9.4 billion and imports valued at \$10.9 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Export earnings from CMP (cutting, making, and packaging) garment

businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. According to the Commerce Ministry, higher exports have helped trim the trade gap in the current fiscal.

At present, the CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling due to the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western countries. It can harm the export sector to a certain extent, the businesspersons pointed out. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mineral exports exceed \$1 bln in 2019-2020FY H1

MYANMAR'S mineral exports have shown a marked increase this fiscal, touching US\$1.13 billion between 1 October and 3 April, an increase of \$537.8 million compared with the year-ago period, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the corresponding period of the previous financial year, mineral exports were pegged at just \$596.27 million.

Both private and public sector mineral exports have recorded an increase in the current fiscal, with private sector exports valued at \$679.24 million and public sector exports estimated at \$454.87 million.

So far, excavation of over 1,250 mining blocks has been permitted on a manageable, small, medium, and large scale, according to the Ministry of Nat-

ural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Due to the limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals had dropped significantly in the previous years. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016, but after two years, Myanmar's mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the ministry.

Within two years of the implementation of the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mines Department has approved 144 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks.

At present, evaluation teams in Kachin, Kayah, Shan, and Kay-in states and Sagaing, Taninthayi, and Magway regions are screening mining applications, based on the recommendations of the respective departments and the

region and state governments.

The Myanmar Mines Law was enacted on 24 December 2015, but the law came into force when the rules were issued on 13 February 2018.

Myanmar's export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources has been lessening.

Of the seven export groups, exports of agricultural goods, minerals, fishery, and finished industrial goods has shown an increase, while exports of livestock, forest products, and other goods have declined in the current FY. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic investments exceed K1,200 bln in H1; up K300 bln against previous FY

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR citizens have more invested in the country and the value exceeded K1,200 billion over the first half of the current fiscal, an increase of K300 billion compared to the corresponding period of the previous FY, stated DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

Between 1 October and 3 April this year, 69 local enterprises were allowed to invest in the country by the Myanmar Investment Commission and the state and region investment committees. Domestic investments have reached K1,211.89 billion so far, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, as per the DICA's data.

Domestic investors have pumped K893 billion into 89 projects in the October-November period in the 2018-2019 financial year.

This fiscal year, the number of enterprises permitted was 20 less than the previous year. However, the quantum of investment was larger compared with the year-ago period as the business with large capital flowed

into the country, the DICA said.

At the recent DICA's meeting held on 3 April, MIC and the respective investment committees cleared seven domestic projects worth US\$7.959 million and K133.6 billion, with two in manufacturing, two in the hotels, two in real estate sector and one in another sector. Those enterprises will create over 300 jobs, according to the DICA.

Twelve enterprises invested in the manufacturing sector; four businesses pumped funds into the other services sector; the hotels and tourism sector and the real estate development sector attracted three enterprises each; and, one project was approved for the livestock and fisheries and agricultural sectors each.

Over the six months, the manufacturing sector pulled the largest investment, followed by other service sectors, hotel and tourism sector and the real estate development sector. The domestic investments also flow into the agriculture, mining, livestock and fisheries and power sectors.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Knowledge about COVID-19 is power

As of Wednesday evening, 74 people have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Four of them have died.

Most of the infected cases are in Yangon. As the number of cases is expected to rise, people are advised to strictly follow the health guide lines of the health authorities.

In this time of crisis, paying attention to what information we do have is important.

In the face of this infectious disease, increased cooperation between administrative sectors, healthcare workers and volunteers is a must. People are the key to winning the battle against the pandemic. They must cooperate with the authorities by following the guidelines and maintain

responsible behaviour and continue to help health leaders contain the spread of this deadly virus.

Having knowledge about the COVID-19 is the power to defeat the disease. To give the power to the people, health awareness should be raised frequently among the people to ensure that they take steps to minimize exposure to the virus.

While the Ministry of Health and Sports has kept the people informed of developments, the people are urged to stay informed and stay well by following the health guidelines. This is a situation in which knowledge really is power.

Hence, people are obliged to pay attention to information from reliable sources, such as ministries concerned and to follow the individual measures announced by the health authorities.

Therefore, both public and individual measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 are critical. Local governments' efforts for imposing travel restrictions and social distance will help.

Besides, public and personal hygiene is the first defence against the COVID-19 today. With the cooperation of volunteers, regional health authorities are urged to raise cleanliness and public hygiene levels, and to change people's habits to stop the spread of this deadly disease.

Authorities and individuals in each state/region are urged to work together to bring down the rate of transmission.

Be kind, stay safe and be alert to keep ourselves and our families safe.

People are the key to winning the battle against the pandemic. They must cooperate with the authorities by following the guidelines and maintain responsible behaviour and continue to help health leaders contain the spread of this deadly virus.

Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 at IDP Camps

Submitted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

On motley assortments of inevitable ground reasons, the IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps cropped up in Kachin State, Kayin State, Chin State, Rakhine State, and Shan State in the Union of Myanmar, where necessary protection and assistance are provided that bring smiles and satisfactions to the vulnerable and the marginalized persons.

Statistics on 6 April 2020 shows that the five states under reference have accommodated (128) IDP camps and (7) conflict-induced IDP camps, and other temporary shelter where (255,000) helpless are taking shelter.

Shouldering the onerous task, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement — in collaboration with the respective state governments, the ministries, the INGOs, the civil society organizations, and well wishers — is providing the underprivileged with the food, shelter, education, health, electricity, transportation, security, and livelihood.

Working in top gear

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic hit another grim milestone on this planet, Myanmar has formed the National-Level Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment, and that tasks are rolling ahead in top gear.

As having expected through projection, the first positive patient was detected on 23 March 2020, which prompted

the formation of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Containment and Emergency Response Committee. Related tasks are being rapidly carried out with the broad participation of the people in the whole country.

On the part of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the officers and the staff members stepped into the grass root areas starting from the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory to the Ward/Village level of the whole country hand in hand with the relevant frontline workers.

In accordance with the instructions, directives and guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the MSWRR has disseminated the public with the awareness raising information through the hand speakers, the loud speakers and the available public addressing system, including the distributions of handouts and pamphlets.

Spreading out in the campaign are the officers and staff members of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the General Administration Department, the Ministry of Information, the related government departments, the Red Cross Society, and the Civil Society Organizations.

At various quarantine facilities under the care of the regional and the state governments, it was all hands on deck pouring out their hard work in keeping the management in smooth functioning.

Lending hands in the drive

A number of school cum shelters and cyclone shelters under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have been transformed into "Community Based Facility Quarantine" units in collaboration with the region and the

state governments. The shelters are from the townships namely Hinthada, Labutta, Pyapon, Hlaing Bwe, and Kaw Thauang.

Moreover, in the Rakhine State, the Hla Pho Khaung Kyar Camp in Maungtaw Township has been transformed into "Community Based Facility Quarantine" unit for the returnees who came back with their own consent.

More importantly, the "Psycho Social Support", in other words — consoling and counselling, has been provided at the "Community Based Facility Quarantine" units.

For those who are in dire need of consoling and counselling have the valuable opportunity by calling the phone numbers being provided by the Ministry in the relevant region and state, where the specially trained professionals are ready to answer in a secure and confidential mode over the telephone.

With regards to the violence against women and girls, it takes many different forms, including domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment. These cases could be confided at helpline — 067 3404222 and 3004999 with safe, secure and confidentiality.

No one is to be left behind

In the campaign of social protection programme and the humanitarian assistance programme, the motto "No one is to be left behind" has been upheld by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in its implementation. This is being carefully applied in the IDP camps.

For COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment at the IDP camps, the preparatory meas-

At all the IDP camps in Kachin State, Kayin State, Chin State, Shan State and Rakhine State, the elderly persons between the ages of 60 and 85 years, and the pregnant mothers and under 2 years infants would be entitled to K20,664 as financial support.

ures and preliminary working programme have been drafted and sought approval from the National-Level Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment.

In the working plan, the implementation tasks include such as that of imparting knowledge and awareness on the disease; that of the prevention on the spreading of the virus; that of the emergency response when the symptoms of the infection are being detected; that of the proper management of the resources; that of the cooperation and coordination; that of the proper management over the information with regards to the pandemic trend; that of the monitoring and evaluation over the working plan.

In connection with the various stages incorporated in the working plan, the UN agencies and the INGOs have been duly informed and updated through the video conferences, and discussed for full participation and cooperation.

Additional cooperation and coordination have been sought and arranged with the UNDP, the WFP, the UNICEF, the UN-OCHA, the other UN agencies, the LIFT Fund Board, the World Vision, the Blue Sky, and the Myittar Yin Myit Foundation.

Covered 67 per cent

Beginning 27 March 2020, the work programme started to spin and swing at the IDP camps in the five states through the hand speakers, loud speakers and public addressing systems on all the information in connection with the spread of COVID-19, and the dos and don'ts, including the free distribution of soaps.

Up till 12 April 2020, at (86)

IDP camps and conflict-induced camps, the awareness raising campaign have been accomplished for over (67) per cent including the free distribution of (7,000) bar of soaps, and the humanitarian work continues.

The remaining work is going to take shape according to working schedules in the backdrops of the available transport and on the ground reality at the targeted areas.

After detailed discussions between the Department of Disaster Management and the relevant organizations, the infrared thermometers have been distributed, and that the IDP camps in Kachin State received (9) units; the IDP camps in Rakhine State received (9) units; the IDP camps in Shan State received (4) units; the IDP camps in Kayin State received (2) units. Moreover, (10,000) surgical masks and (10,000) soap bars are in the pipeline for the IDP camps for free distribution in the near future.

Three more IDP camps are already earmarked and planned for Samee Town and Meezar Village in Paletwa Township in Chin State, where the same treatment and dealing would be accorded.

Assistances to be continued

Soap bars and masks for each and every household would be distributed free of charge at all IDP camps with the funds of the Department of Disaster Management.

The necessary items for disease prevention and things for disinfectant would be provided after due consultation with the partner organizations.

At all the IDP camps in Kachin State, Kayin State, Chin

State, Shan State and Rakhine State, the elderly persons between the ages of 60 and 85years, and the pregnant mothers and under 2 years infants would be entitled to K20,664 as financial support.

The amount is calculated on the basic calorie of four nutrition for each day for per head equivalent of K (984) multiplied for (21) days, which would be borne by the Department of Disaster Management.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has been mitigating and reducing the suffering of the people due to natural disaster or due to social adversity, and also providing necessary management.

In the face of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, which is the defining global health crisis of the time and the greatest challenge that have faced since World War Two, Myanmar is engaging the virus with the lead of the National-Level Central Committee for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment headed by the State Counsellor.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement — in line with the directive of the Central Committee — is shouldering and continue to do so with the cooperation and coordination with the relevant government departments, the government agencies, the UN agencies, the civil society organizations, the community based organizations, the well wishers. It pledges and promises to help and assist the people at the IDP camps and the entire population as a whole with seriousness, significance and sincerity.

(Translated by UMT (Ahlon))



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 15th April, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16th April, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah States. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Northern Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th April, 2020: Partly cloudy.

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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A physical barrier

Chinese Taipei unveils recipients of 6M surgical masks donation

In addition, 1.3 million masks will be delivered to Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden, with 1.6 million sent to New Southbound Policy target countries Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

THE recipients of 6 million surgical masks pledged by Chinese Taipei five days earlier for use as personal protective equipment by frontline medical personnel combating coronavirus in America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific were unveiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chinese Taipei 14 April.

According to the MOFA, 1.05 million masks are to be shipped to allies Belize, Guatemala, Haiti,

Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as other partner countries in the region, while one million pieces will go to the U.S. states hardest hit by the pandemic.

In addition, 1.3 million masks will be delivered to Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden, with 1.6 million sent to New Southbound Policy target

countries Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

The latest pledge follows the April 1 announcement that a total of one million masks would be sent to the Holy See and 14 other allies, two million to the US and seven million to Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and



Chen Chin-fang, the plant manager of Chinese Taipei's Universal Incorporation, one of the country's biggest mask-makers, inspects mask materials at a factory in Tainan on 6 March. PHOTO: AFP

the UK.

Another 400,000 masks have already been delivered to the US as part of an agreement to send 100,000 per week under an epidemic prevention cooperation framework announced March 18 by MOFA Minister Jausieh Joseph Wu and American Institute in Chinese Taipei Director Brent Christensen.

The MOFA said the donations reflect the compassion of the government and people, underscoring a commitment to expanding the Chinese Taipei's global participation and showing how Chinese Taipei Can Help realize the World Health Organization's goal of Health For All.

SOURCE: MOFA of Chinese Taipei

physical distancing

On-off social distancing may be needed until 2022: Harvard study

A one-time lockdown won't halt the novel coronavirus and repeated periods of social distancing may be required into 2022 to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed, Harvard scientists who modeled the pandemic's trajectory said Tuesday.

Their study comes as the US enters the peak of its COVID-19 caseload and states eye an eventual easing of tough lockdown measures.

The Harvard team's computer simulation, which was published in a paper in the journal *Science*, assumed that COVID-19 will become seasonal, like closely related coronaviruses that cause the common cold, with higher transmission rates in colder months.

But much remains unknown, including the level of immunity acquired by previous infection and how long it lasts, the authors said.

"We found that one-time social distancing measures are likely to be insufficient to maintain the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 within the limits of critical care capacity in the United States," lead author Stephen Kissler said in a call with reporters.

"What seems to be necessary in the absence of other sorts of treatments are intermittent social distancing periods," he added.

Widespread viral testing would be required in order to determine when the thresholds to re-trigger distancing are crossed, said the authors.

The duration and intensity of lockdowns can be relaxed as treatments and vaccines become available. But in their absence, on and then off distancing would give hospitals time to increase critical care capacity to cater for the surge in cases that would occur when the measures are eased.

"By permitting periods of transmission that reach higher prevalence than otherwise would be possible, they allow an accelerated acquisition of herd immunity," said co-author Marc Lipsitch.

Conversely, too much social distancing without respite can be a bad thing. Under one modeled scenario "the social distancing was so effective that virtually no population immunity is built," the paper said, hence the need for an intermittent approach.

The authors acknowledged a major drawback in their model is how little we currently know about how strong a previously infected person's immunity is and how long it lasts.

Virus likely here to stay

At present the best guesses based on closely related coronaviruses are that it will confer some immunity, for up to about a year. There might also be some cross-protective immunity against COVID-19 if a person is

infected by a common cold-causing betacoronavirus.

One thing, however, is almost certain: the virus is here to stay. The team said it was highly unlikely that immunity will be strong enough and last long enough that COVID-19 will die out after an initial wave, as was the case with the SARS outbreak of 2002-2003.

Antibody tests that have just entered the market and look for whether a person has been previously infected will be crucial in answering these vital questions about immunity, they argued, and a vaccine remains the ultimate weapon.

Outside experts praised the paper even as they emphasized how much remained unknown.

"This is an excellent study that uses mathematical models to explore the dynamics of COVID-19 over a period of several years, in contrast to previously published studies that have focused on the coming weeks or months," Mark Woolhouse, an infectious disease epidemiologist at the University of Edinburgh said.

"It is important to recognize that it is a model; it is consistent with current data but is nonetheless based on a series of assumptions — for example about acquired immunity — that are yet to be confirmed."

SOURCE: AFP



Police arrest a man in the Mea Shearim neighborhood in Jerusalem for violating emergency directives to contain the coronavirus, on 30 March, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Fujifilm boosts Avigan drug production for coronavirus treatment

TOKYO — Fujifilm Corp. said Wednesday it has begun increasing the production of anti-influenza drug Avigan, which is being tested as a treatment for the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The Japanese firm is aiming to secure by September supply to treat up to 300,000 patients per month.

The drug, developed by a group firm, is undergoing clinical tests in Japan as a possible treatment for COVID-19 after studies in China suggested the drug is effective in treating patients.

Fujifilm had been asked by the Japanese government to increase the output of Avigan in the wake of the spread of the virus. The government said earlier this month it aims to triple the national stockpile of Avigan to secure enough to treat 2 million



Supplied file photo shows a nurse holding Avigan, an anti-influenza medication. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

people.

Fujifilm aims to first produce enough Avigan to treat up to 100,000 patients a month by

July, a 2.5-fold increase from its output level at the beginning of March, before targeting supply for 300,000 patients per month.

If the safety and efficacy of Avigan is confirmed through the clinical tests launched 31 March, the Japanese government will likely approve the drug for use in COVID-19 treatment this summer.

The drug has also been sought by foreign governments. Japan has said it plans to provide Avigan for free to 20 countries and also offer a \$1 million grant for the United Nations Office for Project Services to buy and distribute the drug.

Since the drug, also known as Favipiravir, is feared to cause birth defects, it cannot be used on expectant mothers or women who might become pregnant. —Kyodo News ■

Japan city seeks raincoats as emergency protection for virus staff

TOKYO — Japan's third-biggest city has appealed for donations of raincoats to be used as personal protection gear by hospital workers dealing with the coronavirus outbreak.

The shortage of proper protective clothing in Osaka is so acute that some health workers are resorting to wearing garbage bags over their scrubs.

"Please send us unused raincoats. Any colour will do," Mayor Ichiro Matsui told reporters on Tuesday.

The region is battling a growing number of cases, with

more than 830 infections recorded — the second-highest in the country after Tokyo's 2,171.

"Some hospital workers are wearing a garbage bag as an alternative to protective gear," Matsui said, adding the makeshift fix raises contamination risks for workers as they removed them over their heads.

"It doesn't matter if you're an Osaka city citizen or not. Please provide us raincoats," the city government website said.

The request comes as Japan's two emergency medicine associations issued a joint state-

ment saying they are "already sensing the collapse of the emergency medical system".

"The number of hospitals that can accept patients suffering from a high fever and breathing problems is decreasing," the statement said, warning these patients were instead being sent to emergency clinics which had to turn away patients with other serious medical complaints.

"We fear that patients suffering from heart attacks, strokes, or multiple injuries might lose precious time in being treated," the statement said. — AFP ■



Officials in Japan's second biggest city have appealed for donations of raincoats for health workers to use as emergency personal protective gear when dealing with coronavirus patients. PHOTO: AFP

Afghan girls try building ventilator from used car parts

KABUL — A team of robot-designing girls in Afghanistan is trying to build a low-cost medical ventilator from car parts, as health authorities look to boost critical-care capabilities for coronavirus patients in the impoverished country.

If the teenagers succeed and can get government approval for their prototype, they say it could be replicated for as little as \$300, where normally ventilators sell for around \$30,000.

"The team is working with local health specialists, as well as experts from Harvard University, to produce the prototype based on a design by Massachusetts Institute of Technology," said Roya Mahboob, who runs an Afghan tech company and sponsors the team of five girls, aged 14-17.

They are part of a bigger group of high-achieving high school girls known as the "Afghan Dreamers", from the

western city of Herat, where coronavirus is on the rise after thousands of people returned from neighbouring Iran as it experienced a spike in cases.

The girls made headlines in 2017 after being denied visas to take part in a robotics competition in Washington — before President Donald Trump intervened and they were allowed to travel.

They are taking engine and battery parts from a Toyota Corolla — ubiquitous on the streets of Afghanistan — to produce a prototype they started designing after the Herat governor called for more ventilators as coronavirus cases rose.

Central to the ventilator is a self-inflating plastic sac known as an Ambu bag that medical staff use to help patients breathe.

The girls' prototype uses a mechanical system to operate the bag automatically and accurately. — AFP ■



If the teenagers succeed and can get government approval for their prototype, they say it could be replicated for as little as \$300, where normally ventilators sell for around \$30,000. PHOTO: AFP

Sony to help making ventilators in Japan for coronavirus patients

TOKYO — Sony Corp. plans to help other domestic makers in manufacturing ventilators due to rising concerns they would be in short supply as the number of new coronavirus patients increases in Japan, company sources said Wednesday.

Sony plans to use its medical equipment plant in Shizuoka Prefecture and digital camera factory in Aichi Prefecture to make parts and help with assembly of the ventilators, aiming to be involved in production of 1,000 to 2,000 units within three months, the sources said.

The Japanese government has been calling on domestic manufacturers to boost the production of ventilators. It said Monday it will shorten the approval process of medical equipment manufacturing to a few days from several months to spur the entry of companies from other sectors.

Sony will first cooperate with Tokyo-based medical equipment maker Acoma Medical Industry Co. in making the ventilators before expanding the tie up with other companies, the sources said. — Kyodo News ■

IEA predicts 'worst year in the history' of oil sector

LONDON — The coronavirus outbreak will slash global oil demand in 2020 to erase a decade of growth and set up “the worst year in the history” of the sector, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said Wednesday.

Demand is projected to plummet by a record 9.3 million barrels per day (mbd) for the year as a whole, with 29 mbd in the month of April, and 26 mbd in May — “staggering numbers”, according to the agency’s executive director Fatih Birol.

“I believe in a few years’ time, when you look at 2020 we may well see that it was the worst year in the history of global oil markets,” he told reporters on a teleconference.

“During this terrible year, the second quarter may very

well be the worst of the lot and... April may very well be the worst month.”

The projected figures for this month were last seen in 1995, said Birol, describing this as “Black April in the history of the oil industry.”

The global economy has been hard hit by the coronavirus outbreak, with many industries brought to their knees and air, rail and road traffic slashed as non-essential businesses were closed and hundreds of millions of people around the world placed in lockdown.

The epidemic has killed more than 123,000 people since it first emerged in China in December.

The IEA said measures taken by the OPEC+ group and



The IEA said measures taken to bolster the global economy and to reduce oil supply should allow a “gradual” recovery in the second half of the year. **PHOTO: AFP**

other oil producing nations to cut output should allow demand to start exceeding supply again by the second half of 2020, assuming population lockdowns to curb virus spread are lifted.

“Once the declines in oil demand start to reduce and once the impact of the production cuts from the OPEC+ agreement and non-OPEC producers start to bite, we start to see a recovery in

the second half of the year,” Neil Atkinson, head of the agency’s oil division, told the briefing.

“But obviously there’s still a long way to go before we reach that point.” — AFP ■



US online retailer Amazon says its operations in France are under threat following a local court ruling on worker health measures during the coronavirus outbreak. **PHOTO: AFP**

Amazon threatens to halt key French centres after court ruling

PARIS — Online retailer Amazon warned Wednesday it may be forced to halt activity at its distribution centres and reduce service in France following a court ruling on measures to slow the spread of the new coronavirus among its workers.

The US e-commerce giant said it would appeal the Tuesday ruling that it can deliver only essential goods while it evaluates its workers’ risk of coronavirus exposure. In the meantime, it said: “Our interpretation suggests that we could be forced to suspend activity at our distribution centres in France.”

The facilities are key in preparing orders submitted online for delivery to clients.

A court outside Paris ruled Tuesday that Amazon France had

“failed to recognise its obligations regarding the security and health of its workers” in the facilities where hundreds of staff work.

While carrying out a health evaluation, Amazon can prepare and deliver only “food, hygiene and medical products,” the court said. The injunction must be carried out within 24 hours, or Amazon France could face fines of one million euros (\$1.1 million) per day. Amazon has one month to carry out the evaluation.

The firm said the ruling left it “perplexed given the concrete evidence which was submitted concerning the security measures put into place to protect our employees,” including temperature checks, physical distancing orders and use of personal protective equipment.—AFP

New iPhone may be coming as locked-down consumers seek bargains

SAN FRANCISCO — Is now the time to launch a new iPhone?

Despite a pandemic-induced global economic crisis, Apple is widely believed to be set to release a reduced-priced handset that aims to fill a gap in its lineup, as early as this month.

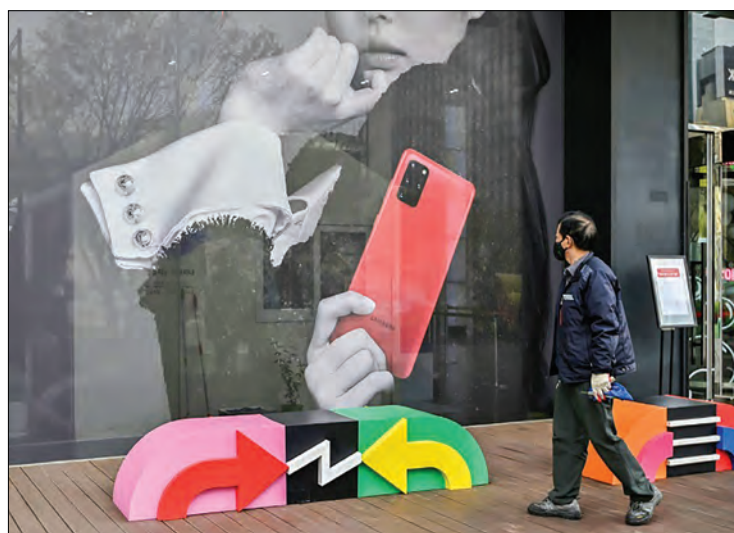
Google could also follow a similar path, after Samsung last week unveiled new devices costs less than \$500.

Reports suggest that the new Apple handset, to be called iPhone SE or iPhone 9, could have a starting price under \$400,

and generate some growth with the timetable uncertain for a new flagship smartphone for the California giant.

“While launching a mid-cycle budget/entry-level smartphone into the backdrop of a consumer global lockdown and unprecedented pandemic will be head scratcher to some, we note that Apple is viewing this as a low volume, low touch release with little fanfare as the phones are already ready to ship,” Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives said in a research note.

Ives said Apple is likely to be able to sell 20 million to 25 million of the new devices before a new flagship iPhone 12 is ready to ship. Any new smartphone release would be without the splashy unveiling for which Apple is known, and would rely on online sales with most retail stores closed.—AFP ■



Samsung announced new smartphones last week at prices below those of its flagship handsets. **PHOTO: AFP**

Apple data show dramatic impact of virus on movement

HONG KONG — Apple has launched a new website that shows with striking graphs how the coronavirus pandemic has slammed the brakes on life around the world.

The tool visualises the movement of people in dozens of major cities and countries around the

world based on the number of requests made for directions on Apple Maps since 13 January.

It shows the dramatic drop in the number of users driving, walking or taking public transit as governments around the world rolled out increasingly stringent containment measures

to stop the spread of the deadly virus.

Apple said Tuesday that the purpose of the new website was to help global efforts to try and stop the spread of COVID-19 by giving insights into the movement of people to governments and health authorities.—AFP ■

Stimulus against virus to boost Japan GDP by up to 3.8%: Abe

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday the government's latest emergency package to cushion the fallout from the coronavirus outbreak will boost Japan's economy by up to an annualized real 3.8 per cent.

Abe made the remark about the country's largest-ever 108.2 trillion yen (\$1.01 trillion) stimulus package at a meeting of the government's Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, at a time many economists predict a double-digit economic drop in the April-June period.

"Giving top priority to protecting people's lives, health and livelihood, we drew up the economic package," Abe told the meeting.

As a key pillar of the economic package approved by the Cabinet last



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks during a teleconference. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

week, the government allocated about 4 trillion yen to provide 300,000 yen to each household whose income has dropped sharply due to the spread of the coronavirus.

Under the stimulus,

with 39.5 trillion yen in direct fiscal spending, the government will provide up to 2 million yen each to small business owners, including freelance workers, if their revenue drops significantly.—Kyodo News ■

Virus sends Germany into recession as curbs to be extended to 3 May

BERLIN — Germany in March plunged into a recession set to last until the middle of the year, the economy ministry said Wednesday, as the government readied an extension of the virus-fighting curbs that sparked the slump until 3 May.

With schools and most shops closed, travel halted and millions now working from home, Germany has been severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

As calls grow from industry for restrictions to be gradually eased, Chancellor Angela Merkel will hold talks this afternoon with state premiers on extending the curbs, which are currently due to run until 19 April.

Regional government sources told AFP ahead of the talks that representatives from Germany's 16 states and the chancellery

have agreed on a position paper which includes maintaining restrictions through 3 May.

"Falling global demand, interruption of supply chains, changes in consumers' behaviour and uncertainty among investors" had already made themselves felt, the economy ministry said.

The economic blow from the virus fell just as Germany was beginning to

recover from a 2019 marked by the impact of trade wars and Brexit fears.

Industry in particular had seen rises in new orders and activity as 2020 got underway, the ministry noted.

But "given the massive demand and supply shock at home and abroad from the coronavirus pandemic, economic developments reversed course," it said.—AFP ■



Car manufacturing, one of the motors of the German economy, has also taken a huge hit from coronavirus mitigation measures. PHOTO: AFP

G-20 finance chiefs discuss debt relief for poor nations

TOKYO — Finance chiefs of the Group of 20 major economies held a videoconference Wednesday, with debt relief for developing countries likely on the agenda to enable them to implement necessary steps in the battle against the novel coronavirus.

The talks came a day after a separate virtual meeting among the Group of Seven industrialized nations, at which they agreed to suspend debt payments

owed by "the most vulnerable and poorest countries" if all the G-20 economies support the move.

The focus is on whether the finance ministers and central bank governors of the G-20 countries, including China — a major lender to developing nations — can reach a consensus over the debt relief backed by the G-7 countries, according to Japanese government officials.

The officials said some sort of statement may be issued after the virtual meeting, which took place amid growing concern about capital outflows from emerging economies, as uncertainty over the virus pandemic darkens investor sentiment.

After the talks on Tuesday, the G-7 nations said in the chair's summary issued by the United States that they "support multilateral efforts" to as-

sist low-income countries, and are "ready to provide a time-bound suspend" on their loan payments.

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

The composition of total public debt in developing countries has been shifting from "Paris Club" countries — traditional sources such as the G-7 nations — toward nontraditional lenders including China. The total of the 59 lowest-income countries' outstanding obligations to China, against the sum of their gross domestic product, was 11.6 per cent in 2016, about four times as much as that owed to Paris Club nations, according to an IMF report in 2018.—Kyodo News ■



FILE: Group of 20 leaders meet in Osaka in June 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0121 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0121 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT/HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC MERGUI VOY. NO. (014W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC MERGUI VOY. NO. (014W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-4-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/TMT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

Low-key celebrations for North Korea's founder in face of virus

SEOUL — North Korea marked the anniversary of the birth of its founder Kim Il Sung in subdued fashion Wednesday, with mask-wearing citizens placing flowers before his statue in Pyongyang as the country imposes strict anti-coronavirus measures.

The grandfather of the current leader Kim Jong Un was born 108 years ago and April 15 is the most important date in the North's annual political calendar, where it is known as the Day of

the Sun.

But Pyongyang has imposed tight restrictions against the pandemic that has swept the world since emerging in neighbouring China, closing its borders and for a time quarantining thousands of its own citizens as well as hundreds of foreigners, and insists that it has not seen a single case.

Pyongyang residents arrived at Mansu hill, where giant bronze statues of Kim and his son and successor Kim Jong Il



Pyongyang residents pay their respects at the giant bronze statues of Kim Il Sung and his son and successor Kim Jong Il. PHOTO: AFP

gaze out over the capital, to lay flowers at their base.

But they came in much smaller groups than the some-

times hundreds-strong detachments of workers or soldiers seen on previous occasions. —AFP ■

Voting for S Korean parliamentary election begins



Former South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak Yeon of the ruling Democratic Party makes a speech in Seoul on 2 April, 2020, as official campaigning for the 15 April general election starts the same day amid the spread of the new coronavirus. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

SEOUL — South Korean voters headed to polls on Wednesday morning to elect a new parliament, in what is seen as a mid-term evaluation of President Moon Jae In's administration amid the ongoing fight against the novel coronavirus.

Of the 300 National Assembly seats up for grabs, 253 are directly elected seats while the remaining 47 are proportional representation slots, meaning voters will cast one ballot for a candidate and another for a political party.

The result of the general election is also expected to be a significant indicator for future direction of the next presidential

election slated for 2022.

Though the main opposition United Future Party has been urging voters to render a verdict on Moon's government, which is in the third year of its term, the ruling Democratic Party and other liberal parties are expected to win a majority of the seats, according to local media projections.

People who are in the middle of self-quarantine and showing no symptoms of coronavirus infection will be allowed to go outside from 5:20 pm to 7 pm to vote at designated polling stations.

The results are expected to be out early Thursday morning. —Kyodo News ■

India allows rural poor to work in virus lockdown

NEW DELHI — Millions of people in rural India will be allowed back to work next week despite a nationwide coronavirus lockdown, the government said Wednesday, as it conceded the hardships of shutting its vital farming economy were too great.

Restrictions on movement in the world's second-most populous nation of 1.3 billion people — put in place in late March — have hit the poorest the hardest, including rural migrant workers and other labourers.

In cities and towns, usually bustling streets are deserted with shops shuttered, while jobless migrants who did not manage to make the long journey home to villages, often on foot, are living in crowded shelters in cities.

The lockdown has also tak-

en place during the harvest season, with farmers worried their reaping and sowing cycles will be severely disrupted and place further pressure on India's food supply chain — already hit by transport delays.

"To mitigate hardship to the public, select additional activities will be allowed," the Home Affairs Ministry said.

"The revised consolidated guidelines are aimed at operating those sectors of the economy

which are critical from the perspective of rural and agricultural development."

Under the new guidelines to be implemented from 20 April, agriculture and related sectors including farmers' markets, logistics, repair shops and brick kilns will be restarted.

Strict measures will be enforced, including the wearing of face masks or coverings.

Some factories such as manufacturing will also be re-opened but staffing will be limited and working hours staggered.

Factory owners are required to try and provide dormitories for workers or arrange special transport to and from the plants.

Refineries, coal production and some construction will also be permitted. —AFP ■



People wait in line to collect free rations from a government store during India's nationwide lockdown. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS In BRIEF

Sleep at last for Varanasi's keepers of cremation fires

VARANASI — The stench of smouldering funeral pyres usually hangs heavy by the Ganges river in Varanasi, the mystical Indian city where Hindus believe being cremated will free them from the cycle of rebirth.

But because of a nationwide coronavirus lockdown, the 200 to 300 bodies from all over India and beyond that are typically cremated here daily cannot be transported to the city. Now barely 30 to 40 funerals are taking place per day, all of them locals, and the usual teeming crowds of mourners, pilgrims and tourists in one of India's holiest places are eerily absent.

"We still haven't stopped working," Jagdish Chaudhary, 51, told AFP from Manikarnika, the main cremation "ghat" or embankment in Varanasi, reputedly one of the oldest cities on Earth. — AFP ■

China says US decision to halt WHO funding undermines global anti-pandemic cooperation

BEIJING — A decision by the United States to halt its funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) would undermine international cooperation on fighting COVID-19, and China is gravely concerned about it, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Wednesday.

As the most authoritative and professional international organization in the field of global public health security, the WHO has played an irreplaceable role in dealing with a global public health crisis, Zhao said at a press briefing, when asked to comment on the decision announced Tuesday by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"Particularly, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO led by Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has actively fulfilled its duties and played a central role in coordinating and promoting international cooperation," Zhao said, stressing that the WHO's work has been widely recognized and highly appreciated by the international community. —Xinhua ■

Danish schools begin reopening after month-long closure

COPENHAGEN — Denmark began reopening schools for younger children on Wednesday after a month-long closure to combat the novel coronavirus, becoming the first country in Europe to do so.

Nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools were restarting after they were officially closed on 17 March in an effort to curb the COVID-19 epidemic, though many had shut before then.

However classes are only resuming in about half of Denmark's municipalities and in about 35 per cent of Copenhagen's schools, as others have re-

quested more time to adjust to health protocols. All are expected to reopen by 20 April.

In the centre of the capital Copenhagen, some 220 pupils up to the second grade arrived at the Norrebro Park Skole, welcomed by their teachers who waved Danish flags. Children in the third and fourth grade will follow on Thursday.

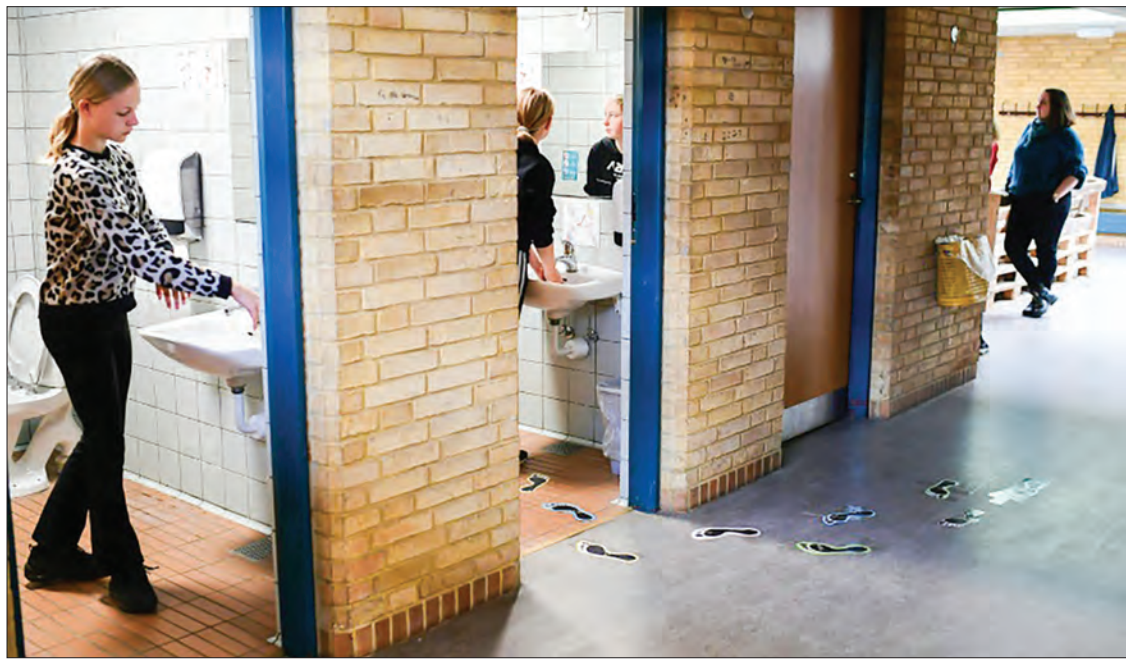
The children quickly settled into the reorganised classrooms designed to comply with strict new sanitary guidelines.

"I feel great, really good about the kids going back to school," Caroline, a 38-year-old and mother of two, told AFP.

In early April the country's centre-left government announced that schools would be reopened "on the condition that everyone keeps their distance and washes their hands."

But while schools are gradually reopening, bars, restaurants, hairdressing and massage parlours, shopping centres and discos remain closed, and gatherings of more than 10 people are banned.

Schools are required to ensure that a distance of two metres (about six feet) is maintained between desks in classrooms and recesses must be organised for small groups.—AFP



Bottles with hand sanitiser are never far away to encourage students to clean their hands regularly. PHOTO: AFP



The man reportedly told magistrates that he first flouted the law to get food but hours later broke quarantine again because he missed his girlfriend. PHOTO: AFP

Lovelorn Aussie first jailed for breaking virus quarantine

PERTH — An Australian who repeatedly sneaked out of coronavirus quarantine, reportedly to visit his girlfriend, was jailed for a month Wednesday — the first person imprisoned under the country's lockdown laws.

Jonathan David, 35, was arrested earlier this month after jamming open a fire escape and slipping out of mandatory quarantine at a Perth hotel, Western Australia Police said in a statement.

He told Perth's Magistrates Court that he first flouted the law to get food but hours later broke quarantine again because he missed his girlfriend, Seven News reported.

By escaping through the fire exit, he successfully avoided hotel

staff several times but was caught on CCTV, police said.

Under laws aimed at stopping the spread of the virus, David was required to isolate for 14 days after arriving in Perth from the southeastern state of Victoria on 28 March.

If he had remained in his hotel room he would have been freed on Monday but instead he will spend a full month in jail and has been handed a fine of more than AUS\$2,000 (US\$1,280).

Police around the country have issued more than 1,000 fines for breaches of lockdown laws, with offences ranging from dozens of people gathering for a street car rally in Brisbane to a group of men eating pizza in a car together in Sydney's west.—AFP

In California, early coronavirus action 'makes a difference'

LOS ANGELES — Swift and strict containment measures in California appear to have succeeded in reducing hospital overcrowding and mass deaths from coronavirus, according to health experts in the country's most populous state.

California, one of the first states struck by the deadly disease, has been under lockdown for nearly four weeks. During that time its confirmed case and death tolls have been rapidly overtaken by various eastern states.

"From the data it seems very clear that early mitigation makes a difference in terms of how we're able to stop the spread of the virus," said Anne Rimoin, a public health professor at University of California, Los Angeles.

"California was really in the front of the pack to put regula-

tions and legislation in place to keep people safer at home, to promote social distancing, to shut down concerts, shut down big events, and... encouraging people to wear cloth masks," she added.

"And all of these things together, make a very big difference."

It was in California that the very first US cases of "community transmission" were reported at the end of February.

When Governor Gavin Newsom imposed stay-at-home orders on all 40 million Californians on 19 March, the state had registered just around a thousand cases, and 19 deaths.

Millions of people in the San

Francisco area — the part of the state most affected by coronavirus at the time — had already been placed on lockdown three days earlier, under a coordinated decision by six counties.

By that same point New York had registered more than 5,000 cases, but officials there waited another day to limit population movement.

The pandemic has since exploded in New York, with more than 10,000 deaths, as emergency services are overwhelmed and morgues filled.

In California cases continue to peak — Los Angeles suffered a record 40 deaths in 24 hours on Tuesday. But the situation overall remains far less dire than New York, a city roughly twice the size, where around 800 died in the same period.—AFP ■



Across California there have been over 25,500 cases, including at least 783 deaths, according to a count from Johns Hopkins University. PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar midfielder awarded high assist points: AFC

MIDFIELDER Maung Maung Lwin of Yangon United and Myanmar National Football Team is currently standing as a top assist provider with a total of ten assists in the AFC Cup competition since the 2017 version of the tourney, according to the April statement of the Asian Football Confederation.

Maung Maung Lwin (Mg Mg Lwin) has performed as a key player for Yangon United and his assists turned to golden opportunities for the team to grab victories from 2017 to 2020.

Filipino Club Ceres Negros players Stephan Schrock and Manny Ott and Tajikistan club player Fatkhullo Fatkhulloev also assisted ten times as equal as Maung Maung Lwin. Next, Indonesian club player Riko Simanjuntak assisted nine times and Filipino Club Ceres Negros midfielder Oj Portetia made eight assists. Maung Maung Lwin has also shown great form along with Yangon United in the 2020 AFC Cup matches, created 14 goal chances, thirty crosses, three assists, and already scored one goal of three games played. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Yangon United star player Maung Maung Lwin. PHOTO:YUFC

Well-wishers donate essential things to MFF quarantine camps

WELL-WISHERS have donated essential stuff to the COVID-19 quarantine camps of the Myanmar Football Federation at the Myanmar National Football Team's apartment starting from 27 March, according to the MFF.

Sayadaw Ashin Sandadika donated three boxes of Dhamma Teaching books for the quarantined persons.

The Myanmar Football Federation Vice President Dr Sai Sam Tun donated purified drinking water bottles worth K1,260,000.

Also, Grand Royal Group donated 500 bottles of hand sanitizers and Daily Stars Co., Ltd donated boxes of masks worth

of K3,000,000.

Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) also offered Sim cards plus top-up cards worth of K625,000 and Zeya and Associates donated K5 million.

Next, EC Futsal Club also donated K7 million and Baby Ancestor Company and Magteron Company donated one disinfection equipment.

Myanmar Medical Association donated 200 boxes of fruits and B Win company donated 15 boxes of B Win hand sanitizers worth K480,000. Max Global Limited also donated 200 boxes of fruits and 100 Plus company donated 25,000 cans of isotonic drinks. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Hammers boss Moyes fears injury pile-up if Premier League resumes

LONDON (United Kingdom)—West Ham manager David Moyes fears a rash of injuries to players should there be a desperate rush to complete the Premier League season if the coronavirus relents sufficiently to allow the resumption of football.

The Premier League has now ditched plans to get back underway at the start of May and a further complication is that a number of players will be out of contract in June.

It has been suggested that clubs may need to play up to three games a week in order to finish this season before the 2020/21 campaign gets going.

Moyes would prefer a four-week build-up on the training ground before the current Premier League season resumes,

should lockdown restrictions be relaxed and the Hammers boss fears the consequences if, as seems likely, clubs have less preparation time.

"I think that four weeks would be ideal. But I think three weeks will be the maximum we get," Moyes told beIN Sports on Tuesday.

"Everybody's now talking about the injuries we're liable to pick up either during the three-week preparation time or during the period where it looks like we'll have to play an awful lot of games in a short period of time."

West Ham are only above the relegation zone on goal difference but Moyes, in his second spell in charge of the east London club, was optimistic about their long-term prospects.—AFP



Injury concern - West Ham manager David Moyes. PHOTO: AFP

IPL cricket made to wait as India extends restrictions



The Mumbai Indians won last year's IPL. PHOTO: AFP

NEW DELHI (India) — India's cricket board remains optimistic about playing the lucrative IPL later this year, a team official told AFP Wednesday, as an extended national lockdown left the competition in limbo.

In line with other sports events worldwide, the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League, the world's richest Twenty20 tournament, had already been pushed back from its original start date of March 29.

Officially it was postponed until Wednesday but with India

and much of the world in lockdown, preventing players from travelling and fans attending matches, the tournament remains on hold.

After India extended the lockdown on Tuesday until May 3, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) told the eight franchises that the tournament has been deferred indefinitely.

"Yes, they have informed us that the IPL stands suspended for the moment," a team official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"However it is said that they will find a window in the later end of the year to do it."

Cricketer-turned-commentator VVS Laxman said the IPL should kick off the cricket calendar that includes the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia in October and November.

"I think some of the cricket boards will be encouraging the fact that IPL is a big tournament, and everyone acknowledges that," Laxman, who is a mentor for IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad, told Indian broadcaster Star Sports.—AFP