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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw starts 16th regular session with discussions on bills, loans from IDA, IMF



The second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw holds its first day meeting of its 16th regular session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw began its 16th regular session yesterday, and members of the Joint Bill Committee and the Joint Public Accounts Committee presented legal and financial recommendations on the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill presented by the Union Government.

In his opening remark, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat said that the prioritized issues will be discussed in two weeks, and he reminded the MPs that additional budgets for the projects included in the bills

could not be scrutinized under regular process.

He also explained that healthcare services, transportation and accommodations for the Hluttaw representatives in line with the guidelines of COVID-19 measures.

Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill for 2019-2020FY

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win reported on the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill with the approval

... the proposed budgets to be spent for recovery of economic and social sectors caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

of Finance Commission; and explained the Revised Estimates (RE) and the Budget Estimates (BE) drafted by the ministry.

He clarified the ministry approved on the proposed budgets to be spent for recovery of

economic and social sectors caused by the COVID-19 crisis; the ministry will also prioritize on the budget proposal for the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Sports, the construction projects of Nay Pyi

Taw Council from the General Revenue Fund (GRF), the Ministry of Defence Services for military expenditures and land compensations.

Joint Secretary of Joint Bill Committee Dr Myat Nyana Soe read out legal recommendation report on the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill for 2019-2020 financial year, Vice Chairman of the Joint Public Accounts Committee U Aung Min presented financial recommendations on the bill.

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PYITHU HLUTTAW

Pyithu Hluttaw raises the curtain on its 16th regular session

THE Second Pyithu Hluttaw began its 16th regular session yesterday, in line with health-care guidelines on preventive measures against the COVID-19 viral disease.

On the first day of this session, the four Pyithu Hluttaw representatives of Tatmadaw swore and signed their oaths in the presence of Speaker U T Khun Myat.

In his opening remark, the Speaker said that the 16th regular session will discuss the scheduled topics, especially the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Bill for 2019-2020 financial year, while taking protective measures to prevent the Hluttaw representatives from the COVID-19.

MP U Lagan Zal Gyone from Waimaw constituency asked about upgrade of Myitkyina-Waimaw-Sadone-Kampaite to the neighbouring China.

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn explained the maintenance works on this road and upgrade plan of it during the post COVID-19



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe.



Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn.



MP U Wan Hla from Nanyun constituency.



MP U Lagan Zal Gyone from Waimaw constituency.

crisis.

MP Dr Lin Lin Kyaw from Myittha constituency asked about upgrade of Kume-Kason-

Theingone-Ogone road into concrete or tarred road. The Deputy Minister said that the road will be developed into a tarred road

by the fund of Mandalay Region government beyond 2020-2021FY.

MP U Wan Hla from Nanyun constituency raised query on assignment of duties to fill the required positions at healthcare centres in his constituency.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe replied positioning of health workers for this constituency this year.

MP U Myo Zaw Aung from Kawlin constituency asked for rural clinics in some villages of his constituency. Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe explained the recommendations of regional health officers not to establish rural clinics as some villages do not meet the fundamental norms.

The Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn replied to the query of MP U Bone Myint Aung from DaikU constituency about upgrade of main road in Hmaw In village of his constituency; Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe answered the questions of MP Dr Sein Mya Aye from Dala constituency about appointment of staff members

for sports and physical education at the basic education schools, and MP U Nay Lin Aung from Mindat constituency about free medicines and medical supplies at the public hospitals in his constituency.

Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease Bill

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe submitted the Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease Bill to the Hluttaw and Dr Wai Phyo Aung, member of Bill Committee read out the bill.

U Nay Myo Tun, member of Bill Committee, discussed amendments and recommendations proposed by the Amyotha Hluttaw on the National Library Bill.

U Kyaw Soe Lin, secretary of Bill Committee, tabled a motion to discuss the controversial bill at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and the Speaker agreed to do so.

The second day meeting of Pyithu Hluttaw will be organized on 19 May.—Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses landholding permits, ethnic youths & literature

THE first day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 16th regular session took place in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Firstly, Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw candidates took the oath of office in the presence of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than.

The Speaker than delivered a greeting, where he said he hoped the Hluttaw representatives used their time before this session to meet their constituents and explain their parliamentary experiences, get firsthand experience to understand the needs and challenges of the public, and actively participate in regional development.

Next, MP U Soe Win of Rakhine State constituency 12 raised a question on whether the act of relevant organizations requiring applications for a farmland working permit form-7 through The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law (2012) complies



Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.



Deputy Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Hla Maw Oo.



MP U Soe Win of Rakhine State constituency 12.



MP Daw Khin Swe Lwin of Chin State constituency 9.

with legal regulations.

He also asked whether there were plans to issue the form-7 in accordance with Ar-

ticle 582 of the Myanmar Land Records Manual Law.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irriga-

tion U Hla Kyaw replied that it is currently not possible to convert unspecified landholding into specified in regions where field surveys and collecting landholding ownership documents cannot be carried out. He said they will be categorized into either vacant, fallow or virgin land in this situation.

The Deputy Minister said the proper procedure would be to apply for a permit in line with The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law and then apply for the form-7 after farming becomes stable.

Next, MP Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency 11 raised a question on whether the Yangon Region Minister for Rakhine Ethnic Affairs has plans to open a youth centre for Rakhine youths in Yangon. She also asked how the same minister has been utilizing the allotted budget from 2016-2017 financial year to 2019-2020 financial year for the development of Rakhine youths.

Deputy Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Hla Maw Oo replied that the Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister is working to open a Rakhine community centre that would also incorporate a youth centre for Rakhine youths.

The Deputy Minister said the Yangon Region Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Ministry has utilized K70 million in 2016-2017 financial year, K230 million in 2017-2018 financial year, K99.5 million in 2018-2019 financial year, and K37 million so far in 2019-2020 financial year for various Rakhine festivities and celebrations and for publishing Sayadaw U Ottama's history, the second edition of Rakhine dictionary and a book on ancient Rakhine cities.

Next, MP Daw Khin Swe Lwin of Chin State constituency 9 raised a question on what plans were in place to promote ethnic literature education for Ra, Daryindu, Oap (Pu), Dine, and Mwin ethnic groups in Kanpetlet Township,

SEE PAGE-3

“People are the key”

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw starts 16th regular session with discussions on bills, ...



Union Minister U Thaung Tun.



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win.



Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein.



Deputy Governor of CBM U Soe Min.



Joint Secretary of Joint Bill Committee Dr Myat Nyana Soe.

FROM PAGE-1

Region/State Budget Estimate Bill

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win also discussed the need of budget estimate law that would be helpful for the Region/State governments in drawing, discussing and scrutinizing the budgets with their Hluttaws.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe read out the recommendation report of his committee on the Region/State Budget Estimate Bill.

IDA loan from World Bank

Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein discussed the US\$50 million loan from the International Development Association (IDA) from the World Bank. The proposal was sent by the President.

The Deputy Minister said that out of the proposed loan, \$48.5 million will be used under the capital expenditure for buying necessary hospital equipment to be set up at intensive care units and oxygen treatments at the hospital, while the remaining \$1.5 million under the revenue expenditure will be spent in system strengthening for clinical care capacity, other projects in capacity building, project management and monitoring and evaluation.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win said the \$50 million loan is under the programme of First Track COVID-19 Facility; in accordance with the rules of IDA 18 loans there will be 5 years of grace period and 25 years of repayment period with annual interest 1.25 per cent,

0.75 per cent of service charge per annum, and that the calculation on grant element for this loan is just 38.37 per cent.

He added that MoHS need to spend the possible loan in line with financial rules and to report progress report; the loan plan meets the existing laws of the country, medium-term debt management strategy, development aid policy, the MSDP (2018-2030), and the Goal 6 of COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan-CERP, and then he confirmed his ministry's support on the loan plan.

Report of Myanmar Investment Commission for 2018-2019 FY

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun presented

the Myanmar Investment Commission's report for 2018-2019 financial year from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2020.

\$700 million loan from IMF

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win discussed the \$700 million loan from the International Monetary Fund as the government has spent a lot of budgets to address COVID-19 crisis for business and social sectors, and has planned to get international loan with low interest rate instead of drawing out funds from the Central Bank of Myanmar.

He then sought approval of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to get this loan as it meets the existing policies of the country.

Deputy Governor of CBM U Soe Min said that Myanmar

has been informed to get IMF loan from \$300 million to \$700 million, and the CBM will co-ordinate with the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry after receiving the loan.

Other bills

U Zaw Win, the member of Joint Bill Committee, read out findings and recommendations of his committee on the Road Safety and Vehicle Management Bill and the Industrial Zone Bill, sent by the President.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced to submit the name of MPs who want to discuss the bills.

The second day meeting will be organized on 21 May. —Min Min Zaw, Han Lin Naing/ Photo: Kyaw Zin Htike (Translated by Aung Khin)

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses landholding permits, ethnic youths & literature

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Chin State, and what preparations are in place to ensure the full legal rights entitled to them.

Deputy Minister U Hla Maw Oo replied the Ministry of Education has arranged for 91 teaching assistants and 112 languages teachers to teach the literature of the five aforementioned ethnic groups in 121 schools in Kanpetlet Township in 2019-2020 academic year.

The Deputy Minister said they ensure the sustainability of Chin ethnic literature and its development in accordance with the Ethnic Rights Protection Law and Bylaw and in line with the President's directive to safeguard stability and bring about change. He said the Chin

State government and Hluttaw should provide assistance and his ministry will continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Education to develop ethnic languages and literature.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Kyein Ngike Mahn then read her committee's report on the microfinance bill, sent back with amendments by the Pyithu Hluttaw. The Speaker then called for MPs interested in discussing and amending the bill to enroll their names.

This was followed by MP U Min Oo of Bago Region constituency 6 tabling a motion expressing sorrow for the deaths of Dr Htay Kywel of Yangon Region constituency

1, also Chairman of the Amyotha Hluttaw Committee on the Human Rights, Democracy and Basic Rights of the Citizens, and U Kyaw Kyaw of Rakhine State constituency 4, who was also a member of the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee.

With approval from the assembly, the Speaker then announced the motion will be put on record and a copy to be sent to the families of the deceased. The Amyotha Hluttaw then observed 2 minutes of silence for the two MPs.

The second day meeting of the 16th regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held today. —Aung Ye Thwin

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Investigation Committee invites people to share information on WHO staff killed in Rakhine State

COMMITTEE to investigate the shooting of the WHO vehicle was formed on 28 April 2020 by Presidential Directive number 64/2020.

The Committee undertook field and site visits to Rakhine from 12 to 15 May 2020. The investigation is undertaken in line with international standards and protocols. Below are the contact details for any person desiring to share any information related to the incident:

Email: vechcoms@gmail.com
WhatsApp: +959440254439
Viber: +959440254439

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Tour operators for Chinese visitors discuss better services in post-COVID-19

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung held a video conference with Chinese tour operators based in Yangon Region and Mandalay Region from his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister U Tin Latt, Director-General U Maung Maung Kyaw of the Directorate of Hotels & Tourism, the chairman of Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association, the chairman of Myanmar-China Tourism Promotion Committee, and the entrepreneurs providing travel services to Chinese tourists in Yangon and Mandalay.

The meeting focused on preparing the Myanmar travel industry for the period after the COVID-19 pandemic and to discuss the implementation of the State Counsellor’s guideline for ‘quality rather than quantity’.

The Union Minister said travel to Myanmar significantly increased when the restrictions for Visa on Arrival were lifted on 1 October 2018 with the number of visitors between the later part of 2018 to 2019 reaching 749,719.



Union Minister U Ohn Maung holds a video conference with Chinese tour operators for future plan for tourism business. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Union Minister said there was an insufficient number of Chinese-speaking tour guides which resulted in a majority of Chinese tourists who only spoke their native tongue failing to properly understand the Do’s and Don’ts when visiting Myanmar.

He said this resulted in lo-

cal residents of tourism destinations to misunderstand the behaviours of Chinese tourists and have spread through social media. He also highlighted the incident on 5 February where two Chinese tourists were penalized under The Protection and Preservation of Ancient Monuments Law.

The Union Minister said Visa on Arrival, e-Visa and leisure visas have all been suspended due to the spread of COVID-19 and there has been no Chinese tourists entering the nation as a result but will resume once travel channels reopen when the virus is contained.

The Union Minister said they will learn from the difficulties faced in the past to provide better services when travel resumes in Myanmar. He said F.I.T. will not be prioritized in quality control but rather package tours will have to operate on a prepaid system, cover health insurance and be provided with a tour guide that is fluent in Chinese.

The Union Minister said tour operators need to provide quality services and guarantees for paid services. He said they must prepare to provide quality services that will benefit domestic businesses instead of the previous tour services that had been dubbed ‘zero budgets’. He said the ministry will provide the necessary technical support.

The meeting then commenced with attendees discussing ways to boost the travel industry when tourism resumes after COVID-19 and the Union Minister provided suggestions, advice and guidance where necessary.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

COVID-19 cases in Myanmar stand at 188 on 18 May 2020

THE Ministry of Health and Sports released an update report of COVID-19 in Myanmar yesterday, with 4 new cases and national tally reaching 188.

The four new cases are 1 from Taninthayi Region, 2 from Kawkareik Township of Kayin State and 1 from Thandwe Township of Rakhine State.

Out of 188 positive cases, 6 died, 101 persons have recovered and 88 persons have been discharged from the hospitals.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 in Myanmar Updated at 8 pm, 18 May 2020 Total tally: 188

1. There was ONE new cases from testing of 170 samples at the Department of Medical Research and 188 samples at the National Health Laboratory (Yangon), totalling 358 samples on 18 May.
2. Total confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar reached 188, at 8:00 pm on 18 May.
3. FOUR old cases (Case 36, 48, 88, 114) were tested negative two consecutive times, in a total of 101 persons up to 18 May, Among them, 88 persons have been discharged from the hospital and they will be kept isolation at the designated places.
4. The national death toll remains at 6.
5. There are a total of 48 new persons under investigation in the past 24 hours from 12 noon of 18 May.

Laboratory test for COVID-19 at 8 pm, 18 May

Case No	Age	Gen-der	Address	Contact with pos-itive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
188	35	Male	Thandwe Tsp, Rakhine State	No	Yes, Malaysia	District Hospital in Thandwe	Positive	Held under quarantine (in Thandwe)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19 Laboratory results at 8:00 pm, 18 May 2020

Samples tested in first group at National Health Laboratory (Yangon) on 18 May	188
Samples tested at Department of Medical Research on 16 May	170
COVID-19(SARS-CoV-2)	1

COVID-19 Situation Report at 8 pm, 18 May 2020

	New	Total
Confirmed Cases	1	188
Recovered Cases	4	101
Death	0	6

Rubber export income down about \$30 mln in seven months (Oct-Apr)

MYANMAR has exported 114,000 tonnes of rubber worth over US\$140 million as of April-end in the current financial year since 1 October 2019, which shows a decrease of about \$30 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

During a year-ago period, over \$170 million worth 136,000 tonnes were shipped to the external markets.

At present, rubber prices range K900-1,850 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg) depending on quality and variety, as per data of the local rubber market.

"Rubber export drops amid the coronavirus pandemic due to the falling demand and difficulties in trade.

An improvement in Myanmar rubber exports will be

directly related to the price offered, according to the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA).

The volatile rubber price is related to global climate change, and government subsidy will be required for growers to produce quality rubber, said an official of the MRPPA.

Rubber is primarily produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. There are over 1.6 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for about 500,000 acres, followed by Kayin State (270,000 acres), according to the MRPPA.

About 300,000 tonnes of rubber are produced annually across the country. Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to



A woman is preparing to smoke raw rubber sheets in a warehouse in Thuwunna Waddi, Mon State. **PHOTO: KHUN (WIN PA)**

Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

At present, Myanmar is exporting only raw rubber sheets owing to lack of machinery and technology. Export rubber varieties include synthetic rubber, ribbed smoked sheet RSS 1, 3, 5, Myanmar Standard Rubber MSR-20, Technically Specified

Rubber TSR-20, and Crepe Rubber. The MRPPA had sought special rubber zones in the regions and states to produce value-added rubber and quality raw materials at the 15th regular meeting with private entrepreneurs, led by Vice President 1, which was held last year.

About 150,000 tonnes of rubber was exported in the 2017-2018

fiscal year. Myanmar shipped over 190,000 tons of rubber, with an estimated value of \$250 million, to external markets in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, an increase of 41,000 tons which helped boost earnings by \$60 million compared to the year-ago period, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce. —GNLM
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

External trade crosses \$23 bln as of 1 May

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 1 May in the 2019-2020 financial year was registered at US\$23.27 billion, an increase of \$2.25 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 \$21 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 \$10.98 billion and imports valued at \$12.28 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 packing) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is

dwindling.

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, CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western countries amid coronavirus pandemic consequences. As a result of this, manufacturing export, mainly CMP garment, showed a drop in the pandemic shock, the businesspersons pointed out. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Govt buys 10,000 tonnes reserved rice as of mid-May

By Nyein Nyein

THE government has received about 10,000 tonnes of reserved rice since 30 April, according to Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service (MITS), the authorized organization of the State and MRF have implemented a rice reserve scheme on 30 April. The state has purchased about 10,000 tonnes of rice from 50 companies as of 15 May, in line with the set rules and regulations.

The exporters must sell 10 per cent of total export volume (25 % broken, well-milled and sorted rice), stated in the export declaration as country's reserved rice.

The reserved rice must be sent to the state's warehouse. MITS, the authorized organization

of the State, will inspect and verify the quality and quantity.

The Yangon Region government will receive the reserved rice proportioned by sea trade, while some per cent of the border export will be stored at the Consumer Affairs Department in Mandalay Region.

The country has the rice reserve scheme for emergency case beyond self-sufficiency in the domestic market. Myanmar's rice export has returned to normal in May and it intends to ship over 2 million tonnes of rice in the current financial year, according to the MRF.

The Federation has been negotiating with the government concerning the export depending on the situations of the coronavirus pandemic and local and foreign markets.

It is the harvest time of summer paddy and the

federation is making efforts for the growers to get a decent price. Additionally, MRF, its subsidiary organizations and the rice traders are coordinating to have a much fairer price of rice for the consumers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Local market constitutes over 70 per cent of production, whereas some portion of the remaining is sent to the foreign market and some of them are left for rice reserve. Ministry of Commerce and Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) have planned to export 100,000 tonnes of rice through sea trade and 50,000 tonnes through border trade in May.

They are negotiating with ASEAN and the neighbouring countries to sell the rice through government (G to G) plan.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR

Aungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

SENIOR TRANSLATOR

Zaw Htet Oo

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR

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

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
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U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Participates in the Video Conference of the 32nd ASEAN-Australia Forum

U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the Video Conference of the 32nd ASEAN-Australia Forum yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Forum was co-chaired by Dato’ Ahmad Rozian, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Country Coordinator of the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations and Justin Hayhurst, ASEAN Senior Official and Acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. The Forum was attended by Senior Officials from the ASEAN Member States and the Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat.

At the Forum, the Senior Officials shared their respective national efforts and best practices in the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19, and exchanged views on enhancing ASEAN-Australia cooperation on the COVID-19 response and recovery. Permanent Secretary U Soe Han apprised the Forum of national measures taken by the Govern-



Permanent Secretary U Soe Han attends the Video Conference of the 32nd ASEAN-Australia Forum yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

ment of Myanmar ensuring the principle of ‘no one left behind’ in the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19, a whole-of-government approach in addressing health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, the Government’s efforts in mobilizing public participation in the fight against the pandemic, and suggested possible areas of cooperation between ASEAN and Australia on the COVID-19 response and

recovery.

In addition, the Forum also reviewed ASEAN-Australia cooperation in the areas of political and security, economic and social and culture, and exchanged views on future direction of the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership. Under the agenda on Political-Security cooperation, Permanent Secretary U Soe Han lead the discussion on the ASEAN-centred Regional Architecture by highlighting

the importance of enhancing the role of ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum in promoting regional peace and stability and addressing regional security challenges and further strengthening cooperation between ASEAN and Australia including in the area of maritime cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Managing stress and anxiety amid COVID-19

THE long-term presence of COVID-19 disease could prolong stress and anxiety. People will experience three levels of mental states: preparations for response to stress as soon as it was comprehended depending on the period of stress, having capacity to face against the crisis and the state of depression.

The spread of COVID-19 could cause worries, employment problem, financial problem, separation from family, discrimination and getting blame. Difficult sleeping, irregular eating, gain/loss of weight, anxiety, frustration, loss of concentration, fatigue and isolation are some of the feelings suffered during the preparation level as soon as the stress has been realized.

It is required to manage this level. Otherwise, the stress exists long, it could

turn into depression, and severe repercussion might be suffered.

Directives of relevant ministries and organizations must be strictly abided by during the COVID-19 period. It seems to add more anxiety, but it is the best way to develop the habits of these suggestions to be able to resist stress and overcome it for solving socioeconomic problems.

Moreover, people need to apply proper ways in passing through COVID-19 crisis as its end cannot be expected until now. The most important point is to realize that everyone is suffering stress. This understanding could help someone reduce their stress and selfishness, and develop sympathy for others. Sympathy could decrease hatred among each oth-

er and could develop problem-solving capacity, and that it could also lessen stress during COVID-19 period. Instead of facing problems with hatred, it is required to establish the habits of mindfulness, finding ways together with family members or close persons in solving problems, doing physical exercises depending on the weather situations and health condition, eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, responding to the issues with emotions and abstaining from having alcohol/narcotic drugs.

These practices could reduce stress and develop mental power, not to fall into the level of depression.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Society)

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Correction

Please read “While the cyclone is currently NOT heading towards Myanmar...” instead of “While the cyclone is currently NOW heading towards Myanmar” in the seventh line of the fifth paragraph (second column) of the news titled “Cyclone Amphan coded yellow by DMH, likely to cross West Bengal of India” on page-2 of the 18 May Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. —Ed.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Myanmar brings back 81 citizens from the Philippines

THE relief flight of Air Asia Philippines landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday, carrying 81 Myanmar citizens who were stranded in the Philippines due to the suspension of international flights.

On arrival at the airport 10:25 am, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine

period at the designated places and the respective hotels in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks.

As per the directives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and in coordination with the Myanmar embassies in respective countries and other relevant ministries in Myanmar, the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs arranged relief flights to repatriate its citizens from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Bangladesh, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Italy, Vietnam and the Philippines.

A total of 2,072 Myanmar citizens have arrived back from these countries by relief flights.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar returnees from the Philippines queue at immigration counters of Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Well-wishers donate face masks, hand sanitizers to NPE



GOLD Lite Myanmar and Sawdee Electronics donated 1,500 face masks and 60 bottles of hand sanitizers to Kyemon newspaper building in Pazundaung Town-

Deputy Chief Editor of NPE in Yangon receives donation items for prevention of COVID-19. **PHOTO: AYE MIN THU**

ship yesterday morning.

The two companies are part of a group supported by Aye Khin Medicine company. The donations were received by the Yangon-based Deputy Chief Editor of News and Periodicals Enterprise, U Hla Shwe, and officials who gave certificates of honor

in return.

U Zaw Win Nyunt, one of the donors, said they cooperated with the aim of simply wishing to make donations. He said the face masks they have donated are of good quality to ensure safety and no fogging up of spectacles. He said they will continue making

donations.

The same group donated 7,200 face masks to the Ministry of Health and Sports on 11 May and 900 face masks to the National Health Network at the National League for Democracy in Botahtaung Township on 13 May.—Aye Min Thu

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Illegal drugs, clandestine lab seized in Tachilek Tsp

A joint security task force in Tachilek Township, Shan State (East), acted on a tip-off and investigated the house of a person identified as Sai Hla Shwe in Lunkyaing village, Mongphan (Ka) village-tract, at 7:20 pm on 17 May.

The house was deserted but authorities found an AK-47 rifle and 9 cartridges and 57 bullets for it, 48 (5.56) ammo bullets, 28 (9mm) Lugar bullets, 72,000 WY psychotropic tablets, 1kg of the illegal drug ICE from the garage. The illegal

drugs are estimated at a value of K133 million.

Authorities discovered a wicket gate connecting the house to its neighbour and investigated the single-storey house to discover numerous equipment used in producing illegal

drugs.

The drugs and confiscated equipment have been transferred to Tachilek police station according to the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Illegal drugs worth K600 mln arrested in Muse Tsp



Three suspects are seen with confiscated items at Muse Township Police State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Firearms, explosives discovered at Muse cemetery



Firearms and ammunitions founded from a garbage dump in Muse on 16 May. **PHOTO: MNA**

SECURITY forces in Muse Township, Shan State (North), discovered 4 rifles, bullets and cartridges hidden in a gunny sack and buried in a garbage dump at the edge of Muse at 7 pm on 16 May.

Authorities also discovered another gunny sack located 500 metres

northwest from the first one that contained two pistols, their bullets and cartridges, and 5 grenades.

The office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services states that they will follow due procedures regarding the confiscated weapons. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Illegal drugs worth K975 mln confiscated in Maungtaw Tsp

AT 9 pm on 16 May, authorities in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, arrested a person identified as Maung Hla Aye at the 3-mile inspection gate along the Maungtaw-Angumaw highway after discovering 487,500 WY psychotropic tablets in the trunk of his car.

The illegal drugs were stored in three gunny sacks and are estimated to have a value of K975 million. They have been transferred to Pyinphyu police station, according to the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Officials arrest K975 million worth of WY psychotropic tablets in Maungtaw Township on 16 May. **PHOTO: MNA**

SECURITY forces in Muse Township, Shan State (North), confiscated 120,000 WY psychotropic tablets from two men near Yahteik junction at 6:05 am on 17 May.

The two men have been identified as Soe Hlaing and Min Htet Kyaw Linn and the illegal drugs found in their motorcycle are estimated to be worth K240 million.

Soe Hlaing divulged upon interrogation that a person named Maung Maung Tuu ordered them to transport the drugs and lives in territory (16), Homon ward, Muse. Authorities were

able to arrest Maung Maung Tuu at his home but he reportedly said the drugs had been moved to Soe Hlaing's house.

An investigation into Soe Hlaing's house at 1:20 pm uncovered 180,000 psychotropic tablets estimated to be worth K360 million. The suspects and drugs worth a total of K600 million have been transferred to the Muse police station, according to the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Dealing with stress and anxiety during COVID-19

LIKE other pandemics and emerging disease outbreaks, COVID-19 is creating immense psychosocial disturbances. The COVID-19 pandemic can be extremely stressful. Like other occurrences in our lives, everyone reacts differently.

We have seen some reports about seeds being distributed to local people in Shan State by local authorities to build home gardens while staying at home.

It is a welcome move as the home garden programme can help people to escape from crowds for getting vegetables and getting safe kitchen crops amidst Coronavirus spread. Besides, working on home gardening also gives the people physical exercise and helps alleviate pandemic-induced emotional

distress which can lead to anxiety and depression if we can't control it.

In fact, the pandemic is putting enormous stress on all of us but especially on health care workers and other specific groups.

If the stress and anxiety worsen, it may trigger negative physical symptoms such as an elevated heart rate, insomnia, digestive issues, weakness and fatigue.

When fear takes control, both our nervous system and emotional part of our brain go into overdrive. This response can lead to impulsiveness, panic and feeling out of control emotionally. If a person has a preexisting mental illness or history with anxiety and depression, it can often worsen and intensify during times such as these.

If you've been feeling anxious, frustrated, angry or downright confused lately, know that you're not alone—we are all in this together.

There are ways to relieve your stress and improve your mental and emotional well being.

All of us need to take a break from watching, reading or listening to news stories, and that is to include social media like Facebook. Deep breaths, stretching and meditation are good ways to help your body. Eating healthy, well-balanced meals will energize you. Exercise, gardening and plenty of sleep are vital each day, but especially now.

Make plans with friends for unwinding. That can be virtual using Zoom or Facebook Messenger or various other means, or it could be in groups of less than 10 with social distance. Talk to them, and be a good listener. Remember, sharing joys and sorrows is part of having a good relationship with your friends.

And it bears repeating - don't turn to alcohol and drugs as an escape. That's the last thing anyone needs to do.

If anyone is, or knows someone who is, overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression or anxiety, try to get some help from the call centres of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.



Fourth-Year Performances of Mandalay Region Government

By Nandar Win

PHOTO: TAR YAR (IPRD REGION)

Mandalay Region: Working in Full Swing for Regional Development

“TAMPAWADDY” is the name of Mandalay during Myanmar Kings, and that the scholars have accepted the land as the birthplace of the patriots, loyalists and nationalists.

In grandiose, the palace walls, the four gates and the moats still stand today as evidence of the majestic palace city, where the Kings of Konbaung Dynasty reined the country.

Splendor and pleasant in Central Region, Mandalay is the cultural heart of Myanmar where the most refined arts, traditions of dance, music and drama live on, and stand tall as the second largest city of the nation embedded as the capital of Mandalay Region.

Being the economic and commercial hub of central Myanmar, Mandalay hooks up China and India, and that the Asian Highway passed through the city.

Beginning 1 April 2016, the Mandalay Region Government rolls on in full swing on health, education, socio-economic development of the people.

Policy

In line with the policy laid down by the nation, the Mandalay Region Government (MRG) is implementing that of the national reconciliation tasks; that of the stability and peace in the country; that of the materialization of State Constitution for the emergence of democratic federal union; that of uplifting of the socio-economic life of the people.

Objective

Hand in hand with the people, the tasks in the reforms such as that of the political, economic and private sectors have been upheld as objectives in building a modern developed democratic nation.

Programmes

In keeping the government departments and the organizations to be in line with the stipulations of the State Constitution, the proper management, the directive, the supervision, and the inspection are being carried out of the Mandalay Region Government.



Aung Myay Mandalar Residence for civil servants in Mandalay.

For the sake of the socio-economic development of the people, the MRG is implementing the directives spelled out by the Mandalay Region Hluttaw.

Mandalay Urban Development

Ease and comfort of the people and the beautification of urban development, the Mandalay City Development Committee has upgraded the basic infrastructure such as roads and bridges during four years period.

Road Safety Measures

With a view to reduce traffic jam, to make proper vehicle parking, and to have road safety; a total of (1,919) “Road Side Car Parking Lots” are being designated in downtown Mandalay.

In easing the road traffics, (52) normal traffic lights or traffic signals; (50) Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System - - SCATS traffic lights; and (2) units of “Individual Loop Sensor” have been installed.

Daily surveillance records have been collected through the “SCATS system”; the “Automatic number-plate recognition - - ANPR Camera system”; 360 Degree Rotation “A pan-tilt-zoom camera - - PTZ Drone Camera”; the “e-Police Camera”; and the “Parking Traffic PTZ Camera system”.

Moreover, the Control Center has been set up by using

the “SCATS Software”; “SCATS Traffic Lights”; the “Intelligent Traffic Monitor System Platform Software”; the “Red Light Running”; the “Over Lane Line”; the “Lane Provisions Violation”; the “Illegal Lane Change”; and the “Wrong Way Driving Functions”.

Water Treatment Plants

With the soft loans from ADB, the Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project (MUSIP) is under implementation.

Water filtration typically consists of several steps in the treatment process, and the interceptor sewer that receives flow from a number of sewers and conducts the wastewater to a treatment plant. In this connection necessary treatment plants are constructed.

Sister Cities established

Mandalay and Busan of ROK have been established as sister cities by signing MOU on 15 September 2017. Medical team consisting of (25) professional from Busan of ROK had visited Amarapura Township on 27 and 28 April 2018, treated the people in rural areas and donated US\$ (14,477) worth of medical supplies.

Modern Development of Mandalay

(10) Anniversary 2019 of the Phoenix Arizona of USA awarded “People's Honor” to Mandalay

The “Asian-Oceania Computing Industry Organization (ASOCIO)” has awarded “ASOCIO 2019 Smart City Award” to Mandalay for its ICT development endeavors.

Moreover, the “Govinsider Innovation Awards Committee” and the “UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP)” have awarded the “Rising Star Award” for electronic innovation on 16 October 2019 at a ceremony held in Bangkok of Thailand.

Cultural Heritage

On 8 July 2019, the UNESCO inscribed Myanmar's ancient town of Bagan, famed for its thousands of pagodas, as a World Heritage Site held in Baku of Azerbaijan.

City Development Tasks

During the four year period, the Mandalay Region Government has carried out roads constructions with nylon asphalt / concrete / asphalt / gravel / crushed rock materials. Bridge constructions, urban water supply and rural water supply have been carried out. Moreover, many tasks for the development of the farmers have been implemented.

During four year period, the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department has



Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung.

implemented the water supply for cultivation (909) projects; the drinking water supply for (58) projects; the flood water prevention for (123) projects; (319) other related projects; (1,097) dams repair tasks; (156) lake / pond repair tasks; (33) tasks on drainage digging; totaling (2,695) projects.

Rural water supply covers (1,038) villages with (194,688) households for (966,255) people; and other (1,044) projects at the cost of MMK (11,389) millions.

Power Supply

In four years period, the Mandalay Region Government has spent MMK (52,740) millions in providing electricity to (2,976) villages. Moreover, with the NEP project and solar power system, total of (121) villages have been provided with electricity at the expense of MMK (3,993) millions.

SEE PAGE-10



The 33KV Switchbay of Mandalay's Thazi Sub-power station.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar President's Office Order 14/2020

12th Waning of Kasone, 1382 ME
18 May 2020

Appointment of Chief Justice of Taninthayi Region High Court

In accordance with the provisions stated in the Article 308, sub section (b), sub-sub section (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; sub-section (b) under Article 82 of Union Government Law, Article 44 of Union Judiciary Law and Article 17, sub-section (d) of Region or State Government Law, Daw Paik Paik Aye, the Judge of Taninthayi Region High Court, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Taninthayi Region High Court.

Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

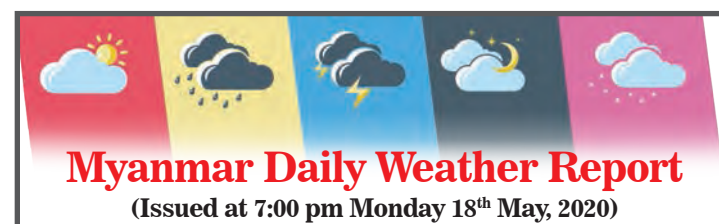
President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs.

The Office of the President issued Press Release 19/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 16 May.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 16 May.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 20 May issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar.—GNLM



BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the Super Cyclonic Storm (AMPHAN) over the West Central Bay and adjoining South Bay of Bangal has moved North-Northeast wards and over a West Central Bay of Bengal. It is centered at about (370) Nautical miles South of Paradip (Odisha-India), about (450) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Digha (India), about (520) Nautical miles Southwest of Khepupara (Bangladesh), about (405) Nautical miles West of Coco-Island and about (510) Nautical miles West-Southwest of Patheingyi (Myanmar). Weather is cloudy over the South Bay and West Central Bay and partly cloudy and cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.



Fourth-Year Performances of Mandalay Region Government



Workshop on Heritage Sites Management in Lanchang-Mekong Countries being held in Bagan, Mandalay Region.

FROM PAGE-9

Road Communication

During 2019–2020 fiscal year, the Department of Rural Road Development and the B.O.T Companies have implemented road/bridge repair and upgrading work including new construction with the Union Government fund amounting MMK (1,988) millions and Mandalay Region Government fund MMK (23,697) millions.

Rural Roads and Bridges

Similarly, the Department of Rural Roads Development has carried out the construction of rural roads and bridges linking the multiple villages including the natural disaster prevention projects with available funds from the Union Budget, the Region Government, and the relevant ministries.

Rural Socio-economic Development

Rural Areas Development Department has implemented many tasks for the development of socio-economic life of rural population with the available funds being granted by the Union Government, the UNICEF, the JICA, the Region Government, and the President.

Works being done under proper planning

In the “Mya Sein Yaung” village development projects, soft loans are being provided to the local rural people in enabling them to carry out agriculture, animal breeding, water supply, electricity generation, local goods manufacturing, trade and other businesses.

Furthermore, the JICA has facilitated rural water supply projects and that the Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) has also assisted in water supply schemes.

Education Sector

During four years period, the Mandalay Region Education Department has succeeded in opening (1,008) Basic Education State High Schools; (1,027) SHS (Branches); (1,061) Basic Education State Middle Schools; (1,486) SMS (Branches); (2,085) Basic Education Post State Primary Schools; (9,822) Basic Education State Primary Schools; (303) SPS (Branches). Moreover, total (32) non-formal education (Primary Schools) have been established.

Healthcare Sector

The Public Health Department is shouldering healthcare tasks such as that of upgrading public healthcare centres; that of disease prevention; that of the treatment; and that of the rehabilitation. New constructions have been realized such as that of (9) rural healthcare centres; that of (30) rural healthcare branches.

Fighting against COVID - 19 Pandemic

Regional level “Surveillance and Responce Team – SRT” has been formed with (34) members. With the close supervision of the Mandalay Region Government, tasks such as that of the prevention of disease has been carried out in advance at places where the virus could sneaked in; that of the necessary test and confirmation are being done for the suspected patients; that of the preparation of facility quarantine

are being set up; that of the release of latest news on COVID-19 have been carried out; that of the coordination and collaboration with Nay Pyi Taw and other adjoining states/regions in exchanging information are being realized.

Raising Sports Standard

In nurturing the sports stars in the Mandalay Region, the local and international sports events are being convened. Many events such as that of the “20th ASEAN Age Group Chess Championship 2019”; that of the “World 6 Red Snooker & World Team Snooker Championship 2019”; that of the 2019 6th National Cycling Tournament”; that of the “5th Takuya Taniyama Cup Karate Championship 2019” were successfully held.

December Mass Sports Activities

In December Public Mass Sports Activities, the Mandalay Region have won best activities award in 2016; again in best activities award in 2017; and consolation award in 2019.

Nurturing national sports stars

Selected sports stars have been produced in many sports categories such as the badminton; the billiard and snookers; the hockey; the swimming; and many other sports.

Housing Projects

During 2019–2020, (21) buildings with (504) rooms; (23) buildings with (552) rooms in (6) townships have been sold out to government employees including company staff mem-

bers through open and transparent manners. Total of (2,000) rooms are on the agenda for the government employees during 2020–2021 fiscal years.

Assistances for Natural Disasters

In the face of natural disaster, the advanced Plan for Disaster Management has been in place which is drawn by the Region Disaster Management Department.

Foreign Investment Sector

For the regional development, counties namely the PR China; the ROK; Thailand; Singapore; and Japan have made investment in the Mandalay Region. In 2018–2019 fiscal years, total of US\$ (528) million for (15) investment projects have been realized.

Myanmar citizen's Investments

During 2018–2019 fiscal years, the investments from the Myanmar citizens have been realized MMK (321,503) millions on (16) different investment projects; 2019–2020 fiscal years received MMK (76,238) millions on (4) investments projects.

E-Government implementations

During four years period, the e-Government system has been on the agenda for pragmatic application to be spread out in the region, and that the “e-Mandalay Web Portal (www.emandalay.gov.mm)” could be able to handle (140) regional level government departments.

It is formatted and designed in their scheduled tasks such as that of featuring of information; that of the services being provided with regard to the applications, rules and regulations; that of the floating of tenders and its services; that of the establishment of “Data Centre” with stage “Tier – Two” covering data and information of the Regional Government; that of the “i Route Application” showing “fire hydrant water hose points and firefighting and stations”; that of the police stations; that of the social philanthropic associations; that of the “Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)” for the e-registration on incoming and outgoing official letters and file registration including the submission of case files.

For those interested gov-

ernment employees, the basic computer training courses have been provided at the Computer Universities.

Complaint Letter

Total of (978) complaint letters being received through the Central Committee for Confiscated Lands Scrutinizing and Redressing have been handled properly.

Among the land cases, (80) cases have been submitted to the Central Committee for closing the cases; (185) cases are under scrutiny at regional level; (24) cases at District level; (115) cases at township level; total (324) under scrutiny; and (574) land cases to dispose off and closed down.

There are (918) direct complaint letter sent to the Mandalay Region Government; (94) cases under scrutiny at regional level; (53) at district level; (271) at township level; and that (500) land cases disposed off and closed down.

Authorization for land use

With the approval of the Central Land Management Committee, total of (352) land cases covering (787) acres have been given approval for the utilization other than cultivation in accordance with the Article 30 (a) Land Laws.

Religious Matters

The Government has conferred the Religious Titles to monks and medal of civil honours to outstanding citizens and that the Region Government has convened supplement honours.

Moreover, religious activities and appropriate events have been convened. On 21 January 2018, (20,000) members of Sanghas have been revered with cash and kinds. Furthermore, on 8 December 2019, (30,000) members of Sanghas have been revered with cash and kinds, total amounting MMK (2,150) millions.

In conclusion, all round development of the socio-economic life of the people, including the propagation of religious sphere, have been carried out in the approach of reform and relaxation of procedures.

All in all, the Mandalay Region Government is moving ahead in full swing towards the aspired goal of the nation hand in hand with the people for the emergence of a peace and modern Democratic Federal Union.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)

Local epidemiology should guide focused action in 'new normal' COVID-19 world

By WHO South-East Asia Region



Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh,
Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia

NEW Delhi, 15 May 2020: Amid rising cases of COVID-19 and as countries in WHO South-East Asia Re-

gion ease lockdowns in a graded manner, WHO today said careful assessment of local epidemiology should guide future actions to combat the virus.

“Countries in the Region must continue to take evidence-informed action and conduct careful risk assessments while winding back public health and social measures. The focus should be on local epidemiology of COVID-19, to identify hot-spots and clusters, and the capacity of systems and responders to find, isolate and care for cases, and quarantine contacts,” said.

The Regional Director who held a virtual technical briefing meeting with senior health officials of 11 Member countries for the forthcoming virtual 73rd World Health Assembly session, said that despite the Region be-

ing the first to get an importation of COVID-19 on 13 January in Thailand, early and aggressive measures by member countries, including unprecedented physical distancing measures, have helped keep the number of cases low as compared to other parts of the world.

With countries now preparing to transition towards a “new normal” in which social and economic life can function, continued whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach would be critical, said Dr Khetrapal Singh.

As of 15 May morning the Region has approximately 122,000 cases and 4,000 deaths due to COVID-19. Countries in the Region are in various transmission scenarios and the cases are increasing. In every transmission scenario, the core public health measures remain

– rapidly detect, test, isolate, care and trace contacts, the Regional Director said, adding that moving forward we need to scale up these measures.

Prone to natural disasters, the Region have been prioritizing strengthening emergency response capacities as a flagship programme since 2014. In September 2019 member countries adopted Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness in the South-East Asia Region reaffirming their continued commitment to disaster risk reduction through multi-hazard approach to emergency preparedness. The declaration called for “four I’s”: identify risks; invest in people and systems for risk management; implement plans and inter-link sectors and networks. “The declaration was timely and we are seeing this approach put to use across the

Region,” she said.

The Region with one-fourth of the global population and disproportionate disease burden, however, continues to be vulnerable in view of high population densities, mega-urban slums, migrant groups, socio-economic drivers impacting compliance to physical and social distancing, in addition to the global shortage of essential medicines and commodities.

In the coming period all efforts should be made to control and suppress spread of COVID-19, strengthen and maintain health services, and support each other to stay safe, healthy and well.

“There can be no illusions: We are in this for the long haul,” Dr Khetrapal Singh said.

(WHO South-East Asia)



Cybersecurity: a responsibility we all share

By Arker Nyut Wai, Head of Business Security, Technology Group

Technology has been a lifeline for many all over the world as the COVID- 19 pandemic has cut all forms of physical togetherness. As we’ve kept our distance to stay safe from disease, we expose ourselves to new threats in the cyber domain.

17 May marks the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day. It commemorates the founding of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on 17 May 1865 when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris. Since then, the role of telecommunications in society has moved from an interesting innovation to an essential part of everyday life for all of us. In the time of COVID-19, more so than any time earlier.

It’s first of all evident in network traffic: we call more, consume more data and spend infinitely more time in video meetings. Myanmar is no exception. But as we all spend more time online, so do all kinds of cyber hustlers and scammers. Phishing emails, fake news and various types of tips and information utilizing our interest and concern for COVID-19 has surged during the past couple of weeks. Uncertain times unfortunately provide criminals golden opportunities.

Internet services were introduced in Myanmar in 2000 and the telecommunications sector was liberalized in 2013. Today there are more connections than people in Myanmar, and only during the year 2019 the number of connections increased by 10 million. Today, 4 in 10 people in Myanmar have an internet connection, and the country is among the world’s fastest growing data markets. In 2013 there were only 2 cases of cyber related crimes reported, five years later the number stood at 744. Scanning and malware attacks are among the most frequently reported in Myanmar.

A lot can be done with technology to reduce cyber threats, but it is us humans, users, who are the weakest points in our cyber defence. Humans can be tricked into clicking or accepting requests by utilizing our curiosity or our desires. These seven rules can help you protect yourself and your loved ones from harm:

1. Be skeptical to information online: if the claims made sound shocking or outrageous, the information may be designed to provoke and may be false. Check your sources.
2. If you receive an offer that is too good to be true, it usually is. Verify that the sender is who they claim to be.
3. Before clicking links in emails, verify the URL and the sender.
4. Be wary of unknown messages urging you to open attachments.
5. Be skeptical of requests to provide sensitive information such as username, password or credit card details.
6. If you observe suspicious activities, report them to your network administrator or internet service provider.
7. Take security training and stay updated.

What if the communication infrastructure that we have grown so dependent on, was not reliable, not stable, or could not be trusted? Life would have been very different indeed. As the digital world evolves, moving more and more critical services into cyberspace and cloud solutions, there will always be individuals and groups that see this as an opportunity for crime or other illicit activities.

According to the IBM X-Force 2020 report, over 8.5 billion records were compromised globally in 2019, more than a doubling compared to 2018. Ransomware was up 67% in Q4 of 2019 in a year-on-year assessment. This happens across a multitude of industries, ranging from government to healthcare, manufacturing, and telecom.

Telenor has established a global programme to strengthen our security to be able to detect, resist, and if required evict threat actors attacking our mission-critical networks. We also ensure the safety of users



Ko Arker Nyut Wai

by offering advanced value-added services to protect against more sophisticated attacks or advanced malwares.

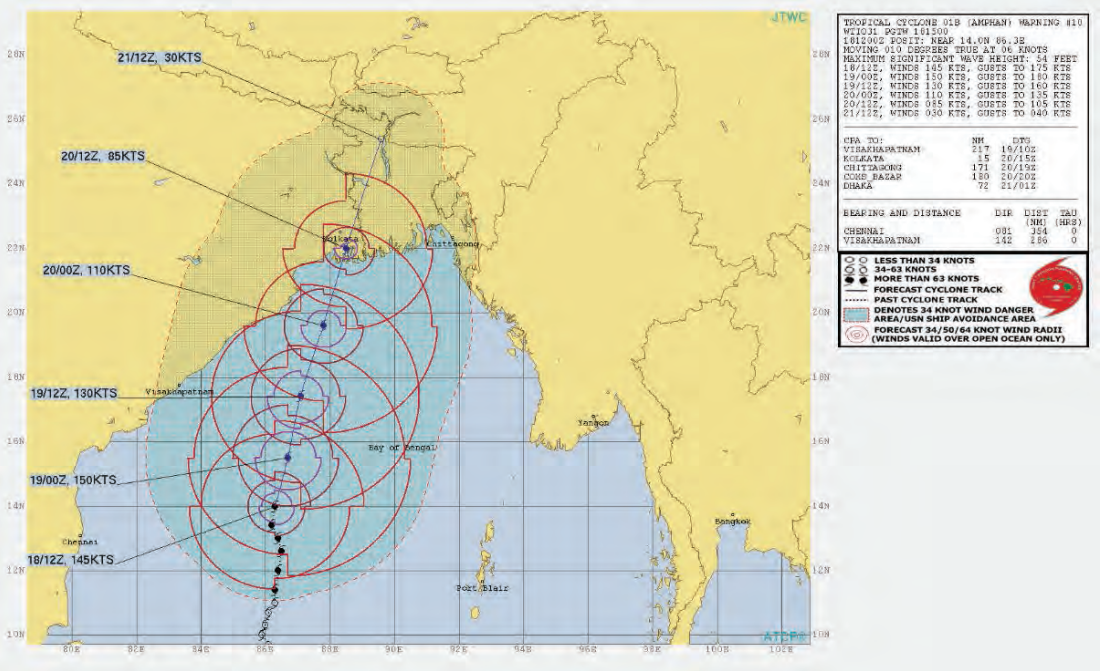
We all share a responsibility to ensure that the digital societies, the digital economies and the digital lives we lead are safe and secure. We’re committed to doing our part.

Happy Telecoms Day!



Warning about Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm (AMPHAN)

- The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology released the report (14/2020) issued on 18 May afternoon and the Emergency Management Centre of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement also published its finding on this weather situation. The reports has forecasted that the Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm (AMPHAN) over the West Central Bay and adjoining South Bay of Bengal is expected to cross India, West Bengal and coastal areas of Bangladesh, without heading to Myanmar at present.
- Although the AMPHAN is not forecasted to move to Myanmar, scattered to fairly rain falls are possible across the country from 18 to 21 May. It is also expected that the wind speeds may vary from 30 to 35 mph in Sagaing, Monywa, Shwebo, YeU, Kanbalu townships in lower part of Sagaing Region, and in Pakokku, Saw, Gangaw, Pauk, Htilin, Kyaukhtu, Chauk, Myaing and Yesagy townships in upper part of Magway; from 40 to 45 mph in Sittway, Minbya, MraukU, Yathedaung, Kyauktaw, Buthidaung and Maung-taw townships of Rakine Region and in Phalam and Tiddim townships of Chin State: from 50 to 60 mph in Paletwa, Matupi and Hakha townships in Chin State.
- The Cyclone Giri on 19 October 2010 that crossed coastal areas of Rakhine state caused flood and



Tropical Cyclone AMPHAN Forecast Track (Joint Typhoon Warning Centre)

- landslides, leaving 35 deaths and 10 loss in Rakine State, and strong wind sand creek water caused 9 deaths and 3 losses in Mandalay and Magway regions.
- The Cyclone 02B that passed between Maung-taw of Myanmar and Chittagong of Bangladesh on 19 October 2011 caused heavy rains in inland areas of Magway Region, Chin State and Sagaing Region, while flash floods occurred in Yaw Creek, Shwe Creek and other sand creeks in Pakokku, Pauk, Seikphyu and Myaing townships. The sudden flash occurred at 4 am in early morning caused 46 deaths and 115 losses who were temporarily living on their cultivated lands beside sand creeks.
 - Not because of cyclones, but because of floods in August 2018, a landslide caused by heavy rain in a short time at Malatmountain in Paung Township of Mon State left 73 deaths and 63 persons were injured.
 - Although it is expected not to require to take shelters at temporary shelters due to the Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm (AMPHAN), people in both coastal and inland areas need to take precautions against the related heavy rains, landslides and mountain torrents and flash floods. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have issued the following suggestions:
- (1) Make the houses and buildings resist to strong winds and rains. Clear trees and tree-branches that can break down onto the houses.
 - (2) During heavy winds and rains, trees, branches, power posts and telephone posts might fall down, injuries could be caused by iron roof sheets and other materials taken by strong winds, and it is required not to go outside buildings to avoid possible thunderbolts. Don't use electrical items.
 - (3) The wind speed from 50 to 60 mph can destroy small huts and remove the roofs of buildings, and that remove from these buildings if it not sure resistance of these buildings.
 - (4) Heavy rains can cause flash flood and have no enough time to

- flee from it, and that it is necessary to have more safely precautions in night times.
- (5) Those living near rivers and creeks, mountain streams, base of the mountains and mountain slopes may experience landslides, and that they need to be moved to other safe places, if necessary.
 - (6) Motorcars, motorbikes, cattle carts or people should not pass through mountain streams during the heavy rains. Flash floods can pose dangers.
 - (7) In going outside just after heavy winds or rains, stay away from power lines and posts as much as possible. Be aware of snakes and other poisonous insects. Don't stay near slopes of mountains, creeks, rivers and mountain streams.
 - (8) Abide by the COVID-19 directives when taking shelters at nearby houses and buildings resistible to strong winds.
- Information and assistance are available at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement through the hotline numbers: 067 3404666 and 067 3404777.

Ministry of Social Welfare,
Relief and Resettlement
(Translated by Aung Khin)

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (067N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (067N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AS FLORA VOY. NO. (004N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS FLORA VOY. NO. (004N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AISOPOS II VOY. NO. (020W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AISOPOS II VOY. NO. (020W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Huawei criticizes U.S. move to tighten export controls as “arbitrary”

BEIJING — Huawei Technologies Co. on Monday criticized the latest U.S. move to tighten export controls on the Chinese telecom-equipment giant, calling it “arbitrary and pernicious” as well as harmful to the global semiconductor industry.

“Huawei categorically opposes the amendments

made by the U.S. Department of Commerce to its foreign direct product rule that target Huawei specifically,” the company said in a statement. On Friday, Washington took new steps aimed at blocking semiconductor supplies worldwide to Huawei, ratcheting up the pressure on the already blacklisted Chinese firm

that it views as a threat to U.S. national security.

“This decision by the U.S. government does not just affect Huawei. It will have a serious impact on a wide number of global industries. In the long run, this will damage the trust and collaboration within the global semiconductor industry,” it added.

Under the new rules, foreign enterprises that use U.S. chip-making equipment will be required to gain a U.S. licence before supplying certain items to Huawei, which has been struggling to procure key components such as semiconductors.

Last May, Huawei, a leader in next-generation 5G mobile communications networks, and its non-U.S. affiliates were placed on the department’s blacklist known as the “Entity List.” U.S. companies wishing to export items to the listed entities must obtain a licence. U.S. President Donald Trump, who has pursued protectionist policies as part of an “America First” agenda, has voiced wariness over China’s advances in leading-edge technologies, with Washington having targeted Chinese goods linked to them in a trade dispute.

—Kyodo ■



File: Under the new rules, foreign enterprises that use U.S. chip-making equipment will be required to gain a U.S. licence before supplying certain items to Huawei.
PHOTO: AFP

OPEC daily oil price increases to 26.54 USD per barrel

VIENNA — The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) daily basket price increased to 26.54 U.S. dollars a barrel

on Friday, compared with 24.93 dollars on Thursday, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations released on Monday.

Also known as the OPEC reference basket of crude oil, the OPEC basket, a weighted average of oil prices from

different OPEC members around the world, is used as an important benchmark for crude oil prices.

—Xinhua ■

Equities rise as nations reopen; gold hits 7.5-year peak

HONG KONG — World stock markets rose Monday on a further easing of coronavirus lockdowns around the world, sending US oil prices back above \$30 per barrel, but haven investment gold hit a 2012 pinnacle on festering economic fears, dealers said.

In Asia, Hong Kong closed up 0.6 per cent, Shanghai won 0.2 per cent and Tokyo jumped 0.5 per cent.

The positivity spilled over into Europe, with Frankfurt, London and Paris rising sharply approaching the half-way mark.

US oil prices topped \$30 per barrel on an im-

proving demand outlook, while the dollar also rose on haven demand.

“Equities and oil are higher as investors cautiously welcome signs lockdowns are ending -- but markets remain in this tug-of-war pattern where we simply do not know whether the damage will be a lot worse than feared or the recovery will be much swifter,” said analyst Neil Wilson at trading site Markets.com.

“Gold has emerged as a clear winner from the economic turmoil created by the pandemic,” Wilson added after gold hit \$1,765.19 per ounce — the highest level since

October 2012. The British pound however dipped after Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane hinted in an interview at negative interest rates, with UK borrowing costs currently pegged at just 0.1 per cent. The BoE has already forecast that Britain will endure its worst recession for centuries.

“Given the scale of the economic crisis that Britain is entering into, it may be wise for investors to keep an open mind as to monetary policy developments over the next year or so in the UK and beyond,” said Rabobank analyst Jane Foley on Monday.—AFP ■



Internet giants such as Spotify, Netflix and Amazon could be subject to tax in Indonesia under a new levy proposed by the tax directorate. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Indonesia planning 10% tax on foreign digital services

JAKARTA — Indonesia will slap a 10 per cent value-added tax on the digital offerings of foreign companies from July 1, the finance ministry said, a levy that could apply to internet giants such as Spotify and Netflix. Products and services including video games, music and movie streaming could be subject to the levy, the government said. “The tax for foreign digital products is a part of the government’s effort to create a level playing field for all businesses,” the tax directorate said in a statement.

The move was also aimed at boosting public revenue to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on

Southeast Asia’s biggest economy, it added.

Indonesia’s fast-growing Internet economy was valued at \$40 billion in 2019 — a figure estimated to more than triple by 2025 — according to a study by Google and Singapore sovereign investment fund Temasek. Tech companies often pay little tax in countries where they are not physically present.

International efforts have dragged on to find a new model for taxing revenues earned via online sales and advertising, but Washington said targeted taxes single out US companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Netflix.—AFP ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION ENTERPRISE

Date. May 18, 2020

- Invitation to Bid for implementation of Ground Mounted Solar Power Plant Projects on Independent Power Producer and Build – Operate – Own Basis**
1. Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) seeks to invite tender for the purchasing of electricity at Designated Connection Points from the Ground Mounted Solar Power Plant Projects on Independent Power Producer (IPP) and Build Operate Own (BOO) basis.
 2. The Concession period shall be 20 (twenty) years from Commercial Operation Date (COD).
 3. The Tender Form can be purchased within office hour from the tender announced date at following office either;
(1) Procurement Department,
Electric Power Generation Enterprise,
Building 27, Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
(or)
(2) No. 39, Kanner Road, Ahlone Power Station, Ahlone Township
Yangon, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
 4. The Tender Form fee is Myanmar Kyat three hundred thousand (Kyat 300,000) only.
 5. The bid submission date is **18th June, 2020 at (10:00) hr.** Myanmar Standard Time.
 6. Bidders shall prepare the proposals in accordance with the Invitation for Bid and Request for Proposal (RFP). Bidder's Proposals must be submitted on time. Any late proposal shall be rejected.
 7. The necessary information of this tender can be inquired within office hour via calling phone numbers or sending Email;
Electric Power Generation Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Building 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Ph + 95 9 797137280, +95 9 2225181
epgesolartender@gmail.com

Appointment of Malaysian PM is constitutional, king says

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's King Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin stated in Parliament on Monday that the appointment of Muhyiddin Yassin as prime minister was constitutional, after predecessor Mahathir Mohamad mounted a campaign questioning its legitimacy. The king, in his speech to open the first Parliament session since the change of government in March, recounted events sparked by Mahathir's shock resignation on Feb. 24 after his ruling coalition collapsed due to defections, forcing the monarch to intervene to end the political impasse that ensued.

"I have the responsibility to

appoint a new prime minister as provided under the Federal Constitution," the king said after he disclosed that he had tried to persuade Mahathir to reconsider but the nonagenarian was adamant to quit. "The political crisis cannot be allowed to drag on without a resolution. Thus, after going through all the process and in line with the Federal Constitution, I found that (Muhyiddin) has the majority support from members of the House of Representatives and is qualified to be appointed as the eighth prime minister," he added.

Mahathir's resignation was seen as a tactical move for him

to reconsolidate his support, as soon after he claimed to have the numbers to be returned to power.

But the rapid shifting of political allegiances thwarted that ambition and on Feb. 29, King Abdullah, after personally interviewing parliamentarians to gauge their support, announced Muhyiddin as the prime minister.

The king said in Monday's address that he hopes with the leadership issue settled, attention will be focused on containing the coronavirus outbreak.

"Don't drag the country into another political uncertainty when the people are still facing various problems and a difficult



Malaysia's new prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

PHOTO: KYODO

future because of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.—Kyodo ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Taliban claims Afghan bomb attack, demands prisoner release

KABUL — The Taliban claimed a deadly attack on an Afghan intelligence agency post Monday, even as they urged the new power-sharing government to accelerate a prisoner swap to pave the way for talks.

At least seven intelligence personnel were killed by a car bomb in the eastern province of Ghazni, Wahidullah Jumazada, spokesman for the province's governor told AFP.

"The terrorists have used a Humvee in their attack. They have targeted the National Directorate of Security unit in Ghazni city," he said, adding that 40 people were wounded.

The interior ministry in Kabul and a health official in Ghazni confirmed the car bomb.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said on Twitter that their insurgents had carried out the attack.

The bombing comes a day after President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah signed a new power-sharing accord in Kabul, ending their bitter months-long feud.—AFP ■

South Korea's Moon honours Gwangju Uprising victims

SEOUL — South Korea's President Moon Jae-in honoured victims of the pro-democracy Gwangju Uprising on Monday, speaking at the spot where protesters were killed 40 years ago.

Demonstrators protesting against military dictator Chun Doo-hwan confronted his martial law troops on May 18, 1980.

Official organizations point to around 160 dead over the next 10 days — including some soldiers and police — and more than 70 missing, but activists say up to three times as many may have been killed.

Those who died, Moon said, "believed that the survivors would manage to open up a better world. They were convinced that the defeat of that day would become the victory of tomorrow".—AFP ■

Hong Kong activists charged as clashes erupt in legislature

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's political crisis returned to centre stage on Monday as clashes erupted in the legislature and a group of prominent pro-democracy activists were charged for taking part in last year's huge protests.

Four months of calm imposed by mass arrests and the coronavirus pandemic has unravelled in recent weeks as tensions soar in a city still marbled by divisions.

Among those in court on Monday to hear formal charges were 72-year-old media tycoon Jimmy Lai, founder of anti-establishment newspaper Apple Daily, and Martin Lee, an octogenarian former barrister who helped write the city's constitution.

The group of 15 also includes former lawmakers Margaret Ng, Albert Ho, Leung Kwok-hung, Au Nok-hin and current lawmaker Leung Yiu-chung.

All were charged with organ-

izing and taking part in unlawful assemblies last summer. Five face a more serious charge of incitement, which carries up to

five years in jail. All were bailed and some used the appearance to criticize the government.

Asked by a judge if he un-

derstood the charges, social activist Raphael Wong shouted: "I understand this is a political prosecution."—AFP ■



Clashes broke out once more in Hong Kong's legislature. PHOTO: AFP

Mt Fuji to be closed in summer due to pandemic

TOKYO — Japan's beloved Mount Fuji will be closed during

this year's summer climbing season to prevent the spread of the

new coronavirus, officials said Monday.

Shizuoka prefecture, home to the country's tallest mountain, announced they were closing three of the four major routes to the mountain's peak.

"The routes open in summer but this year we will keep them closed from July 10 to September 10," the only climbing season for Mount Fuji, a Shizuoka prefecture official told AFP.

"We're taking this measure so as not to spread the coronavirus," the official said.

It will be the first time the trails of the 3,776-metre (12,388-

foot) volcanic mountain are closed since at least 1960 when the prefecture began managing the routes, he added.

The decision comes after nearby Yamanashi prefecture said it will close the Yoshida trail, the most popular hiking path among the four.

The mountain huts along the four routes will remain closed as well.

The mountain, a UNESCO world cultural heritage site, is located just 100 kilometres (60 miles) from Tokyo and is clearly visible from the Japanese capital.—AFP ■



No climbing this year at Mount Fuji. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Saint Peter’s reopens and Italy serves pizza again

ROME — Saint Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican reopened on Monday, heralding a return to relative normality in Italy where cafes, restaurants and shops also started serving again after over two months of lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

A handful of visitors queued up at Saint Peter’s, observing social distancing rules, and were watched by police officers wearing face masks before having their temperatures taken to enter the church, which has been closed since March 10.

Italy was the first country to go into a full lockdown over two months ago, bringing the economy to its knees.

The official death toll from the virus now stands at around 32,000.

Some of the faithful gathered under the basilica’s giant dome, kneeling at the tomb of pope John Paul II. “Masks must

cover your noses!” Vatican police sternly told worshippers tempted to try to breathe a little more easily.

Car traffic around Rome’s Colosseum and other main roads was almost back to its chaotic norm on Monday morning.

“Italy turns the lights back on after 69 days of closure,” wrote Monday’s La Repubblica daily.

The government started lifting restrictions on May 4, and on Sunday joggers, walkers and cyclists were plentiful on the streets of Rome’s historic centre.

‘Not afraid’

With restaurants, bars, cafes, hairdressers, and stores finally allowed to reopen, some people couldn’t wait to rush out and get their grey roots done or purchase new underwear.

“I’ve tried to do some hair care at home over the past



Visitors observed social distancing rules as they waited in line to enter. PHOTO: AFP

weeks but it’s been a disaster,” said Marie-Antonietta, 56, the first customer in the chair at a

hairdressers in the Testaccio neighbourhood.

Gianluca Politano, 30, said

as he wielded the scissors: “I’m not afraid, I can’t afford to be afraid”.—AFP ■

Acropolis in Athens reopens after virus shutdown

ATHENS — Greece reopened the Acropolis in Athens and all open-air archaeological sites in the country to the public on Monday after a two-month closure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A clutch of tourists and masked reporters gathered at the

world-famous site, the most-visited monument in Greece.

“We have never seen so few people at the Acropolis,” a Russian visitor accompanied by her husband told AFP.

“It’s like having a private visit,” said the woman, who has lived



This picture shows a general view of the tiny Anafiotika district of Athens, under the Acropolis archaeological site. PHOTO: AFP/LOUISA GOULIAMAKI

in Athens for five years.

President Katerina Sakellariopoulou was among the first visitors to the ancient Greek complex that sits on a rocky outcrop overlooking the capital and which had been closed ahead of the March 23 lockdown.

She celebrated being able to “visit the site again in a traditional way” after virtual visits were made available online for those still keen to experience the monument under lockdown.

Culture Minister Lina Mendoni, journalists and employees — many wearing face masks — was also present for the opening, with new anti-virus measures enforced. Separation screens have been put up and the sites have been disinfected, the culture ministry said.

Visitors will be encouraged to wear masks — which will be

compulsory for guides at the site — and guests will be asked to stay 1.5 metres (five feet) apart.

“Security First” was touted as the country’s new tourism slogan, a play on the pre-pandemic “Heritage First” phrase, Mendoni said Monday.

“Hand sanitizer and face masks are distributed at the entrance, and social distancing will be encourage a with markers on the ground,” she said, adding that a maximum of 2,000 people will be able to visit the Acropolis at a time.

For Ukrainian student Daria, who arrived in Greece just before the lockdown was imposed, the long overdue visit was welcome, even under blazing summer heat.

“We didn’t have time to visit before, so we came today, and it’s free!” She said alongside two other Ukrainian students.—AFP ■

Coronavirus cases strongly trending downward throughout US: Trump

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump said that there is a significant decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases across the United States.

“The number of Coronavirus cases is strongly trending downward throughout the United States, with few exceptions. Very good news, indeed!” Trump wrote on Twitter.

A total of 1,486,423 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the United States, according to the Johns Hopkins University. The number of deaths in the country is over 89,550.

In April, the daily increase in the coronavirus cases in the US was around 36,000 which has since come down, Sputnik reported.

The United States is worst-hit country globally in the number of reported COVID-19 deaths and cases.

Meanwhile, there are more than 4.7 million COVID-19 cases worldwide and over 315,000 deaths. —ANI ■

Israel court convicts settler of Palestinian arson murders

JERUSALEM — An Israeli court on Monday convicted a Jewish settler on three counts of murder over a 2015 arson attack that killed a Palestinian toddler and his parents.

Amiram Ben-Uliel, 25, from the West Bank settlement of Shilo, was also found guilty of two counts each of attempted murder and arson, along with conspiracy

to commit a hate crime, a court statement said.

The court did not set a date for sentencing on the charges which under Israeli law carry a maximum term of life in jail.

The verdict comes a day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel’s new government should push ahead with annexing Jewish settlements in

the occupied West Bank, a move likely to further inflame tensions in the territory.

Ben-Uliel’s defence team said it had notified the Supreme Court that it would lodge an appeal. The firebomb attack in the occupied West Bank village of Duma killed 18-month-old Ali Saad Dawabsha and fatally wounded his mother and father.

His brother Ahmed, aged four at the time, was the sole survivor from the immediate family and escaped with severe burns.

A prosecution statement after the verdict said the “horrific terror attack in Duma” was a premeditated act of revenge for the fatal shooting of settler Malachi Rosenfeld by a Palestinian near Shilo a month earlier.—AFP ■

30th SEA Games medal winners to be awarded worthily

MEDAL winners of the 30th South East Asian (SEA) Games which was held in the Philippines from 30 November 2020 to 11 December 2020 will be awarded worthily, according to the official statement with the Sports and Physical Education Department of Ministry of Health and Sports.

There are 31 kinds of sports Myanmar competed in the 30th SEA Games and Myanmar athletes won four gold medals, 18 silver medals and 51 bronze medals for 20 kinds of sports.

The gold medalists in individual event will get prize money of K15 million while each of the gold winners from group event will get K10 million. The silver medalists in individual event will get prize money of K7.5 million while each of the silver winners from group event will get K5 million. The bronze medalists in individual event will get prize money of K5 million while each of the bronze medalists from group event will get K3 million.

Coaching team of gold

medalists will be awarded K5 million while coaches for silver winners will get K3 million and coaches of bronze collectors will garner K2 million respectively.

Next, administration team of gold-medal winners will also get K3 million while administration team of silver-medal winners will garner K2 million and administration team of bronze winners will garner K1 million, according to the Sports and Physical Education Department.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Yangon United provides aid to strong wind victim defender

Yangon United has provided cash assistance to the Yangon United left defender Kyaw Zin Oo who has recently suffered from heavy rain and strong wind and whose house in Namsam, Shan State, was collapsed by the strong wind, according to the statement with the Yangon United Football Club.

On May 2, heavy rain and strong wind caused heavy damage to the

buildings and houses in Namsam, and Yangon United Player Kyaw Zin Oo's house was one of them, said the source with the football club.

Yangon United president U Pye Phyoe Tay Za donated K4 million for the resettlement for the team defender Kyaw Zin Oo and team authorities and his team mates also contributed K1 million to Kyaw Zin Oo.

Upon the cash donation assistance, defender Kyaw Zin Oo has expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Yangon United president, team authorities and his team mates.

Kyaw Zin Oo plays left defender for Myanmar National Team and Yangon United FC.

He played for left wing-back position starting from 2018 Myanmar National League season.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Trump says golf stars 'are all great people' despite McIlroy blast



Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy plays a shot on the tenth hole during a charity golf event in Florida on May 17, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

LOS ANGELES — Donald Trump doesn't expect to be teeing it up anytime soon with Rory McIlroy, who called out the US president earlier in the week for his controversial leadership.

McIlroy, the No. 1 player in the world, blasted his former golfing partner Trump on a podcast episode for the latter's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump, an avid golfer, and McIlroy played a round together three years ago in Florida.

"We're in the midst of something that's pretty serious right now, and the fact that he's trying to politicize it and make it a campaign rally, saying that (the United States) administers

the most tests in the world like it's a contest," McIlroy said.

"It's just not the way a leader should act, and there is a bit of diplomacy that you need to show, and I just don't think he's shown that, especially in these times."

Asked on Sunday during a video link interview with NBC television how he felt about the criticism he sometimes receives from players, Trump said he doesn't expect them all to like him.

"A lot of them are very political. Some of them like my politics and some don't. The ones that don't, I don't see as much," Trump told NBC during the broadcast of a golf tourna-

ment in Florida that included McIlroy and three others playing for charity.

But Trump said he doesn't hold a grudge against players who are turned off by his abrasive style.

"I know so many of the tour players. I can't think of anyone I don't like, and I can't say that in life. When you meet tour players, they are all great people," he said.

The 31-year-old McIlroy was getting back into the swing of things Sunday with fellow pros Dustin Johnson, Rickie Fowler and Matthew Wolff after a two-month break due to the coronavirus pandemic.—AFP

In rarefied air ... mountain villagers to lace up boots for Euro 2020

GSPON (Switzerland) — Despite the postponement of Euro 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, a small Swiss mountain village - thought to be home to the highest pitch in Europe - is hoping to stage a scaled-down version of the tournament this summer.

The European Mountain Village Championship dates back to 2008, the same year Switzerland co-hosted the conventional tournament with neighbours Austria, and is set to return to its origins in Gspon.

The competition was the brainchild of Fabian Furrer, a Gspon native and sports magazine editor, who splits his time between Bern and this idyllic village of 585 inhabitants, where in the winter "the ski slopes run

across the football pitch".

Perched atop the canton of Valais in the Swiss Alps near Zermatt, Gspon sits two kilometres above sea level and is only accessible by cable car. Its football pitch, which bears the name of former Switzerland and Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, lies buried beneath snow each year until May.

After the inaugural event won by a team from Spain, the second edition was held in 2012 in Kleinarl, Austria, at an altitude of just over 1,000 metres. French ski resort Morzine most recently staged the tournament in 2016.

Originally planned for June, much like Euro 2020, the "Bergdorf Euro" was also forced to find new dates and pushed back until August 28-30.—AFP



The European Mountain Village Championship is due to return its origins in the Swiss alpine village of Gspon, at an altitude of around 2,000 metres. **PHOTO: AFP**