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Saturday, 30 May 2020

State Counsellor holds talks with overseeing authorities on returnees from Thailand

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a video conference yesterday from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw with authorities who were overseeing the repatriation of Myanmar citizens from Thailand through the Myawady border checkpoint in Kayin State.

The following persons participated in the discussions — Kayin State Hluttaw Representative U Thant Zin Aung, Head of General Administrative Department in Myawady District U Tay Zar Aung and Daw Khin Ohnmar Myint, a teacher who was helping out in data collection.

After words of greetings by the State



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holding the video conferencing with the authorities who are overseeing the repatriation of Myanmar citizens from Thailand through the checkpoint of Myawady border town in Kayin State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. **PHOTO: MNA**

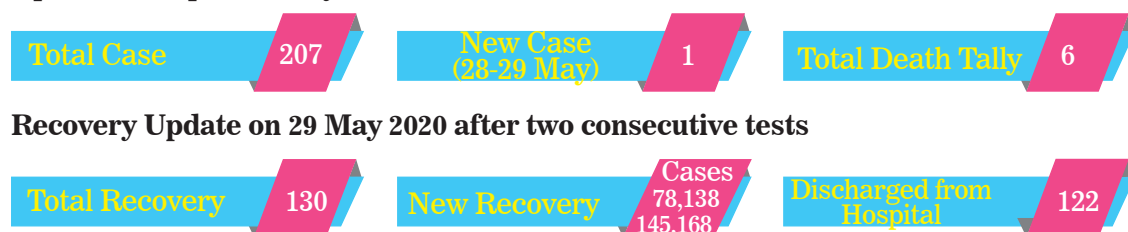
Counsellor, U Thant Zin Aung discussed the repatriation process of Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand, arrangements for sending them back to their home towns, screening them in line with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, distribution of health-care items for COVID-19, awareness

programmes, the conduct of awareness and public education programmes, systematic information dissemination, food and living situation of the returnees and their adherence to rules and regulations, and measures undertaken to encourage public participation.

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Updated at 8 pm, 29 May 2020



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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves loans from EDCF, IDA, ADB on final day of 16th regular session



Union Minister U Thein Swe.
PHOTO : MNA



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe.
PHOTO : MNA



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win
PHOTO : MNA



Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw.
PHOTO : MNA



Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Lin.
PHOTO : MNA

PYIDAUNGSSU Hluttaw brought down the curtain on its 16th regular session yesterday, approving the international loans for the ministries.

The Hluttaw first approved the reshuffle of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Joint Committee on ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, and also took records of the bylaws on 5th amendment of electoral laws for Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and State/Region Hluttaws.

Approval of EDCF loan

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win discussed a proposal for US\$20 million loans, put forward by the President, from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund for expansion of Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge (Dala) construction project as

they said that it will help reduce travel time between downtown Yangon and its suburban town across the river to connect Ayeyawady delta towns.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the proposal of loan for the project which is expected to complete in October 2022.

Approval of Unicredit Bank loan

Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win discussed a proposal for Euro 33 million loan, presented by the President, from the Unicredit Bank of Austria for implementing electronic registration of population. The Hluttaw approved the loan proposal.

Approval of IDA loan

Deputy Minister for

Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win discussed a proposal for the \$200 million loan, sent by the President, from the International Development Association of the World Bank for the Myanmar National Food and Agriculture System Project.

The Hluttaw gave the green light to the proposal.



MP U Ar Moe Si.

Approval of ADB loan

U Saw Tun Mya Aung from Papun constituency, MP Dr Khin Sithu from Loikaw constituency and MP U Ar Moe Si from Khaunglanphu constituency discussed a proposal to get \$30 million loan, submitted by the President, from the Asia Development Bank for the Greater Mekong Subregion Health Security Project and the upgrade of healthcare services in the crisis of pandemics.

After the explanations of Un-



MP Dr Khin Sithu.

ion Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win, the Hluttaw decided to approve the proposal. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also passed a bill to draw up and submit budget for State/Region governments. The 16th regular session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was concluded after seven meetings in two weeks.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)



MP U Saw Tun Mya Aung.

MoPFI discusses ADB loans for COVID-19

Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win held a virtual meeting with Asia Development Bank’s Country Director Mr Newin Sinsiri and team yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed ADB’s COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO) which entails loaning US\$250 million to Myanmar as budget support, steps to acquire this loan, designing a Country Engagement Framework for Myanmar, and ADB’s collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and JICA for Myanmar’s COVID-19 measures.

Present at the meeting were

MoPFI’s Deputy Ministers U Set Aung and Dr Min Ye Paing Hein, and ADB and government officials. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed the proposals to acquire two separate loans of \$ 60 million and USD30 million from ADB for the Enhancing Financial Access Through Public Credit Guarantee Scheme Project and the Additional Financing to Greater Mekong Subregion Health Security Project, respectively.

Both projects will contribute to the action plans of the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister U Soe Win holds the virtual meeting with Asia Development Bank’s Country Director Mr Newin Sinsiri to discuss ADB’s COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option. PHOTO: MNA

COVID-19 in Myanmar: One new case on 29 May, total figure reaches 207

FROM PAGE-1
One new COVID-19 Case updated at 8 pm 29 May 2020

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
207	44	Male	Mawlamyinegyun Township, Ayeyawady Region	No	Yes, Malaysia	People’s Hospital in Pathein	Positive	Held under quarantine (Pathein)

Ministry of Health & Sports (Translated by Aung Khin)

State Counsellor holds talks with overseeing authorities ...

FROM PAGE-1

Daw Khin Ohnmar Myint briefed about how she had participated in collecting data of the returnees; ensuring correct data collection during the transportation process on their return journey to their home towns and difficulties encountered.

U Tay Zar Aung explained how the Myanmar migrant workers were given a warm welcome; how they were systematically transported back to the respective home towns; and arrangements made for providing them with meals and temporary accommodation in coordination with relevant departments and organizations.

In her response, the State Counsellor explained that the Union Government wanted to make sure that “no one was left behind” in implementing the repatriation programme and transporting the returnees back to their home towns in a systematic manner. She added that a major challenge of COVID-19 was the great importance for physical distancing while being close at the spiritual level; and that at the present moment, success could be achieved only with the participation of everyone.

She continued by saying that this challenge could be overcome only by mutual understanding



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discusses repatriation of Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand via Myawady border. PHOTO: MNA

and sympathy; at this time, human nature could not be neglected; it was not easy to impose strict restrictions for a long time; as the situation improved, it was necessary to consider easing of restrictions; if the situation did not turn out as planned, it might be necessary to roll back some restrictions.

The State Counsellor added that education should not be neglected, and that plans were underway to start reopening schools in July for the high school levels. However, the government has been continuously considering

whether it would be possible or not to reopen schools in early July.

Efforts must be made to achieve progress slowly in fighting against COVID-19; prevention and recovery from this disease were concerned with the medical science; as Myanmar was not a top-class country in the field of medical science, other developed countries were in the process of seeking for cures and vaccines; although Myanmar did not have power which comes from science or development, she would have to rely on the united strength of

the people; if the people acted in unity, it would be possible to control the situation; if the situation could be controlled, it would be possible to overcome the difficulties; that was why in meeting the challenge of COVID-19, cooperation was the key.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor expressed thanks to all the people in Kay-in State as its government and locals were mainly responsible for accepting the migrant workers through the border crossing; coordination of all the stakeholders has made the repatriation

programme successful; despite some concerns in the initial stage, the manner in which cooperation was achieved deserved great respect and thanks. Finally, she said she wanted to thank all officials in the government and administration sectors, volunteers and common people. She added that she believed the COVID-19 challenge could be overcome if the present momentum could be maintained. She ended by praying and sending “metta” for the good health and well-being of everyone.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister U Thaung Tun meets with foreign Chambers of Commerce to discuss government leadership in response to COVID-19



Union Minister U Thaung Tun discusses actions taken by the government to mitigate COVID-19's impact on Myanmar's economy. PHOTO: MNA

NAYPYITAW – Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun today participated in a video conference attended by over 400 participants, including representatives from 15 Foreign Chambers of Commerce, to discuss actions taken by the government to mitigate COVID-19's impact on Myanmar's econ-

omy, and implementation of the COVID-19 Comprehensive Economic Relief Plan (CERP).

The Minister expressed thanks to Myanmar's foreign investor community for their ongoing commitment to Myanmar amidst the current crisis while highlighting the need for stronger partnerships noting “...we

must celebrate when common ground can be found, but also that a diversity of views does not weaken this partnership. Indeed, through open dialogue such as this, our partnership is strengthened”.

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Set Aung provided a detailed account of the CERP Action Plans and

called for stronger coordination, efficient implementation, and comprehensive monitoring. The Deputy Minister also noted the need to boost consumption, and that the targeted use of cash transfers would have a multiplier effect within the domestic economy in this regard.

The Minister noted that, despite positive 2021 growth forecasts, Myanmar's economy had not escaped unscathed, with garments, textiles, tourism and MSMEs having absorbed both supply and demand shocks. The Minister drew attention to initiatives aimed at easing financial pressures faced by firms and families, including the COVID-19 Fund, and complementary initiatives such as the European Union-funded

‘Myan Ku’ cash transfer programme.

The Minister called upon garment sector employers to ensure that workplaces were safe and secure and that the rights of workers were respected as per Myanmar law and ILO Core Labour Standards and guided by the principle of freedom of association. The Minister noted with particular appreciation several major brands present in Myanmar who had heeded this call.

Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Bharat Singh expressed optimism that, despite COVID-19's dark shadow, FDI approvals had exceeded US\$4.1 billion in the fiscal year-to-date, placing MIFER's US\$5.8 billion

FDI target in reach.

Mr Chris Hughes, AustCham Myanmar Chairperson, speaking on behalf of the 15 foreign chambers present at the event noted “we were delighted to hear directly from the Ministers regarding the current situation and the concrete actions being taken to support the business community as we prepare for the rebound. We are encouraged by the commitment to further reform and the steps being taken to expedite investment processes. The foreign business community looks forward to partnering with the Government to deliver the responsible investment needed to help Myanmar realize its sustainable development plans.”—MNA ■

Union Information Minister inspects MoI works in Nay Pyi Taw council area



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint discusses newspapers work at Phoewazira Hall of Mirror Daily in Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint looked into the works at the printing factory under the Printing and Publishing Department, and the offices of Myanma Alin Daily and the Mirror Daily under the News and Periodical Enterprise in Zeyathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Union Minister and party also visited the office of Information and Public Relations Department and its community centre in Pynmana Township in the afternoon.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung and officials arrived at the printing factory in the morning, and heard reports by the Acting Director-General on the accomplishment of schoolbook production and distribution in time, while adhering to the recommendations and guidelines of Ministry of Health and Sports amid COVID-19 crisis, the visit of inspection teams to the factory, the COVID-19 preventive measures at the factories

and Sarpay Baikman book shop and library, inserting awareness materials for COVID-19 in the publications of Sarpay Beikman, ongoing processes for selection of literary awards, and preparation for printing ballot papers to be used in the 2020 General Election.

After the report, the Union Minister gave advice on the works.

The Union Minister and party then looked around maintenance of machines and production of envelopes for the ballot

papers of advance voting.

On arrival at the office of Mirror Daily, the Acting Managing Director reported on duties of staff members of newspapers, ferry services for the newspaper employees in Yangon, specific suits in delivering the copies, wearing face masks and gloves during the deliveries, COVID-19 measures at the respective newspaper offices, covering COVID-19 daily updates in state-owned newspapers and the Myanmar Digital News website, and the visits of COVID-19 inspection

teams to the newspaper offices.

The Union Minister, the Deputy Minister and party looked around the newsroom and printing section of the Mirror Daily, and the newsroom and the construction of 4-storey and 4-plex apartment for staff members.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and party arrived at the IPRD office and its community centre in Pynmana Township. They inspected the arrangement of social distancing at the library, children reading room and posters, as well as preparations for conducting training courses in the post COVID-19 period.

During the inspection tour, the Union Minister emphasized requirements of knowledge on innovative technologies in printing works, staying alert in works to COVID-19 despite no positive case among the MoI staff, promoting the bookshops of Sarpay Beikman with many interesting books, operating libraries in line with healthcare guidelines and developing the mainstream newspapers of MoI into digital versions.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Further Extension of Temporary Measures at Yangon International Airport

ACCORDING to the announcement released by the Ministry of Health and Sports in accordance with Temporary Measures to Prevent Importation of COVID-19 to Myanmar through Air Travel on 29 March, 2020, the restrictions for all airlines operating international air services to and from Yangon International Airport has further extended till 31 May 2020, 23:59 hours of Myanmar Standard Time.

In order to continue to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Myanmar effectively, the National Central Committee for Prevention, Control, and Treatment of COVID-19 has decided to further extend the effective period of the Temporary Measures till 15 June 2020, 23:59 hours of Myanmar Standard Time.

*Ministry of Transportation and Communications
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)*

MAI relief flight brings back 188 Myanmar citizens on 29 May

A relief flight by Myanmar Airways International (MAI) landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday evening, bringing back 52 Myanmar citizens from South Korea and 42 citizens stranded in Canada, Germany, Norway, Qatar, UAE, America, and Hong Kong.

Another MAI relief flight that repatriated Thai citizens to Bangkok brought back 94 Myanmar citizens to Yangon yesterday evening as well.

Upon arrival, a total of 188 returnees were subject to health inspections and arranged for the 21-day mandatory quarantine by local authorities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is collaborating with relevant departments and Myanmar embassies to retrieve Myanmar citizens overseas facing difficulties during this period. This is done in line with guidelines by the National Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19. Myanmar has so far brought back a total of 2,596 citizens to home.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Myanmar returnees are queuing for immigration process at the International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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MoHT discusses mission shift to better service

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung held a video conference with state/regional heads of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism yesterday.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Tin Latt, Director-General U Maung Maung Kyaw of the directorate, and ministry officials.

The Union Minister first delivered a speech where he said since the ministry has changed its mission statement, it will also convert its motto to “To Serve Better” and “Service to Tourists, Tourism Industry to the Public” in order to emerge as an effective service ministry.

The Union Minister said the mindset of ministry staff needs to change to reflect the new motto. He said the Tourism Law passed in 2018 brought about noticeable change when certain authorities were delegated to state/regional tourism committees.

All ministry staff should clearly understand official pub-

lications by the ministry, said U Ohn Maung. He said the Tourism Strategic Road Map for the period during and after the COVID-19 pandemic incorporates the three phases of Survival, Reopening, and Relaunching and is in the initial implementation stage.

The Union Minister said the survival phase will include training courses that provide daily wages which will be planned by the DMOs of local tourism committees and management committees. He said hotels wishing to reopen soon must pass inspections by the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

The Union Minister said the tourism sector will reopen with domestic tourism and it is necessary to assist restaurants so that they can pass medical inspections to reopen again. He also told attendees to discuss the use of the Guest List Manage-



Union Minister U Ohn Maung holds the video conference with state and regional heads of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ment System launched in May and any issues regarding it.

Next, the Deputy Minister discussed that a destination management plan and action plans need to be drawn ahead of forming District Management Organizations (DMO), how fees for licences related to tourism had been exempted for a year during COVID-19, and carrying out the COVID-19 Myanmar Tourism Relief Plan by uploading relevant information on the Facebook pages of state/regional offices.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein receives the fund raised by MPT for National Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Public donations made to COVID-19 central committee

MEMBERS of the public and civil servants donated to the National Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Thar Oo first explained the donations made and Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein said words of gratitude, accepted the donations, and gave certificates of honour in return.

The donations included K100 million by Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications, K20,691,500 donated by MPT users through SMS, and K400,000 by the seventeen Deputy Directors of the Agriculture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, who received a promotion in 2019. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

World Environment Day 2020: ECD to organize online quiz competition

THE Environmental Conservation Department-ECD will observe the World Environment Day 2020, which falls on 5 June, by organizing a digital campaign with its theme for this year ‘Time for Nature’.

The information on environmental education will be broadcast on FM radio, and WED 2020 Quiz will be broadcast live on Facebook. Winners will be awarded.

Those who are interested

in the quiz programme can visit www.ecd.gov.mm, the website of the Environmental Conservation Department, and Facebook Page of Environmental Conservation Department-ECD for detailed information.

Along with the digital campaign, National Clean and Green School Award will be presented, and tree saplings will be distributed to homes and planted.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Yangon University conducts EU-funded energy sector project

THE University of Yangon has been carrying out an energy sector project in cooperation with foreign universities.

The project titled “Developing Energy Efficient and Smart Lighting Education in Viet Nam and Myanmar (DESL)” was funded by the European Union’s Erasmus + Capacity Building in Higher Education Programme.

Along with the University of Yangon, Alto University in Finland, Eindhoven University of Technology in Netherlands,

University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, Mandalay Technological University in Myanmar, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Eastern International University, Vietnamese German University and Trường Đại học Thu Dầu Một University in Viet Nam was cooperating on the research project.

With the permission from the Ministry of Education, the three-year research project is being organized to develop energy efficient and smart lighting habits and produce expert engineers.

Under the project, lectures from the universities in Myanmar and Viet Nam will be sent to Finland, Netherlands, Viet Nam and Slovenia to attend capacity-building trainings and workshops, cooperate on research projects, create work-based curriculums, set up teaching aids laboratory equipment, and promote education cooperation among the member universities.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

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

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS
Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR TRANSLATOR
Zaw Htet Oo

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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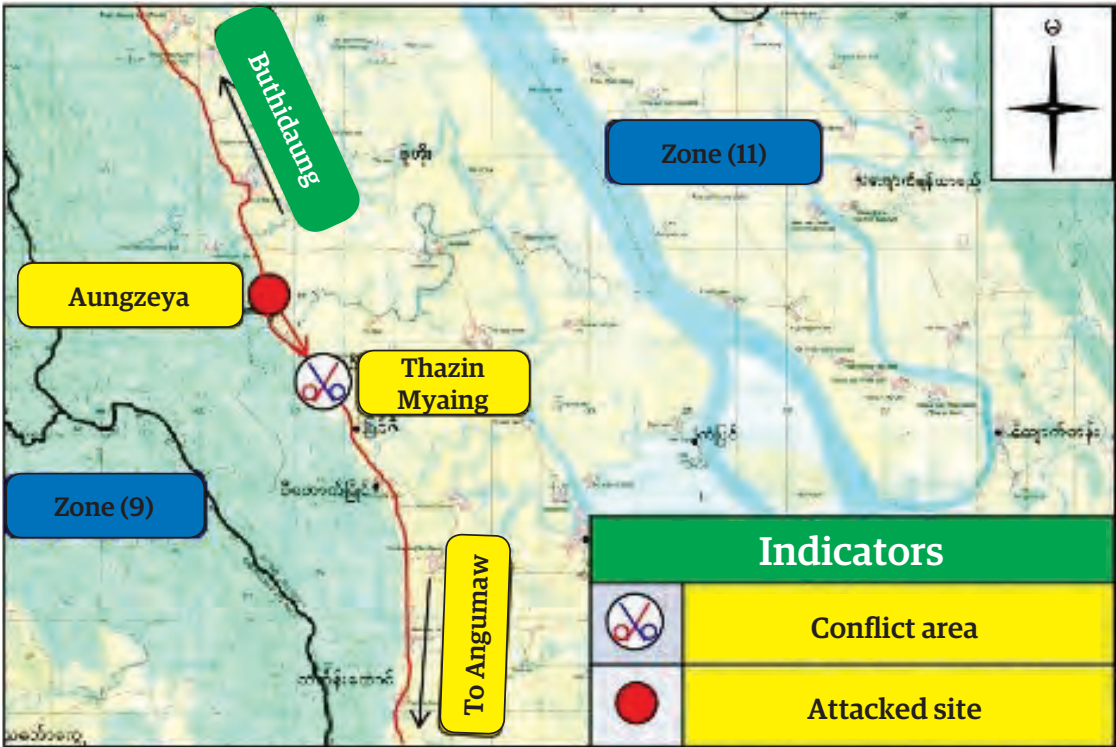
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AA launches large-scale attack in Yathedaung Tsp



THE AA terrorists attacked Thazin Myaing police outpost in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, at 2 am yesterday morning and 10 police officers and 3 civilians are reported

about a hundred AA terrorists began attacking Thazin Myaing outpost in full force from the northwest around 2 am.

A few police officers went to reinforce Kakingon station at 5 am but some officers went missing around that time. Reinforcements from Myanmar Police Force and the Tatmadaw are currently supporting the besieged outpost.

The AA terrorists have attacked 4 police outposts in Buthidaung Township on 4 January 2019, an outpost in Ponnagyun Township on 9 March, the police headquarters in MraukU on 10 April, and an outpost in Buthidaung Township on 16 July that have resulted in the deaths of 22 police officers and injuries to 11 officers, in addition to some officers and their family members missing.—MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Australian PanAust Co gets licence for Wuntho 3 exploration in Sagaing Region

By Nyein Nyein

"THE granting of Wuntho 3 Exploration Licence is the result of a two-year collaboration between the company, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the local stakeholders in Sagaing Region, stated PanAust Executive Chairman Dr Qun Yang, after receiving the licence handed over to the company representatives at an official ceremony held at Nay Pyi Taw on 27 May.
An Australia-based company, PanAust, has been granted a licence for Wuntho 3 exploration in Sagaing region, according to the PanAust company.

The granted Wuntho 3 exploration industry has an area of 750 square kilometres in the high prospective Wuntho Massif region, according to the PanAust company.
PanAust company will continuously effectuate the development of the exploration programme, which will contribute toward the development of the country, he added.
"Given our operating assets are located in neighbouring Laos, we are uniquely placed to effectively deploy an exploration team to investigate the site when safe to do so in accordance with the local and international travel restrictions

because of coronavirus pandemic," he stressed.
Moreover, PanAust has made significant improvements to healthcare, education and transportation infrastructure in the areas in which it operates. While progressing our exploration activities, PanAust can create job opportunities for the residents too, he highlighted.
PanAust was the first company to be awarded exploration licence in 2018 under the government new mineral regulations.
Moreover, three similar licences were awarded in 2016. Since then, the company has carried out a strong exploration

programme while adhering to the international best practices for environmental protection and community engagement.
In Myanmar, PanAust holds a 90-per-cent interest in Wuntho Resources Company Limited (WRCL) with joint venture partner Myanmar Energy Resources Group International Company Limited (MERG), a Myanmar-based company which holds the remaining 10 per cent of WRCL.
WRCL holds seven exploration licences that cover approximately 1,500 square kilometres in Sagaing region.
(Translated by Hay Mar)

MoTC plans to upgrade Nyaung-U, Thandwe aerodromes

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC) has planned to upgrade the Nyaung-U aerodrome for the chartered planes to land safely and smoothly as well as Thandwe aerodrome to turn it into the Customs Aerodrome, said the Union Minister for Transport and Communications at Amyotha Hluttaw meeting held on 25 May.
"The Thandwe airport was extended in 2016-2017 fiscal year. The airport is to be turned into

a Customs aerodrome, which is mainly dependent upon the annual fund. We are conducting other necessary upgrading and it is possibly named as Customs aerodrome after 2020-2021FY, said Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
The Department of Civil Aviation will enter into a contract with KBZ Group and Hinthatha Group companies to upgrade Heho and Mawlamyine airports. The private companies are

selected to submit the tender to finalize the upgrading of three domestic airports including Heho, Kawthaung and Mawlamyine. The tenders have been granted to KBZ Group for Heho Airport, Hinthatha Group for Mawlamyine Airport and Golden Myanmar Airlines Public Company for Kawthaung Airport.
However, the Golden Myanmar Airlines Public Company gave up the upgrading project. So, the authorities called a new tender to substitute the Golden

Myanmar Airlines Public Company.
Under the joint venture programme, the international chartered planes will be allowed to land upon completion of the upgrading project, according to the Department of Civil Aviation.
The estimated cost of the project is US\$40 million for Heho airport, \$36 million for Kawthaung airport and \$20 million for Mawlamyine airport.—Aye Cho
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Govt buys 2,200-tonne reserved rice in May

By Nyein Nyein

THE government has reserved about 2,200 tonnes of rice within a month, according to the press statement of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) on 28 May.

The Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service (MITS), the authorized organization of the State and MRF have implemented the rice reserve scheme since 30 April. The state has purchased about 2,200 tonnes of rice from 80 companies as of 27 May, in line with the set rules and regulations.

The exporters have to 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 organiza-

tion 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 the local and foreign markets.

It is the harvest time of summer paddy and the federation is making efforts for the growers to



Workers are stockpiling rice bags as exporters have to sell 10 per cent of total export volume for country's reserved rice. PHOTO: MRF

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)

YRIC clears two projects creating over 2,900 expected jobs

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee, at a video conference held on 27 May, has approved one foreign project from China, with an estimated capital of US\$4.8 million and one domestic project worth K1.6 billion.

The projects will create 2,996 jobs. They will invest in the manufacturing sector on the CMP basis, and production and distribution of cookie, biscuit and cracker, according to the committee.

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

The investments in the regions also flowing into the hotel services, and other services sectors. To date, foreign invest-

ments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

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

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million. —GNLM

(Translated by EMM)

Action taken against petrol stations because of incompatible quality

A total of 115 petrol stations have had action taken in the states and regions because of incompatible quality, according to an announcement of the Supervisory Committee for Petroleum and Petroleum Products under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

There are a total of 2,733 private gas stations across the country as of March 2020. And, there are a total of 1,783 petrol stations in Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing, Ayeyarwady, Magway

and Yangon region, according to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

A total of 52 new stations were allowed to open in January, February and March, according to the official statistics issued by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

The Ministry has granted the opening of 2,681 petrol stations as of 31 December 2019, which is an increase by 292 petrol stations compared to 2018. By 27 December in 2018,

a total of 2,389 petrol stations were already opened across the country.

As of 31 March 2020, the number of licence holding petrol stations are: 95 in the Union territory, 191 in Yangon region, 662 in Mandalay region, 210 in Ayeyarwady region, 271 in Bago region, 204 in Magway region, 245 in Sagaing region, 30 in Taninthayi region, 126 in Kachin State, 20 in Kayah state, 54 in Kayin state, five in Chin State, 140 in Mon state, 38 in Rakhine state, 60 in eastern Shan State, 198 in northern Shan State and 184 in southern Shan State.

The fines would be increased up to K1 million if the petrol does not match the set quality of the fuel, according to an announcement made by the Myanmar Oil Import Export Distribution Association on 27 September, 2019.

The petroleum laboratory has been planned to open across the country to check the quality of the fuel oil, stated Union Minister U Win Khaing of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. —Aye Maung



Staff at a fuel station fills up a car's oil tank. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Time to prepare to mitigate COVID-19 impact on women

AS THE COVID-19 pandemic continues its exponential growth, it is essential to support working families to minimize negative consequences for vulnerable groups such as children, aged population and women.

Women in the world's countries are seeing disproportionate effects of the economic downturn during the coronavirus pandemic compared to men, and Myanmar is no exception.

The year 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration for promoting the development of women and we need to speed up the efforts.

It is found that women have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 because the service sector they dominate is hard hit by social distancing rules.

We all should be aware that the loss of jobs in sectors dominated by women will have a devastating impact on families, especially where women are the primary or co-breadwinner.

To help policy makers choose the correct decisions, civil society organizations are requested to gather information on the challenges that women are facing and to direct their voices to these policy makers.

There are over 200,000 job losses in Myanmar during the COVID-19. Besides, of the migrant workers who returned from neighbouring countries, many women are not likely to seek jobs in neighbouring countries in post-COVID-19. Meanwhile, when it comes to creating jobs, we should not neglect the women living in rural areas and in cities.

Under the coming programme, we should strengthen livelihood skills of the returnees and women in the agriculture and cottage industries and women's knowledge of finances, markets and business development in our country.

To help policy makers choose the correct decisions, civil society organizations are requested to gather information on the challenges that women are facing and to direct their voices to these policy makers.

This pandemic is also challenging our commitment to development of women. With women's interests and rights front and centre, we can get through this pandemic faster, and build more equitable and resilient communities and societies that benefit everyone.

GROWING RIFT

Germany's virus 'guru' in crosshairs of lockdown critics

ONE of Germany's top virologists has become a hate figure for conspiracy theorists and the anti-lockdown movement, leading to an ugly spat with the country's top-selling newspaper and exposing a growing rift over the role of scientists in fighting the pandemic.

Christian Drosten, a world-leading expert on coronaviruses, has advised Chancellor Angela Merkel's government on COVID-19 measures credited with bringing the outbreak under control by early May and keeping the death toll relatively low.

But his high profile and frequent media appearances have also made him a lightning rod for a noisy minority angry about social distancing rules they see as too restrictive and even authoritarian.

The debate around the curly-haired scientist in his late 40s reached a peak this week when he became embroiled in a bitter public row with the tabloid-style Bild newspaper, which attempted to cast doubt on his scientific research.

'Better things to do'

The Bild row centres around preliminary results from a study by Drosten's Charite team that claimed children can spread COVID-19 as easily as adults. The issue is key as millions of parents hope to see schools completely reopen.



Drosten in his lab at Charité in Berlin on January 23rd. PHOTO: DPA

A Bild reporter gave Drosten just an hour to respond to a list of critical comments on the study from other scientists, provoking him to post an angry response on Twitter.

"I have better things to do," he said, publicly shaming the reporter by posting a screenshot of the email including the journalist's phone number.

The scientists cited by Bild have distanced themselves from the article, saying their comments were simply made in the spirit of critical feedback aimed at improving research.

Drosten has also fiercely defended the study, telling Spiegel magazine that Bild was not "really interested in understanding the scientific problem".

But hostility towards the virologist has since snowballed. An image circulating on social media showed the faces of Drosten and Nazi doctor Josef Mengele side by side, with the caption: "Trust me, I'm a doctor."

Drosten has even reported receiving a threatening package containing a capsule of liquid and a note saying "Drink this – then you will be immune."

The government's point man on fighting anti-Semitism, Felix Klein, slammed the Nazi image and its "demonizing of an extremely deserving scientist".

"Anyone who uses such cynical rhetoric and imagery to express their views disqualifies themselves from any further discussion," he said.

Interior Minister Horst Seehofer has also waded into the argument, saying his ministry was following the death threat "very closely, with a strategy of zero tolerance".

'Social media swamp'

Drosten has since taken to Twitter repeatedly to defend himself – but this is a double-edged sword, as Spiegel has pointed out: "The more Drosten uses his social media power, the more he himself is drawn into the social media swamp. And this is not a good place for a scientist."

The virologist already warned in his podcast back in March that too much media attention would push scientists to withdraw from public life.

"I see myself drawn as a cartoonish figure and it makes me feel bad," he said, warning that a tendency to "dramatize" in the media could sow "dissatisfaction in society".

Drosten, whose team at Berlin's Charite university hospital was the first worldwide to develop a test-kit for COVID-19, quickly found himself thrust into the spotlight when the pandemic reached Germany and he became a trusted advisor to the government.

He has been called a "guru" and "godsend" for his expertise on the virus. Polls show strong public backing for the government measures which have sharply lowered the rate of infection and allowed for an opening up of businesses and restaurants.

Drosten's podcast on the virus has consistently topped national charts since it was launched in February in collaboration with public broadcaster NDR and he has become a regular on panels and talk shows.

But opposition to virus restrictions has swelled in recent weeks, even as the states move to begin relaxing the measures, with thousands taking part in rowdy, sometimes violent demonstrations in German cities.

The movement brings together diverse groups of conspiracy theorists, political extremists, anti-vaxxers and people concerned about a curtailment of civil liberties. Authorities have also pointed to a troubling anti-Semitic streak in some of the groups' messaging. More than 60 protests are planned across the country this weekend.

SOURCE: AFP

Labour Protection in Labour Intensive Industries

By Lokethar

INVESTORS from many countries try to move their production activities, particularly those relating to labour intensive manufacturing, to places where the cost of labour is the least so that they have a competitive edge in the global market for their products. The countries with the "cheapest labour cost" are mostly the developing countries of the world. This has led to the "moving" of production facilities in the countries they have been located in, to countries with "cheaper" labour. Besides most of the investors from foreign countries prefer their manufacturing facilities to be located in the large cities in view of better transportation facilities as well as in big cities with seaports from where the manufactured goods

would be easier and less costly to export to other countries.

Labour intensive industries in the cities are a "pull factor" in the movement of labour from mostly rural areas of the country side. Low incomes in the rural areas are the "push factor" that drive people in the rural areas to "migrate" to the cities in search of higher incomes. Many of them borrow money from the money lenders (who are in fact also the "pwe sars" that get them the jobs) and leave the village to work in the cities. However there is the problem of accommodation for the workers which the factory owners usually don't provide. So the migrant workers hire rooms in "halls" (asaungs) near the place of employment

or within easy travelling distance. They live "jam packed" in small rooms. In this time of the Corona Virus 19 Pandemic it is a situation which could lead to the fast spread of infection by the virus if any of the resident of the "asaungs" has the virus. This is all the more a possible scenario as there may be residents who are "asymptomatic", that is they do not display the signs of infection by the virus. Hence promoting CMP industries at this juncture would not be a "wise" decision. Are we then to disregard the employment generation advantage of the CMP industry? Well perhaps we should conduct a study of the advantages and disadvantages of the CMP industry in terms of the benefits accrued versus the

"cost" to society.

The benefits of the labour intensive manufacturing industries, vis a vis the "investor" is that it is of comparatively a low investment and high employment generating industry. However up on closer examination the "manufacturer" in Myanmar only gets the "making charges". No doubt there is considerable "value added" in converting the raw materials (fabric, packing material etc.) into the finished product but it is enjoyed by the "seller" of the products and not those who are involved in the "manufacturing" only. As for the local owners of the land (and in some cases the buildings), if they are not themselves the "investors", they stand to benefit only from

the rentals they get from the Investors whether local or foreign. The "revenue" earned by the State are through taxes on the exported products which is not much. The state may benefit from the "making charges", (which is also not much), being accumulated in foreign currency. If alternatively the "land" could be used for more "high value added" industries it would benefit the State, the investor and the land owner much more. Also the "supply chain" would not clutter up the logistic and transport situation as now.

The CMP industry being a "labour intensive industry" does provide "jobs" for many, especially female workers. But can the work they perform be classified as "decent work"?

Isn't there too much of "overtime work" with surges in demand for the products? Are all the workers fairly paid including for the overtime work they perform? Are they given the legal "minimum wage"? Will not long working hours affect their health in the long run? Can living in cramped quarters and eating "street food" daily because they don't have time or place to cook, affect their health in the long term? Are they able to meet unreasonably high production targets? Are the workplaces safe? Do they have enough washing and sanitary facilities? These are some questions that need satisfactory answers.

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 29th May, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 30th May, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Magway Region and Kachin State, fairly widespread in Naypyitaw, Sagaing and Mandalay Regions and Rakhine States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Naypyitaw, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak to moderate monsoon over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th May, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th May, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th May, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Naypyitaw and Mandalay Region and widespread in Yangon Region.

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Coronavirus: MoHS tests people in North Okkalapa in mobile units

The vehicles installed with infra-red thermal detection units have carried out coronavirus testing in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region yesterday.

With the directives from Yangon Region government, the region's public health department and Township committee for COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment organized the mobile test programme to detect and combat the spread of coronavirus.

Dr Ohma Sein, head of North Okkalapa Township's public health department, said, "There are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our township. Mobile tests are mainly carried out in the wards they stay."

"We take body temperatures based on the data which were collected in advance. By doing so, we will quickly provide treatments by detecting early the suspected cases of COVID-19," she added.



A health worker is testing a local for COVID-19 in North Okkalapa Township yesterday. PHOTO: PE ZAW

Mobile medical teams including healthcare workers, officials, Hluttaw representatives and civil society organizations tested a total of 12,098 individuals from 2,633 households in North Okkalapa Township in the vehicles installed with infrared thermal

detection units yesterday.

Of them, 6,898 persons of 1,514 households are from San Pya (Ga) Ward and 5,200 of 1,119

households are from (Tatalingeik) Ward in North Okkalapa Township.

U Aung Aung Moe, the leader of San Pya (Ga) Ward, said, "We have informed the people in our ward in advance to receive the tests. Almost all people came and received the test."

Along with the mobile tests, COVID-19 awareness campaigns were also being carried out in the township.

In Yangon Region, mobile tests were carried out in the streets and wards where confirmed cases of COVID-19 were found.

The townships with high coronavirus confirmed cases in Yangon Region are Insein, Mayangon, Tamu and Hline-thaya. People in Hlegu Township were also tested in similar mobile units yesterday, according to the Yangon Region's health department. —Zaw Gyi (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

One more COVID-19 case on 29 May, total tally reaches 207

After no new COVID-19 case on 27 and 28 May, one new confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 29 May, bringing the total positive cases to 207. The new case was held under quarantine in Patheingyi, is a 44-year-old man from Mawlamyint

gyi Township, Ayeyawady Region. Out of the 207 confirmed cases, 6 patients died, 130 have recovered, and 122 have been discharged from the hospitals, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

OPPO and Vodafone announce partnership agreement to bring a broad range of OPPO products to Vodafone's European markets

OPPO and Vodafone, on 26 May, announced a comprehensive partnership agreement that will bring a broad range of OPPO's smartphones to Vodafone's European markets starting from May 2020.

As a leading smartphone brand with an innovative product portfolio, advanced 5G technology know-how, and annual handset shipments of more than 100 million, OPPO is a natural partner for Vodafone's leading gigabit network. The collaboration between the two companies will give consumers more choice and accelerate 5G adoption across Vodafone's international markets.

OPPO's broad range of products will be made available across Vodafone's retail and online channels, spanning value-for-money handsets to industry-leading 5G flagship smartphones including the OPPO A series, Reno series and Find X series.

In the first phase of cooperation, Vodafone will introduce OPPO products across retail channels in Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and the Netherlands. The two companies will jointly develop their global partnership, working together to expand the future availability of the OPPO range across Vodafone's markets.

Alen Wu, Vice President and President of Global Sales, OPPO said: "OPPO is confident that our industry-leading products and technologies will enable Vodafone to win new opportunities in the 5G era. Vodafone's vision that 'we connect for a better future' aligns with OPPO's value of 'Benfen' – to do the right thing and provide real value to customers. OPPO looks forward to solidifying a long-term win-win relationship with Vodafone to create a better future for our customers in the 5G era." —GNLM

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Over 1,000 Myanmar citizens return from Thailand

A total of 1,202 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand returned through the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday. Of them, 411 returned under the repatriation programme arranged by Myanmar Embassy in Thailand, and 791 came back by themselves.

Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrator U Tayzar Aung, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Chan Nyein, Police Lt-Col Thet Lin Oo, Township Administrator U Phyo Zaw Ko Ko, and officials checked the returnees' health conditions, and fulfilled their needs.

A total of 8,981 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand from 1 to 29 May. 60 of them arrived back on 1 May, 54 on 2 May, 1 on 3 May, 44 on 4 May, 23 on 5 May, 100 on 8 May, 44 on 10 May, 13 on 11 May, 41 on 12 May, 16 on 13 May, 38 on 14 May, 120 on 15 May, 76 on 16 May, 90 on 17 May, 64 on 19 May, 604 on 23 May, 1,118



Myanmar returnees are seen at the border checkpoint before they are brought back to home yesterday. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

on 24 May, 1,277 on 25 May, 1,394 on 26 May, 1,434 on 27 May, 1,168 on 28 May and 1,202 on 29 May.

Out of them, the returnees arrived back on 13, 14 and 15 May, and 45 returnees out of 90 on 17 May are those who freed from the prisons in Thailand. Therefore, officials from Thailand handed over them to the Myanmar authorities. Yesterday's returnees include 50 from Kachin State, 9

from Kayah State, 131 from Kayin State, 157 from Mon State, 31 from Sagaing Region, 307 Bago Region, 133 from Magway Region, 46 from Yangon Region, 100 from Mandalay, 55 from Nay Pyi Taw, 67 from Shan State, 13 from Tanintharyi, 13 from Rakhine State, and 90 from Ayeyawady Region. — Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Russia slams 'dangerous' US foreign policy moves

MOSCOW — Russia said on Thursday the United States was acting in a dangerous and unpredictable way, after Washington withdrew from a key military treaty and moved to ramp up pressure on Iran.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova made the comments after Washington announced it would end sanctions waivers for nations that remain in a nuclear accord signed with Iran. The remaining parties to the deal include Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

US officials also said they would walk away from the Open Skies Treaty, which allows each signatory's military to conduct surveillance flights over another member country each year on short notice.

"Washington's actions are becoming more and more dangerous and unpredictable," Zakharova told reporters. "The nature of this behaviour is clearly disruptive," Zakharova said,



The US accuses Russia of blocking flights over certain sites and forbidding surveys of military exercises, normally allowed under Open Skies. **PHOTO: AFP**

accusing Washington of undermining international security.

She also criticized the United States for exiting the INF missile treaty last year and failing to commit to renewing the New START arms control accord with

Russia, which is due to expire in 2021.

President Donald Trump in 2018 withdrew the United States from a landmark agreement under which Iran had drastically curbed its nuclear activities and

reimposed sanctions on Iran.

On Wednesday, Washington said it was ending sanctions waivers for the countries remaining in the Iran deal, bringing the agreement further to the verge of collapse.—AFP ■

Greece releases first list of 29 countries allowed to send tourists as of mid-June

ATHENS — Greece's government released on Friday the first list of 29 countries allowed to send tourists to the country as of June 15 by flights to the airports



A file photo taken on 16 February, 2015 shows the International Airport of Thessaloniki. **PHOTO: AFP**

of Athens and Thessaloniki.

Sample tests for the novel coronavirus will be conducted to travellers from the 29 countries — that include Albania, Australia,

Austria, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea and Switzerland.

The list was drafted based on the epidemiological profile of the countries and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) announcements, following recommendations from Greek scientists, according to an e-mailed press statement issued by the Ministry of Tourism.

Greece is moving forward

to gradually and cautiously reopen its tourism industry, a vital sector of its economy, as the COVID-19 outbreak drastically slows down.

Following a full lockdown that lasted from March 23 till May 4, economic activities have restarted and all professionals in the tourism sector have received instructions on how to welcome travellers from now on so that everyone stays safe.

The first list will be expanded by July 1, when international direct flights to all Greek airports will start, the ministry added, stressing that "evaluation based on epidemiological data will be constant."—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police precinct in flames in US protest over death of black man

MINNEAPOLIS — Police formed a human barricade around the Third Precinct, where the officers accused of killing George Floyd worked before they were fired on Tuesday.

A police precinct in Minnesota went up in flames late Thursday in a third day of demonstrations as the so-called Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul seethed over the shocking police killing of a handcuffed black man.

The precinct, which police had abandoned, burned after a group of protesters pushed through barriers around the building, breaking windows and chanting slogans. A much larger crowd demonstrated as the building went up in flames.

The crowd was protesting the death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man who died after Minneapolis police arrested him on Monday on suspicion of using a counterfeit banknote. Police handcuffed him and held him to the ground, with a bystander video showing an officer pressing his knee on Floyd's neck.—AFP ■

White House not to release economic projections this summer: media

WASHINGTON — White House officials have decided not to release updated economic projections this summer, breaking from precedent as the U.S. economy is on track to a deep recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to U.S. media.

Citing three people with knowledge of the decision, The Washington Post reported Thursday that the decision had been made because "the novel coronavirus is causing extreme volatility in the U.S. economy, making it difficult to model economic trends."

The White House is supposed to unveil a federal budget proposal every February and then typically provides a "mid-session review" in July or August with updated projections on economic trends such as unemployment, inflation and economic growth, according to the Post.—AFP ■

Virus tolls surge in Americas as Europe reopens

NEW YORK — The death toll from the coronavirus spiked again in the United States, and Latin America's pandemic crisis deepened, as Europe's re-opening from lockdown grew bolder by the day.

Grim figures from the Americas were accompanied by the growing economic fallout, with the number of people filing

unemployment claims in the US reaching 40 million, and Brazil shedding five million jobs.

But Europe pressed on with efforts to return to normality, with the English Premier League and Italy's Serie A unveiling plans to resume play.

Populations are learning to adjust to life with the long-term threat of infection as the virus

continues its march around the globe and a vaccine remains elusive.

Pharmaceutical firm bosses expressed optimism a jab could be rolled out by year's end but warned of "daunting" challenges in producing the 15 billion doses needed to curb the pandemic.

Well over 100 labs around

the world are scrambling to come up with a vaccine, including 10 candidates that have made it to the clinical trial stage.

"If things go well, and the stars are aligned, we will have enough evidence of safety and efficacy so that we can... have a vaccine around the end of October," said Pfizer boss Albert Bourla.—AFP ■

Indonesia-Japan rail project to be integrated into Chinese one

JAKARTA — Indonesia plans to integrate a medium-speed rail service connecting Jakarta and its second-largest city Surabaya, and built with Japanese assistance, into a high-speed one, built with China's assistance, connecting the capital and the city of Bandung, a Cabinet minister said Friday.

Coordinating Minister for the Economy Airlangga Hartarto revealed the plan, proposed by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, to reporters after attending a limited Cabinet meeting on the evaluation of national, strategic projects that will be continued to recover the country's economy after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"To be more economically viable, according to the president, the (Jakarta-Bandung railway) project should not only end in Bandung, but continue to Surabaya," Hartarto said.

Jokowi, according to the



A worker sprays disinfectant, amid concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, at a train station in Surabaya on 15 March, 2020. **PHOTO—AFP**

Cabinet minister, also proposed to bring a consortium of Japanese investors in, joining the Indonesia-China consortium currently constructing the railway between Jakarta and Bandung, the capital of West

Java Province.

The construction of the Jakarta-Bandung project itself has been postponed for a year since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic that caused a "budget overrun," Hartarto said.

Asked whether it means that the Jakarta-Surabaya railway project will be scrapped, the minister quickly answered, "It will be integrated (into the Jakarta-Bandung railway project)." —Kyodo ■

Philippines bracing for return of more overseas workers next month

MANILA — The Philippine government on Friday pledged to expedite the repatriation of some 42,000 migrant workers expected next month as several thousand remain stranded in quarantine centres.

The workers are heading back to the country following the suspension or end of their contracts over the COVID-19 pandemic, posing a logistical challenge to the government.

Labour Secretary Silvestre Bello told a virtual press conference that many of them have been stranded overseas due to a wave of travel bans across the globe.

"This number is a combination of stranded workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work-

ers who lost their jobs due to the crisis and couldn't return home immediately, and those who re-

cently ended their job contracts abroad," he said.

Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, some 24,000 Filipino workers based in several countries have already been flown home.

All returning overseas workers are required to spend 14 days in quarantine on arrival in the Philippines.

Many of the 24,000 stayed in quarantine facilities for weeks beyond the 14-day requirement while awaiting the results of their tests, prompting President Rodrigo Duterte to recently order the fast-tracking of the return of these workers to their respective provinces. —Kyodo ■



In a photo from March 19, 2020, passengers queue outside Manila's international airport. **PHOTO: AFP**

Indonesia rolls out public shaming for virus violators

JAKARTA — Indonesian officials are forcing social distancing violators to recite Koran verses, stay in "haunted" houses and submit to public shaming on social media as the country battles to contain surging coronavirus infections.

The Southeast Asian archipelago began deploying around

340,000 troops across two dozen cities to oversee enforcement of measures aimed at halting transmission of the disease, such as wearing facemasks in public.

But provincial leaders are buttressing these efforts with their own zealous campaigns to fight the virus.

Police in western Bengku-

lu province have assembled a 40-person squad to find lockdown scofflaws and force them to wear placards with promises to wear masks and keep their distance from others in future.

Pictures of the perpetrators are then uploaded to social media for maximum shaming effect, according to an official.

"People in Bengkulu still aren't aware of the importance of following the rules, especially when it comes to wearing masks and not gathering" in big groups, said Martinah, Bengkulu's public order agency chief, who goes by one name. "This is for the sake of themselves and their families," he added. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China rebukes Britain, U.S., Canada, Australia over H.K. law

BEIJING — China on Friday rejected a joint statement by Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States over Beijing's new Hong Kong security legislation that they say could jeopardize the territory's freedom and prosperity.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said in response to the joint statement that China firmly opposes foreign interference in China's internal affairs, adding that it had lodged "solemn representations" with the four countries.

The four governments criticized China on Thursday, saying the new security law, as envisaged, would breach the U.N.-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration and "curtail the Hong Kong people's liberties, and in doing so, dramatically erode Hong Kong's autonomy and the system that made it so prosperous." —Kyodo News ■

Pakistan to resume int'l flight operations

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan will resume its international flight operations from Friday night after the government eased some of the restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, according to a notification issued by the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Friday. "As per decision of the Federal Government, the outbound international flights operation has been allowed with effect from 23:59 (local time) tonight," the notification said.

Both national and foreign airlines will be allowed to operate from all international airports of Pakistan with exception of the country's southwest Gwadar and Turbat airports, said the notification. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) for outbound international flights have already been issued, according to which, airlines will be required to follow the SOPs of the destination country, said the CAA, adding that disinfection of aircraft will be ensured and no congestion at airports will be allowed. —Xinhua ■

Britain pushing US to form 5G club to cut out Huawei: report

LONDON — Britain wants the United States to form a club of 10 nations that could develop its own 5G technology and reduce dependence on China's Huawei, The Times newspaper reported Friday.

The reported proposal comes ahead of a planned G7 summit that US President Donald Trump hopes to host next month.

Britain has allowed the Chinese global leader in 5G technology to build up to 35 per cent of the infrastructure necessary to roll out its new speedy data network.

But Prime Minister Boris Johnson was reported by The Telegraph newspaper last week to have

instructed officials to draw up plans to cut Huawei out of the network by 2023 as relations with China sour.

Now, The Times reports Britain is proposing a "D10" club of democratic partners that would include the G7 nations, Australia, South Korea and India.

It said one of the options involved channelling investments into existing telecommunication companies within the 10 member states.

Johnson's office issued no immediate comment on the report.

Finland's Nokia and Sweden's Ericsson are Europe's only current alternative options for

supplying 5G equipment such as antennas and relay masts.

"We need new entrants to the market," a UK government source told The Times.

"That was the reason we ended up having to go along with Huawei at the time."

Johnson's decision this year to include Huawei angered Washington because it believes that the private Chinese company can either spy on Western communications or simply shut down the UK network under orders from Beijing.

But his reported plan to eventually cut Huawei out of the network could



A Verizon crew updates cell tower equipment for the new 5G network in Orem, Utah. **PHOTO: AFP**

significantly complicate London's relations with China just as Johnson seeks new trade partners

following Britain's exit from the EU.

Johnson challenged his US critics in January

to come up with an alternative to Huawei if they did not want Britain to use the Chinese firm.—AFP ■

Indonesia prepares tourism sector for new normal despite virus risk

JAKARTA — Despite the continued high risk of the new coronavirus spreading in Indonesia, the country has been preparing its hard-hit tourism sector to enter what it calls the "new

normal" era as restrictions against the pandemic ease.

During a limited Cabinet meeting, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo on Thursday instructed his ministers to prepare health

protocols and new promotion strategies before the government decides to allow the tourism sector to resume operations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic will change the trends in global tourism, with the issues of health, hygiene, safety and security becoming the main considerations for tourists," Jokowi said.

"Moreover, vacation preferences will shift to less-touristy holidays, such as solo travel, wellness tours, as well as virtual tourism and staycations," he added.

With large-scale social restrictions imposed

in most parts of the archipelago in efforts to curb the spread of the virus, tourist sites have been closed and transportation limited to essential travel.

A total of 180 tourist destinations and 232 tourist villages across the country have been temporarily closed, according to the Association of the Indonesian Tour and Travel Agencies.

The association reported that 98 per cent of its 7,000 members, consisting of travel agents and tour operators, have had to suspend their operations, forcing them to furlough or lay off about 1.4 million employees.—Kyodo ■



Empty beach chairs in Bali as a resort worker sprays Covid-19 disinfectant in the sand. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japan's April jobless rate rises to 2-yr high of 2.6% amid pandemic

TOKYO — Japan's unemployment rate rose to 2.6 per cent in April, the highest level in over two years, while job availability dropped to its worst level in about four years due to the coronavirus pandemic's impact on business activity, government data showed Friday.

The jobless rate edged up from 2.5 per cent in March for the second consecutive monthly increase to hit the worst level since

the 2.7 per cent logged in December 2017.

The seasonally adjusted number of unemployed grew 60,000 from March to 1.78 million, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Among those unemployed, 700,000 people voluntarily left their jobs, down 10,000 from a month earlier, while 500,000 were new job seekers, up 70,000, and 450,000 were laid off, unchanged from March.

Separate data from the labour ministry showed that the job availability ratio in April deteriorated from 1.39 in March to 1.32 in April, down for the fourth straight month to the lowest level since March 2016. The ratio means there were 132 job openings in April for every 100 job seekers.

The availability ratio in the southern Japan prefecture of Okinawa fell to 0.91 in April. From September 2016 to March, the

figure had stayed above the threshold of 1 in all 47 of the country's prefectures.

During a state of emergency period that at one stage covered the entire nation and was lifted completely on Monday, the government asked businesses to suspend operations and people to refrain from making nonessential outings to prevent the further spread of the virus, dealing a huge blow to the economy.—Kyodo ■

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS FLORA VOY. NO. (005N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-5-2020 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.

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES

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A tomb in the compound of the Church and the inscriptions on the tomb in Armenia, Latin and Portuguese languages showed it was not tomb of Nga Zin Kar.

AMONG foreigners who interfered in Myanmar affairs in the history, Portuguese were those who earliest arrived in Myanmar. Of them, Nga Zin Kar aka Filipe de Brito who moved in Thanlyin region was the most notorious. Portuguese citizens together with Nga Zin

Kar settled in Thanlyin, leaving their evidences.

Thanlyin in Myanmar history

The records of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Nga Thanlyin conquered the king of Pada region in 629 AD and established Thanlyin called Sakar Village

Ancient Portuguese Church in Thanlyin

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

as a city. He himself was titled as King Thanlyin. Mon ethnics called Thanlyin as Tharong. Portuguese name of Thanlyin was translated into English, calling Syriam.

Thanlyin fell under British colonial rule in 1852 after the Second Anglo-Myanmar War. The town was under control of Yangon District. Thanlyin was set as a town in 1907 and its municipal committee was formed in 1909. At that time, Thanlyin was home to 10,905 people in four wards. It was upgraded to Thanlyin District on 17 February 1912.

Currently, Thanlyin takes position between 16° 40' and 59' north latitude and between 96° 13' and 25' east longitude. The township with 13 miles in width from the east to the west and 24

miles in length from the south to the north is located on 143.56 square miles of land including 5.94 square miles of Thanlyin. The township is surrounded by Thongwa and Kayan townships in the east, Yangon River in the west, Kyauktan Township in the south and Bago River in the north.

Bago River flows along the seven miles length between Thanlyin Township and Yangon. The hillock of Kyaikkhauk Pagoda is the highest in Thanlyin Township which takes a position at 78.3 feet higher the sea level.

Thanlyin Township, formed with 17 wards and 57 villages from 28 village-tracts, gives residences to 248,216 number of population in March 2018, 95.32 per cent of whom are Bamar ethnic.



Thanlyin Township possesses locations for Eastern Yangon University, Technological University, Myanmar Maritime University, Cooperative University, nine basic education high schools and five branches in addition nine middle schools and branches and 57 post-primary and primary schools. A general hospital (200-bed), a 16-bed station hospital and five rural health centres as well as private clinics are being operated to give healthcare services to the local people.

Kyaikkhauk Pagoda in Phayagon Village-tract is the most eminent among 146 pagodas and stupas in Thanlyin Township. There are five Christian religious buildings, 10 Islam religious buildings, 32 Hindu temples and two Chinese temples in the township. Among them, Kyaikkhauk Pagoda, Wungyi Padetharaza Tomb, Nat Shin Naung memorial tomb, Theindawgyi ordination hall in Kyaik-in Village, Portuguese Cathedral in Thanlyin and Mausoleum Five Saints (Panch Peer Dargah) are historic buildings in Thanlyin Township.

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum maintains Kyaikkhauk Pagoda, Wungyi Padetharaza Tomb, Nat Shin Naung memorial tomb and ancient Portuguese Church.

Portuguese citizens in Myanmar history

In 16th century, Myanmar and Yodaya kings hired Portu-



Ancient Portuguese Church in Thanlyin.



Main entrance of the Immaculate Conception Church in Thanlyin, Myanmar. Construction of the Church began in 1749.

guese gunners in their wars. But, Myanmar faced problems that Portuguese attempted to colonize parts of Myanmar.

Portuguese citizens arrived as merchants and mercenaries in Rakhine region from 1531 to 1638 AD. Portuguese officer Salvador Ribeire de Sousa, who arrived first in Rakhine, served as a major at the troop of Rakhine King Min Yazagyi in 1599 AD.

King Min Yazagyi recruited Portuguese mercenaries. But, increasing number of Portuguese made attempts of danger to the Rakhine king. de Brito from Thanlyin also defied the king. As such, King Min Yazagyi arranged to combat Portuguese as of 1607. The king gave opportunities to Dutch merchants in 1608 for building trade camps so as to seek help from them to combat Portuguese.

After King Bayintnaung

had passed away, Rakhine King Min Yazagyi and Toungoo King Minye Thihathu joined hands in attacking Hanthawady of King Nanda. After conquering Hanthawady, when King Min Yazagyi arranged to return to Rakhine, Filipe de Brito from Portuguese troop requested the king to appoint him as the commander of the guard for customs office in Thanlyin.

In accord with the permission of the Toungoo King, King Min Yazagyi issued an order to assign Filipe de Brito to guard the customs office. When King Min Yazagyi returned to Rakhine, de Brito occupied the custom office and rebuilt it as a fortress. After occupying Thanlyin, he returned to Goa and handed over the area of Thanlyin to the Portuguese Governor and sought the recognition. While in Thanlyin, de Brito forcibly

ordered the people to join the faith of Catholic. He ordered the locals not to pay homage and donate to Buddhist monks. Hence, some Buddhist monks fled from Thanlyin and some became laypersons again.

Nga Zin Kar ordered all domestic and international cargo ships to anchor in Thanlyin to levy taxes from them. As he controlled trade affairs, the regions in upper Myanmar faced shortages of goods including salt.

Toungoo King and Rakhine King attacked Thanlyin ruled by Nga Zin Kar in 1603 but their mission failed. Nga Zin Kar burgled enshrines of pagodas and cast bronze bells as cannons. In fact, it was reported that Nga Zin Kar made attempts to occupy the whole Myanmar in addition to Toungoo, Pyay and Inwa.

After occupying Thanlyin, Nga Zin Kar had organized over 3,000 followers and three warships in 1599. He urged Portuguese citizens to settle in Thanlyin and he himself married the daughter of Byinya Dala, the governor of Mottama City.

Nat Shin Naung from Toungoo associated with Nga Zin Kar. Hence, Toungoo faced great loss for them. Inwa King Anaukbelun difficultly attacked Thanlyin in 1613 to combat Nga Zin Kar.

The King of Inwa investigated and killed both Nga Zin Kar and Nat Shin Naung in the presence of people in centre of Thanlyin. Later, Portuguese's interference in Myanmar affairs came to an end. Then, Inwa King resettled Portuguese citizens from Thanlyin to the area near Shwebo.

Ancient Portuguese Church

Most of the people assumed the ancient Portuguese church as the tomb of Nga Zin Kar in the compound of No 1 Oil Refinery in Thanlyin. Construction of the building, 297 metres long and 16 metres wide, was funded by Armenian Nicolai de Agualar under the supervision of Italian Catholic priest Paolo Nerini of Inwa and Bago missionary team in 1749-1750 AD. It was a Catholic Cathedral for Europeans.

At present, the ruined church did not have the roof but damaged walls only. A team comprising 14 members led by Dr. Andrew Sneddon from the Culture and Ancient Heritage Department of the Queensland University in Australia conducted a 14-day excavation of research at the old church and environs in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology and National Museum in February 2017.

The excavation aimed to observe things whether there was another building in that place before 1700, do research whether there was any evidence written in Portuguese language related to development of trade in Thanlyin in 1600s, search evidences on bilateral relations between foreigners and locals, conduct research on lifestyle of locals in Thanlyin more than 250 years ago, and observe flow of commodities between Yangon and foreign merchants and archaeological facts on trade in these centuries.

They found pieces of pots, brick tiles and ceramic plates with floral designs. Dr. Andrew analyzed these objects were made in Europe or China or Viet Nam in 15th or 16th century. As they assumed a passage might be existed in the middle of the Cathedral, they found bricks in design of tiles in excavation.

Father Matthew from Insein Township said although some people assumed the tomb in the centre of the ruined Cathedral as that of Nga Zin Kar, the inscriptions on the tomb in Armenia, Latin and Portuguese languages showed it was not tomb of Nga Zin Kar.

The ancient Portuguese church built 270 years ago is a historic building that unveils part of Thanlyin region in the Myanmar history.

(Translated by Than Tun Aung)

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Interior Portuguese Church.



Walk of the Church.

MFF to select new technical director from foreign candidates

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) is currently looking for a new technical director position as former technical director Eric Abrams departed from MFF who served in the MFF half of his three-year contract term with the federation, according to the MFF.

Currently MFF have received tremendous numbers of applicants for the technical director

post and they include football experts from German Football Clubs like Dortmund and Ajax, according to MFF authorities.

Looking for the new technical director position, Than Toe Aung, Chairperson of the MFF Technical Committee said MFF had now many of applications and could not make a precise decision yet.

U Than Toe Aung continued that MFF football authorities were

keen to request youth football programmes from German football giants like Dortmund and Ajax.

The MFF is currently aiming at improving football standard of Myanmar to reach top of Asian level and new technical director and talented coaches of Myanmar Football Teams could be seen on the turf of the football teams in post-pandemic period.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

MFF president donates cash, goods to IDPs

THE Myanmar Football Federation president, U Zaw Zaw who is also a chairperson of the Ayeyarwady Foundation has recently donated cash and necessary goods to internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Paletwa, Chin State and made further donations in Sarphyu Su Quarter, Mawbi Township, Yangon Region, according to a statement

with the Ayeyarwady Foundation.

The donations of the MFF president were made through the Ayeyarwady Foundation and officials from the foundation along with Yangon Region Hluttaw Representative U Than Aung participated in the donation.

The foundation has donated K100,000 for each household and also handed over rice bags,

oil bottles and necessary foodstuffs and goods, according to the foundation.

Also, the Ayeyarwady Foundation has already arranged transportation for volunteers and health-care providers who are helping to fight the global coronavirus outbreak and the training centre of the AYA Bank is shifted to have accommodations for the volunteers.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Istanbul hopes to host new, 'historic' Champions League final

ISTANBUL — Fifteen years after the "Miracle of Istanbul" that cemented Steven Gerrard's status as a Liverpool legend, the Turkish metropolis was supposed to host its second Champions League final on Saturday. But that was before the coronavirus pandemic wreaked worldwide havoc.

On March 23, UEFA suspended Champions League matches until further notice as Europe's football competitions were hit hard by the virus.

Although no date has been announced for the resumption of games, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) hopes the final will be played in August -- the month when Istanbul is usually sunk into the hot and humid summer torpor.

In the meantime, Turkish fans are eagerly waiting, hoping that the Istanbul final will be

played. Atakan Bodan, a member of the ultrAslan, Istanbul giants Galatasaray's main fan group, feels the suspension of the top football leagues has "robbed him of joy in his life".

"I'm holding out with the Bundesliga and a few matches in the Belarusian championship, (but) I want the Champions League to resume," he said.

"It would of course be a source of pride to host a new final in Istanbul," Bodan said. "(Istanbul) is a city of football, we are passionate."

'Ready'

All football fans remember the 2005 Champions League final in Istanbul and Liverpool's stunning comeback and penalty shoot-out victory over AC Milan after trailing 3-0 by half-time. The final of the 2020 edition was set to be held on Saturday at the same



Liverpool defeated AC Milan in the 2005 'Miracle of Istanbul'. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

venue, the Ataturk Olympic Stadium. Today, the uncertainty reigns not only over the date of a possible resumption of the

Champions League, suspended during the last 16, but also on the rest of the competition as speculation abounds whether

will it return as normal, if there will be no return legs, or even if a "Final four" tournament will be staged.—AFP ■

Murray to return to action in June

LONDON — ANDY Murray will return from his latest injury problem on June 23 in a tournament organised by his brother Jamie to raise money for a UK National Health Service charity.

Jamie Murray has helped create the behind-closed-doors tournament called 'Schroders Battle of the Brits'.

The event, which runs from June 23-28, will see the Murray brothers and fellow British players Kyle Edmund and Dan Evans go head to head at the Lawn Tennis Association's Roehamp-

ton base in London. It will be screened live on Amazon Prime and aims to raise at least £100,000 (\$122,000) for the state-run NHS.

With the ATP and WTA seasons postponed due to the coronavirus, Murray's first appearance since November's Davis Cup Finals will be a welcome tonic for tennis fans.

"The last few months have been incredibly challenging times for everyone and we see this event as our way of giving back," Jamie Murray said.

"A lot of work has gone in

to make sure this could happen and we are very excited to be able to bring an action-packed week of tennis, while raising valuable funds for NHS heroes to say thank you for the amazing work they have done."

Prior to the lockdown, former world number one Andy Murray had been returning to the court after another injury-enforced absence. The 33-year-old was unable to hit for three months because of what was initially diagnosed as a mild bone bruise.—AFP ■



Andy Murray plans to return to action in June. PHOTO: AFP/FILE