

NATIONAL

UNICEF supplies for COVID-19 measures arrive in Yangon

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

UEC discusses COVID-19 preventive measures for 2020 General Election

PAGE-3

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID- 19) Announcement

5th Waning of Nayon, 1382 ME
(10 June 2020)

1. For those Myanmar citizens who wished to return to Myanmar during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) period, arrangements have been made to receive them systematically by opening official reception centres at the international airport, port and border entry points to carry out disease prevention, control and treatment measures.
2. Also, although the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) had made announcements and arrangements for Myanmar citizens returning from foreign countries to come in through official border entry points and undergo medical observation and examinations, there have been cases where some persons have entered

through border crossings where there were no official reception centres. This could hamper efforts to prevent, control and treat Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and also lead to the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

3. Therefore, if anyone enters Myanmar through any unauthorized entry point from a foreign country and if such person has been accepted with the knowledge that such person has entered the country illegally, it is hereby notified that legal action would be taken in accordance with prevailing laws.

National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Because of COVID, we are encountering many things to think about and to learn on a daily basis: State Counsellor

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that because of COVID, they have been encountering many things to think about and to learn on a daily basis. The most important lesson they have learnt from COVID was the fact that they were forced to train themselves to have boundless vigilance. This was what she wrote:

After issuing rules and instructions with regard to any particular issue, we need to study and assess whether these instructions are suitable and workable.

Not too long ago, we were working towards reopening food stalls after establishing regulations. Some food stalls in Nay Pyi Taw reopened after undergoing inspection. Then a staff member who was alert, energetic and who found much joy in his work went around to three or four food shops to have meals after making his own voluntary decision, not caring if he was having more than his fair share of meals. He thought he had to study the situation. This was an eating survey which was beneficial for us (and not at government expense).

The most important lesson we have learnt from COVID is that we were forced to train ourselves to have boundless vigilance.

This person was able to give us a full detailed report and assessments because he had experienced it himself. The first thing that gave us satisfaction was the fact that both the food shops and the consumers had

the desire to follow the rules and regulations. Of course, there were still some things that needed improvement. Although the workers at the food shops wore masks, there were still some who did not wear face shields and gloves. Since these points are very important for the consumers as well as the employees of the food shops, we need to issue instructions again.

Thanks to the staff member, another thing for us to think about is for people who came together to be able to eat together. People come in the same car together. They come together on the same motorcycle. When they reach the food shop they cannot eat together. This is a rule which is not beneficial in the practical sense. We realized that this rule should not have been made. The important thing was to have suitable partitions between the tables to eliminate contact with strangers.

Because of COVID, we are encountering many things to think about and to learn on a daily basis. The most important lesson we have learnt from COVID is that we were forced to train ourselves to have boundless vigilance.
(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Union Education Minister holds talks on school reopening plans

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

MoRAC, MoTC hold press briefings on their 4th-year performances

PAGE-6



LOCAL NEWS

Shan State Food Supply Committee provides foodstuffs for ethnic organizations

PAGE-4

LOCAL BUSINESS

Domestic investments top K1,200 bln in eight months

PAGE-5

UNICEF supplies for COVID-19 measures arrive in Yangon

A special flight carrying the supplies of UNICEF to Myanmar in measures against COVID-19 landed at the Yangon International Airport from Shanghai city of China yesterday afternoon.

The US\$334,330.42 worth PPE sets and related items of the UN body will be presented to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

On 9 June evening, another special flight arrived in Yangon with the PPE sets and related supplies worth about \$431,941.76 of the UNICEF for Myanmar.

With the supports of Gavi, the UNICEF presented COVID-19 test kits and other medical supplies to Myanmar in May, and it also provided its own aid.

Myanmar is now receiving COVID-19 medical supplies from the UN organizations such as WHO, and India, China, Korea, Singapore and Japan.—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Workers unloading medical supplies of the UNICEF from the special flight at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

Film sub-committees discuss preparations for centenary celebrations



Sub-committees for centenary celebrations of Myanmar film industry hold their second coordination meeting at the Motion Picture Development Division in Yangon on 10 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

SUB-COMMITTEES for centenary celebrations of Myanmar film industry held their second coordination meeting at the Motion Picture Development Division of the Information and Public Relations Department in Yangon yesterday morning.

The sub-committee for screening historic Myanmar movies, chaired by Patron of Myanmar Motion Picture Organization U Hnin Moe, discussed nomination of academy award winning local films after 1952 as the Myanmar historic films, transforming famous historic films into digital versions and to be screened them on movie theatres, producing interviewing programmes with famous artistes in the film industry and broadcasting historic films, movie songs and film centenary programmes and chronicles of academic awards on MRTV.

Patron of MMPO U Kyi

Soe Tun and sub-committee members of the exhibition organizing committee also held talks on preparations for display of machines and equipment along Myanmar film history, documentary photos, costumes, setting materials in film production, cartoon movies, short films, and photo and video booths for the artists and their fans.—Ohmar, Yi Yi

(Translated by Aung Khin)

The ASEAN Secretariat Invites Nationals from Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam to apply for the following post:
Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Cooperate Affairs

THE ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) based in Jakarta, Indonesia is inviting qualified ASEAN nationals from Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam to apply for the position of Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Cooperate Affairs (DSG CCA). Detailed information including responsibilities and qualifications are available at <https://asean.org/opportunities/vacancies-asec/>.—MNA

MoEA, MoE, MoSWRR, Nay Pyi Taw Council to hold press conference on 12 June

THE Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Nay Pyi Taw Council and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will hold joint press conference on their fourth-year performances at the Office No.7 of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 12 June. — MNA

Myanmar COVID-19 figure reaches 248 after two new cases reported on 10 June

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 figure reached 248 after two more positive cases, who returned from Bangladesh, were reported on 10 June, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Out of 248 confirmed cases in the country, six died, 165 persons have recovered and 148 have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

UEC discusses COVID-19 preventive measures for 2020 General Election



UEC Chairman U Hla Thein holds talks on measures against COVID-19 for 2020 General Election yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Union Election Commission organized a coordination meeting to discuss holding the 2020 General Election this year in line with preventive measures against COVID-19.

U Hla Thein, the Chairman of UEC, presided over the meeting held at its headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw, and it was attended by the commission members, officials from the Ministry of Health and Sports and the representatives of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

The UEC chairman said that his commission is carrying out the works in line with the guidelines of Ministry of Health and Sports for the COVID-19, and the third parliamentary elections will also be organized in late this year while following the control measures against this pandemic.

The commission will use a mobile application to prevent gathering of voters in checking their lists during the pre-election period. The UEC has planned to set up over 40,000 polling stations across the country for over 37 million eligible voters in the upcoming elections.

Model polling stations will also be erected to demonstrate COVID-19 measures for the voters on the election day, and the UEC has adopted five norms for organizing the 2020 General Election.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Education Minister holds talks on school reopening plans

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi held a meeting on videoconference yesterday to discuss reopening of schools next month.

The Union Minister discussed resuming classes for high school students in July, followed by gradual reopening of classes for the middle and primary levels, in accordance with the guidelines and directives of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

He also talked about awareness programmes for public on the healthy practices for children, teachers and parents at school and home.

The Union Minister also highlighted ensuring all the



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi discusses school reopening plan next month. **PHOTO: MNA**

children go to schools, healthy and safety measures, making minimum 6-ft between each other in the classrooms, sufficient interval times for classes in the morning and afternoon sections, security measures for schools, minimum dropout rates, better learning opportunities and qualities.

He continued to say that appointment, assignment and duty transfers will be prioritized in ethnic areas before the academic year; new curriculum for Grade 4, 7 and 10, teacher training course for short-term teaching and learning courses, refresher courses including online training, coordination with the National Education Policy

Commission and the National Curriculum Committee and participation of parents to support home assignment system.

Health awareness refresher courses, roundtable discussions, educative articles, nutrition programmes for school children, prevention of dengue fever, education stipends, processes in school enrolment weeks, cooperation of social affairs ministers with parents and teachers.

After the discussions of deputy minister, social affairs minister of region/state governments explained preparations for reopening of schools.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

ASEAN Social Welfare and Development Ministers hold virtual meeting

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myint Aye attended the ASEAN Minister Meeting on Social Welfare and Development-AMMSWD, which was held online yesterday.

Lao's Labour and Social Welfare Minister, in his capacity as chair of the meeting, said COVID-19 has greatly affected vulnerable groups in ASEAN region.

The minister also urged other member countries to accelerate social welfare programmes and services in the region, and shared good practices with other member countries.

Delegates from ASEAN Secretary-General Office discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups in ASEAN, and the countries' responses.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye takes part in ASEAN Minister Meeting on Social Welfare and Development yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye said during the COVID-19 crisis Myanmar was cooperating with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, social organizations and volunteers in response to COVID-19 leaving no one behind.

National Volunteers Steering Committee was formed on 15 April 2020 to protect children and women, provide psychological support to public, organize social and cash assistance programmes, educate the persons with disabilities about COVID-19, provide assistances for IDPs, and help the volunteers who are working on the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment processes nationwide.

A joint statement on adequate protection of vulnerable groups including children, women, persons with disabilities, and elderly persons was also discussed and approved.—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,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION
(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

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

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

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



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Shan state food supply committee provides foodstuffs for ethnic organizations



An official from Shan State Food Supply Committee handing over the rice bags and cooking oil cans to three ethnic organizations in Taunggyi yesterday. PHOTO: SOE NYUNT SHWE (STATE IPRD)

THE Shan State Food Supply Committee supplied foodstuffs to three ethnic organizations at the committee's office in No.1, Basic Education High School, Taunggyi Town, yesterday.
Members of Shan State government and Shan State Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Nyunt Lwin, officials from Kanbawza Bank, and members of the food supply committee were present at the ceremony.
They handed over 300 rice bags and 30 cooking oil cans each to the liaison officers of three ethnic organizations – SSA/Tatma-ha (7), SSPP/SSA and S.N.P.L.O. They also provided 300 rice bags and 30 cooking oil cans each to P.N.L.O, PNO and RCSS on 8 June.—Soe Nyunt Shwe (State IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Sending of Myanmar labour abroad expected to turn normal in 2021

WITH the impact of coronavirus pandemic, the sending of Myanmar labour abroad is expected to turn to the normal situation in the first month of 2021, according to overseas recruitment agencies. Because of the pandemic, the sending of Myanmar labour abroad has been suspended.
Even if we get permission to send the Myanmar labour, it will take time to get back to the normal situation. On the other hand, entrepreneurs from other countries are also facing an economic

crisis because of the impact of the pandemic. Even if they need Myanmar labour, they will hire only five workers instead of ten. Some of the overseas recruitment agencies have suspended their operation in mid-March.
Thailand, Malaysia and Japan topped the list of destinations which Myanmar migrant workers were sent to by the ministry.
At present, hundred thousand of Myanmar labour have already received the permit letters and they are ready to go

abroad before the pandemic period, according to the overseas recruitment agencies.
If the overseas recruitment agencies will get a permit to resume their operation, those hundred thousand of Myanmar labour who had received the permit letters will be given the priority to go abroad. For those new Myanmar labour, they need to wait for a new vaccine from foreign jobs.
“We have around 200 Myanmar workers to send to Malay-

sia. They are ready to leave for their jobs. However, the sending of overseas Myanmar labour is suspended and now they are being faced with the difficulties,” said an overseas recruitment agency owner. At present, the factories from Thailand and Malaysia which mostly hire Myanmar labour have closed their operations because of the decline of demand and economic crisis, said an official from the overseas recruitment agency.—Aye Maung (Translated by Hay Mar)

Over 16,000 lamp posts targeted to install in Mandalay: MCDC

WITH the installation of the lamp posts with high technology by Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), more than 16,000 lamp posts are targeted to install this year, it is learnt.
Currently, a total of 9,669 lamp posts are being installed as of the first week of June. For the safety of the people at night, MCDC has been implementing the lamp posts installation pro-

ject on the roads using street light technology starting from the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
In 2018-2019FY, a total of 5,354 lamp posts were installed on the main road of Mandalay, according to the official report of MCDC.
“We targeted to install 16,584 lamp posts in this FY (before October 2020). Currently, 7,325 single arm lamp posts, 2,279

double arm lamp posts and 65 triple arm lamp posts are being installed. The remaining 6,915 lamp posts have been planned to install within the project period, said an official from MCDC.
When the new lamp posts are erected, the old ones are removed only to be used in other necessary installation of the lamp posts. The new lamp posts are also erected after calculation

of the road width and the power of light. When MCDC is implementing the lamp posts project, the donors who wish to donate towards the lamp post project are also taking their part. More than 2,200 lamp posts are installed by the donors while over 8,200 lamp posts are installed from the MCDC 2019-2020 budgets.—Kyi Tha (Mandalay)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Armed robbers make off with K180 mln from Sittway KBZ bank

FOUR unidentified men robbed K180 million from a KBZ bank branch in Sittway, Rakhine State, yesterday with three of them managing to evade capture from authorities and dis-

appear with the stolen money.
The four men arrived at the KBZ branch-2 in Kyaypinkyee Ward around 4:15 pm in a mini truck and threatened the people inside the bank with their knives

before grabbing the K180 million on the counter and running away.
Security forces managed to capture one of the robbers and are continuing their pursuit of

his accomplices and the stolen money, reports the Tatmadaw True News Information Team.—MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Domestic investments top K1,200 bln in eight months

By Nyein Nyein

INVESTMENTS by Myanmar citizens in the country exceeded K1,200 billion in the past eight months of the current fiscal year 2019-2020, an increase of over K200 billion compared to the corresponding period of the previous FY, the DICA's data indicated.

Between 1 October and 31 May in the current fiscal, 79 local enterprises were allowed to invest in the country by the Myanmar Investment Commission and the state and region investment committees. Domestic investments have reached K1,297 billion so far, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises, as per the DICA's data.

Domestic investors pumped K1,041 billion

into 108 projects in the October-November period in the 2018-2019 financial year. This fiscal year, the number of enterprises permitted was 29 less than the previous year. However, the quantum of investment was larger compared with the year-ago period as the business with large capital flowed into the country, the DICA stated.

During Oct-May period, hotels and tourism sector pulled the largest investment, followed by manufacturing and other service sectors. The domestic investments also flow into real estate development, transportation and communication, livestock and fisheries, industrial estate, mining and power sectors. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand exceed 1.2 mln tonnes in Oct-May

MYANMAR'S corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through borders between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

So far, Myanmar has exported about 2 million tonnes of corns to foreign countries. The sharp increase in export volume is attributed to the growing demand from Thailand this year.

Earlier, China is the major purchaser of Myanmar's corn. Later, Myanmar traders turned to the Thailand border market. Additionally, Myanmar exports corn to India, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines through maritime trade. Yet, the volume of corn exports to those markets is quite small.

In the current fiscal,



Farmers unloading the corns in their farm.
PHOTO: KO HTEIN

Myanmar has shipped over 500,000 tonnes of corns to external markets through maritime trade.

It has been one year since China suspended the importation of some agro products through the borders. Besides, corn is not listed in China's legitimate goods for border trade. Therefore, the ministry is making an effort to seek China's AQSIQ registration and to reach an agreement with China for legal trade.

The corn crop is most-

ly demanded by feedstuff processing business. This being so, it is a potential business for both domestic and external markets, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar surpassed corn export target of over a million tonnes in the current fiscal.

Myanmar shipped 1.5 million tons of corn, worth US\$270 million, to foreign countries in the previous financial year. During the previous fiscal, 200,000 tons

of corn, worth over \$40 million, was shipped through maritime trade, while 1.3 million tons of corn, with an estimated value of \$230 million, was sent through the borders, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

As per data from the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar exported 1.4 million tonnes of corn, worth over \$290 million, in the 2017-2018FY; 1.2 million tonnes of corn, worth \$250 million, in the 2016-2017FY; and, 1.1 million tonnes of corn, worth \$300 million, in the 2015-2016FY.

Myanmar is the second-largest exporter of corn among regional countries. There are over 1.9 million acres of corn plantations, primarily in Sagaing and Magway regions, and Chin, Kayin, Shan, and Kayah states. Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Advertorial

Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH) is launching 'Smart School' social contribution project to improve children's right to play



LH selected Thakayta32 Primary School located in the YangonThakayta area as the first project of the Smart School as the first project to improve the Myanmar educational environment. LH Vice President Lee Yong Sam visited here last January from Korea and attended the groundbreaking event, and after six months of construction, it has finally completed on June 10th.

In order to improve the poor educational environment where children cannot play on the playground because of lack of play facilities, LH selects one primary school every year to promote the educational environment improvement project.

The chief Representative of LH Myanmar Representative Office, Mr Kim Gunwoo said, "I am happy to be able to contribute to Myanmar society through the Smart School started by LH."

"In order to realize a people-centred future education, we intend to promote creative, emotional and cooperative school space innovation in which students participate together. I expect it to continue."

Company Profile

The KMIC project covers 2.24 sq km (roughly 555 acres) of land near Nyaung Hnint Pin Village in Yangon's Hlegu township.

In early 2016, stateowned Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Construction (MoC), and has claimed an investment of \$120m in the project.

The own split gives 60% to LH Consortium with the remaining 40% held by the Ministry of Construction, which provides land and infrastructure for the project.

In July 2017, the two parties ratified a memorandum of agreement and preliminary work reportedly began on the project. Under the terms of the MOA, the MOC provides all external infrastructure for the zone including roads, electricity and water supply.

LH submit the documents and granted MIC approval in 2019.

KMIC is conducting detailed design and start construction this year.

LH is hoping to attract both Global investors and invite Korean companies from China or Vietnam to re-set up factories in the zone.

MoRAC, MoTC hold press briefings on their 4th-year performances

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the Ministry of Transport and Communications held press briefings on their 4th-year performances yesterday.

Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture

Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min talked about the Union government's Waso robe offering ceremony organized by the ministry at the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw, conferring religious titles to 343 monks, 25 nuns and 147 laypersons in 2020, presenting advanced level certificates in 2019, holding the 72nd Tipitaka examination this year.

He also presented renovation of landmark Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon and donation of gold plates at the pagoda; K15.676 billion of public donation to Kyaikhthiye pagoda in 2019 under the new trustee board which was reorganized with 11 members on 23 August 2016 after cancelling contract system for the donation, and arranged free accommodation with the daily capacity of 1,279 visitors.

The ministry also managed in the construction of Eternal Peace pagoda in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw at the cost of K8.33 billion, including the contributions of well-wishers.

Establishment of inter-faith friendship programme was 121 in township level, 40 in district level, 11 in region/state level and 1 in central level. The ministry also supported in organizing the first Religions for Peace Advisory Forum organized by the Religions for Peace Myanmar on 21 November 2018 at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw, its second edition on 7 May 2019 and the third edition on 19 November.

Regarding cultural affairs, the ministry could try to include ancient capital of Bagan into the UN Cultural Heritage list at the 43rd session of World Heritage Committee held in Azerbaijan from 30 June to 10 July. A draft version of Nomination Dossier for MraukU Cultural Area was also submitted to the UNESCO in September 2019 for the World Heritage list, and preparations for its final version. The Ananda Candra stone inscription in MraukU has been included in the list of Asia-Pacific Memory heritage list and it will be submitted to the UNESCO for the Memory of the World.



Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture holding the press conference on their 4th-year performances yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum is presenting honourary cash awards for the cultural items as a move to prevent trafficking of these materials. The department presented K246.85 million for 9,680 items and 50 antique materials in the fourth year.

The ministry also conserved 2,289 tangible and intangible items of cultural heritages from 2016 to 2019, and held workshops to submit Myanmar Thanakha on the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list.

The ministry will also repair 11 remaining pagodas out of 389 damaged in the earthquake on 24 August 2016, and renovate the National Library in Yangon.

Renovation of the 28-year old National Theatre has begun on 10 August 2019, and the project is expected to last for two years.

The deputy minister also briefed on arts school in Yangon and Mandalay, arts and dance courses of basic and higher levels and conducting diploma and advanced levels of arts at the National University of Arts and Culture in Yangon and Mandalay.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture is working for propagation and perpetuation of Buddha Sasana which is the major religion of the country in line with Article 34 of State Constitution, while coordinating with other faiths for lasting friendship as per Article 361 of the State Constitution. The Union Minister is also working together with members of Sangha, layperson and other religious leaders for prevention of conflicts caused

by the religious affairs.

The Deputy Minister also explained the remaining 20 per cent to finalize nomination procedure draft of MraukU cultural area for the World Heritage is on the side of locals, and field surveys must be conducted by the ministerial staff and UNESCO experts, however, it is not possible to do so due to security reasons.

He also answered to the questions about fire and theft of relics at the temples in Bagan, prevention of religious conflicts before and post 2020 General Election, security measures of Bagan area, legal actions against gathering for religious purpose that breached rules for COVID-19, the remark of ministry on the two fugitives from justice, construction of residential buildings in monastery compounds and the time for reopening of pagodas and religious sites.

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Permanent Secretary U Win Khant explained the 4th performances of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. He said their transport infrastructure projects follow the National Transport Master Plan and it's auxiliary plan.

He said the Myanmar Railways began upgrading the Yangon circular train in 2017 with loans from Japan's ODA and national budget and is estimated to be completed in 2021. He said they have completed 51 out of 59 miles and put up 42 miles of brick walls and 8 miles of fencing to keep squatters out.

The Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrade project is also done with Japan's ODA loan in two phases starting from 2017 and will require repairing 202 culverts and constructing 35 large bridges in the first phase. The second phase for Toungoo-Mandalay railway is underway and is waiting for tender applications. The entire project is expected to finish around 2023.

A South Korean engineering team was called in to assess the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway upgrade project twice and concluded that a tunnel, a large bridge and two new train stations are needed for the rough terrain along the Nankhan-Bonchaung and Mawhan-Kadu sections. A loan agreement with ROK-based EXIM Bank has been signed for US\$125 million for this purpose.

Similarly, negotiations are underway for acquiring an Asian Development Bank loan for upgrading the Yangon-Pyay railway, upgrading the Bago-Mawlamyine and Bago-Thaton railways are complete, and Thaton-Mawlamyine railway will be completed within this year.

The Road Transport Administration Department managed to reduce traffic accidents in line with international standards while the Union budget was used for 69 waterway maintenance projects and state/regional government funds were used for 964 projects to prevent bank erosion with priority given to densely populated locations along the Ayeyawady, Chindwin, Mu and Dokhtawaddy rivers.

The Twantay canal development project was initiated with

US\$ 61.3 million from South Korean EDCF loan and US\$ 7.942 million from the national budget and is expected to finish by 2023. A port in Mandalay was completed for container transportation as an inland jetty and ports are being constructed in Monywa, Pakokku, and Bhamo.

A total of 76,532 feet of retaining walls have been constructed within 4 years to prevent the banks on Myanmar's side of rivers and creeks shared with other nations from eroding and thus losing national territory. Beginning in May 2018, the river current in Yangon jetty has been stabilized to a point and with help from Japan, the Navigation Aid in Yangon River is continuing. A survey and drafting of a master plan for the jetty's infrastructure is under way from October 2019 to October 2020 with cooperation from USAID.

There were 11.3 million entries and exits combined across the international and domestic airports of the nation in 2019. A PPP tender auction for the highly traveled domestic airports in Heho, Mawlamyine and Kawthoung have been called. The Thandwe Airport will have its runway extended and terminal upgraded within two years while G to G coordination for Hantawaddy Airport are in process with the government of Japan. Myanmar National Airlines flies to 28 cities in Myanmar and has international flights to Singapore, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hong Kong, Chengdu, and Gaya.

Two domestic companies and two foreign companies have been given Nationwide Telecommunication licences to promote private sector participation in the communications sector. There are 4 similar work licenses given to 205 domestic and foreign companies. The Myanmar e-Governance Master Plan is being implemented with the important Integrated Data Center to be completed in Nay Pyi Taw by 2022.

Myanmar's postal services began back in the colonial era but has been improved and upgraded to meet modern needs and standards. There are currently 1,389 post offices across the nation and 841 of them now provide financial services. Myanmar climbed up to the 91st place in the Universal Postal Union's ranking for 2018 from 126th in 2016.

MoRAC, MoTC hold press briefings on their 4th-year performances

FROM PAGE-6

Next, Managing Director U Ba Myint of Myanmar Railways replied to questions from the media on the Muse-Mandalay railway project. He said a feasibility study was completed and a survey for human and environmental impact is continuing. He said this project is restarting a second time with a feasibility study completed in 2010 as well. He said they will go through with the project if it will benefit border trade but currently Switzerland is giving support as a third party. Permanent Secretary U Soe Thein of MoTC then replied to a question on the internet shut-

down in Rakhine State. He said several townships have had their internet shut down but Maung-taw Township had it reopened not too long ago. He said they have orders to continue the shutdown till 1 August. He said this was done to protect the public and if this measure can be proved to be unnecessary then it will be lifted. The Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Nay Pyi Taw Council and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will hold their press briefings on 12 June.—Han Myo Soe, K Tar
(Translated by Aung Khin, Zaw Htet Oo)



Senior officials from Ministry of Transport and Communications explain 4th-year performances of their ministry during a press briefing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



994 Myanmar migrant workers return from Thailand via Myawady

MYANMAR migrant workers continue returning home through the Myawady Friendship Bridge (2), with the total number of 994 yesterday. The Myanmar Embassy in Thailand arranged six vehicles from Mo Chit Bus Terminal for 125 returnees while the remaining 869 Myanmar citizens returned by their own schedules. Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung and other officials performed

medical examinations and assisted the returnees with other arrangements upon their arrival. These returnees were 608 males and 386 females. A total of 24,634 returnees have entered this crossing since 1 May.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Migrant workers queuing for immigration process before entering Myanmar. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

10 Myanmar seamen kept under quarantine in Kawthoung hotel

TEN Myanmar seamen who signed off from the MT-MTM Colorado ship anchored in the Andaman Sea arrived in Kawthoung yesterday evening and are currently held under hotel quarantine. Captain U Aung Kyaw Thet and the other nine seamen who signed off the ship had swapped

duties with Captain U Zawyar Lin and six seamen who will be signing on the ship docked early in Kawthoung. The ship was transporting cargo from Russia and passed through Singapore and arrived near an islet in Kawthoung Township on the Andaman Sea. The ten seamen will be quar-

antined for 21 days and their lab samples have been sent to the National Health Laboratory. —Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
Myanmar seamen are questioned by a combined team of officials at Kawthoung jetty before they are held under quarantine. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**



Two new cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 10 June, total figure reaches 248

Updated at 8 pm, 10 June 2020



2 new cases of COVID-19 on 10 June 2020: Updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
247	46	Female	Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State	No	Yes, Bangladesh	District People's Hospital, Maungtaw	Positive	Held under quarantine (Maungtaw Township)
248	32	Male	Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State	No	Yes, Bangladesh	District Peoploe's Hospital, Maungtaw	Positive	Held under quarantine (Maungtaw Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

Act now to hold safe 2020 General Election

WITH the COVID-19 pandemic, the public observed the stay at home order, and still keeping a “physical distancing” to fight against the infectious disease. Besides, our people have helped small businesses by ordering take-out, bought what we need when grocery shopping rather than hoarding what we want and wore a mask in public.

We can all make these sacrifices to keep ourselves and others safe. Meanwhile, volunteers and health workers still stand at the front lines, risking their own health and lives caring for the sick.

This COVID-19 crisis, which can be viewed as a prolonged war, is a great test of our stamina.

This year's election will be different because of COVID-19 and a range of measures will be in place to help keep people safe in complying with the health guidelines.

These included queue management, physical distancing, hand sanitizers alongside ballot boxes and protective gear for people staffing voting stations.

It is worth noting that the Union Election Commission is planning to launch a mobile application in the election season to ensure that eligible voters check their names in the online voting list.

However, we need to discuss with experts from different sectors how to provide safety to the people during the election activities such as election campaigns and on the election day because the health guidelines did not cover the campaigns and rallies, all of which are likely to be significantly affected.

There will be over 40,000 polling stations nationwide for over 37 million eligible voters for the 2020 General Election.

With social distancing at all voting precincts, casting a ballot may take a little longer and may be inconvenient.

To overcome that challenge, advance voting and other convenience ways, particularly for the elderly and those with existing medical conditions, should be encouraged as we continue to practice social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when voters stand in line to cast their ballots.

The 2020 General Election will be of utmost importance, and the process by which it is decided must ensure the safety of the people.



Mount Popa Geopark and Its Aesthetic Values

By Than Htun (Myanmar Geosciences Society)

UNDER the National Geopark Committee, National Geopark Executive Committee has been striving to establish, by the collaborative effort of Myanmar Geosciences Society, Forest Department and Geology Departments of various Universities, the first National Geopark in Mount Popa region. With the approval of Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Ministry and Chief Minister of Mandalay Region, Geopark field party started reconnaissance survey and assessment in Mount Popa Area in December 2016. The geology, vertebrate palaeontology, palaeobotany, forestry, cultural and archaeology sites have been selected for geosites in a total area of 1964 sq.km, the whole Kyaukpadaung Township, NyaungU District in Mandalay Region.



Popa Taungkalat (pedestal hill). PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKHTILA)

plain'. There is a crater at the top of the cone, but one side of the crater had been blown away during one of the volcano's many eruptions (Maung Htin Aung, 1959).

Thagya Nat Mahagiri Nat Popa Taungkalat

The Mount Popa was visited by King Pyusawhti in A.D.167. King Thinlikyaung established a new cult by proclaiming that Popa Ywa was given as a perpetual fief to U Tint De and his Sister, Nat spirits in A.D.352. And King, ministers and people visited them once a year.

To an early chief at Bagan, Popa Sawrahan 613-40, is attributed the introduction of the present Burmese era (Kacchapancha), starting in March 638. Siam uses it under the name Chulasakaraj. Doubtless it was drawn up by Hindu astrologers at one of the

to Popa Hill to be re-quipped and reorganized. Perhaps at one time the hill itself was worshipped as separate from the gods and goddesses, and it was probably considered to be 'a hallowed ground of victory' whose very touch would give success to 'men of endeavour' in their 'mighty undertakings' (Maung Htin Aung, 1959).

After having many serious problems with his alchemistic experiments and replacing his eyes with eyes of goat and bull, Monk Goat-Bull (Shin Isa Gawna) obtained the Philosopher's Stone on the top of Mount Popa.

In A.D.1249, Uzanar took thrown and after visiting Nat festival at Mount Popa, Pwa Saw of Kanpyu village became Queen of Bagan.

The Thirty-seven Nats

Throughout human history

people of all races have pictured their gods and goddesses as living on a mountain. The Buddhists believe that their gods and goddesses live on Mount Mayu, just as the Ancient Greeks believed that their gods and goddesses dwelt on Mount Olympus.

In the same way, the early Burmese came to believe that Mount Popa was the home of their gods and goddesses. They came to believe, too, that beautiful ogresses, who lived not on flesh but on flowers, played hide-and-seek in the groves of Mount Popa, and that on its slopes there wandered magicians and alchemists in search of potent herbs and roots.

Under King Thinlikyaung in A.D. 344-387 the religion of the Bagan people must have been very similar to that from the animism now practiced by the remoter hill peoples of Burma. Nat spirits were worshipped everywhere in the country but each village restricted its worship to its own local Nats. After reaching Saga tree the new city of Thiripyissaya King Thinlikyaung had an opportunity to establish a new religion or at least a new cult. The king's carvers soon carved out of the tree trunk images of U Tint De and his sister, and then covered them with gold. The images of the two Nats were put on golden palanquins and attended by the king himself, they were carried along the road to mount Popa. The procession reached the summit of Mount Popa on the full moon day of the golden Nat shrine, awaited the two images. The images

were set up in the shrine with great pomp and ceremony, and the king proclaimed that the village on the slope of the hill, Popa Ywa, was given as perpetual fief to the two Nat spirits.

With the exception of one of the 37 Nats-namely Thagya Nat-all are spirits of deceased heroes, and in most cases they also have royal blood, or are linked to royalty. Most are associated with historical figures who lived between the 13th and 17th centuries. The 37 Nats are:

- 1.Thagya Nat, 2. Mahagiri Nat, 3. Hnamadawgyi Nat, 4. Shwe Nabe Nat, 5. Thonban Hla Nat, 6. Taung-ngu Mingaung Nat, 7. Mintara Nat, 8. Thandawgan Nat, 9. Shwe Nawratha Nat, 10. Aungzwamagyi Nat, 11. Ngazishin Nat, 12. Aungbinle Sinbyushin Nat, 13. Taungmagyi Nat, 14. Maung Minshin Nat, 15. Shindaw Nat, 16. Nyaung-gyn Nat, 17. Tabinshweti Nat, 18. Minye Aungdin Nat, 19. Shwe Sippin Nat, 20. Medaw Shwesaga Nat, 21. Maung Po Tu Nat: a trader from Pinya who was killed by a tiger, 22. Yun Bayin Nat, 23. Maung Minbyu Nat, 24. Mandale Bodaw Nat, 25. Shwebyin Naungdaw Nat, 26. Shwebyin Nyidaw Nat, 27. Mintha Maung Shin Nat, 28. Htiyu Saung Nat, 29. Htiyu Saung Medaw Nat, 30. Bayinma Shin Mingaung Nat, 31. Min Sithu Nat, 32. Min Kyawzwa Nat, 33. Myaukpet Shinma Nat, 34. Anauk Mibaya Nat, 35. Shingon Nat, 36. Shingwa Nat, 37. Shin Hnemi Nat.

TO BE CONTINUED

ANTIBODIES IN YOUR BLOOD

BLOOD-BASED TESTS

Italy's coronavirus blood tests advancing slowly but providing "essential" information



An Italian health worker shows a swab used to test for the presence of coronavirus. PHOTO:AFP

Serological testing aimed at charting the extent of the spread of coronavirus in Italy is going slower than expected, officials told Xinhua, though the information it is providing is still "essential."

In late May Italy began a national pilot test of at least 150,000 individuals to determine the prevalence of the coronavirus antibody in the population.

But Italian Red Cross officials told Xinhua that fewer than one in four Italians asked to provide blood to be tested for potential exposure to the virus gave their immediate permission. Though the Red Cross did not say what acceptance rate they expected, the organization did say the rate was lower than their models predicted.

"We expected more citizens to participate," Rosario Valastro, vice president of the Italian Red Cross, said in an emailed statement. Of the estimated 150,000 calls made so far, just 24 per cent resulted in an immediate agreement to be tested.

Valastro said around 13 per cent agreed to recon-

sider their decision, while nearly two-thirds -- a total of 63 per cent -- declined to respond at all.

Valastro said the testing, which had been scheduled to wrap up by mid-June, would now be extended to at least the end of the month.

The government is not the only entity supporting such testing. Local governments, organizations, and companies -- from individual regions and trade unions representing healthcare workers to private companies such as carmaker Fiat-Chrysler and multinational tire manufacturer Pirelli -- have funded their own testing regimens.

Health officials in the northern Italian city of Bergamo, one of the those hardest hit by the pandemic, said this week that 57 per cent of the nearly 10,000 residents tested showed the presence of the coronavirus antibody, meaning they had come into contact with the virus at some point.

Researchers have said those with coronavirus antibodies in their systems could be immune to COV-

ID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, or could at least have heightened resistance to the disease.

According to Fabrizio Pregliasco, a researcher at the Department of Biomedical Sciences for Health at the University of Milan, the testing plays an essential role in the government's policymaking going forward.

"Slowing the spread of an outbreak like the coronavirus is a complex matter," Pregliasco said in an interview. "There are antibodies that show up immediately after infections and others that show up 14 days later. No information set is perfect, and there is always a margin for error. But this kind of data is essential to understand how the virus spread and what parts of the population may still be vulnerable."

Pregliasco said serological testing at the San Donato Hospital in Milan, where he works, found that 11 percent of employees showed signs of having been exposed to the coronavirus, even if some of them never showed COVID-19 symptoms.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 10th June, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over the Central Bay of Bengal has moved West-Northwestwards and still persists over the West Central Bay of Bengal. Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 11th June, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway Region and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Mandalay Region and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8-10) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Rakhine States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11th June, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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Japan MPs pass record coronavirus budget

TOKYO —Japan’s powerful lower house of parliament approved an emergency budget worth nearly \$300 billion Wednesday, doubling the scale of measures to pep up the world’s third-biggest economy after the coronavirus tipped it into recession.

Consumer spending has slowed to a crawl despite Japan’s relatively low infection numbers and death toll from the pandemic, prompting the first economic downturn since 2015.

In response, lawmakers approved a second exceptional budget of 31.91 trillion yen (\$297 billion), including subsidies for smaller businesses and cash handouts for medical workers.

The budget bill will be sent to the upper house and is widely expected to be enacted as early as Friday.

The cash — to be raised

by issuing bonds — will also be used to help finance rescue programmes and loans for struggling businesses.

The government said the size of the package, including loans and investments in addition to actual fiscal spending, is worth about 117 trillion yen, nearly the same size as the first extra budget enacted on April 30.

Combined with that initial stimulus package, Japan’s total measures amount to 230 trillion yen when loan schemes are taken into account.

That is a whopping 40 per cent of GDP — trumpeted by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as the world’s biggest virus programme — and pushes Japan’s debt-to-GDP ratio up to 257 per cent, noted Naoya Oshikubo, senior economist at SuMi TRUST.



The stimulus package aims to pep up Japan’s recession-hit economy. PHOTO: AFP

“It will be worth it to drive the recovery,” said Oshikubo.

“The two supplementary budgets alone should push up real 2020 GDP by three points.

In addition, the state of emergency has now ended across Japan and the economy is set to improve,” added the economist.—AFP

Malaysia to gradually reopen schools from June 24

PUTRAJAYA — Malaysia will start reopening schools in stages on June 24, as the country reported only two coronavirus

cases Wednesday, its lowest daily infection rate since a partial lockdown was imposed in March.

Education Minister Radzi

Jidin said in a televised address that the reopening will involve over 500,000 students from 2,440 high schools across the country. Students sitting for end-of high school and pre-university entrance examinations will be allowed back first. The rest, including those in primary schools, will have to wait.

Schools have been shut since the government enacted the “movement control order” on March 18, after the number of daily coronavirus cases rose to triple digits.

As the infection rate has steadily dropped, the government has also begun to ease many of the restrictions since May 4, by allowing most business sectors to resume operations.

More measures were relaxed starting Wednesday, with barbers and beauty salons allowed to operate. An inter-state travel ban has been lifted, and outdoor markets, museums and zoos have also opened.

However, the country’s borders remain closed, and pubs, entertainment outlets and activities that invite big crowds, like sporting events or concerts, are banned until Aug. 31. As part of conditions for schools to reopen on June 24, Radzi said they must adhere to guidelines, including taking students’ temperature before entering class, tables must be at least a meter apart and break time must be staggered to avoid crowding in the cafeteria.

— Kyodo



Visitors have their temperatures checked at the entrance of a store in Kuala Lumpur on May 4, 2020. The Malaysian government eased curbs on movement and business the same day, following signs of improvement in the coronavirus situation. PHOTO: KYODO

NEWS In BRIEF

S. Korea to charge defector groups over anti-North leaflets

SEOUL — The South Korean government on Wednesday said it will file legal complaints with police against two civil activist groups known for launching anti-Pyongyang leaflets into North Korea.

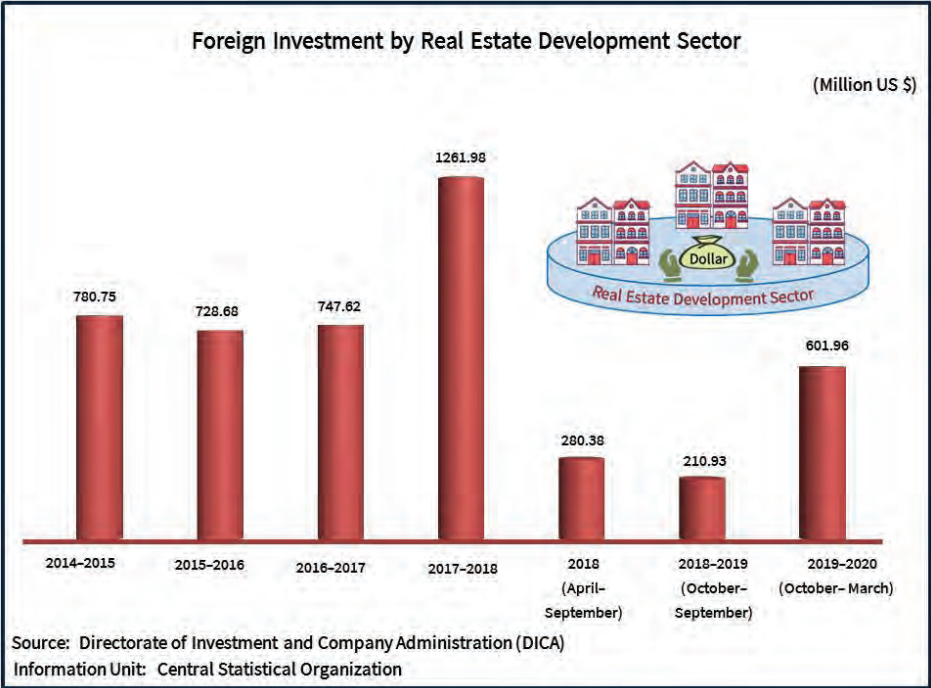
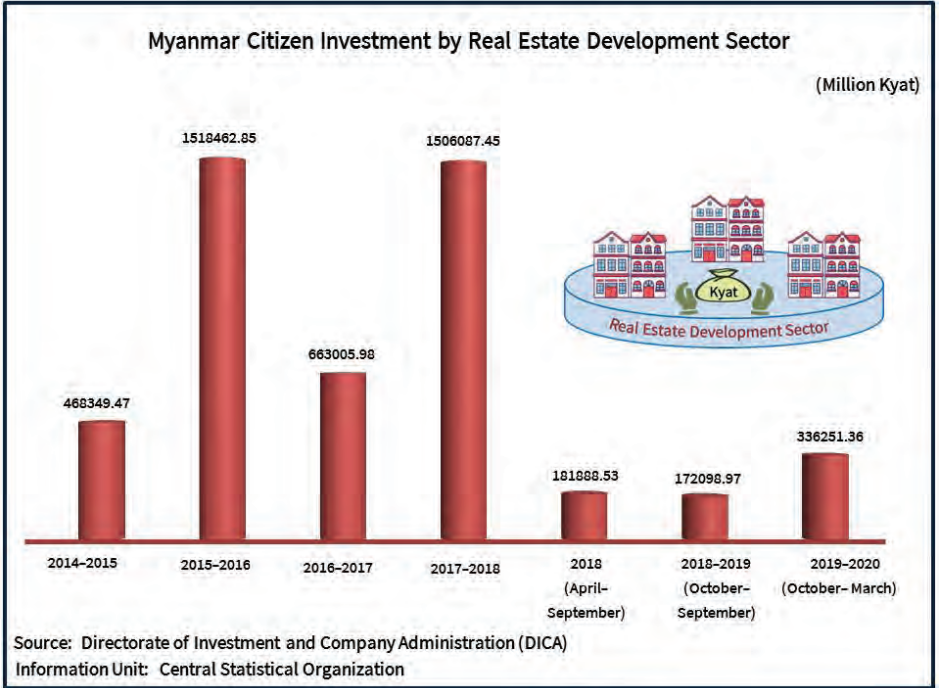
The Unification Ministry said in a briefing that it would also start proceedings to revoke the statuses of the two groups — Fighters for Free North Korea and Kuensaem — as nonprofit organizations.

It accused the groups, which are led by North Korean defectors, of violating an inter-Korean cooperation law.

In a press release it said they endangered “the lives and safety of residents in the border regions.”

The defector groups expressed their intent to continue sending balloons carrying the leaflets into North Korea regardless of the crackdown. The move comes a day after North Korean state-run media reported that the country would sever all lines of communication with the South in protest over the groups’ leaflet-sending activities.

The cutting off of the communication lines “is the first step of the determination to completely shut down all contact means with South Korea and get rid of unnecessary things,” the official Korean Central News Agency said.—Kyodo



Informant who disclosed Soleimani's location sentenced to death in Iran

TEHRAN—Mahmoud Mousavi Majd, who was 'linked with CIA and Mossad' and disclosed information on whereabouts of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani has been sentenced to death, IRNA reported.

The outlet cited Iran's Judiciary's spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaeili as saying that Mousavi Majd had "disclosed information on the location" of Qasem Soleimani'.

Tensions between the US and Iran soared dramatically earlier this year after Washington launched airstrikes at Baghdad International Airport, which killed Soleimani.

Tehran retaliated by firing a volley of ballistic missiles at two military bases of US-led coalition forces in Iraq, leading to



Soleimani, who headed the Quds Force, the foreign operations arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, was killed in January in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad. **PHOTO: AFP**

strife in the region. Earlier this month, US President Donald Trump thanked Iran for releasing the American hostage Michael White, saying that, "it shows a

deal is possible'. "I just got off the phone with former American hostage Michael White, who is now in Zurich after being released from Iran. He will be on a U.S. plane shortly, and is coming home..." Trump had tweeted. "...to the United States! We have now brought more than 40 American hostages and detainees back home since I took office. Thank you to Iran, it shows a deal is possible!" he added. On Monday, Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo said the United States has activated the sanctions it had prepared against Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) for allegedly carrying cargoes of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) .—ANI ■

Trump to resume campaign rallies this month as states relax Covid restrictions

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump is expected to restart his "Keep America Great" rallies in upcoming weeks, his campaign team has said, following several months off the trail amid the coronavirus pandemic. "Americans are ready to get back to action and so is President Trump," Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale said on Monday in a statement cited by

The Washington Post. "The Great American Comeback is real and the rallies will be tremendous. You'll again see the kind of crowds and enthusiasm that Sleepy Joe Biden can only dream of," Parscale added. Parscale had previously said the rallies would probably resume in late summer. But Trump has been increas-

ingly determined to get back out on the road, fueled by polling that shows him trailing presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden five months out from the November election, according to officials who were not authorized to speak publicly about the campaign's plans. The pandemic, which has claimed the lives of at least 109,000 Americans, has grounded

Trump's campaign for the longest stretch since he announced his candidacy five years ago. In recent weeks, states have begun relaxing their restrictions, although it remains unclear whether governors and local officials will be open to holding the types of large-scale rallies that Trump has credited with helping to propel him to the White House in 2016. — ANI ■

US and Russia to resume nuclear talks, but China casts cloud

MOSCOW—Russia called Tuesday on the United States to make a "positive" proposal as the powers open talks on a major disarmament treaty, warning that US insistence on including China could scuttle efforts.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov will meet in Vienna on June 22 with US envoy Marshall Billingslea to start negotiations on New START, which

expires in February. President Donald Trump has walked out on a number of international agreements but voiced a general interest in preserving New START, which obliged the United States and Russia to halve their inventories of strategic nuclear missile launchers.

But the Trump administration says that a successor to New START, a Cold War legacy negotiated under Barack Obama, should bring in China — whose nuclear arsenal is growing but remains significantly smaller than those of Russia and the United States. Addressing the Council on Foreign Relations by videoconference, Ryabkov described the US willingness to start negotiations as "good news" but said: "The ball is on the American part of the court." — AFP ■



Military vehicles carry surface-to-air missiles in an October 2019 parade in Tiananmen Square to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. **PHOTO: AFP**

Peru reopens beaches to surfers and bathers

LIMA—Surfers and bathers are allowed back on Peru's beaches despite the national lockdown remaining in place, authorities said on Tuesday. Beaches will re-open gradually under certain restrictions, such as limiting users to no more than one hour in the sea. Wearing masks when not in the water will be mandatory. Bathers will only be allowed if they are alone, and beaches will only be open at certain times of the day. Social distancing will apply when the beaches are open. Surfing is a hugely popular sport in Peru with more than 60,000 practitioners, and many popular surf beaches are located in and around the capital Lima. The local municipality in the Miraflores district of Lima said on Twitter that beachgoers should "avoid using vehicles to arrive at the beach."

Miraflores is a popular neighborhood among tourists and boasts five kilometers (three miles) of coastline, including the largest number of surf beaches in the capital. While surfers will be allowed to ride the waves, surf schools are not allowed to open nor rent out boards. As well as surfing, other water sports such as wind-surfing, sailing and swimming are allowed. Peru surpassed 200,000 coronavirus cases on Tuesday, making the South American country the eighth worst-hit nation in the world.—AFP ■

Honda cyberattack halts plants in India, Brazil



Honda said the cyberattack was still affecting at least four plants globally. PHOTO: AFP

TOKYO—Honda plants in Brazil and India have halted operations as the Japanese carmaker battles to recover from a cyberattack that affected several factories worldwide. The cyberattack at the beginning of the week targeted Honda’s internal servers and spread a virus through the company’s systems, a spokes-

woman told AFP on Wednesday. Motorcycle plants in India and Brazil were still out of action following the attack, while a four-wheel vehicle plant in Turkey resumed operations on Wednesday, the spokeswoman said. The firm was “still investigating details”, she said. In total, the cyberattack af-

ected 11 Honda plants -- including five in the US, according to local media reports. All US plants have resumed operations, the spokeswoman said, declining to elaborate further. She said the suspension would have only a limited impact on Honda’s business globally.—AFP ■

Cambodia inks deal to export mangoes to China

PHNOM PENH —Cambodia has reached a key agreement with China to export mangoes to the Asian giant, the government said Wednesday. Agriculture Minister Veng Sakhon told Kyodo News that under the deal, which he signed Tuesday with Chinese Ambassador Wang Wentian, Cambodia will be permitted to export 500,000 tonnes of fresh mangoes per year to China. The agreement, which covers phytosanitary requirements for the export of mangoes, was hailed by both sides as a milestone in agricultural cooperation between the two countries. Currently, Cambodia exports mangoes to seven countries including South Korea, Russia and France. Last year it exported over 58,000 tonnes of fresh mangoes. The exports to China will involve some 20 mango farming companies as well as a South Korean-owned treatment facility. Mangoes are the second Cambodian agricultural product to be approved for export to China following bananas, which were given the green light in 2019.—Kyodo ■

S.Korean banks’ corporate lending posts biggest May growth

SEOUL—South Korean banks’ corporate lending posted the biggest May growth as companies rushed to secure liquidity on worry about the COVID-19 outbreak, central bank data showed Wednesday. Banks’ lending to companies amounted to 945.1 trillion won (793.2 billion U.S. dollars) as of the end of May, up 16 trillion won (13.4 billion U.S. dollars) from a month earlier, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK). It marked the biggest May expansion since relevant data began to be compiled in June 2009. The corporate lending soared 27.9 trillion won (23.4 billion U.S. dollars) in April and 18.7 trillion won (15.7 billion U.S. dollars) in March respectively.—AFP ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
DEPARTMENT OF HYDROPOWER IMPLEMENTATION

Invitation to tender for the Design, Supply and Supervision of erection and commissioning of Hydraulic Steel Structure and Electromechanical Works for Nam Pa Nga Hydropower Project.

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, **Department of Hydropower Implementation (DHPI)**, hereinafter called the Employer, seeks to invites qualified Contractors and/or Joint Ventures to submit Tenders for the **design, supply and supervision of erection and commissioning of Hydraulic Steel Structure and Electromechanical works for Nam Pa Nga Small Hydropower Project (Delivered Duty Paid - at Site Basis)**.

2. The project is located on the Nampanga Chaung, one of the main tributaries of Chindwin River, on the territory of the Homalin Township area, Sagaing Region of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

3. A complete set of Tender documents can be purchased within office hours upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **300,000 MMK (Three Hundred Thousand in Myanmar Kyat)** at the following office by **June 25, 2020**.

Procurement Branch
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Office Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Telephone: 009567-8104189, 009567-8104190, 009567-8104191
E-mail : procurement.dhpi@moe.gov.mm

4. **Tender Submission Date** is 9th of July, 2020 at 13:00 (Myanmar Standard Time).

5. Tenderers must be submitted the proposals to the address above on **Tender Submission Date**. Any late proposal shall be rejected.

6. All tenders shall be rejected if they submit their proposals by electronic or express services.

7. Technical envelop will be opened in the presence of tenderer’s representatives, who choose to attend at the address above after **13:00 hours** (Myanmar Standard Time) on **Tender Submission Date**.

8. Any request for the extension of **Tender Submission Date** shall not be allowed.

Tender Committee
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Nay Pyi Taw

Virus crisis forces Spain’s Inditex into the red

ARTEIXO—Spain’s Inditex, which owns fashion chain Zara, said Wednesday it would focus on growing its online business after posting its first Q1 loss in nearly 20 years as the pandemic devastated sales. “The COVID-19 pandemic has had a material impact on our operations as lockdown and restrictions have been in place in most markets,” executive chairman Pablo Isla told analysts. The textile giant posted a first-quarter loss of 409 million euros, compared with a net profit of 734 million euros in 2019, in what was its first loss since it went public in 2001. The figure included a provision of 308 million euros for work in its shops which was already under way before the crisis took hold. Sales plummeted by 44 per cent to 3.3 billion euros (\$3.7 billion) from 5.9 billion euros a year earlier, with the group closing up to 88 per cent of its stores at the height of the lockdown, among them Zara, Massimo Dutti, Bershka, Oysho and Pull&Bear. But online sales, which accounted for 14 percent in 2019, posted strong growth of 50 percent during the first quarter, and even increased by 95 per cent year-on-year in April, the company said.—AFP ■

The coronavirus is having a 'severe but temporary' impact on Zara’s business, as one analyst put it. PHOTO: AFP

Embassy of India, Yangon
Tender Notice

Requirement of Manpower – one Receptionist, one Office Assistant and one MTS. Details are available in the Embassy’s website <https://embassyofindiayangon.gov.in/> Tender - Tender (Embassy’s) and CPP Portal. The last date is **24 June, 2020**.

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Australian media companies to cut jobs further amid COVID-19 downturn

SYDNEY—Two major Australian media companies, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the News Corp Australia, were both set to cut jobs further to save the cost, Australian Associated Press (AAP) reported on Tuesday.

To meet the Australian federal government’s budget cut, the ABC management said they were prepared to cut more than 200 positions across all divisions in the company, with voluntary redundancies offered to its staff.

“The budget gap of 41 million Australian dollars (28 million U.S. dollars) per annum means that despite our best efforts some of our services will be affected and, regrettably, there will be redundancies,” ABC’s managing director David Anderson said. “As we finalize those



News Corp will stop printing more than 100 regional and local newspapers. - Pic source: News Corp

change proposals, we have decided to provide employees in divisions where it is anticipated that more than 10 redundancies will be required with an opportunity to express an interest in redundancy.”

Meanwhile, staff at News Corp Australia are told at the same day to expect dozens of jobs to be

axed as the company will merge the production and editorial positions in its two metropolitan newspapers, The Daily Telegraph in Sydney and The Herald Sun in Melbourne.

The company’s national newspaper, The Australian will also cut “a

small number” of staff but likely to keep its’ editorial positions separate from metropolitan papers.

Australia’s media sector has gone through widespread job cuts and closure in recent months with hundreds of jobs lost during the process.—Xinhua ■

Egypt cleans up for return of tourists

CAIRO—Hotels have ramped up hygiene, archaeological sites have been sanitized and beaches cleaned up -- Egypt is gearing up to welcome back tourists kept away by the coronavirus pandemic.

“We are laying the groundwork for tourists from around the world to find this destination ... in exemplary sanitary conditions,” Egypt’s antiquities and tourism minister, Khaled al-Anani, told AFP.

Egypt has since March halted air traffic and shuttered archaeological sites, museums and hotels to stem the spread of COVID-19.

The North African country, like others, has in recent weeks started loosening confinement measures as it looks to slowly open up to tourists in the summer season.

“We are waiting for our curve (of contaminations) to stabilize,” the minister said.

Conditions for international tourism will be announced in the “coming days”, he said, adding that the government was “not rushing” it.

“All we want is to make sure that tourists face no problems when we open up.”

Egypt’s health ministry has so

far registered around 35,000 COVID-19 cases, including more than 1,200 fatalities.

The minister said Red Sea resorts including in South Sinai will be the first to open along with Mediterranean beaches west of the coastal city of Alexandria.

Top tourist attractions such as the Giza pyramids and Luxor’s Karnak temple will also reopen to tourists but with controls.

Luxor’s star attraction, the tomb of Tutankhamun, for example, will grant entry to a maximum of 10 people at a time, Anani said.—AFP ■

Invitation for Prequalification

Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Name of Project: Myanmar Power System Efficiency and Resilience Project
Contract Title: Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant of around 300MW Net Power Capacity
Sector: Energy
Prequalification Reference No.: EPGE-PQ-01/2020
Date: June 11, 2020

1. The Government of Myanmar has applied for financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Ywama new Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) power plant and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design, Supply, and Installation of a CCGT Power Plant of around 300MW Net Power Capacity.
2. Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) intends to prequalify contractors for performance of the construction of a power plant at the Ywama site, located in the suburb of Yangon. The plant will be built using the combined cycle gas technology and the scope of works is for a full turn-key power plant; including the demolition of existing units, engineering, procurement, construction and installation of equipment, testing, and commissioning of the new power plant. The time for completion of the facilities is estimated to be of 36 months. The detailed scope of the contract is outlined in Section VII of this Prequalification Document. It is expected that the Request for Bids will be made in 2020.
3. Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures as specified in the World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018 (“Procurement Regulations”), and is open to all eligible Applicants as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from EPGE at the address below during office hours 09.30 to 16.30 hr (Myanmar Standard Time). A complete set of the prequalification document in English language can be available by interested Applicants on the submission of a written application to the address below by email from the date of announcement. The document will be sent by e-mail.
5. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes delivered to the address below by August 20, 2020, 14:00 hr Myanmar Standard Time and be clearly marked “Application to Prequalify for Ywama New Combine Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant(ICB EPGE-PQ-01/2020)” Late applications may be rejected by Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE).

Attn: Managing Director
Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Phone: +95 9 2225181, +95 9 5133511
E-mail: ywamaproject@gmail.com

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M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (022S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (022S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/TMT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

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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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM DAY NOTICE

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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 BEN LINE AGENCIES
(S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

BOARD STRUCTURE FOR CRISES TIMES: A CHANGE OF ROLES

By: Cherry Trivedi, Aung Myat Khaing and Benedikt Bevec

COMPANIES operating in Myanmar undergo a rapid development ever since the opening to the world economy. Catching up to international standards is on the agenda of many organizations, but often hindered by externally inflicted crises such as natural disasters or political instability. Strong leadership in difficult times is essential to grow a business and make it thrive over a long period of time. The board of directors can directly influence which path a company takes during a crisis and how it channels its assets and networks. This requires a conscience awareness of how the board is composed and which role it plays when push comes to shove. Pre-defined crisis management plans, a balanced-board, and sufficient information supply frameworks play a crucial way in weathering economic and natural turmoil.

THE BOARD'S ROLE TO PLAY

A crisis does not mean that there is a bad day in the office; a crisis can affect multiple levels of a company, such as a company's value and reputation or

even its very existence. It will always require an executive-level response, a so-called board or committee of the board. Under such circumstances, board members are often challenged in ways that may be unfamiliar to them as they are drawn into a more active role.

Based on MIOD's certified members' experience sharing, the frequency and velocity of crises is growing. The last decade alone has brought us the banking crisis, political transformation, Cyclone Nargis, trading policies changes, and not to mention high profile governance failures. These similar kinds of crises will be happening in this increasingly volatile environment, speeded up by climate change. It is no longer possible to simply say "this crisis may not relate to our type of business" or "ya par tall".

During this COVID-19 period, scholars and business operators keep questioning how was high-level leadership of the company involved with crisis handling and its organization? How and when was the board involved?

The board of directors is an essential element in corporate

governance. It has an imperative duty to ensure organizations have an appropriate corporate governance structure and culture. The fiduciary duty inherits that decisions are made to the benefit of the whole company its shareholders, and ideally to the benefit of all stakeholders.

The board of directors is the trustee of the shareholders' interest and is charged with fiduciary responsibility. In the context of corporate governance, the meaning of fiduciary is unwavering, trustful, undoubting. Failure of such often leads to significant operational losses and missed opportunities; and materializes on the (triple) bottom of a company. Boards are responsible for safeguarding the corporate governance and viability of the organization. How crises are handled are, thus, a central preoccupation for the board of every organization, regardless of the size and local, regional, or global focus.

If the frequency and velocity of crises are increasing continuously since many years, why do boards still struggle to be prepared.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUFFICIENT INFORMATION SUPPLY

A board is only able to make educated decisions based on the information it is supplied with. Insufficient information supply is a key challenge to this. Reports and data are generated in the course of daily operation, usually under the supervision of senior management. CEOs and managers, who are in contact with the operations team on a daily basis, have an information advantage over the board and are gatekeepers on which information will be forwarded and presented to the board members. This poses a potential threat as the top management is usually compensated on measurable key performance indicators. In Myanmar particularly, where many companies still op-



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

erate on manual data collection and lack digital infrastructure such as Enterprise Resource Planning software or Customer Relationship Management systems, senior management has an increased influence of the accuracy of supplied information.

Secondly, board members

members. CEOs present only facts that supported the deal without adding out-of-the-box thinking related to risk mitigation.

Thirdly, board rooms often decide their deals before inclusive discussions, and make business cases based on older

If we are all in agreement on the decision - then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about.

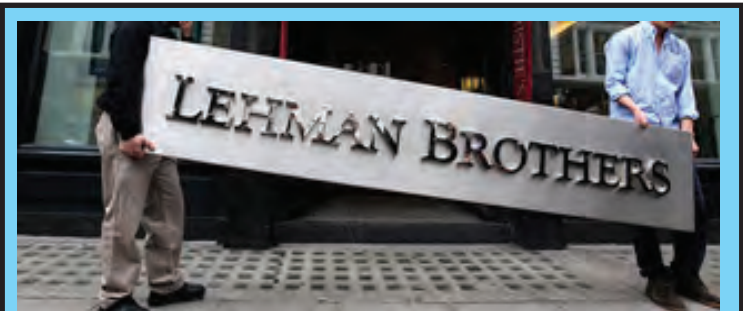
- Alfred P. Sloan (1875 – 1966)

are in a difficult situation to evaluate which information is relevant and indicates risk. When China first reported the cluster infections of COVID-19 to the World Health Organization in December 2019, it was not yet foreseeable how this information will influence companies, especially those not related to the healthcare sector or not operating internationally. Most boards make decisions based on their limited knowledge received from outside of board rooms. Mostly top executives convince the chairman of the board or board committees of a deal's value and together they set out to convince the remaining board

assumptions of the way of doing business. Board members and specific committees too often rely on a person or a single source opinion as a trusted expert. Over the positive assumption, they identify some obvious risks, but patiently assure the board that executives understand those risks and would have them all under control and well monitored.

BOARD COMPOSITION AS A RISK MITIGATION TOOL

Who serves on an organization's board plays an important role in the ability to monitor and offer support to the manage-



The bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc, is a prominent negative example of information processing failure. Lehman Brothers was a financial services firm investing in high-risk real estate mortgages. The company went bankrupt in 2008 due a drastic devaluation of invested assets. Stakeholders that signalled concerns about the high leverage risk this investment strategy inherited included shareholder of competitors, the Securities and Exchange Commission and selected government departments of the United States. Yet, concerned stakeholders had no systematic way to reach the board of directors of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc.



of board members is still an open question and there is no perfect answer to it. What is more important anyways, is not how many people serve on the board, but who serves on it.

Independent Directors

American energy company Enron Corp. melted down in 2001 because it lacked independent directors, and several are quite long in the tooth. Corporate boards have been shaken up and made over. In Myanmar it is mostly public companies that have more independent directors these days, and nearly all of them (up from roughly a third just a few years ago) have appointed lead or presiding directors to help ensure the board's vigilance in company affairs.

Independent directors are board members that are not employed, nor have material or pecuniary relationships to the company. They often come from different industries and have the function to bring in an outside perspective. Questions asked by independent directors might sound trivial to industry-insiders but can reveal fundamental misunderstandings amongst board members. Having an increased number of independent directors helps mitigating risk and avert crises. As they work in different industries, independent directors can enrich the board with creative solutions to current or future challenges. Their engagement with related stakeholders provides independent directors with a broader oversight over systematic risks and shifts across industries. An increased number of independent directors is a good assessment tool to evaluate information presented to the board and compare it to relevant metrics from their respective industries.

Furthermore, independent directors have a higher motivation to monitor the company, since they face an increased reputational risk by leading companies outside their specific industry. Mismanagement and maladministration of a company will affect his/her reputation in this industry, as well as the industry the independent directors originate from.

Age Heterogeneity

This parameter refers to the age difference between the youngest board member and the oldest. A certain degree of experience is required to be a good board member. In the fast-changing economic envi-

ronment of Myanmar, age does not necessarily translate into wisdom. Business models and consumer behaviour change rapidly, and the younger generation is keener to keep up with the change. A balanced board consists of different generations that, in crisis times, combine the experience and wisdom of older generations with new ideas and practices of the younger generations.

The Role Of Risk Management Committees

A risk management committee is a dedicated workforce compiled of board members that are experienced in risk management. The committee's main duty is to oversee risk policies and risk management practices of the company. It is further in charge to monitor systematic risk inside and outside the industry, as well as global risk such as the COVID-19 pandemic or a financial crisis.

When a crisis scenario emerges, board members, who are responsible for the well-be-

ing of the company, must display their care for each individual inside and around the organization. That includes daily conference calls and engagements with all levels of the company. Such occurrences could turn out to be the most important engagements a person has during his or her tenure. To make a smooth transition from a monitoring board member on observation and advisory duty, to an active board member executing tangible actions, a Crisis Management Plan is required in any organization, so that it could answer before the crisis causes too much damage.

Crisis experience may not be a key requirement when companies and shareholders place board members, but it is in these situations, where good boards can have an impeccable impact on the company and develop a truly board-driven competitive advantage.

The chair of the risk management committee must make sure that information provided to the board is trustworthy, re-

liable and actually reaches the board room. This includes fostering relationships with stakeholders, especially those that have an interest in the success of the company. A functioning risk management committee is responsible that critical information can reach the board room from either insiders or from external sources.

Myanmar is a country that is especially exposed to a multitude of risks. The recent opening and fast development of the local economy causes a rapid change in business models and consumer behaviours, as well as a dependence of trade activities with neighbouring countries. Political instability and natural disasters pose further risks that can disrupt a company's operation with little to no warning. A well-balanced board and active risk management committees are proven measurements companies can apply to avoid or mitigate disruption as much as possible.



ment, regarding risk mitigation and risk policies. It influences how information is requested, processed, and interpreted. A well-balanced board is more likely to identify risk earlier and make strategic decisions that prepare an organization for the future, or immediate disruptions. Key parameters for board composition are board size, the number of independent directors, and age heterogeneity.

Board Size

How many persons should serve on a board differs for every organization, but it has shown that having between 7 to 14 people sitting on the board of directors lowers the impact risk has on a company. More board members increase the capacity to monitor the company and understand the informational that is presented to them more effectively. Having too many people appointed as board members, though, inherits the risk for delayed decision-making as it is more difficult to find consensus. Globally, the number of board members averages around 9 – which is a remarkably stable average over the years and across countries.

Bigger boards are usually found at large conglomerates and globally operating enterprises, such as Wal-Mart or General Electric (GE). The ideal number

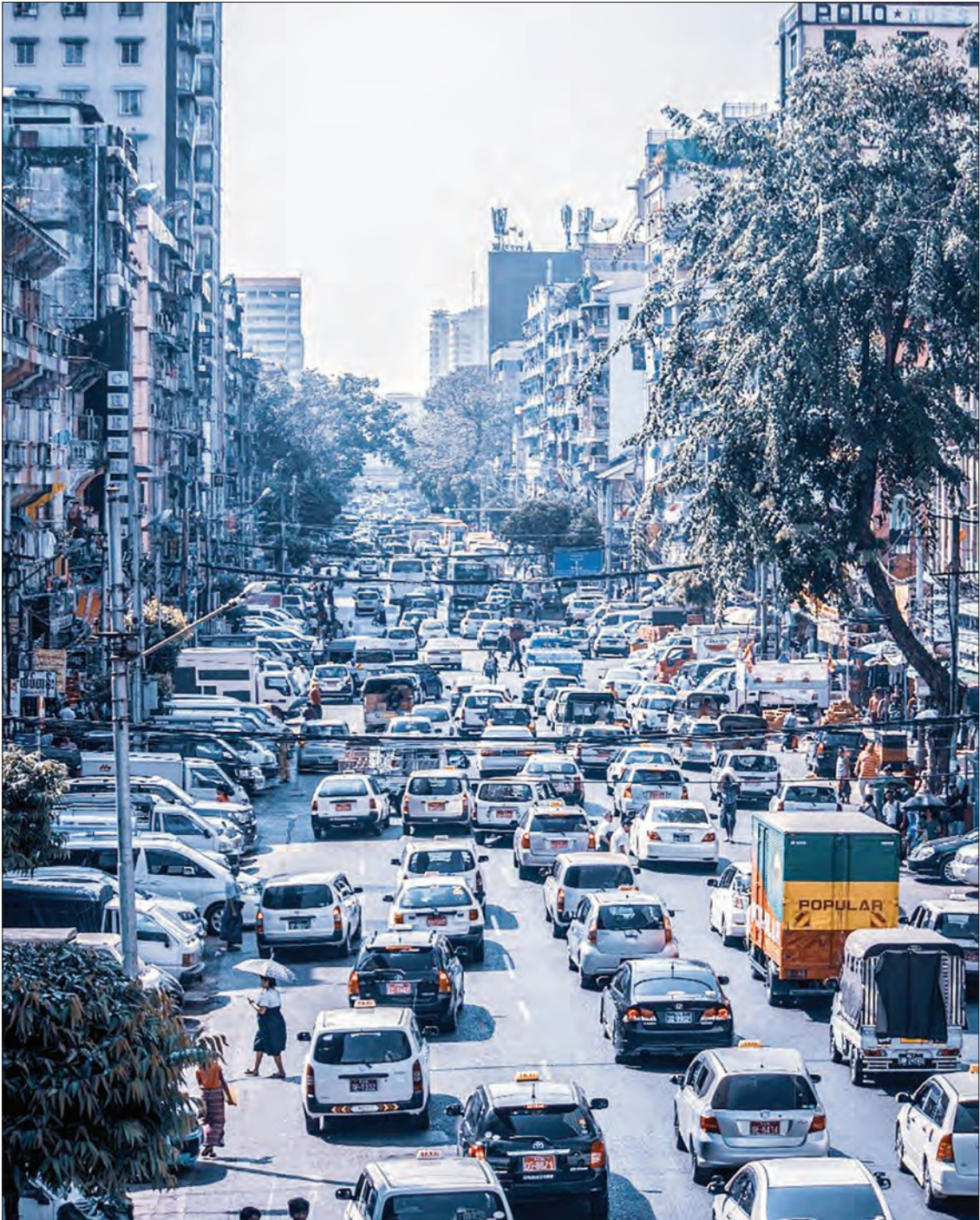


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Myanmar National League scheduled to resume on 16 July

MYANMAR National League matches which have postponed for the global outbreak of pandemic in March is being planned to restart on 16 July, according to the Myanmar National League committee meeting held at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

President of the Myanmar Football Federation and Myanmar National League Committee, U Zaw Zaw, vice president of the MFF and MNL Committee, Dr Sai Sam Tun, vice president of the MFF and owner of the Yangon United, U Pye Phyto Tay Za, owners of the Myanmar

National League clubs, football authorities from MFF and MNL attended the meeting to discuss restarting the Myanmar National League matches next month.

Upon restarting the MNL matches, football authorities will request permission to hold the national league matches from government in the couples of day.

When the government allowed to hold the tourney, Myanmar National League matches will be held from 16 July to 12 September at Thuwunna Stadium, Yangon United Sports Complex and Padonmar

Stadium and Myanmar National League II matches will be launched from 22 July to 28 August at Padonmar Stadium, Salin Stadium and Bahan M-3 artificial turf and South Dagon Stadium.

Next, General Aung San Shield matches will be held from 16 July to 26 September at Thuwunna Stadium, Padonmar Stadium, Salin Stadium, Bahan M-3 artificial turf and South Dagon Stadium.

Detailed fixtures will be released soon, according to the Myanmar National League Committee.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



U Zaw Zaw, President of the Myanmar Football Federation and Myanmar National League, discusses on restarting football matches at the yesterday's MNL Committee Meeting. **PHOTO: MNL**

Stoke manager O'Neill tests positive for coronavirus



O'Neill tested positive for coronavirus after testing negative on five previous occasions. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

LONDON — A friendly between Manchester United and Stoke was called off at the last minute after the manager of the Championship side, Michael O'Neill, was diagnosed with

coronavirus.

Stoke had arrived at United's Carrington training base on Tuesday and were in the academy building when they found out.

"Stoke City can confirm that manager Michael O'Neill has tested positive for the Covid-19 virus following the latest round of testing on Monday (June 8)," read a club statement.

"O'Neill had tested negative in the previous five rounds of testing.

"He will now follow the relevant guidance and undergo a period of isolation, whilst continuing to be in regular virtual contact with his coaching staff and players."

O'Neill's assistant Billy McKinlay will prepare the team for their game with Reading on June 20 when the Championship resumes after being suspended in March due to the pandemic.

Stoke are just three points above the relegation zone with nine games remaining.—AFP ■

Roger Federer out of tennis until 2021 after knee surgery

PARIS — Twenty-time Grand Slam singles champion Roger Federer said Wednesday he would be sidelined until 2021 after undergoing his second knee operation in a matter of months.

The 38-year-old Swiss said he needed follow-up arthroscopic surgery "a few weeks ago" after undergoing a similar keyhole procedure in February.

Federer, whose last Grand Slam win was the 2018 Australian Open, said he "experienced a setback during (his) initial rehabilitation".

"I plan to take the necessary time to be 100 percent ready to play at my highest level," he said in a statement on Twitter.

"I will be missing my fans and the tour dearly but I will look forward to seeing everyone back on tour at the start of the 2021 season." The announcement is likely to renew speculation about retirement for Federer, who holds the record for men's Grand Slam singles titles and was last month named as the world's highest-paid athlete.

Federer, whose first major trophy was in 2003, lies just ahead of his fierce rivals Rafael Nadal (19) and Novak Djokovic (17) on the all-time list.

After the initial operation Federer had originally planned to return for the now cancelled grass court season this month. His last tournament match was on January 30 in the Australian Open semi-final, where he lost to eventual champion Djokovic.

—AFP ■

Beyond bizarre: Thomas has 'different feel' as PGA Tour returns

LOS ANGELES — Justin Thomas says getting back into the swing of things on the PGA Tour after a three-month break due to the coronavirus pandemic has a different feel to it.

It means daily temperature checks, filling out health questionnaires, knowing where the hand-sanitizing stations are and social distancing on the tee boxes.

The Charles Schwab Chal-

lenge will be full of firsts as the PGA Tour's restart begins Thursday in Texas with the 148-field teeing off at the Colonial Country Club.

"I would say 2020 is beyond a bizarre year so far, and especially in the world of sports it's just going to be different," said the former world number one Thomas.

"If we all want to get back and play the game that we love

we're just going to have to get over the fact that it's going to be different and be a little weird."

World number one Rory McIlroy and second-ranked Jon Rahm of Spain lead a strong field that includes 15 of the world's top 20 players.

World number three Brooks Koepka, defending champion Kevin Na, Dustin Johnson and Phil Mickelson are also

teeing up at the course in Fort Worth, Texas.

Some of the sport's top players from outside of North America decided to skip the event because travelling to the US would mean a two-week quarantine, including 10th-ranked Englishman Tommy Fleetwood.—AFP ■



Justin Thomas is looking forward to playing this week at the Colonial, the first event of the PGA's restart which will feature new health and safety guidelines and no spectators. **PHOTO: AFP**