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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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We have successfully overcome the first COVID wave. We estimate that the second wave will be more difficult. No matter what, hope for the best and prepare for the worst: State Counsellor

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that the first COVID wave has been successfully overcome; the second wave would be more difficult. She said no matter what, "we should hope for the best and prepare for the worst". This was what she wrote:

There is a saying, "make cotton yarn while the moon shines". The English would say "make hay while the sun shines". This is just to remind us that we should do what needs to be done at the opportune time.

Since this is the rainy season, this is the best time to capture rainwater and store water. This is to make preparations to prevent water shortages during the hot summer. Something like, "savings for the future".

All countries have to try to confront and solve whatever happens by thinking about what could happen in the future. It is the perennial duty of a government to make sure that they have enough food stockpiles and financial resources to overcome an emergency like COVID which is difficult to predict in advance.

> It is the perennial duty of a government to make sure that they have enough food stockpiles and financial resources...

I wish to say that a "reservoir of future spiritual resources" is more important, if not equally important, than saving physical resources. These may be regarded as a boundless supply of spiritual heritages for use by future generations. Historical processes defined by the triumph of goals and intentions will endure as such heritages. We can save such heritages only with the participation of the people.

We have successfully overcome the first COVID wave. We estimate that the second wave will be more difficult. No matter what, hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

The Venerable Shwetaung Gone Sayadaw has given us this advice which should be taken to heart and forever fixed in our minds: there are four types of "viriya" (determined effort); the first is to make a decision to start an initiative; the second is to start implementing according to the decision; the third is to keep on implementing although difficulties are encountered; the fourth is to keep on implementing with unflagging zeal even if the endeavour seems to be failing.

We are now at the stage when we are transitioning from the second stage to the third stage of "viriya". Let us all try to leave good viriya heritages for future generations.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 15 June, total figure reaches 262

Updated at 8 pm, 15 June 2020

Total Case	New Case (14-15 June)	Total Death Tally
262	1	6

Recovery Update on 15 June 2020 after two consecutive tests

Total Recovery	New Recovery	Discharged from Hospital
175	8	160

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 15 June 2020

New PUI
35

1 new case of COVID-19 on 15 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
262	63	Male	Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State	No	Yes, Bangladesh	People's Hospital, Buthidaung	Positive	Held under quarantine (Buthidaung Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

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Announcement on Extension of the Precautionary Restriction Measures Relating to Control of the COVID-19 Pandemic until 30 June 2020

1. With a view to the further strengthening of measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has issued the following announcements regarding temporary entry restrictions for visitors from all countries. All those restrictions were extended until 15 June 2020 by the Ministry's announcement dated 1 June 2020.

   (a) Announcement dated 15 March 2020 regarding precautionary measures for all travellers visiting Myanmar;
   (b) Announcement dated 20 March 2020 regarding additional precautionary measures for travellers visiting Myanmar and temporary suspension of issuance of visa on Arrival and e-visa;
   (c) Announcement dated 24 March 2020 regarding additional precautionary measures for travellers from all countries visiting Myanmar;
   (d) Announcement dated 28 March 2020 regarding temporary suspension of all types of visas (including social visit visas) and visa exemption services.

2. In order to continue its effective response measures to protect the population of the country from the risks of importation and spread of the COVID-19, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has decided to extend the afore-mentioned entry restriction measures until 30 June 2020.
3. In case of urgent official missions or compelling reasons, foreign nationals, including diplomats and United Nations officials, who wish to travel to Myanmar by available relief or special flights, may contact the nearest Myanmar Mission for possible exception with regard to certain visa restrictions. However, all visitors must abide by existing directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports relating to the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated. 15 June 2020

MoE, EU discuss coordination in education sector

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi (left photo) holds a virtual meeting with the delegation led by EU Ambassador Mr Kristian Schmidt on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi held a videoconference with EU Ambassador Mr Kristian Schmidt and delegation on the works for education sector yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the Union Minister talked on COVID-19 Response and Rehabilitation Plan for Myanmar education sector which was adopted in May, resuming highschool classes on 21 July and step-by-step reopening of middle and primary classes, online course and the 5-days training for health education, new curriculum for Grade 4,7 and 10 and conducting training courses for over 35,000 trainee teachers across the country through Myanmar Digital Education Platform.

Director-General Daw Si Si Pyone from the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and Director-General Daw Khine Khine Aung from the OAGU made discussions.

After the speech of the EU Ambassador, both sides discussed preparations for school reopening, implementation of recommendations from the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, budget allocations to regions and states with lesser centralization, the phase 2 of National Education Strategic Plan (2021-2030) and education development plans with the assistance of EU.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun and officials from the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Education and the Office of Auditor-General of the Union.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

One more COVID-19 case on 15 June, total figure reaches 262

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 figure reached 262 after one more case, who returned from Bangladesh, was reported on 15 June, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 262 confirmed cases, six died, 175 have discovered and 160 have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

MoI, MoNREC, MoHT to hold press briefings on 17 June

THE Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will hold joint press briefings on their fourth-year performances at the Office No 7 of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 17 June. — MNA

MoSWRR distributes healthcare items at IDP camps in Shan, Rakhine states

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provided healthcare items to the camps of internally displaced persons in support of the battle with COVID-19 in Shan and Rakhine states.

The four IDP camps in Kutkai Township of Shan State received four hand speakers and four memory sticks with audio files of COVID-19 awareness campaign on 13 June.

Similarly, 12 temporary IDP shelters in Kyauktaw Township of Rakhine State received 11,368 soap bars, 11,368 cloth face masks, 4,988 bottles of hand sanitizer, 12 hand speakers, 12 thermometers, 12 memory sticks with audio files of COVID-19 awareness campaign and 12 vinyl sheet of COVID-19 awareness campaign yesterday. The ministry is supporting people in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, regions and states in fighting against the COVID-19.— MNA ■

(Translated by TTN)

An official (left) presents the hand speaker to a local man as part of MoSWRR's efforts to fight against COVID-19. **PHOTO: MNA**

"People are the key"

Promulgating Ordinance on Union Taxation Law

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Ordinance No. 1/2020

7th Waning of Nayon, 1382 ME
(12 June 2020)

Union Taxation Law Ordinance

THE Office of the President has promulgated the following ordinance under the powers conferred by Article 32 of the Union Government Law in accordance with the 'Overcoming as One: COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan' for the recovery of crisis-hit businesses resulting from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

1. The ordinance shall be called the Union Taxation Law Ordinance
2. The ordinance shall have effect for the 2020-2021 Tax Year.
3. The words in this ordinance shall have the same meanings as in the Income-Tax Law and the Union Taxation Law 2019.
4. In order to implement Goal (2) of the "Overcoming as One: COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan", to reduce the impact on the private sector by promoting investments, trade and banking enterprises, the following tax exemptions have been permitted: -
   (a) Non-refundable tax credit on 10 per cent of total additional wage and salary in 2019-2020 Income Year
   (b) Deduction of the amount equivalent to 125 per cent of total additional wage and salary in 2019-2020 Income Year from the income as the expenditure
   (c) Non-refundable tax credit on 10 per cent of total value for additional inputs of capital equipment in 2019-2020 Income Year
   (d) One time depreciation on the amount equivalent to 125 per cent of reduced cost on additional capital equipment for 2019-2020 Income Year
5. The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry shall issue Orders to specify which businesses are entitled to enjoy the tax relief plan in accordance with paragraph 4 of this ordinance.

Sd/-Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Road safety council meets for UN Regulation on safety requirements of helmet

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung speaks during the meeting on safety requirements of helmet in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE National Road Safety Council held a meeting on safety of helmets in line with the UNECE Regulation No.22 (Safety Helmets) yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, in his capacity as the chairman of Management Sub-committee of the council, talked about goals of the council in 2020 to decrease road accidents, implementation of the UN regulation, quality of motorcycle helmets, using standard helmets to prevent serious head injuries in the accidents and the implementing state-departments in this issue. Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, as the vice-chairman of sub-committee, explained the works of Road Management Department to decrease accidents on motorcycle ways, awareness campaigns for wearing helmets in rural areas, designating specific route for motorcycles in major roads, coordination with experts for road safety and stands of roads.

Director-General U Zaw Min Oo from the Department of Road Transport Administration briefed on workings for implementation of the UNECE Regulation No.22 (Safety Helmets).

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo and Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo discussed public awareness to use quality halmets and import of halmets, followed by discussions of officials for implementation of the UN Regulation. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

YUDE to open two fully online certificate courses

THE Yangon University of Distance Education will soon be opening two online certificate courses from its Chemistry Department and led by the Human Resource Development Department.

According to U Aung Khaing Than, Head of the Academic Affairs Department of YUDE, one of the course will be on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and the other on Water and Sanitation for Occupational Purposes (WSOP) and will be taught online through a web-based teaching system. Both courses will be 3-months long and are fully online certificate courses.

The courses are open to students who have taken the matriculation exams, graduated civil servants, and company or civil society organization members who can take them from any region or workplace they are located at. Registering and paying fees can be conducted online and application forms can be sent to www.udechem.edu.mm starting from 16 June.

A hundred students will be accepted and selected candidates will be informed either online or by phone. Admitted students must make payments with KBZ QuickPay starting from 18 June. Students will have received their username and password after successful payments and the courses will begin on 9 July.

Both courses will be three months long and cost K50,000 each. Classes will take 3 hours per week and instructions are available in the Myanmar and English Languages. Certificates of completion can be sent online or by mail.

Dr Thazin Lwin, the head of YUDE's Chemistry Department, said learning good manufacturing practices will inform people how daily food products are manufactured, quality maintenance, ensuring food safety and nutrition.

Course graduates will be able to work in any manufacturing industry systematically and safely and have higher chances of being employed by factories and workplaces. The Water and Sanitation for Occupational Purpose (WSOP) course aim to impart appropriate skills to maintain water resources, build the resilient human resource, and conserve the natural environment. In addition to providing skills related to water resource research and environmental conservation, the courses will also increase employment opportunities.—Myo Thitsar ■

(Translated by GNLM)

MoUGO, MoC, CBM hold press briefings on 4th-year performances

Senior officials from Ministry of Union Government Office give press briefing on their 4th-year performances in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Union Government Office, the Ministry of Construction and the Central Bank of Myanmar presented their 4th-year performances in press briefings in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Ministry of Union Government Office

Deputy Minister for Union Government Office U Tin Myint said that the ministry is putting emphasis on reform processes of the General Administration Department to implement people-centred development projects and perform effective services as per the motto of 'Transition starts with GAD', is functioning with four objectives of securing rule of law, community peace and tranquility, implementing government policies, realizing better administrative system and carrying out the people-centred regional development tasks, as well as setting up the people-centred better administrative system.

The main functions of GAD are land administration tasks, the management in excise, the collection of four kinds of revenues, the systematic formation of towns and villages, the village development tasks, the systematic registration of associations and organizations, the honouring titles, decorations and medals, and the managing of the immovable properties. Moreover, the GAD is performing the duties assigned by the President's Office, the Ministry of the Office of the Union Government and other ministries.

In the 4th-year period, the department completed 175 cases of land transfer, and issued 16,237 land grants, and 102 land grants for religious purpose and 52 ordination hall with tax exemption.

The GAD is collecting excise duty, land revenue, dam, embankment, levee and reservoir revenues, and mineral taxes. Over 71 per cent out of the estimated tax could be collected from October 2019 to May 2020.

'One Stop Shops' of the GAD in townships are providing services from 27 different sorts of units with 156 varieties of necessities of the public. In 2019 , a total of 1,399,074 services were offered to the public. The Mobile Service Delivery was offered during 1,865 field trips in 2019 and that the total number of services stood at 196,115 in remote villages.

The Ministry of Union Government Office is performing as the focal ministry in the central committee for solving land confiscation cases, and a total of 113,609. 242 acres of lands could be transferred.

The GAD has established its offices in all the towns and townships across the country, and the Region/State-level GAD officers are the secretaries of Region/State governments.

The Union Minister for Government Office is the member of National Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 and the secretary of COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee.

Officers and staff members of GAD are participating in COVID-19 measures and relief works, scrutinizing of returnees from foreign countries and sending them back home in coordination with the local governments, Hluttaw representatives, health workers, departmental officials and volunteers.

The ministry is providing effective services to the people in implementing a good governance in line with the government's motto 'Together with the people'.

Director-General of General Administration Department U Myint Than explained land management measures, dispute settlements, and transfer of unused lands by the ministries and organizations.

He also talked about issuing licences in excise management, increasing duty of this sector, formation of task forces at different levels and the ways of management and administration.

Based on the facts from field trips and oversea visits, the GAD has drafted its reform plan in 2019 that connects the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030), and its has also adopted the 6 areas and 15 targets based on 3 prioritized plans.

Deputy Permanent Secretary U Htet Aung explained implementation of the GAD Reform Framework (2019) and its implementation during the COVID-19 crisis.

Deputy Minister U Tin Myint and officials replied to the questions of media personnel on the issues of loan plan for staff members during COVID-19 period, legal actions against civil services officers and staff members who have shares in private companies to prevent conflicts of interest between the state duties and their businesses, inspecting the lists of food supplies for grassroots people in regions and states, addressing challenges on administrative sectors in Rakhine State, demarcation of border aeras and land confiscation cases.

Ministry of Construction

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin held talks on the 4th-year performances of the ministry to the media. He said that the Building Department has submitted the draft of Building Construction Industry Development Law to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, it will be published for the whole country after it has been approved by the Hluttaw.

Moreover, the ministry and the Myanmar Engineering Society are working together to produce English translation of the Myanmar National Building Code with the help of UN-Habitat, and the tasks has been completed up to 95 per cent.

Manuals of construction, fire and other safety measures are being drawn with the assistance of Korea.

The Deputy Minister also explained the works of Road Department and Bridge Department in the 4th year of government. The ministry increased traffic safety measures on Yangon-Mandalay highway. The number of vehicles used on this highway was around 3,000 in 2016, making over 700 traffic accidents and 170 death tolls per year. Although the number of daily vehicles on this highway increased to 5,000, the accidents and death tolls declined to 500 and 108 respectively in one year.

The Road Department has reduced 50 per cent charged at the 86 tolls for six months from 1 June to 30 November 2020.

The Department of Urban and Housing Development has drawn urban development projects in 21 townships this year, and is working together with international organizations for urban development plans, including constructions of 1,144 units of apartment in Yangon Region and 676 units of apartment in Ayeyawady Region. A total of 2,538 units of staff quarter were constructed in regions and states, and 676 in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay. The Korea Myanmar Industrial Complex (KMIC) is also under construction together with the Land and Housing Corporation (LH) from Korea.

The Department of Village Department is working for completion of 90 per cent rural roads with the total lengths of over 55,000 miles by 2030. In his Myanmar New Year Message on 17 April 2018, the President said that the Ministry of Construction will construct about 600 miles of rural roads. The ministry constructed 2,257 miles of road in 2018-2019 financial year, along with 540 concrete bridges, 22 wooden bridges, 17 Bailey bridges, 86 suspension bridges and 1,410 Box Culverts.

Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Lin explained construction of Gwa-Ngathaingchaung sea-side road which will help development of more hotel zones close to the beaches along the 100-mile-long concrete road with 24-ft width.

SEE PAGE-5

Ministry of Construction holds press conference on their fourth-year performances at the Office No.7 of Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

MoUGO, MoC, CBM hold press briefings on 4th-year performances

FROM PAGE-4

The Deputy Minister and officials answered to the media on matters related to rental apartment of retired civil service staff in Nay Pyi Taw, construction of temporary shelters for the returnees at Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre, Myitkyina-Sumprabum road, construction of roads and bridges in Rakhine State, the release of construction workers from arrest, time of inauguration of Paletwa bridge, participation of ministry in One Belt, One Road project, and damages of construction machinery in the armed conflicts.

Senior officials from the Central Bank of Myanmar give press briefing on their fourth-year performances at the Office No.7 of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Central Bank of Myanmar

Deputy Governor U Soe Min explained the 4th-year performance of the Central Bank of Myanmar. He said the CBM sets policies for interest rates to meet the monetary reserve target, setting the minimum reserve requirement for banks to deposit in the CBM, and implementing various financial policies such as Open Market Operations.

The CBM lowered the interest rate policy in 2020 from 7 to 3 percent to support businesses and lowered the minimum interest rate on deposits to 5 percent and maximum interest rate for loans taken with collateral approved by the CBM to 10 percent as well.

The CBM reduced the minimum reserve requirement for banks during the COVID-19 pandemic from 5 to 3.5 percent and also calls for deposit auction and credit auction, treasury bills and treasury bonds auction, and FX intervention in the Interbank FX Market.

The CBM has been calling deposit auctions every fortnight since September 2012 but has temporarily suspended deposit auctions starting from 26 March this year to assist banks during these times.

The CBM issued rules for international transactions to promote legal transactions while eliminating illegal ones. They also issued directives that allow foreigners living in Myanmar and those abroad to trade stock from officially listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange. An order was issued on 15 May 2020 to prevent loss of currency due to the usage and trade of digital currency by people within the nation.

The CBM has approved the opening of 27 private banks and 1931 bank branches as of April 2020 and approved the opening of 13 foreign bank branches starting from April 2015 to accommodate the increased trade and investment in the country.

The CBM approved of foreign banks owning more than 35% of joint-ventures with domestic banks starting from January 2020, has completed the third foreign bank selection process, and allowed 7 foreign bank branches to also operate subsidiaries starting from 9 April 2020. The CBM has also allowed 29 Non-Bank Financial Institutions to open up so that businesses and the general public have another source of access to financial support.

The CBM approved of 12 private banks to operate through agents using mobile technology for locations that are unable to open a bank branch till the end of April 2020. They also approved 4 mobile network operators and a non-bank financial institution to provide mobile financial services.

The CBM has conducted on-site examinations and inspections on whether banks adhere to the Central Bank of Myanmar Law and Financial Institution Law in addition to off-site monitoring of bank reports. Previous examinations on banks were compliance-based and the CBM issued guidelines on the reporting mechanism for news and information on loans. This was meant to increase opportunities to take out loans from banks, provide SMEs with means to acquire loans for their businesses, and promote Myanmar's lending industry. The formation of the loan information department will allow financial organizations to share information and reduce concentration risk.

The CBM is committed to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism and strictly regulates and inspects banks and other financial organizations or institutions under its supervision in addition to providing training on AML/CFT management of potential losses.

With the help of the World Bank, the CBM was able to draft the National Payment System Strategy (2020-2025) to make payment systems and accounting systems for efficient while supporting fiscal stability and economic development. They are currently working on the necessary legal framework and National Payment System Bill.

The CBM regularly issues annual reports, quarterly financial statistics bulletin, and monetary policy report that can be easily viewed on its website at www.cbm.gov.mm.

Director-General of the Financial Institutions Supervision Department Daw Than Than Swe replied to a question about gambling dens across the nation operating with digital currencies. She said the CBM is taking action against this by interviewing organizations that are involved in the process, cooperating with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Myanmar Police Force, and filing lawsuits.

Director-General of the Foreign Exchange Management Department Daw May Toe Win explained how cryptocurrencies and digital currencies are not legal tender and their use can cause financial losses to the nation, which is why the CBM issued a notification regarding them in May 2019.

She said trading in digital currency can be acted upon under Section 38 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law. Trading Bitcoin and other digital currency in Kyats without a business licence is a breach of Section 159 of the Financial Institutions Law and can be acted upon under Section 171.

The CBM officials then answered to questions raised by the media on printing additional banknotes with the image of Bogyoke Aung San within this government's term, the situation of the American Dollar during the COVID-19 pandemic, having foreign bank branches reopening on time, the CBM's actions against money laundering, implementing a QR system on payment systems, and how the CBM is fulfilling the Union Government's deficit with loans.

The press conference on the Union Government's 4th-year performances will continue with the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism on 17 June. —Han Myo Soe, Kaytar ■

(Translated by Aung Khin, Zaw Htet Oo)

506 migrant workers return from Thailand through Myawady border on 15 June

A total of 506 Myanmar migrant workers returned from Thailand through the border bridge (2) in Myawady Town of Kayin State yesterday.

Among them, 45 persons were transferred by the Immigration Detention Centre of the Kingdom, and the remaining 461 persons came back home under their own schedules with the approval of Myanmar Embassy in Thailand.

Kayin State Hluttaw MP U Thant Zin Aung, Myawady District GAD Officer U Tay Zar Aung and local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 28,008 Myanmar migrants have arrived back home through this route until now.

The latest group of returnees included 282 males and 224 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar citizens returned from Thailand queue at the Myawady border on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

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

MR reschedules service plans during COVID-19

Passengers wait for the train at a railway station in Yangon.
PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

BY Nyein Nyein

MYANMA Railways (MR) will expand its service for Yangon circular railway and other rail lines, said an official of MR.

MR will start running the new schedule from 16 June to contain the spread of infectious disease and ensure physical distancing of the commuters, with more schedules added for Yangon circular railway and other rail lines.

The expansion plan includes Yangon-Mandalay No. 5 and 6 (up and down) trains with the departure at 3 pm and arrival at 7:30 am, stopping at Bago, Toungoo, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw and Thazi stations.

Another rail line is Yangon-Mawlamyine No 81 and 82 (up and down) trains (with the departure at 8:00-8:15 pm and arrival at 5:45-6:30 am), and it stops at Toegyaungkalay, Bago, Waw, Kyaikto, Taungzun, Hninpalae, Thahton and Paung stations.

Additionally, Yangon-Pyay No 71 up train will depart at 1 pm and arrive at 8:45 pm, while No. 72 down train will leave from Pyay at 10:30 pm and arrive Yangon at 6:15 am. The train will stop at Hlawga, Taikkyi, Thayawady, Letpadan, Minhla, Oakpho, Gyobingauk, Zegon, Nattalin, Paungde, Padegon, Thegon and Sinmeeswel stations.

Moreover, another extended schedule for Mandalay-Myitkyina rail line is No. 57 up train with the departure at 8:45 am and arrival at 4 pm, whereas No. 58 down train from Myitkyina will leave from the station at 4 pm and arrive Mandalay at 11 am, with Ywahtaung, Shwebo, KhinU, Kantbalu, Kyunhla, Koetaungbo, Kawlin, Wuntho, Nangkham, Maezar, Indaw, Nabar, Mawlu, Nansiaung, Mohnyin, Nangmar, Hopin, Pinbaw, Mingon, Moegaung and Nammatee stations.

Furthermore, Yangon circular railway will also add the trains during the rush hours for Yangon-Insein, Yangon-Paywatseikgone and Yangon-Toegyaungkalay.

At present, Yangon circular railway run 40 rounds per day, with eight trains. MR will increase the schedule to 52 rounds with 11 trains.

The price of train tickets will remain unchanged. The detail of train schedules has been posted at the respective train stations, according to the MR.

(Translated by EMM)

Crime News

Detonators, drugs seized in three Mandalay townships

SECURITY forces at the 16-mile joint-investigation gate in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region, arrested 4 people in a vehicle from a transportation service named 'Htet Oo' at 5:30 am on 13 June after discovering 14 bags containing 2,100 electric detonator wires each and 6,000 detonator rods inside the vehicle.

The arrested included the driver named Htet Naing Oo, the service owner named Kyaw Kyaw Htay, his wife Aye Aye Nwe, and a helper named Zin Min Oo.

Similarly, security forces arrested two men identified as Tun Min Latt and Nyein Chan Aung at 8:30 am on the same day after confiscating 9,700 13ft detonator rods, 15,000 electric detonator rods, 45,030g of gunpowder, and 114 pink psychotropic tablets imprinted with 88/1.

Suspects are seen together with seized detonators in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region, on 13 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Security forces were able to obtain information from the suspects to a person named Soe Min Kyi for his connection to the confiscated items and arrested him at the Myitnge-Htonebo junction in Pyigyidagun Township.

Further investigation led to the arrest of three men named Bo Bo Naing, Nay Win Tun and Tun Tun Min at 11:30 am on the same day along the 22-milepost on the PyinOoLwin-Mandalay highway. The vehicle they were driving also belonged to 'Htet Oo' transport service and the three suspects had buried 20 sacks holding 3,140 rods containing 285g of gunpowder and 180 ignition detonator rods at the 21 miles and 2 furlong part of the road. Security forces then learned the items were to be sent to a man named U Ba Aung in Sein Pan Ward, Mahaaungmye Township, but upon arriving at his house they only found his son, named Ye Yint Aung, who was arrested with 25g of marijuana.

The Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services reported that the suspects and confiscated items have been handed over to Mahaaungmye Police Station.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

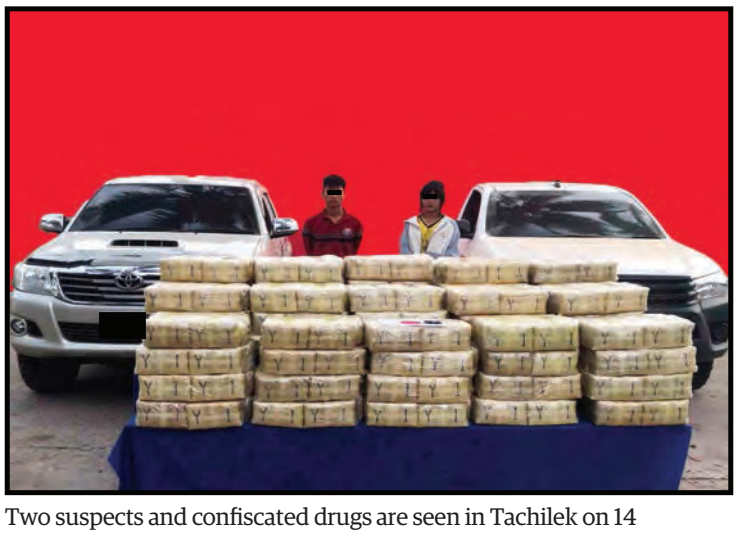
Tachilek Tsp police confiscate over 6 mln illegal tablets

TWO men were arrested for possessing illegal drugs near the Sanlu-Jawpa Village forest path in Tachilek Township, Eastern Shan State, on 14 June.

Police had pulled over a car driven by a man identified as Li Jia at 2:45 am and were searching his car when another vehicle drove up behind the first one and stopped midway as the driver, named Kya Pu, fled the scene.

Police arrested the other man in the second vehicle, named Mana Pu, after discovering 6,502,000 psychotropic tablets worth an estimated K9,700 million inside. A case has been open against the suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. —GNLM ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Two suspects and confiscated drugs are seen in Tachilek on 14 June. **PHOTO: MPF**

CBM buys $12 mln within 2 weeks to control forex market

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) has purchased about US$12 million from private banks within two weeks to govern the market.

At present, the global forex market sees the weak sentiment amid the coronavirus outbreak, with the US dollar index of around 97.

At present, exports of rice, corns and pulses are increasing. The weakening dollar can harm export income and the stability of internal forex market.

The CBM's effort seems to keep the exchange rate at above K1,400 when US dollar dip in the global market, a market observer pointed out.

The dollar is currently pegged at above K1,400 in the domestic market.

On 12 May, the CBM had set the reference exchange rate (weighted average market rate) at K1,401 per dollar.

In October last year, the dollar exchange rate had hit a high of K1,600. Thereafter, the dollar has been falling in the local currency market. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

FDI inflows exceed $22 bln over four years under incumbent government

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR has attracted over US$22 billion over the four years under the incumbent government, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective investment committees granted permits and endorsements to 905 foreign enterprises between 2016-2017 financial year and as of May-end in the 2019-2020FY, with estimated capitals of $22.39 billion.

The FDIs flow into the 12 sectors — oil and gas, power, transportation and communication, real estate, hotels and tourism, mining, livestock and fisheries, industrial estate, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and other service sectors.

Power sector tops the investment line-up, followed by oil and natural gas in the second place and manufacturing in the third place.

Of 51 foreign countries, Singapore put the largest investments, followed by China and Thailand.

MIC is prioritizing the labour-intensive businesses. In the incumbent government period, domestic and foreign projects employ over 500,000 locals, according to the DICA.

Those enterprises have created over 19,000 jobs in 2016-2017FY, 110,000 jobs in 2017-2018FY, over 53,000 jobs in the 2018 mini-budget period, over 180,000 jobs in 2018-2019FY and 160,000 (Oct-May) in 2019-2020FY respectively. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar's exports top $12 bln as of 5 June

Female workers sort shrimp at a cold storage factory in Kawthoung. **PHOTO: AYE THAN**

Myanmar's exports between 1 October and 5 June in the 2019-2020 financial year shot up to US$12.1 billion from $11.6 billion registered in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

The figure reflects an increase of $503 million compared with the year-ago period. Of the seven export groups, agriculture, fisheries, minerals and other goods showed an increase in exports. Meanwhile, exports of livestock, forest products and finished industrial goods declined.

Export values were registered at $2.84 billion for agro products, $61.59 million for livestock, $670 million for fishery products, $1.28 billion for minerals, $105.7 million for forest products, $6.3 billion for manufactured goods, and $817.5 million for other goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is decreasing.

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

At present, exports of rice, corns and pulses are rising and CMP garment exports drop.

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on export promotion in order to reduce the trade deficit.

Since 2011, the Ministry of Commerce has adhered to its reform policy. A series of moves to liberalize and open the economy have been introduced through policy development to improve the trade environment. — Ko Khant ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Japan stands third-largest investor in Myanmar in 2019-2020FY

THREE Japan-based companies have invested over US$700.6 million in the past eight months (Oct-May) of the current financial year 2019-2020, as per data released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Japan is the third-largest investor in Myanmar so far, following Hong Kong with FDIs of $1.3 billion in the first place and Singapore with $920 million in the second place.

More investments from Japan are expected in the current financial year, said an official of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

"Japan focuses on responsible businesses. Therefore, they thoughtfully consider and learn before they make investments. It is expected that investments from Japan will increase this year," he continued.

Additionally, Japanese businesses are prepping to enter Myanmar. The Thilawa Special Economic Zone is a symbol of development in Japan's investments in Myanmar. Besides, Japan is a development partner of Myanmar, he added.

Japan has been lending comprehensive support in developing infrastructure — including railway, road, and research— in Myanmar through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Foreign investments of over $678 million have flowed into the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) from 39 Japan businesses, under the Special Economic Zone Law.

Japan's investment in Myanmar stood at $42.77 million in the last financial year 2018-2019, $134.5 million in the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), $384 million in the 2017-2018FY, $60 million in the

2016-2017FY and $219.79 million in the2015-2016FY respectively, the DICA's data showed.— GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

16 JUNE 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Be proactive in cracking down on sales of banned agro chemicals to save farmland, people from risks

AS THE rice plantation season begins, authorities in regions and states are urged to be proactive in cracking down on sales and trading of banned agricultural inputs and related activities in all the regions in the wake of the coronavirus crisis.

As the demand for agricultural inputs would be high in the coming months, authorities and stakeholders are urged to strengthen efforts to prevent the sale of banned or counterfeit pesticides and fertilizers in the country.

Spurious and illegal pesticides often contain chemicals which are either banned or restricted due to the risk they pose to human health and the environment. As the contents of fake and illegal products are unknown, their use can pose a high-risk to farmers, the environment, and crops.

> In order to effectively carry out agricultural material management work, especially the implementation of the law, Illegal trade needs to be absolutely eradicated and rule of law is extremely important.

The sale of agricultural inputs, including pesticides and herbicides, has been allowed only through registered distributors as they are crucial to farmers.

The Pesticide Law does not allow the import and export of chemicals, their repackaging, or sale, whether retail or wholesale, in the country without permission from the Registration Board.

We have to continue inspections, strengthen law enforcement and especially pay attention to prevent the flow of banned pesticides and fertilizers as well as counterfeit and poor quality products through borders.

The banned agricultural pesticides and fertilizers linger longer in vegetables and rice and seriously affect the health of consumers.

In this regard, Pesticide Registration Board (PRB), constituted with 10 competent authorities from the ministries of Agriculture, Health and Sports, Forest, Trade, and Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, was formed in 1992, under the law. It has been issuing licences to distributors after scrutinizing the efficiency of chemical inputs to ensure that farmers get quality inputs, to conserve the environment, and prevent undue harm to humans.

While cracking down on the sale of illegal agricultural pesticides and fertilizers at the business locations nationwide, we need to take action against illegal trade, prevent bribery, and ensure correct market competition.

In order to effectively carry out agricultural material management work, especially the implementation of the law, Illegal trade needs to be absolutely eradicated and rule of law is extremely important.

To save the farmlands and to protect people from the risks posed by unregistered pesticides, punitive action must be taken against those who sell illegal pesticides and fertilizers.

Coronavirus: latest global developments

PARIS (France) — Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis.

European borders reopen

After three months of isolation, more countries reopen their borders to fellow Europeans on Monday, including Belgium, France, Germany and Greece.

Paris gets back to normal

Paris, Europe's most visited city, starts getting back to normal, with cafes and restaurants finally allowed to reopen their dining rooms, and the Eiffel Tower again open to visitors.

The sooner-than-expected reopening for the Paris region was announced by President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday, followed by news of France's lowest daily toll since March.

Shops reopen in England

Various stores and outdoor attractions in England are allowed to open for the first time in nearly three months, including thousands of non-essential retailers such as bookstores and electronics outlets.

Beijing fights new cluster

As the cluster of infections in Beijing grows to 79, stoking fears of a second wave, the capital closes all indoor sports and entertainment venues and places a total of 21 neighbourhoods under complete lockdown.

More than 430,000 deaths

The pandemic has killed at least 433,493 people worldwide since it surfaced in China late last year, according to an AFP tally at 1100 GMT on Monday, based on official sources.

The United States has the most deaths, with 115,732, followed by Brazil with 43,332, Britain with 41,698, Italy with 34,345 and France with 29,407 fatalities.

A motorist drives past a wall mural painted to thank frontline workers fighting against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Mumbai on June 15, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

India's Chenai locked down again

A lockdown will be reimposed Friday until the end of June on some 15 million people in the Indian city of Chennai and several neighbouring districts as coronavirus cases surge in the region.

Iran on alert

Iran warns it may have to reimpose tough measures against the novel coronavirus to ensure social distancing, as it reports more than 100 deaths for a second straight day.

Stocks tumble again

Stock markets tumble again, extending last week's losses, on fears of a second wave that could derail economic recovery.

In Asia Tokyo falls 3.5 per cent and Seoul sinks 4.8 per cent, while European stock markets dip less than one per cent in midday deals.

BP takes multi-billion hit

British energy giant BP says that it will take a hit of between $13-17.5 billion in the second quarter on "sustained" coronavirus fallout. — AFP

The Human Resource (HR) Management in COVID-19 Pandemic Era

(Dr.Than Lwin Tun, May Thazin, Honey Soe)

THE World Health Organization(WHO) declared the novel coronavirus a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern(PHEIC)" on 30th January, 2020 and announced COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11th March, 2020.

COVID-19 has significantly changed the way we work and also our daily life. One thing that is certain, we know that adjusting to change is challenging. In the past few months, we never imagined that our life will be completely channelled into a new different way because of COVID-19.

In order to survive this period and avoid significant losses, HR needs to be more vigilant and efficient than ever before. To establish a refreshed role, HR teams will need to be brave, challenging and work together to assert professional standards and create better and more consistent systems in which people can flourish. Shaping our organizations, leaders and ensuring the best way to work is a huge responsibility for those working in HR. The Coronavirus has bred a widespread dialogue regarding the potentially altered future of work, and the main component of this is undoubtedly the changing attitude towards flexible and remote working.

In the midst of this COVID-19 crisis, the fellow educators are wondering what they need to be preparing the students for in the future. The COVID-19 crisis may well change the world and global outlook; it may also teach us about how education needs to change to be able to better prepare the young learners for what the future might hold. These includes; educating citizens in an interconnected world, redefining the role of the educator, teaching life skills needed for the future, unlocking technology to deliver education.

HR's role has mirrored the changes in business and economics. It is now time for HR professionals to re-assert their leadership to build new ways of working that create sustainability for organizations and their people.

Work and Society: The Covid-19 pandemic casts a new light on people at work and society. People are pulling together and supporting each other in a crisis and endlessly creative and innovative and they need and want a sense of belonging and purpose as individuals changing roles to find new income when their old job has disappeared. They can work flexibly from home in many roles where previously this may have been denied as an option.

According to Brian Kropp, chief of research for the Gartner HR practice, there are three categories of employees during the pandemic; those who work remotely, those who are no longer working and those who are still going into a workplace of which are 30% to 40% of employees. This raises a question of how to manage those on-site employees. There are 6 strategies for managing on-site employees in COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Ensure employee safety

Employers who still have workers reporting in-person should screen every individual before they enter the premises. HR and senior leaders should continue encouraging employees with symptoms to remain at home, and amend policies to ensure sick employees can stay home without losing pay.

It is important to limit on-site teams to as few people as possible, providing more private spaces, and enforcing strict hygiene rules to help prevent the spread of the virus.

In addition to basic safety standards, it is also important in managing the perception of safety. People will react to this pandemic in various ways, companies should maintain composure and steer employees toward feelings of safety.

2. Maintain regular communication with employees

Employees are going to view the coronavirus in different manners. Some may think the virus is a hoax or not worth paying attention to and others will take it very seriously. Regardless of beliefs, organizations must maintain clear communication with its workers.

Leaders should show their commitment to safety by regularly sharing helpful and fact-based information. Leaders and managers should encourage employees to use trusted websites such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to gain information.

3. Ensure equitable employee policies

According to Kropp, leaders need to create fairness between those who are working remotely and those who are still coming into the office. HR should review and alter company policies to ensure every employee has equal access to healthcare offerings. Once the crisis has passed, employers should encourage employees working from home, or those who have accumulated leave, to donate some of that time off to create a Personal Time Off (PTO) bank for those working on-site.

4. Develop employee-support solutions

HR leaders can provide support in numerous ways, whether it's by dividing workers into teams that alternate work day, or providing free on-site food and snacks. Organizations should also permit high risk employees such as pregnant women, those with weakened immune systems, or those older than 65 to take paid sick leave for up to 30 days if necessary.

5. Seek employee feedback

Feedback can be used to drive employee investment decisions and learn how to better deal and manage the safety and experience of on-site workers.

6. Reward and recognize employees

The Coronavirus has identified the key workers needed to keep business and society afloat in a crisis. HR professionals can also show recognition by using the company's communications channels to acknowledge employees by name for the commitment they've shown working during this crisis.

The HR Team structures need to shift from a few strategic relationships with senior leaders to be the connector for the business, understanding the situation of each layer from front line to executive.

The HR Team needs to be expert at building career networks that give employees the broadest and most diverse set of opportunities for learning and take the lead in designing organization and career structures that meet the needs and demands of the individual, the organization and society.

Last but not least, we need to conduct the new HR management as well as the importance of HR and Compliance Partnership and the development of Electronic HR Management System (E-HRMS) in COVID-19 Pandemic Era.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Order 18/2020

10th Waning of Nayon 1382 ME
(15 June 2020)

Resignation of Mandalay Region High Court Judge approved

IN accordance with the provisions stated in article 312 sub-section (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 49 sub-section (a) of the Union Judiciary Law, Daw Hla Hla Yi, Judge of the Mandalay Region High Court, has been permitted to resign from her position of her own volition starting from 1st July 2020.

Sd/Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release No 23/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 13 June.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 13 June.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 17 June issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. — GNLM

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Ms Anne Elisabeth Luwema as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, in succession to Mr Wouter Robert Marie Jurgens.

Ms Anne Elisabeth Luwema was born in January 1964. She earned B.A in Chinese Language and Culture from the University of Leiden (RUL) in 1987. She studied Economics at the Fudan University in Shanghai from 1986 to 1987 and at the Mandarin Training Institute Taipei from 1987 to 1988.

From 2001 to 2015, she had served in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consulate-General offices in Shanghai and Guangzhou and the Dutch Embassy in Seoul. From 2015 to 2019, she also served as the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Switzerland. Since 2019, she has been serving as Deputy Director of North Africa and Middle East Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

She is married and has two children.—MNA

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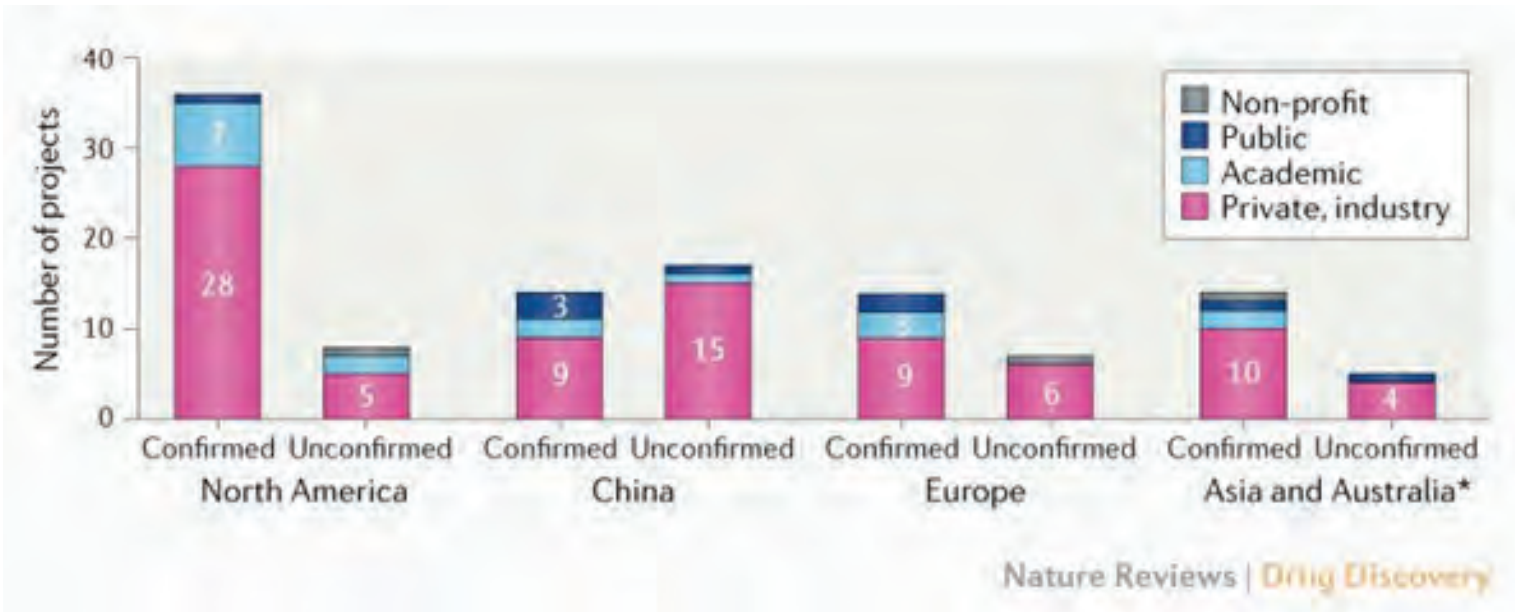
COVID-19 Vaccines & Treatments: Who Owns the Rights?

By P. Kandiah and
Geetha Kandiah



MODERNA INC., Sanofi, AstraZeneca plc, Roche, Gilead Sciences and Novartis are just some of the many pharmaceutical companies working to fast-track the development of a coronavirus vaccine. Many companies and research institutions from various countries are racing to develop the vaccine for COVID-19.

1. Who is leading the race to discover the vaccine and treatment for COVID-19?

At the time of writing, we do not know exactly. There are several companies, as well as universities and research institutions around the world all simultaneously conducting research either individually or in collaboration with each other in obtaining a vaccine, or a therapeutic drug to treat infected COVID-19 patients.

In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a public statement on 13th April 2020 informing the public of their efforts to bring parties together to collaborate on COVID-19 vaccine development. More than 120 parties – scientists, physicians, funders and manufacturers – who are researching and working on the vaccine, "are brought together" as part of an international collaboration, coordinated by WHO, to help speed the availability of a vaccine against COVID-19.

Data from early-April (see below) indicated the countries that were in the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19, with the US ahead of the pack.

(* excluding China)

[Source: Nature Reviews Drug Discovery, https://www.nature.com/articles/d41573-020-00073-5]

While pharmaceutical companies and research institutes in China were quick to embark on finding a vaccine, their progress seems to have hit a snag as the lack of new and active cases in the country means they do not have enough patients to conduct human trials and tests for the potential vaccines, putting them at a disadvantage in advancing their vaccine and treatment research.

On a related note, as of May 4th, the European Commission's Coronavirus Global Response initiative had raised USD 8 billion towards efforts in developing vaccines, diagnostics and treatments against COVID-19 and enabling them "to be made available globally for an affordable price, regardless of where they were developed". Interestingly, while over 30 countries, alongside the UN and research and philanthropic organizations pledged their part, the governments of the US, India and Russia did not participate, alluding perhaps to significant funding going into their own research efforts.

2. Who will own the exclusive right to manufacture the vaccine or the therapeutic drug?

The right will belong to the entity that obtains a patent right. The party that is first to file the patent will own rights to the manufacture and sale of the drugs.

As patent rights are territorial, they must file it in specific countries to gain right in that country. If it is not filed in that country, generic manufacturers can manufacture the vaccine without paying any royalty to the patent owners.

3. Can more than one entity own the right?

Yes, if the invention is developed jointly by more than one entity, then all the entities can own the patent right.

However, they may agree among themselves on their separate/individual rights. For example, if a university is a joint patentee, it may not be interested to engage in commercial production and sale of the vaccine and drugs. It could, instead, either assign its rights to a pharma company or enter into a patent licence with a pharma licensee.

4. There is a common belief that patented drugs are expensive and many countries, especially developing ones cannot afford the expensive vaccine or drugs. How will poor countries manage?

Patent rights are monopolistic rights. It gives rights to the party that invested into developing the drugs. That is how the pharma companies recoup their investments.

But, there are times – urgent times – wherein a balance must be struck, between making a large profit, and taking care of the health of the public.

Compulsory licences are public health safeguards, included in international agreements and national laws.

Most countries have a provision in their patent laws that grant the government of the country the right to grant compulsory licences to a third party to manufacture the drug or export the drug from another country for distribution or sales (at an affordable price) to its citizens without the consent of the patentee. There will still be a royalty paid to the patent holder but at a reasonable, affordable price.

This provision is only invoked for national emergencies.

5. The Government of any country can do that? But isn't that unjust to the inventor of the drug? A lot of expenses would have been spent in developing the drug.

It may be unjust – and for that reason there are conditions to be met, before a country can give a compulsory licence:

I. There must be no production of the patented product or application of the patented process in Malaysia without any legitimate reason;

II. Or there are some but they are sold at unreasonably high prices or do not meet public demand;

III. The person making the application has made efforts to obtain authorization from the owner of the patent on reasonable commercial terms and conditions but such efforts have not been successful within a reasonable period of time.

There is a limited scope to exercise the patent licence and tight time limit too.

6. Has Malaysia made use of the provisions on compulsory licences before?

Yes, Malaysia has used the provision before. In 2003, Malaysia became the first country to issue a compulsory licence for an HIV drug, and many countries followed suit.

Then, in 2017, our Government issued a compulsory licence on the key hepatitis C drug, sofosbuvir. With this, Gilead's drug could be mass produced at an affordable rate. Our government could then afford treatment for the estimated 450,000 people living with hepatitis C in Malaysia.

7. If a drug has been used before, say for example the malaria drug that is now used to treat patients with COVID-19, can any company obtain patent rights for this new treatment?

Generally, it is possible to obtain new patent rights if a known drug is now known to have a second medical use.

In fact, much of the research being done uses current existing antiviral drugs. Apart from the anti-malarial drug, the other popular one is remdesivir by Gilead. This antiviral drug, was originally developed to treat Ebola and recently US and Japan have rushed to increase production of these drugs.

If the drug can be repurposed or modified to treat COVID-19, then it may be possible to obtain patent rights of the new medical use of the known drug.

8. If so, how long will one granted patent last?

The duration of the patent will be 20 years from the date of filing the patent application.

9. Why is there a rush to obtain patent rights for the vaccine or a therapeutic drug?

A vaccine is needed for every human being on earth. That is a huge market and demand. Even if a profit of RM 1.50 for each dose is made, imagine the total sum of profit. It would be in the billions. It would be a blockbuster sale. That is why.

Only one patent will be granted in a country for the same invention. The first company to file the patent for the successful formulation of the vaccine or therapeutic drug will obtain a patent to the exclusion of all others who have been working on the same formulation.

In the latter case, they may not be able to recoup their R&D costs. And so, the stake to rush to file a patent is very high especially for a vaccine or therapeutic drug for COVID- 19.

P. Kandiah and Geetha Kandiah are directors of KASS International, an established intellectual property firm with offices in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. For more information, visit www.kass.asia or drop an e-mail to hello@kass.asia.

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Elephant riding tour to be arranged near Mandalay

OFFICIALS are preparing for elephant riding tour service between Mandalay to PyinOoLwin.

The new service to enjoy the scenery will be provided at the two elephant camps Wanet and Deedote beside the motorway to Yeywa Dam when these camps are allowed for reopening.

Assistant Manager U Tin Kyaw Moe from Myanmar Timber Enterprise said that officials are exploring the mountain routes for elephant riding tour at present, and the service is expected to be available in July.

The two elephant camps are preparing for paint ball shootings and mountain biking, in addition to waterfall elephant ride. These camps are closer to PyinOoLwin Township and not so far each other.

"Although the taste of elephant riding is not different from each other, the scenic views vary from place to place," said U Tin Kyaw.

There are 22 elephant riding tour services across the country, and the respective camps are preparing for significant services in 2020-2021 FY.—Min Htet Aung (Mann Sub-Printing House) ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Wanet and Deedote elephant camps between Mandalay and PyinOoLwin offer spectacular views. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

Mahouts ride elephants at an elephant camp located between Mandalay and PyinOoLwin. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

BP to take up to $17.5bn hit on coronavirus

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British energy giant BP said Monday that it will take a hit of up to $17.5 billion in the second quarter as "sustained" coronavirus fallout ravages global oil demand. The company, fresh from outlining plans to axe almost 10,000 jobs on COVID-19 fallout, said in a statement that it will suffer a negative impact of between $13 billion and $17.5 billion (11.4 billion euros and 15.3 billion euros) in non-cash impairments and write-offs.

BP also cut its long-term oil price forecast after the deadly virus outbreak slammed the brakes on the global economy and hurt oil prices this year.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic having continued during the second quarter of 2020, BP now sees the prospect of the pandemic having an enduring impact on the global economy, with the potential for weaker demand for energy for a sustained period," BP said, adding the virus was set to accelerate a transition to lower carbon energy. The group continued: "BP has revised its long-term price assumptions, lowering them and extending the period covered to 2050.

"As part of its long-term strategic planning, and in the context of its continuing focus on capital discipline, BP is also reviewing its intent to develop some of its exploration intangible assets. "These actions will lead to non-cash impairment charges and write-offs in the second quarter, estimated to be in an aggregate range of $13 billion to $17.5 billion post-tax."

BP Chief Executive Bernard Looney warned that the COVID-19 pandemic "increasingly looks as if it will have an enduring economic impact".

"So, we have reset our price outlook to reflect that impact ... We are also reviewing our development plans.

"All that will result in a significant charge in our upcoming results, but I am confident that these difficult decisions ... will better enable us to compete through the energy transition."

BP now expects European benchmark London Brent North Sea oil prices to average $55 per barrel between 2021 and 2050, while it also lowered its guidance for gas prices.The London-listed energy major had announced plans one week ago to axe "close to 10,000" jobs, or almost 15 percent of its global workforce.—AFP ■

Brazilian retirementhome offers 'hugging curtain' for safe contact

SAO PAULO (Brazil) — A retirementhome in Brazil has come up with a creative solution to allow friends and families to enjoy personal contact with aging residents particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus: a "hugging-curtain."

The large plastic curtain, installed in a retirementhome in the city of Sao Paulo, allows residents on one side and visitors on the other to engage in the sort of comforting hugs that COVID-19 has made impossible for months.

The curtain has pockets through which resident and visitor can insert their arms, and they are outfitted with shoulder-length black gloves for added protection.

"It really feels good; I missed her so much!" 68-year-old Silvio Nagata told AFP after enjoying a long, emotional hug with his sister, Luiza Yassuko, who is 76, at a retirementhome in the affluent Morumbi neighbourhood.

"Because of the pandemic, I wasn't able to visit her, especially because at my age I'm also part of a high-risk group," Nagata said.

"It's an excellent system -- it's great to be able to take her in my arms," said Nagata, a retired civil servant.

"There were 12 of us brothers and sisters, and she was practically a mother to me," he went on. "She didn't get married so she could take care of us."

Nurses carefully disinfect the plastic curtain after each use.

"When we saw that this pandemic was going to last a long time, we had to find a safe way to let families see the residents and let the aging residents know that their loved ones are thinking of them," said Mairo Martins, an physical therapist at the facility.

For visitors, the feeling of being able to take a loved one in their arms is deeply moving, especially as the pandemic continues to rule out normal human contact. "It's good for them, but for us too; it's been a while since we could hug anyone," said Murilo Meira, 51, during a visit to 90-year-old Nair da Costa Marques, who needed a nurse's help to stand for the much-awaited hug.

Sao Paulo state is Brazil's richest and most populous state, with 46 million inhabitants, but it is also the hardest-hit by the coronavirus. There have been 172,875 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 10,581 deaths, according to the latest official tally.—AFP ■

Elisabete Nagata (top) hugs her 76-year-old sister-in-law Luiza Nagata, through a transparent plastic curtain at a senior nursing home in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on June 13, 2020, amid the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

UK's Johnson announces body to probe inequality amid race protests

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he was setting up a commission to look at "all aspects of inequality" following race protests across Britain.

Writing in the Telegraph newspaper on Monday, Johnson said there was "much more that we need to do" to tackle racism despite "huge progress", and argued the "substance" of the problem needed to be addressed, rather than the "symbols".

There have been Black Lives Matter demonstrations in cities across the United Kingdom since the police killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, in the United States on May 25, and Saturday saw far-right groups gather in London to counter the anti-racism demonstrators.

Black Lives Matter demonstrators clashed with rival groups in London. **PHOTO: AFP**

"It is time for a cross-governmental commission to look at all aspects of inequality — in employment, in health outcomes, in academic and all other walks of life," Johnson wrote in the article, which was also published online late on Sunday.

"We need to tackle the substance of the problem, not the symbols." Race campaigners have called for the removal of statues depicting some historical figures, and the toppling of a statue of the 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston in the southwestern port city of Bristol is considered a defining moment in Britain's Black Lives Matter movement.

But Johnson insisted a bronze sculpture of wartime leader Winston Churchill -- who some activists say was racist -- outside the British parliament in Westminster should remain in place.

"We need to address the present, not attempt to rewrite the past – and that means we cannot and must not get sucked into never-ending debate about which well-known historical figure is sufficiently pure or politically correct to remain in public view," the prime minister wrote.

Johnson condemned the "thugs" who gathered in central London on Saturday to "protect" the boarded-up statue of Churchill, which has been defaced in recent weeks.

"It was utterly absurd that a load of far-Right thugs and bovver boys this weekend converged on London with a mission to protect the statue of Winston Churchill," the 55-year-old premier and Churchill biographer wrote.

"He was a hero, and I expect I am not alone in saying that I will resist with every breath in my body any attempt to remove that statue from Parliament Square, and the sooner his protective shielding comes off the better."

Johnson suggested that instead of tearing down statues, more should be built of people regarded "worthy of memorial" by the current generation.

The Prime Minister has been branded racist himself following a 2002 article for the Telegraph in which he referred to black people as "piccaninnies" with "watermelon smiles". —AFP ■

Facebook rejects call to share revenue with Australian media

SYDNEY (Australia)— Facebook on Monday rejected calls from the Australian government and news companies that it share advertising revenue with the media, suggesting it would rather cut news content from its platform.

The US tech giant said in a submission to Australia's competition watchdog that news represents a "very small fraction" of the content in an average user's news feed.

"If there were no news content available on Facebook in Australia, we are confident the impact on Facebook's community metrics and revenues in Australia would not be significant," it said in a thinly veiled threat to boycott local news companies.

"Given the social value and benefit to news publishers, we would strongly prefer to continue enabling news publishers' content to be available on our platform," it said.

In an effort being closely watched around the world, Australia is set to unveil plans to force Facebook and Google to share advertising revenue they earn from news featured in their services.

The initiative has been strongly pushed by Australia's two biggest media companies, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp and Nine Entertainment.

They argue that the crisis roiling the news industry worldwide is mainly because of Google, Facebook and other large tech firms capturing the vast majority of online advertising revenues, without fairly compensating media companies for advertisements placed against news content.

Newspapers' loss of advertising dollars has forced cutbacks and bankruptcies across the sector, a process exacerbated by the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 170 newsrooms have seen cuts or halted publication in recent years. — AFP ■

Russia sentences US ex-marine to 16 years in spy trial

MOSCOW (Russia) — A Russian court on Monday sentenced former US marine Paul Whelan to 16 years in a penal colony for espionage in a case that strained ties with Washington and fuelled speculation of a prisoner swap.

Moscow City Court found Whelan guilty of receiving classified information as he stood in the dock with a sign that read "Sham trial!" and pleaded for US President Donald Trump to intervene in the case.

The court process is "slimy, greasy Russian politics nothing more, nothing less," he said.

Whelan, 50, has been held in a Moscow jail since his arrest in December 2018 and his trial was held behind closed doors because of the accusations of seeking to obtain state secrets. Throughout the trial he maintained his innocence, saying he was framed and comparing himself to the hapless comedy character Mr Bean.

"Russia thought they caught James Bond on a spy mission, in reality they abducted Mr Bean on holiday," he said.

Paul Whelan blasted the case as a 'sham trial' as he stood in the dock. **PHOTO: AFP**

Whelan says he was detained on a visit to Moscow to attend a wedding when he took a USB drive from an acquaintance thinking it contained holiday photographs.

The prosecution had asked the judge to sentence Whelan to 18 years in a strict-regime penal colony, just short of the 20 years maximum term for the charge.

'No evidence'

The US ambassador to Moscow John Sullivan condemned the trial as unfair and lacking transparency.

"I am disappointed, outraged by what I just heard," he told reporters in court.

"(Whelan has) been sentenced to 16 years in prison with no evidence that's been produced.

"I can't say I'm surprised. This is the direction this case has been heading from the beginning," he added.— AFP ■

Fresh Lebanon protests over spiralling economic crisis

BEIRUT (Leabanon) — Dozens of demonstrators angered by a deepening economic crisis rallied for a third consecutive day on Saturday after a night of violent riots sparked condemnation from the political elite.

Rallying against the surging cost of living and the government's apparent impotence in the face of the worst economic turmoil since the 1975-1990 civil war, protesters gathered in central Beirut, brandishing flags and chanting slogans.

In the northern city of Tripoli, young men scuffled with security forces who fired rubber bullets to disperse crowds.

The stand-off began after young men blocked a highway to prevent a number of trucks carrying produce destined for Syria from passing through, according to the official National News Agency.

The Lebanese Red Cross said it treated nine people wounded in Tripoli.

The rallies came ahead of a speech by Prime Minister Hassan Diab at 1500 GMT.

"We are here to demand the formation of a new transitional government" and early parliamentary elections, Nehmat Badreddine, an activist and demonstrator told AFP in central Beirut.

Lebanon is caught in a spiralling economic crisis, including a rapid devaluation of the Lebanese pound, which has triggered a fresh wave of demonstrations since Thursday.

Lebanese media reported that the exchange rate had tumbled to 6,000 per dollar on the black market early on Friday, compared to the official peg of 1,507 in place since 1997.

Lebanese anti-government protesters hurl rocks at soldiers amid clashes in the Bab al-Tabbaneh neighbourhood in the northern port city of Tripoli, on June 13, 2020, on the third consecutive day of angry demonstrations across the country due to a deepening economic crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

After a crisis meeting on Friday, President Michel Aoun announced that the central bank would implement measures from Monday including "feeding dollars into the market", in a bid to support the Lebanese pound.

Despite the government's pledges, roughly 200 young men gathered on mopeds in central Beirut on Friday night. Some of them defaced shop fronts and set fire to stores, causing serious damage.

Security forces fired tear gas to disperse them and some of the young men threw stones and fire crackers back. Tension petered out after midnight.

In Tripoli, demonstrators threw stones and Molotov cocktails towards soldiers late on Friday and damaged the facades of several banks and shops. Soldiers responded with tear gas.

The next day, Diab called on officials to assess damage in central Beirut.

Former premier Saad Hariri toured the area, condemning vandalism and riots. Interior minister Mohammed Fahmi said security forces would find those responsible for damaging property in the capital. Lebanon -- one of the most indebted countries in the world with a sovereign debt of more than 170 percent of GDP -- went into default in March.

It started talks with the International Monetary Fund last month in a bid to unlock billions of dollars in financial aid. Dialogue is ongoing. —AFP ■

Stock markets slip on fears of second virus wave

HONG KONG (China) — Equities tumbled Monday, extending last week's losses on fears of a second wave of virus infections around the world that could put the brakes on the easing of lockdowns and a budding economic recovery.

While European nations press ahead with their reopening after months of strict shutdowns, there are signs that the deadly disease is coming back in China and seeing a resurgence in the United States too.

The worrying figures will provide a test for stock markets, which have soared up to 50 per cent from their March troughs thanks to the lifting of stay-at-home orders and trillions of dollars of stimulus and central bank backstopping. Beijing has carried out mass testing and locked down several neighbourhoods after 79 cases were linked to a single wholesale food market in the capital. City official Li Junjie said Monday that cases had also been found at another market.

The city has raced to quash the new outbreak, closing the affected markets, deploying paramilitary police and putting nearby housing estates under lockdown.

That came as more than a dozen US states, including populous Texas and Florida, reported their highest-ever daily case totals, while Rome and Tokyo have also seen fresh spikes.

"It means the virus hasn't lost its infectiousness, it isn't weakening... we shouldn't let down our guard," World Health Organization deputy director Ranieri Guerra told Italian journalists. AxiCorp's Stephen Innes said in a note: "Falling infection rates have provided investors the confidence that the lockdown approach was working, allowing equity investors to look forward to 2021 as impressive monetary and fiscal policy provide a post-pandemic bridge."—AFP ■

Tokyo's Nikkei closes down over 3.4% on virus fears

TOKYO (Japan) — Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei index dropped more than 3.4 per cent on Monday over fears of rising coronavirus infections in the US and a new outbreak in China.

The Nikkei 225 index lost 3.47 per cent, or 774.53 points, to close at 21,530.95, while the broader Topix index fell 2.54 per cent, or 39.90 points, to 1,530.78.

"Concerns over a second wave of infections are growing as clusters of new infections were reported in the US and China, while the number of new cases increased in Tokyo," Okasan Online Securities said in a commentary. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported a surge in new infections on Sunday and Monday, surpassing 40 on both days. China also reported its highest daily number of new coronavirus cases in months on Sunday, triggering fears of a second wave of infections.—AFP ■

CLAIM DAY NOTICE

M.V PRESIDIO VOY. NO. (039W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PRESIDIO VOY. NO. (039W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE., LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC MERGUI VOY. NO. (024W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC MERGUI VOY. NO. (024W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16-6-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM DAY NOTICE

M.V NORDMAAS VOY. NO. (023S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V NORDMAAS VOY. NO. (023S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-6-2020 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

Macron rejects tearing down statues in France

PARIS (France) — President Emmanuel Macron vowed on Sunday that France would not seek to erase elements of its history or take down statues of controversial public figures, despite growing global scrutiny of former colonial powers in the wake of worldwide protests.

In an address to the nation, Macron said France would be "uncompromising" in its fight against racism after days of demonstrations over alleged prejudice among police forces.

Angry crowds have toppled statues of colonial figures in Britain and the United States, and there has been an intensified scrutiny of the records of key leaders of the colonial era in Europe.

But Macron said the country would not obscure elements of its history or dismantle statues of public figures who may have advocated racist views or policies.

"The Republic will not wipe away any trace or any name from its history. It will not forget any of its works. It will not take down any of its statues but lucidly look at our history and our memory together," he said.

He said this was especially important in Africa, where French colonial rule in several countries left a legacy that remains a subject of anger for many to this day.

Together, France and Africa need to find a "present and a future that is possible on both sides of the Mediterranean", he said.

In a sign of the sensitivities in France, former prime minister Jean-Marc Ayrault had Saturday urged a new designation for a hall in parliament named after the 17th-century statesman Jean-Baptiste Colbert. It was Colbert who drew up the "Code Noir" that defined the conditions for slavery.—AFP ■

France and Africa need to find a 'present and future' acceptable to both, said Macron. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Trumptillas,' or pro-Trump flotillas, celebrate president's birthday in Florida

MIAMI (United States) — Hundreds of President Donald Trump fans across Florida paraded their yachts in flotillas -- or "Trumptillas" -- on Sunday to celebrate his 74th birthday.

The boats set sail from the Sunshine State's major marinas. They flew American flags, and some had Trump's "MAGA" slogan emblazoned on the hull.

"They make him look like he's a racist, but he's not, and I'm here to celebrate him," said Rachel Cramer, who was dancing on a boat leaving Fort Lauderdale to join a flotilla of dozens of other yachts headed for Boca Raton. "Also, happy birthday, Mr President!"

Cramer wore a mask with the Republican president's face on it and a T-shirt that read, "Trump 2020 -- fuck your feelings."

Further north in Jacksonville, about 1,000 boats participated in the Trumptillas, according to official Duval County estimates.

Trumptillas became popular in early May as Florida residents wanted to show support for the president while still respecting social distancing guidelines

Pro-Trump flotillas for the president's birthday also took place in Tampa, Pensacola and Sarasota on Florida's west coast, as well as in the Keys off the state's southern tip. The Republican Party announced Thursday that Trump will accept the GOP presidential nomination in Jacksonville following a row over coronavirus restrictions with the governor of North Carolina, where the event was originally scheduled.—AFP ■

Boats in the "Trumptilla" -- a flotilla of Donald Trump supporters -- wave American flags, Trump 2020 flags and MAGA flags for the US president's birthday on June 14, 2020 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. **PHOTO: AFP**

US Air Force F-15 fighter jet crashes in North Sea

A US fighter jet on a training mission from a British Royal Air Force base in eastern England crashed in the North Sea on Monday.

"A US Air Force F-15C Eagle crashed at approximately 0940 (0840 GMT) today (Monday) in the North Sea," said USAF Captain Miranda T. Simmons, from RAF Lakenheath.

"The cause of the crash as well as the status of the pilot are unknown at this time, and UK Search and Rescue have been called to support."

The plane took off from the RAF Lakenheath base, near Mildenhall, in Suffolk, which hosts the 48th Fighter Wing of the US Air Force.

The BBC said the plane was believed to have gone down 74 nautical miles (137 kilometres) off the East Yorkshire coast.—AFP ■

Another police killing of a black man stokes US tension, debate

WASHINGTON (United States) — The fatal shooting of a black man by a white police officer in Atlanta has poured more fuel on the raging US debate over racism, prompting another round of street protests and the resignation of the southern city's police chief.

The death of 27-year-old Rayshard Brooks was ruled a homicide by the county medical examiner's office on Sunday, a day after the Wendy's restaurant where he died was set on fire and hundreds of people marched to denounce the killing.

His deadly encounter with police on Friday drew expressions of outrage, shock and dismay in a country deeply shaken by civil unrest since the May 25 police killing in Minneapolis, Minnesota of George Floyd, an unarmed black man.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced at a news conference Saturday that Police Chief Erika Shields had decided to step down.

"I do not believe this was a justified use of deadly force," Bottoms said.

The officer who shot Brooks -- identified as Garrett Rolfe -- has been dismissed.

Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard said his office would decide whether to lay criminal charges against Rolfe by mid-week, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

James Clyburn, an African-American member of Congress from South Carolina, said he was incensed by the killing.

"This did not call for lethal force. And I don't know what's in the culture that would make this guy do that. It has got to be the culture. It's got to be the system," he said, speaking on CNN's "State of the Union." —AFP ■

Veteran Philippine journalist found guilty in "cyber-libel" case

High-profile Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, co-founder of online news outlet Rappler, meets the press in Manila on June 15, 2020, shortly after she was found guilty of "cyber-libel" by a Manila court. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

MANILA — High-profile Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, co-founder of online news outlet Rappler, was on Monday found guilty of "cyber-libel" by a Manila court, CNN Philippines reported.

Ressa, a former CNN correspondent who was named one of Time magazine's "2018 Persons of the Year," as well as former Rappler researcher-writer Reynaldo Santos Jr. were both were convicted by the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 46.

The court sentenced them to between six months and up to six years in jail over charges filed by businessman Wilfredo Keng, according to her news organization.

They were also ordered to pay a total of 400,000 pesos (about $8,000) in damages. Both are entitled to post-conviction bail while they pursue appeals.

"To all Filipinos, protect your rights. If you don't use your rights, we will lose them...Press freedom is for everyone, not only in journalism," Ressa said in a news conference immediately after the verdict was handed down.

The court said Rappler did not offer proof to verify allegations made against Keng in an article published on the site in May 2012 that linked him to illegal drugs and human trafficking.

It added that freedom of the press cannot be used as a shield.

Rights groups warned that the verdict could have a chilling effect on mass media in the country and silence critics of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Rappler is known for its critical coverage of the Duterte administration, which took office in 2016.—Kyodo News ■

Hong Kong Disneyland to reopen after five-month virus closure

HONG KONG (China) — Hong Kong's Disneyland will reopen its doors on Thursday following nearly five months of closure, the park said Monday, in a fresh boost for a city that has largely managed to defeat the coronavirus.

Visitors will need to sign health declarations, submit to regular temperature checks and wear masks at all times unless eating, the park said in a statement on Monday.

It is just the second Disneyland around the world to resume services during the pandemic after Shanghai turned its lights and rides back on last month.

Tokyo and Paris remain closed while the company's flagship park in California is eyeing a July reopening.

Hong Kong was one of the first places to record coronavirus infections after the disease first emerged in central China, morphing into a global pandemic and enveloping much of the world in a recession.

But the finance hub has since managed to largely halt local transmission with just over 1,100 infections and four deaths.

All overseas passengers are screened at the airport and quarantined by authorities if found to be infected -- on top of a mandatory 14-day home quarantine for arrivals.

Across the globe, tourism operators are desperate to restart business, trialling different forms of social distancing as lockdowns ease.

Last month, a group of Japanese amusement parks announced guidelines on how to operate safely under the threat of the virus, including asking guests to "refrain from vocalising loudly" on rollercoasters and other rides.

Park staff, including those dressed up as stuffed animal mascots and superheroes, were also advised to not shake hands or high-five with young fans.

Hong Kong authorities currently ban gatherings of more than eight people because of the virus. That ban is up for renewal on Thursday, the day Disneyland reopens.

David Hui, a leading infectious disease expert in the city, told RTHK radio on Monday that the anti-virus ban could be further relaxed as most activities in the city have resumed.

Authorities have also used the public gathering ban as a way to refuse permission for pro-democracy protests which have bubbled up again in recent weeks and been quickly dispersed by riot police citing the emergency measures.

Last year, the city was rocked by seven straight months of huge and often violent pro-democracy demonstrations and Beijing has since vowed to impose a new sweeping national security law on the business hub. —AFP ■

Hong Kong Disneyland is set to reopen after nearly five months of closure forced by the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

Malaysia reports 41 new COVID-19 cases, preschools set to open in July

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia reported 41 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, pushing the total cases to 8,494, the Health Ministry said.

Health Ministry Director-General Noor Hisham Abdullah said at a press briefing that three of the new cases are imported. Of the local transmissions, 32 are foreign nationals, including a cluster of foreign detainees from an immigration facility as well as clusters of foreign workers. Of the six local transmission involving Malaysian citizens, one new cluster was found in a senior citizen care center.

There are 973 people who remain active cases in the country, of which four are being held in intensive care and none of the rest are in need of assisted breathing.

No new death has been reported, leaving the total deaths at 121.

Another 54 cases had been released, bringing the total number of cured and discharged to 7,400 or 87.1 percent of all cases.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Ismail SabriYaakob, who coordinated the implementation of restrictive measures, said in a separate press conference that preschools and kindergartens will be allowed to operate from July 1 onwards.

Malaysia's Education Ministry announced earlier that middle schools will be reopen on June 24 for senior grade students.—Xinhua ■

NEWS In BRIEF

7 dead in China mine accident

XI'AN – All seven miners involved in a coal mine accident in northwest China's Shaanxi Province were found dead, and rescuers retrieved their bodies on Monday noon, local authorities said.

The coal mine located in Longmen Township, in the city of Hancheng, was rocked by a coal and gas outburst on June 10, according to the publicity department of the city.
– Xinhua ■

New Zealand's travel restrictions flatten arrivals and departures in April

WELLINGTON – The number of people crossing New Zealand's border in April 2020 fell to levels last seen in the late 1960s, the country's statistic department Stats NZ said on Monday.

There were a combined 38,200 arrivals and departures in April 2020, compared with nearly 1.2 million in April 2019, Stats NZ said. New Zealand's border was closed to almost all visitor arrivals just before midnight on 19 March. This was part of the New Zealand government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, daily arrival and departure numbers have dropped substantially, it said. –Xinhua

Viet Nam couple detained over killing pet dogs and cats for meat

HANOI (Viet Nam) – A couple accused of poisoning dozens of pet dogs and cats in Viet Nam have been arrested, state media said Monday, as local authorities clamp down on animal snatchers who sell the meat to food shops and markets.

Traditionally eaten with rice wine or beer, dog meat is considered a delicacy in parts of the country. Cat – although less popular – also features on some menus, often dubbed "little tiger". But the animals are also lovingly raised as pets by many families.–AFP ■

General Aung San Shield 2020 set to restart on 16 July

GENERAL Aung San Shield 2020 is set to resume on 16 July 2020, according to the Myanmar National League's social media.

The first round of the tourney will take place on 16 and 17 July.

On 16 July, 10/Mon FC will play against Paung Laung FC at the M3 ground, University FC and Kachin United FC will meet at the Padonmar Stadium, and Junior Lions FC will take on Yaw Myay FC at the Sa Lin ground.

On 17 July, Myawady FC and Yangon Premier League Champion will meet at the Padonmar Stadium, Silver Stars FC will take on Shwe Pyi Thar FC at the Sa Lin ground, and Mawyawadi FC will play against Happy Friendship FC at the M3 ground.

Its second round will be held on 5 August and third round on 12 August. The tourney's quarter-final will take place on 19 August, and semi-final on 9 September.

The final match is scheduled to play on 11 or 12 September at the Thuwunna Stadium.

The 2020 General Aung San Shield is the sixth season of Myanmar knockout football competition. The tournament is organized by the Myanmar Football Federation. This cup succeeded the Myanmar Football Federation Cup. — Kyaw Khin ■

Players of Magwe FC celebrate thier winning of the General Aung San Shield 2016 after the final game against Yangon United FC on 17 August 2016. **PHOTO: MNL**

Premier League lockdown: winners and losers

LONDON (United Kingdom) — The Premier League finally makes its long-awaited return on 17 June following a three-month coronavirus lockdown.

The landscape has changed since March — clubs have welcomed back injured players, others have had a chance to regroup and Liverpool have had to come to terms with a low-key title celebration.

AFP Sport looks at the winners and losers as teams emerge from the lockdown.

Healed stars boost Spurs, Man Utd

When we last saw Jose Mourinho, the Tottenham manager cut a despondent figure as he admitted he wished he could fast-forward to next season.

At the time, injury-hit Tottenham were on a six-match winless run that saw them knocked out of the Champions League and FA Cup, while falling seven points adrift of the top four.

However, no boss has benefited more from the three-month break than Mourinho and eighth-placed Tottenham will return rejuvenated after Harry Kane, Son Heung-min, Steven Bergwijn, Erik Lamela and Moussa Sissoko regained their fitness. —AFP ■

Inspired by Bruno Fernandes, Manchester United hope for a strong end to the season. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yangon United donate K1 mln to family of late coach Aye San

OFFICIALS from Yangon United FC have provided K1 million to the family of the late football coach and footballer Aye San, who drowned and died in Dawei, according to the club's social media.

The officials visited and comforted the family of U Aye San, former national team player and coach of Yangon National Football Academy.

"Our thought and deepest sympathies are now with the family and may his soul rest in peace," Yangon United FC posted on their social media.

The 38-year-old football coach drowned in Thayet Chaung waterfall in Dawei in the evening of 12 June.

Aye San has been selected as a national team player for many years. He later played in teams such as KBZ (now Shan United) and Nay Pyi Taw.

In 2007, he represented the Myanmar U-23 to the final of 2007 SEA Games. He played as the captain for the bronze medal-winning Myanmar National Team at 2011 SEA Games in Indonesia. — Kyaw Khin ■

Officials from Yangon United FC (right) present cash aids to the family members of late coach Aye San on 15 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNL**

Asia's One Championship cuts staff as MMA shows halted by virus

SINGAPORE — Asia's largest mixed martial arts promotion, One Championship, said Monday it was cutting 20 per cent of its staff worldwide after being unable to stage fight cards for almost four months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Singapore-based organization, which promotes cards across Asia in mixed martial arts, Muay Thai and kickboxing, has between 201-500 employees, according to its LinkedIn profile.

One Championship said in a statement it had raised an additional $70 million to its "war chest", bringing its total capital to $346 million but added it had also "streamlined operations, including a 20 per cent reduction of total worldwide headcount".

Social distancing and other measures to contain the virus have forced the closure of sporting events worldwide and One Championship's last event was held behind closed doors in Singapore on February 28, said a spokesman.

Four events were planned to be held without fans in Singapore during April and May, but they had to be shelved because of the city's tough anti-virus rules.

Another event on May 29 in Manila was also cancelled because the Philippines remained under lockdown.—AFP ■