

NATIONAL

Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) holds videoconference

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko receives cash donations for religious purposes

PAGE-5

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Friday, 19 June 2020

State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID-19 on Myanmar agricultural sector



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds discussions with stakeholders in agricultural sector on videoconference 18 June 2020. PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a videoconference to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the Myanmar agricultural sector yesterday from the Presidential palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

Participants at the discus-

sions were Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu, Myanmar Rice Federation Chairman U Ye Min Aung, and Outstanding Farmer Award Winner from Ayeyawady Region Daw Kyin Sine.

Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee for

COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment first discussed that Myanmar is an agricultural country and therefore agriculture is very important; measures carried out during the COVID-19 period should be aligned with the previous steps, as well as the future plans and goals. She

said that she wanted Myanmar to become a modern industrial country based on agriculture because Myanmar has a natural advantage in agriculture; there were some countries which have succeeded based on agriculture, for example, New Zealand; this small island country became

an industrial country based on agriculture; it is also one of the most progressive and modern nations in the world; Myanmar also has great potentials like this country in terms of agricultural resources that should be developed to reach a higher level;

SEE PAGE-3

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 18 June, total figure reaches 263

Updated at 8 pm, 18 June 2020



New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 18 June 2020



SEE PAGE-2

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

New K500 banknote featuring Bogoyoke Aung San to roll out on 19 July

PAGE-6

NATIONAL

MoALI discusses recovery plan for fisheries sector in post-COVID

PAGE-10



LOCAL NEWS

MSME Development Agency ponders ways to produce resilient businesses

PAGE-4

BUSINESS

Normal entry permit called for as China's driver substitution causes trade delay

PAGE-7

Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) holds videoconference



Union Minister U Thaung Tun attends the virtual meeting to discuss investment sectors in Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR Investment Commission (MIC) held its regular meeting via videoconferencing system, yesterday morning. Chairman of the MIC, Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Vice-Chairman, Union Minister Dr Than Myint and members of the Commission participated in the meeting from their respective offices in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. The meeting approved nine

new projects in the manufacturing sector and other sector as well as additional investments in six existing projects. The approved projects amounted to USD (193.389) million, Kyat (64,341.827) million and (2,507) job opportunities are expected to be created. By the end of May 2020, the countries with the largest investments in Myanmar are Singapore, the People’s Republic of China and Thailand. The oil & gas sector accounted for 26.51%. This was followed by the power sector, accounting for 26.60% and the manufacturing sector, accounting for 14.11% of the total permitted amount of foreign investment.—MNA

Notification on COVID-19 prevention in IDP camps

1. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is implementing action plans to prevent, contain and treat COVID-19 in IDP camps across the nation.
2. Management committees and temporary residents of the IDP camps are notified to proceed with the following action points:
- Regularly and systematically wash hands with the hand basins and soaps provided in the camps.
 - Be wary of personal hygiene and minimizing contact with other persons when using public toilets and showers.
 - Be extra vigilant for the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses living in the camps.
 - To regulate camp residents from going outside and to maintain records of persons going outside for compulsory reasons. Every time they leave or enter the camp, their body temperatures should be checked, surgical or cloth-sewn masks should be worn and hands should be washed systematically.
 - Always wear fabric-woven face mask. Mark two colours for interior and exterior of face mask. Completely cover nose and mouth. Never touch mask with hand when worn on face. Remove from face using the strings attached to the mask. Clean the fabric-woven face mask thoroughly every day.
 - Prevent external persons from entering the camp.
 - Report immediately to authorities for unusual activities or requirements concerning COVID-19.
 - Carefully read SMS messages from Ministry of Health and Sports on updates and information related to COVID-19.
 - Follow patient referral procedures in case of COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Connect with local general administration department, health department and philanthropic organizations to swiftly transport patients under surveillance and suspected persons to their designated locations.
 - Adhere to notifications issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and local governments concerning COVID-19
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
- (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

8th relief flight from Singapore lands in Yangon with 155 Myanmar nationals

MYANMAR National Airlines landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon, with 155 nationals from Changi International Airport of Singapore yesterday. As they arrived in Yangon, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks. As per the directives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and in coordination with other relevant ministries in Myanmar and the Myanmar embassies in respective countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged relief flights and chartered planes to bring back Myanmar people from foreign countries. A total of 4,183 people have been repatriated to Myanmar to date, and the 9th repatriation flight will pick up more Myanmar nationals stuck abroad through the Changi International Airport on 28 June.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar nationals queuing for medical tests at Yangon International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

One more COVID -19 case on 18 June, total figure reaches 263

Myanmar COVID-19 figure reached 263 after one more case, who contacted with positive patient No. 262, was reported on 18 June, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 263 confirmed cases, six died, 187 have recovered and 172 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

(Translated by YHT)

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 18 June, total figure reaches 263

FROM PAGE-1

One new case of COVID-19 on 18 June 2020: Updated at 8 pm

C a s e No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
263	17	Female	Buthidaung Township, R a k h i n e State	Yes, Case 262	No	District People’s Hospital, Maungtaw	Positive	Held under quarantine (Maungtaw Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

“People are the key”

State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID-19 ...

FROM PAGE-1

in the implementation of plans they had to make predictions to see how the future was going to turn out by taking the long-term view; they could not focus only on the present; at this time that matter was becoming more apparent; during the COVID period they had to think about today and tomorrow; the COVID situation was such that it was not certain how each day was going to turn out; while thinking in this way, they had to consider to make sure that in the long term, in the post COVID period, the country was advancing along the desired path and goals.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the agricultural sector; delaying commodity flows, loss of markets for the produce, suspension of the export sector; the lack of storage facilities, strict restrictions on trade policy neighbouring country; insufficient checks on quality, a decline of remittance from migrant workers, a decline of investments in agriculture and output volume.

Revenue has dropped due to travel restrictions, affecting agricultural and related sectors; the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan has been beneficial to the agricultural sector; and the government has allowed some project and K92.61 billion fund for the socio-economic development of the rural people.

The Union Minister also talked on the four factors to promote the lives of rural residents, with maintaining production in the agricultural sector as per 2.1.7 (B) of CERP; the Department of Agriculture will lead in implementing 100,000 acres of paddy seed production project; it will be carried out in 287 townships in different regions and states, except Chin State, in contract farming system, the K14.91 billion from CERP programme will be used for this project until the end of September.

The Department of Rural Development will set up K42 billion capital fund which will be managed by the rural people in 1,700 villages in regions and states.

The Department of Fisheries will supply fishery farmers with

fish fingerlings worth K40,000 per fishing acre, totalling K6 billion.

The ministry will also spend K1.257 billion in distributing agriculture machinery in 11 regions and states.

The MoALI will create six categories of employment opportunities for the farmers in rural infrastructural developments, supporting livestock sector, safety and security courses for the fishing worker; renovation of irrigation facilities, using transplanting machines in six regions and states, vocational training courses of the Small-Scale Industries Department.

The Union Minister also explained facilitations in export and border trade sectors, implementation of CERP; implementation of contract farming and laboratories for quality tests, the loans from World Bank and grant from EU.

Outstanding Farmer Award Winner Daw Kyin Sine discussed

be exported from 1 May to 15 June, making about \$100 million in revenue.

The Myanmar Rice Federation fulfilled requests of the Philippines, China and Malaysia through the diplomatic channel to sell the rice, and it was carried out with the directives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and the government leaders.

The MRF Chairman suggested cultivation of alternative crops in addition to rice for the benefits of farmers, production of value-added items from rice; the importance of 2012 Farm Land Law for the farmers, the formation of a farmers organization for systematic coordination and advancement of the agriculture sector; the expectation of farmers to cultivate other crops on 50 per cent of their lands, requirements for effective implementation of this law to be able to grow alter-

tions and in the form of loans and financial assistance from other nations; loans need to be repaid and this makes them important and crucial for a nation's integrity; it was also important for other countries to see a nation as being economically reliable.

Although Myanmar suffered greatly due to the effects of war right after she gained independence; she had been very timely and exact in repaying her debts. Because of her reputation of not being even a single day late in repayments, there were many who wished to help and give loans; they wanted to continue in this manner; loans need to be repaid; she believed that every farmer had the desire to repay the loan; the Union Government has to work towards a situation where it was possible to repay the loans.

She said it was important to make investments that would create large returns so that loan

among the migrant workers who returned to Myanmar; she wanted them to work in Myanmar; she had learnt that working abroad was very tiring and that sometimes full of difficulties; if there were skilled workers among the returnees, it was necessary to connect them to places in Myanmar where their expertise would be needed.

She said it was necessary for migrant workers to settle down in areas where their skills are needed. If there was a problem, it should be resolved through negotiations; this was the basic principle that needs to be practiced throughout the country. If any problem occurs, it should be resolved through negotiations; she wanted this custom to become one of the customs of the country.

The State Counsellor said that since Myanmar was an agricultural country, she did not wish to let go of agriculture; now the whole world has come to understand food security; food security was very important; countries which did not produce food have to depend on food producing countries; food would always be in demand; no matter how developed a country might be, if it could not produce enough food for its citizens, it was a big problem. As Myanmar assists in fulfilling the global food requirements, she also needs to consider her own national development.

At one time Myanmar was known as the “rice bowl” of the world. Especially we could say that the Ayeyarwaddy region was the world's top rice producing region. That is now in the past. In building for the future, we need to work properly in the present; rice is very important for Myanmar; it would still be important in the future; it may be said the rice is the staple food of our citizens; however, if we looked at the whole world, we find that countries which depended on rice became less and less dependent on rice as they developed; it has been noticed although Japan used to consume rice as its staple food, the consumption of wheat increased as Japan developed; thus consumption patterns have changed. Therefore as the world changes, Myanmar also needs to change.

SEE PAGE-4

... Myanmar was known as the “rice bowl” of the world. Especially we could say that the Ayeyarwaddy region was the world's top rice producing region. That is now in the past. In building for the future, we need to work properly in the present;

the 10 factors for agricultural development, including soil development, seed production, manageable cultivation of domestic crops, difficulties in buying paddy seeds and repayment of state agricultural loan and support of WHH to 23 paddy seed-producing farmers with US\$200 each, technical requirements for agricultural machinery and shortage of labour.

Myanmar Rice Federation Chairman U Ye Min Aung discussed panic buying of people to increase rice price, the announcement of MRF on the sufficiency of rice for domestic consumption, selling rice at an affordable price at industrial zones with the help of UMFCCI. The federation worked together with private agricultural firms, rice millers and merchants to contribute 70,000 tonnes of rice in the government's plan for rice distribution to people with irregular incomes.

Myanmar has over 40,000 tonnes of reserve rice, and more than 200,000 tonnes of rice could

native crops, the needs of crop dryers and warehouses, loans from banks by showing documents for the crops stored at the warehouses before selling the produce at an attractive price, formation of farmer affairs association, access to agricultural loans from foreign banks, local banks and partner organizations for the production of value-added items and trades, loans for SMEs, development of irrigation systems for agriculture.

The State Counsellor responded to the discussion and said the life and skills of the nation's farmers and cultivators need to be improved in order for the nation to develop. The standard of living needs to go up in rural villages and opportunities for development need to be discovered.

She said the nation is making use of billions of Kyat during the COVID pandemic and this financial support is acquired from international financial organiza-

repayments could be made. She asked for the special needs of the farmers during the COVID period as these were matters that the people and the government need to work on together.

She continued by saying that it was important to have the will and spirit to overcome stress and challenges; and that all the discussions made would be recorded. She said they would assist in all difficulties; with regard to the matter of not having skilled workers, for the future of the country it would be necessary to train and produce skilled workers. She said the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation needs to consider adding training courses on how to use farm equipment and machinery at the location they are sold; similar courses should be taught at the vocational training schools across the states and regions.

She added that they needed to consider whether there were skilled workers or not from

State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID-19 ...

FROM PAGE-3

She added that climate change is very important for agriculture; we do not even know if the infrastructures that had been built in the past would be compatible with the current climatic situation; with regard to the changes in the global markets, just as rice consuming countries turned to wheat, in countries where rice has never been seen before rice consumption increased.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor said that the Union Government has been following continuously all the requests made by farmers to reflect the needs of farmers in the laws and regulations and that they had to listen to all sources; sometimes, if we failed to listen to both sides, it would not be complete; with regard to the comment that warehouses and grain dryers were needed, she has observed that in some places, there were farmers who did not use the warehouses although these were available.

Someone made a comment that they could wait till a high price could be fetched if there were enough warehouses; however, some farmers want to sell out their produce without waiting for a decent price although they can use warehouses; she wanted them to keep their produce in

the warehouse and wait; training should be conducted to teach farmers not to be impatient and sell their produce to obtain ready cash; it was very important for the grain dryers to have acceptable quality standards; everyone knows already about the matter of loans; they know that the loans should be of sufficient amount; they have been working hard all the time to make sure that loans were being disbursed to individual farmers, small and medium enterprises.

She added that the Union Government is supporting the private sector; the country's economy can be strong only when the private sector is developed. For the long term development of the economy, the government should not be playing the leading role all the time; there should be cooperation between the government and the private sector; however, the private sector is very important; regarding agriculture, it was mentioned that crops should be stored at the end of the rainy season; regarding this matter it would be necessary to think this through very carefully because of climate change; climate which has changed is no longer regular; this is the number one problem.

In recent years the monsoon came in and went out in a regular pattern. The rains have been reg-

ular. Now, one cannot say when the monsoon will arrive. When it rained it would rain for many days continuously; then it would stop completely. This is the current weather pattern; sometimes there was no water and sometimes we have floods. To be able to manage these two extremes, it would be necessary to study with the use of modern technology. For example, Japan is a country which has made special study of the effects of climate change on agriculture. We should obtain expertise from such countries and use these techniques suitably for Myanmar. It would be necessary to change our infrastructures to a certain extent depending upon climate change. In building roads and bridges, as they were built in line with the previous monsoon climate are thus not suitable with the current weather pattern. So also with dams; as the dams, embankments and reservoirs were built in accordance with previous weather patterns, it would be necessary to consider what needs to be done in the long term to be in accord with the current new weather patterns.

She said that we should not rely on one single crop and that Myanmar should not rely only on rice. Efforts should be made to expand the rice market and make it better. The approach should be to

have more rice varieties and more ways of preparing and using rice.

She said she was pleased to learn that farmers wished to plant other crops apart from rice. The willingness to innovate, the courage to innovate and the courage to create and try out new things, all these are very important. There is a saying "necessity is the mother of invention". During the COVID period, there was more unity. Out of necessity we had to invent how to cooperate and how to bargain with each other; this invention is one of our good results. Challenges are opportunities for us. We need to turn challenges into opportunities.

If some emergency guidelines for the COVID-19 are appropriate for the long term, these must be maintained for the future; it must be said that COVID is very supportive for tests; this is trial period; some inventions for the short span could be useful for the long term after some adjustments; continuous monitoring is needed to do this.

Farmers have concerns about the weather every day; they have to forecast it day by day; therefore, readiness and flexibility play key roles in reforms; while farmers are the driving force of the country, they should themselves be a strong community; strength should be simply judged

on their usefulness to relevant societies and the country; other powers are not considered to be strong; there are different types of powers and various interpretations to them; in this circumstance the power can be measured in relation to its benefit to the respective communities; it is important for the farmers; for a stronger power, a more cautious approach should be developed.

Rice is the strength for country; the national economy relied on it in the past; it is not the time to depend only on a single product; and that agriculture become a pivotal role for the economy of the country; production of raw materials is not enough for development of the country; it is required to focus on producing finished products from raw materials in promoting economic sector; this sector needs to be promoted urgently at present; it can be implemented by collaboration of farmers, the government and private firms; there would be more opportunities in the future for discussions like this.

The State Counsellor finally said 'thank you' to all the participants in the discussions and prayed for their success in their respective sectors.

(Translated by Aung Khin, Zaw Htet Oo)

MSME Development Agency ponders ways to produce resilient businesses

THE Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency held their (1/2020) meeting with a videoconference from the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and the SME Centre in Yangon yesterday.

Present at the meeting were the Chairman of the MSME Agency and Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Aung Htoo, Joint-Chairman of the agency and also Deputy Minister for the same ministry Dr Min Ye Paing Hein, the Vice-Chairman of the agency and UMFCPI President U Zaw Min Win, and other agency members.

U Aung Htoo first delivered a speech where he said MSMEs have suffered from the coronavirus and this is why there are plans for the nation to give out loans in the CERP plan. He said they are working to allot excess funds from the JICA Two-Step Loan as loans for MSMEs and how loans alone are not enough for developing MSMEs.

The Deputy Minister said



Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry hosts a meeting of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency on 18 June 2020. PHOTO: MNA

they require technology, market penetration, and skilled workers to fully develop and the temporary closure of MSMEs during COVID has caused losses. He said if the skilled workers returning to Myanmar during the pandemic were to cooperate with MSMEs then it will increase national production. He said they must support MSMEs to sustain themselves during COVID.

U Aung Htoo said business methods will change after COVID and consumer needs will change as well and businesses unable to adapt to these changes will have difficulty keeping afloat. He said MSMEs will need to make extensive use of the Digital Economy and become Internationalization SMEs according to market needs. He called for ideas regarding the Global Value

Chain and International Production Nature.

Next, Dr. Ye Min Paing Hein said the MSME Agency must discuss how best to reduce the negative side effects of COVID-19 on MSMEs and to support them so that they may swiftly get back on their feet afterwards. He called for agency members to discuss the registration of MSMEs, the Myanmar MSMEs Master Plan

drawn in collaboration with FNF, and amending the SME Development Law.

The Deputy Minister said the budget of the Ministry of Health and Sports has been increased for prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 and arrangements have been made to increase the budget for agriculture and livestock processes as well while loans are given out to MSMEs. He said they are arranging to give out loans to CMP businesses, hotels and tourism businesses, transportation businesses, and restaurants.

The meeting then commenced with discussions on building resilient MSMEs after COVID-19, the Myanmar MSMEs Master Plan, implementing a digital MSME application, and other policy matters. Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo then delivered the closing speech and ended the meeting. —MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko receives cash donations for religious purposes

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko received a total of K542.5 million cash donations for religious purposes yesterday.

At the donation ceremony held at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhamma Thabin of Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon, well-wishers donated K345 million for final phase in construction of Eternal

Peace pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw, K85 million for all-round renovation of Maha Thanti Thukha Buddhist Missionary Monastery, K57.5 million for cash fund of Pariyatti Examination winners and K55 million for missionary works in border and mountainous areas.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko attends the cash donation ceremony for religious purposes at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhamma Thabin of Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar discusses transport sector cooperation with ASEAN, China

THE 1st Task Force Meeting on Mid-Term Review of the Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic

Plan, the 49th ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting and the ASEAN-China Senior Trans-

port Officials Meeting were held through video conferencing on 16 and 17 June.

Present at the meetings were Senior Transport Officials from the 10 ASEAN member nations and China, officials from the office of the ASEAN Secretary-General, Permanent Secretary U Win Khant of Myanmar's Ministry of Transport and Communication, and Senior Officials from the Department of Civil Aviation, Department of Marine Administration, Department of Road Transport Administration, Department of Roads, and Myanma Railways.

The meeting on the first day discussed the progress of nations and regions concerning the air routes, marine routes, land routes, and transportation efficiency components of the Kua-

la Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan.

The 49th Senior Transport Officials Meeting exchanged views on establishing ASEAN's sole market for air and water routes, the Singapore-Kunming railway project and ASEAN highway project, implementing agreements and measures to make transport in ASEAN more effective, responding to COVID-19 and necessary measures for the transport sector after COVID-19.

The ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting commenced later in the day and exchanged opinions on responding to COVID-19 and cooperation between ASEAN and China.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



The 49th ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting and ASEAN-China Senior Transport Officials Meeting being held via videoconferencing. **PHOTO: MNA**

MoSWRR carry out COVID-19 preventive measures in Kachin State

MINISTRY of Social welfare, Relief and Resettlement have been carried out prevention, control and response measures against the COVID-19 at the IDP camps in cooperation with relevant departments and organizations in the country.

The ministry implemented COVID-19 preventive measures at IDP camps in Kachin State yesterday. Officials from the ministry provided 1,152 soap

cakes to three IDP camps – Myothitkyi Jan Monggoung, Shwe Set Baptist and Mankhein Baptist—in Myintkyina, Kachin State.

The ministry have been not only implementing COVID-19 preventive, control and response measures but providing psychological supports in the regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.—MNA ■

(Translated by YHT)



An official providing necessary assistance to the internally displaced person in Kachin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Volunteers, CSOs honoured for activities in COVID-19 measures

VOLUNTEERS and civil society organizations who contributed their services at quarantine centres and Myawady border gate in Kayin State were honoured yesterday at Technological University in Hpa-an yesterday.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, Kayin State Chief Minister Daw Nang Khin Htwe Myint and officials visited the University yesterday and the Union Minister handed over certificates of honour, brooches, face masks, hand sanitizers to the Kayin State Chief Minister for 241 volunteers and 23 philanthropic groups.

The visit of the Union Minister and entourage to the Technological University was conducted in line with the COVID-19 prevention and controlling measures.

The Union Minister also handed over K 14,670,000 to a person-in-charge of the quarantine site for 297 pregnant mothers, 174 under five-year-old children and 18 aged persons.

Next, the Union Minister expressed his heartfelt thanks to the volunteers and charity groups for their all-out services at the quarantine centres and Myawady Border in Kayin State and he continued that he is unable to meet each of the volunteers to present their award as ceremonies are banned to hold due to the pandemic condition.

National Volunteer Steering Committee will ensure the certificates arrive in the hands of 241 volunteers and 23 philanthropic groups and will continue to identify, acknowledge and award certificates and brooches to volunteers and philanthropic groups in different states and regions.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye providing the medical products for the volunteers and quarantined persons in Kayin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

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New K500 banknote featuring Bogyoke Aung San to roll out on 19 July



The front side of the banknote. PHOTO : MNA



The reverse side of the banknote. PHOTO : MNA

THE Central Bank of Myanmar has announced circulation of 500-kyat banknote on 19 July.

With depiction of national leader Bogyoke Aung San, the size of new banknote will have 150 mm in length and 70 mm in width. Its prominent colour is red brown, and printed the 'CENTRAL BANK OF MYANMAR' at the top.

The obverse side of the banknote depicts National Leader Bogyoke Aung San as the main portrait.

Its right corner carries the 500-kyat denomination in Myanmar numbers, and its English digits in the remaining corners.

The serial number lies

horizontally in Myanmar numbers, and vertically in English digits, while its left side portrays the watermark of Bogyoke Aung San and a moving effect is being incorporated into the 500-kyat note security thread. At the most left and right sides are the embossed short stripes.

The reverse depicts the building of CBM with English letters 'CENTRAL BANK OF MYANMAR' at the top and 'FIVE HUNDRED KYATS' at the bottom.

The existing 500-kyat note which is in circulation will continue to be legal tender currency.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Nearly 70 per cent of hotels in Mandalay set to reopen

NEARLY 70 per cent out of over 400 hotels in Mandalay region will reopen upon completion of the inspection process, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism Department in Mandalay region.

To be able to reopen the hotels recognized by the department in the Mandalay region, authorities are inspecting the hotels whether they follow the instructions of the health regulations.

The operation of the hotels and guesthouses has been suspended during coronavirus prevention and control period. To be able to resume the op-

eration, the government team will inspect these hotels and guesthouses whether they follow 59 rules set up by the Ministry of Health and Sports. The rules are not very strict but are aimed at ensuring the health and safety of the workers and customers.

More than 400 hotels are holding the licence issued by the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism Department in Mandalay region.

Among them, the inspection completed hotels have already been submitted to the regional government. The authorities granted the resump-

tion of the hotel operation phase by phase.

"There are more than 400 hotels in Mandalay region. Among them, over 60 per cent of hotels have completed the inspection process and submitted to the regional government to get permission," said U San Yu, the assistant director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism Department in Mandalay region.

"After inspection, if the hotels get A, they will be granted to reopen. If they get B and C, they still need to fulfil some necessary requirements to reopen. After that, we will conduct

inspection upon these hotels again. We also need to submit the report to the regional government," said U Min Naing, the chairman of Mandalay Region Hoteliers Association, who is involved in the inspection team.

The inspection team was led by an official from the health department with the officials from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism Department and Myanmar Hoteliers Association as members. —Than Zaw Min (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

MR arranges 2 seats for 1 ticket to keep social distancing among commuters

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMA Railway (MR) is making arrangements to keep two seats for one ticket so that the commuters can keep social distancing, said an official from MR.

Although MR is making arrangements for keeping two seats for one ticket, the train fare is only for one ticket as usual. So, the commuters do not need to spend the extra cost. By doing so, the passengers can follow the social distancing rule which is the key to controlling infectious disease. The officials from MR will also take care of the passengers with no ticket.

"Some countries have lifted the restrictions including the opening of the schools; however, the rate of infection of coronavirus has significantly increased because of not following the government instructions. So, these countries are difficult to control this pandemic disease. As for Myanmar, we need to follow the rules by learning the lesson from other countries' cases," said an official from MR.

Although MR wants to earn more income, MR is giving priority to the health and safety of the commuters over the income. MR also announced that people are needed to avoid travelling if

there are no urgent cases and if they cannot get the tickets, the travelling date should be postponed.

Besides, the commuters are needed to stick to the mask-wearing rule. The railway staff will also check the passengers at the railway stations whether the passengers are wearing the masks or not besides measuring the temperature and making arrangements for them to wash their hands.

In order to prevent unnecessary travelling in the pandemic period, MR has been operating on only six up and down main routes starting from 10 April and

the remaining railway operations have been suspended.

However, there have emerged important cases recently which require the people to travel. Therefore, the operations of the railway are resumed again starting from 16 June in line with the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

With the increasing number of passengers, MR is adding the trains of up and down Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Pyay, Yangon-Mawlamyine and Mandalay-Myitkyina trips starting from 16 June.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Normal entry permit called for as China’s driver substitution causes trade delay

By Nyein Nyein

THE driver substitution system by China causes a delay in Muse and China border trade, prompting Muse Highway Freight Forwarders Association to call for a normal entry permit.

China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Since April, the trucks have been waiting in long queues in Muse and Kyalgaung due to the driver substitution policy.

“The traffic congestion has worsened after the driver substitution system is practised,” said U Win Aung Khant, president of

Muse Highway Freight Forwarders Association.

To ease the traffic, the association has requested to get normal entry permit to Myanmar drivers, extend the capacity of borders between the two countries, and reduce inspection time in China and unnecessary red tapes, he added. “We need to enter Kyalgaung border with our own drivers as the driver substitution system by China caused delays in trade,” he continued.

Earlier, about 250 trucks daily entered Kyalgaung border through Muse. Now, only 150 trucks are seen due to traffic congestion.



Trucks from Myanmar carrying agro-products, fishery products and animal products wait Chinese buyers at Kyalgaung near Muse. **FILE PHOTO**

Previously, it took only three to four days from Muse’s Mang Weing border to China’s Kyalgaung. Now, it takes 10 to 12 days. Similarly, the return trip from Kyalgaung took about 7 to 8 days,

whereas it took only one day before that, the association stated.

At present, the traffic delay resulted in unnecessary loss and hiked truck charges. China’s demand on Myanmar agro products are dropping, U Win Aung Khant explained. The association wants the governments of two countries to negotiate effectively the border trade.

Last 8 June, Union Minister Dr Than Myint of the Ministry of Commerce met with a delegation led by China’s ambassador Mr Chen Hai to Myanmar, in order to effectuate the development of bilateral trade relations.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Hteekhee border trade falls by \$605 mln as of 5 June

BILATERAL trade between Thailand and Myanmar through the Hteekhee border between 1 October and 5 June in the 2019-2020 financial year sharply fell to US\$1.39 billion from \$1.99 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Over the eight months of current fiscal, exports through the Hteekhee border stood at \$1.37 billion, while imports fell short of \$18.4 million.

Exports of natural gas from Tanintharyi Region has contributed to the enormous increase in trade through the Hteekhee border since the previous fiscal, said an official from the ministry.

Earlier, the Myawady border sees the largest trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. The rise in exports through the Hteekhee crossing boosted the value of the Myanmar-Thailand land border trade in the 2018-2019FY. In the current fiscal, trade values at Hteekhee crossing also surpassed those registered at Myawady crossing.

Between Myanmar and Thailand, Myeik, Mawtaung and Hteekhee borders have witnessed a decrease in trade in the current financial year, while the remaining crossings have reported an increase.

Trade values stood at \$105 million at Tachilek border, \$841.9 million at Myawady, \$313.54 million at Kawthoung, \$122.15 million at Myeik, \$1.39 billion at Hteekhee, \$12.68 million at Myawady and \$2.6 million at Maese respectively, as per the Commerce Ministry’s data.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, corns and bamboo shoots to Thailand. This year, corn exports to Thailand rose significantly compared with the previous years. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, and consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country.

— Ko Htet

Sagaing Region Investment Committee endorses over 30 businesses as of May-end

THE Sagaing Region Investment Committee (SRIC) has endorsed over 30 domestic proposals, with an estimated capital of over K17 billion and about US\$3 million, and \$1.3 million worth one joint venture so far, according to the data released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Those enterprises are engaged in the water park and garden; cultivation and manufacturing of crops; crops drying, categorizing and rice milling and processing activities; manufacturing and marketing of concrete pillar; manufacturing of motorcycle parts and accessories; manufacturing of special bamboo furniture; hotel services; packing and wrapping equipment supplier; processing and packaging of sugar cane mud; and private school.

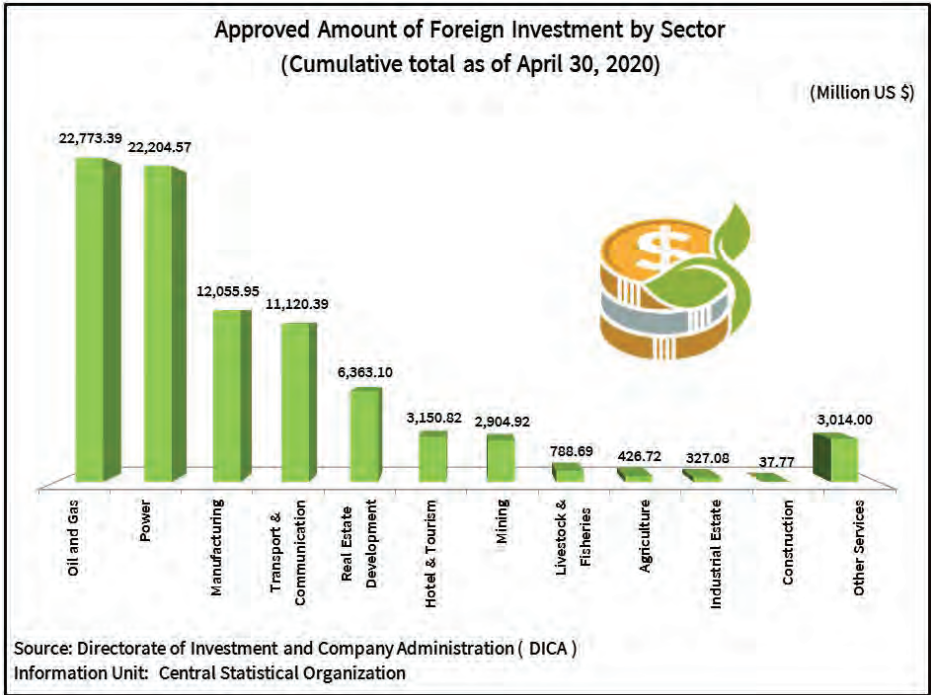
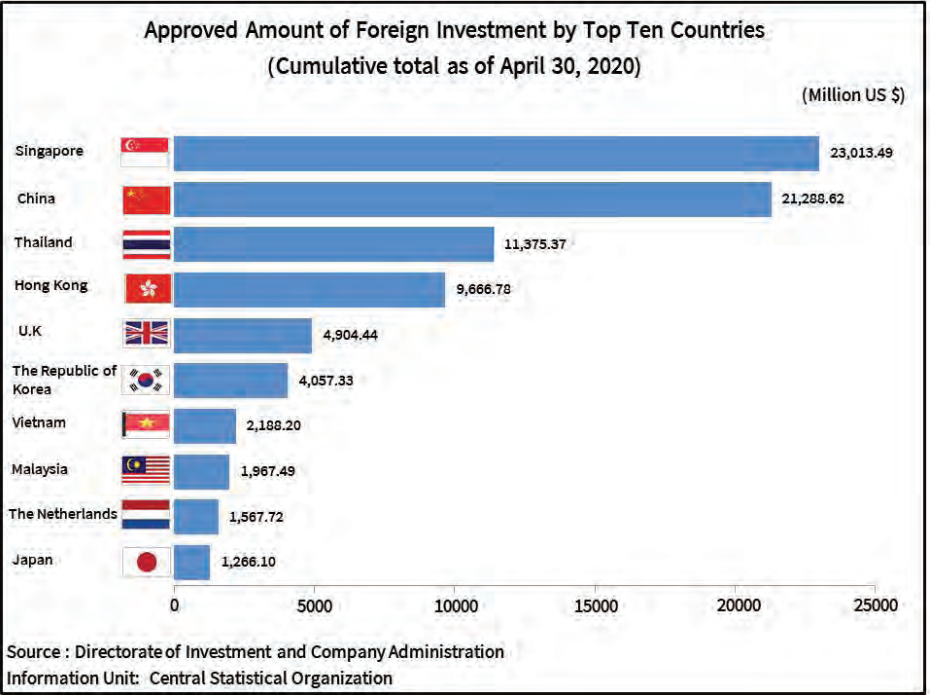
The committee also discussed investment matters and endorsements concerning one foreign project and two domestic proposals at the meeting held on 16 June.

According to the Myanmar Investment Law, the Regions and States Investment Committees are allowed to grant permissions to local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed Ks6 billion, or \$5 million to simplify the verification process of investment projects.

Some projects are no longer need Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) approval while some businesses that are strategic to the government require MIC permit. Also, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding \$5 million and possible impact on the environment and local community need to pass DICA proposal assessment team.

Having introduced a fast-track way to set up a business in Myanmar, investors can apply to the MIC or the State and Regional investment committee for an Endorsement of an investment proposal depending on business types.

— Ko Khant



Going digital is a must for MSMEs in agro sector during post COVID-19 era

MICRO, small, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) account for 90 per cent of all businesses and half of the world's jobs, according to the World Bank Group. Due to COVID-19, many of these businesses are struggling to make ends meet, facing new hardships. There is an urgent need to reimagine how MSMEs buy, sell, and operate.

The government is planning to provide loans to MSMEs in the hope that the loans would benefit them amid-COVID-19.

At the same time, some experts have pointed out that just loan is not helpful for the our MSMEs to overcome their challenges, and they also need technology, market penetration and skillful labours to bring their businesses back on the right track to development amidst- and post-COVID-19.

When it comes to providing loans to MSME, we should see the agricultural sector first because our MSMEs, including small-holder farmers, are among the drivers of the domestic economy.

Over 80 per cent of mobile phone users in Myanmar own a smartphone, and this is a perfect opportunity to leapfrog development in our country's digital sector.

In the agricultural sector, most MSMEs can be found in post-harvest sector as development partners for farmers. In this challenging time, providing MSMEs in agricultural sector and smallholder farmers with credit to invest in their farms isn't just a good measure, it can also be a good business opportunity.

Meanwhile, smallholder farmers frequently do not have physical collateral or other sources of income that can help them obtain loans.

There are risks involved, but there are strategies that can be implemented to reduce risk and make farm finance a successful product for micro-finance institutions.

Another sector we should focus is the digitalization. Promoting the digitalization of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is necessary to drive inclusive growth because MSMEs that can leverage digital tools will more easily be able to rebuild and relaunch their businesses. Going digital is not optional — it's essential.

Digital technologies can no longer be tools of the elite or those in urban hubs. To weather the coronavirus crisis, small enterprises must expand and gain access to markets beyond their own communities. In a March Covid-19 communique, ASEAN economic ministers called for digital trade and technologies to keep businesses operating, especially MSMEs.

Over 80 per cent of mobile phone users in Myanmar own a smartphone, and this is a perfect opportunity to leapfrog development in our country's digital sector.

We can enable the MSMEs and the people to receive the necessary skills and technology by creating a digitally connected society.

But, the effective digitization of MSMEs will require the collaboration of industry players to develop effective digital platforms, offer training for MSMEs to leverage these platforms, and provide financial tools and resources to help them plan for the future.

A CLEANER, FAIRER AND MORE SECURE ENERGY FUTURE

REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

IEA floats 'green recovery' plan to boost economies, cut emissions

THE International Energy Agency (IEA) on Thursday unveiled a three-year post-pandemic master plan to simultaneously salvage the global economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Drawn up jointly with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the 2021-2023 blueprint aims -- in each of those years -- to boost GDP growth 1.1 per cent, "save or create" nine million jobs, and slash CO2 emissions by 1.5 billion tonnes.

Total CO2 emissions last year from fossil fuel and industry was about 37 billion tonnes.

Hitting those targets will require investments of about \$1 trillion (900 billion euros) annually over the three year period, the IEA has calculated.

"A cleaner, fairer and more secure energy future is within our reach," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol, adding that world leaders have a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to reboot their economies and tackle global warming at the same time.

But those goals continue to pull against each other, Birol acknowledged, pointing to lessons learned from the global recession triggered by the collapse of the US housing market.

"When we look at the 2008 financial crisis, we see that global emissions declined in 2009," Birol told journalists by phone.

"But in 2010 they increased much more than the decline in 2009 -- by 1.7 per cent, which was the largest (increase) in history. We want to avoid this rebound."

Figures released this week by scientists tracking global CO2 emissions suggest that window of opportunity is narrowing quickly.

Government policies during the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered patterns of energy demand around the world.

The closing of borders, the nearly complete shutdown of international air travel, and stay-at-home lockdowns sharply reduced transport and consumption patterns.

At their peak in early in early

April, these policies resulted in daily global CO2 emissions dropping 17 per cent compared to average 2019 levels, researchers reported in Nature Climate Change.

Two month later, however, that decline had been sharply reversed, the same team noted in an update.

"Emissions rebounded to within five per cent of mean 2019 levels in early June as countries lifted or weakened their confinement policies," according to the findings, published via the Global Carbon Project, a research consortium.

Overall, global emissions will drop at least four per cent in 2020, they estimate, while the world economy is on track to contract at least six percent this year, according to the OECD.

The energy industry -- covering electricity, oil, gas and biofuels -- has been hit especially hard, shedding three million, or nearly eight per cent, of the sector's 40 million jobs, the IEA said.

Another three million jobs in



World leaders have a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to reboot their economies and tackle global warming at the same time, the IEA has said. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

related areas such as vehicles, buildings and industry have also been lost or are at risk.

Energy investment, meanwhile, is set to plunge an unprec-

edented 20 per cent in 2020, raising concerns about the pace of clean energy transitions.

New jobs envisioned in the Sustainable Recovery Plan are

concentrated on retrofitting buildings to improve energy efficiency, and in the electricity sector, especially renewables.

SOURCE: AFP

Post COVID - 19: Towards labour intensive industries in Myanmar

By Dr. Maung Aung

IMFACTS such as that of adversity, hardship and bad break are all there when COVID - 19 hit hard towards factories, mills and service industry on this planet being enveloped with chaos, confusion and mayhem.

As some countries came out of the grip of the pandemic, they stepped on inch by inch in pulling

up the nation's economy.

Today, many countries including Myanmar are swinging into top gear to pull the economy back to normal as fast as possible.

Expectation runs high in Myanmar to create a scenario with domestic integrated industries that are linked with global supply chains while creating massive job opportunities towards enhanced GDP of the country.

Based on the fast changing

patterns of industries in conjunction with the upcoming global supply chains, Myanmar is poised with focus in building manufacturing industries compatible to post COVID - 19 scenarios.

Changes in world industries due to COVID - 19

Starting from mainland China, the pandemic spread across the planet, killing people in the United States, Europe and Latin

America, pulling the economies down. Many countries, especially the United States, Japan and Europe, are thinking to pull out their industries from China.

China is known as "The World's Factory". Some may think the ubiquity of Chinese products is due to the abundance of cheap Chinese labour that brings down the production costs, but there is much more to it than that.

In addition to its low labour costs, China has become known as "the world's factory" because of its strong business ecosystem, lack of regulatory compliance, low taxes and duties, and competitive currency practices.

Special economic zones have been opened up in the areas such as Shanghai, Shenzhen and Beijing creating the country as a growth pole.

China is the world's second largest economy behind the United States. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, consumer price index, purchasing managers' indices, trade and industrial production are all key indicators.

A quick look shows that China is equipped with economy of scope, economy of scale and

economy of speed. Economy of scope and economy of scale are two different concepts used to help cut a company's costs.

In the wake of COVID - 19 pandemic, and in the midst of trade war, the United States and Japan are pulling their companies out of China. However, the EU countries would like to remain status quo.

For many businesses, adjusting their supply chains in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic means expanding from China, not necessarily leaving, some analysts say. However, some countries are mulling to pull out from China.

Indicators in selecting a country

Factors influencing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in a country are as follow.

1. Stability of the Government;
2. Pro-active measures of the Government to promote investment (infrastructure);
3. Rule of law;
4. Return on investment.

Other factors are also considered such as that of the labour, the

electricity, the transportation, the seaport, the investment climate, the investment law, the intellectual property law, the indicators for doing business, the index on corruption, and etc.

In the past, the investors paid focus on tax relief matters, but the time has changed as they look forward on existing basic structures such as that of the electricity, the transportation, and the availability of skilled workforce.

International investors tend to avoid the investment in their own countries as the labour costs are high, and that they select the countries where cheap labour force existed.

Choosing an area for investment

Next, the investors select the suitable area for investment, and that there are three indicators as options and choice.

- Low cost production area;
- Smooth connectivity with word trade and having seaport with low cost;
- Gaining access to adequate and accurate information.

SEE PAGE-10



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 18th June, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 19th June, 2020:

Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing and Magway Regions, scattered in Mandalay Region, fairly widespread in Northern Shan and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30 - 35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-10) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and about (4-7) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak to moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th June, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th June, 2020: Some rain or thundershowers which may be heavy at times. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th June, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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MoALI discusses recovery plan for fisheries sector in post-COVID

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held a meeting on government's assistance for recovery of fisheries sector hit by COVID-19.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu made discussions on implementations of livestock, fishing, processing and selling fishery products for both domestic and foreign markets and supports of the ministry to the business that suffered from the decline of market. He also explained providing K40,000 worth fingerling per fishing acre to 150,000 acres for recovery of fishery businesses under the action plan of the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan.

The MoALI will allocate K600 million for distribution of fish seeds and fingerlings and K60



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu presides over meeting for recovery plan of fishing industry in post-COVID on 18 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

million to conduct safety training courses at the coastal regions for fishing workers in their jobs as these financial supports have been approved by the government.

The ministry has submitted proposals of SME loans K200 million each for 10 fishing ports, K10 million each for 3,190 fishing vessels in collecting foods and fuels, and K100 million for each fish/prawn processing factories.

The Union Minister also talked about cooperation with international partners such as EU and JICA for providing assistance to fishing businesses in 18 townships of Ayeyawady, Bago, Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway and Kayin.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Post COVID - 19: Towards ...

FROM PAGE-9

Such areas in a country are seen with jammed packed industries and economies, centrefolds for the economies of a nation.

Obviously, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Beijing could be seen as the central pillars of development. Bangkok is the central pillar of development in Thailand, while Hanoi is the centre of Vietnam.

Yangon is the central pillar of development of Myanmar

In the post COVID -19, the setting and scene are most likely that many economies and industries of the world would be pulling out of China, and that new investors might be looking for fresh territories for investment.

In such a new landscape, Myanmar should revamp, rebuild and refurbish all the existing drawbacks with regards to the economies and industries of the country, and at the same time the investment climate should be added with stimulus, spur and strength.

Advantage could be reckoned in the labour domain of Myanmar that is much lower compared to other countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

Looking into the latest census of the country, Myanmar has perfect reserved workforce with the highest statistics on (18 to 60) age bracket population.

Being located in the strategic place of Asian continent, the mega planned projects are in the pipeline such as that of the Asian Highway Network (AH), also known as the Great Asian Highway, and the East-West Economic Corridor, paving high credit and commen-

dation for investment climate.

Over the years, the attainment and accomplishment are being witnessed in the basic infrastructure sector such as that of the road communications, the electricity and the transport, obviously the head start and trump card compared to the past.

International investors prefer Yangon and its surrounding for investment. Moreover, Yangon stands out as the main attraction since it enveloped all the factories, plants and mills that have connectivity with the whole wide world.

Moreover, Yangon offers lower production cost and has fast communication system with the world, equipped with non-congested seaport, edging over other investment venues in the region.

Standing in the centrefold, Yangon is the host for (29) industrial zones and Thilawa Special Economic Zone with (6,000) plants deploying (600,000) workers, enjoying with the reputation as industrial business centre.

Yangon based industrial hub is sure to be expanded in the coming year while that of the electricity would be supplied as needed, that of the Mandalay - Yangon Road and Myawady - Yangon Road would be functioning much better, that of the expansion of Thilawa Special Economic Zone, that of the revamp and renovation of jetties and bridges.

With the wisdom of the Union Government, all out efforts have been poured into the scheme of Yangon industrial development, and it is highly expected that enormous of job opportunities are on its way.

The new Myanmar Compa-

nies Law, introduced on 1 August 2018, allows foreign investors to take up 35 per cent in local companies and investment with capital not exceeding 5 million U.S. dollars can be permitted by the regional or state authorities of the DICA.

Lately, Myanmar introduces draft Industrial Zone Law to govern the development of the industrial sector. In 2019, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw issued the draft Industrial Zone Law to provide much needed legislation to govern the sector and help to draw in much needed foreign investments into the country.

Recently, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Myanmar's highest legislature has approved the highly anticipated comprehensive Industrial Zone Law on 26 May 2020.

Myanmar Company Law and Industrial Zone Law are the valuable instruments that could attract foreign investment in the country.

Around 70 per cent of the Myanmar CMP (cut-make-package) sector is exporting to the EU and this sector creates hundred thousand of job opportunities for women around the country, imparting them with skills in the industry.

Myanmar is exporting basic produce such as natural gas, wood products, pulses, beans, fish, rice, clothing, jade and gems and that the items are not fetching fair prices and good return.

Time is ripe to produce value-added items through the modernization of manufacturing industrial sphere.

Value-added products are defined as having the change in the physical state or form of the product such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam. It is the making of a produce in a manner that enhances its val-

ue. Such transformation creates more job opportunities.

Fixing the drawbacks

Out of the blue, the COVID -19 can bring out the worst as well as the best to our country.

Obviously, we have learned the lessons in connection with the forced closure of the businesses not because of the pandemic, but due to the protests of the garment workers at the factories that led to the dead end.

At this juncture, the government has taken up necessary measures to avoid untoward protest and demand through the issuance of rules and regulations, and also set up a mechanism of "One Stop Service" in settling the labour matters.

Coming together in solving the problems

The development of the nation through the manufacturing industry needs a good investment climate such as favourable investment climate which is likely to include low inflation, falling interest rates, growing corporate earnings, political stability, and a high degree of consumer confidence.

People are the key, and that their participation is much needed.

With a view to reducing protests at the factories, the applicants are imparted training courses with ethical behaviours at workplace such as that of obeying the rules, effective communication, taking responsibility, accountability, professionalism, trust and mutual respect among colleagues. Workers are appointed only when they completed the training course.

A good timing

The United Nations World

Food Programme (WFP) has requested countries to ensure food security and to expand crops cultivation if possible.

It is indeed a good time for Myanmar in expanding cultivation of crops with added momentum, and also steps towards the labor intensive manufacturing industry for value added items.

In the backdrop of COVID - 19, our skill workers that have been working in the foreign countries and neighbouring countries are back in the homeland to fill in the required jobs.

The writer is of the view that there would have better working conditions when the "export oriented value added industrial law" is being enacted in Myanmar, where local and foreign business people could prioritize the establishment of labour intensive manufacturing industry in a short time.

Time to work hard

Going by world's experience, it could take countries on this planet over two to three years after lockdown restrictions are eased to get their economies back on track.

Myanmar needs to work harder individually as well as collectively with patriotism in unity and cohesion in rebuilding the nation.

In conclusion, the writer firmly believes that creating job opportunities in a large scale in conjunction with economic recovery measures is on the right pathway for the fastest lane for development. We are sure to come out of the crisis in the shortest possible time when we are working together in high hope to witnessing the economic development of the nation.

(Translated by UMT (Ahlon))

ADB cuts growth forecast to almost zero in developing Asia in 2020

THE Asian Development Bank on Thursday cut its 2020 growth forecast for the developing and newly industrialized economies of Asia to just 0.1 per cent this year, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is down from the 2.2 per cent forecast in April and would be the slowest growth for the region since 1961. But growth in 2021 is expected to rise to 6.2 per cent, as forecast in April.

The forecasts came in a regular supplement to the Asian Development Outlook 2020 released in April, since which time the number of COVID-19 cases worldwide has risen from less than 1 million to over 7 million, with developing Asia accounting for 10.7 per cent of the total.

“Economies in Asia and the Pacific will continue to feel the blow of the COVID-19 pandemic

this year even as lockdowns are slowly eased and select economic activities restart in a ‘new normal’ scenario,” the Manila-based institution’s chief economist Yasuyuki Sawada said.

“Governments should undertake policy measures to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and ensure that no further waves of outbreaks occur,” Sawada said.

The report said the pandemic may see multiple waves of outbreaks in the coming period and sovereign debt and financial crises cannot be ruled out, while there is also the risk of renewed escalation in trade tensions between the United States and China.

In terms of sub-regions, East Asia, excluding Japan, is the only one projected to experience growth in 2020, though the

forecast is downgraded from 2.0 per cent to 1.3 per cent.

This reflects expansion in mainland China by only 1.8 per cent in 2020, rebounding to 7.4 per cent in 2021 and lifting sub-regional growth to 6.8 per cent.

Economic activity in South-east Asia is expected to contract by 2.7 per cent this year before growing by 5.2 per cent in 2021. Bucking that trend is Vietnam, whose economy is forecast to grow 4.1 per cent in 2020, the fastest growth expected in the sub-region.

South Asia is forecast to contract by 3.0 per cent in 2020, compared to 4.1 per cent growth predicted in April. Growth prospects for 2021 are revised down to 4.9 per cent from 6.0 per cent.

SOURCE: Kyodo



File photo shows Yasuyuki Sawada, chief economist of the ADB. PHOTO: KYODO

Food deliveries during virus lockdown fuel Thailand plastic usage

SINGLE-USE plastic waste in Thailand ballooned during the coronavirus lockdown as demand for home food deliveries soared, activists say, setting back efforts to reduce the country’s dependency on the environmental scourge.

The contagion has had mixed outcomes for Thailand’s environment, with dugongs, turtles and otters returning to beaches normally packed with tourists.

But in urban areas plastic food containers, cutlery and bags have piled up, clogging canals, rivers and landfills as people stuck at home because of the

epidemic order take-away.

Urban waste almost doubled between January and March from a year ago mainly due to increased food deliveries, says Wijarn Simachaya, president of the Thailand Environment Institute.

In Bangkok alone, rubbish leapt by 62 per cent in April.

“The situation is really worrying,” he says.

In Bangkok’s network of canals, trash collectors pluck plastic bottles, bags and containers from the fetid waters.

“Plastic pollution may kill more people than (the coronavirus) in Thailand,” says

12-year-old environmentalist Ralyn “Lilly” Satidtanasarn, the kingdom’s answer to Swedish climate change activist Greta Thunberg.

Plastic detox

Thailand along with Indonesia, the Philippines, China and Vietnam produce half the plastic waste in the world’s oceans, according to campaign group the Ocean Conservancy.

Over the last year all of those countries have pledged, or introduced, new rules to ban single-use plastic bags and other throwaway items.

SOURCE: AFP



In Bangkok alone, rubbish leapt by 62 per cent in April. PHOTO:

Study shows how quickly coronavirus spreads at home

RESEARCHERS based in China and the United States found the average patient had just a 2.4 per cent chance of infecting someone they did not live with, that figure jumped to 17.1 per cent -- around one in six -- among cohabitants.

The novel coronavirus is twice as infectious within households than similar diseases such as SARS, with a substantial number of additional infections spreading before a COVID-19 sufferer shows any symptoms, according to modelling released Thursday.

Researchers based in China and the United States said their findings could have profound impacts on reducing the number of new infections as the pandemic progresses.

Using data on 350 COVID-19 patients and nearly 2,000 of their close contacts in the city of Guangzhou, China, the researchers estimated the virus’ “secondary attack rate” -- that is, the probability that an infected person transmits the disease to someone else.

They found that while the average patient had just a 2.4 per cent chance of infecting someone they did not live with, that figure jumped to 17.1 per cent -- around one in six -- among cohabitants.

According to their models, which rely on data collated in January and February but have been updated to reflect the

latest developments, the likelihood of household infection was highest among over-60s, and lowest among under-20s.

The overall chances of infecting a family member or live-in partner with COVID-19 are twice as high as with SARS, and three times higher than MERS, another coronavirus, they found.

Significantly, the researchers found that the probability of a COVID-19 carrier infecting a family member or flatmate was significantly higher -- 39 per cent -- before they started showing symptoms than afterwards.

This suggests that the virus is easily transmissible within its incubation period and may be passed on by individuals who don’t know they are infected.

The team said that isolation within households cut the total number of COVID-19 cases among the study cohort by 20-50 per cent compared with no quarantine.

“Although the effect of case isolation seems moderate, the high infectivity of the virus during the incubation period suggests quarantine of asymptomatic contacts could have prevented more onward transmissions,” said Qin-Long Jing from the Guangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

SOURCE: AFP

Race to ready Dubai’s mega Expo despite one-year delay

DUBAI — Armies of workers in protective masks are racing to complete the mammoth Dubai Expo 2020 site despite the coronavirus that has sickened some employees, forced a one-year postponement, and created a logistical headache.

The six-month world fair, a milestone for the emirate which has splashed out \$8.2 billion on the eye-popping venue in the hope of boosting its soft power and resetting the economy, will now open its doors in October 2021.

But organizers grappling with the complexities of rescheduling the event are intent on delivering the main buildings of the Expo by the original start date.

They are keeping the Expo 2020 name and logo, which is emblazoned on everything from billboards to aircraft.

As well as the onset of the scorching Gulf summer, organizers have had to contend with coronavirus infections and layoffs among a large workforce recruited from across the world.

“Of course, the impact of COVID-19 has affected the logistics and the processes of delivering some of the remaining works,” said Ahmed Al Khatib, chief development and delivery officer. But “work continues and some of the pavilions have actually reached a very final stage. 2020 is the year of delivery,” he told AFP during a rare visit to the site, which will be mothballed once the major work is done.—AFP ■



Many of the fair’s main structures have been completed at the site rising from the deserts of Dubai. PHOTO: AFP

Balkan hoteliers hope for ‘survival’ as borders reopen

PEFKOCHORI (Greece) — As the first Balkan travellers queued at the border with Bulgaria to cross into Greece this week, hotelier Yiannis Laspas was glued to his TV screen, eagerly awaiting potential guests.

“My cancellation figures look like something out of a stock exchange crash,” the 37-year-old muses. More than 13,000 people have already crossed the border with Bulgaria, the first overland checkpoint opened by Greek authorities on Monday after the coronavirus lockdown in March.

“Let’s see what can be salvaged from this disastrous year,” Laspas tells AFP from his office, where he has a large television screen tuned into foreign channels. “Our basic goal is survival,” he says with an uneasy smile. One of



In Albania, whose economy draws up to 15 per cent from tourism, operators are staring at a potentially ruinous year with the suspension of mainly Polish and Scandinavian bookings. PHOTO: AFP

Greece’s most popular tourism destinations, the Halkidiki peninsula fields around 100,000 rooms in hotels and apartments. Nearly 60 per cent of business activity relies on the travel sector.—AFP ■

ANA to resume flights on 20 routes, half of services remain suspended

TOKYO — All Nippon Airways Co. said Thursday it will resume services on 20 domestic routes in July as the spread of the novel coronavirus has slowed and regional economies are reopening.

The Japanese airline said, however, that nearly half of the flights it originally planned to operate during the month will remain suspended.

It will resume flights between Tokyo and Kobe, as well as those to and from Kansai International Airport in western Japan and New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido, among other services. ANA said it will suspend 12,227 domestic flights on 109 routes in July, though it initially planned to operate 24,134. For June, the company had planned 22,970 flights but said it would suspend 15,963 flights due to the pandemic and the subsequent drop in travel demand.—Kyodo ■

Netflix founder gives \$120 million for US black college scholarships

Netflix chief Reed Hastings and his philanthropist wife on Wednesday gave \$120 million to historically black US colleges to fund full-ride scholarships for students.

The gift by the Netflix co-founder and his wife, Patty Quillin, to Spelman College and Morehouse College — two Atlanta universities — and the United Negro College Fund was touted as the largest-ever contribution by an individual in support of such scholarships.

“Both of us had the privilege of a great education and we want to help more students — in particular students of color — get the same start in life,” Quillin and Hastings said in a statement.

“Historically black colleges and universities have a tremendous record, yet are disadvantaged when it comes to giving.”—AFP ■

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of SHAANXI ROYAL CROPSCIENCE CO.,LTD has registration the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now we have to change from old distributor name “MYANMAR WAI FUNG AGRICULTURE CO.,LTD”, to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD Ph no-09787630272.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	HP Cruiser	Dimethomorph 50% WP	P2018-4417
2.	Prelan	Azoxystrobin 20% + Difenconazole 12% SC	P2019-4743

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of GUANGDONG HAODE CROP SCIENCE CO.,LTD has registration the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now we have to change from old distributor name “MYANMAR WAI FUNG AGRICULTURE CO.,LTD”, to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD Ph no-09787630272.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	HD Sharp	Quizalofop-P-ethyl 10% EC	P2018-4449

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of SHANDONG JOPHEN BIOTECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD has registration the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now we have to change from old distributor name “MYANMAR WAI FUNG AGRICULTURE CO.,LTD”, to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD Ph no-09787630272.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	ZFN Titan	Indoxacarb 30% SC	P2018-4461

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of DONGGUAN RUIDEFENG BIOTECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD has registration the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now we have to change from old distributor name “MYANMAR WAI FUNG AGRICULTURE CO.,LTD”, to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD Ph no-09787630272.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	RDF Foison	Isoprothiolane 40% EC	P2018-4418

Italy launches ‘holiday bonus’ to boost battered tourism sector

ROME — Italy has unveiled details of a new “holiday bonus” scheme under which low-income households will receive up to 500 euros (\$560) each to help get the country’s battered tourism sector back on its feet.

The government said it was setting aside 2.4 billion euros for households earning less than 40,000 euros a year to receive a financial incentive to holiday in Italy rather than go

abroad.

Italy’s tax authority said in a letter late Wednesday that the bonus will amount to 150 euros for single households, 300 euros for couples and 500 euros for families of three or more.

The bonus can be used to pay for holiday accommodation within Italy between July 1 and December 31.

Applicants will receive a discount of 80 per cent

on the price of the hotel room, bed-and-breakfast or self-catering accommodation and can claim the other 20 per cent against tax.

Tourism accounts for around 13 per cent of Italy’s gross domestic product and the sector has been brought to its knees by the coronavirus pandemic, with industry experts projecting a shortfall in revenues of as much as 3.2 billion euros this summer.—AFP ■



Many Italians will get paid for holidaying at home. PHOTO: AFP

Virus-fighting Bank of England pumps out extra £100bn stimulus

LONDON — The Bank of England on Thursday unveiled an extra £100 billion of cash stimulus to prop up Britain’s coronavirus-hit economy, despite a slump less severe than first thought. The BoE, reporting the outcome of a regular meeting, said policymakers voted by a majority of 8-1 to hike the central bank’s quantita-

tive easing (QE) stimulus by the equivalent of \$126 billion or 112 billion euros. The nine-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) panel voted unanimously to leave the central bank’s key interest rate at a record-low 0.1 per cent.

The pound held steady after the cash infusion to help retail banks lend to businesses -- a move an-

alysts said was ultimately aimed at avoiding deflation -- a spiral of falling prices.

The QE expansion was widely forecast after the UK economy contracted by one fifth in April amid a nationwide lockdown to try and halt the spread of the coronavirus outbreak.

Yet policymakers believe that the economy will fare better than anticipated as lockdown restrictions are relaxed.



Throwing more money at the problem. PHOTO: AFP

Recovery in sight?

After UK GDP contracted by around 20 per cent in April, “evidence from more timely indicators suggests that GDP started to recover thereafter”, said minutes of the BoE meeting.—AFP ■

France slams ‘provocation’ as US halts digital tax talks

PARIS — France and the US locked horns Thursday over taxing digital giants such as Google and Facebook, after Washington said it was breaking off talks aimed at establishing a global framework for making the companies pay larger levies where they operate.

“This letter is a provocation,” French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said, confirming receipt of the announcement by US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

France, Britain, Italy and Spain have already sent a reply expressing their desire to agree on “a fair digital tax at the level of the OECD as quickly as possible,” Le Maire said.

“We were a few centimetres away from an agreement on a tax for digital giants, who are perhaps the only people in the world to have benefitted immensely from the coronavirus,” he told France Inter radio. In January, 137 countries agreed to negotiate a deal on how

to tax tech multinationals by the end of 2020, under the auspices of the OECD.

European countries in particular say the so-called GAFA -- Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon -- are unfairly exploiting tax rules that let them declare profits in low-tax havens, depriving them of a fair share of their fiscal payments. In the meantime, France as well as Britain, Spain, Italy and others have imposed taxes on the largest digital companies.—AFP ■

China’s central bank vows ample liquidity to support coronavirus-hit economy

SHANGHAI — China’s central bank vowed Thursday to keep financial liquidity at a reasonable and adequate level in the second half of the year, amid efforts to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on the economy.

The country’s new yuan-denominated loans are expected to reach nearly 20 trillion yuan (about 2.82 trillion U.S. dollars) this year and the total amount of social financing is poised to exceed 30 trillion yuan,

according to Yi Gang, governor of the People’s Bank of China. The figures would represent a 19-per-cent expansion compared with 16.81 trillion yuan worth of new loans in 2019, and an annual increase of at least 17.28 per cent for total social financing. “China’s economic fundamentals remain sound, and its monetary policy is within the normal range,” Yi said via a videoconference of the Lujiazui Forum. Yi added

that the central bank would further guide the market interest rates to a lower level through interest rate reforms and cut financing costs for enterprises.

He reiterated a Wednesday statement of the State Council that financial institutions would be encouraged to help businesses save 1.5 trillion yuan this year, by lowering interest rates, using monetary policy tools and reducing banks’ charges.—Xinhua ■

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of SHENZHEN NOPOSITION AGROCHEMICALS CO.,LTD has registration the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now we have to change from old distributor name “MYANMAR WAI FUNG AGRICULTURE CO.,LTD”, to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD”. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD Ph no-09787630272.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	Ywet Nu Hla	Dimethomorph 9% + Mancozeb 60% WP	P2018-1927
2.	NPS Seer	Thiamethoxam 35% FS	P2018-4439
3.	Blue Fire	Glyphosate 41% SL	F2019-1935
4.	Noposition Iprodione 50 WP	Iprodione 50% WP	F2020-2728

PESTICIDE TRADE NAME CHANGE ADVERTISING

The following pesticides are distributed by Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD(registered by SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD to Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar) and here we would like to pesticide trade name change advertising. Anyone who would like to object or inquiry about new trade name contact within 14 days to Joint-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO.,LTD 09787630272.

Sr.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Number
1.	BNS Quinclo	BNS Kwin Myat Shinn	Quinclorac 25% SC	P2017-3665
2.	BNS Fome	BNS Van To	Fomesafen 25% SL	P2017-3643
3.	BNS Atra 80	BNS Htoo Shinn	Atrazine 80% WP	P2017-3653
4.	BNS Ema 5.7	BNS Darr Sat Kyar	Emamectin Benzoate 5.7% WDG	P2017-3650
5.	BNS Azoxy	BNS Hmaw Ka Wi	Azoxystrobin 25% SC	P2017-3656
6.	BNS Buta A	BNS Pyi Shinn	Butachlor 60% EC	P2017-3659
7.	BNS Difeno	BNS Say Wake Zar	Difenoconazole 25% EC	P2017-3661
8.	BNS Cyper 25	BNS Wu Khone	Cypermethrin 25% EC	P2017-3649

Indian PM launches auction of coal blocks for commercial mining, pledges reform of mining sector

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched the auction process of 41 coal blocks for commercial mining, through a videoconference from New Delhi, said an official statement.

It was part of the series of announcements made by the Indian government under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self Reliant India Campaign).

The federal Coal Ministry in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) launched the process for auction of the coal mines. A two-stage electronic auction process

was adopted for allocation of the coal mines, said the statement.

On the occasion, Modi said reforms and investment in the coal sector will play a big role in easing the lives of tribesmen. The extra revenue generated through coal production will be used for public welfare schemes in the region, said Modi.

He highlighted the country's irony that along with being world's fourth largest coal reserve and second largest producer, India is also the second largest coal importer. This situation had lasted for decades and the coal sector was kept entangled in the mesh of captive



The auction is taking place at a time when economic activities are returning to normal with relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions. **FILE PHOTO: AFP**

and non-captive mines, he added.

The coal sector was excluded from competition and transparency which was a big prob-

lem, he said, adding that owing to this, the coal sector lacked investment and its efficiency was also questionable.—Xinhua ■

S. Korea seeks WTO panel on Japan's tightened export rules

SEOUL — The South Korean government has asked the World Trade Organization to set up a dispute-settlement panel over Japan's allegedly unjustified tightening of export controls on

semiconductor materials, the government said Thursday.

The formal request to appoint a panel of experts to consider the case was sent to the WTO Secretariat in Geneva and to the

Japanese side on the same date.

On June 2, South Korea's Trade, Industry and Energy Ministry said it was resurrecting the complaint because Japan had not shown willingness to settle

the dispute bilaterally despite months of talks.

In July last year, Japan placed tougher restrictions on South Korea-bound exports of three key materials used to manufacture semiconductors and display panels.

The following month, Japan removed the country from a "white list" of countries given preferential trading status, citing concerns over Seoul's lax rules on exporting sensitive goods.

South Korea filed the WTO complaint in September, arguing the measures were a form of political retaliation, but suspended it in November after the countries agreed to start consultations on export controls.

Seoul has recently accused Japan of not holding up its end of the deal by easing its export controls despite the South Korean side having addressed Tokyo's concerns.—Kyodo ■



The World Trade Organization headquarters in Geneva. **PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP**

Beijing coronavirus outbreak exceeds 150 cases in 1 week



BEIJING — Beijing municipal authorities said Thursday more than 150 coronavirus infections have been discovered over a one-week period since the detection of a cluster at the city's biggest wholesale market.

The local government said that 21 new infections were found

People ride bicycles and motorcycles on their way to work in Beijing on June 18, 2020, wearing face masks amid a resurgence of coronavirus infections. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Wednesday in the Chinese capital and that 14 of them were confirmed in the southwestern district of Fengtai, where the Xinfadi market is located.

The latest outbreak comes after a lull in new locally transmitted cases in Beijing that lasted roughly two months. The authorities have stepped up anti-epidemic measures, such as by controlling people's movements in and out of residential areas and shutting down elementary schools.

The local government said

Wednesday it has tested about 356,000 people for the virus since last Saturday, including those who had recently visited the market.

Daily new infection cases reported by the authorities only refer to symptomatic patients. The number of new asymptomatic patients detected Wednesday was three.

Also in Hebei Province near Beijing, two patients of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, were found. They were both linked to the market.—Kyodo ■

NEWS In BRIEF

China's top legislature strongly condemns U.S. signing of bill on Xinjiang

BEIJING — The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, on Thursday strongly condemned and resolutely opposed the signing of the so-called "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020" by the United States in disregard of stern representations from China.

The U.S. move has grossly interfered in China's internal affairs and seriously violated international law and the basic norms governing international relations, the committee said in a statement.

To respect and protect human rights is an important principle set forth in China's Constitution and an important goal of China's endeavours to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects, according to the statement.—Xinhua ■

Mysterious 'UFO' captures imaginations in Japan

TOKYO — An unidentified flying object was first spotted on Wednesday morning when residents in northern Sendai city took to social media to post pictures and debate what they were seeing.

It's hardly the stuff of little green men, but a mysterious balloon-like object seen floating across the skies of northern Japan has captured national attention, even prompting questions to the government.

The unidentified flying object was first spotted on Wednesday morning when residents in northern Sendai city took to social media to post pictures and debate what they were seeing.

"This white thing isn't moving at all. What is it? Can anyone tell me?" wrote one user, with others chiming in using the hashtag "unidentified flying object" in Japanese.—AFP ■

India, Mexico, Norway, Ireland elected to UN Security Council

UNITED NATIONS — The UN General Assembly elected on Wednesday four new members of the Security Council for 2021 and 2022, with Canada losing out again and the battle for the African seat going to a second round.

India, Mexico, Norway and Ireland were chosen as non-permanent members, while Djibouti and Kenya — both of which failed to receive the two-thirds vote majority required to win — will go to a second round of voting on Thursday.

Canada was beaten once again for one of the Western seats, by Ireland and Norway, despite a long and star-studded campaign, a result likely to be a blow to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In the Asia-Pacific region, India -- which has been trying unsuccessfully to win a permanent seat in an expanded Security Council -- ran unopposed to win 184 votes out of the 192 countries



United Nations Security Council. (FILE PHOTO)

that participated in the election. The result means that India will now have a seat at the same table as China, just days after the two nations disputed their Himalayan border, trading blame for a brawl that left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead. Mexico, which also ran unopposed, earned 187 votes. African nations have in the past picked their own candidate but were unable to put forward a single country this time. Kenya received 113 votes against Djibouti, which got 78. Kenya boasts of enjoying the support of the African Union, but Djibouti says it should have the seat due to Nairobi's past participation on the Security Council and the principle of rotation.—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Serbian city stands defiant against ruling party domination

SABAC (Serbia) -- Lying due west of Belgrade on a bend in the Sava river, the small city of Sabac and its cafe-lined streets resemble those of any other typical Serbian town.

Yet Sabac has a claim to fame: it is home to one of the last opposition mayors left in all of Serbia, a status the 45-year-old local official is determined to hold onto in Sunday's elections.

Sitting in the garden outside Sabac's peach-coloured city hall, Nebojsa Zelenovic describes his town as an island of freedom in a country where all but six of more than 180 municipalities are in the clutches of President Aleksandar Vucic's ruling coalition.

Since becoming mayor six years ago, Zelenovic and his colleagues have been living in a constant "state of emergency", he says, describing threats, smear campaigns and financial pressure emanating from the central government.—AFP ■

Kazakh leader Nazarbayev, 79, has coronavirus: official website

NUR-SULTAN — Kazakhstan's 79-year-old former president and official 'Leader of the Nation' Nursultan Nazarbayev has tested positive for the coronavirus, a statement on his official website said Thursday.

"Currently, the First President of Kazakhstan is in self-isolation. Unfortunately, the last test... for the coronavirus infection showed a positive result. There is no cause for concern," the statement said.

The statement said that Nazarbayev is "continuing to work remotely."

Strongman Nazarbayev, who turns 80 next month, served as Kazakhstan's president for close to three decades before handing the reins over to hand-picked successor Kassym-Jomart Tokayev last year.—AFP ■

France arrests six Chechens in raids after unrest

PARIS — French police on Thursday detained six members of the Chechen community on suspicion of taking part in suc-

cessive nights of violence that rocked the eastern city of Dijon, prosecutors said.

From Friday to Monday,



A burned-out van in the Gresilles neighbourhood of Dijon, eastern France, on Monday after a night of clashes. PHOTO : AFP/FILE

Dijon was rocked by clashes and vehicle burnings after an assault this month on a 16-year-old Chechen boy that prompted other members of the community to stage reprisal raids.

Scenes of unrest carried out by hooded men brandishing guns or clubs shocked the country and raised questions over whether security forces had been too passive.

Police carried out early morning raids at several addresses across France, regional prosecutor Eric Mathais said.

A source close to the inquiry, asking not to be named, said the arrests were made at five locations across France, including Dijon.

Those detained are already known to police and include a man suspected of being behind the first appeal on social networks for organized reprisals, sources said.

Chechens had reportedly travelled to Dijon from all over France and even from neighbouring Belgium and Germany to take part.

The violence focused on the low-income district of Gresilles, which has a large community of people originally from North Africa.

Chechens involved in the events have told French media they were targeting drug dealers of North African origin.—AFP ■

Atlanta police officer charged with murder for shooting black man

ATLANTA — An Atlanta police officer has been charged with murder for shooting a 27-year-old man in the back, justice officials announced Wednesday, in the latest case to spark anger over police killings of African Americans.

Rayshard Brooks' shooting came less than three weeks after a Minneapolis police officer's killing of handcuffed African

American George Floyd on May 25 fuelled a national uproar over racism and police brutality.

Atlanta District Attorney Paul Howard said police officer Garrett Rolfe had no justification for shooting Brooks as he fled, and aggravated the case by kicking his body as he lay on the ground bleeding.

He also said that Rolfe and

fellow officer Devin Brosnan violated multiple police department regulations after they detained Brooks on June 12.

"We concluded that, at the time that Mr Brooks was shot, he did not pose an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury to the officers," Howard said.

Not treated fairly

Donald Trump called the

killing of Brooks "a terrible situation", but went on to claim officers have "not been treated fairly" in a Fox News interview Wednesday.

"I hope he gets a fair shake because police have not been treated fairly in our country," the US president said, when asked about the charges against Rolfe.—AFP ■

MFF holds meeting to discuss Futsal Knockout Cup 2020



U Ko Ko Thein, General Secretary of the MFF discusses the holding of the Futsal Knockout Cup 2020 soon. **PHOTO: MFF**

A coordination meeting of Myanmar Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee of the Myanmar Football Federation was held yesterday at the MFF headquarters in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

Dr Ye Mon Htut, Chairperson of the Myanmar Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee and the committee members, U Ko Ko Thein, General Secretary of the Myanmar Football Federation and football author-

ities attended the coordination meeting.

During the meeting, football authorities discussed the preparation to hold the MFF Futsal Knockout Cup 2020, condition of the Myanmar National Futsal Team in the upcoming ASEAN Futsal Championship which has slated to be held in 2021, holding of domestic futsal league and tourneys and the short and long term plans for the development of Myanmar's

futsal.

The football authorities also focused on searching sponsorships for the Futsal Knockout Cup.

There will be 14 teams to compete in the tourney and detail fixtures will be released by the MFF.

The Myanmar Football Federation authorities are also arranging for live broadcasting the futsal tourney, according to the meeting. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Two European fighters join Myanma Lethwei

WORLD Lethwei Championship (WLC) has recently announced that two European starfighters Diogo Calado and Nauzet Trujillo recently signed with the WLC, proving that they want to showcase their fighting skills in the glory of Lethwei worldwide, according to the WLC.

Upon their arrival, U Zay Thiha, chairman of the Lethwei said, "World Lethwei Championship has the toughest rosters of World Champions in the world and we are excited

to welcome Calado and Trujillo into our stable. As the home of the world's purest martial art, we are attracting elite world champions who want to challenge themselves in Lethwei and I am beyond excited to see how they fare!"

Arriving at the WLC, Portugal fighter Diogo Calado expressed his feeling: "This is an exciting next step in my martial art journey, and getting to test myself against the world's best pure strikers is extreme-

ly appealing to me. Lethwei is becoming the future of sports and I want to become its representative on the global stage."

Diogo Calado has won the WBC European, ISKA European and Strikers League belts.

Spanish fighter Nauzet Trujillo also said, "I am proud to be the first Spanish athlete signed to World Lethwei Championship! The organization has experienced rapid growth and I think Lethwei is a fantastic platform for me to showcase



Spanish fighter Nauzet Trujillo (Left) and Portugal fighter Diogo Calado (Right). **PHOTO: WLC**

my abilities."

Nauzet Trujillo has won belts for WMC Spanish, ISKA

European, IPCC Intercontinental, and the ISKA World Championship. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Napoli beat Juventus behind closed doors in the Italian Cup final as football returned to the country on Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Napoli fans swarm onto streets to celebrate Italian Cup win

NAPLES — Thousands of Napoli fans swarmed onto the streets of Naples late Wednesday to wildly celebrate their team's first trophy in six years after a dramatic Italian Cup penalty-shootout victory over Juventus. The match in Rome's Stadio Olimpico was played behind closed doors because of the strict post-coronavirus health protocol.

But in Naples an estimated 5,000 fans celebrated in the city's historical centre after the 4-2 penalty win after the match against the Juventus of their former coach Maurizio Sarri ended 0-0.

Parades of cars and scooters began at the final whistle and gatherings took place in different

parts of the city, with flares and fireworks lit and fans brandishing scarves and banners in praise of Napoli or mocking Juventus. Most of the celebrations were in Piazza Trieste e Trento, in the city's historic centre, and the traditional meeting place for club tifosi on victory days. In the midst of the flags, the horns and the songs, dozens of people threw themselves into the Artichoke fountain, in the centre of the piazza.

Napoli had not won a trophy since 2014, the year they won both the Italian Cup and Super Cup.

They have won Serie A twice, back in the days of Argentine great Diego Maradona in 1987 and 1990.—AFP ■

Serena set for US Open as officials vow safety, star power

NEW YORK — Serena Williams committed to play at this year's US Open on Wednesday as US Tennis Association officials vowed they can safely stage the first Grand Slam since the coronavirus pandemic shutdown.

With top men's stars questioning the wisdom of the

staging the event, the USTA said the tournament will be held August 31 to September 13 without spectators at New York's National Tennis Centre, which in April became a temporary hospital facility to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

"I really can't wait to return to the US Open 2020," Ser-

ena Williams said in a video message. "I think the USTA is going to do a really good job of ensuring everyone is going to be safe. "This is crazy. I'm excited." The Flushing Meadows fortnight will be the first Grand Slam event staged since the deadly virus outbreak shut down global sport. Wimbledon

was cancelled and the French Open was postponed until September.

The site will also host the ATP/USTA Western and Southern Open, typically staged in Cincinnati, the week before the US Open with a similar safety "bubble" that includes testing for players and their

entourage.

The USTA expects an 80% drop in net operating income as a result of having no spectators for the US Open but will provide \$60 million in prize money for the two events in New York combined plus another \$3.3 million each to the ATP and WTA.—AFP ■