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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 79, Fullmoon of First Waso 1382 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Saturday, 4 July 2020

State Counsellor holds videoconference to discuss impact of COVID on construction sector with stakeholders



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with stakeholders in construction sector on 3 July about their difficulties amid the outbreak of COVID-19. PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her capacity as Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 held a videoconference from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw this morning at 10:00 am regarding the impact of COVID on the construction sector with stakeholders.

Those who participated in the discussions were Dr Kyaw Lin, Deputy Minister for Construction U Htay Lwin, team leader of the carpentry unit, and U Shein Win, Chairman of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation.

The State Counsellor said yesterday when we are about to discuss the construction sector, all of you must have already heard about the sad news about the Phakant incident. With respect to this incident, she wished to say that this was also something sad for the country. Another thing was the fact that this was related to the difficult livelihood problems being confronted by the people at the basic level of society. For the majority of the Myanmar people, digging for precious stones in the Phakant area is for the purpose of earning a livelihood. Among those who lost their lives in the current incident, the majority are illegal workers.

The fact that these people were digging for precious stones illegally brings out the fact that there is still a difficulty, to a certain extent, to find legal jobs in Myanmar. She added that as far as she was concerned, she placed a high priority to ensure that Myanmar citizens are able to find jobs legally. As the availability of jobs legally was a priority, the construction sector plays a very critical role. The reason why she had to say this was because, among the kinds of jobs related to COVID, the construction sector has special relevance. Construction works cannot be stopped. They were related to the infrastructures of the country.

In addition, in this construction side, there were opportunities to ensure that health rules and regulations were being followed. In some types of jobs, it was not too easy to work with proper spacing among workers. In some enterprises, it was not easy to follow the rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports in a strict manner. However, in the construction sector, it was possible to handle this problem in the most effective manner and that was the reason why restrictions were lifted at a very early stage.

Construction works will always be needed. There were many types of construction works

such as roads and bridges at the basic level were very important for the people. The construction of buildings could create jobs for the people; at the same time, she wanted this sector to provide opportunities for further advancement. Among those who have come to participate in the discussions were U Kyaw Lin, deputy minister from the Construction Ministry; U Htay Lwin who is very much involved in construction works; and U Shein Win, an entrepreneur from the construction industry. All need to cooperate. The Union Government has to manage the process so that workers and entrepreneurs cooperate.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President's Office
Notification No. 84/2020
14th Waxing of First Waso 1382 ME
3 July 2020

Formation of investigation body into mining landslide in Lone Khin, Phakant

1. A landslide triggered in Lone Khin, Phakant Township, Kachin State, caused death and injuries to workers on the 2-7-2020 morning. An investigation body into this incident is formed with the following personnel:

(a) U Ohn Win
Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

(b) Lt-Gen Soe Htut
Union Minister for Home Affairs

(c) Dr Win Myat Aye
Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

(d) Dr Khat Aung
Chief Minister of Kachin State

(e) U Min Thu
Managing Director of Myanma Gems Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Conservation

(f) U Tun Zaw
Secretary, Kachin State Cabinet

Chairman

Member

Member

Member

Secretary

Joint-Secretary

2. The investigation body is tasked with the following duties:

(a) To investigate the cause of the landslide.

(b) To uncover the different levels of management related to the incident.

(c) To arrange necessary compensation and support for families of the deceased and injured.

(d) To recommend action plans regarding security that will prevent similar events in the future.

3. The investigation body will submit their report at the earliest to the President's Office.

Sd/Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification 120/2020
14th Waxing of First Waso 1382ME
3 July 2020

Two Defence Services Personnel representatives substituted for Region Hluttaws

According to the report presented under Section 33 of the Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw Election Law on substitution of two Region Hluttaw representatives of Defence Services Personnel who were submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services for the 8 November 2015 General Election, the Union Election Commission has scrutinized and substituted the following two Region Hluttaw representatives shown on the left column under the Notification 15/2017 dated on 29-6-2017 and the Notification 63/2018 dated on 15.5.2018 with those shown on the right column.

Sagaing Region Hluttaw

(1) BC 26884
Col Than Tun Aung

BC 24993
Col Win Tin Soe

Yangon Region Hluttaw

(1) BC 27189
Col Aung Soe Moe

BC 21897
Col Win Tint

Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Planning, Finance & Industry
Announcement No. 2/2020
14th Waxing of First Waso 1382 ME
3 July 2020

1. The Committee for Remedying Economic Effects of COVID-19 made a decision at meeting (6/2020) on 17 June 2020 to put in an additional K100 billion into the COVID-19 Fund. This decision was made in order to continue providing financial assistance to businesses negatively affected by COVID-19.

2. The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry will conduct the following procedures with the permission of the Union Government:

a) K150 billion from the Union general reserved fund of 2019-2020 financial year will be allocated as follow:

i. K100 billion will be added to the COVID-19 Fund.

ii. K50 billion inserted during the conception of the COVID-19 Fund by the Social Security Board will be transferred back to the Social Security Board's fund.

b) The addition of K100 billion will be separated into three deposits. The first deposit will be made of K35 billion, the second of K35 billion, and the third of K30 billion.

3. The committee will announce the types of businesses eligible for loans from the COVID-19 Fund, interest rates, loan periods, and other rules and regulations at a later date.

Statement of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on Landslide in Hpakant, Kachin State
Statement No. 8/2020

1. The Commission is greatly saddened and shocked by the news of the loss of lives in a landslide at a mining site in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, on the morning of 2 July 2020. Loss of lives is also the loss of the right to life.

2. Reportedly, over 160 unfortunate people were feared dead in the tragic event. Although it was the worst that has ever happened, this landslide is not the first one and there were some similar tragedies in the past as well, involving loss of many lives.

3. One can easily understand what kind of circumstances have driven those feared dead to risk their lives at those mining sites. Mining operations have been going on in those areas over a decade and it defies understanding why the concerned mining companies have not bothered to carry out human rights due diligence and the necessary risk assessment in their operations at the dangerous sites, though their earnings amounted to billions of dollar a year.

4. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights call for due diligence to be practised by the State and Businesses.

5. The MNHRC is of the view that it is high time the businesses enjoying unfettered freedom to operate unscrupulously should be regulated, asked to conduct human rights due diligence in the conduct of their businesses and to give sympathetic consideration to the issue of remedies as necessary.

6. The MNHRC would like to extend its heart-felt condolences to the bereaved families of those feared dead in the landslide.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
Date - 3 July 2020

Special care cannot be given to every single crop

We work everyday to govern an entire nation. So, we don't have leisure time. In governing an entire nation, it is impossible to focus at the same time on every issue affecting the people. But, in reality, our government is working with many difficulties, we saw success in some issues and not in others.

(Excerpt from the address made by Bogyoke Aung San at the meeting with journalists on 30 May 1947)



State Counsellor holds videoconference to discuss ...

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The Union Government has to take extra care during the COVID period to make sure that construction works do not grind to a halt; so that construction works continue to run smoothly and also to ensure that the health of workers is not affected. The Government also had to look ahead to the post-COVID period. This is something the government had to be constantly monitoring. The Government machinery was not going to grind to a halt because of the COVID period. It has to keep on running. She added that she wished the government machinery to move towards the positive side as it continued functioning.

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin explained that the statistics in 2018 showed that there are 1.37 million people who are relying on construction sector of the country, and the most vulnerable persons in this sector are general workers.

The state construction projects are implemented by capital expenditure and foreign loans. The projects from state budgets were suspended from the end of March to April; however, almost all of these projects have resumed in the first week of May and returned to normality at present.

Meanwhile, the construction project implemented by foreign loans have suffered more impacts from the pandemic, with the delay in the import of machinery and construction materials and postponement in the return for foreign experts; the ADB, World Bank and JICA have offered their loans, and that the projects are expected to resume in 2021 if the cabinet and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw agreed to them.

The deputy minister also explained preventive measures against COVID-19 in the construction projects, and the 50 per

cent discount of motorway tolls at 68 bridges and 245 roads from 1 June to 30 November under the CERP and invitation for EOI for the 4 road and bridge projects.

He also requested instalment loans from the back to promote housing demands, to implement public rental housing projects in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, and to construct 10,000 units of the double-room apartment with 650 square feet if the government allocates K250 billion from state budget each year.

U Htay Lwin discussed their difficulties in livelihoods during COVID-19 period, adhering to

crisis and the establishment of the construction training school in coordination with Japan on 5-acre land of MCEF in Nay Pyi Taw.

He also remarked it is expected to take from 6 to 3 years for the recovery of some businesses and suggested to set up industrial zone projects in creating job opportunities for construction workers.

U Shein Win said that the federation will propose a project for retired civil service personnel to own apartments with the minimal amount of down payment and monthly payment in instalment, and he also proposed

neurs who could help in creating employment opportunities. *

And then, the State Counsellor said that there hasn't been yet a case so far in the construction sector; thus it may be said that the compliance level is high with respect to the obedience of COVID rules and regulations. This needs to be continued. She said that as time went by, being humans, human behaviour was such that people come to be careless in washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing. Especially in the construction sites, workers are in the habit of eating in groups and talking in groups; that was why they had to be constantly reminded not to eat in groups and talk in groups. In other work-sites and departments, workers behaved in the same way; at the present time, they should be vigilant about such kinds of behaviours. Although farmers spaced themselves while working on the farm, at lunchtime they tended to eat in groups; this was a good custom but it was important not to behave like this during this time. In places where there are many workers, it could create a big problem if one worker got infected. The infection could spread to a lot of people. That was why everyone should take this very seriously. Regarding job opportunities, as the deputy minister had presented, job creation is very important and she accepted the fact that the construction sector could provide many jobs in Myanmar; that was why the Union Government has been helping the three types of the construction business in the construction sector in many ways; by doing so it would benefit the construction workers as well as people and government employees who wished to live in their own homes; she said that many employees replied that they wanted to live in a house of their own by the

time they retired when she asked them what was the most important need for them. She said she did not want them to be in a situation when you don't know how you were going to live after working hard for your whole life. The Union Government has been building on a priority basis housing for government employees so that they could live in dignity and comfort when they grow old. By implementing such construction projects, it also provides job opportunities for construction workers.

She said she learnt that the reason why some construction works could not be completed as scheduled during the COVID period was that foreign experts could not come. At present, permits were being given little by little in some places where they are needed; it occurred to her that Myanmar needs many skilled workers; it is easy to create jobs in the construction sector; in doing this, she wanted their skills to be upgraded and their skills should be upgraded during the training period. The whole process should be to upgrade the skills and qualifications of Myanmar citizens. To do this, the Union Government should take responsibility for the one part and the entrepreneurs should take responsibility for the other part. She said she wanted the workers to have such kind of mindset.

Construction workers go all over the country to work. When she travelled, she found many relatives from upper Myanmar working in the construction sector everywhere she went. As they were working on roads, buildings and bridges, they greeted her on the way; most of them were from Magway, Natmouk and Yaynan Gyaung; she also found workers from Magway when she was in the Chin state.

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... as time went by, being humans, human behaviour was such that people come to be careless in washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing.

COVID-19 guidelines in workplaces when the projects were resumed; and requirements of land plots for the construction workers as they have to hire huts for living in the areas of squatters.

U Shein Win talked about cooperation of MCEF with the government in the guidelines of CERP, directives of the federations to follow COVID-19 measures at the construction sites, the contribution of K1,000 million through Yangon Region Government. The federation has been working with the Myanmar Licenced Contractors Association since April in construction of 189 units of apartment for retired civil service personnel, offer of employment opportunity to the Myanmar construction workers who returned from foreign countries during the COVID-19

a plan to issue new tender rules.

He also requested loans up to 20 to 30 per cent of project value from foreign loans through private banks.

Yangon City has 15,000 units of condom rooms, selling of condo apartments to foreigner contributed 40 per cent, numbering 6,000 rooms, of total sale.

He also expressed thanks to the State Counsellor, the MPs of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry for reduction of income tax in the construction sector for the trial period in 2019-2020 financial year.

U Shein Win added Myanmar national entrepreneurs faced against the pandemic together with the people; and proposed income tax exemption on the investment of local entrepre-

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Now that all these workers have gone home, with their unfinished work; these works should be restarted again once COVID-19 has been brought under some measure of control.

By fulfilling the construction needs of the local people, workers will get back their jobs and earn income. This is something which needs the collaborative efforts of everyone. There were some projects which were being implemented with international loans. She had always reminded with regard to international loans; these loans need to be paid back; in repaying these loans according to international practice there were two types. Some projects were implemented with grants while others were implemented with loans. When implementing with loans, these need to be repaid at one time or the other; not only to maintain the dignity of the country but also to build up trust economically, it was necessary to repay the loans in a proper and timely manner. Plans are being made to provide debt relief to least developing countries relating to COVID-19; she was thankful for such plans; it is helpful for countries such as Myanmar where the development process was weak; as a rule Myanmar should be able to repay the loans she has taken; it was necessary to work hard to repay these loans; this is why while implementing construction projects, we should bear in mind that by working on one construction project we are actually providing impetus to the country's economic engine. We should not think in the narrow sense. We should think in such a way that our country's economic engine would function properly. Thinking in this way, she placed great importance on the construction business.

She said that the facts during the discussion were matched with their statements and that it could be problematic if people couldn't work two or three days as they were daily wage earners. We need to consider this. In the long term, this is for our people and workers to have economic security; to be rich is the next level; basic security is a necessity; she had always said that the stability of a country depended upon security. Security means physical security and mental security and these two are related; for example, if a person has to worry from

where to get the money for school expenses for his children, there is no mental security. This is also related to physical security.

She said that the Union Government would consider these matters. She said special plans have been made to for people who do not have regular income during the COVID period. Everyone knows about this already. After the distribution of basic essential commodities, there has also been financial assistance; this is an effort by the Union Government to give mental security to a certain extent, to people without the regular income to the best of its ability. The most important thing is for the country's economic and development to be moving in a regular manner and for the people to ultimately have sufficiency economically as well as physically.

U Htay Lwin talked about vocational education in his discussions. The main activity at "La Yaung Taw" is agriculture; Agriculture does not mean only growing crops but also includes gardening and growing flowers; in a city like Yangon, trees are being planted on the roadsides but they are not beautiful and not too pleasant to look at; this is because of lack of knowledge in agricultural techniques; knowledge of gardening is not only how to grow a big tree from a small tree but also to know the shape, how to make it last longer, which type of tree would be best suited, for the roadside the tree should look nice and give shade, it should not obstruct the cars, and to be able to figure out all these things according to the need. When growing flowers, we need to know which flower should be planted in which particular spot; not only vegetables, to make our environment beautiful we need flowers also; if we have a beautiful environment it gives us tranquillity and happiness. This is also important.

She said she wanted to encourage the development of vocational schools. I want vocational education to become a well-developed sector in Myanmar. In some of the most developed countries in the world, vocational education is on par with university education. People regard graduates from vocational schools on the same level as university graduates and other professionals from relevant disciplines. At every opportunity, she has recounted this matter; in the whole world Switzerland

has one of the best vocational education systems; this country although small is one of the richest in the world; in her education system, vocational education is very successful; just as there are students who go to university, there are also those who go to vocational schools; among these students, there is no attempt to discriminate who is better and who is not.

The State Counsellor said she was able to meet a student from a vocational education and training (VET) centre upon request during her visit to Switzerland. She said she had met four students from four different VET centres and admired this particular student. When she asked the student why they chose to learn carpentry she replied that although she wanted to be a musician when she was young, she discovered she did not have the talent for it when she became 10

ter can become a world-famous musical instrument maker.

The State Counsellor said she wishes to create an education system that offers numerous opportunities for development and also currently wishes to provide regular income and social security for workers without the regular income. She said the Union Government is doing its best to achieve this goal but it also requires the participation of private businesses as well.

The State Counsellor said the business side had submitted matters relating to tenders, taxation, loans, and rules, regulations and laws concerning them and the Union Government will consider all the matters it can assist with. She said she holds a deep regard for everything discussed during the one hour of video conferencing. She said the discussions will be handed over to relevant departments so that

over. She said most economically advanced nations are facing numerous challenges because of their emphasis on academic education and most university degrees are becoming less relevant with the demands of the present age.

She added that developed countries are now aiming towards vocational education and training but are not finding it easy without the proper foundations. She said the general public in those countries believe academic degrees reflect how educated, and capable, a person is; then it would be quite difficult to implement and develop a vocational education system.

The State Counsellor said Myanmar has better opportunities in this respect as the people practically desire vocational education. She said the fact that youths and parents are both steering towards wanting vocational education is a good sign for the nation and the Union Government will do its best to provide assistance.

The State Counsellor said people who have to live on daily wages face serious difficulties if work stops for 2 to 3 days and they have to consider the economic and personal income security of every citizen. She said thinking of methods to provide sources of regular income to people without it is more important as providing with assistance is a form of treatment when prevention is a better choice.

The State Counsellor said the nation has achieved a level of success in handling the spread of COVID-19 as they placed great emphasis on prevention measures early on. She said the Ministry of Health and Sports took the first steps towards prevention of the disease on 4 January and Myanmar can be said to be one of the earliest countries to do so. She said this is the reason the disease is under control and will have to remain so in the future.

She added that they have to take preventive measures now to prevent possible setbacks when attempting to resolve the safety and needs of the public. She said preventing issues from arising is better than resolving them later. She said the Union Government and businesses should consider how to prevent the loss of regular income than only providing assistance when a person no longer has it.

An important issued raised at the meeting was the livelihood and current lack of accommodation for workers which needs to be addressed by both businesses and the Union Government.

to 11 years old.

The State Counsellor said this student was quite mature as she was aware of herself at a young age. She said the student loved music and decided to learn basic carpentry to become one of the best violin makers in the world so that she may remain in the music industry.

The State Counsellor said she admired the student's answer as it showed her wisdom and resolve. The student was able to rationalize the possibility of a situation like an adult and make her own choice. She had the confidence to start learning carpentry and aim to become a professional maker of world-class instruments.

We are trying to increase the number of vocational training centres like this in our country as well, said the State Counsellor. She said it takes time to set up a school as it requires careful planning including the choice of a suitable location and hiring educators. She said she will always remember the idea that a carpen-

they may discuss it in greater detail, find ways to implement national development and offer assistance.

She said an important issued raised at the meeting was the livelihood and current lack of accommodation for workers which needs to be addressed by both businesses and the Union Government. The other issue was the educational needs of the workers' children, which the State Counsellor points out is paramount to the future of the nation. She said we need to consider how best to fulfil the education requirements of children of all citizens. She said there shouldn't be a situation where financial difficulties halt progress in education.

The State Counsellor said they have to make the education system comply with the actual requirements of the nation and highlighted the importance of vocational education. She said it is the requirement of the modern age as the time when having a university degree corresponded to a person's level of education is

Celebration of Myanmar Women’s Day held online

MYANMAR Women’s Day was held online yesterday morning at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement under the healthcare guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports for COVID-19.

Participants in the discussion were the representatives of 11 groups from Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs, the online members of the Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs, the chairs of the women committees from states and regions and the secretaries, the invited guests from respective departments, the representatives from the UN agencies and women associations.

The ceremony was launched by broadcasting video clip with the song honoured to Myanmar Women’s Day, followed by the video speech of the State Counsellor.

The State Counsellor said that the year 2020 was a challenging year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the works and the events were held in the new way; the restrictions had to be done unavoidably across the world in order to prioritize to protect, control and treat the disease which caused the social and economical impacts; more or less in every country, that the women were more vulnerable to the disease than men; the gender-based violence and more domestic violence had occurred; Myanmar has lower number of such violence.

She said that women usually took responsibilities to take care of their home and family members; the family was the primary source of human society and it

was important that the family members cooperate; the family spirit and the sympathy were the fundamental norms of Myanmar people; she believed that it is necessary to overcome the difficulties of the consequences of COVID-19 through family spirit and the sympathy. Moreover, she said that it was the ability to be adaptable with the change while facing the situations; doing businesses, performing tasks and socializing needed to be connected by changing with new normal.

She continued to say that there were also opportunities during COVID-19 period; people self-employed and sold online such as offering online courses; it can be found that the garment industries made the protection things for health; the situations in country side and city were different; to make it fair although it’s different while leading with new form, to make sure no one had left; the government was implementing COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) to assist to everyone with necessary protection, social welfare, granting loan with less interest, and the plan to support pregnant women and children. She urged that the private sector should also cooperate with the government and not to leave behind the women sector as this was a significant year for gender equality.

She also suggested women to fulfill the needs of the country equally with the men and the government, private and social organization needed to think how to help them. She urged the social organizations to cooperate by presenting the needs and difficulties of the women, teaching necessary skills, helping them to



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi talks on video clip to virtual Myanmar Women’s Day celebration on 3 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

be able to do professional works.

In conclusion, she said that the role of women was very important to build societies which had to be built with family spirit and empathy. She called for everyone to try to perform in fulfilling the needs of the country and the women, and to hand over the spirit and strength of unity to future generations.

Then, the performance of physical fitness from the Myanmar National Women sport association along with the music was showed by a video clip.

And the ceremony was continued with the round table discussion for Myanmar Women Day by the title “Role and Challenges of Women in COVID-19 Response” led by Dr Win Myat Aye, the Union Minister for

Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the president of the Myanmar National Women Committee, U Win Maw Tun, the deputy minister for Education, Doctor Mya Lay Sein, the deputy minister for Health and Sports and Daw Khine Khine Nwe, the joint-general secretary from UMFCCI. They discussed the role of the participation of the women in COVID-19 response in the sectors of economy, education and health and the difficulties they faced and to find the ways to overcome those and etc. Then, attended guests asked the questions and the people who participated in the discussion answered.

Afterwards, certificates of honour from the Myanmar National Women Committee were

given to women healthcare givers and employees who served the country by working in protecting, controlling and curing the Coronavirus disease 2019, by Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, chair of the Myanmar National Women Committee. Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein received them on behalf of them.

The round table discussion for Myanmar Women Day was held one week in advance by the respective scholars from the sectors of Health, education and economy and the discussion yesterday was to find ways and to make policies for women to overcome the challenges in COVID-19.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Two members of Defence Services confirmed positive for COVID-19

TWO members of Defence Services who recently returned from India have tested positive for COVID-19, according to the statement of Tatmadaw True News Information Team.

The statement released on 27 and 28 June said that the military personnel returned from India via military flight after completing course on 26 June, and five soldiers out of 48 soldiers who were quarantined at Yangon Region Command area tested positive.

While the remaining 43 sol-

diers who took the same flight were under quarantine, the two soldiers showed symptoms, said the statement. Their specimens were tested by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) at the 1000-Bedded Defence Services Hospital (2) in Mingaladon and the results showed positive.

These two confirmed cases are now taking medical treatment at Defence Services Liver Specialist Hospital (Mingaladon) and are in good health conditions.—MNA ■ (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

State Counsellor holds videoconference to discuss impact of COVID ...

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The State Counsellor called on workers to voice their opinions confidently and said expanding more vocational training centres falls in line with the nation’s ambitions and policy, which they are aiming to implement swiftly.

The State Counsellor then moved on to the end of her speech. She said the construction industry is important for the nation in many forms and

so is communication. She said a nation’s economy can only develop if it possesses a good communication system. She said there needs to be a sense of closeness between people so that there is unity among all citizens. She said some villages are not very familiar with each other as they are too far apart and lack communication.

The State Counsellor said better communication will lead to increased cooperation among people. She said the develop-

ment of basic infrastructure will also aid national development. She said it is important for people to be able to have regular meals, clothe themselves with dignity, and possess their own safe housing that complements their self-confidence. She thanked everyone for contributing to the success of the construction industry and then wished them all good health.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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MR to invite tender this year for upgrading YGN-MDY railway project phase-II

THE tender will be invited this year for Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrading project phase-II -- Toungoo-Mandalay railway project, it is learnt.
For the Toungoo-Mandalay railway upgrading project, the detailed design has already been developed. According to the project, ten tenders will be invited, said Myanma Railway (MR).
The Yangon-Mandalay rail-

way upgrading project is being implemented in two phases with JICA ODA loans and the national fund being spent. The first part of the project is Yangon-Toungoo which is about 166 miles long while the second part of the project is Toungoo-Mandalay which is about 219 miles long.
For the Toungoo-Mandalay railway upgrading project, the detailed design has been devel-

oped since 2018-2019 with the assistance of JICA's Grant Aid.
MR has signed a contract with Construction for Consultancy Services (CMC) for Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrading project phase-II.
The engineering team started their job in 2019 for Yangon-Mandalay railway upgrading project phase-II, according to MR.
MR is operating six express

trains, two mail trains, four up and down Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw trains on Yangon-Mandalay railway. Upon completion of the whole upgrading project, the trains can run at a speed of 100 kilometres per hour (60 mph) on the Yangon-Mandalay railway road. Additionally, there will be air-con coaches on the train.—Aye Cho
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Export of cattle granted to benefit local breeders in Magway region



A veterinary physician is injecting medicine into a cow. PHOTO : ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)

Legal export of the five years and above old oxen and buffalos are granted for the benefit of the local breeders in Magway region, according to the Regional Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.
At present, four companies are exporting cattle at a market price between K500,000 and K2

million, the Department stated.
Myanmar has been exporting the cattle on a one-year trial basis and during this trial period the country has earned over US\$500 million in terms of tax. A Chinese company based in Europe sent the offering letter to the Union Minister for Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock

and Irrigation to buy between 1 million and 5 million oxen annually, said Dr Maung Maung Soe Oo, the regional head of the Department.
“We have market demand, so it is more beneficial for the local livestock farmers. The livestock has high potential market recently. If the local breeders

can focus on breeding, their livelihood will develop,” he added.
The exported cattle will have health checked, the vaccine injected and the number of cattle recorded by the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. Then, the department will submit this matter to the head office of the department. After that, the Ministry of Commerce will issue a three-month carry permit.
“The local breeders are also having hard times because of climate change. They could not stand only by farming. So, they are doing the livestock breeding businesses,” said a local farmer from Minbu township.
Regarding paying of tax deposit, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department has to submit this matter to the Magway regional government's EC meeting. The department has to pay in a deposit in the bank after they get permission. It will take seven days for the department to send the cattle to disease control areas in Kutkai town.—Zayyatu (Magway)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

58 human trafficking cases reported in first half of 2020

By Nyein Nyein

A total of 58 human trafficking cases were reported across the country in the first six months of 2020, according to the Anti-Trafficking in Person Police Unit.
From January to June, 58 human trafficking cases involving 93 trafficked victims including 16 young girls were

investigated.
Out of 58 cases, 15 cases happened in January, seven in February, nine in March, six each in April and May, and 15 in June. The police detained 166 human traffickers.
The human trafficking cases were reported in forced marriages, forced labour and forced prostitution. The victims were

trafficked to China and Malaysia as well as inside the country.
In the six months of 2020, there were 58 reported cases of human trafficking including 40 forced marriages in China, nine forced prostitution cases inside the country and six forced labour cases and one forced labour case each in Malaysia and China, according to the Anti-Human

Trafficking Police Unit.
Shan State and Yangon Region topped the list of trafficking in person cases with 18 each followed by Mandalay with six, Kachin with five, Ayeyawady with four, Bago and Magway with two each and Taninthayi, Sagaing and Nay Pyi Taw with one each.
(Translated by Hay Mar)

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“People are the key”

125 Myanmar nationals repatriated from Philippines by relief flight



Myanmar nationals returned from the Philippines are queuing for immigration processes at Yangon International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

A total of 125 Myanmar nationals from the Philippines arrived back home by Myanmar Airways International (MAI)’s relief flight that landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

Of them, 15 were those who stranded in the Philippines and 110 were from the ships of Conquest Dream and Holland America of the Carnival Cruise Line in the Philippines.

On arrival at the airport at 7:00 pm, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided them with proper medical

checks and arranged 21-day quarantine for them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.

A total of 6,648 Myanmar citizens abroad have been repatriated to date.—MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Ayeyawady Foundation contributes over K3 bln in fight against COVID-19

THE Ayeyawady Foundation is rendering assistance to measures against COVID-19, with the total donation of K3 bln to date.

The foundation donated K10 million to Waibargi Hospital and North Okkalapa General Hospital which are giving medical treatments to COVID-19 positive patients, one-month bonus K6.3 million for 30 health workers of swab team of Yangon health department, and K3 million for Patheingyi hospital to be used in sending laboratory samples of COVID-19 suspected patients.

It also arranged three meals a day for 500 persons at quarantine centre set up by the foundation at Thuwanna Football Stadium

for the returnees from Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore.—Ye Yint Shine ■ (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

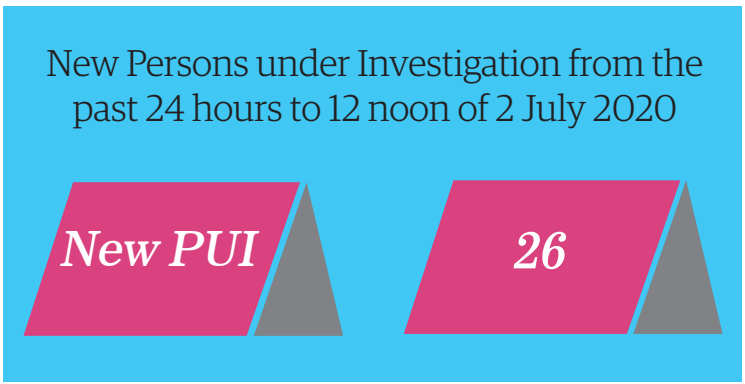
Ayeyawady Foundation makes donation for measures against COVID-19. PHOTO: KO MOE



COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 306 after one new case reported on 3 July

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases reached 306 after two new cases returned from India, was reported on 3 July, according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 306 confirmed cases, six died, 237 have been recovered and 219 have discharged from hospital.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 3 July 2020



Two more case of COVID-19 on 3 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Oversea travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
305	24	Male	Hline Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	Defence Services Liver Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Hline Township)
306	23	Male	Hline Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, India	Defence Services Liver Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Hline Township)

Mental health, suicide prevention needs greater attention from authorities and public during pandemic

MENTAL health issues are likely to emerge as significant side effects of the new disease, requiring the attention of public-health policymakers.

COVID-19 has brought significant changes to our daily lives, as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain and slow the spread of the virus.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still accelerating and impacting people in multiple ways, WHO called upon countries in South-East Asia Region on 2nd July to pay greater attention to mental health and suicide prevention.

“Hitting lives and livelihoods, the pandemic is causing fear, anxiety, depression and stress among people. Social distancing,

isolation and coping with perpetually evolving and changing information about the virus has both triggered and aggravated existing and pre-existing mental health conditions which need urgent attention,” said Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region.

Early identification of mental health conditions, recognition of suicidal behaviours and appropriate management through a multi-sectoral approach is important, even as we continue to focus on arresting further spread of the pandemic, Dr Khetrpal Singh said.

Suicide claims almost 800,000 lives every year globally and is the leading cause

of death among young people aged 15-29 years of age. Evidence shows that for each adult who dies of suicide there are more than 20 others attempting suicide.

The WHO South-East Asia Region accounts for 39% of global suicide mortality.

In Myanmar, suicide mortality for men and boys stood at about 5.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2016 – well below the global average of 13.5 – according to WHO. But for women and girls, Myanmar’s suicide mortality was 9.5 per 100,000 people, higher than the global average of 7.7. It was the results of the survey that was carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this pandemic, sense of stability and control has been threatened for everyone. For our young people, whether in the middle of puberty or approaching adulthood, this is hitting hard. Depression and anxiety generally go hand in hand with feelings of hopelessness and dread of what might lie ahead.

In these challenging times, we must look after our mental, as well as our physical health, and we all should display more sympathy and understanding, as the pandemic does not seem to be going away any time soon.

Myanmar people who possess the fine traditions of perseverance, friendliness, generosity, and sympathy always actively participate in humanitarian tasks in the communities.

These initiatives are most needed today. Together we must work towards promoting mental health and preventing suicide.



Apprenticeship – Myanmar Style

By Lokethar

RECENTLY, while browsing the internet I came across a paper on a study of apprenticeship in Myanmar by a development partner. As was expected, and concluded in several previous studies by local “researchers” as well, there is no “formal apprenticeship” in Myanmar as is practised in all the developed and even many developing countries around the world. However an “informal style”, or if you will, a “Myanmar style” of apprenticeship is being practised practically in all micro, small and medium industries in Myanmar. This has been confirmed by studies conducted by local researchers.

The “informal apprentices” are provided board and lodging by the employer but not given wages. Their ages are from around thirteen upwards. They are called “aloke thins” meaning “learner of the work”. The “aloke thins” are attached to the more experienced workers and learn the “jobs” through helping the experienced worker at the workplace. In fact it is “learning by observing and doing” with occasional “instruction” from the experienced worker on how to do it. After acquiring

some skills over a period of time the “aloke thin” is paid some monthly “mont pho” (pocket money), if the “employer” is a “kind” enough person, but usually no fixed wages. The period of serving as an “aloke thin” varies from 2 to 5 or 6 years depending on the occupation. In point of fact many of the “aloke thins” are exploited as cheap labour. As more than 90% of the “enterprises” in Myanmar are micro, small and medium sized, one can guess the number of all the “aloke thins” they “employ”.

In the new employment and skills development Law “formal apprenticeship” is included. However the extensive practice of “informal apprenticeship” was taken into account as well. The meaning of the term “ahloke thin” in the ESD Law covers “informal” as well as “formal Apprentices”. In fact the particular section in the Law prescribed the “age of the ahloke thin” to be at least 16 years. The aim of the Law includes linking informal apprenticeship to formal training in institutions. The “informal apprentices” would acquire skills through experience on-the-job as well as through increasing levels of training to earn certificates of recognition of their

skills while in employment.

As for training of the “ahloke thins”, provisions in the Law allow employers to resort to making “training contracts” with the “aloke thins” for employment training prior to the actual “employment contract”.

In the new Employment and Skills Development Law “formal apprenticeship” is included. However the extensive practice of “informal apprenticeship” was taken into account as well. The meaning of the term “ahloke thin” in the ESD Law covers “informal” as well as “formal apprentices”.

Besides continuing training and certification of the skilled workers is embedded in the “employment and skills development Law” itself. Occupational competency based Training and Assessment System of the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA) in the Law is designed for training progressively at four levels namely Semi-skilled, Skilled, Advanced Skilled and Supervisory levels. The competency standards are designed to impart “underpin-

ning knowledge” and “underpinning skills” required for adequate performance at each of the level concerned. The lowest level of learning is level 1, for entry level employment. The “ahloke thin” can be trained on the job or where feasible, in a

fore a higher level of training can be undertaken. This will gradually build up the knowledge and skills of the worker to even proceed eventually to a basic level diploma course and beyond. Hence the upward mobility of the skilled worker would be “open” if trained through the 4 level system.

The aforementioned “Four Level” training system is to be financed by the “Skills Development Fund” which is embodied in the ESD Law. The SDF is to be built up primarily through the “contribution” of the employers (a minimum of 0.5% of the skilled workers payroll) as prescribed in the law. The employers who train the workers or send them for training to training centres or schools run by training providers, may recover the cost of the training from the SDF. This is a system practised in many countries around the world.”

The public and private sector skills training centres/schools could conduct short courses starting from level 1, based on the occupational competency standards for entry into the specific occupations. OCSs for level 1 and 2 workers have already been drawn up for some (30) common occupations. The

employers, by hiring trained workers at the level 1, would benefit from better and safer performance and lesser learning period “on-the-job” when compared with untrained general labour to be helpers to the skilled workers, particularly in occupations in the construction and many common manufacturing and service industries.

Hence it is suggested that at present the “aloke thin” or the Myanmar style apprentice training system practised in the small and medium enterprises all over Myanmar, be linked to formal institutional training through the “four level” training system of the NSSA. It would enable young persons, including “non-schoolers” of low educational attainment, to learn job skills, earn qualifications and at the same time address the social need to protect such young persons from being “exploited” as cheap labour by their employers. For the larger private and public Industries employing a large number of workers, a more “formal” apprenticeship, could be considered if such industries are ready for it.

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CUTTING OFF REVENUE STREAMS FOR INDIA'S CINEMA CHAINS

The battle for Bollywood: virus, streaming apps spark fears for cinemas

Frustrated Bollywood producers have turned to the likes of Amazon, Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar to release films online

ABOLLYWOOD actor’s face tattooed on his arm, Sandeep Bacches devotion shocks few in India where stars enjoy semi-divine status. But even here the hallowed silver screen may be losing its shine to streaming services and pandemic fears.

“Whenever things get better and theatres begin operations, I will watch three movies a day for

sure just as a way to celebrate,” said the Mumbai rickshaw driver, who is recovering from the virus himself.

With cinemas shut for months due to a coronavirus lockdown, and little prospect they will reopen soon, frustrated Bollywood producers have turned to the likes of Amazon, Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar to release films online.



Vehicles drive past the closed PVR Plaza cinema complex in New Delhi on March 13, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

“Gulabo Sitabo”, starring Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, premiered on Amazon Prime last month. Other Hindi movies have followed a similar

route, as have the huge Telugu-, Tamil- and Malayalam-language film industries.

But, noting the financial might of the competition, he said:

“No business model in the world can compete with free money and Netflix is nothing but free money.”

India has the worlds most prolific film industry, churning out

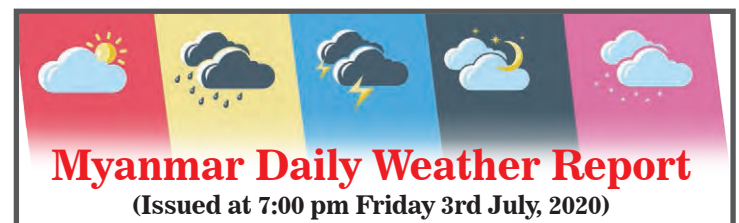
nearly 1,800 releases in 2018. Stars are worshipped like gods, with fans building temples and making pilgrimages to their homes.

Going to the cinema also remains a hugely popular and affordable pursuit, with 75 rupees (\$1) buying three hours of entertainment in an air-conditioned movie theatre.

Some of the higher-end multiplex cinemas have menus that include biryani being delivered to your recliner, and blankets to snuggle under if the air conditioning is too cold.

But with more than half of India's population under 30, and many of them consuming entertainment on mobile phones, the likes of Netflix were starting to make inroads even before the coronavirus.

SOURCE: AFP



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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 4th July, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Naypyitaw and Magway Region, scattered in Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Regions, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Chin and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with regionally heavyfalls in Kachin, Rakhine and Mon States and with isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan and Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (9-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate to strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th July, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region and widespread in Yangon Region.

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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Log on to Myanmar's learning revolution

By Jon Omund Revhaug, CEO of Telenor Myanmar

THE last months have taught us that almost everything we do can be handled online if we're motivated to make it work. New habits post COVID-19, connectivity and quality content sets Myanmar up for a learning revolution.

Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision that has impacted more than 91% of the world's student population. While countries around the world are working towards flattening the curve of the still-growing pandemic, headlines mostly focus on relief efforts and infection rates. However, no society can afford to overlook the education sector.

The sudden and unprecedented disruption to education places new challenges on governments to ensure continuity of learning. The issue affects students, parents, teachers, and caregivers. While the pandemic continues to unfold, it is increasingly clear that education itself and the next generation of learning will be defined

by how well the policies and practices before COVID-19 and those that come in response to the pandemic work together to fill the gap to enable continuity. According to UNESCO, this will be the defining chapter from education disruption to recovery.

The World Bank has identified the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on education "a learning crisis with high evidence in learning poverty". At least 1.5 billion children and youth from more than 160 countries have been affected by school closures done to limit the spread of COVID-19. In many countries, including Myanmar, school buildings have been turned into makeshift quarantine facilities.

Current educational content shared throughout the world revolves around the importance of precautionary measures, social distancing and staying at home, while formal education has been overshadowed. The situation emphasizes the importance of efficient distribution of information and knowledge to all parts of society.

Regional chapters of UN



Mr Jon Omund Revhaug.

agencies such as UNESCO in Asia-Pacific are taking action to ensure that LearningNeverStops, making tailored educational material available on its portal. Similar efforts are undertaken by both organizations and governments, as well as some businesses. All of this has to happen as authorities debate when and how to reopen schools, as well as looking at longer-term impact of the COVID-19 situation.

Telenor has embraced online learning as a tool to upskill and reskill its own global workforce, challenging employees to spend at least 40 hours per year on learning something new. Now in its third year running, the learning challenge has produced

new critical expertise for the company and helped instill a learning culture. Telenor Myanmar employees on average spend more than 60 hours on e-learning, suggesting that our staff see clear benefits with this form of learning.

These experiences have compelled us to also bring online education to our customers through our own digital channels, recently launching the first telco-education program in Myanmar together with Strategy First University. The programme includes business management courses targeting small and medium enterprise owners, as well as young learners with basic educational content from the school curriculum.

In the meantime, all schools in Myanmar are still closed for safety reasons. While the Government is planning to re-open some in the coming months, there is still the need to provide continuous education in the country. Due to the exceptional nature of the current situation, the use of distance and virtual learning through digital platforms have developed greatly.

However, most students and teachers lack access to the necessary resources, such

as appropriate infrastructure or technical skills to effectively take part in this e-learning revolution. Safe, reliable and efficient connectivity remains the foundation for any virtual learning experience. Ensuring this access is available to as many as possible is vital. In response to the current situation, industry players like Telenor are providing free access to the Ministry of Education's online platform for six months while DBE Boxes, remote learning tools, have been donated to teachers and students in schools across Myanmar.

For this reason alone, it is urgent that all mobile industry players step up and contribute to the acceleration of digital learning. While the education sector is tasked to respond with digitally inclusive methods and implement plans outside of the traditional classroom, industry players must step up with innovative solutions and robust communication. E-learning technology may indeed become one of the most compelling sectors for businesses to explore, also in Myanmar.

1,134 Myanmar nationals come back home via Myawady border bridge on 3 July



Myanmar nationals arrive at Myawady border crossing after they returned from Thailand on 3 July. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

A total of 1,134 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand through Myawady Town, Kayin No.2 border bridge in State, on 3 July.

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

The number of migrant workers who returned home from abroad through this border has been 39,547 until now.

The latest group of returnees included 661 males and 473 females from different regions and states. — Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

MoSWRR provides foods to street children in Yangon

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is helping street children and their families with food, protection and assistance.

The ministry is cooperating with Yangon City Development Committee, UNICEF, TDHL, World Vision and Kinected (Myanmar) in conducting educational programme on COVID-19 and taking survey on the community of street children for their needs.

From 6 to 23 June, the ministry provided basic foods to a total of 100 street families.

Supplies to 126 families of street children in Dawbon, North Okkalapa and Hlinethaya townships were given on 3 July, and provisions for 39 families in Dagon Seikkan Township will be distributed on 7 July.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

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India's Modi makes surprise border visit after clash

NEW DELHI — Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to India's northern frontier region with China on Friday in his first trip to the area since a deadly border clash last month.

The incident in the Galwan Valley saw 20 Indian troops killed and was the first time in 45 years that soldiers had died in combat on the Asian giants' long-disputed Himalayan border.

Modi toured a military base at Nimoo in Ladakh, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) as the crow flies from the site of the June 15 battle.

He was due to go to a military hospital in nearby Leh to meet soldiers injured in the hand-to-hand skirmish, a security source told AFP.

The head of India's military and the army chief also joined the visit to the sensitive area, which has been used as a staging post to build up troop numbers in the region.—AFP ■



Narendra Modi's trip to Ladakh comes after a deadly clash with Chinese soldiers that saw 20 Indian troops killed last month. **PHOTO: PIB/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Philippine coast guard searches for bodies of missing fishermen

MANILA — The search for 14 people missing after their fishing boat and a cargo ship collided off the Philippines has turned into a retrieval operation with little hope of finding them alive, the coast guard said Friday.

The vessels crashed last Saturday night in waters southwest of Manila, capsizing the Philippine fishing boat Liberty 5 off the coast of Occidental Mindoro province.

The crew of the Hong Kong-registered cargo ship MV Vienna Wood has been detained as investigators prepare to lay criminal charges over the incident.

"There is a very slim chance that we may still find them alive," Philippine coast guard chief George Ursabia told a local radio station, as the search shifts to retrieving the bodies of the missing men in the next two days.

"Eventually we will terminate our efforts on this."

Philippine authorities have deployed aircraft and ships in the hunt for the 12 missing Filipino crew members and their two passengers.—AFP ■

S. Korea names spy chief Suh Hoon as new national security director

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae In on Friday named intelligence agency chief Suh Hoon as new National Security Office director, his office said, in a major reshuffle of his diplomatic and security teams amid renewed tensions between the two Koreas.

Moon also plans to appoint ruling party lawmaker Lee In Young as new unification minister, following his predecessor Kim Yeon Chul's resignation over the strained inter-Korean ties. The president tapped former culture and tourism minister Park Jie Won as Suh's successor at the National Intelligence Service.—Kyodo ■

Kim hails NKorea's 'shining success' against COVID-19: KCNA

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un has praised what he described as his country's "shining success" in holding off the new coronavirus, according to state-run KCNA news agency Friday.

The head of the hermetic totalitarian state spoke at a Worker's Party politburo meeting on Thursday discussing the impact of the virus, six months after North Korea closed bor-

ders and put thousands in to isolation.

KCNA reported that after reviewing efforts, Kim "said we have thoroughly prevented the inroad of the malignant virus" and "maintained stable anti-epidemic situation despite the worldwide health crisis".

The reclusive leader praised the "shining success achieved by the far-sighted leadership of the Party Cen-

tral Committee and a high sense of voluntary spirit displayed by all people who move as one on orders of the Party Central Committee," KCNA continued.

But he also stressed the need to "maintain maximum alert" especially in light of new outbreaks in "neighbouring countries".

"He repeatedly warned that hasty relief of anti-epi-

demic measures will result in unimaginable and irretrievable crisis," KCNA said.

Pyongyang has not confirmed a single case of the deadly disease that swept the world after first emerging in neighbouring China, but has imposed strict rules, including closing its borders and schools, and putting thousands of its people into isolation.—AFP ■

Gilty pleasure: Vietnam opens world's 'first' gold-plated hotel



The 25-storey hotel is located on the bank of the Giang Vo Lake in the downtown Ba Dinh district of Hanoi. Staff wait to welcome guests in the lobby of the newly-inaugurated Hanoi Golden Lake hotel. **PHOTO: AFP**

HANOI — For guests at the "Dolce Hanoi Golden Lake" coffee comes in a gold cup and bath time is taken in gilded splendour.

The world's first self-proclaimed gold-plated hotel is open for business -- and the Vietnamese owners insist they have the Midas touch despite the cramping of global travel during the coronavirus pandemic.

The hotel cost \$200 million to construct with a 24-carat plating across lobbies, an infinity pool and rooms with even cutlery, cups, shower heads and toilet seats receiving the golden treatment.

While expensive for Vietnam, at \$250 a night it is not

prohibitive for wealthy locals craving a few nights living like Donald Trump, the US President renowned for his love of all things that glitter.

The hotel wants "ordinary people to the super rich... to check-in" both physically and on social media, said Nguyen Huu Duong, chairman of Hoa Binh group that owns the hotel.

A gold-plated infinity pool overlooks the city, while meals at the 25-storey hotel in downtown Hanoi may be mixed with a mysterious "gold substance", according to the owners. So far, the smattering of customers appear to be delighted with Hanoi's flashiest new digs.—AFP ■

India opens vast railway network to private players

MUMBAI — India has opened up its vast railway sector to private companies, allowing firms to operate trains on certain routes, in a bid to boost its stuttering, virus-hit economy.

The 167-year-old train network carries 20 million passengers daily but is plagued by deadly accidents, rickety infrastructure, lack of modern amenities and poor investment.

In an announcement late Wednesday, the railway ministry said it would now permit businesses to run trains along 109 routes, inviting bids from firms weeks after New Delhi opened up coal mining to the private sector.

“This is the first initiative of private investment for running passenger trains over Indian Railways network,” the ministry said in a statement.

“The objective of this initiative is to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world class travel experience to passengers,” it added.

The project will require an investment of \$39.8 million and private players will have to pay the government fixed haul charges and a percentage of profits determined during the bidding process.

Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi has sought to privatize a range of industries that have been under state control for decades, sparking criticism from the opposition Congress party.

“Now the government is in a desperate mood to sell a great chunk of one of our largest national asset Indian Railways,” Congress politician Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury tweeted.

“Privatization cannot be construed as a panacea of railways malady,” he added.

The tottering network is notorious for accidents, with 15,000 passengers killed every year according to a 2012 government report that described the deaths as a “massacre.”



India's 167-year-old train network carries 20 million passengers. PHOTO: (AFP)

Asia's third-largest economy has been clobbered by the pandemic and a months-long lockdown, growing at its slowest pace in at least two decades last quarter.

The shutdown, which put millions out of work overnight, is widely expected to plunge the country into recession.—AFP ■

U.S. labour market won't recover to pre-pandemic level by 2030: CBO

WASHINGTON — The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) said Thursday that U.S. unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2030 could be 4.4 per cent, still above the historically low of 3.5 per cent the country experienced before the COVID-19 outbreak.

In a 10-year economic outlook report, the CBO projected unemployment rate to fall to 10.5 per cent in the fourth quarter this year, and then to 7.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Despite continuous decline, U.S. unemployment rate could still be



A 'help wanted' sign hangs on a window of a restaurant in Lower Manhattan, May 4, 2018 in New York City. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

4.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2030, indicating the COVID-19 pandemic's scarring effect on U.S. labour market over the next decade.

U.S. employers added 4.8 million jobs in June, pushing the nation's unemployment rate down to 11.1 per cent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Thursday.

According to CBO's projection, gross domestic product (GDP) will

shrink 5.9 per cent in 2020 on a fourth-quarter to fourth-quarter basis. In 2021, U.S. economy will grow by 4.8 per cent.

Several U.S. states, mostly in the South and West, have recently seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases, prompting some of them to roll back or pause reopening plans. Texas, for example, announced last week that it would close bars and reduce restaurant occupancy.—Xinhua ■

Virus reduces Japan's FY 2019 tax revenue by 3.2% to 58.44 tril yen

TOKYO — Japan's tax revenue in fiscal 2019 fell 3.2 per cent from the previous year to 58.44 trillion yen (\$540 billion), as the coronavirus pandemic severely hit companies' bottom line, the Finance Ministry said Friday.

Tax revenue in the year through March dropped nearly 2 trillion yen from a record 60.36 trillion yen in fiscal 2018, well below the government's estimate of 60.18 trillion yen at the end of last year, mainly due to sluggish corporate tax revenues, according to the ministry.

“The new coronavirus infections have had a negative impact on corporate earnings,” a ministry official told reporters. As for the current fiscal year, the official said it is “too early” to talk about the significance of the economic fallout from the spread of the virus, while admitting that the situation has been “getting tougher” than in December last year, when the government estimated fiscal 2020 tax revenue to reach 63.51 trillion yen.—Kyodo ■

Singapore records lowest monthly decline in retail sales since 1986

SINGAPORE — The Department of Statistics (DOS) of Singapore announced on Friday that Singapore's retail sales decreased by 52.1 per cent year on year this May, compared to a revised 40.3-per-

cent decrease in the previous month.

DOS said that this is the lowest recorded decline since 1986 when growth rate data was first compiled. It attributed the retail sales decrease mainly to the Circuit Breaker measures that Singapore implemented from April 7 to June 1 to contain the COVID-19 transmission.

The proportion of online sales in the total retail sales value, which was

about 1.8 billion Singapore dollars (about 1.29 billion U.S. dollars), grew from 17.8 per cent in April to an estimated 24.5 per cent. On a seasonally adjusted basis, the retail sales decreased by 21.5 per cent month on

Notice for Change of Pesticides Trade Name

The foreign manufacture AgriGate CropSciences Pte., Ltd will import and distribute the following insecticides registered in Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board Changing trading name.

No.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	A.I	Reg: Type	Reg: No.
1	Alarm 15EC	Ziclone Z 15EC	Emamectin Benzoate 5% + Lambda -cyhalothrin 10% EC	Provisional	2015 - 2250

It is therefore announced to come and reject within 14 days to joint Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein in wishing to make any objection in respect of the said changing trading name of insecticide.

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Boeing communications chief resigns over article from 30 years ago

NEW YORK — Boeing’s communications chief resigned Thursday following a complaint over an article he wrote more than 30 years ago contending that women should not serve in combat.

His resignation comes as a number of US companies examine their corporate culture following weeks of protests in the country over racism and police brutality, following the killing of African American George Floyd by a white police officer. Niel Golightly leaves his post at Boeing after just months on the job. In a press statement, he said that the article “was a 29-year-old Cold War navy pilot’s misguided contribution to a debate that was live at the time.”

“My argument was embarrassingly wrong and offensive,” Golightly said, adding that dialogue that followed afterwards “quickly opened my eyes, indelibly changed my mind, and shaped the principles of fairness, inclusion, respect and diversity that have guided my professional life since.” His exit comes as Boeing attempts to emerge from a crisis that saw its 737 MAX grounded since March following two deadly crashes and as the aviation industry navigates the coronavirus pandemic that has resulted in travel restrictions and lockdown measures.—AFP ■

Eight major Canadian banks join Facebook ad boycott



Facebook is facing a mounting ad boycott by hundreds of companies over its approach to racist and hate speech. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

MONTREAL — Eight major Canadian banks said Thursday they would heed a call by other major global advertisers to boycott Facebook, demanding the social network do

more to tackle racist and other hate speech. Scotiabank, RBC, CIBC, TD, BMO, National Bank of Canada, Desjardins and Laurentian Bank confirmed to AFP

that they support the StopHateForProfit movement launched by social justice activists. That means they will pull their ads from Facebook and its sister

photo-sharing platform Instagram.

“We have temporarily paused paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram,” a TD spokeswoman said.

“TD is committed to the fight against racism and hate speech and to the work needed to help create a safer and more inclusive society.”

An RBC spokesman said the bank wanted to work towards “eliminating systemic racism and unconscious bias, and enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.”

“One way we can do that is by standing against misinformation and hate speech, which only make systemic racism more pervasive,” he added.

More than 400 com-

panies including Adidas, Coca-Cola, Puma and Starbucks have suspended their ad buys on Facebook, which has more than 1.7 billion daily users.

The StopHateForProfit campaign was launched by pressure groups including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the United States.

The movement gained momentum in the wake of the May death in police custody of George Floyd, an unarmed African American.

Last week, Facebook said it would ban a “wider category of hateful content” in response to the growing protests.—AFP ■

Israeli mining magnate dodged US sanctions in DRC deals: report

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of the Congo — Israeli mining magnate Dan Gertler used a global money laundering network to get around US sanctions and extract further mineral wealth from DR Congo, an investigation by two rights organizations found Thursday.

The United States in 2017 froze all the assets and accounts of Gertler, a close ally of former DRC president Joseph Kabila, accusing the billionaire of profiting from massive resource corruption in Africa.

But an investigation released Thursday

by Global Witness and the Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF) alleged that Gertler dodged the sanctions to rake in millions over the last several years.

“Gertler appears to have used a money laundering network stretching from Democratic Republic of Congo to Europe and Israel to evade US sanctions against him, funnel millions of dollars abroad, and acquire new mining assets in DRC,” their report said.

Its said its findings were “based on documents provided by whistleblowers despite great risks to their

personal safety”.

The investigation found that Gertler and a network of proxies set up accounts with branches of the Cameroon-based Afriland First Bank, and at least \$100 million flowed through associated accounts between June 2018 and May last year.

Just one day before the report was released, Afriland First Bank lodged a complaint against it with the public prosecutor’s office in Paris.

The complaint was over the “theft of documents, violation of banking secrets and defamation,” lawyer Eric Moutet

told AFP. It was filed in France because the office of PPLAAF chief William Bourdon is in Paris, Moutet added.

Transparency campaigners have long ac-

cused Gertler of having used his friendship with Kabila to obtain lucrative mineral rights at bargain prices before selling them onward at huge margins.—AFP ■



DR Congo, mineral-rich and dirt-poor. PHOTO: AFP

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Ancient Kyaungphyu Pagoda in Pintin Village

Towards native land of King Alaung Mintaya's First Queen Mei Yun San

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

KHINU Township, the native land of eminent Buddhist monk Webu Sayadaw, was also a birthplace of Mei Yun San, First Queen of King Alaung Mintaya, who established the Third Myanmar Empire.

KhinU Township in Shwebo District of Sagaing Region is 751 kilometres north from Yangon and 33.5 kilometres northwest of Shwebo. It is necessary to take four hours for RBE drive from Mandalay to KhinU. Anya Thihataw Pagoda and ancient Sipoktara city take positions in KhinU Township.

KhinU in the records

According to the records of the Ministry of Home Affairs, an area of outpost called KinU in Myanmar language was set to defend enemies from area of Wuntho Saopha in the northern

part and that of Moemeik Saopha in the eastern part in Shan State as well as those from Kathei from the north. Later, the name of area was changed to KhinU from KinU.

Myanmar encyclopaedia mentioned that Chaukywa, Kantha and Nyaungzin stations were combined as Chaukywa Township in around 1891 AD, and government offices were set up in the area of KhinU. It was governed by Nga Chit Nyo who did not be loyalty to King Alaung Mintaya in Konbaung era.

In the past, the area of KhinU Township was for 12 villages. Among them, North KhinU, South KhinU and Puzawkon villages became KhinU town. The area of KhinU was formed with hillocks namely Ingyin, Theindaw, Puzaw, Panpon, Tawnaykyau, Thinzok, Wambe and Ywahta.

KhinU Township stretching from the east to the west is at an altitude of 403 feet. The area of the whole township is 400.82 square miles and KhinU, 0.71 square mile.

It shares border with Ayeyawady River and Thabeikkyin Township in the east, Mu River and YeU Township in the west, Shwebo Township in the south and Kanbalu Township in the north. It is home to 153,648 people, 153,602 of who are Bamar ethnic. The majority of the people in the township believe in Buddhism and some people in Christianity and Islam.

The township is combined with five wards and 147 villages in 59 village-tracts. It gains 44.32 inches of rainfall in 2017 set as the largest record.

Ancient evidences in KhinU



Ingyinpin Tawya

Township

Local people assumed that an earthen lake in Pintin Village, among five self-reliant dams and five earthen lakes irrigating farmlands in KhinU Township, had been dredged since Pyu era. Such lake is called Mawragiwa Lake (Daunglezalok Lake) with storage capacity of 10,240 cubic feet of water benefiting 1,800 acres of lands.

People in successive eras as-

sumed that Kyaungphyu Pagoda built by Queen Thambula of King Kyansittha is located at the lower part of the bund of Pintin Lake. A mound under bushes was renovated by the local people. So, it does not have any original works.

Local people say PhaungdawU Pagoda in Pintin Village was built by King Narapatisithu of Bagan in 555 Myanmar era together with Shwekottaw Pagoda in Nyaunggan Village of KhinU

Township and Shwelinpin Pagoda in Sipoktara Village. The damaged PhaungdawU Pagoda was renovated in 1993. Now, the 37 feet high pagoda can be seen.

According to the data of the township, Anya Thihataw Pagoda, Sipoktara Shwelinpin Pagoda and Ingyinpin Tawya are eminent religious edifices among 1,617 pagodas, 539 stupas and 207 monasteries in the township.

Some people assumed Htantabin Village as an ancient city near Zigon Village, north of KhinU but it may be an ordinary village due to lack of brick walls. However, a brick monastery in Nyaungyan era takes a position in Htantabin Village.

Shwekar Village, two miles northwest of ancient Sipoktara city was the native village of Mei Yun San, First Queen of King Alaung Mintaya. Her residence in Shwekar Village belongs to generations of U Seik Kaung and Daw Yar but they still maintain the land plot without construction of any buildings. The compound is 200 feet long and 168 feet wide.

Sipoktara

Ancient Sipoktara city in KhinU Township is located at north latitude 22°49’ and east longitude 95°35’. Currently, Sipoktara is a village, formed with 669 houses of 3,145 people.

Travellers must turn right at the entrance from KhinU and go straight along the five miles long earthen road. They can see a road direction leading to Sipoktara Shwelinpin Pagoda. Then, if they turn three miles to the west, they will arrive at Sipoktara.

It was reported that the canal from KhinU to the road direction to Shwelinpin Pagoda was dredged in the reign of King Alaung Mintaya. Such kind of canal is still used to feed water into Maha Nanda Lake in Shwebo.

At the entrance to Sipoktara, one-side collapsed ancient walls can be seen at the eastern gate. Travellers can see the southern wall but the northern one remains as a mound.

If one goes out southwest of Shwelinpin Pagoda precinct, one can see corners of western and southern walls of the ancient city. Moreover, a cultivable land which can be assumed as a moat can be seen.

In the southeast of the pagoda, many mounds of ancient pagodas are under bushes. If these mounds are excavated, ancient evidences of Sipoktara may be found.

Sipoktara in the history

Sayadaw U Nipunna of

Sipoktara explained the city was established in 555 ME. Shwebo District Gazetteer compiled in 1924 mentioned Sipoktara was built in 4th century AD in the time of King Duttabaung.

Some people said guard cities Ngayanee in the northeast and KinU (KhinU) in the southeast were built together with Sipoktara. Some wrote Sipoktara was one of five subordinate cities in the time of first Tagaung era. One of 10 Buddha images built by Bagan King Narapatisithu is kept in Sipoktara.

Everybody pay homage to the Buddha image of Shwelinpin Pagoda believed as an image built by King Narapatisithu, and Mei Yun San, the First Queen, also paid homage to the image.

The Buddha image is kept in ancient, wooden Sipoktara Monastery, and it is fenced by iron rods.

Ten Buddha images of King Narapatisithu are located in Sipoktara in KhinU Township, Kaunghmutaw Pagoda in Sagaing, Samon Village in Sagaing Township, Hlahtwe Village in Wetlet Township, Shwetaza Pagoda in Shwebo, and one each in Mingin, Singu, Kalay, Kyahnyet and ChaungU townships.

The west hall of the monastery stores ancient objects, Buddha images and human statues. Moreover, Thitsadaw red treatise used in cursing is displayed at the monastery but the original treatise was buried.

The wooden monastery was built with gilt posts. Each post is labelled in numbers in addition to names of donors in golden colour. Eastern posts were re-gilt and the western ones were in original works.

Ingyinpin Tawya

While in KhinU Township, Ma Khin Zu Zu Hlaing and family took me to Ingyinpin Tawya where eminent Webu Sayadaw resided.

Ingyinpin Tawya is five miles north of earthen road from the right of entrance to KhinU. Then, the road leads to Inginpin Village.

The pagoda built by Webu Sayadaw and other religious edifices can be seen at one mile square brick walls at Ingyinpin

Tawya. These buildings store utensils used by the Sayadaw, coffin and many documentary photos. The vehicle used by the Sayadaw is displayed in the precinct of the Tawya.

Despite not so many visitors, KhinU Township preserving interesting sites together with an ancient city is historical area.

(Translated by
Than Tun Aung)

Reference:

Facts related to KhinU Township (General Administration Department)
Research over early Konbaung era (Dr Tin Win)
Clarifications of Sipoktara Sayadaw U Nipunna



Earthen Pintin Lake.



The walls of Sipoktara City

Yangon United vaccinated against seasonal flu

A vaccination programme for Yangon United was organized at the Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon yesterday.

The programme was conducted to prevent the football club's players and officials prevent seasonal influenza, according to the football club's social media.

The club's officials and players were tested for diseases and provided vaccinations to keep them healthy and get ready for the upcoming matches. On 16 July, the team will play against Magwe FC at their home ground Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon.—Kyaw Khin ■

Chinland FC assists IDPs from Paletwa

CHINLAND FC donated foods, hand sanitizers, books, and clothing to the IDPs from Paletwa, who currently arrived in Hmawbi, yesterday, according to the football club's social media.

A total of K2 million worth of donation including 70 rice bags, oil, salt and onion, 35 bottles of hand sanitizers, 56 dozens of exercise books, 70 pieces of nether garment (35 for men and 35 for women), and stationeries were distributed to the IDPs from Paletwa, who currently arrived in Hmawbi under the Chinland for Paletwa Programme.

Under the programme, the football club will continue donating. The football club also expressed thanks to the well-wishers and donors who contributed to their programme from their social media page.—Kyaw Khin ■



Chinland FC's players carrying rice bags for the IDPs from Paletwa, who currently arrived in Hmawbi Township, on 3 July 2020. **PHOTO: CHINLAND FC**

Leroy Sane targets Champions League glory after signing for Bayern Munich

BERLIN — Leroy Sane has targeted Champions League glory with Bayern Munich after joining the Bundesliga giants from Manchester City for a fee of around 50 million euros (\$56 million) on Friday.

The Germany winger has returned to his home country on a five-year contract after receiving the blessing of City coach Pep Guardiola.

"Bayern is a very big club and has big goals -- these goals suit me as well," said the 24-year-old Sane.

"I want to win as many titles as possible with Bayern, and the Champions League is at the top."

The Bundesliga champions did not give the transfer fee, but Sky Sports and the BBC have reported that Bayern and City agreed a fee of £54.8 million (60.8m euros, \$68.2m). German daily Bild claim the fee is around 50 million euros.

Sane said he is looking forward to linking up again with Bayern head coach Hansi Flick, who has just steered the club to an eighth straight league title in his first season in charge.

"I know Hansi Flick from the under-21 national team. We had a very good relationship there," added Sane. His transfer became an open secret as Guardiola re-

vealed earlier this week that Sane was likely to leave after rejecting a new contract offer with a year left on his existing deal at City.

The 24-year-old spent four years at City, winning two Premier League titles, an FA Cup, two League Cups and two Community Shields, but European success eluded him.

"We wish Leroy all the best in this new chapter of his career," said Guardiola in a statement on Friday.

"Leroy has been part of one of the most special periods in this club's history and he leaves with the best wishes of everyone here at Manchester City."—AFP ■



The Germany winger has returned to his home country on a five-year contract after receiving the blessing of City coach Pep Guardiola. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Next season started today': Sterling has Liverpool in his sights

LONDON — Raheem Sterling said Manchester City proved a point in a 4-0 thrashing of newly-crowned Premier League champions Liverpool on Thursday (Jul 2) as they look to take the title back next season.

Sterling scored in a competitive match against his old club for the first time and also had a major part in two other goals as City inflicted just Liverpool's third league defeat in two seasons in emphatic fashion.

Kevin De Bruyne opened the scoring from the penalty spot after Sterling was wrestled to the ground by Joe Gomez.

Sterling and Phil Foden then made it 3-0 before half-time and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain could only turn Sterling's shot

into his own net to round off the scoring in the second half.

"We had a test against the current champions to make a point and we did brilliant," said Sterling. "Next season started today and we did well."

City boss Pep Guardiola is hoping the manner of the victory can spur his side on to finish the season on a high by succeeding Liverpool as Champions League winners for the first time in the club's history.

"It is important," said Guardiola on the confidence boost for his side. "Especially because they were incredibly focused."

City had given Liverpool a guard of honour before kick-off in their first game since becoming champions.—AFP ■



Manchester City's Raheem Sterling (left) celebrates scoring against his former club Liverpool. **(AFP PHOTO/DAVE THOMPSON)**