State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID on hotels and tourism sector with stakeholders

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discusses impact of COVID-19 on hotels and tourism industry with officials concerned on 10 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a videoconference from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am yesterday to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the hotels and tourism sector and the practical realities at the ground level with stakeholders.

Those who participated in the discussions were:
U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism; Daw May Myat Mon Win, Vice-President of the Myanmar Tourism Federation; U Min Kyaw Ou, Secretary-General of the Myanmar Hotel Entrepreneurs Association.

Firstly of all the State Counsellor made some introductory remarks. She said since the COVID-19 pandemic started, the global tourism sector has been hit quite hard; in the presentations submitted by the three participants, she has found the term “new normal” being used; as for her she has not accepted this term yet; this was because she thought that it was still too early to decide whether we should follow the “new normal” way. If we follow the “new normal” way, it sounds as though it was not possible to control COVID. If we look back into history, medicines for curing diseases that were thought to be incurable had been found. If continued efforts were put in to find cures, medicines for curing these diseases could be found.

Prevention of the disease was more important than curing of the disease. It was more effective. After having been injected with the vaccine for the prevention of the disease, one could live with peace of mind. To have the medical treatment for the disease provides a certain amount of comfort; of course, there would always be costs involved; although a preventive medicine has some costs involved, it is a little bit easier; there were many things to be considered regarding prevention and curative protocols.

In meeting, she wanted to discuss about how much the world’s economy has been affected by COVID-19; what were the results and impacts; secondly what was the impact on Myanmar’s tourism industry; we need to consider this for the short term as well as the long term; in the short-term, we need to consider to what extent we could help the people who are involved in the tourism sector so that they were not hurt too much; how much could the Union Government do and how much could the entrepreneurs from the private sector cooperate; in the long-term if the COVID period is going to last for a long time, we would need to follow the health guidelines and regulations during this period; if the COVID period lasts a long time, the number of travellers would decrease and it would be necessary to take this into account; if the COVID disease disappears quickly, it would be good for everyone; if this disease disappears, we would have to compete with the rest of the world; all the countries of the world would try their best to recover the losses they had suffered during the COVID period and Myanmar would have to compete also. It would be necessary to make sure that the hotels and tourism sector is able to make the adequate arrangements so that the tourists could come; she said she wanted to request the Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism to explain about the severe impact suffered by Myanmar and the plans and preventive measures taken so far.
TATMADAW (Army, Navy and Air) provided medical equipment to the Central Women’s Hospital in Lanmadaw yesterday to help the hospital in its fight against COVID-19.

A donation ceremony was held at the hospital, and attended by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Maung Maung Kyaw, senior officers from the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army), Yangon Command’s Commander Brigadier General Nyunt Win Swe, Chief of Yangon Region Public Health and Medical Services Department Dr Tun Myint, and the hospital’s medical superintendent Dr Khin May Thwin and officials.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing handed over 20,000 surgical masks, 1,000 N95 masks, 500 surgical gowns, 1,000 gloves, 3 buckets of Sodium Hypochlorite, Fetal Doppler, CTG Machine (Fetal Monitor), portable ultrasound, and portable X-Ray to the hospital’s medical superintendent Dr Khin May Thwin and officials.

At the ceremony, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received the foods and expressed words of thanks for the donation.

In addition, Tatmadaw provided foods for press council, artists, and Lethwei organization at the Tatmadaw Hall in Dagon Township, Yangon yesterday.

At the ceremony, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing handed over 500 rice bags, 1,000 visses of oil, 1,000 visses of peas, and 1,000 visses of salt to Chairman of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Senior General and party then cordially greeted the attendees and treated them with foods, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)
State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID on hotels and tourism ...

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung explained impacts of COVID-19 on the industry and recovery plans.

He said the number of inbound visitors in January this year was over 400,000, but it declined to about 6,000 in April, including those through land borders. After the trans-border visitors have been banned and the 14 day quarantine period imposed, the foreign visitors did not enter the country.

The MoHT has adopted the Myanmar Tourism Relief Plan that reflects CERP and its first phase has been implemented at the end of June. The relief plan included a one-year exemption of licence fee, 6-month postponement of taxes, 1 per cent interest loan and surveying the COVID-19 impacts.

The ministry will conduct tourism-related payment training for the persons with no job and no income due to the outbreak of COVID-19 after travel restrictions from one area to other regions have been lifted; the national tourism guidelines have been adopted for ensuring safety tourism services amid the pandemic based on the directives of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture before the businesses are allowed for reopening.

The Union Minister added the ministry has resumed the industry with domestic travellers while international airports have not come into operation, and people failed to follow the directives and it was a challenging situation for the country; the industry has seen only less than 10 per cent of previous figures; while the government has a limited capacity to provide full support to this industry; the most appropriate way is to work of resumption of this industry in line with the rules and directives.

Vice-President of the Myanmar Tourism Federation Daw May Myat Mon Win discussed people suffered anxiety during COVID-19 outbreak, and that it is expected they will travel to free from their distress.

She suggested the need for new tourist destinations as Myanmar has abundant natural attractions to the visitors; the tourism industry is a major driving force for the national economy helping people from all strata of society. She also talked about the requirement of a clean environment with no debris in promoting the tourism sector, while tourists have preferred unspoiled areas taxis, horse-carts, trishaws and boats, with the roadside vendors, souvenir shops, tour guides and healthcare works.

Hotel reservations began to decline at the end of January, some cancellations in February, decreasing inbound visitors in mid-March, increasing cancellation at the booking websites and zero reservation of a room in April.

He also talked about other difficulties in service charges, maintenance charges and electricity bill during the pandemic, and requested additional loans for the industry.

He continued discussions about reopening of hotels in line with the healthcare guidelines and conducting online training from each other; however in the tourism industry, it was very difficult to practise social distancing.

She said the other day she saw a photograph of domestic tourists visiting the U Bein bridge; when she looked at the photo she saw that the people were grouped together; for family groups, it was not a problem; however looking at the photo, it could not be just one family; they were all staying together with other tourists; in the tourism industry, it was important to stay physically apart from each other.

Because of the nature of the tourism industry, as many tourists wish to visit the holy and sacred pagodas, how do we keep the visitors six feet apart from each other; we need to work this out in a practical manner; we would need to limit the number of tourists allowed to enter the pagoda at one time.

During the COVID period, many of the hotels have been affected; hotel owners have given a lot of support regarding COVID matters. When we ask foreigners to go into hotel quarantines, they preferred to stay in hotel quarantine rather than hospital quarantine. In making arrangements for them it would have been impossible without the cooperation of hotel owners; she wished to say that in facing the COVID challenges, hotel owners were in the frontlines.

For the hotels industry to succeed we need a lot of visitors; if the number of visitors was not big, hotel owners would have to struggle harder; we would all have to decide in a collaborative manner how to approach the problem of the hotels industry. In some countries they keep the tourists in expensive hotels; these tourists are rich. Their hotel industry was based on this. In other countries, they have inexpensive hotels; as for Myanmar we wish to follow the middle path; we do not wish our country to become a tourist destination where people can come cheaply.

Some western tourists go to eastern countries because of the cheap prices. Some tourists travel to these places because of their interest in the culture and environment. Some travellers who are on the lookout for cheap prices do not care much about the environment or the surroundings. That was why there have been incidents where the natural environment was damaged.

After this, the State Counsellor made her concluding remarks. She said she would look at the rules and regulations for granting loans to the hotels industry. She said the Union Government would provide effective support to the hotels and tourism sector as much as possible. To help the people during their difficult times was investing in the future of the country. We need to help when help is needed. Only then would our country develop without losing its momentum.

She continued to say that she wanted to help all the small businesses that were connected with the hotels and tourism sector. She said she wanted the hotel owners to use their websites to market their hotels by posting the unique dishes offered at their hotels, training courses and cooking lessons. They could also post how to visit nice places for relaxation.

Now is the best time to give training to staff members who need to be restructured so that they would be able to fit in their new work places; it would be beneficial for the country if arrangements could be made to build small buildings for one or two nights stay in the beautiful natural environment to study and enjoy the natural environment; she wanted the tourism industry to encourage the beautiful natural environment of Myanmar.
State Counsellor discusses impact of COVID on hotels and tourism ...

The meeting was chaired by Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Chairman of the MIC. Members of the Commission participated in the meeting from their respective offices in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. The meeting approved 8 new projects in the livestock, manufacturing, oil and gas and other sectors as well as additional investments in 9 existing projects. The approved projects amounted to USD 135.144 million and Kyat 54.115 billion. The projects are expected to provide 2,008 job opportunities. Among the new projects approved by the meeting is a USD 115 million shrimp farm and cold storage facility in Taninthayi Region. The project is expected to create over 1,000 jobs.

Notwithstanding COVID-19, both local and foreign investments continue to show interest in Myanmar. Singapore, the People’s Republic of China and Thailand head the list of countries that have invested in Myanmar in the current fiscal year. Investment in the power sector accounted for 26.52%. This was followed by the oil & gas sector (26.44%) and the manufacturing sector (14.28%) of the total permitted amount of foreign investment.—MNA

Myanmar Investment Commission approves investment proposals including shrimp farming processing and cold storage in Taninthayi Region

The natural environment is changing; we need to change what we need to be changed; when we change it is very important to change in the interest of the majority. She added that she wanted all the participants to consider the fact that during the COVID period, this was the opportune moment to review and reassess the hotels and tourism sector to make it better and make it possible to operate at a higher level.

Challenges are not difficulties but opportunities. During this period when we have many challenges, the tourism sector was also one of the challenges; the tourism sector is "heart to heart" connection; from this, we need to go one step further and encourage visitors who come to Myanmar not only to have "heart to heart" connection but also "mind to mind" connection; we need to make them understand our history, our situation, and our challenges; our country is facing many challenges; basically the reason why there have been misunderstandings is that we have many problems, lack of knowledge of the past and also inadequate knowledge of the present.

She added this is the reason why she wanted to urge all the participants to work to establish a "mind to mind" connection starting from "heart to heart" connection. In whatever you do, bear in mind to work for the happiness and safety of the people. She wanted the hotels and tourism sector to work towards the happiness and safety of the people, the country and the Union and to keep this in mind always; the Union Government will work to the best of its ability; she also wanted the entrepreneurs, and all the responsible officials in the related sectors to collaborate and cooperate. —MNA

YBS contribution to management funds exempted until end-July

FROM PAGE-3

STATE COUNSELLOR DISCUSSES IMPACT OF COVID ON HOTELS AND TOURISM...

YANGON Region Transport Authority (YRTA) has extended again the exemption for YBS companies from contributing management funds until the end of July, according to YRTA. Previously, the YBS buses operating for the convenience of the commuters to be able to travel within Yangon region were exempted from contributing of K4,000 per bus daily to the YRTA management funds from 27 March to 30 April. Then, YRTA has extended the exemption till 31 May to be of help to the YBS buses. Then, the exemption period was extended again up to 30 June and now again to the end of July according to YRTA. This move of YRTA is to support YBS companies during the coronavirus crisis, said YRTA Managing Director U Aung Nyo Nyo Maw.

Earlier, about 4,500 buses ran daily on Yangon roads. Following the impact of coronavirus pandemic, the number of YBS buses has decreased to over 3,300. At present, 126 bus lines are providing public transport amid the pandemic, according to YRTA. YBS companies must report to the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) on their daily process such as applying for waivers and recording the routes as usual.

Moreover, YRTA is making efforts to solve the problems facing YBS buses under the supervision of the Yangon region government if the bus lines find it hard to overcome the problems.

Currently, YRTA is cooperating with YBS companies to prevent the spreading of the coronavirus pandemic according to the guidelines and instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

In response to the global viral disease, YBS companies and the public are cooperating in such activities as promotion of health awareness campaign by putting stickers, distributing pamphlets and keeping the hand sanitizers on board the buses, installing basins and placing soaps and ensuring systematic disposal of garbage near the bus stops and the railway stations. At present, over 100 bus lines are operating buses on about 135 routes, along with the Airport Shuttle and city transit. —Nyein Nyein

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

YRTA has extended exemption of management fee K4,000 per bus daily till the end of July.

(Translation by Aung Khin)

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(Translation by Aung Khin)
Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds first meeting with literary consultant team of Sarpaybeikman

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint held the first coordination meeting with the newly formed literary consultant team of Sarpaybeikman yesterday.

The meeting was held at the office of Printing and Publishing Department of MOI in Yangon.

In his opening remark, the Union Minister advised on holding the consultant team’s coordination meetings twice a month at the initial stage, and then monthly meetings for sharing ideas and encouragements of senior consultants to the editors with lesser literary experiences.

The nine-member new consultant team was formed with Sithu Dr Thaung Kaung, Dr Khin Aye (Maung Khin Min-Donu-byo), U Maung Hlaing (Mg Swe Nga), Daw Mya Mya Than (Ma Hin Phwe), Daw A Win (Librarian), U Ohn Myint (Mg Yint Mar-Kyaunggone), U Than Ohn (Mg Ze Yar), U Kyi Win (Lawka Amon) and U Htay Win (Mg Lin Yeik) who are the veterans writers of Myanmar literary world.

The formation of new consultant team was aimed to foster literary development works, to improve independence and quality of translation and publication and to modernize development of Sarpaybeikman library.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint also urged the consultant team to lead in organizing activities such as literary events and paper reading sessions.

Those attendees at the meeting discussed upgrade of literary development works, quality of publications, book productions from Sarpaybeikman paper reading session, training course for editorial teams to promote practices of literary studies, republishing famous books of Sarpaybeikman, using social media platforms to give young generation knowledge about activities of Sarpaybeikman, translation of Myanmar cultures into English and publications of science and technology books.

In the afternoon, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint met with cartoonists who are contributing their works regularly in the newspapers Myanma Alin and the Mirror, and the journals Doe Kyaw Ywar’ and Shwe Thway, publication of Sunday Cartoon collection, upgrade of Shwe Thway Journal, electoral cartoon campaign for 2020 General Election, broadcast of cartoon animation programme for MRTV and development of ‘cartoon museum’.

UAGO holds Universal Periodic Review meeting

THE Union Attorney-General’s Office held a meeting on the process of Universal Periodic Review yesterday.

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo said that Myanmar’s UPR reports were submitted twice in 2011 and 2015 as per the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); the third edition will be submitted in October this year.

He continued to say that the report preparation committee had submitted the fourth or final versions of draft to the national level UPR Committee.

The UPR has encouraged the government to implement a mechanism on human rights affairs.

The attendees at the meeting discussed implementation of decisions in the third coordination meeting of national committee, plans for establishment of national level mechanism for Myanmar human rights, and submitting the national report to the UN Security Council.

The meeting was attended by Union Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Myanmar Human Rights Commission Chairman U Hla Myint, Permanent Secretary of the Union Attorney-General’s Office Dr Thidar Oo, Director-General Dr Thi Thi Myint, Director-General from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Chan Aye and the respective officials from the Union Attorney-General’s office.

Over 161 Myanmar citizens return home from PRC and Thailand

A total of 161 Myanmar nationals – 75 from People’s Republic of China by the Myanmar Airways International and 86 from Thailand by the Myanmar National Airlines – arrived back home yesterday after they were stranded in these countries due to suspension of international flights amid COVID-19.

On arrival at the Yangon International Airport, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided the returnees with proper medical checks and arranged 21-day quarantine for them.

The ministry 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 7,301 Myanmar citizens have been brought back home to date. — MNA

Myanmar nationals returned from foreign countries queue for immigration process at the Yangon International Airport on 10 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)
Seven new cases of COVID-19 on 10 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact with positive patient</th>
<th>Oversea travel history</th>
<th>Hospital for medical treatment</th>
<th>Lab result</th>
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<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, India</td>
<td>South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>325</td>
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<td>Yes, Bangladesh</td>
<td>Maungtaw District People's Hospital</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Held under quarantine (Maungtaw Township)</td>
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</table>
Need to prevent and severely restrict dangerous illegal border crossings

In this type of situation, all of us need to prevent and severely restrict dangerous illegal border crossings. Those who come in illegally do not enter quarantine; if they carry the infection, the disease can spread to others. The steps needed to be taken to investigate and search for people who might have been exposed to the disease (contact tracing) and to quarantine them is such a huge burden for the country. This is a duty we have to undertake without fail so that the people would be free from danger.

Those who come into the country illegally, those who receive them knowingly, and those who cover up will be dealt with strictly and severely according to the law. If you happen to know any occurrence that endangers the public, please inform the ward/village administrative authorities. Giving this type of information does not mean that you are putting someone into trouble. This is just to prevent innocent people from falling into the COVID-19 abyss.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Facebook post on 13 June 2020)

Committee on Preventing Grave Violence Against Children in Armed Conflicts holds coordination meeting

THE fifth coordination meeting of Preventing Violence Against Children in Armed Conflicts Committee is in progress in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

THE fifth coordination meeting of Preventing Violence Against Children in Armed Conflicts Committee was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday afternoon. The committee was formed in January 2019 to carry out for ensuring the rights of children in line with the law. In his opening remark, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye stressed the need to review implementation of committee as there are some reports on grave violence against children in armed conflicts. The committee has adopted 10 tasks to prevent violence and recruitment of child soldiers. He added the needs for legal support, as well as support in livelihood, mental and physical rehabilitation and medical treatment to the victims, effective collaboration with UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNDP as well as with CTMR.

Security forces and respective commands were also advised to enforce the set rules and directives to prevent grave violence against children while coordinating with Ministry of Information to publish the committee’s works. Actions would be taken against six grave violations cases on the crime against the children if the investigations of Independent Commission of Enquiry of the President Office approved the cases, he said. He also welcomed the UN Secretary-General’s announcement on remaining Myanmar military from list of index in child soldier recruitment report. Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye confirmed that children were among the victims in armed clashes in Rakhine State. Regarding accusations of lacking health care measures amidst COVID-19, he said the committee has been carrying out measures against COVID-19 since March there. The secretary of the committee briefed on the progress and future plans of the committee, awareness programme for danger of landmines and establishment of help lines at the Rehabilitation Department.

The deputy minister discussed implementation of the 10 procedures more effectively, measures not to be enlisted in the index of child soldier recruitment report, preventing children from sexual harassment and protection of children in armed conflicts. The meeting was attended by the officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Health and Sports, Union Attorney-General’s Office, Adjutant-General’s Office, Chief of Armed Forces Training Office, General Administration Department and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Myanmar hands over 17 Thai nationals

A total of 17 Thai nationals — 16 migrant workers and one prisoner — were sent back to their homeland through the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge yesterday. Among 16 migrant workers, seven were males and nine were females, and they officially worked in Myanmar.

Local officials arranged their repatriation in coordination with Thai counterparts. On the same day, a Thai national who finished serving his prison sentences in Kengtung Prison was also handed over to the Thai authorities.—Yar Sae (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)
**OPINION**

**Concern is warranted and vigilance is required**

As part of the efforts to enforce COVID-19 safety guidelines in factories and other public places, the Ministry of Health and Sports announced on Thursday that it will conduct surprise inspections at factories, which have reopened after receiving permission from the government, to reduce the risk from new clusters of COVID-19, and will enforce quarantine measures against migrant workers returning from neighboring countries.

We are confident that these enforcement measures would ensure that there is no resurgence of COVID-19 in our country and we will continue to contain the coronavirus infection. In our country, in which only 260 positive cases have been reported yesterday, of all workers coming from neighboring countries. We believe that these enforcement measures are already initiating against those who do not abide by orders and do not comply with mandatory quarantine orders. Myanmar migrant workers, whose numbers may be 1,200 on average, are returning home daily after crossing borders during the COVID-19 outbreak. At present, about 23,780 people are quarantined in 614 facilities nationwide. According to the Health and Sports Ministry, about 10 per cent of COVID-19 cases in Myanmar are imported. Hence, authorities from ministries concerned are advised to enforce the anti-COVID-19 measures on all returnees coming home on flights or via land borders. According to the health guidelines, they need to go through temperature checks and medical examinations. Those with medical problems would be referred to a hospital, while those without infection would be sent to designated places for quarantine. If those entering the country have fevers, they will be taken directly to a hospital. In this time of crisis, all returnees are responsible to abide by the directions and health guidelines on COVID-19 issued by the authorities. Amidst the spread of coronavirus, granting permission to reopen factories after inspections for complying with health guidelines, along with accepting migrant workers returning from neighboring countries through border checkpoints are great challenges for the country.

**In commemoration of 73rd Martyrs’ Day**

The Union Government has decided to hold a ceremony to commemorate 73rd Martyrs’ Day on September 17th this year, as the day is observed to honor those who lost their lives during the struggle against the Japanese invasion from August 1945 to February 1946.

**Avigan study fails to demonstrate benefit in COVID-19 treatment**

A Japanese medical university said Friday a clinical study of the antiviral drug Avigan has failed to demonstrate a clear efficacy in treating COVID-19 patients at an early stage of the disease.

Rikuzo Health University said that the difference seen between the patients who took the drug immediately and those who took it later was not statistically significant in reducing the severity of the disease. The study involved 48 patients in the study who were too small to yield a statistically meaningful difference. In Italy, Chief Cabinet Secretary Giuseppe Conte said at a press conference, “There’s no change in our policy to approve the drug. If the efficacy against the coronavirus is confirmed, we will be faster to release.” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had expressed hope to see his government also lift the coronavirus-related lockdown measures in the coming weeks.

**Myanmar Daily Weather Report**

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL MONDAY OF THE 17th July, 2020**

Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Magway and Mawlamyine Regions, Northern Shan State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Yangon and Areyawaddy Regions, Shan State and Kayin State and Kayah State and will be widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region, Karen and Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (65%).

**FORECAST FOR NAYPYIDAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11th July, 2020**

Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (50%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11th July, 2020**

Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (50%).
MSMEs receive largest share of COVID Fund amounting to over K70 bln

By Nyein Nyein

OUT of K100 billions of COVID Fund, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) received the largest amount of the fund totalling over K70 million, according to the committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic.

The Committee for Remedial Works on Economic Impacts of COVID-19 has set up the coronavirus fund in order to provide necessary monetary assistance to the businesses hit by the pandemic. That is why the committee has granted the loans to CMP businesses, hotels, and tourism-related businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are badly impact-ed by the pandemic.

Regarding the loans, the committee has granted the loans seven times to a total of 3,383 businesses which are in accord with the loan terms and conditions.

Among them, a total of 2,550 MSME businesses including restaurants, personal goods, goods manufacturing and service businesses received the largest amount of loan totalling K70.911.10 million.

Moreover, 340 hotel businesses were granted K15,720.74 million loans, 45 CMP factories were granted K6,312.20 million, 220 restaurants were granted K3,182.12 million, 236 tourism sectors were granted K3,275.46 million and other two CMP were granted K75.11 million, according to the committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic.

COVID Fund loans were provided starting from 9 April. As of 1 July, the committee has provided K101,128.30 billion loans to 3,383 businesses.

The Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry have announced on 3 July that the K100-billion fund will be set up to provide for the second time the immediate loans to the enterprises battered by the global viral infection. The fund will be provided three times — K35 billion for the first time, K25 billion for the second time and K20 billion for the third time.

The committee will issue an announcement concerning the terms and conditions regarding granting of the fund.

The committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic was formed on 13 March with U Thaung Tin, the Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, as the chairman. (Translated by Hay Mar)

Exporters need to apply for licence for over 1,200 items: MoC

By Nyein Nyein

OUT of more than 10,000 goods, only over 1,200 goods are necessary to apply for an export licence, according to an announcement of the Ministry of Commerce released on 8 July.

The Ministry of Commerce requires a total of 1,224 items to apply for export licences under HS Code 2017 version, which contains alive animals, rare fish species and animal products, medicinal plants, forest products, mining products, raw materials and restricted chemical products, explosive devices, fertilizers and antiques. HS code 2017 requires applying for the export licence but the government has relaxed this licence requirement rule step by step. Previously, it was necessary to apply for the export licence for over 10,000 items. Thanks to relaxation, only 1,224 HS lines are necessary to apply for the export licence.

The Ministry of Commerce has exercised the power vested in it by Article 13 Sub Article (b) of Import Export Law in relaxation of the rule to apply for the export licence with the objective to streamline the trading process.

In doing so, assessment is made annually as to which commodity lines should be exempted from the application process.

This relaxation notification will come into effect beginning from 1 August and this notification will overrule Notification 9/2018 issued on 8 February 2018 by the Ministry of Commerce.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

90pc of businesspersons receive coronavirus loans in Mandalay

NEARLY 90 per cent of the businesspersons who have applied for loans from the Emergency Coronavirus Fund has been granted the loans, said an official from the Mandalay Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI).

The government has been providing loans to entrepreneurs from across the country to remedy the economic impacts caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

A total of 27 businesses in Mandalay region have applied for the loans via MRCCI in the first week of July, and they have now been granted the loans. This is the seventh time the loans are granted.

A total of 417 entrepreneurs have applied for the loans via MRCCI in Mandalay region and about 357 of them have already been granted the loans so far.

“We are not aware of how much they will receive because the loan permits are all sealed. The government is providing loans depending upon the business condition. We heard that some received a loan amounting to K300 million. For those who have not been granted the loans yet, they are highly likely to get the same amount of loan, said the office.

Some businesses from Mandalay region applied for the loans via MRCCI while some applied through the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

The government is providing the loans to the businesses which are holding the business licences, earning the annual income during the past two years and paying incoming tax, commercial tax and special excise tax.

More than 4,200 coronavirus-hit businesses from Mandalay region have applied for Emergency COVID Fund from across the country. And, the government will provide K100 million loans to them.—Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)
By Nyein Nyein

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC), at a videoconference held on 8 July, has approved eight foreign projects from China, Viet Nam, Samoa and Hong Kong (SAR), with an estimated capital of US$23.784 million. The projects will create over 5,000 jobs. They will invest in manufacturing of sportswear, bags, garments, hats and fabric on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis and hotel business, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

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

The investments in the regions also flowing into the hotel services, and other services sectors as well. To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands, Samoa and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

Yangon Region tops foreign investments among the regions and states, attracting more than 600 enterprises over the four years of the incumbent government, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The DICA indicated that Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states receive only a small share of investments. The Myanmar Investment Commission and the respective investment committees have granted permits and endorsements to 965 foreign enterprises between 2016-2017 Fiscal Year and as of May-end in the 2019-2020FY, with estimated capitals of US$22.39 billion.

Of 51 foreign countries, Singapore put the largest investments, followed by China and Thailand. MIC is prioritizing the labour-intensive businesses. In the incumbent government period, domestic and foreign projects employ over 500,000 residents, according to the DICA. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Kyat gaining against US dollar in local forex

THE US dollar has been sliding against the Kyat in the local currency market, with the exchange rate touching a low of around K1,390.7 per dollar on 10 July, which is a shump of K51 from K1,430 registered on 1 May, money exchangers said.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) purchased over 30 million dollars from private banks in June to govern the market. It has purchased $19 million within a week.

The domestic forex market witnessed the maximum rate of K1,410 in June. Despite the CBM’s dollar purchase, the dollar is currently pegged at around $1,390-1,370 in the domestic market.

At present, the global forex market sees the weak sentiment amid the coronavirus outbreak, with the US dollar index of around 96.29.

At present, exports of rice, corns and pulses are increasing, whereas the local forex market is facing low demand. The exporters are unhappy with the strengthening Kyat as the weakening dollar might harm export income and the stability of internal forex market, said a market observer.

Additionally, people are reducing luxury import items and giving priority to food commodity due to the adversity of pandemic.

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

Sale of manageable-scale handicrafts declines in Coronavirus period

The outbreak of coronavirus disease has caused the sale of handicrafts such as tobacco pipes and other personal goods on a manageable scale to decline in Ywath village in Chaungzon township, Mon state, according to the local handicraft makers.

Although the handicrafts sold well for K50,000 daily previously, most of the shops had to be closed in viral infection period and there are no buyers at the handicrafts shops.

The handicrafts are sold for between K500 and K8,100, said U Than Zaw, a tobacco pipe and other personal goods maker.

Although the handicrafts particularly tobacco pipes and other personal goods are purchased not only by the local visitors from other regions but also by foreign visitors, there are only a few buyers in the handicraft shops because of the pandemic.

In the past, the handicrafts were sent to Mawlamyine, Hpa-an and Bago as the export products. Now, the handicrafts are sold only in the handicraft shops.

Since the outbreak of global infectious disease, there have been very few or almost no travellers in Mon state and the sale of handicrafts has been cool in the market, he added.

Previously, there were many tobacco pipe makers in the village. Now, only a few people are engaging in tobacco pipe businesses. The village is manufacturing over 25 personal goods such as tobacco pipes, crutches, pens, combs, trays, spoons, forks, mortars and tea sets. — Htoo Eain
(Chaung Sone)
(Translated by Hay Mar)
560 Myanmar nationals come back home via Myawady border bridge on 10 July

Myanmar nationals returned from Thailand queue for immigration process at the Myawady border on 10 July 2020. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

Inclusive businesses to play a role in responding to the economic challenges of COVID-19

As part of their ongoing response to COVID-19, the UK aid-funded DaNa Facility and the BoP Innovation Centre are extending their online inclusive business training course free of charge until 29 September. Initially offered to the public at the end of April, so far more than 800 representatives from the public and private sectors have participated in the course.

The ‘bootcamp’ course has been updated to include a fourth COVID-19 oriented module on ‘last mile distribution’. Most of the Myanmar population can be described as ‘last mile’; consumers that are under-served by the mainstream private sector because they are in low incomes or live in remote areas. Inclusive businesses engage with people from under-served communities to ensure they get the support they need to participate in, and benefit from, economic growth.

By employing inclusive business strategies, enterprises can involve people from under-served areas to work within their own communities. Last mile distribution enables businesses, development organisations, and government agencies to set up local sales forces that can help create brand recognition in new markets and bring additional value through distribution to under-served and remote communities.

“The inclusive business online bootcamp provided invaluable insights on how business participants can apply IB tools and practices to strengthen the social impact of the businesses while contributing to meeting Myanmar’s sustainable development goals. I look forward to participating in the next module on last mile distribution where I will learn relevant and interesting topics especially for the rural sector,” said Taryar Aht Kyi, Sustainability Manager at City Mart Holdings Co., Ltd.

The bootcamp consists of 4 modules: (1) the promise of Inclusive Business in Myanmar; (2) developing an Inclusive Business model; (3) the power of partnerships for Inclusive Business; and (4) last mile distribution for Inclusive Business. Each module incorporates Myanmar examples as well as regional and global best practice cases. The modules, which are available in both Myanmar and English languages, aim at identifying innovative approaches to create jobs and increase incomes.

“DaNa’s Inclusive Business online bootcamp has created awareness among public and private participants from all around the country and stimulated our knowledge on the application of IB techniques to support Myanmar’s MSME community. In addition, it is becoming clearer that IBs can play an important part of the business response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in last mile distribution,” said U Aung Myo Khang, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.

—GNLM

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

Anxiety is a natural process and emotion of life and can be acknowledged and resolved. Anxiety can become mental fatigue if it is left unchecked and become severe. Anxiety symptoms include insomnia, excessive enthusiasm, fatigue, eating disorders, indigestion, headaches, joint pains, anger, fear, worry, sadness, guilt, memory issues, pessimism, hopelessness, loneliness, blaming others, and reduced productivity.

If these feelings are not resolved in a proper manner they can become mental fatigue and can lead to an inability to resolve challenges. This can lead to socioeconomic challenges and should seek motivational support before this stage is reached.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Unit)

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

Each of us has the responsibility to prevent, contain and respond to COVID-19 and to adhere to directives and regulations issued.

As COVID-19 draws on, there are worries about health, employment, financial issues, separated from family, discrimination, and other mental pressures. As the public works hard to overcome these mental hurdles, adhering to directives and regulations should not be viewed as additional mental pressure but the adherence to them should serve to make the public more resilient. They will aid in solving socioeconomic issues as well.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Unit)
International auto expo opens in northeast China

CHANGCHUN — The 17th China Changchun International Automobile Expo opened Friday in Changchun, capital of northeast China’s Jilin Province, with a record number of over 1,400 vehicles on display.

The 10-day event is being held both offline and online, with stringent epidemic prevention and control measures in place. The exhibition is spread over an area of 150,000 square metres at the main venue. Short videos and livestreaming shows will be launched on video-sharing platforms such as KuaiShou and Douyin, as well as TikTok. Popular internet anchors will join the activities, which focus on new energy vehicles and luxury cars.

Advanced technologies including autonomous driving, 5G, artificial intelligence and virtual reality are highlights of the auto show.

“The auto expo will help spur sales of new car models and reduce excess inventory by displaying new technologies and products, thus stimulating consumption in the entire automobile industrial chain, boosting employment and enhancing economic vitality,” said Xu Huawu, president of Changchun Committee of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

During the first half of the year, China’s auto production and sales stood at 10.11 million units and 10.26 million units, down 16.8 per cent and 16.9 per cent year on year, respectively.

NEW YORK — Popular smartphone apps including Spotify and Pinterest suffered outages Friday due to an apparent bug in Facebook’s systems. “We are aware and investigating an increase in errors on the iOS SDK which is causing some apps to crash,” Facebook posted on its developer site. App users began reporting early Friday morning on Twitter that they were unable to open Spotify and other

Outages in smartphone apps appear linked to Facebook bug

NEW DELHI — When Chandana Hiran was a child, strangers would urge her to lighten her skin. Today the Indian student is leading a campaign against whitening creams as global anti-racism protests highlight the obsession with fair complexions for many in Asia.

The campaign achieved its first victory when cosmetics giant Unilever dropped the word “fair” from its popular Fair & Lovely skin-lightening cream. D’Neal and Johnson & Johnson announced similar initiatives.

“They have been thriving on selling insecurities to women,” 22-year-old Hiran, who launched an online petition against Fair & Lovely, told AFP. “The narrative is that if you are dark-skinned, you cannot achieve anything in life. So being a dark-skinned girl I’ve always felt that maybe... I need to be fair. If I’m not, then maybe I don’t deserve those things.” Multinationals have long profited from sales of whitening creams, facewash and even vaginal bleaching lotions, by advertising the message that beauty, success and love are only for pale-skinned people. Unilever made $500 million from Fair & Lovely sales in India last year, according to Bloomberg.

Bulgarian hotels see over 90 pct drop in May occupancy, revenue

SOFIA — Bulgarian hotels and motels have seen a year-on-year decline of over 90 per cent in occupancy and revenue in May amid the coronavirus pandemic, the country’s National Statistical Institute (NSI) said Friday.

The total number of nights spent in accommodation establishments in May 2020 was 116,100, or 92 per cent less than the same month of the previous year, the NSI said.

The number of arrivals decreased by 91.7 percent year-on-year to 48,900, the NSI said, adding that a “collapse both for foreign tourists and for Bulgarian citizens by 86.1 per cent was registered.”

Meanwhile, the total revenue from nights spent in May 2020 reached 5.4 million U.S. dollars, or 92.9 per cent less year-on-year, respectively. The total number of hotel rooms was 10.11 million, down 16.8 percent year-on-year.

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTOR CHANGING

The manufacture of SHANGHAI TOPCHEMS INDUSTRY CO., LTD (China) has registered the following product in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "AGRINAM MYANMAR CO., LTD", to new distributor name “Y AGRO SOLUTION CO., LTD”.

Sr. Trade Name A.I Registration No.
1. Top-Fostar 80 WP Fosetyl-aluminium 80% WP P2017-3412

Claims Day Notice

W.M. Greentec

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V Greentecvoy. no. (202002) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-7-2020 and cargo will be discharged to the premises of WILMAR worldwide which will lia at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

M/S WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICE(S) PTE LTD
Hsipaw Saopha, who gave favour to Myanmar artistes

By Hsipaw Ko Latt

Hsipaw, the town in Shan State is famous in preserving, revitalizing and honouring the Myanmar culture. Saophas from Hsipaw respectfully honoured and favoured literature, culture and theatrical drama and artistes. Among them, Sao Khe called Sir Sao Khe, the 86th Saopha of Hsipaw, was the most famous.

It was the time when King Thibaw had been taken away. So, it was time of the whole Myanmar under British colonial rule.

Sao Hkun Saing (aka) Sao Kya Khaing, the 85th Saopha of Hsipaw, passed away. Son Monglong governor Sao Khe succeeded to his father, as the 86th Saopha of Hsipaw on 29 April 1906. Afterwards, he was famous as Kambawzarattha Mahawuntha Maharaza Saopha Sir Sao Khe.

Saopha Sir Sao Khe made utmost efforts for sectoral development of Hsipaw region. As part of supporting the Buddhism, he organized the Buddha Sasana Pujaniya festival once 10 years on a grand scale. He invited 18 eminent Sayadaws from Mandalay, Pyay and Kani and hermit U Khanti from Mandalay Hill to attend the ceremony so as to join hands with the venerable Buddhist monks in propagating religious affairs.

After King Thibaw had been taken away, experts of Myanmar theatrical performing arts were gathered by the Saopha and looked after in Hsipaw. Especially, he gave favour to Myanmar theatrical drama performers similar to Shan ethnic theatrical drama troupes in order to continuously flourish the Myanmar theatrical drama performances.

He established a performer troupe quarter near Hsipaw Haw. Moreover, he ordered to issue allowance to those performers wishing to tour elsewhere for performing entertainments. Building the Thabin dha Sasana Pujaniya festival...
Ahsaykhan fort in Sagaing deserving of visit

At the half of each wall in the east and west, there are embrasures for firing, and the northern side was structured to look like with full of embrasures to fire along the north wall.

The fort carried four hundred openings for firing and ammunition depots.

There were about four hundred holes for firing on the walls and ammunition depots in it.

In addition to the forts, a naval force was systematically formed to fight against enemies.

Members of naval forces were accommodated in the respective quarters such as Pyo-neantHlaydawthar in Pylonect Ward, LinzinHlaydawthar in Linzin Ward, MoearHlaydawthar in Moear Ward and TaunglonHlay-dawthar in Taunglon Ward, addition to Udaw Ward for guardian forces at the fortification.

During the third Anglo-Burma War, the military forces were deployed at Thalaytay Fortress, Myamar naval forces at Iwra Elephant camp fortress and Taunglon naval forces in Servant Fortification to conduct combined attacks. A total of 2,726 Myanmar forces were deployed at Sagaing Servant Fortification. However, the forces surrendered to British naval forces on 26th November 1885 when the royal order came to do so. Formation of naval forces and military perspective can be studied from these fortifications which still stand as historical heritage of the country.

The local and foreign travellers can learn more about the forts. Travellers should come to the fort to study about the history and to learn about the Myanmar ancient kings’ advance view on war on those days.

Nwe Nadi (Myi Myi Ngai)

Translated by Than Tun Aung
Van Bronckhorst ‘can’t imagine’ Barcelona without Messi

Barcelona — Former Barcelona defender Giovanni van Bronckhorst told AFP that he hopes Lionel Messi will finish his career at the Camp Nou, as speculation swirls about the superstar’s future. Messi is reportedly frustrated with Barcelona’s failure to build a top-notch squad, and tired of purported leaks from the Spanish club which paint him in a bad light. Radio station Cadena Ser reported last week that the Argentine had broken off negotiations on extending his contract, which runs until 2021, and was thinking of leaving.

Dutchman van Bronckhorst, 45, who is now coaching Guangzhou R&F in China, told AFP: “I would love to see him be part of Barcelona for his whole career. “He’s one of the (few) players to stay his whole career at the same club. “I admire him as a person and a player and hopefully he will stay there. That’s what I’d love to see.” — AFP

Premier League admits VAR blunders

LONDON — The Premier League has admitted that VAR got penalty decisions wrong in all three matches on Thursday (Jul 9), as frustration mounts over the use of the technology in the English top-flight.

Manchester United were given a controversial helping hand by the video assistant referee in their 3-0 win at Aston Villa, while Tottenham suffered fresh frustration at the hands of the review system in their 0-0 draw at Bournemouth.

United midfielder Bruno Fernandes won a spot kick when he spun into Ezri Konsa before tumbling in the area despite little evidence of a foul by the Villa defender. Jose Mourinho’s Spurs were off-key for long periods but could feel hard done by after Josh King’s push on Harry Kane in the penalty area went unpunished despite a VAR review.

Southampton’s James Ward-Prowse hit the bar after a disputed penalty as the south coast side drew 1-1 with Everton.

The Premier League confirmed to the BBC’s Match of the Day programme that United and Southampton should not have been given penalties, but Tottenham should have been awarded one. Former Everton midfielder Tim Cahill, a Match of the Day pundit, said a former player should work alongside VAR officials.

“I think that would really help them, to understand the movements,” the former Australia international said. — AFP

PGA trio compete in a bubble after testing positive for COVID-19

LOS ANGELES — Collin Morikawa shot a seven-under 65 Thursday for a one-shot lead after testing positive for COVID-19. They have limited access to the clubhouse or training facilities at the Ohio-based tournament.

“We have our own little pocket down underneath the old pro shop. The three of us can go in there and have a meal and just chill together,” said Frittelli.

PGA is allowing a return to competition for players and caddies who continue to test positive for coronavirus if at least 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared and 72 hours have passed since fever has disappeared. — AFP

Shan United eyes youth defender Thet Paing Htwe

SHAN United, the Myanmar National League defending champions, have eyes on Zwekapin United’s youth defender Thet Paing Htwe, according to the MNL statement.

Shan United’s head coach U Aung Naing said that the team is currently testing the football skills of the player.

“We are now testing his football skill in our football club. If he fixes with our team we want to recruit him. As for now, all the football matches are freezing and we need to wait and see upcoming conditions of the tourneys,” he added.

Thet Paing Htwe was a key player of the Zwekapin United and showed his best skill in the beginning season of the 2020-21 Myanmar National League.

As Shan United is looking to add more talented players in the squad as the team targets to win the championship trophy, the team is arranging to recruit Myanmar veteran defender Win Min Htut in the near future, according to the football club.

— Lynn Thit (Tgi)