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634 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand return through Myawady border on 12 July

A TOTAL of 634 Myanmar migrant workers returned home through the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge No 2 in Myawady Border yesterday amidst COVID-19.

Up to yesterday, 634 returnees—396 men and 238 women—returned with their own arrangement, and the local authorities welcomed them at Maesok and transported them in buses to the quarantine centres in respective regions and states in accordance with the COVID-19 health guidelines.

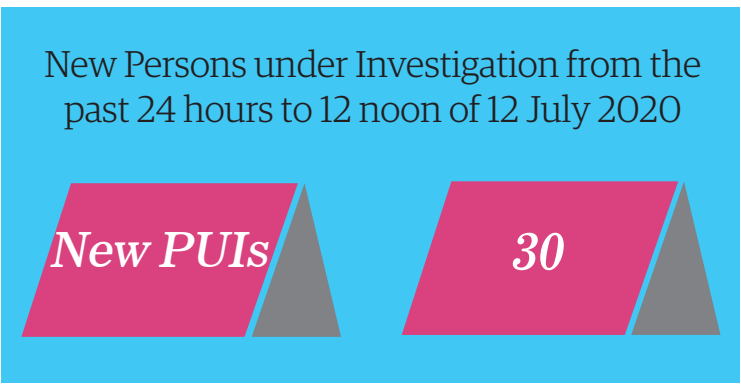
From 1 May to 12 July, 46,337 migrant workers have returned home through the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge-2.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) ■



Myanmar nationals returned from Thailand queue for immigration process at the Myawady border checkpoint on 12 July 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LINAUNG (IPRD)**

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 331 after one new case reported on 12 July

Updated at 8 pm, 12 July 2020



Four new cases of COVID-19 on 12 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
331	40	Male	North Dagon Myothit Township, Yangon Region	No	Yes, USA	South Okkalapa Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Mingaladon Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

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Bogyoke Aung San Park in Kandawgyi reopens after upgraded

IN commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of Martyrs’ Day, which will fall on 19 July, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein officiated the opening ceremony of the upgraded Bogyoke Aung San Park on Kandawgyi Circular Road in Yangon yesterday evening.

At the opening ceremony the Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein said that the historic bronze statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kandawgyi Nature Park was unveiled on 13 February in 1955, the 40th birthday of Bogyoke Aung San. He continued that the historic Bogyoke Aung San Statue and the Bogyoke Aung San Park was properly renovated and upgraded in order to be a high-quality beautiful park so that the people can comfortably pay tribute to the national leader Bogyoke Aung San.

Afterwards, the Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, government officials, Hluttaw Representatives, and officials of Yangon City Development Committee inspected the historic Bogyoke Aung San statue, and the upgraded Bogyoke



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials attending the opening ceremony of the upgraded Bogyoke Aung San Park on Kandawgyi Circular Road in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE**

Aung San Park.

The Bogyoke Aung San Park had been renovated and upgraded by the Yagon City Development Committee since March 2020.

The Bogyoke Aung San Park is located at northern part of the larger Kandawgyi Nature Park

area. The area of the Bogyoke Aung San Park is about 1.3 acres. The bronze statue was cast by an English sculptor Mr Copnell, in collaboration with Myanmar artist U San Pe in 1955. The height of the statue is 8 feet and 4 inches. The inscriptions on the pedestal of the Bogyoke Aung San Statue

was suggested by leading poets Saya Zaw Gyi and Saya Min Thu Wun, former Prime Minister U Nu, the third Secretary-General of the United Nations U Thant and Colonel Ba Shin. —Myint Maung Soe
(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Baby crocodile found dead in fish trap in Pantanaw

A four-foot and six-inch long crocodile was caught dead in the bamboo fish trap of a fisherman in Ahtet Kazin Taw Village, Yaybawgyi Village-tract in Pantanaw Township, Maubin District in Ayayawady Region on Saturday.

Upon seeing the baby crocodile dead in his fish trap, U Bae Lay, a fisherman, reported the incident to his village leader who then informed the Pantanaw Township Administrator about it.

The township administrator instructed relevant village leaders in the township to raise awareness about crocodiles in the villages that are located beside creeks and rivers. —Pyae



The dead body of Baby crocodile. **PHOTO: PYAE PHYO KYAW (IPRD)**

Phyo Kyaw (IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Trade deficit increases two-fold in 2019-2020FY

MYANMAR’S trade gap has significantly widened as of 3 July in the current financial year 2019-2020 to more than US\$1.8 billion from \$890.6 million registered in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 3 July in the current fiscal, Myanmar’s external trade increased to over \$28.37 billion from \$26.75 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at \$13.28 billion, imports were valued at \$15 billion. Compared to the previous fiscal, exports showed an increase of \$351.7 million, while imports climbed up by \$1.26 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, CMP

raw materials, and consumer goods.
The country’s export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country’s reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.
The government is trying to cut the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports.
Myanmar’s trade deficit was pegged at \$1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, \$1.3 billion in the previous mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$5.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization. —Mon Mon
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Unity in its real essence

Unity must have a common interest, a common sense of working together and a common objective, for the independence of the whole country and the interests of the whole populace. Unity must work for the people so that they can enjoy shared well-being and shared cause in working together. It is not enough just to say that we want to be united. Labour must be shared, and interests must be shared. Our objective must be the same. Only this kind of effort is worth calling "Unity".

(Excerpt from the speech addressed by Bogyoke Aung San at the AFPFL Conference on 23rd January 1946)



Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System to be introduced in Muse in 2021



The training for Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) is in progress at the Muse-Namkham Border Trade Chamber of Commerce in Muse, northern Shan State. PHOTO: SALAI VAN RO THANG (IPRD)

MYANMAR Customs Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Muse-Namkham Border Trade Chamber of Commerce, and Muse-Namkham Customs Brokers Association have jointly provided training for Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) at the hall of the Muse-Namkham Border Trade Chamber of Commerce in Muse, northern Shan State since 8 July.

By using the MACCS, the user can pay duties via any computer that has an Internet

connection. So, the user will not need to go to the Customs Department offices to pay duties. So, trade will be faster.

Muse-Namkham Customs Brokers Association Secretary U Sai Htun Ko Ko said, "Only the persons who receive this training can use the MACCS. After completing this training, the user will get an IE Code (Importer/Exporter Code). The trader will be able to track the relevant information such as which steps have been completed and where the delay occurred. The user will be able to track information via

his computer at home, so there will be many benefits." MACCS sub-department Director U Win Thant, Muse's '105th mile Trade Zone Customs Department Director Daw Aye Aye Win and other relevant officials have been conducting the training. Theories have been taught for 13 days and practice has been taught for 13 days. The MACCS was introduced in Yangon in 2015-2016, and in Myawady in 2018. The system will be introduced in Muse in 2021.—Salai Van Ro Thang (IPRD) (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

To hoist flags at half-mast, sound sirens for 73rd Martyrs' Day on 19 July

THE President Office has issued an instruction to government departments and institutions to convey the instruction to the lower levels of the government organizations.

The instruction stated that the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar be hoisted at half-mast throughout the country for 73rd Martyrs' Day, which falls on 19th July 2020 (Sunday), Myanma Radio and Television to transmit the sound of wailing siren at 10:37 am, the time Bogyoke Aung San and his colleagues were assassinated, and all vehicles on the roads to stop for a moment and honk their horns. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

49 Myanmar citizens returned from China arrive in Lashio in past two days

A total of 49 Myanmar nationals returned from China through Chinshwehaw border crossing arrived in Lashio in last two days.

Members of township committees for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Laukkai and Chinshwehaw townships handed over the 49 returnees – 23 on Saturday and 26 on Sunday – to Lashio.

Of them, 27 are males and 22 are females, and 2 are from Yamethin Township in Mandalay Region, 1 from Mingin, 4 from

Taze, 1 from Dabayin, 2 from Ayadaw and 1 from ChaungU in Sagaing, 3 from Nattalin in Bago, 11 from Pwintbyu and 1 from Minbu in Magway, and 23 from northern Shan State.

Since 30 April Chinshwehaw Township committees for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 handed over a total of 13, 124 returnees, 7, 271 males and 5,853 females, to the relevant township COVID-19 committees.—Zin Zin (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A woman returned from China has her temperature checked at a gate in Lashio, Shan State. PHOTO: ZIN ZIN (IPRD)

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)

The most important lesson we have learnt from COVID

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

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Facebook post on 10 June 2020)



National COVID-19 Committee honours volunteers, CSOs in Taninthayi Region

THE National-Level Volunteer Steering Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment on COVID-19 presented certificates of honour, badges, facemasks and hand sanitizers to the volunteers and civil society organizations (CSOs) that are fighting against COVID-19 pandemic in Taninthayi Region yesterday.

The certificates of honour were presented at Dawei Town's University of Computer Studies and Sasana Beikman, which are opened consistent with quarantine centres.

Secretary of the Volunteer Steering Committee and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye was accompanied by Taninthayi Region's Chief Minister U Myint Maung, Social Affairs Minister, Social Welfare Department's Deputy Director-General, and officials from Public Health and Medical Services Department and General Administration Department at the quarantine centres.

The Union Minister and



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presents face masks and badges to a volunteer representative in Taninthayi Region on 12 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

party handed over certificates of honour for 3,927 volunteers and 160 CSOs in Taninthayi Region to the Region Chief Minister and badges, facemasks and hand sanitizers to the volunteers and CSOs representatives.

The Chief Minister and

officials will also present the certificates of honour to the volunteers and CSOs in the region.

If there are volunteers and CSOs who were not included in the first batches of presenting certificates in regions and states, officials from related townships' volunteers support

groups will give certificates for them, according to the ministry.

The two ceremonies in Taninthayi Region yesterday were held in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The ministry provided a

total of K 2.97 million, K30,000 per one, from its fund for the quarantine centres' 44 pregnant women, 41 children under 5, and 14 elderly persons to an in-charge of the quarantine centre.

The Union Minister also coordinated the volunteers' difficulties and needs for foreign returnees at the quarantine centres.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister inspected the two-storey preschool building being constructed by the town's Social Welfare Department, Ye Township, Mon State and urged the officials to timely complete the projects and meet quality standards.

They also visited Sulun Gu Dhamma Aye Yeiktha Monastery in Asin Sanpya Village in Ye Township and made offertories to the monastery's Sayadaw Bhaddanda Tiloka.

At the monastery's quarantine centre, the Union Minister gave K30,000 each and nutritious snacks to children under 5. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Kachin State flood victims get relief assistance

OFFICIALS from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement along with governmental officials from Kachin State provided relief aids to flood victims in Kachin State yesterday.

The flood water from the Ayeyawady inundated low-lying areas in Myitkyina and Waingmaw of Kachin State including Rampu, Kyat Paung Chan, Le Kone and Myoet Thit Gyi quarters on 11 and 12 July, forcing 579 local people from 136 households to take temporary shelters.

Officials handed over 579 cloth masks and 136 bars of soap

to the flood victims in Kachin State followed by educating them with key messages and actions for COVID-19 prevention measures set by Ministry of Health and Sports.

The authorities are also planning to provide foodstuffs to the flood victims, according to the Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Ministry.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Officials inspecting the flooded areas in Kachin State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Foreigners hold over 38,000 shares in equity market over past 3 months

FOREIGN investors have purchased over 38,900 shares of three listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) over the past three months, according to the statistics released by the exchange.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

At present, shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd, and Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd (EFR) — are available for local investors for trading. Of them, FMI, MTSH and EFR accepted foreign shareholding, and FPB is for block trade only. As of 10 July, foreigners hold over 5,700 shares of FMI, over 27,800 shares of MTSH and 5,380 shares of EFR.

The SECM, under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, issued a notice on 12 July 2019, announcing that foreigners would be allowed to invest in shares listed on the YSX.

After opening bank and securities accounts, an investor is able to send buying/selling orders under the stock trading rules stip-



Two men stand in front of an electric board displaying market data at the Yangon Stock Exchange in Yangon on 6 January 2017. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

ulated in the Trading Business Regulations, the SECM notified.

The YSX held a seminar on 'Foreign Participation in Myanmar Stock Market' on 14 December 2019 at the Yangon Stock Exchange.

At the seminar, U Than Aung, founder and CEO of Maxmax Solution Corporate Advisory and Executive Learning Institute, presented investors' perspective on foreign participation in the Myanmar stock market. U Thet Htun Oo, executive senior manager of the Yangon Stock Ex-

change, highlighted how foreign participation would entail better capital inflows, long term and sustainable investment, encourage good corporate governance, and support market orientation.

Regarding the share trading, the foreign investors must strictly comply with the rules stipulated by the Central Bank of Myanmar.

The security companies will monitor the daily trades of foreigners, in keeping with the rules and regulations, so that they do not exceed the limit set for each listed company. In accordance

with Section 42 (a) of the Securities and Exchange Law and Section 4 of the Trading Participant Business Regulations, the YSX has granted trading qualifications to the following securities companies — Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre Co. Ltd. (MSEC), KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities Co. Ltd. (KBZSC), CB Securities Limited (CBSC), AYA Trust Securities Co. Ltd. (AYATSC), KTZ Ruby Hill Securities Co. Ltd. (KTZRH), and UAB Securities Limited (UABSC).

Investors have to send their

buy or sell orders to the YSX through the securities companies who have been issued a licence by the SECM as well as a trading qualification by the YSX, according to the stock exchange.

The YSX was launched three years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars.

To boost the trading, the YSX has doubled its stock trade matching time from two to four per day last year. The exchange launched 7 times matching per day on 26 March 2020.

In addition to this, it has held promotional events to attract new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.

A total of 2.4 million shares worth K13.39 billion were traded on the YSX in 2019, a significant increase compared to the previous year, YSX stated in the annual report.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Horse-cart riding businesses face financial hardship in Bagan

THOSE engaged in horse-cart riding businesses in Bagan cultural heritage zone are experiencing adversities with no passengers although the temples are reopened for inbound travellers. The local people relying on that business are struggling for livings, said U Myo Han, a horse-cart rider.

Bagan cultural heritage zone, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was eerily empty due to the tight restriction period of the coronavirus pandemic. After the three-month restriction period, the inbound tour was reopened from the first week of July. However, there is no passenger for horse-cart riders. They are bitterly facing financial hardship.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the historical temples in the ancient city were packed with a large number of pilgrims and tourists throughout the year, allowing the local people earning a healthy income.

There are about 300 horse-cart riders in Bagan-NyaungU area, yet they receive zero passengers even after the restric-

tion for the inbound tour has been relaxed. Additionally, feed for horses is expensive. It costs approximately K3,000 per horse a day, said U Tin Soe, a horse-cart rider. Earlier, they earned around K50,000-80,000 every day.

At present, the temples reopened between 9 am and 4 pm. About 450 pilgrims come to the zone per day on the weekdays

and more visitors were seen during the weekends.

Over 1,000 visitors are seen in the famous historical temples of Bagan city; Shwezigon Pagoda, Lawkananda Pagoda, Tuyintaung Pagoda, Tantkyitaung Pagoda, Htilominlo Temple, Ananda Pagoda, Bu Pagoda, Thatbyinnyu Temple, Dhammayangyi Temple, Sulamani Temple, Payatho-

nezu Temple, Mahabodhi Temple, Sulamani Temple, Manuha Temple, Gawdawpalin Temple, Myazedi Temple, Nanpaya Temple, and other famous pagodas during the weekends, according to the board. The pilgrims are registered on the data of the pagoda trustees' board. The visitors must wear facemasks and wash hands, in line with health

guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, said U Tin Hla Oo, secretary of Trustees Board.

Earlier, during the high season from November to April, Bagan is packed with local pilgrims and tourists. They used to visit Bagan to observe the temples and stupas and view the sunset. The horse-riding businesses, motorcycle and electric bike rental businesses, hotels, motels, and guesthouses were earning well in the high season, along with souvenir businesses. Those businesses created jobs for local residents.

The local tourism industry is battered by the viral disease and those engaged in local transportation rental business (three-wheel, boat, horse-riding, car, e-bike, cycle, and motorcycle), hotels and guesthouses, restaurants and souvenir shops are suffering from this. The businesses relying on tourism are nearly closed amid the pandemic negative impacts.—Ko Htein, Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Parked horse-carts are seen near a pagoda in Bagan, Mandalay Region. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

COVID-19 impacts in the Philippines



Jeepney drivers chanting slogans during a protest in Quezon city in the Metro Manila area on 1 June, 2020, calling on the government to allow them to return to work. **PHOTO: AFP**

IN the Southeast Asian region, the Philippines is one of the countries that has been affected the most by the COVID-19 pandemic. The country is estimated to lose between three percent and four percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) this year. In the first quarter of 2020, its GDP shrank by two-tenths of one percent for the first time in two decades according to Sec-

retary Sonny Dominguez of the Department of Finance (DOF). However, given the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases in the country, it is most likely that the succeeding economic quarters will not be promising, as the Philippine economy tries to bounce back. President Duterte in his address to the nation on 7 July said, “We have to be very circum-

spect in reopening the economy.” The president has a conservative stand on the reopening of the economy as he wants to avoid any possible overwhelming surge in the number of cases that might engulf the health care system of the country. Still, President Duterte’s utmost priority is to protect public health amid the pandemic while gradually opening the economy.

Socio-economic wise, the Philippines, like any other country that has been hit by the pandemic has suffered enormously. Due to almost a standstill of economic activities and taxpayer relief efforts because of the lockdowns, the government’s projected revenue collection is much lower compared to previous years. The DOF has projected that revenue collections will be 17 percent of GDP – lower than the collection in 2019. While disbursements for 2020 have been projected to be around 21.7 percent of GDP, 10 percent higher than the disbursements in 2019.

Such disbursements include COVID-19 initiatives that are continuously being implemented and delivered by various government agencies. Thus, the deficit for 2020 is projected to be around 8.1 percent of GDP or PHP1.56 trillion (US\$31.5 billion). This is a very challenging economic forecast for the Philippines and something that Filipinos, in general, have to be mindful of.

Domestic consumption, which is the primary engine of the Philippine economy has been sternly affected by the pandemic. Sectors such as tourism, services, trade, retail, real estate, and

manufacturing are experiencing difficulties. Around 7.3 million Filipinos have temporarily or permanently lost their jobs due to business closures because of the pandemic.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has estimated that around 10 million workers may lose their jobs this year because of the pandemic. There’s also a huge loss on remittances given that thousands of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) that have been temporarily or permanently retrenched in their host countries and are returning to the Philippines.

These are just some of the serious socio-economic impacts of the pandemic that are noticeable and if not mitigated and addressed could deepen further the inequities across socio-economic classes, affecting the most vulnerable sectors of society like women, children, the elderly, poor households, informal workers/labourers, ethnic minorities/indigenous groups and communities, and those in post-conflict regions like the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

SOURCE: THEASEAN-POST

A ‘PARTY CITY’

Berlin throws clubs 81,000 euro lifeline

BERLIN’S clubs and concert halls, closed for four months due to the coronavirus pandemic, have received an average of 81,000 euros each in aid from the city, according to figures published Sunday by the daily Tagesspiegel. The clubs, which are mainly techno and have helped to build Berlin’s reputation as a “party city”, find themselves in a difficult financial situation since their closure on March 14 due to the spread of the virus. The Berlin authorities, however, decided to grant emergency aid to 46 clubs, festivals and concert halls, according to figures from Georg

Kossler, a Green member of the state government, quoted by the Tagesspiegel. Among them are clubs known far beyond the German capital, such as the Tresor, the Kater Club and the gay club Schwuz. “I want people to be able to dance and party when the days of the coronavirus are over, so our clubs must survive,” said Kossler. Despite a wide relaxation of the restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic throughout Germany, no date has been given for the reopening of clubs and discotheques.

SOURCE: AFP

JAPAN’S ‘MACHINE HERITAGE’

Public given chance to see reassembly of Japan’s 1st postwar plane

THE public will be able to observe the reassembling of Japan’s first postwar mass-produced passenger plane from Saturday at a theme park, three months after parts of the aircraft were transported from a hangar

at Haneda airport. The process will be shown free of charge at Hirosawa City theme park in Ibaraki Prefecture until July 26. The very first YS-11 propeller plane ever made is expected to go on display in

complete form next spring. The fuselage and other parts of the plane were transported by trailer to the theme park in March from the Tokyo airport, where the aircraft had been stored by the National Museum of Nature and Science for about two decades. “It’s amazing that such a large fuselage was transported. I was thrilled to see the real thing,” said Chieko Saito, 56, a businesswoman living in the city of Tsuchiura in the prefecture. “It made me feel very nostalgic. I want to come back and see this again when it is completed,” said Hidetsugu Kikuchi, 72, from Mito, adding that he flew on YS-11 planes many times when they were in service.

SOURCE: KYODO



Photo taken July 11, 2020 shows a YS-11 propeller plane under reassembly at Hirosawa City theme park in Ibaraki Prefecture. **PHOTO: (KYODO)**

HOUSE ON WHEELS

Motorhomes come of age as Europe relaxes lockdowns



Coronavirus has reduced the desire for foreign holidays and increased the demand for motorhomes.
PHOTO: STR/AFP

AFTER months of working on the frontline in the battle against COVID-19, Spanish nurse Yone Alberich was absolutely ready for a holiday, but the question was how.

Going on holiday generally meant flying abroad – but with the virus still very much in the

air, she didn't want to take a plane. Nor did Alberich want to stay in a hotel or be around crowds of people. So she and her husband rented a motorhome.

"The idea was to keep away from people to avoid getting infected," said the 32-year-old, who has a toddler and lives in the Va-

lencian coastal town of Castellon.

"And with COVID, what could be better than travelling around with your house on your back?"

With social distancing now the new norm across Europe to avoid any fresh outbreaks, there has been a shift in thinking about holidays, with a recent survey

showing 90 percent of Spaniards would remain in Spain rather than travelling abroad.

And 83 percent planned to use their own car over public transport.

Fabrizio Muzzati, who runs specialist Spanish travel agency Aquestoy Caravaning, said many people who never thought about a motorhome holiday are now considering it.

"At a time when the whole world is very much looking for a sense of security, there are a lot of people who are going to give it a go because of the circumstances."

And as travel restrictions were eased, motorhome rentals resumed "intensively", the Spanish mobile home and campervan association ASEICAR said last month, suggesting it may be "key to reviving tourism this summer".

freedom, savings and being green. Now we can add health and safety and for us, that's a real boon."

Across Europe, there has been growing interest in the sector and today, there are five million users and two million vehicles in circulation, industry figures show.

In Germany, Europe's main market, more than 10,000 new motorhomes were registered in May, an increase of 32 percent year-on-year, while France added 3,529 new registrations -- up nearly two percent.

And in Spain, a much smaller market but where interest is growing rapidly, there were 1,208 new vehicles registered in June -- up 20 percent on last year, ASEICAR figures show.

There has also been a jump in demand in the rental market.

Yescapa, a peer-to-peer rental platform, registered more than 32,500 bookings across Europe in June, with requests for July and August 60 percent higher than in the same period last year.

Of that number, just under a third -- or 9,435 -- were in Spain.

SOURCE: AFP

PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SPIRITUAL INTERVENTION

Facebook bans content promoting 'conversion therapy'

FACEBOOK on Friday said it is banning content that promotes "conversion therapy," which is based on the unfounded notion that gays can change their sexual orientation through psychological or spiritual intervention

Facebook and its image-centric social network Instagram are updating policies to require removal of content that directly promotes conversion therapy when such posts are flagged by users, according to the California-based internet giant. The move is an extension of an existing ban on ads that promote the tactic, which medical experts consider ineffective and often harmful.

"We don't allow attacks against people based on sexual orientation or gender identity and are updating our policies to ban the promotion of conversion therapy services," a Facebook spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"We are always reviewing our policies and will continue to consult with experts and people with personal experiences to inform our approach." Conversion therapy "interventions" include electric shock, food deprivation and chemically-induced nausea, the American Medical Association has said in a report.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that sexuality and gender identities in people vary naturally, with the idea of "conversion" a misconception, the report said. Such "sexual orientation change efforts" not only don't work, they may cause significant distress, the AMA said, citing a study showing they caused depression, anxiety, alienation, and other ill effects.

Another study cited by the AMA found that nearly 30 percent of people who underwent conversion therapy reported suicide attempts.

SOURCE: AFP

REDUCING OVERCROWDING AT BEACHES

City launches app to stop crowding at beaches

THE Swedish city of Helsingborg on Thursday launched a "treasure hunt" smartphone app to prevent congestion at tourist beaches by touting lesser known spots.

Helsingborg, strategically situated at the narrowest part of the Oresund strait and opposite the Danish town of Elsinore, is a historic city with a fortress and stunning beaches.

Named "Badplatsjakten" (The hunt for swimming spots), the app encourages sun worshippers to discover different bathing spots around the city and avoid crowding in the best-known spots.

"We have 23 beaches in Helsingborg, but only three or four of them are popular and attract a lot of people," Kristina Magnusson, director of urban planning in Helsingborg, told AFP.

"In this time of coronavirus, we are afraid the it might spread and we want to get people out to the other 20 beaches," she added.

On each beach a four digit

code is hidden that users can enter into the app.

After gathering the codes from 10 beaches, participants win a beach bag, and after 20 they are entered into a lottery where they can win a gift card worth 250 Swedish kronor (\$27 or 24 euros).

"It's like a treasure hunt," Magnusson said. "Everyone can play. I hope families will of course, but also elderly people." The competition will run until August 31.

SOURCE: AFP



On each beach a four digit code is hidden that users can enter into the app. PHOTO: AFP

The culture of impunity must end

REMOVING our country from the list of nations that use and recruit child soldiers by the UN has brought encouragement to our country to accelerate our commitment to preventing and ending the grave violence against children in armed conflicts.

We formed a committee in 2019 to prevent six grave violations against children in conflicted areas in Myanmar and it reflects our commitment to ending and preventing six grave violations against children in conflicted areas of Myanmar, which has witnessed armed conflicts for over 70 years, and still, the guns are not silenced.

Besides, our country ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC).

The government will take actions following violations against children during armed conflicts, as determined by the Independent Commission of Enquiry-ICOE formed by the Office of the President.

Regional military commands and security forces are obliged, in accordance with set rules and directives, to monitor armed conflicts and enforce the rules to ensure there are no incidents involving children during armed conflicts.

The committee is tasked with taking immediate measures to respond to information on actions which deviate from civilian and military law and order; and to take action following violations against children during armed conflicts.

Also, the government will take actions following violations against children during armed conflicts, as determined by the Independent Commission of Enquiry-ICOE formed by the Office of the President.

There are some reports on violations against children in armed conflict areas. Hence, all warring parties in Myanmar have a duty to protect children from six violations under international law — killing and maiming of children, recruitment or use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, abduction, attacks against schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access to children.

As the child rights law has been enacted, and our children, the future of our country, need to enjoy their rights, including security, development, and protections guaranteed by the Child Rights Law. It is not just our moral obligation to make sure children are safe and secure, but a legal one, too.

Steps are being taken by the Union Government for providing medical care and rehabilitation to the victims with psychological support and for better protecting our children. Meanwhile, the committee should effectively cooperate with the UN agencies including UNICEF, UNDP and CTFMR to accelerate its efforts.

Please remember that the value of human society depends upon how it protects its children. The culture of impunity must end in our country.

National Export Strategy: an initial response to the COVID-19 Economic Downturn

NES is an active platform for Government and private stakeholders to work together for the economic development through increased trade.

THE world economy is in paralysis. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has hampered the global economy, and a global recession has started. Social distancing practices are disturbing financial markets, disorganizing industries and global value chains, and forcing many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to close temporarily, and some even permanently. The virus has triggered a global supply and demand shock that is now affecting all areas of our current globalization. The adverse impact of COVID-19 is contributing the downturn of the economic activities, with the World Trade Organization estimating that world trade will shrink by up to 32% in 2020.

Affecting not only the human body, but also the economy, the Covid-19 crisis is rapidly penetrating Myanmar's economic activities. The economic "contamination" to Myanmar spreads through a collapse of tourism entries; a large decline in manufacturing, particularly evident in garment sector; an overall reduction in imports and exports; and decrease in active foreign direct investment (FDI) projects. This situation is resulting in short- and long-term economic consequences for our country.

Myanmar's export industries are facing a drastic drop



Trucks from Myanmar carrying agro-products, fishery products and animal products wait Chinese buyers at Kyin San Kyawt Gate near Muse. **PHOTO: VAN YO HTAN (MUSE-IPRD)/FILE PHOTO**

in demand. Most buyers in destination markets are cancelling or delaying orders; flights and transportation restrictions are triggering increase in the costs of trading. The border closures of the checkpoints including China-Myanmar borders, have resulted in damages and losses of goods. The limited import volumes are restricting the manufacture and processing of goods for our domestic market and for exports. This collapse in manufacturing capacities is leading to the surge in unemployment for too many of our citizens.

The Covid-19 crisis is challenging the world with new questions; the timely answer may turn into opportunity, the negligence may cause complications. While governments and private sector are seeking options to "revitalize" the production, consumption and global trade, citizens are wondering about tomorrow's standards of living and well-being. Like the disease that may eventually trigger stronger immunity, the economic crisis may bring innovation and diversification, creating demand for new products and access to new markets.

The National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-2025 is evolving as a joint Government of Myanmar and private sector response to the pandemic, to build sustainable export development and, ultimately, create better jobs and opportunities for Myanmar citizens. The NES will allow establishing a new cycle of export growth for Myanmar, exploiting its vast untapped potential for trade and investment. The NES priorities, which are currently being designed in close coordination with the private sector, will support Myanmar's COVID-19

recovery plans.

The NES is looking beyond creating new market opportunities for our SMEs and established exporters; it also aims to strengthen our industry performance and institutional support systems for improved resilience to withstand future crises. An effective export development, led by enabled institutions, such as Myantrade - the Export Promotion Agency of Myanmar, can rapidly contribute to the rebound of priority industries. With active export development, Myanmar will reach new customers and increase needed foreign exchange earnings.

Myanmar can also capitalize the investment opportunities identified in the NES strategies. Active promotion of Myanmar will contribute to positioning our country as an important investment destination in Asia. The pandemic is fast-tracking the development of regional value chains. Investment in Myanmar's export-oriented value chains will offer companies a good strategic location to reach more than 2 billion customers in regional markets. This is Myanmar's opportunity to position itself as a viable manufacturing hub to create new job opportunities for our citizens.

NES is an active platform for Government and private stakeholders to work together for the

economic development through increased trade. To ensure continuous dialogues with industry representatives, the Ministry of Commerce, in close collaboration with UMFCCI, is leading the formation of new public-private Export Development Board. The Board is aimed to serve as the focal point body to promote export growth in cooperation with all related Ministries and stakeholder organizations.

The value of NES is in implementation. The Strategy realization will allow to contribute to people's well-being with better and more diversified job opportunities, descent working conditions, improved skills and technologies. The document will articulate an implementation mechanism, including responsible institutions, processes and tools to kick-start, track and monitor the progress. It will set short- and medium-term action priorities to rebound Myanmar's economic growth and increase the country's prominence in the regional and international trade arena.

*This article is contributed by
National Export
Strategy (NES) of
Myanmar, the Ministry
of Commerce*



COVID-19: pandemic puzzle

TRACING THE ORIGINS OF COVID-19

Novel coronavirus could have existed long before outbreak: WHO regional official

WHO has established a large team that will work together with Chinese scientists to analyze the origin of the virus

THE novel coronavirus could have existed in a dormant state long before its outbreak, Melita Vujanovic, the representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) to Russia, has said.

"WHO has established a large team that will work together with Chinese scientists to analyze the origin of the virus," Vujanovic said in a recent interview with RIA Novosti news agency.

"This virus lived in animals

and at some point passed to humans. It's hard to say when and where this happened. It's being investigated. Viruses can be found in waste water. But nothing can be said specifically," she said.

The novel coronavirus has existed worldwide and broke out whenever and wherever favorable conditions occurred rather than starting in China, Tom Jefferson, senior associate tutor at the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine

at Oxford and a visiting professor at Newcastle University, said earlier this month. Spanish virologists have discovered traces of the novel coronavirus in a sample of Barcelona waste water collected in March 2019, nine months prior to the virus outbreak in China.

According to the Italian National Institute of Health, samples of sewage water from Milan and Turin showed traces of the novel coronavirus on Dec. 18, long before

the country's first confirmed cases. Vujanovic said that scientists are studying these samples and if there is any "revolutionary result," the WHO will immediately announce it.

SOURCE: Xinhua

Researchers work in a lab that is developing testing for the COVID-19 coronavirus at the Hackensack Meridian Health Center on 28 February, 2020 in Nutley, New Jersey. **PHOTO: AFP**

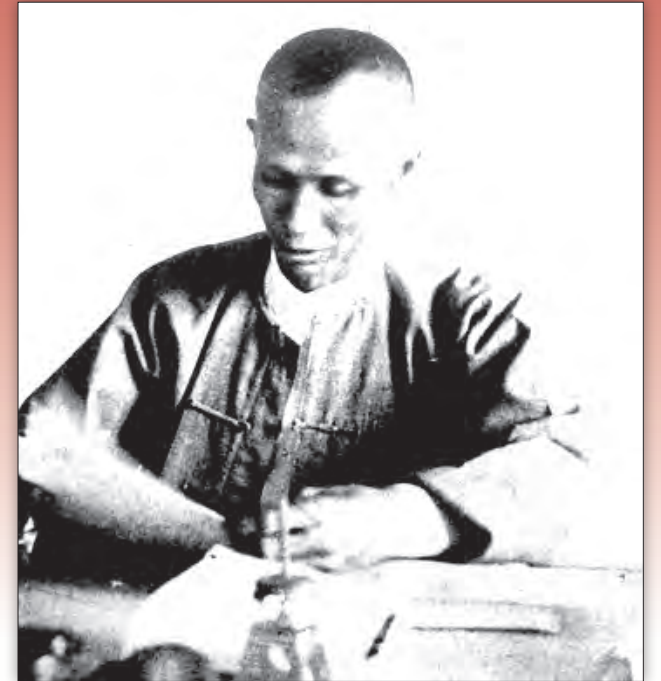


In Commemoration of 73rd Martyrs' Day

19th July, 1947-19th July, 2020

U Ba Win

(11 June 1901 - 19 July 1947)



U BA WIN was the Minister of Supply and Trade in General Aung San's Cabinet. His father was U Phar, a lawyer, and his mother was Daw Suu, and they had 9 children. U Ba Win was their eldest son.

He was born on 11 June 1901. He graduated with Bachelor of Science (Math) in 1929 and then he became a teacher at Yenangyaung National High School. He married Daw Khin Saw, a daughter of U Aunt and Daw Shwe May, in 1935.

He was the chairman of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL, Yenangyaung). While serving as the Minister, he made contribution to preparing the draft of the Constitution.

He was assassinated on 19 July 1947 at 10:37 am.

He was survived by his wife and six children (Ma Tin Hla Win, Maung Saw Win, Maung Aye Win, Ma Khin Mya Win, Maung Sein Win (Dr Sein Win) and Maung Htwe Win).



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Philippine lawmakers reject major TV network's franchise application



A photojournalist for ABS-CBN takes part in a protest outside congress on July 6, 2020 in Quezon city, Metro Manila, Philippines. **PHOTO: KYODO**

MANILA — Philippine lawmakers on Friday voted to deny ABS-CBN Corp.'s application for renewal of its broadcast franchise, following the government's order for the country's largest media network to shut down operations.

The move drew swift condemnation from the opposition and journalists who view it as part of a worsening crackdown on press freedom under President Rodrigo Duterte.

Seventy members of the House of Representatives' Committee on Legislative Franchises voted to deny renewal of the franchise for another 25 years, while 11 voted for renewal, two voted to inhibit and one abstained.

The majority voted to deny

the application of ABS-CBN for a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and broadcasting stations in the Philippines.

Duterte, who has publicly expressed his unhappiness with the network's coverage of his governance and its 2016 presidential election coverage in particular, had earlier indicated that he did not favor the network's franchise being renewed.

His supporters in Congress have cited the company's alleged "biased reporting."

On May 5, the National Telecommunications Commission ordered ABS-CBN to stop its broadcast operations under the Radio Control Law after its 25-year congressional franchise expired.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

70 confirmed dead due to heavy rain, flooding in southwestern Japan

TOKYO — The record-breaking torrential rain which battered Japan's southwestern region of Kyushu since last weekend has left 70 people dead as of Sunday, as rescuers continued operations to search for the missing people.

Among the 70 fatalities, 63 were from the hard-hit Kumamoto Prefecture. Meanwhile, one is without vital signs and 13 others remain missing in the Kyushu region.

According to the land ministry, as of Sunday, 102 rivers in 12 prefectures had overflowed their banks and there had been 302 cases of damage due to landslides in 27 prefectures.

The Japan Meteorological Agency warned of further mudslides and overflowing rivers as heavy rainfall is again expected to intensify in western Japan from Monday.—Xinhua ■

COVID-19 Biggest Test Of Financial System's Resilience: RBI

MUMBAI — The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken several measures to protect the country's financial system and support the economy after COVID-19 crisis, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Saturday.

"Both conventional and unconventional liquidity measures were taken to boost market confidence and ease liquidity stress. As a result, the Indian economy has started showing signs of going back to normalcy in response to the staggered easing of restrictions," he said while addressing the 7th SBI Banking and Economics Conclave here through video-conferencing.

Das said that COVID-19 is the worst health and economic crisis in the last 100 years with unprecedented negative consequences for output, jobs and well being. It dented the existing world order, global value chains, labour and capital movements across the globe.

"COVID-19 pandemic perhaps represents so far the biggest test of robustness and resilience of our economic and financial system," he said.

Even before the onset of the virus, the central bank had taken several measures to reverse the slowdown in the economy. "The lagged impact of these measures was about to propel a cyclical turnaround in economic activity when COVID-19 brought with it calamities and miseries, endangering of lives and livelihood of people."—ANI ■

Hong Kong coronavirus epidemic "at worst time" as new cases rising

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's coronavirus epidemic is at its worst phase as infections in recent days have spread across the community, a health official said Saturday, with 29 new cases being reported.

"The epidemic is at its worst, as compared with (the previous surge of cases in) March," Chuang Shuk-kwan, head of the Communicable Disease Branch of the Center for Health Protection, told a press briefing.

"The epidemic had yet to spread into the community in March, now there are more people infected, like taxi drivers, public estates residents, even schools and an elderly home," Chuang said.

"We are in the midst of a community outbreak, which could get worse if we do not tighten up infection control measures," she said.

While nine of 17 locally transmitted cases are connected to previously reported cases that involve two local restaurants and a home for the elderly, the other eight cases have no known source of infection.

Chuang also said 33 more preliminary positive cases are pending confirmation, including an immigration department officer who worked at the Shenzhen Bay checkpoint near the mainland Chinese border.—Kyodo ■



Public entrance at Happy Valley Racecourse on July 8, 2020 in Hong Kong. Racegoers have to abide by public health measures including temperature screening before entry, filling in health declaration forms and wearing surgical masks during the race meetings. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Bollywood superstar Aishwarya Rai tests positive for coronavirus: official

MUMBAI — Bollywood superstar Aishwarya Rai has tested positive for the coronavirus, a Mumbai city authority official told AFP Sunday, just a day after her actor father-in-law Amitabh Bachchan said he was in hospital with the infectious disease.

Her eight-year-old daughter, Aaradhya, was also COVID-19 positive, the Brihanmumbai Mu-

nicipal Corporation official, who asked to remain anonymous, said. Bachchan's actor son Abhishek, Rai's husband, said he too was positive but that both their cases were mild.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan took the Miss World crown in 1994 and made her acting debut in the late 1990s.

She went on to become one

of the most famous Bollywood faces abroad as well as in India and has been a regular on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival. She married Abhishek Bachchan in 2007.

The elder Bachchan, 77 -- idolised in India and affectionately known as "Big B" -- has a more than four-decade-long career in the film industry.—AFP ■

Trump finally dons mask as US sets new virus case record

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump finally yielded to pressure and wore a face mask in public for the first time on Saturday as the US posted another daily record for coronavirus cases, while Disney World reopened in a state hit hard by the pandemic.

White House experts leading the national fight against the contagion have recommended wearing face coverings in public to prevent transmission of the illness.

But Trump had repeatedly avoided wearing a mask, even after staffers at the White House

tested positive for the virus and as more aides have taken to wearing them.

Hours after the World Health Organization urged countries to step up control measures to rein in the disease, Trump donned a dark mask bearing the presidential seal as he visited wounded military veterans at the Walter Reed military hospital in a suburb outside Washington.

“I’ve never been against masks but I do believe they have a time and a place,” he told reporters as he left the White House.—AFP ■



US President Donald Trump wears a mask as he visits Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland on July 11, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Power blackouts continue in S. Africa amid escalating COVID-19 pandemic

CAPE TOWN — Massive rolling power blackouts continued in South Africa on Sunday for three days running, dealing another heavy blow to the economy already battered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The severely constrained generation system will most likely persist through the coming week, said state-run electricity utility Eskom, which provides about 95 percent of the electricity consumed in the country.

Rolling blackouts, or load shedding, were a necessary step to replenish the emergency generation reserves to better prepare for the coming week, said Eskom.

Due to the much colder weather, demand for electricity has also risen significantly, requesting the public to help reduce electricity usage in order to lessen the impact of load shedding, said Eskom.

—Xinhua ■

Two officers, suspect killed in Texas shooting

HOUSTON — Two police officers were killed Saturday in the city of McAllen in southern Texas while responding to a domestic disturbance call and the suspect shot himself dead, local authorities said.

The officers were shot by the suspect when approaching the door of a home, McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez told a press conference.

“The officers never had a chance to suspect deadly assault on them, much less death,” said Rodriguez.

The suspect shot himself and died as other law enforcement officers arrived on the scene, according to the police chief.

The suspect, identified as Aldon Caramillo, 23, had a history of arrests and charges, including driving under the influence, fleeing from police and assault.—Xinhua ■

Bulgarian president calls on ‘mafia-type’ government to resign

SOFIA — Bulgarian President Rumen Radev called on Saturday for a resignation of the “mafia-type” conservative government, which he blamed for ordering police raids on his offices this week.

The president’s legal affairs and anti-corruption secretary and his security and defence advisor were detained for questioning on Thursday and their offices searched as part of two separate probes into influence-peddling

and disclosure of state secrets.

The searches sparked public anger and brought thousands of demonstrators onto the streets of Sofia to condemn the raids as an attack by the government and the chief prosecutor against the

Socialists-backed Radev, rather than on the real oligarchs.

The president is an outspoken critic of the cabinet of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, accusing it of “links with oligarchs”.

“Turning the government into a mafia-type structure has pushed freedom-loving Bulgarians of all ages, regardless of their political affiliations, to raise demands for respect of the law,” Radev said in a televised address to the nation.

“There is only one way out of the current situation — resignation of the government and the prosecutor general,” he added.

An “anti-mafia consensus” is forming in the country, out of anger built up by years of “corruption, incitement of fear, prosecution racketeering and inaction against plunder, and trampling upon the presumption of innocence,” Radev said.

“Europe has no right to look away from Bulgaria. The European Union needs a democratic Bulgaria,” he added.—AFP ■



Protesters out on the streets of Sofia Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Polarised Poles vote in tight presidential race

WARSAW — Poles voted on Sunday in a knife-edge presidential run-off between a populist incumbent closely allied with US President Donald Trump and a europhile liberal keen to mend fences with the EU.

The stakes are high for Poland’s right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party government, which has relied on incumbent President Andrzej Duda to endorse judicial reforms that have set Warsaw on a collision course with the EU over democratic standards just three decades

after communism’s demise.

Duda is struggling in a tight race with Warsaw mayor Rafal Trzaskowski of the opposition Civic Platform (PO) as final surveys showed the two running neck and neck.

Wojciech, a 59-year-old builder who declined to give his surname, said he chose Duda because his close ties to Trump meant Poland “can count on the US for defence”.

He also said he “agrees completely” with Duda’s vow to ban adoption for same-sex couples.

Warsaw pensioners who identified themselves only as Helena and Maria, both in their eighties, said they chose the pro-European Trzaskowski in the hope he could “get things back on the right track with the EU”.

“We remember too well how it was before (under communism), so for our grandchildren we want Poland to be stable in Europe,” Helena told AFP.

Turnout hit a record high 44.73 percent by noon, the state elections commission said, suggesting that the coronavirus

pandemic would not keep voters away from the ballot box.

Long queues formed at polling stations as social distancing measures were used to stem infections.

Voters were also required to wear masks, use hand sanitiser and their own pens, plus to give priority to pensioners, pregnant women and voters with children.

The election had been due in May — at a time when Duda was riding high in the opinion polls — but was delayed because of the pandemic.—AFP ■

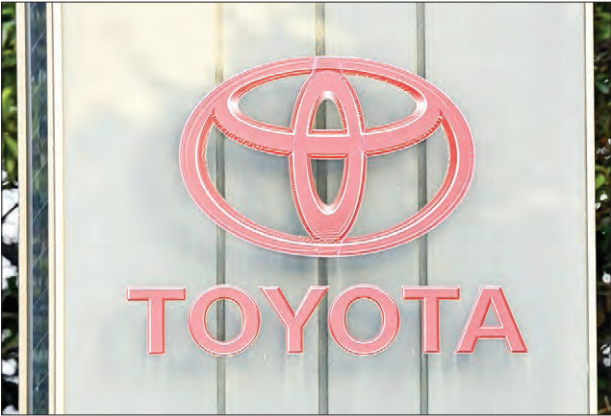


Photo taken April 3, 2020, shows the logo of Toyota Motor Corp. at an entrance to its Tsusumi plant in Toyota, Aichi Prefecture, central Japan. PHOTO: KYODO

Toyota to fully resume global output for 1st time since February

NAGOYA — Toyota Motor Corp. will resume automobile production in all of its manufacturing bases around the world for the first time since February, a source with knowledge of the matter said Sunday. Toyota’s factory in Venezuela, the last where

output had remained suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, is expected to restart operations on Monday, according to the source. Besides Venezuela, where the Japanese automaker produced only 416 vehicles in 2019, output in

more than 20 other countries in which it has plants has already resumed in stages, while not yet returning to pre-coronavirus levels. Toyota, which produced about 5.63 million vehicles overseas last year, is forecasting that global

auto demand will be on a recovery trend and plans to gradually boost output. In April, Toyota’s overseas output tumbled 66.2 per cent from a year earlier, but the company saw a 53.0 per cent decline in the following month. —Kyodo ■

Wall Street’s Big Tech enthusiasm getting stronger

NEW YORK — Tech stocks were going strong even before COVID-19, but behavioral shifts during the pandemic have lifted the sector further into the stratosphere, leaving the broader stock market far behind. The tech-dominated Nasdaq Composite Index has closed at records in six of the last seven sessions, reflecting investors’ confidence that tech companies benefit from the so-called “stay-at-home” trade even as the market has pummeled

airlines, hotels and brick-and-mortar retailers. “There’s clear winners and losers right now in the market,” said Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, who thinks the biggest tech giants could still gain another 30 percent this year. “From a winner perspective, the clear spotlight [is on] tech names.” Technology companies are a “pocket of certainty” in a time of economic weakness, said Quincy Krosby, chief

market strategist at Prudential Financial. The latest surge means that just five companies, the so-called “FAANG” group -- Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google -- now account for more than 20 per cent of the value of the S&P 500. With spiking coronavirus cases in the US expected to bolster the dynamics behind the recent surge, the industry’s biggest worry is probably politics, analysts said. —AFP ■



Big tech CEOs (L-R) Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, Sundar Pichai of Google, Tim Cook of Apple and Jeff Bezos of Amazon are scheduled to testify in Congress later this month. PHOTO: AFP

Start-up city: Vietnam’s young invest ideas in Ho Chi Minh



Environmental innovation is a priority for many Vietnamese start-ups. PHOTO: AFP

HANOI — A tech-savvy population, a fast-growing economy, and the perks of being first in an emerging market -- Vietnamese entrepreneur Le Thanh saw the potential in booming Ho Chi Minh City for his start-up transforming coffee grounds into masks. The 35-year-old chemistry graduate worked for two multinationals before stepping out on his own three years ago to launch ShoeX -- a sustainable footwear company which nimbly pivoted to masks as

the coronavirus pandemic struck. When he entered the workforce, Thanh was drawn to the higher salaries and no-nonsense working culture at foreign companies he assumed were a cut above local firms, tangled up in rules imposed by his country’s staid Communist rulers. “But now I see there are more openings in a place where things are a bit murky,” Thanh told AFP from his buzzing Ho Chi Minh City co-working

space. He is not alone in believing Vietnam -- and especially its southern commercial centre -- is poised to become an innovation hub thanks to its young, educated and digitally active population. Vietnamese e-commerce and e-payment companies have been “flooded” with private equity in the past couple of years, said Eddie Thai, a Ho Chi Minh City-based partner at venture capital firm 500 Startups. Their rise has been stellar. Vietnam-based start-ups made up 18 per cent -- or \$741 million -- of the capital invested in Southeast Asia in 2019, up from four percent in 2018, according to a report by Cento Ventures. Although Indonesia remains the leader, the amount pumped into Vietnam start-ups pushed ahead of Singapore for the first time in 2019, the venture capital firm said. —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (721W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (721W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S GOLD STAR LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (190N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (190N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0135 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0135 N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

U.K. aims to strike trade deal with Japan by end of July

LONDON — The British government is aiming to reach a trade deal with Japan “around the end of this month,” according to London’s chief negotiator with Tokyo.

“We are working very quickly and would both like to reach an agreement around the end of this month and sign a trade agreement formally in September,” Graham Zebedee said in an online business seminar earlier this month.

The two governments kicked off negotiations on June 9 and are keen to have a deal come into

force by the end of this year when the free trade agreement between the European Union and Japan no longer applies to the United Kingdom, which left the regional bloc on Jan. 31.

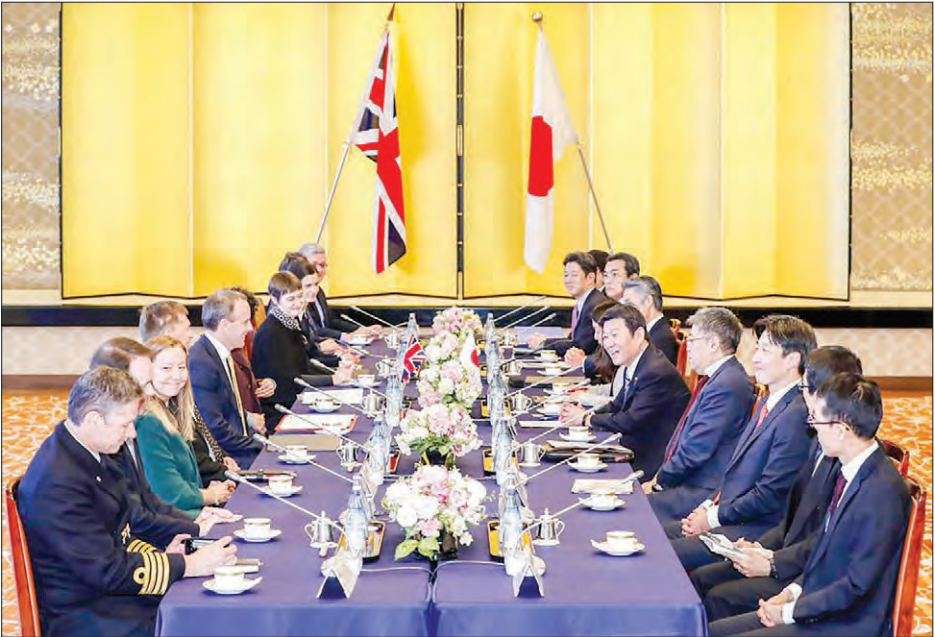
The countries are working to clinch an agreement on the basis of the Japan-EU FTA, with Tokyo looking to scrap auto tariffs as soon as possible while London wants benefits for its financial services and textile industries.

Trade between the two countries totaled about \$38 billion in 2019, with Japan being the United Kingdom’s 11th largest export

market and the United Kingdom the 12th biggest market for Japan.

In the July 2 webinar organized by the global consultancy group EY, Zebedee said, “We have looked at every aspect of the EPA (the Japan-EU deal) and decided whether we can improve on it.”

The negotiator with the Department for International Trade was referring to an economic partnership agreement, an arrangement that eliminates barriers to the free movement of goods, services and investment between countries.—Kyodo ■



Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi (5th from R) and his British counterpart Dominic Raab (5th from L) hold talks in Tokyo on Feb. 8, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

China economy rebounds in Q2 after virus hit: AFP poll

BEIJING — China returned to growth in the second quarter after the coronavirus pandemic handed the world’s second largest economy its first contraction in decades, according to an AFP poll of analysts.

The survey of analysts from 11 institutions pegged China’s growth at 1.3 percent – a far cry from the 6.1 percent expansion

posted last year but in better shape than other countries still grappling with the contagion.

The coronavirus, which first emerged in China’s industrial central province of Hubei late last year, has shut businesses worldwide and destroyed hundreds of millions of jobs.

But analysts forecast China will be the only ma-

jor economy to experience positive growth this year – partly because it was first to be hit by COVID-19 and therefore first to recover.

China is expected to post 1.7 percent growth for the full year, according to the economists surveyed by AFP, compared with IMF forecasts of a global contraction.

Growth data for the April to June period will be published on Thursday.

The government essentially shut down the country for months to bring the virus under control, halting factory work, keeping workers at home and limiting travel. But activity has resumed as China largely brought the epidemic under control and ended the lockdown of Hubei and its capital Wuhan in April.—AFP ■



Analysts forecast China will be the only major economy to experience positive growth this year. PHOTO: AFP



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MANDALAY REGION GOVERNMENT
MANDALAY CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MANDALAY URBAN SERVICES
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Invitation for Bids

Request for Expression of Interest No: MYWS 52.0
Contract No: MYWS 52.0
Contract Title: Design Supervision and Construction Supervision as FIDIC Engineer of the New Water Treatment Plant and Associated Pipe Line Works (MUSIP)

- Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), as part of Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project, intends to recruit the Design and Construction Supervision Consultant for the New Water Treatment Plant and Associated Pipe Line Works Contract under financing from Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD).
- Mandalay City Development Committee now invites applicants to submit Expressions of Interest documents for Design Supervision and Construction Supervision as FIDIC Engineer of the New Water Treatment Plant and Associated Pipe Line Works to be performed in Mandalay.
- Bidding will be conducted through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures as specified in the AFD Procurement Guidelines. The bidding documents shall be addressed only to the short-listed eligible firms following the evaluation result of the Expressions of Interest.
- Interested firms may obtain the Request for Expressions of Interest documents from Project Manager, at the address given in Item (6) below, during office hours 9:30 to 16:30 hr, starting from 13th July 2020, they also may obtain the said documents from AFD tender publication website <https://tenders-afd.dgmarket.com>.
- Application for Expressions of Interest must be delivered to the address below on or before local time 15:00hr, 10th August 2020. Electronic applications of Expressions of Interest are acceptable. Late application may be rejected.
- The address referred to above paragraph 4 and 5 is:

Attention: **Project Manager**
MUSIP Project Management Office,
1st floor, 3 storey building
Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC)
26th Street, Between 71st and 72nd Streets
Chan Aye Tharzan Township
Mandalay

Country: **Republic of The Union of Myanmar**
Telephone: **+95-2-4061631**
Email address: **pmomusip.ext3@gmail.com**

**MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE
EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER**

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(a) DATE & TIMES

- (23-7-2020) (09:00) A.M
- (EX-SITE) HARDWOOD LOG ONLY
- (24-7-2020) (09:00) A.M
- YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/ HARD WOOD (LOG AND CONVERSION)
- (27-7-2020) (12:00) Noon
- YANGON TEAK LOG ONLY

(b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME

- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1497) TONS
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (168) TONS
- (EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT)
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (340) TONS
- (WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT)
- PYINKADO, IN, KANYIN, HTAUKYANT, SAGAWA, THINWIN, INGYIN, THITYAR, YEMANEABOUT (12315) TONS
- HARD WOOD LOGS (INCLUDING 2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR)
- TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

(c) PLACE

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMAR TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.mte.com.mm).

Contact; Office Ph: 01-528771, 01-377296. E-mail, marketing1ppy@gmail.com

OPEN TENDER COMMITTEE
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE

Natma Taung ASEAN Heritage Park

By Maung Yin Kyay

NATMA Taung known locally as Khaw Nu M' Cong and in the past as Mt. Victoria is situated in southern Chin State Mindat, Matupi and Kanpetlet townships covering an area of 275.35 sq. miles (176,202 acres) at an altitude of more than 10,200 ft. above sea level. The area covered with mountain mists contains Buran (Rhododendron arboretum) tree that produces the state flower of Chin State, Cherry and pine trees.

Natma Taung had more than 800 tree species and is an area where degradation of natural environment was kept at a minimum level. Surveys found 23 amphibians, 65 reptiles and 77 butterfly species as well as rare cats, bear, mountain goats, pangolins, monkeys and the re-

gion's own White-browed Nuthatch as well as 289 different species of birds.

Natma Taung had become a national park in 2010 and numbers of visitors reached the peak number during the New Year transiting from 2018 to 2019.

This Christmas and the New Year was the time when most visitors came to our Kanpetlet town. Visitors came under the arrangement of travel companies as well as on their own. People from nearby areas of Magway, Minbu and Pakokku also came by motorcycles. About 1,500 visitors came every day. The majority stay in Kanpetlet at an elevation of more than 4,500 ft. and then climb the Natma Taung. So the six hotels in Kanpetlet hotel zone as well as motels and inns were always

full of visitors. Some stay in their friends or relatives houses too said a Kanpetlet local Chin ethnic national Ko Ki Nine.

Even before 4 a.m. in the chilling misty morning, Kanpetlet came to life with the sounds of cars and motorcycles warming up to start the journey up Natma Taung. Cars were permitted up to the 10 mile station at an altitude of 9,000 ft. above sea level and from there on the area became a restricted national park area where no cars except for specially permitted one were allowed. Visitors can proceed to the top of the mountain by foot or by motorcycles.

Most of the visitors hike up the mountain while enjoying the natural beauty and the sounds of the birds. Some women and children who prefer an easier way up and down took a

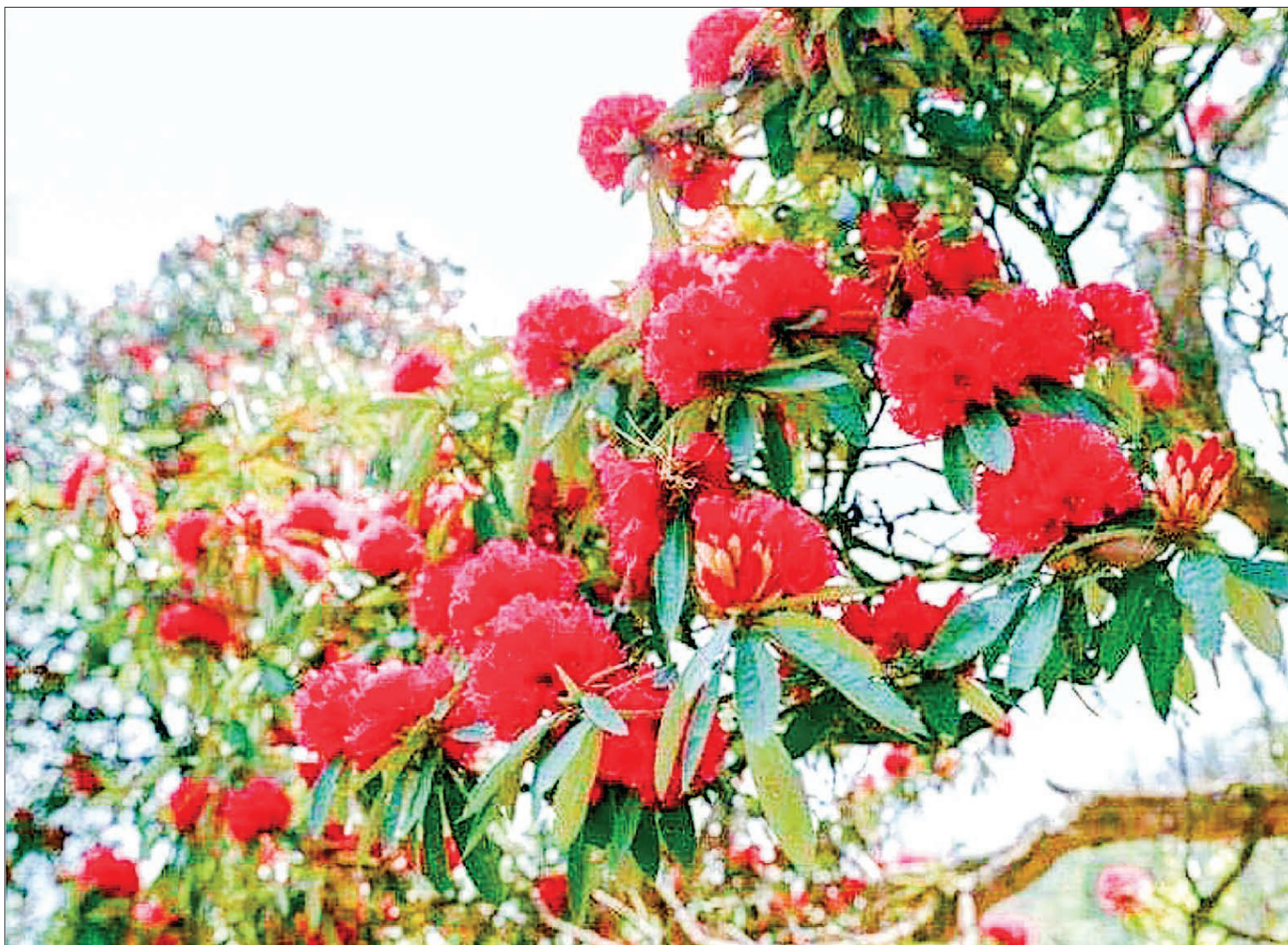
motorcycle ride offered by the locals at Ks 5,000 for ascent and Ks 5,000 for descent. This bike ride had its fair share of accidents resulting in scratches, cuts and bruises but still those who want to take the motorcycle ride were always more than the available motorcycles so there was a considerable waiting time. Locals from Kanpetlet area were also gaining a sizable income from this.

The path to the top of the mountain from 10 mile station was about 3 miles 4 furlong long and there were no shops or stalls along the way so it is important for visitors to bring along sufficient food and water. The hike up the mountain took about three to five hours and those who attempt it need to have enough stamina to complete it.

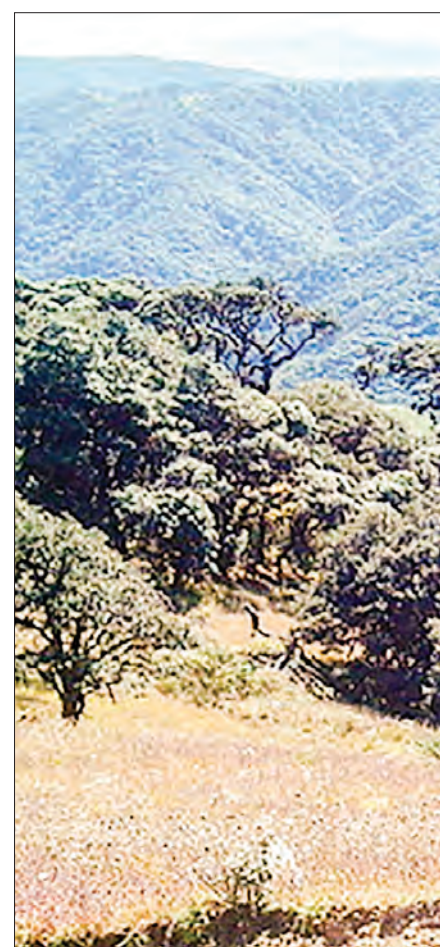
However, all along the way was irresistible photo ops and for most who attempted the way up would find the hike well worth it.

Rhododendron flower, the Chin State national flower is normally red in colour and can be found all along the mountain path but beyond an elevation of 10,000 ft. rare white and yellow colour flowers can also be found. Locals were said to have produce wines from their national flower.

To preserve the state flower from extinction, Forest Department had strictly prohibited peoples from picking the flowers or even breaking off the branch of the tree. This was a timely conservatory move. Forest Department had also started a campaign on reducing usage of plastics and had setup



Rhododendron flower, the Chin State national flower. **PHOTO: SAN LWIN (FISHERIES DEPARTMENT)**



Natma Taung ASEAN Heritage Park. **PHOTO: SAN LWIN (FISHERIES DEPARTMENT)**



Natma Taung ASEAN Heritage Park. **PHOTO: MAUNG YIN KYAY**



PHOTO: NANDA

trash bins along the way. However, it was a sorrowful sight to see discarded plastic bags and water bottles littering many locations along the path. It looks like more still need to be done.

Just past the 9,000 ft. elevation is a small ice covered pond measuring 20 ft. by 15 ft. attracting visitors taking pictures and inspecting it.

It was a unique experience to walk the natural path surrounded by small bamboo clusters and shrubs and all the tiredness was taken away by the splendid sight awaiting the climbers at the mountain top.

Natma Taung region situated at an elevation above 10,000 ft. is not a proud natural heritage for Myanmar only but also for ASEAN region as well. Visitors coming by car to the area from all over Myanmar must pass through Kazunma town at the junction of Pathein-Monywa road in Magway Region Seikpyu Township

to Saw town where all will stop briefly before ascending up the road to Kanpetlet town at an elevation of 4,500 ft. through breath taking sights.

At Kanpetlet, they'll be entertained by old Chin women with tattoos on their cheek who'll play the pipe with their noses! They can also buy Chin clothes weaved in traditional looms as souvenir. In the evening they can enjoy traditional Chin moon shine liquor and Gayal meat pounded together with chillies beside a born fire. Gayals from Chin mountain ranges belong to the same species (Gavarus) of bison and banteng. These beasts were usually bred for meat and could also be found living in the wild between 2,000 and 10,000 feet above sea level.

All are invited to come and enjoy these as well as the natural beauty of Natma Taung.

Translated by Zaw Min

AFC reschedules matches for 2020

ASIAN Football Confederation (AFC) officials have already arranged new schedules for the football matches and Futsal tournaments in 2020, said AFC in its statement.

According to the new sched-

ule, AFC U-19 Championship in Uzbekistan will take place from 14 to 31 October 2020. Next, AFC Futsal Championship in Turkmenistan will hold from 4 to 15 November 2020, and AFC U-16 Championship in Bahrain will

compete from 25 November to 12 December 2020. Similarly, AFC Futsal Club Championship in the United Arab Emirates will be held from 2 to 13 December 2020.

AFC General Secretary Dato' Windsor pointed out even

in these challenging times more encouraging progress in the return of many domestic Leagues to the field and thereby expected both the AFC Champions League and the AFC Cup would follow in the coming months.

AFC has also arranged the postponed Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Second Round for October and November 2020.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Manchester City to learn fate of Champions League ban appeal



Manchester City will find out on Monday if they are to be banned from European football for two seasons. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON — Manchester City's Abu-Dhabi project and the future of UEFA's financial fair play (FFP) rules face a pivotal day on Monday when the Court of Arbitration for Sport delivers its verdict on City's appeal against a two-season ban from European competitions. The stakes could not be higher for the English side, who have always strong-

ly denied any wrongdoing over allegations they deliberately inflated the value of income from sponsors with links to the Abu Dhabi United Group, also owned by City owner Sheikh Mansour, to avoid falling foul of FFP regulations between 2012 and 2016.

In February, UEFA imposed a fine of 30 million euros (\$32 million, £25 million) on City as

well as suspending them from European competitions for the next two seasons. Since Sheikh Mansour's takeover 12 years ago, City's fortunes have been transformed from perennially living in the shadow of local rivals Manchester United to winning four Premier League titles in the past eight years among 11 major trophies. —AFP ■

Usman outclasses Masvidal as UFC debuts on 'Fight Island' in UAE

ABU DHABI — Kamaru Usman put on a 'Fight Island' masterclass Sunday to retain his Ultimate Fighting Championship welterweight world title by grinding down a brave Jorge Masvidal in Abu Dhabi.

"I'm at the top of the mountain and everyone's looking at me," declared the 33-year-old Usman after scoring a unanimous points decision 50-45, 50-45 and 49-46 on the three judges' cards.

The Nigerian-American Usman (17-1) looked the fresher with Masvidal (35-14) having taken the UFC 251 headline bout at just six days' notice when Brazil's Gilbert Burns (19-3) tested positive for COVID-19 and was unable to travel.

The Las Vegas-based UFC pulled off a power-packed schedule with three world title fights to kick off a series of mixed martial arts cards.

It helped fulfil supremo

Dana White's vision of a coronavirus-free 'Fight Island', something he first floated when the pandemic caused a global shutdown of sport in March.

UFC has decamped to Abu Dhabi's locked down Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates until the end of July to isolate fighters from the threat of the COVID-19 and ensure the shows roll on.

Strict protocols mean athletes and staff are tested twice before leaving for the UAE, and twice again on arrival, before spending 48 hours in quarantine -- measures that caught out Usman's original opponent Burns (19-3).

Usman never gave the 35-year-old replacement Masvidal the space to land the combinations for which he is noted, and he monstered Cuban-American when the action hit the cage, and the canvas.—

AFP ■

Ex-Australia and Crystal Palace captain Jedinak calls it a day

SYDNEY — Former Australia captain and Crystal Palace stalwart Mile Jedinak announced his retirement on Sunday (Jul 12), saying it was "time for a new chapter".

The 35-year-old spent five seasons at the London club, joining from Turkey's Genclerbirligi in 2011, skipping Palace to promotion back to the Premier League via the playoffs in 2013.

He moved to Aston Villa in 2016 but was released at

the end of the 2018-19 season with speculation that he may rejoin a team in Australia's A-League, where he started his career.

But the defensive midfielder took to Instagram to confirm he was hanging up his boots aged 35.

"I was a young boy from Western Sydney with a dream to play professional football," he said. "My journey to reach that goal was full of so many experiences, challenges and

memories that will always be cherished."

"I want to thank all the clubs I represented for allowing me the opportunity to do so. It's now time for a new chapter."

Palace paid tribute on Twitter, calling Jedinak "a leader of men and a club legend".

He played 79 times for his country, featuring at three World Cups before bowing out of international football in late 2018. —AFP ■



The end: Former Australia and Crystal Palace captain Mile Jedinak has retired at the age of 35. **AFP/Odd ANDERSEN**