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PARLIAMENT

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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I want our government schools to be able to deliver the best education just like in some of the world's public schools where they have the highest educational standards: State Counsellor



STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote on her Facebook page yesterday that she wanted the Myanmar government schools to be able to deliver the best education just like in some of the world's public schools where they have the highest educational standards. This was what she wrote:

It has been now three days since the high schools reopened. We have also been giving permission for more schools to reopen as we see more schools meeting the health standards. Among the schools which have received permission are 764 private schools.

There have been some school children who wished to transfer from private schools to the government schools. They will be accepted with open arms. I want our government schools to be able to deliver the best education just like in some of the world's public schools where they have the highest educational standards.

According to the situation of our country, the role of private schools is valuable. That's why we see to it that they are running smoothly. However, at the moment it is not yet possible to give permission to private boarding schools to reopen. Students and parents want these schools to be permitted to reopen. Some are of the opinion that these private boarding schools are as safe as quarantine facilities. However, when we assessed the global situation, we found that private boarding schools could not be considered to be safe.

> We have also been giving permission for more schools to reopen as we see more schools meeting the health standards.

We will keep on allowing more schools to reopen as the safety situation of school children improve.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar remains at 343 after no new case reported on 23 July

Updated at 8 pm, 23 July 2020

Total Cases	New Case	Total Death Tally
343	0	6

Recovery Update on 23 July 2020 after two consecutive tests

Total Recovery	New Recovery	Discharged from Hospital
280	0	269

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 23 July 2020

New PUIs
18

Ministry of Health and Sports

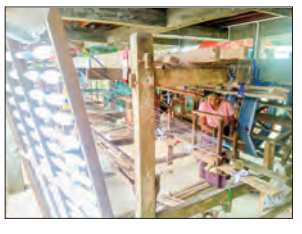
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PYITHU HLUTTAW

Pyithu Hluttaw raises queries, submits bill, tables motion to Union Government

THE second Pyithu Hluttaw continued its 17th regular session at the 5th-day meeting yesterday.

The Hluttaw approved substitution of members for the Banking and Financial Development Committee, the Electricity and Energy Development Committee and the Women and Children Rights Committee.

MP U Zone Taint from Chipwe constituency asked about enough supplies of hygiene water for public in four residential wards and nearby villages of his constituency.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Tun replied that the proposed project is estimated at K381.09 million, but the possible budget for Chipwe Township Development Committee in 2020-2021 financial year is K16.40 million, and that the project could not be implemented by the township development fund.

MP U Myint Thein from Wetlet constituency asked about renovation of irrigation system from Tatywa's River Water Pumping Project for 5,000 acres in six villages of his constituency.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw replied that the project will be implemented as the regional government has submitted budget for coming fiscal years beginning 2020-2021FY for upgrading irrigation facilities for 1,200 agricultural acres.

MP Daw Khin Than Nu from Mindon constituency asked about upgrade of a self-reliant primary school to a primary school (affiliated) in Kyowa village-tract of her constituency.


Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.


Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Tun.


Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.


MP U Zone Taint.


MP Daw Khin Than Nu.


MP U Myint Thein.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun replied that an official land certificate will be required for the proposed plan.

MP Daw Nang Moe from Mantung constituency asked whether compensation punishment is an effective measure to reduce corruption case or not. U Aung Than Myint from the Anti-Corruption Commission answered the question.

MP U Thaung Htay Lin from Patheingyi constituency asked about development plan for new residential areas near Mandalay industrial zone. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Nyi Tun replied it.

MP U Tun Tun from Pwintbyu constituency asked for the plan to supply water from Mong Creek to the agricultural lands for all-season cultivation in Lalma village of Mezali village-tract in his constituency. Deputy Minister for MoALI U Hla Kyaw replied it.

MP U Tin Aye from Metmung constituency asked about construction of a one-storey school building at the primary school of Aye Kyant village-tract in his constituency; MP U Myint Oo from Thanatpin constituency asked about appointment of teachers for the vacancies at the state-owned schools in his constituency; MP U Nay Lin Tun from Bokpyin constituency about upgrade of post primary school to the middle school (affiliated) at Aung Mingalar Ward in his constituency. Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun replied the questions.

The Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw invited the list of MP who want to discuss the Petroleum Testing, Drilling and Processing Bill which was submitted by Secretary U Soe Myint (a) U Aung Zaw Myint from the Electricity and Energy Development Committee of Pyithu Hluttaw.

MP U Tin Maung Win from Seikkan constituency tabled a motion that urged the Union Government to list about 1,000 important products with Myanmar Standard and Specification during the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement while implementing the free flow of goods in establishing ASEAN Free Trade Agreement which plays a crucial role in implementing the ASEAN Economic Community.

The motion was supported by MP Daw Cho Cho from Ottwin constituency, MP U Yan Lin from Kyaiklat constituency, MP U Sai Oo Kham from Hsenwi constituency, MP U Tun Mya Aung (a) U Saw Tun Mya Aung from Papun constituency and U Bo Gyi from Chauk constituency.

Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun agreed to approve the motion.

The Pyithu Hluttaw then approved it. The 6th-day meeting of Pyithu Hluttaw will convene on 28th July.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW

Second Amyotha Hluttaw continues 17th regular session


Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut.


MP U Whei Tin.


Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo.


MP U Min Naing.


MP Daw Htu May.

THE 5th-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 17th regular session convened yesterday.

MP U Whei Tin of Chin State constituency 11 asked whether there were plans to expand the motorcycle path between Mee Zar village and Ohn Tee village in Paletwa Township and to pave the remaining section of the new road there.

Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut replied that while Than Naing company won the tender for the project in 2016-2017FY and has finished 10 miles of the 26-mile road, security concerns have brought the project to a halt. He said a budget for the project wasn't considered in the 2020-2021FY proposal but might be considered for the 2021-2022FY if relevant authorities can attest to regional peace and stability in that area together with approval from the Chin State government.

MP U Kyaw Thaung of Sagaing Region constituency 1 asked if the Burmese chronological history series will continue publication. Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min replied that publication will continue depending on the available budget and remaining content.

SEE PAGE-3

Come hell or high water!

We need zeal and perseverance to realize our goal. Once in a boat race in Pathein, rowers stopped paddling and lifted their oars when they achieved a slight lead over their competitors' boat. We, the Myanmar people, too often give up before reaching our goal. We can call this a Myanmar spirit under enslavement. I warn all of you to be against this spirit. Come hell or high water, you must never give up!

(Excerpt from the last address Bogyoke Aung San delivered from the City Hall in front of Maha Bandoola Park in Yangon, on 13 July 1947



Joint Bill Committee discusses on Union Tax Bill

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held a meeting on 2020 Union Tax Bill sent by Union Government at the meeting hall of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Joint Bill Committee and Joint Public Accounts Committee U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, the vice chairmen, the secretaries, the joint secretaries and committee members of the Joint Bill Committee and Joint Public Accounts Committee, and officials from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office. — MNA

(Translated by YHT)



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee discusses 2020 Union Tax Bill on 23 July. **PHOTO:MNA**



Union Minister U Thaung Tun joins the 7th meeting of the Working Committee to address the Impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy on 23 July. **PHOTO:MNA**

Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy meets

The seventh meeting of the Working Committee to address the Impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy was held via videoconference yesterday morning.

The meeting was chaired by U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Members of the working committee Union Minsters, U Soe Win, U Thein Swe, Dr Than Myint, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and representatives of the Ministries concerned took part in the meeting.

The meeting discussed matters relating to disbursement of new loans to the enterprises recommended by the UMFCCI and the MICPA. Sectors designated for consideration include agriculture, livestock and fisheries and food processing as well as labour recruitment agencies, vocational schools, export-oriented and import substitution enterprises. — MNA

Second Amyotha Hluttaw continues 17th regular session

FROM PAGE-2

MP Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency 11 then asked whether there are plans to construct a jetty in Saku island, Yanbye Township, and upgrade the 8.2-mile road on the island in the coming financial year. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo replied there are currently no plans to build a jetty on the island but a budget proposal of K773.25 million for upgrading the road has been submitted for 2020-2021FY by the Rakhine State government.

MP U Min Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 12 asked whether a new building for Khamti Airport will be constructed in 2020-2021FY. Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo replied that the current airport structure can adequately handle the amount of passengers that are using it and so there is no need to construct an additional building.

MP U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency asked about constructions of two bridges in Kyauktaw township in 2020-2021 financial year. Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Major General Than Htut answered it.

MP U Maung Maung Ohn of Ayeyawady constituency asked about legal actions taken against illegal transportation of foreign registered vessels in Myanmar waters, and the question was answered by Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo.

Approving a bill, discussing amendment bill

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Brig-Gen Tint Lwin read the committee's report on the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Bill. Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than sought the assembly's opinion on each paragraph of the bill and then approved it.

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win tabled the bill to be approved in its current condition and U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi Region constituency 7 seconded the motion.

The Speaker then sought the deliberation of the Hluttaw, received no opposition, and announced the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Bill is approved in its current condition.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe read the committee's report on the bill amending the 1959 Defence Services Act and the Speaker called for MPs interested in discussing the bill to register their names.

The 6th-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 17th regular session will convene on 28 July. —Aung Ye Thwin

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

"People are the key"

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification (138/2020)

4th Waxing of Second Waso, 1382 ME
23rd July 2020

Permission for broadcast campaigns of political parties

1. The Union Election Commission has permitted to form political parties after scrutinizing their registrations. It has also released Notification (115/2020), dated on 1-7-2020, to announce the holding of 2020 General Election on 8 November.
2. The UEC will allow campaigns of the political parties on state-owned radio and televisions from 8-9-2020 to 6-11-2020.
3. In applying for permission of broadcast campaign, the chairperson or the secretary of a certain party shall submit a manuscript for the campaign, the name of speaker, position and contact phone numbers to the UEC by 22-8-2020. The manuscript must not exceed seven pages of A4 size paper in Pyidaungsu Font Size 13. If the broadcast campaign includes party song (audio/video), the two copies of disc and lyrics must be presented. If any political party will not conduct this broadcast campaign programme on state-owned radio and television, it must be informed to the UEC.
4. The UEC will discuss with relevant organizations about date and schedule for each political party for their broadcast campaign.
5. The UEC will review the manuscript to be presented as needed and,
   (a) will issue permit or will ask to edit the manuscript before permission
   (b) the name of speaker, time and date allowed by the UEC will be included in the permit
   (c) before the date of shooting, the manuscript will be sent back to the applicant for editing with remarks and reasons, if necessary
6. For each broadcast campaign on the state-owned media, each political party will be allowed:
   (a) maximum 15 minutes
   (b) party song in these 15 minutes
   (c) campaign in Myanmar or in ethnic language; if it is in ethnic language, the manuscript must be presented in Myanmar language too
7. Political parties must not violate any of the following rules for campaign on state-owned radio and television
   (a) speech that can tarnish Non-disintegration of the Union; Non-disintegration of National Solidarity; Perpetuation of Sovereignty;
   (b) speech that can disturb the security, rule of law and the peace and stability of the country
   (c) speech that disrespects existing laws and the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
   (d) speech that defames the nation or tarnishes the image of the nation
   (e) speech that brings about the disintegration of the Tatmadaw or defames the Tatmadaw
   (f) speech or inciting that can cause racial or religious conflict or that can harm dignity and morality
   (g) speech that exploits religions for politics
   (h) incitement to obstruct the pursuance of peaceful education
   (i) incitement to Civil Services personnel not to perform their duty or to oppose the government
8. In accordance with the laws, political parties can deliver electoral speeches explaining how to transform Myanmar into a peaceful and developed modern nation by carrying out their respective policy.
9. In order to make the multi-party democracy General Election (to be held on 8 November 2020) free and fair, the political parties can explain their respective policy, opinions and processes, and deliver their electoral speeches via state-owned radio and TV programmes, and the electoral speeches must comply with the regulations mentioned in this announcement.

Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Notification (139/2020)

4th Waxing of Second Waso, 1382 ME
23rd July 2020

Public Announcement of dissolution of political party

1. The Union Election Commission permitted the People Democracy Party to register as a political party with Registration No.43 of Notification (49/2011) on 23-9-2020.

2. The People Democracy Party was suspended of its registration status for three years from 18-7-2017 to 17-7-2020 and directed to resolve its issues, in line with Section 24-(c) of the Political Parties Registration Law.

The party has failed to resolve its issues during the three-year period and was also unable to appoint a Chairperson by holding a party conference as directed by UEC.

The UEC decided in its plenary meeting (24/2020) on 23-7-2020 to terminate the registration of People Democracy Party as a political party and to dissolve it in line with Section 24(e) of the Political Parties Registration Law.

3. It is hereby announced that the People Democracy Party has been terminated and the party dissolved as of 23 July 2020.

Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission

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MNHRC inspects prison, court, custodies in Thayet Township



MNHRC members inspect facilities for prisoners in Thayet Township.
PHOTO : MNA

An inspection team of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) led by its member U Kyaw Soe visited the Thayet Prison yesterday to ensure that there was no violation of human rights.

During the inspection tour, they also inspected the custodies of court and the police station of the township.

The members of MNHRC inspected the prison cells, medical ward, water tanks, visiting rooms and preparations for COVID-19 prevention. They met several inmates individually and asked them if there had been violations of human rights, difficulties in prison visits, access to basic necessities and human rights situation in the prison.

They recorded the investigation and will send their findings to relevant departments in order to take necessary actions.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

The relationship between the State and the people is very important



The relationship between the State and the people is very important. When I say State, I mean the whole machinery, both animate and inanimate, which keeps the country running, led by the Union Government. To become a State which is dependable, we need people who are dependable.

At this time when the COVID disease is spreading all over the world, all countries are dealing with this problem in various ways. "People are the key"; we have placed our belief firmly on this. We place value on the people and derive our strength from the people. We are striving to overcome the dangers of this disease by building up the spirit of "all for one and one for all".

One of the measures taken by the Union Government is to make it possible for those citizens living in foreign countries to be able to return; because the infection rate of the disease is high in some foreign countries, we have to make special preparations to make sure that the infection does not spread from the returnees.

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

Notification on Basic Reference Paddy Price

Notification No (1/2020)
23 July 2020

1. The basic reference price for paddy is set as follows in order to make the paddy market fair in accordance with the Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits Law.
2. If the paddy met the prescribed criteria: 14 per cent moisture content and free from impurities such as dust, sand, and small stones, the basic reference price for paddy is K520,000 per 100 baskets. (One basket is equivalent to 46 lb.)
3. If the market price is above the basic reference price, rice merchants must purchase paddy at the prevailing market rate. If the market price falls below the basic reference price, the merchants must buy paddy at the basic price. This basic reference price is for 2020 monsoon paddy and 2021 summer paddy.
4. Any farmer facing difficulty to sell the paddy at this basic reference price can contact the headquarters of the Myanmar Rice Federation (Phone 01-2301128, 01-2301129, 01-218266) or its township representatives.

Leading Committee for Farmer Rights Protection and Enhancement of their Benefits
(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Human rights body holds meeting with Amyotha Hluttaw commission

THE Myanmar National Human Rights Commission held a meeting with Fundamental Rights of the Citizens, Democracy and Human Rights Committee of Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

The meeting discussed cooperation works on human rights affairs, and the former presented the publications of human rights.

Chairman of MNHRC U Hla Myint, Deputy Chair Dr Nanda Hmun, commission members U Paw Sein Lwin, Dr Than Myint, Daw Nu Nu Yin, U Kyaw Myint and Commission Office's Director-General U Phone Kywe attended the meeting together with Amyotha Hluttaw's Fundamental Rights of the Citizens, Democracy and Human Rights Committee Chairman U Win Aung, Secretary U Myo Htat (aka) Salai Myo Htike and committee members.—MNA *(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye holds meeting on resettlement of IDPs in Kachin State

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye met Mr Gao Zhong Ping, Chief Representative of Power China Kunming Engineering Corporation regarding the initial feasibility study in relocating the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kachin State yesterday morning. At the meeting, the Union Minister said that the Chinese government will provide 200 million Yuan for resettlement of IDPs and voluntary return in Kachin State and the Chinese President Xi Jinping signed an agreement on economic and technological cooperation during his visit to Myanmar.

According to the agreement, 1 million yuan will be spent in conducting initial feasibility study and so Myanmar will cooperate when the survey group arrives in Myanmar.

The people from five townships fled from their homes and so the government set strategic plan to carry out the processes by forming National-Level for Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Closure of IDP Camps.

The Union Minister expressed words of thanks for the aids provided by the Chinese government.

The accords received from the sessions of Union Peace Conference–21st Century Panglong prioritized the resettlement of IDPs and such assistance and aid are very supportive for peace processes, the Union Minister added. Afterwards, the Power China Kunming Engineering Corporation discussed that the processes will be carried out by two groups – technological group and cooperative group – and negotiated about the sectors that Myanmar has to provide in their operations. Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, Head of Working Group on Resettling IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in Kachin State, the Director-General of State Counsellor Office U Kyaw Lwin, Director-General of Social Welfare Department Dr San San Aye and officials from Power China Kunming Engineering Corporation attended the meeting.—MNA *(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye holds meeting with the Chief Representative of Power China Kunming Engineering Corporation for relocating of IDPs in Kachin State on 23 July. **PHOTO: MNA**

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

You are not the only one under pressure from COVID-19, but all of society is and that fact can help to build compassion among the public.

Compassion can reduce hatred between individuals and accept issues for resolving together.

Anxiety can be reduced by this method and everyone should try hard to face and overcome COVID-19 issues.

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

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

Myanmar-India border closure affects weaving businesses in Chin state



A woman is weaving traditional fabrics on the loom. **PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD**

WITH a long-time closure of Myanmar-India border including Tamu-Moreh border and Reekhorda-Zokhawthar border caused by spreading of the coronavirus across the country, the weaving businesses were suspended for lack of raw materials in the India imported market, according to the weaving entrepreneurs from Kalay Township.

There are more than 1,500 manageable-scale weaving businesses in Kalay township. These businesses are weaving mostly the Chin traditional clothes in Haka, Tiddim, Falam, Mezoh and Zohton. These businesses rely upon Indian cotton produced and imported from India through India border. The weaving businesses are being faced with a lack of raw cotton after restricting the crossing of Myanmar-India border because of COVID-19 starting from March.

"The India cotton costs K29,000 per pack which contains 2 visses previously. Although the price of India cotton has increased to K35,000 per pack, it could not be bought easily in the market. The local weavers are using only India cotton because it is compact and good for weaving. The local people in Kalay township are weaving the cloth in their house to earn their family income," said Daw Nilar Oo, a local weaver from Kalay township.

Before the pandemic period, the local people were earning their livelihood doing the weaving businesses in Kalay township.

Therefore, it can create job opportunities for local women who help earn their household income. The clothes from Kaly township are exported to India as well as to other countries. The clothes are reportedly sent as Chin traditional wears to Yangon, Mandalay and other regions. —Chindwinthar

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Telenor Myanmar donates K70 mln for measures against COVID-19

TELENOR Myanmar handed over a total of K70 million to the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 to use for the on-going combatting measures.

Also, Telenor customers generously contributed over K5.7 million via SMS-enabled donation programme, an amount matched by over 60 million from Telenor Myanmar.

Sending repeated text messages to the SMS facility between 9 April and 30 June, Telenor customers showed their generosity and solidarity to tackle the challenge of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The people of Myanmar are known for their generosity and have proved it again through the SMS donation programme. It shows a strong sense of togetherness in the face of the infectious situation, and we are proud to be able to be a helping hand to communities across the country when in need. Telenor Myanmar remains committed to actively participate in relief assistance during national emergencies," said Hans Martin Høegh Henrichsen, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Telenor Myanmar.

Telenor Myanmar has been monitoring the pandemic situation actively since Myanmar saw its first infectious-disease patient in March, and has focused on helping communities stay safe, connected and empowered. Efforts include donating essential hygiene, sanitation, and medical supplies to 15 quarantine centres in Bago region and Mon state through the Network Activities Group (NAG) to keep those quarantined, health workers and visitors safe and to prevent further spread of the disease. Keeping quarantined citizens connected, Telenor Myanmar brought 25,000 SIM cards loaded with 1GB data to regional governments for distribution in relevant centres.

Committed to empowering societies, Telenor Myanmar remains actively involved in relief assistance during national emergencies. Since 2015, the company has provided more than K1 billion in humanitarian relief to affected communities as part of its corporate responsibility efforts. —GNLM

Over 100 acres of farmlands damaged by embankment breaking

WITH the breaking of embankment in Amarapura township, Mandalay, on 19 July night, more than 100 acres of farmlands were damaged, according to the Agriculture Department in Mandalay Region.

"The paddy and sesame plants were not found in the flooded area because we have harvested already. But we have vegetable land and other farmland. They were destroyed by the flooded water. However, we have planned to provide the vegetable seeds to remedy the losses of the local farmers," said an official from the Regional Agriculture Department.

The local people grew the beans, corns, cilantro, water spinach and rosselle in the flooded areas, according to the local farmers.

The Agriculture Department will provide not only the crop seeds but also the compensation for the damaged corps when the department gets the instruction from the regional government.

The Agriculture Department has provided over K560 million to the local farmers in the first week of July whose farmlands were damaged by the natural disasters in 2018-2019FY in Mandalay region.

More than 13,000 people from seven villages suffered from the flood, and currently, they are living in the relief camps. —Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Natural gas exports exceed $2.4 bln in Oct-May

MYANMAR'S exports of natural gas over the past eight months of the current financial year amounted to US$2.4 billion, the Commerce Ministry's data showed.

The figures reflect a decrease of over $400 million compared with the corresponding period of 2018-2019 fiscal, according to the Commerce Ministry.

The drop in the value of exports is linked to the collapse of the global oil and natural gas prices, according to an expert.

Natural gas is included in the list of major export items of Myanmar. Over 10 per cent of the country's total export earnings come from the sale of natural gas.

There are 53 onshore blocks and 51 offshore blocks, totalling 104 blocks. A total of 25 onshore blocks and 31 offshore blocks are operating under foreign investment. Natural gas extraction is being made at the Yadanar, the Yedagun, the Shwe, and the Zaw Tika offshore blocks as well as onshore drilling blocks. Yearly extraction is elevated to cubic feet in 670.36 billion from 600 billion this year, according to the fourth-year performance statement of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

The Shwe natural gas field, located offshore from Rakhine State, was discovered in 2014. Natural gas extracted from the field is exported to China.

The Yadana natural gas project is being carried out by the TOTAL Company, with its pipeline supplying natural gas to Thailand. Natural gas is also extracted in Yedagun, located offshore from Taninthayi and discovered in 1992. The Zawtika Project in the Gulf of Mottama mainly supplies natural gas to neighbouring Thailand.



An offshore natural gas drilling site of Shwe Natural Gas Project in the west of Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**

Production at Yadana and Yedagun is declining, and those projects will be halted in the coming years.

Myanmar's exports of natural gas in the previous financial year totalled $3.88 billion, as per Commerce Ministry data.—Ko Htet *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Indian millers ask to extend black bean import deadline

THE Indian millers have requested their government to extend the deadline for black bean import up to March 2021. This being so, there is the possibility of a deadline extension, said traders from pulses and beans market.

The domestic traders are closely observing the market with the changes in India's policy on bean importation. Now, the growers have already sold out the beans and they are in the hands of traders. They have stockpiled around 120,000-150,000 tonnes of black beans. Some traders are holding the stocks as they expect a high price. The trading is quite cool in the export market.

The prices of the black bean are pegged at around K970,000-980,000 per tonne on 22 July. The price moved above K1 million per tonne in June-end, according to the data of the Bayintnaung market. India's low demand on pulses and beans has brought down the black bean prices in the domestic market, said an official of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Regarding the importation of 400,000 tonnes of black beans for the next fiscal year, India has narrowed the import deadline by August-end. It has also granted import licences to some companies. However, due to the spread of coronavirus and monsoon climate, India's companies reduced the import volume.

"The country lays down policy for its national interest. India's move is possible to protect their farmers as they will harvest India's beans in September. That is why they shrank the deadline to August-end 2020. Nevertheless, India is likely to extend import deadline as they experienced some damages to their farms. The market price is usually up when the traders load the beans on ships", said a trader from Bayintnaung market.

Myanmar is the top producing country of black bean that India demands. Besides Myanmar, Australia and Africa grow other kinds of peas such as pigeon peas, green grams and yellow peas, the association stated.—Ko Khant *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*



Due to some damages to bean cultivation, India is expected to extend the deadline for black bean import from Myanmar. **PHOTO : MIN HTET AUNG**

About 10 enterprises notify closure: MIC reports

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR Investment Commission (MIC) has received official notification of business closure from around ten enterprises, said Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

If the business is granted permits by MIC, they need to seek approval for withdrawal from the commission.

"MIC offers tax break and incentives to the investors depending on types of business and location, according to the Myanmar Investment Law. Having said that, we ask the Internal Revenue Department to check tax payment of the businesses, and withdrawal is accepted later. Therefore, it takes a certain period for the withdrawal process. So far, shutters of about ten businesses are reported," he said.

Some businesses are found downsizing in the factories and temporary and permanent shutdown amid the coronavirus impacts. Some employers are fleeing without paying salary. The factory operators can face legal actions under the Myanmar Investment Law if they fail to comply with notification requirements for the closure of factories, he continued.

To avoid such cases, the Civil Society Organizations requested the MIC to sign off proposals only if the businesses pay the deposit.

DICA D-G responded to the request: "We are endeavouring to facilitate the investments. The deposit is designed to protect the investment risk, yet we cannot set the deposit under the law. We accept the responsible business to ensure there is no environmental impacts, social impacts and national interests. We do not have a deposit plan.

100 CMP enterprises and other 63 businesses have reported the closure between 1 January and 21 June. Unemployment claims hit over 54,000 workers. Now, 101 of them resumed their operations. And over 15,000 workers returned to jobs, the DICA stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

24 JULY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

The only way to secure the integrity of the democratic process is to abide by electoral rules

THE political party broadcast for the upcoming general elections will be aired by the State-owned TV and radio from 8th September 2020 to 6th November, 2020, as the general elections is designated to be held on 8th November.

For this political party broadcast programme, there are some specific rules set out by the Union Election Commission to ensure every political party get an equal and fair advantage for reporting their policies and plans for the development of the country to the voters.

The UEC is committed to holding the 2020 general elections in accordance with five standards: freedom of choice, fairness, transparency, accessibility, and compatibility with public desire.

> To be free and fair, not only the political parties but also the media are obliged to avoid disinformation, hate speech and incitement.

When it comes to the free and fair election, exactly equal time should be given to the political parties in this programme. It means each and every party would get the same amount of time : 15 minutes: on screen and air.

According to the rules, the political parties are also obliged to respect and obey the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and to abstain from writing anything which could affect the dignity and character of others.

The above rules are not new ones, and they are included in sub-paragraphs (c) and (d) under Chapter 2 of the Political Parties Registration Law, and political parties have also agreed to abide by them at the time of their establishment.

Political parties and candidates have the right to compete in elections without harassment or intimidation at every stage of the general elections.

To be free and fair, not only the political parties but also the media are obliged to avoid disinformation, hate speech and incitement.

While the media is obliged to follow media ethics and the election guide designed by the Myanmar Press Council, political parties are also obliged to conduct election campaigns in accordance with the set rules and regulations and follow the Code of Conduct written by all political parties and Hluttaw representatives.

No one should be above the law regarding elections, and enforcement should be tightened to prevent violations of the law.

In any democracy, citizens have the fundamental right to free and fair elections, with their votes counted in a transparent and credible manner.

The rules for political parties and the media are designed to help secure the integrity of the democratic process.

Holding a free and fair election is a matter of dignity for the country and the people.

■ ■ ■

Greater Effort Needed For Skills Training of Workers

By Lokethar

THE other day a news item on MRTV covered well the event regarding Research Conference of the Myanmar Universities under the various Ministries. The number of papers and the fields they covered were impressive.

Generally speaking, excellence in academic research determines the reputation of the universities. The world class universities which produce highly qualified professionals and intellectuals are noted for their research programmes. Research contributes to advancing the frontiers of knowledge and technology. This is of much benefit for progress and development of society. As was observed by the Union Minister of Education at the closing ceremony, the research programmes of our universities is expected benefit much our country.

Persons of high academic qualifications, especially the professionals are needed in all sectors of the economy at the middle and top levels of the organization pyramid. But the lower levels of the pyramid requires the employment of various "levels" of skilled workers. The proportion of skilled workers required is much higher than the mid-level and higher level personnel. Hence with increased investment, the demand for skilled workers will increase at a much higher rate compared to the management and professional level personnel.

With the future increases expected in high value added labour intensive industries like furniture manufacturing, (wood and steel), electrical and mechanical parts and components manufacturing, vehicle assembly etc. in the manufacturing sector, construction workers of various types in the building construction and infrastructure sector, skilled operators and machinery maintenance workers in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors are needed. Various levels of skilled workers in the service sectors, including health, social welfare, travel and transport, hotel and tourism and so on are being increasingly needed as well.

> Regarding budget allocations in the field of Public Education, it is of utmost importance that priority should be given to Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Training of skilled workers is a high priority to meet the immediate and emerging needs of our economy and to gradually replace the skilled workers from other countries. In this regard we probably need a "Foreign Worker Hiring Law" to regulate hiring of such workers.

The National Education Law of 2015 and it's amendments encompass education and training by the State sector as well as by the private sector. It also advocates Public Private Partnerships in all areas of education and training. Regarding technical and vocational Training, while the entry requirement of the "trade" based skilled worker training which can enable the trainee to further seek technician level training remains the same as before, the entry level requirement to other appropriate vocational courses has been lowered to primary level educational attainment. This provides opportunity to the school drop outs to acquire occupation based training. Occupation based "short courses" are now being offered at State expense in the public vocational schools. Many young drop outs are only now becoming aware of such courses. It maybe sooner rather than later, for more and more young school dropouts to avail themselves of such opportunities.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, under the 2013 Employment and Skills Development Law has formed the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA) to help Employers train /upskill their workers in specific occupations in line with Occupational Competency Standards of the NSSA. The OCSs have been developed at four levels in accordance with the modality shared by the CLMVT Countries of ASEAN, following the ASEAN/Aus-Dev Project: "Enhancing Skills Recognition Arrangements within ASEAN (2002 -2006)".

Regarding budget allocations in the field of public education, it is of utmost importance that priority should be given to technical and vocational education and training. The cost of training skilled workers to occupational competency standards can be high. Hence adequate allocation of budget/funds is a dire necessity.

It is hoped that the public and private vocational training centres will conduct short courses for training skilled workers in specific occupations in line with the occupational skills standards at four levels of competency which the NSSA has developed for skills training and certification of skilled workers in Myanmar.

■ ■ ■

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at: 10:00 hrs M.S.T on 23-7-2020)

Flood condition of Ayeyarwady River

According to the (09:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyarwady River at Shwegu has exceeded about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise above the present water level by about (1) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Chindwin River

According to the (09:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Homalin has exceeded about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise above the present water level by about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (09:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Phaungpyin has exceeded about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise above the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advertised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Shwegu, Homalin and Phaungpyin Townships to take precaution measure.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 23rd July, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 24th July, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Naypyitaw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Eastern Shan State, fairly widespread in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kayin and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%)

B L O O D C L O T S T A R G E T E D I N T R E A T M E N T T R I A L

ANTI-THROMBOTIC

New drugs developed by Australian researchers may help treat COVID-19 triggered blood clotting

A new drug developed by Australian researchers has shown promise as prevention against heart attack and stroke, and may also have the potential to treat COVID-19 triggered blood clotting.

The research published in Science Translational Medicine on Thursday revealed that the drug displayed in animal testing the ability to temporarily prevent platelet-triggered blood clots, which can cause heart attack or stroke.

Researchers were hopeful the drug could also be used to treat COVID-19 patients who developed similar blood clotting -- which according to them occurs in around 75 per cent of those critically ill with coronavirus and is a major cause of death associated with the virus.

"The possibility of using our newly developed anti-thrombotic to improve the treatment of COVID-19 patients is an appealing idea we would like to explore," said lead researcher, Associate Professor Justin Hamilton from the Monash University's Australian Centre of Blood Diseases.

Hamilton explained that the potential drug was found by accident when researchers were observing the changes within platelets around the time a stroke or heart attack occurs and stumbled upon the enzyme of interest.

"This enzyme allows the platelets to respond to this blood flow change and to 'gear up' their capacity to clot, causing an attack," Hamilton said.

"It is this blood flow perturbation which is a hallmark and predictor of a heart attack."

By temporarily stopping the enzyme initiating this process, the new drug can limit the cells sticking together and hence forming a clot, which can block blood supply to the heart or the brain.

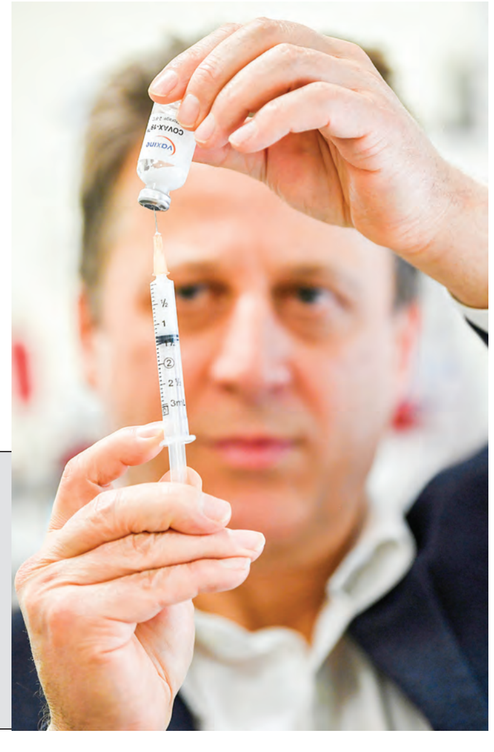
Hamilton explained that there have been very limited developments over the past decade and a half in alternatives offered to patients suffering these conditions.

"There has been no new drugs to treat, let alone prevent, heart attack or stroke in more than 15 years," Hamilton said.

Current drugs used to prevent further blood clotting at the time of heart attack or stroke, such as aspirin, only work in around 25 per cent of cases, and have the possibility of causing serious side effects.

Researchers are now working on improving the drug for next stage clinical trials. — SOURCE: Xinhua

■ ■ ■



Vaxine research director Nikolai Petrovsky holds the first potential coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine developed in the southern hemisphere, called COVAX-19 and created by Adelaide company Vaxine Pty Ltd, in the Flinders University lab in Adelaide, Australia, July 2, 2020. **[PHOTO/AGENCIES]**



Announcement on offering low-interest loans to microfinance institutions

1. In accordance with the decision of the meeting (on 27-5-2020) of the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID – 19) and the permission of the Union Government, a low interest one-year loans will be provided to registered teashops and small restaurants in Nay Pyi Taw Council area, regions and states.
2. Myanma Economic Bank will provide one-year loans to microfinance institutions at an interest rate of 1 per cent per annum. In return, the microfinance institutions must provide one-year loans to the registered teashops and small restaurants affected by COVID-19 crisis, at an interest rate of 2 per cent per annum.
3. Licenced microfinance institutions that want to take part in the above-mentioned loan programme, the loan application forms and the list of required documents can be available at the official website (www.frd.gov.mm) of the Financial Regulatory Department. The completely filled applications must be submitted to the Financial Regulatory Department by 7 August, 2020 via Myanmar Microfinance Association.

Financial Regulatory Department

Announcement on offering business loans to microfinance institutions

1. In accordance with the permission of the Union Government, the Myanma Economic Bank will provide 3-year business loans to microfinance institutions at an interest of 9 per cent (if the loanee can provide items as collateral) or at an interest rate of 11.5 per cent (if the loanee cannot provide items as collateral)
2. Licenced microfinance institutions that want to take part in the above-mentioned loan programme can get the loan application forms and the list of required documents at the official website (www.frd.gov.mm) of the Financial Regulatory Department. The completely filled applications must be submitted to the Financial Regulatory Department by 7 August, 2020 via Myanmar Microfinance Association.

Financial Regulatory Department

Six endangered bird species found in Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary

SIX endangered bird species, out of nine in the country, are inhabiting in Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary, according to the recent official data.

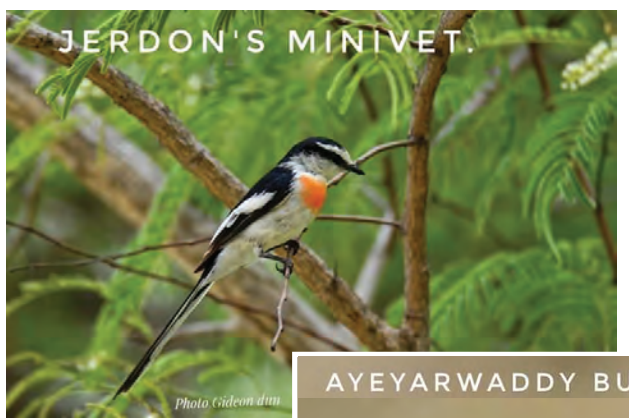
These bird species are Hooded treepie, Ayeyawady bulbul, Burmese bush lark, White-throated Babber, Jerdon's minivet and Burmese Collared-dove.

The data collected from 1995 to 1997 showed that there are 241 bird species in Chatthin Wildlife Sanctuary which is located in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region.

The figure has increased to 262 after 21 new bird species were found in this sanctuary.

U Maung Maung Naing, the officer of sanctuary, said, "Collecting the figure of bird species could help in conducting research and awareness campaign for conservation of wildlife species.—Aung Win Nyein (Kanbalu)

(Translated by Aung Khin)





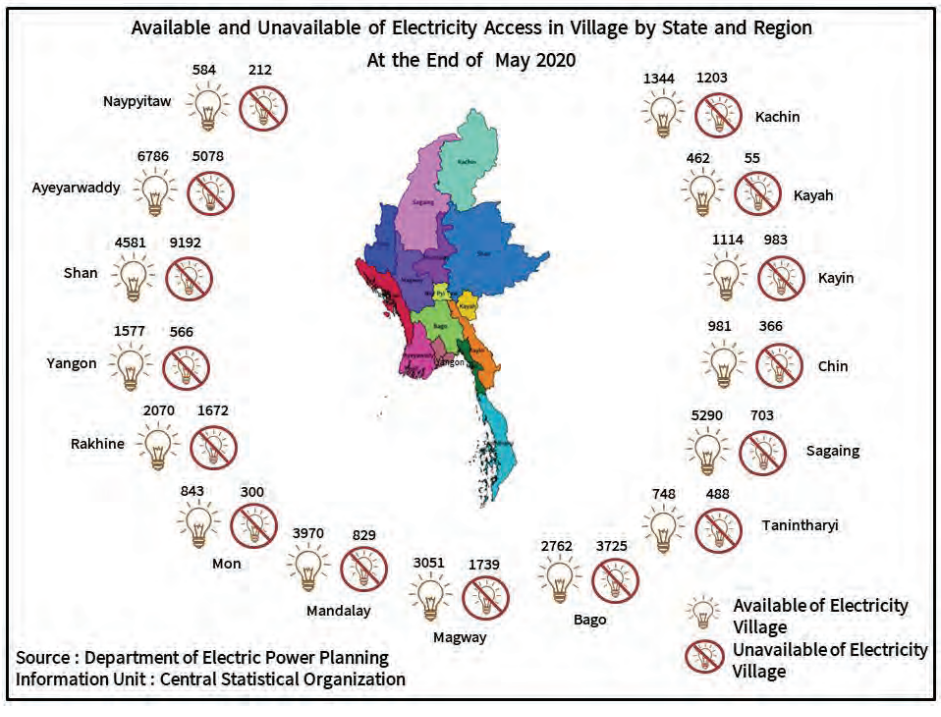


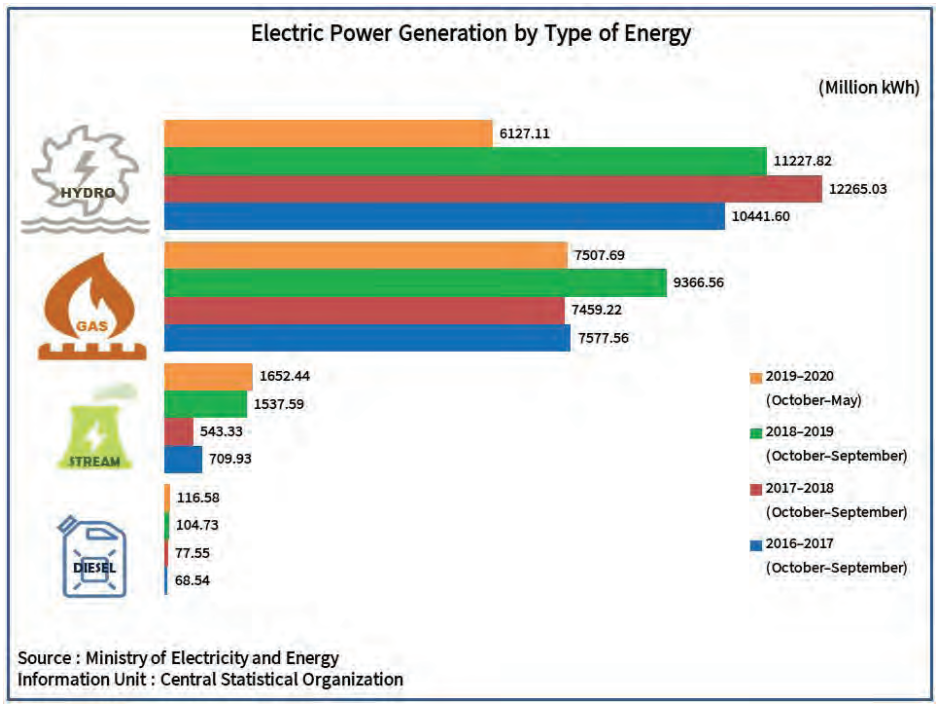












New Naung Lone Bridge ensures vehicle safety in Hpa-an

THE new Naung Lone Bridge in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State, has made travel in the region smoother and more efficient since its completion on 5 June 2020.

The bridge is 400 feet long and 56 feet wide, 48 feet for the main road and 3 feet on each side for the pedestrian path. Special Bridge Unit 14 of the Ministry of Construction began working on the bridge on 1 June 2017 and total construction expense amounted to K2,900 million from 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 financial years.

The accompanying road to the bridge is 573.63 metres long and 14.64 metres wide and all related processes in its construction and compensation for farmland relocated in the process amounted to K475.6 million from the Kayin State government's fund. Construction was carried out by Lin Ngwe Yaung company and overseen by the Road Department.

Over K16 million was compensated to 8 local residents at a rate of K4 million per acre of farmland and K20 million per acre of park grounds.



The new Naung Lone Bridge in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State, completed on 5 June 2020 makes better communication for local people. **PHOTO: SAW MYO MIN THEIN (IPRD)**

Naung Lone Bridge is located on the Hpa-an-Naung Lone-Gyaing section of the Union Highway and used to be only 17 feet wide and devoid of maintenance for some time, thus making it unsafe for cargo trucks and large vehicles.

U Kyi Lwin, head of Hpa-an's Road Department, said about 2,700 vehicles pass through this section of the Union Highway every day. He said the former bridge was too small to accommodate more than one large vehicle at a time so they had to take turns to cross the bridge. But now with the new bridge, cargo trucks, passenger buses and all sorts of vehicles can use the bridge safely at the same time.—Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD) *(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

MRTV staff join IT, broadcast engineering course online



The MRTV staff attending the online webinar on IT and Networking Basic for Broadcast Engineers course. **PHOTO: LEI YIN MYINT**

THE 21 staff members from the Engineering Division of Myanmar Radio and Television attended the online webinar on IT and Networking Basic for Broadcast Engineers course conducted by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union through webinar yesterday afternoon.

Dr Veyselbinbay, the senior engineer, with 22 years of experience at the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRI) introduced basic computer application and networking, the use of applications, cloud computing concepts, virtualization and IP network. —Lei Yin Myint

(Translated by Aung Khin)

622 Myanmar nationals come back home via Myawady border bridge on 23 July

A total of 622 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand through No. 2 border bridge in Myawady Town, Kayin State, on 23 July.

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

The number of migrant workers who returned home from abroad through this border has been 52,414 until now.

The latest group of returnees included 372 males and 250 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Myanmar citizens who returned from Thailand queuing for immigration process in Myawady on 23 July. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

Microsoft sees growth amid pandemic computing demands



Microsoft on Wednesday reported rising revenues in the past quarter amid strong demand for cloud computing services from pandemic-hit businesses and consumers and big gains in its Xbox gaming operations. **(AFP/GERARD JULIEN)**

SAN FRANCISCO — Microsoft on Wednesday reported rising revenues in the past quarter amid strong demand for cloud computing services from pandemic-hit businesses and consumers and big gains in its Xbox gaming operations.

Profits in the quarter ending June 30 fell 15 per cent to $11.2 billion, the result of increased tax charges compared with a year ago.

Revenue meanwhile rose 13 per cent to $38 billion, led by strong gains in its cloud computing and its Xbox gaming services.

Chief executive Satya Nadella said Microsoft was equipped to deal with the coronavirus pandemic with its "integrated, modern technology stack."

"We are seeing businesses accelerate the digitization of every part of their operations from manufacturing to sales to customer service," Nadella told a conference call.

Microsoft shares dipped some 2.5 per cent in after-hours trade on the results, which were largely ahead of forecasts.

Its shares have been trading at near record levels amid a surge of some 50 per cent since March, giving it a market value of more than $1.6 trillion.

Revenue from Microsoft's "intelligent cloud" division which includes its Azure enterprise business rose 17 per cent to $13.4 billion in the fiscal fourth quarter.

In the personal computing segment including the Windows operating system, revenues were up 14 per cent to $12.9 billion.

Within that segment, Xbox gaming service revenues rose 65 per cent and sales for its Surface devices were up 28 per cent. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia to subsidise tourists on domestic vacations: PM

MOSCOW — Moscow will subsidize holidays taken by Russian tourists who vacation at home instead of the Mediterranean, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said Wednesday.

The push to boost domestic tourism comes after officials lifted most coronavirus restrictions in June.

Yet Russians are still barred from holidaying abroad due to international travel controls imposed to slow the pandemic.

"We have already provided subsidies in the amount of about 3.5 billion rubles ($49.3 million) to tour operators," Mishustin told parliament during a report on government work in 2019.

"The government has decided to allocate an additional 15 billion ($211 million) to develop domestic tourism," which will be used to partially compensate Russians who vacation at home.

Russians will receive between 5,000 ($70) and 15,000 ($211) rubles, depending on the tour, he said.

The Association of Russian Tour Operators said companies already received information about the cashback scheme meant to stimulate tour sales. It said people would be eligible for the rebate if they buy a tour from a government-compiled list and use the Russian Mir bank card -- a would-be competitor of Visa and Mastercard heavily promoted by the government.— AFP ■

China unveils guideline to boost business environment

BEIJING — The State Council issued a guideline Tuesday to further improve China's business environment and better serve market entities.

It stresses six categories of policies and measures, including more streamlined and efficient approval procedures for construction projects and their financing, easier approval processes and conditions for enterprises generally, and an optimized business environment for foreign trade and investment.

It also highlights support for employment and entrepreneurship, improved quality and efficiency of services provided to businesses, and a long-term mechanism for business-environment improvement.

Specifically, the guideline states that the market-entry threshold should be further lowered for the education, medical services and sports sectors, among others, and unreasonable barriers should be removed. Meanwhile, it stressed the further removal of operational and investment barriers to foreign-invested and foreign-trade firms, such as offering cities at or above prefecture level mandates to register foreign-invested firms.— Xinhua ■

Twitter sees surge in users; revenue slides amid turmoil

WASHINGTON — Twitter said Thursday user growth soared in the past quarter even as ad revenues took a hit amid civil unrest in the United States.

The short-messaging service reported a net loss of $1.2 billion in the quarter, most of that coming from setting aside funds for income taxes.

Revenue slumped 19 per cent from a year ago to $683 million. Despite some modest rebound from the pandemic-induced economic slump, Twitter said that "many brands slowed or paused spend in reaction to US civil unrest" in May and June.

Twitter said ad revenue declined 15 per cent over the last three weeks of June, but appeared to have rebounded since then.

A key metric for Twitter, the number of "monetizable" daily active users, hit 186 million for a jump of 24 per cent from last year.

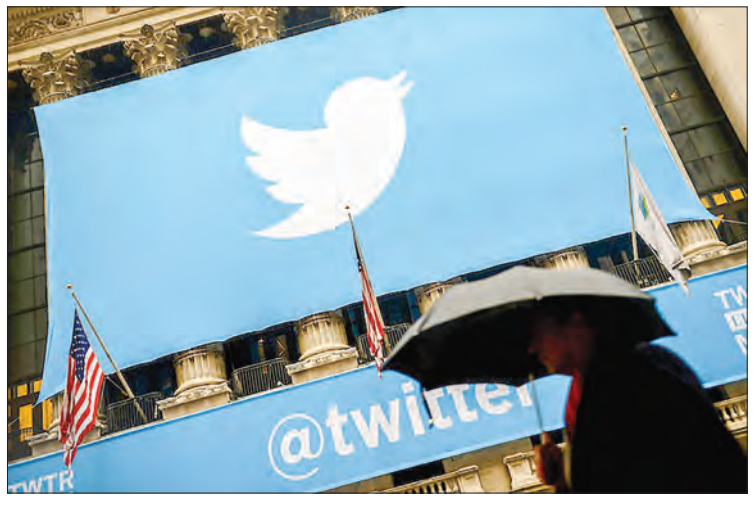
This was "driven by global conversation around current events and ongoing product improvements," Twitter said in its second quarter update.

Chief executive Jack Dorsey said the user gains showed "the highest quarterly year-over-year growth rate we've delivered" using this measure.

Twitter shares jumped 6.5 per cent in pre-market trade following the release.

The earnings report comes a week after Twitter suffered a hack that affected high-profile accounts and raised fears about security of the service which has become a key element of political conversation.

Dorsey said: "We moved quickly to address what happened, and have taken additional steps to improve resiliency against targeted social engineering attempts, implemented numerous safeguards to improve the security of our internal systems, and are working with law enforcement."—AFP ■



Twitter said advertisers pulled back on marketing on its platform during the racial equity protests in the United States in June. **PHOTO: AFP/ FILE**

Nike to cut jobs, boost direct-to-consumer venture

NEW YORK — Nike said yesterday it expects to cut jobs as it announced a slew of new executive appointments to accelerate direct-to-consumer initiatives amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The sports giant did not estimate the headcount hit, but said it expects "a net loss of jobs across the company", resulting in one-time expenses of $250-$300 million.

"We are announcing changes today to transform Nike faster, accelerate against our biggest growth opportunities and extend our leadership position," said chief executive John Donahoe.

"Now is the right time to build on Nike's strengths and elevate a group of experienced, talented leaders who can help drive the next phase of our growth."

Before COVID-19, Nike had invested heavily in recent years in upgrading smartphone applications and other tech-focused programmes amid the decline in brick-and-mortar retail and surging activity in e-commerce channels.

But the upheaval of the coronavirus has sped up those trends. Nike said the new structure would be "nimbler" and "flatter" and lead to a streamlining of its corporate leadership team.—AFP ■

Indonesia's tourism revenue drops sharply in May

JAKARTA — Indonesia's annualized revenue from the tourism sector plummeted by 97 per cent to 31 million U.S. dollars in May due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said on Wednesday.

Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment Affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan said over 2,000 hotels were forced to halt operations as the pandemic has made the number of foreign tourist arrivals plunge by over 87 per cent in May.

More than 180,000 workers were impacted by the situation, he said.

However, as the country has gradually reopened tourist destinations, the minister hoped the number of domestic travellers would drift up by 70 per cent in the third quarter.

Meanwhile, Indonesian Minister for Tourism and Creative Economy Wishnutama Kusubandio was optimistic that the tourism activities would get back to normal when a COVID-19 vaccine is ready.

The government has resumed operations of tourist destinations across the country under tight health protocols, aiming at restoring the tourism sector.— Xinhua ■



Security personnel guarding a closed-off entrance gate leading to a beach in Kuta near Denpasar, Bali, on 29 May 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

Cambodia's foreign reserves rise to 19.5 bln USD as of June: central bank

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia's international reserves had increased to 19.5 billion U.S. dollars as of June 2020, up 3.7 per cent from 18.8 billion dollars at the end of 2019, said a National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) press release on Thursday.

International reserves include foreign currencies, gold and SDR (Special Drawing Right), which are under the NBC's control. Currently, the kingdom has 36.5 tonnes of gold, the press release said, adding that 12.4 tonnes have been stashed in Switzerland, 14.1 tonnes have been invested in the Britain's central bank and 10 tonnes have been kept in Cambodia.

"International reserves remain high, which can secure the imports of goods and services for the next 10 months," the NBC said. "They are much higher than the maximum level for developing countries that should have the 3-month guarantee of imports."

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said last month that the country's economy is predicted to shrink 1.9 per cent this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it will bounce back to 3.5 per cent next year thanks to the gradual recovery of global economy and external demand.— Xinhua ■

S. Korea reports worst economic performance in more than 20 years



South Korea's economy recorded its worst performance in more than 20 years in the second quarter, the central bank said on July 23, as the coronavirus pandemic hammered its exports. **(PHOTO BY JUNG YEON-JE / AFP)**

SEOUL — South Korea's economy recorded its worst performance in more than 20 years in the second quarter, the central bank said Thursday, as the coronavirus pandemic hammered its exports.

Asia's fourth-largest economy contracted 2.9 per cent year-on-year in the April-June period, the Bank of Korea said.

It was the fastest decline since a 3.8 per cent drop in the fourth quarter of 1998, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis.

Quarter-on-quarter, it shrank 3.3 per cent, also the worst showing in more than 20 years.

South Korea endured one of the worst early outbreaks of the coronavirus outside mainland China, and while it never imposed a compulsory lockdown, strict social distancing was widely observed from March until it started loosening restrictions in May.

But its economy has been unable to escape the global impact of the pandemic.

The country is highly trade-dependent, and exports plunged 13.6 per cent year-on-year in Q2 -- the sharpest decline since 1974, in the wake of the OPEC oil crisis.

The decline was driven by "decreases in motor vehicles and coal & petroleum products", the Bank of Korea said in a statement.—AFP ■

European airlines seek freedom from airport slots

PARIS — The main association of European airlines called on 22 July on the EU to extend the suspension of its "use-it-or-lose-it" rules governing slots at airports through the slow winter season, saying the return of demand is uncertain. In March, the EU formally shelved until October 24 the requirement that airlines use 80 per cent of their slots — take-off and landing authorizations — or lose them the following year as coronavirus lockdowns meant that many flights were being cancelled.

Although airlines resumed some flights as EU nations relaxed most internal travel rules, the A4E airline association said there still aren't enough people who want to fly."The number of slots we have is too many based on the demand," said Ben Smith, chairman of A4E and the head of Air France-KLM.

The summer vacation season is when European airlines operate the most flights, while operations are scaled back during the rest of the year. Slots at busy airports at Europe's major cities are very valuable for airlines. Airports have been unhappy that some airlines are cancelling flights at the last minute, not allowing airports to allocate slots to other carriers.—AFP ■



Although airlines resumed some flights as EU nations relaxed most internal travel rules, the A4E airline association said there still aren't enough people who want to fly.
PHOTO: TWITTER

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Face Shield for COVID-19 protection in the (2019-2020) Budget year.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division, Department of Medical Services Office No (4), Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from (23.7.2020).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (5-8-2020),12:00 noon, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411628, 067-3411544, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports.

Procurement and Supply Division
Ministry of Health and Sports

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Silver Diammine Fluoride in the (2019-2020) Budget year.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division, Department of Medical Services Office No (4), Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from (24.7.2020).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (21-8-2020),12:00 noon, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411628, 067-3411544, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports.

Procurement and Supply Division
Ministry of Health and Sports

China successfully launches first Mars mission

WENCHANG — China launched a Mars probe on Thursday, designed to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission, taking the first step in its planetary exploration of the solar system.

A Long March-5 rocket, China's largest launch vehicle, carrying the spacecraft with a mass of about 5 tonnes, soared into the sky from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of southern China's island province of Hainan at 12:41 pm (Beijing Time).

About 36 minutes later, the spacecraft, including an orbiter and a rover, was sent into the Earth-Mars transfer orbit, embarking on an almost seven-month journey to the red planet, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

China's first Mars mission is named Tianwen-1, which means Questions to Heaven and comes from a poem written by Qu Yuan (about 340-278 BC), one of the greatest poets of ancient China. The name signifies the Chinese nation's perseverance in pursuing truth and science and exploring nature and the universe, said the CNSA.



A Mars probe is launched on a Long March-5 rocket from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in south China's Hainan Province, July 23, 2020. **PHOTO: (XINHUA/YANG GUANYU)**

"The successful launch is only the first step of China's Mars mission, and we hope each of the many key steps of the long journey is completed successfully," said Geng Yan, an official at the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Center of the CNSA.

The key steps include slowing down when close to Mars, orbiting, separating the landing platform and the rover from the orbiter, landing softly and roving.— Xinhua ■

Fearful Papua New Guinea calls for WHO virus help

PORT MORESBY — Papua New Guinea has asked for World Health Organization help after a rapidly spreading new coronavirus outbreak sparked preparations for large-scale community transmission in the under-resourced country.

Having mostly dodged the COVID-19 pandemic until now, Papua New Guinea reported Thursday it had detected three new cases in the previous 24 hours, bringing the total to 30 -- up from just 11 on Sunday.



Papua New Guinea had largely avoided the coronavirus pandemic, until the recent outbreak. **PHOTO: AFP**

With limited coronavirus testing and many positive cases found in health workers, there are fears the virus may have a stronger foothold than those detected cases indicate.

National pandemic response controller David Manning expressed "serious concerns on the alarming rate of increase of COVID-19 cases in Port Moresby and the likely spread to the other provinces", saying there was a "high likelihood of expanded community transmission".

Papua New Guinea is one of the poorest countries in the Pacific. Its rickety health system is already under severe pressure from the widespread transmission of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, as well as one of the world's few remaining outbreaks of polio.

Port Moresby resident and mother of five Christine Tameta told AFP that the number of cases among health workers had caused deep concern.

"We are afraid to move around in case we contract the virus, especially when there is no social distancing being observed," she said, adding that her family would be staying at home as much as possible. —AFP ■

Shanghai to relax quarantine rules for overseas arrivals

SHANGHAI — Shanghai will allow people arriving from overseas to undergo a weeklong home quarantine after finishing a seven-day concentrated quarantine in designated places starting next Monday.

The eastern Chinese metropolis previously demanded all overseas arrivals to undergo concentrated quarantine for 14 days in a bid to contain the spread of novel coronavirus.

The new decision, announced by the city's office on COVID-19 prevention and control, said Shanghai-bound travelers can enjoy the new policy if they have a residence in Shanghai and if their living condition fits the requirement of at-home quarantine.

They must receive a nucleic acid test before completing seven days of concentrated quarantine and, if their results come back negative, they will be transported to their residence to observe at-home quarantine.

The office also said Shanghai will continue to allow the elderly, minors, pregnant women and others whose condition do not allow concentrated quarantines to apply for home quarantines, as long as they test negative in nucleic acid test and fit home quarantine requirements.

On Wednesday, Shanghai reported one new imported COVID-19 case and no increase in domestically-transmitted cases, the municipal health commission said Thursday. —Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Afghan girl who killed Taliban gunmen 'ready to fight again'

KABUL — An Afghan girl who shot dead two Taliban fighters after they gunned down her parents said she was ready to confront any other insurgents who might try to attack her.

Qamar Gul, 15, killed the militants when they stormed her home last week in a remote village in the central province of Ghor.

"I no longer fear them and I'm ready to fight them again," Gul told AFP by telephone from a relative's home, where she was being watched by guards.

A photo of Gul posing with a gun has circulated online, with many praising her actions and calling for her safe passage out of the country.

It was about midnight when the Taliban arrived, Gul said, recounting the events of that night.

She was asleep in her room with her 12-year-old brother when she heard the sound of men pushing at the door of their house.—AFP ■

Wuhan receives first trans-provincial tour group since lockdown lifted

WUHAN — A tour group from outside Hubei Province on Tuesday kicked off a sightseeing tour of the provincial capital of Wuhan, the first of its kind since the city's lockdown was lifted on April 8.

The eight-member group consists of a family of seven people and a friend, all from neighbouring Hunan Province.

Their arrival marked a significant step in the resumption of trans-provincial group tours for the province where the COVID-19 epidemic wreaked havoc. On Saturday, a group of six travellers flew to northwest China's Lanzhou city, becoming the first tour group to travel out of the province.

Hubei last week announced that trans-provincial group tours were allowed to resume, and indoor tourist sites will be reopened in the province.—Xinhua ■

US House approves removing Confederate statues from Capitol



The US House approved a measure to remove from Capitol Hill statues of people who served in the Confederacy during the 1861-1865 Civil War, including this one of Confederate vice president Alexander Hamilton Stephens (L). **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON — The US House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a measure removing from Capitol Hill statues of people who served in the Confederacy during the country's bitter 19th century Civil War.

While the measure was approved 305-113 in a bipartisan vote in the House, where Democrats hold a majority, it still needs approval in the Senate, controlled by President Donald Trump's Republicans.

Trump, who has strongly opposed taking down historical statues, would also need to sign the measure for it to become law.

The bill orders the removal from the US Capitol, where Congress is located, of statues of individuals who voluntarily served in the Confederacy.

During the 1861-65 Civil War several southern states tried to secede and form an independent slaveholding republic.

The measure would also remove the statues of three men who either supported slavery or white supremacy.

Activists and many African-Americans see Confederate battle flags and monuments to Confederates as symbols of racism, while others, especially white southerners, see them as symbols of heritage.

In mid-June the portraits of four senior 19th-century lawmakers who served in the Confederacy were removed from the US Capitol.

The paintings of the men, all former speakers of the House, were taken down at the order of current Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The US public has been increasingly grappling with the country's legacy of racism and slavery since protests swept the nation following the May 25 killing of African American George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer.

"My ancestors built the Capitol, but yet there are monuments to the very people that enslaved my ancestors," said Representative Karen Bass from California, chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus.— AFP ■

New York police clear protest camp amid Trump threats

NEW YORK — New York police cleared a camp of anti-racism protesters and homeless people from outside city hall on Wednesday, after President Donald Trump threatened to send federal agents to bolster law enforcement in America's largest city.

NYPD officers — accompanied by cleaners and lawyers — dismantled the tents just before dawn, driving away around 50 demonstrators without clashes or injuries, police chief Dermot Shea told reporters.

The "Occupy City Hall" camp sprung up a month ago following widespread demonstrations against police brutality sparked by the killing in custody of unarmed black man George Floyd in Minneapolis in May.



New York police officers standby as sanitation workers remove graffiti at the site of Occupy City Hall protest. **PHOTO: AFP**

"What we saw change over the last few weeks was the gathering there got smaller and smaller, was less and less about protests, (and) more and more became an area where homeless folks were gathering.

"It was time to take action," said Mayor Bill de Blasio.

With the massive anti-police protests subsiding in New York, pressure had been mounting on officials to remove the encampment and graffiti on statues and nearby municipal buildings.

The pressure increased on Monday when Trump warned he could send federal officers to New York and other Democratic-led cities to protect federal buildings and sort out what he says is a collapse of law and order. — AFP ■

Britain says 'unfortunately clear' no Brexit deal by end of July



EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON — Britain's chief Brexit negotiator said Thursday it was clear that London's goal of striking a preliminary deal on the UK's exit from the EU will not be reached in July.

"It is unfortunately clear that we will not reach in July the 'early understanding on the principles underlying any agreement'," David Frost said, adding that "we must face the possibility that one will not be reached" at all before the post-Brexit transition period ends in December.— AFP ■

Sacking at Hungary news site fuels press freedom fears

BUDAPEST — The editor of Hungary's top independent news site was fired on Wednesday amid fears of growing government influence over the outlet and sparking a potential mass exodus by journalist staff.

Szabolcs Dull, editor-in-chief of Index.hu, Hungary's most widely read news portal, was dismissed for leaking internal documents to the media, according to a letter sent by management to staff.

Last month Dull protested against a proposed overhaul of the news site by its owners, by declaring its independence to be at risk due to "external pressures".

He said the site's freedom to publish stories critical of Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government was "in grave danger".

Index management previously said economic pressures caused by the coronavirus crisis forced the planned changes that include outsourcing much of the site's content creation. — AFP ■

MFF president attends AFC Executive online conference



Myanmar Football Federation president and Asian Football Confederation vice president U Zaw Zaw joins the online conference of the AFC yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

U Zaw Zaw, president of the Myanmar Football Federation and vice president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) attended the online conference of the AFC Executive yesterday to discuss the betterment of the Asian Football Confederation during the coronavirus pandemic period.

AFC president Mr Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, vice presidents, executive committee members from Qatar, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan and AFC General Secretary also attended the online conference.

The online conference was launched by an opening speech of the AFC president Mr Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa.

During the virtual conference, AFC authorities discussed the issues to be approved from previous virtual conferences, management programme of the executive committee sector, financial management programme, and sectors on rules and regulations and statistic. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

MFF shortlists 3 candidates for technical director position

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) has shortlisted three candidates for the Technical Director position -- each from Germany, the Netherlands and Australia -- according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

MFF was seeking the technical director position Eric Abrams from Belgium parted away with the MFF this year May.

Eric signed for a three-year contract with MFF but Eric and MFF made the mutual agreement for his leaving.

"The MFF Technical Committee has narrowed the list of 11 applicants to one candidate each from Germany, Netherland and also Australia," said Chairman U Than Toe Aung of the MFF Technical Committee.

"From here, we will be conducting interviews through video conferencing where we will also ask their plans for the development of Myanmar football."

A total of 11 applicants have submitted their resumes to the MFF mostly by European football giants' countries of Germany, Netherland, Portugal, Switzerland, Australia and Iceland in the previous months, and MFF authorities are discussing on choosing the most suitable person for the position. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Olympic cancellation spectre haunts Tokyo, one year before postponed Games

TOKYO — Japan holds subdued celebrations Thursday night to mark one year until the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics, with the coronavirus pandemic raising stark concerns about whether the Games will go ahead.

In Tokyo, which should have been buzzing with thousands of athletes and fans by now, organizers will hold a small event at an empty National Stadium in the evening after the public were barred following a new surge in infections.

Olympic countdown boards have been quietly reset around the capital, where digital signs display the message "365 days to go to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics". Despite the setbacks and the downbeat mood, Japanese and Olympic officials have not wavered from the message that the Games will go on, serving as a symbol of the world's recovery from the virus.

"They will be the first worldwide gathering after the coronavirus," International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach insisted last week.—AFP ■

Klopp delighted by trophy lift after Liverpool hit Chelsea for five

LIVERPOOL — Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said having the opportunity to lift the Premier League trophy at Anfield meant the world to him despite having to do so in an empty stadium with fans shut out due to coronavirus.

The Reds sealed a first top-flight title for 30 years last month, but had to wait until after a thrilling 5-3 win over Chelsea in their final home game of the season to lift the Premier League trophy for the first time.

"You make the best of what you can," Klopp told Sky Sports. "Today our families are allowed to be there which is incredible. It means the world to me.

"Everything would be better with fans but for months we knew that would be impossible. A few months ago I thought it was impossible that we play football.

"I couldn't be happier to be honest, it would be perfect if the stadium would be full but we cannot change it. What we tried to do is make it clear to the people that we really do it for them. It's an absolutely great moment."



Liverpool lifted the Premier League trophy for the first time on Wednesday **(AFP Photo/Laurence Griffiths)**.

Despite pleas for fans to stay away on the night Liverpool finally got their hands on the trophy, supporters crowded around the stadium even prior to kick-off, while the second half was accompanied by the constant crackling of fireworks lit by fans outside the ground.

On the field, Klopp's men ensured a memorable night was accompanied by a positive result after just two wins in five previous games since they clinched the title. And the German again promised the fans a proper party with a parade planned through the city once restrictions are lifted.—AFP ■

West Brom promoted to Premier League afer last day drama

LONDON — West Bromwich Albion clinched promotion to the Premier League with a 2-2 draw against QPR as rivals Brentford faltered on a dramatic final day of the Championship season.

Slaven Bilic's side will join Championship title winners Leeds in the top-flight next season after a nail-biting Wednesday night at the Hawthorns.

With third-placed Brentford beaten 2-1 by Barnsley and fourth-placed Fulham held to a 1-1 draw at Wigan, Albion finished in second place to secure their return to the Premier League after two seasons away.

On a riveting finale in the second tier, 2013 FA Cup winners Wigan were relegated to League One along with Hull and Charlton.—AFP ■