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Monday, 27 July 2020

47-member leading committee of 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee holds fifth meeting



The 47-member leading committee of the 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee holds fifth meeting at the Maha Pathana Cave in Thiri Mingalar Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon on 26 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE fifth meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee kicked off at the Maha Pathana Cave in Thiri Mingalar Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

The meeting was attended

by the members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumar-

abhivamsa.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, and officials of the ministry.

Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa presid-

ed over the meeting and Joint Secretary Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Panditta Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Silacara Bhivumsa acted as the master of the ceremonies. In his opening address,

Bhamo Sayadaw stressed the importance of judging the religious issues without bias to ensure the decisions made by the committee would be accepted by over 500,000 Members of the Sangha in Myanmar.

SEE PAGE-3

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 350 after two new cases reported on 26 July

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases reached 350 after 2 new cases were reported on 26 July according to Ministry of Health and Sports.

Case No 349 returned from Thailand and Case No 350 from USA.

Out of the 350 confirmed cases, six died, 290 have

recovered, 272 have been discharged from hospitals and 12 were held under investigation.—MNA

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Towards the town Kalay which means market town (2)

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More than 100 returnees come back home by train from Lashio

SHAN State (North)’s COVID-19 Containment Working Committee handed over a total of 111 returnees by train to their natives yesterday.

The Myanmar nationals returned from China arrived in Lashio through Muse, Laukkai and Chinshwehaw townships.

The returnees included 75 males and 36 females. Of them, four are from Kachin State, three from Chin State, 24 from Sagaing Region, 11 from Bago Region, two from Mon State, 25 from Magway Region, eight from Mandalay Region, one from Nay Pyi Taw, 11 from Rakhine State, 11 from Yangon Region, and 11 from Ayeyawady Region.



Officials arrange the transportation for the Myanmar returnees on 26 July. PHOTO : NAN THANDA OO (IPRD)

The Chinshwehaw’s COVID Committee handed over a total of 13,583 returnees, 8,341 males and 5,242 females, on trains to the townships concerned since 6 May.—Nan Thanda Oo (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Chinshwehaw sends back 22 returnees home on 26 July

CHINSHWEHAW’S COVID-19 Containment Working Committee handed over a total of 22 Myanmar nationals who returned from China to their natives yesterday.

The returnees included 11 males and 11 females. Of them, three are from Kanbalu Township and one from Taze in Sagaing Region, two from Moenyo in Bago Region, three from Yesagyo in Magway Region, and 13 from the townships in Shan State.

The Chinshwehaw’s COVID Committee handed over a total of 13,717 returnees, 7,594

males and 6,123 females, to the townships concerned since 30 April.—Zin Zin (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A Myanmar woman returned from China has temperature checked at the Chinshwehaw border on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: ZIN ZIN (IPRD)

Tatmadaw True News Information Team holds press briefing

THE Tatmadaw True News Information Team held a press briefing at the Defence Services Museum in Nay Pyi Taw on 25 July afternoon.

The press briefing was conducted by Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun from the Tatmadaw True News Information Team.

Before the press briefing, officials from the Directorate of Medical Services of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) measured temperatures of the attendees. Social distancing was also enforced in the press conference as a COVID-19 preventive measure.

During the press briefing, Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun explained about Tatmadaw’s efforts related to “Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief” (HADR). He said that in accordance with the guidelines of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Tatmadaw, like international Tatmadaw, regularly practice to quickly respond to natural disaster.

Every time natural disaster occurs, Tatmadaw immediately goes to the locations and provides humanitarian assistance without delay, said Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun. Regarding disaster management, Tatmadaw formed many levels of committees, includ-

ing the Central Committee led by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, and the work committees, according to Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun.

Tatmadaw issued a statement to enforce a ceasefire in certain areas from 10 May to 31 August 2020. Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun spoke about the situations of Ethnic Armed Organizations in the five regional commands from 22 June to 21 July.

Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun also highlighted the meeting between the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Myanmar at the parlour of Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 July. He explained about deep relations between two armed forces in fighting COVID-19, peace process, border security issues, and cooperation in drug eradication.

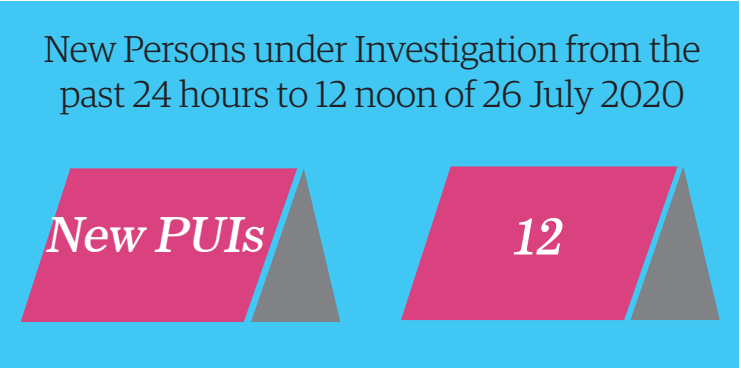
Afterwards, Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun answered the questions raised by reporters.

A total of 42 journalists from 22 news agencies (local media and local-based foreign news agencies) attended the press briefing.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

COVID-19 figure in Myanmar reaches 350 after two new cases reported on 26 July

FROM PAGE-1
Updated at 8 pm, 26 July 2020



Two new cases of COVID-19 on 26 July 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Oversea travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
349	24	Female	Kawkareik Township, Kayin State	No	Yes, (Thailand)	People’s Hospital, Hpa-an Township	Positive	Keep under Investigation (Myawady Township)
350	50	Male	Pyapon Township, Ayeyawady Region	No	Yes, (American)	Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon	Positive	Keep under Investigation (Mingaladon Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

The meaning of independence

Independence does not mean an undisciplined way of life. Independence strictly dictates that we live a disciplined life. Independence can survive only with discipline. After we achieve independence, the people need to observe discipline more strictly.

(Excerpt from Bogyoke Aung San's speech broadcast on radio on 5 April 1947)



47-member leading committee of 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka ...

FROM PAGE-1

Speaking at the meeting, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko called on the Members of the Sangha for timely preventing ideology, teachings and distribution of books which are in contradiction to the teachings of the Buddha and posing a danger to the Theravada Buddhism.

Besides, the Union Minister also urged the country's highest Buddhist regulatory committee to give advices to the Buddhist devotees on making Buddha statues in conformity with the guidelines of the Theravada Buddhism to ensure that the statues are graceful for the Buddhist devotees. He said the government removed 109 Buddhist statues

housed at the Seintarmuni Minn Win Mountain Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana on 6th July as they went against the Theravada Buddhism. The Union Minister also called on the members of the body, joining hands with local authorities and Sangha bodies, to enforce religious rules on monks, novices and nuns as part of efforts for purification

of Buddhism. Afterwards, the meeting was followed and members of the 8th committee discussed the measures taken during the first period of the duty taken by the third branch of the 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and made resolutions. During the meeting, members of the Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee discussed

religious issues including arbitration of disputes in accordance with the rules, learning and teaching of Buddha's teachings, and the meeting came to an end in the afternoon. Nearly 90 per cent of Myanmar's population practices Theravada Buddhism, the more conservative of the two major branches of the religion. —MNA ■

Myanmar migrant workers, seamen return home by relief flight



Myanmar citizens who came back from Jordan queuing for immigration service at Yangon International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Returnees come back home from Singapore seen at Yangon International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

A relief flight by Myanmar Airways International (MAI) bringing back 171 Myanmar nationals landed at the Yangon International Airport at 4:45 am on 26 July. With the help of Myanmar Embassy in Tel Aviv, the 171 Myanmar nationals working at several companies including Rich Pine, Century Miracle, Camel and Vega in Jordan could be brought back home. This is the

second relief flight arranged for Myanmar nationals who stranded in Jordan. Similarly, with the help of the Consulate General Office in Hong Kong, 58 Myanmar nationals who stranded in Taiwan (Chinese-Taipei) were brought back to the Yangon International Airport by China Airlines flight at 9:25 am on 26 July. Furthermore, after coop-

eration between the relevant shipping companies, and the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore, 45 Myanmar seamen who needed crew-change after their contracts had expired could be brought back by an MAI charter flight. The flight came from the Singapore Changi Airport landed at the Yangon International Airport at 1pm on 26 July. As they arrived in the Yan-

gon International Airport, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged proper medical check-ups and 21-day quarantine for the returnees. To bring back Myanmar nationals stranded in foreign nations by relief flights and charter flights in accordance with the

instructions from National-Level Central Committee for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective nations, and brought back a total of 8,831 Myanmar citizens.—MNA ■ (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

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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.

Irrigation officials inspect dams in Nay Pyi Taw



Officials inspect the Chaung Ma Nge Dam in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: HTET HLYAN

NAY PYI TAW Council Member U Aye Maung Sein and officials from Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department inspected the strength of Paunglaung Dam, Chaung Ma Nge Dam and Phaung Laung Dam in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Saturday.
Director of Construction No.5 U Ko Ko Naing reported on the conditions of the dams, storage of water in the dam and distribution of water for monsoon paddy cultivation to the officials during the inspection.
The department is monitoring dams for safety and for irrigating for both monsoon paddy and summer paddy cultivations.—Htet Hlyan
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Nature lovers expect to have petrified Wood Park in Magway Region

MAGWAY Region primarily produces raw materials of petrified wood, and nature lovers are keen on petrified Wood Park in the region, said petrified wood collectors.
If the petrified wood park exists in the region, it will become a new tourist destination, said Deputy Director U Myint Sein of regional Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.
It will create job opportunities for residents, have a fair market for exports, and raise the value of the natural resource.
The petrified wood is found in 16 out of 25 townships of Magway Region. "It is around 20 years that they have been commercially produced. It is also an export item for China border market. We can earn revenue if we create the park in the region," said a petrified wood collector.
It is better if we can create a park or make value-added products. This way, it can earn more revenues, said the collectors.
If we can create the petrified wood park, the students and researchers can discover more findings, according to Green Network.

"Earlier, more than 30 companies were exporting petrified wood. But, a mismatch between supply and demand led to a drastic decline in prices. Now, only six companies are engaged in their export," said U Thi Han Tun, chair of the Mandalay Region Petrified Wood Entrepreneurs Association.
"The market is solely dependent on demand from China. The market has cooled since

late 2014. Price manipulation and illegal trade have brought down the number of exporter companies," he added.
Myanmar allowed the export of petrified wood in 2012, and China is the only market for it. Higher supply, lack of price regulations, and the conditions in the Chinese market have led to market deterioration after 2014. Some traders are exporting them through the illegal

trade channel, he stated.
Petrified wood is found in the central regions of Myanmar — Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway. Petrified wood mined from Mahlaing and Natogyi townships in Mandalay is of high quality, while Magway and other regions only produce raw materials which can be used for interior decoration.—Zayyatu/ Khine Set Wai
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A traveller walks viewing the pieces of petrified wood in Magway on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: ZAYYATU

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

People can face anxiety during COVID-19 and remember not to resolve things with anger, not act out of impulse, avoid alcohol and drug abuse, search for solutions together with family members and close friends, perform physical activities according to weather and health situation, eat nutritional foods, get enough sleep to resolve mental pressure.
Everyone can put these suggestions into practice to prevent their mental health from become fatigued and boost willpower.

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)

MoLIP to speed up issuing citizenship scrutiny cards ahead of Nov-8 elections

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MoLIP) U Thein Swe held a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe urged the officials concerned to speed up the works to ensure every citizen gets the national registration card which is required for voting in 2020 General Election.

He also said it is important for eligible citizens to gain voting rights and not to lose voting

rights.

The ministry is now focusing on issuing the citizenship scrutiny cards to both eligible voters at home and abroad.

They are also cooperating with foreign embassies so that Myanmar citizens abroad can vote in the Nov-8 elections, he added.

He also called for discussions on issuing cards that can be used in upcoming election at the meeting.

The ministry's department heads in regions and states reported on their works to the

meeting.

The Union Minister urged the attendees to ensure their works to meet the ministry's objectives.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister U Myint Kyaing, Permanent Secretary U Aye Lwin, directors-general, deputy directors-general and directors from the relevant departments, and heads and officials from the ministry's states and regions departments. — MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister U Thein Swe speaks during the coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: MNA

520 Myanmar migrant workers return via Myawady border on 26 July

A total of 520 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand — 297 males and 223 females — returned home through the Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) in Myawady, Kayin State yesterday.

Kayin State Hluttaw Representative U Than Zin Aung, Myawady District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Chan Nyein and officials from

district and township departments helped them with medical tests and other supplies at the border checkpoints, and sent them to the quarantine centres concerned.

A total of 53,796 returnees including 11,680 in May, 25,338 in June and 16,778 in July so far have come back home through this border crossing since 1 May. —Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Two Myanmar women returned from Thailand stands in a row to have temperature checked at the Myawady border on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

Myanmar imports over \$890 mln worth iron/steel materials in Oct-May

THE value of Myanmar's iron and steel imports for the construction sector is valued over US\$893.8 million in eight months of the current fiscal year 2019-2020, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

Additionally, \$386 million worth iron and steel products are also imported during October-May period.

At present, Myanmar's steel demand is estimated about 2.5 million tonnes per year, and 92 per cent of which are imported. The demand is likely to grow up to 5.4 million tonnes per year in 2030, according to the Myanmar Steel Association (MSA).

If Myanmar can fulfil the requirements of local steel consumption and focus on import substitution, the steel industry will strategically contribute to the nation's interest. Steel con-

sumption includes in calculating economy growth index, said MSA Chair U Sit Taing Aung.

Having said that, 11 executive members of MSA established MSA Public Company Limited and they are making efforts to set up iron and steel industrial zone, to reduce the outflow of US dollar, effectuating the development of steel industry and assisting in the country's infrastructure building.

Studies for implementation of iron and steel industrial zone project are underway in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine and Mon states. The project is slated to commence within three to five year after completing studies, he continued.

The government needs to support the steel sector by granting tax relief and land rights, controlling illegal im-

port, making anti-dumping law come into the effort and formulating steel policy, according to the MSA.

"Steel industry is pivotal in industrial infrastructure building. This project needs to be implemented for prospects of the country's economy", he said.

The MSA will move forward to the development of industry standards which are compatible with the country and the emergence of steel library and steel laboratory. The association will cooperate with the international organizations to grow the steel sector, he added.

China is the main supplier for Myanmar's steel market. Iron and steel are also imported from India and the Republic of Korea. — GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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“People are the key”

US dollar likely to remain low in local forex market



A clerk checks US 100 dollar bank notes at a foreign currency exchange counter in Yangon. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE US dollar has been sliding against the Kyat in the local currency market, with the exchange rate touching a low of K1,379 per dollar on 26 July, which slumped from K1,403 registered on 21 July, said money exchangers.

At present, the global forex market sees the weak sentiment amid the coronavirus outbreak, with the US dollar index of around 94.35.

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

ket, said a market observer.

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

The dollar exchange rate is expected to remain low due to the weak demand in the local forex market, said traders.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) is reported to purchase over 160 million dollars from private banks in the past six months to govern the market.

The domestic forex market witnessed the maximum rate of K1,410 in June. Despite the CBM's dollar purchase, the dollar is currently pegged at around \$1,365-1,379 in the domestic market.

In October last year, the dollar exchange rate had hit a high of K1,600. Thereafter, the dollar has been falling in the local currency market.

— Ko Htet ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Hong Kong SAR investments exceed \$1.34 bln in Q3

HONG KONG SAR has emerged as the largest investor in Myanmar with 41 Hong Kong-based firms pumping in US\$1.34 billion in real estate development, electricity, and garment businesses at the end of the third quarter of current financial year, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Hong Kong SAR topped the list of investors in the past nine months, followed by Singapore, which invested an estimated \$1 billion in 13 projects.

Investments also flowed into the country from China, France, Germany, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Macau, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the UK, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, Viet Nam, Samoa, Seychelles, Estonia.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) of \$4.336 billion flowed into Myanmar during the October-June period, including an expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to DICA.

DICA intends to reach its

FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the 2019-2020 financial year.

“This year, infrastructure projects such as industrial parks and urban development projects are bringing large investments into the country,” said DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

“Myanmar is trying to attract foreign investment by providing tax relief, tax incentives, investment opportunities, and fast processing of proposals. However, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations is inviting only responsible businesses to the country,” he said.

The economic interaction between Myanmar and Hong Kong has been increasing rapidly. Hong Kong emerged as the fourth largest investor in Myanmar after Singapore, China, and Thailand. Between 1988 and June 2020, 261 enterprises from Hong Kong brought in foreign direct investment of \$9.6 billion into Myanmar, according to official data on permitted enterprises provided by the DICA. — GNLM ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

To prevent COVID-19 outbreak at our factory, to our employees, and to our community we implemented Ball’s global standard preventative measures as early as March : Mr Asa Robinson, General Manager (Myanmar Team)

Q: How many workers are there and how is your factory managing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 there? Please let us know your challenges and achievements regarding battling the virus.

A: Ball Corporation supplies innovative, sustainable aluminum packaging solutions for beverage, personal care, and household products all over the world, as well as aerospace, other technologies and services. Ball Corporation and its subsidiaries employ more than 18,300 people worldwide with a team of 135 in Yangon.

Our operation in Myanmar began in late November 2016 at Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Thanlyin, with the majority of employees from the local community. To prevent COVID-19 outbreak at our factory, to our employees, and to our community we implemented Ball’s global standard preventative measures as early as March. This included strict social distancing, the wearing of masks and new innovative approaches to the way we operate. As the Ministry of Health’s Guidelines were implemented for Factories, Workshops, Work Sites and Construction regarding the Prevention Of COVID-19 all proceed were already in place.

Q: How is your factory managing for the livelihood of the workers amidst the COVID-19?

A: Safety is our top priority and our main focus is on creating a safety culture change within our whole team. This is something that we have been recognized as part of the Global Award for Hoover Sustainability. Our whole team ethos is to support each other and therefore risk the global pandemic has to our business and

the wider community. We have always ensured full support and delivered training to our team, working with the very highest global standards.

We are donating \$5 million to combat the impacts of COVID-19 in our communities around the world. Our focus is to provide critical support for medical supplies, food security, small businesses and at-risk communities. Each region has the flexibility to decide how best to use the funds to address COVID-19 related challenges in the most impactful ways possible.

Ball Myanmar donated €12,000 to local communities for COVID-19 relief. We chose two organizations – Clean Yangon and Medical Action Myanmar, and donated €6,000 each for COVID-19 relief in June 2020. Those organizations have donated to households which had hardship amid



Mr Asa Robinson
General Manager (Myanmar)

COVID-19. Our donation supported total 1,164 households of at risk communities including families with dependents and elderly living in Thanlyin, Hlinethaya, and Shwepyitha townships.

Q: Is there any achievement this year?

A: Ball Corporation recognized our Myanmar team in Yangon, out of its 80 global manufacturing plants, with the 2019 R. David Hoover Sustainability

Award for making a substantial impact toward Ball’s sustainability goals, both inside the plant and within their communities.

This includes progress across the areas with the most significant sustainability impact across Ball’s operations (safety, energy, water, and waste), as well as the promotion of aluminum packaging’s sustainability credentials and engagement in their local communities.

The plant was accredited for its significant operational and social sustainability improvements. Our Yangon plant has consistently improved its electricity efficiency since 2016, improving by nearly 23% in 2019 by implementing several energy efficiency projects. —GNLM

Mr Asa Robinson is General Manager of Ball Beverage Packaging Yangon (Ball Corporation - Myanmar)

BACKBONE OF ECONOMY

Indian firms struggle to lure migrant workers back

SPURNING free air tickets, accommodation and higher pay, millions of migrant workers who fled India's cities when coronavirus hit are too scared to return, with grim implications for the already crumbling economy.

Migrant labourers form the backbone of Asia's third-biggest economy toiling in every sector from making consumer goods and stitching garments to driving cabs.

But when India went into lockdown in late March, vast numbers lost their jobs, prompting a huge heart-rending exodus back to their home villages, sometimes on foot, their children in their arms.

Some died on the way.

Mumbai's swanky high-rises, for example, were built and largely staffed by people from poorer states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha, who worked as security guards, cooks and cleaners.

But as the city became a virus hotspot, around 80 percent of construction workers left the financial hub after work came to a standstill, according to the Maharashtra Chamber of Housing Industry.

Four months on, with lockdown measures eased, some workers have trickled back but more than 10,000 building sites are lying virtually abandoned

due to severe labour shortages across the city.

"We are trying our best to bring back migrant workers, even going to the extent of giving them air tickets, COVID-19 health insurance ... (and) weekly checkups by doctors," real estate developer Rajesh Prajapati said.

"But it has not reaped any positive signs yet," he told AFP.

Property giant Hiranandani Group which -- unusually -- continued to pay its workers during lockdown, has had more success, but has still only managed to convince around 30 percent of its 4,500 workers to stay on site.

"We looked after them,



Migrant labourers form the backbone of India's economy. PHOTO: AFP

took care of their food, safety and sanitisation and even had mobile creches for kids," the group's billionaire co-founder Niranjan Hiranandani told AFP. SOURCE: AFP

ADVANCED AUTONOMOUS DRIVING TECH

Pandemic getting Japan's automated delivery services on the road

JAPAN is paving the way for autonomous delivery robots to become part of everyday life, with social distancing efforts required during the coronavirus pandemic making the push all the more vital.

The coronavirus crisis has increased the appeal of services that allow for reduced human contact and Japanese firms are counting on the potential of robots that can, in the not so distant future, deliver a range of products from nearby warehouses or shops to consumers.

In August, an autonomous delivery robot developed by

ZMP Inc., dubbed the DeliRo, will deliver Japanese soba noodle dishes to customers in a trial in Tokyo.

Customers can place orders via tablet device during the event from Aug. 12 to 16 near JR Takanawa Gateway Station, make a cashless payment and have their food delivered by the robot within a designated area.

"We want to explore what kinds of autonomous delivery services are possible and what the DeliRo can offer at a time when new lifestyles are called for amid the coronavirus out-

break," a ZMP official said.

The DeliRo, measuring about 1 meter in height with a load capacity of 50 kilograms, is capable of detecting and avoiding obstacles blocking its way using advanced autonomous driving tech. It travels at a maximum speed of 6 kilometers per hour.

The Japanese government is stepping up its push for autonomous delivery services in the hope they will alleviate the acute shortage of labor in the rapidly aging country.

One outstanding issue, however, is to decide how to treat low-speed, self-driving vehicles that travel below 6 km per hour because the existing legal framework in Japan does not cover them, an impediment to conducting test runs on public roads.

An expert panel under the National Police Agency has begun discussions on how traffic rules should apply to the delivery robots and the government aims to allow trials on public roads this year, as long as they can be monitored remotely.

E-commerce giant Rakuten Inc. has said it plans to carry out a demonstration of a delivery service using an autonomous vehicle on a public road by the end of 2020.

SOURCE: Kyodo



ZMP Inc. CEO Hisashi Taniguchi speaks before the company's autonomous delivery robot CarriRo Deli at a gathering in Tokyo on July 25, 2019. (KYODO)

SPECIAL FLIGHTS

Hot air balloons take off for 1st time from Israel's int'l airport

FOR the first time ever, hot air balloons took off from Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport on Saturday, the Israel Airports Authority (IAA) said.

The four balloons, flown by Israeli companies Rize Up and Skytrek, received the IAA permission due to the lower number of flights amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Dozens of aviation enthusiasts came to the airport to watch the event and photograph it, as the balloons took off on a runway near the airport's main terminal, Terminal 3, reaching an altitude of about 2 km.

Recently, the IAA allowed

aviation enthusiasts from all sectors, such as flying ATVs and ultra-light aircraft, to conduct special flights from the airport, which previously could not be possible due to heavy air traffic.

The Hebrew news website "Ynet" reported that one of the participants in the balloons flight was a 72-year-old recovered coronavirus patient, after being hospitalized in critical condition.

In mid-June, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu estimated that the opening of Israeli skies to flights would be on Aug. 1.

SOURCE: Xinhua



A hot air balloon is seen above Ben Gurion International Airport near central Israeli city of Tel Aviv on July 25, 2020. (XINHUA PHOTO)

Lessening impacts from coronavirus: We're in it together

THE International Labour Organization has estimated that about 25 million jobs around the world can be laid off due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has brought repercussions on the hotel and tourism industry, construction sector, transportation, agriculture, livestock breeding, wholesale and retail businesses and other services in Myanmar just as much as the rest of the world.

Myanmar has also seen massive downsizing in factories in companies, businesses shutting down or suspended and Myanmar migrant workers returning home every day.

The Union Government is taking the initiative to administer transportation of Myanmar migrant workers, mitigating economic repercussions on businesses, economic rejuvenation, and containment of the disease in collaboration with the entire country. The

To support the employment agencies, the Union Government will grant loans to overseas employment agencies and training courses or classes if they meet set standards.

government is also working to prevent job losses by creating job opportunities during and after the spread of COVID-19.

The Cash-for-Work programme being implemented by the government under its COVID-19 Economic Response Plan-CERP is providing financial support to wage earners in some 2500 villages nationwide.

Meanwhile, a large number of Myanmar migrant workers working overseas are still returning home.

Employment agencies are obliged for implementing the basic rights of workers in domestic and overseas settings in accordance with the law for providing a safe workplace.

The ministry acknowledges Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation-MOEAF and those working to compile correct statistics of returnees in Myawady, the border town

with Thailand. Employment agencies should ensure they have an updated comprehensive list of Myanmar citizens working abroad, the region they were working in, and their date and other information upon return.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is developing a computer software for this matter and will be able to make a detailed list of names, nature of employment and region travelling for work in the future.

To support the employment agencies, the Union Government will grant loans to overseas employment agencies and training courses or classes if they meet set standards. Training centers that meet regulations from the Ministry of Health and Sports will also be allowed to reopen soon.

To lessen the consequences of the global pandemic, employers and employment agencies are advised to seek ways for tackling the crisis together with the government before the situation worsens.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population always has its doors open to the employment agency federation should they wish to discuss their difficulties and challenges in a trans-



Raising public health literacy: crucial in second phase of COVID-19 pandemic

By Dr U Than Sein, Dr U Thein Shwe

MYANMAR is entering the rainy season from early June and the second phase of the COVID-19 outbreak. When people resume their lives, out of economic necessity, practicing physical distancing will be more important than ever. As this concept is not practised widely by the population and not well understood, raising public health literacy and public awareness are needed.

It has been hectic days for the two and half months, after the first COVID-19 positive case in Myanmar was identified on March 23. A broad spectrum of public health and other socio-economic measures was undertaken by the Government to curb the spread of the virus. Thingyan water festival event and many religious activities were cancelled and a stay at home period announced, curfews were ordered, domestic and international travel restricted, and some of the Yangon townships with a spike in COVID-19 cases were locked down. This was needed as the public health system of Myanmar has limited capacity to deal with large-scale outbreak.

By the end of May, the number of new cases had dwindled to none or only a few per day. On May 30, the Ministry of Health issued an order that boiled down to a

softening of some of the measures taken and in which it also stated that community spread is not a factor at this point in time, and that most new cases are imported from abroad. On June 15, when the current measures lapse, it is to be expected that a further softening of restrictions will be announced. The Ministry of Education has announced that basic education high schools will be opened by July 1st. There is also some relaxation by reopening the Food and Beverage Shops, and main markets.

Myanmar is not out of the woods, though. The monsoon season is the traditional influenza and dengue season, so we must remain vigilant. In addition to this, the economic impact of the COVID-19 measures has been sizeable, especially on the poor. Thousands of jobs have been lost, remittances of migrant workers have shrunk, and inward investment has come to a grinding halt. In short, the Government is facing a difficult balancing act: how public health would be protected when everybody wants to go back to work? There is also the political dimension, with the elections looming large and several parties jockeying for position or criticizing the Government.

It is unavoidable that Myanmar society will re-open. So, how

can we keep ourselves safe in that scenario? That is the key question that the Post-COVID Advisory Committee, set up by the Minister of Health and Sports, Dr U Myint Htwe, and of which the authors are members, is currently pondering.

Of the protective behaviors

It is unavoidable that Myanmar society will re-open. So, how can we keep ourselves safe in that scenario? That is the key question that the Post-COVID Advisory Committee, set up by the Minister of Health and Sports, Dr U Myint Htwe, and of which the authors are members, is currently pondering.

that need to be maintained, mask wearing, temperature measuring and hand washing are already quite common and well understood among general population. Physical/social distancing is not nearly practised as widely, particularly in low income neighbourhoods and rural environments.

One of the reasons for the lack of distancing can be found in part of Myanmar culture. It is

considered to be slightly awkward to be far away from your relatives, friends or colleagues, and speak each other loudly. In situations where there is a clear difference of hierarchy, soft speaking is required. In ASEAN culture, the concept of private space is not as well developed as in East Asian

or Western countries. People are used to getting close to each other. On top of that the term “social distancing” is considered to be confusing.

One of the challenges in urban and metro areas is that it is hard for low income workers to keep their distance. They rely on cheap public transport – trains and buses packed with people – and often work in crowded cir-

cumstances like markets/factories. The COVID-19 guidelines for management of the factory’s floor, which the Ministry of Health and Sports, had tried to address this issue. Nonetheless, for many factories, especially in the garment sector, it will be hard to achieve 100 % compliance.

In rural areas, the challenges are different. Farmers and farmhands work in open air circumstances, with a lot of ventilation and some distance between people. Their huts usually have windows, and thus, virus-carrying aerosols are dispersed rapidly by drafts. In the villages and hamlets of Myanmar gatherings like religious ceremonies, village meetings and marriage ceremonies pose the largest risk of infection. It’s important that rural audiences are reached with tailor-made messages about the risks they are facing and how they can protect themselves best against infection.

In the first phase of the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar, the People’s Health Foundation, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS), ran the mass media campaign “Let’s Beat COVID Together”, which was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies. This campaign was obviously just one piece of the puzzle; the Ministry of Health and Sports has stepped up ad-

mirably and distributed a broad spectrum of materials on safe behavior, like wearing masks, stay at home, keep distance, etc., in the last two months.

During the early phase of the COVID-19-crisis, MoHS officials and staff responded quickly and worked tirelessly to stop the virus from spreading further. After this first period of stringent measures and broad messaging, we now need to focus on the behaviors that will keep people safe when they go back to work and resume their normal lives. Keeping a safe distance is going to be crucial to curb the spread of the virus in the monsoon season. Clear and persuasive messaging through public awareness campaigns, tailored to urban and rural audiences, will be the key in the coming months.

Only then can we be confident that we can prevent the second wave of infections that some fear.

Dr U Than Sein is the President of the People’s Health Foundation. Dr U Thein Shwe is the Vice-President. They both are members of the Post-COVID-19 Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health and Sports.



COVID - 19 : THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS IN MYANMAR

Virus-hit sectors in Myanmar

By Athira Nortajuddin , Journalist at The ASEAN Post

TO DATE, ASEAN has over 200,000 coronavirus infections across all 10 member states, with more than 6,000 fatalities as a result of the deadly disease. Although other regions such as Europe and the Americas have recorded more COVID-19 cases compared to Southeast Asia – the pandemic has still managed to ravage livelihoods and local industries in the latter region.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected that growth in Southeast Asia will decelerate from 4.4 per cent in 2019 to one per cent this year before rebounding to 4.7 per cent in 2021.

“The evolution of the global pandemic – and thus the out-

look for the global and regional economy – is highly uncertain. Growth could turn out lower, and the recovery slower, than we are currently forecasting,” said Yasuyuki Sawada, ADB’s chief economist.

For ASEAN member state Myanmar, despite the low reported cases of COVID-19 in the country which stands at 343 infections as of 23 July – the social and economic effects could be severe, noted the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

An IMF publication titled, ‘Six Charts on Myanmar’s Economy in the Time of COVID-19’ states that the pandemic shock has affected the economy’s key growth engines. It explains that the Country has seen a sharp



This file photo shows workers at a garment factory in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

decline in exports, remittances, and tourist arrivals. At the same time, domestic economic activity has been constrained by strict measures to curb the virus.

According to a recent report by the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organisation (MTPO), the tourism industry has been hit hardest by the pandemic, fol-

lowed by the garment industry. Other sectors that have been feeling the pinch include the rubber export and manufacturing sectors.

Local media in the country reported that nearly one third of all companies in the country have temporarily shuttered due to the pandemic.

Tourism

Back in March, Myanmar’s Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism, U Tin Latt told local media that he expects tourist arrivals in the country to fall by 50 per cent this year amid the coronavirus crisis.

“Chinese tourists account for around 25 per cent of tourists to Myanmar. As Chinese people have stopped travelling, we are likely to lose that 25 per cent. Travellers from Western countries, Japan and Korea have also cancelled their trips, so tourist arrivals will drop by 20 to 50 per cent this year,” said U Tin Latt. **SEE PAGE-10**



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Sunday 26 July, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 27 July 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Rakhine State, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway and Ayeyawady regions, Eastern Shan and Chin states, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago and Yangon regions, Northern Shan and Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Ayeyawady Region. 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: Likelihood of increase of rain in Sagaing and Mandalay regions, Kachin and Shan states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Warning (Issued at 12:00 hrs MST on 26-7-2020)

According to the (11:30) hrs MST observations today, the water levels of Ayeyawady River at Mandalay and Myinmu are observed as about (1) foot and at Sagaing is observed as about (½) foot below their respective danger levels. It may reach their respective danger levels during the next (3) days at Mandalay and Myinmu and next (2) days at Sagaing.

According to the (11:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Dokehtawady River at Myitnge is observed as about (½) foot below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying area at Mandalay, Sagaing, Myinmu and Myitnge to take precaution measure.

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“ILLEGALLY” RETURNING

Suspected case of new coronavirus detected in N. Korea: KCNA

A first suspected case of the new coronavirus in North Korea has been detected, prompting leader Kim Jong Un to convene an emergency meeting of the ruling party, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said Sunday.

North Korea had previously claimed it was free of the virus, having cut off traffic to and from China since earlier this year. The coronavirus was first detected late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan and later spread across the globe.

A person who defected to South Korea three years ago is “suspected to have been infected with the vicious virus” after “illegally” returning to the North’s border city of Kaesong, KCNA said.

Kaesong has been “totally” blocked since Friday, while people who came into contact with the person and those who have traveled from the city in past five days have been put under quarantine, the news agency said.

At the enlarged emergency gathering of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, held on Saturday, Kim pledged to implement anti-epidemic measures at the “maximum” level. “Despite the intense preventive anti-epidemic measures taken in all fields throughout the country and tight closure of all the channels for the last six months, there happened a critical situation,” Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA.

SOURCE: Kyodo



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un convened an emergency politburo meeting on Saturday to implement a ‘maximum emergency system and issue a top-class alert’ to contain the virus, official news agency KCNA said.
KCNA VIA KNS/AFP

MOxAd-Tech

Reusable mask “capable of inactivating coronavirus” launched in Portugal



Portuguese barber Elizio da Silva Gomes waits for customers at the Campos barber shop in Lisbon. PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/AFP

A consortium of companies and research institutes announced on Saturday that they have created a type of reusable mask capable of inactivating the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19 disease.

Named MOxAd-Tech, the textile mask “successfully passed the tests carried out by the Joao Lobo Antunes Institute of Molecular Medicine,” the consortium said in a statement sent to journalists.

The creators claimed that the mask has an “innovative

coating that neutralizes the SARS-CoV-2 virus when it comes into contact with the fabric, an effect that remains even after 50 washes.”

Pedro Simas, a virologist, explained that the tests on the MOxAd-Tech mask revealed a “99 percent viral reduction after one hour of contact with the virus, according to the test parameters indicated in the international standard.”

“In a simplified way, these tests consist of analyzing the tissue after contact with a

solution that contains a certain amount of virus, whose viability is measured over time,” said Simas.

The masks, being produced in Portugal, will be sold for 10 euros (11.6 U.S. dollars) in the country and throughout the European Union.

Portugal recorded four more COVID-19 deaths and 263 new infections in the last 24 hours, bringing the totals to 1,716 and 49,955 since the beginning of the pandemic.

SOURCE: Xinhua

Virus-hit sectors in Myanmar

FROM PAGE-9

International commercial flights to Myanmar have been suspended since late March and are banned until 31 July. Nevertheless, Myanmar vice-president, Henry Van Thio recently said that it was unlikely for the country to allow international passenger flights until the end of the third quarter of this year.

This has caused great concern to those in the travel industry in Myanmar.

Although the country has reopened domestic tourism, local tour companies are still struggling and many may have to cease operations if international passenger flights were not

allowed until October, said Union of Myanmar Travel Association chairman U Naung Naung Han.

“It appears that we can no longer wait for COVID-19 to be eliminated. By the time COVID-19 is eliminated, tour operators will no longer have a business,” he warned.

It was reported on 22 July that the country’s Ministry of Hotels and Tourism had rolled out plans to boost domestic tourism such as providing tax rebates and reliefs to tourism operators, and gradually opening tourism destinations with physical distancing guidelines in place.

Exports

Daw Naw Mutakapaw, Direc-

tor General of the MTPO said that the export sector in Myanmar has been affected as a result of the pandemic, also citing declining demand as one of the main factors.

Based on local media reports, Myanmar produces around 200,000 tons of rubber each year. While the country only uses eight percent of its rubber, it exports 90 percent of it to other countries such as China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, among others.

According to the MTPO report, the rubber export sector has been significantly affected and small-scale rubber companies have been hit hard as well.

The Assistant Permanent

Secretary of Myanmar’s Commerce Ministry, U Khin Maung Lwin, explained that rubber exports earnings declined by US\$23 million in around seven months as the rubber export volume decreased by over 18,000 tons compared to the same period last year.

Other than that, the country’s seafood industry has also felt the pandemic pinch.

Prior to the outbreak, the Myanmar Fisheries Federation projected record exports of US\$1 billion for 2020, up by 40 percent from 2019. However, the forecast has since been slashed to just US\$350 million.

“It is a time of zero exports without any new orders from

buyer countries,” said Hnin Oo, Senior Vice-President of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

The country’s fishery exports mainly depend on China, the United States (US), Japan and European countries, he added.

Unfortunately, with almost all exports ceasing since February to contain the spread of the new coronavirus, major buyers have halted their orders. It was reported that an estimated one million people in Myanmar may lose their jobs in the fisheries industry.

SOURCE:
THE ASEAN POST
■ ■ ■

UK to unveil obesity plan after PM's near-death experience



Boris Johnson, seen in his mayor of London days on a visit to Jakarta, says the coronavirus is a 'wake-up call' to the risks of being overweight and junk food advert bans and more biking can help tackle the issue. **AFP/FILE**

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to roll out a £10 million anti-obesity campaign, including junk food advert bans, following his own brush with death that he partly blamed on his weight.

Johnson will announce his “Better Health” campaign on Monday, which is expected to include encouraging doctors to issue “cycling prescriptions” for overweight patients, more segregated cycling lanes and a ban on junk food television ads before 9.00pm, according to British media reports.

“COVID-19 has given us all a wake-up call of the immediate and long-term risks of being overweight, and the Prime Minister is clear we must use this moment to get healthier, more active and eat better,” said a government spokesman on Sunday.

“We will be urging the public to use this moment to take stock of how they live their lives, and to take simple steps to lose weight, live healthier lives, and reduce pressure on the NHS.”

Restaurants will also have to publish the number of calories in the meals they serve, according to a report in the Daily Mail.

Johnson, who has fought his own battles to control his weight, required intensive care treatment in April after catching the virus. The plan, which the Guardian estimated would cost £10 million (\$12.8 million, 11 million euros), marks a U-turn by the prime minister, who has long railed against the interventionist “nanny state”. A Public Health England (PHE) study published on Saturday found that obesity increased the risk of death from coronavirus by 40 per cent.—AFP ■

Growing Israel protest movement calls for Netanyahu to go

JERUSALEM — “We won’t leave until Bibi leaves.” Israel’s struggle to contain the coronavirus has stirred deep-seated resentment towards Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and protests demanding his resignation are growing by the week.

As the Shabbat rest-day was ending on Saturday evening, thousands of demonstrators headed towards Netanyahu’s Jerusalem residence, a main site for protests that have taken place in multiple cities.

Some demonstrators branded Netanyahu -- who has been indicted with bribery, fraud and breach of trust -- as corrupt, while others condemned a lack

of coherence in the government’s response to the pandemic.

For Tamir Gay-Tsabary, who travels each day to the Jerusalem protests with his wife Tami from southern Israel, coronavirus was “a trigger” that brought renewed focus to Netanyahu’s leadership faults.

The pandemic made people “understand that he doesn’t care (about) Israel, he just cares for himself,” the 56-year-old sales manager told AFP.

Netanyahu won praise for his initial response to the virus. His government’s quick decisions in March to curb travel and impose a lockdown brought the daily case-count to a trickle by early May. But an economic re-opening that began in late April has led to an explosion in transmission in the country of about 9 million people, with daily COVID-19 tallies ranging between 1,000 and 2,000 cases in recent weeks.—AFP ■



Israeli protesters have demonstrated for weeks against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s handling of the coronavirus and are demanding his resignation. **PHOTO: AFP**

Putin says Russia keeps modernizing naval hardware

MOSCOW — The Russian navy’s level of military hardware is constantly growing, President Vladimir Putin said Sunday as the country celebrated its Navy Day.

This year, 40 warships of various classes will join the Russian navy, Putin said in a speech at a naval parade held in the country’s second largest city of St. Petersburg.

The modern navy includes ships armed with high-precision weapons, strategic and multi-purpose submarines, the newest aircraft, “unique weapons and special equipment,” he noted.

The navy will strengthen its unique advantages and increase its combat capabilities by deploying advanced digital technologies, hypersonic strike systems, unmanned underwater vehicles, and the most effective means of defense, Putin said.

The naval parade in St. Petersburg involved 46 ships and submarines, more than 40 planes and helicopters, and over 4,000 servicemen. Smaller celebrations were held in the country’s other fleet bases.

Russia marks its Navy Day annually on the last Sunday of July.—Xinhua ■



Warships pass the Dvortsovy (Palace) drawbridge rising above the Neva River during the Navy Day parade in St. Petersburg. **(DMITRI LOVETSKY/POOL/AP) /FILE**

Volunteer confesses to setting French cathedral on fire

PARIS — A volunteer church assistant has confessed to setting the fire that severely damaged a Gothic cathedral in the western French city of Nantes, his lawyer said Sunday, though his motives remain a mystery.

The 39-year-old, an asylum-seeker from Rwanda who has lived in France for several years, was arrested Saturday after laboratory analysis determined that arson was the likely cause of the blaze, the local prosecutor’s office said.

“My client is cooperating,” lawyer Quentin Chabert said at a press conference in Nantes, without venturing on what prompted the attempt to burn down the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

“Obviously it was a relief for him to show, as he would say, his repentance. As a believer, it’s important for him to show this effort,” he said.—AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

India's Commercial vehicles face grim near-term outlook

MUMBAI — Domestic commercial vehicle sales are expected to decline by 30 to 35 per cent in the current financial year as the industry is staring at further de-growth while the COVID-led economic downturn adds to negative sentiment, according to Care Ratings.

The dip in sales is going to be more severe in medium and heavy commercial vehicle (M&HCV) segment than the light commercial vehicle (LCV) segment. In FY20, the domestic commercial vehicle industry clocked sales of 7.17 lakh units.

"The contraction in LCV segment is expected to be limited as demand from rural and semi-urban markets is expected to recover faster on account of higher agriculture output on the back of good monsoons during the current year," said Care. Truck utilisation levels remained under pressure during Q1 FY21 (April to June) due to Covid-19 lockdown and various restrictions on movement across the country.-- ANI ■

Beijing allows public transport to operate at full capacity

BEIJING — As part of easing restrictions to control the COVID-19 epidemic, Beijing has allowed its buses and subways to operate at full capacity.

The passenger capacity of buses has been raised from 90 percent to 100 percent while that of subway is up from 80 percent to 100 percent, according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport. Wearing masks is compulsory on buses and subways, according to the commission.

Beijing reported no new COVID-19 cases Friday, which is the 19 consecutive day without a new infection. On Monday, Beijing lowered its COVID-19 emergency response from level II to III after having reported no newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 for 14 consecutive days.--Xinhua ■

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
HOLIDAY NOTICE**

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 31st JULY 2020 (Alternative Holiday of Qurbani Eid) 1st AUGUST 2020 (Qurbani Eid) and 3rd AUGUST 2020 (FULL MOON DAY OF WASO), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

Hong Kong tightens quarantine rules for sea and flight crews

HOING KONG — Hong Kong will stop most ships from changing crews in the territory from Wednesday to cut back on quarantine exemptions blamed for causing a third wave of coronavirus cases.

After seemingly ending local transmissions for weeks, new infections have hit triple figures on a daily basis in the densely packed finance hub -- sparking fears the new outbreak is spreading out of control.

More than 1,000 infections have been confirmed since early July -- more than 40 percent of the total since the virus first hit the city in late January.

Some health experts have blamed an exemption from the usual 14-day quarantine which



the government granted to "essential personnel", including cross-boundary truckers and air and sea crew.

Because of its extensive air links and busy port, Hong Kong is a popular transit point for ships to change crews. **PHOTO: AFP**

Because of its extensive air links and busy port, Hong Kong is a popular transit point for ships to change crews. The government announced a slew of measures to tighten quarantine exemptions on Sunday as the city recorded 128 new cases in the previous 24 hours, bringing the total to 2,634 with 18 deaths.--AFP ■

Ukraine's snail farmers fear collapse over EU lockdowns

VOYNIVKA — When the first snail farm in Ukraine opened five years ago, local villagers couldn't hide their curiosity.

Residents of Voynivka



'Snail mother' Yulia Koretska at her farm, one of some 400 now in Ukraine exporting snails. **PHOTO: AFP**

south of the capital Kiev would peek over the fence of the old dairy farm where manager Yulia Koretska kept the snails to ask if people really ate them.

"They called me the snail mother," she laughed, surrounded by wooden boxes of snails in a green field under the blazing summer sun.

Ex-Soviet Ukraine's budding snail industry now boasts some 400 farms which have found eager buyers in European countries like Italy and Spain.

But sweeping coronavirus restrictions that plunged the global food service industry into an unprecedented crisis have threatened to wipe out the fledgling farms in one of Europe's poorest countries. Most snail farmers in Ukraine -- where the delicacy has yet to catch on -- rely heavily on sales to restaurants in Europe where economies are still struggling to recover to pre-pandemic levels after months-long lockdowns.--AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2013W/ 2014E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. (2013W/2014E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT** 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (011 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (011 N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-7-2020** 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

China micro-credit firms' outstanding loans at 884.1 bln yuan

BEIJING — Outstanding loans extended by China's micro-credit companies stood at 884.1 billion yuan (about 126.4 billion U.S. dollars) by the end of June, according to central bank data.

The figure was down 24.9 billion yuan from the beginning of the year.

By the end of last month, the number of micro-credit companies in China came in at 7,333, the People's Bank of China said in an online statement.

Micro-lenders largely target small companies and low-income groups in need of capital. In recent years, China has tightened regulations for the sector to rein in financial risks.--Xinhua ■

Thailand urged to reopen northern border checkpoints to allow cross-border trading



Trucks pass through a checkpoint near the Myanmar-Thailand border in the town of Myawaddy in Kayin State. **PHOTO: AFP/FINE PHOTO**

BANGKOK — The Thai government was urged on Saturday to reopen northern border checkpoints to allow cross-border trading between Thailand and Myanmar to resume from next month.

Pakaimas Vierra, vice president of the Chiang Rai Provincial Chamber of Commerce, called on the authorities to promptly consider reopening the border

checkpoints in Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai province as soon as next month.

Cross-border trading between Mae Sai district and Tachileik township in Shan state of Myanmar has virtually grounded to a halt since the border checkpoints were temporarily closed in March under Thailand's anti-pandemic and lockdown measures, accord-

ing to the vice president of the provincial chamber of commerce.

The economy of the northern province has been largely affected by the temporary closure of the Mae Sai border checkpoints through which some 800 million baht (about 25.29 million U.S. dollars) in combined value of goods has been traded monthly, the official said.— Xinhua ■

Federal Reserve convenes as virus puts US recovery on edge

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve meets next week amid mixed signals on the health of the US economy, with some sectors bouncing back from the coronavirus-caused downturn and others struggling.

Retail and new home sales were among those showing growth over the last two months but the Labor Department said last week new claims for unemployment benefits had increased week-on-week after months of declines.

Analysts say the mixed indicators won't be enough to get the rate-setting Federal Open Market

Committee (FOMC) to change course, particularly not after it cut the benchmark lending rate to 0-0.25 percent in March as the pandemic hit.

"We don't expect much to come out of this particular meeting," said Jonathan Millar, deputy chief US economist at Barclays Investment Bank.

The two-day meeting beginning Tuesday comes as cases of coronavirus surge again, particularly in the southern and western United States, raising fears that the world's largest economy is set for a prolonged downturn. — AFP ■

Indonesia's economy forecast to decelerate slightly in 2020 over COVID-19

JAKARTA — The Indonesian government forecast the country's economy would decelerate slightly this year, head of the Fiscal Policy Office of the Finance Ministry Febrio Kacaribu said on Friday.

With that condition, Kacaribu stressed that Indonesia might not go into a deep recession as the tax revenue has started improving along with other signals of recovery.

Banks have commenced distributing loans for capitals as business activities pick up along with the reopened economy and relaxation of restrictions, he said.

According to the Indonesian Financial Services

INVITATION TO BID

Bid No. MM-09184-NCB-001, Updated design and construction works for the proposed renovation of the Information Counter Building in Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar (MOHT) through its procurement committee, invites all prospective/potential bidders to apply for bid with the above-referenced subject for:

Name of Project : Grant 9184-MYA Economic Empowerment of the Poor and Women in the East-West Economic Corridor Project

Procurement package : Bid No. MM-09184-NCB-001, Updated design and construction works for the proposed renovation of the Information Counter building in Mawlamyine

Contract Location : Lower Main Road 118 (MOHT Information Counter Building), Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar.

The significant times and deadlines of procurement activities are shown below:

1. Issuance of Bidding Documents - 27 -7-2020,09:30 AM
2. Pre-Bid Meeting - 5-8-2020, 11:00 AM (To contact 09 420704808 with SKYPE)
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids - 24 -8-2020,15:45 PM
4. Opening of Bids - 24 -8-2020, 16:00 PM, PMU Office, Nay Pyi Taw (in the presence of bidders' representatives)

Submission of Bids : Project Management Unit Office-Grant 9184-MYA, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Building 33, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, email: planandstat@tourism.gov.mm

Bid Documents : Bid documents (Soft Copy) may be obtained at Project Management Unit Office-Grant 9184 -MYA Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Building 33, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar or as follows:

- Online at www.empowermentmonstate.org
- Soft copies in pdf format will be available upon request via email at planandstat@tourism.gov.mm

To obtain further information and any clarification, please communicate with the contact person: U Tin Tun Aung, Project Director, Project Management Unit – (PMU), Economic Empowerment of the Poor and Women in the East-West Economic Corridor Project, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar, Telephone: +95 67 406102 Fax: +95 - 67 406098, E-mail: planandstat@tourism.gov.mm

Procurement will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedure in accordance with ADB procurement rules and regulations.

Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications should participate

A. Financial qualification. The Bidder shall have a minimum average annual construction turnover of \$ 690,000, calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed, within the last Five (05) years. (refer to Section 4, form FIN-2 "average annual construction turnover").

The Bidder must demonstrate that its financial resources less its financial obligations for its current contract commitments meet or exceed the total requirement for the Subject Contract of \$ 115,000.

B. Construction experience requirement. The Bidder shall have experience that at least one contract that has been successfully or substantially completed within the last Five (05) years and that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds \$ 140,000, or at least two contracts each of that have been successfully or substantially completed within the last Five (05) years and that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds \$ 86,000 of each contract.



People queue for a free rapid test for the COVID-19 coronavirus sponsored by the Indonesian National Police in Jakarta on 21 June, 2020. **(AFP PHOTO)**

Authority, loans have begun creeping up in July after registering a downturn in the previous three months.

Kacaribu was upbeat

that business activities including those in the sector of small and medium businesses, would recover soon.

The official said the

authority has been striving to avoid two straight quarters of economic growth deceleration in the second and the third quarters.

— Xinhua ■

Towards the town Kalay which means market town (2)



First Yayhsankyun Pagoda.

The teak log going upstream in the river was carved into Buddha images.

Second Yayhsankyun Pagoda

The teak log was carved into Buddha image as masterpieces which are better than the First

Yayhsankyun Pagoda. The second one takes a position on a wide terrace near Myittha River at the exit of Kalay. Soft drinks and snacks are available at the

foot of the pagoda hill in addition to a wide car park.

Bawdi Yadana Pagoda (Kyaukgutaw Monastery)



Beauties of Myittha River seen from Yayhsankyun Pagoda.



The point where north latitude passes.

People know it as Kyaukgutaw Monastery, rather than Bawdi Yadana. Located behind Kalay industrial zone, Bawdi Yadana Pagoda can be seen with elephant statues, Buddha image chamber and stupas. Public-rest houses and monastery buildings are catching interest of visitors. As it is similar to just a recrea-

tion centre rather than the religious edifice, youths visit there to take photos.

9th-Mile Kyauktalone Creek

A laterite road, leading to Kyauktalone Creek, beyond Kalay University passes Chin villages. Visitors can buy intoxicating brew in these villages at

K3,000 per pot. Then they may go to Kyauktalone farm being upgraded to the restaurant and recreation park. The park collects K200 per person for entrance fee. Visitors can taste intoxicating brew and foodstuffs while enjoying scenic beauties of Kyauktalone Creek.

Three pagodas

Travellers can pay visits to three ancient pagodas along the road from Shwebontha Pagoda. An ancient city wall can be seen not far from these pagodas.

Venue crossed by North Latitude

Travellers can see a large signboard near mile post 55-56 near Kyansetkon Village where the north latitude crosses the venue.

Yazagyo Dam

It needs to take one and a half drive from Kalay to Yazagyo Dam. Hotness covers the road along the dam. So, it is necessary to grow trees and flowery plants in the area for being travel site and recreation centre. In fact, it is a good area to take photos.

Tarhan market

I think Tarhan market is bigger than Kalay Myoma market where various kinds of meat and fish are sold in addition to textile imported from China at cheap prices.

Kalay Myoma market

It is a large market in urban area of Kalay. Varieties of textile

imported from India and China are being traded as a centre.

View Point

The area beyond Kalay University is located in Chin State. So, the view point takes a position in Chin State. Despite no significant facilities, travellers visit there. Some travellers watch the sunrise scene from

St. Mary Roman Catholic Cathedral on Bogyoke Street, Methodist Church in Tarhan, Vengpui Methodist Church and Salem Baptist Church.

Other visiting sites

I cannot pay visits to all significant places in Kalay where I visit every year. I saw Taungphila Hill in far distance on my way

rant where delicious Thai foods and BBQ are available. Another shop is titled JD23 which gives services of rice in tray. Hsa-buthee is available in Tarhan market. Goshen restaurant is always crowded with consumers to give delicious food services to the visitors.

Lodging

Kalay. Tarhanthu shop is full of various products. Many shops can be seen around Kalay Airport as well as in Tarhan market. Indian saris are available at Lin Yaung Chi shop near Kalay Myoma market.

Despite lesser travel sites, Kalay is a lovely town where people from four corners meet to seek jobs. So, it is endless obser-



Methodist Church in Tarhan Ward.



Entrance to Hindu Temple where First Yayhsankyun Pagoda takes a position.

the view point.

Churches

A large number of people in Christianity reside in Kalay. Mizo Chin ethnics are the majority among various Chin ethnics. So many churches can be seen in Kalay. Boards are posted in all wards to show announcements of dead persons and its work procedures in Chin language.

I visited churches such as

back. I enlisted the significant travel sites but some of them are located in far distance. These sites are Taungtalone, Myitsone, Taungphila, Thang Pagoda, hand washing lake, Myatheintan Pagoda, Webula Hill, Natchaung, Panmon Creek, Manipura Dam, the waterfall in Hsedaw Village and Sakarhla Pagoda.

Eateries in Kalay

I preferred to Flow restau-

Majesty Hotel, Moe Hotel and Taungzalat Hotel are ready to give accommodation to guests in Kalay. In addition, those who cannot spend a large sum of money on their trips may stay at lodges and small hotels.

Gifts from trips

Travellers may buy Chin traditional costumes and utensils, Chin sarongs, blankets, men's wears, necklaces and bags in

vation for travellers. If the travellers have adequate time, they may buy textile from Tamu in addition to paying visits to Reed Lake, Tiddim and Haka.

May all be always safe and secure, healthy and happy on their trips.

(Translated by Than Tun Aung)



Inside part of Tarhan market.



Tarhan market, hustle and bustle with people.

ONE Championship comes back with 'No Surrender' event on 31 July

AFTER a long pause of the ONE Championship special fights and events amidst of the global pandemic, the thrilling fights will return to action with an event: 'No Surrender' to be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 31 July, according to an official statement with the ONE Championship.

The fighting event will be held as an audience-free live event.

Live event for the matches will available via the ONE Super Application and its YouTube Channel, said ONE Champion-



PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

ship two-division world champion Aung La N Sang who is

also known as Burmese Python or icon of the fighting sport in

Myanmar.

The Burmese Python said,

"We're only 5 days away from ONE Championship's big return, featuring the debuts of kickboxing superstars Sitthichai and Superbon!"

"I can't wait to see all the Thai superstars put on a show. Watch on YouTube or the ONE Super App!", Aung La N Sang added.

Three main bouts for the event have set as fights of Rodtang vs Petchdam, Petchmorakot vs Yodsanklai and Sitthichai vs Superbon, according to the ONE Championship. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Fernandes leads Man Utd back into the Champions League



Manchester United's Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea (3R) congratulates Manchester United's English midfielder Jesse Lingard (2R) after Lingard scored their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Manchester United at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on 26 July 2020. PHOTO: AFP

LEICESTER (United Kingdom) —Manchester United secured a return to Champions League football next season as Bruno Fernandes's penalty and a late howler from Kasper Schmeichel to gift Jesse Lingard a tap in saw Leicester beaten 2-0 on Sunday to end the Foxes' challenge to play in Europe's elite club competition.

United just needed a point to consolidate their place in the top four and a tense game with so much on the line for both clubs was decided 19 minutes from time when Jonny Evans and Wes Morgan combined to bring down Anthony Martial and Fernandes converted from the spot.

Evans was then sent off for a wild lunge on Scott McTominay before Schmeichel was dispossessed by Lingard, who stroked home his first league goal of the season to ensure United finish the campaign in third.

Leicester resumed the sea-

son last month with an eight-point lead over United, but a run of three wins from their last 14 league games before and after the shutdown undid their good work in 2019, which included a run of nine straight wins.

By contrast, United are now 14 unbeaten in the Premier League since Fernandes' January arrival from Sporting Lisbon transformed their season.

The riches from the Champions League are all the more important to United due to the economic downturn in the coronavirus pandemic.

And there were more signs of the rebuild that still lies ahead for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer if the Red Devils are to close the gap on rivals Liverpool and Manchester City next season as they again looked jaded after a blistering start to their return to action last month, which put them in position to overhaul Leicester in the table.—AFP ■

Sarri urges Juve 'not to lose heads' as Serie A title within grasp

MILAN — Maurizio Sarri urged his Juventus players not to lose their focus as they have a second chance to clinch their ninth Serie A title in a row on Sunday at home against Sampdoria.

The champions fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at struggling Udinese on Thursday to miss out on wrapping up the title with three games to play.

"We must be combative and not lose our heads, because going close counts for nothing. In

all the games we want to bring home points even if we have until August 2 to do it," said Sarri.

Juventus's final three games are against Sampdoria, Cagliari and Roma.

The former Chelsea and Napoli boss blamed physical and mental fatigue as his side conceded two second-half goals in Udine, including the decisive blow in stoppage time.

"In Udine we made a mistake in our desire to attack," said the 61-year-old.

"It is an atypical moment, it never happened to play the season in July. "This is the most difficult season in the history of Italian football, with enormous difficulties for everyone."

Sarri remains wary of Claudio Ranieri's 14th-placed Sampdoria who are coming off a 2-1 derby defeat to city rivals Genoa.

"Sampdoria are not an easy team to face. They are organised, I think that they will be motivated as they just lost a derby.—AFP ■

Werenski, Thompson share 54-hole lead at PGA 3M Open

WASHINGTON — Richy Werenski, seeking his first US PGA title, closed with an eight-foot birdie putt to match Michael Thompson for the lead

after Saturday's third round of the 3M Open. Thompson, a 2012 US Open runner-up, and American compatriot Werenski, who birdied three of the last four holes,

each fired three-under par 68s to stand on 15-under 198 after 54 holes at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, Minnesota. "Definitely good to have a strong finish like that," Werenski said. "It just kind of clicked in and I gave myself a chance going into tomorrow."

Charl Schwartzel, the 2011 Masters champion from South Africa, and US stand-out Tony Finau shared third on 200 with American Max Homa another stroke adrift. Thompson, whose only PGA title came at the 2013 Honda Classic, led by four strokes on the 15th tee but made bogey on the only hole Werenski didn't birdie down the stretch to leave them deadlocked at the top, just as they began the day.—AFP ■



Richy Werenski birdied three of the last four holes to share the lead with fellow American Michael Thompson after 54 holes at the US PGA 3M Open. PHOTO: AFP