Pyithu Hluttaw raises queries to ministries, approves bill, tables motion

Pyithu Hluttaw organized its 7th-day meeting of 17th regular session yesterday.

MP U Khin Maung Thein from Sagaing region constituency asked for new paints on the 90-year-old Sagaing bridge (Inwa).

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo replied some parts of 3,948-foot-long bridge are being painted, and its remaining areas could be painted on the availability of budget allocation in 2021-2022 financial year.

MP U Myo Zaw Oo from Lewe constituency asked about organizational structure, responsibility and accountability of third party organizations, and policies and directives for their operations.

Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Kyaw Linn replied that the staff members from Quality Control Division of Village Development Department are representing the government in quality control inspection; although they do not earn additional charges for inspection works, they have to manage the QC processes; the ministry has also drafted the Construction Development Bill; if contractor companies, quality control inspection teams and third parties failed to adhere to provisions in tender agreement, then fines will be imposed.

MP U Thar Aung from Myothit constituency asked for inspection of quality control at the inter-village roads and allocation of budget for the damaged roads.

Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Linn replied that inspections of quality control are being carried out by the third parties of local governments, while the periodic maintenance, the routine maintenance and the special maintenance are being performed by using the funds of Union government and the local governments since 2017-2018 financial year.

MP U Yan Kyin Kan from Kunlong constituency asked for maintenance of bank erosion at 9 places of Neint Taint creek, MP U Sai Ngaung Sai Hein from Maungmaici constituency about implementation of digital payment system for cash fines on the vehicles which breach traffic rules. The two questions were answered by Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo.

MP U Khin Than Htoo from Hsihseng constituency asked for construction of the remaining 2-mile section on the Union Highway in his constituency, MP U Khin Maung Myint from Taungdwingyi constituency tabled a motion that urged the Union Government to increase traffic awareness campaign and its law enforcement measures to reduce road accidents and related death tolls mainly caused by motorcycle accidents.

The Hluttaw agreed to discuss the motion, and the Speaker invited the list of MPs who want to discuss it.

The 8th-day meeting of 17th regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw is scheduled on 4 August. — Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)
Amyotha Hluttaw raises questions to ministries, Nay Pyi Taw Council, approves bill amending 1959 Defence Services Act

AMYOTH A Hluttaw yesterday held its 7th-day meeting of 17th regular session, with questions of MPs to the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, and the Nay Pyi Taw Council. The 7th-day meeting also approved the bill amending the 1960 Defence Services Act.

MP Daw Htu May from Rayhine State constituency 11 said that Myanmar has faced international pressure regarding the Rayhine issue. She raised a question about how the government is making efforts by diplomatic means to make the international community understand the situations that Myanmar has encountered, to reduce international pressure on the country, and to promote the images of the citizens and the country.

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin replied that the international pressure is mainly related to conflicts in the Rayhine State. In trying to improve the situations in the Rayhine State, to safeguard the human rights, and to promote the image of the country, the effort by diplomats alone is not enough; so, MPs, security personnel and all citizens need to exert united efforts.

He warned that international organizations which are putting pressures on Myanmar actually know the real situation of Myanmar, but they targeted Myanmar for their political agenda. Regarding protection of human rights, trying to improve the situations in Myanmar will make the country to overcome the challenges. The majority of human right violations and the cases that led to allegations occurred at the conflict-torn areas. If the armed conflicts come to an end, the external allegations will be reduced and stopped.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin also urged all stakeholders to cooperate and work in unison to stop armed conflicts and to make the peace process successful.

He continued that the government is facing the challenges practically and fairly in order to safeguard the benefits and stability of the country. He also urged MPs and the citizens to properly control their speech and behaviour not to fall into the traps of sabotage acts. He added that all citizens need to say and have proper manner that can support the relevant efforts of the diplomats at the forefront of the process.

MP U Ye Myint Soe from Yangon Region constituency 7 raised a question whether the government has a plan to help farmers in growing Kenaf, which is marketable in the international markets. The Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw replied that the Department of Agriculture has provided good seeds and technical assistants to Kenaf growers.

In collaboration with relevant departments, the Ministry of Commerce is working to identify new marketable items for international markets, and the commercial attaches are trying to hunt overseas markets for crops. As an encouragement for growing Kenaf, it has been removed from the list of items that need export licence, said the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. The government has cooperated with private business persons for overseas market penetration, said the Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw.

MP U Ko Ko Naing from Sagaing Region constituency 8 raised a question regarding installation of electricity meter boxes in villages. The Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win replied that the electricity meter boxes purchased by the Ministry has been delivered, and after inspection, the meter boxes will be handed over to regions and states in August and September 2020. The Ministry will also purchase more meter boxes, said the Deputy Minister.

In response to a question raised by MP U Tun Tun Oo from Mandalay Region constituency 2, the Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win replied that smart electricity meters will be used and the AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) system will be implemented step-by-step after making discussions with international consultants.

MP U Bwe Khane from Chin State constituency 3 raised a question whether there is a plan to build a two-storey (108 x 72 square feet) RC building to replace the old damaged Town Hall building owned by the Hantlang Township Municipal in Chin State. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Tun replied that it was not included in the budget allocation for the 2020-2021 financial year (FY). He added that if the relevant MP relevant committees and the residents submit a proposal for the construction, a budget will be allocated in an appropriate budget year.

MP U Hla Myint Than from Mon State constituency 11 raised a question regarding vacant, fallow and virgin lands in Mon State, and MP U Thet Naing Soe from Tanintharyi Region constituency 2 asked a question regarding harmful bad smell from a fishmeal plant in Kyauk Nai Maew Village in Laung Tong Township in Taninthary Region. The questions were replied by the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.

MP U Kyaw Than from Rayhine State constituency 10 made a question regarding a land dispute in Mannaung Township in the Rayhine State. The question was replied by Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Tun.

Afterwards, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khang Than sought the assembly’s opinion on each paragraph of the bill amending the 1959 Defence Services Act, and then Amyotha Hluttaw unanimously approved it.

The 8th-day meeting of 17th regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw will be convened on 4 August.—Aung Ye Thwin

(Translated by Maung Maung Sue)
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives ROK Ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Mr Lee Sang-hwa, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on cooperation between Myanmar and ROK, the parliaments and friendship ties between people of the two countries, preparations for 2020 General Election, bilateral friendship ties between the two countries, investment, measures related to COVID-19 and legislative affairs.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Announcement on Extension of the Precautionary Restriction Measures Relating to Control of the COVID-19 Pandemic until 31 August 2020

1. With a view to the further strengthening of measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar has issued the following announcements regarding temporary entry restrictions for visitors from all countries. All those restrictions were extended until 31 July 2020 by the Ministry’s announcement dated 28 June 2020.

(a) Announcement dated 15 March 2020 regarding precautionary measures for all travellers visiting Myanmar;

(b) Announcement dated 20 March 2020 regarding additional precautionary measures for travellers visiting Myanmar and temporary suspension of issuance of visa on arrival and e-visa;

(c) Announcement dated 24 March 2020 regarding additional precautionary measures for travellers from all countries visiting Myanmar;

(d) Announcement dated 28 March 2020 regarding temporary suspension of all types of visas (including social visit visas) and visa exemption services.

2. In order to continue its effective response measures to protect the population of the country from the risks of importation and spread of the COVID-19, the Government of the Union of Myanmar has decided to extend the afore-mentioned entry restriction measures until 31 August 2020.

3. In case of urgent official missions or compelling reasons, foreign nationals, including diplomats and United Nations officials, who wish to travel to Myanmar by available relief or special flights, may contact the nearest Myanmar Mission for possible exception with regard to certain visa restrictions. However, all visitors must abide by existing directives issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports relating to the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

CBM Governor holds virtual meeting with US-ASEAN Business Council

GOVERNOR of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung held a videoconference with Chairman, President and CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council Mr Alexander C. Feildman, Senior Vice President and Regional Managing Director Ambassador Michael W Michalak and party in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

At the meeting, the Governor said the Central Bank of Myanmar cut the interest rate by 300 bps from 10 per cent to 7 per cent to reinforce the country economic recovery and to improve business performance, reduced the minimum requirement reserve ratio from 5 per cent to 3.5 per cent to support liquidity in the local financial markets until the end of September, and suspended deposit auction for ensuring sufficient liquidity in local banking services.

The CBM has permitted 13 local banks for mobile banking services, mobile network operators-MNO and non-bank financial institutions-NBFI for mobile financial services.

The Governor added that Myanmar is working for the ‘MMQR’ which will become the national standard for QR code to implement QR code payment services.

The attendees discussed the development of the small and medium scale businesses during the post-COVID period economic recovery, to promote Myanmar’s digital economy and to develop cashless payment systems.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Governors of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Soe Min, U Soe Thein and U Bo Bo Ngal and senior officials from US companies including Bower Group Asia, Chevron, Chubb, Visa and US ICT Council Myanmar.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)


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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“...We want real freedom and not tinsel and sham of it. When we say real freedom, we mean the freedom not only to plan our political destiny but also the economy and defence of our country by ourselves...”

(Excerpt from the address made by Bogyoke Aung San at the 2nd session of the Supreme Council of AFPFL, 16 May 1946)
MoI tracks Myanmar media trend to explore its impacts, challenges

THE Ministry of Information held a discussion on the ongoing trend of Myanmar media yesterday.

The discussion was attended by Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, departmental heads, officers, staff members and invited guests.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint delivered an opening remark, saying that news media workers need to track and thoroughly understand the trend of media, only then they could pace themselves in changing technologies for media development, and could find ways to address possible impacts and challenges.

Deputy Director U Khin Maung Kyi from Internal/External Relations and Information Division, Director U Aung Myo Thant from the Information and Public Relations Department, Editor Daw Khin Yadanar from the News and Periodicals Enterprise, Staff Officer U Aung Aung Oo from Myanma Radio and Television, Assistant Director U Tet Tun Toe from IPED and Editor Daw Su Yi Mon from NPE presented their discussions.

Attendees at the event took part in the discussions.

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun made his suggestions for cooperation, coordination and exchange of views in the changing trend of media industry.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint then made a concluding remark on the discussions. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)
**ILO Convention-138 (Minimum Age Convention) discussion held**

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population held virtual meeting with International Labour Organization (ILO) to discuss ILO Convention-138 (Minimum Age Convention) yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister U Thein Swe, Deputy Minister U Myint Kyaw, (Labour Affairs) Permanent Secretary U Myo Aung, the Directors-General, representatives from Yangon Office of ILO and members of Technical Working Group on Child Labour (TWG-CL), representatives from employer organizations, labour organizations, INGOs and NGOs and Youth Policy Affairs Group took part the discussion. At the discussion, the Union Minister said that they will disseminate capacity building and knowledge to all the relevant parties to support and implement the convention, and that it was a process which should be done; the responsible officials from the ministry did the own research on the Minimum Age Convention and it had been thought over and over again to reflect the experiences of other countries and the realities of their own; thus, before ratifying the convention, Myanmar National Committee on Child Labour Eradication led by the Vice President(1) was formed with five-year plan in different States and Regions and the implementation of this programme supported the Minimum Age Convention.

Myanmar joined ILO in 1948 and ratified 18 conventions; to live up with those conventions, and with the ILO’s advices, the government coordinated employer and employee organizations to implement the existing labour laws; on the ILO’s Centenary Celebration Day in 2019, Myanmar considered to ratify the Minimum Age Convention-138 and the agreement was made after the tripartite coordination between employer, employee and government; then, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw decided to accept and practise the convention; the convention will take effect on 8 June 2021; at present, the definition, implementation, educating programme to people and human resource development would be done by cooperating with ministries, regional governments, NGOs, INGOs and UN organizations to plan and implement the convention, the Union Minister said.

The Union Minister also said that Myanmar National Child Labour Eradication programme would be implement in relation with the Convention-138, by practising the Convention-138, there would be both benefits and challenges; the rules must be followed to practise the convention, especially, to educate the employers from construction, mining and power sectors; the education programmes and courses need to be opened.

Then, the experts from the ILO Yangon Office and Asia-Pacific regional offices discussed the rules to follow in practising the convention, the reviews on relevant laws in Myanmar and the suggestions for further action.

**Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presents social pension to senior citizens in Sagaing**

UNION MINISTER of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye provided food supplies, cash assistance and medical equipment for prevention of COVID-19, life jackets and life boats for the flood victims in Sagaing Region yesterday morning.

Social pensions were also given to the age group of 85 years and older: The Union Minister and party firstly visited Yoon Monastery in Mingin Township and donated Wasso-robe and offered to the leading monk of the monastery. He also donated K4.2million to construct two units of three-attached public toilet buildings for the flood victims who are taking shelter at the monastery.

The Union Minister provided K388,500 cash assistance, instant noodle, masks and soap bars for COVID-19 to 185 flood victims of Mingin township and presented a motor boat and life jackets worth of K4.2million to the relevant officials to use in rescue works.

He also provided a total of K10,350,000 as monthly social pension to 345 elderly aged 85 and above.

The Union Minister and party visited Shwe Pyi Tan Home for the Aged in Mingin Township, and met the committee members of centre and discussed the processes, trainings of caring for the elderly persons and contributed K500,000 for the fund of centre — MNA

**Myanmar need not worry about food if systematic management is carried out in this sector**

It must be said that the habit of buying non-essential items has declined while people are placing more priority on essential items, the fact that people are thinking more about what is an important issue and what is minor is not a bad thing, some persons working in declining markets might have some difficulties; such problem must be addressed step-by-step; domestic commodity flow, domestic trading and production of value added items must be considered for both local and foreign markets; Myanmar need not worry about food if systematic management is carried out in this sector.

*(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s discussions with senior officer and business persons from trade sector on 30 June 2020)*
UNHCR, WFP provide COVID-19 test kits to Myanmar

A special flight carrying 20,000 test kits for COVID-19 purchased under UNICEF programme with funds of UNHCR and WFP arrived at Yangon International Airport yesterday morning. Officials of UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF handed over US$323,888.68 worth of 20,000 test kits to Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun, Director General of Department of Medical Research under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

WFP Myanmar’s Country Director Mr Stephen Anderson said, “These COVID test kits are very essential during this period and it cannot be done anything even if we have strong financial status. Now, the UN agencies ordered from the relevant companies and delivered to Myanmar in time so that we can accelerate our efforts in testing COVID-19.”

The UN agencies are helping Myanmar in full swing to fight against COVID-19 responses and also providing assistance to promote capacity buildings in controlling spread of the pandemic. The WFP has arranged relief flights to carry relief aids and medical supplies into Myanmar.

Mr Tan Shufu said that “These COVID test kits are very essential during this period and the COVID-19 period; the Chinese government takes serious consideration in resettlement programme in this area. Myanmar will work together with the feasibility study group from China.

Mr Tan Shufu said that it was the first visit of economic mission of their embassy during the COVID-19 period; the Chinese government takes serious consideration in resettlement programme in this area, Myanmar and China signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation; they will hand over 200 million yuan for the resettlement of IDPs in Kachin State, and 4 million yuan from this financial assistance will be handed over soon for resettling villages.

He also called for cooperation of Myanmar in the trips of survey team and in their works.

Director-General U Win Naing Tun, the Secretary of working committee, from the Rehabilitation Department explained the future project and related processes. -MNA

(Translate by Khine Thazin Han)

Public donations towards COVID-19 measures

THE Union Government is doing all it can in preventing, containing and treating the pandemic COVID-19 at the national level and private companies, organizations and individuals have been contributing to the cause as well. The following list details donations made in this regard as of 4:30 pm on 27 July 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Amount of Kyats (In lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Telenor Myanmar</td>
<td>642.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kunming Cuicai Trading Co. Ltd (Yunnan Province, China)</td>
<td>185.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>22nd birthday donation for Maung Shine Htet Aung</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U Myint Htay + Daw Yin Thida Aye</td>
<td>185.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Telenor SMS-enabled donation programme</td>
<td>57.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1986 batch of Medical University (1)</td>
<td>54.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>B.Phrm graduates from various sectors</td>
<td>43.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Myanmar embassies, Myanmar Permanent Representative office, Myanmar consulates (9 offices)</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Daw Khin San Myint (Retired Joint High Court Judge), Kungyangon Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>91st birthday donation for U Aung Thant, Kyaukme, Yangon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Daw Mya Win (Retired nurse), Kyaukme</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Families and friends of Shwe Moe International Co. Ltd and Profora Co. Ltd</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>30th birthday donation of Ma Soe San Thant, Temporary Singaporo</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,220.74</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional donations of cash and hospital equipment/apparatus will continue to be made public.

National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19

MoSWRR, Chinese embassy discuss IDP resettlement in Kachin State

DEPUTY Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung and Mr Tan Shufu, Economic and Commercial Counsellor of the Chinese embassy, held a meeting to discuss resettlement programmes for the internally displaced persons in Kachin State yesterday.

In his capacity as leader of the working committee for implementing IDP resettlement in Kachin State, U Soe Aung first thanked the support from China in resettling IDPs in Kachin State. He said they will cooperate in that support and the professional team from Myanmar will work together with the feasibility study group from China.

Mr Tan Shufu said that it was the first visit of economic mission of their embassy during the COVID-19 period; the Chinese government takes serious consideration in resettlement programme in this area, Myanmar and China signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation; they will hand over 200 million yuan for the resettlement of IDPs in Kachin State, and 4 million yuan from this financial assistance will be handed over soon for resettling villages.

He also called for cooperation of Myanmar in the trips of survey team and in their works.

Director-General U Win Naing Tun, the Secretary of working committee, from the Rehabilitation Department explained the future project and related processes. —MNA

(Translate by Zaw Htet Oo)
19 Myanmar seamen spend hotel quarantine in Kawthoung

A total of 19 Myanmar seamen who signed off from the MV-Melati-3 (Finafuti) ship anchored in the Andaman Sea arrived in Kawthoung on 29 July evening and are currently held under hotel quarantine.

These 19 Myanmar seafarers had swapped duties with 21 seafarers including Captain U Ye Naung. The local officials of jetty and health department helped them with medical tests and other supplies and put under 21-day hotel quarantine, while their swabs will be sent to the National Health Laboratory of Yangon.—Nyaw Soe (Kawthoung) (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

More supplies reach IDP camps for measures against COVID-19

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is providing medical and relief items to the IDP camps in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states for prevention of COVID-19 transmission.

Moreover, the ministry is conducting awareness campaigns and motivation works in Nay Pyi Taw council area and other Regions/States.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

25 Myanmar nationals return home through Chinshwehaw border town

LOCAL authorities in Chinshwehaw border town of northern Shan State received 25 Myanmar returnees from China on 29 July. Among 9 males and 16 females, 1 person was from Mandalay Region, 2 from Magway Region, 22 from Northern Shan State.

They will go back to respective areas through Lashio. A total of 13,923 persons have returned Myanmar from China through Chinshwehaw border crossing from 30 April to now.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

274 Myanmar nationals come back home via Myawady border bridge on 30 July

A total of 557 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand through No. 2 border bridge in Myawady Town, Kayin State, on 30 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 55,272 until now.

The latest group of returnees included 163 males and 111 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) (Translated by Aung Khin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Kachin Township</th>
<th>Phakant Township</th>
<th>Mogau Township</th>
<th>MraukU Township</th>
<th>Myebon Township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 camp</td>
<td>2 camps</td>
<td>1 camp</td>
<td>34 camps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Bar</td>
<td>427</td>
<td></td>
<td>18,860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime Powder bags</td>
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<td>340</td>
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<td>Campaign Vinyl Sheet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An official provides relief items to a local on 30 July 2020. PHOTO:MNA

Officials conducting immigration processes to Myanmar returnees from Thailand on 30 July. PHOTO:MNA

Call Tha Phyu May 09251022355
Fighting child labour requires collective effort of all stakeholders

For a historic move, Myanmar ratified the ILO Convention 182, which seeks to eliminate child labour and ensure children do not work under hazardous conditions. This comes at the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken a heavy toll on child labourers. The pandemic has highlighted the positive development, particularly in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, which threatens the rights, safety and development of the estimated 11.3 million children in child labour globally. The Minimum Age Convention 182 requires countries to set a minimum age of 14 for full-time compulsory education and under which no one shall work. The work is neither hazardous nor takes the place of education except light work and work which does not interfere with the studies and does not take away the child's time for the repetition of classes or other educational activities.

Hence, regarding ILO Convention 182, the Union Government is willing to work with NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies to improve the country’s human resources by promoting capacity building among governmental staff, MPs, employees, employers and the people.

For 31st July, 2020:

STATE OF THE SEA:

The state of the sea in the waters around Myanmar will be as follows:

1. MYANMAR COASTAL AREA:

- Wave height will be about (5-8) feet off and along Myanmar coastal waters. Wave height at coastal areas will be moderate in Myanmar coastal waters. Wave height will be about (1) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise during the next (2) days.

2. ANDAMAN AND NARGIS BAY:

- Waves will be low. The direction of the sea will be south-south-east, and the wave height will be about (1-2) feet.

3. BANGLADISH BAY:

- Waves will be low. The direction of the sea will be south-west, and the wave height will be about (1-2) feet.

4. DEFOCUS FOR AYAPAYADU RIVER:

- According to the 108 hrs MIST observation today, the water level of Ayapayadu River at Shilkhella has exceeded about (1) foot above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (2) days.

5. PUMBURPAR RIVER:

- According to the 108 hrs MIST observation today, the water level of Ayapayadu River at Shilkhella has exceeded about (1) foot above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (2) days.

Advisory

It is specially advertised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Ngayun Township and Shilkhella to take precaution measures.
Magway Myathalun pagoda likely to reopen in August

Myathalun is one of the famous destinations in central Myanmar for the visitors. PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)

MR to reopen up/down trains in August

MYANMA Railway (MR) will resume its operation of up and down trains starting from 1 August after suspension of the railway services caused by the outbreak of the global viral disease, according to MR.

Starting from 1 August, the 55-up and 56-down trains in the section of Mandalay-Myaikyina-Mandalay railway, 181-up and 182-down trains in the Pathein-Kyayin-Pathein railway, 69-up and 70-down trains in the Kyimyindaing-Thayawady-Kyimyindaing railway and 103-up and 104-down trains in Pyinmana-Taunggwintkyi-Pyinmana railway will be resumed.

Moreover, Yangon-Okkan, Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Mawlamyine, Yangon-Pyay, Yangon-Bago, Yangon-Yay, Bago-Yangon and Letpadan-Thayawady railways suspended in the coronavirus period are resuming their operations regularly starting from 1 July.

MR has extended its railway routes suspended due to the pandemic. MR is making arrangements to enable the passengers to sit on board the trains keeping social distancing rules to prevent the virus from spreading. Also, MR is supervising its staff not to allow the passengers to ride on the trains without the tickets.

The schedule of the trains is announced at the railway stations concerned. Each passenger takes two seats to keep physical distancing but MR charges for only one person even when a passenger occupies two seats.—Myint Maung (Translated by Hay Mar)

Farmers of quality paddy to get K140,000 per acre in Pathein District

UNDER the programme to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic, the Agriculture Department will provide K140,000 per acre to the local farmers who are growing the good quality paddy grain.

Additionally, the department will reclaim a total of 500 acres of land for growing high-quality paddy ~ 450 acres for Yeetaowoetable species and 50 acres for Yeekyanaut species.

Providing of high-quality paddy seeds will enable the local farmers who are working on the high-quality paddy farms to get the jobs for harvesting and genetic exclusion, said U Htin Kyaw Oo, the township head from the Agriculture Department.

There are more than 100,000 acres of monsoon paddy in Kyaung Gone Township. Among them, over 70,000 acres of monsoon paddy have already been planted, said U Min Naung, the head of Township Land Registry Department. —Win Kyawng (IPRD) (Translated by Hay Mar)
Fishery exports reach $733.8 mln as of 17 July

EXPORT earnings from the fisheries sector during the period between 1 October and 17 July in the 2019-2020 financial year reached US$733.8 million, an increase of $108.97 million from the year-ago period, according to the statistics released by the Commerce Ministry. Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union. However, Myanmar’s fishery export volume is much lower compared to neighbouring countries.

The Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) is making concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes which meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques. The MFF plans to establish fish lakes, aqua feedstuffs processing factories, cold storages, and packaging factories, in cooperation with foreign experts. Myanmar’s marine products account for six per cent of overall export earnings, the Ministry of Commerce’s data showed.

At present, the fisheries sector is hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak. More than 3 million people are relying on this sector and the businesses need the government’s support to keep surviving amid the pandemic, said MFF Secretary U Win Nyang. The government’s recent relaxation on land use policy regarding fishing will enhance the sector and help the breeders get access to formal loan, he said.

There are over 247,000 acres of fish farms and 240,000 shrimp breeding farms across the country. Myanmar exported 340,000 tonnes of fishery products worth $530 million in the 2013-2014 FY, 338,000 tonnes worth $440 million in the 2014-2015 FY, 360,000 tonnes worth $500 million in the 2015-2016 FY, 440,000 tonnes worth $600 million in the 2016-2017 FY, 560,000 tonnes worth $700 million in the 2017-2018 FY, and over 580,000 tonnes in the 2018-2019 FY, according to the Commerce Ministry.—GNLML

Myanmar bean body calls for extension of black bean import deadline

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association (MPBSSMA) has asked India’s Embassy to Myanmar and the Ministry of Commerce to extend the deadline for black bean import as the deadline is due on August-end, said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of the association.

“At present, Myanmar’s Commerce Ministry has requested the Indian government to extend the import deadline. Furthermore, the association will make further efforts through the ministry. It has also directly sent a request to the Indian embassy. Earlier, the import quota of 400,000 tonnes of black beans was set for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year. Later, they narrowed the deadline to August-end,” he said.

India rapidly changed the import period to three months by August-end 2020 from the earlier set deadline of March 2021, as per their official notice.

With the changes in India’s policy on bean importation, Myanmar still lags short of the target. The growers have already sold out the beans and they are in the hands of traders. They have stockpiled around 200,000-250,000 tonnes of black beans, the association stated. “Myanmar cannot ship the entire quota as the deadline is in any possible way. India’s companies have been granted import licence from early July, while some have not received licence until now. Therefore, trading can start in mid-July. If the deadline is April-end, the country can ship only 29 per cent of quota (approximatively 80,000 tonnes), he noted.

The prices of the black bean are pegged at around K940,000-945,000 per tonne, while pigeon peas are priced K800,000-805,000 per tonne, as per the market’s data. 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. —GNLML

Local Business

Bago Region Investment Committee endorses 3 foreign enterprises creating 1,000 new jobs

THE Bago Region Investment Committee, at a videoconference held on 29 July, has endorsed three foreign projects and approved five foreign enterprises to increase capital, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The investments of those projects including the expansion of capital by the existing enterprises are estimated at US$8.119 million and K680 million. —GNLML

Nearly 90 foreign businesses are being executed in the Bago region, according to Bago Region Investment Committee. According to the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states receive only a small share of investments.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or $5 million.—GNLML

(Translated by El Myat Mon)

Ministry of Commerce is discussing Indian government to extend its deadline of black bean import from Myanmar. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG
German economy shrinks by record 10.1% in Q2 on virus hit

BERLIN — The German economy shrank by a record 10.1 per cent in the second quarter as coronavirus lockdowns took their toll, official data showed Thursday, but experts say a recovery is already under way.

Federal statistics agency Destatis called the quarter-on-quarter decline in gross domestic product “historic” and far bigger than any slump seen during the 2008-2009 financial crisis. Economy Minister Peter Altmaier had warned earlier this year that the pandemic would push Europe’s top economy into “the worst recession” in its postwar history, ending a decade of growth.

Analysts had expected a slightly smaller contraction of around nine per cent for the April-June period.

Destatis said efforts to contain the COVID-19 outbreak had led to “a massive slump” in exports and imports, although government spending had increased over the period. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

In globalized market, French growers embrace ‘slow-flowers’ movement

AMSTERDAM — In Amsterdam’s suburbs, the forklift trucks have already resumed their incessant loading of crates of flowers as the Netherlands’ horticulture giants get back to deliveries across the globe after the virus lockdown.

Every day, the Netherlands’ massive flower industry sells tonnes of French flowers to French consumers, just one sign of Dutch dominance of the globalized market.

But as the pandemic pushes consumers to look more locally, French flower growers are hoping to break Dutch hegemony by selling home-grown produce with less of an impact on the climate as part of the so-called “slow flowers” movement.

Started in the United States as a way to promote local farm and flower produce, the movement is growing as it supports local economies and ethical producers in a shift away from industrialised commerce.

Figures vary, but executives at French affiliate of Dutch giant Fleuramet estimate 70 per cent of the world’s flower production now makes its way through Holland, even produce that is not grown on Dutch soil.

“We sell 30,000 different varieties,” said Michel Van Schie, spokesman for Royal Flora Holland, another Dutch horticulture giant. —AFP

U.S. GDP in 2nd qtr. shrinks at 32.9% pace, worst since 1940s

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy dived an annualized real 32.9 per cent in the April to June period amid the coronavirus pandemic, the worst quarterly deterioration since comparable data became available in 1947, the Commerce Department said Thursday.

The contraction in terms of inflation-adjusted gross domestic product, which followed a 5 per cent drop in the preceding quarter, underscored the devastating impact of the public health crisis that has led to the widespread shuttering of businesses and stay-at-home orders in an effort to slow the spread of the virus.

However, the headline figure was better than the market forecast of a 34.1 per cent decline.—Kyojo

Prosecutors accuse ex-PEMEX boss of taking $10.5m bribe

MEXICO CITY — Mexican prosecutors accused the former boss of state oil company PEMEX of accepting a bribe worth more than $10 million from Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht at his trial in Mexico City on Wednesday.

Emilio Lozoya is accused of receiving huge payments in return for lucrative public works contracts.

Prosecutors said Lozoya’s mother and wife were also involved in the fraud.

The bribes were allegedly used to buy buildings for family members or transferred to accounts in Europe in a bid to “hide” the origin of the funds.

In return Odebrecht obtained a $39 million “profit” in the “award of works” contracts.

The trial is taking place by videoconference because Lozoya, 45, has been in hospital suffering from anaemia since returning to Mexico on July 17 following his extradition from Spain, where he was captured in February.—AFP

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Shell dives to $18.1bn loss on virus-hit oil market

THE HAGUE — Anglo-Dutch energy major Royal Dutch Shell posted Thursday a colossal net loss of $18.1 billion (15.4 billion euros) for the second quarter, blaming massive asset write-downs on the coronavirus-hit oil market, and flagged that job cuts are on the way.

The performance, contrasting sharply with profit after tax of $3.9 billion a year earlier, was sparked by a huge $16.8-billion charge on chronic fallout both from COVID-19 and collapsing oil prices.

The vast charge was taken “as a result of revised medium- and long-term price and refining margin outlook assumptions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and macroeconomic conditions as well as energy market demand and supply fundamentals,” Shell said in a results statement.

The dire performance meanwhile reflected lower prices for oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and gas, while it was also adversely impacted by lower refining margins and oil products sales volumes. Production dipped six per cent to 3.4 million barrels of oil equivalent per day in the reporting period — and is forecast to drop further in the third quarter.

“Resizing”

“Shell has delivered resilient cash flow in a remarkably challenging environment,” said Chief Executive Ben van Beurden in Thursday’s statement.

“We continue to focus on safe and reliable operations and our decisive cash preservation measures will underpin the strengthening of our balance sheet.” —AFP

Huawei overtakes Samsung as top smartphone seller

BELJING — China’s Huawei has overtaken Samsung to become the number-one smartphone seller worldwide in the second quarter on the back of strong domestic demand, industry tracker Canalys said Thursday.

Canalys said the embattled firm, which is facing US sanctions and falling overseas sales, shipped 55.8 million devices — overtaking Samsung for the first time, which shifted 53.7 million units.

The findings marked the first quarter in nine years that a company other than Samsung or Apple has led the market, Canalys said. —AFP

Strong sales of cleaning products amid pandemic boost P&G results

CINCINNATI — Strong sales of cleaning products and soaps amid the coronavirus crisis more than compensated for lacklustre demand for shaving products, lifting Procter & Gamble’s quarterly earnings, the company reported Thursday.

The US consumer products giant, whose brands include Mr Clean, Cascade and Gilette, scored an impressive 11 per cent surge in second-quarter sales in fabric and home care, the standout division in the period.

“We remain highly relevant across the board,” said Chief Financial Officer Jon Moeller, who said consumers were keeping larger inventories of products at home to avoid store visits.

“Consumers generally are carrying higher inventory levels. They also are consuming more,” said Moeller, adding that shoppers had also had more money for household items that might have otherwise gone to travel or eating out.

Moeller said consumers were using more detergent because they were washing clothes after just one use. Sales of some items, such as Bounty paper towels, were up “strong” double digits in the quarter, he told reporters on a conference call.—AFP

Oil firms like Shell are booking massive losses as lower oil prices force them to reduce the value of their assets. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Notice of Commencement of EIA Investigation Phase

The members of the Bawdwin Joint Venture Company Limited (BJV) plan to redevelop the existing lead, zinc and silver mine located in Namtu township, Kyauk Me District, Northern Shan State, Myanmar.

Redevelopment will involve demolition of some existing infrastructure and construction of new infrastructure to support mining and processing activities within the 38 km2 existing mining concession.

An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken in accordance with Myanmar’s Environmental Laws and Procedures. The Scoping Report, Terms of Reference, Public Participation Plan and Grievance Mechanism are available at the Information Centers listed below and on BJV’s website set up in the project area or from the website given below.

Public consultation relating to the project will be carried out in Namtu and Bawdwin in August 2020 and will be held in accordance with Government COVID19 public gathering guidelines.

For further information, to submit comments, or lodge a grievance, please visit the Information Centers located at Bawdwin Upper Village, Bawdwin Lower Village and Tiger Camp or send us an email by visiting https://bawdwinjv.com
Pakistan shows concerns over India’s induction of Rafale jets

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan on Thursday expressed serious concerns over India’s induction of Rafale fighter jets imported from France into the Indian Air Force and said it could lead to an arms race in South Asia.

A batch of five Rafale jets reached at Indian air force station Ambala in the northern state of Haryana on Wednesday. The five aircraft is the first tranche of the 36 planes bought by India from France.

“We have seen reports of recent acquisition of Rafale jets by Indian Air Force. According to some former senior Indian officials and several international publications, these Rafale jets have dual-capable systems that can also be modified as nuclear weapon delivery platforms,” Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said.

“It is well known that India continues to expand and modernize its nuclear arsenal both in terms of type and number of delivery systems. In addition to this, India has nuclearized the Indian Ocean and continues to increase the readiness of its arsenal,” Farooqui said at her weekly press briefing in Islamabad.—Xinhua ■

Philippines arrests former MP over wife’s killing

MANILA — A former Philippine congressman and religious cult leader was arrested Thursday over his wife’s killing and corrupt practices, police said, ending a years-long manhunt.

Ruben Ecleo, 60, was head of a group called the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association when his wife’s remains were found in a bin bag at the bottom of a ravine on the central island of Cebu in 2002.

He was arrested months later in a police raid on his home on the island of Dinagat, during which 17 people were killed.

Ecleo was hailed in 2004 and won a House of Representatives seat in 2010 — held up as an example of an infamous culture of impunity in the country, where the rich and powerful are rarely held to account.

In 2012, a year after he stopped attending the trial, a Cebu court convicted him of parricide and sentenced him to 30 years in prison.

Manila police described Ecleo as the “#1 Top Most Wanted Person” in the Philippines.

A police report said he was arrested Thursday at a gated housing enclave in the northern city of Angeles, where he had been living under another name.

His driver was also detained for trying to obstruct Ecleo’s arrest, police added.

In 2006, another court convicted Ecleo of corruption committed when he was a town mayor in Dinagat in the early 1990s.—AFP ■

Tokyo asks restaurants, bars to shut early as virus spikes

TOKYO — Tokyo’s governor called Thursday for restaurants, bars and karaoke parlours to shut earlier to help contain the coronavirus as the Japanese capital reported a record number of new infections.

“The current situation is more serious than before,” said Yuriko Koike, citing experts.

“There were several clusters in Tokyo... We have no time to waste,” she said, adding the number of infections through group dining is increasing.

Japan has so far escaped the epidemic relatively lightly, with around 32,500 infections and just over 1,000 deaths since the first case was detected in January.

But the number of cases has been on the rise since the government lifted a state of emergency two months ago.

“Tokyo will have to declare a state of emergency if the situation gets worse,” Koike said.

Businesses in the capital that serve alcohol and karaoke parlours will be asked to close at 10 pm, from August 3 until the end of the month, Koike said.

The city’s government will offer subsidies of 200,000 yen ($1,900) to medium and small-sized firms that cooperate, she added.

“It’s not realistic to ask them to close entirely,” she said.

Complying is voluntary, with no penalties for those who don’t, and comes as the capital reported 367 coronavirus cases just a day after a record single-day nationwide figure of 1,264 new cases.—AFP ■

N. Korea again claims no novel coronavirus infection cases

BEIJING — North Korea’s most influential newspaper again claimed Thursday that nobody has been infected with the new coronavirus so far in the country, saying measures to prevent the pandemic from spreading there.

If North Korea lets its guard down, that would trigger a “crucial crisis,” said the Rodong Sinmun, the newspaper of the Workers’ Party of Korea.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday that a first suspected case of the novel coronavirus in North Korea had been detected, prompting leader Kim Jong Un to convene an emergency meeting of the ruling party.

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, the news agency said.—Kyodo ■

Philippines to stockpile Avigan for COVID-19 treatment

MANILA — The Philippine government said Thursday it will stockpile an anti-flu drug Avigan, to treat severe cases of the new coronavirus, as planned clinical trials for the drug draw closer.

Carlito Galvez Jr., presidential adviser and head of the national task force handling the pandemic, said the government is looking for ways to treat severe cases to prevent more deaths.

“This is why we are buying high-flow nasal cannula, and we will also stockpile remdesivir and Avigan, as well as blood plasma (from COVID-19 survivors) so that our severe cases will not become fatalities,” Galvez said during a press conference in Metro Manila. Favipiravir, an oral antiviral drug sold under the brand name Avigan, is manufactured by a subsidiary of Japanese firm, Fujifilm Holdings Corp. A government review on the usage of Avigan in the Philippines has already concluded, according to Philippine Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergez, suggesting clinical trials could start soon.—Kyodo ■
Muslim pilgrims to scale Mount Arafat for peak of hajj

MACCA — Muslim pilgrims converged Thursday on Saudi Arabia’s Mount Arafat for the climax of this year’s hajj, the smallest in modern times and a sharp contrast to the massive crowds of previous years.

A tight security cordon has been erected all around the foot of the rocky hill outside Mecca, also known as Jabal al-Rahma or Mount of Mercy.

Pilgrims, donning masks and observing social distancing, were brought in buses from neighbouring Mina, state television showed, as Saudi authorities impose measures to prevent a coronavirus outbreak.

They were subject to temperature checks and attended a sermon — which state media said was translated into 10 languages — before they set off on the climb to the summit for hours of Koran recitals and prayers to atone for their sins.

The scene was strikingly different to last year’s ritual when a sea of pilgrims ascended Mount Arafat, marshalled by tens of thousands of stewards in a bid to prevent any crushes.

After sunset prayers, pilgrims will make their way down Mount Arafat to Mundilah, another holy site where they will sleep under the stars to prepare for the final stage of hajj, the symbolic “stoning of the devil”.

It takes place on Friday and also marks the beginning of Eid al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice.

The hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam and a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime, is usually one of the world’s largest religious gatherings.

But only up to 10,000 people already residing in the kingdom will participate in this year’s ritual, compared with 2019’s gathering of some 2.5 million from around the world.

“You are not our guests but those of God, the custodian of the two holy mosques (Saudi Arabia’s King Salman) and the nation,” Haji Minister Mohammad Benten said in a video released by the media ministry on Wednesday.

Bolivia records 10% increase in coca cultivation in 2019: UN

VIENNA — Bolivia recorded a 10 per cent increase in coca cultivation in 2019 as compared to the previous year, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said on Wednesday.

That amounted to an increase from 23,100 hectares to 25,500 devoted to the crop, a primary ingredient in cocaine but is chewed raw in several Andean countries. Bolivia is the third largest producer of cocaine in the world after Colombia and Peru, according to the UNODC.

The data was compiled from satellite imagery and information collected on the ground.

One of the main coca producing areas of Bolivia is in the central Cochabamba department, a bastion of peasant support for exiled former president Evo Morales.

UNODC said it has detected “the presence of coca plantations in six of the 22 nationally protected areas” in Bolivia, where the harvesting of coca is prohibited.

In Bolivia it is legal to chew coca leaves and use them to make tea or in religious Andean rituals. Morales passed a law in 2017 that almost doubled the legal area allowed for coca cultivation from 12,000 to 22,000 hectares. —AFP

US federal forces agree on conditional pullout from Portland

PORTLAND — President Donald Trump’s administration on Wednesday agreed to a deal to defuse weeks of clashes in the US city of Portland with the withdrawal of federal forces whose presence enraged protesters, but the timing remained in dispute.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown said the forces — whose deployment was seen by many as part of Trump’s law-and-order strategy for re-election — would begin their phased pullout on Thursday. Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf indicated, however, that the officers will withdraw only if there are guarantees that local police can ensure the federal courthouse will be secured.

Trump’s administration earlier this month sent the federal police teams, many wearing combat-like gear, to intervene in the western city after weeks of protests against racism and police brutality saw windows broken and graffiti scrawled on the federal courthouse and other buildings.

But their deployment only served to inflame the situation, especially following video footage of protesters being snatched off the street by federal forces and put into unmarked cars.

“They have acted as an occupying force & brought violence. Starting 30 July, all Customs and Border Protection & ICE officers will leave downtown Portland.”

In his statement, Wolf said he and Brown had “agreed to a joint plan to end the violent activity in Portland directed at federal and local police and security cordon”.

Bolivian anti-narcotics police prepare to incinerate cocaine at La Rinconada, on the outskirts of La Paz, in December 2019 — the country reported a 10 per cent increase in coca cultivation in 2019. —AFP

Russia jails US ex-marine for 9 years over police assault

MOSCOW — A Russian court on Thursday sentenced former US marine Trevor Reed to nine years in prison for assaulting two police officers while drunk last year.

Reed, a 29-year-old student and former marine from Texas, allegedly attacked police after attending a party in Moscow.

He appeared wearing a face mask in a cage for defendants in a courtroom in the Russian capital as the judge read out the guilty verdict, saying the police officers had suffered “mental and physical harm”.

Reed was handed nine years in a penal colony, according to an AFP reporter in the courtroom.

“This is completely a political case,” Reed told journalists after the verdict. “I will be asking my government for political support”. The case has caught the attention of US diplomats in Russia and US Ambassador John Sullivan said he was following proceedings along with the trials of other Americans detained in Russia. —AFP
MFF, FIFA discuss football development amid pandemic

THE ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) announced yesterday that the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020 will be postponed until next year for safety with the coronavirus pandemic, according to the AFF’s statement.

The AFF Suzuki Cup Task Force Committee recently held a meeting before reaching this decision and detailed fixtures for the tournament will be released later, according to the AFF.

AFF president Major-General Khiev Sameth said: “Since the onset of COVID-19, the AFF has been closely monitoring guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Ministries, government agencies, FIFA and AFC”.

Adrian Staiti, president of APAC at Sportfive, the exclusive commercial partner of AFF Suzuki Cup and other football associations of ASEAN countries also attended the virtual conference.

During the meeting, U Zaw Zaw discussed the coronavirus-preventative process of Myanmar Football Federation and Ayeawady Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports, launching quarantine centres at Myanmar National Football Academies and Myanmar National Football teams’ apartments to help the quarantined persons during the pandemic period, hard times being faced by players and their families, and football sponsors in most of the countries due to the pandemic, and the preparation process being undertaken by MFF for making ready to hold the football tourneys again after getting permission by the government. The MFF president also stressed on the equal rights of getting COVID-19 Relief Loan by FIFA and supporting women football tourneys nationwide.

Next, FIFA president discussed planning to hold FIFA World Cup every two years instead of every four years and eight Asian countries to be included in the World Cup tourneys. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

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Adrian Staiti, president of APAC at Sportfive, the exclusive commercial partner of the AFF Suzuki Cup, also said, “Sportfive supports the decision of the AFF to postpone the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020 to ensure the safety and well-being of all players, partners, staff and fans. While we are disappointed that we are unable to hold the tournament this year, we will work closely with the AFF to monitor the situation and look forward to working with our partners to deliver a great tournament for the fans of ASEAN next year.”

The AFF Suzuki Cup Football tourney is an apple of everyone’s eyes for ASEAN region and it has possessed fan attendance of more than 750,000 in 2018. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

No spectators for US Open golf due to COVID-19

NEW YORK — The 120th US Open will be staged without spectators at Winged Foot on Sep 17-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Golf Association (USGA) announced Wednesday (Jul 29).

The USGA consulted state officials before ruling out fans over health and safety issues.

The major showdown in suburban New York would have been the first to allow fans since the US PGA Tour resumed play in June after a three-month shutdown due to the deadly virus outbreak.

“Following months of consultation and scenario planning with local and state health officials, we have jointly decided that hosting the US Open without spectators will provide the best opportunity to conduct the championship safely for all involved,” USGA chief executive officer Mike Davis said.

“We will miss the excitement of the fans and what their presence brings to the championship. We look forward to welcoming them again to future US Opens.”

The PGA Tour had planned to have fans at the Memorial tournament two weeks ago but rising numbers of cases in Ohio prompted state officials to scratch that idea.

Spectators will also be absent from next week’s PGA Championship at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco, the first major championship of a year where the regular schedule was thrown into chaos by the virus.

The US Open was postponed from June to September and staged without the usual trademark qualifying rounds, the field selected by rankings and other methods.

The PGA was moved from May to August while the Masters was shifted from April to November and the British Open was called off altogether.

Organizers had pushed to try and have spectators at the US Open.—AFP

Brighton sign Ajax defender Veltman

LONDON — Brighton signed Netherlands defender Joel Veltman from Ajax for an undisclosed fee on Wednesday (Jul 29).

Veltman agreed a three-year contract with the Premier League side. The 28-year-old helped Ajax win the Dutch title three times after coming through the club’s vaunted academy.

“We’re delighted to welcome Joel to the club,” Brighton boss Graham Potter said.

“He has terrific experience from his time with Ajax including the Champions League and, of course, with the Dutch national team.

“He’s an excellent defender who can play at right-back and at centre-half, but he’s also comfortable in possession.

“Joel will bring great experience to the club and we’re looking forward to working with him.”

Capped 22 times by Holland, Veltman was part of the 2014 World Cup squad and also played in Ajax’s Europa League final defeat to Manchester United in 2017. He becomes the second arrival at the AMEX Stadium this week after England midfielder Adam Lallana joined the Seagulls following his departure from Liverpool.—AFP

Myanmar Football Federation president U Zaw Zaw discusses football development matters with FIFA via online on 29 July 2020. PHOTO: MFF