State Counsellor discusses resumption of football events under COVID-19 guidelines

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a videoconference on the possible resumption of football events under control measures against the COVID-19.

Participants at the virtual meeting were Permanent Secretary Dr Thet Khaing Win from the Ministry of Health and Sports, President U Zaw Zaw from Myanmar Football Federation and former Myanmar national selection goalkeeper Thiha Sithu.

First of all, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), said the discussion would be on the restarting of football matches during the COVID period; Myanmar is interested in football matches; that was why football fans would be interested to know when football matches would be restarting, the situation of football matches and how the footballers were faring.

She said during the discussions, she wanted the participants to explain the negative impact of COVID-19 on sports and the efforts to mitigate the negative effects as much as possible; she had read the news that a vaccine for the treatment of COVID-19 has been discovered in Russia; we do not know yet the veracity of this news report; if the news were true efforts would be made to get this vaccine for the Myanmar people immediately; during this interim period she wanted the people to be patient and keep on following the rules and regulations; if these rules and regulations were being followed, we would be able to overcome the health problem.

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar reported on 12 August, total figure reaches 361

MYANMAR’s COVID-19 positive cases reached 361 after 1 new case was reported on 12 August according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Case No. 361 returned from India. Out of the 361 confirmed cases, six died, 318 have recovered, 310 have been discharged from hospitals and 16 were held under investigation.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 12 August 2020

| Total Cases | 361 |
| New Case    | 1   |
| Total Deaths | 6   |
| Total Recovered: | 310 |
| Discharged from hospital: | 5 |
| New PUIs | 16 |

SEE PAGE-3

SEE PAGE-5
Vice President U Henry Van Thio arraigned at Kalay airport in Sagaing Region while on flight from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The Vice President and his entourage, including Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gy, Deputy Ministers U Tin Myint, U Khin Maung Win and U Myint Kyaw, Permanent Secretary U Shwe Lay, Directors-General and other officials, were well-received by Chin State Chief Minister Salai Lian Lwal, Speaker of Chin State Hluttaw U Zo Bawi and other departmental officials.

The Vice President, in his capacity as Chairperson of National Disaster Management Committee, presented K30 million cash assistance for river bank erosion prevention measures in Bi village in Mingin Township and K 4.5 million for river bank erosion prevention measures in Myauksi village in Kandawgyi Township of Chin State and information centre in Tiddim Township of Chin State.

U Aung Myo Oo, head of state Department of Agriculture explained distribution processes of coffee beans to local coffee farmers.

After hearing the reports, the Vice President instructed to adapt the way of growing coffee seed instead of giving the coffee sprouts from the coffee farm to the coffee farmers from remote regions as they might face high logistic costs, damages and insufficient sprouts. He later inspected the construction works of new sports stadium (Bwazan) in Tiddim Township and instructed to build systematically in line with the criteria after U Than Aung, director of Chin State Sports and Physical Education Department briefed the facts of the new stadium.

The new stadium is 120ft in length, 90ft in width and 36ft in height and is being constructed with K247.5million budget of 2019-2020FY. He inspected construction of the general administrative office and U Aung Min Khant, project manager of Equal Construction and Decoration Co.,ltd explained the works. It is a two-storey truss building with140ft in length, 34ft in width and 24ft in height and worth of K384.327 million.

Statement of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) on its inspection of prisons, jails and lock-ups in Myanmar in 2020

1. Since its establishment under Order No. 3/2020 of the Office of the President on 14 January 2020, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) has inspected prisons, jails, police detention centres, court lock-ups and hospital guard-wards, on scheduled dates, in accordance with section 43 of the Commission Law in order to examine whether prisoners and detainees are treated in conformity with humanitarian norms, international human rights instruments and domestic legislation.

2. In inspecting, as stipulated in section 44 of the Commission law, spaces in the prisons, jails and lock-ups and facilities for those detained are examined and independent interviews with the prisoners and detainees are conducted. The findings of the inspections together with recommendations are referred to the relevant Union-Level organizations.

3. Since the commencement of its functions till July 2020, the Commission has inspected 10 prisons, 8 jails, 12 police detention centres, 7 court lock-ups and 5 hospital guard-wards as follows:

(a) 27 January to 1 February: Mandalay Central Prison; Meiktila Prison; Htone Bo –Male 1, Htone Bo Male 2, Htone Bo Female, 24-mile and Phayar Ngasu Labour Camps; police detention centres, court lock-ups and hospital guard-wards in Meiktila.

(b) 18 to 21 February: Pyay Prison; Paungde Prison, police detention centres, court lock-ups and hospital guard-wards.

(c) 24 February: Sarmalaut Agricultural and Livestock Training School.

(d) 17 to 21 March: Putao Central Prison; Myitkyina Police Detention Centre, court lock-ups and hospital guard-wards.

(e) 8 and 9 July: Insein Central Prison.

(f) 14 to 17 July: Yamethin Prison; Nay Pyi Taw Jail, Pyinmana police detention centre and labour camps 1 and 2 of Kintha.

(g) 23 July: Thayet Prison; Thayet police detention centre and court lock-up.

4. On these inspection tours, 361 prisoners and detainees were allowed to separately meet the inspection team to freely reveal their difficulties, violations of their rights and judicial matters without the presence of prison employees. After reviewing their revelations, the relevant organizations at the Union Level are informed accordingly.

5. The team carried out the inspections in accordance with the United Nations Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, contained in section 41 and section 42 of the Procedure of the MNHRC Law and, Myanmar Police Manual and, based on the findings, the following recommendations have already been put forward to the relevant Union-Level organizations:

(a) Related to health 37
(b) Related to education 10
(c) Related to administration 53
(d) Related to prison transfer 5
(e) Related to sanitation 13
(f) Related to family visit 8
(g) Related to food 6
(h) Related to library 1
(i) Related to prison buildings 11
(j) Related to Lack of communications with families 1
(k) Related to appeal cases 1
(l) Related to drinking water 1

Total 147

6. While inspecting prisons, jails and lock-ups, the inspection team also monitored the implementation of the previous recommendations and progress achieved. The implementation of the new recommendations resulting from the current inspections will be re-examined as well on next inspection tours.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Date:12 August 2020
Who is eligible to vote?

- irrespective of sex or religion
- those who are 18 years of age on the date of the election
- citizens, associate citizens, and those who have permission to become naturalized citizens, who do not contravene the provisions of the Hluttaw Election Law
- a person whose name has been included in the voting list of the respective constituency

Who is ineligible to vote?

- a member of a religious order
- person serving a prison sentence
- person adjudged to be of unsound mind as provided for in the relevant law
- person who has not yet been discharged as an insolvent
- person prohibited by the Election Law
- foreigner or person who has assumed foreign citizenship

Section 59 (g) in Hluttaw Election Law

IN accordance with section 59 (g) of the Hluttaw Election Law, no one is allowed to vote more than once in any election for a Hluttaw constituency in which he or she has the right to vote. Anyone who is found guilty of or abetting this act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding K100,000 (one hundred thousand Kyats), or with both.

State Counsellor discusses resumption of football events under COVID-19 guidelines

FROM PAGE-1

Next, Permanent Secretary Dr Thet Khaing Win discussed the importance of physical exercise in healthcare and medical treatments, as well as in the relief of diseases; due to serious measures against the pandemic under the instruction of central committee and the management of MoHS since early January, Myanmar was a 195th country that found the first positive case in the world; rules of control measures have some impacts on the socio-economic sector of the country, but restrictions were systematically relaxed phase by phase to avoid the second wave of a pandemic like in other countries; regular and unexpected checks were carried out at the businesses which were allowed for reopening.

Health authorities inspected the Yangon United Football Club in Hlone Township, Thawonna football stadium and Yangon Football Academy, and discussed with officials for the Standard operating procedures or guidelines to be able to resume football events; the Myanmar National League has been permitted to restart for the first stage.

On the basis of international guidelines for football events, Myanmar has adopted its appropriate SOP; the games will be held only in Yangon, instead of home and away matches where spectators are not allowed in the stadium to watch; all the participating players, referees and relevant persons will have to live in the camp for the whole football season; a total of 300 persons have been tested negative; it has been instructed not to closely celebrate for the goals and to adhere to guidelines in the matches and training sessions.

He continued to say that more sports competition will be allowed on the basis of results from control measures in MNL. Former Myanmar national selection player goalkeeper Tha Sithu briefed the impacts of COVID-19 on the income of footballers; suspension of training for some months due to this disease; resumption of the events; agreements for lesser salaries to relieve financial losses of football clubs; MNL players cannot do other jobs in line with international norms of contracts with the clubs during the events were suspended; there are a total of 5,000 persons, including players, referees, coaches and managers, in the Myanmar professional football industry, as well as about 50,000 amateur persons.

He finally pledged to follow healthcare guidelines to prevent the pandemic.

President U Zaw Zaw from Myanmar Football Federation said that Myanmar National League becomes a professional league in 2009 and contracts with local and foreign players were made in line with the rules of the International Federation of Association Football and the Asian Football Confederation; the success of MNL club is also the dignity of Myanmar; there are 12 clubs in League One and 8 clubs in League Two in MNL; national selection team was formed with the players from the leagues and it has been approved by the AFF to take part in the Asian Champion League and the AFC competitions.

The competitions were held in accordance with the season’s fixture list. The events were suspended on 20 March and planned to restart on 14 July after the MoHS officials inspected preparations. The MFF used its dormitories, academies and training facilities as the COVID-19 quarantine centres and a total of 3,000 persons have been accommodated there.

U Zaw Zaw added that the MNL events are scheduled for 22 August to restart; after finishing all the games in October, the selection for the national team will be carried out.

He said that two football clubs from the League One were dissolved due to financial difficulties, leaving only 10 clubs in this league; while football club owners have spent a lot of their money for development of Myanmar football, while the MFF has struggled for surviving for 15 years without using the state budgets; the MoHS is also requested to provide more supports.

As local events are also related to Asian level and world level competitions, the executive meeting of AFF was also held online.

The MFF president added the women football events are expected to resume at the end of this year, as well as futsal and aged classes events; the detailed plans up to December will be reported to the MoHS for its approval.

Also he requested to air the events on MHTV and to reopen dormitories at the football academies; explained the sponsor organizations have reduced by around 50 to 60 per cent of their contracts due to economic decline at home and abroad, resulting from the cuts in the number of events and cost.

Amidst the pandemic situations, Myanmar is in the best status, compared with other ASEAN member-countries due to the systematic management of the government and people’s adherence to the control measures.

U Zaw Zaw also advised the government to organize school football competitions to promote the soccer level of the country.

The MoHS has planned to organize school football competitions; the WHO is discussing the announcement of Russia on the discovery of COVID-19 vaccine; Myanmar has negotiated with relevant and international organizations to get the vaccines; the ministry is relaxing restriction gradually.

SEE PAGE-4
State Counsellor discusses resumption of football events under COVID-19 guidelines

FROM PAGE-3

With respect to the discussions the State Counsellor said that she wanted the footballers to restart their football matches as soon as possible; in the same way, she wanted the country to be up and running in a regular fashion; we need to verify quickly the news about the discovery of preventive vaccine; the Ministry of Health and Sports has been working diligently regarding the prevention of COVID-19; if the situation became safe, she wanted the concerned authorities to allow football matches to be played in the most expeditious manner.

She wanted to know what kind of assistance could be given by the health authorities about the capability loss by footballers for being away from training sessions for about 4 to 5 months; during the quarantine period it was easy to give them special exercises in a systematic way and make efforts to improve their capabilities by providing good food and proper healthy regimes; just as the Myanmar Football Federation has been giving assistance, she wanted the Ministry of Health and Sports to provide assistance from the government side; success in the field of sports was also a success for the country and a matter of pride and dignity for the country; at one time Burma selected football team was the top in Asia; she still remembered this; we need to work hard to reach this level again.

Basically, it was important for the people's health to be good; the fact that Myanmar footballers could play the first part, well and during the second part their performance declined was due to the fact that these players had not received adequate nutrition during their youth; it was difficult to repair their health as they became older; the stamina of players who had received adequate nutrition from the time of their birth and players who had not received adequate nutrition during the same period was not the same; we have to make a lot of effort to reach up to international standard; just as efforts are made in the health sector, efforts need to be made in the sports sector also; cooperation was the key and also important; if efforts were made as a team real success could be achieved.

In some sports, some people believed that it could be accomplished by a single person; for example, a swimming champion might think that success was achieved single-handedly because the swimming events were individual events; it could not be forgotten that during the process of building up stamina and training, other people had been involved; there were his family and coaches during various stages of his career; no one could know everything single-handedly; we have to take into account the environment, the team and supporters; this is a very important fact; she liked football very much because the world of football brings out this fact in a clear and vivid manner; in playing football, apart from playing the game as a hobby, the spirit of cooperation was very important.

She wanted the footballers to be role models for the youth; she was not saying that they had to be role models in every field; footballers could become role models in having teamwork; it was not the excellence of one single person, for this person had to rely on his comrades to develop his capabilities and skills; in the same way this person had to help his comrades to develop their capabilities and skills; to be able to show this fact was very good for the country; this kind of spirit and training was very good for a new country, a country which had embarked on the road to development and a developing country; the fact that footballers are taking reduced salaries is for the benefit of supporters and donors who were supporting the team; this kind of spirit is very good; to be able to show how to build up a certain kind of strength through cooperation is very good indeed; this is the spirit of a footballer.

The spirit of a good footballer is the spirit of a good team; the spirit of a good team should be the spirit of a country; if all the citizens of a country participated and cooperated with the spirit of a good team, the development of the country could be assured; the efforts that had been made to restart the Myanmar National League matches were not only in accordance with the rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports but also in accordance with the needs of the country; this was why she was happy to learn that it was possible for the Myanmar National League matches to be resumed.

In her concluding remark, the State Counsellor said the government encourages football not only as a game but also as a tool for motivation; football competitions need to be organized at schools; each town must have at least a football ground; the economic situation of business firms plays a crucial role for supporting this industry; development of sports is related to the prosperity of a country; plans for football events during the pandemic are good; the central committee on COVID-19 holds the meeting every 15 days for relaxing restrictions.

She added that the government will consider about the football academies and the dormitories of private schools; both of these issues are being related; high schools have been reopened for one month and restrictions will be eased in accordance with the outcome; the immediate recovery is expected for the whole country through safe plans; public pressures for relaxing control measures have caused the outbreak of the second wave; imposition of rules again have more impacts on the country and its people; football events should be aired on the television channels and it will surely motivate the people.

The State Counsellor continued to say that the government will work for the people as much as possible although the country is not a developed and prosperous nation; doubt on Myanmar's capacity for controlling COVID-19 have been removed; the sportsman spirit is needed to maintain the prevailing success in this measure; this attitude must be cultivated in facing win or loss; the defeat must be turned into the victory.

She said that football can attract the largest number of global fans; Myanmar football status should be developed; with understanding the impacts of COVID, the government will render possible assistance; all the resources of the country are intended for its people as 'People are the Key'; resources and wealth of country are just for the people, including football players; recovery of football industry will be facilitated, and the government will help for the earliest resumption of football events and airing the games on television channels. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing donates blood in Yangon

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing encouraged Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) officers from Yangon Command who donated blood collectively at National Blood Bank under the Ministry of Health and Sports in Latha Township in Yangon yesterday morning.

At the National Blood Bank, Deputy Director-General Dr Thida Aung explained the works in blood donation of Tatmadaw members.

The Senior General and Tatmadaw personnel had participated in the blood donation with military officers and well-wishers, they presented nutritious foods to those who donated blood with friendly greeting.

The Senior General presented the nutritious foods to the blood donors.

The Deputy Director-General received food supplements donated by the Tatmadaw families, and returned certificates of honour.

Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) officers have donated blood for nine times to the same blood bank, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung inspects border area development, human resources development in Shan State

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung accompanied by Shan State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Colonel Hla Oo inspected the progress of border areas and human resources on 10 August.

The Union Minister and party arrived at the Technical School for Nationalities Youths from Border Areas in Aungban and the officials of training school briefed the construction works of 4-storey teaching building, 3-storey sleeping quarter, 3-storey with 4 attached apartments of civil-servant housing, warehouse and kitchen.

The Union Minister said the new Technical School for Nationalities Youths from Border Areas will be opened soon and the modern kinds of training for vehicle maintenance, mason/carpenter, electricity and aircon maintenance, wielding and mobile phone repair will be available at the school for the local youths and the qualified teachers will teach by using modern teaching materials.

The TVET vocational subjects are valuable for sustainable development of lives and it also needs to conduct departmental qualification courses to improve the skills and teaching method of the relevant instructors, he added.

The Union Minister and party inspected at the Training School for Development of Nationalities Youths from Border Areas in Pin daya on 11 August and awarded those who passed the matriculation exam of 2019-2020 academic year and inspected the school compound.

The Union Minister and party also visited the road construction sites in Pindaya and Ywangan townships of Danu Self-administered Zone. The engineers in charge explained the operation from the beginning to the end of the projects with documentary photos.

The Union Minister said that despite restrictions during the COVID-19 crisis, human resources development and border area development activities could be performed well by spending the permitted fund for 2019-2020 financial year and the works were completed on time in accordance with the set standards. The Union Minister also urged the officials to exactly follow the COVID-19 preventive measures set by the Ministry of Health and Sports during implementation of the works, and to try to complete the work with the set standards on time.

The Union Minister also urged the locals to cooperate for the long-term stability after the work finished and coordinate the requirements.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han and Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar reported on 12 August, total figure reaches 361

FROM PAGE-1

One new case of COVID-19 on 12 August, 2020: updated at 8 pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact with positive patient</th>
<th>Oversea travel history</th>
<th>Hospital for medical treatment</th>
<th>Lab result</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>361</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yankin Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, India</td>
<td>Waibargi Specialist Hospital, Yangon</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Keep under Investigation (Dagon Township)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presides over coordination meeting of MYAC

THE government has developed and implemented long-term plans to promote youth human resources and nurture young generations, said Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, during the coordination meeting of the Myanmar Youth Affairs Committee (MYAC) in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 August.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, the Permanent Secretaries, the Directors-General, and the Deputy Directors-General of the relevant ministries, and MYAC members across the country.

At the meeting, Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as Chairperson of the MYAC, said that relevant ministries, representatives for young people, and technical advisors collaboratively drafted the Youth Affairs Policy. The National Strategic Plan of the policy has also been drafted. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement discussed and collaborated with regional governments to launch Youth Centres in States and regions, and allocated budget funds for purchase of necessary things related to youth development.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi, in his capacity as committee Vice-Chairperson (1) of MYAC, said that “duties and responsibilities of MYAC members (draft)” has been drawn up. He continued that National Strategic Plan of the Youth Affairs Policy has already been drafted, and young people will be able to work collaboratively in accordance with the plan.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi also emphasized the “1,000 days after birth” programme conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi, in his capacity as committee Vice-Chairperson (2) of MYAC, said that all relevant ministries and organizations need to work collaboratively in implementation of the Youth Affairs Policy. He continued that young people need to be healthy, educated, altruistic, and patient as well as they need to work unidly in order to achieve their goals. He also urged the young people to have healthy lifestyle, good friends and good ethics.

In the meeting, the MYAC Secretary Director-General Dr San San Aye from the Department of Social Welfare, officials from relevant ministries, and youth delegates of the MYAC discussed the “duties and responsibilities of MYAC members (draft)”, matters related to sub-committees and implementation of the strategic plan.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye takes part in the discussions at the second coordination meeting of Myanmar Youth Affairs Committee in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 August. PHOTO: MNA.

(Translated by Maung Maung Sue)
THE NCA Implementation Framework Coordination Group Leader Sao Sai Ngern said that the three-day Joint Implementing Coordination Meeting (JICM) preliminary meeting, which was held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw, was fruitful and obtained good results.

The final-day session of the preliminary meeting was held yesterday afternoon.

The objective of the JICM preliminary meeting is to prepare for the upcoming 9th JICM meeting, and the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong.

Representatives of the Government at the meeting were the NRPC Vice-Chairman U Tun Tun Oo (Attorney-General of the Union), Lt-Gen Yar Pye, Lt-Gen Min Naung and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Peace Commission Secretary Retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo, Peace Commission advisory board members U Hla Maung Shwe and U Moe Zaw Oo, and Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor.

The preliminary meeting concluded with ‘good results’

THE NCA Implementation Framework Coordination Group Leader Sao Sai Ngern, NCA Implementation Coordinator U Myo Win, members Pado Saw Ta Doh Moo, U Hla Htay, Saw Mra Yazar Lin, Dr Lian Hmung Sakhong, Salai Htlaw Hei, Saw Sein Win, Pado Saw L. Kalu Say, Saw Kyaw Nyunt, Kya Salmon, Nai Aung Ma Ngay, Khan Myint Tun and Dr Sai Oo represented the NCA-S EAOs.

During the meeting, the Coordination Group Leader Sao Sai Ngern said that the three-day preliminary meeting was fruitful because it could make decisions on meeting plan for the upcoming 9th JICM meeting, which would be held on 13 August, and could discuss the matters related to the upcoming fourth session of the Union Peace Conference. Despite both sides’ concerns, they could frankly discuss interpretations of terms, according to Sao Sai Ngern.

He said that both sides aimed to get a win-win solution for the sake of the whole Union, and the preliminary meeting achieved good results. Then, he expressed thanks to the participants. He also urged all the participants to have health awareness for COVID-19.

Afterwards, the NRPC Vice-Chairman U Tun Tun Oo (Attorney-General of the Union) said that the topics discussed in the preliminary meeting are important matters including future processes for federal system and basic principles, and regarding some points, the EAOs could not make immediate decisions because they need to obtain agreement from all member groups. But the other points were agreed, and the remaining points will be discussed in future meetings, said U Tun Tun Oo.

Some points that were agreed in the meeting will be included in the Part III of the Union Accord, which is expected to be signed in the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong.

The preliminary meeting reached agreement on 15 points for NCA Implementation Framework, 8 topics related to future processes and implementation for post-2020 period, the names of the sub-topics that still need further negotiation, and 5 points related to federal principle, and the agreement will be included in the Part III of the Union Accord.

After the preliminary meeting, the Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor and NCA-S EAOs representative Nai Aung Ma Ngay explained the meeting results to the media, and answered the questions raised by the media. —Tun Win Naing, Hein Min Soe (Translated by Maung Maung Suee)

125 Myanmar citizens repatriated from foreign countries

AN MAI relief flight transported 125 Myanmar nationals stranded abroad from Incheon International Airport, the Republic of Korea, to Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon.

Among them, 92 persons were from the United States while 18 persons and 14 Myanmar seamen from the Republic of Korea.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and local officials helped the returnees for health inspections and arranged for proper 21-day quarantine.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries and brought back a total of 10,882 citizens to date.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)
Secure firm foundations for Democratic Federal Union through political agreements

A three-day preliminary meeting on holding the 9th Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting on Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement concluded yesterday at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw. During the three-day session, the two sides were able to make a decision for holding the 9th JICM meeting, and negotiate and amended matters related with holding the fourth session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong.

We would like to express thanks to leaders of both sides for the positive results which ensured that the agreements were only finalized after both sides understood the concerns with each other.

Both sides understand that it is required for them to take time to make decisions over some points, such as future tasks and basic directives for building a federal democratic union, and the leaders of the ethnic armed organizations needed to seek agreement from their respective organization.

However, most points discussed at the two sides at the negotiating table. We are confident that the consensus on the points, which have not yet been agreed to by both sides at the negotiating table, would be reached after the next session.

During the three-day session, the two sides were able to make a decision for holding the 9th JICM meeting, held today can be considered an important step and an important precursor for the successful convening of the 4th session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong.

It is very important for us this year to lay down to day priority and actions plans acceptable to all participants on ways to continue the implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. The NCA belongs to all of the stake holders. It is necessary for all stakeholders who have signed the agreement to share responsibility for the success of the implementation.

The main sources of armed conflicts were the inability to resolve the political problems. In the coming fourth session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, we will attempt to solve the source of the armed conflicts through dialogue and with Panglong spirit.

To bring total peace to the people of Myanmar, who have been the bearer of the more than 35 years of internal armed conflicts, it is very important to achieve political agreements that are acceptable to different forces.

R USSIA has claimed Tuesday it had developed the world’s first vaccine offering “sustainable immunity” against the coronavirus, as the pandemic marked another bleak milestone with 23 million infections globally.

Western scientists have raised concerns about the speed with which Russia has decided to release the vaccine, suggesting that researchers needed more time to test its potential.

And the World Health Organization on Tuesday warned that any approval of the Russian vaccine would require rigorous review of data to show its safety and efficacy.

Dmitry Kravtsov, head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund which finances the vaccine project, said Phase 1b/2a trials would start on Wednesday, industrial production was expected from September and that countries had pre-ordered more than a billion doses.

Two sides at the negotiating table are in pre-clinical evaluation, while the other 26 are still in clinical trials conducted at the end of March.

The race for a vaccine is heating up with 165 candidate vaccines in development, but few are as advanced as Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine.

The NCA belongs to all of the stakeholders. It is necessary for all stakeholders who have signed the agreement to share responsibility for the success of the implementation.
LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)

Lemon growers upset with low demand despite high yield

LEMON growers from Myinmu Township in Sagaing are unhappy with no demand from the market even there is a high yield of lemon.

"Even though we have a high yield of lemon, we could not send it across the county this year like last year: " said to Aung Soe Pe (Myinmu).

Lemon price drops in the local market despite high yield this year.

PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (MYINMU)
Mineral exports top $1.553 bln in current financial year

MYANMAR'S mineral exports have shown a marked increase this financial year, touching US$1.553 billion between 1 October and 31 July, an increase of $265 million compared with the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the corresponding period of the previous financial year, mineral exports were pegged at just $1.28 billion.

Both private and public sector mineral exports have recorded an increase in the current budget year, with private sector exports valued at $1.069 billion and public sector exports estimated at $484.19 million.

So far, excavation of over 1,250 mining blocks has been permitted on a manageable, small, medium, and large scale, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Due to the limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals have dropped significantly in the previous years. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016, but after two years, Myanmar's mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the ministry.

Within two years of the implementation of the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mines Department has approved 144 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks and many more blocks are to be granted the permit.

At present, evaluation teams in Kachin, Kayah, Shan, and Kayin states and Sagaing, Taninthayi, and Magway regions are screening mining applications, based on the opinions of the respective departments and the region and state governments.

The Myanmar Mines Law was enacted on 24 December 2015, but the law came into force when the rules were issued on 13 January 2019.

The ministry undertakes the screening process of the proposals for medium and large-scale mining blocks, while regional and state governments are allowed to process applications for small-scale mining blocks.

Under the new regulations, foreign firms can invest in large blocks which cover up to 500,000 acres (about 202,000 hectares), while local firms can invest in all kinds of blocks. Investors can seek a permit to mine for minerals such as gold, copper, lead and tin. The permits cover prospecting, exploration, and production.

Myanmar export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are increasing the country's reliance on natural resources has been decreasing. Myanmar's mineral products constitute 19 per cent of overall exports. — Ko Httet

(Japanese translations by Ei Myat Mon)

JICA to organize SMEs recovery discussion online in September: UMFCCI reports

By Nyein Nyein

A virtual discussion event will be held in September for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to recover during the coronavirus pandemic, the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) stated.

The SMEs are hit hard during the pandemic. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in cooperation with the private organizations, will organize this to help the SMEs recover from the impacts.

Through virtual discussion, strategies of effective management for the SMEs, the information and data and procedures to seek for JICA SME Two-Step Loan will be shared and supported.

The discussion is scheduled to take place on 2 September, in Myanmar Language.

Mr Sano Yuji, chief representative of JICA (Yangon) office, and his entourage met with UMFCCI President U Zaw Min Win and official concerned in advance of the discussion.

UMFCCI is helping the businesses stricken by the COVID-19 impacts in accessing the government coronavirus loan.

The UMFCCI received loan applications by 10 August. Starting from 11 August, the UMFCCI, officials from the SME Department, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and 21 representatives from the affiliated organizations are assessing the coronavirus loan amount so that the business can take out a loan in time.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Export rice prices sliding amid falling demand by China

By Nyein Nyein

THE export rice prices in recent days are slightly dropping on account of the falling demand by China, said vice chairman U Min Thein of Muse Rice Depot.

In the first week of August, China purchased about 30,000 bags of rice per day. The demand plummeted to about 10,000 bags in recent days.

“The price of rice is declining in China. Earlier, the rice was priced 130-132 Yuan per bag. It is now rarely traded at 125 Yuan. The price slipped back slightly,” he said.

The General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC) granted licences to 43 Myanmar companies on 10 July 2020 to export the rice to China through a legitimate trade channel. About 10 of them are exporting rice to China, he continued.

“Although 43 companies are granted licences some of them are lacking documents, and some are still observing the market. Around six companies are sending rice to China,” he added.

The prices of rice in the export market significantly plummeted in July against the previous two months, as per data of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

In June, the prices of white rice varieties ranged US$395 to 440 per metric ton depending on quality. The prices plunged to $375-430 per metric ton in July.

The prices of rice last month move in the ranges of K36,000-51,000 per 108-pound-bag of Parawon varieties, with a drop of K1,000 per bag compared to the previous two months. Meanwhile, low-quality rice fetched 20,500-22,500 in the domestic market, showing a decrease of K1,000 per bag as against the prices in May and June, MRF data showed.

Myanmar exports rice, green grams, onions, chilli and other food commodities while CMP raw materials, building materials, pharmaceuticals and personal goods are imported.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Workers loading the truck with sacks of rice at Botataung Jetty in Yangon. (PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR)
Indonesia to extend railways to help boost economy

JAKARTA—Indonesia has planned to build over ten thousand kilometres of railways until 2030 to support people’s mobility and transport of goods in the country, Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi said on Tuesday.

Sumadi pointed out that among the areas where the construction of the 10,524 km long railways would be carried out are those in the main islands of Sumatra and Java, which are home to about 80 per cent of the country’s over 260 million people. The planned railway construction would lengthen the existing ones which have already been operating across the country, such as the 1,796 km long railways in Sumatra Island, the 4,131 km long railways in Java Island and 45 km long railways in Sulawesi Island, according to local media.

The construction of the railways would also be undertaken for transporting goods and people from and to seaports and airports, a senior official at the Transportation Ministry Zulikri said.—Xinhua

EU revokes trade preferences for Cambodia over human rights concerns

PHNOM PENH—The European Union said Wednesday that duty-free quota-free access to the EU market is now partially withdrawn due to the country’s failure to improve its human rights record.

“EU’s decision to partially withdraw Cambodian’s duty-free quota-free access to the EU market is now effective,” the commission said.—Kyodo

German machine tool sector sees steep fall in orders in Q2

FRANKFURT—Incoming orders to the German machine tool industry suffered a sharp fall of 46 per cent in the second quarter (Q2) of this year from a year earlier, mainly due to the coronavirus pandemic and the associated lockdown, according to data from the industry’s association on Wednesday. Data in April-June showed that orders from the German domestic market fell by 36 per cent and foreign orders fell by 51 per cent compared to the same period last year, said a statement from the German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association citing the latest data from the German Machine Tool Builders’ Association (VDW).—Xinhua

Uncertainties to remain in energy market due to COVID-19: EIA

HOUSTON—The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) on Tuesday forecast that uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic will remain because mitigation and reopening efforts continue to evolve.

In its August Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO), EIA said that reduced economic activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes in energy demand and supply patterns in 2020. Uncertainties persist across the outlook for all energy sources, including liquid fuels, natural gas, electricity, coal, and renewables.

For the crude oil prices, EIA expected that Brent crude oil prices will average 43 U.S. dollars per barrel during the second half of 2020 and rise to an average of 56 dollars per barrel in 2021. EIA expected higher inventory levels and surplus crude oil production capacity will limit upward price pressures in the coming months. But as inventories decline into 2021, those upward price pressures will increase, said the STEO.—Xinhua

German machine tool sector sees steep fall in orders in Q2

In its August Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO), EIA said that uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic will remain because mitigation and reopening efforts continue to evolve.

In its August Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO), EIA said that reduced economic activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes in energy demand and supply patterns in 2020. Uncertainties persist across the outlook for all energy sources, including liquid fuels, natural gas, electricity, coal, and renewables.

For the crude oil prices, EIA expected that Brent crude oil prices will average 43 U.S. dollars per barrel during the second half of 2020 and rise to an average of 56 dollars per barrel in 2021. EIA expected higher inventory levels and surplus crude oil production capacity will limit upward price pressures in the coming months. But as inventories decline into 2021, those upward price pressures will increase, said the STEO.—Xinhua

People are seen at a gas station in Plano, Texas, the United States, on April 20, 2020. (PHOTO BY DAN TIAN/XINHUA)
Apple must pay $500 million over patent violations, US court rules

Cupertino—Apple must pay more than $500 million in damages and interest for 4G patent infringements held by intellectual property company PanOptis, a Texas court has ruled. The US tech giant—now worth almost $2 trillion—will appeal Tuesday’s decision, local media said.

PanOptis, which specializes in licencing patents, took Apple to court in February last year, claiming it refused to pay for the use of 4G LTE technologies in its smartphones, tablets and watches. “The plaintiffs have repeatedly negotiated with Apple to reach an agreement for a FRAND licence to the Plaintiffs’ patent portfolios which Apple is infringing,” the court filing read. FRAND refers to terms that are “fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory” and is the IT industry standard for technology use. “The negotiations have been unsuccessful because Apple refuses to pay a FRAND royalty to the Plaintiff’s licence,” Apple said in a statement reported by media outlets.—AFP

Cathay Pacific reports first-half loss of US$1.27 bn

Hong Kong—Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific said Wednesday it lost HK$8.9 billion (US$1.27 billion) in the first half of this year, making it the latest major airline to reveal how badly the coronavirus pandemic has eviscerated its business.

“The first six months of 2020 were the most challenging that the Cathay Pacific Group has faced in its more than 70-year history,” chairman Patrick Healy said in a statement announcing the results. “The global health crisis has decimated the travel industry and the future remains highly uncertain, with most analysts suggesting that it will take years to recover to pre-crisis levels,” he added. Like airlines worldwide, Cathay has been battered by the evacuation of global travel during the pandemic. The firm said it carried 4.4 million passengers in the first six months of 2020—a 76 percent plunge on-year—as the pandemic burst out of central China and then spread around the world. At the height of the global lockdowns in April and May, its entire fleet was averaging just 500 passengers a day.—AFP

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TRADEMARK CAUTION
**Sri Lanka president strengthens Rajapaksa dynasty in new government**

**COLOMBO**—Sri Lanka’s President Gotabaya Rajapaksa named two more relatives to a new government unveiled Wednesday, further consolidating his family’s grip on power.

His brother Mahinda will lead the government, formed after their nationalist party’s landslide win in a parliamentary election last week. Gotabaya and Mahinda will control the key defence and finance portfolios, respectively, in the new 26-member cabinet.

Their elder brother Chamal kept his place in the cabinet, and was joined by Mahinda’s eldest son, Namal, who was named sports minister.

The growing dynastic imprint was strengthened by one of their nephews, Shashindra Rajapaksa, who joined the government as a state agriculture minister though he will not be in the cabinet. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 71, became president in November last year and named Mahinda, a 74-year-old former president, as prime minister.

Pursuing a nationalist agenda, their party has won a two-thirds majority in parliament, which allows them to change the constitution and tighten their hold on power. The brothers want to scrap a 2015 constitutional amendment which transferred some executive powers from the president to the prime minister, along with independent institutions to run public services and the judiciary.

In the new cabinet, Mahinda was given three portfolios — finance, culture and housing — last year and named Mahinda, a 74-year-old former president, as prime minister.

Pursuing a nationalist agenda, their party has won a two-thirds majority in parliament, which allows them to change the constitution and tighten their hold on power. The brothers want to scrap a 2015 constitutional amendment which transferred some executive powers from the president to the prime minister, along with independent institutions to run public services and the judiciary.

In the new cabinet, Mahinda was given three portfolios — finance, culture and housing — while their eldest brother Chamal, 77, was given irrigation, a non-cabinet position responsible for internal security and disaster management. —AFP

**World’s biggest container ships take shape in South Korea**

**GEOJE**—On the bridge of one of the world’s biggest container ships being built at the Samsung Heavy Industries shipyard on the island of Geoje, at the southern tip of South Korea.

Deep in the bowels of the enormous vessel, welders are dwarfed by the giant engines that will propel it at a maximum speed of over 22 knots. At 400 metres (1,300 feet), the HMM St Petersburg is 100 metres longer than the Eiffel Tower is tall, and 62 metres wide.

It has a capacity of 23,820 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units, the standard measure of a shipping container), which owns Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) describes as enough to carry seven billion choco-pies, a popular Korean snack — one for every human being on the planet. —AFP

**Three killed in violence over Facebook post, Congress MLA’s house, police station vandalized**

**BENGALURU**—A mob in Bengaluru rampaged through Pulakeshi Nagar on Tuesday night and vandalized a police station and Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy’s residence over a derogatory Facebook post shared by the politician’s relative on social media.

Three people lost their lives in Bengaluru after violence broke out in the city on Tuesday night allegedly over a Facebook post. According to news agency ANI, as many as 110 people have been arrested in connection with the violence. Nearly 60 police personnel also suffered injuries.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner said that accused Naveen has been arrested. He had allegedly shared a derogatory post on the social media site. —ANI

**New Zealand election date in doubt as COVID-19 returns**

**AUCKLAND**—Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern weighed delaying New Zealand’s upcoming election on Wednesday by a day (Aug 12), as experts investigated whether the coronavirus could have re-entered the country through freight shipments.

Health authorities rushed to implement a rapid lockdown in the country’s largest city Auckland, where four more probable COVID-19 infections have been uncovered bringing the outbreak’s total to eight. With 1.5 million people under stay-at-home orders, and millions more at risk of a wider outbreak, Ardern said she was seeking advice on delaying the Sep 19 election. Parliament was due to be dissolved on Wednesday to allow the election to take place, but the centre-left leader held off the move until Monday to monitor how the crisis evolves. —AFP

**Jimmy Lai freed on bail in Hong Kong crackdown**

**HONG KONG**—Hong Kong pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai walked free on bail Wednesday, over 40 hours after he and other critics of China were rounded up by police as part of a widening crackdown on dissent.

When Lai left a police station he was swarmed by a crowd of journalists and cheering supporters, some of whom waved copies of his Apple Daily in a show of their backing.

A clampdown has gathered pace in Hong Kong since China imposed a sweeping security law in June, with opposition politicians disqualified and activists arrested for social media posts. The moves have provoked outrage in the West and fear for millions who last year took to the streets to protest communist China’s tightening grip on the semi-autonomous city. —AFP

**Doubt as COVID-19 infections rise in New Zealand**

**AUCKLAND**—Prime Minis- ter Jacinda Ardern weighed delaying New Zealand’s upcoming election on Wednesday by a day (Aug 12), as experts investigated whether the coronavirus could have re-entered the country through freight shipments.

Health authorities rushed to implement a rapid lockdown in the country’s largest city Auckland, where four more probable COVID-19 infections have been uncovered bringing the outbreak’s total to eight. With 1.5 million people under stay-at-home orders, and millions more at risk of a wider outbreak, Ardern said she was seeking advice on delaying the Sep 19 election. Parliament was due to be dissolved on Wednesday to allow the election to take place, but the centre-left leader held off the move until Monday to monitor how the crisis evolves. —AFP
UK enters deepest recession on record as economy shrinks by 20.4%

LONDON — Britain’s economy shrank by a fifth in the second quarter, higher than any European neighbour, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed businesses and plunged the country into a record recession.

“It is clear that the UK is in the largest recession on record,” the office for National Statistics said after gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 20.4 per cent in April-June.

Britain’s recession — its first since 2009 amid the global financial crisis — was confirmed after two quarterly contractions in a row.

GDP shrank 2.2 per cent in the first three months of this year.

The statistics office said that the contraction for the first six months of 2020 “was slightly below the 22.7 per cent seen in Spain but was more than double the 10.6 per cent fall in United States GDP over this period.” But Britain’s second-quarter contraction beat Spain’s GDP of minus 18.5 per cent.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said Britain’s dire second quarter was driven by a 20-per-cent drop in output in April, “the biggest monthly fall on record reflecting widespread declines in output across the services, production, and construction industries”.

‘Hard times’

Finance minister Rishi Sunak said the data “confirm that hard times are here”.

He added: “Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, and sadly in the coming months many more will.” Chancellor of the Exchequer Sunak plans to end in October the government’s furlough scheme that is paying up to 80 per cent of wages for nearly ten million workers.

The UK — which has the highest death toll in Europe from the coronavirus — appears to be paying a heavier price for locking down later than its continental neighbours.

The British economy also relies more heavily on the hard-hit services sector than other European countries.

Experts said that hopes of a swift V-shaped recovery look dashed, with the Bank of England warning last week the UK could take longer to rebound than previously predicted.

Joe Biden picks Kamala Harris to be first black woman VP

WASHINGTON — President hopeful Joe Biden named Senator Kamala Harris, a former rival in the White House race, as his running mate Tuesday, marking a historic first for American women of color.

Biden’s announcement capped a months-long search for a Democratic partner to challenge President Donald Trump in November.

Harris, who would become America’s first female and first black vice president if elected, is a “fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country’s finest public servants,” Biden, 77, said in revealing his running mate.

“I’m proud now to have her as my partner in this campaign.”

The decision, announced in typical 2020 style on social media, was a crucial moment for Biden as he aims to build a broad coalition of voters to oust Trump from the White House.

It also provided an early financial windfall he said, tweeting after the vice-president announcement that “we are on track to have our biggest fundraising day ever.”

Harris, who at 55 is two decades Biden’s junior, could appeal to younger voters and women, particularly those in the suburbs who have been fleeing Trump.

The former California attorney-general is the first person of Indian descent in the running for the number two role, and personifies the diversity seen as key to building enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket, particularly in a year marked by a historic reckoning on race.

Republican and staunch Trump supporter Sarah Palin — herself a former vice presidential nominee — congratulated Harris on Instagram and posted a lengthy list of advice for the campaign trail, including keeping her allies close and staying true to herself.

Harris, who ran for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination against Biden, said she was “honored” to join the ticket and would “do whatever it takes to help him win.”

News in Brief

Scottish train derail

ABERDEEN — A passenger train derailed in northeast Scotland Wednesday, killing a historic first for American women of color in what First Minister Nicola Sturgeon described as “an extremely serious incident”.

The crash, close to the town of Stonehaven around 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Aberdeen, followed severe flooding across parts of the region overnight.

Smoker could be seen coming from the scene in pictures broadcast on television news channels.

Almost 60 pct of hotels and restaurants in Germany at risk of closure

BERLIN — Almost 60 per cent of German companies in the hotel and restaurant industry saw their existence at risk, the German Hotel and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA) announced on Tuesday.

Companies suffered an average turnover decline of 91 per cent in the first seven months of the year, according to a company survey by DEHOGA among 7,200 restaurant and hotel operators.

Asleep in Jesus

Mr Alexander Khup Za Lian Thang @ Thangno

Age 60 Years

Mr Alexander Khup Za Lian Thang @ Thangno, beloved son of the late Pa Lt. Col Son Kho Pau, former 2nd Chin Battalion Commander, & Pi Esther Kyin, who lived at 2/4 Tahan, Begoike Rd., Kalaymya, Sagaing Region: loving brother of Pa Victor Vum Za Cun Pau & Nu Fung Lian Hlaaw (NZ), Pa Peter Khup Cin Pau & Nu Nang Lun Vung (USA), Ms Sm. Dim Khan Cing (UK), Nn Pome Neam Cing & (Pa Kip Kho Kha), Pa David Cin Thian Tung Nong @ Bathike Cung & Nu Hau Suan Din (Canada), (Ms Lii. Lian Lamb Cing), (Pa Micihel Van Deh Thang) & Nu Phyu Phyu Win; also survived by 16 nieces & nephews, peacefully passed away on Monday 11 pm, 10th August 2020 at home, 35, 53rd Street, Qr. 4, Botataung Tup., Yangon. Funeral worship services held on 12th August 2020 Wednesday 10 am, at home in Talian, followed by the burial service with interment continually at All Denominational Christian Cemetery. The bereaved family.
Asian qualifiers for World Cup to move to 2021

Asian qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup scheduled to play this year will be shifted to next year, stated FIFA in its announcement yesterday.

Considering the current COVID-19 situation worldwide, FIFA and Asian Football Confederation (AFC) have decided on 12 August that upcoming qualifying matches for World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023, which were originally slated to take place in October and November 2020, will move to 2021, said the source with the FIFA.

Previously, Myanmar team’s FIFA World Cup qualifiers matches were set to hold in October this year but football authorities from FIFA already decided all the world qualifiers to be postponed.

“With the aim of protecting the health and safety of all participants, FIFA and the AFC will continue to work together to closely monitor the situation in the region and to identify new dates for respective qualifying matches. Further details on the new dates for next round of qualifying matches of World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 will be announced in due course,” a joint FIFA and AFC statement said.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Paris marathon joins list of 2020 cancellations

This year’s Paris marathon has been cancelled because it is impossible to hold the race during the coronavirus pandemic, organisers said on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PARIS—This year’s Paris marathon has been cancelled because it is impossible to hold the race during the coronavirus pandemic, organizers said on Wednesday. The race through the French capital, moved from its original date of April 5 to November 15, joins a long list of elite marathons across the world to be cancelled this year.

“Faced with the difficulty that many runners, especially those coming from abroad, had in making themselves available for the 15th November, it was decided that it would be better and simpler for those concerned if we organised the Schneider Electric Marathon de Paris in 2021,” organizers said. The marathons in New York, Boston, Chicago and Berlin have been scrapped this year and London announced that it would only hold a race for elite runners because organizers say it would be unsafe for 45,000 runners to compete. A contest between Kenya’s Eliud Kipchoge, the defending champion, and Ethiopia’s Bez kitler will headline the women’s field.—AFP

LISBON — Four months behind schedule because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Champions League has reached the quarter-final stage with Paris Saint-Germain taking on outsiders Atalanta in Lisbon on Wednesday in the first game of the ‘Final Eight’.

A straight knockout final tournament held in one place, akin to a World Cup or European Championship, was the only solution available to UEFA in order to complete its most lucrative club competition, suspended for five months from March until last weekend.

Two-legged quarter-finals and semi-finals have been done away with, and all eight teams have come to Lisbon, where they are following strict health guidelines including regular testing.

There was a scare at the weekend when it was revealed two Atlético players had tested positive, but their squad has travelled to Portugal and their game is set to go ahead.

Before that match, PSG will look to reach the semi-finals for the first time since the Qatari takeover almost a decade ago and they were given a boost on the eve of their match against Atlético as Kylian Mbappe was declared fit enough to play a part by coach Thomas Tuchel.—AFP

Barcelona COVID-19 case had no contact with Champions League squad

BARCELONA — A Barcelona player has tested positive for coronavirus but he has not been in contact with the squad travelling to Lisbon for the Champions League quarter-final against Bayern Munich, the club said on Wednesday.

“Following PCR tests conducted this Tuesday afternoon on the group of nine players due to begin the pre-season today, one of them has tested positive for COVID-19,” Barcelona said in a statement.

“The player has not been in contact with any of the senior team players who are scheduled to travel to Lisbon this Thursday to compete in the Champions League.” The club added the player, who they did not name, “has no symptoms, is in good health and has been quarantined at his home”.

Barca, who were beaten to the Spanish title by Real Madrid, face Bayern in the ‘Final Eight’ played behind closed in the Portuguese capital on Friday.—AFP