

NATIONAL

Upgradation work on Yangon-Pathein highway completes 98 per cent

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

UEHRD Healthcare Task Force to cooperate in Rakhine State's COVID fight

PAGE-3

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Monday, 24 August 2020

Stranded Myanmar nationals in US, S Korea brought back home by relief flight

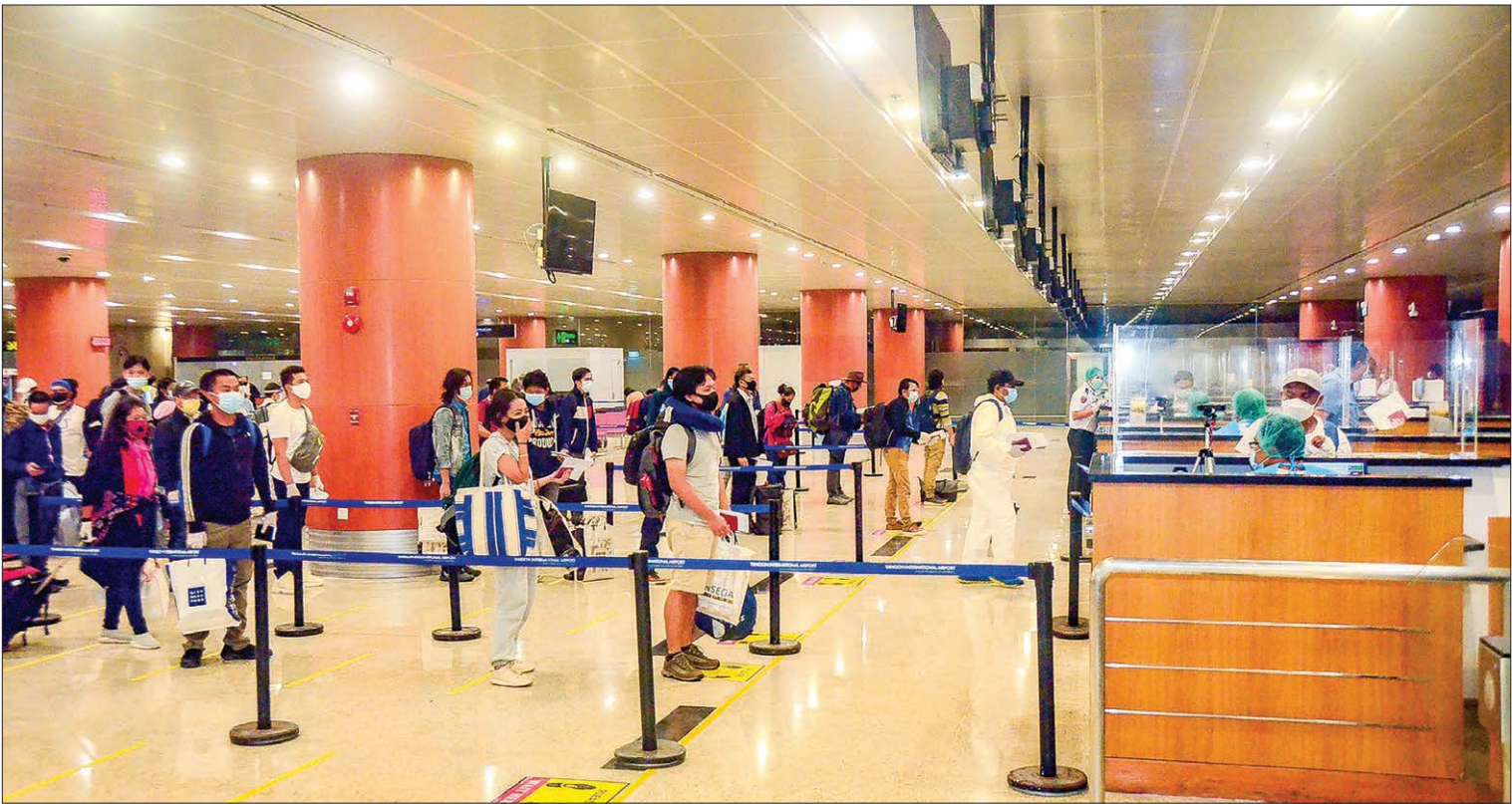
MYANMAR nationals stranded in the United States and in the Republic of Korea were repatriated by relief flight yesterday.

The Myanmar Airways International-MAI's flight carrying 94 nationals stranded in the US and 30 in the ROK totalling 124 departed from ROK's Seoul, and landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday evening.

The relief flight was arranged by the Myanmar embassies in Washington and Seoul.

At the Yangon International Airport, officials of Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Health and Sports and Yangon Region Government have provided them with arrangements for 21-day quarantine and medical check-ups in efforts to prevent the coronavirus infection.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working in line with the directives from the National-Level Central Committee



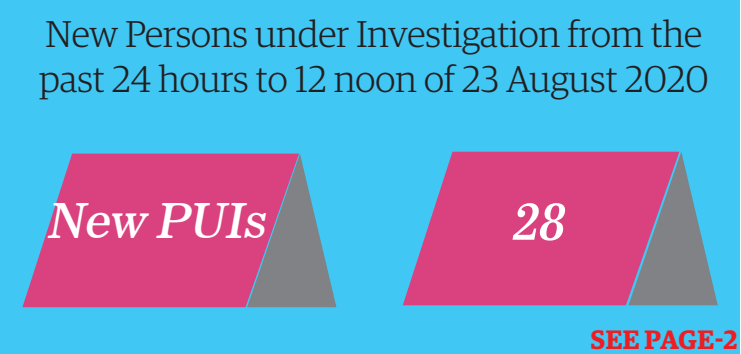
Myanmar citizens returned from foreign countries queue for immigration process at the Yangon International Airport on 23 August. PHOTO: MNA

for Prevention, Control and Treatment on COVID-19 to bring back Myanmar nationals stranded abroad due to the suspension of international flights.

Myanmar embassy in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, has arranged a relief flight service on every Tuesday for Myanmar nationals stranded in the US and in other countries. As a special programme, the embassy has also arranged relief flight services in coordination with the Myanmar Embassy in Washington to bring back Myanmar nationals in the US, and so far, three flights have been operated to date.—MNA

Nine new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 August, total figure reaches 450

Updated at 8 pm, 23 August 2020



INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
Medical professionals arrive in Sittway to volunteer for COVID fight
PAGE-3



TOURISM
Pa-O land with true natural beauties
PAGE-14,15



BUSINESS
CMP businesses-imported raw materials plummet to \$1.87 bln as of 7 August
PAGE-5



Upgradation work on Yangon-Pathein highway completes 98 per cent



Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Linn inspecting the repairing works between Yangon and Bo Myat Tun Bridge on Yangon-Pathein road on 23 August 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

DEPUTY Minister for Construc- upgrading works between Yan- on Yangon-Pathein road on Sat-
tion Dr Kyaw Linn inspected the gon and Bo Myat Tun Bridge urday.

At the briefing hall of Mile 26/5 work site, Director (Civil) from Ayeyawady Region U Yan Naing Zaw reported on the up- grading works on the road sec- tion including improving bridges to four-lane bridges and installa- tion of slope protection.

Bridge Department’s Direc- tor-General U Nay Aung Ye My- int detailed about the conditions of three routes to Pathein from Yangon.

Yangon-Pathein road No.1 is via Sarmalauk Junction; road No.2 is from the route of Kawhmu, Dedaye, Pyapon, Bo- gale, Mawgyun, and Wakema; and road No.3 is from Twantay, Maubin, Yehlegale, Shwelaung, and Kyungon.

After hearing the reports, the Deputy Minister said the road No.1 is being used, the road No.2 is expected to open soon, while the road No.3 construction is underway.

He also chose the designs of sheet piles for slop protection, and designs for road furniture and road safety work.

The Union Minister and par- ty viewed the works of placing sheet piles into the soil near the Mile Post 30/3 on the road No.1.

The upgrading of 36-mile road section between Mile Post 5/4 and Mile Post 41/4 on Yan- gon-Pathein road No.1 to a 30- feet wide concrete road is 98 per cent complete. — MNA (Trans- lated by Kyaw Zin Tun) ■

492 Myanmar migrant workers return home through Myawady border

A total of 492 Myanmar migrant workers returned home through the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge No 2 in Myawady Border yesterday amidst COVID-19.

Kayin State Hluttaw Rep- resentative U Thant Zin Aung, Myawady District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung and local author- ities helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 68,158 Myanmar citizens have returned home so far since 1 May. Local author- ities are closely supervising the process of accepting the return- ees in line with the COVID-19 fighting guidelines. The latest group of returnees included 317 males and 175 females from different regions and states. —Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin) ■

Local authorities measuring body temperature of the returnee from Thailand in Myawady on 23 August 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**



Nine new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 August, total figure reaches 450

FROM PAGE-1

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases reached 450 after 9 new cases were reported on 23 August according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Out of the 450 confirmed cases, six died, 341 have recovered, 335 have been discharged from hospitals and 28 were held under investigation.—MNA ■

No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive pa- tient	Overseas trav- el history	Hospital for medi- cal treatment	Lab result	Remark
442	24	Male	Tiddim Township, Chin State	No	Yes (India)	People’s Hospital, Tiddim	Positive	Held under quarantine (Tonzang Township)
443	58	Male	Thandwe Township, Rakhine State	No	No	District People’s Hospital, Thandwe	Positive	Held under quarantine (Thandwe Township)
444	20	Male	Thandwe Township, Rakhine State	No	No	District People’s Hospital, Thandwe	Positive	Held under quarantine (Thandwe Township)
445	44	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	No	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	Screening for high-risk group
446	38	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	Yes (Cases 398 and 417)	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	
447	29	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	No	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	
448	41	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	No	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	
449	47	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	No	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	Held under investiga- tion (People’s Hospital, Sittway)
450	18	Female	Sittway Township, Rakhine State	No	No	People’s Hospital, Sittway	Positive	

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION



The General Election will be held on 8 November 2020.

- Union Election Commission has announced the first edition of eligible voter lists at local offices of the commission in respective wards/village-tracts, in the villages from 25 July 2020 to 7 November 2020.
- If the name of any eligible voter is not included in the list, voter registration can be requested by filling in Form 3.
- Objection can be filed against any ineligible voter in the list by using Form 4.
- Correction for voter list can be requested by using Form 4 (c).
- Voters can cast their votes only if their names are included in the voters list.
- Cooperation is requested for at least one member of each family to check their names without fail to ensure a complete and correct voters list.
- Check the voters lists not to lose voting rights by filling up discrepancies, deleting and making corrections.

2020
General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020



UEHRD Healthcare Task Force to cooperate in Rakhine State's COVID fight



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye holds the virtual meeting with UEHRD healthcare task force. PHOTO: MNA

The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development

(UEHRD)'s Healthcare Task Force will join in hands in the government's fight against

coronavirus in Rakhine State, according to a virtual meeting yesterday.

The UEHRD Committee organized the meeting online with its healthcare task force calling on the taskforce's cooperation in coronavirus fight in Rakhine State.

Speaking at the meeting, UEHRD Vice-Chairperson 1 and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye said that the UEHRD was formed to help the victims of conflicts in Rakhine State.

The UEHRD has been undertaking the works of humanitarian assistances, development and establishment of peace and stability with long-term plans, he added.

He also said UEHRD Healthcare Task force to work together with the government and the Ministry of Health and Sports in providing assistances of hospital beds and healthcare works that need to be increased for healthcare process.

He called for the healthcare task force to coordinate with relevant departments to fulfill the

requirements of volunteers and to cooperate with other UEHRD task forces.

The meeting discussed matters related to selecting in-charge of coordination for Rakhine State's ground situation and planning for fast implementation, and that the healthcare task force will implement the works with separate funds.

They also detailed about fast assistance programmes for healthcare workers, coordination with Rakhine State Youth Affairs Committee members, recruiting trained volunteers, and conducting trainings for volunteers.

The meeting was attended by UEHRD Vice-Chairperson 1 Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, Secretary Deputy Minister U Soe Aung and members U Toe Aung and U Nyi Nyein Aye, UEHRD Healthcare Task-force members, UEHRD Office members, and directors-general. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Medical professionals arrive in Sittway to volunteer for COVID fight

MEDICAL professionals who will volunteer for fighting against COVID-19 arrived in Sittway, Rakhine State by a special flight of Myanmar National Airlines yesterday morning.

Those doctors and nurses were welcomed by Rakhine State Social Affairs Minister Dr Chan Tha, Head of State Public Health and Medical Services Department Dr Sai Win Zaw Hlaing, leader of medical team Director (Epidemiology) Dr Nyan Win Myint, Medical Superintendent of

Sittway General Hospital Dr Zaw Lwin and officials.

The volunteer team included a Deputy Head of State Public Health and Medical Services Department, a specialist for Medicine, 19 assistant doctors and three nurses.

The special flight also brought medicine and medical equipment with volunteer medical team for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)



Healthcare volunteers arrive in Sittway on 23 August 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Health is the greatest of blessings.

I think our people already know that the number of COVID-19 positive cases found in Sittway have been high. Although I can imagine how much pain and anguish is being felt by anyone who has tested positive, let me say this, although I don't want to, so that all the people would know.

We had to issue home stay orders and other COVID related rules and regulations in Sittway because 3 or 4 government personnel went on a trip by contravening existing regulations. As a result there was an outbreak.

We now have to spend a great deal of financial and human resources to be able to contain the disease.

Health is the greatest of blessings. All the people, please be vigilant. People are the key.

(Extract from the Facebook posting of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of 21 August 2020)



New express train service launches on Yangon-Mawlamyine road



A train run on the Yangon-Mawlamyine railway lines seen at the Central Railway Station in Yangon. PHOTO: AUNG THU YA

A ceremony to unveil the operation of No 84 express train (down) from Mawlamyine to Yangon was held at the Platform 1 of Mawlamyine Railway Station at 9 pm on 22 August.

The event was attended by Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan and ministers, Myanma Railways (MR)'s Managing Director U Ba Myint and officials. Speaking at the event, the Union Minister said that the trains were arranged so that passengers onboard can

observe social distancing set by the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the railroads were renovated to reduce travel time.

The Union Minister, the Chief Minister and officials also met the passengers and presented them gifts. Similarly, a ceremony to unveil the operation of No 83 express train (up) from Yangon to Mawlamyine was held at the Yangon Central Railway Station at 8 pm on 22 August.

Myanma Railways (MR) purchased the express trains on Yangon-Mawlamyine road with the loans from Republic of Korea

(ROK). The express trains are operating with a total of 10 coaches – four upper class coaches, five ordinary class coaches, and one passenger brake coach.

Ticket prices are K 8,000 for upper class and K 4,000 for ordinary class.

No 83 up train leaves Yangon Railway Station at 8 pm and arrives at Mawlamyine Station at 5:15 am of the following day.

No 84 down train departs from Mawlamyine Station at 9 pm and arrives at the Yangon Station at 6 am the following day. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun) ■

SWRR Union Minister hands over cash assistance for vulnerable people in Kyauktaga, Nyaunglebin

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye yesterday visited Bago Region to hand over cash assistance to relevant officials to use the money for vulnerable groups and to repair roads damaged by natural disasters.

The official ceremony held yesterday at Kyauktaga Township Department of Planning was attended by the Union Minister, regional Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Kyi Zin, regional government's Kayin Ethnic Affairs Minister Daw Naw Pwal Hsay, Directors General of relevant ministries, MPs, officials from General Administration Department and other relevant officials.

During the ceremony, the

Union Minister said that his ministry is providing cash assistance to the vulnerable group members — elderly people, the disabled and pregnant women — in accordance with the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP). In addition to providing the cash assistance, his ministry is also carrying out projects related to natural disaster management, according to the Union Minister.

The Union Minister also called on the residents to strictly abide by the COVID-19 preventive guidelines set by the government.

He said that elderly people aged 85 and over across Myanmar are already entitled to regular social pension. He contin-

ued that in accordance with the CERP, the government will provide one-time financial support for elderly people aged between 80 and 85, and the disabled. He also explained how his ministry is providing financial support to pregnant women and children under the age of 2 across Myanmar. He said that his ministry is also providing early childhood care and development services.

The Union Minister handed over a total of K9,690,000 for 323 disabled persons in Kyauktaga Township.

Under the National Disaster Management Fund, the Union Minister handed over K56.39 million to relevant officials for construction of Thahtaygon-Kinywa-Yamtolar laterite

road in Kyayyoe village-tract in Kyauktaga Township, K1 million for repairing Kyansitha-Khalaung Road (in Pyoosu village-tract) damaged by flood, and K5 million for repairing Thahtaygon-Harrybam inter-village road.

Afterwards, Department of Social Welfare Director General explained the project on measuring growth of the children under the age of 3 and prevention of disabilities in Kyauktaga and Nyaunglebin townships.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and his entourage also visited homes of 15 elderly people aged between 80 and 85 in Kyauktaga town, and provided K30,000 to each of the elderly people in accordance with the

CERP.

The Union Minister and his entourage yesterday afternoon visited Shwekyin Nikaya Tawya Pariyatti Monastery, paid homage to the Buddhist Abbot of the monastery, and donated saffron-robos and cash money. Then, the Union Minister handed over a total of K58,680,000 to relevant officials for 1,956 disabled persons in Nyaunglebin.

Then, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and his entourage visited homes of 15 elderly people aged between 80 and 85 in Nyaunglebin town, and provided K30,000 to each of the elderly people in accordance with the CERP—MNA ■

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

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.



CMP businesses-imported raw materials plummet to \$1.87 bln as of 7 August

IMPORTS of raw materials by CMP businesses have been valued at US\$1.87 billion over the past ten months beginning in October in the 2019-2020 financial years, which plunged from \$2 billion registered in the corresponding period of last financial year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector is mostly concentrated in garment and textiles produced on the cutting, making, and packing basis, and it contributes to the country's GDP to a certain extent.

At present, some CMP garment factories have shut down on the reason for the lack of raw materials due to the coronavirus negative impacts, leaving thousands of workers unemployed.

The pandemic badly batters the labour-intensive enterprises, said an official of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

To deal with the shortage of raw materials for the CMP garment factories in Myanmar, the Ministry of Commerce, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association and the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, the China Enterprise Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar (CECCM) have jointly imported raw materials through border trade channels and airlines.

However, import values of raw materials by CMP businesses dropped by \$140.49 million compared with a year-ago period.

The CMP garment sector, which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector, is facing hardships because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western countries amid the coronavirus pandemic. It can harm the export sector to a certain extent, highlighted the businessper-



A woman sewing on the production line in a garment factory in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

sons.

The CMP industry has emerged as very promising in the export sector. The value of CMP exports was just \$850 million in the 2015-2016 budget year, but it tripled within two years to reach \$2.5 billion in the 2017-2018FY. During the last financial year 2018-2019, incomes from garment exports were over \$1 billion higher than the previous

budget year, according to the Ministry's data.

Since an outbreak like COVID might happen in the future, it is necessary to prepare for a sufficient supply of raw materials. The public and private sectors will cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories.

Japan is the largest market for Myanmar apparel, followed by the European Union.

The MGMA has more than 500 members, and garment factories in Myanmar, employing more than 500,000 workers. Investors prefer to invest in countries with inexpensive labour, such as Myanmar.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Sesame prices possibly remain higher amidst China's strong demand

THE prices of sesame seeds are expected to remain higher on the back of strong demand from China even when the fresh sesame will be harvested in September, Mandalay traders said.

"The prevailing price of sesame is pegged at K160,000-210,000 per bag depending on quality. The price significantly rose as against that in early July. The price is likely to fluctuate around K200,000 per bag during the harvest time," said a trader.

As the sesame stockpile is thin, there is no way of the price drop in the coming weeks, he continued.

This year, high sesame producing regions of Myanmar (Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing regions) experienced low yield due to drought impacts. During the meantime, China high demand hiked the prices, according to Soe Win Myint depot in Mandalay.

"Myanmar increasingly sends sesame seeds to China

market. The price fluctuates a bit. The gradual increase in sesame prices since last week of July has been attributed to high demand by China when the drought reduced crop yield in the country. The various varieties of sesame are priced good, especially black and white sesame varieties," said the owner of Soe Win Myint Depot.

Myanmar exports 90 per cent of sesame production to foreign markets. China is the leading buyer of Myanmar sesame, which is also shipped to markets in Japan, South Korea, China (Taipei), UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, and Poland among the EU countries.

The EU markets prefer organic-farming sesame seeds from Myanmar, said an official from the Trade Promotion Department.

Japan prefers Myanmar black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP), and purchases them

after a quality assessment. Black sesame seeds from Myanmar are also exported to South Korea and Japan. Meanwhile, China buys various coloured sesame seeds from the country.

The number of sesame acreages has increased in the country. Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the primary producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Of the cooking oil crops grown in Myanmar, the acreage under sesame is the highest, accounting for 51.3 per cent of the overall oil crop plantation.

The volume of sesame exports was registered at over 96,000 tonnes, worth \$130 million, in the 2015-2016 financial years, 100,000 tonnes, worth \$145 million, in 2016-2017FY; and, 120,000 tonnes, worth \$147 million, in 2017-2018FY.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Manufacturing sector attracts 169 foreign enterprises

MAJORITY of foreign enterprises eye the manufacturing sector for investments in the current financial year 2019-2020, pulling in US\$875 million from 169 projects, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) stated.

Of 219 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by Myanmar Investment Commission and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 31 July of the current financial year, 169 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector.

Other service sector stood at the second by attracting 16 businesses, while power sector got the third spot with eight projects.

The current COVID-19 consequences have not affected the foreign investment sector, said DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

The proposals submitted to MIC include CMP businesses. At present, such kind of labour-intensive enterprises is facing financial hardship, disputes between the employers

and employees and the closure of factories. However, those cases in the industry did not hinder new investments.

The manufacturing enterprises and businesses that need large labour force are prioritized. MIC is endeavouring to clear those kinds of projects so fast that they can start running in the post-COVID-19 period, he continued.

Moreover, MIC showed readiness to accept the projects regarding the production of mask, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, in responding to the activities of prevention, control and treatment of coronavirus infection.

Myanmar has attracted foreign direct investment of more than US\$5 billion between 1 October and 31 July in the 2019-2020 financial years, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises and ventures in the Special Economic Zones, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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

45 Myanmar migrant workers come back home via Lashio

A total of 45 Myanmar nationals: 20 males and 25 females, who returned from China were transported back to their native places via Lashio in northern Shan State by train yesterday.
Yesterday's returnees include two from Kachin State, one from Kayin State, 11 from Sagaing Region, two from Bago Region, 24 from Magway Region, three from Mandalay Region and two from Yangon Region respectively.

A total of 15,292 Myanmar citizens: 9,380 males and 5,912 females have returned to Myanmar from China through border crossings from 6 May to date.—Nan Thanda Oo (IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin lin)

Myanmar migrant workers going home from Lashio by the train arranged by local authorities. **PHOTO: NAN THANDA OO (IPRD)**



Illegal returnees held under quarantine in Kawthoung

A total of nine illegal returnees: six men, two women and one child in Kawthoung are helping under quarantine, according to the local authorities.
The Myanmar migrant workers came back home il-

legally from Malaysia on 22 August and they are from Mon State, Magway Region and Taninthayi Region.
Currently, the illegal returnees are being kept under facility quarantine for 21 days

and home quarantine for another seven days.
Officials from COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee in Kawthoung are helping them with medical tests and other sup-

plies, local authorities said.
Swab test samples of the returnees will be sent to the National Health Laboratory for COVID-19 test.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Methamphetamine seized in DHL parcel; Nigerian nationals arrested

POLICE seized 0.957 kg of methamphetamine (ICE), worth more than K76 million, in a DHL parcel intended to be sent to the Philippines on 19 August, according to the Myanmar Police Force. A Nigerian national has been arrested for the drug case and three other Nigerian nationals have been arrested for illegally remaining in Myanmar with expired visas.
After suspicious staff at the DHL office in Hline Township, Yangon, on 19 August afternoon, informed the police about a par-

cel they suspected to consist of illegal drugs, the police went to the office and questioned three Myanmar nationals — Ma Myint Myint Nyein (a) Moe Moe (aged 38), Daw Myint Myint Nyein (aged 56), and Thein Tun (aged 34) — who came to the DHL office to send the parcel to Philippines. On the parcel, the name of the sender is Ma Cho Zin Htoo (Myanmar national) and the name of the receiver is TONABEL P-SAN.
When the police inspected the parcel, they found the

0.957 kg of methamphetamine in wheels of a car for kid.
After further investigations, the police, in Dagon Myothit Seikkan Township in Yangon, could arrest a Nigerian national named Mr Obumkaemere Kel-echi Thankgod (aged 32) who commanded the Myanmar nationals to send the parcel.
Mr Obumkaemere testified that Mr Agu Chukwunonso Peter ordered him to send the parcel to Mr Agu's wife in Philippines. Mr Obumkaemere has been charged in connection

with the case.
Police also raided the house where Mr Obumkaemere stayed and found that three other Nigerian nationals—Mr Duru Tochukwu (aged 22), Mr Iziga Innocent Chinonso (aged 24) and Mr Obiefuna Benjamin Tochukwu (aged 31)— illegally stayed in Myanmar after their visas had expired, and they will also be charged under the Myanmar Immigration Act.—MNA
(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Nigerian nationals — Mr Iziga Innocent, Mr Duru Tochukwu, Chinonso and Mr Obiefuna Benjamin Tochukwu (L-R). **PHOTO: MNA**



Ma Myint Myint Nyein (a) Moe Moe, Daw Myint Myint Nyein, Thein Tun and Mr Obumkaemere Kel-echi Thankgod (L-R). **PHOTO: MNA**

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.
Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

BIOMOLECULAR INTERACTION ANALYSIS

DNA nanoswitches rapidly detect emerging viruses including SARS-CoV-2: study

PROGRAMMABLE DNA nano-switches that bind to viral RNA in human body fluids may provide an inexpensive platform to rapidly detect a wide variety of emerging viruses including SARS-CoV-2, according to a new study published on Friday.

Recent emerging viral threats highlight the cost and difficulty in responding rapidly. To address these challenges, the research team, led by Lifeng Zhou at the State University of New York, developed a platform for low-cost and rapid detection of viral RNA with DNA nano-

switches that mechanically re-configure in response to specific viruses.

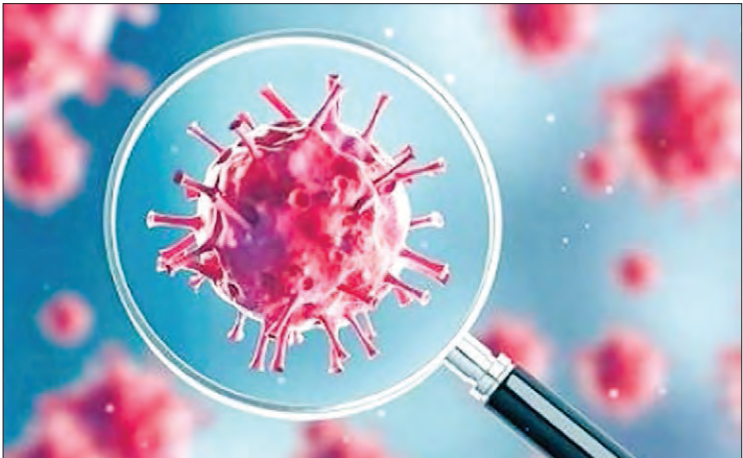
This approach may make testing more manageable in resource-limited areas, only costs about 1 penny per reaction, and can be performed within hours, according to the study published on Science Advances.

The researchers first tested this approach with DNA nano-switches designed to target a sequence in the Zika virus genome and demonstrated its ability to detect clinically-relevant levels of Zika RNA in human urine.

They later developed nano-switches to target SARS-CoV-2 RNA in human saliva, finding that they could successfully detect the virus' presence within about two hours.

The nanoswitches also successfully differentiated between Zika virus and Dengue virus, which occur in overlapping geographical regions and cause similar symptoms, demonstrating the nanoswitches' potential to avoid misdiagnoses, said the study.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Programmable DNA nanoswitches that bind to viral RNA in human body fluids may provide an inexpensive platform to rapidly detect a wide variety of emerging viruses including SARS-CoV-2. IMAGE CREDIT: Academic & Scientific Cooperation Portal of Turkey - TABIP

RAVE CULTURE

The party goes on for French ravers, despite pandemic and police

SUMMER time is rave time in France but this year battle lines have been drawn between authorities alarmed at the risk of coronavirus and serious party-goers determined to dance on. Ravers, called "teufeurs" in French back slang, speak of "resistance" against a crackdown by security forces encouraged by locals to restore order.

"Because of the pandemic there have been fewer events this year than previous years," free party organiser Robin told AFP, asking not to use his full name.

"But a lot of attention has been focused on those events and the crackdown has been much tougher."

"We cannot allow 5,000, 6,000 people to get together, without shirts, masks or any respect for virus rules," said junior interior minister Marlène Schiappa in July at the site of a rave that drew 4,000 people to the Nièvre department in central France. For now, no virus outbreak has been linked to a free party by any of France's regional health authorities.

SOURCE: AFP



Police handed out fines for public drunkenness and drug use. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

THE ROCK AND R-PAT

Noir 'The Batman' footage thrills fans at DC virtual event

ROBERT Pattinson showcased "The Batman" footage and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson hyped up his new anti-hero movie "Black Adam" as Hollywood A-listers and their comic-book alter-egos hosted a sprawling online event Saturday.

The virtual "DC FanDome" from Warner Bros comes after real-world extravaganzas beloved by comic-book fans — such as Comic-Con — were canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Headline billing went to "The Batman," a dark, detective-style mystery take on the Caped Crusader which star Pattinson said had to shut down midway through production in March due to Covid-19.

Director Matt Reeves said his version — still due next year — is inspired by classic noirs like "Chinatown" and "Taxi Driver," and will meet a "very human and very flawed" Bruce Wayne in his second year as Batman, trying to solve a series of crimes.

First-ever footage from the



Headline billing went to "The Batman," a dark, detective-style mystery take on the Caped Crusader which star Robert Pattinson said had to shut down midway through production due to Covid-19. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

much-hyped movie left fans drooling online, with a mysterious villain leaving notes for Batman at crime scenes across Gotham — and the film's hero pummeling a street thug before growling: "I'm vengeance."

Like the rival, record-breaking Marvel films, several movies featuring DC characters including Superman are inter-connect-

ed, with shared storylines and crossover cameos.

Saturday's all-day event premiered footage and panels for follow-ups to blockbusters "Wonder Woman," "Suicide Squad" and "Shazam!" — despite uncertainty over release dates, with many US theaters closed.

SOURCE: AFP

THE WORST DAILY FIGURE

Italy reports largest rise in cases since lockdown

ITALY recorded more than 1,000 new cases of the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, the worst daily figure since lockdown was lifted in May, the health ministry reported on Saturday.

Officials in Rome said the capital region recorded 215 new coronavirus infections in the same period mainly because of people returning from holiday, the biggest such rise since lockdown in March.

The health ministry said Italy recorded 1,071 new cases of the novel coronavirus in the last day and three deaths, for the first time crossing the threshold of 1,000 infections since May 12. It marks a relentless uptick

in cases in the last few days, from 947 on Friday, 845 on Thursday and 642 on Wednesday.

The figure of 215 for Rome is a record, more than the 208 people were infected in a one-

day period on March 28, when Rome had come to a virtual standstill to stop the coronavirus spreading, the capital's health official Alessio D'Amato said.

SOURCE: AFP

Volunteers are our angels of hope during ongoing COVID-19 crisis

IN this time of COVID-19 crisis in Rakhine State's Sittway, health professionals and heal care workers who arrived Sittwe yesterday to provide their voluntary services to fighting the COVID-19 outbreak is like a breath of fresh of air in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those who volunteer to address the current health care crisis deserve our admiration and our thanks.

We encourage everyone who can to volunteer. Volunteers include recent retirees, health care professionals who can take a break from their regular jobs and individuals with health care backgrounds.

volunteers since the outbreak started in our country to take part in community-based facility quarantine services ,which require assistance from well-trained volunteers.

We will need additional medical workers to deploy in Sittway to replace those in the medical workforce who need relief as the locally transmitted cases is expected to surge.

In this time of crisis, it is a welcome step that the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State : UEHRD's health care task force will join hands with the Ministry of Health and Sports and will provide assistance to hospital facility and to health care volunteers effectively after studying the needs of the volunteers.

Hence, we encourage everyone who can to volunteer. Volunteers include recent retirees, health care professionals who can take a break from their regular jobs and individuals with health care backgrounds.

We appeal to such professionals to come forward at this hour of need. In this time of crisis in our community, we are looking forward to you, the volunteer doctors, sharing the burden before it overwhelms the available doctors in the public health system.



Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Motegi's message for promotion of Japan-Myanmar Friendship

TODAY, I am visiting Myanmar for the first time as Foreign Minister. I have visited Myanmar three times prior to this visit, and I am truly looking forward to witnessing the remarkable development in Myanmar since my last visit in 2014.

Japan and Myanmar have maintained a friendly and cooperative relationship since World War II. In particular, Japan never forget the gratitude to Myanmar for providing Japan with plenty of rice during the times of food shortage immediately after the war. Myanmar is a key member of the ASEAN and the Mekong region, and the longstanding friendship between Japan and Myanmar has been the cornerstone for building the multilayered relationship in politics, economy, and people-to-people exchange.

Under the leadership of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the efforts for democratisation, national reconciliation, and economic development are currently underway in Myanmar. Japan has been providing utmost support to our dear friend Myanmar. Primarily, Japan is providing the assistance to improve



Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. PHOTO: KYODO

the lives of the Myanmar people through economic development and job creation in Myanmar. The Thilawa Special Economic Zone, which opened in 2015 as a result of cooperation between the public and private sectors of Japan and Myanmar, has been a great success, creating employment for approximately 12,400 people across 113 new companies. We are also making concerted efforts to bolster regional connectivity in Myanmar, such as the East-West Economic Corridor and the Yangon-Mandalay Railway projects in order that the benefits of the Thilawa development prosperity will prevail in the wider community. Moreover, the scope of our cooperation extends far beyond infrastructure. We are

pursuing cooperation in all areas, including health, education, agriculture, and administrative capacity building while promoting "responsible investment" by Japanese companies with an eye to Myanmar's future. Japan wishes to continue such cooperation.

Japan also cares about the situation in Rakhine State. I am well aware that this is not an easy issue to solve. However, it is of my earnest belief that, with the wisdom of the Myanmar people, building a cohesive society in Myanmar is achievable. Moreover, I am convinced that it is the international community's mission to support Myanmar's own initiatives. In particular, I strongly hope that both the Myanmar Government and the Tatmadaw will promptly take legal measures in a transparent manner based on the recommendations of the Independent Commission of Enquiry regarding the alleged human rights violations, while urgently creating an environment conducive to the return of displaced persons. Japan will continue to provide full-fledged support for Myanmar's efforts that truly contribute to reconciliation and the building of peace and stability in both communities.

Advancing the peace process among ethnic minority communities is also an important challenge. The Government of Japan, together with Mr. SASAKAWA Yohei, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar, has been promoting dialogue between the parties, while working with Japanese NGOs to support the improvement of the people's livelihoods through the provision of infrastructure such as housing, schools, wells, electrification as well as agricultural technical guidance. In Karen and Mon States, 10,000 formerly displaced persons have resumed their normal lives in 2,350 households that were built through the Nippon Foundation's assistance. The Nippon Foundation will further continue to support the resettlement of displaced persons in Kachin State. It is our policy to support the determination of the Myanmar Government to achieve peace with ethnic minorities and to advance along with them. I strongly hope that Japan's support will lead to the improvement of the lives of all Myanmar people and promote the peace process.

The international communi-

ty is now facing an unprecedented challenge of the global spread of COVID-19. I commend the Myanmar Government and the people for their unity in controlling the spread of the disease throughout the country. Nonetheless, neither Myanmar nor Japan are immune from the impact of the global economic recession and the interruption of cross-border travels. Japan has been leading the international community's efforts to support countries with inadequate health and medical capacity with the aim of an early elimination of COVID-19. We have provided over 30 million US dollars in technical assistance and health and medical supplies either bilaterally or through international organisations. We are also going to provide 410 million US dollars to assist the efforts of Myanmar in revitalising the economy. Moreover, I am fully aware that many technical intern trainees and students in Myanmar are looking forward to coming to Japan. Japan will continue to discuss with Myanmar to resume people-to-people exchanges in a way that is compatible with preventing the re-spreading of the infection. I strongly hope that the people of

Japan and Myanmar will work together to overcome this unprecedented crisis, and further consolidate bilateral ties and achieve economic breakthroughs in the post-COVID era.

This November marks a major milestone in Myanmar's democratisation process with the general election. I am confident that, with the commitments of the Myanmar people, a free and fair election will be held. Japan will dispatch the Election Observation Team headed by Mr. SASAKAWA Yohei, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan, to observe the smooth conduct of the election together with the Myanmar people. We will also offer grant assistance to provide indelible ink to prevent double-voting to all polling stations across Myanmar and contribute to achieving a free and fair election. As a sincere friend of Myanmar, Japan will continue to provide maximum support for the democratic nation-building of Myanmar at both public and private levels.

(The views expressed in this article are those of the author, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.) ■ ■ ■

JAPAN GETS READY TO LIFT COVID-19 RE-ENTRY BAN ON FOREIGNERS

Japan to ease entry restrictions for foreign students

The restrictions for foreign students will first be eased for those sponsored by the Japanese government ...

JAPAN has decided to ease entry restrictions for foreign students, imposed to curb the novel coronavirus, possibly within this month, government sources said Saturday. Japan also plans to fully lift the re-entry ban on foreign nationals who hold resident status as early as next month, according to the sources. The restrictions for foreign students will first be eased for those sponsored by the Japanese government and the relaxation is expected to be later expanded to self-supporting international students.

All foreigners will be required to take polymerase chain reaction tests and prove that they are not infected with the virus

when entering Japan, the sources said, adding that they will also be requested to stay in self-isolation for two weeks to monitor their health.

Japan currently denies entry from 146 countries and regions. The denial of re-entry for those with resident status has drawn strong criticism particularly from the country's expatriate community, as it effectively prevents them from traveling abroad and returning. Many other countries that have imposed travel bans do not discriminate between citizens and foreign residents in granting re-entry.

Most foreign students usually come to Japan in the spring and fall, when the school calen-

dar in the country begins. But many of them could not enter Japan this spring as the government sharply increased the number of countries designated for entry restrictions in early April, in response to the global pandemic.

Besides foreign residents, who are allowed to re-enter Japan under certain conditions, the relaxation of the restrictions has so far only applied for those on business trips. The Japanese government has recently decided to accept business travelers from 16 countries, including Thailand and Vietnam.

SOURCE: Kyodo



Foreign students pose for a photo on their way to attending their coming-of-age ceremony in Tokyo on Jan. 14, 2019. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

Flood Bulletin (Issued at 11:00 hrs MST on 23-8-2020)

Flood condition of Chindwin River

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Phaungpyin has exceeded by about (4½) feet above its danger level. It may fall from the present water level by about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Mawlaik has exceeded by about (4) feet above its danger level. It may fall from the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Kalewa has exceeded by about (2½) feet above its danger level. It may fall from the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Mingin has exceeded by about (2) feet above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (¼) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Monywa has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River at Hpa-an has exceeded by about (1½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (4) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River at Pasawng has exceeded by about (7) feet above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Phaungpyin, Mawlaik, Kalewa, Mingin, Monywa, Hpa-an and Pasawng townships to take precaution measure.

Flood Warning (Issued at 13:00 hrs MST on 23-8-2020)

According to the (12:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Seiktha is observed as about (2) feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

According to the (12:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Hinthada is observed as about (2½) feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (3) days.

According to the (12:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun is observed as about (2½) feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (3) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Seiktha, Hinthada Township and Zalun Township to take precaution measure.

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Virus curbs see elephant idols shrunk for major Indian festival

NEW DELHI — Indian authorities have imposed tough anti-coronavirus restrictions on gatherings and the size of Ganesha elephant god idols for one of the biggest religious festivals of the year that started Saturday.

The 10 days of prayers and family gatherings for Ganesh Chaturthi started under a pandemic cloud with the country closing on three million infections and 56,000 deaths.

Most major cities have ordered that effigies of the popular elephant-headed god Ganesha, which can draw thousands of Hindu devotees onto the streets, be shrunk back.

Traditionally, the idols can tower 10 metres (30 feet) high or more and need dozens of people to carry them but this year authorities said they can be no more than 1.1 metres tall in a bid to cut crowds.

In New Delhi, no Ganesha idols will be shown in public

while hard-hit Mumbai has cut back access to the seafront to immerse Ganesha figures, usually the highlight of the festival.

Tens of thousands traditionally flock to the beaches on the final day of the festival to immerse elaborately decorated figurines of the deity in the Arabian Sea.

This year, authorities in India's financial capital have constructed hundreds of artificial immersion ponds across the city to stop hordes crowding the waterfront.

Devotees will also be able to leave their elephant idols at collection centres and volunteers will immerse them in the sea.

Authorities want devotees to mark the festival at home, dampening enthusiasm among pandemic-weary locals. Even the idols worshipped at home must be no more than 33 centimetres (13 inches).

"Every year I looked forward to Ganesha celebrations



Usually Ganesha idols up to 10 metres high are paraded through Indian cities for the festival but this year authorities have set a maximum height of 1.1 metres in a bid to cut crowds under anti-virus measures. **PHOTO: AFP**

and visited a nearby lake to watch idol immersions. But

this year, we are not even inviting friends home for traditional

prayers," Mumbai-based analyst Ruta Amin told AFP.— AFP ■

Chinese inactivated COVID-19 vaccine starts phase-3 clinical trials in Argentina



A file photo shows a scientist works at the mAbxience biosimilar monoclonal antibody laboratory plant in Garin, Buenos Aires province, Argentina. **PHOTO: AFP**

BEIJING — An inactivated COVID-19 vaccine developed by China has started phase-3 clinical trials in Argentina, according to its developer China National

Biotech Group (CNBG), which is affiliated to Sinopharm.

The launch ceremony of the phase-3 clinical trials was held in Beijing Friday after the

CN BG obtained the certificate of approval for the process.

This is an achievement brought about by CN BG's international cooperation in a bid to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. The inactivated vaccine received approval for phase-3 clinical trials in the United Arab Emirates on June 23, and in Peru and Morocco on Thursday.

The CN BG will work together with a company in Argentina to promote research and development related to the inactivated vaccine.

Liu Jingzhen, chairman of Sinopharm, said the phase-3 clinical trials will help fight the epidemic and contribute to the building of a community of health for all.—Xinhua ■

Pak's ISI using crime syndicates in France, Thailand to further its agenda

BANGKOK — Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, has been using the services of Pakistani crime syndicates operating in several countries, including France and Thailand, to further its agenda, according to a report in the Global Watch Analysis.

Recently, Thailand Police arrested a Pakistan national named Baqar Shah for his involvement in multiple illegal activities in the country including money laundering for the ISI.

He was first noticed by Thai authorities due to his involvement in organising an anti-American protest outside the US Consulate in Chiang Mai in September 2012. In February 2016, his name again surfaced when Thailand Police busted a major fake passport syndicate in the country and an Iranian national, Hamid Reza Jafary, and five Pakistanis were arrested.

The six of them were found to be involved in the supply of fake travel documents and human trafficking. It is to be noted that Jafary was on the wanted list of security agencies in several countries including the UK, France, Australia and New Zealand.

According to investigations, Jafary and his five Pakistani contacts were supplying forged passports that were being sold to people from Gulf countries for travel to Australia and Europe. During the probe, it was found that Gohar Zaman, one of the five Pakistanis in custody, had close links to Shah. As the Thai security agency put Shah under close surveillance, they discovered that he maintained regular contact with officials from Pakistan Embassy in Bangkok and his restaurant was being used as a meeting point for Pakistani officials.

"Shah's main job appeared to be spotting potential assets for Pakistanis in the local police, immigration, customs and airlines and to develop contacts within the Muslim community in Chaing Mai and Mae Sot region," according to the report.

Shah was blacklisted by the Thai immigration for five years and deported to Pakistan in 2018. However, he managed to sneak back into Thailand under the guise of ISI mentors on a fresh passport in the name of Syed Baqar Ahmed Jaffri. However, Thailand Police tracked him down again and he is currently in custody.—ANI ■

China sees 210,000 new AI-related enterprises

BEIJING — China is seeing a surge in the number of enterprises related to artificial intelligence (AI) as entrepreneurs flock to capture growth in the area, data showed.

As of Thursday, the country saw more than 210,000 newly registered AI-related enterpris-

es this year, surging by 45.27 percent year on year, according to data from database query platform Tianyancha.com.

Nearly 950,000 companies in China have business in the areas of artificial intelligence, robots, data processing, cloud computing, voice and image rec-

ognition, and natural language processing, showed the data.

The size of China's AI software and application market is expected to reach 12.75 billion U.S. dollars by 2024, according to global market intelligence firm International Data Corporation.—Xinhua ■

US House approves \$25 bn for postal service amid voting dispute



Rally goers gather at a post office to protest the Trump administration's handling of the US Postal System at the Rally to Save the Post Office on August 22, 2020, in Los Angeles, California. **PHOTO: RICH FURY/AFP**

WASHINGTON — The US House of Representatives passed a bill Saturday to give the postal service a \$25 billion infusion and halt changes Democrats said threatened the millions of mail-in ballots expected

in November's presidential election.

The 257-to-150 vote, largely along party lines in the Democratic-led chamber, came as President Donald Trump called the legislation "another HOAX

by the Democrats... without talking about the Universal Mail-In Ballot Scam that they are trying to pull off."

The bill is expected to die in the Republican-led Senate, with Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell calling it a "partisan stunt."

Americans are expected to vote by mail in massive numbers due to the coronavirus pandemic, but Trump has opposed more funding for the cash-strapped US Postal Service (USPS), acknowledging the money would be used to help process ballots.

Trump, who is trailing challenger Joe Biden in polls, also has repeatedly and baselessly linked mail-in voting to election fraud.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a Republican fundraiser who Trump appointed to head the postal service in May, has presided over the removal of mail collection boxes and processing equipment.

He has also overseen a cut in overtime pay for mail carriers, which a union leader told AFP has slowed delivery times nationwide, and reshuffled senior management.

The postal service has warned most states that it could not guarantee on-time delivery of mail-in ballots.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

13 dead in Peru nightclub raided over virus restrictions

LIMA — At least 13 people suffocated in a crush during a raid on a nightclub in Peru's capital where a party was being held despite a coronavirus ban on such gatherings, police said.

Latin America has been badly hit by the pandemic, and this month Peru reimposed stricter restrictions on movement.

The illegal birthday party on Saturday was organized on social media and drew a crowd of around 120 at the Thomas Restobar, the interior ministry said in a statement confirming the 13 deaths.

"Faced with the police operation, which did not use any type of weapon or tear gas, those attending the party tried to escape through the single exit, trampling each other and getting trapped in the stairway," the ministry said.— AFP ■

Mexican reporter's killer jailed for 50 years in rare judgment

MEXICO CITY — A Mexican judge has sentenced the man convicted of ordering the 2017 murder of prominent journalist Miroslava Breach to 50 years imprisonment, a singular judgment in one of the deadliest countries globally for media.

The sentence of Juan Carlos Moreno, also known as "El Larry," was announced by the state prosecutor's office Saturday.

He had been convicted of being the "intellectual author" of Breach's murder, one of the few such media killings to be solved in the country. Mexico is regularly rated by journalism watchdog Reporters Without Borders as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.

Breach, who covered the country's drug war, was one of 11 journalists murdered in 2017. More than 100 have killed since 2000, but 90 percent of the murders remain unresolved. Prosecutors said in a statement that the 50-year sentence set a precedent in cases involving crimes against free expression, adding it was the longest sentence to date for such crimes.— AFP ■

Tens of thousands in Belarus protests demand Lukashenko's resignation

MINSK — Demonstrators massed in central Minsk on Sunday after opposition leaders called for a huge rally to demand the resignation of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, the latest in a wave of protests against his disputed re-election.

The authoritarian leader dispatched his notorious riot police to disperse spontaneous rallies that erupted after he claimed a sixth presidential term in an election two weeks ago that critics say was rigged.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators draped in the red-and-white flags of the opposition

flooded Independence Square and marched through the capital chanting "freedom" and "we will not forget, we will not forgive" as passing cars honked in support.

"We have just two demands: fair elections and stop the violence," 32-year-old Igor told AFP.

Officials issued a warning to Belarusians against participating in "illegal demonstrations" and local news outlets published videos on social media showing water cannon and riot police with shields moving towards Independence Square.

The defence ministry said



Demonstrators were draped in the red-and-white flags of the opposition. **PHOTO: AFP**

it would intervene to protect "sacred" World War II memori-

als and several metro stations in Minsk were closed.—AFP ■

West African delegation 'very hopeful' after meeting Mali junta

BAMAKO — A West African delegation visiting Mali to push for a speedy return to civilian rule following a coup said it was "very hopeful" on Saturday after meeting with the country's military junta and the president it ousted.

The head of the delegation from the regional ECOWAS

bloc, former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan, said that detained Malian president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was doing relatively well.

"We saw him, he's very fine," said Jonathan, who had earlier met for half an hour with the soldiers who seized power on Tuesday, including

new strongman Colonel Assimi Goita.

Jonathan told AFP that negotiations were going well and he was "very hopeful".

Rebel soldiers seized Keita and other leaders after a mutiny on Tuesday, dealing another deep blow to a country already struggling with a brutal Islamist

insurgency and widespread public discontent over its government.

Mali's neighbours have called for Keita to be reinstated, saying the purpose of the delegation's visit was to help "ensure the immediate return of constitutional order".—AFP ■

It's not the economy: stock markets soar to record highs

WASHINGTON — The record highs attained by Wall Street last week might come as welcome news for US President Donald Trump.

But the booming stock markets will offer little solace to the many millions of people who have lost their jobs and livelihoods as the coronavirus pandemic pushes economies around the globe ever deeper into recession. “This is the great American comeback!” tweeted Trump’s deputy Mike Pence last Tuesday, after the S&P 500 stock index soared to a fresh historic high and the tech-rich Nasdaq notched up one record after the other in recent weeks.

However, the disconnect between the financial markets and the real economy could not be starker as coronavirus lockdowns destroy untold numbers of jobs and push even traditional economic powerhouses such as the US, Britain and Germany into unprecedented contractions.—AFP ■

Japan, Laos agree to relax coronavirus travel restrictions

TOKYO — Japan and Laos agreed Sunday to allow expatriates to resume traveling as early as September, provided they stay home for 14 days after entering their respective countries as part of measures to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The plan was agreed by Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and his Laotian counterpart Saleumxay Kommasith during their talks in Vientiane, according to the Japanese government.

In addition to the reopening of borders for long-term residents, they agreed to speed up coordination through diplomatic channels toward resuming business trips, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

Motegi also told him that entry to Japan by Laotian students with Japanese government scholarships will be realized at the earliest opportunity, according to the ministry.

Laos, with a relatively low number of confirmed coronavirus cases, is among the 16 countries and regions with which Japan is discussing ways to ease



Laos, with a relatively low number of confirmed coronavirus cases, is among the 16 countries and regions with which Japan is discussing ways to ease entry restrictions. A woman wearing a mask amid concerns about the spread of the coronavirus rides a motorcycle in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, on March 11.

PHOTO: MLADEN ANTONOV/AFP

entry restrictions.

Japan currently bans entries by foreign nationals from

146 countries and regions in principle.

It is Motegi’s third stop on

a four-nation tour that also includes Papua New Guinea, Cambodia and Myanmar.—Kyodo ■

UAE deal puts Israel’s economic reach on Iran’s doorstep

LONDON — Israel’s landmark deal with the UAE to normalise ties could see businesses from the Jewish state operating on arch-rival Iran’s doorstep, but are unlikely to disturb Emirati economic ties to Iran.

It could also pave the way for direct economic engagement between Israeli and UAE-based Iranian business people that would reap benefits from politics, experts say. Cinzia Bianco, a research fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said it would be “a while” before Iranians in the UAE come face to face with Israelis.

“It is important to stress here that most Iranians with real ties in the Islamic republic were either expelled or moved away in the past years,” she said.

“Those who remained in Dubai or the UAE in general are the ultra-pragmatic business people, who refuse to get enmeshed in any kind of politics. So some of them view this deal as an op-



Iranian business people now in ‘Dubai or the UAE in general are the ultra-pragmatic’ kind, says research fellow Cinzia Bianco. People swimming at Jumeirah Beach residence in Dubai on March 20, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP / GIUSEPPE CACACE/FILE**

portunity, not a challenge,” she added.

The oil-rich United Arab Emirates was the first Gulf state to establish ties with Israel, in a deal that came amid rising tensions with Iran, accused by its neighbours of fuelling regional instability. Abu Dhabi accuses Tehran of occupying three Emirati islands since 1971, and downgraded ties with Iran in 2016 amid

rivalry between UAE ally Saudi Arabia and the Islamic republic, which is also targeted by painful US economic sanctions.

Despite tensions, the UAE and Iran, which lie 70 kilometres (44 miles) apart across the strategic Strait of Hormuz, have maintained diplomatic exchanges and crucially protected their economic ties, generating billions for both sides.—AFP ■

Algeria chafes against EU trade deal as deadline looms

ALGIERS — Days ahead of a final deadline, activation of a long-planned Algeria-EU trade deal risks unravelling as political and business leaders in the North African country warn it will undermine economic sovereignty.

The deal is meant to come into effect on September 1, a decade and a half after the two sides initially agreed their Free Trade Agreement as part of a wider pact setting out economic, social, cultural and judicial cooperation.

But as the clock ticks, concern has grown in Algiers about the coronavirus-hobbled economy’s ability to cope without tariffs on steel, textiles, electronics and vehicles – protective measures originally meant to end three years ago.

For Ali Bey Nasri, chairman of Algeria’s exporters’ association, “the agreement was badly negotiated from the start.”

“When the deal was ratified in 2005, the EU had only 15 mem-

bers, while now it is 27 strong and in a few years the membership will grow,” said Nasri.

A free trade zone would be a “disaster for the national economy”, he added.

In early August, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune called on Commerce Minister Kamel Rezig to reassess the European Union deal.

The head of state insisted that the deal “must be the subject of special attention, asserting our interests for balanced relations”, an official statement said.

Mounting pressure

Algeria’s hydrocarbon-dependent economy is in an extremely fragile state, as the effects of policies around the world to contain the coronavirus pandemic have hit already diminished oil and gas revenues.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts that Algeria’s economy will shrink 5.2 per cent this year.—AFP ■

China’s booming duty-free market spurs luxury consumption



Customers pay their check at a duty-free shopping mall in east China’s Shanghai, Aug. 21, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA/DING TING

SHANGHAI/HAIKOU — Inside a duty-free shop in downtown Haikou, capital of south China’s island province of Hainan, Su Yanqing was selecting a watch for herself.

“I had decided to buy a watch before I came here,” said Su, a tourist from Xiamen, east Chi-

na’s Fujian Province. “The price in the duty-free shop is definitely lower than in ordinary shopping malls.” Besides picking a watch worth about 10,000 yuan (about 1,447 U.S. dollars), she also planned to buy cosmetics and skincare products.

From July 1, Hainan

has increased its annual tax-free shopping quota from 30,000 yuan to 100,000 yuan per person. The number of duty-free goods categories has also expanded from 38 to 45, with products such as mobile phones and laptops added to the list.

—Xinhua

TikTok parent firm to sue Trump gov’t for banning service in U.S.

BEIJING — Beijing-based ByteDance Ltd., the parent company of popular video-sharing app TikTok, has decided to sue the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump for banning its service in the United States, local media reported Sunday.

The lawsuit, which China Global Television Network says would be filed on Monday, comes as Trump has stepped up

pressure on TikTok against the backdrop of concern that the platform is both a privacy risk and susceptible to Beijing’s censorship activities.

On Aug. 6, Trump issued orders prohibiting any transactions in the United States with TikTok and popular Chinese messaging app WeChat, owned by Chinese IT giant Tencent Holdings Ltd., in 45 days.

Also on Aug. 14, Trump

ordered ByteDance to divest its interest in the U.S. operations of TikTok within 90 days.

TikTok, which lets users upload short videos set to music, is a hit among young people and has grown popular as a way to pass the time amid the coronavirus pandemic. The Chinese app is believed to have surpassed 2 billion downloads earlier this year.—Kyodo



Beijing-based ByteDance Ltd., the parent company of popular video-sharing app TikTok, has decided to sue the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump for banning its service in the United States, local media reported Sunday. PHOTO: BYTEDANCE/TWITTER

Trip.com chairman wants Japan-China tourist travel to resume this year

TOKYO — The executive chairman of China’s Trip.com Group Ltd., Asia’s biggest online travel agency, has said he wants to see Japan and China reopen their borders to each other for leisure travel “later this year,” projecting a strong recovery in tourism demand despite the coronavirus

pandemic.

A recovery in domestic travel would come first once the spread of cases starts to ease and the “next question” is when Japan and China can reach an agreement about reciprocal travel, said Trip.com Co-founder and Executive Chairman James Liang in a recent

interview via videolink with Kyodo News.

“I hope this kind of agreement can be reached later this year,” Liang said from Trip.com’s Shanghai office. “Once the border opens, there will be a spike of outbound travel. There would be pent-up demand.”—Kyodo

Notice to whom it may concerned

U Bilal, authorized representative of the Mohamed Ebrahim Munny Family Waqf has filed a case, Civil Regular Case No. 50/2019 of Yangon Regional High Court in regard of land and premises being No. 77/91 (Former Tourist Burma) Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, against Yangon Metropolitan Development Public Co., Ltd. U Bilal had also filed an Appeal Case against the judgement and decree of Yangon Regional High Court on (5-8-2020) and the Appeal Case has already been admitted being Appeal Case No. 492/2020. Thus so it is informed that, the case is not finally decided and it is under process and U Bilal as a citizen, is searching legal rights in accordance with existing laws.

Instructive Person U Bilal (12/PaBaTa(Naing)010530) Authorized representative of the Mohamed Ebrahim Munny Family Waqf	Under instruction, U KYAW NYEIN (Sr.2302) DAW KHIN MAY THAN (Sr.3228) B.A (Law), LL.B, D.B.L, D.M.L LL.B, D.B.L, D.M.L, D.I.L Advocate Advocate Off: No. 162, 1st Floor, 35th Street (Middle Block), Kyauktada Township, Yangon. Phone- 09-5108521, 09-5015316
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (194N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (194N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-8-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (723W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (723W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-8-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S GOLD STAR LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (003N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (003N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-8-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINES

Pa-O land with true natural beauties

By Thiha, the Traveller

PA-O land or Pa-O region's Pinlaung Town was said to be very beautiful by those who were there. Those who had visited many regions of Myanmar would say that Myanmar is beautiful with its natural beauties. However the beauty of Pinlaung is somewhat in a majestic and peaceful way.

Pinlaung

It was a region once governed by saophas (local rulers or royalties) and the region was known as Loilon region. Now it is Pa-O Self-Administered Zone. It was in southern Shan State and was about 50 miles away from Taunggyi. Sao Moe Kyaw was Pinlaung (formerly Loilon) region's last saopha and relinquished his powers in 29 April 1959.

Weather

Situated 4,820 ft. above sea level, weather in Pinlaung Town is cool. It also rain considerably in the raining season. For a person like me who came up from hot and humid delta area, the Pinlaung weather was very nice. Sometime water became frozen during the winter time.

How to go to Pinlaung

Pinlaung was a town midway between major cities so it is quite an awkward destination. From Yangon, most will take an overnight express bus to Loikaw reaching Pinlaung at an unearthly hour of 2:30 or 3 am. From Nay Pyi Taw, it can be reached via Kintha. By air, you'll land at Heho and then drive down to Pinlaung for

about two hour.

Places to go in and near Pinlaung

There were some places to visit in Pinlaung but most drive out of town to visit villages, hike into forests or up a hill. Pinlaung was surrounded by natural greenery and there were many natural waterfalls and caves that are of interest. There were even places to go trekking or hiking or even rock climbing! As I'm not that sporty type of person, I'll only mention places that I went to.

Pinlaung Haw or palace

The front end of Pinlaung Haw (palace) had collapsed while the back end was in a dilapidated condition looking at

though it was hit recently by a strong earthquake and was on the verge of collapsing. Relatives of the saopha still lived in nearby houses and visitors can pay a visit but be sure to be respectful toward the host. Comparing the sad state at the present with its glorious past could bring tears to those who tend to be sad.

Saopha tombs

The tombs of saophas and families are in the town center near Mway Daw Pagoda. Their ancient titles and names can be examined from the cemetery record.

Mway Daw Pagoda

Mway Daw Pagoda can be seen from afar across Kan Tha



Nam Hoo pagoda Hill. PHOTO THIHA



PinlaungHawNan or Palace. PHOTO THIHA



Haw Nan.

Ya Lake as you enter Pinlaung Town. The lake itself was always crowded with local and foreign visitors.

Pinlaung Myoma Market

Although it is right smack in the middle of the town, it is usually busy only on the market days that were held once every five days. The market days are when exotic traditional Shan foods that were not readily available everyday even in other towns and villages were offered. Restaurants and eateries near the market also offer special dishes on the market days. It is advisable to check out when the next market day will be and time it to coincide with your visit in order to taste local Shan delicacies.

Loi Maung Taung or Loi

Maung Mountain

The road beside the Mway Daw Pagoda will take you to Loi Maung Taung or Loi Maung Mountain. This is the highest peak near Pinlaung rising up to a height of 6,124 ft.

At such height, the weather at the top of the mountain is severe and changes drastically in a moment. It might be misty but can become sunny and hot within a moment or the other way round. At the summit is a monastery, a pagoda and a communication tower. The mountain is very attractive for active sports persons, mountaineers and hikers alike. As the summit can also be reached by cars or motorcycles, even non-sporty person like me can enjoy the view up there. Inle Lake as well as other peaks can be seen from the summit. Most



Mway Daw pagoda.

went up to enjoy the sunset view and timed the ascent to coincide with the sunset.

Edible earth

There's a strange habit of eating earth in this region. The edible earth pits were right beside the road or trek up Loi Maung Mountain. For a visitor like me, the ordinary and edible earths were undistinguishable. It is best to check out with locals. Villagers roast the edible earth and eat it as a snack.

Nam Hoo Pagoda Hill

Nam Hoo Pagoda Hill near Pinlaung Town is a place where the town can be seen closely from above. Pintale Kyaik Hti Yo Pagoda is yet another place rising up above the town and yet near the town offering a close up view of the town from above.

Lone Naga Pat Pagoda is a must visit place if you were ever

in Pinlaung. The views along the way to the pagoda were breathtakingly beautiful. The history of the pagoda was too mythical and I'll leave it for visitors to learn about it in their visit and to believe

Sa Ma Kyauk Sar Pagoda or Sa Ma Stone Inscription Pagoda is right beside the path that'll take you to Lone Naga Pat Pagoda. In my mind the stone inscriptions looks more like a fossil remains



Edibal earth pits.

it or not! Near this pagoda is a small pond called Thitsa Khayu (snail) pond with many snails in it.

of the snails!
(to be continued as part two next week)

(Translated by Handytips)

Sa Ma Kyauk Sar Pagoda



SaMa stone inscription Pagoda. **PHOTO THIHA**



Saopha tombs

Hantharwady United stands atop in MNL Week-10

HANTHARWADY United is currently standing in the first place after eight matches played with just one loss in the Week-10 games of the Myanmar National League, according to the statement with the MNL yesterday.

Following Hantharwady United, Ayeyawady United is standing in the second place with six wins, two draws and no loss from eight matches played.

In the third place of the table former champion team, Yangon United has garnered 17 points after playing eight matches of five wins, two draws and one loss.

Next defending champions Shan United FC is sitting in the fourth place with earning 14 points off four wins, two draws and two losses from eight match-

es played.

Rakhine United is in the fifth place of the standing table with earning 13 points of four wins, one draw and three losses after eight matches played.

In the meantime, Sagaing United is standing in sixth place with ten points of three wins, one draw and four losses after eight matches played.

Ten teams are being participated in the tourney, and Southern Myanmar FC is currently in the bottom place with no win.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Hantharwady United players pose for a group photo before a previous MNL match at the Thuwunna Stadium. **PHOTO:HUFC**



Japan athletes give Tokyo Olympic stadium a test run

TOKYO — Japan's top athletes put the new Tokyo Olympic stadium through its paces at a track meet Sunday, one year ahead of the Games which have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The televised competition was held behind closed doors, with only athletes and a few hundred journalists and officials in attendance at the 60,000-seat

facility, which is still undergoing construction work on its exterior.

High jumpers got the Golden Grand Prix 2020 meet underway as up-tempo music and the lively voices of stadium announcers filled the air.

The jumpers however had no spectators to ask for slow hand claps to find their rhythm as they sped down the runway.

Sprinters likewise rushed to the finish line but there were no cheers of excited fans and no collective sighs greeted the failed jumps of the pole vaulters.

A handful of male javelin throwers took matters into their own hands and offered slow claps in unison for each other as they took their turns.

"It's great to be back at my place of work," javelin throw

winner Genki Dean told reporters. "It's so fun to compete."

The event was held as Japan takes cautious steps to reopen its economy, with professional baseball, football and sumo resuming in front of limited number of fans. But the nation is also seeing a rebound in new infection figures, particularly in urban areas including Tokyo and Osaka.—AFP ■

Bayern boss Flick on par with club legends Heynckes, Hitzfeld - Lahm

BERLIN — Philipp Lahm, who captained Bayern Munich to their last European title in 2013, put current head coach Hansi Flick on a par with the club's legendary Champions

League-winning bosses Jupp Heynckes and Ottmar Hitzfeld ahead of Sunday's final against Paris Saint-Germain.

Lahm captained Bayern when they beat Borussia Dortmund

2-1 in the 2013 Champions League final in London, then led Germany to the 2014 World Cup title in Brazil before retiring in 2017.

The 36-year-old is full of praise for Flick, who can land the treble on his first season in charge if Bayern, who are on a 20-match winning streak, beat Neymar-inspired PSG in Sunday's Champions League final in Lisbon.

"When you look back at FC Bayern's past, at Ottmar Hitzfeld or Jupp Heynckes, it was one of their strengths that they did not hog the lime-light, but worked for the team," Lahm told broadcaster ZDF.

"That's exactly how Hansi Flick is."

Heynckes, 75, coached Bayern to the 2013 European

title at Wembley, while Hitzfeld, 71, was in charge when they won the 2001 Champions League final by beating Valencia in Milan.

In 10 months, Flick, 55, has gone from interim coach to leading Bayern to the Bundesliga, German Cup titles and is now 90 minutes from lifting the Champions League trophy.

Bayern have steamrolled their way into Sunday's final, scoring 42 goals in 10 matches, including their jaw-dropping 8-2 demolition of Barcelona in the quarter-finals.

This is Flick's first job in charge of a Bundesliga club, having been assistant coach when Germany won the 2014 World Cup before going on to become sports director of the German FA until 2017.—AFP ■

I'm excited about my debut, says Yangon United's Yan Naing Oo

YANGON United midfielder Yan Naing Oo expressed his feeling this week that he is so excited to make his first debut with his team Yangon United in the upcoming Myanmar National League start.

The midfielder said I'd try my best to collect points in our Myanmar National League restart matches, and all our coaches make us strong enough to face our opponents".

Myanmar National League has postponed since 24 March now the Yangon player said he is confident to play.

"I am not worried about my performance and believe in playing against my opponent as I am well trained", he added.

"All Myanmar National teams have many talented players, and the teams' players have pretty understanding. Thus, we need to focus on every match. Yangon United beat Magwe FC 6-0 on 22 August at Yangon United Sports Complex at the restart of Myanmar National League 2020. Thus, Yangon United collected 17 points from 8 plays, and standing at the third place while Magwe FC is currently standing at the eighth place from eight matches played. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Philipp Lahm captained Bayern Munich to their last Champions League triumph in 2013. **PHOTO: AFP**