

NATIONAL

La Hu National Development Party and National Democratic Party for Development present their policies, stances and work programmes

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
National Reconciliation and Peace Centre
Announcement

12th Waning of Wagaung, 1382 ME
14th September 2020

- 1. The National Reconciliation and Peace Centre has put an emphasis on implementing reconciliation, internal peace and political dialogue which are crucial for establishing a Democratic Federal Union expected by national people for many years.
- 2. The works for increasing negotiation momentum have encountered some difficulties under prevention, control and treatment measures of COVID-19 . However, in coordination with the group representing the government, the Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw, the group representing the ethnic armed organizations which signed Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, and the group representing political parties, the NRPC could successfully hold the 4th session of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong in Nay Pyi Taw from 19 to 21 August 2020 in line with the rules and regulations of COVID-19 prevention and control health measures.
- 3. The Tatmadaw has also announced suspension of military operations in the conflict zones, except for the areas of terrorist groups from 10 May to 30 September 2020 for effective measures of control, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 more widely while aiming for internal peace.
- 4. The announcement and the activities of Tatmadaw have reflected implementation of UN Security Council’s resolutions adopted on 1 July 2020, and that NRC welcomed these measures which have supported its peacemaking efforts.
- 5. The genuine desire and active cooperation for peace of the relevant organizations, including the Tatmadaw, could help in successful holding of the 4th session of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong in accordance with the healthcare rules of COVID-19 prevention and control measures. Moreover, the stakeholders could sign Part III of agreements for the Union Accord crucial for the peacemaking processes in the post 2020 General Election. It is announced that the NRPC will continue to establish a genuine Democratic Federal Union expected by the national people with absolute determination.



On completion, the expanded quarantine facilities will be able to accommodate 1,220 patients.
PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG

Quarantine facilities
in Phaunggyi being
expanded

THE Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation is expanding facilities at the COVID-19 Medical Centre in the compound of Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar) of Phaunggyi village in Hlegu Township, Yangon, to be able to accommodate a total of 1,220 patients.

U Shein Win, the chairman of MCEF, said that the expansion of facilities began after the meeting between departmental officials and the construction entrepreneurs on 1 September as the number of COVID-19 con-

firmed cases is increasing in Yangon Region.

Since 10 September, some patients have received medical treatments at the new facilities.

U Myo Myint, the General Secretary of MCEF, said that the COVID-19 Medical Centre will be used for only the patients with critical and serious health conditions due to the limited capacity of resources for medical workers and volunteers at the centre, while positive patients will be kept at the quarantine centres.

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Advice to people in Yangon Region

1. About 6,000 people have been quarantined in Yangon. Within two days, quarantine spaces were arranged for 1,000 people who came back from Rakhine State. Now, the number of people who had contacts with COVID-19 patients has increased, so seven new quarantine centres have been established for 1,000 more people. The civil society organizations and volunteers are invited to help the persons at the quarantine centres.
 2. People in Yangon need to send the persons who had contacts with confirmed cases in the contact tracing to the quarantine centres without making them worried.
 3. People should adhere to the required rules and regulations in the quarantine centres. When sending food to people in quarantine centres, alcohol and cigarettes should not be included in the delivery.
 4. People in Yangon have lots of difficulties, challenges and burdens. Therefore, they need to strictly follow the rules by staying at home in two to three weeks during this period. In going outside for necessary reasons, they must wear masks. As Yangon City has a large number of population, people are also advised to abide by the rules of Ministry of Health and Sports amidst the increasing number of confirmed cases.

EU supports Myanmar's transition to democracy

* The European Union and its Member States with presence in Myanmar wish to celebrate with Myanmar and its people the International Day of Democracy, and seize this opportunity to voice our support for the great strides made by Myanmar during the last years on its path to democracy.

* Strong democratic institutions, the right to participation, a vibrant civil society, freedom of expression, access to information and press freedom are crucial cornerstones of a democratic society.

* As Myanmar gears up for the elections while boldly facing the worldwide pandemic that curses all our countries, political participation and freedom of speech need special safekeeping. The election process must embrace all who want to participate; women and men, young and elderly from all communities, ethnicities and religions. The opportunity to vote and be elected is

crucial. Each and everyone should be free to express their point of view and be heard, be it through traditional or social media. A vibrant debate lies at the heart of every democratic project, reminding us that discerning views reflect the different needs and concerns across the far reaches of the country.

* We take this opportunity to recall that the European Union and its Member States enjoy a partnership with Myanmar that stretches beyond a single election, reiterating our firm commitment to walk the long road towards democracy and peace with the Myanmar people

(Signed by Ambassadors and Heads of European Union Missions with presence in Myanmar EU, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden).—European Union in Myanmar

Quarantine facilities in Phaunggyi being expanded

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“Patients with no symptoms have been allowed for discharge from hospitals after 14 days as they cannot cause the spread of disease. Due to the construction works here, we sent 100 patients with no symptoms to the Yoma facility in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township,” added U Myo Myint.

The Ministry of Construction has set up four units of modular house for medical doctors and health workers at the COVID-19 Medical Centre in Phaunggyi, and construction works for additional four

units of such houses are underway there.

U Myo Myint also said the facilities are installed with Wifi internet for the patients to be able to communicate with their family members.

Under the directives of Yangon Region government, the MCEF has spent about 1 billion kyat set up COVID-19 facilities at the Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar) since 2 April.

—Pwint Thitsar ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Ayeyarwady Foundation builds COVID-19 temporary medical centre in Yangon

THE Ayeyarwady Foundation is building a COVID-19 temporary medical centre that can accommodate over 400 patients at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre in Yangon.

The construction was started on 12 September and the works are expected to be completed in coming days.

The Ministry of Health and Sports will manage healthcare services and treatments at the centre, and the foundation will provide all the fund required for the whole infrastructure, logistics, and supplies, as well as the expenses for daily meals.

The Ayeyarwady Foundation is working together with the Ministry of Health and Sports in measures against



Temporary medical treatment centre set up by Ayeyarwady Foundation at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre in Yangon is about to be completed this week. **PHOTO: AYEYAWADY FOUNDATION**

COVID-19, including the establishment of some quarantine centres.

The foundation also provided medical supplies and daily meals for persons under investigation at the quarantine centres, as well as health insurance and other supplies for the health workers.—Ye Yint Shine

(Translated by Aung Khin)



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.



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.

Press Statement of Tatmadaw True News Information Team about allegations regarding villages in Maungdaw area

It was announced on 6 July 2020 that a court of inquiry led by Major-General Myat Kyaw had been established to investigate the events at the Chut Pyin and Maung Nu villages in Rakhine State in 2017. This investigation has advanced to such an extent that we can now announce that there will be a court-martial in this case, commencing before the end of 2020. Allegations regarding Taung Bazar are included in the scope of the Maung Nu investigation announced on 6 July 2020. Furthermore, we also announce that the analysis by the Office of the Judge Advocate-General of the final report (with annexes) of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) and other information has reached the point where the Office is investigating possible wider patterns of violations in the region of northern Rakhine in 2016-2017. Allegations regarding villages in the Maungdaw area are included in the scope of this wider investigation.

Tatmadaw True News Information Team

Commerce Ministry organizes virtual coordination meeting on making smooth flow of goods amid COVID-19 pandemic

COMMERCE Ministry organizes a coordination meeting on plans for price stability and smooth flow of goods during the restriction period of COVID-19 via Zoom application yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, the Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint said that Myanmar successfully overcame the first wave of COVID-19, but the second wave had severely hit Myanmar. The citizens, the Union government, regional governments, and volunteers are taking collaborative efforts to respond to the second wave of COVID-19, he added. He called on all the participants to make discussions on plans to continue trade, and to make flow of goods efficient and smooth while sticking to health guidelines. He said that increasing cases in Yangon Region showed that COVID-19 can rapidly spread in



Union Minister Dr Than Myint discusses plans for price stability and smooth flow of goods during COVID-19 via Zoom from the Ministry of Commerce on 14 September 2020. PHOTO: MNA

the areas which have large population. He urged the participants to frankly discuss on how they could help in making smooth flow of goods. During the meeting, the Deputy Minister for Commerce said that all stakeholders need to take collaborative efforts to maintain the supply chain, to continue flow of goods despite travel restrictions, and to prevent

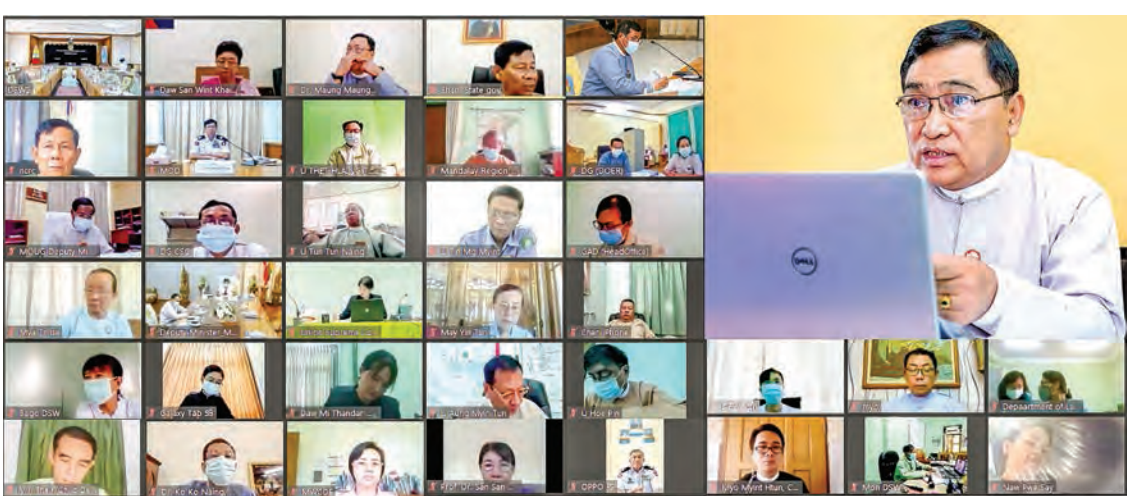
shortage of medicines. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aye Maung Sein explained about health examinations and opening of check gates in accordance with the instructions given by National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID – 19). The Yangon Mayor explained about the arrangements for price stability and making flow of goods effective. Officials from the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and its associated organizations including regional federations of chambers of commerce from Yangon, Mandalay and southern Shan State made discussions on plans for efficient flow of goods. —MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

National Committee on Rights of Child holds coordination meeting online

THE National Committee on Rights of Child held the 1/2020 coordination meeting online with its local committees at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as the chairman of committee, presided over the meeting which was also joined by deputy ministers, the directors-general, the deputy directors-general, civil society organizations, and the chairpersons and officials of child rights committees from Nay Pyi Taw Council and regions/states, child rights experts and representatives on child rights organizations.

In his opening remarks, the Union Minister explained the formation of management committees, work committees and technical teams for the emergence of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services for prompting the rights of children; the ECI pilot project is being im-



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presides over the coordination meeting with National Committee on Rights of Child via videoconference on 14 September 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

plemented in 7 wards of villages of Ayeyawady, Yangon, Sagaing and Mon, covering from the infants to the babies under five-years old, in coordination with the relevant ministries, experts and well-trained community volunteers.

Myanmar has adopted policies and strategies after developing laws and bylaws for early childhood development, established 142 nursery schools under this programme, and more schools will also be set up in promoting self-reliant pre-primary schools across the country.

Under this programme, 1,543 self-reliant pre-primary schools received K1,635.58 million and 1,200 schools of mother circles (child nurseries) K1,724.

16 million in 2019-2020 financial year.

The national committee has established 7 childcare centres in Yangon, Mandalay, Magway, Mon, Shan (east), Ayeyawady and Rakhine for orphans, abandoned children and unprotected children. A child care centre that can accommodate 1,00 children has been established in Nay Pyi

Taw with the cash contribution of Myanmar Association for Prevention, Care and Protection of Abandoned Children.

Director-General Dr San San Aye from the Department of Social Welfare presented the government's implementation on the tasks under UN's Convention on the Rights of Child.

The Deputy Director-General of the department reported on accomplishment of decisions in the national committee's meetings, followed by the presentations of senior officials for respective subjects briefed on preparations for the 5th and 6th joint report of national committee and developing the draft bylaw and policy of child rights.

The chairpersons and committee members of committee from Nay Pyi Taw Council and regions/states discussed their works, followed by the suggestions of child rights experts.

—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)



Seamen signed off from the ships in the Andaman Sea undergo hotel quarantine in Kawthoung. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**

26 Myanmar seamen kept under hotel quarantine in Kawthoung

A total of 26 Myanmar seamen who signed off from three ships – eight from MT-Hai Xing of China and five from MV Ever Alliance and 13 from MT Busan Hope of India – anchored in the Andaman Sea arrived in Kawthoung yesterday evening.

Captain Saw Shar Gay Htoo and six seamen for MT-Hai Xing, Captain U Kyaw Htet Lin and two seamen for MV Ever Alliance, and Captain U Soe Min Tun and eleven seamen for MT

Busan Hope has swapped duties with the returned seamen.

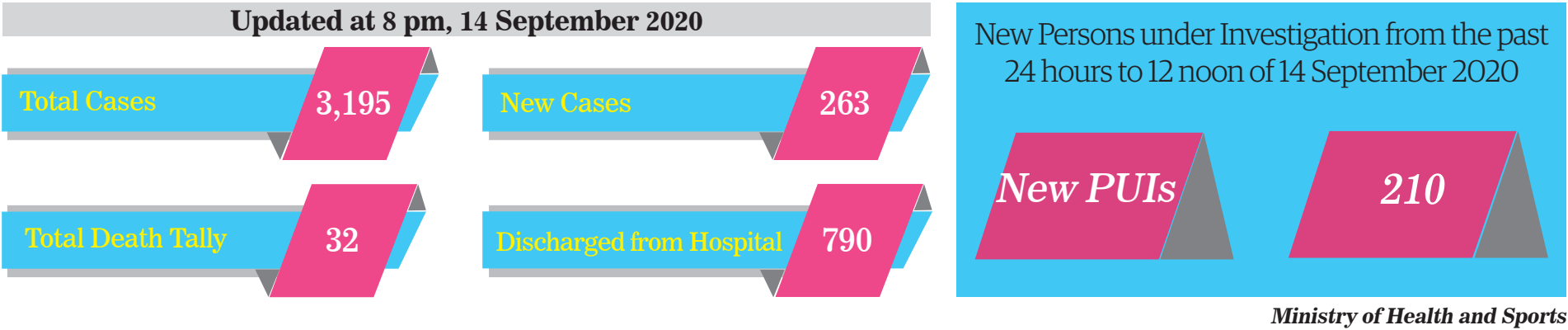
Officials from departments concerned and healthcare workers examined the returned seamen's health conditions.

The twenty six seamen are being quarantined for 21 days and their lab samples will be sent to the National Health Laboratory.

—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

263 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 September, total figure rises to 3195

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to 3195 after 263 new cases were reported on 14 September according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 3195 confirmed cases, 32 died, 790 have been discharged from hospitals and 210 were held under investigation.—MNA



COVID does not discriminate whether you are old or young

Among those who have passed away, the majority are those with diabetes and high blood pressure. If one has diabetes or high blood pressure, it is next to impossible to fight back against the COVID disease. Please be careful. People who are not in good health should be especially careful. The rest of the people also need to be careful. The other thing I have noticed is that among some of those infected, some are teenagers. They are 16, 15 and 18-year-olds; youths in the prime of life. That is why we should deeply understand that COVID does not discriminate whether you are old or young, or whether you have underlying health problems or not. This is very important.



(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Report to People regarding need for strict compliance with regulations, instructions, directives issued for containment of COVID-19, on 11 September 2020)

Advice to people in Nay Pyi Taw

1. People should not illegally come to Nay Pyi Taw. If a person comes back from other places to Nay Pyi Taw, he/she needs to inform and receive medical examination. The charge for COVID-19 tests has been considerably reduced.
2. It has been learnt that some people get out of the cars on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and some old roads, and then they entered Nay Pyi Taw via motorcycle roads and inter-village roads. So, authorities are cooperating with the Myanmar Police Force to take strict measures to control these illegal entries.
3. The ward/village administrators have been instructed to report, manage and send individuals who entered or came back to the ward/village to the quarantine centres.
4. To make the flow of goods smooth, truck drivers will be given the slip at the entrance gate, from which the drivers must drive their trucks directly to the exit gate, where the slip must be left. The truck drivers are not allowed to go to other places between the entrance gate and the exit gate.
5. Face mask rule has been imposed in Nay Pyi Taw townships and COVID-19 awareness has been raised via loudspeakers. A dusk-to-dawn curfew has been in force, and surprise checks have been carried out on restaurants.

209 Myanmar nationals return through Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2)

A total of 209 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand – 130 males and 79 females – returned through the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday. Myawady District Administrator U Tayzar Aung, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Chan Nyein and relevant officials provided them with medical examination and other re-

quirement. The returnees will then be transported to relevant quarantine centres. A total of 77,141 returnees including 11,680 in May, 25,338 in June, 18,597 in July, 15,998 in August and 5,979 in September so far have come back home through this border crossing since 1 May.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A Myanmar national returned from Thailand (L) has temperature checked at Myawady border on 14 September. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN**

Myanmar officials join 55th ASEAN-COCI online

MYANMAR officials joined the 55th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (55th ASEAN-COCI) online hosted by Singapore as the rotating chair of COCI yesterday morning. Rector Daw Khin Kyi Pyar and officials from the National University of Arts and Culture in Mandalay under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, which is the focal Committee on Culture and Information of Myanmar (COCI-Myanmar), and Acting Deputy Director-General U Zeyar and officials from the Myanmar Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information, which is the Sub-committee on Culture and Information of Myanmar (SCI-Myanmar) joined the videoconference from the respective offices in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. The meeting focused on



ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information organizes its 55th meeting online on 14 September 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

the estimated budget for ASEAN cultural fund, financial procedures for culture and information projects, the proposed projects from member countries and approved Thailand to host the next round of COCI meeting in 2021. The ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information was established on 4 October in 1978, and the ASEAN Cultural Fund was set up on 2 December 1978. Myanmar hosted the meetings of ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information in 2007 and 2018.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR
Aungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS
Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR TRANSLATOR
Zaw Htet Oo

TRANSLATORS
Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER
Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION
(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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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.

Workers retain jobs as Yangon factories continue work amid COVID-19

THERE are 29 industrial zones in Yangon Region with Hlinethaya Township housing 12 zones, the most in the region. Industrial zones are continuing to operate normally during the COVID-19 period so that employees retain their jobs.

The industrial zones in Yangon Region are operating in line with health regulations by the Ministry of Health and Sports and industrial zone chairpersons and garment manufacturer associations are making sure everyone complies so that factories will not be closing anytime soon.

Daw Khine Khine Nwe, General Secretary of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association, said they discussed health protection to keep the factories running in the last tripartite meeting. She said while they had to worry about the health of themselves and the employees, there was greater concern that they would be unable to pay the workers. Employers will need to maintain health regulations systematically and employees need to wear face masks and comply with the regulations when getting off work. She said they told the Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population during the tripartite meeting that they had no plans to shut down factories since they are adhering to guidelines from



Workers retain jobs as factories in Hlinethaya continue operations amid COVID-19. PHOTO: THAN HTIKE

the health ministry. They have to analyze the nationwide situation so factories that have work continue to operate.
There are about 400 garment factories in Hlinethaya's Shwe Lin Ban Industrial Zone and only suspected persons who have been in close contact with positive COVID-19 cases from three factories have been suspended while the rest continue to operate. The cases themselves were not transmitted between factory workers but contracted from external contact.
"We found positive cases in three factories. The first one was found in a Japanese facto-

ry with over 200 workers who were all given 10 days of paid leave," said U Aye Thaung, Chairperson of the Shwe Lin Ban Industrial Zone. The second case was in a factory with 1,500 workers. The worker contracted the disease from taking care of their mother and they were suspended with 20 other people who were in close contact. The third factory also suspended workers who were in close contact with the positive patient.
U Aye Thaung said they do not urge factories to close but have increased protective health measures in all the factories. He said decisions

should be made after consulting with the people who are actually working in the field. He said there are issues with managing employees through a medium and so they have decided to work through COVID-19 together.
The 12 industrial zones in Hlinethaya Township are industrial zones 1 to 5 and 7, Shwe Lin Ban, Ngwe Pin Le, Shwe Thanlwin, Anawratha, Mya Sein Yaung, and Livestock industrial zones. Factories continue to run during the second wave of COVID-19 so that workers can retain their jobs. —Than Htike
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

YGN trucks not allowed to enter Magway city; goods unloaded at temporary terminal

With the coronavirus cases surging in Yangon, trucks which come from Yangon are not allowed to enter Magway city and the temporary terminal has been planned in the high school compound of Magyikan village, Magway Township to unload the goods, according to a supervision committee for private motor vehicles in Magway Region.
Magway Region bans highway buses to fight the COVID-19 resurgences starting from 14 September. However, a temporary truck terminal has been arranged for the movement of trucks and goods carriers from outside of the region.



Lorries come from Yangon are seen outside Magway City on 14 September. PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)

"The temporary terminal was opened on 12 September; and after that, around 40 trucks

arrived at the terminal in the morning of 14 September. The goods are unloaded there, and

they are sent inside the city with other short-haul drivers. The trucks drivers from Yangon have to stay at a separate facility, and they are restricted to enter the city," said U Myint Soe, chair of the committee.
Similarly, those short-haul drivers and assistants are also subjected to mandatory 14-day quarantine, in compliance with the health orders issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports. The committee ensures that those vehicles inside the town are to ply in line with health guidelines.—Zayyatu (Magway)
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Go Digital ASEAN Project virtual launch event to be held today

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Keep food chains alive amid COVID-19 crisis

WHILE facing the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the people are also struggling to tackle the challenges of their livelihood and their economy.

The situation with a surge in coronavirus cases and travel restrictions has demanded the policy makers to draw plans for keeping food supply chain alive amidst the global pandemic before the COVID-19 pandemic wreaks havoc on our food chains.

Now is the time to protect the flow of food in the country before the COVID-19 outbreak, with all the accompanying closures and travel restrictions, create logistical bottlenecks.

The Food and Agriculture Organization urges countries to meet the immediate food needs of their vulnerable populations and boost their social protection programmes.

While every country faces its own challenges, collaboration — between governments and the full gamut of sectors and stakeholders — is paramount. We are experiencing a global problem that requires a global response.

The Ministry of Commerce and importers have come together to relax import rules to ensure that goods which are necessary for the people can be easily imported.

The government has implemented precautionary measures – from stay-at-home orders to enforcement of preventive regulations- in a bid to contain the spread of

COVID-19. To avoid the food shortage, the approach we take must avoid imposing measures that would restrict trade and the flow of commodities.

We must ensure that food markets are functioning properly and that information on prices, production, consumption, and stocks of food is available to all in real-time.

Knowing who are your most critical and vulnerable suppliers, and which risks pose an imminent threat, is vital to ensuring continuation of food supply.

The most important role governments can play is to keep the food supply chain operating, intervene to ensure there are enough workers, and keep the food markets from panicking.

Policy makers need to be careful to avoid accidentally tightening food value chain and the logistics. Besides, they must support labour-intensive sectors such as fruit and vegetables with a special scheme which can supply labour to the sectors under the health guidelines.

Individuals can also play an important role, by buying what they need only and by avoiding panic buying and hoarding of food, and cutting down on food waste. Buying too much fresh farm produce that becomes rotten before it can be eaten will just exacerbate food supply problems.

There is enough food for all the people in the country. If all hands from the governmental and private sectors are on deck to effectively make plans to ensure that logistics function smoothly, we will never face a food crisis.

■ ■ ■

Building back better on food and agriculture

FAO has elaborated a comprehensive Response and Recovery Programme to overcome the impacts of COVID-19 through up-scaled and robust international collaboration

By QU Dongyu, Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

AS the impacts of COVID-19 take their toll on human health and well-being around the world, the imperative of producing and ensuring access to healthy food for each and every one of us must not be overlooked. The food systems that must give daily sustenance to all humans are under threat. If we want to avoid what could be the worst food crisis in modern history, we need robust and strategic international cooperation at an extraordinary scale.

Even before the pandemic, global food systems and food security were strained by many factors, including pests, poverty, conflicts and the impacts of climate change. According to the latest FAO report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, in 2019 close to 690 million – or nearly one in ten people in the world – were hungry. The COVID-19 pandemic could push an additional 130 million people worldwide into chronic hunger by the end of 2020. Furthermore, in 2019 three billion people did not have access to healthy diets and suffered from other forms of malnutrition.

Due to the pandemic and related containment measures,

we have already experienced disruptions in global food supply chains, labor shortages and lost harvests. Now we are seeing a delayed planting season. Around 4.5 billion people depend on food systems for their jobs and livelihoods, working to produce, collect, store, process, transport and distribute food to consumers, as well as to feed themselves and their families. The pandemic has put 35 percent of food system employment at risk, impacting women at an even higher rate. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has actively supported countries and farmers to work on scalable and sustainable solutions. This forms the basis of the comprehensive FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, which identifies seven priority areas for action. However, to catalyze and build upon these solutions, a business as usual approach will not suffice. The following three strategic shifts must guide our collective response.

First, we need better data for better decision-making.

Timely and effective responses depend upon knowing exactly where and when support is needed, as well as how that support can be implemented best. This means up-sealing work on data, information and analysis, and taking a bottom-up approach.

FAO is rapidly adapting and



Farmer are planting paddy in rain-fed field in Minbu. PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)

enhancing data collection methods at the country, regional and global levels, as data collection processes have been disrupted by physical distancing measures to contain the pandemic. For instance, FAO has recently released the FAO Data Lab to bring real time data on food prices and sentiment analysis. We have also developed the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform which brings more than 1 million geospatial layers to help prioritize interventions within countries.

Second, we must dramatically increase the synergy of our collective actions.

The COVID-19 crisis calls

for us to act in unison like never before, particularly on promoting economic inclusion, agricultural trade, sustainable and resilient food systems, preventing future animal-to-human disease outbreaks and ensuring coordinated humanitarian action.

The pandemic is already generating an unprecedented impact on global and regional trade, with world merchandise trade in 2020 expected to fall by as much as 32 percent, according to WTO. Unlike any other food or health crisis in modern times, the impacts of COVID-19 are causing supply and demand shocks at a national, re-

gional and global level, leading to immediate and longer-term risks for food production and availability. We need to ensure the compliance of trade requirements and improve efficiency in moving goods across borders.

The prevention of future animal-to-human disease outbreaks requires coordination between stakeholders from all relevant sectors. FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) have strengthened the Joint FAO/WHO Centre. This Centre unites expertise on zoonotic diseases from FAO, WHO and other global partners and coordination mechanisms, to build

national capacities to predict, prevent and control zoonotic threats.

An effective response also calls for joint humanitarian action, particularly to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder and family farmers. We must thoughtfully and adequately increase collaboration and partnerships among and between United Nations' entities, the private sector, civil society and key local actors.

Third, we must accelerate innovation.

New investment strategies, digital technology and infrastructure innovation are essential to obtaining better data, increasing efficiency in food production and providing market access. In this regard, there are many solutions from the private sector that could be of great use to governments and international organizations, which can fine-tune their methods based on the private sector's innovation-centric, results-oriented approach.

The prevention of food crises cannot wait until the health crisis is over. FAO is placing its convening power, real-time data, early warning systems and technical expertise at the world's disposal. Together, we can help the most vulnerable, prevent further crises, increase resilience to shocks and accelerate the rebuilding of our food systems. To build back better.

■ ■ ■



The slogans for Ozone Layer

- * Preserve the Ozone layer for human health
- * The Ozone layer, the UV blocker
- * Let's work together to improve the Ozone layer and climate
- * Let's preserve the Ozone layer to protect the living things under the Sun
- * Continue to protect the Ozone layer to reduce global warming
- * Save Ozone, save life
- * Save Ozone, make future cool

Environmental Conservation Department

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 14th September, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over Westcentral Bay of Bengal and adjoining North Andhra Pradesh coast(India) still persists. Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 15th September, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Magway Region, scattered in Mandalay Region, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Bago and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine, Kayah and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15th September, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15th September, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15th September, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Lahu National Development Party presents its policy, stance and work programmes

Lahu National Development Party central executive committee member U Kya Soe presented party's policy, stance and work programmes through radio and TV on 14 September.



Greetings to all esteemed people

Let me first express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak about our party's policies, stance and work programmes.

My name is U Kya Soe, a central executive committee member of the Lahu National Development Party. I will first explain about our party's policies and stance.

Our policies and stance are as follow:

Our party believes that the implementation of a genuine democratic federal union is the only way for the ethnic groups in Myanmar to turn it into a modern developed nation.

The Lahu National Development Party was formed to gather the strength of the different ethnic, national races living in Lahu areas and unite them in the road to establishing a modern and developed democratic federal union.

In our native tongue, our party is called "Lahu Chaw Ceu Ul La Muh La Tu Party" and Lahu National Development Party in English.

I will now explain our party's flag. Our flag measures 5 feet by 2.5 feet with a white equilateral triangle in the front and the background divided in half into red and marine blue. Inside the triangle is a white backdrop with two traditional Lahu flutes crossed with each other. A maize crop grows out from the flutes' intersection and is topped with a red star.

The symbols have various meanings. The colour

white represents purity, honesty, integrity and loyalty. Red symbolizes courage, enthusiasm and discipline. Marine blue represents tranquillity, peace, peace and unity.

The triangle represents the Lahu people's reverence to their religion, nationalism and love of their country. The traditional flute represents the emphasis we place on our culture, traditions and unity. When we play that flute at any auspicious celebration, there will be dancing and honouring in unity and harmony. The maize represents our traditional livelihood in agriculture and development. The red star represents all of the Lahu people.

In our party's seal, we have written the party's name in Myanmar language on the top half and Lahu language on the lower half, with a star separating the two languages on each end. In the middle are two traditional Lahu flutes crossed with each other and ripe maize growing from the intersection with a star on top. LNDP is written just below the flutes.

Our party's objectives are:

- We will ensure national sovereignty perpetuates throughout the country's border. We will ensure ethnic solidarity lasts, and independence continues in line with democratic practices.
- We will preserve and develop Lahu literature, culture, customs and traditions, and art.
 - We will ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, the rule of law, and political and economic campaigns in the region.
 - We will work hard to improve the living standard of the entire population, including the livelihood and living conditions of the Lahu people who have lagged in development for all-era generations.
 - We will acquire valuable experiences and methods from developed nations and implement them in our own national and regional development.

I will now explain our party's action plans for the future:

1. We will develop the people of Lahu regions and the rest of Myanmar to be more conscious politically, economically and socially. We will campaign to raise the integrity of our political party.

2. We will work for the rights of ethnic groups and regional development. We will eliminate terrorism that brings devastation to all people and guide the way to finding solutions within the legal framework and in line with fair and peaceful democratic practices.
3. We will interact with other political parties that share a common objective, stance, ideology and opinion as equals and cooperate and help each other as necessary.
4. We will practically eliminate the opium trade, which brings harm to everyone, that has been the primary source of income for generations and replace it with agriculture, livestock rearing, and extracting natural resources which can be exported locally and internationally. We will acquire the experts and professionals and the investments necessary to achieve this goal.
5. We will practice free and active political policies for peaceful coexistence with the rest of the world.
6. We will nurture and develop Lahu literature, culture, customs and traditions, and art as it becomes more progressive.
7. We will expand infrastructure construction to allow easy access between regions. We will work from free healthcare for all people regardless of their level of income. We will ensure inclusive access to education.

In conclusion, the traditional Lahu flute is the symbol of our Lahu National Development Party which will be competing in the General Elections on 8 November 2020. It represents the unity of the entire Lahu group. We urge the Lahu people to be united and implore you to vote for us for establishing a democratic federal union, ethnic equality and regional development.



Campaign speeches of Union Solidarity and Development Party, Ethnic National Development Party and Ka Man National Development Party to be broadcast on 15 Sept, published on 16 Sept

CAMPAIGN speeches of Union Solidarity and Development Party, Ethnic National Development Party(ENDP) and Ka Man National Development Party for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanma Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 15 September; and will be published in the state-owned newspapers— the Myanma Alinn, the Mirror and the Global New Light of Myanmar—on 16 September.—MNA

Section 58 (d) in Hluttaw Election Law

IN accordance with section 58 (d) of the Hluttaw Election Law, no one is allowed to give speeches at meetings, instigation, writing, distribution of using posters or attempting by other means to disturb the voting or election. Anyone who is found guilty of or abet 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.



Elections are the root for development of democracy.

National Democratic Party for Development presents its policy, stance and work programmes

National Democratic Party for Development Chairman U Hla Thein presented party's policy, stance and work programmes through radio and TV on 14 September.



Esteemed voters and admirers of democracy
Greetings to you all

I am the Chairman of the National Democratic Party for Development, U Hla Thein. Our nation is composed of different ethnicities and religions. Just as every citizen has shared ownership of the country, they each have the responsibility to ensure independence is not lost and the nation does not head towards dissolution. Every citizen is born with full human rights, and everyone wishes for a democratic country ruled by public authority.

Esteemed people

The majority of nations around the world value democracy and are heading towards a system of democracy. Still, there are both developed nations and those that are not as developed as they should be. Some of the underlying reasons for that are a lack of comprehensiveness in the formation of the democratic system, inadequate capabilities of participating leaders, ignoring the wishes of the public, and emulating the systems of other nations without adapting them to suit regional requirements.

Our party believes only a genuine democratic system that guarantees full human rights in line with the interests of all levels of society is capable of establishing a new democratic nation.

Our party's objectives are:

- 1. To establish a democratic government that protects the eternal sovereignty of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
- 2. To establish national reconciliation inclusive of all ethnicities, religions, genders and social background.
- 3. To acquire unattached assistance from developed nations for the future of our nation's development.
- 4. To ensure all workers have improved living standards, sufficient wages corresponding to their skills, are employed for the right job and receive their full rights.
- 5. To implement economic policies and action plans that will lower commodity prices and relieve the public.
- 6. To discover and extract natural resources across the country with assistance from modern industrial nations.
- 7. To prioritize internal peace to end conflicts and terrorism within the nation.
- 8. To construct a national security and defence system that incorporates the rule of law.

Our party aims to build a nation with nothing

short of genuine democracy that guarantees full fundamental human rights which ties in with the interests of all levels of society.

The main requirements of the nation:

- 1. Freedom to practice any religion or faith.
- 2. Equal opportunities in legal settings.
- 3. Freedom to choose careers.
- 4. Fair and legal rights of citizenship.
- 5. Having equal rights, eliminating unfair and oppressive laws, and equal opportunities in education.
- 6. Freedom in elections.
- 7. Ensuring full-time electricity for urban and rural areas, instrumental for national development, and promoting small industrial businesses.
- 8. Ensuring state-funded healthcare for all ethnicities and citizens.
- 9. Providing free education from basic to the high school level. Ensuring there are sufficient educational materials, furniture, buildings, scientific and technological equipment, laboratory apparatuses, and teachers.

I will now explain our party's stance on economic activities. We must accept a free market economy as the national economic policy. We will effectively support individual development for all citizens. We need to implement an economic policy that attracts a multitude of foreign companies and entrepreneurs to invest in Myanmar. We will arrange for opportunities to work abroad to attract foreign revenue and partially resolve unemployment issues. Establishing industrial businesses based on the regional production force will ensure balanced development for the entire nation.

Our party policy focuses on utilizing private businesses as the main driving force. We need individuals who will establish and grow their own businesses. We need youths who will be working in these economic structures to procure raw materials, produce finished products, distribute high-quality finished products abroad, and establish joint ventures with foreign companies in factories and companies in line with Myanmar's economic policy law. We have experienced professionals from the economic sector in leadership roles.

We need to regularly welcome foreign investments as long as they do not interfere with national sovereignty and economic policy and form joint ventures with state-owned or private businesses. National economic development requires experts in the economic sector to be leaders.

Esteemed people

Myanmar is home to a multitude of ethnic groups and different religions, and we need to establish a genuine union that guarantees equal rights for each citizen in the nation and cooperates with no discrimination between the other regions.

Our country has lagged for several decades, and we are still trying to overcome that situation while establishing a genuine democratic federal union. Solidarity is based on unique differences and requires mutual recognition, respect, sympathy and peaceful coexistence. Solidarity is the foundation for peace and development.

We need to closely follow the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure national peace and prosperity, unity and full human rights. The three pillars of government being the legislative, executive and judiciary authorities need to be given detailed and separate

authority in line with the Constitution. The judiciary must be completely free from the influence of the executive branch.

There needs to be political stability for the nation to grow its economy. Just as political stability is essential for economic development, the same is true the other way around. The internal conflicts and violence that have been raging on for over 70 years are a hindrance to economic development and need to be quelled. A democratically elected government needs to strive for internal peace and create a positive environment for future generations.

Peace is essential for democratic transition and establishing a federal union. We need to simultaneously work hard for national reconciliation, which we have yet to achieve, and the union peace process. We will exert our best efforts in our nation's future trajectory to pass on a heritage of peace to the next generation.

There will be differences in social standards based on individual skills, capabilities and perseverance. But there must be equal inherited rights and fundamental human rights among all people. There may be differences in the level of income in the democratic process, but there should be no difference in fundamental human rights between a national leader and a farmer. We must respect every individual's rights.

Esteemed people

In conclusion, the objectives and aspirations of our National Democratic Party for Development aims for modernization and development of Myanmar and formation of a Republic of the Union of Myanmar based on genuine democracy through united cooperation of all citizens. We believe the upcoming elections will be free and fair and rightfully reflect the will of the public.

The Constitution stipulates that national sovereignty stems from its citizens and perpetuates across the entire nation. Thus the original owners of national sovereignty are the people themselves. The people elect representatives from among themselves to exercise the authorities related to the legislative, executive and judiciary powers on their behalf. This is the essence of democracy. Voting for your representative of choice is a civil right and civic duty. We need to utilize the value of a single ballot properly.

We have chosen the book and the pen as the symbols of our party. They represent the education sector which is essential for national development and foundational for modern development.

May you be able to use your single ballot to elect the Hluttaw representatives who will implement democracy and human rights for the nation. Vote for the book and the pen to create experts and professionals from within the country.

We wish good health and happiness for all members of the Union.



Oct, Nov to be ‘tougher’ with more coronavirus deaths: WHO Europe



Pedestrians wearing protective face masks due to the COVID-19 disease caused by the novel coronavirus, walk in a street of Bordeaux, southwestern France, on 14 September 2020. PHOTO: AFP

COPENHAGEN (Denmark) — The World Health Organization expects Europe to see a rise in the daily number of Covid-19 deaths in October and November, the head of the body’s European branch told AFP.

Cases in Europe have risen sharply in recent weeks, especially in Spain and France. More than 51,000 new cases were reported on Friday alone in the 55 countries monitored

by WHO Europe, which is more than the highest peak in April, according to the organization.

“It’s going to get tougher. In October, November, we are going to see more mortality,” WHO Europe director Hans Kluge said.

Even though the continent is experiencing a surge of cases, the number of deaths has remained relatively stable. But the resurgence is expected to lead to an increase in daily fatalities, the WHO said.

“It’s a moment where countries don’t want to hear this bad news, and I understand,” Kluge told AFP in an interview, stressing that he wanted to send the “positive message” that the pandemic “is going to finish, at one moment or another.”

The WHO Europe’s over 50 member states are holding an online meeting on Monday and Tuesday to discuss their response to the new coronavirus and agree on their overall five-year strategy.

However Kluge, based in Copenhagen, issued a warning to those who believe that the development of a vaccine will end the pandemic.

“I hear the whole time: ‘the vaccine is going to be the end of the pandemic’. Of course not!,” the Belgian said. —AFP ■

Israel announces 3-week nationwide coronavirus lockdown

JERUSALEM — Israel’s government announced Saturday it would impose a three-week nationwide lockdown in an effort to stem one of the world’s highest novel coronavirus infection rates after a surge in cases.

The lockdown order, set to go into effect on Friday, makes Israel the first developed economy to take such a drastic measure to curb a “second wave” of virus infections.

Israel had initially been widely praised for curbing the spread of the Covid-19 disease by imposing a stringent lockdown in March, but it is now second only to Bahrain for the world’s highest coronavirus infection rate per capita, according to an AFP tally.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the government decision in a televised statement, saying the cabinet had agreed “a strict (lockdown) plan for three weeks, with an option that it will be extended”.

“Our goal is to stop the increase, to reduce the contagion,” which has crossed the threshold of 4,000 new cases a day, he added.—AFP ■

Dozens arrested at Melbourne anti-lockdown protest

MELBOURNE (Australia) — Authorities in Melbourne arrested more than 70 people for flouting stay-at-home orders to protest against lockdown restrictions Sunday, with some demonstrators clashing with riot police at a market in the city.

About 250 people attended the illegal protest — the second in as many days in the city — promoted by coronavirus conspiracy groups on social media.

The demonstrators ignored official warnings and public health orders to gather at the central Queen Victoria market, calling for an end to a weeks-long lockdown of Australia’s second-biggest city. They were met by a heavy police presence, with scuffles breaking out as the riot squad swept through market’s fruit and vegetable aisles.—AFP ■

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Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (005N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-9-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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.
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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICTY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(7/2020-2021)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-115(20-21)	Assorted Sizes for Float Shoes & Float Collars (2) Groups	Ks
(b)	DMP/L-116(20-21)	Flexable Wire Rope & Drilling Lines (9) Items	Ks
(c)	DMP/L-117(20-21)	Drawwork Spares for All Rigs (6) Groups	Ks
(d)	DMP/L-118(20-21)	Spares for All Rigs (8) Groups	Ks
(e)	DMP/L-119(20-21)	Spares for Drilling Rigs Equipment (6) Groups	Ks
(f)	DMP/L-120(20-21)	Sucker Rod & Pony Rod (2) Groups	Ks
(g)	DMP/L-121(20-21)	Magna Dewax, Wildcat 441, Demulsifier, Greenzyme (4) Items	Ks
(h)	DMP/L-122(20-21)	Spares for L-Type & ZW-Type Dispenser (6) Items	Ks
(i)	DMP/L-123(20-21)	Spares for Safe Dispenser (8) Items	Ks
(j)	DMP/L-124(20-21)	Spares for IMW Dispenser (6) Items	Ks
(k)	DMP/L-125(20-21)	Assorted Sizes of Tyres & Battery (21) Items	Ks
(l)	DMP/L-126(20-21)	Chemicals (8) Items	Ks
(m)	DMP/L-127(20-21)	Spares for Volvo Tractor (54) Items	Ks
(n)	DMP/L-128(20-21)	Spares for Kenworth Oil Field Truck (49) Items	Ks
(o)	DMP/L-129(20-21)	Spares for Cat D3406 DI Engine Ex Pacific Oil Field Truck (50) Items	Ks
(p)	DMP/L-130(20-21)	Spares for MI-2 Dozer (102) Items	Ks
(q)	DMP/L-131(20-21)	Spares for NAT C 245-125 FH Torque Convertor (21) Items	Ks
(r)	DMP/L-132(20-21)	Spares for GM 6V-71 Engine Ex Cooper Well Servicing Truck (39) Items	Ks
(s)	DMP/L-133(20-21)	Spares for Mitsubishi S6N Rig Pump Engine (36) Items	Ks
(t)	DMP/L-134(20-21)	Spares for NAT C 300-100 FH Torque Convertor (21) Items	Ks
(u)	DMP/L-135(20-21)	Spares for F 1600 Rig Pump Ex ZJ 70L Drilling Rig (25) Items	Ks
(v)	DMP/L-136(20-21)	Spares for 3NB 1300C Rig Pump Ex ZJ 50D Drilling Rig (25) Items	Ks
(w)	DMP/L-137(20-21)	Spares for K 700 A Rig Pump and FA 1600 Rig Pump (2) Groups	Ks
(x)	DMP/L-138(20-21)	Industrial Raw Materials (4) Groups	Ks
(y)	DMP/L-139(20-21)	Class 'G' Cement (2,000) Tons	Ks
(z)	DMP/L-140(20-21)	Spares for Cementing Unit (2) Groups	Ks
(aa)	DMP/L-141(20-21)	Spares for Air Compressor (2) Groups	Ks
(ab)	DMP/L-142(20-21)	Spares for GM 6V-53 Engine Ex Cooper Well Servicing Truck (43) Items	Ks
(ac)	DMP/L-143(20-21)	Spares for Doosan Gas Engine (11) Items	Ks
(ad)	DMP/L-144(20-21)	Spares for CAT-D3306 DI Engine Ex KB-150 Well Servicing Truck (42) Items	Ks
(ae)	DMP/L-145(20-21)	Electrical Spares for Mann / TSB Oil Field (2) Groups	Ks
(af)	DMP/L-146(20-21)	Electrical Spares for ZJ 70L Sr1 Rig (25) Items	Ks
(ag)	DMP/L-147(20-21)	3 Ton & 1.5 Ton Battery Type for Forklift (2) Items	Ks
(ah)	DMP/L-148(20-21)	ရွှေပြည်သာ(၂) CNG အရောင်းဆိုင်(၁၂၇) ရှိ 500 KVA Transformer အား 1000 KVA Transformer ဖြင့် ပြောင်းလဲ အစားထိုးခြင်းလုပ်ငန်း(၁) ခု	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **14 September 2020** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm on 14 October 2020**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **14-10-2020, 12:00 pm**

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US ambassador to China says he's retiring



(FILES) This file photo taken on January 10, 2019 shows US Ambassador to China Terry Branstad applauding at an event commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON (United States) — US ambassador to China Terry Branstad is stepping down, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced Monday, at a time of increasingly strained ties be-

tween the world's two biggest economies.

Thanking Branstad for his service, Pompeo said in a tweet that he had "contributed to re-balancing U.S.-China relations

so that it is results-oriented, reciprocal, and fair."

In a statement, the US embassy in Beijing confirmed the departure, saying Branstad was retiring and would leave Bei-

jing next month. It added that he had confirmed his decision to President Donald Trump by phone last week.

The 73-year-old had been in his post since May 2017.

"I am proudest of our work in getting the Phase One trade deal and delivering tangible results for our communities back home," the statement quoted him as saying.

It noted his work pushing Beijing to class the powerful opioid fentanyl as a controlled substance, making its sale to the United States subject to China's maximum legal penalty.

It did not give any details on who would take over at the embassy.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs -- while acknowledging Pompeo's tweet -- said it had not received notice of his resignation.

Branstad -- who previously served as governor of Iowa for more than 20 years across two spells -- has represented Washington in Beijing during a period when tensions with China were

heightened over trade, regional territorial claims, the coronavirus pandemic, and unrest in Hong Kong.

In June, he was summoned by Beijing after President Trump signed a law that paved the way for sanctions over Hong Kong, an action the foreign ministry slammed as "gross interference in China's internal affairs."

Last year, he called on Beijing to open a "substantive dialogue" with the Dalai Lama during a rare visit to Tibet, a region where the central government is accused of widespread repression.

An early supporter of Trump's run for the White House in 2016, Branstad was appointed soon after the election.

At the time, Trump's transition team praised his "tremendous understanding of China and Chinese people."

He was reported to have a long-standing relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, whom he first met in the 1980s. —AFP ■

Suspected Israeli strikes kill 10 pro-Iran fighters in Syria: monitor

BEIRUT (Lebanon) — Suspected Israeli air strikes in eastern Syria on Monday killed 10 pro-Iran fighters, most of them Iraqis, a war monitor said.

The raids against militant positions south of the town of Albu Kamal in DeirEzzor province took the lives of eight Iraqi and two Syrian combatants, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said the strikes, which also destroyed munition depots and vehicles, were "likely" carried out by Israel.

The Observatory has previously reported suspected Israeli air strikes on DeirEzzor, but these reports are rarely corroborated by Syrian state media or the Jewish state.

A US-led coalition is also present in the area after years of backing Kurdish forces in their fight against the Islamic State group. —AFP ■

TikTok rejects Microsoft offer, Oracle sole remaining bidder

NEW YORK (United States) — American tech giant Microsoft said Sunday its offer to buy TikTok was rejected, leaving Oracle as the sole remaining bidder ahead of the imminent deadline for the Chinese-owned video app to sell or shut down its US operations.

TikTok is at the centre of a diplomatic storm between Washington and Beijing, and President Donald Trump has set Americans a mid-September deadline to stop doing business with its Chinese parent company ByteDance -- effectively compelling a sale of the app to a US company.

The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times reported

that Oracle had won the bidding war, citing people familiar with the deal, although the company did not immediately confirm that to AFP.

But two Chinese state media outlets -- CGTN and China News Service -- said Monday that ByteDance will not sell TikTok to Oracle either, citing unnamed sources.

The Oracle bid would need approval from the White House and Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, a source told the Journal, with both parties under the belief it would meet US data security concerns.

Microsoft had indicated at the beginning of August that



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 27 August 2020, The TikTok logo is displayed outside a TikTok office on in Culver City, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

it was interested in acquiring TikTok's US operations, but an-

nounced Sunday that bid had been rejected. —AFP ■

Lukashenko to meet Putin for talks on 'integration'

MOSCOW (Russia) — Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Monday flew to Russia for one-to-one talks with his counterpart Vladimir Putin as Moscow has offered security aid while urging closer integration with its neighbour.

The talks are the first meet-

ing between the long-serving leaders and close allies since Lukashenko's disputed win in August 9 polls prompted mass protests against his rule, with tens of thousands taking part in the latest demonstration in Minsk on Sunday.

Lukashenko arrived in the Black Sea resort of Sochi,

where Putin has a residence, making his first foreign trip since the election.

He smiled as he stepped down from his plane in a short-sleeved shirt into the bright sunshine, not wearing a face-mask.

A reporter for Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid, Dmitry

Smirnov, wrote that Lukashenko who "hasn't particularly accepted the threat of coronavirus" nevertheless had to undergo anti-virus measures before the meeting.

The leaders were expected to hold a televised press conference after their talks. —AFP ■

Suga elected as successor to Japan PM Abe in party vote

TOKYO — Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, the right-hand man of outgoing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, was elected as the new president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Monday, setting him firmly on course to become the country’s next leader later this week.

In a vote at a meeting of LDP lawmakers of both chambers of parliament, Suga, who has pledged to carry on Abe’s policies, secured a comfortable victory over his two rivals -- Shigeru Ishiba, a former defence minister, and Fumio Kishida, a former foreign minister. A majority of the LDP’s factions gave the top government spokesman their backing after Abe said last month he would step down for health reasons.

Suga received 377 votes, Kishida 89, and Ishiba 68.

Calling the spread of the novel coronavirus a national crisis, Suga said, “We must inherit and promote the efforts that Prime Minister Abe has made so that people can overcome the crisis and live a safe and stable life.”

Suga also said he will proceed with government reforms and deregulation in Japan. “I’ll create a Cabinet that works for people,” he said.

Suga’s election as prime minister at an extraordinary Diet session on Wednesday is almost certain as the governing party controls the House of Representatives, the more powerful lower chamber, and holds a majority in the House of Councillors with its coalition partner Komeito.

The LDP election became a mere formality for endorsing the party factions’ decisions to back Suga, 71.

A total of 394 ballots were given to LDP lawmakers and 141 to delegates of local chapters, while the party’s rank-and-file members were excluded from the vote this time to speed up the process amid the coronavirus pandemic. Suga secured his win among the local chapters’ votes as well after most of them held primaries, with each chapter deciding whether to give all three allotted ballots to a single candidate or to multiple candidates in proportion to primary results.



Outgoing Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga pose for a photo after the Liberal Democratic Party’s presidential election to choose Abe’s successor in Tokyo on 14 September 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

The election was prompted by Abe’s announcement on Aug. 28 that he would step down due to a relapse of an intestinal disease called ulcerative colitis,

just days after he became the longest-serving prime minister in the country’s history in terms of consecutive days in office. —Kyodo News ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Singapore makes contact tracing devices available to all residents

SINGAPORE — Singapore on Monday began distributing contact tracing devices to all residents who want them to beef up the city-state’s ability to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The pager-like wearable electronic device, dubbed the TraceTogether token, complements the contact tracing smartphone app the government made available for download earlier this year but whose use among the public has so far been limited. — Kyodo News ■

Japan bans imports of German pork after swine fever case

TOKYO (Japan) — Japan has suspended imports of pork and live pigs from Germany, an agricultural ministry official said Monday, after the European country confirmed its first case of African swine fever.

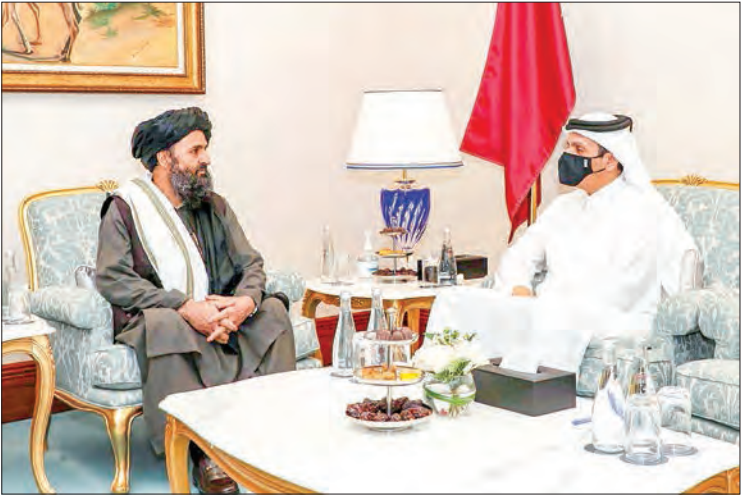
Tokyo imposed the suspension last Friday, a day after Berlin said scientists detected swine fever in a dead wild boar in the eastern state of Brandenburg. — AFP ■

Heavily indebted Thai Airways gets court nod for restructuring

BANGKOK (Thailand) — A Thailand court on Monday approved the restructuring of Thai Airways, which is billions of dollars in debt and struggling to survive the coronavirus tourism crash.

The global aviation sector was plunged into crisis by the pandemic as countries severely restricted travel, forcing airlines to ground vast numbers of planes and seek government help as they haemorrhaged cash. —AFP ■

Afghan government mounts pressure on Taliban for truce



A handout picture released by the Qatar News Agency (QNA) on 12 September 2020 shows Qatar’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani(R) meeting with Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the Afghan negotiations. **PHOTO: AFP**

DOHA (Qatar) — The Afghan government ratcheted up pres-

sure for a truce with the Taliban on Monday, reiterating calls for

a long-term ceasefire at talks in Qatar.

The two sides are in the early stages of meetings in the capital Doha in an effort to hammer out a deal bringing to a close 19 years of bloodshed in Afghanistan.

A slick opening ceremony on Saturday saw the Afghan government and allies, including the US, call for a ceasefire.

But the Taliban, who fought a year-long guerrilla campaign against American and Afghan forces after they were forced from power in a 2001 US-led invasion, did not mention a truce as they came to the negotiating table. Afghan presidential spokesman Sediq Seddiqi tweeted Monday that the presence of

government negotiators at the talks “is aimed at achieving a ceasefire, ending the violence and ensuring lasting peace and stability in the country.”

The head of the peace process for the Afghan government, Abdullah Abdullah, had earlier suggested the Taliban could offer a ceasefire in exchange for the release of more of their jailed fighters.

Schedules and a code of conduct for the talks were discussed in meetings on Sunday, according to both sides, but talks on substantive issues are yet to get underway. Delegates warned negotiations, which take place even as fighting continues in Afghanistan, would be arduous and messy.—AFP ■

South Korean sex slave campaigner charged with embezzlement

SEOUL (South Korea) — An activist-turned-MP has been indicted for embezzling more than 100 million won donated to help elderly victims used by Japan as wartime sex slaves, South Korean officials said Monday.

Youn Mee-hyang spent

more than 100 million won (\$85,000) intended for so-called “comfort women” -- a euphemism for women abused by Japan during WWII -- “for personal use without expenditure statements,” prosecutors said.

The misuse happened over a period of nine years, they said,

but did not elaborate further.

Media reports have alleged Youn embezzled funds to buy apartments and to pay for her daughters’ tuition in the United States.

The scandal first emerged in May when Lee Yong-soo, a prominent 91-year-old survivor,

accused the group and its former leader of exploiting comfort women to collect government funds and public donations.

A thorny issue between Seoul and Tokyo for decades, the activist group has campaigned for compensation and an apology from Japan.—AFP ■

Iran says AFC tournament TV rights cut due to 'sanctions'

TEHRAN (Iran) — Iran has said that the Asian Football Confederation has cancelled television broadcasting rights of the regional champions' league to the Islamic republic, seemingly over US sanctions against it.

Iran's football federation said Sunday the AFC had written to it cancelling the contract "due to international sanctions."

The AFC "also cannot provide the live signal for the group stage of the Asian Champions' League," Iran's official body said.

Iran's federation has written to the AFC in protest.

Iran has "sent its representatives to the Asian Champions' League and therefore expects the AFC to prepare the necessary framework for live broadcast of the matches ... so that millions of fans in Iran can watch," the federation said.

The United States withdrew from a landmark nuclear agreement with Iran in 2018

and reimposed harsh unilateral sanctions, targeting key oil and banking sectors.

The AFC has not yet officially commented on the matter.

The continent's showpiece club tournament — put on hold since March due to the novel coronavirus pandemic — is set to resume on Monday in Qatar.

Four Iranian clubs, including Persepolis, Esteghlal, Shahr Khodro and Sepahan, represent Iran in the tournament.

Shahr Khodro is set to play the United Arab Emirates-based Al Ahli later Monday.

Esteghlal was also scheduled to play the UAE's Al Wahda.

However, the Emirati side said they cannot travel after a number of their club members tested positive for the Covid-19 virus.

On Tuesday, Persepolis and Al Taawoun, as well as Sepahan and Al Nassr, are due to play.—AFP ■

MPT MNL Week-16 matches to be played on 15, 16 September

THE Myanmar National League (MNL) released its MPT MNL Week-16 Fixture that will take place on 15 and 16 September 2020, according to the league's social media yesterday.

On 15 September, Rakhine United will play against Hantharwady United at the Padonmar Stadium; Yadanarbon FC will take on Southern Myanmar FC at the Yangon United Sports Complex; Ayeyawady United FC and Sagaing United FC will play at the Thuwunna Stadium.

On 16 September, Shan United FC will take on Yangon United FC at the Thuwunna Stadium; Magwe FC and I.S.P.S FC will meet at the Yangon United Sports Complex.

All of the matches will be played behind closed doors at 3:30 pm of respective dates. MyCujoo Facebook Page will broadcast live all the matches.

After Week-15, Ayeyawady United is standing at the top of the standing table with 33 points from 10 wins, three draws and no loss, followed by Hantharwady United in the second place with the same points from 11 wins and two losses.

Yangon United is in third



Yadanarbon FC and Southern Myanmar FC will meet in Week-16 of MPT MNL 2020 at the Yangon United Sports Complex on 15 September 2020. **PHOTO: MNL**

place with 29 points, Shan United in the fourth place with the same points, followed by Rakhine United in the fifth place with 17 points.

Yadanarbon FC is in the sixth place with 13 points, Sagaing United is in the seventh

place with 10 points, I.S.P.E is in the eighth place with eight points, Magwe FC is in the ninth position with seven points.

At present, Southern Myanmar FC is at the bottom of the standing table with four points.—Kyaw Khin ■

Thiem beats Zverev to win US Open for first Grand Slam title



Austria's Dominic Thiem hits the ball during a quarter-final match against Italy's Gianluca Mager during the ATP World Tour Rio Open 2020 tournament, Jockey Club in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in the early hours of 22 February 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW YORK (United States)— Dominic Thiem produced a historic comeback to beat Alexander Zverev in a nervy five-setter and win the US Open on Sunday for

his first Grand Slam title.

The second seeded Austrian beat the fifth seed 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) in 4hr 2min inside a near-empty Arthur Ashe Sta-

dium. It marked the first time in the US Open's Open era history that a player had recovered from losing the opening two sets to win the title.

It was also the first time the final had been settled by a tie-break.

"I wish we could have two winners today. I think we both deserved it," said Thiem.

The title is the 27-year-old Thiem's maiden Grand Slam trophy after three previous defeats in finals of tennis majors.

Thiem was runner-up at the Australian Open earlier this year and also lost in the last-two show-downs at the French Open in 2018 and 2019.

He also becomes the first new Grand Slam champion since Croatian Marin Cilic won at Flushing Meadows in 2014.

Thiem is also the first Grand Slam champion other than Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer since Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka won the third of his majors at the 2016 US Open.

"I achieved a life goal, a dream of myself, which I had for many, many years," said Thiem.

Zverev, 23, smashed four aces and 16 winners in the first set as he displayed an impressive serve and volley game to take a 1-0 lead in just 30 minutes.

The German was helped by some sloppy serving from Thiem, who hit three double faults as he was broken twice, in games three and seven.

In set two, Zverev wasted three set points while 5-1 up but held on to take a 2-0 lead on his fifth set point.

The tide was beginning to

turn though as Zverev's play became increasingly cagey as his suspect second serve got slower and his forehand, another weakness, became more defensive.

'Tough battle'

After Thiem took set four, Zverev found himself serving for the championship at 5-3 in the fifth set.

But he could not hold and soon Thiem found himself 6-5 ahead. He took a medical timeout before it was his turn to serve for the championship.

However, like Zverev moments earlier, Thiem failed to clinch the match and it went to a tie-break. He found himself 5-3 up after two double faults by Zverev but Thiem, by now exhausted and limping, blew two championship points.—AFP ■