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Friday, 15 May 2020

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Public announcement of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

8th Waning of Kasone, 1382 ME
14 May 2020

1. The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The Office

of the President made a public announcement, while the Union ministries, Nay Pyi Taw Council and Region/State governments issued orders,

directives and announcements respectively to prevent and control the spread of this disease in Myanmar.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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

8th Waning of Kasone, 1382 ME
14 May 2020

It is announced that the statements to public, orders, notifications, and directives of Union-level organizations and Union ministries effective until

15 May 2020 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) will be extended to 31 May 2020 as it is required to con-

tinue containment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).



Govt COVID-19 committee holds meeting with PNLO

THE national coordination committee for negotiating COVID-19 measures with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) held an online video conference with the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) yesterday.

The committee held the meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) office on Shweli Road, Yangon, and focused on preparations and cooperation regarding COVID-19.

Joining the meeting on the government's side were committee Chairman Dr Tin Myo Win, Vice-Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Khin Zaw Oo and committee members and they were joined by invited guests, PNLO Vice-Chairman Khun Myint Tun and his group of representatives.

Dr Tin Myo Win delivered the opening speech and discussions with PNLO commenced based on the 7 agreements discussed with the 10 NCA-S EAOs.



National Coordination Committee for negotiating COVID-19 measures with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) holds an online video conference with the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) yesterday. **PHOTO: POE HTAUNG**

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ASEAN labour ministers discuss response to impacts on employment sector amid COVID-19

LABOUR ministers of ASEAN countries held a meeting yesterday through video conferencing to discuss responses to impacts of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on employees and employments in the member countries.

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Human Resources in Malaysia. Myanmar's Union Minister U Thein Swe and senior officers joined the meeting, together with the labour ministers and high-ranking officials from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Secretary-General of ASEAN Mr Dato Lim Jock Hoi and ILO Director-General Mr Guy Ryder also discussed at the meeting.

The Secretary-General talked about impacts of COVID-19 on public health, economy, trade and tourism sectors



Labour Ministers from ASEAN countries hold the meeting yesterday through video conferencing to discuss responses to impacts of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on employees and employments in the member countries. PHOTO: MNA

of member countries, ILO's response survey on the pandemic and the post pandemic recovery plan of International Labour Organization.

Union Minister U Thein Swe discussed Myanmar government's assistance to the labour and private sectors, awareness programmes, quarantine centres, discount of electricity

bill in April and food supplies to the families without regular incomes.

After the discussions of ASEAN members, the ILO's director-general explained plans of his organization to help with the recovery plans in the prioritized areas of economic and financial sectors, supports for recovery of regular incomes, healthcare ser-

VICES for employees and finding solutions in adopting effective policies.

The meeting also agreed on ensuring livelihood, health and other rights for the labourers in high risky jobs, healthcare services for the disease infected workers without discrimination, healthcare for workers from their host countries, protection

them from the impacts of pandemic, adopting effective and responsive policy for labour market at national and regional levels and sharing the results from researches for post pandemic and recovery plan among employers, state social organizations, international organizations and relevant stakeholders.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

ROK ambassador hands over 2,000 sets of PPE to MoHS



Director-General Dr Zaw Than Tun receives the donation of PPE sets for the Ministry of Health and Sports from the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. PHOTO: MNA

THE Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar presented 2,000 sets of personal protective equipment worth about US\$44,000 to the Ministry

of Health and Sports yesterday.

Director-General Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun from the Department of Medical Research re-

ceived the items donated by the Hyundai Motor and the Shwe Daehan Motors.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports Order No.50/2020

8th Waning of Kasone, 1382 ME
14 May 2020

The Ministry of Health and Sports is issuing this order in line with provisions stated under Article 21-(b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is implementing preparatory measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in a timely manner and has announced 10 townships in Yangon Region and 1 township in Sagaing Region are inclusive in the "Stay at Home" programme.

2. The following observations have been made at the aforementioned townships during the "Stay at Home" programme:

- (a) There has been no additional COVID-19 cases in the last 21 days.
- (b) There have been no incident of mass transmission of the virus from persons with positive cases.
- (c) Relevant departments, organizations and the public have closely adhered to awareness raising programmes during the "Stay at Home" programme.
- (d) Lab specimens of all possible persons to have been in close proximity to confirmed cases have been tested and tested negative in the last 21 days.
- (e) Active participation observed on part of township administrative bodies, health department officials, affiliated departments and organizations, volunteer groups, and the public in virus prevention and containment processes.

3. Upon reviewing the virus transmission rates and epidemiological data, the following townships in Yangon Region and Sagaing Region are found to have complied with all facts outlined in the section (2). Thus, these townships have been removed from the "Stay at Home" programme effective at 4:00 am on 15-5-2020:

- (a) Shwepyitha Township
- (b) Hlinethaya Township
- (c) Mingaladon Township
- (d) Botahtaung Township
- (e) Kalay Township

Dr Myint Htwe
Union Minister

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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“People are the key”

Public announcement of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

FROM PAGE-1

2. Due to the collaborative efforts and effective coordination of the Union Government, Union ministries, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State governments and the people in protection, control and prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it has been observed at this time that the disease has been contained to a certain

extent, therefore the orders and directives are being relaxed step by step including the relaxation of the “stay at home” restrictions in the five townships in States/Regions and the Nay Pyi Taw Area.

3. However, as we cannot assume that the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been brought fully under control, the people

are requested and advised to strictly follow the directives of the Ministry of Health and Sports in relation to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) prevention, containment, and control, with full health awareness and alertness to health dangers.

*Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor*

Govt COVID-19 committee holds meeting with PNLO

FROM PAGE-1

The PNLO vice-chairman said the meeting discussed regional cooperation for protecting against and containing COVID-19. He said they discussed technical assistance, forming quarantine centres, and cooperating on investigating for suspected COVID-19 cases.

The PNLO held a meeting with the Shan State Department of Health on 11 May for detailed discussions regarding COVID-19.

Peace Commission advisory board member U Hla Maung Shwe said the meeting discussed the lack of a designated testing facility in the PNLO region and work was divided among three zones. He said they also discovered there were no armed or uniformed personnel and the PNLO said they have talked cooperation with Shan State Health



National Coordination Committee for negotiating COVID-19 measures with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) holds an online video conference with the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) yesterday. **PHOTO: POE HTAUNG**

Department and other state departments.

The EAOs COVID-19 coordination committee and PNLO

also discussed the basic necessities of residents and rehabilitation plans for after the pandemic period.

U Hla Maung Shwe said trust was increased on both sides during the meeting. He said they discussed the govern-

ment coordination committee's processes and are prepared for cooperation on COVID-19 and future endeavours.

PNLO will cooperate with Shan State Health Department in handling locals returning from abroad.

Vice-Chairman Khun Myint Tun said they have arranged for suspected COVID-19 cases to be put under quarantine in the closest townships possible and to cooperate with the Shan State Health Department, with detailed discussions underway. He thanked the government for forming a committee to coordinate COVID-19 measures with EAOs. He said this form of cooperation will support the overall peace process. The COVID-19 coordination committee will hold a similar online video conference with Chin National Front on 15 May. — Ye Gaung Nyunt (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Myanmar air travel ban extended to end of May

THE period for Temporary Measures to Prevent Importation of COVID-19 to Myanmar through Air Travel has been extended to 31-5-2020, 11:59 pm Myanmar Standard Time, with permission from the National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.

The temporary measures, issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, were first imposed on 29-3-2020 and extended once to 15-5-2020 before.

*Ministry of Transport and Communications
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Nay Pyi Taw Council Order No. 51/2020

8th Waning of Kasone, 1382 ME
14 May 2020

Public Announcement for Prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

1. The Nay Pyi Taw Council has issued Order No. 40/2020 dated on 26 April 2020 to suspend all the events and entertainments of public and private organizations with a large number of audiences, as well as cinemas, private dormitories and nursery schools, in Union Territory Nay Pyi Taw till 15 May 2020 to prevent Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).
2. This order will be extended to 31 May 2020.

*Sd/
Dr Myo Aung
Chairman
Nay Pyi Taw Council*

MoSWRR continues distribution of COVID-19 prevention supplies

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement distributed 1,054 bottles of hand gels, 4,217 bars of soap and 2 medical thermometers for 5 IDP camps and 2 temporary conflict relief centres in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State

Similarly, 5,281 bars of

soap and 2 medical thermometers were distributed to 2 IDP camps in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State.

The ministry also distributed 22,932 cloth masks, 118 surgical masks, 59 bottles of hand gel, 9 vinyl posters, a medical thermometer, 2 wash basins, and 320 bags of unslaked lime

to 12 IDP camps and 20 temporary conflict relief centres in Sittway and Buthidaung townships, Rakhine State.

The ministry continues to raise awareness on COVID-19 and provide support across the nation.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Staff from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement offers medical aids for COVID-19 prevention in Kyitkyina. PHOTO: MNA

No new case of COVID-19 at 8 pm on 14 May: Total figure remains at 181

Laboratory tests of the Department of Medical Research on 151 samples for COVID-19 showed NO new positive case on 14 May. There are a total of 181 confirmed cases in Myanmar up to 8:00 p.m. on 14 May.

FIVE old cases (Case 44, 55, 92, 95 and 127) were tested negative two consecutive times, and that a total of 84 persons have recovered up to 14 May. Among them, 71 persons have been discharged from the hospital and they will be kept isolation at the designated places. 6 positive patients have died until now.

There are a total of 82 new persons under investigation in the past 24 hours from 12 noon of 14 May.

COVID-19 Laboratory results at 8: 00 pm, 14 May 2020

Samples tested at Medical Research Department on 14 May	151
COVID-19(SARS-CoV-2)	0

COVID-19 Situation Report at 8 pm 14 May

	New	Total
Confirmed Cases	0	181
Recovered Cases	5	84
Death	0	6

Ministry of Health and Sports
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Low pressure area warning issued for preparatory measures

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has observed at 4:30 pm yesterday that the low pressure area over South-east Bay of Bengal might further intensify into a depression over South Bay of Bengal in 24 hours and a Cyclonic Storm during next 48 hours.

The low pressure was expected to move Northwest wards initially and then turned to North-Northeast wards towards North Bay of Bengal after 17 May, and then moved to the Bay of Bengal.

If the low pressure turned to North-Northeast after 17 May, it is forecasted to cross Bangladesh, middle area and northern part of Rakhine coastal areas.

According to the recent observation on the possible direction of storm to north and northeast wards after 17 May, it is expected to land middle and northern areas of Rakhine coastal areas and southern parts of Chin State on 19 May with the maximum wind speed of 100 mph and maximum inches of rain from 3 to 7,

under strong winds, heavy rain, flash floods, landslides and tidal floods in some coastal areas.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has also advised to the local people in both coastal and inland areas to make the following preventive measures:

(1) Safe shelters are required during the storm. However, it is better to make houses and buildings resist strong wind and heavy rain as people need to stay only at home amid COVID-19 outbreak.

(2) Emergency items, foods, water and important documents should be ready for urgent evacuation. Soaps, hand sanitizers and face masks are kept ready for COVID-19 prevention during evacuation.

(3) Torch, candles and lighters must be in hand, along with fully charged mobile phones.

(4) Gathering point must be set among the family members for possible separations in the disaster. Each family member must keep the contact phone number, name, ward/village, town and contact person.

Information and assistance are available at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement through the hotline numbers: 067 3404666 and 067 3404777.—MNA

(5) Those who are living, working or doing fishing businesses near the coastal areas must be alert to the storm and tidal wave.

(6) Inland areas may suffer indirect impacts of storms, with strong winds, heavy rain and thunderbolts.

(7) People living near mountain steams need to be aware of flash floods, and move to safer place, if necessary.

(8) Temporarily move to safer place to avoid soil erosion near rivers and creeks.

(9) Follow guidelines for COVID-19 either in nearby cyclone shelters or in specific place.

People need to closely monitor the situation of possible storm and follow the disaster management of authorities in emergency period.

Information and assistance are available at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement through the hotline numbers: 067 3404666 and 067 3404777.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Officials inspect GNLM for COVID-19 preventive measures

A joint team of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population inspected the office and workplace of the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) yesterday afternoon.

The team checked the workplaces of the GNLM in line with the guidelines and directives of both ministries concerning the prevention, control and treatment measures against coronavirus pandemic.—GNLM



Joint team inspects newsroom of the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper yesterday. PHOTO: KYAW ZEYA

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80,000 rice bags exported to China every week

By Nyein Nyein

ABOUT 80,000 rice bags are exported to China every week, with the certificates from China's food safety inspection mechanism — the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ), Vice-Chair U Min Thein of Muse Rice Depot told the Global New Light of Myanmar on 14 May.

At present, the traders export the rice to China through borders, with the new AQSIQ certificates from the Agriculture Department. A 50-kilogramme rice bag is priced 135-140 Yuan, he continued.

"Rice trade is steadily going with the new certificates. About 80,000 rice bags are weekly supplied to Muse crossing. They have been inspected and received Phytosanitary certificate before entering the border", he said.

Starting from 3 April, Myanmar's rice could not be sent to China without an AQSIQ cer-

tificate issued by the Agriculture Department. As a result of this, about 50,000 sacks are stranded in Muse warehouses, while about 100,000 rice bags are remained stuck in Kyalgaung area, for the lack of AQSIQ certificates.

The Agriculture Department has been testing about 50,000 rice sacks from warehouses in Muse, and they are soon to be certified, according to Muse rice depot.

However, rice stuck in Kyalgaung need to go back to Muse to seek a pest-free certificate for export, he stated.

"The inspection in Muse is undergoing. The officials cannot go and inspect the rice in Kyalgaung, so they have to return to Muse for inspection. The Agriculture Department cannot pass them without inspection", he added.

Earlier, China accepted the pest-free certificate issued at the Muse border as of 31 May. Now, they will allow the rice bags with the certificates issued only



Workers loading the truck with sacks of rice. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

by the Agriculture Department, according to Muse depot.

China must follow 10 facts embodied in Protocol on Plant Inspection and Quarantine Requirements for Exporting Rice from Myanmar to China, as per

MoU.

The rice sacks which are currently exported to China is a portion of the export quota for May (50,000 tonnes of rice through border trade)

During the coronavirus

pandemic, the Ministry of Commerce set to export 100,000 tonnes of rice through sea trade and 50,000 tonnes through border trade to external markets.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Exports cross \$10.7 bln as of 1 May

MYANMAR'S exports between 1 October and 1 May in the 2019-2020 financial year shot up to US\$10.7 billion from \$10.018 billion registered in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, according to the Ministry of Commerce data.

The figure reflects an increase of \$691.7 million compared with the year-ago period.

Of the seven export groups, agriculture, fisheries, minerals and other goods showed an in-

crease in exports. Meanwhile, exports of livestock, forest products and finished industrial goods declined.

Export values were registered at \$2.4 billion for agro products, \$60 million for livestock, \$570.28 million for fishery products, \$1.16 billion for minerals, \$95.6 million for forest products, \$5.6 billion for manufactured goods, and \$778 million for other goods.

The country's export sector

relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is dwindling.

The CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western countries. It can harm the export sector to a certain extent, the businesspersons pointed out.

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on export promotion in order to reduce the trade deficit. Since 2011, the Ministry of Commerce has adhered to its reform policy. A series of moves to liberalize and open the economy have been introduced through policy development to improve the trade environment. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Workers work at a fish factory in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

YRIC clears \$8 mln worth three foreign projects, creates over 1,800 jobs

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee, at a video conference held on 13 May, has approved three foreign projects from Thailand and China, with an estimated capital of US\$8.28 million.

The projects will create over 1,800 jobs. They will invest in the manufacturing sector on the CMP basis, according to the committee.

The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engaging in the production of pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis.

The investments in the regions are also flowing into the hotel services and other services sectors. To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the

Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in the region.

According to the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, and Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states receive only a small share of investments.

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

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITORAungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm**DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR**Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

SENIOR TRANSLATOR

Zaw Htet Oo

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORYe Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein,**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**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,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda 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
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Over 300 entrepreneurs granted loans in pandemic period

Staff giving service to the businessperson in applying for loans amid COVID-19. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE**

MORE than 300 entrepreneurs have been granted the business loans in coronavirus period, said UMFCCI general-secretary U Aye Win.

The government has provided K100 billion coronavirus funds to the businesses affected by the pandemic.

"The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared new coronavirus disease as a pandemic on 3 March. UMFCCI

coordinated with the relevant departments, the experts and Myanmar labour organizations to mitigate the coronavirus impact upon the economic sector. This being so, the government granted permission to provide K100 billion loans to the businesspersons. As of today, K13 billion loans have been provided to 300 businesses already," he added.

UMFCCI and its affiliated

associations from states and regions accepted the applications through online from 30 March to April to provide the loans. Now, the federation received a total of 4,258 application forms. Among them, the loans were provided to 85 businesses in the first batch, 113 businesses in the second batch and 111 businesses in the third batch. The remaining application forms are still being scrutinized. The federation will

complete the scrutinizing of the application forms at the end of May and provide the loans to the remaining businesses.

"We provide the loans with an aim for the businesses to carry out their operations as usual. We don't mean for them to extend or make more investment. Because of providing the loans, they can give the employee's salary and continue their businesses. At least, the employees can receive a three-month salary," he noted.

The loan applying businesses are mostly from the SME sector, the garment factories and the hotel businesses. Moreover, UMFCCI is still accepting the applications.

During the coronavirus period, some factories are faced with challenges to suspend their factories' operations for lack of raw materials. However, the government is encouraging the businesses to continue to operate their businesses in cooperation with the economic experts. — Myint Maung Soe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

People donate elephant feeds during pandemic period

People feeding elephants. The feeds were donated by well-wishers across Myanmar during the pandemic period. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN (NGATHAYOUK)**

PEOPLE from across the country donated the elephant feeds for Palin Kanthayar elephant camp, which was closed temporarily during the coronavirus pandemic period, said Daw Tin Lay Nwe, Forest Department head of Palin Kanthayar elephant camp. Palin

Kanthayar elephant camp was opened beside Ayeyawady River near Ah Nyunt Palin village, Nyaung U township, in Mandalay region.

A total of 22 elephant camps of Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE) under the Ministry of

Natural Resources and Environment Conservation were suspended starting from 25 March in order to prevent and control coronavirus. So, the elephants from the camps need the food. Although the elephant camps opened in the forest do not need

to worry about the food, the elephant camps opened near the tourism town need the food. So, the elephants are eating the food donated by the elephant lovers.

The elephant lover from Myingyan donated over 1,600 sugar canes worth K500,000 to the Palin Kanthayar elephant camp on 14 May while the elephant lovers from Yangon region donated the elephant buffet worth K50,000 on 10 May. Moreover, the elephant foods were also donated by the people from Kyaukpadaung town on 6 May, those from Tamu town on 6 May, Nyaung U on 4 May and Monywa town on 16 April, said Assistant Manager U Myo Min Ko from Palin Kanthayar elephant camp.

During the coronavirus period, the elephant lovers donated the elephant feeds for 22 elephant camps belonging to the MTE. — Ko Htein (Ngathayouk)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Fire engulfs cargo vessel in Homalin

A fire destroyed a cargo vessel named Shwe Sin Aung at 6:30 pm on 13 May at Chindwin river jetty in Homalin town, Sagaing region.

U Win Min Tun, head of Fire Services Department from

Homalin township received the information by phone and sent the firefighters to the scene. Arriving at the scene of the fire, the 12 firefighters put out the fire with the use of a fire engine and the fire was controlled within 20

minutes. The fire started when a crew member of the motor vessel filled up the fuel oil on board the vessel. The fire destroyed 13 fuel oil containers, egg boxes, one Honda machine and engine oil with damages amounting to

K4.3 million.

Legal action has been taken against U Kyaw Myo Win and the crew of MV Shwe Sin Aung under Section 285 of the Penal Code. — Lin

(Translated by Hay Mar)

More Myanmar nationals return from Thailand

MYANMAR began accepting Myanmar migrant workers returning from Thailand on 1 May and accepted 38 Myanmar nationals, who received penalties from the Thai government, at Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday.

The returning Myanmar nationals were given health examinations and other necessary procedures with the assistance of Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrator U Tayzar Aung, District Police Commander Police Lt-Col Thet Lin Oo, Myawady District Immigration and Population Department Head U Aung Khine Swe and relevant officials.

This is the second batch of Myanmar nationals returning from Thailand that had penalties imposed on them.

The number of Myanmar nationals who returned from Thailand was 60 on 1 May, 54 on 2 May, 1 on 3 May, 44 on 4 May, 23 on 5 May, 100 on 8 May, 44 on 10 May, 13 on 11 May, 41 on 12 May, 16 on 13 May and 48 on 14 May with no returnees on 6, 7 and 9 May.

Of the returnees from yesterday, 1 is from Kachin State, 23 are from Kayin State, 7 are from Mon State, 4 from Bago Region, 2 from Yangon Region and 1 from Ayeyawady Region. — Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Staff testing the body temperature of the Myanmar Nationals returned from Thailand through Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

Two suspects arrested for Hlinethaya murder case

POLICE arrested two suspects in the murder case of Chinese man in Hlinethayar Township (western) in Yangon Region.

The Chinese victim, identified as the 63-year-old Mr Yan Bang Chao, was stabbed to death on a private car at the scene on 11 May afternoon.

After collecting information from CCTV records and witnesses near the Alae village, the figures of two suspects were sent to the police stations in Yangon and Bago regions.

Police found Ye Ko Ko, 30-year-old man, one of the suspects in the murder case, who lives in Nyaung village of Hlinethaya Township (east) was arrested at 3:30 pm on 13 May, with weapons and clothes used in committing the crime,

6 notes of 100 US dollar and 230,000 Myanmar kyat, and he pleaded guilty.

His accomplice, the 26-year-old man named Han Win Tun (a) Nga Pwe, was also arrested at Kyaiksagaing village of Taikkyi Township in the same evening, with a motorcycle and clothes used in the crime, some amount of Chinese yuan and 870,000 Myanmar kyat.

The two suspects used to hunt for possible victims who drive their cars without companion on board and then pretended the car hit their motorcycle to claim compensations. In some cases, while the driver focused on the accidents, they stole precious items and money on the car.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Ye Ko Ko and Han Win Tun (a) Nga Pwe seen. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar's foreign trade hit \$ 22 bln in 6 months

EXPORT value of Myanmar reached US\$ 10,700 million and its import was \$11,906 million, totalling \$22,606 million from both sectors from October to April in 2019-2020 financial year.

During the corresponding period of last FY, export valued \$ 9,750 million, and the import was \$10,314 million. and thus total foreign trade reached to \$ 20,064 million, exceeding by \$950 million in export sector and \$1,592 million in import sector, with a total of increase by \$2,542 million in comparing with the previous fiscal.

Comparison of export items for different categories in the value of US dollar in million

No	Items	2019-2020 (April) (Temporary)	2018-2019 (April)	Comparison
1	Agricultural Product	23.88.445	2017.253	371.192
2	Animal Product	60.149	281.907	(-) 221.785
3	Fishery Product	569.648	496.048	73.600
4	Mineral	1160.009	878.027	281.982
5	Forestry Product	95.500	103.566	8.066
6	Finished Goods	5649.005	5409.593	239.412
7	Other	777.942	563.936	214.006
	Total	10700.698	9750.330	950.368

Comparison of import items for different categories in the value of US dollar in million

No	Items	2019-2020 (April) (Temporary)	2018-2019 (April)	Comparison
1	Goods for Investment	4683.502	3203.101	1480.401
2	Raw Materials	4335.213	4343.929	1.284
3	Utensils	2877.249	2767.230	110.019
	Total	11905.964	10314.260	1591.704

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre 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 8 am to 8 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

First focus on reducing impact of drought, and later on relief

AS ANTICIPATED, drought has arrived in our country, mostly affecting sections of the nation's rural areas. The record temperature of 47.5C recorded in Chauk township in Magwe on May 8, the highest in the country in 52 years, and the above normal temperatures across the country, has put us on alert to prepare for combating drought, rather than dealing with its aftermath.

Reports include vivid pictures of rural people receiving donated water from philanthropic associations, as well as authorities warning us that our country is one of the most vulnerable countries at risk from the climate crisis.

Last year, the number of villages facing water shortage rose from the expected number, to reach nearly 400 nationwide.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020, Myanmar has had the highest weather-related losses in the past two decades, alongside Puerto Rico and Haiti.

The drought has delivered a threat to crop production and the needs of those living in rural areas, where over 70 per cent of the country's population resides.

The dry zone in Myanmar lies within the central portion of the country, home to nearly one-third of Myanmar's total population. According to media reports, temperatures there are projected to rise by up to three degrees Celsius (3° C) after 2040.

According to the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance, which is a body that straddles the United Nations, the government and civil society, the total monsoon period has already decreased from 144 days per year in 1998 to 125 days.

The number of extremely hot days is projected to increase from one day a month to between four and 17 by 2041. This will cause serious health problems to local residents, and damage ecosystems, crops and infrastructure.

Weather experts have warned that the central dry zone of Myanmar suffers a significant climate change impact due to droughts and floods, resulting in the destruction of crops and increased vulnerability for farm households.

The Myanmar Climate Change Strategy 2018-2030 was drafted by the country's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), with assistance from other organizations. The long-term goal of this strategy is to achieve climate-resilience and a low-carbon growth pathway to support inclusive and sustainable development by 2030.

Whether we will achieve that long-term goal depends significantly on field operators, because disaster mitigation always requires changes in people's habits and mindsets to properly work.

And bear in mind, if we fail to preserve our water, it might someday kill us.

Fourth-Year Performances of Magway Region Government

By Shin Min
Photo: Kay Kay of Region Government

Endeavouring to ensure the public fully enjoys the benefits of development projects: Magway Region Government



Magway Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo.

MINBU solar power plant, one of the accomplishments of Magway Region in the fourth year, is now supplying power to about 210,000 household through the national grid.

National grid

As regards the accomplishment, Chief Minister of Magway Region Dr Aung Moe Nyo said, "This is the first solar power plant that distributes electricity through the national grid in the region. Its present capacity is 40-megawatts. The four-stage power plant projects will have 170 megawatts in total. The first three stages will generate 120 megawatts, and the fourth stage 50 megawatts. When completed, the entire project will generate 350 million kilowatt hours of renewal energy. The region government is also working hard to produce renewable energy through wind turbines at Minhla, Mindon and Chauk townships."

"The project will come true after the negotiations at the Union

level. The production of renewable energy in Minhla, Mindon and Chauk townships will contribute to the national development," the Chief Minister said.

Electricity supply

During the four years, the region government electrified 1,172 villages. At this year end 50% of households had electricity, up from only 17 per cent in fiscal year 2016-2017.

Rural electrification

Magway Region is now supplying power to 63,34% of villages - 24.3% through the grid and 38.97 through other means.

The 66/6.6KV (5)MV transformer in Aunglan is replaced with a 66/611KV (10)MV, and the 33/6.6KV (1.25)MV transformer in Minhla is replaced with a 33/11KV (3.3)MV facility.

Road transport

Magway Region government is also striving for the improvement of transport, apart from developing the power supply sector.

"We will upgrade 63% of rural roads at the end of fiscal year 2020-2021. We have already built 657 miles of 10-foot wide tarred roads, 7.5 miles of 24-foot tarred roads, 2,239 miles of gravel roads, 2,239 miles of granite roads and 2,768 miles of earth roads at the end of fiscal year 2019-2020", said the Chief Minister.

The road department is implementing the 2,187-mile road project with the involvement of



The five-storey building of the Magway General Hospital.

six private companies that are undertaking 454 miles under the BOT system. The three special road construction groups implemented 3,223 works including new road projects, road extension programmes, paving works, gravelling works, bridge projects, culverts and concrete pipes and retaining walls at a cost of over 268,686 million. The Rural Development Department also built nine miles of concrete roads, 224 miles of tarred roads, 657 miles of gravel roads, 2,239 miles of granite roads and 2,768 miles of earth roads at the end of fiscal year 2019-2020. The department is providing technical assistance for the approved rural development projects which cover 326 villages. The budget allotment for each

village is Ks 10 million. Now the people of the region are enjoying the fruits of road transport development.

Irrigation facilities

Magway Region is building multipurpose dams to harness the waters of Ayeyawady and Myittha rivers, and Mone, Mann, Salin, Yaw and Pin creeks of the area, especially for irrigation. Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department has completed 75% of the work in renovating the spillway of the Mone creek dam, building a reserve spillway and repairing the U/S Apron Portion and the Crest Portion at a budget allotment of Ks 500 million for fiscal year 2019-2020. The department has also completed

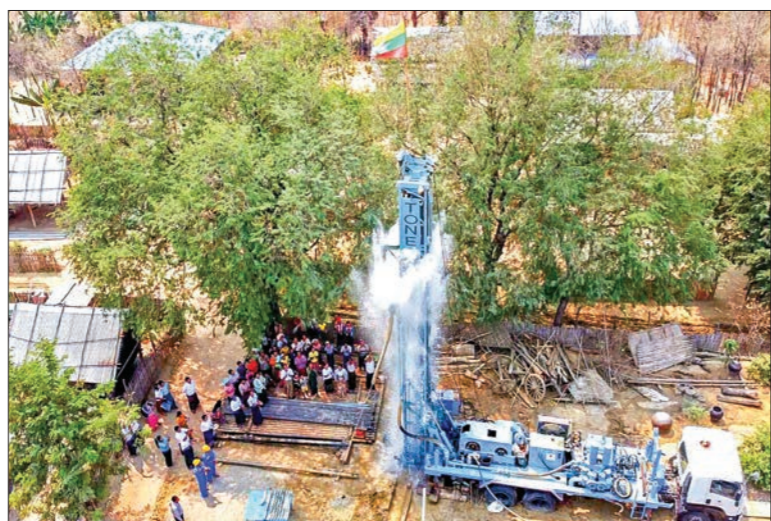
AFD from France, and implement the Kyauk Sauk Dam Rehabilitation of Concrete Lining and Direct Outlet project and Nagabwet irrigation project in cooperation with the Western States Agribusiness Project (WSAP).

Agriculture

Magway Region is applying modern methods and techniques for increasing the crop production in the interest of the farmers. It set up a soil testing laboratory in 2018 in Magway, and one more lab in Pakokku on 17 January this year for developing the agriculture sector. The region put 16145.12 acres under various crops in accord with the good agriculture practice (GAP) in fiscal year 2018-2019, and sold 88 tones of monsoon sesame. In fiscal year 219-2020, it cultivated over 70,520 acres of crops under GAP. Magway Region provided over Ks 2,786 million for the agriculture sector in fiscal year 2018-2019.

It also provided 300 motorcycles, 30 sets of moisture measuring equipment for 25 townships and the region branch office, and over 40,000 bags of compound fertilizers for 24 townships under the Immediate Response Mechanism (IRM) of the World Bank. The region government provided over 22 baskets of sesame seeds for the fire victims of Kyobinin village in Magway Township, and 28 baskets of sesame seeds for the volunteer farmers in Magway and Minbu townships.

SEE PAGE-10



Water gushes out from a tube-well in Yayzagyo Township, Magway Region.



War Yar Thazi Water pumping seen in Magway Region.



Elephant camp near Mann Shwe Settaw Pagoda in Minbu becomes popular for holiday makers.

The "Reach Out Strategy" in Combatting the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Lokethar

MYANMAR, like all other countries of the world is facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Like in most other developing country, Myanmar's Public Health Facilities, at the beginning of the Pandemic, lacked testing equipment, the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and most of all shortage of Doctors, Nurses, Health Care Workers. The Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS) and under it the Public Health Facilities, including the Public Hospitals and Clinics have had to face the Pandemic as best as they can.

In Myanmar however, there has been a strong Political will, even in the early stage, of the Corona Virus crisis, to do the best it can to prevent it and to treat the people who inadvertently are affected by it. It therefore set up a committee for the purpose even when the news of the "Corona Virus" epidemic was circulating around. Later however, with the World Health Organization's Announcement of March 11, 2020; that the Corona Virus 19 crisis was a Pandemic, Myanmar upgraded the initial Prevention and Treatment Committee to a National Level Central Committee headed by the State Counsellor. Subsidiary Committees at the Regional, Township and even Wards and Village levels were formed.

First and foremost the Central Committee launched, through it's various subsidiary committees, an extensive Covid-19 education campaign through the media to inform the people about the Covid-19 pandemic and how best to confront it using the Guidelines of the World Health Organization and the detailed Directives and Instructions issued by the MOHS. Many INGOs as well as NGOs pitched in for helping in the process as did the Volunteers (Saydanar Wundhans) including Doctors, Nurses, Caregivers and ordinary citizens particularly the country's youths.

Simultaneously priority has been given to detecting those showing the early symptoms of infection by alerting all the health facilities under the MOH, to set up preliminary health surveillance units, for weeding out people with fever and showing other initial symptoms of the disease. This procedure is also being undertaken at every port of entry as it is most likely that the virus will be "imported" through them. The various committees at every level are being directed to supervise the measures to detect the symptoms of the disease and to report to the MOHS health facilities, including the clinics and hospitals within nearest reach.

Sometime later the Central Committee was able to acquire, with the help and assistance of friendly countries, testing as well as other needed equipment and could perform the tests at the National Health Laboratory and later at the Medical Research Institute both under the MOHS. The tests were made on those who showed signs of Covid-19 infection. Those who tested positive to the Covid-19 virus were sent to the public hospitals designated by MOHS to treat Covid-19 patients. Thus far only about (144) persons showing symptoms, have tested positive among whom (5) persons have succumbed to the disease. However, with the migrant Myanmar workers returning from the countries concerned it is anybody's guess as to how many would test Covid-19 positive in the not too distant future.

What I would like to highlight here is the "Reach Out Strategy" adopted by the Central Committee. By that Strategy the State Counsellor herself, undertook to reach out to those Township/ Wards/Village Committees and persons actively engaged, at the "on ground level" in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Fourth-Year Performances of Magway Region Government

FROM PAGE-9

Education

Apart from its endeavours for socio-economic development, the region government is also striving for the improvement of the education level. It upgraded 33 affiliated high schools into high schools, 333 middle schools into affiliated high schools, 106 post-primary schools into affiliated middle schools, 133 primary schools into post-primary schools, 45 affiliated primary schools into primary schools and 136 self-reliant schools into affiliated primary schools, totalling 939 schools.

As for ensuring the peaceful pursuit of education for local boys and girls, the region government built 268 new school offices and buildings, made 4,029 desks of various sizes, and constructed 768 schools and officers. It will lay earth roads for 121 schools and build toilets and concrete roads for 3009 schools.

Ethnic culture and literature

As for the progress of the literature and culture of Chin nationals living in Magway Region, the region government conducted eight summer literature and culture courses in fiscal year 2017-2018, with 550 teachers, and 2,617 students completed the courses. It opened ten such courses with the involvement of 874 teachers in fiscal year 2018-2019, and 1,453 completed them. The local government held talks on ethnic rights and collected data in Magway, Ngaphge, Taungdwingyi and Hsaw in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Public relations

The region office of the Information and Public Relations



The Magway Region Hluttaw Meeting being convened.

Department is holding reading sessions, talks, courses, fairs and competitions at the community centres. It held the children's literature festivals in Thayet District in 2019 and Gangaw District in 2020, apart from organizing public talks for promoting democracy practices. The local government also held the youth all-round development festival (Magway) for three days from 14 to 16 December 2019 for the physical and intellectual development of youth. President U Win Myint graced the festival. The region government provided books, periodicals and furniture for 14 rural libraries in 2019.

e-Government

Magway Region government has been opening courses for the progress in implementing the e-Government since 2018. The course included basic e-Government course, Web-content course, Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)

course for Government Personal Management System (GPMS), Software and website courses.

Mann Shwesettawya

The region government renovated the Koekhangyi Hall of the Mann Shwesettawya in Minbu Township this year. "We renovated the hall at a cost of over Ks 500 million. The roof and floors are repaired in the Myanmar architectural designs. We hoisted a new sacred umbrella atop the pagoda built on the original footprint of Buddha," said the Chief Minister.

Health

Magway Region has an area of 17,305.62 square-miles and a population of 4,176,441. It has five districts, 30 townships, 1,535 village-tracts and 4,803 villages. The mission of the government is to provide health cover for the entire population. The region office of the Public Health Department built a building for the generator

of the eye ward under the budget allotment of Ks 1.8 million, an eight-unit four-storey building at Magway teaching hospital under the budget allotment of Ks 300 million in fiscal year 2016-2017. It is building a two-storey staff quarters at a cost of over Ks 157 million.

Community based tourism

Magway Region government could generate job opportunities for locals and increase their income by setting up community based tourism (CBT) at Inyaung village, Myaing Township, and Magyeegan village in Chauk Township. It is now implementing CBT at Hteinbingon village, Htilin Township and Kyungalay village in Pakoppu Township.

Disaster response

Fire Services Department of Magway Region built the new Magway District fire station at a cost of over Ks 338 million, a new township fire station in Yesagyo

at a cost of over Ks 156 million, a new district fire station in Thayet at a cost of over Ks 338 million, a new area fire station in Htilin Township at a cost of over Ks 117 million. The region government provided six fire engines, 18 command vehicles, six water tankers, two support vehicles, four fire fighting vehicles, three ambulances and two search and rescue vehicles during the four years.

International cooperation

As for achieving regional development the local government conducted the Key Issues in Economic Reporting Training in cooperation with USAID, vocational education training in cooperation with Actionaid Myanmar, implemented S4RLD and S4E Project projects in cooperation with HELVETAS MYANMAR, and conducted agriculture courses in cooperation with Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) during the four years in office.

Parliament

The Region Hluttaw was completed in July 2019. The Second Magway Region Hluttaw enacted 21 laws and 10 bylaws till now. The parliament is the most basic need for the legislative pillar in the national democratization process.

Benefits

Magway Region carried out many development undertakings in the interest of the public including road transport, health, education, agriculture, farming, electricity projects and various rural projects. It will continue its endeavours for the people to fully enjoy the benefits of the projects.

(Translated by TMT)



The gas-fired power plant in Magway Region.



Engineers and workers repairing the Minbu-An Road in Magway Region.

Typhoon forces risky evacuations in virus-hit Philippines

MANILA — A powerful typhoon hit the central Philippines Thursday, forcing a complicated and risky evacuation for tens of thousands already hunkered down at home during the coronavirus pandemic.

At least 200,000 people live in coastal areas or flimsy homes in the province near where the storm, called Typhoon Vongfong, made landfall with fierce winds and heavy rain.

Tens of millions more live along the typhoon's path, which is expected to take it near the densely populated capital Manila.

Because of the twin threat of

the storm and the virus, evacuation centres in the central Philippines will only accept half their capacity and evacuees will have to wear facemasks.

The surge of people and limited space mean authorities have asked 47 big churches in the area to accept people fleeing the typhoon, which is the first of the season.

"We will be overwhelmed so we're expanding our evacuation to include churches," said Cedric Daep, disaster chief in central Albay province.

Vongfong is packing gusts up to 190 kilometres (120 miles) an hour as well as drenching

rains that could cause flooding and landslides, the national weather agency said.

Areas in the typhoon's path are under varying levels of virus quarantine, yet many people are staying at home to avoid infection.

The Philippines has reported 772 deaths and 11,618 cases of the virus, though the number is believed to be higher due to limited testing.

Typhoons are a dangerous and disruptive part of life in the Philippine archipelago, which gets hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons each year.—AFP ■



Tens of thousands have been forced to evacuate in the Philippines because of a powerful typhoon. PHOTO: AFP

Amazon could be next virus hot zone: scientist

SAO PAULO — The next pandemic could come from the Amazon rainforest, warns Brazilian ecologist David Lapola, who says human encroachment on animals' habitats — a likely culprit in the coronavirus outbreak — is

soaring there because of rampant deforestation. Researchers say the urbanization of once-wild areas contributes to the emergence of zoonotic diseases — those that pass from animals to humans.

That includes the new coro-

navirus, which scientists believe originated in bats before passing to humans in China's rapidly urbanizing Hubei province, probably via a third species.

Lapola, 38, who studies how human activity will reshape the future ecosystems of tropical forests, says the same processes are in play in the Amazon. "The Amazon is a huge reservoir of viruses," he told AFP in an interview. "We'd better not try our luck." The world's biggest rainforest is disappearing at an alarming rate. Last year, in far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's first year in office, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon surged 85 percent, to more than 10,000 square kilometers (3,900 square miles) — an area nearly the size of Lebanon.—AFP ■



Researchers say the urbanization of once-wild areas like the Amazon contributes to the emergence of diseases that pass from animals to humans. PHOTO: AFP

Researchers go 'cuckoo' over Antarctic penguin poop

COPENHAGEN — Antarctica's king penguins emit such copious amounts of nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, via their faeces that researchers went a little "cuckoo" studying them, according to a Danish scientific study published Thursday.

"Penguin guano produces significantly high levels of nitrous oxide around their colonies," said the head of the study, Professor Bo Elberling, of the University of Copenhagen's Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management.

While studying colonies of king penguins on the Atlantic island of South Georgia between South America and Antarctica, "the researchers went 'cuckoo' from being surrounded by pen-

guin poop", he said.

Besides being a strain on the climate, nitrous oxide has an effect very similar to the sedative laughing gas used at the dentist's.

"After nosing about in guano for several hours, one goes completely cuckoo. One begins to feel ill and get a headache," Elberling said.

Nitrous oxide is 300 times more polluting to the environment than carbon dioxide. The nitrous oxide is explained by the penguin diet of krill and fish, which contains high levels of nitrogen. Nitrogen is released from the penguins' faeces into the ground and soil bacteria then convert it into nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas.—AFP ■

The "Reach Out Strategy" in Combatting the Covid-19 Pandemic

FROM PAGE-9

She has been holding, video conferencing sessions, televised over the Myanmar Radio & Television Broadcasting Network, with small groups of three persons comprising a township/ village level official, a member of the voluntary organization in the area, and a health worker (doctor/ nurse/ caregiver/ attendant etc.) in a casual conversation session lasting for about an hour or so, as to how they were performing, their difficulties, their needs, and most of all the help they needed to do their jobs effectively. This "Teleconferencing" is being carried out thus far even to include remote states and regions of the country.

It is indeed a unique process in line with democratic principles. It is a strategy to inform the "people" and make them aware of what the Government is doing to control the epidemic. In some way it is also a "monitoring" process to evaluate what is being done by the responsible people in the country to combat a dreaded infection using the resources available. It also enables the Central Committee and the MOHS to "fill in" some of the needs of the township/ward/ village level organizations to help them do their work more effectively.

The best part of the "teleconferencing" is the very "informal" way it has been conducted by the State Counsellor herself. The talk commences with each

of the three local participants presenting what they have been doing concerning the control measures set by the MOHS and what further help they need. After each presentation there would be a dialogue between the participant and the State Counsellor to further clarify the presentation and at the same time address the difficulties encountered by the presenter in performing his/her duties. The State Counsellor discusses with each participant as to what can be done immediately and what can be done after consultation with the departments concerned including the MOHS. The "talk" can be interrupted at any time by the presenter or by the State Counsellor who would smilingly introduce anecdotes to make the talk lively. Her

style encourages the three participants to lose their inhibitions and to frankly express their opinions and forward their "ideas" to help combat the Covid-19 pandemic to the best of their ability. The talk ends with the State Counsellor wrapping up the discussion and giving valuable advice and encouragement to the participants as how to better perform their work.

The "Teleconferencing" with the responsible persons at the basic level is a novel and a very modern idea indeed. Perhaps a team of researchers could be formed to "document" the proceedings and publish it for posterity.

With charity to all and malice to none.



Hope for return to normal as Japan partially lifts virus emergency

TOKYO — Residents on Thursday expressed relief and hope that their lives will soon return to normal after a national state of emergency declared over the novel coronavirus pandemic was lifted for 39 of Japan's 47 prefectures.

But people living in areas remaining under the state of emergency voiced concern that what policymakers and experts perceive as a protracted battle against the pneumonia-causing virus will continue to negatively impact their lives and businesses.

"I believe the flow of people will gradually return to normal," said Yuta Arai, 34, who works at a fruit and vegetable shop in Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast.

Ishikawa is among 13 prefectures that have been designated as areas requiring "special caution" regarding the virus

outbreak, but it is set to see the order lifted, along with 38 other prefectures.

"I just hope many customers will visit my shop," said Arai, whose store is in Omicho Ichiba in Kanazawa, a famous market that draws local customers and tourists from other parts of Japan as well as abroad.

Akane Sakamoto, 25, a company employee, said that like others, she has become tired of complying with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's request for people to refrain from making nonessential outings during the emergency period. Sakamoto said she hopes the number of infections will fall to zero in Ishikawa and elsewhere in Japan as soon as possible.

In the city of Akita, northeastern Japan, Aya Osada, 41, who was playing with her 1-year-old son, said, "I am relieved because I have been feeling tension among people around me.—Kyodo ■



People wearing face masks walk at Fukuoka Station in southwestern Japan on May 14, 2020. The government is set to decide later in the day on partial lifting of a state of emergency as the spread of the novel coronavirus seems to have subsided. **PHOTO: KYODO**

NEWS In BRIEF

Nissan to cut production capacity by 20% amid coronavirus outbreak

TOKYO — Nissan Motor Co. plans to cut its global production capacity by 20 percent from the current level by fiscal 2022, as the coronavirus outbreak has led to slumping sales in the United States, sources close to the matter said Thursday. Nissan is currently capable of producing 7 million vehicles worldwide annually.

The capacity cut, taken up by board members at a meeting on Thursday, is set to be announced May 28 as part of the company's fresh medium-term management plan, the sources said. Together with the overhaul plan, Nissan will release its earnings results in the 2019 business year that ended in March.—Kyodo ■

China's foreign trade powerhouse registers positive growth in April

NANJING — East China's Jiangsu Province, China's major export-oriented economic powerhouse, reported a year-on-year increase of 11 per cent in foreign trade in April, which represents the first positive monthly growth this year. The total value of imports and exports in the province reached 366.28 billion yuan (about 51.6 billion U.S. dollars) in April, up 7.6 percent month on month, according to figures released by the Nanjing Customs Thursday.

Due to the impact of the novel coronavirus, Jiangsu's foreign trade value fell by 4.4 percent year on year to 1.27 trillion yuan in the first four months.

In April, Jiangsu's exports rebounded by 19.1 percent year on year and 10.4 percent month on month to reach 226.79 billion yuan. Meanwhile, its imports totaled 139.49 billion yuan, down 0.1 percent year on year and up 3.4 percent month on month.

Zhou Changqing, deputy director of the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Commerce, said the epidemic has decreased the overseas demand. Jiangsu's government and enterprises have worked together to explore markets and ensure supply in order to tide over the difficulties.—Xinhua ■

Singapore Airlines reports nearly \$150 million virus loss

SINGAPORE — Singapore Airlines reported an annual loss of

almost \$150 million Thursday, driven by the collapse in air



Singapore Airlines reported an annual loss of almost \$150 million, driven by the collapse in air travel caused by the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

travel caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the latest sign of the outbreak's devastating impact on the aviation sector.

The airline group -- which includes subsidiaries SilkAir and Scoo -- suffered a net loss of Sg\$212 million (US\$148 million) for the financial year that ended on March 31, compared to a profit of Sg\$683 million last year.

The city-state's flag carrier lost Sg\$732 million in the fourth quarter, mainly due to a reduction in passenger revenue as the virus crisis exploded.

"Fears about the spread of the virus, as well as global travel restrictions and border

controls, led to a collapse in the demand for air travel during the quarter," the airline said in its financial report.

The recent collapse in oil prices also led to Sg\$710 million of fuel hedging losses in the fourth quarter.

Singapore Airlines cut passenger capacity by 96 percent from April to June and grounded most of its fleet as people stopped flying due to the pandemic.

The airline's majority shareholder, state investment fund Temasek, has thrown its weight behind a rescue package to help the carrier weather the pandemic.—AFP ■

California authorities say Tesla plant could reopen next week

LOS ANGELES -- Authorities in California say Tesla's only assembly plant in the United States could open as early as next week, albeit with enhanced safety measures because of the pandemic, after a very public anti-lockdown tirade by Elon Musk with support from President Donald Trump.

In a series of tweets overnight Wednesday, authorities in Alameda County, which includes

the city of Fremont, home to the plant, said they had met with Tesla representatives, reviewed the electric carmaker's safety plans for the factory and made some extra recommendations.

"If Tesla's Prevention and Control Plan includes these updates, and the public health indicators remain stable or improve, we have agreed that Tesla can begin to augment their Minimum Business Operations

this week in preparation for possible reopening as soon as next week," the county health agency said.

Musk said Monday the company was resuming production, defying authorities and escalating a feud over the Pacific state's pandemic shutdown.

"I will be on the line with everyone else," Musk tweeted. "If anyone is arrested, I ask that it only be me."

Musk's move comes amid rising disputes over the pace of easing the lockdowns imposed by states to contain the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

The new statement from the county said police in Fremont would be on hand to verify that Tesla is observing social distancing and that other agreed upon safety measures for workers are being upheld.—AFP ■

Nearly 600,000 Australians lose jobs as virus lockdown bites

SYDNEY — Almost 600,000 Australians lost their jobs as the virus shutdown took hold in April, the steepest monthly drop since records began more than 40 years ago, data showed Thursday.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

said 100,000 people filed for unemployment benefits, while a further 500,000 left the workforce altogether.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison called the figures “terribly shocking”, with the ABS reporting the underutilization rate — which combines unemployment

and underemployment — reached a record high of 19.9 per cent in April.

The ABS said 2.7 million people — or one in five Australian workers — either left the workforce or had their work hours reduced as the country recorded an “unprecedented

fall” in the workforce participation rate to 63.5 per cent. The drop in the participation rate meant unemployment rose one percentage point to 6.1 percent, well short of forecasts of more than eight per cent.

Just 12.4 million Australians now have jobs after the steepest monthly fall in employment since the ABS began recording monthly data in 1978.

Morrison warned Australians to brace for more difficult economic news in the months ahead, adding: “A very tough day. Terribly shocking, although not unanticipated.

“We knew there would be hard news as the pandemic wreaks an impact on Australia as it is on countries all around the world.”

The Treasury has forecast the unemployment rate will reach 10 percent in the June quar-



Prime Minister Scott Morrison has warned of further pain to come for Australia's economy.
PHOTO: AFP



New Zealand has got the virus under control but Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned of pain ahead, with unemployment rising and the economy contracting.
PHOTO: POOL/AFP

New Zealand boosts budget spending amid virus downturn

WELLINGTON — New Zealand announced a NZ\$50 billion (US\$30 billion) war chest Thursday to help cushion the impact of the coronavirus pandemic that has stalled the economy and already cost thousands of jobs.

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund is the centrepiece of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's annual budget, aiming to stimulate recovery with spending on infrastructure and business support.

The South Pacific nation has contained the virus by closing its borders and imposing a seven-week lockdown that ended Thursday, but Ardern said there were still tough times ahead.

“Global predictions

are dire. Unemployment will rise, and growth will slow dramatically,” she said. “We know as a trading nation that will have an impact, and it will be significant and it will be painful.”

About NZ\$30 billion from the fund has already been allocated, with NZ\$20 billion kept in reserve for projects over the next four years. Even with the stimulus, the Treasury predicts unemployment will reach at least 8.3 per cent next year and the economy will contract 4.6 per cent.

But the recession, which Ardern said would be “sudden and deep” is expected to ease by 2022, when growth is forecast to bounce back to 8.6 per cent.—AFP ■

Nigeria oil industry scrambles as price fall slams economy

LAGOS — The collapse in oil prices linked to the coronavirus crisis has seen Nigeria's revenues from crude dry up and left Africa's largest economy more threatened than ever by its dependence on black gold.

The crude market may have rebounded in recent days to more than \$30 a barrel, but the future remains bleak for

the continent's largest producer, which relies on the commodity for some 90 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings.

“Nigeria is facing the twin challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the crash of the crude oil price. For Nigeria, it's a double whammy,” finance minister Zainab Ahmed said last week.

“Globally the crude oil

market is very slow and we are not able to sell as much crude as we used to do before.”

The challenge may be even bigger for Nigeria than for other producers scrambling to cope with the plummet in prices unleashed by the pandemic and a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Experts and indus-

try insiders told AFP that Nigerian oil is currently selling for around \$10 less than Brent crude, the benchmark to which it is usually aligned.

Bloomberg in April reported that the price of Nigerian crude scraped as low as around \$12, a far cry from the \$57 target figure the government had based its budget on before the crisis.—AFP ■

China OKs barley imports from U.S. amid dispute with Australia

BEIJING — China has decided to allow imports of barley from the United States under strict quarantine, the government said Thursday, as Beijing threatens tariffs on Australian barley.

Some analysts interpreted the green-lighting of the U.S. grain as a veiled threat against Australia, which has recently called for an independent investigation into the origins of the new coronavi-

rus, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry in recent days reportedly told Canberra that, following an 18-month-investigation, it is considering imposing anti-dumping tariffs on Australian barley.

The punitive measure would deal a stunning blow to Australia's agricultural sector, pundits say.—Kyodo ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (074 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (074 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-5-2020 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY.NO. (210 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (210 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

WHO warns virus may be here to stay as toll nears 300,000



Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) officers detain a man in front of a supermarket in Moscow after city authorities made it mandatory to wear gloves and a mask in public places. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON — The coronavirus may never go away and populations will have to learn to live with it just as they have

HIV, the World Health Organization has warned, as the global death toll from the disease nears 300,000.

There were also gloomy forecasts from the US Federal Reserve, which said prolonged shutdowns to stem the spread of the virus could cause lasting economic damage in America.

Washington ratcheted up tensions over the pandemic by accusing China of trying to steal research into a vaccine, while US President Donald Trump upped the rhetoric with a colourful phrase that could anger Beijing.

“We just made a great Trade Deal, the ink was barely dry, and the World was hit by the Plague from China. 100 Trade Deals wouldn’t make up the difference — and all those innocent lives lost!” Trump tweeted.

The United States logged more than 1,800 deaths on Wednesday, bringing the nation’s

total to 84,059.

The president has increasingly looked to pin the blame on China, where the virus first emerged late last year.

Two US security agencies piled further pressure on Beijing Wednesday by saying Chinese hackers were attempting to steal intellectual property related to treatments.

“China’s efforts to target these sectors pose a significant threat to our nation’s response to COVID-19,” the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) said.

Neither agency offered evidence to support the allegation.

‘May never go away’

A vaccine could allow coun-

tries and economies to fully reopen from lockdowns and potentially earn millions of dollars for its creators.

But the WHO said the virus may never be wiped out entirely.

“This virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this virus may never go away,” said Michael Ryan, the global health body’s emergencies director in Geneva.

“HIV has not gone away — but we have come to terms with the virus.”

The prospect of the disease hanging around leaves governments across the world facing a delicate balancing act between suppressing the pathogen and getting economies up and running.—AFP ■

Wisconsin high court overturns state’s stay-at-home orders

MILWAUKEE — Wisconsin’s Supreme Court overturned the state’s stay-at-home orders on Wednesday, as regions across the US grapple with the increasingly partisan decision of whether or not to reopen amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Americans across the country have staged anti-lockdown demonstrations and President Donald Trump has pressed for rapid steps to rekindle the devastated US economy before his tough re-election battle in November. But public health experts, including the president’s top medical advisor Anthony Fauci, have warned that loosening restrictions on public gatherings too early could trigger fresh COVID-19 outbreaks. The Midwestern state’s high court sided with lawmakers from Trump’s Republican Party, who had challenged an extension of the quarantine imposed by Democratic Govern-

nor Tony Evers’s administration.

Evers warned on Twitter that the decision risked undoing “all the work we have done and all the sacrifices Wisconsinites have made over these past few months.” “It’s a mess,” he later told CNN. “I mean, I can’t put it any other way.” While the state is not one of the hardest hit, it has still recorded more than 10,900 cases and more than 400 deaths.

The legal challenge was filed against Wisconsin Department of Health Services chief Andrea Palm and other officials, who had extended stay-at-home orders to May 26 even as the state relaxed some restrictions on business.

The state’s Republican House Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald said the ruling allowed “people to once again gather with their loved ones or visit their places of worship without the fear of violating a state order.”—AFP ■



Nicaragua has reported only 16 coronavirus cases and five deaths, but civil society groups claim the number is much higher. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Nicaragua releases 2,800 prisoners to house arrest to contain virus

MANAGUA — Nicaragua released more than 2,800 prisoners to house arrest on Wednesday to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, but advocates said there were no political prisoners among them.

Authorities have jailed at least 86 opposition figures and supporters of rights groups un-

der the government of Daniel Ortega — a former rebel hero who has been in power since 2007 and is now accused of running a repressive dictatorship.

Many of those prisoners were arrested during 2018 protests against Ortega that rights groups said left 300 people dead.

But none of them were among the 2,815 prisoners the interior ministry said had been released from Nicaragua’s prisons, defence lawyer Yonarki Martinez told AFP. “It’s obvious that there’s no respect for human rights and the health of those denied their freedom,” Martinez said.—AFP ■



Americans across the country have staged anti-lockdown demonstrations. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Fear of virus grows in Yemen’s squalid camps

SANAA — In a desolate camp for Yemenis displaced by war, Nasima Ahmed wonders how she and her four children can possibly protect themselves as the novel coronavirus stalks the

country. The five-year-old conflict between the government and the Iran-backed Huthi rebels has pushed millions to the brink of famine in a country ill-prepared to face the new

health threat. “We are not ready for the coronavirus because we have nothing,” Ahmed told AFP at her tent, which is practically empty except for two ragged foam mattresses.—AFP ■

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Substantial investment needed to avert mental health crisis

THE COVID-19 pandemic is highlighting the need to urgently increase investment in services for mental health or risk a massive increase in mental health conditions in the coming months, according to a policy brief on COVID-19 and mental health issued by the United Nations on 14 May, 2020.

“The impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health is already extremely concerning,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “Social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment.”



A yoga instructor concludes a live streamed yoga class via the Zoom online video conferencing platform in the midst of coronavirus. **PHOTO: ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP**

Depression and anxiety are increasing

Reports already indicate an increase in symptoms of depression and anxiety in a number of countries. A study in Ethiopia, in April 2020, reported a 3-fold increase in the prevalence of symptoms of depression compared to estimates from Ethiopia before the epidemic.

Specific population groups are at particular risk of COVID-related psychological distress. Frontline health-care workers, faced with heavy workloads, life-or-death decisions, and risk of infection, are particularly affected. During the pandemic, in China, health-care workers have reported high rates of depression (50%), anxiety (45%), and insomnia (34%) and in Canada, 47% of health-care workers have reported a need for psychological support.

Children and adolescents are also at risk. Parents in Italy and Spain have reported that their children have had diffi-

culties concentrating, as well as irritability, restlessness and nervousness. Stay-at-home measures have come with a heightened risk of children witnessing or suffering violence and abuse. Children with disabilities, children in crowded settings and those who live and work on the streets are particularly vulnerable.

Other groups that are at particular risk are women, particularly those who are juggling home-schooling, working from home and household tasks, older persons and people with pre-existing mental health conditions. A study carried out with young people with a history of mental health needs living in the UK reports that 32% of them agreed that the pandemic had made their mental health much worse.

An increase in alcohol consumption is another area of concern for mental health experts.

Statistics from Canada report that 20% of 15-49 year-olds have increased their alcohol consumption during the pandemic.

Mental health services interrupted

The increase in people in need of mental health or psychosocial support has been compounded by the interruption to physical and mental health services in many countries. In addition to the conversion of mental health facilities into care facilities for people with COVID-19, care systems have been affected by mental health staff being infected with the virus and the closing of face-to-face services. Community services, such as self-help groups for alcohol and drug dependence, have, in many countries, been unable to meet for several months.

“It is now crystal clear that mental health needs must be treated as a core element of our

response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “This is a collective responsibility of governments and civil society, with the support of the whole United Nations System. A failure to take people’s emotional well-being seriously will lead to long-term social and economic costs to society.”

Finding ways to provide services

In concrete terms, it is critical that people living with mental health conditions have continued access to treatment. Changes in approaches to provision of mental health care and psychosocial support are showing signs of success in some countries. In Madrid, when more than 60% of mental health beds were converted to care for people with COVID-19, where possible, people with severe conditions were moved to

private clinics to ensure continuity of care. Local policy-makers identified emergency psychiatry as an essential service to enable mental health-care workers to continue outpatient services over the phone. Home visits were organized for the most serious cases. Teams from Egypt, Kenya, Nepal, Malaysia and New Zealand, among others, have reported creating increased capacity of emergency telephone lines for mental health to reach people in need.

Support for community actions that strengthen social cohesion and reduce loneliness, particularly for the most vulnerable, such as older people, must continue. Such support is required from government, local authorities, the private sector and members of the general public, with initiatives such as provision of food parcels, regular phone check-ins with people living alone, and organization of online activities for intellectual and cognitive stimulation.

An opportunity to build back better

The scaling-up and reorganization of mental health services that is now needed on a global scale is an opportunity to build a mental health system that is fit for the future,” said Dévora Kestel, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Use at WHO. “This means developing and funding national plans that shift care away from institutions to community services, ensuring coverage for mental health conditions in health insurance packages and building the human resource capacity to deliver quality mental health and social care in the community.”

SOURCE: WHO

Asia-Pacific virus latest: NZ lockdown ends; Japan seeks to lift emergency



Masked man in New Zealand waits for bus. **PHOTO: AFP**

HERE are the latest developments from Asia related to the novel coronavirus pandemic:

Crewcuts and catch-ups as New Zealand lockdown ends

New Zealanders mingled with friends and hit the shopping malls for the first time in seven weeks as a national lockdown ended and businesses faced a “new normal” minimizing the

constant threat of coronavirus.

A long-awaited haircut was the top priority for many Kiwis after almost two months in isolation, with queues of tangle-headed customers forming at barbers before dawn.

Japan seeks to lift virus emergency in most regions

Japan’s government said it wants to lift a state of emergency declared over the coronavirus in

most of the country, though not yet the capital Tokyo and other urban centres.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe earlier this month extended a nationwide state of emergency until the end of May.

But with infections sharply down, his government is now hoping to lift the measure early in up to 39 of the country’s 47 prefectures.

SOURCE: AFP

Phone Myint Kyaw to play former 8 Ball Pool world champion today

MYANMAR'S pool star Phone Myint Kyaw (a) Ko Ar Ti will play against his decisive fifth match against former Chinese 8 Ball World Champion Yang Fan, at the 8 Battle Chinese Pool Super Match 2020 Tournament, in Chao Yang, China today.

The former world champion Yang Fan had already played four matches in the tourney, won two matches and lost another two.

Yang Fan had defeated Chinese famous players Yu Hai Tai and Li Bo and lost to Zheng Yu Bo and Chu Bing Jie.

On the other side, Myanmar's Phone Myint Kyaw had won all four matches including world-class Chinese players including former world champion Yu Hai Tao and former China Open Champion Li Bo.

For the four consecutive wins, Phone Myint Kyaw is currently in a good shape to surpass to the next stage of the tourney and today's match is also a de-



Myanmar's pool star Phone Myint Kyaw (L) receiving his jersey labelled with Myanmar Flag, which will be worn on today's match with former Chinese 8 Ball World Champion Yang Fan. **PHOTO: KO AR TI'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

cisive one for surer of advancing to next stage.

Myanmar's Phone Myint Kyaw is still leading the Chinese 8 Ball tourney with full 24,500 points and Yu Hai Tao is following Phone Myint Kyaw with 22,000 points and Chu Bing Jie is at third place with 21,600 points

and Yan Fang is at the fourth place with 18,000 points.

To honour the Myanmar player and his fans, tourney organizers have already allowed Phone Myint Kyaw to wear the jersey with Myanmar flag starting from today match. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Hearn questions integrity of allowing Tyson comeback



Former heavyweight boxing champions Evander Holyfield (left) and Mike Tyson (right) are looking to fight charity exhibition bouts in their 50s. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON—Boxing promoter Eddie Hearn has questioned whether a return to the ring for Mike Tyson at 53 would be ethical.

A video posted on Tyson's Instagram this week showed the former world heavyweight champion in training and he has

said he could make a comeback for charity exhibition bouts.

Hearn admitted he had been approached about promoting a fight for Tyson, but is concerned about the responsibility of making money from ageing fighters.

"I would probably like to see

it but I feel is it a bit irresponsible to let a 53-year-old legend back in the ring?" Hearn told British Boxing Television.

"What's compelling is could he actually go back in at 53 and do some damage. But should we be encouraging that from an all-time great?"

"There's a fine line - and I've crossed it a couple of times - between integrity of the sport and entertainment delivering numbers. Our job is to deliver numbers for broadcasters but we have to keep it as close to the right mark as we can."

Another former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield has announced he will make a ring comeback for charity at 57, hoping to help first responders and children combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Hearn believes former boxers are seeing the chance for a final pay day with Holyfield and Tyson not the only retired fighters considering a comeback.—AFP

Mawyawadi FC delivers aids to players' homes

TEAM authorities from the Mawyawadi FC provided necessary foodstuffs including sacks of rice to the homes of the team players, according to yesterday's statement with the Mawyawadi FC.

The team officials have sent the necessary stuff plus salaries for all the players from the Senior team, U-21 and U-19 teams of Mawyawadi FC, said the team statement.

The aim of door-to-door making assistance for each of

player is the ease of self-training for them during their stay at home period, said officials from the football club.

Mawyawadi FC is a Myanmar National League II club and the team is currently standing at the fifth place of the standing table after playing seven matches of three wins and four losses according to the March statement with the Myanmar National League.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Ronaldinho closing in on 70 days detention in Paraguay

ASUNCION — Brazilian great Ronaldinho's lawyers are hoping the former world player of the year will be allowed to go home after more than two months of detention in Paraguay over a forged passport.

"We're hoping to convince the prosecution to allow Ronaldinho and his brother to return to their country. We can do nothing but wait for the investigation to end," a defence source told AFP.

Former Barcelona, AC Milan and Paris Saint-Germain star Ronaldinho and his brother, Robert de Assis Moreira, are facing up to five years in jail if convicted.

The brothers spent more than a month behind bars after they were accused of entering Paraguay in possession of false passports.

The 2005 Ballon d'Or winner and his brother posted bail of \$1.6 million and have been under house arrest at the plush Palmaroga Hotel in the historic

centre of the Paraguayan capital Asuncion since April 7.

The public prosecutor has six months to investigate the case, and has ordered the arrest of 18 in connection with it.

"There is not one single serious proof that incriminates him," Rogelio Delgado, president of Paraguay's footballers union told AFP.

"Although he has a luxury prison, it's very unfair that he's still being detained," added Delgado, a former Paraguay international.

The 40-year-old Ronaldinho has been keeping a low profile since being released from behind bars, not least because of coronavirus lockdown measures.

"I was completely caught off guard when I found out that these passports were not valid," Ronaldinho told Paraguayan newspaper ABC last month in his only public statement since his release.—AFP



Ronaldinho (in t-shirt) arrives at Asuncion's Justice Palace to testify about his irregular entry in Paraguay on March 6, 2020. **PHOTO:AFP**