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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Sunday, 24 May 2020

MoHS, Tatmadaw medical corps take body temperature with mobile infrared thermal detection units

MOBILE teams of Ministry of Health and Sports and the Tatmadaw medical corps used vehicles installed with infrared thermal detection units in taking body temperature of people in Mayangon Township in Yangon yesterday morning, as a move to prevent transmission of COVID-19 among the public.

The Public Health and Medical Services Department of Yangon Region led in using these vehicles in wards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Mayangon Township, out of 10 residential quarters, while other combined teams carried out door to door medical tests.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, his government members and officials looked around these works.



SEE PAGE-3 Officials take body temperatures of people on a vehicle installed with infrared thermal detection units in Mayangon township yesterday. **PHOTO: Pe Zaw**

COVID-19 Situation in Myanmar

Updated at 8 pm, 23 May 2020

Total Case	New Case (22-23 May)	Total Death Tally
201	2	6
Total Recovery	New Recovery	Discharged from Hospital
120	4 Cases—59,119,179,180	107

Recovery Update on 23 May 2020 after two consecutive tests

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours until 12 noon of 23 May 2020

New PUI	48
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SEE PAGE-2

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Myanmar receives 604 returnees from Thailand on 23 May



Officials testing the body temperature of the returnees from Thailand. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

A fresh batch of 604 Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand arrived back home through the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday, bringing the total number of returnees from Thailand through border crossing since 1 May to 1,388. Yesterday's returnees are 3

from Kachin State, 1 from Kayah State, 35 from Kayin State, 28 from Mon State, 43 from Sagaing Region, 217 from Bago Region, 121 from Magway Region, 25 from Yangon Region, 47 from Mandalay Region, 25 from Nay Pyi Taw, 14 from Shan State, 3 from Taninthayi Region, 7 from Rakhine State, and 35 from Ayeyawady Region.

Following the negotiation between the two governments, the Myanmar embassy in Thailand arranged the repatriation programme for the migrant workers.

Authorities checked the returnees' health conditions and fulfilled their needs. Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrator U Tayzar Aung, Police Lt-Col Thet Lin Oo, Township adminis-

trator U Phyo Zaw Ko Ko, and officials supervised the processes.

A total of 1,388 Myanmar nationals returned home from Thailand from 1 to 23 May. Of them, 60 returnees arrived back 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, 38 on 14 May, 120 on 15 May, 76 on 16 May, 90 on 17 May, 64 on 19 May, and 604 on 23 May.

Of them, the returnees arrived back on 13, 14 and 15 May, and 45 returnees out of 90 on 17 May are those who freed from the prisons in Thailand. Therefore, officials from Thailand handed over them to the Myanmar authorities.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Supplies reach IDP camps for measures against COVID-19

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

Moreover, the ministry is conducting awareness campaigns and motivation works in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and other regions/states.—MNA

The table shows supplied items and IDP camps in respective areas from 21 to 23 May 2020.

Items	Kachin		Shan	Rakhine	
	Bamaw Township	Mansi Township	Kutkai Township	Minbya Township	Buthidaung Township
	2 camps	2 camps	3 camps	39 camps	4 camps
	22 May	23 May	22 May	21 May	22 May
Hand Sanitizer bottles	268	1,038	578	-	139
Soap Bar	718	2,303	-	2,015	
Lime Powder bags	20	20	-	310	18
Thermometer	1	4	-		4
Washbasin	3	9	-	38	5
Cloth Mask	1,436	4,606	3,478	-	
Surgical Mask	-	-	-	-	4,030
Hand Speaker	2	2	-	-	4
Memory Stick (Campaign Audio file)	2	2	-	-	4
Campaign Vinyl Sheet	-	2	6	-	4

237 return from China through border on 23 May

Myanmar people returning from China through Muse and Laukkai and Chinshwehaw in Kokang Self-Administered Zone in Shan State (North) have been systematically transported back to their respective regions and states from Lashio by train.

First the people who came home via Muse and Laukkai and Chinshwehaw were properly checked, and transported them to Lashio by car. From Lashio they have been sent to the respective regions and states beginning 6 May this year. On 23 May, 237 persons – 151 males and 86 females – were sent back home. Of them, one was from Kachin State, 35 from Sagaing Region, 46 from Bago, 80 from Magway, 32 from Mandalay, five from Nay Pyi Taw, 20 from Rakhine, one from Yangon Region

and 17 from Ayeyawady Region. Under the supervision of COVID-19 prevention, containment and treatment committee, the chairman and members of Lashio District and Township COVID-19 prevention, containment and treatment committees, officials of Operator Licence, Transport Coordination and Supervisory Division (Shan State joint office), officials of Myanma Railways, members of township private road transport supervisory committee, social welfare organizations and Red Cross, and well-wishers are rendering assistance in providing food and accommodation, health checks, hostels and transport for the homecoming people.—Nang Thanda Oo (IPRD)

(Translated by TMT)

COVID-19 Situation in Myanmar

FROM PAGE-1

New COVID-19 Cases Updated at 8 am, 23 May 2020

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Overseas travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
200	38	Male	Tiddim Township, Chin State	No	Yes, Malaysia	People's Hospital in Tiddim	Positive	Held under quarantine (in Tiddim Township)
201	26	Male	Tiddim Township, Chin State	No	Yes, Malaysia	People's Hospital in Tiddim	Positive	

“People are the key”

MoHS, Tatmadaw medical corps take body temperature with mobile infrared thermal detection units

FROM PAGE-1

The Chief Minister said, “Mobile medical tests could find the persons with symptoms of COVID-19 to get early treatment. It will also help in contact tracing to prevent more transmissions among the public. The programme focuses on the townships with higher numbers

of confirmed cases.”

Officials and combined teams also used survey forms to collect specific health conditions of individuals.

Ko Zaw, living in 12th street of Ward 1 in Mayangon Township, commented, “We welcome the door to door screening. I have felt confident after the

test. People participate in this programme, and it is a good sign for our country to control the COVID-19.”

Over a hundred thousand of people received tests in Mayangone Township yesterday, where the second highest positive cases were found.

The township-wide screen-

ings have been conducted in Insein, Tamway, Hlinethaya, South Okkalapa, Bahan, Dagon Myothit (east), Dagon Myothit (north), Dagon Myothit (south), Shwepyitha, Mingaladon, Kyauktada and Mingala Taungnyunt affected by the pandemic in considerable cases.

The Public Health and Med-

ical Services Department of Yangon Region will continue mobile medical tests in Sangyaung, Ahlon, Dagon, Kamayut, Hline, Dawbon, Thakayta, Botahtaung, Pabedan, Pazundaung, Thingangyun, North Okkalapa and Hlegu townships.—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Aung Khin)

The Importance of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to Fight against COVID-19

By Dr. Than Lwin Tun,
May Thazin, Honey Soe

THE World Health Organization (WHO) announced COVID-19 can be characterized as pandemic on 11th March, 2020. We have already been through the impact of this pandemic before the outbreak hit our own lands. When it does happen, the government is the first to respond in any country. As the virus is new, we still have a lot yet to learn over time. This is a long term battle for the human being and the sector of PPP plays a key role to fight against COVID-19.

As the State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said, “People are the Key”.

We would like to mention that we all need to know the 5As to fight against COVID-19: Asymptomatic Carrier, Avoid Crowded Places, Activate Immunity, Active Community Participation and Attitude towards using Masks, Handgel, Handwashing and Physical Distancing.

To implement 5As, the role of PPP is very important. One way to prevent this catastrophe is to reduce the number of new cases per day by preventing people from being exposed to infected individuals through physical distancing, thereby reducing the probability of new infections. Moreover, taking private healthcare providers into confidence, training them where necessary and planning a cost-cutting strategy to relay the benefit to the people may lighten the burden on public healthcare system in such scenarios. Such a symbiotic association will benefit the general public greatly in the face of a healthcare emergency.

PPP have demonstrated successful containment of infectious disease outbreaks in the

past. In 1985, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore established a cell to investigate the outbreak of HIV in India. Findings of this cell led the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to establish a task force to design a strategy to control the spread of HIV/AIDS. “In any outbreak, government laboratories are the first to respond. The same procedure is followed in most countries,” Abdul Ghafur, a Chennai-based infectious disease expert says, “The ICMR has now announced that it will allow private laboratories to test for COVID-19. The government labs have done a good job so far and there has been no harm to the country by not involving private laboratories in the beginning. We have not lost any time yet and now is the right time for private entities to participate.”

Today’s growing global health crisis not only highlights the urgent need to leverage the private sector for its speed and implementation capacity, but it also draws attention to the critical role of the public sector in terms of emergency measures—in particular waiving federal regulations and laws, and giving doctors flexibility to treat affected patients.

South Korea can also be looked to for some early lessons in light of its early successes in containing the spread of COVID-19. Its dynamic model has led to recovery cases outnumbering new cases in a short amount of time due to its emphasis on public-private partnerships, transparent communication, and data-based technology-backed measures. For example, South Korea has leveraged the innovative technology expertise of

KT, a company that developed the Global Epidemic Prevention Platform (GEPP), a smart phone application that allows users to reach out to authorities regarding their health condition in an effort to combat the spread of infectious disease. It is fair to say that the COVID-19 crisis cannot be looked at or combatted with a myopic mindset, nor can it be resolved by solely relying on the public sector. As seen in the case of South Korea, it is essential for the public sector to partner with the private sector to ensure a successful and timely end to this pandemic.

A growing wave of technology entrepreneurs and companies

laborate with the Government in getting information, reporting and tracing contacts of COVID-19 via website <http://www.mohs.gov.mm> and internet address <https://www.mohs.gov.mm/Main/content/page/covid-19-contact>.

Most recently, in an effort to help monitor and slow the spread of COVID-19, Google and Apple joined forces to provide a cross-platform contact tracing Application Programming Interface (API) for app developers to help public health agencies track potential exposure to the virus among communities. Government health organizations can also automate timely updates and responses to the public via

Today’s growing global health crisis not only highlights the urgent need to leverage the private sector for its speed and implementation capacity, but it also draws attention to the critical role of the public sector in terms of emergency measures ...

has been harnessing their skills over the past couple of years to collaborate with, and better serve, government. Now, during this critical moment, they are mobilizing and joining the call to partner with cities in the unified fight against the spread of the virus.

In Myanmar, the mobile application, Sawsawpyaw (<http://www.sawsawpyaw.com>) has been developed in collaboration with the Government and Technomation for faster and easier COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Reporting. Public can also col-

laborate with the Government in getting information, reporting and tracing contacts of COVID-19 via website <http://www.mohs.gov.mm> and internet address <https://www.mohs.gov.mm/Main/content/page/covid-19-contact>.

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sellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said in the foreword of CERP, “While we must come together in the fight against COVID-19, our past offers us no blueprint for the future. Our collective response must be both comprehensive and well-coordinated. I draw strength from the knowledge that both our public and private sector will rise to this new challenge, sustained by, and working in partnership with, individuals and communities, both regional and international.

Therefore, the role of public private partnership is very important in mitigating the dire consequences of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. While the international leaders are feeling the weight and severity of COVID-19’s impact during this new, unstable reality, we believe that we will meet this crisis and create a new normal life together.

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Myanmar China Association donates medical supplies to fight coronavirus infection

MYANMAR China Association donated medical supplies to the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 May for the protection against and control of the coronavirus disease.

The donation ceremony was held in Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee hall and attended by Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Vice Mayor U Ye Min Oo, committee members U Min Thu, U Min Thein, Permanent Secretary U Myo Aung, head of the department (city/land) U Min Min Zaw, the deputy permanent secretary, related departmental heads and officials.

The members of Myanmar China Association donated the



Myanmar China Association donating medical supplies to the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 May. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG**

medical supplies on behalf of Daw Khin Khin Lay, Chairperson of the association. Then, Vice Mayor U Ye Min Oo and officials received the donation

items and gave the thankful speech and honourable certificates. The association handed over 15,000 surgical masks, 50 PPE suits and two sets of

disinfectant equipment worth K18 million to Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.—Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Taungtha Seintalone growers face cheaper price than before coronavirus pandemic

THE Seintalone mango growers are unhappy because of price drop during the high harvest time of Seintalone in Taungtha and Myingyan townships in Mandalay Region, said U Thet Khine Win, an owner of Muditha Sein-

talone mango farm in Ward 2.

The villages in Taungtha Township grow the Seintalone mango on a commercial scale. Although there is a great supply of Seintalone mango this year, the demand is not as high

as the supply, thus the growers having to sell the mango at a low price. Previously, the Seintalone mango dealers came to make an outright purchase of mangoes directly on the farms. Now, the mangoes are selling at a low price because the mango dealers do not come to our village because of the coronavirus outbreak. So, the mango growers face a hard time, according to the Seintalone mango growers.

The Seintalone mango from Taungtha Township is of high quality. Every year, the Taungtha mango gets a high price. This year, the mango growers are unhappy because of the price drop. The price of Seintalone mango packed in bag stands at K3,000 per 10 pieces while the mango without bag packing are sold for K1,500-2,000 per 10.

Of about 200 mango varieties originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamyar Ngamauk, Yinkwe, Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. The foreign market prefers Seintalone variety.

Myanmar's mangoes are primarily shipped to China, and also to India, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Japan. Ayeyawady Region possesses the largest mango plantation acres, having about 46,000 acres. Bago Region is the second-largest plantation with 43,000 acres and Mandalay has 29,000 acres of mango. There are over 24,000 acres in Kayin State, over 20,400 acres in Shan State and over 20,000 acres in Sagaing Region.—Kyaw Myo Naing (Taungtha) (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)



A woman measuring the weight of the mangoes for sale in a market. **PHOTO: KYAW MYO NAING (TAUNGTHA) (IPRD)**

Over 5,000 tonnes of illegal timber seized in Sagaing Region

With the illegal timber extraction rampant during coronavirus pandemic period in Sagaing Region, authorities are exerting greatest efforts and thus over 5,000 tonnes of illegal timbers were seized from October to April in this fiscal year 2019-2020, according to the Sagaing Region Forest Department.

During the coronavirus infection period, the illegal timbers were confiscated in

Sagaing, Shwebo, Monywa, Katha, Kalay, Mawlaik, Khamti and Tamu districts.

"Over 5,000 tonnes of illegal timbers were confiscated in Sagaing Region from October to April in this FY. Although we expected that the illegal timber extraction would decline because other businesses were also suspended in this period. However, the illegal timber extraction does not decline," said

an official from Forest Department in Sagaing Region.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the authorities have taken action against a total of 1,380 cases in Sagaing. Most of the seized illegal timbers are ownerless. The Forest Department filed charges against 218 cases while 174 cases had legal action taken. The department also arrested 483 offenders, who felled the trees illegally.

The department has seized a total of 26,674 tonnes of illegal timber in Sagaing district, 1,004.1357 tonnes in Shwebo, 734.9195 tonnes in Monywa, 1087.4340 tonnes in Katha, 1352.7094 tonnes in Kalay, 689.1516 tonnes in Mawlaik, 453.1152 tonnes in Khamti and 103.5866 tonnes in Tamu districts.—Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Report to the people on the progress of the Implementation committee on recommendations on Rakhine State between September and December 2019

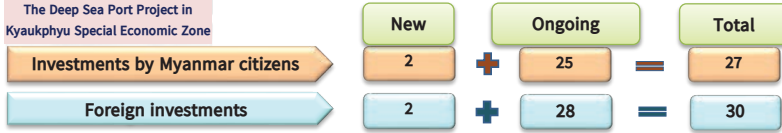
Economic and Social Development of Rakhine State



Status of Maungdaw Kanyin Chaung Economic Zone A (49.58 acres) Construction Project – 92.22 % completed.

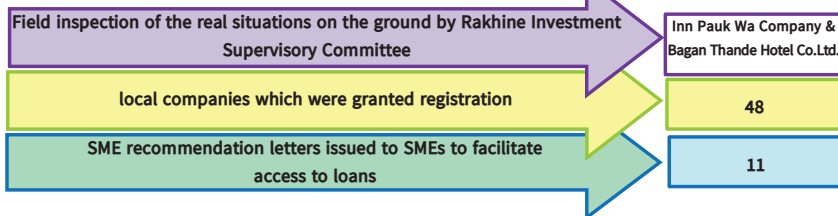


The extension of the Framework Agreement on Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone Deep Sea Port Project was signed on 7th November 2019.



Two new investments by Myanmar citizens – High quality rice milling and hotel service

Two new foreign investments – Livestock husbandary (chicken/pigs) and animal feed production; 150 MW electricity generation from natural gas



Coordination Meeting of Rakhine State Tourism Working Committee (3/2019) held on 29/09/2019

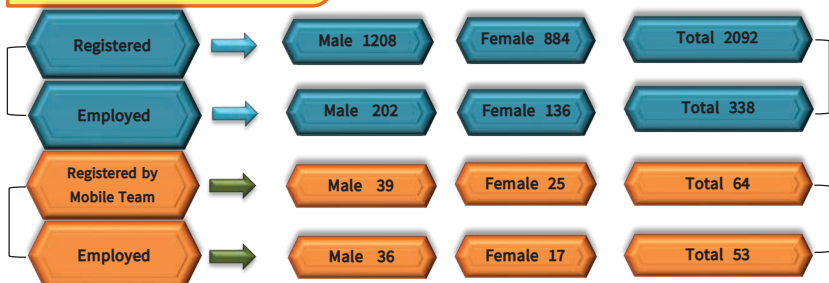


Ngapali Beach Autumn Festival held in cooperation with Myanmar Hoteller Association (Rakhine Zone) on 20/10/2019.



Online Hotel Guest List Management System Training conducted in Kyauk Phyu on 22/10/2019 and in Sittwe on 24/10/2019

Labour Registration



Delivery of training courses



Electrical wiring training, the Government Technical Institute (Kyauk Phyu)

Community based tailoring training (Sittwe, Thetkaepin Camp)

Business Awareness Training (TOT) (Sittwe)

Market driven vocational skill training	Vocational training for women	Financial literacy training
26 training courses / 742 trainees	27 training courses / 564 trainees	2 training courses / 42 trainees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical wiring training computer training electrical maintenance training bamboo handicraft training plumbing training motor cycle repair training ecosystem based aquaculture management training masonry (brick laying) training shampoo, soap and candle making training single cylinder engine repairing and maintenance training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tailoring trainin value added food production training fancy hand made product training bamboo handicraft training hand weaving design training natural dye technology training personal care product and cosmetics making training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Awareness Training (TOT)

At the Vocational Training School (Sittwe), air-conditioning installation training and electrical wiring and installation trainings were provided and NSSA Inspection Team assessed the trainees to award the certificates of National Skill Standard Authority (NSSA).

Transportation

10 bridges which have been 100 % completed	37 bridges which are under construction (on average 48% completed)
Kyauk Tan Bridge	Pyun Shyae; Khayan Chaung; Lone Chaung; Yu Chaung; Myaung Bway; Yar Maung; Kha Yu Chaung; Taung Shauk Chaung; Ywar Chaung Gyi; Nga Pyi Gyi; Kar May Chaung; Kin Chaung; Kyauk Pasat; Nga Tan Pyinn; Pan Chan Chaung; Kyi Chaung; Seik Nar Pyin; Gwa Chaung; Kyauk Twe; Kywe Ku; Min Tet Chaung; Daw Yahta Chaung; Kun Taing; Bridge No. (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) on Kyein Chaung- Goppi Road; Zaydi Taung; Magyee Chaung; Bridge No. (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) on Kyauk Padu- Inn Din- Zaydi Pyin Road (including 7 new bridges)
Ma Whon Chaung Bridge	
Sa Inn Bridge	
Sitt Kel Taw Oak Bridge	
Shwe Tone Bridge	
Nan Taw Taung Bridge	
Brigde No. (1) and (2) on Kyein Chaung- Goppi Road	
Brigde No. (1) and (2) on Kyauk Padu- Inn Din- Zaydi Pyin Road	

Status of Construction of 4 May Yu Mountain Passes

No.	Township	Description	Completion status of passes	Completion status of bridges
1	Maungdaw	Kyein Chaung- Goppi Mountain Pass	35%	20%
2	Maungdaw/Buthidaung	U-daung - Nyaung Chaung Mountain Pass	-	25%
3	Maungdaw	Thet Kaing Nya - Padagar Mountain Pass	30%	20%
4	Maungdaw	Kyauk Padu- Inn Din -Zaydi Pyin Mountain Pass	55%	-

Roads under Construction

- Minbu-Ann-Sittwe Road
- Taungup-Maei- Kyauk Phyu Road
- Taungup- Thandwe Road
- Thandwe-Ngapali-Lone Thar Road
- Kyauktaw- Paletwa Road
- Buthidaung- Maungdaw Road

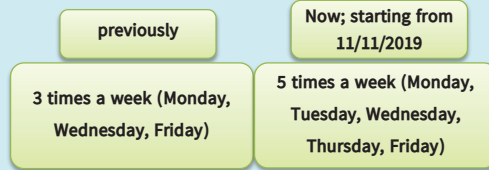
Transportation Sector

Air Transport



Out of all domestic flights, the flights to Rakhine State account for 15.19%.

The airlines fly from Yangon to Munaung, Kyauk Phyu and Sittwe.



Sr.	Description	Allocated Budget for 2019-2020 FY	Status of Progress
1	Construction of Sittwe Airport Fire Station Building; (36' x40' x15.5') reinforced concrete one storey building	MMK 40.00 million	Tender process is ongoing.
2	Widening Thandwe Airport runway (8500'x100') into 150 feet	MMK 4250.00 million	Tenders were invited on 15/10/2019 and subsequent steps are being taken.

Water Transport in Rakhine State



Report to the people on the progress of the Implementation committee on recommendations on Rakhine State between September and December 2019

Rail Transport

Railway track and embankment repair works on the Kun Taung – Kyauk Taw Section have been completed and those on the Pyi Taw Thar – Yae Chan Pyin Section are ongoing.

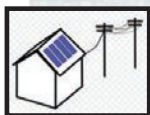
Telephone, internet and telecommunications sector

Extension of mobile radio station	32
Extension of fiber optic cable	767.55 Km

Electricity Sector



66/11 KV, 5 MVA transformer installation at Sittwe substation



During the reporting period, a total of 151,686 households in 22 towns of Rakhine State have been supplied electricity, resulting in 70.01% electrification in Rakhine State.

Sr.	Description	Status of Progress
1	Construction of 66 KV transmission line (0.6 miles) from Ponnagyun-Sittwe to Sat Yoe Kya and construction of 66/11KV, 20MVA substation at Sat Yoe Kya	Completed on 25/09/2019
2	Construction of one 66/11KV, 5 MVA substation (extension) at 66/11 KV, 20 MVA Sittwe substation	Completed on 30/09/2019
3	Construction of 66/11 KV, 10 MVA substation and 66 KV double circuit line (0.6 miles) to electrify 14 villages including Sat Yoe Kya Village in Sittwe	Electricity transmission started on 08/10/2019
4	Installation and construction of 11 KV transmission line (0.5 miles), 400 V transmission line (1 mile), one 11/0.4 KV, 200 KVA transformer one D/S set in Gaung Toke (Palaung) Village in Kyauk Taw	Electrification on 02/11/2019

Sr.	Description	Status of Progress
5	Installation and construction of 11 KV transmission line (1.2 miles), 400 V transmission line (2 miles), two 11/0.4 KV, 200 KVA transformers, one D/S set in Gaung Toke (Kalar) Village in Kyauk Taw	Electrification on 02/11/2019
6	- Construction of 33/11KV, 5 MVA substation to supply electricity to 53 villages including Kazu Kai Village in Ann Township - Construction of 33 KV transmission line (4.51 miles)	Materials arrived; Tender evaluation finished
7	To electrify 17 villages including Kyein Chaung Village, - Switch Bay extension at 66/33KV, 10 MVA, 66/11 KV, 5 MVA Maungdaw substation; - Other civil works; - construction of 20.4 miles of 66KV transmission line - construction of 39 miles of 11 KV transmission line - construction of 16.5 miles of 400 V transmission line - construction of 22 11/0.4KV, 100 KVA transformers	Transformer installation was undertaken on 23/12/2019 and 25/12/2019 100 % 18 % 100 % 100 % 100 %

Electrification by Solar Energy



Opening of Munaung Solar Power Plant



Munaung Solar Power Plant started electricity transmission and distribution on 13/11/2019 and was opened on 19/12/2019.

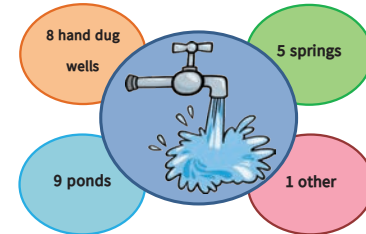
Under Rural Electrification Program as a part of National Electrification Plan (NEP), installation of 1,562 home solar systems is being implemented in 246 villages in 16 townships and 66% has been completed.

Infrastructure Development

During the reporting period, the construction project of 300 rural houses in 30 villages in 12 townships, namely Sittwe, Rathaedaung, Myaypon, Thandwe, Taungup, Gwa, Mrauk U, Kyauk Taw, Minbya, Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Ramree, has been 100% completed.

Water Supply

23 rural water supply projects completed



Rural Development Project

Development projects under the Multi-sectoral Rural Development Program have been completed in 141 villages in 12 townships. In the previous reporting period, 8 development activities – 7 road and bridge projects and 1 water supply project – being implemented in 8 additional project villages were 58% completed and during this reporting period those projects have been 100% completed.

Community Driven Development Project

Implementation of Community Driven Development Project with the support of World Bank



Upgrading into concrete road in Rahykin Village, Rahykin Village Tract, Gwa Township



Upgrading into concrete road in Myitnarpyin Village, Aleichaung Village Tract, Ponnagyun Township

14 villages in 9 village tracts, Gwa Township

6 villages in 4 village tracts, Ponnagyun Township

A total of 14 projects completed including 10 road and bridge projects, 3 school projects and 1 water supply project

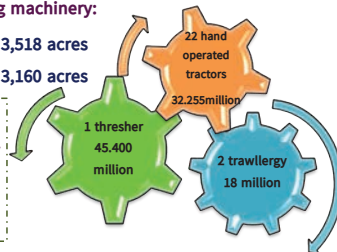
A total of 6 projects completed including 5 road and bridge projects and 1 water supply project

Agricultural Mechanization

Cultivation and harvesting by using machinery:

Cultivation	-	3,518 acres
Harvesting and threshing	-	3,160 acres

Installment loans of MMK 95.655 million were provided to the farmers to buy hand operated tractors, threshers and trawllergies.



Distribution of Pure Variety Quality Seeds and Transfer of Modern Farming Technology

Seed production fields

14 acres (monsoon paddy), 115 acres (winter peanut) and 5 acres (mung bean);

Establishment of pure variety crop production zones

monsoon paddy (100 acres); vegetables (483 acres); peanut (1,133 acres); cow pea (130 acres); green gram (1,145 acres) and mung bean (30 acres)

Distribution of pure varieties and seeds

monsoon paddy (1,100.25 bushels); green gram (102 bushels); mung bean (59 bushels); peanut (1,520 bushels); summer rice (17.50 bushels); cow pea (70.5 bushels); sunflower (16.9 bushels); mustard (43.2 bushels); sesame (3.8 bushels) and onion (6 pyi);

Satellite farms

1 satellite farm for monsoon paddy; 3 experimental farms for mung bean (growing mung bean by using seeds provided by Department of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture Research); 2 experimental farms for peanut (growing peanut by using seeds provided by Department of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture Research);

Model farms

monsoon paddy (Seeder) (191 acres); monsoon paddy (Good Agricultural Practice – GAP) (5 acres); winter peanut (115 acres); sun flower (31 acres); mung bean (33 acres); cow pea (29 acres); mustard (19 acres); green gram (35 acres); and vegetables (105 acres)

Inspection and monitoring to enforce legal production and distribution of agricultural inputs

inspection of fertilizer shops (51 times); inspection of pesticide shops (51 times); inspection of seed shops (23 times)

Completed crop growing

monsoon paddy (35,210 acres); sesame (3,579 acres); peanut (62,757 acres); sunflower (1,396 acres); mung bean (1,789 acres); green gram (15,593 acres); corn (15 acres)

Report to the people on the progress of the Implementation committee on recommendations on Rakhine State between September and December 2019

Agricultural Extension Services

Agricultural Extension Training on Modern Farming Techniques

Staff Capacity Development Training	22	342 males + 139 females = 481
Farmer Field School Training	61	2,284 males + 851 females = 3,135

Provision of Agricultural Loans

Monsoon Loans	MMK 7,854.00 million
Secured Loans using building and land as collateral	MMK 1.260 billion (36 businesses)
Micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) loans	MMK 0.227 billion (8 enterprises)
winter loans	MMK 1,627.600 million

Agricultural Extension Education Services

Demonstration of monsoon paddy farming methods	19 times
Demonstration of winter crop farming methods	3 times
Distribution of IEC materials (pamphlets) on farming techniques	8,490 pieces

Aquaculture development activities can be implemented in 2 townships and other services can be provided in 3 townships as follows:



Fish stocking in Selksone Pond in Minbya Township



Mud crab stocking in Yaechanpyin Village, Sittwe

- Fish stocking (50,000) no.
- Mud crab stocking (5,000) no.
- Rabies vaccination to dogs (100) no.

Repairs and Construction of Dams and Embankments



Construction of Kwin Hlyar Shae Earthen Reservoir Dam

In Kwin Hlyar Shae Village, Gwa Township, Kwin Hlyar Shae Earthen Reservoir Dam is being constructed to provide sufficient water supply to the communities from nearby villages.



Repair of three cracks in Farmer Embankment in Taungnyo, Kyauk Phyu Township



Construction of Chaungbote Valley Dam in Kinchae Village Tract, Ann Township

During the reporting period, the following construction projects have been 100% completed using 2018-2019 FY capital budget:

- Construction of Pyin Nga Khu Kwing Embankment (3000 feet) In Pyin Nga/ Khu Chaung Village Tract, Myaypon Township;
- Construction of Shauk Chone Kwin Embankment (3300 feet) in Shauk Chone Village Tract, Myaypon Township;
- In Taung Nyo, Kyauk Phyu Township, blocking the Cow Creek and repairing 3 cracks in Farmer Embankment;
- Construction of Chaung Bote Valley Dam in Kin Chae Village Tract, Ann Township;

For waterway improvements and prevention of bank erosions, the following activities are being undertaken:

- Waterway improvement at the estuary of Kalatan River in Kyauk Taw Township;
- Prevention of bank erosion in Sin Tet Maw Village, Pauk Taw Township;
- Installation of bore piles towards the middle of the river from the bank for 220-foot river bank retaining wall in Minbya;
- Prevention of bank erosion in Kan Sauk Village, Mrauk U Township;
- Prevention of bank erosion in Zee Gyun Village, Thandwe Township;
- Prevention of bank erosion in Letpan Gyun Village, Taungup;
- Prevention of bank erosion in Pyar Gyi Village, Munaung; for prevention of bank erosion in Yae Myetwa Village, tenders were invited on 02/12/2019;
- Tender process for Myin Kan Creek restoration project has been completed and discussions and preparations are taking place to start the project with the successful company.

Conservation of Forests and Environment

One forest conservation activity was carried out as follow:



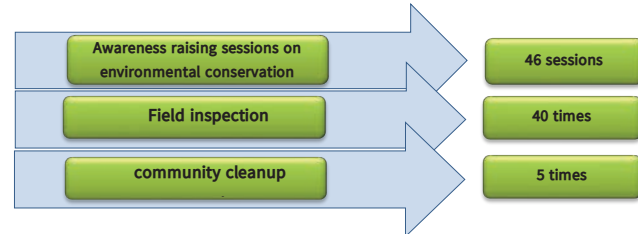
Educational talk at Nantawpyin Basic Education Primary School (22/10/2019)



Community cleanup campaign in Kyauk Phyu Township (16/11/2019)



Planting mangrove seedling campaign in Kyauk Phyu Township (04/11/2019)



Public presentation of Environmental Impact Assessment Plan for Shwe Project Phase (3) was held on 05/09/2019.

Citizenship

Citizenship scrutiny cards and NV cards have been issued as follows:

Issuance of 10 year old citizenship scrutiny cards	18 people
Issuance of 18 year old citizenship scrutiny cards	28 people
Issuance of NV cards	1,144 people
Biometric measurements taken	1,364 people

Freedom of Movement

During this reporting period, a total of 242 people (138 males and 104 females) were provided travel authorization out of Rakhine to Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Magway Region for social and health reasons, for meetings and trainings by issuing temporary travel authorization certificates (Form 4).

Travel authorization by issuing Form (4)	Male	Female	Total
National registration card holders	70	49	119
NVC card holders	68	55	123
Total	138	104	242

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)



Briefing on IDP Camp Closure (Sittwe)



Launching of the National Strategy on Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Closure of IDP Camps (Shwe San Eain Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw)

- Construction of 400 housing units has been 100% completed to resettle IDPs from Taung Paw IDP Camp in Myaypon when the camp is closed. Another 242 housing units are under construction in 2019-2020 FY and 30% of construction has been completed.
- In the resettlement housing area for Taung Paw IDP Camp from Myaypon, the construction of an earthen road (7722x8) has been completed. That road can help people to travel during the rainy season.
- The National Strategy on Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Closure of IDP Camps was launched on 19/11/2019 and the introduction to the Strategy took place in Sittwe on 02/12/2019.

Humanitarian Assistance



Provision of social pensions to the seniors over 85



- During the reporting period, the social pension program is being implemented. In this program, MMK 313.230 million is provided as social pension to 1,044 seniors over 85 in Rakhine State. Each senior receives MMK 10,000 per month.
- From 01/09/2019 to 31/12/2019, monthly food rations worth MMK 14,573,900 were provided to 813 households (3,063 people) and 5 relief items (male sarongs, female sarongs, T-shirts, blankets, and soap), food rations (rice, cooking oil, salt and pea) for one month, 58 kitchen sets and food allowances (MMK 600,000) were provided to 200 boat people.

Assistance Provided by World Food Programme (WFP)

No.	Month/Township	Description	Food (metric tons)	Beneficiary	Value (MMK)
1	September 10 townships	- Food provision for children under 5, pregnant and breast feeding mothers	3,475.710	-	662.745 million
2	October	- Northern Rakhine State -(Buthidaung, Maungdaw)	-	2,000	-
		- Food aids for IDPs from 176 Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu villages; - Food aids for people fleeing conflict	-	97,400	-

(TO BE CONTINUED)

To alert double infection of COVID-19 and dengue virus in coming months

WHILE fighting with the spread of coronavirus, we will have to struggle to cope with dengue fever outbreak which occurs in the rainy season.

It is a great encouragement to know that frontline health workers and volunteers are carrying out activities to prevent larvae formation and kill mosquitoes in populated areas these days.

It is best to prevent rather than to treat, and public health awareness is key for prevention. Meanwhile, government investment in public health to promote a healthy lifestyle among the public and proper sanitation facilities at public places is also paramount.

Like the coronavirus, dengue is a viral infection. While many dengue cases only lead to mild illness, it "can cause an acute flu-like illness" and can occasionally develop into "a potentially lethal complication," according to the World Health Organization.

We have already known that severe dengue is a leading cause of serious illness and death. The WHO recommended that it requires management by medical professionals to cope with the dengue outbreak.

Additionally, the medical journal Lancet said that dengue and COVID-19 are difficult to distinguish "because they have shared clinical and laboratory features."

When we fight with the dengue outbreak, the capacity and quality of our medical infrastructure would become an issue amidst the battle against the COVID-19.

Dengue should not be taken lightly, as it has directly affected more people than COVID-19. The number of dengue cases is often observed to increase at the beginning of the four-month rainy season, which starts in June.

As the rainy season is drawing near, we should also focus on other diseases, such as waterborne diseases and influenza, along with leptospirosis, which occurs during the rainy season.

According to the Ministry of Health and Sports, the number of dengue cases in 2017, 2018 and 2019 reached about 80,000, with some 450 deaths.

There is no typically prescribed medicine to offer treatment for dengue fever, except for relief from pain. And it is worth remembering that the number of yearly deaths caused by dengue fever is higher than COVID-19 fatalities, so far this year.

The regional governments are urged to take note of their regional health infrastructure respectively in the face of the current public health crisis.

The current pandemic provides an opportunity for us to see what we need to improve in our health sector to face the possible double outbreak in the coming months.

We need to vow to pay more attention to the health sector.

Fourth-Year Performances of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER)

By Shin Min
PHOTO: MIFER

Elevating the growth rate of national economy: MIFER

WITH the main objectives to attract more investment into the country to boost national development and to systematically handle the aids, the assistances and the loans, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) is working in top gear.

In harmony and balanced manner with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) projects as well as the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), the MIFER is shouldering for the creation of better investment environment and interacting efficiently with the inter-



Union Minister U Thauang Tun.

national economic organizations.

An interview is called on the Union Minister U Thauang Tun, and that the fourth year performances of the MIFER are submitted to the esteemed readers and the people.

Q: Kindly tell us first on the functions of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER).

A: In raising the local and foreign investment along with the smooth functioning of businesses, and balanced flow of foreign financial aids and technical expertise, we formed the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) on 19 November 2019.

We incorporated the Directorate of Investment Company Administration (DICA) and the Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD) from the Ministry of Planning and Finance into our ministry.

The MIFER has undertaken the two main tasks such as that of

the creation of better investment environment in harmony with the MSDP and the MIPP; and that of the effective and successful cooperation with the international economic organizations.

For the smooth and effective functioning of the MIFER, one Deputy Minister has been inducted in the ministry.

Regarding the matters on the international development aids and the international technical cooperation, the FERD is shouldering the duties, while the inflow of investment is being handled by the DICA.

Over the years since the formation of the MIFER, endeavor and effort is the main push of the ministry in building reliance and trust of the local and foreign investors. The push is to keep up and carry on in top gear.

Q: Please share us on the part of raising local and foreign investment and the economic cooperation activities.

A: As a developing nation, it is customary to garner the available domestic financial resources of the country as well as attracting foreign investment, the development assistance, and the foreign loans.

Looking into the main functions of the MIFER, it has the obligation for inviting local and foreign investors in one hand, and on the other hand, it needs to negotiate with international partners in securing aids and assistances and also soft loans to be used in the country's political, economic and social sectors.

Aim, target and goal for the formation of MIFER are to invite foreign investment steadfastly and strenuously and also to work on categorically and closely in securing aids, assistances and soft loans for the country.

Three main components are there in working with the international development partners.

First and foremost, it is ongoing smooth cooperation with the UN and its agencies with the departments, reflecting with the fine implementation of 2018-2022 Five-Year Country Program meticulously drafted between the UNDP and the relevant ministries.

Secondly, the ADB and the World Bank are giving soft loans



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with representatives from MEDEF International of France on 5 February, 2020.

for the development of Myanmar as well as providing technical skills, policy advocacy and project implementation.

Moreover, European Union supported education in Myanmar with EUR (221) million to provide equal accesses to better quality education for all Myanmar students in April 2019.

Browsing over the ASEAN cooperation, Myanmar follows after Singapore in the country wise implementation of 2019 ASEAN economic sphere.

ASEAN has five free trade agreements (FTAs) with six Dialogue Partners, namely China, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, and Australia and New Zealand, and that the cooperation is going ahead for more investment.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its free trade agreement (FTA) partners of (6) countries.

The pact aims to cover trade in goods and services, intellectual property, etc; and that it is expected to sign in 2020.

Myanmar is poised to enter in an international trade agreement for opening up opportunities for the people of Myanmar.

Thirdly, we have witnessed tangible improvements in bilateral cooperation. During the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Myanmar, many agreements have

been signed and that in the next (3) years Yuan (4) billion is in the pipeline.

Similarly, we have signed agreements with Japan such as that of aids and assistances programs; that of human resources development programs; and that of other assistances projects.

In September 2019, Myanmar and ROK signed the framework agreement under which South Korea will provide US\$ (1) billion to Myanmar for an economic development cooperation fund (EDCF) during a visit by South Korean President Mr Moon Jae-in. The implementation is now in progress.

European Union member countries namely Germany, France, Switzerland, Czech Re-

public, Denmark, Austria and Netherlands as well as Australia and New Zealand are stepping in and come together for cooperation in elevating for the sectors such as education, healthcare and human resources.

Q: Please elaborate on the citizen's investment from domestic sphere and the foreign investment.

A: During 2018-2019 fiscal year, 282 foreign enterprises were approved by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) with the total foreign investment amount of US\$ (2 point 764) billion.

Total of (97) foreign enterprises with ongoing projects have been approved with additional investment of US\$ (1 point 394) billion.

Moreover, (16) projects in Thilawa Special Economic Zone have been approved with investment of US\$ (0 point 362) billion. Therefore, the foreign investment for 2018-2019 fiscal year stands at (4 point 520) billion.

With regards to Myanmar citizen investment, total of (169) enterprises have been approved with investment MMK (1,434) billion including US\$ (381 point 638) million.

Total of (25) ongoing projects have been approved with MMK (256 point 459) billion including US\$ (91 point 647) million. Total amount stands at MMK (1,691 point 332) billion including US\$ (473 point 285) million.

Q: Kindly explained us on the approved domestic and foreign investment projects in the country and that of the job opportunities created out of it.

A: 2018-2019 saw the transport and communication sector at the top in investment; covering (36 point 99) percent. The industry sector covers (32 point 41) percent. Other service sector embraces (15 point 70) percent.

Myanmar citizen investment covers (24 point 04) percent in industry sector and stands top in the list.

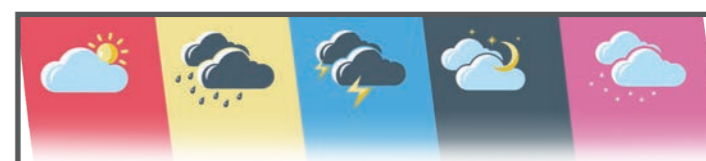
Service industry stands at number two slot with (19 point 62) percent.

The third slot is occupied by animal breeding and fisheries with (12 point 62) percent.

SEE PAGE-10



Union Minister U Thauang Tun attends the 51st ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting and related meetings in Bangkok.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 23rd May, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and weather is a few cloud elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 24th May, 2020: Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions and Kayah State. Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin State, fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region, Shan (North and South), Chin and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-8) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of weak monsoon over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th May, 2020: partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th May, 2020: partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th May, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting the submission of poetries, opinions, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been sent to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Fourth-Year Performances of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER)

FROM PAGE-9

Looking into the statistics on job opportunities, the foreign investment projects employed (170,330) workers, and that Myanmar citizen investment appointed (19,193) employees, totalling (189,523) workforce.

Q: Please tell us the countries that invested in Myanmar.

A: I would like to split in two parts on foreign investments.

During 2018 – 2019 fiscal year, based on the merits of total volume, there are (51) countries invested in Myanmar, and that Singapore, PR China, Thailand and Hong Kong stood at the forefront.

In the second part, I would like to highlight the inflows of investment during 2018 – 2019 single fiscal year compared to



Deputy Minister U Bharat Singh.

the same period of previous fiscal year. It has been recorded as a significant surge in that year.

Especially, the Asian countries namely Singapore, Thailand, and Hong Kong running at the forefront, while western countries such as Britain, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, and United States joined the bonanza with more investment.

Q: Tell us on the measures for raising investment.

A: Seriously taken up, the Myanmar Investment Commission has been convening roadshows in (6) foreign countries for (11) events, with (29) domestic presentations; totaling (40) showcasing of local and foreign investment in an attractive or favourable way.

The Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP) was drafted in accordance with the 2016 Myanmar Investment Law, and approved on 25 July 2018. The launching ceremony was held at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon in



Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and German Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Thomas Neisinger opening the Shan State Investment Forum 2019 in Taunggyi.

October 2018 in order to improve the responsible investment and to attract more than US\$ 200 billion next 20 years.

With a view to smooth implementation of MIPP, the MIFER formally launched the Investment Promotion Committee (IPC) at a ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw on 25 June 2019.

Q: Kindly share on the current foreign investment objectives of 2019 – 2020 fiscal year compared to previous years.

A: Expectation is set at US\$ (5 point 8) billion for 2019 – 2020.

As of 9 April 2020, US\$ (3 point 367) billion have been approved, inclusive of Thilawa Special Economic Zone, and therefore, the anticipation could be realized.

Looking back the statistics of last year, the same period showed US\$ (1 point 988) billion, and it is safe to say the foreign investment is outpouring.

Q: Kindly explain over the electronic registration of companies.

A: New company registrations can be completed via Myanmar Companies Online (MyCO), following the commencement of the Myanmar Companies Law (2017).

Established by DICA, MyCO acts as a public registry of all companies and entities registered under the Myanmar Companies Law.

With the installation of MyCo, Myanmar climbed up the ranking in “Doing Business Report (2019)” from (152) to (70) in “Doing Business Report (2020)”.

During the period from 1 August 2018 to 29 February 2020, total of (67,898) companies have been registered, and that between (1,400) to (1,500) companies are keep coming in for registration.

On 14 February 2020, Myanmar passed its new Insolvency Law, which aims to introduce a modern insolvency regime for investors and entrepreneurs.

In this connection, separate registry system is to be created for the insolvency practitioners; and those unregistered companies that falls under individual /

MSME category.

Plans are underway for implementation such as that of drafting the “Corporate Governance Principle”; that of establishing “Coordinator Office of Myanmar” for EITI matters; that of the compiling and releasing of relevant documents in connection with “Beneficial Ownership” in collaboration with the Anti-Money Laundering Central Committee of Myanmar. The “Investment Proposal Online System” and the “Online Investment Monitoring Application” are on the table for launching as soon as possible.

Q: Please tell us the possible impact on our economy by COVID – 19 pandemic and the measures for recovery.

A: The pandemic brings in some impact on economy in those countries that have linkage and hook up with the PR China. As Myanmar has profuse economic connectivity with China, we have felt the economic impact.

It hits hard in the manufacturing sector, the hotel industry, and the tourism sector. That is why we rushed in the tasks in

the formation of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease. We continued the fight against the virus continuously without interruption or gaps.

The Working Committee, formed on 13 March 2020, to address the impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the Country’s Economy was held at the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) in Yangon on 15 March 2020.

The Government took action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy on 18 March 2020, as set out in Notification No. 1/2020. The MIFER then held a coordination meeting of the working committee to remedy economic repercussions caused by COVID-19 and that the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry then announced the steps to resolve the effects on Myanmar’s economy.

At the meeting (2 / 2020), the initial relief fund is raised at MMK (100) billion, and that businesses hit by COVID-19 would be offered with (1) per cent loan interest rate for (1) year.

Beginning 9 April 2020, businesses that applied loans were given loans to (85) in the first group; (113) in the second group; and (111) in the third group. The mitigation works would be continued.

In conclusion, the Government on 27 April 2020 announced the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (“the plan”). The document talks about various action points by various government entities that will provide aid and relief in Myanmar in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Union Minister U Thaung Tun and members of the Myanmar Investment Commission attend the video conference with officials from respective offices in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon.



China's trade with N Korea down 90% in April amid pandemic

BEIJING — The total volume of China's trade with North Korea plummeted 90 per cent in April on the year to around \$24 million, highlighting the continued stagnation of bilateral shipments amid the new coronavirus pandemic, government data showed Saturday.

China's imports from North Korea totaled \$2.2 million last month, while its exports to the country stood at \$21.8 million, the General Administration of Customs said. In recent months, trade between the two nations has fallen to its lowest levels in years.

North Korea has cut off traffic to and from China and Russia since earlier this year in the wake of the spread of the pneumonia-causing virus. Pyongyang claims to have zero cases of coronavirus within its borders.

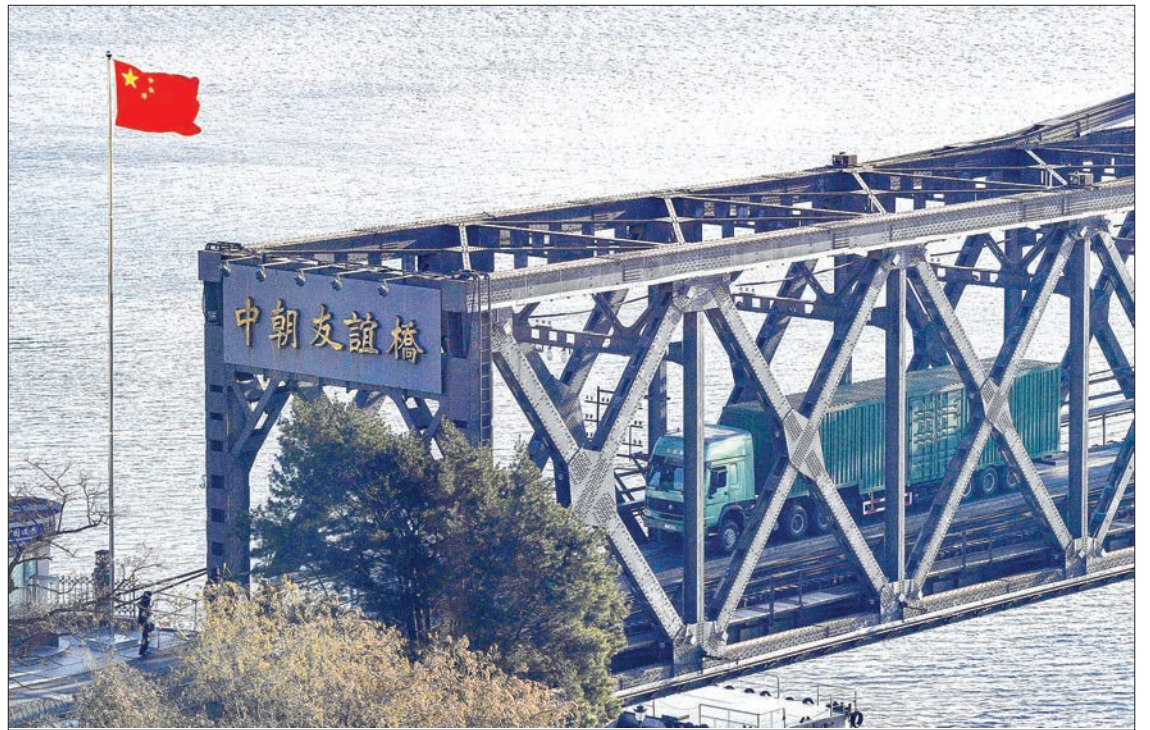
Beijing is known as Pyong-

yang's closest and most influential ally in economic terms. North Korea depends on China for more than 90 per cent of its trade.

Although trade with China is seen as an important source of foreign currency for North Korea, Pyongyang has put more emphasis on strengthening quarantine controls, foreign affairs experts said.

Earlier this month, Russia's ambassador to Pyongyang, Alexander Matsegora, reportedly said that his country has resumed exports of some necessities to North Korea to prevent its economy from further deteriorating.

North Korea is believed to be vulnerable to infectious diseases against a backdrop of chronic shortages of food and medical supplies triggered by economic sanctions aimed at



File photo taken Dec. 5, 2019, shows the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge that links China's Dandong and North Korea's Sinuiju. **PHOTO: KYODO**

thwarting Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile ambitions. North Korea previously

barred foreigners from entering the nation during the 2003 outbreak of severe acute res-

piratory syndrome, or SARS, and the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014.—Kyodo ■

Russia proposes shelving jurisdiction issue in isle talks with Japan

MOSCOW — Russia has proposed that the stalemated issue of legal jurisdiction over joint economic activities with Japan on disputed islands be shelved, sources close to the two countries' relations said Saturday.

While the proposal is Moscow's compromise in talks on promotion of joint activities as a confidence-building effort toward resolving the territorial spat, Tokyo still faces the task of bringing the two countries' leaders together to discuss the return of the islands seized by

the Soviet Union after Japan's surrender in World War II.

It is not known whether the Japanese government plans to accept the proposal.

There was a similar arrangement under a bilateral fishing agreement in 1998, with Russia allowing Japanese fishing boats to operate in designated areas near the disputed islands and shelving the question of sovereignty over the waters in those areas.

Despite the accord, Russian authorities have conducted boarding inspections of Japa-

nese boats in those waters.

Moscow wants to promote the economy in its Far East region through the joint operations in such areas as tourism and fish farming, while Tokyo sees economic cooperation as a step toward negotiating the return of Russian-controlled islands — Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and Habomai islet group known as the Southern Kurils in Russia.

The territorial row has prevented the two countries from signing a postwar peace treaty.—Kyodo ■



Photo taken from Rausu in Hokkaido, northern Japan, on Jan. 27, 2020, shows Russian-held Kunashiri Island. **PHOTO: KYODO**

97 dead, two survivors in Pakistan plane crash

KARACHI — All but two of the 99 people on board a Pakistan passenger plane were killed when it crashed into a residential neighbourhood of Karachi, officials said Saturday, as rescue workers toiled through the charred and twisted wreckage strewn across the street.

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane had made multiple approaches to land at Karachi airport on Friday when it came down among houses, sparking a rescue operation that lasted into the night.

The bodies of all the passengers and crew had been recovered, the Sindh Health Ministry said, adding that 19 had been identified.

DNA testing was being carried out at the University of Karachi to help identify the dead.

Flames and plumes of smoke were sent into the air as the plane came down, its wings slicing through rooftops before crashing onto a street.

Residents were the first to search through debris for survivors, with witnesses reporting the cries of a man hanging from the plane's emergency exit door.

A local hospital earlier reported it had received the bodies of people killed on the ground. PIA said air traffic control lost contact with the plane travelling from Lahore to Karachi just after 2:30 pm (0930 GMT).—AFP ■

Papua New Guinea ex-PM arrested over corruption

PORT MORESBY — Papua New Guinea's former prime minister Peter O'Neill was arrested over corruption allegations after arriving back in the country on Saturday, police said.

The arrest was part of an investigation into the alleged unauthorized purchase of two Israeli generators while he was in power, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary assistant

commissioner Hodges Ette said in a statement.

"There is reasonable evidence for misappropriation, abuse of office and official corruption," Ette said.

O'Neill was still being interviewed by police but would be granted bail to undergo two weeks of quarantine at his home, Ette said on Saturday night.—AFP ■

UK govt defends top adviser over lockdown 'breach'



Cyclists, some wearing face masks, ride along The Mall near Buckingham Palace in central London, Britain, May 16, 2020, following an easing of coronavirus lockdown restrictions. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — The British government on Saturday rejected calls to sack top adviser Dominic Cummings over allegations he broke coronavirus lockdown rules by travelling across the country while displaying symptoms of the disease.

Cummings left his London home shortly after he was diagnosed with the virus on March 30, and was later seen with his young son close to his parents' home in Durham, more than 250 miles (400 kilometres) away.

Under lockdown rules brought in on March 23, anyone with symptoms must self-isolate in their own homes. And people aged over 70 -- as Cummings' parents are -- are not allowed to receive visitors.

Britain's opposition Labour party said his actions suggested Cummings viewed himself as above the law and the smaller Liberal Democrats said it could be a resigning issue.

"The public have made extraordinary sacrifices during this pandemic and the lockdown. It cannot be one rule for those who set them and another for the British people," said Labour leader Keir Starmer.

An unnamed minister told the Daily Telegraph: "He's going to have to go. It's just arrogance."

But a spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that Cummings had acted "in line with coronavirus guidelines." — AFP ■

Cuba dreading Trump re-election, says diplomat

HAVANA — The re-election of Donald Trump as president of the United States would be "the worst" scenario for Cuba, Havana's top diplomat in charge of relations with Washington told AFP. "If the Republicans win ... it's a very negative scenario," said Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, the foreign ministry's general director for the US.

"It would mean at least a continuation of the policy of aggression against our country."

Cuba has been subjected to a US embargo since 1962 -- but, under Democratic President Barack Obama, tensions were easing. Then Trump took power and began ramping up sanctions once more, cancelling or suspending many of the agreements made during Obama's term.

In 2019 Trump added more than 80 sanctions, including those that hinder the supply of

Venezuelan oil, discourage investments, give the green light for compensation claims in US courts against nationalized properties, and block commercial and financial activity.

Added to that, the general lockdown that has been provoked by the coronavirus pandemic has worsened the social situation for millions of Cubans in a country that was already suffering from food and fuel shortages.

Trump addressed a message on Wednesday to the Cuban community in Florida -- a key swing state in November's US election -- in which he blasted "Cuba's tyrannical regime."

Many Cuban exiles and immigrants in Florida are passionately opposed to the communist regime in Havana, including Republican senator Marco Rubio. — AFP ■



People wear face masks as they queue to buy food in Havana on May 19, 2020, amid the new coronavirus pandemic. US President Donald Trump has ramped up tensions with the island nation after a relaxation during the Obama years. PHOTO: AFP

South America named virus epicentre as Trump seeks US reopening

BRASILIA — South America is "a new epicentre" of the coronavirus pandemic, the World Health Organization has declared, as US President Donald Trump intensified his push to reopen the reeling American economy.

Brazil led the surge across South America, its death toll passing 21,000 on Friday from 330,000 infections, the third highest caseload of any country in a pandemic that has infected 5.2 million globally and killed more than 338,000.

China reported more positive figures on Saturday, recording no new infections for the first time since it began reporting its data in January.

However, there are signs that other Asian countries are facing an upsurge -- India registering jumps of more than 5,000 cases each day for much of the

past week, although from a much lower base than the hardest-hit countries in Europe and the Americas.

Experts have hailed the impact of lockdown measures for slowing the spread of the

COVID-19 disease, but Trump has long prioritised the needs of the economy over public health concerns -- renewing his attacks on Friday on local officials for refusing to allow businesses to reopen. — AFP ■



Indigenous Kaingang leader Kretan Kaingang marches in protest against President Jair Bolsonaro as Brazil's COVID-19 death toll reaches new heights. PHOTO: (AFP PHOTO/EVARISTO SA)

US discussed holding first nuclear test in decades: report

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration has discussed holding the first US nuclear test since 1992 as a potential warning to Russia and China, the Washington Post reported Friday.

Such a test would be a significant departure from US defence policy and dramatically up the ante for other nuclear-armed nations. One analyst told the news-

paper that if it were to go ahead it would be seen as the "starting gun to an unprecedented nuclear arms race".

The report, citing one senior administration official and two former officials, all who spoke anonymously, said the discussion had taken place at a meeting on May 15. It came after some US officials reportedly claimed that Russia and China were con-

ducting their own low-yield tests. Moscow and Beijing have denied the claims, and the US has not offered evidence for them.

The senior administration official said that demonstrating Washington's ability to "rapid test" would be a useful negotiating tactic as the US seeks a trilateral agreement with Russia and China over nuclear weapons. — AFP ■

Argentina in default but creditor negotiations continue

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina defaulted on Friday for the second time in less than 20 years after failing to pay \$500 million of interest on its bond debt, but it continues to negotiate a restructure with creditors, Finance Minister Martin Guzman said.

“There is still a significant distance to go but, more importantly, all sides remain at the table to find a solution,” he said.

The default — Argentina’s ninth overall — was widely expected after

the economic ministry announced on Thursday that it was extending, for a second time, talks with international creditors on restructuring \$66 billion of its debt. The new deadline is June 2.

President Alberto Fernandez’s government is expecting to come to an agreement before Argentina suffers the full effects of its default.

Thursday’s announcement “provides flexibility in case the Republic decides to make modifications in

the coming days to ensure a sustainable agreement with our creditors,” Guzman said.

The crisis-wracked South American country, which has been in recession for two years, currently owes \$324 billion, amounting to around 90 percent of its GDP.

The crisis was aggravated when its economy was hit — like others all over the world — by the coronavirus pandemic.

Though it is one of the world leaders in food exports, Argentina has

already defaulted eight times in its history, most recently in 2001 when it owed \$100 billion.

That triggered a painful social and economic crisis.

‘Significant losses’

Ratings agency Moody’s said the default would provoke “significant losses for investors.”

“Moody’s expects that the panorama for the restructure of Argentina’s debt will very probably become more complicated,” said vice president Gabriel



Finance minister Martin Guzman during a livestreamed event hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce in Buenos Aires on May 19, 2020.

PHOTO: ARGENTINA’S ECONOMY MINISTRY/AFP/FILE

Torres.

Argentina’s main group of creditors is de-

manding “a direct and immediate discussion” on its restructure plans.—AFP ■

Virus-hit Hertz declares bankruptcy in US and Canada

WASHINGTON — Global car rental company Hertz became the latest economic casualty of the coronavirus pandemic

Friday, filing for bankruptcy in the US and Canada after more than a century in business.

“The impact of COV-

ID-19 on travel demand was sudden and dramatic, causing an abrupt decline in the Company’s revenue and future bookings,”

Hertz said in a press release.

Hertz said it took “immediate action” to prioritize the health and safety of employees and customers and eliminate “all non-essential spending”.

“However, uncertainty remains as to when revenue will return and when the used-car market will fully re-open for sales, which necessitated today’s action,” it said.

Its main international operating regions, including Europe, Australia and New Zealand, were not included in the US Chapter 11 filing.

Hertz had already cut 10,000 jobs in North America, or 26.3 per cent of its global workforce, to save money after the coronavi-

rus shutdowns paralyzed travel and crippled the economy.

Chapter 11 is a mechanism that allows a company that is no longer able to repay its debt to restructure itself without creditors.

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that Hertz held debts of roughly \$19 billion, in addition to nearly 700,000 vehicles sitting idle because of the coronavirus.

“The financial reorganization will provide Hertz a path toward a more robust financial structure that best positions the Company for the future as it navigates what could be a prolonged travel and overall global economic recovery,” the Hertz statement said.

Hertz’ franchise sites, which are not owned by the company, are also not included in the Chapter 11 proceeding.

Established in 1918 with only a dozen cars, the global car rental giant had survived the Great Depression and numerous American recessions.

But in recent years the company has struggled with competition — including Avis Budget and carpooling services such as Uber.

Hertz suffered a fourth consecutive annual net loss in 2019. But 2020 had started well with an increase in turnover of six per cent in January and eight per cent in February compared to the same months of last year.—AFP ■



Hertz’s main international operating regions, including Europe, Australia and New Zealand, were not included in the US Chapter 11 filing.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Chinese banks report forex settlement surplus in April

BEIJING — China’s commercial banks saw a net forex settlement surplus of 104.7 billion yuan (about 14.8 billion U.S. dollars) in April, the country’s forex regulator said on Friday.

Forex purchases by banks stood at 1.11 trillion yuan in April, while sales reached 1 trillion yuan, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange showed. In particular, the amount of forex settlement and sales by banks for cus-

tomers stood at 974.4 billion yuan and 889.5 billion yuan respectively, with a settlement surplus of 84.9 billion yuan. The amount of foreign exchange settlement and sales for banks themselves stood at 137.1 billion yuan and 117.3 billion yuan respectively, with a settlement surplus of 19.8 billion yuan. In the first four months, commercial banks saw a net forex settlement surplus of 377.7 billion yuan.—Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (090N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (090N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-5-2020 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (075 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (075 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-5-2020 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
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Phone No: 2301185

Infrastructural upgrades contribute to Ayeyawady Region's development

By Kyaw Htike Soe

WITH a view to helping local people from Ayeyawady Region go to other areas across the country in a convenient manner, improving road transport networks in the region, facilitating swift commodity flow, and contributing to regional development, the Pathein Bridge-2 is being built by the Ministry of Construction, said an official tasked with overseeing the bridge construction project.

The bridge is designed to link Pathein city and some residential wards on the west bank of Ngawun River and is being built by Construction Group-16 of the Department of Bridge under the ministry at an estimated cost of Ks. 28.5 billion. 20 engineers from the Department of Bridge and more than 200 skilled workers currently involves in the construction of the bridge that will be an important structure in



Ayeyawady Region, said Daw Thit Thit Aung, Project Engineer and Director of the Department of Bridge. The bridge construction project has been about 83 per cent finished so far, she added. The bridge is of a steel reinforced concrete facility and is 2,380-ft long with

28-ft wide traffic route. The bridge will be able to withstand up to 60 tonnes of weight and will have 5-ft wide pedestrian lanes on each side.

The width of pillars and height for waterway will be 416-ft and 60-ft respectively. Construction of the bridge be-

gan on 27 October 2018 and the facility is slated for completion in July this year. With rapid urbanization of Pathein City and urgent need for extension of urban residential housings on the west bank of Ngawun River, the Pathein Bridge-2 is built by the ministry, she said.



The Labutta (Pinlal Lay) Bridge was commissioned into service by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in late December last year. **PHOTO: MNA**



The Pathein Bridge-2 will become an important structure in Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: IPRD

The bridge is expected to become an important landmark for Pathein, contribute to regional development and offer a faster route to beaches such as Ngwehsaung, Chaungtha and Shwe Thaug Yan, and to Ayeyawady Region and Rakhine State's coastal roads. Upon completion of the bridge as scheduled, locals will be able to easily transport fishery products in the region to major cities in the country without any delays.

In addition, local people now can directly travel between Pathein and nearby areas by car in an easily manner. Be it what it may, road transportation will no longer be a headache for local people. The local government has been attempting to upgrade basic infrastructure projects in the region, pouring majority of its budget into reconstruction and upgrade of the road networks, to make operational in all seasons. The Labutta (Pinlal Lay) Bridge was inaugurated by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in late December last year. The ministry built a suspension bridge (Pinlal Lay) capable of withstanding 36 tonnes of weight in 1996 and finished it in 1998. Its load capacity declined after 2008 Nargis cyclone, and only 20 tonnes of weight were allowed

for passing over the bridge.

After the damage of Myaungmya suspension bridge in April 2018, the strength of Labutta (Pinlal Lay) Bridge was tested with the help of Chinese engineers. Based on the test results, the bridge's capacity was categorized as level 4 and the maximum load of 14 tonnes was allowed for passing over it. In the financial year 2018-2019, the old bridge was removed, and the Japanese technology steel box girder was used in constructing a new bridge. The new bridge is 1340 ft. long and 30.5 ft. wide. The bridge's clearance is about 29 ft. and waterway under the bridge is 192 ft. and it can withstand up to 60 tons of weight. The repair work for the old bridge has been undertaken by the Construction Group-1 under the ministry since 1 October 2018.

"The bridge enables travellers and local people to transport local goods to other areas. We encountered many difficulties when renovation of the bridge was carried out. Sometimes, we had to spend one night at the jetty near the bridge as we couldn't catch up the vessels. Now we no longer face such challenges," Ko Kyaw Min Oo, a truck driver said.



AIA brings its global ambassador, David Beckham, and partner, Tottenham Hotspur, together to promote Healthier, Longer, Better Lives

AIA, the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group, recently launched a new content series (filming was conducted prior to the Covid-19 pandemic) in partnership with its Global Ambassador David Beckham and partner Tottenham Hotspur Football Club ("Spurs" or "the Club").

This series marks the first time AIA has brought its two global partners together. A teaser image released this week shows the pair at Spurs' world-renowned stadium.

The initiative is underpinned by AIA's purpose-led brand promise of helping people to live Healthier, Longer, Better Lives. It sees David Beckham visit Spurs' training ground and stadium where he met with Head Coach Jose Mourinho, first team players, coaches and nutritionists. David Beckham and members of the Spurs team discuss the simple health and lifestyle choices everyone can make to improve their health, whether a professional player or not. Stuart A. Spencer, AIA Group Chief Marketing Officer, said: "We're excited to be collaborating with two of our most important long-term partners, David Beckham and the team at Spurs, to launch this series at a time when so many people are looking for practical ways to improve their health. AIA is committed to creating a movement across the Asia-Pacific region to enable Healthier, Longer, Better Lives. The ability of David Beckham and Spurs to attract and influence the right audience is key to the sustained success of this movement. This series speaks to the importance of taking even small actions to improve our health and wellness, whether relating to getting sufficient sleep, spending time with family and friends, eating well or getting enough exercise."

To watch episode <https://youtu.be/ONzWG1C73XI>.

The episodes include a focus on the importance of getting sufficient sleep, building on AIA's successful #OneMoreHour programme, which raises awareness of the physical and mental benefits of sleep. In one episode, David Beckham meets South Korea's Son Heung-Min and Brazil's Lucas Moura, both of whom credit stable sleep patterns as one of the major factors in boosting their performance in

training and on the pitch.

Alongside Spurs in-house experts, they discuss how the Club supports them in establishing good routines, getting enough quality sleep and offer tips everyone can use in their daily lives. The Spurs team emphasize how the combination of all these individual actions can really help to increase both mental and physical fitness. At a time when we are all focussed on our health, doing what we can to help us be stronger, fitter and boost our immunity has never been more important.

AIA Global Ambassador, David Beckham, said: "As new club owner with Inter Miami CF I want to help our team be the best they can be. I am grateful to AIA for giving me the opportunity to learn about Spurs' pioneering approach to player health and wellness and to get insight from a manager as experienced and successful as Jose was a real privilege. There is a lot of science and new thinking in the game since I was a player but it's clear that simple things like a solid routine and great sleep are still really important. I am proud to partner with AIA and to see first-hand their commitment to supporting people to live healthier lives."

Spurs Head Coach, Jose Mourinho, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome a true football legend like David back to the Club earlier this season and to learn about his affinity to Tottenham Hotspur through his family ties and training at the Club in 2011. We also spent time discussing the virtues of team preparation and ensuring the players are in peak condition both physically and mentally. Leading a healthy lifestyle has never been more important than at the current time and we are proud of AIA's great work to promote wellbeing through our partnership with them."

In another episode, Spurs players Harry Winks and Japhet Tanganga join David Beckham to talk about the importance of

maintaining discipline when making lifestyle choices, not just from getting enough sleep, but also eating well to give them an extra edge throughout their careers. The combination of all these small steps, combine to make a tangible difference to our health and wellbeing.

Both David Beckham and Spurs are playing a key role in making AIA synonymous with Healthier, Longer, Better Lives, through leveraging the power of football to reach millions across the Asia-Pacific region.

AIA has partnered with Spurs since 2013 and is the Club's Global Principal Partner. The partnership has been used to promote the vital role that active participation in sport plays in helping people to live Healthier, Longer, Better Lives.

The Club and AIA have seen great success in delivering their unique football development programme, engaging local communities and helping develop the football skills and overall physical fitness to over 55,000 people in 15 of AIA's 18 markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

For more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/AIA.Myanmar.MM/>.

AIA appointed David Beckham as our Global Ambassador in 2017. As an internationally famous sporting icon, and a dedicated family man, David is playing a leading role helping AIA to promote achievable steps people can take to improve their health and wellness. AIA launched the #WhatsYourWhy campaign with David, in which members of the public were asked to share their motivation for living a healthier life. Millions of people across Asia viewed and took part in the campaign. David makes frequent visits to AIA markets to help drive the Healthier, Longer, Better Lives movement, where he engages with large numbers of AIA customers, agents, partners and employees.—GNLM



HERO Winks Beckham Tanganga AIA group.

MFF president provides fund to Pathein hospital

MYANMAR Football Federation president U Zaw Zaw along with the Ayeyarwady Foundation recently donated K15 million to the Pathein Hospital, Ayeyarwady Region, according to the statement with the Ayeyarwady Foundation.

The donation aims to assist the general need of Pathein Hospital healthcare providers,

physicians and staff, and for the general use of the hospital, according to the source with the foundation.

Next, the foundation led by MFF President U Zaw Zaw also donated K500,000 to a coronavirus-affected person who returned from Malaysia.

Also, the Ayeyarwady Foundation already donated 20

ambulances to the Emergency Ambulance Service and philanthropic group for the ease of transportation in healthcare provision processes.

Previously, MFF president provided K500,000 for 19 coronavirus-affected patients in Yangon Region to assist preventive and combating measures of the pandemic. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

MPT invites fans to Freestyle Football Challenge

MYANMAR Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) has invited Myanmar football fans to a football programme named Freestyle Football Challenge, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The challenge aims to keep Myanmar football fans to be active while staying at home.

The challenge has started from 23 May and the end date is 12 June.

To participate in the chal-

lenge, interested fans need to record a video of their football performance.

Next, they need to upload their video files to MPT web portal via <http://mptfreestyle-football.com/>.

Video must be one-shot, and edited video would be not allowed, according to the MPT.

MPT will be approved the participant's uploaded video at 1 pm the following day.

After approval, the partici-

pant must share the link of the video to his/her Facebook profile by putting the hashtag "#MPT-FreestyleFootballChallenge" as the caption, according to the MFF.

Every Myanmar citizen can participate in the football challenge and 20 prizes will be awarded.

Winners will be chosen by 50% of voting results and 50% of Judges' decisions. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Premier League chief 'confident' of June restart

LONDON—Premier League chief executive Richard Masters is confident the top-flight season will resume in June as 'Project Restart' gathers pace.

Clubs returned to socially distanced training in small groups this week and the league

hope to begin playing the remaining 92 matches on Jun 12 or 19. Premier League players and staff have been checked for the coronavirus, with six people testing positive including Watford defender Adrian Mariappa.

"We've taken the first step.

It's great for everybody, including the fans, to see our players back on the training ground," Masters told BBC Sport on Friday. Masters said he was "as confident as we can be" that teams would be able to start in June.

Asked if the Premier League had an exact date for a return, Masters said the organization had to be "flexible".

While the top tier is taking baby steps towards emulating the Bundesliga's return to action, leagues in France, Scotland and the Netherlands have been abandoned because of the pandemic. Masters said he recognized the need for "contingency plans" and admitted "curtailment is still a possibility".

Watford captain Troy Deeney and Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante have both opted against returning to training over health fears.—AFP ■



Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder Bruno Fernandes (L) vies for the ball with Manchester City's Portuguese midfielder Bernardo Silva during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Manchester City at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on March 8, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

'Not on pitch but on console': Euro 2020 kicks off without footballers



Euro star? Lotfi Derradji will lead France. PHOTO: AFP

PARIS —Euro 2020 may have been swept from the calendar due to coronavirus, but UEFA's video-game eTournament version kicks off on Saturday regardless. Instead of Kylian Mbappe, Harry Kane or Cristiano Ronaldo racing around the pitch, gamers will slug it out, contesting the first ever eEuro from their armchairs. "The weight of the whole thing is on our shoulders," said 21-year-old Frenchman Lotfi Derradji, who comes from the Paris suburbs but 'plays' for Monaco where he was crowned French champion in 2018. "We will represent France not on the pitch but on the console,

we're getting huge amounts of support," said Derradji's international and club teammate, Walid Rachid Tebane, who won the individual European title in June 2019. "We are disappointed that the Euros have been postponed but at the same time it switches more attention on to us," added Derradji, who has been playing with international French striker - and gaming enthusiast - Antoine Griezmann. These two bespectacled eSports professionals earn 2,000-6,000 euros a month, but can boast that with the 40,000 euros up for grabs this weekend and its commercial tie-ins.—AFP ■

Pochettino 'happy' that Mourinho replaced him at Tottenham

LONDON—Mauricio Pochettino insisted Friday that he was "happy" that Jose Mourinho replaced him as Tottenham coach.

Mourinho took over in November despite Pochettino having enjoyed a successful five-and-a-half year spell in charge of the London side.

"I am so happy that he is at Tottenham, replacing me," admitted Pochettino who is now officially off the payroll at Spurs after his six-month gardening leave ended.

That leaves him free to take other jobs without the worry of prospective employers having to pay compensa-

tion. "And of course I am happy as well to leave the club in the way that we left it, with all the facilities that are the best in the world.

"For sure, he is very grateful for the way that we helped to build the club, which is now his club."

Pochettino recalled how he and Mourinho had forged a close relationship during their days as rivals in Spain's La Liga. "With Jose, we know each other for a long time," he explained.

"When I was the coach of Espanyol, and he was at Real Madrid, we had a very good relationship.—AFP ■

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Global New Light of Myanmar

NEXT GENERATION PLATFORM

24 MAY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR



By Angel Linn
M.Ed, Y.I.O.E

With our hands of loving-kindness

When I was young, I was in poor health. I have encountered a situation in which my life was almost snatched from the Lord of Death as I slipped down from the staircase about 12 feet in height. When I grew up as a teenager, I have been seriously ill for one or two times. I was lying in bed without moving. I could not raise even my hands for a cup of water. Even in such a situation, I felt and thought I was very far away from the lord of death. Now, I have reached my 30s.

When I was in the age of university student, my health got better a lot and I almost forgot the Lord of Death. When I was 20, I encountered feelings of anxiety over petty things that every

youth experiences. The strange thing is that although anxiety could be forgotten in the course of time, the consequences were that I lost appetite and could not sleep at night. Although the anxiety was almost forgotten, the real ground situation was worse than ever. I could not stand up alone. I tried to eat something I always liked, but I could not swallow it. I thought I had to seek for medical advice. If not so, I would die. That was my first and foremost thought about death.

My mom who knew me ins and outs took me to a doctor, a friend of hers. After they had talked for a while, the doctor advised me to take I.V. injection for three days and gave some pills for ten days. Then, she encouraged me that I

would recover and regain my strength after her treatment, and I could overcome my anxieties automatically. Her tone was full of kindness but I could reply to her nothing but a faint 'Yes' as I was in such a frail condition. Then, I recovered again within ten days, thanks to the doctor's encouragement. I happened to think that I would surely die unless I took the medical treatment.

When I was 25, I had to travel a lot as a Junior Adviser in a microfinance organization in the Ayeyawady Region. I was in charge of four townships alternately. Therefore, I stayed in a township just for a week a month. One day, I was travelling to a town in a small van arranged by my office. After about half an hour, we came to an intersection of the highway.

My driver carelessly turned left and an express bus running straight at high speed was about to hit our car. All of a sudden, my driver got cautious again and turned his steering wheel to the clockwise direction.

I screamed loudly. Our van could not escape the danger totally but dragged along over a hundred feet, and we were safe again. Loud screeches and screams from the passengers of the express bus were like the turmoil of a hell. Luckily, not a soul in our car was killed, except for some scratches and wounds. The driver from the express bus got down and came to us angrily. In spite of being frightened to death, on behalf of our driver, I had to apologize him to his satisfaction. It was a close shave indeed from the lord of death.

This time, a thought I could die at any time entered my mind instead of thinking I was very far away from the Lord of Death.

Again, I saw my dad and my younger brother passed away one after another in a few years. I also had a good lesson or some general knowledge about 'life' which

SEE PAGE-S-2



By Htar Sandi Naing
Third Year (Honours),
English Specialization,
University of Yangon



WORDS WORDS, WORDS WORDS

Have you ever wondered about how many words you speak a day? That question popped up in my head when I watched a movie called, "A Thousand Words". With every word the main character speaks, a leaf falls from a tree. In that case, he is limited to speaking only a thousand words. Research shows that the average person speaks at least 7,000 words a day. It is true that words are free. Whenever you want to use that word you don't need to buy it or order online. You don't have to wait until it is delivered to your house as well. Do they all have a purpose? Or do they have no purpose at all?

Humans are the only species that can talk. However, we never think about how many words we speak within

24 hours. We keep on talking and talking. Words are filled in our mouths. They are ready to slide down once we open our mouths to talk. Some people might send texts as soon as they wake up. Or some might call someone as soon as they open their eyes. 'Good Morning!' As you can see, two words are spoken already. As the day goes by, words keep spilling out of our mouths. As they spill out, there is nothing in the world that can help us attain them back. These words will stay forever. They may not be forgotten. Instead of using too many words to express something, why don't we just shorten it to the main point? In addition to that, we need to think carefully before we speak. At that time, we can realize whether it will be useful to say it out aloud or not. If it is going to hurt someone,

isn't it better to stay silent?

However, we cannot stay quiet for too long. At some point, we all have to talk in order to communicate. It should at least have a purpose. Otherwise, we'd be just wasting our energy. If without a purpose, what is the point of doing it at all? Words even have the power to tie us back and push us into the hole of trouble. That's why they can even kill you. Words have the ability to tear down all kinds of relationships, as well. Sometimes, we blindly trust someone without having second thoughts in our minds. As we become boiled up because of the power of the words, we can't clearly see what is right and what is wrong. At that time, everything is over. Words

can't be taken back. They live forever in the mind. It is clear that words hurt more than swords. That's why it is better to stay silent or use kind words when you are irritated.

One more question is: "Can we stay silent forever to avoid all the troubles?" The answer is obviously "No!" I imagine of my whole life not talking to anyone at all. However, it is an impossible task to happen. Words are the weapons that we can use to express everything. Talk when you need to talk. In that way, we can at least not hurt someone or cause trouble. Therefore, instead of saying 7,000 words a day, why don't we just use fewer words to communicate? I'd advise you to keep track of how many words you speak a day. ■

FROM PAGE-S-1

can vanish at any time. I happened to take notice of the 'death' more and more. Now I am in my 30s and all of the human beings of the world are facing an extremely deadly disease: COVID-19, which threatens the lives of the whole mankind worldwide. Our ancestors have already faced all sorts of disasters

and dangers and kept on living through generations after generations. One might grumble, saying, 'Even death will be good', but never fails to face the death bravely. Whenever death comes nearer and nearer, we give hands and hearts to one another and fight against the death by snatching any weapons we could lay our hands on. That was

why our ancestors had survived and stretched out their lifespan.

Last week, I turned 33. I seriously thank those who sent birthday wishes on Fb. I might conquer the Lord of Death 33 times but I must, inevitably, resign myself to his hand one day. In such a Stay-Home period, we are far away from each other but our hearts

are very close through giving aids and sharing what we have. I think, in this way, we are going to pull our loved ones out from the cruel icy fingers of the COVID-19 and get them back to our bosoms only with our hands of loving-kindness. ■

An important duty: Keeping our body in good health

By Kyaw King

During the Stay-at-Home period of the COVID-19 pandemic, dieting has become a problem for me as no food shops and stalls are open in Yangon.

I thought of skipping some meals, and tried it. But I couldn't bear the hunger that beat me after more than 24 hours. It was okay for me to do skipping dinners in the holidays and going to bed early. It was like taking a fast and not a big difficulty for me.

In my working days, skipping dinners wasn't the right solution for me. I always felt hungry in the late evenings, which are my prime working hours. I felt lack of energy, and no work could be properly finished after skipping a dinner.

In addition, skipping several dinners made my body weak and thin. I came to notice the vital role of foods for my body.

I tried another way by purchasing ready-made foods to solve my hunger problem. The foods with no expensive meat and fish were kept in a freezer. Thus, I have solved my eating problem for a week.

It cost me more than I spent on the meals at the shops before COVID-19. I feel that they are not nutritious for my body, and de-

cidated to give up the way which is not good for long term.

Since all the tea shops and meal shops have been ordered to be closed down, those who are living alone in Yangon have faced many difficulties in getting their daily meals, which were previously available almost everywhere.

People came to know that only money cannot make a proper meal. What would you do with your money if it cannot buy any meal?

Coronavirus still continues. On a holiday two weeks ago, I watched a video on YouTube, and came to know about human's six fundamental needs. It was a breakthrough for me.

The first one of the six human needs is food, which is needed for our bodies. If we eat the food that contains calories and a variety of nutrients including protein, fat, and carbohydrates every day, we will grow up, and have energy to perform daily tasks. Without food, our bodies will be thinner and weaker, and its functions will be stopped.

The YouTube channel also warns that unless a person meets the fundamental needs, his/her self-esteem, security, belonging, actualization, and the other expressions of contentedness will not be properly fulfilled and developed.

Then, I noticed that those who are happy in the world are

healthy. The healthier a person, the happier he or she becomes, I see.

Soon after I surfed on the Internet to find out what is a balance diet, and luckily came across the Eatwell Guide site, which explains and shows food groups which provide us what kinds nutritional values and make us healthier.

After I had gone through the main articles on the site for several times, I came to know why my body was not properly developed. It is because I didn't eat proper amounts of foods from each food group.

I previously thought that dairy products, especially milk and yogurts, have a good nutritional value. Therefore, I drank a lot of milk and consumed yogurts in some of the days.

After I thoroughly read the Eatwell Guide, I achieved a crucial breakthrough for my diet. I followed the guidelines of the Eatwell Guide. It is not expensive and even can reduce time consumption.

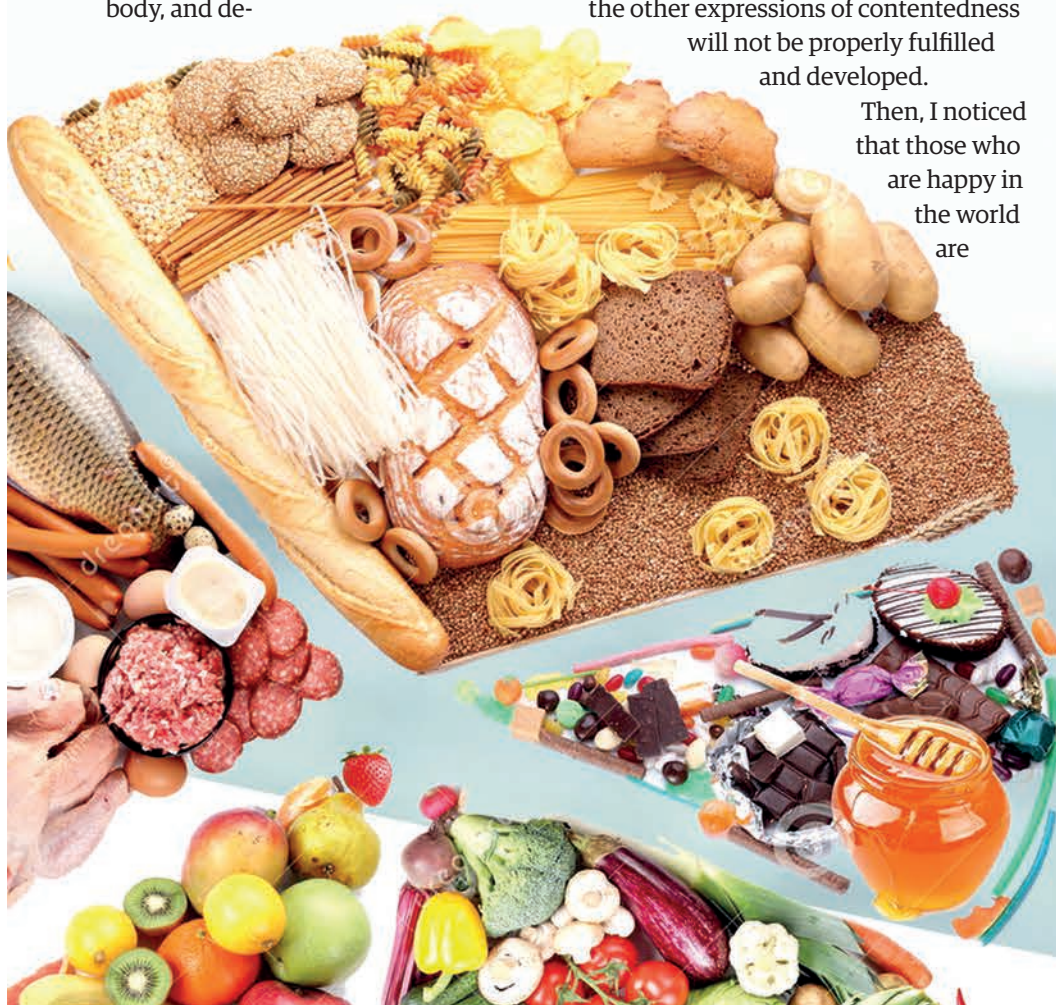
Our body is made up of foods and drinks. Therefore, right foods are of vital importance for our bodies to be healthy. Now I feel healthier.

I also want you to be healthier. Therefore, let me share eight healthy tips from the Eatwell Guide with you. If you are already a healthy person, you may skip it.

Here are the eight tips for healthy eating—(1) Base your meals on higher fibre starchy carbohydrates, (2) eat lots of fruit and veg, (3) eat more fish, including a portion of oily fish, (4) cut down on saturated fat and sugar, (5) eat less salt: no more than 6g a day for adults, (6) Get active and be a healthy weight, (7) Do not get thirsty, and (8) do not skip breakfast.

Once a wise man said, "To keep our body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear."

I wish you a healthy body and a brilliant mind. ■





The collaring team takes vital measurements. Credit: La Min Nyi Nyi/FFI

anmar's relatively untouched natural riches have already begun to suffer levels of exploitation that are ultimately unsustainable. In particular, agricultural expansion in the form of commercial oil palm and rubber plantations is leading to widespread deforestation of the Asian elephant's traditional strongholds.

As forest cover declines, Myanmar's elephants are forced to forage beyond the boundaries of their shrinking natural habitat and enter nearby plantations and settlements, exposing them to more frequent contact with humans. More often than not, these encounters result in crop damage and human injury or even death, which in turn can lead to retaliatory killing.

The loss of a crop to a rampaging herd of elephants can have a devastating impact, particularly for those already living below the poverty line. Regrettably, incidences of human-elephant conflict are increasing year on year. As

plantations inexorably eat further and further into the remaining natural forest, they serve only to aggravate the problem.

FFI is well aware of the need to reverse this trend by taking steps to defuse potential conflict situations. By anticipating trouble and providing advanced warning to communities of the impending arrival of elephants, we hope to nip some of these problems in the bud. But that

will not be possible unless we know the elephants' whereabouts and direction of travel.

And that's where the collars come in. Each satellite collar is programmed to transmit a signal at regular intervals - in this case every four hours. This will enable us to track elephant movements and pinpoint their precise location at given times, shedding light on their behaviour and the extent of their home range.

regular monitoring in this area has made it difficult to confirm whether elephant numbers are falling or stable.

We know that deforestation is jeopardising their future - and that of other endangered wildlife that shares their dwindling habitat, including Myanmar's largest remaining tiger population and the critically endangered Gurney's pitta. There is an urgent need to gather more data on the country's elephants, in order

and experience of our two key partners in this project, the Smithsonian Institution and the state-owned Myanmar Timber Enterprise.

In due course, we are hoping to build a network of elephant guardians, ideally comprising people drawn from the villages most directly affected by crop raiding and other incursions. These guardians would play a crucial role in establishing an early-warning system for their communities



Fitting the collar securely is a skilled operation. Credit: La Min Nyi Nyi/FFI

Collar ID - Keeping track of Myanmar's elephants



By Tim Knight

(Communications Specialist, Conservation Partnerships)

Tim has worked closely with FFI since 1999. He has edited & FFI (formerly Fauna & Flora magazine) since its inception in 2001 and is co-author of *With Honourable Intent - A Natural History of Fauna & Flora International*, published in 2017.

We're going to need a bigger collar. No, it's not a line from *Jaws*. This is a story about great grey elephants, not great white sharks. Asian elephants, to be specific.

So, why is Fauna & Flora International (FFI) going to the enormous trouble, so to speak, of tagging wild elephants? In short, we need to gain a better insight into their daily lives.

Asian elephants have disappeared from much of their former range. Myanmar is one of just a dozen countries where they still occur in the wild, and the species is functionally extinct in several of these. The second-largest country in mainland South-east Asia, Myanmar still boasts large tracts of forest that are extensive enough to support viable elephant populations.

Among these is the relatively pristine lowland forest of Tanintharyi region in southern Myanmar. Indigenous communities in this area have lived in harmony with nature for countless generations, in the knowledge that their ancestral lands are a vital source of food, fuel, fresh water and medicine. Most traditional agricultural, artisanal fishing, forest management and cultural practices have had minimal impact on the landscape.

All that is changing, however. In the decade since the country opened its doors to the outside world, My-



Oil palm plantation, southern Tanintharyi. Credit: Saw Soe Aung/FFI

Local knowledge proved invaluable in helping us to locate a few candidates for collaring, but finding them was merely the starting point. Tranquilising a wild elephant is not for the faint-hearted. It's a hazardous business for both parties and requires precision, nerve and an element of luck. Once a dart found its target, the team needed to work quickly in order to minimise stress to the animal. While the collars were being attached, staff took the opportunity to gather measurements and other vital data on the prostrate pachyderms.

It is hoped that the collars will also serve a wider purpose. The most authoritative recent estimates - although these are almost certainly out of date - put the elephant population in the southern part of Tanintharyi at around 100-150 individuals. Until now, the lack of

to help combat the immediate and longer-term threats to their survival posed by habitat loss, conflict with humans, and poaching for their tusks, meat and even skin.

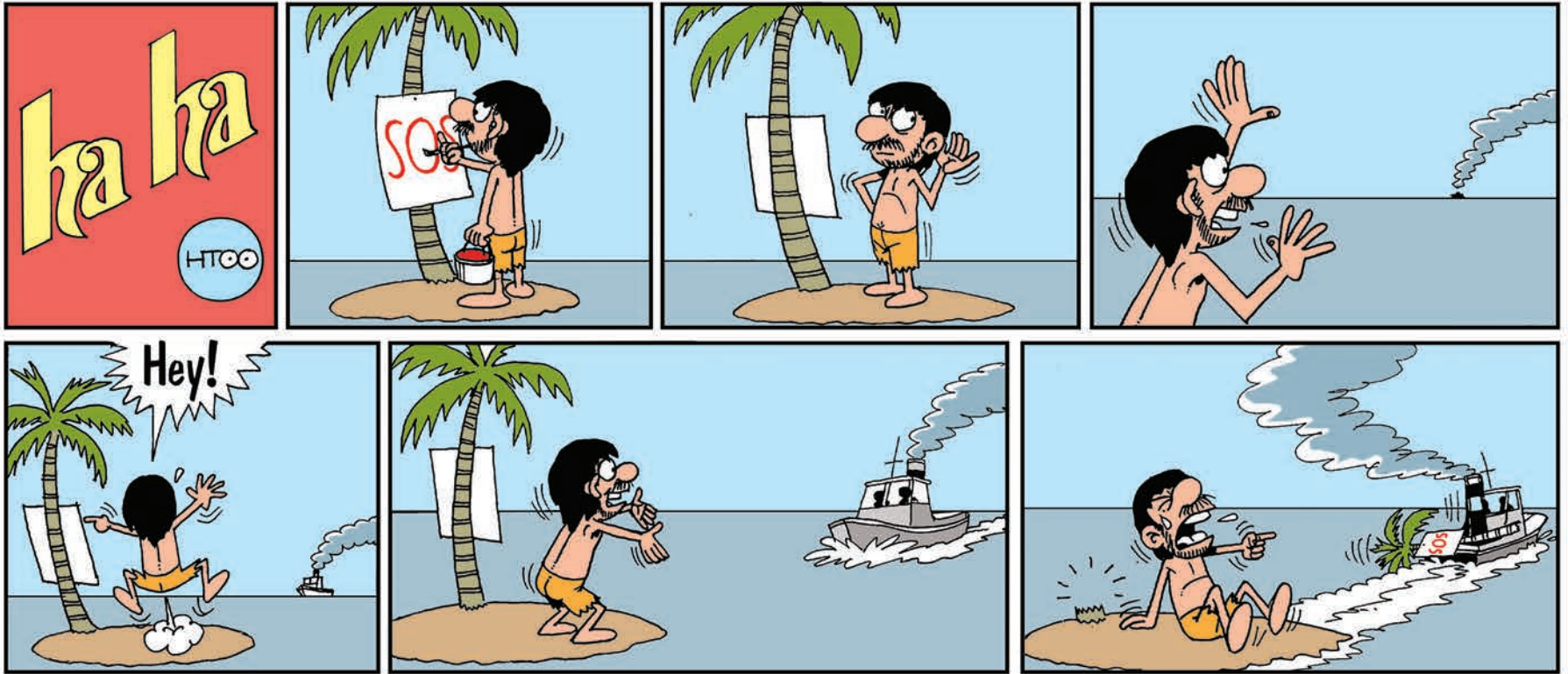
It is difficult to imagine a world without the Asian elephant. Leaving aside its importance as a cultural icon that has been widely revered for centuries, the species plays a pivotal role in maintaining the health of the forest ecosystem, not least as a seed disperser. There is also a strong moral imperative to prevent the extinction of such an iconic beast.

With funding from US Fish & Wildlife Service, FFI is working with communities and government partners to ensure a future for elephants in Myanmar. The collaring initiative is a vitally important component of that programme of activities. Its success relies heavily on the technical skills

by keeping an eye on elephant movements. This would not only help reduce incidences of human-wildlife conflict, but also mitigate the poaching threat. Meanwhile, FFI is also raising wider awareness on how to behave around elephants in order to minimise the risk of accidental injury or fatalities on both sides.

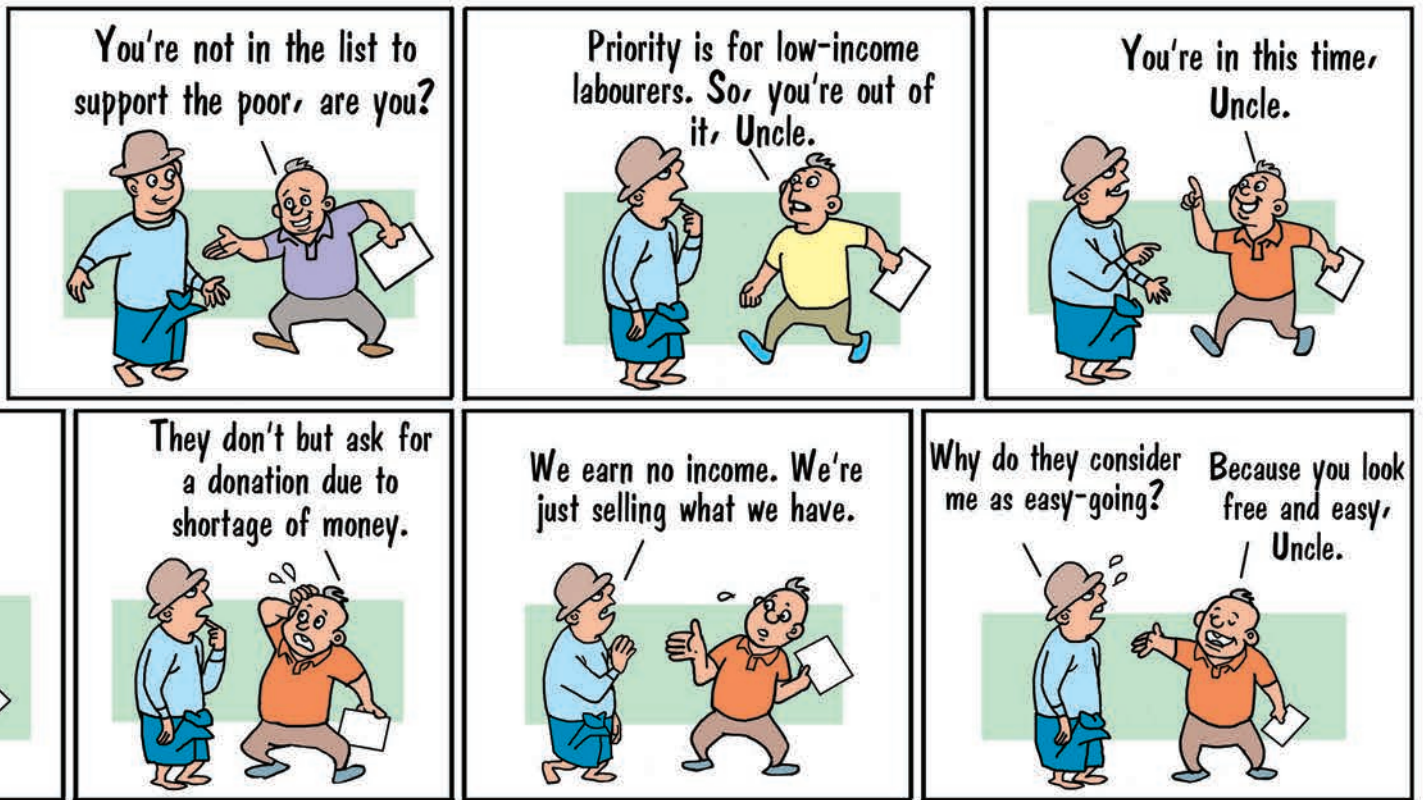
The tracking data from the collaring exercise will help inform the proposed establishment of a managed elephant range in southern Tanintharyi, as envisioned in the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Action Plan. Ultimately, the fate of Asian elephants in Myanmar - as elsewhere - will depend on our ability to create the conditions that enable them to co-exist harmoniously with humans in the same landscapes.

SUNDAY COMICS



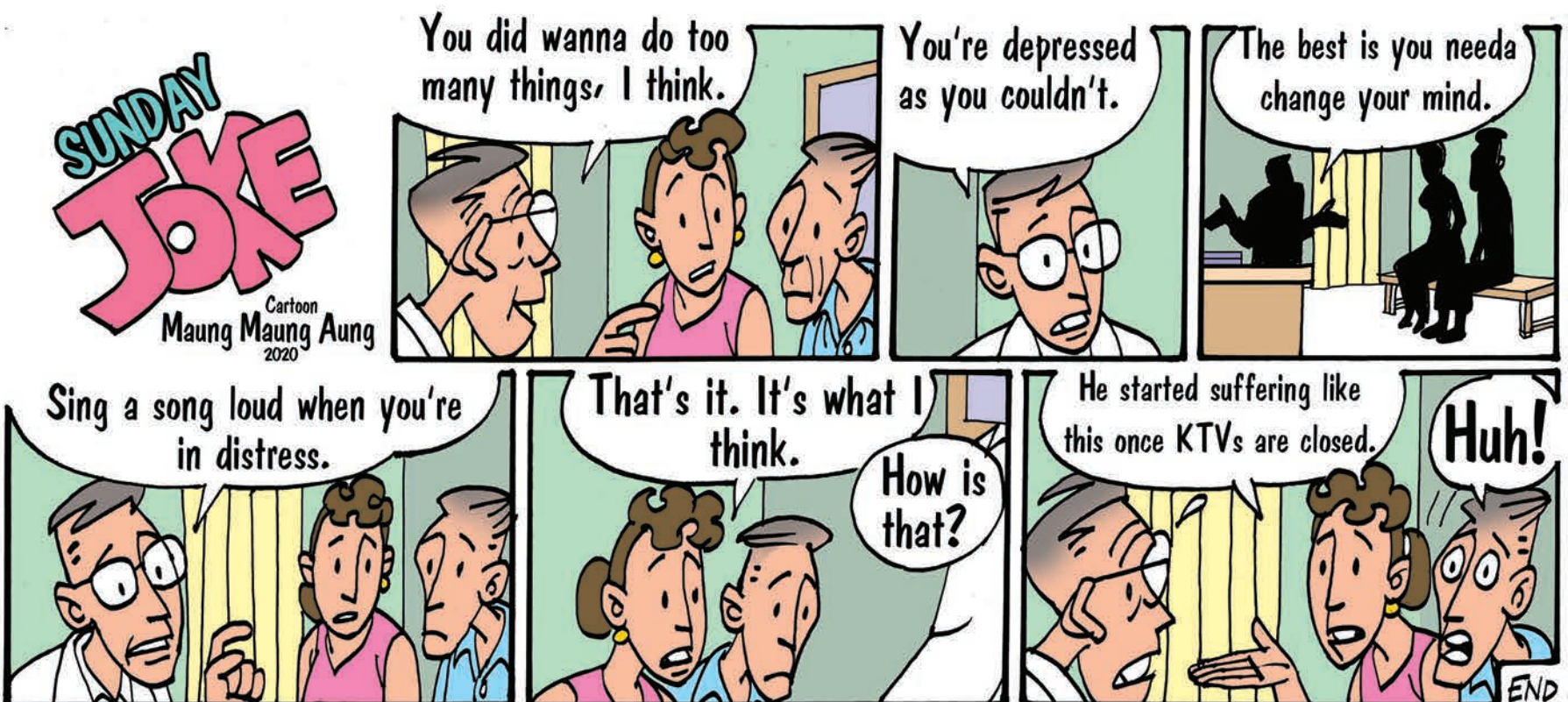
PEOPLE WILL BE PEOPLE

Cartoon
Maung Shwe Win

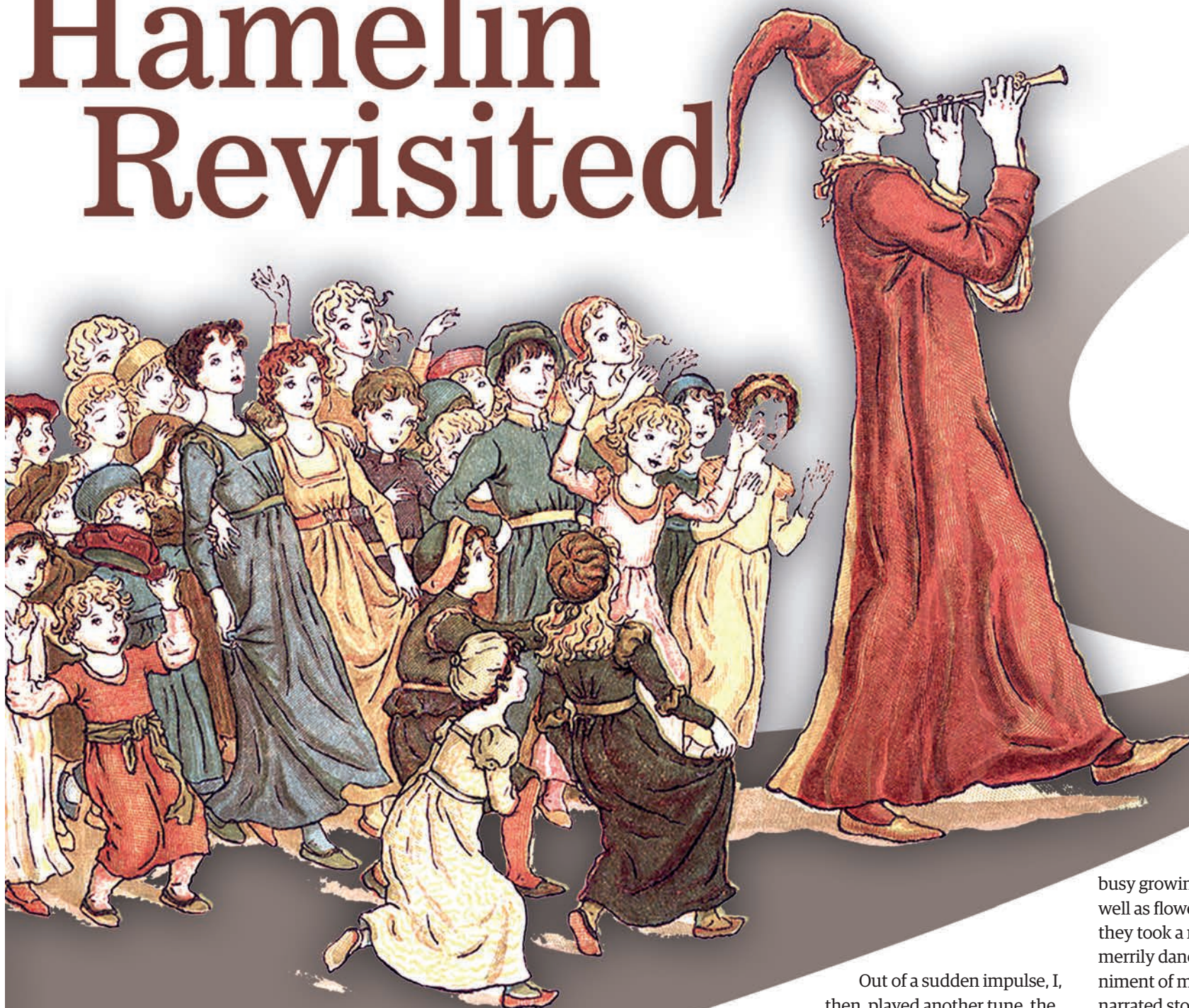


SUNDAY JOKE

Cartoon
Maung Maung Aung
2020



Hamelin Revisited



By Zaw Tun (Monywa)

It was a full moon night. In the starless, sombre blue sky, there shone the shining silver moon as huge as a gigantic wheel. The cool night breeze was caressing my curly hair, but my heavy heart was not a bit lightened up. Here, at the top of the craggy Coppelburg Hill, also known as Poppenberg, I found myself sitting, my eyes closed, my lips resting on my fipple flute like a little butterfly. A sweet tune filled with inexpressible emotions was floating like a curling wisp of smoke in the air.

Over there flowed the rippling Weser quietly under the moonlight. Sometimes, the wanton wind puffed up, blurred voices wafting from the little town Hamelin, not very far from here. Sometimes I heard a distant woof of an agitated dog.

"Should I or shouldn't I go back there?" I thought to myself.

II

It was 22nd July, 1376. I remember the little town Hamelin was then shockingly ransacked by hordes of ravenous rats, squeaking, scampering all over, even in the daylight, not being scared away by the shoos and screams. I, then, presented myself, dressed in a red and yellow gown, for which the people call me the Pied Piper. I explained I could get rid of all the rats, and demanded, "A thousand guilders." "One? Fifty guilders!" replied the Mayor, promptly. The deal was made.

I played a tune on my pipe, the Tune of Happy Death, and then, out came all the rodents, big and small, young and old, the scrawny and the fatty, from every nook and corner, following me, and in a wink, they were all gone into the swift-flowing Weser! But, despite my successful mission, the promised reward never came to me, but a real slap on the face since I was shooed away as if a poor, hungry mendicant.

Out of a sudden impulse, I, then, played another tune, the Tune of Happy Dance! Kids, all a hundred and thirty in number, followed my sprightly steps and danced to my pipe music.

There loomed up the Coppelburg Hill before us against the backdrop of the copper sky. Open, rocky Gate! The mountain quaked and the large mouth of the mountain opened agape. Welcome, kids! When all were in, the rocky jaws shut again. (I didn't realize two kids, the little blind one and the little mute one, who had lagged behind, were then left outside.)

III

Now, once again, I came back to reality from my reverie. I stopped playing on my pipe. I heaved a deep sigh. I went down over the rocks inside the dark cave. A thin strip of moonlight was streaming in the corner. There, I could see little kids sprawling on the sheets of goat-skin, sleeping soundly, like little flowers with their petals closed. Poor innocent lambs!

These days I had formed a secret garden by the Weser. In the morning, the children were

busy growing vegetables, as well as flowers. In the afternoon, they took a nap. At night, they merrily danced to the accompaniment of my pipe. Sometimes, I narrated stories which end with a moral lesson: Promise is like gold; if we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

Here, inside this mountain, out of my hard-earned savings, I had kept many bags of wheat for making bread. So, Life had been going easy, Life was always plentiful here. But my guilty conscience often woke me up in the middle of the night. I had kept these innocent kids out of sight inside the heart of the mountain, merely for the sake of taking vengeance on those wretched townfolks and the miserly mayor.

"I should send them back home," I thought to myself.

These days, a rumour has it that I had led these children into the swift flowing Weser, and let them drowned. Some people also spread a tall tale that the children have all been crushed in a heavy landslide. I have been accused of being sort of silver-tongued lokators, brightly dressed, who roam northern Germany trying to recruit settlers for the East. Some townspeople have also made up

SEE PAGE-S-8

Let us feel the thoughts



By Edu Lin
B.Ed, S.I.O.E

Everyone has got thoughts, hopes, and dreams each. Some hopes and dreams can be the same, but others cannot. Some thoughts and hopes are also possible to be performed in practical lives but others are not. Those very impossible ones sometimes come into existence though unexpected. Some ordinary thoughts and hopes cannot sometimes be performed to come into existence. The world is just amazing, isn't it?

Putting aside the possibility and the impossibility, everyone has an opportunity of having free thoughts and free hopes, I think. Most of the things that have materialized in human society were born from free thoughts, hopes or dreams, weren't they? Some significant examples are airplanes, marine vessels, spacecraft, etc. They all started with the human being's thoughts, hopes, and dreams. In addition, almost all the world's famous stories, science novels, paintings, classical novels were inspired by man's imaginative thoughts, hopes, and dreams.

Such inspirations tended to bring benefits to mankind, that is, they led to the advantages of the whole human society.

Sometimes, apart from the benefits of people, some people may cling

to their individual interests. It should not be blamed as it is the nature of man. This is his or her individual right as long as his or her inspiration does not affect the others. Indeed, drifting yourself in the flow of inspiration is a pleasing and enjoyable experience.

Thoughts and hopes are related to one's lifestyle. A fisherman will be thinking to catch big fish in his net. A farmer will be expecting to get a high yield of his paddy from his fields. Similarly, a gardener, nurturing the plants in his garden, will also be looking forward to the time when all his flowers will bloom. All inspirations often reflect one's life, characters, and intelligence.

There have been so many hostile, cruel and inhumane incidents in the world. Then, where did these incidents come from? And were they the outcomes of people's inspirations? What is certain is that they originated from some of the foolish people who lost the mind. They were so egoistic that they ignored the ethics, 'Hiri-ottappa: moral shame and moral dread'. The three things called Greed, Anger, and Ignorance totally overwhelmed them. The inspiration of a cultured man might not have led the people to feel aggrieved even though it is egoistic.

Perhaps, people are not often aware of the fact that their inspirations often reveal their standard of culture, intelligence, and characters. Now, let us appreciate a poem

written by a well-known poet:

Wishes

"To kiss
The fragrance of a rose,
To view the colorful
spectrums
Of a rainbow,
To follow
After a firefly,
To tickle
A young child,"

These are only a few lines of the poem, which is a bit long. In the poem, the poet expresses his thoughts about a rose, a rainbow, a firefly, a young kid, a song, a beach, a dance of a peacock, a sunset, and a waterfall. Do his thoughts affect anyone? Do his thoughts bring ruins to others? He wants to kiss the fragrance of a rose and be pleased in the beauty of the colorful rainbow. Then he wants to follow a firefly. This puts me in mind of the fact that fireflies have become a rare sight in our surroundings for ages. Somebody ever told me that fireflies cannot live in the surroundings without fresh air. On full moon nights, the flickering lights of the fireflies are like tiny, little lamps floating in the night sky. I often think that when the night falls, if it happens to be a moonless night, it will be good if the fireflies appear.

Then, the poet is seized with a desire of teasing a child tickling it. To his ear, the giggles of a child so innocent sounds so pleasing.

Just imagine how enjoyable it will be! After that, the poet wishes he had a chance to take a rest on a beach, listening to a song and singing along. The poet also wants to watch the dance of a peacock displaying its feathers. He desires for the feel of painting slowly and steadily; furthermore, he wants to gaze at Nature's sunset scene. He also wants to listen to a bird singing a song and get the pleasure of the tiny droplets of water splashing onto him from the large waterfall, etc.

Oh, my dear readers, if you are poem-lovers, I would like to ask you a question. No matter how many thoughts or wishes a poet may have, are they not the dreams and pleasing thoughts of a cultured person? On long days of this Stay-Home period, you will have to keep your body anchored at your residence. Though I do not know where your thoughts are rambling about, I dare say that you are the one familiar with the high-standard culture of the poem if you find your thoughts surfing in the atmosphere of refined culture.

FROM PAGE-S-7

stories, in order to avoid the wrath of the church or the king, that the children had left Hamelin to join a pilgrimage, a military campaign, or even a new Children's crusade, so they could never return to their parents. Accordingly, I have appeared to them as a leader or a recruiting agent.

Of course, these children have been together with me, enjoying a new life inside this rocky mountain. But some stories have mixed up the disappearance of these children with what is termed as "mass psychogenic illness in the form of dancing mania" - like one event that happened in 1237 in which a large group of children travelled from Erfurt to Arnstadt (about 20 km), jumping and dancing all the way. What is worse, I have even been slandered as a psychopathic paedophile,

who is sexually interested in children!

Well, I must prove every single soul of these kids is still alive! I must prove they are all safe here under my wing. I must prove I am just a kind-hearted guy who loves children. The one and only reason I took them along was I just wanted to keep the innocence of the children unstained by those old people who have failed to abide by their promise. In fact, these children have turned the life of this lonely piper and wanderer into a happy world. These little lambs have formed an entwining part of every single day of my life. Nevertheless, I must restore their former life to them.

But I had second thoughts.

"Before I send them back home," I thought to myself, "first, I should check out what have been changed in Hamelin over the lapse of a year." Is Hamelin the

same little town a year ago?

Now the shadow of a thin and tall figure was running pit-a-pat over the ragged rocks down the mountain. My heart was beating wildly like the frenzied drums of the barbarians! The wind was blowing fiercely, hysterically.

I was almost breathless when I approached the outskirts of the town. Then I came to an open gate, newly built. My heart bled when I saw what was inscribed on the new gate: Centum ter denos cum magus ab urbe puellos duxerat ante annos I condita porta fuit [This gate was built one year after the magician led the 130 children from the city.]. Magician? Am I a magician?

Then I continued walking when I came to a church. My heart was throbbing fast. I could see the story of the Piper and One Hundred and Thirty Children

portrayed on the colourful glass mosaic of the church window.

Now I realized I had done a grievous mistake. The little kids must be handed over, once again, to the bosoms of their dear mothers.

I came to the town hall where the folks were flocking, maybe for some reason. My hands trembled. I was now seized with an unnamed fear that I would be stoned to death for having snatched their children away. They all turned around, and looked at me - in fossilized smiles. Thank God, nobody recognized me. And I was stunned.

Their faces! Shrivelled faces, with whiskers, sharp-pointed noses sniffing some foul smell. And their beady eyes, like rotten seeds. Gosh! What a shocking transformation! Lousy rodents' faces!

■