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## State Counsellor discusses remedies to lessen COVID-19 impacts on economy



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discusses relief plan of COVID-19 impacts with ministers, UMFCCI president on 16 June 2020. PHOTO: MNA

**S**TATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), held a videoconference from the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Chairman of the COVID-19 Eco-

nomie Relief Work Committee, Deputy Minister U Sett Aung who formulated the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) and U Zaw Min Win, president of UMFCCI to discuss remedies to lessen the impacts of COVID-19 on the Myanmar economy.

The State Counsellor said discussions would be about the economy; by economy, she meant

The Union Government has adopted emergency programmes to protect Myanmar on multiple fronts such as political, economic, social and health.

to say economic matters related to COVID; as a first step during the time when COVID preventive measures were needed, actions were initiated in the health sector; however, after commencing activities in the health sector it was soon realized that economic aspects should also be considered.

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### No new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 16 June, total figure remains at 262

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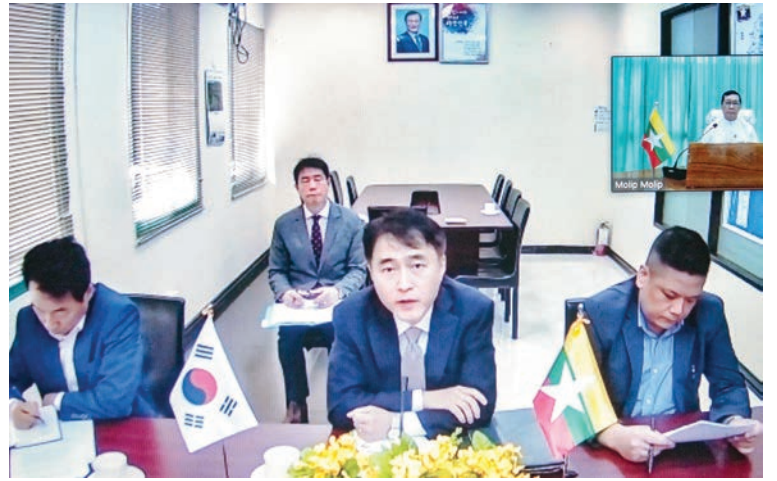
## Union minister discusses labour affairs with ROK Ambassador

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe held a videoconference with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr Lee Sang-hwa, at 10 am yesterday.

They discussed extending the time for repatriating Myanmar workers in South Korea, arranging relief flights for Myanmar workers in ROK who wish to return to Myanmar, increasing the number of EPS admitted Myanmar migrant workers from 1,000 to 7,000, recalling experienced and skilled Myanmar workers back to South Korea as a priority when possible, cooperating for preliminary examinations for EPS during COVID-19 period, coordinating flights for transporting EPS skilled workers, and discovering technological solutions to resolve issues between employers and employees in the garment industry caused by the current



Union Minister U Thein Swe (left photo) speaks during the videoconference on labour affairs with the delegation led by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Lee Sang-hwa, (left photo) on 16 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



pandemic.

They also discussed capacity building initiatives, the inability to pay social security benefits due to not having procured

unemployment statistics but the government's efforts to resolve such matters between workers and employers, and reducing taxation during the pandemic.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Myint Kyaing, the permanent secretary, director-general, and other officials. —MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Construction ministry draws lots on rental units for retired civil service staff

THE Urban and Housing Development Department under the Ministry of Construction organized drawing lots on rental housing units for retired civil staff with in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The apartments are located in Thukawadi Housing in

Dekkhinathiri Township.

Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Lin witnessed drawing lots conducted in a transparent manner.

Present at the ceremony were Permanent Secretary U Shwe Lay, directors-general, deputy directors-general, department heads, officials from



A woman draws a lot for housing unit in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Committee for Housing Unit Allocation under the Ministry of Construction organizes a ceremony to draw lots on housing units for retired civil service staff in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 June 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

21 ministries representing 300 retired civil servants, and invited journalists.

The Deputy Minister, who also serves as Chairman of the Housing Unit Allocation Committee, said they have assigned 240 housing units for rent to civil

servants in Mandalay with cooperation from the local government.

He said they have also assigned 136 housing units in Yangon Region for active civil servants and are assigning housing units for retired civil

servants in Nay Pyi Taw for the first time.

He said it was not appropriate to call all retired civil service staff during the pandemic and thus representatives have been called in their place.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Renovation of Bogyoke Aung San Museum set to be complete by end-June

THE renovation works to the Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Yangon) is expected to be complete by the end of June, according to the museum's in-charge U The Win Aung.

Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture's Archaeology and National Museum Department has supervised the museum's renovation works.

"Renovation on Bogyoke museum is underway. Visiting the museum has been banned since 25 March. No instruction on 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Martyrs' Day was received. Preparations

were made to be ready for the 73<sup>rd</sup> Martyrs' Day if it is celebrated," said the museum's in-charge.

The museum's renovation works, undertaken by MIEG Company, have begun in early April. It was also renovated last year, restoring its handrails and painting. This year's renovation includes painting roofs and other works.

Before COVID-19 outbreak, locals were allowed to visit to the museum free of charge, and foreigners were collected K5,000 per one.

Except Mondays and gazetted holidays, the museum is open daily from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. On the Martyrs' Days and following two days (20 and 21 July), it is open from 6 am to 6 pm.

On the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Martyrs' Day last year, more than 30,000 locals, and over 100 foreigners visited the museum.

The 99-year-old museum, built in 1921, is located in Bogyoke Museum Lane, Bo Cho (1) Ward in Bahan Township, Yangon Region. —Maung Sein Lwin (Myanma Alinn) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Renovation of Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Yangon) is underway. **PHOTO: MIN HTET**



## “People are the key”

# State Counsellor discusses remedies to lessen COVID-19 ...

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Economic matters were handled beginning from February; they had to consider how to confront, deal with and overcome the ripple effects of COVID if economic enterprises declined due to workplaces and factories having to close down; China and Thailand were closely linked with Myanmar economically and also share borders; they had already factored in the effects of COVID resulting from movements at border entry points and that they had to look both the short-term and long-term effects.

She continued by saying that in the health sector, the country would be able to look after the health care needs of the people only if Myanmar was developed; if the country did not develop, not only the health and education needs but also other needs would not be fulfilled sufficiently. That was why they were giving great care to economic issues. The issue of “jobs” was related to the economy. Having a “job” does not only mean having an income but also relates to a person’s dignity; not having a job can lead to depression and sometimes lead to mental havoc; that was why they were taking great care to make sure that job opportunities were not affected.

Union Minister U Thaug Tun said that the global economy had slowed down because of the effects of the COVID-19 disease and that the majority of the world’s countries were facing economic hardships; the impact of COVID has also affected Myanmar to a certain extent; that was why the Union Government has adopted emergency programmes to protect Myanmar on multiple fronts such as political, economic, social and health.

With regard to efforts for remedying the economic impact of COVID-19 disease, the Union Government established a committee on 13<sup>th</sup> March to remedy the economic impact of COVID; this committee established a Kyats-100-billion fund to support and assist garment manufacturing enterprises, hotels and tourism enterprises and MSMEs – micro, small, medium enterprises, the three main enterprises who had suf-

fered the most from economic impacts. Loans were given to enterprises owned by Myanmar nationals with 1 per cent interest beginning from the end of the Thingyan period and up to this date a total of 3,000 enterprises had been given loans up to a total of more than Kyats 86 billion; in assessing the loan applications, representatives from ministries, and representatives from UM-FCCI and the Myanmar Institute of Chartered Public Accountants participated in the assessment and disbursement of loans.

For immediate recovery from the crisis, Myanmar has adopted the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) which is a short-term plan; in this plan measures to lessen the main negative economic impacts and to achieve recovery from economic decline have been included; furthermore, this has been aligned with the MSDP – Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan; in addition, other Union Ministries have relaxed restrictions with respect to sectors in their own ministries.

The CBM — Central Bank of Myanmar — reduced the interest rate many times; private sector banks have reduced the special minimum amount to be kept in Kyats from 5 per cent to 3.5 per cent; medicines and medical equipment have been exempted from commercial tax; licence fees imposed on hotels and tourism enterprises have been exempted up to the end of this year.

In the second part of the discussion, the Union Minister continued to say about receiving international loans for the investment sector. He said that for economic recovery funds, Myanmar received the loans of US\$700 million from International Monetary Fund, \$270 million from Japan, \$250 million from the World Bank and \$30 million from the Asian Development Bank, in total \$1.25 billion.

It was very important for Myanmar to receive more foreign investment to achieve economic recovery.

For example, Myanmar Investment Commission has approved investment proposals from Thailand and Korea to establish industrial zones which

can create many employment opportunities; the MIC will also scrutinize and allow the business proposals of Singapore; a total of \$4.15 billion was approved in 2018-2019 financial year, and \$4.09 billion in the 8 months of 2019-2020FY up to May; Myanmar is in the uptrend of foreign investment, and more capitals will flow into the country in the post COVID-19 period; the volume of investment could reach \$5.8 billion, the expected target in this year.

Unemployment issue is the most serious problem in the world, investments are being allowed systematically to alleviate its impacts; and that a total of 168,000 jobs could be created

... in addition to food self-sufficiency, production of agricultural export items must be promoted; as an agricultural country, Myanmar could supply the global food demands in the post COVID-19 period and the country has plenty of opportunities for this; ...

up to May of this financial year.

In the third part of the discussions, U Thaug Tun presented business opportunities in the post COVID-19 period. He said that Myanmar is a country with food self-sufficiency, and is an exporter, and that the existing opportunities must be used for the development of the country with the modern agricultural methods; it is required to have multi-sector development in building a national-level economic system; in addition to food self-sufficiency, production of agricultural export items must be promoted; as an agricultural country, Myanmar could supply the global food demands in the post COVID-19 period and the country has plenty of opportunities for this; while the other country is adopting different ways to control the pandemic, Myanmar is standing on the policy of ‘People are the key’, which is a people-centred approach; because the government and the people are cooperating harmoniously it might be said that Myanmar’s situation was much better when compared to other countries.

Deputy Minister U Sett Aung explained the CERP, saying that the impacts were not very significant in the first four months and the second four months despite some losses in the latter; it is likely to have more impacts in the third and fourth four months and the short and long term plan have been formulated to address these possible losses; the impact is more serious in health sector than any other issues of the countries, so also in the economic sector; although Myanmar has not experienced severe conditions in health sector; a certain degree of economic impact has occurred due to suspension of many businesses; impacts are expected to

Therefore, the plan includes key facts to foster the GDP parts; stimulus plans for finance and currency policies are enshrined in the CERP; there are some views to use the budgets of relevant departments in the work plans; actually budget is essential for implementing every project; however, plans are needed for effective use of budgets.

The plan was drawn quite earlier, and that the amount of budget has not been estimated at present; however, the work plan will be implemented phase by phase on the availability of budgets; for example, providing financial assistance to the households, giving low-interest loans to SMEs in the initial phase, and to offer more loans depending on the budget.

The Deputy Minister added that international organizations has offered \$1.25 billion loan when there are only four months left in this FY; more loans have been offered for the following financial years from \$1.5 to 2 billion; the CERP includes to take out the most available amount of budget from the ministries commencing 2019-2020FY; although the proposed budget in CERP was 10 per cent, it was just the maximum amount; the respective ministries have their prioritized plans; the amount of budgets will be discussed with these ministries in prioritized manners; the amount of budget taken out is around 6.6 per cent; the funds were also used without delays, the short plans of CERP need to connect with the long term MSDP; additional plans are being drawn to support the connection as there might be some complexities in implementing short and long term plans.

The short term plan in CERP can be carried out by the departments separately, but all the departments are heading to a single goal; in addition to linking the processes of respective departments, all the regulations, policies and projects of these department must be linked; the silver lining of COVID19 is better cooperation between the government and people, as well as coordination among the departments; video call and videoconference have been widely used;

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widespread of mobile banking services; cloud technology has been used at the departments; the use of modern technology should be maintained in the post COVID-19 period.

U Zaw Min Win, the president of UMFCCI, discussed although Myanmar has not tested for a high number of COVID-19 cases and its death toll, the economic impacts are very significant; restrictions on business with foreign countries have caused many problems.

Labour-intensive businesses such as CMP sector, production, services, hotels and tourism and MSMEs have experienced serious blows, causing a decline of demand and incomes, slow capital flows, higher unemployment rates and a flock of returnees from foreign countries.

The UMFCCI COVID-19 Task Force was formed in March, and it joined with the affiliated groups to carry out social and health issues from the economic perspective; commodities were sold to the workers in industrial zones; food supplies were distributed to the grassroots people with irregular incomes.

The UMFCCI raised funds to donate medical supplies and medicines to the Ministry of Health and sports and worked together with the Public Health Department for health awareness campaigns at the business-

The president of UMFCCI said appreciation on the K100 billion loan programmes of the government for the relief of impacts on businesses in March; welcomed the CERP which helped for reducing the bank interest rate, relaxing banking rules for financial access; and that economic results have turned to positive trend; and the upcoming loan plan of K200 to 500 billion will surely support the businesses.

Despite some crisis in the social and economic sector, some inflexible rules and practices become flexible, especially in digitalization sectors such as online payment and e-commerce.

Taking opportunities from these situations, strict rules and procedures should be reformed, such as the processes for land utilization which is the major obstacles in the agriculture and livestock sector.

It is required to adopt a prioritized plan for recovery of businesses in a good momentum and to support MSMEs. The government should spend its budget more in the infrastructural sector to support the development of local businesses and to create more employment opportunities.

He also suggested the collaboration between the government and the private sector in the affairs of Myanmar migrant workers from foreign countries and the incentives and rule of

the country.

The second advice is to consider the recommendations of the private sector in adopting development plan for economic recovery plans in the midterm.

The third point is to form the export promotion board with the participation of the public and private sectors.

The fourth idea is to create more job opportunities, to prioritize on promoting local

ID-19. The Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry has to focus on both issues. People are the key to the national economy as it is for the people. It is needed to know the plan of how to protect people from economic hardship and how to adopt measures for economic recovery ever than before."

The State Counsellor said that some financial institutions and countries have offered

in the right time.

Although Myanmar is not a rich country, more help was given to the public better than developed country; collaborative effort played the most crucial role among the government, employers and employees; the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry is the key ministry to help in financial problems of the public; private sectors are working together with the government; it is not difficult to adjust different views if there is a common good intention; the state departments need to do more cooperation.

The volume of investment is not so bad in this year; it is not a surprise that there was no serious loss in the first four months, and the country has entered the second four months which has seen some difficulties; people are informed that the government has prepared for the worst in the third four months; people do not need to worry for this period, but just face against it; public concern about economy is understandable; economy is related with the livelihoods; U Zaw Min Win discussed security measures, and even foreign investors expect guarantee for business security, and that the government always takes priority on the rule of law which can create a safety environment for the people, not for restrictions; the rule of law is necessary for stability and harmony in any community; laws must be fair and suitable for the time; the government's directives and regulations on the economy might have both positive and negative results; changes must not be delayed to convert the bad results; people must be informed preparations to overcome challenges in COVID-19.

The government's planning, finance and investment sectors must be published on the respective websites, and through the Ministry of Information in clear and precise reports to benefit people and the functions of ministries; the works of UMFCCI during the COVID-19 crisis are also recognized and appreciated for the constant collaboration with the government; it is expected to overcome the third four months through collaborative efforts. —MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

The government always takes priority on the rule of law which can create a safety environment for the people, not for restrictions; the rule of law is necessary for stability and harmony in any community; laws must be fair and suitable for the time;

businesses and ensure a fair competitive environment for local businesses.

The fifth expectation is to hold regular meetings between the government and private sector for business discussions amid COVID-19 crisis.

In response to the discussions, the State Counsellor discussed the investment sector and the current economic situation; the ongoing expectation on the economy this year despite the COVID-19 pandemic; Myanmar is still in the status of competition in the half of year due to the investments of the previous year; the country's economy has not declined significantly yet although the significant unemployment rate in the country; some businesses were shut down due to the COVID-19; the pandemic is addressed with emergency plans despite the needs of long and short term plan; although the problems must be overcome immediately, preparations must be made to solve the following repercussions.

She added, "Just focusing on the existing problems will cause the future crisis. Economic recovery is very important. Both emergency and recovery plans are crucial although they have different approaches. The emergency plan is aimed to prevent serious impacts on the people, if possible, nothing will be allowed to hit the people although it is impossible. These measures are similar to the actions in the prevention of COV-

loans, and they are appreciated for this; Myanmar need to manage the loans systematically for short and long term plans; the loans are not only for COVID-19, but also for the long term plan; both plans must be linked correctly; it has been reminded on her Facebook page about the second wave of COVID-19; health and economic issues cannot be seen differently; they are interrelated, and it will be difficult to implement relief plans for health sector alone; people are the key, followed by the unity; strength of individual person is required for the unity.

In her concluding remark, the State Counsellor said that there are no huge gaps in economic visions between the government and private sectors; both have a common goal; both sides have a good intention for the development of the country; it is required to ensure sustainable development for the long term; all have high expectation for development.

She also said that there are some different views on choosing the plans; it is better to have different ideas; a single perspective will not always be true; a single solution is not the right remedy for the problem as they might be more than one options one of the best solutions can be chosen; the best method for a certain country will not be appropriate for the other; it is needed to consider resources and situations of the country; it is also important to do changes

Health and economic issues cannot be seen differently; they are interrelated, and it will be difficult to implement relief plans for health sector alone; people are the key, followed by the unity; strength of individual person is required for the unity.

es and factories.

It is also preparing for impact assessment to realize economic impacts and to give recommendations to the government; the UMFCCI COVID-19 Social and Economic Stimulus Proposal has been submitted to the government in seeking the directives, and the UMFCCI Webinar Series will be produced to stimulate and carry out reforms with the participation of the public and private sectors during and post COVID-19 periods.

law are required in attracting foreign investments.

The president of UMFCCI also gave suggestions on the recovery of local businesses in the post-COVID-19. The first one is the guarantee of government for the government's special loans and international loan programme for improvement in the investments of local businesses and economic recovery in rapid pace, and the government's role as the guarantor to get loans from local and foreign banks in



# COVID-19 committee honours volunteers, CSOs in Magway

THE National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment on COVID-19 presented certificates of honour, badges, face masks and hand sanitizers to the volunteers and civil society organizations (CSOs) that are fighting against COVID-19 pandemic in Magway Region yesterday.

The committee also provided cash aids for pregnant women, children under 5 years old and the elderly who are receiving quarantine after organizing handover ceremonies at Magway Education College in Magway and Setkatae Monastery in Minbu.

The ceremony was attended by the central committee's secretary and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, Magway Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo, Deputy Director-General of the Social Welfare Department, and officials from General Administration Department, Public Health Department, and Depart-

ment of Medical Services.

At the quarantine centres of Magway Education College and Setkatae Monastery, the Union Minister handed over certificates of honour for volunteers and civil service organizations to the Chief Minister, and presented badges, face masks and hand sanitizers to the volunteers' representatives.

The Union Minister also gave a total of K4.05 million, K 30,000 for each person, for 101 pregnant women, 26 children under 5 years old, and eight elderly persons to the in-charges of the quarantine centres.

The volunteers reported on their difficulties and requirements in fighting against COVID-19, and the Union Minister coordinated over the matters.

Officials from the Magway Region government's general administration department and related volunteers steering committees will give the national-level central committee's certificates of honour to 7,580 volunteers and



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye (centre) presents badges and face masks to a volunteer (right) at the Setkatae Monastery's quarantine centre in Minbu, Magway Region, on 16 June. PHOTO: MNA

172 philanthropic organizations in 25 townships in the region.

If there are volunteers and philanthropic organizations that were not included in this batch, the committee will arrange additional certificates for them, according to the committee.

The committee will also

present certificates of honour to the volunteers and civil service organizations in other regions and states after officials from the related region and state governments' general administration departments and volunteers steering committees scrutinized the volunteers and the organiza-

tions in their regions.

The committee held yesterday's handover ceremony in Magway in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.— MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## MoSWRR implements COVID-19 preventive measures in Kachin, Rakhine

MINISTRY of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, in cooperation with relevant departments and organizations, carried out COVID-19 preventive measures at the IDP camps in Kachin and Rakhine states yesterday.

Officials from the ministry provided a total of 1,152 soap cakes for three IDP camps in Myitkyina Township in Kachin State.

They also supplied 21,530 soap cakes, 52 bottles of liquid

detergent, 9 sheets of vinyl with COVID-19 awareness information, 32 washbasins, and 8 sets of PPE to three IDP camps in Rakhine State.

The ministry is not only implementing COVID-19 preventive, control and response measures but also providing psychological support in regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.— MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



An official (left) provides soap cakes to a local woman on 16 June. PHOTO: MNA

## Myanmar citizens from foreign countries brought back home by special flight



Myanmar nationals returned from foreign countries queue for immigration processes at the Yangon International Airport on 16 June 2020. PHOTO: MNA

A relief flight of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) carrying a total of 132 Myanmar nationals stranded in South Korea and other seven countries landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

Of them, 84 are from South Korea and 48 are from Brazil, Canada, Japan, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the

Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided the returnees proper medical examination and arranged 21-day quarantine for them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working in line with the guidelines set by the National Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 and cooperating with relevant ministries, Myanmar embassies

abroad to repatriate Myanmar citizens stranded in other countries due to COVID-19.

A total of 3,894 Myanmar citizens have been brought back home until now.

Yesterday's was the ninth batch of repatriation from the Incheon International Airport in South Korea to Myanmar.— MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



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**Fewer number buys damage insurance among over 6 mln motorcyclists**

WITH more than 6 million motorcyclists registered in Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) across the country, people are not very much willing to buy the insurance premium for their motorbikes, according to the Global World Insurance.

The Global World Insurance is giving the compensation for the motorbikes on 16 June in Bahosi housing compound in Wardan Street, Yangon.

At the compensation giving ceremony, Medical Action Myanmar (INGO) purchased damage insurance premium for their 125 Kanbo motorbikes in last one year. In May 2019, they lost their motorbikes in Manaw grounds, in Putao town, Kachin State. After having an investigation, the Global World Insurance gave compensation to the INGO which amounted to K850,000.

"There are a lot of motorbike users across the country.



An official from the Global World Insurance provides compensation to an insured at their office in Yangon on 16 June. **PHOTO:MYINT MAUNG**

Our GWI started providing insurance services in 2019. According to the RTAD official statistics, more than 6 million motorcycles across the country are registered in RTAD, which has increased six times than the automobiles. However, people

are less aware to keep the insurance for their motorbikes. The motorbikes are easy to be damaged and lost. If they buy the insurance premium, it will be safe for their property," said Director U Soe Win Than of Global World Insurance.

Regarding the premiums of the motorbikes insurance, a motorbike worth K500,000 will cost a premium of K30,000 while a motorbike worth K1million will cost K60,000. The motorbikes are easy to damage and lose.

So, the motorbike owners need to buy comprehensive motor insurance for their bike safety. If the motorbikes are damaged, the company will pay compensation for their motorbike value. If the bike is lost, the company will open the case file in the police station. Then, the owners need to wait for a year and if their bike is lost, they will pay compensation for the normal price of the motorbike value.

As of April 2020, more than 7,450,000 vehicles are registered in RTAD. Among them, over 6,100,000 are motorbikes, according to the Global World Insurance. —Myint Maung ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)

**25,000-acre monsoon paddy to be grown in Naga self-administered zone**



A terrace farming in Naga self-administered zone.

**PHOTO: WIN OO (ZAYYARTINE)**

THE 25,000-acre monsoon paddy will be cultivated in three town-

ships and four towns of Naga Self-Administered Zone, Sagaing

Region in 2019-2020 fiscal year, according to the Regional Agriculture Department.

"The towns and townships from Naga Self-Administered Zone are located on the mountains they are thus growing the paddy using terrace farming technology. Among other crops, the local people prefer to grow the paddy year by year. The regional department is also providing the seeds suited to the region and supporting necessary technology to the local farmers by reaching their farmland," said

U Win Haling Oo, the regional head of Agriculture Department in Sagaing Region.

In 2019-2020FY, the department is planning to grow 5,186 acres in Leshi township, 520 acres in Mobaingluk town, 5,662 acres in Lahe township, 1,499 acres in Htanparkway town, 2,476 acres in Nanyun township, 4,650 acres in Donhee town and 5,007 acres in Pansaung town in Naga Self-Administered Zone. —Win Oo (Zayyartine) ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)

**Restriction on entry visa for foreign travellers extended until 30 June**

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on 15 June that the Ministry will not grant the visa exemption and social visa including visa on arrival and electronic visa to the foreign travellers until 30 June.

With the issuance of all entry visas suspended up to 15 June, the Ministry now has extended

the restriction up to 30 June.

Myanmar government has imposed entry restriction for foreign travellers from 15 March. Also, the government has suspended issuing of the entry visa.

Regarding the foreign travellers, although the government restricted the entry visa, the foreign nationals including dip-

lomats and the United Nations officials are allowed to enter the country. However, those wishing to visit Myanmar for urgent missions or compelling reasons must follow the instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, according to the announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile, the

effective period of suspension of operating all international commercial passenger flights at Yangon International Airport was also extended until the end of June. The diplomats and the United Nations officials are allowed to enter Myanmar via relief flight recently. —Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Suspect Maung Phyu is seen together with seized illegal drugs. **PHOTO:MPF**

**Narcotic drugs seized in Maungtaw**

AUTHORITIES confiscated more than K1 billion worth of stimulant tablets from a village in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, on Sunday. Police raided the house of Maung Phyu, 43, in Kyain Chaung (Alae Ywar) in Maungtaw Township at 6:15 pm

on 14 June, and seized 674,500 stimulant tablets together with an Isuzu Bighorn vehicle. Police filed charge against him under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—GNLM ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



## Public sector manufacturing exports down by \$388 mln as of 5 June

EXPORTS of finished industrial goods by public sector sharply plunged to US\$2.4 billion between 1 October and 5 June in the current fiscal year 2019-2020, which is a decrease of \$388.79 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous financial year, according to the Ministry of Commerce. The public sector's manufacturing exports were registered at \$2.79 billion during a-year ago period.

Meanwhile, the private sector exported \$3.9 billion worth manufacturing exports, which rose from \$3.7 billion in the last fiscal.

As per figures provided by the ministry, the exports of finished industrial goods totalled \$6.3 billion in the current fiscal, which declined from \$6.53 billion of the same period in the 2018-2019FY.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector is largely concentrated in garment and textiles produced on the Cutting, Making, and Packing basis, and it contributes to the country's GDP to a certain extent. At present, some CMP garment factories have shut down on the reason for the lack of raw materials due to the coronavirus negative impacts, leaving thousands of workers unemployed.

Even worse, some foreign

entrepreneurs are also running away from their businesses. Those factories without official notification of closure will be inspected by a ground field inspection team. And, the factory operators can face legal actions under the Myanmar Investment Law (MIL) if they fail to comply with notification requirements for the closure of factories, said DICA Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin.

The labour-intensive enterprises are badly battered by the COVID-19, he added.

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

However, import values of raw materials by CMP businesses dropped by \$92.8 million compared with a year-ago period.

The CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is currently struggling because of the cancellation of the order from the European countries



File photo shows textile workers sewing on production line at a garment factory in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

and suspension of the trade by western countries. It can harm the export sector to a certain extent, the businesspersons pointed out.

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

previous fiscal year, according to the Ministry's data.

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

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

The MGMA has more than

500 members, and garment factories in Myanmar, employing more than 500,000 workers.

Investors prefer to invest in countries with inexpensive and relatively well-educated labour such as Myanmar, along with some tariff exemptions and FDI incentives. However, the country has other disadvantages such as electricity shortages, high transport and communication costs and administrative red tape.

— Ko Htet ■  
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Myanmar attracts domestic investments of K9,500 bln under incumbent government

By Nyein Nyein

THE domestic investments of over K9,500 billion made by Myanmar citizens have brought into Myanmar over the four years of the incumbent government, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

A total of 512 domestic enterprises put investments of K9,566 billion into the country between 2016-2017 fiscal year and 2019-2020FY (as of May-end).

Those domestic investments permitted by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and endorsed by the respective region and state investment committees

flow into the following 12 sectors; oil and gas, power, transport and communications, real estate development, hotels and tourism, mining, livestock and fisheries, establishment of industrial zone, agriculture, construction, manufacture and other service sectors.

Of them, the real estate development sector has pulled the largest domestic investments, followed by other service sectors in the second place and manufacturing sector in the third place.

MIC has been prioritizing labour-intensive enterprises among proposals. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Coronavirus Fund grants about K50 bln for over 2,000 businesses

By Nyein Nyein

A total of 2,078 businesses were approved to receive K49.116 billion from the Coronavirus Fund in the sixth batch by a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the pandemic, the committee stated. More than 3,000 enterprises have been granted over K86 billion from the Fund between 9 April and 16 June, as per the committee's data. The applicants approved by the committee will be screened in line with banking rules and procedures, and they are not eligible for the loan if they get sued by a bank. The remaining applications are being processed, the committee stated.

The priority sectors for the Fund of K100 billion are CMP garment business, hotels and

tourism service and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The committee has been granting the loan to the business stricken by the pandemic from the Coronavirus Fund, with K50 billion allocated from the country's revolving fund and another K50 billion from the social welfare fund. The committee was formed on 13 March and Union Minister U Thaung Tun for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations was appointed as the chairman of the committee.

The committee is responsible for measures to address the negative impacts of the pandemic situation on trade and tourism sectors; short, medium and long term measures to respond to the coronavirus crisis, together with the private sector and related associations; creation of new

jobs for those employees who have been laid off at the factories; conducting vocational education to the workers; and additional measures to explore new markets to buy raw materials for CMP garment businesses in the country instead of relying on the sole market-China.

Additionally, the public and private sectors need to cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our own sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories, the committee urges. Furthermore, the committee will request Myanmar President office to give tax exemption and reliefs depending on the situations of the pandemic impacts on SMEs and to provide loans to the domestic businesses at low interest rate. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



# Safety must come first in reopening domestic travel destinations

**W**ITH formation of Destination Management Organizations-DMOs in regions and states, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is planning to reopen travel destinations and businesses in efforts to revive the country's economy hit hard by COVID-19.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have seen the negative repercussions of the spreading of the virus, and industries which employ large labour forces, as well as employees in the hotels and tourism sector and related businesses, are bearing the brunt of the Coronavirus outbreak.

DMOs will be formed with stakeholders from hotel and tourism industry and townsenders in accordance with the Myanmar Tourism Law and they would ensure public safety at the destinations.

It means DMOs need to market their respective regions as safe destinations and need to burnish the reputations of destinations in their regions after containing their coronavirus spread and implementing strict new public health protocols such as health screening, temperature checks upon arrival and enforcing the use of face masks in public spaces.

Besides, measures include sanitizing surfaces and social distancing in hotels, restaurants, tour operators and taxis.

It is important to facilitate travel as this will kick start the economy. To promote the travel sector amidst COVID-19, we also need to ensure travel costs-in prices of accommodation and transportation remain affordable for domestic travellers.

To promote the travel sector amidst COVID-19, we also need to ensure travel costs-in prices of accommodation and transportation remain affordable for domestic travellers.

Meanwhile, we must recognize that several safety protocols at the destinations, accommodations and restaurants need to be established before they are launched because at the end of the day, the most important thing is to ensure safety.

The coronavirus will remain a problem for a long time, and it means we need to getting used to ways for living with it for the long term in our everyday lives.

The hotels and tourism sector is one of the sectors driving socio-economic development in Myanmar. The State is also encouraging the sector because it can create jobs for people living with disabilities and the aged.

According to data released by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, there are more than 2,000 hotels with over 81,200 rooms in our country.

We are confident that reopening domestic travel with national health guidelines would open door to jump-starting tourism with regional countries.

# ICAEW: Most SEA economies to fall into recession in the first half of 2020, but GDP growth to rebound in 2021

**M**OST South-East Asian economies are expected to fall into recession in the first half of 2020 due to the severe impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a new report commissioned by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). However, growth is expected to spring back to an average 8 per cent in 2021, supported by fiscal stimulus packages and monetary easing.

The report, Coronavirus global outlook: After the outbreak by Oxford Economics, predicts that an enduring COVID-19 outbreak will see world GDP shrink by 4.7 per cent in 2020, more than double the impact of the global financial crisis in 2008 and the biggest global recession in post-war history. Similarly, most South-East Asian (SEA) economies will fall into recession in the first half of 2020 (H1), before recording a 1.9 per cent contraction in 2020.

Measures to lock down countries and cities in the region to varying degrees have substantially cut domestic demand, with many countries bringing in restrictions on exports of food produce to safeguard domestic food supplies, further dampening export growth. Thailand is forecast to be one of the worst hit amongst SEA economies, because tourism and travel, which have par-



Viet Nam will emerge from the pandemic the least affected of all countries in Southeast Asia. Containers are transferred from a truck to a cargo ship at the international cargo terminal of a port in Hai Phong, Viet Nam. PHOTO: AFP

ticularly suffered because of the pandemic, account for 20 per cent of its GDP. On the other hand, Vietnam will emerge the least affected, with its lead in unwinding measures as compared to other countries in South-East Asia, although it is not immune to the sharp slowdown in trade flows.

The adverse impact on South-East Asian economies is forecast to turn the corner in the second half of 2020 (H2) as Chinese import demand and global trade recover at a consistent pace, while a slower pace of normalization will continue to weigh on tourism-dependent economies. Coordinated fiscal stimulus pack-

ages and monetary easing from authorities across the region will support the recovery in economic growth, with GDP growth eventually set to rebound to an average 8 per cent in 2021.

Mark Billington, ICAEW Regional Director, Greater China and South-East Asia, said: "Beyond a global health and economic crisis, the pandemic is also an important chapter of an unfolding bigger interconnected catastrophe of climate emergency, massive biodiversity loss and increasing inequality. Our recovery will need to include sustainable solutions that benefit nature, society and economy. As countries in the

region gradually ease lockdown restrictions and start to open their economies, organizations and businesses will have to adapt to a 'new normal' for sustained growth and performance in the post-outbreak world."

In China, the worst may have passed as the pandemic is largely contained. Gradual growth is expected with a recovery in consumption, reduced supply-side disruptions, and improved investment prospects especially in new industries and infrastructure, all supported by strong government policies. Recent policies such as cuts in taxes and interest rates will support the economic re-

covery, although the easing will remain targeted and modest in size. This will contribute to a GDP growth of 0.8 per cent in 2020, followed by 8.5 per cent growth in 2021 as both domestic and global economies recover.

Mark Billington added: "China's reopening is a tell-tale sign that other economies in the region will bounce back with time. However, a recovery in the second half of 2020 will not make up for lost activity in the first half of the year and we expect global GDP to return to pre-crisis levels only by mid-2021.

While fast-growing emerging markets are more likely to reverse the losses in GDP than their slower-growing counterparts, each region will have its own particular experience with the crisis that will dictate the depth of its recession and the strength of its recovery."

At the regional Virtual Economic Forum hosted by ICAEW on 4 June 2020, industry leaders discussed the impact of COVID-19 on businesses in the ASEAN region, with a focus on the long-term effects on productivity, and how businesses can cope and adjust to the new normal post-pandemic. The panel discussion was moderated by Professor Annie Koh, Vice President of Business Development, V3 Group Professor of Family Entrepreneurship, Professor of Finance (Practice)

at Singapore Management University, and joined by Christopher Jeffery, Chairman, The British Business Group Vietnam and Dean of the British University Vietnam; Justinian Habner, Country Director, Department for International Trade, British High Commission; and Suhaimi bin Ilias, Chief Economist, Maybank Investment Bank.

Following Mr Ilias's economic briefing, the panellists shared their viewpoints on the impact of the pandemic on the South-East Asia economies, as well as their recovery outlook. Across the region, Vietnam is poised to take advantage of the situation as it benefits from a manufacturing shift by multinational companies, although Mr Jeffery cautioned against the impact of the slowdown in global demand that will continue to weigh on its supply chains and manufacturing sector. Mr Habner also discussed opportunities that will emerge post-pandemic, as COVID-19 has accelerated trends and efforts around digital transformation and innovation in areas such as trading, business transactions and more.

Professor Annie Koh concluded the forum discussion with three key takeaways for economies and businesses to adapt to a new normal: building Trust, Talent and Technology. SOURCE: Oxford Economics

# More than 100 cases in new Beijing COVID-19 outbreak: WHO

**M**ORE than 100 cases of the novel coronavirus have been officially recorded in the fresh outbreak in Beijing, the World Health Organization said on Monday (Jun 15).

As lockdown restrictions ease and countries in Europe lifted their borders, the WHO warned countries to stay on alert for a possible resurgence of COVID-19 infections.

The UN health agency said it understood no new deaths have been reported thus far in the Chinese capital but added that given Beijing's size and connectivity, the outbreak was a cause for concern.

"Even in countries that have demonstrated the ability to suppress transmission, countries must stay alert to the possibility of resurgence," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference. "Last week, China reported a new cluster of cases in Beijing, after more than 50 days without a case in that city. More than 100 cases have now been confirmed.

"The origin and extent of the outbreak are being investigated." The virus emerged in Wuhan in China in late 2019. It since drove local transmission down to near-zero as the crisis hammered the rest of the world. Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, told the news conference in Geneva: "My understanding is that there are no deaths associated so far" with the Beijing outbreak.

## CHINESE-LED INVESTIGATION

WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said that countries which have implemented an immediate and comprehensive spread of measures have generally been able to contain new clusters.

"However, Beijing is a large city and a very dynamic and connected city, so there is always a concern," he said.

"And I think you can see that level of concern in the response of the Chinese authorities, so we are tracking that very closely."

He said the WHO had offered assistance and support to the Chinese authorities leading the probe, and may reinforce its own team in Beijing in the coming days as the investigation grows.

"A cluster like this is a concern and it needs to be investigated and controlled - and that is exactly what the Chinese authorities are doing," said Ryan.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 433,000 people and infected more than 7.9 million since it first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

Tedros said it had taken more than two months for the first 100,000 cases to be reported - but for the past two weeks, more than 100,000 cases have been reported to the WHO almost every day.

Nearly 75 per cent of recent cases come from 10 countries, he



Staff from the market supervision administration of Fengtai District inspect a restaurant's kitchen in Beijing, capital of China, June 16, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

said, mostly in the Americas and South Asia. However, there were increasing numbers of cases in Africa, eastern Europe, central Asia and the Middle East, he added. SOURCE: AFP

**Myanmar Daily Weather Report**  
(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2020:** Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, fairly widespread in Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (7-11) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Continuations of strong monsoon.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2020:** One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2020:** One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2020:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thunder showers. 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](mailto: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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## Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## Office of the President

## Press Release 23/2020

10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nayon, 1382 ME  
(15 June 2020)

## Additional statistical bulletin on drug seizures, acting on information

- In order to prevent and eradicate the dangers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic drugs, the Office of the President has formed the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** on 26 June 2018 to systematically accept and respond to reports on drug abuses and other related cases from the general public.
- With orders from the Office of the President, the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department relayed information on reports on drug-related offences up to 13 June 2020 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take action, as displayed below:

Sr	Nature of report	Detail on seizure and legal action taken
1.	Information received of Myint Ngway who lives in Thila Village, Indaw Township, Sagaing Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 8 June 2020, police searched the house of Myint Ngway, 39, son of U Tun Tin, who lives in Thila Village, Indaw Township and arrested him together with heroin. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Indaw) MaYa(pa)90/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
2.	Information received of Nay Min Soe who lives in Cheikthin Village, Htigyaing Township, Sagaing Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 8 June 2020, police arrested Nay Min Soe (a) Soe Ko Oo, 25, son of U Than Tun, who lives in Cheikthin Village, Htigyaing Township, together with 'WY' stimulant tablets at the junction of Tonlon Village. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Htigyaing) MaYa(pa)63/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
3.	Information received of some people using, distributing and selling illegal drugs in Aungthukha Ward, Kawthoung Township, Taninthayi Region.	Police have opened 20 cases and arrested 20 men and four women together with stimulant tablets, stimulant tablet crash powder and speciosa powder in the previous weeks. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Van Dane (a) Myo Thet Tun, 35, son of U Ye Myint, who lives in Aungthukha Ward of Kawthoung Township, together with 'WY' stimulant tablets, on Bogyoke Street, Aungthukha Ward, on 11 June 2020. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Kawthoung) MaYa(pa)113/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Similarly, police arrested Thiha Naing (a) Narhtoo, 19, son of U Aung Naing, who lives in Padauk Shwewah Ward of Kawthoung Township, together with 'WY' stimulant tablets, on Bogyoke Street, Aungthukha Ward on 11 June. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Kawthoung) MaYa(pa)114/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
4.	Information received of some people using, distributing and selling illegal drugs on the road of Abid-Khalaedaing village road in Mudon Township, Mon State.	Police have opened 11 cases and arrested 20 men together with speciosa and stimulant tablets in the previous weeks. Acting on a tip-off, police searched a motor cycle on the road of Abid-Khalaedaing Village near Abid Village, Mudon Township. It was driven by Win Tun Hlaing, 22, son of U Aung Naing Myint, who lives in Kyant Khaing Yay Ward, Thanbyuzayet Township, on 12 June, and police arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with NaMaSa (Kamarwet) MaYa(pa)34/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
5.	Information received of Chan Myae Thu who lives in south Thayattaw Ward, Kyeemyindaing Township, Yangon Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 7 June 2020, police arrested Chan Myae Thu, 35, son of U Myint Thein, who lives in Thayattaw Ward, Kyeemyindaing Township, together with 'WY' stimulant tablets at the corner of Kyun Shwewah Street and Thayattaw 5 Street, the same ward. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Kyeemyindaing)MaYa(pa)6/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

6.	Information received of Nyein Chan Oo who lives in Sintngu Ward, Insein Township, Yangon Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 8 June 2020, police searched the house of Nyein Chan Oo (a) Nyein Chan (a) Phargyi, 32, son of U Hla Phaw, who lives in Sintngu Ward, Insein Township and arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets and marijuana. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Insein) MaYa(pa)101/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
7.	Information received of Thuya Zaw (a) Baygon who lives in No 1 Ward, Khayan Township, Yangon Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 9 June 2020, police inspected a motorcycle driven by Thura Zaw (a) Baygon at the top of Bayintnaung Street, No 2 Ward, Khayan Township. Police arrested Thura Zaw (a) Baygon, 44, son of U Ohn Myint, who lives in No 1 Ward, the same township, together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa(Khayan) MaYa(pa)3/2020 under section 16(c) and 20(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
8.	Information received of Daw Cho Cho Thet who lives in 10/south No 12 Ward, Thakayta Township, Yangon Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 10 June 2020, police searched the house of Daw Cho Cho Thet, 58, daughter of U Nyo, who lives in 10/south No 12 Ward, Thakayta Township, and arrested her together with marijuana. A case has been opened against her with NaMaSa (Thakayta) MaYa(pa)27/2020 under Section 16(c) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
9.	Information received of Aung Pyae Phyoo Paing (a) Arset who lives in No 1 Ward, North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, using, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 13 June 2020, police searched the house of Aung Pyae Phyoo Paing (a) Arset, 28, son of U Aung San Kyi, who lives in No 1 Ward, North Okkalapa Township and arrested him together with 'WY' stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (North Okkalapa)MaYa(pa)37/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

- Out of the information sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department, so far a total of 1,179 cases have been opened files as of 13 June 2020. A total of 1,821 people, including 1,525 men and 296 women had been arrested with 9,533.5314 g of heroin, 1,347.42 g of ICE, 43,563.92886 g of opium, 1,367.96 g of low-quality opium, 53,263.76 g of speciosa powder, 15,097.32 g of speciosa, 2.5 liters of liquid speciosa, 631,868 stimulant tablets, 10767.90 g of marijuana, 0.1 litres of opium tincture, 629.28 g of opium blocks, 60 g of poppy seeds, 56.95 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 0.001 g of crushed ecstasy powder, 26 firearms, different kinds of 609 cartridges and one grenade. Efforts for fighting the drug trafficking has been stepped up and the department will report on further exposed cases.
- To seize further drugs and to arrest drugs dealers, people are urged to inform the Ministry of Home Affairs, region and state governments and to inform huge cases of drug trafficking and other suspicious cases directly to the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** of the Office of the President via following contact numbers:

## Contacts

Landline No. — 067-590200  
 Fax Phone No. — 067-590233  
 Email Address — [antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm](mailto:antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm)

## Unregistered SIM cards to be deactivated as from 1 July

THE Directorate of Communications under the Ministry of Transport and Communications has issued a reminder on systematic re-registration of SIM with the personal information of holders not later than 30 June. The earlier announcement has been made on state-owned newspapers and its websites and social

media on 23 February that the SIM card registration can be obtained through online services of respective operators or at the sale centres.

According to the law, maximum two SIM cards have been allowed to each person, holding national identity card, citizen card, certified card, scrutiny card

or passport (for foreigners). The extra SIM cards of these persons or unsystematically registered SIM cards have been banned from outgoing call, except to Call Centres, since 30 April.

The DoC has also notified unregistered SIM cards will be totally deactivated as from 1 July. —GNLM



# Govt holds COVID-19 coordination with RCSS

THE Committee on Coordinating with Ethnic Armed Organizations on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 held a video-conference with the Restoration Council of Shan State yesterday.

Representatives from the government's side included committee Chairman and Peace Commission Chairman Dr Tin Myo Win, PC Vice-Chairman U Thein Zaw, committee Vice-Chairman and PC secretary Lt-Gen (retd) Khin Zaw Oo. The RCSS were led by peace dialogue head Sao Bawng Kay.

They made discussions based on the agreements made between the government and the 10 NCA-S EAOs on 8 May on handling COVID-19, returnees from abroad and migrant worker affairs, acquiring international

aid, finding contact cases, and other general matters.

Peace Commission advisory member U Hla Maung Shwe said the RCSS discussed about taking body temperatures in about 30 areas. He said they gauged the temperature of about 60,000 people including that area. He said they discussed possible cooperation with the government negotiation representative group.

U Hla Maung Shwe said the RCSS agreed to the state level ceasefire in December 2011 and the Union level ceasefire in 2012 before signing the NCA in October 2015. He said they were negotiable and showed signs of better results for containing COVID-19.

—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Representatives of Committee on Coordinating with Ethnic Armed Organizations on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 hold videoconference with RCSS members. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

## 644 migrant workers return from Thailand via Myawady border bridge on 16 June

A total of 644 migrant workers came back home through the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge (2) of Myawady border town in Kayin State yesterday.

Among them, 45 persons were transferred by the Immigration Detention Centre of Thailand and the remaining 599 persons came back home on their own schedules with the approval of Myanmar embassy in the kingdom.

Kayin State Hluttaw MP U Thant Zin Aung, District Admin-

istration Department Officer U Tay Zar Aung, local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 28,652 Myanmar migrant workers have arrived back home through this route from 1 May to date.

The latest group of returnees included 390 males and 254 females from different regions and states.

—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar migrant workers seen at Myawady border as they return home from Thailand on 16 June. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

## Myanmar foreign trade value hits 25 bln in Oct-May

Period	Export (mln US\$)	Import (mln US\$)	Total (mln US\$)
2018-2019 (up to May)	11,280	12,123	23,403
2019-2020 (up to May in temporary)	11,874	13,456	25,330
Balance	594	1,333	1,927

### Comparisons of export items in the corresponding financial years (Values are in mln US\$)

Sr.	Names of Products	2019-2020 (until May) (temporary)	2018-2019 (until May)	Comparison (surplus or deficiency)
1	Agricultural products	2,784.521	2,342.939	441.582
2	Animal products	61.250	298.750	-237.500
3	Fishery products	656.811	564.322	92.489
4	Mining products	1,247.157	1,078.024	169.133
5	Forest products	103.855	118.432	-14.577
6	Finished industrial products	6,217.994	6,257.434	-39.440
7	Other products	802.805	620.190	182.615
	Total	11,874.393	11,280.091	594.302

### Comparisons of import items in the corresponding financial years (Values are in mln US\$)

Sr.	Names of the products	2019-2020 (until May) (temporary)	2018-2019 (until May)	Comparison (Surplus or deficiency)
1	Investment products	5,244.540	3,841.267	1,403.273
2	Raw materials	4,901.142	5,045.031	-143.889
3	Household goods	3,310.701	3,236.970	73.731
	Total	13,456.383	12,123.268	1,333.115

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# N. Korea blows up inter-Korean liaison office: S. Korea

SEOUL—North Korea on Tuesday blew up an inter-Korean liaison office in the country's border city of Kaesong in a major escalation of its stance toward its southern neighbour.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, had predicted the destruction of the office in retaliation for anti-Pyongyang leaflets sent by balloon across the border by defector groups and other activists.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said the joint liaison office, a four-storey concrete building located in the Kaesong Industrial Zone, was blown up at 2:49 pm. Later Tuesday, North Korea's state-run media also reported that the office, one of the symbols of inter-Korean reconciliation, had been "completely ruined."

The demolition came in the wake of "corresponding to the mindset of the enraged people to surely force human scum and those, who have sheltered the scum, to pay dearly for their



In this file photo taken on September 14, 2018, South and North Korean officials attend an opening ceremony of a joint liaison office in Kaesong. - North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on its side of the border on June 16, 2020, the South's Unification ministry said, after days of increasingly virulent rhetoric from Pyongyang. **PHOTO: AFP**

crimes," the official Korean Central News Agency said.

"At 14:50, the liaison office was tragically ruined with a terrific explosion," it added.

Kim You Geun, deputy director of South Korea's National

Security Council, said following an NSC meeting that Seoul "feels deeply regretful" over the North's unilateral demolition, calling it "an act of betraying everyone's hope for peace on the Korean Peninsula."

He said North Korea will be held solely responsible for whatever situation follows the demolition and warned that if things continue to worsen, the South will take strong countermeasures.—Kyodo ■

## New Zealand records first coronavirus infections in over 3 weeks



Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield shows an example of a scan for the NZ COVID Tracer app at a press conference in Wellington, New Zealand, on May 20, 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO**

SYDNEY—New Zealand confirmed on Tuesday two new coronavirus cases in women who recently arrived from Britain, ending a 24-day streak of no new infections.

New Zealand closed its borders to almost all international arrivals in March in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19, the illness caused by coronavirus.

Overseas arrivals are required to be isolated at a government-sanctioned facility for 14 days. However, the women, one

in her 30s and the other in her 40s, were allowed to leave their isolation site in Auckland early to visit a dying parent in the capital, Wellington.

"A new case is something we hoped we wouldn't get but is also something we have expected and planned for," said New Zealand's director general of health, Ashley Bloomfield.

New Zealand has recorded 1,506 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, and 22 deaths.—Kyodo ■

## Virus-hit India's overwhelmed health workers brace for monsoon

NEW DELHI—With hospitals already severely stretched, coronavirus-hit India is now bracing for the monsoon and its deadly annual onslaught of mosquito-borne illnesses, with an overwhelmed army of public health workers the only defence.

Every year illnesses such as dengue fever and malaria infect more than half a million people and kill hundreds in India as the monsoon brings much-needed rain but also devastation and disease.

With more than three decades of experience as a doctor in India's chronically underfunded public healthcare system,

Vidya Thakur -- medical superintendent at Mumbai's Rajawadi Hospital -- is used to managing "heavy burdens".

But now, she says, "COVID-19 has left us helpless... and the monsoon will make things even more difficult".

Every bit of space at the 580-bed state-run hospital where she works is already devoted to dealing with the pandemic. Beds crowd corridors, storage rooms function as wards and staff are overworked.

At Mumbai's massive Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital, better known

as Sion, undergraduates have been drafted into service, medical resident Shariva Ranadive told AFP.

Many experienced doctors and nurses are staying on the sidelines because they are vulnerable to the virus due to their age or pre-existing conditions such as diabetes.

"Everyone is working constantly... we are overwhelmed," Thakur told AFP.

And now with the monsoon having arrived in Mumbai on its months-long journey northwards, she is readying for the usual rush of seasonal ailments.—AFP ■

### NEWS In BRIEF

#### Thailand's aviation chief discusses with airlines possibility of resuming int'l flights

BANGKOK—The head of the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) on Tuesday held talks with airline representatives on partial resumption of international services.

"Priority will be given to business trips, with tourists from paired "travel bubble" countries being allowed in later, said CAAT director-general Chula Sukmanop, adding that investors are financially ready to absorb costs related to the COVID-19 control measures such as a quarantine programme.

Chula said he had discussed with all airlines which operate international flights to ready themselves with stringent measures implemented by the CAAT, the Public Health Ministry and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"These measures include social distancing on planes and at airports, guidelines for in-flight food services and quarantine areas aboard planes for passengers who fall sick during flights," Chula said.—Xinhua ■

#### 3 Indian soldiers killed in clash with China along Himalayan border

NEW DELHI/BEIJING—Three Indian soldiers were killed during a "violent face-off" with Chinese troops on the contested border in the Himalayas, the Indian Army said in a statement on Tuesday.

The incident on Monday night occurred during a de-escalation process under way in the Galwan Valley, the statement said, adding that senior military officials of both sides are currently meeting to "defuse the situation." Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that on Monday, the Indian side "seriously violated our consensus and crossed the border line twice for illegal activities and provoked and attacked Chinese personnel which lead to serious physical conflict between the two sides."—Kyodo ■



## Italy press mogul to launch 'progressive' newspaper

ROME—Veteran Italian businessman and press magnate Carlo de Benedetti's latest challenge is hardly his least: launching a progressive news website and paper in the middle of an economic crisis.

"Domani" (Tomorrow), a web-based publication with print editions, is to begin publishing in September, giving voice to what De Benedetti called under-served "progressive, liberal and reformist" ideas.

"We will cover politics, economics, the environment, international issues," the former owner of La Repubblica daily told AFP.

"No columns, no gossip, just facts."

One of the most influential figures in Italian capitalism, the 85-year-old businessman and former boss of electronics firm Olivetti stepped down as president of all his companies in 2009.



Tycoon Carlo De Benedetti wants to offer Italians a publication that is "against all types of populism and sovereignty, against racism, in favour of the market, freedom and Europe". **PHOTO: AFP**

De Benedetti said he hoped the new initiative would "last beyond my time on this earth". And he defended the idea of launching another newspaper in this politically fractious country -- and during a coronavirus-induced economic crisis.

"It seems to me that after the change of ownership of the Repubblica-Espresso group, Italy found itself without 'a liberal voice', as they say in the United States. Let's say reformist or progressive. I think a broad public needs a newspaper as a point of reference," he said.

### Uphill challenge -

Eight years ago, De Benedetti transferred to his three sons his holdings in the GEDI press group, Italy's leading media group and publisher of the dailies La Repubblica and La Stampa, among others.

But last year, in an interview with Il Corriere della Sera, he sharply criticized his sons' management, saying they had "neither the competence nor the passion required to be publishers" and tried unsuccessfully to regain control of GEDI.—AFP ■

## Online news wins subscribers around world but trust low: survey



While more people are subscribing to digital media, a large proportion of internet users say nothing could convince them to pay for online news. **PHOTO: AFP**

PARIS—Increasing numbers of readers are paying for online news around the world even if the level of trust in the media in general remains very low, according to a report published Tuesday.

Around 20 per cent of Americans questioned said they subscribed to an online news provider (up four points over the previous year) and 42 per cent of Norwegians (up eight points), along with 13 per cent of the Dutch (up three points), compared with 10

per cent in France and Germany.

But between a third and a half of all news subscriptions go to just a few major media organisations, such as the New York Times, according to the annual Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute. Some readers, however, are also beginning to take out more than one subscription, paying for a local or specialist title in addition to a national news source, the study's authors said. But a large proportion

of internet users say nothing could convince them to pay for online news, around 40 per cent in the United States and 50 per cent in Britain. YouGov conducted the online surveys of 40 countries for the Reuters Institute in January, with 2,000 respondents in each.

Further surveys were carried out in six countries in April to analyze the initial effects from COVID-19.

The health crisis brought a revival of interest in television news -- with the audience rising five per

cent on average -- establishing itself as the main source of information along with online media.

Conversely, newspaper circulation was hard-hit by coronavirus lockdown measures.

The survey found trust in news had fallen to its lowest level since the first report in 2012, with just 38 per cent saying they trusted most news most of the time.

However, confidence in the news media varied considerably by country, ranging from 56 per cent in Finland and Portugal to 23 per cent in France and 21 per cent in South Korea.

In Hong Kong, which has been hit by months of sometimes violent street protests against an extradition law, trust in the news fell 16 points to 30 per cent over the year.

Chile, which has had regular demonstrations against inequality, saw trust in the media fall 15 per cent while in Britain, where society has been polarised by issues such as Brexit, it was down 12 points.—AFP ■

## EU opens antitrust cases against Apple

BRUSSELS—The EU's powerful antitrust authority opened a series of cases against Apple on Tuesday, including one brought by Spotify alleging the iPhone maker makes unfair use of its app store.

The European Commission also launched an in depth investigation into Apple Pay, amid concerns that the fast-growing and easy-to-use payment system is shutting out rivals.

The cases put Apple back into the EU's crosshairs four years after Brussels ordered the California-based giant to repay 13 billion euros (\$14.7 billion at current rates) in back taxes on antitrust concerns.

The latest onslaught came after Spotify filed a formal complaint in 2019 that took issue with restrictions by Apple on apps that don't use its payment system on its App Store.—AFP ■

## Bank of Japan boosts aid for coronavirus-hit firms

TOKYO—Japan's central bank Tuesday ramped up aid for businesses struggling with the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, as it attempts to ease the recession in the world's third-largest economy.

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) expanded its zero-interest loan programme to firms to 90 trillion yen (\$837 billion) from 55 trillion yen. Its total war-chest for companies amounts to 110 trillion yen when corporate bond purchases are taken into account. "Japan's economy is likely to remain in a severe situation for the time being due to the impact of COVID-19 at home and abroad, although economic activity is expected to resume gradually," the bank said following a two-day policy meeting.—AFP ■



Japan is suffering its first recession since 2015. **PHOTO: AFP**

## CLAIM DAY NOTICE

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# US\$ 3.4 billion of FDI pumped into Myanmar in current FY

By Kyaw Htike Soe

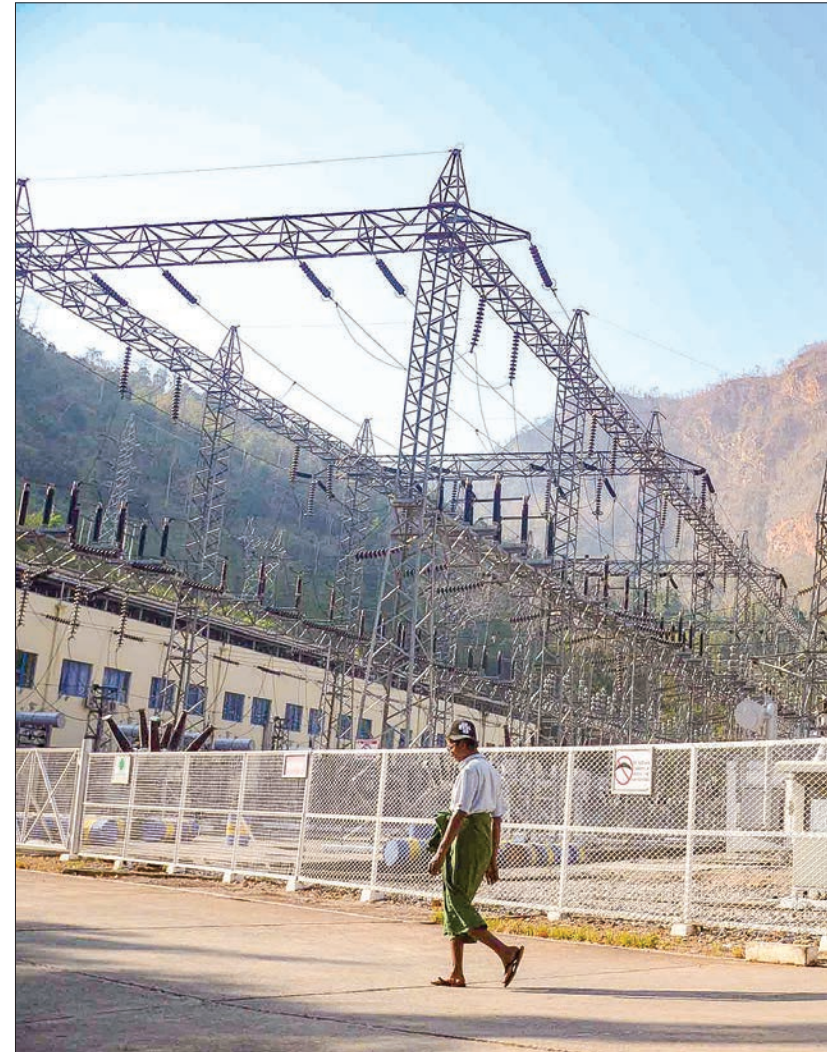
**T**HE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) permitted nine foreign investment projects valued at US\$ 684.2 million and over Ks. 96,034 million that can create up to 4,180 job opportunities for Myanmar citizens. The investment proposals in tourism, industry, electricity generation and service sectors were approved by the MIC during its regular meeting held via video conferencing on 22 May, according to the figure issued by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration

(DICA) under the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

The MIC also gave the nod to five new investment projects worth US\$ 64.594 million and Ks. 10,841 million in its monthly meeting held in late April. The investment proposals in service, oil and gas, and real estate sectors are expected to create 344 job prospects for Myanmar citizens. Myanmar citizen investment projects in the current fiscal year saw over Ks. 1,200 billion, an increase of more than Ks. 300

billion when compared to the same period last year, the DICA said. The MIC greenlighted 73 Myanmar citizen investment projects worth Ks. 1,251,224 million during the period from 1 October to 30 April. The MIC approved 89 Myanmar citizen investment projects worth Ks. 893,917 million in the previous financial year.

Foreign direct investment inflows into Myanmar totalled over US\$ 3.4 billion during the first seven months of this fiscal year, an increase of more than US\$ 900 million when com-



pared to the same period last year, U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) under the ministry told the State-run media recently. Foreign investments worth US\$ 2.5 billion flowed to Myanmar in the seven months of the previous

financial year, he added. The Southeast Asian country received an average of US\$ 500 million per month in foreign direct investment in the current fiscal year, he once told the media. He continued that the foreign investment volume was higher than domestic investments by Myanmar citizens.



The real estate sector stands second in Myanmar's foreign investment with US\$ 895 million of total FDI in the current fiscal year. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR





Electricity generation tops Myanmar's FDI sector line-up in the present fiscal year, with investment of US\$ 1.02 billion. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

The foreign investment projects approved by the MIC have created nearly 145,000 job opportunities for Myanmar citizens in seven months of the current fiscal year. With steady FDI inflow in the present financial year, Myanmar is likely to meet its FDI target of US\$5.8 billion, set under the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), he said. The increase of foreign direct investment into Myanmar attributes to the government's steps to ease regulations in an attempt to lure more foreign direct investment into the country. Singapore topped the list of foreign investors in Myanmar during the period from October last year to date, and was followed by China and Thailand. Singapore became the largest foreign investor in Myanmar, injecting over US\$ 22 billion into 312 projects of the Asia's last frontier market.

Myanmar drew up the MIPP in order to attract US\$ 221 billion of FDI within 20 years from 2016-2017FY to 2035-2036FY to become a middle-income country by 2036. Foreign investor's interest in Myanmar's much-needed infrastructure projects such as construction, tourism, telecommunications,

and industry sector is rising. Myanmar is considered to be a key overseas emerging investment market for foreign investors around the world due to its consumption trends, abundant young workforce and relaxed export & import related policies. The power sector topped the FDI line-up in the current fiscal year, with investments of US\$ 1.02 billion, followed by the real estate sector with investments of US\$ 895 million, and the manufacturing sector with US\$ 544 million.

The largest sector of foreign direct investment came to oil and gas sector, accounting for 26.74 per cent of the total FDI, followed by the electricity generation sector with 26.07 per cent and the manufacturing sector with 14.16 per cent. Around 1,800 foreign firms from 51 countries were given permission to pour investments into 12 sectors in Myanmar. Myanmar received US\$ 9.4 billion of foreign direct investment in 2015-2016FY, US\$ 6.6 billion of FDI in 2016-2017, US\$ 6.11 billion of FDI in 2017-2018FY, US\$ 4.52 billion in 2018-2019, and is estimated to attract US\$ 5.8 billion in the current financial year.



# An inclusive and diverse workplace keeping everyone connected

By CBO, Daw Yin Yin Htay @ Caroline

**D**IVERSITY is an integral element needed in our everyday lives especially in the workplace.

Different diversities in various backgrounds should lead to inclusions in our society - for there is beauty in variety. (Quote is by Michael Eisner, Former CEO of the Walt Disney Company)

International Telecoms Week for 2020 falls between June 14 to 17. Just like the theme of this year #KeepingTheWorldConnected, we welcome this week by highlighting how diversity and inclusion in the workplace is important for moving forward and making our lives better, by keeping us all connected.

In tech, diversity is critical as it enables companies to create better and safer products that take everyone into consideration, not just one section of society. A report recently released by

McKinsey shared the great insights that diverse companies can perform better, attract better talents, drive workplace engagement and able to retain workers better than companies that do not focus on diversity and inclusion. Still, women remain widely underrepresented in Technology related industry and in particular IT related roles. i and Myanmar is also not an exception.

Telecoms is a sector traditionally dominated by men. According to "The State of Women In Tech 2020" report by Dream Host, nearly 90% of the all Information Technology patents were made by male invention teams from 1980 to 2010. Moreover, it is stated that women are more likely to be in junior positions than men.

Building Telenor Myanmar since 2014, we started out with a hypothesis similar to Eisner: that there is power and creativity in diversity and management make great efforts to create diverse workplace. We have 40% women in our workplace, and 30% women in our management team with coming from diverse

background. Nurturing a diverse and inclusive workplace is a fundamental part of Telenor's DNA and unique corporate culture of Telenor Myanmar which our colleagues take pride for that.

Telecommunications is an industry that is both tech-intensive and people-driven, physical and digital - especially in emerging markets like Myanmar. As a major employer, we are mindful of crafting HR policies and avoiding bias in our recruitment policies. We need better people, and they can be of any ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or with any physical disability and standing out as a true Equal employment opportunity employer in Myanmar.

Among people with disabilities in Myanmar in 2014, hardly half were employed. This makes the rate of employment in this group 20 percentage points lower than the majority population. This is why we earlier this year introduced Telenor Open Mind in Myanmar, a program aimed at facilitating job opportunities for people with disabilities (PwDs) in the telecoms industry.

Currently, we have three team members who have joined us through the program. This is an opportunity to build a career in the corporate world and these employment means they are taking responsibility for their livelihoods and contributing back to the community as taxpayers.

Telenor prioritizes diversity in the workplace and encourages other public and private organizations to also hire more people with disabilities.

While this is a week of telecoms, June is a month of Pride. Diversity and inclusion must extend to all minorities. According to global statistics by Glaadv, more than 40% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and nearly 90% of transgender people have experienced employment discrimination, some form of harassment or mistreatment. This type of misbehavior and discrimination should not be tolerated by any business. Training, communication and policies are key, but fostering inclusion is a management responsibility.

At Telenor, we're in the business of "reducing inequalities". We connect and include. Since telecom operators invested in Myanmar in 2013, mobile technology has become accessible to everyone. We can now stay connected and get faster information no matter where we live in the world. Over the past months as we've been fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, that connectivity and inclusion has been more important than ever at the professional as well as our personal level.

Now as restrictions are being lifted and life returns to a "new-normal", we see that many of the habits formed, remain. Myanmar's already rapid digital evolution has accelerated further.

We would like to welcome the International Telecoms Week by renewing our commitment to keep Myanmar connected. #KeepingTheWorldConnected is an imperative for growth, development, inclusion and of course reducing inequalities.



Daw Yin Yin Htay.



## Key UEFA meeting to decide on way forward for suspended Champions League



The latter stages of this season's Champions League could go ahead in August in Lisbon in a "Final Eight" format, according to reports. **PHOTO: AFP**

PARIS — As football around Europe returns after a long suspension, UEFA is set to announce the format for the latter stages of the Champions League at a key meeting on Wednesday which will also raise the thorny issue of the postponed, pan-continental Euro 2020.

The Champions League was frozen in mid-March before the last-16 stage had been completed, as the sport ground to a halt when the coronavirus pandemic began to take hold.

Initially, European football's governing body had hoped to finish its flagship competition -- along with the Europa League and women's Champions League -- by the end of June.

It soon became clear that such an outcome was overly optimistic, and during the peak of the pandemic in Europe any prospect of finishing the season at all looked slim.

Nevertheless, UEFA has for some time been working on a way of completing its season in August, which looks feasible as leagues restart and the European death toll from Covid-19 slows.

With that in mind, the Executive Committee meeting, to be held by videoconference, is set to approve the idea of a "Final Eight" in Lisbon, as widely reported by media across Europe in recent days.

That would mean finding a way to play out the four remaining last 16, second legs before bringing together all the quarter-finalists in Portugal's capital for a series of one-off games to crown the European champions. According to reports, the final would be on August 23. In the current context, grouping all teams together in one place and reducing travel is the wisest solution, although it remains to be seen how many fans, if any, could attend.

Football in most countries is being played behind closed doors, yet UEFA's meeting comes in the same week many EU member states -- Portugal among them -- opened up once again to foreign visitors.

The final was scheduled to be played in Istanbul on May 30 and only last week Turkey's Sports Minister, Mehmet Kasapoglu, expressed confidence that the city would not lose out.—AFP ■

## AFF postpones futsal championship to 2021

THE ASEAN Football Federation postponed this year's AFF Futsal Championship to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to the federation's meeting last week.

The tournament, which was originally planned to take place in November, was postponed, for about two months, to 25-30 January. The host country for this year is Thailand. Myanmar secured second place in the 2016 tournament and third place in 2017.

Last year's tournament, Myanmar only secured fourth place after being beaten by Viet Nam in the third-place match 3-7.

The AFF Futsal Championship or ASEAN Futsal Championship is an international futsal competition of the Southeast Asian nations and is sanctioned by the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF).

It was first held in 2001 which took place every two years only until 2005 when it became an annual competition. This is one of the top futsal competitions of Asia, with the top teams of Asian futsal, Thailand, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

Until now Thailand became champions in every tournament except 2010 tournament that they didn't take part due to the Thai 5s, which was being held around the same time.

According to the AFF's records, Thailand is at the top of the performance table becoming champions for 15 times, followed by Indonesia one time.

Malaysia is in the third place becoming runners-up five times, and second runners-up five times.

Myanmar is in sixth place with one-time runners-up and two-time second runner-ups.—Kyaw Khin ■

## Behind the tests: Hong Kong firm puts Premier League on road to recovery

HONG KONG — The thousands of coronavirus tests that have enabled the Premier League to return this week have an unlikely source -- a little-known start-up in Hong Kong.

Prenetics/Circle DNA is playing a key role in rebooting the world's most popular football league after landing a £4 million (\$5 million) con-

tract to screen its players and staff.

The company has set up stations at each of the Premier League's 20 clubs, carrying out testing twice a week -- using partner laboratories in Britain -- in the run-up to Wednesday's return to play. So far, 8,687 deep-throat and nasal swab tests have turned up 16 cases, with

Tottenham Hotspur, Norwich City, Bournemouth, Watford and Burnley all revealing positive results. The screening, with results available within 48 hours, has been a major factor in the return of the Premier League, whose global appeal is exemplified by its huge following in Asia.—AFP ■

## Premier League braces for return after virus shutdown

LONDON — The Premier League returns on Wednesday after 100 days in the deep freeze, with Liverpool on the brink of winning the title in a radically changed football universe.

The English top flight follows Germany's Bundesliga and La Liga in Spain in rebooting their seasons after the coronavirus lockdown, aiming to cram 92 games into six weeks of breathless action.

Aston Villa kick off against Sheffield United, to be followed later on Wednesday by Manchester City v Arsenal, before a cascade of matches.

Despite vocal complaints from some clubs and stars including Sergio Aguero and Raheem Ster-

ling, "Project Restart" has largely gone smoothly, with regular testing of players and staff yielding few positives.

But when Villa and Sheffield United kick off, the watching world will be confronted with a jarring spectacle, with an eerie silence in the usually noisy stands.

Piping crowd chants into stadiums, cardboard cut-outs of supporters and live video fan walls will add colour

but it will be impossible to mimic the usual vibrant atmosphere.

In total, about 300 people will be allowed in stadiums for each match, with strict health protocols in place.

There will be widespread disinfection of changing facilities, dug-outs, matchballs, goalposts, corner flags and substitution boards. People other than players and coaching staff on team benches must wear face coverings. The games themselves will look different. Players have been told to maintain social-distancing

during goal celebrations and encouraged not to spit.—AFP ■



Liverpool are 25 points clear of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League. **PHOTO: AFP**