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State Counsellor calls for adherence to COVID-19 guidelines to avoid pandemic long-term impacts



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds videoconference with officials who are taking part in contact tracing for COVID-19, and in carrying out prevention and control measures of this disease. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a videoconference with officials who are working for contact tracing for COVID-19, and carrying out prevention and control measures of this disease.

The discussion was taken part by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major-General Soe Tint Naing, Head of General Administration Department in Yangon's south district U Nay Win Aung and Assistant Director of Public Health Department in Yangon Region Dr Thet Su Mon.

The State Counsellor, in her capacity as the Chairperson of National-Level Committee on Prevention, Control and Treat-

ment of COVID-19, discussed from the meeting hall of Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw via videoconferencing.

Opening discussions of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The State Counsellor said the discussion will focus on contact tracing to the suspected persons with COVID-19; as the cases could increase, people need to consider about it very seriously; cooperation of people plays crucial role for the effective control of disease; people also need to understand high expenses in terms of finance, human power and time consuming in contact tracing; the latest figure has shown that the

number of case is increasing in Yangon as it has a large number of population; moreover, people living in Yangon have failed to follow rules and guidelines strictly in the past 3 or 4 months.

In addition to the rules, more guidelines have been issued; actions will be taken under the Natural Disaster Management Law; some people do not like strict actions; however they need to know the reasons of legal punishment; if the pandemic widely spreads in Yangon, it will be very difficult to provide medical treatments to those people.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has been about a half year; if it can be controlled well, the risk

of this pandemic could be overcome successfully; although there are some news about the production of vaccines, it is not sure; the World Health Organization will confirm it; if people face against this disease in adherence to rules, the impacts will not be longer; if it was treated by negligence, the outbreak of disease would be longer.

Discussion of Dr Thet Su Mon, the Assistant-Director of Yangon Region's Public Health Dept

The COVID-19 has transformed into a global pandemic, and the control measures are being conducted in line with the guidelines of national committee.

The latest reports on 1 and 2 September have shown there are 34 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Yangon Region; among them, 11 cases were identified while they are receiving other treatments at the hospital; the family members of positive cases are now living in residential areas; doctors from the contact tracing teams have informed their family members about the cases about possible infection through close contacts; health workers explained the need of early treatments for early recovery from the disease.

The primary contacts of confirmed cases were kept under quarantine arranged by the

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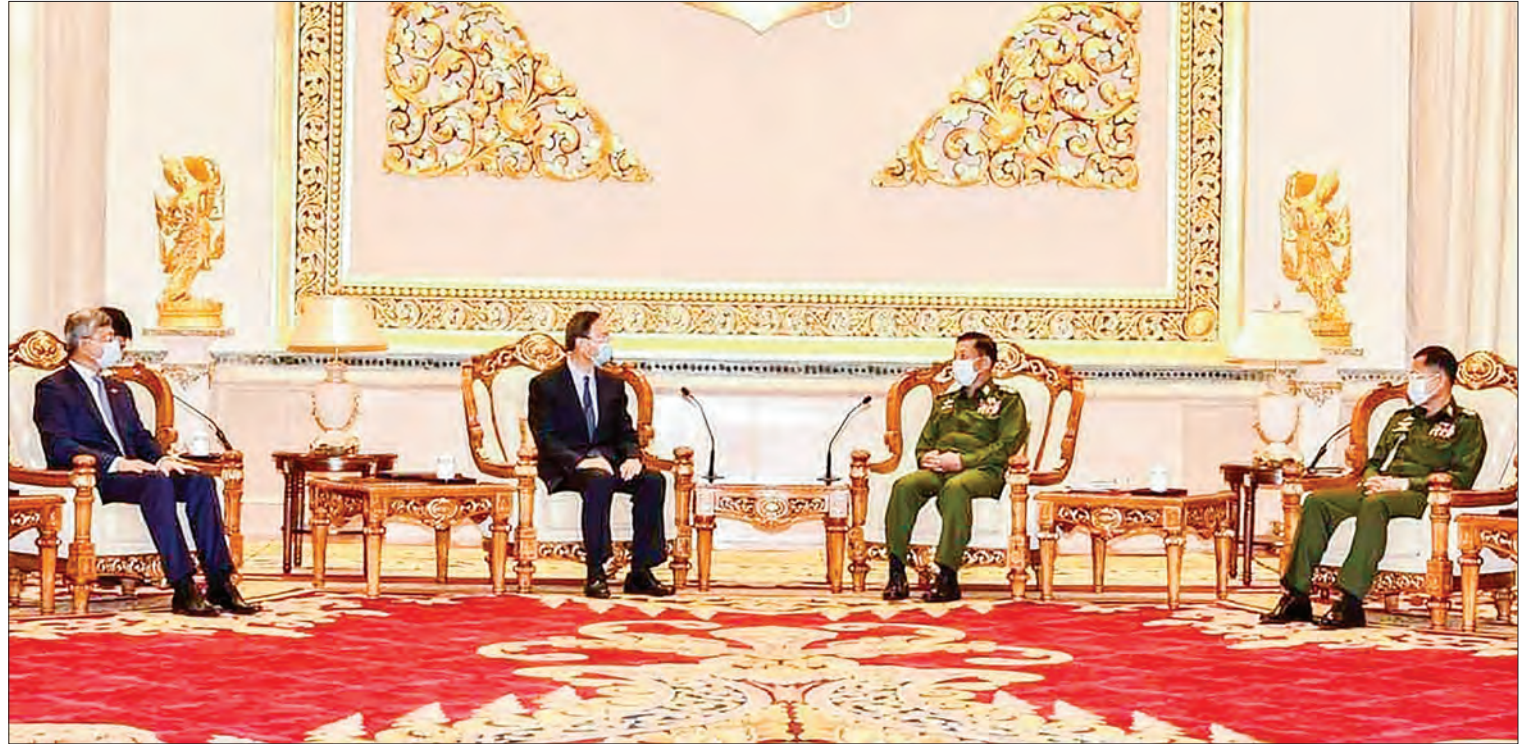
“People are the key”

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services receives Political Bureau member of Chinese Communist Party CC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a call from Mr Yang Jiechi, the member of Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee at the Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The call was also attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win, senior Tatmadaw officers, senior Chinese officials and Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai.

At the meeting, they discussed increasing promotion of fraternal and bilateral relations which have entered the 70th anniversary, the consistent implementation of mutual agreements made during the official visit of Chinese President Mr Xi Jinping in January this year; medicines and medical supplies of Myanmar Tatmadaw to China during the initial period of COVID-19, and sending medical experts of Communist Party of China and the People's



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Mr Yang Jiechi, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF C-IN-C OF DEFENCE SERVICES**

Liberation Army to Myanmar to exchange knowledge on COVID-19 control while providing medical assistance.

The report from the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said that the meeting also focussed on ex-

change of information between the two militaries on border security, peace, stability, rule of law and anti-narcotic efforts; promoting coordination between border guard forces and administrative organizations along the border, the importance of sign-

ing nationwide ceasefire agreement for lasting peace, more effective activities of Tatmadaw in COVID-19 control measures, suspension of military activities except at the operation areas of armed groups declared by the government as terrorist groups

until 30 September, successful holding of free and fair November 8 elections, establishment of stronger friendly “Phauk Phaw” relations through close relations and increasing cooperation.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

CPC delegation concludes Myanmar visit



Mr Yang Jiechi and delegation at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport to depart for China. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHINESE delegation led by Mr Yang Jiechi, the member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and party, concluded their visit in Myanmar yesterday afternoon.

At the Nay Pyi Taw International Air-

port, they were seen off by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Soe Han, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai and other officials.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

UEC holds press briefing on candidate registration processes for Nov 8 elections

THE news and information team of the Union Election Commission held a press briefing yesterday in line with the COVID-19 guidelines on the candidate registration process for the 2020 General Election which is scheduled on 8 November.

The member of UEC and its information team— U Myint Naing, U Than

Htay, U Swe Tint Lwin, the director-general and the deputy director-general of commission office—explained submission of electoral candidates, their withdrawal, scrutinizing and confirmation.

The press briefing was attended by 27 local and foreign media organizations.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Members of the Union Election Commission's news and information team answer to questions from journalists. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor calls for adherence to COVID-19..

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Yangon Region government in coordination with health workers and the relevant COVID committees; the role of volunteers play a crucial role in sending the contacted family members to the quarantine centres; the possible transmission from 25 positive cases was prevented as the cases were found in the quarantine centres.

The medical workers had to make video calls to family members in showing the face of doctors; they also worried about discrimination in their communities; there was no local transmission after 17 May in Yangon despite the cases from flight returnees and border returnees; when new cases were discovered in Rakhine State in second and third weeks of August, more doctors from districts were assigned for duties, taken part by the volunteers.

Discussions of Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major-General Soe Tint Naing

The COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee's Secretary Office is working for the rule of law, contact tracing, awareness programmes and coordination in administrative works; the secretary office is formed with 21 members, including the directors from the Union Ministries for the 11 tasks; five necessary food items were supplied to the families with no regular income; videoconferencing is used to hold discussion with security and border affairs, ministers for coordination.

The technical department of the Ministry of Home Affairs is monitoring the false news and wrong information on social media to prevent public fears and unnecessary gatherings.

The committee removed 5 websites, 15 pages, three groups and 35 accounts until August and legal actions have been against these individuals under Article 66 (d) of Telecommunications Law, while the Ministry of Home Affairs has developed the 'Stop COVID-19' application which has received about 700,000 users; the application is to post of local and international news in real-time.

The secretary office set up two hotline phones for prevention of crimes for 24 hours every day; most of the reports were about foreign returnees who failed to inform to local authorities, unlicensed tuitions and KTV lounges amid restrictions.

People need to abide by the directives and rules of the central



The State Counsellor discusses contact tracing and measures against COVID-19 with officials taking part in these activities on 2 September. PHOTO: MNA

committee to foster the rule of law; the committee is collecting information with the help of Myanmar Police Force, the Special Investigation teams and Special Branch; the office has to report to the national committee about the status of public adherence to the directives and guidelines; the office had to inform about the negligence of public on guidelines for enforcement.

The MPF could effectively conduct contact tracing; it collected the data of returnees as they need to stay in quarantine at the border areas or their regions.

However, some persons came back the country illegally and stayed at their homes without informing to local authorities; as contact tracing process is related with the police works and it is very effective in disease control measures.

Discussions of Head of GAD in Yangon's south district U Nay Win Aung

The department worked closely with the Department of Public Health since the first case was confirmed in the country and arranged for sending the patients to the respective hospitals while cooperating in administrative and security sector.

The department is conducting awareness programmes to be able to identify contact persons to be sent to the quarantine centres and their swabs to the labs while ensuring safety measures for health workers and administrative officials.

The district GAD office had to collaborate with health workers, officers, MPF and Traffic Police unit.

Community based facility and quarantine centre have been set up at the respective

townships with the assistance of health workers, members of Red Cross Society and Fire Services Department, as well as volunteers from CSOs.

Mobile fever clinic vehicles were used for medical services in the areas with positive cases; the works have improved after working together with We Love Yangon civic organization.

Discussions of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

In response to the discussions, the State Counsellor said that the citizens also need to take responsibility in controlling the COVID-19 spread, and if COVID-19 related rules are obeyed, the probability of infection will considerably decrease; most of the cases occurred because many people failed to adhere to the rules; some people followed the guidelines but they were also infected because a lot of people from their environment failed to stick to the guidelines; health department will provide medical treatments to the patients, but every person needs to be responsible too; the problem of the nation is related to all citizens.

This problem poses a severe danger to the country; the spread of the disease can be controlled only if every person is responsible.

The spread of the disease is possible to be controlled in Rakhine State, but it will be challenging to control the outbreak in places like Yangon. More than 7,000 people travelled from Sittway to Yangon from 10 August to today; now travel from Sittway to Yangon has been prohibited. One can think how more than 7,000 people can spread the disease. Those people who travelled from Sittway to Yangon via flight might con-

tinue their trip to other regions/states, those people may extend to a lot of places across the country, so those who travelled from Sittway to Yangon via flight need to contact relevant authorities. If they fail to do it, legal actions will be taken against them. Some people may not like facing legal actions, and the government does not want to do it, but legal steps are essential.

Contact tracing was conducted, and all people who had contacts with confirmed COVID-19 patients have been quarantined; that's why Myanmar can control the COVID-19 outbreak. Majority of Myanmar citizens have to live in narrow houses or apartments; so if a person is infected with COVID-19, the person's family members will also be infected, and then people around them will also be infected. The government is exerting efforts to prevent those occurrences, and the country has to spend too much for the tasks to prevent the spread of the disease, but the life of every citizen is priceless, so the government takes no account of costs. People need to value themselves. **Concluding remarks of the State Counsellor**

One of the reasons to be able to control the COVID-19 is early quarantine and treatments; people did not voice great worry about the pandemic as its infection rate was low, including only 6 death toll.

Public cooperation is needed for the successful control of this disease; the number of case in Yangon has reached 400; the townships with over 3 positive cases are put under the Stay at Home programme; this is the time for people in Yangon to show their capacity of cooperation.

People are the key and their participation could lead to the success; not only individuals but also the respective societies must be protected; the government will provide assistance as much as possible; however, people need to take part in the government's efforts; the administrative sector usually comes under bitter criticism from common people; the view of people could be changed in this circumstance and would be seen as the reliable departments.

The latest statistics show there are 398 positive cases in Rakhine State, 400 in Yangon, 62 in Insein Township and 49 in Hline Township and the numbers are increasing. It does not need to be afraid of these numbers but rather place more emphasis on following rules. The Ministry of Home Affairs must strictly enforce the law.

I wouldn't say I like those that don't take responsibility, such as the people opening nightclubs amid the restrictions, as it is reckless and unsympathetic to the nation and its people. They need to face severe repercussions that spring from wanting to protect the nation. The law exists to implement stability, not punish citizens. However, people must understand that there are consequences of actions that damage that stability. They must understand the implications of the law and the purpose they were enacted. It is every government department's duty to ensure citizens understand this.

I wish for everyone to cooperate on preventing COVID from spreading any further. It is not enough for civil service staff to fulfil their duties; each and every citizen must perform their duties as well. You need to contact the authorities if you have come into proximity with people from Rakhine or know those who have. You will be protecting others, not reporting.

Going into quarantine is not something to be afraid of, and you will not get into any trouble for saying you have come into contact with a COVID-positive patient. You will enter quarantine and receive treatment if necessary. That is why everyone must work together. I extend my gratitude to the three departments, the We Love Yangon group and similar organizations, the volunteers, and the people who are understanding and cooperative with us. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin, Zaw Htet Oo)

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION



Advance voting process for local voters outside their constituencies in 2020 General Election

- Heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails are to contact the sub-election commissions to get documents of Form 15.
- They must return these documents to sub-commission of respective townships by 26 August 2020 after the documents are filled by the voters.
- Sub-election commission of respective townships must send ballot papers and envelopes for advance voting to the trainings, schools, hospitals and jails by 7 October 2020.
- Advance voting must be organized at trainings, schools, hospitals and jails on their appropriate day from 8 October 2020 to 21 October 2020.
- The envelopes containing ballot papers must be sent back to sub-election commission of respective townships by 4 pm on 8 November 2020.

2020
General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020

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Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung discusses logistics sector development

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications held a meeting to design a roadmap for the development of the logistics sectors in Myanmar; organize a coordinating committee in collaboration with the relevant ministries and private organizations related to the logistics sectors and to revise the appropriate regulations and facilitation of logistics activities yesterday.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung said that the Ministry of Transport and Communications is making concerted efforts for the development of logistics sector and the National Logistics Master Plan has been drawn up with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with the aim of developing national-level supporting activities.



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung addresses a meeting to develop the logistics sector in Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

He also added only through good cooperation between the government and private sector

can there be developed logistics services for economic growth. Dr Myo Nyein Aye, Director

of Transport Planning Department explained the National Logistics Master Plan while

the private organizations in the logistics sector discussed work related to the National Logistics Master Plan from their relevant sector.

The officials of relevant ministries joined the meeting together with the chairpersons and executive members of Myanmar Transport and Logistics Federation (MTLF), Myanmar Mercantile Marine Development Association (MMMDA), Myanmar Container Trucking Association (MCTA), Myanmar Customs Brokers Association (MCBA), Myanmar International Freight Forwarders' Association (MIFFA), Coastal Voyage Ship-Owner Association (CVSA), Myanmar Highway Freight Transportation and Service Association (MHFTSA).—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

76 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 September, total figure rises to 995

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to 995 after 76 new cases were reported on 2 September according to Ministry of Health and Sports.

Out of the 76 new cases, 51 are from Rakhine State, 12 from Yangon Region, 4 from Mandalay Region, 3 from Mon State, 2 from Kachin State, 2 from Shan State(South),

Updated at 8 pm, 2 September 2020

1 from Taninthayi Region and 1 from Shan State (North).

Among these 995 confirmed cases, six died, 359 have recovered, 348 have been discharged from hospitals and 81 were held under investigation.—MNA



Recovery Update on 2 September 2020 after two consecutive tests



New PUIs	81		
New Cases in State/Region			
2 September 2020			
Rakhine	51	Kachin	2
Yangon	12	Shan (South)	2
Mandalay	4	Taninthayi	1
Mon	3	Shan (North)	1

Ministry of Health and Sports

Section 59 (g) in Hluttaw Election Law

IN accordance with section 59 (g) of the Hluttaw Election Law, no one is allowed to vote more than once in any election for a Hluttaw constituency in which he or she has the right to vote. Anyone who is found guilty of or abetting this act shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or with fine not exceeding K100,000 (one hundred thousand Kyats), or with both.





Provide all necessary assistance

She also believed that the people would all participate and cooperate; this was such a strength; although the country is not rich, our people are rich in generous spirit; because there is a sense of unity in a time of need and a cooperative spirit, it would be possible to provide sufficient financial assistance; we would provide all necessary assistance for the health of a part of our Union.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's discussions with stakeholders for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Rakhine State on 28 August 2020)

Commerce Ministry takes steps for Dawei- Hteekhee highway construction

THE Ministry of Commerce held a coordination meeting for the construction of a two-lane highway between the Dawei Special Economic Zone and the Myanmar-Thailand border town of Hteekhee yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar and NEDA (Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency) of Thailand are cooperating on the highway project as part of the Dawei SEZ development.

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, in his capacity as the Special Economic Zone Central Working Committee Chairman, delivered the

opening speech at the meeting.

The meeting discussed the progress on negotiation with NEDA for the construction of the highway and for the loan approved by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to be received from Thailand, the implementation progress on the environmental investigation to build the highway and further process.

The Deputy Minister for Construction, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Commerce, Directors-General and other officials participated in the meeting. —MNA



Union Minister Dr Than Myint addresses a coordination meeting for constructing a highway between Dawei SEZ and Hteekhee on the Myanmar-Thai border. **PHOTO: MNA**

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Yangon – Cocogyun ferry service launched



MV Charites is the first to offer ferry service between Yangon and Cocogyun township. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE ferry service between Yangon and Cocogyun Township was launched on 2 September, and the first ferry, MV Charites owned by Thuriya Sandar Win Company, departed Bo Aung Kyaw Port, Yangon at 3:30 pm on that day.

The plan came after the instruction of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during her visit to the island last month, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications supervised the arrangements to

launch the ferry service.

The people aboard the first ferry trip were 13 crews, 3 from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, 43 company workers for electrification project for the township and 20 passengers. Prior to the trip, they have already been quarantined in the designated Quarantine Centre as part of COVID-19 mitigation measures.

The ferry also carried lamp posts (831.5 tonnes of total weight) provided by the Yangon

Electricity Supply Corporation for electrification project, solar panel and related equipment, 2 ambulances donated by the Yangon Region government, and 4 cars to be used for township development tasks.

Yangon Region Minister for Electricity, Industry, Roads and Communications Daw Nilar Kyaw and other relevant officials inspected the ferry service at Bo Aung Kyaw Port.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Myanmar, Japan sign Exchange of Notes, loan agreement for reducing COVID-19 impacts

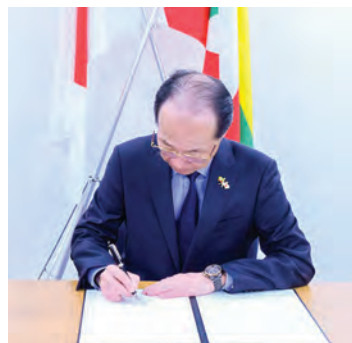
MYANMAR and Japan signed Exchange of Notes on 1 September for a Japanese yen 30 billion loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Loan Agreement. The loan is intended to remedy social and economic impacts caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

The Exchange of Notes was signed by Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Ichiro Maruyama. The Loan Agreement was signed

by Myanmar's Treasury Department Director-General Daw Si Si Pyone and JICA Myanmar Office Chief Representative Sakakura Noriji.

A regular session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has approved the loan intended to be used for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 and for providing assistance to remedy social and economic impacts caused by the crisis. — MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Ichiro Maruyama signs Exchange of Notes on 1 Sept. **PHOTO: MNA**



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win signs Exchange of Notes on 1 Sept. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Tatmadaw reaches final in Tank Biathlon in International Army Games

MYANMAR'S Tatmadaw tank team has reached the Tank Biathlon final of the International Army Games 2020 in Russian Federation after beating ASEAN rival Viet Nam in the "Relay Race" semifinal match 1 on 1 September.

The International Army Games 2020 commenced on 23 August.

Alongside Viet Nam, Qatar, and South Ossetia, the Myanmar tank team participated in the "Individual Race" group matches of the opening round. Myanmar's team number 1 finished third with 36 minutes 27 seconds on 24 August; Myanmar's team number 2 finished second with 42 minutes 43 seconds on 28 August and Myanmar's team number 3 finished first with 33 minutes 39 seconds. So, the total time of the Myanmar teams in the "Individual Race" is 1 hour 52 minutes 49 second, and consequently the Myanmar team secured a berth for semifinal.

In the semifinal on 1 September,



A tank from the Myanmar team rushes along in a relay race at the International Army Games 2020 in Russia.

PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES

ber, the Myanmar team finished in 2 hours 18 minutes and 4 seconds, beating Viet Nam, which finished in 2 hours 23 minutes 16 seconds.

Tajikistan, Laos and Congo participated in the Relay Race semifinal match 2 on 2 September.

The final, in which Myanmar will contest, will be held on 4 September, according to the news release of Office of the Command-

er-in-Chief of Defence Services. —MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

192 Myanmar nationals including seamen brought back home

A chartered flight by Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) from Singapore landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday evening, with 28 Myanmar seamen who needed crew-change after their contracts had expired.

Similarly, after cooperation between authorities and the Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, a relief flight carrying 164 Myanmar nationals (11 from Saudi Arabia, 67 from UAE, 76 from Egypt, 4 from Pa-

kistan, 1 from Germany, 3 from England, 1 from Israel, and 1 from Russia) landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday evening.

As they arrived in the Yangon International Airport, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government helped the returnees for health inspections and arranged for 21-day quarantine.

To bring back Myanmar

nationals stranded in foreign nations by relief flights and charter flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective nations, and brought back a total of 13,364 Myanmar nationals to date.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Myanmar nationals returning from abroad check in immigration at Yangon International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

Supreme group of companies make 18th blood donation



Officials from Defence Services Hospital No.2 in Yangon hand over a certificate of honour to blood donors from Supreme Group of Companies. **PHOTO: HTET HLIAN**

TO assist pregnant mothers and patients with cancer or awaiting emergency operations during COVID-19, a hundred people from Supreme Group of Companies donated their blood to the Defence Services Hospital No.2 and the National Blood Bank in Yangon yesterday morning.

Supreme also donated PPE outfits and surgical masks worth K1 million to the 500-bedded Defence Services Hospital No.2 and K300,000 to the National Blood

Bank.

This is the 18th time Supreme has made donations of blood to places such as Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay and more than 3,500 bottles of blood in total. They helped organize transportation for charity blood donation organizations and supplied nutritional food for more than 1,000 blood donors.—Htet Hlian

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Well-wishers, CSO make donations for COVID-19 prevention

WELL-wishers and civil society organization made donations to the Rakhine State government for prevention and control of COVID-19 in the state yesterday afternoon.

Zeyar Maungmae CSO (Sagaing) donated COVID-19 prevention equipment (worth K6,849,000) and “Star Empire Yangon” owned by family of Daw Tin May donated a “bedside monitor” (worth K3,151,000) to the Rakhine State government.

On behalf of the donors, Ra-

khine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu handed over the equipment to the Rakhine State Minister for Finance, Revenue Planning, and Economy, and the Rakhine State Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation.—*Tin Tun(IPRD)(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)*

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu hands over donations of well-wishers to his cabinet members on 2 September. **PHOTO:MNA**



MSF to conduct crew change programme in Kawthoung



Myanmar seamen are seen at Yangon International Airport before leaving for Kawthoung on 2 September. **PHOTO:PWINT THITSAR**

A total of 60 Myanmar seamen were brought to Kawthoung from Yangon by chartered flight yesterday morning.

The Myanmar Seamen’s Federation will conduct crew change programme on 3 September for 60 Myanmar seamen outside the port area of Kawthoung Township under the supervisory of the officials of National-Level Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 and relevant ministries.

“We served for Myanmar

seamen like conducting health check-ups and issuing health certificates for crew change. We offer such service with the fund of federation in Dawbon Township. Our new headquarters building will be opened soon,” said U Soe Min Aung, chair of Myanmar Seamen’s Federation.

The federation served for a total of 400 seamen under the crew change programme—200 seafarers who signed off their job from the ship and 200 seafarers who took duties to join the ship.

Another 10 ships will arrive

at the port area of Kawthoung Township.

The Ministry of Health and Sports and National Health Laboratory has issued health recommendation letters to more than 1,500 seamen certifying that they are free of COVID-19.

The federation also discussed with the officials of Social Security Board to receive social security benefits for the family members of seamen including their pensions. —Pwint Thitsar

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

702 migrant workers return home via Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge 2 at Myawady

LOCAL authorities in Myawady received 702 Myanmar migrant workers who returned back home through Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge No 2 yesterday.

Among them, 436 people were men and 266 people were women from respective states and regions.

They were given medical examinations and other neces-

sary arrangements by Myawady District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Chan Nyein, and other officials.

A total number of 72,708 people from 1 May to date have been repatriated to Myanmar through this route.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Myawady border crossing with Thailand on 2 September. **PHOTO:HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

New postage stamp honouring Myanmar stuccowork to be issued

THE Myanmar Post will issue a new postage stamp (K200), featuring the Myanmar stuccowork, on 4 September. The new stamp is aimed to raise awareness among young people of the 10 Myanmar traditional arts and crafts. The stamp can be bought at Nay

Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office, Mandalay Post Office and the post offices in every state and region commencing 4 September.

As a special arrangement, for the stamps purchased on 4 September, the Nay

Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office and Mandalay Post Office will stamp the date on the stamps and the Firstday Covers.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Zero tolerance to those violating mandatory COVID-19 orders

WITH the number of positive coronavirus cases reaching nearly 1,000 in the country yesterday, the Union Government has stepped up its fight against COVID-19 by warning that those who do not follow quarantine rules will face legal punishments.

The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Yangon Region reached over 400 yesterday and other parts of the country have seen several positive cases following a surge of infections in Rakhine.

From 10 to 27 August, over 5,700 people had travel history to Rakhine State by air, and of them, some might have been infected with the coronavirus. The government has announced their names in the state-run newspapers.

Those who had travel history to Rakhine State after 10 August have put our country at high risk for the spread of COVID-19 infection. Hence, they are urged to contact the local health authorities. But, they did not follow the request and broke the law.

Meanwhile, nightclubs were opened in Yangon in defiance of the law.

Violations have included assaulting and stigmatizing health care workers, refusing to stay in or fleeing from quarantine centers, organizing gatherings and weddings or other defiance of the ban on gatherings and failing to follow nighttime curfews.

Choosing to ignore mandatory quarantine orders and community orders under the natural disaster management law is not only against the law but also putting citizens, first responders, health professionals and the most vulnerable at risk of exposure to the virus.

We would like to send the message to all violators that the authorities will have

a no-tolerance stance towards those who do not follow the mandatory orders amidst the COVID-19 crisis, and violators will face legal punishments.

We cannot allow one person who we know has the coronavirus to refuse to protect his or her family members, friends and neighbours. This is about us, not about "I". Quarantine is a must to keep the community safe.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has the power to strictly maintain COVID-19 mandatory orders.

There would be no leniency towards all forms of foul play during COVID-19 preventive procedures.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also a natural disaster, and those who do not comply with the law can face fines and even prison time under Section-2 (b) of the Natural Disaster Management Law.

Collectively, everyone has a role to play to ensure compliance with COVID-19 mandatory orders including quarantine and physical distancing measures.

E-Wallet Adoption On The Rise In ASEAN

By Athira Nortajuddin (Digital Journalist, The ASEAN Post)

THE number of digital consumers in Southeast Asia is growing exponentially and in a much quicker pace than expected. Just last year, Bain & Company, a global consulting firm predicted that the number of digital consumers in the region will reach 310 million by 2025. However, in its follow-up report titled, 'Digital Consumers of Tomorrow, Here Today,' they now expect the region to reach the projected number this year, instead of in five years.

This means that almost 70 per cent of consumers in Southeast Asia will go digital in 2020.

Other than that, the report also revealed that the average spend per consumer will more than triple to US\$429 in 2025 from US\$124 in 2018. This exceeds their prior estimation of about US\$392 in 2025. The new Bain & Company study, in collaboration with Facebook, surveyed around 16,500 digital consumers across ASEAN member states Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

According to the report, although Southeast Asia is still cash-reliant, the number of people who prefer to pay with cash went down to 34 per cent from 40

per cent in 2019. Moreover, about 22 per cent of respondents now prefer to complete transactions via e-wallets, an increase from just 14 per cent last year. This shows the steady rise of e-wallet adoption in the region.

Mobile Wallets

China has long been a leader in the mobile economy. Media reports stated that fintech firms in the country have enabled almost "ubiquitous cashless payments" across the populous nation. But in recent years, a new competition has popped up to challenge the status quo - Southeast Asia.

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) noted that 49 per cent of urban consumers in the region who are commercial bank customers already use e-wallets. The consulting firm in its 2020 report titled, 'Southeast Asian Consumers Are Driving a Digital Payment Revolution' projects that the proportion will reach 84 per cent by 2025. In fact, adoption could accelerate in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which "has triggered a sharp rise in digital payments and home delivery," said the BCG. "The COVID-19 outbreak and its aftermath will prompt many more Southeast



This file photo shows Chinese tourists walking past a QR code for Chinese digital wallets displayed on a street in Kathmandu. PHOTO: AFP

Asian households to embrace digital payments."

According to the Mastercard Impact Study 2020, Malaysia leads other countries in Southeast Asia when it comes to using e-wallets at 40 per cent, ahead of the Philippines (36 per cent), Thailand (27 per cent) and Singapore (26 per cent). The report also found that almost half of consumers surveyed in Malaysia have increased their online shopping activities. Other activities that saw an increase include surfing the inter-

net for news and entertainment, online video streaming, social networking and home delivery for food or groceries.

It is also believed that even as countries in Southeast Asia ease their virus restrictions and are preparing for a 'new normal', some of the trends' built in responses to the crisis would likely remain.

ASEAN member states Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand have also reported reducing their cash usage by 67 per cent,

64 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively as they shift towards contactless payment methods.

E-Wallet Usage

A recent survey about e-wallet preferences of Asian consumers conducted by STICPAY, a London-based fintech company, found that users in the region consider fast withdrawals and low transaction fees as the main criteria for choosing e-wallet services.

The study surveyed 400 of STICPAY's e-wallet users across the Asia Pacific region including

Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The fintech firm found that while the trading and online gaming sectors lead as the main users of e-wallet services, 9.6 per cent of respondents utilize digital wallets for online shopping. Other than that, respondents also cited prepaid cards, local bank wire options, diverse deposit methods, safety and security as some of the most important criteria for choosing an e-wallet solution.

wwE-wallet operators have expanded their solutions and services over the years. Some have provided top-up solutions for prepaid services or utility payments. According to Joel Yarbrough, vice president of Asia Pacific at fintech solutions provider Rapyd, the next wave of mobile wallet features will be in cross-border remittances and foreign exchange.

For wallet operators, "there is a need to expand practical use cases by creating more ways of getting people to use e-wallets, such as paying in a store and online," said Yarbrough. "Wallet QR codes can be more alienating than enabling to customers."

SOURCE: THE ASEAN POST

BAFFLING HEALTH EXPERTS

Pakistan puzzles health experts as virus cases drop

SIX months after the coronavirus arrived in Pakistan, the country appears to have dodged the worst of the pandemic, baffling health experts and dampening fears its crowded urban areas and ramshackle hospitals will be overrun.

Following an initial surge, the number of infections has plummeted in recent weeks, with Covid-19 deaths hovering in the single digits each day, while neighbouring India tallies hundreds of fatalities.

Pakistan has a long history of failing to contain myriad infectious diseases such as polio, tuberculosis and hepatitis, while successive governments have underfunded its healthcare sector for decades.

Added to that, many Pakistanis live in crowded, multi-generational homes or packed apartment buildings that favour

rampant virus transmission.

"No one has been able to explain this decline... We don't

have any concrete explanation,"

said Salman Haseeb, a doctor at Services Hospital in the eastern

city of Lahore.

Pakistanis have proposed numerous hypotheses for their



Health experts feared Pakistan's crowded cities would provide fertile breeding ground for the coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

country's seeming ability to weather the pandemic, crediting everything from the young population and the hot and humid climate to unproven claims of natural immunity.

Its median age is only 22 and the coronavirus is known to disproportionately impact older people with prior health complications.

In comparison, Italy, with a median age of 46.5, has recorded more than 35,000 deaths, while Pakistan's official toll is about 6,300.

To date, the South Asian nation has confirmed more than 295,000 infections and currently is recording a few hundred new cases per day.

Observers say that with only limited testing the true number of infections is likely considerably higher.

One testing exercise in

Lahore suggested as many as seven percent of the city's population had been exposed to the virus.

But anecdotal evidence from hospitals across Pakistan supports the downward trend. While healthcare facilities were initially swamped, doctors across Pakistan told AFP they are now no longer seeing a coronavirus-related rush on emergency services.

"Regardless of the reasons, the good thing is the first wave of the virus is almost over in Pakistan," said Khizer Hayat, a doctor at Nishtar hospital in the central city of Multan.

"The situation is now under control and the number of coronavirus cases is dropping, the wards are emptying. It's hard to know why."

SOURCE: AFP

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Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

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“ Adapting First Aid practices to the Pandemic ”

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Flood Bulletin
(Issued at 11:00 hrs MST on 2-9-2020)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River
According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun has exceeded by about (1½) feet above its danger level. It may fall from the present water level about (1) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Ngawun River
According to the (10:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of NgawunRiver at Thabaung has exceeded by (½) foot above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (2) days.

Advisory
It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Zalun and Thabaung Townships to take precaution measure.

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

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORSYe Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR TRANSLATOR**

Zaw Htet Oo

TRANSLATORSHay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

16 VMS control centres conducting surveillance of offshore fishing vesselsA Vessel Monitoring System Control Centre surveys offshore fishing vessels. **PHOTO: KHINE HTOO (MYEIK IPRD)**

STARTING from 1 September 2020, 16 Vessel Monitoring System Control Centres have been conducting surveillance of offshore fishing vessels in Myanmar waters for the ships to comply with vessels monitoring rules set by the Fisheries Department.

"The vessel operators must report to the nearest control station within 48 hours of system breakdown if VMS has the error. The device must be repaired. They will face legal actions if

they do not arrive at the related station within 48 hours," said U Tun Naung Oo, head of Myeik District Fisheries Department.

The Myeik District Fisheries Department has trained more than 300 vessel operators regarding the VMS device and rules. The department will take actions against those vessels violating rules in the coming fishing season.

Eight VMS devices are located Myanmar Navy, while six are installed at Fisheries De-

partment and two, at Myanmar Maritime Police.

If the vessel operators violate the rules the first time, the fish and shrimps on board will be confiscated. They will be fined K3 million and suspended operation for three months. In the second time, the goods loaded on board will be seized, and the operators will be fined K6 million and suspended licence for six months. The vessel will be confiscated, and the operators will get the licence revoked. We have

explained the rules and punishments to the vessel operators, Myeik District Department of Fisheries.

The operators have been notified the set onshore, and offshore areas and the offshore fishing vessels are restricted to enter the coastal site. The department will warn them of departure from the area within one hour; the Myeik District Fisheries Department stated. —Khine Htoo (Myeik IPRD) *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Myanmar reports some 88 human trafficking cases in 8 months

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR reported on some 88 human trafficking cases in eight months of 2020. The issues involved 128 victims, including 28 children, according to the figures released by the Anti-Trafficking Police Force. Out of 88 cases, 15 cases happened in January, seven in February, nine in March, six each in April and May, 15 in June, 14 in July and 16 in August.

The police arrested 236 offenders suspected of involvement in trafficking.

The human trafficking cases were reported in forced marriages, forced labour and forced prostitution. The victims were trafficked to China, Thailand and Malaysia as well as inside the country. Forced marriage was blamed for the main cause of trafficking in person in Myanmar, according to the Anti-Trafficking

Police Force.

Myanmar recorded 88 cases of human trafficking, 64 of which are related to the forced marriage to Chinese men, two to forced marriage in the country, 12 to forced prostitution in the country, six to forced labour in the country, two to forced labour to Malaysia, one to forced prostitution in the country and one to forced labour to China.

Moreover, most of Myanmar's

human trafficking cases in eight months were reported in Yangon Region with 26 cases, followed by Shan State with 25 cases and Mandalay Region with nine cases. There were also eight cases in Kachin State, seven cases in Ayeyawady Region, six cases in Bago Region, two cases each in Magway and Taninthayi regions, one case each in Rakhine State, Sagaing Region and Nay Pyi Taw. *(Translated by Hay Mar)*

YBS exempted from paying daily management funds till Sept-end

By Nyein Nyein

YANGON Region Transport Authority (YRTA) has extended the exemption period for paying in management charges by YBS buses until the end of September, according to YRTA.

Previously, YRTA set the exemption period deadline for paying in management charges of K 4,000 by 27 March and it has now been extended to 30 April. Then, the extension of the due date will be moved up to 30 September for the six times with an aim to assist the YBS companies and the bus lines, according to YRTA.

"By doing so, YRTA is supporting YBS companies in one way or another," said U Aung Nyi Nyi Maw, the Managing Director of YRTA.

Although some 4,500 buses are running daily on Yangon roads previously, only over 4,000 buses from 128 bus lines are operating with over 1 million commuters recently because there is a decreasing number of passengers because of the pandemic, according to YRTA.

YBS companies must report to the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) on their daily process involving applying for waivers and

recording the routes as usual. Moreover, YRTA is making an effort to solve the problems facing the YBS buses under the supervision of the Yangon Regional Government if they find it hard to overcome the problems, he noted.

Currently, YRTA is cooperating with the YBS companies to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from spreading wide according to the guidelines and instructions issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports. YBS companies are operating their buses daily as usual, mainly for the convenience of the passengers.

In response to COVID-19, YBS companies and the public are cooperating in such activities as promotion of health awareness campaign by putting stickers, distributing pamphlets and keeping hand sanitizers on board the buses, installing basins and placing soaps and ensuring systematic disposal of garbage near the bus stations and railway stations.

At present, over 100 bus lines are operating buses along 135 routes in Yangon Region along with the Airport Shuttle and city transit.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Export rice price remains unchanged in August: MRF

THE prices of rice in the export market remained unchanged in August for the two consecutive months, as per data of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

In August, the prices of white rice (low quality) and parboiled rice range US\$385 to 455 per metric tonne depending on quality.

The foreign market purchases our rice as the price is relatively lower than other Asian countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam, MRF data showed.

Yet, the prices are higher than those market prices of India and Pakistan, MRF's data showed. The rice export is not that high due to transportation difficulties in the rainy season. The domestic wholesale market sees a slight rise for high-quality rice varieties as the traders make bulk-buying amid the COVID-19 concerns, said traders from Bayintnaung market.

The prices of rice last month for Pawsan varieties moved in



Labourers load rice bags onto a truck at a jetty. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

the ranges of K37,000-51,000 per 108-pound-bag in the domestic market, showing a slight increase of K500-1,500. Meanwhile, low-quality rice fetched K22,500-

25,500, showing a rise of K1,000-2,500 per bag as against the prices in July, MRF data showed.

The volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 Octo-

ber and 14 August in the 2019-2020 FY has been estimated at over 2.39 million metric tonnes, worth over \$726 million, according to an announcement from the MRF.

It is likely to reach the rice export target of 2.4 million tonnes in the current financial year 2019-2020. According to the coordination meeting held on 26 June 2020, 100,000 tonnes of rice will be sent to the external market in September.

There is self-sufficiency in the domestic market, and people do not need to concern over the shortage of rice, MRF stated.

ASEAN countries constitute 18 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports. The European Union countries account for 20 per cent of rice exports, while 29 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to African countries, followed by China with 28 per cent.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.29 million tonnes, worth \$691 million, in the 2018-2019FY. — Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Number of companies registered on MyCO exceeds 9,300 in 8 months: DICA

By Nyein Nyein

THE number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, reached over 9,300 in the past eight months (Jan-Aug) 2020, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. Typically, over 1,000 new companies are registered every month. This year, the figures of registered companies stood at 1,415 in January, 1,298 in February and 1,015 in March, only 348 companies in April, 798 in May, 1,314 in June, 1,650 in July and 1,551 in August, as per data of the DICA.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to data provided by the DICA.

When the online registry was launched in August 2018, 1,816 new companies registered on MyCO. The figure stood at 2,218 in September 2018, 1,671 in October, 1,431 in November, 1,364 in December,

1,733 in January 2019, 1,419 in February, 1,108 in March, and over 1,045 in April, 1,411 in May, 1,307 in June, 1,428 in July, 1,302 in August and 1,181 in September. The figures reached a fresh new peak of 2,059 in October 2019. Then, 1,615 new companies in November and 1,772 in December 2019 were recorded, data from the DICA shows.

Since the establishment of the online registry platform, 35,269 new companies and 46,377 existing companies have registered and re-registered on MyCO, bringing the total number of registered companies to 81,646 by August-end.

Also, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

A total of 15,843 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 for the restoration of the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Pigeon peas price up by K10,000 per tonne but mung bean price stable

By Nyein Nyein

PIGEON peas price is up by K10,000 per tonne, although mung bean price is stable, said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

The prevailing price of mung bean stands at K950,000 per tonne, while pigeon peas fetch about K815,000 per tonne.

At present, Myanmar's beans are demanded by Bangladesh, Dubai and Pakistan, beyond India, he continued.

However, the purchase volume is relatively smaller than India's demand. India is the leading buyer of Myanmar's black beans and pigeon peas.

However, India is delaying the bean purchase amid the COVID-19 impacts, stated traders.

India rapidly changed the

import period of 400,000 tonnes of black bean to three months by August-end 2020 from the earlier set deadline of March 2021, as per their official notice on 22 May.

Although Myanmar's bean body has asked for deadline extension for import quota of 400,000 tonnes set by India, there is still no response.

Myanmar has delivered nearly 100,000 tonnes of black bean of 400,000 tonnes quota. Around 200,000 tonnes of black beans are also stockpiled in the local market, the association stated.

Myanmar is the top producing country of black bean that India demands. Besides Myanmar, Australia and Africa grow other kinds of peas such as pigeon peas, green grams and yellow peas, the association stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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European Union chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier (R) and the British Prime Minister's Europe adviser David Frost speak at start of the first round of post-Brexit trade deal talks between the EU and the United Kingdom, in Brussels on March 2, 2020. PHOTO: OLIVIER HOSLET / POOL / AFP/FILE

Brexit, COVID-19 issues confront PM Johnson as UK politicians return from summer hols

LONDON — UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson chaired a Downing Street meeting of his most senior ministers Tuesday as the parliamentary machine sprung back into action after its lengthy summer recess.

With issues surrounding COVID-19 high on the agenda, the focus was also on latest developments on the Brexit front, with looming fears a future trading deal between Britain and Brussels will not be reached by the end

of this year. According to media reports in London, Number 10 played down prospects of reaching a trade deal, with an official spokesperson for Johnson saying it will be very difficult, heaping blame on Brussels' insistence on tackling tough issues before a deal can be brokered.

Britain's chief negotiator David Frost met Tuesday his EU counterpart Michel Barnier in London for informal talks ahead of the next round of formal talks

next week.

The EU side is expected to hold a critical meeting next month when it hopes to finalise a trade agreement with Britain. It said it needs the green light in October to enable the 27 member states of the bloc to have enough time to sign-off any agreement before the end of this year.

Time though, said political analysts, is running short with a deadline looming in a matter of weeks.—Xinhua ■

Virus plunges Brazil into recession with record 9.7% drop

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil's economy, the biggest in Latin America, contracted by a record 9.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, plunging into recession as coronavirus lockdowns hit home, the official statistics agency said Tuesday.

Brazil's economy, the biggest in Latin America, contracted by a record 9.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, plunging into recession as coronavirus lockdowns hit home, the official statistics agency said Tuesday.

Brazil has been hit hard by the pandemic, with the second-highest number of infections and deaths worldwide after the United States, and stay-at-home measures to contain the virus have taken a heavy toll.

"GDP is now at the same level as late 2009, at the height of the global financial crisis," the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) said in a statement.

It was the biggest drop since the current system of records began in 1996, it said.

There were record contractions of 12.3 per cent in the industrial sector and 9.7 per cent in the services sector, which together account for 95 per cent of the Brazilian economy, IBGE said. "These results refer to the peak of social distancing, when many economic activities were partially or totally paralyzed to fight the pandemic," IBGE national accounts coordinator Rebeca Palis said in the statement.—AFP ■



Analysts say the downturn has been mitigated by a stimulus package decided on by the government of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, shown here posing with a doctor before the event "Brazil beating COVID-19" at Planalto Palace on August 24, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Japan's job availability hits 6-year low in July



Job seekers head to a career fair hosted by Mynavi Corp. in Tokyo on July 7, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

TOKYO — Japan's job availability fell to a six-year low and employment conditions worsened in July, government data showed Tuesday, highlighting the severe blow dealt to workers by the coronavirus pandemic.

The job availability ratio dropped to 1.08 from 1.11 in June, falling for the seventh straight month to the lowest level since April 2014, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The ratio means there were 108 openings for every 100 job seekers.

The unemployment rate rose to 2.9 per cent from 2.8 per cent

in June, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The jobs data painted a bleak picture of an economy that is struggling to emerge from recession after the coronavirus outbreak led to a slowdown of activity and a record economic contraction in the April-June quarter. Despite the lifting of a state of emergency in May, economic activity has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, making the outlook uncertain.

The services sector continues to struggle, with the latest data showing new job offers by hotels and restaurants plunging

44.0 per cent from a year ago before seasonal adjustment. The number of offers in the manufacturing sector saw a 40.9 per cent decline. The reports demonstrate the challenge facing the successor to outgoing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as jobs data are a lagging indicator of economic health. The government has been providing subsidies to companies to keep people employed amid the virus' spread.

"We are likely to see a bigger impact on employment going forward," said Toru Suehiro, senior market economist at Mizuho Securities Co.—Kyodo ■

Creditors back Argentina restructuring of \$66 bn debt

BUENOS AIRES — Recession-hit Argentina has managed to restructure 99 per cent of \$66 billion in debt issued under foreign legislation, Economy Minister Martin Guzman announced on Monday.

The news comes approximately a month after Argentina reached an agreement with three major creditor groups to renegotiate the terms of the debt following months of strained talks and several missed deadlines.

"There has been massive acceptance, thanks to the dialogue process," said Guzman, speaking alongside President Alberto Fernandez and Vice President Cristina Kirchner.

Guzman said that the deal

meant Argentina would benefit from \$37.7 billion in debt relief while its annual interest rate will drop from seven percent to three percent.

"This gives us a sufficient economic timeframe to generate

sustainable policies and allow development," said Guzman.

The high acceptance rate also lifts the specter of litigation by speculative funds, which have successfully sued the country in the past.—AFP ■

Black franchisees sue McDonald's for discrimination



McDonald's rejected charges it limited opportunities for Black franchise owners. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

CHICAGO—More than 50 Black former McDonald's franchisees have sued the fast food chain claiming a "systematic" pattern of racial discrimination that hindered their success and forced some out of business -- claims the company strenuously denies.

The complaint, filed late Monday in a federal court in Chicago, accuses the restaurant chain of steering Black franchisees to poor locations that required higher security and insurance costs and suffered from lower-volume sales.

"McDonald's intentionally and covertly deprived plaintiffs of the same rights enjoyed by white franchisees," the suit said.

"But for plaintiffs' race, McDonald's would have offered plaintiffs profitable restaurant locations ... rather than forcing them out after decades of sweat and tears dedicated to the franchise."—AFP ■

Suga says he would continue with "Abenomics" policy

TOKYO—Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Wednesday he would continue with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic policies known as "Abenomics" as he formally announced his candidacy in the election to succeed him as leader of the ruling

Liberal Democratic Party. Suga, 71, who has steered policy for nearly eight years as Abe's right-hand man, has emerged as the front-runner in the Sept. 14 election having secured wide support among the factions of LDP lawmakers.—Kyodo ■



Yoshihide Suga formally announces candidacy for race to succeed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a press conference in Tokyo on Sept. 2, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

Will trade for food: online bartering soars in virus-hit Philippines

MANILA—Struggling to make ends meet, Lorraine Imperio swapped a pair

of Nike slip-on shoes for a whole dressed chicken on an online bartering

site, one of dozens that have sprouted up during the Philippines' virus lockdowns.

With millions stripped of their jobs and many forced to stay home to slow the coronavirus spread, Filipinos have flocked to Facebook groups to exchange their possessions, including kitchen appliances, children's toys and designer handbags -- mostly for food. "It's so difficult

nowadays. You don't know where you'll get the money to settle the bills for groceries," said Imperio, a mother of two whose husband works part-time at a doughnut shop in Manila.

His hours have been slashed because of the pandemic and he now only earns about 9,000 pesos (\$185) a month, half of which is used to pay the rent for the family's apartment.—AFP ■



Many Filipinos are now unable to afford to buy food in supermarkets. PHOTO: AFP

Rolls-Royce launches new Ghost amid virus worries

MANCHESTER—Rolls-Royce launched its eagerly-awaited new "Ghost" model on Tuesday, even as the luxury carmaker's chief warned that coronavirus would impact the automotive market for several years.

The new model, complete with a 6.75-litre twin-turbo V12 engine, minimalist design, and even a branded umbrella, will cost some £222,000 (250,000 euros,

\$298,000).

Nevertheless, the lure of a new status symbol car for the super-rich would not be enough to soften the blow of the pandemic in the short-term, the group warned.

"We expect COVID-19 to remain (a difficulty) for some time, until a vaccine is available," said Rolls-Royce Managing Director Torsten Mueller-Oetvoes in a telephone interview with AFP.—AFP ■

Acknowledgement of Changing Pesticide Trade Name

The trade names of the following pesticides, manufactured by Syntech International Co., Ltd registered at Pesticides Registration Board with the name of distributor by Golden Lion High Tech Agricultural Resources Co., Ltd have been changed in reference to import and distribution.

Sr.	Trade Name (Old)	Trade Name (New)	Active Ingredient	Type of Registration	Registration No
1.	KM 50 WG	Bonus	Kresoxim-methyl 50%WG	Experimental	P-2017-3434
2.	Mesotra 55 SC	Golden Corn	Atrazine 50% + Mesotrione 5% SC	Experimental	E-2018-4480

For the above reason, in accordance with the objection of changing trade names may come and object at the Co Secretary, Pesticide, Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within(14)days.

Golden Lion High Tech Agricultural Resources Co., Ltd. No. 242, Kanaung Minthargyi St, Industrial Zone (2), Hlaing Tharyar T/S., Yaongon. 09-264189400, 09-79777587, 09-783231907

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NORDCLAIRE VOY. NO. (035W/036E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NORDCLAIRE VOY. NO. (035W/036E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-9-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (034S/036N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (034S/036N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-9-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/TMIT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V VCT PLANET

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VCT PLANET VOY. NO. (V06/20)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-9-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **SPW-7** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Chinese embassy urges India to immediately withdraw troops illegally trespassing border area

NEW DELHI—The Chinese embassy in New Delhi on Tuesday urged India to immediately withdraw its troops illegally trespassing the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and immediately halt any move that would escalate tensions.

In response to a media query on the China-India border situation, Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India Counselor Ji Rong said China has urged the Indian side to restrain its front-line troops and immediately end all provocative actions.

“On Aug. 31, Indian troops violated the consensus reached in previous multi-level engagements and negotiations between China and India, illegally trespassed the Line of Actual Control again at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake and near the Requin Pass in the western sector of China-India border, and



Aerial photo taken on Aug. 3, 2019 shows a road along the Pangong Tso lake in Ngari, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. PHOTO: XINHUA/JIGME DORJE/FILE

conducted flagrant provocations, which again stirred tension in the border areas,” Ji said.

“India’s move has grossly violated China’s territorial sovereignty, seriously violated relevant agreements, protocols and

important consensus reached between the two countries, and severely damaged peace and tranquility along the China-India border areas,” said the spokesperson.

Meanwhile, India’s External

Affairs Ministry said Tuesday that Chinese troops had engaged in another provocative movement at the border despite ongoing bilateral talks between senior military officials to resolve tensions in the disputed Himalayan

region of Ladakh.

“Even as the ground commanders of the two sides were in discussions to de-escalate the situation, the Chinese troops again engaged in provocative action,” the ministry’s spokesperson said in a statement.

Due to “timely defensive action,” the Indian side has been able to halt China’s attempts to “unilaterally alter the status quo,” the statement said.

“The Indian side is firmly committed to resolve all outstanding issues along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in the western sector through peaceful dialogue. In this context, we expect the Chinese side to sincerely abide by the understanding reached earlier and earnestly work with India to resolve the situation and to restore peace and tranquility in the border areas,” it added.—Xinhua /Kyodo

China raps U.S. report on nuclear warheads as “full of prejudice”

BEIJING—China on Wednesday rejected a U.S. report that says the Asian power is expected to double its stockpile of nuclear warheads within the next 10 years, saying it “ignores facts and is full of prejudice.”

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters, “We urge the United States to abandon the outdated concepts of Cold War mentality and zero-sum game,” adding Washington should

“do more to benefit” the two countries.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Defense Department said in the report that China is likely to at least double its 200-plus nuclear warheads over the next decade.

The latest China military power report to Congress, covering developments through the end of 2019, has been released amid a deepening feud between Washington and Beijing on matters ranging from economic to security issues.—Kyodo ■

Japanese gov’t may offer free COVID-19 vaccines to all residents

TOKYO—The Japanese government may offer COVID-19 vaccinations for free to all residents so that the number of future fatalities and those developing severe symptoms and needing hospitalization can be mitigated, sources with knowledge of the matter said Wednesday.

According to the sources, owing to the highly contagious nature of the COVID-19 and its potential to render patients with extremely severe symptoms, the government wants the highest number of people as possible to get vaccinated.

At a meeting convened last week, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that the government aims to have

secured by the first half of 2021 enough COVID-19 vaccinations for all of the country’s citizens, as part of its new measures and protocols to combat COV-

ID-19 here. The vaccines will be purchased from reserve funds from the budget of the current fiscal year to March 2021, the government said.—Kyodo ■



An antibody test for the new coronavirus is demonstrated in Tokyo on June 1, 2020. Japan started a program to test 10,000 people for new coronavirus antibodies to better understand its spread. PHOTO: KYODO



Thailand’s king has reinstated his former consort Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi. PHOTO: THAILAND’S ROYAL OFFICE/AFP/FILE

Thai royal consort reclaims king’s favour

BANGKOK—A Thai royal consort who was purged for “disloyalty” after running afoul of the Queen has made a sudden and unexpected comeback, with the king reinstating her titles. Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi was stripped of her rank and titles last year just three months after she became the consort, accused on national television of “disloyalty” and “ambition” to match the position of Queen Suthida.

She has not been seen in public since October, but that looks set to change. “Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi is not tarnished,” said a decision by the king published by palace

mouthpiece Royal Gazette, confirming she would once again take the honorific title of “Chao Khun Phra”, or noble consort.

“Henceforth, it will be as if she had never been stripped of her military ranks or royal decorations,” said the decision, which was dated August 29 but only came to light Wednesday.

The latest episode of palace intrigue comes as Thailand faces unprecedented protests by a pro-democracy movement calling for more transparency and reforms to the secretive royal institution.—AFP ■

Trump to host summit between bitter enemies Kosovo and Serbia

WASHINGTON—The United States hopes to foster a breakthrough in talks between Balkan war foes Kosovo and Serbia as leaders of the two countries meet at the White House Thursday and Friday. More than two decades after their bloody ethnic conflict, Serbia refuses to recognize the independence that its former province Kosovo declared in 2008. US officials hope that bringing Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic together for discussions on economic cooperation could help set them on the road for improved relations.

“We’re kind of stuck on political discussions and we keep pounding the same issues over

and over without much progress,” said an advisor to President Donald Trump on the issue.

“We do believe that a concentration on the economic development side would produce progress,” the advisor told reporters, on grounds of anonymity. But coming two months before the US presidential election and without a major agreement promised, the summit has the feel, some think, of a show to display Trump as a master of diplomacy.

While Brussels has been leading negotiations between the two sides for nearly a decade, the US has recently sought a role under Richard Grenell, a special envoy appointed by Trump. —AFP ■



Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti (L) and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (R) will meet at the White House in Washington to discuss economic cooperation. PHOTO: ARMEND NIMANI, ANDREJ ISAKOVIC AFP/FILE

Macron backs Iraq ‘sovereignty’ on first Baghdad visit



French President Emmanuel Macron says he wants Iraqis to be given alternatives to domination by Islamist extremists or regional powers. PHOTO: AFP

BAGHDAD—French President Emmanuel Macron met his Iraqi counterpart Wednesday on his first official visit to Baghdad, where he insisted the war-scarred country should reassert its “sovereignty” despite simmering US-Iran tensions.

Coming straight from a two-day trip to crisis-hit Lebanon, Macron is the most prominent world leader to visit Iraq since Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi came to power in May.

The trip aims to “launch an initiative alongside the United Nations to support a process of sovereignty,” Macron announced

on his final night in Beirut.

In Baghdad, he voiced his support for his Iraqi counterpart Barham Saleh to help Iraq fight Islamic State group sleeper cells and resist foreign interference.

“Iraq has been going through a challenging time for several years, with war and terrorism,” Macron said.

“You have a transition to lead. France will be by your side so the international community can help,” he added.

But there were few details on the much-vaunted “sovereignty” initiative, and Iraqi officials told AFP they were not

expecting announcements of new financial or military aid.

Saleh thanked Macron for France’s support in the anti-IS fight and said he hoped Macron would pay a longer visit to Iraq in 2021. After dictator Saddam Hussein was toppled by a 2003 US-led invasion -- in which France did not take part -- Iraq was ravaged by waves of sectarian conflict.

That culminated in IS capturing swathes of the country six years ago, before the jihadists were beaten back with international support including a US-led coalition that did include French forces.—AFP ■

Lebanon PM designate bids to form crisis cabinet within two weeks

BEIRUT—Lebanon’s prime minister designate Mustapha Adib started talks on forming a crisis government Wednesday, under French pressure to complete the task within two weeks to move forward with desperately needed reforms.

The consultations came after a high-profile visit by French President Emmanuel Macron during which he said political leaders had agreed a road map for reform after last month’s devastating blast in the port of Beirut. “As I leave Beirut, I want to say again and with conviction: I will not abandon you,” Macron said in a statement as he flew out on Wednesday.

The last government resigned in the face of public anger over the August 4 explosion that killed at least 188, wounded thousands and laid waste to entire



Lebanon’s newly appointed prime minister designate Mustapha Adib and the leaders of the country’s various factions have pledged to form a crisis cabinet within two weeks. PHOTO: AFP

Government formation is usually a drawn-out process in multi-confessional Lebanon where a complex political system seeks to share power between different religious groups.

But the country’s deadliest peacetime disaster has created

intense pressure for swift reforms to lift the country out of its worst economic crisis in decades. Premier designate Adib started meeting parliamentary bloc leaders, as Pope Francis warned Lebanon faced “extreme danger that threatens the very existence of the country”.—AFP ■

First COVID-19 case reported in Greece’s largest migrant camp

ATHENS—The first confirmed COVID-19 case in Greece’s largest refugee and migrant camp has been confirmed, Greek authorities announced Wednesday.

The patient is a 40-year-old Somali refugee who was living in the Moria camp on Lesbos island, who has since been hospitalized. Meanwhile, the camp has been sealed off for 14 days, according to a statement from the Greek Migration and Asylum Ministry.

The Somali national’s asylum bid had been approved and he had left Lesbos on July 17, but returned to the island recently, according to the statement.

Moria, with a capacity for 2,757 people, currently accom-

modates 12,714, according to official data.

At the moment, 27,576 migrants and refugees are hosted mainly on five islands in the Aegean in overcrowded facilities, making up part of the some 100,000 asylum seekers in Greece.

Since 2015, more than one million refugees have reached Greece, with half of them landing on Lesbos, with most continuing their journey to other European countries before the closure of borders along the Balkan route in the winter of 2016.

A total of 10,524 infections have been registered in Greece as of Tuesday afternoon, according to data from the country’s health ministry.—Xinhua ■

Yadanarbon Hlaing Bo Bo to miss match with ISPE

HLAING BO BO, captain and star player of the Yadanarbon FC, will miss a match against ISPE FC which will be played on today (3 September), according to a statement with the Myanmar National League.

The captain has received three yellow fouls within this year MNL season, and this is the reason he could not play next match against ISPE FC.

Hlaing Bo Bo is playing for the midfield position and has played for previous ten consecutive matches. He took the captain role for his team from Week-1 to Week-6 of 2020 season Myanmar National League.

The captain also scored two essential goals for his team and also assisting goal chances frequently.



Yadanarbon Captain Hlaing Bo Bo (No.19) absence could be a big chance for ISPE to have a good result. **PHOTO:MNL**

After playing ten matches, Yadanarbon FC is standing in sixth place with ten points

garnered while ISPE is sitting in ninth place with four points earned.

In their first-round meet, Yadanarbon beat ISPE 4-0. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

MNL to present best coach, player awards this month

MYANMAR National League authorities will give best coach and player awards this month, according to a statement with the Myanmar National League.

MNL awards were given for qualified player and coach monthly in the early season of the league, and the awards will be back from this month, said MNL officials.

The best player and coach award will be chosen from MNL Week-9 matches held in March and Week-10, 11 and 12 matches held in August, said the source with the MNL.

Hantharwady United head coach U Myo Min Tun has been adjudged the best coach in the Myanmar National League, and the team's striker Donald Bissa has been named the best striker for January.

Yangon United head coach U Tin Maung Tun has been adjudged the best coach, while midfielder Maung Maung Lwin has been declared the best player in the Myanmar National League for the month of February. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

International football returns at last as Nations League starts

PARIS—After the postponement of Euro 2020 by a year, international football comes out of a long hibernation this week in Europe with the start of the latest UEFA Nations League, which is being crammed into the autumn despite the ongoing coronavirus concerns and will see Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal defend their title.

In normal times, the continent's leading international teams would have been returning to action less than eight

weeks after the final of the European Championship, but instead, they will be playing for the first time since completing Euro qualifying last November, a hiatus of 10 months.

"We are delighted to have our team back out on the pitch, and to be able to play international matches again," said Germany coach Joachim Loew. "The past few months have been difficult for everybody."

While such a long break is unheard of in the modern era,

this is also confirmation of how crammed the calendar will be in the year ahead, with almost all nations playing back-to-back fixtures this month just before Europe's major leagues start the 2020/21 season.

"I think across the board there's got to be a look at the football calendar, and that's everyone's responsibility," warned England manager Gareth Southgate last week.

"Everybody is trying to put their competitions in and the

calendar is growing and the spaces are getting smaller."

The demands on the players will be enormous. Six rounds of Nations League matches will take place in total between September and November, with the top four nations coming together for the finals.

Initially planned for June 2021, these are now set to go ahead later in the year, once the European Championship has finally been completed.—AFP ■

Tennis: Serena shrugs off record-chase after US Open first round win



Serena Williams serves during her first round match against Kristie Ahn at the 2020 US Open. **PHOTO: AFP/AL BELLO**

NEW YORK—Serena Williams insisted she isn't focusing on records as she took a step towards a 24th Grand Slam title with a straight-sets win in the US Open first round Tuesday.

The 38-year-old overcame the loss of her first service game in the opening set to power past Kristie Ahn 7-5, 6-3 in a virtually empty Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Williams is pursuing a seventh US Open title at the US National Tennis Center that would take her level with Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam titles.

But she insisted afterwards that neither record is really on her mind.

"Yeah, in a weird way I feel like every time I come here I'm being told I broke another record. I felt like I had something last year. Maybe it was a tie for Chris Evert," she said nonchalantly.

"But it's cool. I don't think I ap-

preciate it enough, which is unfortunate. But I'm in the middle of a Grand Slam, so it's not the time to be focused for me on records when I'm thinking about winning a tournament," Williams added.

It has been more than three years since Williams won her 23rd Grand Slam title at the 2017 Australian Open - when she was already pregnant with daughter Olympia.

She has come close since, reaching four major finals only to come away empty-handed.

Her chances have improved this year by the absence of several top players, including world number Ashleigh Barty and the second-ranked Simona Halep, due to coronavirus fears or injury. Williams took a few games to get into the swing of things, giving up her serve early on with a double fault.—AFP ■