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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Thursday, 15 October 2020

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Message of Greetings sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, on occasion of 5th Anniversary of signing of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

14th Waning of Tawthalin, 1382 ME
15th October 2020

1. On this day, five years ago, the Union Government and the leaders of the EAOs (Ethnic Armed Organizations) signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. To achieve lasting peace, we have firmly resolved to complete the agreed tasks of the NCA together without fail, based on duty, responsibility and transparency. It could be said that we have walked on the NCA path on the road to peace for five years.
2. The fact that we have been celebrating the anniversaries of the signing of the NCA means that we are reaffirming our promise to continue the implementation of the agreements reached in the NCA. It is a testimony of the fact that all concerned

are marching forward in unity with firm beliefs with respect to the implementation of the NCA. However, I am sending this Message of Greetings because it is not possible to celebrate this event as in previous years due to the rules and regulations imposed for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19.

3. The difficulties and challenges that we have encountered during the past five years with respect to the implementation of the NCA were discussed and negotiated among the various groups; we have now been able to reach agreement on how to overcome these challenges. At this time, among all the ethnic nationalities, there are no differences

of opinion as to the common goal of building a Democratic Federal Union, and this has become our common dream for a Union. To materialize this dream together in a pragmatic way, we now have work programmes for different steps and agreements for the implementation of these steps. In the same way, we have been able to reach agreement on our common aspirations for building a Democratic Federal Union, something which has been our hope for many years. This is Part 3 of the Union Accord which was signed at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, Fourth Session.

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Advance voting of Myanmar citizens continues in Bangkok, Tokyo, Singapore

ADVANCE voting of Myanmar citizens living abroad continue their advance voting yesterday for the 2020 General Election of their home country.

The Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok of Thailand facilitated the voting of 524 nationals, while the embassies in Tokyo and Singapore managed the voting of 57 persons and 1,243 persons.

Moreover, a total of 85 voters cast their advance votes at the Myanmar Embassy on 13 October local time in London.

The respective embassies took preventive and control measures with taking body temperature, providing hand sanitizers before entering polling booths and distributing gloves and masks.

A total of 19,09 advance voters was recorded on 14 October for different time zones of respective countries.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar citizens casting advance votes in Tokyo, Japan, on 14 October. PHOTO: MNA

“People are the key”

Message of Greetings sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for 5th anniversary of signing Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement . . .

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4. After signing the NCA, during a period of five years, we convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong for four times. We were able to sign Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Union Accord. We were able to convene the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong successfully in Nay Pyi Taw in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 with the participation and support of individuals and organizations from the Union Government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw, EAOs, and political parties. Part 3 of the Union Accord which was signed at the said conference could be regarded as an important milestone for peace which is very important for national reconciliation and internal peace; it contains precise policies for implementation, practical programmes, steps for implementation and the aspirations of the future Union; all these are needed for building the Democratic Federal Union in the post-2020 period.
5. The three programmes for peace which will be implemented during the post-2020 period are as follows:
- (a) First Programme: National reconciliation and internal peace. These two programmes to be implemented in tandem. Negotiations will be conducted with EAOs which have not yet signed the NCA to reach ceasefire agreements and to bring them to the political negotiations. While conducting these negotiations, efforts will be made with increased momentum to consolidate the ceasefire agreements already reached with EAOs who are signatories of the NCA; furthermore, negotiations will be conducted to undertake reform measures to strengthen and increase the effectiveness of the ceasefire monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, efforts will be made to uplift the rights of ethnic nationalities and to ensure that legal reforms are in harmony as these are the forerunners of compacts that will lead to federalism; also

measures taken in the administrative sector will be aligned towards equal rights.

- (b) Second Programme: Democratic transition and establishment of a Federal Union. These two programmes to be implemented in tandem. Negotiations will be continued with respect to section 3, Part 3 of the Union Accord, which deals with fundamental guidelines for the establishment of the Democratic Union to take care of the points that need further negotiations; a consensus will be sought with respect to the nature of the state constitutions. At the same time, the policy for political negotiations will be amended to make it practical in accordance with Schedule (1) of the step-by-step programme and step-by-step implementation for the post 2020 period. After that, efforts will be made to obtain Schedule (2) which will contain the detailed headings of Schedule (1) which spells out the step-by-step programmes and step-by-step implementations for the post 2020 period which has already been agreed. In dealing with democratic transition and establishment of a Federal Union, thorough negotiations and discussions will be held for a programme for political and security integration harmoniously; implementation mechanisms and practical implementation modalities.
- (c) Third Programme: Implementation of programmes for amendment of the Constitution based on the agreements that will emerge from the First and Second Programmes. As discussions are made on the step-by-step programmes based on the guidelines, a political policy will emerge which everyone can agree. A political agreement will be reached at the working committee level, with the participation of technical experts in accordance with the NCA road map, to undertake the task of amending laws, including the Constitution. Efforts will be made to formulate and implement programmes systematically through consultations, as to how the Constitution should be amended, how the matter of drawing up state constitutions should be dealt with, and

how the programme for security integration could be carried out harmoniously.

6. We will continue our efforts to implement with increased momentum in the post-2020 period, the “New programme for establishing the Democratic Federal Union in the post-2020 period” which would make it possible to effectively and harmoniously implement the above three programmes for peace which needs to be implemented further in the post-2020 period. This will be done after review by various working groups, inviting suggestions from those who participated in the programmes and studies and comments made on how implementation has been carried out. This new programme will be carried out to implement Part 3 of the Union Accord effectively, to support the strengthening of the UPDJC and JMC mechanisms along the NCA path, to provide technical support to the representatives of working groups who are participating in the negotiations at various levels, and to be able to select viable options for solving political problems in a pragmatic manner.
7. In Myanmar where different ethnic nationalities and ethnic races are living side by side, it may be seen that it is very important to recognize our diversity and turn it into strength; for this, we need to establish a genuine Democratic Federal Union. We shall continue to strive with firm resolve for reconciliation and success of the peace process in a country where internal armed conflicts have existed for over 70 years, reconciliation among the combatants, the establishment of a genuine Democratic Federal Union which has been the aspiration of all our ethnic nationalities and peoples. I send this Message of Greetings with a solemn pledge to continue working relentlessly for the success of our programmes to prevent and contain COVID-19 which we are facing at present; to successfully carry out a free and fair multi-party democracy general elections in a safe and secure manner; and for the success of the New Programme for the establishment of a Democratic Federal Republic in the post-2020 period.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

State Counsellor to deliver speech about 5th anniversary of NCA on MRTV today

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as the Chairperson of National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, will deliver a televised speech about the 5th anniversary of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement on Myanma Radio and Television at 8 pm news today.—MNA

Campaign speeches of three political parties for 2020 General Election will be broadcast for second time

CAMPAIGN speeches of Union Solidarity and Development Party–USDP, Ethnic National Development Party (ENDP) and Kaman National Development Party for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanma Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 15 October for the second time.—MNA

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.



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.



Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

Message from Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing for 5th anniversary of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

14th Waning of Tawthalin, 1382 ME
15th October 2020

Esteemed citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Union-born national brethren,

The 15 October 2020 is the 5th anniversary of signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-- NCA, which is a significant milestone for Myanmar's peace. I would like to extend greetings that may all the stakeholders of the NCA, those who help us achieve the NCA, leaders of ethnic groups, all witnesses from Myanmar and foreign countries and all the people living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar be healthy and happy and have greater strength in serving the interest of the country and in realizing peace.

National ethnic people live together in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and it lost its Independence in 1885 when it was annexed by colonialists. The invaders tried to divide the national ethnic people of Myanmar so that they cannot grant Independence for Myanmar. When the time had come near for Myanmar to gain Independence, the colonialists helped create separatist movements and armed insurgencies. For more than 70 years, Myanmar experienced multi-coloured insurgencies. The successive governments worked hard to stop insurgencies and to achieve nationwide peace, but in vain because of various situations.

Based on the "Our Three Main National Causes", the Tatmadaw government invited ethnic armed organizations to discuss peace, starting from 18 September 1988. As a result, by going through the peace process, the country could agree on a ceasefire with ethnic armed organizations, and achieve nationwide peace.

Under the Tatmadaw government, it achieved only "gentleman agreements" such as agreements on temporary accommodation for ethnic people, the designation of areas and regional development.

In switching into democracy, lasting peace is essential. In the multi-party democratic era, peace process and agreements need to match with the democratic system. So, we take efforts to draft the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), which is the beginning of peace.

Drafting NCA was discussed after the Laiza Conference on 2 November 2013. The draft version of NCA was developed on 31 March 2015. From the draft version to its final edition of NCA, the detailed discussions were made for six times before reaching agreements. Almost all the provisions in NCA were based on the suggestions of EAOs, while the government and the Tatmadaw made coordination.

With the participation of 8 ethnic armed organizations, the NCA was signed on 15 October 2015 due to coordination, patience, high-mindedness and selfless efforts of the members from the government, the Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw and the EAOs. Another two EAOs joined the agreement in 2018. The Tatmadaw recognizes the role of participants for their strenuous efforts in the emergence of NCA.

The provisions in NCA have wider meaning although the document is titled as the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

The fundamental principles of NCA include ceasefire talks, the establishment of political culture to avoid military option to solve political problems for ensuring lasting peace, and that the processes will be implemented in line with the results from political dialogues of the roadmap.

In addition to many national races, Myanmar also has many political parties based on various political views, localities and national groups. Therefore, wider representation of the political parties which are striving for the affairs of ethnic people and the State is required in state-building tasks. These parties could have opportunities to work for the benefits of their regions and their people more effectively only when this system could be practised. Then, a Union system with lasting peace, democracy and federal system could be established as quickly as possible, and this way should be considered.

The Panglong Agreement is a symbol that recognizes stronger unity of national people, as well as a symbol of historic value for removing long-term conflicts and mistrusts among each other. Therefore, the provisions of NCA need to be implemented.

The three parts of Union Accord must be tabled to the Hluttaw for discussions in a democratic way.

COVID-19 pandemic has occurred as the second wave since early September in this country. The number of confirmed cases has reached over ten thousand and over a hundred of death toll until now. The Tatmadaw has put strenuous efforts in the control measures against the disease, and donations have been made at the self-administered zones and regions and the control areas of ethnic armed organizations. During the outbreak of disease, the Tatmadaw is working together with the public for socio-economic development of people.

By strict adherence to the rules for COVID-19 prevention, people could overcome the pandemic as decent citizens. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic is occurring across the country. Although about 7,000 million people are suffering from a decline in socio-economic sectors, the trade of commodity has not declined yet. As the food is a fundamental need for every body, it is advised to increase foodstuffs production in respective regions to promote individual incomes and state revenues. The Tatmadaw will join hands with the public with the best efforts in socio-economic development of the country.

The 2020 General Election will be held in November. The election plays a vital role in multiparty democracy system, and that it needs to be free and fair. It is also advised to elect the 'capable candidates who can work for the country in genuine desire with Union spirit'. A right choice could help to be fully able to enjoy democracy, peace and development expected by the ethnic people.

The Tatmadaw will work together with national people in establishing a united and strong Union based on democracy and federal system in line with the desire of ethnic people. All the respective organizations and national people are urged to participate in the works for the lasting peace and sustainable development of the country.

*Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*

Working Committee to address impact of COVID-19 on country's economy meets



Union Minister U Thaung Tun presides over the Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy where K21.122 bln are approved to disburse to 1,200 enterprises. **PHOTO:MNA**

THE tenth meeting of the Working Committee to address the impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy was held via videoconference yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was chaired by U Thaung Tun, Union Minis-

ter for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Members of the working committee Union Ministers, U Soe Win, U Thein Swe and Dr Than Myint, the Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and representatives of the Min-

istries concerned took part in the meeting.

Following the setting up of the first COVID-19 relief fund of Kyats 100 billion in April, the Committee approved the disbursement of loans to 3,393 enterprises.

Subsequently, the government added a further Kyats 100 billion to the COVID-19 Fund and approved Kyats 20.777 billion in loans to 1,041 enterprises. Yesterday's meeting approved the disbursements of Kyats 21.122 billion to 1,200 enterprises.

Number of Enterprises from different Sectors and loans disbursed:

No.	Title	Enterprises	Million (Kyats)
1.	Agricultural Sector	41	1,010
2.	Livestock Sector	182	2,957
3.	Fisheries Sector	93	2,218
4.	Export Sector	42	1,770
5.	Import Substitution Sector	153	3,432
6.	Supply Chain	49	1,257
7.	Food Manufacturing	1,570	27,560
8.	Foreign Employment Services	70	870
9.	Vocational Training	41	825
Total		2,241	41,899

The meeting also discussed the need to carry out an assessment regarding the impact of the loans disbursed so as to decide on a future course of action.—MNA



Advance voting in London. **(NEWS ON PAGE-1)**



Advance voting in Thailand.

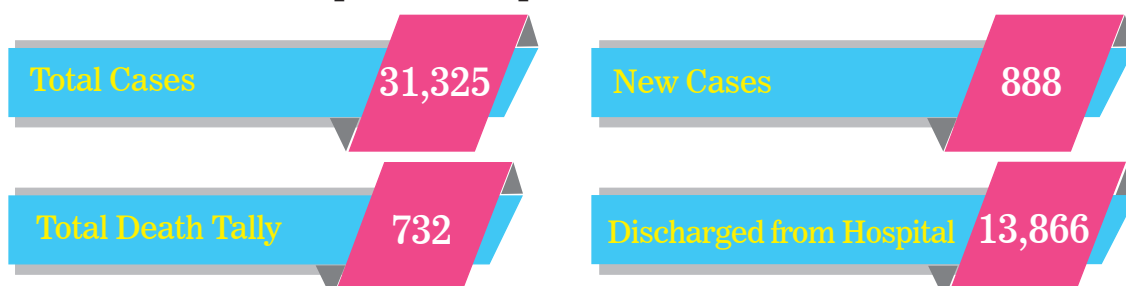


Advance voting in Singapore.

888 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 October, total figure rises to 31,325

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to 31,325 after 888 new cases were reported on 14 October according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 31,325 confirmed cases, 732 died, 13,866 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 14 October 2020



Daily Death toll until 8 pm 14-10-2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

Union Minister U Thaung Tun participates in Virtual 11th Intersessional Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun yesterday attended the 11th Intersessional Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting via video-conference.

During the meeting, the RCEP Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) Chair presented the TNC report to the Ministers on the status of the RCEP Negotiations. The Ministers exchanged views on the preparations for the signing of the RCEP Agreement at the 4th RCEP Summit.

The Ministers welcomed the significant progress made by the RCEP Trade Negotiation Committee and the Working



Union Minister U Thaung Tun attends virtual 11th Intersessional Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting via videoconference on 14 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Group on Legal and Institutional Issues for completion of legal scrubbing to ensure timely completion of the agreement. The Ministers also agreed that the RCEP would keep the door open

for India to join the agreement when it was ready to do so.

The Union Minister commended the Trade Negotiation Committee, the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues

and the ASEAN Secretariat for their hard work in ensuring the timely completion process for signing of the RCEP Agreement.

The meeting was attended by RCEP Ministers from 10

ASEAN Member States and Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, the TNC Chair and TNC leaders, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and officials.—MNA

Sixth Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue held via videoconference



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin co-chairs the sixth Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue via videoconferencing on 14 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin attended the Sixth Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue which was held via videoconference at 1:00 pm on 14

October 2020 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw. The Dialogue was co-chaired by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation and Mr Eamon Gilmore (for-

mer Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland), the European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights.

The dialogue was also par-

ticipated by the Myanmar Ambassador to EU and Senior Officials from Ministries concerned from Myanmar, and Mr Ranieri Sabatucci, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Myanmar, Mr Alessandra Schiavo, Ambassador of Italy to Myanmar, Ms Riikka Laatu, Ambassador of Finland to Myanmar, EU Senior Officials and diplomats from some EU member States based in Yangon.

During the dialogue, the two sides exchanged views on a wide range of human rights issues relating to the challenges facing Myanmar in its democratic transition, situation in Rakhine State, progress on implementation of the recommendations of Advisory Commission

on Rakhine State, labour rights, rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, business and human rights, freedom of expression, countering hate speech and human rights cooperation in multi-lateral fora as well as fundamental rights and freedoms pertaining to EU's experience in protection of human rights including migration and asylum issues.

Both sides also discussed the updates on the ongoing GSP engagement between Myanmar and the EU Enhanced EBA monitoring mission and shared the experiences and good practices of other's measures on the prevention and containment of COVID-19.—MNA

Central Farmland Management Committee holds 33rd meeting

THE Central Farmland Management Committee yesterday morning held its 33rd meeting via videoconferencing.

The meeting was attended by Central Farmland Management Committee Chairperson Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu, the committee's Vice-Chairperson Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw, and members including the Permanent Secretary and the Directors-General.

During the meeting, Department of Agriculture Land Management and Statistics Director-General U Thet Naing Oo, in his capacity as Secretary of

the committee, announced the subjects to be discussed in the meeting. Then, the participants make discussions.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu said that 33 meetings could be held in the five years of the term of the current government. He added that the meeting was held to discuss how to efficiently handle some cases submitted to the Central Farmland Management Committee. The Union Minister said that various subjects including matters on plan to give compensations to the original owners of confiscated lands should be discussed.

The Union Minister pointed

out that if the amounts of compensations for confiscated lands are smaller than the fair amount, the original land owners who will have to give up their lands will suffer disadvantages and if the amounts for compensations are larger than the fair amount, the country will suffer financial losses. So, the calculation of the amounts needs to be made properly and fairly. The meeting decided that more than K 2 billion will be given to original land owners as compensation for confiscated lands, and crops.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



MoALI Union Minister Dr Aung Thu attends the Central Farmland Management Committee 33rd meeting via videoconference on 14 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Govt officials, well-wishers donate cash to national COVID-19 committee

A donation ceremony for measures against COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment was held at the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday afternoon.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win and Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung firstly explained the reason of the cash contribution to COVID-19 committee.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe said the ministry always keeps eye on nature and spread of virus and resources of the country.

He continued saying that it is absolutely essential to follow the health rules as there might be small waves of infections in the country after the second wave of COVID-19 and before the vaccine is developed.

According to the data, 95 per cent of the deaths in the country are with underlying conditions



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe (R) receives the donations from the ministries and well-wishers. **PHOTO: MNA**

like hypertension, diabetes and heart attack and so all the people including elderly persons need to follow the health guide-lines without fail, said the Union Min-

ister, adding that the currently received cash will be used especially for the hospitals, ICU (Intensive Care Unit) and upgrading oxygen pipelines.

Then, Union Minister for Transport and Communications and his wife and staff of Economic Department and Transport Department of Myanmar

Railways donated K10 million while K26,853,000 by the staff of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, K3,530,000 by the staff of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, K4.2million by the Union Auditor-General and his staff, K1million by the staff of Department of Higher Education including Director-General, K1,321,000 by Loikaw University, K3,005,000 by Taunggyi University, K7,475,000 by Yadanabon University, K1million by U Htin Kyaw, member of Shan State sub-election commission and his wife, Daw Nan Hmwe and K1million by U Thet Shay + Daw Myint Myint Thu from FMI City of Hlinethaya Township.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein and Permanent Secretary Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win received the cash donation and gave the certificates of honour in return.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Myanmar nationals return home from foreign countries

A relief flight of MAI brought 145 Myanmar seamen with finished contract of JSM International Ltd under the arrangement of Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and the company, and it landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

The 10th relief flight of MAI arranged by Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh to bring back Myanmar nationals stuck in Oman, Bahrain and UAE arrived in Yangon, carrying 165 Myanmar nationals on the same day.

Among these returnees, 4

Myanmar nationals were from Bahrain while 7 each from Qatar and Oman, 84 from UAE, 6 from Sri Lanka, 2 each from Norway and Britain, 3 from Italy, 6 from South Africa, 1 each from Austria and Bangladesh, 4 from Russia, 3 from French and 35 seamen from UAE and Qatar.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged 7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day

home quarantine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back the Myanmar citizens and seamen stranded abroad due to the suspension of commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Returnees are queuing at the Immigration counter of Yangon International Airport on 14 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ayeyawady Foundation donates hospital equipment, cash assistance to South Okkalpa hospital



Dr Win Maw Oo (L), Superintendent of the South Okkalapa Hospital receives donations from Ayeyawady Foundation. **PHOTO: KO MOE**

THE Ayeyawady Foundation which had involved in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 disease donated hospital equipment and necessary cash assistance to the South Okkalapa General Hospital yesterday.

Ma Eaint Hmuu Zaw and Ko Ye Mann Zaw from the Foundation presented 10 million kyats and hospital equipment to South Okkalapa General Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Win Maw Oo and the Superintendent returned the certificate of honour.

The Foundation has been

donating medical supplies to COVID-19 hospitals since March and medical insurances were provided to doctors and health workers.

The Ayeyawady Foundation, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Sports, is building the Ayeyawady Centres at the Thuwanna Football Stadium and the National Football Academy (Yangon) to treat COVID-19 patients as well as providing COVID-19 medical treatment in other regions and states.—Ye Yint Shine

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Shan-Yangon transport cost double amidst COVID-19 resurgence

By Nyein Nyein

THE transport cost for commodities from Shan State to Yangon Region has increased more than double amid the coronavirus crisis, said U Kyaw Thu, secretary of the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP).

At present, the truck fare rates remarkably soar to K1.6 million from the previous rate of K600,000-650,000, he continued.

"We can steadily transport the goods at the previous rate of K600,000-650,000. Now, the truck drivers are price markers," he stressed.

Following the double increase rate, only 20 to 30 trucks are seen entering Thirimingala Market of Yangon in the recent days.

"We see the entry of over 20 trucks only these days. Before the coronavirus outbreak and the period before the resur-

gence of coronavirus, hundreds of trucks are flowing into the region," he stated.

The vegetables such as tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, bell pepper, eggplant, potato and onion are abundant in Shan State. However, the local products cannot easily be transported to the other regions owing to high truck fares and other transport difficulties. As a result, the commodity prices are so high for consumers, according to MFVP.

"The truck operators raised the fares. Consequently, it directly hurts consumers. Nevertheless, the farmers do not even get handsome profit and benefit from that. The consumer price is unexpectedly ten times higher than the low introductory rate of farmers. Transport problem must be resolved to control the commodity rate. If not that, the price will continue rising," he shared his opinions.



Truck owners have raised transport charges between Yangon and Shan State. PHOTO: HAN HTAY (LASHIO IPRD)

The tomato is priced only K300 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg), whereas the prevailing price is K3,000 per viss in mar-

kets in Yangon. Similarly, a cabbage fetches only K300-400 in the farm, yet, the price touched a high of K1,500 in Yangon. The

cost of a cauliflower increased to K1,000 in Yangon from K150 on the farm.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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အမှတ် ၇၇၊ ၅၂ လမ်းနှင့်ပဟာဗန္ဓုလမ်းထောင့်၊ ပုဇွန်တောင်မြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကင်းမြို့။
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အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊ ငါးထပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း (ကင်းဘလမ်း)၊ ဗဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကင်းမြို့။
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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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YRIC clears \$6.904 mln worth three enterprises from Viet Nam, ROK, China

The Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC), at a videoconference held on 14 October, has endorsed three foreign projects from Viet Nam, Republic of Korea and China.

Those projects are to be brought in an estimated capital of US\$6.904 million. Those enterprises will create 2,279 jobs. They will execute manufacturing of bags and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis, and production and distribution of iron, steel and galvanized iron and building materials, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Ad-

ministration (Yangon Region), YRIC stated.

The Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC) has endorsed over 130 foreign investment projects with an estimated value of over \$280 million in the last financial year 2019-2020, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

Manufacturing, hotels and tourism, other services, electricity and agricultural sectors pulled in the foreign investments. Majority of the investments went into the manufacturing industry, followed by other service and ho-

tels and tourism industries.

To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands and Seychelles are arriving in Yangon Region.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.—Myint Maung, Htet Myat (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Forced collection of loans by microfinance firms to face legal action

MICROFINANCE Supervisory Committee (MSC) will take legal action against the microfinance institutions if they forcibly collect loans in the pandemic period, according to the committee's announcement released on 13 October.

The committee also announced that the microfinance businesses should not forcibly collect the loans plus interests when the members' businesses and income are lower in the pandemic period, and they should only negotiate the date of repayment of the loans and interests.

The committee has also announced that if the members are forcibly asked to return the loans and interest, they are entitled to complain to the committee in detail mentioning the contact phone number or address. The committee will take legal action against the microfinance institutions under the Microfinance Law.

The committee announced in April that the livelihood businesses and enterprises operating with the loans in COVID-19 period might be adversely affected by the economic impact caused by the pandemic. So, the institutions

should not forcibly ask for repayment of the loans and interests.

In July, the committee issued an instruction that the institutions are allowed to collect the loans only from those who are ready to return the loans, and they need to provide the new loans or internal loans. They also need to negotiate re-fixing of the paying back period.

There are many microfinance institutions in 252 townships across the country with 4.6 million loan takers.—Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Behaviour change is essential to minimize impacts on environment from COVID-19

WITH many shops and offices closed, lower emission on roads, people are staying at home, local air quality has dramatically improved in Yangon Region amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Globally, emissions have dropped, and the demand for coal and oil is lower than it has been in a long time, due in large part to the decline in demand from transport and slowdown in manufacturing.

The COVID-19 restrictions are having short-term environmental benefits demonstrating what can be done differently.

But, this crisis also brings an opportunity to effectively implement our country's "environmental management system" to prevent degradation of the ecosystem and environmental damages through our behaviour change in significant ways.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic highlights the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to human health.

Enhancing environmental health through better air quality, water and sanitation, waste management, along with efforts to safeguard biodiversity, will reduce the vulnerability of communities to pandemics and thus improve overall societal well-being and resilience. Effective waste management is essential to minimize possible secondary impacts upon health and the environment while water access and quality and biodiversity protection are key to battling the spread of pandemics.

Limiting people's exposure to air and water pollution will reduce vulnerability to future pandemics and contribute to enhancing health and well-being.

While fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to make efforts for helping the people to change their behaviors and life style which could encourage sustainable production and consumption even after restrictions are lifted.

Meanwhile, necessary measures should be taken to enforce the rules and regulations and procedures related to disposal of waste materials, waste water treatment, garbage system, and environmental degradation caused by illegal mining; in short we need to raise environmental awareness.

A better understanding of the role of environmental health as a crucial component of overall health priorities will help to inform policy responses in the recovery from the current pandemic and preparedness for future such shocks. Such an understanding will also generate significant co-benefits in terms of improving the overall health of communities and increasing the resilience of societies.

To turn the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic into opportunities for environmental health, we need to promote individual and collective behaviour change in terms of reducing environmental pollution.



"FOOD SAFETY": THE ENTIRE FOOD CHAIN FROM THE PRODUCER TO THE PROCESSOR TO THE CONSUMER

Ensuring Food Safety in Myanmar

By Lokethar

RECENTLY there was an editorial in the Global New Light of Myanmar about food safety. The points made in the editorial are both interesting and timely. The facts mentioned are only too true. It says that "Contaminated food may contain harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical agents causing more than 200 diseases-ranging from diarrhoea to cancers". The editorial goes on to say that "safety of food must always be monitored through effective law enforcement. No excuse should be given to the sellers of unhygienic food, and traders of substandard quality of raw food items". Of course, "food safety" should cover the entire food chain from the producer to the processor to the consumer. The goal however is to ensure that the consumer, that is the public, is ultimately the beneficiary of "food safety".

Unsafe food consumption by the public has definitely been the cause of many chronic diseases like, diabetes, hypertension, kidney diseases, liver diseases, gastro-intestinal diseases and even cancers among the people of Myanmar. The cost of medical care for such diseases far outstrips the cost of some common acute diseases like food poisoning, diarrhoea, seasonal flu, etc. The chronic diseases acquired through ingestion of unsafe food

for prolonged periods of time, can in the long run add to the cost of medical care both by individual citizens and the State.

Myanmar has laws relating to food safety. Unfortunately enforcement has been rather "weak" in the past due probably to the insufficient number of personnel and the insufficient facilities and equipment for testing food quality, produced locally or imported. Under the existing Food Law as well as the recently enacted Consumer Protection Law it is mandatory for producers and manufacturers to attach labels to food and medicine products, indicating their constituents and expiry date. These provisions regarding food safety help the authorities concerned to check on the quality of food and medical products being sold in the market. Law enforcement of the safety of food and food products must be improved and action taken against the producers, suppliers, and the distributors of food products who fail to abide by the laws, rules and "standards" related to "food safety" in Myanmar.

The editorial also comments that some regional countries emphasize safety and hygiene of their "street foods" to attract tourists. In Myanmar, particularly in the large cities including Yangon, there are many fine and hygienic restaurants and cafes that the tourists may patronize. For tourists



Generally speaking, buying and consuming "safe food", depends entirely on the "choice" of the consumer. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, MM

who want to sample "local street food", there are many "street food sellers" that are permitted by the concerned authorities. It's up to the tourists themselves to decide which street food sellers they would like to choose. For guided tours it's probably the tour guides who will recommend a particular "location/seller" for any particular type of food. Their choice would likely be the street food sellers in the permitted "street food areas". In all fairness it must be said that "street food sellers" are patronised by the general public as well, in numbers that far exceed the number of tourists who patronize them. Moreover in this period of Covid-19, in the absence of foreign tourists,

it's the local people who mostly patronize the "street food sellers".

It is common knowledge that the "street food sellers" are not limited to "fast foods" for consumption in the "shop" or to "take away" as parcels. There are also "street sellers" of raw food items for cooking at home. They line the city streets mostly around the "municipal markets", housing and business areas and probably the items they sell are cheaper (though not necessarily safer) than the same items sold in the many "municipal markets" or "food markets" of shopping centres. In some narrow streets they even sell their wares in the middle of the street thus blocking traffic. The "people"

patronize these "street sellers" in spite of the fact that their compliance of "food safety" requirements is questionable. Enforcing the food safety rules to such street sellers has been a problem all along. It's time to take action against them if they are selling unsafe food, especially in unhygienic environments, like near waste dumps, sewage drains and wet and soggy areas of the street or on pavements meant for people to walk on.

On the other hand, generally speaking, buying and consuming "safe food", depends entirely on the "choice" of the consumer. It is up to the consumer to choose the safe food items sold in the more "accountable and hygienic stalls"

in the municipal markets instead of buying them from the "street sellers".

The painful fact is that many people are not food safety conscious or civic minded enough to make the right "choice". Sometimes it may be a matter of convenience to patronize the nearest "street seller" for items of raw food or vegetables for daily "cooking needs". From the "rights" point of view we may not be able to question the "consumer's" choice. Technically however they may be considered as being guilty of "encouraging" the street sellers.

Hence what is needed to ensure "food safety" in the long run is to change the behaviour of the consumers. It will take some time and quite a bit of "persuasion" to make them aware of "food safety" and change their behaviour viz-a-viz patronizing of unhygienic street food sellers. If the people develop the habit of purchasing food items from the municipal markets (provided there are sufficient number of modern such markets in the various township as I had proposed in one of my earlier article) or the "food markets" in the many shopping centres, the "food safety" lacking street side food sellers will eventually disappear, and the people would be none the worse for it.

With charity to all and malice to none.



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS, THEIR HEALTH AND OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

'Time for global solidarity' to overcome COVID's health, social and economic challenges

THE COVID-19 pandemic has not only led to a "dramatic loss" of human life but also constitutes an "unprecedented challenge" to public health, food systems and employment, a group of leading UN agencies said on Tuesday.

In a joint statement, the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted that tens of millions are at risk of falling into extreme poverty.

"Now is the time for global solidarity and support, especially with the most vulnerable in our societies, particularly in the

emerging and developing world", the statement said.

"Only together can we overcome the intertwined health and social and economic impacts of the pandemic and prevent its escalation into a protracted humanitarian and food security catastrophe, with the potential loss of already achieved development gains".

Jobs decimated

The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihoods at risk, the UN agencies attested.

Pointing out that "millions of enterprises face an existential threat", they indicated that nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion workforce risks losing its livelihood.

Unable to earn an income dur-



Women sell fruit and vegetables on a sidewalk in the Philippines, where workers in the informal economy are in danger of having their livelihoods destroyed by the impacts of COVID-19. PHOTO: ILO/MINETTE RIMANDO.

ing lockdowns and without sufficient social protections or health care, informal economy workers are particularly vulnerable - many powerless to feed themselves and their families.

Agricultural workers

At the same time millions of

wage-earning and self-employed agricultural workers face high levels of poverty, malnutrition and poor health.

With low or irregular incomes and no social support, many are spurred to continue working in unsafe conditions, exposing them-

selves and their families to additional risks.

Moreover, amidst income losses, the agencies flagged that they may resort to unwise strategies, such as panic-selling of possessions, predatory loans or child labour. "Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments", the statement detailed.

Food systems

The pandemic has also laid bare the fragility of the entire food system.

Border closures, trade restrictions and confinement measures

have disrupted domestic and international food supply chain and reduced access to healthy, safe and diverse diets.

The UN agencies underscored that long-term strategies must be developed to "address the challenges facing the health and agri-food sectors" with priority given to underlying food security, malnutrition challenges, rural poverty and social protections, among other things.

Coming back stronger, together

The UN is committed to pooling its expertise and experience to help countries respond to the crisis and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SOURCE: UN NEWS

U Min Thein appointed as Ambassador of Myanmar to the Republic of Austria

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Min Thein, Director-General of Protocol Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Austria. — MNA



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Wednesday 14 October, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the North Bay and East central Bay of Bengal. Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

SPECIAL FEATURE: According to the observations at (15:30 hrs MST today, the tropical storm "Nangka" over the Gulf of Tonkin has crossed Northern Vietnam Coast. It is forecast to move westwards and weakened gradually.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 15 October, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States, fairly widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions, scattered in Kachin State and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered to fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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Water supply project from Dotthawadi River to start in 2021



A section of Dotthawadi River. PHOTO: THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)

MANDALAY Pyigyitagon Water Supply Development Project with the purification of Dotthawadi river, jointly implemented by the Netherlands and Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), will commence only in early 2021, said U Saw Han, a member of MCDC.

It is hard to carry out the project during the coronavirus crisis. The officials are also still

negotiating it. The precautionary restriction measures and crowd restriction caused the project to suspend, he added.

This project was initiated with the assistance of JICA grant in 2018 and covered five wards in Pyigyitagon Township. The remaining 13 communities will get water supply from Dotthawadi river water purification scheme. The project will begin only in

early 2021 due to the COVID-19 impacts, he stated.

The project can cover 70 per cent of Pyigyitagon Township, with the Dutch grant of 29.96 million Euro and 29.96 million Euro loan from the Netherlands banks — FMO and ING, with the total project cost of 59.92 million Euro.

In this project, construction of water treatment plant, pumping station, water storage

lake, service water pipelines, household water connections, development of district meter area zone to reduce the water loss, and installation of water meter in Pyigyitagon Township are included. Under the project development, residents in 70 per cent of the Pyigyitagon town area will receive good and clean water.

The Netherlands and Myanmar signed the grant agreement for Pyigyitagon Water Supply Development Project on 9 June 2020 in the ways of the virtual signing event. Mr Huub Buisse, Deputy Ambassador, Mr Astrid Raaphorst, Director of NL Process and Legal Affairs, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), Daw Si Si Pyone, Director General, Treasury Department under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and Dr Ye Lwin, Mayor of the Mandalay City signed the grant agreement, according to the Netherlands Embassy to Myanmar.—Than Zaw Min (IPRD) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

City Taxi registration extension to resume only with permission by authorities

By Nyein Nyein

THE extension process of city taxi registration will be resumed only when we get the permission from the relevant authorities depending upon the COVID-19, said U Hla Aung, the joint secretary of Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

The extension process of city taxi registration has been

suspended starting from the outbreak of COVID-19 in March to prevent people from being crowded.

"All taxis have to be registered as city taxis for the Yangon Region. But, we have suspended the extension of city taxi registration temporarily due to the spread of pandemic. Still, now, we suspend the city taxi registration extension process. We

will resume this process again only when we get the permission from the relevant authorities," said U Hla Aung.

City taxi registration began in 2002 to bring transport services on par with Yangon's image as a commercial hub, and for regulating the taxi services.

With the renewal of city taxi registration, a total of 2,900 criminal cases broke out between

2014 and 20 August 2019.

YRTA was formed on 8 July 2016 to improve the transport facilities in Yangon for convenience of the public. The authority is carrying out city taxi registration.

There were more than 60,000 registered city taxis in Yangon Region as of end-March, according to the data from YRTA. (Translated by Hay Mar)

COVID testing fees reduced by K10,000 for truck drivers, mates

By Nyein Nyein

THE COVID-19 testing fees for the truck drivers and the conductors have been reduced by K10,000, according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

In order to ensure smooth flow of the cargoes, the health authorities have ordered conducting of the swab tests on the truck drivers and helpers using the rapid antigen test kits, and the cost is K20,000 per person. Now, the price has been reduced to K10,000 per person.

Although the testing fees for COVID-19 have been reduced, we want the authorities to extend

the time of 72 hours COVID-19 clearance certificate, said U Kyaw Thu, the secretary of the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association.

"It is good for reducing the COVID-19 testing fees for the drivers and helpers. However, we need to have the certificate for a longer period. The certificates last for only 72 hours. The period of 72 hours is not enough for investigation and travelling time. Instead of 72 hours, we requested to extend up to 10 or 14 days," he added.

Moreover, the related state and regional authorities, who have to follow the Union Gov-

ernment instructions, may have a problem to change the rules for the truck drivers. So, the flow of the trucks will be delayed with the consequence of the rising of the commodities prices, he added. On 9 October, Yangon Region government Chief Minister U Phyto Min Thein and the UMFCCI chairman and the officials held a videoconference to ensure systematic operation of the permitted businesses and smooth flow of the cargoes in stay home period in Yangon region.

At the conference, they discussed the threefold detecting through the use of the test kits, issuance of COVID-19 clearance certificates and reducing the test

kit fees to K10,000 per person from K20,000 per head.

Moreover, they have also discussed buying of test kits for Yangon region, formulation of a systematic technology for the health and transportation sectors, cooperation with the federation to have accurate data when they collect the list of the employees and labours who fail to contribute SSB, proper operation of the factories and workplaces, making preparations for survival and/or recovery of the businesses in the post-stay home period and giving priority to the local businesses, according to UMFCCI.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

EMERGING FROM THE PANDEMIC

China's return to post-COVID new normal "nearly unthinkable": US media

CHINA has returned to a post-COVID-19 new normal, which is "nearly unthinkable," according to US media.

In a report on Sunday, CBS News said that from morning tai-chi at various gardens to lunch crush in central business districts in China, the "sheer normalcy" of it all makes it seem as if the coronavirus never happened at all.

When the epidemic broke out, the Chinese government "struck back hard and fast", forcing up to 50 million people into lockdown for two months, and new hospitals were built from scratch in just two weeks, the report said.

The government has carried out testing and contact tracing, implemented a QR health code system, banned nearly all foreigners from entering the country, and put people who were allowed to return into a 14-day quarantine.

Roark Jones, a sophomore at New York University's campus in Shanghai, told CBS that "Everyone in China is very willing to abide by any policy set forth for containment of the disease. One thing that was kind of inspiring to me is that everyone did the quarantine."

"In February, I was basically in my dorm the entire time ... Now, people sometimes don't even wear masks outside. The pandemic's basically nonexistent here," Jones was quoted by CBS as saying.

SOURCE: XINHUA

ADVANCING TIES

Japan, Vietnam to agree to bolster supply chains during Suga's visit

JAPAN and Vietnam plan to agree to facilitate the cross-border flow of medical equipment and other goods when Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga visits Hanoi next week, government sources said Wednesday, part of a push to diversify supply chains in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Suga is also hoping to sign an agreement enabling Japan to transfer defence equipment and technology to Vietnam in a planned meeting with his counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc, the sources said.

Japan relies on imports for much of its medical equipment, with around 80 per cent of its face masks supplied by China. As demand for face masks surged following the outbreak of COVID-19 earlier this year, many stores struggled to maintain stock as

domestic manufacturers scrambled to boost output.

In a bid to reduce its dependence on China, Japan is giving subsidies to firms that move production to Southeast Asia, which is both geographically well-placed and able to provide relatively cheap labour.

Of the 30 firms that have already been chosen to receive the subsidies, including manufacturers of goods ranging from medical gowns to car engine parts, half are planning to set up in Vietnam.

During his visit, Suga is also slated to make a speech at Vietnam Japan University, a symbol of bilateral educational exchanges that opened in Hanoi in 2016 with funding from both governments, according to the sources.

SOURCE: KYODO



Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga speaks in Tokyo on Oct. 9, 2020 PHOTO: KYODO

RECOVERY

US banks report good earnings, but warn of hit if no more stimulus



Shares of JPMorgan Chase rose after it reported better-than-expected results and avoided hefty reserves for bad loans. PHOTO: AFP

LARGE US banks reported better-than-expected results Tuesday on an improving economy, but cautioned that the recovery could falter if Washington fails to

enact new stimulus measures.

"It's important and it needs to happen as quickly as possible," said Citi Chief Financial Officer Mark Mason, who added that

massive spending from Washington has helped avert a tidal wave of delinquencies so far.

JPMorgan Chase executives warned of a "double-dip" recession if there is not another package. That takes place when a second period of economic contraction follows an initial recovery. "The people we need to help the most are small businesses and the unemployed," said JPMorgan Chief Executive Jamie Dimon, who said Washington's actions will determine whether it needs to take much higher reserves for bad loans.

"If the better outcomes happen" with a good a stimulus package, "we are over reserved by \$10 billion," he said. But if there is a

double-dip recession, the bank could be "unreserved by \$20 billion," Dimon added.

The comments came as both JPMorgan Chase and Citigroup released earnings that showed a big improvement from the last two quarters, when both companies set aside billions of dollars in reserves for bad loans in the wake of coronavirus shutdowns.

How many bad loans?

JPMorgan Chase, kicking off a deluge of results from large financial companies, reported \$9.4 billion in profits, up four percent from the year-ago period as revenues were down slightly at \$29.9 billion.

SOURCE: AFP

GROWING CONCERNS OVER E-WASTE

Apple's rare earth recycling steps up environmental response

APPLE said on Tuesday that its new iPhones would be produced from recycled rare earth materials, as part of a strengthened environmental initiative that also has geopolitical implications.

Announced as part of a series of sustainability actions, Apple said the move builds on

previous initiatives, including its promise to become 100% carbon neutral in all aspects of its activities.

Apple's chief environmental officer Lisa Jackson told an online event announcing the new iPhone 12 handsets that for the first time, we are using

100% recycled rare earth elements in all magnets including camera, haptics and MagSafe (connectors).

The announcement comes amid growing concerns over e-waste from billions of smartphones as consumers switch to new models and with growing

political tensions over the rare earths needed by many electronic devices.

Activists have expressed concerns about the environmental impact of rare earth mining, and some of the materials come from countries cited for labour and human rights violations

China, the scene of fatal mining accidents, has been in the spotlight for its dumping of toxic waste in Baotou, Inner Mongolia, as Beijing boosts global production of rare earth elements

SOURCE: AFP

"PROTECT" BALLOTS

National Guard 'available' in US capital in case of election unrest



Army Gen. Mark Milley (second from left), chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others listen as President Trump speaks during a meeting with senior military leaders in October.

PHOTO: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI / AFP

RESERVE troops of the US National Guard will be available for deployment in the US capital in case of trouble following the November 3 elections, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said Tuesday.

"There have been no requests from other agencies to support at this time, but we're always available to support" the city's police department of other federal agencies, McCarthy said at a press conference.

McCarthy, who has ultimate command of the National Guard in the nation's capital, defended the use of reservist troops during protests against police brutality and racism over the summer.

An inquiry has been launched into the actions of the National Guard during a

heavy-handed crowd dispersal operation in Washington in June.

"We don't police America's streets," said McCarthy. "We support law enforcement, whether that is at the federal or state, local levels."

President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly made unsubstantiated warnings that his rival Democrats are plotting election fraud, has called on his supporters to turn up at polling stations and to "protect" ballots, raising fears of clashes if the race turns out to be very close.

On June 1, National Guard helicopters flew very low over anti-racism protesters close to the White House to try to disperse them, ripping the branches off trees and whipping other debris over streets.

SOURCE: AFP

JAPAN'S LABOUR MARKET

Japan joblessness hits 3% for 1st time since 2017

JAPAN'S unemployment rate rose to 3.0% in August, the highest figure since mid-2017, official data showed Friday, illustrating the pandemic's effect on the country's tight labour market.

The figure, up a tenth of a percentage point from July, is the first time since May 2017 that the rate has stood at three per cent or higher, according to the internal affairs ministry data. Separate data compiled by the labour ministry showed there were only 104 job openings for every 100 job-seekers in August, worsening from 108 to 100 in the previous month.

Japan was already struggling with the effects of natural disasters and a hike in consumption tax before the coronavirus pandemic crippled the global economy. Once it hit, there were no mandatory lockdowns in the country, with the government instead asking people to stay at home – a request that was largely heeded. But that, coupled with a shuttering of the country's borders, battered tourism and consumer spending, with the hospitality industry hit particularly hard.— SOURCE: AFP

A COMMON MAPPING SYSTEM

EU agrees on common rules for coronavirus travel restrictions

EUROPEAN Union countries on Tuesday agreed on common criteria to coordinate coronavirus travel restrictions in an effort to end the confusing patchwork of national rules that has developed during the pandemic.

Ministers from the 27 countries agreed on the new guidelines at a meeting in Luxembourg, putting in place a common mapping system to define risk areas in the EU, although the rules are not binding on member states.

In March, several EU nations hastily closed their borders in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus, even though the EU's Schengen agreement allows residents to move freely between countries without visas. The action blocked traffic and medical equipment.

"The COVID-19 pandemic

has disrupted our daily lives in many ways. Travel restrictions have made it difficult for some of our citizens to get to work, to university or to visit their loved ones," said Michael Roth, the German minister for Europe.

"It is our common duty to ensure coordination on any measures which affect free movement and to give our citizens all the information they need when deciding on their travel."

Member states agreed to provide coronavirus data to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), which will publish a weekly map sorting regions according to the severity of coronavirus outbreaks.

The criteria used to define the coloured zones - green, or-



Representative image. PHOTO: AFP

ange and red - are the number of newly notified cases per 100,000 in the past 14 days as well as the testing rate and the test positivity rate in the past week.

Member states agreed that they should not restrict free movement of people trav-

eling from or to green areas, but national EU governments will continue to set their own restrictions such as quarantines or mandatory testing upon arrival for people coming from orange or red zones.

SOURCE: AFP

"IT'S INEVITABLE,"

Paris hospitals near COVID-19 saturation: Top health official

HOSPITALS in Paris could have up to 90 per cent of intensive care beds packed with COVID-19 patients as soon as next week, the system's chief warned Tuesday (Oct 13), as France braces for new measures to slow a surge in cases.

"It's inevitable," Martin Hirsch, the head of the 39 hospitals in Paris and its suburbs,

told the Parisien newspaper.

"By around Oct 24, there will be a minimum of 800 to 1,000 COVID-19 patients in intensive care, representing 70 to 90 per cent of our current capacity," he said.

The prospect puts more pressure on President Emmanuel Macron, who is widely expected to announce tighter

restrictions in a prime-time TV interview Wednesday night.

He met with top ministers Tuesday morning to evaluate potential measures for slowing a second wave of infections.

In his last major TV interview, to mark the Bastille Day holiday in July, Macron ordered that face masks be used in all enclosed public spaces nationwide.

Since then, they have also become compulsory on the streets of Paris.

Media reports have speculated that new measures could include curfews in Paris and other cities placed on maximum alert because of fast-rising COVID-19 cases that are again straining hospitals.

SOURCE: AFP

ALARM BELLS RING

Singapore's economy shrinks at slower pace as virus curbs eased



People look on next to the CMA CGM Jacques Saade, the world's largest container ship to be fully-powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG), is seen docked at the CMA CGM-PSA Lion Terminal in Singapore on October 11, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

SINGAPORE'S coronavirus-hit economy shrank at a slower pace in the third quarter as restrictions were eased, official data showed Wednesday, but the trade-reliant city-state still faces a long road to recovery.

The financial hub plunged into its first recession since the 2008 global financial crisis in the second quarter when the government closed businesses as part of drastic measures to contain infections.

One of the world's most open economies, Singapore is seen as a bellwether for the health of global trade, and its economy's dramatic deterioration rang alarm bells.

"The worst is over for Singapore, but the path to recovery is still a bit bumpy," Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Banking,

told AFP. In July-September, gross domestic product shrank 7.0 per cent year-on-year, according to preliminary data released by the trade ministry.

While a heavy fall, it was better than the record 13.3 per cent drop registered in April-June, with many businesses having re-opened as Singapore's outbreak slows.

Compared with the previous quarter, the economy grew 7.9 per cent, rebounding from a 13.2 per cent drop, the ministry said.

Manufacturing, which includes key semiconductor exports, was up 2.0 per cent, a turnaround from negative growth in April-June.

The services sector also shrank at a slower pace, although it was still weighed down by the anaemic performance of the key

tourism sector as global air travel remains largely grounded.

Construction was down 44.7 percent, but that was better than the previous quarter's near 60 percent plunge.

SOURCE: AFP



REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
Swiss Challenge Tender Committee
October 15, 2020

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL PARK WITH ESSENTIAL ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF YANGON CITY

Yangon City Development Committee under the Yangon Region Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received an unsolicited proposal to develop an Industrial Park with essential ancillary infrastructure in New Urban Development of Yangon City. In line with the Presidential Notification No. 2/ 2018, a Swiss Challenge Tendering Process is to be held to select the developer for this project. By leveraging the Swiss Challenge model, the Government of Myanmar will apply a structured and transparent process with the aim of encouraging the private sector to contribute to projects that are beneficial for the country and fostering competition among bidders.

In this regard, the Tender Committee would like to invite companies to express their interest in competing in the Swiss Challenge Tender Process for developing the Industrial Park with essential ancillary infrastructure. As a first step, interested entities are required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) no later than 1500 Hrs Myanmar Standard Time, on October 22, 2020 to the Tender Committee at yangon_tender@rolandberger.com.

The submission form for the Expression of Interest (EOI), which includes the project background and guidelines for submission are available for download from this link: https://www.ycdc.gov.mm/download.php?pdffile=20201015_YGN_Industrial_Park_EOI.

Swiss Challenge Tender Committee,
Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Advertise with us/ Hot Line : 09974424848

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BALI VOY. NO. (175N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BALI VOY. NO. (175N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ADMIRAL TY SPIRIT

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ADMIRAL TY SPIRIT VOY. NO. (01)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AIPT-2** 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 COSCO SHIPPING SPECIALIZED CARRIERS CO LTD

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (15/2020-2021)

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

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-002(20-21) CAP	A 205 Rotary Table Complete Set(2)Nos	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **13 October 2020** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm on 13 November 2020**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **13-11-2020, 12:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MYANMA RAILWAYS INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

1. Open Tenders are invited for supply of the following item in Euro:

Sr No	Tender No	Description
1.	12(T)3/MR(ISN)20-21	Spare Parts for CAT Engine (91) Items
2.	12(T)4/MR(ISN)20-21	Spare Parts for Alco Engine (61) Items
3.	12(T)5/MR(ISN)20-21	Spare Parts for Pielstick Engine (16) Items
4.	12(T)6/MR(ISN)20-21	Spare Parts for DPMS (81) Items

Closing Date & Time – 16.11.2020 (Monday) (14:30) Hrs

2. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 12.10.2020 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Deputy General Manager Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung, Yangon. Phone: 95-1-291985, 291994

NEW RESTRICTIONS

New lockdowns from China to Europe as coronavirus trials stumble

As Europe imposed new restrictions to try to stall a surging second wave of the novel coronavirus, hopes for vaccines to rapidly provide relief suffered a blow Tuesday with the suspension of two clinical trials in the United States.

China meanwhile rushed to test an entire city of nine million within days after a minor coronavirus outbreak in the sprawling country, a far cry from the struggle in Europe to tackle surging infections with tough new steps including partial lockdowns.

The virus is still spreading rapidly worldwide, with over one million deaths and 37 million infections. Many nations that suppressed their first outbreaks now face a second wave.

Hopes for a rapid vaccine rollout suffered a setback as US pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly said it had suspended the Phase 3 trial of its antibody treatment over an unspecified incident, the second in less than 24 hours after Johnson & Johnson ran into a similar problem.

In Europe, the Netherlands imposed a "partial lockdown" to



A health worker (L) takes a swab from a resident to be tested for the COVID-19 coronavirus as part of a mass testing programme following a new outbreak in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province. **PHOTO: AFP**

curb one of the region's worst coronavirus surges, with all bars, cafes and restaurants to close, and non-medical face coverings mandatory in all indoor spaces for people aged over 13.

In Britain, Labour opposition leader Keir Starmer called for a 2-3 week "circuit break" lockdown to slow the rates, saying the government had "lost control" of the outbreak having ignored

stringent measures suggested by scientific experts on September 21.

French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to announce tighter restrictions and faster testing in a prime-time TV interview late Wednesday, with some media speculating Paris and other cities could face evening curfews.

Meanwhile China — where

Covid-19 first emerged late last year — launched a drive to test all residents of Qingdao after a handful of cases were detected on Sunday. More than four million samples had been collected and 1.9 million results returned as of Tuesday afternoon, Qingdao authorities said, adding that no new cases had been found beyond already confirmed infections.

SOURCE: AFP

JOBS AND ECONOMY
DURING THE PANDEMIC

EU extends state aid rule easing to 2021: commission

The European Commission announced Tuesday that it will extend its relaxation of EU state aid rules until mid-2021 as part of efforts to help businesses cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier this year, the Commission, the EU's executive arm, eased until December 31 its tough state aid rules in the hope it would help reduce the pandemic's disastrous impact on the economy.

"We prolong...(the measure) to cater for the continued needs of businesses, while protecting the EU's Single Market," the commission said in a press release.

"We also introduce a new measure to enable Member States to support companies facing significant turnover losses." Europe has seen more than 241,000 deaths from 6.5 million infections during the pandemic that has battered the global economy with strict lockdowns meant to curb the virus spread.

SOURCE: AFP

MALWARE TO UPEND THE NOVEMBER 3 VOTE

Microsoft targets malware vendor Trickbot amid US election fears



The Microsoft logo at the International Cybersecurity Forum (FIC) in Lille, Jan. 28, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

MICROSOFT said Monday it had taken down malware vendor Trickbot in an effort to thwart attempts to meddle with the upcoming US presidential election.

The tech giant's announcement came as The New York Times reported United States Cyber Command also targeted the group amid fears hackers could use malware to upend the November 3 vote, in which President Donald Trump seeks a second term against challenger Joe Biden. "We disrupted Trickbot through a court order we obtained as well as technical action

we executed in partnership with telecommunications providers around the world," said Tom Burt, Microsoft's vice president for customer security and trust.

Burt said Trickbot distributed ransomware, a type of malware that would allow hackers to infect a computer and then take control of it at an opportune time.

"We have now cut off key infrastructure so those operating Trickbot will no longer be able to initiate new infections or activate ransomware already dropped into computer systems," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

THAI PROTESTS

Protesters gather ahead of pro-democracy rally in tense Bangkok

MORE than a thousand protesters gathered in Bangkok ahead of a pro-democracy rally on Wednesday, with tensions high in Thailand after the arrest of 21 pro-reform activists a day earlier.

The activists are part of a movement that has organized rallies since July, calling for an overhaul of the government and the resignation of Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha. Some have also demanded reforms to the unassailable monarchy.

Anon Numpaa -- a prominent activist and one of the key figures demanding royal reform -- urged the people gathering at the capital's Democracy Monument to remain calm and respectful, with the motorcade carrying the King and Queen scheduled to pass by in the afternoon.

SOURCE: AFP

TARMAC MEALS

Stir-crazy 'passengers' gobble up tickets to dine on parked Singapore jets

TARMAC meals have become an unlikely hit for coronavirus-battered Singapore Airlines, with hundreds of "passengers" paying the equivalent of a budget ticket just to dine inside grounded A380 jumbos.

For a hefty sum of up to Sg\$642 (\$470), people with a hankering for airline food can have a meal on an A380, the world's biggest passenger jet.

With the aviation industry in deep crisis due to the pandem-

ic, airlines have turned to alternative ways to raise cash, from offering "flights to nowhere" to tours of aircraft.

Singapore Airlines, which has cut thousands of jobs and grounded nearly all its planes

this year, decided to try another route: offer travel-starved customers the opportunity to dine on one of two A380s turned into pop-up restaurants.

SOURCE: AFP

US ELECTIONS

Biden, Trump duel in battleground states 21 days from election

PRESIDENT Donald Trump told a Pennsylvania crowd Tuesday that he's fighting "Marxists" and "lunatics" while his Democratic challenger Joe Biden accused him in Florida, another key electoral state, of having treated Americans as "expendable" during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With only 21 days until the November 3 election and badly down in the polls, Trump fired every lurid exaggeration about the Democrats and insult about Biden's mental state that he has in his arsenal.

He said Biden was "choking like a dog" during their televised debate, called him mentally "shot," and claimed the Democratic frontrunner was the pawn of communists.

"He is handing control to the socialists and Marxists and left-wing extremists," Trump told the large, raucous crowd in Johnstown. "He can't stand up to the lunatics running his

party." Going even further on his long-running narrative that 77-year-old Biden is too frail for the presidency, Trump, 74, tweeted a crudely faked picture purporting to show Biden in a wheelchair, surrounded by elderly wheelchair-bound people in a room.

"Biden for president," the caption said, with "p" struck out to change the word to "resident."

The mocking presentation of the infirm elderly was somewhat surprising given the president's apparently growing problems in retaining the loyalty of seniors, an important electoral force.

'Crush the virus'

In Johnstown, Trump reprised the outsider image that he developed for his surprise 2016 victory, telling the crowd that he was combatting a "selfish and corrupt political class" back



Supporters look on as Democratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden speaks during a drive-in rally in Miramar, Florida. PHOTO: AFP

in Washington.

But even as he delighted the crowd with his greatest rhe-

torical hits, Trump once more showed that despite his poor poll showing he has no intention of

trying to reach across to Democrats in a deeply divided nation. SOURCE: AFP

GLOBAL RECOVERY

Saudi hosts G20 talks on virus recovery, debt relief



Saudi Minister of Commerce Majid al-Qasabi chairs a virtual G20 finance ministers' meeting in September. PHOTO: G20 PRESS OFFICE/AFP

G20 finance ministers and central bankers are set to hold talks Wednesday aimed at spurring global recovery from a coronavirus-triggered recession while considering a proposal to extend debt relief for crisis-hit poor countries.

The virtual talks, hosted by current G20 president Saudi Arabia, come a day after the International Monetary Fund warned that global GDP would contract 4.4 per cent in 2020 and the damage inflicted by the pandemic would be felt for years.

The meeting will "discuss updates to the G20 Action Plan — supporting the global economy through the COVID-19 pandemic," G20 organizers said in a statement.

The group will also discuss "the progress made on the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and its proposed extension into 2021," the statement added.

The 20 most industrialised nations had pledged in April to suspend debt service from the world's poorest countries

through the end of the year as they faced a sharp economic contraction caused by the pandemic.

The World Bank and campaigners have called for the debt suspension initiative to be extended through the end of 2021, while charities such as Oxfam say it needs to be stretched through 2022.

But World Bank President David Malpass on Monday warned G20 countries may only approve a six-month debt relief extension because "not all of the creditors are participating fully" to help poor nations weather the health crisis.

"I think there will be compromise language (on) maybe a six-month extension that can be renewed depending on debt sustainability," Malpass said.

The DSSI has received 46 applications from eligible countries across the world, most of them from Africa, the G20 said last month.

But global campaigners have criticised the group for doing little to help poor countries stave off the knock-on effects of the pandemic.

SOURCE: AFP

UNPRECEDENTED TALKS

Lebanon, Israel hold landmark maritime border talks

LEBANON and Israel, still technically at war, held unprecedented talks under UN and US auspices on Wednesday to settle a maritime border dispute and clear the way for oil and gas exploration.

The talks mark a "first step in the thousand-mile march towards the demarcation" of the sea frontier, Brigadier General Bassam Yassin, the head of Lebanon's delegation, was quoted as saying in an army statement released after the session ended.

"Based on the higher interests of our country, we are looking to achieve a pace of negotiations that would allow us to conclude this dossier within reasonable time."

Following years of US shuttle diplomacy, Lebanon and Israel this month said they had agreed to begin UN-brokered negotiations, in what Washington hailed a "historic" agreement.

The talks, held at a UN peacekeeping force base in the Lebanese border town of

Naqura, lasted for around one hour and came weeks after Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates became the first Arab states to establish relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

This has prompted suspicions that the flurry of US-sponsored diplomacy relating to Israel is linked to President Donald Trump's re-election campaign.

A second round of negotiations will be held on October 28, a Lebanese military source and the official National News Agency (NNA) said.

The Naqura talks, which focused exclusively on the disputed sea frontier, came at a sensitive time as Lebanon, battered by multiple crises, hopes to continue exploring for oil and gas in a part of the Mediterranean also claimed by Israel.

Security was tight, with roads in the area blocked by UN peacekeepers and Lebanese troops, and helicopters flying overhead.

SOURCE: AFP

Players' welfare is 'main priority', says Asian football body

KUALA LUMPUR — Asian football's governing body said player welfare was its "main priority" after criticism from the global players' union that it had been slow to provide enough support since the coronavirus shutdown.

FIFPro general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann last week said the Asian Football Confederation's engagement had been "lacking severely", adding that player welfare problems threatened to undo Asia's progress in the sport.

But the AFC defended its response to the Covid-19 crisis. "The Asian Football Confederation put the welfare and the well-being of the players -- and all our stakeholders -- as our main priority throughout the pandemic," it told AFP in a statement.

The AFC "provided support for clubs and leagues through the member associations and



The AFC Champions League resumed in a bio-secure 'bubble' in Qatar. PHOTO: AFP

regional associations," it added. "Our competitions were the first to be postponed in the

world and that was to protect the health of all those who were to be involved in those matches."

Baer-Hoffmann highlighted the problems faced by players in Indonesia, saying a "unilateral

decision" by clubs to slash wages by three-quarters had caused "quite severe hardship".

"We would have liked to see the confederation (AFC) involved in some of these really drastic negative situations on the domestic level," Baer-Hoffmann told AFP.

He added: "We would very much expect that the confederation sets a certain standard, in terms of embracing collective decision-making, in terms of embracing the standards that we are working under on the deeper level. And that's certainly not happening."

Like many sports bodies, the AFC has suffered severe difficulty running its competitions this year. The suspended Champions League has resumed in a biosecure "bubble" in Qatar, while the second-tier AFC Cup has been cancelled and World Cup qualifiers are on hold. —AFP

World No.1 Johnson tests positive for Covid-19: PGA Tour

LOS ANGELES — Dustin Johnson has tested positive for Covid-19, the PGA Tour said Tuesday, forcing the world number one golfer's withdrawal from the CJ Cup in Las Vegas.

Johnson underwent a test after experiencing symptoms of coronavirus ahead of Thursday's opening round at Shadow Creek, the tour said in a statement.

The 36-year-old, whose last outing came at last month's US Open, is now undergoing self-isolation, the tour added.

"Obviously, I am very disappointed," Johnson said.

"I was really looking forward to competing this week, but will do everything I can to return as quickly as possible.

"I have already had a few calls with the Tour's medical team and appreciate all the support and guidance they have given me."

Johnson's withdrawal comes after a stellar season which has seen him win the FedEx Cup for the first time as well as PGA Tour Player of the Year honors.—AFP



In this file photo Dustin Johnson of the United States looks on from the first green during the final round of the 120th US Open Championship on September 19, 2020 at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, New York. PHOTO: JAMIE SQUIRE/AFP

Premier League clubs debate radical reform plan

LONDON — Premier League clubs are holding a shareholders' meeting on Wednesday after Football Association chairman Greg Clarke said a breakaway from the top flight was wielded "as a threat" during talks over radical proposals to restructure English football.

The "Project Big Picture" plan, backed by Liverpool and Manchester United, has been criticized by the government, the Premier League and fan groups.

Proposals include cutting the number of Premier League teams from 20 to 18, scrapping the League Cup, controversial changes to voting rights and a

financial settlement for the English Football League (EFL).

Representatives of the 20 Premier League clubs will have the chance to debate the issue in the open for the first time during a virtual get-together on Wednesday that comes after an eye-catching intervention from Clarke.

In a letter to the FA council, which convenes on Thursday, he said he had taken part in initial discussions before walking away when he felt the aim had become "the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few clubs, with a breakaway league mooted as a threat".

Clarke warned the FA could use its so-called "golden share" as a trump card if it felt the wider interests of the game were being compromised and suggested any breakaway competition would not receive the necessary sanctions from the governing body.

FA warning

"We, the FA board and council, have to ensure that any changes would be to the long-term benefit of the whole of football and we have substantial controls to help ensure that the best interests of the game are served by any new proposals," he said.—AFP

New Zealand scrap England football friendly over coronavirus 'complications'

WELLINGTON — New Zealand pulled out of next month's football friendly against England on Wednesday, saying "complications" caused by Covid-19 had made it too difficult to field a team at Wembley on November 12.

The withdrawal follows a number of coronavirus cases during the current round of international fixtures, including a positive test by Portugal and

Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

"The shifting nature of travel restrictions and commercial flight availability under Covid means that we do not have certainty we could assemble a squad at Wembley," New Zealand Football CEO Andrew Pragnell said in a statement.

He said a "significant number" of players would face quarantine or other restrictions when

they returned home, adding that could "potentially jeopardise their professional careers".

All Whites coach Danny Hay said he was "gutted" to have to withdraw from such a high-profile fixture.

"Looking at the restrictions currently in place, as well as the rising number of Covid-19 cases across Europe, it just isn't possible to put a competitive squad together," he said.—AFP