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Tuesday, 20 October 2020

State Counsellor reports latest situation on COVID-19

I think by now our people know quite a lot about the COVID-19 disease. They know quite a lot about the basic facts. I want to remind you again that it is important to how to live based on these facts.

When we look at it, although we may say that the Second Wave originated in Sittway, the biggest infection spread occurred in the Yangon region. However, recently, during the past few days, during the past week, we could see that the Yangon region was able to contain the disease to a certain extent. I am not saying that we have achieved total containment. There was containment to a certain extent. This is because we have been able to use test kits which made it possible for us to test quickly. Another thing is that I think people have been more careful.

However, we have noticed that there have been more infection spreads in other regions and states such as Mon state, Bago region, and Ayeyawady region. That is why we need to be careful everywhere. Please don't let off your guard because you know there is danger in Yangon only. The infection can spread to your



state or your region. I want you to be aware that the infection can come at any time. The infection can spread to 100 people from one positive person. Especially if the disease is not detected at an early stage, it could spread to 20 other persons who had been in contact with this person. From

these 20 people, if the infection spread from each of these 20 persons, it could spread to about 100. We cannot say that it might not exceed 100. That is why I wish to remind all of you that there is no such thing as being too careful and vigilant.

From the perspective of the

Union Government, this COVID-19 disease has been with us for quite some time; especially the second wave we have noticed that our people have had to struggle quite a lot for their livelihoods. For this situation, our Union Government will see how much we can do and how

we need to provide assistance. We will be thinking about this all the time and provide necessary assistance as much as possible, and we are providing assistance right now. Therefore I want the people to be patient because they would have to confront difficulties. It is not going to be a normal life as before. We have not forgotten our people. We have not neglected them. However, we would be able to overcome these problems quickly with the cooperation of the people. Problems have to be confronted. We will have to confront either this problem or that problem. I wish to say this is the law of nature. The main thing is to be able to solve this problem in the correct manner.

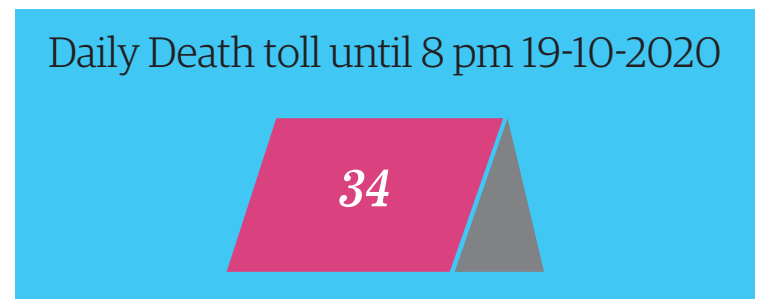
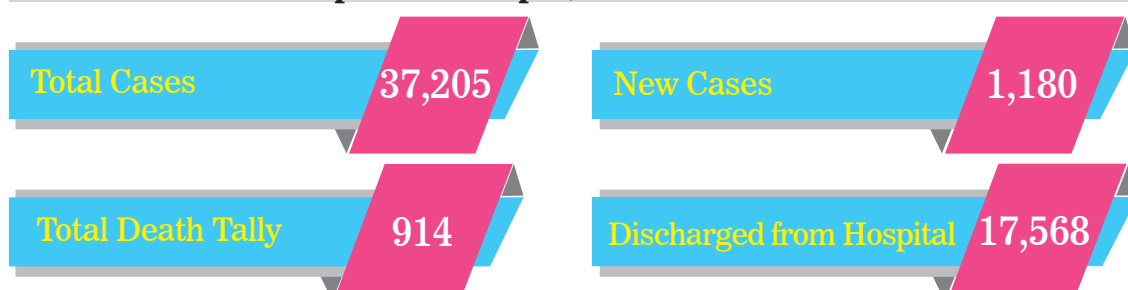
When we present the COVID-19 problem to our people, I think the first requirement is to be truthful. We need to talk about the faults as they truly are in a truthful manner. Only then will our people be able to figure out how to behave and how to confront the disease. However, I do not wish our people to be addressed in a threatening manner. I do not wish to do like this.

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1,180 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 19 October, total figure rises to **37,205**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to **37,205** after **1,180** new cases were reported on 19 October according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **37,205** confirmed cases, **914** died, **17,568** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 19 October 2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

State Counsellor reports latest situation on COVID-19

FROM PAGE-1

Why, because if someone is over-anxious, it is not good for anyone. On the one hand, I want our people to be able to confront this disease with good morale; on the other hand, I want the people to understand the dangers fully.

What can happen is that you are careless; we try to understand to what extent the problem can become bigger. We study carefully. We are trying our best on many fronts. We have been presenting question and answer sessions with specialist doctors and veteran physicians so that the people will know matters related to their health, things they need to know and things they wish to know. On the one hand, the reason we have been presenting sessions about patients who have recovered from the disease is that in case a person gets infected, then this person will understand how to overcome this problem and how to survive this situation. We want our people to know first-hand from these patients. Things are not going to be the same from one person to the other. That is why everyone will have their own viewpoint, their own personality. You need to overcome the challenges with the capabilities that you have. Some-

times, you can take an example from the experiences of other; you need to think about this. This person had this kind of experience; I need to avoid this kind of experience. I need to overcome this problem in this way. You need to take a lesson from the experience of the other person. You can overcome the challenge just like the other person. That is why we have arranged these discussion sessions. That is why I want you all to listen to these programmes if you can and have the time. I want you to listen to those who have recovered from the COVID disease and matters related to health education.

Like COVID-19, another unavoidable challenge that must be overcome is to complete the general elections successfully. In this regard, I also appreciate active voting of Myanmar citizens abroad because they are always considering the interests of their country and people with national spirit although they are living overseas. It is an encouragement for us. The advance voting in abroad is about to be complete at present, and it is expected I would describe the number of advance voters abroad during my report to the public on coming Friday.

It is pleased for us that I re-

ceived a letter from a Myanmar citizen in the UAE today. There is no Myanmar mission in the UAE. Those who are working in the UAE want to cast their advance votes for the general elections. However, it is inconvenient for

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The advance voting there was successful due to their genuine desire for it. It is a good lesson for us. I have frequently talked that sufficient desire, endeavour, spirit and wisdom are the four

After all, everybody needs to rely on oneself. However, self-dependence for the nationwide aspect means the reliance on each other among the nationals. It is a necessity for the country and is the unity with interdependence and mutual trust among the nationals.

them to come to Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, where the nearest Myanmar embassy is located from them. As they asked for the arrangement of advance voting in the UAE, the Ministry of International Cooperation successfully implemented it.

Myanmar embassy's staff members in Riyadh from Saudi Arabia could set up a poll booth at a hotel in the UAE, where our citizens actively cast their advance votes. It was proud of our country of their affection for and their responsiveness to the country. It also appreciates of the civil service staff. They are the staff members in Riyadh from

key factors for success.

The challenging COVID-19 crisis would be overcome by these factors, so also in the General Election.

In conclusion, we have frequently discussed that when we could receive the vaccine for COVID-19. There is no answer until now. Many believe it is possible at the end of this year or early next year. However, there is no guarantee of a hundred per cent sure until the vaccine could not be developed. It was learnt that some countries have suspended their researches on this vaccine. It is not required to worry about it.

Different countries have different rules and laws for vaccine research, so also in their political and social situations. Therefore, it does not mean that they have stopped the project as they have suspended it at a certain stage. Capable business firms and governments are emphasizing the production of this vaccine. Therefore, people need to rely on themselves until this vaccine has been developed. Self-dependence is also required after the vaccine has been received. After all, everybody needs to rely on oneself. However, self-dependence for the nationwide aspect means the reliance on each other among the nationals. It is a necessity for the country and is the unity with interdependence and mutual trust among the nationals. It is advised that unity plays the key role to overcome any challenges for the people. Therefore, all need to live for health and well-being and live for active participation in the General Election. The government is also making a plan for people to be able to cast their votes healthily.

May all people be healthy and well-being.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)

Ballot papers for advance votes transferred to UEC



Ministry of Foreign Affairs hands over sealed advance ballot papers to the Union Election Commission on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over the sealed ballot papers for advance votes sent by 28 Myanmar embassies, missions and consulates in foreign countries to the Union Election Commission yesterday.

Forty-three parcels containing ballot papers were delivered by Myanmar DHL Service at 6:30 am with tight security to Nay Pyi Taw via Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Highway and arrived at the Nay Pyi Taw Toll Gate at 10:30 am. Then, Managing Director U Kham Aung of Myanmar Post under Ministry of Transport and Communications handed over these parcels to Director-General U Aung Soe Win of Planning and Administrative Department under the Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs. After that, he transferred to Director-General of UEC U Khin Maung Oo.

The Myanmar embassies, missions and consulates in foreign countries respectively sent back the ballot papers for advance votes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ministry systematically transferred the ballot papers sent from a total of 34 polling stations to UEC – the ballots sent from 4 polling stations on 14 October; from 2 polling stations on 15 October and from 28 polling stations on 19 October. Moreover, 273 Myanmar nationals in the UAE cast their advance votes in Dubai on 18 October and a total of 554 voters cast vote on the first two-day of polling.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Section 58 (d) in Hluttaw Election Law

IN accordance with section 58 (d) of the Hluttaw Election Law, no one is allowed to give speeches at meetings, instigation, writing, distribution of using posters or attempting by other means to disturb the voting or election. Anyone who is found guilty of or abet 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



The General Election will be held on 8 November 2020.

- Union Election Commission has announced the first edition of eligible voter lists at local offices of the commission in respective wards/village-tracts, in the villages from 25 July 2020 to 7 November 2020.
- If the name of any eligible voter is not included in the list, voter registration can be requested by filling in Form 3.
- Objection can be filed against any ineligible voter in the list by using Form 4.
- Correction for voter list can be requested by using Form 4 (c).
- Voters can cast their votes only if their names are included in the voters list.
- Cooperation is requested for at least one member of each family to check their names without fail to ensure a complete and correct voters list.
- Check the voters lists not to lose voting rights by filling up discrepancies, deleting and making corrections.

2020

General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020



3rd Anniversary of UEHRD held virtually



The video message sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the Anniversary of UEHRD is being played on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

THE 3rd anniversary of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State (UEHRD) was held via zoom video webinar at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and

Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The ceremony was also joined by Union Ministers, Chief Minister of Rakhine State, Deputy Ministers, cabinet members of Rakhine State government,

members of UEHRD, Permanent Secretaries, departmental officials, members of UEHRD's Task Force, diplomats of foreign embassies in Myanmar, representatives of United Nations organizations and NGOs and

INGOs and officials.

A video message from Chairperson of UEHRD and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was broadcast at the opening session of the ceremony.

(Speech of the State Coun-

sellor is separately covered on page 4.)

The ceremony was concluded after showing the UEHRD tasks documentary video clip in the past three years.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Campaign speech of a political party for 2020 General Election will be broadcast for second time

CAMPAIGN speech of Zomi Congress for Democracy for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanmar Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 20 October for the second time.—MNA

Elections are the root for development of democracy.

State Counsellor makes speech at UEHRD 3rd anniversary celebration

I send my good wishes and greetings to all of you for your good health and well-being.

Today's ceremony is to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of UEHRD which was established after the ARSA attacks of 2017 and the events that followed which brought together the Union Government, entrepreneurs and the people, working as a Union Enterprise to receive the displaced persons who had fled to the other country, to resettle and rehabilitate those who had remained inside the country and for rapid development, and durable peace free from conflicts in the whole of Rakhine State.

Just as it is the duty of all the citizens for a country to develop and achieve peace; at the same time, the government which is providing leadership and administrative services need to undertake necessary organizational processes and programmes to ensure stability and harmonious development of all parts of the country.

Among these initiatives and programmes, the UEHRD committee has been set up specifically for the Rakhine State as a programme and committee.

Our country is a country where diverse ethnic nationalities with different belief systems have lived together in coexistence since the time of our forefathers. We will continue to work to achieve unity based on diversity at all times, continuously. At this time, efforts to bring peace and stability are especially needed in northern Rakhine.

Throughout the past eras, backwardness in development, conflicts and instability have existed as challenges; to deal with these challenges our Union Government formed the Central Committee for Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State as soon as we took over state responsibility.

Under this Central Committee, we formed four Working Committees for different sectors to strengthen the work of the central committee. The central committee and working committees were organized with personnel from the various government ministries, and they performed the duties of their respective departments.

The UEHRD has been established to perform not only governmental tasks but also to bring together the synergies of



entrepreneurs, advice of learned experts, and cooperation and assistance from home and abroad. This is a Union Enterprise established for the development of a particular region with a new form of organizational structure.

From the time of its establishment, UEHRD carried out the tasks of repatriation in accordance with the agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar during the prescribed period. Amidst many constraints, we were able to build two reception camps and one transit camp with the cooperation of the Rakhine State government within the prescribed period of between two to three months for the repatriation process. We were not doing this because we were duty-bound, but we participated and performed this task with enthusiasm with a sense of duty because it was necessary for our country. We need to recognize this fact.

While we were working on the repatriation efforts, we initiated the "UEHRD Youth Volunteers Programme" to provide humanitarian assistance for those within the Rakhine State who needed help, by mobilizing youth volunteers from different parts of the country to distribute food and other necessary supplies.

What I wish to say at this point is that while the older people were participating in different sectors, our youths were also participating and cooperating and performing their share of duties.

When I say 'UEHRD Committee', I am referring to its task forces comprising its committee members, businesspersons, pro-

fessionals and young and middle-aged persons. These task forces were formed under thematic expertise with special focus on respective tasks, making the collective activities of the UEHRD Committee.

The UEHRD is implementing its objectives for the effective provision of humanitarian aid, the coordination of resettlement and rehabilitation efforts and the promotion of regional development, and durable peace free from conflicts.

The UEHRD is to be congratulated for being able to implement up to certain extent resettlement and rehabilitation efforts for the displaced persons after scrutiny, and building housings, roads, electricity and providing livelihoods for internally displaced persons.

We also need to thank and acknowledge the Union ministries, the Rakhine State government, businesspersons, the people, friendly countries and international organizations for their cooperation and support.

Especially, the Red Cross Movement has been participating in an ongoing joint project implemented by the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Moreover, we feel grateful to the World Food Programme for its constant supplies of foodstuffs and relief items before and during COVID-19 crisis for Rakhine State.

In line with its motto of 'One ASEAN one Response', the ASE-

AN Secretary-General's office, as well as our partner countries, are providing necessary assistance regularly for matters related to Rakhine State.

Especially, I wish to thank and acknowledge the contributions of Japan, China and India who have provided relief assistance.

At this point, what I want to say is that in any type of endeavour, we are bound to meet difficulties and challenges. No matter how much we wish to work for development and peace and stability in Rakhine, we are always bound to meet obstacles.

Armed conflicts increased while we are implementing the development and stability of Rakhine State. Apart from this, the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has attacked our country, including Rakhine State.

Our people need to adhere to the rules and regulations to overcome these problems. There is a Myanmar saying, 'Pinching the nail might hurt the fingertip.' Conflict or any outbreak of disease in any region of our country, not only in Rakhine State, is a common problem for the whole country and people. Therefore, the whole country needs to provide assistance in addressing these issues. Regarding this matter, I have said in the round table talks in August about COVID-19 containment measures to develop a spirit of 'the Union for Rakhine, and Rakhine for the Union'. Only then would we be able to establish a modern, developed, long-lasting Democratic Federal Union which all of us have yearned for.

Only then would we be able to hand over a genuine and valuable legacy to the future generations.

There is still one more thing I wish to talk about. It is none other than "health". If we are healthy, we will be able to work; then we will be able to participate in development works as well as building peace and stability. Everybody needs to be constantly vigilant about the spread of COVID-19, health, and healthy practices. This is a reminder to individuals as well as all the members of UEHRD Committee.

This reminder is very important for the Healthcare Task Force of UEHRD, which is participating in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Rakhine State. Individual committee members should live healthily to carry out their works. Therefore, I wish to advise all members to live healthily while performing your respective duties. I also want to request all of you to take care of your health.

I have said this at the second anniversary of UEHRD that we are working for posterity for the future of our Union. If our citizens, our sons and daughters of the Union could solve the problems in Rakhine collaboratively, we could bequeath this priceless legacy – having self-confidence in ourselves – to the next generation.

With respect to Rakhine State matters, while there have been some constructive outlooks and assistances for what we have been doing in Rakhine, there have also been some internal and external communities who try to point out only our weaknesses and try to exacerbate the problems. I want to remind you of this.

We are implementing our policy of 'Leave no one behind' for the development of our Union, including Rakhine State.

In conclusion, I want to express my appreciation to individuals of relevant ministries, the Chief Minister of Rakhine State and his government officials, businesspersons, members of UEHRD Task Forces, well-wishers and individuals who have worked and who are continuing to work for peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.

I send good wishes with Metta for all of you to be free from COVID-19; may you be able to serve the public good as much as possible and may you have peace of mind.

Thank you all.

We are making efforts with the future economic situation in mind

With respect to providing treatment, we are using the latest and best treatment protocols being used at the international level. We also use medicines. No matter whatever medicines we use, no matter whatever treatment protocols we use, in the end, the most effective method is for each individual citizen to take care of his or her health. At this time, when we are facing the onslaught of COVID-19, we need to continue our efforts to make sure that essential parts of the governmental machinery are running. As I have said before; we have to keep our eyes on the economic situation. We have to view the situation with a long-term economic vision. That is why we have given permission for certain factories to resume operations if they can meet the rules and regulations. The reason we have given permission is that we are making efforts with the future economic situation in mind.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's reports on containment measures against COVID-19, on 16 October 2020)



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds virtual meeting with EU electoral experts

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint held a virtual meeting with EU's senior electoral expert Mr Saphy Gilles and his

group yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, the experts from EU asked the Union Minister questions about

state media's activities for the upcoming general elections, the situations related to the Broadcasting Law of Myanmar, politi-

cal parties' electoral campaigns, plans to report election results in state media, and the Information Ministry's activities to combat

false news and misinformation. The Union Minister responded to those questions.

Regarding Myanmar's upcoming general elections, the Union Minister also sought opinions and suggestions from the experts. The virtual meeting was participated by EU's senior electoral expert Mr Saphy Gilles, Acting Head of EU Embassy Mr Johann Hesse, Mr Frédéric Maduraud (Head of Political, Economic, Trade, Press and Information Section & Minister Counsellor), Mr Li-dauer Michael (Senior Elections, Governance and Peacebuilding Consultant), Ms Ramos Alves Cristina (Electoral and Legal Expert) and Media Professional Ms Lase Inta.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds talks with EU's senior electoral expert Mr Saphy Gilles via videoconference on 19 October 2020.

PHOTO: MNA

Activities of MoLIP for workers affairs in September 2020

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population has continuously made efforts to help ensure occupational safety, to make working environments pleasant, and to provide necessary assistance in order for workers to get full rights under the law and to enjoy full social security benefits including healthcare services.

Department of Labour

The Department of Labour could help 2,210 men and 5,292 women to sign a total of 7,502 employment contracts. It formed mediating teams in townships to help employers and employees resolve disputes. The township teams received a total of 165 cases in September, 2020. One of the cases was handed over to another department. Thirteen cases were settled in an amicable manner, 39 cases were handed over to an industrial tribunal, and 25 cases were dropped. Some gained monetary benefits in 69 cases. Eighteen cases are still being dealt with. 154 people were given K54,073,274, USD770.3 and Thai Baht 15,000 as monetary benefits.

Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department

The Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department resolved matters related to working on public holidays, earned leave (annual leave), unpaid wages, casual leave, medical leave and maternity leave, so over K660 million were given to the workers as monetary benefits.

Department of Labour Relations

Twenty-seven labour disputes were settled by an industrial tribunal and 25 labour disputes were settled by Arbitration Council.

Social Security Board

The Social Security Board has been working to provide social security benefits and healthcare services to insured workers in accordance with Social Security Law. The board provided a total of monetary benefits of over K3.3 billion to insured workers. It provided a total of K150 million to 1,437 insured workers for their medical expenses.

Workers' Hospitals, social security clinics and departmental clinics provided healthcare services to insured workers in September 2020 as follows:

Healthcare Services

Sr.	Hospitals/Clinics	Numbers of workers who received medical treatments
a	3 Workers' Hospitals (5,058 outpatients, 420 inpatients)	5,478
b	96 social security clinics, one traditional medicine clinic, 58 departmental clinics and 14 clinics (including 5 OPDs which provide Obstetric and Gynaecology services) which use PPS system	75,245
c	Doctors from social security clinics visited the relevant sites to provide medical treatments (Once)	20

—MNA *(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)*

COVID-19 national committee receives cash donation

UNION Minister Dr Myint Htwe, in his capacity as the Secretary of National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, received cash donation at the Ministry of Health and Sports in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung explained that over K1,722 million cash assistance to the committee is the Top-Up money left on the 34.49 million deactivated SIM cards which were not re-registered by 30 June, 2020.

On 22 February 2020, the Ministry announced that SIM card registered with more than two identification cards before 1 April, 2019 must be re-registered by 30 June, 2020 and if the cards are not re-registered with accurate national scrutiny card, they will be deactivated.

Under this directive, more than 34.49 million SIM cards that were not re-registered by 30 June, 2020 and un-registered SIM cards with accurate the



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe (R) receives cash donation at the Ministry of Health and Sports on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

national scrutiny card after 22 February, 2020 were deactivated. A total of K1,722 million were left on these SIM cards and that money is now donated to the COVID-19 committee for the benefit of the country on behalf of the consumer.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications also donated over 400 million kyats for the Oxygen pipeline installation to the 1,000-bedded General Hospital in Nay Pyi Taw; over K1,573 million from the 6.5 million blocked SIM cards to

the National Disaster Management Committee on 31 January and K120.6 million contributed by MPT and the MPT user via SMS to the COVID-19 committee on 29 May.

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo said that the staff from the Office of the Union Attorney-General also contributed since the employees from various ministries as well as local and foreign donors are contributing as much as they can for the fight against the COVID-19.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe expressed words of thanks for the contribution. The Union Minister said it is important to pay attention to the immunization rules as there may be small wave infections after the second wave of COVID-19 until the effective vaccine is found and 95 per cent of the death of COVID-19 are people with chronic diseases and people can also be infected through the people who have to go out for various reasons while living

at home.

The Union Minister added that the donations will be of great benefit not only to treat COVID-19 patients but also to upgrade the Ministry's intensive care units in hospitals across the country, in the installation of Oxygen pipelines and Oxygen generators that will be useful for long term.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe and Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein accepted K1,722,755,512 from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, K11,680,000 from the Office of the Union Attorney-General, K30,000,000 from the Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank Ltd, K7,648,500 from the 1,000 Kyats Campaign of the Public Staff Volunteers, K2,222,000 from the departments of the Yangon University of Education and K1,000,000 from the Ambassador Dr Hla Maung Foundation and returned the certificates of honour.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports Order 129/2020

3rd Waxing of Thadingyut, 1382
(19 October 2020)

The Ministry of Health and Sports is exercising the rights in Article 21-(b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law to issue this order.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is continuously working on prevention measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and amid the discovery of new positive cases in Kachin State including those who have not had contact with any positive cases and no travel history and the rapid increase of cases in a short amount of time, stay-at-home measures are necessary for the people in some of the townships in Kachin State.
2. Thus, all citizens in the following townships of Kachin State are included in the stay-at-home programme:
 - a. Phakant Township
 - b. Mohnyin Township
3. This being the case, all people in those two townships are to adhere to the following rules:
 - (a) Relating to the stay-at-home order (for government departments in accordance with Letter No. 2354/264/COVID-19/Committee(2020) issued on 14-9-2020 by the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), to follow the directive for civil servants to rotate on a 2-week for office attendance and 2-week on work-from-home basis. Those in the private sector concerning banks and financial services, fuel refilling stations, food businesses and cold warehouses, pharmaceutical and medical equipment businesses, drinking water businesses, factories producing daily hygiene products, communications businesses such as post office services, landline and mobile phone communications services, Internet services (not including the vendors selling mobile phones and Internet data), and services for communications towers and fibre networks are not included.)
 - (b) Organizations and companies are to work from home.
 - (c) Only one person per household can go outside to purchase essentials.
 - (d) Only two persons per household may go outside for hospital or clinical visits.
 - (e) Always wear facemasks/masks when going outside.
 - (f) Allow only vehicles transporting working people and permitted vehicles may pass over townships.
 - (g) Within the ward, only the driver and one other person are permitted to go shopping and only the driver and two other persons are permitted to go to the hospital / clinic.
 - (h) To ensure smooth flow of commodities in those two townships, trucks are required to follow the Standard Operating Procedure for vehicles.
4. If the number of people exceed the limitations mentioned in Paragraph 3-(c), (d) and (g), or for any other emergency reasons, prior notice should be given to the relevant ward administrators and they in turn must only permit the people going from and returning to the wards and not allow people from outside the wards to enter or other people within the wards to leave.
5. Failure to comply with this order will have action taken in accordance with the existing laws.
6. This order takes effect as of 8 am on 20-10-2020.

Sd/ Dr Myint Htwe
Union Minister

“People are the key”

MoHT organizes virtual meeting with Tourism Marketing Association



Union Minister U Ohn Maung holds meeting online with Myanmar Tourism Marketing Association (MTM) on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung yesterday morning participated in a virtual meeting with Myanmar Tourism Marketing Association (MTM) Chairperson and new

executive members via video-conferencing.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said that the ministry and LuxDev jointly drafted Myanmar Tourism Strategic Recovery Roadmap (MTSRR). He called on the MTM to cooperate with the ministry in implementing the MTSRR. He continued that Myanmar Tourism Marketing Strategy 2020-2025 has also been drafted.

Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) has also been formed across Myanmar.

MTM Chairperson U Myo-Thwin and other officials from

relevant work committees explained their future plans.

Deputy Minister U Tin Latt's discussion emphasized digital marketing for tourism, virtual promotion, online programmes such as Myanmar Virtual Travel Mart, agricultural tourism development, tourism survey, and cooperation in developing human resources for tourism.

Union Minister U Ohn-Maung made necessary discussions and suggestions before the meeting was concluded.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

170 Myanmar citizens fly back home from Malaysia by MAI relief flight

THE Myanmar Airways International (MAI) flew a relief flight to bring 170 citizens back home from Malaysia yesterday evening.

As they arrived in Yangon, the officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for immi-

gration process, medical tests, and arrangement for their 7-day quarantine at the specific areas or the designated hotels, and 7-day quarantine at home.

The Myanmar embassy in Kuala Lumpur is working closely with the relevant organizations in Malaysia to bring back Myanmar citizens who have no national verification and who

were in detention centres, after their citizenship has been identified in accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Myanmar has organized 16 relief flights for repatriation of nationals from Malaysia.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Myanmar returnees queue for immigration service at the Yangon International Airport on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA



Construction of COVID-19 Test Centre of Ayeyarwady Foundation is underway in Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region. PHOTO: YE YINT SHINE

Ayeyarwady Foundation builds COVID-19 test centre in Taikkyi

THE Ayeyarwady Foundation will donate a COVID-19 test centre to test truck drivers and their mates in Taikkyi Township.

The foundation is constructing the test centre on the Yangon-Pyay Road, Mile Post (43/6) and Max Highway Co., Ltd will pay for it. After completing the centre on 20 October, it will be handed over to the Yangon Region government. The Ayeyarwady Foundation, under

the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Sports, has been involved in the prevention of COVID-19 since March, and is currently building the Ayeyarwady Centre to treat the COVID-19 patients and will continue to donate the requirements for the treatment and prevention of the disease.—Ye Yint Shine

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

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.



We can't let COVID-19 causes unnecessary fear in public

AS rainy season wraps up, winter season is coming. With changing amounts of sunlight, heat, and humidity, the transition from one season to another always brings influenza.

Our opening season starts with the Thadingyut light festival which falls on fullmoon day.

The World Health Organization yesterday cautioned against any relaxation of response actions following the recent slight decline in COVID-19 cases in South-East Asia Region, saying the pandemic continues unabated and our response only needs to be strengthened further to curtail virus transmission.

"This festive season we must continue to take responsibility as individuals of the need to maintain physical distance, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and wear a mask when and where needed. People must remember the three Cs - avoid crowded places, avoid closed settings and avoid confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilation," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia.

When catch flu, people should go to fever clinics instead of staying under stress caused by misinterpretation of COVID-19 deaths which has caused unnecessary fear in the public and significant stress.

When catch flu, people should go to fever clinics instead of staying under stress caused by misinterpretation of COVID-19 deaths which has caused unnecessary fear in the public and significant stress.

Stress causes high blood pressure and high blood pressure with heart disease or vascular disease causes heart attacks and strokes. It does not mean to scare people, but to urge the people to seek medical help at the fever clinics and hospitals. Medical professionals and workers are too overwhelmed to help you.

Continuing the battle against the crippling COVID-19, and coping with the threat from seasonal flu in the transition from rainy to winter, appears to pose a dual challenge to the health authorities.

However, we are confident that the COVID-19 strategy, with the increased hand hygiene, cough etiquette and social distancing, our people are practicing daily in the face of COVID-19, will be useful in the war to be waged against two diseases at one time.



Need to continue extreme caution against COVID-19: WHO



Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh.

THE World Health Organization has cautioned against any relaxation of response ac-

tions following the recent slight decline in COVID-19 cases in South-East Asia Region, saying the pandemic continues unabated and our response only needs to be strengthened further to curtail virus transmission.

"There should be no complacency in view of the declining numbers in recent weeks. The Region still reports large numbers of COVID-19 cases. We need to continue to do our very best to curtail the pandemic," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director WHO South-East Asia Region.

The upcoming festival season and the approaching winter/cold season threatens to aggravate the situation if we let our guards down, she said.

Member countries have been making concerted efforts scaling up capacities for timely detection, testing, tracing contacts, isolating the affected and providing hospital care to those who need it. "Our relentless efforts need to continue with more vigor," the Regional Director said.

This festive season we must continue to take responsibility as individuals of the need to maintain physical distance, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and wear a mask when and

where needed. People must remember the three Cs - avoid crowded places, avoid closed settings and avoid confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

The co-circulation of seasonal influenza and COVID-19 in the winters may present challenges for health systems and health facilities, since both diseases present many similar symptoms. Many of the same measures that are effective in preventing COVID-19 are also effective for preventing influenza, including physical distancing, hand hygiene, covering coughs, ventilation and masks.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia.

WHO is working with countries to take a holistic approach to the preparedness, prevention, control and treatment of all respiratory diseases, including influenza and COVID-19.

For the third week in a row, the WHO South-East Asia Region has registered 6 - 8 % decline in the number of COVID-19 cases, mainly due to a decrease in reported cases from India and Bangladesh.

Home to one-fourth of the world's population, the Region has reported over 8 million

of the nearly 40 million cases globally, mostly from the most populous countries which also face unique demographic and geographic challenges.

WHO continues to support countries in their containment and mitigation efforts providing technical guidance, laboratory capacity strengthening for testing, equipment for hospitals and protection of healthcare workers, and creating awareness and addressing misinformation.



IMF calls for 'action' in virus-hit MENA region

THE IMF on Monday urged Middle East and North African countries to accelerate reforms and diversification efforts as the energy-rich region faces unprecedented challenges due to the coronavirus and low oil prices.

In its latest regional economic outlook report, the International Monetary Fund projected the economies of the MENA

region to shrink by five per cent this year compared with a July estimate that they would contract by 5.7 per cent.

The region — which includes all Arab countries and Iran — was expected to suffer its worst economic performance since 1978 when it was convulsed with unrest and shrank by 4.7 per cent, according to World Bank data.

"We should look at what is

happening today as a call for action, and also as an opportunity to stimulate the transformation of the economy and create more opportunities, especially for the youth," Jihad Azour, the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia director, told AFP.

"We expect that both growth and unemployment to be affected this year, and overall this crisis could bring growth down by five per cent as well as also un-

employment could go up by five per cent." Years of devastating conflicts in several Arab countries — including Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya — have already battered their economies and created widespread poverty.

Meanwhile, unemployment among youths in the energy-rich region sits at 26.6 per cent, World Bank data shows.

Since March, countries of the region, many of them heav-

ily dependent on oil revenues, have resorted to sweeping lockdowns and curfews to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, disrupting local economies.

The IMF says the average price of oil was expected to be \$41.69 a barrel in 2020 and \$46.70 a barrel in 2021, well down on the \$57-\$64 average in 2019.

Hit by the double whammy, oil exporters' growth was tipped to contract by 6.6 per cent, while

importer' economies were expected to contract by one per cent as the Covid-19 pandemic keeps striking tourism and trade.

"We are at an important moment where there are hopes that (a) vaccine could accelerate the recovery, but also there are challenges with the risk of a second wave of the coronavirus," said Azour.

SOURCE: AFP

Lagarde says 'crucial' EU virus recovery plan succeeds

PARIS (France)— European Central Bank (ECB) chief Christine Lagarde said Monday it was "crucial" for the EU's 750-billion-euro coronavirus recovery plan to succeed as new epidemic-busting measures weigh heavily on the bloc's economy.

The money in the \$881-billion fund must be disbursed as soon as possible, she told Le Monde newspaper.

"If (the money) is not targeted, if it disappears into the administrative machinery and does not reach down into the real economy to drive our countries toward the digital and green (economy), then we will have missed a historic opportunity to change direction," Lagarde said in an interview with Le Monde published on

the newspaper's website. The plan, unprecedented in its scope and commitments, was agreed by European Union leaders in July after several rounds of tough negotiations.

It has since been held up in the European Parliament by disputes over whether payments should be conditional on strict implementation of EU rights policies by member states such as Poland and Hungary.

Asked about concerns that the rescue funds may arrive too late, Lagarde said: "The European Commission's objective is to be able to disburse the money at the beginning of 2021 and that absolutely has to be kept to."

"It is now up to the member states, who have to submit their recovery plans — some



European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde speaks during the 16th Congress of Regions (Congres des Regions) in Saint-Ouen, north of Paris on October 19, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

are already done — and up to the Commission, which must review them quickly," said Lagarde, a former French finance minister and International

Monetary Fund head. "Political leaders also must move quickly," she said.

"It is crucial that this exceptional plan, which broke impor-

tant taboos (on the EU's role) in several countries, should be a success," Lagarde added.

'Spirit of compromise'

The key breakthrough in the EU package came from Germany and its agreement to borrow money and spend it collectively so as to help states whose weak finances it had up to then deemed to be an insuperable obstacle to such joint action and responsibility.

On Friday, French President Emmanuel Macron called for a "spirit of compromise" to resolve differences over the plan in the European Parliament.

European Parliament President David Sassoli said last week the negotiations had stalled due to the unwillingness

of member states to take "small steps".

Lagarde said the second wave of the coronavirus outbreak in Europe and resultant restrictions on restaurants, bars and other businesses, were delaying the economic recovery.

The ECB predicts a drop of eight per cent in GDP for the eurozone in 2020, "but if the situation deteriorates that will obviously lower our forecast," due to be revised in December, she said.

The ECB president added that the EU recovery plan, financed for the first time by joint debt, was estimated to have generated the equivalent of 1.3 percentage points of growth and to have saved a million jobs, while keeping private lending rates low. — AFP

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release 37/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 17 October.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 17 October. The full text of the press release will be reported in the 21 October issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 19 October, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 20 October, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Ayeyawady and Taninthayri Regions and Rakhine State, fairly widespread in Ayeyawady Region, Kachin, Eastern Shan and Chin States, scattered in Upper Sagaing, Magway, Yangon and Bago Regions, Southern Shan, Kayin and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (6-9) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Ayeyawady Region and Rakhine State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 October, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 October, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 October, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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Ayeyarwady Foundation donates cash, rice bags, masks to monasteries, nunneries

By Nyein Nyein

AYEYARWADY Foundation donated 22,000 masks, K22 million and 220 rice bags to 11 monasteries and nunneries in Yangon Region, the foundation stated.

The donation also reached the Ywarma Pariyatti Monastery in Insein and Theindawgyi Pariyatti Monastery, in which some monks infected with the COVID-19, and other monasteries and nunneries.

The masks donated by the foundation are self-made surgical masks. The foundation has recently started operating machines to produce the covers amid the COVID-19 crisis, with the guidance of foreign experts.

The plant has a daily production capacity of 50,000 masks (with 5,000 units per hour). The foundation will also distribute 5 million masks for free to vulnerable people with



Ayeyarwady Foundation donates cash, rice bags and masks to 11 monasteries and nunneries in Yangon. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

low income.

Ayeyarwady Foundation has cooperated with the Ministry of Health and Sports since the COV-

ID-19 outbreak in March. It built the COVID-19 treatment centre, extended treatment facilities and also provided accommodation

and transportation to the health care professionals.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Magway Region has over 500,000 senior citizens to cast advance votes

THERE are over 500,000 senior citizens aged 60 years, and above who are eligible to cast advance votes in Magway Region, the regional election sub-commission stated.

Those older people can cast their advance ballots between 29 October and 5 November.

"Those eligible voters aged 60 years and above in the

townships under the Stay-at-Home order and the crowded townships with 5,000 people per square kilometre can cast their votes from home, to ensure the safety amid the COVID-19. The commission will provide door to door service for those older adults as they have difficulties to go to the polling station under the Stay-at-Home order. The

elderly people in the townships which is excluded in this can cast their advance votes at the respective sub-commissions," said U Soe Htut Oo, secretary of regional election sub-commission.

In a bid to reduce the public gathering and ensure the safe polls, those eligible older people can cast the advance vote under

the Union Election Commission Law.

There are more than 3.27 million of eligible voters in Magway Region, and over 500,000 of them can cast advance votes, the regional election sub-commission stated. — Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Truck drivers, assistants can register via Call Centre to check COVID: UMFCCI

By Nyein Nyein

THE truck drivers and assistants can contact the Call Centre to receive the COVID-19 tests, the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) stated.

In a bid to ensure the smooth commodity flow in Yangon Region, the truck drivers can make an appointment through Call Centre dialling code — 2019, with extension number 3 to be tested for the COVID-19. They need to book the appointments by provid-

ing name, age, gender, phone number, NRC, present and permanent addresses and vehicle licence.

The drivers and assistants must make an appointment via Call Centre one day in advance before getting to and leaving from Yangon. They can easily

COVID test at the entry and exit points of the town.

The Call Centre, under the guidance of Yangon Region government and support of UMFCCI, will provide the service from 19 October between 9 am and 5 pm.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

AGD Bank temporarily closes 5 branches in Yangon, Magway

By Nyein Nyein

FOLLOWING the coronavirus cases mounting in the country, Asia Green Development (AGD) Bank has stopped its services in five branches in Yangon and Magway regions from

19 October, stated the bank in its press release.

They are AGD Phaungyi, Shwebontha, Kamayut and South Okkalapa branches in Yangon and AGD Magway branch 2. The remaining 72 units will keep opening regu-

larly.

The customers from the suspended branches can get the service at the nearest AGD bank branches. The money withdrawal service is available at AGD ATM.

AGD Bank is also offering

digital banking services — AGD Mobile Banking, AGDPay and Onepay app to facilitate banking. The bank is also taking preventive health measures for its customers.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar rice exports exceed 2.58 mln tonnes in FY2019-2020

THE volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 October and 30 September in the last financial year 2019-2020 reached over 2.58 million metric tons, worth US\$794 million, according to an announcement from the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

MRF expected to ship 2.4 million tonnes of rice and broken rice in the last FY and the country surpassed the export target, sending over 426,611 metric tons to neighbouring countries through border trade and over 2.15 million tonnes of rice and broken to foreign trade partners via maritime trade, totalling over 2.58 million tonnes.

A surge in rice shipping through sea trade was contributed to meeting year's export target, MRF stated.

Myanmar's maritime trade, which constituted 84 per cent of



Workers carrying sacks of rice at the Botahtaung Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

rice exports, generated an estimated income of \$668.49 million, as per data from Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Earlier, border trade was relatively high compared to sea trade in terms of rice exports. Since the

previous financial year 2018-2019, border trade has dropped, and currently, it accounts for just 16 per cent of the total rice exports. Rice exports through the land border have generated an estimated income of \$125.898 million in the

FY2019-2020.

"Illegal trade is highly witnessed between Myanmar and China border areas in the previous years. This year, traders sent the goods via legitimate trade route, and trading volume sharply fell," he added.

Myanmar has shipped rice to 66 foreign markets. China is the main buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by the Philippines and Malaysia. Madagascar is the fourth-largest buyer and Poland, the fifth-largest buyer of Myanmar rice.

In the last FY, Myanmar has exported broken rice mostly to Belgium, followed by China, Senegal, Indonesia and the Netherlands. Broken rice has been placed in 60 foreign markets.

ASEAN countries constitute 18 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports with over 466,882

tonnes. In comparison, 30 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to China with over 775,884 tonnes, followed by African countries with 27 per cent after exports of around 706,302 tonnes. The European Union countries account for over 20 per cent of rice exports with over 514,523 tonnes while other countries represent five per cent of exports with over 122,786 tonnes.

Myanmar targets to export 4 million tonnes of rice and broken rice in the current financial year 2020-2021, said U Aung Than Oo, vice president of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the FY2017-2018, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.3 million tonnes, in the FY2018-2019.—GNLM
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

MPT launches digital insurance for healthcare, personal accident

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR'S leading telecommunications operator MPT launched MPT U-Life Digital Insurance on 19 October to provide comprehensive coverage for general healthcare and personal accident protection for its customers, in partnership with GGI Nippon Life & AYA SOMPO Insurance.

That digital insurance service in Myanmar is offering health and personal accident insurance coverage for MPT customers, including COVID-19 patients.

MPT is partnering with GGI Nippon Life to offer Health Insurance called Zi Wa Ka and AYA SOMPO Insurance for Personal Accident Insurance called Thet Taw Saunt for MPT SIM Users. MPT users can effortlessly purchase the above two insurance policies to protect themselves and their loved ones, from their own homes via MPT4U application and MPT Website, SMS notification and MPT U-Life Digital Insurance Webpage <http://bit.ly/U-life-Eng>.

From 19 October, customers can purchase Zi Wa Ka

health insurance policy underwritten by GGI Nippon Life which provides comprehensive hospitalization coverage in case of hospitalization from sickness or death caused by diseases and COVID-19. There is an additional lump sum payment of K200,000 (valid till 31 December 2020) if any person covered under Zi Wa Ka is diagnosed with COVID-19. Every MPT SIM user between 6 and 75 years old can purchase Zi Wa Ka health insurance policy. However, parents or guardians of children between the ages of 6 and 18 will be required to insure them under their insurance plans.

The Thet Taw Saunt personal accident insurance is underwritten by AYA SOMPO Insurance and will be available on the MPT platform by the end of October 2020. Customers can purchase coverage against personal accidents resulting in injury, total permanent disabilities, and death, where the insured person will be entitled to a payout amount between K500,000 and the maximum amount of K10 million. MPT customers aged between 16 and 60 years are eligible to

purchase; however, persons between 16 to 18 years of age can apply for coverage through their parents and guardians.

The "MPT U-Life Insurance" service is designed to simplify access to insurance products, especially for those customers who have never purchased insurance coverage before.

Deduction of the premium is possible through a mobile airtime account or direct MPT Money transfer. Additionally, all the insurance customers between 19 October and 18 November can receive rewards with every insurance plan purchase.

MPT customers can seamlessly use MPT4U application to manage their accounts from their own homes. MPT4U App for iOS and Android can be downloaded from <https://bit.ly/MPT4Ufree> or by dialling USSD code *4040# to receive a download link.

For more information, please visit MPT website > www.mpt.com.mm or its Facebook Page > www.facebook.com/mptofficialpage or MPT U-Life website > <http://bit.ly/U-life-MM>.—GNLM

Imports stand at \$341.7 mln as of 9 Oct, MOC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 and 9 October in the current financial year 2020-2021 stood at US\$341.7 million, reflecting a decrease of \$150 million from \$491.89 million registered in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses groups declined in the current FY.

During the nine days of trading, the import value of capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and aeroplane parts, was estimated at \$118.29 million. The figure was \$54 million lower than the same period in the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$80.66 million, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a decrease of \$15.9 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Typically, intermediate goods make up a large share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. In the current FY, imports of raw materials plunged to \$113 million from \$160.8 million registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth \$29.68 billion were also imported for the

Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment businesses, showing a decrease of \$31.5 million compared with last year.

Myanmar imported over \$19 billion worth goods in the last FY2019-2020, showing an increase of \$935.8 million compared to the FY2018-2019.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data of the Ministry of Commerce.

The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic material and supporting products for export promotion and the import substitution.

The Ministry of Commerce has adhered to its policy reform depending on the requirements of the State and people. Moreover, a series of trade liberalization and openness for policy development have been introduced for enhancing a more viable trade environment. The private sector plays a prominent role in Myanmar's market-oriented economic system. The ministry is highlighting free and fair trade, ensuring product safety and quality goods and services.—Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

REPUBLIC of THE UNION of MYANMAR

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE to PREPARE and IMPLEMENT A LARGE-SCALE HYDROPOWER PLANTS REHABILITATION PROJECT

CONSULTING SERVICES Expressions of Interest

The Government Of The Republic Of The Union Of Myanmar has received a financing from Agence Française de Développement ("AFD"), and intends to use part of the funds thereof for payments under the following project : Rehabilitation of Hydro Power Plants. The Services of the consultant shall consist of an approximative 3 years mission to provide Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Electricity (MoEE), in charge of the project execution :

- preparation of the works (reviewing of workstream, planning, revision of the operational manual ...),
- assistance to EPGE for the procurement of materials and equipment (terms of reference, support during procurement procedures ...),
- supervision of works, and enforcement of AFD's E&S guidelines,
- along the project: coordination of the various stakeholders, reporting, ad hoc assistance to the EPGE project team.

The planned budget is 700kEUR.
The MoEE hereby invites Applicants to show their interest in delivering the Services described above.
This Request for Expressions of Interest is open to:

- Consulting firms Individual consultants
- NGOs Joint Venture between NGO(s) and consulting firm(s)

Eligibility criteria to AFD financing are specified in sub-clause 1.3 of the "Procurement Guidelines for AFD Financed Contracts in Foreign Countries", available online on AFD's website: <http://www.afd.fr>.

The Applicant shall submit only one application, either in its own name or as a member of a Joint Venture (JV). If an Applicant (including any JV member) submits or participates in more than one application, those applications shall be all rejected. However, the same Subconsultant may participate in several applications. If the Applicant is a JV, the expression of interest shall include:

- a copy of the JV Agreement entered into by all members, or
- a letter of intent to execute a JV Agreement, signed by all members together with a copy of the Agreement proposal.

In the absence of this document, the other members will be considered as Subconsultants.
Experiences and qualifications of Subconsultants are not taken into account in the evaluation of the applications.
Interested Applicants must provide information evidencing that they are qualified and experienced to perform those Services. For that purpose, documented evidence of recent and similar services shall be submitted.

Determination of the similarity of the experiences will be based on:

- The contracts size;
- The nature of the Services: technical specifications review, capacity reinforcement, works supervision, project management;
- The technical area and expertise:
 - hydroelectricity,
 - hydropower plant rehabilitation,
 - hydromechanical and electrical equipment,
 - hydraulic gate refurbishment,
 - HSES expertise;
- The location : in the south east asian region and particularly in Myanmar.

The Client will also take into account for the evaluation of the applications the following items:

- Taking into account the Covid sanitary situation, and consequent travel restrictions, it will be essential to count with local representatives and partners with strong expertise;
- Skills and availability of in-house technical back-up experts provided to the on-site experts.
- Quality assurance procedures and certifications of the Applicant

In case of JV or Consortium, the maximum numbers in Consortium shall be limited to three (3) members.

Among the submitted applications, MoEE will shortlist a maximum of six (6) Applicants, to whom the Request for Proposals to carry out the Services shall be sent.

MOEE specifically reserves the right to accept or reject applications if two or fewer applications are received and moreover, the proposals of those applicant(s) are acceptable, it will directly negotiate with the applicant(s) and continue the Bid process.

The Expressions of Interest must be submitted by e-mail to the address below no later than 19/11/2020.

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Electric Power Generation Enterprise
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Telephone: +95-067-8104292, +95-9-250345339
Email: epge.afd@gmail.com**

Interested Applicants may obtain further information and Appendix to the Request for Expression of Interest by sending the official request via e-mail at the address above during office hours: From 9:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m.

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Megacell International Company Limited, a company incorporated and existing under the laws of Thailand, and having its principal office at 65/156-157 Chamnan Phenjati Bldg., 19th Fl., Rama IX Road, Huaykwang Sub-District, Huaykwang District, Bangkok 10320 Thailand, hereby declares that the Company is the Owner and Sole proprietor of the following Trademark:



The above Trademark is used in respect of "Automotive parts; automotive brakes; automotive belts; automotive filters (parts of automotive), namely oil filters, air filters and fuel filters and starters and alternators" in **Class 12**.

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the above Trademark or other infringements whatsoever thereto will be dealt with according to law.

Daw Yee Mon Aung, (Advocate)
For **Megacell International Company Limited**
c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
Level 18, Unit 18-03, Sule Square,
221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated: **20 October 2020**

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Thai-Ishe Industries Company Limited, a company incorporated and existing under the laws of Thailand, and having its principal office at 65 Chamnan Phenjati Building., 19th floor, Unit no. 65/156-157, Rama IX Rd., Huaykwang Sub-District, Huaykwang District, Bangkok 10320 Thailand, hereby declares that the Company is the Owner and Sole proprietor of the following Trademark:



The above Trademark is used in respect of "Batteries" in **Class 9**.

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the above Trademark or other infringements whatsoever thereto will be dealt with according to law.

Daw Yee Mon Aung, (Advocate)
For **Thai-Ishe Industries Company Limited**
c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
Level 18, Unit 18-03, Sule Square,
221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated: **20 October 2020**

THE WORLD WILL NEED AS MANY SYRINGES AS DOSES OF VACCINE

UN stockpiling billion syringes for Covid-19 vaccine

GENEVA (Switzerland) — The United Nations said Monday it would stockpile one billion syringes around the world by the end of 2021, to be used for the delivery of any future coronavirus vaccine.

UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, said it aims to get 520 million syringes in its warehouses by the end of this year, to guarantee an initial supply in countries ahead of the vaccine.

"The world will need as many syringes as doses of vaccine," UNICEF said in a statement.

UNICEF said it was also buying five million safety boxes for used syringes.

The number of con-

firmed coronavirus cases worldwide passed 40 million on Monday, according to an AFP tally based on official sources. More than 1.1 million deaths have been recorded across the globe.

"Vaccinating the world against Covid-19 will be one of the largest mass undertakings in human history, and we will need to move as quickly as the vaccines can be produced," said UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore. "By the end of the year, we will already have over half a billion syringes pre-positioned where they can be deployed quickly and cost effectively."

—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (694 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (694 N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1144W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1144W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GENIUS STAR X V.2009

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GENIUS STAR X VOY. NO. (2009)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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 ELDER TRIUMPHANT SHIPPING LINES
PTE LTD**

SELLING A LUXURIOUS FLAT AT A LOSS JUST ONE YEAR AFTER BUYING IT

British inventor Dyson sells luxury Singapore penthouse

SINGAPORE (Singapore) — British billionaire inventor James Dyson is selling his luxurious Singapore penthouse atop the city-state's tallest building, his company said Monday, about a year after buying it for a reported US\$54 million.

The tycoon snapped up the property, which has a rooftop terrace, private pool and jacuzzi, after his electric appliance firm announced it was shifting its global headquarters to the city-state from England.

The price tag was the highest ever for a penthouse in the affluent financial hub.

But a Dyson spokesman told AFP an offer had been accepted on the three-floor residence, which also has a 600-bottle wine cellar and a dedicated butler service.

He did not give details of the sale, but it appears Dyson has made a hefty loss -- Singapore's Business Times newspaper reported the property was bought by a businessman in the US for Sg\$62 million (\$45 million).

Despite the sale, the spokesman said "Dyson remains fully committed to expanding its research and de-

velopment footprint and other operations in Singapore".

The property sits on the top floors of the 64-storey, 290-metre high Guoco Tower, which is in the business district and has panoramic views over the city, including popular waterfront area Marina Bay.

Since announcing the move of his company's headquarters to Singapore last year, Dyson has made headlines by going on a property-buying spree.

Just weeks after snapping up the city-state's priciest penthouse, he bought another luxurious house for Sg\$45 million

(\$33 million), which faces the UNESCO-listed Botanic Gardens and features an infinity pool.

The company's move to Singapore prompted fury in Britain that the tycoon -- a vocal Brexit backer -- was not investing more in British manufacturing.

The firm -- famous for its bagless vacuum cleaners -- abandoned plans to produce electric cars last year, saying the project was not commercially viable. Its first vehicle plant was to be located in Singapore. —AFP ■



A view of Guoco Tower, where a luxury penthouse at Wallich Residence is located, is seen in Singapore on 10 July 2019. PHOTO: AFP

TRADE SUSPENDED DUE TO TECHNICAL OUTRAGE

Paris bourse trade resumes after 'technical problem'

PARIS (France) — Trading on the Paris stock exchange resumed after a technical problem halted business for nearly three hours on Monday, bourse operator Euronext said.

The problem had been "identified and resolved", Euronext said in a statement to AFP.

It gave no details on the nature of the glitch which affected all the exchange's market products.

Other exchanges run by Euronext -- Brussels, Amsterdam, Lisbon and Dublin -- were also affected by the outage, but not Oslo.

The benchmark CAC 40 index was up around 0.7

per cent at 4,967.26 points at 10:50 GMT, slightly weaker than its level when trading was halted an hour into trading. Earlier this month, Euronext announced it would buy the Milan bourse from the London Stock Exchange group for 4.3 billion euros (\$5 billion).

—AFP ■

MOST ASIAN MARKETS ALSO ROSE MONDAY

European stocks advance at open

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Europe's major stock markets climbed in opening deals on Monday with investors lifted by fresh optimism over a new US stimulus package.

London's benchmark

FTSE 100 index of leading blue-chip companies rose 0.6 per cent to 5,956.46 points, Frankfurt's DAX 30 was up 0.8 per cent to 13,017.23 points and the Paris CAC 40 added 1.1 per cent to 4,989.47.

Most Asian markets rose Monday on US stimulus hopes, although Shanghai turned lower after data showed China's economy grew at a slightly slower pace than expected.

—AFP ■

Bid Announcement

KMIC Development Co., Ltd. intends to invite eligible Bidders for "1st Phase Site Development Construction Works of KMIC".

- Bid Title:** 1st Phase Site Development Construction Works of KMIC
* Location of KMIC: Nyaung Hnit-Pin, Yangon Region
- Spatial Work Scope:** 1,273,514 m² (314.69 acres, 1st phase)
- Duration of the Contract:** 24 months from the commencement date
- Bidding Method:** International Competitive Bidding
(Lump Sum & Unit Price Contract: the Employer shall provide unpriced BOQ and the Bidders shall submit priced BOQ)
* Selection Method : QCBS (Quality and Cost Based Selection)
- Estimated price (exclusive of taxes):** US\$ 27,058,272
* The Bid Price shall be equal or less than the Estimated Price.
- Work Scope:** Site Development Construction Works for 1st phase of KMIC: earthwork, road and pavement, storm water drainage, wastewater collection, water supply, central canal
- Eligibility for bidding**
 - Legal Requirement:** A bidder (including all parties/partners in case of JV) shall be a legitimate company established in the Republic of Korea or the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in accordance with the law procedures of the established country.
 - Construction Experience:** A bidder shall have a(an) accumulative completed similar construction works experience of more than 1,270,000 m² in the last ten (10) years as of the bid announcement date, and each unitary project experience shall be 100,000 m² or more.
- Joint Venture (JV)**
 - In the case of a Joint venture or association:
 - The number of associating companies is not allowed more than five (5), which means maximum five (5) members are allowed, and each member of a JV shall take at least five (5) percent share, and one member who has the largest share shall be a leading/representative member.
 - The JV shall have at least one Korean Company (a company established in the Republic of Korea), and a Korean Company of the JV shall be a leading/representative member. Companies established in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar may be member(s) of the JV.
 - In the case of a single bidder, a company established only in the Republic of Korea is allowed to be a bidder.
- Time Schedule**
 - Bid announcement [19th October, 2020]
 - Pre-bid meeting (on-line) [21th October, 2020 / 14:00 p.m.]
 - * Zoom Meeting ID: 844 8655 4167 (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84486554167>)
 - Query (21st ~ 23rd October, 2020) and Clarification [27th October, 2020]
 - Pre-registration with submission of Bid Security [28th October, 2020]
 - Bid submission deadline [26th November, 2020]
 - Opening and Evaluation of proposals [1st December, 2020]
 - Negotiation and Signing of the Contract [2nd ~ 4th December, 2020]
 - The above schedule can be changed depending on the situation.

- Contact Information**
 - Address: Project Development Department, KMIC Development Co., Ltd., Suite 2007, Pyay Garden Office Tower, 346-354, Pyay Road, Sanchaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar
 - E-mail: mailman@lh.or.kr
 - Attention: Hong, SungSoo, General Manager
 - Website: www.mykmic.com

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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(17/2020-2021)

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

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-148 (20-21)CAP (Retender)	ရွှေပြည်သာ (၂) CNG အရောင်းဆိုင်ရှိ 500 KVA Transformer အား 1000 KVA Transformer ဖြင့် ပြောင်းလဲ အစားထိုးခြင်းလုပ်ငန်း	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 19 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 19 November 2020.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – 19-11-2020, 12:00 pm
Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67-411206

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May,

09251022355, 09974424848

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON VOTING

2.2 million Facebook and Instagram ads rejected ahead of US vote

PARIS (France) — A total of 120,000 posts on Facebook and Instagram have been withdrawn for attempting to “obstruct voting” in the US presidential election and 2.2 million ads have been rejected, Facebook’s vice president Nick Clegg said in an interview published Sunday.

In addition, warnings were posted on 150 million examples of false information posted online, the former British deputy prime minister told the French weekly *Journal du Dimanche*.

Facebook has been increasing its efforts to avoid a repeat of events leading up to the 2016 US election, won by Donald Trump, when its network was used for attempts at voter manipulation, carried out from Russia.

There were similar prob-

lems ahead of Britain’s 2016 referendum on leaving the European Union.

“Thirty-five thousand employees take care of the security of our platforms and contribute for elections,” said Clegg, who is vice president of global affairs and communications at Facebook.

“We have established partnerships with 70 specialized media, including five in France, on the verification of information,” he was quoted as saying in the newspaper.

AFP is one of those partners.

Clegg added that the company also uses artificial intelligence which has “made it possible to delete billions of posts and fake accounts, even before they

are reported by users”.

Facebook also stores all advertisements and information on their funding and provenance for seven years “to ensure transparency,” he said.

In 2016, while he was still deputy prime minister, Clegg complained to the *Journal du Dimanche* that Facebook had not identified or suppressed a single foreign network interfering in the US election.

On Wednesday, Trump rebuked Facebook and Twitter for blocking links to a *New York Post* article purporting to expose corrupt dealings by election rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter in Ukraine.

A day earlier Facebook announced a ban on ads that discourage people from get-



(FILES) In this file photo illustration taken on February 17, 2019, the US social media Facebook logo displayed on a tablet in Paris. Facebook announced October 12, 2020 that it will ban content that denies or distorts the Holocaust, describing the move as its latest effort to free the platform of hate. PHOTO: AFP

ting vaccinated, in light of the coronavirus pandemic which the social media giant said has

“highlighted the importance of preventive health behaviours.” —AFP ■

MEASURES TIGHTENED AGAINST NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Europe tightens virus curbs as global cases top 40 million



A cyclist rides past graffiti against further coronavirus restrictions in Manchester, northwest England on 19 October 2020. PHOTO: AFP

BRUSSELS (Belgium) — A raft of European nations including Italy and Belgium took desperate new measures on Monday to try to combat a second wave

of coronavirus infections as the worldwide caseload topped 40 million.

The latest global milestone came just hours after the number

of people who have died from Covid-19 passed 250,000 in Europe, according to an AFP tally, as the pandemic rages across much of the continent.

Many governments are seeking to avoid the full-on lockdowns imposed in the first wave as they battle to keep their economies going but in some countries, people are chafing against the new restrictions on daily life.

In Belgium, where hospitalizations rose 100 per cent in just the last week, bars and restaurants were closed on Monday for a month and a curfew will be reinforced overnight.

“Managers, chefs, dish-washers, everyone is suffering,” Angelo Bussi said as he put

the key in the lock of his Brussels restaurant late Sunday.

“We don’t feel like anyone cares. It breaks my heart,” he told AFP before shrugging and walking off into the night. “Ah, well there we are, see you in a month.”

Belgium’s second major lockdown comes after Prime Minister Alexander de Croo warned the situation was “much worse” than in March when there was an almost complete confinement.

Italy, the initial epicentre of Europe’s outbreak, also announced fresh curbs including earlier closures for bars and restaurants and a push to increase working from home. —AFP ■

FRANCE TEACHER ATTACK

French police raid Islamist groups after teacher’s beheading

PARIS (France) — French police on Monday swooped on radical Islamist groups three days after the beheading of a teacher who had shown his pupils satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

The raids came a day after tens of thousands of people took part in rallies countrywide to honour teacher Samuel Paty and defend freedom of expression, including the right to show cartoons regarded by many Muslims as insulting.

Gerald Darmanin said the swoop on Islamist networks was designed to send a message that “enemies of the Republic” would not enjoy “a minute’s respite”.

Sources close to the operation told AFP that individuals targeted in the police operation were known to the police for radical preachings or hate speech on social media.

Darmanin said the government would also tighten the noose on NGOs with links to Islamist networks, including the high-profile Anti-Islamophobia Collective. —AFP ■

COVID-HIT ECONOMY AND BREXIT STALEMATE

UK and EU mull how to break Brexit deadlock following threats

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Britain and the European Union held fresh meetings on Monday to try to unlock their Brexit impasse after London threatened to walk out and go its own way next year despite warnings of further damage to the Covid-hit economy.

The UK government launched an information campaign advising businesses that “time is running out” to be ready for a complex new trading chapter with a post-Brexit transition period expiring at the end of this

year, deal or no deal.

But industry groups continue to warn of potential chaos for road hauliers and the possibility of drugs shortages, as vital preparations remain in the early stages ahead of Britain unwinding nearly five decades of European integration.

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) deputy chief Josh Hardie said a “hat-trick of unprecedented challenges” loomed amid the first wave of coronavirus earlier this year, its resurgence now and “uncertain-

ty over the UK’s trading relationship with the EU”.

Senior minister Michael Gove said Sunday the door remained “ajar” for an overarching trade deal to remove much of the uncertainty if the EU shifts position, despite Prime Minister Boris Johnson declaring last week he was ready to abandon talks.

Gove met European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic in London on Monday morning to discuss the two sides’ existing divorce treaty, which Britain has threatened to redraw

through a new internal market bill to regulate post-Brexit trade within the UK.

The contentious law has passed Britain’s House of Commons and was due later Monday to come up for debate in the upper chamber, the House of Lords, which includes Anglican bishops.

In a rare joint letter published in the *Financial Times*, the five most senior bishops including Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said the bill set a “disastrous precedent” for violating the rule of law. —AFP ■

BIGGEST PROTESTS IN YEARS

Thai PM recalls parliament as protesters step up pressure

BANGKOK (Thailand) — Thailand's embattled premier called Monday for a special session of parliament as protesters planned more rallies to demand his resignation, the release of jailed activists, and reforms to the monarchy.

Tens of thousands of mostly young protesters have taken to the streets in the past week in defiance of an emergency decree banning gatherings of more than four people.

Police said around 20,000 people protested across the capital Sunday, although activists and local media estimated much bigger crowds.

As they prepared to rally again Monday, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said parliament -- currently in recess -- would be recalled to discuss how to reduce tensions.

"We support opening an extraordinary session to solve this conflict," he told reporters, warning protesters not to break the law.

"I request protesters rally peacefully. The government has already compromised to some degree," he said.

The largely leaderless movement is calling for the resignation of Prayut -- a former army chief and mastermind of a 2014 coup -- as well as the re-writing of the military-drafted constitution they say rigged last year's election in his favour.



Pro-democracy protesters take part in an anti-government rally at Kaset intersection in Bangkok on 19 October 2020, as they continue to defy an emergency decree banning gatherings. PHOTO: AFP

Most controversially, protesters are also making unprecedented demands to reform the powerful and ultra-wealthy monarchy.

They want the abolition of a draconian defamation law that shields King Maha Vajiralongkorn from criticism, greater transparency of royal finances, and for the monarch to stay out of politics.

The movement appeared to be gaining traction across the country with smaller protests taking place Sunday from Phuket in the south to Khon Kaen in the

northeast.

'Protect the monarchy'

It has gained momentum since July, but sharply escalated last week after a group of protesters surrounded a royal motorcade and flashed three-fingered "democracy salutes" -- borrowed from the "Hunger Games" movies -- at Queen Suthida.

Two activists now face charges under a rarely used law banning "violence against the queen" and face a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted. Confrontations escalated

further on Friday when riot police used water cannon and other strong-arm tactics, provoking widespread outrage.

Prayut warned Monday the government needed to protect the monarchy.

"This is the duty of all Thais," he told reporters.

Apart from arrests by police, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society said it had flagged more than 325,000 messages on social media platforms that violated the Computer Crimes Act, which critics say is used to muzzle dissent. —AFP ■

VIOLENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

US envoy slams Afghan bloodshed as car bomb toll rises

KABUL (Afghanistan) — A top US envoy slammed Afghanistan's "distressingly high" levels of bloodshed Monday after a car bombing at a police headquarters killed at least 16 people and

wounded scores more.

The latest remarks by veteran diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated a withdrawal deal with the Taliban in February, come as spiralling violence

across Afghanistan imperils ongoing peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban.

"Continued high levels of violence can threaten the peace process and the agreement and the core understanding that there is no military solution," Khalilzad said on Twitter.

"Violence today remains distressingly high in spite of the recent reaffirmation of the need for substantial reduction."

On Sunday, a car bomb near the police headquarters in the western province of Ghor left 16 people dead and 154 wounded, local hospital head Mohammad Omar Lalzad told AFP on Monday.

Five children, nine women and 26 members of the security forces were among the wounded,

he said.

Aref Aber, the spokesman for Ghor's governor, confirmed the toll.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but Afghan officials blamed the Taliban.

In the country's southern province of Helmand, thousands of families have been forced to flee their homes in recent days as fierce fighting erupted between the Taliban and government forces.

The violence continues even though Khalilzad last week claimed the Taliban had assured US forces they would reduce attacks and casualties.

US influence over Afghanistan's battlegrounds is on the wane, with the Pentagon looking to withdraw all its remaining troops by next May. —AFP ■



Smoke rises from the site of a car bomb attack that targeted an Afghan police headquarters in Feroz Koh, the capital of Ghor Province on 18 October 2020. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan, Vietnam boost defence ties as South China Sea tensions mount

HANOI (Viet Nam) — Japan and Vietnam agreed to step up security and defence cooperation Monday, reaching an agreement in principle for Tokyo to export defence equipment and technology to the Southeast Asian nation. —AFP ■

China to eliminate poverty among youth via e-commerce

BEIJING — The All-China Youth Federation has rolled out a programme as a targeted measure to help young people eliminate poverty with new business forms such as e-commerce.

A group of representatives was selected to promote fine local products and folk culture through new modes and bridge the domestic industrial chain and the supply chain.

The ten representatives, including famous Chinese live e-commerce anchors, influencers, and online business people, were selected based on their outstanding performance in new types of businesses.

The members will pass on their experience via both online and offline channels to help young people with employment related to the industrial chain and the supply chain or trying to start their own business to shake off poverty. —Xinhua ■

China urges Japan to cautiously consider nuclear plant water release

BEIJING — China on Monday urged the Japanese government to "cautiously" consider whether to release treated radioactive water in the sea from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant crippled by a powerful earthquake and ensuing tsunami in 2011. —Kyodo News ■

Germany, Netherlands, Belgium launch joint bid for 2027 Women's World Cup

BERLIN (Germany) — The German football association (DFB) announced Monday a joint bid with Belgium and the Netherlands to host the 2027 Women's World Cup.

"We are delighted to have joined our Dutch friends and will do our utmost to support this project," DFB president Fritz Keller said in a statement.

The Dutch FA (KNVB) already stated its desire to host the 2027 finals back in 2018 and secured parliamentary support in the Netherlands.

The bid is set to be fronted

by three former players in Germany's Silvia Neid, Femke Maes from Belgium and ex-Dutch midfielder Sarina Wiegman.

Germany hosted the 2006 men's World Cup, the women's finals in 2011 and will hold the men's European Championship in 2024. The Netherlands hosted, and won, the women's Euros in 2017, but Belgium has never hosted a major women's tournament. The three partners have already presented their plans to FIFA, as well as European football's governing body UEFA, the DFB added.—AFP



USA players celebrate after the final whistle during the France 2019 Women's World Cup football final match between USA and the Netherlands, on July 7, 2019, at the Lyon Stadium in Lyon, central-eastern France. **PHOTO: AFP**

Guardiola challenges Aguero to earn new Man City deal



Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (R) is substituted by Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on 17 October 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Pep Guardiola says Sergio Aguero must earn a new contract at Manchester City even though he is the club's all-time record goalscorer.

Aguero, who returned from a four-month spell out with

injury in Saturday's 1-0 win over Arsenal, has entered the last 12 months of his existing deal.

The Argentine has scored 254 goals for City and been a major part of four Premier League title triumphs, including his fa-

mous last-gasp winner in 2012.

However, Guardiola, who is also in the final season of his deal, believes the 32-year-old needs to prove his fitness and form in the coming months.

"The important thing is that Sergio comes back in good physical condition, starts to get his rhythm, doesn't get more injuries and plays good," Guardiola said.

"We know what he means for us, we know how we appreciate him, but now he has to show like every one of us, me first, that we deserve to continue here and playing good and winning games."

Aguero played a key role in City's goal against Arsenal, driving forward to feed Phil Foden, with Raheem Sterling finishing after Bernd Leno could only parry the midfielder's shot.

But he was also involved in a moment of controversy in the second half when he put his arm on the shoulder of assistant referee Sian Massey-Ellis.

The image provoked a wave of criticism of the striker, but Guardiola defended his player's actions.

"Come on guys. Sergio is the nicest person I ever met in my life," he added. "Look for problems in other situations, not in this one."—AFP

Poland to use national stadium as hospital as virus surges

WARSAW (Poland) — Poland's national stadium will double as a field hospital for Warsaw, a senior government official said on Monday, as a spike in coronavirus cases has strained health care facilities to the breaking point.

The decision came days after the government asked Poles to "stay home" and "work remotely" if possible as it announced a raft of restrictions to stem infections.

Built for the UEFA Euro 2012 football championships, the 60,000-seat stadium has conference rooms under its stands able to accommodate patients.

"About 500 beds will be installed in the stadium to receive people requiring hospitaliza-

tion," government spokesman Piotr Muller told the commercial Polsatnews channel.

The new facility, that will have around 50 intensive care beds, will be ready to accept patients by the end of the week.

Field hospitals could be created in each of Poland's 16 administrative regions if need be, Muller said.

Media reports suggest that hospitals in areas with the largest spike in cases have run out of beds and are refusing to accept new patients arriving by ambulance.

Roughly half of Poland was designated a coronavirus "red zone" as of Saturday, with secondary schools switching to distance learning.—AFP



(FILES) In this file photo taken on May 18, 2012 an aerial view made from a helium balloon shows the new National Stadium, ready for the Euro 2012 football games, in Warsaw. **PHOTO: AFP**