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Thursday, 22 October 2020

COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee holds 3rd coordination meeting online



Vice President U Myint Swe presides over the 3rd coordination meeting of COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee online on 21 October. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Myint Swe, in his capacity as the Chairman of the COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee, presided over the third coordination meeting of the committee yesterday.

The meeting via videoconferencing was held at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw and was attended by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Deputy Minister Major-General Soe Tint Naing and officials, while the Union Ministers from the Ministry of Office of the Union Government, Ministry of Defence, the Ministry

of Border Affairs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, as well as the Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), the Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications and its Permanent Secretary.

At the meeting, the Vice President explained the formation of the 10-member committee headed by himself with 11 assigned tasks, by the Office of

the President on 30 March 2020.

With the participation of Union Ministers and the Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), the committee is implementing the directives of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, and has organized the 1st and 2nd coordination meetings on 3 April and 14 April this year.

The committee has also set up its 21-member Secretariat led by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs and directors from 10 Union-level ministries for the effective performance of duties

which is working on a 24-hour basis. Regional level emergency response committees were also formed on 6 April this year with the approval of National-Level Central COVID-19 Committee. The Vice President also talked about the committee's works on contact tracing for early quarantine, searching the persons who had contact with infected persons in collaboration with the relevant ministries, regular videoconferencing between the Secretariat and the regional offices of the COVID-19 control and emergency response committee.

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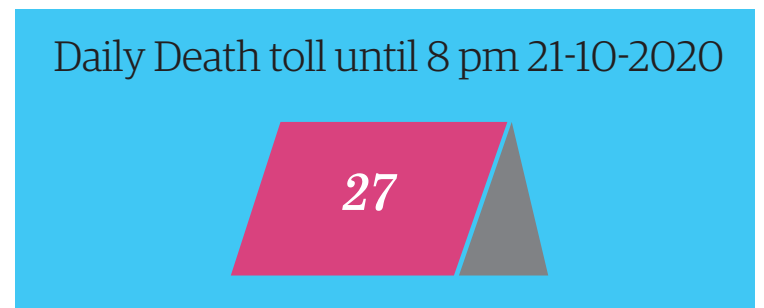
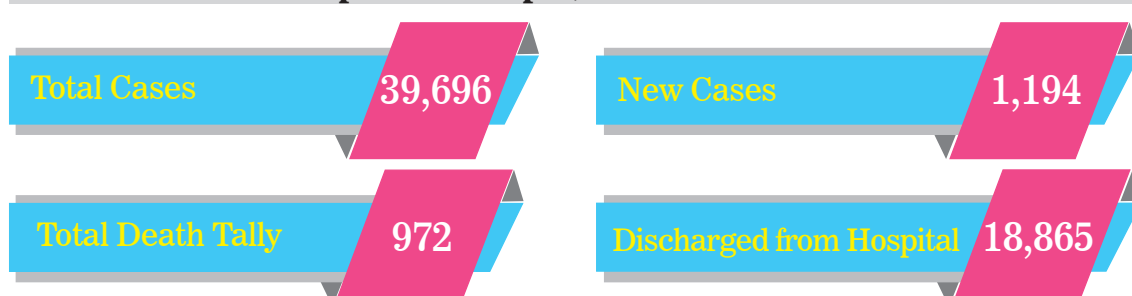
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1,194 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 October, total figure rises to 39,696

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to 39,696 after 1,194 new cases were reported on 21 October according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 39,696 confirmed cases, 972 died, 18,865 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 21 October 2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

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.

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

CAMPAIGN speeches of Kachin National Congress Party (KNC) and Lisu National Development Party (L.N.D.P) for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanma Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 22 October for the second time. — MNA

UAGO opens 10 law offices under Pilot Law Office Programme

THE Union Attorney-General Office held an opening ceremony of 10 additional law offices yesterday to expand the Pilot Law Office Programme, jointly conducted by the USAID Promoting Rule of Law in Myanmar (PRLM).

At the ceremony, Permanent Secretary Dr Thida Oo explained the important role of law offices under the programme for the rule of law and interview process ahead of court proceeding.

Officials from the USAID PRLM talked on their cooperation in the programme.

The ceremony was also attended by the Permanent Secretary, the Director-General of Prosecution Department, the Deputy Directors-General, the Directors, legal officers from regions and states, officers of new law office and responsible persons from USAID PRLM.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Attorney-General Office holds the opening ceremony of 10 additional law offices under the Pilot Law Office Programme on 21 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

Civil Service Institute donates K5 mln to COVID-19 medical centre in Phaunggyi



Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar) donates K5 million to COVID-19 medical centre (Phaunggyi) on 19 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar) held a cash donation ceremony in honour of medical civil servants and volunteers at COVID-19 medical centre (Phaunggyi) on 19 October.

At the donation ceremony, Deputy Chairperson (1) of COVID-19 Medical Services Supervising Committee and Rector of the Institute U Kyaw Win Han

presented K5 million donation.

Secretary (1) of the committee and Medical Superintendent Dr Ko Ko Naing expressed words of thanks.

Members of Administrative Department from the institute, Deputy Superintendent of the Centre Dr Yin Yin Tun and doctors attended the ceremony. —MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Myanmar nationals return home from foreign countries

THE relief flight of Air India landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon, carrying 63 Myanmar nationals who wanted to return to home from India during COVID-19 outbreak.

A relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines also brought 30 Myanmar nationals back from Thailand in the same evening.

In addition, 90 Myanmar seamen who were stranded in UAE returned home by the

Myanmar Airways International (MAI) relief flight under the arrangement of Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh on the same day. 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 immigration process, medical tests, and arrangement for their 7-day quarantine at the specific areas or the designated hotels, and 7-day quarantine at home.

For the repatriation of Myanmar citizens and seamen who were stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Myanmar returnees queuing at immigration counters of Yangon International Airport on 21 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION



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

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

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General Election
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List of persons who had contact with infected persons was distributed on a real-time basis to the Nay Pyi Taw Council, and states/regions. Furthermore, in cases where the Ministry of Health and Sports was having difficulties in contacting the “contact persons”, for cases where only the NRC numbers were available and cases where the person could not be contacted by phone although the phone number was available; in such cases, investigations were made with the help of relevant ministries for purposes of identification.

The committee also took part in the distribution of essential commodities for people with no regular income from 4,006,302 households from 10 April to 19 April this year.

Legal actions have been tak-

en in 26 cases for spreading false news on social networks and other sources to create public panic and 14,577 cases for breaching the COVID-19 rules of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The committee also arranged transport and quarantine facilities for the returnees through border crossings and airports to their respective areas. He added that while the Union-level ministries were working together for containment of COVID-19, the Tatmadaw had been conducting medical tests, treatments and quarantine for monks, nuns and ordinary people from 26 May 2020 until now.

Secretary (1) of the committee and Union Minister U Min Thu discussed implementing the tasks of the COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee by the Nay Pyi Taw Council and at the state/region

levels in coordination with the relevant ministries.

Secretary (2) of the committee and Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut explained the works of the Secretariat.

Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win and Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung briefed about legal actions taken and preparations for quarantine facilities.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura U Aung Ko explained quarantine facilities at the religious buildings under the ministry, medical treatments of infected monks and nuns, cash donations and food supplies to the monasteries and nunneries.

Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe reported on inspections being made for adherence to healthcare guidelines at the factories and businesses, the return

of Myanmar migrant workers, the assistance of social security fund for insured workers and confirmed positive cases at the workplaces.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe presented the containment measures against COVID-19, cooperation with the Tatmadaw and effective legal actions taken against those who breached the rules.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discussed preparations for community-based facility quarantine, awareness programmes and relief supplies in respective areas.

General Mya Tun Oo explained the confirmed cases and quarantined persons of Tatmadaw members, designated hospitals for the civilian patients in the first wave, additional designated hospitals to accommodate the increasing number of cases in the

second wave, the formation of 60 medical corps in respective military commands, conducting medical tests to civilians, Tatmadaw personnel and their families, supplies of 23 relief items and over 1,000 oxygen tanks and meals for positive cases and persons under investigation.

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo and its Permanent Secretary U Soe Thein explained organizing relief flights for the returnees from foreign countries, technology for applications of contact tracing and information dashboard.

After the reports, Vice President U Myint Swe expressed his appreciation about the works being carried out and gave necessary instructions for effective implementation of the committee's tasks.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

ASEAN nations discuss COVID's effects on agro, forestry sectors at 42nd AMAF

THE 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) was held as a virtual meeting through the Blue Jeans application, under the chairmanship of Veng Sakhon, Cambodian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, yesterday morning.

The Myanmar delegation was led by Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. They discussed how ASEAN nations could respond to consequences caused by COVID-19 to ensure the smooth progress of food security, food safety and receiving sufficient nutrition, and trade.

The meeting discussed progress in food crop, agriculture and forestry through the collaboration framework. The agriculture and forestry ministers of ASEAN na-



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu joins 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry online on 21 October. PHOTO: MNA

tions had issued a communiqué on responding to COVID-19 on 15 April earlier this year.

The meeting reviewed the ASEAN Co-operation on Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Sectors and its Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

and approved the ASEAN guidelines on implementing international standards for preventing plant diseases, the separate ASEAN strategic plans for livestock, agriculture, fishery and controlling fall army worms, and

guidelines on sustainable non-wood forest products.

The meeting decided to continue plans regarding key deliverables in 2021 including bio-information, preventing transboundary animal diseases

and trade concerning livestock, establishing action plans and quality assurance on biodiversity and ASEAN guidelines on preventing plant diseases in crop trade, plans for anti-microbial resistance in the fishery sector, and signing a contractual agreement for policy and legal framework on ASEAN food safety.

Similarly, the Myanmar delegation cooperated with affiliated and international organizations, the nations of Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea and Russia, the FAO, OIE, and Grow Asia. The Joint Communiqué for the 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry was also approved at the meeting. The 43rd AMAF will be held in Bandung of West Java, Indonesia.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

We will never ignore and turn our backs on our citizens living abroad

Another thing is that apart from the fact that we are looking after the people inside the country, we also have to look after our citizens who are living in foreign countries. That is why, although we are facing the second wave of COVID-19 inside the country, we have not suspended our programme to accept our citizens who wish to return. They are continuing to return. If we look at the overall situation, more than 10,000 citizens have returned by air since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. Over 200,000 returned from across the border. In total it would be about 250,000. These are our citizens returning; more will continue to come. We are making plans to bring them back by air, more and more, day by day, according to the requirements. We will never ignore and turn our backs on our citizens living abroad because we are having problems at home.

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



Micro-satellite MMSATS-1 for Myanmar completed in Japan

MICRO-satellite MMSATS-1 (*Lawkanat-1* in Myanmar name) has been built and it was transferred by its developers Hokkaido University and Tohoku University to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) yesterday for launching into the space.

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi joined the transfer ceremony online.

After explanation of Professor Mr Yukihiro Takahashi from the Hokkaido University about development of the satellite, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi expressed thanks to the two Japanese universities for completion of the satellite during COVID-19 period.

Myanmar will construct a ground station for use with a small satellite and a research lab at the Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University by the end of this year.

Seven academic staff members and seven students in the first batch of MAEU received online training on satellite building, satellite technology and space technology.

The MMSATS-1 (*Lawkanat-1*) will be used for agriculture, forestry, urban planning, maritime sector, oceanology, exploration of minerals, weather, water sources and the mitigation of large-scale natural disasters.

The five-year programme from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2024 valued at 1,680 million yen, and it includes building two 50kg-class Micro-satellites, a small ground station, a research lab, 14 trainees for technical transfer programme and 7 academic personnel under the on-the-job training programme.

After sending the satellite to the International Space Station in February 2021, it will be launched



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi joins online ceremony to hand over MMSATS-1 (*Lawkanat-1*) to Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency on 21 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

into Earth orbit in March.

Myanmar has scheduled to

launch its second micro-satellite, *Lawkanat-2*, in September

2023.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe meets ICRC delegation online



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe holds online meeting with ICRC's Resident Representative on 21 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe held videoconferencing with Mr Stephan Sakaliane, Resident Representative of International Committee of the Red Cross to discuss programmes of the ICRC in Myanmar, work plans for 2021 and returns of ICRC members if they are found positive for COVID-19.

During the meeting, Mr Stephan Sakaliane discussed cooperation works with Sittway General Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation processes for the injured people in Rakhine State, plans to resume the operations which are halted due to COVID-19 in Shan State, 3 MoUs between MoHS and ICRC to improve the healthcare services in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states, utilization of ICRC's 2021

budget for Myanmar in conducting such work programmes.

Then, Union Minister also briefed the work programmes of ministry which are being carried out in Rakhine State, practical cooperation with ICRC to increase the awareness of international countries, formation of focal team to monitor and supervise the cooperation works between the ministry and ICRC, importance of healthcare services without any discrimination on gender and religions, progresses at the Physical Rehabilitation centres in Kengtung and Myitkyina townships and Physical Rehabilitation programmes to be implemented at Sittway General Hospital.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

“People are the key”

MoC organizes meeting with KOICA Myanmar on expressway projects



Ministry of Construction holds final report meeting on Feasibility Study on the Central Backbone Expressway in Myanmar on 21 October. PHOTO: MNA

THE final report meeting for “Feasibility Study on the Central Backbone Expressway in Myanmar (Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and Yangon-Ngayokekaung Expressway)”

jointly conducted by the Department of Highway of the Ministry of Construction and KOICA Myanmar Office was held yesterday morning via videoconferencing.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said that Myanmar wants to work together more closely with Korea in infrastructure investments.

Currently, Myanmar and Republic of Korea are jointly carrying out Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge Project in Yangon and Korea Myanmar Industrial Complex.

The virtual meeting focused on the feasibility studies on upgrading Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and building Yangon-Ngayokekaung Expressway.

Yangon – Mandalay Expressway connects three main cities of Myanmar: Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. The planned Yangon-Ngayokekaung Expressway will connect Yangon to the Ayeyawady coastal areas. The expressway is a part of the master plan of the “Arterial Road Network Development” of Myanmar. The two expressway projects have a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Myanmar.

The Union Minister said that feasibility studies are

important to projects, and expressed thanks to relevant ministries, relevant officials, and those who actively cooperate in the feasibility studies.

South Korean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Lee Sang-hwa also delivered a speech in the meeting.

KOICA Myanmar Office’s Chief Representative Ms Lee Youn Soo explained the meeting, and expert Mr Tong Hyun Kim explained the final report for Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. Expert Mr Seong Yil Bae explained the final report for Yangon-Ngayokekaung Expressway.

Union Minister U Han Zaw delivered a concluding remark in the virtual meeting.

The feasibility studies on upgrading Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and building Yangon-Ngayokekaung Expressway was begun in 2018.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Anti-grave violations committee holds 6th coord meeting online

THE 6th coordination meeting of the Committee for Preventing Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflicts was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday afternoon.

Committee Chairman and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr Win Myat Aye, said the National Action Plan on Preventing Grievous Injuries and Sexual Abuse on Children in Armed Conflicts (2020-2021) was approved by the President’s Office on 10 August this year.

The working committee held their fourth coordination meeting on 9 September this year and met with UNICEF on 21 September. The Rehabilitation Department has formed a separate group for accepting and screening reports, advertised phone numbers and emails for contact, and distributed national-level action plans to Nay Pyi Taw Council, sub-national governments, relevant ministries, Hluttaw offices and other organizations such as the National Committee on Child Rights, Myanmar National Hu-

man Rights Commission and Myanmar National Committee on Women.

As a national-level action, the Ministry of Defence sent out instructions to military commands across the nation on 15 September to prevent grievous injuries and sexual exploitation of children in armed conflicts and to take action in line with military law. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also issued similar instructions.

The Union Minister said they are in progress to approve the monitoring and evaluation committee outlined in the national action plan and that they will carry out distribution of IEC materials under the Multi-Year Work Plan signed between the ministry and UNICEF.

The committee’s secretary U Win Naing Htun, Director-General of the Rehabilitation Department, explained the committee’s progress and continuation of implementing a national-level reporting mechanism. Meeting attendees also discussed plans going forward with the national action plan.

The meeting was attended



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presides over the 6th coordination meeting of the Committee for Preventing Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflicts. PHOTO: MNA

by personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Office of Union Government, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Health and Sports, the Union Attorney-General Office, and

Myanmar Red Cross Society.

The Committee for Preventing Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflicts was formed by the Union Government on 7 January 2019 to prevent the six grave violations on children in armed conflicts designated by the UN.

The grave violations are

killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups, attacks on schools or hospitals, rape or other sexual violence against children, abduction of children, and denial of humanitarian access to children.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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Bamboo lantern businesses resume in Mandalay

MYANMAR traditional hand-made lantern businesses are earning a good income as they resume their work again in Mandalay in time for the light festival during Thadingyut, according to the traditional handmade lantern makers.

The Thadingyut Festival, the lighting festival of Myanmar, is held on the Full Moon of Thadingyut of Myanmar Lunar calendar. During the lighting festival, people hang colourful lanterns in their homes. This is also the time when lanterns and candles are selling well at almost every shop.

"But this year, the lantern businesses have to start rather late because of the pandemic. Last year, our business started before the Lent set out and we had thus got big market demand. But this year, we started making lanterns only when we received enough market orders. Lanterns are selling for between K1,500 and K2,500 each, depending upon the size, design and cartoon patterns. But we don't have much demand compared to



A man making traditional handmade lanterns at his workshop. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

last year," said Ko Mya Thwin, a lantern seller.

"I am anxious about COVID-19, and I am also worried about the lantern market situation this year. But I have already decided to sell the lanterns during the lighting festival as a traditional business," he added.

The traditional lanterns are made from coloured paper and bamboo. Ahead of the

crafting process, lantern makers collect and trim bamboo. Then they bend it into shapes and affix the paper to the bamboo structure. Skilled artisans can shape lanterns into the elephants, peacocks or even aeroplanes. Paper lanterns made of bamboo are becoming rare, according to the traditional bamboo lantern makers.

The Thadingyut Festival is a significant one for Myanmar

people, and it is usually celebrated for three days — before the Full Moon, on Full Moon and the day after Full Moon. During the festival, pagodas, temples and monasteries are crowded with the pilgrims, and the people light the candles around and illuminate the pagodas and houses with the electric bulbs— Aye Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Local Business

MFVP invites business partners for Yangon mobile market plan

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) has called for the affiliated associations and businesspersons to cooperate in the distribution and retail business of Yangon mobile market scheme.

MFVP planned to help support fast and smooth commodity flow of the producers and market stability amid the COVID-19 crisis and initiated the mobile market scheme to sell the fruits and vegetables with mobile trucks in the townships of Yangon, supported by Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization under the Ministry of Commerce and Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

Thus the MFVP invited the retail business partners who want to work together with them in line with the regulations.

This market plan will cover all the 45 townships in the Yangon Region, with some exception. The affiliated association will sell the vegetables with trucks in South Dagon Myothit, Dagon Seikkan, Dabon and Thakayta townships for now. Six downtown areas — Latha, Lanmadaw, Pabedan, Kyauktada, Pazundaung and Botahtaung townships are excluded in this as selling with mobile trucks are restricted in the downtown areas. However, door-to-door delivery service or other suitable plans will be made for those six townships.

Additionally, the MFVP asked the retail business

partners to bring fresh vegetables to those families in 34 townships.

Those affiliated associations and businesspersons who want to join this plan must have capital of K200,000 per truck, Hijet or any two-tonne truck with valid licence, licenced drivers, sales staff and supply chain workers.

The management team of the mobile truck will accept the goods supplied by the registered farmers only. The team will also set the price in individual wards with low-income people. Good packaging is also required for the door to door delivery system. Those truck operators must strictly adhere to the traffic rules, the rules set by the municipal, and the health guidelines for the coronavirus, the MFVP stated.

Those interested business partners must present the name and registration number of companies, MSMEs, businesses and associations, and verification of the respective ward administrator or municipal officials for small shops and volunteer group. The copy of motor vehicle licence and photo of vehicle will be provided as well. For further inquiry, they can contact through phone number 01-218367 or email mffvpea.office@gmail.com of the MFVP. During the Stay-at-Home period, they can also contact the officials of the MFVP via 09-5184756, 09-5250603 or secretary@mfv.org, 09-5005269 (U Min Zaw), 09-43034894 (Daw Darli), 09-79654521 (Daw Ei Ei Soe).

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Sagaing Region aims to grow over 1.6 mln acres of oil crops this FY



Farm workers are picking the groundnuts in Sagaing. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

A total of 1,628,266 acres of oil crops are planned to grow in the ten districts of Sagaing region and Naga Self-Administered Zone in winter crops season of the current 2020-2021 financial year (FY).

The Department of Agriculture will grow a total of 1,628,266 acres of oil crops including 327,300 acres of sunflower, 523,000 acres of winter sesame, 95,000 acres of summer sesame, 116,700 acres of flower sesame, 531,500 acres

of groundnut and 34,766 acres of mustard, according to the Department of Agriculture in Sagaing Region.

The oil crops will be cultivated on 219,206 acres of land in three townships of Sagaing District, 169,323 acres in four townships of Monywa District, 179,410 acres in four townships of Yinmabin District, 329,318 acres in six townships of Shwabo District, 153,950 acres in two townships of Kanbalu District and 269,949 acres in seven

townships of Katha District in Sagaing Region.

Additionally, 136,891 acres of oil crops will also be planted in three townships of Kalay District, 29,065 acres in two townships of Mawlaik District, 19,472 acres in one township and two townships of Tamu District, 19,070 acres in two townships of Kani District and 2,612 acres in three townships and four towns in Naga Self-Administered Zone. —Win Oo (Zayyardine)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Investment committees-endorsed 70 domestic firms generates K191.89 bln last FY

By Nyein Nyein

THE region and state investment committees gave the green light to 70 domestic enterprises in the last financial year 2019-2020, with an estimated capital of K191.89 billion, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration's data indicated.

Between 1 October and 30 September of the FY2019-2020, Ayeyawady Region Investment Committee cleared 13 projects, ploughing in estimated capital of K41.26 billion.

Similarly, Yangon Region Investment Committee gave a go-ahead to 12 enterprises with K26 billion, Taninthayi to 10 projects with K41.38 billion, Sagaing to 10 enterprises with K13.9 billion, Mon to five businesses with K13.6 billion, Kayah to four enterprises with K8.2 billion, Mandalay to three enterprises with K12.14 billion,

Nay Pyi Taw Council to two businesses with K6.147 billion, Chin to two enterprises with K2.535 billion, Bago to two enterprises with K5.265 billion, Shan to two projects with K5.67 billion, Kayin to two enterprises with K9.6 billion, Magway Region to one with K2.5 billion, Rakhine to one with K2.499 billion, and Kachin to one with K965 million respectively.

The domestic investments are flowing into the manufacturing, hotels and tourism, other services, electricity, agriculture, real estate development and mining sectors.

Of them, manufacturing sector pulls the most massive investments, followed by hotels and tourism and other service sectors.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to endorse

local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.

While some projects no longer need MIC approval, businesses that are strategic to the government require the permit from the commission. Besides, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding \$5 million and that may have a possible impact on the environment and the local community need to be approved by the DICA's proposal assessment team and the relevant ministries.

With a fast-track way to set up a business in Myanmar having been introduced, investors can apply to the MIC or the state and regional Investment Committees to get their investment proposals endorsed, depending on the business type.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar-Thailand border trade via Myawady drops amid COVID resurgence

TRADE between Thailand and Myanmar via the Myawady land border between 1 and 9 October in the current financial year 2020-2021 plunged to US\$12.32 million from \$31.12 million registered in the year-ago period, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Following some traders tested positive for COVID-19, Myawady trade was suspended by Thailand until 25 October. However, the business has not entirely halted yet.

Myanmar's external trade through border trade and maritime trade is dropping owing to the COVID-19 resurgence. As a result of this, imported goods are likely to cost higher.

The surge in coronavirus cases in Myanmar led Thailand to close its border area in Mae-sai in mid-September. Only six trucks are allowed on Tachilek-Maesai bridge per day after negotiations of the two countries, the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry released the news on 16 September 2020.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. Last year, Myanmar increasingly exported corns to

Thailand through Myawady border. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country.

Myanmar generated \$1.12 billion from trade through Myawady in the last FY2019-2020, which rose from \$969 million registered in the FY2018-2019.

Myanmar has seven border posts with neighbouring Thailand — Tachilek, Myawady, Hteekhee, Kawthoung, Myeik, Mawtaung and Maese.

Between FY2016-2017 and FY2019-2020 (as of August), Thailand has been Myanmar's largest trade partner among the ASEAN states, followed by Singapore and Malaysia.

Thailand accounted for 18.48 per cent of total trade in the FY2016-2017 with an estimated trade value of US\$4.2 billion, 19.17 pc in FY2017-2018 with a trade value of \$5.07 billion, 40.38 pc in the FY2018-2019 with \$5.46 billion and 39.55 pc in the FY2019-2020 (Oct-April) with \$3.15 billion respectively, the Central Statistical Organization's statistics showed.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Myawady Trade Zone in Kayin State, bordering with Thailand. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR



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Impunity has no place in a civilized society

WHILE we are experiencing the rapid spread of the coronavirus throughout our country, there are some reports on violations against children in armed conflict areas. Warring parties must immediately abide by international law to end violations against children to end this “moral crisis of our age.”

It is worth noting that plans are underway to approve the organizational set-up and tasks of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, which will be formed under the National-level Project - 2020-2021 which was approved by the President on 10 August. The project is playing a crucial role in preventing six grave violations against children in armed conflicts.

A strong mobilization of regional governments, donors, civil society and private sector is needed to ensure that the project keeps children safe in any situation.

Hence, the authorities concerned are to scale up efforts to pull children out of conflict-ridden circumstances and to prevent the current pandemic from making the issue more complex.

The Ministry of Defence instructed the regional military commands and security forces on 15 September to monitor armed conflicts and enforce the rules to ensure there are no incidents involving children during armed conflicts. The Ministry of Home Affairs also issued instruction for the police forces under it.

Also, the government will take actions following violations against children during armed conflicts, as determined by the Independent Commission of Enquiry-ICOE formed by the Office of the President.

Safety and security are enshrined in the Child Rights Law which guarantees our children, the future of our country, their rights, including security, development and protections. It is not just our moral obligation to make sure children are safe and secure, but a legal one, too.

The committee formed in 2019 on preventing six grave violations against children is also tasked with taking immediate measures to respond to information on actions which deviate from civilian and military law and order, and to take action following violations against children during

armed conflicts. Hence, all warring parties in our country have a duty to protect children from six violations under international law — killing and maiming of children, recruitment or use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, abduction, attacks against schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access to children.

Please remember that the value of human society depends upon how it protects its children. The culture of impunity must end in our country.

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Please remember that the value of human society depends upon how it protects its children. The culture of impunity must end in our country.



CAMPAIGN TO CURB SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION AMID COVID-19

UN urges people to #PledgetoPause before sharing information online

With the COVID-19 pandemic sparking a “communications emergency” caused by false information disseminated on social media, the UN Secretary-General is encouraging people everywhere to take a breath before sharing content online.

ANTÓNIO Guterres will on Wednesday launch the #PledgetoPause campaign as part of wider efforts to create what the UN hopes will be “a new social media norm” to help combat the impact of viral misinformation.

The campaign is based on research which indicates that taking a brief pause before sharing information can significantly lessen the inclination to share shocking or emotive material, and slow the spread of misinformation.

Deadly consequences

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, the wrong information can be deadly. Take the pledge to pause and help stop the spread of misinformation”, the UN chief said in a video message recorded for the campaign.



In Venezuela, the Internet is the source of both information and misinformation. PHOTO: UN OCHA/GEMA CORTES

The message, which begins with a five-second pause, will be shared on his Twitter and Instagram accounts, and is designed to be replicated by other leaders, influencers and members of the public. #PledgetoPause aims to

increase media literacy so that social media users can spot misinformation and stop themselves from passing it on.

Break the chain of misinformation

The new campaign is part

of Verified, a UN initiative launched in May to share science-backed health information and stories of global solidarity around COVID-19.

The UN describes it as the first global behaviour-change campaign on misinformation, to

mobilize experts and researchers, governments, influencers, civil society, businesses, regulators and the media, under a single message: #PledgetoPause.

“COVID-19 is not just a health crisis, but a communications emergency as well. When misinformation spreads, the public loses trust and too often makes decisions that hamper the public response and even their own lives”, said Melissa Fleming, head of the UN’s Department for Global Communications.

“It is increasingly clear that we cannot successfully tackle the pandemic without also addressing online misinformation. Each and every one of us can help break the chain of misinformation by pausing before we share.”

Ms Fleming added that the

UN is also working with social media platforms to recommend changes.

Civil society support

The #PledgetoPause campaign aims to reach a global audience of one billion, online and through partnerships, by the end of December.

Civil society collaborators supporting Pause include organizations from around the world that are fighting misinformation, such as Chequeado, Newschecker.in and First Draft.

African media organizations such as MultiChoice and Yuvaa also are helping to distribute campaign messaging.

SOURCE: UN News



LOW-COST PAPER-BASED TEST TO AVAILABLE IN INDIA SOON FOR RESULTS WITHIN AN HOUR

India to roll out quick and cheap coronavirus paper test

This testing method is similar to a pregnancy strip test. Feluda changes its colour if the virus is detected and doesn't need expensive machines for detection

A fast and cheap paper-based coronavirus test will soon be available across India, with scientists hopeful it will help turn the tide on the pandemic in one of the world’s worst-hit nations.

India has recorded more than 7.5 million infections, second only to the United States, and the outbreak has spread from densely packed megacities like Mumbai to rural communities with limited medical services.

The locally-developed Feluda, named for a detective in a famous Indian novel series, resembles a home pregnancy test and delivers results within an hour.

Researchers are optimistic that its low cost and ease of use can help stem the pathogen’s spread in poor and remote areas.

“This test doesn’t require any sophisticated equipment or highly trained manpower,” said co-creator Souvik Maiti, a

scientist at New Delhi’s CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB).

“There are lots of remote parts of India where you do not have any sophisticated laboratories... (The test) will be much easier to deploy; it will have much more penetration.”

India currently diagnoses Covid-19 with either RT-PCR tests, which are highly accurate but require advanced lab machinery, or antigen tests, which can give results in just a few minutes at a limited cost but with significantly lower accuracy.

Feluda, like other inexpensive paper-based tests being developed in other countries, claims to combine the accuracy of the PCR test with the accessibility of the antigen kits.

It uses the gene-editing technique CRISPR-Cas9, which recently earned its inventors Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Feluda has been granted government regulatory approval and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said last week it could be rolled out in the next few weeks by Indian conglomerate Tata Group.

If made available within that timeframe, India will be one of the first countries in the world to begin mass use of such a test.

The price has not been released, but local media said it could cost around 500 rupees (\$6.80) -- around a fifth of what a PCR test costs in New Delhi.

The current prototype requires a PCR machine for processing, but scientists are working on a saliva or self-swabbing version that can be used at home, co-founder and IGIB scientist Debojyoti Chakraborty said.

Virologist Upasana Ray said, “Feluda is an alternative to the quantitative RT-PCR tests and is highly specific. It is capable of detecting low copy number nucleic acids (less viral



A fast and cheap paper-based coronavirus test will soon be available across India, with scientists hopeful it will help turn the tide on the pandemic. PHOTO: MONEY SHARMA AFP/FILE

RNA quantity) as well as single nucleotide variations”

According to the researchers, “This marks a significant achievement for the Indian scientific community, moving from R&D to a high-accuracy, scalable and reliable test in less

than 100 days. The Tata CRISPR test achieves accuracy levels of traditional RT-PCR tests, with quicker turnaround time, less expensive equipment, and better ease of use.”

The US granted emergency-use approval for the world’s

first CRISPR-based test for COVID-19 in May, developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 21 October, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over the West Central Bay of Bengal still persists. It is forecast to move North-westwards and intensify into a Depression during next (24)hrs. Thereafter it is likely to move North-Northeastwards and may further intensify into a Deep Depression during next (48)hrs near West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh coasts. Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 22 October, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Regions, Northern Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, scattered in Magway and Bago Regions, (Southern and Eastern)Shan State, fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region and Rakhine State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Chin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along Rakhine coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-10) feet Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and about (4-6)feet Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%)

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Statement on adherence to healthcare guidelines in 2020 General Election

1. The Union Election Commission, in accordance with 2008 Constitution, already announced that the multiparty democracy general elections will be held nationwide on 8 November 2020 to elect MPs for third term of three Hluttaws.
2. The election process includes setting up of polling stations, coming of voters to the stations and voting at the stations. Similarly, it also includes preparations for voting in the general elections of those who are under quarantine due to COVID-19 infections, advance voting of those who are unable to come to polling stations on the election day at relevant ward/village-tract election sub-commissions on designated dates, counting votes at respective township election sub-commissions and polling stations, collecting of election results and announcing the names of elected candidates by region/state election sub-commissions.
3. Due to present COVID-19 situation, polling station heads, deputy heads and members who will perform duties at the polling stations of different levels of relevant election sub-commissions, those who will manage outside the polling stations and voters need to be careful of the successful holding of the general election not to be infected by COVID-19.
4. The Ministry of Health and Sports issued the standard operation procedure Part-I about campaigning in accordance with COVID-19 preventive and control measures for Hluttaw candidates, who will compete in the general election, on 7-9-2020.
5. Therefore, it is hereby announced that those who are involved in the election works according to paragraph-2 will have to abide by the directives included in standard operation procedure Part-II that is to be carried out in accordance with COVID-19 prevention and control measures during the general election and health guidelines issued by relevant officials depending on situations.
6. The standard operation procedure Part-II which is to be carried out in accordance with COVID-19 prevention and control measures in holding the general election can be viewed at the website of the Union Election Commission, www.uec.gov.mm, and UEC Facebook.

(Hla Thein)
Chairman

Union Election Commission

Turning the tide against child labour – for Khin’s sake

By Selim Benaissa,
Chief Technical
Advisor, ILO-Myanmar

MORE than a million Myanmar pupils returned to the classroom in late July but a surge in COVID-19 cases in recent weeks has forced schools to close again. Selim Benaissa, Chief Technical Advisor at the International Labour Organization (ILO), shifts the focus to those left behind – the one in 11 children trapped in child labour across the country – those who have had to drop out of school even before the pandemic. In the midst of a worsening health and economic crisis, is there still hope in the horizon for them?

When we first saw 12-year-old Khin, she looked much like any diligent schoolgirl doing her homework during the first week of term. With her hair pulled back neatly, she leant over her notebook, practicing writing with her favourite red pen, eyes narrowed in careful concentration. “My teacher is my idol,” she tells us. The sad reality is that Khin no longer goes to school.

“I had to quit school because my father got into a fight with a relative and died,” she explained. “My mother’s new husband wouldn’t let me stay, and I now live with my grandmother, doing temporary jobs like roof building, cutting bamboo and carrying firewood to support us.” We witnessed Khin and two other children lug piles of branches big-



Hear Khin's story firsthand in San San Aye and Zaw Myo Oo's short documentary, *I Miss School*. **PHOTO CREDIT: @SAN SAN AYE AND ZAW MYO OO/ PHOTODOC ASSOCIATION**

ger than them to a boat for 2500 kyats. “It takes all of us an hour and a-half to do this job, though a single adult can do it in an hour,” she said.

In our work at the ILO, we are all too aware of cases like Khin’s. Many children are forced to work out in the fields or in people’s homes. Others in mines or markets. An estimated 1.13 million 5- to 17-year-olds are trapped in child labour in Myanmar. At the last count, a further 151 million children face the same fate around the world.

In addition to the fact that education is compulsory only until the age of 10 (K-to-12 programme) in this country, a complex web of misunderstanding, poverty and neglect means that so many of our young citizens are denied the chance to learn, grow and contribute to society.

Worst still, the data shows that around half of the children

in child labour suffer hazardous conditions that could result in illness, injury, disability, psychological damage, or even death.

The cycle continues. Children, communities and the country fail to reach their full potential.

As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens and so many households’ livelihoods shrink, there are serious concerns that more children will be forced to take on extra household duties or support their families’ incomes. These short-term adjustments will have life-long consequences for the children affected and will limit possibilities for us all. Many of them may never be able to step into a classroom again.

And yet, the picture is not so bleak. There is a glimmer of hope. Despite the many challenges, I believe we are on the cusp of a transformation. A transformation that can change the destiny of our youngest citizens and this

country forever.

On 8th June 2020, Myanmar ratified ILO Convention Number 138. Behind the legal jargon of this international labour standard lie important facts. Now we have a minimum age – 14 years old – under which no one is permitted to work. Now hazardous work is also prohibited for anyone under 18. Further discussions are still needed to align the end of compulsory education with the legal working age, define what constitutes hazardous work, and determine if there are specific jobs that may be safe for 12- to 14-year-olds to carry out alongside their education (so-called ‘light work’). However, the legal framework is falling into place.

On 4th August 2020, the Pacific island of Tonga submitted a file to the ILO’s Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. They were the last member state to ratify another ILO Convention – 182 – joining Myanmar and all countries in the world in committing to take immediate steps to prohibit and eliminate any form of child labour that is likely to harm children’s physical, mental or moral development. “This historic achievement underscores our responsibility to fulfil the legal commitment all countries have now made,” said Donglin Li, the ILO Liaison Officer in Myanmar.

On 1st January 2021, another important milestone is upon us as we mark the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. In all corners of the globe, a year of advocacy and action will begin, as partners redouble ef-

orts to reach Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals to “end child labour in all its forms by 2025.” In Myanmar, the National Action Plan is being rolled out by key government ministries, workers and employers’ organizations along with civil society groups. As Khin diligently studies her texts, so must our lawyers and leaders. So must we. Convention 138. Convention 182. Target 8.7. At last, the stars are aligning to protect her and her peers across Myanmar and around the world. Along with the Child Rights Law that Myanmar passed in 2019, now we have the frameworks we need. These policies provide the tools needed to spur lasting change.

For this to happen, government has a central role, ensuring that the National Action Plan is implemented in a robust and meaningful way, and holding those who do not comply to account. But everyone must play their part. Employers must follow the law. Parents must value education and allow their children a chance to thrive. Organizations like the ILO must continue to rally to ensure that everyone is fighting for children’s rights.

With the legal instruments slotting into place, all that remains is for us all to listen to children like Khin, so that she and her peers can fulfil their potential and everyone reaps the benefits.

“I still have my books and I often I think about my teacher,” she said. “I pray every day to go back to school.”

THE REVIEW CONFERENCE

U.N. nonproliferation talks likely to be put off again on COVID-19

THE president-designate of the next U.N. conference on nuclear nonproliferation is making arrangements to postpone the gathering again, possibly to August-September next year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, diplomatic sources said Wednesday.

The review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has already been pushed back until January next year in New York from the original dates of April-May this year.

Held every five years, the meeting provides a platform for nuclear weapons states such as the United States, Russia and China to hold discussions with non-nuclear weapons states, but a growing rift caused members

in 2015 to fail to adopt a consensus document.

Gustavo Zlauvinen, a former deputy Argentine foreign minister who will chair the next review conference, has sounded some member countries out about the idea of another postponement, the sources said.

The move comes amid uncertainty surrounding international nuclear disarmament with the U.N.-adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which involves no nuclear powers, likely to enter into force early next year and the only remaining U.S.-Russian treaty capping their nuclear arsenals set to expire in February 2021.

SOURCE: KYODO



Supplied photo of Gustavo Zlauvinen during an online interview with Kyodo News on Sept. 30, 2020. PHOTO: COURTESY OF GUSTAVO ZLAUVINEN/KYODO

AGRICULTURAL POLICY REFORM

EU agrees to farm reform with tough new environment rules

EUROPEAN Union ministers agreed on Wednesday (Oct 21) to overhaul its big budget farm policy with tighter rules to protect the environment and fight climate change.

The new policy adopted by the 27 EU countries will now be the subject of negotiations with

the European Parliament, which this week will vote on its own proposals.

"After a long struggle, we have reached a crucial agreement," German Agriculture Minister Julia Klockner said after two days of talks in Luxembourg.

Klockner said there was

a "good balance" in achieving a Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) that is "greener, fairer and simpler".

The member states and members of the European Parliament must decide together between now and next year on rules that will apply starting in January 2023.

The European commissioner for agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski said the deal was "a good starting point" for these negotiations, suggesting a "good compromise" could be reached.

With a budget set for around €387 billion over seven years, the CAP accounts for the biggest share of EU spending.

Under the agreement, all farmers will be forced to respect stricter environmental regula-

tions if they want to benefit from financial aid.

Small farms will be subjected to simple checks "which would reduce the administrative burden, while guaranteeing at the same time their contribution to environmental and climate objectives", it says.

So-called "ecoregimes", a system of incentives for farmers to apply more stringent environmental standards, would also become compulsory.

Each member state will have to devote at least 20 per cent of EU direct payments to them, with the goal being for farms to receive additional funds if they go over and above the basic norms on climate and the environment.

SOURCE: AFP



A seasonal worker in a strawberry farm in Spain. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

TARGETING MUSEUM ARTEFACTS

Mystery surrounds vandal attacks at Berlin museums

VANDALS have damaged more than 70 artworks and artefacts at some of Berlin's most renowned museums, police said, in a targeted attack kept quiet by authorities for more than two weeks.

Valuable paintings, stone sculptures and sarcophagi at three institutions on the Ger-

man capital's UNESCO-listed Museum Island were sprayed with an "oily liquid", leaving visible stains, Berlin police told AFP.

German media called it "one of the biggest attacks on art and antiquities in German post-war history".

"The state criminal investigation office of the Berlin police

has opened a probe over property damage to artworks and artefacts on display," spokesman Martin Dams said in a statement.

Mr Dams said police believe the vandalism occurred on 3 October, Germany Unity Day, during opening hours at the Pergamon Museum, Neues Mu-

seum and Alte Nationalgalerie.

He did not say why neither the museums nor the police had communicated earlier about the attack, which was first reported late yesterday in German media.

Mr Dams did not provide any information about a possible motive.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

France honours beheaded teacher as judge questions suspects

France will pay tribute Wednesday to a history teacher beheaded for showing cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed in a free speech lesson in a gruesome attack that has shocked the country and prompted a government crackdown on radical Islam.

Seven people, including two pupils, will appear before an anti-terror judge for a decision on criminal charges over the killing of 47-year-old history teacher Samuel Paty on Friday.

Police have carried out dozens of raids since the killing, while the government has ordered the six-month closure of a mosque outside Paris and plans to dissolve a group it said supported Palestinian militant group Hamas.

SOURCE: AFP

NEW START

Russia seeks to continue dialogue with U.S. on nuclear treaty

RUSSIA on Wednesday confirmed its readiness to continue negotiations with the United States on the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).

"This topic is of strategic nature and global significance. It is in the interests of not only our two countries but also global security and stability," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a daily briefing.

He said Russia hopes that the dialogue with the United States will continue and their differences will be overcome.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that the country is ready to freeze its existing number of nuclear warheads along with the United States to extend the New START by one year.

The U.S. State Department then said it appreciated Russia's willingness to make progress on nuclear arms control.

SOURCE: XINHUA

SEVERE FUEL CRISIS

Damascus raises fuel prices blaming US sanctions



A US patrol near a refinery in Syria's Hassakeh. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

DAMASCUS has sharply increased petrol prices in government-held areas of Syria, saying that US sanctions on the war-torn country had left it with no alternative.

The cost per litre of the 100-litre ration of subsidized petrol motorists are allowed each month has risen from 250 to 450 Syrian pounds (36 US cents at the official exchange rate, 20 US cents at the black market one).

The cost of unsub-

sidized petrol also went up, rising from 296 to 650 pounds a litre, the trade ministry said late Tuesday.

The ministry blamed the price hikes on "the great cost to the government in securing oil derivatives and the increase in transport costs in light of the unjust blockade imposed by the US administration". Consumers were quick to criticize the price hikes, which came a day after the price of industrial fuel oil shot up from 296 to

650 pounds a litre.

"Everything will start costing more with the fuel prices going up," complained one Facebook user.

President Bashar al-Assad announced several measures on Wednesday to mitigate the impact on the most needy, raising the income tax threshold and ordering the payment of a one-off grant of 50,000 Syrian pounds to all public sector employees, military or civilian.

SOURCE: AFP

SURVIVAL PLAN

Cathay Pacific to cut workforce by nearly a quarter

CATHAY Pacific announced plans Wednesday to cut its workforce by nearly a quarter and close one of its short-haul airlines in an effort to survive the "devastating" impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Across the globe, airlines have been hammered as the pandemic

has slashed international travel, and they face a long, hard winter after a much-hoped-for rebound failed to materialize.

Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong's flag carrier, published a corporate restructuring plan on Wednesday that will lead to 8,500 job losses in total -- nearly a quarter of its workforce --

and one of its airlines to disappear completely.

"The global pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on aviation and the hard truth is we must fundamentally restructure the Group to survive," CEO Augustus Tang said in a statement.

Cathay said 5,300 redundancies would be made

among the airline's Hong Kong-based employees with a further 600 overseas.


The remaining losses would come from a recruitment freeze and natural attrition.

Cathay Dragon, a subsidiary that primarily flies shorter-haul flights within Asia, will cease operations.

SOURCE: AFP



Cathay Pacific has become the latest airline to announce mass job losses. PHOTO: AFP



Announcement to Shareholders

1. We are pleased to announce that 28th Annual General Meeting (2019-2020 FY) of Myanmar Citizens Bank Ltd. is soon to be held. The meeting will be arranged in accord with the bank's Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association. Thus some directors shall terminate at the end of their terms and new directors shall be elected for their places as per existing Articles of Association.
2. Candidates shall have to submit their applications to the Central Bank of Myanmar in advance before the Meeting. Accordingly any Special Account Holders at Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) and Security Account Holders at Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) willing to be elected as the directors, among individuals with the shares of MMK 5,000,000 (Five Million Kyats) and above, and companies/associations with MMK 10, 000,000 (Ten Million Kyats) and above at the closing on 26.10.2020 as set by MCB Board of Directors, may visit MCB at No-383, Maharbandula Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon and submit your applications by 16:30 on 02.11.2020.
3. Candidates must meet the qualifications stated in sub-clause 1 to 8 of Clause 76 (b) of Section 10, the Financial Institutions Law.
4. Please note to bring NRC (original), 1 photo (license photo size) and proof documents for the ownership of shares along with you at the time of application. We shall announce the time and venue of Annual General Meeting later. For More information, please contact our Administration Department at 01-8386023 and 01-8386029.

Board of Directors
Myanmar Citizens Bank Ltd

THE CITIZENS' CHOICE

QUARTERLY SALES DECLINE

IBM revenue slips for third straight quarter

IBM reported on Monday that revenue slipped for the third consecutive quarter this year, causing shares to cede a little ground in after-market trades.

The U.S. technology veteran said it took in \$17.6 billion during the three months that ended on September 30, compared with \$18 billion in the same period a year earlier.

Net income, however, was up slightly to \$1.7 billion as the company trimmed costs, according to the earnings report.

IBM shares were down by 2.6% in after-market trades.

The New York-based company spotlighted growth in its cloud computing business, which saw overall revenue climb some 19% to \$6 billion.

"The strong performance of our cloud business, led by Red Hat, underscores the growing client adoption of our open hybrid cloud platform," said IBM chief executive Arvind Krishna.

IBM last year closed its \$34 billion-deal to buy enterprise software company Red Hat.

The group recently unveiled a corporate reorganization to allow it to focus on cloud computing, spinning off its division for managed infrastructure. By separating its managed infrastructure services business, IBM is sharpening focus on its offerings in a "hybrid cloud" market valued at a trillion dollars, according to Krishna.

SOURCE: AFP

AN EARNINGS SURPRISE

Ericsson posts better-than-expected results

SWEDISH telecoms equipment maker Ericsson, one of Europe's key 5G suppliers, reported Wednesday better-than-expected third quarter results on the back of its highest profitability rating since 2006.

Ericsson posted a three months to September net profit of 5.6 billion kronor (522 million euros, \$622 million) compared with a loss in the same period the previous year of 6.9 billion kronor when it had to make large provisions.

SOURCE: AFP

RETALIATION

China warns Swedish firms of tit-for-tat action after Huawei ban

China on Wednesday told Sweden to reverse a ban on Chinese tech firms from its 5G network, warning of "negative impacts" if it did not.

The Swedish telecoms regulator issued a ban on Tuesday that would require carriers to remove existing Huawei and ZTE equipment by 2025, citing national security concerns.

Chinese telecoms companies have faced bans and heightened scrutiny in recent months over fears Beijing could use their overseas deals to spy on foreign citizens.

That has provoked a furious response from Beijing, which denies the allegations and says trumped-up security concerns are being used against its successful tech firms to hem



Photo taken on Nov. 20, 2019 shows Huawei's exhibition booth during a press preview for the 2019 World 5G Convention in Beijing, capital of China. PHOTO: XINHUA/LI XIN

them in for commercial reasons.

China's foreign ministry said it was "strongly dissatisfied" with Sweden's decision, accusing the Swedish government of "blatantly suppressing Chinese telecom compa-

nies and politicising normal economic cooperation."

Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian urged Sweden to "correct its wrong decision" to avoid a "negative impact on China-Sweden economic and

trade cooperation, and on the operations of Swedish companies in China."

Sweden's decision comes amid pressure from the United States on allies to cut Huawei from their internet infrastructure.

SOURCE: AFP

RETURNING TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

As oil prices dive, Iraqi Kurds seek to diversify economy

IRAQ'S Kurdish region has for decades lived off its oil wealth, but plummeting energy prices amid the pandemic and financial mismanagement are forcing locals to return to long abandoned farms.

Civil servants from the northern region's bloated public sector have gone without pay and many are now turning back to agriculture and other business-

es to make ends meet.

On a rugged hillside some 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of Arbil, the booming regional capital, vineyards are ripe for harvesting as a new source of income.

Abdallah Hassan, 51, a civil servant from the nearby village of Mam Rostam, has returned to harvest the grapes, used to produce raisins and vine

leaves, for the first time in almost 20 years.

"There is hardly any work left for us and there are no salaries," he said, complaining that the regional government now "only pays wages every couple of months".

"It's better for farmers to tend to their fields than wait for the payday or for charity."

Hassan recounted

how before the 2003 US invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein's regime, the Kurdish region had survived on farming during years of painful sanctions.

Since then, in its drive to secure lucrative oil revenues, the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) had mostly abandoned agriculture.

SOURCE: AFP

Request for Bids
Goods
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Myanmar
Name of Project: National Electrification Project (NEP), Funding: Italian Soft Loan
Contract Title: Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV Systems for Households and Public Facilities
Credit No.: 5727-MM
RFB Reference No.: ICB S&I-NEP-IT2

- The Government of Myanmar has received financing from the Government of the Italian Republic toward the cost of the National Electrification Project – Component 2: Off-grid Electrification, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV System for Households and Public Facilities.
- The Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Livestock and Irrigation now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for supply, installation and maintenance of solar PV Systems for households and public facilities in the following State and Region:
Lot 1- NEP Solar PV Packages in Chin (6) and Rakhine (6)
Lot 2- NEP Solar PV Packages in Sagaing (7)
- For quick reference, some key qualification requirements include:
 - The average annual turnover (or annual sales volume) of the last three years should be a minimum of EURO 1,600,000 for Lot-1 and EURO 2,800,000 for Lot-2 or higher which varies by lot and is cumulative if bidding for multiple lots.
 - The bidder has successfully completed at least two (2) contracts in supplying, installing, supervising, commissioning and/or maintaining off-grid solar PV systems with batteries, in any year over the last five (5) years, and at least one of the two (2) contracts had a value equivalent to or greater than 50% of the available budget specified in Section II. Bid Data Sheet - ITB. 51.1. The details of the qualification requirements are in the bidding document.
- Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated January 2011 (revised July 2014)* ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the address below and inspect the bidding document during office hours 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at the address given below.
- A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through e-mail only. In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing:
Dr. Soe Soe Ohn, Director
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Office No. 36, Naypyitaw.
Country: Myanmar, Tel./Fax +95 673 418635, 418636
Email: ksaung@gmail.com; dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com; drdnp.procurement@gmail.com
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **December 10, 2020** (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL Bid", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on or before **December 10, 2020** (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. All envelopes marked "SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Security*" as stated in ITB 19.1 – Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding Document.
- The address referred to above is:
Attention: Dr. Soe Soe Ohn, Director, Project Manager of National Electrification Project
National Electrification Project, Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.
Office No. 36, Naypyitaw, Myanmar,
Tel /Fax: +95 673 418635, 418636
ksaung@gmail.com, dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com, drdnp.procurement@gmail.com
- Clarification of the bidding document will be conducted through e-mail or letter to the Purchaser as stated in ITB 7 of the bidding document.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CTP FORTUNE VOY. NO. (202W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP FORTUNE VOY. NO. (202W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0150N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU 0150N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-10-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

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Newspapers & Journal Printing Service. Contact: 01-8604530

Salient points in Yangon Stock Exchange's listing criteria

By Pyae Phyo Aung (Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry)

A LISTING on a stock exchange refers to the company's shares being admitted on the board of stock exchange that are officially traded by a large number of investors including individuals and institutional investors in the market. Once a company's shares are listed, the shares will be available for investment to general public. An applicant company is required to know listing criteria, a set of basic requirements or standards for a public company for listing on YSX. Listing criteria differ among stock exchanges in the world, however, it serves the same purpose which is to ensure qualify shares for the investors. An applicant company must follow 17 criteria issued by YSX to list on YSX.

Whether or not a public company lists on YSX, understanding criteria enables not only to improve the company, but it also to be well prepared for listing on the stock market in the future.

Preparing for listing on the stock exchange is not easy as expected. To be able to meet the criteria in a short time is not possible, but it has to take time for at least one year. It can

be known by learning six listed companies.

Emergence of 17 criteria

YSX issued the criteria, a set of basic requirements or standards for a public company for listing on YSX when YSX started operation in December in 2015. 16 criteria came from Japanese advisers who provided technical assistance. Officials concerned made minimal amendments to some criteria and supplemented a new criterion to be appropriate for the country. At that time these criteria were criticized for being lessened too much when they were compared with those from neighbouring countries. Now 17 criteria corresponding with the current status of stock exchange have become official basic standards.

The companies listed on YSX are six in total and these companies had to make preparations to be in line with the official criteria. They received permissions only after they were scrutinized.

The first criterion states that an applicant company must be a public company formed in accord with Myanmar Companies Act. The public companies formed with the 1950 Special

Companies Act are also entitled to the first criterion. One out of the six listed companies is a public company constituted with the 1950 Special Companies Act.

The second criterion describes number of shareholders that the applicant company shall have at least 100 shareholders and above. It means that the number of shareholders must be according to the said number by the date of the official listing.

This is because the applicant companies can do initial public offering and they can issue and sell out shares to their employees. The initial founders of the six listed companies had to begin applying for the YSX listing with the lesser number of shareholders and they had to perform these measures said above until the date of official listing.

The third criterion states that paid-up capital shall be the minimum of 500 million kyats on the date of application. This benchmark is a small amount for some companies, but it is aimed at improving small-and-medium enterprises having competitiveness and development potential.

The fourth criterion says that it shall have the profit at least two years during the period of before the date of application. The profit means that a sum of money exceeding zero

coming from the addition of loss and profit. The fifth criterion describes that the business shall have the stable basic income and conduct in accordance with the existing laws.

The sixth criterion mentions that the Board of Directors and the heads of the company shall be in good character and not have been punished by a court, in addition, have not been facing any lawsuits. They shall perform their duties and responsibilities with well-prepared, in good-faith and fairly in line with the laws.

The seventh criterion expresses that the Board of Directors and the heads of the company shall not act any deceptive manners by the public for the interest of the company and self-interest. It is required to be a company performing the tasks in accordance with rules and regulations, orders and directives.

The eighth criterion says that each Director of the public company shall not do any business which has the same interest carrying out by the public company, except with the approval of Shareholder meeting.

The ninth criterion describes that the company, the Board of Directors and the heads of such company shall not be included in the black list of any public and government

organizations.

The tenth criterion states that book-keeping of accounts and auditing of the company shall be undertaken in accordance with the Myanmar Financial Reporting Standards (MFRS) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The accounts must be kept in accordance with the directives of Myanmar Accountancy Council. When the accounts are submitted to the Yangon Stock Exchange, any budget report must be Unqualified Opinion or Qualified Opinion of the external auditor.

The eleventh criterion points out that the company shall fulfill tax duties in accordance with existing tax laws of Myanmar.

The twelfth criterion mentions that the disclosure of relevant corporate information and the facts that the public should be known, shall be disclosed and submitted to the Securities Exchange Commission of Myanmar and Yangon Stock Exchange, besides it shall be disclosed and announced to the public by means of easy understandable and best suitable ways in timely manner. For disclosure of corporate information, it shall prescribe especially and precisely on the matters which have a considerable impact on investment decisions of



The Yangon Stock Exchange Building in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



The Yangon Stock Exchange Building in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



Visitors seen at Yangon Stock Exchange in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

the investors, such as the risk factors for the potential loss and the basic potential business activities.

The thirteenth criterion indicates that it shall set up an effective system to comply with laws, rules and regulations by appointing the compliance officer.

The fourteenth criterion shows that it shall have busi-

ness plan containing business design, business process environment and the risk factors. It is required to draft the business plan from the year of submitting application until next five years. It must be reviewed year on year.

The fifteenth criterion describes that it shall set up a system to prevent the insider trading as the stock share market plays a major role. The awareness of laws, rules and regulations as to the share trading shall be raised among all the staffs including members of board of directors and managers.

The sixteenth criterion says that it shall continuously operate and manage stably without any influence by keeping soundness of good corporate governance, internal management and internal control system.

The seventeenth criterion states that it shall have rational expectation to get a profit based upon stable revenue.

Other trustworthy fixed criteria

In addition to the criteria mentioned above, an applicant company must know other trustworthy fixed criteria. The

first one is that it must have at least 5,000 floating shares in the stock market. The second one is that the market value of these 5,000 floating shares must be 500 million kyats. Normally these two criteria are aimed at many investors being able to perform trading in the stock exchange market. The number of shares can be said quite little, but it is suitable for the primary market.

The third one is that the operation service of the company must be at least two years before the date of submitting application. The fourth one says that the applicant company mustn't have limitation on share transfer except for the observance of the provisions prescribed in the existing laws. This point is aimed at transferring shares in a convenient manner when the shareholders trade in shares every day.

The fifth one describes that the services of shareholders must be undoubtedly entrusted to the stock exchange for ensuring that the shares issued by the company shall be transferred in an easy manner. The sixth one says that the shares and the accounts of shareholders between the stock exchange and securities companies must

be recorded in the computer by means of electronic method.

It is easy to understand some criteria that are interrelated each other. It is an undeniable fact that a public company takes up a huge responsibility for shareholders who make investment.

Moreover, a company listed on the stock exchange must take responsibility and accountability for shareholders, investors and relevant persons and organizations. It is specially required to be model companies in the financial market in Myanmar.

According to the criteria, minimum standards issued by Yangon Stock Exchange, the matters relating to whether the company's income increases or not and whether the company is able to protect interest of the general public or not and whether the company is able to carry out good corporate governance, internal management and internal control system or not have been scrutinized. The main objective of scrutinizing the matters is to protect the interest of the investors and the general public. In doing so, the company will be able to be regarded as the one capable of competing in the stock market community

in a transparent manner. Some criteria that contained in the newly-enacted Myanmar Companies Law (2017) were partially amended in 2018 in order to correspond with Notification No 18/2018 issued by Myanmar Accountancy Council.

The 17 criteria mentioned above and other six trustworthy fixed ones are prescribed in rules and regulations of securities which is work procedure of Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX). One can check out Yangon Stock Exchange website written in Myanmar and English languages.

In the past the rules and regulations of Yangon Stock Exchange could be observed by English language only. But during 2019 they were translated into Myanmar language by a securities company and a law organization.

References:
www.dica.gov.mm
www.secm.gov.mm
www.yxs-mm.com

Translated by Htut Htut
(Twantay)



PHOE KHWAR



Thet Htar Thuzar waits for upcoming int'l tourneys

DUE to the global outbreak of a pandemic, Myanmar's Badminton icon Thet Htar Thuzar is currently preparing and waiting for upcoming international tourneys plus Tokyo Olympics which has been postponed to next year by World Badminton Federation (WBF).

The WBF will resume its bid for the Tokyo Olympics in early 2021, with Myanmar Badminton star Thet Htar Thuzar competing depending on the tourney's confirmation amidst pandemic.

Thet Htar Thuzar, who is seeking entry to the Olympics, is being away from international tourneys since March amidst pandemic.

She is currently ranked 27th in the final list of Olympic qualifiers released by the World

Badminton Federation and possessed good prospects for qualifying for the Olympics.

The World Badminton Federation has announced some of the events to be held within the Olympic qualifying period, but all competitions will be confirmed by the end of the year due to the COVID-19. The badminton star was previously scheduled to compete in the HSBC BWF World Tour Super 750 in Denmark from October 13 to 18, but she dropped out after registering due to the second wave of COVID-19 outbreak. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Myanmar's Badminton star player Thet Htar Thuzar. **PHOTO: THET HTAR THUZAR'S FACEBOOK PAGE**



Proposals for a 'European Premier League' met by backlash



European giants such as Bayern Munich could be part of an 18-team 'European Premier League' according to a new report. **PHOTO: MANU FERNANDEZ POOL/AFP**

LONDON — Speculative proposals for a "European Premier League" comprised of the continent's top clubs and reportedly backed by FIFA were criticised on Tuesday by La Liga and supporter groups.

A Sky report on Tuesday claimed that negotiations were nearing conclusion on an 18-team league with end of season playoffs including the likes of Real Madrid, Barcelona, Liv-

erpool, Manchester United and Bayern Munich.

According to the report, the project would be funded by \$6 billion (5.1 billion euros) of financing from major banks secured on the proceeds from future TV broadcast deals. Each of the participating clubs could receive "hundreds of millions of pounds to participate".

A European Super League

has long been touted as the way for major clubs to further increase their revenue streams, but it would come at the cost of the Champions League and national leagues.

Although the report claims the proposals would see clubs continue to compete in national leagues with European matches in midweek, that would put extra strain on an already highly congested calendar.

"These 'underground' projects only look good when drafted at a bar at five o'clock in the morning," said La Liga president Javier Tebas.

"The authors of that idea -- if they really exist, because there is nobody actually defending it -- not only show a total ignorance of the organisation and customs of European and world football, but also a serious ignorance of the audiovisual rights markets. —AFP

Woods back on happy hunting ground in quest for 83rd win

LOS ANGELES — Tiger Woods launches his latest bid for a record-breaking 83rd PGA Tour victory on Thursday when he emerges from a five-week layoff to defend his title at the relocated Zozo Championship in California.

A year ago, Woods bagged the 82nd tour title of his career with victory at the same tournament in Japan, finally tying Sam Snead's all-time mark to cap a 2019 which also included a 15th major title at the Masters.

But in the 12 months since that milestone 82nd victory, Woods' hopes of moving clear of Snead have stalled, with the coronavirus pandemic and niggling injuries drastically limiting his tournament appearances.—AFP

Tokyo survey shows 79% of Olympic volunteers concerned about COVID-19

TOKYO — The Tokyo metropolitan government said Wednesday that its survey has found 79 percent of volunteers for next summer's Olympics and Paralympics are concerned about the spread of the novel coronavirus.

In the online survey responded to by 13,480 "City Cast" volunteers, 75.1 per cent also said they want the Japanese capital to create a safe environment for the volunteers to work in.

City Cast volunteers will

offer transport and sightseeing information to spectators and tourists during the Olympics and Paralympics, which were postponed for one year due to the pandemic.

Following the decision in March to delay the two events, the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese organizers agreed to simplify the Tokyo Games to cut costs and prevent the spread of the virus causing the COVID-19 illness.—Kyodo



This photo taken with a fisheye lens on May 16, 2019, shows about 80 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics volunteers at an orientation session in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**