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Friday, 23 October 2020

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in ASEAN-United Nations Ministerial Meeting (AUMM) held via videoconference

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin participated in the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting with the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General and the President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (AUMM) which was held via videoconference on Wednesday at 6:30 pm from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Meeting was chaired by Mr Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam in his capacity as the Chair of ASEAN in 2020, and was attended by Mr António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Volkan Bozkır, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and senior officials of ASEAN and the UN.

The Meeting reviewed the progress made in the cooperation between ASEAN and the UN, and encouraged full implementation of action lines under the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action (2016-2020). Subsequently, the



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in the ASEAN-United Nations Ministerial Meeting via videoconference from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Meeting adopted the new five-year Plan of Action (2021-2025) to further strengthen ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership. The Meeting also exchanged views on regional and international issues including COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organized crimes. The Meeting

also highlighted the importance of promoting regional peace and security, sustainable development and disaster management, and underscored the need to enhance international cooperation in addressing the emerging challenges, especially the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts.

In his statement at the Meeting, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin expressed his appreciation on the continued strengthening of ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership as well as tangible progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action (2016-2020), and supported the adoption of the new

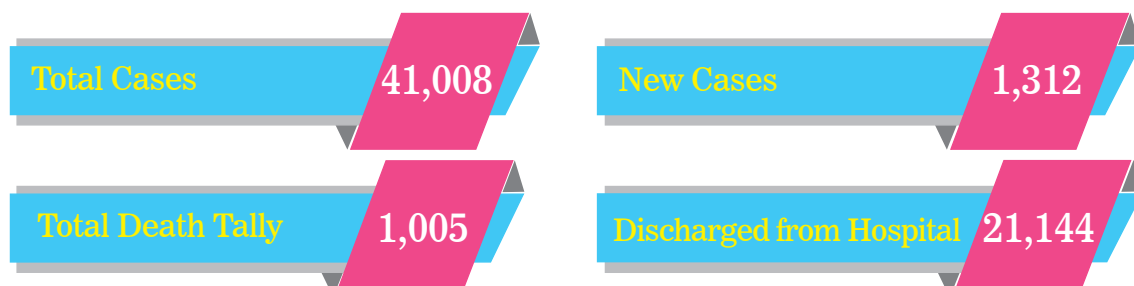
Plan of Action (2021-2025). The Union Minister also appreciated the leadership of the UN Secretary-General for taking multilateral initiative in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As equitable and affordable access of all global citizens to the safe and secured vaccines has been

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1,312 more new cases of COVID-19 reported on 22 October, total figure rises to 41,008

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to 41,008 after 1,312 new cases were reported on 22 October according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 41,008 confirmed cases, 1,005 died, 21,144 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 22 October 2020



Daily Death toll until 8 pm 22-10-2020

33

Ministry of Health and Sports

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

CAMPAIGN speech of Dawei Nationalities Party for 2020 General Election will be broadcast on MRTV, Hluttaw Channel, Myanma Radio and MRTV Facebook page at 7 pm on 23 October for the second time. — MNA

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in ASEAN-United Nations Ministerial Meeting (AUMM) held via Videoconference

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top priority for all countries, he stressed the need to enhance cooperation between ASEAN and the UN to ensure vaccine security. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between ASEAN and the UN in addressing terrorism and violent extremism which pose a profound threat to international peace and security.

In response to the remarks on the Rakhine issue, the Union Minister reminded not to overlook the involvement of elements of terrorism in the

Rakhine issue and underlined that many people conveniently ignored the fact that the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State was triggered by the violent coordinated attacks against multiple security outposts by a terrorist group called Harakah al-Yaqin also known as Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). He stated that ARSA members have been active in Cox's Bazaar camp instigating unrest to hinder the repatriation process. Referring to the media reports, the Union Minister added that the ARSA terrorist group has

made deep inroads in the camp engaged in the illegal arms and drug smugglings, involved in abduction, murder, human trafficking and terrorist activities, and even conducted military training. He also expressed concern over the continued threats of terror attacks posed by ARSA and AA using Bangladeshi territory as a sanctuary to commit terrorist activities. He highlighted that the new dimension of dual conflict with ARSA and AA coupled with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the Government's efforts in restor-

ing peace, harmony and stability in Rakhine State including repatriation of the displaced persons. He also refuted that the resolution of the issue rests not solely on Myanmar since cooperation of Bangladesh is also needed for successful repatriation. The Union Minister reaffirmed Myanmar's commitment to receiving the verified displaced persons in line with the bilateral agreement and laying down a sustainable foundation for peace and stability, reconciliation, democracy and development for all in Rakhine State. He also expressed the

hope that the UN will try to learn and understand the complex challenges and strengthen the government's capacity to help Myanmar's efforts in addressing the issue.

The convening of AUMM this year is significant to both ASEAN and the UN as 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the UN and two ASEAN Member States are taking seats at the United Nations Security Council as non-permanent members. Also present at the Meeting were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA

MoFA transfers ballot papers of advance voters abroad to UEC

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over the sealed ballot papers of advance voters sent by 8 Myanmar embassies, missions and consulate-general offices abroad to the Union Election Commission yesterday.

Director-General of Planning and Administrative Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aung Soe Win presented the ballot papers to Director-General for UEC U Khin Maung Oo.

The Myanmar embassies, missions and consulate-general offices abroad that opened polling stations for Myanmar citizens sent

back the ballot papers of advance voters to the ministry.

The ministry already handed over the ballot papers from a total of 42 embassies, missions and consulate-general offices – 4 on 14 October, 2 on 15 October, 28 on 19 October and 8 on 22 October – to UEC to date.

The ministry, when the remaining ballot papers of the respective polling stations abroad are received, will also transfer them to the commission.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs hands over ballot papers of advance voters abroad to Union Election Commission on 22 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA



Myanmar returnees from foreign countries are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 22 October 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar nationals, seamen fly back home from Japan, ROK by relief flights

THE relief flight of All Nippon Airways landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday evening bringing back a total of 154 Myanmar nationals after they were stranded in Japan due to the suspension of international flights.

The MAI relief flight also brought back a total of 133 Myanmar seamen from Dragon Tun company, from the Republic of Korea yesterday. Among them, 2 seamen were from Singapore, 5 from Egypt and 126 from ROK.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged

7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home quarantine.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens and Myanmar seamen who are 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 Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

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



Who is eligible to vote?

- irrespective of sex or religion
- those who are 18 years of age on the date of the election
- citizens, associate citizens, and those who have permission to become naturalized citizens, who do not contravene the provisions of the Hluttaw Election Law
- a person whose name has been included in the voting list of the respective constituency

Who is ineligible to vote?

- a member of a religious order
- person serving a prison sentence
- person adjudged to be of unsound mind as provided for in the relevant law
- person who has not yet been discharged as an insolvent
- person prohibited by the Election Law
- foreigner or person who has assumed foreign citizenship

2020

General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020

DAYS

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MoPFI discusses Private Sector Growth and Competitiveness Project with WB

UNION Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win yesterday morning held a virtual meeting with World Bank Country Director for Myanmar Ms Mariam Sherman and her group to discuss the Private Sector Growth and Competitiveness Project.

During the meeting, the Union Minister welcomed the World Bank's suggestion for implementation of the Private Sector Growth and Competitiveness Project.

The Union Minister said that Myanmar's economy, especially the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that the project will help implement National Single Window (NSW) implementation conducted by Myanmar Customs



Union Minister U Soe Win holds online meeting with World Bank officials on Private Sector Growth and Competitiveness Project on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

Department.

The project will support innovation for MSMEs, enhance the capacities of employees and

promote the supply chain connectivity, and it will also help Myanmar remedy the economic impact, according to the Union

Minister.

World Bank's senior economist Mr Faya Hayati and leading private sector specialist Mr

Philippe de Meneval explained the project. Their discussions focussed on development of Customs procedures, trade facilitation, plan to share experiences and to provide technical assistance, marketing, and low-interest loans from the World Bank.

Myanmar is making efforts to promote the private sector, facilitate trade, combat illegal trade, and develop the SME sector; and if the Private Sector Growth and Competitiveness Project is effective and successful, many benefits will be brought.

The virtual meeting was also participated by Deputy Ministers U Maung Maung Win, U Sett Aung, and Dr Min Ye Paing Hein, Permanent Secretary U Ko Ko Lwin and other relevant officials.—MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

COVID-19 National committee receives cash assistance

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

After congratulating to the health workers and volunteers who work hard in COVID-19 medical centres, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thuang Tun explained the reason of donation. He said that the cash assistance is contributed by the staff from his ministry and that he is also coordinating with representatives from the MoHS and other ministries to make the necessary purchase of medicines and medical supplies as soon as possible.

Permanent Secretary from



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe receives cash donation for COVID-19 national committee on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture U Tun Ohn explained their second donation from his ministry for COVID-19 activities. He mentioned the establishment of temporary quarantine centres

at the religious buildings and COVID-19 treatment centre in the National University of Arts and Culture.

The Permanent Secretary continued that his ministry has

submitted the name list of 41 employees who wish to volunteer in the COVID-19 control and prevention activities and he expressed words of thanks for the medical care to the COVID-19 infected monks and nuns.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe replied that the MoHS could buy necessary medicines and medical equipment with the assistance of the committee. He continued that there are 14 new COVID-19 treatment centres for about 9,700 patients with the support of donors and Yangon Region government at the beginning of COVID-19 second wave in Yangon and the awareness campaign on prevention the disease in crowded areas such as market, monastery and nunnery by cooperating with respective authorities and social organizations.

The Union Minister highlighted the stay-at-home programme and social distancing lifestyle for senior citizens and people with chronic disease and to participate in the COVID-19 measures to effectively contain the disease.

At the donation ceremony, officers and staff of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Relations donated K3,449,000; officers and staff of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture donated K10,000,000; officers and staff of the Department of Sport and Physical Education K1,900,000; staff of education department K1,500,000; Director U Khin Zaw and staff of Irrigation Department K1,000,000 and Director of Thuwunna Pada Co., Ltd U Khin Maung Oo K500,000.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

It is better to avoid the crowding of people

The reason we wish to do these things quickly is to avoid the people from gathering; the way to protect ourselves from the COVID disease is to avoid people from gathering. People need to stay at a distance from each other. This is because we will be taking the temperatures of the voters who come to cast their votes on Election Day at the polling booths as soon as they arrive. We have also made arrangements from the health viewpoint for any person found to have a temperature higher than the prescribed temperature. However, the more we can avoid the crowding of people, the better. That is why we have made arrangements for the voters to stand in line six feet apart. We have studied in detail to determine what kind of rules and regulations need to be prescribed so that voters do not have to stand in line for long periods and so that they can leave the polling booths quickly.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's reports on containment measures against COVID-19, on 17 October 2020)



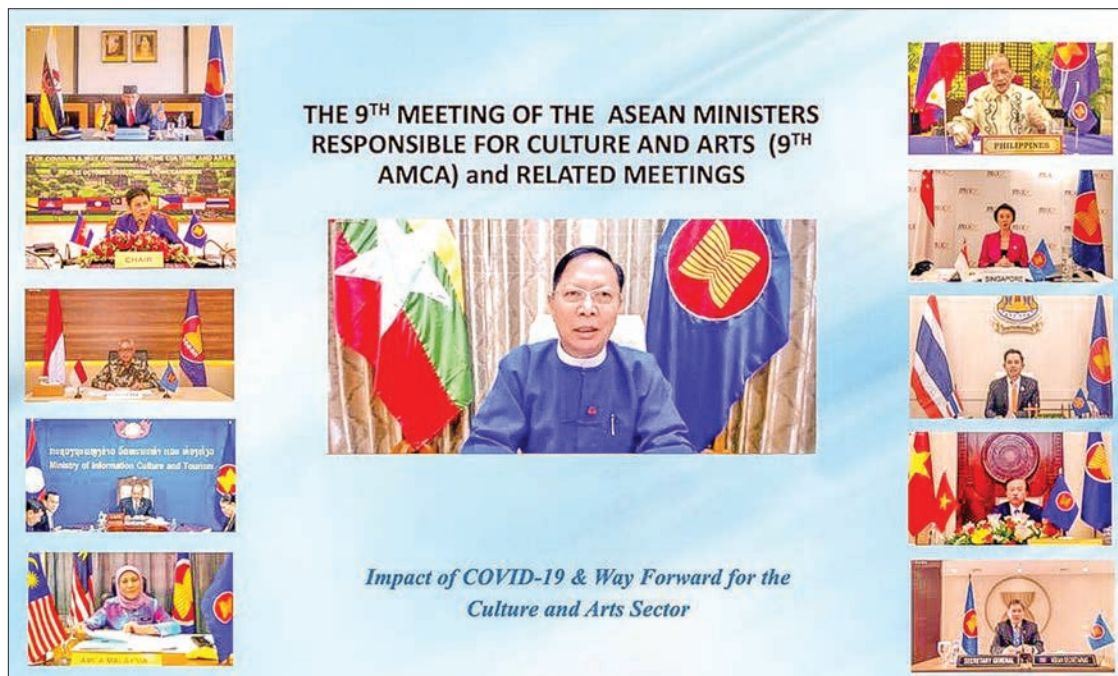
ASEAN cultural ministers hold 9th AMCA virtual meeting

THE 9th Meeting of ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts was jointly held by Cambodia, rotating chair and the Secretary-General of ASEAN via videoconferencing yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Deputy Minister U Kyi Min, Permanent Secretary U Tun Ohn, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community high-level official Dr Khin Kyi Pyar, rector of National University of Arts and Culture in Mandalay and officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture joined the videoconference from the respective offices in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the host country Cambodia made a speech under the topic of COVID-19 impacts on culture and arts.

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko said that the COVID-19 pandemic currently affects the



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko participates in the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts and related meetings on 22 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

lives and properties of millions of people around the world and so the country is creating entertainment programmes to help people living at home during the COVID-19 period to reduce

stress and is also providing cash assistance to the artists.

It also beefs up security measures for ancient heritages by cooperating with the relevant officials of regions and states,

conducts online courses culture and arts and offers online exhibition and library.

It will actively cooperate in economic, social, cultural development and other cultural

issues like other member countries and it conducts educating programmes for the people as preventive measures regarding COVID-19 pandemic, said the Union Minister, adding that currently, nobody knows when this pandemic will end and so all should support each other in accordance with the principles of ASEAN.

The meeting discussed work plans to be implemented in 2021 according to the culture and arts activities in ASEAN countries and reviewed the work plans of former meetings.

Rector Daw Khin Kyi Pyar and officials from the National University of Arts and Culture in Mandalay under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture joined the videoconferencing of Senior Officials Committee for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community held on the morning of 21 October.—MNA Translated by Khine Thazin Han

ASEAN, Plus 3 organize 20th Agriculture, Forestry Ministers' Meeting online



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu (L) joins the 20th Meeting of Agriculture and Forestry Ministers of ASEAN and the Plus 3 countries via videoconference on 21 October 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE 20th Meeting of Agriculture and Forestry Ministers of ASEAN and the Plus 3 countries was held virtually on 21 October.

Cambodian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Veng Sakhon presided over

the meeting participated by agriculture and forestry ministers of ASEAN countries, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation

Dr Aung Thu expressed thanks to Japan Government for donating a total of 302 metric tons of rice and ROK for donation of 600 tonnes of rice to Myanmar under Programme III of ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve.

The meeting discussed matters relating to food security, food safety and healthy nutrition amid COVID-19, smooth trading and ensuring food security and food reserves of ASEAN and the Plus 3 countries, cooperation on ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, and ways of response to COVID-19.

They detailed about the projects being implemented under Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation on Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016-2025), discussing the provision of rice under Programme III of ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, two projects on climate change, assistance for ASEAN Action Plan on Fall Armyworm 2020-2025,

Japan's technical assistance in accordance with capacity building project, Plus Three's technical and financial assistance to ASEAN for the development of agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors.

They talked over the research proposal on the use of ERIA's cold chain development and digital technologies for producing value-added agricultural products, and also approved a joint declaration.

The 21st Meeting of Agriculture and Forestry Ministers of ASEAN and the Plus 3 countries will be held in Bandung of West Java in Indonesia.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

MoLIP holds weekly meeting with labour reps

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe presided over a coordination meeting with labour organization representatives on opening factories during COVID-19 and the continued distribution of cash to workers and employees eligible for social security via videoconferencing yesterday.

Labour representatives discussed the spread of COVID-19 in reopening factories, workers facing difficulties to re-enter Yangon Region after going back home when the factories closed, the excessive overtime working hours, swiftly reopening factories in Ayeyawady Region in line with directives from the health ministry, compiling a list of workers who do not have social security, contacting authorities of discoveries of COVID-positive persons in factories, workplace safety and health awareness training, and reopening technical training schools for workers.

The Union Minister replied that suspected COVID cases can be alerted to the local departments of general administration, health, and factories and general labour laws inspection. He said they will notify the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of



Union Minister U Thein Swe chairs meeting with representatives of labour organizations on reopening of factories during COVID-19. PHOTO: MNA



COVID-19 about workers who want to return to Yangon at a suitable time.

The committee has been trying to prevent unnecessary restrictions while working in line with international standards, said the Union Minister. He requested workers to be understanding of their endeavour to revitalize businesses and urged more awareness raising activities to prevent unnecessary protests during the pandemic. He said they will negotiate with relevant authorities to reopen factories in Ayeyawady Region in line with health department requirements.

The Director-General of the Social Security Board said there

are 3,440 departments that have filed for social security financial support. As of 21 October, K16,417.747 million has been approved for 244,670 eligible workers from 1,765 departments, he said and added that K12,019,906.8 has also been approved for 177 workers from departments in 11 townships of Mon State, Bago Region, Ayeyawady Region and Madnalay Region who are all under stay-at-home orders.

The meeting explained that since 12 October, authorities have formed the 4 online Viber groups for tele consultation team to prevent regular patients and insured workers with chronic diseases do not contract COVID at the labour

hospitals (Yangon, Htantabin) with local doctors and physicians from relevant regions. There are arrangements to deliver medicine to homes or designate a collection point for insured workers in remote regions.

There are 2,361 insured workers who have received health certificates among the quarantined. K45.395 million has been approved for 499 insured workers withdrawing 60 per cent in sick benefits and K501.085 million for 3,395 pregnant mothers doing the same.

The Director of the Department of Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection said 20 hours of overtime per week can

be enforced with their permission but urged reporting working hours enforced over that limit.

Deputy Minister U Myint Kyaing said they are planning to distribute hand sanitizers and masks for workers and employers to vote at the upcoming 8 November elections.

The Union Minister concluded the meeting by saying these weekly meetings with labour representatives are helpful for resolving worker's issues and for everyone to follow COVID-prevention health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports. -MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

MoC discusses trade promotion with Myanmar commercial attachés abroad

THE Ministry of Commerce organized a virtual meeting with Myanmar commercial attachés in China's Beijing, Nanning and Hong Kong, the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea on finding ways for trade promotion with those countries yesterday.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint asked the Myanmar commercial attachés to discuss promotion of bilateral ties, trade and investment, taking priority on connecting business persons with relevant departmental organizations, and presenting reports on economic recovery works of the respective nations.

Deputy Minister also said the commercial attachés that their main duty is to promote



Union Minister Dr Than Myint organizes online meeting with Myanmar commercial attachés abroad on finding ways for trade promotion on 22 October. PHOTO: MNA

trades and investments, urging them to try hard to meet the high hopes of the country given upon

them and to grasp the opportunity of some countries' interests in making investments in Myanmar.

The commercial attachés reported on the situation of trades and investments, between Myan-

mar and the respective countries.

The Union Minister and the Deputy Minister said the attachés to study e-commerce situation for development of e-commerce in Myanmar; to create links for purchasing machineries in Myanmar's MSME sector; to collect and report on the sorts of the businesses in Japan and ROK for sending Myanmar workers, to work for promotion of Myanmar tourism industry, and to exchange information between the commercial attachés.

The ministry will continue meeting with the commercial attachés from Switzerland, Belgium, Thailand, Singapore and India today, 23 October.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

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.

“People are the key”

MoHS holds virtual meeting on Human Resources for Health Strategy

THE Ministry of Health and Sports organized a virtual meeting to assess implementation of the Human Resources for Health Strategy (2018-2021) yesterday afternoon via videoconferencing.

During the meeting, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe said that the Department of Human Resources for Health is a department to nurture experts, draft project plans and assess implementation of projects.

The Union Minister stressed that rectors of medical universities have very crucial roles for development of human resources for the health sector. He called on the relevant officials to take into account future needs in making efforts for the development of human resources for the health sector.

Regarding promotion opportunities for existing officials, the Union Minister said that the promotion processes will be

conducted by discussing with the department heads/professors concerned.

He said that health officials nurtured by the country need to have great skills, be ethical, be optimistic, be able to work in a team, and be forward-looking.

The Union Minister said that the ministry increased budgets for medical universities for 2020-2021 financial year.

The Union Minister also urged project managers of more than 40 health projects of the ministry to review their strategies and tasks in order to make necessary changes.

Dr Tin Tun, Deputy Director-General (Academic Affairs) explained the participants on the situations related to implementation of the Human Resources for Health Strategy (2018-2021). Director Dr Kyaw Soe Nyunt and Deputy Director May Thwe Hla Shwe also made discussions about the strategy.



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe speaks during the meeting on human resources for health strategy on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Director Dr Kyaw Shwe explained the administration and finance matters related to the Human Resources for Health Strategy (2018-2021) and future plans. World Health

Organization (WHO) Representative to Myanmar Dr Stephan Paul Jost and Jhpiego's Technical Director Dr Khaing Hay Mar Myint also made discussions in the virtual meeting.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivered a closing speech in the virtual meeting.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Myanmar joins roundtable meeting of IMF with Finance Ministers, Central Bank Governors of ASEAN

CENTRAL Bank of Myanmar Governor U Kyaw Kyaw Maung joined a roundtable meeting between the International Monetary Fund and the Finance Ministers and the Central Bank

Governors of ASEAN member countries via videoconferencing yesterday morning.

The discussion was also participated by IMF Managing Director Mr Kristalina Georgie-

va, Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win and Vice-Governor of CBM U Soe Thein.

The IMF Managing Director talked about the forecast of

global economic growth at 4.4 per cent and ASEAN countries at 3.4 per cent amid uncertainty of economic development amid COVID-19 pandemic while the countries are making significant efforts in saving lives of human beings and implementing economic recovery plan.

She also discussed that IMF is providing financial and technical assistance, as well as policy advice to the member countries which need to adopt and implement their suitable version of Integrated Policy Framework.

She also asked for recommendations of the ASEAN finance ministers and the Central Bank governors, response activities of member countries to challenges and the pandemic

and required assistance of IMF to the member countries.

IMF Economic Counselor and Research Department Director Ms Gita Gopinath discussed the topic of ‘Toward an Integrated Policy Framework: COVID-19 Responses and Fiscal Considerations’ in relations to monetary policy, FX Intervention, Capital Flow Management Measures, Macprudential Measures, Integrated Policy Framework for the respective countries, and the important role global financial safety net.

The Finance Ministers and the Central Bank Governments exchanged their views before the concluding remark of the IMF Managing Director.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Central Bank of Myanmar Governor U Kyaw Kyaw Maung (L) participates in the meeting of IMF with Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of ASEAN on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

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

Online training seminar held for safety measures in transporting COVID-19 patients



National Volunteers Steering Unit and Myanmar Medical Association jointly organize virtual seminar on safety measures in transporting COVID-19 patients on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE National Volunteers Steering Unit and the Myanmar Medical Association jointly conducted an online seminar for ambulance drivers and volunteers in regions/states and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday for their safety measures in transporting COVID-19 patients.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, the Permanent Secretary, Director-General, President and Vice-President of MMA and other officials of Social Welfare Department joined the seminar.

The Union Minister said that National Volunteers Steering Unit gathered the volunteers for their safety measures.

The present campaign is the third time, and a total of 231 volunteers from Nay Pyi Taw Council, Kayah, Mon and Rakh-

ine states, Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Bago regions have joined the campaign to date.

Currently, 164 volunteers from Kayin and Chin states, Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions participate in the latest seminar.

He also discussed structure of ambulance, processes of ventilators, healthcare for patients with chronic diseases, proper use and disposal of PPE, guidance to treat the expectant mothers with COVID-19 and publishing of volunteer handbooks and appreciated the participation of volunteers in COVID-19 fight.

President of MMA Dr Htin Aung Saw later expressed words of thanks while other attendees respectively coordinated the discussions.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thaz-in Han)

MoHS receives COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits, PPE donations

MINISTRY of Health and Sports received COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits and Personal Protective Equipment sets donated from Shinhan Bank based in the Republic of Korea, Shwe Daehan Motors Co., Ltd, NongHyup Bank and NongHyup Finance Myanmar yesterday morning in Yangon.

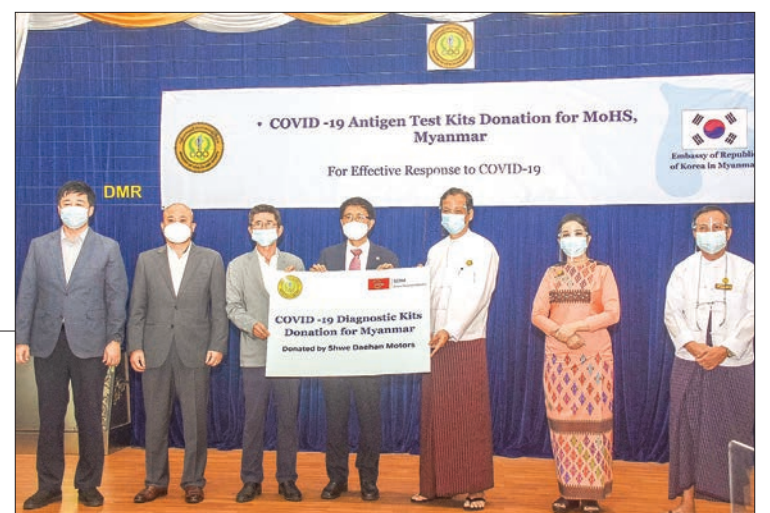
At the donation ceremony, Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Minister Mr Hahm Jeonghan explained the donation and

Director-General of the Medical Research Department Prof Dr Zaw Than Tun expressed words of thanks. After receiving the donations from the Deputy Chief of Mission and officials from Shinhan Bank, Shwe Daehan Motors Co., Ltd, NongHyup Bank and NongHyup Finance Myanmar, the Director-General returned the certificates of honour.

Shinhan Bank donated 1,000 COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits worth of US\$7,000, Shwe Daehan Motors Co., Ltd donated 1,000

COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits worth of \$7,000 and NongHyup Bank and NongHyup Finance Myanmar donated 2,500 COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits worth of \$15,000 and 1,000 PPE sets worth of K18.5 million.—Min Thit (MNA) (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Shinhan Bank donates COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits and PPE sets to MoHS on 22 October. **PHOTO: MNA**



Producing human resources is key to improving nation's healthcare system

THE COVID-19 pandemic has revealed major requirements needed for our healthcare system, shining a spotlight on improvements that must be made to steel the country for future disasters.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen that our country needs more medical specialists, such as anaesthetists, emergency physicians, hospital management experts, laboratory and X-ray specialists, and specialized nurses.

Similarly, the pandemic has exposed shortcomings in producing specialists and health workers, who are in high demand on the ground, and this situation has demanded that the Ministry of Health and Sports draw up short and long term plans for ensuring human resources are available to improve the country's health care system.

Human resources, including trained health professionals are limited, it is obviously a major constraint on our ability to fight the pandemic. The silver lining of the pandemic is that the current crisis inspires changes for the better, in our health care system that needs improvement.

The pandemic has exposed shortcomings in producing specialists and health workers, who are in high demand on the ground

We need to invest more and more in public health care and build a robust health care system by producing professional human resources to protect precious health gains of the public.

The country will need to put all of our energies into improving our health care system by adopting short-term and long-term plans.

Before our weaknesses impact our health care system in the future, we must make efforts to maintain essential health services and accelerate resumption of health-care services disrupted by the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the authorities are urged to work in collaboration with countries with robust healthcare systems and development partners to distribute sufficient medicines and medical equipment and to promote capabilities of public healthcare staff and the long-term development of our healthcare sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the fact that the world is a global village where all lives are intertwined. To win we must collaborate and fight as one.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that epidemics can happen any time and reach our doorsteps without warning. The best we can do is to strengthen our healthcare systems.

However, during this stressful time, it is important for health systems and organizations to create an infrastructure with resources that support professionals, physicians, nurses and health care team members.

JOINING FORCES TO COMBAT COVID-19 MISINFORMATION

The World Health Organization and Wikimedia Foundation expand access to trusted information about COVID-19 on Wikipedia

The collaboration is part of a shared commitment from both organizations to ensure everyone has access to critical public health information surrounding the global coronavirus pandemic

THE World Health Organization (WHO) and the Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit that administers Wikipedia, announced a collaboration to expand the public's access to the latest and most reliable information about COVID-19.

The collaboration will make trusted, public health information available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike licence at a time when countries face continuing resurgences of COVID-19 and social stability increasingly depends on the public's shared understanding of the facts.

Through the collaboration, people everywhere will be able to access and share WHO infographics, videos, and other public health assets on Wikimedia Commons, a digital library of free images and other multimedia.

With these new freely-licensed resources, Wikipedia's more than 200,000 volunteer editors can also build on and expand the site's COVID-19 coverage, which currently offers more than 5,200 coronavirus-related articles in 175 languages. This WHO content will also be translated across national and regional languages

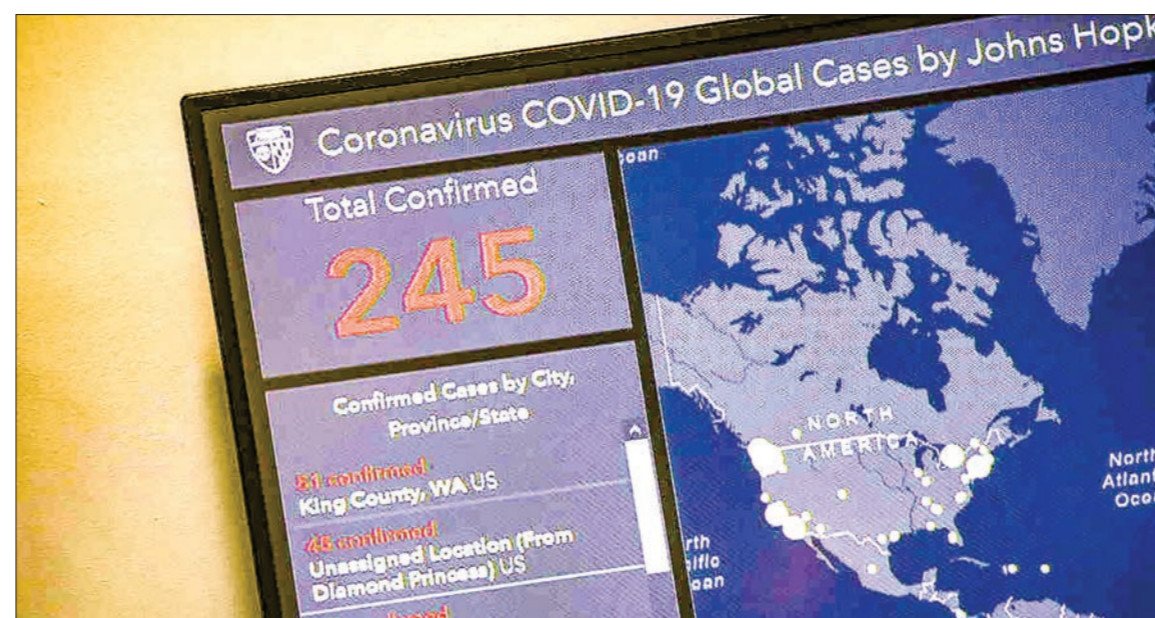
through Wikipedia's vast network of global volunteers.

"Equitable access to trusted health information is critical to keeping people safe and informed during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. "Our new collaboration with the Wikimedia Foundation will increase access to reliable health information from WHO across multiple countries, languages, and devices."

Since the beginning of the pandemic, WHO has taken steps to prevent an "infodemic"—defined by the organization as "an overabundance of information and the rapid spread of misleading or fabricated news, images, and videos."

Wikipedia editors have similarly been on the frontlines of preventing the spread of misinformation surrounding the coronavirus, ensuring information about the pandemic is based on reliable sources and updated regularly on Wikipedia.

By making verified information about the pandemic available to more people on one of the world's most-visited knowledge resources, the organizations aim



The outbreak map dashboard showing statistics on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the US during a briefing from Johns Hopkins University on 6 March, 2020 in Washington, DC. PHOTO: AFP

to help curb this infodemic and ensure everyone can access critical public health information.

"Access to information is essential to healthy communities and should be treated as such," said Katherine Maher, CEO at the Wikimedia Foundation. "This becomes even more clear in times of global health crises when information can have life-changing consequences. All institutions, from governments to international health agencies, scientific bod-

ies to Wikipedia, must do our part to ensure everyone has equitable and trusted access to knowledge about public health, regardless of where you live or the language you speak."

WHO has served as the leading international health agency spearheading the global response to the coronavirus outbreak. Since the beginning, WHO has worked to rapidly establish international coordination, scale up country readiness and response, and

accelerate research and innovation. Today, as information on the transmission and epidemiology of the virus evolves, WHO continues to provide essential guidance and public health recommendations to governments, communities and individuals everywhere.

At the same time, Wikipedia volunteer editors, many of whom are from the medical community, have been creating, updating, and translating Wikipedia articles with information from reliable

sources about the pandemic. As one of the top ten sites in the world, studies have shown that Wikipedia is one of the most frequently viewed sources for health information.

At the moment, readers can access WHO's mythbusting series of infographics on Wikimedia Commons. The infographics, which focus on addressing common misconceptions about COVID-19, are also available for Wikipedia editors to incorporate into Wikipedia articles.

In the coming months, the Wikimedia Foundation and WHO will continue uploading resources to Wikimedia Commons and collaborating with Wikipedia volunteer editors to better understand gaps in information needs on Wikipedia articles related to COVID-19 and how WHO resources can help fill these gaps.

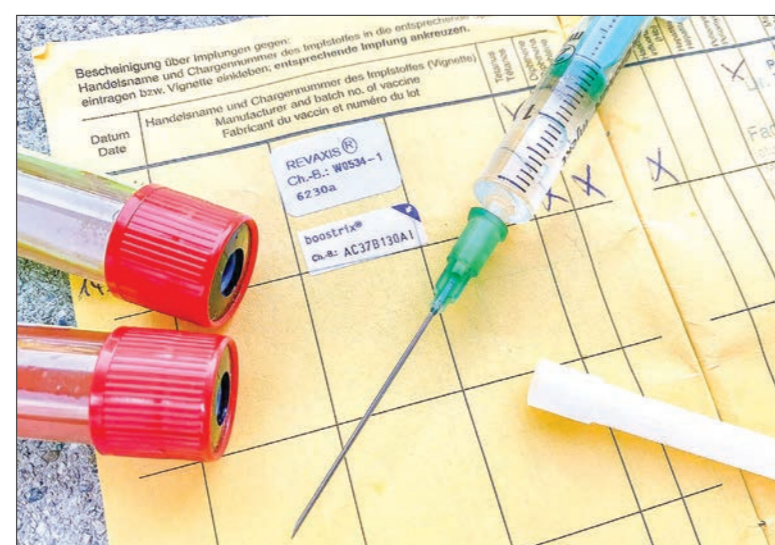
Additionally, under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license, other organizations, individuals, and websites can more easily share these materials on their own platforms without having to address stricter copyright restrictions.

SOURCE: WHO

PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT THROWS COLD WATER ON VACCINE HOPES

Vaccine trials 'can't detect' virus risk reduction: expert

Some vaccines are likely to reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection by only 30%, says expert



Vaccinations for Covid-19 may not be as effective as most people think. PHOTO: AFP

NONE of the trials of Covid-19 candidate vaccines can detect a reduction in serious outcomes such as hospitalization or death, a leading public health expert said Thursday.

Writing in the BMJ medical journal, associate editor Peter Doshi warned that not even phase 3 trials under way in the race for a vaccine can prove their product will prevent people contracting Covid-19.

In a sobering essay, Doshi said those hoping for a breakthrough to end the pandemic would be disappointed, with some vaccines likely to reduce the risk

of Covid-19 infection by only 30 per cent.

"None of the trials currently under way are designed to detect a reduction in any serious outcome such as hospital admissions, use of intensive care, or deaths," he wrote.

"Nor are the vaccines being studied to determine whether they can interrupt transmission of the virus."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified 42 candidate vaccines in clinical trials, ten of which are in the most advanced "phase 3" stage.

This is where a vaccine's ef-

fectiveness is tested on a large scale, generally tens of thousands of people across several continents.

But Doshi, assistant professor of pharmaceutical health services research at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, said that even the most advanced trials are evaluating mild rather than severe disease.

This may be down to the numbers of people involved in trials, he said, pointing out that the majority of confirmed Covid-19 infections involve mild or no symptoms.

And few if any current trials

are designed to find out whether there is a benefit among the elderly, a key at-risk constituency.

Without enrolling frail and elderly volunteers in trials in sufficient numbers, Doshi said "there can be little basis for assuming any benefit against hospitalization or mortality."

He added that children, immunocompromised people and pregnant women had largely been excluded from trials, making it unlikely that the experiments will address key gaps in our understanding of how Covid-19 develops differently among individuals.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Gazette Heads of service organizations confirmed and appointed

1. THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names after the one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
1. Dr Aung Win	Rector, Myitkyina University, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
2. Dr Soe Soe Khaing	Rector, University of Computer Studies (Monywa), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
1. U Aung Myint Lwin, Deputy Director-General, Office of the Revenue Appellate Tribunal, Ministry of Union Government Office	Director-General, Office of the Revenue Appellate Tribunal, Ministry of Union Government Office
2. U Win Htike, Deputy Permanent Secretary/Deputy Director-General, Union Minister's Office, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry	Director-General, Union Minister's Office, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Thursday 22nd October, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (12:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over West central Bay of Bengal has intensified into a depression over Northwest and adjoining West Central Bay of Bengal. It is centered at about (100) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Paradip and about (190) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Sagar Islands (India), about (270) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Khepupara (Bangladesh) and about (330) Nautical miles West-Southwest of Maungdaw (Myanmar). Weather is cloudy over the North Bay and Westcentral Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 23rd October, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Northern Shan, Kayah and Kayin States, scattered in Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan(South and East) and Mon States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region, Rakhine State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

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

Zaw Htet Oo

TRANSLATORSHay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 97442414**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Young Insurance Company, SME Development Bank sign bancassurance agreement

A ceremony to sign implementation of bancassurance between Young Insurance Co., Ltd and SME Development Bank was held at 10 am on 20 October at Chatrium Hotel, Yangon.

At the ceremony, Senior General Manager U Aung Soe Oo of Young Insurance Company and CEO Dr Zayar Nyunt of SME Development Bank signed the agreement.

"The SME Development Bank has constantly been striving for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Now the bank will cooperate with our Young Insurance Company to provide a high living standard and a



Young Insurance Co., Ltd and SME Development Bank sign bancassurance agreement on 20 October. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

secure future for the people of Myanmar to provide better service for Myanmar nationals. Shortly, the general insurance

products and life insurance product can be bought at SME Development Bank and Young Insurance," said U Aung Soe Oo, Senior General Manager of Young Insurance Company.

With the widely providing of those insurance products by the SME Development Bank, the bank will be able to provide one-stop bank services and insurance services for the customers. As a consequence, the customers will be able to access two types of services at the same place and buy eight types of general insurance and 19 types of life insurance, it is learnt. —GNLM

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Japan supports four ADX projects in Myanmar

FOUR projects in Myanmar received the "Asia Digital Transformation ADX projects" grant sponsored by Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

JETRO invited applicants for the "Asia Digital Transformation (ADX) projects" under the FY2019-2020 Supplementary Budget, and adopted 23 projects.

The following four cases were adopted from Myanmar.

In the medical and health-

care sector, Fujita Medical Instruments Co., Ltd was selected for trial and marketing of the excretion disorder rehabilitation programme.

In the agricultural sector, ARUN Seed is selected for the project for PoC (Proof of Concept) on the quality and traceability of agricultural products through an AI (Artificial intelligence) image recognition model.

In the Tourism sector, Nip-

pon Koei Co., Ltd won the grant for Introduction of COVID-19-FREE Digital Assessment Tool for the tourism industry in Bagan.

In the Human Resource sector, STUDIST CORPORATION was selected for the demonstration project of streamlining education and training using visual-based manuals.

These programmes aim to support Japanese companies

in conducting demonstration projects together with ASEAN companies to contribute to solving socio-economic challenges in ASEAN by utilizing digital technologies, said the announcement of JETRO.

Using these pilot projects as showcases, ASEAN and Japan will discuss policies on specific ways to create business-friendly environment for enhancing similar digital projects.—GNLM

Local investment committees endorse over 470 foreign firms in last 3 years

By Nyein Nyein

AFTER the Myanmar Investment Law came into force in 2017, the region and state investment committees gave the go-ahead to over 470 foreign enterprises over the past three, and half years, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) statistics showed.

Those endorsed businesses pulled in the capital of

US\$979.734 million. The investment committees endorsed 54 foreign enterprises in the financial year 2017-2018 with an estimated capital of US\$91.027 million, 46 projects worth \$102.232 million in the 2018 mini-budget period (April to September), 203 businesses with \$362.804 million in the FY2018-2019 and 175 firms with \$423.67 million in the FY2019-2020 respectively.

Yangon Region attracted the highest foreign investment,

followed by Bago Region, and Ayeyawady Region.

Nevertheless, Chin State has zero investment in the past three and a half years, the DICA stated. 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.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar-India trade value reaches \$0.697 mln as of 9 October

THE value of border trade between Myanmar and India reached US\$ 0.697 million from 1 to 9 October 2020 in 2020-2021FY, according to a statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce.

The border trade during

the period dropped by \$1.783 million compared to that of the same period last year. It is because of the temporary closure of border posts because of COVID-19 pandemic.

The export of \$0.69 million shared Myanmar-India total

border trade during the period. Last year, India-Myanmar bilateral trade was \$2.48 million in total. The two countries use the Tamu, Reed and Kenglap border trade camps to deliver the goods on a commercial scale.

Myanmar mainly exports

to India fruits and vegetables, fishery and forestry products while importing from India medicines, electronic products, motorbikes, cotton yarn, non-alloy steel and other construction materials.—Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

External trade tops \$153 bln in incumbent government period

Myanmar's external trade over the past four years under the incumbent government has touched a high of US\$153 billion, comprising exports worth \$70.4 billion and imports valued \$82.8 billion, according to the statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between the financial year 2016-2017 and FY2019-2020, the maritime trade has outperformed the border trade. Myanmar's average trade was estimated at \$111.7 billion, while its border trade with the neighbouring countries – China, Thailand, Bangladesh, India and Laos stood at \$41.6 billion.

Myanmar's foreign trade has shown a 10-per-cent increase, year over year, under the incumbent government.

The values of foreign trade were registered at \$29 billion in the FY2016-2017, \$33.57 billion in the FY2017-2018, \$18.7 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period, \$35 billion in the FY2018-2019 and \$36.6 bln in the FY2019-2020, the ministry's data showed.

The country has managed to generate \$17.6 billion from exports and \$19 billion from imports amid the COVID-19 crisis last FY.

The Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce has issued US\$6.8 billion worth

19,996 import/export licences through an online platform in the past four months (April-August), to ensure smooth trade amid the coronavirus outbreak, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Under the National Planning Law for the FY2020-2021, Myanmar intends to reach an export target at US\$16 billion and import at \$18 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

Myanmar's top export countries are China, Thailand, Japan, Singapore, the US, India, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Spain and the UK. In contrast, it primarily imports from 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 country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is endeavouring to boost export under the World Trade Organization's rules, enhance value-added production and competitiveness, reduce export barriers and provide trade financing



A cargo ship carrying containers is docked at a port in Yangon on 23 June 2020. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

services. 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.

Myanmar trade deficit has registered at \$5.2 billion in the FY2016-2017FY, \$3.8 billion in the FY2017-2018, over \$1 billion in the mini-budget period (April-Sep-

tember, 2018), \$1.02 billion in the FY2018-2019 and \$1.37 billion in the FY2019-2020, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization.

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 ministry has also adopted e-Trade such as

online licensing system, Country of Origin online application and launching Myanmar Trade net > www.myantrade.gov.mm to update the real-time trade info and strengthen Myanmar's economy in the post-coronavirus era. 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)

Foreigners hold over 54,000 shares in equity market as of 22 October

FOREIGN investors have purchased 54,220 shares of three listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) as of 22 October, according to the Exchange-released statistics.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

At present, shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd, and Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd (EFR) — are available for local investors for trading. Of them, FMI, MTSH, TMH and EFR accepted foreign shareholding, and FPB is for block trade only.

As of 22 October, foreigners hold over 10,060 shares of FMI, over 38,399 shares of MTSH, 205

shares of TMH and 5,556 shares of EFR.

The SECM, under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, issued a notice on 12 July 2019, announcing that foreigners would be allowed to invest in shares listed on the YSX.

After opening bank and securities accounts, an investor can send buying/selling orders under the stock trading rules stipulated in the Trading Business Regulations, the SECM notified.

U Thet Htun Oo, senior executive manager of the Yangon Stock Exchange, highlighted at the seminar held last year how foreign participation would entail better capital inflows, long term and sustainable investment, encourage good corporate governance, and support market orientation.

Regarding the share trading, the foreign investors must strictly comply with the rules stipulated by the Central Bank

of Myanmar.

The security companies will monitor the daily trades of foreigners, in keeping with the rules and regulations, so that they do not exceed the limit set for each listed company.

Under Section 42 (a) of the Securities and Exchange Law and Section 4 of the Trading Participant Business Regulations, the YSX has granted trading qualifications to the following securities companies — Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre Co. Ltd. (MSEC), KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities Co. Ltd. (KBZSC), CB Securities Limited (CBSC), AYA Trust Securities Co. Ltd. (AYATSC), KTZ Ruby Hill Securities Co. Ltd. (KTZRH), and UAB Securities Limited (UABSC).

Investors have to send their buy or sell orders to the YSX through the securities companies who have been issued a licence by the SECM as well as a trading qualification by the YSX,

according to the stock exchange.

The YSX was launched three years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Myanmar's securities market has been able to continue operating even for one day is symbolic of the efforts of all market participants,

Mr Koichiro Miyahara, President and Chief Executive Officer of Tokyo Stock Exchange, gave a remark to YSX EXPO 2020 online event on 12 September.

Furthermore, YSX is carrying out necessary actions to establish the new Pre-Listing Board, in addition to the existing market (Main Board), intending to increase the number of listed companies, Deputy Minister U

Maung Maung Win of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar delivered the remark to YSX EXPO 2020 online event on 12 September.

In addition to this, it has held promotional events to attract new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.

A total of 2.4 million shares worth K13.39 billion were traded on the YSX in 2019, a significant increase compared to the previous year, according to the annual report released by the exchange. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

SOPHIE WILMES

Belgian foreign minister in intensive care with Covid

BELGIAN Foreign Minister Sophie Wilmes, who was caretaker prime minister during the first wave of the coronavirus, has been admitted to intensive care, officials said Thursday.

The 45-year-old tested positive for Covid-19 last week and had been self-isolating, but her condition worsened and on Wednesday night she was admitted to a Brussels hospital.

"She is conscious and she can communicate," her spokeswoman said, confirming that Wilmes was receiving intensive care. A source in her office said her condition was



Belgian Foreign Minister Sophie Wilmes, who was caretaker prime minister during the first wave of the coronavirus, has been admitted to intensive care. **PHOTO: AFP**

"stable". Prime Minister Alexander de Croo, who succeeded

Wilmes on October 1, wished her a "speedy recovery" on his Twitter account.

"No one is immune from this dangerous virus. Together as one, we will beat Covid-19!" he said.

Several senior European politicians have fallen ill with the coronavirus, and Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg tested positive on the same day as Wilmes.

The European Union is reviewing its policy for face-to-face meetings after a Brussels summit last week was disrupted by three leaders being forced to go into self-isolation after aides were infected.

Belgium, meanwhile, is experiencing one of the worst

second waves of the epidemic in the world, and with 10,539 deaths in a country of 11.5 million people, one of the deadliest outbreaks per capita.

The number of confirmed infections has doubled in a month to 253,386, and there are 3,274 patients currently in hospital, despite a renewed partial lockdown that has seen pubs and restaurants close.

Government ministers and scientists will hold a new emergency meeting on Friday and are expected to announce still tighter measures to stem the spread of the virus.

SOURCE: AFP

Upbeat

US firms more optimistic amid uncertainty: Fed report

BUSINESSES around the United States were a bit more upbeat about their prospects coming out of the worst months of the pandemic, but worries remain, including about jobs and retail, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday.

While growth picked up speed, commercial real estate remains a soft spot, with offices remaining empty and stores going bankrupt or unable to pay their rent, according to the Fed's latest "beige book" survey of economic conditions.

The November 3 presidential election was mentioned only a handful of times in the report, the last before Americans go to the polls to determine whether Donald

Trump will get another four years in the White House.

Trump's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, which inflicted severe damage on the US economy, is a key issue in the election and after tens of millions of job losses he trails behind Democratic challenger Joe Biden in opinion polls.

While employment increased in almost all regions, "growth remained slow" and "firms continued to report new furloughs and layoffs."

The Fed's Philadelphia branch summed it up: "With the pandemic ongoing and the stimulus ended, uncertainty remained extremely high in anticipation of layoffs, foreclosures, and bankruptcies."

SOURCE: AFP



Commercial real estate is struggling amid the pandemic as many US stores and restaurants cannot pay rent. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ROBERT KOCH INSTITUTE

Germany's virus situation 'very serious'



People with and without face masks walk along the Castle Square amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Stuttgart, southern Germany, Oct. 13, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

GERMANY is facing a "very serious" rise in coronavirus cases, the head of the Robert Koch Institute disease control centre said Thursday, as the country reported a record 11,287 new infections.

It is still possible to bring the virus under control through "systematic compliance with restrictive measures", Lothar Wieler said.

But "the overall situation has

become very serious," he added.

Germany, like many European countries, has been facing a sharp increase in Covid-19 cases for several weeks.

Thursday's caseload far exceeds the previous record of 7,830 recorded last Friday, and is a steep jump from the 7,595 cases reported on Wednesday.

Faced with the rebound, authorities have toughened meas-

ures to curb the spread of the pandemic, such as banning large gatherings.

Local restrictions have also been imposed -- in Berlin, it is now compulsory to wear a mask on certain busy streets.

Wieler on Thursday blamed private gatherings, especially among young people, for the dramatic rise in cases.

SOURCE: AFP

AT-527

Roche teams up with Atea in US on oral coronavirus treatment

SWISS pharmaceuticals giant Roche said Thursday it is collaborating with Atea Pharmaceuticals on the development of an orally administered drug to treat coronavirus patients who have not been hospitalized.

"Roche and Atea Pharmaceuticals are joining forces in the fight against Covid-19 to develop, manufacture and distribute AT-527, Atea's investigational oral direct-acting antiviral, to people around the globe," the two companies said in a

joint statement.

AT-527 is currently being tested in phase 2 clinical trials for use as a treatment for people hospitalized with moderate cases of coronavirus.

And phase 3 trials -- the last stage before an application can be made for a new drug to be approved and sold on the market -- are to be held in the first quarter of 2021 where it will be tested on patients outside a hospital setting, Roche said.

SOURCE: AFP

MANUFACTURING

A look at Donald Trump's record on auto jobs



US President Donald Trump met with General Motors CEO Mary Barra and other Big Three leaders shortly after taking office; the industry has had a mixed record on US investment and jobs during Trump's tenure. **PHOTO: AFP**

CANDIDATE Donald Trump's campaign pitch in 2016 to revive US manufacturing was critical to his upset election victory over Hillary Clinton, helping him capture vital battleground states such as Michigan and Ohio, albeit by narrow margins.

Trump railed against free trade agreements and boasted he would be able to strong-arm Detroit's "Big Three" to shift jobs from Mexico to the United States.

But did he make good on those promises?

How have auto jobs fared under Trump?

The trend in US auto employment has mirrored the larger dynamic in manufacturing jobs, rising throughout much of Trump's presidency, but falling off a cliff in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

US auto employment rose 4.6 per cent between January 2017 and the end

of 2019, when it stood at around one million.

But since the coronavirus crisis erupted, employment fell to 919,500 in September, according to the latest estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, down about 3.7 per cent from when Trump took office. The record is mixed at Detroit's "Big Three," which have traditionally been big employers in battleground states such as Michigan and Ohio. General Motors

has cut almost 20,000 US jobs since Trump took office, while Fiat Chrysler has added about 3,000 jobs, based on the latest company figures. Ford's overall US employment is about flat over the period, a spokeswoman said.

Has production come back from Mexico?

All of the Big Three continue to make cars in Mexico, though there has been some movement.

SOURCE: AFP

HEAVY TARIFFS

Trump's trade war does little good for US industry

WHEN President Donald Trump visited a Whirlpool factory in Ohio in August, he boasted that his trade policy had led to the creation of about 200 jobs for the appliance manufacturer at the plant.

But in slapping tariffs on appliances and components imported from China in response to Whirlpool's pleas, the Republican incumbent ultimately hurt American consumers, as prices for washing machines and dryers soared.

The example underscores the double-edged impact of the US leader's aggressive trade tactics, which have produced landmark deals like the USMCA pact with Canada and Mexico and a partial truce with China, but have had adverse effects on every-

day Americans and the economy overall.

"There have been some successes, but if you have to assess in the whole, the US is in a worse position with respect to trade than it was when Donald Trump took office," said Edward Alden, a trade specialist with the Council on Foreign Relations.

Geoffrey Gertz of the Brookings Institution agreed, saying he sees no overall gains for American workers from Trump's trade policy.

He pointed to improvements in "a few very small, narrow areas" such as the steel and aluminium industries, but noted the hostile responses Trump's policies earned from abroad.

SOURCE: AFP

A STEEP FALL

Japan Sept. department store sales drop 33% on 2019 tax hike impact

DEPARTMENT store sales in Japan plunged 33.6 per cent in September from a year ago, affected by last-minute shopping before the consumption tax was raised, an industry body said Thursday.

The drop, compared with a 22 per cent fall in August, was registered as people also continued to refrain from going out due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Japan Department Stores

Association. In September, department store sales totaled about 334 billion yen (\$3.1 billion) at 196 outlets operated by 73 companies and logged a decrease for a 12th straight month on a year-on-year basis.

One year ago, sales increased 23.1 per cent, as consumers made more purchases before the consumption tax was raised from 8 per cent to 10 per cent in October.

SOURCE: AFP

CALL FOR BOYCOTT

Saudis shun 'made in Turkey' as rivalry deepens

FROM pickled vine leaves to coffee and cheese, Saudi supermarkets are taking Turkish products off the shelves after calls for a boycott, as rivalry between Riyadh and Ankara heats up. The two countries have long competed for supremacy in the Muslim world, but their geopolitical rivalry intensified after Saudi agents

murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's Istanbul consulate in 2018. The wealthy Gulf petro-state has sought to pressure Turkey's already struggling economy, with high-rolling Saudi tourists facing calls from nationalists last year to boycott the tourism magnet and stop purchasing property there.

Now, Turkish export-



People shop at a supermarket in Riyadh. Multiple Saudi supermarket chains have announced they are stopping the import and sale of Turkish products. **PHOTO: AFP**

ers of textiles and other goods are complaining of inordinate delays at Saudi customs, and warning that

Riyadh's attempts to block the imports could disrupt global supply chains.

SOURCE: AFP

PESTICIDE TRADE NAME CHANGE ADVERTISING

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A FRENCH-BACKED REFORM PLAN

Saad Hariri named new Lebanon PM, promises reform cabinet

THREE-TIME Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri was named to the post for a fourth time Thursday and immediately promised a government of technocrats committed to a French-backed reform plan.

Hariri said he would “form a cabinet of non politically aligned experts with the mission of economic, financial and administrative reforms contained in the French initiative roadmap”.

“I will work on forming a government quickly because time is running out and this is the only and last chance facing our country,” he added.

President Michel Aoun named Hariri to form a new cabinet to lift the country out of crisis after most parliamentary blocs backed his nomination.

Hariri, who has previously led three governments in Lebanon, stepped down almost a year ago under pressure from unprecedented protests against the political class.

“The president summoned... Saad al-Deen al-Hariri to task him with forming a government,” a spokesman for the presidency said.



Lebanon's new prime minister designate Saad Hariri now has the task of persuading the country's myriad of factions to approve a new government committed to the reforms demanded by Western creditors. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hariri was backed by a majority of 65 lawmakers, while 53 abstained. Lebanon is grappling with its worst economic crisis in decades and still reeling from a devastating port blast that killed more than 200 people and ravaged large parts of Beirut in August.

Aoun warned Wednesday that the new prime minister, the third in a year, would have to spearhead reforms and battle corruption.

A relatively unknown diplomat, Mustapha Adib, had been nominated in late August following the resignation of his predecessor Hassan Diab's government in the aftermath of the deadly port blast.

Adib had vowed to form a cabinet of experts, in line with conditions set by French President Emmanuel Macron to help rescue the corruption-ridden country from its worst ever economic crisis. **SOURCE: AFP**

TOCILIZUMAB

Mixed results for arthritis drug repurposed as Covid-19 treatment

A trio of new studies published in JAMA Internal Medicine on Tuesday examining the efficacy of an arthritis drug against Covid-19 showed inconsistent results. Tocilizumab has been used by doctors since the start of the pandemic with the hope of tamping down an abnormal immune response known as a “cytokine storm” that causes severe organ damage in some hospitalized Covid-19 patients.

Unlike steroids, which suppress the immune system more broadly, tocilizumab blocks a particular signalling protein

from triggering inflammation.

Writing in a related editorial, Doctor Jonathan Parr, an infectious disease specialist at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill said: “Newly released randomized trials suggest a potential role for tocilizumab in COVID-19 but do not show clear evidence of efficacy.

“I plan to wait out the torrent of positive observational studies and reconsider tocilizumab's use in Covid-19 if, and only if, more compelling data from randomized trials emerges.” **SOURCE: AFP**



Recently, India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) approved Tocilizumab for patients infected with COVID-19. Moreover, Tocilizumab's use for COVID-19 is accepted off-label by the Indian regulator. **PHOTO: DR FERNANDO LAZO/TWITTER/AFP**

THE BUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Asia's biggest film fest opens as a shadow of its usual self

ASIA'S biggest annual film festival started in South Korea Wednesday at a fraction of its usual scale, but some movie fans will still be able to attend screenings despite the coronavirus forcing many events online.

The Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) usually sees a host of stars and industry players from Asia and elsewhere descend on the port city for 10 days of critical consideration and financial deal-making.

But strict conditions imposed this year because of the pandemic mean there will be no opening ceremony, and no red-carpet parades, after-parties or outdoor fan events.

The fact it is taking place at all, however, is a bonus, as many international festivals have gone online-only and some – such as Cannes – have been cancelled altogether.

This year marks the festival's 25th anniversary and

comes after home-grown director Bong Joon-ho's historic Oscar win for the dark comedy “Parasite” in February – the first time a foreign-language film has won top accolades.

Around 190 movies will be shown at this year's festival and only once each, compared to the typical 300-odd films played multiple times – an 80 per cent cut in total screenings.

Those attending will have to wear masks, while social distancing will be enforced by making available only a quarter of theatre seats.

“We are doing our very best to offer what's most essential while following Covid-19 safety measures,” BIFF programme director Nam Dong-chul told AFP.

“We think what's most important about film festivals is to screen movies at movie theatres, as cinema is an art form that requires big screens.”

SOURCE: AFP

INNOVATIVE COVERINGS

Translation tools, air purifiers: face masks go high-tech



Devices that provide health data or translation services would be of huge benefit to doctors and nurses on the front line of the battle against the virus. **PHOTO: AFP**

FROM monitoring vital signs to filtering filthy air and even translating speech into other languages, the coronavirus-fuelled boom in mask-wearing has spawned an unusual range of high-tech face coverings. As masks become the norm worldwide, tech companies and researchers are rolling out weird and wonderful models to both guard against infection and

cash in on a growing trend. One of the wackiest comes from Japan, where start-up Donut Robotics has created a face covering that helps users adhere to social distancing and also acts as a translator. The “C-Face” mask works by transmitting a wearer's speech to a smartphone via an app, and allows people to have a conversation while keeping up to 10 metres

(32 feet) apart.

“Despite the coronavirus, we sometimes need to meet directly with each other,” Donut Robotics chief executive Taisuke Ono told AFP. The lightweight silicone device could have immediate benefits for people such as doctors who want to communicate with patients from a distance, the company says. It can translate speech from Japanese into English, Korean and other languages – a function that will become more useful once travel restrictions are eventually eased. But it does not offer protection from Covid-19 on its own, and is designed to be worn over a regular face covering when it goes on sale in February for about 4,000 yen (\$40). Donut Robotics raised nearly 100 million yen (\$950,000) via crowdfunding to develop it, a success Ono believes was driven by a desire for innovations to make life easier during the pandemic.

SOURCE: AFP

LIBERAL MINORITY SURVIVES CONFIDENCE VOTE

Trudeau government averts Canada snap election

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's minority Liberal government survived an unusual confidence vote Wednesday with the support of a small leftist opposition party, staving off snap elections.

It was the second vote of confidence masterminded by the government this month.

Canadians had been on edge about the possibility they could be headed to the polls amid a pandemic over a push for an anti-corruption committee to scrutinize the government's Covid-19 spending, described by one party leader as a "witchhunt" against the Trudeau family and denounced by the Liberals as a "partisan inquisition".

After 24 hours of uncertainty and political drama, however, the New Democratic Party (NDP), along with a handful of Green and independent MPs, voted to prop up the government.

The Conservative motion to create the committee was defeated 180 to 146. "We're voting against an election," NDP leader Jagmeet Singh had said ahead of the House of Commons vote, assuring the motion would not pass.

SOURCE: AFP

TRAWLING FOR COMPROMISE

UK-EU Brexit talks back on as clock ticks to trade deadline



Led by chief negotiator Michel Barnier, the EU team was en route from Brussels after a dramatic breakthrough on Wednesday gave Britain an outlet to end days of brinkmanship and redouble efforts to prevent economic chaos at the end of the year. PHOTO: AFP

EUROPEAN Union negotiators headed to London on Thursday to resume Brexit trade talks after Britain called off a boycott, with both sides vowing to work round the clock to seal a deal in the time left.

Led by chief negotiator Michel Barnier, the EU team was en route from Brussels after a dramatic breakthrough on Wednesday gave Britain an outlet to end days of brinkmanship and redouble efforts to prevent economic chaos at the end of the year.

In a joint document, Britain and the EU agreed that Barnier and UK negotiator David Frost would meet through the weekend, and continue every day if necessary beyond that to bridge their yawning differences once a post-Brexit transition ends on December 31.

However, the 10-point memo cautioned that "nothing

is agreed in these negotiations until a final overall agreement is reached".

Speaking to Sky News, British policing minister Kit Malthouse said he had his "fingers crossed" that the new urgency injected into the fraught talks would pay off.

"Negotiations often involve a bit of temper, and tensions, and slamming doors, and walking out," he said.

"It's in the nature of a negotiation that these things become tense, particularly towards the end when you're facing a deadline."

The breakthrough, which pushed the pound to six-week highs on currency markets, came hours after Barnier told a session of the European Parliament in Brussels that an agreement was "within our grasp" if both sides compromised.

SOURCE: AFP

THE DRIVE-IN RALLY IN PHILADELPHIA

Obama warns against complacency over Biden poll lead



Former US President Barack Obama addresses Biden-Harris supporters during a drive-in rally in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on October 21, 2020. - Former US president Barack Obama hit the campaign trail for Joe Biden in a bid to drum up support for his former vice president among young Americans and Black voters in the final stretch of the White House race. (PHOTO BY ALEX EDELMAN / AFP)

FORMER US president Barack Obama excoriated Donald Trump and warned on Wednesday against complacency despite favourable opinion polls during his first public rally in support of Democratic challenger Joe Biden ahead of the November 3 election.

At the drive-in rally in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one of a handful of battleground states expected to decide the election, Obama lashed out at Trump's behaviour and declared him "incapable of taking the job seriously."

But he also issued a stark reminder of 2016, when opinion polls showed Hillary Clinton as the clear favourite -- only for her and her supporters to be shocked by a Trump victory on election day.

"We can't be complacent. I don't care about the polls," the former two-term president told the rally outside a baseball stadium.

"There were a whole bunch of polls last time. Didn't work out.

Because a whole bunch of folks stayed at home. And got lazy and complacent. Not this time. Not in this election."

He told supporters that too much was at stake to have four more years of Trump leading the nation, seeking to contrast his successor -- a Republican real estate mogul and ex-reality TV star -- with his former vice president.

"This is not a reality show. This is reality," Obama said.

SOURCE: AFP

VIOLENT CRACKDOWN

Nigeria's Lagos shut down after protest shooting



Nigeria has been rocked by protests over police brutality and deep-rooted social grievances. PHOTO: PIUS UTOMI EKPEI / AFP/FILE

SHOPS were shuttered and streets empty Thursday as Nigeria's largest city Lagos was locked down under curfew after unrest flared following the shooting of protesters. Amnesty International said at least 12 people

were killed by the Nigerian army and police in a brutal crackdown on protesters Tuesday that drew international condemnation.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo said his "heart goes out" to the victims of the shooting as

well as policemen and others who have lost their lives in several days of turmoil in Africa's most populous country. "The pain of these terrible events is palpable in our towns and cities, and some losses are irreplaceable, but we can and will get justice for all of them," a statement said. President Muhammadu Buhari has not yet directly commented on the shooting, drawing fierce criticism for his silence.

Nigeria's army has dubbed as "fake news" reports that soldiers opened fire on demonstrators. Police Minister Muhammad Maigari Dingyadi told the BBC that troops were not ordered to open fire on protesters. "I cannot say who is involved in the shooting... definitely not the police. Soldiers have already spoken about this, they are denying their involvement," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

ICU, HDU facilities set up at Thuwunna Stadium

Ayeyarwady Foundation has completed facilities of the biggest Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HDU) Centres for COVID-19 patients at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon since early this month.

With the help of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the latest 75-bed ICU and HDU centres are equipped with world-class medical equipment.

It has now expanded the ICU and HDU centres with 75 more beds for a total of 1,000 beds with staff from the foundation and a further 350 volunteers working together.

The Ayeyarwady Centre has been providing emergen-

cy care services to the 75-bed ICU / HDU Centre since October 9, and will now be able to accommodate up to 125 ICU/HDU patients.

At the ICU, HDU Centre, medical teams led by Professor Dr Mya Soe; nurses and over 250 volunteers are closely monitoring the COVID-19 patients.

Moreover, the foundation has recently donated surgical masks to the Yangon Region government for use in needy areas of Yangon Region.

The foundation has utilized US\$5 million for this COVID-19 treatment programme with further provisions by public. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



The interior view of ICU, HDU Centre in Thuwunna Stadium, Yangon. PHOTO:MFF

About 10,000 fans allowed at Chinese football final: FA official

SUZHOU, China—About 10,000 supporters could be allowed at each leg of the Chinese Super League final next month, a top football official said, as spectators return to China's stadiums despite the lingering coronavirus threat.

Football across the world is grappling with how to readmit crowds while preventing infections, with the English Premier League among the high-profile competitions still taking place behind closed doors. The coronavirus emerged in China late last year

but the country has successfully curtailed the number of local infections, allowing football fans to begin returning to matches in limited numbers.

The postponed CSL began in July without spectators but there were about 3,000 fans on Saturday for a 2-2 draw between title contenders Beijing Guoan and Shandong Luneng in Suzhou. The title will be decided over two legs, on Nov 8 and 12, in Suzhou, near Shanghai. "Going to the final, I would say ... 10,000-ish (fans)," Chinese Football Association sec-

retary-general Liu Yi told AFP.

"It'd be that kind of ceiling because it's a big game for sure," he added. That figure is likely to be lowered if there is a sudden spike in virus cases.

The Suzhou stadium holds nearly four times that number but attendance will be limited to allow social distancing.

Fabio Cannavaro's Guangzhou Evergrande took a step closer to retaining the title as they thrashed Hebei China Fortune 5-0 on Wednesday to win their two-legged quarter-final 8-1.—AFP ■

Tennis: Novak Djokovic pulls out of Paris Masters, eyes Vienna and London

BELGRADE—Novak Djokovic said on Wednesday (Oct 21) that he will not defend his Paris Masters title because he cannot gain any ranking points if he plays.

The world No.1 told Serbian daily Sportski Zurnal that due to the revised ranking system created amid the coronavirus pandemic he could not win any additional ranking points at next month's ATP event in the French capital.

Djokovic said his main priority is to remain first in the rankings until at least March 8 next year to break Roger Federer's record for most weeks in the ATP's top spot.

Rankings are calculated by the players' best results between March 2019 and December this year.—AFP ■

'Thank you Brazil': football legend Pele still laughing as he turns 80

SAO PAULO—Considered by many to be the greatest footballer of all time, Pele will celebrate his 80th birthday on Friday (Oct 23), confined to his home in Brazil because of COVID-19 but meeting the milestone with his trademark laugh. "The King" has suffered from a series of health problems in recent years, but has not lost his charisma or sense of humour. "I'm fine, it's just I won't be able to play" on his birthday, he joked this week in a video conversation with the head of the Brazilian Football Confederation.

The only player in history to win three World Cups (1958,

1962 and 1970), Pele plans to celebrate his birthday quietly - as he does almost every year, he says, coronavirus pandemic or not.

But several tributes are planned in Brazil, from an exhibit in his honor at the Sao Paulo Football Museum to a mural designed by renowned street artist Kobra in Santos, the city where Pele started his professional career as a 15-year-old prodigy in 1955. Pele also recorded a song with Grammy-winning Mexican duo Rodrigo and Gabriela, billed as "a little birthday present for his fans and himself."—AFP ■



Fans have been slowly returning to Chinese stadiums despite the lingering coronavirus threat. PHOTO:AFP