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Monday, 21 December 2020

State Counsellor delivers video message to 29th AGM of UMFCCI



THE 29th Annual General Meeting of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) was held at the Mingalar Hall of the UMFCCI yesterday afternoon via videoconferencing.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sent her video message to the meeting.

(The video message delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is covered on page-3.)

During the meeting, UMFCCI President U Zaw Min Win said that the speech of the State Counsellor is very important for the future and the development of the private sector as a whole.

The UMFCCI President said that

public-private cooperation needs to be strengthened between the government and the private sector with mutual trust and respect.

The UMFCCI President reiterated what the State Counsellor said, by saying that digital communication is very important during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep the system running smoothly.

The UMFCCI President said that Myanmar's signing of the RCEP will enhance the private sector, which is the main driver of the country's economy. He added that all stakeholders must work together to ensure that the people enjoy the rights given by the RCEP.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers video message to the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA



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 Mandalay 09 2531 51970, 09 4539 55560

All information and illustrations are based on data available at the time of publication and subject to change without notice.

“People are the key”



Stake-driving ceremony held for Ottara District Court

A ceremony to drive stake for construction of Ottara District Court was organized at the plot where the court will be built at the corner of Chindwin and

Court streets in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday.

U Myo Win have sprayed it with scented water.

The Union Chief Justice and officials looked around the place where the District Court will be constructed.

The construction of the court was carried out in line with third-year plan of Judicial Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

The two-storey reinforced concrete building constructed by Zwe Man Hone Company is 200 feet in length and 140 feet in width. — MNA

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo drives stake for construction of Ottara District Court in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo attended the stake-driving ceremony that took place in line with COVID-19 health guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

At the event, the Union Chief Justice drove stake at the designated place of the court construction site after Justices of the Union U Tha Htay, U Myint Aung, U Aung Zaw Thein, U Mya Han, U Myo Tint, U Soe Naing, U Khin Maung Kyi and

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

MoE minister meets education staff for drafting NESP 2021-2030

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi organized a virtual meeting with education staff from the ministry’s departments including the Union Minister’s Office, interested staff and NESP 2 Drafting Teams on drafting of National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 yesterday.

The Union Minister, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, officials and education staff from the ministry and departments participated in the meeting via videoconferencing.

Speaking to the meeting attendees, the Union Minister stressed the importance of cooperation spirit of the ministry, universities, schools and institutes in reviewing the condition of Education Sector Analysis-ESA on the National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

Education reform would be successful only with the cooperation spirit and collective strengths. Implementations leading to quality education are also being made, he added, saying that if the works are done with family spirits, successful works would be more successful and difficulties and challenges could be overcome together.

The ministry was making education reform in accordance with NESP 2016-2021 towards

the core values of objectives – no one left behind in the education reform, no dropping out of school, not losing learning opportunities, students to become decent human beings, cooperation, accountability and creativity.

The government already published and distributed the new textbooks for kindergarten and 12 classes of basic education. Learning and teaching must be made in accordance with Teacher Competency Standard Framework-TCSF, he added.

Teachers were being appointed and trained for building their capacity and sustainable development. Scholarships for them were also provided.

The rate of primary, middle and high school completion has increased. In 2018-2019 academic year, students who studied at high school classes exceeded 1 million the first time. In 2019-2020 academic year, students studied at primary, middle and high school classes reached 9.716 million in total. In 2020, a total of 566,274 students got the certificates of high school completion.

According to analysis reports about primary school completion, reading analysis at primary school and mathematics analysis at primary schools, students from Myanmar are

good at reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Students from Myanmar achieved a total of six honorary mentions in competing at International Mathematical Olympiad between 2016 and 2020. According to national education quality index, those who got the certificate of basic education school completion can join Level 4 vocational schools, Level 5 vocational schools for diploma and advanced diploma courses, and open universities.

The ministry already provided nine English proficiency courses, seven IT courses,

management, and financial management courses, and was working on short-term courses for requirements from technical, vocational and training sector, diploma courses, and upgrading curriculums.

He called for collective cooperation in creating learning opportunities of lifelong learning blended effective subjects, saying that the ministry was working on all citizens to complete basic high school education.

Permanent Secretary Dr Zaw Myint introduced the drafting works of NESP 2021-2030 and detailed about the Education

Sector Analysis-ESA conducted by UNESCO IIEP.

Director-General U Ko Lay Win discussed basic education sector, Director-General Dr Sai Kyaw Nai Oo technical and vocational sector, Director-General Dr Thein Win higher education sector, Director-General Dr Win Tun management, cooperation, capacity building and quality assurance sector.

Attendees at the meeting made discussions about the NESP 2021-2030 and gave suggestions.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi participates in the virtual meeting with education staff over drafting of NESP 2021-2030 on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Build a Union with a diversity of strength

The word Union is such a beautiful word. It is imbued with grace. It is very important for all of us to value, love and cherish this word. A Union means something which has been established collectively. A country which has been established collectively, a great country which has been established collectively is not the same as those countries which have not been established collectively. We will be able to establish a Union only after transforming our diversity and differences into strength.

(Extract from a Message of Greetings delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 15 January 2020 at the ceremony to celebrate Kayah State Day)



Myanmar Folk Dance - U Shwe Yoe and Daw Moe. PHOTO: ZAW MG MG OO (SANDAKU)

It is important to create favourable conditions for investments to flow in: State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Following is the video message of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) yesterday.

20 December 2020

FIRST of all, I would like to extend my warm greetings for the good health and well-being of all esteemed guests present on this occasion.

Today we are holding the 29th annual meeting of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

As you all know, the private sector is the main engine of growth of the State economy. First of all, I really appreciate UMFCCI for providing leadership in the private sector and for your active cooperation and collaboration for State and the people.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made by UMFCCI to the efforts made by the State for the development of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises; for Myanmar economic enterprises to penetrate not only local markets but also into international markets; for the progress of the digital economy, eradication of corruption, and many other tasks.

I also acknowledge that besides participating in the protection, control and treatment activities during the COVID-19 crisis, UMFCCI, together with other allied organizations, has given aid to charity work like food supply and donation, keeping commodity prices under control, and ensuring the continuous supply commodities, in respective sectors. These actions have provided

... in the post-COVID period, priority must be given to taking necessary measures to build the kind of economic environment conducive to economic growth we have dreamed of.



much support for the people. I would like to urge you to keep up this good tradition and strive for enhanced public private partnership (PPP) in all endeavours of the State in the future.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our country still has good prospects for our economy and economic development. Asia, where our country is located, is a region known for the fastest economic growth. Although, developed western countries are usually referred to as economically developed countries, economic developments are emerging in the Asian region as well. As one of the countries in Asia, progress has been taking place in Myanmar also.

If we take a look at the progress made so far, we can see that this progress is due to labour-intensive economic enterprises producing garments and cotton textiles and export-oriented enterprises. Since production costs have risen in other countries in the region, investors have started seeking better locations for producing their goods. Because of the strategic location of our country as well as being one of the eco-

nomically developing countries in Asia, due to these good characteristics, our country is bound to be among the locations chosen for investment. However, on our part, it is important to create favourable conditions for investments to flow in.

That is why the Union Government has made strenuous efforts for the creation of a good investment climate characterized by transparency, simplicity, predictability and competitiveness capable of attracting FDI – foreign direct investment; this is to ensure that these investments are not only responsible but of high quality and would be supportive of sustainable development. As a good outcome of the efforts thus made, according to 2020 Ease of Doing Business Report of the World Bank Group, Myanmar's ranking, which stood at 171 last year, now stands at 165, which has placed Myanmar among the twenty most developing countries.

Since the foreign direct investment influx in this fiscal year fetches nearly 5.7 billion in US dollars, according to the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), nearly 98 percent of the expected outcome has been achieved. In the present, more investments have come in from our regional partners Japan, Thailand, South Korea and Singapore while foreign investments from US and European countries are also coming in.

Establishing stronger post-COVID public-private sector collaboration

During this pandemic period that has imposed challenges and hardships, we need to build stronger public-private sector collaboration. This pandemic has changed our ways of trading and goods production. So in the post-COVID period, priority must be given to taking necessary measures to build the kind of economic environment conducive to economic growth we have dreamed of.

SEE PAGE-4

Please be very careful



If you wish to get back to the normal routine sooner, you need to be extremely vigilant. Please be very careful. I am not sure that people strictly follow my advice as I have frequently talked about it. At this time, because I have to remind again and again, I am not sure whether some people might even listen to me. However, allow me to remind you as there is a need to remind repeatedly. The rate of infection could be significantly reduced by wearing masks and washing hands. I'm not saying you will have 100 per cent safety. However, wearing masks and washing hands to kill germs could lower the infection rate. The best practice is to stay away from other people who are not family members. Vigilance is needed even at home because some family members have to go outside and come back. I have reminded that although the younger persons in good health conditions have lesser risks of this disease, the elderly groups and people who have underlying health problems are more vulnerable to the pandemic.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's report on COVID-19 containment measures, on 12 December 2020)

While most of the regional countries have advanced towards digital economies, the majority of our micro, small and medium size enterprises have been left far behind

FROM PAGE-3

Developing the Micro, Small and Medium size Enterprises under the leadership of women entrepreneurs

I believe that creating an environment conducive to the businesses of the women entrepreneurs will soon come to the forefront in the post-COVID period.

I would like to emphasize the fact that in honour of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence Campaign, necessary support should be given to founding and expanding the micro, small and medium size enterprises for women. I am very much encouraged that the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Network has been extending aid and support in the present.

According to the second Myanmar Investment Policy Review issued by the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations of Myanmar, Myanmar has made progress in high momentum since its ranking has reached up to 70 from the former position of 170, scaling up the starting a business index among the feasibility indexes in undertaking the World Bank projects within four years.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP), which is well under way, gender equality and women's crucial role in participating in the implementation of action plans of the state economic reforms will be highlighted.

Digital transformation and Regional Economic Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP)

COVID-19 has thrown light on the significance of the digital system and the need for digital transformation to be launched with increased momentum. In carrying out our transformation towards a digital system, effective preparations and our capabilities will surely become one of the factors which will determine the extent of our country's ability to sustain our success.

The Union Government is already collaborating

with the private economic enterprises for building the Digital Platform System in order to launch a faster digital transformation so that according to the demand-supply chain, the goods and services may be traded, loaned or exchanged between the govern-

I would like to urge you to utilize digital technology and expand your businesses so as to reach international markets.

ment and the people, between the government and the enterprises and between enterprises through the utilization of digital technology.

While most of the regional countries have advanced towards digital economies, the majority of our micro, small and medium size enterprises have been left far behind. So I would like to urge you to utilize digital technology and expand your businesses so as to reach international markets.

I really hope our micro, small and medium size enterprises will be able to make use of 21st century digital technology to penetrate international markets with collaboration and effective support. We promise the Union Government will make efforts for helping the private businesses out in overcoming difficulties in marketing.

On 15 November, Myanmar signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Trade Agreement. This Agreement covering over 30 percent of the world population and 30 percent of the world economy

and 29 percent of world trade is often referred to as the World's Biggest Trading Bloc. According to the present geopolitical conditions and the international trading conditions, while the Superpower countries are in trade tensions, plans have been laid down for safeguarding the self-interests. So it is important to re-boost the rules-based international trade system. Given the present situation of the world economy, Myanmar, a country with modest economic potential, finds it hard to stand isolated in international economic relations. However, I strongly believe that as a member of RCEP, we will be able to strengthen the private sector, which is the driving force of the state economy. I would like to request you to cooperate and collaborate closely and harmoniously between the government and the private sector so that we could bring the privileges outlined in the Agreement to the benefits of our people.

Once again, I would stress that the government and the private sector join hands for the sake of our people's socio-economic development. If we can establish such a strong and profound collaboration, we will be able to create new job opportunities and new economic opportunities and pave way to the sustainable development and prosperity for our people.

For reaching this goal, I would like to request UM-FCCI to continue your programmes such as sharing the knowledge and skills and connecting the markets and providing financial sources for the private sector.

In conclusion, I wish UM-FCCI and partner organizations blessings of good health, to lay down practical and effective programmes in this annual meeting for the sake of our country and our people, and a great success in the programmes to be implemented in the future.

Thank you.

A happy and prosperous new year 2021 to you all.

(Translated by Dr Zaw Tun)

UMFCCI holds 29th Annual General Meeting

FROM PAGE-1

The UMFCCI President said that the government has set up a committee to remedy the economic impacts caused by the COVID-19, and spent nearly Kyat 3,000 billion, which is about 4 per cent of the GDP, for the plan. He added that some businesses are able to survive because of government's assistance such as easing economic procedures, reducing bank interest rates and tax cuts.

The UMFCCI President concluded his speech by saying that his federation and the business community welcomed the government's plans to implement the CERP and MERRP to remedy the economic impacts.

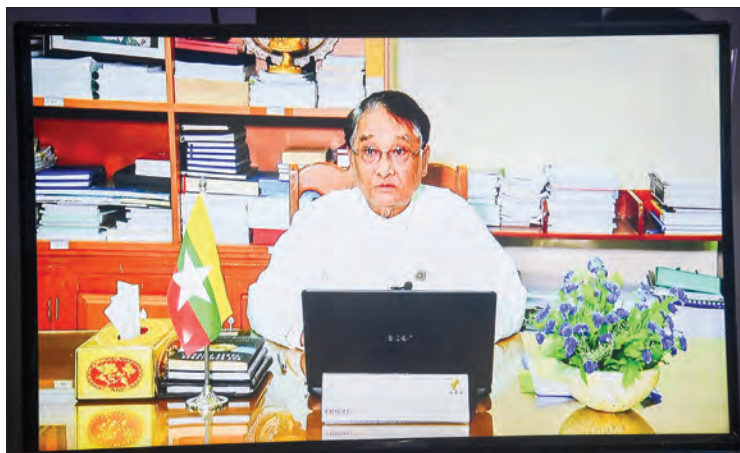
After that, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun, in his capacity as a Patron of the UMFCCI, delivered a speech. He said that the government is providing loans at low interest rates to the businesses affected by the COVID-19 crisis. To date, more than K166 billion have been loaned to 6,333 businesses.

Union Minister U Thaung Tun said that although the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all the nations, Myanmar received about US\$ 5.7 billion in foreign investment in the 2019-2020 financial year. He continued that there is great potential for domestic and foreign investments in agriculture, electricity and industrial zones in Myanmar in the upcoming financial year.

Construction of Korea-Myanmar Industrial Complex (KMIC) will begin on 24 December, and AMATA Smart and Eco City will be implemented by cooperating with Thailand. Moreover, Myanmar and Singapore will continue implementing the Myanmar Singapore Industrial Park, according



Union Minister U Thaung Tun delivers video message to the 29th Annual General Meeting of UMFCCI on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister Dr Than Myint delivers video message to the 29th Annual General Meeting of UMFCCI on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein speaks to the 29th Annual General Meeting of UMFCCI via video message on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

to Union Minister U Thaung Tun.

Myanmar has signed the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), said Union Minister U Thaung Tun, who added that the RCEP is the world's largest trade agreement, representing more than 30 per cent of the world's population and 29 per cent of world trade volume.

He said that by cooperating with the signatory nations, Myanmar will achieve benefits in the long run.

A statement of the World Bank said that although the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the economy in many nations, Myanmar is able to maintain a good position compared to other nations, and Myanmar's

economy will gradually recover in 2021, according to the Union Minister. A report of the ADB also said that Myanmar's economic growth rate is only 1.8 per cent this year, but will reach 6 per cent in 2021.

Then Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, in his capacity as a Patron of the UMFCCI, delivered a speech. He said that the government is making great efforts to develop Myanmar's economy in various ways. The government holds meetings with business organizations including the UMFCCI, and takes into account the suggestions of the business organizations. The government is doing what should be done in a timely manner. He continued that the government,

local organizations and business persons need to work together in order for domestic products to compete in local and foreign markets.

For the development of the private sector, the Ministry of Commerce is a focal ministry and the ministry is cooperating with UMFCCI, which represents the private sector, said Union Minister Dr Than Myint, who added that difficulties and challenges of the private sector are being continuously discussed and coordinated with other relevant ministries.

Regarding the "Ease of Doing Business" rankings, Union Minister Dr Than Myint said that Myanmar has achieved good results in cooperation with the private sector, and the aim was not only to improve the rankings but also to really make it easier to do business.

The Union Minister said that his Ministry is working to issue an e-commerce guideline as soon as possible.

He said that in order to encourage the flow of goods and to stabilize commodity prices during the COVID-19 crisis, his ministry is coordinating with business organizations including UMFCCI.

Because of the cooperation

of the UMFCCI and its associated organizations, the distribution of basic food to the needy people could be carried out smoothly, according to Union Minister Dr Than Myint.

He said that the Ministry of Commerce has been providing online services since 2004. In order to make it easier for traders to do businesses, his ministry has made arrangements, so by using the "Registration of importers and exporters with Tradenet 2.0 system", business persons can register as importers and exporters via online and they can also apply for export licenses and import licenses online.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein said that it is a time for Myanmar to overcome the economic difficulties and challenges caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

In the endeavor to overcome the challenges, success will be achieved only with the cooperation among the government, the private sector and the general public, said the Yangon Region Chief Minister, who added that his regional government was able to effectively cooperate with the UMFCCI during the COVID-19 crisis.

The virtual meeting was participated by Union Ministers, the Yangon Region Chief Minister, Deputy Ministers, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of Yangon Region Parliament, Yangon Region Ministers, ambassadors, economic diplomats, local and foreign business organizations, business persons, officials from the UMFCCI and its associated organizations, and guests.

During the first-year term (2019-2020) of the new Executive Committee of the UMFCCI, it could successfully implement its tasks despite the COVID-19 crisis. In February 2020, the UMFCCI could formulate the "Strategic Action Plan" and "12 Business Agendas". —MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



UMFCCI President U Zaw Min Win and officials pose for a group photo at the 29th Annual General Meeting of UMFCCI on 20 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

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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.

Myanmar nationals brought back home from Chinese Taipei by relief flight

A total of 147 Myanmar citizens including seamen who were stranded in Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flight yesterday.

Myanmar Consulate-General Office in Hong Kong arranged the relief flight of China Airlines that landed at the Yangon International Airport in the morning.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided them with proper medical tests and arranged 7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home quarantine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back cit-



Myanmar returnees queue for immigration clearance at the Yangon International Airport on 20 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

izens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accord-

ance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control

and Treatment of COVID-19. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Chrysanthemum growers face financial hardship amid COVID-19 crisis



A woman carries flowers for sale on a farm in Minbu Township, Magway Region. **PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)**

THE slump in Chrysanthemum demand amid the COVID-19 pandemic brought down the market in Minbu Township,

Magway Region. Additionally, the growers are facing financial hardship due to high input cost to stop whiteflies on Chrysanthemum during the harvest time.

"The Chrysanthemum market is commonly dependent on household consumption in

flower offerings to Buddha. The whiteflies infestation caused damage to flower. The price is not good during the pandemic. The growers are not financially doing well with the business due to high input cost for insecticide," said a grower Ko Zaw Min.

Yetwington village-tract among the villages of Minbu Township is the primary producer of Chrysanthemum. Shwewahwin, Lucky, Shwesain and Ngushwewah (local Chrysanthemum varieties) are primarily grown. "The travel restriction poses another reason for market fallouts. The traders are experiencing difficulties to send to markets in other regions and states. The market sees a steep drop in demand," a seller Mon Mon said.

Furthermore, Chrysanthemums are damaged by heavy rain in June this year, the growers said.—Zayyatu (Magway) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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

New sugar likely to fetch good price at year-end

THE price of new sugar produced at the end of December is expected to rise as the stock of old sugar, and imported sugar is remained less, according to Sugar and Cane Related Products Association.

"Local sugar mills are started running beginning from 5 December. The new sugar will be produced in December-end. The stock of old sugar has become lesser. Additionally, sugar import is rarely found in the meantime. Sugar price has surprisingly risen this year in the international market. The domestic sugar market also sees a potential," said U Thi Ha Tun, secretary of Sugar and Cane Related Products Association.

Sugar millers purchased sugarcanes in mid-December,

and the mills are operating to produce sugar by the 2020-2021 sugarcane season. At present, the sugar mills in eastern and western Bago Region are running. The mills in northern and southern Shan State and Sagaing Region are soon to operate.

"Myanmar can export locally produced sugar to China and Viet Nam. As the supply is deficient, the price will rise on the growing demand for sure," vice-chairman U Win Htay of the association guessed.

Sugarcane covered 438,420 acres in the country this year. Myanmar's sugar mills intend to grind 4.2 million tonnes of sugarcanes in the 2020-2021 sugarcane season, the Agriculture Department stated.

Myanmar produced about 450,000 tonnes of sugar from 440,000 acres of sugarcane plantations in the 2014-2015 financial year, over 390,000 tonnes from 390,000 acres in the 2015-2016FY, over 370,000 tonnes from 400,000 acres in the 2016-2017FY, over 500,000 tonnes from 400,000 acres in the 2017-2018FY, and 500,000 tonnes from 500,000 acres in the 2018-2019FY.

Sugar cane prices were pegged at over K50,000 per ton in the 2015-2016FY, K45,000 in the 2016-2017FY, K41,500 in the 2017-2018FY, and K38,000-40,000 in the 2018-2019FY, according to news released online by the Ministry of Commerce.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay sub-printing house)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Over 438,000 acres have been put under sugarcane this year.
PHOTO: MNA

CMP garment exports drop by \$176 mln in first month of 2020-2021FY

MYANMAR'S garment export sector, which constitutes over 20 per cent of overall export value, showed a steep drop of US\$176 million in October of the current financial year, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

In October of FY2020-2021, the country exported \$203.95 million worth garments to foreign countries. The figure plunged from \$384 million registered in October of the 2019-2020FY.

At present, over 100 CMP garment factories temporarily shut down on the reason for the lack of raw materials and slump in demand due to the coronavirus negative impacts, leaving thousands of workers unemployed. Sixty-four factories have been permanently closed down during the pandemic, compensating about 25,000 workers. The

data does not include those factories which have not resolved worker payments, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population stated.

The coronavirus impacts badly batter the labour-intensive enterprises according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

"Myanmar mainly exports the garments to Japan and European countries, especially Germany. The US has also purchased the garments made in Myanmar. Some western countries cancelled orders amid the pandemic. That's why we need to focus on market diversification. Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) requested the ministries concerned to deal with changing and cancelling order to keep the business alive. Myanmar's

garment factories have been complying with the COVID-19 health guidelines, and the buyers recognized this. If the factories can prevent from spreading the virus, it will not affect the production," MGMA General Secretary Daw Khaing Khaing Nwe shared at the virtual conference held on 11 December 2020.

Under the EU Myan Ku Fund, we have now distributed K5.2 billion in support across 67,810 payments to unemployed garment factory workers as of 12 October. Workers in all the states and regions of Myanmar have received this financial assistance, Jacob A. Clere, Team Leader for EU Myan Ku Fund said.

Aung Myin Hmu, the garment industry training centre is working together with the EU Myan Ku Fund to train over 400 workers who are recently out of the jobs, affected by the COVID-19 impacts, as per the 12 October press release of Aung Myin Hmu.

The plan is designated to train the trainees for ten days, with 18 batches, in a bid to upgrade the existing skills and make them more readily employable.

Next, foreign direct investments flow into many types of businesses, including garment enterprises. The foreign investors are not bothered by the disputes between employers and employees and the closure of

some CMP businesses during the mean times, the Myanmar Investment Commission affirmed.

Of the investment proposals, the manufacturing and labour-intensive businesses are prioritized by the commission.

The commission is planning to accept investment projects in manufacturing masks, pharmaceuticals and others which can contribute to the fight against the coronavirus in the country at the soonest.

Myanmar mainly exports CMP garments to markets in Japan and Europe, along with the Republic of Korea, China, and the US.

The garment sector is among the prioritized sectors driving up exports. The CMP garment industry has emerged as a promising one, with preferential trade from Western countries.

Myanmar's garment factories operate under the CMP system, and those engaged in this industry are striving to transform CMP into the free-on-board (FoB) system. As the factories cannot enter into a contract for FoB, Own Design Manufacturing (ODM) and Own Business Manufacturing (OBM), the income is limited, according to the MGMA.

Exports of garments manufactured under the cut-make-pack (CMP) system were valued US\$4.798 billion in the last finan-

cial year 2019-2020, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Although the sector is facing hardships because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and the suspension of the trade by western countries amid the pandemic, export values rose in the previous FY.

The export value of CMP garments was only \$850 million in the 2015-2016FY, but it has tripled over the past two FYs. In the 2016-2017FY, about \$2 billion was earned from exports of CMP garments. The figure increased to an estimated \$2.5 billion in the 2017-2018FY and \$2.2 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period (from April to September). It tremendously grew to \$4.6 billion in the 2018-2019FY, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Since an outbreak like COVID-19 might happen in the future, it is necessary to prepare for a sufficient supply of raw materials. The public and private sectors will cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our own sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories.

The MGMA has more than 500 members, and garment factories in Myanmar, employing more than 400,000 workers. Investors prefer to invest in countries with inexpensive labour, such as Myanmar.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A garment worker sews clothes at a workplace in Yangon.
PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Empowering SMEs through new innovative digital knowledge is a must

WITH the COVID-19 pandemic wrecking the global economy, our country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is estimated to drop from 6.8% growth reported between 2018 and 2019 to just 0.5% for 2019 to 2020, according to a World Bank report released in August.

Myanmar's economic growth is projected to remain subdued at 2 percent in the current fiscal year 2020-21 due to economic disruptions associated with COVID-19 containment measures imposed in December, the WB said.

However, we are confident that once the restrictions are relaxed and cases of local transmission of the coronavirus are slow, we would be seeing very positive economic growth in coming years.

once the restrictions are relaxed and cases of local transmission of the coronavirus are slow, we would be seeing very positive economic growth in coming years.

The World Bank projected growth would slowly recover starting from March 2021. Meanwhile, we need to take measures to increase public investments in infrastructure and digital technologies to ensure that our country, as a digital nation and keep abreast of the changing world due to COVID-19 pandemic.

It is worth noting that our small and medium enterprises still lagged behind the digital access to finance and market.

Hence, we need to promote our digital innovation efforts to accelerate the small and medium enterprises and help SMEs in rural areas get access to digital innovation as we are committed to "no one is left behind" vision.

Digital transformation is driving change in all regional countries.

To shape Myanmar's brighter future, the United Nations Development Programme also acknowledged that Myanmar's youth can make the difference in helping Myanmar to build back better using digital technologies to transform how Myanmar does business across the public and private sector to deliver on the SDGs.

Myanmar youth have a tremendous potential to use digital technologies to shape Myanmar's brighter future.

We are confident that our SMEs can make the difference in helping our country to build back better using digital technologies to transform.

Hence, we would like to urge all stake holders and technology companies to create all possible opportunities for SMEs and the country's youths to develop their full potential to build Myanmar as a digital nation and keep abreast of the changing world.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Trade Mark Acts

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355 09974424848

A brief look into the case studies in ELT during and post-COVID crisis

By Dr. Zaw Tun

WE are now living in the tug-of-war Age, in the sense that while we are enticed by the new opportunities, we are faced with the emerging challenges. To use Thornbury's (2019) terms, "in 1990s, and thereafter, the English language teaching proliferated big before them, absolute global, massive by the turn of the twenty-first century." However, according to English UK's report "Impact of COVID-19 on the English Language Teaching Sector in the UK" (2020), the pandemic hit in early February, and there was no chance for face-to-face teaching starting from 20 March 2020. As the unprecedented changes had taken place, many students had to pack up for their return journey home. Many courses offered for scholarships were cancelled or postponed.

During the COVID crisis, since face to face teaching is out of the question, online learning like a synchronous Zoom Web Conference System has to be the last resort we have to seek for so that teachers would not go unemployed while learners would not go idle, but continue learning during this long break. In the post-COVID crisis, since the New Normal context in which this teaching-learning process takes place can make a strong impact on all sectors, the overall impact may be considered by the researchers focusing on

the local context, which would be feedback to other stakeholders, including the language policy makers. Despite its drawbacks of lack of social interaction through personal contacts, one of the advantages of online learning is flexibility: you can learn anywhere at any time. But this flexibility is challenged by the ease of access: Is the Internet access guaranteed to all parts of our country? To exploit this advantage of flexibility of online learning, the language teachers need to consider how to get "socialized language learning" springboard from the rigid frame of learning of textbook and "grammar mc nuggets" to use the terms of Thornbury (1999) because we do not want to produce the glued-to-the-screen generations.

The research findings of Dwi Rahayu (2020) in Pamulang University, Indonesia, show that 62 students make positive responses to three factors of online activities: communication, lesson material and study process. On the other hand, students prefer the traditional face-to-face learning in terms of communication and materials, compared with the e-learning.

It goes without saying that research should come in pre-, while-and post-Covid crisis. In other words, we must at least be prepared with Plan A, Plan B, etc., to face the unpredictable. At this point, I would like to take the opportunity of giving a brief account of the activities and case studies



The coronavirus pandemic has spurred the adoption of distance learning at all education levels. PHOTO CREDIT: WORLD LEARN ORG

in primary and higher education during and post COVID crisis in Myanmar.

Background

Unlike many other countries, Myanmar had remained unaffected by the first wave of the pandemic for some time until to the return of migrant workers. Universities were then holding examinations. Fortunately, the postgraduate examinations finished just in time, but students taking the undergraduate examinations had to sit for two more papers when it was announced that all institutions under the Ministry of Education, includ-

ing private schools and international schools, were closed. When the first wave of the pandemic was almost over, measures were taken to re-open the schools in line with the directives of the Ministry of Sports and Health. However, especially with the flights from Sittwe to Yangon, came the second wave with a much faster spread at a higher mortality rate. Because online teaching and learning was never expected in the context of the teaching-learning process, the institutions under the Ministry of Education were not ready to face the new situation, and had to be closed again.

Higher education level

During the COVID- crisis, Zoom meetings were conducted at the administrative level over how to tackle the New Normal situations, and workshops were provided for the teaching staff of universities. For instance, Digital literacy: Learning Management System, sponsored by the Rectors' Committee, Zoom Webinar for Leadership and Management in Higher Education by Prof. Dr Aung Tun Thet and pedagogy lectures by the Department of Educational Theories, Sagaing University of Education. However, it must be pointed out that in

the post-COVID-19 crisis, a tracer study be made on the effectiveness of these training courses paving the way to the combination of pedagogy and practice in online learning.

Impact on jobs

As a case study of an international school in Mandalay has pointed out, COVID-19 crisis has made a strong negative impact on jobs. Many institutions suffered the issues of redundancies. On the other hand, since the staff have to follow the Stay-at-Home rules under the directives of the Ministry of Sports and Health, a considerable number of teaching staff had left their jobs and picked up their own online teaching to three or four students. As a result, a private international school in Mandalay suffers a dearth of language teachers to continue running the school. Such challenges may come over again if, God forbid it, the pandemic would repeat itself. It is suggested that as a project of post-Covid crisis, schools should start training the teaching staff on how to conduct online classes and exploit the effectiveness of online teaching, as suggested by an instructor trainer Lokethar (2020): "It is true that training the teachers on modern technology and teaching methods would address the issue of the current deficiencies in the teaching-learning process."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Asia Foundation launches Myanmar Business Environment Index 2020

Second edition of MBEI tool shows progress in governance for private sector development

THE Asia Foundation released the Myanmar Business Environment Index 2020 (MBEI). The MBEI 2020, funded by UK Aid through the DaNa Facility, is Myanmar's second installment of the Index, which was first launched in 2019.

The MBEI released on 10 December is a survey of primarily businesspeople measuring perceptions on the ease of doing business across Myanmar.

The survey results are analyzed to produce an index for each state and region of Myanmar, establishing a benchmark

for rating business-friendliness. The index provides policymakers with critical information to inform decision-making regarding the business landscape in Myanmar.

The MBEI is organized into 10 subindices, each a measure of a specific dimension of the business environment such as the cost of entry, government transparency, access to land, and the availability of suitably skilled labor. Each subindex consists of statistically rigorous indicators—153 in total. Each MBEI indicator tracks a specific issue, for example, the MBEI answers questions ranging

from how many businesses have had difficulties with official registration to how frequently they have power outages.

Findings from the MBEI 2020 reveal that there have been improvements in Myanmar's local governance for private sector development since the first iteration of the MBEI in 2018.

Some business environment dimensions have improved more than others; results for seven out of the 10 subindices show improvements while there is a decline for one dimension, law and order. The MBEI 2020 suggests

that Yangon Region, Sagaing Region, Bago Region, and Nay Pyi Taw are the best environments to do business in Myanmar.

In addition to being able to compare business landscapes between Myanmar's states and regions, the MBEI 2020 offers specific insights within each state and region. The index illustrates the strengths and weaknesses for each state and region, allowing government decision-makers, businesses, and the public to track progress in making each state and region a better place to start and grow businesses.

Mark McDowell, The Asia Foundation's country representative in Myanmar remarked, "The MBEI results can help government pinpoint areas that need special attention and then keep track of the impact of efforts to improve them. But it can also help businesses make investment decisions and citizens address public interest issues. It's a project with benefits not just for business or government, but for all members of Myanmar society."

ABOUT THE ASIA FOUNDATION

SOURCE: The Asia Foundation

73rd Independence Day Anniversary (2021)

National Objectives

- All Union nationals to protect and strive with "collective strength" for Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Unity, and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
- All citizens to be able to enjoy on the same level - social equality, economic equality, political equality, equality as citizens, equal opportunity, and equality before the law.
- To strive towards the amendment of the Constitution for the emergence of a genuine Democratic Federal Union.
- To build a modern developed Democratic Federal Union by nurturing Union spirit for the perpetuation of the Union.
- The government, together with the people to confront with collective strength the challenges faced by the entire people with increased momentum for all-round development of the country.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 20th December, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few cloud elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 21st December, 2020: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Eastern Shan State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be generally fair in Naypyitaw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly winds may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-8) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (4-7) feet Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21st December, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21st December, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21st December, 2020: Generally fair weather.

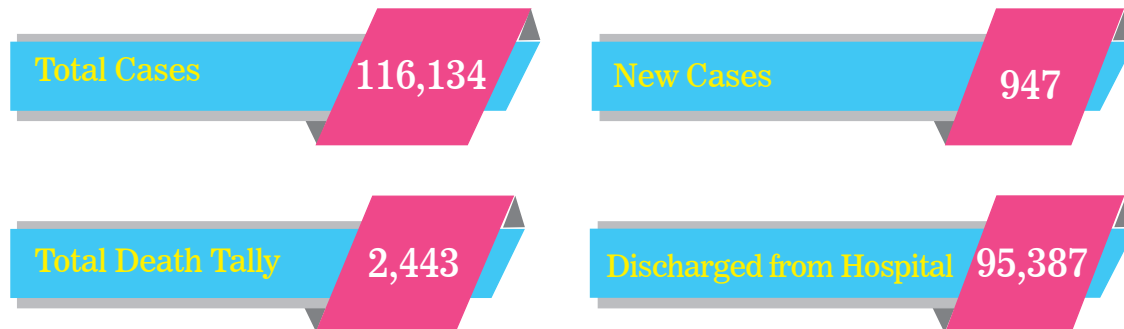
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947 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 December, total figure rises to **116,134**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **116,134** after **947** new cases were reported on 20 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **116,134** confirmed cases, **2,443** died, **95,387** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 20 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 20-12-2020

19

Ministry of Health and Sports

Bamboo chicken coops on brink of extinction

THE traditionally-woven chicken coops is on the verge of extinction in Kyaukkyi Town, Taungoo district, Bago Region, according to the handicraft manufacturers.

"We make a bamboo basket for the chicken trap. It is traditional arts which passed generations to generations. However, most of the young people are lack of interest in traditional arts and crafts. We are worried about traditional skills being on the way to extinction, a basket maker Saw Po Poe stressed.

"We use bamboo in weaving

chicken baskets. It takes two to three hours to make a basket. We make many kinds of bamboo baskets, including fish trap, chicken trap, eel trap, etc.," he added.

The business can run throughout three seasons — summer, monsoon and winter. The traditional basket making business can earn income amid the coronavirus pandemic, the artisan's family said.—Ko Thar Gyi (Kyaukkyi)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A woman is weaving bamboo chicken coop. PHOTO: KO THAR GYI (KYAUKKYI)

Women provided with digital, leadership skills training



Ooredoo Myanmar launched its Tech Age Girls (TAG) programme 2020-2021 for empowering young women with digital literacy and leadership skills.

Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation-MBAPF organized the one-year Tech Age Girls Program for young women aged 16-20 with an aim to equip them with essential leadership and digital technology knowledge.

Each year over 100 young women from different communities are selected to participate in

the programme.

The Tech Age Girls program since 2016 with connectivity and devices, and became the main sponsor in 2019. More than 200 young women have been recruited to participate in the Tech Age Girls 2020-21.

The Tech Age Girls Program includes three phases of learning — ICT skills, soft skills and leadership summit, and these three phases will start in December 2020 and ends in October 2021. —GNLM

YAC L turns fifth year handing over from YIA

IT has been slightly more than 5 years since the effective operation and management of Yangon International Airport ("YIA") was transferred from the Department of Civil Aviation ("DCA") to Yangon Aerodrome Company Limited ("YACL") pursuant to a Concession Agreement signed on 6th January 2015.

Much has been achieved in this short period with the Yangon International Airport Development Project: New Terminal buildings, Terminal 1 (International) and Terminal 3 (Domestic) with the forthcoming retrofitting of Terminal 2 (International), new Rescue & Fire Fighting Station and considerable increase

in aircrafts parking positions. Whilst the physical infrastructure has transformed the landscape, many important changes and improvements in operation, capacity building and resource development have also occurred boosting safety, security and efficiency of YIA.

YIA Terminal 1 (International) was officially opened in March 2016.

In the short term, efforts to ensure sustainability of YIA will be implemented. Proposition for cost cutting measures including furlough or retrenchment with its impact and consequences on YIA's safety, security and efficiency are considerations that

management will not take lightly.

The paramount importance is the well-being of our people and our airport users.

YIA has an important role as the main gateway of Myanmar. In the economic growth of Yangon and Myanmar, YIA serves as the connection hub for investment and growth. The future growth shall be addressed together with the other stakeholders and the public, aiming for a technically, environmentally and economically balanced approach.

The opportunities lie in the future, with preparedness and readiness of changes, YACL is ready to seize and deliver the opportunities. —GNLM



A TUMULTUOUS YEAR OF DIFFERENCES

Saudi Arabia and Russia express unity ahead of OPEC+ summit

Saudi Arabia and Russia on Saturday said they backed each other ahead of a key OPEC+ oil summit, following a tumultuous year of differences over oil production and volatile prices.

Earlier this month, the 13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), plus allies including Russia — a group known as OPEC+ — said that from January 2021 they would raise production by 500,000 barrels per day.

Saudi Oil Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said the OPEC+ cooperation charter had brought the group together,

producing “good results”.

“That’s why it should be perpetuated,” he told reporters in a broadcast on state-run Al Ekhbariya TV.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Moscow “once again confirmed our loyalty” to existing agreements.

“We plan to work together in order to achieve a balanced situation... and to propose solutions aimed at stabilising the market,” Novak said.

OPEC+ will hold an online summit on January 4, while Riyadh and Moscow are due to hold talks in March, a meeting

hoped to be “in person”, Prince Abdulaziz said.

At the start of the year, a price war had pitted Saudi Arabia against Russia, the third and second largest oil producers respectively, as the oil market was hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.

But faced with Moscow’s refusal to reduce production in line with OPEC cuts, Riyadh had sharply increased its own, causing prices to plummet.

Earlier this month, the OPEC+ group struck a deal to increase production over coming months.

SOURCE: AFP



A handout photo released by the Saudi Energy Ministry shows Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman chairing a virtual extraordinary meeting of G20 oil ministers, in the capital Riyadh. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

DEADLINE LOOMS

Path to post-Brexit deal blocked by fish dispute

INTENSE haggling Saturday over EU fishing rights in UK waters threatened to sink negotiations on a post-Brexit deal and plunge cross-Channel trade into chaos.

Fishing is now the main obstacle to securing a pact by 1 January, when Britain leaves the EU single market, after progress on the other main issue of guaranteeing fair competition.

“It remains very blocked,” one EU diplomat told AFP.

Another said Brussels had made Britain its last offer on fishing access and it was down now to UK Prime Minister Boris

Johnson to decide whether he wants a deal.

“If Britain doesn’t accept the latest EU offer it will be a ‘no deal’ over fish,” he warned, adding that London has until the end of the year to decide.

The EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier has proposed EU fishermen giving up nearly a quarter of the value of the fish they currently catch in UK waters. Britain is understood to be holding out for getting back much more than half. The UK has suggested this compromise last for three years before it is renegotiated, whereas Europe is

holding out for double that. “It’s all down to numbers now,” the second European diplomat said.

EU fishermen expressed alarm that “we are in the throes of being sold down the river,” in a statement from the European Fisheries Alliance.

It urged Barnier to stick to protecting them, saying: “The shape of a deal, as currently stands would give a huge blow to the European seafood sector which is made up of more than 18,000 fishermen and 3,500 vessels with an annual turnover of 20.7 billion euros.”

SOURCE: AFP



Fishing is now the main obstacle to securing a pact by 1 January, when Britain leaves the EU single market, after progress on the other main issue of guaranteeing fair competition. PHOTO: AFP

FIRST ELECTIONS IN 15 YEARS

In refugee camps, Palestinians prepare for post-Abbas power struggle



Palestinian security personnel maintain a heavy presence around Balata refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, following an upsurge in intra-Palestinian violence. PHOTO: AFP

IN Palestinian refugee camps in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, some residents are preparing weapons for a potential power struggle when president Mahmud Abbas finally leaves the stage.

Abbas, 85, leader of the dominant Fatah movement and of the Palestinian Authority (PA), has promised legislative and presidential elections in 2021, for the first time in almost 15 years.

Rivals are already seeking to build up a power-base.

In Balata camp, outside the city of Nablus, walls are plastered with posters picturing Hatem Abu Rizq, regarded as a “martyr” of Palestinian in-fighting.

On October 31, Palestinian media reported one dead and others wounded in Balata, where 30,000 people are crammed into one quarter of a

square kilometre (one tenth of a square mile).

This time, the casualties were not the result of a clash with Israeli forces, although Abu Rizq spent almost 10 years in Israeli jails for his part in the Palestinian uprising of 2000 to 2005. At the age of 35, he died in the eruption of intra-Palestinian violence in October.

Palestinian officials said he was killed by the premature explosion of a bomb he was about to detonate.

“But in truth he was killed by shots from the Palestinian Authority,” says his mother, Um Hatem Abu Rizq, in the family’s tiny apartment in a dilapidated concrete building.

“He was looking to fight corruption within the Palestinian administration, that’s why they didn’t like him,” she weeps, kissing a giant poster of her son.

SOURCE: AFP

MOUNT KUMGANG

North Korea to redevelop flagship tourist resort

PYONGYANG plans to redevelop its flagship Mount Kumgang tourist complex into an international resort, a year after leader Kim Jong Un ordered South Korean-built buildings there demolished, state media reported Sunday.

The resort -- once a prominent symbol of inter-Korean economic cooperation -- was built by South Korea's Hyundai Asan on one of the North's most scenic mountains, drawing hundreds of thousands of Southern visitors.

But last year Kim condemned the development with the South as an eyesore and described facilities there as "shabby" and built like "make-shift tents in a disaster-stricken area or isolation wards", ordering their removal.

On Sunday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim Tok Hun, the

North's premier, stressed "the need to build the tourist area our own way" to turn it into a "cultural resort envied by the whole world", during his visit to the area.

He also called for pushing ahead to turn the area into a "modern and all-inclusive international tourist" resort, it added.

The Mount Kumgang complex was once one of the two biggest inter-Korean projects, along with the now-shuttered Kaesong Industrial Complex, where Southern companies employed North Korean workers while paying Pyongyang for their services.

But its tours came to an abrupt end in 2008 after a North Korean soldier shot dead a tourist from the South who strayed off an approved path, and Seoul suspended travel.

SOURCE: AFP



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) in 2019 described facilities at the Mount Kumgang tourist area as 'shabby' and ordered their removal. PHOTO: KCNA VIA KNS/AFP/FILE

SPIKE IN DEMAND

German factory races to churn out Covid-19 syringes

THE battle against Covid-19 has delivered not just a vaccine at record speed but also a spike in demand for the billions of syringes needed to administer it.

One German factory is already busily churning out the little plastic tubes and is confident global needs can be met.

"There won't be a short-

age of syringes, even if we are facing a big challenge," said Otto-Philipp Braun, co-director of Almo, Germany's leading syringe manufacturer.

At the company's production site in the central German town of Bad Arolsen, the loud hum of machinery fills the hall.

Employees man the assembly lines, wearing masks, hair nets and occasionally ear plugs.

They churn out disposable syringes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, destined for use in Germany and more than 140 other countries around the world.

One machine moulds high-quality plastic granules into thin, one-millilitre syringes, while another spits out the pistons that fit snugly inside the cylinder and are needed to push

out the vaccine.

The plastic piston is green, matching the logo of German parent company B. Braun, a giant in the medical devices industry and still owned by the Braun family.

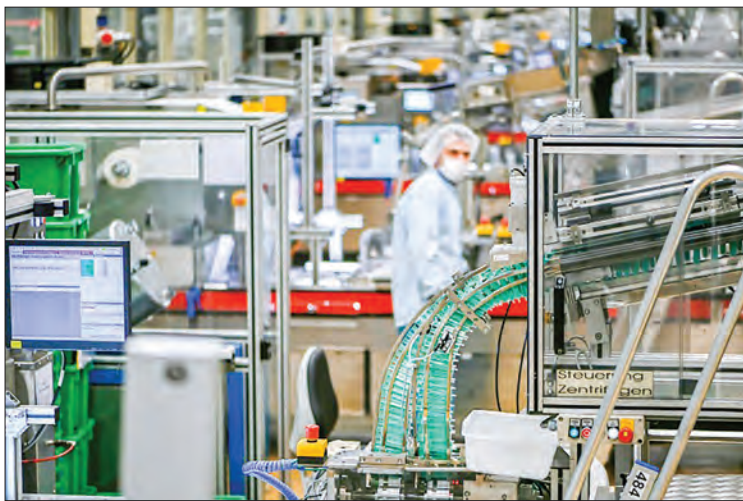
A total of 64 syringes with pistons are assembled every 13 seconds.

Every year, Almo churns out more than two billion syringes of various kinds.

The needles that can be added to the injection devices are produced by a B. Braun subsidiary in Malaysia.

The company intends to spend 30 million euros on an additional assembly line, partly to cope with increased demand for the Covid-19 jabs.

SOURCE: AFP



One German factory is already busily churning out the little plastic tubes and is confident global needs can be met. PHOTO: AFP

PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY CHAIN

Singapore gets shot in the arm from global drug demand

SCIENTISTS in protective clothing work in a high-tech laboratory at a pharmaceutical plant in Singapore, whose coronavirus-hit economy has received a shot in the arm from robust global drug demand.

The city-state is on course for its worst ever recession this year but factory activity has held

up, thanks partly to countries rushing to stockpile medicines during the pandemic.

The nation just half the size of Los Angeles has become a centre for drug makers and is home to more than 50 factories, owned by big players including Pfizer, Roche, GlaxoSmithKline and Takeda.

Singapore's drug sector "plays an important role in the global pharmaceutical industry supply chain", Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific chief economist at consultancy IHS Markit, told AFP.

And in 2020, "governments and private-sector firms have been building up inventories of critical drugs as a result of the

severe supply chain disruptions in many countries during the pandemic", he added. Data highlights the benefits for the trading hub -- biomedical manufacturing, which covers pharmaceuticals, has grown strongly, with output expanding 90 percent on-year in September alone.

SOURCE: AFP

TRADE MEASURES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Air cargo and container ship restrictions impacting delivery of goods

AMID the Christmas festivities and the year's biggest shopping season, severe restrictions on trade between China and the rest of the countries have infuriated retailers and shoppers in Europe and the United States.

During Germany's first lockdown in March due to coronavirus, Oliver Hellmold, CEO of Notebooksbilliger, one of Europe's largest online electronics retailers, had started ordering a large number of gadgets from China like every year's pre-Christmas sales "anticipating a pandemic-related shift toward people working from home", said Nikkei Asia. However, by October Hellmold's struggle to maintain inventory had begun. According to Hellmold, since August the demand from schools and the public sector for monitors, PCs and notebooks had increased by as much as 40 per cent year-on-year due to shifting of learning and services to online mode.

SOURCE: ANI

PATIMBAN INTERNATIONAL PORT

Indonesia launches Japanese-funded port to boost auto exports

INDONESIAN President Joko Widodo on Sunday presided over the soft launching and initial operation of the Japanese-funded Patimban deep sea port, located some 120 kilometers east of Jakarta.

Widodo said that with the completion of the first phase of Patimban International Port in Subang Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia's exports, including autos, to the global market are expected to increase.

In November 2017, the Japanese government signed an agreement with Indonesia to finance the first phase of the port development project with a



The future Java Integrated Industrial and Ports Estate. SOURCE: JIPE

soft loan of some 119 billion yen.

The port has a current capacity for 3.75 million 20-foot-long cargo containers or their equivalent, while its car terminal can accommodate 218,000 completely built-up units,

or CBUs.

Its capacities are expected to increase to 7 million containers and 600,000 CBUs upon the completion of the third phase in 2027.

Also on Sunday, Widodo, participating in the ceremony virtually, witnessed

the first shipment of 140 Toyota, Daihatsu and Suzuki cars to Brunei from the new port.

Patimban, designated as a national strategic project, is expected to facilitate the country's exports by boosting time efficiency and lowering logistics costs.

It will ease heavy congestion on roads to Tanjung Priok port, a major export base north of Jakarta.

The new port is located in the east of industrial parks in and around Bekasi Regency, where Japanese automakers and car parts manufacturers are building an industrial cluster.

SOURCE: KYODO

\$900BN

US lawmakers set to vote on virus stimulus deal: WSJ

US lawmakers agreed on pandemic spending powers for the Federal Reserve late Saturday, the Wall Street Journal reported, clearing the way for a vote on a roughly \$900 billion Covid-19 relief package for millions of Americans.

The deal would maintain the central bank's ability to set up emergency lending programs without congressional approval, the Journal said, but the Fed would require approval to restart existing CARES Act programs once they expire

at the end of this year.

Republicans had sought to limit the Fed's ability to provide credit for businesses and other institutions, claiming Democrats were trying to use the legislation to create a "slush fund" for state and

local governments they control. Democrats argue restricting the bank's powers could compound the fiscal crisis and hamper the ability of the incoming Joe Biden administration to boost the ailing US economy.—SOURCE: AFP

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၁။ ဝယ်ယူမည့် ပစ္စည်းအမည်နှင့် အရေအတွက်
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(၁) နိုင်ငံခြားစက္ကူ(၃)မျိုး
- Sticker Paper (21"x30") (85gsm) (100 sheets) ၃,၇၀၀ ထုပ်
- Duplex Board (31"x43") (Ivory Board) (270gsm) (100 sheets) ၆,၀၀၀ ထုပ်
- Wood Free Paper (27"x34") (70gsm) (500sheet) ၃၀၀ ထုပ်

(၂) Printed Carton Box (5ply) (၇)မျိုး ၅၅၂,၁၀၀ ခု
(၃) Printed Carton Box (3ply) (၈)မျိုး ၃၆၆,၅၀၀ ခု
(၄) PET Plastic Container with Sticker Label ၂၃၀,၀၀၀ ခု
(၅) PE Plastic Bottle (3 liter) ၄၀,၀၀၀ ခု
(၆) BOPP Tape (2"x100yards) ၁၅,၀၀၀ ခွေ

၂။ တင်ဒါပိတ်ရက်နှင့် အချိန် - (၇ - ၁ - ၂၀၂၁) မွန်းလွဲ (၄:၀၀)နာရီ

၃။ ပစ္စည်းပေးသွင်းရမည့် စက်ရုံ - ဆေးဝါးစက်ရုံ (အင်းစိန်၊ အင်ဂျင်နီယာ)

၄။ တင်ဒါပေးသွင်းရမည့် နေရာ - ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ၊ တင်ဒါလက်ခံရေးနှင့် စီစစ်ရေး ကော်မတီ၊ မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း၊ စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။

၅။ တင်ဒါပုံစံနှင့် တင်ဒါစည်းကမ်း အသေးစိတ် အချက်အလက်များကို အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ ဌာနတွင် စုံစမ်းမေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည်-

မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်) တယ်လီဖုန်းအမှတ် ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၈၈
စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၇၄
ရုံးအမှတ်(၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။

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Consignees of cargo carried on **TUG: SALVAGE ACE** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

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

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

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Pwe Hla Haw Nan in Pwe Hla Village, southern Shan State

By Thiha Lu Lin
(THIHA, THE TRAVELLER)

PWE Hla, also known as Pwe Hla Village in Danu Region in southern Shan State, is now a thriving town. It has been 260 years that Pwe Hla was built and it can be said that it is a very long-lived area. The town is also peaceful on its own. During my visit, I noticed that there was a lot of natural beauty in the area. I assume that it has the beauty of nature the travelers haven't seen yet. I went trekking near its environment and also took a look in the town and market.

The region owns various kinds of flower and vegetable. Speaking of Pwe Hla, in this article, I am going to tell you my unplanned visit to Pwe Hla Haw Nan while on a trip to Pindaya.

Pwe Hla Haw Nan

During my trip to Pindaya, some local more talked about Pwe Hla Haw Nan than Pindaya Haw Nan and it

makes me want to visit Pwe Hla Haw Nan. I felt profound and enjoyed it when I got there. The building structure of Pwe Hla Haw Nan is unique. It feels like it has stone walls, unlike any other Hall Nan. It is said that the Indians created the Haw Nan by carving gravel. The carpenters were from China. One unique thing about the Haw Nan is that the building has a European-style look with the Myanmar interior decorations. This nearly 120-year-old Haw Nan is said to be built in Japanese rule in Myanmar. The Haw Nan was the palace of Saopha Sao San Mya, and we can see the photographs of the Saopha and his family and relatives in black and white colours.

There are altogether 20 rooms, ten rooms in upstairs and 10 in downstairs in the 400 square feet wide Haw Nan. Except for some slight damages in some place, the entire Haw Nan



Over a century-year-old European style Pwe Hla Haw Nan.



Pwe Hla Saopha Sao San Mya.



Maha Davi Daw Khin Tint.



is still in a perfect condition. The rooms don't have much light because it has not been systematically transformed yet into a museum. The things inside of it are also found in a state of disrepair with dust like a warehouse.

As I looked around the room, I could guess the conditions of that time. The room where the Saopha lived, the bed and the type of cord used in those days are still there. The door handles are also unique.

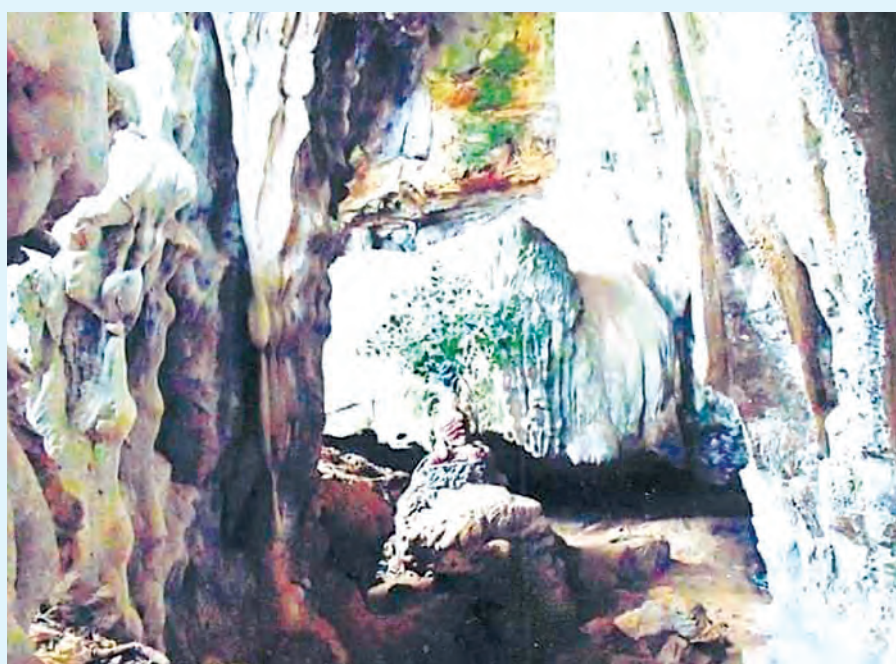
Even though the other rooms are left as such, a small place where Grandma Daw Sao Mya Aye lived at the back entrance of the downstairs and the Buddha shrine hall was cleaned. The Buddha shrine was there since the palace was built and the photographs on the wall of the living room in upstairs are the real history, showcasing the first Saopha to the last one.

I personally prefer the exterior design of the Haw Nan. Grandma Daw Sao Mya Aye whom I met during my visit is the last daughter among eight children of Saopha and. Despite her age of being 90, I noticed that she was relatively healthy and active. The last daughter was a professor at the History Department at Taunggyi University and can speak English fluently with clear pronunciation. Due to her age, she didn't guide the tour when she was not in the mood but, when she wanted to, she used to explain the story of the Haw Nan.

I appreciated her explanation

Hpa-Baung cave in Mon State attracts more visitors

MORE and more people are visiting Hpa-Baung Cave located in Lamukho Village-tract, Kyaikmaraw Township in Mon State. The cave is home to the fascinating beauty of nature and ancient pagodas, decorated with stalactite and stalagmite inside



of it. The cave is situated on the east bank of Attayan River, about an hour walk from the Sabai Cave Bridge. At present, there are 900 small and large Buddha statues and seven pagodas inside the Hpa-Baung cave. Besides, a six-foot-high ancient artwork reclining Buddha Statue covered by gold makes the cave shine in golden colour.

The Hpa-Baung cave was first discovered by a hunter from War Pyan Kone Village around 1,200 years ago. The pagoda festival is held annually on the full moon day of Tagu since after the discovery of ancient pagodas carved in votive tablets and multiple stupas in the cave. — Cho Cho (IPRD)
(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Black and white pictures of the relatives.



Fireplace in the Saopha's bedroom.

and hospitality as it was not the public museum. It was sad to hear that she passed away on 16 September 2020. Of the relatives of Pwe Hla Saopha, U Sao Aung Mya, the former Chief Minister of Shan State, is still alive.

Notification to visitors

Let me kindly request you to be extra careful when visiting by not disturbing the family living in the Haw Nan since it is not yet a public museum.

When visiting

The Haw Nan is located in Pwe Hla Village around 8 miles from Pindaya. It can be easily searched in Google Maps and also can be found on Aung Ban- Pindaya road if you are going from Kalaw, Aung Ban.

Of all the centuries-old Haw Nans, Pwe Hla Haw Nan is the one that amazes anyone who has ever been there with its well-built and unique design. Although it will be nice to be transformed into a museum with

good maintenance, the family's desire is more important. I want to suggest to pay a visit to nature-based places in Pwe Hla while the trip to Pwe Hla Haw Nan.

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Myanmar joins AFC Futsal Director's Workshop 2020

REPRESENTING Myanmar, U Naing Thaung Htike, Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation's Futsal and Beach Committee, attended the video-conference of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal Director's Workshop 2020, on 18 December, according to the yesterday's statement with the MFF.

A total of 21 representatives from the Asian Football Confederation and the ASEAN Football Federation attended the virtual conference to highlight the regional football matters.

At the workshop, repre-

sentatives from various ASEAN countries discussed the current situation of futsal and beach football and the development plans of futsal sport in each country, and the AFC football authorities provided unique recommendations for the AFC member countries.

AFC Futsal Director Iran Ali Targholizadeh said that the world of futsal in Myanmar is growing year by year. He welcomed the acquisition of a new world-class futsal court and said he believed the project would improve even more.

The previous version of the

AFC Futsal Director's Workshop was also held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 12 December 2019 and President of the Myanmar Futsal and Sand Beach Committee Dr Ye Mon Htut, attended the meeting and discussed future development plans of the futsal sport. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Vice-Chairman of the MFF Futsal and Beach Committee U Naing Thaung Htike joins the AFC Futsal Director's Workshop 2020 virtually on 18 December 2020.

PHOTO: MFF



Federer training, committed to playing Australian Open: Tiley



Roger Federer (right) was beaten by Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semi-finals this year. PHOTO: DAVID GRAY AFP

MELBOURNE — All the world's top players, including 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer, are expected to be in Melbourne for the coronavirus-disrupted Australian Open, tournament organiser Craig Tiley said.

The opening Grand Slam of the year, in front of at least 50 percent of normal crowds, has been pushed back three weeks until February 8 with all players to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine on arrival.

The delay could be pivotal for Federer, who admitted last week he was in a "race against time" to be fit as his recovery from two rounds of knee surgery takes longer than expected.

Tiley said he had been in touch with the 39-year-old and he was going through his normal pre-season training routine in Dubai. "Every player, including Roger, has made a commitment to travel to Melbourne to play," he said after confirming the new start date on Saturday.

"We have been in touch with him and his team and it's been three days now, he's hit for the first time in Dubai. He's in his normal pre-season training routine. "He did say to us that February 8 was a more suitable date for him in terms of preparing for the Australian Open," Tiley added. "But a lot will depend on how he responds to his surgery in the next two to three weeks of training."—AFP ■

How many goal landmarks left for Lionel Messi?

MADRID — Lionel Messi reached a new landmark Saturday by scoring his 643rd goal for Barcelona, equalling the record held by Pele for goals recorded for the same club, but who is football's greatest marksman?

Messi's latest achievement came in the 2-2 draw with Valencia when the 33-year-old headed in from Jordi Alba's cross after his first-half penalty was saved.

It equalled the mark set by Brazilian great Pele for Santos before he left for New York Cos-

mos in 1974. Messi's goals have come in 748 matches, an average of one every 1.16 games; Pele's came in 757 matches at one every 1.17 games.

"These figures are impressive, we will never have a player so effective at this club," admitted Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman.

"That's why he is the number one. What he has done for this club, it's impressive." Rarely does a season go by when Messi isn't forcing football's history books to

be updated.

On July 1, in a 2-2 draw with Atletico Madrid, Messi scored the 700th goal of his professional career — club and internationals combined — with a clever 'Panenka' penalty. More than 15 years have passed since Messi opened his goal account with Barcelona.

It was on May 1, 2005, against Albacete in La Liga in a 2-0 win.

However, his love affair with Catalonia soured in August this year when he threatened to leave.—AFP ■



Great leveller: Lionel Messi heads in against Valencia to equal Pele's record for goals scored for one club. PHOTO: AFP

Mexico's Alvarez overpowers Britain's Smith to claim two titles

LOS ANGELES — Mexican pound-for-pound champ Saul Alvarez ended the longest layoff of his career on Saturday, brutally overpowering the previously unbeaten Callum Smith to capture

two super middleweight titles with a unanimous decision in Texas.

Three-division champion Alvarez claimed the vacant WBC title and Briton Smith's WBA

version of the 168-pound belt, overcoming a stark height difference as he moved up in weight class for the fight in front of a pandemic-limited crowd at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

"I feel really proud to have this," Alvarez said. "I represent not only the boxing world but my country. I did a great job after a 13-month layoff.

"I am the best in the world."

Alvarez improved to 54-1-2 with 36 knockouts, while Smith suffered the first defeat of his pro career and dropped to 27-1, 19 knockouts.—AFP ■