

SUNDAY SPECIAL



Pull-out supplement

NATIONAL

Director-General of Ministry of State Counsellor Office holds online press conference about government's handling amid COVID-19

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Disinfection conducted at Hluttaw buildings in Nay Pyi Taw to prevent spread of COVID-19 disease



Defence Services personnel and Fire Brigade members carry out disinfection in the compound of Hluttaw buildings in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. PHOTO: MNA

DISINFECTANTS were sprayed at the buildings of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday morning as a move to prevent

spread of COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory.

Meeting halls and dining rooms were disinfected by 20 Defence Service personnel and

80 members of Nay Pyi Taw Fire Services Department, using 4 disinfecting vehicles, 6 fire engines, 2 water tankers and 2 Robotic Fire Fighting (LUF 60) vehicles.

The disinfections were supervised by the directors-general of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office, the Fire Services Department and military officers of Nay Pyi Taw

Command. Combined teams of officials will also carry out disinfections in Nay Pyi Taw council area in coming days.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

144 Myanmar citizens brought back from Singapore in 4th group as total number reaches 577

THE 4th relief flight of Myanmar that brought back 144 returnees from Singapore landed at the Yangon International Airport

yesterday evening.

On arrival at the airport, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Pop-

ulation, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period

at the designated places and the respective hotels in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks. As per the di-

rectives of National-Level Central Committee on Prevention,

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Union Minister observes transport projects in Shan State (South)

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, accompanied by Deputy Minister Dr Kyaw Lin and officials, inspected, road and bridge construction sites, rural road/bridge construction undertakings and progress of work in Shan State (South) through the video conferencing from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Chief Engineer U Kyaw Thiha of Construction Department reported on upgrading of roads and bridges in Shan State (South) in fiscal year 2019-2020, tarring of a district road, road extension, paving and expansion of roads, construction of reinforced concrete bridges and culverts, Covid-19 prevention and donations and upgrading of Meiktila-Taunggyi-Kentung-Tachilek road with the help of power point. Shan State (South) now has 117 more miles of tarred roads and have completed 99 per cent of

new reinforced concrete bridges.

Director U Tun Aung Kyaw of Urban and Housing Development Department office of the state explained the ongoing housing projects in the area. According to director U Aung Tun of the Department of Rural Development, DRD has completed 61.71 per cent of new tarred, gravel and earth roads and bridges in Shan State (South), 21 miles three furlongs of the 26-mile ring road of Inlay Lake, 65 per cent of Helgu-Mognethraphu-Kyaton-Indain tarred road, Naungpi-Tilon-MoeU-Nantphamu tarred road, and MingalaU-Tihat road projects.

Deputy director of Bridges Department presented a power-point report on replacing the blown-up Goghtaik bridge with a bailey bridge, construction of a two-lane 210-foot long bridge at the place. Deputy director



Construction Minister U Han Zaw chairs a meeting on video conference about progress of infrastructure projects in southern Shan State. **PHOTO: MNA**

U Thant Zin of special bridge group 12 and assistant director U Aung Kyaw Htaik of bridge construction group 3 also presented reports.

In response, the Union Minister and the deputy minister expressed pleasure for the

developments during the Covid-19 prevention and containment period and pointed out the need to meet the set standards in implementing the projects. They suggested constant checks by officials for the safety and smoothness of the mountain

roads. All must observe the orders, directives and instructions issued by the relevant ministries for prevention, containment and treatment of Covid-19, they noted, and stressed the need to work in harmony and unison. —MNA
(Translated by TMT)

Thai authorities hand over 76 Myanmar citizens



A Myanmar migrant worker receives body temperature measurement as he arrives at Myawady Friendship Bridge 2 on 16 May, 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LINN AUNG (IPRD)**

MYANMAR began accepting Myanmar migrant workers returning from Thailand on 1 May and Myanmar officials accepted 76 Myanmar citizens who have served jail terms in Thailand for various offences at Myawady Friendship Bridge 2 yesterday.

Handover of these persons and their medical check-ups were supervised by Kayin State Hluttaw Representative U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrator of Myawady District U Tay Zar Aung, Head of District Police Force Police Lt- Col Thet Lin Oo, Township Administrator U Phyzo Zaw Ko, and officials.

The number of Myanmar nationals who returned from

Thailand was 60 on 1 May, 54 on 2 May, 1 on 3 May, 44 on 4 May, 23 on 5 May, 100 on 8 May, 44 on 10 May, 13 on 11 May, 41 on 12 May, 16 on 13 May, 38 on 14 May and 120 on 15 May with no returnees on 6, 7 and 9 May, totalling 630.

They are six persons from Kachin State, one from Kayah State, five from Kayin State, seven from Mon State, three from Sagaing Region, 25 from Bago Region, 14 from Magway Region, three from Yangon Region, four from Mandalay Region, four from Nay Pyi Taw, two from Shan State and two from Ayeyawady Region. — Htein Linn Aung (IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Strong winds destroy houses, religious buildings

Strong winds devastated houses and monasteries in eight regions and states on 14 and 15 May.

In the pre-monsoon periods of March, April and May, strong winds, heavy clouds, lightning, and sleet falling used to occur in Myanmar.

Strong winds in Kayah State blew off the roofs of four houses in Dimawhso and Meisei townships, and strong winds in Kayin State destroyed the roofs of two houses in Myawady Township, while Sagaing Region's strong winds damaged a house, the roofs of 36 houses and three religious buildings in Ayadaw, Tamu, Depeyin, and Kyaukmyaung townships.

Bago Region's strong winds destroyed the roofs of six houses

and a religious building in Kawa and Thegon townships, and Magway Region's strong winds blew off the roofs of five houses, while strong winds in Mandalay Region damaged a house, and the roofs of five houses buildings and a religious building in Madaya, Thabeikkyin and NyaungU townships.

Sleet fallings in Mogok Township damaged the roofs of 223 houses and two religious buildings.

Mon State's strong winds blew off the roof of a house in Ye Township, and Shan State's strong winds destroyed the roofs of 97 houses and two religious buildings in ten townships.

During 9 and 16 May, strong winds and sleet falling across

the nation damaged a total of 781 houses and 14 religious buildings, and blew off the roofs of 10, 847 houses and 213 religious buildings.

Officials from the Disaster Management Department under Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement went to the places affected by strong winds and sleet fallings, and had already donated K 621.4 million for relief items including rice and house-construction materials.

People can contact at 067-3404666 and 067-3404777, the hotline phone numbers of the MSWRR, if they need help for the matters related to natural disasters, according to the ministry.—MNA
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



An official from the Disaster Management Department (right) provides relief fund to a victim of strong wind. **PHOTO: MNA**

“People are the key”

161 rice bags donated to monks, nuns in Pyinmana, Pubbathiri townships

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture donated 161 rice bags for 581 monks and 244 nuns in Pyinmana and Pubbathiri townships of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Led by the patron of Mingala Zeyone Pali Tekkatho Monastery, Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Bhaddanta Vimala

Buddhi, the five senior monks represented for receiving the donated items at the Mingalabyuha Sasana Beikman of Pyinmana Township.

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko attended the ceremony and presented offertories, together with the departmental officials.

The rice bags were sent to the 259 monks at 10 monasteries and 96 nuns at 4 nunneries in Pyinmana Township, and 322 monks at 6 monasteries and 148 nuns at 3 nunneries in Pubbathiri Township.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

144 Myanmar citizens brought back from Singapore in 4th group as total number reaches 577

FROM PAGE-1

Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with the

Myanmar embassy in Singapore and other relevant ministries in Myanmar, arranged the first relief flight for 144 citizens on 7 May, 144 persons on 9 May, 145 persons on 13 May, and 144 persons yes-

terday, totalling 577 persons from the city-state.

The 5th relief flight is scheduled to bring back 146 Myanmar citizens on 21 May.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



The 4th group of 114 Myanmar citizens arrives back home from Singapore yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

COVID-19 supplies reach IDP camps in Kachin, Rakhine states



Two officials from MSWRR (left and centre) hand over soap bars to a representative at an IDP camp. PHOTO: MNA

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, in cooperation with related departments and organizations, has implemented prevention, control and response actions against COVID-19 at the IDP camps in Kachin and Rakhine states on 15 and 16 May.

In Kachin State, MSWRR officials provided 2,030 liquid soap bottles, 5,640 soap bars, 130 lime powder bags, 10 infrared thermometers, 4 sticks with COVID-19 awareness audio files, and a vinyl for 13 IDP camps in Myitkyina, Waingmaw, and Mohnyin townships.

In Rakhine State, the officials distributed 4,576 cloth masks to an IDP camp in Sittway Township, and 463 soap bars, 926 masks, 70 lime powder bags, and seven washbasins to seven IDP camps in MraukU Township.

The ministry is not only continuously implementing control and response actions against COVID-19 but also organizing educative programmes, awareness activities and moral supports in all regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355

One new case of COVID-19 on 16 May: Total figure reaches 182

1. Result on testing of 94 samples in the first group for COVID-19 at the National Health Laboratory (Yangon) and 137 samples at the Department of Medical Research, totalling 231, on 16 May showed:
One new case was found.
2. There are a total of 182 confirmed cases in Myanmar up to 8:00 p.m. on 16 May.
3. SEVEN old cases (Case 40, 49, 56, 57, 77, 121 and 151) were tested negative two consecutive times, in a total of 95 persons up to 16 May. Among them, 83 persons have been discharged from the hospital and they will be kept isolation at the designated places.
4. The total death toll remains at 6.
5. There are a total of 60 new persons under investigation in the past 24 hours from 12 noon of 16 May.

COVID-19 Laboratory results at 8:00 pm, 16 May 2020

Samples tested in first group at National Health Laboratory (Yangon) on 16 May	94
Samples tested at Department of Medical Research on 16 May	137
COVID-19(SARS-CoV-2)	1

COVID-19 Situation Report at 8 pm 16 May 2020

	New	Total
Confirmed Cases	1	182
Recovered Cases	7	95
Death	0	6

Ministry of Health and Sports
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Director-General of Ministry of State Counsellor Office holds online press conference about government's handling amid COVID-19

Director-General of the Ministry of State Counsellor Office U Zaw Htay held an online press conference yesterday, about government's management on various topics, including COVID-19 crisis.

Regarding the situations of COVID-19 in the country and government's actions, the Director-General said the government formed a national-level committee on 13 March for prevention, containment and treatments and it was chaired by the State Counsellor; after reviewing the developing situations after the Thingyan Water Festival, the 'stay home' plan was adopted until 15 May as much as possible; during the interim period, 'safely stay home' rule was also ordered at the townships with positive patients in line with regulations with quite strict restrictions instead of total lockdown practiced in other countries; announcement to public has been extended from 15 to 31 May; some restrictions were relaxed in Shwepyitha, Hlinethaya, Mingaladon and Botahtaung townships of Yangon Region and Kalay Township of Sagaing; international flights has been suspended until 31 May.

He added daily wage workers and grass root people were supplied with five fundamental household food supplies (rice, cooking, salt, onion and beans) during the Thingyan holiday; nearly 4 million families enjoyed these relief supplies and the government had to spend K50.844 billion from the state revenue; plans have been made to provide a reasonable amount of financial assistance, not relief commodities, to the internally displaced persons and vulnerable grass root families under the Goal 4 of COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan.

The 3.99 million of families will be scrutinized through digital information this time in collaboration with the General Administration Department; discussions are also underway with the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry to choose an appropriate online system for respective townships and villages; the government is discussing with the potential agents to be able to draw out cash by showing password on mobile phones and it is also expected to realize soon.



Director-General of Ministry of State Counsellor Office U Zaw Htay holds an online press conference with journalists about the government's management on current situations. **PHOTO: HEIN MIN SOE**

Some positive cases were found at people with overseas travel history and contact tracing; however, the government has put emphasis on contact tracing in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Sports and the local governments to be able to control transmission of the disease.

Myanmar has increased in capacity of test for COVID-19, while some other countries has returned to normal trend after lifting lockdown plan; they are trying to be familiar with upcoming situation; Myanmar government is also discussing to adopt an appropriate new scenario in the future and seeking advice from the relevant stakeholders on reopening of tea shops, restaurants, stalls, vendors and schools.

The World Health Organization has talked about transition to a 'new normal' during the COVID-19 pandemic as the pandemic could not disappear totally and to adopt a lifestyle amid this viral disease; the South Korea could control this disease better than other countries and it has relaxed lockdown orders; Myanmar also need to develop the habits of wearing mask outside, washing hands, physical distancing and taking body temperature in daily life; it would become a 'new normal' in Myanmar; the State Counsellor is leading to find the best ways for introducing appropriate regulations.

Although the price of masks skyrocketed at the initial stage of COVID-19 up to K500-600 per piece, but it has declined by half at present and it is expected to decrease more; there are some cloth face mask that meet health guidelines; the masks in the qual-

ity nearly like N95 and medical masks could become popular among the public as it would be required in the future lifestyles; the COVID-19 orders have been extended to 31 May and more preparations will be made in the remaining period.

Questions of news media

Media persons raised questions about the stance of government on calling for ceasefire across the country, including Rakhine State, exclusion of AA in ceasefire announcement of the Tatmadaw, elimination of illegal drug production, direc-

is now held under quarantine, second package of relief aid to families and public contributions and possible allocation of budget for COVID-19.

They also raised queries about suspension of internet services in some townships of Rakhine State, finding all the announcements in a single site, releasing matriculation results, informing university teachers to return works on 18 June, recruiting more staff members of electricity sector, actions on a woman who reached near the home and asked to meet with State Counsellor; coordination

The World Health Organization has talked about transition to a 'new normal' during the COVID-19 pandemic as the disease could not disappear totally ...

tives to relax restrictions in four townships of Yangon and Kalay Township of Sagaing Region, second package of relief supplies to the families, reopening of basic education schools, suggestion of Chinese ambassador to resume Belt and Road Initiative project, the number of foreign returnees and medical tests for COVID-19 to the civil service employees.

The journalists also asked an alternative plan to cease armed clashes in Rakhine State, the number of civilian deaths in Rakine conflicts, reviewing plans on 150 electricity units, the government's plans to provide relief items to the IDP camps in Paletwa, actions against a video file went viral online, transfer of 22 Indian prisoners, legal action against Saw David La who

of departments on community forests, difficulties of people in getting land registration forms and status of second package relief plan for the families.

Answers to media questions

Director-General U Zaw Htay replied that AA has been declared a terrorist group. AA and ARSA are not inclusive in the unilateral ceasefire. The acts of AA amount to terrorism. The Government in office has prioritized the anti-drug drive. The drug problem has relations with peace process. The people and EAOs should join hands in the drive.

Over K 50 billion was spent in distributing basic food items for the grassroots relying on daily earnings. Nearly K 18,000 were

distributed to every household. But the commodity prices vary depending on the locations. But the value did not exceed K 20,000. It is learnt that disputes occurred at the basic levels in distributing food. Leaders of the State are seeking ways to distribute the aids fully to the targeted persons. So, negotiations are underway with Online Payment Agents. The relevant ministries are also seeking a suitable way. The current distribution can be twice the value of the previous one. News about the distribution will be released when the approval is made. Plans are underway to channel the aids to about four million households, he said.

The DG said the second distribution programme will be conducted within few weeks. Some problems were face in applying the swiftest means. Forms have been sent down to the wards and villages to have a comprehensive list, and an Online Payment system is underway. It may take two to three weeks. Some did not fully receive the five kinds of food items distributed by the government through the administrative machinery. Complaints presented in video clips have appeared on the Facebook pages. So, we have to take into account these complaints. In some cases rice or cooking oil is bought at the local markets. It is learnt that some received the full amount of food aids, but some didn't. Most of the complete-set of aids reached the destinations, and only the minority faced such problems, he said.

He said we are thinking of means to send the aids right into the hands of the targeted persons. We are taking into account the use of Wave Money, Ok dollar, and KBZ Pay as they may be suitable means. We can transfer the money directly to the targeted persons just by knowing their phone numbers. We can provide them with secret code, and the agents cannot draw the money if they do not know the code. Coordination will be made by the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Central Bank of Myanmar for this part. We should know which payment system is suitable for a particular place. The cost of delivering the five kinds of food varies from K 20,000 to K 10,000 and K 15,000 depending on the locality. We have planned to use up to K 30,000 or K 40,000.

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Mandalay allows over 40 businesses, markets to reopen

“OVER 40 temporarily closed businesses and markets in Mandalay region were allowed to reopen starting from 16 May,” said Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin.

Mandalay regional government has extended the temporary closure prohibition on passenger transportation, hotels, factories and fashion shops till 25 May to prevent spreading of coronavirus pandemic. The regional government will lift the prohibition order in three phases -- 47 types of business in the

first phrase, three types in the second phrase and the last five types in the third phrase.

The first type businesses will include shops, agencies and factories while the second type, the gyms, futsal grounds, guest-houses and dormitories and the third, amusement parks, training courses, karaoke lounges, beauty salons and massage parlours.

The reopened businesses must follow the rules and regulations prescribed by the

Ministry of Health and Sports, he added.

“In lifting the restrictions imposed upon the businesses, we do this on a priority basis. The priority is based on the level of the risk of infection,” he added.

The regional government announced to take action if those resumed businesses are found not following the regulations. Those who fail to follow the rules will have their shops closed for three days for the first

time and if they fail to obey for the second time, the shops must be closed for ten days and if they fail for the third time, the shops must be closed for an unlimited time.

With the allowing of the food shops in 41 municipal markets in Mandalay to reopen, the other shops are also allowed to reopen starting from 16 May, he said.

The seven markets, which are always crowded with the people, will be allowed to resume after making necessary

preparations by the market committees, he stressed.

Coronavirus prevention and control related restrictions and prohibitions will be lifted depending upon the disease situation, he added. “We are very glad that the shops and the markets can resume their operation. But the shopkeepers need to follow the guidelines of the market committee and the government,” said a local resident.—Aye Cho

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Mandalay Region reopens over 100 highway bus lines

THE highway bus lines have all been suspended starting from April to prevent the spreading of coronavirus disease. Now, the Mandalay regional government has allowed them all to resume their transportation service, operating in the towns in Mandalay region starting from 16 May, according to the regional bus line supervisory committee (highway).

The bus lines being operated within a diameter of 100 miles from Mandalay City are resuming their transportation service starting from 16 May. And, the authorities provide the disinfectants to the bus lines from the reopened three bus terminals.

“The regional bus lines

start their operation on 16 May. More than 100 bus lines operating in an area of 100 miles in diameter from Mandalay City are now running in the towns of Mandalay region. There are five bus terminals. Among them, all buses within under 100-mile area are operating from three bus terminals — Thiri Mandala, Maha Aung Myay and Chan Mya Shwe Pyi. The buses will allow the passengers to get on board the buses in conformity with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports,” said an official from the regional bus line supervisory committee (highway).

To be able to operate the bus lines systematically, the authorities are distributing the



Some highway bus operators suspended in April have resumed their transportation services.

PHOTO: KYAW SWA (MYINGYAN)

announcement letter of rules and regulations to the bus lines to follow the coronavirus prevention activities.

Among the bus line operat-

ed in Mandalay region, only 50 per cent of bus line operating Bagan, Nyaung U, Pyawbwe, Yemethin, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mogok and Tagaung towns are allowed

to resume its operation and the remaining bus lines, operated in other towns, are not granted to resume recently.—Aye Cho

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Thai-Myanmar border trade value declines this FY



Myawady is one of the major crossings with Thailand as bilateral trade with the kingdom was more than US\$1.4 billion in the past seven months. PHOTO SUPPLIED

VALUES of Thailand-Myanmar border trade from 1 October to 1 May this financial year 2019-2020 amounted to more than US\$1.4 billion which showed a decrease

of \$170 million against last FY, according to the official statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

The country's export to Thailand amounted to \$1.7 billion

while its import shared \$677 million in seven months of this FY.

Myanmar and Thailand are also conducting bilateral trade via the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Maese and Mawtaung borders.

During this FY, Hteekhee border which has the second-largest trade value out of 17 border crossings saw a decrease of over \$541 million compared to a similar point of last FY. Myeik and Mawtaung borders also witnessed a slight decrease in trade value against the last FY.

The country's agricultural and fishery products are exported to Thailand while cosmetics, food products and machinery

and raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers are imported.

The country is also trading with these neighbouring countries- China, India and Bangladesh. Sino-Myanmar border trade is through Muse, Lweje, Kampaiti, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung borders while Myanmar is carrying out border trade with India via Tamu and Reed. The country's trade with Bangladesh is also through the Sittway and Maungtaung borders.

Border trade as of 1st May this FY totalled nearly \$6.76 billion which increased \$351 million more than last FY. —Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Fire victims in Dekhinathiri Tsp receive cash aids

A fire broke out in Do Ngwe Village of Dekhinathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area at 2:25 am on 15 May.

Cash and kind assistance for the fire victims were presented at the Sandisukha Monastery of the village at 10 am on the same day.

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Tun, Secretary of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Khin Maung Lay, and officials first made offertories

to Sayadaw Bhadanta U Zawana, the presiding monk of the monastery.

The Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative and officials presented the fire victims K1.8 million donated by the Council Chairman and U Ye Htut Tin, Managing Director of Naung Yoe Technologies Co., Ltd.

They inspected the resettlement activities in the site. Nay Pyi Taw Disaster Management Department also pro-



PHOTO: MNA

vided kit boxes containing 17 relief items, K2.3 million for construction materials, and K 102,

900 for rice for the fire victims. — Zaw Min Lwin (IPRD)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Director-General of Ministry of State Counsellor Office holds press conference

FROM PAGE-4

So we are looking in our delivery plan in detail. According to the previous experience, we have come to know that disputes occurred in designating the grassroots. So we consider sending the forms first. So, we can choose the targeted persons depending on the occupation and income. Records will be computerized so, they can be available at the same time in all difference places. We are taking time in realizing this type of programme. We are gathering all the lists. We are trying to find means for the convenience of the grassroots and to reduce the wastage, the DG explained.

U Zaw Htay then said preparations are underway to issue the list of foreign and local donors. Some donate kind and others cash. The process of COVID-19 inspection may be slow, but it is comprehensive. We are conducting experiment on the test kids for improving the inspection capacity. Plans are underway to use more test kids. We are trying to conduct COVID-19 test in Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Shan State, apart from the National Health Laboratory. The Government is paying serious attention to the COVID-19. It will continue to implement its original programmes as usual. It will reach agreements with various countries in addition to China. A total of 888 came back to Myanmar through Myawady and Phayathonsu, and none of them is found to be positive. They are now placed in quarantine. There may be a delay in the re-acceptance programme, positive cases were found at the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. The common border is closed. There is no plan to conduct COVID-19 test on government staff, as it is not nec-

essary. The test is conducted on the persons assigned at the crucial places and jobs. The States introduced the 150-unit free electricity supply programme, mainly for the grassroots. The government has to subsidize Ks 35.5 billion for over 4.49 million households, he noted.

As regards the situation in Rakhine State, some armed clashes broke out in Paletwa area. Civilian casualty list will be issued when available. Eth-



Director-General of Ministry of State Counsellor Office U Zaw Htay holds an online press conference with journalists about the government's managements on current situations. PHOTO: HEIN MIN SOE

nic races are living in Paletwa. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is providing assistance to IDP camps in Paletwa. As regards the viral video file on the internet, the Tatmadaw has established a court of inquiry for the case. Under the Constitution there are military court and the civilian court. All the global countries also have the military court of justice.

The transfer of 22 Indian citizens is concerned with National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K). Military operations were launched from January to March in 2019 in the area. Legal measures were also taken. The NSCN-K presented a pardon to the President and the State Counsellor. Moreover, Naga literature and culture commit-

tees also present a pardon to the President and the State Counsellor. The President granted amnesty for all the 22 persons on the Myanmar New Year Day.

The 22 were related to the groups active in Assam and Manipur states. They are Indian citizens. The Myanmar Police Force transferred the 22 to acting Indian consul at Khamti airport. They were then taken to India from there. Myanmar transferred all the 22 persons,

not only in Bago Region, but also in all parts of the country. Officials concerned will be informed about the matter. The half-present-half-absent programme for government staff goes on till further order is issued. According to the instructions travelling is banned, except from attending a funeral. Failure to observe them will be met with civil service laws.

A woman approached the residence of the State Counsellor at 10:10 pm on 14 March. She entered Nay Pyi Taw in the late evening, and cried that she wished to meet the State Counsellor. So the leader of members of the police on security duty asked her questions. She never gave any answer. After checking her, the police phoned her father. According to the information, she left the house before 10 am, she is suffering from mental disorder and is receiving medical treatment, she wished to file a complaint at her website, she wanted a rescue as there was injustice, she stated her NRC number on the website and said there was one person who could save her. Her parents arrived on 15 May. A medical checkup was conducted and found that she was really suffering from mental disorder. Her parents were asked to sign the letter of pledge. The case was submitted to the upper level to take follow-up measures. An instruction came from the upper level that if she was really suffering from mental disorder, she must be released for medical treatment. She will be escorted by police to the mental hospital in Yangon, said the DG.

He then answered the questions raised by the media persons. — Myo Myint, Han Lin Naing, Aung Ye Thwin
(Translated by Aung Khin & TMT)

the news about the death of one of them in jail is just a fake. We have the list, he said.

IDP camps in Rakhine State have internet access. COVID-19 awareness campaigns are carried there. Maungtaw has the internet. Health knowledge is being distributed through the SMS. In areas where there is no internet access, village administrators are conducting COVID-19 awareness campaigns with the help of loudspeakers. The Ministry of SWRR will spend K 2.2 billion for the anti-COVID-19 drive. It will prioritize the IDP camps. Coordination is being made with ICRC, he said.

The DG assured that legal action will be taken against Saw David Lar. He said the problem with land records forms occurs

SOUNDING AN ALARM

Worrying surge in childhood disease linked to COVID-19

EUROPE and the United States have seen sharp surges in recent weeks of a severe immune disorder in children linked to COVID-19, health authorities reported Friday, sounding an alarm.

At least five children — three in New York, and one each in France and Britain — have died from the syndrome, and at least two other deaths are suspect.

Up to now, COVID-19 — with 4.5 million confirmed cases worldwide, and more than 300,000 deaths — has largely spared small children and teens, though many are thought to have been infected without showing symptoms. But the new illness, while still very rare by comparison, suggests that no age bracket is safe.

Europe has seen some 230 suspected cases of so-called paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS) in children up to 14 years old, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said Friday.

Doctors in Bergamo, northern Italy reported a 30-fold increase in the incidence of severe inflammatory disorders among young children, with ten cases from mid-February to mid-April as compared to 19 during the previous five years, according to a study this week in *The Lancet*.

In the US, where well over 100 cases have been identified in the New York area, health authorities have issued an alert for the mysterious illness.

“Initial reports hypothesise that this syndrome may be related to COVID-19,” World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual briefing Friday, calling on clinicians worldwide to help “better understand this syndrome in children.” France’s state-run health watchdog described the likelihood of such a link as “very probable.” Like Kawasaki disease, a rare condition that occurs in very young children, the new disorder can cause persistent fever, searing abdominal pain, rashes and a swollen tongue.

Also compared to toxic shock syndrome, PIMS leads to inflamed blood vessels and, in some cases, damage to the heart.

A nine-year-old boy who died in the southern French city of Marseille was said to have suffered “a neurological injury related to cardiac arrest” — in other words, a heart attack.

A delayed impact

Experts speculate that the virus triggers a violent response in the immune system, causing it to turn against, rather than protect, the tissue and organs of affected children.

“They had the virus, the body fought it off earlier,” Sunil Sood, a paediatrician at Cohen Children’s Medical Center in New York, told AFP. “But now there’s this delayed, exaggerated immune response.” PIMS is different, however, from the Kawasaki syndrome in that it seems mainly



At least five children — three in New York, and one each in France and Britain — have died from a COVID-19-related syndrome that inflames the immune system. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

to affect older children.

“The population we are seeing are seven or eight through to 17,” Karyn Moshal, a paediatric infectious disease consultant at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London told *BMJ*, a medical journal. Only a minority of children affected by the inflammatory syndrome have tested positive for the new coronavirus, but that doesn’t mean they didn’t have it, experts say.

Evelina London Children’s Hospital has seen more than 50 children with signs of the syndrome, said Julia Kenny, a consultant in immunology at the hospital. “While very few tested positive for the virus on swabs, the majority tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies,” which

means they caught the virus without knowing it, she told *BMJ*.

Indeed, the surge in PIMS cases appears to lag several weeks behind the peak in COVID-19 infections across the general population, suggesting that antibodies may play a role in triggering the symptoms.

“In London, the peak (across the whole population) was estimated around the first or second week of April, and we think we saw the peak of these children this or last week,” Liz Whittaker, a lecturer in children’s infectious disease and immunology at Imperial College London, said at a press briefing on Wednesday.

“What we wonder is whether this is an antibody mediated or delayed response to the virus that

is happening several weeks after the infection,” she said. “That would explain why these children don’t test positive for the virus.”

Researchers are groping for answers as to why some kids and not others get hit with the syndrome. In adults, the strongest predictors have been pre-existing health problems, especially high blood pressure, but none of these applies to young children.

One theory emerging from the recent cases points to a genetic link. In England, six of the eight first cases observed were in children of Afro-Caribbean origin, according to a study last week in *The Lancet*. The boy who died in France was also of African origin, his doctor reported.

SOURCE: AFP

NEXT ADVANCEMENT IN INFECTION CONTROL

Antimicrobial surface coating kills coronavirus for 90 days: study



A technician is pictured in 2018 applying Allied BioScience’s first generation antimicrobial coating product. **PHOTO: ALLIED BIOSCIENCE/AFP**

A specially formulated antimicrobial coating can keep surfaces clear of a human coronavirus for

up to 90 days with just one application, a preliminary study said Friday, suggesting a new line of

defense against COVID-19.

The paper by researchers at the University of Arizona (UA), which has not yet been peer-reviewed, found that the amount of virus on coated surfaces reduced by 90 per cent in 10 minutes and by 99.9 per cent in two hours.

Charles Gerba, a microbiologist at UA who was the study’s senior author, told AFP the technology was “the next advancement in infection control.”

“I think it’s mostly important for high-use surfaces like subways and buses, because you could disinfect them but then the next people that come in there will recontaminate the surfaces,” he said. “It’s not a substitute for regular cleaning and disinfecting, but it covers you in between reg-

ular disinfecting and cleaning.”

The UA team tested a coating specifically designed to act against viruses that was developed by the company Allied BioScience, which also funded their study. The researchers carried out their testing on human coronavirus 229E, which is similar in structure and genetics to SARS-CoV-2 but causes only mild cold symptoms and was therefore safer to use. The coating works by “denaturing” the virus’ proteins — effectively twisting them out of shape — and attacking its protective layer of fat.

The colorless substance is sprayed on surfaces, and has to be reapplied every three to four months. The technology behind so-called self-disinfecting coat-

ings has been around for almost a decade, and has previously been used in hospitals to fight against the spread of infection, including against antibiotic-resistant bacteria. A 2019 paper by UA researchers found that coatings reduced hospital-acquired infections by 36 per cent.

Gerba said that as a university professor, he and colleagues had been discussing ways to make their environment safer for students when they return from lockdowns, and antimicrobial coatings on door handles and table tops would be useful.

“There’s a lot of them being developed right now, but hopefully when we start opening everything, they’ll be ready.”

SOURCE: AFP

Overcome challenges ahead with resilience

WITH total COVID-19 cases reaching 182 and six deaths so far, the Union Government decided to extend the Stay-at-Home order to 31st May. It means the people need to continue staying home and following social distancing protocols. We still need to remain vigilant.

This was not an easy decision. We understand that this has been difficult for everyone. Businesses need to re-open. People want to end this self-isolation and want to return to normal. But, this virus is potentially deadly, especially for the elderly and those with chronic diseases.

182 infection cases is not many in comparison with other countries. Thanks to the united efforts of the people and the authorities, we can contain the spread of the virus and save lives.

Meanwhile, in certain areas, restrictions have been relaxed and it was needed to constantly monitor the resulting consequences. There needed to be a correct balance in giving relaxations and imposing restrictions.

That doesn't mean we let up. It's exactly why we do not. It's why two additional weeks of stay-home guidelines are necessary. Impatience leads to fear.

We can live with a May 31st target date. Can't we? For the health and safety of vulnerable populations,

we can. Still, we need to be alert and active with the understanding that "people's participation is a must" and assist in overcoming the challenges. Strength and maturity can be attained by facing new experiences.

After five months periods into COVID-1 fighting, it is found that actions taken by the government against the disease are the same with the advice given by international experts today. We could be proud of this fact.

To overcome challenges ahead not only in coming months but also for the post COVID-19 period, it is necessary to take into consideration the needs of the people and their resilience.

We are confident that our people can come through this crisis, and also come out more resilient at the other end. So let us all be resilient, to overcome challenges ahead.

... we need to be alert and active with the understanding that "people's participation is a must" and assist in overcoming the challenges. Strength and maturity can be attained by facing new experiences.

Fourth-Year Performances of Shan State Government

By Shin Min
Photo: Kay Kay

The Shan State Government selected Taunggyi, Kalaw, Loilem, Hsipaw, Pindaya, Pinlaung, Lashio, Kengtung, Tachilek, Panglong, Muse and Nyaungshwe for its clean and green rural project. Kalaw has been turned into a garbage-and-drug-free township under the One State One Township Project.

COMMUNITY-BASED tourism (CBT) in four Pa-O villages – Loikhaw, Inni, Hti and Katku – on the mountains in southern Shan State are developing with added momentum. The visitors can learn the cooking methods, and enjoy the traditional cuisines, dances, songs and cultures of the area.

CBT of the four Pa-O villages – Loikhaw, Inni, Hti and Katku



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut.

– won the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF-2017) award in 2017 and Winner Award at the ITB (Berlin) held in Berlin, Germany in 2017. The CBT of the four Pa-O villages is the achievement of Shan State government during its four years in office.

Shan State government is negotiating with the respective bodies for establishing commercial air transport flights from Heho to Lanchan in Yunnan Province, the

People's Republic of China and to Chiang Rai in Thailand. Executive committee members of Myanmar hoteliers association (southern Shan State) took part in the Fifth Yunnan China-Myanmar Cooperation Forum Tourism Officials and Tourism Enterprise Executives Exchange Program. Cooperation was made with GIZ to improve the Information Counter in Nyaungshwe, Shan State (South). During the four years, Shan State government approved licenses for 380 hotels and inns, 100 tour services and 1303 tour guides, and conducted 169 tourism trainings, workshops and forums.

"We have new ecotourism projects at Danu Self-Administered Zone, Kalaw Township, Ywangan Township in southern Shan State, new tour programmes in eastern Shan State, and new nature tourism destinations in Nawngkhio, Lashio, Hsenwi, Hopang and Tangyan townships and Momeik District in northern Shan State," explained Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut of Shan State.

The Shan State Government selected Taunggyi, Kalaw, Loilem, Hsipaw, Pindaya, Pinlaung, Lashio, Kengtung, Tachilek, Panglong, Muse and Nyaungshwe for its clean and green rural project. Kalaw has been turned into a garbage-and-drug-free township under the One State One Township Project.

As regards, the development



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and officials opening the electrification ceremony in Alechoung Village, Yaksawk Township.

of the transport sector during the four years, Shan State built 564 tarred roads, gravel roads and earth roads at a cost of over K 119 billion, 164 concrete, wooden and other bridges under the budget allotment of over K 1.8 billion and the over 17-mile Taunggyi-Hopon detour at a cost of over K 338 million, and implemented 30 Union highway projects and 163 local road projects. It has set aside over K 26 billion to build a 351-foot bridge on Thanlwin River

at Tarkaw. It is also planning to build a new bridge over Thanlwin River at Kunlong in northern Shan State. The 286-metre long and 12-metre wide reinforced concrete facility will be on the Hsenwi-Kunlong-Chinshweh road. The project will be implemented with grant aid from the PRC. Its bearing capacity will be 60 tonnes.

During the four years in office, Shan State government erected 31 miles of 66KV cable lines, 81.9 miles of 33KV cable lines, 3.5 miles

of 11KV cable lines, three 66/11KV subpower stations, nine 66/11KV transformers, seven 11/0KV transformers, and 4.46 miles of 400-volt power lines from the Union funds, and over 11 miles of 33KV power lines, 1.85 miles of 22.4KV power lines, over 687 miles of 11 KV power lines, one 33/11KV sub-power station, one 22.4KV transformer; 782 11.4KV transformers and over 832 miles of 400-volt power lines from the Shan State funds during the four years.

Muse 105th Mile Trade Zone exported USD 13.21 billion worth of goods, and imported USD 5.95 billion worth of goods, Tachilek trade zone exported 56.279 million worth of goods and imported USD 257.456 million worth of goods, and Chinshweh trade zone exported USD 1.6 billion worth of goods, and imported USD 1.8 billion worth of goods during the four years.

Shan State Development Affairs Department built 2,057 roads, 1,096 bridges and 484 water supply projects for 33 townships and sub-townships at an allotted budget of over K 64 billion during the four years. Water supply facilities were extended in Taunggyi, Kalaw, Phekong, Pinlaung, Nongtaya, Yaksawk, Ywangan and Pindaya under phase one of the regional development projects with JICA(ODA) loan. Water supply system of Lashio will be extended under the JICA(ODA) loan. The local government built 66 shallow wells, 121 deep wells, 21 hand-drilled wells, 40 water storage ponds, 939 spring water supply facilities, and 445 other water supply systems under the allotted budget of K2,550 billion for rural development; implemented rural development tasks at 1,443 villages, and upgraded Heho in Kalaw Tosnship and Nantpan in Nyaungshwe Township.

SEE PAGE-10



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and officials inspecting the construction of the Maukmai-Wunhat-Langkho Bridge.



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and officials inspecting the repairing of platforms in Taunggyi.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 16th May, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the Deep Depression over Southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Southwest Bay of Bengal. It is centered at about (555) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Paradadip(Odisha-India), about (638) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Digha(India), about (695) Nautical miles Southwest of Khepupara (Bangladesh), about (458) Nautical miles Southwest of Coco-Island and about (603) Nautical miles Southwest of Pathein (Myanmar). Weather is cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17th May, 2020: Weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, (Southern and Eastern)Shan State. Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Kayin and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (7-10) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th May, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th May, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17th May, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting the submission of poetries, opinions, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been sent to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). – Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Fourth-Year Performances of Shan State Government



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and officials inspecting the Sub-power station in Heho, Shan State.

FROM PAGE-9

During the four years, the local government produced quality rice, corn, sunflower and pigeon pea seeds for 1,1149 acres of crops, reclaimed 2,790 acres of farms for landless people, 1,050 acres for local farmers and issued GAP for 2,810 farmers, 26 kinds of fruits and vegetable and 9,581 acres.

“Per acre rice loan has increased from K 100,000 in the past to K 150,000 at present. During the four years Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank distributed over K 751 billion as loans for 133,000 farmers of the state. The local government bought 149 units of farm machinery at a price of K 6.13 billion provided under JICA Two Step Loan,” said the Chief Minister.

Shan State government issued landownership certificates

for 698,567 farmers in 2012 and held the Shan State Agricultural Symposium at Inkhaung Village, Kalaw Township, Taunggyi District for three days between 22 and 24 December 2019 on a grand scale to protect the rights of farmers and serve their interest. It is returning the seized land back to farmers within the framework of principles, procedures, rules and laws and formed the respective bodies for the fairness and swiftness of the work, and to ensure that the land is handed back to the real owner.

A total of 30,800 acres of land were relinquished in Shan State, and of them, the local government has returned 29,600 acres back to the owners. It is also accelerating the work to give the remaining 12,000 acres back to the original owners. It is also endeavoring to restore peace which is related to

regional development. Thanks to the efforts, RCSS/SSA, PNLO and LDU have become the signatories of the NCA. The JMC-S meeting was held in Kholam town, Loilem District in Shan State for 17 times between 27 January 2018 and 14 October 2018.

Shan State government upgraded the Sao San Tun Hospital into a 500-bed facility, that is providing healthcare services with Cobalt 60 Machine, MRI 1.5 Tesla (GE- Signa Explore) and H.D Machine.

“Race/region-wise national level meetings of the NCA signatories have been held. The national level meeting of Pa-O people was held in Hopong from 16 to 20 February 2017 and in Taunggyi

from 23 to 25 April 2017. These meetings are much supportive for the establishment of democracy federal Union,” said the Chief Minister.

The local government is striving for socio-economic development as development momentum is required in restoring peace.

“We donated K 10 million for the development of Gadugyi region, which is the headquarters of PNLO, an NCA signatory, on 6 March 2020. Kyats 3.3 billion was set aside for Nanpan creek (Mongshu) bridge project on Minenaung-Mongshu road. The implementation of the project began on 1 November 2018. We have completed 82 per cent of the work. We started building the Pon creek bridge on Kyundaung-Kyauktalongyi-Nongyasai-Hsaikhaung-Ponchaung-Maukmai road on 1 October 2018 under an allotted budget of over K 970 million,” he said.

Shan State government is planning to honour 138 Buddhist monks, laypersons and organizations for the efforts for regional development. It provided Ks

K 331.5 million for social welfare organizations and pre-primary schools during the four years. It built 69 new health facilities, appointed 4,883 health staff including doctors and provided free medical treatment for over 60,000 people during the time. Shan State government upgraded the Sao San Tun Hospital into a 500-bed facility, that is providing healthcare services with Cobalt 60 Machine, MRI 1.5 Tesla (GE-Signa Explore) and H.D Machine. It formed the Shan State level Covid-19 surveillance and treatment supervisory committee, and is taking precautionary measures and conducting treatment at the border entry points where possibility of infection is high. It is planning to build a specialist hospital to provide specific medical treatment for various infectious diseases apart from COVID-19. During the four years, the local government extended the number of schools to 6391. It is implementing low-price housings for low-income families including government employees. It provided 1,030 apartments of 63 residential buildings for 5150 families of retired persons, government employees who were about to retire from the job and people who were facing shelter problems during the four years in office.

Thanks to the efforts of the local government for all-round development of Shan State, it is now witnessing progress in multiple sectors including road, bridge, electricity, infrastructure, education, health, tourism sectors. All in all, the entire Shan State is now enjoying progress and prosperity.

(Translated by TMT)



Shan State Chief Minister and officials observing the organic plantations in Shan State.



Machines digging the soil for Ganaing Pond (3) in Kyaung Gyi Su Quarter, Taunggyi, Shan State.

US department store JCPenney files for bankruptcy

NEW YORK — US department store JCPenney, which has not turned a profit since 2011, on Friday became the latest American retailer to be pushed into bankruptcy by the coronavirus pandemic.

The iconic business said it was filing for Chapter 11, a mechanism which allows a company that can no longer pay its debts to restructure.

The group, based in Plano, Texas, will close some stores across the US as a result, it said in a statement.

It has \$500 million in cash and has received financing commitments of \$900 million from lenders, it added.

The company missed a debt interest payment in April, fueling rumors of an impending bankruptcy. “The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for our families, our loved ones, our communities, and our country,” chief executive officer Jill Soltau in a statement.

“The American retail industry has experienced a profoundly different new reality, requiring JCPenney to make difficult decisions in running our business,” she continued.

“Until this pandemic struck, we had made significant progress rebuilding our company... While we had been working in paral-

lel on options to strengthen our balance sheet and extend our financial runway, the closure of our stores due to the pandemic necessitated a more fulsome review to include the elimination of outstanding debt,” Soltau said.

Founded in 1902 in Wyoming by James Cash Penney, the chain survived the Great Depression and established itself in the second half of the 20th century as an anchor of giant suburban shopping malls, then symbols of American consumerism.

But — like clothing company J.Crew and department store Nieman Marcus, which have also filed for bankruptcy since the pandemic began — it has strug-



JCPenney will close some stores in phases as part of its restructuring. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA/AFP

gled for years.

Its decline began a decade ago with the advent of online

shopping and the rise of Amazon as well as trendy, cheap chains like H&M and Zara.—AFP ■

Air Canada to lay off half its workforce as virus bites



Air Canada had already reduced flights by 95 per cent due to the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

MONTREAL — Air Canada announced Friday that it will lay off at least half of its staff due to the collapse of its business during the coronavirus pandemic.

The airline decided to slash

its workforce after reducing flights by 95 per cent due to border closures and lockdown measures, it said in a statement emailed to employees and seen by AFP.

The company, which employs about 38,000 people, says it does not expect a return to normal for a long time.

“Today we took the very painful decision to reduce our operations according to plan, which unfortunately means a reduction in our workforce by 50 to 60 per cent,” the email said.

The current workforce allows the airline to operate about 1,500 flights a day, using 258 aircraft. “In the current economic climate, an operation on this scale is not viable for the future,” the airline said.

“We are doing this to preserve our cash flow, to bring the size of the company in line with expected traffic levels over the medium and long term and to position ourselves for renewed growth when business resumes.”

The Montreal-based company had laid off more than 16,500 employees by the end of March before announcing in early April that it intended to rehire them thanks to a wage subsidy programme put in place by the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. This programme was extended Friday until the end of August. Air Canada suspended most of its international flights, including to the United States, after the temporary closure of the border between the US and Canada in an attempt to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The airline continues to serve all of Canada, but at a reduced number of airports.

The company says it has contacted the unions to implement the layoffs, which will take effect in early June.—AFP ■

GM chief calls jobs cuts in self-driving unit ‘prudent’

DETROIT — General Motors chief Mary Barra on Friday labeled as “prudent” the automaker’s plans to cut staff in its self-driving car unit.

The company saw first quarter earnings plunge and sales dry up amid COVID-19 lockdowns, and Barra confirmed reports that Cruise Automation was eliminating 160 jobs, eight per cent of the unit’s staff.

“It was a very prudent action,” Barra said, noting that the layoffs will not involve any technical staff dedicated to the company’s mission of developing self-driving vehicles.

“They’ve grown very quickly,” she said of Cruise, a wholly-owned subsidiary of GM, which employs 2,000 workers largely in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Workers who lose their positions will receive transition assistance and health care benefits for the remainder of the year, according to an email memo from Cruise CEO Dan Ammann.

Despite the cuts, Barra said the manufacturer remains committed to autonomous technology, which also can be used to deliver packages.

“We are full speed ahead,” she said.—AFP ■

Sumitomo Chemical funding development of COVID-19 scent sensor

TOKYO — Sumitomo Chemical Co. is providing some 100 million yen (\$934,000) to an Israeli startup working to develop a sensor that can detect novel coronavirus infections by scent recognition.

The Japanese company recently announced the decision to shoulder some 70 per cent of the funds needed for NanoScent Ltd. to develop the sensor.

The diagnostic sensor uses the startup’s scent detection technology to detect viral infections from nasal exhalations within 30 to 60 seconds, it said. The Israeli company is seeking to attain 90 per cent precision.

The sensor is being tested at hospitals in Israel and Europe

and with companies that are developing high-precision testing technologies. It is expected to take several years before the sensors are put into practical use, according to the Japanese company.

Unlike conventional testing methods, the sensor does not require collecting samples from the nose or throat with swabs and risk causing injuries. The cost of the test is expected to remain low at around 1 euro (\$1.1).

The development of the technology “can be applied not only to COVID-19 but also to...areas where future pandemics are anticipated,” Sumitomo Chemical said in a news release earlier this month.

The company added it will “continue to promote a variety of initiatives to fight against pan-

demics through open innovation with startups and academia.”—Kyodo ■



People sit at Dizengoff Square with food and drinks from the surrounding restaurants on May 15, 2020 in Tel Aviv, Israel.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Huge virus recovery bill clears US House, fate uncertain in Senate



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her Democrats passed a record \$3 trillion coronavirus rescue package but the Republican-controlled Senate is unlikely to take up the legislation, and series of negotiations is expected.

PHOTO: AFP

WASHINGTON — House Democrats on Friday narrowly pushed through the largest-ever US economic rescue package, but the coronavirus measure faces headwinds in the White House

and Senate where Republicans bemoan its \$3 trillion price tag.

The Heroes Act, which passed largely along party lines, provides some \$1 trillion for state and local governments, another

round of cash disbursements to millions of hard-hit American families, funds for hospitals, hazard pay for health workers, and relief for devastated small businesses.

In an attempt to counter the pandemic's devastating economic fallout, the 1,815-page measure also would extend food and unemployment aid; provide rent and mortgage support for struggling households, and pump billions of dollars into virus testing, tracing operations and treatment.

"We think this is a major investment in the lives of the American people and in the budgets of our states and localities," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

More than 36 million Americans have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus catastrophe and related business lockdown.

"They're suffering so much, in so many ways," Pelosi said. "We want to lessen the pain for them."

In a sign that the pandemic has jumbled Capitol Hill's routines, the House also passed a rules change that would allow remote voting by proxy for the first time in the chamber's 231-year history.

Doomed in Senate

The legislation, which cleared the House on a vote of 208 to 199, with 14 Democrats and all but one Republican opposed, appears doomed in the Senate.

Many Republicans branded it an exorbitant liberal wish list packed with Democratic priorities like funding for vote-by-mail programmes or marijuana studies and emergency checks for undocumented immigrants.

"It's not a stretch to say that this bill is nothing more than a Democratic policy agenda masquerading as a response to the coronavirus crisis," House Republican Tom Cole told colleagues.

"The Pelosi package will never see the light of day in the Senate," Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator, added on Twitter after the House vote. In the Republican-controlled chamber, "we will work with the Trump Administration to jump start the economy and fund efforts to defeat COVID19." — AFP ■

Alarm in Germany as 'corona demos' take off

BERLIN — From anger over lockdown measures to a purported vaccine plan by Bill Gates: a growing wave of demonstrations in Germany by conspiracy theorists, extremists and anti-vaxxers has alarmed even Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Initially starting as a handful of protesters decrying tough restrictions on public life to halt transmission of the coronavirus, the protests have swelled in recent weeks to gatherings of thousands in major German cities.

Thousands are set to mass again in Stuttgart, Munich and Berlin on Saturday, with police out in force after some protests turned violent.

The growing demonstrations have sparked comparison to the anti-Muslim Pegida marches at the height of Europe's refugee crisis in 2015, raising questions over whether the strong support that Merkel is currently enjoying due to her handling of the virus crisis could evaporate.

Just as it won popularity by

fanning anti-migrant sentiment five years back, the far-right AfD party is now openly encouraging protesters and repositioning itself as an anti-lockdown party.

A recent poll commissioned by the Spiegel news magazine found that almost one in four Germans surveyed voiced "understanding" for the demonstrations.

The development has shocked the political establishment, with Merkel reportedly telling top brass of her centre-right CDU party of the "worrying" trend that may bear some hallmarks of Russia's disinformation campaigns.

'Vilification'

Germany in March took unprecedented measures to shut down public life.

While a huge majority of Germans back the action, giving Merkel's government a big boost in approval ratings, dissent is fomenting, particularly online where YouTube videos championing conspiracy theories or quack medical advice are attracting tens of thousands of views. —AFP



A growing wave of protests has shocked Germany, with many of the demonstrators spouting conspiracy theories. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Iran sentences French academic to 5 years: lawyer

TEHRAN — Iran sentenced a French-Iranian academic to five years in prison on national security charges on Saturday, her lawyer told AFP.

Fariba Adelkhah was "sentenced to five years for gathering and conspiring against national security, and one year for propaganda against the Islamic republic," Said Dehghan said.

He said his client would only be expected to serve the longer, five-year jail term and added that she intended to appeal.

Adelkhah, a specialist in

Shiite Islam and a research director at Sciences Po university in Paris, was arrested in June last year.

She is a citizen of Iran and France, but Tehran does not recognize dual nationality.

Her trial started on March 3 with the last hearing held on April 19 at branch 15 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court.

Adelkhah's French colleague and partner Roland Marchal, who was detained along with her, was released in March in an apparent prisoner swap. —AFP ■



France has been demanding for months that Iran release researcher Fariba Adelkhah, who has dual French-Iranian citizenship.

PHOTO: SCIENCES PO/AFP/FILE

China tells US to stop ‘unreasonable suppression’ of Huawei

BEIJING — Beijing has urged the United States to stop the “unreasonable suppression of Huawei and Chinese enterprises” after Washington announced new export controls to restrict the tech giant’s access to semiconductor technology.

The latest restrictions on the world’s second-largest smartphone manufacturer, which is at the centre of US spying allegations, are a new escalation in the US-China battle for global technological dominance.

“The Chinese govern-

ment will firmly uphold Chinese firms’ legitimate and legal rights and interests,” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Saturday.

“We urge the US side to immediately stop its unreasonable suppression of Huawei and Chinese enterprises.”

The ministry said the Trump administration’s actions “destroy global manufacturing, supply and value chains”. The US Commerce Department said Friday the controls would “narrowly and stra-

tegitally target Huawei’s acquisition of semiconductors that are the direct product of certain US software and technology.”

US officials have repeatedly accused the Chinese technology giant of stealing American trade secrets and aiding China’s espionage efforts, ramping up tensions with the rival superpower while both sides were involved in a long-simmering trade war.

As a result, Huawei has increasingly relied on domestically manufactured technology, but the

latest rules will also ban foreign firms that use US technology from shipping semiconductors to Huawei without US permission. The new restrictions will cut off Huawei’s access to one of its major suppliers, the Taiwanese chipmaker TSMC, which also manufactures chips for Apple and other tech firms. The US last year banned Huawei from using US-manufactured semiconductors in their products.

China has threatened retaliation against the US for the move, including



A woman wearing a facemask as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus speaks on her smartphone outside a shopping mall past a Huawei shop (back) in Beijing on April 1, 2020.

PHOTO BY NICOLAS ASFOURI / AFP

imposing restrictions on major US firms and putting them on an “unreliable entity list”, according to an anonymous government source quoted in the Communist Party tabloid Global Times on Friday.—AFP

Ukraine workers skirt lockdowns to rescue European farms

KIEV — In an almost empty terminal at Boryspil airport in Kiev, Yuriy was waiting in a busy line of 200 seasonal workers to check in for a lone flight to Finland.

The flight was an exception after Ukraine closed its borders and

grounded air travel in March to contain the coronavirus, stranding Ukrainian labourers who would usually be harvesting crops on farms throughout Europe. Faced with the prospect of fruit and vegetables rotting in fields, farmers in countries including the

United Kingdom and Finland moved to solve the problem by chartering flights for workers.

“Salaries in Ukraine are too low,” said 35-year-old Yuriy, who declined to give his last name. “You can’t do anything with it.”

It will be his third trip to Finland, during which he expects to make around 7,500 euros (\$8,100) over five months picking lettuce and broccoli — nearly four times what he would make as a forklift driver at home.

He is among tens of thousands of Ukrainian seasonal workers who travel every year to pick fruit on farms in western European countries like the UK, Finland and Poland after failing to find well-paid jobs at home.

‘Illogical’ to leave

The ex-Soviet nation with a population of 40 million is one of the poorest countries in Europe and the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic threatens to put additional financial pressure on struggling Ukrainians.

Health officials in Kiev, which earlier this week eased a lockdown imposed in March to slow the virus, registered 17,330 coronavirus cases and 476 deaths as of Friday.

The return of Ukraine’s seasonal labourers comes as leaders throughout Europe cautiously open borders and ease lockdowns to get stalled economies moving again.—AFP ■

Fitch lowers outlook on France debt rating to negative

PARIS — The international ratings agency Fitch on Friday lowered the outlook on France’s sovereign debt from “stable” to “negative” in view of the anticipated deterioration in the country’s public finances and economy this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But Fitch said in a statement that it was nevertheless maintaining France’s long-term credit rating at “AA” for the time being.

“The revision of the outlook reflects the substantial worsening in public finances and economic activity expected this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Fitch said.

“The combination of much reduced economic activity due to containment measures introduced from March and government policies to support the economy in the period of enforced reduced activity will sharply increase government borrowing and indebtedness.”

The deterioration of France’s public finances comes at a time when its debt levels were already comparatively high and when it had made only “limited progress in fiscal consolidation since the global financial crisis” of 2008 and when real economic growth was only “moderate”, the statement said.—AFP ■



Ukrainian seasonal workers wait in line to check in for a flight to Finland where they can earn much more than at home as the coronavirus pandemic ravages the economy.

PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1119 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1119 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA
SHIPPING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (025W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (025W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (128N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (128N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-5-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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SHIPPING LINE

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Market facilities to be upgraded in Yangon almost immediately

By Swe Oo Wai



MARKETS are one of the daily life essentials of the Yangonites. The Yangon City Development Committee is constantly fulfilling the needs for the existing markets as much as possible for the convenience of those who are doing the shopping so that they are able to operate their business activities. Now is also reported that the YCDC will upgrade eight markets facilities in Yangon soon.

The measures to upgrade these eight market facilities will be introduced through a market operator system in the private management capacity. The relevant company will have to take overall responsibility for its market to be alive with a teeming crowd. The YCDC is charged with supervising the markets.

These eight markets to be upgraded in Yangon are Bogyoke Aung San Market and New Bogyoke Market in Pabedan Township, Ngamoeyek Sanpya Market in Thingangyun Township, Thiri Myintha Market in South Okkalapa Township, Kaytumate Market in Dagon Myothit (South) Dagon, Hline Market and Hline Yadana Market in Hline Tonwship, Thiri Mingalar Market in Shwepyitha Township, according to the official release issued by the YCDC. Submission of proposals Local and foreign joint

venture companies are to submit proposals to upgrade the markets in Yangon to the YCDC starting from 21 April in 2020.

The market upgrades highlighted a joint effort between the private sector and the government. The upgrade measures will pay attention to systematization, discipline, being alive with a teeming crowd, convenience between the sellers and the buyers, market characteristics, and market appearance.

Systematic and disciplined measures

The market facilities will be upgraded to meet the standardizations of the international wholesale markets. A market operator system will be implemented to make a systematic approach to shopping room, passageway, display, goods storage and trading activities.

There are a total of 178 markets in Yangon. The markets will be scrutinized whether they should be upgraded or not. Some markets will be upgraded through PPP system and some through market operator system.

A total of 25 markets

The markets in Yangon are categorized as A-level, B-level, C-level and D-level. A-level markets include Bogyoke Aung San Market, Theingyi Market (A and B complex), Theingyi Market (C, D and E complex),

Than Market, Nyaungbinlay Market, Central Sanpya Fish Market, Myaynigone Market, Mingalar Market, Pazuntaung Market, 38th Street Plaza Market, Hledan Market, Thiri Mingalar Market, Shwepadauk Fish Market, Bayintnaung Market, and Insein Market.

There are about 50 B-level markets including Padetha, Nandawun, Padamyar, Myittha

in South Okkalapa Township and Yadana Theinga in North Okkalapa Township under the control of the YCDC. There are 64 C-level markets including Waibargi, Kyaukyaydwin, Madyarwi and Shwepaukkan and 39 C-level markets as well.

“The markets existing in Yangon will have to be upgraded. Systematic measures to upgrade the market facilities

will be taken for the emergence of the ones with hygienic conditions,” said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. Some sellers from mostly markets in Yangon are being found to be selling goods beyond the market area and on road area. The goods are on display on the road area and they are also kept there.



The photo shows Bogyoke Aung San Market in the downtown Yangon. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)



The photo shows Bogyoke Aung San Market in the downtown Yangon. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)

Markets need upgrade

The areas inside the markets don't look very hygienic and the air there is foul as well. For that reason the attention of the buyers turn to purchasing things from the hawkers selling on the roadsides in front of the markets. That is why it is required to upgrade the markets to become the ones with hygienic conditions.



The YCDC has arranged market in-charge offices in most of the markets in its municipal area of Yangon to collect the tax from the sellers and the in-charges are supervising the markets. But we don't have the companies yet to be able to carry out effective measures and develop the markets. Although the markets are built in a systematic manner, they are degrading in quality without seeing a sustainable development, said Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

So as to overcome such worse situation, 22 markets will be upgraded through PPP system and 10 ones through market operator system. U Than, Joint Secretary of the YCDC said that State budget will not be spent on upgrading the markets in Yangon.

The reasons for the market upgrades are to improve the market design, create an easy place for the buyers to get what they want in the single place and remove the roadside hawkers.

The upgrades on the markets will help Yangon promote urban development, thereby creating Yangon an easy paradise for the shoppers, local and foreign travellers as well as those wishing to make observations.

(Translated by
Htut Htut (Twantay))

Hyundai Motor and Shwe Daehan Motors are donating PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to the Ministry of Health And Sports

HYUNDAI Motor and Shwe Daehan Motors have donated PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to the Ministry of Health And Sports for COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment. Mr Lee Sang Hwa (Korean Ambassador for Myanmar), Professor Dr Zaw Than Htun (Director General of the Department of Medical Research), Mr Kim Sunbal (CEO of Hyundai Motor Myanmar), Mr Choi Won Young (Managing Director of Coordination and Innovation Division), Mr Park Chang Ick (Managing Director of Sales and Marketing Division), Daw Pann Moh Moh Phyu (DGM of Hyundai Motor Myanmar), the invited guests and the responsible persons from the Republic of Korea Embassy for Myanmar and the Department of Medical Research have attended the donation ceremony which is held at the Department of Medical Research at 10:00 am on 14th May, 2020.

Firstly Mr Lee Sang Hwa (Korean Ambassador for Myanmar)

has spoken commendations for the ceremony and Professor Dr Zaw Than Htun (Director General of the Department of Medical Research) has thanked on behalf of the Ministry of Health And Sports. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) are donated to Director General of the Department of Medical Research and the Certificate of Donation is given to Hyundai Motor and Shwe Daehan Motors. Moreover, Korean Ambassador for Myanmar,

Director General of the Department of Medical Research, the responsible persons from Hyundai Motor and Shwe Daehan Motors, and the Department of Medical Research have taken photos altogether and the ceremony is ended at 11:00 am.

Hyundai Motor and Shwe Daehan Motors have donated 2,000 sets of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) from Korea which is worth of 44,000 USD.—GNLM



Donation ceremony in progress. PHOTO: YUNDAI MOTOR

LOTTE Group donates foods to Health workess at Waibargi Hospital

LOTTE Group is Korean based global company founded as a food business and expended into retail, tourism, service, chemical, construction and finance to enrich lives and enhance value for customers in all of their business fields.

As a part of commitment to overcome the coronavirus pandemic situation, LOTTE Group in Myanmar (LOTTE Hotel Yangon, LOTTE MGS and L&M Mayson) have involved its support to the ones on the Frontline – the Doctors, Nurses and other healthcare workers who are working long, hard hours amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this regard, the donation happened on 12 & 13 May, at the Wairbargi Hospital and South Oakkalar Hospital delivering 1,000 sets such as bread items, drinks and snacks manufactur-

ing by LOTTE Group.

“With the wonderful partnership of LOTTE Companies, we are really proud to support these Frontline healthcare staffs who are the real heroes in this hard situation. Together, we can get through COVID -19. Going forward, LOTTE Group will be

actively supporting to the community by cooperating with affiliates to fulfil our social responsibilities. In the meanwhile, we are also taking care our staffs and guests with the best prevention and precaution plan for COVID-19.”, said Mr. Jay Lee, General Manager of LOTTE Hotel Yangon.—GNLM



Officials of LOTTE Group pose for documentary photo. PHOTO: UPPLIED

Phone Myint Kyaw wins six straight wins in Chinese 8 Ball tourney

Phone Myint Kyaw (a) Ko Ar Ti made a six consecutive win at the Chinese 8 Ball Tournament, by beating Wu Zhenyu by 21-19 in Chao Yang, China yesterday.

Phone Myint Kyaw early dominated the first half of the match by 4-1 but young Chinese player Wu Zhenyu followed Phone Myint Kyaw to 9-7 and the result reached to 8-11 before the player's break. After the break, Phone Myint Kyaw took lead over the Chinese player along with his consecutive shots from the starting ball. Then Phone Myint Kyaw led by a big gap 16-11 again in the middle of the match.

But, Chinese player followed up Phone Myint Kyaw by point by point and reached even to 17-17. Then, Wu Zhenyu led by 18-17 and that pushed some pressure for fans from Myanmar who



Myanmar's pool star Phone Myint Kyaw. **PHOTO: KO AR TI'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

were watching the match via live broadcast video.

But, Phone Myint Kyaw could play stably and could control the match with his precise shots to reach the point of 18-18.

Phone Myint Kyaw then led the match to 19-18 and brought back some happiness for his fans from Myanmar. The leading

point made some strength for Phone Myint Kyaw to reach the point of 20. Though, Wu Zhenyu stepped up a point to reach point of 19, Myanmar's Phone Myint Kyaw finished up the match with his neat and precise shots and took his six consecutive wins in the Chinese tourney. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Player divide threatens Premier League's restart plan

LONDON — The Premier League's bid to restart the season in June is in danger of being derailed by a heated debate between players about the risks of playing amid the coronavirus crisis. While Premier League chiefs believe completing the campaign is essential to safeguard the financial and sporting future of the game, some stars are not so convinced. AFP Sport looks at both sides of the row:

"I'm not going to put my family at risk" Watford captain Troy Deeney has been one of the loudest voices against returning to the pitch so soon.

Although the Premier League has agreed to fund regular testing for players and staff, there is no guarantee of keeping the virus at bay while vaccine trials remain in the early stages.

Adding to Deeney's concern, black and ethnic minorities are statistically more at risk of dying from the virus, leaving him adamant he will not gamble with his family's life just to satisfy the desire for football to resume.

"I'm not even talking about football at the moment. I'm talking about my family's health," Deeney said on Instagram.

"I'm not going to put my family at risk. What are they going to do, take money off me? I've been broke before so it doesn't bother me. "They're talking about not playing in front of fans until 2021. So if it's not safe enough for fans to be inside a stadium, why should it be safe for players to be in there?" Critics of Deeney's view have noted that Watford were just outside the relegation zone on goal difference when the season was halted, so his club would clearly benefit from the season being abandoned. —AFP



Newcastle's Danny Rose does not agree with 'Project Restart'. **PHOTO: AFP**

MFF president assists further aids to hospitals amid pandemic

Myanmar Football Federation President and Chairman of the Ayeyawady Foundation, U Zaw Zaw has recently provided further aids and cash assistance to the hospitals and health workers through the Ayeyawady Foundation to combat coronavirus pandemic.

The foundation provided medical requirements respectively, valued at K33 million, to Haka People's Hospital, Muse People's Hospital, Madaya People's Hospital and Kengtung People's Hospital, for prevention and treatment of coronavirus disease, stated the foundation source. Next,

the foundation also offered K12 million for the physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers to be used where necessary. Also, AYA Bank Training Centre is still providing accommodation with full facilities for 80 healthcare providers, who are fighting the pandemic in the front line. The Ayeyawady Foundation has provided daily meals, facility quarantine accommodation and other healthcare supports for 131 people, who returned from Thailand and Malaysia at Myanmar National Football Teams camps, along with the workforce of 30 volunteers since 6 March. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Higuain final Juventus player to return to Italy



Juventus forward Gonzalo Higuain returns after two months in his native Argentina. **PHOTO: AFP**

MILAN — Argentina striker Gonzalo Higuain became the final Juventus player to return to Italy on Friday (May 15) as Serie A prepares to return to action on Jun 13.

Higuain arrived in Turin by private jet on Friday afternoon after a stopover in Las Palmas and was driven away by a waiting car.

The former Real Madrid, Chelsea and Napoli player will now spend two weeks in quarantine, according to media reports.

The 32-year-old international left Italy on Mar 19 to be with his sick mother in Argentina after a test confirmed he was negative for coronavirus despite three of his team-

mates testing positive.

Star attacker Cristiano Ronaldo returned to Turin from Portugal on May 4, the day individual training resumed in Italy, and has been in quarantine since.

Higuain was the last player to return after French midfielder Adrien Rabiot on Wednesday night.

Top-flight group training sessions will resume in Italy next Monday, with a return to competition slated for June 13.

Juventus were leading Serie A, one-point ahead of Lazio, when the championship was suspended on March 9 amid the virus pandemic which has killed almost 32,000. — AFP

The WALKING TREE

By Zaw Tun (Monywa)

(A tribute to the environmentalists, all medical staff, volunteers and well-wishers fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Here, at the top of the lonely hill above a small town with a sea of green fields, rolling, rippling as far as the eye could see, I have stood tall for years. Many a monsoon, the raging winds and the roaring thunder had tried to shake me up. In the cold season, the biting cold almost froze my sinewy, gnarled boughs and branches to the bone. And when the summer came, the blazing sun stripped me off all the yellow leaves, and left me bare under the open sky. However, despite the merciless winds and weather, here I have stood, unshakeable as ever.

From dawn to dusk, I love watching the little town down there, her people, like little ants, coming and going and following their daily routines. Sometimes, I could hear faint sounds of laughter, and sometimes, a song wafted up to me. And in my mind's eye, I could see their radiant smiles in the cheerful sunshine. In the course of time, I have now got myself entangled with a strong tie of attachment towards these people, who I think are living a simple life enveloped in loving kindness.

Yes, I am a lonely, huge tree on a lonely hill. Where are my friends, my company? Well, they are all gone.

One fateful day came. There turned up from nowhere a rowdy gang of woodcutters, armed to the teeth with all sorts of machinery like chain saws and axes with bloodthirsty blade and iron chains, and an aggressive-looking grapple skidder, too. Here, on this hill, the invaders, who were going on a cutting spree, were stopped by a group of the angry crowd, who were the natives of my little town. A heavy man with a swelling paunch, who struck me as the leader of the pack, rolled out a paper to the curious eyes, assuming a haughty look. To the shock of the local people, he displayed the red seal of the letter, bearing a crooked signature below.

"Well," said an old man, who was the head of the local people, looking up at me, with loving eyes, "You may cut the forests here, but please don't touch this tree. Keep it intact, will you? It's the age-old landmark of our town."

Grinding, fuming, sawing, chopping, hauling. Trees groaned, trees moaned, trees wailed. Poor souls that have given shade and shelter, all gone!

Bye-bye, my friends, my dear friends!

Finally, I have stood here all alone on this bare hill top. I had been yearning for somebody's company days after days.

One misty morning, through the overhanging veil of fog, I saw a shadowy figure slowly approaching towards me. He was a lanky, tall man, with long, wavy hair.



Challenges or Opportunities ?

By Kyal Sin Phu
2nd Year Honours Student
(English Specialization)
University of Yangon



It is often said that `` Life is not always a Bed of Roses ``. Certainly, each individual has to experience ups and downs, i.e. both good and bad happenings in life. According to human nature, although we tend to happily embrace decent aspects of life, we are more likely to consider challenges daunting, and feel intimidated. Most of us often have an opinion that challenges bring us only terrible predicaments. From my perspective, if we view challenges opportunities to learn and grow, and take actions sensibly, we can make the most of challenges.

Currently, the news of the Coronavirus has become a very hot issue among the people from all walks of life. Since the outbreak has been causing a significant number of deaths and a great deal of confirmed cases worldwide, it was declared a pandemic by the Public Health Emergency of International Concern by WHO on 11 March 2020. It is understandable that many people residing across the globe, including

our nationals, go panic, and are very anxious of the life-threatening disease. As negative impacts of the pandemic, we are encountering economic and social crises in our daily lives as we are required to do social distancing, stay at home, and self-quarantine to lessen the spread of the virus, and protect ourselves. Thus, one cannot deny the fact that these aforementioned situations and circumstances are challenges for us to go through and overcome. Indeed, it is sorrowful to encounter such an undesirable national health dilemma. However, on the other hand, these challenges somehow offer us opportunities, especially in the areas of learning and development.

For the sake of being productive during our stay-at-home period in time of the pandemic, a considerable number of the world's prestigious universities and institutions are now offering online courses free of charge. These online courses cover

a myriad of fields, ranging from Languages, Humanities, Arts and Designs, to Business, Programming, and Engineering, etc. Some courses even grant certificates to those online learners once they are eligible. Obviously, getting access to such fabulous online courses would be a sort of treasure for those who are passionate to continuously learn one subject after another at their own pace and at the time of their convenience. In addition to online courses, we can also download numerous books of both local and international authors for free, and read the e-books to our heart's content. Thus, those who are avid readers may certainly find their paradise in the prevalent availability of a wide variety of e-books.

Another noticeable opportunity during the Coronavirus outbreak is the emergence of online learning in the education industry in our country. Since the schools and courses are also required to close for a while in order to avoid the mass of people during the pandem-

ic, many teachers and students are now engaged in online learning. Although learning in our country has taken place in traditional, physical classrooms most of the time, most of the teachers and the students in our country are now continuing their respective classes online through video conferencing and group chat using Google Classroom, Zoom, and other social networking sites. As a result, both teachers and students get themselves familiar with online communication tools, and do apply the usefulness of these applications and websites in the learning process.

In a nutshell, having to do self-isolation at home during the Coronavirus pandemic may be quite tough at times. But it would be smart of us to exploit available online resources, and equip ourselves with the skills we want to develop in us while staying safe and healthy at home.



Soulmate (*Eain-mak-phat*) by Linkar Yi Kyaw



By Kyaw Kyaw Myo Myat
*M.B.,B.S, Diploma in ESL (USA),
Diploma in TESOL, University of
Medicine (2), Yangon*

Is it a fascinating tale of love? Or should we call it a highly original story full of dreams? The novel 'Soulmate' by 'Linkar Yi Kyaw' is, in my own humble opinion, is a unique and gripping blend of these genres.

Written in 2019, the novel is set in Myanmar, the USA, Singapore and France, focusing on the main characters of Thet Nyi and Khin Oo. Thet Nyi, who was a son of a widowed mother, and who often had unusual dreams and grew up to be a talented artist. He fell in love with Khin Oo the minute he saw her. Khin Oo, who also requited Thet Nyi's love at first sight, was a university student as well as an absolute knockout. Although Khin Oo came from a rich, educated family, she eloped with Thet Nyi, who was far from her status and position in society. Personally, I believe it is this decision of the young lady which adds to the interest of the story.

My favorite character is undoubtedly Khin Oo. She is my ideal of what a soulmate should be. She is not only brave but also determined when she finds true love. She un-



derstands her husband's interests and dreams and supports them through thick and thin. Similarly, Thet Nyi could be described as a loving, faithful man with perseverance and control. The reader can imagine how committed and devoted

the couple has been to each other as soul mates. Of course, this is one of the main reasons why I believe this novel is so brilliant. Another character Alice, who falls in love with the wrong person, displays a few flaws, and some readers may not empathize with her.

The writer excels at describing Thet Nyi's dreams, many of which inspire his works of art, and I think that these are useful devices which hold the complex plot together. I am impressed by the clever ways in which the story is created to hold our interest with

suspense, beckoning the reader on to the end.

In conclusion, I enjoy 'Soulmate' so much that I would highly recommend this exceptional book. It will be definitely worth the time. I challenge you to remain unmoved after reading this rewarding book.

**Invitation to young
writers for Sunday
Special**

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

Opium growers in Matman Tsp turn to growing elephant foot yam for greater profits

By Soe Naing (Matman IPRD)

LURED by greater profits from the elephant foot yam (*Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*), some farmers in Matman Township in Shan State have turned to the elephant foot yam tubers mixed-cropping with other perennial trees on their farm.

Some farmers began to grow the elephant foot yam last year on 10 acres of highland cultivation field with the technical assistance of local agricultural department under the opium-substitute plantation project.

An elephant foot yam tree can produce a root weighing about three visses three years after growing. One viss of root can fetch about K9000 to K10000 at the market, and the demand is also high as the food is export product. About 45,000 plants can grow in one acre.

Due to the profitable business, the farmers have turned to the opium-substitute mixed cropping with the elephant foot yam and other perennial trees such as mangoes, avocado, Macadamia, orange, tea leaves and bananas.

This growing seas has doubled the number acres which are under put under the elephant foot yam with the mixed cropping, reaching about 20 acres.

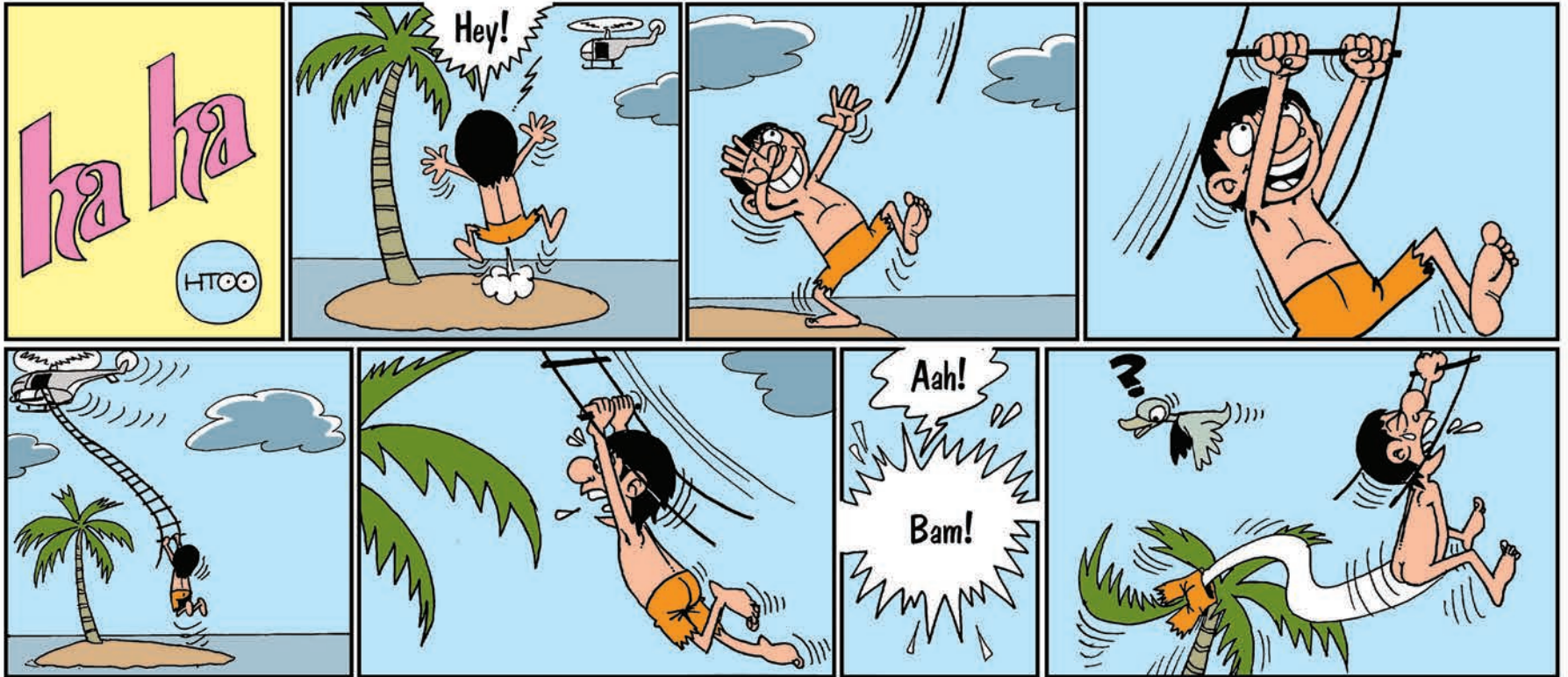
In 2017, the price of dry elephant foot yam was Ks7,000 per viss. The price of dry elephant foot yam has increased this year compared with the same period last year, because of the high demand from foreign countries, according to an elephant foot yam trader.

The export of dried elephant foot yams (*Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*) earns nearly US\$3 million annually, according to an official statistics.

(Translated by Nat Ye Hla)

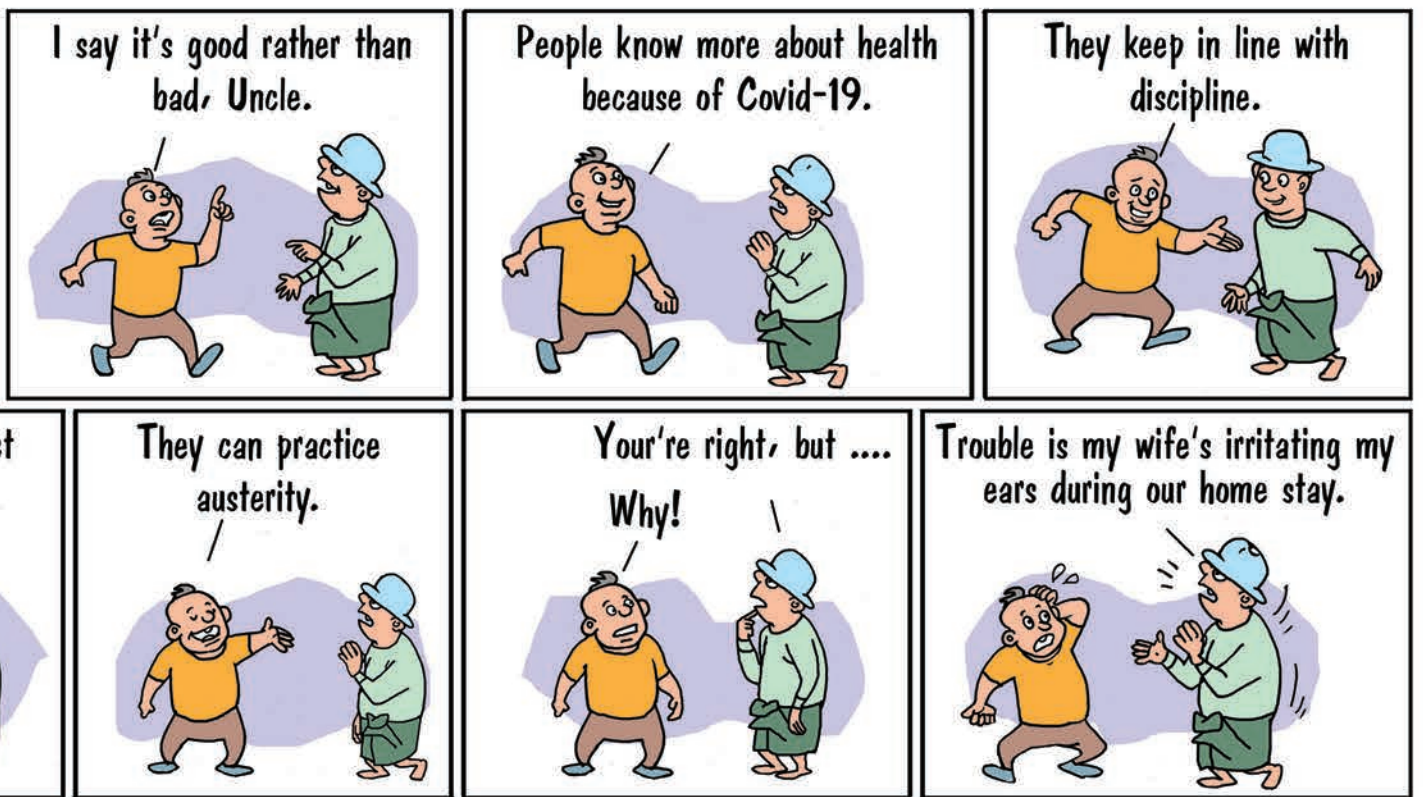


SUNDAY COMICS



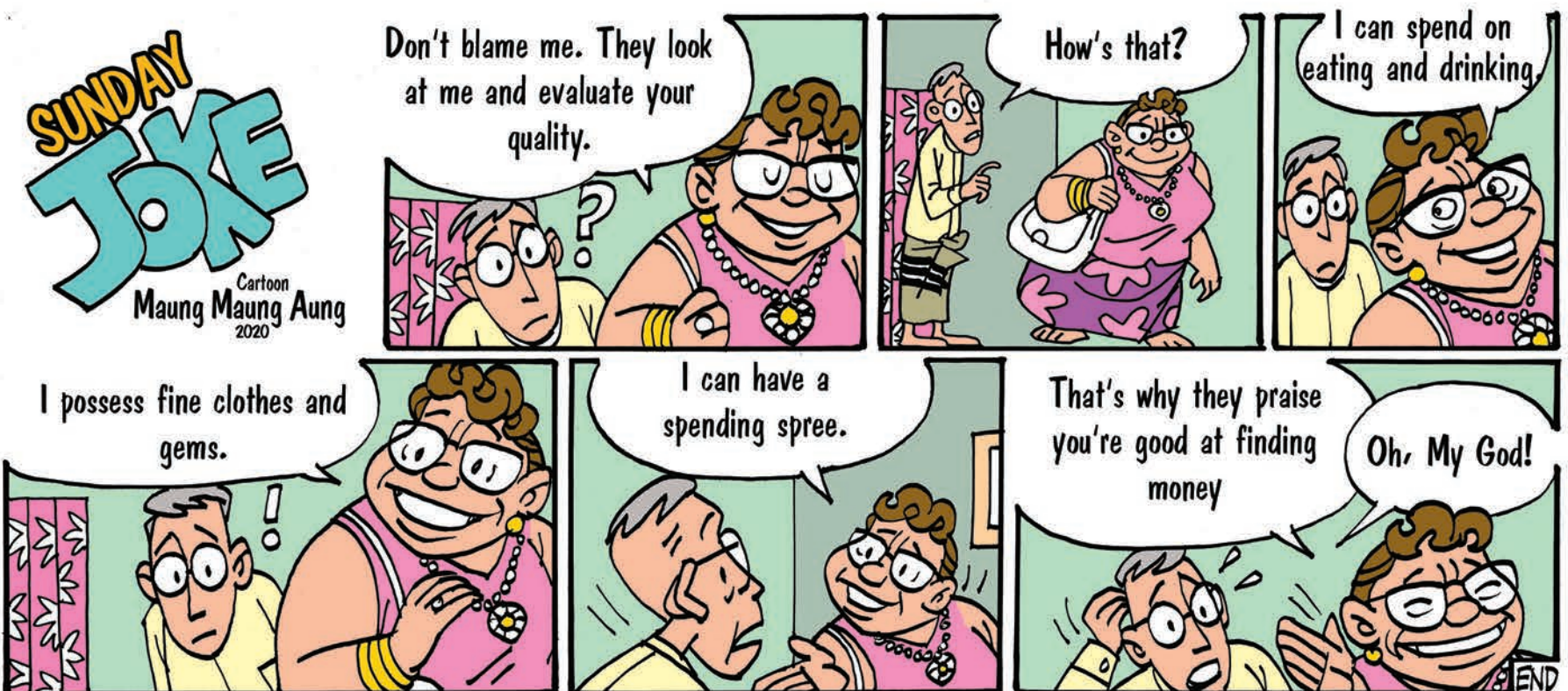
PEOPLE WILL BE PEOPLE

Cartoon
Maung Shwe Win



SUNDAY JOKE

Cartoon
Maung Maung Aung
2020





A Visit to the **Yangon University Library**

By Maung Maung Aye

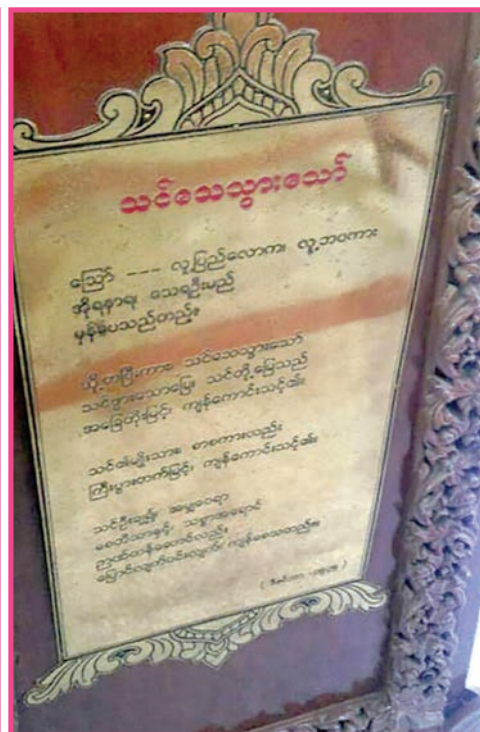
As soon as the YBS bus I was taking came to a stop with a sharp squeal of hastily applied brakes at Marlar bus-stop, I jumped it off. Then, I walked along the Pyi Road, entered the Yangon University Campus by the gate in front of

Yangon University of Economics and took the road leading straight to the Convocation Hall. The road was sheltered by the shady perennial trees all along. On the left I saw the Eco-canteen, crammed with students and teachers, and on the right, red-brick residences

of professors in large compounds fenced with hedges. The clattering sounds and loud voices of waiters attending to the needs of the customers coming from the canteen died away, as I walked further towards the Convocation Hall.

Soon, I got to the junction

of the road and the Adhipati Road (Chancellor Road). I glanced at the Convocation Hall. It stood grave and solemn, with two seated shiny, bronze images of the Crested Lion underneath the canopy of the main entrance. While looking at the old, impressive building, I remembered that Yangon University enjoyed a reputation as a top university in Asia in the 1950s. Across the Convocation Hall before the Science Hall was the Thit-pok tree (false hemp), an emblem of Yangon University, throwing her sinewy boughs and branches up into the sky. A group of students in exuberance of gay spirit was fidgeting with their hand-phones to take photos of themselves. Along the pavement of the Adhipati Road before the Arts Hall were yellow Ngu (Indian laburnum) trees in full blossom. The Adhipati Road, lined with green Yetamar (Cedrela febrifuga) trees, was running straight up to the main gate, which opened out into



Bronze statue of Sayar Zaw Zyi (Left) and his famous poem "When you pass away" (Right)

SEE PAGE-S-8

FROM PAGE-S-7

the University Avenue.

Calls of various species of birds rent the hot afternoon air. Now and then, fallen, withered leaves were carried away by the wanton winds. The sun was scorching hot in the cloudless sky. In the intense heat, my nerves got frayed. So I quickened my steps. In no time, I got in front of the Recreational Centre. Alas! There was a deluge of students: some sitting on the benches under the Gangaw (iron wood) trees before the library, some walking by the Arts Hall and the Science Hall and some gathering around the tea-shops in the Recreational Centre. After casting a sweeping glance at them, I turned into the path leading to the Yangon University Library. The patch of land in front of the library was thick with Gangaw trees heavily laden with flowers. I nosed my way through the students taking shelter under the thick foliage of the trees from the intense heat of the sun and cars parked there. I ascended the library by a short flight of stair-case. At the door, I found an old man wearing rimmed spectacles with a book open on the table placed in front. I wrote down my name and time of arrival and signed in the book and made a bee-line to the counter where staff were sitting. I returned the books I had borrowed to them and went to the catalogue-boxes and rummaged in them for the



The Thitpoke tree in the compound of the Yangon University.

names of the books I wanted to borrow again.

Then I came down to the reading-room. But, much to my surprise, all the tables in the room were already occupied by students. Some students were with their eyes fixed on the books on the tables before them while some were sitting with the open books before

them, gazing abstractedly; some were surfing through the internet for the e-books they wanted to read; some in group working on their projects. With no vacant table, I gave up my desire of reading there and took leave.

When I was passing by the iron gate, I was captivated by the Myazedi stone inscribed

pillar (ink inscription) and the statue of Sayagyi Zawgyi (U Thein Han) erected there. It is learnt that this four-sided Myazedi stone pillar was inscribed in 1013 A.D in four languages -Myanmar, Pali, Mon and Pyu to record the donation of Prince Rajakumara, son of King Kyanzitha, and that it was the first stone inscrip-

tion which carried Myanmar alphabets throughout Myanmar history. Sayagyi Zawgyi (U Thein Han), who was an eminent poet in our country, succeeded Sayagi U Khin Zaw, whose pen name was 'K', who was the first librarian of the Yangon University Library. Successors to Sayagyi Zawgyi were Sayagyi U Taik Soe and Sayagyi U Thaw Kaung. I read the Myanmar version of the stone-pillar and saluted the statue of Sayagyi Zawgyi for his remarkable contributions to the world of Myanmar literature and the Yangon University Library. Then I left the library, saying good-bye to the old man who was standing guard at the door.

In conclusion, I find that the Yangon University Library is one of the longest-standing and biggest well-stocked libraries in Myanmar and that it has been providing many resources to the students and scholars for nearly one hundred years. Especially, at the present time when the student-centred approach is being introduced at the university, the role of the resource centres like the Yangon University Library has become more important than ever. Therefore, I want to suggest here that the Yangon University Library should be upgraded and stocked with more books and made more easily accessible to the customers, young and old.

■

FROM PAGE-S-1

He stopped right before me. His eyes were sparkling with excitement. He rubbed my weather-beaten, rough barks with his tender hands. Instantly, words flowed out from his mouth:

"In this world, the number of the trees we've chopped
Is greater than that of the trees we've grown;

In this world, out of our sheer frenzies,

We went on a spree, doing field sports, like a lord;

In this world, we've cooked this very World

More than our fat bellies could relish;

In this world, we've extended our territory

more than we could lay down our back;

In this world, we've made this World a burning stove
more than the warmth we ac-

tually need for our cozy corner..."

I was so touched by his moving words. I could no more bear to listen to his recitation till to the end of his poem. My heart was bleeding within.

The Poet looked up at me. Then he left abruptly. Where are you going? I don't want you to go!

Every day I looked forward to seeing him again, but he never turned up again. Days followed days, and months followed months.

It was a monsoon evening. The sky was laden with heavy rolling clouds. I could hear some muffled sounds of commotions from down there. My heart was wild with intriguing questions.

Unaware, I pulled out all of my entangling roots. Lumps of red earth and dust flew into the air. I scrambled to my feet on the ground, my boughs and branches trembling, and, clumsily, I found

myself taking shaky steps down the hillside!

There, in front of the town hall, there assembled the whole population of the townspeople. They looked so suffocated, and helpless. Seized with hysteria, they were looking up into the swirling, grey sky, flinging their hands into the air.

"Oxygen!" they cried, in a panic, "Give us oxygen! Give us oxygen!"

My heartbeat went faster than ever.

Finally, I made up my mind to do something. All my foliage now breathed in the swarms of air pollutants in the atmosphere, as much as I could. Then I sucked up all the oxygen from every vein and blood vessel inside my whole body. There exploded my panting, big chest. And I was falling, falling down to the ground.

■



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