

### **Magwe government allows more than 1000 factories reopen**

Magwe regional government has allowed more than 1000 factories to reopen after inspections were carried out on May 22. The officials allowed reopening of about 1000 out of 4000 business including factories, industries, hotels and supermarkets which have been shut down due to COVID-19 outbreak in Magwe Region. This means that around 20,000 workers will get back their jobs. Magwe has a total of two confirmed COVID-19 positive cases out of the country's 203 total cases.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 26, 2020)*

### **Commerce ministry issues foreign liquor import guidelines in Myanmar**



*Liquor stand seen in a store in Yangon*

The ministry's "Guidelines for the Importation of Foreign Liquor" allows foreign spirits with the cost, insurance and freight value of US\$8 or above to be brought in from Yangon ports and the Yangon International Airport. Imports of spirits have been tightly restricted in Myanmar since 1962. But while the import of foreign liquor is now permitted, the General Administration Department is still drafting an Excise Law which will regulate the distribution and sale of foreign liquors within the country. The law will need both the cabinet and parliament's approval before becoming effective. For now, the draft bill has yet to be made public. This is a step forward in paving the way for more direct foreign investments in the beverage industry. It also

deals a blow to the thriving black market for foreign liquors in Myanmar. The new guidelines are intended to rein in illicit trade, improve tax revenue and improve consumer safety.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 25, 2020)*

### **Myanmar fuel consumption rises as business resumes**

Following the easing of traffic restrictions in Myanmar, domestic oil consumption has just started increasing again after the past two months as there are now fewer cases of the virus being reported. On May 5, local petrol prices fell lower than half the prices in January before COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. This was caused by a significant dropped in demand as transportation and flights ground to a halt, governments shut their borders and people remained in their homes. But things appear to be picking up. On May 18, prices had risen K380 per liter of Octane 92, K500 for Octane 95, K810 for Octane 97, K470 for diesel and K480 for premium diesel. This is also due to higher oil price globally.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 21, 2020)*

### **Government allows restaurants to reopen with strict guidelines**

The government has allowed restaurants to resume operations in accordance with guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Sports on May 19. The guidelines include placing a hand washing sink and sanitizers at the entrance, a partition placed to separate customers and the distance between those who will be dining-in must be in accordance with the guidelines. Additionally, employees must wear a face shield and mask. Arrangements are also being made so that customers without mask or face shield can make a purchase for food items which are sold at the regular pricing. Posters and signboards on COVID-19 awareness must also be placed at the entrance and in the shop. In Yangon, customers will be allowed to dine in food shops in areas where there are no cases of COVID-19. Dine-in

restrictions will be relaxed in Yangon's 39 townships, including Mingaladon, Hlaing Tharyar, Shwe Pyi Thar and Botahtaung, which are among 10 townships under partial lockdown because of COVID-19 cases.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 20, 2020)*

### **Myanmar government asks China to speed up trade flow in border area**



*Busy traffic seen at Muse border area in Shan State*

The government wants China to help speed up the flow of perishable goods across the border in Muse, Shan State, to help exporters reduce losses. The Myanmar Embassy in Beijing is reportedly working with the Chinese government to ensure that trucks carrying perishable goods from Myanmar reach China in a timely manner to help exporters reduce their losses. Thousands of trucks carrying fruits and vegetables were stranded in Muse during March, April and May because of the government restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. And more than 500 trucks carrying perishable goods are stuck at the border every day, which causes some of the fruits and vegetables to spoil. The Myanmar embassy sent the request for a better policy to help Myanmar exports reach customers faster to the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) and Ministry of Commerce of China on May 6.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 22, 2020)*

### **60 hotels, guesthouses seek to open in Mandalay**

Sixty hotels and guest houses in Mandalay Region have applied to reopen and will be inspected starting in the first week of June. Only those who pass the inspection which included 57 requirements will be allowed to reopen. In 2019, there were 9073 rooms in 291 hotels, motels and guest houses in Mandalay. In the Bagan-Nyaung-U area, there were 3255 rooms in 96 hotels and guest houses. The rest of the region had 14,520 rooms in 401 hotels and guest houses. The Myanmar government has begun to ease COVID-19 restrictions in a bid to restart the economy.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 26, 2020)*

### **Myanmar Tourism Business prepare to reopen**



*A tour guide explaining to tourists in downtown Yangon.*

Myanmar tour companies are awaiting government guidelines to ensure a safe reopening of their business. They will focus on the domestic tourism market at first, and improve some destinations. Safety measures will be implemented for both tourism workers and tourists. There are also some international airlines have announced the resumption of flights to Yangon starting on June 1. Myanmar suspended all international commercial flights from March 29 to May 31 to prevent COVID-19. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is also preparing for the reopening of tourism, and is planning to stop zero-budget tours, which involve

mostly Chinese tourists buying cheap package deals from tour operators registered in Myanmar but owned by Chinese nationals. The packages involve tightly planned itineraries that only patronize shops, hotels and restaurants that are connected to the tour operators. The ministry said that it aims for quality rather than quantity in attracting foreign tourists. Visitors to Myanmar dropped by 44 percent from January to April as the world grappled with the deadly virus that has spread to 188 countries and killed over 345,000 people.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 26, 2020)*

### **Government to disinfect all schools used for quarantine in Myanmar**



*Firefighters disinfect Pearl Condominium in Yangon after one of its residents was found positive of COVID-19*

The government ordered all schools used as quarantine facilities to be closed and returned to the Ministry of Education no later than June 16, in preparation for the beginning of the school year. There are 6021 schools which are now used as quarantine facilities in the whole country. Schools are planned to reopen on July 15 under the guidelines to follow prevention measures, declaring that they cannot be closed permanently due to the COVID-19 since there are a lot of difficulties and problems to start internet-based teaching in the developing countries like Myanmar.

*Learnt From: Myanmar Times (May 18, 2020)*