

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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About 68 per cent of population to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in 2021, 2022

ALL CITIZENS over the age of 18, 67.9 per cent of Myanmar's population, are expected to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in 2021 and 2022, said Dr Htar Htar Lin, Director of the Central Expanded Programme on Immunization. She made the remark in the fourth coordination meeting of the COVAX National Coordinating Committee – CNCC.

The virtual meeting of the CNCC was held yesterday morning via videoconferencing.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe said that officials of the Ministry of Health and Sports and members of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group - NITAG are working collaboratively to draft a detailed plan for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, and the drafting process has reached the final stage.



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe speaks at the fourth coordination meeting of COVAX National Coordinating Committee via videoconferencing on 10 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

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Public shelter in Dala to be completed in 2021

CONSTRUCTION works for a disaster-resistant public shelter in Dala Township on government-owned land beside Bogyoke Road, Ant Gyi West Ward, Dala Township, Yangon Region, will be completed in eight months this year.

The project will be managed by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with financial support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“The disaster-resistant facility for our township will be fi-

nanced by the ADB and managed and implemented by the ADPC, and it will cost US\$190,000. The value of the land is not included in that amount, which is only the cost for the building,” said Dala Township Municipal Committee Chairperson Daw Myint Myint Kyi. “To implement this project, the Yangon Regional Government, the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), the ADB and the ADPC jointly selected an appropriate township out of 33 townships in the area

of the YCDC. The Dala Township, which is near the Yangon River and is prone to natural disasters such as fire, floods, and storms was selected by relevant authorities as first priority. North Okkalapa Township was selected as the second priority. There are many working-class people and squatters in Dala Township. And there are just a few disaster-resistant buildings. If our township has disaster-resistant buildings, we will be able to provide safety and rehabilitation services for

the people. In addition, the building will be built for multi-purpose uses for the general public.

A reservoir is included in the disaster-resistant public shelter project to prevent water shortage, and solar power supply will be provided in case of power outage.

The construction works are scheduled to begin in February 2021 and it will be completed in eight months, according to Daw Myint Myint Kyi. Originally it was scheduled for completion in Au-

gust this year. But the COVID-19 crisis has caused delays, so now it is expected to be completed in October.

The ADB, by the JFPR- ADB Grant, has financed to set up a total of six water purification machines in the Dala Township, and to implement an efficient garbage disposal system. It is learnt that similar activities have been implemented in two wards in Hline-thaya Township in Yangon.—Nai Lin Kyaw (Dala) (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

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“People are the key”

Ngar Kyee reinforced-concrete bridge opened in Monyo Township



Picture shows the newly-opened Ngar Kyee Bridge in Monyo Township, Bago Region. PHOTO: TIN SOE (BAGO)

A reinforced-concrete bridge named “Ngar Kyee” in Ngar Kyee Village, Monyo Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region was launched yesterday morning with an opening ceremony. The bridge will cross the Myitmakha River with a length of 320 feet and 20 feet wide, and it is linking Htan Pin Gone Village Tract and Ywar Tharyar Village Tract.

In turn, the bridge also connecting Monyo Township and Gyobingauk Township. At the opening ceremony, Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein gave an opening speech. Next, Bago Region Rural Road Department Director U Aung Kyaw Lu explained the details of the bridge and Bago Region Hluttaw Representative of Monyo Township U Win Ko expressed heartfelt thanks for the bridge completion. Afterwards, Chief Minister U Win Thein, Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Maung Yin, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative Dr Win Myint, Bago Region Hluttaw Representative U Aye Win and Bago Region Rural Road Department Director U Aung Kyaw Lu and officials cut the ribbon to open the bridge. The bridge was built by the Han Thiri Construction Company under the close supervision of the Rural Road Department of Monyo Township with a capital allocation of K614.40 million from the 2019-2020 financial year to the 2020-2021 financial year. Construction began on 20 January 2020 and was completed on 16 July 2020. Nga Kyi Bridge will benefit 38,503 people of 9,089 households from 65 villages and 11 village tracts. Before completion of the bridge, the distance from Monyo Township to Gyobingauk Township was about (37/0) miles. After the construction, it was only about 22/4 miles. The bridge will provide easy access to local people from one place to another in a short period of time, said local authorities. — Tin Soe (Bago)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Visitors flock to Loimonemain Hill to enjoy cloud sea scenery

MANY people have been visiting the magnificent cloud sea site in Mongpan Township, Langkho District, southern Shan State this cold winter. The site is located on Loimonemain Hill, at the right side of the Mongpan-Kengtung Road, northwest of Mongpan. It is located at an altitude of 2,222 feet. It is a mountain town with a cold climate. Rice paddy, garlic, pineapple and orange are the most widely grown crops in the area. At the entrance of Mongpan Town, there is a pagoda, which is a replica of the Shwedagon Pagoda. Since many years ago, the magnificent cloud sea can be seen in winter at that place, but the cloud sea was not very popular because it is located in a mountainous area with difficult access. In early November 2020, many people started to become interested in the cloud sea in Mongpan. The residents in Mongpan said that when COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted, more and more visitors will visit Loimonemain Hill, on which the beautiful cloud sea scenery appears in winter. To make the site become a landmark of the town; Buddhist monks, MPs, local officials, town elders, the residents and donors are making collective efforts. A Buddha image was built at the site. Towers were also built to help people enjoy the view of the cloud sea. Now, because of the at-



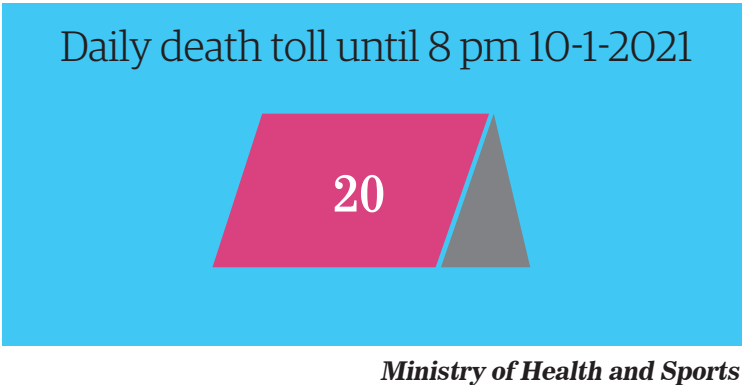
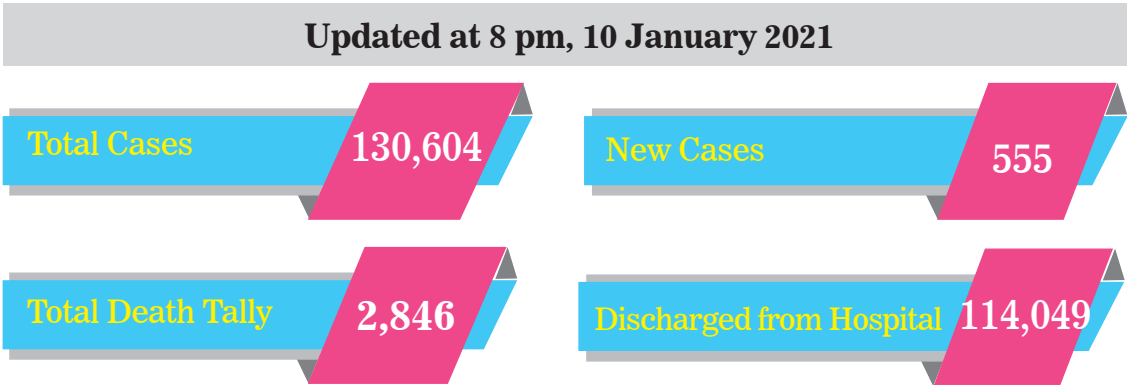
Travellers visit the magnificent cloud sea site in Mongpan Township, Shan State. PHOTO: SAIZAW LATT (LANGKHO)

traction of the magnificent cloud sea, not only the residents but also visitors from far away are flocking to the Loimonemain Hill in the winter. — Sai Zaw Latt (Langkho)

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

555 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 10 January, total figure rises to 130,604

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 130,604 after 555 new cases were reported on 10 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 130,604 confirmed cases, 2,846 died, 114,049 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Activities at the various levels of public services



The general administration reform and model anti-corruption activities at the various levels of public services, from administrative to business sectors, must be carried out in leaving the old system and administration behind for implementation of the public sector that includes transportation, infrastructure and nationwide electrification. When our government took office, only 34 per cent of households were connected to the national grid. The electricity coverage has increased to 57 per cent now and has been targeted to 75 per cent in 2025 and 100 per cent in 2030 respectively. Moreover, our government has made a commitment to introduce Universal Health Coverage which can reach every citizen. The government will adopt specific plans in the upcoming five years to manufacture medicines medical equipment, to provide medical services from international standard hospitals and healthcare centres in the country, to upgrade technologies in healthcare services, to attract more investments in the health sector by promoting public healthcare services to be able to reduce the outflow of revenue.

(Excerpt from Chairperson of National Reconciliation and Peace Centre and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech on New Year, on 2 January 2021)

Construction begins on Centre for Disease Control, Training and Research in Nay Pyi Taw

CONSTRUCTION on Centre for Disease Control, Training and Research, a cooperation between Myanmar and China, started yesterday with a launching ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe expressed thanks to the government of China for its contribution to establishing the centre which would benefit the health sector of Myanmar and would be existing as a milestone of friendship between the two countries.

“Upon completion, trainings and teaching for prevention and containment on infectious diseases and pandemic diseases and research work on the infectious diseases in cooperation with Chinese medical experts,” said Dr Myint Htwe.

Besides, the centre will be the place for trainings for the public health officials and researchers from the governmental departments across the country



Construction on Centre for Disease Control, Training and Research officially launches in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 January, 2021. PHOTO: MNA

all year round, he added.

The establishing of centre comes after the agreement between the two countries during the visit of former President U Htin Kyaw's visit to China in April 2017.

On behalf of the government of China, Mr Chen Hai pledged that China would give a two-year technical cooperation to the centre in producing disease prevention and control experts in Myanmar.—MNA

(Translated by AMS)

Announcement on fund establishment to purchase COVID-19 vaccines

1. The National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 30-12-2020 formed a Fund Management Sub-committee on the Purchase of COVID-19 Vaccines. The sub-committee has opened the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund at the Myanma Economic Bank in Nay Pyi Taw as follows:
 - (a) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012). The bank account will be initially deposited with USD250 million, equivalent to about K338 billion from State-funding.
 - (b) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733). The bank account is initially deposited K1 billion (K1,000 million) from State-funding.
2. Therefore, organizations and people (local/ foreign countries) who want to contribute cash donation for the purchase of vaccines, can donate any type of foreign currency to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012) at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw), and can donate Myanmar Kyat to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733).
3. The potential well-wishers can contact the following phone numbers:
Director-General (067 3410156)
Treasury Department (067 3410158)

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

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About 68 per cent of population to be vaccinated ...

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The detailed plan will be submitted to the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as soon as possible to seek approval.
The Union Minister said that when they decide a priority population group for the vaccination programme and draft the detailed plan, they take into accounts of suggestions from the National-Level Central Committee on Preven-

tion, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the World Health Organization, “Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance”, and the NITAG.
The Union Minister also highlighted the need to systematically identify vaccination sites. He said that all stakeholders need to educate the general public about side effects of the vaccines and other necessary instructions.
In case of severe side effects after vaccinations, health officials need to respond to

the situations systematically and promptly, said the Union Minister.
He said that effective transports of the vaccines and good management will be the most important factors for the success of COVID-19 vaccination programme. He also pointed out that efficient arrangements need to be made to respond immediately to unforeseen circumstances likely to be caused by changes in various situations.
Dr Htar Htar Lin said that

when COVID-19 vaccines are limited quantities, higher priority must be given to those who have the highest risk of contracting the disease.
Dr San Hone, Director (Health Management Information System) said that Master Patient Index Software and DHIS 2 Software will be used in preparation for the COVID-19 vaccination programme.
— MNA
(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Bago Region modernizes farmland in Yedashe Tsp, hopes for completion of project by summer



The machine farming in Bago Region is part of a Myanmar Agricultural development. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWA)

BAGO REGION Government and the Agricultural Mechanization Department are modernizing over 180 acres of farmland in Saitamou Gyi Village, Kyan Thanwe Village Tract, Yedashe Township, Bago Region, hoping to complete the project before the summer paddy planting time, according to

the local authorities.
“The land has been upgraded for mechanized farming since 30 December 2020 and all the farming processes will be finished in time”, said U Than Oo, an officer of the Township Agricultural Mechanization Department on 10 January 2021.
Super Sun Bright Com-

pany Limited will be responsible for the land leveling and farming processes with 237.7 million kyats of the Bago Region Government’s 2020-2021 budget. Irrigation water will be available from the Water Supply Canal No. (5), (6) and (7) of Swa Dam and officials will conduct landscaping and construction

of Irrigation canal, drainage, water pipes and bridges.
The model systematic farming will greatly benefit farmers in the development of the agricultural sector, with better and higher yields than conventional farming, said local authorities. —Ko Lwin (Swa)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

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

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

Cabbage supply up despite price down in MDY market amidst COVID resurgence

A plentiful supply of cabbage from various states and regions flows into the Mandalay market in recent days. The market remained slow during the pandemic, and the price plummeted to the lowest of K50-100 per cabbage, said U Aung Moe Naing, Aung warehouse owner from Mandalay town.

About 15 trucks loaded of cabbage are entering Mandalay vegetable market. However, the market is cool during the pandemic, and a cabbage fetched the maximum of K300 only.

“The growers and greengrocers are not financially doing well. The market is sluggish during the COVID-19. The growers have to sell the vegetable at below market value. The price moved in the lowest range of K50-100 and the highest range of K300. The sales dropped by three times compared to the previous years,” a depot owner explained the market condition.

The demand drastically dropped as the COVID-19 shocks shut down the hotels and restaurants and ruined the market.

The government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are working together to cover the loss of cabbage growers hit hard by the COVID-19 consequences, Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers & Exporters Association (MFVP) stated.

Since early April, the cabbage growers in Naungtayar town, southern Shan State have been suffering losses as the market ruined, forcing them to distribute the cabbage to the people free of charge, according to the MFVP.

“The cabbages were left unharvested in the farm to decay. Therefore, we met the growers to make a free distribution to people. The CSOs contributed transport charges. However, to cover some loss for the growers, the CSOs and well-wishers came up with



A woman is planting cabbage in a farm. PHOTO: AMS

an idea to give back K70-100 per cabbage for the growers,” said U Kyaw Thu, secretary of MFVP.

On 18 May, under the guidance of MFVP, 12-wheel truck of cabbage was distributed free of charge each in Thingangyun and South Dagon townships. The second batch of free distribution is planned to proceed in Dagon

Myothit (East) and Hlinethaya townships.

“The CSOs and well-wishers are planning to return the people’s contributions to remedy the loss of the growers,” said U Kyaw Thu.

Next, MFVP launched an e-commerce platform, and people can buy fruits and

vegetable online.

Additionally, the association arranged mobile market trucks to get a fair price for the consumers and earn a reasonable profit for the growers.

The cabbage price drastically plunged to K100 from K1,000 compared to last year.

Besides, the supply surpassed the demand in the market. The growers are facing financial hardships.

The cabbages are mainly cultivated in northern and southern Shan State. The cabbage from Mandalay and Sagaing regions are also flowing into Mandalay market.

There are about 1,300 acres of cabbage in Naungtayar town, southern Shan State. An acre can produce 10,000-12,000 cabbages. In mid-2020, 35 per cent of the production are damaged in the farm owing to weak demand, MFVP stated. — Min Htet Aung/ Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Manufacturing sector attracts 13 foreign enterprises in Q1

Majority of foreign enterprises eye the manufacturing sector for investments in the first quarter of the current financial year 2020-2021, pulling in US\$158 million from 13 projects, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) stated.

Myanmar has attracted foreign direct investments of more than US\$348.8 million in Oct-Dec of current FY, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises and acquisitions in the Special Economic Zones, DICA’s statistics indicated.

Out of 23 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by Myanmar Investment Commission and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 31 December of current FY, 13 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector. Livestock and Fisheries sector attracted three projects while agriculture, power and other services sector pulled two projects each and one foreign enterprise entered the hotels and tourism sector.

At present, labour-intensive enterprises face financial hardship, disputes between the employers and employees and

the closure of factories. However, those cases in the industry did not hinder new investments.

The manufacturing enterprises and businesses that need large labour force are prioritized, MIC stated.

“During the current FY2020-2021, Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will give the go-ahead to 24 proposals submitted in the previous FY2019-2020. The commission is carefully assessing the projects, and upon approval of the ministries concerned, it will grant permission,” said U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the DICA.

Twenty-four foreign investment proposals have an estimated capital of over US\$3 billion. The commission is carefully reviewing 24 proposals due to large projects, he continued.

MIC intends to reach the FDI target of \$5.8 billion for the current FY2020-2021.

According to the DICA data, the country almost reached an FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the 2019-2020 FY. However, due to the COVID-19 impacts, it has only registered FDI inflows of \$5.68 billion. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Export rice price spikes as demand rises

MYANMAR rice’s export price hit a record high in 2020 as the local and foreign demand picked up.

The global foreign demand surged this year amid the drop in global food production triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People’s Republic of China (AQSIQ) gave more companies the green light to export rice to China. The domestic market also experienced the price gain, pointed out the exporters.

Moreover, Myanmar regained rice market shares from certain countries on account of high quality and the price also remarkably increased in November and December 2020, according to Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

In 2020, the export prices of Myanmar white rice (low quality), broken rice and parboiled rice rose compared to the previous years’ rates. The prices moved in the range of US\$375-485 per metric ton.

The export price of Myanmar rice is relatively lower than the rates of Thailand and Viet Nam. Yet, the prices are higher than those of India and Pakistan’s market prices, MRF’s data showed.

Following the coronavirus

impacts in Myanmar, rice was highly demanded in the domestic market. The domestic retail market in 2020 saw a rise of K3,000-10,000 per 108-pound bag compared to 2019’s prices, said traders from Bayintnaung market.

The rice prices last month for Pawsan varieties moved in the ranges of K38,000-57,000 per 108-pound-bag in the domestic market, while low-quality rice fetched K22,300-28,000, MRF data showed.

Myanmar exported 520,884 metric tons of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners between 1 October and 18 December in the current financial year 2020-2021, generating an income of over US\$196.5 million, as per MRF’s data.

MRF expected to ship 2.4 million tonnes of rice and broken rice in the last FY (Oct 2019-Sep 2020). The country surpassed the export target, sending over 426,611 metric tonnes to neighbouring countries through border trade and over 2.15 million tonnes of rice and broken to foreign trade partners via maritime trade, totalling over 2.58 million tonnes.

Last year, Myanmar shipped rice to 66 foreign markets. China is the leading buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by the Philippines and

Malaysia. Madagascar is the fourth-largest buyer and Poland, the fifth-largest buyer of Myanmar rice.

Meanwhile, Myanmar exported broken rice mostly to Belgium, followed by China, Senegal, Indonesia and the Netherlands. Broken rice was placed in 60 foreign markets.

ASEAN countries constitute 18 per cent of Myanmar’s total rice exports with over 466,882 tonnes. In comparison, 30 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to China with over 775,884 tonnes, followed by African countries with 27 per cent after exports of around 706,302 tonnes. The European Union countries account for over 20 per cent of rice exports with over 514,523 tonnes while other countries represent five per cent of exports with over 122,786 tonnes.

Next, Myanmar yearly produces 13 million tonnes of rice. There is self-sufficiency in the domestic market, and rice reserves have been stored in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the FY2017-2018, which was a record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.3 million tonnes, in the FY2018-2019. — Ko Khant
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

What we do and don't know about new COVID mutations

The emergence in Britain and South Africa of two new variants of Sars-CoV-2, which are potentially far more infectious versions of the virus, has prompted widespread concern. Here is what we know - and what we don't - about the mutations.

What are they?

All viruses mutate when they replicate in order to adapt to their environment.

Scientists have tracked multiple mutations of Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, since it appeared in China in late 2019. The vast majority of mutations did not materially alter either the virus's virulence or transmissibility.

However, one mutation - variant B117, which likely emerged in southeastern England in September, according to Imperial College London - has now been detected in countries across the world, including the United States, France and India. Another variant, 501.V2, was detected in South Africa in October, and has since spread to several nations, including Britain and France. Both have multiple mutations to the virus, most notably on its spike protein - the part of the virus that latches on to human cells and helps it spread.

Specifically, the mutated versions have an altered receptor binding domain known as N501Y, which is situated on the virus' protein spike and which allows easier access to the ACE2 receptor in human cells.

This makes the mutated versions potentially more infectious than other strains.

The European Centre for Disease Control says that while there is "no clear relationship" between enhanced ACE2 binding and increased transmissibility, "it is plausible that such a relationship exists".

Are they more contagious?

Indeed, several recent studies - yet to be peer-reviewed - have concluded that the British variant of Sars-CoV-2 is likely to be far more transmissible than other strains. The NERVTAG expert committee which advises the British government on disease control has estimated the new mutation is between 50% and 70% more transmissible.

A team at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) concurs, with experts putting increased transmissibility in the 50-74% range.



The B117 coronavirus strain, which emerged in Britain late last year, has been shown to be between 40 and 70 percent more contagious than variants which have spread previously. **PHOTO: FILE/AFP**

Last week researchers at Imperial College London released the results of a study into thousands of genetic sequences of Sars-CoV-2 found in Britain between October and December.

They found that the new variant had a "substantial transmission advantage", with a reproduction rate between 0.4 and 0.7 higher than the unmutated virus.

Preliminary studies on the South African variant have also concluded it is more contagious than regular Sars-CoV-2.

Although initial data seems to confirm that the two new versions are more contagious, experts have urged caution.

Bruno Coignard, head of infectious diseases at France's health authority Sante Publique France, told AFP that the British variant's spread was due to "a combination of factors".

"These concern the virus' characteristics but also prevention and control measures put in place," he said.

Are they more dangerous?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the mutated viruses are any stronger than normal.

But increased transmissibility alone poses an enormous

problem, given that a small but consistent percentage of COVID-19 patients require hospital care.

"Increased transmissibility eventually translates to a far higher incidence rate, and even with the same mortality, this means significant pressure on health systems," said Coignard.

Adam Kucharski, an epidemiologist at LSHTM, said that a virus that is 50% more contagious would be a "much bigger problem" than one that is 50% more deadly.

In a Twitter thread, he explained how a disease such as COVID-19, with a reproduction (R) rate of 1.1 - where each patient on average infects 1.1 others - and a mortality rate of 0.8% would be expected to produce 129 deaths within a month.

If the mortality rate increased 50%, the number of deaths would rise to 193.

But due to the exponential growth in cases with a more contagious variant, a disease with a 50% higher transmission rate would see the death toll hit 978.

Arnaud Fontanet, an epidemiologist with France's science council, admitted on Monday that the new British variant was "extremely concerning right now".

Initial studies also concluded that the British variant was significantly more contagious among young people, which raises the issue of whether or not to keep schools open.

The LSHTM study concluded that lockdowns similar to those seen across Britain in November would be insufficient to stem the new variant's spread "unless primary schools, secondary schools, and universities are also closed".

Will vaccines still work?

As vaccination campaigns get underway across the world, is there any reason to fear that the new mutations may not respond to the host of vaccines already on the market? After all, the messenger RNA vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna trick the body into reproducing the virus's spike protein - the precise part of the pathogen that has mutated in the new versions. The ECDC said it was too soon to know if the mutations will impact vaccine efficacy.

Last week Henry Walke from the American Centers for Disease Control told reporters that "experts believe our current vaccines will be effective against these strains".

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

CYPRUS

Three-week lockdown begins

AS of 5am, Cyprus has entered a 3-week lockdown which sees retail businesses forced to close their doors. This following an 'explosion in transmissions', which has been attributed at least in part to the arrival of the new strain of the virus first found in the UK.

The lockdown doesn't only affect businesses, but also citizens, who will only be allowed to leave their homes twice a day, and only after informing authorities via text. The reasons for leaving home are also limited, with acceptable reasons including exercise, food shopping, or medical reasons. Places of worship will close their doors, while schools will go back to on-line teaching.

SOURCE: AFP

CHINA

Monday marks anniversary of first Covid-19 death

11 JANUARY, Monday, will mark one year since the first registered Covid-19 death in China. On 11 January 2020, a 61-year-old man died from the virus.

Worldwide numbers are rapidly approaching a total of 2,000,000 deaths since the start of the outbreak, with millions infected and ill with the virus.

SOURCE: AFP

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AGAINST THE CLOCK

Britain races to vaccine target as Germany warns hardest days ahead

BRITAIN on Sunday raced against the clock to vaccinate as many people as possible while Germany warned of the “hardest” days yet to come with Europe battling to contain soaring coronavirus infections.

January 11 marks one year since China confirmed its first death from Covid-19, a 61-year-old man who was a regular at Wuhan city’s market, where the pandemic emerged before spreading around the world.

Nearly two million deaths later, the pandemic is still thriving, with new variants again prompting governments from Israel to Australia to impose lockdowns, curfews and restrictions – even with mass inoculation drives underway.

UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said Sunday that every adult in Britain will be offered

a jab by autumn, with officials vaccinating 200,000 people daily in a race to meet a target of 15 million of the most vulnerable by mid-February.

The vaccine drive comes as Britain recorded another 1,035 fatalities from the virus, bringing its deaths to nearly 81,000, one of the highest tolls in Europe.

Soaring cases are forcing UK medical chiefs to try to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed and the government to reinforce its campaign for people to abide by stay-at-home orders.

“Of course we are all tired of restrictions, but we must find the collective strength to get through this critical stage and save as many lives as we can,” England’s Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty wrote in the Sunday Times.

Germany topped 40,000 fatalities on Sunday, the centre for



Soaring cases are forcing UK medical chiefs to try to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. PHOTO: AFP

disease control announced.

Chancellor Merkel warned in a weekly video message that the country had yet to feel the full impact of socialising over the Christmas and New Year.

The coming weeks will be “the hardest phase of the pan-

20,000 deaths, more than half in retirement care homes, health officials said.

Vaccine examples

With vaccines deemed the only way to end to the health crisis, governments across the globe are ramping up inoculations while being forced to re-introduce economically painful shutdowns and restrictions to curb the virus spread.

Pope Francis and Britain’s Queen Elizabeth became the latest high-profile figures to join the global vaccination campaign as officials try to overcome scepticism over jabs developed in record time. Pope Francis urged people to get the vaccination and said he would be inoculated himself next week when the Vatican begins its campaign, while denouncing opposition to the jab.

SOURCE: AFP

SPAIN’S RECORD SNOWSTORM

Spain races to clear snow before cold snap freezes roads



After the worst snowstorm in decades, Spanish officials were racing Sunday to clear the roads of snow before a cold snap transforms them into icy death traps. PHOTO: AFP

AFTER the worst snowstorm in decades, Spanish officials were racing Sunday to clear the roads of snow before a cold snap transforms them into icy death traps.

Storm Filomena killed three people during its passage through Spain and kept emergency services workers and army snow ploughs busy through Saturday freeing 2,500 drivers trapped in their vehicles.

The storm also brought heavy rains before moving through eastern Spain into southern France.

Spain’s weather forecasters AEMET predicted heavy frost overnight Sunday to Monday in

of Madrid Sunday where the city’s mayor, Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida, said Sunday there was not a minute to be lost.

“Our aim is to make the most of every minute before Monday when the drop in temperature happens,” Martinez-Almeida told Sexta television late Saturday. “From then, until the end of the week, it’s going to be very difficult to get about.”

Volunteers help soldiers in Madrid

The capital Madrid and the surrounding region was one of the areas worst hit by the snow, with levels of snowfall not seen since 1971. The army also had to clear the snow from Madrid airport, one of the regions worst hit by the snowstorm, which had forced the cancellation of flights from late Friday. They are not due to be reopened until Sunday afternoon at the earliest.

Volunteers helped soldiers clear access to the city’s hospitals, still struggling to cope with the country’s coronavirus crisis.

“We’re very aware of the importance of keeping their access clear,” said Felix Sanchez, a 52-year-old Madrid resident, as he helped out at the entrance to the Gregorio Maranon hospital.

SOURCE: AFP

PHASE 3 TRIALS

Cuba to test Covid vaccine candidate in Iran

CUBA will test its most advanced Covid vaccine candidate, in Iran, the research center that developed it announced on Saturday.

State-run Finlay Vaccine Institute (IFV) and the Pasteur Institute of Iran signed an agreement in Havana that will see a Phase 3 clinical trial in Iran, to “move forward faster in immunization against Covid-19 in both countries,” the IFV announced on Twitter.

The news came on the heels of Iran’s supreme leader on Friday banning the import of American and British-produced vaccines against Covid-19, saying they were “completely untrustworthy.”

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a tweet, accompanied by the hashtag #CoronaVaccine: “It’s not unlikely they would want to contaminate other nations.” The Islamic republic has reported more than 1.2 million cases of the novel coronavirus, which have caused over 56,000 deaths. It has accused arch-enemy the United States of hampering its access to vaccines through a tough sanctions regime.

The Sovereign 02 is the country’s most advanced coronavirus vaccine candidate, showing “an early immune response (at 14 days),” IFV Director Vicente Verez said in December.

SOURCE: AFP



Cubans go out to buy food in Havana on April 12, 2020, amid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO: ADALBERTO ROQUE/ AFP/FILE

Good preparedness, management key to reducing impacts from disasters

According to the National Disaster Management Law, the National Disaster Management Fund was established in 2015. The annual allocation of K20 billion has been used since 2016-2017 fiscal year, and it has made disaster risk reduction and response activities and rehabilitation more effective and quick.

Now the time comes to draw annual region-wise disaster response and management master plans by the respective regional and state governments including the Nay Pyi Taw Council to tackle the more commonly seen natural disasters during the monsoon season, which included cyclones, floods, flash floods, lightning, collapsing of embankments, and landslides.

Besides, the regional and state governments including Nay Pyi Taw Council need to draw required projects for other disasters preparedness apart from their annual plans.

Hence, it is foremost necessity for the regional and state governments to improve their disaster preparedness plans to better manage risk and mitigate economic and social costs before and after disasters.

We are confident the regional and state governments would be going to have to be more proactive about disaster preparedness by implementing plans for reducing floods, prevention landslides, taking measures for mitigating drought and water scarcity, construction of public shelters, taking measures for quick response to disasters including evacuation amidst disasters and drawing plans for internally displaced persons and using fund allocation effectively.

We can not prevent natural disasters, but we can reduce the impacts from them through our being properly prepared. We also need to encourage the use of modern technology such as AI as it can help identify urgent needs and infrastructure damage and provide all available data to experts to ensure that they make correct decisions based on the data.

Meanwhile, people must be alerted to seasonal disasters, including storms and earthquakes, and should prepare “full precautions” and take “necessary action” to protect themselves and their property from them.

We must continue to diligently make preparations for these possible situations, which are predictable.

We are confident that collaboration and cooperation between experts and regional authorities will ensure effective management plans for natural disasters during the COVID-19 crisis.

With well-effective disaster preparedness, we can improve outcomes at every point during the disaster life cycle.

ADDRESSING THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS

World Insights: Challenges, solutions for disrupted world in post-pandemic era

THE year of 2021 will be critical for the whole world that is struggling to end the COVID-19 pandemic and committed to addressing its long-term impacts.

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the world economy, disrupted globalization, amplified unilateralism and accelerated a crisis in international cooperation. To tackle those challenges will not be easy, and requires collaboration across ideologies, cultures and governments.

RAGING PANDEMIC IN U.S.

In 2021, the ravaging pandemic is still one of the most threatening challenges facing the U.S. government.

In a country that boasts the most advanced medical technology, some 21.5 million people have been infected with the virus and more than 364,600 lost their lives.

Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, has recently warned that without substantial mitigation, the middle of January could be a really "dark time" for Americans.

One of the major problems exposed in the country's fight against the pandemic is its lack of a unified response on the national level, said Da Wei, a professor with China's University of International Relations.



Medical staff process samples collected for COVID-19 tests at a nucleic acid test institute in Shunyi District of Beijing, capital of China, Jan. 3, 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/REN CHAO

Pulling out of the World Health Organization at a critical juncture in the global fight against COVID-19, Washington has fallen further into the quagmire of unilateralism. In 2021, it remains uncertain whether the incoming administration can truly bring the country back to the track of multilateralism.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN EUROPE

A COVID-19 resurgence has

been unleashing more uncertainty into Europe's economic recovery, as the European Commission predicted that output in both the euro zone and the European Union (EU) is "not expected to recover its pre-pandemic level in 2022."

Meanwhile, multiple statistics showed that countries across Europe suffered a surge in non-performing loans, bankruptcy filings and unemployment rate, prompting governments to take measures to stabilize economies

and ensure people's livelihood.

The EU has been paving the way for the implementation of a recovery package totaling over 1.8 trillion euros (2.19 trillion U.S. dollars) to handle the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

Against such a bleak backdrop, economic cooperation between China and the EU has sustained momentum and kept pacing to a broader stage, with more opportunities sprouting after the completion of China-EU

investment agreement negotiations and the entry into force of the China-EU agreement on geographical indications in 2021.

OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK FOR ASIA -PACIFIC

A new wave of infections has hit many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, indicating that combating the pandemic and managing its economic impact will remain a major challenge for the region in 2021.

Fortunately, with an array of deals having been sealed, countries have strengthened regional economic cooperation to jointly reverse the economic downturn.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a free trade pact signed in November, is widely believed to become a key driver to reboot regional economic growth in the post-COVID-19 era.

Economic activity in developing Asia is forecast to pick up to 6.8 percent in 2021 as the region moves toward recovery from the pandemic, according to an Asian Development Bank report released in December.

In particular, China has managed to control the outbreak and achieve a strong economic recovery, injecting vitality into the economies of Asia-Pacific countries with close ties with China. In 2021, China's role in stimulating

the regional economy is expected to become more prominent.

CHANGING LANDSCAPE IN MIDDLE EAST

Since August 2020, four Arab countries, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, have successively announced the normalization of relations with Israel.

Ding Long, a researcher at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the normalization may aggravate the division of the Arab world, bringing a profound impact on the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt earlier this month decided to end three and a half years of diplomatic crisis with Qatar, showing their resolution to manage their divergences.

Yet, Washington's escalation of maximum pressure on Iran has intensified the two countries' face-off and caused widespread concern.

For Middle East countries, it is a long-term task in the 21st century to complete their national construction and governance capacity building, said Liu Zhongmin, a professor with Shanghai International Studies University. SOURCE: Xinhua

EMBARKING ON ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST AMBITIOUS VACCINE ROLLOUTS

India to start mammoth vaccination drive on January 16

INDIA will launch one of the world's most ambitious coronavirus vaccination drives next Saturday, aiming to reach 300 million people by July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced.

The vaccine is to be free for the country's population of 1.3 billion, and Modi said the January 16 start would be "a landmark step" in fighting the pandemic.

India is the world's second worst-hit country -- behind the United States -- with more than 10 million cases, though the death rate is one of the world's lowest.

The first phase will target about 30 million health and other frontline workers including secu-

rity forces and 270 million people over 50 or at highest risk from Covid-19.

The government has said it wants to have the first 300 million people inoculated by the end of July and has already staged mass trials of vaccination centres across the country.

About 150,000 staff in 700 districts have been trained and roughly 290,000 temperature-controlled supply points, 240 walk-in coolers, 70 walk-in freezers, 45,000 ice-line refrigerators are ready for use.

The government has approved two vaccines -- AstraZeneca/Oxford University's Covishield

and one produced by Indian pharmaceutical firm Bharat Biotech.

The world's biggest vaccine maker by number, Serum Institute of India (SII), says it has made about 50 million doses of the AstraZeneca product and is aiming to increase production to 100 million doses a month by March.

But the Indian government is yet to finalise a purchase deal with Serum, amid reports of wrangling with Serum over the price.

The number of new coronavirus cases reported each day has fallen dramatically in recent weeks.

But the announcement of the vaccination drive came after the

health ministry said the number of people who have tested positive for a virulent new strain of the coronavirus found in Britain had increased to 90.

India only let flights from Britain restart on Friday following a 16-day suspension because of the new strain. The Delhi regional government has ordered that all passengers from Britain must undergo 14 days of isolation, even if they test negative for Covid-19.

Authorities are still trying to trace thousands of passengers who arrived on flights from Britain before the suspension was ordered.

SOURCE: AFP



A health official adjusts a mask on a Covid-19 awareness exhibit during a dry run or a mock drill for the Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine delivery at a government hospital, in Chennai on January 8, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 10 January 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 11 January 2021: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region, Kachin and Eastern Shan states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly winds may reach (30-35) m.p.h. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-9) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (3-6) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Kayah states.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 January 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 January 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 January 2021: Generally fair weather.

NOW Available

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

ROK President pays state visit to Myanmar

State Counsellor holds talks with ROK President

an Suu Kyi ascender of spouse

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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- The Global New Light of Myanmar**
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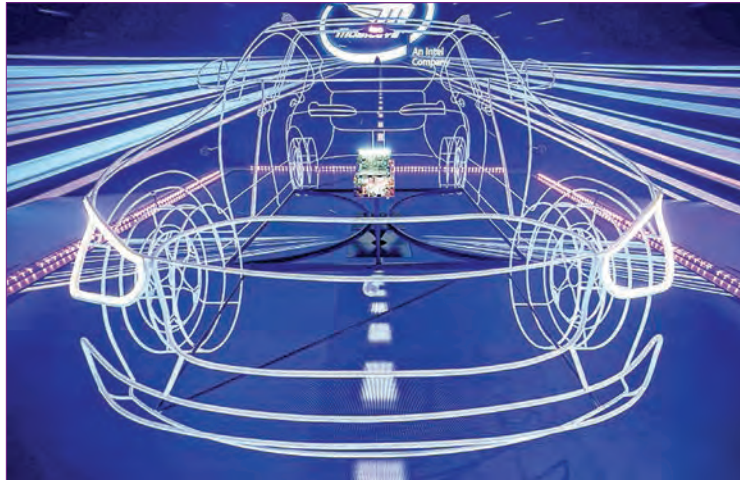
CONSUMER ELECTRICS

Major CES gadget show turns to tech for virtual salvation

THE Consumer Electronics Show known for crowds, sensory-overload, and deal-making is relying on technology it has long hawked to put pizzazz into its first virtual event, kicking off Monday.

The deadly pandemic that has derailed in-person conferences around the world during the past year forced the Consumer Technology Association to follow suit with an online version of the annual gathering in Las Vegas. "CES is one of the most experiential events in the world, where attendees can actually see and touch and experience the latest innovations," CTA spokeswoman Jean Foster said during a briefing ahead of the show. "And while we can't recreate that magic that happens in Las Vegas, we can bring our audiences a new and unique whole digital experience."

Show organizers worked with Microsoft to build an online platform, and help exhibitors



Despite the lack of in-person events, the Consumer Electronics Show is being held in digital format and will be showcasing innovations for smart devices, autonomous cars and more. **PHOTO: AFP**

craft video presentations, digital press kits, and chat forums for engaging with attendees.

"We really built around the concept of people being able to interact with each other," Foster said, noting that Microsoft Teams video-conferencing software was a strong component of the platform.

'Broadcast experience'

The digital version of CES

will be a "true broadcast experience," the centerpiece of which will be an online "anchor desk" staffed by social media and tech news veterans.

The anchor desk will stream interviews, announcements, analysis, and keynote presentations, as well as recap daily events and preview what is ahead, according to Foster.

SOURCE: AFP

NATURAL PHENOMENA

El Nino and La Nina, the climate cycles that blow hot and cold

NATURAL climate phenomena El Nino and La Nina are opposite phases of a complex weather pattern so powerful that it can alter the global temperature.

Linked to ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean around the Equator, as well as atmospheric changes including winds and rainfall, these events play a significant part in Earth's climate system.

Peruvian and Ecuadorian fishermen coined the term El Nino in the 19th Century for the arrival of an unusually warm ocean current off the coast just before Christmas. El Nino can refer to the baby Jesus in Spanish.

The name came to describe the phenomenon of surface water warming near the coasts of South America, while the periods of intensified cooling in the same region was called La Nina. The phenomena can each last nine to 12 months and occur irregularly,

every two to seven years, punctuated by neutral periods.

They vary in intensity and do not necessarily follow one another, so for example it is possible to have two El Nino events in succession separated by a neutral period. Their effects are diverse and far-reaching. An El Nino episode can cause reduced rainfall across parts of eastern Australia, Southeast Asia, India, southern Africa and northern Brazil, but wetter conditions over parts of South America, equatorial East Africa and the southern United States. In many areas, La Nina causes the opposite.

The two phenomena can also cause substantial climate fluctuations -- hotter for El Nino and cooler for La Nina.

In 2015 and 2016, a particularly intense El Nino stoked temperatures to make 2016 the hottest year ever recorded, with experts estimating that the phenomenon added between 0.1 and 0.2 degrees Celsius. **SOURCE: AFP**

SANDY CITY

Omanis revive memory of village swallowed by desert

ENCROACHING sands have left little evidence that the Omani village of Wadi al-Murr ever existed, but former inhabitants and curious visitors are coming to rediscover the hamlet engulfed by the desert. Salem al-Arimi, originally from the area, looked out nostalgically over the expanse.

According to local elders, "all the houses in the village were invaded by the sand that assailed them 30 years ago, forcing the inhabitants to leave their homes," he said. Building tops and sections of stone wall emerge here and there, bearing witness to those who once lived here. Deserts are expanding all over the world, pushed on by climate change, and affected populations have few weapons to fight back. Wadi al-Murr's inhabitants, who mostly relied on pastoral activities, had to give up their village, swelling the ranks of those migrating to towns and cities.

Nostalgia

Located at the bottom of a valley nearly 400 kilometres (250 miles) southwest of the capital Muscat, Wadi al-Murr is cut off from main roads and only reachable via a long, rough track. Its isolation, including from the electricity and water grids, contributed to its slide into obscurity. **SOURCE: AFP**



Former residents of Wadi al-Murr visit their abandoned village, which also attracts trekking and photography enthusiasts. **PHOTO: AFP**

SCIENTIFIC PUZZLE

A year after first death in China, coronavirus source still a puzzle

IT is the world's most pressing scientific puzzle, but experts warn there may never be conclusive answers over the source of the coronavirus, after an investigative effort marked from the start by disarray, Chinese secrecy and international rancour.

January 11 marks the anniversary of China confirming its first death from Covid-19, a 61-year-old man who was a regular at the now-notorious Wuhan wet market.

Nearly two million deaths later, the pandemic is out of control across much of the world, leaving tens of millions ill, a pulverised global economy and recriminations flying between nations.

Yet China, which has broadly controlled the pandemic on its soil, is still frustrating independent attempts to trace the virus' origins and the central question of how it jumped from animals to humans.

There is little dispute that the virus which brought the world to its knees sparked its first known outbreak in late



A staff member adjusts equipments at a vaccine production plant of China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) in Beijing, capital of China, April 10, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA / FILE**

2019 at a wet market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan where wildlife was sold as food, and the pathogen is believed to have originated in an undetermined bat species.

But the trail ends there, clouded by a mishmash of subsequent clues that suggest its origins may predate Wuhan as well as conspiracy theories -- amplified by US President Donald Trump -- that it leaked from a Wuhan lab.

Establishing the source is vital for extinguishing future

outbreaks early, leading virologists say, providing clues that can guide policy decisions on whether to cull animal populations, quarantine affected persons, or limit wildlife hunting and other human-animal interactions.

"If we can identify why they (viruses) keep emerging, we can reduce those underlying drivers," said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, a global NGO focused on infectious disease prevention.

SOURCE: AFP

PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

Kazakhs vote in opposition-free parliamentary ballot

VOTERS headed to parliamentary polls in Kazakhstan on Sunday with the ruling party expected to score a big win and the oil-rich country’s only registered opposition force boycotting the ballot.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, 67, had pledged gradual political reform in the authoritarian Central Asian nation since being eased into his post by Nursultan Nazarbayev, who called time on nearly three decades as head of state in early 2019.

But 80-year-old Nazarbayev retains powerful positions, including the chairmanship of the Nur Otan party that controls the lower house and boasts 800,000 members among a population of 19 million.

The party is expected to win a commanding majority in the lower house polls featuring four other competing parties that are viewed as proxies.

The only party that styles



President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had pledged gradual political reform. **PHOTO: AFP**

At a polling station in the capital Nur-Sultan a 50-year-old man named Nurzhan told AFP that many Kazakhs “have stopped believing in progress.” **SOURCE: AFP**

2015 IRANIAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Iran to expel IAEA inspectors if U.S. sanctions not removed by Feb. 21: lawmaker

A senior Iranian lawmaker warned on Saturday that Iran will expel the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors if the U.S. anti-Iran sanctions are not lifted by Feb. 21, semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

“If the sanctions against Iran, particularly in the fields of finance, banking and oil, are not lifted by Feb. 21, we will definitely expel the IAEA inspectors from the country,” Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani, a member of the presidium of Iran’s parliament, was quoted as saying.

Iran will also stop voluntary implementation of the IAEA’s Additional Protocol, he added.

“This is the law of the Iranian parliament

and the government is obliged to implement it,” Amirabadi Farahani noted. The main goal of the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal was the removal of sanctions against Iran, he said. “If the sanctions are not removed, we will see no reason to fulfill our obligations.” Iran launched 20-percent uranium enrichment process on Monday as part of its Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions which was approved by the parliament in December 2020.

In response to the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018 and re-imposition of sanctions against Iran, the Islamic republic stopped implementing parts of its obligations under the deal.

SOURCE: Xinhua



A senior Iranian lawmaker warned on Saturday that Iran will expel the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors if the U.S. anti-Iran sanctions are not lifted by Feb. 21, semi-official Mehr news agency reported. **PHOTO: ATOMIC ENERGY ORGANIZATION OF IRAN / AFP/FILE**

“HONORED TO HAVE HIM THERE”

US Vice President Mike Pence to attend Biden inauguration: reports

MIKE Pence will attend the upcoming inauguration of Joe Biden, multiple media reports said Saturday, the vice president becoming the latest longtime loyalist to abandon an increasingly isolated President Donald Trump. Relations between Trump and Pence -- previously one of the mercurial president’s staunchest defenders -- have nosedived since Wednesday, when the vice president formally announced Biden’s victory in November’s election.

A mob of far-right demonstrators stormed the US Capitol the same day in a failed bid to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s win, in a riot blamed on Trump that left five dead.

Multiple media reports on

Saturday cited senior administration officials as saying that Pence -- who was forced to take shelter from the intruders during the riot -- had decided to attend Biden’s inauguration on January 20.

The president-elect earlier in the week said Pence would be welcome at his formal swearing-in, due to take place in a scaled-down format due to the coronavirus. “I think it’s important that as much as we can stick to what have been the historical precedents of how an administration changes should be maintained,” Biden told reporters. “We’d be honored to have him there, and to move forward in the transition.”

SOURCE: AFP



A mob of far-right demonstrators stormed the US Capitol the same day in a failed bid to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s win, in a riot blamed on Trump that left five dead. A pro-Trump rioter poses for a photo with the vandalized statue of former President Gerald Ford. **PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

FREE SPEECH

Short on alternatives, fans trash Twitter’s Trump ban – on Twitter

FRIENDS, family and advisers to Donald Trump have been bitterly complaining that Twitter’s ban of the president after his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol amounts to an assault on free speech by radical leftists. Ironically, given the enormous influence of the platform, they have aired their grievances first of all on ... Twitter – a choice underscoring the platform’s huge readership and the relative paucity of alternatives. “Free speech is dead & controlled by leftist overlords,” tweeted Donald Trump Jr., the president’s older son.

SOURCE: AFP

NATION’S NUCLEAR ARSENAL

Biden urged to renounce sole control of US nuclear weapons

A former US defense secretary has called on President-elect Joe Biden to reform the system that gives sole control of the nation’s nuclear arsenal to the president, calling it “outdated, unnecessary and extremely dangerous.” The call from William Perry came the same day US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke with the nation’s top military leader about ensuring that an “unhinged” President Donald Trump not be able to launch a nuclear attack in his final days in office. “Once in office, Biden should announce he would share authority to use nuclear weapons with a select group in Congress,” said Perry, who served under President Bill Clinton.

SOURCE: AFP

“MALICIOUS” BREACH

New Zealand central bank hit by cyber attack



People walk on a street in Wellington's Central Business District on May 14, 2020. PHOTO: AFP/MARTY MELVILLE

NEW ZEALAND'S central bank said Sunday it was responding with urgency to a “malicious” breach of one of its data systems, a third-party file sharing service that stored “sensitive information”.

Reserve Bank of New Zealand governor Adrian Orr said the breach had been contained and the system was taken offline but it would take time to determine what information had been accessed. “We are working closely with domestic and international cyber security experts and other relevant authorities as part of our investigation and response to this malicious attack,” Orr said. “The nature and extent of information that has been potentially accessed is still being determined, but it may include some commercially and personally sensitive information,” he added. “It will take time to understand the full implications of this breach, and we are working with system users whose information may have been accessed.”

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE JALALABAD AIRPORT

Airport in eastern Afghanistan launches first civilian flight after 18 years

THE Jalalabad Airport in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province on Thursday launched its first civilian flight after 18 years, a local online news agency reported Sunday. “This was a test flight that successfully took off and landed which marked the first flight after foreign troops handed over the facility to Afghan authorities months ago,” the private news agency Wadsam reported on Sunday.

SOURCE: Xinhua



A bullet train runs in a trial operation of the Xi'an-Yinchuan high-speed railway in Xinmin Town of Binzhou, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, Nov. 3, 2020. PHOTO: ZHANG XIN/XINHUA

A WHITE PAPER

China's high-speed rail lines top 37,900 km at end of 2020

THE total length of high-speed rail lines in China came in at about 37,900 km at the end of 2020, up about 2,900 km from 2019 and almost twice that of 2015, according to the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd.

By the end of 2019, the length of high-speed rail lines across the country exceeded 35,000 km, making up more than two-thirds of the world's total, said a white paper titled “Sustainable Development of Transport in

China” released in December 2020. In total, China had 146,300 km of rail lines at the end of 2020, up 20.9 percent from that at the end of 2015, according to the railway operator.

SOURCE: Xinhua

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS
MYANMA RAILWAYS
INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

1. Open Tender is invited for supply of the following item in Euro:

Sr No	Tender No	Description
1.	15(T)9/MR(E)/Euro/2020-2021	Spare Parts for Automatic Levelling, Lining and Tamping Machine and Flash Butt Welding Machine (75 Items)

Closing Date & Time-9.2.2021 (Tuesday) (14:30) Hrs

2. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 11.1.2021 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Deputy General Manager Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung, Yangon. Phone: 95-1-291985, 291994

SRIWIJAYA AIR FLIGHT SJ182

Indonesia locates “black box” recorders from crashed airliner

INDONESIAN authorities said Sunday they had located the “black box” flight recorders from a Boeing 737-500 that crashed in the sea off the capital Jakarta with 62 people aboard, as the search for survivors and wreckage continued.

As body parts believed to be those of passengers on Sriwijaya Air Flight SJ182 as well as suspected debris from the aircraft were recovered, President Joko Widodo urged the public to pray that survivors would be found.

The plane disappeared from radar minutes after taking off from Jakarta's Sukarno-Hatta International Airport on Saturday afternoon and is thought to have crashed near Laki Island, a part of the Thousand Islands chain, just north of the capital.

The plane's departure had been delayed due to heavy rain. “Black boxes have been located,” Marshal Hadi Tjahjant, commander of the Indonesian military, said, adding signals from them had been detected.

He had said earlier that signals “strongly believed” to originate from the plane's flight recorders had been detected in the suspected location of the crash. The debris found in the shallow waters included colored aircraft parts, electrical cables, life vests, parts of the plane's

registration number and clothing, officials told reporters.

The plane departed Jakarta's main airport at 2:36 p.m. bound for the West Kalimantan provincial capital of Pontianak.

A minute after takeoff, the plane requested to ascend to 29,000 feet (8,839 meters), according to Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi. However, at 2:40 p.m., air traffic control inquired with the pilot as to why the plane was heading northwest instead of its expected path.

A few seconds later, the plane disappeared from radar, the minister said.

Flight tracking website Flightradar24 showed that after taking off, the plane climbed to 10,900 feet in approximately four minutes, but then went into a steep descent over the next 21

seconds, with the last received data placing the plane at 250 feet from the water's surface.

Relatives and friends of those on the ill-fated aircraft were shown on television waiting for news at both Jakarta and Pontianak airports.

“I waited for my wife and three children to arrive but wondered what had happened after I waited for two hours and the plane had not had arrived,” Yasman Jay told Kompas TV before breaking into tears.

The cause of the crash remained unknown. Local fishermen told television networks there was heavy rain at the time of the incident and they seen a plane plunging into the sea. They also reported hearing two explosions.

SOURCE: Kyodo



A rescue team is pictured in the search operation for the Sriwijaya Air Flight SJ182 plane on Jan. 10, 2021 in Jakarta, Indonesia. PHOTO: GETTY/KYODO

NEWS IN BRIEF

TRAFFIC DISRUPTION

Over 1,200 vehicles stranded as heavy snow continues in Japan

MORE than 1,200 vehicles were temporarily stranded in central Japan on Sunday as heavy snowfall continued across wide areas of the country, forcing some prefectures to request the Ground Self-Defense Force's help in rescue operations. About 200 vehicles were stuck near an interchange on the Hokuriku Expressway in Fukui Prefecture as of 11 a.m., while another 830 remained stranded at other sections of the expressway since as early as Saturday, Central Nippon Expressway Co. said. Another 200 vehicles were stranded in Toyama Prefecture after a large truck was unable to move on the Tokai-Hokuriku Expressway. About 50 GSDF members engaged in rescue work at the scene, the prefectural government said. A 25-year-old woman and 44-year-old man who were stuck in their cars became ill and were transported to hospitals, according to local rescue workers.

SOURCE: Kyodo

POST-BREXIT

Brexit deal’s ‘rules of origin’ spark trade confusion

MANY British businesses are swiftly discovering that they must now pay duties on exports bound for the European Union, despite the breakthrough Brexit free trade deal clinched over Christmas.

The development, which has already helped spark sliding freight traffic to Ireland, is part of trade disruption that has become increasingly evident this year after Britain’s Brexit divorce was finalised on December 31.

Trade has also been badly hampered by new Covid-19 border restrictions, with the roll-out of testing for lorry drivers as Britain races to curb



British high-street retail giant Marks & Spencer has warned that the Brexit trade deal will ‘significantly impact’ its businesses in the Czech Republic, Ireland and France. People walk by Marks & Spencer store on High Street, Exeter, England, on Nov. 22, 2016. **SHUTTERSTOCK/ AFP/FILE**

a rampant variant of the deadly virus. At the heart of the Brexit deal, which came into force on January 1, is the so-called “rules of origin” condition applied to all goods crossing the border. **SOURCE: AFP**

STRONG RESILIENCE

China’s SMEs continue robust recovery

CHINA’S small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) registered stable recovery in the fourth quarter of 2020 (Q4) as the country’s economy demonstrated strong resilience and vitality, said the country’s top economic planner.

In Q4, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Index, based on a survey of 3,000 SMEs, went up 0.2 points from Q3 to 87, according to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). **SOURCE: Xinhua**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DA PING VOY. NO. (053)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DA PING VOY. NO. (053)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V LEA AUERBACH

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V LEA AUERBACH VOY. NO. (-)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301191/2301178**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1089)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1089)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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.

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S LAND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS SDN BHD LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0226-023N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0226-023N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S’PORE) PTE., LTD.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
DEPARTMENT OF HYDROPOWER
IMPLEMENTATION

Invitation to tender for the Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Hydraulic Steel Structure and Electrical/Mechanical Equipment Works for Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, **Department of Hydropower Implementation (DHPI)**, hereinafter called the Employer, seeks to invites qualified Contractors and/or Joint Ventures to submit Tenders for the **design, supply, installation and commissioning of Hydraulic Steel Structure and Electrical/Mechanical Equipment Works for Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project (Delivered Duty Paid - at Site Basis)**. The prices shall be quoted by the Tenderer entirely in US\$ (US Dollar). The payment shall be made in Myanmar Kyat (MMK) equivalent with the contract amount in United State Dollar (USD) prevailing with current exchange rate referenced by Central Bank of Myanmar.

2. The project is located on the Nam Teng River, on the territory of the Mongnai Township area, Southern Shan State of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

3. A complete set of Tender documents can be purchased within office hours upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **300,000 MMK (Three Hundred Thousand in Myanmar Kyat)** at the following place and date stated as follows;

Tender No. : **001/DHPI/UKT(HSS&EM)/2020-2021**

Place to Purchase : **Main Gate of Office No. 27**

Time & Date for Sale : **13:00pm-15:00 pm (11th Jan, 2021 to 1st Feb, 2021)**

Contact for inquiry : **Director of Procurement Branch
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Office Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

Telephone : **009567-8104189, 009567-8104190, 009567-8104191**

E-mail : **procurement.dhpi@moe.gov.mm**

4. **Tender Submission Time, Date and Place is 26th February, 2021 at 13:00** (Myanmar Standard Time), **Office of Assistant Director (Civil-5), No. (1) Construction of DHPI, Pan Khinn Road, Pyinmana. (Google Location 19.757319, 96.196395)**

5. Tenderers must be submitted the proposals to the address above on Tender Submission Date. Any late proposal shall be rejected.

6. All tenders shall be rejected if they submit their proposals by electronic or express services.

7. Technical envelop will be opened in the presence of tenderer’s representatives, who choose to attend at the address above after **13:00 hours** (Myanmar Standard Time) on **Tender Submission Date**.

8. Any request for the extension of **Tender Submission Date** shall not be allowed.

**Tender Committee
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Nay Pyi Taw**

စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန
မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း
ထုတ်ဝါးပစ္စည်း(၇)မျိုးနှင့် အထောက်အကူပြုပစ္စည်း(၁)မျိုး အဝယ်တင်ဒါ

၁။ ဝယ်ယူမည့် ပစ္စည်းအမည်နှင့် အရေအတွက်

စဉ်	ပစ္စည်းအမည်	အရေအတွက်
(၁)	100ml PET Bottle & Cap (White)	၂၅၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၂)	100ml PET Bottle & Cap (Amber) (with Carbonate Coated Cap -၂၀၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ)	၈၀၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၃)	500ml PET Bottle & Cap (White)	၅၅၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၄)	500ml PET Bottle & Cap (Amber)	၄၉၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၅)	500ml PET Bottle & Spray Head Cap (White)	၁၀၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၆)	500ml Glass Bottle & Cap (Amber)	၅၀,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၇)	1oz Plastic Bottle & Cap (aluminium top seal)	၇၅၅,၀၀၀ ခုံ
(၈)	Silica Gel (1gm)	၄,၂၂၆,၀၀၀ ခုံ

၂။ တင်ဒါဖွင့်ပိတ်ရက် - (၂၁-၁၂-၂၀၂၀) မှ (၂၀-၁-၂၀၂၁)

၃။ ပစ္စည်းပေးသွင်းရမည့် စက်ရုံ - ဆေးဝါးစက်ရုံ (အင်းစိန်)

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

၅။ တင်ဒါပုံစံနှင့် တင်ဒါစည်းကမ်း အသေးစိတ် အချက်အလက်များကို အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ ဌာနတွင် စုံစမ်းမေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည်။

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

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

Loilem with natural beauties in southern Shan State

By Loilem Moe

BEAUTIFUL forests, mountains and lakes in various parts of the country are the significant features of Myanmar. Different regions and states have possessed their own natural beauties for the whole the year.

Chin and Shan states are full of the unparalleled natural beauty in the cold season. Loilem, with an altitude of 4447 feet above sea level, is a town in mountainous southern Shan State. Surrounded by mountains, it was named Loilem after the 6,262-foot-high (Taung Chon) mountain to the west of the town. In Shan language, Loi means Taung and Lem means Chon. There are two pagodas built on the mountain more than 60 years ago.

Although no one could go for trekking to the mountain due to the unstable conditions of the area in the past, people

can do now mountain tour to Taung Chon Mountain from the western slopes of the town that surrounds Loilem.

Approximately 7 miles from Loilem, the Taung Chon Mountain, the highest peak of the region, can be reached by car. It takes around 30 minutes of trekking to the top of the mountain from the foot of it. In winter, you can enjoy the breathtaking natural beauty of the forest and mountains with the fresh air that carries the fragrance like a beautiful winter painting, and a beautiful poem.

Among the 60-year-old two pagodas, one was damaged due to natural disaster in May 2018 and another one was almost collapsed. With the contribution and donation of the residents of Loilem, Chief monk U Thu Nanda of Hwae Haung monastery in Pan Oh village tract in Loilem, and



Two Buddha Stupas built on the Taung Chon mountain. PHOTO: LOILEM MOE



Cloudsea being seen from the Taung Chon mountain. PHOTO: LOILEM MOE



6,262-foot-high (Taung Chon) mountain. PHOTO: LOILEM MOE



View of Loilem from the Taung Chon mountain. PHOTO: LOILEM MOE

New tourist attraction in Yedashe ready for post COVID tourism

By Ko Lwin (Swa)

THE Ye Hlwe waterfall on the east bank of Sittaung river is recognized as a new tourist attraction for the post-COVID-19 tourism due to its beautiful scenery and convenient transportation after the opening of the Sittaung River Bridge (Yedashe) on 2 January.

The waterfall is located in Ye Hlwe village, Yedashe Township in Bago Region. Vehicles can drive to the Mya Yaung pagoda near the waterfall and the villagers are now repairing and cleaning the road to make it more convenient for visitors to the waterfall.

On the way to the waterfall, visitors can also pay visit to Kayin Chaung village surrounded by ancient moats and the Shwe Pyi Aye sitting Buddha statue facing mountains of Kayin State.

U Myint Oo, a resident of Kayin Chaung Village said the Bouddha statue was not absolutely touched by bullet during bomber strike several times by the American warplanes during World War II. The village road was used by the Japanese troops during the war and antiques can still be seen at the village.

Moreover, the discovery of about three miles wide of old laterite walls, brick boards and burial urns near Thet Kae Kyin village, about three miles up from Ye Hlwe waterfall also offers the cultural heritage which is connected with the tourism industry.



Visitors seen at the Ye Hlwe waterfall. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWA)

When the travel restrictions are eased in the post-COVID-19 period, the people will start travelling and developing tourism destinations will surely support the

country's smokeless industry.
(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



people from the township and district administration departments, these two pagodas were renovated in February 2019. At present, Loilem is promoting mountainous tourism to Taung Chon Mountain and people from Loilem, Panglong, Mongpan and Namhsan come in groups and more and more people are coming to the mountain to enjoy the natural beauty and to pay homage to the two pagodas. As the area is more stable, the number of mountaineers will increase.

May all friends from all over Myanmar plan a mountaineering trip to Loilem Taung Chon in the post-COVID-19 period, and enjoy the natural beauty of the forest, mountains and bring good health and happiness to the society.

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Ye Hlwe waterfall. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWA)

Palmer, English share lead at PGA Tournament of Champions

LOS ANGELES—Ryan Palmer birdied six of the last seven holes to share the lead with fellow American Harris English after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Tournament of Champions.

Palmer fired a bogey-free nine-under par 64 to match English, who shot a bogey-free 66, on 21-under 198 after 54 holes over the par-73 Plantation course at Kapalua, Hawaii.

"It was pretty spot on," Palmer said of his round. "I drove it pretty well. My putting has really come around."

English hasn't made a bogey since the seventh hole of the opening round. "Extremely satisfied," English said. "Normally Saturday is my toughest day. I feel like I played really well, stuck to my strategy, stayed patient.—AFP ■

Shan United appoints U Han Win Aung as new head coach

ACCORDING to the football authorities, Shan United FC, defending champions of the Myanmar National League, appointed U Han Win Aung as its new head coach.

U Han Win Aung played as a critical player for Kanbawza Football Club (now Shan United) in 2009 and retired as an assistant coach at his home club.

Shan United has won the MNL championship for two consecutive seasons. Still, the team authorities made a significant change for the new season as former head coach U Aung Naing is now acting as a technical director position.

"For the first time in the club's history, former head coach U Aung Naing was able to claim the league champion title for two consecutive seasons. However, in addition to training young coaches, he was reassigned to take charge of senior and youth teams and youth development projects," the club authorities said.

Shan United is now making preparations for the new MNL season and has already signed Ayeyawady United winger Thiha Zaw on a two-year deal.

Thiha Zaw played for the Ayeyawady United in the 2020 season of the Myanmar National League and assisted his team to finish in the third-place position.

Currently, Shan United has already signed up to five new player details announced in the coming days, officials said. —Shine Htet Zaw

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Shan United new head coach U Han Win Aung. PHOTO: PHOE THAW ZIN



Newcastle draws blank as Gunners advance to FA Cup 4th Round



Arsenal midfielder Emile Smith Rowe (right) celebrates his winning goal against Newcastle in the FA Cup. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON—Emile Smith-Rowe made the most of his red card reprieve as the Arsenal youngster sent the FA Cup holders into the fourth round with the decisive extra-time strike in Saturday's 2-0 victory against Newcastle.

Smith-Rowe avoided being sent off when his foul on Sean Longstaff — initially ruled a dismissal — was changed to a booking after referee Chris Kavanagh consulted the pitchside

monitor.

It would have been harsh on the promising 20-year-old midfielder if he had been given his marching orders.

Smith-Rowe celebrated the escape with a fine finish to open the scoring in a hard-fought third round tie at the Emirates Stadium. Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang bagged Arsenal's second goal — just his sixth of a difficult season

— in the final moments.

The Gunners' gave boss Mikel Arteta the first silverware of his reign when they beat Chelsea in the FA Cup final in August and the optimism provided by that success is slowly returning to north London after a difficult period.

Arteta was fighting to save his job just two weeks ago, but three successive wins over Christmas lifted Arsenal away from the Premier League relegation zone and eased the pressure on the Spaniard.

Arsenal have won the FA Cup a record 14 times, lifting the trophy four times in the last seven seasons, and another long run in the competition would be a welcome boost for Arteta.

Bernd Leno, Kieran Tierney, Pablo Mari and Aubameyang were the only Arsenal players to retain their places from the 4-0 win at West Bromwich Albion.

Arsenal were forced into a late change after Gabriel Martinelli suffered an ankle injury in the warm-up and was replaced by Reiss Nelson.—AFP ■

Ibra returns as Milan bounce back to extend Serie A lead

MILAN — Zlatan Ibrahimovic returned from injury, coming off the bench for a late cameo appearance, as AC Milan defeated Torino 2-0 on Saturday to extend their lead at the top of Serie A.

Last weekend, champions Juventus ended Milan's 27-match unbeaten run in the league dating back to March.

But Rafael Leao's goal and a Franck Kessie penalty in the first half ensured AC Milan moved four points ahead of Inter Milan who travel to third-placed Roma on Sunday.

Ibrahimovic started on the bench, having been out of action since scoring a double against Napoli on November 22, with a thigh injury and then a calf problem.—AFP ■



AC Milan's Portuguese forward Rafael Leao (2ndL) got the first goal against Torino in the San Siro. PHOTO: MIGUEL MEDINA AFP