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President U Win Myint receives Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister



President U Win Myint receives the Chinese delegation led by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received the Chinese delegation led by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, both sides discussed fostering the existing friendly relations and bilateral cooperation, continued cooperation in building a community of

shared future between the two countries, working together for fighting against COVID-19, pledge made by China to donate yuan 3-million worth of COVID-19 medical supplies, China to provide 300,000 units of COVID-19 vaccines for the Myanmar people, continuing implementation of the Myanmar-China Cultural and Tourism Year in 2021,

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State Counsellor discusses fostering bilateral relations with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on matters relating to the signing of an action plan for establishing the Myanmar-China Community of Shared Future

while making programmes for state visits; maintaining the momentum for implementation of the bilateral projects including the transport infrastructure projects under the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor; cooperation between the two countries to combat the COVID-19 pandemic; China to supply COVID-19 vaccines for the people of Myanmar; the continued celebration of

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582 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 January, total figure rises to 131,186

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **131,186** after **582** new cases were reported on 11 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **131,186** confirmed cases, **2,858** died, **114,609** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 11 January 2021

Total Cases

131,186

New Cases

582

Total Death Tally

2,858

Discharged from Hospital

114,609

Daily death toll until 8 pm 11-1-2021

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Ministry of Health and Sports

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister makes official visit to Myanmar



CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi made an official visit to Myanmar by a special flight yesterday afternoon. At Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, Mr Wang Yi and party were welcomed by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai and officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin welcomes Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

Rule of Law Centre and Justice Sector Coordinating Body organizes 8th meeting

THE Rule of Law Centre and Justice Sector Coordinating Body organized its 8th meeting yesterday morning via videoconferencing.

During the meeting, Coordinating Body Chairperson Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo said that in order to implement the duties of the organization effectively, Coordination Sub-divisions had been formed in regions and states. He added that an advisory group comprising of experts was also formed.

He said that the “Conference on Justice Sector Coordinating for the Rule of Law” was held on 7-8 March, 2018 to develop the group's strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan 2019-2023 with the theme “Justice for People” was drawn up in line with the recommendations of the participants of the conference and approved by the Union Government. Four goals — justice sector coordination, public trust, justice education and improving justice sector arrangements — have been set in the strategic plan.

The Union Attorney-General

said that the organization published its standard procedures, and regularly organized meetings with the Sub-divisions. He added that public awareness campaigns were carried out in collaboration with international partners and the Sub-divisions.

He said that the standard practice includes procedures for receiving complaints, field inspection to the scene, raising public awareness and issues related to organizing meetings.

He continued that if the Sub-divisions are able to comply with the standard procedures; rule of law and justice will be accessible to all citizens.

The Union Attorney-General also called on the Coordination Sub-divisions in regions and states and other relevant government organizations to work collaboratively for the justice sector.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo participates in the virtual meeting of the Rule of Law Centre and Justice Sector Coordinating Body on 11 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

Corruption case filed against civil aviation department officer

THE Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has received a complaint that an official at the Department of Civil Aviation (Ministry of Transport and Communications) misused his positions and authority to engage in corruption.

Because of the complaint, the ACC has set up an investigation committee. It is found that Department of Civil Aviation General Manager U Soe Paing, during his tenures as Director of the Air Traffic Control Inspection Division and General Manager of the Air Navigation Control Division, misused his positions and authority.

By using his email, he informed foreign agents (operators) to pay US\$100

or US\$60 or US\$40 to him for quick services for each flight permit. He got a total of US\$72,066 from 12 foreign agents (operators) for quick services, and he deposited the money at a foreign bank account open in his name U Soe Paing.

After investigation, he has been found guilty of corruption by misusing his positions. Under section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law, the corruption case against U Soe Paing has been filed at Mingaladon Myoma Police Station, Yangon Region on 11 January, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Correction

Please read “...foreign bank branch licences...” instead of “...subsidiary licences...” in the headline and second paragraph of the news story titled “CBM issues subsidiary licences to more foreign banks” on page-3 of the 9 January issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. Also, read “... foreign bank branches ...” instead of “... foreign subsidiaries ...” in the third paragraph of the same story. The GNLM regrets the error. — Ed

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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

President U Win Myint receives Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister



President U Win Myint receives the Chinese delegation led by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO:MNA**

FROM PAGE-1 projects. The call was also attended by Union Ministers U Min Thu, U Thaung Tun, U Kyaw Tin, U Thant Sin Maung, government officials, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai and senior Chinese officials.—MNA
and maintaining the momentum of ongoing bilateral (Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe holds meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi

UNION Minister for the Office of State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe had discussions with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw at 5:15 pm yesterday.

At the meeting, they discussed fostering friendly and bilateral relations, works for security, peace and stability at the border areas, continuous constructive support towards Myanmar’s peace process, and matters related to IDPs in Rakhine State and development of the state.

They also exchanged views on closer collaboration between the two countries in regional and multilateral fora, including the United Nations.

The meeting was also par-



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe holds talks with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 January 2021. **PHOTO:MNA**

Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai and senior Chinese officials.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

State Counsellor discusses fostering bilateral relations with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister

FROM PAGE-1

the Myanmar-China Cultural and Tourism Year in 2021; cooperation for maintenance of peace and stability along the border; and closer collaboration between the two countries in regional and multilateral fora, including the United Nations.

During the meeting, the State Counsellor also stressed that, in the next term, the Union Government would continue to work on peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar. They also discussed China's continued constructive support for Myanmar's peace process.

Mr Wang Yi also conveyed the message of senior Chinese leaders congratulating Myanmar for conducting the general elections successfully.

The call was also attended by Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Soe Win, U Thaung Tun, U Kyaw Tin, responsible government officials, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai and senior Chinese officials.

During the official visit of the



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi and party at the Hall for Envoys of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO:MNA

... closer collaboration between the two countries in regional and multilateral fora ...

Chinese delegation, the two sides signed and exchanged the Agreement on Economic and Technical

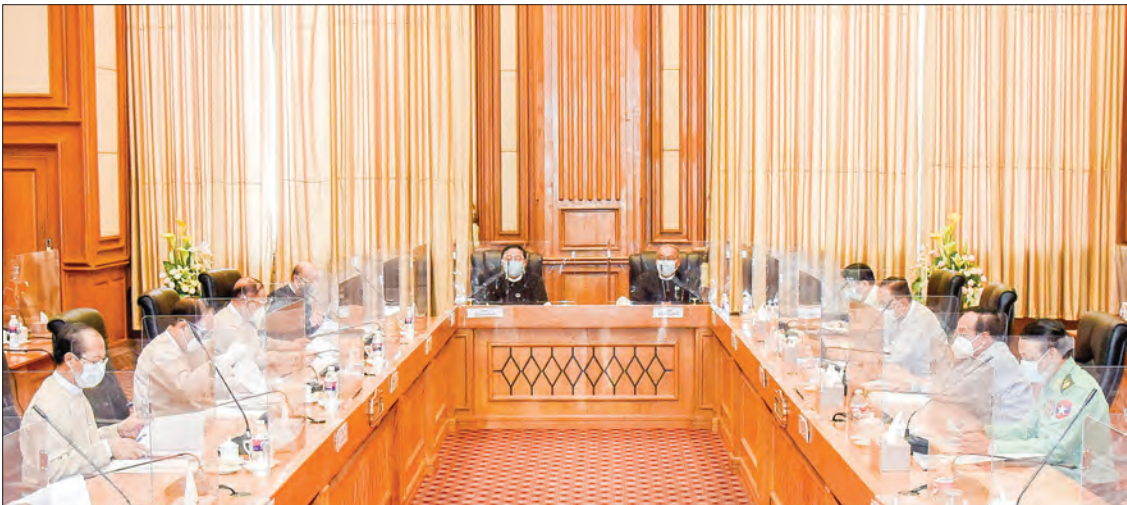
Cooperation between Myanmar and China, Five Year Development Programme for Trade and Economic Cooperation between Myanmar and China, the Memorandum of Understanding on Feasibility Study of the Mandalay-Kyaukpyu Railway Project, the Minutes of Meeting for Investigation of Feasibility Study of Rural Roads and Bridge Improve-

... also discussed on China's continued constructive support towards Myanmar's peace process.

ment Project in Myanmar; Hand-over Certificate of Cash Support for the Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons in Kachin

State and Hand-over Certificate of Purchasing Passenger Coaches under Chinese Interest-free Loan Project.—MNA

Meeting between Central Committee for convening Hluttaw sessions, work committees held in Nay Pyi Taw



Central Committee and Work Committees for Convening Hluttaw sessions hold meeting 1/2021 at the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 January 2021. PHOTO:MNA

A coordination meeting No (1/2021) between the Central Committee for convening first regular sessions of the third Union-level Hluttaws and its work committees was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, U T Khun Myat, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, in his capacity as Central Committee Patron, said that first regular sessions of the third Hluttaws should be held by the current

Speakers of the second Hluttaws (the Second Pyithu Hluttaw and the Second Amyotha Hluttaw) in accordance with section 123, 124 (b) and 155 of the Constitution.

The first regular sessions of the third Pyithu Hluttaw and

Amyotha Hluttaw will be held on 1 February this year; and MPs have been summoned to Nay Pyi Taw by 24 January, according to U T Khun Myat.

He said that the first day of the first regular session of the third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw would be held on 5 February.

The first regular sessions of the third Hluttaws will elect Speakers of the third Pyithu Hluttaw and the third Amyotha Hluttaw and Deputy Speakers. The sessions will also form parliamentary committees. President and Vice-Presidents of Myanmar will also be elected during the parliamentary sessions, which will form the Union government.

U T Khun Myat called on the work committees to work collaboratively for the successful convening of Hluttaw sessions.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker

Mahn Win Khaing Than, in his capacity as Central Committee Patron, urged all stakeholders to work together to ensure the success of upcoming first regular sessions of the third Hluttaws in accordance with COVID-19 preventive guidelines.

Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, in his capacity as Central Committee Chairperson, asked for suggestions from the attendees for COVID-19 preventive measures to be taken in the parliamentary processes.

The meeting was attended by Union Ministers from relevant ministries, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairperson, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, officials from the work committees and Hluttaw officials.—MNA(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

“People are the key”



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint inspects the installation of broadcast equipment, control rooms and media corners at the buildings of Amyotha Hluttaw, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

MoI prepares for broadcast of third Hluttaw sessions

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint inspected preparations for the broadcast of first session meetings of Union-level third Hluttaws yesterday afternoon.

The Union Minister looked around the installation of broadcast equipment, control rooms and media corners at the buildings of Amyotha Hluttaw, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw.

Director-General U Ye Naing from Myanmar Radio and Television and officials reported on the preparations for the live broadcast of Hluttaw television channels, production, equipment, broadcast system and reserved systems for any faults.

The Union Minister and party also inspected the rooms for technical and production crews of MRTV at the Information and Communications Technology unit in the Hluttaw compound.

—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Handover ceremony of Conservation Management Manual for Bagan temples held

THE four manuals on the Republic of Korea’s mural conservation and management at the temples in Bagan were presented to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture yesterday morning.

The ministry and the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation have been jointly carrying out the conservation of temple 477, 478 and 479 since 2018.

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, ROK’s Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Lee Sang-hwa, Head of the Bagan Office of the KCHF Mr Kim Dong-min attended the event at the Bagan Archaeological Museum.

At the ceremony, the Union Minister talked about the technical assistance and programme of the KCHF to the conservation of ancient Bagan temples which were damaged by a major earthquake in 2016.

The first phase of the conservation project was started

in 2018, and it will be finalized in 2021.

The second phase of the project will be implemented from 2021 to 2025.

Followed by the greetings from the ROK ambassador, the head of KCHF in Bagan explained the first phase of conservation works.

U Kyaw Oo Lwin, the Director-General from the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, reported on bilateral cooperation, cultural exchange programme, antique exhibition and training courses.

The Union Minister then received the four booklets— Conservation Manual, Structural Conservation Manual, Mural Painting Conservation Manual and the Ground Penetrating Radar.

The Union Minister, the ambassador and officials looked into the laboratory of Bagan archae-



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko accepts the Conservation Management-Manual GPR Equipment presented by the Republic of Korea on 11 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

ology museum and the store of antiques.

A plaque of appreciation was also unveiled to appreciate the assistance of KCHF.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

COVID-19
Call Centre
opens daily

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

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

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Myeik Smart Island open for new CBT destination



Smart Island is open for the development of community based tourism in Myeik Archipelago.
PHOTO : KHAING HTOO (MYEIK IPRD)

THE Community Based Tourism (CBT) in Donenyaunghmai Village in Myeik Town and floating jetty in Smart Island in Myeik Archipelago has become the new tourism destination in Taninthayi Region. The CBT site created in Donenyaunghmai village is located at Done Island in Kyunsu Township, which is 48 nautical miles away from Myeik Town. The visitors often flock to the famous Smart Island near Donenyaunghmai Village. Additionally, a floating jetty was also arranged for the visitors on Smart Island, which has the natural pebble

beach and sandy beach. The visitors can study the culture, tradition, customs and living styles of Salon people and Kayin ethnic people in Donenyaunghmai village CBT site. Furthermore, they can ride a bicycle on the island, row the boats, study mangrove forest, go fishing and go on a study tour in fishing boats. Additionally, the visitors can go to Smart Island with speedboats. The opening of the CBT site and floating jetty will attract more local travellers and tourists. It will also help create job opportunities for residents.

On 10 January, the opening of the floating jetty in Smart Islands was held near the jetty. Moreover, the CBT site opening ceremony took place at Donenyaunghmai village on the same day. Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myint Maung and the regional ministers, officials concerned and residents marked the opening events. First, the regional Chief Minister and ministers formally inaugurated the floating jetty by cutting the ribbon and sprinkling scented water on the signboard. Afterwards, the regional Chief Minister

and party inspected the infrastructure in Smart Island and looked around the sandy beach and pebble beach. Then, they left for Donenyaunghmai village with speed boats from Smart Islands and formally opened the CBT site in the village. The regional Chief Minister delivered the opening remark that the Taninthayi Region has rich natural resources to create tourism destinations. The region is boasted with its realistic scenic view and aquatic resources. The CBT site in Donenyaunghmai village is aimed at assisting in the government's poverty alleviation project. I hope it will become the most successful CBT site in the region. The regional government is endeavouring to become a significant tourism spot like Yangon, Mandalay, Inle and Bagan. Now, it has marked a milestone for the efforts. Later, Director U Nyo Aye of the Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism explained CBT and treasurer of CBT site gave a thankful speech. Regional Chief Minister handed over the honour certificates to the donors and chair of village CBT presented commemorative presents to regional Chief Minister and ministers at the event. —Khaing Htoo (Myeik IPRD) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mandalay Agriculture Dept to cover 1.6 mln acres for five oil crops



Picture shows sunflower plantation in Mandalay.
PHOTO : MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

MANDALAY Region Agriculture Department planned 1.6 million acres for five oil crops in the current financial year

2020-2021 throughout all seasons (summer, monsoon and winter). Oil crops are scheduled

to cultivate in November. The department targets 488,183 peanut acres, 1,056,495 sesame acres, 141,449 sunflower acres,

7,698 sesame acres for winter, 1,433 mustard acres (winter), totalling 1,695,258 acres in the region, Assistant Director Daw Si Si Phone answered on the call. "The oil consumption is growing year over year. That is why the department arranged for oil crop plantation throughout the whole year to fulfil the requirement of edible oil to a certain extent," she explained. The region has projected to cover over 290,000 acres for oil crops in the region this winter, and the winter oil crop cultivation has completed over 73 per cent with 210,000 acres so far. The growers in the region cultivate paddy, various pulses, oil crops and industrial crops. —Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Exporters urgently need COVID-free certificates to ship fisheries products to China via land borders: MFF reports

By Nyein Nyein

THE COVID-19 free certificate, essential for fishery exports to China, must be issued at the soonest as it can cause disturbance on trading, said general secretary U Win Kyaing of Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF).

China authorities have given the go-ahead for fishery exports only with the presence of COVID-19 free certificate on products since last October. Consequently, fishery exports, including frozen fish, prawn, eel and crabs, cannot be exported to China via the land

border.

"The Ministry of Health and Sports of Myanmar take all responsibility regarding COVID-19 and, there is no other institution which can guarantee the COVID-free status. Therefore, we need to tackle this process soon since failure to do so will directly harm the trade. The government needs to formulate a better policy for that as soon as possible, following the international standard," U Win Kyaing shared his opinion.

The Federation stated that the exporters do not know where

to seek COVID-free certificate on fishery products.

"We need to follow the importing countries' rules and regulation to enter their market. At present, the COVID-19 free status on fishery exports is essential for China. We still do not realize which department is responsible for the issuance. Earlier, the Fisheries Department took all responsibility regarding food safety on fishery products and granted certificate. The department is now planning to deal with this to the utmost of its power during the pandemic. However, when

we look into Thailand's Department of Fisheries, they are not authorized for this matter," he elaborated.

Therefore, the Federation called for cooperation between the official departments concerned, he added.

The Federation has already submitted a report to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation through the Fisheries Department to screen fishery products and receive the COVID-19 free certificate.

China is the second-largest buyer of Myanmar's fishery

products. During the previous financial year 2019-2020, Myanmar shipped over US\$850 million worth fishery products to external markets and among them, US\$254 million worth exports flowed into China.

The Federation expects to reach fishery export target of US\$1 billion in the current FY. Nevertheless, the fishery exports via land border have halted since October 2020, resulting in a \$30 million drop in fishery export value during Q1 compared with a year ago.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mango growers expect good yield, high market potential in China in coming season



Workers are seen sorting mangoes at a mango farm. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

MYANMAR'S mango is expected to reach 80 per cent market share in China, along with high yield during the upcoming mango season, said U Kyaw Soe Naing, secretary of Myanmar Mango Market and Technology Development Association.

The blooming season has started. The growers are providing trees with nutrients, irrigation and insecticide. As the COVID-19 vaccine has now developed, the market is likely to rally 80 per cent in China in the mango season. Earlier, regional climate experts predict strong La Niña condition. At present, La Niña weakened. The flower season of mango tree has started in Myanmar. High yield is also expected, he continued.

The association advised the

growers to use the same packaging for same size code in each region and state. This way, mango can fetch the fair price, and China cannot blame them for quality packaging. The association is raising awareness of input methods, packaging systems, export criteria and growing methods through the online platform during the meantime. The mango growers are also urged to supply the quality mango to maintain the market reputation.

Mango farm-owners need to follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). They also need to obtain GAP certification. The Agriculture Department has been instituting criteria for long-term organic farming, the association stated.

Of about 200 mango varieties

originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamyar Ngamauk, Yinkwe, Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. The foreign market prefers Seintalone variety.

Typically, Myanmar's mangoes are primarily shipped to China and sent to India, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Japan.

Ayeyawady Region possesses the most extensive mango plantation acres, having about 46,000 acres. Bago Region is the second-largest producer with 43,000 acres, and Mandalay has 29,000 acres of mango. According to the association, there are over 24,000 acres in Kayin State, over 20,400 acres in Shan State and over 20,000 acres in Sagaing Region. – Min Htet Aung
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Individual trades through land border exceed K8 bln in Q1

ACCORDING to data released by the Ministry of Commerce, trade conducted by Individual Trading Card (ITC) holders reached over K8.09 billion through the land border in the first quarter of the current financial year 2020-2021.

The Trade Department issued 17 cards in the October-December period this FY. Imports exceeded K6.46 billion, and exports were valued at just K1.6 billion.

The Myawady border recorded the highest trade value at K5.3 billion, according to the Commerce Ministry. Nevertheless, the figure only reflected imports as individual trading cardholders did not export goods through the Myawady crossing.

The value of trade carried out by individual cardholders stood at K115 million at Tamu post, K116 million at Tachilek, K421 million at Kawthoung, K2.09 billion at Mawtaung and K14.2 million at Kengtung, as per data from the Commerce Ministry.

Individual trades topped K737 million in the period from 21 November 2012 to 31 March 2013; exceeded K6.6 billion in the FY2013-2014; reached

K9.37 billion in the FY2014-2015; stood at over K6.4 billion in the FY2015-2016; rose above K18.5 billion in the FY2016-2017; touched K45.9 billion in the FY2017-2018; K22.5 billion during the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September); K59 billion in the FY2018-2019 and drastically plunged to K43.32 billion in the FY2019-2020.

The individual traders who cannot establish their own company can trade with the ITC in the border area. However, trading volume is limited. The card validity is set only one year, and the cardholders need to extend the card at the respective border posts one month before the expiry date.

Trading with the use of ITC is based on local currency. Hundreds of exports and imports items have been allowed for individual trading via the border posts.

The trade department has issued 1,792 cards so far intending to boost trade. Business people can trade goods worth K3 million per day using ITCs, and the Trade Department has permitted trade of up to K15 million per day over five days. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Success of vaccination programme demands good logistics system

WITH COVID-19 vaccines roll-out, logistic issues for getting millions of doses where they need to go is becoming the next challenge.

Now, the Ministry of Health and Sports is planning to inoculate all citizens aged over 18, which makes up about 70 per cent of our country's population, in 2021 and 2022.

Regarding the vaccination, our country will give priority to those with high-risk conditions such as medical professionals and frontline workers, in an effort to contain the infection rate and to ensure the situation returns to normalcy as soon as possible.

Getting the vaccinations for the people across the country would create good logistic management issues. It means that we should be better prepared to address issues related with logistics to ensure that we can quickly respond to unexpected situations.

The national vaccination programme calls for all hands on deck to ensure the logistics of distribution, storage and delivery are effective as vaccines supplies are limited and the distribution locations will vary across the country.

The Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe said in his opening remarks of the fourth coordination meeting of the COVAX National Coordinating Committee – CNCC yesterday that the committee has made good preparations to store the vaccines at the designated temperatures and to make a good logistics management system.

The national vaccination programme calls for all hands on deck to ensure the logistics of distribution, storage and delivery are effective as vaccines supplies are limited and the distribution locations will vary across the country.

We will see a first batch of immunization soon. The more people receive the vaccine, the more protected everybody will be.

We are confident that the experiences of the Ministry of Health and Sports and its health workers and experts in immunization programmes would make the coming national immunization programme against COVID-19 a success.

We have a long way to go until the majority of our citizens are vaccinated, but we should all be grateful to see the progress being made and keep the faith that a return to normalcy is on the horizon.

We must prepare now for day one of the vaccine's availability through a comprehensive national strategy for procurement, logistics, the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine and immunization.

And, even with a vaccine, it will take time for the global and our economy to get back to pre-crisis levels.

Hence, before being vaccinated against the coronavirus, we need to be very vigilant during this period.

Limiting cars on Yangon city streets

By Lokethar

THE number of cars on Yangon city streets, to say the least, are "too many" as can be seen by anyone moving around in the city. Private cars top the list. Of course it's the right of people to own cars for their personal use. But the trouble is not all who own cars have places to park them. They usually park them day and night in front of the buildings and apartments they live in. When told about it they usually reply where else could they park it.

There is a requirement that at the time of purchase and registration of the private vehicles, the owners are to declare where they will park their car(s). However "wild parking" is commonplace. Of course every one knows about private cars using up public street places to the inconvenience of the general public. Just as the owners of cars have a right to use the streets, the general public has the right to walk freely around the city or in their community. So how can the City Fathers meet the needs of both pedestrians and motorists? The most obvious answer would be to limit the number of cars within the city boundary.

In quite a number of large cities around the World, the "taxes" on owning and operating a private vehicle can be high. This is of course a deterrent to owning private cars. Another is to improve public transportation so that it would be more convenient to travel in the city



A traffic congestion in Yangon in 2019. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

for various reasons without the use of private cars. In Yangon City improvements in the public transport system by the Yangon Region government with the introduction of many new buses and bus-routes by the newly formed transport companies has much improved moving around the city without using private cars. There needs to be further improvements to see lessening use of private cars.

The "Taxi" service in Yangon provided by taxi companies have also added to improved mobility within the city by those who can afford hiring "Taxis". Perhaps re-introduction of the "taxi meter" for taxis and educating the public

to use taxis with meters would increase use of taxis instead of private cars as there need not be the problem of parking if private cars are used. After all many large cities around the world have "Taxis" with meters so that the passenger, pay according to standard rates set on the distance and time travelled.

People say that the City Fathers should provide parking spaces for the private cars. Perhaps multi-level car parks could be built by the Yangon City Development Corporation as a business venture. But then the economic/utility benefits of using the land for car parks would be less than if the land is used, say

for instance, for building modern market places.

Another solution used is to require developers to build sufficient vehicle parking spaces in buildings for housing the cars of the residents. Some building engineers opt for providing underground parking spaces for large building complexes. In doing so the engineers probably make provisions to deal with possible waterlogging of the underground parking spaces in times of temporary flooding that may occur due to heavy rainfalls. In the final analysis, the logical solution seems to be to limit private car ownership to those who really have facilities for parking their

cars overnight or in the daytime when not in use.

In these times of Covid-19 Pandemic, and the Stay at Home Rules of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the spread of the Covid-19 virus seems to be under control to some extent. A "consequence" of the "Stay at Home" rules have been restrictions on travelling to the extent that there has been less cars on the roads of cities with large populations like Yangon and Mandalay.

With the Corona Virus-19 Pandemic, in Yangon nowadays, driving into the city for essential articles like food, medicines etc. with less cars on the roads is quite a pleasant experience. Driving past the green parks with beautiful flower beds, green grass kept well trimmed, leafy green trees, the "green" landscaped embankments of the Inya and Kandawgyi Lakes, the "green islands" of some of the long main roads and the many "parks" in and around the city being a pleasant "green", is a feast for tired eyes, especially after sitting for long hours with eyes fixed on the laptop screen or on the TV while staying at home. In the past driving into and around the City for business or official purposes, one never noticed the "greening" of the city because one's eyes were mostly glued on the many cars in front and sides so as to avoid unpleasant accidental encounters.

When, in the future, the Stay at Home Rule is gradually relaxed, vehicular traffic on Yangon roads, especially private cars, will make a come back. The

number of cars on the streets will increase and slow down our "mobility" and dirty our "air" as well.

The way to limit vehicular traffic in Yangon City from making everybody miserable would probably be best to limit the number of private cars on the city streets. It could be done by making it expensive to own a car or limiting the use of cars, within the City Centre which is one of the main cause of clogging the somewhat "narrow" roads between blocks of multi-storey buildings. A common "solution" tried out by some large cities around the world is allowing cars with odd and even number licence plates to enter the city on alternate days. Another measure taken by a very large city is to limit private cars from entering the marked boundary of the "City Centre". However there is no telling that such arrangements would work in the City of Yangon.

With the City Fathers planning to expand the city in all directions, it is hoped that the more well to do people would gravitate towards the new sub-urban areas and tend to live in individual houses with garages to park cars in their own homes or in collectively built car parking facilities, could lessen the number of cars on the streets, whether temporarily or permanently on the side of the narrow streets thus causing traffic and pedestrian movement to slow down, leading to traffic jams.

With charity to all and malice to none.

■ ■ ■

Digital health in spotlight as pandemic shifts tech show focus

DIGITAL health care is in the spotlight at the tech industry's big event this week amid a pandemic that has highlighted the importance of remote services, with a potentially lasting impact on medical delivery.

The Consumer Electronics Show, which is being held online from Monday, will showcase technology for remote patient visits, biosensors and a range of other gadgetry that can help people avoid doctors' offices and waiting rooms.

Demand for telehealth services was projected to have risen 64 per cent in the US alone, according to Frost & Sullivan researchers,

underscoring the need for better communications platforms, home monitoring devices and more.

"We have learned that going into waiting rooms with other sick patients can be problematic and people are looking for other ways of getting care," said Samir Qamar, a family physician and founder of MedWand, which is expected to launch its device with 10 diagnostic tools for remote care this year.

Qamar, who is speaking at a CES panel, said the pandemic also exposed gaps in telemedicine including a lack of accessible internet for some population segments.

"One of the big problems is the lack of ability to examine patients

remotely," Qamar told AFP.

Companies have been developing remote tools that can be used at home, including stethoscopes, otoscopes, heart and blood pressure monitors, but need to show they are highly accurate in order to gain regulatory approval, Qamar noted.

CES exhibitors will be showing devices that monitor the elderly living alone for signs of medical issues, wearables that help with early detection of disease as well as various diagnostic tools.

Also on display will be an array of workplace health gadgets, from smart thermometers to air purifiers and sanitizing robots.

"Crazy devices such as personal air purifiers that were viewed with amusement last year will be viewed as much more relevant this year," said Richard Windsor, an independent technology analyst who pens the Radio Free Mobile blog. **Digital records, analytics**

Another important element for remote medical care is keeping track of health data and using analytics tools to better understand the risks for Covid-19 as well as other diseases, notes Bettina Experton, chief executive at the digital health platform Humetrix, a longtime CES exhibitor.

With more people turning to telemedicine, "sometimes the phy-

sician might not have an existing relationship with the patient, so there is a critical need for their medical history," Experton said.

"We have developed various mobile applications with medical history which you can share with the push of a button."

The platform, which is available for individuals and insurers, also uses artificial intelligence to help assess risks for people affected by the coronavirus.

Similarly, Tokyo-based Axion Research will be unveiling an early-detection system that predicts disease risks, including for cancer and Alzheimer's, using AI to "map" people's health outlook.

Fitness evolves

While CES has long focused on consumer products for fitness, this has increasingly been applied to the healthcare field as technology advances, said Robin Murdoch of the consulting group Accenture, who follows the show.

"It has been focused on the consumer side of health and fitness, but there is some crossover," Murdoch said.

"You now have smartwatches and other devices which monitor your pulse, your blood oxygen and more, and that provides a lot of data" that can be applied for medical purposes. — AFP

■ ■ ■

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President issued Press Release 1/2021 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 9 January 2021.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 9 January. The full text of the press release will be reported in the 13 January issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 11 January, 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 12 January, 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, 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 (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 slight decrease of night temperatures in Bago Region and Shan, Kayah States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12 January, 2021: Partly cloudy.

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Announcement on contribution of cash donation towards COVID Vaccination Fund

1. THE people who want to contribute cash donation for the purchase of vaccines, can donate to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund at Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733 of Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw) by using the following methods:
 - (a) Cash contribution can be made at Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw), branches of State-owned banks and private banks.
 - (b) Cash contribution can be made with the Account Transfer method from other saving accounts of state-owned banks and private banks.
 - (c) The donation via Mobile Banking/ Mobile Wallet can be made through Mobile Apps of their respective service Provider/private banks.
 - (d) The donation via MPU Card (ATM Card) can be made through MPU.
 - (e) The further information will be announced later for the well-wishers to donate safely via Over-the-Counter which links with MPU Debit/Credit cards, local/foreign Visa/ Master Credit cards at the Website of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry.
2. The people who want to contribute cash donation for the purchase of vaccines can donate to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund at Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012 of Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw) by using the following methods:
 - (a) Any type of foreign currency can be directly donated via all the branches of Myanma Economic banks which received MC and AD licences.
 - (b) Cash contribution can be made with the Account Transfer method from foreign currency accounts opened at the branches of Myanma Economic Bank.
 - (c) Cash contribution can be made via the private and foreign banks by using SWIFT Code-MYEBMMMY together with the expression of Donation to COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Account EDC 600012) Myanma Economic Bank.
 - (d) If there is no direct communication between Myanma Economic Bank and the foreign banks for cash contribution by using the above — mentioned SWIFT Code and Donation to COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Account EDC 600012) Myanma Economic Bank, the cash contribution can be made via the following foreign bank partners of Myanma Economic Bank:

UOB Bank (Singapore)	OCBC Bank (Singapore)
DBS Bank (Singapore)	May Bank (Singapore/Kuala Lumpur)
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp (Tokyo)	Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ (Tokyo)
Mizuho Bank (Tokyo)	Bangkok Bank (Bangkok)
Siam Commercial Bank (Bangkok)	Krung Thai Bank (Bangkok)
Thanachart Bank (Bangkok)	ICBC Bank (China)
OCBC Wing Hang Bank (Shanghai)	China Construction Bank (China)
Sonali Bank (Bangladesh)	AB Bank (Bangladesh)

3. For the records, the donors should send their names, phone numbers and addresses in full and other pieces of evidence of cash contribution to the e-mail — treasury05@365mopfi.gov.mm, treasury10@365mopfi.gov.mm (or) Viber-09-251182042 and 09-420788851.
4. Those who want to donate in person and in virtual system in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay can contact the following persons:

Nay Pyi Taw	Yangon	Mandalay
Daw Si Si Pyone Director-General Treasury Department 067-3410156 09-450455237	U Min Thu Managing Director Myanma Agricultural Development Bank 01-8391342 01-8391072	U Tun Tun Aung Director Internal Revenue Department 02-4035916
Daw Yi Yi Khaing Deputy Director- General Treasury Department 067-3410158 09-254558424		

5. The cash donated to COVID-19 vaccination Fund is exempted from tax according to the Income Tax Law.
*Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry
(Translated by Khaing Thazin Han)*

CONFLICT

Biden taps career diplomat William Burns as CIA chief

US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday announced William Burns as his pick to lead the Central Intelligence Agency, tapping a retired veteran diplomat who helped lead secret talks with Iran.

Burns spent over three decades in the US foreign service, including a stint as ambassador to Russia from 2005-2008, and high-ranking jobs in the State Department.

“Bill Burns is an exemplary diplomat with decades of experience on the world stage keeping our people and our country safe and secure,” Biden said in a statement released by his transition team.

Burns, who holds a masters and doctoral degrees from Oxford University, also served as

US ambassador to Oman from 1998-2001.

He retired from the foreign service in 2014 and is the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an international affairs think tank in the United States.

Burns had been considered a likely candidate to lead the State Department under Biden, given his deep experience with Iran.

He was involved in back-channel negotiations that set the stage for the 2015 deal to limit Iran’s nuclear capabilities.

“The fact that we did it quietly or secretly caused a certain amount of controversy,” he said in a 2016 interview.

“But the reality is that after 35 years without sustained



(FILES) In this file photograph taken on March 6, 2014, then Deputy Secretary of State William Burns testifies on the current situation in Syria and the Ukraine to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. **PHOTO: AFP**

diplomatic contact between the United States and Iran, there was a huge amount of baggage, a lot of mistrust, and a lot of grievances.”

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Democrats forge ahead to impeach Trump, again

US Democrats said Sunday they would push to remove President Donald Trump from office during the final days of his administration after his supporters’ violent attack on the Capitol, with some Republicans supporting the move.

Trump could face a historic second impeachment before the January 20 inauguration of Democrat Joe Biden, at a time when the United States is hit by a surging pandemic, a flagging economy and searing division.

SOURCE: AFP

IS attack kills 8 regime loyalists in east Syria: monitor

ISLAMIC State group fighters killed at least eight regime loyalists in eastern Syria on Monday, the latest in a series of deadly jihadist attacks, a Britain-based war monitor reported.

Five Syrian soldiers and three pro-regime militia fighters were among those killed in the IS attack on one of their positions in a desert region of Deir Ezzor province, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

SOURCE: AFP

Sri Lanka to rebuild Tamil war memorial after protests

SRI Lanka’s government said Monday it would rebuild a memorial to Tamil civilians killed in the country’s civil war that was demolished at the weekend.

The destruction of the monument at Jaffna University -- depicting arms sticking out of a mound -- prompted protests and threats of a general strike in areas where Tamils are a majority.

SOURCE: AFP

LATEST

Coronavirus: Latest global developments

HERE are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

German virus deaths top 40,000

The total number of Germany's coronavirus deaths crosses 40,000 Sunday, as Chancellor Angela Merkel warns that worse is to come.

In her weekly video message Saturday, Merkel said the full impact of socialising over the Christmas and New Year's period was yet to show up in the statistics.

Belgium virus deaths pass 20,000

Coronavirus deaths in Belgium pass 20,000, health officials say Sunday, with more than half the victims from retirement care homes.

The country of 11.5 million people has one of the highest death rates from the pandemic in the world, with 1,725 per 100,000 people, according to an AFP tally.

More than 1.9 million people dead worldwide

The pandemic has killed more than 1.9 million people worldwide, according to a tally compiled by AFP using official sources and information from



A child plays football as people walk past closed stores on the Brandenburger Strasse pedestrian area in the centre of Potsdam, eastern Germany on January 6, 2021 amid the ongoing novel coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

the World Health Organization (WHO).

The United States is the country most affected with more than 372,000 deaths, followed by Brazil (more than 202,000), India (over 150,000), Mexico (over 132,000) and the United Kingdom (over 80,000).

\$1bn raised for 'vulnerable'

countries

Britain says it has helped raise \$1 billion (818 million euros) from global donors to help "vulnerable countries" access coronavirus vaccines, by match-funding contributions from other countries.

It has also committed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC),

says Britain's Foreign Office.

Czechs seek Israeli help

With daily cases at record rates, Czech President Milos Zeman says he has asked Israel "for help with organising the vaccination campaign because Israel is absolutely perfect at that", having already vaccinated 1.5 million people.

His appeal comes as thousands spill into central Prague to protest against an ongoing vaccination campaign and tight government anti-virus restrictions.

France extends curfew restrictions

France extends its longer overnight curfew restrictions to eight more departments from Sunday, including second city Marseille, after a family cluster of the mutation identified in the UK is found.

Quebec starts overnight curfew

The Canadian province of Quebec starts an overnight 8-5 curfew to try to curb the spread of the virus.

One on this scale has not been ordered in Canada since a devastating flu swept the globe a century ago, according to historians.

Vaccine scepticism 'suicidal denial', says pope

Pope Francis urges people to get the vaccination, calling opposition to the jab "suicidal denial" and saying he will get inoculated next week.

SOURCE: AFP

VIRUS ORIGIN

WHO to probe virus origins in China as nations struggle with surges

A World Health Organization team will finally reach China this week to start probing the origins of the coronavirus, more than a year after the pandemic began and following accusations Beijing tried to block the investigation.

Infection numbers surged across Europe, with Germany warning of the "hardest" days

ahead as Britain raced to vaccinate as many people as possible to contain a virus that has infected close to 90 million people worldwide and killed nearly two million.

The human and economic toll of the pandemic has caused anger and frustration worldwide, giving even greater polit-

ical significance to the WHO's long-awaited investigation mission to China. The 10-member WHO team will arrive Thursday and "conduct joint research cooperation on the origins of Covid-19 with Chinese scientists", Beijing's National Health Commission said in a statement that provided no further details.

Beijing has faced international criticism over its lack of transparency during the early days of the pandemic. The United States and Australia have led international calls for an independent inquiry, enraging China.

The announcement of the WHO team's arrival came on the anniversary of the first death confirmed by China in the central city of Wuhan, where a wet market was identified as the first major outbreak of the disease that then spread around the world.

The anniversary of the first reported death passed by unmarked on Monday in Wuhan,

where commuters move freely to work, and parks and riverside promenades buzz with visitors.

"Wuhan is the safest city in China now, even the whole world," 66-year-old resident Xiong Liansheng told AFP.

Hospitals overwhelmed

The recovery of Wuhan is in sharp contrast to the many parts of the world where the pandemic is still raging, fuelled by new variants that are prompting governments from Israel to Australia to reimpose restrictions, including lockdowns and even curfews.

The surges in Europe and North America have hit even as Covid-19 vaccines were approved and rolled out in record time.

Virus deaths in Germany crossed 40,000 on Sunday, with Chancellor Angela Merkel warning that the country had yet to feel the full impact of socialising over Christmas and New Year period.

The coming weeks will be

"the hardest phase of the pandemic" so far, Merkel said, with hospitals stretched to their limits.

Hospitals in Britain, which has one of the highest death tolls in Europe, were also close to being overwhelmed, and the surge in cases forced the government to reinforce its campaign to get people to abide by stay-at-home orders.

UK health authorities are rushing to give shots as many people as possible to meet a target of 15 million vaccinations among the most vulnerable by mid-February. The surge in Mexico, which the fourth-highest death toll in the world, has left hospitals in a "critical" state, with paramedics struggling to even find beds for patients. "For there to be room, one person has to be discharged or die," said Angel Zuniga, a Red Cross coordinator in the city of Toluca.

"It's tough but it's the truth."

SOURCE: AFP



(FILES) This file photoshows a woman walking in front of the closed Huanan wholesale seafood market in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province in China. **PHOTO: AFP**

CRIME

Turkish TV preacher jailed for 1,000 years for sex crimes

A Turkish Muslim televangelist who surrounded himself with scantily-clad women on TV was jailed for more than 1,000 years on Monday for sex crimes, local media reported.

Adnan Oktar preached conservative views while women he called his “kittens” – many of whom appeared to have had plastic surgery – danced around him in the TV studio.

The 64-year-old was detained in June 2018 as part of a crackdown on his group by the financial crimes unit of the Istanbul police.

He was sentenced to 1,075

years for crimes including sexual assault, sexual abuse of minors, fraud and attempted political and military espionage, the private NTV broadcaster reported.

Some 236 suspects have been on trial in the case, 78 of whom are under arrest, according to the official Anadolu news agency.

The hearings have featured lurid details and harrowing sex crime allegations.

Oktar told the presiding judge in December that he had close to 1,000 girlfriends.

SOURCE: AFP



Turkish police officers escort televangelist and leader of a sect, Adnan Oktar (C) on July 11, 2018, in Istanbul, as he is arrested on fraud charges. **PHOTO: AFP**

POLITICS

Netanyahu to appear in court February 8 for Israel graft trial

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to appear in court on February 8 after his trial for corruption was delayed due to a novel coronavirus lockdown, judges said on Monday.

Netanyahu's trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust began last May, with the premier being excused from subsequent hearings as his lawyers argued for more time to review prosecution evidence.

The Israeli premier was due to be in court on January 13 for the presentation of his formal response to the charges, but the hearing was postponed in the face of a lockdown to combat the spread of Covid-19.

Last week the Jerusalem district court delayed that hearing, citing the “large amount of participants... and the lockdown”, but did not set a new date.

On Monday, however, it said the hearing would now take place on February 8.

Israel last month imposed its third national lockdown since the start of the pandemic, but tightened the restrictions on Friday after the daily caseload remained high.

The end of the lockdown is



Israeli Prime Minister Minister Benjamin Netanyahu receives the second dose of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine at Sheba Medical Centre in Ramat Gan, near the coastal city of Tel Aviv, on January 9, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

currently set for January 21.

Netanyahu, 71, is the longest-serving prime minister in Israeli history and the first to be indicted while in office.

The premier, who is facing re-election in March, says the charges against him are part of a witch-hunt to drive him from office.

The prosecution has assembled more than 300 witnesses to back its allegations.

They say Netanyahu accepted improper gifts and sought to illegally trade favours with

media moguls in exchange for positive coverage.

Last month, the court ordered the prosecution to amend the charge sheet against Netanyahu to differentiate between him and family members mentioned in it, who are not on trial.

Under Israeli law, a sitting prime minister does not have automatic immunity from prosecution, but is not obliged to resign when charged, only when convicted and after all avenues of appeal have been exhausted.

SOURCE: AFP

TRIAL

Corruption trial of Israeli magnate opens in Switzerland

FRENCH-ISRAELI diamond magnate Beny Steinmetz went on trial in Geneva on Monday over allegations of corruption linked to mining deals in Guinea, after a drawn-out international investigation.

Steinmetz, who travelled from Israel to take part in the two-week trial, has denied wrongdoing in the case, which involves allegations of multi-million-dollar bribes paid to top Guinean officials to win lucrative mining rights.

The 64-year-old businessman, who made his fortune in diamonds, faces charges of corrupting public officials and forging documents following a six-year inquiry.

SOURCE: AFP

EDUCATION

Greece reopens some schools after two-month shutdown

GREECE reopened thousands of primary schools and nurseries on Monday for the first time in two months, and prepared to launch a campaign to vaccinate the over-85s against coronavirus.

More than 850,000 children under 12 returned to education, officials said, following a mass closure on November 16.

Greece has been under a nationwide lockdown since November 7 following an infection spike in the autumn.

More than 4,000 of Greece's 5,263 reported virus deaths have been registered in the past two months.

On Friday, restrictions that were supposed to end on January 11 were extended for another week.

Over 44,000 Greeks have received vaccine doses since last month, according to government data.

The government aims to hit 30,000 vaccinations per month

from nearly 8,000 at present, minister of state George Gera-petritis said Monday.

Greece has secured enough

vaccines for 15 million people, more than its population of around 11 million, government spokesman Christos Tarantilis

said.

More than 420,000 doses will be available this month, he said.

SOURCE: AFP



(FILES) High school students keep social distances on the first day of class of the new academic year in Drama, on 14 September 2020, amid the crisis linked with the covid-19 pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

INFLATION

China consumer prices rise in December ahead of Lunar New Year

CHINA'S consumer prices rebounded in December, official data showed Monday, as food prices picked up due to weather difficulties and rising demand ahead of the Lunar New Year festival.

In December, the consumer price index (CPI) rose more than expected at 0.2 per cent on-year, said the National Bureau of Statistics, with prices increasing for fresh produce and meats such as pork, beef and mutton ahead of next month's nationwide holiday.

"Due to continued low temperatures, the production, storage and transportation costs of fresh vegetables and fruit increased," said NBS senior statistician Dong Lijuan.

The index is a key gauge of retail inflation, and the rebound follows the first negative reading in over a decade the month before as food costs fell.

On Monday, Dong said that consumer demand was picking up due



A woman picks up vegetables at a market in Beijing on December 17, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

to New Year's Day and the upcoming Lunar New Year, bumping up prices of other food items.

But pork prices, which rocketed previously after an African swine fever outbreak ravaged pig stocks, continued to drop by 1.3 per cent on-year last month as supplies of the staple meat recovered.

For the full year of 2020, consumer prices rose 2.5 per cent on-year.

"Consumer prices may slip back into deflation over the next couple of months due to a jump in pork prices a year ago, but this should prove temporary," said Capital Economics' senior China economist Julian Evans-Pritchard.

On Friday, China's first live hog futures began trading, which officials hope will help halt price fluctuations.

High food inflation has triggered urban unrest in the past and rising prices is a concern not just for farmers but also the country's leaders.

Iris Pang, chief economist for Greater China at ING said consumer prices should hold steady moving forward, with pork prices stabilizing and vegetable costs dropping after winter.

SOURCE: AFP

MARKETS

Asia markets mixed, dollar rises as Biden's pledges huge stimulus

ASIAN markets were mixed Monday as traders struggled to track another record performance on Wall Street, though investors remain broadly upbeat on the prospect of a further massive stimulus for the US economy, with President-elect Joe Biden calling for a spending spree in the trillions of dollars.

With vaccines being rolled out around the world and key risk events including the US election, Georgia senate runoffs and Brexit now out of the way, observers said focus is now on the expected global

recovery from last year's economic catastrophe.

The need for more financial help for the world's top economy was laid out Friday with data showing 140,000 people lost their jobs in December – the first fall since April – as virus infections and deaths surged across the country.

Biden, who will be sworn in as president on January 20, said he would press for a new rescue package that includes \$2,000 direct payments to taxpayers and help for small businesses.

SOURCE: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (035W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY. NO. (035W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (734W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (734W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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

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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICTY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(28/2020-2021)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-005(20-21)	(Retender) Truck Mounted Single Drum Well Servicing Unit (1) Unit	Ks
2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 12 January 2021 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.			
3. The interested Bidders should submit the Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than 12:00 pm on 11 February 2021 .			
4. Tender Closing Date & Time – 11-2-2021, 12:00 pm			

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

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

ROYALS

Thai royal defamation cases ramp up as protests pause



Thai activists who were demanding reforms to the monarchy, arrive at a police station in Bangkok on January 7, 2021, to face charges involving section 112, the kingdom's tough royal defamation law. **PHOTO: AFP**

THAI authorities on Monday charged four democracy activists with royal defamation, with the protest movement rocking the kingdom put on hold because of a spike in coronavirus cases.

A total of 41 people have now been charged with insulting the monarchy in a major

uptick in Thailand's use of its strict lese majeste laws since a youth-led protest movement began last July.

The charges can carry a 15-year jail sentence, but the threat of prosecution has not deterred protesters from demanding reform to the monarchy and great-

er scrutiny of its finances.

Police questioned the four on Monday and released them, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

Three, including a 17-year-old, were charged over a protest at Wongwienyai, across the river from Bangkok early

in December.

In a separate case, a student was charged for allegedly printing the pro-democracy movement's 10 demands as well as transcripts of speeches by protest leaders at an August rally.

All four have pleaded not guilty.

Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said people were free to protest in a way that was "constructive and beneficial for society", but not to insult others or "incite hatred".

Protests demanding political reform and the resignation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha were halted over the Christmas-New Year period and are likely to remain on hold while Thailand grapples with a surge in coronavirus cases.

An outbreak at a seafood market in December has spread the virus to more than 50 provinces and increased the total cases to more than 10,000 -- from just 4,000 in November.

Protest leader, Parit 'Penguin' Chiwarak, who is facing a dozen royal defamation charges, said the fight for democratic re-

form will continue in 2021 "but with the covid situation, gathering may not be the main theme".

Political analyst Paul Chambers of Naresuan University said the 41 cases marked the biggest use of the royal defamation laws since 2017, when when 64 people were either facing charges or already in jail under the previous king's reign.

"At this point, the authorities are being temporarily saved by the growing ravages of Covid-19 in Thailand. Authorities are using this period to make numerous arrests of protest leaders so that any future demonstrations will lack these key individuals," he told AFP.

Chulalongkorn University political scientist Thitinan Pongsudhirak said the recent cases in such a short a time "show an unprecedented escalation of legal persecution".

"The apparent aim is to keep the protest leaders on the back foot and the movement off balance because lese majeste has a high conviction rate with loose parameters where anyone can charge anyone," he told AFP.

SOURCE: AFP

INVESTIGATION

Afghanistan probes air strike that killed civilians

AFGHAN authorities said Monday they are investigating an air strike at the weekend which local officials say killed more than a dozen civilians, including children.

Provincial officials said 15 people died on Saturday night when a rocket struck a house in Khashrod district of Nimroz province.

"We are aware of claims of civilian casualties in Nimroz. We have launched an investigation jointly with local officials," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Provincial council member Nehmatullah Sediqqi told AFP that Afghan forces carried out two air strikes in the district.

"In the first strike six Taliban fighters were killed. The second strike hit a house that killed 15 civilians, including women and children," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

AVIATION

Crew on crashed Indonesian passenger jet did not declare emergency: investigator

THE crew of an Indonesian passenger jet that crashed off Jakarta at the weekend with 62 people aboard did not declare an emergency or report technical problems before it suddenly plunged into the sea, an investigator said Monday.

So far, inspectors have so far been unable to say why the 26-year-old plane crashed just four minutes after takeoff, but they do know the location of the black boxes. A recording of conversations with air traffic control pointed to routine exchanges, and there was no communication as the Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 plunged about 10,000 feet (3,000 metres) in less than a minute before slamming into the Java

Sea, said National Transportation Safety Committee investigator Nurcahyo Utomo.

"It's like a normal conversation and nothing suspicious," he told AFP. "There's no talk of an emergency or something like that." The preliminary data suggested it was "most likely" that the plane was intact when it hit the water Saturday, he added.

"But we don't know at this stage" what caused the crash, Utomo said.

His comments came as divers searched waters off Jakarta for black boxes -- cockpit voice and flight data recorders -- that could be crucial to help explain why the plane went down.

SOURCE: AFP



Indonesian police stand by a body bag containing the remains of a victim at Tanjung Priok port, north of Jakarta, on January 11, 2021, during search and rescue operations off the coast for the Sriwijaya Air flight SJ182 Boeing 737-500 passenger jet which crashed into the Java Sea minutes after takeoff on January 9. **PHOTO: AFP**

BLACKOUT

Pakistan suspends power plant staff after nationwide blackout

SEVEN staff at one of Pakistan's biggest power plants have been suspended after a technical fault sparked a massive grid breakdown at the weekend, plunging

the entire country into darkness.

The blackout hit all of Pakistan's major cities, including the capital Islamabad, economic hub Karachi and the second-largest

city Lahore, lasting around 18 hours in most areas.

The employees at Guddu thermal power plant in Sindh province were suspended "on ac-

count of the negligence of duty", according to the Central Power Generation Company, which operates the facility.

SOURCE: AFP

POLITICS

North Korea’s Kim assumes late father’s mantle

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has had his official party title changed, state media reported Monday, assuming a position previously held by his late father in what analysts said was a move to bolster his authority.

The North Korean economy is struggling in the face of self-imposed coronavirus isolation, and is subject to multiple sanctions over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

At the same time, nuclear talks with the United States have been deadlocked since the collapse of the Hanoi summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in February 2019.

The ruling Workers’ Party of Korea “unanimously adopted” a decision to elect Kim as general secretary at its congress on Sunday, the official KCNA news agency reported.

“All the delegates expressed full support with stormy applause in great excitement,” it said.

The South Korean military said it detected signs that a military parade may have been staged Sunday night for the congress.

The last such gathering five years ago had named Kim as party chairman in what was largely seen as a formal corona-



This picture taken on January 10, 2021 released from North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on January 11, 2021 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) attending the 8th Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) in Pyongyang. PHOTO: AFP

tion for the leader, who was in his early 30s at the time.

The new title comes after Kim pledged at the meeting to strengthen his nuclear-armed nation’s military capabilities, and called the US his country’s “foremost principal enemy”.

He also admitted that “almost all sectors fell a long way short of the set objectives” in North Korea’s previous economic plan.

Experts said the new nomenclature was largely symbolic, with the congress changing job titles to reinstate a previous-

ly scrapped party secretariat system.

North Korea is more isolated than ever after closing its borders last January to protect itself against the coronavirus that first emerged in neighbour and key ally China.

“It’s another indirect way of admitting that plans introduced in 2016 -- including the new chairman system -- did not really work out,” said defector-turned-researcher Ahn Chan-il of the World Institute for North Korea Studies in Seoul.

“Kim wanted to create

a new image for himself and his era -- that’s different from his father’s -- by becoming a ‘chairman’, but it looks like he feels the need to stress his connection to his father in order to consolidate his leadership during this difficult time.”

Kim’s father Kim Jong Il has remained the party’s Eternal General Secretary since soon after his 2011 death, while the current leader’s grandfather Kim Il Sung, North Korea’s founder, is the country’s Eternal President despite dying in 1994.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesia extends border closure to keep out new coronavirus variant

INDONESIA on Monday extended the closure of its borders to all international visitors for another two weeks until Jan. 28, as the country tries to keep out a potentially more transmissible variant of the novel coronavirus.

Meanwhile, Indonesia’s Drug and Food Monitoring Agency approved the emergency use of China’s CoronaVac vaccine across the vast archipelago.

SOURCE: KYODO

South Korea minister visits Iran amid tanker tensions

SOUTH Korea’s deputy foreign minister met his Iranian counterpart in Tehran on Sunday, state news agency IRNA reported, days after Iran seized a South Korean-flagged tanker in sensitive Gulf waters.

Choi Jong-kun’s meeting with Abbas Araghchi came after Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said Monday they had seized the South Korean-flagged Hankuk Chemi in Gulf waters.

SOURCE: AFP

ENVIRONMENT

Top global oil exporter Saudi Arabia launches car-free city

SAUDI Arabia, the world’s top crude exporter, announced Sunday the launch of an eco-city “with zero cars, zero streets and zero carbon emissions” at its futuristic NEOM mega development.

The \$500 billion NEOM pro-

ject, set to be built from scratch along the kingdom’s picturesque Red Sea coast, is billed as a development evocative of a sci-fi blockbuster.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled plans for a

city, dubbed “THE LINE”, in a presentation broadcast on state TV.

It consists of “a city of a million residents with a length of 170 kilometres (105 miles) that preserves 95 per cent of nature within NEOM, with zero cars, zero streets and zero carbon emissions,” he said.

“We need to transform the concept of a conventional city into that of a futuristic one,” added the de facto leader of the Arab world’s leading economy, regularly ranked among the world’s most polluting countries.

Prince Mohammed showed computer-generated images of “THE LINE” as well as landscapes of pristine deserts and blue seas.

The pedestrian city will have services such as schools, health centres and green spaces, as well

as high-speed public transportation, with no journey expected to take more than 20 minutes, according to a NEOM statement.

Artificial Intelligence will play a key role in the city, the statement said, adding that “it will be powered by 100 per cent clean energy, providing pollution-free, healthier and more sustainable environments for residents”.

Construction of the city will begin in the first quarter of this year, with funding from the Public Investment Fund, the main vehicle through which the kingdom is diversifying its economy beyond oil.

The project is slated to create 380,000 jobs and contribute 180 billion riyals (\$48 billion) to the kingdom’s GDP by 2030, the NEOM statement said.

SOURCE: AFP



Three men walk past the announcement boards at the departure hall of Qatar’s Hamad International Airport near Doha on January 11, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Japan sumo wrestler quits, saying coronavirus fears ignored

A sumo wrestler in Japan said he had “no choice” but to quit the sport after his request to skip a tournament for fear of catching coronavirus was rejected.

The 22-year-old known as Kotokantetsu said the Japan Sumo Association had insisted he fight in the New Year Grand Sumo Tournament, which began on Sunday and lasts 15 days.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar men's football team to play int'l friendlies in March, June

By Shine Htet Zaw

MYANMAR national men's football team is scheduled to play international friendly matches in March and June 2021, according to the football authorities.

The team has also scheduled to play remaining matches of the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Second Round qualifiers this year.

An agreement has been reached with the rival teams for the June friendly match, but negotiations are underway for the friendlies in March.

The Myanmar national team and the Jordan national team formerly agreed to play a friendly match in November 2020, but it was cancelled due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the

two football federations decided to play again this year.

The latest friendly match of team Myanmar before the pandemic period was on 7 November 2019 in Mandalay against Nepal national team.

The Myanmar national team will play two World Cup qualifiers in March and one World Cup qualifier in June, and thus training is set to begin this month. The Myanmar national team will play against Japan on 25 March as part of the remaining world cup qualifiers.

On 30 March, the team Myanmar will play against Kyrgyzstan at their home and also play away match against Tajikistan on 15 June.

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Myanmar national team players (in white) attempt to block the free kick during an international friendly match against Nepal at Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay on 7 November 2019. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT**

2022 PGA Championship pulled from Trump course - PGA of America



England's Tyrrell Hatton (R) celebrates with his caddie Mick Donaghy after playing his final shot on the 18th green and winning the PGA Championship at Wentworth Golf Club in Surrey, south west of London on October 11, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

LOS ANGELES (United States) — The PGA of America pulled the 2022 PGA Championship from the Trump National at Bedminster course in New Jersey on Sunday, days after supporters of President Donald Trump attacked the US Capitol.

"The PGA of America Board of Directors voted tonight to exercise the right to terminate the agreement to play the 2022 PGA Championship at Trump Bedminster," PGA of America President Jim Richerson said in a statement posted on Twitter.

"It has become clear that conducting the PGA Championship would be detrimental to the PGA of America brand and would put at risk the PGA's ability to deliver our many programs and sustain the longevity of our mission," Richerson added in a video posted on the organization's website.

The announcement on the fate of one of the four major championships in golf follows increased calls in the golf world for leaders of the sport to distance themselves from Trump.—AFP ■

About 80% favour cancelling, postponing Tokyo Olympics in summer: poll

TOKYO — Around 80 per cent of people in Japan believe the postponed Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, planned for the summer, should be cancelled or rescheduled, a Kyodo News survey showed Sunday, with the novel coronavirus pandemic continuing to cast a cloud over the sporting event.

The weekend telephone survey was conducted as Japan is struggling with a resurgence of infections that have increased the strain on the country's medical system. In the poll, 35.3 per cent called for the cancellation of the Tokyo Games, while 44.8 per cent said the games should be put off again. The games were slated to take place last year but were rescheduled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The approval rate for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga stood at 41.3 per cent, down 9 percentage points from the previous survey in December, while the disapproval rate was 42.8 per cent, four months after the start of the Suga administration.

The most commonly cited reason for disapproval was Suga's "lack of leadership" over the pandemic at 41.2 per cent.

The survey found 68.3 per cent were dissatisfied with the coronavirus measures imple-

mented by the government, while 24.9 per cent said the government had dealt with the pandemic appropriately.

A monthlong state of emergency declared over the pandemic on Thursday, covering Tokyo and the adjacent prefectures of Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama, was viewed as "too late" by 79.2 per cent, while nearly 78 per cent said it needed to be expanded to other areas.

The poll found 39.8 per cent viewed the length of the emergency, which will be in place until Feb. 7, as "adequate," while 46.6 per cent said the one-month time frame was "too short."

Under the emergency decla-

ration, eateries in the area have been asked to shorten opening hours.

Suga has said the government will submit a revision to the special measures law soon making it possible to punish businesses that refuse to comply with its requests.

In the survey, 48.7 per cent opposed such punishment, while 42.7 per cent were supportive.

The government previously declared a state of emergency covering Tokyo and six other prefectures in early April last year and expanded it to the country's 47 prefectures later that month. It was lifted in steps in May as coronavirus cases subsided.—AFP ■



Olympic Rings and a Japan flag are seen on the Japan Olympic Museum building in Tokyo on January 8, 2021, as Tokyo Olympics organizers insisted that the coronavirus-postponed Games will still go ahead despite Japan declaring a state of emergency less than 200 days before the opening ceremony. **PHOTO: AFP**