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Friday, 15 January 2021

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President

Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint on occasion of 69th Anniversary Kayah State Day celebration (15 January 2021)

DEAR ESTEEMED ethnic national brothers and sisters residing in Kayah State,

On this auspicious special occasion of the 69th Anniversary of Kayah State Day, I wish to send good wishes and greetings to all Kayah ethnic nationals and Union-born ethnic national brothers and sisters living in Kayah State to be blessed with good fortune, prosperity and auspiciousness.

In Kayah State, nine Kayah racial

groups, as well as Bamars, Kayins, Shans, Pa-Os and Innthas have lived in close friendship together since ancient times. In accordance with the 1947 Constitution, Karreni State became one of the states of the Union of Burma; later in accordance with the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1951, Karreni State was officially designated as Kayah State beginning from 15th January 1952 by popular referendum. The date on which "Karreni State" was called "Kayah State"

was designated as Kayah State Day, and we have now reached 69 years. Every year we have celebrated Kayah State Day on a grand scale attended by throngs of people with exhibition rooms for ethnic culture, dance contests for ethnic national traditional dances, musical entertainments, boat races, sports competitions, paddy pounding competitions, bazaars and exhibitions for various merchandise. However, to my great regret, because of the COVID-19 pandemic all over the

world, we are not able to celebrate this event on a grand scale as in previous years.

Starting from the time the COVID-19 disease first occurred in Myanmar, Kayah State worked to the utmost to contain the spread of the infection and was able to contain the infection spread to a certain extent. Kayah State became the state with the least amount of positive cases.

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VP U Henry Van Thio attends ceremony to return confiscated lands to locals in Yaksawk Township

VICE-PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as chairman of Central Scrutinizing Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, attended the ceremony yesterday to present land use permits for the confiscated lands in Yaksawk Township in southern Shan State.

Those present at the ceremony were Union Minister Dr Aung Thu, Deputy Ministers U Tin Myint, Maj-General Soe Tint Naing, Maj-Gen Myint Nwe and responsible officials.

At the event, the Ministry of Defence returned 5,814.70 acres of agricultural land which were included in 10,634.956 acres of Kantawmin area, to the 1,116 farmers who are the original landowners.

The Union Government has been able to return confiscated lands for 24 times up to now, and this time is the largest number of acres released by the Ministry of Defence.

The Vice-President said at



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio speaks at the ceremony to present land-use permits for the confiscated lands in Yaksawk Township in southern Shan State on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

the ceremony to ensure proper return of lands to the original owners as there were some de-

lays in the scrutinizing process due to arguments among the owners and the users although

the lands have been returned by the relevant ministry.

The committee has an-

nounced the list of successful land-use applicants on the notice

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Statement of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on COVID-19 and Vaccination Statement No. (1/ 2021)

1. 2020 is *annus horribilis* for Myanmar as with the rest of the world due to the scourge of COVID-19 pandemic that engulfed the globe. The well being of humanity itself was significantly undermined with serious implications for social, economic and political situations of effected countries and Myanmar was not spared either.

2. In such dire circumstances, the drive to ensure human rights for all human beings apparently lost momentum and often even regressed in some places. The pandemic directly threatens the right to life and health while indirectly compromising many other basic rights relating to work, equity, information, indiscrimination, education, freedom of movement and in some instances freedom of expression. Human rights were at times overlooked in the struggle against COVID-19 where Governments choose to mobilize the public to rally behind them in their concerted effort to overcome the pandemic threat.

3. There have been concerns on and reports of increased human rights violations in the shadow of the pandemic in the form of discrimination, domestic violence, summary dismissals of employees, extreme restriction of movement and expression, denial of the right to information, internal displacement and forced migration as well as additional barriers against access to education and COVID-19 treatment.

4. Myanmar society has been blessed with socio-cultural capital to ameliorate many of those aforementioned rights violations through compassion and empathy yet there could had been isolated cases of transgressions and the authorities has tried their utmost to rectify them.

5. Nowadays, the advent of COVID-19 vaccine developed by many companies has raised hopes in the new year, and 2021 promises to be the turning point in the effort to counter the pandemic threat. However, despite the World Health Organization’s (WHO) efforts to advocate equitable allocation of vaccines around the world vaccine politics seems to have eclipsed humanitarian considerations and rich and powerful countries are appropriating the limited stocks by securing advance purchase even before the actual productions began and formal approval given by competent regulating agencies. There have also been some concerns about the efficacy of the vaccine.

6. Due to the concerted efforts of our leaders Myanmar is able to secure supplies of vaccines from India to cover a substantial portion of our population and further arrangements are reportedly being made to get more from friendly countries to satisfy our needs. This effort not only requires a huge expenditure of foreign
- currency for purchase but also more financial, human and logistical resources to store, transport, distribute and finally administer the medicine which needs to be kept at extremely cold temperature. Given our relatively large population spread over vast territory with a varied topography, it would be a huge, complex and demanding task for the authorities concerned. An endeavour without precedence that would stretch our meagre resources to the limit.

7. Meanwhile, as it is impossible to vaccinate everyone at the same time and the limited availability of vaccine there is a need to develop a priority scheme for inoculation. Everybody would agree that front line health workers, including volunteers, should have the right to be immunized as the first cohort. Ranking the various sections of the population in the vaccination sequence is more difficult though we can learn from the experience of other countries which had already started the vaccination process. However, the priority scheme for Myanmar cannot be a copy of another country, and it should be developed in the Myanmar context where social, cultural, economic and political circumstances are different and perhaps even unique in its own way. No doubt the authorities concerned are aware of those and would come up with the best fit for our country and people.

8. Nevertheless, the MNHRC believes that a human rights perspective can complement various other considerations in producing the best solution possible. In this way, multiple rights may be fulfilled while enhancing the right to life and health of our people. In that respect what comes across as potential candidates for early vaccinations are certain sections of society who themselves may not be seen as vulnerable as old persons and those with underlying illnesses or hold important positions in the administrative hierarchy but are prone to have multiple contacts and interactions with the population at large through their functions and services. They may be identified as: schoolteachers, transport workers, service workers in banking retailing, food and beverages and manufacturing, street vendors, and food sellers. This is not an exhaustive list and given the fluid nature of their work and their roaming nature it could be quite taxing to track some of them down, but the benefits of immunizing those with a high potential for passing on the virus to the larger population could outweigh the difficulties involved.
- Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Date: 14 January 2021

Myanmar nationals abroad brought back home by relief flights



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 14 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE relief flight of Amelia Airline organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Paris landed at Yangon International Airport bringing back a total of 28 Myanmar seamen after they were stranded in Europe due to the suspension of international flights, yesterday morning.

The 19th relief flight of All Nippon Airways (ANA) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo also brought back a total of 79 Myanmar nationals who were stranded in Japan, yesterday evening.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and

the Yangon Region government arranged 14-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home quarantine.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens and Myanmar seamen who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries and shipping companies.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

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

Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint on occasion of 69th Anniversary Kayah State Day celebration

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Therefore, I wish to record my appreciation individually to all those who have participated in the COVID-19 protection, control and treatment activities with goodwill and metta to the fullest extent on a voluntary basis, taking on any of the assigned duties; and also to all the ethnic national brothers and sisters who have followed the health instructions and awareness bulletins scrupulously.

At the present time, we are carrying out the COVID-19 protection, control and treatment activities all over the country with full momentum; at the same time, our Union Government has been working for all-round development all across the Union as well as the harmonious development of all states and regions. In Kayah State also, we have been working for the supply of drinking water, transport, electric supply, education, health, agriculture, livestock farming and rural development

in order to achieve multi-sectoral development.

Kayah State is in possession of cultures and traditions as well as mountains, streams and natural beauty which are the good basic conditions where tourism can thrive successfully, and we may perhaps call it a smoke-free industry. Therefore, we exerted continuous efforts to promote community-based tourism for foreign and local travellers starting from the end of 2014; this resulted in the gradual increase of foreign and local travellers. We are now seeing more job opportunities for local ethnic nationals and upgrading of their socio-economic development.

Due to the united efforts and cooperation of all ethnic nationals living in Kayah State, success has been achieved in each sector such as politics, economy and social sectors. You were given the Patient Safety Champion award in 2019 presented by the Ministry of Health and Sports, All-

round achievement award for the 50-bed traditional medicine hospital, and first prize for enthusiastic participation in the states/regions December people's sports physical fitness movement. You have obtained all these awards deservedly. So I urge you all to keep up your good efforts.

Although we have encountered difficulties to implement development projects due to armed conflicts in Kayah State, as armed conflicts have decreased to a bare minimum, we have been able to carry out more regional development projects. As peace prevails in the countryside and transportation networks improve, the socio-economic life of ethnic nationals in Kayah State will improve. Therefore, I wish to urge the ethnic armed organizations in Kayah State in great seriousness to join hands and participate fully in the Union peace process and the political dialogues and discussions.

For peace and development which

is necessary for the perpetuation of the Union, for establishing the Democratic Federal Union which is the aspiration of all ethnic nationals, we have already convened the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong meetings up to the fourth session. We have obtained several agreements. In accordance with the common agreements relating to democracy and the federal system which came out of these sessions, I wish to urge all the ethnic nationals to work together with the Union Government with the unity of spirit and desire for the establishment of a peaceful and developed Democratic Federal Union fully imbued with political essence having the characteristics of justice, freedom, equal opportunity, and self-determination. With these thoughts, I send this message of greetings on this auspicious occasion.

Sd/-
(Win Myint)
President

Vice-President U Henry Van Thio attends ceremony to ...

FROM PAGE-1

board and in the state-owned newspapers to ensure that the original owners would not lose their land ownership rights in case they could not be contacted.

The Vice-President explained that the government focussed on the return of confiscated lands to the owners as the agricultural lands are the lifeblood of farmers in an agro-based country like Myanmar.

He added that the return of seized lands would help in reducing both domestic migration and international migration, squatting in cities and preventing the loss of human resources from the country.

He also advised the farmland owners to cultivate high-quality crops by using mechanized farming, as they are responsible for socio-economic development of their families.

The Administration of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Law 2012 was amended on 11 September 2018, and the Farmland Law 2012 on 14 February 2020, to enable the original owners to manage their own lands in the agricultural sectors, lands related to culture and tradition



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio attends the ceremony to present land-use permits for the confiscated lands in Yaksawk Township in southern Shan State on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

of ethnic nationals and other sectors.

The Vice-President also expressed his appreciations to the officials from the Ministry of Defence, Shan State government and other personnel for their collaboration in returning the confiscated lands.

After this, the Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut

reported on issuing land-use permit Form-7 for the original farmers.

Lt-Col Tin Naing Oo from Ba Htoo Station handed over the land ownership documents to the General Administration Office of Taunggyi district before the government officials and Tatmadaw officers presented Form-7 land-use permits for

1,116 farmers.

The Vice-President and party left Yaksawk for Mawlamyine Township in Mon State by helicopters.

Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan and officials welcomed them and proceeded to Kyaik Thalan Pagoda to inspect the work being done for the earth retaining wall funded by the

National Disaster Management Committee.

The Vice-President also inspected the trial operation of the water supply project from Athtayan river in Mawlamyine.

The 8.5 billion kyat project could supply 4.8 gallons of water each day to 16 residential wards to the city of Mon State.—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

Myanmar, US and a number of South-East Asian countries discuss opportunities for strengthened regional multilateral partnerships

U THAUNG TUN, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, yesterday presented a keynote address during a virtual workshop titled ‘COVID-19 and Beyond: Multilateral Cooperation to Enhance Resiliency’, organized by the US-based Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS).

Facilitated by Dr Miemie Winn Byrd, participants used the event to share updates, insights, and regional perspectives



Union Minister U Thaung Tun participates in the virtual workshop titled ‘COVID-19 and Beyond: Multilateral Cooperation to Enhance Resiliency’ on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

“I believe that Myanmar and the region would benefit greatly from the US that seeks to leverage its strengths in response to Asia that exists today, with all its complexity. Just as the US and ASEAN have been cooperating to advance our mutual interests for 40 years, let us reign in tendencies toward strategic competition in favour of strategic cooperation.”

on respective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify recommendations aimed at enhancing assistance provided by the US and partners.

The Union Minister drew attention to recent progress made in the fight against COVID-19, citing global economic recoveries now occurring, vaccine distribution drives, and the potential for a newfound sense of bipartisanship and multilateral cooperation, noting that at some point in the coming months, rates of infection would overtake rates of infection and that the light at the end of the tunnel would begin to shine brighter.

The Union Minister expressed a belief that the pandemic has helped bring to the fore three distinct yet intertwined challenges, namely climate change, inequality of opportunity, and major geopolitical re-alignments.

On climate change, the Union Minister noted that while

COVID-19 may be the worst pandemic experienced within our lifetimes, it is not the first nor will it be the last. Numerous diseases have emerged in recent years as a result of unchecked human trespass into natural ecosystems. The Union Minister also noted that Myanmar continues to contend with more extreme storms, more damaging cyclones and more intense heatwaves, in addition to changing disease patterns. However, the Union Minister also highlighted that there was still good news to be found, stating that our people are turning toward more environmentally friendly ways of living. He said that Myanmar was witnessing the growth of a new generation who are speaking out in opposition to climate change and in support of more climate-friendly policies – taking advantage of Myanmar’s new era of openness, and freedom of expression.

Regarding rising inequality, the Union Minister stated that

while Myanmar has remained amongst the region’s fastest-growing economies, with GDP expected to grow 6 per cent in 2021, policymakers and partners must contend with the fact that not all of Myanmar’s people have truly benefitted from this growth, with rural areas still lagging in access to public services, and with unequal access to secondary education exacerbating a range of inequalities, including gender inequality.

Addressing geopolitical shifts accentuated by COVID-19, the Union Minister called for increased collaboration able to span ideology and culture, and for partners to direct every effort toward ensuring the proven and potential benefits of globalization are shared more equitably across society.

“In this more complex, multipolar world, no man, or woman, can be an island unto him or herself. No one country can lead alone.”

The Union Minister made three concrete recommendations that could contribute to stronger

US-Myanmar ties and broader multilateral partnerships.

First, he underscored the need for the fast-tracking of transitions toward more renewable sources of energy. In this regard, the Minister welcomed President-elect Biden’s commitment to rejoining the Paris Agreement, and updated participants on Myanmar’s recent Nationally Determined Contribution, including reducing CO2 emissions, increasing the share of renewable energy and reducing net emissions from the forestry sector.

Second, the Union Minister called for further support to the region’s digital transition, noting that, with relatively modest investments, countries like Myanmar can offer almost universal access to e-government, e-payment and e-commerce, telemedicine, and help facilitate the transfer of international skilled labour throughout the world.

The Union Minister concluded by calling for continued US engagement in the Asia Pacific Region. He urged countries to reign in tendencies toward strategic

competition in favour of strategic cooperation. He said instead of viewing rising Asia as uniquely a security challenge, countries should see the changes in the region as an economic opportunity.

The Union Minister also took the opportunity to call for increased US investment in Myanmar, noting how US investment was welcomed to play a key role in catalyzing Myanmar’s broader economic recovery, stating:

“I believe that Myanmar and the region would benefit greatly from the US that seeks to leverage its strengths in response to Asia that exists today, with all its complexity. Just as the US and ASEAN have been cooperating to advance our mutual interests for 40 years, let us reign in tendencies toward strategic competition in favour of strategic cooperation.”

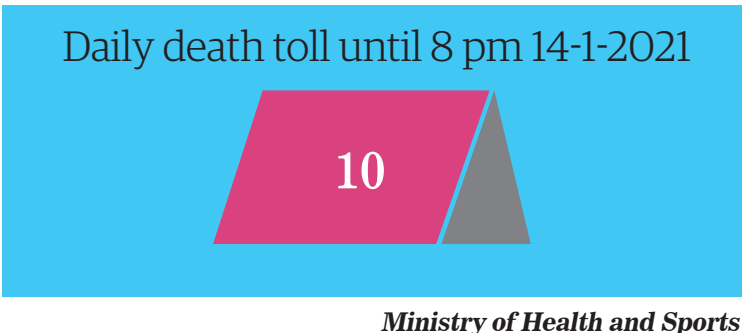
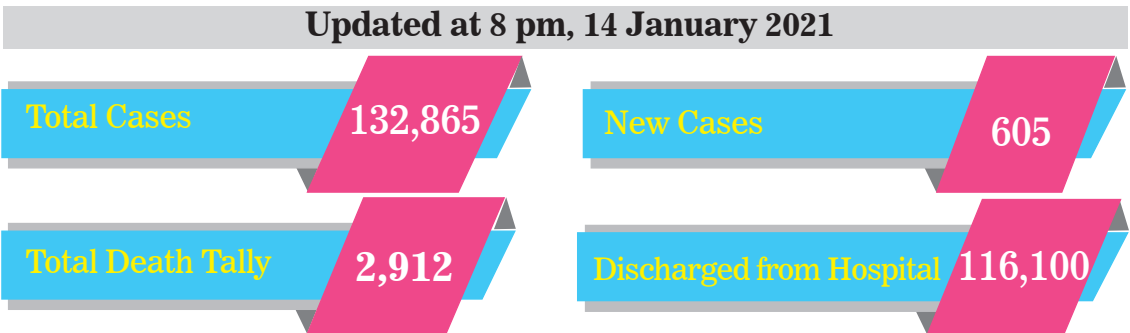
“The US has some of the world’s greatest companies, world-class technology, and unparalleled connections to global supply chains. And yet, US firms in Myanmar are too few, and those that are here are shrinking in relative terms compared with regional investors.”

The Union Minister also used the opportunity to express sincere thanks to the United States Agency for International Development for its contribution to Myanmar’s COVID-19 response – including the provision of medical equipment and PPE, upgrades to the National Health Laboratory, and support channelled through the multi-donor Access to Health Fund.

The Honolulu-based APCSS is a centre of excellence renowned for its dedication to regional and global security issues, nurturing relationships, and cultivating new networks among security practitioners and national security establishments throughout the Asia-Pacific region.—MNA

605 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 January, total figure rises to 132,865

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 132,865 after 605 new cases were reported on 14 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 132,865 confirmed cases, 2,912 died, 116,100 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Ministry of Health and Sports

The private sector will be encouraged

Rather than inviting investment proposals, opportunities will be created to attract local and foreign investments. Therefore, more infrastructures of domestic, international and joint-venture investments are expected to appear in the country in the near future. Financial and monetary stimulus packages will be effectively carried out based on the situations of economic response during and post COVID-19 crisis. Government budgets will be spent in areas where they will be effective, and the private sector will be encouraged.

(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)



Stake-driving ceremony for national oil and gas information centre held

UNION MINISTER for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing attended the stake-driving ceremony of the National Oil and Gas Information Centre to be built by the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

The ceremony was held in accordance with the COVID-19 regulations and attended by the Deputy Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and departmental officials.

During the ceremony, Union Minister said the MOGE was conducting oil and gas exploration to meet the demand for oil and natural gas and explained the reason for building the National Oil and Gas Information Centre.

The (first phase) three-storey RC building is going to be built with the 2020-2021 Financial Year Capital Expenditure of the MOGE under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy and



Union Minister U Win Khaing speaks at the stake-driving ceremony for the National Oil and Gas Information Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

aimed to maintain the oil and gas reserves data and laboratory samples for oil exploration and to drill with upgraded IT system; to ensure timely management in the event of natural disasters and to prevent harm to people and the environment; to perform real-

time data monitoring and management with centralized control in activities relating to oil and gas exploration, drilling, production, shipping, distributing and selling and to speed up transportation and distribution activities.

Union Minister said the real-

time data will be available on both fibre network and internet network upon the completion of the centre for monitoring and managing and, information on oil and gas control/distribution centres can be viewed directly from Nay Pyi Taw head office.

The centre will provide the control with SCADA System, information of inland and offshore blocks and pipeline, geology and geophysics data, plant & equipment list by location, CNG outlets, information of operator companies, personnel and human resources development information and the ability to store and manage financial information as needed.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party drove stakes at the designated places.

The National Oil and Gas Information Centre (first phase) will include 24 Core Fibre Optic Cable, Geo-SCADA Software System, Video Wall System and Station Field Devices and Software and the second phase and the third phase will be implemented step by step in 2021-2022 financial year and 2022-2023 financial year respectively.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

MoLIP organizes virtual meeting on SSB information system

A virtual ceremony to present information management system and e-services businesses that are jointly implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population's Social Security Board and International Labour Organization was held from the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe said that most people in the world have obstacles to economic and social development as they don't have proper social protection.

All countries are making a long-term plan to strengthen the current social protection system so that all people can enjoy social protection rights.

In his New Year Message, President U Win Myint said that social security fund in the short term would be effectively managed for the wellbeing of the labourers.



Union Minister U Thein Swe speaks during the virtual meeting on social security board information system and e-services on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

Social Security Board, in line with social insurance, developed a strategy to cover all nationals in social security project and was providing effective services of social security and healthcare for the labourers who are the main power of the country in accordance with Social Security Law 2012.

The board, in cooperation with the government, employers and employees and with technical assistance from ILO, was

working on IT reform, medial reform, administrative reform and legal reform for a better medical service which are necessary for employers and employees.

A social security project that covers about 1.34 million labourers in 116 townships was also implemented with three Workers' Hospitals, 78 branch offices, 96 township clinics, 58 department clinics, 8 clinics with free for services payment, 10 clinics with capitation payment, 1 tradition-

al medicine clinic and 2 mobile clinics.

For real-time information flow, the social security board was implementing SSB Information System's e-services – SSB Mobile Application, SSB Website, e-Contribution, e-Benefit and e-Mail Server systems.

The board was cooperating with Central Bank of Myanmar, Myanmar Economic Bank and private banks so that the contribution of employers and employ-

ees can be made via e-payment, he added.

He stressed the importance of abiding by respective departments' guidelines, directives and financial rules in implementing SSB information system.

He expressed thanks to the officials from ILO and ILO-Korea Project and relevant ministries for their assistance for SSB information system.

ILO Liaison Officer Mr Donglin Li made a remark, and the Director-General of the Social Security Board explained the annual performance of the board.

After the Union Minister made the remark, the meeting was concluded.

The Deputy Minister, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors, ILO officials and members of technical groups participated in the virtual event. —MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

MoC minister participates in international engineering education conference

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw participated in the International Conference on Engineering Education Accreditation 2021 via videoconferencing from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The virtual conference was organized from the headquarters of Myanmar Engineering Council in Lanmadaw Township, Yangon.

Chair of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations Prof Dr Gong Ke, Chair of Washington Accord Executive Committee Em Prof Elizabeth Taylar and experts from China Association for Science and Technology, Myanmar Engineering Council’s patrons, chair and officials, the Ministry of Construction’s Permanent Secretary U Shwe Lay and officials joined the meeting.

Speaking at the meeting, the Union Minister said that the My-

anmar Engineering Council had established the Engineering Education Accreditation Committee to work on the accreditation of engineering education.

The committee, in cooperation with ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Federation of Engineering Organizations, upgraded the engineering education programmes, organized training courses, and made accreditations.

He talked about the works carried out between 2013 and 2020 that a total of 52 workshops was organized, training was conducted by international institutions, the accreditation programmes were cooperated by all technological universities,

He urged the Myanmar Engineering Council to work on the international quality accreditation activities and engineering



Union Minister U Han Zaw joins the International Conference on Engineering Education Accreditation 2021 via videoconferencing from Nay Pyi Taw on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

CQI, to make practical relations with members and interested organizations, to increase systematic registrations by using best practices, and to expand promotion of engineering education.

Washington Accord Executive Committee Chair Em Prof Elizabeth Taylar and WFEO Chair Prof Dr Gong Ke made remarks at the meeting.

Experts and resource persons read the papers relating to the international conference on engineering education, and attendees raised questions.

The engineering education conference will continue until 16 January. — MNA
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

MoSWRR minister discusses recommendations of Advisory Commission on Rakhine State



Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement organizes meeting on reviewing implementations of recommendations on Rakhine State on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye and the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State discussed yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw over the recommendations of Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, discussed cooperation work between the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population for citizenship, freedom of movement and IDP issues during the three-year term of the committee and planned to carry out in line with the stipulations of 1982 Citizenship Law.

The Union Minister also highlighted the need to offer rights of citizenship verification for all people living in the country including in Rakhine State in accordance with the provisions of 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law and duties of relevant departments for the community development, peace and the rule of law.

He then made suggestions about finding solutions for the difficulties in the real situation, planning the processes to complete in time and holding educative talks for all people living in Rakhine State to know their rights in the scope of law. The Union Minister also stressed the efforts in implementing the processes for social harmony and systematic plans for the government to conduct effective processes.

Then, the participants coordinated the meeting and briefed the work plans being carried out in line with the existing law, instructions and procedures and other challenges. —MNA
(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

‘Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign’ conducted in Magway

THE Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign was organized in Magway Township on 14 January.

Deputy Director-General of Magway Region Public Health and Medical Services Department Dr Thaung Hlaing launched the campaign in front of his office.

“Although our health workers got tired of controlling COVID-19, they continue fighting against this pandemic,” said Dr Thaung Hlaing.



Participants in the ‘Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign’ pose for a group picture at the Public Health Department in Magway on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: THAN NAING OO (NGAPHE)

The campaign aimed to raise public awareness on wearing masks, washing hands, following social distancing and



reminding the threats of this disease among each other. —Than Naing Oo (Ngaphe)
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Fishery export prices to Thailand plunge by 50 per cent

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR fishery products' export price to leading buyer Thailand slumped by 50 per cent, said U Win Kyaing, general secretary of Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF).

Myanmar mainly ships mackerel fish to Thailand through Kawthoung-Ranong border. It fetched 100-120 baht per kilo last year, and the price sharply fell to 50-55 baht per kilo.

"Thailand did not stop trading, yet the offering price drastically dropped. During a bear market, the income generated by fishery products also decreased. Surprisingly, the market experienced a 50 per cent drop", U Win Kyaing elaborated.

At present, the country is primarily conducting border trade with Thailand's neighbouring country through those border posts; Kawthoung-Ranong, Mawtaung in Myeik, Hteekhee in Dawei and Myawady.

Thailand has shut down the border with Hteekhee and Mawtaung. The central trading post (Kawthoung-Ranong) is still open for trading. However, to contain the spread of COVID-19, Myanmar traders cannot enter Thailand's side, and the trading occurred only at the pier.

Kawthoung-Ranong generated an income of US\$250 million out of total fisheries export value with Thailand at \$318 million in the previous financial year 2019-2020, MFF stated.

Thailand is the primary buyer of Myanmar's fisheries products. Last FY, Myanmar shipped \$318 million worth fisheries products to Thailand, while the total fishery exports stood at \$850 million.

The federation expects to reach fishery export target of \$1 billion in the current FY2020-2021. Nevertheless, the fishery exports touched a low of \$242.352 million between 1 October 2020 and 1 January 2021,



Workers process shrimps at a cold storage factory in Kawthoung. PHOTO: KYAW SOE

which plunged from \$261.994 million registered a year-ago period. The figures reflected a decrease of \$19.6 million over the Q1 of the current FY compared

with the last FY2019-2020, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

Myanmar's fisheries products are exported to 45 foreign

countries, and Thailand is the primary buyer of the fisheries products, followed by China.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Salt production in Magway falls by 60% amid low demand

SALT production in Magway Region dropped by 60 per cent as the COVID-19 indirectly affected salt industry.

Earlier, a salt-making business on a manageable scale in Magway city daily produced about 250 visses (a viss equals 1.6kg). The salt makers reduce the daily production to 100 visses, according to salt making business in Aungmyittar Ward.

"Raw salt produced by lower Myanmar regions also enter

Magway market. The producers make high-quality salt for restaurants and hotels. Pandemic shut down the schools, restaurants and other events. Consequently, the salt demand dropped. When things return to new normal, we can regularly produce the salt," said Daw Aye Wai, the salt producer. Salt making businesses includes pouring salt into large clay pots, clearing impurities, sand, weed, and small stones and refining steps.

If you make 50 visses of raw salt, 46 visses of quality salt are left. An Iodized salt packet receives K800 per viss, and they are distributed in the city, the salt marketer U Khin Maung Myint said. Myanmar has coast and inland salt productions. Myanmar's salt production heavily relies on domestic consumption. Salt from foreign countries also floods the market with lower price. — Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A man makes salt at a workplace in Magway. PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)

Myanmar products to be showcased at China (Chongqing) Forum in March

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Embassy in Beijing, Myanmar local products and traditional handicrafts with quality packaging will be featured into China (Chongqing)-Myanmar Friendship Week and Cooperation Forum in the first week of March.

This five-day forum will be jointly held in the first week of March by the Myanmar Embassy in Beijing and China (Chongqing) municipal government. The forum will display Myanmar's local product and will attract importers in Chongqing and other municipalities.

Myanmar will introduce its value-added snacks; cashew, jaggery, peanut butter, peanut snacks, sesame snacks, plum jam and plum snacks, biscuit, tangerine cubes and assorted toffees and preserved Myanmar traditional snacks.

Additionally, coffee beans, coffee powder, instant coffee packets, dried tea leaf, tangerine, mango and plum juices and other beverages such as rum, whisky, wine and beer

will be showcased.

Furthermore, local spices (black pepper, turmeric, cardamom and bay leaf) and Myanmar's handicrafts and souvenirs (wooden crafts, paintings and snail shell wind chimes) will be put on the forum. Myanmar's agricultural products, including various pulses and Tragacanth gum and fruits, are also included.

Those interested businesspersons are cordially invited to join the forum by emailing through info@myanmarembassy.com. Samples of Myanmar's products are firstly sent to China, and Myanmar Embassy will pay the shipping cost. The sample products will be displayed in the form as well as trade promotion showrooms in other big cities of China.

The press release of Myanmar embassy in Beijing also stated that the bilateral trade between Myanmar and China was estimated at US\$18 billion in 2019, as per the data released by the General Administration of the Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC).

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR

Aungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS

Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing

TRANSLATORS

Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun,
Maung Maung Swe, Khine Thazin Han,
Ei Phyu Phyu Aung

REPORTER

Nyein Nyein Ei,

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM

Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION

(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

‘Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign’ signboard erected to raise public awareness

A signboard bearing the phrase “Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign” was erected yesterday morning at Myanmar Tourism Bank (Head Office) on Pyay Road as part of the public awareness programme to control the global pandemic in Yangon.

The campaign was launched by the Yangon region government and the Ministry of Health and Sports in collaboration with the Myanmar Tourism Federation (MTF) and Myanmar Tourism Bank (MTB).

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and the regional ministers, MTB’s chairperson and the officials from MTF and its brotherhood associations attended the ceremony. The Chief Minister formally opened the ceremony, pressing the button to unveil the signboard and cutting the ribbon.

The signboard bears the phrases—wear the masks, wash your hands, practice social dis-



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein attends “Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign” held at Myanmar Tourism Bank in Yangon on 14 January 2021. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

tancing and remind each other. These catchphrases urge people to wear masks and remind each other. At the ceremony, Myanmar Souvenir Entrepreneurs Association donated 50,000 surgical masks and 10,000 wet tissues. In comparison, MTB provided

20,000 masks, Myanmar Tourists Healthcare Association contributed 1,000 N95 masks, and Myanmar Hospitality Professionals Association (MHPA) donated 100 face shields to Yangon region government.

The yellow campaign led

by Yangon region government and Yangon Health Department is continuously being launched in public places to prevent and control the spreading of the COVID-19 in Yangon region.

— Myint Maung Kyaw
(Translated by Hay Mar)

World Bank to provide loan to FREDIP

MYANMAR Forest Restoration, Development and Investment Project --FREDIP -- will be implemented with the World Bank’s loan, according to the Forest Department, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

At present, the Forest Department has drawn FREDIP plan, which will be carried out with the World Bank’s aid.

Therefore, the comments and suggestions on the draft plans designed to mitigate the project’s environmental and social impacts are requested to submit not later than 22 January.

FREDIP aims to develop sustainable forest management and use it to improve the lives of its communities. The project will be carried out in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory and five

regions—Ayeyawady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing.

The project will be implemented in four phases: production forests; community-owned forestry for livelihoods; forest protection and strengthening organization and project management.

As part of the project preparation process, the department is looking for the feedback and

suggestions from the stakeholders for the Environmental and Social Management Framework-ESMF, Environmental and Social Commitment Plan-ESCP, Social Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement Plan-SEP. Arrangements are being formulated to reduce the environmental and social impacts of the project. — Thiri

(Translated by Hay Mar)

19,804 acres of summer paddy to be cultivated in Pwintbyu

THE irrigated water from MeZali Diversion Dam will also be distributed on 16 February to grow the paddy in time in Pwintbyu township, Magway region, and the plan is underway to cultivate 19,804 acres of summer paddy in this season, according to Pwintbyu Township Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

The department is yearly supplying the irrigated water from MeZali Dam through Taung Mone Myaung Ma Gyi and Myauk Mone Myaung Gyi to the paddy farmlands to grow the seasonal crops in time. Distributing of the irrigated water makes the local farmers happy with a higher yield of paddy



MeZali Diversion Dam will distribute irrigation water for growing summer paddy in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region. PHOTO: YE WIN NAING (IPRD)

and crops.

“To supply the irrigated

water to summer paddy under cultivation on 16 February, the

department is clearing the silt and sand to improve the flow of water in the irrigation canals, upgrading of the canals, which are necessary to renovate to ensure equitable irrigation of summer crops,” said U Ye Htut Aung, the head of the Pwintbyu Township Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

In 2020-2021 financial year, Pwintbyu township will grow 19,804 acres of summer paddy and 32,660 acres of summer sesame using irrigated water from MeZali diversion dam, according to the department’s statement. —Ye Win Naing (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

DISPOSABLE WASTE

Mexico City plastic ban poses challenge for virus-hit firms

MEXICO'S ban on single-use plastic in its capital, one of the world's most populous metropolises, has delighted environmentalists but dismayed some businesses struggling to cope with the coronavirus pandemic. Home to around nine million people, Mexico City generates about 13,000 tonnes of solid waste every day.

The new rules, which are being phased in, ban the use of disposable plastic items such as cutlery, plates, cups, straws and food trays, in addition to a year-old ban on plastic bags.

The move poses yet another challenge for Celina Aguilar, whose restaurant has had to close twice due to the pandemic and like others now relies on takeout or home delivery.

"We still haven't recovered from the losses (of the first closure). Now everyone must change to biodegradable packaging or they fine you," Aguilar complained.

Since December 18, Mexico City has banned non-essential activities including dining in restaurants in an attempt to curb the soaring number of coronavirus infections.

The plastics ban "affects us a lot because right now we're doing takeaway only, and how can we give it to the customers?" said food vendor Martin Matias. "It's a daily battle in this situation."

Environmental group Greenpeace Mexico argues that businesses in the city have had plenty of time to prepare for the change.

SOURCE: AFP



Restaurants in Mexico City now rely on take away or home delivery as sit-down dining has been suspended due to the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

KUMBH MELA

Coronavirus fails to deter massive Hindu Ganges pilgrimage



Hindu devotees gather at a ghat of the River Ganges ahead of the religious Kumbh Mela festival. PHOTO: AFP

HINDU pilgrims flocked to the Ganges river in India Wednesday, shrugging off the risk of coronavirus a day before the start of the Kumbh Mela -- a religious festival that attracts millions each time it is held.

Despite India having the second most coronavirus infections in the world -- and more than 150,000 deaths -- the virus has not stopped devout Hindus from making the pilgrimage.

"The pandemic is a bit of a worry, but we are taking all

precautions," said organizer Siddharth Chakrapani, who expected between 800,000 to a million people to attend on Thursday alone.

"I'm sure Maa Ganga will take care of their safety," he added, referring to the river considered holy by the faithful.

According to Hindu mythology, gods and demons fought a war over a sacred pitcher containing the nectar of immortality. Drops fell at four different locations, which

now alternate as hosts for the immense gatherings.

Recognized as a cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2017, the last Kumbh Mela in Allahabad in 2019 attracted around 55 million people over 48 days.

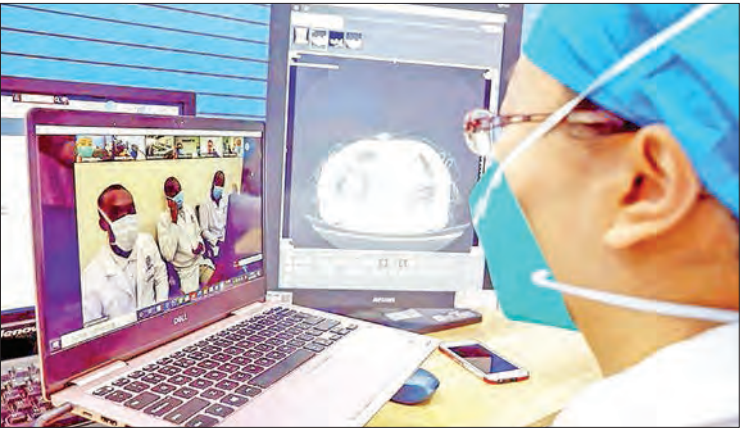
This year, beginning Thursday, Haridwar in northern India is the host, and several million people were expected to throng the holy city in Uttarakhand state over the coming seven weeks.

SOURCE: AFP

THE ORIGINS OF THE CORONAVIRUS

WHO team arrives in Wuhan as China reports first virus death in months

A team of experts from the World Health Organization arrived in Wuhan on Thursday to start a probe into the origins of the coronavirus, as China reported its first death from Covid-19 in eight months. The 10 scientists, who must complete a two-week quarantine in Wuhan before starting their work, arrived for their mission to examine the origins of the pandemic. The virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and has since billowed out across the world. State broadcaster CGTN showed the plane carrying the team arrive from Singapore to be met by Chinese officials in full hazmat suits. Their trip comes as more than 20 million people are under lockdown in the north of China and one province has declared an emergency, with Covid-19 numbers climbing after



A medical expert from Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University communicates with Kenyan counterparts via a video call in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, March 22, 2020. Experts from the hospital have shared their experience in treating COVID-19 patients via video calls with peers from France, Canada and Kenya recently. PHOTO: GAO XIANG/XINHUA/FILE

several months of being relatively static.

China had largely brought the pandemic under control through strict lockdowns and mass testing, hailing its economic rebound as an indication

of strong leadership by the Communist authorities. But another 138 infections were reported by the National Health Commission on Thursday -- the highest single-day tally since March last year. Clusters are still small

compared with many countries contending with rampant infections and record numbers of deaths, and the first virus fatality in several months -- reported in northern Hebei province -- seeded alarm across China.

Beijing is anxious to stamp out local clusters ahead of next month's Lunar New Year festival when hundreds of millions of people will be on the move across the country. Health authorities gave no details about the latest death except that it occurred in Hebei province, where the government has placed several cities under lockdown. As infections have spread, northeastern Heilongjiang declared an "emergency state" on Wednesday, telling its 37.5 million residents not to leave the province unless absolutely necessary.

SOURCE: AFP

THREE-WEEK LOCKDOWN

Dutch extend coronavirus curbs until February 9

THE Netherlands is extending coronavirus restrictions until February 9 as infections are still high and the government is "very concerned" about the UK variant of the disease, Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Tuesday.

Under the current restrictions, which were due to expire on January 18, schools have been closed, all but essential shops are closed, and people are banned from having more than two people in their homes.

"I don't think I am going to surprise you this evening, we had to decide to extend the lockdown by three weeks," Rutte told a televised news conference.

SOURCE: AFP

VAST PROPOSALS

Markets mainly rise with Biden stimulus in focus

ASIAN and European markets mostly advanced Thursday as investors awaited Joe Biden's proposals for substantial new stimulus, and the US Federal Reserve's policy outlook.

The London stock market climbed 0.6 per cent in late morning deals, while Frankfurt rose 0.3 per cent and Paris added 0.2 per cent in midday eurozone trade.

Bitcoin gained for a third day, increasing by 2.2 per cent to \$38,090 on keen demand, but remained under the record \$41,981 set on Friday. The US dollar wavered against the euro and yen, while oil prices steadied.

"A more positive tone in markets has developed ahead of the expected stimulus announcement from Joe Biden," noted Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at trading firm IG.

"Investors (are) hoping that the president-elect will move quickly and in substantial form



Bitcoin gained for a third day, increasing by 2.2 per cent to \$38,090 on keen demand, but remained under the record \$41,981 set on Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

to secure a new package that will bolster the US economy as the vaccine programme moves into a higher gear," he added. News that Donald Trump had been impeached for a historic second time appeared to have little immediate impact on sentiment, despite worries about more unrest ahead of Biden's inauguration on January 20. Hopes for another huge spending splurge

in the world's top economy overshadowed fears about surging virus cases -- and record daily deaths in the US and Britain -- that have forced governments to impose new lockdowns. Analysts said a drug being developed by pharma giant Johnson & Johnson could make a huge difference as it would only need one jab and can be transported more easily.

SOURCE: AFP

WAITING TIMES

Brexit adds to airline virus woes in Britain



No-frills airlines, such as Ryanair and EasyJet, are notably affected, with their business model based heavily on flying customers across the European Union. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ALREADY grounded by the coronavirus pandemic, airlines operating in the UK are facing post-Brexit obstacles to flying across the European Union, and their shareholders are paying the price.

The trade agreement reached ahead of Britain's recent formal divorce from the EU allows flights between the two to continue as before.

But for airlines with fewer than 50 per cent EU-based shareholders, flights within the European Union require a new agreement by the end of 2021.

"To continue being able to access these intra-European

traffic rights, airlines need to demonstrate they are majority-owned and controlled by European persons," noted Bernstein analyst Daniel Roeska.

No-frills airlines, such as Ryanair and EasyJet, are notably affected, with their business model based heavily on flying customers across the European Union, such as French and German tourists to holiday destinations in Spain and Greece.

'Added costs'

"There has been sufficient time to prepare" for the changes, said independent aviation analyst John Strickland, with

Britain voting in favour of exiting the EU 4.5 years ago.

However the required changes in shareholder ownership "adds additional cost and complexity", he said, at a time when the global aviation sector is suffering huge losses on Covid fallout.

"Such (ownership) constraints do not exist in most other industries," Strickland told AFP.

"Ensuring safety and strong competition should be the primary areas of focus, not ownership limitations," he stressed.

SOURCE: AFP

DRIP TRAYS

Brexit paperwork sours
Belgian beer exports to UK

SOME suppliers of Belgian beers are waking up to a post-Brexit hangover as exporting their brews to thirsty British drinkers across the Channel becomes more difficult and prices go up. Rotsaert, a wholesaler stocking some of its country's most famous Trappist beers, sent off its last consignment to the UK on 29 December just two days before Britain left the EU's single market. Now Filip Rotsaert, who runs the firm with his brother, tells AFP that they have had to temporarily halt shipments to the UK. London and Brussels struck a trade deal on December 24 to stave off the damaging imposition of sweeping tariffs -- but the last-gasp agreement still didn't give the Bruges-based firm and the transporters it relies on enough time to prepare for the changes. "The shipping companies we work with are not ready with the paperwork to ship to the UK," Rotsaert explains. "We are working on it, and hopefully we can be ready at the end of January, beginning of February."

Tax tops up prices

After Belgium itself, the UK is the second-biggest market for the company that sends out its drinks across the whole of Europe. But even when the paperwork is solved, clients in Britain now face an unpleasant surprise when deliveries restart as the UK is set to slap on VAT of 20 per cent on top of a new export tax of 17.5 per cent for orders over 150 euros.

SOURCE: AFP



Despite the challenges, BeerSelect founder Miel Bonduelle thinks they will keep their UK customers. **PHOTO: AFP**

MOVING ON

Tech show offers transport
solutions for Covid-changed world

THE global pandemic has put the brakes on a number of mobility trends, prompting the transportation industry to rethink strategy. New options on display at the all-digital 2021 Consumer Electronics Show underscore the changes in mobility during the global health crisis, with more personal vehicle use and less emphasis on sharing. Interest in electric vehicles meanwhile has accelerated in the wake of the stunning growth of Tesla, with many parts of the world seeing increased

adoption. And more options are being offered for personal "micromobility" and delivery amid the surge in online commerce. General Motors offered its vision at CES this week, unveiling a new Bright Drop brand of electric delivery vans along with previews of its newer Bolt, Cadillac and Hummer electric vehicles. "Before the pandemic, shared mobility was the name of the game," said Axel Schmidt, global auto analyst with Accenture. "Covid-19 has put the brakes on this." **SOURCE: AFP**



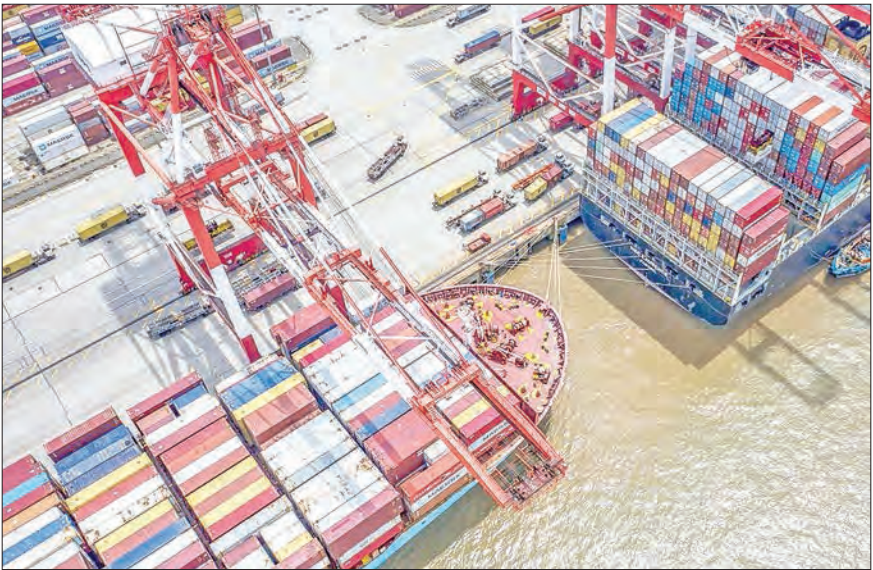
The 2022 Hummer EV, featured at the virtual Consumer Electronics Show, includes off-road capabilities including a diagonal "crab walk" feature and has "a crazy amount of power," according to General Motors. **PHOTO: GENERAL MOTORS/AFP**

STOCKS AND TRADES

China trade surplus with US widens 7.1% to \$317 bn in 2020

CHINA'S trade surplus with the United States widened last year, underlining the failure of Donald Trump to narrow the gap during his tenure, while demand soared for electronics and medical equipment during the coronavirus pandemic. The pick-up came on the back of a jump in exports through most of last year as China's factories kicked back into gear from the second quarter following a strict lockdown that managed to broadly contain Covid-19 and allow economic activity to return. Trump had made addressing the gaping trade gap with China a priority when he took office four years ago, and signed a partial agreement with Beijing to boost the country's purchases of goods such as soybeans. But Chinese customs data showed the surplus with the US climbed 7.1 per cent to \$316.9 billion in 2020. The figure is a 14.9 per cent jump from 2017's surplus of \$275.8 billion

– which was already a sensitive political issue due to Trump's claims that China held unfair practices and killed US jobs. While the world's second-largest economy suffered a record contraction in the first quarter of last year as the coronavirus essentially brought all activity to a halt, it soon recovered as lockdowns around the country were eased and people went back to work. Total exports rose 3.6 per cent, though imports shrank 1.1 per cent. In December, however, both exports and imports rose more than expected, at 18.1 per cent and 6.5 per cent respectively. "With the pandemic under control in China, factories and export-oriented companies have resumed normal operations earlier than most other countries, allowing China to meet global demand better," said Axi strategist Stephen Innes. SOURCE: AFP



China's trade balance narrowed to US\$58.93 billion, from US\$62.33 billion in July. This shows that the gap between export growth and import growth remains significant, but is narrowing. PHOTO: XINHUA

S. Korea's import price rises 1.8 pct in December 2020

THE price for imported goods to South Korea recorded the first rebound in six months owing to higher global crude oil price, central bank data showed Thursday. The import price index gained 1.8 per cent in December last year from a month earlier, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

It was attributable to higher crude oil price. Dubai crude, South Korea's benchmark, averaged 49.84 U.S. dollars per barrel in December 2020, up from 43.42 dollars in the previous month. Price for imported raw materials advanced 6.9 per cent in December last year from the previous month amid expensive crude oil. Intermediary goods price added 0.8 per cent, but those for capital and consumer goods slumped 0.7 per cent and 1.0 per cent each.

The export price index fell 0.1 per cent in December 2020 from a month ago, keeping a downward trend for five straight months. The price fall came on the back of the strong local currency. The won/dollar exchange rate averaged 1,095.13 won per dollar in December last year, down from 1,116.76 won per dollar in November 2020. SOURCE: Xinhua

BOJ maintains economic views on 5 regions as pandemic persists



Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda (2nd from L in front row) attends a teleconference with branch managers on Jan. 14, 2021, at the central bank's head office in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO

THE Bank of Japan on Thursday maintained its economic assessments on five of the nine regions amid a resurgence of coronavirus cases as Governor Haruhiko Kuroda expects the pace of recovery to be modest. In its quarterly Sakura report, the assessment on Hokkaido in northern Japan was downgraded due to a slowing recovery while the BOJ raised its view on

the remaining three regions, Hokuriku, Shikoku and Kyushu-Okinawa. The economy was in a "severe" situation in many regions due to the pandemic, but signs of a pickup have emerged, the BOJ said. The report came amid reignited fears of a double-dip recession following a resurgence of the virus toward the end of 2020 and Japan's struggle to stem the rise.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared last week a new one-month state of emergency in the Tokyo metropolitan area, and expanded the measure to Osaka and six other prefectures on Wednesday. Kuroda said earlier in the day that the BOJ will take additional easing steps if necessary to support the world's third-largest economy. SOURCE: Kyodo

MASSIVE DENT

German economy sees biggest blow since financial crisis

GERMANY'S economy suffered its biggest contraction last year since the 2009 financial crash, as it was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, official data showed Thursday. Output shrank 5.0 per cent year-on-year, as "almost all economic sectors were markedly affected by the corona pandemic", the federal statistics agency



Germany's economy suffered its biggest contraction last year since the 2009 financial crash, as it was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

Destatis said. The downturn ended 10 years of growth, Destatis added, though its figure was better than the government's own forecast, which had anticipated a decline of 5.5 per cent. In 2009, in the midst of a global economic crisis, gross domestic product (GDP) had plunged by 5.7 per cent. "Measured against the original fears after the outbreak of the

pandemic, this sad result is also a success in damage limitation," said Fritz Koecher-Geib, chief economist at the KfW public bank. The 2020 German slump is smaller than others recorded in France, Italy or Spain, where GDP is projected to have declined by 9.3, 9.0 and 11.1 per cent respectively, according to European Central Bank forecasts. SOURCE: AFP

Ministry of Transport and Communications
Department of Marine Administration
Tender Notice Cancellation

Notice is hereby given to all prospective service bidders/tenderers that the invitation for open tender announced in the Mirror Daily, the Myanma Alinn Daily and the Global New Light of Myanmar newspapers on 18 December 2020 with respect to the demolishing of the vessel "MT. Viet Tin Lucky" has been cancelled.

Tender Committee

CHANGING THE NAME OF INSECTICIDE TRADING

The foreign manufacture Makro Chemical will import and distribute the following insecticides registered in Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board changing trading name-

No	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredient Name	Registration Type	Registration Number
1	Shwe Doe Lay	Shwe Indo	Indoxacarb 15% SC	Provisional	P 2019 - 4521

It is therefore announced to come and reject within two weeks to Joint Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein in wishing to make any objection in respect of the said changing trading name of insecticide.

Address : Golden Key Co., Ltd.
NO. 258/262, STRAND ROAD, 11th FLOOR,
CLASSIC STRAND CONDO, PABEDAN TOWNSHIP, YANGON, MYANMAR.
PH : 01 - 371629

'INCITING' US CAPITOL RIOT

Trump impeached for unprecedented second time

THE House of Representatives was set to impeach "clear and present danger" President Donald Trump Wednesday, with several key Republicans backing the Democrat-led push to bring down the real estate tycoon in flames a week before he leaves office.

Donald Trump became the first US president in history to be impeached twice when the House of Representatives voted to charge him with inciting last week's mob attack on Congress.

"Today, in a bipartisan way, the House demonstrated that no one is above the law, not even the president of the United States," Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi said after Wednesday's vote.

The Senate will not hold a trial before January 20, when Democrat Joe Biden assumes the presidency, meaning the real estate tycoon will escape



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi signs the article of impeachment after the US House of Representatives voted to impeach US President Donald Trump at the US Capitol. **PHOTO: AFP**

the ignominy of being forced to leave early. He is set, however, to face a Senate trial later, and if

convicted he might be barred in a follow-up vote from seeking the presidency again in 2024.

"Donald Trump has deservedly become the first president in American history to bear the

stain of impeachment twice over," said Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer, who in a week's time will become Senate leader.

"The Senate is required to act and will proceed with his trial."

In the House of Representatives, the only question was how many Republicans would join the lockstep Democratic majority in the 232-197 vote. Ten Republicans broke ranks, including the party's number three in the House, Liz Cheney.

"I am in total peace today that my vote was the right thing and I actually think history will judge it that way," said Adam Kinzinger, a vocal Trump critic and one of the Republicans who crossed the aisle.

Holed up in the White House, Trump issued a video-taped address in which he made no mention of impeachment.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

EMBOLDENED AND UNAPOLOGETIC

Brazil's Bolsonaro increasingly isolated as Trump leaves

WHEN Jair Bolsonaro became Brazil's president in January 2019 he nurtured relationships with other like-minded, far-right governments, but as the political tide turns he now finds himself and his country increasingly isolated. Boasting close ties with US President Donald Trump, Bolsonaro was emboldened and unapologetic for a worldview often criticized as sexist, racist and homophobic, as well as his disdain for the environment. **SOURCE: AFP**

CONTROVERSIAL S-400 MISSILE SYSTEM

Turkey urges dialogue with US after missile sanctions

TURKEY'S defence minister has called on the United States to reopen talks about Ankara's controversial purchase of a Russian air defence system, urging Washington to move past sanctions and threats. But Hulusi Akar also told foreign reporters in Ankara on Wednesday that Turkey was in discussions to receive a second batch of the advanced S-400 missiles from Russia, which compete with US Patriots. **SOURCE: AFP**

POLITICAL CRISIS

Italian PM battles to keep government afloat

ITALIAN Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was battling Thursday to keep his government afloat after a key coalition partner withdrew, sparking a political crisis in the middle of a raging pandemic.

Lawmakers on all sides demanded he set out what will happen next following the dramatic exit of former premier Matteo Renzi's Italia Viva party on Wednesday evening. The speaker of the lower house of parliament, Roberto Fico, suspended Thursday's proceedings and said he would call a meeting of all party chiefs. "I will contact Conte for the request to come to the chamber," he said, adding: "This House

is not and cannot be indifferent to what is happening."

Renzi's two cabinet ministers and a junior minister quit the government Wednesday, breaking up the ruling centre-left coalition that has been in office in September 2019. With him went Italia Viva's 18 senators, leaving Conte without a majority in the Senate – although he still has one in the lower Chamber of Deputies. Renzi had for weeks been complaining about Conte's leadership, notably his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which has plunged Italy into deep recession and claimed more than 80,000 lives. **SOURCE: AFP**



Conte, left, has lost his majority in the Senate after Renzi's Italia Viva party withdrew from their coalition. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

IN A GROUNDBREAKING CASE

French court to hear landmark case on climate inaction

A Paris court will begin hearing a complaint brought by NGOs backed by two million citizens on Thursday accusing the French state of failing to act to halt climate change. The NGOs want to the court to hold the state responsible for ecological damage and say victory would mark a symbolic step in the fight to persuade governments to do more. An international accord signed in Paris five years ago aims to limit global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels, and preferably to 1.5



People march against climate change in Bordeaux, southwestern France, on October 13, 2018. **PHOTO: NICOLAS TUCAT/ AFP**

degrees. But experts say governments are far from meeting their commitments and anger is growing among the younger

generation over inaction, symbolised by the campaigns of Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg. The French case is part of a mounting

push from climate campaigners across the world to use courts against governments. In 2019, the Dutch Supreme Court ordered the Netherlands to slash its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% of 1990 levels by the end of 2020 after a case brought by an NGO. The French case began in December 2018 when four NGOs accused the government of failing to reduce emissions in a formal complaint backed by more than two million people in an online petition – a French record.

SOURCE: AFP

CORRUPTION SCANDAL

S. Korea’s top court upholds ex-president’s 20-year jail term

SOUTH KOREA’S top court upheld a 20-year prison sentence for disgraced former president Park Geun-hye on Thursday, in the final ruling over the corruption scandal that brought her down.

The decision brings to an end an extended legal process that involved multiple trials and appeals, including a previous Supreme Court hearing.

The country’s first female president was impeached in 2017 after huge street protests against her rule.

She was convicted the following year of bribery and abuse of power and jailed for 30 years. A series of appeals, a retrial and further appeals followed which reduced her sentence to 20 years.

On Thursday, the case went for a second time before the Supreme Court, which said it accepted and confirmed the 20-year sentence.

The court also upheld fines and forfeits totalling 21.5 billion won (US\$19.5 million). Park has been boycotting the proceedings, saying they are biased against her, and was not present in court on Thursday.

SOURCE: AFP



Park Geun-hye was convicted in 2018 of bribery and abuse of power. PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE

“Art in Pandemic” kicks off

FIVE impressionists have staged an exhibition in line with health guidelines, showing over 40 works created in pandemic.

The show titled “Art in Pandemic” kicked off yesterday at the KaLaSa Art Space located at No. 131, 1st Floor, 34th St Middle Block, Kyauktada Township.

A maximum number of visitors to the exhibition is 20, and washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing mandatory rules for the visitors, said Su Htwe, the curator of the art space.

The exhibition reflects how Myanmar artists are passing the days in pandemic while staying at home.

“I am choked with staying at home. It is very tiring of me to stay at home, without travelling,” said Htoo Aung Kyaw, an artist who participated in the show.

“To create paintings in the pandemic, we have to recall our memories before the pandemic and capture them on canvas and paper,” said the artist.

The young artist has shown its works on Bagan, Ngapali, Mingu and other scenes.

Another young artist Aung Ko living in Shwetaung in western Bago Region sent his artworks to the exhibition as he is



Ko Maung Kyaw Than



Aung Si Thu



Shwe Thein



Htoo Aung Kyaw



Aung Ko



following the stay at home rules.

Due to pandemic, another impressionist Shwe Thein has shifted his brilliant boat subject to roses and still life in this exhibition. Artist Aung Si Thu’s transparent watercolour works of rural sceneries are also on display. The 67-year-old artist Ko Maung

Kyaw Than, who is a prominent figure in the Myanmar art scene, retired from the Yangon State School of Fine Arts seven years ago, also displayed acrylic works on landscapes in Myanmar.

The exhibition will be held from 14 to 19 January.

(Translated by Net Ye Hla)

MAGNETOMETERS

Fines for US lawmakers who refuse to walk through metal detectors

US lawmakers who refuse to go through metal detectors installed at the House of Representatives after last week’s Capitol riot will be fined, Speaker Nancy Pelosi said late Wednesday.

The fine for the first offense will be \$5,000, and \$10,000 for the second, Pelosi said in a statement. Fines will be docked directly from members’ salaries. “It is tragic that this step is necessary, but the Chamber of the People’s House must and will be safe,” Pelosi said as she announced the measure. Tighter safety rules came into effect after a mob of supporters of President Donald Trump violently broke into the building on January 6 in an attempt to stop the certification of Joe Biden as the next US president.

Five people died in the day of violence. Metal detectors were installed at the entrances to the US House for the first time Tuesday in response to the riot. Magneto-



US Capitol Police stand near a metal detector outside chamber of the House of Representatives. PHOTO: AFP

meters have been used for years at all visitor and staff entrances to the Capitol and many other federal buildings. But lawmakers have

been allowed to go around those security screenings provided they were wearing their congressional pin. Since the metal detectors

were installed several Republican lawmakers have pushed past police even after setting off the metal detectors. SOURCE: AFP

Mobile internet in Cuba

SINCE arriving in Cuba just two years ago, mobile internet has revolutionized life here -- helping people find food, fuel and even medicine amid crippling shortages, and helping them organize protests in a country where waving a placard can land you in deep trouble.

Many in the Americas’ only communist-ruled state now wonder how they ever lived without it. On the WhatsApp group Red Solidaria (Solidarity network), questions about basic necessities abound: “Flour please??”, “Has anyone seen toilet paper??”, or even “Does anyone know where to find milk?..”

Other online groups allow people to sell or exchange hard-to-come-by products: one user who goes by Gaby is looking to swap shower gel for toilet paper and soft drinks, while Leo is offering cooking oil and soap in exchange for baby food.

SOURCE: AFP

Head coach Antoine Hey returns to Yangon to start team training



Myanmar men's national football team head coach Antoine Hey.
PHOTO: MFF

MYANMAR men's national football team head coach Antoine Hey arrived back to Yangon on 13 January by air from Germany for restarting his team training, according to the statement with the Myanmar Football Federation.

He underwent a COVID-19 test in Germany with a negative result before landing in Myanmar and he is currently in quarantine at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel for his COVID-19 retest.

After his quarantine with the COVID-19 negative test re-

sult, he will start the football team training, said MFF football authorities.

The 50-year-old German football coach has been a manager of team Myanmar since October 2019. Antoine Hey assisted team Myanmar in securing two straight wins in the Group F of the World Cup Qualifiers in November 2019.

With the supervision of the head coach, Myanmar beat Tajikistan 4-3 and also took victory over Mongolia by 1-0 within a month in the Group F to bag

6 points.

The Myanmar national team will play an away match against Japan national team in the 2022 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers Group-F on 25 March and a home match against Kyrgyzstan on 30 March.

The Myanmar national team will run their training session this month in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports, said the source with the Myanmar Football Federation. — Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Barca reach Spanish Super Cup final after Ter Stegen penalty heroics

MADRID—Marc-Andre ter Stegen's heroics ensured Barcelona edged past Real Sociedad on penalties on Wednesday to reach the Spanish Super Cup final, without the injured Lionel Messi.

Messi was watching on as Ter Stegen did his best to fill the void in Cordoba, the goalkeeper immense both in the shoot-out and during normal time, which had finished 1-1.

Frenkie de Jong's header was cancelled out by a penalty from Mikel Oyarzabal, who then missed in the shoot-out, one of two crucial saves made by Ter Stegen before 21-year-old Riqui Puig hit the winning shot.

"I wasn't down to take one but we needed one more taker and I stepped forward," said Puig.

Barca advance to meet either Real Madrid or Athletic Bilbao in the final on Sunday, when Messi is expected to be available again, although coach Ronald Koeman was cautious at full-time. "We have to wait," he said. Koeman's team have a mountain to climb in La Liga's title race but they are improving, now nine games unbeaten and with a trophy in their grasp.

This is the second year of the Spanish Super Cup's new format, which has four teams playing each other in a semi-final and final.

Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad joined after reaching the final of last season's Copa del Rey, which is still to be played, while Barcelona finished runners-up to Madrid in La Liga. — AFP ■

Rafia rescues Juve to join Napoli, Inter, Milan in Italian Cup quarters



Juventus players celebrate. **PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP**

MILAN—Tunisian midfielder Hamza Rafia came off the bench to score an extra-time winner on his debut as Juventus battled past Genoa 3-2 to reach the Italian Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday.

Rafia, 21, came on with quarter of an hour to go in regular time and scored his first Juventus

goal after 105 minutes in Turin. Andrea Pirlo's side had let a two-goal advantage slip to allow Genoa back into the game.

Cristiano Ronaldo started on the bench with forward Alvaro Morata and defender Giorgio Chiellini returning from injury.

Chiellini set up Dejan Kulu-

sevski to open the scoring after two minutes in the Allianz Stadium.

Kulusevski then sent through for Morata to double their tally after 23 minutes.

But five minutes later Lenart Cymborra headed in to revive Genoa hopes.

Filippo Melegoni curled in the equalizer from outside the box, beating veteran keeper Gianluigi Buffon with quarter of an hour to go. Ronaldo came off the bench with two minutes to go in regular time.

The Portuguese forward had a role in the winner, sending Morata through to tee up Rafia with Brazilian Arthur saving Juventus by heading off the line three minutes later. Juventus, the record 13-time winners, next meet either Sassuolo or SPAL.—AFP ■

In-form Foden is natural fit for England, says Guardiola

LONDON—Phil Foden should be an automatic pick for England at this year's delayed European Championship after his outstanding season so far, says Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola.

The 20-year-old midfielder scored his eighth goal of the season as City beat Premier League strugglers Brighton 1-0 on Wednesday -- their seventh successive win in all competitions.

City climbed to third spot in the table, just four points behind leaders Manchester United and one point adrift of Liverpool with a game in hand on the champions.

Guardiola praised his young match-winner, who is City's leading goalscorer this season.

"In the last few days, Phil has played against (Chelsea's Cesar) Azpilicueta, one of the most incredible defenders in the Premier League, and was out-

standing," he said.

"It was the same against (Manchester United's). I am pretty sure he would be selected (for England) if it was me. "(England manager) Gareth (Southgate), I don't know but I am sure he was really impressed by him, like all of us."

Foden first sprang to prominence when England won the Under-17 World Cup in 2017 and has since earned three senior caps.—AFP ■



Phil Foden is Manchester City's leading scorer this season.
PHOTO: POOL/AFP