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Saturday, 16 January 2021

Confiscated lands returned to 348 farmers in Myeik by issuing temporary permits



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio speaks at the ceremony to present temporary land-use permits (Form-3) in Myeik on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

In his capacity as the chairman of the Central Scrutinizing Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio attended the ceremony to present temporary land-use permits to farmers in Myeik district, Taninthayi Region, yesterday morning.

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

Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myint Maung, his regional cabinet ministers, Hluttaw representatives and the farmers who received the lands.

Authorities presented temporary land-use permits (Form-3) to 149 farmers for 1,193.77 acres in Kyaukphya village-tract, out of 4,416.61 acres confiscated for New Kyaukphya Town Project in Myeik Township, and to 199 farmers for 1,170.70 acres in Thabyut village-tract respectively.

A total of 348 farmers received temporary land-use permits for 2,364.47 acres at the 25th ceremony to return the seized farmlands to the original owners.

The Vice-President also said that his committee is negotiating with the relevant ministries and organizations for compensation and cash for related losses to the farmers who have not received the reimbursement for loss of their lands in development projects.

The State Counsellor was

quoted in Vice-President's speech as saying to solve land confiscation cases out of sympathy and justice.

He continued to say that the farmers can cultivate marketable crops which are appropriate with local situations; that the government is using the revolving fund in purchasing paddy from the farmers when the crop went down the local price index while holding talks with the relevant countries on expanding Myanmar's crops and

new export items and production of value-added items for international markets.

The Vice-President also advised to conserve the limited land resource and avoid environmental degradation for the farmers' sustainable livelihood.

He also expressed his appreciation to the members of Taninthayi Region government and urged the farmers to use the lands for the country's economic development.

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THE NEW H-1

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Cruise control

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Yangon (Direct Showroom)
Yangon (Grand Sirius; Ahlone)
Yangon (Cherry MYKO; S/Okkalapa)
Yangon (Green Gate; N/Okkalapa)
Yangon (Silver Ocean; Thingangyun)
A/S Center

(01) 522 723, 09 42 100 2051, 09 2500 100 10
09-776633377
09-441444491-93
09-780807799, 09-443669999
09-400881003-05
01 522 724

Yangon (MMM; Tarmwe)
Yangon (Myint Myat Maung; Hlaing)
Yangon (Myanmar Jade Crown; N/Dagon)
Yangon (Zathapayin; Thaketa)
Yangon (Power Five; Bahan)
Mandalay (Grand Sirius)

09-958581111, 09-958582222
09-455012633, 09-785012633
09-444123181, 09-51970650
09-428701459, 09-455271035
09-677200500, 09-954328585
09-776633399

Mawlamying
Naypyidaw
Monywa
Magway
Taunggyi
Mandalay (Direct Showroom)

09 970164 721, 09765724480
067 26416
09 7921 30 200, 09 2131 200
09 77777 1616, 09 777776161
09 521 2514, 09 791113994
09 2531 51970, 09 4539 55560

All information and illustrations are based on data available at the time of publication and subject to change without notice.

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

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

Myanmar seamen brought back home from Singapore, ROK by relief flights



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

THE 35th relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore landed at Yangon International Airport, bringing back a total of 143 Myanmar seamen after they were stranded in Singapore due to the suspension of international flights, yesterday evening.

Another MNA relief flight organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Myanmar Seamen's Federation also brought back a total of 142 Myanmar seamen who were stranded abroad, yesterday evening. Among them, 87 people were from the Republic of Korea, 2 from the United States, 1 from Kenya, 5 from Indonesia, 8 from Spain, 1 from Bangladesh, 9 from Japan, 6 from Ecuador, 5 from Singapore, 9 from Egypt, 6 from France 1 from the Netherlands

and 1 from Tanzania.

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)

Confiscated lands returned to 348 farmers in Myeik by issuing temporary permits



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio visits the prawn farming in Myeik on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

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Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu, Chief Minister U Myint Maung, Deputy Minister for the Union Government Office U Tin Myint, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Soe Tint Naing, Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Myint Nwe and officials presented the land-use permits to the farmers.

The Vice-President and party then proceeded to Katalu village of Kyunsu Township in a speedboat to the salt water prawn farming project of Pyae Phyo Tun International Co., Ltd.

The project was first established in February 2014 with 61 ponds on 415 acres of land. The prawns are mainly exported to Japan and China.

The Vice-President also visited Smart Island to inspect preparations for community-based tourism in the area which is 48-mile away from Myeik Township, and it takes about 2 hours in the speedboat.

Visitors can study Bamar, Kayin and Salon indigenous people’s lifestyles, go kayak-



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio looks around the Done Island in a speedboat on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio visits Smart Island on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA



Picture shows Done Island. PHOTO: MNA

ing, enjoy the shallow beach and sea view, go fishing and have seafood. Officials are working to organize 2-days 1-night tour to this site. Onboard the speedboat, the Vice-President and party looked around Doneyaung-hmai village where the community-based tourism will be established. —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

CBM grants subsidiary licences to foreign banks

THE Central Bank of Myanmar issued only branch licences to foreign banks in the first and second rounds of foreign bank licencing, but granted subsidiary licences in its third round.

In the third round of licencing, Siam Commercial Bank Myanmar Limited from Thailand was granted foreign bank subsidiary licence on 12 January.

The foreign subsidiaries, like local banks including 27 local private banks, can offer commercial banking services to customers according to Articles 52 of Financial Institutions Law.

The public working with the banks will get international standard banking services of foreign banks and good results of local banks under the competitive conditions.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Myanmar Engineering Council organizes ICEEA 2021 Myanmar

MYANMAR Engineering Council organized the International Conference on Engineering Education Association (ICEEA 2021 Myanmar) online at the Ministry of Electricity and Energy yesterday.

Union Minister U Win Khaing, in his capacity as Patron of the council, highlighted the establishment of Engineering Department at the University of Yangon in 1923, engineering degrees granted by RIT in 1964 to date and efforts of engineering degree holders in the very sector of the country.

The Union Minister also said the infrastructure plays a key role in the developing countries and so the engineers mainly implement such procedures.

The government accelerates their plans for transportation,



Union Minister U Win Khaing participates in the International Conference on Engineering Education Association 2021 via videoconferencing on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA



electrification and access to clean drinking water.

Therefore, the engineering subject is crucial to produce qualified engineers.

The Union Minister then stressed the important role of engineers not only in government sector but also in private industries together with the developed market-oriented economic system and cooperation work between the council and ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organization (AFEO) and Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and Pacific (FEIAP).

He also expressed words of thanks to partner organizations such as FEIAP, IEET, UNSW, BEM, WFEO and IEA for their cooperation and supports.

He stressed the efforts of the ministry to meet 75 per cent of the country's electricity need by 2025 and its 2030 goal of full electrification.

He then highlighted the need to carry out in accordance with the international criteria to improve the quality of engineering subjects and engineering degree holders as well as for the development of the country.

The ICEEA 2021 Myanmar will be held until 16 January and the representatives of international and regional engineering organizations including Myanmar Engineering Council, the Rectors and Professors of Yangon Technological University, Mandalay Technological University will read the papers.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

He also discussed the significant development in every sector during the new government term and the increase of nationwide electricity access from 34 per cent to 57 per cent including 40 per cent power generation from hydropower, 14 per cent from solar energy, 34 per cent from Domestic Gas and 11 per cent from LNG.

MoSWRR holds meeting of R&R working group

MINISTRY of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held the first coordination meeting of the Working Group on Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Victims - R & R Working Group, one of three working groups formed under the Central Committee for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the working group, said his ministry is cooperating with related departments, working groups and, local/international social organizations.



Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement holds meeting over repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficked victims on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

He continued the working group was reformed in May 2018, and the meeting is to ensure effective communication between members, to identify advantages and weaknesses and to take ac-

tion plans.

He also added the need to appropriate the fund to implement the plans and to prepare for the annual US Anti-Trafficking Report.

The Deputy Minister stressed the need for cooperation with relevant civil society organizations and departments in protecting Myanmar migrant workers and vulnerable groups, including domestic violence caused by COVID-19 and the prevention and response of potential human trafficking.

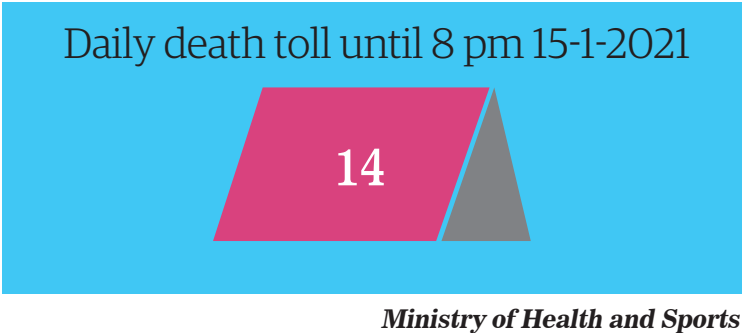
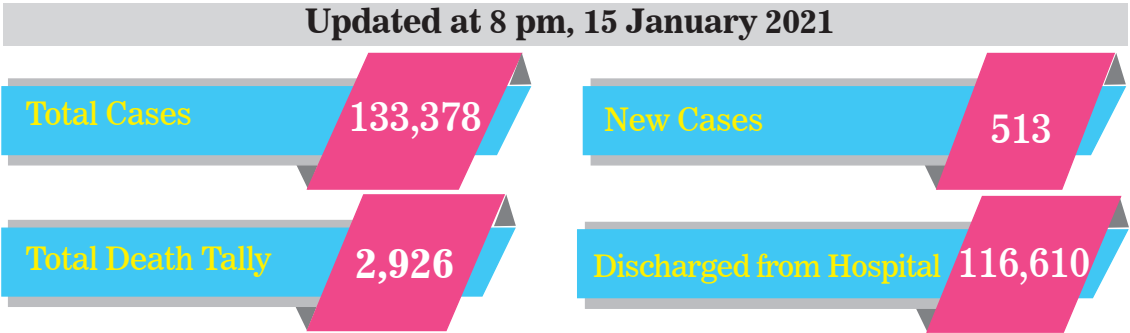
Afterwards, the Secretary of the working group, Director-General for the Rehabilitation Department U Win Naing Tun, presented the working conditions of the working group and further activities to be carried out and discussed the advantages and weakness of the working conditions.

The meeting was also attended by the Permanent Secretary for the Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Director-General and members of the Working Group on Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Victims - R & R Working Group and officials.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

513 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 January, total figure rises to 133,378

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 133,378 after 513 new cases were reported on 15 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 133,378 confirmed cases, 2,926 died, 116,610 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



To develop the education sector is a long-term process

Education is a very crucial sector for the development of the country. It is a long-term process. The government will make more investment to promote the education sector, and the private education sector will be supported. Education reform plans will be carried out to meet the demanding situations. Expanding vocational education could help in creating more employment for young people, and they would enjoy job security for life. The power of education is the ability to build capacity in a person to enable him/her to solve problems in the best possible way. The government will implement an education system to nurture the citizens who can dutifully work for the establishment of a Democratic Federal Union which can overcome all local and foreign challenges of the country in 2021 and the following years.

(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)



NSSA presents national-level skill certificates through virtual system

THE National Skills Standards Authority of Myanmar presented the national-level skill certificates through the virtual system at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Union Minister U Thein Swe, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Central Body for Employment and Skill Development, made a speech at the event.

The certificates were awarded via online to 1,165 skilled workers, 11 Accredited Assessment Centres, 9 Accredited Assessors and 22 Accredited Inspectors as they passed the NSSA exams in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 financial years.

The NSSA has issued a total of 16,519 skill certificates for 30 types of employments since 2014.



National Skills Standards Authority presents national-level skill certificates through virtual system on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

The Union Minister talked about requirements for the development of new skills, the participation of employers and employees in the skill develop-

ment programmes.

An analysis report of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population released in December on the cause of increas-

ing domestic migrant workers to Yangon has said the majority of local migrant workers to the industrial zones in Yangon region were from Ayeyawady, Bago

and Magway regions. Women contributed about 50 per cent in this migrant population. Most of them finished only primary and middle schools and are working in garment and textile industries.

He also advised harmonious collaboration among employees, employers, development partners and relevant ministries to make readiness for more employment opportunities that will emerge together with the Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan.

The Union Minister suggested 'green skills', which can support the 'green economy', employments for modern digital technology age, jobs in foreign investment, and identifying skill gaps by conducting research in respective sectors. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MoEE organizes meeting over works on energy sector

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy organized a coordination meeting over its present and future works on the energy sector at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing, departments and enterprises' directors-general and managing directors, and departmental officials participated in the meeting from Office No. 27 in Nay Pyi Taw, and officials from oil fields, oil plants, fertilizer plants, gasoline plants and petroleum storage and distribution joined the meeting via videoconferencing from their respective regions.

Directors-General and Managing Directors from the ministry's departments and enterprises relating to the energy sector discussed matters pertaining to human resources



Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing speaks at the meeting over works on the energy sector via videoconferencing from Nay Pyi Taw on 15 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

development, cooperation with international organizations and annual budget allocations.

Upon the discussion, the Deputy Minister replied that it is important to have skilled employees so that the works of related departments could be successfully implemented, and

also stressed the importance of establishing libraries for the employees' capacity building, conducting pieces of training for human resource development of the employees.

He added that not only training but also workshops should be frequently organized

and energy master plan should be studied.

It is necessary to analyze the facts for the future plan and the facts needed for CSO, and to draw up practical plans of three years for short terms, eight years for medium terms and 15 years for long terms, he

said stressing the importance of readiness of technologies and hiring of experts if needed.

He also talked about the production of quality urea that meets the country's requirement, saying the importance of analyzing the real market condition.

Future plans should not be delayed because of financial plans, and it is necessary to produce the employees who put co-workers first, he added.

He urged the employees to try their best by changing their old-style thinking to get faith from the public and by focusing the works suggested by the public so that the departments and enterprises become the organizations that can be relied on by international commercial companies.—MNA *(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)*

Repatriation, resettlement of displaced persons in Rakhine State discussed via virtual meeting



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye participates in the meeting on maintaining strength and sustainability of infrastructures for the displaced persons in Rakhine State on 15 January. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye presided over a videoconference meeting yesterday to discuss maintaining strength and sustainability of infrastructures for the displaced persons in Rakhine State. The Union Minister talked

about implementing the agreements made with Bangladesh on repatriation of displaced persons who left for the neighbouring country due to violent incidents in Rakhine State in August 2017.

Myanmar Government formed a committee on 15 March 2018 to systematically bring back the displaced persons. The committee is comprised of two work committees led by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs and the Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The committee is working together with ASEAN member countries to speed up the repatriation programme. The government spent over K18 billion for repatriation and resettlement programmes under the management of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD), with the contribution of funds by region/state governments, local and foreign well-wishers, Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and partner countries.

A total of 1,854 houses have been constructed for Hindu and Islam people, and 1,294 units have been used for them. Over K1.4 billion of UEHRD was spent on maintenance of facilities.

Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Phone Myat discussed the implementation of infrastructural development programmes in Rakhine State in respective financial years.

Deputy Minister U Soe Aung also represented the resettlement programmes and plans for preventing entering of illegal settlers near the border fence.

Officials also discussed electrification, transportation, and scrutinizing processes for the returnees.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Ngapali hoteliers prepare for post-COVID-19 tourism business

HOTELIERS are preparing for the post-COVID-19 tourism in Ngapali Beach, one of Myanmar’s leading tourist destinations with luxury hotels, resorts and golf course along its 3 km long beach. Ngapali beach, on the west coast of Myanmar facing India ocean, is located about 4 miles from Thandwe Township. The main transportation to the beach is taking the flight to Thandwe airport.

The name “Ngapali” was given to a little village in Thandwe District in 1826, after the first Anglo-Burmese War, by Italians who reached there. According to them, the beach is so similar to a beach in Napoli, a city in Italy and the name became “Ngapali” on the Rakhine people’s tongue.

After a visit of the former President U Thein Sein, Ngapali was developed into a township from a village in 2014. Tourism has been booming in Ngapali since colonial time and still a renowned place all around the world. — Khayan Soe Myint

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung) ■



Picture shows Ngapali Beach. **PHOTO: KHAYAN SOE MYINT**

69th anniversary of Kayah State Day celebrated in Loikaw



The 69th Anniversary of Kayah State Day is celebrated in Loikaw on 15 January 2021. **PHOTO: SOE HLAING HTAY**

THE 69th anniversary of Kayah State Day was celebrated in accordance with the health guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday morning in Loikaw.

The nine chairpersons of the ceremony and attendees saluted the Flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and paid tribute to the fallen martyrs. Minister for Development and Social Affairs for the Kayah State government Dr Aung Kyaw Htay read out the message sent from President U Win Myint on the occasion of the 69th Kayah State Day Ceremony.

Afterwards, Acting Chief Minister of Kayah State U Bosko said Kayah State Day has been celebrated annually throughout the state for 69 years and can’t celebrate this year due to the COVID-19 cases in Kayah State.

He also urged to all ethnic people to love and care for each other by building unity and solidarity to make the state stable, peaceful and comprehensively developed, to preserve the literature and traditional culture of the ethnic nationalities and to enable to live together in peace and security and build a truly democratic federal union.

The ceremony was also attended by the State Hluttaw Speaker, Chief Justice of the State High Court, Deputy Speaker of the State Hluttaw and officials from the Regional Command Military Headquarters (Loikaw), cabinet ministers, Hluttaw representatives, ethnic literature and cultural groups, peace organizations and guests. — Soe Hlaing Htay

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung) ■

Thai traders give lower price to fresh chilli due to mixed quality

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to the chilli exporters, the fresh chilli exported to Thailand is offered lower price because of mixed species of the fresh chilli.

The fresh chilli exported to Thailand through Myawady border area is found mixed with at least three types of chilli species. The local farmers are growing the chilli species they like on the same farmland. That is the reason why the fresh chillies are mixed with a variety of chilli species. The chilli-demanding country will offer a reasonable price only if the traders export only one species. If the traders are still exporting the mixed chilli species, the country will offer the low price.

Besides, the fresh chillies are carried in the cold storage containers to Myawady from the chilli producing townships. Sometimes, the chillies are damaged if the trucks have to stay overnight for some reasons, and the refrigerator is off for about two hours. Simultaneously, the chilli traders from other countries would offer low prices when the quality of chilli drops. The chillies will also be damaged when packed in strainers bags and shipped in the trucks without cold storage. So, the chilli should be exported only with cold storage, not counting the extra shipping costs.

Myanmar exports about 80

tonnes of fresh chilli daily to Mae Sot, Thailand via Myawady border trade zone. The fresh chillies are sold for US\$650 per tonne.

The export requires attachment with a Phytosanitary certificate issued by the Myanmar Agricultural Department and CO-Form or Form-D from the Department of Trade.

Now, Thailand is buying the fresh chilli for 50 or 60 baht per kilo. The maximum price of fresh chilli is 80 or 90 baht per kilo depending upon the freshness quality.

Now, the prevailing price of fresh chilli in Thailand is only 50 or 60 baht per kilo because there are three or four species of mixed chillies in addition to damages. If the chilli is gravely damaged, the traders in Thailand will offer only 17 baht per kilo, according to the chilli exporters.

Therefore, the local chilli growers need to grow high-quality chilli seed and cultivate only one variety of chilli species on the same farmland. The traders are also required to export the chilli using cold-storage trucks without consideration of the transport charges. By doing so, Myanmar chilli will have a strong market in the buyers' countries, which will offer reasonable prices.

At present, Kloot Wah Logistics Co., Ltd is exporting the high-quality chilli baskets, which can accommodate 7 ki-

los of fresh chillies. Their brand is PRO Chilli and is being exported to Bangkok, Thailand via Myawady border trade zone. The company is also buying excellent quality chilli from local growers by paying a great price to ship chilli to other countries.

Myanmar chillies are grown mostly in Kyaukse, Yamethin, PyinOoLwin in Mandalay region and Natnauk in Magway region and Ayeyawady region.

The chilli in Ayeyawady could be harvested only in January or February. The residents grow two types of chilli species such as Moe Htaung and Auk Swe chilli species. The growers are cultivating mostly Moe Htaung chilli species which yield higher and are easy to pick up.

Myanmar traders are exporting the fresh chilli only to Mae Sot, Thailand. Last year, the fresh chillies were exported to Malaysia through Thailand. Malaysia and the Philippines are interested in purchasing Myanmar chilli. However, Myanmar chilli market competes with Viet Nam. Myanmar chilli is also cheaper than that of Viet Nam chilli in terms of the selling price. But the quality of Myanmar chilli is not comparable to that of Viet Nam.

So far, there is no high-quality chilli in Myanmar that can be exported to Malaysia. The high-quality chilli can fetch 100 baht per kilo, according to the chilli exporters.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Corn powders exported to Thailand via Myawady despite pandemic

By Nyein Nyein

ALTHOUGH the coming into and going out of the border areas are restricted because of the pandemic, corn powders are still exported to Thailand through Myawady trade zone, according to the Myanmar Corn Traders.

Although Thailand has set a time limitation and export volume for import of corn, there is no restriction imposed on corn powder.

Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certificate has not been requested yet for export of corn powder to Thailand. Still, export requires attaching of a Phytosanitary certificate and the country of origin (CO) form. Similarly, these certificates must be produced in the export of maize. Myawady trade zone also scrutinizes and issues the Form-D to enable export of corn and corn powder.

Myanmar traders are exporting corn and corn powders to Mae Sot, Thailand, through Myawady border trade zone. Thailand traders refine the imported corn powder to re-export to Malaysia, China and Laos.

The price of grained corn (FOB) exported to Thailand through Myawady border trade zone is sold for 7 or 8 baht per kilo while the corn powder is sold for US\$220 per tonne. According to the corn traders, the prevailing price of grain corn in Myawady

market is 8.5 or 9 baht per kilogramme.

The high-quality FOB corns are sold for 8 or 10 baht per kilogramme (K480 or K485 per viss). Only maize with moisture content below 14.5 and 15) sells well in the trade market, the corn traders said.

Myanmar could export the corn to Thailand by attaching Form-D between 1 February and 31 August. After that time, Thailand will impose 73 per cent of tax on corn import as per the notification submitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Myanmar exported 2.2 million tonnes of corn to the foreign market in the past FY 2019-2020, with an estimated value of \$ 360 million, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed. Corn is cultivated in Shan State, Myingyan and Taungtha, Sagaing region and other regions along the Ayeyawady River.

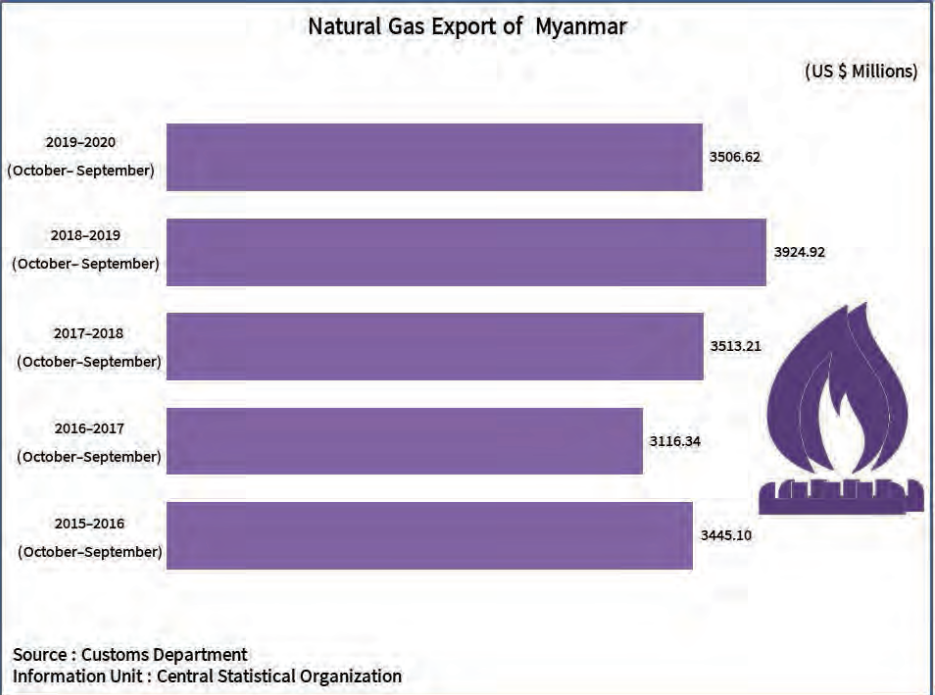
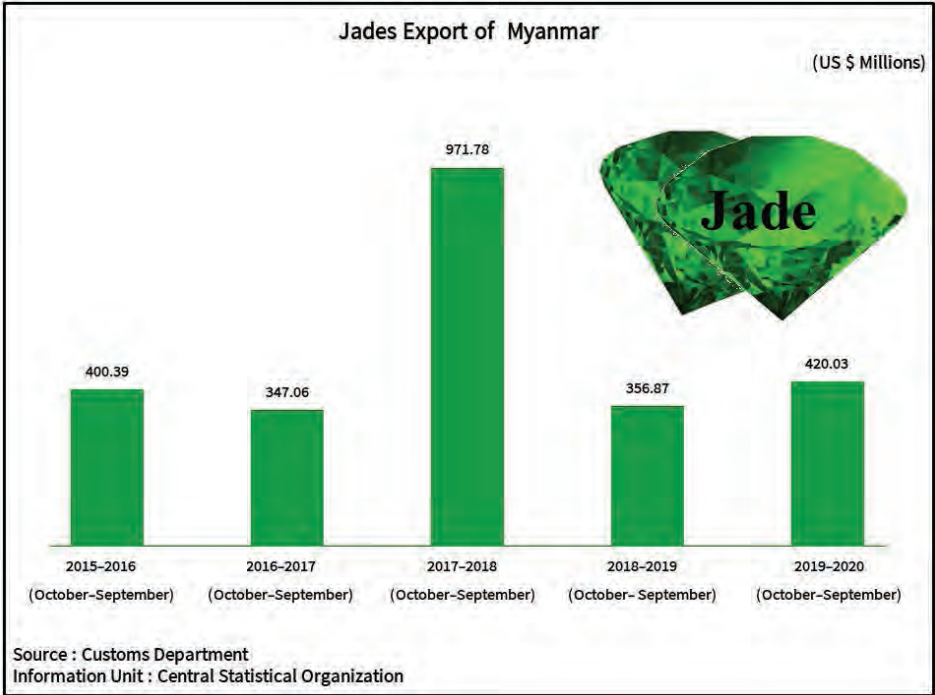
The highest quality corns that are demanded from Thailand are produced from the areas along the Ayeyawady River. Myanmar has three corn seasons — winter, summer and monsoon. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn.

Myanmar primarily exports corn to Thailand and China market. They are also shipped to Malaysia and Laos.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Trade Mark Ads Call

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New skills and future of work in post-COVID-19 era

FOR ECONOMIC recovery post-COVID-19, governments and businesses are now increasing their investments in digital skills development to ensure that youth can leverage online education and employment opportunities.

With a plan to resume its work on judging occupational skills of workers in January in line with health standards, the National Skills Standards Authority of Myanmar has taken steps to judge skill standards of 3,000 employees in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

As the Union Government continues to respond to the ongoing pandemic, it is important to ensure that our youth have the skills they need to benefit from new employment opportunities.

To create job opportunities post COVID-19, we need to do a research about employment demand from foreign and local investment sectors, from green economy and digital economy. At the same time, we need to a strategic move by conducting trainings for workers to ensure that they can adapt to new job opportunities. This should be the first step towards recovery in what has been a punishing year for manufacturing.

To succeed on a large scale, the government and private sector partners are to work together to empower youth with the skills they need to thrive during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through digital skills training programmes.

To succeed on a large scale, the government and private sector partners are to work together to empower youth with the skills they need to thrive during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through digital skills training programmes.

As NSSA is working towards producing quality human resource, the programmes should focus on helping lay off workers to benefit new employment opportunities in the digital economy and in the post-COVID-19 world.

According to a survey, most of the internal migrant workers in the industrial zones in Yangon Region are from Ayeyawady Region, Bago Region and Magway Region, and of them, women make up 50 per cent of the population of migrant workers. Most of the migrant workers completed primary and middle education and found jobs at garment factories.

Hence, our future policies should consider the need of such workers nationwide to help them get new professional skills and to create job opportunities in their regions.

We are confident that the regional governments and private sector partners can work together to overcome challengers from the COVID-19 and to help the workers be ready to seize job opportunities to be emerged along with the economic recovery plan.

Myanmar and ASEAN maritime cooperation

By Thi Ha Hein

THE year 2020 is challenging year not only for Myanmar but also for the nations throughout the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has made drastic changes to both the global political-security and social-economic environments including maritime cooperation. It is observed that over the past year, the challenges and complicated development in the regional maritime landscape has increased in sharpening of maritime disputes among the coastal states and intensifying U.S.-China's strategic rivalry in the region.

The safety and security of maritime areas in the region remain vulnerable with overlapping claims on sea borders, piracy and armed robbery, drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal fishing, natural disasters and other transnational challenges at sea.

In the economic front, UNCTAD projected 4.1% volume of global maritime trade which provide massive way of international trade flow with 80%, will plunge in 2020 due to the unprecedented disruption caused by COVID-19.

Thus, enhancing maritime cooperation is needed for the smooth and continuous flow of trade through promoting safety, security and stability in the regional waters in this challenging time and post COVID-19 era.

The importance of safe, secured and peaceful Myanmar maritime territory

Being as a country with over 2400-kilometre-long coastline, 23,070 kilometre territorial waters and 800 islands, securing the maritime domain is crucial for the integrity and sovereignty of the country. Furthermore, it is not deniable that Myanmar rely heavily on the maritime routes for its economic development since more than 85 % of trading is based on maritime route. The safety of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) is a national priority and it is imperative that these sea lanes are safe and stable as well as all activities in the territorial waters are properly managed, marine ecologies are preserved for the generations to come.

In geographically, Myanmar is linking the South and Southeast Asia and sitting on the maritime shipping route from Pacific Ocean to India Ocean so that establishing an efficient maritime transport system to become Asia's newest maritime hub can be one of the country's national development agendas.

ASEAN maritime cooperation mechanisms

At present, following 13 ASEAN sectoral bodies are involving in maritime related activities with each focussing on different dimensions of maritime cooperation under the three pillars of ASEAN-



In this picture taken on August 23, 2006, ships wait to be loaded and unloaded with containers at the port in Jakarta. PHOTO: AFP/BAY ISMOYO/FILE

AN- Political and Security Community, Economic Community and Socio-Cultural Community:

- (1) ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM)/ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (ASEAN SOM)
- (2) ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)
- (3) ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)/ADMM-Plus
- (4) ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) / Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF)
- (5) ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)/ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)
- (6) East Asia Summit (EAS)
- (7) ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM)/ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM)
- (8) ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting (ATM)/ Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM)/ Maritime Transport Working Group (MTWG)
- (9) ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF)
- (10) Meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM)/ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs)
- (11) ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC)
- (12) ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment (AWGCEM) under the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment (AMME)/ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN)
- (13) ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology (AMMST)/ Committee on Science and Technology

(COST)/Sub-Committee on Marine Science and Technology (SCMSAT)

As the maritime issues are across cutting and multifaceted ranging from maritime security, safety of navigation, fishery, cybersecurity, tourism to marine

The safety and security of maritime areas remain vital to Myanmar both in terms of national security and economic prosperity.

environmental protection, maritime cooperation in ASEAN needs to be comprehensive rather than security focus one. In this regard, ASEAN has been trying to create effective coordinating mechanism among these sectoral bodies so that it should not be overlapped and duplicated the work stream of maritime sectors in ASEAN. And thus, it is important for ASEAN to consider developing a strategy in outlining a holistic integrated and comprehensive approach while maintaining ASEAN leadership in regional maritime cooperation through ASEAN unity and centrality in promoting rules-based re-

gional maritime order.

Maritime dispute in South China Sea

The issue of maritime disputes in the South China Sea is complex. Particularly, tensions among the major powers and claimant states in the region need to be addressed. Aside from COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, today world is facing geopolitical uncertainty and emerging challenges as power competition is lingering in the region.

As a rule based regional organization, ASEAN concerned the growing uncertainties resulting from the changing geo-political dynamics in the regional and global landscape including in the South China Sea. As a result, on the 8th August 2020, ASEAN released ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the importance of maintaining peace and stability in Southeast Asia reaffirming the commitment to maintaining Southeast Asia as a region of peace, security, neutrality and stability and strengthening peace-oriented values in the region in line with international law, while calling all parties for the continued building of strategic trust and mutual confidence among countries through continued dialogue, win-win cooperation and practical confidence building measures to create a peaceful environment conducive for sustainable growth in the region.

Myanmar always encourage, all parties would exercise maximum restraint avoiding any actions that could escalate tension in the region and all differences and disputes be settled amicably through

consultations, negotiation, greater engagement, cooperation and peaceful manner.

Enhancing maritime security capabilities

For the time being, responsibility for the safety and security of Myanmar water has been shared between Myanmar Navy and the Maritime Police, a part of the Myanmar Police Force. To protect its long coastline and extensive water territory, Myanmar has steadily modernized its navy.

Nevertheless, it is considerable that whether the Navy could address effectively the issue of maritime security in terms of non-traditional challenges, and have to think of different aspect of the movement of navy ship and coastguard ship in the sea. In fact, Myanmar is one of three countries (Myanmar, Brunei and Laos-land link country) in the ASEAN that does not already have national coastguard. Thus, it is needed to form the coastguard in order to strengthen the maritime security capacity and more secure the maritime territory with greater flexibility in responding to the maritime issues. Moreover, the establishment of the coastguard will contribute in addressing not only the maritime safety but also marine environmental issues recognizing sustainable use of marine resources by preserving marine bio-diversity is key to long-term development of the country.

Conclusion

The safety and security of maritime areas remain vital to Myanmar both in terms of national security and economic prosperity. It is therefore recommended that redefining of maritime security should be prioritized in the national security agenda and shall establish its coastguard in tasking to provide better security and to preserve marine resources in Myanmar waters.

Under the regional context, ASEAN remains the important regional actor contributing towards peace, stability and prosperity of the region by looking at common concerns of its member states in enhancing regional rule-based order and practical activities including maritime cooperation. It is therefore suggested that Myanmar needs to continue strengthening its cooperation through ASEAN-led, inclusive, comprehensive regional maritime mechanisms for better harmonized and coordinated maritime policy and strengthened maritime security capabilities.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of GNLM.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 15 January, 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16 January, 2021: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Rakhine State and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coast.

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

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 January, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 January, 2021: A few cloud.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 January, 2021: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region and a few cloud in Yangon Region.



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Ananda Temple prepared to reopen in post-coronavirus



(FILES) Picture shows Ananda Temple in Bagan Cultural Heritage Zone. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN (KDP)**

Bagan’s Ananda Temple is getting ready to reopen in post-COVID-19 abiding by the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports, according to U Zaw Win Cho, a member of the pagoda’s board of trustee.
Thermal cameras are installed, and hand washbasins are set up at the temple’s west gate as the entrance to the temple.

The temple will accept 50 visitors at a time, the visitors will look inside the building clockwise, and south and east gates are arranged as exit routes.
The Ananda Temple built by King Kyansittha in 1105 AD is in a cruciform with several terraces leading to a small pagoda at the top covered by an umbrella known as hti, which

is the name of the umbrella or top ornament found in almost all pagodas in Myanmar. The temple houses four standing Buddhas, each one facing the cardinal direction of East, North, West and South.
The temple is surrounded to the north-east with Min O Chan Tha Temple, to the north-west and west with Tharabha Gate, Thatbinnyu Pagoda, Pita-

ka Taik and Shwegugyi Temple, to the south with Dhammayangyi Temple.
The surrounding pagodas will also accept the visitors in the post-COVID-19 abiding by the guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports if the Bagan-NyaungU Ancient Cultural Zone is reopened. — Ko Htein (KDP)
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

K3 bln water supply project to be set up in Mandalay

THE Mandalay government will use more than K3 billion for water supply operations during summer in 139 villages of 22 townships in the coming financial year, said the regional Rural Development Department.
The water supply operations will provide water to a total of 110,366 people of 23,542 houses in 139 villages of 22 townships by using water from 140 wells, including swallow wells and hand-dug wells.
The tender winning companies will operate the water supply operations starting the third week of this month, said U Soe Than, Director for regional Rural Development Department.
“We will spend more than K3 billion of Union Budget for the people living in 139 villages of 22 townships not to face water shortage problems in summer months. We will sign contracts with the tender winning companies in the second week of

this month. 37 companies out of 51 won the tender. They survey during the second week of this month. We will carry out for the people not to face water shortages this summer,” he said. The water supply projects will be implemented in 22 townships Py-

inOoLwin, Patheingyi, Madaya, Kyaukse, Sintgaing, Myittha, TadaU, Meiktila, Mahlaing, Wundwin, Thazi, Taungtha, Natogyi, Ngazun, Pyawbwe, NyaungU, Kyaukpadaung, Yamethin, Myingyan, Thabeikkyin, Singu and Mogok townships.

In 2019-2020FY, the regional government also used a total K900 million budget to construct reservoirs to save rainwater for 76 villages of 13 townships where faced water crisis.—Ko Thwin (Mdy) (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Mandalay Region government will use over K3 billion for water supply projects. **PHOTO: KO THWIN (MDY)**

SEA PIRACY

Pirate attacks remain high in Singapore Strait amid pandemic

SEA piracy and armed robbery in Asian waters jumped 17 per cent last year compared with a year earlier, with a particularly high occurrence in the Singapore Strait, a Japan-led international centre to combat the scourge said on Friday.

A total of 97 such incidents were reported last year, of which the largest -- 34 -- took place in the Singapore Strait, the RECAAP Information Sharing Centre said in its annual report.

The Singapore Strait, one of the world's busiest, remained a high-risk area last year, continuing the trend in 2019 when there were 31 incidents.

The second highest was in Indonesia with 22 cases, followed by the Philippines with 13, India

with nine and Viet Nam with six.

However, the severity level of the incidents remained moderate, it said.

The centre, established in Singapore in 2006 under the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, issued five alerts for the shipping community on the risk of the piracy in the Singapore Strait last year.

Masafumi Kuroki, its executive director, partly attributed the rise in incidents in the region to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, citing economic hardships impacting many coastal communities and also the fatigue of shipping crew stranded for long periods at sea amid border



The photo shows law enforcement training exercises using a high-speed rubber raft being conducted for Philippine Coast Guard personnel (a patrol vessel provided to the Philippine Coast Guard by Japan is visible in the background). **PHOTO: RECAAP/KYODO/FILE**

controls.

"The negative impact of COVID-19 can be one of the causes," Kuroki said.

The Singapore Strait is difficult for ships to navigate because it is quite narrow with high traffic, he said, adding that this

causes ships to decrease speed, giving pirates the opportunity to board.

SOURCE: Kyodo

FASHION IN FREE FALL

Covid kills men's fashion buzz in Milan

A year after the last Covid-free catwalk shows in Milan, men's fashion week begins on Friday, but without the buzz of its traditional audience of buyers, bloggers, celebrities and media.

As the pandemic continues to upend Italy's crucial luxury sector nearly 12 months after it first swept through the country, fashion houses have turned to technology to showcase their fall/winter 2021-22 collections.

Shows will be broadcast live on the fashion houses' own

websites or be replaced with pre-recorded presentations, short films and other artistic projects. Others such as Dolce & Gabbana have withdrawn entirely.

The four-day men's fashion event takes place with infections rising in Italy's Lombardy region with a return a full lockdown possible as early as the weekend.

Lombardy, whose capital is Milan, is one of five in Italy classified "orange" by the govern-

ment, which means that stores and most schools are closed, while a curfew remains in force at night. Among those opting for live shows to be broadcast by the fashion houses are Fendi, Etro and Kway.

Most other brands, however, including Ermenegildo Zegna, Tod's, Prada and Church's, have opted for pre-records -- choices that allow for creative freedom but lack the immediacy and drama of live shows.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

AI TECHNOLOGY

Japanese hi-tech duo eyes Vietnam's OCR market with AI-based service

JAPAN'S AI inside Inc. has teamed with a Vietnamese affiliate of Japanese telecommunications company Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corp. to market an artificial intelligence-equipped optical character recognition service in Viet Nam. AI inside announced the partnership with OCG Technology Joint Stock Co., based in Hanoi, on Thursday for the cloud-based "DX Suite" service that scans accounting slips and other documents hand-written in Vietnamese for conversion into printed matter.

Equipped with deep-learning AI technology developed by AI inside, the optical character-reading system can identify hand-written letters with high accuracy, helping companies automate business data input/output, according to the Japanese firm. The duo will initially focus on improving reading accuracy before launching a commercial service in Vietnam, expected this spring. OCG is a joint venture between the NTT East group and the state-run Viet Nam Posts and Telecommunications Group. SOURCE: Kyodo

SHARES COLLAPSE

Smartphone giant Xiaomi reels as US ramps up China blacklist

SHARES in Xiaomi collapsed on Friday after the United States blacklisted the smartphone giant and a host of other Chinese firms as the Trump administration aims to cement its trade war legacy against Beijing.

Beijing hit back at the latest sanctions, accusing the US of "abusing state power" to crack down on Chinese companies "for no reason". The flurry of last-minute blacklistings is the coda to four years of aggressive diplomatic and trade policies towards rival China under Donald Trump.

With just six days to go before the president leaves office, US officials made a series of announcements targeting Chinese firms including state oil giant CNOOC, Xiaomi and embattled social media favourite TikTok.



A man looks at a mobile phone in a Xiaomi shop in Beijing. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Xiaomi -- which overtook Apple last year to become the world's third-largest smartphone manufacturer -- was one of nine firms classified by the Pentagon as "Communist Chinese military companies". The Pentagon's ac-

tion means US investors will be unable to purchase Xiaomi securities and will ultimately have to divest down the line unless the order is overturned by the incoming administration of Joe Biden. SOURCE: AFP

HIGH HOPES

France says pharma giant Sanofi could make rivals' Covid vaccines

SANOFI, France's biggest pharmaceutical company, could help produce foreign-developed Covid-19 vaccines pending the launch of its own vaccine, which will not be ready for months, a government minister said Friday.

Industry Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher told Radio Classique that vaccines developed by BioNTech, which partners with Pfizer, and Janssen, owned by Johnson and Johnson, were the most likely choices for Sanofi to lend a helping hand.

The world has been scrambling to develop and produce enough anti-Covid vaccines, with inoculation drives hampered by limited stocks of doses and logistical constraints.

France had high hopes that its national champion Sanofi would contribute to a first wave of coronavirus inoculations, but the company's vaccine will not be ready before the end of the year.

Pannier-Runacher said she had therefore begun talks with Sanofi to act as a sub-contractor for other firms while it completed its own Covid jabs. "We are looking at this together with them," she said, "and they are examining with BioNTech on the one hand and Janssen on the other whether it would be possible." SOURCE: AFP

NEW START

For Russia, nuclear arms curbs with Biden are a 'no brainer'

WHEN US President-elect Joe Biden enters the White House next week his administration will be in a race against time to salvage a landmark nuclear arms accord with Russia. The New START treaty, which expires just 16 days after Biden's inauguration, is the last major arms reduction pact between old foes whose bulging nuclear stockpiles dominated fears for global security during the Cold War.

But the fast-approaching deadline to find compromise comes as tensions between Moscow and Washington are at fever pitch over recent hacking allegations, and after Biden vowed to take a firm stand against Russia.

The stakes of reaching an agreement are high, says Ele-



Marshall Billingslea (R), US Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control after the US and Russia talks on nuclear weapons in 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

na Chernenko, a foreign editor at Russia's Kommersant newspaper who has closely followed negotiations.

"The treaty limits the chances of one side miscalculating the intentions or plans of the other,

which we saw happen several times leading to very dangerous moments during the Cold War," she told AFP. Any agreement is also likely to define spending priorities for both governments, said Russian political columnist

Vladimir Frolov.

Extending New START could determine both in Moscow and Washington whether "more money than necessary would have to be spent on nuclear toys as opposed to health care", he told AFP.

Treading a fine line

New START was signed in 2010 between then-US president Barack Obama and former Russian leader Dmitry Medvedev, curbing warheads to 1,550 each and restricting numbers of launchers and bombers. Biden will be eager to score a big diplomatic win early in his term, but he is also under pressure to tread a fine line and make good on a campaign promise to be tough on Russia. **SOURCE: AFP**

WASHINGTON DC

US capital locks down as security threats mount

THE centre of Washington was in lockdown Thursday as more than 20,000 armed National Guard troops were mobilized following the deadly assault on the Capitol and the threat of more violence at the presidential inauguration of Joe Biden.

Police Chief Robert Contee said the US capital was facing "a major security threat" after supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building a week ago in a violent bid to block Biden's confirmation that left five people dead.

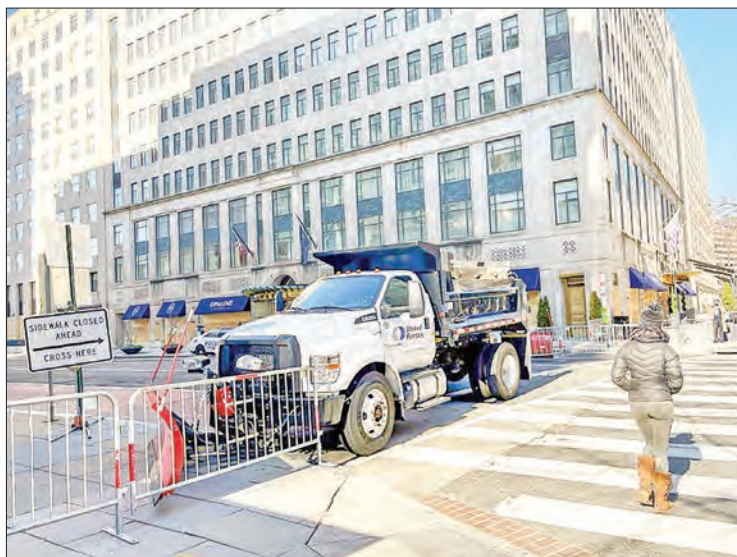
A day after Trump was impeached in Congress for allegedly supporting the assault, more barriers were being erected and

razor wire laid as part of precautions ahead of the January 20 ceremony.

Most of downtown Washington was off-limits to traffic, drawing comparisons to Baghdad's high-security "Green Zone".

The Secret Service, in charge of security, was weighing an unprecedented shutdown of the entire National Mall, the grassy spread where hundreds of thousands traditionally gather to celebrate the inauguration of a new president.

Security officials are warning that armed extremist Trump supporters, possibly carrying explosives, pose a threat to Washington as well as state capitals over the



A truck used as a temporary security barrier on a street near the White House. **PHOTO: AFP**

coming week.

"We are seeing an extensive amount of concerning online chatter," FBI Director Chris Wray told Vice President Mike Pence in a televised briefing.

"We're concerned about the potential for violence at multiple

protest rallies planned here in DC and state capitol buildings around the country in the days to come, that could bring armed individuals within close proximity to government buildings and officials," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

1988 BOMBING

Scottish court upholds Lockerbie bomber's conviction

FIVE judges at Scotland's highest court of criminal appeal on Friday upheld the conviction of the only man found guilty of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing after a posthumous legal challenge.

The family of former Libyan intelligence officer Abdelbaset Ali Mohmet al-Megrahi, which brought the case, said they were "heartbroken" at the decision, their lawyer Aamer Anwar said. They will apply to appeal to the UK Supreme Court within 14 days, he added. The ruling at the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh comes

just over 32 years after what remains Britain's worst terrorist attack, with long-held doubts about Megrahi's involvement.

Megrahi spent seven years in a Scottish prison after his conviction in 2001 for the mass murder of 270 people, when Pan Am Flight 103 blew up over the Scottish town on December 21, 1988. The Libyan regime of Moammar Kadhafi officially acknowledged responsibility in 2003, and paid \$2.7 billion in compensation to families of the victims.

SOURCE: AFP



December 1988: Some of the destruction caused by Pan Am Flight 103 after it crashed onto the town of Lockerbie in Scotland. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

EXONERATED

Mexican prosecutors clear ex-defence chief accused by US

MEXICAN prosecutors on Thursday exonerated a former defence minister who was arrested in the United States on drug trafficking charges and sent home to face a possible trial. The attorney general's office said it would take no action against retired general Salvador Cienfuegos, whose surprise arrest at a Los Angeles airport in October had sparked diplomatic tensions.

It said prosecutors had concluded that Cienfuegos "never had any meeting with the members of the criminal organization investigated by the US authorities."

"He did not have any communication with them, nor did he carry out acts intended to protect or help those individuals," it added.

Prosecutors said there was also no evidence that the retired general "had issued any order to favour" criminals or "obtained illegal income." Cienfuegos was accused by the US of conspiring to produce and distribute "thousands of kilograms" of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana. **SOURCE: AFP**

Russia leaving Open Skies military treaty

RUSSIA'S foreign ministry said Friday it is leaving the Open Skies treaty, a post-Cold War defence accord that allows its signatories to carry out unarmed surveillance flights over each other's territories.

Citing "lack of progress" on maintaining the functioning of the treaty after the United States withdrew from it last year, the ministry said in a statement it is beginning "domestic procedures for Russia's withdrawal from the Open Skies treaty."

The Open Skies treaty was signed in 1992 and came into force in 2002. It allowed its nearly three dozen signatories to carry out short-notice flights over one another's territory to monitor potential military operations.

Members include countries across Europe, the former Soviet Union and Canada.

SOURCE: AFP

'JUSTICE IS COMING'

US rioters sought to 'capture and assassinate' lawmakers at Capitol: prosecutors

US prosecutors now believe supporters of President Donald Trump planned to "capture and assassinate elected officials" in their siege of the Capitol building last week, according to a new court filing.

The filing, submitted by Justice Department lawyers late Thursday, sought the detention of Jacob Chansley of Arizona, the QAnon conspiracy theorist pictured in the riot dressed as a horned shaman at the desk of Vice President Mike Pence.

"Strong evidence, including Chansley's own words and actions at the Capitol, supports that the intent of the Capitol rioters was to capture and assassinate elected officials in the United States government," prosecutors said of the January 6 siege.

They said Chansley, 33, left a note for Pence at the dais in the Senate Chamber where the second-in-command had been standing just minutes before, which read: "it's only a matter of time, justice is coming."

The filing gives further insight into the FBI probe on the day of chaos at the center of American democracy, which left elected officials holed up fearing for their lives and at least five people dead, including one police officer.

SOURCE: AFP

SHOW OF STRENGTH

North Korea shows off new submarine-launched missile at parade



Pictures showed at least four of the SLBMs with black-and-white cones being driven past flag-waving crowds in Kim Il Sung Square. PHOTO: KCNA VIA KNS/AFP

NUCLEAR-ARMED North Korea unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile at a military parade in Pyongyang, state media reported Friday, in a show of strength days before Joe Biden's inauguration as US president.

The display came after the five-yearly congress of the ruling Workers' Party, where leader Kim Jong Un decried the US as his country's "foremost principal enemy".

A grinning Kim oversaw the parade on Thursday evening, wearing a black leather coat and fur hat as he watched infantry troops, artillery, tanks, and a flypast with aircraft forming the number "8" to commemorate the party meeting.

"The world's most powerful weapon, submarine-launch ballistic missile, entered the square one after another, powerfully demonstrating the might of the revolutionary armed forces," the official KCNA news agency said.

SOURCE: AFP

HOSPITAL FLATTENED

At least 34 dead as Indonesia quake topples buildings

A powerful earthquake rocked Indonesia's Sulawesi island early Friday, killing at least 34 people, levelling a hospital and severely damaging other buildings, authorities said.

Hundreds more were injured when the 6.2-magnitude quake struck in the early hours, triggering panic among the terrified residents of the island, which was hit by a huge quake and tsunami two and a half years ago that killed thousands.

"The latest information we have is that 26 people are dead... in Mamuju



People work at the site of a collapsed building in Mamuju. MAWARDI/AFP

city," said Ali Rahman, head of the local disaster mitigation agency, adding "that number could grow".

"Many of the dead are buried under rubble," he said. Separately, the national disaster agency said at least eight people had died in an area south of Mamuju, a city of some 110,000 in West Sulawesi province, bringing the total death toll to 34. Rescuers were searching for more

than a dozen patients and staff trapped beneath the rubble of the levelled Mamuju hospital.

"The hospital is flattened -- it collapsed," said Arianto from the rescue agency in Mamuju city, who goes by one name.

"There are patients and hospital employees trapped under the rubble and we're now trying to reach them," he added, without giving a specific figure. Rescuers were also trying to reach a family of eight trapped under the rubble of their destroyed home, he added.

The country's search-and-rescue agency said at least one hotel had partially collapsed after the quake struck at 2:18 am local time Friday (1818 GMT Thursday), while the regional governor's office also suffered extensive damage. A Mamuju resident said damage across the city was severe.

"Roads are cracked and many buildings collapsed," said 28-year-old Hendra, who also goes by one name. "The quake was very strong... I woke up and ran away with my wife."

SOURCE: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (202N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (202N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (016N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (016N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CAPTAIN YAKUBOVICH

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CAPTAIN YAKUBOVICH** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-5** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: **2301191/2301178**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

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Rama and Lekkhana reliefs in Thakuttanei



Ancient prayer hall



By Maung Tha (Archaeology)
TRANSLATED BY THAN TUN AUNG

RAMAYANA Jataka, legendary in some Asian countries including Myanmar, is very famous as a classical novel in the world literature. The history of Indian literature recognizes Ramayana and Maha Bharata as the most classical stories. Despite a story, Ramayana much

influences over social life of Hindu people. Characters such as Rama, Lekkhana, Sita, Dassagiri and Hannuman involved in Ramayana Jataka dominate over cultures of India and Nepal. Likewise, Ramayana Jataka spread out to Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Ramayana Jataka was translated into various languages for winning hearts of Asian people by presenting the performances of such drama.

Although anyone did not know exact time of arriving Rama drama in Myanmar, Rama and Lekkhana plots carved on shale stones can be vividly seen in Myanmar. Thakhuttanei where reliefs of Ramayana Jataka were carved on shale stones in Konbaung era is distinct in Myanmar’s cultural arena. Thakhuttanei Pagoda where shale stones were carved as reliefs in mid-19th

century takes a position in Ywathit Village of Budalin Township in Sagaing Region.

Thakhuttanei Village

Thakhuttanei Village is located 36 miles northeast of Monywa and 15 miles north of Budalin. People from Monywa have easy access to Thakhuttanei Village by car. Such village produces fans made of toddy palm leaves for Buddhist monks.

Phayagyi Village where reliefs of Ramayana Jataka are located is two miles from Thakhuttanei. In fact, Phayagyi Village is involved in area of Ywathit Village-tract. But, the historical pagoda in Phayagyi Village has been named Thakhuttanei Pagoda in successive eras. Now, Thakhuttanei Village-tract is formed with 547 households for 2,120 people who are engaging in cultivation of beans and pulses.

Sayadaw U Ñeya

Maha Lawkamarazina Pagoda and ancient buildings scatter in Phayagyi Village. The pagoda was built by Second Maungthaung Sangharaja Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya in 1846 AD. But, the pagoda was named as Natyetaung Pagoda regarding two hillsides of Natye Hill, south of the village.

King Thayawady (1837-1846 AD) supplicated The-in Sayadaw to serve Sangharaja on 31 May 1837 as well as offered Ñeyadhammalankara Maha Dhammarajadhipati Rajaguru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya. When The-in Sayadaw passed away in November 1839, the King handed over Sangharaja duty to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya. At that time, these Sayadaws served as missionary or Sasana guardian,





Maha Lawkamarazina Pagoda

and the word of Sangharaja was not used, according to veteran historian Dr Than Tun. In monarchical era, the king directly selected Sangharaja Sayadaws.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya had discharged duty of Sasana guardian for six years. In 1846 when King Bagan (1846-1853 AD) came onto the throne, Bagaya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Paññajota was assigned duty of Sasana guardian. So, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya handed over duty of Sasana guardian to new Sayadaw and went to Phayagyi Village. While in Phayagyi Village, the Sayadaw emphasized Buddhist missionary tasks.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya started construction of a 108 elbows high pagoda and a 50 feet by 50 feet prayer hall on 26 November 1846. Within about two and a half years, construction of buildings completed in 1849. A holy umbrella was hoisted atop the pagoda on 1 May, and the pagoda was titled Maha Lawkamarazina. Two large black alms-bowls each can be seen at the eastern and western foot of the pagoda. Statues of Hinduism gods are found at the southern and northern arches to the pagoda but nobody knew the purpose of these statues.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya managed carving of plots from Rama Jataka on 18 by 18 inches shale tiles which were one inch thick. A total of 347 tiles were

placed around the pagoda. After 35 tiles had been lost, the Department of Archaeology constructed a building in the precinct of the pagoda in 1972 and kept remaining tiles. The building was titled “shale relief tiles on Rama Jataka in Konbaung era” and “protect ancient cultural heritages”.

Shale relief museum

Rama Jataka shale relief museum displays 29 plaques each of reliefs in 10 rows and 16 plaques in two rows, totalling 312 plaques of reliefs in 12 rows. Each shale plaque bears about 0.5 inch high embossed reliefs depicting plots from Rama Jataka.

The styles of reliefs may be created in mid-19th century, most of which are in good condition. Some plaques were damaged at reliefs and some with cracks. Some reliefs were labelled in number and some plaques bore name of plots in the Jataka. Round alphabets such as Queen Sita, Hannuman, entrance to Hmawyon and offering the ring can be seen clearly.

With regard to relief of King Rama, veteran historian Dr Than Tun said, “Rama sits on the throne with full of royal regalia. His sitting style is seen with upside knee and hanging leg on the throne. He holds a yak tail fan in left hand. A betel box is laid in left side. Three umbrellas without opening are kept in right

side. If white umbrellas open, it indicates the person is a king. I guess Rama is not a king at that time because his umbrellas are not opened.”

Although Rama Jataka has been for many years, sculptors created styles of characters with royal costumes in Konbaung era of mid-19th century. As such, everybody can observe cultural characters of such era.

Presiding Nayaka of Phayagyi Monastery in Phayagyi Village Bhaddanta Ukkamsa said that only when ancient Myanmar’s cultural heritages and artistic works are systematically maintained, can new generations observe higher status of Myanmar’s cultural fine arts.

Ancient prayer hall

An ancient prayer hall built by Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ñeya can be seen at southeast corner of the pagoda till today. Such building is 42 feet and nine inches long and 40 feet and nine inches wide. The roofless building has cracked brick walls and it slightly tilts to the west. The grand prayer hall bears archways, arts and crafts as well as statues on beams. A throne is located in the southern part of the monastery without Buddha images.

Multi-coloured mural paintings can be seen on interior walls of the monastery but some concrete parts bearing mural paintings fell from the wall. Other mural paintings are also damaged.

A mural painting on the western wall of the monastery distinctly depicts a picture of a prince and another one giving a hand to a princess from the throne. Ink inscriptions in black



Shale reliefs

round alphabets were seen under the mural painting on the eastern wall. Except the words “coming to Himalaya”, all words were not distinct.

It can be assumed that the old building in northeast corner of the pagoda might be a public rest house. Now, it has been fenced with brick wall. The double roof may be original. An old site of the chamber of Buddhist image can be seen at the end of entrance. The building was formed with 28 posts, and each post is 63 inches in diameter on the average. 13 inches high shale sculpture works were stuck to the post. Most of shale plaques might be plots from Rama Jataka. Some of shale statues were damaged.

A site for stage of Sangha can be seen in the north of the hall. It might be used as a building for Dhammathabin or donation ceremonies. Now, floors were reconstructed as part of main-

taining the building.

It is a nature that there remain tangible and intangible ancient objects in the countries with high culture. Scattering of ancient buildings and ancient objects in Myanmar show high culture of the country. Among them, ancient reliefs of Rama Jataka located in the precinct of Thakhuttanei Pagoda nobly prove sculptural works in Konbaung era despite some damage.

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self-field trips



Rama Jataka Shale Relief Museum

Defender Kyaw Zin Lwin joins Shan United for two-year contract

Myanmar national football team and Ayeyawady United right-back player Kyaw Zin Lwin, recently signed a two-year contract with Shan United, according to the team's statement.

Kyaw Zin Lwin started his domestic league career in Magwe FC and played till the end of the 2018 Myanmar National League season.

Next moved to the Ayeyawady United in 2019.

Kyaw Zin Lwin made his best assist for the Ayeyawady United and the team claimed the second-place position in 2019 and third-place position in the 2020 season respectively.

Consequently, Kyaw Zin Lwin was selected as a defender for the Myanmar national team.

Upon joining the Shan United, the Myanmar defender has expressed his feeling about moving to his new team.

"Some of my friends asked me why I made a decision to move to the Shan United as one of the greatest Myanmar defenders Ko David Htan is already there. I replied to them that I myself love challenges. I do respect Ko David, but I want to take challenges on the other hand. I'll try to be better, taking good knowledge and experience from him. Whether or not I'll be in the line-up is just

a part of the issue. On my part, I have to try and I will", Kyaw Zin Lwin said.

"When I bid farewell to Ayeyawady, I received offers from all the big teams, but I like the warmth of the people, the interest they showed in me and the respectable discussions – those are the reasons. The presence of head coach Han Win Aung attracts me to go there. The playing style that he explained to me would be a key role in my choice of this team. I think I can blend in it. The last reason is because of the training pitch. I really like the clubhouse with the training



Defender Kyaw Zin Lwin (middle) receives the Shan United jersey from the club authorities for his arrival. **PHOTO: SUFC**

pitch attached to it. You can do like to do training," he added. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Japan's Government to suspend athletes' coronavirus entry exemptions



TOKYO—Japan's government has told sports bodies it will temporarily suspend the current entry exemptions that allow foreign athletes to enter Japan in order to train and compete ahead of this summer's Tokyo Olympics, a source with knowledge of the matter said Thursday.

In principle, nonresident foreign nationals are prohibited from entry into Japan during the current state of emergency, in effect until Feb. 7. The move to suspend athletes' exemptions is in line with the government ending its exemption for business travelers. Japanese athletes will still be able to return, but they will no longer be exempt from the

14-day self-quarantine upon arrival and may not practice or compete during that time.

Nonresident foreign athletes and coaches with Japan's domestic leagues had been exempt from the entry restriction. They will now be prohibited from entering Japan and joining their teams. Pro soccer's J-League begins its season in February, while Nippon Professional Baseball's spring camps open on Feb. 1. Entry exemptions had been suspended for athletes coming from some areas that had imposed stricter border controls where new mutated variants of the coronavirus had been discovered.— Kyodo

A general view shows a countdown clock for the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo on July 23, 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Rashford credits Mourinho for greater penalty area 'savvy'

LONDON—Marcus Rashford said Thursday (Jan 14) that former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho had helped him become a more "savvy" striker in terms of winning penalties.

Following Premier League champions Liverpool's 1-0 defeat by Southampton earlier this month, a match where striker Sadio Mane was denied a spot-kick, Reds manager Jurgen Klopp said United had been given "more penalties in two years than I had in five-and-a-half years" in charge at Anfield.

But Rashford, during an

interview after he received the Football Writers' Association 2021 Tribute Award on Thursday, said the reason why United were getting plenty of penalties was down to their attack-minded approach rather than some sort of bias on the part of match officials.

"As a forward line, we want to go and score goals," Rashford said. "When you are making runs in behind or you are dribbling with the ball and if you see a challenge coming, you don't want to get tackled because you are looking at an opportunity to score a goal.— AFP

No special favours for virus-hit Andy Murray, Aussie health chiefs say

MELBOURNE—Health chiefs vowed Friday there will be no preferential treatment for five-time finalist Andy Murray, saying he must return a negative Covid-19 test if he wants to play the Australian Open.

The former world number

one was due to travel to Melbourne on one of a series of charter flights laid on by tournament organizers, but revealed on Thursday he had tested positive for the virus.

He is isolating at home in London, casting major doubt over

whether he will be able to play the opening Grand Slam of the year.

Britain's Press Association news agency said the three-time major winner, apparently in good health, was hoping to arrive in Australia at a later date.

But Victorian state health minister Martin Foley said the Scotsman won't be getting any special favours.

"In regards to Mr Murray, we've been clear from the start that anyone who tests positive is not able to be part of the programme coming into Melbourne and Australia," he told reporters.

"Mr Murray, and the other 1,240 people as part of the programme, need to demonstrate that if they're coming to Melbourne they have returned a negative test.—AFP



Britain's Andy Murray. **PHOTO: FRED DUFOUR/AFP**