

## NATIONAL

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## NATIONAL

Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) under construction for development of Naga mountain ranges

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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Sunday, 14 February 2021

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
State Administration Council

State Administration Council Law No (4/2021)

## Amendment of Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of the Citizens

2<sup>nd</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1382ME

13 February 2021

1. The State Administration Council enacts this law according to Article 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
2. This law shall be called the Amendment of Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of the Citizens.
3. The stipulations of Sections 5, 7 and 8 of the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of the Citizens shall be suspended in accordance with Article 420 of State Constitution.
4. This law shall be deemed to be effective only during the period when the State Administration Council is assigned to the State Power according to Article 419 of the State Constitution.

I hereby sign under Article 419 of the State Constitution.

Sd/ Min Aung Hlaing  
Senior General  
Chairman  
State Administration Council

## MoHS receives cash assistance for COVID-19 prevention

THE Ministry of Health and Sports received K300 million for COVID-19 prevention and control activities from Aung family lived in Pyay Avenue (2), Mayangon Township, yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the donation ceremony, Union Minister Dr Thet Khine Win said the first wave and the second wave of COVID-19 were overcome as well as the COVID-19 control measures were optimized with the participation of the people, volunteers, the staff from the Ministry of Health and Sports and donations from the generous donors.

He added the measures to prevent the coming waves by the Central Epidemiology Unit, the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination, the Standard Operation Procedure for relevant sectors to generate the socio-economic activities, keeping cash assistance at the relevant banks and money usage with the permission of the Central Committee without any waste.

After receiving the cash assistance, the Union Minister returned the certificate of honour and expressed words of thanks.—MNA

Union Minister Dr Thet Khine Win presents the certificate of honour to the donor on 13 February. **PHOTO: MNA**



"We guarantee the product is made from Arabica Coffee"

*Pyin Do Lwin*

## NANMYAING

(PURE ARABICA COFFEE)

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 STARMART Nine Mile Showroom-(9)Mile, Pyay Road, Yangon. Ph: 09 30860180, 01 9669713  
 STARMART MANDALAY Wholesale-Corner of 26<sup>th</sup> st and 66<sup>th</sup> st, Mandalay. Ph: 09 661702244



Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
State Administration Council  
State Administration Council Law No (3/2021)  
Fourth Amendment of the Ward or Village-Tract Administration Law  
2<sup>nd</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1382ME  
13 February 2021

1. The State Administration Council hereby enacts this Law according to Article 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
2. This Law shall be called the Fourth Amendment of the Ward or Village-Tract Administration Law.
3. The sub-section (g) of Section 13 of the Ward or Village-Tract Administration Law shall be substituted as follows:  
(g) receiving and granting the information of guest list for overnight guests from other wards or village-tracts, inspecting the guest list and taking action if failed to inform the guest list;
4. After sub-section (c) of Section 16, sub-section (d) shall be added as follows:  
(d) if it fails to carry out in accordance with sub-section (a), (b) and (c), the Township Administrator can assign a person to the duties of acting ward or village-tract administrators by seeking the permission of respective region or state administration councils or Nay Pyi Taw council.
5. Section 17 shall be substituted as follows:  
17. The person residing in the ward or village-tract shall inform the relevant Ward or Village-Tract Administrator if any of the following cases arises  
(a) coming and putting up as the overnight guest who is not listed in his family unit and is residing in other ward or village-tract.  
(b) departure of the guest who comes and puts up.
6. Section 27 shall be substituted as follows:  
27. Whoever fails to carry out duty contained in sections 17, 18 and 19 shall be punished with fine not exceeding ten thousand kyats. If default to pay the fine, he shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding seven days by the relevant court.
7. Subsections (b) and (c) of Section 28 shall be substituted as follows:  
(b) subsidy to those temporarily appointed in accordance with sub-section (c) or (d) of Section 16  
(c) lump-sum subsidy if he serves the entire term of duty efficiently;
8. Section 33 shall be substituted as follows:  
33. The Ward or Village-Tract Administrator shall not collect any currency in respect of guest list information.  
I hereby sign under Article 419 of the State Constitution.

Sd/ Min Aung Hlaing  
Senior General  
Chairman  
State Administration Council

Special Session of Human Rights Council on Myanmar held

AT the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a special session of the Human Rights Council on Myanmar was held on 12 February 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. During the session, the United Kingdom and the European Union jointly tabled a resolution on the current situation in Myanmar.

Before the submission of the draft resolution, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Ambassador U Myint Thu, made a statement and explained the present situation in Myanmar, including the assumption of the State responsibility by the Tatmadaw on 1 February 2021 in accordance with State Constitution (2008),

the policies of the State Administration Council and plans to be implemented during the period of State of Emergency. He also said that Myanmar will continue to adhere to the Independent, Active and Non-aligned Foreign Policy; uphold the principles of peaceful co-existence and engage with the United Nations towards lasting peace and stability and sustained development to the benefit of the people. Furthermore, he stated that Myanmar has never accepted a country specific resolution which is politicized and unbalanced. He added that such attempt can further complicate the prevailing situation in the country and hamper the prevalence of maintaining law



The special session of the Human Rights Council on Myanmar was held in Geneva on 12 February 2021.  
**PHOTO: MNA**

and order, peace and stability and the socio-economic development of the people. In this manner, Myanmar dissociated itself from the resolution. China, Russia, Venezuela, Bolivia and Philippines also dissociated themselves from the resolution. —MNA

Request to Public

1. Democracy practices have granted the public freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason for human rights, some persons are now under pressure, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnishing the image of democracy.
2. For preventing destructive actions against the stability of the State, the safety of the public and the rule of law, it is also required to take proper actions in line with the law.
3. All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of country and people.

# To foster the multiparty democracy expected by the people

Free and fair elections are fundamental to strengthen the democratic system. In my 2020 New Year Message to the country, I said that ‘the Year 2020 is an important year for the country. It is important to strengthen the multiparty democracy system this year with the holding of the general elections. For ensuring free and fair elections and for prioritizing the national interest sincerely in the politics, I said during the 3rd anniversary of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement on 15 October 2018 that ‘Nothing is as important as the ethnic affairs and the national interests, and only the politics with sincerity and fairness’.

During the 4th meeting of Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, held on 20 August 2020, I also said that the concept ‘no one is above the law’ in establishing the democratic system as a fundamental rule in laying the democratic foundation, and ‘no one or no organization is above the national interest in state-building and nation-building’. These concepts of the Tatmadaw are aimed to foster the multiparty democracy expected by the people.

*(Excerpt from the speech to the public made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 9 February 2021)*

## Announcement to the civil servants who fail to perform their duties for various reasons

1. Civil servants are the people who are working to make the whole state machinery function well. No matter how much the political, economic or government changes, civil servants must perform the duties to function the state machinery. They must abide by the rules and regulations regarding working hours, performance, and conduct in the workplace in accordance with the Civil Service Law and Employee Ethics. Those who breach the employee ethics and misconduct can be taken action in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Law. If an employee’s act or fail to serve is a possible offence, legal action will be taken.
2. Therefore, it is announced to the civil servants who fail to perform their duties for various reasons to return to work as soon as possible while urging employees to return to work.

## NOTICE TO INFORM

THE Myanmar Police Force has issued a statement saying to report about those who have been issued the arrest warrants, for peace and stability in the country.

The statement said that a state of emergency had been declared in the country since 1 February, 2021, in accordance with Article 417 of the 2008 State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and efforts are being made to ensure the rule of law and regular functioning of the state machinery. Meanwhile, Min Ko Naing (a) Paw Oo Tun, Kyaw Min Yu (a) Jimmy, Htwe Lin (a) Lin Lin, Innsein Aung Soe, Myo Yan Naung Thein, Eaint Poe U (a) Ei Pansalo and Maung Maung Aye have been charged under Section 505 (b) of the Penal Code in the relevant

courts for writing articles and speeches by using their popularity on social media that could harm the peace and order of the country, and the relevant courts have issued arrest warrants under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

As every citizen is responsible for the stability and peace of the country, if you find any fugitives mentioned above or if you have information about them, report to the nearest police station or call the telephone numbers issued in each state, region and Nay Pyi Taw and those who receive them will be taken action in accordance with the law.

## Public Announcement 8 February 2021

Local banks are providing daily services with helps in livelihoods and businesses of the people. Regular banking services are fundamental to economy of the country. The Central Bank of Myanmar is supervising the systematic operation of banking services in the country. People are requested to take part in this process for ensuring economic stability of the country.

Central Bank of Myanmar

## People pay homage at famous pagodas across Myanmar

PEOPLE paid homage at famous pagodas yesterday in Myanmar by following COVID-19 safety rules.

Famous pagodas are now opening across the nation starting from 8 February, and people could pay homage at these pagodas.

Pagoda has been closed off for more than 10 months since 9 April 2020 during COVID-19 pandemic.

People including Buddhist monks and nuns paid their special homage at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Maha Muni Pagoda in Mandalay, and Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

People can pay homage the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon at three times in the morning: 6 am to 7 am, 8 am to 9 am, and 10 am to 11 am, and three times in the afternoon: 1pm to 2 pm, 3 pm to 4 pm, and 5 pm to 6 pm respectively.—MNA



Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry  
Announcement No (2/2021)

2<sup>nd</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1382ME  
13 February 2021

1. The government has been conducting relief measures on taxation to help ease the pain for businesses affected by COVID-19 pandemic and made an exemption for the 2 per cent advance income tax on exports from 1.4.2020 to 31.1.2021.
2. There are still socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, and the exemption for the 2 per cent advance income tax on exports will be extended to 28 February 2021 according to the permission of the State Administration Council.

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

State Administration Council's Announcement

Some unscrupulous persons are putting various forms of pressures and posing threats to civil service personnel in performing their duties at present. The civil service personnel who have encountered such pressures and threats shall contact the following phone numbers. Strong legal actions will also be taken against those who make such pressures and threats.

Contact phone numbers	-067 412 168	-067 412 246	-067 412 388	-067 412 598	-067 412 539
	-067 412 222	-067 412 387	-067 412 444	-067 412 066	-067 412 540

Mandalay Region Administration Council's Announcement to Public

Some unscrupulous persons are putting various forms of pressures and posing threats to civil service personnel in performing their duties at present. The civil service personnel who have encountered such pressures and threats shall contact the following phone numbers. Strong legal actions will also be taken against those who make such pressures and threats.

Contact phone numbers	-02 403 9635	-02 403 6869	-09 797 144 144
	-02 403 7199	-02 403 6978	-09 694 740 311

Request to health workers

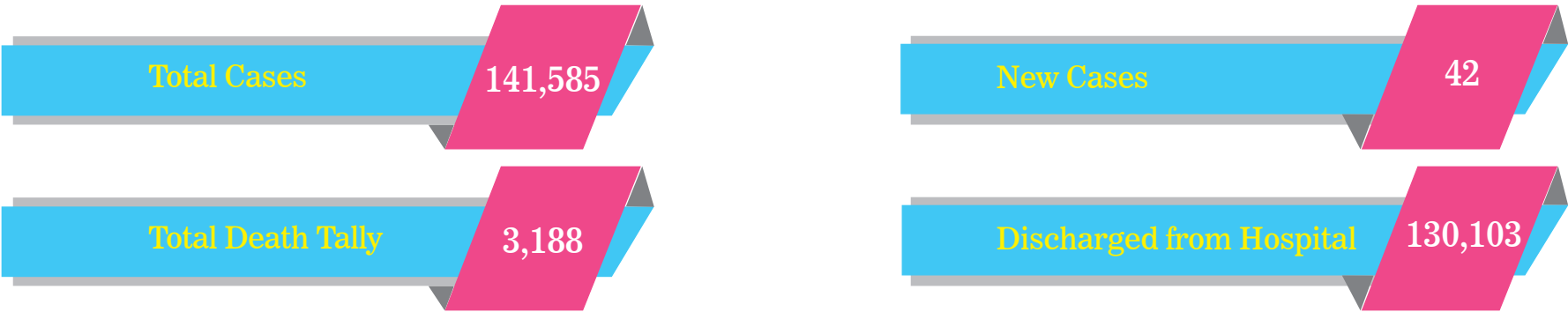
1. It is appreciated for the strenuous efforts of the medical doctors, nurses, medical experts and other health works at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports at the front-line in the fight against prevention, containment and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
2. As the vaccination programme of COVID-19 is being conducted for the public and the real-time healthcare services are required for the people, all the staff members at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports are strongly urged to return to their duties with taking the well-being of patients into consideration.

Ministry of Health and Sports  
8 February 2021

42 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 February, total figure rises to 141,585

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 141,585 after 42 new cases were reported on 13 February 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 3,188 died, 130,103 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 13 February 2021



Ministry of Health and Sports

# Healthcare services offered at Tatmadaw hospitals



TATMADAW hospitals from different states and regions are giving medical services to the people with support of physician volunteers, according to the Office of the Senior General (Army).  
A total of 7,454 outpatient, and 3,176 inpatients were transferred to the Tatmadaw hospitals in respective military headquarters as of yesterday from 5 February and doctors, nurses and healthcare workers are giving necessary treatment to those in need as well as facilitating the foods and places

for hospitalized patients.  
Among the patients, a total of 470 patients who were in need of major and minor surgeries have been given necessary operation, and other emergency patients are being treated specially by doctors and medical workers.  
The Office of the Commander-in-Chief has announced that people can have medical treatments at the nearest Tatmadaw hospitals if there are any medical difficulties at any time.—MNA

Commander Brig-Gen Saw Than Hlaing is providing foodstuffs to the patient. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

## Tatmadaw medical corps provide COVID-19 test for domestic air travellers

TATMADAW medical team from Dawei Battalion provided the COVID-19 medical tests to a total of 49 domestic air travellers flown from Dawei to Yangon yesterday.  
The Tatmadaw medical corps in collaboration with departmental officials have been providing COVID-19 tests, medical care to the positive patients and issuing COVID-19 health certificates to domestic air travellers in accordance with the COVID-19 health guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports at Dawei airport since 7 February, Tachilek airport since 8 February and Lashio airport since 9 February.  
The Tatmadaw is also opening temporary hospitals to provide daily medical care to civilians in respective townships, according to the report of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.—MNA



The Tatmadaw medical corps are seen testing a traveller for COVID-19 in Dawei yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

## Tatmadaw True News Information Team: Healthcare services offered at military hospitals

THE Tatmadaw True News Information Team released a statement on 4 February 2021 that healthcare services are offered to all the national people at the military hospitals.  
The statement said that some persons who are creating disturbances, aiming to destabilize the administrative mechanism and stability of the State, have incited Civil Disobedience Campaign through social networks, causing failure to perform duties among the health workers.  
Doctors have vowed during their convocation that “Health and well-being of the patients will be our own issues as the first priority ; I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity and in accordance with a good medical practice; I will serve my medical profession regardless of nationality, race and social status; and I will maintain the utmost respect for human life”.  
It is also advised all the health workers not to follow the incitement that can jeopardize the interest of country and people, and keep their professional vows to the public.  
The Tatmadaw has received the permission of the State Administration Council to solve the current healthcare problems of people across the nation by the military medics.  
Therefore, people can get proper medical treatments at the nearest military hospitals.—MNA

## CBM issues announcement on public rumours about monetary issue

THE Central Bank of Myanmar released an announcement on 3 February to wipe out rumours among the public about the monetary issue and possible closure of banks.  
The announcement said, “There were false rumours that K5,000 and K10,000 banknotes would be demonetized and banks would close in relation to the current situations in the country. It was also learnt that some people were worried because of the rumours and were reportedly withdrawing their money from the banks.  
The Central Bank of Myanmar has been working hard to stabilize the financial system, and the banks have been providing proper services in accordance with the rules and regulations.  
The general public can continue using the banknotes and banking services without any worries, and all the banks have been instructed to provide regular banking services.”—MNA



# Thanlyin local farmers grow more summer paddy, edible oil crops

FARMERS from Thanlyin Township grow monsoon paddy, summer paddy and edible oil crops annually. According to the summer paddy growers, this summer, the residents are cultivating more summer paddy because they have accessed the irrigated water in their township.

The Department of Agriculture in Thanlyin township targeted to grow 3,096 acres of summer paddy.

“I have cultivated 35 acres of summer paddy. I have been growing the summer paddy for three years. In the past two years, we have troubles to access irrigated water. Additionally, the summer paddy prices have dropped in the local market. I have also cultivated 37 acres of a green gram as

the winter crop. We have many agricultural inputs. This year, we hope to have access to sufficient amount of irrigated water and also expect that the price of summer paddy and green gram will be rising in the market,” said U Zaw Min, a local farmer from No 706, Group-B farmland, Bawt Thabyay Kan village, Thanlyin Town.

The department is also providing the awareness training in time to the local farmers from Thanlyin township regarding the multi-crop cultivation based on the cost-effective technology; how to access high-quality seeds; the farming techniques under GAP system; production of crops in line with the COVID-19 rules and regulations. —Thet Khaing (Thanlyin)/GNLM



The Department of Agriculture in Thanlyin township targeted to grow 3,096 acres of summer paddy.  
**PHOTO: THET KHAING (THANLYIN)**

## Forty-three villages access electricity in Magway Township



Recently about 43 villages have already access to the electricity under the NEP project.  
**PHOTO: MAGWAY WIN MAUNG**

UNDER the Phase-1 project of National Electrification Project (NEP), 43 villagers receive electricity in Magway township. On 13 February, two more villages -- Thabyay San North village and Thabyay San South village accessed the electricity.

Similarly, another two villages named Tamoh village and Yin Seik village have also access to electricity.

To access electricity in Thabyay San North village and Thabyay San South village,

1,200-foot long 400-volt power lines and 2.5-mile long 400-volt power lines were installed with the villagers’ contribution. And 11 kV power line, 11/0.4 kV and 100 kVA transformer for Thabyay San North village and 11/0.4 kV, 200 kVA two transformers for Thabyay San South village were installed under the NEP project.

Under the NEP project in Magway Township, Thabyay San North village is the 40th village that accesses the electricity. In contrast, the Thab-

ay San South village is the 41st village that accesses the electricity. There are 57 houses in Thabyay San North village and 420 houses in Thabyay San South village, said U Soe Htay Aung, the electrical engineer in Magway Township.

“Under the NEP project, a total of 51 villages will access to the electricity supply. Recently, about 43 villagers have already access to the electricity,” he added. —Magway Win Maung/GNLM

## Border trade using ITC exceeds K8.09 bln in Q1 this financial year

ACCORDING to the figures released by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar’s total border trade using Individual Trading Cards (ITC) exceeded K8.09 billion in the first three months of this financial year 2020-2021.

From 1 October to 31 December 2020, the ministry issued 17 individual trading cards. Export using ICT cards through land borders earned over K1.62 billion while its imports exceeded K6.46 billion.

During the period, Myawady border checkpoint recorded the highest ITC’s trade with over K5.33 billion.

Individual trades topped K737 million in the period from 21 November 2012 to 31 March 2013, exceeded K6.6 billion in the 2013-2014FY, reached K9.37 billion in the 2014-2015FY, stood at over K6.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, rose above K18.5 billion in the 2016-2017FY, touched

K45.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, K22.5 billion during the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), K59 billion in the 2018-2019FY and K43 billion in the 2019-2020FY.

The Trade Department has issued 1,792 cards, registering its trade value of over K220 billion so far since the 2012-2013FY intending to boost trade.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufactured goods and other goods to foreign trade partner countries. In contrast, the capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported into the country.

People in business can trade goods worth K3 million per day using ITCs, and the Trade Department has permitted the trade of up to K15 million per day over five days. —Zwe/GNLM

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Ads

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# WHO experts want ‘more data’ from China on possible early Covid cases

WHO experts voiced frustration Saturday over the lack of access to raw data during a recent mission to China to probe the pandemic’s origins, saying more was needed to detect possible early Covid cases.

“We want more data. We have asked for more data,” Peter Ben Embarek, who headed WHO’s expert mission to Wuhan, told AFP in an interview.

“There is a mix of frustration but also a mix of realistic

expectations in terms of what is feasible under which time frame,” he said, adding he hoped the requested data would be made available going forward.

The four-week WHO mission to China to uncover the origins of the coronavirus wrapped up earlier this week with no conclusive findings.

Experts believe the disease -- which has killed nearly 2.4 million people worldwide -- originated in bats and could have



The team members have had to walk a diplomatic tightrope during their mission. **PHOTO: AFP**

been transmitted to humans via another mammal.

But while the virus was first discovered in Wuhan in December 2019, it remains unclear if that is when and where the outbreak actually began.

The expert team determined that there were no signs of large clusters of Covid-19 in Wuhan or elsewhere prior to December that year, but did not rule out sporadic cases spreading before that. —AFP ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WHO expects ‘post-COVID condition’ to affect many globally

WORLD Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said here on Friday that given the scale of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO expects many people to be affected by “post-COVID condition,” also referred to as “long COVID.” Speaking at a virtual press conference, he also said that the best way to prevent this condition is to prevent COVID-19 in the first place. According to the WHO chief, earlier this week the WHO held a global meeting of patients, clinical experts and other stakeholders to advance the understanding of “long COVID”. —AFP ■

# At least 30 injured after 7.3-magnitude quake strikes off northeastern Japan

AT least 30 people were injured after an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.3 struck off Fukushima Prefecture in northeastern Japan late Saturday.

The quake was preliminarily measured with a magnitude of 7.1 and was later revised up to 7.3, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said.

At least 30 people were injured in Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, according to local authorities. The temblor occurred at around 11:08 pm local time (1408 GMT), with its epicentre at a latitude of 37.7 degrees north and a longitude of 141.8 degrees east, and at depth of 60 km, according to the JMA.

So far no tsunami warning has been issued. The quake logged Upper 6 in some parts of Fukushima Prefecture on the Japanese seismic intensity scale which peaks at 7. Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said



A strong earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1 hit off the coast of eastern Japan on Saturday, shaking buildings and triggering widespread blackouts, but there appeared to be no major damage and no tsunami warning was issued. **PHOTO: EPA/AFP**

about 950,000 households were left without electricity following the strong earthquake. The blackout affected 860,000 homes under the area covered by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. and 90,000 homes under Tohoku Electric Power Co., Kato said. —Xinhua ■

### Oil prices gain amid stimulus hopes

OIL prices advanced on Friday, bolstered by hopes for a U.S. stimulus bill. The West Texas Intermediate for March delivery added 1.23 U.S. dollars to settle at 59.47 dollars a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude for April delivery increased 1.29 dollars to close at 62.43 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange. Oil prices have rallied recently amid signs of tightening supplies. The U.S. crude benchmark logged a weekly rise of 4.6 percent, while Brent surged 5.2 percent for the week. —Xinhua ■

### Portugal prolongs flight suspensions with UK, Brazil

PORTUGAL on Saturday extended the suspension of flights from Britain and Brazil to March 1, in an attempt to check the spread of Covid variants first detected in those countries.

“In the context of the epidemiological situation... all flights from Brazil and the United Kingdom” are suspended, the interior ministry said.

On Friday Portugal extended border controls with neighbouring Spain until March 1. —AFP ■

# Equatorial Guinea suspends transport links due to lack of virus kits



Equatorial Guinea on Saturday said it was suspending air and boat links between its capital Malabo, located on an island, and its mainland due to a lack of Covid testing kits. **PHOTO: AFP**

EQUATORIAL Guinea on Saturday said it was suspending air and boat links between its capital Malabo, located on an island, and its mainland due to a lack of Covid testing kits.

Equatorial Guinea, a country with 1.3 million people, has officially recorded 5,663 cases of coronavirus, of which 87 have been fatal.

The economic capital Bata is located on the mainland and the suspended travel links will be a severe blow to the people of the oil-rich country, where the vast majority lives in grinding poverty.

The tiny state, ruled by 78-year-old President Teodoro Obiang Nguema for the past 41 years, scaled back a rigorously enforced range of restrictions in August.

“From Sunday February 14 until a date that will be decided later, all flights and boat crossings are suspended between Malabo and Bata and vice-versa because the Covid-19 testing kits have been depleted,” the state television said late Friday. —AFP ■



# Investing in post-harvest technologies is a must

WHILE bearing the brunt of market difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, many farmers counting losses due to market difficulties and extreme weather events caused by the climate change.

If they had post-harvest technologies or infrastructures, they could store their produce for a long time and sell when the situation stabilizes and they could harvest their products in time before unseasonal weather came to them.

Hence, the private sector should seize this business opportunity and to invest in post-harvest handling technologies including cold rooms, warehouses and many post-harvest techniques.

Getting access to required technology which can increase their production and can ensure suitable prices for their produce in the market is also one of the rights of the farmers.

Climate change causes crop damage yearly in Myanmar and thus the Agriculture Research Department has developed 25 hybrid strains which are climate-resilient crops suitable to the soil of the nation.

In addition to growing of paddy as a main food, Myanmar is a country of growing such edible oil plant as peanut, sesame, sunflower and varieties of pea; such kitchen crops as various kinds of vegetables; and such perennial crops as mango, rubber and coffee. The post-harvest technology should focus on all crops grown in our soil.

Post-harvest infrastructure, such as storage and distribution facilities, is vital to a farmers' market, according to the current market-oriented economic system. To implement the farmers' market system, we need time and space to improve such facilities and to encourage practices which can enable a sustainable market situation.

Meanwhile, it's worth noting that youth who have been engaged in paddy works are searching green pastures in urban areas or going abroad for their better future. As a result the strength of workforce in agriculture sector decrease facing bad consequences as rising in wages, failing to cultivate in time, increasing in loss and wastage and decreasing in production.

Commitments to get rid of these kinds of loss and wastages should be made by traders, experts and investors at home and abroad.

It's unacceptable for farmers to continue incurring such losses after working so hard in a bid to improve their lives.

■■■

## COVID: Using AstraZeneca vaccine is 'right thing to do' for everyone, says WHO expert panel

A World Health Organization (WHO) expert panel countered concerns over the efficacy of the AstraZeneca COVID vaccine on Wednesday, insisting that "it's the right thing to do" to use it - even in countries where variants had surfaced.

“Even if you have the circulation of a variant in a country, there is no reason that we see for now, not to use the AstraZeneca vaccine as indicated, to be able to reduce the levels of severe disease in that population”, said Dr Alejandro Cravioto, Chair of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE).

The development follows the recent release of data from a study in South Africa indicating that the AstraZeneca jab provided little protection against a variant of the new coronavirus among older people.

At a press conference in Geneva, SAGE Executive Secretary, Dr Joachim Hombach, described that study as “relatively modest”, while Dr Cravioto added that few over 65s had taken part in it.

Dr Kate O'Brien, WHO's head of immunization, said that the South African study's findings were “inconclusive, albeit demonstrating a low efficacy against mild and moderate disease”.

### Absence of data

Most important was the “absence of evidence from that trial over whether the AZ product has efficacy against severe disease,



The coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca is already being administered in the UK. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD/JOHN CAIRNS

hospitalisation and death”, she said, “and that is the outcome of most interest and most impact for early roll-out of vaccines”.

From research into the new coronavirus's response to vaccines in trials so far, Dr O'Brien explained that the highest impact had been among the most poorly patients.

“For all of the vaccines there is a gradient of response”, she said. “The highest response is against the most severe disease and somewhat lower efficacy for moderate and then further down for milder disease...this is not unique to coronavirus vaccine.”

### No upper age limit

The vaccine should be administered in two doses to people over 18 years old “without any upper age limit”, Dr Cravioto said, adding that the “best” interval between the first and second doses was eight to 12 weeks, to ensure an increased immune response.

Although the vaccine is “safe”, the SAGE Chair said that owing to a lack of available data, it was not yet possible to make a recommendation about whether the vaccine should be given to all pregnant or breastfeeding women.

That decision should be taken

on an individual basis by a general practitioner, he added.

And because of a lack of available vaccines and the need to continue limiting the potential for the virus to spread, Dr Cravioto advised that international travellers should not be given the jab.

### No time to lose

Urging countries to use the AstraZeneca vaccine - particularly those for whom it would be their sole protection against the virus - WHO Chief Scientist, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, insisted that there was no time to lose.

“The vast majority of coun-

tries that are still waiting to introduce a vaccine - and this vaccine may be the first one - certainly the benefits will far outweigh the risks.”

Dr Swaminathan also issued a call for greater genomic monitoring of COVID-19 transmission in initiatives including the Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative.

“In many other countries the situation may be that with very limited sequencing they've been able to detect this variant, but they don't know the spread. And therefore, they're very cautious in making decisions based on very limited data.”

To date, there have been 106,555,206 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 2,333,446 deaths, reported to WHO.

### Vaccine solidarity call

In a related development, the heads of the WHO and UN Children's Fund UNICEF on Wednesday made an urgent appeal for vaccine solidarity.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Henrietta Fore called on leaders “to look beyond their borders and employ a vaccine strategy that can actually end the pandemic and limit variants”.

SOURCE: AFP

## No end to pandemic without equal vaccine access: experts

DEVELOPING new Covid-19 vaccines will fail to end the pandemic unless all countries receive doses in a fast and fair manner; disease experts warned Saturday.

As several nations consider implementing vaccine passports when international travel resumes, the authors of an open letter published in the Lancet medical journal said vaccine stockpiling in wealthier countries would only prolong the global health emergency.

They warned that “vaccine

nationalism” could leave the Covax initiative aimed at getting vaccines to low- and middle-income countries facing a huge dosage shortfall for several years to come.

“The stark reality is that the world now needs more doses of COVID-19 vaccines than any other vaccine in history in order to immunise enough people to achieve global vaccine immunity,” said lead author Olivier Wouters from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

“Unless vaccines are distributed more equitably, it could be

years before the coronavirus is brought under control at a global level.”

Despite there being more than two dozen Covid-19 vaccines either in development or approved for use, lower income countries still have enormous logistical challenges to procure immunisations and deliver them to populations.

These include a lack of funds to purchase vaccines, as well as poor infrastructure to transport and store them - especially since the mRNA vaccines on the market

currently need to be kept ultra cold throughout their delivery.

And despite unprecedented public and private investment in vaccine development and procurement, Covax estimates it will need an additional \$6.8 billion in 2021 to secure supplies for 92 developing nations.

Based on available sales figures, the authors said that rich nations representing 16 per cent of the global population had already secured 70 per cent of vaccine doses - enough to inoculate every one of their own citizens several



The authors of an open letter published in the Lancet medical journal said vaccine stockpiling in wealthier countries would only prolong the global health emergency. PHOTO: NOAH SEELAM/AFP/FILE

times over.

“Securing large quantities of vaccines in this way amounts to countries placing widespread vaccination of their own populations ahead of the vaccination of

Of the 128 million doses administered so far, more than three quarters of vaccinations have been in just 10 of the wealthiest nations, they said.

This is a “self-defeating strategy” that will cost lives and livelihoods, the UN officials said, before warning that it would also give the virus the chance “to mutate and evade vaccines”, while also undermining economic recovery.

So that vaccine rollouts can begin in all countries of the world in the first 100 days of 2021, the WHO and UNICEF chiefs said it was imperative that health workers who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic in lower and middle income settings should be protected first.

They also called for the COVID response initiative known as Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT) to be fully funded, to help developing countries to deploy vaccines.

If fully funded, the ACT Accelerator could return up to \$166 for every dollar invested, the UN officials maintained.

SOURCE: AFP

**Myanmar Daily Weather Report**  
(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 13 February 2021)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the South Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.  
**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 14 February 2021:** Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions and Northern Shan, Chin, Kayin, Mon states and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.  
**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.  
**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.  
**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 February 2021:** Generally fair weather.  
**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 February 2021:** Partly cloudy.  
**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 February 2021:** Generally fair weather.

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## France, Germany, Britain urge Iran to stop production of uranium metal in violation of nuclear deal

FRANCE, Germany and Britain on Friday urged Iran to stop producing uranium metal in violation of the 2015 nuclear deal, according to a statement released by the French foreign ministry.

The three European countries (E3) noted “with grave concern” the International Atomic Energy Agency’s report in which it confirmed that Iran was producing uranium metal in violation of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“We reiterate that Iran has no credible civilian justification for these activities, which are a



The UK, France and Germany condemned Iran’s decision to produce uranium metal, which they said was contrary to Iran’s commitments to the international community. **PHOTO: AFP**

key step in the development of a nuclear weapon,” the statement read, adding that Iran, under the JCPOA, “committed

not to engage in producing or acquiring uranium metal or to conduct research and development on uranium metallurgy for

15 years.”

“We strongly urge Iran to halt these activities without delay and not to take any new non-compliant steps on its nuclear programme. In escalating its non-compliance, Iran is undermining the opportunity for renewed diplomacy to fully realize the objectives of the JCPOA,” the three countries said.

Iran said in early January that it was starting to produce 20 per cent enriched uranium, as part of the country’s Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions which was approved by parliament in December 2020.—**AFP ■**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**UN concerned about 1.3 mln people facing severe hunger in Madagascar**

HUMANITARIANS at the United Nations said on Friday they are seriously concerned about the 1.3 million people in the southern and eastern parts of Madagascar facing severe hunger in a “rapidly deteriorating food situation”. Singling out southern Madagascar, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the area is facing its worst drought in 10 years and the third drought in a row. People have minimal access to essential services. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, significant rainfall deficits in the Grand Sud region have led to a decline in the area planted with staple foods and will likely compromise food production this year,” OCHA said in a release. — **Xinhua ■**

**Philippine leader demands U.S. “pay” to keep visiting forces pact**

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte demanded on Friday that the United States “pay” if it wants his country to continue a visiting forces agreement with Washington.

The president’s remarks, made during an address at an air force base in the suburbs of the capital Manila, were likely made in half-jest in response to a perceived lack of military cooperation between the two longtime defence allies, but the words could be taken negatively in the United States. Duterte said that even though he asked former U.S. President Donald Trump for the United States to provide the Philippines with guided missiles, nothing has come of it. “I’d like to put on notice if there is an American agent here that from now on, you want the visiting forces agreement done, you have to pay,” the president said. The Duterte government served notice to the United States in February last year that it intends to cancel the pact. It has since postponed the decision twice. — **Kyodo ■**

## Cypriots protest against corruption, virus restrictions



Cypriot protesters clash with police in Nicosia. **PHOTO: AFP**

CYPRriot police on Saturday used water cannon and tear gas to break up a rare protest in the capital, as hundreds demonstrated against government corruption and coronavirus restrictions.

Protesters, including families with children and young men and women in black hoodies and balaclavas, moved through central Nicosia, blocking traffic on several major streets, an AFP

journalist said. Some beat drums and shouted at dozens of police in riot gear, while others held large black banners that read in Greek, “We have to go onto the streets to fight fear”.

Police responded with water cannon and tear gas to break up the gathering, which is prohibited under coronavirus restrictions.

One protester was seen lying on the ground suffering from the effects of tear gas.

Protest organizers on social media had called for the protest to say “enough” to “state authoritarianism”, “the failed management of the pandemic” and “corruption”.

Cyprus in January unveiled a series of measures to tackle corruption, months after alleged

abuses were uncovered in a controversial “golden passports” scheme for foreign investors.

Nicosia had long faced pressure from Brussels to reform the scheme over concerns it may have helped organised crime gangs infiltrate the European Union.

“The government has lost legitimacy after the passport scandal and they are using the pandemic as a reason to stop protests,” Andreas, 26, a lawyer and part of the organizers’ legal team who declined to provide his surname, told AFP.

Cyprus has begun cautiously easing its national lockdown following a decline in the spread of Covid-19 infections that peaked after Christmas.—**AFP ■**

## India’s domestic flights reach highest since resumption after COVID-19 outbreak

INDIA’S Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Saturday that Feb. 12 recorded the highest number of passengers on domestic flights since the resumption of the services.

The number of domestic passengers on the day rose to 297,102 on 2,349 flights, the highest since the resumption of domestic flights on May 25 last year, a statement issued by the Civil Aviation Ministry quoted Puri as saying. The minister said with air travel emerging as a preferred mode of travel due to safety, efficiency and time saving, the numbers are almost touching pre-COVID-19 levels. The total flight movements of Feb. 12 were 4,697, and the total number of footfalls on airports was 593,819, the minister said. Domestic flight operations had been suspended in India since March 24 last year in wake of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, before being resumed on May 25, 2020. — **Xinhua ■**



India’s Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Saturday that Feb. 12 recorded the highest number of passengers on domestic flights since the resumption of the services. **PHOTO: AFP**



# Iran’s Rouhani warns of virus ‘fourth wave’

IRAN’S President Hassan Rouhani warned Saturday of a Covid-19 “fourth wave” as cases rise in certain areas of the Middle Eastern country hardest hit by the pandemic. “This is a warning for all of us,” Rouhani said in televised remarks.

He said some cities in the southwestern province of Khuzestan were now “red” -- the highest on Iran’s colour-coded risk level -- after weeks of low alert levels across the country.

“This means the beginning of moving towards the fourth wave. We all have to be vigilant to prevent this,” Rouhani



Iranians wearing protective masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic, leave a bus in the capital Tehran, on Dec 30, 2020. PHOTO /AFP

added. The country of more than 80 million people has lost close to 59,000 lives out of more than 1.5 million cases of Covid infection. —AFP

# Moderna wants to pack 50% more Covid vaccine per vial



Some ten percent of Americans have so far received at least one Covid vaccine dose, with Moderna accounting for just under half the number. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

US biotech firm Moderna said Friday it was seeking clearance with regulators around the world to put 50 per cent more coronavirus vaccine into each of its vials

as a way to quickly boost current supply levels. The company issued a statement after The New York Times first reported the US Food and

Drug Administration had already cleared it to increase levels by 40 per cent.

“In order to better maximize resources as well as maximize opportunities to deliver more doses into each market faster, Moderna has proposed filling vials with up to 15 doses of vaccine versus the previous 10 doses,” a spokesperson said in a statement to AFP.

The spokesperson added the company was engaging in discussions with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and authorities in other countries, and the increased level of doses wouldn’t require different vials to

those currently in use.

“Any resulting change would be subject to final approval from the various regulatory authorities. Implementation of any such changes would be expected to be completed in approximately a two- to three-month period,” it said.

Citing sources close to the matter, the Times reported that the FDA had agreed to Moderna using 14 doses per vial, compared to the previous 10.

This would require retooling of production lines that would take less than ten weeks, or before the end of April, the newspaper said. —AFP ■

# Cambodia approves emergency use of China’s Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine

CAMBODIA officially approved the emergency use of China’s Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine, the country’s Health Minister Mam Bunheng said on Friday.

“Taking into account of the pandemic of COVID-19, with a view to protecting life and health of Cambodian people, the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia has decided to grant Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine for the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) in Cambodia, he said in a statement.

Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine has been used safely in China

and other countries, the minister added.

The EUA of the vaccine will take into effect immediately, he said.

On Feb. 4, Cambodia also approved the emergency use of China’s Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine, saying that it is used safely in China and other countries.

The Southeast Asian nation kicked off an anti-COVID-19 inoculation drive on Feb. 10, days after receiving the first batch of Sinopharm vaccine from China. —AFP ■

# Oil tankers catch fire, gun shots heard in Islam Qala port in W. Afghanistan

SEVERAL oil and liquid gas tankers caught fire and gunshots were heard in the customs office of the dry port of Islam Qala that connects Afghanistan to Iran on Saturday, provincial government spokesman Jilani Farhad said.

The fire devoured numerous oil tankers and damaged some other areas, the official said.

The provincial government has ordered the local fire brigade to the scene and has also sought help from the NATO-led Resolute Support

(RS) mission to assist local authorities in extinguishing the fire, Farhad added.

Farhad did not say whether the incident was a terrorist act, saying that investigation could determine the reason.

Herat Provincial Governor Wahid Qatali, according to local media, has sought the support of Iran in fighting the fire to save traders’ goods stranded in the area.

Islam Qala is the biggest dry port that links landlocked Afghanistan to Iran.—Xinhua

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Portugal prolongs Covid border controls with Spain till March

PORTUGAL said Friday it will extend border controls with neighbouring Spain until March 1, after imposing the restrictions to try to curb rampaging Covid-19 infections.

The measures introduced in late January involve controls at a number of crossing points and limit cross-border traffic, the government said in a statement. They do allow for the flow of goods and emergency services and for people living near the border to pass from one country to the other.

Portuguese nationals and those with the right to reside in the country will also be allowed to return from Spain, and foreigners will be allowed to leave. —AFP ■

### Nigeria mobile court hands out fines for mask violations

AUTHORITIES in Nigeria’s capital Abuja have established an outdoor mobile court in an effort to prosecute individuals and institutions violating rules imposed to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

Face masks are compulsory in public spaces and social distancing is advised across the country, but these rules are rarely observed. Since early February, the Abuja Covid-19 task force has prosecuted violators at a court set up on Eagle Square, steps away from the Supreme Court and National Assembly.

“I think today we had about 46 people, three were minors,” Attah Ikharo, chairman of the task force said on Wednesday.

Punishments can include community service and even jail time. President Muhammadu Buhari signed a new law in January prescribing a six months jail sentence for those disobeying Covid-19 guidelines. —AFP ■



# Draghi sworn in as Italian PM

FORMER European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi was formally sworn in as Italy's new prime minister on Saturday, against the backdrop of the deadly coronavirus pandemic and a crippling recession.

The appointment of the 73-year-old known as "Super Mario" capped weeks of political instability for the country still in the grips of the health crisis that has killed more than 93,000 people.

"I swear to be loyal to the Republic," recited Draghi, as he stood before President Sergio Mattarella in the ornate presidential palace in a ceremony broadcast live on television.

Members of his new cabinet, who include technocrats, veteran politicians and ministers held over from the previous government, each took the oath of office.

Draghi was parachuted in by Mattarella after the previous centre-left coalition under premier Giuseppe Conte collapsed,

leading Italy rudderless at a critical time.

He spent the last 10 days assembling a broad-based coalition and on Friday night formally accepted the post of premier in a meeting with Mattarella, after which he publicly revealed the new cabinet for the first time.

On Wednesday, Draghi will be presented to the Senate, the upper house of parliament, followed by the lower Chamber of Deputies on Thursday for a confidence vote that will give the final official blessing to his government.

"Break a leg," read the headline on La Stampa daily Saturday, as an Ipsos poll in the Corriere della Sera daily showed that 62 per cent of Italians supported Draghi.

## Coalition, for now?

Draghi has the support of a rainbow coalition ranging from leftists to Matteo Salvini's far-right League.

It includes the populist Five



Mario Draghi will be sworn as Italy's new prime minister on Saturday, and will quickly face a raft of challenges. PHOTO: AFP

Star Movement (M5S), the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) and Italia Viva -- who made up the previous government and

then fell out over the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

M5S, the biggest party in parliament which began life as

an anti-establishment movement, was split over whether to support a government led by an unelected technocrat.—AFP ■

## Peru health minister resigns over ex-president vaccine scandal: TV

PERU'S health minister resigned Friday, state TV reported, amid a growing scandal over claims that former President Martin Vizcarra was vaccinated against Covid-19 before the jab was available to the public.

Pilar Mazzetti -- who had served as the country's minister of health since July last year -- has presented her letter of resignation to Presi-

dent Francisco Sagasti, state television network TV Peru reported. The government is yet to formally confirm she is stepping down.

Her successor is due to be sworn in Saturday, local media said, and will be the South American nation's fifth health minister since the pandemic first emerged in the country 11 months ago.

They will take office as the

country continues to be hammered by a second wave of Covid-19 -- hospitals are overrun with more than 14,100 coronavirus patients and have reported a lack of oxygen to treat those with breathing problems.

Peru only began its immunization program on Tuesday, two days after receiving 300,000 vaccine doses from state-owned Chinese company Sinopharm. —AFP ■



Peru's Health Minister stepped down Friday, amid a growing scandal over claims that former President Martin Vizcarra was vaccinated against Covid-19. PHOTO: PERUVIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH/AFP/FILE

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Trump impeachment trial nears end with verdict expected

THE US Senate is expected to deliver a verdict in Donald Trump's impeachment trial this weekend after his lawyers argued late Friday that the former president bears no responsibility for an attack by supporters on Congress after he failed to win reelection. Defence lawyers wrapped up their presentation in just three hours, accusing Democrats of persecuting Trump.

This followed two days of evidence from Democratic impeachment managers, centred around harrowing video footage of the mob assault against the Capitol on January 6.

The Senate is due to reconvene Saturday at 10 am (1500 GMT) for debate on whether to allow witness testimony, then closing arguments. Expectations are that a verdict could be voted the same day, with indications so far that Democrats will not get enough Republican support for a conviction. —AFP ■

### Mexico's president welcomes US cancellation of constructing border wall

MEXICAN President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on Friday welcomed the decision by his US counterpart Joe Biden to cancel the construction of a border wall separating the two countries, calling it a "good" decision.

Lopez Obrador also welcomed Biden's proposal to set up a visa system for Mexican and Central American migrants. Both measures are among Biden's first actions since taking office in January.

"It is an issue that we celebrate because the wall has been under construction for some time ... so it is a historical step," Lopez Obrador told reporters during his usually daily press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City. —Xinhua ■



# Exports from 6 ASEAN states only down 2.2% in 2020 despite pandemic



File photo of shipping containers at Tokyo Port in December 2019. (Kyodo)zoom photoFile photo of shipping containers. **PHOTO: KYODO**

EXPORTS from six Southeast Asian countries fell 2.2 per cent in 2020 from a year earlier to a combined \$1.35 trillion, a relatively small decline despite the coronavirus pandemic hitting the region and other parts of the world, according to data from the Japan External Trade Organization.

Of the six, only Vietnam posted an in-

crease in exports for the year, up 7.0 per cent to \$282.66 billion, with a 5.2 per cent drop to Japan more than offset by a 25.7 per cent rise to the United States and an 18.0 per cent expansion to China, JETRO said, citing Hanoi's customs authorities.

However, Vietnam's growing trade surplus with Washington and Hanoi's interventions

in the foreign exchange market prompted the U.S. Treasury Department last December to label the country as a currency manipulator for the first time.

Among the five other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines logged a 10.1 per cent fall in exports in 2020, followed by a contraction of 6.0 per cent in Thailand,

4.1 per cent in Singapore and 2.6 per cent each in Malaysia and Indonesia, according to JETRO, referring to statistics from respective countries.

The combined trade surplus of the six ASEAN members more than triple to \$133.66 billion, as easing energy prices and shrinking domestic demand led to steeper declines in imports than exports.—Kyodo

# Will money laundering laws end art world's culture of secrecy?

WHEN a Botticelli painting went under the hammer last month at Sotheby's in New York for \$92 million, it was assumed the buyer was a Russian oligarch since the bidding was done by an adviser to wealthy Russians.

But as art journalist Scott Reyburn told "The Week in Art" podcast, it's not always that simple: "Sometimes very wealthy collectors use telephone bidders that imply a certain nationality just to guarantee their own anonymity... to throw us off the scent," he said.

The ultra-wealthy prize that sort of confidentiality, and it also helps build the mystique and theatre in which auction houses like to drape themselves.

Lately, however, regulators in Europe and the United States are out to spoil the fun, arguing that this culture of secrecy is ripe for exploitation by criminals.

New anti-money-laundering rules mean art and antiquities dealers in Britain and the EU must now record the actual beneficiaries of their sales for the first time. US Congress approved similar legislation last month that should be in place by 2022.

Some high-profile cases over the past decade seem to justify the clamp-down, such as disgraced Brazilian financier Ede-mar Cid Ferreira buying an \$8-million Jean-Michel Basquiat painting and shipping it to a New York storage facility with a \$100 label.

Or fugitive Malaysian Jho Low, accused of spending some \$137 million on art with money he "borrowed" from his country's 1MDB sovereign wealth fund.

But some in the art market fear the new approach means they are being essentially hung out as bait for criminals.—AFP



Botticelli's 'Young Man Holding a Roundel' was sold in New York last month for \$92 million. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

# Maryland becomes first US state to tax digital ad revenue



Facebook and Google dominate the digital advertising market, bringing in billions in revenue annually. **PHOTO: AFP**

MARYLAND on Friday (Feb 12) became the first US state to tax digital ad money taken in by Internet giants.

Legislators in the state Senate mustered

enough votes to override a veto by Republican Governor Larry Hogan, who had sought to derail the tax on revenue taken in from online ads shown in Maryland.

"It's all about taxes and no results," Mr Hogan said in a video posted at Twitter. "This is not the end of this fight, this is the only the beginning. It cannot and it will not stand."

The tax is expected to be challenged in court.

Supporters of the tax, money from which is to be funnelled into education, touted its passage as a victory for schools that have gone underfunded while Internet firms have raked in fortunes from targeted ads.

Mr Hogan vetoed the Bill last year, con-

tending it would raise taxes on people already struggling due to the pandemic.

A tax bite of up to 10 per cent would be taken from the portion of digital advertising revenue resulting from Internet use in the state.

"Maryland will become the first state in the country to make sure big tech pays their fair share while making billions of dollars a year using our personal data to sell digital ads," state senator Bill Ferguson said in a Facebook post supporting the Bill.—AFP

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# Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) under construction for development of Naga mountain ranges

By Swe Oo Wai  
Translated by  
Than Tun Aung

THE government is striving for ensuring smooth transportation in hilly areas of the country. As priority is being given to the construction of roads and bridges not only for local ethnic people but for their regions, gradual improvement can be seen there. Currently, Chindwin

Bridge (Htamanthi) is being built to link the Naga area and the mainland of the country. Construction Group (2) of the Ministry of Construction is taking responsibilities for building Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) in Homalin Township of Hkamti District in upstream Chindwin area of

Sagaing Region. Stakes were driven for the building of the bridge on 19 January 2021 to launch the bridge project. The facility will link Htamanthi and Yinma villages in Homalin Township. Upon completion, local people will have easy access to the mainland of the country.

“Thanks to Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi), local people from the Naga area can drive throughout the route to the mainland of the country by car. The bridge will fulfil the basic requirement of the local people for regional development and transportation,” said U Myo Nyunt, Pyithu Hlut-taw representative of Homalin Township at the stake driving ceremony. Local people are pleasure with construction of the bridge.

In fact, Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) is bridging the Naga Self-Administered Zone and the mainland of the country. The project was launched with K33,000 million of the Union budget in 2020-21 fiscal year. It is necessary to take more than two years for construction of the bridge which will be 802 metres long and 9.4 metres wide.

At a time when the bridge is completed, goods and products from Naga area can be sent to Monywa, Mandalay and other major cities directly. As transportation will be smooth and swift all the year-round, the bridge will contribute much to improvement of health, economic and social lives of the local people as well as the development of tourism industry of the region.

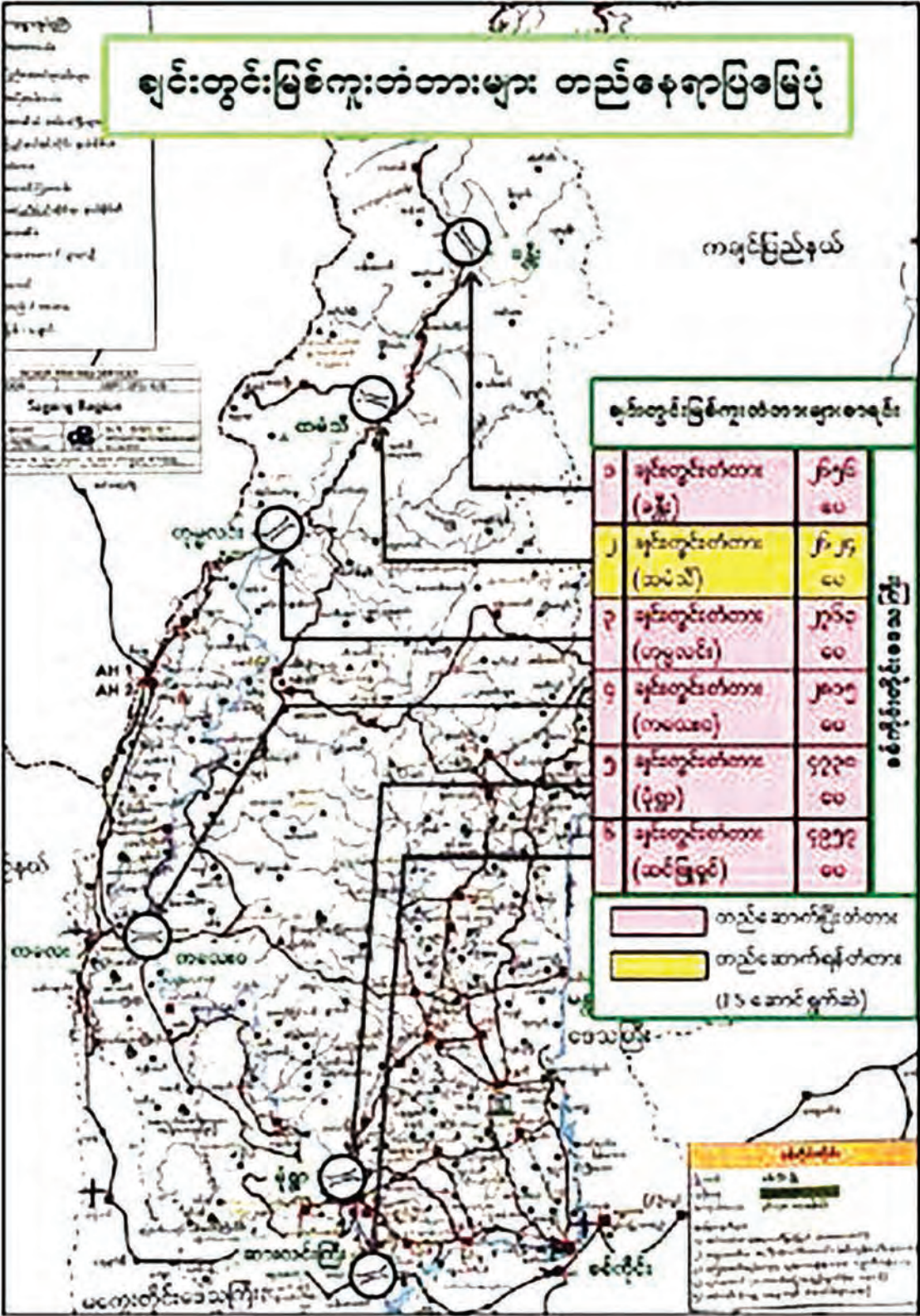
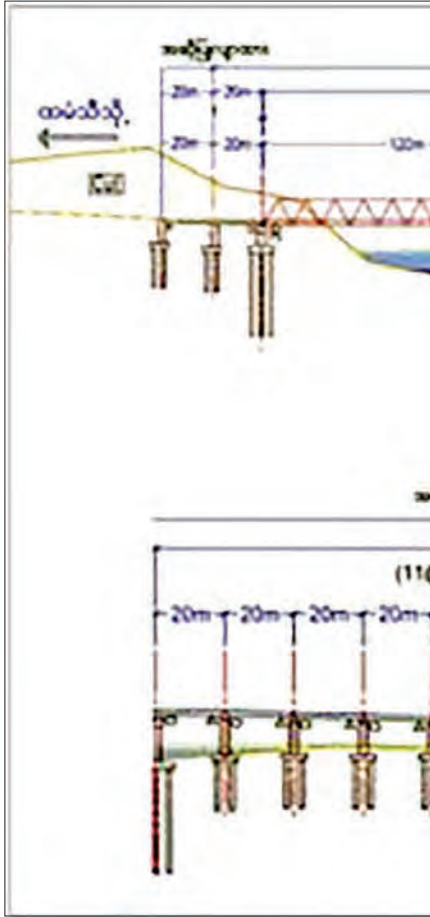
The areas in Naga upstream of Chindwin River in Sagaing Region were difficult in transport. Moreover, streaming of Chindwin was a great barrier and challenge for the local people. Chindwin River, more than 750 miles long, flows from the north to the south, streaming into Ay-

eyawady River near Myingyan. Thanks to the bridge, local people will have the opportunities to overcome the challenges in the development of the region due to hindrances caused by Chindwin River.

Indeed, four bridges have been built crossing Chindwin River. They are 2,656 feet long Chindwin Bridge (Hkamti), 2,763 feet long Chindwin Bridge (Homalin), 2,815 feet long Chindwin Bridge (Kalewa) and 4,730 feet long Chindwin Bridge (Monywa). The 2,624 feet long Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi), which is under construction, is the fifth facility of its kinds.

Really, the bridges built crossing Chindwin River in Sagaing Region help undertake the tourism industry and regional development tasks. As Chindwin River passes through Htamanthi wildlife sanctuary and Hukaung Valley Tiger Sanctuary, if all the bridges have been completed across Chindwin River, various types of tourism industry would have secured improvement with momentum. Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) will create smooth transportation facilities for the travellers bound for Htamanthi wildlife sanctuary.

Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) under construction is located between Chindwin Bridge (Hkamti) and Chindwin Bridge (Homalin). The facility links milepost 247/5 on Thet-keikyin-Phaungpyin-Homalin-Hkamti road and Htaman-









## ONE Championship: Fists of Fury event set to launch on 26 Feb

A special event of the ONE Championship named “Fists of Fury” featuring bouts of world-class fighters will be held on 26 February at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore.

There will be a total of six fights: four men’s bouts and two women’s bouts of women fighters.

In the main card of the event or Men’s Flyweight Kickboxing World Championship, Ilias Ennahachi of Netherlands will fight against Superlek Kiatmoo of Thailand.

In the Men’s Featherweight Kickboxing bout, Giorgio Petrosyan of Italy will take

on Davit Karia of Georgia.

In the Men’s Flyweight Kickboxing bout, Rodtang Jitmuangnon of Thailand will fight with Alejandro Rivas of Spain.

In the Men’s Bantamweight Kickboxing fight, Hiroki Akimoto of Japan will face Zhang Chenglong of China.

In the Women’s Strawweight Muaythai fight, Wondergirl Fairtex of Thailand will fight with Jackielou Buntan of the United States.

In the Women’s Atomweight fight, Victoria Lee of Singapore will take on Sunisa Srisen of Thailand.



PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

The ONE Championship Fights will be broadcast live free on ONE Super Application and ONE Championship YouTube Channel, according to the statement with the ONE

Championship. The first two fights will also be streamed live on ONE Championship Facebook page, officials stated.—GNLM



Casper Ruud became only the second Norwegian to make the last 16 of a Grand Slam Saturday, emulating his father. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Like father, like son: Ruud makes Slam last 16

MELBOURNE— Casper Ruud became only the second Norwegian to make the last 16 of a Grand Slam Saturday, emulating his father Christian who made the grade at the Australian Open in 1997.

The 22-year-old outlasted Radu Albot 6-1, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 to book a fourth-round Melbourne Park clash with Russian Andrey Rublev and said he was proud to match his dad’s achievement.

“He was happy. He’s my main coach, so it’s also an achievement for him. Now he has done it himself and as a coach,” he said.

“So I think he’s happy that I’ve been able to not beat his record yet, but at least do the same as he did.

“That was kind of the last inch he had on me when it comes to Norwegian records in tennis,” he added.—AFP ■

## Bayern Munich win race to sign Leipzig defender Upamecano - reports

BERLIN—France defender Dayot Upamecano will join Bayern Munich from Bundesliga rivals RB Leipzig next season, according to reports Friday. Both magazine Kicker and daily Bild say Bayern will pay 43 million euros (\$52 million) to activate the buy-out clause in Upamecano’s Leipzig contract, which runs until 2023.

European champions Bayern appear to have fought off competition from Liverpool and Chelsea, who also wanted to



France defender Dayot Upamecano will join Bayern Munich from Bundesliga rivals RB Leipzig next season, according to reports Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

sign the centre-back.

Upamecano will replace

David Alaba, 28, who is set to leave Bayern when his contract

expires in June after repeatedly turning down extension offers. Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic told Bild he could confirm the transfer of the 22-year-old Upamecano.

“I can and we at FC Bayern are very happy about it,” said Salihamidzic. “We had very good, intensive and professional talks with Dayot and his agent Volker Struth over many months. “We knew that we had very strong competition. —AFP ■

## Inter, Juve continue title pursuit after cup skirmish

ROME—The pursuit of Serie A leaders AC Milan heats up this weekend, as Juventus and Inter Milan face key matches after clashing on and off the pitch midweek.

Champions Juve, who travel to Napoli on Saturday, knocked Inter out of the Italian Cup with a dogged goalless draw at the Allianz Stadium on Tuesday which gave them a 2-1 aggregate win over their fiercest rivals.

Inter coach Antonio Conte appeared to show the finger to Juve’s directors at half-time, while footage from broadcaster RAI at the end of the match showed Juve chairman Andrea Agnelli apparently telling Conte to “shut up”.

Newspaper Gazzetta Dello Sport reported the pair clashed in the tunnel after the final whistle, and speaking to Sky Sport

Italia on Thursday Juve’s Leonardo Bonucci said “the images speak for themselves”.

Juve appeared to take particular delight in seeing off their former coach Conte, who left Italian football’s ‘Old Lady’ in July 2014 after leading them to a trio of league titles, the first of their current run of nine in a row.

Conte was hired by Inter to knock Juve off their perch and although they find themselves two points ahead of the third-placed Turin giants they are being held at bay by city rivals Milan.À

Seven-time European champions Milan have defied expectations under Stefano Pioli and will be favourites to at least hold on to their five-point lead at the summit as they travel to lowly Spezia while Inter host red-hot Lazio. —AFP ■



The pursuit of Serie A leaders AC Milan heats up this weekend, as Juventus and Inter Milan face key matches after clashing on and off the pitch midweek. **PHOTO: AFP**