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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Waxing of Tazaungmon 1382 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm, www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 16 November 2020

## State Counsellor participates in 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit, Closing Ceremony of 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, related Summits via videoconference

### 15 Asia-Pacific nations including Myanmar sign RCEP, world's biggest Regional Trade Agreement



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi participates in the Handing Over of the ASEAN Chairmanship to Brunei Darussalam via videoconference from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 November 2020. PHOTO: MNA

**D**aw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit and Closing Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and related Summits which were held via videoconference yesterday from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive

Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit was chaired by Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in his capacity as the Chair of ASEAN in 2020 and attended by Leaders of ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand.

During the Summit, the Leaders stressed that the RCEP Agreement is critical

for the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will play an important role in building the region's resilience through inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery process. They acknowledged that the RCEP Agreement is the most ambitious free trade agreement initiated by ASEAN, which contributes to enhancing ASEAN centrality in regional frameworks and strengthening ASEAN

cooperation with regional partners. They also expressed their commitment to ensuring that RCEP remains an open and inclusive agreement.

In her statement, the State Counsellor stressed that the landmark trade pact will serve as a strong signal to the world that we are committed to maintaining the credibility of regional cooperation architecture, retaining the trust of business community and con-

tributing to regional economic recovery. She also added that the RCEP will provide a new driving force which will accelerate the facilitation of trade and investment as part of a well-functioning, highly efficient, rules-based multilateral trading system. She concluded by stressing that Myanmar will exert utmost efforts to realize the full implementation of the

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## President, Vice President of Nicaragua send congratulatory message to State Counsellor

THE following is a congratulatory message from President, Vice President of Nicaragua sent to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, for the successful General Election held on 8 November 2020.

### Mr Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President, and First Lady Ms Rosario Murillo, Vice President of the Republic of Nicaragua send congratulatory message to the State Counsellor

WE salute the triumph of your party, the National League for Democracy, and your people, for the successful elections held on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

We congratulate your victory and we congratulate

your people, wishing peace, mutual understanding, well-being and prosperity.

Our people, the Nicaraguan families, and our government, congratulate ourselves for the Diplomatic

and Fraternal Relations, established this year.

We are sure that we can continue working together for a world of dialogue, justice and peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Deepavali Festival celebrated virtually



THE Deepavali Festival organized by All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (Central)-AMTHF was held virtually at the foundation in Botahtaung Township, Yangon on 14 November. AMTHF Chairman U Thein Lwin, Deputy Chairman U Kyi Soe Win, general secretary

U Chin Win, joint secretary U Kyaw Min and members opened the ceremony lighting oil lamps.

Central Executive U San Min Naing read the message sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Afterwards, the video message sent by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko was played.

AMTHF general secretary gave a brief account of the foundation's activities and words of thanks, and attendees said prayers. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Deepavali Festival 2020 is organized virtually from the office of All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (Central)-AMTHF in Botahtaung Township, Yangon on 14 November. **PHOTO: MNA**

## 99 Myanmar seamen abroad arrive back home by relief flights

A total of 99 Myanmar citizens stranded in foreign countries due to suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flights yesterday.

Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Dragon Tun Company jointly organized the relief flight of Myanmar Airways International to bring back the 99 citizens home—82 from the Republic of Korea, two from Laos, eight from Japan, six from

Turkey and one from UAE.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided them with proper medical tests and arranged 7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home quarantine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with

Myanmar embassies in foreign countries, local ministries and shipping companies/organizations to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Myanmar returnees line up for immigration service at the Yangon International Airport on 15 November 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

## 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

# State Counsellor participates in 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit, Closing Ceremony of 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, related Summits via video conference

## 15 Asia-Pacific nations including Myanmar sign RCEP, world's biggest Regional Trade Agreement



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi participates in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit via videoconference from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 November 2020. PHOTO: MNA

**FROM PAGE-1**  
provisions contained within the RCEP Agreement.

The RCEP Summit was followed by the Signing Ceremony of the RCEP Agreement in which the State Counselor witnessed the signing of the Agreement by Union Minister for the Ministry of Investment

and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaug Tun on behalf of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The RCEP Agreement signed by (15) Asia-Pacific nations represents almost 30 per cent of the world's population, 30 per cent of global GDP, and close to 28 per cent of global trade.

The State Counsellor also attended the Closing Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and related Summits and Handing Over of the ASEAN Chairmanship to Brunei Darussalam in the afternoon. At the Ceremony, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam delivered his Closing Remarks

and handed over the ASEAN Chairmanship Gavel to the Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Viet Nam. The Closing Ceremony concluded with the remarks of His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, the Chair of ASEAN in 2021.

Together with the State Counsellor, Union Minister for

Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaug Tun and Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin were present at the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit and Closing Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and related Summits.—MNA

# Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit

ON behalf of the State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-United Nations Summit which was held via video conference at 8:30 am yesterday from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Summit was chaired by Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in his capacity as the Chair of ASEAN in 2020 and attended by Leaders of ASEAN Member States and their representatives and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

During the Summit, the Leaders discussed and exchanged views on future cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations as well as on regional and international issues. They recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and underlined the importance of de-



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin joins the 11th ASEAN-United Nations Summit via videoconference on 15 November 2020. PHOTO: MNA

veloping vaccines that are safe, efficient, accessible and affordable to all. They also agreed to intensify joint efforts in combating the growing threat of transnational organized crimes in the region.

In his statement, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin appreciated

the progress of the ASEAN-UN comprehensive partnership. He also stressed the need to reinvigorate multilateralism and international solidarity and to strengthen joint efforts in maintaining strategic stability and ensuring inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from the

current crisis posed by the global pandemic.

In response to the remarks on Rakhine State, the Union Minister assured that resolving the issue of displaced persons will remain one of the top priorities of the Government during its second term. He added

that despite all the challenges, Myanmar remains committed to receiving verified displaced persons in line with our bilateral agreement with our neighbor. He reaffirmed that Myanmar will continue working closely with ASEAN and the United Nations Agencies to lay out a sustainable foundation for peace, stability, and development for all people in Rakhine State.

In respond to the comment with regard to the boat people, the Union Minister shared concerns over the plight of those who are victims of human trafficking and underscored the need to look at the issue in a broader regional context in addressing the root causes of the issue including economic insecurity and criminal activities of the traffickers and terrorists.

Together with the Union Minister, Permanent Secretary and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present at the ASEAN-United Nations Summit.—MNA

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar**  
**Union Election Commission**  
**Announcement 264/2020**  
1<sup>st</sup> Waxing of Tazaungmon, 1382 ME  
(15 November 2020)  
**Announcement of Region/State Hluttaw representatives**

Elected Region/State Hluttaw representatives in the multiparty democracy general elections on 8 November 2020 and their constituencies are announced from the reports of election sub-commissions in the respective regions and states as per Section 49 (b) of Region/State Hluttaw Election Law.

Sr.	Name	NRC	Constituency	Party/ Individual
<b>Kachin State</b>				
1.	U Khin Maung Myint (a) U Deik	5/YaOuNa(N)026391	Bamar ethnic	NLD
2.	U Sai Sein Lin	12/MaGhaTa(N)029018	Shan ethnic	NLD
3.	U Shwe Min (a) Si Falar Luu	1/MaKaNa(N)103789	Lisu Ethnic	Lisu National Development Party
4.	U Chan Hsin Zi (a) Jowr Ram	1/KhaBaDa(N)005664	Rawam Ethnic	NLD

*Sd/  
Hla Thein  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission*

## Announcement of election results

- The Union Election Commission (UEC) held the 2020 General Elections for third Hluttaw tenure on 8 November 2020. There are 315 seats for Pyithu Hluttaw, 161 for Amyotha Hluttaw, 612 for State/Region Hluttaw and 29 seats for Ethnic Affairs, totalling 1,117 seats.
- Respective Region/State Election Sub-commissions have already announced the names of elected candidates. The Union Election Commission has also further announced the names from 9-11-2020 to 15-11-2020.
- The numbers of elected candidates (candidates of political parties/ individual candidates) in the 2020 General Election are as follows.

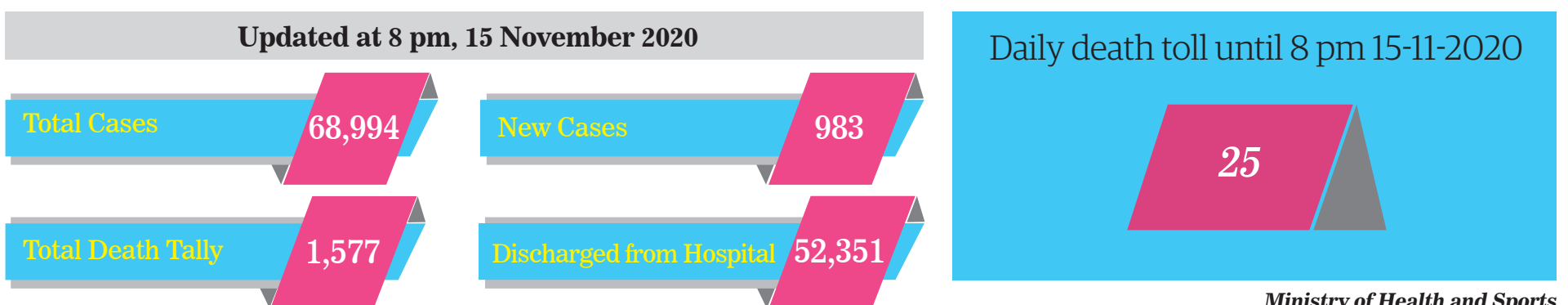
Sr	Party Names/Individual	Pyithu Hluttaw	Amyotha Hluttaw	Region/State Hluttaw	Ethnic National	Total
1.	National League for Democracy	258	138	501	23	920
2.	Union Solidarity and Development Party	26	7	38	-	71
3.	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	13	2	27	-	42
4.	Arakan National Party	4	4	7	-	15
5.	Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party	3	2	7	-	12
6.	Mon Unity Party	2	3	6	1	12
7.	Pa-O National Organization Party	3	1	7	-	11
8.	Kayah State Democratic Party	2	3	3	-	8
9.	Kachin State People's Party	1	-	3	-	4
10.	Arakan Front Party	1	-	2	-	3
11.	Wa National Party	1	-	2	-	3
12.	Lahu National Development Party	-	-	1	1	2
13.	Zomi Congress for Democracy Party	1	-	1	-	2
14.	Lisu National Development Party	-	-	1	1	2
15.	New Democracy Party (Kachin)	-	1	1	-	2
16.	Kayan National Party	-	-	-	1	1
17.	Kayin People's Party	-	-	1	-	1
18.	Shan Nationalities Democratic Party	-	-	1	-	1
19.	Chin National League for Democracy	-	-	1	-	1
20.	Individuals	-	-	2	2	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,117</b>

- So, we would like to inform the citizens that the Union Election Commission has already further announced all the lists of elected Hluttaw representatives (candidates of parties/ individual candidates) of the 2020 General Election.

*Union Election Commission*

**983 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 November, total figure rises to 68,994**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to **68,994** after **983** new cases were reported on 15 November according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **68,994** confirmed cases, **1,577** died, **52,351** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



## UEC's announcement on final list of winning parties until 15 November

Sr	Winning Party	Pyithu Hluttaw	Amyotha Hluttaw	Region/State Hluttaw	Region/State (Ethnic National) Hluttaw
1.	National League for Democracy	258	138	501	23
2.	Union Solidarity and Development Party	26	7	38	-
3.	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	13	2	27	-
4.	Arakan National Party	4	4	7	-
5.	Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party	3	2	7	-
6.	Mon Unity Party	2	3	6	1
7.	Pa-O National Organization Party	3	1	7	-
8.	Kayah State Democratic Party	2	3	3	-
9.	Kachin State People's Party	1	-	3	-
10.	Arakan Front Party	1	-	2	-
11.	Wa National Party	1	-	2	-
12.	Lahu National Development Party	-	-	1	1
13.	Zomi Congress for Democracy Party	1	-	1	-
14.	Lisu National Development Party	-	-	1	1
15.	New Democracy Party (Kachin)	-	1	1	-
16.	Kayan National Party	-	-	-	1
17.	Kayin People's Party	-	-	1	-
18.	Shan Nationalities Democratic Party	-	-	1	-
19.	Chin National League for Democracy Party	-	-	1	-
20.	Individuals	-	-	2	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>29</b>

## Total winning seats of political parties

Sr	Winning Party	Winning seats
1.	National League for Democracy	920
2.	Union Solidarity and Development Party	71
3.	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	42
4.	Arakan National Party	15
5.	Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party	12
6.	Mon Unity Party	12
7.	Pa-O National Organization Party	11
8.	Kayah State Democratic Party	8
9.	Kachin State People's Party	4
10.	Arakan Front Party	3

Sr	Winning Party	Winning seats
11.	Wa National Party	3
12.	Lahu National Development Party	2
13.	Zomi Congress for Democracy Party	2
14.	Lisu National Development Party	2
15.	New Democracy Party (Kachin)	2
16.	Kayan National Party	1
17.	Kayin People's Party	1
18.	Shan Nationalities Democratic Party	1
19.	Chin National League for Democracy Party	1
20.	Individuals	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,117</b>

## Imports down by \$370 mln as of 6 November, MOC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 October and 6 November in the current financial year 2020-2021 stood at US\$1.49 billion, a sharp drop of \$370 million from \$1.86 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses groups dropped in the current FY.

Over the past month of the current FY, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and aeroplane parts, were brought into the country. Their import value was estimated at \$502.8 million. The figure was \$152.6 million lower compared to the same period in the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$334.8 million, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight decrease of \$20.47 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make up a large share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year, imports of raw materials plunged to \$470.75 million from \$613.97 million registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth \$189.6 million were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector, showing a decrease of \$53.9 million com-

pared with the last budget year.

At present, the CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of trading by western countries amid the COVID-19. Therefore, import values of raw materials by CMP businesses have been dropping.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data of the Ministry of Commerce. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Hindu association donates ambulance to Kyauktada Red Cross



Officials from Thanantana Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association and Kyauktada Township Red Cross pose for group photo during the ceremony of donating ambulance last week. **PHOTO: YI YI**

THE Thanantana Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association donated an ambulance to the Red Cross of Kyauktada Township in Yangon recently.

Kyauktada Township Administrator U Htoo Kyaw made opening remarks at the ceremony.

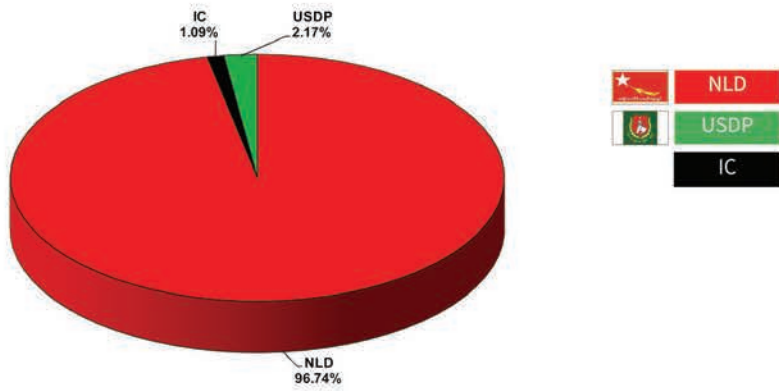
The association's Chairman U Maung Maung and executives presented the documents relating to the donated

vehicle to Kyauktada Township Red Cross chairman U Shwe Maung who returned certificates of honour.

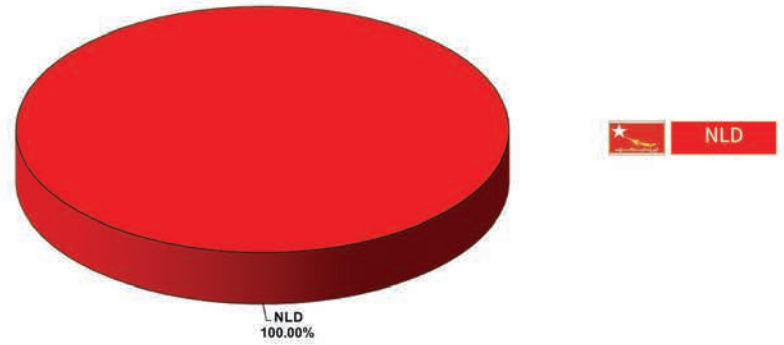
Chairman of the association Shri Bajrang Lal Sharma (a) U Maung Maung, said, "Ambulances are needed at present during COVID-19. The donation is made upon knowing that ambulances are needed for the township." —Yi Yi (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## Elected Region/State Hluttaw Representatives in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election

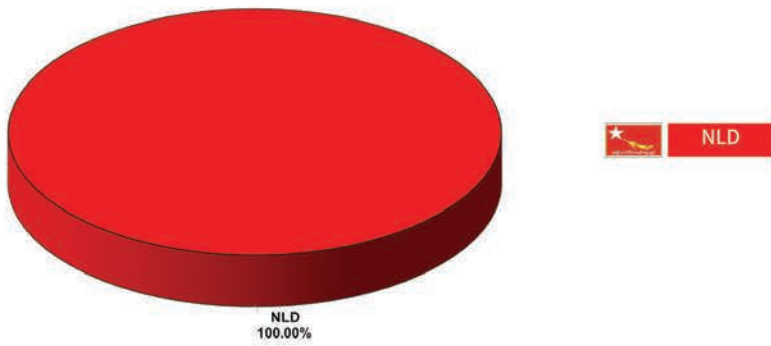
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 45 constituencies of Yangon Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



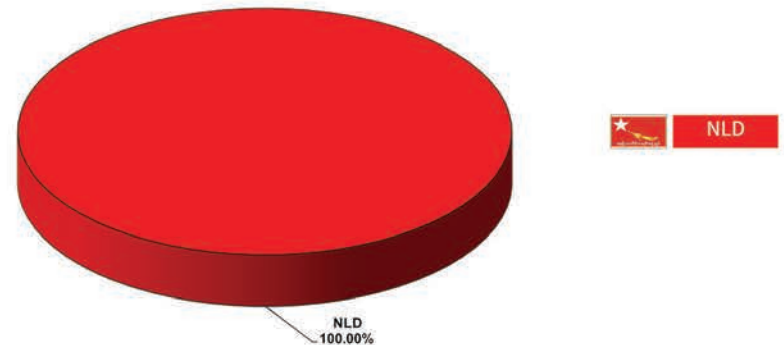
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 56 constituencies of Mandalay Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



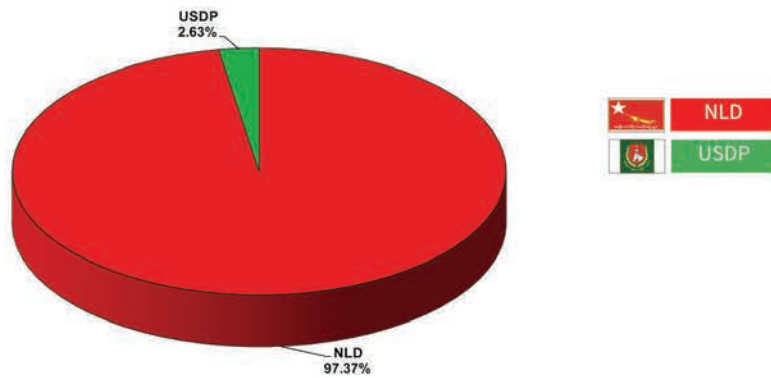
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 56 constituencies of Bago Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



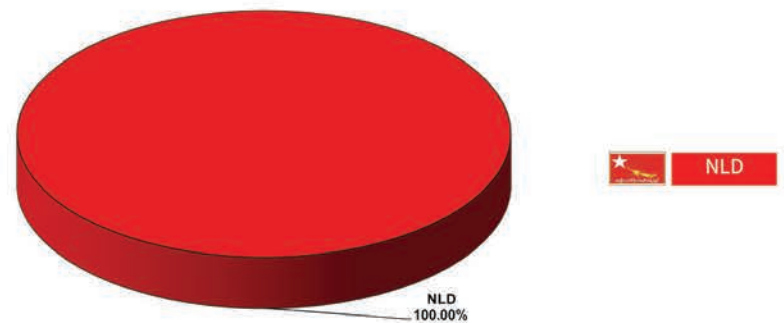
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 52 constituencies of Ayeyawady Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



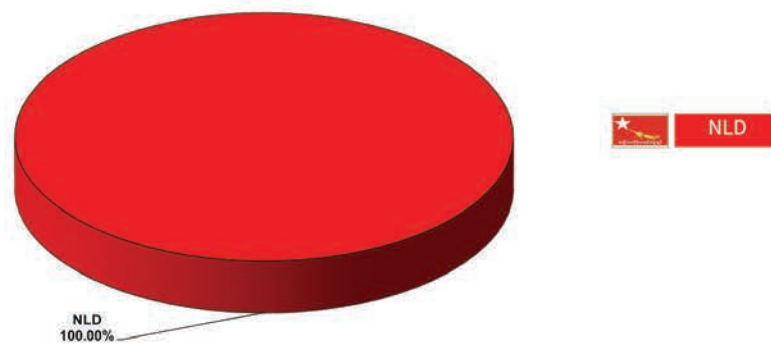
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 74 constituencies of Sagaing Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



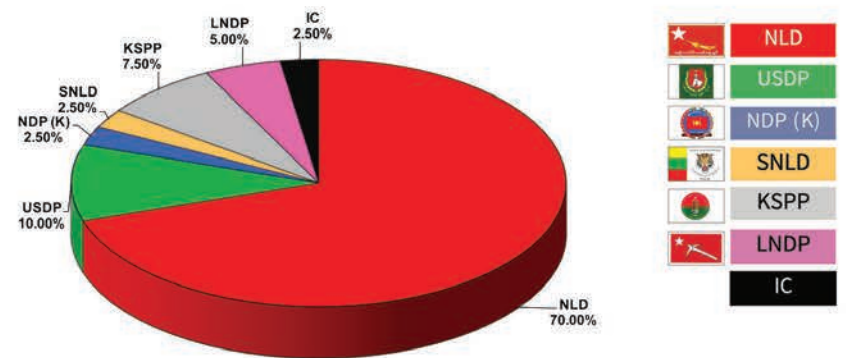
Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 50 constituencies of Magway Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



Votes of Regional Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 20 constituencies of Taninthayi Region in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 36 constituencies of Kachin State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election

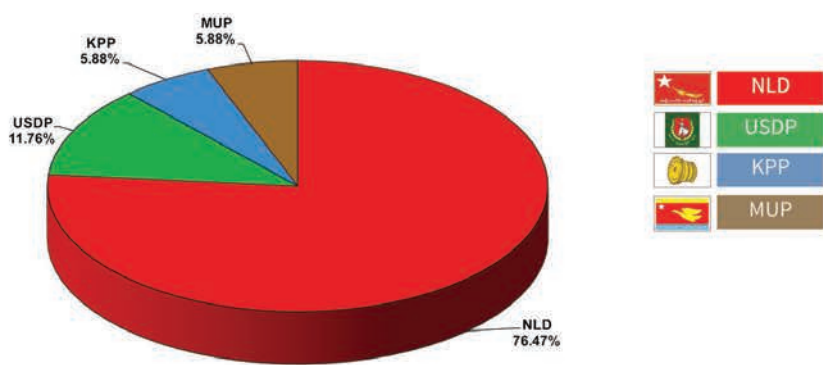


Explanation		
NLD	= National League for Democracy	NDP(K) = New Democracy Party (Kachin)
USDP	= Union Solidarity and Development Party	SNLD = Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
		KSPP = Kachin State People's Party
		LNNDP = Lisu National Development Party
		IC = Individual Candidate

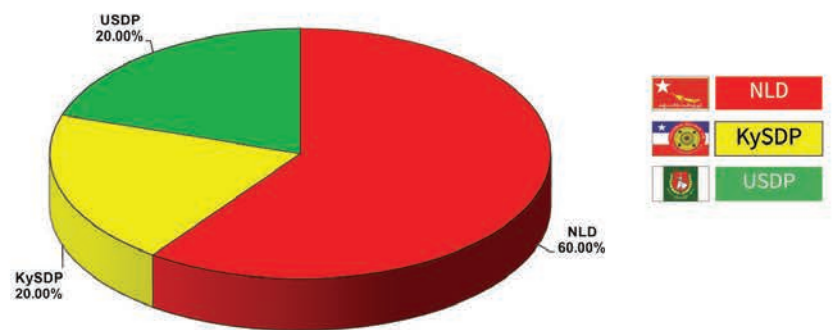
# Elected Region/State Hluttaw Representatives in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election

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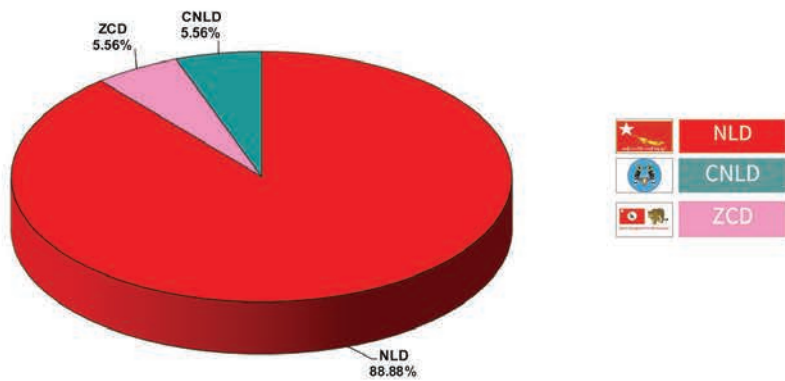
Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 14 constituencies of Kayin State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



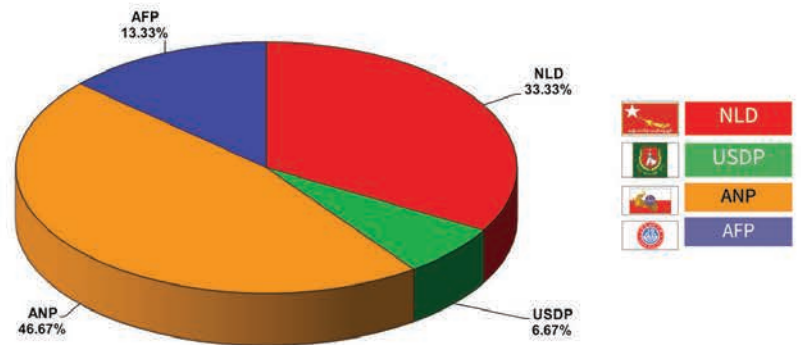
Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 14 constituencies of Kayah State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



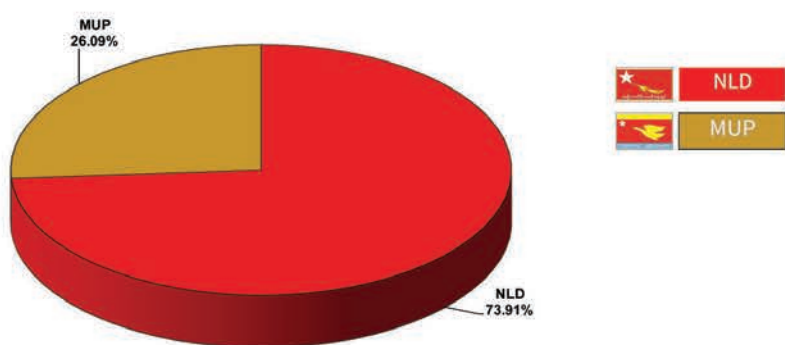
Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 18 constituencies of Chin State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



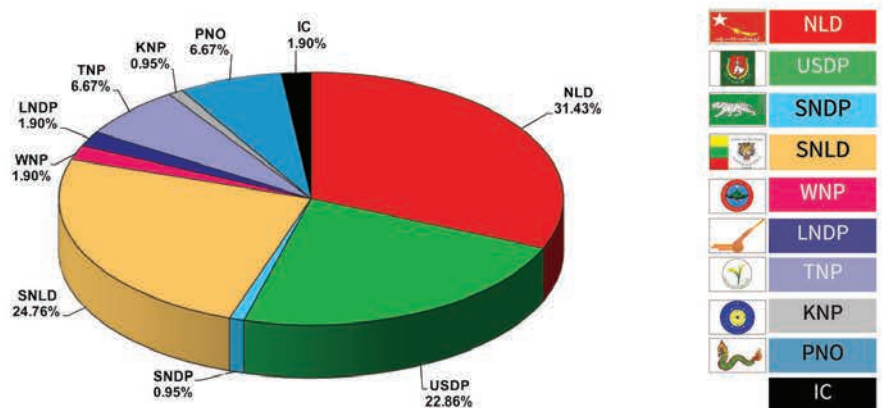
Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 14 constituencies of Rakhine State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 20 constituencies of Mon State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



Votes of State Hluttaw MPs and Ethnic Hluttaw MPs in 98 constituencies of Shan State in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



## Explanation

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| NLD = National League for Democracy           | CNLD = Chin National League for Democracy      | WNP = Wa National Party                |
| USDP = Union Solidarity and Development Party | ZCD = Zomi Congress for Democracy Party        | LNDP = Lahu National Development Party |
| KPP = Kayin People's Party                    | ANP = Arakan National Party                    | TNP = Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party |
| MUP = Mon Unity Party                         | AFP = Arakan Front Party                       | KNP = Kayan National Party             |
| KySDP = Kayah State Democratic Party          | SNDP = Shan Nationalities Democratic Party     | PNO = Pa-O National Organization Party |
|   | SNLD = Shan Nationalities League for Democracy | IC = Individual Candidate              |

# Govt remains committed to delivering justice, human rights throughout the country during second term

After the elections, we have a lot of work ahead of us. The post-election period has brought calls for us to work together to contain, prevent and treat the coronavirus infection, as well as to address other challenges, such as economic recovery during the post-COVID-19 period, holding elections in areas where the 2020 general elections was cancelled due to security concerns, building a federal democratic union, ending of armed conflicts, repatriation returnees in Rakhine State.

The Union Government must double down on these issues with the participation of the people during its second term.

We are confident that the Union Government will spare no efforts to bring peace, stability and development for all communities in Rakhine especially under these very difficult circumstances like COVID-19.

The Union Government has assured that resolving the issue of displaced persons will remain one of the top priorities of the Government during its second term.

In respond to the comment with regard to the boat people, we shared concerns over the plight of those who are victims of human trafficking. However, the boat people issue needs to be looked at in a broader regional context in addressing the root causes of the issue, including economic insecurity and the criminal activities of traffickers and terrorists.

Despite all the challenges, Myanmar remains committed to receiving verified displaced persons in line with our bilateral agreement with our neighbor, with a confident that the bilateral agreement is the only feasible way in the situation in Rakhine State.

We fully share the concerns of the international community over the violence affecting communities in Rakhine State. The issue in Rakhine is one of the complex challenges faced by Myanmar on its path towards democracy.

In fact, the government's efforts to bring peace and stability predate the violent attacks by the ARSA terrorist group in 2016 and 2017 that triggered the current humanitarian crisis. Since assuming office in 2016, the elected civilian government has placed the highest priority on addressing the situation in Rakhine State.

We have a plenty of challenges ahead. Despite all the challenges facing Myanmar, we are committed to making progress with regard to justice and human rights not only in Rakhine but also everywhere in our country.

However, the boat people issue needs to be looked at in a broader regional context in addressing the root causes of the issue, including economic insecurity and the criminal activities of traffickers and terrorists.

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC HEALTH IS SO CRITICAL

# COVID-19: Consequences of 'chronic under-investment in public health' laid bare: Tedros

A global chronic under-investment in public health has been exposed by the coronavirus pandemic, which must now lead to a major re-think in how all societies value health: head of the World Health Organization (WHO)

TEDROS Adhanom Ghebreyesus was making closing remarks at the closing of WHO's governing body, the World Health Assembly, which finalized its annual session this week after its regular May meeting was cut short by COVID-19 safety requirements.



A nurse takes a girl's temperature at a Primary Health Care Centre in Beirut, Lebanon, during the COVID-19 outbreak. PHOTO: UNICEF/FOUAD CHOUFANY

### Historic vaccine advances

The WHO chief highlighted the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine breakthrough announced this week, which results indicate could be around 90 per cent effective, saying he had "no doubt" that vaccines were a vital tool for controlling the on-going pandemic.

"Never in history has vaccine research progressed so quickly. We must apply the same urgency and innovation to ensuring that all countries benefit from this scientific achievement.

"But we have a long way to go. The world cannot put all its

eggs in one basket and neglect the many other tools at our disposal, that countries like Thailand have shown are effective, for bringing this virus under control."

What works against the virus before inoculation, are isolation, testing and treatment programmes, where the contacts of

those infected are traced and then quarantine.

### Chronic weakness

The COVID-19 pandemic has "demonstrated the consequences of chronic under-investment in public health", said Tedros, and the health crisis, "has ignited

ed a socio-economic crisis that has impacted billions of lives and livelihoods and undermined global stability and solidarity. Returning to the status quo is not an option."

The WHO chief said it wasn't just more investment that was needed in public health infrastructure, "we must also rethink how

we value health."

### New brains trust on health economics

Tedros told the Assembly that that time has now come to think of healthcare as an investment, not a cost, "that is the foundation of productive, resilient and stable economies." "To start building that narrative, today I am proud to announce that we are establishing a new Council on the Economics of Health for All, to focus on the links between health and sustainable, inclusive and innovation-led economic growth."

He said the first virtual session of the Council, which will bring together leading economists and health experts, will likely hold its first virtual session in the coming weeks, to set out its work plan and best way of working.

"The pandemic has also shown that there is an urgent need for a globally agreed system for

sharing pathogen materials and clinical samples", he added, "to facilitate the rapid development of medical countermeasures as global public goods."

### Productive session

Among the Assembly's achievements through the week were a new roadmap to defeat meningitis by 2030; a new roadmap for neglected tropical diseases; a resolution on scaled-up action on epilepsy and other neurological disorders; the adoption of the Immunization Agenda 2030; the Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a public health problem; and the Global Strategy for TB Research and Innovation.

"Each of these represents an urgent health priority that affects the lives of millions of people, and which increases the demands on, and expectations of, WHO", said Tedros. SOURCE: UN News

## QUESTIONS ARISE AROUND THE LIMITED DATA SHARED ABOUT ITS COVID-19 VACCINE

# COVID-19: As lab execs sell shares worth millions, questions arise

Pfizer, Moderna, Novavax: executives at several American laboratories developing Covid-19 vaccines have recently pocketed millions of dollars by selling shares in their companies - raising questions about the propriety of such a move in the midst of a national health crisis.

On the very day that pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced preliminary data showing its vaccine was 90 percent effective against



This combination of file pictures shows signs for the Pfizer and Moderna pharmaceutical companies, both in Cambridge, Massachusetts; executives at both, as well as at Novavax, have raised questions by selling shares worth millions amid the pandemic. PHOTO: DOMINICK REUTER, JOSEPH PREZIOSO AFF/FILE

the coronavirus, its chief executive Albert Bourla sold shares worth \$5.6 million.

There was nothing illegal about this, Pfizer said: the sale took place according to rules allowing company heads to sell shares under predetermined criteria, at a date or for a price set in advance, to avoid any suspicion of insider trading.

Under the same rules, several Moderna officials have sold shares worth more than \$100 million in recent months.

That company has not placed a single product on the market since its creation in 2010, but the federal government has committed to paying it up to \$2.5 billion if its vaccine proves effective.

Moderna shares have soared from \$19 at the beginning of the year to a current level of \$90. The boss of Novavax, for his part, sold \$4.2 million in shares on August 18, just over a month after the announcement it would receive public financing of \$1.6 billion. Accountable US, a nonpartisan taxpayers' advocacy group, has calculated that from the start of the federally coordinated effort to develop vaccines on May 15 until August 31, officials at five pharmaceutical companies made more than \$145 million by selling shares.

### 'Legally questionable'

Executives at Pfizer and Moderna were operating under a rule put in place by the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2000 to allow company employees to sell shares without facing insider-trading charges. It allows them to set up a plan determining the trades of their shares at a price, amount or dates specified in advance, but only when

they are not in possession of privileged information that could affect share prices.

Once such a sale is planned, it cannot be modified at the last minute, even if its timing might ultimately raise questions.

Still, this use of the rule by Pfizer and Moderna appears "legally questionable," according to Daniel Taylor, an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton business school, who has been studying the big pharma firms since the beginning of the pandemic.

"The question is, what did the executives know at the time that they pre-scheduled the trade?" he asked.

Bourla, according to Pfizer, had merely re-authorized on August 19 a plan for a share sale originally authorized in February, "with the same price and volume terms." But a day after that, the company issued a statement describing the preliminary results of its clinical trials as "positive."

### 'Level playing field'

It is of course not just normal but desirable that laboratory heads should be encouraged to develop a safe and reliable vaccine as quickly as possible, Taylor said. But "when they are going to sell their shares, they have to make sure that they are operating by the same level playing field, that they're not taking advantage of other investors by having more information," he said. Taylor added a word of caution: "I don't think that companies have internalized the reputational risk to these trades" by selling shares even as Covid-19 cases have been spiraling upward around the world. SOURCE: AFP



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 15 November 2020)

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

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** According to the observations at (18:30 hrs MST today, the severe tropical storm "Vamco" crossed over Northern Vietnam coast near Dong Hoi has weakened into Land Depression. It is forecast to moved West-Northwestwards and gradually weaken into a Low Pressure Ares over Laos.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16 November 2020:** Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Shan State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of light rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Shan, Chin states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 November 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 November 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 November 2020:** Generally fair weather.

Advertisement for 'The Global New Light of Myanmar' newspaper, featuring a 'NOW Available' banner and images of the newspaper's front page with headlines about ROK President's state visit and State Counsellor's talks.

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**CHIEF EDITOR**Aungthu Ya  
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm**DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR**Aye Min Soe  
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Aung Khin

**LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS****EDITORS**Ye Htut Tin  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Aung Htein  
Tun Tun Naing  
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR TRANSLATOR**

Zaw Htet Oo

**TRANSLATORS**Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,  
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,  
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar  
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,  
Kay Khaing Win,  
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,  
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,  
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 974424848  
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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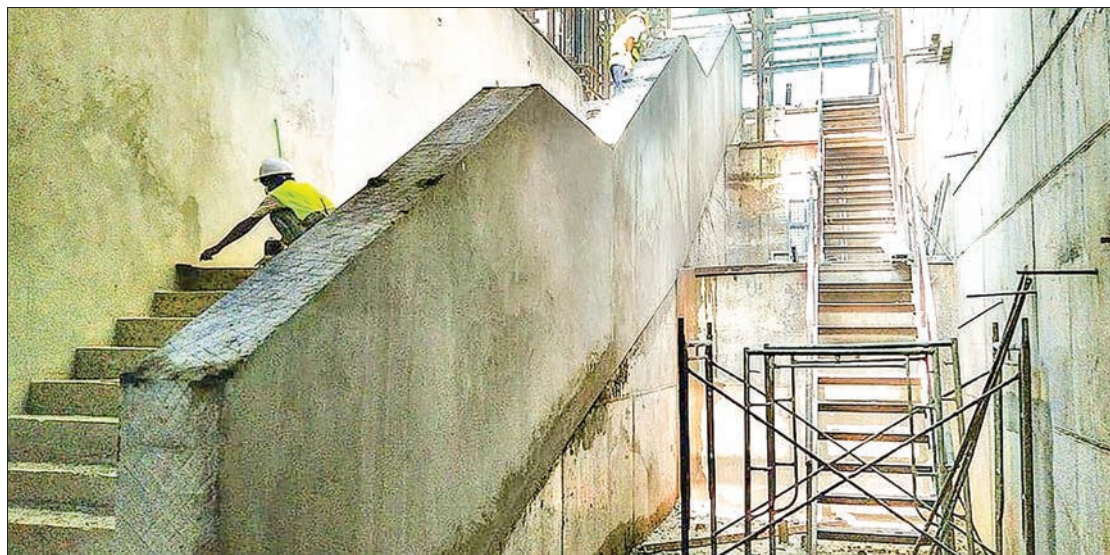
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## Yangon's first pedestrian underpass 85 % complete

Construction of pedestrian underpass on Pyay Road near Yangon University of Education is underway. **PHOTO: HTIN PAW WIN (KAMAYUT)**

THE construction work of pedestrian underpass on Pyay Road, near Yangon University of Education, Kamayut Township, Yangon is 85 per cent complete,

the construction site reported.

The construction project of subway began in February 2020. The small shops will be located inside the underpass.

At present, the escalator is still under construction at the side of Junction Square, and the finishing work is being undertaken.

It is the reinforced concrete

subway tunnel which is 427 feet two inches long, 11 feet high and 40 feet wide. The pedestrian walk inside the subway tunnel is 19 feet, eight inches wide. The highest attained capacity of the subway is about 6,000 people per hour.

It has three escalators and two elevators (maximum capacity of eight people) for the disabled persons. The staircase has an inclined 30 degree. About 10 feet square stalls will be placed inside the underpass. Yangon City Development Committee is building Myanmar's first pedestrian underpass so that people can avoid heavy traffic safely.

The project is slated to finish in January-end 2021.

—Htin Paw Win (Kamayut)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Myanmar-China bilateral trade tops \$12 bln last FY

THE value of Myanmar's trade with China through the maritime trade route and land border topped \$12 billion in the past financial year 2019-2020, the Ministry of Commerce's trade data showed.

The MoC reported that imports surpassed exports in trade with China, with exports reaching over \$5.4 billion and imports valued at over \$6.7 billion during the last FY. Myanmar trade deficit in goods with China was estimated at over \$1.3 billion, the data released by the Ministry of Commerce indicated.

This year, China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19, causing traffic congestion in the border areas of two sides.

Between the 2016-2017FY and the 2019-2020FY, China has

been Myanmar's largest trade partner beyond the regional states.

The value of Myanmar's bilateral trade with neighbouring country China through maritime trade and border trade was estimated at US\$47.183 billion in the incumbent government period, the statistics issued by the Central Statistical Organization under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry indicated.

Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, gem and animal products are primarily exported to China. In contrast, machinery, plastic raw materials, CMP raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products to China

through the border trade, which is often halted, on account of China clamping down on illegal goods. Myanmar merchants are facing difficulties in exporting goods to China through the legitimate channel as they find the tax levied by China is too high.

In a bid to lower trade barriers and offer relief to Myanmar traders through the border trade channel, the Ministry of Commerce, the relevant departments and Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been negotiating with China counterparts. Illegal trade is highly witnessed between Myanmar and China borders in the previous years. This year, traders sent the goods via legitimate trade route, and trading volume sharply fell", said an official of Myanmar Rice Federation.

The two countries are making efforts to set up more border economic cooperation zones and promote border trade. Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce is trying to boost exports of rice, broken rice, agro-products, fruits and fisheries to China through diplomatic negotiations.

Myanmar is carrying out border trade with the neighbouring country China through Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and Kengtung land border posts.

Apart from its leading trade partner China, Myanmar's external trade was mostly carried out with the regional trade partners. Trade with countries in the European Union, however, remained uncompetitive, compared with regional trade partners. — Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Trade via Hteekhee border falls by over \$290 mln in Oct

BILATERAL trade between Thailand and Myanmar through the Hteekhee border over the past one month reflected a decrease of \$291.7 million as against a year-ago period.

Between 1 October and 6 November in the current financial year 2020-2021, the figures sharply fell to US\$113.9 million from \$405.6 million registered in the previous financial year, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

The surge in coronavirus

cases in Myanmar led Thailand to close the border areas and to limit the working hours of truck drivers at the border posts. Consequently, the trade via land border sharply fell in the current FY.

Exports of natural gas from Taninthayi Region have contributed to the enormous increase in trade through the Hteekhee border during the previous years, said an official from the ministry.

Earlier, the Myawady bor-

der sees the most extensive trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. The rise in exports through the Hteekhee border had boosted the value of the Myanmar-Thailand border trade since the 2018-2019FY.

Tachilek land border between Myanmar and Thailand showed a slight increase in trade while the trades via the remaining border areas -- Myawady, Myeik, Kawthoung, Mawtaung, Htikhee and Maese have declined.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, corns and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, and consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country.

— Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# Victims of Ayeyawady riverbank collapse get cash assistance

MAGWAY Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo and his entourage yesterday handed over cash assistance to 36 households from Kanhla, Zee Kyun and Kyaung Zu Villages, Paukkone Village-tract in Pwintbyu Township, who were evacuated to safe place because of collapse of the Ayeyawady riverbank.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Magway Region Minister for Construction and Transportation U Tin Nwe Oo, Minbu District Administrator U San Htay and other relevant officials.

At about 6:30 pm on 14 November, the riverbank collapsed in the villages in Magway Region. The collapse was caused by erosion of the Ayeyawady River.

Each household of the 36

households - 30 households from Paukkone, five from Kyaung Zu, and one from Zee Kyun - was given K100,000. So, the total cash assistance is K3.6 million. The Chief Minister and his entourage also gave the victims food.

"We were evacuated with the help of staff members from the Township General Administration Department, firefighters from the Township Fire Department, police, social organizations and villagers. We would like to express thanks to the Chief Minister and his group for their visit and assistance," said a villager who was evacuated.

Currently, authorities are planning to provide land plots to the farmers who have encountered difficulties in finding appropriate lands.



Photo shows the site of the riverbank collapse in Pwintbyu, Magway Region. PHOTO: THAN NAING OO

Similarly, the Magway Region Disaster Management Department will provide K100,000

per household to the victims on 16 November. — Than Naing Oo (Magway District IPRD)

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

# Huge India oil well fire extinguished after five months

NEW DELHI (India) — A massive oil well fire that has raged for more than five months in northeast India has finally been extinguished, officials said Sunday.

Oil India engineers had battled the blaze in Assam state since an explosion in June, weeks after the well blew out and began discharging huge quantities of natural gas.

Two employees of the state-owned company died in the blast, which sent a wall of flame and massive plumes of smoke into the sky. A third

worker died in September after an accident at the site.

Experts from Singapore, the United States and Canada joined efforts to contain the inferno, and Oil India spokesman Tridiv Hazarika said Sunday the fire had now been "doused completely".

"The well has been killed with brine solution and is under control now," he told AFP, adding that the well had yet to be capped.

"There is no pressure in the well now and it will be observed for 24 hours to check

if there is any amount of gas migration and pressure build-up," Hazarika said.

Thousands of villagers in Tinsukia district had been relocated to relief camps after the blaze started.

The Baghjan oil field is next to the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and the wetland habitat of several endangered species, including tigers and elephants.

The region is also home to several bird sanctuaries.

The Wildlife Institute of India said in a July report that the oil spill had brought a "large-scale impact" on local plant and animal life.

"The toxins released are known to have long-term persistence in soils and sediments, which will not only affect current life conditions, but due to sustained release over a long period, pose a serious health risk for a longer term," the institute added.

The disaster cost Oil India more than \$800,000 according to the firm's estimates, managing director Sushil Chandra Mishra told local media in late September. —AFP



Rescue workers recover a body of a worker following an explosion at a well run by state-owned Oil India in Tinsukia, the northeastern state of Assam on June 10, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

# Public money guarantees 'risky' fossil fuel projects: experts

ARIS (France) — Energy firms are undertaking financially risky natural gas extraction projects from the Arctic to Africa made feasible by government-backed loans and guarantees, jeopardising efforts to curb global warming, experts say.

As pressure from the public and investors to green their portfolios grows, and the cost of renewable energy continues to fall, oil and gas majors are finding it harder to attract investment on new fossil fuel projects.

They are also increasingly reliant on government-backed funding -- in the form of loans or insurance -- several industry experts told AFP.

Eight export credit agencies awarded loans to French oil giant Total in July, when the company signed a \$14.9-billion financing agreement for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Mozambique. The province where the sites are located, Cabo Delgado, has been grappling with a jihadist insurgency since 2017 that has killed more than 1,000 people.

Certain energy projects have become "very risky in general, let alone in regions with unstable politics", said Dylan Tanner from Influence Map, which monitors the energy sector.

Beyond security issues, the think tank highlighted in a report last year the risk of "asset stranding" due to increasingly competitive renewable energy and tighter climate regulations.

Credit export agencies use government-backed funds to shore up projects.

If the projects go sideways due to geopolitics or become obsolete as technology and environmental policy evolves, they end up costing the state, not private investors. "If there is a problem, taxpayers will pay for the damages, not the companies," Cecile Marchand, from Friends of the Earth France, told AFP.

"Commercial banks would not take the risk of lending so much money on the long term without any insurance."

**'Aware of climate concerns'**  
As well as the risk of financial loss and stranded assets, experts say projects such as Total's in Mozambique also call into question states' commitment to combat climate change.

The 2015 Paris treaty enjoins nations to limit global temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels through sweeping emissions cuts.—AFP

## BIONTECH VACCINE CREATOR

High vaccination rate  
“essential” before  
autumn 2021

PROF Ugur Sahin, co-founder of BioNTech, told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that it was essential to complete vaccination programmes over the summer next year to avoid another wave of infection in autumn and winter 2021.

Sahin said it was not yet known how long immunity would last after the second dose of the vaccine, but suggested booster immunisations could be an option if immunity dropped significantly after 12 months.

He also said the virus could feasibly reduce transmission by half, which would help people return to a more normal life by the end of next year.

The goal now is to deliver more than 300 million doses worldwide by next April, he said, which “could allow us to only start to make an impact”.  
SOURCE: AFP

## THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT

German Minister sees several  
more months of virus curbs

Police speak to security guards at a meat processing plant near Gütersloh after an outbreak. PHOTO: INA FASSBENDER/AFP/FILE

GERMANY may see four to five more months of coronavirus restrictions, Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said Sunday, dashing hopes of a quick end to a partial lockdown introduced two weeks ago.

“The infection numbers are still far too high -- much higher even than a fortnight ago,” Altmaier told the Bild an Sonntag newspaper ahead of a government meeting on Monday to assess the progress of the restrictions.

Germany went into partial lockdown in early November, closing bars, restaurants, gyms and other recreational facilities but keeping schools and shops open.

The number of new infections per day has since slowed but remains high, with a record of more than 23,000 reported on Friday.

“We will have to live with considerable precautions and restrictions for at least the next four to five months,” Altmaier said.

“Many people are now understandably hoping for a loosening (of restrictions), that

restaurants or cinemas will re-open. But in view of the still far too high infection rates, we have little room for manoeuvre.”

The restrictions agreed by Chancellor Angela Merkel and the leaders of Germany's 16 states are provisionally in place until the end of November.

But the leaders will meet again on Monday to decide whether to extend them or to introduce sharper restrictions.

With more than 300,000 schoolchildren in quarantine, calls have been growing for schools to shut or at least move more of their lessons online.

“We are entering a situation where school operation is becoming a high risk for children, teachers, parents and grandparents,” MP and epidemiologist Karl Lauterbach said in an interview with the Funke media group. Several demonstrations against the restrictions were held on Saturday across Germany, including one in Frankfurt where water cannons were used against counter-demonstrators.  
SOURCE: AFP

## SHUTTING OF BOOKSTORES IN FRANCE

Authors to pay bookshop fines for  
breaking lockdown rules

A handful of bookshops have openly flouted the shutdown, backed by writers, literary critics and tens of thousands of bookworms who argue that books are essential to well-being. PHOTO: AFP

ONE of France's best-known authors, Alexandre Jardin, vowed Sunday that writers would bail out rebel bookshop owners fined for opening in defiance of a nationwide coronavirus lockdown.

Literature lovers are fuming over the government's shutting of bookstores, along with all other outlets selling “non-essential” goods or services, for the second time this year.

A handful of bookshops have openly flouted the shutdown, backed by writers, literary critics and tens of thousands of bookworms who argue that books are essential to well-being.

Jardin, who penned bestselling romance novels “Le Zebre” and “Fanfan”, has rallied in their defence.

He said Sunday that authors would pay the fines incurred by rogue booksellers.

Jardin told Europe 1 radio that Didier van Cauwelaert, winner of the Prix Goncourt, France's top literary prize for his 1994 novel “Un Aller Simple”, had offered to cover any penalty imposed on a bookshop in the city of Cannes, leading the revolt. “The next bookshop will be me, and the next somebody else,” he said, declaring that “no state has the moral right to close bookshops”.

## -‘Freedom of speech’

France has some of the highest book readership figures in the world, studies show, and one of the largest networks of independent bookstores. While hairdressers, toy stores, perfumeries, florists, cinemas and malls have all been shut since October 30, the plight of bookshops has sparked the greatest public indignation.

In an open letter to President

Emmanuel Macron, van Cauwelaert warned that restricting access to culture posed a threat to France's “precious freedom of speech”. Jardin pointed out that other European countries, such as Belgium, had allowed bookshops to remain open. The head of Grasset publishing house, Olivier Nora, complained booksellers were missing out on crucial November-December sales accounting for 25 percent of annual revenues. The French government has so far resisted pressure to ease a month-long partial lockdown imposed to curb a second wave of Covid-19 infections. Prime Minister Jean Castex on Thursday did however raise the possibility that some shops might be allowed to reopen in December if current trends showing a decline in new infections continue. SOURCE: AFP

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

## Brazil votes in local polls marked by virus

BRAZILIANS began voting Sunday in municipal elections that will test the strength of the country's rightward shift under President Jair Bolsonaro, with the coronavirus pandemic looming large -- and likely denting turnout.

These are the first elections since Bolsonaro, a far-right former army captain often compared to US President Donald Trump, surged to victory in 2018, upending the political gameboard in Latin America's

biggest economy.

Postponed six weeks because of the pandemic, the vote already bears the imprint of Covid-19, which has killed more than 165,000 people in Brazil, the second-highest death toll worldwide, after the United States.

The authorities are urging Brazil's 148 million voters to bring their own pens, respect social distancing guidelines and disinfect their hands multiple times at their polling sta-

tions.

Voters are choosing the South American giant's 5,568 mayors and city councils, with analysts watching to see where the various political camps stand midway to the next presidential elections in 2022.

Bolsonaro heads into Sunday's first-round vote weakened by his political idol Trump's loss in the US and his controversial handling of the virus, which he has downplayed as a “little flu.”  
SOURCE: AFP

WORLD'S BIGGEST TRADE DEAL

## Japan businesses expect RCEP deal to boost Asia trade, investment

JAPANESE business leaders welcomed the signing of the world's largest trade deal by Tokyo and 14 other Asia-Pacific partners on Sunday, expecting a boost in trade and investment in the region and strengthening of supply chains.

"The signing is extremely significant toward realizing a free and open international economic order" at a time when some countries are becoming inward-looking due to the global novel coronavirus pandemic, said Hiroaki Nakanishi, chairman of the Japan Business Fed-

eration known as Keidanren.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, covering some 46 percent of Japan's total trade, will be the country's first trade deal with both China, its largest trading partner, and South Korea, its third largest.

Under the deal, Japan will see tariffs eliminated on 86 percent of items exported to China, 81 percent to South Korea and 88 percent to the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Australia and New Zealand.

RCEP also sets common



Under the deal, Japan will see tariffs eliminated on 86 percent of items exported to China, 81 percent to South Korea and 88 percent to the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Australia and New Zealand. **PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS /AFP/FILE**

rules on e-commerce, intellectual property, customs and rules of origins.

Due to the rules and lower-

ing of tariffs, supply chains established by Japanese companies in Asia "will become more broad, effective and resilient," Akio Mi-

mura, chairman of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said in a statement.

*SOURCE: Kyodo*

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

## Failure looms as post-Brexit talks enter crunch week



Officials on both sides of the Channel are eying an EU leaders video summit on Thursday as the de facto last chance for a Brexit breakthrough. **PHOTO: JUSTIN TALLIS AFP/FILE**

THE EU and Britain launch the final stretch of trade negotiations on Monday after months of bickering, hoping to dispel fear of failure by agreeing a blueprint for their future.

Britain left the European Union in January, but the full economic effect of the bitter divorce will be felt at the end of the year when an 11-month transition period closes.

Britain dramatically shut the door on its 47-year membership of the EU after a 2016 referendum, ending a testy relationship marked by anti-EU euro-scepticism, especially among older voters.

Going forward, relations between Britain and Europe could be governed by a trade deal, but only if negotiations currently under way deliver, which is hardly guaranteed given still wide divergences.

Officials on both sides of the Channel are eying an EU leaders video summit on Thursday as the de facto last chance for a breakthrough.

This gives negotiators Michel Barnier and David Frost just four days and nights to bridge differences that have remained unchanged since talks began in March.

And this, in turn, might give the European Parliament just enough time to ratify the deal for the end of the year.

"Logic and reason would all point to a deal," said one EU diplomat with a close eye on the talks.

"But if anything became clear in the past three years, when it comes to Brexit, economic rationale and pure logic are not enough to explain what's happening," the diplomat said.

*SOURCE: AFP*

FIERCE COMPETITION

## Japan finds luring business from Hong Kong may be tough

TOKYO is on a charm offensive, hoping to lure firms in Hong Kong spooked by protests and a controversial security law imposed by China. But the city is proving a tough sell.

"I want to make Tokyo Asia's number one financial city," Governor Yuriko Koike said in October, as the Japanese capital opened an information centre in Hong Kong for international businesses considering a move.

Tokyo's courtship comes with some concrete promises, including temporary office space in the city for foreign financial firms that want to try out life in Japan.

There are also a number of more theoretical incentives being floated, including tax breaks,

streamlined bureaucracy and even a special economic zone like Shenzhen, China's Silicon Valley.

In some ways, Japan might seem an obvious alternative for businesses looking to leave Hong Kong: it is the world's third-largest economy, home to the Tokyo Stock Exchange, and already houses outposts of numerous financial institutions and international firms. But there are some serious stumbling blocks, and competitors, that experts say mean Tokyo's hopes for regional financial dominance may be little more than a pipe dream.

For a start, Japan's income taxes are sky high, comparatively, topping out at 45 percent against Singapore's 22 percent and Hong Kong's 17 percent.

*SOURCE: AFP*

THE HISTORIC TOWN ON AN ISOLATED OASIS

## Egypt's Siwa fortress renovation boosts hopes for ecotourism

TUCKED away in Egypt's Western Desert, the Shali fortress once protected inhabitants against the incursions of wandering tribes, but now there are hopes its renovation will attract ecotourists. The 13th-century edifice, called "Shali" or "home" in the local Siwi language, was built by Berber populations atop a hill in the pristine Siwa oasis, some 600 kilometres (370 miles) southwest of Cairo. The towering structure is made of kershef – a mixture of clay, salt and rock which acts as a natural insulator in an area where the summer heat can be scorching.

After it was worn away by erosion, and then torrential rains almost 100 years ago, the European Union and Egyptian company Environmental Quality International (EQI) began to



The 13th century edifice, called 'Shali' or 'home' in the local Siwi language, was built by Berber populations. **PHOTO: KHALED DESOUKI/AFP**

restore the fortress in 2018, at a cost of over \$600,000. "Teach your children, and mine, about what ancient Shali means," sang a choir of young girls in brightly coloured robes at the renovated fortress' inauguration ceremony last week. Dotted by thick palm groves, freshwater springs and salt lakes, the Siwa oasis's ge-

ographic and cultural isolation offers a rare eco-friendly getaway, far from Egypt's bustling urban communities. The region's tourism model contrasts with Egypt's mass approach in other areas, such as its Red Sea resorts in the east or along the Nile valley, especially in Luxor and Aswan in the south. *SOURCE: AFP*

## A VICTORY OF MULTILATERALISM

## Asia-Pacific countries launch world's biggest free trade bloc with RCEP deal signed



Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc addresses the signing ceremony of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) during the 37th ASEAN Summit and related summits via video conferences in Hanoi, Vietnam, Nov. 15, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement was signed among its 15 participating countries on Sunday, launching the world's biggest free trade bloc.

Participating countries include the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, accounting for around 30 percent of the global population, world's gross domestic product (GDP) and global trade.

The signing of the deal is "a victory of multilateralism and free trade," Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Sunday as he at-

tended the fourth RCEP Summit in Beijing, held via video link.

"The signing of the RCEP is not only a landmark achievement of East Asian regional cooperation, but also a victory of multilateralism and free trade," Li said.

The global and regional economies are facing huge obstacles and challenges caused by not only COVID-19 but also the decreased global trade, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said at the fourth RCEP summit held before the signing ceremony.

The conclusion of the negotiations of the RCEP will "send a strong message of ASEAN's leading role in supporting the multi-

lateral trade system, helping to create a new trading structure in the region, facilitating trade sustainably, developing the disrupted supply chains and supporting post-pandemic recovery," he said.

The RCEP agreement will accelerate the building of the ASEAN Economic Community and thereby allow ASEAN to become dynamic and strong partners in promoting cooperation for shared prosperity, he said later at the signing ceremony held via video conference.

Malaysia's Minister of International Trade and Industry Mohamed Azmin Ali said the signing of the RCEP agreement will be a testament to the world

on the efforts to strengthen the multilateral trading system and uphold the development agenda in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

"It will also demonstrate to the world that ASEAN together with the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement partners say 'no' to protectionism and 'yes' to free trade," he said.

The RCEP is "a hugely symbolically significant agreement, coming at a time of global trade uncertainty," said Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham.

"It says in a really powerful and tangible way that our region, which has been the driver of global economic growth, is still committed to the principles of trade, openness and ambition," he told the Australian media Sunday.

The signing of the RCEP deal came after more than 30 rounds of negotiations, which were launched in November 2012, as well as a number of specific leaders' and ministerial meetings between the participating countries. The signing ceremony took place during the ongoing 37th ASEAN Summit and related summits, from Thursday to Sunday via video conferences.

Founded in 1967, ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Vietnam is the ASEAN chair for 2020.

*Source: Xinhua*

## RESETTING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

## Australian states urged to plan for return of international students

THE Australian government has asked the states and territories to come up with plans for the return of international students to the country.

Dan Tehan, the Minister for Education, said on Sunday that state and territory governments have been told to draw up proposals for how they can fit international students into their hotel quarantine systems.

However, he reiterated that the tens of thousands of Australian citizens stranded overseas would remain the government's number one priority.

"Our priority is returning Australians and that will continue to be the case especially in the lead up to Christmas," Tehan told Sky News Australia.

"But we have asked state and territory governments to submit plans to us as to how they can bring in international students back."

*Source: Xinhua*

## TYPHOON VAMCO

## Philippine typhoon, floods leave 67 dead, 12 missing

PHILIPPINE disaster response authorities said Sunday that at least 67 people were killed and 12 are missing after Typhoon Vamco barreled through the northern main island of Luzon on Thursday and caused severe flooding.

They estimated agricultural damage at 1.19 billion pesos (\$25 million) and infrastructure damage at 470 million pesos, with nearly 26,000 houses impacted.

Floods and landslides occurred in the capital Manila and various parts of the surrounding provinces.

Local television footage showed people carrying household goods out of muddy houses.

*SOURCE: Kyodo*

## HEALTH RISKS

## India's capital awakes to 'severe' smog as revellers defy cracker ban

TOXIC smog blanketed India's capital early Sunday after firecrackers were set off throughout the night to mark the country's biggest annual festival Diwali despite a ban, further worsening the city's air quality levels.

India's environmental court had imposed a ban to stop millions of the explosives being lighted up to mark the Hindu Festival of Light, stressing that residents were already reeling from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the pollution crisis that arises every winter.

But the sound of firecrackers regularly was heard in the city of 20 million people late Saturday, and sporadically on Sunday.



People play cricket at a part near India Gate amid smoggy conditions a day after Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, in New Delhi on November 15, 2020. **PHOTO: SAJJAD HUSSAIN / AFP**

"The overall air quality of Delhi is in the Severe category as of today morning," the state-run System of Air Quality

Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said Sunday.

"Significant local additional emissions (probably firecrack-

er related) during yesterday night... build up stubble fire-related pollutant concentrations."

*SOURCE: AFP*

UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

# Judge rejects Trump limits on 'Dreamer' immigration program

A judge on Saturday rejected the White House's limitations on a program protecting 700,000 so-called "Dreamers," undocumented migrants brought to the United States as children.

The federal judge in New York ruled that President Donald Trump's acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf was not lawfully serving in his role when he issued the new rules for the DACA program in July. The ruling is another victory for proponents of the Barack Obama-era program after the US Supreme Court in June rejected Trump's cancellation of it. President-elect Joe Biden, who defeated Trump in the November 3 polls, had pledged to reinstate the program when he takes office on January 20. Wolf, who has not been confirmed in his role by the US Senate, issued new restrictions on the program in response to the Supreme Court ruling. Saturday's court decision said his restrictions "effectively suspend-



File photo of immigration rights activists rally in front of the US Supreme Court on November 12, 2019 during hearings on DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) programme. PHOTO: SAUL LOEB, AFP

ed" DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, while the Trump administration reviewed how to proceed. Wolf's rules said new applications would not be accepted and renewals would be

limited to one year instead of two.

They are now invalid because "the court holds that Mr. Wolf was not lawfully serving as Acting Secretary of Homeland Security under the Homeland Se-

curity Act" when he issued them, the ruling said. Judge Nicholas Garaufis said the correct order of succession had not been followed for the acting secretary appointment. SOURCE: AFP

GENEVA REACTION

## Sigh of relief as international organisations await Biden

AFTER years of US disengagement and confrontation, international organisations in Geneva appeared to breathe a collective sigh of relief at Joe Biden's presidential election win -- but the anticipated honeymoon could be short.

"I think everyone is basically waiting with open arms for the US government to come back," said Manfred Elsig, an international relations professor at the World Trade Institute of Bern University.

Republican President Donald Trump's administration has been a traumatic experience for international organisations that in many cases were created by the United States and accustomed to strong US support and leadership.

In Geneva alone, the United States has, under Trump, cut its ties to the UN's top rights body, hamstrung the World Trade Organization and begun withdrawing from the World Health Organization even as the body strives to coordinate the global response to Covid-19.

After the election was called for Democratic Party candidate Biden last weekend, "there was a huge sigh of relief" within the international organisations, a Geneva trade official told AFP, asking not to be named.

Observers expect Washington under Biden to re-engage with the international community and its institutions, and to resume discussions on a number of issues blocked by his predecessor.

### Celebration time

"I think there will be a bit of a honeymoon," Elsig said, warning though that the blissful period could be "short".

SOURCE: AFP

ONGOING POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

# Protesters in Belarus dispersed with stun grenades



A Belarusian rights group said more than 300 people were detained, including journalists. PHOTO: AFP

BELARUSIANS took to the streets of the capital Minsk on Sunday in a fresh demonstration against strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko as anger mounted over the recent death of

an opposition activist.

Armed and masked police dispersed protesters with tear gas and stun grenades and deployed water cannon, local media reported, shortly after the latest

march began against the ex-Soviet country's strongman leader.

Belarusian rights group Viasna said at least 328 people were detained, including journalists. Some 15 metro stations were closed and mobile internet access was limited, an AFP journalist reported. Tens of thousands have taken to the streets of cities throughout Belarus every weekend since August 9 when Lukashenko claimed a sixth presidential term in elections that his critics and Western countries said were rigged. The EU has slapped sanctions on officials in the authoritarian country for rigging the vote and waging a brutal crackdown on post-vote demonstrations that led to mass

arrests and allegations of torture and abuse at the hands of the security services. Sunday's rally comes after thousands of demonstrators turned out in Minsk Friday to mourn the death of a protester who was pronounced dead one day after police arrested him. Roman Bondarenko, 31, died in Minsk after police arrested him following a dispute in a city square that has become a regular meeting place for the opposition.

He was arrested by police on Wednesday after an altercation between residents and masked men who removed red and white ribbons, the colours of the opposition, hung in a building courtyard in Minsk.

SOURCE: AFP

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

# Conservatives flock to 'alt' social media in US election dispute

CONSERVATIVES backing President Donald Trump's claims of election malfeasance have sparked a migration to alternative social media sites which have refrained from filtering unverified claims. The shift has boosted right-wing favorites like Parler, Newsmax and Rumble which have rejected the approach of Facebook and Twitter in labeling and limiting the reach of conspiracy theories. Par-

ler, founded in 2018, saw more than 3.3 million downloads from Apple and Google marketplaces since November 3 to reach 7.3 million installs globally, according to market tracker Sensor Tower. Large gains were also seen for other conservative-friendly services such as Newsmax — which Trump himself endorsed — as well as MeWe and Rumble. These sites have left up Trump's claims of

manipulation of election results in states he lost.

While alternative social networks have seen ephemeral gains in the past, the post-election trend "has reached more mainstream conservatives" who are frustrated with the large internet platforms, according to Bret Schafer, a disinformation specialist at the nonprofit Alliance for Securing Democracy. SOURCE: AFP

## McIlroy's hopes for Masters breakthrough fade

AUGUSTA (United States) —Rory McIlroy fired six birdies in a five-under par 67 on Saturday, but said he has likely left it too late in his latest bid to complete a career Grand Slam at the Masters. McIlroy didn't gain any ground on tournament leading world number one Dustin Johnson despite his strong third-round effort, and the American star was showing no signs of slowing down.

"I think I've left myself too far back after the bad first day, but, you know, I'll give it a good effort (Sunday) and see where that leaves me," the 31-year-old Northern Ireland star said. His goal on Sunday will be "a good round of golf. "Just try to do the same thing I've done the last couple of days, go out and try to hit every fairway, try to hit every green, try to make a birdie on every hole if you can," McIlroy said. "McIlroy had kept his hopes alive with a second-round 66 on a marathon Friday that started nightmarishly — with three bogeys as he resumed his interrupted first round. "It was those last nine holes," McIlroy said of the Friday morning completion of his first round, made necessary after a three-hour weather delay on Thursday.—AFP



England striker Harry Kane. PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS POOL/AFP

## 'Phenomenal' Kane can be England record scorer: Southgate

LONDON—Gareth Southgate says "phenomenal" Harry Kane is capable of becoming England's record goal-scorer as the Tottenham striker prepares to win his 50th cap against Belgium on Sunday.

England captain Kane is sixth on his country's all-time scoring chart with 32 international goals, 21 behind record holder Wayne Rooney.

Southgate believes the 27-year-old should be setting his sights on passing Rooney.

Kane has scored 13 times for Tottenham already this season, but drew a blank in each of his four appearances for England this term. Ahead of his side's Nations League visit to Belgium, England boss Southgate outlined the case for Kane to chase football immortality.

"In terms of what is possible, the goalscoring record is the really interesting one

because his strike rate for us is phenomenal and he has time on his side to chase Wayne Rooney's record which would be a remarkable feat," Southgate told a press conference on Saturday.

"I know from his perspective, while the personal achievement is something he is driven towards, it is the team achievement.

"He is so focused on the team having success and he would want to look back over the next few years at the team achieving."

Kane has enjoyed a host of memorable moments since winning his first England cap four years ago, including finishing as top scorer at the 2018 World Cup. Asked about his favourite memory of Kane in his first 49 caps, Southgate picked out the striker's first international goal.—AFP

## ONE Championship launches mobile action game of Aung La N Sang



PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

ONE Championship recently launched a mobile action game named "The Burmese Python Strikes" featuring non-stop action movements of ONE Championship light heavyweight Champion and Myanmar's sports icon Aung La N Sang on the ONE Application. The game includes adventure series of Aung La N Sang in his homeland of Myanmar. Its starting point is his hometown Myitkyina and game's end is Yangon.

There are a total of 20 episodes in the non-stop action game, and game-lovers need to pass each episode by beating big busters with kicks, strikes and punches of Aung La N Sang.

For launching the game, Aung La N Sang has expressed his cheerfulness to ONE Championship. "It's every kid's dream to star in their own video game," said Aung La N Sang.

"When I was a kid, I used to love playing games like Contra, Double Dragon, Tekken, and Street Fighter. I love fighting games, and it's a treat to have a game with me in it. It's unreal to have myself and my voice in a video game. I am filled with gratitude to ONE Championship for making it happen," Aung La added.

The game was created with challenging levels, and Aung La has shared his experience about

the game.

"I've tried the game, and it's a game I would have enjoyed a lot when I was a kid. I haven't completed it yet — it's rather hard. But I've been in training camp, so I haven't spent too much time on it previously. I suggested including Kachin Manau Park," said Aung La N Sang. "It's an iconic park in Myitkyina, and it's also the park with my bronze statue in it," said Aung La N Sang.

Everyone who wants to play "The Burmese Python Strikes" mobile action game will need to download the ONE Super Application on Play Store for Android phones and App Store for IOS users. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

## France, Germany shine in Nations League as Ramos endures miserable landmark



Let's celebrate: Germany's Timo Werner (right) is congratulated by teammates. PHOTO: AFP

WORLD champions France and Germany rode on the influence of their Chelsea stars to rack up Nations League wins on Saturday while Spain's Sergio Ramos missed two penalties

on the night he celebrated a record-setting 177th international appearance.

Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante scored just his second international goal as France

defeated European champions Portugal 1-0 in Lisbon to secure a place in next year's finals.

Kante was quickest to react to a rebound as he netted the winner on 53 minutes that clinched France top spot in their group. France lead Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal by three points ahead of Tuesday's clash with Sweden in Paris but are guaranteed first place by virtue of their superior head-to-head record.

"It's very nice to see them snatch the win. It's deserved. We've fulfilled our objective of finishing first," France coach Didier Deschamps said after the win over a Portuguese side which had won the inaugural Nations League title on home soil in 2019.—AFP