

## NATIONAL

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Victory Day celebrations held in Nay Pyi Taw

PAGE-4

## NATIONAL

MoPFI Deputy Minister joins 33<sup>rd</sup> Chairs' Meeting of ASEAN Capital Markets Forum

PAGE-4

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 238, 11<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tazaungmon 1382 ME

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

Thursday, 10 December 2020

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## President U Win Myint sends Message of Greetings on occasion of 72<sup>nd</sup> International Human Rights Day celebrations

(10 December 2020)

TODAY is the auspicious occasion of the 72<sup>nd</sup> International Human Rights Day. It is customary to celebrate United Nations International Human Rights Day on 10<sup>th</sup> December, the date on which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was declared.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, a member of the United Nations which places and holds high

regard for human rights, has been participating in the International Human Rights Day celebrations just like other countries. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar was one of the countries which supported the Universal Human Rights Declaration, a fundamental document on human rights, which was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948.

Myanmar has been a signatory of international conventions on human rights such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – ICESCR, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – CRPD, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women – CEDAW,

**SEE PAGE-2**

## President U Win Myint participates in 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) Summit and 10<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV) Summit via videoconference

Myanmar takes over CLMV Chairmanship from Laos for next 2 years



President U Win Myint joins the 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) Summit via videoconference on 9 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

**U**WIN Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) Summit and the 10<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV) Summit held via videoconference at 8:00

am yesterday from the President Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

### 9<sup>th</sup> ACMECS Summit

The 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) Summit was chaired by Mr Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia with the participa-

tion of Mr Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

During the meeting, the leaders reviewed and cordially exchanged views on the im-

plementation of the ACMECS Master Plan (2019-2023) and the future direction of ACMECS.

In his statement, President U Win Myint welcomed the considerable progress ACMECS has made during its 17-year journey towards the regional socio-economic development by successfully overcoming the challenges with the spirit

of solidarity based on the traditional friendship and mutual understanding. He highlighted that despite having geographical advantages for development, the momentum for the development and prosperity of the Mekong sub-region has been hindered by non-traditional and other emerging challenges.

**SEE PAGE-3**

## President U Win Myint sends Message of Greetings on occasion of 72<sup>nd</sup> International Human Rights Day celebrations

### FROM PAGE-1

and Convention on the Rights of the Child – CRC. Additional protocols related to some of these conventions have also been acceded to. To ensure that the fundamental rights and duties of citizens stipulated in the 2008 Constitution and the rights stipulated in international human rights conventions are being enjoyed by Myanmar citizens, these stipulations have been incorporated into the local laws and are being observed. At the same time, we have to take special care that the rights of others are respected as we enjoy our own human rights.

In today's age of globalization, democracy, and human rights have come to the forefront and it may be said that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are interrelated. These are also related to the establishment of the Democratic Federal Union which the State is trying to achieve. Human Rights, Democracy and

Rule of Law have correlations with each other. Among these, if one has been violated, the other two have also been violated. Indifference to and disregard for human rights amounts to total disregard for democracy and the rule of law. That is why the subject of human rights should be disseminated among the people. This is very important. By uplifting human rights, the rule of law and democracy will also be elevated and protected as these are interconnected.

In Myanmar, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission has been exerting strenuous efforts to uplift and protect human rights in cooperation with relevant Union ministries and state and regional governments. The Union Government will cooperate with local and foreign organizations for the emergence of a human society which respects and abides by the principles of human rights.

At present, all countries of the world are facing the COVID-19 pandemic, which is threatening the very

existence and survival of human beings. Because of this pandemic, the survival and existence of human beings, their livelihoods, job opportunities, and development have been greatly impacted. Our country has been striving hard by interacting with the international community, including the World Health Organization to protect, contain and treat this pandemic. In this regard, we have taken into consideration as much as possible not to infringe upon the basic human rights of our people.

In accordance with the motto of the 72<sup>nd</sup> International Human Rights Day, "Recover better – Stand up for Human Rights", I am sending this Message of Greetings solemnly urging all Union ministries, union level organizations, state and regional governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and media organizations to cooperate enthusiastically with the Myanmar Human Rights Commission to elevate and promote the human rights situation of our citizens.

*(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)*

## MFVP to launch online workshop on digital technology literacy

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) will launch an online workshop on digital technology literacy, which will become essential to agricultural producers and exporters, according to MFVP.

The online workshop will be held jointly by Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF) and MFVP. The e-Commerce workshop will be launched on 12, 19 and 26 December on Saturdays from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Anyone interested in this online workshop can join via zoom application.

The discussion topics of this workshop are: what internet is, how to introduce internet market; the advantages of the internet market; who your buyers are, international market and internet market; internet market in Asia; internment market in

China; sale fruits via shop.com.mm in Myanmar; searching the information from internet market; planting with the use of technology; agriculture and breeding with the sensors machines; agriculture method in developing countries and the advantages of using agricultural technology.

Further, the benefits of qualification; using of technology in the regional countries; the telecommunications in Myanmar country mobile communications by 2019; packaging with the use of machines; taking photos to promote the products; describing the information of the products; customizing the products; tracking products; posting the products on internet; seeking the market and information retrieval; expanding into the internet market; advertising the products on internet; online payment and security awareness on the internet will also consist on the

workshop topics. The speaker of the workshop will be Dr Zaw Lin, the treasure of Myanmar Computer Entrepreneurs Association, who is studying technology-based agriculture and authors of the internet market. He formed Youth International University and published a total of 41 books including "The Digital Economics".

Other speakers will also be participating in the workshop. People can learn how to make their own business more successful, and the methods work side by side like other countries by attending the workshop.

People who are engaged in the agriculture industry should attend the workshop, and they can get the zoom link by calling the phone number: 09-7956554521 and email: mffvpea.office@gmail.com and myanfresh@gmail.com.

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

## Hteekhee border trade falls by \$188 mln in 2 months amid COVID surge

BILATERAL trade between Thailand and Myanmar through the Hteekhee land border over the past two months reflected a decrease of \$188.38 million as against a year-ago period.

Between 1 October and 27 November in the current financial year 2020-2021, the figures sharply fell to US\$218 million from \$406 million registered in the previous financial year, according to the 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, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

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

The border trade between Myanmar and Thailand through all border areas — Tachilek, Myawady, Myeik, Kawthoung, Mawtaung, Hteekhee and Maese, declined as of 27 November.

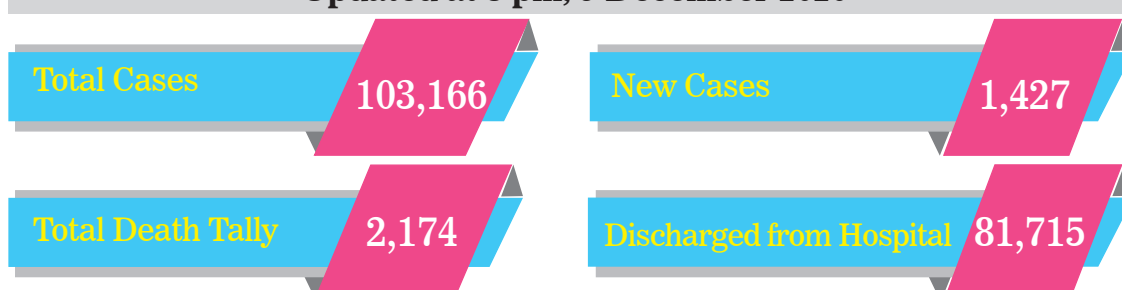
Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, corns and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, and consumer goods such as cosmetics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

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

**1,427** new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 December, total figure rises to **103,166**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **103,166** after **1,427** new cases were reported on 9 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **103,166** confirmed cases, **2,174** died, **81,715** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 9 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 9-12-2020

23

Ministry of Health and Sports

## Benefits from working together

If we want the whole country to develop, we need to combine all our human, financial and material resources and work strenuously together. Only then shall we benefit. It will be of no benefit if the Bamars, the Karens, the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins are divided, each going their own way. We will enjoy benefits only if we work together. And you will find that out only if you try it out.

(Extract from a speech delivered by General Aung San on 11 February 1947 in Panglong at a dinner with Sawbwas)



Shwe-Kyet-Yet and Shwe-Kyet-Kya Pagoda. PHOTO BY: THANT ZAW OO

## President U Win Myint participates in 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic...



President U Win Myint participates in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam Cooperation Summit (CLMV) via video link on 9 December. Myanmar will assume the Chairmanship of CLMV for a tenure of two years. PHOTO: MNA

### FROM PAGE-1

The President expressed his thanks to Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam for their support to Myanmar in the fight against COVID-19. He suggested enhancing cooperation to conduct joint research and production of COVID-19 vaccine and medicine for treatment, and addressing other challenges, including climate change, human and drug trafficking, arms trafficking and terrorism under the ACMECS cooperation.

The President underscored the importance of the tourism sector in the post-pandemic recovery and the implementation of the “Plan of Action on ACMECS Tourism Cooperation (2019-2023)” for speedy economic recovery of the region. He also stressed the need for upgrading transport infrastructure in line with the context of the New Normal, harmonization of health guidelines and procedures at the points of

entry, and promotion the digital economy to maintain regional supply chain and to respond to the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution.

The President welcomed the growing interest of countries and institutions around the world to become the Development Partners of ACMECS, in addition to the ACMECS’s official Development Partners of Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and United States, and congratulated Thailand for taking up the responsibility of a coordinator. He also appreciated Thailand’s initiative of formulating ACMECS Funding Mechanism and its commitment to contribute 200 million USD to the ACMECS Development Fund, which is designed to strengthen self-reliance of ACMECS member states in implementing the ACMECS Master Plan.

The meeting adopted the Phnom Penh Declaration of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ayeyawady- Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation

Strategy (ACMECS) Summit.

### 10<sup>th</sup> CLMV Cooperation Summit

Afterwards, President U Win Myint attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV) Summit held via video link. The Summit was chaired by Mr Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of Lao PDR with the participation of Prime Minister of Cambodia and Prime Minister of Viet Nam.

At the meeting, the leaders cordially exchanged views on the progress and future cooperation of CLMV, and endorsed the “Framework for CLMV Development” which is a unifying strategy for CLMV countries to achieve sustainable upper middle-income economy by 2030.

In his statement, the President highlighted that the CLMV cooperation has been able to assist its member states for the socio-economic development and

the ASEAN Integration process. He stressed the need to have a better planning and close coordination in a balanced manner between health concern and socio-economic priorities in order to rebuild the societies and the economy in the post COVID-19 era, and welcomed the formulation of the “CLMV Action Plan (2021-2022)” which contains a specific provision on COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

Furthermore, the President highlighted the need for restoration of connectivity in the context of New Normal which is vital for the reopening of regional economy, and promotion of the digital economy to address the economic uncertainties caused by the COVID-19. He suggested filling in missing linkages at the economic corridors in the Mekong region to facilitate smooth flow of essential goods and services in the long term. He added that promotion of tourism cooperation should

also be focused in the efforts for regional economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 period.

The meeting adopted the Joint Statement of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV) Summit.

After the session, Lao PDR handed over the Chairmanship of CLMV to Myanmar. In his acceptance speech, President U Win Myint affirmed Myanmar’s commitment to do discharge the duties of Chairmanship with great diligence to collectively address the challenges and to deliver greater benefits to all peoples in the sub-region. Myanmar will assume the Chairmanship of CLMV for a tenure of two years.

U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, Permanent Secretaries of the President Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also present at the Summits. — MNA



We need to work for the economic recovery of the country in the post-COVID-19

Moreover, the average quarantine cost for each person who had contact with a positive case is about K600,000. The considerable amount of this budget expenditure could not be used for other issues. We need to work for the economic recovery of the country in the post-COVID-19, and the country would also need to rehabilitate economy. If we could use medical treatment budgets in the economic recovery plan, it will benefit the country and the people in the long term.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's report on COVID-19 containment measures, on 5 December 2020)

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Victory Day celebrations held in Nay Pyi Taw



The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Victory Day celebrations are in progress in Nay Pyi Taw on 9 December. PHOTO: MNA

A ceremony to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Victory Day was held at the Ministry of Education in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, in accordance with the healthcare rules for COVID-19 prevention.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, directors-general, deputy directors-general and officials celebrated the event at the headquarters while rectors and principals of universities, degree colleges and colleges under the Higher Education Department, the education officers from regions, states, districts and town-

ships, student unions and alumni of Myoma School joined the celebrations online.

The ceremony was opened with 'Zartiman (Patriotism)' music video.

The message from President U Win Myint to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Victory Day event was read by Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi.

The ceremony was concluded after screening a commemorative video clip and the music video titled 'Beauties of the Union'.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MoPFI Deputy Minister joins 33<sup>rd</sup> Chairs' Meeting of ASEAN Capital Markets Forum

DEPUTY Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win, in his capacity as the Chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission joined the 33<sup>rd</sup> Chairs' Meeting of the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum via videoconferencing yesterday.

The meeting was presided by Chairman of Viet Nam State Securities Commission Mr Tran Van Dzung and attended by officials of ASEAN Capital Markets Commission, partner organizations and Asian Development

Bank.

The meeting discussed the long-term and mid-term Roadmap of ASEAN Capital Markets for sustainable funding in ASEAN regions, criteria for ASEAN Capital Markets, Sustainability-Linked Bond, procedures for sustainability reporting of ASEAN Corporations, assessment for 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Corporate Governance, technical aids of ADB and ASEAN Capital Markets website programmes and cooperation works between ASEAN

Working Committee for Capital Market Development (WC-CMD) and ACMF.

The meeting also agreed to keep carrying out the priority sectors of ACMF Action Plan (2021-2025) between 2021 and 2015. The ACMF is a high-level grouping of capital market regulators from ASEAN countries.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Chairs' Meeting of the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum will be held in Brunei. —MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win participates in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Chairs' Meeting of ACMF on 9 December via videoconference. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar nationals brought back home from Malaysia, ROK by relief flights

A relief flight of Myanmar Airways International organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur landed at the Yangon International Airport with 173 Myanmar nationals who were stranded in Malaysia due to the suspension of international flights yesterday.

Moreover, another relief flight of the MAI organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Crew Change Supporting Committee also brought back 131 Myanmar seafarers who were stranded abroad after the expi-

ration of their contracts from the Republic of Korea in the same evening. This group included 96 persons from the Republic of Korea, 1 from Singapore, 1 from France, 3 from Chile, 9 from the Philippines, 1 from Egypt, 3 from Turkey, 12 from Panama and 5 from Indonesia.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged 7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day

home quarantine.

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

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Returnees are in the Immigration process. PHOTO: MNA

# “People are the key”

## 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ARMAC steering committee held online

THE ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre Steering Committee held its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting through videoconferencing yesterday morning in its headquarters in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Myanmar Ambassador to Cambodia U Thit Lin Ohn and Director for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Nyan Myint Aung and Lt Col Htin Aung Kyaw from the Office of the Directorate of Military Engineers, in their capacities as the members of the committee, attended the meeting from Nay Pyi Taw online.

The meeting was also at-

tended by the ambassadors from the ASEAN countries, Executive Director for the ARMAC Mr Prum Suonpraseth, representatives of the committee and officials.

At the meeting, the Ambassador of Viet Nam handed over the rotating chairmanship of ARMAC to the Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Cambodia.

The meeting also agreed to hold the ARMAC Steering Committee meeting every four months instead every three months.—MNA

*(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)*



Myanmar Ambassador to Cambodia U Thit Lin Ohn and officials attend the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of ARMAC steering committee via videoconferencing on 9 December. PHOTO: MNA

## Myanmar anti-corruption officials join 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-PAC



Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission delegation joins the 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Parties Against Corruption ASEAN-PAC via videoconference on 9 December. PHOTO: MNA

A delegation of Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission led by member Daw Myat Myat Soe joined the 16<sup>th</sup> Principals Meeting of ASEAN Parties Against Corruption (ASEAN-PAC) hosted by the Government Inspectorate of Viet Nam (Viet Nam-GIV) in the form of videoconference yesterday.

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of 10 ASEAN-PAC member countries.

Myanmar became a member of the South East Asia Parties Against Corruption (SEA-PAC) on 2013 and cooperated with the member countries to combat corruption.

The ASEAN Secretary-Gen-

eral Office approved to recognize the SEA-PAC as an Entity of ASEAN in 2017 and officially changed the SEA-PAC into ASEAN-PAC.

With the theme "Better Governance, Less Corruption", the delegations discussed and agreed on records of 15<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-PAC, amendments to the ASEAN-PAC Action Plan for 2020-2022, Terms of Reference and logo in line with the Group's new name while the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Thailand presented their one-year performance on anti-corruption and transferred the chairmanship to the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Brunei for 2021.—MNA

*(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*

## Myanmar Watercolour Society to organize online art exhibition

MYANMAR Watercolour Society will organize an online art exhibition under the title of 'Spend Stay-at-Home Time with Watercolour'.

The 18<sup>th</sup> exhibition of this society will be held from 25 to 29

December.

U Mar Lar, chairman of Myanmar Watercolour Society, said that their group annually shows art exhibitions for development of watercolour, and the online show

this year will take place on the Facebook page of society due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

"The annual events are aimed to create opportunities for promotion of Myanmar watercol-

our art and the participation of amateur artists. The exhibition will be held online this year to prevent COVID-19 infection," he said.

Each of the 40 member

artists will show their 5 paintings, and prices will range from US\$200 to \$800.—Min Htet Aung (Man Sub-printing House)

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*



Watercolour paintings to be shown in an upcoming online exhibition of Myanmar Watercolour Society. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

# Statement of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on 72<sup>nd</sup> International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2020

## Statement No. (15/2020)

1. Today is the International Human Rights Day and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) is, as in other countries around the world, celebrating this auspicious occasion to mark the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. Since then, there have been profound developments in nations of the world in efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of their citizens.

2. The MNHRC finds this occasion most appropriate to reflect on its activities throughout this year and present to the Myanmar people what it has achieved, what it is planning and where it has fallen short in implementing its mandate.

3. The work of the Commission in 2020 was based on its Operational Plan for the year, developed with specific activities to be implemented within the set timeline. The COVID-19 epidemic restrictions inhibited the full implementation of the Plan and even led to the suspension of certain activities such as visits to scenes of human rights violations, prisons and jails, human rights lectures tours and planned workshops. However, the Commission made every effort to carry out as many activities as possible. The following are the areas covered by these activities.

- a) To amend the MNHRC Law of 2014, the Commission was able to finalize the amendments called for by the international community, through consultations with the Supreme Court, the Office of the Attorney-General, the Ministry of Home Affairs and CSOs. These amendments have been submitted to the President's Office.
- b) To fulfil its mandate to protect human rights, the Commission made 42 visits to prisons, jails and detention centres in early 2020 before the COVID-19 epidemic worsened, including the youth training camps at Thanlyin and Nget Aw San in Yangon. Findings of the visits and the Commission's recommendations were communicated to the Government entities concerned and many have been implemented by relevant authorities. In this regard, the Commission is encouraged by the cooperation of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- c) In spite of the COVID -19 epidemic, the Commission has received complaints without interruption, totalling 2,102. They were examined in daily screening meetings and referred to relevant authorities for verification and necessary action. In respect of serious violations, seven visits were made to the sites of violations to verify the situation and then reported to the Office of the President. The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the regional governments of Yangon Region, Mandalay Region and Ayeyawady Region for their responsible responses to the complaints referred to them and hopes to receive continued cooperation from them.
- d) To enhance access to the Commission

regarding human rights violations, the Commission broadcasts the information on how to lodge complaints with the Commission in twelve ethnic languages, using public radio and television channels.

- e) Pursuant to the Operational Plan for 2020, the Commission observed the Multiparty Democracy General Election held on 8 November 2020. It observed 20 polling stations in the seven selected constituencies of Yangon Region and Nay Pyi Taw and reported its observations to the Office of the President and Union Election Commission.
- f) Under the Paris Principles, the MNHRC, like other National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), is required to promote human rights through education, outreach programmes, the media, publications, training and advising. Accordingly, before the onset of COVID-19 the Commission had given lectures at training courses of the Government for officials of the military, police, civil service and fire brigades. The outreach programmes on human rights are being planned, targeting the wider community. The possibility of on-line trainings on human rights for government officials of States, Regions and Townships are also being explored with the UNDP.
- g) Since its reconstitution, the Commission has issued 15 public statements to bring to the attention of the Government and the public certain serious human rights situations. These statements concerned unregulated mining practices giving rise to loss of many lives, cyber bullying of the rights of women, fulfilling the special needs of the vulnerable groups in anti-COVID efforts. Playing its advisory role under the Paris Principles, the Commission has recommended the Government to ratify or at least sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and already embarked on advocacy steps for United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT), the two conventions extremely important for a democratic nation. The Commission has now presented its recommendations to the concerned authorities to become a state party to the ICCPR.
- h) To strengthen its relations with civil society, on-line discussions were held on Business and Human Rights, Land Law reform, regulation of private security services, question on digital rights and election monitoring. With their cooperation, talks on Persons with Disability (PWD) and LGBT rights were held. Also workshops on child rights, PWD, women and girls' rights were conducted at the Commission. The CSOs engaged by the Commission in these activities were MCRB, Equality Myanmar, NCRWG, Shwemintha Foundation, Democracy Reporting International (DRI), Pen Myanmar, Triangle Women Organiza-

tion, LGBT rights Network etc. Training of trainers programmes have been planned to be conducted with Equality Myanmar. The Commission met in Nay Pyi Taw with the Fundamental Rights of the Citizens, Democracy and Human Rights Committee of Amyotha Hluttaw and exchanged views on possible areas of cooperation between the two bodies.

- i) To engage with international human rights mechanisms, the Commission played the advisory role in the preparation of the Government UPR Report while it submitted its own report. Two technical working group meetings of the South East Asia National Human rights Institutions Forum (SEANF), its 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, a High-Level Dialogue with the Asia Pacific Forum, and the Annual Meeting of the APF were held through videoconferencing. The UNDP has assisted the Commission in upgrading its IT infrastructure and training of the Commission's staff in IT skills in a timely manner to enable the Commission to effectively participate in all these meetings.
- j) The Commission is currently planning together with the UNDP to conduct a business and human rights session on 15 December with the participation of B&HR experts and representatives of the private sector of Myanmar. The Commission also participated in the on-line GANHRI Annual Assembly of NHRIs from 3 to 4 December 2020.
- k) Having reviewed the implementation of its Operational Plan for 2020, the Commission has embarked on the development of new activities for the 2021 Operational Plan. The suspended activities of last year's plan will be integrated together with the new activities in the new plan.
- l) The Commission's capacity has now been obviously enhanced through various trainings conducted through cooperation with the UNDP and CSOs. In addition to the branches in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Sittway, the Commission is planning to open three more branches, starting with the first one in Ayeyawady Region and the remaining two in Shan and Kayah States afterwards.

4. Even amidst COVID-19 restrictions, the Commission had endeavoured to fulfil its mandate under the MNHRC Law in accordance with the Paris Principles to the best of its ability. On this International Human Rights Day, the Commission solemnly pledges never to relent in its efforts to stand up for human rights and fundamental freedoms and contribute to rebuilding the Myanmar society highly impacted by the pandemic.

**Myanmar National Human Rights Commission**  
Date: 10 December 2020

# Myanmar rice shipment plummets in past two months

MYANMAR'S rice export through sea trade drastically plunged in the past two months amid the competitive pricing, the traders said.

The export price of Myanmar's rice is relatively lower than in other Asian countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam. Yet, the prices are a bit higher than those market prices of India and Pakistan, Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) stated.

Myanmar cannot practise price reduction strategies based on competition to cover the production and logistic costs. Consequently, exports by sea are dropping, for now, said exporters.

Myanmar's rice export by sea generated an estimated income of US\$77.08 million as of 27 November in the current financial year, and the figures reflect a decrease of \$74.67 million compared with a year-ago period. The export volume by sea plunged from over 519,368 tonnes to 206,046 tonnes in the current FY, as per data released by MRF.

However, rice exports via land border rose in the current



Myanmar's rice export by sea generated an estimated income of US\$77.08 million as of 27 November in the current financial year, and the figures reflect a decrease of \$74.67 million compared with a year-ago period. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

FY. Rice exports through the land borders have generated an estimated \$53.96 million (144,214 tonnes) in the current FY, which increased from \$25.379 million (96,224 tonnes) registered in the corresponding period of last year. "China's demand is increas-

ing during the harvest time of monsoon paddy. The price is pretty good, as well. About 40,000 rice bags are daily entering the Muse trade zone for now, and then, the traders keep sending the rice bags to China," U Min Thein, vice-chairman of Muse rice depot said.

Additionally, K10.6 billion fraud case by the Chinese trader has not affected the rice trade through the Muse border so far, and the business is still continued, he added. The volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 October and 27 November in the

current FY reached 350,260 metric tons, worth over US\$131 million, according to an announcement from MRF.

Myanmar targets to export 4 million tonnes of rice and broken rice in the current FY, said U Aung Than Oo, vice-president of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF). MRF expected to ship 2.4 million tonnes of rice, and broken rice in the last FY ended 30 September 2020. The country surpassed the export target, sending over 426,611 metric tons to neighbouring countries through border trade and over 2.15 million tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners via maritime trade, totalling over 2.58 million tonnes.

Last year, a surge in rice shipping through sea trade was contributed to meeting year's export target, MRF stated.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the FY2017-2018, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.3 million tonnes, in the FY2018-2019.—Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Myanmar-India border trade up by \$2.9 mln as of 27 Nov

THE bilateral trade between Myanmar and India hit US\$18.4 million as of 27 November in the current financial year 2020-2021 ending 30 September, said a statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce.

The border trade during the period increased by \$2.9 million compared to that of the same period last year.

The Myanmar-India total

border trade during the period was shared by Myanmar's export of \$18.3 million and its import of \$0.07 million. The two countries carry out border trade mainly through Tamu, Reed, Thantlang cross-border trade camps while a significant part of bilateral trade is delivered through ships.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the total trade volume from Tamu bor-

der trading post in the 2019-2020FY was \$41.77 million with exports valued at \$40.73 million and imports at \$1.04 million. Total trade volume via the Reed border trade post in the same period was \$50.88 million with exports valued at \$48.86 million and imports at \$2.03 million.

Myanmar mainly exports to India fruits and vegetables, fishery and forestry products, while importing from India medicines, electronic products, motorbikes, cotton yarn, non-alloy steel and other construction materials.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's border trade with four neighbouring countries—China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh—totalled \$1.14 billion, shared by \$714 million in exports and US\$427 million in imports. — Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Myanmar mainly exports to India fruits and vegetables, fishery and forestry products. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

## MIC to give green light to remaining 24 proposals in current FY

By Nyein Nyein

DURING the current financial year 2020-2021, Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will give the go-ahead to 24 proposals submitted in the previous FY2019-2020, and they are carefully assessing the projects, said Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Twenty-four foreign investment proposals have an estimated capital of over US\$3.5 billion. The commission is carefully reviewing 24 proposals due to large projects, he added.

"Those proposals required MIC permit as they have large capital investments. We need to assess the projects which are strategic to the government. The five-year term of the incumbent government led by the National League for Democracy (NLD) is going to end. Although the ruling government won enough seats to form the next government, we are advised to do a systematic review to compile all data and statistics for the past five years.

The institutions concerned are ensuring check and balance. Therefore, the commission still cannot grant permits on those proposals. The projects have been prepared for evaluation steps. We need discussion with the ministries concerned. We will proceed to permit upon approval of the ministries concerned," U Thant Sin Lwin affirmed.

MIC intends to reach the FDI target of \$5.8 billion for the current FY2020-2021.

The country fell short of the FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the FY2019-2020 due to the COVID-19 impacts, registering FDI inflows of only \$5.68 billion, according to the DICA data.

As a result of this, MIC will critique the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP). The commission and Japan International Cooperation Agency will jointly review the MIPP to boost the agricultural, health, industrial and digitization sectors for the post-coronavirus era, the DICA DG stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# Respecting rights of PWDs key to helping them stand on their own

WITH only 10 years left before 2030, the last year for the Sustainable Development Goals which include the right of persons with disabilities, we must do more to make sure that PWDs in our country stand on their own.

To ensure that no PWD is left behind in their rights guaranteed by the law, we need to continue to review the law on rights of people with disabilities.

All stake holders and regional authorities should be sensitive to address disability challenges in the financial support processes and job opportunities for persons with disabilities which make up 4.6 per cent of the country's population.

... we would like to call on relevant civil society organizations, particularly the media, to play a major role in raising awareness and changing attitudes towards physically challenged people.

Meanwhile, our national development activities should promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities for PWDs to participate in every facet of life — civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

Hence, we would like to call on relevant civil society organizations, particularly the media, to play a major role in raising awareness and changing attitudes towards physically challenged people

We hope that all hands from the different sectors would be on deck to provide an enabling environment for the PWDs. Only then, will our country be in synergy with the global vision of development and be able to build a just society devoid of discrimination.

**Trade Mark Ads**

Call Thin Thin May. 09251022355, 09974424848

## WOMEN NEED MORE SAFE PASSAGES TO MIGRATE

# Making Migration Safe and Fair for Women Workers

By Akio Nakayama, Donglin Li and Nicolas Burniat, representatives of IOM, ILO and UN Women in Myanmar.



There are over 4 million Myanmar nationals working abroad, a third of whom are women but many more migrate outside official routes. PHOTO: UN

"Women hold up half the sky," so the saying goes and it is certainly true that remittances from women migrant workers bolster the economy of many areas of rural Myanmar.

As the world draws attention to the global pandemic of violence against women during the ongoing 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, many Myanmar migrant women are stranded overseas, unable to return due to border closures. Many more are working long hours in factories, plantations, farms, private households, on construction sites in care facilities, hotels, shops. With over one million Myanmar women workers overseas, their experiences are diverse and individual, inspiring and heart-breaking, exciting and mundane, dangerous and safe. It is in this context that the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Women have joined forces to make migration safe, fair and a fulfilling and rewarding experience for all migrant women.

### Out of poverty

As the World Bank and others have consistently shown, global migration has lifted millions out of poverty and boosted economic growth. In Southeast Asia alone, there is an estimated 20.2 million migrant workers, of which nearly 6.9 million migrate to surrounding countries. According to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, there are over 4 million Myanmar nationals working abroad, a third of whom are women but many more migrate outside official routes. Migration benefits both the countries of origin and destination and for Myanmar, where 25 per cent of the population are international or internal migrants, 2019 World Bank data showed that remittances from migrants amounted to USD2.8 billion, representing 4 per cent of the country's GDP.

While the economic impact of migration can be positive, migration is not always safe making migrants and particularly women

vulnerable to violence at different parts of their journeys for different reasons.

Women migrants can be exploited by labour recruiters, brokers, smugglers or traffickers, their employers or other employees, before departure, in transit and in the countries of destination. In many instances, their plight is further exacerbated by lack of avenues to seek help due to language challenges or general lack of access and information. The more dependent migrant women are on the employer, especially unscrupulous ones, the more desperate their situation. If there are limited safe, legal and regular migration channels, women may migrate irregularly, making it harder for them to seek help when they might need it.

Ultimately, the violence women migrants face during migration is connected to the deeply rooted patriarchal underpinnings of gender inequality. This affects women's ability to benefit from opportunities and to be free from violence. In order to make positive and lasting system changes, governments, employers, labour organizations, and civil society, must act to break through the patriarchal system that undermines gender equality in Myanmar and the wider region.

But we must seek different ways to tackle the issues around safety of migrant women. One of the biggest risks is the undertaking of migration through informal channels as many migrants lack the required legal documents with some sources suggesting that a majority of Myanmar migrants migrate irregularly. This is a key factor that puts women at risk, exposing them to several forms of violence such as exploitation, abuse, harassment, trafficking and forced labour with little recourse to seek for help.

Women need more safe passages to migrate. They need labour migration policies and approaches to protect them. While gender-sensitive pre-departure preparation, workshops and messages that educate women on safe and fair migration can help women workers to make informed decisions about migration, we must also acknowledge that the onus must never exclusively be on the migrant women to stay safe but on the perpetrators not to abuse and on the processes to be transparent and effective and for all involved to commit to safe migration. Therefore, access to support services such as legal recourse and counselling need to be further strengthened for these women.

### Workplace harassment

It is also essential that we address workplace harassment and the culture of impunity of perpetrators as this determines the wellbeing of women migrant workers. Jobs that are predominantly performed by women, for example domestic work, carers, the entertainment industry are often not recognized in labour laws or valued by society. This needs to change.

Considering the benefits countries of destination gain from migration, they should help migrants in this transition and provide protective mechanisms against those who aim to take advantage of them. Migrant women who are exploited, abused and utterly dependent on their employer or trafficker, can feel helpless and powerless, unable to speak up, fight or take any form of action because that would make them unemployed or face consequences of having migrated irregularly.

One of the factors closer to home that contributes to making migrant women vulnerable is the sense of duty they have for their families trying to support their parents, siblings, and family members, even at their own expense. The transformation of traditional gender roles is therefore key for empower-

ment and protection of women against risky migration. At the same time, migration can help women to gain greater financial independence and confidence and offer opportunities outside traditional gender roles. Hence, migration can also enable women's empowerment if protection measures are strengthened to provide more safe passages.

Some of these challenges, including an increased care burden on women, have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since April, an estimated total of 180,000 migrants, more than 40 per cent of whom were women, have returned home to Myanmar. Globally, due to worries of migrants transmitting COVID-19, there has been anti-migrant sentiment, which has even forced some to hide and not seek help even when it was available, making them even more vulnerable to infection and other associated risks.

One of the main issues facing returning migrants is loss of income for an indefinite and extended period. This has not only affected the returning migrants themselves but also their families who relied on their earnings. In addition to the hardship faced due to poverty, such economic insecurity also amounts to vulnerabilities that can make returnee mi-

grant women particularly at risk of gender-based violence including domestic violence. Globally, a very worrying rise in domestic violence has been recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic. For women whose husbands or other male relatives are abusive, the restrictions on movement and socializing have resulted in women being isolated in their homes without any means of escape or access to help. The Gender Equality Network in Myanmar have been contacted by women in Myanmar in such situations.

### The safe return of migrants

Notably, women and civil society organizations in Myanmar have played a vital role as leaders and frontline responders advocating for and facilitating the safe return of migrants – women and men. It is essential that they are fully supported to enable them to provide adequate support to the returning migrants and ensure that pregnant women and mothers and children, are supported in finding refuge during these precarious times. Some returned migrants have also contributed to the efforts and joined the response, working in quarantine facilities where they are housed.

Migrant women from Myanmar fill huge gaps in the job market carrying out essential roles particularly in domestic, care and hospitality work. The role of migrant women remains undervalued, they often earn less than their male counterparts and face exploitation, extortion and gender-based violence.

Women play a central role in Myanmar society and its economic development and it is our hope that together we can ensure that the contributions of Myanmar's migrant women – home and abroad – are applauded, recognised and acknowledged, and that we create conducive environments for these strong and ambitious women to seek safe opportunities for themselves and their families.

As we conclude this year's 16 Days of Activism, it is time to accelerate our collective efforts to dismantle the structural inequalities that result in exploitation, disempowerment and violence against Myanmar migrant women.

SOURCE: IOM, ILO and UN Women in Myanmar

အမျိုးသမီးများအပေါ် အကြမ်းဖက်မှုပျောက်ရေး (၁၆)ရက်တာလှုပ်ရှားမှု အထိမ်းအမှတ်အခမ်းအနား

“အမျိုးသမီးများအပေါ် အကြမ်းဖက်မှု ကာကွယ်ရန်အတွက် ဝီသီသန့်ရန်ပုံငွေတာဝန်ရှိသူ အချက်အလက်ကောက်ယူဖို့”

“Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”

**Myanmar Daily Weather Report**  
(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 9 December, 2020)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 10 December, 2020:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas 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:** Generally fair in the whole country.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10th December, 2020:** Fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 December, 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 December, 2020:** Fair weather.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
သတင်းစာများလုပ်ငန်းစဉ်အတွက် သတင်းပို့ရန်အတွက်  
Circulation order is in easier way. **HOTLINE 09-45237515**

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
သတင်းစာ၊ ဂျာနယ်များအတွက် အား ခိုင်စွာတောင်းဆိုပါ  
ပုံနှိပ်စက်ဖြင့် ပုံနှိပ်ပေးပါသည်။  
Newspapers & Journal Printing Service. **Contact: 01-8604530**

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
မြေကြေးကုန်များနှင့် မြေကြေးအရင်းစီးများအနေဖြင့် မြေကြေး  
ထုတ်လုပ်မှုတို့ကို အထောက်အကူပြုရန်အတွက်  
Advertise with us. **HOTLINE 09-974424848**



THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.gnlm.com.mm

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Kyaw Myaing

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Aung Khin

**LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS**Ye Htut Tin  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Aung Htein  
Tun Tun Naing  
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.  
[gnlmnews@gmail.com](mailto:gnlmnews@gmail.com)  
[www.gnlm.com.mm](http://www.gnlm.com.mm)  
[www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com](http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com)  
[www.facebook.com/thegnlm](http://www.facebook.com/thegnlm)**Write for us**We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm) with your name and title.

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

**THIRD-PHASE TRIALS****UAE registers China's Sinopharm vaccine, says 86% effective**

THE United Arab Emirates on Wednesday officially registered the coronavirus vaccine produced by Chinese drug giant Sinopharm, saying it was 86 per cent effective according to analysis of third-phase trials.

The health ministry "has announced the official registration" of the vaccine, state news agency WAM said, without elaborating on how it would now be used.

The vaccine has been undergoing third-phase trials in the Emirates since July, and it was approved for emergency use for healthcare workers in September.

"The announcement is a significant vote of confidence by the UAE's health authorities in the safety and efficacy of this vaccine," WAM said.

UAE health officials have

reviewed Sinopharm's interim analysis of the third-phase trials which shows it is 86 per cent effective against coronavirus, the report said.

"The analysis also shows the vaccine to have 99 per cent seroconversion rate of neutralizing antibody and 100 per cent effectiveness in preventing moderate and severe cases of the disease.

"Furthermore, the analysis shows no serious safety concerns."

China has four vaccine products in the final stages of development, three of which -- including Sinopharm -- use an inactivated form of the novel coronavirus to boost immunity.

This means they only need to be refrigerated and can be easily distributed compared to jabs



UAE PM Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum receives Covid vaccine shot. PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP

developed by rivals Pfizer and BioNTech or Moderna, which have reported efficacy of 95 per cent and 94 per cent respectively but need to be transported at

minus 70 to 20 degrees Celsius.

However, Chinese drugmakers have not released any data on their vaccines' safety or efficacy.

SOURCE: AFP

**CHENGDU****China tests 250,000 people for Covid after new cluster emerges**

A passenger looks at a photo on a train of the Line 1 of Chengdu Metro in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, Oct. 17, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG XI

CHINA has tested more than a quarter of a million people for the coronavirus after a handful of new cases were detected in the southern city of Chengdu.

An elderly couple were di-

agnosed as confirmed cases on Monday, and authorities have been tracing their close contacts and testing food samples.

Local health officials said the virus was detected on food

stored in their fridge and on a chopping board in their flat.

As of Tuesday 255,200 residents in the city had been swabbed for COVID-19 tests, the municipal health commission said, with six confirmed cases and one asymptomatic patient.

Schools and kindergartens in the Pidudu district where the cases emerged have closed, according to local authorities, with students and teachers to quarantine and be tested for the virus.

Footage on state TV showed people in a park queuing up to be tested by health officials in hazmat suits.

China -- where the virus first surfaced late last year -- has largely brought domestic

transmissions under control, with state media blaming recent clusters on imports of frozen food and other shipments.

The World Health Organization says there is currently no evidence that people can catch COVID-19 from food or food packaging.

Almost a year after the virus first emerged in the central city of Wuhan, China is stepping up a campaign to question its origins.

A Tianjin health official said in November that the city's infections had been traced to imported cold chain products such as pig heads from North America, saying the virus strains found were similar to those in Europe and the US.

SOURCE: AFP

**AHEAD OF CHRISTMAS****Merkel demands tougher curbs as virus deaths break record**

CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel on Wednesday demanded tougher curbs to bring down coronavirus infections, as the German death toll reached a grim daily record of nearly 600 people.

"When mulled wine stands are being built, when waffle stands are being built, that's not compatible with what we

had agreed of only takeaways for food and drinks," she told parliament, in reference to traditional German Christmas markets.

"I am really sorry... but if we're paying the price of death tolls at 590 people daily then that's, in my view, not acceptable."

SOURCE: AFP

**NET PROFIT JUMP 20 TIMES****Malaysian glove maker saw profit surge as pandemic fuelled demand**

TOP Glove Corp. Bhd., the world's largest rubber glove producer, saw net profit jump 20 times to 2.4 billion ringgit (\$590 million) in the fiscal first quarter of 2021 through November from the same period a year earlier, as global demand surged during the pandemic, the Malaysian company announced Wednesday.

Despite being dogged by negative headlines after more

than 5,000 of its employees were infected with coronavirus, forcing it to shut dozens of its factories and prompting an investigation by authorities over labour welfare issues, the company said it "attained its highest ever quarterly sales revenue of 4.76 billion ringgit, representing a 294 per cent increase compared with the first quarter of the financial year 2020."—SOURCE: KYODO

HANDBRAKE

## Virus-hit Cyprus shuts hospitality, malls for holiday season

CYPRUS announced Wednesday it would close hospitality venues and shopping malls and ban church attendance over the Christmas holidays to curb a spike in coronavirus cases.

Health Minister Constantinos Ioannou announced the tighter restrictions following an emergency cabinet meeting.

Rapid antigen tests throughout Cyprus had shown that “the virus is everywhere, in all cities, villages, districts”.

He said bars, restaurants, cafes and other hospitality venues must close, as will shopping malls, while church services

will go ahead without attendees and after-school tutorial centres are also banned.

The new measures will be enforced from December 11 to 31.

High schools will resort to remote learning from December 14, Ioannou told a press conference.

Face masks are mandatory indoors and outdoors, except at home, while household gatherings are limited to 10 people, as are weddings and funerals.

The Cyprus Covid-19 case tally is now at 13,286 and 68 deaths.—SOURCE: AFP

NEWS

IN BRIEF

HUMAN RIGHTS

## Pandemic putting democracy under threat: study

MORE than six of 10 countries around the world have adopted measures during the Covid-19 pandemic that threaten democracy or human rights, a report by democracy institute International IDEA said Wednesday.

The study, which examined the situation in almost all countries of the world, concluded that 61 per cent of nations “implemented restrictions that were either illegal, disproportionate, indefinite or unnecessary” in at least one area of democratic freedoms.

Among countries widely considered democracies, 43 per cent fell into this category, a figure that rose to 90 per cent for authoritarian regimes, according to the Stockholm-based intergovernmental organization.—SOURCE: AFP

A GREAT CELEBRATION

## Israel gets first delivery of Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vows to set an example to fellow Israelis by being the first to be inoculated as US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer BioNTech delivers a first planeload of its coronavirus vaccine. PHOTO: ABIR SULTAN POOL/AFP

ISRAEL received its first batch of Pfizer’s coronavirus vaccine on Wednesday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declaring the pandemic’s end was “in sight” and vowing to get the first jab.

“This is a great celebration for Israel,” he said on the tarmac at Ben Gurion airport, near Tel Aviv, as a fork-lift truck started unloading the cargo from a red and yellow DHL air freighter.

The shipment was the first of eight million doses ordered from US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer BioNTech.

It came ahead of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, which begins on Thursday.

“The end is in sight,” Netan-

yahu said referring to the disease which has infected 348,948 Israelis, 2,932 of them fatally, according to a Wednesday update.

“What is important to me is that Israeli citizens get vaccinated,” he added.

“I want to serve as an example to them and I intend to be the first to be injected with this vaccine in the state of Israel.”

The Pfizer vaccine has yet to receive the necessary regulatory approvals for use in Israel but Netanyahu said he expected it to receive clearance “in the very near” future.

The results of third-phase clinical trials showed that the vaccine was 90 per cent effective in

preventing Covid-19 symptoms and did not produce adverse side effects among thousands of volunteers.

Britain started inoculating its citizens with the vaccine on Tuesday.

Israel has also contracted to buy six million Covid-19 vaccine doses from US biotech firm Moderna which are expected to be delivered in 2021, giving a total of 14 million shots for its population of nine million.

The Jewish state imposed a second nationwide lockdown in September, when the country had one of the world’s highest per capita infection rates.

SOURCE: AFP

ALLERGIC REACTIONS

## UK issues allergy warning over Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine



British health officials on Wednesday warned that anyone with a history of significant allergic reactions should not have the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid jab for the time being. PHOTO: AFP

BRITISH health officials on Wednesday warned that anyone with a history of significant allergic reactions should not have the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid jab for the time being.

The warning came after two members of the state-run National Health Service who were among the first to receive the vaccine on Tuesday suffered allergic reactions and needed treatment.

NHS England medical director Stephen Powis said both people, who had a history of reactions, were now recovering well.

The independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has now

advised that “people with a significant history of allergic reactions do not receive this vaccination” as a precaution, he added.

“Significant” allergic reactions include those to medicines, food or vaccines, according to the MHRA.

Thousands of Britons became the first in the Western world to receive an approved Covid vaccine on Tuesday as the NHS began the biggest vaccination drive since it was created in 1948.

The vaccine is administered in two doses, 21 days apart. The over-80s and health and social care staff are first in line to get the jab in the national rollout.

Britain has received some 800,000 doses of the vaccine in the first batch of an order of 40 million. Up to four million doses are expected by the end of December.

Pfizer chief executive Albert Bourla on Tuesday said he understood global concerns about the speed with which pharmaceutical companies have produced vaccines against Covid-19.

But he insisted no corners have been cut.

The vaccine had been tested “in the exact same way as we are testing any vaccine that is circulating out there”, he told a virtual media briefing in Geneva.

SOURCE: AFP

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

## WHO against mandatory Covid-19 vaccines



Margaret Keenan, 90, becomes the first person to get the newly-approved coronavirus vaccine as Britain began its inoculation roll-out on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE World Health Organization said Monday that persuading people on the merits of a Covid-19 vaccine would be far more effective

than trying to make the jabs mandatory.

The WHO said it would be down to individual countries as

to how they want to conduct their vaccination campaigns against the coronavirus pandemic.

But the UN health agency

insisted making it mandatory to get immunized against the disease would be the wrong road to take, adding there were examples in the past of mandating vaccines use only to see it backfire with greater opposition to them.

"I don't think that mandates are the direction to go in here, especially for these vaccines," Kate O'Brien, director of the WHO's immunization department, told a virtual news conference.

"It is a much better position to actually encourage and facilitate the vaccination without those kinds of requirements. "I don't think we envision any countries creating a mandate for vaccination." O'Brien said there may be certain hospital professions in which being vaccinated might be required or highly recommended for staff and patient safety. But WHO experts admitted there was a battle to be fought to convince the general public to take the vaccines as they become available.

SOURCE: AFP

## FIGHTING FOR ITS SURVIVAL

## Norwegian Air secures bankruptcy protection in Norway

EMBATTLED low-cost carrier Norwegian Air Shuttle said Tuesday it had secured bankruptcy protection in Norway, after recently receiving a similar shield in Ireland.

Burdened with massive debt after an ambitious expansion programme and suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic that has paralyzed global air traffic, Europe's third-biggest no-frills airline is now fighting for its survival.

An Irish court on Monday allowed Norwegian to put itself and several Irish subsidiaries -- which manage its fleet and some of its routes in Europe -- under "examinership", the equivalent of the US procedure known as Chapter 11.

The manoeuvre shields the company from creditors and potential bankruptcy while it tries to restructure its debt.

A specialized Norwegian court on Tuesday also granted it protection.

"A supplementary reconstruction process under Norwegian law will be to the benefit of all parties and will increase the likelihood of a successful result," Norwegian chief executive Jacob Schram said in a statement.

"Our aim is to secure jobs in the company and to contribute to securing critical infrastructure and value creation in Norway," he added.

Pending a worldwide roll-out of Covid vaccines that could



Just six of the 140 aircraft Norwegian was operating at the start of 2020 are still flying. **PHOTO: TT NEWS AGENCY/AFP/FILE**

enable air traffic to return to normal, Norwegian last week presented a rescue plan that included slashing its fleet, debt

conversion and a rights issue of up to four billion kroner (\$453 million, 374.5 million euros).

SOURCE: AFP

## SAO PAULO

## Vaccination campaign to begin in January

SAO Paulo state, Latin America's coronavirus epicenter, will launch a Covid-19 vaccination campaign in January, the governor said Monday, though a political battle with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro could derail those plans.

Governor Joao Doria said large-scale immunization using the Chinese-developed vaccine CoronaVac would begin with healthcare workers, the elderly and other vulnerable groups on January 25.

"The target public for this

initial phase was chosen based on the incidence of coronavirus fatalities in the state," Doria told a news conference.

However, the state's proposed five-phase timeline depends on Brazil's federal regulatory agency, Anvisa, approving

the vaccine.

CoronaVac has been caught up in a political battle between Bolsonaro and Doria, a top contender to challenge the far-right president in Brazil's 2022 elections.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS  
IN BRIEFECONOMIC  
EXPECTATIONS

## German investor confidence jumps on vaccine boost

GERMAN investor confidence jumped in December, buoyed by hopes that vaccines -- which are expected to win approval for general use in the EU imminently -- could help end the coronavirus pandemic.

The ZEW institute's monthly barometer measuring economic expectations rose to 55.0 points from 39.0 points in November, after falling for two straight months.

"The announcement of imminent vaccine approvals makes financial market experts more confident about the future," said ZEW President Achim Wambach.

Britain on Tuesday became the first country to administer the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine outside a clinical trial, and potential approvals of a swathe of vaccines have galvanised optimism of a route out of the pandemic.

SOURCE: AFP

SUMMARY OF  
TRENDS

## #Covid19, #BlackLivesMatter top Twitter themes in 2020

THE coronavirus pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement topped the list of conversation topics on Twitter in a tumultuous year, the messaging platform said Monday.

In a summary of trends, Twitter said the hashtag #Covid19 and other variations were tweeted nearly 400 million times, while #StayHome was the third biggest hashtag of the year.

The number two hashtag of 2020 was #BlackLivesMatter, which spread worldwide after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, according to Twitter.

"People continued to utilize Twitter to publicly advocate for political change and demand accountability from world leaders this year," a Twitter blog post said.

SOURCE: AFP

COVID-19 RELIEF PROPOSAL

# White House proposes new \$916 bn stimulus plan to break deadlock

THE White House unveiled a \$916 billion stimulus proposal on Tuesday in a final dash to break a months-long logjam over new aid for the coronavirus-stricken US economy before President Donald Trump leaves office in January.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced the plan, which he said includes "money for state and local governments and robust liability protections for businesses, schools and universities."

Those elements have been key sticking points in negotiations between Democratic and Republican lawmakers. The proposal comes weeks before Trump is set to hand over power to President-elect Joe Biden and a new Congress takes office, and as the country struggles with the world's worst Covid-19



Mnuchin said he presented the package to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and had reviewed it with Trump and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi speaks on Capitol Hill on Nov. 6. PHOTO: AFP

outbreak that has caused the worst economic downturn in a century.

"I look forward to achieving bipartisan agreement so we can provide this critical economic relief to American workers,

families and businesses," Mnuchin said in a statement. The new proposal is slightly larger than a \$908 billion compromise unveiled by a bipartisan group of senators last week. Mnuchin said he

presented the package to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and had reviewed it with Trump and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. SOURCE: AFP

INVESTOR SENTIMENT

# Tokyo stocks rebound on vaccine progress, robust machinery data

TOKYO stocks bounced back Wednesday, with the Nikkei ending at a new 29-year high, as investor sentiment improved on the start of COVID-19

vaccinations in Britain and robust Japanese machinery orders data, which fueled expectations of an economic recovery.

The 225-issue Nikkei

Stock Average ended up 350.86 points, or 1.33 per cent, from Tuesday at 26,817.94, its highest closing level since April 17, 1991. The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange finished 20.61 points, or 1.17 per cent, higher at 1,779.42.

Gainers included non-ferrous metal, air transportation and machinery issues.

The U.S. dollar moved narrowly in the lower 104 yen range, underpinned by optimism about imminent access to coronavirus vaccines, dealers said. Britain on Tuesday became the first country to begin administering doses of the COVID-19 vaccine jointly developed by U.S. pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc. and German partner BioNTech SE.

At 5 pm, the dollar

fetched 104.22-23 yen compared with 104.11-21 yen in New York and 104.07-09 yen in Tokyo at 5 pm Tuesday.

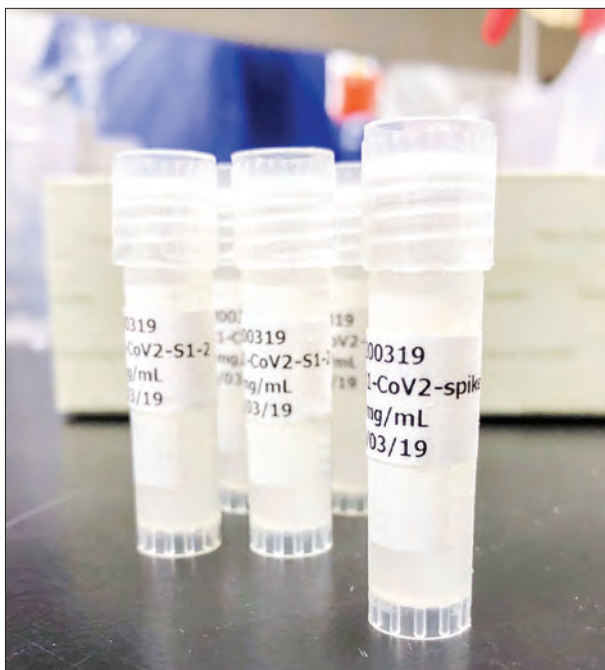
The euro was quoted at \$1.2128-2130 and 126.40-44 yen against \$1.2098-2108 and 126.05-15 yen in New York and \$1.2113-2114 and 126.06-10 yen in Tokyo late Tuesday afternoon.

The yield on the benchmark 10-year Japanese government bond was unchanged from Tuesday's close at 0.015 per cent.

The Nikkei rebounded after losing 1.3 per cent in the past three trading days.

Sentiment improved from the opening on the vaccine news and Japan's machinery orders data, a leading indicator of capital expenditure that came in stronger than expected.

SOURCE: KYODO



Supplied file photo shows a DNA vaccine for the novel coronavirus under development by medical startup Angen Inc. and Osaka University. PHOTO: OSAKA UNIVERSITY/KYODO

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0223-020N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0223-020N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-12-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SPRING SHINE

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SPRING SHINE VOY. NO. (252) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-12-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS  
CO LTD

RAIL FREIGHT TRANSPORT

# Chinese city launches new China-Europe freight train route



A China Railway Express freight train leaves from Xi'an, Shaanxi province, to Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, in July this year. PHOTO: XINHUA

A new China-Europe freight train route has been launched, linking the city of Ankang in northwest China's Shaanxi Province with Central Asian and European cities.

The first freight train on this route left Ankang Tuesday afternoon, carrying 43 TEUs of goods weighing more than 700

tonnes, including household appliances and natural slate.

The train first arrived in Shaanxi's capital Xi'an, from where it is scheduled to reach Central Asia in eight days and Europe in 13 days via the Chang'an China-Europe freight route.

SOURCE: XINHUA

BUDGET BATTLE

# Deal close on EU budget: Poland's deputy PM



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. PHOTO: AFP

POLAND'S deputy prime minister said on Wednesday that a new proposed agreement on the future EU budget meant that the reasons for Warsaw and Budapest to veto it have "practically disappeared".

tically disappeared".

The comment came a day after Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said there was "a good chance" of a deal being struck at Thursday's European summit on the EU's budget and coronavirus recovery fund.

Budapest and Warsaw last month blocked the EU's 1.8-trillion-euro (\$2.1-trillion) budget and virus rescue package over its tying of funds to respect for the rule of law.

Both governments are accused by Brussels of rolling back democratic freedoms, notably judicial independence in Poland and press freedom in

Hungary.

"The reasons for Poland and Hungary to take a different position from other EU countries have practically disappeared," Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Jaroslaw Gowin told reporters in Warsaw on Wednesday.

"The position of the German (EU) presidency is also similar to the position of Poland and Hungary, but of course unanimity is required for an agreement at the European Council," said Gowin, who leads a junior coalition party in Poland's nationalist government.

"For now, there's agree-

ment in the Warsaw-Berlin-Budapest triangle. I believe that this agreement will also cover the other 24 capitals of Europe," he added.

But there was no hint of a compromise in Berlin on Wednesday. EU powerhouse Germany currently holds the bloc's rotating six-month presidency.

Speaking in parliament, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declined to predict whether a quick solution could be found in the dispute: "Unfortunately I can't tell you whether it will work or not".

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS

IN BRIEF

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

## Putin signs law on imprisonment for attempts to split Russia

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin signed a law on Tuesday in a move that provides imprisonment for those that attempt to alienate Russian territories or incite the public to such acts.

According to the law, secession and other acts aimed at violating Russia's territorial integrity will be punished with

a jail term of six to 10 years.

Such public appeals that are voiced for the first time will be punishable by an administrative fine of up to 500,000 rubles (6,825 U.S. dollars), while a repeated offence within a year may result in imprisonment.

SOURCE: AFP

CRISIS TALKS

## Johnson heads for Brussels in last-minute bid to get Brexit deal

PRIME Minister Boris Johnson is Brussels-bound on Wednesday, with Britain's fading hopes for a post-Brexit trade deal hanging on crisis talks with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen.

Johnson's dash back to the city where once he made his name as an EU-bashing newspaper reporter marks the last chance of a breakthrough before Britain leaves the EU single market.

Talks are blocked over the issue of fair competition, with Britain refusing to accept a mechanism to allow the EU to retaliate swiftly if the UK business regulations change in ways that put European firms at a disadvantage.

EU negotiator Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart

David Frost have narrowed the gaps over eight months of talks, but London insists it will reclaim full sovereignty at the end of the year after half-a-century of close economic integration.

If Britain leaves the EU single market in three weeks without a follow-on trade deal the delays that travellers and freight will face at its borders with the European Union will be compounded by import tariffs that will drive up prices.

**Demolition claim**

Johnson spoke to Von der Leyen on Monday by telephone to secure the last chance dinner invitation after Barnier and Frost's negotiations broke off without agreement.

SOURCE: AFP

DETERMINATION TO SEIZE THE "OPPORTUNITY"

# Iran says ready for snap return to nuclear deal compliance



Protesters stand outside the White House as U.S. President Donald Trump announces the United State's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal May 8, 2018 in Washington, DC. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

IRAN is ready to return to full compliance with a 2015 nuclear deal with major powers as soon as the other parties honour their commitments, President Hassan Rouhani said Wednesday.

The agreement between Iran and major powers has teetered on the brink of collapse since outgoing US President Donald Trump pulled out of it in 2018 and reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions.

US President-elect Joe Biden has expressed readiness to return to the agreement but over the past 18 months Iran has suspended the implementation

of some of its own obligations, including key limits to its uranium enrichment programme.

"Just as soon as the 5+1 or 4+1 resume all of their commitments, we will resume all of ours," Rouhani said.

He was referring to the five veto-wielding permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany with whom Iran reached the nuclear deal.

"I've said it before - it doesn't take time, it's just a question of willing," he said in comments to his cabinet aired by state television Defying criticism from Iran's ultra-conservatives, Rouhani reit-

erated his determination to seize the "opportunity" presented by the change of US president in January. Parliament, which has been controlled by conservatives since a February election marred by record low turnout, passed a bill last week that threatens the prospects for a thaw in relations with Washington.

The bill, which still has to be signed into law by Rouhani, would relaunch Iran's enrichment of uranium to 20 per cent purity and threaten other future measures that would likely sound the death knell of the nuclear deal.

SOURCE: AFP

HEALTH AND DEMOCRACY

## Indonesia holds nationwide poll despite virus warnings



More than 100 million Indonesians were eligible to cast a ballot, despite warnings the poll would worsen the nation's Covid-19 crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDONESIA held nationwide regional elections Wednesday with more than 100 million voters eligible to cast a ballot, despite warnings the poll would worsen the nation's Covid-19 crisis.

The archipelago of nearly 270 million – the world's third-biggest democracy and fourth most populous nation – delayed the vote originally set for September as it struggled to contain soaring

infection rates.

From the capital Jakarta to the holiday island of Bali, polling station staff in full protective gear enforced social distancing and took voters' temperatures before

polls closed at 1:00 pm local time (0600 GMT).

Abdul Rahman Wahab, 24, admitted he was nervous about turning up to vote on Sulawesi island.

"Health is my priority for sure, but voting is also an important part of our life in a democratic country," he said.

Islamist parties are looking to score big gains in the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation as they ride a tide of rising religious conservatism.

In the second-biggest city Surabaya workers followed the tradition of donning superhero costumes, dressing as Spiderman to lure voters in.

Others were tasked with taking ballot boxes into hospitals so that Covid patients could vote from their sickbeds.

"All polling stations were disinfected," said Suprianto, head of a polling station committee in Jakarta's Ciputat district, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

SOURCE: AFP

SHIP-BASED BMD

## Japan weighs ships for Aegis missile defence system

JAPAN will build two ships equipped with Aegis missile interceptors after public opposition forced the government to scrap deployment of a costly land-based system, the country's defence minister said Wednesday.

Earlier this year, Japan decided to suspend unpopular plans to deploy the US-developed Aegis Ashore defence system in north-eastern Akita and western Yamaguchi prefectures amid technical problems and swelling costs. As an alternative, Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi told a ruling party meeting, the government hopes "to build two vessels equipped with the Aegis system." Officials aim to win cabinet approval as early as next week, public broadcaster NHK reported.

The prime minister's top spokesman Katsunobu Kato later said that the proposal "is aimed at establishing a system of defending the whole of Japan continuously with a ballistic missile defence system."

The Aegis Ashore purchase was approved in 2017, at an estimated cost of \$4.2 billion over three decades. It is not immediately clear what the cost of a deployed system on ships will be.

The system's purchase was seen both as part of attempts by Tokyo to bolster its defensive capabilities after successive North Korean missile launches but also as a way to foster closer ties with Washington under US President Donald Trump, who pushed allies to buy more American military

equipment. But Aegis has long been controversial in Japan, with opposition stemming not only from its expense but also

from locals concerned about the risks posed by a missile defence system in their backyard.

SOURCE: AFP



Japan's pacifist constitution strictly limits the country's military to self-defence, leaving it heavily dependent on the United States for security. **PHOTO: AFP**

A SNEAK PREVIEW PERIOD

## "Demon Slayer" draws fans as public screening kicks off in Thailand

THE blockbuster animated movie "Demon Slayer" based on the namesake Japanese manga series launched its public screening in Thai cinemas on Wednesday, drawing fans out to theatres across the country.

Around 220 cinemas nationwide were scheduled to screen "Demon Slayer -- Kimetsu no Yaiba -- The Movie: Mugen Train" on the first day, with showings expected to continue throughout the month.

The movie centres on the hero Tanjiro Kamado's efforts to save the lives of passengers aboard the "Mugen Train", named after the Japanese word for infinity, on which countless people have gone missing.

The movie grossed around 9 million baht (\$299,000) during a sneak preview period from Dec. 3-8, according to the movie's distributor.

SOURCE: KYODO

### NEWS IN BRIEF

CONDEMNATION

#### China summons U.S. embassy official, protests against U.S. sanctions on NPC officials

CHINESE Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang on Tuesday summoned Robert Forden, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in China, to lodge solemn protest and strong condemnation over the U.S. so-called sanctions against 14 vice-chairpersons of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee.

"The move by the U.S. side has severely violated the basic norms governing international relations, interfered in China's internal affairs, and harmed China-U.S. relations," said Zheng, adding that the act is outrageous, unscrupulous and vile.

"China expresses strong indignation and condemnation against it," Zheng said.

SOURCE: XINHUA

#### A ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISE

#### Cruise ship returns to Singapore after passenger tests positive, New Zealand's tourist hotspots struggle amid COVID-19

A Royal Caribbean cruise returned to Singapore after a passenger tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, as New Zealand's tourist hotspots struggle amid the virus.

The Straits Times quoted Annie Chang, cruise director of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), as saying that the 83-year-old passenger had reported to the onboard medical centre with diarrhea, and underwent a mandatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test as part of onboard protocols. New Zealand's key tourism destinations such as Queenstown, Rotorua and Auckland had some of the largest drops in filled jobs in the September 2020 quarter in the wake of COVID-19, the statistics department Stats NZ said.

SOURCE: XINHUA

## Ronaldo scores twice as Juve crush Messi's troubled Barcelona



Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi met for the first time since the Portugal forward left Real Madrid in 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

BARCELONA — CRISTIANO Ronaldo struck twice from the penalty spot to win his battle with rival Lionel Messi and guide Juventus to a 3-0 win over Barcelona on Tuesday, earning the Italians top spot in Champions League Group G.

The former Real Madrid striker and his Argentina counterpart traded Ballon d'Or wins for a decade between 2008-2017 and were figureheads for the duelling Spanish giants, but there was only one winner at the Camp Nou as they met for the first time

since Ronaldo's departure for Juve in 2018.

Andrea Pirlo's Juventus lost 2-0 at home against Barcelona in October without Ronaldo, sidelined with Covid-19, but were greatly improved and earned the first Champions League away win against Barcelona since Bayern Munich triumphed in 2013.

Both sides, tied on 15 points, were assured of qualification before kick-off, but Juve's three-goal victory handed them a superior head-to-head record.

"When you have this desire to sacrifice yourself and an infallible sniper, like Ronaldo, you are sure you can win these matches," Bonucci told Sky Sport Italia.

"As we showed in the derby (win over Torino), if we play with this desire, we bring home the results we want. The next step is to do this in all our games." —AFP ■

## Solskjaer refuses to blame Champions League exit on Pogba disruption

LEIPZIG — Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer refused to blame claims that Paul Pogba is "unhappy" for their Champions League exit after a 3-2 defeat at RB Leipzig.

United were punished for a slow start, conceding early goals by Manchester City loanee Angelino and Amadou Haidara before Justin Kluivert put Leipzig 3-0 up midway through the second half.

United pulled back goals in the final ten minutes as Pogba came on to score a late header to make it 3-2 after Bruno Fernandes converted a penalty.

In the build-up, Pogba's agent Mino Raiola said the World Cup-winning France



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer refused to blame claims that Paul Pogba is "unhappy" for their Champions League exit after a 3-2 defeat at RB Leipzig. **PHOTO: AFP**

midfielder, 27, is "unhappy" and needs a "change of scene" after struggling to establish himself

under Solskjaer.

Solskjaer gave a terse answer when asked if Raiola's comments had unsettled his side.

"The squad is fine, they are a team and they stick together, as soon as Paul's agent realizes it's a team sport and we work together, the better," he said.

"That is the last thing I want to say about it," Solskjaer replied when asked if he had spoken to Pogba about Raiola's comments.

Instead, the Norwegian blamed the defeat on his side's lethargic start.

"We didn't perform well enough as a team," he said. —AFP ■

## Golf: World No. 1 Ko aims for dream major win at US Women's Open

WASHINGTON — World No. 1 Ko Jin-young of South Korea chases the Major golf title she most dreamed about when the Covid-19 delayed US Women's Open begins on Thursday (Dec 10) in Houston, Texas.

The 25-year-old from Seoul, a two-time Major champion,

spent most of the year in her homeland after the pandemic shut down the LPGA Tour from February to the end of July.

But Ko came to the United States last month and played in two tuneup events, placing fifth last week in Dallas, to pre-

pare for the year's final major at Champions Golf Club.

One of Ko's earliest golf memories was watching South Korea's Pak Se-ri win the 1988 US Women's Open just seven weeks after taking her first major title at the LPGA Championship. —AFP ■

## AFF Suzuki Cup 2020 postponed to December 2021

THE ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) has recently decided to postpone the ASEAN Suzuki Cup to December 2021, according to the AFF Committee Meeting which was held on 7 December.

The tournament is first scheduled to run from 11 April to 8 May 2021 but has been postponed again due to the health concerns of the participating teams amidst the COVID-19 outbreak in the ASEAN region.

Therefore, the tournament will be held from 21 November to 2 December 2021, after the 31<sup>st</sup> Viet Nam SEA Games.

The upcoming Suzuki Cup is planned to hold in the style of 2018 version. The final round will be played by 10 teams. The five teams will be divided into two groups. Two away matches will be played.

The ASEAN Foot-

ball Federation (AFC) has launched the tournament since 1996. The ASEAN Suzuki Cup was renamed the ASEAN Suzuki Cup in 2008.

The tournament has been held 12 times, with the Thai team winning five times and the Singapore team four times. Viet Nam has won twice and Malaysia once.

The 2018 tourney was won by Viet Nam. Myanmar team reached the semi-finals in 2004 and 2016 with the highest achievement.

The last time the Myanmar team competed in the 2018 tournament was against Viet Nam, Malaysia and Cambodia. Team Myanmar dropped out of the group stage with seven points in the tourney.—Shine Htet Zaw

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



The trophy for the AFF Suzuki Cup Football Tournament. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT**