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Sunday, 13 December 2020

193 Myanmar citizens abroad brought back home on 12 December

A total of 193 Myanmar citizens who were stranded abroad –126 from Viet Nam and 67 from Singapore – because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flights yesterday.

Myanmar Embassy in Hanoi organized the relief flight of Myanmar Airways International to bring back 126 Myanmar nationals from Viet Nam. The flight landed at Yangon International Airport in the evening.

Myanmar Embassy in Singapore arranged the relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines to repatriate 67 Myanmar seamen from Singapore. The flight landed at Yangon International Airport in the evening.

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

The Ministry of Foreign



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 12 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries

concerned to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international

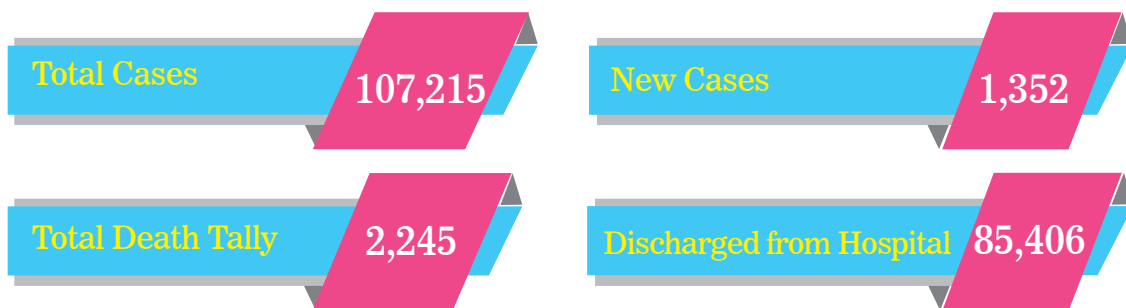
commercial flights, under the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Preven-

tion, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

1,352 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 December, total figure rises to 107,215

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 107,215 after 1,352 new cases were reported on 12 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 107,215 confirmed cases, 2,245 died, 85,406 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 12 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 12-12-2020

25

Ministry of Health and Sports

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SC Office, CDNH discuss promoting women's role in Rakhine State

THE Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor and the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH) organized a virtual meeting on “Enhancing Women’s Roles on Anti-Hate Speech and Social Cohesion in Rakhine State” yesterday.

At the event, Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Min Lwin said the government was prioritizing Rakhine issues through short and long-term implementation.

He added that the implementation of the recommendations of Dr Kofi Annan’s Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was underway, and its progress was being delivered to the public through regular reports.

The Union Attorney-General Office’s Criminal Investigation and Prosecution Body was formed to conduct investigations and prosecutions of matters mentioned in the final report of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) regarding the incidents that occurred in northern Rakhine State.

The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) was formed to address the development needs of Rakhine State, he said.

He highlighted that women play a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and trust building between all communities in Rakhine State.

He added that Myanmar

was implementing the ratified Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the signed Joint Communiqué on the Prevention and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence.

Women’s social advancement was being encouraged in Rakhine State by conducting capacity building and livelihood training courses in cooperation with development partners.

He explained that the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer support programme for expectant mothers and children up to two years supported over 130,000 mothers from April to June 2020, and over 130,000 mothers from July to September 2020. A supplementary assistance programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has provided financial support to over 137,000 mothers.

He pointed out that the Office of the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued Directive No. 3/2020 on 20 April 2020, on prevention of incitement to hatred and violence (or) prevention of proliferation of hate speech. According to the directive, all ministries and all regional and state governments are to ensure that their personnel, officers, staff – whether military, other security forces, or civil servants – and local people under their control or direction denounce and prevent all forms of hate speech. All ministries, their agencies, departments and offices shall further encour-



Deputy Minister U Min Lwin presides over a virtual meeting on “Enhancing Women’s Roles on Anti-Hate Speech and Social Cohesion in Rakhine State” on 12 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

age all personnel to participate in and support anti-hate speech activities.

He said that the third workshop on combatting hate speech and promoting social cohesion in Rakhine State was held virtually because of the pandemic.

The First Aid for All training programmes is being implemented to promote social cohesion further and provide opportunities for youth in Rakhine State.

The workshop will help to build mutual respect and understanding, and strengthening peace development among the diverse communities in Rakhine State, he added.

He further said that assistance and cooperation from friendly countries, United Na-

tions Agencies and development partners play a vital role in building peace, stability and development of Rakhine State.

He called for their continued supports for the government’s efforts in these areas, saying that concerted efforts are necessary to divert and end conflicts.

Director Dr Aung Thurein from the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor spoke about anti-hate speech campaigns and the objective of the workshops. CDN’s Executive Director Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing explained the implementation of tasks spearheading social cohesion.

The opening ceremony was attended by Colonel Htein Lin (Retd), Advisor to the Office of the President, the permanent secre-

taries from various ministries, responsible personnel, ambassadors, chargés d’affaires, heads of UN Agencies, and over one hundred representatives from Rakhine State.

The meeting discussed matters relating to anti-hate speech campaigns, promoting social cohesion, and capacity-building training for women.

The first women’s workshop on combatting hate speech and promoting social cohesion was held on 23 February 2020, at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Yangon. The second workshop titled “Anti-Hate Speech Campaign: Success and Challenges” was held at the NRPC in Yangon on 14 and 15 July 2020. —MNA

Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo joins China-South Asia expo online

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo joined the opening ceremony of China-South Asia Expo through videoconferencing yesterday from Nay Pyi Taw.

At the ceremony, the Deputy Minister said the important role of the digital economy in responding to the COVID-19 crisis as well as promoting trade and accelerating sustainable development. He said the Expo would set the good foundation for the partnership between China and South Asian countries including Myanmar, as well as for trade, tourism and investment cooperation bringing peace and stability, mutual trust and prosperity for the people of the region and he said Myanmar is proud to be a bridge between South Asia and China.

He added the accelerated



Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo joins the virtual opening ceremony of China-South Asia Expo on 12 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

economic cooperation by seeking new ways for priorities in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2020 and the Community and Silk Road Project and he said he believed that the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor can enhance closer ties between China and South Asia.

The Deputy Minister continued to implement new trading methods such as online payment systems and e-commerce in addition to regular trade for the challenges of COVID-19 outbreak around the world are creating the conditions for greater unity and cooperation in all fields. He

said, in doing so, it is necessary to adhere to the relevant commitments in accordance with the rules-based multilateral trade system and to reduce trade barriers. He said to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 by integrating the global production chain openly and innovatively, and also the purpose of the expo is to work together to respond to the effects of COVID-19 and move closer to cooperation.

At the ceremony, representatives and Deputy Ministers for Commerce from China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Laos and Viet Nam also delivered the opening remarks.

Afterwards, Secretary of CPC Yunnan Provincial Committee Ruan Chengfa announced the opening of the Expo and Consuls-General of Laos, Cambodia,

Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam and Bangladesh in Kunming including Myanmar Consul-General U Tun Aung Kyaw inaugurated the Expo.

The China-South Asia Expo will be held from 12 to 18 December and 20 Myanmar companies led by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization displayed wood furniture, fruits and food items in the Expo online. On 15 December, a National Promotion Programme will be participated in the Expo by Live Streaming for Promotion of Goods, Industry, Culture and Tourism of Myanmar led by the Myanmar Consulate-General in Kunming.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

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

MoRAC discusses upgrade of national libraries

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture held a presentation on the completion of the upgrade of National Library (Nay Pyi Taw) and National Library (Yangon) into e-library which is being carried out with the capital expenditure of the 2019-2020FY of the Department of Historical Research and National Library on 11 December.

The event was attended by Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, Deputy Minister U Kyi Min, Director-General for Department of Historical Research and National Library U Aung Myint, the Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General, Directors and officials of Lantro (Myanmar) company.

Director-General U Aung Myint presented the upgrade of libraries services and e-Library connectivity for National Libraries in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. Managing Director for Lantro (Myanmar) Company U Zaw Myint Oo and other officials briefed the completion of upgrading works.

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko said the connectivity with Shan State Buddhist Uni-



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko inspects the National Library in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 December 2020.

PHOTO: MNA

versity and the University of Computer Studies (Pakokku) is useful as Union Catalogue, and for the first priority, it should be for the National Library (Yangon), the second priority will be for the libraries of local universities and colleges while the third priority is for international

libraries.

It also needs to make efforts for the Yezin Agriculture University, the University of Veterinary Science and the University of Forestry in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union Minister also discussed to provide the necessary arts, science and technological

books and papers by connecting with the Technological Universities and Arts and Science Universities by cooperating with the relevant ministries, important role of libraries especially for the experts to do their researches, local and foreign basic and advanced training including

postgraduate courses for the library staff, better library services, cooperation works for the libraries to become the places where produce plenty of experts in science, arts and technology.

He stressed the awareness programmes regarding with the establishment of e-library at National Library for the other universities and libraries, plans to brief the services of e-library by inviting the librarians of universities and colleges and efforts to make the better libraries including National Library (Yangon) to provide the needs of the basic, middle, high schools students, university and college students by connecting with the international libraries.

Then, the officials of Lantro (Myanmar) Company presented the services of National Library (Nay Pyi Taw) including Digital Signage, Smart Wall, Data Centre, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), e-Resource, RFID Gate, Self-check machine and the Union Minister concluded the meeting. — MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

We need to make concerted efforts to contain the spread of the disease with the participation of the people



We can accept the fact that infection rates are high in the Yangon region because of the population density and the frequency and volume of travel. However, the willingness of the people to abide by the rules and regulations is also an important factor. The more people follow the rules and regulations, the better; then, the situation will be good. For example, in the Mandalay region, the infection rate increased a little bit compared to last month. However, due to the participation of the people, during the past 14 days, the situation became better. We could say that the situation is under control. That is why in every region and state, we will need to make concerted efforts to contain the spread of the disease with the leadership of the respective governments and the participation of the people.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's report on COVID-19 containment measures, on 8 December 2020)

MoNREC minister inspects forest plantations in Nay Pyi Taw

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win inspected the plantations yesterday in Thiri Yadana Street in Ottara Thiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area which were planted by the ministry and Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association in 2018. The Union Minister and party then inspected the Phohsaung-taung reserve block No (3) in Thiri Yadana Street of Ottara Thiri Township which was designated to hold 2021 monsoon tree plantation festival and instructed the officials regarding with the plants for the festival.

The officials of No (2) Training School of Myanmar Timber Enterprise located at Thabyay Street in Ywar Kaung Ward of Pynmana Township presented the matters related with the training schools, online teaching method during COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union Minister then discussed the importance of

practicals and lectures for the trainees at the training school delivers the best method of behaviour in real practices of Dozer and Loader operation, driver and mechanics, internet access for the trainees during their online learning period, online tests, cooperation works with the regional heads to conduct practicals and lectures for the trainees via the skilled staff without affecting their worksite and working hours and plans to negotiate with the officials of the Myanmar Timber Enterprise head office to extend the learning hours if necessary.

After that, the Union Minister inspected the dormitories of the training school and instructed to follow the COVID-19 health rules and to have an awareness of fire.

Then, the officials of the main workshop of Myanmar Timber Enterprise located in Aung Thar Yar Ward of Pobathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw presented the Union Minister



Union Minister U Ohn Win inspects the plantations in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on 12 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

about the matters related to the types of machinery, selected pieces of machinery to repair in the respective financial year, budgets and the fire prevention activities.

The Union Minister stressed the important role of

machineries in transporting the felled trees to the timber yard, budgets for the main workshop, programmes to set the level of machinery to be maintained and repaired based on the commercial purposes and the record of fuel consumption.

The Union Minister also inspected the warehouses of machineries and instructed the need to repair and maintain the workshops and warehouses and to conduct fire prevention activities.—MNA *(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*



Printing press of Hermit U Khandi to be displayed as ancient heritage

THE arrangement will be made to display the over 100-year-old printing press and related equipment used by Yathe Gyi U Khandi as an ancient heritage to the

Picture shows the Printing Press used by Hermit U Khandi. The device is said the biggest one of upper Myanmar of that time.

PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

public, according to U Soe Naing Swe, Joint Secretary (1) of the Mandalay Hill Board of Trustees.

Yathe Gyi U Khandi arrived at the Mandalay Hill in 1269 ME and did his missionary work in over 20 towns around Myanmar. In 1281, he bought a printing press and related items from the United States and published religious books of Buddhism and Mya Yadanar Religious Maga-

zine. The printed books are kept at the Mandalay Hill Library for public reading.

It is reported that the printing press was the giant printing press in Upper Myanmar of that time, with a printing capacity of up to 16 pages. At present they are kept in Mandalay Hill Monks Association Monastery.—Min Htet Aung *(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)*

Minbu chilli growers earn double price with bumper yield

THE whole villagers from Yedwingone village, Minbu (Saku) township, Magway region are growing chilli with the use of irrigated water. The local chilli growers are happy with the bumper production and earning double price compared to the same period of last year.

About 200 villagers from Yedwingone village are growing chilli. They are sending around 5,000 visses of chilli daily to traders in Minbu town. Although the chilli growers sold the chilli for K500-800 per viss last year, the price has risen double to K1,200-1,700 per viss this year.

“The chilli is grown mostly in June. It can be picked up in October. The chilli can be picked two times per month. The chilli growers sell the chilli usually between November and February. After picking up for nine times, we have to keep them to be right to take chilli species. Each acre of chilli can produce 5,000 viss-

es. Last year, we could not pick much of chilli because of less demand from the chilli traders. This year, we pick up the chilli continuously and are earning the double price,” said Daw Aye Kyu Khaing, a local grower from Yedwingone village.

The traders collect the right chilli from Yedwingone village and put them into the bag (which can contain 25 visses of chilli). Then, they loaded the chilli bags onto the trucks to send them to Rakhine State. The truck charges were K5,500 per bag last year. This year, the truck charges cost K65,000 per bag.

“This year, the chilli yield is high in Yedwingone village while the yield in other villages dropped one-third of chilli production. Although this is COVID-19 period, the local growers are sending chilli daily to Rakhine State. They are sending 50 or 150 bags of chilli depending upon the demand of the traders. The price



Farmers collect and bag mature red chilli after being sundried. PHOTO: KO TA MAR (IPRD)

of chilli dropped when there is high supply. Now, we could create 15 job opportunities for the local villagers,” said Daw Sein Mya, a local trader from Ywar Thar village, Minbu town. The villagers

from Yedwingone are growing the chilli with their own seeds. We irrigate water two or three times per month. So, they have dug the ground down to 4 inches. The local people are growing Kyauk

Sein chilli annually because these species yield highly and the farmers are earning good profit, according to local Chilli growers. — Zayyatu (Magway)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

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New, harvested white cowpea from Madaya enter market at normal price

THE new, harvested white cowpea from Madaya enters Mandalay bean market at regular price, according to Mandalay market.

“This year, the new, white cowpea was harvested one week earlier than the same period of last year. Last year, the price of white cowpea started at K125,000 per bag containing three baskets in the initial white cowpea season. This year, the price of white cowpea rose to K150,000 per bag in this white cowpea season,” said U Soe Win Myint, the owner of the Soe Win Myint brokerage from Mandalay.

“This new, white cowpea is annually produced in early December (Nadaw). So, the local people named the new white cowpea as Nadaw bean. However, this Nadaw bean was harvested one week earlier than usual time of this year.

The local farmers from Kyaukse township are earning good price growing this white cowpea annually and saving the gold from growing this bean. So, the local people also called the bean as Weik Sein bean (Weik Sein is the name of the gold shop). The white cowpea is

less consumed in the country and is exported mostly to India, China and European countries,” he added.

The white cowpea is grown in September (Tawthalin in Myanmar calendar) near Ayeyawady and Chindwin Rivers. The bean is grown mostly in Kyaukse, Madaya, Singu, Monywa and Pakokku, Salin and Hsin Phyu Kyun townships. The bean is also grown in Hinthada, Zalun and Kayan Thone Gwa townships. — Min Htet Aung (Man Sub-printing house)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Big Bag Wolf Book Sale to launch via online system

THE Big Bag Wolf Book Sale, the world’s biggest book sale, will be launched in Myanmar for the fourth time via an online system from 23 to 30 December 2020, according to an announcement of the Big Bag Wolf Book Sale website. At the sale expo, the Big Bag Wolf official website will offer 20 million English-language books and over 40,000 book titles with up to 90% discount prices.

During the pandemic period, the books are now available in a new system that allows the read-

ers to purchase books securely on the website.

The Big Bag Wolf Book Sale will offer bestsellers, novels, science fictions, romance, literature, graphic novels, business books, self-help architecture, cookbooks, and much more. Besides, the vast collection of children’s books, including storybooks, activity books, board books, painting books and interactive books, will also be displayed on the website.

The official website link of the Big Bag Wolf Book Sale will be released very soon. The latest

update of the online book sale will be announced on Big Bag Wolf Book’s social media Facebook account <https://www.facebook.com/bbwbooksmm/>.

The Big Bag Wolf Book Sale was established in 2009 in Pedaling Jaya, Malaysia. Now, the book sale is being held across 12 counties in 34 cities including Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, Cambodia, South Korea, Pakistan, Taiwan, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). — Aye Min Thu (Translated by Hay Mar)

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MoE discusses drafting of national education strategy 2021-2030

THE Ministry of Education held a coordination meeting on the draft of National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) (2021-2030) via videoconferencing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the monastic schools Sayadaws including Phaung Daw Oo Sayadaw and IBEC Sayadaw, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, the Permanent Secretary and Directors-General of Education, the Directors-General and officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the officials and representatives of Shwe Minn Tha Foundation (Myanmar), Myanmar Special Education Association and Educational Association for the people with disabilities.

During the meeting, Union Minister stressed the important role of a global citizen culture and learning culture, lifelong learning opportunities for everyone if they can basically read, write and calculate, the monastic education system of the Sayadaws which delivers education to the children, people, novices, nuns and monks, efforts of the ministry to create multiple learning opportunities for the average people, people



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi participates in the virtual meeting on drafting of National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 on 12 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

with disabilities, people from city or rural areas regardless of poor or rich, cooperation and collaboration culture, discussion culture, research culture and the establishment of Industry 1.0 and Education 1.0 to Industry 4.0 and Education 4.0.

The Union Minister also emphasized the perfect life of public with the development of education rather than industrial development, distribution of KG+12 school textbooks for free, training for teachers, assessment, priority sectors for ethnic areas, the increase of the

numbers of students who complete primary, middle and high schools education and more than 1 million high school students for the first time in 2018-2019 academic year.

He then said there are a total of 9,716,373 students (primary, middle, high schools), 315,944 monastic school students and 261,922 private school students in 2019-2020 academic year.

The ministry provided K794.4 million for the development of monastic schools, K91.27 million for 1,431 visual and hearing-impaired students.

There were 566,274 students who received high school completion certificates in 2020.

Then, Permanent Secretary of Education Dr Zaw Myint briefed the drawing up of NESP (2021-2030) while Director-General for Basic Education Department U Ko Lay Win presented about Chapter (5) of NESP (2021-2030) and other officials about Chapter (6) and Chapter (7) of NESP (2021-2030).

The attendees to the meeting openly coordinated the meeting.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung attends APTYPS awards ceremony



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung speaks at the awards ceremony of APT Young Professionals & Students Programme. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung attended the online award ceremony for winners of APT Young Professionals & Students Programme (APTYPS) Competition 2020 yesterday afternoon.

The competition was held on 11 December by the Myanmar Computer Professional Association with the support of Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and the Posts and Telecommunications Department of the Ministry.

During the opening speech,

the Union Minister said the study efforts of young people, the wealth of intuition, brilliance, creativity and activism is essential for the development of the country and the inclusion of not only boys, but also girls can demonstrate the potential of women and contribute to gender equality in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals providing Gender Equality.

He said he was pleased to see that the "Innovative Junior & Senior Robotic Project" competition was organized ac-

ording to the New Normal and combines two types of Virtual Online Competition and Offline.

There were two types of competitions: Junior Innovative Robot Project Competition for young people from 10 to 17 years old and Senior Innovative Robot Project Competition for young people from 17 to 20 years old. Three teams from each state participated in the Junior Innovative Robot Project Competition, and a total of nine teams from each state participated in the Senior Innovative Robot Project Competition.

Myanmar Computer Federation and Myanmar Computer Professionals Association; Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation Department; University of Information Technology and Myanmar Engineers Association participated as the members of the judging panel.

After the award ceremony, General Secretary of Myanmar Computer Professionals Association U Zaw Win Tun expressed words of thanks and closed the award ceremony.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

What we know about Covid-19 vaccines and side effects

THE distribution of the first vaccines for the coronavirus has raised hopes that the end of the pandemic may be in sight, but it has also sparked some concern about side effects.

Here's what we know so far: **WHAT SIDE EFFECTS?**

Results from final-stage clinical trials of two of the frontrunner vaccines were published this week and both are considered safe.

Data for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine – already authorized in several countries – was released in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The drug is based on experimental technology that uses a synthetic version of a molecule called “messenger RNA” to hack into human cells and effectively turn them into vaccine-making factories.

Its trial involved 40,000 volunteers and suggested the vaccine provokes only mild side effects.

Some 80 per cent of those vaccinated felt pain at the injection site. Many also felt fatigue, headache and muscle-pain and some had temporarily swollen lymph nodes.

These side effects were more frequent and intense for young people.

A partnership between Oxford University and AstraZeneca uses a disabled virus – in this case a chimpanzee adenovirus – as a vehicle to carry the vaccine.

Their vaccine data – from trials involving some 23,000 volunteers – was published in another

prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*. The study found the vaccine is safe.

Pick and mix?

Saying you prefer one vaccine to another is like saying you prefer chocolate ice cream to strawberry ice cream, according to virologist from the French national health-research institute (INSERM) Marie-Paule Kieny.

She told the French parliament citizens should be aware that the vaccines might «hurt the arm and induce fatigue», comparing the side effects to those children experience when they get a jab.

“It’s unpleasant, for a day or so maybe, but these reactions are short-lived and if they are associated with a high level of protection I think it should be tolerable.”

RARE EVENTS

Severe side effects for both vaccines have so far been extremely rare.

Only one patient who received the Oxford AstraZeneca jab had a “serious side effect possibly related” to the injection, according to the data in *The Lancet*.

The patient suffered from transverse myelitis, a rare neurological condition that causes inflammation of the the spinal cord.

This provoked the temporary global shutdown of trials in early September.

Two other serious side effects were observed, although these have not been attributed to the jab.

Researchers said all three



Photo taken on May 18, 2020 shows a logo in front of AstraZeneca's building in Luton, Britain. PHOTO:XINHUA

had recovered.

Four cases of Bell’s palsy – a facial paralysis that is often temporary -- were observed among 18,000 volunteers over two months in the Pfizer/BioNTech trial.

But the frequency is similar to that normally seen in the general population for this condition, so it is unclear whether the cases were provoked by the vaccine.

To be on the safe side, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended particular caution. There were eight cases of appendicitis in those who were administered the vaccine, double the amount for those who received the placebo one.

But the FDA put this down to a statistical coincidence, unrelated to the vaccine.

As for all medicine, the hypothesis of serious side effects cannot be ruled out. A substance is evaluated by weighing the benefits against the risks.

WHAT ABOUT ALLERGIES?

After Britain began administering the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine earlier this week, British health authorities said two patients had suffered adverse reactions.

Both were said to have serious allergic pathogens, to the extent they always carry adrenaline on them.

In response, British authorities warned anyone with “a history of a significant allergic reaction to a vaccine, medicine or food” to avoid taking the vaccine.

“For the general population this does not mean that they

would need to be anxious about receiving the vaccination,” Stephen Evans, pharmacoepidemiology professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told Science Media Centre (SMC).

“One has to remember that even things like marmite can cause unexpected severe allergic reactions,” he added.

Those in charge of the clinical trial anticipated the risk, excluding volunteers with a history of severe allergic reactions to vaccines in general or to one of the vaccine’s components.

Millions of people who suffer from allergies to common substances such as eggs and nuts do not appear to be allergic to the vaccine.

SOURCE: AFP

ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL PRESSURE

US drug regulator denies interference over Pfizer vaccine

THE US Food and Drug Administration on Saturday defended itself from allegations of political pressure over the timing of its Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vac-

cine approval and provided new information on the risks to people with allergies.

The FDA issued an emergency use authorization for the

two-dose regimen late on Friday night following reports President Donald Trump had threatened to fire the head of the agency if he didn’t act that day. Commissioner Stephen Hahn denied this had occurred, telling reporters: “The representations in the press that I was threatened to be fired if we didn’t get it done by a certain date is inaccurate.” He added that the decision, which had been expected a few days later, was “based on the strongest scientific integrity.”

The agency also released new information for health care providers and for patients as the US shipped millions of doses of the vaccine across the country.

SOURCE: AFP



An elderly couple wearing a protective face masks walks past the Pfizer Inc. headquarters on December 9, 2020 in New York City. PHOTO:AFP

PHARMA SALE

UK

UK’s AstraZeneca says buying US biotech firm Alexion

BRITISH pharmaceuticals group AstraZeneca, which is finalizing a vaccine against Covid-19, said Saturday it was buying US biotech firm Alexion for \$39 billion to boost its work on immunology.

“Alexion has established itself as a leader in complement biology, bringing life-changing benefits to patients with rare diseases,” AstraZeneca chief executive Pascal Soriot said in a statement.

SOURCE: AFP

Germany

96% of regions are Covid hotspots

CURRENTLY, 396 regions in Germany have a higher Covid incidence rate than the threshold of 50/100,000 residents over 7 days. According to data from the Robert Koch Institute, this marks 96% of German regions as coronavirus hotspots.

The most severely affected areas are the Regensburg district, followed by the district of Bautzen. The district of Rostock has the lowest case figures.

SOURCE: AFP

Anti-hate speech plays a major role in promoting social cohesion

Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace, and we all need to stop the hate speech at every turn to promote social cohesion across the country, particularly in Rakhine State.

Violence attributed to online hate speech has increased worldwide, and it is necessary to take actions that can curb hate speech.

What is hate speech? The United Nations' Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech said that there was no international legal definition of hate speech, and the characterization of what is 'hateful' is controversial and disputed.

According to the document, the term hate speech is understood as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factors.

Hate speech impacts on many areas including human rights protection, prevention of atrocity crime, preventing and countering terrorism and the underlying spread of violent extremism and counter-terrorism, preventing and addressing gender-based violence.

Addressing hate speech, therefore, requires a coordinated response that tackles the root causes and drivers

of hate speech, as well as its impact on victims and societies more broadly.

Regarding hate speech, the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor and the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony organized a virtual meeting yesterday discussing the matters relating to enhancing women's role on anti-hate speech and social cohesion.

It is necessary to tackle hate speech to prevent armed conflict, atrocity crimes and terrorism, end violence against women and other serious violations of human rights, and promote peaceful, inclusive and just societies.

Therefore, the government has been making efforts to organize anti-hate speech campaigns and anti-hate speech workshops to build a better country for all citizens.

Not only the government but also we individuals need to combat hate speech and to have the right speech which can replace and conquer hate speech.

Right Speech, according to the Buddhist Scriptures, has four factors to be avoided. They are abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, and idle chatter. These rules apply to both real-world and online speeches and writings.

By combatting hate speech and making the right speech, we can strengthen the bonds of society and build a better world for all.

'Intellectual Courage' and 'Transcending' Intellectual Provincialism'

By Dr Myint Zan

On 1 September 1970 a 'fresher welcome' ceremony for the first-year 'entering' students of the Rangoon Arts and Science University (RASU) (as it was then officially named) was held at its Convocation Hall.

'Intellectual Courage' in Speech of Saya Dr Khin Maung Win (Philosophy)

Among the speeches given by the various Head of Departments at the fresher welcome ceremony, I especially recall the speech by then Philosophy Professor at RASU the late Dr Khin Maung Win (7 October 1929-9 January 2011). In introducing his subject or 'major' Dr Khin Maung Win stated to the effect that students (indeed one could say or add) all educators and knowledge-seekers alike need to cultivate the boldness, the curiosity indeed the courage to seek new and unfamiliar areas of knowledge. Dr Khin Maung Win said 'we need to have what is called intellectual courage'. Dr Khin Maung Win said the phrase 'intellectual courage' in English.

'Intellectual Provincialism' in the Obituary of Historian Arnold Toynbee

Fast forward to around late November 1975. On the passing away of the eminent historian Arnold J. Toynbee (14 April 1889-22 October 1975), Time magazine published an obituary of Toynbee in its 3 November 1975 issue. I read it in Mandalay several weeks later. The last paragraphs of Toynbee's obituary states:

QUOTE
Daniel Boorstin, recently confirmed as the new Librarian of Congress, commented that "few historians have spent themselves so unstintingly or so effectively in the effort to transcend the provincialism of their time and place." Toynbee felt that there was a kind of intellectual provincialism, too, in what he called "the dogma that 'life is just one damned thing after another,'" for he had "a lifetime conviction that human affairs do not become intelligible until they are seen as a whole."

UNQUOTE
I would prefer to rewrite

the last line of Time's obituary thus: (the changes that I wish to make are written in bold)

QUOTE
Toynbee himself felt that there was a kind of intellectual provincialism too, in what he called the "dogma that 'life is just one damned thing after another'" for he had a lifelong conviction that human affairs do not become understandable until they are seen as a whole".

UNQUOTE

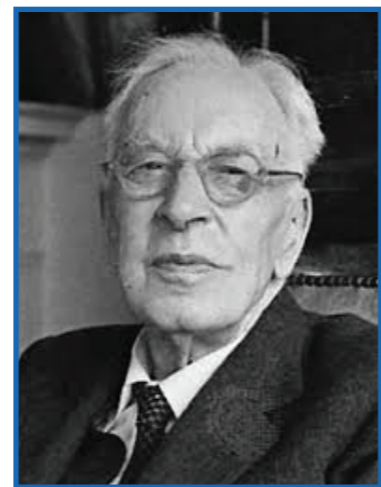
This writer finds the last sentence of Toynbee's obituary to be moving and perhaps at times even 'comforting'. When things look puzzling, disappointing, anomalous or even outrageous to me, I at times mutter to myself 'of things not being understandable' (adding to myself 'they certainly do not') and then try to 'salve' such opacity of non-understanding by trying to remind oneself with the caveat or reminder: 'until they are seen as whole'.

What does the renown historian mean by his 'lifelong conviction' that 'the dogma of life being one damn thing after another' smacks of 'intellectual provincialism'?

The philosopher Bertrand Russell (18 May 1972-2 February 1970), who like Arnold Toynbee was British, wrote in one of his essays that escaping from and transcending 'the tyranny of the here and the now' in considering 'human affairs' (to use the words from Toynbee's obituary) is to be philosophical and, in a sense, almost to be free.

Most of us are self-interested and self-centred persons though there could be shades of -indeed vast- differences among individuals regarding our 'self-centredness' so to speak. More often than not we are likely to be largely, almost entirely focussed on, overwhelmed by or 'submerged' in the concerns, happenstances and at times snares of our self-interests - the 'provincialisms' of our times and places. Still, at times, even non-historians and non-philosophers should try to transcend the 'provincialisms' of our times and places' to the extent that is possible (if not so effectively as Toynbee apparently had done).

A few historians like Toynbee, perhaps, do have lifelong



Historian Arnold Toynbee

convictions to try to 'understand' current human affairs

Dr Khin Maung Win was exhorting us students to have 'intellectual courage'- musingly (not 'amusingly'), mystically that 'in the 21st century, human life is going to be a unity again in all its aspects...'. (quoted from Time's obituary of Toynbee).

beyond the provincialisms of their times and places. Almost logically (or is it historically?) as historians qua historians, they should be able to discern human events from the broader sweep of human history.

Arnold Toynbee wrote perhaps around 1970 if not earlier - roughly the same time Dr Khin Maung Win was exhorting us students to have 'intellectual courage'- musingly (not 'amusingly'), mystically that 'in the 21st century, human life is going to be a unity again in all its aspects...'. (quoted from Time's obituary of Toynbee).

As of the time of this writing, nearly two decades of the 21st century are now history. In the two decades of the 21st century, there is 'globalization', but both concomitantly and contrapuntally there are also lots of fragmentations as far as the human condition is concerned. This writer thinks that the rise of populist nationalism in quite a few places around the world is not a 'sign of unity' as enig-

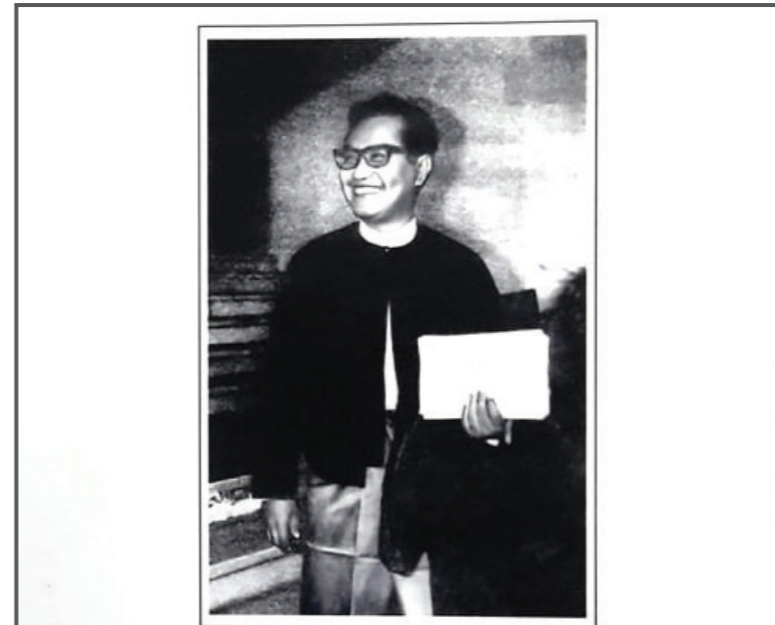
matically written or historically (not astrologically!) predicted or envisaged by Toynbee several decades back.

Saya Zawgyi's Comparable Perspective on 'Viewing things as a whole'

As regards the need for perspective (and to the extent that is possible) for detachment and humility is also espoused by our very own Saya Zawgyi (12 April 1907-29 September 1990) in one of his ဝေဇာတိပုဒ်ပြည်တော်များများ 'Ancient Pagan series of poems'. The poet in one of his poems wrote about viewing the

Intellectual Courage needed to overcome, transcend or lessen intellectual provincialism

Now, how can we and how should we link a philosophy professor Dr Khin Maung Win's exhortation to fresher students in the year 1970 to have 'intellectual courage' with the eminent historian Toynbee's (lifelong) conviction regarding 'intellectual provincialism'? Perhaps intellectual courage is needed not only in taking the initiative and having the audacity to study new subjects, explore new knowledge, expands one's horizons, persist on attempt-



တဝှားအောင်မြင်ချင်တယ်ဆိုရင်၊ သည်းခံတတ်ရတယ်၊ စိတ်ရှည်ခံတယ်၊ သည်းခံတယ်၊ စိတ်ရှည်တယ်ဆိုတာ အားနည်းချက်မဟုတ်ဘူး။ ကိုယ်အတွက် အားသာချက်တွေ ဖြစ်တယ်၊ သို့မဟုတ် သည်းခံတတ်ခြင်း၊ စိတ်ရှည်ခြင်းဆိုတာ သဘာဝအလျောက်ဖြစ်တာတော့မဟုတ်ဘူး။ ကိုယ့်ကိုကိုယ်လေ့ကျင့်ယူရတာ

Dr Khin Maung Win (1929-2011) Professor of Philosophy at Rangoon Arts and Science University (1965)

ing to understand if need be to internalize such knowledge, even if they go against one's ingrained beliefs, perceptions and -yes- prejudices.

'Intellectual courage' is also required so that we do not all the time immerse ourselves in our 'provinces' not only of the physical kinds- but also psychologically even philosophically. In a sense, the message of the two phrases taken together would be that we should try to transcend or reduce our intellectual timidity, our intellectual laziness. We should try not to be entirely enmeshed in the intellectual, emotional and moral narrow-mindedness, our 'provincialisms' so to speak. And intellectual courage is needed to overcome or at least lessen our intellectual as well as our emotional and moral provincialisms. That, to me, is the message that I derived from a speech given more than fifty years ago at a student's welcome ceremony and the lifelong conviction of a historian who through his copious and voluminous writings I had (at least according to some of Toynbee's admirers) 'unstintingly and effectively' transcended the 'provincialisms' of his time(s) and place(s).

This article commemorates the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the University of Rangoon and brief appreciation of two alumni: Saya Zaw Gyi (U Thein Han) and Dr Khin Maung Win (philosophy).

The book that the writer edited Legal Education and Legal Traditions has recently been published in Springer Link (springerlink.com). The book includes eight Chapters; one of which written by Dr Myint Zan deals in part with the philosophy of history of Arnold Toynbee as well as that of Augustine and Karl Marx.

Dr Myint Zan has also established a fund for the years 2018 to 2020 the Myint Zan Fellowship in Philosophy at the Philosophy Department of the Australian National University (ANU), one of his alma maters, for post-doctoral early career researchers as well as an undergraduate Myint Zan Philosophy prize in perpetuity at the ANU for undergraduate philosophy students.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 12 December 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over North Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 13 December 2020: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region 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: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 December 2020: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 December 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 December 2020: Fair weather.

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 11:00 hour MST on 12 December 2020)

A slight earthquake of magnitude (3.8) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about 13 miles north-west of Mingin), latitude 22.98°N, longitude 94.32°E, depth 19 kilometers, about (52)miles northeast of Haka seismological observatory was recorded at (10) hr (44)min (11) sec MST on 12 December 2020.

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PARIS AGREEMENT COMMITMENTS 'FAR FROM ENOUGH'

UN chief urges global summit to declare 'climate emergency'



UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged world leaders to declare a "state of climate emergency" and shape greener growth after the coronavirus pandemic, as he opened a summit marking five years since the landmark Paris Agreement. **PHOTO: UNEP**

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged world leaders to declare a "state of climate emergency" and shape greener growth after the coronavirus pandemic, as he opened a summit marking five years since the landmark Paris Agreement.

The Climate Ambition Sum-

mit, being held online, comes as the United Nations warns current commitments to tackle rises in global temperatures are inadequate.

The commitments made in Paris in 2015 were "far from enough" to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the

UN secretary-general said in his opening address to the summit, which is co-hosted by Britain and France.

"If we don't change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3.0 degrees this century," he said.

"That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached," he added, arguing the recovery from COVID-19 presented a rare opportunity to recalibrate growth.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the climate summit that a traumatic year of pandemic was ending with the hope of vaccines coming on-stream.

"My message to you all is that together, we can use scientific advances to protect our planet, our biosphere against a challenge far worse, far more destructive, than even the coronavirus pandemic," he said.

For its part, Britain was acting on climate not because it was a nation of "mung bean-eating eco freaks" but because scientific progress would allow the creation of "millions" of green jobs, Johnson added.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS
IN BRIEF

RED CROSS

Foreign aid convoy reaches capital of Ethiopia's scarred Tigray

THE first international aid convoy arrived Saturday in the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region since fighting broke out more than a month ago, triggering a refugee crisis and humanitarian disaster. The first international aid convoy arrived Saturday in the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region since fighting broke out more than a month ago, triggering a refugee crisis and humanitarian disaster.

SOURCE: AFP

KREMLIN CRITIC

Putin says Navalny poisoning not enough for probe

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has said his top critic Alexei Navalny's near-death poisoning is not a reason to open a criminal probe.

Germany, France and Britain have accused Russian authorities of "involvement and responsibility" in the poisoning of Kremlin critic Navalny with Novichok, a Soviet-designed nerve agent.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied responsibility and some top officials suggested that the top Russian opposition leader might have been poisoned in Germany where he was taken for treatment after falling violently ill in Siberia in August.

SOURCE: AFP

IRANIAN DISSIDENT JOURNALIST

Iran executes opposition figure Ruhollah Zam

IRAN on Saturday (Dec 12) executed Ruhollah Zam, a former opposition figure who had lived in exile in France and was implicated in anti-government protests, state television said.

The broadcaster said the "counter-revolutionary" Zam was hanged in the morning after Iran's Supreme Court upheld his death sentence due to "the severity of the crimes" committed against the Islamic republic.

France and human rights groups had condemned the Supreme Court's decision.

The son of a pro-reform Shia

cleric, Zam fled Iran and was given asylum in France.

In October 2019, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps said it had trapped Zam in a "complex operation using intelligence deception". It did not say where the operation took place.

In announcing his arrest, the Revolutionary Guards claimed that Zam was "directed by France's intelligence service".

State television said he was "under the protection of several countries' intelligence services".

SOURCE: AFP



Ruhollah Zam, a dissident journalist who was captured in what Tehran calls an intelligence operation, is seen during his trial in Tehran, Iran June 2, 2020. Picture taken June 2, 2020. **PHOTO: WANA NEWS AGENCY/AFP**

GLOOMY ASSESSMENT

UK puts navy on standby to protect fishing if Brexit talks fail



Brexit disruption could bring massive queues of trucks on major roads in southern England. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

A Brexit trade deal between Britain and the European Union looked to be hanging in the balance on Saturday after gloomy assessments from leaders on both sides of the Channel, with just hours left before last-gasp talks conclude. Britain on Saturday readied armed Royal Navy ships to patrol its fishing waters if tempers flare after a "no-deal" Brexit as a make-or-break deadline approached for talks with the European Union.

Four 80-metre (260-foot) vessels have been placed on standby to guard British waters from EU trawlers in case the two sides decide to abandon efforts to secure a free-trade agreement on Sunday.

The development is part of increased contingency planning on both sides of the Channel, and evokes mem-

ories of the "Cod Wars" with Iceland over fishing rights in the North Atlantic in the 1960s and 70s.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said it is "very, very likely" the talks will fail, and Britain will revert to World Trade Organization (WTO) terms with its largest single trading partner.

European leaders have also been told the chances of a deal are slim with both sides at loggerheads over rules to govern fair competition and fishing rights in British territorial waters. Deal or no deal, Britain will leave the EU single market and customs union on the evening of December 31, more than four years after a landmark referendum on membership of the bloc.

SOURCE: AFP

ETHICAL DILEMMA

They got the placebo -- should they be next in line for vaccine?

WITH America poised to become the next country to approve a Covid-19 vaccine, authorities find themselves facing an ethical dilemma: when to give trial participants who received a placebo the real deal.

The question is most pressing for studies involving Pfizer-BioNTech's two-shot regimen, which has received emergency approval in Britain and a handful of other countries. The US could follow within days.

On Thursday, the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine published results from a clinical trial involving nearly 44,000 people in the United States and

other countries.

Around half were randomly chosen to receive injections containing the companies' patented messenger RNA molecules, while the rest got saline solutions.

The experiment was "blinded," meaning neither the volunteers nor their health care providers knew who was given what, a crucial element in ensuring people go about their everyday lives as they would have otherwise done.

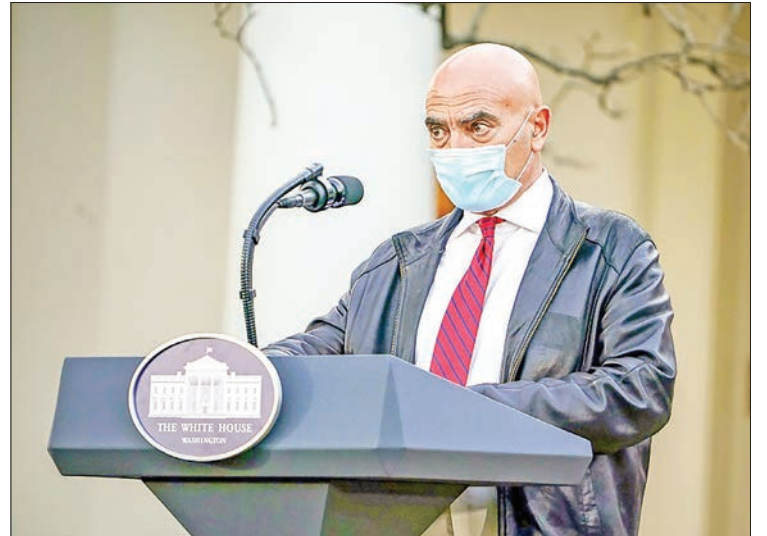
Independent researchers analyzing the study waited for volunteers to become infected naturally -- unfortunately, owing to the rampant nature of the

pandemic, this happened all too quickly -- then lifted the hood on the data so that they, and only they, could see which group the sick were in.

The results confirmed that receiving the vaccine reduced the risk of developing Covid-19 by 95 per cent compared to not receiving it, and that no serious side effects could be attributed to the drug. So why isn't that enough to call off the trial and make sure everyone now benefits?

Ideally scientists still want more data, which would help clarify, for example, possible long-term harms linked to the vaccine.

SOURCE: AFP



Placebo participants will receive the vaccine from trial organizers, Moncef Slaoui, pictured in November 2020, said in a recent briefing. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

DESPITE HIGH NUMBERS

Greece to shorten quarantine, open churches for Christmas

GREECE will slash quarantine time for incoming travellers and reopen churches for Christmas, a government spokesman said Friday, although coronavirus infection rates remain high.

"Up to nine people will be allowed in churches and up to 25 people in cathedrals" on Christmas Day and Epiphany, government spokesman Stelios Petsas told reporters.

And there was good news for some small businesses as hair salons and bookstores can also resume operation from Monday.

An ongoing coronavirus lockdown to January 7 remains in force, but the quarantine pe-



Italian tourists look at the Roman Agora in Athens on Thursday, as Greece eases lockdown measures taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19. PHOTO: AFP

riod for incoming travellers will be reduced from 10 to three days for those arriving from December 18, Petsas said.

The government added that

because of major delays in parcel delivery, retail stores can distribute online orders through click-and-collect side exits until January 7, wherever possible.

"Just one person will be allowed to collect their order... we must avoid major social mobility and crowding outside stores," Development Minister Adonis Georgiadis said.

Greece has struggled to alleviate pressure on its health system amid hundreds of daily infections and scores of deaths.

Over 120,000 cases have been recorded since February -- with infections spiking after the summer -- and over 3,300 people have died of the virus.

Over 80 per cent of intensive care beds nationwide are currently occupied, Petsas said Friday.

SOURCE: AFP

SHARP RISE

Nigeria's health minister warns on second wave of COVID-19

NIGERIA'S health minister has warned of a second wave in the coronavirus pandemic following a sudden rise in infections in the vast west African nation, his office said Thursday.

Osagie Ehanire said 1,843 cases were recorded last week compared with 1,235 two weeks ago. "We may just be on the verge of a second wave of this pandemic," the minister said.

Rising infections could be blamed on people failing to uphold preventive measures like mask-wearing, hand-washing and physical distancing, Ehanire said. He added that he had directed health authorities to reopen isolation and treatment centres which had been closed as case numbers fell.

South Africa, another of the continent's heavyweight nations, announced Wednesday it had entered a second wave of Covid-19. Nigeria recorded its highest number of infections in five months on Thursday, with 675 new cases after 550 on Wednesday, according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The country had seen a drop in infections since the start of October with a daily average of less than 200 cases. Health authorities feared Nigeria might not be able to cope with a second wave because of its weak health facilities and poorly equipped and ill-motivated personnel.

SOURCE: AFP

LOW IMMUNE RESPONSE

Sanofi, GSK Covid vaccine delayed until end of 2021

FRANCE'S Sanofi and Britain's GSK said Friday their Covid-19 vaccines will not be ready until the end of 2021, after interim results showed a low immune response in older adults.

The announcement is a huge setback in efforts to fight the pandemic, which first emerged in China last December and has killed over 1.5 million people worldwide.

Sanofi and GSK said the delay in their adjuvanted recombinant protein-based COVID-19 vaccine programme was to "improve immune response in older adults."

The vaccine's potential availability had been pushed back "from mid-2021 to Q4

2021," they said in a statement.

American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech have said their vaccine had proven 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 infections in ongoing Phase 3 trials involving more than 40,000 people.

US experts voted Thursday to recommend granting emergency approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, paving the way for America to become the next country to move ahead with mass immunization after the UK. Canada, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have also approved it.

The Sanofi-GSK candidate is based on technology that Sa-

nofi has used to produce seasonal influenza vaccines and on immunological agents developed by GSK.

"Phase 1/2 study interim results showed an immune response comparable to patients who recovered from COVID-19 in adults aged 18 to 49 years, but a low immune response in older adults likely due to an insufficient concentration of the antigen," the statement said.

It said a recent study in non-human primates using an improved antigen formulation demonstrated that the candidate could "protect against lung pathology and lead to rapid viral clearance from the nasal passages and lungs, with-



The vaccine candidate is based on technology that Sanofi has used to produce seasonal influenza vaccines and on immunological agents developed by GSK. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

in 2 to 4 days."

"These results increase the companies' confidence in the capacity of the adjuvanted recombinant platform to deliver a highly efficient vaccine for all adults," it said.

SOURCE: AFP

ON WARTIME LABOUR

S. Korean court rejects Nippon Steel's appeal over asset seizure



A South Korean court has rejected an appeal from Japanese steelmaker Nippon Steel Corp over seizure of the company's assets to compensate South Koreans forced to work there during wartime. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

A South Korean court said Friday it has rejected an appeal from Japanese steelmaker Nippon Steel Corp. over seizure of the company's assets to compensate South Koreans forced to work there during wartime. The Daegu District Court's Pohang branch said that it decid-

ed not to accept the company's immediate appeal due to the "absence of grounds". The case will now move to a higher court for review.

The court decided to seize Nippon Steel's assets in South Korea as the company refused to implement a Supreme Court decision in 2018 that ordered compensation over wartime forced labor at Japan Iron and Steel Co., the steelmaker's forerunner, in the 1940s.

According to South Korean media, Nippon Steel has filed immediate appeals over two of the three cases over the company's assets for which asset seizure orders have been issued.

The Japanese firm had made an appeal back in August for another case that is in progress, which also was rejected by the court and was moved up to higher court.

SOURCE: Kyodo

NEWS
IN BRIEF

STABLE GROWTH

China's bike industry posts surging profits in first 10 months

CHINA'S major bicycle manufacturers saw stable growth in the first 10 months of this year, with their profits jumping 25.1 per cent year on year, official data showed. Bicycle manufacturers with annual main-business revenue of more than 20 million yuan (about 3.06 million U.S. dollars) raked in 5.88 billion yuan of profits in the period, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. The operating revenue of the major bike makers totalled 141.93 billion yuan during the period, up 16.8 per cent year on year, the ministry said.

SOURCE: Xinhua

FINE DINING SECTOR

Virus bites into profits at Europe's top restaurants

AN elegant Madrid institution known for exquisite soufflé potatoes, Zalacain closed its doors last month, the latest top European restaurant to have its fate sealed by the coronavirus pandemic. "We did everything we could," said Carmen Gonzalez, manager of Zalacain that opened nearly five decades ago and became the first Spanish restaurant to obtain three Michelin stars in the early 1980s.

Other prestigious European eateries are in the same predicament, with the closure in June of two iconic London venues, The Greenhouse and The Ledbury,

both of which held two Michelin stars. "If (the crisis) continues in 2021, it will be very difficult for the sector to survive," warned Mauro Colagreco, the celebrated Argentine chef who runs the three-starred Mirazur in Menton on the French Riviera.

Like other French restaurants, Mirazur will not be able to reopen until January 20 at the earliest due to the ongoing virus restrictions. Running a prestigious restaurant "is often the project of a lifetime," explains Gwendal Poullennec, international director of the Michelin Guide.

He said that only 15 to 20 per cent of Europe's top eateries are open, with the rest closed by Covid restrictions or financial difficulties.

For now, the number of permanent closures remains "comparable to previous years", Poullennec said, while noting that European restaurants are dependent on international tourists, leaving them far worse off than those in Asia where "the local clientele carries the restaurant business".

- 'A huge crisis' -

In the kitchens at his two-

starred Terraza del Casino restaurant in central Madrid, chef Paco Roncero is preparing a dish of clams with "a hint of coffee".

- Luxury lunch boxes -

Like others, she has thrown herself into creating a line of luxury lunch boxes to try and cut her losses, with each costing 90 euros per person -- something of a revolution within haute cuisine. In Madrid, Roncero has been doing the same since September and thinks the idea has caught on for good.

SOURCE: AFP

INJECTION OF 3.7 BILLION EUROS

Portugal announces rescue plan for flag carrier TAP

THE Portuguese government announced on Friday its recovery plan for ailing flag carrier TAP Airline foreseeing an injection of 3.7 billion euros (4.5 billion U.S. dollars) in the next four years. According to the Minister of Infrastructure and Housing, Pedro Nuno Santos, the plan aims to restructure the company's medium-term operations, and TAP will have to return the money to the Portuguese state in 2025. According to Nuno Santos, the Portuguese airline will have accumulated losses in "revenues of 6.7 billion euros over the next

five years." TAP's restructuring plan foresees the dismissal of 3,000 employees, a big cut in salaries for those who remain and a reduction in the number of airplanes. In addition to presenting the airline's restructuring plan at a press conference, the government also submitted the proposal to officials of the European Union in Brussels. In early July, the Portuguese government announced its decision to increase its stake in TAP from 50 percent to 72.5 per cent to avoid the collapse of the company. (1 euro = 1.21 U.S. dollars) SOURCE: Xinhua



Planes of TAP Air Portugal are seen at the Humberto Delgado Airport in Lisbon, Portugal on March 24, 2020. **PHOTO: PEDRO FIUZA/XINHUA**

PROPERTY SALES

New Zealand house prices hit new record high as sales up 29.6 pct

MEDIAN house prices across New Zealand increased by 18.5 per cent year on year in November to a record high of 749,000 New Zealand dollars (532,491 U.S. dollars), as property sales in November were up 29.6 per cent on the same time last year and inventory levels were at lowest point ever, the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) said on Friday.

REINZ's figures show 9,885 properties were sold in November across the country, the highest number of properties sold in a month since March 2007.

For New Zealand excluding Auckland, the biggest city of the country, the number of properties sold increased by 18.3 per cent when compared to the same time last year (from 5,205 to 6,157) - the highest number of properties sold since March 2016 (56 months) and the highest November sales volumes since November 2006 (14 years).

SOURCE: Xinhua

MIXED MARKETS

European shares, pound hit by fading Brexit deal outlook

STOCK markets and the pound stumbled Friday after London and Brussels warned that a no-deal Brexit was now a strong possibility. When closing bells rang, London stocks had fallen by a collective 0.8 per cent, while Frankfurt gave up 1.4 per cent and Paris was off by 0.8 per cent. Wall Street also had a lackluster day, with both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq retreating even as the Dow eked out a gain. "We are starting to see the first meaningful de-risking from investors amid concern over Brexit," remarked Stephen Innes, chief global markets strategist at AXI.

SOURCE: AFP

TROUBLED FARMING SECTOR

Why are Indian farmers protesting, and what can Modi do?

AS an army of resolute Indian farmers keeps up its blockade of New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces potentially the trickiest challenge yet to his authority and reform agenda.

As an army of resolute Indian farmers keeps up its blockade of New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces potentially the trickiest challenge yet to his authority and reform agenda.

With the protests entering their third week, AFP looks at the background to new farm laws, why they are sparking such opposition and Modi's limited options.

What is the state of Indian agriculture?

India's farming sector is vast and troubled.

It provides a livelihood



Modi has tried to brush off the current agitation as being stoked by an opportunistic opposition 'misleading' the farmers. PHOTO: AFP

to nearly 70 per cent of the country's 1.3 billion people and accounts for around 15 per cent of the \$2.7-trillion economy.

The "Green Revolution" of the 1970s turned India from a country facing regular food shortages into

one with a surplus -- and a major exporter.

But for the past few decades, farm incomes have remained largely stagnant and the sector is in sore need of investment and modernisation. More than 85 per cent of

farmers have less than two hectares (five acres) of land. Fewer than one in a hundred farmers own over 10 hectares, according to a 2015-16 agriculture ministry survey. India hands out an estimated \$32 billion in subsidies to farmers

annually, according to the finance ministry.

How are farmers coping?

Water shortages, floods and increasingly erratic weather caused by climate change, as well as debt, have taken a heavy toll on farmers.

According to a Punjab government report in 2017, the northern state will use up all its groundwater resources by 2039.

More than 300,000 farmers have killed themselves since the 1990s. Nearly 10,300 did so in 2019, according to the latest official figures.

Farmers and their workers are also abandoning agriculture in droves -- 2,000 of them every day according to the last census in 2011.

SOURCE: AFP



A sign in front of an eatery in Osaka's major entertainment district of Minami notifies customers on Nov. 26, 2020, of shortened business hours. PHOTO: KYODO

DINING INDUSTRY

Bankruptcies of eateries to hit all-time high in 2020 amid pandemic

THE number of bankruptcies in Japan's dining industry will likely hit an all-time high in 2020 as many establishments struggle to restore their cash flow amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the results of a recent survey showed. According to the survey conducted by Tokyo Shoko Research, bankruptcies of companies with debts of at least 10 million yen (\$96,000) from January to November stood at 792, an increase of 8 per cent compared with the same period last year. With Tokyo and some other local governments once again requesting that dining establishments shorten their business hours due to a resurgence in infections, the figure is almost certain to surpass the previous

annual record of 800 set in 2011.

Eateries specializing in a particular cuisine, such as Japanese food or ramen noodles, made up the largest portion of bankruptcies at 192. It was followed by cafeterias and restaurants at 184, and "izakaya" Japanese-style pubs at 162. By prefecture, Osaka saw the most bankruptcies among eateries at 146 cases, followed by Tokyo at 129 and Aichi at 76. In a sign that COVID-19 is also taking a toll on establishments smaller in scale, the number of bankruptcies totalled around 2,400 when taking into account businesses that have voluntarily closed down or gone bankrupt with debts of less than 10 million yen. SOURCE: Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AISOPOS II VOY. NO. (048S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AISOPOS II VOY. NO. (048S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SAN PEDRO VOY. NO. (952S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SAN PEDRO VOY. NO. (952S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/TMT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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New housing projects to appear in Shan State in the near future



The photo shows a scale model of a housing project.

By Zin Lin Myint
TRANSLATED BY HTUT
HTUT (TWANTAY)

NOW is the time when every effort is being made to gear up development measures in regions and states across the country. The Covid-19 pandemic has become an obstacle to the daily lives of the people including economic, social and education matters, making it difficult for all the enterprises both from the government and private sectors to continue in the normal way. In spite of experiencing a difficult situation, the country is working at full capacity. Food, clothing and shelter, the basic needs of human beings, is of great importance in life. The government considers having a place to live or stay as a basic human need, stepping up the implementation of the new housing projects, where necessary in the country. Now the implementation of new housing projects is being carried out with might and main

in Shan State.

As regards the implementation of the new housing projects, the Department of Urban and Housing Development of Shan State drew up urban planning in order to help develop the towns in the Shan State, especially implementing new housing projects to accommodate the government employees who have retired or are in service. An attempt to implement new housing projects is a significant factor in urban development.

The implementation of new housing projects includes 6 five-storey buildings with 120 apartments in Taunggyi, one five-storey building with 36 apartments in Tachilek, 28 buildings with 316 apartments in 10 townships in Shan State and 68 buildings with 1,046 apartments in 26 townships.

Plans have been made to increase the implementation of the new housing projects for the people. Projects have been set up in Shan State for ensuring that the urban areas in Shan State will systematically develop. The number of already-drafted projects in Shan State is six in total—Moemaik new town plan, Mongton township's rural project, Monghsat urban project, Hopong urban project in Pa-O

Self-Administered Region, Namhsan urban project in Palaung Self-Administered Zone, and Laukkai urban project in Kokang Self-Administered Zone.

Moreover, with the assistance of the British government, the Department of Urban and Housing Development of Shan State has got a plan to undertake the urban project in Taunggyi

in cooperation with the British government, hoping that it will be undertaken from 2020 to 2022.

Plans are underway to implement projects for urban development in Kalaw. The authorities are planning to preserve ancient heritages since Kalaw has cold and pleasant weather and beautiful natural environment, and it is also to be created

as the tourist destination site.

To be able to do so, SAL Sweden Group is going to try to implement the urban development in Kalaw after collecting data. Kalaw is gifted with tourism attractions. Efforts are being made for the implementation of the projects capable of attracting foreign tourists.

Transport plays an inte-

The photo shows a scale model of a housing project.



gral part in an effort to develop a region. For that reason, Katha-Taunggyi section of Meiktila-Kalaw-Taunggyi road has been upgraded into the concrete tarred road. Now, this road section can be used at any time in all seasons. This road section was paved with tar in the use of the latest technology. The construction of the road section saved time compared to that of the past and so it is of top quality.

The development works are now fully operational in the areas of the eastern, southern and northern parts of Shan State. In addition to the respective areas of education, health, economy and transport, housing projects are under implementation. Unlike in the past, the hope that the retired government employees and in-service ones would like to live at a shelter has come true. The implementation of private housing projects is in place.

According to the favourable geographical features of Shan State, transport and climate, those who can live in housing will be on the increase in the future. With the increasing number of people, there will be a rise in the number of migrants, too. If the government builds the high-rise apartments the people could afford to buy in partnership with the private sector, it will help contribute toward the urban development.

It is believed that Shan State having urban development plans will be able to begin with new housing projects the mass of people can live in the near future.



Myanmar Script Fund Award Ceremony: 3 Awards and a Special Mention



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MEMORY! Cinema ran the 5th edition of Myanmar Script Fund for emerging Myanmar Filmmakers developing their first or second long feature films (fiction only). After two intense weeks of coaching and online meetings with professionals from the film industry, the finalists of the MSF Original section presented their projects in front of the MSF Jury, chaired by Mrs Dechen Roder, filmmaker (Bhutan). Six projects were completed. At the end of the Jury's deliberation, three prizes and a Special mention were announced officially during the MSF Award and Closing Ceremony on 9 December.

The MSF Short-to-Feature Award goes to *CITY BIRDS*, by Nay Wunn Ni, Director and produced by Myo Thar Khin.

The "MSF Short-to-Feature Award" is intended to help the project that most needs an additional short film to strengthen its case. The director of the short film must be the same as the director of the submitted project. The subject and duration are completely free. The short film must be a fiction. For the production of this short movie, a grant 2,000 euros will be given to the winning team.

The 2020 MSF Script Development Award goes to *MEL MO*, by Kaung Myat Thu Kyaw, Director and produced by Aye Nilar Kyaw.

The "MSF Script Development Award" is intended to support the project with the strongest scriptwriting potential by adding to the team a scriptwriter-consultant who will work directly with the director in the development of the treatment. The total value of the award is 2,000 euros that will be fairly shared between the scriptwriter-consultant and to the winning team.

The 2020 MSF Open Doors Award goes to the producer Lin Sun Oo for *THE MIST OF MAYA*, by Director Zaw Win Htwe.

This Award enables a creative producer to participate in the 2021 edition of the Open Doors Lab - Locarno Festival (Switzerland) in August 2021.

'All the MSF finalists who have been selected this year, are already winners, because the spotlight is now on those film projects; and organizations like Cannes Locarno, Busan Film festivals and other A-list festivals will already be watching their development with interest', added the co-founder of Myanmar Script Fund, Séverine Wemaere.

Due to the pandemic, Myanmar Script Fund was held fully online: over 140 online sessions, 12 film projects, 25 candidates, 14 experienced professionals representing, a dozen top-notch international film festivals and script funds. MSF handled two different sections: MSF Original for new projects where 6 finalist

teams faced final pitching competition with 3 awards at stake; MSF Advanced for MSF alumni's where 6 finalist teams could present their projects to film industry decision-makers for further selection in international festivals, script funds and coproduction platforms.

Myanmar Script Fund (MSF) is a year-round programme with peak sessions at the end of the year.

MSF acts as a talent scouting for independent cinema in Myanmar. Since 2016, more than 70 talents have been trained, representing about 30 feature film projects. Beyond the competition, all finalists are then eligible for a customized follow-up, notably for future applications to international platforms that are crucial for the development of a film project.

The MSF programme is supported by the Union Ministry of Information of Myanmar, the French Embassy, the Institut français, the Swiss Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, The European Union Delegation in Myanmar, CNC (Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée, French National Film Center), Arte, the US Embassy, the Locarno Festival-Open Doors and Forever Group.

International Jury for 2020 Myanmar Script Fund chaired by Mrs Dechen Roder, filmmaker and producer (Buthan).

Sophie Bourdon, Open Doors / Locarno Festival (Switzerland), Rachel Mathews, Script Professor (UK, Germany), Marianne Dumoulin, Producer, JBA Production (France), Isabelle Glachant,

Chinese Shadows (China-France), Marietta von Hausswolff von Baumgarten, Torino Film Lab

(Sweden) and Vit Janecek Producer and Professor at the FAMU (Czech Republic).

The six finalists film projects of Myanmar Script Fund Original 2020:

CITY BIRDS by Nay Wunn Ni and produced by Myo Thar Khin
CURVE by Mann Pye Pyo Aung and produced by Hnin Ei Hlaing

INFINITE PAIN by Sic Hmuu Naing and produced by Jose Dennis C. Teodosio

MEL MO by Kaung Myat Thu Kyaw and produced by Aye Nilar Kyaw

THE MIST OF MAYA by Zaw Win Htwe and produced by Lin Sun Oo

THE YELLOW FIELD by Min Min Hein and produced by Min Min Hein —GNLM



Everton owner Farhad Moshiri (right) has pumped in £100 million to help cover the club's huge losses. **PHOTO: AFP**

Everton blame Covid for record £140 million loss

LONDON—Everton have announced club record losses of £139.9 million (\$186 million) after the implications of the coronavirus pandemic significantly impacted revenues.

The Toffees said the impact of Covid-19 amounted to an unforeseen loss of £67.3 million due to a cut in matchday revenue and television rebates.

However, the figures show Everton would still have made a huge loss without the disruption of the pandemic after also posting a then-record loss of £111.8 million last year.

The club spent £113 million on new players for the 2019/20 season and have splashed another £70 million in the most recent transfer window as well as recruiting Carlo Ancelotti as manager on a lucrative four-and-a-half year deal in December 2019.

The sacking of former manager Marco Silva and his coaching staff a year ago amounted to £6.6 million in compensation costs, while another £20 million was spent on preparation for a new stadium. —AFP ■

'No time to mope:' Inter seek Serie A lift after Euro flop

MILAN—Inter Milan turn their focus back to Serie A after their Champions League flop with a trip to Cagliari awaiting on Sunday following their group stage exit midweek.

"There's no time to sit and mope," warned captain Samir Handanovic with his side out of Europe after finishing bottom of their Champions League group.

Antonio Conte's side are second in Serie A, five points behind leaders AC Milan, with

the two city rivals trying to deny Juventus a 10th consecutive league title. "We have to focus on the league and the Coppa Italia," urged Handanovic.

In his second campaign, Conte now has no choice but to deliver a 19th 'Scudetto' to Inter and first since 2010.

The former Juventus and Chelsea manager took Inter to second in Serie A and the Europa League final in his first season. —AFP



Inter Milan crashed out of Europe after a goalless draw with Shakhtar Donetsk. **PHOTO: MARCO BERTORELLO AFP**

ONE Big Bang II: Jonathan Haggerty wins with unanimous decision



The referee declares the win for the British fighter Jonathan Haggerty (right) with a unanimous decision at the ONE Championship Big Bang II event in Singapore on 11 December 2020. **PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**

BRITISH fighter Jonathan Haggerty (alias) "The General" shaped a victory over Japanese fighter Taiki Naito (alias) "Silent Sniper" via unanimous decision in the main card titled Flyweight Muay Thai Fight of the ONE Championship: Big Bang II at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore on this Friday.

Haggerty relied on straight kicks plus southpaw and orthodox stances to combat his opponent. In the meantime, Naito stood as a smart blocker, but he often used high kicked toward the British fighter.

Both fighters did not fall onto the floor till the final rounds of the fight and the decision was made by the referees to declare the victory for the British fighter Jonathan Haggerty.

Next, in the Lightweight Kickboxing bout, Nieky

Holzken of Netherlands defeated Elliot Compton of New Zealand at 1:36 minutes mark of round one.

In the Featherweight Mixed Martial Arts fight, Kim Jae Woong of South Korea beat Tetsuya Yamada of Japan via Technical Knockout at 4:39 minutes mark of round two.

In the Heavyweight Kickboxing Fight, Rade Opacic of Serbia defeated Errol Zimmerman of Netherlands via Technical Knockout at 1:35 minutes mark of round two.

In the Welterweight Mixed Martial Arts Fight, Tyler Mcguire of the United States made a win over Agilan Thani of Malaysia via unanimous decision.

Next, in the Bantamweight bout of Mixed Martial Arts, Chen Rui of China defeated Ali Motamed of Iran at 1:56 minute of round one. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Japan's Shibuno fires 67 to seize US Women's Open lead

LOS ANGELES— Japan's Hinako Shibuno, the 2019 Women's British Open champion, fired a four-under par 67 to seize a three-stroke lead after Friday's second round of the US Women's Open.

The 22-year-old, who hopes to capture her US Women's Open debut after winning her major debut last year, stood on 7-under 135 after 36 holes at Champions Golf Club in Houston, Texas.

Swedish amateur Linn Grant shot a second 69 to stand second on 138 with Americans Amy Olson, Megan Khang and Kaitlyn Papp another stroke adrift.

Shibuno made six birdies and two bogeys on Jackrabbit,



Japan's Hinako Shibuno fired a four-under par 67 on Friday to seize the lead after the second round of the US Women's Open. **PHOTO: JAMIE SQUIRE/AFP**

one of two courses used along with Cypress Creek for the opening two rounds, and said she couldn't draw much confidence this week from her major

title at Woburn.

"I feel like I'm not really confident at all," Shibuno said through a translator. "It feels like this is not myself." —AFP