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Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President

President U Win Myint sends Message of Greetings on occasion of 46th anniversary Rakhine State Day celebrations

(15 December 2020)

Dear esteemed Rakhine ethnic national brothers and sisters,

On the auspicious occasion of the 46th anniversary of Rakhine State Day, I wish to send good wishes for

all ethnic nationals residing in Rakhine State and all ethnic national brothers and sisters born within the Union and residing in the country to be blessed with auspiciousness.

Rakhine State was established as a separate state when states and regions were formed under the 1974 Constitution.

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Myanmar citizens brought back home from abroad by relief flights

A relief flight of Myanmar Airways International organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur landed at Yangon International Airport with 120 seamen stranded in Malaysia, and 47 former detainees in Malaysia, totally 167 yesterday afternoon.

Moreover, another relief flight of the MAI organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh also brought back 132 citizens stranded in the UAE yesterday evening.

These second group included 4 from Saudi Arabia, 70 from the United Arab Emirates, 9 from Egypt, 10 from Britain, 6 from South Africa, 3 from the Netherlands, 3 from Brazil, 4 from Tanzania, 5 from Maldives, 4 from Ethiopia, 3 from Pakistan, 9 from Iran, and 2 from France, totally 132.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population,



Myanmar returnees from foreign countries are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 14 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 Myan-

mar 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 Aung Khin)

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1,170 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 December, total figure rises to 109,512

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 109,512 after 1,170 new cases were reported on 14 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 109,512 confirmed cases, 2,292 died, 88,131 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 14 December 2020

Total Cases

109,512

New Cases

1,170

Total Death Tally

2,292

Discharged from Hospital

88,131

Daily death toll until 8 pm 14-12-2020

24

Ministry of Health and Sports

“People are the key”

Condolence book signed for death of former Pakistani Prime Minister

DIRECTOR-GENERAL U Aung Myint from the Strategic Studies and Training Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the Embassy of Pakistan in Yangon yesterday morning to sign the condolence book for the death of former Pakistani Prime Minister

Mr Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Mr Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali was the 15th prime minister of Pakistan and served his duties from 2002 to 2004, and died at the age of 76—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Director-General U Aung Myint signs the book of condolence for demise of former Pakistani Prime Minister on 14 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Livestock Breeding and Veterinary officials to be prosecuted for corruption cases

THE Anti-Corruption Commission received a complaint that Magway Region Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department's Regional Head and his subordinates committed corruption by misusing the money — training fees and expenditures for office buildings — provided by the government.

The Anti-Corruption Commission set up an investigation committee to investigate the case.

It was found that Magway Region Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department's Regional Head and Director Dr Maung Maung Soe Oo committed corruption in re-allocating the expenditures for training and office

buildings, provided by the 2018-2019 State budget, to the respective subordinate townships.

Regarding the training, Dr Maung Maung Soe Oo demanded Kyat 20,000 per a two-day course and Kyat 50,000 per a five-day course from the respective townships, through Deputy Staff Officer Daw Thandar Sint. After complaints concerning the corruption, he re-transferred the money, a total of Kyat 1.5 million, to the respective townships via the Myanma Economic Bank.

Through Daw Thandar Sint, he also asked for Kyat 2.5 million out of Kyat 8 million allocated by the state for the renovation of Yesagyo Township office building in

the 2018-2019 fiscal year. He also received Kyat 500,000 transferred by Yesagyo Township Department Head.

It was found that the Deputy Staff Officer Daw Thandar Sint also received Kyat 200,000 and helped Dr Maung Maung Soe Oo to commit corruption.

Currently the Anti-Corruption Commission is working to charge Dr Maung Maung Soe Oo under section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law and charge Daw Thandar Sint under section 56/63 of the law, according to the commission. — MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Three new species of Migratory Waterbirds discovered in wetland area of Indawgyi Lake

THREE new species of Migratory Waterbirds (one species is new for Myanmar and the other two species is new for Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary) were found in the wetland area of Indawgyi Lake, Myanmar's largest and Southeast Asia's third-largest inland freshwater lake, in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State, in 2019-2020, according to the Administrative Office of the Indawgyi Lake

Wildlife Sanctuary.

Monthly census of Migratory Waterbirds are scientifically conducted to record when the migratory birds arrived in Indawgyi, when they went back to their places and which new species came to Indawgyi.

Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary' Administrator U Maung Win said, “Previously, 110 species of Migratory Waterbirds were recorded in the wetland area



Photo: Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary.

of Indawgyi Lake. Three new species of Migratory Waterbirds were discovered in 2019-2020, so a total of 113 species of Waterbirds have been recorded so far.”

During the winter, birds in the Northern Hemi-

sphere flock to wetland areas in Southeast Asia, South Asia and East Asia. There are nine major flyways, and Myanmar is part of the Central Asia Flyway and East Asia Australia Flyway.

Wetland areas on the

East Asia Australia Flyway formed a wetland-group to conserve Migratory Waterbirds, and Myanmar's five areas are included in the wetland-group.

Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a sanctuary in 2004. —Pan-azaloat Thein Nyunt

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Build a Union with a diversity of strength

The word Union is such a beautiful word. It is imbued with grace. It is very important for all of us to value, love and cherish this word. A Union means something which has been established collectively. A country which has been established collectively, a great country which has been established collectively is not the same as those countries which have not been established collectively. We will be able to establish a Union only after transforming our diversity and differences into strength.

(Extract from a Message of Greetings delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 15 January 2020 at the ceremony to celebrate Kayah State Day)



Myanmar Folk Dance - U Shwe Yoe and Daw Moe. PHOTO: ZAW MG MG OO (SANDAKU)

President U Win Myint sends Message of Greetings on occasion of 46th anniversary Rakhine State Day celebrations

FROM PAGE-1

Therefore 15 December 1974, the date on which a public referendum was initiated for the adoption of the 1974 Constitution was designated as Rakhine State Day and Rakhine State Day celebrations have been held annually starting from that day. This year marks the 46th anniversary.

From the time our Union Government took office, we formed the Central Committee for the implementation of Peace and Development in Rakhine State together with the Working Committees to implement the short-term and long-term aspects of development with special attention and focus. We have also been exerting consistent efforts for creating job opportunities, and development of trade and investment by establishing the UEHRD – Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine.

We have been working for the development of sectors such as – transport, supply of electricity, agriculture, education, health, and socio-economic development for the progress and development of Rakhine State. Apart from that, we have been working for tourism development and promoted investment opportunities for economic development. We also worked on linking local entrepreneurs within Rakhine State with investors within Myanmar and in foreign countries towards this end.

In order to promote the transport sector to promote the socio-economic life of people living in urban and rural areas of Rakhine State, we are building the 1,320 feet Gwa Chaung reinforced concrete bridge connecting Rakhine State with Ayeyawady Region.

In Rakhine State, more than 55 per cent of wards and villages now enjoy electricity from the National Grid. For smooth transportation and for promotion of rural development, we have been able to construct 1.8 kilometres nylon-tar roads, 5.4 kilometres concrete-tar roads, 158.35 kilometres concrete roads, 235.07 kilometres tar roads, 166.62 kilometres gravel roads, and 177.109 kilometres of earth and dirt roads.

To supply drinking water to the local people, 15 small

dams were constructed at a cost of K5671 million, and this will benefit 28 villages comprising 18,457 households with a population of 84,279 persons. Furthermore for protection against floods and intrusion tidal waves into agriculture lands, 97 embankments were constructed at the cost of K12425.047 million which will benefit 58090 acres of land.

We supplied more than K3.739 billion worth of relief supplies such as rice, cooking oil, beans and salt during 1-10-2019 and 30-9-2020 to IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in Sittway district, Maungtaw district, MraukU district, and KyaukPyu district. Apart from that, we constructed eight temporary shelters for IDPs in seven townships namely Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, MraukU, Minbya, Yathedaung, Buthidaung and Myepon at the cost of K2.037 billion. We are also in the process of constructing a temporary shelter at the cost of K233.450 million in An township.

At present, while global countries are facing the spread of COVID-19, Myanmar is also waging the great struggle against this pandemic. I am really grateful to all the volunteers in various sectors, all the people in Rakhine State, and all the Union citizens in the country, who are strictly following the healthcare guidelines.

The Union Government allocated over K33 billion—including cash and five basic essential household supplies—to the grassroots families with no regular income during the outbreak of COVID-19, while the Rakhine State government has spent over K2.29 billion for this programme.

The Union Government is putting emphasis on internal peace and national reconciliation. The four sessions of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong have been held for lasting peace and the establishment of a Democratic Federal Union in the post-2020 period through phase by phase and step by step implementation; we have reached agreements on these matters. Furthermore, with mutual trust and cooperation, we believe that we will be able to build a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union with the collective strength of the people by consolidating national unity without fail.

At a time when good conditions exist for the cessation of an internal conflicts and durable and lasting peace, the fact that armed conflicts are occurring in Rakhine State, which has enjoyed stability and peace for the past decades is really regrettable. Although Rakhine State has abundant rice, water resources, paddy, meats, fishes and natural resources, it still lacks multi-sectoral developments like in other regions and states. At a time when development works are still needed, development efforts are being hampered by armed conflicts, and some of the local people find it difficult to live in their own areas and has become IDPs. This is cause for much regret.

In our country which is on the path of democratic transition, all ethnic nationals have the right to present their wishes through their elected representatives at the respective Hluttaws; political avenues have already been opened for negotiations and consultations at the Union Peace Conference - 21st-century Panglong meetings. All those who are concerned need to understand choosing armed struggle for ethnic rights would cause the greatest loss to the local people. It is very regrettable for local people in the areas where the elections were postponed due to lack of stable security conditions for holding free and fair elections in Rakhine State. I wish to make a special request to concerned individuals and relevant organizations to participate and cooperate to create favourable conditions for the holding of free and fair elections.

On the auspicious and great occasion of Rakhine State Day, I send this message of greetings and pray that all the people of Rakhine will be blessed with good health and well-being, free from COVID-19; I also pray for stability and the rule of law, communal harmony, and for the emergence of a developed peaceful prosperous and beautiful Rakhine State. I also urge you to continue participating and cooperating in the building of the future Democratic Federal Union in unity and vision.

Sd/Win Myint
President

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)

No one can say for sure in detail the impacts on health after being tested positive

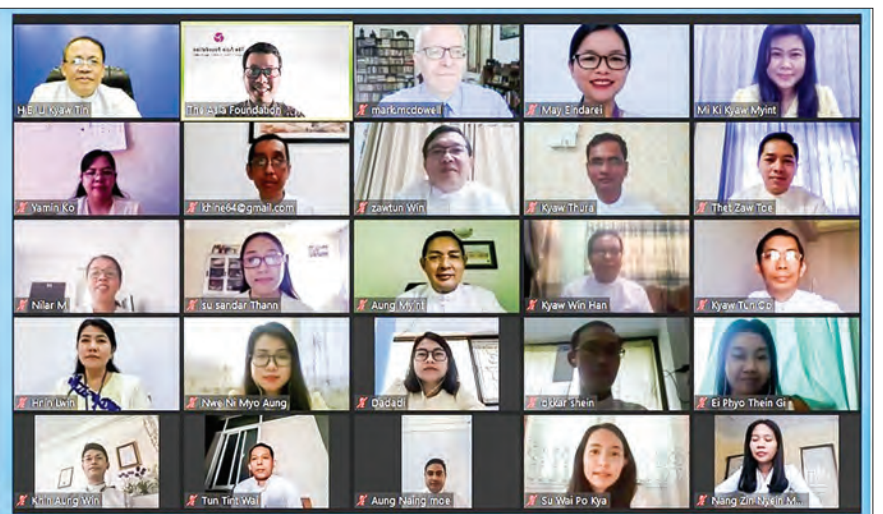


Firstly, healthcare workers and professionals have repeatedly been reminding. They say that it is impossible to predict the effects of COVID-19 in the future. What I wish to say is this - can a person become infected if this person had already been tested positive before? Whatever the case may be, no one can say for sure in detail the impacts on health after being tested positive. The majority of the doctors know about this already. Some of the people might already know about this. The injuries of youth can emerge as one gets older. For example, an injury that occurred during childhood which looked quite insignificant could cause a great deal of pain in old age; it could cause problems in your ability to move about .

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

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin attends opening ceremony of online training course on “Public Policy and Basic Social Research Methodology”

OPENING Ceremony of the online training course on “Public Policy and Basic Social Research Methodology”, which jointly conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Asia Foundation, took place at 12:30 pm on 14 December 2020. At the occasion, U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation delivered opening remarks, and Mr Mark McDowell, Country Representative of the Asia Foundation, Myanmar made introductory remarks through videoconferencing.



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in the online training on “Public Policy and Basic Social Research Methodology” on 14 December 2020 .

PHOTO : MNA

Also present at the occasion were U Khine Win and Daw Nilar Myaing from the

Sandhi Governance Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Cooperation.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Cooperation.

The training will be conducted from 14 to 18 December 2020 from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

and participated by 31 trainees through online platform. —MNA

MoC Union Minister delivers speech at opening ceremony of Myanmar-China Border Trade Fair (Online)

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of the 19th Myanmar-China Border Trade Fair (Online) via videoconferencing yesterday morning.

The Union Minister said

that the trade fair reflects the friendship and cooperation between Myanmar and China and is essential for the promotion of bilateral trade.

He said that it is important to exchange business information

between the two nations and the two nations need to work together to eradicate illegal trade in the border areas.

He also urged officials and traders to make efforts for the speedy implementation of the

Myanmar-China Border Economic Cooperation Zone.

During the opening ceremony, Yunnan Province Deputy Governor said that during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Myanmar, the two nations agreed to establish a strategic relationship. He said that the border trade fair plays a crucial role in improving the social lives of the people living along the border and promoting economic cooperation.

The annual Myanmar-China border trade fair is held alternately in Myanmar (Muse) and China (Ruili) in accordance with the border cooperation agreements signed between the two governments. This year’s 19th border trade fair was to be hosted by Myanmar in Muse, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the trade fair is held in the virtu-

al format. About 90 exhibitors have displayed their products at the border trade fair. Myanmar traders have displayed food, agricultural products, fruits, vegetables, fishery products, gems and jewels, clothing, and traditional medicine. Traders of China have exhibited food, fertilizers, agricultural and industrial machinery, and electronics and medical equipment. B2B Business Matching will be held during the trade fair. On 16 December, meetings on Trade Financing and Border Trade Payment System Between Myanmar & China will be held.

Traders from Myanmar can register for free at www.myanmarexpopark.com in order to participate in the border trade fair.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Union Minister Dr Than Myint speaks during the opening ceremony of 19th Myanmar-China Border Trade Fair (Online) via videoconferencing on 14 December 2020. PHOTO : MNA

MoE discusses drafting NESP 2021-2030

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi chaired a coordination meeting online with teacher unions, teacher associations and common teachers to draft the National Education Strategic Plan(2021-2030) at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the Union Minister highlighted the critical role of coordination in the improvement of education quality and called for collaboration of all the teachers in unity.

The Union Minister discussed the changing trend of education together with the industry in studying the Leapfrogging to Education 4.0: Student at the Core, the page 19 of FICCI-EY Knowledge Paper and the page 12 of OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030: OECD Learning Compass 2030.

He also explained the evolutions of Industry 1.0 and Education 1.0 with no education criteria, no specific curriculum and limited infrastructure; Industry 2.0 and Education 2.0



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi presides over the meeting on drafting of National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 on 14 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

with full-time teachers, specific curriculum and classrooms, the emergence of universities, dormitories and recreation centres; Industry 3.0 and Education 3.0 with online learning, research cooperation,

investment in technology and infrastructure; the Industry 4.0 with the Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, the Cloud Computing, big data and robotics technologies.

The Union Minister re-

ferred to the Learning Generation Report 2017 for the changing trends in community, economy and technology and the requirement of an education system which can encounter the challenging situations

in the 21st century.

He also pointed out the need for innovative learning, capacity, view and technologies for future employment opportunities, as well as the new professionals of the current age.

He also suggested the coordination of business sector, the establishment of the school-industry partnership, management reform at the universities, human resources, award presenting, conducting capacity-building programmes continuously and financial assistance.

Permanent Secretary Dr Zaw Myint explained the drafting processes of National Education Strategic Plan(2021-2030), Director-General U Ko Lay Win from the Department of Basic Education introduced the basic education sector in Chapter 5 of the NESP and Director-General Dr Sai Kyaw Naing Oo reported on the Technical and Vocational Education Sector in Chapter 6 of the NESP. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MSWRR discusses community-based COVID-19 response efforts

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement organized a virtual meeting yesterday to discuss issues related to cooperation in the Community-based COVID-19 Prevention and Control Special Project via videoconferencing.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye (Secretary of National Volunteer Steering Unit) said that at present, COVID-19 response strategies are being changed as needed in accordance with circumstances. He added that as community-based COVID-19 response efforts, it is important to develop more effective ways to control the disease.

He said that the meeting also aims to help Nay Pyi Taw Council Area authorities and regional governments in COVID-19 response efforts.

Regarding changing strategies, the Ministry of Health and Sports is coordinating with



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye participates in the virtual meeting on community-based COVID-19 response efforts on 14 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

the Yangon Region government to carry out community-based COVID-19 prevention and control programmes.

He said Myanmar has many volunteers, including

experts, people who have received training of Trainers programme and multiplier course for volunteer, and ambulance drivers. He continued that those volunteers need to

be effectively integrated into community-based COVID-19 response efforts.

The Union Minister also pointed out that the citizens also need to have a clear under-

standing of the changing strategies of COVID-19 response efforts. He also called on all the stakeholders to work together for the success of the community-based COVID-19 control process.

The Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, regional ministers for social affairs, officials from the Ministry of Health and Sports and the General Administration Department, Directors from regional Department of Social Welfare, officials from Myanmar Medical Association, members of Myanmar Youth Affairs Committee and Myanmar Red Cross Society participated in the discussions.

In his closing speech, the Union Minister said that he believes that the Community-based COVID-19 Control Special Project will be successful in States and Regions because of collaborative efforts. —MNA(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

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MoPFI Deputy Minister holds virtual meeting with AMRO Mission chief

DEPUTY Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win held a virtual meeting with ASEAN + 3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) Mission Chief Dr Lee Lae Young and his party yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, the Deputy Minister expressed thanks to AMRO for its regional economic analysis, technical assistance and training.

In the 2019-2020 financial year, Myanmar's economic growth rate was initially expected to grow by 7 per cent, but only 3.2 per cent was achieved because of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Deputy Minister, who also said that Myanmar has been implementing the plans to remedy the COVID-19 related economic impacts, by getting loans from international institutions such as World Bank, ADB, IMF and JICA.

He said that the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) and the Myanmar Economic Resilience and Reform Plan



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win holds virtual talks with ASEAN + 3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) Mission Chief Dr Lee Lae Young on 14 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

(MERRP) had been drafted for the post-COVID-19 period.

MERRP aims for the stability of macroeconomic and financial sectors, said the Deputy Minister. It also emphasizes the need to focus on sustainable investments in the renewable energy and infrastructure sectors.

Dr Lee Lae Young said that although the COVID-19 crisis has undermined Myanmar's economy, the Myanmar currency Kyat has been relatively stable compared to other nations in the region. Foreign investments in Myanmar and imports/exports of the country is likely to increase,

said Dr Lee Lae Young, who pledged that people of Myanmar would be brought to the AMRO office for further training.

The meeting was also participated by officials of the ministry and other relevant officials.—MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

MNA to resume domestic flights on 16 December under health guidelines

MYANMAR National Airlines (MNA) scheduled to resume its domestic flights on 16 December, in compliance with health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports, MNA stated.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has ordered a halt to domestic airlines until 15 December 2020 in response to local transmission of COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw Council, the regions and states across the country.

According to the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Transport and Communications notified the Department of Civil Aviation of the reopening of domestic flights in line with Standard Operating Procedure starting from 16 December 2020.

Therefore, the Department informed the airlines to prepare for necessary measures to reopen the domestic flights be-



Myanmar National Airlines plans to restart the operation of its domestic flights on 16 December 2020. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG

ginning from 16 December and ensure the cabin crew, airport staff and passengers abide by the health guidelines and SOPs.

The domestic airlines such as MNA, Myanmar Airways International, Air KBZ, Shwe My-

anmar and Mann Yadanarpon Airlines will re-operate their domestic routes Yangon, Sit-tway, Kyaukpyu, Thandwe, An, Mandalay, Kengtung, Tachilek, Heho, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthoung, Myitkyina, Putao, Kalay, Loikaw

and Nay Pyi Taw will resume starting from 16 December 2020 and Air Thanlwin will fly again starting from 30 December, the Department of Civil Aviation stated.—Myint Maung (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Pigeon pea price shows downtick as India halts purchasing

THE pigeon peas market saw a slightly downward trend in price after India's demand has dried up, said U Zaw Moe, general secretary of Monywa Commodity Depot.

"The newly harvested pigeon peas are entering the market. As India stopped buying the beans, the market is cooling off. The price fell by K2,000-3,000 per basket. It declined from K28,500-K29,000 to K24,000 per basket," he added.

The prevailing price this year is lower than last year's price amid the COVID-19 consequences. Last year, it was priced above K30,000 per basket at least, said a trader.

"Earlier, the pigeon peas (red grams) stockpiled in Monywa were delivered to India, and about 75 per cent of stocks were cleared at that time. As there is no demand by India so far, the traders are keeping them for



Pigeon pea price goes down because India stops buying. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)

now", said U Zaw Moe.

"Normally, the pigeon peas produced in Monywa are sent only to the India market. So far, there is no direct link between Monywa and India markets although the Sagaing Region shares border with India. The peas are exported through trad-

ers from Yangon," said U Tin Maung Kyaw, Aung Chan Thar pigeon pea depot owner from Monywa.

Next, the price of chickpeas remained unchanged at K27,000-28,000 per basket in Monywa market. Meanwhile, the sesame fetched a low price during its

early harvest season. The sesame price showed an uptick from K54,000 to K56,000 per basket on the back of demand by China. Also, the peanut is well traded.

"The sesame and green grams are selling well in the domestic market. Of sesame varieties, black sesame is of the best quality. Exporters prefer the black and white sesame to the brown and red sesame," U Zaw Moe said.

Myanmar's pigeon peas are primarily shipped to India and also exported to Singapore, the US, Canada, Pakistan, the UK, and Malaysia. But, the export volume to other countries rather than to India is minimal.

In the 2016-2017 budget year, over 160,000 tonnes of pigeon peas were shipped to foreign countries, while in the 2017-2018 financial year, exports topped 220,000 tonnes.

Myanmar ships over 1.6 mil-

lion tonnes of different varieties of pulses, especially mung beans, with an estimated worth of US\$1 billion, to other counties in the 2018-2019FY.

Since 2017, India has been setting import quota on beans, including black bean and pigeon peas. Therefore, the growers face difficulties to export their beans to the India market.

Myanmar has to export black bean and pigeon peas under a quota system and limit period. Consequently, there is no guarantee that we could get the prevailing market price next year; the market observers shared their opinions.

Following the uncertainty in markets of black bean and pigeon peas, the association suggested, in October-end, that the growers cultivate black-eyed bean more.— Myo Win Tun/ Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Action to be taken against permitted A-level factory unless complied with regulations

THE permitted factories in Mandalay Industrial Zone, which meets A-level practices in coronavirus containment measures, will be taken action for a shutdown if they are found not to comply with health regulations during surprise inspections, Mandalay Industrial Zone Management Committee stated.

The factories and workplaces, which meet health criteria (Level A) set by the Ministry of Health and Sports, are allowed to reopen. The factories with B-Level are mandatory to prepare for A-level, and if they fail to abide by it, they will get closed down.

The surprise inspections are

being conducted in the zone. The committee is ensuring the factory are complying the health guidelines and making preparing for A-level practices. The pharmaceutical factories, food production factories, and workshops are prioritized for re-operating in line with health instructions. Some factories met A-level criteria, but the workers have transportation difficulties during the semi-lockdown period, said U Maung Maung Oo, secretary of Mandalay Industrial Zone Management Committee.

The inspection teams are comprised of officials from Township Public Health Department,

the General Administration Department, the Department of Labour, the Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department, Mandalay City Development Committee and Mandalay Industrial Zone Management Committee.

There are more than 1,200 factories and workplaces in the Mandalay Industrial Zone. About 50 per cent of the factories met A-level prevention of COVID-19 during the inspection in April-end and have resumed the operations, the committee stated.— Than Zaw Min (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Workers wearing face masks make baozi, which is called Pauksi in Myanmar, at a workplace in Mandalay. PHOTO: THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)

Nearly 15,000 cattle stranded in Muse cause high feedstuff cost

By Nyein Nyein

ABOUT 70 companies of cattle stranded in Muse are arranging to bring the cattle back to their home owing to the burden of labour wages and high feedstuff cost, said U Soe Naing, chair of Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association.

"It costs K400,000-600,000 to take care of 100 heads of cattle every day. It includes labour wages and feedstuff cost. It is approximately K10 million per month," he added. At present, about 15,000 heads of cattle, owned by 150 companies, are stranded at the Muse border. The labour wages and feedstuff cost burden them. Consequently, they reported Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association for cattle return, he continued.

"For now, around 15,000 heads of cattle are struck in Muse. As per the report, 70 companies want to go back to their designated place. However, the news of legal purchase by China is spreading in the market. As a result of this, they are asking for our opinions on whether they should return or not. They are worried about transportation wastes as well," he explained.

China permits live cattle import only after ensuring the cattle is free from 20 diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease, along with vaccination certificates,

health certificates, and farming registration certificates. Therefore, the officials concerned from the two countries are negotiating this, he confirmed. Earlier, 1,500-2,000 heads of cattle were daily traded through Muse border. With China stepping up border control as precautionary measures for the COVID-19 and other reasons, it was three months that China halted cattle trade, he pointed out.

In the meantime, we are concerned about possible market manipulation when the supply is surpassing the demand. Additionally, Myanmar's live cattle export is heavily relying on the China market due to a reasonable price. However, Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh, he added.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export, and the pass is valid for three months. The companies can be taken legal actions if they do not sell the cattle during a three-month period.

Live cattle export was allowed in late 2017, to eradicate illegal exports, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

Myanmar has around 500,000 heads of cattle for export beyond domestic consumption, the association stated.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

New strategy needs to ease restrictions, balance economic concerns

WITH the rollout of new vaccines for coronavirus just a few weeks away, the end of the pandemic catastrophe is in sight.

The Union Government is also planning to make the vaccines available for everyone in the country.

But, the importance of inoculating people and following health guidelines grew even more apparent today as the daily infection rate of coronavirus has not yet gone down.

Besides, even after vaccines start to be distributed, there won't be enough for the wider public to be immunized until mid-2021.

The number of new cases reported on Monday reached over 1,350, adding the total number of cases since the outbreak to over 107,000. It signals that the virus is infecting more people at a faster rate.

ministries concerned need to be quick to come up with specific plans on implementing a new strategy in the face of common challenge of easing restrictions while balancing various health, social, and economic concerns.

Yangon has suffered the highest death tolls, positive cases and heaviest economic blows from the pandemic. At the same time, the problems are hardly confined to Yangon Region.

Yangon Region which is a metropolitan city with a dense population, higher numbers of factories than other regions and a large public transportation network, should have a different approach to control the transmission.

To control the situation, we hope that the Yangon Region Government, Ministry of Health and Sports and ministries concerned need to be quick to come up with specific plans on implementing a new strategy in the face of common challenges of easing restrictions while balancing various health, social, and economic concerns.

Besides, the new strategy would critically need cooperation from citizen volunteers to work with the government

to protect public health and to augment overwhelmed public services. This is because, WHO has warned that a premature lifting of restrictions could spark a resurgence of infections and cause even more severe, longer-term damage to the economy that exists as a result of restrictions.

Yangon Region authorities are urged to have to resort to the carrot and stick approach as soon as possible with those people who have flouted mandatory rules such as wearing masks and gathering without maintaining social distancing.

Meanwhile, we must encourage the value of collaboration among local citizens, volunteers, civil society including community-based groups, and regional governments to fill gaps in public services.

THE MOTTO OF THE UNIVERSITY OF YANGON AND THE INFLUENCE OF PALI

Dr Nyan Tun, Assist. Lecturer (NRDC)



ANY organizations as well as educational institutions have formulated their relative mottos for the target they are going to march. The University of Yangon which was established in 1920, the oldest and the well-known University in Myanmar; is one of the ancient academic institutions which have been reached its centenary in 2020 and as recorded in the history it has been the most prestigious University in South-east Asia and one of the top Universities in Asia throughout 1940s and 1950s. The Motto of University of Yangon is 'Natthi vijja samam mittam' (နတ္ထိ ဝိဇ္ဇာ သမံ မိတ္တံ) the Pali sentence which means friendship is not equal in value to knowledge. It is the most significant sign for the educational institution holding invaluable motto for the present and the future of the nation. The motto shed light on the Myanma educational concept adopted by our ancestors even being set up under the colonial period.

Let us have a look the historical background of Myanma education from its inception and what we come to know is the fact that nobody can deny Pali language plays the most important role which influenced on Myanmar society. Actually, Pali language has been a home to Myanmar since immemorial time. We have ample evidence to prove the existence of Buddhist education imparting literacy and numeracy and religious based education since the Pyu period (1st century A.C) as excavation of archeological site in Hmawza (then known as Sri ketra) where the golden palm leaves inscribed Buddhist scripture were found and Buddhist monastic education system is an old educational process dated back from that century even the present time and the schools provided the essential education needs throughout Myanmar history and they were the only source of education for all sort of lives ranges from the royal princes to common subjects.

The Sangha, the spiritual leaders received royal patronage not only because it was the spiritual focus of society but because it was also an educational institution. Education at that time in principle meant the study of the development of moral and spiritual character. Buddhist education helped to give Myanmar a rate of literacy considerable above those of other Far Eastern coun-

tries in early 1900s. Monasteries have been the centres for social, economic, culture, education, politics, custom and tradition. Thus, spiritual leaders have been occupying not only the seat of respected leaders in spiritual progress but also the teachers of the people in Myanmar history.

I am interested in the motto of the University of Yangon so I traced where this Pali sentence is rooted and searched it and finally found it that it was the work of the great scholar who appeared in Pinya dynasty during the reign of King Thihathu (712-721) also known as 'ငါးစီးရှင်ကျော်စွာ'. The author was not the respected venerable monk but a product of monastic school who served in the highest rank under the king Kyaw Swar. He was none other than but Caturangabala, the Minister; (တရုင်္ဂဗလ အမတ်ကြီး), a well-known poet as well as the great Pali scholar in Pinya dynasty. The minister was from Prome (now Pyay) while serving as a secretary he was conferred the title of 'သိရိမဟာစတုရင်္ဂဗလ' for he was well-versed in the four fields: (1) well-versed in Grammar; (2) well-composed poems, (3) could raise questions dealing with social, law and political affairs (4) was excellent to play chess. He had the above mentioned four forces so he was named 'Caturangabala'. He composed many treatises due to his well-versed knowledge in Pali, Sanskrit. Among those treatises, the most important treatise

that he compiled was 'Lokaniti' (လောကနိတိ) which means social ethics. The treatise was composed in stanza which means poem style and the author divided his treatise into seven sections which consists of 167 stanzas in number.

We need to raise the question in this context why did the minister compile his work in Pali version? The response is just simple for the influence of the language at that time was Pali and the Myanma language and literature have not yet developed. Thus, most of respected scholars recorded their works in Pali language. The term 'Pali' originally refers to the canonical texts which preserved the teachings of the Buddha by Theravada school of Buddhism and the Pali texts are the oldest collection of Buddhist scripture orally transmitted from generation to generation by the Theravada Buddhist monks up to date.

The motto of the University of Yangon was taken out from the stanza number 23 of Lokaniti treatise. As written style, most of the verses or poems in Pali have four lines and the University motto is the first line. Anyway, in this article I would like to mention the entire poem to pay respect to the late Minister; Caturangabala. The stanza goes: 'Natthi vijja samam mittam, na ca byadhisamo ripu, na ca attasamam pemam, na ca kammamam balam.' It means friendship is not equal in value to knowledge; there is no enemy like sickness; no love is equal to

self-love; no power equal to moral merit.

The national schools and national colleges were born together with a group of patriotic Myanmar university students who boycotted the Rangoon University Act. Due to the students' strike, the nationalistic spirit was enormously aroused for Myanmar education and Myanmar independence. National schools were set up around the country. We learned that General Aung San, the father of the nation, was also one of the national students as well as Pali outstanding in his high school life. As an article written by his daughter (now State Counsellor) entitled 'My Father' in her book "Freedom from Fear", she said, "In 1932, he matriculated in the 'A' category with distinctions in Burmese and Pali and went to study at Rangoon University."

The influence of Pali on Myanmar society has benefited to produce the well known secular and spiritual leaders as well as scholars for the nations. We learned that when Rangoon University College started running its academic year; Pali was one of the compulsory subjects that all Intermediate Arts (I.A) students have to study. One of the world well-known Pali scholars was none other than but U Pe Maung Tin (1888-1973), the first national professor of Pali language as well as the first ever principal of University College, Rangoon University and he was also known as Pali Maung Tin be-

cause of his knowledge of Pali and Buddhism. He laid the foundations for the university's 'Oriental Studies' comprising Pali and Burmese studies. While studying in London, he kept in touch with Pali Text Society (PTS) and translated the profound doctrine of the Buddha called 'Visuddhimagga' The Path of Purity (1922), and Atthasalini, the Expositor; the commentary on Dhammasangani Pali text, the first book of the seven Abhidhamma texts (1920).

The influence of Pali terms in the academic field proves how the words are precise and essential for the technical terms such as 'ပါမောက္ခ ကထိက၊ တက္ကသိုလ်၊ သမဂ္ဂ၊ တေရဗဒါ၊ ရူပဗေဒ၊ သတ္တဗေဒ၊ ကုမ္ပဏီဗေဒ၊ ဇီဝဗေဒ၊ ဘူမိဗေဒ၊ သင်္ချာ၊ ခန္ဓာဗေဒ၊ ဇီဝကမ္မဗေဒ၊ ဝါဏိဇ္ဇာဗေဒ၊ အတ္ထဝင်္ဂဗေဒ၊ ဒဿနိကဗေဒ၊ ဘောဂဗေဒ၊ မနုဿဗေဒ၊ ဂဝဏီ၊ တက္ကဗေဒ' and so on. In the common ground, the use of Pali terms in daily life are beyond words, for instance, 'ဝေဒနာ၊ သောက်၊ ဝရိဒေဝ၊ ဒုက္ခ၊ မေတ္တာ၊ ကရုဏာ၊ မုဒိတာ၊ ဥပက္ခန္ဓာ၊ လောဘ၊ ဒေါသ၊ မေဟ၊ မာန၊ တဝဝိဋ္ဌိ၊ အသုဘ' etc.

I am not a product of the University of Yangon but I thought to myself as its product for I have a chance to learn under the renowned retired professor and senior lecturer from the University of Yangon while studying at Sasana University (Yangon). One of my respected professor and head was the late U Tin Lwin who served as at the Department of Oriental Studies as a professor and head

(from 1986-1989) and he was a modern Pali scholar as well as the author and another respected senior lecturer was the late U San Tan who served at the Department of Myanmar. After retiring from their respective posts, the two scholars shared their experienced, knowledge and their subjects to us until they expired. Luckily, I have an opportunity to serve as a teaching staff at the Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree College (NRDC) which is affiliated to the University of Yangon so even though not being a full product of the University of Yangon, I think I have the rights to say proudly I am a part of the products of the University of Yangon.

As I mentioned earlier, Pali is a home to Myanmar; the golden Land so the influence of Pali literature and guidance of the admonishment of Buddhist ethical and moral ethics will prevail on this land forever. Social ethics inscribed in the heart and soul of the people are not to associate with the fool, to associate with the wise and to honor for those who are worthy of honor and moral ethics that curbed in the heart of the people are not to do any evil, to do what is good and to purify the mind.

At the 100th anniversary celebration of University of Yangon, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi comments on the motto of Yangon University in her congratulatory speech and what she said, "In accordance with the University's motto 'There no friend like learning'. The University of Yangon is a place that provides education, which is like a good friend of the citizens. During its first 100 years, the University of Yangon has encountered various experiences according to the vicissitudes of life and is now celebrating its Centenary Celebration. The University of Yangon, the first-ever university of Myanmar; is the greatest and most prestigious university in Myanmar's history. Fulfilling the demand for Myanmar's history, the University of Yangon became a pivotal point of Myanmar's education, Myanmar's politics and Myanmar's independence." Therefore, we believe the motto will come to life the status of the University of Yangon as its prestigious glory.

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release 43/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 12 December.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 12 December. The full text of the press release will be reported in the 16 December issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Heads of Service Organizations appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
1. U Ye Gyaw Mra Deputy Director-General ASEAN Affairs Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General ASEAN Affairs Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. U Wunna Han Deputy Director-General Political Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General Protocol Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. U Maung Maung Than Deputy Permanent Secretary (Deputy Director-General) Union Minister Office (Labour Affairs) Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population	Director-General Department of Labour Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 14 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 NOON OF THE 15 December, 2020: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin, Kayin, Mon States 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 increase of night temperatures in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 December, 2020: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 December, 2020: A few cloud.

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TRIAL

UN rights chief 'appalled' by execution of Iran dissident

GENEVA (Switzerland) — The UN rights chief voiced outrage Monday at Iran's execution at the weekend of opposition figure Ruhollah Zam, and urged Tehran to halt its "alarming and increasing" use of the death penalty.

"I am appalled at the execution in Iran on 12 December of Ruhollah Zam," Michelle Bachelet said in a statement.

"His death sentence and execution by hanging are emblematic of a pattern of forced confessions extracted under torture and broadcast on state media being used as a basis to convict people."

Zam was hanged on Saturday after Iran's supreme court upheld his death sentence passed in June over his role in protests during the winter of 2017-18, among other charges.

The dissident, who ran a Telegram channel widely followed in the protests, had lived in Paris

for several years after being given refugee status and residency in France.

But activists say he was held after travelling to Iraq from Paris in October 2019 in circumstances that remain unclear, with some campaigners accusing Tehran of abducting him.

In her statement, Bachelet also highlighted "serious concerns that the apprehension of Zam outside the territory of Iran could amount to an abduction and that his subsequent transfer to Iran for trial may not have respected due process guarantees."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed that Zam was among many activists and protesters in Iran who have been "sentenced to long prison terms or given the death penalty for exercising their human rights after trials that failed to comply with international standards re-

garding due process."

"These constitute serious violations of Iran's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to life," she said.

Bachelet urged Iranian authorities to "immediately halt their alarming and increasing use of the death penalty and vague national security charges to suppress independent voices and dissent in Iran."

She also called on Tehran to "immediately free all those arbitrarily detained for exercising their human rights."

The UN rights chief said she was opposed to the death penalty in all cases, insisting it was "simply irreconcilable with human dignity, is too often arbitrary in its application, and errors can be never be made good again."

If countries insist on using



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet wearing a protective face mask gestures prior to a press conference on December 9, 2020 in Geneva. PHOTO: AFP

the penalty, she stressed that under international law, it can only be applied for the most serious crimes, and only after a fair trial and access to appeal and the

right to seek clemency.

These, she said, are "cumulative conditions clearly not met in Ruhollah Zam's case."

SOURCE: AFP

BANKRUPTCY

G30 report sees big corporate shakeout after Covid-19



(FILES) Agustin Carstens, Governor of the Bank of Mexico and Chairman of the International Monetary and Financial Committee, speaks during the 32nd Annual Group of 30 (G30) International Banking Seminar in Washington, DC, on October 15, 2017. PHOTO: AFP

NEW YORK (United State) — Figuring out which companies to save and which to let die will be a key challenge facing governments after the pandemic, according to a G30 report released Monday.

The report sketches out a difficult post-pandemic economic environment in which firms must try to dig out from massive debt levels built up to survive the downturn.

Once massive fiscal support programmes run out, the group of international economists fears a solvency crisis.

"We're not in any way saying we know the size of the problem,"

said Raghuram Rajan, a former Reserve Bank of India governor now at the University of Chicago who oversaw the report.

"It's been disguised by a lot of the extensive support that's in place."

Former European Central Bank Chief Mario Draghi, who also coordinated the report, said there have been relatively few insolvencies so far because "the flow of money is actually masking an underlying reality".

The report seeks to guide governments on how to avoid providing vital resources to companies that are ill-situated for the post-pandemic world and

to instead "adapt to new business realities".

This includes encouraging "necessary or desirable business transformations" in sectors that are increasingly digitizing.

The report also recommends a rethink of bankruptcy laws for places where current protocols make it difficult for debt-laden firms to survive even if they have a viable strategy.

"At the heart of the challenge is the fact that while the current crisis is producing a much larger number of firms with sound underlying business models but unsound balance sheets, most jurisdictions have insolvency procedures that essentially assume a firm with an unsound balance sheet is a structurally unsound business," the report said.

The report also urged a broad shift in financing structure towards equity rather than debt, adding that governments could establish policies to encourage balance sheet restructures, or take equity themselves.

"Properly structured, these government initiatives can generate substantial investment earnings to partially or fully offset the cost of the incentives or the losses governments incur from firms that collapse," the report said.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS

IN BRIEF

ESPIONAGE

Turkey detains 11 suspected of spying for Iran

TURKEY has detained 11 people suspected of spying and abducting an Iranian political dissident on behalf of Tehran, the Turkish police said on Monday.

The announcement followed a rare public spat between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and top Iranian officials over Azerbaijan.

SOURCE: AFP

HACKING

Norwegian cruise company Hurtigruten hit by cyberattack

NORWEGIAN cruise company Hurtigruten announced Monday that it had been hit by a major cyberattack involving what appeared to be "ransomware", designed to seize control of data to ransom it.

"It's a serious attack," said the company's chief digital officer Ole-Marius Moe-Helgesen in a statement. "The entire worldwide digital infrastructure of Hurtigruten seems to have been hit."

SOURCE: AFP

TALKS

Afghan president calls for peace talks to be moved home

THE next round of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government should be held at home, President Ashraf Ghani said Monday, backing calls to move the talks from Qatar.

The warring sides have been engaged in direct talks since September at a luxury hotel in Doha, where the Taliban have their political office.

SOURCE: AFP

UPDATE

Coronavirus: Latest global developments

HERE are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

US rolls out shots

The US is poised to start vaccinating health care workers and nursing home residents with the Pfizer-BioNTech shot.

Germany shutdown

Germany will go into a partial lockdown from Wednesday closing non-essential shops and schools and urging companies to allow employees to work from home until January 10.

Italy passes Britain

Italy passes out Britain with the worst death toll in Europe and the fifth worst in the world.

Canada also begins vaccines

Canada also begins a roll-out of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine just days after becoming one of the first countries to approve it.

...And the UAE

The United Arab Emirates also launches vaccinations in the capital Abu Dhabi days after it approved a jab by Chinese drugs giant Sinopharm.

Dutch decision time

The Netherlands mulls closing non-essential shops, theatres, museums and amusement parks, as the number of infections as its death toll passes 10,000.



A man shouts into a megaphone in front of the Ministry of Health during a protests organized by Nurses and Clinical Officers in Nairobi on 14 December 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Nigerian generals hit

At least 26 Nigerian generals have tested positive after attending a conference in the nation's capital and one, Major-General John Irefin, has died.

Eswatini PM dies

Ambrose Dlamini, 52, the prime minister of Africa's last absolute monarchy -- previously known as Swaziland -- died on Sunday from the virus in neighbouring South Africa.

Croatia coach succumbs

Otto Baric, one of Croatia's most respected and successful football coaches, died Sunday

from the virus.

Over 1.6 million dead

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,612,297 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP on Monday.

The US is the worst-affected country with 299,191 deaths, followed by Brazil with 181,402, India with 143,355, Mexico with 113,953 and Italy with 64,520.

CureVac vaccine trials

German biotech firm CureVac says it is starting final-phase clinical trials for its vaccine be-

fore seeking approval from regulators.

Slower French recovery

The French central bank expects the country's economy to recover more slowly than previously thought and return to its pre-pandemic level only in mid-2022.

Character of the year

The Japanese written character "mitsu", meaning dense, crowded and close -- everything people in Japan were urged to avoid this year -- is voted the country's top symbol of 2020.

SOURCE: AFP

VACCINE

Singapore approves Pfizer-BioNTech virus vaccine

SINGAPORE — Singapore has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, and expects to receive the first shipments of the shots by the end of December, the prime minister said Monday.

The city-state joins a handful of other countries around the world, including Britain and the United States, which have approved the jab.

Singapore hopes to have enough vaccines for its 5.7 million population by the third quarter of 2021, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in a televised address.

Priority will be given to those at most risk, such as health care workers, the elderly and vulnerable.

Vaccination would be voluntary, Lee said, but he was "strongly" encouraging people to get the shot.

"Because when you get yourself vaccinated, you are not just protecting yourself. You are also doing your part to protect others, especially your loved ones," he said. Lee also announced a further easing of virus curbs from December 28 as Singapore's outbreak slows markedly, with weeks of barely any local transmissions.

SOURCE: AFP

ACCESS TO WATER

Health centre water crisis increasing virus risk: WHO

GENEVA (Switzerland) — One in four health centres worldwide lacks access to water, putting around 1.8 billion people at increased risk of contracting the coronavirus, the World Health Organization said Monday.

The lack of this basic amenity endangers patients and staff alike at such centres, the WHO said in a joint report with the UN children's agency UNICEF. The study was based on data from 165 countries.

"Working in a healthcare facility without water, sanitation and hygiene is akin to sending nurses and doctors to work without personal protective equipment," said WHO chief Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

These elements "are fundamental to stopping Covid-19. But there are still major gaps to overcome, particularly in least developed countries."

According to WHO figures, while health professionals make up less than three percent of the population, they account for 14 percent of Covid-19 cases recorded around the world.

"Sending healthcare workers and people in need of treatment to facilities without clean water, safe toilets or even soap puts their lives at risk," said UNICEF chief Henrietta Fore.

The report also found that one in three health facilities

around the world could not guarantee hand hygiene, while one in 10 did not have access to sanitation services.

The figures are even worse for the world's 47 least-developed countries (LDCs), where half of healthcare centres have no access to drinking water, a quarter have no access to water for hygiene purposes, and three in five lack basic sanitation services.

The WHO and UNICEF calculated that it would cost around \$1 per inhabitant to provide basic water services in these countries' health centres -- and 20 cents each to maintain such facilities each year.

SOURCE: AFP



Residents observe social distancing as they wait in a queue to fetch clean drinking water at a dispensing point at Kibera Town Centre in Nairobi on 29 May 2020. PHOTO: AFP

BRETON

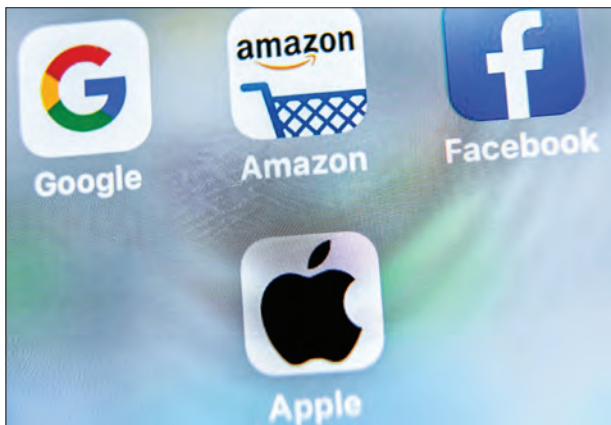
Tech giants will need to inform EU of takeover plans

PARIS (France) — Tech giants will need to inform the European Union ahead of any planned mergers or acquisitions under tough new regulations set to be unveiled this week, the bloc's industry commissioner Thierry Breton said Monday.

The EU is set to present on Tuesday its new Digital Services Act and its accompanying Digital Markets Act to lay out strict conditions for internet giants to do business in the 27 countries.

The biggest tech firms will be designated internet "gatekeepers", subject to specific regulations to limit their power over the market.

"We're going to require big platforms to notify us before they make an



A picture taken on August 28, 2019 shows the US multinational technology and Internet-related services company Google logo (top L), US online store application Amazon (top C), US online social media and social networking service, Facebook (top R) and US multinational technology company Apple logo application (down C) displayed on a tablet in Lille. PHOTO: AFP

acquisition" as part of the new regulations, Breton told France Inter radio.

Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon, and maybe others, will almost certainly be slapped with

the designation. There has been growing concern among European and US regulators that the big tech firms have used purchases as a way to nip in the bud potential rivals.

Examples include Facebook's acquisition of Instagram and Whatsapp as well as Google's purchase of YouTube and Waze.

Breton said the prior notification requirement would be a world first and was squarely aimed at the gargantuan firms whose client bases and market capitalisations "give them a predatory capacity" over other firms.

The EU believes that much like big banks that were deemed "too big to fail" and subjected to special oversight by financial regulators following the 2008 financial crisis, so too should big tech firms.

"Because when one is very big there are greater responsibilities," Breton said.

He added, "My role is to set rules, and if they are not adhered to there will be sanctions."

But Breton also warned that if these sanctions are repeatedly not respected "they could ultimately result in a breakup".

The proposals will go through a long and complex ratification process, with the EU's 27 member states, the European Parliament, and company lobbyists and trade associations influencing the final law.

France and the Netherlands have already come out in favour of Europe having all the tools it needs to rein in the gatekeepers, including the power to break them up.

SOURCE: AFP

INTERNET

Massive outage hits Google services worldwide

PARIS (France) — A massive outage knocked Google services including Gmail and video sharing platform YouTube offline across much of the globe Monday.

Within minutes, social media sites were awash with hashtags including #googledown and YouTubeDOWN as hundreds of millions of internet users tried vainly to connect to the US search engine.

Google indicated the outage had affected all of its services for the "majority" of users.

The outage began at approximately 1150 GMT and by 1230 GMT Google said that services had been restored for some users and said services should soon be restored for all users. All of Google's main services appeared to be affected including Gmail, Google Maps, Google Drive, and YouTube.

SOURCE: AFP

**THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(25/2020-2021)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-193(20-21) (Retender)	System Upgrade, Inspection and Spares Requirements for Hlaw Gar GCS (1) Lot	Ks
(b)	DMP/L-196(20-21) (Retender)	System Upgrade, Inspection and Spares Requirements for Thaton GCS (1) Lot	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **15 December 2020** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm on 15 January 2021**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **15-1-2021, 12:00 pm**
Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V TSL ROSEMARY V.202001

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TSL ROSEMARY VOY. NO. (202001)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** 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
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **SHANDONG TOPAGRI LIMITED (CHINA)** have registered the following products in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**AGRO POWER CO.,LTD**", to new distributor name "**ROYAL SHIN THANT CO.,LTD**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. **ROYAL SHIN THANT CO., LTD. Ph-09444461516.**

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration No.
1.	AP Conil	Chlorothalonil 40% SC	P2020-4842
2.	AP Paung Sayar	Fluazifop-P-butyl 150 g/l EC	P2020-4860
3.	Royal Kasu	Kasugamycin 4% SL	P2020-4821
4.	AP Downy	Propamocarb Hydrochloride 722 g/l SL	P2020-4820

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V VINASHIP DIAMOND V.1920

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VINASHIP DIAMOND VOY. NO. (1920)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

PESTICIDE TRADE NAME CHANGE ADVERTISING

The following two pesticides are distributed by **AGRO POWER CO.,LTD** and here we would like to pesticide trade name change advertising. Anyone who would like to object or inquiry about new trade name contact within 14 days to Joint-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon. **AGRO POWER CO.,LTD 09-444461516.**

Sr.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration No.
1.	AP-Ginger	AP Tryn	Ametryn 80% WP	P2020-4287

MERGER

Reddit snaps up TikTok rival Dubsmash

LOS ANGELES(United States) — Reddit has acquired the TikTok-like app Dubsmash, both companies said Sunday, as big tech moves to carve out territory in the lucrative short-form video-sharing market.

In a statement, Reddit said it had been drawn to Dubsmash -- which reports over a billion video views a month -- because of its commitment to diversity and promoting under-represented voices.

SOURCE: AFP

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ECONOMY

G20 economy rebounds in Q3, still below pre-pandemic high: OECD

PARIS — Gross domestic product (GDP) in the G20 area rebounded by 8.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2020 but remained 2.4 per cent below its pre-crisis high of the final quarter of 2019, said the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on Monday.

Many G20 economies

rebounded with double-digit numbers in the third quarter after double-digit falls in the second quarter. GDP in India rebounded strongest, by 21.9 per cent, following a fall of 25.2 per cent in the second quarter; the sharpest drop ever recorded, said the OECD in its press release.

SOURCE: XINHUA

CYBERATTACK

US government confirms cyberattack

WASHINGTON (United States) — The US government confirmed Sunday that its computer networks had been hit by a cyberattack, as The Washington Post reported at least two departments had been targeted by Russian state hackers.

“We have been working closely with our agency partners regarding recently discovered activity on government networks,” a spokesperson for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

told AFP.

“CISA is providing technical assistance to affected entities as they work to identify and mitigate any potential compromises.”

The Post said the hacks were linked to an attack last week on cybersecurity firm FireEye, which said its own defences were breached by sophisticated attackers who stole tools used to test customers’ computer systems.

SOURCE: AFP

VOTE

US Electoral College set to confirm Biden win as Trump fights on

WASHINGTON (United States) — Long a mere formality, a vote on Monday by members of the Electoral College to formally recognize Joe Biden as the next US president has taken on unusual import this year with Donald Trump stubbornly refusing to admit defeat.

The results of the November 3 vote have been certified by each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia; the Democrat won with a record 81.3 million votes, or 51.3 per cent of those cast, to 74.2 million, and 46.8 per cent, for the Republican president.

But in the United States, the occupant of the White House is chosen by indirect universal suffrage, with each state allocating its electors -- whose numbers are essentially based on population -- to the candidate who carried the state.

The results confirm an easy victory for Biden, with 306 of the 538 electoral votes, to 232 for Trump, with 270 required for election.

Electoral College members



Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden speaks during a rally at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi on 8 March 2020. PHOTO: AFP

meet Monday to formalize the process, though the electors actually meet separately in each state.

Biden will then deliver a speech in the evening to celebrate the latest confirmation of his win and “the strength and resilience” of US democracy -- a clear jab at Trump’s unprecedented stance.

Electors are local political

officials or activists, civil society figures or friends of candidates.

Most are unknown to the wider public, though national personalities occasionally take part -- like Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in the 2016 election but who will vote Monday in New York to confirm President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

SOURCE: AFP

BRITAIN

EU’s Barnier sees ‘some progress’ in Brexit talks

BRUSSELS (Belgium) — EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier on Monday signalled “some progress” in talks on a post-Brexit trade deal, EU diplomats said, but differences remain on key sticking points.

“There might now be a narrow path to an agreement visible -- if negotiators can clear the remaining hurdles in the next few days,” an EU diplomat said after a briefing from Barnier.

“There has been some progress in the negotiations over the last few days, but -- sometimes substantial -- gaps still need to be bridged in important areas like fisheries, governance and level playing field.”

Barnier was set to sit down Monday in Brussels with his British counterpart David Frost for the latest round of talks aimed at thrashings out a deal before Britain leaves the EU’s single market on December 31.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged to “go the extra mile” on Sunday as they side-stepped a self-im-



EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier, wearing a protective face mask, arrives at Brussels Midi station, after the last round of Brexit talks in London, on 5 December 2020. PHOTO: AFP

posed deadline to end talks if there was no chance of a deal.

Johnson insists it remains “most likely” that Britain will crash out of the globe’s largest single market on World Trade Organization (WTO) terms by year’s end as the two sides spar over regulating future standards and fishing.

Barnier tweeted ahead of Monday’s negotiations that “the

next few days are important” for striking an accord, and stressed it was “our responsibility to give the talks every chance of success”.

A second EU diplomat noted that “serious difficulties” remains over the issue of fishing rights with London adamant it wants to assert full rights over its territorial waters.

SOURCE: AFP

RUSSIA

Two Russian men given jail sentences for Euro 2016 attack

AIX-EN-PROVENCE (France) — Two Russian men were on Monday sentenced to jail terms of three years and 10 years for a savage attack on an English football supporter at the 2016 European championships.

Mikhail Ivkin received a three-year term and Pavel Kossov the longer sentence for

their role in the beating that left Briton Andrew Bache with a brain injury.

Detained since the two men were arrested in Germany in February 2018, Ivkin will be released “between now and the end of the week”, his lawyer Julien Pinelli told AFP, while Kossov returns to jail.

SOURCE: AFP

DIPLOMACY

Europe-Iran forum postponed after outcry over execution

PARIS (France) — Organizers have postponed a major forum on business between Iran and Europe due to begin Monday in the wake of an outcry over the execution at the weekend of opposition figure Ruhollah Zam.

The three-day Europe-Iran Business Forum had been due to kick off with keynote remarks

by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, followed by a panel with EU ambassadors.

But the holding of the event caused controversy coming two days after the execution of Zam, who ran a social media channel popular during 2017 protests.

SOURCE: AFP

PARLIAMENT

Malaysian ministers wear PPE in parliament, opposition walks out



This handout photo taken and released by Malaysian opposition lawmaker Teresa Kok on 14 December 2020 shows ruling party politicians, who had been required to be in quarantine due to contact with someone with a case of the Covid-19 coronavirus, wearing full personal protective equipment while attending a parliamentary session at the Malaysian Parliament in Kuala Lumpur. **PHOTO: AFP**

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia) — Two Malaysian ministers who should have been quarantining after being exposed to coronavi-

rus voted in parliament in protective gear Monday, triggering an opposition walkout.

The politicians came into

contact with Covid-19 patients earlier this month, but officials allowed them to partake in a key budget vote — provided they wore gowns, face masks, shields and gloves.

But the sitting quickly descended into pandemonium, with opposition MPs shouting out in protest and most deciding to leave the chamber rather than cast their votes.

“It is a black day for democracy in Malaysia because there is no rule of law,” opposition lawmaker Xavier Jayakumar told AFP.

However, as well as the health minister and human resources minister, one opposition MP who should have been quarantining also turned up in parliament in protective gear.

The parliament speaker insisted safeguards had been

taken, including having the lawmakers transported in an ambulance and placed in a special room, state news agency Bernama reported.

He rejected attempts to stop the vote, and the nine-month-old government easily won after the walkout.

Most MPs had already backed the main budget vote last month, a victory for embattled Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin whose parliamentary coalition holds a wafer-thin majority.

But officials need to win several more crucial votes related to specific parts of the spending bill.

Muhyiddin seized power in March without an election after the collapse of a reformist coalition, but his government is highly unstable and has been accused of lacking legitimacy.

SOURCE: AFP

SPACE X

Indonesia wants to lure SpaceX to build rocket launch site

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — Indonesia has invited Tesla boss Elon Musk to build a launch site for his SpaceX’s rocket in the Southeast Asian country, pointing out the benefits of a location next to the equator, officials said.

“Indonesia has several areas located near to the equator,” Jodi Mahardi, spokesman of Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Ministry, told AFP on Monday.

“The cost of SpaceX’s rocket launch will be lower because its satellite won’t need any manoeuvring to adjust its orbit to the equator,” he added.

President Joko Widodo officially extended the invitation to the world’s second-richest person in a telephone conversation on Friday. Indonesia’s space agency announced last year a plan to

build its first spaceport on the island of Biak, off the north coast of the island of New Guinea and has been in talks with foreign partners. SpaceX last week launched a prototype Starship rocket from Texas which it hopes will be used for Mars missions. The rocket crashed on landing but Musk was upbeat, saying they got all the data they needed from the experimental flight.

Musk and Widodo, along with Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut B. Pandjaitan, also discussed investment opportunities for Tesla in Indonesia, according to a press statement. The pioneering electric car company is reportedly eyeing Indonesia’s large nickel reserves, a key component for its batteries.

“Tesla CEO Elon Musk re-



SpaceX owner and Tesla CEO Elon Musk arrives on the red carpet for the Axel Springer Awards ceremony, in Berlin, on 1 December 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

sponded to the invitation of Indonesian President Joko Widodo by planning to send his team to Indonesia in January 2021 to explore all the opportunities for

this collaboration,” the ministry statement said.

However, Mahardi said no exact date had been confirmed.

SOURCE: AFP

MARITIME

Explosion rocks Singapore-flagged tanker off Saudi port

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia) — An explosion rocked a Singapore-flagged oil tanker off the Saudi port city of Jeddah Monday, the vessel’s owner said, in the latest apparent strike on energy sector targets in the kingdom.

All 22 sailors aboard the tanker BW Rhine escaped unhurt after the blast struck just

after midnight, Singapore-based shipping company Hafnia said, but it did not exclude the possibility of an oil spill.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the alleged attack, but it comes as Iran-backed Huthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen step up cross-border strikes against Saudi targets in retaliation for a five-year military

campaign led by Riyadh.

“BW Rhine has been hit from an external source whilst discharging at Jeddah... causing an explosion and subsequent fire onboard,” Hafnia said in a statement, without specifying what struck the vessel.

“The crew have extinguished the fire with assistance from the shore fire brigade and

tug boats, and all 22 seafarers have been accounted for with no injuries,” it added.

Saudi authorities did not immediately confirm the blast off Jeddah, a key Red Sea port and distribution centre for oil giant Saudi Aramco.

Hafnia reported “hull damage” in the blast.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

CULTURE

Japan’s symbol of year nods to no-lockdown virus strategy

A written character that evokes everything people in Japan were urged to avoid this year -- crowds, confined spaces and close contact with others -- was on Monday voted the country’s top linguistic symbol of 2020.

Although new infections have recently hit record highs, Japan has seen a relatively small coronavirus outbreak overall and never imposed a strict lockdown like those seen elsewhere in the world.

SOURCE: AFP

TRAVEL

New Zealand eyes quarantine-free travel from Australia by March-end

NEW Zealand has agreed in principle to accept quarantine-free travel from Australia by the end of March, provided coronavirus cases do not increase, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Monday.

While New Zealanders have been able to travel to certain states of Australia since October, New Zealand has been hesitant to extend the same freedoms to travelers from Australia due to recent community outbreaks of coronavirus in the bigger neighbor.

SOURCE: KYODO NEWS

KIDNAPPING

Two Indian nationals kidnapped in Nigeria: police

POLICE in southwest Nigeria on Sunday warned foreign nationals to be vigilant days after gunmen kidnapped two Indian workers in the region.

Gunmen seized the two men on Wednesday as they drove out of a pharmaceutical firm in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state. They cut the rear tyres of their vehicle to force it to stop.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar team to join World Cup Qualifiers in 2021



Myanmar defender Thein Than Win (red) tries to tackle the ball against Japanese midfielder Doan during the World Cup Qualifier at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 10 September 2019. **PHOTO: AFC**

MYANMAR national football team will join three World Cup qualifiers in March and June 2021, according to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

Team Myanmar has three games left to play and will face against Japan national team in the qualifiers in March. Next, the home game against Kyrgyzstan will also be played in March and away match against Tajikistan is scheduled for June.

Owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Myanmar national footballers have not been able to train yet and only had to train for a short time in March. The Myanmar

national team will be coached by German Coach Antonio Hey for the qualifiers.

Due to this year's postponement of the World Cup Qualifiers amidst pandemic, the Myanmar team has to play for four consecutive months in a row in 2021.

Next year, the Myanmar national team will also compete in ASEAN level tourney named Suzuki Cup, and it will be held in December 2021.

The ASEAN Suzuki Cup is formerly scheduled to be held at the end of 2020, but it has been postponed due to the pandemic. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Ronaldo marks Juve century as late Hernandez brace rescues AC Milan

MILAN (Italy) — Cristiano Ronaldo marked his 100th game for Juventus with a pair of penalties in a 3-1 success over Genoa on Sunday, as the champions closed the gap on Serie A leaders AC Milan who were held at home against Parma.

French defender Theo Hernandez's brace rescued a point at the death for AC Milan who came from two goals down to draw 2-2 in the San Siro.

Milan's lead on second-placed Inter was cut to three points after Antonio Conte's side staged a 3-1 comeback win at Cagliari.

Napoli, in third, are a further point adrift after beating Sampdoria 2-1, equal on points with nine-time reigning champions Juventus.

Playing without injured top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Milan had looked set for their

first league defeat this season.

Hakan Calhanoglu rattled the woodwork three times with Brahim Diaz also hitting the post for the hosts before Hernani put Parma ahead after quarter of an hour. The Brazilian midfielder then set up Jasmin Kurtic for the second after 56 minutes.

But two minutes later Hernandez headed in off a Calhanoglu corner with the French defender adding a second in injury time off a rebound.

"It wasn't the best night but we had the quality to bring home an important draw which boosts our self-esteem," said coach Stefano Pioli.

"While Ibra gives us a lot of presence, we did well even without him. We have shown strength, especially psychologically, it's a step forward."

Chasing a first league title

since 2011, Milan are unbeaten in the first 11 matches of a Serie A season since the 2003/2004, when they also won the 'Scudetto'.

In Genoa, Juventus were boosted after their 3-0 Champions League win in Barcelona, with Paulo Dybala getting his first goal this season.

Stefano Sturaro levelled for the hosts after an hour.

But Nicolo Rovella's foul on Juan Cuadrado allowed Ronaldo to slot in his first penalty after 78 minutes with the second coming a minute from time after goalkeeper Mattia Perin brought down Alvaro Morata.

Genoa sink to second from bottom of the league.

Ronaldo, Ibrahimovic lead way

Ronaldo, 35, joins 39-year-old Ibrahimovic as leading scorer in Serie A with 10 goals this season, for a total of 79 since joining Juventus in 2018.

"What better way to celebrate my 100th game for Juventus, than scoring two more goals for the team?" Ronaldo said on Twitter before vowing to reach 100 goals for the reigning champions.

Inter Milan's Romelu Lukaku, 27, is just behind with nine goals after scoring the third against Cagliari in injury time.

Conte's side are out of Europe with their focus now on a first Serie A title since 2010. —AFP ■



Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo shoots to score a penalty during the Italian Serie A football match Genoa vs Juventus on 13 December 2020 at the Luigi-Ferraris stadium in Genoa. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hamilton expects to sign new Mercedes deal by Christmas



Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (C) takes part in the End Racism event ahead of the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix at the Yas Marina Circuit in the Emirati city of Abu Dhabi on 13 December 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

ABU DHABI (United Arab Emirates) — Lewis Hamilton ended speculation about future intentions on Sunday when he made clear he expects to sign a new contract with Mercedes before Christmas.

The newly-crowned seven-time world champion, who finished third in the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on return from a bout of Covid-19, said talks with team chief Toto Wolff were likely to start in the next "couple of weeks".

"I plan to be here next year, I want to be here next year," Hamilton told reporters after the race.

"I think us, as a team, have more to do together, more to achieve both in the sport and even more outside the sport."

"So, yes, I hope we can begin this week discussions and hopefully get it tied up before Christmas." ■

Hamilton has won six of his seven titles with Mercedes since joining in 2013. In that time, he has won 74 races, the most by any driver with a single constructor.

He has also scored points in a record 49 consecutive races, if only race starts are considered after he missed last weekend's Sakhir Grand Prix.

On Sunday, he admitted he felt "destroyed" by the after-effects of the coronavirus and was well below his best in the race at the Yas Marina Circuit won by Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

Wolff said Mercedes' defeat — Valtteri Bottas finished second ahead of Hamilton — meant they departed Abu Dhabi with "a slap on the wrist" following a below-par display.

Verstappen came home 16 seconds clear of Bottas at the end of the team's most comprehensive beating this year. —AFP ■