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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 19 December 2020

## Myanmar relief flights bring citizens back home from Singapore, Thailand



Myanmar returnees queue for immigration clearance at the Yangon International Airport on 18 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR Embassy in Singapore organized the 31st relief flight for the 148 citizens who wanted to come back from the city state.

They arrived at Yangon International Airport by the Myanmar National Airways yesterday

evening.

Moreover, the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok organized the 13<sup>th</sup> relief flight to bring back 40 citizens from Thailand, and they landed in Yangon in the same evening.

The Ministry of Labour, Im-

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

The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs is cooperating with the relevant ministries for the repatriation of Myanmar citizens who are stranded in foreign countries in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).—MNA

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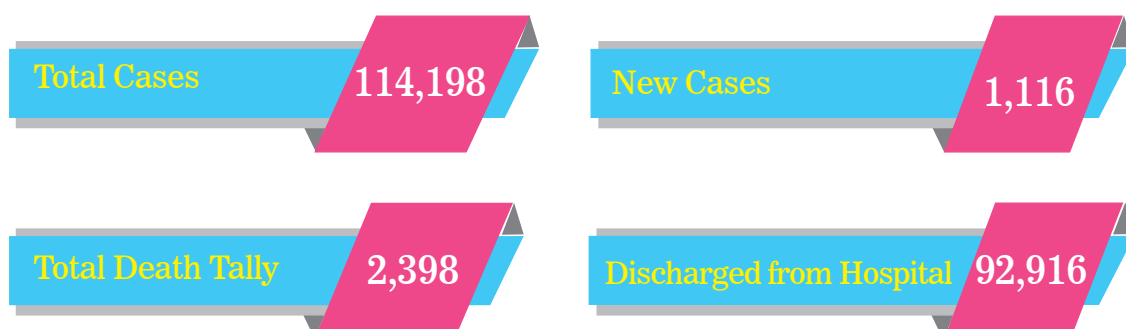
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## 1,116 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 December, total figure rises to 114,198

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 114,198 after 1,116 new cases were reported on 18 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 114,198 confirmed cases, 2,398 died, 92,916 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 18 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 18-12-2020

21

Ministry of Health and Sports



## “People are the key”

### Govt discusses holding coord meeting with KNU for Bawkahta hydropower project

OFFICIALS from the Peace Commission and two ministries discussed holding a coordination meeting with Kayin National Union representatives for the implementation of Bawkahta hydropower project at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Peace Commission's Secretary Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo (Rtd), advisory board member U Hla Maung Shwe and U Moe Zaw Oo, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy's Permanent Secretary U Than Zaw, the Ministry of the State Counsellor Office's Director-General U Zaw Htay, MoEE Directors-General U Hein Htet, Daw Mi Mi Khaing and officials attended the meeting.

State Counsellor Office's Director-General U Zaw Htay reported on the KNU's propos-



Peace Commission and two ministries hold meeting on KNU's proposals for Bawkahta hydropower project via videoconferencing on 18 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

als and conditions relating to the Bawkahta hydropower project. Ministry of Electricity and

Energy's Permanent Secretary U Than Zaw, Directors-General U Hein Htet and Daw Mi Mi

Khaing discussed matters relating to the implementation of Bowkahta hydropower project,

government's policies on the implementation of hydropower projects, and plans for the performance of hydropower projects for peace.

Peace Commission's Secretary Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo (Rtd), advisory board member U Hla Maung Shwe and U Moe Zaw Oo detailed about the peace processes.

The meeting also discussed the KNU's proposals for Bawkahta hydropower project and holding a coordination meeting with KNU representatives for the implementation of the Bawkahta hydropower project.

The hydropower project is located in Kyauk Kyi Township, Bago Region.— MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

### U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attends closing ceremony of online training course on “Public Policy and Basic Social Research Methodology”

CLOSING Ceremony of the online training course on “Public Policy and Basic Social Research Methodology”, which was jointly conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Asia Foundation, took place at 4:30 pm

on 18 December 2020. At the occasion, U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered remarks, and Mr Mark McDowell, Country Representative of the Asia Foundation, Myanmar made remarks

through videoconferencing.

Also present at the occasion were U Khine Win and Daw Nilar Myaing from the Sandhi Governance Institute, who were lecturers of the course, senior officials and trainees from the Min-

istry of Foreign Affairs .

The training was conducted from 14 to 18 December 2020 and participated by 31 trainees from the Ministry through online platform.—MNA



Double decker cruise ship will ply in Yangon River starting from 25 December. PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG

### Two-deck cruise ship to ply in Yangon River

THE two-deck cruise ship will ply in Yangon River for the public commencing 25 December.

The cruise is organized by the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association for the passengers to enjoy the sunset view during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the vessel has a capacity of 120 passengers, only 30 passengers will be carried in each trip.

Carrying officials and media personnel, its first trip will start from the Health Jetty near the Pansodan Jetty at 4 pm on 20 December.

U Naung Naung Han, the Chairman of Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association, said, “The cruise ship will carry the passengers in accordance with social distancing rules

and healthcare guidelines.”

The association will organize the cruise ship trips on 26 and 27 December (on Saturday and Sunday), and will arrange the trips on every weekend based on the demand of passengers.

The cruise ship will leave the Health Jetty at 4 pm and take the route near the water of Botahtaung pagoda-Thanyatsoon and the confluence three rivers near the Twantay River Mouth before returning to the Health Jetty through the water near Kyimyindine Strand Road and Bayintnaung Bridge.

The ticket price is estimated at K15,000 per person, and the official rate will be announced on 21 December.—Pwint Thisar

(Translated by Aung Khin)



## 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

## MoALI Minister joins Agrobusiness Forum 2020

THE Eurocham Myanmar, the International Labour Organization and the Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development virtually co-chaired the Agrobusiness Forum 2020 yesterday.

The forum was attended by Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu, Director-General for Planning Department U Kyaw Swe Linn, EU Ambassador to Myanmar Ranieri Sabatucci and other representatives of partner organizations.

During the event, Union Minister Dr Aung Thu discussed the COVID-19 impacts on the agricultural sector, activities to bring the practices into conformity



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu joins the Agrobusiness Forum 2020 via videoconferencing on 18 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

with ASEAN standards like GAP, GAQP, GAHP and GMP, effective economic responses and the cash-for-work project to provide farmers under CERP of the gov-

ernment.

The Union Minister also highlighted the rural development programmes via the agricultural development, food security,

land-ownership issue and better farming system.

EU Ambassador Mr Ranieri Sabatucci discussed plans to improve the business and invest-

ment sectors of Myanmar; cooperation work to produce quality and safe agricultural products and to penetrate the international markets, honey export to EU and opportunities for Myanmar's farming products and foodstuffs in EU markets.

Director-General U Kyaw Swe Linn briefed the challenges, reforms and efforts of the ministry in the agribusiness sector under the topic "Taking Stock of 2020 to Unlock Myanmar's Potential" during Plenary Session.

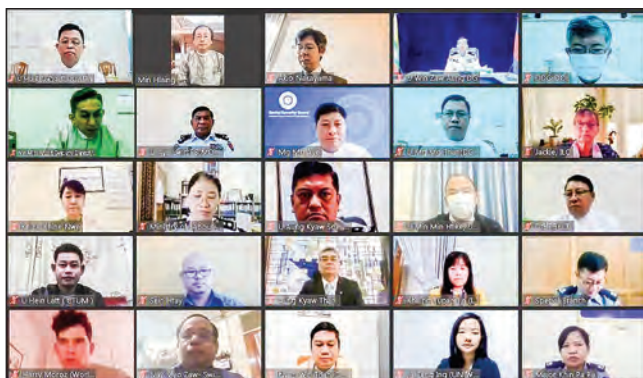
The forum was also attended by the Hluttaw Representatives, officials of Eurocham Myanmar, OECD, ILO and civilian organizations. —MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

## MoLIP discusses national action plan for international migration

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and the International Organization for Migration held a virtual meeting to review the implementation and monitoring of the mid-term second five-year national plan of action on international migration (2018-2022) yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Thein Swe said that the meeting aims to review the experiences and achievement from the priorities of the second phase of the national action plan and to identify the prioritized plans for 2021.

He added the implementation of the plan in collaboration with non-governmental organ-



Union Minister U Thein Swe participates in the meeting on the implementation of second five-year national plan of action on international migration (2018-2022) on 18 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

izations and related ministries and agencies by holding several meetings for action planning, the expanding of up to 19 Migrants Resource Centre (MRC) with the collaboration of ILO and IOM in areas with the highest number of

migrants, and the attendance of representatives from 207 licenced foreign employment agencies to seminars on prestigious international recruitment practices.

The Union Minister also said the need to include action plans to

ensure the safe migration of migrant workers on post-COVID-19 period and to improve the living standards of migrant workers returnees and to establish a digital platform to provide access to essential services using technology

to protect migrant workers.

The meeting also discussed the link between the action plan and the Global Compact for Migration aspirations, the review on achievement from the implementation of the half of the Action Plan (2018-2022) and priorities to do in 2021 according to the Action Plan.

The Deputy Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General and the Chief of Mission for IOM and representatives participated in the meeting. —MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



## With respect to vaccines, ...

We have a programme jointly implemented by the WHO and GAVI, an association focussing on protective vaccines. This is a programme for vaccination against COVID. This is the COVAX programme. We are also participating in this programme. We have sent a letter of request on 7 December. With respect to vaccines, we have learnt that we can get these vaccines. Furthermore, we will buy from other sources if we don't have enough. We will not get enough vaccines for everyone under this COVAX programme. However, the Union Government has implemented programmes to have enough vaccines for everyone. In the implementation of this programme, we have formed an advisory group composed of senior health professionals. What programmes are we going to implement? How will we store the vaccines? How will we distribute these vaccines? How will we carry out the vaccinations? We have already formulated such programmes.

*(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's report on COVID-19 containment measures, on 12 December 2020)*



## MoE holds meeting with parents for drafting NESP (2021-2030)

THE Ministry of Education held a meeting with parents yesterday for drafting the National Education Strategic Plan (2021-2030).

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi discussed technology developments in 21<sup>st</sup> century like Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Cloud Computing, Big Data and Internet of Things, competitive labour market, climate changes, IQ and EQ of students in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Digital Age.

The Union Minister also explained the Traditional Education System, including by-heart learning, exam-based and teacher-centred approaches.

He also discussed the New Normal Education System while new normal is just a part of economic normal, safe learning environment for the students, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Competencies and the different situation of students living across the nation.



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi holds talks with parents over drafting the National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 via videoconferencing on 18 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

He then highlighted the use of technology in learning during COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of Blended Learning which is a combination of High-Tech Learning and High-Touch Learning, implementation of

the better education system and the differences between Traditional Education System and New Normal Education System.

He also stressed the performance based on 12 priority

sectors of NESP (2016-2021), vocational training, educational opportunities for students and people as a pathway out of poverty, plans to provide teaching materials by cooperating with relevant regions/states govern-

ment and Hluttaw Representatives.

He recommended the appointment of qualified teachers, capacity-building programmes for the teachers, action plans to provide WIFI services, Website and e-library facility at the schools, universities and libraries.

He also discussed the Learning Management System of Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP), South-East Asia Primary Learning Metric (SEA-PLM) assessment programme and the critical role of the participation of students, teachers and parents in implementing the quality education system.

The Directors-General of relevant education departments respectively briefed the progress in drafting NESP (2021-2030).—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](tel:0974424848)) 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 8<sup>th</sup> April.—MNA



# ACC, UNODC organize online training on financial investigation

THE Anti-Corruption Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime jointly organized a virtual training on the financial investigation at the commission's training hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Commission's Acting Chair U San Win, members U Zaw Win, Daw Myat Myat Soe, U Han Nyunt, U Aung Than Myint and U Myo Myint, the Commission Office's Directors-General and staff, UNODC's Anti-Corruption Programme Manager Ms Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois and trainers international expert Dr Ramandeep Chhina participated in the meeting.

At the opening of the training, Acting Chair U San Win said that the training was conducted so that chief financial investigators can skillfully conduct the financial investigation



Anti-Corruption Commission Acting Chair U San Win speaks during the opening day of online training on financial investigation on 18 December 2020. PHOTO: MNA

and build their capacities, saying that the commission can get important evidence by conducting financial investigations into the cases being investigated by the commission.

Anti-Corruption Law Articles 17 and 32 say that the commission can investigate and copy the records of banks

and financial organizations, and can call for prohibition orders to the banks and financial investigation in investigating the corruption cases.

Eighty per cent of the commission's investigation included the financial matters.

The commission also arranged three foreign training

courses and five local training-courses for chief investigators in past years.

The five-day training will provide theoretical and practical lectures about the financial investigation.

UNODC's Anti-Corruption Programme Manager Ms Marie-Laure Pegie Cauchois

made greeting remarks and introduced trainer Dr Ramandeep Chhina to the trainees.

A total of 30 chief investigators from the Commission Office's investigation teams joined the training that will take place from 17 to 23 December.

—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



# MNA offers free date change on domestic flight tickets bought in past

Date	Day	Destinations
16th DEC, 2020	WED	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Heho, Kengtung
17th DEC, 2020	THU	Sittwe, Myitkyina, Putao
18th DEC, 2020	FRI	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung, Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe
19th DEC, 2020	SAT	Heho, Kengtung, Myitkyina, Putao
20th DEC, 2020	SUN	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung, Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe
21st DEC, 2020	MON	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Ann, Sittwe, Myitkyina, Putao
22nd DEC, 2020	TUE	Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung
23rd DEC, 2020	WED	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Heho, Kengtung
24th DEC, 2020	THU	Sittwe, Myitkyina, Putao
25th DEC, 2020	FRI	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung, Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe
26th DEC, 2020	SAT	Heho, Kengtung, Myitkyina, Putao
27th DEC, 2020	SUN	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung, Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe
28th DEC, 2020	MON	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Ann, Sittwe, Myitkyina, Putao
29th DEC, 2020	TUE	Thandwe, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung
30th DEC, 2020	WED	Nay Pyi Taw, Loikaw, Heho, Kengtung
31st DEC, 2020	THU	Sittwe, Myitkyina, Putao

MYANMAR National Airlines said it was offering free date change on the domestic flights booked before and during the coronavirus, saying no change of fare rules was made.

The airlines resumed its operation of domestic flights daily starting from 16 December in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for passengers, using the new flights of Boeing 737-800 NG Embraer 1901 ATR-72 G00 Series.

Travellers can purchase the domestic flight tickets at MNA ticketing counters, website and travel agents. They need to take COVID-19 clearance document from the Ministry of Health and Sports after testing with Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test (RDT) Kit.

During check-in, passengers need to show their negative COVID-19 test result made at the Ministry of Health and Sports within 36 hours ago.

The airlines will provide free date change or full refund if the passengers test positive for COVID-19 with rapid antigen diagnostic test. For the tickets purchased from travel agents, passengers must contact the respective travel agents for the date change and refund.

The domestic flight schedules of the airlines can be viewed at <https://www.flymna.com/plan-a-trip/flight-schedule>.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

# Myanmar's foreign trade touches \$4,468 mln in 2020-2021FY (up to November)

THE temporary figure of Myanmar's foreign trade amounted to US\$4,468 million in 2020-2021FY (up to November), decreasing by \$1,961million in comparison with that of corresponding period.

## Categories of export items, values and comparisons in relevant FY

Amount in Million of US dollar

Sr	Item	2020-2021 (Up to Nov) Temporary	2019-2020 (Up to November)	Comparison Up (+)/Down(-)
1	Agricultural products	639.942	562.196	(+) 77.746
2	Livestock products	13.547	41.970	(-) -28.423
3	Fishery products	149.184	178.595	(-) -29.411
4	Mineral products	205.258	706.363	(-) 501.105
5	Forest products	19.406	27.704	(-) 8.298

6	Industrial finished products	1010.900	1759.977	(-) 749.077
7	Other items	71.854	54.662	(+) 17.192
	Total	2110.091	3331.467	(-) 1221.376

## Categories of import items, values and comparisons in relevant FY

Amount in Million of US dollar

Sr	Item	2020-2021 (Up to Nov) Temporary	2019-2020 (Up to November)	Comparison Up (+)/Down(-)
1	Investment materials	844.648	1052.221	(-) 207.573
2	Industrial raw materials	796.425	1232.688	(-) 436.263
3	Household commodities	716.868	812.712	(-) 95.844
	Total	2357.941	3097.621	(-) 739.680



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

## Mushroom farming, GAP awareness online training to be conducted in end-December

By Nyein Nyein

THE mushroom cultivation and production and GAP awareness online training will be provided for the first time from 28 to 30 December, according to Mandalay Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI).

The three-day training will be provided jointly by MRCCI, and Myanmar Mushrooms Producer & Exporter Association from 9 am to 12 pm via Zoom application platform.

The training will share information with the local farmers about the mushrooms and

Picture shows a mushroom cultivation. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY-SUB-PRINGTING)**

the breeding knowledge on the mushroom, how to make a crop of mushroom seeds, cultivation and treatment of oyster

mushroom, straw mushroom outdoor cultivation method-1, straw mushroom outdoor cultivation method-2, information of GAP cultivation and ways to follow and mushroom cultivation techniques.

The training will accommodate only 35 trainees and those who are interested in joining the online training need to register by sending name, position, organization, phone number, email to MRCCI office. For further information, call the following numbers of MRCCI: 024069326, 024069311, 09767333710.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Whale found dead in water near Kyunsu Township

A large whale was found dead and floating in the water near Paekalet labour camp in Wae Kyun village, Kyunsu Township, in Taninthayi Region on 16 December. According to U Nyi Nyi Lin Htut, Director of the Department of Fisheries, the dead whale was found to have been stabbed with something about eight inches in the back of its head in the water near the work camp which is about 0.5 nautical miles from Wae Kyun village and may have died six days ago.

The fish was towed to the cemetery island near Wae Kyun village. It is believed to be a female whale, with about 26 feet long and 12 feet in size and was systematically buried on the island's sandy beach at low tide.

— Si Thura Aung (Kyunsu)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

A whale carcass is found floating in the water of Kyunsu, Taninthayi Region. **PHOTO: SI THURA AUNG (KYUNSU)**



## Home-grown G Bank expands its banking services

As new banking services expand in Myanmar's economic sector, G Bank is a home-grown private bank formed under the Financial Laws by Central Bank of Myanmar.

G Bank announced its special interest rates on all fixed deposit accounts as 2020 year-end promotion starting from 1st December. The interest

rates are 8.4% p.a. for 365-days (1 year) fixed deposit and 7.8% p.a. for 180-days (6 months) at any G Bank branches around the country. G Bank has its branches in Yangon division, Mandalay division, Sagaing division, Shan state and Kayin state, also expanding to other cities.

Moreover, G Bank offers a

secure interbank remittance service to any other townships and districts in Myanmar via CBM net with other banks. This service is a useful function for all the bank users and is also a moving act in local economic by CBM (Central Bank of Myanmar).

Since a bunch of local and international practitioners encouraged about saving practices in World Savings Day Forum 2020, G Bank participated to leverage Myanmar people's saving practice by raising the deposit interest rates up to 8.7% p.a. G Bank also giving away 2021 calendars to all customers during this month!

Although the unexpected pandemic Covid-19 affected severely this year to the businesses and people around the country, G Bank offers its special interest rates on all fixed deposit accounts during this

December to preserve the country's prosperity.

G Bank opened its first branch in Monywa, Sagaing Region, in September, 2018 and bases its mission on developing the agricultural sector, which can be regarded as the lifeblood of the nation. G Bank's objectives also include making banking services accessible to everyone through the use of technology while incorporating ingenuity, responsibility, accountability, ethics and rules and regulations issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar in its services.

With its HQ on Pyay Road, Yangon, G Bank serves standard banking services such as depositing or withdrawing cash, local remittance, hire purchase, loans, PO (payment orders) during its operating hours. — GNLM



(FILES) G-Bank employees count Myanmar currency notes in 2018. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**



# Taxes lost for country due to rampant illegal export market for cattle: MRCEA

By Nyein Nyein

THE illegal export market for cattle is on the rise, according to the Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association (MRCEA).

MRCEA Chairperson U Soe Naing said that the illegal export of cattle is two or three times higher than the legal one, which causes loss of the taxes of the country.

“We are discussing this matter with the ministries. The illegal export cattle market will gradually decrease when the legal market turns normal,” he added.

The cattle are being exported illegally via Bhamo, Lweje, Mong La, Kengtung, Tachilek and Nant Paung in Muse, according to MRCEA. The Ministry of Commerce for the first time permitted the export of the cattle alive at the end of 2017 with the purpose to legalize the illegal export of cattle, to increase the income and profit and to create job opportunities for the livestock farmers and to

improve the economy of the local farmers.

However, about 15,000 heads of cattle owned by 150 companies are now stranded in the Muse border as China stopped purchasing of the cattle. The labour wages and the feedstuff cost burden them, and now about 70 companies in Muse have requested the association to return to their original places.

“Now, China permits the cattle import only after ensuring that the cattle are free from 20 diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease. Thus, the officials concerned from the two countries are negotiating this,” he explained.

“Earlier, 1,500-2,000 heads of cattle were daily traded through the Muse land border. Now, the cattle trading was suspended for three months for COVID-19 and other reasons given by China,” stated MRCEA chair U Soe Naing.

“In the meantime, we are



Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association states Myanmar currently exports 50,000 cattle annually. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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 because of the fair 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 exports, and the pass is valid for three months.

The companies can have legal action taken if they do not sell the cattle during the three months.

Currently, Myanmar exports 500,000 cattle annually, according to the association stated.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

NOW!  
Available

FOR BRIGHT FUTURE THROUGH BILATERAL FRIENDSHIP PAGE 6 (OPPOSITE)

13<sup>th</sup> regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw holds 16<sup>th</sup>-day meeting PAGE 8 (OPPOSITE)

Ambassadors Visit Returns in Bhamo PAGE 10 (OPPOSITE)

Pyithu Hluttaw debate pesticide reduction, subsidizing ecosystem PAGE 12 (OPPOSITE)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

သတင်းစာများကို ဤဆိုင်များတွင် ဝယ်ယူပတ်ဂျူနိုင်ပါပြီ။

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## MCIA to open corn commodity depot in Myawady early next year

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR Corn Industrial Association (MCIA) has planned to open Myawady corn commodity depot in the third week of January in 2021, said MCIA Chair U Min Khaing.

The corn commodity depot will be opened to ensure fair trade of corn on the Myawady border and for the greater convenience of the trading.

Although the commodity depot was first targeted to open on 1 April 2020, the opening of the depot was delayed by COVID-19 outbreak, he added.

“Earlier, we were set to open the depot on the 1 April 2020. We have already invited the related officials. But we have postponed the opening of the depot because of the pandemic. Now, we have made a new schedule to open the depot in 2021. We are not sure as to what to do because the government

declared the extension of the stay home till the end of December. We are ready to open the depot, but we have to invite the officials and traders from both countries. But we could not do so because of COVID-19. But we targeted to open it in the third week of January 2021,” he explained. We are attempting to open the commodity depot in January so that we could export the corn to Thailand under the tax-free system.

Thailand imposed a hefty tax on imported goods during its corn season to protect the interest of its growers. It grants tax exemption for corn import between February and August.

Thailand imported around 5 million tonnes of corn annually from abroad. At present, Myanmar’s corn export is heavily relying on border trade. The country mainly sends the corn to the neighbouring countries like China, Laos and Thailand.

Corn is also shipped to Singapore, Malaysia and Viet Nam through sea trade. The corn fetched US\$230-240 per tonne.

The local maize consumption in Myanmar is also higher than that in the previous year. This year, the association targeted to export 1.6 million tonnes of corn, according to the association.

Myanmar exported over 2.2 million tonnes of corn to the foreign market in the past FY2019-2020, with an estimated value of over \$360 million, according to the data of the Ministry of Commerce. At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. There are about 1.12 million acres of corn in Myanmar, and it has three corn seasons — winter, summer and monsoon.

The country produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn annually. (Translated by Hay Mar)



# Global cooperation needed for employment of migrant workers during, post-COVID-19

THE UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID 19 Crisis warns that the COVID-19 pandemic "is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it is already increasing poverty and inequalities at a global scale."

COVID-19 continues to negatively affect communities and economies around the world. However, economic and health-related obstacles mostly affect migrant workers in foreign countries and those who returned home.

Economically, migrant workers and their families face great challenges. Hence, the government has made every effort and has brought back all our migrant workers who are facing difficulties in foreign countries, and is creating job opportunities for them by initiating labour-intensive projects in the construction and agriculture sectors.

Poverty is expected to surge by nearly 24 per cent in 2020 in our country as a result of the pandemic, according to the United Nations Development Programme.

post-COVID-19 era.

Poverty is expected to surge by nearly 24 per cent in 2020 in our country as a result of the pandemic, according to the United Nations Development Programme.

Like Myanmar, global economies are also suffering greatly from the effects of COVID-19 on migrant workers. The economic and health risks of COVID-19 severely affect migrant workers worldwide. From restricted travel to greater risks of exploitation, migrant laborers face both severe health and economic risks.

Therefore it is important to explore the economic and health risks of COVID-19 on migrant workers.

This is a global problem. Hence, there is a need for global cooperation that delivers concrete actions in response to our common challenges.

# COVID-19 and Vaccine nationalism

THE COVID-19 pandemic is in its second consecutive year in the country where it originated. As for our country it's in the eighth month or so and still persistent, with no sign of ending soon in sight. A few countries in the world managed to keep the spread of the disease under control at a certain level so far, but there still is no guarantee that they are totally safe as yet. They too must be wary of the possibility of being struck by a second wave or may be even a third one.

The present pandemic could be the severest that hit the world in modern times. In my over eighty years' lifetime, I had been through plague, small pox, cholera and H1N1 flu outbreaks, but they were much milder and nothing comparable to this pandemic. It impacted almost every sector - social, health, education, tourism, trade, transportation, industries, entertainment, sports, recreation and above all the economy. The fatalities too are very high and the medical facilities are stretched to the extremes, making it difficult to cope with even for some advanced and wealthy nations.

Thus every country around the world must surely be anxious-hoping for the emergence of an effective anti-coronavirus vaccine as soon as possible so as to quickly overcome this disastrous pandemic. As some giant pharmaceutical manufacturing firms in the world are rushing against time to produce an effective vaccine to fight the COVID-19, so also the "vaccine nationalism" too is rising fast.

### Vaccine nationalism

So, what is vaccine nationalism? When a country manages to secure many doses of vaccines for its own citizens or residents



Pharmacy Technician Kevin Ros (R) prepares Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine before it is administered to healthcare workers at Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, California on December 15, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

and prioritize its own domestic markets before they are made available in other countries, it is known as "vaccine nationalism". This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturing firm.

Even before the human trials are completed or regulatory approval given, several wealthy and affluent countries like Britain, France, Germany and the US have entered into pre-purchase agreements with the vaccine manufacturers. Such advance agreements will give way to fears that they will render the initial few vaccines unaffordable and inaccessible to everyone apart from the rich countries in a world of roughly 8 billion people. If that should happen they are grossly unfair and at the same time could impact adversely on the pandemic.

The advance purchase agreements that some countries have

negotiated with pharmaceutical companies exemplify the rich grabbing everything first. This has led the World Health Organization (WHO) to warn the nations that hoard possible COVID-19 vaccines while excluding others would worsen the pandemic. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently said, "We need to prevent vaccine nationalism. Sharing finite supplies strategically and globally is actually in each country's national interest."

To bring about equitable and broad access, WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) have come up with an initiative known as "Covax Facility". The facility aims to procure at least two billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of next year for deployment and distribution mainly in the low and middle-income countries.

The vaccine nationalism is not new. It emerges from a similar

situation that happened in 2009 during the H1N1 flu pandemic. Australia, the first country to come up with a vaccine, blocked exports while some of the wealthiest countries entered into pre-purchase agreements with several pharmaceutical companies. The US alone obtained the right to buy 600,000 doses.

It was only when the H1N1 pandemic began to recede, those developed countries offered to donate vaccine doses to poorer nations. However, it must be noted that H1N1 was a milder disease and its impact was far lesser than COVID-19, which has already infected more than 71 million people worldwide and killed over 1.6 million, as at 12 December, 2020.

The vaccine nationalism is unfair and inhumane, thus undesirable. It is harmful for equitable access to vaccines. It further disadvantages countries with fewer resources and bargaining power. It deprives populations in the developing and impoverished

nations from timely access to vital public health goods. In extreme cases it allocates vaccines to moderately at-risk populations in wealthy countries over populations at higher risk in developing economies.

### Shouldn't make business out of the pandemic

Making profit during any human tragedy is a crime against humanity and shouldn't be allowed to carry on. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious human tragedy and thus needs global solidarity. However, in a liberalized economy, there is a shocking silence in the global market where some are trying to do business out of human suffering. This is where organizations of the United Nations and global networks for people should come together in one voice.

### Drawbacks of the vaccine nationalism

The major drawback of vaccine nationalism is that it puts countries with fewer resources and bargaining power at a disadvantage. Thus, if countries with a large number of cases lag in obtaining the vaccine, the disease will continue to disrupt global supply chains and, as a result, economies around the world would be greatly impacted.

In this connexion, the chief executive of the GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) was quoted by Reuters as saying: "If you were to try to vaccinate the entire US, (and) the entire EU, for example, with two doses of vaccine - then you'd get to about 1.7 billion doses. And if that is the number of doses that's available, there's not a lot left for others. If a handful, or even 30 or 40 countries have vaccines, but more than 150 others don't, then

the epidemic will rage there."

The alternative measure to stop the rise of the vaccine nationalism is global collaboration, which is being done through the WHO-backed COVAX Facility mechanism. So far, more than 170 countries have expressed interest: about 90 low and middle-income countries and 80 fully self-financing countries. The countries that join the initiative are assured supply of vaccines whenever they become successful. It is understood that our country had joined that initiative and is thus being guaranteed to receive our allotment in due course of time.

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the weaknesses in the multilateralism which is best exemplified by the race among countries for getting access to the vaccine. Having nothing less than the vaccines and life-saving medicines being treated as a public health good, instead of being a commodity of trade, must definitely be the long-term goal. Interestingly, or should I say surprisingly, even though vaccine nationalism runs against global public health principles, there are no provision in the international laws that prevent pre-purchase agreements. The world organizations concerned should endeavour to introduce necessary laws, rules and regulations to curb the rise of vaccine nationalism.

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## COVID-19 IS INDEED "FAR MORE SERIOUS" THAN THE SEASONAL FLU

# Coronavirus nearly three times more deadly than flu: study

ROUGHLY a year into the pandemic it is clear the new coronavirus is worse than seasonal flu, and a study released on Friday outlined just how much worse, showing a death rate almost three times higher among Covid-19 patients.

The research, using French national data and published in

the journal The Lancet Respiratory Medicine, underscored the increased severity of illness for people with Covid-19.

Researchers compared data for 89,530 patients hospitalized with Covid-19 in March and April this year with 45,819 patients hospitalized with seasonal influenza between December 2018 and the

end of February 2019.

Some 16.9 per cent of Covid-19 patients died during the period of study - which was during a devastating first wave across Europe when doctors had few therapies to turn to for severely ill people.

This compares to a death rate of 5.8 per cent among those with influenza.

Catherine Quantin, a professor at the University Hospital of Dijon and the French national health institute INSERM who jointly led the study, said the difference in death rates was "particularly striking" given the 2018/19 flu season was the deadliest France had seen in five years.

The authors note that the

difference in the number of hospitalizations - which saw twice as many people admitted for Covid-19 than flu - may be partly explained by existing immunity to influenza, either because of previous infection or vaccination.

Researchers found that more patients with Covid-19 needed intensive care - 16.3 per cent

compared with 10.8 per cent for influenza - while the average stay in ICU was nearly twice as long (15 days compared to 8 days).

The study also reported far fewer children under 18 hospitalized with Covid-19 than with flu - 1.4 per cent compared to 19.5 per cent.

SOURCE: AFP

### Letter to the Editor:

## Sayamagyi Dr Daw Thin Kyi's 'Prediction' of 1970 regarding the governance of the country

Dear Editor

Thank you for publishing a series of articles by various authors regarding the centenary of the establishment of the University of Rangoon (now the University of Yangon).

I would like to mention (in retrospect) a prescient speech (please see below) that was given on the golden jubilee year of 1970 at the fresher welcome ceremony held at the Convocation Hall of the Rangoon Arts and Science University on 1 September 1970.

The then Professor of Geography the late Sayamagyi (respected lady teacher) Dr Daw Thin Kyi welcomed the 'freshers' of RASU in her speech stating that 'if you take the medicine course, you will become mere doctors; if you take engineering course you will become mere engineers, but those who will rule the country have arrived here' (at RASU)! တိုင်းပြည်အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးလုပ်မည့် လူတွေ ဒီတိုရောက်လာတာပဲ

Naturally, inevitably Sayamagyi Dr Daw Thin Kyi's comments received the loudest applause from the gathered students. Fifty years later, I would add that Sayamagyi Dr Daw Thin Kyi's comment, prediction if you like, was (sort of) prescient at least as far as the then freshers from the discipline of law or the law major was concerned.

Mahn Win Khaing Than (born 23 April 1952) (then a first-year law student) over 45 years later became the Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw (the 'Upper House' of the Legislature) in early February 2016. U Tual Kyin Pau, then also a first-year law student is, since April 2016, a member of the Union Constitutional Tribunal. Both of them are currently (mid- December 2020) serving in those posts. In the words of Dr Daw Thin Kyi of 1970, they are 'governing' in fairly high positions of the State hierarchy.

Other RASU graduates, who were freshers in the 1970s and later years I am sure, are also currently involved in the tasks of 'governing' the country in the top executive and legislative branches.

Dr Myint Zan



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2020)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2020:** Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, 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 (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT:** Generally fair in the whole country.

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## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Singapore 'hawker' culture gains UN recognition

ONCE seen as lowly members of Singaporean society, cooks in the city-state's bustling "hawker" centres are rejoicing this week after the United Nations recognized their food as a cultural treasure.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Wednesday approved the country's bid to have its street food included on a list of intangible cultural heritage, which also includes yoga, Chinese calligraphy and flamenco.

"In the past being a hawker was a job that was looked down on, it was seen as a beggar's

business," says Ng Kok Hua, who sells traditional deep-fried delicacies from his small stall.

"And now it's not, now the hawker culture in Singapore is globally recognized."

The city-state is full of open-air food courts where vendors serve delectable -- and cheap -- dishes.

In the same food centre as Ng's stall, for example, you can buy Michelin guide-recommended Hainanese chicken rice for around Sing\$5 (US\$4).

On its website, UNESCO noted that Singapore's diverse population of ethnic Chinese, Malays, Indians and other races

inspired the hawkers' culinary creations.

"Many (hawkers) specialize in a particular dish, refined over many years, and transmit their recipes, knowledge and skills to younger family members or apprentices," it added.

Ng's stall is an example of this -- it was started by his father, according to local media, and is one of the few places in Singapore that still makes "ngoh hiang", beancurd-wrapped rolls of spiced minced meat.

"Hawker culture is something that's not elite, it's of the people so I think it's something that all Singaporeans can cel-



The UN has put Singapore's street food on a list of intangible cultural heritage. **PHOTO: ROSLAN RAHMAN/AFP**

brate," says Pasha Siraj, whose stall serves modern In-

dian cuisine. **SOURCE: AFP**

## HUNDREDS DEFY VIRUS FEARS

## Hundreds shrug off pandemic for Ikea's new India store



Ikea's newest Indian store, on the outskirts of Mumbai, which comes two years after its first outlet opened in the southern city of Hyderabad. **PHOTO: PUNIT PARANJPE/AFP**

HUNDREDS of masked shoppers defied pandemic fears to visit Ikea's second Indian store, which opened Friday, as the Swedish giant tries to lure the country's burgeoning middle class with minimalist design and a dash of local masala.

The company is betting big on the vast but complex mar-

ket of 1.3 billion people, mixing Swedish functionality with locally sourced Indian wares. Its latest store, on the outskirts of Mumbai, comes two years after its first outlet opened in the southern city of Hyderabad, but amid vastly changed circumstances with social distancing norms requiring customers to register in advance

before visiting.

With an area equivalent to 10 football fields, the new flagship houses a 1,000-seater restaurant as well as the largest children's section of any Ikea store worldwide and can accommodate up to 10,000 people.

For the foreseeable future however, only about 2,500 customers will be allowed to visit daily.

"It has been beyond our expectations," deputy store manager Preeti Budhraj told AFP, saying customer slots for the next two weeks were already filled.

The canteen serves Ikea's signature meatballs but without beef or pork in deference to local religious practice, as well as local favourites such as biryani.

With coronavirus cases nearing 10 million in India -- but with economic activity returning to normal -- Ikea plans to open two smaller stores in the financial capital by the end of next year.

**SOURCE: AFP**

## SICHUAN

## China to start opening vaccination programme to general public

CHINA plans to start opening its vaccination programme to members of the public in southwestern Sichuan province early next year, health officials said, despite the inoculations not yet receiving official approval.

At least one million people have already received a jab in China after vaccine candidates were approved for "emergency use", but so far they have been limited to priority groups such as state employees and international students. China has five coronavirus vaccines in the final stages of development -- but none has received official approval from authorities and the results of late-stage trials have yet to be published.

A provincial health official told local media that vaccines will be provided to the general public in Sichuan after the

Lunar New year holidays in February.

Officials said Thursday that 118,000 vaccine doses had arrived in the province so far, with plans to inoculate all high-risk groups by February 5 before rolling out the programme to the rest of the population.

They did not specify who developed the vaccines.

Sichuan is the first province to outline a timeline of its vaccination plans for the general public. The coronavirus -- which first emerged in China late last year -- has largely been brought under control in the country, but there have been a series of domestic outbreaks.

Sichuan has been hit by a small cluster of Covid-19 cases in recent weeks, with one more virus infection reported Friday.

**SOURCE: AFP**

## COVAX FACILITY

## Covid-19 vaccine delivery to poor countries to start in early 2021: WHO

THE World Health Organization and partners said Friday that the Covax facility, created to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines worldwide, expected to begin delivering jabs early next year. Announcing the agency

had secured nearly two billion doses of vaccine candidates, the WHO said in a statement that this would "enable all participating economies to have access to doses in the first half of 2021, with first deliveries anticipated to

begin in the first quarter of 2021."

"The light at the end of the tunnel has grown a little bit brighter," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference.

**SOURCE: AFP**



A doctor volunteer receives injection of the adenovirus vector vaccine in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, April 12, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**



THE LOW-COST LONG-HAUL AIRLINE SECTOR

## Shareholders back Norwegian Air rescue plan

SHAREHOLDERS of struggling low-cost airline Norwegian Air Shuttle on Thursday backed a rescue plan that includes debt conversion, a new share issue and reduction of the fleet.

Hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on travel, having already been in financial trouble before, Norwegian recently applied for bankruptcy protection in both Ireland and Norway, in order to buy time to work out a solution with its creditors.

In early December, the company's management presented a plan to stay afloat involving a large-scale conversion of debt into equity, a new rights issue to raise up to four billion Norwegian kroner (€381 million), and the selling of an unspecified number of aircraft.

During an extraordinary general meeting on Thursday,

shareholders overwhelmingly agreed to back the plan, granting management the mandate to begin negotiations with creditors.

The company, a pioneer in the low-cost long haul sector, has been in the red since 2017 and its debt amounted to 48.5 billion kroner at the end of September, in part the result of major expansion by the company.

Just six of the 140 aircraft it had in service at the start of the year are still flying, on Norwegian domestic routes, while only 600 employees among a formerly 10,000-strong payroll are still at work.

Shares in Norwegian were up over 10 per cent after lunch on the Oslo Stock Exchange, though over the past year, they have lost 98 per cent of their value.

SOURCE: AFP



Just six of the airline's 140 planes are currently still flying. PHOTO: NICOLAS ECONOMOU / NURPHOTO / AFP

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FAILING

## Sweden struggles under second virus wave

DESPITE a sharper tone from authorities and new restrictions, Sweden, which has famously relied on non-coercive measures, is struggling to contain a strong second wave of Covid-19 it thought it could avoid.

The capital Stockholm is once again at the epicentre of the epidemic and this week called on members of the public with medical training to help offset some of the burden on healthcare.

Lars Falk, a doctor at an intensive care unit at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, told AFP the second wave had hit much harder than they expected.

"We got three different scenarios from the Public Health Agency this summer. We prepared for the worst, and it turned out twice as bad," Falk told AFP. While the Swedish capital is the worst-hit region in the country, many others are also seeing resources stretched thin. On Monday, the number of people receiving hospital care reached 2,406, near the peak of 2,412 on April 20.

For now, the number of people in intensive care is still only at half the level seen in April, according to Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare.

SOURCE: AFP

AMID FOURTH WAVE

## New virus restrictions threaten Hong Kong's last true junk boat



The Dukling's management says authorities have showed a 'lack of caring' for companies like theirs, because they are excluded from public subsidies. PHOTO: AFP

THE red sails of the "Dukling" junk boat have glided across Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour for more than six decades.

But the wooden ship has been docked after new measures to stem a fourth wave of the coronavirus were introduced earlier this month, threatening the city's last remaining antique junk.

Strict social distancing rules were brought back after daily cases repeatedly spiked to more than 100, their highest levels since July. Authorities also vowed to ramp up policing of gatherings at private properties and on boats, setting up a ded-

icated hotline for the public to report any breaches.

"In the near future, it is very difficult for us to stay alive," Charlotte Li, Dukling Limited's director of business development, told AFP. The boat requires at least four workers to operate on the water but two resigned during the pandemic over slashed wages, leaving the Dukling short on numbers. "We have to follow and obey the law. But how can we maintain the staff and their families?" Li said.

Li said she felt authorities showed a "lack of caring" for small private companies after

excluding attractions like the Dukling boat from public coronavirus subsidies handed out to travel agencies, tour guides and big parks. Ocean Park, an ageing theme park that was making losses even before the pandemic struck, has received billions from a government bailout.

"I know the government can't help everyone, but in the tourism industry they need to think more globally," she said.

Junks date back to the Han Dynasty (221-206 BC) and were traditionally used for fishing and transport.

SOURCE: AFP

TESTING STRATEGY

## Latvia pioneers automated virus test centre



The automated centre hands out testing kits with a robot arm and then collects the samples. PHOTO: AFP

LATVIA is pioneering an automated coronavirus testing station that can operate around the clock and virtually eliminate the risk of infection during the screening

process, organizers told AFP on Wednesday.

The machine -- a blue box roughly two metres high and one metre wide -- has tested rough-

ly 500 students and staff since it opened last week at the Pauls Stradies Clinical University Hospital in Riga.

Created by three Riga-based companies, the machine is initially to be used by university hospital employees but the firms are aiming to manufacture more units for other institutions in the capital and rural areas with limited access to testing.

"People who might be infected can avoid contact with medical staff or others at the hospital or our labs, eliminating the risk that they might inadvertently let the infection spread further," said Dr Didzis Gavars, chief scientist at the E. Gulbja Laboratory, one of the developers of the station.

SOURCE: AFP



'JUST A FEW HOURS' LEFT

## Brexit trade talks enter desperate 'final hours'

BRITISH and EU negotiators plunged into the "final hours" of their scramble for a post-Brexit trade deal Friday, deeply divided on the highly-charged issue of fishing rights.

The UK will leave the EU single market in less than two weeks and time has all but run out for any agreement to be approved in time to head off a severe economic shock.

The European Parliament has demanded that it see the text of any accord by Sunday at the latest, and the UK government says it will not allow talks to go beyond December 31.

Brussels' chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier told the MEPs before heading to talks with his UK counterpart David Frost that Friday marked a "moment of truth".

"We have very little time remaining, just a few hours to work through these negotiations... if you want this agreement to enter into force on January 1."

Britain left the European Union on January 31 and will leave the EU single market on December 31 at midnight, with or without a follow-on accord.



Barnier briefed the European Parliament before heading into the "final hours" of trade talks with his UK counterpart. **PHOTO: AFP**

### Last call?

Without a trade deal, cross-Channel trade will be conducted on basic WTO rules and a market built over 47 years of economic integration will be disrupted by tariffs on goods. Late on Thursday, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and EU chief Ursula

von der Leyen held talks by phone that failed to break the logjam in the eight-month-old negotiation.

After the call, a Downing Street spokesperson said: "The prime minister underlined that the negotiations were now in a serious situation."

**SOURCE: AFP**

WITH HISTORIC PICKS

## Biden taps Haaland as first Native American to run Interior



Congresswoman Deb Haaland is Joe Biden's pick to run the Department of the Interior -- she would be the first Native American in the role. **PHOTO: MARK RALSTON AFP/FILE**

US President-elect Joe Biden unveiled his environment team Thursday, choosing congresswoman Deb Haaland to serve as the first Native American interior secretary and Jennifer Granholm, a former Michigan governor, as energy secretary.

He also nominated Michael

Regan, a North Carolina environmental regulator who is Black and brokered the nation's largest coal ash cleanup, to be administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The choices fit with Biden's much-publicized pledge to form the most diverse White House

cabinet in history.

"This brilliant, tested, trail-blazing team will be ready on day one to confront the existential threat of climate change with a unified national response rooted in science and equity," Biden said in a statement.

Haaland is a first-term Democratic congresswoman from New Mexico and a member of the Laguna Pueblo people. If confirmed by the Senate, she would become the first Native American to lead a cabinet-level department.

The Interior Department is a vast agency of more than 70,000 employees overseeing the country's natural resources, including national parks, and oil and gas drilling sites, as well as tribal lands -- home to 578 federally recognized tribes.

**SOURCE: AFP**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 2017 DEATH

#### Former mayor arrested for 'complicity' in Mexican journalist's murder

A former mayor from northern Mexico's Chihuahua state was arrested Thursday for "complicity" in the 2017 murder of journalist Miroslava Breach, authorities said. A Chihuahua court "has succeeded in establishing the probable responsibility" of Hugo Amed Shultz, former mayor of Chinipas, for having "sought and provided information to an organized crime group which ordered and carried out the murder," the prosecutor's office said in a statement without providing further details.

**SOURCE: AFP**

#### Biden to save U.S. billions by abandoning Trump Wall

PRESIDENT-ELECT Joe Biden would save about USD 2.6 billion for the U.S. government if he halts the construction of the border wall, according to the U.S. Army corps of Engineers. The Washington Post (The Post) has reported Biden told reporters during the summer that he would not build "another foot" of the border barriers which the incumbent U.S. President Donald Trump promised. The wall construction was one of the most expensive federal infrastructure projects in the country's history.

**SOURCE: ANI**

### JAILED TURKISH PHILANTHROPIST

#### Turkey's jailed rights leader Kavala faces new trial



The trial is seen by rights groups as a bellwether on the state of freedom of expression under Erdogan. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

TURKISH civil society leader Osman Kavala appeared Friday by video link before an Istanbul court on charges that rights groups view as part of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's effort to stifle dissent.

The 63-year-old social crusader's trial comes as the constitutional court mulls whether his detention -- ongoing without a conviction for more than three years -- is lawful.

US academic Henri Barkey is being tried in absentia alongside Kavala in a case linked to the 2016 failed coup attempt against Erdogan.

"I have opposed military coups my entire life and have criticized the army's interference in politics," Kavala told the presiding judge as his wife Ayse Bugra looked on in the courtroom.

"These (accusations) are in stark contrast to my worldview and ethical values."

Rights groups view Kavala's fate as a bellwether on the state of freedom of expression under Erdogan -- a strong-willed leader who has ruled Turkey as prime minister and president since 2003.

The Parisian-born businessman was a founding member of philanthropist George Soros's Open Society Foundation in Turkey and headed a group that promoted cross-cultural ties through the arts at the time of his arrest.

**SOURCE: AFP**



OVERSEAS INVESTORS

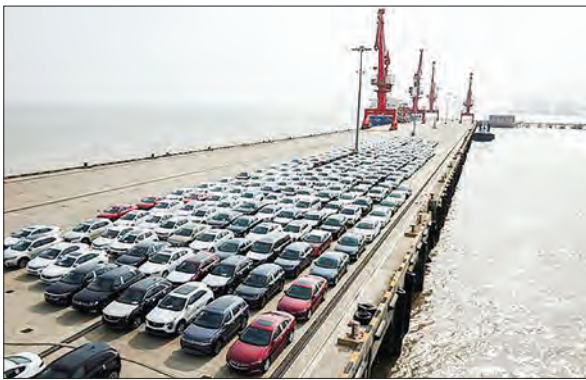
## Shanghai's foreign investment rises 6.8 pct in Jan.-Nov.

SHANGHAI saw accelerated foreign investment growth in the first 11 months of this year as overseas investors looked to cash in on business opportunities.

The actualized use of foreign investment in Shanghai rose 6.8 per cent year on year to 19.04 billion U.S. dollars in the January-November period, the Shanghai Foreign Investment Association said on Thursday.

The increase during the period accelerated from the 6.2 per cent growth in the January-October period.

Shanghai will further expand its opening-up and strive to provide better, more convenient and more efficient services to help foreign businesses share the development opportunities in the city, said Shang Yuying, deputy secretary-general of the Shanghai municipal government. *SOURCE: Xinhua*



Aerial photo taken on June 27, 2019 shows new cars waiting for shipment at a port in the Lingang area in Shanghai, east China. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FANG ZHE/FILE**

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**A CHINA-EUROPE FREIGHT TRAIN**

#### Turkey's first China-bound exports cargo train crosses border

A China-Europe freight train from Turkey entered China Thursday via Horgos Port in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the local customs said. The cargo train is Turkey's first for exports to China, which departed Istanbul on Dec. 4 and is bound for the northwestern Chinese city of Xi'an. It is scheduled to arrive at its final destination on Saturday, covering a distance of 8,693 km. The train is carrying 1,383 refrigerators worth about 10.4 million yuan (about 1.59 million U.S. dollars).

*SOURCE: Xinhua*

**A POST-BREXIT TRADE DEAL**

#### UK to do 'everything' to secure good trade deal with EU: senior official

BRITISH Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove said Thursday that the British government "will be doing everything" to secure a good post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union (EU).

"Even if sometimes results are coming later than we might have wanted, I know we will be doing everything in order to secure a good free trade agreement in the interest of the whole United Kingdom," Gove told MPs in the House of Commons, lower house of the British parliament. Gove told the lawmakers that they could be called back from their Christmas break to approve a deal if one is agreed between the two sides.

The British government would "request that the House returns in order to make sure that we can legislate effectively," he said. The House of Commons is due to break up for Christmas later on Thursday.

*SOURCE: Xinhua*

DEMAND FOR SAFE ASSETS

## S.Korea's foreign currency deposit hits record high in November



South Korea's foreign currency deposit hit a record high last month due to solid demand for safe assets, caused by the COVID-19 resurgence here, central bank data showed Friday. **FILE PHOTO/AFP**

SOUTH KOREA'S foreign currency deposit hit a record high last month due to solid demand for safe assets, caused by the COVID-19 resurgence here, central bank data showed Friday.

Deposit, denominated in foreign currencies,

reached a fresh high of 93.61 billion U.S. dollars as of end-November, up 0.29 billion dollars from a month earlier, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

The deposit refers to the one owned by local residents, including locals and local companies as well as foreign firms and foreigners who have stayed here for at least six months.

Demand increased for safe assets, especially among individuals, amid the COVID-19 resurgence. The daily number of COVID-19 infections hovered above 100 since Nov. 8.

The foreign currency deposit, possessed by individuals, expanded 0.43 billion dollars from a month earlier to 19.02 billion dollars at the end of November, while the companies-owned deposit shed 0.14 billion dollars to 74.59 billion dollars.

The dollar-denominated deposit reduced 0.46 billion dollars to 79.86 billion dollars in the cited period, but deposits in the Chinese yuan, the European currency and the Japanese yen increased to 1.68 billion dollars, 4.5 billion dollars and 5.33 billion dollars respectively.

*SOURCE: Xinhua*

STRIKING A BALANCE

## Regulators in some Asian nations scaling back support for borrowers

AS the coronavirus pandemic drags on, regulators in ASEAN and India are facing a need to strike a balance between continuing to support some borrowers and weaning others off debt relief measures introduced at the onset of outbreak, according to Moody's Investors Service.

Authorities in the region are opting to rollback support for borrowers in phases instead of immediately. This will help prevent a spike in non-performing loans (NPLs) by giving both borrowers and banks



The most common among programmes introduced at the outset of the pandemic to support borrowers are loan moratorium, and they have or will soon be phased out in most countries in the region. **PHOTO: ANI**

more time to cope with the impact of the pandemic.

"Regulators are gradually scaling back various support measures for borrowers to ease them

back into loan repayment," said Moody's in a sector in-depth report.

The most common among programmes introduced at the outset of the pandemic to support borrowers are loan moratorium, and they have or will soon be phased out in most countries in the region.

In place of loan moratorium, regulators are encouraging banks to restructure loans to accommodate borrowers' reduced debt repayment capacity. *SOURCE: ANI*

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1038W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1038W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-12-2020** 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 OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS (S'PORE) PTE LTD**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1129S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1129S/N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE LTD**





Stone lids of reliquary found from Khin Ba mound.

# Khin Ba Mound

## in Sri Kestra

By Maung Tha  
(Archaeology)

(Translated by  
Than Tun Aung)

**SRI KESTRA**, the largest in three ancient Pyu cities recognized as the world heritage sites by UNESCO in Myanmar, is five miles east of Pyay in Bago Region. It is located at 18° 75' north latitude and 95° 25' east longitude.

There remain many stupas and temples with trails of evidence in Pyu era including Khin Ba and Matheekya mounds in ancient Sri Kestra city.

### Khin Ba mound

Khin Ba mound takes a position near Thay-awady Gate in the southeast of the royal palace area in ancient Sri Kestra city, about 200 feet southwest of Kalakan Village. Title of the mound was based on owner of the area U Khin Ba.

Superintendent of archaeological survey Mr. Duroiselle and party excavated a cubic shape reliquary on Khin Ba mound in 1926 and found more than 500 ancient objects in 68 items including 20 gold palm-leaves. Among them, two stone lids in good condition of reliquary, a stone plaque in three pieces, a round silver casket in the shape of Bawdi throne and gold, silver and bronze Buddha images. Some of them were displayed at Thiri

Khittaya museum in Sri Kestra.

Works of pagoda and Buddha reliefs on the lids were different from each other. The first stone lid bore bodies of five slim and soft Buddha images. The second one featured the chubby Buddha images.

The first stone lid was originally used in construction of the building on Khin Ba Mound. The second one might be used in renovation between 6th and 7th centuries, U Kyaw Myo Win, Deputy Director of Sri Kestra Section from Department of Archaeology and National Museum, reviewed.

After reconstructing the building of Khin Ba mound, religious objects were enshrined. The relief on the first stone lid was that of original pagoda, and another relief on the second lid shaped the renovated pagoda. The two can be seen at Thiri Khittaya museum.

The Department of Archaeology excavated Khin Ba mound in 1964 for conducting research. In the 2011-12 fiscal year, the department cooperated with Lerici Foundation from Italy in maintenance of Khin Ba mound, carrying out detail recording. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, further excavation was undertaken on Khin Ba mound where new trails evidences in Pyu era were found.

### 20 gold palm leaves

A total of 20 gold palm leaves found from the reliquary of building on Khin Ba mound were 6.5 inches long and 1.25 inches wide each. These layers were covered by one gold leaf in same size on



Baked earthen relief unearthed from Khin Ba mound.



either side and bound by gold string. 22 gold leaves weighed 23 ticals, 14 pe and two yway in total.

Excerpts from Tri Pitakat treatises were expressed on gold palm leaves in the Pyu Language. The inscriptions found on ancient objects taken from Sri Kestra could be roughly divided into Pyu language and Pitakat literature. Pitakat literature was excerpts from Tri Pitakat treatises such as Suttanta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma preached by the Lord Buddha. Pyu literature was the literature carved in Pyu language, said U Sein Maung Oo, who excavated ancient Sri Kestra city.

Scholars conducted researches on gold palm leaves. U Lu Pe Win wrote the research paper on gold palm leaves from Khin Ba mound in the Myanmar Archaeological Research Report (1938-1939). Director of Culture Department U Tha Myat conducted the research in 1963 and Professor Daw Than Swe of Myanmar Language published the book on photos of Pyu language on gold palm leaves from Khin Ba mound and the book on studies in the Pyu Language on Khin Ba's gold palm leaves in 1991.

The first to the 18<sup>th</sup> gold palm leaves bore three lines of inscriptions, the 19<sup>th</sup> gold palm leaf four lines and the 20<sup>th</sup>, two lines, totalling 60.

U Sein Maung Oo remarked that the manuscripts on the gold palm leaves were similar to ancient Telagu Kanati alphabets used in southern India while Thiri Pyanchi U Mya expressed his reviews in the paper on the ancient Myanmar alphabets, saying that these gold palm leaves might be used between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The record posted in Khin Ba mound stated that the alphabets written on gold palm leaves were Pyu alphabets derived from Bramahi alphabet used by Ishawaku dynasty of southern India.

**Silver Bawdi throne-shaped casket**

The Bawdi throne shaped hollow silver casket, 72.5 centimetres high, found from Khin Ba mound, was made of four sitting Buddha images embossed on the lotus thrones around the Bo tree. Scholars assumed such silver casket was slightly later than gold palm leaves. The Buddha images were in Bhumi Phassa Mudra, and each disciple monk was in shape of standing among two Buddha images.

Titles of four already enlightened Buddha images were impressed on the brim of the upper lid and names of disciples and donor names on the lower brim.

Two remaining attributes of the Lord Buddha were written behind Gotama Buddha title on the casket. So, gold palm leaves and silver Bawdi casket found from Khin Ba mound were evidences of Pyu ethnics in their faith of Buddhism.

The seminar of scholars which took place at the Cambridge University of England in 1995 accepted gold palm leaves from Khin Ba mound as the works in early 5<sup>th</sup> century AD or mid-5<sup>th</sup> century AD. So, these objects became the most ancient among the evidences of Pali literature found across the world.

Professor Daw Than Swe reviewed



Religious objects excavated from Khin Ba mound.

“Gold palm leaves from Khin Ba mound express in-depth knowledge of Pyu people from the 5<sup>th</sup> century in religious affairs and wonderful arrangements”. As Pali alphabets on gold palm leaves were excerpts from Tri Pitakat treatises such as Suttanta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma, it was assumed that Pyu people thoroughly knew Pitakat literature. It proved that

would be Shin Sariputtara in the future. Maung Kyaw Nyein from Kyuntawsu Village found a gold palm leaf bearing excerpts of Pitakat treatises in Sri Kestra in 1928. Attributes of the Lord Buddha such as Itipiso Bhagava was impressed on the palm leaf. But, the palm leaf was broken into pieces with losing the right top part. Alphabets on the palm leaf were

worn with girdle with fringe. Right hand of the relief was in shape of giving something to a person with shut eyes while a child from the relief was stretching its hand to demand something. The relief's ears did not touch the shoulders, so it was assumed the relief was made in Pyu era.

A baked earthen lotus flower in circular shape was excavated from Khin



Gold leaves from Khin Ba mound.



Baked earthen lotus shape circular excavated from Khin Ba mound.

Theravada Pitakat treatises had been in Myanmar since flourishing of Pyu culture before Bagan era.

In 1897, Superintendent of stone inscription Dr E. Mil Forchhammer found two gold palm leaves on which excerpts from Pitakat literature were expressed in ancient alphabets similar to that of gold palm leaves from Khin Ba mound, from Maungkan mound near Lepaw Village in ancient Sri Kestra city, and these were called Maungkan gold palm leaves.

Maungkan gold palm leaves bore three lines each of inscriptions, both of which were expressed with excerpts of Pali literature starting from “Yedhamma Hetuppabhava”. Scholars estimated these inscriptions might be written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The alphabets on Maungkan gold palm leaves were similar to that of Khin Ba mound gold palm leaves.

It can be reviewed that Pyu people believed in Theravada Buddhism as Yedhamma Hetuppabhava Gatha which was summary of the Desana of Lord Buddha was preached by Shin Assaji to Upatissa which

not beautiful and neat.

**Baked earthen relief on Khin Ba mound**

Engineering staff from Sri Kestra section found a broken baked earthen relief in the shape of woman head with beautiful face in Khin Ba mound in 2015. Such relief was cleansed by experts from Italy. Afterwards, a ray circle around the head and headdress, crown and decorated frontlet on forehead were clearly found. A place of the single strand of hair between two eyebrows was found on the face but it was not clear what kind of image was indicated.

In carrying out excavation on Khin Ba mound starting from 11 October 2016, broken pieces of baked earthen reliefs were found from the southern brick walls. In connecting with the previous head relief, a good relief emerged. The relief was 1.75 feet long and 2 feet and 10 inches wide.

The standing woman of relief did not have developed breasts but her both arms were worn with braces. The relief was

Ba mound. Similar object of silverware was also unearthed in excavation of Khin Ba mound in 1926. Both objects were the same.

The evidence was found on Khin Ba mound where objects and reliefs created in religions were enshrined in the religious edifices in line with OUV No 2 set as world heritage sites.

However, 20 gold palm leaves bearing excerpts of Buddhist literature and excerpts from Pitakat treatises proved flourishing of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Kestra.

As such, Sri Kestra and Khin Ba mound where a great deal of cultural evidence of Pyu people were found catch attentions of scholars and researchers.

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# Yadanabon striker Aung Thu joins Buriram United



Myanmar star striker Aung Thu is seen with the uniform of Buriram FC. **PHOTO: BURIRAM FC**

AUNG THU, a star striker of the Myanmar National League Club Yadanabon FC, has officially joined the Thai League Club Buriram FC with a transfer fee of USD50,000, according to a statement of the Buriram FC.

“Aung Thu joined Thai League One club Buriram this week. Some of the terms of the contract are not the same as the previous ones as our team sold Aung Thu with a transfer fee of US\$50,000 to the Buriram FC,” said U Atar Oo, Manager of the Yadanabon Football Club.

However, the details of Aung Thu and Buriram’s contract are not yet known, Yadanabon FC football authorities added.

The 25-year-old Myanmar striker is now joining some activities in the Buriram FC, which is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the Thai League One.

Aung Thu represented Myanmar national teams of under-17, under-20, under-23, and senior-level team. Representing Myanmar U-20 team at the FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2015, Aung Thu scored his debut goal against New Zealand.

The young Myanmar striker was noted for his powerful football skills exceptionally long shots and high speed in the FIFA technical study book of the 2015 U-20 World Cup, FIFA authorities stated.

Last year, Aung Thu also played for Thai clubs Police Tero and Muangthong United. The current Buriram team is his third Thai club.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

## Inter target top spot as leaders AC Milan face Sassuolo test

MILAN—Inter Milan target top spot in Serie A on Sunday at home against promoted Spezia as league leaders AC Milan face a tricky trip to Sassuolo. Inter are just one point behind their city rivals after picking up a fifth consecutive league win against Napoli midweek. Antonio Conte’s side have gained four points on Milan in the last two league games with their focus now on a first league title since 2010 after their European exit. “It makes me smile when an obligation is talked about,” said Conte of the pressure to deliver the ‘Scudetto’ to save Inter’s season. “There are many teams who want to be protagonists. They start with the aim of trying to win, but, in the end, only one does. —AFP ■

## eSports becomes medal event at 2022 Asian Games

HONG KONG—eSports has been named as a full medal event for the 2022 Asian Games, in a major step towards the mainstream for a sport that has long harboured Olympic ambitions.

eSports and breakdancing were both included on the programme for the Games in Hangzhou, China, at the Olympic Council of Asia’s general assembly in Muscat this week.

“I hope that electronic sports will add value to the Asian Games — and I am sure it will in the future, during the Asian Games 2022 and even beyond that,” the OCA’s Asian Games director, Haider Farman, said in a statement on Friday.

eSports was a popular demonstration event at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, and a medal sport at last year’s Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines. Efforts to include eSports in the Olympics have so far faltered, but the coronavirus pandemic appeared to trigger a shift this year as organizers explored new ideas.

In April, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach called for the movement to “urgently” investigate electronic versions of sports and to approach game publishers. —AFP ■



In this March 3, 2019 photo, online gamers compete at the ESL Katowice Royale Featuring Fortnite Tournament during the Intel Extreme Masters Katowice 2019 event in Katowice, Poland. **PHOTO: BARTOSZ SIEDLIK / AFP**

## Lewandowski and Bronze win FIFA player of the year awards



FIFA President Gianni Infantino (C-L) appears on a screen awarding “The Best” men’s player award to Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski. **PHOTO: VALERIANO DI DOMENICO POOL/AFP**

PARIS—Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski was named men’s player of the year on Thursday at FIFA’s “The Best” awards ceremony in Zurich.

The 32-year-old Lewandowski, top scorer in Europe and winner of the Champions League with Bayern, came out ahead of the other two nominees, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. England defender Lucy Bronze took the women’s award, seeing off the challenge of Wendie Renard and Pernille

Harder.

It is the first occasion for both Lewandowski and Bronze to win the award, with the Pole only the second player after Luka Modric in 2018 to break a 13-year Messi-Ronaldo hegemony. Lewandowski’s stellar season for all-conquering Bayern has already been recognised by UEFA who awarded the Polish striker European player of the year in October. While he has won the Bundesliga in each of his first six seasons at Bayern, finishing as

the league’s top scorer in four of the last five seasons, his international profile has been hurt in the past by Poland’s mediocre form and his previous failure, at Dortmund and Bayern, to win the Champions League. Last season, he was spectacular as Bayern won every game in Europe including the Champions League final against Paris St-Germain. Lewandowski finished with 15 goals in the competition, five more than the next best striker, Erling Braut Haaland. —AFP ■