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## GTI celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with virtual message from State Counsellor

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a video address at the virtual opening ceremony of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GTI Education yesterday morning. (The congratulatory speech of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is covered on page-3.)

The Insein GTI, the earliest school of Myanmar's 12 GTIs, was established on 1 April, 1895 as a Government Engineering School in Latha Township in Yangon. So, the GTI will turn 125 years old on 1 April 2020.

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Ministers from ministries related to the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, the Permanent Secretary and Directors General from the Ministry of Education, TVET Stakeholders; heads of Govern-



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers the virtual message to the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary online celebration of GTI. PHOTO: MNA

GTI education has been contributing to the development of vocational skills which is indispensable for our country's socio-economic development.  
State Counsellor

ment Technological College (GTC), Government Technical Institute (GTI), Technology High Schools and vocational schools; government officials, teachers, students, alumni of GTIs; winners of writing contests and guests participated in the virtual ceremony via online.

During the ceremony, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi said that 6 three-year AGTI diploma courses have been provided and created employment opportunities for the students. The three-year diploma courses have now been provided in a total of 28 schools: three GTCs and 25 GTIs.

He said that a vocational training programme named Professional Training Kitchen has been conducted at the Insein GTI as a Dual Appren-

ticeship system in collaboration with the Swisscontact and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The Myanmar UNEVOC Centre could be established in December 2018 at Insein GTI with the support of the United Nations Centre for Technical and Vocational Education (UNEVOC), according to the Union Minister. So, Myanmar can take part in regional TVET research and development activities, TVET workshops and research paper reading sessions.

From 2018, "Skills Competition and Innovation Award"

ceremonies are held to mark the World Youth Skills Day, according to the Union Minister.

The Ministry of Education is developing a National Education Strategic Plan (2021-2030) and cooperating with all stakeholders to develop strategies and programmes for the technical and vocational education sector.

The Union Minister said that human resources development plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the country, so the GTIs,

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ment Technological College (GTC), Government Technical Institute (GTI), Technology

High Schools and vocational schools; government officials, teachers, students, alumni of

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## 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

## GTI celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with virtual message from State Counsellor

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which nurture and train technicians, have a very important role in the development of the country. He continued that the Ministry of Education has set five goals for the sustainable development of the GTIs.

The Union Minister called on all GTI officials and students to maintain the great image of the Insein GTI, which has been celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He also requested the officials to boost the vocational sector, to link schools and factories or businesses, and to increase cooperation with international development partners in order to achieve continuous success.

Then, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein said



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi delivers the virtual message to the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary online celebration of GTI. PHOTO: MNA

that the government has opened many vocational schools. He continued that Insein GTI is a major milestone of Myanmar's vocational education system, and many graduates from Insein GTI are playing an important role in various engineering fields in Myanmar.

The Yangon Region Chief Minister continued that he wishes to see more schools like GTI in Myanmar for vocational training.

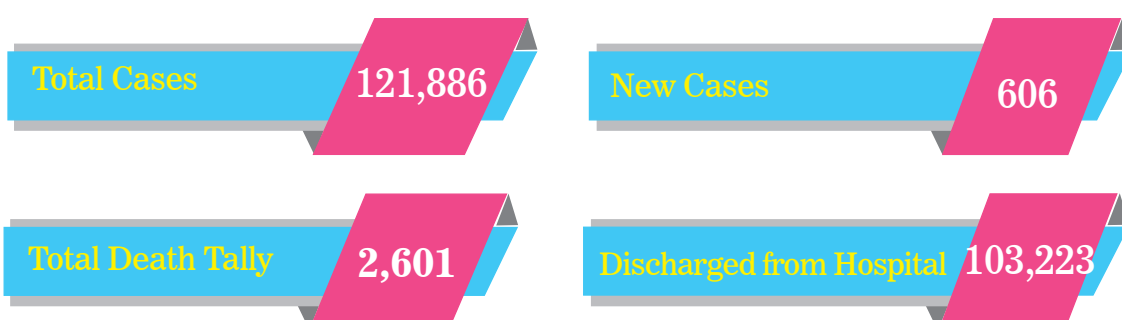
Next, by using Virtual Studio, prizes were virtually presented to the winners of cartoon, poetry, short story and essay contests marking the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

## 606 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 27 December, total figure rises to 121,886

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 121,886 after 606 new cases were reported on 27 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 121,886 confirmed cases, 2,601 died, 103,223 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 27 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 27-12-2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

## The socio-economic life of the people can develop only if the country's vocational education level is truly developed: State Counsellor

Following is the full-text of the virtual message delivered by State Counsellor to occasion of 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GTI education.

It gives me great satisfaction and much delight to have this opportunity to speak at today's ceremony to celebrate the 125 anniversary of GTI education which has been contributing to the development of vocational skills which is indispensable for our country's socio-economic development.

Insein GTI came into existence as a Government Engineering School on 1 April 1895 at 297 Myoma Street, Latha Township. It is also one among the 12 engineering schools that were established; it was the first among them.

In 1898 it was moved to where the Department of Veterinary Medicine now stands in front of the Insein railway station. After that ten years later in 1908, the school was moved to its present location at Insein (Ywama) under the name of "Government School of Engineering and Technical High School". In 1912 the name was changed to "Government Technical Institute" and began teaching vocational education subjects.

During the colonial period, according to records, a Burmese gentleman by the name of U Ba Hli served as principal.

After that during the period of Japanese occupation, the name GTI was changed to "State Technical Institute - STI"; its location was moved to the Rangoon General Hospital compound and thereafter at the end of the colonial period on 15 August 1945 it was moved to No. 6 Churchill road (now Komin Kochin road).

During the end of the post war period, it was moved to its former location to the Insein (Ywama) GTI building; during the AFPFL period it was moved to the Gujarati school building on U Wisara road; after that in 1950 it was moved again to its former location at Insein (Ywama) GTI. This is thus the history its various location changes. From the date of its inception on 1 April 1895 to 1 April 2020, it is now 125 years.

The GTI which was reopened at its original location in 1950 received technical and financial assistance and technical experts from the Commonwealth countries under the Colombo Plan. Efforts were also



initiated to send GTI teachers abroad to upgrade their professional skills and competencies.

In 1954 under the programme of the Ford Foundation from America, technical assistance was received from the "William Hood Dunwoody Industrial Institute of Minneapolis, U.S.A. to provide assistance to four foreign technical experts; it was also able to send state scholars for administrative and substantive subjects.

the continuous development of Insein GTI schools has become increasingly important day by day and has assumed an important role. It is very important to join hands and work together for the emergence of vocational schools with levels of expertise which not only match South East-Asian standards but also international standards.

For our country to become modern and developed, all students attending technical and

the country beginning from the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GTI education. Furthermore, we also need to work for providing courses which correspond with local needs; for this we need to build new schools systematically. To be able to implement these kinds of programmes with sound footing and effectiveness, we are already implementing strategic programmes systematically.

Since the Yangon Heritage Trust has already officially recognized important historical buildings and artifacts important for the Insein GTI, we need to continue working relentlessly for their preservation by keeping these matters always in our minds.

Since we are transforming the Insein GTI, which is steeped in tradition, into a TVET campus which will become a hub for technical and vocational education, the Union Government has been providing financial assistance annually from the government budget for basic buildings and modern teaching aids. Also for capacity building in the areas of management and teaching skills, we are cooperating with local organizations such as UMFCFI - Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, AGTI Society, and foreign entities such as GTZ from Germany, KfW, and Swiss-contact from Switzerland for upgrading the skills and competencies of teachers from tech-

In building a modern and developed Democratic Federal Union, it is very important for the GTI schools to be of high quality in order to produce highly qualified technical professionals, professionals and technicians.

Beginning from Insein GTI, technical institutes were opened all over the country (Mandalay, Kalaw, Pyay, Chauk, Mawlamyine, Hinthada, Taungoo, Monywa, Meikhtila, Maupin, Thanhlyin) for providing technical education and training.

In building a modern and developed Democratic Federal Union, it is very important for the GTI schools to be of high quality in order to produce highly qualified technical professionals, professionals and technicians. The socio-economic life of the people can develop only if the country's vocational education level is truly developed. It is for this reason that

nical and vocational schools, demonstrators and administrative personnel. To upgrade the skills and competencies of GTI students, practical skills competitions were successfully held to commemorate the World Youth Skills Day at Insein GTI beginning from 2018.

The Myanmar UNEVOC was established with financial assistance from UNEVOC in December 2018 at Insein GTI. Work is being done at the regional level on research and development; TVET related workshops and seminars have also been conducted.

Five objectives were adopted to successfully work for the long-term development of GTI's as a result of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GTI Education. These five objectives are: -

To be able to enter the work force in a short period with adequate knowledge and skills and with full commitment after completing basic education;

To train and produce supervisory level professionals who will meet regional industrial needs;

To contact and network with industrial enterprises to provide opportunities for good jobs;

To create opportunities for receiving vocational training, opportunities to receive advanced education, and opportunities for life-long learning;

To reduce the urban-rural development gap and to elevate the socio-economic life of the people.

In conclusion I wish to say that Insein GTI which gave birth to GTI Education on 1 April 1895 has completed 125 years on 1 April 2020. It has withstood the vicissitudes of time, overcome many daunting challenges and has been able to maintain many good traditions successfully. The Union government, together with other relevant organizations needs to participate and cooperate to transform GTI into an international level vocational education institute. I conclude this speech by sending good wishes for continued success for many years from the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary onwards.

I pray for your good health and well-being. May the GTI's succeed and prosper.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)



## It is important to follow the rules strictly

We are also planning to allow both inbound and outbound flights. It will also be implemented as early as possible. Resumption of flights, transportation and travel are aimed for immediate recovery of development. We will reopen the factories and workshops. The reopening of restaurants will be allowed in the areas without stay-at-home orders in accordance with healthcare rules. Therefore, if people want to be free from restrictions, it is important to follow the rules strictly. Therefore, our people, especially in Yangon, are requested to help the country in the containment of COVID-19. Wishing you good health and well-being.

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

## Myanmar avocado association holds general assembly virtually

MYANMAR Avocado Producer and Exporter Association organized the third Annual General Assembly virtually yesterday.

Speaking at the online meeting, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint said that the ministry was not only promoting free trade in local but also easing trade restrictions for exporters, importers and farmers getting profits and would encourage the development of fruits and vegetable sector and promotion of exports.

He extended congratulations on the good results of exporting avocado samples to UK market and expressed thanks to the organizations like USAID and UKaid for their assistance.

Not only Singapore and China but also UK, Germany and the Netherlands have demands for avocados.

The ministry, in cooperation

with relevant organizations, is making efforts to produce value added products from fruits and to export the value added products.

Despite coronavirus, the ministry is creating markets via internet and commercial attachés, he added, saying that it is necessary to create new markets and to effectively export the products to the existing markets.

Director-General of Agriculture Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Chair of Myanmar Avocado Producer and Exporter Association, and Secretary General of UMFCCI made greeting remarks.

Commercial Attaché from the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore explained about the avocado market, and officials from the association presented their



Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint participates in the third Annual General Assembly of Myanmar Avocado Producer and Exporter Association on 27 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

relevant issues.

The event was also participated in by Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, Per-

manent Secretary and Directors-General, Myanmar Avocado Producer and Exporter Association's Chair and executive mem-

bers, officials, farmers, export companies and experts. —MNA  
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## Myanmar Ambassador visits migrant workers in Mahachai market



Myanmar Ambassador to Thailand holds meeting with Thai authorities on providing necessary assistance for Myanmar migrant workers on 24 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

MYANMAR Ambassador to Thailand and party visited Myanmar migrant workers in Mahachai seafood market in Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand, where the coronavirus outbreak was occurring, on 24 December.

The ambassador and party gave words of encouragement and provided foodstuff to the Myanmar migrant workers and also held meeting with Thai authorities on providing necessary assistance to the migrant workers.

Officials from the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok and labour diplomats have been in contact with the Myanmar migrant workers since 19 December and pro-

vided necessary assistance.

During the meeting with Samut Sakhon Province's authorities, the ambassador discussed matters relating to appointment of interpreters for smooth communication between Thai officials and Myanmar migrant workers and provision of necessary healthcare assistance.

Following the 18 Myanmar migrant workers being discarded by an employer from Samut Sakhon Province in Samut Prakan Province, Myanmar labour diplomats held meeting with officials from the Department of Employment in Samut Prakan Province and provided shelters, foods and

medical tests for COVID-19.

All of the 18 Myanmar migrant workers tested negative for COVID-19 in the first-time testing. Officials from the Myanmar Embassy and labour diplomats are working on the migrant workers getting employment in Thailand. The embassy officials and labour diplomats are working on providing necessary assistance including healthcare, accommodation, foods and psychological assistance for the Myanmar migrant workers in Mahachai seafood market where the coronavirus outbreak was occurring. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## Yangon Amata Smart & Eco-City project kicks off on 27 December



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein participates in the groundbreaking ceremony of Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City in Dagon Myothit on 27 December 2020. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG KYAW**

THE groundbreaking ceremony marked yesterday Thailand-backed Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City project on 2,000 acres of land near Dagon Myothit (East) and (South) townships.

The project is jointly developed by the Department of Urban and Housing Development under the Ministry of Construc-

tion and Thailand-based Amata Corporation PCL, under the Yangon Region government's guidance.

"The project is located on the economic corridor of Thilawa Special Economic Zone and Hantawady Airport. It will become an important hub in the city. The project will bring benefits and spur technological development

to the urban areas. I believe we might see technology transfer through foreign direct investments", stated Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein in his opening remark at the event.

Regional Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, regional Hluttaw speaker U Tin Maung Tun, regional minister for Electricity,

Industry, Transport Daw Nilar Kyaw and Communications, Thailand's Ambassador Mrs Suphatra Srimaitreephithak to Myanmar, Director-General U Thant Sin Lwin of Myanmar Investment Commission, Director-General U Min Htein of the Department of Urban and Housing Development, Chairman Mr Arsa Sarasin of Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City and officials concerned inaugurated the event.

"This project demonstrates the strengthened relationships and friendship between Myanmar and Thailand. I believe this project will help enhance the socio-economy of the urban people and create jobs for them," said Thailand's ambassador to Myanmar in her delivering speech.

Amata, the leading industrial city developer, will start implementing the first phase of Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City project under Amata Asia (Myanmar) Limited, with a capital of US\$1 billion.

The first phase of the project will start on 200 acres. The project aims to create an essential hub in the region, bringing all together and providing jobs, vocational schools, healthcare

service, trade and recreation places in one place. Amata pursued industrial development in harmony with local communities and the natural environment. It will provide employment in an eco-friendly environment and contribute to the sustainable growth of the country.

The project will support all necessary infrastructures, utilities, logistics and services, industrial waste management activities and other necessary businesses and attract quality investors, Amata stated.

The project intends to attract \$3.7 billion from the tenant companies in the zone. The businesses in the zone are forecast to estimate at \$3 billion in annual production capacity when the zone is fully operational.

The project will employ more than 33,000 residents. Furthermore, it is expected to generate revenue of \$60 million from income tax yearly.

The whole smart and eco-city project is slated to complete within five years. The first phase of the project will start in the first three months of 2021, and it will be operational in 2021-end. — Myint Maung Kyaw

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

## China constitutes nearly 80% of Myanmar's overall rice exports in current FY

Myanmar exported over 363,400 tonnes of rice worth US\$138.8 million to China over the past two months of the current financial year 2020-2021, which accounts for 77.8 per cent of overall rice exports, Myanmar Rice Federation's data indicated.

Over the past two months, Myanmar daily sent around 60,000 bags of rice to China. The export volume plunged by half at the end of the year.

To have legal rice export channel to China, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of Myanmar (MOALI) and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) signed an agreement on 24 September 2014 regarding SPS protocol (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Protocol). Only 11 companies were given the green light for rice export then.

The authorized companies for rice export to China are likely to increase to 50 next year, after inspecting Myanmar rice companies and rice mills in line with SPS Protocol. However, the deal

has not been confirmed yet by China. If they give the go-ahead to it, the trade will surge to three times for sure. The border trade will remarkably rise, said Vice-Chair U Min Thein of Muse rice depot.

Moreover, the rice depot in Muse is endeavouring to practice only cash transaction rather than credit transaction to avoid fraud case, traders said.

The federation notified the traders to enter into a firm contract and strictly adhere to trade regulations. Myanmar Companies that have difficulties entering into a firm contract and complying with regulations can contact the federation or Muse depot. MRF released a notification on 27 November 2020.

Additionally, Myanmar regained rice market shares from certain countries on account of high quality, said U Ye Min Aung, chairman of Myanmar Rice Federation.

Myanmar delivered over 467,018 metric tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners between 1 October and 11 December this FY, generating

an income of over US\$175.848 million, as per MRF's data.

ASEAN countries constitute 8.43 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports with over 39,370 tonnes, while 12 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to European Union countries with over 56,598 tonnes, followed by African countries with over 2,940 tonnes. Over 4,706 tonnes of rice were shipped to other countries.

Myanmar shipped rice to 28 foreign markets. China is the leading buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by Malaysia and the Philippines. Poland is the fourth-largest buyer and Viet Nam, the fifth-largest buyer of Myanmar rice. Meanwhile, Myanmar exported broken rice mostly to China, followed by Belgium, Thailand, Indonesia and the Netherlands. Broken rice was placed in 15 foreign markets.

The export price of Myanmar's rice is relatively lower than the rates of Thailand and Viet Nam. Yet, the prices are higher than those of India and Pakistan's market prices,



(FILES) Workers bag rice at a warehouse. **PHOTO: TIN ZAR HLAING**

MRF's data showed.

MRF expected to ship 2.4 million tonnes of rice, and broken rice in the last FY ended 30 September 2020. The country surpassed the export target, sending over 426,611 metric tonnes to neighbouring countries through border trade and over 2.15 million tonnes of rice and broken to foreign trade partners via maritime trade, totaling over 2.58 million tonnes.

Next, Myanmar yearly pro-

duces 13 million tonnes of rice. There is self-sufficiency in the domestic market, and rice reserves have been stored in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay.

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

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

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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.

## Multi-purpose stadium in Mandalay to help COVID-19 suspected patients

THE Ayeyarwady Foundation is conducting arrangements for a comfortable stay of COVID-19 suspected patients at the multi-purpose stadium of Mandalay Thiri stadium in Mandalay, according to the foundation officials.

After the COVID-19 first test at Test and Care Centre, people with negative results will have their second round test. Those who get a negative result in the first test will be able to live comfortably at the multi-purpose stadium within 48 hours before the second test, officials said.

The Ayeyarwaddy Foundation has been testing people in Mandalay District since 22 December at the Ayeyarwady Centre (Mandalay).



The front view of the multi-purpose stadium in Mandalay.

PHOTO: KO MOE

Next, the COVID-19 positive patients are being transported to the relevant hospitals or treatment centers with the supervision of the Ministry of

Health and Sports.

The multi-purpose stadium has a total of 100 beds and the Ayeyarwady Foundation will be in charge of accommodation and

meals for the COVID-19 patients and volunteers, the foundation officials said.

The Ayeyarwady Foundation has already set up advanced medical equipment for the COVID-19 treatment centre, plus installation of kidney dialysis machines, safety laboratories and essential medical devices for the ICU/HDU centre.

Officials have also installed Test and Care Center for the screening of the virus.

The Ayeyarwady Foundation, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sports, has set up a 1,000-bed COVID-19 treatment center in Yangon and a 375-bed centre in Mandalay respectively.—Ye Yint Shine  
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

## UNFPA delivers 40,000 Ag Test Kits to support prevention, response to COVID-19 pandemic

THE United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) delivered 40,000 COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits to the Ministry of Health and Sports to support the Union Government's effort to prevent transmission and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic efficiently while ensuring continuity of life-saving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls.

The official handover of 40,000 test kits was organized at Department of Medical Research in Yangon on 24 December 2020. Dr. Hlaing Myat Thu, Deputy Director General of Department of Medical Research said, "Early detection and containment of COVID-19 positive cases is still an essential and extremely important process in order to cut the chain of transmission and effectively control



Officials from Ministry of Health and Sports and UNFPA at the ceremony of the handover of 40,000 COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

the spread of disease."

UNFPA's Rapid Antigen Test Kits procurement delivered at MOHS' Central Medical Store Depot in Yangon.

"As the results of a Rapid Antigen Test are available

within 30 minutes, it is of advantage that decisions can be made much more quickly and infection contained effectively in the nick of time. Thus, the importance and requirement of these Rapid Antigen Test kits

are truly an evidence-based reality," Dr. Hlaing Myat Thu added.

The expansion in testing has been very instrumental in Myanmar getting a grip on the COVID-19 situation after the peak of second wave during September-October 2020. "As the Government of Myanmar engages with the COVAX facility to source COVID-19 vaccines in 2021, the fight is far from over. This is a marathon and we need to continue to remain cautious, vigilant, creative and proactive to reach the finish line. 40,000 test kits, while a significant number, may not be much compared to the daily testing numbers; But, every drop counts..", said Mr. Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Country Representative for Myanmar.—GNLM

## Shan State's Niger Seed fetches good prices in Mandalay market

THE Niger Seed cultivated in Shan State (North) fetches good prices in Mandalay market, according to Mandalay resident merchants.

India is the largest buyer of the Niger Seed, followed by China. The price fetches up to K70,000 per three-basket bag this year though it was K62,000 before. The production rate is also

good due to the fine weather, said U Soe Win Myint (Soe Win Myint Wholesale) from Mandalay.

"There is local and foreign demand of Niger Seed. The local consumers buy them and use in food production industry. The foreign consumers produce edible oil and use in cosmetic and drug manufacturing processes. The price was K110,000

per three-basket bag last 4 or 5 years. But we can expect such price in 2021 if the demand of India is high. During this season, there are plenty of Niger Seed fields in every place of northern and southern Shan State," he said. The Niger Seed earns foreign income and is grown only in hilly region. The Shan ethnic people now expand Niger

Seed plantations as their main income.

The Niger Seed is grown in September and cultivated in the last week of December. They are mainly grown in northern and southern Shan State and Kachin State and are traded via Mandalay.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House) (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

## Myanmar citizens abroad brought back home by relief flight



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 27 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

A total of 170 Myanmar citizens including seamen who were stranded in foreign countries – 40 from Bangladesh and 130 from the Republic of Korea – because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flight yesterday.

The Myanmar Embassy in Dhaka organized the relief flight of Myanmar Airways International to repatriate the 40 Myanmar nationals from the Bangladesh. The flight landed at the Yangon International Airport in the afternoon.

The Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and the Crew Change Supporting Committee (Myanmar) organized the relief flight of Myanmar Airways International to bring back 130 Myanmar seamen home from ROK. The flight landed at the Yangon International Airport in the evening.

The group of Myanmar seamen included

80 from the ROK, 2 from Panama, 27 from Japan, 1 from Canada, 4 from USA, 4 from Singapore, 2 from Britain, 7 from UAE and 3 from Hong Kong.

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

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and ministries concerned and shipping companies to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.—MNA

## Thanaka market looks cool this fall

THANAKA market is sluggish amid the COVID-19 crisis and on the back of weak demand during winter, said U Kyaw Moe, chair of Myanmar Thanaka Planters and Producers Association (MTPPA).

Thanaka, a yellowish-white cosmetic paste made from ground bark, is a natural cosmetic in Myanmar.

“Thanaka exports to Bangkok have come to a halt. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered the domestic production slowdown,” a producer from Ayadaw Township pointed out.

“The market is cool in winter. Three trucks are carrying 500-600 Thanaka plants from Ayadaw (Thanaka city) and supplying the market. Earlier, around eight trucks were seen leaving for other townships,” said U Kyaw Moe.

The prices of a Thanaka plant move in the range of K2,000 and K15,000. The eight-year-old plant was earlier priced K18,000 in maximum. Now, the price dropped to K13,000.

Thanaka produced by Ayadaw Township is sent to wholesale depots in Pakokku, Yesagyo, Bago and Kyonpyaw towns. The demand from the Thanaka val-



Two men unload Thanaka wood blocks from a vehicle. **PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)**

ue chain is relatively low in the meantime.

Ayadaw Township Thanaka Association is making concerted efforts to set up Thanaka zone, said MTPPA Chair U Kyaw Moe.

“There are over 100,000 acres of Thanaka in Ayadaw Township. The association is attempting to set up Thanaka zone covering 100-150 acres in Ayadaw and moving forward to creating agro-tourism site,” he affirmed.

It is like a nature-based,

farm-based and community-based agricultural tourism destination. Discussion is being undertaken. Sagaing Region Consumer Affairs Department and regional Directorate of Hotels and Tourism are working together to establish Thanaka zone.

Myanmar is exploring community-based and eco-tourism sites. There is no tourism site related to Thanaka farming in the country. The zone will create

job opportunities for residents and bring about rural development, the MTPPA chair shared his opinion.

Myanmar’s Thanaka has been submitted to be included in UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list in March 2020.

The location of the zone will be selected depending on the natural scenic view, dam, natural lake and road transportation, he added.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)  
*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

2.91 PERCENT

## Virus plunges Vietnam growth to lowest level in decades

VIETNAM on Sunday reported economic growth of 2.91 percent in 2020, the slowest rate in more than 30 years as the country battled the coronavirus pandemic.

The communist state has long been among Asia’s fastest-growing economies, and the 2020 figure marked a sharp fall from last year’s GDP growth of seven percent.

But Vietnam’s performance looks rosy in the context of a global recession triggered by the pandemic, and officials hailed it as a “huge success”. The Hanoi-based General Statistics Office (GSO) said in a statement Sunday that growth for the final quarter was 4.48 percent, contributing to the year-end figure of 2.91 percent.

“In the context of complicated development of the Covid-19 pandemic that badly impacts the socio-economic situation, this was a huge success for Vietnam,” GSO said in the statement. While many countries have suffered from high infection and mortality rates, Vietnam – population 96 million – has recorded fewer than 1,500 coronavirus cases and only 35 deaths.

SOURCE: AFP

BY JULY

## One million vaccinated but US officials admit rollout behind schedule

MORE than a million Americans have received the first dose of their Covid-19 vaccines, a milestone in the biggest immunization drive in US history that came even as officials admitted the pace of rollout was slipping behind schedule.

The news comes as the winter surge in cases rages across the country, where the

virus has claimed more than 320,000 lives and is on course to be the third leading cause of death in the year.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Robert Redfield said jurisdictions had logged the first million shots with his agency since the biggest immunization drive in US history kicked off

on December 14.

“While we celebrate this historic milestone, we also acknowledge the challenging path ahead,” said Redfield.

“There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the US, but supply will increase in the weeks and months to come.”

SOURCE: AFP

# Seize opportunities of post-COVID-19 economic recovery

While fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union government is also taking measures to boost cooperation with foreign countries, to get assistance in terms of technology and to attract foreign investment as part of efforts for quick economic recovery in the post COVID-19 era.

Given that agriculture is at the heart of our country's post-COVID-19 economic recovery, we are on alert to be able to seize opportunities possible to overcome the challenges of agricultural sector on which farmers, who make up over 70 per cent of the total population of Myanmar, are relying.

Meanwhile, to support post-COVID-19 recovery, it is important to bolster our agriculture sector by promoting high yield, reducing production costs, improving quality and safety of agro products, and logistics sector which is playing a key role in purchasing, milling and trading, strengthening market linkages and promoting entrepreneurship while creating jobs.

Only then, can we build "Myanmar" brand in the agriculture sector and leverage the country's global recognition.

Not only rice but also locally produced fresh fruit and vegetable sector is listed as one of the priority export sectors to be focused on during and in the post-COVID-19 era.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the agriculture sector saw some achievements in agriculture sector with first shipment of watermelons, other shipments of mangoes and pineapples to UAE and first shipment of avocados to the UK.

Rice, fruits and vegetables are on the list of key export products of the National Export Strategy 2020-2025, and in 2020, over 40 rice companies and 79 mills have been permitted to export rice to China.

Despite being his hard significantly due to the trade flow restrictions, the tightening of security at borders, the agriculture sector remains strong and as a whole contributes 22% of the overall Myanmar export sectors for this year.

As we are committed to developing more high quality agriculture, livestock and fisheries products, foreign and local investments are invited in value-added food industries and value chain infrastructures to ensure that our farmers, who are important to our country's economy as well as for achieving food sufficiency for our people, get easy and affordable access to technology, machinery, and inputs for farming as recovery actions from COVID-19.

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS, 27 DECEMBER

# World must be ready for the next pandemic, UN says on first International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

THE United Nations is commemorating the first International Day of Epidemic Preparedness on Sunday, underscoring the need to learn lessons from the coronavirus pandemic, and urging greater solidarity within and among countries, to deal with future health emergencies.

"This first observance of the International Day of Epidemic Preparedness falls at the end of a year in which a scenario many had feared came tragically true ... As we strive to control and recover from the current pandemic, we must think about the next," Secretary-General António Guterres said in a message.

He also highlighted the need for strong health systems and social protection, support for communities on the frontlines, and technical cooperation for countries.

"Across this work, science must be our guide. Solidarity and coordination are crucial, within and among countries; no one is safe unless all of us are safe," the Secretary-General added.

Mr. Guterres also honoured



Wearing a full protective suit, a woman doctor who leads a group of volunteer medical professionals attending to COVID-19 patients and persons under investigation at a community hospital in the Philippines. PHOTO: UN WOMEN/LOUIE PACARDO

medical professionals, front-line personnel and essential workers globally for their "remarkable commitment" in face of the coronavirus pandemic.

"As we recover from the pandemic, let us resolve to build up our prevention capacities so that we are ready when the world faces the next outbreak," he urged.

We cannot be complacent

Similarly, Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly, underscored that the "devastating experience" of the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, the benefits of tackling epidemics.

"If we ready ourselves, then we can save lives and stop epidemics from developing into pandemics," he said, adding that COVID-19 "must be our final warning."

"We cannot afford to be complacent, and we must learn from our mistakes."

Mr. Bozkir urged everyone to join him in trusting science, supporting early warning mechanisms, and standing together in solidarity.

"We will prepare as we have never prepared before – so that epidemics and pandemics can no

longer cause the kind of suffering we have seen across the globe this year," the President of the General Assembly urged.

### One Health Approach

In a separate message, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the UN World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted the importance of a "One Health Approach", which integrates human health, animal health and plant health, as well as environmental factors.

This is all the more important given that 75 per cent of new and emerging human infectious diseases are zoonotic, caused by germs that spread between animals and people.

"Any efforts to improve human health are doomed unless they address the critical interface between human and animals," said Dr. Tedros.

The head of WHO also urged countries to invest in preparedness capacity to prevent, detect and mitigate emergencies, and reiterated the importance of strong primary health systems as the foundation of universal

health coverage as well as the "eyes and ears" of health systems everywhere.

"True preparedness is not just a job of the health sector; it requires an all-of-government and all-of-society approach," he added.

### The International Day

The International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, to be marked on 27 December annually, was proclaimed earlier this month by the General Assembly, to advocate the importance of the prevention of, preparedness for, and partnership against epidemics.

The General Assembly also recognized the role of the UN system, in particular WHO, in coordinating responses to epidemics, and supporting efforts to prevent, mitigate and address the impacts of infectious diseases.

This International Day falls on the birthdate of Louis Pasteur, the French chemist and microbiologist, responsible for ground-breaking work on vaccinations.

SOURCE: UN NEWS

## COVID 19 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

# As vaccines are rolled out, questions remain

EUROPEAN countries are following the United States, Britain and a handful of other countries to begin rolling out coronavirus vaccines.

The rapid development and approval of drugs has been hailed the world over, questions remain about the availability, effectiveness and side effects of the jabs.

**How many vaccines?**  
It usually takes roughly 10 years to develop and market a new vaccine, but the process was vastly accelerated for Covid-19.

A vaccine developed by the American company Pfizer and the German company BioNTech was approved for use in Britain on December 2. Thousands of older people have since received the first dose.

A total of 16 countries and the European Union have given the green light to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The US Food and Drug Administration granted emergency authorisations to the Pfizer-BioNTech drug and another jab from the American company Moderna.

Russia began vaccinations on December 5 with its domestic drug Sputnik V, which is still in its third phase of clinical trials. China has already given the go-ahead for emergency use of some of their vaccines, even though none have yet been formally approved.

A total of 16 vaccines are in the final stage of development, including those already on the market, the World Health Organization says.

**What is the EU's roll-out timetable?**

Vaccinations can begin from Sunday following approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech jab by the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Each member country will take the lead in defining their pri-

orities with the rollout.

But three member states – Germany, Hungary and Slovakia – started vaccinations a day early on Saturday.

**Which vaccine is most effective?**

Since 9 November, four manufacturers have announced that their vaccine is effective: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, the British alliance AstraZeneca-University of Oxford and the Russian state institute Gamaleia.

These announcements are based on phase 3 clinical trials that involve tens of thousands of volunteers.

However, detailed and validated data are available only for the Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca-Oxford drugs.

The scientific journal The Lancet confirmed on December 8 that AstraZeneca's vaccine was 70 percent effective on average.

The FDA confirmed the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at 95 percent efficacy with Moderna claiming 94.1 percent for its drug. Russia claims a 91.4 percent efficacy for its Sputnik V vaccine.

The AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine is the least expensive at around €2.50 per dose. The vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech have a logistical handicap, as they can only be stored over the long term at very low temperatures (-20° Celsius for the former, -70°C for the latter).

**What are the side effects?**

Experts insist that with clinical trials carried out on tens of thousands of volunteers, any major risk would have already been detected. But rarer side effects, or those affecting specific patient profiles, cannot be ruled out.

According to the FDA, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine can result in painful reactions on the arm



Technicians process COVID-19 coronavirus tests at a laboratory in Tianjin, China. PHOTO: AFP

where the injection is made. Other undesirable side effects include fatigue, headaches, cramps and, more rarely, fever.

**Further outstanding issues**

The most important is the long-term efficacy.

Penny Ward of King's College in London said key questions were how long would protection last and could the virus eventually mutate and no longer be covered by the vaccine?

Another crucial question is whether the vaccines act differently in populations most at risk, starting with elderly people who are more likely to develop a serious form of Covid-19. It also remains to be seen whether these vaccines block the transmission of the virus, and also reduce the severity of the disease in those who have received the jab. Is the vaccine less effective against the new strain?

SOURCE: AFP

## 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day Anniversary (2021)

### National Objectives

1. All Union nationals to protect and strive with "collective strength" for Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Unity, and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. All citizens to be able to enjoy on the same level - social equality, economic equality, political equality, equality as citizens, equal opportunity, and equality before the law.
3. To strive towards the amendment of the Constitution for the emergence of a genuine Democratic Federal Union.
4. To build a modern developed Democratic Federal Union by nurturing Union spirit for the perpetuation of the Union.
5. The government, together with the people to confront with collective strength the challenges faced by the entire people with increased momentum for all-round development of the country.



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 27 December 2020)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 28 December 2020:** Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, and Yangon regions, and Kachin, Kayin, and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas will be 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.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 December 2020:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 December 2020:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 December 2020:** Generally fair weather.

## Correction

Please read "...order issued for Seikkyi/Khanaungto, Twantay and Kungyangon townships in Yangon Region (excluding the wards and villages in the townships mentioned in the table underneath) ..." instead of "...order issued for the townships in Yangon Region (excluding the wards/villages in Yangon Region) ..." in the ParaNo.3 of Order 155/2020 of the Ministry of Health and Sports on page-2 of the 27 December Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. GNLM regrets for the mistake.—Ed



## VACCINE EFFICACY

## AstraZeneca Covid vaccine has 'winning formula': CEO

THE Covid-19 vaccine developed by the British drugs group AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford has achieved a "winning formula" for efficacy, the company's chief executive said on Sunday. The vaccine, currently being evaluated by Britain's independent medicines regulator, provides "100 percent protection" against severe Covid disease requiring hospitalisation, Pascal Soriot said in an interview with the Sunday Times newspaper. He added he believes trials will show his firm has achieved a vaccine efficacy equal to Pfizer-BioNTech at 95 percent and Moderna at 94.5 percent. "We think we have figured out the winning formula and how to get efficacy that, after two doses, is up there with everybody else," the chief executive said, while saying only that data would be published at "some point".

The UK government announced on December 23 that the developers of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine had submitted their data to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regu-



Britain's government under Boris Johnson has bet big on the AstraZeneca vaccine. PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE

latory Agency (MHRA). Approval is expected to be granted to roll out the jab on January 4, The Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was the first coronavirus shot to be authorised for use by the UK's independent medicines regulator and has been given to 600,000 of the country's most vulnerable people since last month. Earlier trials had shown varying outcomes in the AstraZeneca shot's efficacy. The vaccine initially showed an average 70 percent effectiveness but that level jumped to 90 percent

depending on dosage. 'Storm' over data

Behind this average figure from large-scale trials in the UK and Brazil was a 62 percent effectiveness for those who were vaccinated with two full doses of the shot. For volunteers who received a half-dose first and then a full dose one month later, however, the vaccine was found to have 90 percent efficacy. Soriot said he was "surprised" by the initial findings. "We would have preferred a simpler set of results," he added.

SOURCE: AFP

## TRANSACTIONS

## Iran's Rouhani says US wants vaccine payments to go via its banks

PRESIDENT Hassan Rouhani said Saturday that Washington was demanding Iranian transactions for novel coronavirus vaccines pass through US banks, and expressed fear the money could be seized.

US President Donald Trump has imposed wave after wave of sanctions on the Islamic republic since 2018, when he unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nu-

clear deal.

Iran has assets frozen in several countries, including in the US.

"We want to transfer money from a country where our money is" to buy the vaccine and "this country has accepted", Rouhani said during a meeting of Iran's coronavirus task force, without identifying the country in question.

SOURCE: AFP



People wearing face masks walk on a street in Tonnekabon, northern Iran, Dec. 6, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA/AHMAD HALABISAZ

## DEFEATING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

## 96-year-old is first Spaniard vaccinated for Covid-19

A 96-year-old living in a care home in central Spain became the first person in the country to be vaccinated against Covid-19 on Sunday, in an event broadcast by national television. She felt "nothing" from the shot, Araceli Rosario Hidalgo Sanchez said with a smile after being injected. With her short white hair, the pensioner living in the Los Olmos retirement home in Guadalajara got up slowly after pulling on her black jacket and walked off using a frame for support. Carer Monica Tapias followed as the second Spaniard to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The Los Olmos home was picked to kick off the country's inoculation campaign because it sits near a Pfizer storage depot, where vaccines were delivered from Belgium Saturday ahead of nationwide distribution. SOURCE: AFP

## VACCINATION

## Europe begins vaccine roll-out as new virus strain spreads fears

SEVERAL EU nations were set to begin vaccinating their most vulnerable groups Sunday as a new coronavirus variant spread internationally and the WHO warned the current pandemic will not be the last. The first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech jab arrived in hard-hit Italy, Spain and France on Saturday, ready for distribution to retirement homes and care staff.

The approval and roll-out of vaccines has boosted hopes that 2021 could bring a respite from the pandemic, which has killed more than 1.7 million people since emerging in China late last year.

However, in a video message ahead of the first International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was time to learn the lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic.

"History tells us that this will not be the last pandemic, and epidemics are a fact of life,"



Several EU nations were set to begin vaccinating their most vulnerable groups Sunday as a new coronavirus variant spread internationally and the WHO warned the current pandemic will not be the last. PHOTO: AFP

said Tedros. "Any efforts to improve human health are doomed unless they address the critical interface between humans and animals, and the existential threat of climate change that's making our Earth less habitable," he added.

## 101-year-old woman vaccinated

A 101-year-old woman in a

care home became the first person in Germany to be inoculated Saturday, in what the country's health minister called a "day of hope". The first jabs were also handed out in Hungary and Slovakia. The three countries joined China, Russia, Britain, Canada, the United States, Switzerland, Serbia, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, which have also begun their vaccination cam-

paigns.

"We'll get our freedom back, we'll be able to embrace again," Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said as he urged his compatriots to get the shot.

But polls show only 57 percent of Italians intend to get the jab, whereas scientists estimate herd immunity can only be reached if 75 to 80 percent have it. Flare-ups of the virus continue to force tougher restrictions, with Israel going into a two-week general lockdown from Sunday and France's health minister saying his government would take similar steps in the event of a post-Christmas spike.

Jitters also remained over a new strain that has emerged in Britain and reached several other European countries and Japan. Four cases were confirmed in Madrid on Saturday, though the patients were not seriously ill, according to health official Antonio Zapatero, who said "there is no need for alarm."

SOURCE: AFP

THE REGIONAL RIVALRIES

## Turkey says will retaliate against any attack by east Libya strongman



Turkey's defence minister says that any attack by eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar on its personnel in the North African country would be met with force. **PHOTO: AFP**

TURKEY'S defence minister said that any attack by eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar on its personnel in the North African country would be met with force. "A war criminal, murderer Haftar and his supporters must know that they will be seen as a legitimate target in case of any attack on Turkish forces" by his troops, Hulusi Akar said in an address to Turkish units in Tripoli late on Saturday and made available to media on Sunday. His comments come days after Haftar said his forces would "prepare to drive out the occupier by faith, will and weapons," referring to Turkish troops operating in support of

Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA). "If they take such a step, they will be unable to find any place to flee to," Akar said, referring to Haftar's forces. "Everyone should come to their senses."

Turkish support for the GNA earlier this year helped repel a 14-month offensive against the capital by Haftar, who is backed by Russia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates. The two sides struck a ceasefire agreement in October, setting the stage for elections at the end of next year. Akar on Saturday made an unscheduled visit to Tripoli where he discussed, according to Libyan officials, military cooperation between Ankara and the GNA.

Turkey's defence minister said political talks based on the ceasefire sought to find a solution. "What matters here is that everyone should contribute to a political solution. Any action other than that would be wrong," he added. Haftar had said there would be "no peace in the presence of a coloniser on our land" during his speech on Thursday. **SOURCE: AFP**

PEACE TALKS

## Next round of Afghan peace talks to take place in Doha: official



The Qatari capital of Doha has hosted peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government since September. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE next round of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government will be held in Qatar from next month, a top official said Sunday, despite President Ashraf Ghani's recent calls for them to be moved home.

Peace talks began on September 12 at a luxury hotel in Doha, but negotiations are currently on a break until January 5.

"The second round of talks will begin on January 5 in Doha," said Faraidoon Khwazoon, spokesman for Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, which is leading the overall peace process in the

country. "The leadership committee of the council ... decided to hold the talks in Doha," he tweeted, adding that many of the countries that had earlier volunteered to host the talks withdrew their offers because of Covid-19.

In a separate statement, the presidency tweeted that Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, who heads the council, held a meeting on Sunday. The two "discussed the venue for the next round of talks" after which Ghani announced the government's support for a second stage of talks with the Taliban, the pres-

idency said. Earlier in December, negotiators from both sides decided to take a break after months of often frustrating meetings which were bogged down by disputes on the basic framework of discussions and religious interpretations. Prior to going on the break, negotiators finally announced they were ready to proceed on preliminary lists of agenda items when talks resumed on January 5.

But Ghani and some other top Afghan officials immediately called for the next round of meetings to be held in Afghanistan. **SOURCE: AFP**

DESPITE INSURGENCY

## Niger stages historic elections despite jihadist attacks

VOTERS in the Sahel state of Niger go to the polls on Sunday for an election that could seal the country's first-ever peaceful handover between elected presidents, despite a bloody jihadist insurgency.

The West African country has been chronically unstable since gaining independence from France 60 years ago, and is ranked the world's poorest country according to the UN's Human Development Index.

Around 7.4 million people are registered to vote for the ballot for presidency, which coincides with legislative elections.

President Mahamadou Issoufou, who was elected in 2011 after the country's last coup in 2010, is voluntarily stepping down after two five-year terms.

The frontrunner in the 30-strong field is his designated successor, Mohamed Bazoum, 60, a former interior and foreign

minister.

Other prominent hopefuls are two former heads of state, Mahamane Ousmane, 70, and Salou Djibo, 55.

Bazoum's main rival, former prime minister Hama Amadou, 70, was last month barred from contesting the vote

on the grounds that in 2017 he was handed a 12-month term for alleged baby trafficking -- a charge he says was bogus.

Campaigning has been overshadowed by the issue of security. Niger is being battered by jihadists on two fronts -- on its southwestern border with Mali,

and its southeastern frontier with Nigeria.

Four thousand people in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger died last year from jihadist violence and ethnic bloodshed stirred by Islamists, according to the UN.

**SOURCE: AFP**



The election is expected to lead to the first transfer of power between two democratically elected presidents **PHOTO: ISSOUF SANOGO/ AFP**

SHOOTING AT ILLINOIS BOWLING ALLEY

## Three killed, three wounded in Illinois shooting

THREE people were killed and another three wounded Saturday in the US state of Illinois when a shooter opened fire at a bowling alley, police said.

A suspect in his 30s was in police custody.

Rockford city police urged people on Twitter to stay away from the area near the Don Carter Lanes bowling alley, as it was an "active situation" and officers were clearing the site.

The force posted on Twitter shortly after midnight: "37-year-old white male suspect is in custody. There are no others being sought at this time."

**SOURCE: AFP**

## THE KEY EVENTS OF THE YEAR

## 2020: World rocked by COVID-19, Trump and Black Lives Matter

**T**HE COVID-19 pandemic cast a long pall over 2020 but it also saw President Donald Trump beaten by Joe Biden in a tumultuous US election and the Black Lives Matter movement shake the world.

Here are some of the key events of the year:

**Rampaging virus**

On January 11, less than two weeks after it alerts a cluster of pneumonia cases “of unknown cause”, Beijing announces its first death from an illness which will become known as COVID-19.

By March a pandemic has been declared and a month later half of humanity is in lockdown as governments scramble to halt its spread.

Massive state aid programmes are rolled out to save jobs as the International Monetary Fund predicts recession, with the global economy shrinking by 4.4%.

In November, drug companies announce positive results for several vaccines as a second wave of cases lashes the planet.

Within a month, the first shots are being given but by Christmas some 1.7 million people are dead, with the US the worst hit.

**Iranian roulette**

The world holds its breath after top Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani is killed in a US drone strike in Iraq on January 3, days after pro-Iranian protesters storm the US embassy in Baghdad.

Iran retaliates by launching a volley of missiles at bases in Iraq housing US troops. The same day, it shoots down a Ukrainian passenger plane “in error” shortly after take off from Tehran, killing all 176 people on board.

Tensions mount again at the end of November when top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh is assassinated, with Tehran blaming Israel.

**Brexit endgame**

Britain becomes the first country to leave the European Union on January 31 following its 2016 Brexit referendum.



A hilltop manned by Moroccan soldiers in the Western Sahara. The Polisario Front said it was returning to war because Morocco had breached a 1991 ceasefire agreement by sending forces into a demilitarized area. **PHOTO: FADEL SENNA/AFP**

But crucial talks on future ties and trade with the bloc drag on for months, breaking deadline after deadline as negotiators try to avert a hard Brexit before a last-gasp deal on Christmas Eve.

While British Prime Minister Boris Johnson claims victory, Scotland’s anti-Brexit leader Nicola Sturgeon says its future is “an independent, European nation”.

**US-Taliban accord**

The US and the Taliban sign a deal in Doha on February 29, with all foreign forces to quit Afghanistan by May 2021 after nearly two decades of war.

Talks between the Afghan government and insurgents start in September, but fighting rages on as the Taliban launch attack after attack and a string of civil society figures are assassinated.

The Pentagon is due to pull 2,000 of 4,500 US soldiers out of the country by January 15, 2021.

**George Floyd killed**

The killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American, by white police officers on May 25 in Minneapolis sparks protests across the US and inspires anti-racism rallies across the world.

The Black Lives Matter movement leads to a major debate about race and the toppling of statues of figures linked to slavery or colonisation.

**Hong Kong clampdown**

In June, a year after a massive wave of demonstrations, China imposes a sweeping new security law on Hong Kong that opponents say undermines the semi-autonomous city’s liberties, promised under its handover from Britain in 1997.

Pro-democracy lawmakers are ousted, harassed and arrested. In December, three prominent Hong Kong activists are jailed including Joshua Wong.

**Thais rise up**

Students spark pro-democracy protests in July that roll on for the rest of the year calling for a new constitution, reform of the untouchable monarchy, and for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha to resign.

**Beirut blast**

A massive explosion on August 4 destroys much of Beirut’s port and devastates swathes of the capital, killing more than 200 and injuring at least 6,500.

The blast from a vast stockpile of ammonium nitrate fertiliser devastates an already teetering Lebanese economy and the credibility of its governing elite.

**Fires and hurricanes**

Enormous bushfires rage across Australia in what becomes known as its “Black Summer” while in September San Francisco and other regions of the American West Coast wake to orange skies as

the state’s largest ever inferno breaks out.

In November, two hurricanes devastate Central America, leaving more than 200 dead.

**The Navalny affair**

Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny is flown to Berlin in a medically induced coma after becoming violently ill after he boarded an internal flight to Moscow.

Tests reveal he was poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok. Navalny accuses Russian President Vladimir Putin of trying to kill him and later releases a recording where he appears to trick the alleged agent responsible into telling him the poison was put in his underpants.

**Crisis in Belarus**

Belarus strongman President Alexander Lukashenko’s disputed victory in August 9 elections sparks four months of anti-government protests, centred on his main rival, political novice Svetlana Tikhonovskaya.

Opposition leaders are jailed or driven into exile.

**Israel’s new friends**

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain normalise ties with Israel on September 15 as Palestinians condemn the move as a “stab in the back”.

The next month Donald Trump announces that Sudan is joining them, while in November unconfirmed reports

of a secret trip to Saudi Arabia by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sparks speculation that the kingdom is set to follow.

In another twist, Morocco “resumed relations” with Israel on December 10 in return for the US recognising its claim to Western Sahara.

**China-US tensions**

2020 sees US-China relations nosedive, with Trump calling Covid-19 the “China virus” and saying Beijing is responsible for “a mass worldwide killing”.

They also clash over the repression of Turkic speaking Uighur minority in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, as well as the national security law imposed on Hong Kong.

**Biden beats Trump**

Deeply-divided Americans vote in record numbers in the November presidential election between outgoing Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden.

After four days of nail biting, Biden takes the White House by seven million votes. Trump cries fraud without evidence and has yet to concede defeat.

**Nagorno-Karabakh**

Heavy fighting for the Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which broke away from Azerbaijan after a war in the 1990s, goes on for 45 days. Several thousand die before a Kremlin-brokered peace deal on November 9, with Armenians losing swathes of territory to Azerbaijan forces.

**Ethiopia: Tigray conflict**

Ethiopian Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner Abiy Ahmed orders a military response to attacks on federal army camps in the dissident northern Tigray region.

The Tigray People’s Liberation Front - which has dominated Ethiopian politics for nearly three decades - denies responsibility and says the reported attacks are a pretext for an “invasion”. Federal forces take the Tigrayan capital on November 28.

SOURCE: AFP

CHOCOLATE

## Haiti's cocoa wants international recognition

ALTHOUGH small in the face of South America's giants, Haiti is slowly developing its cocoa industry, earning better incomes for thousands of farmers and refuting the stereotype that culinary art is the preserve of wealthy countries.

Haiti's annual production of 5,000 tonnes of cocoa pales in comparison to the 70,000 tonnes produced per year by neighboring Dominican Republic, but the sector's development is recent in the island nation. *SOURCE: AFP*

LOST BUSINESS

## Australian lobster prices plummet

EVEN in the scorching Australian summer sun, long queues of customers snake around Fremantle harbour – a soothing sight

for beleaguered local fishermen trying to replace lost business with China. Australia's rock lobster exports are worth

half a billion US dollars a year -- and in normal times, 94 percent of them go to China. But all that changed a few weeks ago, when Beijing imposed a near-total import ban on lobster, part of a broader politically charged "shadow trade war". "It has affected us drastically," third-generation fisherman Fedele Camarda told AFP. "Our income has been reduced considerably." Relations between Canberra and Beijing have been in free-fall for most of this year.

*SOURCE: AFP*



Australian fisherman Joe Paratore displays his catch of the day to customers at the harbour in Fremantle. *PHOTO: AFP*

A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

## Japan sets action plan to boost farm exports



Undated supplied photo shows Japanese sea urchin and other seafood exported to and sold in Hong Kong by Pan Pacific International Holdings Corp. *PHOTO: KYODO*

JAPAN has drawn up an action plan to achieve its goal of boosting farm exports to 2 trillion yen (\$19 billion) by 2025, aiming to make products such as "wagyu" beef and sake more competitive in the global market.

The action plan designates 27 key agricultural, fishery and forestry items,

also including apples and other fruit as well as seafood such as yellowtail and scallops, and sets export targets to be achieved by that year. It identifies specific markets where demand for the key items is high, and calls for efforts to better serve their needs.

"We will support the

development of production areas that specifically cater to the needs of export market countries, and set up processing facilities that comply with the regulations of those countries," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said in mid-December at a conference in Tokyo on the promotion of farm exports.

For example, the action plan calls for increasing beef exports from 29.7 billion yen in 2019 to 160 billion yen in 2025. Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States and the European Union are expected to be drivers of this growth.

While wagyu, known for its tenderness and marbled fat, is growing in popularity overseas, the plan calls for further efforts to promote it to a wider audience.

*SOURCE: KYODO*

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V RISING EAGLE V.07/2020

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V RISING EAGLE VOY. NO. (07/2020)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-12-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIPL** 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 UNI SPRING LOGISTICS HOLDINGS PTE LTD**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 V.087N/S

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (087N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2020** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S INTER ASIA LINE PTE LTD**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC KYOTO V.050S

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCC KYOTO VOY. NO. (050S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2020** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S SEALAND & MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NORDMAAS V.051W

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NORDMAAS VOY. NO. (051W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2020** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S SEALAND & MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CTP FORTUNE V.208N

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP FORTUNE VOY. NO. (208W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-12-2020** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINE**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OSLO TRADER V.050S

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OSLO TRADER VOY. NO. (050S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-12-2020** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:  
**M/S SEALAND & MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD**



**10**

**things to be done on Chaungtha Beach**

Thiha Lu Lin (Thiha, the Traveller)  
PHOTO: SAW KYAW ZIN, GUKU, THIHA LU LIN

**C**HAUNGTHA Beach is one of the nearest beaches to Yangon. It is a crowded place with visitors and offers plenty of accommodation options. The seafood curries are delicious and cheap. It is easy to get to Chaungtha from Yangon at low transport charges.

**Things to do**

I would like to share fun things to do at Chaungtha beach.

**1. Drinking fresh coconut juice**

The coconut water can reduce the risk of heat stress. You can also take photos whilst enjoying young coconut juice on the beach.

So, I would like to urge you to drink fresh coconut juice being sold at the beaches and hotels. I sometimes wonder if drinking coconut juice at the beaches is costly. There might be people who think like me. I also worry that the vendors would add some syrup to make the juice sweet via a pipe. Indeed, you will have a pleasant feeling while sipping on coconut juice in the shade of coconut trees and enjoying the tides come in.

**2. Go surfing**

The people living far from the seas or oceans create artificial waves to feel refreshed and serene during afloat. How fun it is to ride the real waves in the natural sea. Therefore, you should hire inflatable beach floats. It costs between K1,000 and K5,000/10,000 per hour.



**3. Banana boat ride**

Chaungtha offers many beach games. A banana boat ride will give excitement, and so most of the youths enjoy it. Those do not dare to ride can watch the riders just from the Speed Boat that pulls the Banana Boat. Even if you cannot swim, the life jackets will keep you afloat. I did not ride it as I have a fear of water.



Elephant camp just before entering Chaungtha township. Now, there is an elephant camp at Kyauk Maung Nhama beach between Chaungtha and Shwe Thaug Yan beaches. It is easier to get there.



#### 4. Boat ride to Thel Phyu Kyun or White Sand Island

The sand of Chaungtha beach is brown and yellow. Those who want to see the white sand and clear water can go to Thel Phyu Kyun by motorboat or speed boat. It would be best if you chose speed boat as it goes fast and reduces seasickness. The dizziness when riding ordinary boats is such a painful feeling. When you get there, you should beware of snakes. Surely, you will enjoy beautiful scenes, delicate white sand and clear water.

#### 5. Enjoying seafood

I think Chaungtha is the best place for seafood in Myanmar. Supposing it offers cheap and delicious seafood. You can choose various types of seafood. Most of the beaches are not perfect like this. Whenever I stay there, I order food for lunch and dinner. I eat a lot of baked, roasted, fried or cooked seafood including salad and curry. In the past, I ordered



Fried crab, spicy crab, squid and cuttlefish curry, calm salad and curry. The taste of seafood curry of Chaungtha beach is better than any other beaches.

seafood from the local vendors who cook for visitors. They deliver seafood by motorcycles or cars to any places of the beach like Kyauk Maung Nhama, Shwe Thaug Yan or hotels.

I usually make food ordering from

1. Daw Aye- 09 422445668

I usually order from her for my lunch and dinner. She cooks well. The taste of fried crab is also good. She sends the food, including ngapi yay (boiled liquid fish paste) and tote saya (clean and cut

raw vegetables). She prepares food with cetana. But she uses a little more cooking oil. She puts more rice depending on the numbers of visitors.

1. Daw Pa Gwat Gyi- 09252212529

You can order lunch from her. I mostly order crab masala, flower crab soup and fried crab from her. We can feel her goodwill through food, and she has good telephone communication skills in order.

#### 6. Cycling

Cycling on Chaungtha beach is such a fun activity. Gazing the cute girls while biking is also a pleasure doing, isn't it? There are even tandem bicycles for lovers. It is convenient to hire bikes just in front of the hotels. It would be best if you rode the bicycles in the morning and at sunset.

#### 7. A 4-wheeled beach motorbike ride

You cannot ride a motorbike at Chaungtha beach but Kyauk Maung Nhama. It costs about K5,000 for one ride. You can hire the motorbikes in front of Gerizim Hotel where I stayed at. I paid K25,000 for one hour. You can hire them at Kyauk Maung Nhama all day long and early evening in front of the hotels. You can also ride the horse at Kyauk Maung Nhama. It costs about K3,000 for one ride.

#### 8. Elephant camp tour

There is an elephant camp just before entering Chaungtha township. There is an elephant camp at Kyauk Maung Nhama beach between Chaungtha and Shwe Thaug Yan beaches. It is easier to get there. I don't know precisely how pet lovers feel. You can feed and ride the elephants. If you do not want to ride the elephant, you can take photos with them. Taking head to head pictures with the elephants is popular at the beach. Some do not dare to take such images, but some dare to do so.

#### 9. Go Shopping

It is fun to go shopping in the village market. You can buy fresh seafood early morning to bring them putting in the cool boxes to Yangon. You can also buy dried fish or dried prawns, various seafood and souvenirs at night. You can purchase famous Thayet Taw Htoe Mote there.

#### 10. Staying near the beach

It would be best if you did not say it could be done only with money. I think you



You can ride horses at Kyauk Maung Nhama beach at K3,000 for one ride.

should sometimes stay in the sea view room to enjoy the beauty of the sea. Although it can cost hundreds of thousands of kyat per night, you can save the costs via the bill-splitting system when you make a trip together with your friends. Sleeping with the sound of waves will offer you an unexpressed feeling.

When I visited Chaungtha beach, I stayed at Gerizim Hotel located between Shwe Thaug Yan and Chaungtha beaches. It can be reached after a 3-minute drive from the road beside Shwe Hintha Hotel. The hotel staff will pick you up to the hotel when you go there by express cars. They will also send you off to the main road when you return.

The reason why I like Gerizim Hotel is that they have modern rooms. The hotel staff are hospitable to visitors. The services are good, and the fees are not so high. There is also Infinity Pool. You can enjoy the sea closely. The beach is not so much crowded with people. There is no waste and vendor there. So, it is very convenient for those who want to live alone. Then, there is also a large water park for the children.

The sea view room where I stayed at has three master bedrooms (every room has a bathtub), spacious living room and dining room. It is roomy enough to accommodate up to

six persons. It is K700,000 per night and K30,000 for an extra bed. It is convenient to stay at up to 10 persons. The average sea view room is about K100,000 per night while K80,000 for garden view room and K60,000 for a deluxe room.

The room rates can change depending on demand. You should make a booking before you go there. The hotel offers a buffet for breakfast and Myanmar Traditional Foods buffet, like (typical Shan noodle, sticky Shan noodle, Mohinga) through Hi-Tea service in the afternoon. We wait until 3 pm for Hi-Tea service. Let's take a look at the pictures below.

You can contact 09-49494949 and 042-2042425 to 27 for booking.

I haven't reached Chaungtha Beach for many years as the beach's water is being polluted. But now, I can relax at the beachside where it is not crowded with visitors too much and enjoy the famous seafood.

Don't forget to bring a Sony camera with you when you go to the beach.

May you all have a safe trip!  
(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



## Dave Leduc to assist growth of Lethwei in United States



Defending Cruiserweight Lethwei World Champion Dave Leduc. **PHOTO: DAVE LEDUC FACEBOOK PAGE**

DEFENDING Cruiserweight Lethwei World Champion Dave Leduc who is representing Myanmar recently stated on his social media page that he will assist the growth of Myanmar traditional lethwei in the United States with the help of Myanmar

Traditional Lethwei Federation and lethwei authorities from Myanmar.

“I spoke with the Myanmar Traditional Lethwei Federation (MTLF) and they are excited to help create the first USA Lethwei Federation. I will support these efforts with my team.

I want to also thank Zay Thiha and WLC team for their support for this fight outside of the organization.

My next goal is to defend my WLC - World Lethwei Championship title in 2021. Thank you for all for the support.”, Dave added.

Next Dave has expressed his cheerfulness for getting big fans in Myanmar.

“I want to thank all my fans who support me!

Myanmar has around 53

million population and during my fight I reached over 39,000,000 people on my Facebook page. We are already at 1.3M (million) in my Lethwei family!

The bigger the Lethwei family is, the more Lethwei will become popular around the world and the more people will gain interest in the Myanmar culture. Lethwei can make the Myanmar economy grow, as people will come visit our golden land!

They will come to Myanmar to train Lethwei, watch fights, go to restaurants, eat the local food, stay in hotels, buy souvenirs, visit Bagan, Inya Lake, Shwedagon Pagoda, Zwegabin, ect, do you realize that Lethwei can help boost the country? Thailand used Muaythai to promote their country, but we will do it better.

They heavily copied Lethwei to make their Muayboran which later became Muaythai. I am sour about this, so that's the reason I want to fight more Muaythai champions and beat them using Lethwei techniques.

I want to congratulate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for her re-election and I hope to have the honor to meet her one day and discuss the power of Myanmar traditional Lethwei for the Myanmar tourism economy.

My last fight was very important for advancement of Myanmar Lethwei. For the first time in North America, I was so proud to perform my Lethwei Yay in USA with traditional Myanmar music. I was also happy to fight Lethwei in a cage just like Tway Ma Shaung did”, Dave added. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Covid-19 forces FIFA to postpone Indonesia's 2021 showpiece

PARIS—FIFA has postponed next year's U-20 World Cup in Indonesia and U-17 tournament in Peru until 2023 due to coronavirus.

“The Covid-19 pandemic continues to present challenges for the hosting of international sporting events and to have a restrictive effect on international travel, explained football's governing body in a statement on its website.

“The global situation has failed to normalise to a sufficient level to address the challenges associ-

ated with hosting both tournaments, including the feasibility of the relevant qualification pathways.”

It added that FIFA looked forward to working with both host countries “to organise successful tournaments” in 2023.

The two events follow other international football competitions to fall victim to the virus, with Euro 2020 held over until next June, the Copa America moved to the same date, and the Africa Cup of Nations, held over until January 2022.—AFP ■



FIFA has postponed next year's U-20 World Cup in Indonesia and U-17 tournament in Peru until 2023 due to coronavirus. **PHOTO: FIFA/AFP**

## Australian golf legend Norman quarantining at home in Covid scare

MIAMI—Australian golf great Greg Norman said Saturday he was quarantining at home after spending Christmas Day in the hospital with Covid-19 symptoms.

The 65-year-old Aussie, a former world number one who won the 1986 and 1983 British Opens, said in an Instagram post on Saturday that he still had fever, joint and muscle aches and headaches “but on a lesser level.”

Although he had yet to get results of his latest Covid-19 test, Norman said he had a chest X-Ray and blood test in the hospital “where 2 markers showed up leading the Doc to say, assume you are positive with these symptoms and markers.

“They released me to continue quarantining at home on

medication in our guest house away from the main house,” added Norman, who posted a picture of himself on the balcony of the guest house.

On Friday, Norman had post-

ed a photo of himself with medical equipment in the background, an NFL Pittsburgh Steelers mask over his lower face and the caption: “This sums it all up. My Christmas Day.”—AFP ■



Australian golf champion Greg Norman says he is quarantining at home after spending Christmas in the hospital with Covid-19 symptoms. **PHOTO: MIKE EHRMANN/ AFP/FILE**

## Arsenal bounce back to stun Chelsea

LONDON—Arsenal eased fears of being dragged into a relegation battle with a stunning 3-1 win over Chelsea on Saturday, as Manchester United's Premier League title challenge stumbled after they conceded a late equalizer to draw at Leicester.

Everton moved into second place, two points behind leaders Liverpool with a 1-0 win at Sheffield United, while Manchester City climbed to fifth place after beating Newcastle 2-0.

Liverpool will go five points clear of Everton if they beat struggling West Brom on Sunday. Mikel Arteta led Arsenal to win the FA Cup the last time they faced Chelsea in August, but less than five months on, the Spaniard was under intense

pressure after a run of one win in 10 league games.

Arteta had bemoaned his side's fortune in recent weeks, but the Gunners' luck turned on a night when he gave youngsters Gabriel Martinelli and Emile Smith Rowe the chance to shine in the absence of more experienced figures such as David Luiz, Willian and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

“It's a really big win for us,” said Arteta. “Hopefully it is going to be a turning point and elevate the level of confidence in the team.” Kieran Tierney won a soft penalty for a push by Reece James and Alexandre Lacazette slotted home the spot kick to open the scoring on 34 minutes.—AFP ■