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Friday, 1 January 2021

2021 New Year Message from President U Win Myint

(1 January 2021)

DEAR esteemed citizens of Myanmar,

I extend my greetings and good wishes for your good health and well-being on this auspicious occasion of the 2021 New Year.

During the past years, our Union Government has worked relentlessly for the smooth performance and effectiveness of the government's administrative machinery and development of the whole country. For the all-round development of the Union, we formulated short-term and long-term plans by designating 11 sectors and worked on these plans. Working in this way, there have been many projects which we have successfully completed as well as many projects that remain to be completed. In the coming years, we will join hands and work with the people not only to complete these projects but will strive to create better conditions and new opportunities in the political, economic and social sectors.

My fellow citizens,

The most important fundamental requirement for the development and success of a country is to peace and stability and the rule of



... it is important for all the people to work collectively in collaboration for Union peace and stability, for the successful establishment of a Democratic Federal Union aspired by all citizens, in such a way we would be able to work simultaneously for equal development all across the Union.

law. In working towards this end, the collective strength of the people is extremely important.

Just as it is important for all the people to work collectively in collaboration for Union peace and stability, for the successful establishment of a Democratic Federal Union aspired by all citizens, in such a way we would be able

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2021 New Year Message from Vice-President U Myint Swe



DEAR esteemed Union born ethnic national brothers and sisters, I extend my good wishes and greetings to all Union born ethnic national brothers and sisters living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to be blessed with good health and well-being in the auspicious New Year of 2021. In the New Year, all ethnic national brothers and sisters –

May they be able to work in the interest of the country in good health and well-being.

May their socio-economic lives be elevated and developed.

May they all be free from the dangers of COVID-19 and be blessed with good health.

May they achieve as soon as possible the "Peace" that they have all been longing for!

2021 New Year Message from Vice-President U Henry Van Thio



ON the auspicious occasion of the New Year "2021", I extend my greetings and good wishes to all citizens for their good health, well-being and auspiciousness.

Every New Year usually brings new challenges and new opportunities. So, in this New Year also, I believe that there will be new opportunities for all our ethnic national brothers and sisters to work with mutual respect and mutual understanding and friendship in establishing the Democratic Federal Union that we all aspire to.

In this year, may all of us be able to learn good lessons from the experiences of past years.

May all of us be able to collaboratively work to fulfil all the expectations of all ethnic national races. I wish you a prosperous and great New Year 2021, free from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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New Year Wishes of Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa Chair of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee



Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa.

MY NEW YEAR Wish is that during the life-time of Buddha in the past over 2,500 years ago, Vesali state was hit by three major catastrophes—(a) pandemic (b) devils (c) starvation.

The Lord Buddha taught his disciple Anadar recitation of Ratana Sutta, and the latter could help people to overcome these catastrophes.

Myanmar people are advised to recite Ratana Sutta very often, to follow moral conducts and to share merits to celestial beings. In return, those celestial beings may help all the human beings in overcoming COVID-19 pandemic.

New Year Special Message of Sitagu Sayadaw, Sagaing Hill

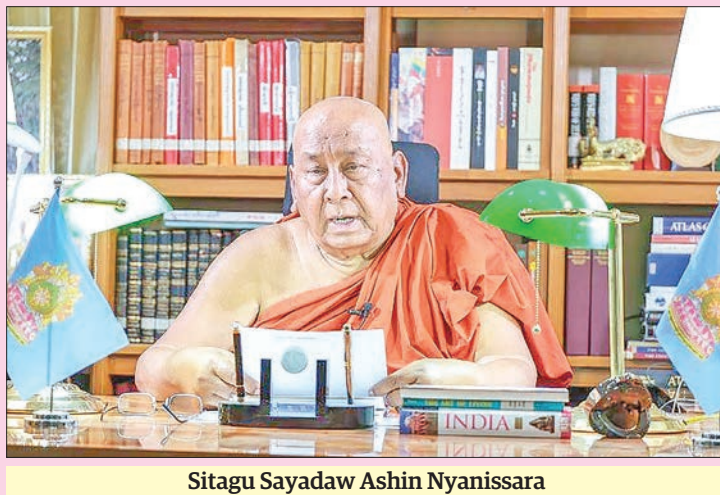
HOW to live in life, like swimming across a sea

Life is very wide and deep with full of storms and tidal waves. Life is like a sea. If someone is not in motion or is unable to swim, it is not sure to avoid sinking or floating.

- Continuous effort must be made in swimming to reach the shore.
- It is needed to know 'swimology'.
- 'Swimology' must be learnt.
- Swimming skill is required.

By developing great courage, firm determination, brave endeavour and profound wisdom, the most traditional and ancient way of living in life, like swimming across the wild sea with dangerous aquatic creatures, is the 'Eightfold Noble Path' with eight components.

The noble persons in the



Sitagu Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara

past followed this path, and the future ones will follow suit.

The nobler ones of the present time are also on the same path.

May all the persons with devotion to good deeds cross the sea with tidal waves and dangerous aquatic creatures along the single path of -ology.

It is the 'Eightfold Noble Path'. The most important meaning is 'swimology'.

Swimology is the most important.

The most important is Swimology.

That is the 'Eightfold Noble Path'.

Dr Nandamala Bhivamsa Rector Sayadaw

THE Year 2020 has ended with worries and remorse caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Share merits for all beings, and make wishes for a happy and pleasant life, the end of the pandemic in the upcoming year.

The pandemic has caused various losses of relatives and property. It is needed to follow healthcare guidelines, and everybody should maintain moral disciplines, right views and practising good deeds.

May all you steadfastly follow the Dhamma path.



Rector Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dr Nandamala Bhivamsa



Dhamma Duta Sayadaw Ashin Cekinda

IT is required to have good wishes for the prosperity of our own family. The wish rooted in affection to our own family.

All the members of the family, including oneself, should enjoy the prosperity.

Laziness and stupidity must be removed by active learning to enjoy prosperity. There is no end to learning.

A very conceited person could not learn any more and would turn into an idiot due to the lack of updated knowledge. All the persons should try for the prosperity of their family and for their country.

Keep a mindset to love and cherish the own country, while expanding knowledge for the development of the country.

Dhamma Duta Sayadaw Ashin Cekinda

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

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

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

Strive for development with united strength

All our ethnic national brothers and sisters need to strive with united strength based on national unity for the success of the peace process, for overcoming the various steps of the democratic transition process, for democracy to take firm root and for it to develop, progress and endure.

(Extract from the Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint on 4 January 2020 on the occasion of the 72nd Anniversary of Independence Day.)



Landscape of Bagan Cultural Heritage Zone. PHOTO: TUN TUN THEIN

2021 New Year Message from President U Win Myint

FROM PAGE-1

to work simultaneously for equal development all across the Union. That is why I wish to make this request to all Union citizens to join hands in overwhelming numbers and work in the interest of our country.

My fellow citizens,

Beginning from the end of 2019, because of the COVID-19 pandemic that spread across all the countries of the world, many countries suffered tragic losses in human lives as well as great difficulties in the eco-

nomie and social sectors. Our country also suffered similar difficulties to a certain extent; it is a well-known fact that because the people worked in close cooperation with the Union Government by taking on their assigned tasks in unity, we were able to protect ourselves and control this pandemic without suffering huge losses. This is a very visible and good example of the great value of collective strength. For this, I wish to thank all our citizens.

In the post-COVID-19 pe-

I wish to express my firm belief that all of us would be able to overcome the losses that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic with the united strength of the Union Government and the people.

riod also, we will continue to implement plans which will include economic response and recovery programmes to lessen the impact of this disease on the socio-economic life

of the people. I wish to express my firm belief that all of us would be able to overcome the losses that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic with the united strength of the Union Government and the people.

On this auspicious occasion of the New Year, may all citizens be free from the dangers of this pandemic and may you all have good health and happiness. I send these good wishes for the peace, prosperity and progress of the Union.

Thank you all.

New Year Greetings by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat

DEAR esteemed citizens and ethnic national brothers and sisters,

I send these good wishes for your peace of mind and good health in

this auspicious New Year 2021.

With unity between the Union government and citizens, we are proud to have successfully held

the 2020 multi-party democratic General Elections in accordance with the COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines in order to maintain the momentum of working for nationwide peace and a Democratic Federal Union that all of us aspire to. The Union government has also taken short-term and long-term measures to remedy economic impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and I would like to request all citizens to cooperate in that process.

On this auspicious occasion of the New Year I send these good wishes to all citizens to be free from the pandemic. May they all be able to make their own contribution, "a grain of sand or a piece of brick", for the emergence of a Democratic Federal Union with mutual tolerance and forgiveness!

New Year Greetings by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than

DEAR esteemed ethnic national brothers and sisters living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and abroad, I send my good wishes and prayers for your good health and well-being on this auspicious occasion of the New Year!

By taking lessons from the difficulties and challenges of the previous years, we will have to embrace the New Year in order to benefit from the opportunities of the future.

Follow democratic practices with empathy and, sharing which are the intrinsic aptitudes of Myanmar people. Develop morality and sympathy and tolerance so that a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union, which is the common goal of national people.

Strictly adhere to healthcare rules of the Ministry of Health and Sports



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than

to wear masks whenever going outside and wash hands frequently to prevent infection of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is being faced by the entire world.

I wish that all citizens

would be free from COVID-19; may you all enjoy a healthy and pleasant future in the upcoming year, and may you all be able to follow the teachings of your respective religions.

2021 New Year Message from Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

DEAR esteemed ethnic national brothers and sisters,

I send these good wishes for this auspicious 2021 New Year for your good health and well-being.

I said in the previous New Year's Greetings that the Year 2020 was an important year for our country. Not only our country but also the world encountered various difficult challenges in 2020.

COVID-19 pandemic started in December 2019, and it has spread throughout the world. The Tatmadaw has kept monitoring the prevention and treatment of this disease.

Although the number of COVID-19 cases has declined in the country, constant vigilance is still needed. Strict adherence



Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports could effectively control the transmission of this disease.

All countries of the world are experiencing socio-econom-

ic losses due to this pandemic. The global population is over 7,000 million. All the countries and all the people are struggling for their livelihoods.

As Myanmar is an agro-

based country, strenuous efforts in agricultural and livestock sectors could help in global food security and socio-economic development of Myanmar.

The Tatmadaw will shun

any matter that can hinder and disturb peacemaking processes. In implementing eternal peace, the Tatmadaw has announced a ceasefire for two years from 21 December 2018 to 31 December 2020 in five military command areas. Possible efforts will be made in the future to the utmost extent.

The ethnic armed organizations need to take the NCA path in the post-2020 in leading to a political path based on democracy and a federal system.

The Tatmadaw will make the best effort for eternal peace and national development in close cooperation with the ethnic national brothers and sisters. Let me pray once again for the people to have all their good wishes fulfilled.

New Year Greetings by Interfaith Groups

Interviewed by Min Thit (MNA)/ Photo: Nay Lin U Thaug Htaik

(Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees member / Chairperson of Myanmar Interfaith Central Organization)

I make my New Year greetings to all brothers and sisters of different faiths in Myanmar to live peacefully with mutual respects for one another's religion. I pray for the nation to be free from calamities and for all brothers and sisters from different faiths possess mental and physical wellbeing. May all Myanmar citizens overcome the pandemic.

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo (Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar)

I would like to urge "to visualize together" the establishment of a new Myanmar nation. We saw the united supports of the public during the democratic election in 2020.

People in ethnic regions cast votes for NLD with the hope they



U Thaug Htaik

will get peace. It is clear that this is the time to settle disagreements related to nationalism, faiths and religions. We already gave lives, blood, and sweat. Let us make our nation recover from pains by bringing about reconciliation. No justice, no peace. The government is necessary to abide by political, economic, social, cultural and citizens' rights. It must embrace the dignity of difference.

Let us visualize emerge of a peaceful nation after having justice in economic and environmental affairs of Myanmar. Let us visualize that displaced persons return to their natives with dignity. Let us visualize together to be Myanmar "Golden Country"



Cardinal Charles Maung Bo



Stephen Than Myint Oo

and to be "the most developed nation in Southeast Asia from the poorest one" after building a democratic system, welcoming the day faiths play a central role in peace and reconciliation processes, and sharing resources with equal and transparent manners.



Dr Hla Tun



Al Haj Kalifa U Aye Lwin

I pray for the disappearance of bad dreams of 2020. May the new peaceful, healthy and wealthy Myanmar nation that we imagined actually emerge.

May all citizens possess an auspicious New Year.

Dr Hla Tun (Member of Thanantana Dham-

ma Palaka (Hindu) Association and Myanmar Interfaith Central Organization)

We were facing coronavirus pandemic in 2020. All people felt sorrow. I pray for all beings to be free from danger and be well and happy.

Stephen Than Myint Oo (Archbishop of Church of the Province of Myanmar [Anglican])

The Year 2021 be an auspicious year. We faced difficulties in 2020 because of coronavirus pandemic. I pray for all citizens possess mental and physical well-beings. May God bless you all.

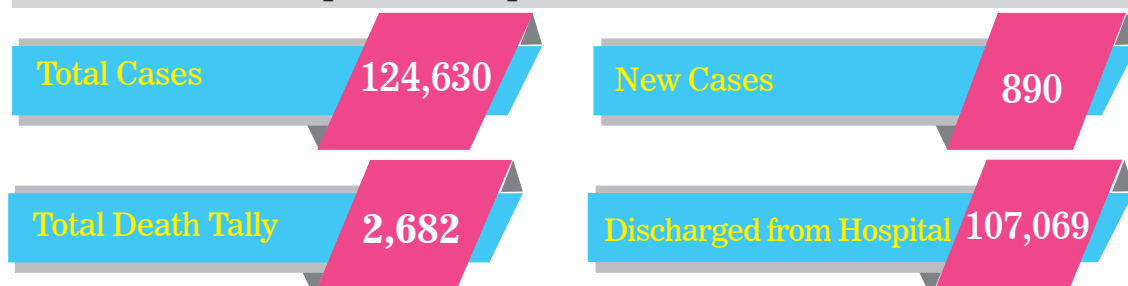
Al Haj Kalifa U Aye Lwin (Myanmar) Chief Convener, Islamic Centre of Myanmar)

All Myanmar citizens and all beings across the world be well, happy and peaceful in the new year. We had many difficulties and challenges in 2020. We are facing against the common enemy of coronavirus. May peace and good health be upon you.

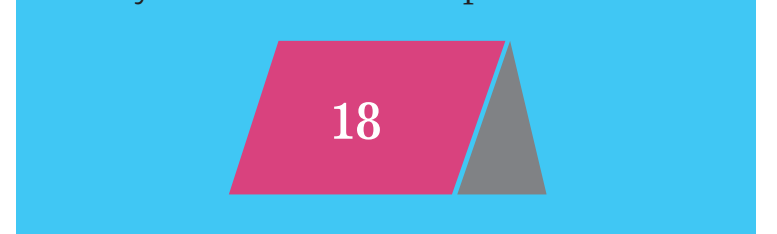
890 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 31 December, total figure rises to 124,630

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 124,630 after 890 new cases were reported on 31 December according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 124,630 confirmed cases, 2,682 died, 107,069 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 31 December 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 31-12-2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

We should not stumble just as our goal comes into view



what we are now focusing our attention on is the vaccine. To purchase vaccines for 15 million people, our delegation is now in India. We will get a clearer picture regarding the purchase of this vaccine within next week. We have already made necessary preparations to initiate the vaccination programme not long after the sales agreement has been signed and all the necessary preparations have been made. This is for the whole country. We will be carrying this out step by step in order of priority; for example, the first priority will be for the healthcare workers who are on the frontlines. After that, we will conduct the vaccination programme as needed for the country as well as for the people. This will be carried out step by step. Whatever the case may be, even after we have obtained the vaccines, the vaccination process for the whole country will take months. That is why we need to be very vigilant during this interim period. We should not stumble just as our goal comes into view.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's report on COVID-19 containment measures, on 25 December 2020)

MoE holds second-day meeting with teachers for drafting NESP

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi held the second day of the online meeting with teachers from the basic education, technological and vocational education sectors for drafting the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) (2021-2030) yesterday morning.

The meeting was also joined by the Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, teachers and relevant officials.

During the meeting, the Directors-General for the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education participated in the discussion on the respective sectors and the relevant officials cordially discussed detail.

Afterwards, the Union Minister expressed words of thanks and concluded the meeting.—MNA *(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)*

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi participates in the virtual meeting with teachers on drafting the National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 on 31 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



2021 New Year Greetings from Peace Negotiators, EAOs leaders



Dr Lian Hmung Sakhong

THE following are the excerpts from 2021 New Year Greetings of peace negotiators and EAOs leaders reflecting the expectation of peace.

Dr Lian Hmung Sakhong
(Vice-Chairman of Chin National Front)

I wish that peace dialogues could turn into peace implementation in 2021. May all the national people make peace of the country this year after discussions on fundamental principles for the establishment of the Union based on democracy and federal system.



U Hla Maung Shwe

U Hla Maung Shwe
(Secretary, UPDJC)

I wish for the well-being of people in the new year. The Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) will implement peace-processes, including the Part 3 of Union Accord and discuss with the ethnic armed organizations which have not signed the NCA. I hope that we could make good results in these processes. May all the citizens enjoy peace and happiness in 2021 New Year, overcome the pandemics and establish a Union based on the democracy and federal system.



U Myo Win

U Myo Win
(Vice-Chairman, of ABSDF)

We all encountered many challenges in 2020, in peace-making issue and the outbreak of COVID-19. I wish that all the people could free from the disease and get the vaccine. Peace and prosperity of the country cannot be made by the ruling party or the government alone. We need to work for national unity aspired by all citizens. We must try for lasting peace based on the good foundations.

Armed conflicts in Rakhine State and the northern part of



Khun Myint Tun

the country have been under control to a certain degree. All the stakeholder must work together for peace. Enjoy peace and happiness in the new year.

Khun Myint Tun
(Vice-Chairman of PNLO)

I hope peace and unity could be made phase by phase in 2021. I also wish for the establishment of the Federal Union through national reconciliation and unity. I expect that we could overcome all sorts of crisis by the collective strength of our people.



Saw Mra Razar Linn

Saw Mra Razar Linn
(Deputy Leader of Peace-Making Group, ALP)

I wish that all the national people could enjoy health and well-being in the new year. My wishes also reflect the expectation of Arakan Liberation Party (ALP). I believe that the ethnic armed organizations, the government and majority of the public have agreed that the establishment of a Federal Union is pivotal to the peace. I conclude that absolute devotion is needed in serving for the country.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
Statement on Ceasefire and Eternal Peace
(2nd Waning of Nadaw, 1382 ME)
(31 December 2020)

1. For striving towards the achievement of eternal peace aspired by the public and effective and rapid control of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services has issued a statement to enforce the ceasefire from 1 to 31 December 2020 in all areas excluding the areas where terrorist groups declared by the government take positions. The Tatmadaw was forming a peace dialogue committee to hold discussions with EAOs for achieving eternal peace.
2. With the aim to achieve eternal peace in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to smoothly implement peace processes with EAOs, and to increase momentum of effective containment, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 pandemic, The Tatmadaw announced the extension of suspension of military activities from 1 to 31 January 2021 in all areas excluding the areas where terrorist groups declared by the government take positions.

Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

2021 New Year Wishes from Businesspersons

Interview by Min Thit (MNA)
Photo by Nay Lin

Wunna Kyaw Htin Sithu,
Thayay Sithu U Aung Ko Win
(Patron of UMFCCI)

May all the national people of the Union enjoy health and well-being during the auspicious New Year occasion. While the government is working for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, people need to follow the rules and directives of the state leaders and the Ministry of Health and Sports to prevent infection of this pandemic.

People should join hands with the government to improve the education quality of the country as it is crucial for the development of the country in the post-COVID-19.

It is pleasing to see that the government is putting emphasis on the economic sector in trying for the livelihood the public and the creation of employment opportunities. All the stakeholders in the economic sector need to work for the successful digital transformation.

All the national people should be united in striving for the Union peace as early as possible as it is necessary for the better rule of law and security, services in health and education, businesses and social sectors.

On this New Year, I wish that all the national people could overcome COVID-19 pandemic and establish a democratic state with lasting peace and prosperity.

U Zaw Min Win

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)

I wish all the best of our citizens and international partners who support Myanmar with good intentions. The Republic of the



Wunna Kyaw Htin Sithu,
Thayay Sithu U Aung Ko Win



Wanna Kyaw Htin Dr Khin Shwe
Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which leads the private business sector of the country, is successively cooperating with the government and international organizations for peace, stability, the prosperity of the country as well as socio-economic development of the people.

I also appreciate the efforts of the government that they are closely working with the private firms to implement the sustainable economic development of the country based on the development of the private sector.

I would like to extend my sincere wishes for active collaboration of Myanmar businesspersons, members of UMFCCI and partner organizations and for the interests of the State, public and private business firms in upcoming New Year.

U Chit Khaing



U Zaw Min Win



U Myo Htwe
(President of Aden Group Company Limited)

I would like to wish a happy and prosperous new year by ending the feelings of worries and sadness that we suffered during the global pandemic last year.

I also wish all Myanmar people could build up a peaceful Union with the positive changes, participate in the new projects of the country regardless of their ages when the economy revives, grab the chances for the development of local tourism industry and agricultural sector to meet the needs of global food security and for the interests of farmers.

Wanna Kyaw Htin Dr Khin Shwe

(Chairman of Zaykabar Company Limited)

On this auspicious occasion of New Year, I wish all people of the world and Myanmar citizens an early escape from COVID-19



U Chit Khaing



Dr San San Yi

pandemic and good health.

The year has changed from 2020 to 2021, and it is such an important year for all people. All as you know, all the countries report high casualties while many business people face recession and all have to struggle in a serious quagmire due to COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, all the people from different walks of life are prioritized not to be infected with the diseases as well as their keeps. When the pandemic ends, it needs better economic recovery to ease the food and accommodation concerns of grassroots people.

Myanmar has better things than other countries as it boasts vast areas of land to conduct breeding and agriculture and better soil, weather and human resources to produce food products.

If we correctly apply these

advantages, the country will have the best opportunities for recovery processes than other countries in the post-COVID-19 period.

Myanmar has plenty of natural resources, and so it is easier to conduct recovery plans than other countries. If the relevant officials create better changes and systematic management, the situation will be better.

I hope there would be good news for the country and citizens in the coming New Year.

U Myo Htwe

(Managing Director of PRO 1 Global Co., Ltd)

On the auspicious occasion of the 2021 New Year, I would like to extend my good wishes to all for their excellent health, well-being and better job opportunities.

May all Myanmar citizens receive COVID-19 vaccines, may the country quickly be free from the pandemic and may all you enjoy best of health and peace of mind in this New Year.

Dr San San Yi

(Chairperson of Okkar Thiri Company Limited)

I am wishing you all a Happy New Year. May all the Myanmar people possess better portents and sweet words in 2021. May all you be free from three disasters and five enemies. I wish you all the best. May all the people in the world enjoy best of health and peace of mind and may all you overcome the risk of COVID-19 pandemic by following the health rules. May the whole world be free from COVID-19 pandemic. I wish you all gain better economy in 2021. I believe that everything will be OK if we all carry out in unity.

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

New Year wishes from artists for 2021

One year has passed. The old year is over, and the new year is 2021. Welcoming the year 2021, here is a collection of New Year wishes, including words of encouragement from the artists to get through the best in the new year, based on the events happened in the year 2020.

Academy award winner Yan Aung

In the 2021 New Year, I wish we all be free from the filth and diseases of the old year and a safe and prosperous New Year with a new mind and a new spirit. During the suffering COVID-19 period, all human beings are struggling and trying to face it. All of this is a new experience for us. With that in mind, let's get through a new life by protection, prevention and living a new lifestyle. I urge you all to be strong.

Director Kyi Phyu Shin

I wish all the people from Myanmar and all around the world can welcome the New Year with good health. I want the global COVID-19 pandemic to end as soon as possible. The disease affects everyone's health, well-being and the economy. Therefore, I wish all of you to be free from this catastrophe and to be healthy, happy and prosperous. The main thing is that if this terrible disease is cured, I believe there will be an economic and social improvement.

Zen Kyi

With half a smile without giving up

I was able to get out... What a beautiful number

But it's very different in reality

Bye Bye, 2020

But... 2020,

Practical training of impermanence. And What really matters in life...

2021 with the weapon of love received in 2020. Let's go through the best...

I wish 2021 would be the opposite year of 2020 for all.

Director Christina Kyi

While the COVID-19 pandemic is stuck in the



Yan Aung



Kyi Phyu Shin



Zen Kyi



Christina Kyi



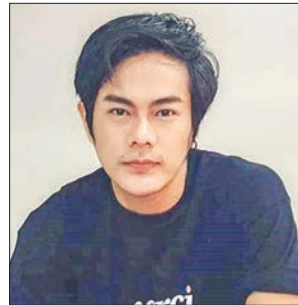
Na Gyi



Paing Phyo Thu



Daung



Kyaw Su



Yan Yan Chen



Aung Htet



Phyo Pyae Sone



Comedian Oak Aww



Pann Thee



Artist Sin Ma



Tain Nyut

world for a long time, I avoided as much of a stressful situation as possible by doing physical activity, eating fruits and vegetables that reduce stress, reading inspirational books, spending time with my loving family and doing research to improve my career and waiting for the pandemic to leave the world.

May all be strong and free from the pandemic as soon as possible and may you have a prosperous, happy and disease-free life.

Director Na Gyi

In the new year 2021, I pray for the speedy implementation of a new rating system that we have never had before and a genuine democracy as soon as possible.

Academy award winner Paing Phyo Thu

In the new year, I wish all the people of Myanmar good health physically and mentally.

Daung

In the new year, I wish we all have new hopes, new dreams, a world with new joys.

Kyaw Su

In the New Year, I wish all human beings free from

all diseases and Happy New Year. We all have to go through the same period during COVID-19, so I would like to tell you not to get discouraged, but to live with a healthy lifestyle and protect yourself.

Yan Yan Chen

Starting from the new year, I pray all the people will have better health and prosperity, and all businesses will prosper beyond normal. I believe that now all human beings can overcome COVID-19 disease.

Aung Htet

At the New Year, I wish all Myanmar people are happy, healthy and free from diseases. I wish we all are free from the current COVID-19 disease and all families are happy and healthy.

Phyo Pyae Sone

In the new year 2021, I wish you all good health. May you have more success and happiness in the future. In the year 2020, We had to go through sadness and harmful things.

From there, in 2021, we will bring back the good from the bad. I also pray for better health, and what to prepare with maturity and experiences we have had.

I want you to think about how we can get through our days in life with COVID-19 rather than the COVID-19 vaccines. Another thing is that nothing is permanent in the world. So what is happening now will pass at some point. As good things will come and so I urge you to move on with this belief.

Eaint Chit

In the year 2021, I wish all the audience good health and prosperity. I wish we can get rid of the COVID-19 disease as soon as possible and I also wish all the families have happy minds.

Gone Ye Aye Kyaw

In the coming new year, may all Myanmar people and all the people of the world be free from all diseases, economic crises and have healthy and prosperous days.

Wanna

In the new year, I wish we all have new minds and new successes. During the COVID-19 period, don't get depressed but live a healthy lifestyle to keep your spirits up.

I would like to encourage you all to strive to be healthy and the strong peo-

ple who are able to achieve many of your dreams once the pandemic is over.

May La Than Zin

I wish every family will be healthy and work again, starting from the new year 2021. I am now living a healthy lifestyle with care. We do not know how far this COVID-19 will last, so whatever you do, I would like to urge you to take care of you in whatever you do by following the instructions, wearing masks and washing your hands.

Performers

Comedian Tain Nyut

I wish all art lovers and citizens full of joys starting from the beginning of the New Year. I also wish you all good economic and social prosperity and free from the pandemic.

Comedian Pann Thee (Thee Lay Thee)

Starting from the New Year, may all citizens be free from the COVID-19 disease and have a happy life. May all families be happy and healthy. May the peace that all the people have been waiting for during the second term of the government be achieved as soon as possible. I pray that the government and the

people will work together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic more successfully.

Comedian Oak Aww

May the world free from the global COVID-19 virus as soon as possible. From the time of the New Year, I wish all citizens May have a good economy, health and social life and free from the disease. May all the people be successful in 2021 and work for the development of the country.

Artist Sin Ma

In 2021, may all the ethnic brothers and sisters living in the country have peace of mind and be in good health and free from the COVID-19 disease. Please protect the disease starting from ourselves.

Roads for the development of our country are appearing. Each of us is responsible for making our country, nationality and the next generation prosper. Let all the people cooperate. I would like to encourage to be strong, and I wish we all start the economy and social works with a new mind, new spirit beginning from the New Year.

Interviewed by Mon Oo Nadi / Zaw Gyi
(Translated by EPPA)

Remain united in fighting pandemic in New Year

2020, WHICH was not a good year for most people, came to an end yesterday.

In 2020, the coronavirus infected 180,000 people and claimed the lives of over 2,680 Myanmar people. Businesses including SMEs on which general employees are relying for livelihood are closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our children have suffered gaps in their educations.

There were havocs wreaked by and economic upheaval caused by COVID-19, but we could come together to contain the pandemic.

We have witnessed achievements in containing the COVID-19, to date, and we could hold the 2020 General Election successfully amidst challenges from the pandemic.

In comparison, the situation of the pandemic in our country is not as severe as other countries now face. No doubt, we have been successful, thus far, thanks to the public's participation and awareness. This is a credit to the crucial role of public participation in preventing and containing the pandemic.

This is also one of the positives of 2020, and our New Year's resolution should be the same as in the old year when we helped and protected each other as we look forward to the time when there will be mass immunity to COVID-19 in 2021 without leaving anyone behind. It means our battle with the pandemic will continue long into the New Year.

In fact, even with the arrival of vaccines in 2021, we are not out of the woods yet. Still, we need to repair the havoc wreaked by COVID-19 in the years to come.

It has been a struggle in 2020 but we could see a light at the end of the tunnel due to the COVID-19 vaccines.

Getting through that long tunnel will involve following health guidelines such as social distancing, wearing masks and washing hands frequently

Mask up, wash up and keep at least 6 feet of distance from others until there is widespread immunity to the coronavirus.

On New Year Day, we would like to urge the people to remain farsighted, determined, diligent and unified to be able to overcome the losses that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

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Sayagyi U Pe Maung Tin

By Dr. Saw Mra Aung

U PE Maung Tin was the only Myanmar to be appointed to the post of Principal of University College (Yangon University) during colonial period. He was as well the one who raised the status of Myanmar-shar shelved by the British at that time. He was the writer of many books in Myanmar and English and the English translator of two well-known Pali commentaries-Visuddhimagga and Atthasalini. He also served in various prestigious capacities throughout his life.

He was born to an Anglican family at Pauktaw in Insein township, Yangon on 24th April, 1888. His parents were U Pe and Daw Myaing, both Baptist Christians hailing from Central Myanmar. His parental grandfather was the first Myanmar pastor of Hinthda while the maternal grandfather, the Sasana-baing (Primate) of the Taungkwin Sangha Sect of Upper Myanmar. U Tun Nyein, who compiled one of the earliest English-Myanmar dictionaries in Myanmar, was his paternal uncle. Although he belonged to a Christian family, he was sent to a monastery near the house, where he learnt basic Pali texts for three years from 1893 to 1896.



Former President U Htin Kyaw, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi cut ribbon to open a statue of U Pe Maung Tin at the Yangon University in Yangon on 20 December, 2019. PHOTO:MNA

but the name was prefixed with his father's 'Pe', when he came of age. In 1910, he became a founding member of the Journal of Burma Research Society (JBRS) and started contributing articles to it. In 1912, he was appointed Pali

mar-sar teachers as U Lin and U Tin in addition to U Pwar who had been appointed before he went to England. Moreover, he demanded to the University Senate that the curriculum of Myanmar-sar should be extended and that more opportunities of teaching Myanmar-sar should be created. So the University Senate prescribed that Myanmar Myanmar-sar must be a compulsory subject for all students including Myanmar and foreigners. It also proffered him 1,000 rupees to buy more Myanmar-sar texts. Therefore, soon, he was able to open Myanmar-sar honours and master classes with the aid of the newly-appointed teachers. Thus he could produce a brood of outstanding Myanmar-sar students like Maung Sein Tin, Maung Wun, Maung Thein Han, Maung Aye Maung, Maung Toe Aung, etc who, some years afterwards, pioneered a new form of Myanmar-sar called Khit-san-sar-pay (Age-testing literature), which marked a turning point in the history of Myanmar literature.

The Second Yangon University Boycott broke out because of the expulsion of Ko Nu and Ko Aung San from the university in 1936. Subsequent to the boycott, Principal D.J.Sloss was transferred to Hongkong University. U Pe Maung Tin was appointed in his place. Thus he became the

tenant-Governor, he also agreed to the decision of U Pe Maung Tin. Then he ousted Mr Peacock from his position and transferred him to England.

U Pe Maung Tin became President of the JBRS in 1939. The Myanmar-sar Department was separated from the Department of Oriental Studies in 1941. U Aye Maung became the first Professor of the Myanmar-sar Department that year. U Pe Maung Tin retired from the position of the principal in 1946. However, due to his eclectic academic knowledge, he was dragged back into the academic field and appointed again to the position of Principal of the University of Adult Education in 1947. He also became Chairman of the University Translation and Publication Advisory Board and Emeritus Pali Professor the following year. He was awarded an Honourary Doctorate LL.D by Yangon University in 1952. In 1957-58, he visited Chicago University and lectured on Buddhism. It conferred an Honourary Doctorate on him. Moreover, he took the helm of the Myanmar Translation Association. And he had to serve as Chairman of the Myanmar Historical Commission from 1960 to 1964. He died at the age of 85 on 22 March, 1973.

In conclusion, it is found that although U Pe Maung Tin was one of the most educated Myanmar-sars during Colonial Period and reached his heights as Principal, Chairman and President of many institutions and organizations, he was never puffed up with the feeling of superiority. He was a humble, perfect man to every inch, in whose footsteps the new generation should follow. Really, he dedicated all his life to the academic field of Myanmar. So the writer thinks that, especially, Yangon University and the Myanmar-sar Department should owe much to him for what he did more for them.

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-Wikipedia Source

He was the only Myanmar on the commission formed in 1918 to establish the Yangon University independent of Calcutta University. In 1920, he was despatched to Oxford University where he translated the Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purity) and got a B.Litt degree.

This helped him secure an enhanced opportunity of becoming a Pali scholar when he grew up. In 1896, he joined a government high school where he got scholarship and many prizes. In 1906, he entered Yangon College. Then he got a B.A degree from it in 1909 and a M.A degree from Calcutta University in 1911. Due to his competence in Pali, he was known as Pali Maung Tin or M.A Maung Tin. During his first years of life, he was called Maung Tin

Professor of Yangon College and Librarian of Benard Free Library. Moreover, he was on the editorial board of the JBRS the same year. He as a Pali Professor, made contact with the Pali Text Society and started to translate into English the Atthasalini(The Expositor), the commentary on the Dhammasangani, in 1916.

He was the only Myanmar on the commission formed in 1918 to establish the Yangon University independent of Calcutta Univer-

Chronicle'. In 1924, he returned to Myanmar and became Professor of Oriental Studies comprising Persian, Pali and Myanmar studies at the Yangon University. As he then noticed that Myanmar-sar was relegated by the university authorities and the teaching of it was low, he decided to promote importance of Myanmar-sar at the university. So he brought out some Myanmar-sar texts with the assistance of the JBRS. Besides, he appointed such new Myan-

73rd 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 a 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 Thursday 31st December, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 01st January, 2021: Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon, Taninthayi Regions and Eastern Shan, Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly winds may reach (30-35) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (4-6) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 January, 2021: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 January, 2021: A few cloud.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 January, 2021: Fair weather.

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Implementation committee on recommendations on Rakhine State holds meeting on review report (draft)



Committee on Implementing the Recommendations on Rakhine State holds meeting over its review report (draft) in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE committee on implementing recommendations on Rakhine State held its coordination meeting over the review report (draft) regarding implementation activities, at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye (also chairperson of the committee), Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu (also joint chairperson of the committee) and other committee members attended the meeting.

The Union Minister said that during the three-year term of the committee, it had prepared a review report based on the status of implementation of the 88 recommendations of the Rakhine State Advisory Commission

chaired by Mr Kofi Annan for the stability and long-term development of the Rakhine State.

The Secretary's Office of the Recommendation Committee has prepared a review report (draft) in accordance with the results of the analysis, and the attendees discussed the report (draft).

The Union Minister said that the review report (draft) is based on the information published in the committee's public reports issued every four months and the information from monthly reports submitted by the Rakhine State government and the relevant ministries.

He pointed out that the three crises that need to be addressed for stability and development in the Rakhine State are development crisis, human rights crisis

and security crisis. He said that all relevant committees and officials has worked together to address those crises.

The Union Minister added that most of the recommendations are for a long-term period and progress has been made to some extent. But it is difficult to quantify the progress, according to the Union Minister, who said that indicators need to be developed to measure the progress.

Regarding the international pressure, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, in his capacity as joint chairperson of the committee, said that the committee members need to be thoughtful in their speech and actions because their words and actions will have a great impact on the international perspective. He also highlighted the need to focus

on Rakhine State issues to ease international pressure.

Deputy Minister for State Counsellor Office U Khin Maung Tin, in his capacity as vice-chairperson of the committee, said that preparation of the review report is very important because the report will provide necessary information to respond to international pressure.

During the meeting, other committee members explained their relevant tasks and made suggestions for the report.

In his closing speech, the Union Minister called on the committee members to adhere to COVID-19 related guidelines in implementing recommendations on the Rakhine State. —MNA

(Translated by
Maung Maung Swe)

Myanmar nationals brought back home from Japan by relief flight

THE 17th relief flight of All Nippon Airways (ANA) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo landed at Yangon International Airport bringing back a total of 155 Myanmar Nationals after they were stranded in Japan due to the suspension of international flights yesterday evening.

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

To bring back the Myanmar citizens and Myanmar seamen who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 31 December 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries and shipping

companies.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

YGEA to penetrate foreign markets with Bogyoke Aung San, DASSK gold coins

By Nyein Nyein

YANGON Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) is endeavouring to sell gold coins with the portrait of national leader Bogyoke (General) Aung San or Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in foreign markets, U Myo Myint, chair of YGEA.

The gold coins are planned to place in the London, the US and Hong Kong SAR markets, he continued.

“The association is committed to export gold coins to London, the US and Hong Kong SAR markets. Myanmar’s gold market will raise its head again if we can ship the gold to foreign markets in line with international standardization, and it can easily flow in and out of the country,” he affirmed.

At present, the illegal gold trade is still found in the country. As a result of this, the association plans to export gold coins with

the portrait of Bogyoke Aung San or Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or the state seal to international markets.

“Additionally, the gold coin export to London has some issues. The investors from London had met Myanmar businesspersons to set up coin factory in Myanmar,” the YGEA chair said.

“The Central Bank of Myanmar, the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Commerce are associated with this matter. The

gold can be directly delivered to the London market only with approvals from those institutions. London investor offered to establish a coin factory in Myanmar with contributions of US\$24 million. We need to give three acres of land and one building for the factory. They will implement to run the factory within six months to one year,” U Myo Myint stated.

Furthermore, beyond physical gold bullion, matters concerning gold monetization with

interest rate benefits and gold exchange are also discussed. I see potential in this. I believe a gradual change over a long period with the formation of law and by-laws will bring about a fruitful result,” he shared his opinion.

Myanmar gave the green light to gold exports and imports in January 2018, with the aims to eradicate illegal trade, earn revenue for the country and maintain the market’s stability.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

US dollar rate drops to K1,340 despite CBM purchases \$8 mln

By Nyein Nyein

THE US dollar exchange rate dropped to K1,340 per dollar, although the Central Bank of Myanmar bought US\$ 8 million, according to the local exchange market.

The US dollar against the Kyat rose to K1,400 in mid-December. Then, the exchange rate plummeted around by 60 kyats a few days later.

Within ten days, the CBM purchased \$1.9 million at the auction average exchange rate of K1, 330 per dollar on 23 December, \$3.8 million on 29 December and \$2.1 million on 30 December from the local exchange market.

In December, CMB bought \$7.8 million. After that, the CBM resold \$3 million back on 14 December when raising the US exchange rate. Since the start of the year, the bank has been purchasing the US

dollar in the auction market to keep the exchange rate stable.

This year, the exchange rate moves in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July and K1,335-1,390 in August. Last year, the rates are pegged at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

In 2019, the rates are fixed at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December. On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit an all-time high of K1,650 in the local currency market.

(Translated by Hay Mar)



(FILES) A woman counts US dollar. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

YRIC endorses \$4.92 mln worth 4 proposals in Q1 creating over 2,000 jobs



(FILES) Women work on the production line of a garment factory in Hlinethaya Township, Yangon Region, before the coronavirus outbreak in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC) has endorsed four foreign enterprises from China, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR in the manufacturing sector, with an estimated capital of US\$4.92 million, in the first quarter (Oct-Dec) of the current financial year 2020-2021.

Those enterprises are to create over 2,000 jobs. They will execute manufacturing of bags, footwear, underwear and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis, YRIC stated.

Between 1 October and 30 September of the previous financial year 2019-2020, Yangon Region stood at the first place with 137 foreign enterprises (with a capital of \$308.768 million), followed by Bago Region with 18 foreign projects (\$72.645 million) at the second place and Ayeyawady, with nine at the third place (\$19.614 million).

Additionally, foreign direct investments also flow into Tanin-

thayi Region from two projects worth \$1.397 million, Magway Region from two worth \$0.991 million, Mon State from two worth \$1.664 million, Mandalay Region from one business valued \$4.6 million, Sagaing Region from one worth \$3 million, Kachin State from one worth \$1 million, Shan State from one worth \$4.13 million and Nay Pyi Taw Council from one valued \$5.862 million.

In the last FY, the respective investment committees of Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine and Chin states did not endorse foreign enterprise at all, the DICA stated.

The region and state investment committees endorsed 175 foreign enterprises with an estimated \$423.671-million capital in the last FY.

The endorsed enterprises are to be engaged in the manufacturing, hotel and tourism, other services, power and agricultural sector.

The majority of the investment goes into the manufac-

turing sector, followed by other services, hotels, and tourism sectors.

The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engaging in pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis.

To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands, and Seychelles arrive in the region.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals if the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.— GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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DIGITAL CURRENCY ELECTRONIC PAYMENT (DC/EP)

Digital yuan parades its strengths during trial

IMAGINE a digital currency that can be used even without the internet, one that does not have to be linked to a bank account and is treated just as bank notes and coins. China's digital yuan, although still being piloted, promises to include more people in this fast-developing digital era, making daily life easier and digital payment more secure.

In the eastern Chinese city of Suzhou, a resident surnamed Lu bought some snacks at a basement store in Tianhong Shopping Mall using digital yuan. She transferred 66.6 yuan (about 10.21 U.S. dollars) from her digital wallet to the vendor's account, although both mobile phones were offline. Lu was one of the 100,000 lucky residents of Suzhou



Photo taken on Oct. 12, 2020 shows a sign reminding customers that digital yuan is accepted at a supermarket in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WU YANTING**

who won a "red envelope" containing 200 digital yuan in a pilot program and could spend the digital currency in designated

brick-and-mortar stores as well as on online retail giant JD.com from Dec. 12 to 27.

WHAT IS DIGITAL YUAN?

According to a signed article of Fan Yifei, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), digital yuan will be positioned as a legal tender, designed to be treated as M0, meaning cash in circulation such as coins and bank notes.

The digital currency will be issued by the PBOC, the country's central bank, to designated commercial banks which will then distribute the currency to the public, according to the article published in the Financial News.

SOURCE: Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEFS

China fines affiliate of IT giant Alibaba for irregular pricing

China's market regulator said Wednesday that it has fined the country's IT companies, including an affiliated firm of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., 500,000 yuan (\$76,657) each for irregular pricing.

The punishment comes as President Xi Jinping has pledged to strengthen measures to curb monopolistic behaviour and disorderly capital expansion of the nation's IT giants.

Earlier this month, China's State Administration for Market Regulation started an anti-monopoly investigation of Alibaba, a Chinese company that has grown into one of the world's largest e-commerce businesses, in response to reports to the authorities.

SOURCE: Kyodo

WINDFALL

Big Money: General Electric boss secures \$47 mn bonus

TWO years after taking the helm at a slumping General Electric, Larry Culp has secured a huge reward: a bonus of around \$47 million and the potential for much more.

The mammoth payoff follows thousands of layoffs at the industrial conglomerate amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Culp took over as chief executive in October 2018 and was paid almost \$25 million in 2019, but he could reap as much as \$230 million if GE meets additional targets, according to securities filings reviewed by AFP.

The ex-CEO of Danaher, Culp has been credited with stabilizing GE's finances through a series of austerity measures, including asset sales and layoffs.

The company justified the bonus citing the executive's performance amid a difficult operating environment.

The board launched a charm offensive over the summer to retain Culp as it faced a bruising downturn in aviation that hit orders for its LEAP engine joint-venture with France's Safran.

The company in August

amended its long-term incentive plan, effectively lowering the bar Culp would have to clear to win the payoff and extended his contract until 2024 with an option for an additional year.

The head of the GE labour union called the package "absolutely outrageous," especially after the company announced some jobs would be shipped overseas.

"How can GE justify this type of enormous bonus for its CEO, while workers, their families, and communities are suffering due to layoffs and



GE Chief Executive has locked in a bonus of at least \$47 million after the company hit targets. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

offshoring?" Carl Kennebrew, president of the Industrial Division of the Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA) said in a statement.

SOURCE: AFP

Facebook to close Irish units at centre of tax dispute

FACEBOOK confirmed Wednesday it was closing its Irish subsidiaries at the centre of a dispute on profit shifting to avoid taxes in the United States.

The California tech giant acknowledged the winding down of Facebook Ireland Holdings Unlimited Company amid a dispute with US tax authorities, which claimed the company owed billions in taxes by improperly shifting profits offshore. A Facebook spokesperson said the move was "part of a change that best aligns with our operating structure" and that the holdings of the three subsidiaries were "distributed to its US parent company." The closing was previously reported by the Times of London and other media. Facebook has disputed the claims from US tax authorities seeking some \$9 billion for allegedly undervaluing intellectual property assets used by the social network. But it noted that these assets were repatriated in July in a move which "best aligns corporate structure with where we expect to have most of our activities and people."

SOURCE: AFP

CITGO PETROLEUM CORPORATION

US slaps sanctions on Venezuelans for jailing ex-Citgo executives

THE United States on Wednesday imposed sanctions on a Venezuelan judge and prosecutor over the jailing of six US-connected former oil executives who allege a sham trial.

The Treasury Department said it was freezing all US assets and criminalizing transactions with Judge Lorena Carolina Cornielles Ruiz and prosecutor Ramon Antonio Torres Espinoza.

The two were behind a trial last month in which six former executives from Citgo, the US-based subsidiary of Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, were handed prison terms.



A rainbow is seen on December 22, 2020 over Caracas, where a Venezuelan court has angered the United States by jailing six former oil executives with US nationality or residency. **PHOTO: AFP**

The six men's families say they were lured to Venezuela and arrested in November 2017 on charges such as money

laundering -- allegations they call laughable in light of what they say is rampant graft and judicial bias under President Nicolas Maduro.

"The unjust detention and sentencing of these six US persons further demonstrates how corruption and abuse of power are deeply embedded in Venezuela's institutions," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said as he announced the sanctions.

Citgo's former president Jose Pereira Ruimwyk, a Venezuelan national with US residency, was jailed for 13 years and seven months and fined \$2 million.

SOURCE: AFP

COMPLETION OF THE BREXIT TRANSITION PERIOD

Japan-U.K. post-Brexit trade deal to take effect Fri

A post-Brexit trade deal between Japan and the United Kingdom is set to come into force Friday, ensuring business continuity and strengthening the bilateral relationship as London seeks to join the larger Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement.

The two countries signed the bilateral FTA in October as the existing Japan-European Union trade pact no longer covers the United Kingdom beyond Thursday, the end of the transition period following its exit from the European Union in January 2020.

A lack of an agreement may have resulted in impositions of higher tariffs on both countries. The deal largely duplicates the Japan-EU FTA, including gradual elimination of British tariffs on Japanese cars by 2026 and immediate removal of its duties on most Japanese agricultural goods such as beef and tea. Under the pact, Japan did not set new preferential treatment for British agricultural imports, although the issue was a major sticking point in their four months of negotiations through October.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and British International Trade Secretary Liz Truss signed the agreement in Tokyo. The deal with Japan was the United Kingdom's first trade pact with a major economy following its departure from the European Union. **SOURCE: Kyodo**



Japan and the United Kingdom signed a post-Brexit bilateral free trade agreement Friday, paving the way for its implementation Jan. 1 2021. Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi (R) and British International Trade Secretary Liz Truss. **PHOTO: POOL/KYODO**

HALF A CENTURY OF TIES

Brexit to take full effect as UK leaves EU single market

BREXIT becomes a reality on Thursday as Britain leaves Europe's customs union and single market, ending nearly half a century of often turbulent ties with its closest neighbours.

The UK's tortuous departure from the European Union takes full effect when Big Ben strikes 11:00 pm (2300 GMT) in central London, just as most of the European mainland ushers in 2021 at midnight.

Brexit has dominated British politics since the country's narrow vote to leave the bloc in June 2016, opening deep political and social wounds that still remain raw.

Legally, Britain left on January 31 but has been in a standstill transition period during fractious talks to a secure a free-trade agreement with Brussels, which was finally clinched on Christmas Eve.

Once the transition ends, EU rules will no longer apply, with the immediate consequence being an end to the free movement of more than 500 million people between Britain and 27 EU states. Customs border checks will be back for the first time in decades, and despite the free-trade deal, queues and disruption from additional paperwork are expected. **SOURCE: AFP**

FAIR TRADE PRACTICES

China, EU complete investment agreement negotiations



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen via video link in Beijing, capital of China, Dec. 30, 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/PANG XINGLEI**

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and European leaders on Wednesday announced that the two sides have completed investment agreement negotiations as

scheduled. The announcement was made during a meeting between Xi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron,

President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen via video link. Calling the investment

agreement between China and the European Union as "balanced, high-standard and mutually beneficial," Xi said the treaty has shown China's determination and confidence to push high-level opening up. "The agreement will provide greater market access, higher level of business environment, stronger institutional guarantees and brighter cooperation prospects for mutual investment," Xi said. The treaty will also greatly boost world economic recovery in the post-pandemic era, enhance the international community's confidence in economic globalization and free trade, making significant contributions to the building of an open world economy, the Chinese president said. **SOURCE: Xinhua**

ADDITIONAL TARIFFS

US imposes new tariffs on French, German products in Airbus-Boeing spat

THE United States announced on Wednesday that it will impose additional tariffs on French and German products as part of a long-running dispute over subsidies for aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing.

The tariffs are on "aircraft manufacturing parts from France and Germany, certain non-sparkling wine from France and Germany, and certain cognac and other grape brandies from France and Germany",



Airbus's massive new cargo plane that looks like a whale. **PHOTO: AFP**

which will be added to the list of products taxed since 2019, according to a statement from the US Trade

Representative. It said the move was in retaliation to tariffs imposed by the European Union which it

considers unfair. The decision is the latest twist in the 16-year trade battle over aircraft subsidies that turned increasingly sour under the protectionist instincts of US President Donald Trump, and comes despite hopes for a trade truce following Joe Biden's election.

The EU was authorized this year by the World Trade Organization (WTO) to levy additional Customs duties on American products. **SOURCE: AFP**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY. NO. (051S/052N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY. NO. (051S/052N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/TMT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TRIESTE TRADER VOY. NO. (051S/053N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TRIESTE TRADER VOY. NO. (051S/053N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/TMT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

LEAVING THE EU'S SINGLE MARKET

Brexit sparks fears of disrupted food, drug supplies

DESPITE the free trade deal signed by London and Brussels, suppliers of food and medicine fear the rapidly introduced changes will disrupt supplies and increase costs, undercutting government claims of a post-Brexit dividend.

While Boris Johnson had promised an “oven-ready” deal a year ago, the British prime minister eventually “delivered us four working days”, the Food and Drink Federation complained

ahead of Britain leaving the EU's single market at the close of 2020.

Minette Batters, president of the National Farmers' Union, said members “do anticipate that there will still be disruption to trade at the border”, despite the deal signed on Wednesday.

As many companies rushed to order in more stock or fulfil orders delayed by coronavirus lockdowns, England's Channel ports, particularly Dover, were already overflowing ahead of the

deal's announcement.

The situation worsened when a number of European countries closed their borders with Britain for two days ahead of Christmas, seeking to curb the spread of a new, more contagious variant of COVID-19.

Thousands of lorries heading to ports got stuck in vast traffic jams and it took several days and the help of the armed forces to unravel the situation.

Ian Wright, chief executive



Tesco supermarket said the new administrative costs would hardly raise prices. **PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS / AFP**

of the Food and Drink Federation, said “last week's chaos at Dover and the last-gasp nature of this deal means that there will be significant disruption to supply and some prices will rise”.

SOURCE: AFP

A TOURIST DESTINATION

China plans tourism development for Greater Bay Area



China will build the Greater Bay Area into a habitable, entrepreneur-friendly area and a tourist destination with a flourishing cultural industry. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINA has recently rolled out a comprehensive development plan on the cultural and tourism development for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater

Bay Area, said the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The country will build the Greater Bay Area into a habitable, entrepreneur-friendly area

and a tourist destination with a flourishing cultural industry.

The plan projected that by the year 2035, the area's tourism and cultural sectors will realize high-quality development, and it will boast greater cultural soft power and higher tourism competitiveness. The plan also emphasized the promotion of national history and culture and the need to beef up patriotic education among the youth in the area. The plan was jointly issued by the ministry, the office of the leading group for the development of the Greater Bay Area, and the Guangdong Provincial People's Government.

SOURCE: AFP

VIBRANT URBAN CENTRE

Afghan youth fear Taliban return will roll back Kandahar's progress



Disc jockey Habiba Quraishi, 19, speaks during a broadcast at the women-led Merman radio station. **PHOTO: AFP**

Once the epicentre of the Taliban's iron-fisted Islamist gov-

ernment, Kandahar city in Afghanistan's restive south is slowly

transforming into a vibrant urban centre dotted with bustling cafes, co-ed universities — and even a women's gym. Every evening, young men head to the Arena club, a trendy cafe in the city of 700,000, to play snooker, watch football on a big screen, or smoke shisha “hubble-bubble” pipes — unthinkable when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. “There was no such place in Kandahar when we built it and there is still no other such place in the (entire) south,” said Nazir Ahmad, the 30-year-old owner of Arena.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS

IN BRIEF

Boris Johnson's father seeks French citizenship

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson's father Stanley confirmed plans on Thursday to seek French citizenship as the free movement of Britons in the EU comes to an end under the Brexit pact delivered by his son.

Speaking to France's RTL radio in French, Stanley Johnson said: “It's not a question of becoming French. If I understand correctly I am French! My mother was born in France, her mother was completely French as was her grandfather.

“For me it's a question of obtaining what I already have and I am very happy about that,” the 80-year-old added.

The father of the politician who ended Britain's 47-year-old membership of the EU was among the first civil servants appointed to Brussels after Britain joined the EU in 1973.

He worked for the European Commission and served as a member of the European Parliament.

He initially campaigned against leaving the EU before changing his mind a year after Britain voted to leave the union in 2016.

SOURCE: AFP

Muslim clerics among 26 held after Pakistan Hindu temple destroyed

AT LEAST two dozen people, including several Muslim clerics, were detained Thursday after a mob attacked and set fire to a Hindu temple in northwest Pakistan, police said.

Around 1,500 Muslims on Wednesday descended on the temple -- which was destroyed in similar circumstances in 1997 -- after staging a protest against renovations at an adjoining building owned by Hindus.

The temple is located in a remote village in Karak district, some 160 kilometres (100 miles) southeast of Peshawar.

“We have arrested 26 people including local clerics for destroying a place of worship and inciting people to riot”, local police official Fazal Sher told AFP.

He added police were looking for a further 50 people identified from videos of the attack.

Discrimination and violence against religious minorities are commonplace in Pakistan, where Muslims make up 97 per cent of the population and Hindus around two per cent. Irfanullah Khan, the district police chief, also confirmed the arrests.

SOURCE: AFP

AIRPORT ATTACK

Yemen govt vows to bring stability after deadly attack



Smoke billows at the Aden Airport on December 30, 2020, after explosions rocked the Yemeni airport shortly after the arrival of a plane carrying members of a new unity government.

PHOTO: SALEH AL-OBEIDI | AFP

Yemen's new power-sharing government vowed on Thursday to bring stability to the war-torn country, a day after deadly blasts rocked Aden airport in an attack

targeting cabinet members.

At least 26 people, including three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a journalist, were

killed and scores wounded in the explosions as ministers disembarked from an aircraft in the southern city.

All cabinet members were reported to be unharmed in what some ministers charged was an attack by the north Yemen-based Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

AFP video footage shows what appears to be a missile strike followed by a ball of intense flames, in part of the airport which moments before had been packed with crowds.

But it is still not fully clear what caused the explosions.

Foreign Minister Ahmed bin Mubarak told AFP on Thursday that the new unity government was up to tackling the challenges facing a country that has long

been the Arab Peninsula's most impoverished nation. "The government is determined to fulfil its duty and work to restore stability in Yemen," he said.

"This terrorist attack will not deter it from that."

Tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, have been killed and millions displaced in Yemen's grinding five-year war, which has triggered what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

The cabinet ministers had arrived in Aden days after being sworn in by Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi in Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition against the Huthi insurgents.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Ten still missing after Norway mudslide buries homes

RESCUE workers were still searching on Thursday for survivors from a landslide that destroyed homes in a Norwegian village close to Oslo leaving 10 people unaccounted for, including two children, and 10 injured.

Work continued overnight after a whole hillside collapsed in Ask, 25 kilometres (15 miles) northeast of the capital.

Homes were buried under mud and some houses were left teetering on the edge of a crater caused by the slide, with several falling over the edge as the day went on.

"It is important for me to stress that we are looking for survivors," chief of operations Roger Pettersen told reporters.

"Now there's daylight and that will help us in our work with better visibility," he said.

Police said one of the 10 people hurt had been seriously injured and was transferred to Oslo for treatment.

One-fifth of Ask's 5,000 population have been evacuated.

SOURCE: AFP

ACCUSED OF COMPLICITY

One year after US killed Iran general, Iraq tensions boil

ONE year after US forces assassinated Iran's most storied commander, tensions are boiling between Iraq's Washington-backed premier and pro-Tehran forces that accuse him of complicity in the Baghdad drone strike.

US President Donald Trump sent shock waves through the region on January 3, 2020 with the targeted killing of Iran's revered General Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant, which infuriated the Islamic republic and its allies.

Trump said the strike came in response to a hail of attacks on US interests in Iraq that has continued since. With only weeks left in the White House,

he has warned that if there are new attacks, "I will hold Iran responsible".

War-scarred Iraq remains torn between former occupation power the United States and neighbouring Iran, Washington's arch-enemy, whose influence has increased greatly since the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi, who took office in May, has recently endured blistering threats from the powerful pro-Iranian paramilitary groups which Washington blames for the rocket attacks. Security sources say tensions flared after the arrest



A member of the Hashed al-Shaabi, an Iraqi paramilitary network dominated by Iran-backed factions, carries a portrait of Soleimani.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

of a man who planned another attack on the US embassy, a fighter of Asaib Ahl al-Haq

(AAH), a faction of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network.

SOURCE: AFP

BEST YEAR ON RECORD

Colombia sets new record in eradicating coca production



In 2019 1,137 tonnes of cocaine were produced in Colombia.

PHOTO: AFP

COLOMBIA beat its record for eradicating coca crops for the second year in a row, the government said Wednesday, although the country still remains the world's leading producer of cocaine. "We have achieved the highest level of manual coca eradication ever recorded by Colombia: 130,000 hectares (321,000 acres)," President Ivan Duque said in a statement to the press. That area, roughly the same size as the city of Los Angeles, exceeds the last record set in 2019, when the government got rid of 94,000 hectares of coca, the main ingredient of cocaine. In

2019, 1,137 tonnes of cocaine were produced in Colombia, a number slightly higher than the previous year, the UN reported. Figures for 2020 are still not available. Duque said his country also set other "historic records" in 2020, such as 498 tonnes of cocaine seized and 5,447 laboratories destroyed. Since taking office in August 2018, Duque's conservative government has prioritized fighting drug trafficking and also launched a plan meant to cut the land area of coca cultivation in half between 2022 and 2023.

SOURCE: AFP

Peacekeeping mission in Sudan's Darfur ends, stoking fears

Sudan's hybrid United Nations-African Union mission in Darfur is set to end its 13-year peacekeeping operations in the conflict marred region Thursday, even as recent violent clashes leave residents fearful.

"The joint United Nations-African Union mission in the Darfur region of Sudan (UNAMID) will officially end operations on Thursday, when the Government of Sudan will take over responsibility for the protection of civilians in the area," the mission said in a statement on Wednesday.

While the bitter conflict that began in 2003 and claimed 300,000 lives has largely subsided, tribal clashes last week left at least 15 people dead and dozens wounded. Citizens, many of whom remain displaced, have held protests in recent weeks against the mission's imminent departure.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar's licenced football clubs hit record in ASEAN

MYANMAR broke the record of the most licenced football clubs in ASEAN region to enter the AFC Club Tournament in 2021 with totalling 15 clubs, according to an official statement with the Myanmar Football Federation and the ASEAN Football Federation.

Myanmar has surpassed all other ASEAN countries in terms of the number of clubs which have successfully licenced for the AFC tourney, according to the ASEAN Football authorities. Among the 11 ASEAN countries, Myanmar hit record with 15 clubs that have licenced for entering the AFC Club Tournament, beating 12 licenced football clubs from neighbouring Thailand and 10 licenced clubs from Viet Nam, AFF stated.

For getting the AFC Club

Tournament licenses, every ASEAN football clubs need to fulfil five main criteria – sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial, football officials said.

In ASEAN, Cambodia, Brunei, Laos and Timor-Leste have not yet qualified for the AFC Championship League but have qualified for the AFC Cup competition. “Myanmar domestic football teams have been instructed by the Myanmar National League to meet the club licence requirements set by the AFC, and the respective football team officials have made a special effort to grab the big achievement,” Myanmar football authorities said.

“This record was made possible by the joint efforts of the



Myanmar possesses 15 licenced clubs including Shan United, the defending champions of the Myanmar National League to compete in the AFC tourneys. **PHOTO: MNL**

Member Associations (MA) Club Licencing Manager and the Club

Licencing Officers. It is also due to the support of all the club of-

officials”, MFF officials added. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)



WBO super flyweight world champion Kazuto Ioka (L) lands a left on Japanese compatriot Kosei Tanaka in the eighth round, when Ioka won by technical knockout, on Dec. 31, 2020 at Tokyo's Ota City General Gymnasium. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Boxing: Ioka defends WBO crown with TKO of unbeaten Tanaka

TOKYO—Japan's Kazuto Ioka successfully defended his WBO super flyweight title for the second time on Thursday in an eighth-round technical knockout of previously unbeaten compatriot and top-ranked contender Kosei Tanaka.

The 31-year-old Ioka, who became the first Japanese to win world championships in four different weight classes, knocked down his aggressive 25-year-old opponent in the fifth and sixth rounds before staggering him with an eighth-round left that caused the referee to stop the fight.

“I thought I'd trained well, but the proof is in the ring,” said Ioka after their fight at Tokyo's Ota City General Gymnasium in which he bided his time to launch surgical strikes while Tanaka moved in to attack at every opportunity.

“Tanaka is still young, and he is boxing's future,” Ioka said. “Fighting him was a great experience for me.— Kyodo ■

EPL plans not to pause season amid rise in Coronavirus case

LONDON—After two fixtures were postponed due to COVID-19, English Premier League (EPL) on Wednesday said they are not planning to pause the season and will play matches as per the scheduled.

Premier League in a statement said it has the backing of the UK government and have confidence in its COVID-19 protocols to enable fixtures as planned.

“The Premier League has not discussed pausing the season and has no plans to do so. The League continues to have

confidence in its COVID-19 protocols to enable fixtures to be played as scheduled, and these protocols continue to have the full backing of Government,” Premier League said in a statement.

This comes following matches between Tottenham and Fulham, and Manchester City's clash against Everton was postponed after a number of positive coronavirus cases were reported.

“With the health of players and staff being the priority, the League is also fully supportive

of how clubs are implementing the protocols and rules,” EPL said.

On Wednesday, Fulham lodged a request with the Premier League Board to rearrange the fixture following a significant rise in positive COVID-19 cases, as well as a number of players showing symptoms.

The Premier League Board has consulted its medical advisors and the decision to postpone the game has been taken as a precaution and with the health of players and staff as the priority.— ANI ■



After two fixtures were postponed due to COVID-19, English Premier League (EPL) on Wednesday said they are not planning to pause the season and will play matches as per the scheduled. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**