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Monday, 4 January 2021

Honouring the 73rd anniversary INDEPENDENCE DAY

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 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.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Win Myint

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Win Myint, on the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From His Majesty Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua King of the Kingdom of Thailand

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to express my warmest congratulations and best wishes for the good health and happiness of Your Excellency as well as for the continuing progress and prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and her people.

Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar are close neighbours constantly fostering our cordial ties of friendship and cooperation in all fields of endeavour. I am certain that our two countries will continue to move forward together in strengthening this special relationship for the mutual benefits of our peoples.

From Xi Jinping President

The People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on behalf of the Chinese government and people, and in my own name, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to you, and through you to the Myanmar government and people.

I believe that under the leadership of the Myanmar government, the Myanmar people will continue to follow a development path suited to the national conditions of Myanmar and create a better future for the country.

Last January, I paid a state visit to Myanmar at your invitation, and thus China-Myanmar relations entered a

new era of building a community with a shared future. I attach great importance to the development of China-Myanmar relations and wish to work with you to carry forward the Pauk-Phaw traditional friendship, jointly fight the COVID-19, deepen practical cooperation in all fields, and strive for new achievements in building a China-Myanmar community with a shared future.

May the Republic of the Union of Myanmar enjoy prosperity and her people happiness.

May the building of a China-Myanmar community with a shared future continue to make new progress.

From Shri Ram Nath Kovind President the Republic of India

On behalf of the Government and the people of India, I extend my warm greetings to you and the people of Myanmar on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Excellency, I fondly recall your successful visit to India in February 2020 that added fillip to our ever-growing bilateral ties. I am encouraged to see that even during the ongoing Covid pandemic, our relations based on mutual trust and shared linkages, have continued to expand in several areas.

I convey my best wishes for your good health, well-being, and for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Myanmar.

From The Honourable Donald J. Trump President

The United States of America

On behalf of the United States of America, please accept my best wishes as Myanmar celebrates the 73rd anniversary of its independence on January 4.

The United States remains a strong partner to the people of Myanmar as they work to build a more peaceful, democratic, and prosperous nation that respects the human rights and dignity of all people.

I congratulate you and the people of Myanmar as you celebrate your Independence Day.

From Halimah Yacob President The Republic of Singapore

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and the people of Myanmar on the joyous occasion of Myanmar's 73rd Independence Day.

The excellent relations between our two countries are anchored by the robust economic links, regular high-level exchanges and the friendly ties between our peoples. Singapore and Myanmar enjoy close cooperation in wide-ranging areas, including investment, education and human resource development. Amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, I am heartened to see the mutual support we have extended to each other in repatriating our citizens and ensuring the health and well-being of our peoples.

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Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Queen United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

I send Your Excellency my congratulations on the celebration of your Independence Day, together with my best wishes to all of the people of Myanmar in these difficult times.

From Moon Jae-in President The Republic of Korea

I extend my warm congratulations to Your Excellency and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as you celebrate the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am pleased to note that our bilateral relations, which marked the 45th anniversary last year, have reached new heights. I appreciate your supportive words that Korea's New Southern Policy Plus strategy will be a catalyst for our cooperation. I hope that the friendly ties our two countries have cemented so far will develop in a more mutually beneficial way in the years to come, and that the exchanges and friendship between our people will also be further deepened.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health and continued success in all your endeavours as well as for the everlasting prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Joko Widodo

President The Republic of Indonesia

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia, I would like to congratulate Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The year 2020 which just came to a close, was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, amidst the pandemic, the Government of Myanmar successfully conducted an election with strict health protocols in place.

On this occasion, I would like to convey my commitment to continue enhancing cooperation between our two countries. The good relations established throughout the years serve as a solid foundation to continue fostering the welfare of the peoples of Indonesia and Myanmar.

While wishing that Your Excellency and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will always be blessed with success in achieving the future aspirations of the nation, please accept, Your Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest esteem.

From Li Keqiang Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to you.

In recent years, Myanmar has continuously made new achievements in developing economy and improving people's livelihood. With the joint efforts of both sides, Chi-

na-Myanmar relations has maintained a sound momentum of development, and our practical cooperation continue to achieve new progress. I would like to work with you to deepen bilateral comprehensive strategic cooperation in all fields and push toward the building of a China-Myanmar community with a shared future, so as to bring benefits to the two countries and peoples.

May the Republic of the Union of Myanmar enjoy prosperity and her people happiness.

May the building of a China-Myanmar community with a shared future continue to make new progress.

From Suga Yoshihide Prime Minister Japan

On the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I am honoured to extend to Your Excellency my warmest congratulations on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan.

I would like to once again express my respect to the successful implementation of the general election in November last year.

Japan continues to stand shoulder to shoulder with Myanmar and provide maximum support for Myanmar's efforts for democratic nation-building, national reconciliation and sustainable development.

I look forward to exchanging views with you in future to promote bilateral cooperation between Japan and Myanmar. Please accept my best wishes for good health and success of you and the people of Myanmar.

SEE PAGE-4

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

Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint on the occasion of the 73rd anniversary celebration of Independence Day

4 January 2021

Dear esteemed ethnic national citizens,

On this auspicious special occasion of the 73rd anniversary of Independence Day, I extend my good wishes to all union born ethnic national brothers and sisters living together in friendship within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to be blessed with auspiciousness and good fortune and to be free from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Myanmar has existed as an independent kingdom with her own culture since many years ago where ethnic national citizens lived together in weal and woe. The dreadful colonial system which overwhelmed the whole world also impacted upon Myanmar in the 19th century. As a result of three unjust wars fought by the colonial imperialists, Myanmar came under the British yoke in 1885.

After being under British rule, we were able to regain our independence on 4th January 1948 due to the sacrifice in lives, blood and sweat of ethnic national leaders and all ethnic nationals led by General Aung San our national martyr with indomitable bravery, courage, spirit of sacrifice, unflagging determination and intense patriotism.

Right from that time, the national leaders aspired to have a democratic system in the country. They intended to have a federal Union. They worked hard to build a peaceful and prosperous Union of Myanmar.

However due to the odious divide and rule tactics of the colonial imperialists, we were confronted with dreadful internal armed conflicts as we began the task of nation building; these resulted in divisions among the ethnic national races, mistrust, suspicions, differences in opinions, and partisanship. Because of years of internal armed conflicts, we drifted further away from the majority of the world's countries and the socio-economic life of our people did not develop as much as we had hoped; even among regional countries we lagged behind quite considerably.

Therefore it is the historic task of all citizens to implement in a correct and proper way, the aspirations of General Aung San and ethnic national leaders who gave us independence. It is therefore of utmost importance for all ethnic national races to protect, maintain and preserve our independence with collective strength as this Union is our heritage handed down to us by the architect of independence General Aung San and our patriotic ethnic national leaders with much difficulty through the sacrifice of many lives, blood and sweat. We must work for non-disintegration of the Union,

non-disintegration of the unity of ethnic national races, and perpetuation of national sovereignty. Our Union Government is also striving to establish a Democratic Federal Union which has been the aspiration of all our ethnic national citizens, with the intention of achieving the speedy cessation of internal armed conflicts and durable peace.

In working towards this end, we were able to convene the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong successfully up to the 4th session; furthermore we were able to reach agreements on: - important agreements which are important elements for the establishment of the future Democratic Federal Union;

In establishing the Democratic Federal Union, it is important for all union born ethnic nationals to help each other in close friendship; to have compassion and empathy; to discuss and negotiate; to be free from suspicion; to have mutual respect; to have mutual understanding; to have mutual trust and unity.

step by step action plans and implementation tasks to be taken in the post 2020 period; and fundamental policy guidelines relating to building a federal union based on democracy and a federal system.

As we achieve success in establishing peace and stability which is the aspiration of all our citizens, we would be able to exert more efforts with all our strength for the socio-economic development of the entire country. At the same time our Union Government has been striving on all fronts for all-round development for our country to become modern and developed so as to achieve: - enduring political stability, rule of law, peace and prosperity, unity among ethnic national races, economic development, comfortable livelihoods, high educational standards, good and comprehensive

healthcare, and protection and preservation of literature, culture and traditions, and heritage of each ethnic national race.

Myanmar is a Union of diverse ethnic national races with different languages, literature, culture and traditions, and different beliefs. It is very important for all national ethnic races to receive and enjoy justice in social relations, political justice, social equality, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination and equality in the dispensation of justice. It is important for all our citizens to enjoy fully and in larger measure the universal principles of democracy such as justice, freedom and equality.

Apart from that, all of you need to participate and cooperate in order to make the constitution, which is the foundation in the establishment of the future Democratic Federal Union to be fully aligned with democratic principles and standards, the actual situation of the country and the emerging federal union system.

In establishing the Democratic Federal Union, it is important for all union born ethnic nationals to help each other in close friendship; to have compassion and empathy; to discuss and negotiate; to be free from suspicion; to have mutual respect; to have mutual understanding; to have mutual trust and unity. These are the fundamental principles of Union spirit. I believe that a peaceful, modern, developed and prosperous Democratic Federal Union will emerge in the future if all ethnic nationals worked strenuously in unity with firm Union spirit. Let me therefore urge all ethnic national citizens in great seriousness to participate and cooperate with firm determination for the fulfillment of the following independence day national objectives on this auspicious occasion of the 73rd anniversary of independence day.

- Non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, perpetuation of national sovereignty; to this end all ethnic nationals to protect and preserve the above with "collective strength";
- Justice in social relations, justice in economic affairs, justice in political affairs, equality in social relations, equal opportunity, equality before the law; all citizens to be able to enjoy the above in equality;
- To strive towards the amendment of the constitution for the emergence of a genuine Democratic Federal Union;
- For perpetuation of the Union to build a modern and developed Democratic Federal Union by nurturing union spirit.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Win Myint

FROM PAGE-2

Please accept my best wishes for your good health, happiness and success, as well as for continued peace and prosperity to the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Nguyen Phu Trong General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and President The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On behalf of the State and people of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and in my personal capacity, I wish to extend to Your Excellency, the State and people of Myanmar my warmest congratulations on the auspicious occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I congratulate Myanmar on the success of the General Election held on 08 November 2020. I firmly believe that, under Your Excellency's leadership, Myanmar will successfully advance the process of national reconciliation, paving the way for the country's peace and prosperous development.

I note with pleasure that the traditional friendship between Viet Nam and Myanmar has been continuously strengthened, particularly since the establishment of the Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership during my official visit to Myanmar in 2017. It is my conviction that with the joint determination and efforts of the two countries' Leaders and people, the ties between Viet Nam and Myanmar will continue to flourish and reach new heights, in the interest of our people and for peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region and beyond.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health and happiness.

From Joko Widodo President The Republic of Indonesia

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia, allow me to congratulate Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The year 2020 was very difficult, as every country struggled with the unprecedented outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the Government of Myanmar has demonstrated good handling of the pandemic by, among others, successfully holding elections with the implementation of strict health protocols. Thus, let us continue to move forward to successfully dealing with the pandemic in this new year.

While reiterating my commitment towards enhancing the cooperation between our two countries, please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Bounnhang Vorachith President The Lao People's Democratic Republic

On the auspicious occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on behalf of the entire Lao people and on my own behalf, I wish to convey my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and through Your Excellency to the people of Myanmar.

I am strongly convinced that under the close guid-

ance of the leaders of our two countries, the time-honored friendly relations and good cooperation between our two countries will be further strengthened and enhanced in the years to come in order to bring about tangible benefits for our two nations as well as for peace, stability and cooperation for development in the region and the world at large.

On the occasion of the New Year 2021, May I wish Your Excellency good health, happiness and greater success in your noble tasks while leading the Myanmar people to further progress and long lasting prosperity.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Moon Jae-in President The Republic of Korea

I extend my warm congratulations to Your Excellency and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as you celebrate the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am pleased to note that our bilateral relations, which marked the 45th anniversary last year, have reached new heights. I hope that the friendly ties our two countries have cemented so far will develop in a more mutually beneficial way in the years to come, and that the exchanges and friendship between our people will also be further deepened.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health and continued success in all your endeavors as well as for the everlasting prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor

FROM PAGE-2

From Mikhail Mishustin Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation

On behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation and myself please accept greetings on the occasion of the national day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar — the Independence Day.

Russia and Myanmar are bound by friendly and partnership relations. I am convinced that strengthening trade and investment cooperation, implementation of promising joint projects in different spheres fully meet the interests of both countries.

I wish You, dear State Counsellor, good health, wellbeing and new successes in Your important work and to all citizens of Myanmar — peace and prosperity.

From Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister The Republic of Singapore

Warmest congratulations on the occasion of Myanmar's 73rd Independence Day!

Singapore and Myanmar enjoy excellent ties. The close and frequent exchanges between our leaders and peoples have fostered strong cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, finance, and infrastructure development. I am confident that we will continue to work closely together, to overcome the challenges and seize the opportunities of the post-pandemic world.

I wish you continued good health and success.

From Nguyen Xuan Phuc Prime Minister The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on behalf of the Government and people of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and in my own name, I would like to extend to Your Excellency, the Government and people of Myanmar the warmest congratulations.

Viet Nam congratulates Myanmar on the successful organization of the General Election on 08 November 2020. We firmly believe that Myanmar will continue to achieve further success in the course of the peace process, national reconciliation and development of a prosperous nation with increasingly important role in the region and the world.

The Government and the people of Viet Nam always attach great importance to the Viet Nam-Myanmar Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership and note with satisfaction of its unceasing consolidation and development over the past years. I look forward to our continued close cooperation to elevate the relations between Viet Nam and Myanmar to new heights, for the benefits of our people, and for peace, stability and development in the region.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health and happiness.

From Andrej Babiš Prime Minister The Czech Republic

Let me extend my most sincere congratulations on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

of your country.

I avail myself of this opportunity to wish you and the people of your country lots of success and prosperity and also to express my conviction that the traditionally friendly relations between the Czech Republic and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will thrive.

I wish your country and you, Excellency, the best of health and prosperity.

From Don Pramudwinai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs The Kingdom of Thailand

On the occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to extend to Your Excellency my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of your country and people.

I am delighted that our cooperation has been deepened and intensified both at the bilateral level and within the ASEAN framework and beyond. I am confident that, with our continued cooperation, the close bonds of friendship between our two countries will be further strengthened and our partnership further advanced in the years to come.

I wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm Thailand's determination to support Myanmar's efforts in overcoming the COVID-19 situation and strengthen our Natural Strategic Partnership for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

“People are the key”

We have never lost sight of our ultimate goal



I also wish to thank the people for showing their confidence for our government with their votes. We have made a very firm resolve to continue striving hard to be worthy of the people's trust and confidence. Ever since our government took over responsibility in 2016, we have never lost sight of our ultimate goal, which is to establish a peaceful and developed Democratic Federal Union, on a solid and firm foundation. We have made continuous efforts cognizant of the fact that in marching towards this goal, peace and sustainable development, healthy growth of democracy and peaceful development, healthy growth of democracy and amendment of the constitution, amendment of the constitution and peace; all these things are interrelated in a circular fashion with backward and forward linkages.

(Excerpt from Chairperson of National Reconciliation and Peace Centre and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech on New Year, on 2 January 2021)

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Win Myint

FROM PAGE-4

From General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General The Commonwealth of Australia

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to convey to you, the Government and the people of Myanmar my warmest wishes, together with those of the Australian Government and people.

The solidarity of the international community is more important than ever as the world's nations work together to manage the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus.

May I express my confidence that the friendly relations between our two countries will continue to prosper in the coming year.

From Frank-Walter Steinmeier President The Federal Republic of Germany

On the occasion of your country's Independence Day, allow me to offer my congratulations to you and your fellow citizens.

The holding of the second democratic election in Myanmar under challenging circumstances both in term of domestic policy and with regard to healthcare was an important step along the path towards a federal democracy. Germany continues to actively support your nation's transition process and will continue to stand alongside Myanmar as a constructive partner in the coming years.

I wish you great strength and every success for the tasks ahead of you, particularly in the ongoing fight to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

From Sergio Mattarella President The Italian Republic

On the occasion of your National Day, may you and all the people of the Union of Myanmar receive the best wishes from the Italian Republic.

Italy followed with interest the ordered and peaceful unfolding of the recent electoral consultation, which is an expression of the trust and hopes that the people of the Union of Myanmar puts in the process of democratic consolidation.

Trusting in the constant strengthening of the ties of cooperation between Nay Pyi Taw and Rome, also thanks to the status of Italy as ASEAN development

partner, I would like to renew our sincere wishes for peace, happiness and prosperity.

From Suga Yoshihide Prime Minister of Japan

On the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to Your Excellency on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan.

As the novel coronavirus disease poses challenges to the world, Japan will overcome this difficult time with Myanmar and cooperate with Myanmar closely to further expand exchanges between our two countries.

The past year was an important milestone in the process of consolidating democracy in Myanmar, with the general election successfully held in November last year. Japan will continue to make efforts for further development of friendship and cooperation with Myanmar and provide maximum support to Myanmar's democratic nation-building.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my highest consideration and my best wishes good health and success of Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar.

729 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 3 January, total figure rises to 126,345

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 126,345 after 729 new cases were reported on 3 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 126,345 confirmed cases, 2,728 died, 109,548 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 3 January 2021

Total Cases

126,345

New Cases

729

Total Death Tally

2,728

Discharged from Hospital

109,548

Daily death toll until 8 pm 3-1-2021

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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.

Myanmar seamen abroad brought back home by relief flight

A total of 128 Myanmar seamen who were stranded in foreign countries because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flight yesterday.

The Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Myanmar Seafarers' Employment Services Federation jointly organized the relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines to repatriate the Myanmar

seamen - 48 from ROK, 22 from Egypt, 1 from Brazil, 1 from the Netherlands, 3 from Malaysia, 21 from Japan, 6 from UAE, 1 from Australia, 7 from Singapore, 5 from Indonesia, 4 from Panama, 3 from France, 1 from the Philippines, 1 from Mexico, 3 from Spain and 1 from the United States. The flight landed at the Yangon International Airport in the late evening.

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

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with

Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

VMS control sub-centre inaugurated in Rakhine State on 3 January



Officials cut ceremonial ribbon to open VMS control sub-centre in Sittway, Rakhine State on 3 January 2021. PHOTO: TIN TUN (IPRD)

THE new Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) control sub-centre in front of Rakhine State Fisheries Department was formally opened at 9 am on 3 January 2021.

U Thet Oo, head of Rakhine State Fisheries Department, explained the VMS control sub-centre and related matters at the opening ceremony.

Rakhine State Minister for Finance, Tax, Planning and Commerce U Kyaw Aye Thein, State Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Forest and Mines U

Kyaw Lwin and State Fisheries Department head U Thet Oo formally inaugurated the sub-centre by cutting the ceremonial ribbon and sprinkling scented water on the signboard.

Afterwards, the state ministers and officials concerned inspected the VMS control sub-centre.

The sub-centre is aimed at conducting surveillance of in-shore fishing vessels in Rakhine fishing block and restricted areas - A1 and A2, to ensure that the vessels comply with vessels monitoring rules set by the Fisheries Department.

The department found 74 vessels entered the restricted areas. The Rakhine State department has warned four boats and has taken actions against 12 vessels violating the rules. Each ship is fined K2 million, and they are suspended licence for two months respectively.—Tin Tun (IPRD) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Magway Region's Kanthit village gets access to electricity



Switch-on Ceremony of Electrifying Kanthit Village in Magway is held on 1 January 2021. PHOTO: THAN NAING OO (NGAPHE)

THE ceremony for electrification was held in Kanthit Village in Magway Region on the evening of 1 January.

The government electrified Kanthit Village with 11kV line, 11/0.4kV, two 200kVA under NEP (National Electrification Project) and the residents of the village participated in the donation to install the 7,800 feet long 400-volt transmission line.

Kanthit Village is the 36th village in Magway Township under the NEP project and will provide electricity to 380 households in the village. — Than Naing Oo (Ngaphe)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

MIC permits 5 investment proposals including two 30 MW solar projects

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC), gave the green light to five new investment proposals including two 30 MW solar projects and approved the four existing projects for capital expansion, according to a video conference held on 30 December 2020.

The permitted investments covered the energy, fishery, hotel and services sectors, with an estimated capital of US\$138.178 million and K109.204 billion. The projects are expected to create over 4,000 job opportunities.

According to the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, the new projects permitted by the MIC include two 30 MW solar power projects in Sagaing Region and a shrimp farm project in Taninthayi Region.

The solar power projects are in keeping with the commitment made by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to tackle climate change in her address to the virtual Climate Ambition Summit held on 12 December 2020. In her statement,

the State Counsellor announced Myanmar's intention to submit its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) by the end of the year. The NDC will aim to reduce over 243 million tonnes of carbon dioxide by increasing the share of renewable energy to 39% and reducing the forestry sector's net emission by 25%, the ministry stated.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy is implementing solar power plants by next summer to meet the country's growing demand.

MIC and the relevant investment committees in the past three months (Oct-Dec) of the current financial year 2020-2021 gave the go-ahead to 19 foreign enterprises from China, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, India and Viet Nam in manufacturing, livestock & fisheries and agriculture, energy and hotels and other services sectors. They brought in investments of over US\$337.75 million, including the expansion of capital by existing enterprises. The foreign enterprises created over

11,000 jobs for locals.

The FDI's have flowed into 12 sectors. They are oil and gas, power, transport and communications, real estate, hotels and tourism, mining, livestock and fisheries, industrial estate, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and other services sectors.

Of 51 foreign countries and regions investing in Myanmar, Singapore put the largest investments, followed by China and Hong Kong (SAR).—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Muse-Mang Weing land border to open trial 24-hour service from 5 to 14 January 2021

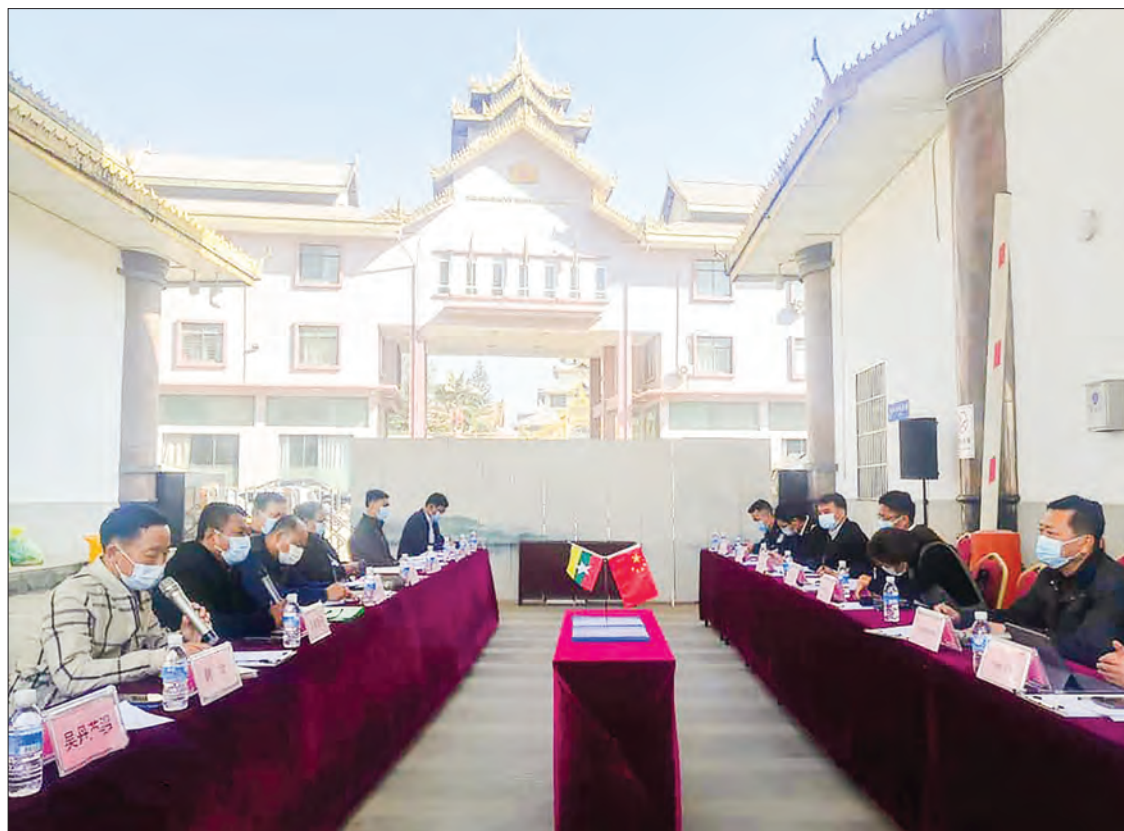
MUSE-Mang Weing land border will have 24-hour service between 5 and 14 January on a trial basis amid the strong COVID-19 safety measures.

Myanmar primarily exported agricultural products and fisheries to China via the land border. The COVID-19 impacts triggered a trading halt. Among Myanmar-China land borders adjacent to Muse district, Mang Weing, Kyinsankyawt and Pansai (Kyu Kok) are open for trading between 6 am and 10 pm in line with COVID-19 health guidelines. However, trading hour limit caused delay and quality loss for perishable goods.

It is almost a year that Myanmar found the first COVID-19 case. Following a friendly negotiation between a team led by Muse District head U Hlaing Soe Thant and the People's Government of Ruili officials led by Mr Yang Shiyong on 2 January, trading hours through Muse-Mang Weing will be extended to 24 hours between 5 and 14 January on a trial basis.

The two countries are responsible for the drivers to follow the health guidelines, and China continues imposing a driver substitution rule.

Myanmar's fisheries and agricultural products can be quickly delivered to China. If the coronavirus preventive measures are successful during the trial period, trading will return to normal. Furthermore, other



Officials from Muse and Shweli hold meeting on opening border at the Muse Shwe Nandaw Gate on 2 January 2021. PHOTO: IPRD (MUSE)

land borders such as Kyinsankyawt and Pansai (Kyu Kok) are also set to extend trading hours, according to the coordination meeting.

At present, Nandaw and Manhero areas which were mostly crowded with people have been closed. Moreover, Sinphyu land border was also shut down for freight lorries. As a result of this, the authorities concerned from both sides negotiated the Sinphyu land border's reopening later.

At present, around 150

lorries can enter Mang Weing checkpoint per day. About 250 lorries are expected to pass the crossing upon 24-hour service, Muse Highway Freight Forwarders Association stated.

The trade value through Muse border plunged to US\$785.6 million between 1 October and 18 December of the current financial year 2020-2021 because of the impacts caused by the COVID-19 preventive measures. According to the Ministry of Commerce, the figures reflected a decrease of \$468

million compared to the corresponding period of the previous FY.

Muse is an important border in Myanmar and handles the largest volume of trade. But at times, it has experienced a sharp drop in trade on account of China clamping down on illegal goods, resulting in a halt in the trade of agricultural products. Moreover, the COVID-19 impacts slow the business this year.

Following the COVID-19 consequences, trading via Muse

did not reach a monthly target of above \$400 million in the previous months last FY.

Myanmar intended to reach trade target of over \$5 billion through Muse for the last 2019-2020FY; however, only \$4.86 billion worth goods were traded. Border trade values at Muse stood at \$5.4 billion in the 2016-2017FY, \$5.8 billion in the 2017-2018FY and \$4.9 billion in the 2018-2019FY respectively, as per data of the Commerce's Ministry.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus in the border, China banned border crossing. Shortly after that, about 50 drivers are allowed to pass the border under driver substitution system. Those drivers are, however, tested every three days. As a result of this, China included them in the vaccination programme, covering 41 Myanmar lorry drivers so far, said U Min Thein, vice-chair of Muse rice wholesale centre.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, including rice, beans and corns, and fishery products such as crab, prawn, etc. Furthermore, Myanmar's natural gas export to China is also conducted through Muse-Ruili border. The raw CMP materials, electrical appliance and consumer goods are imported into the country.—IPRD (Muse)/ Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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We can tackle both climate change, economic recovery plans

WITH approving three new the MIC include two 30 MW solar power projects in Sagaing Region on 30th December, 2020, the Union Government has taken a step in the new year towards a sustainable and green economy future. The solar power projects are in keeping with the commitment made by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to tackle climate change in her address to the virtual Climate Ambition Summit held on 12 December 2020.

The recently permitted five projects including two solar power projects will bring about 400 job opportunities.

It reflects that we can restart our economy and create the jobs and industries of the future that can benefit everyone while fighting against the climate crisis.

It is worth noting that our country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) aims to reduce over 243 million tonnes of CO2 by increasing the share of renewable energy to 39% and reducing the net emission from the forestry sector by 25%.

Myanmar has adopted precise and decisive frameworks since 2019 to carry out every development programme, in accordance with policies and strategies that are harmonized to combat climate change.

Also, we are making efforts for mitigating and adapting to climate change to ensure that our present and future generations are resilient and can adapt to changing circumstances resulting from climate change.

Understanding that nature-based solutions are answer to achieving climate goals, Myanmar has targeted to reduce 105.2 million tCO2e in energy sector and 123.6 million tCO2e in forestry sub-section respectively, and the Myanmar's National Adaptation Plan for climate change is projected to be completed by 2024.

With regard to expansion of carbon sink, the national targets to increase the Protected Area Systems to cover 10% of total national land. In addition, Myanmar is committed to preserving 0.59 million hectares of Reserved Forests and engaging in management of 0.25 million hectares of plantations in public and private land in line with the Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation (2017-2027).

Regarding energy efficiency, Myanmar's objective to improve 7.8% in residential sector, 6.6% in the industrial sector, 4% in the commercial sector and 1.36% in other sectors by 2030.

A programme is being planned to distribute 5.1 million of fuel-efficient stoves to reduce a cumulative emission of approximately 5.99 million tCO2e during 2021-2030 in Myanmar.

While listening to nature, we will continue to fight the climate crisis by giving priority to climate change in our economic recovery plans post Covid-19.

No pain, no gain: With efforts of both physical and mental pain Our Independence in 1948 regained

By Dr Khin Maung Nyunt

- In the following rhymed couplets The writer wisher to tell the readers his best. The story of national Independence regain with great efforts of physical and mental pain.
- In terms of human history Half a century is not a period of time's longevity.
- In the unlucky year of 1885 The British Colonialists annexed. Thibaw's kingdom, with no fight They sat up Colonial Rule in Myanmar As they had done in sub-continent India But all Myanmar Ethnicns resisted with might and main. But all ended in all sad vain.
- For few decades Colonial Rule swayed With black Englishmen [I.C.S] in high posts.
- But British Colonial education cuts both ways like razor edge like. It opened up Myanmar eye. To the world which was changing in endless time. A new generation of Patriots was born To take the place of older generation to be gone.
- The first victory of young Patriots arise set up. Rangoon University of their choice. Inspired by new currents of the World.
- New Myanmar patriots wake up in the form of Thakhins to fight for freedom
- From the yoke of United Kingdom. Under the influences of inter war period. They wake up from their political lethargy. England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. So also was Colonial difficulty was Myanmar's opportunity. Young Patriots Thakhins secretly want out.

In quest of friends and allies abroad. China, in vain of Japanese invasion was unable to give help in vain. So called Yebaw Thone gyeik [30 comrades] Headed by young Thakhin Aung San the great. Japanese Fascists contend in time. To train them in modern warfare and strategy of the kind. On the island of Hainan. Yebaw Thone gyike underwent severe training long run. BIA was founded. Japan's promise of Myanmar Independence Once they set on Myanmar's soil Bogoyoke Aung San the minister of war founded BIA [Burma's Independence Army] But the promise was not kept by the Japanese. In fact they gave Shan Independence military Fascist Rule prewar Bogoyoke Aung San sent out Thakhin Thein Pe [Tet phone Gyi Thein Pe Myint] To Western Alliance headquarter at Simla To first out Japanese Fascist to gather post-World War II in England new Labor Introduced new home clement Attlee policy Our burned by post-war problems He outrightly overturned on all runs. "Colonies are like mile stones around our neck So better return their Independence So called simla white paper the back British brought was a British hypocrisy of a sort. Instead of independence, it was British Colonial Rule comeback. Bogoyoke and Myanmar Ethnicns to rise in arms if Independence

- not granted. Atlee invited Bogoyoke Aung San For parley at London Parliament Attlee liked honesty and frank of Bogoyoke Aung San
- It's promise of Independence within one year run Bogoyoke Aung San made political campaigns across country For the First Panglong Unity Parliament New constitution of British Parliament Democracy was hailed as the most democracy. Unfortunately Bogoyokes Executive Committee was assassinated on 1947. Successor Thakhin Nu took over the charge for some years. But he could no longer carry out fairer.
- Successive military Dictatorship in the names of Burma People Socialist Party. Successor military dictators also tried best Under the name various forms of military democracy
- Turning point comes about when Daw Aung San Su Kyi led NLD party won Victory Like founder daughter Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Laureate With friends and allies carrying the state to weather storm to 2nd Panglong Unity of 21st Century. To establish a Democratic Federal Union
- On 37 points she had achieved agreement With all national ethnic groups met great extent. ASEAN, UN and world Power, giving her morale and physical support On this occasion Independence Day. With apologies to all English poets.

Nations introduce lockdowns, curfews and school closures to fight Covid-19 resurgence

Countries across the world tightened restrictions on their populations Saturday to fight a resurgence in the coronavirus, as the European Union offered to help drug companies expand vaccine production to improve distribution "bottlenecks".

FROM local curfews to alcohol bans and complete lockdowns, governments are trying to tackle a surge in cases.

The coronavirus has killed more than 1.8 million people globally since emerging in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

But experts fear the worst is yet to come, predicting a sharp rise in infections and deaths after weeks of holiday gatherings.

French police booked hundreds of New Year revellers Saturday for flouting anti-Covid measures at an illegal rave.

In Bangkok, the city's nightlife shut down following a ban on bars, nightclubs and restaurant alcohol sales, among a raft of restrictions aimed at curbing the kingdom's rising virus toll.

Public schools in the Thai capital are to close for two weeks. An outbreak last month at a seafood market has led to a resurgence of the virus in Thailand, with infections detected in 53 of the kingdom's 77 provinces.



A nearly empty platform is seen at a BTS commuter train station in Bangkok on January 2, 2021. PHOTO: MLADEN ANTONOV/AFP

The soaring number of infections around the world means the race to vaccinate is set to dominate the coming year.

Delays in getting the vaccines in Europe were not the fault of the European Union, said the bloc's health commissioner Stella Kyriakides.

"The bottleneck at the moment is not the volume of orders but the worldwide shortage of production capacity," she said.

The bloc would help drug companies in their efforts to expand production, she added. "The situation will improve step by step."

recorded in one day, with more than 277,000.

In Russia, health minister Mikhail Murashko said more than 800,000 people had received the domestically produced Sputnik V vaccine and that 1.5 million doses had been distributed throughout the country of around 147 million.

The Kremlin has held back on imposing nationwide virus restrictions, instead placing its hopes on the mass vaccination drive to end the pandemic and save its struggling economy.

The French government, facing the threat of a new wave of Covid-19 infections, lengthened an overnight curfew by two hours in parts of the country to help combat the virus.

The curfew will start at 6:00 pm, rather than 8:00 pm in parts of France, mainly in the country's east. Paris has, for now, been spared the additional restriction.

The US has seen a worrying surge in coronavirus infections in recent months and on Saturday saw its highest number yet

came as police booked more than 1,200 revellers Saturday when an illegal rave in northwestern France finally ended after more than two days of partying that saw clashes with police.

Around 800 of them were booked for flouting anti-virus measures, and the regional health authority in Brittany noted a "high risk of the spread of Covid-19" at the event.

"We knew what we were risking... we had to party, for a year everything has been stuck," said a 20-year-old waitress.

Spanish police broke up another gathering Saturday near Barcelona, where 300 people had been partying for more than 40 hours.

And footballers were also among those caught breaking the rules, with Tottenham's Erik Lamela, Sergio Reguilon and Giovanni Lo Celso to be disciplined after a picture emerged of them attending a large party.

SOURCE: AFP

Winners of national titles and medals announced in commemoration of 73rd Independence Day

THE Office of the President issued 11 notifications on conferring award titles in commemoration of 73rd Anniversary of Independence Day 2021.

The Notification 1/2021 consists of the religious titles that are conferred upon senior Buddhist monks who are performing the duties of Buddhist religion— Pariyatti (lecturing of Buddha's text) and Patipatti (meditation) as well as upon the lay disciples who are supporting the Buddhist religion by donating alms and offertories, Notification 2/2021 honorary titles and medals, 3/2021 Thingaha medal for Myanmar military service, 4/2021 Good military service medal, 5/2021 Good civil service medal, 6/2021 Good police service medal, 7/2021 State police service medal, 8/2021 police joint-fight medal, 9/2021 public service medal, 10/2021 Public service medal, and 11/2021 Law and order enforcement medal. — MNA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 3 January 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 4 January 2021: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin, 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 (5-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperatures in Lower Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 January 2021: Fair weather.

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PRODUCTION CAPACITY

EU ready to help expand vaccine production

THE European Union is ready to help drug companies expand coronavirus vaccine production to clear a “bottleneck” in distribution, its top health official said Saturday.

Health commissioner Stella Kyriakides told German news agency DPA that any delay in getting approved vaccines out was down to production capacity shortage, not EU planning.

“The bottleneck at the moment is not the volume of orders but the worldwide shortage of production capacity,” she said, in comments distributed by her office.

Kyriakides noted that Brussels had provided 100 million euros to German firm BioNTech, which developed a vaccine with US giant Pfizer, to help build production capacity.

And she said that the bloc

was ready to do more, for Pfizer-BioNTech and other companies with candidate vaccines, as the vaccination campaign gets into gear.

“The situation will improve step by step,” she promised, one week after vaccinations began at widely varying paces among EU member states.

“We have been negotiating for additional vaccine doses from BioNTech for a long time and are again ready to help expand production capacities.

“Other manufacturers with whom we have contracts are on the verge of having their vaccines approved by the EU.”

The European Medicines Agency, which advises the European Commission, approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on December 21.

But it is not expected to rule



The European health commissioner, Stella Kyriakides, said at a news conference in Brussels. **PHOTO: POOL/YVES HERMAN/AFP/FILE**

on a potential alternative from US company Moderna until January 6.

And it is awaiting more data on a candidate from AstraZeneca and Oxford University, which has already been approved in

the UK.

But Kyriakides insisted that Europe is not falling behind in its joint procurement programme, backed by the 27 member states.

SOURCE: AFP

VACCINATION

Egypt approves Chinese Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine

EGYPT has approved the use of a Covid-19 vaccine developed

by Chinese pharma giant Sinopharm with its rollout to start later

in January, the health minister said.



Egyptians gather in front of the Central Public Health Laboratories in downtown Cairo as they wait to get tested for the coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 8, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

“The Egyptian pharmaceutical authority approved on Saturday the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine,” Hala Zayed said late Saturday, on the local MBC Masr channel.

The first batch of the vaccine was delivered in December, with further doses expected this month.

“The second shipment of this vaccine is due to arrive in the second or third week of January, and as soon as it arrives, we will start vaccinations,” the minister said.

Each batch of the vaccine consists of 50,000 doses, and the ministry has announced that the first group to receive it will be medical workers.

Zayed said Egypt plans to purchase 40 million doses of the Sinopharm jab.

SOURCE: AFP

VACCINE ROLLOUT

India approves two Covid-19 vaccines for emergency use

INDIA has authorised the emergency use of two coronavirus vaccines developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University and by local pharmaceutical firm Bharat Biotech, the country’s drug regulator said Sunday.

“The... vaccines of Serum Institute (AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine) and Bharat Biotech

are being approved for restricted use in emergency situations,” the Drugs Controller General of India, V.G. Somani, said at a briefing.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that the fast-track approvals were “a decisive turning point to strengthen a spirited fight” that “accelerates the road

to a healthier and Covid-free nation”.

India is the world’s second most-infected nation with more than 10.3 million cases and almost 150,000 deaths, although its rate of infection has come down significantly from a mid-September peak of more than 90,000 cases daily.

The approval is expected to kick off one of the world’s biggest vaccination drives in the country of 1.3 billion people. The government has already been holding nationwide drills ahead of the mass inoculation drive and 96,000 health workers have been trained to administer the shots.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEFS

SOARING CASES

UK set for tougher virus rules as cases surge

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Sunday he was “reconciled” to the prospect of tougher restrictions to combat spiralling coronavirus cases, as a row flared over whether schools should reopen.

“It may be that we need to do things in the next few weeks that will be tougher in many parts of the country,” Johnson told the BBC’s The Andrew Marr Show.

“I’m fully, fully reconciled to that.” Britain recorded 57,725 new cases on Saturday, its highest total of the entire pandemic. Health officials are concerned that the surging numbers could overwhelm hospitals during their busiest time of the year.

SOURCE: AFP

LEGENDARY TV HOST

US news star Larry King hospitalized with Covid-19: report

VETERAN talk show host Larry King has been hospitalized with Covid-19, US media reported Saturday.

Citing a “source close to the family,” CNN reported that King, one of the network’s biggest stars, has been hospitalized for more than a week at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

King, 87, has Type 2 diabetes and has had a long history of medical issues, including several heart attacks, lung cancer and angina, a condition caused by reduced blood flow to the heart.

The legendary host is one of the most recognizable figures on US television, known for his signature rolled-up shirtsleeves, multi-colored ties, suspenders and big glasses. His list of interviewees has ranged from every US president since 1974 to world leaders Yasser Arafat and Vladimir Putin, and celebrities Frank Sinatra, Marlon Brando and Barbra Streisand.

SOURCE: AFP

“AMERICAN OCCUPIERS”

Anti-US chants as Iraqis mourn commanders killed a year ago

THOUSANDS of Iraqi mourners chanted “revenge” and “no to America” on Sunday, one year after a US drone strike killed Iran’s revered commander Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Pro-Iranian supporters, many dressed in black, massed in Baghdad’s central Tahrir Square to also condemn Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi as a “coward” and an “agent of the Americans”.
SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNCLEAR MOTIVES

Gunmen kill 11 miners in southwest Pakistan: officials

GUNMEN in southwestern Pakistan have killed at least 11 workers at a remote coal mine, officials said Sunday.

The victims of the attack in Baluchistan province were from the minority Shiite Hazara community. “Dead bodies of the 11 miners have been taken to a local hospital,” Khalid Durrani, a government official in the area, told AFP. Ethnic Hazara make up most of the Shiite population in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan -- the country’s largest and poorest region, rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies. They are often targeted by Sunni militants, who consider them heretics, though it was unclear why the attackers targeted the coal mine specifically.—SOURCE: AFP

IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Bomb kills two French soldiers in Mali

TWO French soldiers were killed when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in northeastern Mali on Saturday, just days after three others died in similar fashion.

Their deaths brought to 50 the number of French soldiers killed in the West African nation since France first intervened in 2013 to help drive back jihadist forces, according to army staff. President Emmanuel Macron “learnt with great sadness” of the deaths of Sergeant Yvonne Huynh and Brigadier Loic Risser in the Menaka region, his office said in a statement. Huynh, aged 33 and mother of a young child, was the first female soldier killed in the Sahel region since the French operation began.—SOURCE: AFP

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

Gulf crisis resolution in balance ahead of summit



Saudi Arabia led a coalition of countries in the Gulf and beyond in 2017 to cut ties with Qatar over charges it was too close to Tehran and backed radical Islamist groups. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

THE Gulf crisis, which has pitted regional players against Qatar, could be moving closer to resolution as the key countries prepare to meet in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

Riyadh led a coalition of countries in the Gulf and beyond in 2017 to cut ties with Doha, over charges it was too close to Tehran and backed radical Islamist groups. Qatar denies the claims. Washington has intensified pressure on the nations imposing what Qatar calls a “blockade” to resolve the crisis, insisting Gulf unity is necessary to isolate US rival Iran as the curtain falls

on Donald Trump’s presidency. The row will top the agenda at Tuesday’s meeting of leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the northwestern Saudi city of Al-Ula. While Gulf sources say an agreement on further talks and limited confidence building measures is ready, not all of the boycotting countries have yet signed up. The GCC is a bloc that includes boycotting countries Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, neutral Kuwait and Oman, and Qatar. After severing ties in June

2017, the Saudi-led alliance subsequently forced out Qatari expatriate residents, closed their airspace to Qatari aircraft and sealed their borders and ports, separating some mixed-nationality families. The boycott countries later issued a list of 13 demands for Doha, including the closure of pan-Arab satellite television channel Al Jazeera, undertakings on terror financing, and the shuttering of a Turkish military base in Qatar. Doha has not publicly bowed to any of the demands. SOURCE: AFP



Twelve Republican senators have said they will vote against certifying President-elect Joe Biden’s election win. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

LAST-DITCH EFFORT

Dozen US senators plan to oppose Biden certification

A group of Republican senators led by veteran lawmaker Ted Cruz said Saturday they will challenge Joe Biden’s election win -- the latest last-ditch move to support Donald Trump’s efforts to undermine the vote. The initiative, which appears certain to fail, flies in the face of rulings in dozens of courts and the findings by officials in several key states that there were no widespread voting problems. The Republicans’ statement, signed by Cruz and six other current senators along with four senators-elect, asserts that “allegations of fraud and irregularities in the 2020 election exceed any in our lifetimes.”

The group said that when Congress convenes in a joint session on Wednesday -- for what normally would be a pro-forma certification of Biden’s victory -- they will demand the creation of a special commission to conduct an “emergency 10-day audit” of the election results. The statement says individual states could then convene special legislative sessions and potentially revise their vote totals. “An attempt to steal a landslide win. Can’t let it happen!” Trump tweeted Saturday. Posting a list of the 11 senators, Trump added: “And after they see the facts, plenty more to come... Our Country will love

them for it!” They join Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, who said earlier that he planned to raise objections on Wednesday. A Republican member of the House of Representatives, Louie Gohmert, has also announced his plan to oppose certification, and more than 100 House Republicans reportedly will back his challenge. Gohmert sought to further raise the stakes with a lawsuit that would have given Vice President Mike Pence -- traditionally in a ceremonial role in Wednesday’s session -- the power to overturn the election result. SOURCE: AFP

A STABLE IMPERIAL SUCCESSION

Male-only rule should be prioritized in imperial succession:

JAPAN'S male-only succession rule should take precedence in discussions on how to achieve a stable imperial succession, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said in a radio program aired Sunday.

"Under current circumstances, male-only succession should be given priority," Suga said in a prerecorded radio show broadcast by Nippon Broadcasting System Inc., referring to the long tradition of male succession. The program was recorded on Dec. 18, 2020.

Suga's administration has said it would hold discussions on how to secure a stable imperial succession following calls from parliament to address the issue.

The move comes amid con-

cerns that the imperial household could run out of heirs. Currently, only three males are in line to succeed 60-year-old Emperor Naruhito -- his younger brother Crown Prince Fumihito, 55, the crown prince's son Hisahito, 14, and the emperor's uncle Prince Hitachi, 85.

The emperor and Empress Masako have a 19-year-old daughter, Princess Aiko. But the 1947 Imperial House Law states that only males in the paternal line can ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne.

In a Kyodo News poll conducted last year, the public has shown support for women to ascend the throne.

SOURCE: KYODO



Crown Prince Akishino poses with his wife Crown Princess Kiko (2nd R) and their children, Princess Mako (L), Princess Kako (R) and Prince Hisahito at their Akasaka Estate residence in Tokyo, in this photo taken on Nov 14. PHOTO: IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN/KYODO

A PAKISTANI ISLAMIC TERRORIST

Leader of group linked to Mumbai attacks arrested in Pakistan

PAKISTAN authorities on Saturday arrested an alleged planner of the 2008 Mumbai attacks over a separate case of terrorism financing, officials said.

Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a leader of the banned militant organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) was arrested in the eastern city of Lahore where he was running a medical dispensary, Punjab's

counterterrorism department said in a statement.

He used the dispensary to collect funds for militant activities, it added, without providing details.

LeT, including Lakhvi, is accused by India of plotting the four-day assault that left 166 people dead.

India has long seethed at Pa-

kistan's failure to hand over or prosecute those accused of planning and organising the Mumbai attacks.

Lakhvi was detained in 2015 over the attacks but released months later. The government slapped him with a series of detention orders but judges repeatedly cancelled them.

Earlier this year, Pakistan

also arrested firebrand cleric and alleged mastermind of the seige Hafiz Saeed, who heads the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a wing of LeT, for terrorism financing.

Saeed has denied involvement in the attacks.

Lakhvi will be presented before an anti-terrorism court in Lahore, CTD said in the statement.

SOURCE: AFP

CONTROVERSIAL MEGA-DAM

Sudan state media say Nile dam talks to resume Sunday

SUDAN is to join a new round of talks with Egypt and Ethiopia Sunday in a bid to resolve a long-running dispute over a huge Ethiopian dam on the Blue Nile, state media reported.

The three countries have held multiple rounds of talks since Ethiopia broke ground on the project in 2011 but they have so far failed to produce an agree-

ment on the filling and operation of the vast reservoir behind the 145-metre (475-foot) tall dam.

The last, held by video-conference in early November, broke up without making any headway.

Late last month, Egypt called in Ethiopia's charge d'affaires after its foreign ministry spokesman claimed the dam dispute had become a welcome

distraction from domestic problems for the Cairo government.

Sudan's state news agency SUNA said that officials from current African Union chair South Africa would be involved in the new round of talks.

Citing an unnamed official, SUNA said Sudan would propose granting African Union experts a "bigger role" in the negotiations

for a binding agreement on the dam's filling and operation.

Cairo has expressed fears that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will severely reduce the Nile's flow, with devastating effects for the more than 97 million Egyptians dependent on it.

Ethiopia says the hydroelectric power produced at the dam is vital to meet the power needs of its even larger population.

It insists downstream countries' water supplies will not be affected.

Sudan, which suffered deadly floods last summer when the Blue Nile reached its highest level since records began more than a century ago, hopes that the new dam will help regulate the river's flow.

The Blue Nile, which meets the White Nile in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, provides the great majority of the combined Nile's flow through northern Sudan and Egypt to the Mediterranean.

SOURCE: AFP



Ethiopia sees the massive dam on the Nile as essential for its electrification and development, but Egypt sees it as an existential threat. PHOTO: ADWA PICTURES/AFP/FILE

NEWS IN BRIEF

YEARLY INDUSTRIAL DATA

China's paper output hits new record

CHINA'S output of machine-made paper and paperboard rose 8 percent year on year to a record 11.83 million tonnes in November of 2020, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

During the first 11 months last year, the country's total output edged up 0.5 percent from the previous year to 105.08 million tonnes. The country's paper and paperboard production has staged a quick recovery since June last year. In October last year, the output increased 8.1 percent year on year, the fastest monthly growth since March 2016. — SOURCE: XINHUA

E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

China's cross-border e-commerce transactions to top 3 trln USD in 2022

CHINA'S cross-border e-commerce transactions are estimated to reach 20.5 trillion yuan (about 3.15 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2022, according to a report.

The country's cross-border e-commerce sector has expanded rapidly in recent years, with small and medium-sized e-commerce platforms maintaining an annual growth rate of 30 percent, according to a report from the National Intellectual Property Administration. — SOURCE: XINHUA

STRING OF ASSASSINATIONS

Afghan peace talks resume as bloodshed continues

A string of assassinations has sowed fear and chaos across Afghanistan as a fresh round of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban begin in Qatar Tuesday.

Months of deliberations between the two sides have yielded little so far, but both parties made something of a breakthrough last year when they finally agreed at least on what to discuss in the next round.

SOURCE: AFP

CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT



A new US law has closed off a major avenue for global money laundering and tax evasion. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

US closes key money-laundering, tax evasion channel

A major avenue for global money laundering and tax evasion has been closed off by a new law requiring disclosure of owners of US shell companies used to hide billions of dollars.

The Corporate Transparency Act was included in the US defense appropriations bill passed into law by Congress late Friday, overriding President Donald Trump's veto.

The law forces "beneficial owners" behind shell companies to report their identities to the US Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN.

While the law still grants them protection from public knowledge -- only the Treasury and law enforcement will be able to access the FinCEN database -- transparency advocates say it is a

huge step against kleptocrats, organized crime and rich tax evaders who have been able to anonymously wash their suspect wealth through the world's largest economy.

"For years, experts routinely ranked anonymous shell companies ... as the biggest weakness in our anti-money laundering safeguards," said Ian Gary, executive director of the FACT Coalition, which lobbied for the legislation.

"It's the single most important step we could take to better protect our financial system from abuse."

The United Nations estimates that \$800 billion to \$2 trillion is laundered through the global financial system every years.

SOURCE: AFP

HUMANE CONDITIONS

EU denounces conditions for migrants in Bosnia

THE living conditions of hundreds of homeless migrants in Bosnia, bordering the European Union, are "completely unacceptable", EU envoy Johann Sattler said Saturday.

The migrants have been left homeless in freezing and rainy conditions since their camp near the northwestern town of Bihac burned down last month.

"The situation is completely unacceptable," said Sattler, the EU's Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Lives and basic human rights of many hundreds of people are seriously jeopardised," he added after a meeting with Bosnia's Security Minister Selmo Cikotic.

Fire engulfed the Lipa migrant centre in northwestern Bosnia on December 23. There were no casu-

alties from the blaze but much of the infrastructure of the site was destroyed.

The incident deepened the crisis over where to house thousands of migrants, as Bosnian authorities failed to find new accommodation for the newly homeless.

Police believe the blaze on December 23

was started deliberately by migrants living there to protest the withdrawal of the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which had been running the camp.

The IOM had left complaining that the accommodation was not fit to house people during the cold winter months.

Opened in April, the Lipa camp had never been hooked up with electricity or running water.

Sattler met Bosnian minister Cikotic on Saturday along with the German, Italian and Austrian ambassadors, according to a statement released by the EU delegation in Sarajevo.

SOURCE: AFP



Migrants leave the migrant camp "Lipa", after it was destroyed by a fire, near the northwestern Bosnian town of Bihac, on December 29, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CHARITY

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHARITY VOY. NO. (02)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-01-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S UNIVERSE LOGISTICS INTERNATIONAL CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

TUG:ANGGUN SARI & BARGE:EWAN 31

Consignees of cargo carried on **TUG:ANGGUN SARI & BARGE:EWAN 31** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-01-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MSTL** 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: **2301191/2301178**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CEA PROJECT LOGISTICS (MALAYSIA)

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (015N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (015N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-01-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINE PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DU JUAN SONG

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DU JUAN SONG VOY. NO. (67)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-01-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 COSCO SHIPPING SPECIALIZED CARRIERS CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V LOWLANDS PATRASCHÉ

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V LOWLANDS PATRASCHÉ VOY. NO. (20T72)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-01-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICE(S) PTE LTD

A visit to Mae Nu Oak Kyaung

By Thayatan Soe Shwe



Mae Nu Oak Kyaung. **PHOTO: THAYATAN SOE SHWE**

STUDYING a historic building is interesting and it is even more valuable to know and experience the past. If you know and study the past, you will always enjoy learning.

A visit to the Maha Aung Myay Bon San Brick Monastery, also known as the Mae Nu Oak Kyaung in the Innwa area, reveals some of the magnificent architectural masterpieces. The monastery is located near Htee Hlaing Shin Pagoda and surrounded by the beauti-

ful Ayeyawady River.

According to inscriptions, the monastery was destroyed by an earthquake during the reign of King Thawaddy in 1200 ME and the damaged monastery was rebuilt in 1234 by Queen Sin Phyu Mya Shin, the middle queen of King Mindon. Due to her renovation, the Yadanarbon period stucco works and the architecture of Konbaung period can still be seen together today.

The monastery is with a large three-story roofs with seven-tiered

superstructures of a prayer hall. There are a total of 8 stairs to get to the monastery. Of them, the three stairs are unique with fascinating decorated archway which were used by the king and monks and the other people used the rest 5 stairs to get inside of the monastery.

There are two partitions in the Mae Nu Oak Kyaung as the east hall and the west hall. The east hall was used as a reception area for those who observed the Sabbath and the west hall was des-

ignated as a place for monks to stay.

It is called Mae Nu Brick Temple because it was built by Daw Nu (Mae Nu), Queen Consort of King Bagytaw Sagaing King, in 1184 ME. Donations for the construction of the monastery along with the work of famous carpenters, were inscribed on the Thakyathiha Bell.

After the completion of the monastery, a large pavilion was built in the vacant lot on the west side of the monastery and the ceremony was held. It

was named as Aung Myay Bon San and was donated to Nyaung Kan Sayardaw U Pho in 1189 ME.

The donation of Mae Nu Oak Kyaung was very special. During the opening ceremony, visitors from all over the country were given a variety of clothing and accessories as well as total of 68 prisoners were released.

About two years later, Sayardaw U Pho passed away and the monastery was donated to Nyaung Kan Sayardaw U Bod, the second sayardaw who stayed in the monastery.

Nowadays, visiting Mae Nu Oak

Kyaung is very enjoyable and melancholic. The view of the flowing Ayeyawady River, the Sagaing bridge, historical figures in the monastery are so captivating and evocative to the past.

When you visit the Innwa area, you should visit the Mae Nu Oak Kyaung, which offers a lot of delights. Once you reach the monastery, you can sit on the stairs that only kings and monks were allowed to climb and enjoy the full beauty of Innwa.

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Magnificent architectural masterpieces. PHOTO: THAYATAN SOE SHWE



Ancient Artworks. PHOTO: THAYATAN SOE SHWE



PHOTO: THAYATAN SOE SHWE

200-year-old Buddha statues near mount Sakyar, Natogyi

Nwe Nadi (Myit Nge)

THE ancient Buddha statues near Sakyar Mountain in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region are said to be about 200 years old, and were built during Konbaung period, according to scholars.

The site of the ancient statues near Sakyar Mountain is designated as an Archaeological Zone and they were unearthed about four years ago during the construction of the

mountain road from Pya village to Sakyar Mountain.

The Archaeological Zone was divided into two as Cave 1 and Cave 2 and there are a total of 27 caves and more than 140 statues carved in the wall of the caves and mural paintings inside.

Natogyi Township in Mandalay Region is also famous for its Ingyin stone, star tortoise, village of people who still keep Myanmar traditional haircut and the well-known Sakyar Mountain.

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



PHOTO: NWE NADI (MYIT NGE)

Aung La N Sang recalls unforgettable memories from 2020

MYANMAR'S sports icon, ONE Championship Light Heavyweight Champion Aung La N Sang has recalled his favourite memories from the year of 2020, according to a statement with the ONE Championship.

"It's crazy how fast our kids grow. It's amazing how short our lives. Make every day count. My happiest memory was having my daughter, and watching her grow from a little newborn to now, already walking. And when I come home, she gives me the biggest smile. That's the best thing about 2020. Having this coronavirus and having to stay home with her is probably

the best thing about 2020," said Aung La N Sang.

"And now, in the blink of an eye, my son is a five-year-old boy. I'm only 35, and in the blink of an eye, I can remember when I was 21. Life is short. So, being able to spend this time during the pandemic, if it teaches us anything, should teach us that life is short and we should spend time with our families and loved ones because you never know how short life is," the Burmese Python added.

Aung La N Sang also gave a special message to his big fans across the globe.

"Focusing on the things I

can control. Working hard and showing up every day. Looking forward to a great 2021," Aung La N Sang said.

Currently, the Burmese Python is making his special training with coaches from the Sanford MMA in the United States ahead of his upcoming ONE Championship fights in 2021.

Lynn Thit (Tgi)

ONE Championship Light Heavyweight Champion Aung La N Sang. **PHOTO: AUNG LA N SANG FACEBOOK PAGE**



Kane and Son spark Spurs into life amid more Premier League Covid gloom



Deadly duo: Harry Kane (left) and Son Heung-min have scored a combined 32 goals this season. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON — Harry Kane and Son Heung-min were again Tottenham's talismans in a 3-0 win over Leeds to revitalise their Premier League title challenge as Arsenal maintained their return to form with a 4-0 thrashing of West Brom.

However, it was another difficult day for the Premier League's battle against coronavirus as a third game this week was postponed due to outbreaks, while Tottenham and West Ham players were caught breaking restrictions by attending a Christmas party.

Burnley's clash with Fulham, scheduled for Sunday,

was called off due to a number of positive cases among the Fulham squad.

Fulham's trip to Tottenham was also postponed just hours before kick-off on Wednesday, to the frustration of Spurs boss Jose Mourinho.

But even as his side ended a four-game winless run against Leeds, Mourinho also lambasted three of his players for breaking coronavirus rules.

Giovani Lo Celso, Erik Lamela and Sergio Reguilon were pictured attending a large party with family and friends over Christmas along with West Ham's Manuel Lanzini.—AFP ■

Pochettino named new coach of Paris Saint-Germain

LONDON — Mauricio Pochettino was officially named the new coach of French champions Paris Saint-Germain on Saturday following the sacking of Thomas Tuchel.

PSG announced on its website that former Tottenham manager Pochettino had signed a contract until June 30, 2022 with an option for an additional year.

The 48-year-old Argen-

tine was the only name in the frame to take over at the club where he played from 2001 to 2003 after PSG abruptly ended Tuchel's involvement on December 24, reportedly for comments viewed as critical of the Qatari owners.

"This club has always held a special place in my heart. I have wonderful memories, especially of the unique atmosphere of the Parc des Princ-

es," Pochettino said in the PSG statement.

"I return to the club today with a lot of ambition and humility, and am eager to work with some of the world's most talented players," Pochettino said, adding he would do his utmost "to give our team the combative and attacking playing identity that Parisian fans have always loved."

—AFP ■

Mourinho slams Spurs stars for flouting coronavirus protocols

LONDON — Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho has condemned Erik Lamela, Sergio Reguilon and Giovani Lo Celso for breaking coronavirus protocols after the trio were spotted at a large party.

Lamela, Lo Celso and Reguilon were pictured at the gathering over the Christmas period, a photo of which was circulated on social media.

West Ham's Manuel Lanzini was also in attendance, breaching strict guidelines that prohibit mixing with other people indoors due to Covid-19.

Tottenham are set to take disciplinary action after Mourinho issued an angry rebuke about the players' behaviour.

Mourinho had been criti-



A photo of the Christmas gathering circulated on social media (above) after being posted by Giovani Lo Celso. **PHOTO: TWITTER**

cal of the Premier League for cancelling his team's match against Fulham in midweek

after a virus outbreak in the Cottagers' squad.

—AFP ■