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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 266, 9<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nadaw 1382 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm, www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Thursday, 7 January 2021

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Pyithu Hluttaw  
Notification 1/2021**

8<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nadaw, 1382 ME  
(6 January 2021)

**Summoning Third Pyithu Hluttaw  
first regular session**

In accord with Section 123, 124 (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 37 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Law 2012 and Rule 3 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Rule, it is hereby announced that the Third Pyithu Hluttaw's first regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 5<sup>th</sup> Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME (1 February 2021) (Monday).

*Sd/ T Khun Myat  
Speaker*

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Amyotha Hluttaw  
Notification 1/2021**

8<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nadaw, 1382 ME  
(6 January 2021)

**Summoning Third Amyotha Hluttaw  
first regular session**

In accord with Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 37 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Law 2012, it is hereby announced that the Third Amyotha Hluttaw's first regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 5<sup>th</sup> Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME (1 February 2021) (Monday).

*Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than  
Speaker*

## YRTA operates 4<sup>th</sup> trip of Yangon-Cocogyun vessel

YANGON Region Transport Authority ran the 4<sup>th</sup> vessel between Yangon and Cocogyun Township yesterday, carrying materials and equipment for electrification and construction works.

The ship departed in the early morning from No. 3 Sule Wharf in Yangon.

"YRTA is running the vessel trips to Cocogyun Township under the arrangement of Yangon Region government. This trip is aimed at effectuation of development of the township. We have to take responsibility for transportation. Now, we can supply the electricity in Cocogyun Township. We have to conduct other processes such as regional development and transportation of the civil staff," said U Hla Aung, the joint secretary of YRTA.

The passengers will have to stay one-week quarantine under COVID-19 preventive measures.

A total of 61 passengers including seamen, municipal staff, police officers, bank staff, Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) staff and residents were on board the ship. The ship was loaded



Yangon-Cocogyun vessel is seen departing its fourth trip to Cocogyun from Yangon on 6 January 2021. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG KYAW

with some 350 tonnes of cargos. YRTA conducted this trip by renting MV Charites, which cost around K350 million.

Regarding the electricity supply in Cocogyun Township, U Maung Maung Latt, the YESC chair said, "We are supplying electricity to this area for 24 hours under the solar system. Now, we are finalizing the project. We also

carried a 500 kW diesel engine and fuel oil to run the ship. However, we are providing the electricity under the solar system. If necessary, we will run the diesel engine. Now, YESC is supplying 1.5 megawatts under the solar system. To deliver more than 1.5 megawatts, the YESC engineering team will ride on the ship for field inspection."

Not only YRTA but also the Ministry of Transport and Communications also assisted in delivering the goods to enable access to the electricity in Cocogyun Township. Out of the recent seven vessels to this township, four trips were organized by YRTA.

Cocogyun is one of the 45 townships in Yangon Region. It is located in the Bay of Ben-

gal 257 nautical miles south of Yangon and its area is 20.54 square kilometres.

Cocogyun Township lagged in development due to its remote location. Now, the government is making an all-out effort for the development of this township. —Myint Maung Kyaw

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## “People are the key”

# 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 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.*

### **His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath NORODOM SIHAMONI, King of Cambodia sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

It gives me great pleasure to warmly congratulate Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I would also like to send my best wishes for Your Excellency good health and happiness as well as for the continuous prosperity and progress of your country.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is committed to maintaining a close relationship with the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and I express my confidence that these excellent ties of friendship and cooperation will continue to flourish in the years ahead.

With my highest consideration,

### **His Excellency Alexander Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

On behalf of the people of the Republic of Belarus and my own I sincerely congratulate You on the national holiday - the Independence Day.

I am pleased to note success achieved by your country in ensuring the sustainable development.

I hope for the continuation of the constructive cooperation between Minsk and Nay Pyi Taw on the principles of equality and mutual respect.

On this feast day I wish to Your Excellency sound health, longevity, fruitful work, as well as to the people of Myanmar Peace and prosperity.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

### **His Excellency David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

On behalf of the People and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I wish to convey our sincere congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and the People and Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as you celebrate your Independence Day.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands values its relationship with the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and looks forward to establishing closer ties through our mutual interests for the benefit of both our peoples.

Once again, I wish to congratulate the People and Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as you celebrate this momentous occasion.

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

### **His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

On behalf of the Ukrainian nation and my own, I sincerely congratulate You on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Noting high level of trust of the people of Myanmar towards the chosen by You political course, aiming at democratization and national reconciliation of the country, which has been proved by the convincing results of the recent parliamentary election in Myanmar, I would like to confirm Ukraine's readiness to actively build up the whole spectrum of our relations on the basis of mutual respect and pragmatic cooperation, including within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I wish to You, Your Excellency, strong health and success in the responsible statehood activity and to the friendly people of Myanmar-peace, well-being and prosperity.

### **His Excellency János ÁDER, President of Hungary sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

Allow me to extend my greetings to you and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of your national holiday.

By establishing diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Hungary in 1956, we formed a strong base for the cooperation between our two nations. We could claim with great satisfaction that owning the democratic transition of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar our

bilateral relationship has strengthened further during the previous years. I could assure you, that from the Hungarian side we are fully committed to deepen the mutually beneficial cooperation between our nations.

To your highly responsible duties I wish you great success and good health.

### **His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Your Excellency and people of Your country on the occasion of the National Holiday the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Without a doubt, I am confident that, with our joint efforts, the relationship between our countries will continue to develop in all directions and will grow to a complementary level to the interests of both peoples and the potentials of our countries.

Taking this opportunity, I wish Your Excellency strong health, happiness and great successes in your responsible state activities as well as peace and continued prosperity to the friendly people of Myanmar.

### **His Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations sends Congratulatory Message to the President**

I wish to extend to the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar my warmest congratulations on the occasion of your Independence Day.

In these challenging times, we are once again reminded of each country's essential contribution to our global wellbeing.

As we work together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, we must use the recovery to build more resilient, sustainable and just societies. We must also take bold action to address the climate emergency and advance efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

On this national day, I count on the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to help strengthen the United Nations and build a better and more peaceful world for all.

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

# Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor

*The following is message 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 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.*

### **His Excellency Viktor ORBÁN, Prime Minister of Hungary sends Congratulatory Message to the State Counsellor**

Please allow me to extend my greetings to you on the occasion of the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of independence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I would like to also express my sincere gratitude

for Your Excellency's visit to Budapest last year, which provided an opportunity for our traditionally friendly bilateral relationship to reach an even higher level, than ever before.

I can assure you, that my government is fully committed to continue our already comprehensive bilateral cooperation based on mutual respect and trust in spite of the hardships caused by the COV-

ID-19 pandemic.

Allow me to conclude by expressing my appreciation to the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for the excessively high number of participants during the recently organized general election.

To your highly responsible duties I wish you great success and good health.

## Pyithu Hluttaw MPs invited for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of Third Pyithu Hluttaw

THE Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker has sent the invitation letter to each Pyithu Hluttaw representative to inform them about holding the first day meeting of first regular session for the Third Pyithu Hluttaw at 10 am on 1 February 2021 (Monday).

The MPs can contact the following information counters to report on their arrival in Nay Pyi Taw, whether they receive or not the invitation letter, and to be able to do the preparatory works for the Hluttaw meetings.

- (a) No. 2 Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Guest House for the MPs who will stay there.
- (b) Headquarters of Union Solidarity and Development Party for MPs who will stay at the USDP Guest House.
- (c) Building 12 (I-12) of Pyithu Hluttaw Office for the MPs who will stay at their own schedule.
- (d) No. 3 Transit Centre (Ywa Taw) for the Tatmadaw representatives for the Hluttaw.

They also need to inform their arrival not earlier than 23 January 2021 (Saturday) and not later than 24 January 2021 (Sunday)—MNA

## Amyotha Hluttaw MPs invited for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of Third Amyotha Hluttaw

THE Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker has sent the invitation letter to each Amyotha Hluttaw representative to inform them about holding the first day meeting of first regular session for the Third Amyotha Hluttaw at 10 am on 1 February 2021 (Monday).

The MPs are invited to arrive in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 and 24 January ahead of Hluttaw meetings to undertake medical tests of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Whether receiving or not the invitation letter, the Amyotha Hluttaw MPs need to report on their arrival at the Amyotha Hluttaw Building I-19 in Nay Pyi Taw not earlier than 30 January and not later than 31 January 2021, bringing together with the national scrutiny card.—MNA

# MoC discusses promoting domestic fish consumption

THE Ministry of Commerce organized a videoconference yesterday to discuss a plan for promoting fish consumption in the country.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint said that the Ministry would continue making great efforts to improve local fish consumption as fish exports are declining because of the COVID-19 crisis.

In the 2018-2019 financial year, the export of fishery products was US\$732.156 million and in the financial year 2019-2020, the amount increased to \$858.869 million, according to the Union Minister, who said that the meeting was aimed at discussing how to collaboratively work to increase fish consumption because the export of fishery products including fishes was declining in the entire year of 2020 because of COVID-19 pan-



Union Minister Dr Than Myint joins the discussions on the promotion of domestic fish consumption via videoconference on 6 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

demic.

He continued that there are issues and inconveniences related to transportation and sales of fishery products during the COVID-19 crisis, so all stakeholders need to work to encourage local fish consumption in Myanmar collaboratively. He

added that if the fishery sector can be implemented, as usual, it could become a very developed sector in two or three years.

He said that trade development activities must be carried out in the “New Normal” way during the period of COVID-19 pandemic.

The virtual meeting was participated by the Deputy Minister for Commerce; senior officials from the Ministry of Commerce; the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation; Taninthayi Region government; Yangon Region government; Mandalay Region government; Ayeyawady

Region government; commercial attaches; Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Myanmar Fisheries Federation and other relevant organizations.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

# Floating bike rental services debuted in Myitkyina



A private business has introduced floating bicycle rental services near the township development committee office at the bank of Ayeyawaday River in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State.

“The services are aimed for fun and fitness of the youth to stay themselves away from the narcotic drug while schools are closed during the COVID-19 cri-

sis,” said U Sai Khum, the owner of floating bike rental shop.

The rental of each bike for 30 minutes is K3,000 per person, and K5,000 for two persons.

The user has to wear a life jacket before riding the bike. When they feel exhausted and need any help, they can blow the whistle on the life jacket. Then, the rental shop will bring tired users by a motorboat.

The floating bike rental services will be available from 8 am to 5 pm, and the business will be expanded to Indawgyi area and Bhamo Township in Mohnyin district.—Sein Win (IPRD)

Fun ride services are introduced with floating bikes in Myitkyina Township in Kachin State. PHOTO: SEIN WIN (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## We continuously implemented the peacemaking process step-by-step



The first session of the Union Peace Conference- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Panlong began in 2016. We encountered many difficulties during the peace talks in 2015, based on the provisions of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signed between the previous government and some ethnic armed organizations. However, we continuously implemented the peacemaking process step-by-step. When official peace negotiations were suspended due to some disagreements, the NRPC and the Peace Commission were able to organize many informal discussions, and they finally managed to resume official peace talks.

**(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)**

## E-learning platform introduced for final years of nursing, midwifery diploma courses

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe presided over a meeting via videoconferencing yesterday to introduce the e-learning platform in conducting the 3-year diploma course in nursing and midwifery and 2-year diploma course in midwifery.

At the meeting, the Union Minister highlighted the role of Myanmar nurses and midwives in the four major healthcare sectors of upgrading public health services, prevention of diseases, treatments and rehabilitation works.

He also expressed his ap-

preciation for their works at the front line in COVID-19 measures and explained e-learning platforms for the healthcare professions.

The Union Minister recommended an interactive teaching-learning approach in conducting the courses, assistance of officials from the Department of Human Resources for Health and specialists from the relevant hospitals, the open-book exam system and the take-home exam as in developing countries.

The e-learning platform for the courses is supported by non-profit health organization



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe chairs the online meeting to introduce e-learning platform for nursing courses on 6 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

Jhpiego affiliated with Johns Hopkins University.

The introduction of e-learning platform ceremony was attended by senior officials from Department of Human Resource-

es for Health, rectors of the University of Nursing (Yangon) and the University of Nursing (Mandalay), professors, principals of nursing and midwifery training schools, trainee nurses and

midwives, and representatives from UNFPA, UNICEF, Access to Health Fund and Jhpiego. —MNA

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*



Returnees go through immigration process at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Myanmar nationals, seamen brought back home by relief flights

THE relief flight of Myanmar Airways International organized by Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur landed in Yangon yesterday evening with 174 citizens stranded in Malaysia including 61 from the detention centre due to the suspension of international flights.

Another relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) organized by Myanmar Embassy in Singapore and Myanmar Seafarer Employment Service Federation (MSESF) brought back 143 Myanmar seamen stranded in Singapore in the same 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 for them.

To bring back the Myanmar seamen and citizens in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working together with the relevant ministries, Myanmar embassies from respective countries, shipping companies and the relevant organizations.—MNA

*(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*

## Significant pagoda features artworks of Bagan era in Pakokku Township

PAKOKKU Township of Magway Region is recognized as the Western Ayeyar City. The well-known pagodas such as 900-year old Thiho Shin pagoda, Shwegu pagoda, Shwe Mu Htaung pagoda and Phaung Taw Oo pagoda are concentrated there.

Although the domestic tours are suspended across the country during COVID-19 pandemic, the well-wishers including those living in foreign countries donate money for the construction of pagoda called Aung Su Pyae Kyaung Shit-thaung-lay-htaung pagoda located about two miles from Pakokku.

The pagoda was first called 31-bone (31 realms of existence) Kyaw Lon Aung and only 30 per cent of construction completed over 30 years. It was rebuilt in 2003 by Aggamahapandita Aggamahasddhammajotikadhaja Abidhahamharatthaguru Sayadaw Baddhantavisara, Patron of

Mahavithutaryama Monastery of Pakokku Township and renamed as Su Pyae Kyaung Shit-thaung-lay-htaung pagoda. The famous architects were hired to restart the construction in 2017.

The pagoda with artworks of the Bagan era is 75ft in height and surrounded by 24 smaller zedis outside.

There are 32 chambers inside the pagoda and all are depicted with the history of Buddha and picturesque wall paintings.

The whole body of pagoda can be seen from a certain distance. The 89 years old Sayadaw Bhadanta Visara who leads the construction of pagoda is also Ovadacariya Sayadaw for Sugyi Pan Sasana and Saint San Myint Pariyatti (Nunnery school). Sayadaw makes efforts in building meditation centres and religious buildings. The main aim of Sayadaw is to receive propagation of Sasana and provide in-



The pagoda with artworks of the Bagan era is 75ft in height and surrounded by 24 smaller cetis outside. **PHOTO : SALAI KO KEE (IPRD)**

formation for the rural populace.

It will cost K1240,000 per small zedis and K5,400 per buddha statue and K54,000 per sitting buddha statue. The pagoda board of trustee receives between K2.5

million and K9 million of donation daily during COVID-19.

Those wanting to donate cash distributions for construction of pagoda can also donate as much as they can. Currently,

two-third of construction works are being completed under the management of Sayadaw. —Salai Ko Kee (IPRD)

*(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*

## Ywangan (Virgin Land) promoted as global tourist destination



An aerial view of Ywangan (Virgin Land). **PHOTO : U TUN TUN WIN (IPRD)**



Tourism promotion of Ywangan is underway. **PHOTO : U TUN TUN WIN (IPRD)**

TOURISM promotion of Ywangan, as the Virgin Land in Danu Self-Administered Zone in southern Shan State, is being carried out to make the area become a globally popular destination, ac-

cording to the, Ywangan Tourism Development Organization (YTO).

Shan State government has set up the State Tourism Fund to create a high-value market for local products from Ywangan

Township and to generate more income from the sustainable natural economy as tourism with the preservation of the local culture and traditions of the region.

With the cooperation of YTO, Hluttaw representatives, departmental officials, and local residents, the fund is providing tourism infrastructures such as constructing public toilets at the top of the mountain included in the Ashay Myin, Anaut Myin mountain trekking tour; car parking and shops at the foot of the mountain as well as paving the road from Mya Zedi pagoda to the foot of the mountain.

The Ywangan Tourism Development Organization (YTO) is also conducting necessary arrangements for visitors in the post-COVID-19 period to the 300 feet tall Talote Cha waterfall, located in the north of the region, Sinsar Pyar Cave, Kyaut Ngat Won Twin Cave, Pyada Lin Cave, the 7,752 feet tall Ashay Myin Anaut Myin mountain trekking tour, Springwater in the south, Blue Water Lagoon, Taw Kyal waterfall, Alae Chaung eight-tiered waterfall, Main Ma Yae Thakhin Ma Mountain, Eucalyptus-lines lane, Alwan Taung View Point, Myin Mu Viewpoint and the world standard Ywangan Coffee.— Tun Tun Win (IPRD)

*(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)*

## Resumption of supplementary medical classes scheduled for third week of this month

Plans are underway to reopen supplementary classes for the examinations of the final year part 2 at Universities of Medicine across Myanmar in the third week of this month, said Dr Zaw Wai Soe, Rector of University of Medicine 1, Yangon.

He said that the supplementary classes will be reopened with the permission of the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the students must undergo COVID-19 tests.

“The course work of our Universities of Medicine includes Final Year Part I and Part II. In fact, the duration of Final Year Part II is one-and-a-half years. But, there is a supplementary exam, too,” he said. Supplementary examinations are ones conducted after the students failed their previous examination.

“There are 27 students (who will sit the supplementary examination) at our university. We are informing each of them. Some students are travelling, and we are informing them. When they arrive, they must receive COVID-19 tests. We will teach them for two weeks, and then they will have an a-week break before the exam,” he said.

“In fact, they had already attended the classes,” said Dr Zaw Wai Soe. “Human resources, especially for the health sector, are important. So, the classes will be reopened one by one.”

“Teaching will be conducted only in areas where there is no case of COVID-19. We have prepared to use videoconferencing to teach them. Courses will be taught in a combination of online learning and face to face learning.”

There are about 100 students who will sit the supplementary examinations of the Final Year Part II in Universities of Medicine across Myanmar.

Through the Department of Human Resources for Health, permission has been sought from the Ministry of Health and Sports to allow the universities to reopen the regular classes of the Final Year Part II.—Htet Hlyan

*(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)*

## Ayeyarwady Foundation contributes K2 bln to COVID vaccine national fund



Ayeyarwady Foundation led by president U Zaw Zaw donated K17.5 bln in total to date. **PHOTO: KO MOE**

AYEYARWADY Foundation has contributed K2 billion to the COVID-19 vaccine fund raised by the National Committee on COVID-19 Prevention, Control and Treatment.

The foundation is actively taking part in the fight against the pandemic, with giving a wide range of assistance since March, establishing 1,000-bedded and 375-bedded field hospitals in Yangon and Mandalay and providing the front-line

health workers and volunteers with accommodation.

The centres have already provided medical treatments to over 10,000 COVID-19 positive cases and conducted medical tests to over 20,000 persons by spending K21.2 billion in total—K15.5 billion from U Zaw Zaw and K5.7 billion from other donors.—Ye Yint Shine

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## KYOBO Life Insurance donates COVID-19 test kits to MoHS

KYOBO Life Insurance based in the Republic of Korea donated the COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits to the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday afternoon in Yangon.

At the donation ceremony, Director-General for the Department of Medical Research

Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun and Deputy Chief of Mission/Minister Counsellor Mr Hahm Jeonghan from the Embassy of the ROK to Myanmar delivered opening speech and Mr Song Chul Yoon from KYOBO Life Insurance explained the reason of donation.

The Director-General received 5,000 COVID-19 Antigen Test Kits worth of US\$37,000 from the the Deputy Chief of Mission/Minister Counsellor and returned the certificates of honour.—Min Thit (MNA)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



DMR Director-General Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun receives the donation of COVID test kits from the KYOBO Life Insurance of the ROK. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT (MNA)**

## Hindu well-wishers donate 570 rice boxes to COVID quarantine centres



Hindu families group is seen donating rice boxes to one of the COVID quarantine centres in Yangon yesterday. **YE YE**

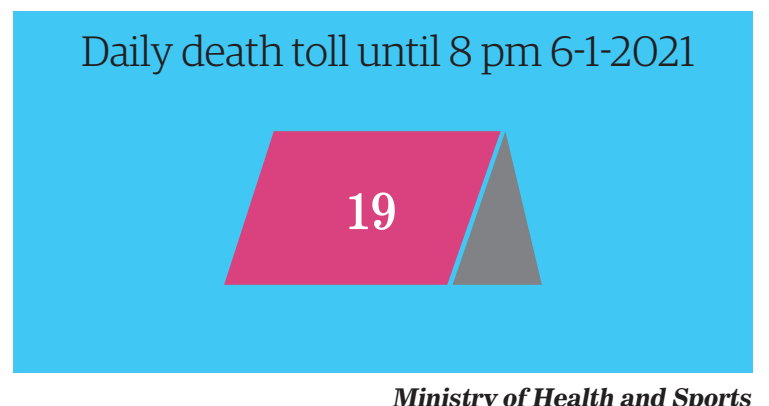
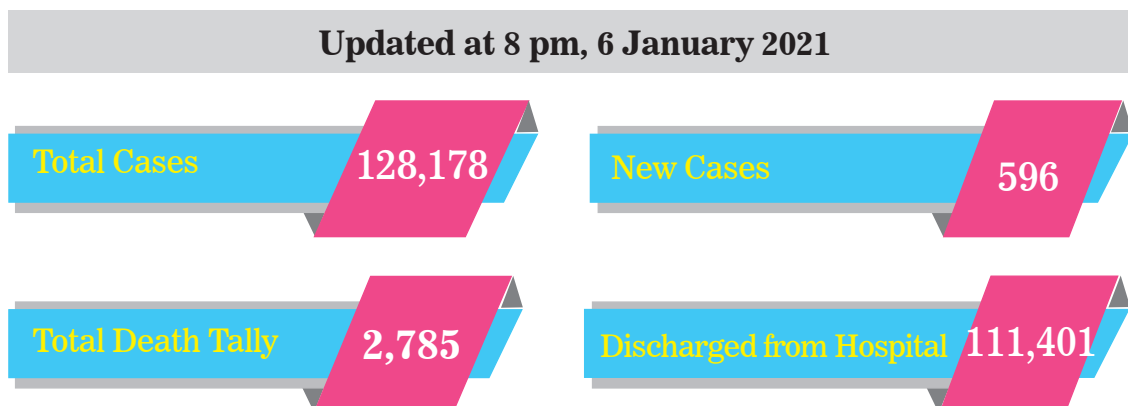
The COVID-19 Hindu Families Relief Group, organized by the Sanatan Dharma Swayamsevak Sangh (SDSS), donated 570 rice boxes to the COVID-19 quarantine centres on Mindhamma Road, Shwepyitha and Mayangone townships yesterday afternoon. Under the three major objectives, the group has offered

rice boxes to the quarantine centres in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi and Mon, medicines and medical supplies to the hospitals and fundamental food supplies to the needy families since March 2020.

The donation of this group has amounted to over K73.8 million until now.—Ye Ye

## 596 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 6 January, total figure rises to 128,178

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 128,178 after 596 new cases were reported on 6 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 128,178 confirmed cases, 2,785 died, 111,401 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Ministry of Health and Sports

# Domestic palm oil prices up as global production down

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association, the domestic palm oil is on the rise as it tracks the imported oil price.

“The domestic edible oil price is related to the international price. It has risen because of the rise in the global market,” Chair U San Lin of the association.

Myanmar yearly imports 700,000 tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia to meet local demand. Those countries faced unpredictable weather condition, and the production declined. Consequently, the edible oil price has risen.

“The reasons for rising edi-



A local consumer buying cooking oil at a retail outlet. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

ble oil price is production slump caused by erratic weather conditions, such as flood and La Niña, coupled with the COVID-19 impacts,” he continued.

Additionally, the temporary

storage of palm oil in those countries and tax hike caused other price rise reasons, the association stated.

The palm oil fetches up to US\$1,035 per tonne in the inter-

national market, while it is priced K2,400 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6kg) in the retail market of Myanmar.

During the early outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, palm oil price stood at only \$700-800 per tonne, and the price in the domestic retail market was only at K1,500-1,600 per viss.

To ensure the self-sufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government purchased over 12,000 tonnes of palm oil for reserves and distributed to the oil tanks in the respective regions and states, the association stated.

“The import volume of palm oil during the pandemic is adequate for the domestic market’s needs. The association urged its

member to have an adequate supply of oil during the pandemic.

“Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association and the government cooperated to import 12,000 tonnes of oil for reserves in May 2020. The association has urged the members to store oil in tanks for the needs. We have enough oil to meet the requirements for sure, the association chair affirmed. The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 600,000-700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are imported annually to meet the domestic market’s self-sufficiency.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## YSX stock trading dives in 2020

ACCORDING To the annual report released by the exchange, a total of K12.6 billion worth of 1.87 million shares by six listed companies were traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in 2020, a significant drop compared to 2019.

Over 2.4 million shares from five listed companies, valued K13.39 billion, were traded on the exchange in 2019.

Both continuous trading and block trading on YSX fell in 2020 despite Ever Flow River Group Public Co’s (EFR) debut, on the exchange on 28 May 2020.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Myanmar’s securities market has been able to continue operating without stopping trading.

At present, shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH) and the EFR are being traded on the exchange.

In 2020, the value of stocks traded on the exchange peaked at K1.48 billion in February. In contrast, trading on the exchange registered an all-time low of K552.9 million in November due to the COVID-19 resurgence in Myanmar.

In January 2020, 196,836 shares worth K1.25 billion were traded on the exchange while 188,919 shares, with an estimated value of K1.48 billion, were traded on the exchange in February and K1.42 billion worth 228,913 shares were traded in March respectively. It touched the lowest of K902 million with 173,808 shares in April. It rose to K1.2 billion with 200,416 shares being traded in May. The share volumes traded on the exchange surged

to 221,682 in June, with estimated value K1.3 billion and then, it fell to K1 billion with 125,137 shares in July. In August, the exchange witnessed a low stock trading value at K747.5 million, with 118,850 shares traded. The value slightly rose to K838.67 million, with 85,237 shares on the exchange in September. It continued drops in October with 85,630 shares worth K673.5 million. The value of shares traded on the exchange sank to the lowest level of K552.9 million in November, with 107,028 shares. The trading value rose to K1.14 billion with 139,513 shares in December, the exchange’s monthly report showed.

The price per share of FMI decreased from K11,500 in January 2020 to K9,900 on 30 December 2020. The share price of MTSH remained unchanged at K3,850 last year. MCB’s stock price also dipped to K8,000 from K8,200. The cost of FPB showed a small drop from K23,000 to K22,500, while TMH slightly fell to K2,800 from K2,850. Nevertheless, the share price of EFR rose to K3,700 in Dec-end compared with the rate in May 2020

In 2016, only three companies were traded on the YSX — FMI, MTSH, and MCB. One more public company, FPB, was listed on the YSX in 2017. In 2018, TMH debuted on the exchange. EFR entered the exchange in 2020. This year, Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd has been approved to be listed on the exchange, and the listing date will be announced soon.

More than 2.5 million shares of three listed companies were traded on the YSX in 2016, and their value was estimated at K70 billion. In 2017, despite an increase in the stock trading volume to 2.6 million shares, the trade value was only K22 billion. In 2018, 2.3 million shares of five companies,

worth K11.5 billion, were traded on the exchange, according to the annual report of the YSX.

The stock markets worldwide have reported their largest declines since the 2008 financial crisis. Similarly, the local equities market is also scared by the COVID-19 crash, points out a market observer.

At present, people are putting money in savings, rather than investing during the COVID-19 crisis, he added.

YSX held webinar sessions on 26 and 27 December to share the future benefit of stock investment for the investors, in coordination with securities companies (MSEC, KBZSC, CBSC, AYA Trust SC, KTzRH and uabsc).

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

Furthermore, YSX launched pre-listing board (PLB) on 28 September 2020 to provide unlisted public companies with fund-raising opportunities and build a bridge toward listing on YSX, YSX stated.

The YSX was launched three years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars. The stock exchange has also sought the government’s support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Domestic gold price rises to K1,336,000 per tical on global cues

FOLLOWING a robust global market trend, the domestic gold price has risen to K1,336,000 per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms) in early 2021 according to the gold traders.

The gold price rallied to US\$1,944 per ounce on 6 January 2021, whereas it stood at \$1,893 per ounce on 31 December 2020, with a rise of \$50 within one week.

In Dec-end, yellow metal fetched K1,325,000 per tical in the domestic market. Then, the price showed uptick this year, with K1,336,000 per tical on 6 January 2021.

“Nevertheless, local market relying on international gold prices did not shake up as it is supposed to be, due to the shortage of raw material,” said Chair U Myo Myint of Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA). At present, the old gold scrap and jewellery are refined into the pure gold bar. The raw material has not come from gold mining as the transportation restriction halted gold mining, the YGEA stated.

The gold market has become sluggish as the pandemic shut down the events like wedding and traditional festivals, gold traders pointed out.

The daily transaction of 50 visses (a viss equals to 1.6kg) of gold was earlier seen. Now, about 5-10 viss are rarely traded per day, according to YGEA.

According to gold traders, the domestic gold was priced with the minimum rate of K1,216,500 (1 July) and the maximum rate of K1,296,500 (27 July). The price moved in the range of, K1,286,500 on 13 August and K1,332,500 on 7 August. The local gold reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,312,000 (16 November) and the lowest of K1,278,000 (28 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of K1,275,000 (1 December) and K1,333,000 (28 December). —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# Now it's time to redouble our efforts for aquaculture development

**DUE** to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 had been a tough year for the aquaculture sector.

With lack of order from foreign buyers, closure of restaurants and transport disruption and the consequences of other measures, the aquaculture export and fish consumption in the country had declined significantly.

Besides, this fall has also threatened the livelihood of millions of workers relying on the fishery industry.

This situation demands all stakeholders including government departments in the aquaculture sector to take a leading role in putting the industry back on the recovery track through innovative ways. Let us hope that all hands in this aquaculture sector are on deck.

We must act now to boost the local fish consumption and find new ideas to ensure that the aquaculture sector recovers in the coming years.

Our country earned over US\$ 732 million in the 2018-2019 financial year and over US\$ 858 million in the 2019-2020 financial year.

But, the sector has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with a slump in aquaculture exports since February, 2019 following the cancellation of orders from foreign buyers and closure of processing plants.

Our country has good prospects for shipping aquaculture products to foreign markets.

Myanmar is rich in natural resources. But, we are still weak, compared with other countries, in catching and farming fish and prawns and producing value-added products.

There is a good opportunity and potential for producing fish and prawns, and this needs to be prioritized to upgrade the food sector.

We believe that by seizing opportunities possible from the current situation,

national-level plans and projects can ensure a recovery of the aquaculture export sector and local consumption.

To put our fishery sector on the right path to recovery in a short period, we need to attract foreign investment which can also offer modern technology. For foreign investments to come in, we need to show first that we have the potential to develop from all sides. Everyone is obliged to cooperate to gain business confidence and to create a good environment for business.

We believe that national-level plans and projects which ensure future success in the sector would be seen soon.



# The good old days at the Rangoon University

By Khin Maung Myint

**AS** tributes to the centenary celebration of the founding of the Rangoon University (RU), now Yangon University, many a writer had written articles based on their experiences at the RU. Being a student at the RU in the mid-nineteen fifties myself, I couldn't resist the urge, thus jumped onto the band wagon and had written some lately. As one already got covered in the GNLM, I intend to keep on writing some more based on my experiences from the RU days. Tediousness from attending classes and studies aside, those were the most care-free and the best days of my life.

Going to the front of the ladies' hostels during the nights, armed with a mandolin or a guitar or a violin to serenade the ladies of those hostels were the most popular pastimes for some male hostel students of the old, but I was never one of them. My hobbies were quite different from most students then. I used to spend my leisure times in and around the Inya Lake -- angling, swimming or rowing.

### The RUBC

Here, I don't want the readers to think I belonged to the famous RUBC (Rangoon University Boat Club). By rowing I meant to say I used to row a traditional dugout boat that a businessman who lived close to the Lakes owned and had placed at my disposal as I was a close friend of his brother.

Here, I would like to mention briefly about the RUBC. It was founded in 1923, three years after the establishment of the RU itself, by Sir Arthur Eggar, a Britisher. Since its founding, the RUBC rowers had participated in many international regattas at home and abroad and had won their fair shares of prizes. To save space and time I'll not be elaborating those achievements in detail, but would like to say that the RUBC was the pride of our university and the country in the old days. That boat club still exists today as the Yangon Universities' Boat Club (YUBC).

### RU produced many national class sportspersons

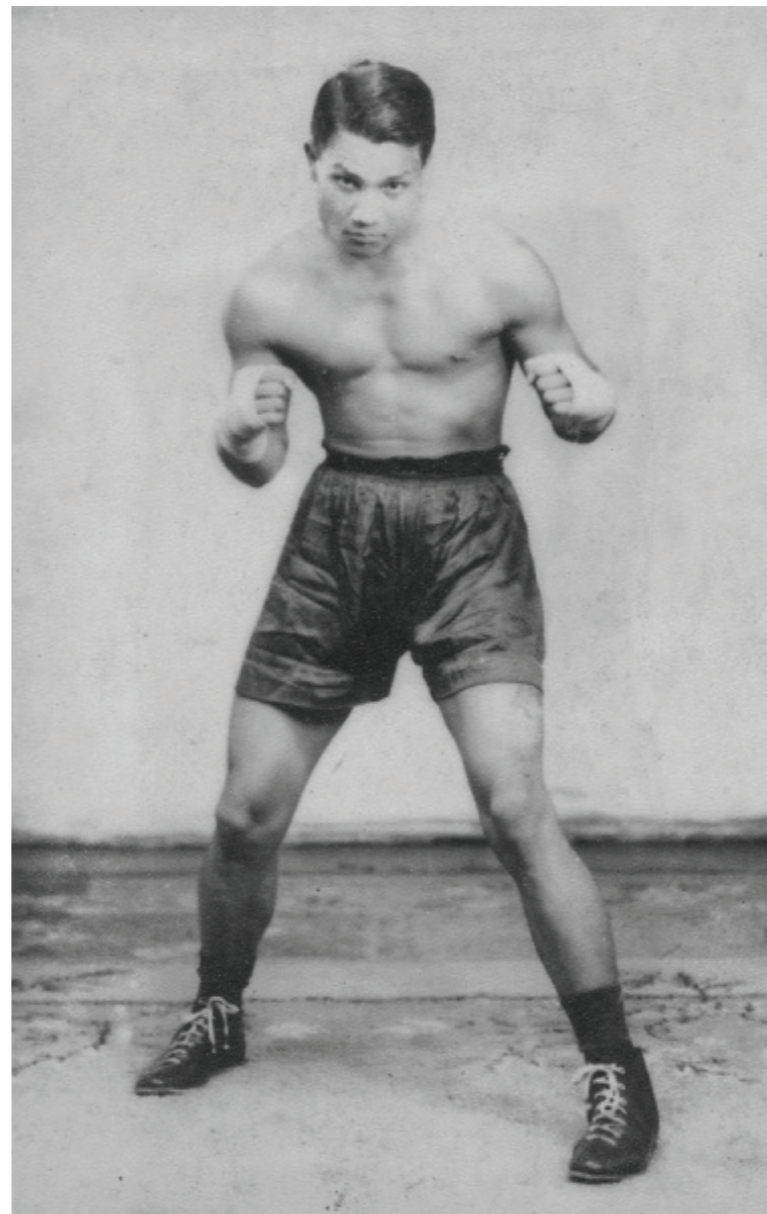
The RU student sportspersons were prominent in various

fields of sports then. Our RU soccer team was one of the star teams in the senior league alongside the best teams such as: the Burma Police, Burma Customs, Burma Army, Burma Navy, Burma Railways and the Burma Post and Telecoms teams to mention some I can remember. That team produced many national standard players and one of the most popular among them was Ne Win, later Collegian Ne Win, the Academy award-winning movie actor. Two other prominent players who preceded him were (U) Sonny Tin Tun and (U) Myoe Sein. They were not only star players, but (U) Sonny was a Burma champion 110 yards sprinter and (U) Myoe Sein was a 440 yards Burma champion.

Besides soccer, there were other sports where the RU students excelled. The RU produced star tennis players too. Joe Ba Maung and Than Lwin, the Burma Champions were the most prominent ones. There were also many national standard athletes in those days. The most outstanding and successful athletes were the "Mra" brothers, who were champion pole vaulters and sprinters. During their heydays, no one ever beat them. They shone even in the regional sport meets such as the South East Asian Peninsula (SEAP) Games, the predecessor of the present South East Asian (SEA) Games.

In swimming, the Burma and S.E Asian champion Tin Maung Ni was an alumnus of the RU. Also the Burma boxing champion in his weight class was Stanley (Sugar) Majid of the Medical College, which was an affiliate of the RU. Besides the champions in the physical sports, RU also produced draught champions in many international regattas. They were Burma champions (Kyar) Ba Nyein and Yin Maung.

The RU also produced many prominent sprinters, runners, hurdlers, throwers and jumpers, who dominated every sport discipline they competed in. Even after leaving the RU and had joined the various services, they continued to reign the fields and tracks for sometime. A fact evidenced by the fact that for some years after leaving university their old familiar faces were common sights at every national



Besides the champions in the physical sports, RU also produced draught champions of national standards. They were Burma champions (Kyar) Ba Nyein and Yin Maung. (Kyar) Ba Nyein was the Lethwei fighter and boxer who participated in boxing at the 1952 Summer Olympics and was a pioneer in modernizing the Lethwei. PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

## Besides soccer, there were other sports where the RU students excelled. The RU produced star tennis players too.

or international sports meets. In those days, there was an African American athletic coach from the US attached to RU, courtesy of the US government, who was an Olympic pentathlon champion. His name was Bill Miller, if I remember correctly.

As for the lady students, they fared quite well too. There were many successful sportswomen and also many beauty queens of that era. The most outstanding

beauty queens during our times were Miss Burma / Union Mini Pu, Ma Sein Aye, Lily Soe Yin, Phyu Phyu Shein, Nu Nu Yee and Naw Louisa Benson, to mention some.

Inter universities and college sports meets that bred many sportspersons were held regularly. These sport activities provided the students, who were interested and enjoyed attending those events the opportunities to

root for the team or the individuals they liked. Those occasions were time to vent or release our tensions and stresses, relax ourselves and forget about the tedious studies for a while.

### Extracurricular activities

Besides these there were some other extracurricular activities for us. As the saying goes: "All work and no play makes Jack a lazy boy", students need to relax and recreate. There were volleyball courts, badminton courts and basket ball grounds at almost every mens' hostel, where we can play and relax. During the evenings those places were ever busy with activities as many enthusiasts spent their times there. There was also an indoors gymnasium behind the Student Union building. It provided weight lifting and body-building facilities in one half of the building and in the other half were squash racket ball courts. There was also a boxing ring in a building close to the gym; sometimes boxing tournaments were arranged outdoors on the campus grounds.

The tennis courts were located across the University Avenue some distance away from the mens' hostels. As far as I can remember, only a very few from my hostel, Pinya, played tennis during my stay there. However, those courts produced national champions in the old days. There was also a soccer/cum athletic field for field and track sports that also produced many national standard sportsmen and women. There was a swimming pool on the campus, where swimming competitions were held regularly. I rarely went there to swim; for me I prefer the "Inya Lake" where I could swim long-distance across the lake.

Other extracurricular activities on the campus included the hostel annual dinners, which were the most coveted occasions that everyone looked forward to. The annual dinners were held during the winter months; "Anyeint pwe" or may be music troupes were hired for entertainments and those occasions were the most joyous highlights of the year. The Mandalay Anyeint troupes like "Yoedayar Pyan Ah Mar Sein" and "Soviet Pyan Nwe Nwe Sann" were popular at hall dinners. We could invite

guests to the dinner and naturally the lady students from the "Sister Hall" were regular guests and vice versa.

In those days there were such things as the "Brother and Sister Halls". One ladies' hostel and a mens' hostel made friendly pact between themselves as "Brother and Sister Halls". The objective was to assist and cooperate one another to conduct some activities like debates, Q&A sessions with the "Brain Trust (group)" that comprised academics and established writers, and other social activities. The relationship between most of the residents of the two hostels grew into sibling bonds that last years long after leaving the university.

The Scientific Exhibitions were also held annually on the campus grounds and behind the Convocation Hall near the Rangoon Yacht Club. During such exhibitions some military hardware, such as: a WW2 vintage army tank, a 40 mm Bofor gun, the famous "Ta Pyet Sea" that played a vital role in the "Insein Campaign" and a gunnery training simulator from the navy, plus a small Bell helicopter from the air force were also on display. Those exhibitions attracted many outsiders too as it was open to the public.

### Other entertainments and outlets

Apart from the above mentioned extracurricular activities that could be pursued on the campus, some hostel students ventured outside the campus in pursuit of entertainments and relaxations. There were numerous movie theatres in the downtown area in the neighbourhood of the Continental roundabout at the junction of the Sule Pagoda street and the Montgomery (Bogyoke) street. Some cinemas and a theatre, where plays were performed could also be found on the Phayre (Pansodan) street. The area around the "Myaynee-kone" roundabout was another popular hangout for the hostel students. That place had a few cinemas and the "Padonmar Kwin" provided those who had interests in Burmese traditional plays and dances with "Zat Pwe", an all night affair, during the dry seasons.

SEE PAGE-11



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 6 January, 2021)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7 January, 2021:** Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Kayin, 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:** Slight increase of night temperatures in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayin, Mon States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 January, 2021:** Fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 January, 2021:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 January, 2021:** Fair weather.

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subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.  
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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.

## About 350 acres of special cotton yarn to be grown this year

A total of 350 acres of cotton yarn special zone will be grown in the Mandalay region's four townships. **PHOTO: KO THWIN (MANDALAY)**

ABOUT 350 acres of special cotton yarn will be grown in mid-February, in this financial year for the local farmers from Mandalay region to produce and use the high-quality cotton seeds, according to the Mandalay Region Agriculture Department.

"About 350 acres of cotton yarn will be grown to produce and use good quality cotton seeds per the water and soil conditions in the region. It will also be grown for the local cotton growers to reduce the production costs and increase the

yield and promote the quality of cotton," said Daw Si Si Phone, Assistant Director of Mandalay Region Agriculture Department.

"Our Agriculture Department is working to increase the rural farmers' income and ensure the production of high-quality

products. The cotton yarn is widely used in the region. It was grown as the special zone for yielding of the excellent quality products. The cotton yarns are planted with irrigated water, and it is convenient to supply the water in the same compound of the plantation.

The cotton yarn will be cultivated in four townships. Also, the agriculture technologies will be provided to the local growers to promote high-quality cotton yield, she added.

A total of 350 acres of cotton yarn special zone will be grown in the Mandalay region's four townships, including 50 acres in Meiktila and 100 acres in Wundwin townships of Meiktila District and 100 acres each in Yamethin and Pyawbwe townships of Yamethin District. Only Shwe Taung-8 and Shwe Taung-10 cotton species will be grown in a special cotton zone. —Ko Thwin (Mandalay)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Only new membership cardholders allowed to enter commodity depot beginning from 1 April

ONLY the new membership cardholders will be allowed to enter the commodity depot for trading beginning from 1 April, according to a statement of the Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (YRCCI) Yangon on 5 January.

The YRCCI (Bayintnaung Commodity Exchange) held its 25<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting on 21 December 2018. According to the association rules approved by the meeting, all association

members have to pay in the annual fees.

So, those members who have not paid the yearly expenses of K30,000 should continuously pay in the annual fees for 2020 and pay in the annual fees for 2021.

However, the Bayintnaung Commodity Exchange was closed in 2020 for many days because of prevention and control measures of COVID-19 pandemic. So, the association

members have been exempted from paying in the annual fees for 2020 under the management meeting of the association held on 4 January. But, the annual fees for 2021 will be collected.

Those who have already paid in for the annual fees for 2020 do not need to pay in for 2021 and only exchange the new membership cards. Those who have not paid in for 2020 are needed to pay for 2021 and

exchange the new membership cards, according to the announcement of YRCCI on 5 January.

Therefore, the members must return their old membership cards. The association has also urged the members to take out the new member cards and pay in the annual fees not later than 31 March 2021. —Thiri

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Exporters to ship watermelon, musk melon daily under quantity setting system

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to a statement released by the Fruit Commodity Depot in Muse 105-mile trade zone, the trucks carrying the watermelon and musk melon will be allowed to export the fruits under the quantity setting system of controlling the market.

Starting from 5 January, the Ho Naung (Kyinsankyawt) border crossing, a majority route of fruit export, has extended the opening time from 7 am to 8:30

pm. Although more trucks with watermelon and musk melon could be exported, Myanmar will export the fruits with a limit to quantity to control the market.

"During the last few days, there was a blockade of the lorries in Wantein ground because of the shortage of labourers and drivers," said Vice-Chair U Aung Thet Oo of Fruit Commodity Depot in Muse 105-mile trade zone.

"Around 24 or 25 December, our lorries loaded with fruits entered the sale ground. But, there

were not enough workers and drivers on that ground, and it took many days. Some could not even find their vehicles. We have tried to adjust to the sale ground operation systematically," he added.

Moreover, the vehicle accidents occurred because more trucks entered the exchange ground exceeding limited capacity.

"The exchange ground can accommodate only 300 or 400 lorries. There are so many lorries

on the ground, and there are also some collisions there. If we could reduce the number of lorries entering the ground, we could also reduce the number of accidents," explained U Aung Thet Oo.

Fruit Commodity Depot with Muse 105-mile trade zone announced on 5 January that the trucks would be entered to the exchange ground under the Fruit Commodity Depot and Truck Supervision Board management.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

# The good old days at the Rangoon University

## FROM PAGE-9

I remembered two very rare opportunities we received. Many famous foreign entertainment groups used to visit our country in those days. They used to entertain at the Jubilee Hall on the Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road. The entrance fees were exorbitant and out of reach for most of us. However, on one occasion the famous American Ballet Dance group, the Martha Graham Ballet Group from the US entertained for the university students, free of charge at

the Convocation Hall. Another occasion was when the world famous Benny Goodman Jazz Band, also from the US entertained us in the open space between the Science Block and the "Grande Thitpoke pin", in an open air setting.

Another attraction for the hostel students was the "Tazaungdaing" lighting festival. During those festivities hostel students, mostly males and sometimes accompanied by some lady hostel students went to the 15th Street in the "Lanmadaw" township late in

the evenings. There we used to loiter leisurely among the cartoon posters displayed along the colorfully lit street. We enjoyed reading the cartoons drawn by famous cartoonists and also by some upstarts. They were really entertaining. Another popular place to visit during those festivals was the "Suburban Street" (now Ngu War) in the Ahlone township where every house in the street were decorated with colourful lights.

This article will not be complete if I leave out the annual State and Division soccer

tournaments held at the Aung San Stadium. For us, who hailed from all over the country, these tournaments provided us the rare opportunities to watch them 'live' instead of crowding around vintage radios and listen to the commentators' incomprehensible comments. On such occasions the RU students, mostly hostel students both male and female would proceed in organized groups to the Aung San Stadium to cheer on their respective State or Division teams.

As this piece is neither a

chronicle nor anything resembling that, but just an attempt to depict a rough sketch of the university environs of my university days, some important facts and names may have missed being mentioned. Also some facts may lack accuracy. However, I sincerely hope that as a nostalgic reminiscence of those good old days at the RU, these flaws would be excusable and that it will bring back the fond memories of the past to many of the alumni of the old RU.



## PANDEMIC: GLOBAL NEWS

### ORIGINS OF VIRUS

# Impasse over WHO virus mission 'not just a visa issue': China

DELAYS to a long-planned mission by WHO experts to China to investigate the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic are "not just a visa issue", Beijing said Wednesday.

A year after the outbreak started, international health experts were expected to arrive in China this week for a highly politicized visit to explore the beginnings of the virus, which first emerged late last year in the city of Wuhan.

The sensitive mission has been beset by delays and politics, with fears of a whitewash by Beijing.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters Wednesday that talks were continuing between the two sides over "the specific date and specific arrangement of the expert group's visit".

"The issue of origin-trac-

ing is incredibly complicated. To ensure the work of the international expert team in China goes smoothly, we have to carry out necessary procedures and make relevant arrangements," said Hua.

She said the country is "doing its best to create good conditions for the international expert group to come to China".

On Tuesday the head of the World Health Organization told reporters Beijing had not yet finalized permission for the team's arrival, saying he was "very disappointed with this news" -- in a rare rebuke of Beijing from the UN body.

Earlier this week Chinese authorities refused to confirm the exact dates and details of the visit, a sign of the enduring sensitivity of the mission.

SOURCE: AFP



Medical workers are checking a patient's CT image with a movable CT machine at the "Wuhan Livingroom" makeshift hospital in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, Feb. 23, 2020. PHOTO: GAO XIANG/XINHUA

### FESTIVE PERIOD

# Pandemic rains on Spain's glittering Epiphany parades

FOR children, it's the most wonderful time of the year, when Spaniards turn out to welcome the gift-laden Three Kings. But this year's glittering parades have been torpedoed by the pandemic.

In Spain, it's not Father Christmas nor Christmas Eve that beguiles all the children, but the Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar who arrive bearing

gifts on the night of January 5.

Every year, millions flock to the streets across Spain to watch the fairytale parades welcoming the royal visitors, with music, dancing and bucket-loads of sweets that are hurled into the excited crowds.

But with all outdoor gatherings banned to slow the spread of the virus this year, local authorities across the country

have been scrambling for creative ways to keep the magic of "Reyes" alive.

### Kings sail into Barcelona

In Barcelona, organisers have been working on a detailed plan "since the summer", fearing even back then that life would not yet have returned to normal come January.

"It's a really traditional cel-

ebration -- total madness, a real family event with dancing, lights, floats and everyone packing the streets to watch," said Esteve Carames, in charge of Barcelona's Reyes festivities, which normally sees 700,000 people massed along the three-kilometre (two mile) route.

This year, however, the Three Kings will be arriving by boat. The royal landing will be

broadcast live from Barcelona's port on TV, after which they will screen footage of a parade recorded in advance.

Barcelona has also set up an open-air amusement park based on The Three Kings. With a capacity for 400 visitors, it has lights, music and scenery, but no actors and nothing that can be touched.

SOURCE: AFP

## CARMAKERS

## Difficult 2020 ends on an improving note for US carmakers

GENERAL Motors and Toyota reported strong US sales at the end of 2020 on Tuesday, reflecting surprisingly robust consumer demand that mitigated the sales drop for the full year in the wake of Covid-19.

The pair are the top two auto-makers by US market share, and both scored higher sales in the fourth quarter despite notching double-digit sales declines for all of 2020.

US auto sales for 2020 are projected to drop 15.3 per cent to 14.4 million – which would make it the worst year since at least 2012 – according to a December forecast from Cox Automotive.

Still, those numbers are much better than analysts feared after the US car market almost completely froze during spring lockdowns as the country contended with a spiralling coronavirus crisis.

“Everybody is excited the market has done as well as it has,” said Charles Chesbrough, senior economist at Cox Automotive. “We’re getting back to normal much more quickly than expected.” While the pandemic has caused elevated unemployment and long lines at food pantries, other consumers have more cash for cars and other big-ticket items due to less spending on

travel and other discretionary goods, and many have benefited from federal stimulus funds.

“If you haven’t lost your job, the government has been giving away money,” said Chesbrough, who thinks the industry could benefit in the second half of 2021 from a recovering US economy bolstered by vaccinations and additional federal spending.

Chesbrough said auto companies have been able to keep selling incentives in check due to limited inventories. However, sales could sag in the first quarter if the worsening pandemic crimps demand.

SOURCE: AFP



Strong demand for the Chevrolet Silverado and other large vehicles enabled General Motors to score solid US sales in the fourth quarter despite an annual drop in sales. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## CYBER SECURITY

## Beijing slams ‘bullying’ US over Trump order on Chinese apps

BEIJING accused the US on Wednesday of “bullying” after President Donald Trump ordered a ban on a series of Chinese apps in his last weeks in office, branding them a threat to national security.

Under the Trump administration Beijing and Washington have clashed repeatedly over trade, technology, human rights and the origins of the coronavirus pandemic.

In the latest move to raise tensions, Trump ordered a ban on transactions involving Alipay, WeChat Pay and other apps linked to Chinese companies, saying they could route user information to the government in Beijing.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Wednesday the move was an example of “bullying” by the US, and accused Washington of “stretching the concept of

national security”.

“This harms both itself and others.” Trump’s executive order is to take effect in 45 days – just weeks after he is replaced in the White House by President-elect Joe Biden on January 20.

But a senior administration

official said the order and its implementation have not been discussed with the “potential incoming Biden administration.”

The apps targeted by the new ban were chosen because of the extremely high number of downloads, which meant tens of millions of users could be at risk

of having their data harvested, according to the administration official.

Trump’s order specifically named apps including Alipay, QQ Wallet, Tencent QQ, WeChat Pay and WPS Office. Alipay and Tencent did not respond to queries.

Previous executive orders aimed at banning TikTok – which is owned by China-based ByteDance – were derailed by court rulings indicating Trump had overstepped his legal authority.

Hua said the new order would “of course have some impact on related Chinese companies, but more important might be that it damages the interests of American consumers and the US”.

“The US talks about a free market economy and fair competition, but how does it behave?” she said.

SOURCE: AFP



US President Donald Trump has ordered a ban on Alipay, WeChat Pay and other apps linked to Chinese companies, saying they could route user information to the government in Beijing. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## NEW STANDARDS

## Apple ties exec bonuses to social, environmental values

APPLE is making environmental and social values factors it will weigh when calculating bonuses for top executives, according to a regulatory filing on Tuesday.

The change taking effect this year is intended to motivate Apple executives “to meet exceptionally high standards of values-driven leadership in addition to delivering strong financial results”, the Silicon Valley technology titan said in proxy documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Financial targets and thresholds for executive bonuses at Apple will not change, the iPhone maker said.

“Beginning in 2021, an environmental, social, and governance modifier based on Apple Values and other key community initiatives will be incorporated into our annual cash incentive programme,” Apple said in the filing.

Living up to Apple’s stated values regarding sustainable energy, workplace diversity and other environmental and social issues will be among factors considered when deciding whether bonuses should be increased or decreased by as much as 10 per cent, according to the company.

“We’ve led the industry in reducing our environmental footprint for years and are committed to one day sourcing 100 per cent recycled and renewable materials across all of our products and packaging,” Apple said in a section of the filing outlining its values.—SOURCE: AFP

## PORK PIE PAUCITY

## Brexit casualty for France: Empty food shelves at Marks and Spencer

FANS of British fare in France have suffered an unsavoury Brexit shock – grocery retailer Marks and Spencer hasn’t been able to stock its popular sandwiches and meals since Britain’s official exit from the EU on January 1.

Hungry shoppers found empty shelves this week at more than a dozen M&S Food stores in and around Paris, depriving them of club sandwiches, pork pies and ready-

to-eat curries, popular in particular with harried lunch crowds.

Instead, signs in French and English apologized that “Due to new UK/EU import legislation, we’re sorry some of your favourites might be missing. We’re working hard to get them back soon”.

“It’s amazing, I come here to buy stuff to eat but there’s nothing,” said Ludovic Bonnet, a marketing director, at

the M&S in an ornate gallery right opposite the fabled Grevin wax museum.

“It’s linked to Brexit I suppose – they wanted to leave, now they have to live with it,” he said.

The shortage brought home for many the fact that despite pledges on both sides of the Channel to maintain a smooth flow of goods, the new customs systems have disrupted decades of friction-

less trade.

“I came especially for their broccoli and spinach,” said Sarah, who said she works in sales.

“Does this mean they’re going to close? That would be a shame, I really like their products,” she said.

M&S chairman Archie Norman had warned as far back as August 2018 of this particular Brexit risk.

SOURCE: AFP

**US ENDS SUDAN'S  
PARIAS STATUS**

**US treasury  
chief visits  
Sudan after  
blacklisting  
lifted**

TREASURY Secretary Steven Mnuchin arrived in Sudan Wednesday for talks on future US economic assistance following Khartoum's removal from Washington's state sponsors of terrorism blacklist.

"The United States Treasury chief Steve Mnuchin arrived today morning (Wednesday) atop a high-ranking delegation, in the first such visit to Sudan," a government statement said.

Mnuchin is scheduled to meet both head of state General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Their talks are expected to focus on Sudan's deteriorating "economic situation, and US aid to Sudan and debt relief," the government said.

Sudan is struggling with a chronic hard currency shortage and galloping inflation that have hit the purchasing power of all social classes.

Its external debt is estimated at around \$60 billion. The United States formally removed Sudan from its crippling blacklist on December 14 as part of a quid pro quo for the mainly Arab country's normalisation of its relations with Israel.

SOURCE: AFP

**THE HANKUK CHEMI**

**Iran says South Korea holding its \$7b funds 'hostage'**



This undated picture taken in an unknown location and released on Tuesday by Yonhap news agency in Seoul shows South Korean Navy's destroyer ROKS Choi Young. PHOTO: YONHAP/AFP

IRAN on Tuesday accused South Korea of holding \$7 billion of its funds "hostage" but stressed that Tehran's seizure of a Korean tanker in Gulf waters

was not a tit-for-tat move. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on Monday sent out naval speedboats to seize the Hankuk Chemi with 20

crew aboard, accusing it of "breaking maritime environmental law".

South Korea has demanded the release of the ship and dispatched its an-

ti-piracy unit to the region.

"We are not hostage-takers," Iran's government spokesman Ali Rabiei told a press conference. "We are used to such

allegations. But ... it is the government of Korea that has taken over \$7 billion of ours hostage on baseless grounds".

He added that the seizure was based on a court order after the tanker had "caused oil pollution in the Persian Gulf. It was warned beforehand, and the (seizure) request was a technical one."

South Korea will dispatch a delegation to Iran soon to resolve the tanker situation "through bilateral negotiations," said its foreign ministry spokesman Choi Young-sam.

South Korea's vice-foreign minister Choi Jong-kun will go ahead with a previously planned three-day trip to Tehran early next week, the spokesman added.

SOURCE: AFP

**MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE  
EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT  
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER**

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY ONLINE SYSTEM JANUARY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/HARD WOOD (LOG)  
- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (812) TONS  
2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR - HARD WOOD LOGS ABOUT (8944) TONS  
PYINKADO, KANYIN, HTAUKYANT, THITYA, INGYIN,  
THITKHAYA, AUTCHINSANI
  - (B) DATE & TIME - (28-1-2021) (09:00) A.M  
- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (808) TONS  
THIRD QUALITY & UPTTEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (102)  
TONS (144) CBM  
2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR - HARDWOOD LOGS ABOUT (7000) TONS  
PYINKADO, KANYIN  
- (WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT)  
ABOUT (171) CBT (242) CBM
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dgmmarketing.export@gmail.com

OPEN TENDER COMMITTEE  
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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  
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW HIGHEST SHIPPING PTE LTD

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (088N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7-1-2021 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.

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Shipping Agency Department  
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINES

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

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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  
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE., LTD.

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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.

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Dictatorship

## New Venezuela parliament sworn in, US-backed Guaido out



Venezuelan lawmakers carry portraits of revolutionary hero Simon Bolivar (L) and late socialist president Hugo Chavez (R) as they head to the National Assembly to be sworn in. PHOTO: AFP

A new Venezuelan parliament was sworn in Tuesday with President Nicolas Maduro's party in firm control and opposition leader Juan Guaido

officially without a job, but with foreign backing to keep up a parallel legislature.

The new assembly was denounced as "a fraudulently

electorally chosen body" by outgoing US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who said in a statement Washington recognized Guaido as "the legitimate president of

Venezuela".

"We consider this group to be illegitimate and will not recognize it nor its pronouncements," he said of the new parliament which was also rejected by Colombia, Brazil and Uruguay.

Members of the Lima Group, consisting of more than a dozen Latin American nations and Canada, said they did "not recognize the result of an election" that violates the National Assembly's "constitutional right to meet without intimidation or interference" to elect its president and governing board.

A total 256 of the National Assembly's 277 seats are in the hands of Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela and its allies after December 6 elections boycotted by the opposition, who claimed fraud.

The chamber, which has a five-year mandate, previously had an opposition majority with Guaido as its speaker since 2019. SOURCE: AFP

Time for Retreat?

## After eight years of Mali campaign, France seeks exit strategy

EIGHT years after France sent troops to Mali to prevent jihadists from overrunning the country, it faces tough choices over how to keep pursuing Islamist extremists without becoming bogged down in a potentially unwinnable war.

Five French soldiers have been killed by roadside bombs in Mali over the past 10 days, bringing to 50 the number of troops killed across the Sahel since France launched a campaign to clear northern Mali of jihadists in January 2013.

The latest victims included Sergeant Yvonne Huynh, the first female soldier killed since the French intervention began. Her death Saturday,

claimed by a group linked to al-Qaeda, coincided with a massacre across the border in western Niger, where unidentified gunmen killed around 100 villagers in one of the region's worst atrocities.

These deaths -- and disputed claims Tuesday from villagers in central Mali that up to 20 wedding guests were killed in an air strike -- have clouded recent successes chalked up by France's 5,100-member Barkhane counterterrorism force and its African partners.

### Shifting public mood

In the past year, the French have killed the leader of the notorious al-Qaeda in the Islamic



A French soldier on an exercise in Burkina Faso uses a bomb detector as he searches for a roadside device, one of the deadliest tactics used by jihadists. PHOTO: AFP

Maghreb group, Abdelmalek Droukdel, as well as one of the military leaders of the al-Qaeda

affiliated Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM). SOURCE: AFP

North West Point Immigration Detention Centre

## Australia vows to 'restore order' on immigration detention island

UNREST broke out at an Australian island immigration detention centre, authorities and NGOs said Wednesday following reports the Christmas Island facility had been set alight by frustrated detainees.

The Australian Border Force said an operation was

underway "to restore order after a disturbance" at the North West Point Immigration Detention Centre on the Australian territory in the Indian Ocean.

"A small number of detainees caused some damage to the facility overnight and con-

tinued to be non-compliant," the government agency said in a statement, adding there were no reports of any injuries.

Advocacy group Refugee Action Coalition said reports from inside the centre suggested two compounds had been set ablaze overnight Tuesday into

Wednesday as tensions boiled over.

"While the extent of the damage is not known, the glare from the fires and the extent of the smoke in the air indicates the fires are substantial," the group said.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

### George W. Bush to attend Biden inauguration: spokesman

REPUBLICAN former US president George W. Bush will attend the inauguration of Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris in Washington on January 20, his chief of staff said Tuesday.

"President and Mrs Bush look forward to returning to the Capitol for the swearing in of President Biden and Vice President Harris," Freddy Ford tweeted.

"Witnessing the peaceful transfer of power is a hallmark of our democracy that never gets old," he added, in a seeming jab at President Donald Trump who refuses to concede defeat and has not confirmed if he will attend Biden's inauguration.

It will be the eighth swearing-in ceremony the Bushs have attended, Ford said.

SOURCE: AFP

MOST OUTSTANDING VOTES IN CLOSE RACE

### Democrat candidate claims victory in one of two crunch US Senate runoffs

DEMOCRATS claimed victory in one of two crunch US Senate runoffs on Wednesday morning, with candidate Raphael Warnock saying he 'believed he had won'.

Democrats were also hopeful of winning a second seat in the knife-edge runoff that will determine the balance of power in the US Senate under Joe Biden's presidency.

The hard-fought races have brought the international spotlight onto this southern state, nine weeks after the most tumultuous American election in two decades.

Democrats need both their candidates, Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, to prevail in order to snatch the Senate from the Republicans. Outgoing President Donald Trump's party needs either Kelly Loeffler or David Perdue to hold their seat to preserve its majority.

SOURCE: AFP

CONGRESS OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF KOREA (WPK)

## DPRK top leader reviews work as 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress opens

THE eighth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) opened here on Tuesday, with top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un delivering an opening address, reported official media on Wednesday.

The congress was convened in order to comprehensively and strictly review the work of the party's central committee, clearly reconfirm the exact orientation and duty in its struggle for winning a bigger victory in the socialist cause and take measures for substantial improvement, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

Kim delivered a report on the work of the party's seventh central committee on the first day of the eighth congress, it said. According to the report, the congress will "discuss and decide on a fresh line of struggle and



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, a ruling party congress is held in Pyongyang, North Korea Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened its first Workers' Party Congress in five years with an admission of policy failures and a vow to lay out new developmental goals, state media reported Wednesday. PHOTO: KCNA/XINHUA

strategic and tactical policies for making a radical leap forward in the development of the Party and socialist construction."

Members of the leadership body of the party's seventh central committee and delegates elected by the party's organiza-

tions at all levels attended the congress.

The congress elected its presidium and secretariat, and elected Kim to the presidium, the report said. According to its agenda, the congress will review the work of the party's central committee and

the Central Audit Commission, and elect the party's central leadership body.

This Party Congress, which may run for several days, is the second one under Kim. The seventh Party Congress was convened in May 2016.

SOURCE: XINHUA

NEW YEAR PERIOD

## JR passengers down 68% in holiday period to record low due to virus



A platform for shinkansen bullet trains is nearly empty at JR Tokyo Station on Jan. 3, 2021, amid the coronavirus pandemic. In ordinary years, train stations are crowded on Jan. 3 as many people return from holidays. PHOTO: KYODO

THE number of people using the shinkansen and conventional train services operated by Japan Rail-

way companies plunged 68 per cent during the year-end and New Year period from a year earlier to

4,879,000, marking the lowest level since comparable data were made available in 1991, six JR companies said Wednesday.

The margin of fall was the biggest on record as well, with JR companies citing the novel coronavirus pandemic and the suspension of some services due to heavy snow in Japan's northeast as reasons. In the 12-day period through Tuesday, the number of people riding the Hokkaido Shinkansen bullet train tumbled 72 per cent, the Tokaido Shinkansen was down 68 per

cent and the Kyushu Shinkansen fell 60 per cent, operators said. According to East Japan Railway Co., one of the six operators, the number of passengers for services excluding the shinkansen and other long-distance carriers at JR Tokyo Station fell 53 per cent to 2.1 million.

The number of passengers at JR Maihama Station, the closest station to Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea parks, in Chiba Prefecture, east of Tokyo, was down 56 per cent to 312,000.

SOURCE: KYODO

OBITUARY

U Tun Maung

(a)

Reggie Tun Maung

92 years

Son of the late ICS U. Sein Nyo Tun and Daw Kyawt Tha, son-in-law of the late High Court Judge U. Kyaw Zan U and Daw Khin U, husband of the late Daw Khin Zan (Mitzi) father of Dr. Tun Zan Maung- Dr. Khin Khin Oo, Mr. Kyaw Zan Maung- Jennifer Koh and Mrs. Mimi Khin Myint Zan Maung- Guillaume Trentin, grandfather of Ray Khin Zan Maung- Shannon Maung, Khin Nan Zan Maung- Jimmy Yang, Win Khin Zan Maung, Sienna Zan Maung Trentin and Sacha Zan Maung Trentin, great grandfather of Emery Zan Yang and Evan Zeya Yang passed away peacefully at the Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminster, BC, Canada, on December 10, 2020, 2020 at 3 am. Remains will be cremated on January 5, 2021, at Ocean View Funeral Home, Burnaby, BC, Canada.

DECARBONIZATION

## China to launch carbon emissions trading scheme next month

CHINA'S delayed carbon trading system will start operating in February, the environment ministry has said, as the world's biggest polluter takes steps towards decarbonizing its economy by 2060.

The ministry issued rules on Tuesday allowing provincial governments to set pollution caps for big power businesses for the first time.

Firms can buy the right to pollute from others who have a lower carbon footprint, but the programme is expected to drive down overall emissions by making it more costly to do so.

"This is one of the most exciting developments for the world's largest carbon market in the recent rollercoaster year," said Zhang Jianyu, vice president of the Environmental Defence Fund China, which has consulted with the government on emissions trading.

However, 60 per cent of power in China is still provided by coal despite

ambitious renewable energy targets, and experts warn the powerful coal lobby will be pressing hard for favourable carbon caps.

Under the new rules, more than 2,200 firms that emit over 26,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year can start trading their emission quotas from February 1.

China's nationwide system is expected to eclipse that of the European Union to become the world's largest emissions trading scheme (ETS).

Beijing has pledged to peak emissions before 2030 and become carbon neutral 30 years later. But it pared back initial plans to curb emissions from seven other industries including aviation, steel and petrochemical manufacturing.

"When Europe started its trading scheme in 2005, there were issues in the first phase where members were kind of caving in to lobbying pressure," said Li Shuo from Greenpeace China.

SOURCE: AFP

PRIVACY CONCERNS

## Singapore admits police can access contact-tracing data

SINGAPORE has admitted data collected for contact-tracing can be accessed by police despite earlier assurances it would only be used to fight the coronavirus, sparking

privacy concerns Tuesday about the scheme.

The city-state has a programme called "Trace-Together" for tracking close contacts of Covid-19 patients, that works via

both a phone app and a dongle.

Take-up was initially slow due to privacy worries but rose to almost 80 per cent of residents after government assurances

and a decision to make its use mandatory for accessing some public places like malls.

However, a senior official admitted in parliament that police could

"obtain any data" -- including information gathered through the contact-tracing programme -- in the course of a criminal investigation.

Foreign Minister Vivian

ian Balakrishnan said later that, to his knowledge, police had so far only accessed contact-tracing data on one occasion, during a murder probe.

SOURCE: AFP

## Ten teams to compete in Myanmar National League I in 2021



Hantharwady United striker Francis Emeka (in dark blue) attempts to breach the defensive line of the Yangon United in a previous season MNL match at YUSC Stadium on 19 September 2020. **PHOTO: MNL**

A total of ten teams will participate in the 2021 season of the Myanmar National League I, according to the official decision made by the Myanmar National League Committee meeting held yesterday by videoconferencing.

The meeting was joined by U Zaw Zaw, President of the Myanmar Football Federation and Myanmar National League Committee, football officials, MNL Club owners and chairmen.

During the meeting, football officials focused on Myanmar football development and the current situation of the Myanmar National League football teams.

According to the unanimous decision of the meeting, there will be ten teams to be included in the Myanmar National League I and Shan United, Hantharwady United, Ayeyawady United, Yangon United, Yadanarbon FC, Ra-

khine United, Sagaing United, Chinland FC and Myawaddy FC and ISPE FC, were selected according to the MNL Regulations.

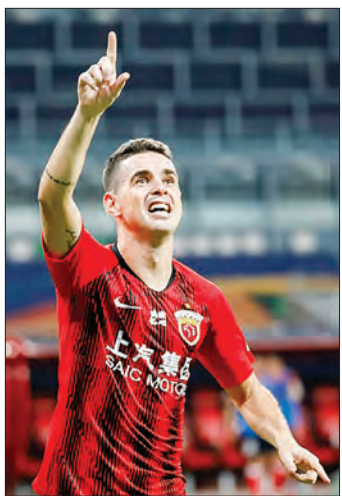
Football authorities also decided to hold the MNL League II tournament with a total of eight teams, including Dagon FC.

The 2021 season of the MNL League I tourney is scheduled to hold from April to September, depending on the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021.

Next, the MNL League II tourney will be held from May to August, and the Bogyoke Aung San Shield football tournament will run from June to September.

In the meantime, Women's League football tournament will be launched from April to July, and Youth League (U-21) is scheduled to run from May to November, according to the MNL online meeting.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## 'End of an era' as Chinese football's star power fades



Oscar joined Shanghai SIPG from Chelsea in 2017. **PHOTO: AFP**

arrival the CFA slapped a 100 per cent tax on incoming foreigners, with the levy going to developing Chinese youth players.

Then last month the CFA said that overseas players cannot earn more than three million euros a year. Domestic players also saw their salaries capped.

"CSL club expenditure is about 10 times higher than South Korea's K League and three times higher than Japan's J-league," said CFA president Chen Xuyuan.

"But our national team is lagging far behind. The bubbles not only affect the present of Chinese football, but also its future."

All players must now have new contracts, according to the state news agency Xinhua, adding that teams can sign "supplemental agreements" with players whose existing deals were above the cap.

That means Oscar, the 29-year-old attacking midfielder, will continue to earn more than 20 million euros a year for the time being.—AFP ■

BEIJING — In January 2017 Brazil international Oscar moved from Chelsea to Shanghai SIPG for an Asian-record 60 million euros, prompting a warning from Arsene Wenger that Chinese clubs were distorting the global transfer market.

But four years later it is a very different story after the Chinese Football Association imposed a series of measures to cool extravagant spending in the Chinese Super League, markedly dimming its star power.

Six months after Oscar's

## Solskjaer hits back at Klopp over penalty jibes

LONDON — Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on Tuesday hit back at Jurgen Klopp's jibes about Manchester United's penalty record as the Old Trafford boss claimed Premier League managers are trying to influence referees.

Liverpool boss Klopp highlighted the large number of

penalties given to United since Solskjaer took charge in a rant that following the champions not getting a spot-kick in Monday's defeat at Southampton.

Klopp claimed United have had more spot-kicks in two years under Solskjaer than Liverpool have in his entire five-and-a-half

year reign. United have been awarded six league penalties this season compared to the five won by Klopp's men.

They have been given 42 in all competitions since Solskjaer took over in December 2018 compared to Liverpool's 19 in the same period.—AFP ■

## Son, Sissoko send Spurs into League Cup final

LONDON — Son Heung-min fired Tottenham into the League Cup final as the South Korean's decisive goal sealed a 2-0 win over Championship side Brentford on Tuesday.

Moussa Sissoko put Jose Mourinho's team ahead in the semi-final at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

But Tottenham were still searching for the knockout blow against spirited Brentford until Son netted with 20 minutes remaining.

Tottenham will face Manchester United or holders Manchester City, who meet in the second semi-final on Wednesday, at Wembley on April 25.

It will be the club's first domestic final since losing the 2015 League Cup showpiece against Chelsea, and their first final in any competition since the 2019 Champions League defeat against Liverpool in Madrid.

Mourinho, appointed in No-

vember 2019, is hoping to lead Tottenham to their first major trophy since the 2008 League Cup.

He has already won the competition four times, landing his first silverware in English football in 2005 with Chelsea,

where he won it twice more before a further success at Manchester United in 2017.

Mourinho is the third manager to reach a League Cup final with three different clubs, following Ron Atkinson and Ron Saunders.—AFP ■



Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker Son Heung-Min (R) celebrates with teammates after he scores his team's second goal during the English League Cup semi final first leg football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Brentford at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, on January 5, 2021. **PHOTO: GLYN KIRK / POOL / AFP**