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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 268, 11<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nadaw 1382 ME

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

Saturday, 9 January 2021

State Counsellor delivers video message, VP II attends National Tourism Development Central Committee meeting



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio speaks at the 1/2021 meeting of the National Tourism Development Central Committee in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

THE National Tourism Development Central Committee held a 1/2021 meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to review the committee's objectives and plans for Myanmar tourism sector.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a video message to the meeting.

(State Counsellor's video message is covered on page 4)

As the chairman of the central committee, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio talked about the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the Myanmar tourism indus-

try and its related sectors. World Tourism Organization estimated about 100 million unemployment across the world, with negative implications on micro, small and medium-sized businesses that mainly employ the young people, including women, economic, social and health sectors, and conservation of cultural industry and societies.

In accord with the National Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment guidelines, the National Tourism Development Central Committee is implementing the COVID-19

Myanmar Tourism Impact Relief Plan (2020), which includes three phases in the index of COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP).

Phase I Survival could bring over K500 million relief for hotel and guesthouse businesses, nearly K450 million for tour agencies and about K100 million for the tour guides. The tax levy was suspended for six months. Rental of FDI hotels was reduced by 50 per cent for nine months, relieving a total of near US\$6 million for the ministry and K1,800 million for State-owned hotels. The committee could manage to

get over K21,000 million loan with 1 per cent annual interest for the hotels and tour agencies. Basic and advanced cash for training courses were conducted for the staff members for hotels and tourism businesses and people from the related sector. K4,800 was given per day for nearly 3,000 trainees and K10,000 per day for almost 1,200 tour guides, and experienced hotels and tourism staff members, who acted as trainers. A total of K230 million was spent on this programme.

Phase II Reopening included conducting pieces of training

in line with the manual of National Tourism Guidelines for Safety Measures against COVID-19, which was adopted from the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Businesses were allowed to reopen with the enforcement of safety measures, and digital marketing was also promoted for safe tourist destinations.

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## “People are the key”

### His Majesty King Felipe VI, King of Spain sends Congratulatory Message to the President

On the occasion of the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to send to Your Excellency, along with the Government and the people of Spain, my warmest congratulations.

Receive Mr President, my best wishes of personal well-being, peace and prosperity for the beloved people of Myanmar.

With the testimony of my highest consideration and esteem.

### His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar sends Congratulatory Message to the President

On the anniversary of your country's Independence Day, I want to extend to you and your people, on behalf of the people of the State of Qatar and my own behalf, our cordial greetings and felicitations, coupled with our best wishes of good health and well-being to Your Excellency and further development and progress to you people.

### His Excellency Mr Khaltmaagiin Battulga, President of Mongolia sends Congratulatory Message to the President

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, allow me to extend my sincerely congratulations to Your Excellency, Mr President, and to the friendly people of Myanmar.

It would be my great pleasure to continue closely collaborating with Your Excellency in further expanding and strengthening friendly relations and cooperation between Mongolia and Myanmar, based on shared values of democracy.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend to Your Excellency my best wishes for your good health and well-being, as well as for the progress and prosperity to the friendly people of Myanmar.

### His Excellency Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran sends Congratulatory Message to the President

I have the honour to extend my sincere congratulation to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar have enjoyed long-lasting relations and friendly cooperation in the past years. I do hope we would witness further expansion and strengthen relationship in the interests of both nations and in all fields.

I avail myself of this opportunity to wish for further well-being and fortunateness of Your Excellency and glory and prosperity for the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

### His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Deputy Amir of the State of Qatar sends Congratulatory Message to the President

On the occasion of the anniversary of your country's Independence Day, I want to express to you my sincere greetings and congratulations, coupled with my best wishes of good health and well-being to Your Excellency and continued development and progress to you people.

### HE Sheik Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the State of Qatar sends Congratulatory Message to the State Counsellor

It pleases me, on the anniversary of your country's Independence Day, to extend to you, on behalf of the government of the State of Qatar and myself, our sincere greetings and felicitations, coupled with our best wishes of continued well-being to Your Excellency and further development and progress to your people.

#### COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

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

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



# State Counsellor delivers video message, VP II attends National Tourism Development Central Committee meeting

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Phase III Relaunching includes organizing 'non-landing sightseeing flights and river cruises in line with the Enchanting Myanmar Health & Safety Protocol approved by the national COVID-19 control committee. Caravan tour and day trip flight will also be arranged to Ngapali and Bagan soon. The protocol to secure the World Travel and Tourism Council's trust in Myanmar as a safe tourism destination will



Union Ministers participate in the virtual meeting of National Tourism Development Central Committee on 8 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Soe Win



Union Minister U Thaug Tun



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung



Union Minister U Ohn Win



Union Minister U Thein Swe



Union Minister Dr Than Myint



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe



Union Minister U Ohn Maung

be implemented.

Plans are also underway to relaunch the tourism sector in the third quarter of this year with ASEAN member countries and Asian countries. Cross-border tourism with Laos and Cambodia will be carried out for 'travel bridge'. 'Travel bubble' with Thailand and Viet Nam are being arranged and expanded to Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong and Macau where the COVID-19 has successfully controlled.

In line with the protocol, the cash for training courses are being conducted by the Ministry

of Hotels and Tourism and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population by spending K140 million for 300 trainers and over 1,000 trainees.

Plans for the resumption of international flights are being carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Besides,

preparations are being made to develop the 'travel bubble' among partner countries to allow business travellers and package tours.

The Vice-President also called for collaboration among the tourism industry stakeholders to ensure more resilience and inclusiveness under the sustainable development goals to liberate from just relying on the natural resources.

He also explained the UNWTO Priorities for Global Tourism Recovery and the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism

adopted by the Global Tourism Crisis Committee to recover this industry in the post-COVID-19.

The 37th ASEAN Summit also issued the ASEAN Declaration on Digital Tourism' on 12 November last year, while the member countries are implementing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).

The Myanmar Tourism Recovery Strategic Roadmap (2021-2025) has been developed in line with World Tourism Organization guidelines and the ACRF with the approval of national COVID-19

committee to promote natural tourism, ethnic tourism, environmental tourism which focus on physical distancing, rather than on crowded city areas.

Union Minister U Ohn Maung, in his capacity as the Vice-Chairman of the committee, Secretary of the committee and Deputy Minister U Tin Latt, Joint-Secretary and the Director-General from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism reported on the implementations of central committee decisions, the approval for MTSRR (2021-2025) and Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol.

The Vice-President then officially launched MTSRR (2021-2025) and Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol.

The members of central committee and Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers and departmental officials discussed the works of respective state agencies for tourism developments in the country. —MNA

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*

## CBM issues subsidiary licences to more foreign banks

THE Central Bank of Myanmar has granted operating licences to foreign banks to develop the banking industry since 2014 and bringing to 13 the number of foreign bank branches in Myanmar in the first and second rounds of licencing.

During the third round of licencing, the CBM granted subsidiary licences to Taiwan's Mega International Commercial Bank Co., Ltd on 5 January while the Korea Development Bank of ROK and another Taiwan's Cathay United Bank on 6 January respectively.

The foreign subsidiaries can offer retail banking services including services for any financing to local and foreign corporates and other banking services.

There are 16 foreign banks currently allowed to operate branches, and it can provide financial assistance to local businesses as well as the import sector to promote the country's economy status.—MNA

*(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*



# Speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at National Tourism Development Central Committee meeting 1/2021

(8 January 2021)

I wish to send greetings and metta for the good health and well-being of all distinguished guests who are attending this meeting.

We will be announcing very shortly the Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan (MERRP) incorporated in the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, which also includes measures to reduce the impact of COVID-19. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in cooperation with other organizations in this sector, taking into consideration the recommendations of the WTO – World Tourism Organization and the World Tourism Council formulated the Strategic Roadmap for Tourism Recovery. This Strategic Roadmap, which includes short-term, mid-term and long-term strategic objectives, will have to be implemented in tandem with the MERRP during the COVID-19 period.



protection against COVID-19, which will incorporate all the instructions issued by the relevant Ministries for the protection and control of COVID-19.

For Myanmar to obtain

as a matter of habit to obtain the certification from the World Tourism Council. It would not be easy. There would be a need for periodic inspections and administrative actions. I wish to urge all concerned to cooperate with the relevant departments so that a durable system is established; something that rises quickly and withers away is not what we want.

At the moment, we have already initiated flights for tourists as well as riverine cruises in accordance with the said protocols. We are also drawing up plans to reopen our coastal areas in accordance with rules and regulations. The tourism sector has been facing difficulties on a world-wide scale. In order to achieve recovery of Myanmar tourism, I hope that we would be able to continue our efforts to promote and develop people-oriented tourism, promote and exhibit our traditional cultures,

cultures of our ethnic nationals as well as the daily social lifestyle of our people.

Not only that, we need to be able to make arrangements to make the tourists interested in our rural life, the unique characteristics of each region and our agricultural works. We also need to make concerted efforts for cleanliness in our rural areas, for safety, to be in accord with health guidelines; and to offer reasonable prices. We need to make efforts for the emergence of small enterprises, local cuisine and dishes, small guest houses and hotels. We need to do all this without losing our traditional characteristics and incorporating innovative ideas.

To be able to develop a tourism destination which is attractive and safe, the Union Government, state and regional governments, ministries, private organizations, and the local people – all of them need

to participate, cooperation and make concerted efforts. It would be necessary to work with new ideas, new outlooks, and new imaginative concepts to bring out the best features of each particular region. To develop tourism markets, it might be necessary for us to be able to penetrate global digital platforms in line with global trends. We will be able to penetrate the tourism market only if we are able to integrate innovations, technology and market development harmoniously.

In conclusion, what I wish to talk about is the tourism and interest of the Union. Our country is a Union. Since our country has been established with various ethnic nationals, in whatever we do, we should not forget the interest of the Union. In our efforts to develop tourism, we should not look at one region only but look at the interest of the Union as a whole and try to coordinate and be cognizant of the inter-relationships. This is very important. If we try to make interesting tour programmes for travellers by trying to link the various regions, it will go a long way to bring our ethnic nationals closer to each other and promote unity.

Let me conclude by urging all of you to join hands and cooperate in unity to revive the Myanmar tourism enterprises, which have been facing tremendous difficulties, as quickly as possible and to be able to operate free from danger and in safety.

I thank you all. May you be blessed with good health and well-being. *(Translated by: Kyaw Myaing)*

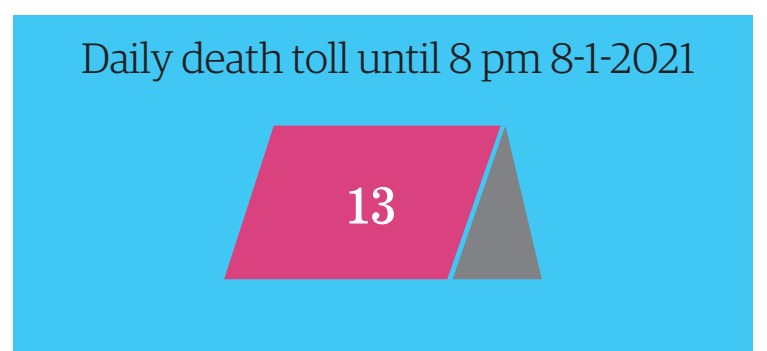
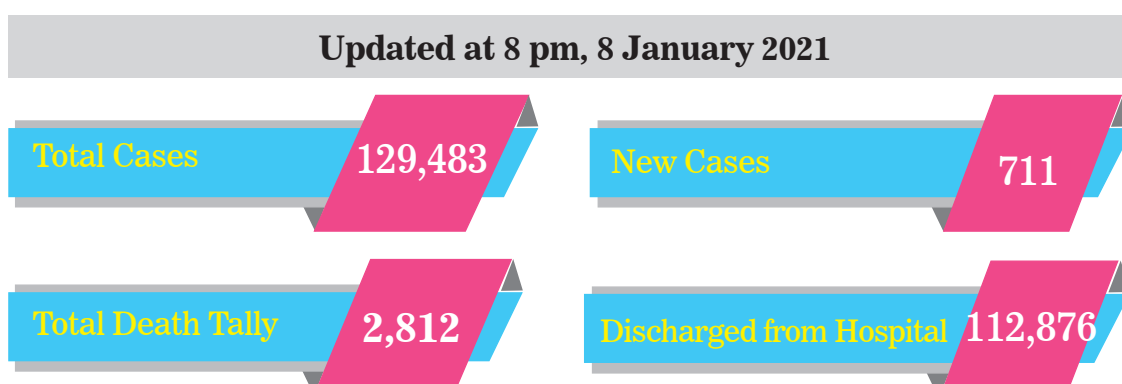
I wish to urge all concerned to cooperate with the relevant departments so that a durable system is established; something that rises quickly and withers away is not what we want.

In our efforts to achieve recovery, the most important thing is the safety of travellers and people who are providing services to them. That is why we are planning to launch National Tourism Handbook related to

the Safe Tourism award, Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocols have already been adopted. In operationalizing these protocols, we would need to undergo training until we are able to follow the guidelines

## 711 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 8 January, total figure rises to 129,483

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 129,483 after 711 new cases were reported on 8 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 129,483 confirmed cases, 2,812 died, 112,876 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Ministry of Health and Sports



## Our aim should be to arrive at an encouraging situation



BY keeping these goals in view, we will be making practical implementations for process, design and inclusiveness of all stakeholders in the upcoming five years. We will make strenuous efforts with increased momentum on 'the New Peace Architecture' in the post-2020 which balances representation and effectiveness and allows thorough negotiations among the main stakeholders; a review process which has been widely discussed from all points of view; thus it would enable subject matter and management support groups, political parties, CSOs, and the people to join in and participate.

The year 2022 will be the 'Diamond Anniversary' or the '75th Anniversary' of the Panglong Agreement. In this year our aim should be to arrive at an encouraging situation where we can see clearly and distinctly in front of us a clear path for us to march towards the goal of our Union; I wish to state that we would be making exerted efforts by using this as our "New Peace Architecture" in the post-2020 period.

**(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)**

## MoHA minister inspects Insein Prison, Fire Services Department

UNION MINISTER for Home Affairs Let-Gen Soe Htut inspected the Insein Central Prison, Myanmar Fire Services Department headquarters in Mayangon Township, and the Dagon Myothit (South) Township Fire Station on 7 January.

The Union Minister and party first visited the Insein Prison where the Department of Correction's Acting Director-General U Zaw Min, Yangon Region Office Head Director U Zaw Zaw, the prison's in-charge and officials explained the prison's works with the use of PowerPoint, and the Union Minister coordinated the requirements.

He also inspected the prison's buildings from the prison tower and going inside the buildings, investigating of the offenders via videoconferencing, the rooms for quarantining new prisoners, and also met the family members of the staff. The Union Minister visited the Myanmar Fire Services Department headquarters in Mayangon Township and inspected its command and control centre.

He also visited the Dagon Myothit (South) Township Fire Station, inspected the fire extinguishing equipment, viewed the drill of the firefighters, looked around the staff apartments, their agriculture and breeding works, and also met the family members of the staff. —MNA  
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister Let-Gen Soe Htut holds meeting with the staff of Insein Central Prison on 7 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

## Myanmar nationals abroad brought back home by relief flights



Myanmar returnees from Malaysia and Singapore are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 8 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

A total of 413 Myanmar citizens who were stranded abroad – 142 from Malaysia, 146 from Singapore and 125 from the Republic of the Korea—because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flights yesterday.

The Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur organized the re-

lief flight of Myanmar Airways International to repatriate 142 citizens from Malaysia, and the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore organized the relief flight of Myanmar National Airways to bring back 146 citizens home from Singapore.

The Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and the Crew Change

Supporting Committee jointly organized the relief flight of Myanmar Airways International to repatriate 125 Myanmar seamen from the ROK. The three flights landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports

and the Yangon Region government provided them with proper medical tests and arranged 7-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home quarantine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries

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

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



## Renovation works at National Theatre (Yangon) projected to finish this year



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko participates in the virtual meeting on renovation to the National Theatre (Yangon) on 8 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE newly renovated National Theatre (Yangon) could be inaugurated at the end of this year, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture's virtual meeting yesterday.

The project commenced on 10 August 2019, and it has reached 52 per cent until 31 December

2020. Speaking at the meeting, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko said that the national theatre being upgraded with assistance from the People's Republic of China covered its main building and audio, lighting, LED, 4K movie, air-conditioning, fire extinguish-

ing and security systems.

He said that the theatre after upgraded would become an international standard one and extended gratitude to the People's Republic of China on behalf of Myanmar government and people.

The National Theatre (Yangon)

was constructed with assistance from the People's Republic of China and completed in December 1990.

Deputy Minister U Kyi Min said that every country has the buildings that represent the nation, and the National Theatre (Yangon) was included in the

buildings that define our nation Myanmar.

The Memorandum of Understanding on the renovation of the theatre was signed on 19 November 2017, he added.

The ministry's permanent secretary who is in charge of the project Director-General U Tun Ohn and officials from the Beijing Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd presented the major renovation of the national theatre with the use of PowerPoint. The Union Minister said that the ministry would provide the assistance needed by the Beijing Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd on the project, saying the company to meet at the opening ceremony of the theatre in end-2021 and wishing the company good health and happiness in the New Year. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## MoALI holds meeting on water supply activities to address water scarcity due to climate change

MINISTRY of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held a coordination meeting on water resources and measures to address water scarcity caused by climate change yesterday afternoon in accordance with the COVID-19 prevention directives in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Aung Thu urged to the responsible engineers from the Ministry to provide disciplined leadership for exploration, conservation and systemic use of water resources with the guidance of the respective state and regional governments.

He added the need to access groundwater to address potential water scarcity issues; to explore water sources for rural drinking water supply, safe drinking water and agriculture; to develop and implement concrete plans

for effective and efficient use of existing water resources without wasting them. He said Myanmar is changing its rainfall pattern due to global climate change and the inflow of water into dams is declining. He continued that the meeting aimed to set short term and long term activities to prevent water reduction in the dams and prioritize the safety work of the completed dams according to the budget year.

The Director-General for Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department explained the extensive use of Rain Water Harvesting technology in relation to water supply works for irrigated acreage development and the use of Ground Water Recharge technology in constructing sluice gates and small dams and new river pumping stations.

The Union Minister and Dep-



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu joins the meeting on tackling water scarcity caused by climate change on 8 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

uty Minister discussed the construction of dams that can supply water to the existing dams, canals with short-term and medium-term activities; continuing to implement Dam Series; conducting surveys for long-term dam

projects; to select and implement potential dams for long-term implementation and the need to carry out safety work on the dams. The meeting was attended by Union Minister Dr Aung Thu, Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw, Per-

manent Secretary U Kyaw Min Oo, the Directors-General and officials from the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

## Announcement on fund establishment to purchase COVID-19 vaccines

1. The National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 30-12-2020 formed a Fund Management Sub-committee on the Purchase of COVID-19 Vaccines. The sub-committee has opened the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund at the Myanma Economic Bank in Nay Pyi Taw as follows:
  - (a) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012). The bank account will be initially deposited with USD250 million, equivalent to about K338 billion from State-funding.
  - (b) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733). The bank account is initially deposited K1 billion (K1,000 million) from State-funding.
2. Therefore, organizations and people (local/ foreign countries) who want to contribute cash donation for the purchase of vaccines, can donate any type of foreign currency to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012) at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw), and can donate Myanmar Kyat to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733).
3. The potential well-wishers can contact the following phone numbers:
  - Director-General (067 3410156)
  - Treasury Department (067 3410158)

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry



# Ministries discuss draft version of Comprehensive Education Plan for Rakhine State

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the Ministry of Education organized a virtual coordination meeting on the draft version of Comprehensive Education Plan for Rakhine State yesterday.

During the meeting, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye discussed the three crises in development, human rights and security sectors of Rakhine State and the importance of education to promote the critical thinking skills of the local populace to overcome these crises.

The Union Minister added only the education could develop the human resources, create the job opportunities and changes in the socio-economic sector and also expressed his hope to gain significant changes through the Comprehensive Education Plan for Rakhine State (Draft).

He also discussed plans being carried out for the 88 facts of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by Mr Kofi Annan.

He also highlighted the suggestions of advisory commission to draft a plan based on the five recommendations for the Ministry of Education such as to give the education sector in Rakhine a major lift, to develop a comprehensive plan for the strengthen-



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi and Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye lead the meeting on draft version of Comprehensive Education Plan for Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ing of the state's education sector, focussing on equal access, improved quality of education, and upgrading of physical facilities and teaching materials.

The higher education can create various approaches to the problems and can take to the pathway of eternal peace by finding ways to avoid the conflicts, he added.

He then talked about the principles in recommendations of Kofi Annan and the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) while implementing the CEPR and Preliminary Needs Assess-

ment (PNA) of ASEAN's Secretary-General Office and AHA Centre for repatriation.

He also said if the people in Rakhine State have high education skills, it can support the development of citizenship, economy, social affairs, free transportation and social harmony.

When the harmony in community emerges, the security and health sectors of Rakhine State will also develop, and there will be tranquillity and prosperity in the state.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi then discussed the

draft of CEPR with five priority sectors based on the report of the advisory commission led by Kofi Annan, work plans to fulfil the needs in education sectors according to NESP (2016-21) for the development of Rakhine State and Learning Together programme of the ministry to promote the social harmony in Rakhine State.

The Union Minister also urged the participants to give suggestions to meet the needs in basic and higher education sector, technical, vocational education and training together with

the CEPR (draft).

He then highlighted cooperation works to establish quality education in line with the recommendation of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and further supports of his ministry.

The Directors-General of relevant departments respectively presented the plans regarding with the draft of CEPR(draft) and then the Union Ministers Dr Win Myat Aye and Dr Myo Thein Gyi concluded the meeting.—MNA

*(Translated by Khaing Thazin Han)*

## First-ever virtual career fair to be held in Myanmar on 6, 7 February

MyJobs will host the First Ever Virtual Career Fair, Myanmar's first online job fair, on February 6 and 7. The purpose of the event is to help job seekers who are struggling to find a job and cannot go outside due to the pandemic Covid-19, easily apply for a job virtually. 50+ local and international companies will recruit more than 1,000 job listings and arrange job seekers to apply for jobs online. Hundreds of professionals will attend a series of webinars, and local and international experts will share their experiences for the next career path.

The CEO of MyJobs, Mr Harry Anarakis said: "In 2020 the impact of COVID-19 on Myanmar's economy was grave. Just recently the government has reaffirmed its support to the digitization of the economy, as the strongest lever for the

post-COVID-19 economic recovery for the country. MyJobs Myanmar has been supporting the Myanmar digitization process of the job market for the last eight years. In the light of the above, MyJobs Myanmar is organizing the 1ST VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR, on the 6th and 7th of February 2021, and request your participation humbly so we can together help the boost of the Myanmar economy in 2021. Together we can!" regarding organizing a virtual career fair.

Register on the online platform to easily find a job with a personal login account, and have the opportunity to meet directly with recruiters from top companies. By attending MyJobs Virtual Career Fair, experts from various fields will share on the current needs and requirements of the job, what

should be prepared, useful topics when applying for jobs and the topics in the skills and knowledge needed to develop careers in the current workplace. Thousands of professionals have been invited to attend, and this is also a good opportunity to create a professional network online.

Job seekers can also access employers' company information online and apply for multiple jobs for free in one place using MyJobs digital profile. They can also take a pre-employment assessment before applying for a job by which they will get a chance to outstand among various candidates. The MyJobs Candidate Care Team also offers timely assistance for online job applications through phone, email or on Facebook Messenger and Viber.—GNLM

## Local mountain in Danu becomes alive with local visitors



Ashae-Myin-Anaut-Myint Mountain is a popular destination for visitors in Danu Self-Administered Zone. **PHOTO: MNA**

A mountain, namely Ashae-Myin-Anaut-Myint, in Danu Self-Administered Zone is now alive with locals since October as its environment is attractive to the visitors until March every year.

With an altitude of 7,752-ft, the mountain is an attraction for tourists, climbers, hill walkers and local people for the night stay, while the locals opted for their day trip from 5 am to 6 pm.

The top of the mountain can

be reached from three routes—Pindaya, Ywangan and Yaksawk townships through villages on the way.

Rhododendrons trees fully blossom at the mountain in open season, and it is also an attraction for both local and foreign visitors, creating employment opportunities for the indigenous people of Danu, Taungyoe, PaO and Palaung etc.—Aung Ko Oo (Pindaya)



# Focus on reducing impact of drought

WITH changing rainfall patterns and droughts year by year, climate change is hitting the world including our country.

Our country is witnessing less rainfall patterns year by year and less water has flowed into the dams than expected.

A fall in the water level in the dams means thirstier winter and summer crops, quenched with less water supply from dams.

As anticipated, drought has arrived in our country, mostly affecting sections of the nation's rural areas.

The situation has rung alarm bells and brought into focus the need to fundamentally rethink water resources management and agricultural patterns.

In this situation, regional and state governments are urged to take a leading role in managing, planning and proper use of rivers and water resources which are one of the most vital resources for fresh water supply and will be crucial for future climate change conditions.

... regional and state governments are urged to take a leading role in managing, planning and proper use of rivers and water resources which are one of the most vital resources for fresh water supply and will be crucial for future climate change conditions.

To solve the challenges from the climate change-induced drought, we need to formulate and implement concrete plans and projects which focus sustainable use of underground water, finding new ways to satisfy the impending rapid increase in demand for drinking water and irrigation water in rural areas and effective use and management of existing water resources.

Our country has abundant water, holding 16 per cent of the water resources in ASEAN and 12 per cent in all of Asia.

We should keep in mind that Myanmar is the world's second most vulnerable country to climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index prepared by the research group Germanwatch. Studies have shown that the onset of the monsoon is becoming more variable, increasing the risk of drought.

In the dry zone, water is becoming more scarce every year with frequent droughts. The dry zone comprises 58 townships in Mandalay, Magwe, and Sagaing, and is home to 10 million people, who mostly rely on rain-fed agriculture and oil crops.

The worst has not yet come. Food security will be at risk if more rice-producing regions experience crop failure, and an energy crisis will be imminent if supply of water at hydropower plants falls short. The chain reaction set off by drought will continue further in the form of inflation as a result of declining rice production.

There is no time to waste. We must prepare to solve our climate crisis. Significant water resource management, reducing industry's impacts on the environment, cleaning up rivers, coastal waters and contaminated land and encouraging our farmers to take up different crops and different agricultural techniques, which need less water can make a difference.



## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO TACKLE GLOBAL CHALLENGES

# Citizens globally affirm belief in international cooperation

Launched to mark the Organization's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the exercise was the UN's most ambitious effort to date to gather input from the global public, and the largest survey on priorities for recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

People worldwide have overwhelmingly highlighted their faith in multilateralism to address global challenges, the results of a year-long survey by the United Nations have shown.

The UN75 initiative was launched by Secretary-General António Guterres, in January last year, to understand the global public's hopes and fears for the future, as well as their expectations and ideas for international cooperation, and for the UN in particular. More than 1.5 million people from 195 countries took part in the campaign through surveys and dialogues.

"The UN75 global consultation showed that 97 per cent of respondents support international cooperation to tackle global challenges," Mr Guterres said on the results.

"That represents a very strong commitment to multilateralism, and to the mission of the United Nations. Now it is up to us - Member States and the UN Secretariat - to meet the expectations of the people we serve," he added.

### Unity across groups and regions

Announcing the findings at



The UN undertook a global crowdsourcing opinion campaign as part of its 75th anniversary celebrated in 2020. PHOTO: UN

the UN Office at Geneva on Friday, Fabrizio Hochschild, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the commemoration of UN's 75th anniversary, said that together with UN75 conversations and surveys, innovative methodologies and artificial intelligence analysis were employed to gauge world opinion, including through traditional and social media.

In addition, two independent surveys were commissions around the same questions to have a "re-

ality check", and the results were striking, he continued.

Unity, across generations, regions income groups, and levels of education, was one such striking result, Mr. Hochschild highlighted, explaining that opinions were united when it came to people's hopes and fears for their future, and their expectations of international cooperation.

In the immediate priorities post-COVID-19, the world is united in wanting much better access to

affordable basic services, healthcare, quality education, water and sanitation, and related is the world seeks much greater solidarity with the hardest hit communities and places, he added.

Launched to mark the Organization's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the exercise was the UN's most ambitious effort to date to gather input from the global public, and the largest survey on priorities for recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Short-term challenges

With the coronavirus pandemic reversing progress in human development and widening inequalities, many respondents prioritized access to basic services and support to the hardest hit places and communities in the short-term, according to the results.

The top immediate, short-term priority globally was universal access to healthcare.

In addition, given the impact of the crisis on children and education, greater investments in education and youth programmes ranked high among respondents, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and central and southern Asia.

### Long-term challenges

Similarly, while people expect access to health services to improve over the next 25 years, respondents in all regions identified climate change and environmental issues as the number one long-term global challenge.

Other longer-term priorities vary according to income levels, but include rising concern with employment opportunities, respect for human rights and reducing conflict.

Respondents in higher hu-

man development countries tended to give the highest priority to the environment and human rights, those in lower human development countries tended to accord the highest priority to less conflict and meeting basic needs, such as employment, healthcare and education.

### UN's role

Many respondents also looked to the United Nations to lead in international cooperation to address immediate and longer-term global challenges, the results showed, with many also want the Organization to innovate - to be more inclusive, engaged, accountable and effective.

In surveys and UN75 dialogues held around the world, participants called on the UN for moral leadership; a more reformed, representative and agile Security Council; and an inclusive and participatory UN system, with improved understanding of the work of the Organization among citizens around the world, and which shows more care for the needs of the people.

SOURCE: UN



## WHO URGES TOUGHER MEASURES TO CURB 'ALARMING' VARIANT

# WHO warns of COVID-19 'tipping point' as cases rise across Europe

Regarding the virus mutation, he reported the SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern has been detected in 22 countries in the region.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of a "tipping point" in the fight against COVID-19, amid surging cases in Europe and the fresh challenge of a mutating virus.

"We were prepared for a challenging start to 2021 and it has been just that", Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, said on Thursday during a virtual press briefing from Copenhagen.

Although new tools against the disease are now available, including several vaccines, and knowledge about the virus has increased, "we remain in the grip of COVID-19", he said.

"This moment represents a tipping-point in the course of the pandemic

- where science, politics, technology and values must form a united front, in order to push back this persistent and elusive virus", he told journalists.

### More lockdowns expected

Last year, more than 26 million cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in the WHO European Region, which comprises 53 countries.

Over a quarter of States are seeing very high incidence of the disease and strained health systems. Currently, more than 230 million people are living in countries under full national lockdown, and more governments are expected to announce lockdowns in the coming week.

Dr Kluge said the impact of the recent holiday period, characterized by family gatherings and the relaxing of preventive measures such as physical distancing and wearing masks, cannot yet be determined.

### Virus mutation 'alarming'

Regarding the virus mutation, he reported the SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern has been detected in 22 countries in the region. "This variant is 'of concern' as it has increased transmissibility. So far, we understand there is no significant change to the disease this variant produces, meaning the COVID-19 is not more, nor less, severe," he said.

SOURCE: UN News



A rise in coronavirus infections is putting pressure on hospitals across Europe during winter. PHOTO: AFP

## MYANMAR GAZETTE

### Heads of Service Organizations confirmed, appointed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on the expiry of one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Myint Zaw	Managing Director Myanmar Shipyards Ministry of Transport and Communications
(b) U Htay Aung	Managing Director Inland Water Transport Ministry of Transport and Communications

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Myint Cho, Deputy Director-General of the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce, as Director-General of the same department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

### Letter to the Editor

#### On (Not) Conceding US Presidential Elections: A Brief Retrospective

Dear Editor

Like a few million non-Americans from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe - not to say India and Jamaica where the parents of Vice-President-elect of the United States Kamala Harris hails from - I rejoice that around 3:25 am local time in the morning of 7 January 2021 the United States Senate and Congress formally, officially, constitutionally affirmed, approved, declared that Mr. Joe Biden and Ms. Kamala Harris were respectively President and Vice-President-elect of the United States.

The current occupant of the White House ('God willing' - using it as a figure of speech - or 'circumstances permitting' that regrettable episode should end on noon 20 January 2021, US East Coast time) stated that though he QUOTE totally disagree[d] with the outcome of the election UNQUOTE he would ensure that there would be a 'smooth transition to a new administration'.

The outcome of the election was to translate Burmese sayings 'as clear as spaghetti strings' ကွက်ကွက်ကွက်ကွက် ဖန့်တီးကွက်သို့ or as 'an elephant in the field' လယ်ပြင်မှာဆင်သွားသလို ဝင်ရူး at the latest by mid-November 2020. It took Mr. Trump about two months after the election results became clear to make this tepid (not quite) 'concession' forced as he was by the temporary occupation of the United States Congress by a group of thugs (as stated by both Democrats and Republicans in the aftermath) waving placards bearing his name.

The late Richard Nixon in the 1960 Presidential election conceded within hours after his loss to Senator the late John F. Kennedy. Nixon lost to Kennedy with less than 160,000 popular votes. Fast forward 40 years, then-Vice President Al Gore graciously conceded the election on 13 December 2000 within hours after the US Supreme Court by a 5-4 majority peremptorily stopped Florida recounts albeit Gore won the popular vote nation-wide by more than 540,000 votes.

And in 2016 although more than 2.8 million voted for her than Trump within hours after the US networks projected that Trump had won the electoral votes, Hillary Clinton conceded. In comparison there were 7 million more votes for Biden and Trump's electoral votes loss was 74 (306-232) in the 2020 election. Alas, all of the above were, in comparison, upright, decent persons.

It is said that a week can be a long time in politics'. As one writes on 8 January 2021, it is 12 days before the inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States. Though 'between the cup and the lips' anything can happen, if all goes as scheduled 20 January 2021 should be a day where at least a plurality of Americans and a few million non-Americans around the world can heave a sigh of relief though (dare I say it and in a sense sadly so) the pernicious atmosphere 'he' and his followers had caused will likely continue for a long time to come.

I convey my sincere congratulations to Mr. President-elect Joe Biden and Ms. Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris of the United States of America.

Myint Zan



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Printed 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.

# Monywa, Fujita Corporation discuss power generation from waste materials

OFFICIALS from Monywa and Japan's Fujita Corporation and Mitsubishi Research Institute organized their third meeting via videoconferencing on electricity generation from waste materials on 7 January.

"Three-year plan was made with Fujita Corporation on power generation from waste materials under carbon reduction project", said U Tun Tun from Monywa City Development Committee.

"Implementation of the project is in second years, and was suspended because of the coronavirus outbreak. Plastics will be sorted from the waste during the suspension period to generate electricity," he added.

U Thit Htoo Myint from Sagaing Region Development



Officials from Monywa and Fujita Corporation hold meeting on power generation from waste materials on 7 January 2021. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)

Committee also joined the meeting together with U Tun Tun.

Officials from Myan-

mar-based TESCO Co., Ltd also participated in the meeting.

The meeting discussed

sorting wastes and generating energy from the wastes.

— Myo win Tun (Monywa)  
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

# Traditional sword business thriving in Naung Po Aung village, Sagaing



Pictures show a blacksmith workshop making traditional swords in Naung Po Aung Village in Homalin Township, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)

MYANMAR traditional Naung Po Aung sword business remains growing with high market demand even in the crisis of the COVID-19, according to Ko Thant Zin Maung, a sword producer in Naung Po Aung village, Homalin township, Sagaing Region.

"Although it is the COVID-19 period, most Naung Po Aung

sword businesses don't stop due to the continuous demands from the markets," he said.

In Naung Po Aung village, there are about 30 blacksmith workshops, mostly in Naung Pakhar ward and Oh Bo Tan ward and there are about 30 types of swords with variety of designs.

Although there are new modern

designs, the swords are still inspired by the traditional forms.

Nhat-Kyi-Taung swords and Kendo swords are mostly in demand and 75 per cent of the swords are shipped to Yangon as well as to Taunggyi, Nay Pyi Taw, Tachilek, Kyaukse and Thantong townships. The swords are ordered mostly for the decoration

at home, rubber planters and household users.

The finished product of the Nhat-Kyi-Taung sword sells for 100,000 to 800,000 kyats, while the unfinished version costs around 35,000 to 100,000 kyats.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

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# Price of watermelon exported to China keeps falling



Merchants wearing face masks are seen beside a lorry carrying watermelons at a Myanmar-China border trade zone during the second wave of coronavirus outbreak in Myanmar. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Melon Producers and Exporters Association, the prices of the watermelon exported to China are continuously falling.

“Although the watermelons fetched over 7,000 Yuans per tonne at the end-November of last year, the price has currently fallen to 2,300 Yuans per tonne,” said U Naing Win, chairperson of the association.

“The price of watermelon is at its lowest price. Now, the watermelon is priced only at 2,300 Yuans per tonne for the high-quality ones. At the end of November, the watermelon price rose to 7,400 Yuans per tonne.

However, the price is now only 2,300 Yuans per tonne,” he added.

Besides, the price of muskmelon is ranging between 3,500 and 4,000 Yuans per tonne. About 200 trucks carrying the watermelon and 50 trucks carrying the muskmelon are entering China through Muse border area.

At present, Myanmar exports its watermelons and muskmelons mainly to China. Last December, Myanmar exported 25 tonnes of seedless watermelons to the Dubai market for the first time.

According to Myanmar Melon Producers and Exporters Association, Myanmar is also arranging to export more melons to Dubai and Qatar markets.

According to the statement released by the Fruit Commodity Depot in Muse 105th Mile trade zone on 5 January, the number of fruit trucks will be limited to be able to control the melon market.

Although Myanmar could export more watermelons and musk melons through Kyin-

sankyawt border post because of extended operating hours from 7 am to 8:30 pm that started 5 January, Myanmar will export the fruits limit to quantity to maintain the market.

The Fruit Commodity Depot at Muse 105th Mile trade zone announced on 5 January that the trucks would enter the exchange ground under the Fruit Commodity Depot and Truck Supervision Board management.

Last year, Myanmar faced a problem in the export of melons to China because of COVID-19. So, the local growers and melon traders suffered significant losses because the exported melon price declined.

Watermelons and muskmelons are grown across the country, excluding Kayah and Chin states. It can be harvested until coming May. Myanmar yearly exports over 800,000 tonnes of watermelons and about 150,000 tonnes of muskmelons to China, the association affirmed.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Distributors need to sell palm oil at reasonable prices during pandemic period: MEODA

By Nyein Nyein

THE palm oil distributors need to sell the palm oil at a reasonable price to prevent the shortage of domestic palm oil as imported palm oil prices are high during the pandemic period, said the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association (MEODA) in its statement on 7 January.

“Currently, the domestic palm oil price is rising as imported oil prices are on the rise,” said MEODA Chair U San Lin.

“These days, the price of imported oil is on the rise. As you know, the domestic edible oil price is directly linked to the international price. That is the reason why our domestic palm oil price is hiking in this pandemic period,” he explained.

Myanmar annually imports 700,000 tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia to meet the domestic demand, he added.

The association is coordinating with the relevant government departments to distribute the healthy palm oil at a reasonable price and meet the domestic market's self-sufficiency in COVID-19 period.

According to the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) official data, about 2 million metric tons of palm oil were stockpiled in 2019, and about 1.2 million metric tons also accumulated in January 2021.

Additionally, the palm oil price has jumped to a price ranging between US\$1,055 and \$1,075 per tonne from \$780 per tonne in last October as the flooded

farmlands caused by erratic weather conditions in Malaysia and the lack of intensive farming activities affected by COVID-19. The production also declined because of factories not able to operate as usual. There were more imports of edible oil due to tax reduction and increases in the export taxes in the palm oil manufacturing countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

The domestic palm oil market situation changes depending on the foreign palm oil price and foreign exchange rate. According to the current situation, palm oil is priced at K2,500 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the domestic market, according to MEODA.

To ensure the self-sufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic,



MEODA urged palm oil distributors to sell the product at reasonable prices amid COVID-19. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

the government purchased over 12,000 tonnes of palm oil for reserves and distributed them to the oil tanks in the respective regions and states. There is no decrease in domestic palm oil demand as the imported oil companies stored about 12,000 tonnes in palm oil reservoirs for reserves, according to the asso-

ciation statement.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tons per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes, and about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are imported annually to meet the domestic demand.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## MoHT invites rental tender for Nan Myaing Hotel in PyinOoLwin

By Nyein Nyein

Nan Myaing Hotel in PyinOoLwin will be rented, according to the tender committee of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The tender committee has announced to invite open tender starting from 8 January to rent Nan Myaing Hotel.

PyinOoLwin Nan Myaing Hotel, built between 1918 and 1922, is owned by the directorate of hotels and tourism, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. The hotel was constructed on 15.22 acres of land and is located at 5th QR Mandalay, Lashio Road, between Nan Myaing Street, PyinOoLwin (Maymyo), Mandalay

Region. The domestic entrepreneurs interested in renting the building could apply for the open tender application.

The conditions for the open tenders application is found at the directorate of hotels and tourism's management department and following website: <http://bit.ly/3olxvN5> by scanning

QR code.

The tender application forms need to submit not later than 8 February to N0. 33 planning department of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Nay Pyi Taw within office hours. The applicants are needed to pay K10,000 for registration fees. The tender will be opened at 1

pm on 8 February.

For further information, contact can be made to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism's planning department: phone-0673-406242 and 0673-406172 within office hours and email: [project,dht@gmail.com](mailto:project,dht@gmail.com), according to the tender committee.

(Translated by Hay Mar)



## ACCUSATIONS OF COVER-UP

## Boeing to pay \$2.5 bn to settle US fraud charges after MAX crashes

US prosecutors on Thursday hit Boeing with \$2.5 billion in fines, settling a criminal charge over claims the company defrauded regulators overseeing the 737 MAX, which was grounded worldwide following two deadly crashes. The Department of Justice (DOJ) said Boeing reached a deferred prosecution agreement related to the company's pronouncements to regulators during the certification of the MAX, which was taken out of service for 20 months after the crashes and only recently cleared to return to the skies. Prosecutors described Boeing's failings in withering terms, accusing the company of spreading "half-truths" and engaging in a "cover up."

"The tragic crashes of Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 exposed fraudulent and deceptive conduct by



Pilots are pictured in the cockpit of a Boeing 737 MAX aircraft operated by low-cost airline Gol as it sits on the tarmac before take off at Guarulhos International Airport, near Sao Paulo on December 9, 2020, as the 737 MAX returns into use more than 20 months after it was grounded following two deadly crashes. **PHOTO: AFP**

employees of one of the world's leading commercial airplane manufacturers," said Acting Attorney General David Burns.

"Boeing's employees chose the path of profit over candor by

concealing material information from the FAA concerning the operation of its 737 Max airplane and engaging in an effort to cover up their deception."

**SOURCE: AFP**

## SELF-DRIVING ELECTRIC VEHICLES

## Hyundai shares soar on Apple car talks reports

SHARES in South Korean automaker Hyundai soared Friday on the back of reports it was in talks with Apple for a joint project to manufacture self-driving electric vehicles.

Hyundai Motor shares rocketed 19.4 per cent in Seoul, with its affiliate Kia also jumping 8.4 per cent at the close.

The moves came after cable broadcaster Korea Economic TV said the iPhone maker had approached the South Korean company to discuss a potential partnership to develop electric cars and batteries for them.

**SOURCE: AFP**

## BENY STEINMETZ

## Israeli magnate set for corruption trial in Geneva

AFTER a drawn-out international investigation, French-Israeli diamond magnate Beny Steinmetz will go on trial in Geneva next week over allegations of corruption linked to mining deals in Guinea. The trial, due to kick off Monday and last for two weeks, will delve into allegations of multi-million-dollar bribes paid to top Guinean officials to win lucrative mining rights. The 64-year-old billionaire businessman has travelled from Israel to Switzerland and will be present at the trial, according to his lawyer Marc Bonnant.

**SOURCE: AFP**

## Invitation for Bids

Date: **05 January 2021**

Loan Agreement No: MY-P20

IFB No: **1/ICB/MY-P20/MESC/2021**

Reference Identification No: **JICA(MY)12-28006 Dated on 28 December 2020**

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) toward the cost of Power Distribution System Improvement Project in Major Cities. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for Procurement of Power Distribution System Improvement Project in Major Cities, Package 12 Introduction of Utility Vehicles.

2. Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.

3. The Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation now invites sealed Bids from eligible and qualified Bidders for the procurement of Utility Vehicles ("the Goods").

a) Truck Mount Aerial Work Platform **2 Nos.** to be delivered to designated place in Myanmar

b) Digger and Pole Erection Machine **2 Nos.** to be delivered to designated place in Myanmar

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation (MESC), Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE), 27th Street, Between 77 and 78 Street, Chan Aye Thar Zan Township, Mandalay, Myanmar.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address above, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee: MMK 15,000 or 10 Dollar

As special measures in consideration with the restriction or constraint on moving to Mandalay City due to COVID-19, a complete set of Bidding Documents can be purchased by means of prepaying a fee by bank transfer and sending PDF files to an interested Bidder by e-mail. If requesting this method, an interested Bidder shall contact to the Purchaser. (Telephone numbers or e-mail addresses are shown below.)

6. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents under Japanese ODA Loans for the Procurement of Goods.

7. Bids must be delivered to the above address at or before **14:00 on 9 March 2021** and must be accompanied by a Bid Security of 20,000USD.

8. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **14:00 on 9 March 2021** at the office of

Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation (MESC), Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE)  
Mr. Aung Kyaw Hein, General Manager Planning Department  
27th Street, Between 77 and 78 Street, Chan Aye Thar Zan Township, Mandalay, Myanmar

Telephone: 1) +95-2-4069121

2) +95-9-259116604

Facsimile number: 1) +95-2-4069121

2) +95-2-403488

Electronic mail address: 1) gmpm.mesc@moe.gov.mm

2) mescjica@gmail.com

3) mescmateplan@gmail.com

## Invitation for Bids

Date: **5 January 2021**

Loan Agreement No: **MY-P20**

IFB No: **2/ICB/MY-P20/MESC/2021**

Reference Identification No: **JICA(MY)12-22008 dated on 22 Dec 2020**

1. The Government of Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) towards the cost of Power Distribution System Improvement Project in Major Cities. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for Package 11 Construction of New Five 33/11 kV Substation in Mandalay City.

2. Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.

3. The Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the design, execution and completion of Construction of New Five 33/11 kV Substations in Mandalay City ("the Works"). International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with JICA's Single-Stage Bidding Procedure.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of the Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation (MESC), Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) Address: Between 26-27 and 77-78 Streets, Chan Aye Thar Zan Township, Mandalay Phone: +95-2-4069121, FAX: +95-2-4069121

5. A complete set of the Bidding Documents may be purchased and inspected by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of MMK 50,000 or USD 40

6. Bids must be delivered to the address above on or before **14:00 on 9 March 2021** and must be accompanied by a Bid Security of JPY13,500,000

7. Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **14:00 on 9 March 2021** at the office of Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation (MESC), Mandalay.

Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation (MESC), Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE)

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19-NATION ZONE

## Virus impact keeps eurozone inflation negative

EUROZONE inflation remains doggedly negative, the latest official data showed on Thursday, the fifth straight month it has languished in the red because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Eurostat figures for December gave the 19-nation zone an inflation reading of -0.3 per cent, the same level as in November. It has been negative since August. The reading is well below the European Central Bank's inflation target level of just under two per cent.

The biggest drag on inflation was energy, which was -6.9 per cent in December compared with -8.3 per cent the month before. The biggest positive component was food, alcohol and tobacco, which rose 1.4 per cent, compared with 1.9 per cent in November. Overall prices have been brought down by restrictions imposed in Europe to curb a second wave of the new coronavirus.

Curfews, work-from-home orders, mandatory quarantines and travel restrictions have all taken their toll. And in several euro-using countries they have been hardened even further in late December.

SOURCE: AFP

PLAN SCRAPPED

## US suspends tariffs on French goods in digital tax dispute

WASHINGTON has suspended a plan to impose new tariffs on \$1.3 billion in French products in a dispute over a digital services tax, the US Trade Representative (USTR) announced on Thursday. The punitive levies were due to take effect Wednesday, but USTR held off citing ongoing investigations of similar measures "adopted or under consideration in 10 other jurisdictions."

The government of President Donald Trump in July 2020 announced the decision to impose 25 per cent tariffs on French handbags and cosmetics, among other items, but

suspended collecting the duties until January 6.

That was in retaliation for the tax France approved in 2019 on tech firms like Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Google, which were accused of moving their profits offshore. USTR Robert Lighthizer slammed the move saying it "unfairly targets US digital technology companies." Paris suspended collection of the digital services tax through the end of 2020, as the sides have been trying to negotiate a deal through the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

SOURCE: AFP

PRESIDENT-ELECT

## Biden names final economic team picks



US President-elect Joe Biden speaks at The Queen theatre in Wilmington, Delaware on January 7, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

US President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday unveiled his picks for commerce secretary, labour secretary and small business administrator to fill his incoming economics team. The transition named Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, Boston

Mayor Martin Walsh and former Obama official Isabel Guzman as nominees for the three positions, respectively. "With two dozen cabinet nominees announced, President-elect Biden has put forward the most diverse cabinet in American history," the Biden team said in a statement. Biden had already revealed choices for part of his economic team in early December, composed mostly of women, minorities and those who had served under former president Barack Obama. Most notable was for-

mer Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen as treasury secretary. "They share my belief that the middle class built this country and that unions built the middle class," Biden said of the group he has assembled, according to the statement. The new officials' priority will be "digging us out from the worst jobs crisis in nearly a century by supporting small businesses, dramatically increasing union density, and rebuilding the backbone of America -- our middle class," the transition's statement said. SOURCE: AFP

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# Custom of festival for Ceti made of sand

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)  
TRANSLATED BY THAN TUN AUNG

**A** CUSTOM of Myanmar people was very famous as building Ceti made of sand in the month of Tabaung dedicating to the Lord Buddha among seasonal festivals in 12 months of Myanmar. Currently, the custom of building Ceti made of sand is gradually fading out.

Even though the Ceti built of sand can be seen in some parts of the country, including Mandalay and Yangon. Among them, five Ceti can be seen on the eastern side of Shwetachaung Canal and one on the western side in Mandalay till today. Likewise, many similar Ceti can be seen in Lanmadaw, Sangyoung and Twantay townships of Yangon Region, Thaton and Mawlamyine townships in Mon State, Kyaikkhami, and Toungoo Township in Bago Region.

### Month of Tabaung and Myanmar

Tabaung is the 12th month in Myanmar calendar. Veteran writer Maung Htin collected excerpts that U Po Latt mentioned Tabaung is the month of cooking jiggery while Secretary of Boat Association defined Tabaung was derived from Tapashar meaning the month of high hotness.

In the past, MP Kaludayi supplicated the Lord Gotama Buddha to return to Kapilavatthu for accepting homage paid by father, King Suddhodana. So, poet monk Shin Ohn Nyo composed the poem for sixty stanzas of Gatha.

### Origin of Ceti built of sand

Ceti derived from Cetiya in Pali language

means the structure enshrined with sacred relics. Ceti made of sand means the pagoda built of sand based on circular foundations. Among Dhatu, Dhamma, Paribhoga and Uddisa Ceti, the Ceti made of sand is inclusive of Uddisa Ceti dedicating the Lord Buddha.

Thera Apadana of Tri Pitakat treatises mentioned hermit Narada residing near Yamaka Hill went to Amarika River where he built a Ceti made of sand and paid homage to it dedicating to the Buddha alive.

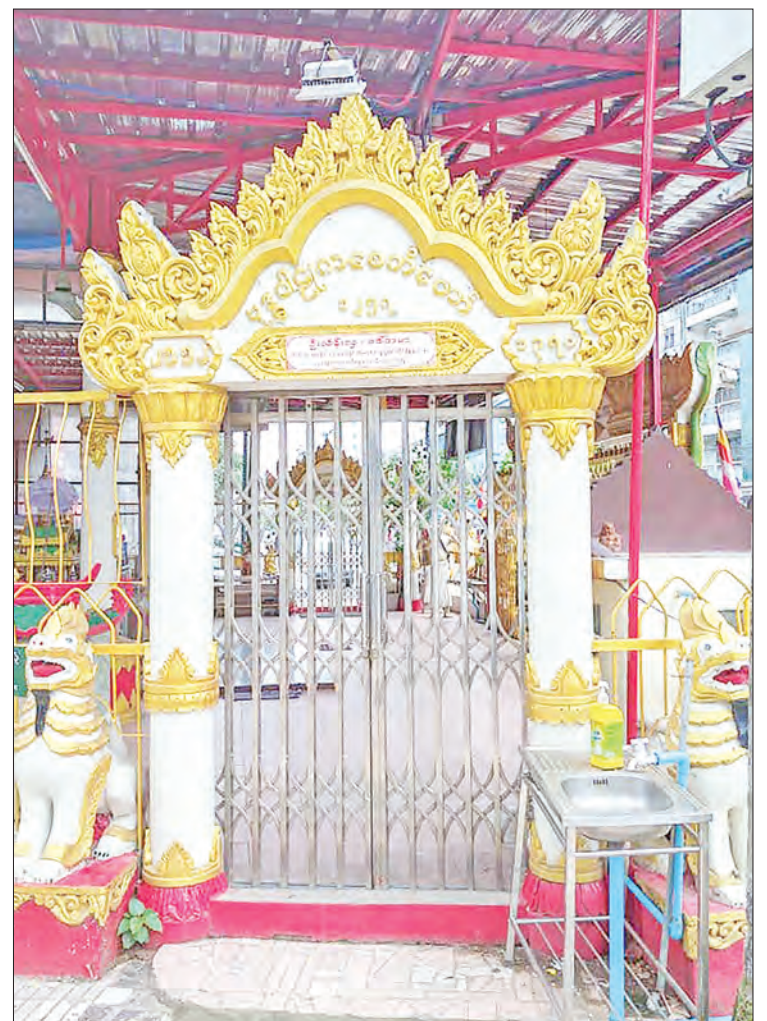
Mogharajathera story of Angutthora Atthakatha said hermit Bavari built a sandy Ceti near his hut and scattered red flowers there.

Generally, Ceti made of sand are built in Tabaung but people from some areas hold festivals for the sandy Ceti in Tazaungmon and Tagu.

### Festival of sandy Ceti in the past

The Ceti must have between three feet and nine feet high with five circular foundations. The circulars made of rattan or bamboo are filled with sand, dedicating to five abodes of Mount Myinmo. The structure of the Ceti is decorated with golden or silver sheets as well as banana leaves. Top of the Ceti is hoisted with banners. Then, the Ceti was consecrated. Meals, flowers, oil lights, fruits and alms are donated to the Ceti. Local people go round the Ceti three times. In some areas, local people invite members of the Sangha and take Sabbath from the monks.

In the past, sandy Ceti were built on banks of rivers and creeks. In Tabaung, water-level de-



Buddha Waluka Ceti made of sand in Lanmadaw Township of Yangon Region.





Maha Waluka Ceti made of sand in Mahaaungmye Township in Mandalay Region.

clines in rivers and creeks with emerging sandbanks. Buddhist people collected sand to be used in building Cetis.

### Myanmar and sandy Ceti

It can be assumed that as Shin Maha Silavamsa composed reason of sandy Ceti in Buddupatti poem in Inwa era, custom of Ceti made of sand flourished in Inwa era. In the reign of King Alaungmintaya, Letwe Thondara used Gulon Thepon which means sandy Ceti in Thadhina poem. As such, the custom of building sandy Ceti might flourish in the mid-Konbaung era.

Some researchers assumed the custom of building sandy Ceti might be derived from Yodaya people who arrived in Myanmar.

On 30 November 1764 in the time of King Myedu, 20,000 soldiers led by Maha Nawrahta marched to Yodaya. In November 1766, General Maha Nawrahta passed away in Yodaya. Nemyo Thihapatae occupied all districts of Yodaya on 9 April 1767 and brought Yodaya King and queen, daughter, sister and grandchildren as well as Yodaya families to Royal Palace.

Family members from Yun, Chaingmai and Laos were appointed at Linzin troops. Linzinkon in Amarapura is the residence of Linzin troops. King Myedu settled Yodaya princes and royal families in Amarapura and in Minthasu Ward around 82nd and 45th streets of Mandalay. Yodaya ministers were set-

tled in Montisu ward, servants in Palin compound and firework makers in Hsukha Village of Madaya.

King Badon moved his royal palace from Inwa to Amarapura on 12 May 1783. The king ordered compound officer U Yauk Gyi to supervise dredging of Shwetachaung Canal linking Madaya and Amarapura with the participation of Yodaya people residing along the canal.

Shwetachaung Canal flew with high speed. Boats could be used from Madaya to Tetthay Lake via the canal which became an important waterway for trading. Yodaya people moved to around Shwetachaung Canal to reside in Minthasu and Rahaing wards. Yama chambers showing the faith of Yodaya can be seen there. Yodaya's custom of paying sandy Ceti can be seen along Shwetachaung Canal.

### Mandalay City and Cetis made of sand

In the early years, Cetis were built of sand in the western part of Shwetachaung Canal. Due to flooding once three years, the Cetis were moved to the eastern part. So, there are five Cetis in the eastern part and one in the western one.

Six sandy Cetis along Shwetachaung Canal in Mandalay were very famous. Among them, four Cetis were built of bricks and cement. The Ceti in the western part of Shwetachaung Canal in Minthasu Ward and one more in

the eastern part on 85th Street between 37th and 38th streets in Montisu Ward of Mahaaungmye Township are rebuilt of sand yearly as part of maintaining the traditions.

Among Yodaya people, ousted Yodaya king Kyauk Bwa Tauk was also brought to Mandalay. He was ordained, and the monk resided in Paungle Monastery

in the eastern part of Rahaing Market and passed away in 1185 ME. As royal families of Yodaya requested King Bodawpaya to build a Ceti made of sand in line with their tradition near their residences beside Shwetachaung Canal, the king allowed them. So, the monk who was former Yodaya king led royal families to build a Ceti made of sand in Minthasu Ward in 1783 AD, according to the stone inscription in the precinct of the Ceti.

The Ceti is rebuilt in Minthasu Ward on Akya Day of Maha Thingyan Festival period for holding the Buddha Pujaniya festival, and it is dissolved once a year. Those related to Yodaya people participate in donations of a handful of sand and a cup of water in minimum to build the Ceti. On Atet Day, the umbrella is hoisted atop the Ceti, and members of the Sangha are invited to share merits gained on New Year Day.

Montisu Ward which emerged together with Minthasu Ward was resided by Yodaya people in the past. The Cetis in Montisu Ward and Minthasu Ward were the same. The stone inscription behind the Ceti in Montisu Ward bore the events from the stone inscription of the Ceti in Minthasu Ward. But, the Ceti in Montisu Ward which was one year later than that of Minthasu Ward was built in 1784 AD under the leadership of Yodaya monk.

The Ceti in Montisu Ward is built on 13th waxing of Kason,

within a day. On 14th waxing of Kason, alms are donated to the Ceti, and alms for draw lots and meals are offered to members of the Sangha on full moon day of Kason.

Similar Cetis can be seen in Yangon Region till today. Buddha Waluka Pagoda at the corner of Kyongyi and Kaingtan streets in Lanmadaw Township was built in 1253 ME. YwaU Thepon Ceti in South Sangyoung Ward of Sangyoung Township was built in 1220 ME and renovated as a brick pagoda in 1286 ME. As Manle Sayadaw preached Desana near Mawtin in Lanmadaw Township of Yangon in 1282 ME, a Ceti near the site of preaching Desana can be seen on 10th street in Lanmadaw Township till today.

Myanmar Buddhist people built Ceti made of sand in various areas of the country during the Second World War with the purpose of ensuring the people to be free from dangers. The Cetis dedicating to the Lord Buddha is a tangible culture of Myanmar as well as festivals of those Cetis, intangible culture of the nation.



### References:

- Royal Palace built in walls (Natmauk Tun Shein)
- Festival of Ceti made of sand (U Maung Maung Tin)
- People in Myanmar related to Yodaya (Sayawun Tin Maung Kyi)



Buddha Waluka Ceti made of sand in Lanmadaw Township of Yangon Region.



## U Aung Naing to take SUFC technical director position

HEAD coach U Aung Naing, who assisted Shan United in winning the Championship titles for two consecutive years, will serve as a technical director position for the team, according to the football club's authorities.

The team released an official statement on Thursday that he would serve the duty for the upcoming 2021 Myanmar National League season.

The 54-year-old head coach is the only local head coach to bring the two times Championship titles for Shan United FC.

U Aung Naing has said his excellent feeling about taking the technical director position

for his team.

"When the club president offered me for the technical director position, I was delighted and accepted the offer. I've achieved two trophies already, and I think I've done as best as I can and this is the time when I should help all my juniors," U Aung Naing said.

Being a technical director, U Aung Naing commented that he would give the best of his not only for senior and junior teams of Shan United but also for youths across Myanmar.

"I have three targets as part of my duties as technical director. First, I will share my

knowledge with the coaches of the youth team. Second, I'd like to implement a youth development programme. There are lots of young people who want to play football not only in Shan State but across the country as well.

I'd also like to share my knowledge with them. Last but not least, I'd like to start grassroots activities. Only when the youth are good enough, the football career of our country will then be good. I just want to work both for the team and for the country. I'm ready to work for the country if I'm given the opportunity," U Aung Naing added.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



U Aung Naing, former head coach of the Shan United will now serve as a technical director position for the team. **PHOTO: SUFC**

## No room for complacency as Atletico's rivals find their rhythm

MADRID—Real Madrid have hit their stride and Barcelona are gaining momentum but Atletico Madrid have stayed strong at the top of La Liga, ahead of what could prove a crucial month in the title race.

A surprise loss to third division side Cornella in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday came in stark contrast to Atletico's form in the league, where only defeat to their capital city rivals last month blots an otherwise perfect run of results that stretches back to mid-October.

Two narrow victories over Getafe and Alaves last week made it four league victories on the bounce since Atletico's setback at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium, where a hesitant, passive performance offered Madrid reassurance.

Atletico had caved when it mattered most and many thought that spelled danger for their prospects longer-term.

But while Zinedine Zidane's Madrid have used the derby victory to string together an unbeaten run of eight games, seven of them wins and five with clean sheets, Atletico have also responded.

Luis Suarez scored consecutive winners against Getafe and Alaves, his tap-in at Mendizorrosa on Sunday prompting the kind of celebrations to suggest his team genuinely believes they can go the distance.—AFP ■



Atletico Madrid's Argentine coach Diego Simeone gestures during the match between Real Madrid CF and Club Atletico de Madrid at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium on 12 December 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Tokyo Olympics 'safe and secure' despite virus emergency: organizers



The postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics are scheduled to start on July 23. **PHOTO: KYODO**

TOKYO—Tokyo Olympics organizers insisted Friday that the coronavirus-postponed Games will still go ahead despite Japan declaring a state of emergency less than 200 days before the opening ceremony. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Thursday announced the month-long measure covering the greater Tokyo area, taking effect from Friday, as the country battles a

surge in infections.

Tokyo 2020 chiefs have already said another postponement of the Games – set to begin on July 23 – is out of the question.

And they insisted Friday that the emergency would not derail plans. "This declaration of emergency offers an opportunity to get the Covid-19 situation under control and for Tokyo 2020 to plan for a safe and secure Games

this summer, and we will proceed with the necessary preparations accordingly," organizers said in a statement.

Suga said Thursday that Japan is committed to holding a "safe and secure" Olympics, and that he believes the public mood will change when the country begins vaccinations, currently scheduled for late next month.—AFP ■

## Coronavirus, Brexit tame Premier League spending

LONDON—Premier League clubs shrugged off the coronavirus crisis to splash out £1.2 billion (\$1.6 billion) in the summer transfer window but reality is expected to bite in a depressed market this month.

Since the last window closed in early October, hopes for a large-scale return of fans have been dashed by soaring infection rates across England, which have led to another national

lockdown.

Football is feeling the strain. Forty positive Covid-19 cases were discovered over two rounds of Premier League testing in late December and early January, with three matches postponed.

This led to fears that another season could be interrupted by the pandemic, with clubs taking a fresh financial hit, even if Premier League bosses insist the season will continue.—AFP ■