

NATIONAL

Senior General receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association and former Member of House of Councilors of Japan

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

Groundbreaking ceremony of Agricultural Marketing Centre held in Nay Pyi Taw

PAGE-4

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## VP U Henry Van Thio attends coordination meeting on permanent residency of foreigners

**V**ICE-PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as chairman of the Management Committee on Permanent Residency System for Foreigners, presided over its coordination meeting at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting the Vice-President said that the 1982 Citizenship Law does not allow dual citizenship. Myanmar has adopted the permanent residency system for foreigners who want to make investment in Myanmar, other experts, former Myanmar citizens and their family members to work for the socio-economic development of the State in line with the national reconciliation process of the country.

In accordance with the approval of the Union Government, bylaws for permanent residency for foreigners were issued on 18 November 2014, as order number 1/2014 by the Ministry of Immigration and Population; the Union Government later formed the management committee, the central committee and the work committee.

The present government has reformed these committees and issued the bylaws amending the



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio speaks at the Management Committee on Permanent Residency System for Foreigners on 20 January. PHOTO: MNA

bylaws of Permanent Residence of a Foreigner Rules. As a result, the permanent residency could be applied at Myanmar embassies, consulates and missions in foreign countries.

The existing administration has approved 444 persons for permanent residency, 4 persons were denied, and one person was still under scrutiny, out of the 434 applicants from 1 January 2016 to 12 January 2021, including applicants from 2015, while the other

10 persons will be interviewed personally.

The Vice-President added that the government earned US\$150,000 from the initial application for the residency, \$237,500 from issuing the certificates for permanent residence and identity card, \$1,038,600 from renewal of residency, totalling \$1,426,100.

At present, the central implementation committee has approved 617 persons, and the remaining 70 persons will be in-

terviewed after the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by submissions to the Security, Peace and Rule of Law Committee and to the Union Government Office for final approval.

Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Min-

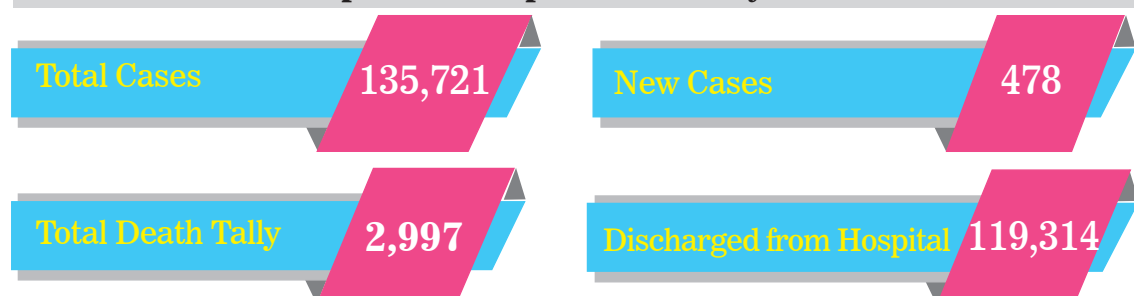
ister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Chan Aye and Director-General from the Foreign Economic Relations Department U Than Aung Kyaw reported on the works of their ministries for permanent residency processes.

SEE PAGE-2

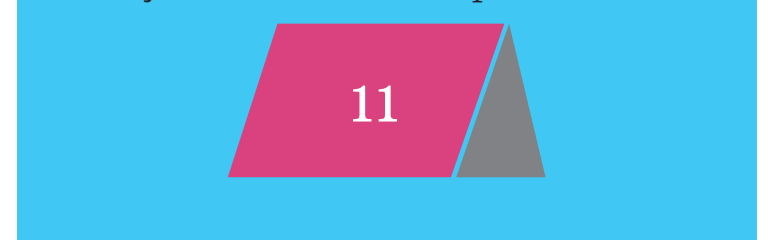
### 478 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 January, total figure rises to 135,721

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 135,721 after 478 new cases were reported on 20 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 135,721 confirmed cases, 2,997 died, 119,314 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 20 January 2021



Daily death toll until 8 pm 20-1-2021



Ministry of Health and Sports

VP U Henry Van Thio attends coordination meeting on permanent residency of foreigners

FROM PAGE-1

In his concluding remarks, the Vice-President expressed his appreciation for the updated recommendations about these processes, and said that the amendment of rules on permanent residency could attract more applicants. He also reaffirmed that any Myanmar citizen would be reaccepted and they can apply for the status of permanent residency for a foreigner or for permanent citizenship in line with the laws.

The Vice-President also talked about the repatriation programmes for the citizens who were stranded in foreign countries, removal from blacklists for the citizens living in exile after they have been scrutinized in ac-



Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister U Soe Win. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister U Thein Swe. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi. PHOTO: MNA

cordance with the existing laws, and the Union Government has shown clearly to the global community that Myanmar is scrutinizing only the citizenship of returnees during the COVID-19 period.

He also said that due to the strenuous efforts of the committees, the country was able to earn foreign income and investments, and attract technicians and experts who can work for the development of the country; for this, he wished to recognize and honour their contributions. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister U Han Zaw. PHOTO: MNA



Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo. PHOTO: MNA

Cash contribution for COVID-19 Vaccination Fund can be made through MOPFI website

1. The contribution of cash for COVID-19 Vaccination Fund can be made via the website of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry (<http://www.mopfi.gov.mm>) in the following ways.
  - (a) MPU Debit/Credit Card of local banks
  - (b) Visa/Master Credit of local banks
  - (c) Visa/Master Debit & Credit Card of foreign banks
  - (d) Mobile Wallets such as CB-pay, KBZ-pay, OK\$ through QR Code (more mobile wallets

- (e) Internet/mobile banking App of KBZ, CB, AYA, UAB and MAB (more internet/mobile banking Apps will be available)
- (f) Over-the-counter at Supermarkets such as City Mart, Marketplace, Sein Gay Har, Aeon, Orange; mini-marts and convenience stores such as Denko Mini Market, Fun Fun Mart, ABC and Oasis; Mobile Wallet agents such as M-Pitesan, True Money and MyTelPay; Mobile Phone shops such as Any Call, e-City,

Lu Gyi Min and My Fone; Wai Yan Electronics Sale Centre; the shops available Near Me logo.

2. Therefore, cash contribution can be made at the above-mentioned platforms electronically, in addition to the branches of Myanma Economic Bank and Myanma Agricultural Development Bank and other local private banks.

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

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

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 8<sup>th</sup> April.—MNA

# “People are the key”

## Senior General receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association and former Member of House of Councilors of Japan

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr Watanabe Hideo, Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association and former Member of the House of Councilors of Japan at the Bayintnaung Yeiktha in Nay Pyi Taw on 19 January afternoon.

According to the report from the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, activities of Japan-Myanmar Association to promote friendly ties between the two countries, and efforts to promote the cooperation between the two militaries were discussed at the meeting.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association Mr Watanabe Hideo on 19 January. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES**



## MoBA Union Minister receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt Gen Ye Aung received Mr Watanabe Hideo, Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association and former Member of the House of Councilors of Japan, yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting discussed the implementation of socio-economic development activities for the people at the border areas, the

implementation of the Japanese language course on hotel services launched by the ministry and the Japan-Myanmar Association, human resources development at border areas, training courses on caring elderly persons to be continued in the post-COVID-19 period and leadership and management training in collaboration with the Nippon Foundation.

The Union Minister and the Chairman of the Japan-Myanmar Association also discussed the Border Area Vocational Training School (Pha-an) in collaboration with Sustainabridge (SB) of Japan; the implementation of com-

prehensive border development projects in Kayin and Mon states and Border Area Development and Human Resources Development Projects in collaboration with Japanese organizations such as Terra People Association (TPA), JICA and Nishida Barley Processing Co., Ltd.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Phone Myat, the Permanent Secretary, Directors General, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Ichiro Maruyama and officials from the Embassy.—MNA (Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Lt Gen Ye Aung poses for documentary photo with Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association Mr Watanabe Hideo on 20 January. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Myanmar nationals brought back home from ROK by relief flight

THE 40<sup>th</sup> relief flight of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul landed at Yangon International Airport bringing back a total of 87 Myanmar nationals after they were stranded in abroad due to

the suspension of international flights, yesterday evening.

Among them, 73 people were from the Republic of Korea, 7 from the USA, 1 from Switzerland, 3 from Egypt, 2 from Uruguay and 1 from Brazil.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government arranged 14-day quarantine at specific places or designated hotels, followed by the 7-day home

quarantine.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens and Myanmar seamen who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Commit-

tee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperated with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries.—MNA

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



We will be putting more focus and efforts into the programmes of the NRPC during this year

We knew and have accepted the fact that national reconciliation is something which is absolutely necessary for the emergence of the Union, which is our aspiration ever since the NLD was founded in 1988. Because of differences in beliefs, ideologies and views among our Union nationals, metta ceased to exist, anger grew, armed conflicts flared, and peace was burnt to the ground; thus we need to build mutual trust, understanding and respect on a firm foundation to end this vicious and dreadful cycle. That is why when our government took over responsibility in 2016, one of our first acts was to establish the "NRPC - National Reconciliation and Peace Centre". We will be putting more focus and efforts into the programmes of the NRPC during this year.

(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)

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin receives Brazilian Ambassador

U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Carlos Antonio Da Rocha Paranhos, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 11:30 am yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister congratulated the Ambassador for his appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. They also cordially discussed matters related to the enhancement of Myanmar-Brazil

bilateral relations, the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the areas of air transport, agriculture and agricultural research, food security, livestock and technology. They also explored on the possibility of the resumption of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Political Consultations between Myanmar and Brazil and closer collaboration under the South-South Cooperation Framework and at the multilateral fora, the United Nations in particular. The Union Minister briefed the Ambassador on the government's efforts in overcoming the challenges facing Myanmar in its democratic transition including the repatriation of the displaced persons from Rakhine State.—MNA



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin receives Mr Carlos Antonio Da Rocha Paranhos, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Brazil on 20 January. PHOTO: MNA

Groundbreaking ceremony of Agricultural Marketing Centre held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE groundbreaking ceremony of the Agricultural Marketing Centre was held in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by the Union Minister for Agri-

culture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu, Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aye Maung Sein, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Maung Maung Swe, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea

to Myanmar Mr Lee Sang-hwa, Chief Representative of KOICA Myanmar Ms Lee Youn Soo, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General of the ministry and other relevant officials.

At the ceremony, Union Min-

ister Dr Aung Thu said that the agricultural sector is a key factor in Myanmar's economic development process. He stressed that technological reforms are needed in Myanmar to reduce high waste of agricultural products.

Establishing the Agricultural Marketing Centre and the Agricultural Products Processing Centre will benefit both agriculturalists and consumers, according to the Union Minister, who said that the cooperation among the government, private sector and agriculturalists is expected to greatly enhance the opportunities to compete in the international market.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Mr Lee Sang-hwa also delivered a congratulatory speech and KOICA Myanmar representative Ms Lee Youn Soo expressed thanks to all stakeholders. The Agricultural Marketing Centre project, jointly carried out by the Korea International Coop-

eration Agency (KOICA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, was begun in 2018 with US\$8.37 million in financial aid from Korea.

The Agricultural Marketing Centre will be built in Pobbathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw and the Agricultural Product Processing Centre will be built in Heho in Shan State. The objective of establishing the two centres is to improve the market for agricultural products in major agricultural production areas, said Director-General Dr Ye Tint Tun.

The centres will be able to provide efficient agricultural market information, and another benefit is that the agriculturalists' organizations will be strengthened. They will help strengthen agricultural infrastructures and will work for issuance of certification. So, the centres will help fulfil the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS).—MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu and officials attend groundbreaking ceremony of the Agricultural Marketing Centre in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw on 20 January. PHOTO: MNA

# Resistance, response to disasters, development works in 2021 discussed with INGOs



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye chairs the meeting on 20 January with INGOs on 2021 plans for resistance and response to disasters and development works. PHOTO: MNA

THE Department of Disaster Management of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held a coordination

meeting with INGOs yesterday afternoon via videoconferencing to discuss future plans for resistance and response to the dis-

asters and development works.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye made an opening speech on the Myanmar Sus-

tainable Development Plan that was adopted to develop Myanmar into a peaceful and prosperous democratic federal union.

In accordance with the MSDP, the National Disaster Management Committee chaired by Vice-President U Henry Van Thio has drafted and implemented the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction, according to the Union Minister, who said that implementations of the action plan in 2020 were monitored and evaluated. According to the evaluation, 28 out of the 32 priority projects included in the action plan were implemented efficiently.

Similarly, the government is also implementing the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) and the Myanmar Economic Resilience and Reform Plan (MERRP).

The Union Minister said that the ministry is working together with INGOs and local NGOs in a transparent and effective manner in drafting and implementing policies to make the society to be highly resilient

to disasters. By holding meetings with the organizations, necessary suggestions to overcome the challenges related to disaster management will be gained, said the Union Minister.

During the video conference, the ministry's Permanent Secretary, in his capacity as Director-General of the department, discussed the duties and works of the department and the priorities for this year's tasks.

The participants also discussed how they could cooperate with the ministry in climate change mitigation issues, disaster management research, emergency response issues and capacity building.

The virtual meeting was also participated by the Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, relevant government officials, and representatives from 23 INGOs. Officials from JICA and INGO Forum also took part in the virtual meeting as observers.

—MNA  
(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

## Mandalay commodity depot reopens today

MANDALAY commodity depot that has halted for four months to prevent the spreading of the pandemic will reopen on 21 January 2021, according to an announcement of the depot executive committee.

With highly rising COVID-19 infection cases, the Mandalay depot was closed starting from 21 September 2020 for the safety of the committee members.

"We have expected to reopen the depot last December. However, the related department scrutinized the necessary things and granted permission to reopen only on 21 January. Our committee keeps a basin to wash the hands and has urged the members to wear the masks," said an official from Mandalay commodity depot.

Around 200-300 people are

daily coming into and going out of the commodity depot. According to the depot members, the trading was conducted from home through Viber group during the depot's closing period.

"I am delighted that the depot reopens today. The traders will come if the depot reopens. Then, we will have competitive prices for trading. Under the online trading system, the traders offer the price that they want to give. Now, they can see the products with their own eyes," said a committee member.

There are around 1,800 members in Mandalay commodity depot. The commodity depot was closed from the first week of April to last week of May during the first wave of COVID-19 outbreak.—Zin Yaw Aye (Translated by Hay Mar)

## Raw salt in Kyaukpyu processed for foreign markets

THE local raw salt in Kyaukpyu Township, Rakhine State, is being processed with two large machines purchased with the Responsible Business Fund (RBF) of the Denmark government for foreign markets.

Daw Myat Nyein Aye, the owner of Kyan Tine Aung salt production factory, said, "We have been doing salt business about 15 years. The new machines of screw-type could save the workforce in the production processes." She added the finished product would have the required norms for foreign markets as it will not include cleaning agents or chemicals.

The auto-filling machines are also used in packing the salt, and the daily production capacity of the factory is over 100 visses at present. The factory owner also

said that they have applied for Food and Drug Administration certification for the finished products.

Salt from Kyaukpyu area is

sold in the local market, Magway, Minbu and Pyay townships.—Tin Tun Oo/Phyo Wai Lin (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Salt from Kyaukpyu Township will be exported to foreign markets after securing FDA certificate. PHOTO: TIN TUN OO/PHYO WAI LIN (IPRD)

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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.

## Thanlyin RTAD to resume its initial registration of motorcycles

UNDER the permission of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) will resume its operations service of the initial registration of motorcycles, three-wheel cycles, three-wheel vehicles and Htaw Lar Gyi (tractor-trailers), according to RTAD office from Thanlyin.

"Starting from today, we will carry out registration for 200 vehicles per day. We will divide into groups and do registration four times a day. Each time will do the registration for 50 vehicles. Currently, the motorbikes imported from the companies are registered



Thanlyin Road Transport Administration Department resumes the operation services of the initial registration of motorcycles effective 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG**

at the RTAD office," said Daw Myint Myint Than, the head of Thanlyin RTAD from Yangon South District.

Recently, Yangon South District RTAD office was moved to Phayagone village at the junction of Myanmar Maritime Uni-

versity and Thilawa road.

To prevent the crowding at the RTAD office, the process for the initial registration of motorcycles, three-wheel cycles, three-wheel vehicles and tractor-trailers requires online booking.

The owner of the motorcycles, three-wheel cycles, three-wheel vehicles and tractor-trailers need to apply for booking starting from 18 January at RTAD website: [www.rtad.gov.mm](http://www.rtad.gov.mm) at least one day ahead or maximum 10 days.

The detailed information will be available in [www.motc.gov.mm](http://www.motc.gov.mm), [www.myanmarrtad.com](http://www.myanmarrtad.com) and [www.rtad.gov.mm](http://www.rtad.gov.mm) websites. —Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Mango plantations to be protected from fruit fly for export quality

AFTER surveying Mandalay region, the protection and suppression measures are being carried out as one-year project starting from the first week of January to control fruit fly on Mango plantations, according to Mandalay Region Plant Protection Division.

Mandalay Region Plant Protection Division Assistant Director Daw Kay Thi Wai said that after conducting the survey, the project will be carried out with the assistance of the People's Republic of China by a joint team comprising Yangon Plant Protection Head Office, Fruit Fly Protection section, Mandalay region plant protection division, post-harvest technology training school and mango growers. The survey will be conducted on the mango farmlands in Kyaukse township, Singu township and Patheingyi township.

"We will formulate the project regarding the fruit fly



Myanmar's mangoes are primarily shipped to China, and also to India, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Japan. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MAN SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

on the mango. The project will be carried out in a multi-versatile method to protect fruit flies from mango plants. The survey will also be conducted in Singu, Kyaukse and Patheingyi mango farmlands the whole year. We will collect and verify as to how

many fruit flies fall on the mango tree. Then, we will consider how we can control and protect the mango plants from them," she explained.

This project is mainly focussed on the Seintalone mango. Then, the protection activities

will be carried out in Mandalay region, Shan State (South) and Bago region, where the mangoes are grown mostly. The awareness will also be provided to the local farmers in post-pandemic period.

"Mango is one of the export fruits in Myanmar. When we export the mango, the foreign traders reject them just because the fruit flies fall on the mangoes. So, it is essential to export good quality products. Mango will be given priority to get high-quality products," said Day Kay Thi Wai.

Of about 200 mango varieties originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamyar Ngamauk, Yinkwe, Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. The foreign market prefers Seintalone variety.

Myanmar's mangoes are primarily shipped to China, and also to India, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Japan. —Min Htet Aung (Man Sub-Printing House)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Ayeyawady dolphins well conserved under 1-year patrolling project

A one-year patrolling project on Ayeyawady dolphin conservation is being carried out by a combined team led by the Fisheries Department.

The project is aimed at reducing and finally eradicating the illegal electrofishing in Ayeyawady River. The project is joined by the Environmental and Endangered Aquatic Species Conservation section, Shwebo District Fisheries Department,

Madaya Township Fisheries Department, Singu Township Fisheries Department, Maritime Police Supervision Division No. 1 in Mandalay, the local people from Ayeyawady Dolphin Conservation area and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) of Myanmar.

The team completed the patrolling project for 15 days from 1 January to 15 January 2021. The project took 240 hours,

and the team carried out the patrolling activities usually in early mornings, mornings, afternoons, evenings and at night.

In the fifth time of 15-day part of the one-year patrolling project, the team seized four fishing boats, one battery and other related illegal fishing equipment. The team has also arrested five people involved in illegal fishing. Now, the five suspects have been charged under

Freshwater Fisheries Law in Mandalay Region.

The team has handed over the illegal equipment seized on 4 and 8 January to Madaya Township Fisheries Department and the accused on 9 January to Singu Township Fisheries Department and those captured on 4 January to Shwebo District Fisheries Department. —GNLNM

(Translated by Hay Mar)

# Pakokku factory offers K1,700 per viss of fresh yams from Mindat Tsp

SHWENAYON elephant foot yam factory in Pakokku Township is purchasing fresh elephant foot yams from Mindat Township of southern Chin State at over K1,700 per viss (a viss equals 1.6kg).

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the price of fresh yams reached a maximum of K2,300 per viss. This year, it fell to K1,700.

“It is only two years that Shwenayon factory was established in Pakokku Township. It was developed on 1.45 acres of land, with an estimated capital of K400 million. The factory purchases about 14,000 visses of yams from Mindat Township, Chin State at K1,725 per viss. The fresh yams are dried and processed into powder to be exported to Japan. China market prefers the slices. It offers K12,500 per viss. Japan buy the dried elephant foot yam powder at US\$9 per viss.

“The factory has stored around 500,000 viss of fresh yams for now. The elephant foot yam cultivation in Chin State will end in January-February. If China calls for more demand, we will keep buying the yams. Some growers sell the fresh elephant foot yams with some impurities, such as soil and root. Moreover, some bring them after rinsing with water. We have to process



Women workers are seen sorting the elephant foot yams at a factory in Pakokku. PHOTO: SALAI KO KEE (IPRD)

the yams with driers not to decay,” said U Nyi Nyi Lwin, the Shwenayon factory owner. I have exported elephant foot yams to Japan and China for the last 13 years, cooperating with the Chin State supplier. Earlier, the country has no yam drying factory. Therefore, we bought the sundried yams only. The yam drying factories were established in Myanmar five years ago. The dried foot yam processing includes rinsing, cutting, chopping, slicing and drying. The full capacity of yam production is 20 tonnes per day, he continued.

“Japan and China produce them by adding value to snacks, noodles and medicines and so on. It is low-fat food and has many health benefits. There is valued-added production of elephant foot yams in Myanmar as well. However, the yams are not that popular in the country as local people do not know the health benefits of elephant foot yams,” he elaborated.

A grower from Panpa village of Mindat Township stressed: “I usually sell them in Mandalay. This year, the yam factories from Mandalay city rarely buy them.

That is why I contacted with Shwenayon factory from Pakokku Township and sold them at K1,725 per viss. It incurred some loss compared to last year.

Yams produced in Chin State are getting a higher price than those from other regions. They have better quality and taste, said traders. Myanmar’s elephant foot yams are primarily purchased by China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Japan offers higher prices than China for yams.

There are currently about ten factories for drying elephant foot yams in Myanmar.

Elephant foot yam production has become a lucrative business. Therefore, value-adding technology is crucial for boosting elephant foot yam production and expanding its market, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association.

According to the association, Myanmar is mostly exporting raw yam, and value-added products made from yam will help the market grow in the long term. Myanmar is only producing semi-processed yam at present.

Elephant foot yams are the main product of Chin State, where they are cultivated on over 8,800 acres of land. The Kanpetlet, Mindat, and Matupi townships produce about 1 million visses (a viss equals 1.6 kg) of elephant foot yams. Elephant foot yams can be planted across the country. In addition to Chin State, yams are being grown in Kayin, Mon, and Shan states, and Taninthayi and Bago regions.

Myanmar exported 4,200 tonnes of elephant foot yams in the 2014-2015 financial year, 1,300 tonnes in the 2015-2016FY, and 20,000 tonnes in the 2016-2017FY, according to the data from the Ministry of Commerce.—Salai Ko Kee (IPRD) (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# YRIC endorses \$12.7 mln worth seven proposals in four months(Oct-Jan)

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC) has endorsed four foreign enterprises from China, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR in the manufacturing sector, with an estimated capital of US\$12.7 million, in the four months (Oct-Jan) of the current financial year 2020-2021.

Additionally, one domestic

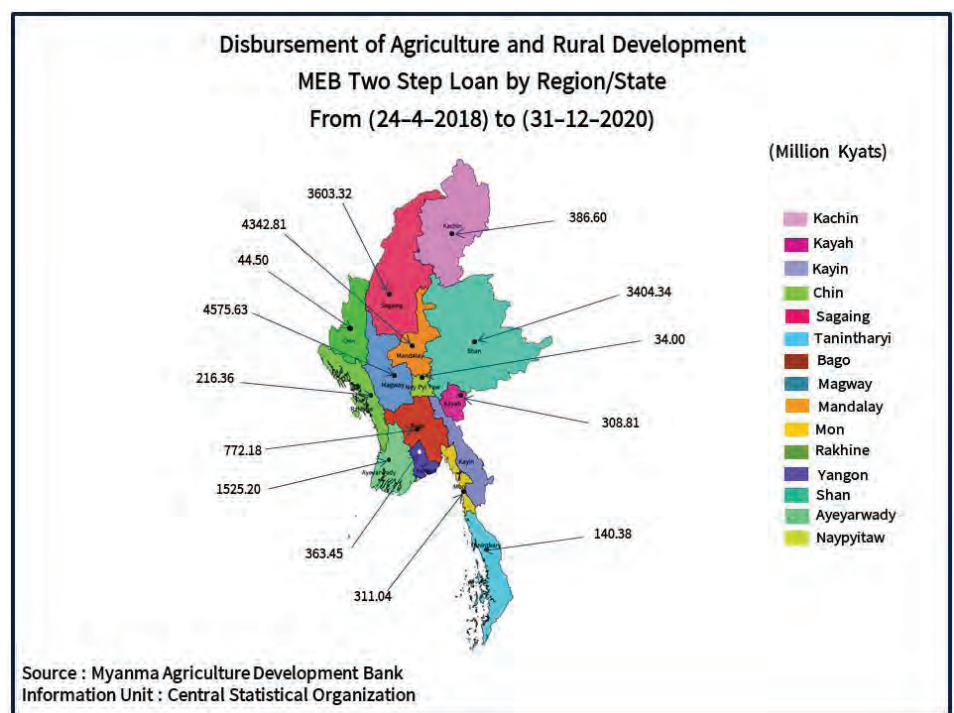
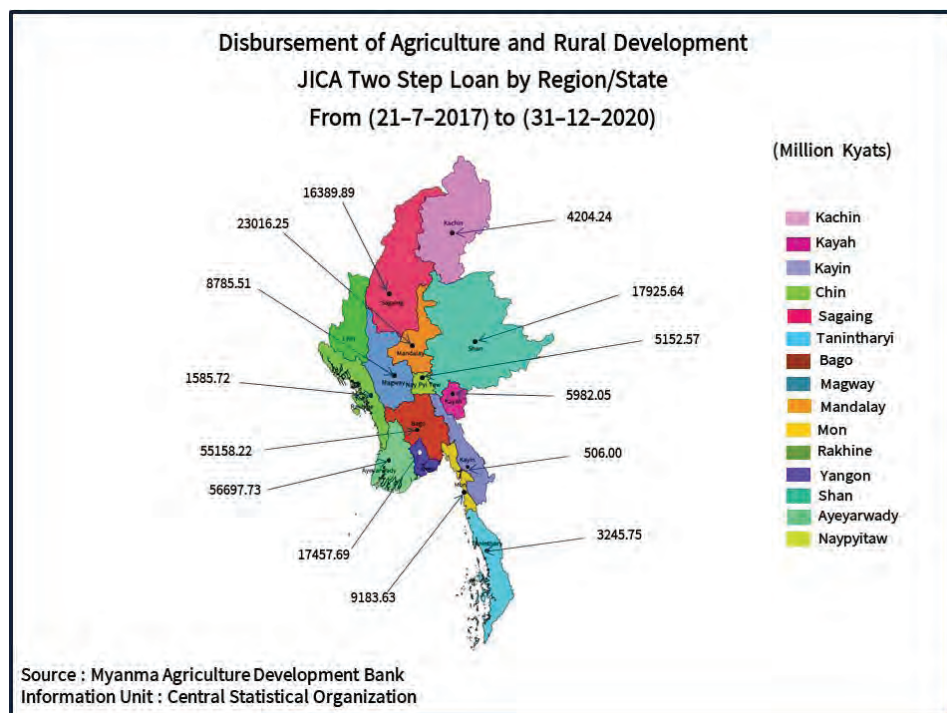
enterprise is also given the go-ahead, with the capital of K2.9 billion. Those enterprises are to create over 3,700 jobs. They will execute manufacturing of bags, footwear, underwear and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis and production of pulses and beans, and production and distribution

of fish sauce, YRIC stated.

Between 1 October and 30 September of the previous financial year 2019-2020, Yangon Region attracted FDI of \$308.768 million from 137 foreign enterprises. The manufacturing sector has attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, with enterprises engag-

ing in pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and garments on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis. To date, foreign investments from China, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, China (Taipei), Malaysia, the British Virgin Islands, and Seychelles arrive in the region.

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



Source : Myanma Agriculture Development Bank Information Unit : Central Statistical Organization

Source : Myanma Agriculture Development Bank Information Unit : Central Statistical Organization

# Disaster resilience essential to achieving sustainable development

**T**HE COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the need to integrate the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) the Union Government is implementing as part of efforts to build a democratic federal Union.

The pandemic has alerted us to make our sustainable development targets more attainable.

In this regard, disaster risk reduction will be playing a crucial role in delivering sustainable development goals.

I encourage local authorities and investors to pursue risk-informed development and invest in resilience.

As the Union Government continues to provide a better situation, to develop policy and legal frameworks for investments, the projects need to be in line with the rules and regulations of government policies.

When it comes to planning projects, the budget should also take into consideration the benefits of the local people.

Besides, we need to fully understand the importance of disaster-proofing critical infrastructure and it is essential to avoid the disruption to important public services during disasters including extreme weather events.

Our commitment is clear and straightforward. We are confident that we will succeed in integrated disaster risks management and disaster

resilience in the post-COVID-19 era through cooperation and coordination with all partners.

Now, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has laid down policies focusing on building a human society which are resilient to disasters.

Meanwhile, the National Disaster Management Committee has carried out disaster reduction tasks after drawing a plan, and out of 32 priorities of the plan, 28 have been implemented.

For economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 period, the Union Government has been implementing the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan and is drawing the Myanmar Economic Resilience and Reform Plan-MERRP.

As COVID-19 batters the world and its economy, and our economy as well, it's time to rethink sustainable pathways for our country.

As the Union Government is cooperating with international and local non-governmental organizations with transparency, we believe that we can overcome the challenges in the post-COVID era.

We would like to call on them to provide important inputs for future policy roadmaps to facilitate sustainable development by enhancing disaster resilience.

... we need to fully understand the importance of disaster-proofing critical infrastructure and it is essential to avoid the disruption to important public services during disasters including extreme weather events.

## MATERNAL AND CHILD DIETS AT THE HEART OF IMPROVING NUTRITION

### Asia and the Pacific regional overview of food security and nutrition 2020

*The economic impact of COVID-19 on the world's most populous region is threatening to further undermine efforts to improve diets and nutrition of nearly two billion people in Asia and the Pacific who were already unable to afford healthy diets prior to the pandemic, says a new report published today by four specialized agencies of the United Nations.*

**T**HE report found that 1.9 billion people were unable to afford a healthy diet, even before the COVID-19 outbreak and the damage it has since caused to economies and individual livelihoods.

Due to higher prices for fruits, vegetables and dairy products, it has become nearly impossible for poor people in Asia and the Pacific to achieve healthy diets, the affordability of which is critical to ensure food security and nutrition for all - and for mothers and children in particular.

Food prices and available incomes govern household decisions on food and dietary intake. But the outbreak of COVID-19 and a lack of decent work opportunities in many parts of the region, alongside significant uncertainty of food systems and markets, has led to a worsening of inequality, as poorer families with dwindling incomes further alter their diets to choose cheaper, less nutritious foods.

#### Making nutritious foods affordable and accessible

More than 350 million people in the Asia and the Pacific were undernourished in 2019, or roughly half of the global total. Across the region, an estimated 74.5 million children under 5 years of age were stunted (too short for their age) and 31.5 mil-



Food prices and available incomes govern household decisions on food and dietary intake. PHOTO: UNICEF

lion suffered from wasting (too thin for height). The majority of these children live in Southern Asia with nearly 56 million stunted and more than 25 million wasted. At the same time, overweight and obesity has increased rapidly, especially in South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific, with an estimated 14.5 million children under 5, being overweight or obese.

Poor diets and inadequate nutritional intake is an ongoing problem. The cost of a healthy diet

is significantly higher than that of a diet that provides sufficient calories but lacks in nutritional value, showing significant gaps in the food system to deliver nutritious options to all at an affordable price. These costs are even greater for women and children, given their added nutritional needs.

#### Improving maternal and child diets requires strengthening vital systems

Nutrition is vitally important

throughout a person's life. The impact of a poor diet is most severe in the first 1000 days, from pregnancy to when a child reaches the age of 2. Young children, especially when they start eating their "first foods" at 6 months, have high nutritional requirements to grow well and every bite counts.

Mainstreaming nutrition-focused behaviour change campaigns throughout these systems should lead to greater knowledge uptake and sustainability

of behaviours helping people to achieve healthy diets.

Education on what constitutes a healthy diet and how to create hygienic environments at home, in schools and in the community, together with investment in girl's education and infrastructure that underlies good water, sanitation and hygiene practices, are critical.

Therefore, providing a nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable diet for all requires coordinating with partners in the Food, Water and Sanitation, Health, Social Protection and Education systems, to collectively create an enabling environment.

Greater attention is also needed to operationalize national policies and plans to improve the delivery of health services for maternal and child diets and good nutrition outcomes. Services to improve the diets of mothers and young children should be prioritized as part of the essential package of health services needed to address undernutrition, overweight and obesity and to achieve universal health coverage.

#### Bringing everyone to the table

Food systems play a critical role in achieving food and nutrition security for all. A sustainable and nutrition-sensitive food

system is essential to produce diverse and nutritious foods for healthy diets. Improved efficiency and productivity of value chains can reduce the costs of essential foods to make them more affordable.

These actions are needed now more than ever because the face of malnutrition is changing in Asia and the Pacific, with highly processed and inexpensive foods readily available throughout the region. These foods are often packed with sugar and unhealthy fats and lack the vitamins and minerals required for growth and development. Consumption of these foods increases the risk of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The report, 'Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2020: Maternal and Child Diets at the Heart of Improving Nutrition' launched on 20 January in Bangkok, is jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

SOURCE: UN News

## Clarification regarding use of the term "Doctor"

By Lokethar

**W**E often read in the newspapers about persons with the prefix "Dr" to his/her name appointed as members of a committee, or appointed to some civil service posts, or is a Hluttaw member and so on. It seems that for the benefit of the general public some clarification is needed regarding the use of the term "Doctor" as a prefix to a person's name.

According to Wikipedia, "a doctorate (from Latin docere, "to teach") or doctor's degree (from Latin doctor, "teacher"), is an academic degree award-

ed by universities, derived from the ancient formalism licentia docendi ("licence to teach"). In most countries, it is a research degree that qualifies the holder to teach at university level in the degree's field, or to work in a specific profession." There may be more detail interpretations of "Doctorate" degrees awarded by the different Universities in different countries. Generally, use of the term "Doctor" as a prefix to a person's name indicates that he/she has a "Doctorate" degree in a particular field of study or in a specific profession.

The top Myanmar Government Universities have "Doctor-

ate" programmes in the various fields and areas of specialization. The most common are the Ph.D degrees awarded by these universities. The usual requirement for entry to a Doctorate Programme is generally a Bachelor and a Master degree in the field. There may be other requirements depending on the course of study/research. The total period of earning a "Doctorate" degree including the Bachelor degree would be around six to eight years or so depending on the field of study and the specialization.

A "Doctorate" is a coveted degree which is a formal recognition of in-depth knowledge

and expertise in any particular field/area of specialization. In the National Qualifications Frameworks of Countries, "Doctorate" is usually the highest academic Qualification awarded by the recognised Universities. Doctorate degrees are generally awarded in recognition of research which furthers the threshold of knowledge and expertise in a specific field. Recognised Professional Institutions/Associations established by law, may also award professional qualifications at the highest level which may be "equivalent" to "Doctorates" awarded by Universities. There are of course the Post-Doctorate Programmes as

well in many of the "top" universities in very specialized areas of study and expertise.

In Myanmar, the term "Doctor" (Dr) as a prefix to a name is taken to mean, by most layperson as being a person of the medical profession. As we inherited the Medical Education system from the British, it's the practice to use the term Dr as a prefix for those who pass from the Medical Institutes and are registered as Medical practitioners. The same with Dentistry or Veterinary Surgeons. In Myanmar culture particularly, "Doctors" are much respected members of society to address them as "Doctor" is quite natu-

ral. But technically it may cause some confusion if every person to whose name "Doctor" is prefixed is taken to be a practitioner of medicine. Hence it may not be out of turn to suggest that persons who have Ph.D or D.Sc or any other "Doctorate", to add the degree at the end of their names, like for instance So & So, Ph.D (Economics), or Professor So and So, Ph.D (history) or Dr So & So Dr Sc (Cardiology) and so on for better understanding by the general public of the person's field of knowledge and expertise.

With charity to all and malice to none.

### Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 20 January, 2021)

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 21 January, 2021:** Rain will be fair widespread in Kachin State and isolated in Upper Sagaing, Ayeyawady Regions and Northern Shan, Chin States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of decrease of night temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Kachin State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 January, 2021:** A few cloud.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 January, 2021:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 January, 2021:** A few cloud.

**Now Available**

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- The Global New Light of Myanmar အမှတ် ၁၇၃၊ ငါးထောင်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း (ကင်းဘဲလမ်း)၊ ဗဟိုရုံး၊ ရန်ကင်းမြို့ ဖုန်း - ၀၁ ၈၆၀ ၄၅၂၂ / ၀၉ ၉၇၄ ၄၂၄ ၁၁၄ ။

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## JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURATION

## Biden calls for unity on 'day of history and hope'

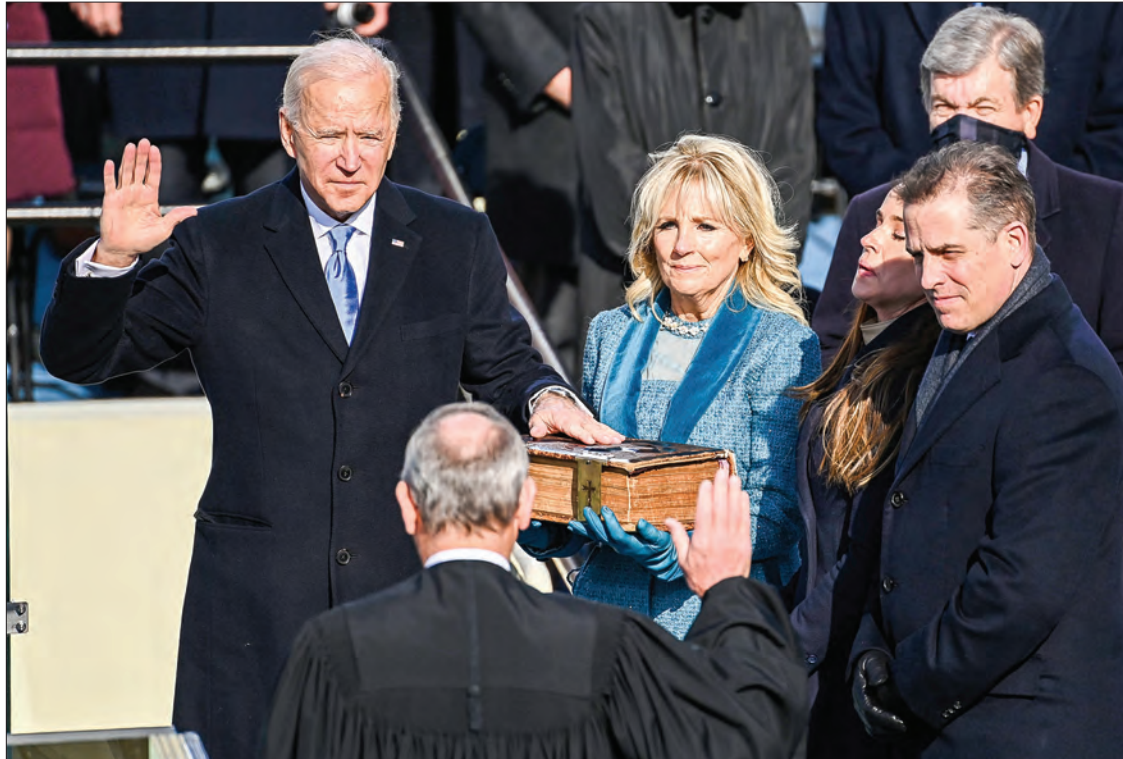
US President Joe Biden called for "unity" and pledged to be a president for "all Americans" at his inauguration in Washington Wednesday, but warned of the challenges ahead as he takes on multiple crises.

Speaking at the US Capitol just two weeks after it was stormed by an armed mob supporting his predecessor Donald Trump, Biden declared: "This is America's day, this is democracy's day. A day of history and hope."

But as the US confronts the deadly coronavirus and deep political divisions, he warned that to overcome its challenges will require "so much more than words, it will require the most elusive of all things in a democracy, unity."

"Today on this January day, my whole soul is in this: bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation, and I ask every American to join me in this cause," the 46th US president said.

"This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge and unity is the path forward. And we must meet this moment as the United



Joe Biden (L), flanked by incoming US First Lady Jill Biden (2nd R) is sworn in as the 46th US President by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts on January 20, 2021, at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. PHOTO: AFP

States of America."

In the 21-minute speech Biden sketched out the challenges ahead.

"We need all our strength to... persevere through this dark winter. We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus," he said, calling

on Americans to "finally face this pandemic as one nation".

Biden spoke on the steps of the Capitol, which two weeks ago saw scenes of violence unprecedented in modern history as rioters egged on by Trump stormed the building, leaving five people dead and shaking US

democracy to its core.

"Here we stand just days after a riotous mob thought they could... drive us from this sacred ground," he said.

"It did not happen, it will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever, not ever."

SOURCE: AFP

## TRIAL

## UK newspaper group calls for full trial in Meghan Markle case

LAWYERS for a British newspaper group that Meghan Markle is suing for publishing a private letter to her estranged father called on Wednesday for a full trial to "shed light" on the case.

The Duchess of Sussex launched legal action against Associated Newspapers, which publishes the Mail on Sunday and MailOnline website, for printing extracts of the letter to Thomas Markle.

The letter was written in August 2018, a few months after Meghan Markle married Prince Harry, and asked her father to stop talking to tabloids and making false claims about her in interviews.

Her legal team are seeking damages and argue there is no need for a full trial, as it was a clear breach of her privacy and copyright.

Should the judge agree, it would avoid a potential showdown between father and daughter at the High Court in London.

SOURCE: AFP

## TRUMP BIDS FAREWELL TO WASHINGTON

## Trump leaves the white house, skipping biden inauguration



US President Donald Trump boards Marine One as he departs the White House in Washington, DC, on 20 January 2021 PHOTO: MANDEL NGAN/AFP

PRESIDENT Donald Trump left the White House for the last time on Wednesday, skipping the inauguration of successor Joe Biden as the 46th US president in an extraordinary break with tradition.

Drawing a curtain on the most tumultuous administration of modern times, Trump is being ousted by a polar opposite with the Democrat Biden intent on charting a new course to tackle COVID-19 and unite a splintered

nation.

A small crowd waved goodbye as Trump, 74, and First Lady Melania Trump walked a short red carpet and boarded the Marine One helicopter shortly after 8:15 am (1315 GMT), for the short flight to the air base where they will continue to Florida on board Air Force One.

"I just want to say goodbye," Trump told the gathering, calling his time in office "the honour of a lifetime".

Trump will be at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida when Biden, a 78-year-old former vice president, is sworn in at noon on the US Capitol's western front.

Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will take the oath of office at the very spot where pro-Trump rioters clashed with police two weeks ago before storming Congress in a deadly insurrection.

While a transition of power will occur much as it has for more than two centuries, this inauguration is unlike any other.

Official Washington has taken on the dystopian look of an armed camp, protected by some 25,000 National Guard troops tasked with preventing any repeat of this month's attack.

And with the pandemic raging, the general public is essentially barred from attending the swearing-in, leading to the unprecedented sight of an empty National Mall on Inauguration Day. With the death toll soaring past 400,000, Biden on Tuesday led a powerful tribute to victims

of COVID-19 as he arrived in Washington.

"It's hard sometimes to remember, but that's how we heal. It's important to do that as a nation," Biden said in sombre remarks in front of the Lincoln Memorial, once more stressing the need to unite the country after Trump's chaos.

## TRUMP SNUB

On the Mall's grassy expanse, some 200,000 flags have been planted to represent the absent crowds at the inauguration.

Trump broke days of silence Tuesday with a pre-recorded farewell video address in which - for the first time - he asked Americans to "pray" for the success of the incoming administration.

But Trump has yet to personally congratulate Biden, who first ran for president in 1987, on his win, and the 11th-hour message followed months spent persuading his Republican followers that Democrat cheated his way to election victory.

SOURCE: AFP

## CELEBRATING HARRIS

## India villagers celebrate Kamala Harris ahead of US inauguration

VILLAGERS from Kamala Harris's ancestral home in southern India made offerings of fruit, lit firecrackers and prepared hundreds of snacks in celebration of her swearing-in Wednesday as US vice president.

Thulasendrapuram, where Harris's grandfather was born, has been in party mode since November when Joe Biden and Harris won the American presidential election.

Her inauguration thousands of miles away in Washington has sparked a day of "Harris-mania" in the Tamil Nadu village of 400 people, as children waved pictures of their hero in streets filled with firework smoke. Jubilant locals laid out hundreds of Chakkali -- a popular south Indian spiral snack -- shaping some to spell out "Kamala Harris", while bowls of sweets were passed around. -- SOURCE: AFP

VIRUS RESEARCH

## Oxford given £100m for antibiotic resistance research

BRITAIN'S Oxford University has received a donation of £100 million (112 million euros, \$136 million) to research growing resistance to antibiotics, the university announced on Tuesday.

The sum, from British chemicals multinational Ineos, is one of the largest donations given to Oxford University in its long history.

The funding will be used to launch a new institute to combat the growing phenomenon of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), caused by the increasing exposure of animals and humans to the medicines which treat diseases caused by bacteria.

Increasing antibiotic resistance already causes 1.5

million excess deaths each year, the University of Oxford has said.

By 2050, up to 10 million deaths each year could be caused because antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs are no longer effective against common diseases.

Oxford's vice-chancellor Professor Louise Richardson said the coronavirus pandemic had shown the urgent need to deal with the "cataclysmic" threat posed to public health by antibiotic resistance.

"We certainly knew that there was a high potential for another pandemic, we were reminded of that many times, and yet we were caught unprepared," she said.



Increasing antibiotic resistance already causes 1.5 million excess deaths each year, the University of Oxford has said. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

"We know that human antibiotics are, with every passing year, becoming fewer and fewer because of the growth of resistance so it's absolutely imperative that we act, and the

impact of being unprepared for the pandemic I think reinforces the importance of acting before it's too late."

SOURCE: AFP

LEBANON

## Doctors urge lockdown extension



People queue for PCR tests in the intensive care unit of the Rafic Hariri University Hospital in the Lebanese capital Beirut, on January 5, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

THE head of Lebanon's main coronavirus hospital Tuesday backed the extension of a total lockdown to curb soaring infection figures and save a fragile healthcare system from collapse. "Easing the lockdown cannot occur if the virus is spreading unchecked in the community," Firas Abiad said on social media.

"The infection is not under control."

The country of more than six million has recorded 255,956 coronavirus cases and 1,959 deaths since its outbreak started

in February.

It entered a strict 11-day lockdown last Thursday after recording a 70% uptick in infections in one of the steepest increases in transmission worldwide.

The lockdown, which includes a round-the-clock curfew, is expected to last until January 25 but the health ministry on Monday announced a new high of 53 coronavirus deaths in a day.

This came after Lebanon hit a new daily record of more than 6,000 new infections on Friday.

SOURCE: AFP

CYPRUS

## Key tourism industry plunges 84% amid virus

CYPRUS went from record tourist arrivals in 2019 to one of its worst ever years, with visitor numbers plunging 84 per cent amid Covid-19 restrictions, official data showed Monday.

The coronavirus pandemic has decimated the island's crucial industry, with tourist arrivals slumping from 3.97 million in 2019 to 631,609 in 2020, the government's Cyprus Statistical Service said.

Tourism usually contributes around 15 per cent to GDP, generating 2.68 billion euros in 2019.

But tourist arrivals nosedived after Cyprus imposed lockdown measures to limit the spread of Covid-19.

There were also travel re-

strictions imposed on Cyprus' main tourist markets -- Britain, Russia and Israel -- while quarantine measures across Europe also hampered travellers.

The pandemic ended four successive record years of tourist arrivals, that helped Cyprus emerge from a financial crisis in 2013.

In December, tourist arrivals were only 9,682, an annual reduction of 91 per cent.

While the government acted swiftly to contain the pandemic when cases were first recorded in March, Cyprus has since struggled to contain the outbreak.

A ban on commercial flights in March was gradually lifted in early June.



Beach tourism is one of the most popular types of tourism activities in Cyprus. The landscape of seabeach with sunshades and deck chairs along the seashore in Cyprus. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

But the island is now its second lockdown, with most European Union arrivals denied entry because of their Covid-19 risk status.

The Cyprus Covid-19 case tally is now at 29,130 cases and 175 deaths.

SOURCE: AFP

NEWS  
IN BRIEF

NOT QUITE MAGIC CURE

### Sri Lanka holy man's 'miracle' coronavirus potion turns sour

A self-styled Sri Lankan holy man's supposed miracle potion to prevent Covid-19 turned sour Tuesday after a minister who publicly drank it was hospitalized with the virus.

Thousands defied public gathering restrictions to swamp a village in central Sri Lanka last month to get the syrup made by Dhammika Bandara. Women and Child Development Minister Piyal Nishantha de Silva was among several politicians who consumed the concoction, but parliamentary officials said he had since tested positive for coronavirus and taken to a treatment centre.

Family members of another politician, who hailed from Bandara's village, had also been infected despite taking the syrup.

SOURCE: AFP

CON-VINCE STUDY

### Around 7% of Luxembourg residents have antibodies

TESTS carried out among the population show that an estimated 7% of residents have antibodies against the coronavirus.

In July, the Con-Vince study estimated that about 3% of the population had developed antibodies against the coronavirus. This was after the first wave but before the second - much more substantial - wave in autumn.

In an answer to a parliamentary question from MPs Martine Hansen and Claude Wiseler from the Christian Social People's Party (CSV), Minister of Health Paulette Lenert unveiled the latest results of this antibody analysis.

Between 16 November and 10 January, the authorities carried out 3,961 antibody tests, 277 of which detected the presence of antibodies. This represents just over 6.99% of those tested.

SOURCE: AFP

# Japan convenience store sales fall for 1<sup>st</sup> time

SALES at Japanese convenience stores of seven major operators fell in 2020 for the first time on a year-on-year basis due to fewer customers in office and tourist areas amid the coronavirus pandemic, an industry body said Wednesday. Their same-store sales fell 4.5 per cent from 2019 to 10.66 trillion yen (\$103 billion), according to the Japan Franchise Association, which began making such data available in 2005. Total sales including those at newly opened stores in 2020 fell 4.7 per cent to 10.16 trillion yen, logging the first decline in three years, according to the association. The number of convenience stores totaled 55,924 at the end of 2020, increasing for the first time in two years, it said. SOURCE: KYODO

## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Individual Consultant

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation  
Department of Rural Development (DRD)

Myanmar: National Electrification Project (NEP) (IDA Project No. 152936)  
International Financial Management Advisor Ref. C2-TA 44

- This Request for Expressions of Interest follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business online on November 3, 2015.
- The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) and applied part of the proceeds of this financing to payments under the contract for a short term **International Financial Management Advisor** for National Electrification Project (NEP) under **ref. no C2-TA44**
- The National Electrification Project includes an off-grid electrification component with \$80 million in IDA credits. IDA support in off-grid areas will target communities located far beyond the existing national grid and, thus, unlikely to receive grid-based access in the next 10 or more years. More importantly, the IDA support will be directed to the peripheral States/ Regions with social and ethnic cohesion and peace building. Off-grid electrification will be technology neutral, depending on technology assessment for target communities, including solar photovoltaic (PV), mini-hydropower, wind, diesel, and hybrid (eg. diesel/solar). Deployment of household solar PV systems in target communities includes households, public institutions (schools, health clinics and other community building) as well as public street light. Moreover, funds are provided for technical assistance and management of the off-grid component. The budget for technical assistance is \$10 million from IDA. This component will support: (a) strengthening of institutional capacity to implement the National Electrification Plan, including capacity building and training of the DRD Project Management Office (PMO), capacity building at the Union, State/Region, district, township and village levels and for the private sector; (b) improving policy and regulatory framework related to electrification; (c) securing technical advice and consulting services on standards, technology assessment and technical design, economic and financial analysis, environmental and social impact management, procurement and financial management; and (d) strengthening project management. In addition, the Project attracts additional financing from various multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, including but not limited to, € 30 million soft-loan from Italian government through Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and \$ 3.45 million grant for Result Based Financing from the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) of the World Bank Group. This grant is explicitly designed to bridge public and private service provision, the Project complements IFC activities as part of the overall, integrated World Bank Group's Joint Implementation Plan. The objective of the Project is to help increase access to electricity in Myanmar. The Project is expected to benefit around 6 million people with new electricity connections by 2021. The Advisor will assist the Project in setting up the appropriate and reliable financial management system, including but not limited to (i) review the existing financial management system and take appropriate actions for use of fund by the project including all activities financed by Result based Financing (IFC), communities and Italian loan and all other donors financed activities under this project; (ii) to ensure proper internal controls are put in place to achieve accountability with appropriate documentation for eligible expenses; (iii) to assist in preparing Annual Work Plan and Budget and quarterly projections of funds; (iv) to conduct training to finance staff of DRD on the procedures for budgeting, disbursement, payment request, financial reporting and use of accounting software; (v) to assist in preparation of project progress report to be submitted to the World Bank. The NEP ends in September 2021 and DRD expects to meet or exceed off-grid electrification targets in the first phase of the National Electrification Plan. To meet the universal access to electricity goal by 2030 requires continuation of the electrification program for off-grid electrification under responsibility of the Department of Rural Development (DRD) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. The Government is, therefore, seeking the World Bank support towards future phases of the NEP. Thus, the World Bank is preparing to support and finance the National Energy Access Program (NEP 2), initiating end of year 2020.
- The Department of Rural Development now invites eligible short term individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested individual consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the Services as per criteria below ( CV with academic background, experience in similar assignment, knowledge of local conditions (if any) etc. including expected remuneration on a working day basis together with evidence of latest payroll slip or contract). Consultants may be invited for interviewing through video conference, if necessary. The assignment will be for 100 working days during the six (6) months period starting from early April 2021 until September 30, 2021. The number of working days can be extended, if more requirement. The Consultant will be working from his/her home/residence. The evaluation criteria are:
  - Must have an IFAC recognized accounting professional qualification;
  - At least 10 years of professional experience in accounting and/or others relevant field;
  - Previous experience in similar assignments within the region or other region;
  - Experience in Financial Management Capacity Development and training;
  - Experience working with the World Bank financed projects or other major donors and having experience in preparing financial management report/documents for preparation of the World Bank's funded project is required;
  - Good PC/ accounting systems literacy, including strong Excel skill and using computerized accounting software.
- A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated January 2011 (revised July 2014) ("Consultant Guidelines"). The attention of interested consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the Consultant Guidelines, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Interested individual consultants may obtain the Terms of Reference at the address given below from 09.30 to 16.00 hours or direct request through e-mail address – dr.soesoehn@gmail.com, drdneprocurement@gmail.com. DRD will provide prompt responses to all interested individual consultants, should there be any questions.
- Expressions of interest must be delivered by registered mail or by e-mail to the address below no later than, 5 February, 2021.

### Attention

**Dr. Soe Soe Ohn, Project Manager**  
National Electrification Project (NEP)  
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation  
Office No. 36, Pandita Road, Oattara Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.  
Tel/FAX : +95 0673 418636, E-mail dr.soesoehn@gmail.com, ksaung@gmail.com, drdneprocurement@gmail.com

## Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: 21 January 2021

Loan Agreement N°: MY-P17

IFB N°: 010/DRD/Water Supply/Lot A2-2  
(Construction)

- The Government of Myanmar has received a loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) towards the cost of the Regional Development Project for Poverty Reduction Phase II (Water Supply Sector). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for Construction of Water Supply Systems for Thanbyuzayat Town, which is in the Mon State of Myanmar.
- Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Bidders registered in Myanmar, as defined in the Loan Agreement.
- The Department of Rural Development (DRD) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the construction and completion of the following works in and near Thanbyuzayat Town in two Lots.

### LOT 1 – Raw Water and Treatment Systems

- Intake pontoon at Win Pha Non reservoir
- Pumps installation on pontoon, 3 Nos. (233.5cum/h, 60m head.)
- Raw water pipeline from pontoon to WTP, 400mm dia. GI, 211m long
- Water treatment works, capacity 11,094m<sup>3</sup>/d, of roughing and slow sand filters and associated facilities
- 2,841m<sup>3</sup> reinforced concrete treated water tank
- Electricity supply works to WTP and intake (2.57km of 11kV overhead line)

### LOT 2 – Treated Water Transmission and Distribution Systems

- Treated Water Transmission Pipeline from WTP to Thanbyuzayat Town, 500mm dia. HDPE, 14,336m long and 450mm dia. HDPE, 845m long
- Pipe bridges for transmission pipeline (5 nos.)
- Distribution network in Town, 40 to 300mm dia. uPVC pipes, 106km long
- 4995 no. 40 mm dia. metered house connections

- Bidders may bid either for Lot 1 or lot 2 or both lots together.
- The work requires suitable experience in the construction of different pipelines, reinforced concrete tanks and the installation of electrical and mechanical equipment.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of DRD, Near Office No. 36, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Facsimile: 067-418655, 067-418633  
Email: drdvsp.oda@gmail.com and pl.hq@drdmyanmar.net
- A complete set of Bidding Documents for both Lots may be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address above.
- Bids must be delivered to the address above on or before 10.00 am on 26 February 2021 and a pre-bid meeting will take place on 29 January 2021 at local time 10:00am through online system.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 10.00 am on 26 February 2021 at the office of DRD.  
U Thein Lwin  
Deputy Director General  
Department of Rural Development  
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation  
Post Code: 15011  
Facsimile: +95 (67)3418604

## Alibaba's Jack Ma appears in public



Jack Ma had virtually disappeared from the public eye since early November, when he was hauled in front of regulators.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

JACK Ma, the billionaire founder of Chinese internet behemoth Alibaba, made his first public appearance in over two months in an online video Wednesday, ending weeks of speculation about his whereabouts.

Ma – one of China's richest people with a fortune estimated at around \$58 billion -- disappeared from the public eye in early November, when he was hauled in front of regulators for an October speech critical of China's outdated financial system. Shortly afterwards, the record-breaking \$37 billion IPO of his financial group Ant was spiked at the last minute by Chinese regulators in a shock move which some saw as retaliation for Ma's outspokenness. But a video clip of Ma giving a congratulatory speech to rural teachers as part of an annual awards ceremony organized by his charity was published on social media by Chinese financial news outlets Wednesday morning. In the speech, Ma praised China's poverty alleviation efforts, a central target of the Communist leadership, and vowed to dedicate more efforts towards helping rural teachers. "My colleagues and I... are even more determined to devote ourselves to education and public welfare," he said, according to a transcript of his speech published by Chinese news site Tianmu News.

SOURCE: AFP

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
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NEW STIMULUS PROPOSALS

# Global markets firmer on Biden inauguration

WORLD stock markets mostly rose Wednesday as investors awaited the inauguration of Joe Biden and took heart from comments by his Treasury nominee Janet Yellen on pushing through the new president's coronavirus stimulus package.

In early afternoon deals, Frankfurt rose 0.5 per cent and Paris 0.3 per cent while London was flat as the pound hit a new 2.5-year peak at \$1.3728.

Asia enjoyed a broadly positive session, after bumper gains on Wall Street following a long weekend break.

The euro meanwhile sagged against the dollar as dealers eyed Italy's political turmoil on the eve of an interest rate decision from the European Central Bank.

Later on Wednesday, Biden will be sworn in as the 46th US president, drawing a curtain on the most tumultuous administration of modern times and charting a new course to tackle Covid-19 and



President-elect Joe Biden's nomination of Janet Yellen to head the Treasury Department offers the clearest look yet at how his administration aims to drive an economic recovery. PHOTO: AFP

unite a splintered nation. Outgoing President Donald Trump, whose efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and console its victims have been widely criticised, will snub the ceremony.

### 'Trump, Brexit in rear view mirror'

"The pomp and ceremony of inauguration day has come with a similarly chipper outlook," said IG analyst Joshua Mahony.

"European markets... (are) looking forward with

optimism, with Joe Biden's inauguration marking the end of a four-year period that married up both Brexit and global trade uncertainty.

"With Trump and Brexit negotiations in the rear-view mirror, markets are faced with a four-year stint of greater stability and less uncertainty."

Investors set aside concerns over the Covid-19 crisis -- although the disease continues to cast a shadow as governments keep lockdowns in place.

While all eyes are on Biden's inauguration, Yellen took centre stage Tuesday as she was grilled by senators for her Treasury secretary confirmation hearing.

She did not disappoint. In comments flagged beforehand, Yellen said that in order to give the world's top economy the best chance for recovery, lawmakers must pass the new administration's \$1.9 trillion spending package.

### Yellen's China warning

Yellen meanwhile reasserted the president-elect's intention to keep the pressure on China.

She told lawmakers on Tuesday that China was "our most important strategic competitor" and accused it of "undercutting American companies" by offering illegal subsidies, dumping products at below-market prices, stealing intellectual property and erecting barriers to US exports.

SOURCE: AFP

THE JAPAN TOURISM AGENCY

## Foreign visitors to Japan in 2020 plunge 87.1%, biggest drop on record

FOREIGN visitors to Japan in 2020 plunged 87.1 per cent from a year earlier, the biggest drop since 1964 when comparable data became available, the Japan Tourism Agency said Wednesday, as the coronavirus pandemic threw cold water on the country's inbound tourism boom.

The number of foreigners visiting the country last year plummeted to 4.12 million, the agency said, in a devastating blow to the government's ambition to welcome 40

million foreign visitors in 2020 when the country was originally scheduled to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Summer Games were postponed for a year due to the pandemic.

In May, the number of visitors to the country dropped 99.9 per cent from a year earlier to 1,663 as the government implemented strict border controls in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus.

Monthly arrivals have crept up since the summer with the government par-

tially easing entry restrictions. In December, the number of foreign visitors stood at 58,700, still down 97.7 per cent from a year earlier for the 15<sup>th</sup> month of decline, the data showed.

By country and region, the largest number of people traveled to Japan from China at 1,069,200, a decline of 88.9 per cent from a year earlier, followed by 694,500 Taiwanese travelers, down 85.8 per cent, and 487,900 South Koreans, down 91.3 per cent.

SOURCE: KYODO

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (702N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (702N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V LE HE V.154

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V LE HE VOY. NO. (154)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-1-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-5** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S COSCO SHIPPING SPECIALIZED CARRIERS CO LTD**

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

**No.(2) Mining Enterprise**

**Invitation for Open Tender**

1. No. (2) Mining Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation invites for tenders to sale for the following materials.

Sr.	Materials Classifies	Weight (M/T)	(F.O.B)	Tender Closing Date/Time
1.	Electro Refined Tin (ERT)	50.049	Thanlyin	18.2.2021 (12:00)pm
2.	Pyro Refined Tin (PRT)	50.009		
3.	Tin Concentrate	50.249	Dawei	
4.	Tin Concentrate	56.112	Myeik	
5.	Tin, Wolfram & Scheelite mixed (≥55%)	82.467	Loikaw	
6.	Tin, Wolfram & Scheelite mixed (≥55%)	72.649	Loikaw	
7.	Tin & Wolfram Scheelite mixed (Low Grade)	2.889	Loikaw	

2. No.(2) Mining Enterprise could provide necessary documents to interest companies and contact to No.(2) Mining Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw, Ph:+95-(0)67- 3409391, E-mail; metwo@e-monrec.gov.mm, within office hours.

Tender Committee  
No.(2) Mining Enterprise

### Transferring Distributor Registered Fungicide

Distributor of the fungicide, Acrobat MZ (Dimethomorph 9% + Mancozeb 60% w/w WP) with its registration number P2017-514 is transferring from **JJ-PUN Trading Limited**, The Campus, 1st Floor, Wing-A, I Office Park, Rain Tree Drive, Pun Hlaing Estate, Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon, Myanmar to **Y Agro Solution Company Limited**, No.19, Nant Thar Kone Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayintnaung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon within 14 days.

BASF Myanmar Limited  
Phone – 01 544041

### Transferring Distributor Registered Fungicide

Distributor of the fungicide, Polyram DF (Metiram 70% w/w DF) with its registration number F2015-151 is transferring from **Golden Lion High Tech Agricultural Resources Co.,Ltd.**, No.242, Kanaung Minthar Gyi Road, Industrial Zone (2), Hlaing Tharyar Township, Yangon, Myanmar to **Y Agro Solution Company Limited**, No.19, Lan Thit Road, Nant Thar Kone Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayintnaung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon within 14 days.

BASF Myanmar Limited  
Phone – 01 544041

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May,  
09251022355,09974424848

## CONGRATULATIONS FROM WORLD LEADERS

## World leaders congratulate US President Biden

World leaders said they were looking forward to working with US Joe Biden, as the Democrat was sworn in as president after four turbulent years under Donald Trump.

**European Union**

Charles Michel, president of the European Council, tweeted congratulations to both Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, adding: "It's time to bring back conviction & common sense and rejuvenate our EU-US relationship." European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said: "Europe is ready for a fresh start."

**Iran**

President Hassan Rouhani hailed the departure of "tyrant" Trump, Tehran having repeatedly called on Washington to lift sanctions imposed over its nuclear drive. "We expect (the Biden administration) to return to law and to commitments, and try in the next four years, if they can, to remove the stains of the past four years," said Rouhani.

Biden's administration wants the United States back in the landmark Iran nuclear accord, from which Trump withdrew, provided Tehran returns to strict compliance.

**Israel**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Biden to "strengthen



US President Joe Biden speaks during the 59th presidential inauguration in Washington, DC on the West Front of the US Capitol on January 20, 2021 in Washington, DC. PHOTO: AFP

en", a long-standing alliance between the two countries.

"I look forward to working with you to further strengthen the US-Israel alliance, to continue expanding peace between Israel and the Arab world and to confront common challenges, chief among them the threat posed by Iran," Netanyahu said in a video.

**NATO**

"The bond between North America and Europe is the bedrock of our security, and a strong NATO is good for both North America and Europe," said NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg.

"NATO Allies need to stand together to address the security consequences of the rise of China,

the threat of terrorism, including in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a more assertive Russia."

**The Vatican**

Pope Francis urged Biden to promote "reconciliation and peace" around the world.

"At a time when the grave crises facing our human family call for far-sighted and united responses, I pray that your decisions will be guided by a concern for building a society marked by authentic justice and freedom," the pope said.

**Russia**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia would seek "good relations with the United States", while a foreign ministry statement said they expected a

"more constructive" approach to upcoming arms control talks. The US and Russia are to discuss extending the landmark 2010 New START nuclear weapons accord shortly after Biden's swearing in. The last remaining nuclear pact between the countries, it limits each side to 1,500 nuclear warheads and is set to expire February 5.

**Germany**

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany, Europe's biggest economy, said he was "greatly relieved" Biden was replacing Trump as US president, calling it a "good day for democracy". Germany looked forward "to knowing we again have the US at our side as an indispensable partner" in addressing "the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, security issues, arms control and disarmament, and many urgent conflicts around the world".

**France**

French government spokesman Gabriel Attal said Biden's commitments to rejoin the World Health Organization, which leads the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Paris climate treaty were "extremely important" following Trump's exit from them.

**Britain**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has faced criticism over

his close relationship with Trump, said he was looking forward to "working closely" with Biden.

"In our fight against Covid and across climate change, defence, security and in promoting and defending democracy, our goals are the same and our nations will work hand in hand to achieve them," he said.

**Ireland**

"Today a true friend of Ireland @JoeBiden became the 46th President of the USA," Prime Minister Micheal Martin wrote on Twitter. "It is a day of history and hope and I look forward to forging ever closer ties between our two great nations."

**Canada**

"Our two countries are more than neighbours - we are close friends, partners, and allies," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, pledging Canada's cooperation in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, for climate action and for a sustainable economic recovery.

**India**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "My warmest congratulations to @JoeBiden on his assumption of office as President of the United States of America. I look forward to working with him to strengthen India-US strategic partnership."

SOURCE: AFP

## SEOUL-WASHINGTON RELATIONS

## New foreign minister for South Korea ahead of Biden inauguration



Chung Eui Yong speaks at a press conference in Seoul on Nov. 10, 2019 PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

THE man who told US President Donald Trump that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wanted to denuclearize was named as South Korea's foreign minister Wednesday, hours before the inauguration of Joe Biden.

Former national security adviser Chung Eui-yong will be responsible for Seoul's relations with treaty ally Washington af-

ter replacing UN veteran Kang Kyung-wha, who was Seoul's first female foreign minister when she was appointed in mid-2017.

Chung was instrumental in brokering the talks between Trump and Kim, which saw three headline-grabbing meetings between the two but little substantive progress.

In March 2018, after a year in which tensions soared as the two leaders exchanged mutual insults and threats of war, Chung visited Washington to brief Trump that Kim -- who he had met earlier in Pyongyang -- wanted to talk and was "committed to denuclearization".

An ecstatic Trump immediately accepted the request for a summit and Chung was deputised to make the announcement in an unorthodox nighttime briefing on the White House lawn.

SOURCE: AFP

## NEW PRESIDENTIAL TERM

## EU chiefs express relief as 'friend' replaces Trump

THE European Union's top officials expressed relief on Wednesday that they would again have a friend in the White House as Joe Biden replaces Donald Trump.

Charles Michel, president of the European Council, said the moment should be seized to form a new "founding pact" between democratic powers.

He was joined in the European Parliament by Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Council, to address MEPs hours ahead of Biden's inauguration. "This time-honoured ceremony on the steps of the US Capitol will be a demonstration of the resilience of American democracy," she said.

"And the resounding proof that, once again, after four long years, Europe has a friend in the White House."

But Brussels' top official warned the fact that millions of Americans had voted for Trump

and that some of them had rioted on his behalf on January 6 should serve as a warning.

"President Trump may be history in a few hours, but his supporters remain. More than 70 million Americans voted for Trump in the election," she said.

"A few hundred of them

stormed the Capitol in Washington, the heart of American democracy, just a few days ago.

"And this really is what it looks like when words put into deeds, when hate speech and fake news become a real danger to democracy," she said.

SOURCE: AFP



European Council President Charles Michel addressed European lawmakers during a plenary session on the inauguration of the new President of the United States and the current political situation. PHOTO: AFP

PARDONS AND COMMUTATIONS

# Outgoing President Trump pardons former aide Steve Bannon

ON his final day in office President Trump issued pardons to 73 people, including his former aide Steve Bannon, who is facing charges of fraud.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday pardoned 73 people, including his former aide Steve Bannon and other allies, just hours before he was due to leave office.

The list of those pardoned -- as well as 70 others whose sentences were commuted -- was released by the White House in a statement during the early hours.

Neither Trump nor his rel-

atives were on the list.

Bannon had been charged with, and pleaded not guilty to, defrauding people over funds raised to build the Mexico border wall, a flagship Trump policy.

He was Trump's campaign manager during the 2016 election, before becoming a senior adviser to the president. He left the White House acrimoniously in 2017, Trump later giving him the derogatory moniker "Sloppy Steve".

But Wednesday's statement read: "Mr Bannon has been an important leader in the conservative movement and is known for



President Trump issued a flurry of controversial pardons and commutations on his final day in office, rewarding a handful of longtime allies and well-connected celebrities, including his former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, and onetime fundraiser Elliott Broidy. **PHOTO: AFP**

his political acumen."

US media earlier reported that the president made his last-minute decision after speaking to Bannon by phone.

Former Trump fundrais-

er Elliott Broidy was similarly pardoned, after pleading guilty last year to conspiring to violate foreign lobbying laws.

SOURCE: AFP

DAXING DISTRICT

# Partial lockdown in Beijing as UK virus variant detected

1.6 million residents were banned from leaving Beijing on Wednesday as two Covid-19 cases linked to a new UK virus variant were found in the Chinese capital.

China has lauded its response to the pandemic, which emerged in the central city of Wuhan just over a year ago but has been broadly brought to heel,

officially killing fewer than 5,000 Chinese people.

Authorities have been swift to stamp out local clusters of cases with lockdowns, mass testing

regimes and travel restrictions.

With the Lunar New Year Holiday looming, officials had been keen to avoid an outbreak in Beijing, the heart of political power.

But a handful of cases have been detected in the capital in recent days, with six more reported Wednesday in southern Daxing district.

Officials said that the two cases in Daxing were linked to a UK variant believed to be a more transmissible form of the virus and were first detected on Sunday.

The cases had "no genetic correlation with previously reported local cases and imported cases in Beijing", the head of the Beijing health authority Pang Xinghuo told reporters, but are "considered to be variants of the new coronavirus discovered in the UK."

SOURCE: AFP



More than one million residents were banned from leaving Beijing, after a handful of coronavirus cases were detected in a southern district. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

VIETNAM

# Tourism on track in the world's largest cave

VAST rock formations the size of multi-storey buildings loom above Ho Minh Phuc, as he picks a path through the gloom inside the world's largest cave.

Phuc, who once earned a living through illegal logging, is a porter for the small tour

groups that explore Vietnam's Son Doong -- a cave so large it has its own ecosystem and weather patterns. Home to flying foxes and a 70-metre rock formation resembling a dog's paw, the cave is an otherworldly wonder that has reshaped the lives of the

surrounding community since it opened for boutique tourism in 2013. Trapped in poverty, young men like Phuc once had little choice but to forage in the depths of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park -- the World Heritage site where Son Doong lies.

There they searched for precious agarwood, a hugely sought-after material known as "the wood of the gods" and widely used for incense. Others eked out a living from hunting endangered civets and porcupines in the forest.

SOURCE: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 22 WORKERS TRAPPED

#### Rescue shaft offers hope for trapped Chinese miners

RESCUERS are widening a communications shaft in the hope of extracting a group of Chinese gold miners who have been trapped deep underground for 10 days in rising floodwaters, state media said Wednesday, with one critically ill and far from medical help.

Twenty-two workers were stuck hundreds of metres underground at the Hushan mine near Qixia city in east China's Shandong province when an explosion on January 10 sealed the entrance and cut off communications.

Contact has been made with 11 miners at one location around 580 metres (1,900 feet) below the surface.

Another -- apparently alone -- is trapped about a further 100 metres down.

After days without any sign of life, a handwritten note was sent up on a metal wire that rescuers had dropped into the mine on Sunday.

SOURCE: AFP

### JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

#### Israel issues tenders for 2,500 new settler homes: watchdog

ISRAEL has issued tenders for 2,500 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, a watchdog said Wednesday, on the eve of Joe Biden's swearing-in as US president.

On Sunday, Israel approved 780 new settler homes in the West Bank ahead of a March poll where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to face a fierce challenge from right-wing and pro-settler candidate Gideon Saar.

Peace Now said the government had now published tenders for a further 2,112 units in the West Bank and 460 in East Jerusalem, the eastern part of the city annexed by Israel but which the Palestinians hope to make the capital of a future state.

SOURCE: AFP

## Sagaing United to recruit up to seven new players



Sagaing United Football Club is representing Sagaing Region for the Myanmar National League.  
**PHOTO: SAGAING UNITED FC FACEBOOK PAGE**

By Lynn Thit (Tgi)

SAGAING United has joined the transfer window of the Myanmar National League as most clubs are preparing to be ready for the 2021 season.

For the upcoming MPT Myanmar National League football season, most of the senior players in the team will be retained, and seven new players will be brought in, said head coach Zaw Lin Tun.

“Last season we signed new players. There are some players who have parted ways with the club, but the senior players who have expired will be re-signed and kept at the club. Players like Zaw Lin Htet, Win Zin Oo and Wai Phyto are

crucial for the team”, said head coach U Zaw Lin Tun.

“Two players from Southern Myanmar FC have also agreed to bring in. We are preparing to recruit seven players for the upcoming Myanmar National League season,” the head coach added.

The Sagaing Region team is also preparing to bring in a national team goalkeeper and a national team winger in preparation for the new season. The team will use up to three foreign players, with centre-back player Solomon and midfielder Friday.

Team authorities are planning to add a new striker to the squad, said the source with the Myanmar National League.

## Saints to face Gunners in FA Cup after seeing off Shrewsbury



James Ward-Prowse after scoring Southampton's second goal in their 2-0 FA Cup win over Shrewsbury. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Saints will have little time to enjoy this victory as their tie with Arsenal, a repeat of the 2003 FA Cup final won 1-0 by the Gunners, takes place at St Mary's on Saturday.

Third-tier Shrewsbury were playing their first competitive match since December following a raft of coronavirus cases and were without manager Steve Cotterill after he had spent time in intensive care due to Covid-19.

Cotterill was taken to hospital last week following an outbreak at the League One club, which forced the postponement of the third-round tie earlier this month.

The 56-year-old spent part of the weekend being given oxygen in intensive care and remains in hospital.

Saints manager Ralph Hasenhuttl made seven changes to the side that lost 2-0 to Premier League rivals Leicester.

Only Jan Bednarek, Jack Stephens, Ibrahima Diallo and James Ward-Prowse remained in the starting line-up.—AFP ■

LONDON — Southampton will be at home to Arsenal in the fourth round of the FA Cup following a 2-0 win over coronavirus-hit Shrewsbury on Tuesday.

Dan N'Lundulu marked his first senior start for the Saints with a maiden goal for the club in the 17th minute at their St Mary's ground before England's James Ward-Prowse put the result beyond doubt a minute from time.

## Japan plans mass virus jabs ahead of Olympics from May: reports

TOKYO — Japan aims to start vaccinating the general public against the coronavirus in May — just two months before the postponed Olympics — after targeted jabs for the most vulnerable, reports said Wednesday.

The Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said the government is hoping the majority of adults will be vaccinated by July, when the Games are due to open.

The country has agreed with pharmaceutical firms to receive enough doses for all 126 million residents and is working to approve the Pfizer jab as the first to be used in Japan from next month.

Around 10,000 medical workers will be first in line for free inoculation, top government officials have said, followed by 50 million at-risk people including those with underlying conditions and the over-65s.

Ministers hope to start

mass vaccination in May at the earliest, the Yomiuri and Sankei Shimbun newspapers reported, citing unnamed government sources.

Tokyo 2020's opening ceremony is in six months, but a surge in Covid-19 infections in Japan and worldwide has cast fresh doubt over the event.

Public support for the

Olympics has plummeted, with more than 80 per cent of people recently polled in Japan saying they should be cancelled or postponed again.

Asked about Wednesday's reports, top government spokesman Katsunobu Kato said it was too early to announce a vaccination schedule.—AFP ■



Tokyo 2020 became the first Olympics postponed in peacetime earlier this year as the coronavirus pandemic took hold. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Messi banned for two matches after historic Barca red

MADRID — Lionel Messi was handed a two match ban on Tuesday following his first ever sending off for Barcelona.

The Argentine forward was shown a red card at the end of Sunday's 3-2 extra-time defeat

to Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Super Cup final after lashing out at Asier Villalibre.

Messi had twice been sent off playing for Argentina, including at the 2019 Copa America, but never in 16 years and 753 match-

es with Barcelona's first team.

The six time Ballon d'Or winner's ban was announced by the Spanish Football Federation.

Messi shook off a thigh problem to start in Seville and was required to play all 120 minutes

as Barca attempted to take the game to penalties.

Instead, the 33-year-old lost his temper at the end of a combative contest, reacting to a late challenge from Villalibre by swiping his hands across the

back of his opponent.

Messi was red-carded 15 years ago for Barca but it was with the reserves in a third division match, according to Spanish statistician Alexis Martin-Tamayo.—AFP ■