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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Friday, 22 January 2021

## State Counsellor delivers speech on updated situations of COVID-19 containment measures

**W**E are now in our New Year – 2021; we are now in the third week of the New Year. I guess the people already know the COVID-19 disease situation. Daily infections hover around 500. During the last few days, the infection rate has gone down a bit to 400 or a little over 400. But this is still not adequate enough. It is important that our progress should be better than this. However, to give you some good news, on the 22nd, the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines will arrive in Myanmar. Half a million doses will be received. Half a million means about 750,000 of our people can be vaccinated. Each person needs to be vaccinated twice. After the first dose, the next dose has to be given after 28 days. Therefore, the Ministry of Health and Sports has already made plans to carry out these procedures effectively and with meticulous detail.

Therefore, the first batch that we will receive will be only for 750,000 persons. Therefore, we have to give very careful consideration as to how we will use these 750,000 doses in the best interest of the country. Thus the first priority will be given to the people who are working on the frontlines – our health personnel. I believe all our people will agree with this. Our health personnel, who are on the frontlines; among the health personnel, we have also included volunteers.

They are the frontline workers who are participating in the activities to combat COVID-19.



They are our people who are providing health care. We will give vaccinations to these people on a priority basis. The next thing we have to consider is how to proceed stage by stage. We will be getting vaccines, and some of them will be donated. However, the majority will be bought by our government. As we receive these vaccines, we have to consider very carefully which groups we need to give priority. In making these considerations, we have to take into consideration two factors. The first factor is the strategic groups of persons who are needed to run the governmental machinery at a normal pace. Why? The suffering of our people will be lessened only if our govern-

mental machinery is running at a normal pace.

These groups of persons are important. The next group is the people who are prone to get infected; those whose immunity level is low. The next group consists of people who can be easily infected. We had to consider how to achieve a good balance between these two groups. The group with low immunity level means the people who are advanced in age and those who already have underlying diseases. When we talk about groups of persons where infection spread can be high are those people who are living in congested situations where a lot of people live in close proximity. Therefore, we have to consider very carefully how to

deal with these two categories of people to arrive at a correct and fair decision.

Therefore, we have to give priority as I have explained previously – health personnel and our people who are working on the frontlines providing service. People in the second group are those in the strategic sectors of our government. We will give them vaccinations. I feel a little reluctant to say this because I belong to this category. I believe our people would be able to understand the fact that I belong to this category. The reason is that, for the State machinery to be running, it is very important that our central government and our region and state governments are functioning effectively. In

terms of numbers, it is not that much. Please allow me to say this.

These are the vital government service personnel and members of our respective governments at various levels. If we add them all up, the number is not that huge. We will all be in the first group. We have included our members of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in this first group which represents people who are vital for the government machinery. The reason is that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is to be convened soon. Our respective Hluttaw representatives will all be coming from all parts of our country to attend the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Therefore, it is a practical thing to do to vaccinate all of them while they are all in one place. Furthermore, it is very important for the running of the government machinery. Then as the next step, we will go to places where the infection rate is high and to persons who are vital for the functioning of our government machinery and places where important people are living. Therefore, when we actually consider this matter in practical terms, these are areas where the population density is high. According to our experience, areas with high population density are areas where the infection rate is high. For example, the “stay at home” townships; therefore, we will be giving priority to these areas. However, it is not easy for us to vaccinate all the “stay at home” townships all at once.

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Chinese traders buying Myanmar cattle on black market

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## Relief cash fund of Social Security Board given to insured workers, employees

The Social Security Board is providing its COVID-19 fund to the insured employees from the private owned factories, workplaces and businesses.

Sr	Types of Relief Cash Fund	Beneficiaries of fund		Period
		Number of Persons	Amount of Fund (millions in kyat)	
1.	Benefit from social security fund in COVID-19 1 <sup>st</sup> Wave 40%)	825,106	20,763.866	13-5-2020 to 19-1-2021
2.	Benefit from social security fund in COVID-19 1 <sup>st</sup> Wave 40%)	704,652	44,574.801	2-10-2020 to 19-1-2021
3.	Medical care benefit to insured persons in quarantine centre (60%)	796	67.586	28-3-2020 to 19-1-2021
4.	Medical care benefit to insured pregnant employees (60%)	3,620	555.515	22-4-2020 to 19-1-2021
	Total cash fund	1,534,174	65,961.768	

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

- 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.
  - MPU Debit/Credit Card of local banks
  - Visa/Master Credit of local banks
  - Visa/Master Debit & Credit Card of foreign banks
  - Mobile Wallets such as CB-pay, KBZ-pay, OK\$ through QR Code (more mobile wallets will be available)
  - Internet/mobile banking App of KBZ, CB, AYA, UAB and MAB (more internet/mobile banking Apps will be available)
  - 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.
- Therefore, cash contribution can be made at the above-mentioned platforms electronically, in addition to the branches of Myanmar Economic Bank and Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank and other local private banks.

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

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

- 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 Myanmar Economic Bank in Nay Pyi Taw as follows:
  - 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.
  - 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.
- 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 Myanmar Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw), and can donate Myanmar Kyat to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733).
- The potential well-wishers can contact the following phone numbers: Director-General (067 3410156) Treasury Department (067 3410158)

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

## Myanmar nationals brought back home from Japan, RoK by relief flights



Myanmar returnees are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 21 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA

THE relief flight of All Nippon Airways (ANA) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo landed at Yangon International Airport bringing back a total of 71 Myanmar nationals after they were stranded in Japan due to the suspension of international flight, yesterday evening.

The relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Myanmar Seafarers' Employment Services Federation (MSEF) also brought back a total of 137 Myanmar nationals who were stranded abroad due to the suspension of international flights, yesterday evening.

Among them, 82 people were from the Republic of Korea, 24 from Egypt, 1 from South Africa, 2 from the USA, 7 from the Philippines, 7

from Japan, 1 from Belgium, 2 from Viet Nam and 11 from Singapore.

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

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

# “People are the key”

## State Counsellor delivers speech on updated situations of COVID-19 containment measures

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The reason is that according to our estimate, there will be a little over 11 million persons if we have to vaccinate all these townships. It is impossible for us to vaccinate over 11 million people within a matter of one day round-the-clock. We need to consider the rate of arrival of our vaccines.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has sufficient capacity to proceed with the vaccinations. Furthermore, plans have been made in advance. We cannot say definitely the number of vaccines which will be available at each time. However, we are sure that the vaccines will be received tomorrow. We expect more stocks of vaccines to arrive in the country in the following week. But I don't want to guarantee until we are definitely sure. The process depends not only on us but also on the country of origin. We have made plans to handle the vaccine, with preparations for proper storage and transportation to the respective destinations of the vaccination programme. However, we can continue with the remaining process only when we receive the shipment of vaccines.

In the meantime, the first thing we will do is to begin the vaccination programme next week for the frontline health workers and volunteers. At this stage, we will be able to identify difficulties and make better plans in the vaccination pro-

gramme. The key government officials, civil services personnel and Hluttaw representatives will be included in the following step. We have targeted to conclude these steps in the next week or 10 days. Depending on available vaccines, we will expand the vaccination programme to control the disease in important

as the basic rules of wearing masks, washing hands, avoiding crowds and observing social distancing.

The second dose will come after 28 days of the first one. It will be a waste of resources if the vaccinated persons with the first dose are infected by the disease as they failed to abide

ing. These vaccines are being tested. How effective are the vaccines? How long will they be effective? So far, we cannot say for sure. So, please take care of your health even after vaccination. Be careful. Do not take the situation lightly. We have to try hard to get into the habit of living with care. Moreover, in the meantime, the people who have yet to be vaccinated need to be especially careful.

Some of our citizens may have already heard and know about it. We can say that, in many countries, COVID-19 has undergone a genetic mutation that has reached a stage that the disease is spreading more rapidly. The faster the disease spreads, the harder to control it. So now we have to be more careful. A new COVID-19 variant is also being reported in Britain. Some say that the new variant of South Africa is different from the variant of Britain. They say it is also spreading fast. So, we cannot guess what will happen in other countries too.

So, it is important to protect yourself. By protecting yourself, you also protect the people in your environment. If you do not get the disease, it cannot be passed on to anyone through you. So, let me request you to be careful. Another thing is that our citizens know that we have set up a fund to buy the vaccines. As usual, our people are united when it really matters. All of us are making donations in unity to raise the fund. First, Kyat 1

billion was raised by the State.

The fund has now been collectively contributed also by individual donors, and the total amount became Kyat 18.781 billion. So, we can see how generous our people are. That amount is the collective donation in Kyats. Moreover, in US dollars, the State set up US\$250 million as a fund. Our people contributed to that fund in dollars, too. So I can say that our situation is good. In my opinion, our people contributed more than US\$2.97 million. That is the donation in dollar currency contributed by donors. We will spend the money to provide the people with the vaccines they need in order to protect themselves against the COVID-19 disease. I pledge that the money will not be wasted. I would like express my profound appreciation and thanks to our people for their collective support.

I would like to say that the collective contribution is also a source of pride and pleasure for our nation. For now, we can say that our New Year begins with good news. We can say that this is a great New Year. I wish that the year continues being to be great for the rest of the year. To make this year a great year, I would like to request all our people to support us to make all COVID-19 control and treatment programmes a success. I wish all of you, peace of mind. Thanks.

*(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Aung Khin)*

Depending on available vaccines, we will expand the vaccination programme to control the disease in important places for the resumption of our government machinery.

places for the resumption of our government machinery. We will also inform our programmes to the public about the reason for prioritizing the specific groups.

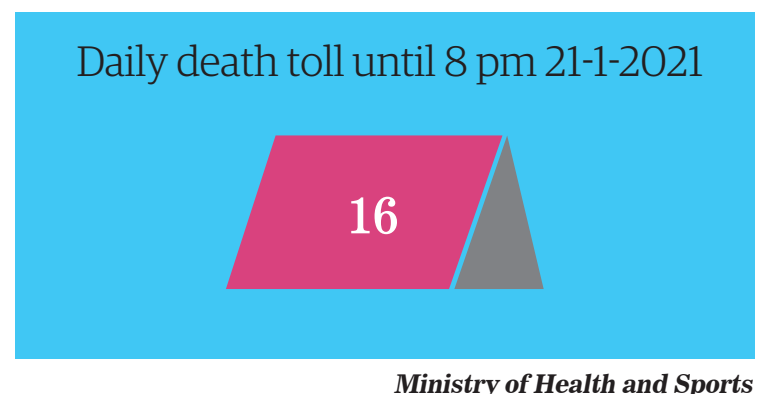
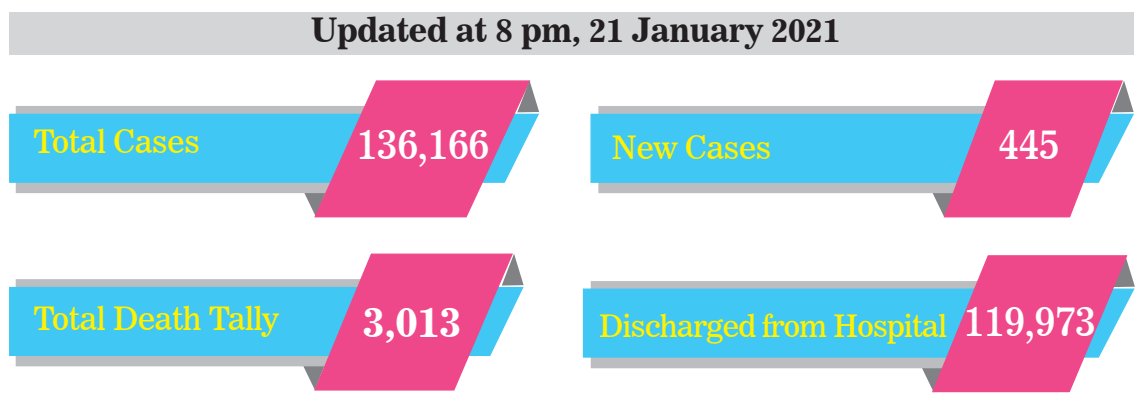
I want to urge you all to maintain constant vigilance, thinking that the vaccine would be available soon. It is a matter of utmost seriousness. As I have mentioned, each person needs two doses of vaccines within the 28-day interval for its effectiveness. The first vaccinated group should not live carelessly. We need to protect ourselves in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports, such

by the rules. Then, the first vaccination would be in vain. They would also miss the full potency of vaccination if they could not control themselves for 28 days. It is also recommended that more seriousness must be taken after the first dose of vaccination to achieve the effectiveness of the vaccine after receiving its second dose.

I say that we will get the full benefits of the vaccines, but at the same time, we still do not know all the details about the effectiveness of these vaccines. This is a trial period for the entire world. We are experiment-

### 445 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 January, total figure rises to 136,166

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 136,166 after 445 new cases were reported on 21 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 136,166 confirmed cases, 3,013 died, 119,973 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Ministry of Health and Sports



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



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

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

## Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives RoK Ambassador

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr Lee San-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed the friendly cooperation between the two governments and the two parliaments, the ongoing Myanmar-Korea joint projects, medical assistance in the prevention and control of COVID-19, cooperation in the fight against corruption and enhancing friendship between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—MNA  
(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives ROK Ambassador Mr Lee San-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Union Minister U Kyaw Tin participates in ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat via videoconference

UNION MINISTER for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin participated in the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat via videoconference at 8:00 am yesterday from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting was attended by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

At the meeting, Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam briefed the meeting on priorities of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship for 2021. He informed that Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship would be guided by the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper". He also informed that Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship would focus on three main priorities namely: to harness the caring nature of ASEAN to build a harmonious and resilient community with people at its centre; to prepare ASEAN for the future so that it remains relevant, and its people can take advantage of new opportunities as well as overcome existing and future challenges and threats; and to create opportunities for all and enhance sustainable prosperity in the region.



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin joins the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat via videoconference on 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Ministers also discussed matters relating to the follow-up to the 37th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits, external relations, priorities and deliverables of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship and exchanged views on regional and international issues.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin while supporting the priorities and deliverables of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship also underscored his confidence that Brunei Darussalam will guide ASEAN comprehensively to achieve

significant results on the priorities and deliverables as well as to further progress ASEAN Community building efforts. He also stressed that securing early access to a safe and affordable vaccine for COVID-19 must be a top priority for ASEAN.

Union Minister also praised the meeting of Myanmar Government's efforts in creating a conducive environment for the returnees, cooperation with ASEAN in the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA), and continued discussion

with Bangladesh to commence repatriation in accordance with bilateral agreements. The Union Minister also brief the meeting on the outcomes of the trilateral Vice-Ministerial Meeting of 19 January 2021 between Myanmar, China and Bangladesh to discuss the commencement of repatriation of displaced persons.

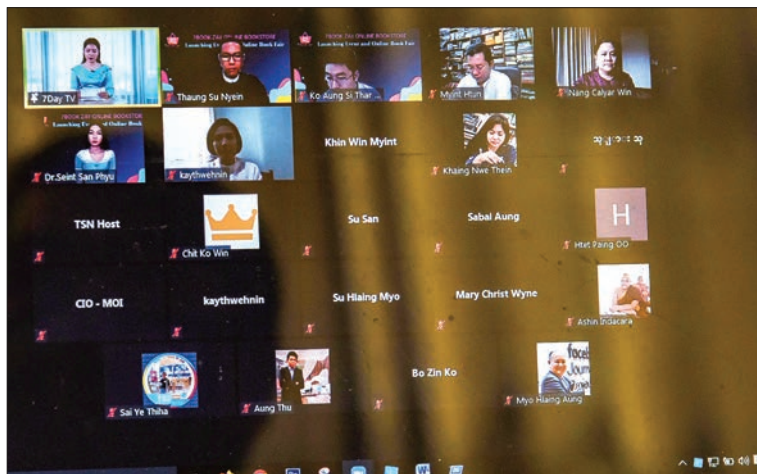
At the end of the meeting, a press release was issued by the Chairman of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat. In the press release, ASEAN Foreign Ministers, among others, welcomed the Myanmar Government's

continued efforts in addressing the situation in Rakhine State, including commencing the repatriation process in accordance with its bilateral agreements with Bangladesh, and reaffirmed ASEAN's continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace and stability, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities as well as to promote inclusive and sustainable development in Rakhine State. They also reaffirmed ASEAN's readiness to play a more visible and enhanced role to support Myanmar in those endeavours and therefore reiterated their appreciation to the Secretary-General of ASEAN for his efforts in leading the PNA recommendation; and looked forward to the conduct of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to continue identifying possible areas to effectively facilitate the repatriation process.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was the first meeting held during Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship for 2021. Brunei Darussalam assumes the ASEAN Chairmanship from 1 January to 31 December 2021.—MNA



## 7Book Zay Online Bookstore launched virtually



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint participates in the virtual launching ceremony of the 7Book Zay Online Bookstore and Book Fair on 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER for Information Dr Pe Myint joined the virtual launching ceremony of the 7Book Zay Online Bookstore and Book Fair yesterday morning.

The ceremony was opened with the greeting messages of writers Chit Oo Nyo, Maung Thar Cho, Than Myint Aung, Pon Nya

Khin and Sabai Phyu Nu video clips.

In delivering a keynote speech, the Union Minister talked about the Myanmar book rental shops in the past when the gap between the income of the readers and the value of books was high, and the need to establish

major book stores for literary development of the country. He also advised selling the physical books at the 7Book Zay Online Bookstore, like international-level book stores in neighbouring countries.

The Union Minister congratulated the bookstore for its objec-

tives to promote literary works and public knowledge and emphasized the importance of writers, publishers and distributors for development of this sector.

He also pointed out the crucial role of literary critics in promoting book sales, the requirement of book clubs in the country

and organizing literary talks and paper reading sessions online during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Daw Nang Calyar Win, the chairperson of Myanmar Publishers and Booksellers Association, discussed the need for a reliable e-commerce platform for online book sales.

U Thaug Su Nyein, CEO of Information Matrix Co, Ltd explained the background of 7Book Zay Online Bookstore and its plan to sell e-books and audiobooks.

The 7Book Zay Online Bookstore was launched by cutting the virtual ribbon, followed by a video presentation about the 7Book Zay and Book Fair. The two sessions of panel discussions were held on the topics of 'New Normal Life and Changes in Book Publishing Works' and 'Reading and Online Bookshelf'.—MNA

*(Translated by Aung Khin)*

## 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Special Senior Officials Meeting on Energy held online

VIET NAM virtually hosted the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Special Senior Officials Meeting on Energy and 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Centre for Energy Governing Council Meeting on 21 and 22 January.

Permanent Secretary for Electricity and Energy U Than Zaw, in his capacity as Senior Official on Energy (SOE) Leader joined the virtual meeting held yesterday together with other officials.

The 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Special Senior Officials Meeting on Energy dis-

cussed the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation –APAEC Phase II (2021-2025), work plans to carry out in 2021 and cooperation work in the energy sector between 2021 and 2025.

The officials also discussed Clean Coal Technology, Civilian Nuclear Energy, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Regional Energy Policy and Planning, Trans-Energy Gas Pipeline and ASEAN Power Grid.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Centre for Energy Governing Council Meeting will be held on 22 January, and the meeting will focus on the facts including ASEAN energy cooperation, budget allocations and ASEAN Endowment Fund.

The 39<sup>th</sup> Special Senior officials Meeting on Energy and Associated Meetings will be held in Brunei in 2021. —MNA

*(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)*



Permanent Secretary U Than Zaw participates in 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Special Senior Officials Meeting on Energy on 21 January 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Status of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission's handling of complaints during 2020

### Statement No. 2/ 2021

1. During 2020, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) received 2020 complaints on human rights violations addressed to the Commission. The complaints investigation team held investigation meetings for examining a total of 2,336 complaints including 316 cases leftover from 2019 which were dealt with as follows:

(a) referring to relevant ministries/ organizations	–	561
(b) advising the complainants concerning the case	–	245
(c) field investigation	–	7
(d) putting on records	–	1,492
(e) remainders to be examined	–	31
Total	–	2,336

2. The MNHRC received the following 613 responses from the relevant Union Ministries and Organizations, Nay Pyi Taw Council and State and Regional Governments relating to the complaints that MNHRC sent for taking necessary actions. Subsequently, the MNHRC informed the status of responses to the complainants as follows:

(a) responses to the complaint received in 2017	–	1 complaint
(b) responses to the complaints received in 2018	–	22 complaints
(c) responses for the complaints received in 2019	–	204 complaints
(d) responses for the complaints received in 2020	–	386 complaints

3. The 1,492 complaints which are placed on record are the cases that have already been handled by the Commission in accordance with its complaints handling procedure, the cases which are not in line with the criteria of the complaint, and the cases under trial before any court, cases under appeal or revision on the decision of any court, cases that have been finally judged by any court. Since these complaints do not need further actions under section 37 of the MNHRC enabling law, the MNHRC puts them on the record systematically.

4. To lodge complaints or allegations of human rights violations, a written complaint may be sent in person or by registered mail and express mail to No. (27), Pyay Road, Hline Township, Yangon. Complaints may be lodged by fax or email to Fax no. 01 654678 and email: [info@mnhrc.org.mm](mailto:info@mnhrc.org.mm) and [protection@mnhrc.org.mm](mailto:protection@mnhrc.org.mm).

5. The name of the complainant, a copy of national registration card, contact address, how human rights were violated as well as a clear and full explanation of the circumstances leading to the incident are necessary together with the complaint letter signed by the complainant. If necessary, copies of documents relevant to the circumstances of the incident, photograph, audio files, video files shall be attached in full with the complaint letter as evidence.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission  
Date: 21 January 2021



# MoALI discusses response measures against impacts of COVID-19 on fishery sector

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held a coordination meeting at its headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to discuss response plans to alleviate the impacts of coronavirus disease on the fishery sector.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu talked about the implementation of government-to-government programmes for exporting fishery products.

The ministry is cooperating with relevant departments and Myanmar Fisheries Federation on issuing coronavirus clearance certificates to the fish produced in Myanmar.

It is necessary to set standards for issuance of recommendations made in Yangon and Mandalay and conduct rounds of capacity-building training for employees and education programmes at cold storage factories, he added.



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu discusses promotion of fishery product export on 21 January. PHOTO: MNA

Director-General of Fisheries Department U Wai Lin Maung discussed the decisions made at the development of fish consumption meeting. Director-General of Cooperative Department U Aung Thura discussed trading of fishery products.

Attendees at the meeting discussed matters relating to the development of fish consumption, works jointly to be done by Fisheries Department and Cooperative Department, searching of the fish market, conducting awareness programmes on health benefits of fish and creating local fish markets.

Fishery products are being distributed in accordance with "No Profit, No Loss" practice and sales of fish outside relevant regions and states is underway.

Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw, Permanent Secretary U Kyaw Min Oo, the Directors-General and officials participated in the meeting.

Fisheries Department formed a Task Force on Good Aquaculture Practices (GAQP) in 2016, organized 111 seminars on GAQP participated by 5,000 trainees and workshops on GAQP, and also issued 10 GAQP certificates for 9,364 acres of fish, prawn and crab farming.

A draft of GAQP standards was also drawn up in cooperation with MySap Project.

Laboratory of Fishery Department has ISO: IEC-17025 and was testing the fishery products that will be exported.

The department is also working on emerging of private laboratories for testing fishery products.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

## Union Minister U Thein Swe holds meeting with private employment agencies

UNION MINISTER for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe delivered an opening speech at the meeting with Executives of Local Employment Companies Association and Managing Directors of local employment agencies held via videoconferencing yesterday morning.

The meeting focussed on the matters related to helping people find local jobs effectively and quickly under the New Normal.

The Union Minister said that COVID-19 pandemic has unprecedented impacts on the labour market. Myanmar has to face problems and challenges such as factory closures and massive layoffs caused by the pandemic.

He said that the government is working hard to control the pandemic, to revive the economy and to mitigate COVID-19 related impacts on the private sector.

During the COVID-19 crisis,



Union Minister U Thein Swe holds talks on solving problems and challenges for labour market due to the COVID-19 outbreak. PHOTO: MNA

workers who registered for social security under a social welfare programme received 40 per cent of their salaries as social security benefits. And insured workers who are quarantined received 60 per cent of their salaries as health coverage benefits and insured pregnant workers received 60 per cent of their salaries, according to the Union Minister.

More than K65 billion has been approved for 1,534,174 insured workers.

In order to improve employment opportunities, citizen-owned companies have been granted local employment agency licences since 2010 in accordance with the laws, and so far 101 companies have been licenced.

The Union Minister said that in the post-COVID-19 period, there would be more job opportunities for digitalization. He also called on the employment agencies to make labour market information accessible to job seekers and employers by finding new ways to use technology to provide services to them. He said that the agencies

need to enhance their capacities to provide effective online services to job seekers and employers. He also called on the agencies to hold job fairs.

He continued that the Local Employment Companies Association is established to provide good leadership. The agencies need to work collaboratively with each other in a transparent manner.

The Director-General of the Labour Department discussed the previous reports of the agencies.

The virtual meeting was participated by the Union Minister, Deputy Minister U Myint Kyawing, the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, government officials, and representatives from the Local Employment Companies Association and employment agencies.—MNA (Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

## 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



## MoHS holds public health symposium on COVID-19

THE Ministry of Health and Sports organized a public health-care symposium on COVID-19 yesterday, to mark 67th Myanmar Medical Conference.

During the conference, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe explained holding discussion, conference and tabletop exercise for better treatment and healthcare system, effective public health strategies, rapid diagnosis and distribution of COVID-19 related medical supplies.

He also emphasized the need to upgrade the treatment system in relation to the nature of virus transmission and mutation in local and foreign countries and study the new treatment and therapy of international countries and lab tests in a timely manner.

The Union Minister also made suggestions on conducting a survey for COVID-19's conse-



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe speaks at the 67th Myanmar Medical Conference Pre-Conference Symposium on COVID-19 on 21 January. **PHOTO: MNA**

quence based on the data of old COVID-19 patients, exchanging information of different disease control strategies among the countries, and establishing the

effective strategies which conform to the various situation of the country.

He continued to say that although the infection rate in the

country falls, the people need to follow the health rules as usual. All the people should know the nature of the disease that it can surge again.

He pointed out that the duration of the current COVID-19 outbreak and infection rate of the country depend on the individuals' adherence to health rules.

The ministry also conducted public health awareness programmes across the nation like Mask and Face Shield Campaign, Stop COVID-19 Yellow Campaign and awareness plan among the family members.

The Union Minister advised being readiness for prevention of some diseases such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola virus disease (EVD) which broke out in the past.

He finally called for further cooperation of officials concerned in disease control activities.—  
MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

## Myanmar's first-ever Yangon Waste to Energy Plant generates 760 kW of electricity daily

MYANMAR'S first-ever Yangon Waste to Energy Plant has been built with minimal environmental impact, and the plant generates 760 kilowatts of electricity per day, according to the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

In May 2015, the Pollution Control and Cleaning Department of YCDC cooperated with the JFE Engineering, which is commissioned by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, to build the plant.

The plant is located on 15 acres of land near Hlawkar Road in Shwepyitha Township, Yangon, and the project cost US\$16 million. The plant uses the heat generated by burning the garbage (waste) to generate electricity.

Since 7 April 2017, the plant received about 60 tonnes of waste from Mingaladon Township. It incinerated the waste, generating 760 kilowatts of electricity daily.

Out of the 760 kilowatts, about 400 kilowatts of electricity have been used to operate the plant and the remaining 360 kilowatts are fed into YESC's National Grid.

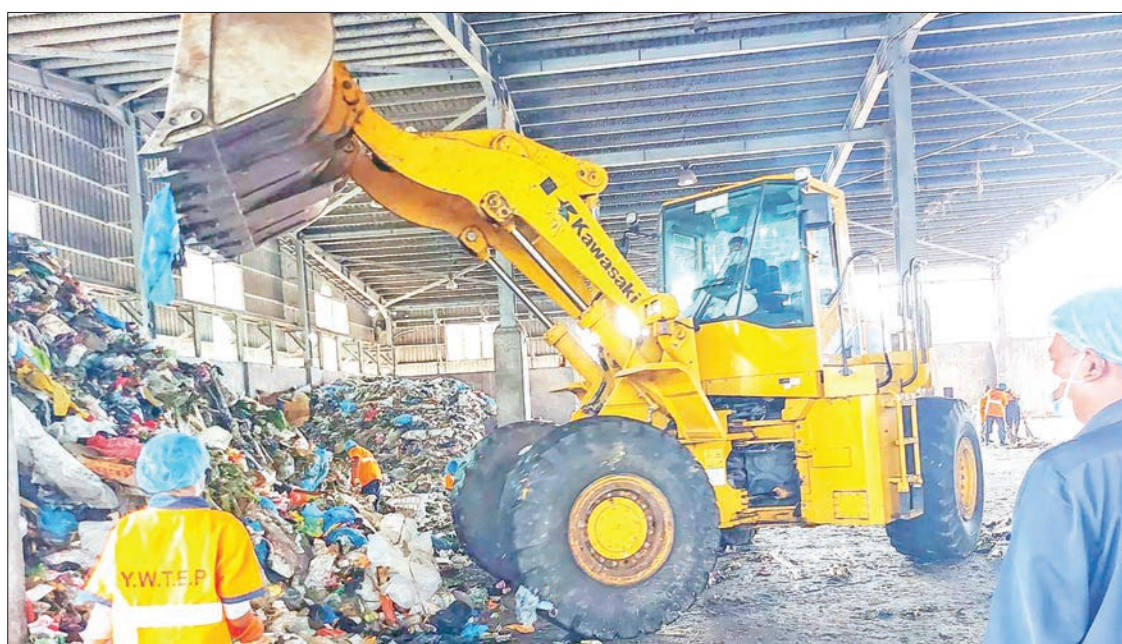
The Yangon Waste to Energy Plant employs 91 workers including officials, engineers and garbage collection workers.

For annual maintenance, the plant usually stops its operations for about 40 days a year, said U Thura Aung, member of the YCDC.

"It is the first-ever Waste to Energy Plant in Myanmar, and air pollution will be kept to a mini-



Yangon Waste to Energy Plant near Hlawkar Road in Shwepyitha Township in Yangon. **PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG**



Waste materials are piled to generate electricity at Yangon Waste to Energy Plant. **PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG**

mum. The air pollution indicators are in line with international air pollution standards. The Waste Yard can handle about 200 tonnes of waste in three days. However, the plant can only incinerate 60

tonnes of waste a day. Hence, the plant handles only 60 tonnes of waste from Mingaladon Township," said U Thura Aung. "In fact, Yangon produces about 2,500 to 2,700 tonnes of garbage daily,

so we are working hard to build more Waste to Energy Plants to generate more electricity."

"In fact, we wanted to send our engineering staff to Japan to receive technological training

there. But it would be more expensive to send our staff to Japan. So, we brought in Japanese experts to work in the plant and to help our staff gain technological knowledge. Over the past four years, the skills and knowledge of our staff have improved significantly. Garbage collection workers are always on duty in the stinking factory environment, so we are constantly encouraging them to be motivated. Only then, they will be able to work in the plant for the long term," said U Thura Aung.

Up to 90 per cent of the waste can be disposed of at the Yangon Waste to Energy Plant, and 10 per cent of the waste is properly disposed of at Kyu Chaung Cemetery in Shwepyitha Township, according to YCDC.—Pwint Thitsa

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



# Innovation in employment sector key to adapting to COVID-19

WITH closure of factories and job losses associated with the COVID-19 crisis, our country is preparing for developing a workforce with skills that will be prized across a range of industries in post-COVID-19 era.

The COVID-19 crisis is having a greater impact on some workers than others. Young people and women are among those at greatest risk of unemployment and poverty.

They generally have less secure, unskilled jobs and are highly represented among workers in industries most affected by the crisis, such as tourism and restaurants.

Rebuilding our economy and workplaces post COVID-19 requires enormous efforts, resources and expertise, and licensed employment agencies are also playing a role in rebuilding our workforce.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies are seeing the benefits of working virtually and the post-COVID period will bring job opportunities supported by digitalization. The job hunters will also need good labour market information and job application process online.

Hence, we need to make information on job opportunities and application process for the job seekers more accessible in the post-COVID-19 era.

In this regard, the employment agencies and regional labour authorities are to work together to seek new services to ensure that individuals tackle on their own the problem of ensuring they have the right skills for getting jobs they deserve.

With the impact felt for years to come, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has triggered one of the worst jobs crises, has brought a real danger for increasing poverty and widening inequalities.

We now need to do everything we can to turn the economic consequences into opportunities in post-COVID-19 period. Reconstructing a better and more resilient labour market is an essential investment in the future and in future generations.

While working to build more inclusive and resilient labour markets, the Union Government have provided social security benefits and health benefits to ensured workers from factories since the outbreak of the pandemic.

The employment agencies which are also playing a part in creating jobs are also obliged to search for innovative ways as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a huge impact on the availability of jobs in post-COVID-19 era.

# The Yangon University Students' Union(1931-1962)

By Dr. Saw Mra Aung

THE Yangon University Students' Union (YUSU) was the association which brought about the welfare of the students and protected their rights. It is said that it was modelled on those of Oxford and Cambridge universities in England. But its one distinction is that it produced many patriotic Myanmar students who were involved in the anti-colonialist movements which led to the regaining of Myanmar independence. So it can be said to be one of the politically historic associations which brewed on the premises of Yangon University.

The building of the YUSU was situated in a large stretch of land at the corner of University Avenue and Adhipadi Road(Chancellor Road), adjacent to the main gate into the university. It was constructed with 170,000 rupees funded by the Wealthy Man U Nyo. The foundation stone was laid down by Governor Sir Harcourt Butler. The building started to be constructed in 1929 and was completed in the middle of 1930. The opening ceremony was held in November 1930. It was a two-storeyed cream-coloured cement building. The upper floor housed a meeting hall and a library and the ground-floor, a canteen, a bookshop and a barber's. There was also a wide room where students could play billiard, ping-pong and weight-lifts. Debates, meetings, fun-fairs and gatherings were frequently held in the meeting-hall upstairs.

It is learnt that, although the first constitution of the RUSU was drawn by U May Aung in 1923, the Students' Union could not be formed at that time. Only on 12 September 1930, student representatives Ko Kyaw Khin, Ko Tint Swe and Ko Ba Gyan met with university authorities and were granted permission to draw a new constitution for the YUSU. In this way, the Committee of Drawing the Yangon University Students' Union Constitution was formed in the 1931-32 academic year. It comprised 12 members chaired by Ko Kyaw Khin. On 9 January 1931, students held the third meeting and founded the YUSU in accordance with the newly-drawn constitution.



The former building of the Yangon University Students Union, which was demolished in 1962.

Chairman was Ko Kyaw Khin and Treasurer, Ko Rashid.

The members who held important positions in the YUSU between the 1931-32 academic year and the 1935-36 academic year were the ones groomed by Principal D.J. Sloss and university authorities. As those students also aimed at securing jobs in the Indian Civil Service and B.O.C Company after they had graduated, they carried favour with high-ranking officials of the university. So they never brought about any benefit to the students nor were involved in anti-colonialist movements. In this way, the YUSU was on the side of the university authorities and meant nothing to the students.

Only when it came to the 1935-36 academic year, a group of patriotic students were in a vantage position, for they could take up key positions in the YUSU. Ko Nu was elected Chairman, Ko Rashid, Vice-Chairman, Ko Thi Han, Secretary and Ko Aung San, Ko Ohn, Ko Tun Ohn, Ko Tha Hla, Ko Tin Tun and Ko Ba Satt, executive members respectively. Thenceforth, the YUSU started to protect students' rights and criticized the university authorities bluntly. On 31 January 1931, Ko Nu gave a

speech to the students in the meeting-hall of the YUSU. During his speech, he happened to say that, as Principal D.J.Sloss was repressive towards the students, he should be punished for that. The following day, the Rangoon Gazette Daily in its editorial said that the student who damaged the prestige of the university authorities should not be forgiven. At that, the university authorities expelled Ko Nu from the university. That provoked anti-colonialist spirit in the minds of the students.

Soon, Thein Tin, under the pen name of Nyo Mya, contributed an article titled, 'The Hell Hound at large (ငရဲခွေးကြီးလွတ်နေပြီ)' to the Oway Magazine published by the YUSU, ridiculing the university authorities. Editor Ko Aung San was asked to identify the writer on pain of expulsion from the university. But, he, on the grounds of the editorial and journalistic etiquette, rejected the ultimatum of the university authorities. So Ko Aung San was also expelled from the university. The anger of the students ran high and was fanned by the expulsion of Ko Nu and Ko Aung San from the university. So the YUSU called urgent-

ly for a meeting of students and decided to go out on strike against the university authorities for their unjust actions. Thus the Second Yangon University Boycott broke out by the end of February 1936. The students encamped for some days at the

increasing. By the beginning of December 1938, the workers from the Chauk Oil Field marched en masse towards Yangon to demand their rights from the government. But, when they came to Magway, they were blocked by the police. So Ko Ba Hein and

When Ko Nu and Ko Aung San were no longer on the YUSU, Ko Ba Hein was made Chairman of the YUSU and Ko Ba Swe.

Mawlamyein Rest-House near the Southern Stair-way of the Shwedagon Pagoda, picketing the university authorities. The university boycott came to an end after four months. And Ko Nu and Ko Aung San entered the Doe-bamar-asei-ayone. The former acted as Treasurer of the organization and the latter, as Secretary-General.

When Ko Nu and Ko Aung San were no longer on the YUSU, Ko Ba Hein was made Chairman of the YUSU and Ko Ba Swe, Secretary. The students became more interested in politics, with the number of student activists

violently down on the students and Ko Aung Kyaw, a student leader from Judson College, was bludgeoned to death. During his funeral ceremony at the Kyantaw Cemetery, Ko Hla Shwe gave a seditious speech to the audience. Due to his speech, anti-colonialist spirit surged up in the minds of the student, and they kept on protesting against the government.

When the student boycott was in full strength, Yangon University and all the schools throughout the country had to be closed down. The Coalition Government headed by Dr Ba Maw was overthrown and the New Government led by Tharyar-wady U Pu was installed. As the New Government acceded to the demands of the students, the Third Yangon University Student Boycott came to a conclusion. The student leaders engaged actively in driving the Japanese out of Myanmar during the Second World War. When it also came to the Parliamentary Democratic Period, the YUSU hosted political talks and debates. To our chagrin, by the time the July Seven Uprising occurred in the university campus, the Revolutionary Government dynamited the building of the YUSU on 8 July 1962, thus bringing the YUSU to a complete end.

In conclusion, it is found that the student leaders produced by the YUSU took a leading role in independence struggles and that they also held important positions in the Government of the New Union of Myanmar during the Post-independence Period. Therefore, the writer thinks that the YUSU was a politically important association not only in the history of Myanmar but also in that of Yangon University.

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- Wikipedia Source

## Myanmar Gazette Heads of Service Organizations appointed

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
1. U Kyi Zin Tun Deputy Director-General of Pension Department, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry	Director-General of Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry
2. U Aye Kywe Deputy Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department, Ministry of Information	Director General of Information and Public Relations Department, Ministry of Information

## UAGO launches 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo made a speech at the launching ceremony of 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of the Union Attorney-General Office held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Union Attorney-General said that the "Towards Rule of Law" 2015-2019 Strategic Plan was established with the help of UNDP and implemented with four goals starting 2015.

He added that the UAG office drafted the "Legal Service for Justice" 2020-2024 Strategic Plan with the aids of USAID (PRLM-Promoting Rule of Law in Myanmar).

He then highlighted the draft of the second five-year strategic plan based on the positive and negative impacts, suggestions and experiences of the survey and research conducted in the first five-year plan.

He also discussed the 5 goals, 15 strategic objectives and 40 strategic programmes and collaboration with the region and state attorney-general offices, Hluttaw, civil society organizations, international partner organizations, professors of law department and organizations in the justice sector.

He then stressed the objectives of the strategic plan to offer legal services for the public, to raise the awareness of people's legal rights and to gain public trust in the performance of legal offices. He also appreciated the efforts of all participants in drafting the plan and urged to keep cooperating in the processes.

The ceremony was also attended by Deputy Attorney-General, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, Acting Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission, members of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, advocates-general of regions and states, Hluttaw MPs, Deputy Chair of Bar Council, Secretary of Union Legal Aid Board, the Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors and other representatives of CSOs, international partner organizations.—MNA

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

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## Yangon circular train to increase daily runs from 12 to 57



(FILES) A circular train is seen at the Yangon Central Railway Station in Yangon before coronavirus outbreak occurred in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

YANGON circular trains managed and operated by Myanmar Railway (MR) (Lower Myanmar) No 7 Division have reduced their operations since the start of the COVID-19 second wave in September.

According to the General

Manager of Yangon Railway Station, MR is planning to extend its operations from the existing 12 to 57 runs with the launching of three more trains daily.

"Now, the up and down Yangon-Mandalay freight trains are running. Three Yangon circular

trains are running 12 runs daily. Now, we are planning to extend the operations to 57 runs. We haven't yet received any official notification when the new operations will start," said U Thaug Htike, the Yangon Railway Station General Manager.

Although MR announced on 20 January the train fares with the train schedules operated across the country through [www.yangonnation.com](http://www.yangonnation.com), the official notification has not been received yet at the Yangon Railway Station.

So far, MR has upgraded the circular railway with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). As the Yangon circular railway services were launched in 1958, it has been about 60 years now. Major repairs and upgrades were started only this year. The project is being funded by a US\$207.8 million loan from Japan, and K54.5 billion from the national budget, MR stated in its announcement.

All upgrading processes will be completed this year. About 3,700 passengers use the circular trains daily on weekdays while about 3,100 are using them on the weekends.

— Thant Zin Win

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

## Mandalay fires kill nine in 2020

ACCORDING to the Mandalay Fire Services Department, a total of 106 cases of outbreaks of fire were reported in Mandalay district in 2020, claiming the lives of nine people and a loss of over K1,139 million.

Most fire outbreaks were caused by negligence in 57 cases. Besides, there were also 33 electric shocks, two stove fires, six auto fires and eight arsons. The Fire Services Department also found that some old high-storey buildings did not have

the emergency fire extinguishing system and some buildings were constructed without the emergency stairs, said U Kyaw Ko Ko, the assistant director of Mandalay Fire Services Department.

The high-level fire outbreak in Sky Walk Shopping Mall in Mandalay Chanayethazan township was put down in January 2020. Moreover, five people were suffocated to death when a fire broke out in a beauty parlour in Chanayethazan township in

October 2020.

The number of high-storey building construction has increased in Mandalay district. When the high-storey building is constructed, it is necessary to undergo the inspection and abide by the construction rules and regulations of the Fire Services Department.

When a fire breaks out in a housing building, the firefighters can fight the fire rapidly if they have easy access to the road. But, they have to take much

time to put down the fire when the fire breaks out in a market, for example, because there are many obstacles, he explained.

There are 116 fire engines, 63 water tenders, 17 supportive firefighting vehicles and 13 other motor vehicles in Mandalay region. The fire engines, fire brigade, and volunteer fire brigade are also sufficiently ready in every Mandalay Region ward under the constitution.

— Aung Thura

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*

## Myanmar food industry invited for showcase in HK Food Expo 2021

By Nyein Nyein

THE Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) has invited Myanmar businesses in the food industry to display their products at Hong Kong's Food Expo 2021.

The HKTDC has sent the invitation letter to the Myanmar Consulate-General in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong's Food Expo 2021 will take place for five days from 12 to 16 August 2021 in Hong Kong.

The expo aims to boost

Myanmar's food export and promote and connect directly with the countries like China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

The pavilion is 90 square feet wide, and each room will be 4.5 square feet, and about 20 companies could display their products at the event.

The expo will showcase many products such as food and beverage, food packaging, labelling, safety and logistics, goods and services, food production, equipment and related services,

Halal foods and drinks from mainland China, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Mexico, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam.

Under the programme of Convention and Exhibition Industry Subsidy Scheme, the participating companies will receive funding of 50 per cent of exhibition fees or Hong Kong dollar 10,000 (equivalent with US\$ 1,281).

The exhibitors in the trade hall need to display their prod-

ucts for a year at HKTDC online marketplace [www.hktcdc.com](http://www.hktcdc.com), where registered customers from all over the world are buying.

The entrepreneurs interested in displaying at food expo 2021 need to register through <https://event.hktcdc.com/fair/hkfoodexpo-en/s/431-For-Exhibitor/HKTDC-FoodExpo.Rule&Regulations.html> not later than 9 March.

*(Translated by Hay Mar)*



## Chinese traders buying Myanmar cattle on black market



About 15,000 heads of cattle, owned by 150 companies, are now stranded in Muse border as China stopped purchasing cattle. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Nyein Nyein

ACCORDING to the Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association, China has been purchasing cattle from Myanmar on the black market.

Chinese traders are buying cattle on black markets (Lweje, Chinshwehaw and Wa border areas). However, about 15,000 heads have stranded in Muse for shipment to China through a legitimate route.

“Chinese traders keep purchasing cattle through illegitimate channels via Lweje, Chinshwehaw and Wa border areas. They do not want cattle in Muse, which is a legitimate trade route. This action is like supporting the black market instead,” confirmed U Soe Nang, Chairperson of the Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association.

Around 2,000 heads of cattle are daily traded on black markets, he continued.

As a result of this, some traders brought the cattle from

Muse back to their home owing to the burden of high feedstuff cost and labour wages. However, some are still waiting for a positive outcome from the bilateral negotiation on cattle export, which will be held in January-end. Moreover, some intentionally stated that they would return to the original designated place but conduct illegal trade in border areas.

“Some traders from Muse turn to black-market instead of going back to home,” U Soe Nang explained.

Regarding cattle exports via Muse, the trading system needs to be changed. Failure to do so cannot avoid a similar event in future. Price manipulation and financial fraud problems will keep arising, said Dr Kyaw Htin, Myanmar Livestock Federation’s vice-chair.

“Such kind of problems will happen as they are carrying out trade in the border area without having trade agreement. They should have made the deal in advance like goat exporters. This

can avoid the scam and goods stuck in the border area. The trade hub should have been in Mandalay or Shan State rather than Muse border. It’d be better if the department concerned grants licence for delivering goods to the border after trade deal,” Dr Kyaw Htin pointed out.

About 15,000 heads of cattle, owned by 150 companies, are now stranded in Muse border as China stopped purchasing cattle. The labour wages and feedstuff cost burden them. It costs K400,000-600,000 to take care of 100 heads of cattle every day.

For legitimate trade, China permits live cattle import only after ensuring the cattle is free from 20 diseases including Foot and Mouth Disease, along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. Therefore, the officials concerned from the two countries are negotiating this.

Earlier, 1,500-2,000 heads of cattle were daily traded through

Muse border: China halted cattle trade with China stepping up border control as precautionary measures for the COVID-19 and other reasons, the association stated.

Additionally, Myanmar’s live cattle export relies heavily on the China market due to a reasonable price. However, Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, and Bangladesh.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export, and the pass is valid for three months. The companies can be taken legal actions if they do not sell the cattle during a three-month period.

Live cattle export was allowed in late 2017, to eradicate illegal exports, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

Myanmar can yearly export around 500,000 heads of cattle beyond domestic consumption, the association stated. *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

## Myanmar to open its trade centre in Singapore

MYANMAR Trade Centre will be opened very soon in Singapore, according to the Myanmar International Trade Centre.

In 2019-2020 financial year (FY), the bilateral trade between Myanmar and Singapore hit US\$3,800 million, shared by over \$700 million in export. Besides, Singapore is one of the top investors in Myanmar, accounting for 45.85 per cent of its total foreign investments.

In international trading, Singapore is one of the main hubs in Southeast Asia. Further, the country is a small island nation where agricultural farmland is scarce with agricultural products imported mostly. Therefore, there will be a more incredible opportunity to boost trade between the two countries.

The Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization (MYANTRADE) has planned to open a Myanmar Trade Centre in Singapore shortly to make effective use of Singapore’s market expansion strategy. The Myanmar Trade Centre will also be opened with the assistance of the Myanmar Business Association (Singapore). The trade centre will be supervised closely by the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore. MYANTRADE was officially launched on 1 April 2016 to place Myanmar as a competitive nation in the regional trade arena by raising Myanmar’s business industry to achieve export-led growth. — Thiri *(Translated by Hay Mar)*

## Domestic palm oil price slipping alongside imported oil price fall

By Nyein Nyein

THE domestic palm oil has slightly decreased, tracking the fall in imported oil price, said U San Lin, chair of Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association.

In early January 2021, production slump in importing countries Malaysia and Indonesia, caused by erratic weather conditions and the COVID-19 impacts, high imports by particular countries under tax reduction, a tax hike on exports in producing countries and the temporary storage of palm oil in those countries contributed to the rise in edible oil price. The palm oil price stood at US\$1,055-1,075 per tonne in the

foreign market. Consequently, it moved around K2,500 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the domestic wholesale market.

In the third week of January, the oil price dipped to \$990 per tonne. Following that, the wholesale price of palm oil moves in the range of around K2,400.

“At present, the edible oil price is quite stable. The imported price declined, and so, the domestic market also reported a small decrease compared to previous weeks. It slipped from over K2,500 per viss to K2,400-2,420 per viss,” he said.

To ensure self-sufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Commerce pur-

chased over 12,000 tonnes of palm oil for reserves, and they have been distributed to the respective regions and states. Those oils are started selling to control the price rise in the domestic edible oil market.

“The Ministry of Commerce and Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association have systematically purchased the reserved oil starting from May 2020, via the tender system. The oil is now distributed to the consumers, handled by the Ministry of Commerce, the Consumer Affairs Department and the related governmental institutions. Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association is also cooperating certain matters,” the

association chair said.

When necessary, selling edible oil reserves is aimed at offering a fair price to the consumers and governing the price, he continued.

The association urged its member to have an adequate supply of oil during the pandemic.

“The association is focusing on sustainable import to meet the market’s demand. Furthermore, there is a cargo shipping problem and shortage of edible oil triggered by production slump during the pandemic. The association is working together with its affiliated members (import companies) so that oil imports will not halt,” U San Lin affirmed.

Last 7 January, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association issued a notice to import the palm oil from foreign countries sustainably, distribute the edible oil at a fair price to the consumers and ensure that there will be no edible oil shortage in regions and state when there is a rise in imported oil price.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported.

*(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*



MAJOR CHALLENGES

# High temperatures, remote islands pose challenges for Asian job distributor

FROM keeping coronavirus vaccines cold in tropical temperatures to ensuring they reach remote islands, a top drug distributor is gearing up for major challenges in shipping shots across Asia.

Only a few countries in the region, which has generally not been as badly affected by Covid-19 as many parts of the West, have started inoculation drives in earnest. But campaigns are expected to be ratcheted up in the coming months and distributors will face a major test.

One of Asia's biggest is Zuellig Pharma, which has about 85 warehouses across the region that can store vaccines at ultra-cold temperatures and a well-developed distribution network.

Of paramount importance is "cold chain storage" -- ensuring vaccines are kept at low temperatures while being produced, flown overseas, stored in warehouses and sent to hospi-



The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine needs to be stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit).

PHOTO: AFP

tals and doctors' offices.

"Cold chain storage for vaccines is extremely important first and foremost for patient safety," Tom Vanmolokot,

the company's executive vice president for distribution and client services, told AFP.

"We cannot administer vaccines that have been outside of

the cold chain," he added, during a visit to their warehouse in Singapore, one of the few Asian countries that has started its inoculation campaign.

This is particularly tricky in some countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia where temperatures often soar above 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit).

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine needs to be stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit) and once thawed for use can be kept at two to eight degrees Celsius for five days.

Meanwhile, US firm Moderna's shot is stored at minus 20 degrees Celsius and those of Chinese company Sinovac at two to eight degrees.

### Biggest challenge

Zuellig Pharma, which has its regional headquarters in Singapore, has developed special boxes to transport the vaccines and keep them cool, which contain devices that record the temperature and ensure the "cold chain" is not broken.

SOURCE: AFP

INDONESIA

## Whale carcass washes up on Bali beach

THE rotting carcass of a nearly 14-metre (46-foot) whale washed up Thursday on Bali beach popular with tourists.

The conservation agency said it was investigating the death of the giant creature, which was first spotted in shallow waters near Batu Belig beach, north of Seminyak.

Curious onlookers gathered around the carcass but the strong smell of decay put many off, said one local. Bali conservation official Prawono Mer-

uanto said the creature could be a Bryde's whale, and that its carcass was later buried at the beach using an excavator.

In July, ten smaller whales were found dead on a beach in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province. Locals managed to get one surviving member of the pod back into the water alive.

Cross-currents off beaches pose a danger to whales as they can get caught between reefs close to shore.

SOURCE: AFP



An excavator hauls the whale carcass to shore to be buried beneath the beach in Bali. PHOTO: BADUNG ENVIRONMENTAL AND HYGIENE SERVICES/AFP

PROTECTING ELEPHANT POPULATIONS

## Satellite images to aid elephant conservation from space

CONSERVATIONISTS have started using satellite imagery to count elephants from space, a technique that British experts hope will help protect threatened populations in Africa.

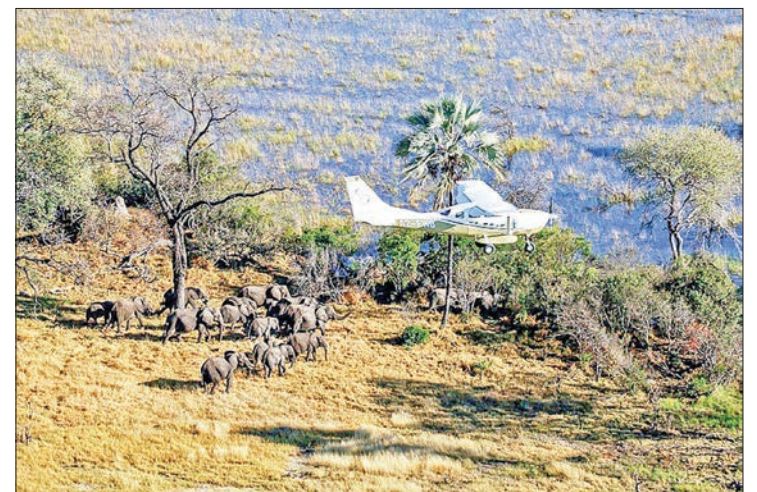
Researchers at the University of Oxford and the University of Bath said the use of algorithms, machine learning and satellite technology could replace current techniques used to count elephants -- a critical aspect of conservation.

"The population of African elephants has plummeted over the last century due to poaching, retaliatory killing from crop raiding and habitat fragmentation," Oxford said in a statement.

"To conserve them requires knowledge of where they are, and how many there are: accurate monitoring is vital."

Currently, the most common technique for surveying elephant populations in savannah environments is aerial counts from manned aircraft.

The academics said aerial surveyors can get exhausted, and are sometimes hindered by



The academics said aerial surveyors can get exhausted, and are sometimes hindered by poor visibility. The picture shows surveying by the NGO Elephants Without Borders. PHOTO: ELEPHANTS WITHOUT BORDERS/AFP/FILE

poor visibility.

"Satellite monitoring is an unobtrusive technique requiring no ground presence, thus eliminating the risk of disturbing species, or of concern for human safety during data collection," they added.

"A process that would formerly have taken months can be completed in a matter of hours."

The scientists first developed the techniques at South Africa's Addo Elephant National

Park. The images, from a satellite orbiting 600 kilometres (some 370 miles) above the Earth, could survey upward of 5,000 square kilometres (nearly 2,000 square miles) of land in one pass, captured in a matter of minutes. The scientists trained the algorithm to recognise only adults among a dataset of 1,000 elephants in the park and then found it was also able to identify calves.

SOURCE: AFP



LOOK FORWARD WITH OPTIMISM

## Biden bounce peters out for European stocks

EUROPEAN stock markets' bounce from Joe Biden taking office as US president petered out Thursday.

Attention switched to the European Central Bank, which meets Thursday to take stock of their monetary stimulus efforts as more infectious strains of the coronavirus and stricter shutdowns cloud the eurozone economic outlook.

The euro hit a six-month low versus sterling, with the British currency buoyed by the UK's early vaccine rollout, analysts said.

The stronger pound, which also hit a 2.5-year high versus the dollar, weighed on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index featuring multinationals earning in the US unit. Oil prices were knocked off course by Biden's greener credentials compared with Trump, according to traders. Asian stock markets made solid gains Thursday, as the new president prepared to unveil plans on tackling the coronavirus crisis.

Biden on Wednesday signed a flurry of executive orders, starting with rejoining the 2015 Paris climate accord.

The orders included keeping the United States in the World Health Organization, a move observers say will help in the fight against the devastating disease.

Wall Street hit record highs Wednesday as Biden took the helm and looks to push through a \$1.9 trillion relief package for the world's top economy.

SOURCE: AFP

DOWNSIDE RISKS

## Virus resurgence leads BOJ to expect deeper slowdown in Japan's economy



An employee of a restaurant disinfected the counter as they prepare to resume their business, a day after the government announced the lifting of the state of emergency due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in large parts of the country, in Osaka, western Japan, in this photo taken by Kyodo May 15, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

BANK of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda on Thursday warned of downside risks to the economy hit by another state of emergency over the novel

coronavirus, as its outlook for the current business year was slightly cut.

But Kuroda brushed aside concerns that Japan may slip back into deflation.

He also said the central bank will check "the balance" between the benefits and side-effects of the policy tools that have been employed to attain its 2

percent inflation target, already elusive and now further away amid the pandemic.

The BOJ is reviewing its ammunition and plans to announce its findings as early as March. The bank will take additional easing steps if needed, Kuroda said. Earlier in the day, the BOJ board decided to maintain its ultraloose monetary policy at the end of a two-day meeting.

"There is heightened uncertainty over the impact that the spread of infections would have on the economy and finance," Kuroda told a press conference after the policy meeting. "We will be keeping a close watch and will not hesitate to take additional easing steps when deemed necessary."

SOURCE: Kyodo

COPYRIGHT DEAL

## Google signs deal on copyright payments to French press

GOOGLE and French newspapers said Thursday they had signed an agreement aimed at opening the way to digital copyright payments from the online giant after months of heated negotiations.

The accord signed with the APIG alliance of French dailies involves "neighbouring rights," which call for payment for showing news content with internet searches, a joint statement said.

It said the agreement sets a framework for Google to negotiate



Google and French newspapers said Thursday they had signed an agreement aimed at opening the way to digital copyright payments from the online giant after months of heated negotiations. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

individual licence agreements with newspapers on the payments and will give papers access to its new News Showcase pro-

gramme, which sees it pay publishers for a selection of enriched content.

Payments are to be calculated individually and

will be based on criteria including internet viewing figures and the amount of information published.

The deal covers papers that carry "political and general news", the statement said.

APIG head Pierre Louette, who is also CEO of the Les Echos of the Le Parisien newspaper group, said the deal amounts to the "effective recognition of neighbouring rights for the press and the start of their remuneration by digital platforms for the use of their publications online".

Google France chief Sebastien Missoffe called the deal proof of a "commitment" that opens up "new perspectives."

The statement included no information about the monetary value involved, and both APIG and Google declined to give financial details when contacted by AFP. News outlets struggling with dwindling print subscriptions have long seethed at Google's failure to give them a cut of the millions it makes from ads displayed alongside news search results. The Cov-

id-19 crisis has hurt sales even further.

'Delighted'

A Paris appeals court ruled in October that the US giant had to continue to negotiate with French news publishers over a new European law on neighbouring rights.

France was the first country in the EU to enact the law but Google initially refused to comply, saying media groups already benefited by receiving millions of visits to their websites.

SOURCE: AFP

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

## ECB meets as virus woes weigh on eurozone

EUROPEAN Central Bank governors meet Thursday to take stock of their monetary stimulus efforts as more infectious strains of the coronavirus and stricter shutdowns cloud the economic outlook. Policymakers are expected to stop short of taking fresh action after ramping up their pandemic support for the eurozone last month.

But observers will be scrutinising ECB chief Christine Lagarde's words for hints of concern about the virus resurgence and the recent strength of the euro against the dollar.

The Frankfurt institution "will want to stay on the sidelines for as long as possible," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said. "The short-term path of the eurozone economy will be determined by the virus, vaccines, lockdowns, and fiscal stimulus, not additional monetary stimulus."

The emergence of more contagious virus variants in Britain and South Africa has fuelled fears of a possible surge in outbreaks, at a time when many countries are already struggling to bring down Covid-19 cases.

SOURCE: AFP

**THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR**  
**MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY**  
**MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE**  
**(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)**  
**(29/2020-2021)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-126(20-21) (Retender)	Mud Chemicals (3) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 22 January 2021 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm on 22 February 2021**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **22-2-2021, 12:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise  
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206



“NEW DAY”

# ‘Democracy has prevailed’: Biden begins U-turn from Trump



US President Joe Biden holds a pen as he prepares to sign a series of orders in the Oval Office shortly after being sworn in. PHOTO: AFP

JOE BIDEN took charge as the 46th president of the United States on Wednesday with an upbeat call to heal a nation torn by deep schisms as he immediately erased some of Donald Trump’s most divisive policies.

Standing on the steps of a US Capitol that was ransacked exactly two weeks earlier by pro-Trump mobs seeking to overturn his victory, Biden swore the presidential oath on a bulging century-old family Bible moments after Kamala Harris officially became America’s first woman vice president.

“Democracy is precious, democracy is fragile and at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed,” Biden said before a National Mall that was virtually empty due to the ultra-tight security and a raging Covid-19 pandemic that he vowed to confront swiftly.

“We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, con-

servative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility and we’re willing to stand in the other person’s shoes,” he said. “Together we shall write an American story of hope, not fear, of unity, not division, of light, not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healing and goodness.”

But Trump, who falsely said that he was cheated out of a second term and egged on his supporters before their deadly rampage at the Capitol, broke 152 years of tradition by refusing to attend his successor’s inauguration. Biden pushed through a flurry of orders the moment he entered the White House, starting with rejoining the 2015 Paris climate accord, from which the US withdrew under Trump, an ally of the fossil fuel industry.

SOURCE: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### THE COMMUNIST-RUN ISLAND

Cuba says Trump sanctions cost it US\$20 billion

THE Trump administration’s stepped-up sanctions against Cuba cost the communist-run island some US\$20 billion, a foreign ministry official said Wednesday. “The damage to the bilateral relationship during this time has been considerable, and the economic harm to Cuba immense,” Johana Tabalada, a senior ministry official, told AFP. “We estimate it at about \$20 billion,” she said by email. Trump, whose term ended Wednesday with the swearing-in of Joe Biden as America’s 46th president, used his time in power to tighten the screws on Cuba.

SOURCE: AFP

### A RAFT OF COMMERCIAL TIES

Israel and UAE agree renewable energy deal

ISRAELI and Emirati companies have signed an inaugural agreement on renewable energy, officials said Wednesday, as the Jewish state forges ahead with plans to become a global leader in the sector.

The deal is one of a raft of commercial ties to be formed between Israel and the United Arab Emirates since the two nations established ties in September, in a normalisation drive dubbed the Abraham accords.

SOURCE: AFP

### RESET IN RELATIONS

## China calls for ‘better angels’ to prevail in reset with Biden’s US



The front page of a Chinese newspaper showing the inauguration of US President Joe Biden. Beijing has called for a reboot of relations with Washington. PHOTO: AFP

CHINA on Thursday congratulated President Joe Biden on his inauguration and called for a reset in relations between Beijing and Washington, as the new

administration brought an end to the fractious term of Donald Trump.

Beijing also said it welcomed news that the US would re-join

the World Health Organization and the Paris climate accord, as Biden tried to immediately pivot his office back to a key role in global leadership.

The new US president is expected to remain tough on China but commit to international cooperation after Trump’s divisive “America First” approach.

“With cooperation from both sides, the better angels in China-US relations will beat the evil forces,” foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a press briefing.

She said Biden had used the word “unity” several times in his inauguration speech, and that it was “precisely what is needed currently in US-China relations”.

SOURCE: AFP

### ENTERING “DEADLIEST PERIOD”

## As pandemic worsens, Biden unveils ambitious Covid-19 strategy

JOE BIDEN’S administration unveiled a detailed Covid-19 roadmap Thursday to boost vaccinations and testing while centring scientific expertise, after the new US president warned during his inaugural speech the pandemic was entering its “deadliest period”.

Officials said Biden would immediately sign 10 executive orders and other directives to jumpstart the national strategy, which experts said was sorely missing under his predecessor Donald Trump.

The US is the world’s hardest-hit country with more



People wearing face masks carry shopping bags as they walk near Herald Square in New York City, the US on June 25, 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

than 405,000 deaths, and government models suggest the B.1.1.7 variant imported from

Britain could supercharge the outbreak’s trajectory in the coming months.

“For almost a year now, Americans could not look to the federal government for any strategy, let alone a comprehensive approach to respond to Covid,” Jeff Zients, a former management consultant who is Biden’s new Covid-19 task force coordinator, told reporters. “As president Biden steps into office today, that all changes,” he added. Biden’s presidency will initially be shaped by his response to Covid-19 and the associated economic emergency. Whereas Trump seldom acknowledged the tragic toll the virus was

inflicting on Americans, Biden paused in his inaugural address -- which the public was essentially barred from attending due to the pandemic -- to offer a moment’s silent prayer for its victims.

### ‘Restoring trust’

The plan has organized goals like restoring the trust of the American people, surging the vaccination campaign, and mitigating viral spread through aggressive masking and testing, while expanding the public health workforce.

SOURCE: AFP



HEAVY-HANDED

# Mongolian PM resigns after protests over Covid-19 mother's treatment

MONGOLIA'S prime minister resigned Thursday following protests and public outrage over the treatment of a coronavirus patient and her newborn baby.

Landlocked Mongolia reported just a handful of Covid-19 cases last year after imposing strict border controls, but in November its first domestic transmissions caused a new wave of lockdowns and restrictions.

Anger mounted this week after TV footage showed a woman who appeared to have recently given birth being moved to an infectious disease centre wearing only hospital pyjamas and plastic slippers, despite temperatures dipping to minus 25 degrees Celsius. After protests outside government buildings on Wednesday, the Mongolian politician apologized on behalf of the government and said he would stand down immediately.

"Unfortunately, we made mistake during relocating that mother," admitted Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa Thursday. "It was heartbreaking to see how she was treated."



Anger mounted after TV footage showed what appeared to be a new mother and baby being moved to an infectious disease centre in temperatures of minus 25 degrees Celsius. PHOTO: AFP

"As a prime minister, I must take the responsibility."

The video of the woman in an ambulance clutching her baby prompted fierce criticism, particularly as Mongolian tradition dictates new mothers should avoid the cold weather and cold food for the first month after birth.

On Wednesday around 5,000 mostly young protesters gathered in a square opposite government buildings in the capital Ulaanbaatar, some carrying wrapped up bundles to represent babies.

Ulziibayar Purevsuren, 30, held a banner reading "resign" and said she was there to com-

plain about "incompetent doctors".

The vice prime minister -- also head of the national emergency commission handling the pandemic -- had already resigned on Wednesday evening, followed by the minister of health.

SOURCE: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### GAS EXPLOSION

#### Death toll in Madrid building blast rises to four

THE toll from a powerful explosion caused by a gas leak that gutted a building in a residential part of Madrid rose to four on Thursday after a priest died from his injuries. The 36-year-old, who was ordained a priest last June, was one of the 11 people who were injured during Wednesday's blast in the La Latina district. He died in hospital in the early hours of Thursday, the Madrid archdiocese said in a statement. The building belonging to the Church of the Virgin de la Paloma and San Pedro el Real located next-door, was completely destroyed in the blast. Two men who were walking in the street and a repairman who was fixing the building's boiler on the fifth floor when the blast occurred also died. SOURCE: AFP

### SERUM INSTITUTE

#### Fire at world's biggest vaccine maker in India

A major fire broke out at the Pune-based vaccine manufacturing company, Serum Institute of India on Thursday. The company is involved in producing Covid-19 vaccine Covishield - developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca - which has been given emergency use authorization in India recently and is being used for inoculation in the country's mega vaccination drive. Deputy Commissioner of Police Namrata Patil told PTI the fire broke out at 2:45 pm on the fourth and fifth floor of the SEZ 3 building in the Serum Institute premises. SOURCE: AFP

ON FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

# US joins Paris climate accord hours after Biden's inauguration



Protesters hold up signs during a demonstration in front of the White House in Washington, DC objecting to US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord, June 1, 2017. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday welcomed US President Joe Biden's decision to rejoin the Paris climate accord, but called on him to adopt an "ambitious" plan to fight global warming. "I warmly welcome President Biden's steps to re-enter the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and join the growing coalition of governments, cities, states, businesses and people taking ambitious action to confront the climate crisis," Guterres said in a statement.

"We look forward to the leadership of United States in accel-

erating global efforts towards net zero, including by bringing forward a new nationally determined contribution with ambitious 2030 targets and climate finance in advance of COP26 in Glasgow later this year." The world's second largest emitter of greenhouse gases was withdrawn from the Paris deal under Donald Trump. Biden has previously warned that climate change poses the "greatest threat" to the country, which was battered by record climate-fuelled wildfires, hurricanes and heat last year.

SOURCE: AFP

DEADLIEST ATTACK IN 3 YEARS

# Twin suicide blasts in Baghdad leave nearly 30 dead

A rare twin suicide bombing killed nearly 30 in central Baghdad on Thursday, Iraqi state media said, the deadliest attack in the city in three years.

At least 28 people were killed and another 73 wounded in the attack on a huge open-air market for second-hand clothes in the Iraqi capital's Tayaran Square. The market had been teeming with people following nearly a year of restrictions imposed across the country in a bid to halt the spread of Covid-19.

According to an interior ministry statement, the first suicide bomber rushed into the market,

claiming to feel sick.

Once a crowd of people had gathered around him, he detonated his explosives. As people then flocked around the victims, a second attacker detonated his bomb, the ministry said. An AFP photographer at the scene said security forces had cordoned off the area, where blood-stained clothes were strewn about the muddy streets. Paramedics were working to remove casualties, and Iraq's health ministry said it had mobilized medics across the capital.

SOURCE: AFP



Iraqi security forces at the scene of Thursday's twin suicide bombing. PHOTO: AFP



## ONE Championship: Unbreakable event to be held tonight

THE first event of the ONE Championship in 2021 named “Unbreakable” featuring bouts of world-class fighters: will be held at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore on 22 January (today).

There will be a total of six fights: five men’s bouts plus one bout of women fighters.

In the main card of the event, or ONE Super Series Bantamweight Kickboxing World Title, Alaverdi Ramazanov will take on Capitan Petchyindee Academy.

In the Mixed Martial Arts – Lightweight event, Shinya Aoki will fight with James Nakashima.

In the heavyweight title bout of the ONE Super Series Kickboxing, Rade Opacic will face Bruno Susano.

In the Welterweight title fight of the Mixed Martial Arts, Zebastian Kadestam will fight against Gadzhimurad Abdulaev.

In the Mixed Martial Arts– Atom Weight fight of women’s category, Meng Bo will face Samara Santos.

In the Straw Weight fight of the Mixed Martial Arts, Namiki Kawahara will take on Lito Adiwang.

The ONE Championship: Unbreakable event will be broadcast live on Skynet Channel at 7 pm of Myanmar Standard Time and will also be broadcast live free on ONE Super Application and ONE Championship YouTube Channel, according to the statement with the ONE Championship. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

## Europe’s top clubs hang tight as financial restraints limit transfers

LONDON—As the January transfer window enters its final stretch, Europe’s top clubs are sitting tight with financial restraints exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic leading to a downturn in player movement worldwide. For the first time in a decade, the number of international transfers dropped from the previous year, by 5.4 per cent, as total transfer fees plummeted by almost a quarter -- a downward trend the direct result of the global health crisis, FIFA said in its annual report this week. English clubs again dwarfed the spending of their rivals on the continent, accounting for \$1.63 billion of the overall \$5.63 billion outlay in 2020 -- more than double the combined \$731.5 million paid by Italian clubs.—AFP ■



Sebastien Haller moved to Ajax in a record deal for the Dutch giants. PHOTO: ANP/AFP/FILE

## Healthy Koepka tees it up in La Quinta with eye on US Open

LOS ANGELES—Former world number one Brooks Koepka starts his 2021 PGA Tour season in the California desert this week with a revamped West Coast schedule aimed at prepping for the US Open. Koepka is playing the event at La Quinta, California, for the first time, part of an early-season schedule that will include the PGA Tour stop at Torrey Pines in San Diego -- which will also host the US Open in June.

“I thought it was impor-

tant to play Torrey Pines and just see the golf course one more time before we go play it in the summer,” said Koepka, who has previously played sparingly on the tour’s West Coast swing. “One of the things I like (is) to play one round or at least one tournament before I get things started, and I feel like playing this week was beneficial, just to really get the game in flow, just see where you’re at this week and make some adjustments going in to next week.”—AFP ■

## Zidane says he still has players’ backing after Real Madrid cup humiliation

MADRID—Zinedine Zidane insisted his players still believe in him after Real Madrid suffered an embarrassing defeat by third-tier side Alcoyano in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday.

La Liga’s reigning champions lost 2-1 to Alcoyano, who scored a remarkable winner in extra-time after having a man sent off.

Real Madrid have now won only once in their last five games, with an extraordinary loss heaping more pressure on Zidane.

Asked if he still had the backing of the players, Zidane said: “Yes I believe so, you have to ask them. We’ve done good things

this season, apart from the last four games. Now we have La Liga and the Champions League and we have to work. Whether my message gets through, you have to ask them, I can’t answer that.”

Zidane took responsibility for the defeat. “I’m the coach, it’s my fault,” he said. “I am responsible, the players have tried but well, we’re out.”

Zidane rotated his starting line-up but a team that included the likes of Marcelo, Isco, Casemiro and Vinicius Junior should have had enough to beat opponents sitting fourth in their division in Segunda B.—AFP ■



Zinedine Zidane will be under pressure again after Real Madrid’s shock defeat in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP/FILE