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Friday, 12 February 2021

Honouring the 74th Anniversary of Union Day

Union Day Objectives

- To work on the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, till the success of the internal peace process is achieved.
- Development of the socio-economic life of the ethnic nationals.
- To work for the emergence of a constitution that is in alignment and harmony with the Democratic Federal Union.
- All ethnic nationals to work for the preservation and protection of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and perpetuation of national sovereignty.
- To nurture and develop new generations endowed with high skills and capabilities imbued with strong Union spirit.



Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sends Message of Greetings on occasion of 74th Anniversary Union Day

Esteemed national brethren,

At this auspicious 74th anniversary of the Union Day, I wish you all health, happiness and prosperity.

A review of the Myanmar's history shows that the country was powerful and wealthy during the times unity could be established, and was weak and eventually fell into servitude during the time national unity was weak due to various reasons. National unity was on the wane and the Union spirit melted away as the colonialists were sowing seeds of mistrust among the nationalities through various means to prolong their rule. It is a historical lesson; we all must remember.

Together with the Tatmadaw, the national people had to sacrifice lots of lives through the unyielding spirit to restore independence. During the independence struggle, national unity and Union spirit could be firmly reestablished under the straightforward leadership. As a proof of the national unity based on Union spirit, Pan-

glong Agreement was signed on 12 February 1947 with the resolve to restore independence together with the hill regions. The 12th of February, the historic day, on which, the Union spirit of all the nationalities was demonstrated, has been honoured as the Union Day. Today is the 74th Anniversary of the Union Day.

Esteemed national brethren,

The hill regions and the plains could restore independence on 4 January 1948 in unity together with the Tatmadaw. It is the outcome of the Union Day. It was the Union spirit that led the country to restore independence through unity. So, all the national people should foster Union spirit and strive steadfastly for the perpetuation and prosperity of the Union.

It's a common knowledge that the pace of national development was slow because of the failure to solve the internal armed conflicts broke out after the evaporation of the Union

spirit due to various reasons during the very early stages of post-independence period and to restore national reconciliation and Union peace firmly till now. The opportunity to share the benefits among the Union people will always be low as long as peace cannot be restored fully in the Union.

Thanks to the determined efforts to firmly restore the national reconciliation and Union peace for the sustainable and harmonious progress for all the nationalities, ten ethnic armed groups have signed the NCA. Furthermore, future peace programs can be adopted after reaching a common agreement.

The Tatmadaw has ceased its military operations except in national defence and administrative undertakings a for a certain period and reinforced the peace dialogue for achieving eternal peace in the whole country.

Esteemed national brethren,

Union spirit is the founda-

tion of the historic independence struggle, and it will also be the cornerstone of the future democratic country. In fact, the Union spirit is the resolve to build a Union through mutual amity between all the nationalities. As a peaceful and stable democratic State will be built only with the Union spirit we must nurture a highly qualified new general possessing a strong Union spirit.

All the nationalities must obey the existing laws to successfully formulate the democratic State. We must safeguard the 2008 Constitution as it is the mother of all laws.

Esteemed national brethren,

Our Three Main National Causes – non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty – is the most important task of the democratization process. As the task of safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes is the main duty of the Tatmadaw, all the sectors of the State

duty have already been transferred to the Tatmadaw. So, I would seriously urge the entire nation to join hands with the Tatmadaw for the successful realization of democracy, while adhering to Our Three Main National Causes.

As for the country which is a heterogeneous society, historical lessons have taught us that only the national unity can ensure the non-disintegration of the Union and the perpetuation of sovereignty. We will have to continue to consolidate the strength of the national unity in the future also.

The State is exerting well-rounded efforts to prevent, contain and combat Covid-19, a pandemic the whole world is facing. It will continue this undertaking with added momentum. I would make a solemn pledge to alleviate the Covid-19's impact on the people's socio-economy at present and to ensure a quick socio-economic recovery during the post-Covid-19 period with the well-organized and united strength of the entire nation.

Information to Public

11 February 2021

The Union Election Commission held the multiparty general elections on 8 November 2020 for the third session of Hluttaw.

It was reportedly known that there were some electoral frauds and illegal acts in collecting voter lists, advance voting and casting ballots on the election day.

Regarding these issues, the UEC is conducting investigations.

To support the investigations, people who know about the electoral frauds and illegal acts may report to the UEC by letter, the following telephones, Fax and emails.

Telephone number 067 340 4410

Telephone number 067 340 4220

Telephone number 067 340 4313

Fax phone number 067 340 4411

Email dep.research@e-uec.gov.mm

Email dep.res22uec@gmail.com

Union Election Commission

Union Election Commission Press Release

11 February 2021

- The Union Election Commissions is scrutinizing matters related to the general elections held on 8 November 2020. As per Section 38 (a) of the Constitution of Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 'Every citizen shall have the right to elect and be elected in accord with the law'. According to Article 6 under Chapter 4 of the Hluttaw Election Laws, 'Persons possessing the following qualifications shall be eligible to vote at the election irrespective of sex and religion:
 - citizen, associate citizen, naturalized citizen or holder of a temporary certificate who has completed the age of 18 years on the day of commencement of election and who does not contravene the provisions of this Law;
 - Electorate concerned shall have the right to recall elected people's representatives in accord with the provisions of this Constitution.
- In the general elections held on 8 November 2020 (except in the areas where the elections did not take place), the previous UEC announced 38,271,447 eligible voters. However, the figure of Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 was 32,211,188 including citizen, associate citizen and naturalized citizen.
- The UEC is scrutinizing the voter lists in general elections on 8 November 2020, the population figures of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and the realistic situations. The findings from the areas scrutinized will be announced.

Union Election Commission

Union Day Flag-hoisting Ceremony to be broadcast live on MRTV

Flag-hoisting Ceremony of 74th Union Day 2021 will be held at the open field in front of the Nay Pyi Taw City Hall at 7 am on 12 February.

The ceremony will be broadcast live starting 6:40 am on MRTV, National Races Channel (NRC), MITV, Channel 9, SkyNet (Ethnic Channel), Myanma Radio.—MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Chairman of State Administration Council Senior General Min Aung Hlaing Situation Report on the Country

Esteemed national people in the Union,

I extend my greetings with making wishes for peace and prosperity of the country while the national people in the Union are serving for the country unitedly.

Our State Administration Council is making the utmost efforts for peace and stability of the country and the unity and socio-economic development of national people in performing our duties during the State of Emergency. Cooperation of national people is necessary for us in these works. The real strength of our nation lies within the country.

“Complete Unity Makes Success”, as the saying goes, we could successfully establish a well-developed Democratic Federal Union and a disciplined democratic system which all of us aspire to. Our national people need to have good health for works and learning education. Only then we could achieve our goals.

The Ministry of Health and Sports and the military medical corps are working hard in offering public healthcare services. We are taking great care in building the country's strength and the health of people amid COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all the health workers at the front-line against the pandemic, volunteers and high-ranking officials above the directors of respective departments have received the first round of vaccination. The vaccination programme has reached the elderly persons of 65 years old and above in the townships included in the stay-at-home order. The programme will also be extended. Two million doses of Covishield injection against COVID-19 as a second batch will arrive in Myanmar from India today. We have adopted new plans for the vaccination programme to cover all the people. In doing so, the import of new and effective vaccine approved by the FDA will be permitted first. The private sector will be allowed to import these vaccines -- implications of Sputnik V vaccine from Russia, SARS-COVI from China and COVAXIN from India. These brands of vaccine are being used in other countries. The vaccine will be used in healthcare services. We will also allow private sector for importing the vaccine in line with the rules and regulations in making the programme reach all the people, and the well-wishers take part in



this programme. Only then, people will get vaccinated urgently without requiring to wait the turn and then the vaccination programme will become more effective.

It is advised to all the national people that the pandemic is still occurring in the world. It is essential to follow the COVID-19 containment rules before getting vaccinated. People are found assembling in public areas at present. It is urged to all to avoid it as such assembly could increase the rate of COVID-19 infection. It is also required to accelerate the momentum of medical tests to be able to contain COVID-19. We are working to do so. Such work plans are needed for the recovery of businesses delayed by the pandemic. People are requested for their coordination, adherence to the rules and contribution to the programme. I also urged all the health workers to return to their public healthcare services at the hospitals.

Regarding the civil service personnel, the 2008 State Constitution has defined that ‘The Union shall enact necessary laws for Civil Services personnel to have security and sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter, to get maternity benefits for married women in service, and to ease livelihood for the welfare of retired Service personnel’. There have been some laws for civil service personnel. There might be some weaknesses in these laws. We will review the laws for

their benefits. The civil service personnel have got a direct chance to serve the country and people. They are honourable persons for their public services through their responsibility and accountability for operating the sectors of legislation, administration and judiciary. We need to maintain this dignity.

Due to unscrupulous persons' incitement, some civil service personnel have failed to perform their duties at present. The former is also making various forms of disturbances to the civil service personnel who are working for the country and people amid many difficulties. Some announcements were issued yesterday. Effective actions will be taken. Required assistance will be given to the civil service personnel who are serving the public to be able to perform their duties without any worries. I am grateful to them for their loyalty to the country and people. Those who are away from their duties are requested to return to their duties immediately for the interests of the country and people without focusing on the emotion.

Another issue is concerned with the elections. As per Section 399 of the State Constitution, the Union Election Commission include holding Hluttaw elections, supervising Hluttaw elections; forming different levels of sub-commissions and supervising and compiling lists of voters and amending. And that the UEC has responsibilities to compile and amend

voter lists. The voter lists were found incorrect. More errors were found in the voter lists than the figures compiled by the Tatmadaw in some places. After exercising the multiparty democracy system, our country has organized three general elections and two by-elections. The successive commissions were led by U Thein Soe, U Tin Aye and U Hla Thein. Every UEC should be independent. It has been proved in 2010 and 2015 general elections. Their commissions could settle disputes before, during and after the elections.

Every UEC has to ensure a “free and fair” election, which can result in a “good governance and clean government”. If any UEC failed to perform these tasks, establishing a genuine and well-disciplined multiparty democracy would not occur. The UEC has to take responsibility for their performance. According to Section 398 (a) of the State Constitution, the President shall constitute a Union Election Commission, and as per its Section 400, the President may impeach the Chairman or the members of the Union Election Commission. These sections are deemed to make reciprocal relation and counterbalance between the President and the UEC. These are the provisions in State Constitution we need to follow. At least, it is required to follow the oath included in the Form of Oaths or Affirmation, saying that “an elected representative of the Pyithu Hluttaw/ the Amyotha Hluttaw/ the Region or State Hluttaw, will uphold and abide by the Constitution of the Union”.

Anyhow, while we are performing our national duties during the State of Emergency, we will put in plenty of our efforts for socio-economic development of the people, unity and development. We will work for the establishment of a modern nation which is an objective of the Union. We will keep on working for the emergence of a Union based on a federal system, non-disintegration of the Union and strengthening national unity. With a clear and intense focus on the path of genuine and well-disciplined multiparty democracy, we will accomplish the Union of Myanmar's objectives.

I also wish for our national brethren's well-being in the Union and calls on working together for the interest of the Union.

Thank you all.

Mandalay Region Administration Council's Announcement to Public

Some unscrupulous persons are putting various forms of pressures and posing threats to civil service personnel in performing their duties at present. The civil service personnel who have encountered such pressures and threats shall contact the following phone numbers. Strong legal actions will also be taken against those who make such pressures and threats.

Contact phone numbers

-02 403 9635
-02 403 7199

-02 403 6869
-02 403 6978

-09 797 144 144
-09 694 740 311

Tatmadaw found 10,482,116 (over 10.4 million) fraud votes with overlapping in different townships, regions and states and some forms of possible irregularities

There were 84 political parties contested in the 2020 General Elections. A total of 217 letters of complaint were submitted. The UEC failed to take the complaints into consideration for many times. Political parties sought the assistance of the Tatmadaw, which is taking part in the leading role of national politics. The Tatmadaw then checked the voter lists and found 10,482,116 (over 10.4 million) fraud votes with overlapping in different townships, regions and states and some forms of possible irregularities.

It was also found 11,943 ineligible voters under 18-year of age, 4,648,270 (over 4.6 million) without national scrutiny cards and 18,356 voters were the 100 years and above.

(Excerpt from the speech to the public made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 8 February 2021)

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw

CHAIRMAN of State Administration Council and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by the council members Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Zaw Myo Tin and other officials visited the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the visit, the Senior General firstly donated flowers and water to the Buddha images.

He then went around the pagoda and, warmly greeted the pilgrims and visitors.

The pagodas and religious buildings have reopened to public starting 8 February in accordance with the COVID-19 regulations.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing looks around the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs meets with Brunei Darussalam Foreign Minister II via videoconference

U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held discussions with Dato Seri Setia Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd. Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam, current Chair of ASEAN, via videoconference at 2:00 pm on 11 February 2021 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the discussion, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs apprised the Brunei Foreign Min-



MoFA Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin meets his counterpart from Brunei Darussalam via videoconference from Nay Pyi Taw on 11 February. **PHOTO: MNA**

ister on the recent developments in Myanmar. The two Foreign

Ministers cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to

the promotion of existing bilateral relations and cooperation

between Myanmar and Brunei Darussalam including closer collaboration in ASEAN on the basis of ASEAN solidarity and unity.

The Union Minister also congratulated Brunei Darussalam for assuming the Chairmanship of ASEAN and reaffirmed Myanmar's commitment to extend fullest support and cooperation to Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship and on the priorities and deliverables as well as to further advance the ASEAN Community building endeavours.—MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No (52/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Deputy Minister

U Kyaw Myo Htut is appointed and assigned to the duties of Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the State Administration Council in accordance with Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No (53/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Region/ State Administration Council Members

The Region/State Administration Council members are assigned to the duties of region/state Ministers by the State Administration Council in accordance with Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The following persons are appointed as the members of Region/State Administration Councils.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Kachin State
(a) U Myo Swe
(b) U Taint Saung | 9. Mandalay Region
(a) U Myo Aung
(b) U Thein Htay |
| 2. Kayah State
(a) U Paw Lu Chan
(b) Daw Su Myar Yin Yin Lay | 10. Mon State
(a) U Zaw Lin Tun
(b) U Aung Kyi Thein |
| 3. Kayin State
(a) U Saw Khin Maung Myint
(b) U Zaw Win | 11. Rakhine State
(a) U San Shwe Maung
(b) U Than Tun |
| 4. Chin State
(a) U Ngun Sun Aung
(b) U Go Swin Khaing | 12. Yangon Region
(a) U Aung Than Oo
(b) U Zaw Win |
| 5. Sagaing Region
(a) U Hla Han
(b) Daw Yi Yi Than | 13. Shan State
(a) U Khun Thein Maung
(b) U Sai Leik |
| 6. Taninthayi Region
(a) U Maung Gyi
(b) U Khin Maung Myint | 14. Ayeyawady Region
(a) U Tin Aye
(b) U Ohn Myint |
| 7. Bago Region
(a) U Htay Lwin Oo
(b) U Tin Oo | |
| 8. Magway Region
(a) Dr San Hlaing | |

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No (54/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment and Assignment of Nay Pyi Taw Council Members

The following persons are appointed by the State Administration Council as members of Nay Pyi Taw Council in accordance with Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. U Myint Soe
2. U Zayar Lin

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No (55/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment of Yangon City Development Committee members

The following persons are appointed as the members of the Yangon City Development Committee in accordance with Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. U Bo Htay | Chairman, Mayor |
| 2. U Nyi Nyi | Vice-Chairman, Deputy Mayor |
| 3. U Nyunt Phe | Secretary |

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order Number (56/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment and Duty Assignment of the Mandalay City Development Committee members

The following persons are appointed as the members of the Mandalay City Development Committee in accordance with Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. U Saw Han | Vice-Chairman/ Deputy Mayor |
| 2. U Win Maung | Secretary |

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order Number (57/2021)
15th Waning of Pyatho, 1382 ME
11 February 2021

Appointment of the Self-administered division/zones administration Committee members

The following senior military officers are appointed as the members of the Self-administered Division or Self-administered Zone Administration Committee in accordance with Article 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Air 2522 Lt Colonel Nyi Nyi Kyaw | Naga Self-Administered Zone | 4. BC 30132 Lt Colonel Moe Min Win | Pa Laung Self-Administered Zone |
| 2. BC 34100 Lt Colonel Tin Naing Oo | Danu Self-Administered Zone | 5. BC 32118 Lt Colonel Thaw Naung | Kokang Self-Administered Zone |
| 3. BC 30545 Lt Colonel Nyi Nyi Tin | Pa-O Self-Administered Zone | 6. BC 34056 Lt Colonel Aung Kyaw Soe | Wa Self-Administered Division |

By order

Sd/ Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

State Administration Council's Announcement

Some unscrupulous persons are putting various forms of pressures and posing threats to civil service personnel in performing their duties at present. The civil service personnel who have encountered such pressures and threats shall contact the following phone numbers. Strong legal actions will also be taken against those who make such pressures and threats.

Contact phone numbers	-067 412 168	-067 412 246	-067 412 388	-067 412 598	-067 412 539
	-067 412 222	-067 412 387	-067 412 444	-067 412 066	-067 412 540

Ministers' meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw



THE meeting of Union Ministers was organized at the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry yesterday.

Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Win Shein, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San and Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi attended the meeting.

The Union Ministers discussed the circulation of No (3) Heavy Industries Enterprise, testing of garment and textile, quality certification, fuel import of Customs Department, reopening of Zoo, speedy trading system including export and import, recovery plan for COVID-hit businesses and cooperation between ministries.

The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and officials of relevant departments.—MNA

Union Ministers meet to discuss the relevant matters of the ministries concerned on 11 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister observes express of MoLIP staff members

UNION MINISTER for Labour, Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing attended the expressions of the Labour Department and the Immigration and Population Department for January 2021 yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the expression of the Labour Department, the Union Minister said the monthly expressions are held to facilitate the difficulties related to accommodation and transportation problems of the staff of the department who are responsible for the labour issues related to not only the domestic workers but also the Myanmar migrant workers abroad.

He said the staff are working daily in accordance with the law, rules and regulations to facilitate wages and health-care for workers, employment



Union Minister U Myint Kyaing attends the expressions of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population staff members in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

opportunities and performances as well as to prevent disadvantages for workers.

During the expression of the Immigration and Population

Department, the Union Minister said the staff from the Immigration and Population Department are carrying out duties related to national security. He contin-

ued they play an important role for the country as they are striving for immigration services at border checkpoints to prevent illegal immigration; for the cit-

izens to hold a certain type of card depending on their citizenship and for making the census accurate for the country.

He said it is necessary for all staff to abide by the Civil Service Law and pay attention to national security and national interest in all activities. The Union Minister said to openly present the difficulties faced by the staff during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Afterwards, requirements were presented by the responsible persons of each department and coordinated by the Permanent Secretary and the Director-General. The Union Minister urged to take care of a systematic manner due to the state of emergency and to work together in unity to achieve the goals and objectives of the departments.—MNA



MoEA Minister inspects display of ethnic cultural, traditional items

UNION MINISTER for Ethnic Affairs U Saw Tun Aung Myint looked into the display of cultural and traditional items of Myanmar ethnic people at the ground floor of his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Director-General from the Department of Ethnical Literature and Culture reported on the reason for the display of items to conserve ethnic culture, literature, languages and historical heritages.

The display features dresses, costumes, traditional musical instruments and personal items of 8 major ethnic people and 50 indigenous groups.—MNA

Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint looks into the display of cultural and traditional items at the MoEA office on 11 February 2021. **PHOTO: MNA**

MIFER holds coordination meeting

THE Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations organized a coordination meeting on facilitation in businesses in accordance with the directives of State Administration Council yesterday.

During the meeting, Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo briefed the coordination meeting and highlighted the main focus of business sector during the short-term governance of government.

In the speech to public made by State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, it included revival of state economy, invitation of local and foreign investments, promotion of bilateral relation between alliance countries and those interested in Myanmar, following of agreements in line with the law, giving permits to businesses which have been approved in policy by the previous government as quickly as possible and development of farming sectors and export sectors.

He also said Myanmar is also



one of the countries that face economic impacts of COVID-19 and instructions are being made to revive the economy. The unpractical ways and some things of existing law and procedures that can be obstacles in businesses will be revised and amended.

He then discussed the facilitation of investment, delay reduction in departmental processes, capacity building of relevant departments, Streamlining and Simplifying Procedures, Maxi-

mizing Online Services, Assuring aftercare services, Reducing Regularoty Burden, providing information in a timely manner and Transparency Enhancement recognized as SMART Programme.

He also said approval seeking step at the department will be relaxed in permitting the investment and quick response must be made by the relevant departments, if necessary.

As the first procedure, negotiations between the ministries

will be conducted to revise and relax the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding the investment. For the second procedure, the One Stop Service (OSS) Centre of Myanmar Investment Commission will be also revised like the OSS of Thilawa SEZ.

The senior officers of ministries assigned at OSS are needed to be fully authorized in accordance with the law and procedures to become effective and quality

OSS.

The third procedure is granting licences and permits. Some of the licences and permits are needed to scrutinize for business fields and they are essential ones according to the laws and rules while some of the licenses and permits are at Low Risk. Similarly, some permits and licences are made although they are not required at all. Therefore, granting permits and licences will be conducted in line with the law.

He then discussed the duties of ministry for investment sector to negotiate between ministries and firms and work pans to permit the delayed investment in accordance with the existing law and procedures.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw and other officials of relevant ministries including Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, YCDC, MCDC and Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation.—MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Order No (58/2021)

1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1382 ME
12 February 2021

State Pardon Order

1. While the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is establishing a new democratic State with peace, development and disciplines, to turn the prisoners into certain decent citizens, to please the public and to create the humanitarian and compassionate grounds, the State Administration Council, as per Section 204 (a) of the State Constitution, has issued an amnesty order for the punishments received before 4th Waning of Pyatho 1382 ME (31 January 2021) for any offence as follows:

- (a) From the death penalty to life imprisonment (with no possibility of release)
- (b) From life imprisonment and with no possibility of release to 40 years (those who have been pardoned from the death penalty to life imprisonment in the previous amnesty orders are not concerned with this pardon)
- (c) Those who have been sentenced from the death penalty to life imprisonment in the previous amnesty orders will be reduced to 50 years of imprisonment
- (d) From more than 40 years of imprisonment to 40
- (e) 40 years and under are cut one-fourth

Sd/
Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Order Number (59/2021)

1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1382 ME
12 February 2021

Remitting prison sentences

While the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is establishing a new democratic State with peace, development and disciplines, to turn the prisoners into certain decent citizens, to please the public and to create the humanitarian and compassionate grounds, the State Administration Council, as per the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 401 (1), the State Constitution has remitted the punishment of 23,314 prisoners from the respective prisons, jails and camps, upon the conditions 'to serve the new punishment together with the remaining punishment to which he was sentenced this time, if more offence is committed.

Sd/
Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Order Number (60/2021)

1st Waxing of Tabodwe 1382 ME
12 February 2021

Remitting prison sentences

While the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is establishing a new democratic State with peace, development and disciplines, to maintain friendly relations with other countries and to create the humanitarian and compassionate grounds, the State Administration Council, as per the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 401 (1), the State Constitution has remitted the punishment of 55 foreign prisoners from the respective prisons, jails and camps, upon the conditions 'to serve the new punishment together with the remaining punishment to which he was sentenced this time if more offence is committed.

Sd/
Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

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](tel:09-5252525)) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

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

Vaccination beginning the end of pandemic

Sixteen days after the beginning of vaccination with 1.5 million vaccines donated by the Government of India, two million doses of vaccines purchased from India arrived yesterday.

With the arrival two million doses, our vaccination programme will gain momentum.

This time, people will be in the line-up for vaccination as the front-line health workers including health professionals, worker and volunteers have been received first doze at the beginning of the vaccination programme.

Now, are seeing the beginning of our victory against the pandemic that has infected over 141,000 and taken over 3,100 lives.

Our country has bought 30 million doses of COVID-19/AstraZeneca from India, of which about two million will arrive in the first week of February. Meanwhile, vaccines provided under the COVAX Facility will arrive in March and vaccines bought by the state budget will arrive in April.

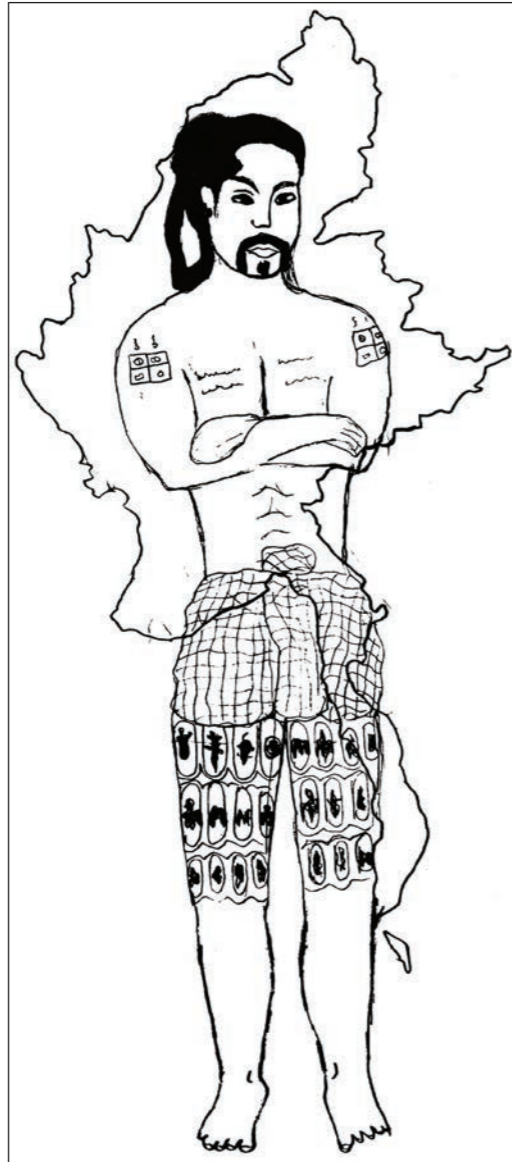
The coming months can bring logistics, public relations and communications challenges for the government and health authorities.

About 70 per cent of our population will be vaccinated against COVID-19 in 2021 and 2022. We are confident that the experiences of the Ministry of Health and Sports and its health workers and experts in immunization programmes would make the coming national immunization programme against COVID-19 a success.

The first vaccination is not the end of the process, although it's the beginning of the end. Those who are vaccinated still need to wear masks when they go into enclosed public places (including the vaccination sites) and they need to maintain a proper distance from others. They need to wash their hands frequently and show up when it's time for their second vaccination.

We have a long way to go until the majority of our citizens are vaccinated, but we should all be grateful to see the progress being made and keep the faith that a return to normalcy is on the horizon.

But, all must follow the basic rules and regulations — including staying masked and socially distanced until we are out of the woods.



Hailing 74th Anniversary Of Union Day

A land of ethnic affinities that is Myanmar, the choicest gift of Mother Nature

- (1) On this auspicious day of the 74th Anniversary of Union Day (12-2-2021) We all join hands to celebrate most bitingly
- (2) Come to take a glance at the map of our country You're sure to get the shape of a human body
- (3) Composed of states and regions Inhabited by 135 ethnic groups Engaging in fields, farms dry and wet cultivation With age old different types of irrigation
- (4) Hunting and stock breeding to supplement their income Happily and peacefully their lives they run
- (5) Chins, Kachins and North-East Shans Occupied the head of the map facing and bending East To meet the rising Sun to greet
- (6) Chin State, Kachin State and East Shan State partly Forming like the neck and shoulders of human body.
- (7) Next, the two hands are composed of Rakhine State and Middle East Shan State The torso (Main human body) has Sagaing, Magwe, Mandalay Regions
- (8) Down below are Bago Region and Kayah State forming the lower part of Torso
- (9) The Yangon, Ayeyawady Taking the shape of the lower human body
- (10) The delta of all rivers flowing from north to south Such as the Ayeyawady, the Sanlween, the Sittaung and Kisanpady

- The Chindwin, the Shweli, Duhtawady, Zagyí etc Forming the seat of a human body
- (11) The Ayeyawady and the Taninthayi Region stretching out into the seas like human legs Standing firmly in good state Big rivers, small rivers and tributaries distributaries and creeks Are arteries and veins of a body indeed
- (12) Among member states of ASEAN Ten Myanmar stands the largest of Peninsula
- (13) It was on the 12th February of 1947 Bogyoke Aung San and all his ethnic allies and friends.
- (14) Unitedly joined their hands Vowing seriously to stand together Through thick and thin long lone forever.
- (15) A memorial stone pillar set up at Shan State's Pinlong Every year we gather together For rejoining for long long. Divided we fall, United we stand Hailing this auspicious Day,

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Daja
Sithu Dr Khin Maung Nyunt

WHO OKs AstraZeneca jabs for Covid variants, over-65s

The AstraZeneca-Oxford Covid-19 vaccine can be used for people aged over 65, and also where coronavirus variants of concern are circulating, WHO experts said Wednesday, soothing fears about the jab.

THE World Health Organization's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) issued interim recommendations for when and how to use the two-shot vaccine, which has yet to receive WHO emergency use authorisation.

The announcement came after the vaccine suffered setbacks, raising questions about whether it should be used on older people, or in places where a variant of the virus first found in South Africa is circulating. SAGE chief Alejandro Cravioto acknowledged the lack of data on the vaccine's efficacy for people aged over 65, which has prompted a number of countries to withhold recommending its use in older people, who are by far the most vulnerable to the virus.

But the experts concluded that given its performance with younger adults, "it is likely that the vaccine will be found to be efficacious in older persons. The trial

data indicate that the vaccine is safe for this age group."

Cravioto told journalists: "We feel that the response of this group cannot be any different from groups of a younger age."

SAGE, he said, recommends it be used "for 18 years and above, without an upper age limit".

Cravioto said the experts were awaiting more specific data on the vaccine's efficacy in people over 65, but said it "would not be appropriate" to wait with its recommendations. "We have thousands of people dying," he stressed.

"Anything we can do to use a product that might reduce that is totally justified, even if the information is not as complete as we would like."

Effectiveness against variants

The experts also said they had discussed the effectiveness of the vaccine when faced with emerging coronavirus variants of concern, and in particular the

one first spotted in South Africa.

The country has decided to put off using AstraZeneca jabs in a planned vaccination programme over concerns about their efficacy against the variant.

Alarm was raised when a South African study concluded the AstraZeneca vaccine provided only "minimal" protection against mild to moderate Covid-19 caused by the variant.

But the WHO insisted more data was needed, pointing to the study's scope, methodology and small size. And SAGE recommended Wednesday that the vaccine could be used "even if variants are present in a country".

The WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan said the benefits would "far outweigh" any risks, as variants may not be the predominant strains circulating in that country. The SAGE experts also said the vaccine proved more effective when the interval



A health worker prepares a dose of the AstraZeneca/Oxford Covid-19 vaccine at a temporary vaccine centre set up at City Hall in Hull, England. PHOTO: AFP

between the doses was extended to between eight and 12 weeks.

Equitable distribution

The Covax system was set up by WHO, the Gavi vaccine alliance and CEPI to procure Covid-19 jabs and ensure their equitable distribution worldwide.

The AstraZeneca vaccine ac-

counts for almost all of the 337.2 million doses Covax is preparing to ship before July to some 145 countries, covering three percent of their combined population.

However, the AstraZeneca jab first needs emergency use authorisation from the WHO, which is set to make a decision next week.

Only the Pfizer vaccine has so far received the WHO stamp of approval. Gavi chief Seth Berkley called SAGE's announcement, which clears a path towards authorisation, "excellent news".

"We will continue with our plans to roll this vaccine out worldwide," he said. SOURCE: AFP

Union Day slogans for 2021 (74th Anniversary)

- 1. Equal opportunities and equal responsibilities, living in a peaceful, prosperous and stable Union.
- 2. Unity is strength, solidarity is power That is the heart of the Union.
- 3. Many fruits sprouting from one stem, this is our brotherhood of the Union.
- 4. Our Union built with brotherhood, Never forget Union day.
- 5. Drinking the same water, living on the same land, we are Union nationals of the same blood.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 11th February, 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 12th February, 2021: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th February, 2021: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th February, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th February, 2021: Fair weather.

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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UCSB holds coordination meeting

THE Union Civil Service Board held a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Members of the UCSB, the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary from the departments, Director-General and Deputy Director-General attended the coordination meeting, and the Rectors for the Central Institutes of Civil Service participated in the meeting through videoconferencing.

At the meeting, Chairman of the UCSB U Than Swe said that his office will continue its efforts to achieve the objectives of each department in accordance with the guidelines set by the State Administration Council.



Union Civil Service Board Chair U Than Swe presides over the coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 February 2021. PHOTO: MNA

He continued the recruitment and training processes have been suspended due to the current pandemic situation and it is necessary to systematically carry out those processes via online system as well as to implement the projects in ac-

cordance with the rules and regulations. He added to submit the difficulties in doing so in a timely manner and without delay and to be dutiful in accordance with the Civil Service Law.

Members of the UCSB, the Permanent Secretary, Director-

General from the Department, Rectors from the Central Institute of Civil Service and the Deputy Permanent Secretary discussed the ongoing works and further activities and the Chairman gave necessary instructions.—MNA/GNLM

YMBA donate bloods to military hospital

A total of 270 members, including monks and laypersons, of the Young Men's Buddhist Association, donated blood to the military hospital in Dagon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

The collective blood donation was aimed to supply blood for the hospital which is providing medical services to the public.

Brig-Gen Sein Lin, the Commander of Military Hospital, expressed thanks for the blood donation and presented nutritious foods to the blood donors, according to the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

CBM discusses monetary policy, banking services

THE CENTRAL BANK of Myanmar organized a discussion at its headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, Governor of CBM U Than Nyein briefed the discussion and held talks on the importance of Department of Monetary Policy Affairs and Financial Institutions Regulation in mon-

etary and financial affairs.

He also urged the staff to work and solve the problems in unity.

Then, Director-General and Deputy Directors-General of Monetary Policy Affairs and Financial Institutions Regulation Department respectively briefed the details of the work plans.

The meeting also focused on the enactment of monetary and interest rate policy, measures for price stability, action plans and statistics to implement the economic objectives, annual report of CBM, report on the implementation of monetary policy and Quarterly Financial Statistics Bulletin, monitoring and regulation of

banking rules, permission for foreign banks and foreign branches, AML/CFT and policy, courses and loan-related matters with IMF, World Bank and SEACEN.

Then, the Deputy Governors of CBM coordinated the discussion, and the Governor instructed the effective ways for working processes.—MNA

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Sub-Committee

From 4-2-2021 to 10-2-2021, local/foreign donors contributed 194.298 million Kyats and USD 6,225 to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 and foreign currency account EDC 600012 opened at the Myanmar Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account as of 10-2-2021 is as follows:

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List

	Kyat
Account opening balance on 4-2-2021	29,914,850,003.39
Received amount of money from (4-2-2021 to 10-2-2021)	194,298,112.00
Closed balance on 10-2-2021	30,109,148,115.39

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List

	USD
Account opening balance on 4-2-2021	178,133,924.53
Received amount of money from (4-2-2021 to 10-2-2021)	6,225.00
Closed balance on 10-2-2021	178,140,149.53

2 mln doses of COVID-19 vaccine imported from India

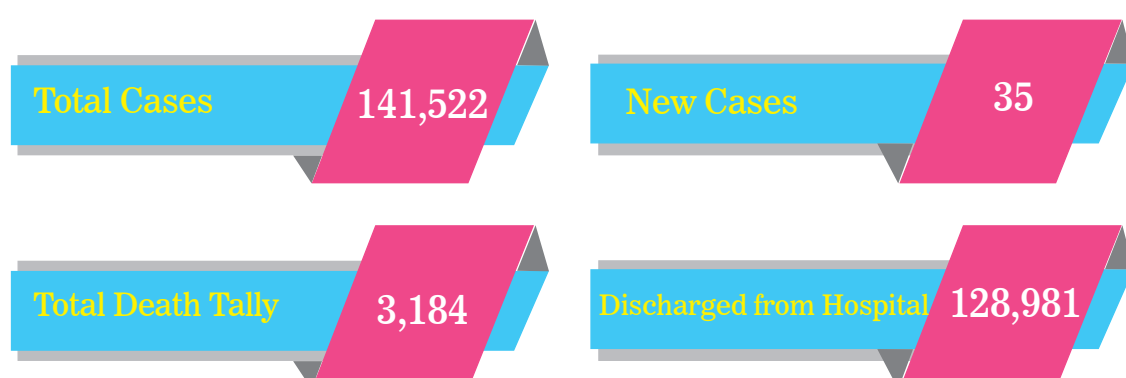
A relief flight of Air India from New Delhi landed at Yangon International Airport with 2 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine COVISHIELD/ AstraZeneca purchased from India yesterday afternoon.

The vaccines were produced by the Serum Institute of India (SII) Director-General for the Yangon Region Public Health Department Dr Tun Myint and Deputy Director-General for Medical Research Department Dr Hlaing Myat Thu and officials received the vaccines for the public.—MNA

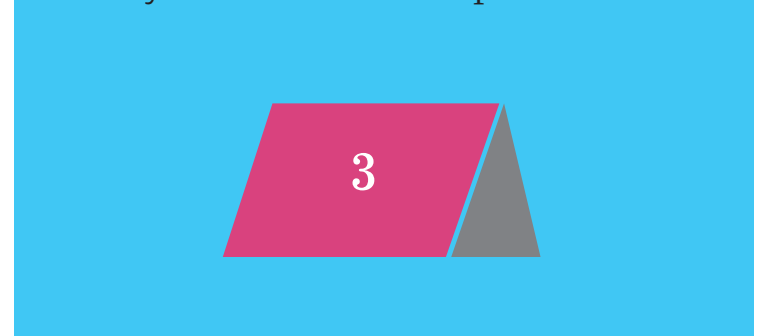
35 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 February, total figure rises to 141,522

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 141,522 after 35 new cases were reported on 11 February 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 3,184 died, 128,981 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 11 February 2021



Daily death toll until 8 pm 11-2-2021



Ministry of Health and Sports

Shwedagon Pagoda allows around 3,000 pilgrims per day

AFTER over 10-month closure caused by COVID-19, Shwedagon Pagoda has allowed around 3,000 pilgrims a day starting from 11 February in line with current COVID-19 rules and regulations.

“As everyone knows, the Shwedagon Pagoda was prohibited from visiting for ten months during the pandemic period. Currently, the number of infected patients has dropped, and the Shwedagon Pagoda was reopened today. Even on a typical day at the pagoda, there were around ten thousands of pilgrims every day. Therefore, on the first day of Shwedagon pagoda’s opening date, the monks, nuns, the elderly, and the people with disability were given priority to visit the pagoda first. Starting from 11 February, all people are allowed to visit the pagoda. However, the pilgrims

have to follow the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports,” said U Aye Tun, the pagoda’s board of trustees.

Visiting time is categorized into six -- 6 am-7 am, 8 am-9 am and 10 am-11 am in the morning followed by 1 pm-2 pm, 3 pm-4 pm and 5 pm-6 pm in the afternoon. The pagoda will allow 500 pilgrims for one visiting period with a total of 3,000 a day for all six periods. The visitors are allowed to enter Shwedagon pagoda through four pagoda terraces.

All pilgrims must wear the masks, use hand gels and undergo body temperature checks. According to the pagoda’s board of trustees, they must also provide personal information and keep a social distance from each other. —Ko Myint Maung/GNLM



Pilgrims are seen paying homage to the Shwedagon Pagoda as it reopens.
PHOTO: KO MYINT MAUNG

Rise of tomato price makes growers happy



A local grower is seen at one of the tomatoes farms in Minbu (Saku). PHOTO: WIN NAING (MINBU IPRD)

ALTHOUGH the yield of tomatoes is abundant in COVID-19 period, the tomato price has risen up again, and the local growers from Minbu (Saku) are making a handsome profit.

“The tomatoes are mainly sold as a kitchen food. Earlier, the tomato price plunged to K100 or K200 per viss from K800 or K1,000 per viss. Thus, the local farmers are in great trouble. Now, we are happy because of rising prices again,”

said U Ba Aye, a tomato grower.

The tomatoes are grown mostly in Kyaukton village than other villages in Minbu township. The local villagers cultivated monsoon tomatoes and winter tomatoes. According to the local growers, tomato’s wholesale price was K400 per viss while the retail price of tomato K500 per viss.

“This year, some regions are restricting the travelling.

So, the price of tomatoes is cool in the market. But, the price of tomatoes is hiking these days again,” said Ma Nwe New Htay, an owner of tomato plantations from Kyauktan village.

Some growers are facing problems with their plants being restored by the infestation. According to the local growers, they are taking care of their plants using fertilizer and pesticide. —Win Naing (Minbu district IPRD)/GNLM

Myanmar awaits rice import permit from China to export rice via Muse

MYANMAR is waiting for a rice import permit to export Myanmar rice to China through Muse border checkpoint this year, said Vice-Chair U Min Thein of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

Myanmar rice trading to China has stopped because last year’s rice export permit from China ended on 31 December. Myanmar is thus still waiting for the rice import permit from China for this year 2021. The rice import licence for 2021 is likely to grant in early March after Chinese New Year. Also, China is expected to issue more licences to the companies this year than last year, according to the rice traders’ opinion.

At present, Myanmar is exporting about 3,000 rice bags and 7,000 broken rice bags to China through Muse land borders under the remaining permit quota of 2020, said U Min Thein.

Although Muse-China border trade was halted on 1 February, the border trading business became normal on 2 February.

Myanmar shipped over 720,000 tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign countries between 1 October and 15 January of this financial year, earning an income of over \$275 million, Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) stated.

However, MRF expected to export only 2 million tonnes of rice to foreign countries this FY because erratic weather affected irrigated water and summer paddy cultivation, said MRF Chair U Ye Min Aung.

In FY2019-2020, Myanmar earned over \$800 million from the export of over 2.5 million tonnes of rice. —NN/GNLM

Request to Public

1. Democracy practices have granted the public for freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason for human rights, some persons are now under pressured, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnish the image of democracy.
2. For preventing destructive actions against stability of the state, safety of the public and the rule of law, it is also required to proper actions in line with the law.
3. All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of country and people.

Pandemic has hit LatAm women's employment hard: report



Women's employment in Latin America dropped six percentage points between 2019 and 2020 due to the pandemic, says ECLAC. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE coronavirus pandemic will set back the participation of Latin American women in the labor market by a decade, according to a United Nations report published on Wednesday.

The rate of women in employment in the region dropped from 52 per cent in 2019 to 46 per cent in 2020, said the assessment by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

In the same period, the rate of men in employment dropped from 73.6 to 69 per cent.

"The pandemic will provoke a reduction in the employment levels of women that represents a regression of at least 10 years," said the report.

It said restrictions in Latin America to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus has forced women out of the labor market and that "to look after the demands of care in

their homes, they will not return to job seeking." ECLAC calculated the unemployment rate for women in the region at 12 per cent but said that figure "rises to 22.2 if you assume the same level of labor participation for women as in 2019."

Regional GDP slowed by 7.7 per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic, and that hit employment hard.

ECLAC estimates that around 118 million Latin American women live in poverty, an increase of 23 million from 2019.

"Women in the region are a crucial part of the front line in the response to the pandemic," said Alicia Barcena, ECLAC's executive secretary, adding that 73.2 per cent of health care workers are women.

Yet women working in health care are paid on average 23.7 per cent less than men.—AFP ■

Osaka drops plan to open casino resort by March 2027

OSAKA officials have decided to scrap the western Japan city's plan to open a casino resort by March 2027 under the country's liberalized gambling laws, due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, sources familiar with the matter said Thursday.

In 2019, the city of Osaka and Osaka Prefecture set fiscal 2026 as their target, but this will not be mentioned in a soon-to-be adopted policy as a number of companies have fallen behind in their preparations for the project, according to the sources.

The decision comes after the Japanese government postponed its plans to

accept formal applications from municipalities vying to host so-called integrated resorts, which incorporate a large hotel, conference rooms and gambling areas. The application period, originally scheduled for January through July, is now slated to begin in October.

The government is planning to select up to three locations where integrated resorts will be permitted to open under legislation that cleared parliament in 2018 to legalize casino gambling in Japan.

The Osaka prefectural and city governments will respectively hold a meeting of senior officials possibly later

this week to approve the policy, which sets out details such as the schedule until the casino's planned opening and various conditions for firms involving in its construction, according to the sources.

The policy will not include a specific opening year, but the officials aim to open a hotel and parts of other facilities in stages, the sources said.

So far, Yokohama, located near Tokyo and the second-largest city in Japan by population, and Wakayama and Nagasaki prefectures have declared their intentions to host casinos.—Kyodo ■



File photo taken Dec. 2, 2020, shows Yumeshima (foreground), an artificial island in Osaka Bay, western Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Row escalates between Twitter and India over blocking accounts

TWITTER said Wednesday it had blocked some accounts in India over comments on mass farmers' protests, but the social media giant refused to shut down others despite a government threat of criminal action. Indian officials last week demanded Twitter block hundreds of users that tweeted about demonstrations against proposed new agriculture laws, saying they were a "grave threat to public order". Twitter initially complied by blocking a number of accounts -- including those of a prominent news magazine and farmer groups -- but unblocked them hours later, prompting threats of "penal action" from the government. Farmers have camped on roads leading into the capital New Delhi since late November as they call for the new laws to be repealed, in one of the biggest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government since it came to power in 2014. International celebrities including pop superstar Rihanna and climate activist Greta Thunberg have even weighed in, drawing the ire of the foreign ministry, which called their online comments "sensationalist". In a blog post, Twitter said it did "not believe that the actions we have been directed to take are consistent with Indian law". "In keeping with our principles of defending protected speech and freedom of expression, we have not taken any action on accounts that consist of news media entities, journalists, activists, and politicians," the San Francisco-headquartered company said. "To do so, we believe, would violate their fundamental right to free expression under Indian law."—AFP ■

Uber posts big loss as pandemic clobbers ridesharing



Uber delivered a hefty loss in the fourth quarter as the pandemic hit its ride-sharing operations, even as it saw spectacular growth in food delivery. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

UBER on Wednesday reported another hefty loss in the final three months of 2020, as the smartphone-summoned ride business struggled during the pandemic.

The loss of \$968 million was narrowed slightly from \$1.1 billion in the same period a year

earlier, according to Uber, which saw a surge in its food delivery operations to partly offset the decline in ridesharing.

Revenue in the quarter was \$3.2 billion, a 16 per cent decrease from the same period a year earlier.

"While 2020 certainly tested

our resilience, it also dramatically accelerated our capabilities in local commerce," Uber chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi said.

Uber said its "mobility" segment in the quarter including ride-hailing was down 52 per cent from a year earlier while its delivery operations -- including its Uber Eats meal service -- saw a revenue jump of 224 per cent.

Chief financial officer Nelson Chai said the improving financials suggest Uber is "well on track to achieving our profitability goals in 2021."

Daniel Ives at Wedbush Securities said the results represent "another major step in the right direction" and suggest an improving picture as Uber emerges from the pandemic.—AFP ■

Oil states face \$9 tn shortfall as demand falters: analysis

OIL AND GAS producing nations face up to nine trillion dollars in lost income as the world accelerates the transition to renewable energy, saddling poorer but resource-rich nations with higher risk of stranded assets, an analysis showed Thursday.

Over 400 million people live in the worst affected countries, where declining fossil fuel revenues could see government income fall by at least 20 per cent, leading to cuts in public services and greater unemployment, according to an assessment by the Carbon Tracker industry watchdog.

Half of those set to be impacted live in Nigeria, where a 70- per cent drop in oil revenues would cut state income by one third, it found.

As renewable energy

such as wind and solar becomes cheaper than fossil fuels, oil producing nations collectively risk a \$13 trillion loss by 2040, compared with industry expectations.

The report warned that governments needed to act now to reduce dependence on oil and gas revenues or face the risk of wasted capital and obsolete infrastructure projects.

Andrew Grant, head of climate, energy and industry at Carbon Tracker, said recent net-zero announcements from global powerhouses such as China and Japan have added impetus to the shift away from highly polluting energy.

“Clearly for certain places in the world there will be trade-offs,” he told AFP.

“Thinking about fossil fuel producing countries who are reliant on fossil



Oil and gas producing nations face up to nine trillion dollars in lost income as the world accelerates the transition to renewable energy, saddling poorer but resource-rich nations with higher risk of stranded assets. PHOTO: AFP

fuel revenues to balance their budgets, they're going to have to face challenges.”

“It really is a matter of when, rather than if,” he added.

The analysis found that seven countries, including Angola and Azerbaijan, could lose at least 40 per cent of total government revenues by 2040 if

oil failed to hold its price at long-term OPEC forecast levels of \$60 a barrel.

Nigeria, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq were among 12 nations that

could lose between 20-40 per cent of government revenues, while Russia, Mexico and Iran were set to lose between 10-20 per cent, the study said.—AFP

UK presses EU on finance deal for post-Covid recovery

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey on Wednesday pressed the

EU to agree a post-Brexit financial services deal by next month for the sake

of pandemic recovery on both sides of the Channel.

The costs of the City of London's lack of access since Brexit were laid bare in new data showing Amsterdam last month overtook London as Europe's top share trading hub.

Rebutting some of the demands made by Brussels in return for the City to regain access to EU states, Bailey said Britain had no intention of creating “a low-regulation, high-risk, anything-goes finan-

cial centre and system”.

“We have an opportunity to move forward and rebuild our economies, post-Covid, supported by our financial systems. Now is not the time to have a regional argument,” the UK central banker said in a speech. Financial services — a key driver of the British economy -- were largely omitted from the last-minute Brexit trade deal agreed between London and Brussels in late December.—AFP

Malaysian GDP suffers sharpest contraction since 1998

MALAYSIA'S economy last year contracted at its fastest pace in more than two decades, as the coronavirus shuttered businesses and hammered the country's key exports, data showed Thursday.

Full-year gross domestic product shrank 5.6 per cent, the statistics department said, marking the worst performance since a 7.4-per cent drop in 1998 during the Asian financial crisis.

In the fourth quarter, GDP slipped 3.4 per cent year-on-year, worse than had been forecast as a virus resurgence forced authorities to reimpose measures to curb its spread.

The Southeast Asian nation initially kept the virus in check by quickly imposing a lockdown last year that closed most businesses for weeks, but it was hit hard by a second wave once restrictions were eased.—AFP



Sun sets on the City. London has been overtaken by Amsterdam as Europe's top share trading hub. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU0165N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY. NO. (KHLU0165N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PRIDE

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PRIDE VOY. NO. (01/2021)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELSEN SHIPS SERVICE (S) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OLIVIA

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OLIVIA VOY. NO. (37L)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Strongman tells loyalists Belarus beat foreign ‘blitzkrieg’



Alexander Lukashenko is Europe's longest-serving leader. PHOTO: AFP

BELARUS strongman Alexander Lukashenko said Thursday his country had fought off a foreign “blitzkrieg”, in a defiant address to loyalists following months of protests against his decades-long rule.

The authoritarian leader had promised to unveil reforms at the people's assembly in the capital Minsk, but his opening address to a packed auditorium of delegates in military and official uniforms instead focused on attempts to overthrow his

government.

“The blitzkrieg did not succeed. We held on to our country,” Lukashenko said, using language especially resonant in a country that suffered huge losses at the hands of German forces in World War II.

“Despite the tensions in society artificially created by external forces, we survived,” Lukashenko said. “We have to resist at all costs. And 2021, this year, will be decisive.”

Belarus's opposition,

whose leaders have either been jailed or forced into exile in neighbouring EU countries, have dismissed the two-day All-Belarusian People's Assembly as a piece of political theatre.

Lukashenko last year faced the most serious threat to his rule since coming to power in the ex-Soviet country in 1994.

Tens of thousands took the streets across the country to demand Lukashenko's resignation after he claimed to have won a sixth presidential term in August elections opponents said were rigged.

The authorities unleashed a violent crackdown on protesters, detaining thousands, many of whom reported torture and abuse in custody.

Lukashenko in November promised to change the constitution to calm the protests, just weeks after he was shown during a demonstration brandishing a Kalashnikov assault rifle and referring to protesters as rats.—AFP

From pandemic to politics, tough road ahead for South African president

SOUTH AFRICA'S President Cyril Ramaphosa delivers his annual address to the nation on Thursday while appearing increasingly fragile politically, hit by massive health and economic crises as well as a divided ruling party.

Each February he outlines his national plan for the year, but this time he will be hard put to try to uplift a pandemic-weary and more impoverished population, while battling for political survival within his ANC.

His country is Africa's hardest-hit by the coronavirus pandemic, which has sent the economy tanking to its worst in many decades, and a slew of government officials are embroiled in embarrassing cases of looting of funds meant to help fight the pandemic.

His government has come under fire for its handling of the pandemic, and lately for delays in acquiring and rolling out vaccines.

“He's going to get it from



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, pictured here in May 2020, has come under fire for his handling of the pandemic and delays in the rollout of vaccines. PHOTO: WHO/AFP

all sides,” said Amanda Gouws, political scientist at Stellenbosch University.

Ramaphosa will have to perform a juggling act to reignite public confidence while also not agitating a rival faction of the African National Congress (ANC) party to ensure his survival.

He came to power in 2018 after an internal struggle in the ANC resulted in Jacob Zuma being forced to resign

on the back of corruption scandals.

A year later he won a popular mandate following national elections.

‘Absent president’

But now Ramaphosa appears to be struggling to firmly stamp his authority over the 109-year-old party of Nelson Mandela and more broadly throughout the country -- the continent's most advanced economy.—AFP

France struggling in Sahel ‘information war’

AS WELL AS suffering a spate of recent battlefield casualties in the Sahel, France risks losing the fight for hearts and minds in the strategic west African region.

Eight years since it deployed troops against jihadists in Mali, Paris is struggling to impose itself in a separate information war being waged for public opinion.

“Fighting against terrorism implies... protecting yourself during communication and disinformation wars targeting the local populations, which can change perceptions,” French Defence Minister Florence Parly said recently during a speech to special forces.

Part of the problem has been highlighted by recent events on the ground.

The French “Barkhane”

force -- made up of 5,100 troops -- came under severe scrutiny in January after an air strike in a remote and largely inaccessible region in northern Mali.

More than a month later, the facts remain murky. Some locals have told journalists that up to 20 people attending a wedding in the village of Bounti were killed, while the French military insists that they targeted a gathering of jihadists.

“Once the French military becomes engaged with responding to accusations of civilian deaths and collateral damage, whether these allegations turn out to be accurate or not, it will already be perceived as a propaganda victory for the jihadists,” Colin Clarke from the Soufan Center, an American think-tank, told AFP.—AFP



France's war is also about perceptions. PHOTO: AFP

French nun, Europe's oldest person, turns 117 after surviving Covid

Europe's oldest person, French nun Sister Andre, turns 117 on Thursday after surviving Covid-19 last month and living through two world wars, with a special birthday feast including her favourite dessert -- Baked Alaska.

Born Lucile Randon on February 11, 1904, Sister Andre said she didn't realise she had caught the coronavirus, which infected 81 residents of her retirement home in the southeast city of Toulon, killing 10 of them.

“I'm told that I got it,” the nun told AFP ahead of her birthday. “I was very tired, it's true, but I didn't realize it.”

But David Tavella, spokesman for the Sainte-Catherine-Laboure nursing home, said she had “experienced a triple confinement: in her wheelchair, in her room and without a visit”.

“So her birthday, it reinvigorates us,” he added, following the deadly outbreak.

Sister Andre said she was not going to do anything special for her 117th birthday but the home is planning a celebration for her.

There will be a special mass at the home, which has a dozen nuns, and the chef is preparing a birthday feast of foie gras, capon fillet with porcini mushrooms and Sister Andre's favourite dessert: baked Alaska, washed down with a glass of port.—AFP

France to scrap Paris airport expansion: minister

THE French government has decided to cancel a planned expansion of the country's biggest airport, Paris's Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle, a minister said in remarks published Thursday.

Minister for the ecology transition Barbara Pompili told *Le Monde* newspaper that boosting the airport's capacity was not in keeping with the fight against global warming. The government had therefore asked airport operator ADP, in which it owns a majority stake, to scrap the current project "and present a new one, more consistent with its objectives concerning climate change and the protection of the environment". The decision comes a week after a court held the state responsible for its failure to take sufficient measures to halt climate change, a first in France.

The now defunct plan called for the construction of a fourth terminal by 2037 to boost the air-



The French government has decided to cancel a planned expansion of the country's biggest airport, Paris's Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle, a minister said in remarks published Thursday. PHOTO: PIERRE VERDY/AFP/FILE

port's capacity by 40 million passengers per year. Pompili called the project "obsolete" because it no longer corresponded to the government's environmental policy and the needs of "a sector in full transformation towards the

green aircraft of the future".

The plan, with an estimated cost of between seven and nine billion euros (\$7.5-10.9 billion), had already run into resistance from environmental activists and local politicians as well as from

the national environmental agency which said it fell short in terms of climate protection.

Le Monde said the government did not want the next project to focus on any extension of capacity. —AFP ■

Expectant father among India glacier missing as relatives pray for miracle



Rescuers have been trying to dig into a tunnel where they hope some of the missing might be trapped in air pockets. PHOTO: AFP

FROM a first-time expectant father to a son whose promised lunch break call never came -- relatives of those missing after

India's glacier disaster waited for news and prayed for a miracle.

More than 170 people are

still unaccounted for since Sunday, when a wall of water and debris -- blamed on a chunk of glacier breaking off upstream -- barreled furiously down a valley in northern India, leaving a trail of destruction and despair.

Those missing come from all over India, many of them workers at two of the many hydroelectric dams controversially dotting the ecologically sensitive Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

Four days later, their families are hoping against hope that some are still alive in the warren of tunnels where rescuers have been toiling to dig them out.

The 27-year-old welder Rawal Silsiwal, from Rishikesh in Ut-

trakhand, had 20 days of leave planned next month for the birth of his first child.

"He was thrilled about the child and had started a countdown until his holiday," said his uncle Vinod Pokhriyal.

"His wife won't survive the shock of losing him, and that makes us worry about the child."

Vijay Kumar Singh, 24, from Uttar Pradesh, missed his Saturday shift due to illness and worked on Sunday to compensate. He last spoke to his father the evening before.

"He called me every day before entering the tunnel but on Sunday he didn't," his father Ram Dhawan said. —AFP ■

Clashes in northern Iraq kill three Turkish soldiers

THREE Turkish soldiers were killed in a new Turkish military offensive against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, Turkey's Defence Ministry said Thursday.

Two of soldiers were killed Wednesday in a clash that erupted in northern Iraq's Gara region on the first day of the latest Turkish operation, the ministry said. Another soldier died of his wounds on Thursday.

The military said Turkish jets retaliated by striking targets of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in Gara. There was no immediate comment from the militant group on the clashes.

Turkey has carried out numerous cross-border ground and aerial offensives against the PKK, which maintains bases in northern Iraq.

The group began an insurgency against Turkey in the mainly Kurdish southeast in 1984 and the conflict has killed tens of thousands of people. The PKK is considered to be a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union. —AFP ■



A general view of the Gara Mountain near the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shell unveils green strategy after oil output peak

ENERGY giant Royal Dutch Shell declared Thursday that its oil output is locked in decline after peaking in 2019 as it outlined green plans to switch away from fossil fuels.

The London-listed company will invest up to \$6.0 billion (4.9 billion euros) per year in green energy products such as biofuels, electric car charging and renewables, it said in a strategy update.

The group said it anticipates a "gradual reduction" in oil output of 1.0-2.0 per cent each year, including divestments.

Total carbon emissions for the company peaked in 2018, it added.

The global oil sector, nursing vast losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is accelerating plans to switch into greener energy and slash carbon emissions in the face of with intensifying climate change fears.

"Our accelerated strategy will drive down carbon emissions and will deliver value for our shareholders, our customers and wider society," Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden said Thursday. "We must give our customers the products and services they want and need -- products that have the lowest environmental impact. —AFP ■

China has more than 40,000 travel agencies

CHINA had a total of 40,682 travel agencies by the end of 2020, statistics from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) showed. In the fourth quarter of 2020, travel agencies across the country organized about 25.25 million domestic trips, down 49 per cent year on year, according to an MCT report on national travel agencies. The top 10 destinations for domestic visitors during the period were Zhejiang, Hubei, Hainan, Jiangsu, Guizhou, Guangdong, Yunnan, Hunan, Anhui and Shaanxi. During the Spring Festival holiday starting Thursday, 80 per cent of the country's A-level tourist spots will remain open as normal, said the MCT. —Xinhua ■

Hantharwady United signs SUFC player Dway Ko on loan



HANTHARWADY UNITED have signed Myanmar national football team and Shan United striker Dway Ko Ko Chit as the team was preparing for the 2021 season of Myanmar National League and AFC Cup 2021, according to the team statement.

Dway Ko Ko Chit played for Yadanarbon FC, Rakhine United and Shan United in previous year's Myanmar National League season, and has won three MNL championship trophies and one Knockout Cup along with Shan United.

Dway Ko Ko Chit scored 11 goals during 2017-2018 Myanmar National League season and six goals in 2019-2020 Myanmar National League season.

The forward player also scored a goal for Shan United FC during the AFC Cup 2019 competition and another single goal for his team at AFC Cup 2020 competition.

Hantharwady United, which is preparing for the new football season in 2021, has already recruited Ye Yint Aung from Yadanarbon FC, goal-keeper Pyae Phyo Aung and Aung Myat Thu from Southern Myanmar FC, Win Moe Kyaw and Nay Moe Naing from Magwe FC and Ye Lin Htet from Ayeyarwady FC, according to the team statement.—GNLM

Former Shan United Striker Dway Ko Ko Chit will play for Hantharwady United in upcoming Myanmar National League season. **PHOTO: MNL**

Barty overcomes Gavrilova in Melbourne

MELBOURNE—Ash Barty overcame Daria Gavrilova in straight sets at the Australian Open on Thursday amid some concerns over a suspected thigh injury.

Barty lost just 10 points in her first-round win against Danka Kovinic and the world number one got past Gavrilova 6-1 7-6 (9-7) on a warm and breezy Rod Laver Arena.

But she struggled to close out her fourth victory in five meetings with her fellow Australian amid worries over heavy strapping on her left thigh. She will face either Barbora Krejickova or Ekaterina Alexandrova in the third round, which she reached at Melbourne Park for the fifth straight year.

Barty was broken in the first game after three unforced errors, but Gavrilova was unable to consolidate and it proved costly.

A double fault from Gavrilova handed Barty a 3-1 lead and the 2019 French Open champion capitalised to claim the first set in 27 minutes. Barty served three double faults in the second game of the second set, yet she again broke back immediately and proceeded to take a 5-2 lead. But the contest started to turn from then as Gavrilova reeled off four straight games, with errors proving costly for Barty. However, a pair of forehands into the net saw Gavrilova squander two set points in the tie-break and she was punished as Barty finally closed out victory.—AFP ■

Tokyo Olympics boss Mori to resign over sexist remarks: media



Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori (R) bows his head after a news conference in Tokyo, Feb. 4, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO—Tokyo Olympics chief Yoshiro Mori is to resign over sexist remarks that have sparked outrage in Japan and abroad, reports said Thursday.

Multiple major Japanese media outlets, citing anonymous sources, said Mori has told officials of his wish to step down and intends to announce his resigna-

tion at a meeting of Games organisers on Friday. Gaffe-prone Tokyo 2020 boss Mori, 83, has come under increasing pressure after he said last week that women “have difficulty” speaking concisely. He has apologised for the remarks, but dug a deeper hole when he insisted he had heard complaints that women speak at length. Politicians and sports stars were quick to condemn the comments, with heavyweight sponsors also saying they ran contrary to the Olympic spirit.

The International Olympic Committee said they considered the matter closed, but then said the remarks were “completely inappropriate” as the backlash grew.—AFP ■

Bayern's Mueller tests positive for Covid-19: reports



Bayern Munich forward Thomas Mueller is set to miss out on Thursday's Club World Cup final in Doha after testing positive for the coronavirus on Wednesday, according to German media reports. **PHOTO: AFP**

BERLIN—Bayern Munich forward Thomas Mueller is set to miss out on Thursday's Club World Cup final in Doha after testing positive for the coronavirus on Wednesday, according to German media reports.

According to Sky Sports Germany and Bild newspaper, World Cup winner Mueller tested positive after Bayern's training session on Wednesday.

A positive test would rule the veteran striker out of Thursday's clash with Mexican CONCACAF champions Tigres in the Qatari capital, in which European champions Bayern are aiming for a historic sixth title in 12 months.

Neither Bayern nor tournament organizers FIFA have yet confirmed the positive test.

Mueller would be the third Bayern player to contract the

coronavirus in recent weeks, after positive tests for Javi Martinez and Leon Goretzka meant they were unable to travel with the rest of the squad to Qatar.

His absence would be the latest blow to Bayern's Club World Cup campaign, after Jerome Boateng returned home to Germany on Wednesday for personal reasons amid reports that his former girlfriend had died.—AFP ■