

NATIONAL

Raw sesame, peanut import proposal causes price shakeup in domestic market

PAGE-7

NATIONAL

MoHS discusses requirement of lab items for COVID-19 tests

PAGE-4

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 215, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waxing of Tazaungmon 1382 ME

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

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

## State Counsellor reports to people regarding COVID situation

**N**OW I need to urge all the people once again for their health. This is the duty of the COVID-19 committee. Furthermore, it is the duty of the Union Government to take care of the health of the people and to work as much as possible for the security of the people's health and economic welfare. At the moment, as everyone knows, the infection rate for COVID-19 is fluctuating up and down; at an average it is now staying steady at about 1,000 daily. We need to work hard to reduce the infection rate. At this time, we need to be fully aware of the fact that there had been gatherings during the election period; the people are well aware of this fact. Therefore, because there had been gatherings, the infection rate is bound to go up. When we made a study of the situation, we found out that there had been spread of infections in Ayeyawady Region, Mandalay Region, and Bago Region. Everyone knows about this already. The infection rate in the Yangon Region, is of course, the highest. Apart from this, we have



noticed that the rate of infections has increased slightly in these three regions. That is why I want you all to be vigilant. I wish to say again that you can never be too careful.

Regarding the COVID-19 disease, as the weather is becoming cooler, you need to be more careful. According to the

assessments and experience of experts, the COVID-19 virus becomes a little more active and multiplies a little bit faster in cold weather. That is why we need to be more careful as the cold weather sets in. We are lucky because in our country some places are not that cold. However, we have areas where it is cold.

We need to be very careful in cold regions. Therefore, for our people to be healthy and to keep warm the Ministry of Health and Sports has been broadcasting physical exercise programmes; I want our people to take interest in these programmes. If people take part in these exercise programmes, they would feel happy

and healthy. Physical exercises are useful for reducing stress. This is what experts have found out scientifically.

There is another thing; very soon, we will be conducting dance competitions from online networks using TV to promote health. The people can get prizes if they are good at dancing. By doing this, we can reduce stress levels. We can also improve our health. I have said this many times regarding COVID-19 disease. People who are basically in good health do not have to suffer too much even if they get infected. That is why it is very important to be fundamentally in good health. We have found out in our country as well as in other countries that people who have diabetes need to be very careful and vigilant about COVID-19. People who have diabetes have to suffer a lot if they get infected with COVID-19 disease. In our country, there are many people who have COVID-19 disease as well as heart disease. This is because of weaknesses in public healthcare.

SEE PAGE-3

**1,167** new cases of COVID-19 reported on 16 November, total figure rises to **70,161**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rise to **70,161** after **1,167** new cases were reported on 16 November according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these **70,161** confirmed cases, **1,599** died, **53,299** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 16 November 2020



Daily death toll until 8 pm 16-11-2020



Ministry of Health and Sports

# Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam sends congratulatory message to State Counsellor

The following is the congratulatory message from Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam sent to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the successful General Election held on 8 November 2020.

## Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam congratulates the State Counsellor

I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to you on the National League for Democracy's victory during the Myanmar General Elections. Our countries share warm and friendly ties, both

at the bilateral and regional levels. I wish you renewed success in your new term and look forward to continuing our work in further strengthening these much-valued relations, especially as Brunei Darus-

salam assumes the ASEAN chairmanship next year. With my kindest regards and best wishes to you for your continued good health and happiness as well as the progress and prosperity of the people of Myanmar.

# Yunnan govt donates 4 mln yuan worth of COVID-19 medical supplies for Yangon



Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein accepts the donation of medical supplies presented by Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai (R) in Yangon on 16 November. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

GOVERNMENT of Yunnan Province provided 4-million-yuan worth of COVID-19 medical supplies for Yangon yesterday morning.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and his government members, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, the embassy officials and officials and the Representative

Office of Yunnan Commerce in Myanmar attended the donation ceremony in Yangon Government headquarters.

The donation items included 23,000 N-95 masks, 23,000 surgical masks, 15,000 medical face shields, 15,000 pieces of medical protective clothing, 15,000 anti-fog eye masks, 15,000 disposable medical caps, 15,000 plastic shoe

covers, 15,000 sets of latex glove, 15,000 sets of disposable isolation gowns and 5 units of non-invasive ventilators, which were transported to Myanmar by trucks through the border crossing.

Yunnan govt also donated K800 million worth of COVID-19 medical supplies for Mandalay Region on 14 November.—Zaw Gyi (Translated by Aung Khin)

# 136 Myanmar citizens brought back home from Philippines

THE 11<sup>th</sup> relief flight of Myanmar National Airlines, organized by the Myanmar Embassy in Manila, brought 136 citizens back home from the Philippines yesterday.

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

home quarantine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is coordinating with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries to bring back the Myanmar citizens who were 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).—MNA



Myanmar returnees from the Philippines are seen at the Yangon International Airport on 16 November 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

# China-ASEAN expo, summit to be held online from 27 to 30 Nov

THE 17<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Expo and the 17<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Business Investment Summit will be held online between 27 and 30 November in Nanning, Guangxi Province of the People's Republic of China. The online CAEXPO will offer B2B programmes, including one-on-one match meeting, Business

Matching and Online Business Talks.

Although Myanmar business people are unable to attend this year's expo due to COVID-19 pandemic physically, 16 Myanmar subsidiaries in the People's Republic of China are planning to exhibit the products with 28 booths in

collaboration with the Myanmar Embassy (Beijing) and the Consulate-General (Nanning).

The Nanning Consulate-General arranges to display the picturesque view of Myanmar including Myanmar traditional festivals and economic sectors at the exhibition area of 81 square metres for

Myanmar.

So, the Myanmar entrepreneurs wanting to introduce their businesses can send their video files of officially established businesses, products, services, tourism promotion (duration 5 to 10 minutes, file type-mp4, must be in English (or) Chinese language audio,

subtitled with English (or) Chinese language if the audio is in Myanmar language) to Myanmar Economic attaché in Nanning, economicattachenanning@outlook.com and economicattachenanning@gmail.com no later than 20 November 2020.—MNA (Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

# State Counsellor reports to people regarding COVID situation

## FROM PAGE-1

We are making efforts to correct and improve this situation. However, it is not possible to improve the basic healthcare situation overnight. It takes years. We can even say that it starts with the child in the mother's womb. That is why we need to take care of pregnant women from the time of conception. That is why we are making extra efforts to look after these pregnant women during the childbirth period and beyond.

Mothers need to try and prepare well in order for babies to be healthy since the baby is in the womb. So, basic health cannot be improved overnight. If a person already has a basic health problem, the person should pay more attention to COVID-19 risks. Let me stress this point again.

Another thing is that as the COVID-19 crisis lasts much longer, the global economy suffers huge impacts. But Myanmar is not the only country that suffers economic impacts. We are trying our best to cope with the financial and economic difficulties of our citizens.

As we all know, this is the fourth time that we provided financial assistance to the grassroots people. Everything went smoothly during the first, second and third times. As for the fourth time, we have seen that there were some disputes among the crowds in some places. These disputes are not necessary. This is because we have no intention of leaving anyone behind. We are not going to leave anyone behind. If you have been left behind for

any reason, we now have a Centre for Complaints. You can make complaints to the centre if your family did not receive financial assistance. If you did not get your entitlement because you are a single person, you could make a complaint. So, just calm down and make a complaint at the complaint centre. Just inform us about the situation. No one will be excluded intentionally. We will provide financial support again to the needy people who were left behind. So, we want all our citizens who are very dutiful, to help resolve this issue smoothly. We would like to complete the fourth round of financial assistance fully and quickly.

It is not possible to improve the basic healthcare situation overnight. It takes years. We can even say that it starts with the child in the mother's womb. That is why we need to take care of pregnant women from the time of conception.

Another matter is that we heard that some people are facing problems in matters related to getting small loans. They obtained small loans. So, they need to repay. Microfinance organizations also have their own rules. According to their rules, they have to demand repayment of the loans in due course. It can be very frustrating for the people who cannot repay

the loans during the COVID-19 crisis. They have to worry. But they are not able to repay.

According to the financial situations of our country, we cannot provide financial assistance to all the people in the entire country. But we have selected one state and two regions where COVID-19 outbreaks are intense and have large populations. They are Rakhine State and Bago and Yangon Regions.

In coordination with the microfinance organizations, the government has begun making arrangements for payment moratorium. By the way, some people received loans from more than one place. They obtained loans

from two, three or four microfinance organizations, so their debts became a heavy burden.

So I would like to request you not to do that. It would not be easy to repay if you borrowed money from more than one place. Anyway, I understand that getting small loans is a necessity for our grassroots people. So, we are planning to provide loans to

Legal actions will be taken against anyone who fails to abide by the ministry's rules and regulations. We don't want to take legal actions against our citizens. We do not want to punish our citizens. We just want to protect the citizens from this disease.

small businesses that need loans. Within two or three weeks, we hope to be able to present to the public what plans will be carried out. We are doing our best for the business sector. I believe that the general public will participate and cooperate in this effort.

In fact, since two months before the World Health Organization announced COVID-19 as a pandemic, we began discussions on how we can prevent the crisis from harming our people economically. We will implement those plans step by step as needed. So people should not worry too much. But people need to be aware of the risks. I want the citizens to take care of their health. If the citizens can take care of themselves and protect themselves from infection and take care not to spread infections, the burden on the Union Government will be reduced by more than half. Resolving economic and social impacts are responsibilities of the Union government, so we will do our best.

In the video speeches that we deliver twice a week, we will let

the citizens know what we will do and what our plans are. We will let the citizens know about our plans via TV or websites of relevant departments or state-run newspapers as soon as possible. Let me repeat. Recently, crowds were formed, so the spread of COVID-19 is likely to increase within a week or two slightly. Please, avoid crowds to prevent COVID-19. The Ministry of Health and Sports has also issued another statement recently. Legal actions will be taken against anyone who fails to abide by the ministry's rules and regulations. We don't want to take legal actions against our citizens. We do not want to punish our citizens. We just want to protect the citizens from this disease. Our citizens are daring and brave. They know their duty, and they are smart and sharp. So, I hope that all of you will work together and participate for your health, for your own safety and for the safety of our country.

May all be able to live in good health and happiness! Thank you.  
*(Translated by Kyaw Myaing, Maung Maung Swe)*



JAMES BOND'S  
CHOICE

Ω  
OMEGA

OMEGA Boutique:  
Sule Square, Sule Shangri-La Hotel  
Yangon • Tel: + 95 9691187001

AVAILABLE AT:  
Swiss Time Square  
No.99, KaBarAye Pagoda Road  
Yangon • Tel: +95 1540189

## MoHS discusses requirement of lab items for COVID-19 tests

UNION Minister for Health and Sports chaired a videoconference yesterday on the existing and future plans for conducting laboratory tests to control COVID-19 pandemic.

At the meeting, the Union Minister discussed the importance of early treatments, laboratory tests and contact tracing to prevent transmission of COVID-19 disease, and the readiness of laboratory equipment for the containment measures.

He also instructed for making a checklist and reviewing the transport of swabs from respective areas to the laboratories, supplies of lab equipment, and the amount of procurement and relief assistance.

Professor Dr Htay Htay Tin, the deputy director-general from the National Health Laboratory, reported on the tests at the laboratories, the advantages

and disadvantages of ongoing test methods, installation of laboratory equipment, equipment lists, and the needs of human resources.

Professor Dr Zaw Than Tun, the director-general from the Department of Medical Research, reported on the lists of laboratory equipment and the needs for future plans.

Senior health officials then discussed the transportation of swabs from the respective regions and states, the stock of equipment and the required items for tests, suggestions on better transport of swabs, the use of Genexpert test and the need of related items and other laboratory test methods.

Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein and Permanent Secretary Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win coordinated the discussions.—MNA  
(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe presides over the videoconferencing on current and future plans for lab tests in the COVID-19 control measure on 16 November 2020. PHOTO: MNA

## CBM launches New Payment and Settlement System (CBM-NET2)

UNDER the threat of COVID-19, both Myanmar, including CBM and domestic & international banks, and Japan sides have made a joint effort to realize the successful launch of Central Bank of Myanmar Financial Network System 2 (CBM-NET2) on 16 November, 2020. This is advanced and upgraded version of original CBM-NET.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported to implement CBM-NET, a secure and efficient payment and settlement infrastructure, in January 2016, and contrib-

uted to the development and computerization of the financial and banking sector. Since then Myanmar's economy is growing at a remarkable pace and financial institutions in this country have been improving their efficiency to provide better services to public through ICT and new technologies, such as mobile banking, mobile wallets and core banking system. In response to the rapid development in recent years of IT systemization of the core business of banks, CBM-NET2 has been developed based on experienc-

es of national payment systems in Japan. Additional features will be added to the system over the first half of 2021.

Although the percentage of households with access to formal accounts remains low, the launch of CBM-NET2 will enable 24/7 domestic MMK remittance with different banks, bulk payments such as payroll transfer and automatic withdrawal of taxes and utilities bills. In addition, straight-through processing (STP) between central banks and commercial banks system and electronic check

processing will improve the efficiency of payments from every state and region. It will make formal remittance services more accessible to those who have previously relied on cash payments and high-risk informal remittances, which will eventually contribute to the promotion of the financial inclusion in Myanmar. Shift from the traditional cash-based economy to electronic "cashless" payment will also provide a solution to the new challenge of coexisting with COVID-19.

Not only supporting the

implementation of the system itself, JICA is supporting the CBM through technical cooperation projects, including human resource development for payment and settlement system operation and maintenance, the formulation of guidelines and rules, and human resource development for monetary policy planning and implementation. JICA will continue its efforts to ensure that the speedy and secure CBM-NET is used by as many people as possible to help financial inclusion activities in Myanmar.—GNLM

## Rural roads, water supply projects to be implemented in 4 villages of Myeik

TWO roads for rural commodity transportation, one concrete bridge, five box culverts and two water supply projects will be implemented with the fund of Myeik Township's Department of Rural Development for 2020-2021 financial year.

U Kyaw Win Naing, the township DRD officer, said that the budget for the rural road is K108.52 million in Lut Lut village, K31.180 million for paving rocks on the road, K12 million for construction of a 10-ft concrete bridge, K12.040 million for two box culverts, K

52 million for paving rocks on the rural road in Thabya village and K18 million for three box culverts.

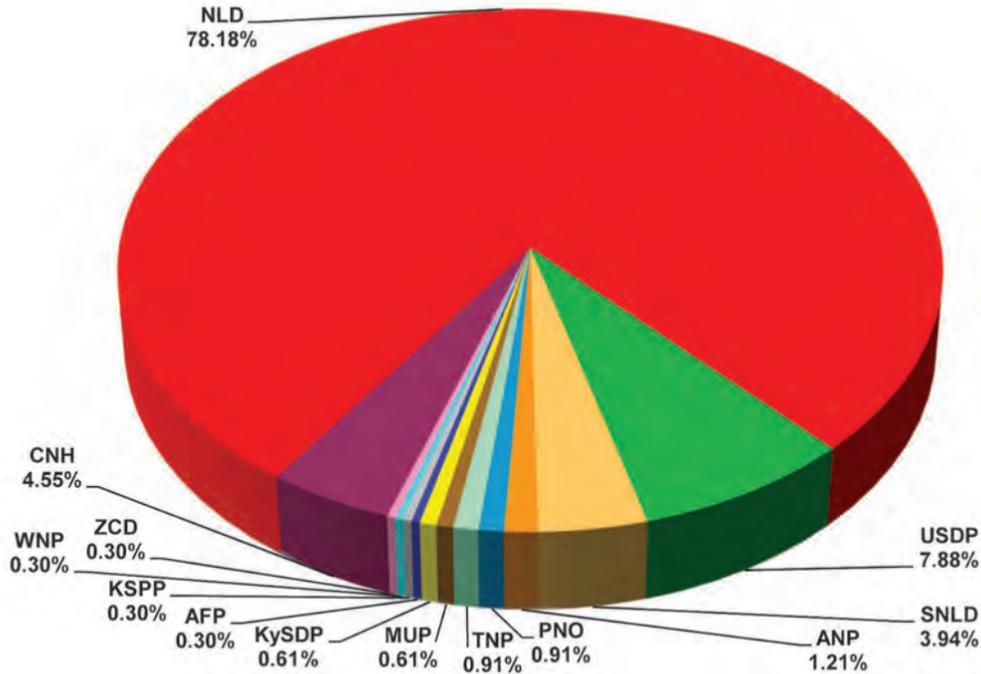
The water supply project for Mayingal village will be done with K18.61 million and for the Wunmal village with K41.33 million.

The rural roads in Lut Lut village and Thabya village could be used for transporting the agricultural produce from 900 acres for cultivation land and 20 acres of rubber to the local markets.—Myint Oo (Myeik)



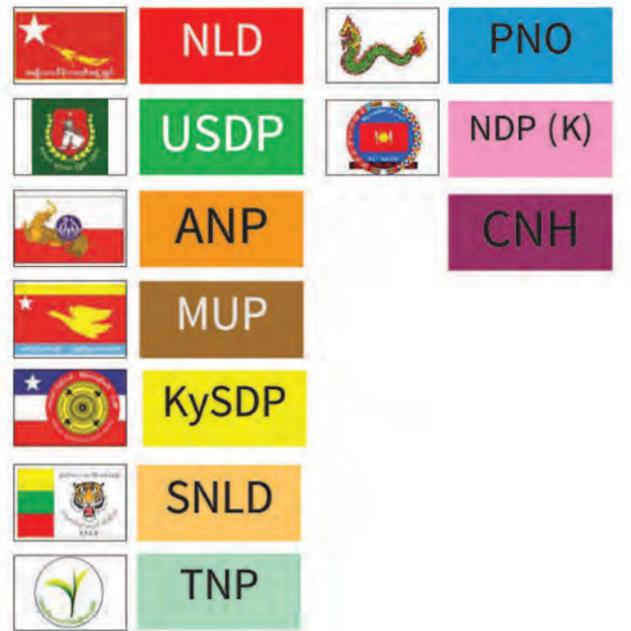
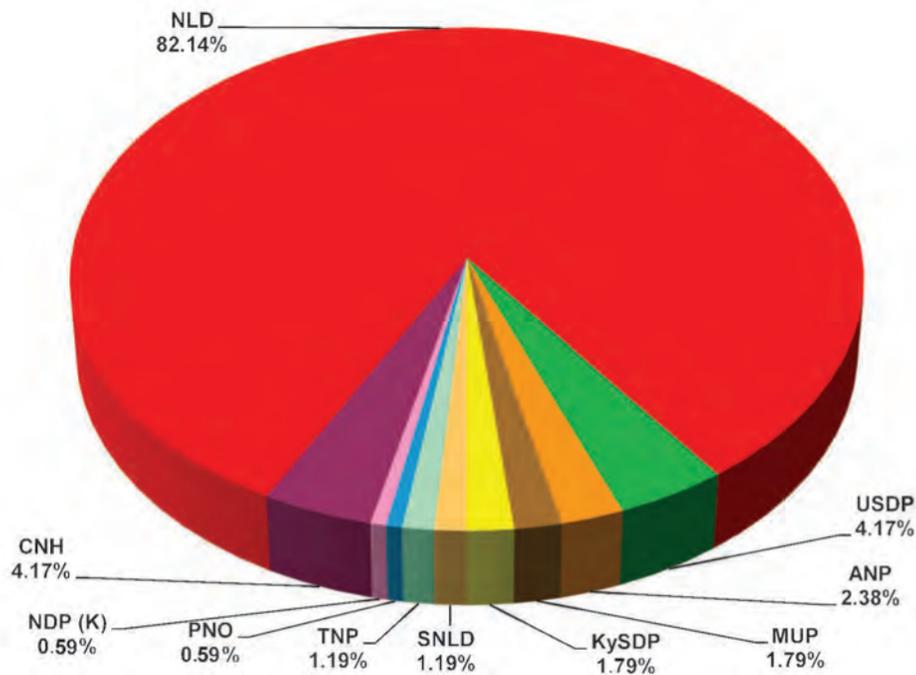
Officials are conducting survey for rural road construction in Myeik. PHOTO: MYINT OO

# Elected Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



NLD - 258 = 78.18 %	PNO - 3 = 0.91 %	AFP - 1 = 0.30 %	CNH - 15 = 4.55 %
USDP - 26 = 7.88 %	TNP - 3 = 0.91 %	KSPPP - 1 = 0.30 %	Total - 330 = 100 %
SNLD - 13 = 3.94 %	MUP - 2 = 0.61 %	WNP - 1 = 0.30 %	
ANP - 4 = 1.21 %	KySDP - 2 = 0.61 %	ZCD - 1 = 0.30 %	

# Elected Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives in 2020 Multiparty Democracy General Election



NLD - 138 = 82.14 %	MUP - 3 = 1.79 %	TNP - 2 = 1.19 %	CNH - 7 = 4.17 %
USDP - 7 = 4.17 %	KySDP - 3 = 1.79 %	PNO - 1 = 0.59 %	Total - 168 = 100 %
ANP - 4 = 2.38 %	SNLD - 2 = 1.19 %	NDP(K) - 1 = 0.59 %	

Explanation		
NLD = National League for Democracy	MUP = Mon Unity Party	WNP = Wa National Party
USDP = Union Solidarity and Development Party	PNO = Pa-O National Organization Party	ZCD = Zomi Congress for Democracy Party
SNLD = Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	TNP = Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party	NDP(K) = New Democracy Party (Kachin)
ANP = Arakan National Party	KySDP = Kayah State Democratic Party	CNH = Constituencies where election was not held
	AFP = Arakan Front Party	
	KSPPP = Kachin State People's Party	

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.gnlm.com.mm

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**CHIEF EDITOR**Aungthu Ya  
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm**DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR**Aye Min Soe  
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Aung Khin

**LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS**Ye Htut Tin  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Aung Htein  
Tun Tun Naing  
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR TRANSLATOR**

Zaw Htet Oo

**TRANSLATORS**Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,  
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,  
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar  
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,  
Kay Khaing Win,  
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,  
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,  
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 974424848  
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmnews@gmail.com

www.gnlm.com.mm

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

www.facebook.com/thegnlm

**Write for us**We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm) with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

# ROK donates 44,000 COVID-19 Antigen Test kits to Myanmar

The Republic of Korea donated US\$425,360 worth of 44,000 COVID-19 Antigen Test kits to Myanmar yesterday.

The donation was made through the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund set up for providing relief supplies to the ASEAN countries affected by COVID-19 pandemic, and Myanmar received the first and foremost assistance of the fund.

At the donation ceremony, Union Minister for Health and Sports expressed thanks for the medical supplies of Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH), and other Korean organizations, including about \$3 million worth of medical supplies by the ROK government.

Korean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Lee Sang-hwa explained the donation and extended congratulations to the ruling National League for Democracy for its victory in the recent multiparty general elections in line with the



Director-General of Medical Research Department Prof. Dr. Zaw Than Tun (R) accepts the COVID-19 Antigen Test kits presented by ROK Ambassador Mr Lee Sang-hwa on 16 November 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

rules and directives of Ministry of Health and Sports.

The donation has coincided with the event of ASEAN-Korea Summit, and ROK President Mr Moon Jae-in has announced the upgrade of existing 'New

Southern Policy' into the 'New Southern Policy Plus' with seven prioritized sectors, including cooperation in health issue.

Ms Oh You Na, the First Secretary of ROK embassy, explained the 'New Southern Policy

Plus', followed by the remarks of Mr Ahn Jong-soh, the local representative from KOFIH Myanmar Office on further preliminary healthcare services in Myanmar.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Short stories against gender-based violence to be sent by 20 November

By Nyein Nyein

To remark the 16-day campaign against gender-based violence, the short story contest, to combat violence against women and to achieve effective law-making, will be held and the stories must be sent by 20 November through [ald.myanmar.2019@gmail.com](mailto:ald.myanmar.2019@gmail.com) or to the address < No 7A, Thiri Myaing 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Ward 13, Hline Township, Yan-

gon.

The objectives behind this contest are to reduce the violence against women, educate the public about gender-based violence, urge the officials to take strict legal actions under the existing law, and enact the effective legislation to protect women.

The 16-day Campaign against Gender-Based Violence is an international one to elim-

inate violence against women and girls. The campaign started in 1991. It runs every year from 25 November to 10 December. The awareness campaign shares through social media and community debates.

The winners will get awarded K300,000 for the first prize, K250,000 for the second prize, K150,000 for the third prize, and K100,000 for consolation prizes respectively.

For further detail of the contest, those interested people can contact Daw Mar Mar Oo (ALD Org) through 09-966068689 and [marmaroo88.mm@gmail.com](mailto:marmaroo88.mm@gmail.com), Daw Myint Myint Naing (Pyigyikhin group) via 09-425209455 and [myint2naing.Pgk@gmail.com](mailto:myint2naing.Pgk@gmail.com), an author (Thway Sagaing) through 09-950961535 and [thway.sagaing@gmail.com](mailto:thway.sagaing@gmail.com).

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Onion price dives as demand collapses amid COVID resurgence

THE prices of onions plunged to below K1,000 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6kg) owing to the bulk supply and the closure of western border amid the coronavirus resurgence.

Earlier, onions were highly demanded by Bangladesh, India and China. Now, the trade with Bangladesh and India has halted to contain the spread of the coronavirus. That is why the price is on the decline, said onion depot owner from Mandalay. The western border of Myanmar is still closed due to the coronavirus resurgence.

At present, there is a

steady demand by Muse border and domestic markets. However, the stockpiles of old onions cause the price to decline lower. The onion prices move in the range of K700 to 900 per viss depending on quality on 16 November 2020, on the back of bulk supply of 200,000 visses to Yangon market.

The onions were priced K2,100-3,400 per viss during a year-ago period. Additionally, freshly harvested onions from monsoon crop season will flood the domestic market by the mid-December, despite

damage to some acres, onion traders said.

This year, the onion growers, as well as traders, are experiencing market fallouts due to the surging COVID-19 cases. As a result of this, workers engaged in onion depots are suffering financial hardship, said a depot owner from Mandalay. Last year, Bangladesh's demand for Myanmar's onions coupled with high demand in the local market hiked up prices, soaring up to K4,000 per viss on 15 November 2019, according to the Mandalay commodity depot. The high

demand by foreign markets and a remarkable price rise prompted the growers to expand the onion cultivation this year. The prices of domestic onions exceeded K3,000 per viss in 2015, 2018, and 2019. Nevertheless, there is uncertainty with foreign demand during the coronavirus pandemic, pointed out a market observer.

The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State.—Maung Sae Aung, Ko Htet  
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Raw sesame, peanut import proposal causes price shakeup in domestic market

THE news of a company's import proposal for raw sesame and peanut makes changes in pricing in the local market, said U Htay Chun, Vice Chairman of Mandalay Depot.

"The Ministry of Commerce reported that a certain company had sought import permit for raw sesame and peanut to be produced on a CMP basis and re-exported to foreign markets. The news shook up the pricing, with black sesame dropping to K180,000-150,000 from over K200,000 per three-basket bag. The market will be competitive as the imported sesame is priced cheaper. However, it will undoubtedly harm the interest of the growers. Consequently, the domestic sesame will be offered a low price," he elaborated.

The Ministry of Commerce asked the opinions of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association regarding the importation proposal of 10,500 tonnes of raw sesame and 32,000 tonnes of peanuts under zero tariff. As it could harm the interest of the local growers, the association has forwarded this news to the respective depots where sesame and peanut are primarily traded and has asked for their opinions.

"Myanmar's peanuts fetch



Myanmar shipped over 150,000 tonnes of sesame during 2019-2020FY, generating an export value of US\$240 million. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

a good price in China due to the high quality and good taste. The peanut from India is about US\$100 cheaper than those in China. Furthermore, as it will be produced on a CMP basis, the tax exemption is also requested. Myanmar grants tax-exempt on raw material import if the goods are exported with a few exceptions. Myanmar's peanut is priced K3,200 per viss (a viss equals to 1.6 kg), while the peanuts from China fetches K2,400 per viss. Myanmar's peanut is of high quality with the use of natural fertilizer. Myanmar pea-

nuts are offered 200 Yuan higher than those produced in China. The import news drove the price cool, and the buyers are closely observing the market," he continued.

Myanmar shipped over 150,000 tonnes of sesame in the previous financial year 2019-2020, generating an export value of US\$240 million, the Commerce Ministry's data showed.

Typically, Myanmar exports about 80 per cent of sesame production to foreign markets. China is the primary buyer of Myanmar sesame, which is also shipped to

markets in Japan, South Korea, China (Taipei), UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, and Poland among the EU countries.

The EU markets prefer organic-farming sesame seeds from Myanmar, said an official from the Trade Promotion Department.

Japan prefers Myanmar black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP), and purchases them after a quality assessment. Black sesame seeds from Myanmar are also exported to South Korea and Japan. Meanwhile, China

buys various coloured sesame seeds from the country. This year, Japan has not purchased Myanmar's sesame yet.

For the current budget year 2020-2021, Myanmar traders target to export over 130,000 tonnes to foreign partners, traders from Mandalay market said.

Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the leading producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Of the cooking oil crops grown in Myanmar, the acreage under sesame is the highest, accounting for 51.3 per cent of the overall oil crop plantation.

The volume of sesame exports was registered at over 96,000 metric tons, worth \$130 million, in the financial year 2015-2016; 100,000 tonnes, worth \$145 million, in the 2016-2017FY; 120,000 tonnes, worth \$147 million, in the 2017-2018FY; 33,900 tonnes valued \$43.8 million in the 2018 mini-budget period, and 125,800 tonnes, worth \$212.5 million in the 2018-2019FY, the trade data of Central Statistical Organization indicated. — Hteik Htar Naing, Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## UK opens door to Myanmar avocado

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR has successfully delivered avocado to the UK's market on trial, according to the press statement issued by the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in London on 14 November.

Amara Variety (local variety), Hass and Buccaneer varieties were placed on the UK's market in the previous week, under the programme of Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP).

Freshpro Imports Limited distributed them through the wholesalers of London and Sheffield cities. It has earned good reviews from the consumers.

Myanmar Embassy in London has been exploring the markets for potential Myanmar products in the UK in line with the government's policy, especially prioritizing the agricultural

products and new local products.

Additionally, Myanmar Embassy, in coordination with the British Chamber of Commerce, will hold a webinar on 19 November for Myanmar exporters regarding the agricultural exports to the UK.

At present, Myanmar is exporting the avocado to China and Thailand through the land border. However, there is no guarantee, and the price is relatively low. Therefore, official trade pacts with China and Thailand are required for Myanmar's avocado exports, said U Lin Thant Aung, secretary of MFVP.

Furthermore, he suggested that the government form a committee including all the stakeholders such as the growers, processors, exporters in the supply chain, intending to facilitate the trading. He also made a further request for the high government officials to suggest Myanmar's avocado during their foreign visits.

Myanmar currently exports 5,000-10,000 tonnes of local avocado varieties to Thailand and China through the land border. Those varieties fetch between K800 and K1,000 per kg, MFVP stated.

Meanwhile, around 3,000 tonnes are yearly sold in the domestic market. The demand is high when there is an increase in tourist arrivals.

The avocado is primarily grown in Chin Hills, Shan highland, Nawnghkio and PyinOoLwin areas, having around 25,000 acres. There are thousands of Myanmar avocado varieties, and the avocado of foreign origins are also found. Myanmar's avocado is abundant in October and the harvest season extends up to April. Myanmar prioritizes the fruit quality that meets international market standards for market potentials. Efforts are being undertaken to legally export Myanmar's avocado to more foreign



A woman grower is picking Myanmar avocado. **PHOTO: SANDAR MYO FB2**

markets in 2023.

Myanmar Avocado Producers and Exporters Association

was established in 2018, with 800 members.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Maintaining support to farmers by teaching good management called key to overcoming agro challenges

WHILE experiencing and tackling annual floods, drought, landslides and outbreaks of diseases on vegetables and meat, the world's countries including our country are facing the COVID-19 pandemic, posing a threat to the lives of human beings.

Myanmar is bearing the brunt of climate change-induced disasters every year. Natural disasters brought on by climate change are hard to predict; and their frequency and severity has been on the increase.

With disasters getting stronger and causing more devastation year by year, disaster management has become crucial for the Union Government, especially in the agricultural sector.

A recent study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to assess the pandemic's impact on family farms in Mandalay and other regions of Myanmar, suggests that the climate has changed significantly over the past few decades. Ninety-five per cent of farmers surveyed said that this has led to lower or non-existent crop yields.

The measures introduced to control the spread of COVID-19, especially those that limit movement, are making matters worse. Many poor people, who were already scraping by on meagre resources before the pandemic, are now facing extra pressure in terms of income sources, livelihoods and purchasing power.

When it comes to taking necessary measures to ensure operation of production and services in which many industries, including agriculture and livestock producers are involved due to the consequences of travel restrictions and delays in the flow of trade in response to the COVID-19 outbreak since March, 2020, we need to provide the smallholder farmers with climate change adaptation assistance. They are on the front lines in the battle for climate change adaptation.

Farmers are fundamental to food security in Myanmar and they are extremely vulnerable to climate. Building the resilience of our farmers is an urgent climate adaptation priority.

It is worth noting that the UN and the Myanmar authorities are finding ways to address the lost income and work opportunities, additional expenses, and decreased agricultural production brought about by the pandemic, as well as dealing with the ongoing effects of climate change.

It reflects that the government cannot lose sight of multiple challenges that farmers face which affects productivity. When it comes to maintaining our support to the farmers, to mitigate the risks of the pandemic in terms of food security and nutrition and to ensure that they are resilient to impacts from climate change, good preparation and management are key to overcoming challenges in the agriculture sector.

# A deep dive into Zero Hunger: farming the seas

AQUACULTURE, or fish farming, is one of the fastest growing food-production sectors in the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), reaching an all-time record high of 114.5 million tonnes in 2018. Asian countries continue to account for the vast majority of farmed fish production, some 90 per cent over the last two decades and, since 2016, aquaculture has been the main source of fish available for human consumption.

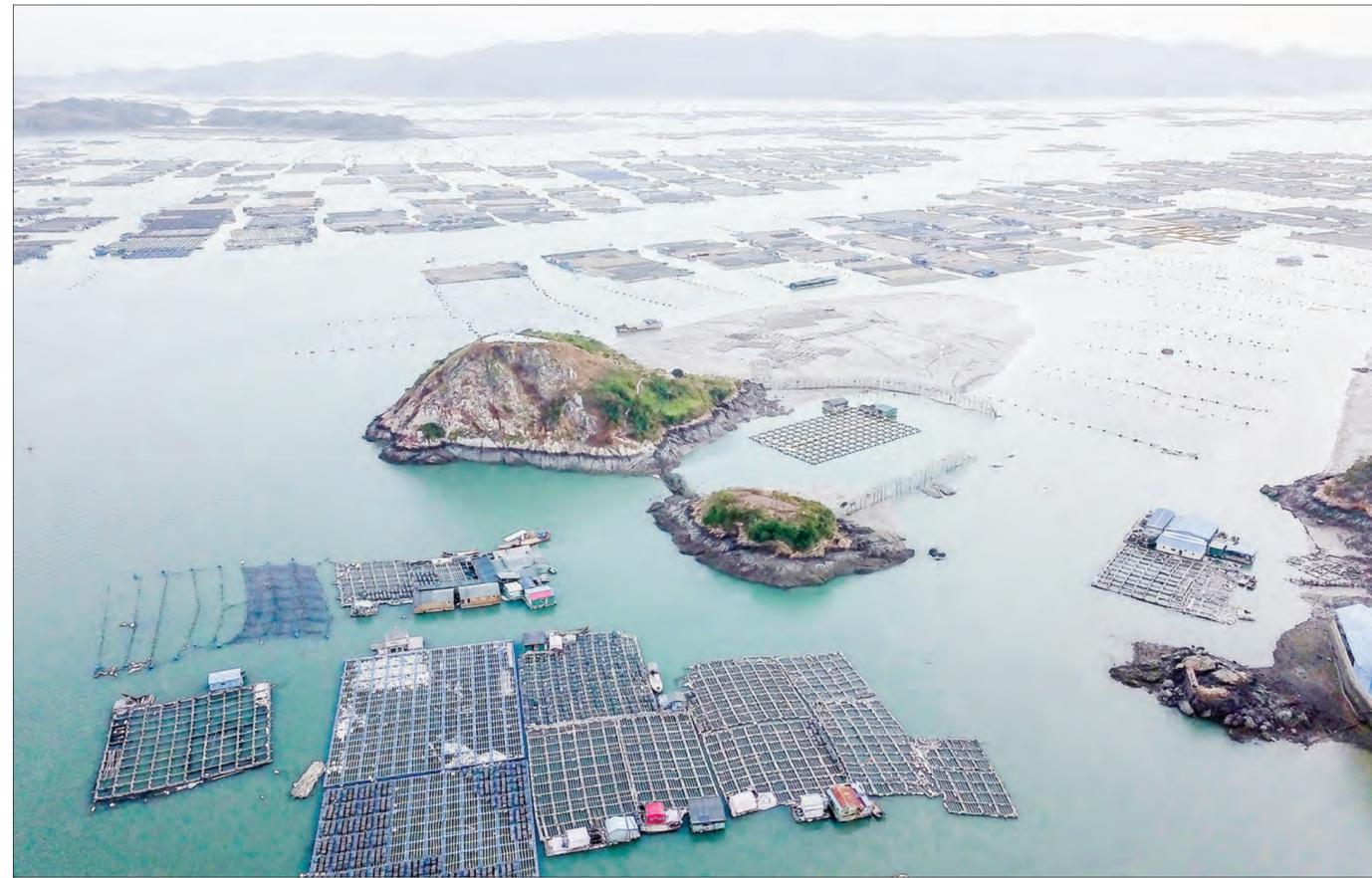
Overfishing of wild fish is an ongoing problem, and the FAO warned in its 2020 World Fisheries and Aquaculture report, that the status of fish stocks are deteriorating: around 30 per cent are not within biologically sustainable levels, and some 60 per cent are at near capacity.

Aquaculture is expected to further dominate the seafood market in the coming years and, in the same report, the FAO declared that it could have a transformational impact on the way we feed the global population, if it is managed sustainably.

### Persistent environmental challenges

Wenche Grønbrekk is the chairperson of the United Nations Global Compact Local Network for Norway, a group of private companies that have agreed to work towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She is also an executive at salmon farming company Cermaq, which is based in Norway, Chile, and Canada. She says that the amount of seafood currently farmed could, in fact, be sustainably increased six-fold, given the right conditions.

However, she acknowledges that environmental challenges that persist. The detrimental effects of aquaculture include the destruction of marine habitats, the use



This aerial photo taken on December 12, 2019 shows a floating village along with fish farms in Xiapu in China's Fujian province. PHOTO: AFP

of harmful chemicals and veterinary drugs, and the production of waste.

"The farmed fish industry is still relatively young and, despite the bad reputation it has had, it has developed a lot. Today, it has a strong focus on sustainability, and salmon farming, for example, is the most technologically advanced form of aquaculture. I've been encouraged to see that there is a real will to lift standards in the industry, and an understanding

that, by working together on sustainable development issues, we will all benefit."

Cermaq is a founding member of Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS), an industry group that is supporting the UN Global Compact's Sustainable Ocean Business Action Platform, which promotes the central role that seafood has to play in feeding the growing world population.

Martin Exel, the managing director of SeaBOS, agrees that

the aquaculture sector only has itself to blame for the reputation it has acquired. "We have had some bad actors, who have done the wrong things and, frankly, broken the rules", he says. Nevertheless, he is confident that the industry is moving in the right direction:

"SeaBOS brings together some of the biggest companies in the industry, and we're having frank discussions about the challenges we face. These include climate change impacts, illegal,

unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, modern slavery, the removal of ocean plastics, and how to reduce the use of antibiotics in aquaculture, especially those that are critical for human health."

According to Mr Exel, the seafood companies in SeaBOS understand the importance of environmental and economic sustainability, which includes looking after the people working in the business, and gaining the trust

and respect of the community, and consumers.

"The fact is that aquaculture is the best way to help feed some 10 billion people in the coming years", says Mr Exel. "It can be scaled up in a healthy and sustainable way, which is why our members are working closely with scientists to advance the technology that will ensure that we can effectively solve the food production challenges that we are all facing."—FAO

## WHO establishes Council on the Economics of Health for All

THE World Health Organization has announced a new Council on the Economics of Health for All, staffed by leading economists and health experts, to put "Health for All" at the centre of how we think about value creation and economic growth.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the consequences of chronic under-investment in public health. But we don't just need more investment; we must also rethink how we value health,"

said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, as he made the announcement on the final day of the resumed 73rd World Health Assembly on Friday.

Chaired by noted economist Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Professor of the Economics of Innovation and Public Value and Founding Director in the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University College London, the Council will aim to create a body of work that sees investment in

local and global health systems as an investment in the future, not as a short-term cost. Designing such investments makes our economies more healthy, inclusive and sustainable.

The COVID-19 pandemic, with 52 million reported cases and 1.3 million deaths, has shown the dire consequences of chronic under-investment in health on the global economy and on the lives and livelihoods of billions worldwide.

Over the past year, the pandemic has ignited a socio-economic crisis like no other; a crisis that has undermined global stability and solidarity. It has stressed how interdependent health and the economy are and served as a reminder that health is a human right.

"We are living through multiple crises: economic, climate and health related. If we continue to patch up the system each time, we will always be one step behind. I

am thrilled to work closely with Dr Tedros on a proactive Health for All economic agenda, to shape our economies so they truly have well-being and inclusion at the centre of how we create value, measure it and distribute it," Mazzucato said.

Returning to the status quo following the pandemic will not be enough – we need an innovation-led transformation of our health systems to achieve economic well-being everywhere.

"The time has come for a new

narrative that sees health not as a cost, but an investment that is the foundation of productive, resilient and stable economies," Dr Tedros said.

The Council on the Economics of Health For All is expected to hold its first virtual session in the coming weeks, to discuss its work plan and mode of operation. The Council will produce thought leadership for implementing change, and help to inform the piloting of initiatives at country level.—WHO

### President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures action on tip-offs

THE Office of the President has issued Press Release 40 /2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 14 November.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 14 November. The full text of the press release will be reported in the 18 November issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

### MYANMAR GAZETTE

## Heads of Service Organizations transferred, confirmed and appointed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each their names from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
a. U Aung Kyaw Zan Director-General Consular and Legal Affairs Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General Planning and Administrative Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
b. U San Myint Director-General Central Statistical Organization Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry	Director-General National Archives Department Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry
c. U Tun Zaw Director-General National Archives Department Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry	Director-General Central Statistical Organization Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of Daw Win Win Maw as Managing Director of the Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, on expiry of the one year probation period.

3. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Aung Naing Oo, Head of Factory, No 10 Textile Factory (Taungtha) of No 3 Heavy Industrial Enterprise under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry as Managing Director of No 3 Heavy Industrial Enterprise of the same ministry on probation from the date he assume charge of his duties.

### MYANMAR GAZETTE

## Appointment of Permanent Secretary

The Union Government has appointed U Thein Htay Oo, Director-General of the Education and Training Department of the Ministry of Border Affairs, concurrently as Permanent Secretary of the same ministry.

Food safety is a biggest concern like job security

## Growing fear: anxiety mounts over Vietnam's food staples

HANOI (Viet Nam)— Vietnam's fragrant noodle soups and fresh spring rolls have won fans across the globe, but mounting food safety scandals on the country's streets are sparking a rising tide of anxiety among millennials about what they eat.

Tran Huong Lan, a 32-year-old accountant, spent two nights in hospital the last time she ate "bun cha", Hanoi's signature pork noodles gobbled up by former US President Barack Obama and late celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain on a visit four years ago.

"About two hours after lunch I started feeling unwell. I went home and I started vomiting," she told AFP.

Rushed to hospital by her husband, doctors told her there was only one explanation: food poisoning.

Lan didn't eat out for a month after her scare, and frequent high-profile food safety scandals have fed others' fears.

In July, 14 people were taken to hospital in a severe condition after being poisoned by a vegan



(FILES) A vendor sits at her stall of dry foods at a local market in downtown Hanoi on 15 March 2010. PHOTO:

pate. Many experienced droopy eyelids and paralyzed respiratory muscles.

As well as anxiety over hygiene standards, there is growing unease about high pesticide use for vegetables and herbs thrown

in typical street food dishes such as fresh shrimp rolls and bun bo, dried noodles with beef.

Some 70 per cent of 16 to 30-year-olds said food safety was their biggest concern – ranking the same as job security – when

polled by the British Council in Vietnam this year.

Truong Quoc Tung, director of the Vietnam Plant Protection Association, recently said the problem was approaching "crisis proportions".

"Banned pesticides are being used, the environment is polluted and agricultural products are being sent back after being shipped abroad," he told state media.

Problems with food safety cost Vietnam around \$740 million per year in productivity, the World Bank says.

### 'Safe' food

But across the country, from lush countryside fields to tiny urban rooftop gardens, Vietnamese are doing what they can to ensure they eat safely.

Ngo Xuan Quyet, 26, used to sell pesticides for a living before switching to "safe" farming.

With the help of Rikolto, an NGO that promotes safe food policies, he is trying to ensure his lettuce, spring onions and herbs – grown with a strictly controlled dose of pesticides – make it into as many bowls of bun cha as possible.

"When I worked (at the pesticide company) I really got to know about the chemical substances in them," said Quyet, who studied agriculture at university. —AFP

Needs time to "process" his loss

## Trump - for a moment - alludes to election defeat

WASHINGTON (United States) — President Donald Trump has yet to admit defeat in the US election. But with a word here, a slip there, he is raising the prospect ever more plainly.

In a tweet Sunday morning, Trump appeared accidentally to acknowledge Joe Biden's victory — before quickly reversing course to claim he won, and again push unsubstantiated claims of mass electoral fraud while ignoring soaring coronavirus cases.

"He won because the Election was Rigged," Trump tweeted.

The first two words — coming days after a verbal slip in which Trump said "time will tell" if he remains president — were immediately seized upon as one more step towards a concession.

But the president soon made a U-turn, tweeting: "He only won in the eyes of the FAKE NEWS MEDIA. I concede NOTHING! We have a long way to go."

And late Sunday night he said "I WON THE ELECTION!"

in a tweet swiftly flagged by Twitter.

President-elect Biden captured 306 Electoral College votes in the November 3 election — 36 more than needed to win the White House.

Senior federal and state election authorities, including a top cybersecurity agency and 16 federal prosecutors assigned to monitor the elections, have rejected claims of widespread election tampering.

Still, Trump continues to insist he will prove fraud and prevail in court.

Meantime, the leaders of nearly every country in the world have congratulated Biden on his victory, reinforcing the notion that almost no one — in the United States or elsewhere — is taking the Trump legal challenges seriously.

Those challenges have been nearly universally dismissed by judges as unfounded. On Sunday, Trump insisted that "many" of them had not been filed by his team, and that his "big cases...

will soon be filed."

Reacting to Trump's initial tweet, Biden's newly named chief of staff Ron Klain told NBC's "Meet the Press" that it was "further confirmation of the reality that Joe Biden won the election."

Biden himself met Sunday in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware with his transition advisors, his spokespeople said.

Some Trump administration officials say privately that they understand that Biden won, but that the president needs time to "process" his loss.

Others, on the outside, speculate Trump may be trying to galvanize his base to back some future commercial or media endeavour or even to support a new run for office in 2024.

### 'There's damage'

Until now, the president has refused to cooperate in the shift to a Biden administration — denying the Democrat both federal funding for transition work and vital briefings by outgoing officials. —AFP

Rescuing a student from a swollen river

## British diplomat in China earns hero status after river rescue

BEIJING (China) — A top British diplomat has become a hero in China after video of him rescuing a student from a swollen river racked up tens of millions of views on social media.

Britain's mission in Chongqing said Monday that Consul General Stephen Ellison leapt into action in nearby Zhongshan at the weekend to save a woman who had fallen into a river coursing through the tourist town.

"Due to the timely rescue, the woman quickly recovered her breathing and consciousness," read the post on the consulate's official Weibo page.

Ellison, 61, was visiting the town Saturday when he heard a cry from a crowd of people as the woman fell into the water.

Bystander video footage shared by the consulate and various Chinese media outlets show Ellison, 61, jump fully clothed into the river, where the unnamed woman was struggling to stay afloat.

Ellison — by several media accounts an accomplished

triathlete — dragged her to a lifebuoy thrown from the riverbank before dragging the two of them to shore.

"We are all immensely proud of our Chongqing Consul General," the UK diplomatic mission in China tweeted Monday.

The hashtag "British Consul-General in Chongqing saves female student who fell in the water" had gained almost 40 million acknowledgements on Weibo by Monday evening as news of Ellison's bravery spread.

"For a man of such advanced age to save another person from the water in such cold weather, regardless of his own safety, he is a hero and gentleman!" read one comment, liked nearly 2,000 times.

"Regardless of our differences... to act heroically is a virtue and should be praised," wrote another.

Ellison took up his post in June after serving as a senior diplomat at the British Embassy in Beijing since 2014. —AFP

ALMOST 95% EFFECTIVE

## In second breakthrough, Moderna's Covid vaccine 'highly effective'

WASHINGTON (United States) — US biotech firm Moderna on Monday announced its experimental vaccine against Covid-19 was almost 95 per cent effective, marking a second major breakthrough in the quest to end the pandemic.

Moderna released early results from a clinical trial with more than 30,000 participants, after American pharmaceutical company Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech last week said their vaccine was 90 per cent effective.

Both frontrunners are based on new technology that uses synthetic versions of molecules called "messenger RNA" to hack into human cells, and effectively turn them into vaccine-making factories.

"This positive interim analysis from our Phase 3 study has given us the first clinical validation that our vaccine can prevent COVID-19 disease, including severe disease," said Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel.

"The light at the end of the tunnel just got even brighter," tweeted Atul Gawande, a member of US President-elect Joe Biden's coronavirus advisory board and a surgeon at a Harvard-affiliated hospital.

"We may now have multiple,



(COMBO) This combination of file pictures created on August 05, 2020 shows a sign for Pfizer pharmaceutical company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 18, 2017, and the Moderna headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts on May 18, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

very effective vaccines distributing widely in spring and summer," he added.

Moderna plans to submit applications for emergency approval in the US and around the world within weeks, and says it expects to have approximately 20 million doses ready to ship in the US by the end of the year.

It says it's on track to manufacture between 500 million to a billion doses globally in 2021.

Global infections from Covid-19 have soared past 54 million with more than 1.3 million deaths since the virus emerged in China

late last year.

### 'Tremendously exciting'

The Modernavaccine, which was co-developed by the US National Institutes of Health, is given in two doses 28 days apart, and the preliminary results are based on the 95 of the 30,000 volunteers who fell ill with Covid-19.

Of the 95, 90 had been in the trial's placebo group, and five in the group that received the drug, called mRNA-1273, translating to an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent.

There were 11 people who fell severely ill, all of whom were

in the placebo group.

The US government has invested around \$2 billion in funding for development, manufacturing, and potential delivery of the vaccine under its Operation Warp Speed.

Most of the Modernavaccine's side-effects were classed as mild or moderate.

After the first dose, about three per cent of people had injection site pain classed as severe.

Among severe side-effects after the second dose, about 10 per cent had fatigue, nine per cent had muscle pain, five per cent had joint pain or headaches, four per cent had other pain and two per cent had redness at the injection site. These adverse events were "short lived" according to a statement.

"This news from Moderna is tremendously exciting and considerably boosts optimism that we will have a choice of good vaccines in the next few months," said Peter Openshaw, a professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College London.

Crucially, Moderna also announced that its vaccine can remain stable at standard refrigerator temperatures of 2 degrees Celsius to 8 degrees Celsius (36 degrees Fahrenheit to 46 degrees Fahrenheit) for 30 days. —AFP ■

VACCINE WOULD NOT BY ITSELF STOP THE PANDEMIC

## Vaccine will not be enough to stop pandemic: WHO chief

GENEVA (Switzerland) — The head of the World Health Organization said Monday that a vaccine would not by itself stop the coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic is raging months after it broke out, with infections soaring past 54 million and claiming more than 1.3 million lives.

"A vaccine will complement the other tools we have, not replace them," director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. "A vaccine on its own will not end the pandemic."

The WHO's figures for Saturday showed that 660,905 coronavirus cases were reported to the UN health agency, setting a new high water mark.

That number, and the 645,410 registered on Friday, surpassed the previous daily record high of 614,013 recorded on November 7. —AFP ■

UPDATED COVID-19 NEWS

## Coronavirus: Latest global developments

PARIS (France) — Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

### Million US cases in week

The US tops 11 million cases, with one million new ones in less than a week, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Local and state officials are taking more drastic steps to reduce the disease's spread with hospitals warning that they are running out of resources.

### But no lockdown

Biden advisor Vivek Murthy says the incoming US president will not impose a national lockdown, instead using targeted measures to limit the disease's spread.

### Olympic cheer

International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach says he is "very, very confident" that spectators will be able to at-

tend next year's pandemic-postponed Tokyo Olympic Games in July.

### Australia anxiety

A cluster emerges in Adelaide, which had gone seven months without a significant outbreak after the country managed to squash a second-wave outbreak in Melbourne.

With state borders due to be almost fully reopened by Christmas, other Australian states immediately impose new restrictions on anyone travelling from South Australia.

### Sputnik sale

Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro says his government has agreed to buy 10 million doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

### Tougher curbs

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is set to push for tougher curbs including masks in all

schools and smaller class sizes in a proposal to regional leaders of Germany's 16 states.

### Algeria too

The prime minister announces closures of sport and cultural centres as well as beaches after a spike in infections. A nighttime curfew is also to be imposed across much of the country.

### Terrorism trial halted

The trial of terror suspects accused of the Charlie Hedbo and Hyper Cacher attacks in Paris in January 2015 is suspended for a week as one main defendant continues to show Covid-19 symptoms.

### 'Butcher's dog'

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is "fit as a butcher's dog" despite self-isolating after an MP he was in contact with tested positive.



People wearing protective face masks against the spread of the novel coronavirus, Covid-19, sit on a bench on an autumn day in a park in Ankara on 16 November 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Johnson spent three days in intensive care after falling ill with the virus in April.

### Italy tops deaths toll

The coronavirus has killed at least 1,319,561 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT on Monday.

That includes 6,225 new deaths, while 498,768 new cases were recorded worldwide.

Italy has the most new deaths with 546, followed by the US with 540 and Iran with 486.

The US is the worst-affected country with 246,224 deaths, followed by Brazil with 165,798, India with 130,070, Mexico with 98,542 and the United Kingdom with 51,934. —AFP ■

## JAPAN-US

## Japan to urge Biden to focus on Indo-Pacific as well as U.S. issues



Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi speaks at a press conference at the Japan National Press Club in Tokyo on Nov. 16, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said Monday that Japan will urge Joe Biden to focus on foreign as well as domestic issues, including maintaining order in the Indo-Pacific

region, as the president-elect prepares to take office in January.

Motegi said he believes Biden will concentrate on domestic issues at the beginning of his presidency, adding he expects the result of the Nov. 3 U.S. presidential election “not to be reversed” despite President Donald Trump’s refusal to concede defeat and his filing of lawsuits in several battleground states.

The former U.S. vice president set up a coronavirus task force a few days after declaring victory in the presidential election, with the world’s biggest economy recording the highest number of infections in the world.

“Japan has a major challenge (in ensuring that) the United States remains committed to order in the Indo-Pacific region, climate change, security

and other global issues,” he told a press conference at the Japan National Press Club.

Under the banner of putting America’s interests first, Trump pulled the country out of international agreements such as the Paris climate accord and implemented protectionist trade measures.

“Other countries have expectations for Japan” to play a role in encouraging Washington to engage in international issues, Motegi said. Japan has been seeking to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific, a concept it coined to promote free trade, the rule of law and freedom of navigation, in a veiled counter to China’s rising military assertiveness in the region.

“Japan needs to resolutely prevent China’s unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China seas

by force,” Motegi said.

The United States is expected to continue its hard-line stance on China under Biden, reflecting anti-China sentiment among the U.S. public and both Democrats and Republicans, Motegi said.

“Unfortunately, the U.S.-China frictions will not be resolved soon,” he said, although Biden may be more collaborative with China on some issues such as climate change and global health than Trump.

On issues related to human rights, however, Biden could be harsher on China, Motegi said, including over Beijing’s handling of protests in Hong Kong against a national security law that critics say has undermined freedom in the semi-autonomous territory and the treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. — Kyodo News ■

NEWS  
IN BRIEF

## G-20 not planning to make anti-protectionism pledge at weekend summit

TOKYO — The Group of 20 major economies do not plan to make a pledge on fighting protectionism at their summit this weekend, despite the increasing need to promote free trade to prop up the global economy amid the coronavirus pandemic, sources close to the matter said Monday.

The G-20 leaders have refrained from denouncing protectionism in joint communiqués at their summits in the last two years in the face of opposition from the United States, which has implemented protectionist trade measures under President Donald Trump’s “America First” policy.—Kyodo News ■

## A MAJOR ROAD TO ISLAMABAD WAS SEALED OFF

## Pakistan’s capital blocked off over anti-France protest

ISLAMABAD (Pakistan) — Pakistan authorities sealed off a major road into the capital Islamabad for a second day Monday as a far-right religious party held fresh anti-France protests.

A rally in the neighbouring city of Rawalpindi which attracted up to 5,000 people on Sunday spilled over into Monday, with around a thousand protesters gathered at the roadblock preventing them from entering the capital.

Commuters faced lengthy delays on alternative routes into the city.

Mobile phone services were restored around lunchtime on Monday, after being suspended for more than 24 hours to prevent rally organizers from coordinating with each other.

Pakistan has seen small and scattered protests over the past few weeks in response to French President Emmanuel Macron’s recent remarks on Islam.

The French president spoke out after an extremist beheaded a teacher near Paris after he showed cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed during a class on free speech. All depictions of the Prophet are forbidden by Islam.

The president said the teacher “was killed because Islamists want our future”.

Macron’s comments trig-

gered anger across the Muslim world, with tens of thousands in Pakistan, neighbouring Iran and other Muslim countries in South Asia flooding the streets and organizing anti-French boycotts.

Pakistan has lodged a complaint with France over what it called a “systematic Islamophobic campaign” in the European nation.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has accused the French president of attacking the Muslim

faith and urged Islamic countries to work together to counter what he called growing repression in Europe.

Blasphemy is a particularly contentious issue in ultra-conservative Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty.

Rights groups have urged the country to reform its blasphemy legislation because it is often abused to settle personal

vendettas.

Sunday’s march was organized by hardline cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, whose party, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), is known for violent protests over the issue.

In 2018, the country was paralyzed by TLP rallies following the acquittal of Christian woman Asia Bibi, who had been accused of disrespecting the Prophet Mohammed. —AFP ■



Activists and supporters of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a religious party, block the Islamabad-Rawalpindi highway during an anti-France demonstration in Islamabad on 16 November 2020. PHOTO: AFP

## S. Korea’s Korean Air to buy rival Asiana Airlines

SEOUL — Korean Air Lines Co., South Korea’s No. 1 carrier, decided at a board meeting on Monday to buy smaller rival Asiana Airlines Inc. for 1.8 trillion won (\$1.62 billion), the company said.

The major reorganization of the aviation industry in South Korea comes as airlines worldwide struggle financially due to a sharp fall in air travels amid the coronavirus pandemic.—Kyodo News ■

## Thailand’s economic contraction slows in 3rd quarter

BANGKOK — Thailand’s economy shrank 6.4 per cent in the three months through September year on year, a smaller decline than the 12.1 per cent contraction during the previous quarter, official data showed Monday.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, gross domestic product expanded 6.5 per cent quarter to quarter, a reversal from the 9.9 per cent contraction in the previous quarter, according to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council.—Kyodo News ■

VACCINE HOPE AND STOCK MARKET

# European stocks surge on Moderna vaccine news

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Europe's major stock markets spiked Monday after Moderna announced its experimental Covid-19 vaccine was shown to be 94.5 per cent effective according to early trial results, sparking fresh hope of a return to normality, dealers said.

"This positive interim analysis from our Phase 3 study has given us the first clinical validation that our vaccine can prevent COVID-19 disease, including severe disease," said Stephane Bancel, Moderna's CEO.

European equities accelerated gains on the news, which comes just one week after Pfizer and BioNTech sparked a stock market boom after announcing that their Covid-19 vaccine candidate had proved 90 per cent effective.

Shortly after midday on Monday, London stocks were up 1.7 per cent, extending early gains.

In early afternoon deals in the eurozone, Frankfurt added 1.2 per cent and Paris soared 2.4 per cent, while Madrid and Milan jumped 3.9 per cent and 2.3 per cent, respectively.

### 'End of nightmare?'

"Just as their initial dose of vaccine bullishness appeared to be waning, the markets got another injection of good news this Monday," Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell told AFP.

"One-upping BioNTech and Pfizer, Moderna has claimed its preparation is nearly '95 per cent effective' after a trial involving 30,000 Americans.

"As with Pfizer, there is still a way to go before



A trader walks past a display showing financial data at the offices of CMC Markets in the City of London on 10 December 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Moderna's vaccine is approved. However, investors were only thinking about the long-term, flashing forward to the end of this nightmare."

World oil prices soared by more than 3.5 per cent as the Moderna news

stoked hopes of a recovery in energy demand.

Prior to the midday announcement, global stock markets were already staging a rally on bright economic data and last week's Pfizer vaccine as they waited on Moder-

na's expected announcement.

Equities also bounded higher after US President-elect Joe Biden's team pledged not to impose an economically damaging nationwide lockdown to contain the virus, which

has now infected more than 11 million Americans

In addition, traders cheered the signing of the world's biggest free-trade deal by 15 Asia-Pacific countries -- including Japan and China -- that covers about a third of the world's GDP

"Global stocks have received further tailwind on Monday, buoyed by investor confidence in economic recovery and building on the initial burst early last week on the vaccine announcement," said Sun Global Investments head Mihir Kapadia.

"The recent growth points towards the fact that Asia is now well and truly on the path to recovery, with China in particular, showing great resilience as Beijing revealed its factory output had risen faster than expected."—AFP ■

### HOME PRICES IN CHINA

## China's housing prices remain stable in October

BEIJING — China's housing market remained stable in October, with slower month-on-month growth in home prices in major cities, official data showed Monday.

New home prices in four first-tier cities -- Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen -- rose by 0.3 per cent month on

month in October, 0.1 percentage points slower from a month earlier, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

On a month-on-month basis, new home prices edged up 0.1 per cent in 31 second-tier cities, and rose 0.2 per cent in 35 third-tier cities.—Xinhua ■

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (011N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CHERRY VOY. NO. (011N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-11-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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 INTER ASIA LINES

**စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန**  
**မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း**  
**ဆေးဝါးသုံး တိရစ္ဆာန်အစားအစာ (၃)မျိုး အဝယ်တင်ဒါ**

၁။ ဝယ်ယူမည့် ပစ္စည်းအမည်နှင့် အရေအတွက်

စဉ်	ပစ္စည်းအမည်	အရေအတွက်
(၁)	ကုလားပဲလုံး	၂၈ တန်
(၂)	ဂျုံကြမ်း	၂၃၅ တန်
(၃)	အစေ့ထုတ်ပြောင်း	၁၆၉ တန်

၂။ တင်ဒါပိတ်ရက်နှင့် အချိန် - (၂၅-၁၁-၂၀၂၀) မွန်းလွဲ (၄:၀၀)နာရီ

၃။ ပစ္စည်းပေးသွင်းရမည့် စက်ရုံ - ဆေးဝါးစက်ရုံ (အင်းစိန်)

၄။ တင်ဒါပေးသွင်းရမည့် နေရာ - ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ၊ တင်ဒါလက်ခံရေးနှင့် စီစစ်ရေး ကော်မတီ၊ မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း၊ စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။

၅။ တင်ဒါပုံစံနှင့် တင်ဒါစည်းကမ်း အသေးစိတ် အချက်အလက်များကို အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ ဌာနတွင် စုံစမ်းမေးမြန်းနိုင်ပါသည် -  
မြန်မာ့ဆေးဝါးလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်) တယ်လီဖုန်းအမှတ်  
စီမံကိန်း၊ ဘဏ္ဍာရေးနှင့် စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၈၈  
ရုံးအမှတ်(၃၇)၊ နေပြည်တော်။ ၀၆၇၃-၄၀၈၃၇၄

Advertise with us / Hot Line : 09974424848

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY. NO. (1129S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY. NO. (1129S/N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-11-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BEST HARMONY V.05/2020

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BEST HARMONY VOY. NO. (05/2020)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-11-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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 WILHELMSSEN SHIPS SERVICE (S) PTE LTD

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (044S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FILOTIMO VOY. NO. (044S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-11-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

## SELF-ISOLATION OF BRITISH PM

## British PM 'fit as a butcher's dog' but self-isolating in virus scare



(FILES) In this file photo taken on November 10, 2020, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrives back at Downing Street in London after chairing the weekly cabinet meeting held at the nearby Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Monday he was in "good health" and had no symptoms despite self-isolating after an MP he was in contact with tested positive for coronavirus. "It doesn't matter that I'm

fit as a butcher's dog, feel great... that I've had the disease and I'm bursting with antibodies," he said in a video released on Twitter.

"We've got to interrupt the spread of the disease and one of the ways we can do that now is by self-isolating for 14 days when contacted by Test and Trace," he added, saying he would lead the virus response from his Downing Street home.

Johnson spent three days in intensive care with coronavirus in April. This time round, he said he was not suffering any symptoms and health minister Matt Hancock on Monday described him as "full of beans".

The prime minister was informed by the Test and Trace scheme that he should self-isolate after Conservative MP Lee Anderson, who Johnson met on Thursday, tested positive for the virus.

Johnson was out of action for nearly a month when he caught the virus during the first wave of infections from March.

But the Conservative Par-

ty leader said he would have "plenty more to say by Zoom and other means of electronic communication" during this spell in isolation.

The British leader has said his coronavirus case was seriously worsened by being overweight, but that he had since lost 26 pounds (12 kilos).

"I am going to continue that diet, because you've got to search for the hero inside of yourself, in the hope that that individual is considerably slimmer," he joked last month.

#### Vaccine plea

Britain has been the worst-hit nation in Europe recording over 50,000 coronavirus deaths from 1.2 million positive cases.

But Johnson said the country now had two "gigantic boxing gloves with which to wallop" the virus in the shape of mass rapid-turnaround testing and a potential vaccine that he said could be available for the most vulnerable citizens before Christmas.

The government announced on Monday that daily testing ca-

capacity is set to more than double early next year with the opening of two new "megalabs" processing up to 600,000 samples a day.

Health minister Hancock on Monday criticized groups that were opposed to taking the new vaccine, telling Times Radio that it was "entirely inappropriate".

"We don't propose, and allow vaccines in this country, unless they pass some of the most stringent safety requirements in the world," he said.

"Getting a vaccine -- whether it's for flu or hopefully for coronavirus -- is something that not only protects you but protects the people around you. So it's a really important step," he added.

News of Johnson's self-isolation capped a tumultuous week which saw his controversial chief aide Dominic Cummings leave his post.

His departure came as part of an expected reset of Johnson's wobbling premiership, but that now looks to be on hold with the prime minister confined to home. —AFP ■

## TOUGHER VIRUS CURBS

## Merkel eyes schools, contacts in tougher virus curbs push

BERLIN (Germany) — Chancellor Angela Merkel will on Monday push for tougher curbs including masks in all schools, smaller class sizes and drastic limits on contacts to bring down coronavirus infections in Germany.

Outside work or school, contact between people should also be "restricted to those from another fixed household," according to a proposal by Merkel's office and which would be put to regional leaders of Germany's 16 states later Monday.

Europe's biggest economy began a new round of shutdowns in November, closing restaurants, cultural venues and leisure facilities to curb transmission of Covid-19.

But while new cases are plateauing, the daily numbers are still too high for officials to determine the infection chain and thereby break the transmission.

During talks to take stock of the situation, Merkel will seek to get state premiers to

sign up to drastically limiting contacts.

All private parties should be cancelled until Christmas, the document proposes.

Children and youths should pick just one specific friend to meet up with outside school hours.

To ensure that schools are kept open as long as possible, the chancellery has also suggested that classes "without exceptions be broken up into fixed groups, where the size of groups in classrooms are halved compared to normal operations".

An alternative is to use larger rooms for classes, according to the draft.

The document also urges anyone with signs of a cold, including a cough or runny nose, to self-isolate for five to seven days until they are free of symptoms again.

Germany has fared relatively well in the first wave of the pandemic, but numbers have dramatically shot up in the autumn. —AFP ■

## FRENCH PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON UN SECURITY COUNCIL

## Macron says UN Security Council out of 'useful solutions'

PARIS (France) — French President Emmanuel Macron said the UN Security Council no longer provides good solutions to global problems, in remarks published Monday, and called for an overhaul of international cooperation mechanisms. Multilateral frameworks "are weakened today, because they are blocked", Macron said in an interview with website Le Grand Continent.

"I cannot help but observe that the United Nation's Security Council no longer produces useful solutions today," Macron said.

Except for one video conference in April, the Council -- whose permanent members are the United States, China, Britain, France and Russia -- has not communicated on the global Covid pandemic.

Macron said "everybody is jointly responsible when some institutions become hostages of the crisis in multi-lateralism", such as the World Health Organization.

President Donald Trump has accused the WHO of being too close to the Chinese government and has started a procedure to withdraw the US from the organization. Now was the right time



French President Emmanuel Macron speaks during The Paris Peace Forum at The Elysee Palace in Paris on 12 November 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

to "strengthen and structure a political Europe" which could be at the heart of a "new multi-lateralism", Macron said.

A strong Europe, he said, "is the only way to impose our values" to avoid a Chinese-US duopoly and "the return of hostile regional powers".

In a speech before the UN General Assembly in September, Macron had already called on the international community to avoid being reduced to the status of "depressed observer" of a

China-US rivalry.

In Monday's interview, Macron said he "deeply" disagreed with German Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer who said recently that Europe would not be able to replace the United States as a guarantor of its own security.

"I think that is a misinterpretation of history," Macron said. "Luckily, the Chancellor (Angela Merkel) does not share that view if I've understood correctly." —AFP ■

CHATTERJEE APPEARED IN 14 OF RAY'S FILMS

## Tributes pour in for India acting legend Soumitra Chatterjee



A picture of late Indian actor Soumitra Chatterjee is seen on garlands placed next to his body during his funeral in Kolkata on 15 November 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

KOLKATA (India) — Legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee has been hailed as one of Indian cinema's leading lights after his death at the age of 85 from health complications after he contracted the coronavirus.

Chatterjee appeared in around 300 films over six decades but was best known internationally for his work with Oscar-winning director Satyajit Ray.

He was admitted to a Kolkata hospital after test-

ing positive for Covid-19 last month and was kept there as he suffered further ailments linked to the virus, according to local media.

The acting icon's condition deteriorated and he died on Sunday, his daughter Poulami Bose wrote on Facebook. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Chatterjee's death was "a colossal loss to the world of cinema" and India's cultural life.

"International, Indian

and Bengali cinema has lost a giant. We will miss him dearly," added West Bengal state chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Twitter.

Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who suffered his own bout of Covid-19 earlier this year, tweeted that Chatterjee was "one of the mightiest pillars" of India's film industry and "a gentle soul".

Chatterjee appeared in 14 of Ray's films and made his debut in the third instalment of the director's acclaimed Apu Trilogy.

He was in 2012 presented with Indian cinema's highest honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke, and France awarded him the Legion of Honour three years ago.

Thousands of mourning fans gathered in Kolkata near the crematorium where his body was taken late on Sunday, carrying candles and photographs of the actor. —AFP ■

### Acknowledgement

Doctor Ohnmar Moe Myint  
Age (63)

The family of the late Dr Ohmar Moe Myint who passed away on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, would like to convey their heartfelt thanks to all who render all necessary assistance during her long illness up to the time of her demise. Doctors, nurses, friends, relatives, staff and everyone far and near who did what they can with love and devotion.

U Moe Myint, U Sithu Moe Myint & U Phone Kyaw Moe Myint and the rest of the family

SUSPENSION OF EMPEROR NARUHITO'S ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S EVENT

## Emperor's New Year's event may be cancelled due to pandemic

TOKYO — The Imperial Household Agency is considering suspending Emperor Naruhito's annual New Year's event at the Imperial Palace due to mounting fears about a new wave of coronavirus infections, an agency source said Monday.

If realized, it would be the first time the event has been cancelled since 1990 when the country was mourning the death the previous year of Emperor

Hirohito, grandfather of the current emperor.

The development came as the number of daily novel coronavirus cases in Japan reached a record high of around 1,700 in recent days.

The agency also nixed the emperor's birthday address days before it was scheduled in February because of concern that the public event could lead to a rise in infections as it would draw a large crowd

into close confines.

The New Year's event usually takes place on Jan. 2. At this year's event, the first since the current emperor assumed the throne on May 1, 2019, he and Empress Masako, together with Crown Prince Fumihito and his family, greeted some 68,000 well-wishers on five occasions -- three times in the morning and twice in the afternoon. —Kyodo News ■

ONE OF THE GREATEST MALIAN MUSICIANS

## Sory Bamba: Malian music's forgotten great

MOPTI (Mali) — Sory Bamba, a Malian music pioneer, spends his days ensconced in the courtyard of his home in the old quarter of Mopti, a town in the centre of the country on the edge of the Sahara.

One of the original modernizers of Malian music, the 82-year-old infused traditional sounds with funk and jazz. He was also a dedicated talent scout.

But few now remember Sory Bamba in Mali, a conflict-ridden state known to music fans for its strong guitar-playing tradition.

Outside of the country, the musician is almost a complete unknown, though connoisseurs insist he belongs among the ranks of Mali's musical icons such as Ali Farka Toure or Salif Keita.

"He is one of the greatest Malian musicians," says Cheick Tidiane Seck, a Malian musician himself whose blend of jazz and traditional music won him renown in the 1990s.

But Bamba "is not someone who puts himself forward," Seck says, adding that he prioritized "real music" over commercial tunes.

Wearing a corduroy flatcap, and with eyes clouded by cataracts, Bamba sits in his courtyard surrounded by clucking chickens and children at play.

He says he once brought a young Ali Farka Toure to play in his home -- long before the singer-songwriter achieved international success -- and that few recognised his talents.

"Many people didn't



Malian musician Sory Bamba, 82, holds a flute in his courtyard in Mopti, central Mali on 15 May 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

like (his) type of rhythms," Bamba says.

Toure, who died in 2016, went on to become a two-time Grammy winner and one of the African continent's most important musicians.

Bamba, who never

achieved the same level of success, appears to harbour no bitterness.

"He was here, in this very house," he says of Toure, with a smile, before taking out his flute and spontaneously beginning to play.

### Mali's Pink Floyd

Bamba began his musical career as a child in the late 1940s when Mali was still a French colony and a friend gifted him a flute.

Later, he worked as an assistant to a trumpet

player in a Mopti band -- before making off with his boss's instrument and dedicating himself to music full time.

In 1957 he started his first group, Kanaga de Mopti, which quickly became popular with youngsters in the town.

The band found wider success after Mali's independence in 1960, through nationwide musical competitions designed to foster a sense of national identity in the vast country.

Bamba, as leader of the group, also sought and received rare permission from ethnic Dogon elders to play their traditional music -- to which he added his own layers of Latin-jazz, funk and folk.

Some dubbed Kanaga de Mopti "Mali's Pink Floyd". —AFP ■



The AFC Futsal Asian Cup, previously known as the AFC Futsal Championship, is the epic international futsal tourney of Asian level. **PHOTO: AFC**

## AFC Futsal Asian Cup to be held in March 2021

THE AFC Futsal Asian Cup will be held in Kuwait from 23 March to 3 April 2021, according to the statement with the AFC.

Football authorities recently confirmed the fixtures of the tourney at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee meeting which was held on 10 November.

The AFC Futsal Asian Cup, previously known as the AFC Futsal Championship, is the

epic international futsal tourney at the Asian level. The tourney was initially held annually from 1999 to 2008. Now the tourney is being held biannually. AFC authorities recently changed the name of the tourney from the “AFC Futsal Championship” to the “AFC Futsal Asian Cup”.

The top three winners of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup will qualify for FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021 which is scheduled to hold in August.

Japan and Iran teams are the most successful teams in the tourney being the only two nations to have won the tournament.

Japan won the championships in 2006, 2012 and 2014 and also participated in the FIFA Futsal World Cups. Next, Iran, also known as “The Kings of Asian Futsal”, is the only nation staying above top four and the team has won the championship twelve times.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Mayweather returns to ring for Feb 2021 Tokyo bout

TOKYO (Japan)—Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather will return to the ring with a fight in Tokyo in February 2021, organizers said Monday, but who he will fight and under what rules was left unclear.

The retired ex-champ had already dropped hints about the fight, which follows a widely ridiculed 2018 “exhibition” match against a Japanese kickboxer, but organisers offered more details on Monday.

It will be part of an event dubbed “Mega 2021”, being hosted at the Tokyo Dome in the Japanese capital on February 28, the production committee said in a press release.

They said it would feature “champion-class” fighters, including Mayweather, but gave no further details -- including who the welterweight star will face, and under what conditions.

Last week the 43-year-old shared a video on Instagram teasing the fight.

“Tokyo, Japan, I’m coming back, in 2021,” he said in the clip.

“I know the Olympics is in Japan in 2021, but me, myself, Floyd ‘Money’ Mayweather and my team will be doing something big in Tokyo Dome... Japan, I’m on my way.”

Mayweather retired three years ago, and although he had previously announced he was “coming out of retirement in 2020”, he hasn’t been seen in action this year. A legend in the boxing world with an unbeaten 50-0 record, Mayweather is no stranger to Japan, where he fought an exhibition match against MMA star Tenshin Nasukawa in December 2018 -- the last time he was coaxed out of retirement for a big payday.—AFP ■



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 31 December 2018, US boxing legend Floyd Mayweather celebrates after winning an exhibition fight against kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa of Japan at Saitama Super Arena in Saitama. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Japan PM, IOC head agree Olympics to happen as planned next summer

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Monday agreed with International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach that the Tokyo Olympics will be held as planned next summer, possibly with spectators, despite the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic.

Suga and Bach, who is on a four-day visit to Tokyo that began Sunday, said they discussed preparations taking place for the Summer Games and agreed to continue working closely to ensure the safety of visitors as the number of novel coronavirus cases continues to rise across the world. After the meeting, Bach told reporters he is confident spectators will be able to enter games venues to watch the sporting action, promising that the IOC will step up efforts to make sure those in the crowd and athletes will be vaccinated “if by then a vaccine is available.”

“In this meeting, we were totally aligned in the full determination and confidence to make the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the Paralympic Games a great success next summer here in Tokyo,” he said. “Together we can make these Olympics Games and the Olympic flame the light at the end of the tunnel.”

This is Bach’s first trip to Japan since the decision in March to postpone the Olympics and Paralympics by one year due to the outbreak of the virus.

The games are now scheduled to be held in 2021, the Olympics on July 23-Aug. 8 and the Paralympics on Aug. 24-Sept. 5.



International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach (L) and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga bump fists at the premier’s office in Tokyo on 16 November 2020, wearing face masks amid the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Compared with many other countries, Japan has been relatively unscathed by the pandemic. It has, however, seen record daily infections in recent days as the temperature has dropped and after it began easing restrictions on people’s movement and border controls. Under such circumstances, Suga renewed his pledge in the presence of Bach that he is “determined” to host the games as “proof that humanity has defeated the virus.”

“I explained that we are making various considerations on the premise of having spectators and agreed with President Bach to work closely together toward realizing a safe and secure Olympics,” Suga told reporters after the approximately 30-minute meeting.

The meeting, also the first with Suga since he became prime

minister in mid-September, took place as the Japanese government has accelerated the process of formulating measures against the virus during the games.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike, who separately held talks with Bach, said the Japanese capital hopes to welcome people from overseas by cooperating with the IOC and other related bodies. “Tokyo is, together with the Japanese government, putting our utmost efforts on measures against the novel coronavirus, and we are striving to welcome everybody including athletes from around the world,” Koike told Bach.

Japan is now planning to exempt foreign visitors traveling to the games from its 14-day quarantine requirement if they are from countries or regions with relatively few coronavirus cases.—Kyodo News ■