

NATIONAL

Union Minister U Win Khaing urges MOGSS to prepare for changes in oil, natural gas industry

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TOURISM

Kawthoung with Sea Gypsies or Men of the Sea

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Monday, 25 January 2021

Prawn farms in Kawthoung maintain export to Thailand amidst pandemic

THE prawns produced from the salt-water prawn farming of Thahtay Island in Kawthoung Town, Thaninthayi Region, were being exported to Thailand amid COVID-19 pandemic, according to Kawthoung District Fisheries Department.

On 24 January, a total of 5.85 tonnes of white prawns were exported to Thailand.

A total of 69.85 tonnes of the prawns worth US\$ 0.129 million were also exported to Thailand in 12 batches during the financial years of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 until January 2021.

Grand Andaman Co Ltd was breeding saltwater prawns on the farms of 124 acres on Thahtay Island in Kawthoung Town, employing about 100 workers and creating job opportunities for over 400 family members of the workers.

The prawns produced from the farms were sold to hotels in local in the past and exported to Thailand during the coronavirus pandemic.

— Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

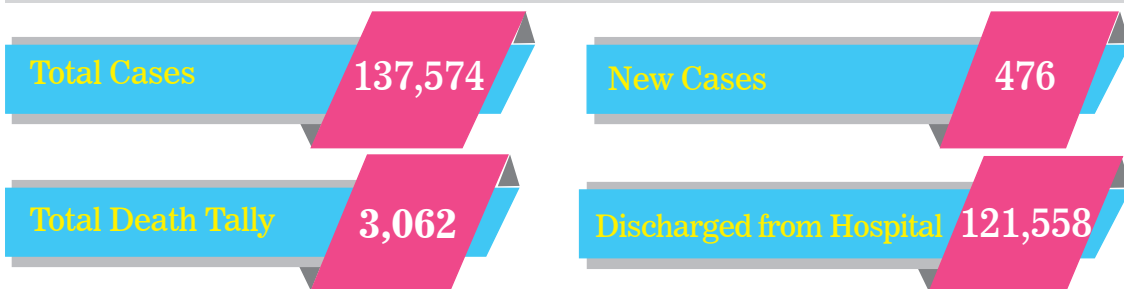


White prawns produced from the farms in Thahtay Island are exported to Thailand during coronavirus. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)

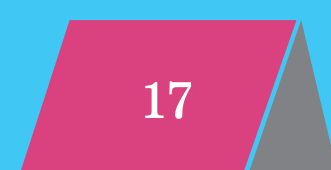
476 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 January, total figure rises to 137,574

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 137,574 after 476 new cases were reported on 24 January 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these 137,574 confirmed cases, 3,062 died, 121,558 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Updated at 8 pm, 24 January 2021



Daily death toll until 8 pm 24-1-2021



Ministry of Health and Sports

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All information and illustrations are based on data available at the time of publication and subject to change without notice.

Government provides foodstuffs for Myanmar workers quarantined in Thailand

THE Government of Myanmar supplied foodstuffs to the Myanmar migrant workers being quarantined because of coronavirus outbreak at a seafood market in Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand.

Myanmar Ambassador to Thailand U Myo Myint Than and officials handed over the foodstuffs provided by the government to the migrant workers on Saturday.

Officials from the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand, military attaché's office and labour attaché's office went to the Talaku seafood market in Samut Sakhon Province, and supplied 1,350 5kg-rice-bags, 1,350 1litre-oil-bottles, 1,350 500g-bean-bags, 1,350 15-egg-cartons, 1,350 boxes of packing 10 cans, and 9,450 6-litre bottles to 1,350 households of Myanmar migrant workers there.

Deputy Head of the Myanmar



The Myanmar diplomat delivers foodstuffs to the Myanmar migrant workers quarantined in Thailand on 23 January 2021. PHOTO: MNA



Embassy U San Oo Maung also led the officials from Myanmar Embassy in Thailand, and labour attaché's office, together with the officials from Mahachai, to the Talaythai seafood market in Samut Sakhon Province and provided rice bags, cooking oil bottles, beans, eggs,

canned foods and drinking water bottles to 360 households of Myanmar migrant workers there.

Officials from the Myanmar Embassy and labour attaché office in Bangkok have been in contact with the Myanmar migrant workers since 19 Decem-

ber when the Myanmar migrant workers were quarantined and have been providing necessary assistance.

The Government of Myanmar supplied the foodstuffs to the migrant workers for their convenience during the quarantine period, and also direct-

ed the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand to provide necessary assistance to the workers after contacting the Ministry of Labour in Thailand and the officials from the Samut Sakhon Province. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

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

1. The contribution of cash for COVID-19 Vaccination Fund can be made via the website of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry (<http://www.mopfi.gov.mm>) in the following ways.

- (a) MPU Debit/Credit Card of local banks
- (b) Visa/Master Credit of local banks
- (c) Visa/Master Debit & Credit Card of foreign banks
- (d) Mobile Wallets such as CB-pay, KBZ-pay, OK\$ through QR Code (more mobile wallets

will be available)

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

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

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

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

Announcement on fund establishment to purchase COVID-19 vaccines

1. The National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 30-12-2020 formed a Fund Management Sub-committee on the Purchase of COVID-19 Vaccines. The sub-committee has opened the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund at the Myanma Economic Bank in Nay Pyi Taw as follows:

- (a) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012). The bank account will be initially deposited with USD250 million, equivalent to about K338 billion from State-funding.
- (b) Fund for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733). The bank account is initially deposited K1 billion (K1,000 million) from State-funding.

2. Therefore, organizations and people (local/ foreign countries) who want to contribute cash donation for the purchase of vaccines, can donate any type of foreign currency to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Foreign Currency Account No. EDC 600012) at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw), and can donate Myanmar Kyat to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund (Myanmar Currency Account No. OA 013733).

3. The potential well-wishers can contact the following phone numbers:
Director-General (067 3410156)
Treasury Department (067 3410158)

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

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

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



COVID-19 has undergone a genetic mutation

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

(Excerpt from Chairperson of National -Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech on updated situations of COVID-19 containment measures on 22 January 2021)

Union Minister U Win Khaing urges MOGSS to prepare for changes in oil, natural gas industry

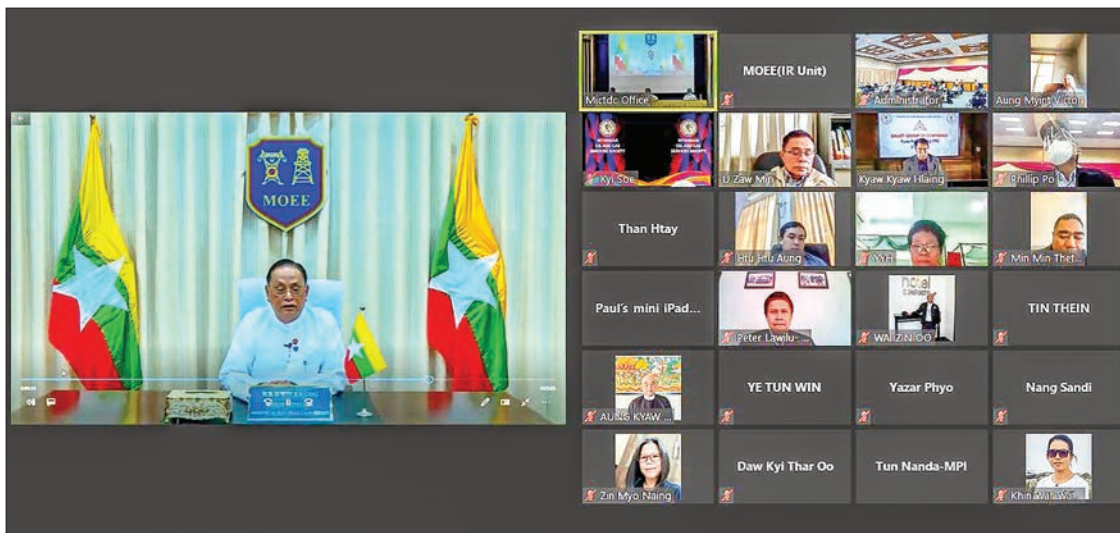
UNION MINISTER for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing said that unexpected changes will occur in the oil and gas industry in future because of the COVID-19 pandemic, calling on the Myanmar Oil and Gas Services Society (MOGSS) to prepare for the changes.

The Union Minister made the remark in a video message delivered to the opening ceremony of the annual meeting held by the MOGSS via online yesterday morning.

He urged the MOGSS to make suitable arrangements to adapt to the 'new normal' situation.

He said that the oil and gas industry continues playing an important role in the future and the market will continue growing.

He continued that in 2021-2022, crude oil prices may gradually rise again. He pointed out that the global supplies and



Union Minister U Win Khaing joins Myanmar Oil and Gas Services Society virtual meeting yesterday.

PHOTO: MNA

demands as well as changes in oil prices may have impacts on inviting international tenders for offshore block projects of Myanmar.

Speaking on the effects of the pandemic, the Union Minister said that natural gas prices dropped by 5 -10 per cent and product prices in the downstream refining sector dropped

by up to 20 per cent.

He said that natural gas and LNG are playing a key role in changing energy consumption patterns due to climate changes and environmental impacts as well as increasing uses of renewable energy in 'New Energy Mix'.

Myanmar's energy mix is about 40 per cent of hydropower; about 14 per cent of solar energy,

about 34 per cent of domestic natural gas and 11 per cent of LNG, so renewable energy consumption in Myanmar is about 54 per cent and clean energy consumption is about 45 per cent, according to the Union Minister.

He said that major investment projects such as A-6, A-3, M-9 and M-3 offshore projects have been providing more job

opportunities in the oil industry. He continued that in the future, new onshore and offshore pipeline-construction projects will be implemented, and consequently business opportunities will be open more.

The Union Minister also urged all the stakeholders to observe the future trends of the power sector in line with the Future Energy Transition pathway.

He also called on the MOGSS to cooperate with banks to obtain necessary funds, to provide technical training to staff members and to organize online conferences and exhibitions in order to develop the industry.

The virtual meeting was participated by officials from the ministry, MOGSS officials, and representatives from companies from the oil and natural gas industry.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Myanmar nationals abroad brought back home by relief flights

A TOTAL OF 413 Myanmar citizens who were stranded in foreign countries— 143 from Taiwan (Chinese Taipei), 145 from Viet Nam and 125 from the Republic of Korea – because of the suspension of commercial flights returned home by relief flights yesterday.

The relief flights of China Airline organized by Myanmar Consulate General Office in Hong Kong repatriating the

Myanmar nationals from Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) landed at the Yangon International Airport in the morning.

The relief flights of Myanmar National Airways organized by Myanmar Embassy in Hanoi and Myanmar Seafarers' Employment Services Federation bringing back the Myanmar nationals from Viet Nam landed at the Yangon International Airport in the evening.

The relief flights of Myanmar Airways International organized by Myanmar Embassy in Seoul and Crew Change Supporting Committee repatriating the Myanmar nationals from the Republic of Korea landed at the Yangon International Airport in the late evening. The Myanmar nationals returned with the flight from ROK are 88 from ROK, 1 from India, 5 from Singapore, 2 from Australia, 1

from Manila, 1 from the Philippines and 2 from Panama.

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

The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back citizens and seamen stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.—MNA *(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)*

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Well-wishers donate winter clothing for locals in Naga Hills

KHAMTI Town's committees, organizations and well-wishers went to eight villages of Naga Hills and donated winter clothing including bedclothes and shoes for Naga people yesterday.

Khamti District Youth Affairs Committee, All Khamti Social Network, Khamti Township Development Committee, Khamti Township Red Cross Society and healthcare workers participated in the four-day charity trip to the Naga Hills.

The winter clothing were donated to the locals of the villages of Nauklaw, Lankhin, Hwayphu, Argain, Kyaukkal,

Hwaykon, Lannauk and Taingngan in Naga Hills in Sagaing Region. "Ko Soe Win Swe of The Helpers for Perfect Democracy from Monwya collected the winter clothing for Naga people donated by the people from various places", U Tay Zar Tun of Khamti District Youth Affairs Committee. "Region government and Township Red Cross Society helped the transportation of the donated items to Khamti, and Khamti Township Development Committee transported the donated items to Naga Hills", he added. —Hmwe Kyu Zin
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Naga children (left) accept the winter clothing from donors (right) at a village in Naga Hills, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: HMWE KYU ZIN**

Global strong demand sparks agricultural exports

THE agricultural exports have touched a high of US\$1.46 billion as of 15 January 2020 in the current financial year since 1 October 2020 on the back of strong global demand for agricultural products amid the coronavirus impacts.

The figures reflect a significant rise of \$408.526 million this FY. The agro exports soared from \$1.05 billion in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's agricultural exports rose regardless of the coronavirus's impact on foreign demand for other export groups.

In the exports sector, the

agriculture industry performed the best, accounting for over 22 per cent of overall exports. The agricultural sector's top export items are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans, and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the export market remains uncertain due to unsteady global demand.

The country requires specific export plans for each agro product. They are currently exported to external markets

based upon supply and demand. Contract farming systems, regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups are required to meet production targets, said an official from the Agriculture Department.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and variable weather conditions.

Myanma Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry has notified the farmers of agricultural loans for the current financial year.

In a bid to mitigate the im-

pacts stricken by the COVID-19, the bank also provided an additional loan of K50,000 per acre under the COVID-19 Special Relief Loan Scheme between June and September 2020. Moreover, it cut the loan interest rate from eight to five per cent during the COVID-19 crisis.

The MADB yearly grants agricultural loans to the small-scale farmers. The paddy farmers can take out loans of K150,000 per acre, while the growers of other crops including sugarcane, can get K100,000 per acre. They have to put the original Farmland Permit Form (7) up for collateral to secure the loan under the personal guarantee system. — Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Growers eye EU market for value-added Hsipaw pineapple products

Sri-Lanka-listed company in Shwelinban industrial zone of Yangon are buying a large volume of pineapples from Hsipaw town of northern Shan State to add value and ship the value-added pineapple products to EU market, local growers said.

A grower called San Lin managing 200 acres of pineapple in Nantyan village of Hsipaw town elaborated that pineapple can be grown throughout the year. We primarily cultivate the pineapple plant in March, April and May. Hsipaw town is the leading producer of Myanmar's pineapples. Moreover, the pineapple plants are free from pesticide. Sri-Lanka listed company in Yangon Shwelinban Industrial Zone are processing dehydrated pineapple and currently exporting them to Germany.

The pineapples are also distributed in Yangon, Mawlamyine of Mon State, Nay Pyi Taw, Monywa of Sagaing and Mandalay markets.

The fresh pineapples still cannot be exported to the foreign market through legitimate trade.

"Pineapple cultivation is easy. We make the wide spacing of plants, allowing 9 feet between plants. The plants bear fruits in ten months. The fruits can be harvested after 120-150 days," U San Lin explained.

China is the primary buyer of Myanmar's pineapples, and it has banned importation since 16 June 2019. The Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) issued by Myanmar's Agriculture Department is required for export to China. At present, the pineapple growers are expecting the exports

to China. Therefore, Myanmar Pineapple Producers and Exporters Association has asked the Agriculture Department to issue the PC soon.

Earlier, 50 per cent of pineapple production is consumed locally, and the remaining goes to China.

Therefore, Myanmar growers want legitimate trade channel to Yunnan Province.

At present, the Ministry of Commerce is trying to penetrate other foreign markets, cooperating with Myanmar Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables Producers and Exporters Association.

Myanmar yearly exports nearly 40,000 tonnes of pineapples to China. Last year, pineapple grower groups from northern Shan State lost over K700 million worth 25,000 tonnes.

Growers can grow around 6,000-10,000 pineapple plants and up to 15,000 plants in an acre if an advanced growing technique is used.

The cultivation costs approximately K1 million per acre. Previously, an acre earned about K2.5 million, with the price ranging K350 to 750 per pineapple. Therefore, it is a lucrative fruit for the growers.

Myanmar earlier shipped about 300-500 tonnes of pineapple per day.

Although pineapple is not listed on the green channel list of General Administration of Customs China, the association requests the government to negotiate with Yunnan provincial government for official trade. — Nan Htet Htet Chit, Thiri
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

China constitutes over 77% of Myanmar's overall rice exports in Q1

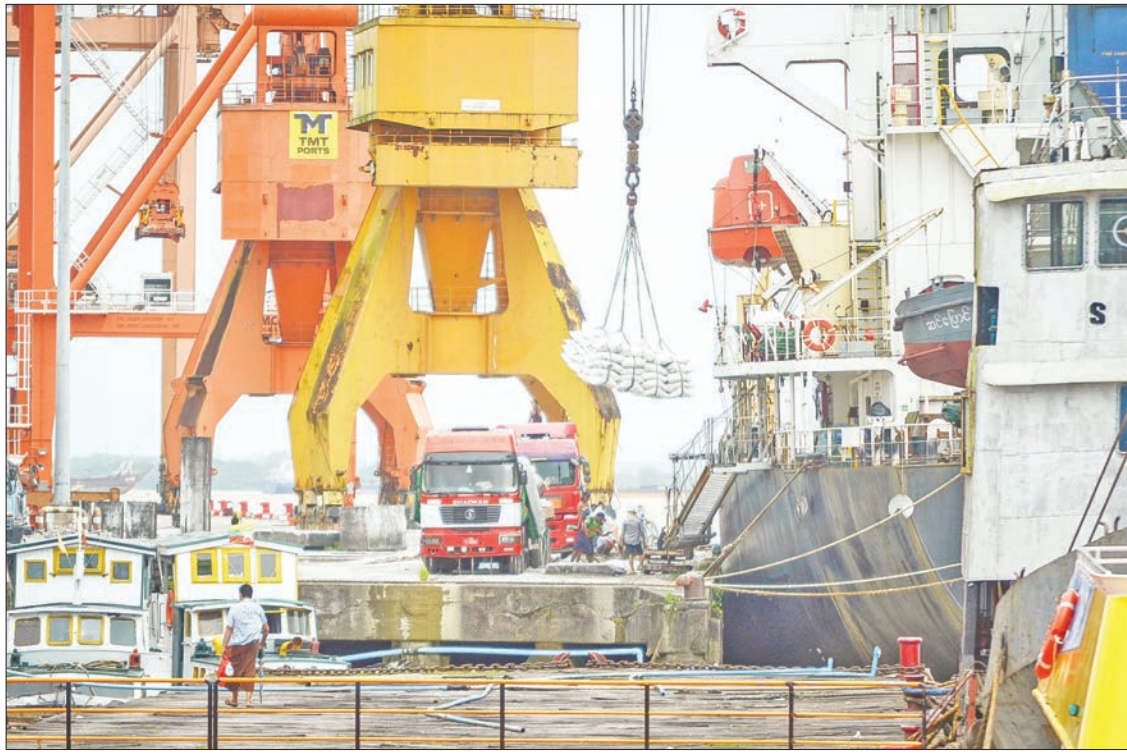
MYANMAR exported over 500,000 metric tons of rice and broken rice worth US\$191.717 million to China in the first quarter of the current financial year 2020-2021, which accounts for 77.4 per cent of overall rice exports, Myanmar Rice Federation's data indicated.

The erratic weather in China has caused damage to some farmlands in China. So, the strong trend is expected, Muse Rice Wholesale Centre stated.

At present, Chinese provincial government has not granted the permit on rice import. However, the traders are buying rice with the remaining permit quota of 2020 through the border.

The authorized companies for rice export to China through border posts is likely to increase to 50 this year, after inspecting Myanmar rice companies and rice mills in line with SPS Protocol (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Protocol). However, the deal has not been confirmed yet by China. If they give the go-ahead to it, the trade will surge to three times for sure. The border trade will remarkably rise, said U Min thein, vice chairman of Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

Moreover, the wholesale centre in Muse is endeavouring to practice only cash transaction rather than credit transaction to



(FILE) Rice bags are being loaded onto an overseas-going vessel at a jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

avoid fraud case, traders said.

The federation has also notified the traders to enter into a firm contract and strictly adhere to trade regulations. Myanmar Companies that have difficulties entering into a firm contract and complying with regulations can contact the federation or Muse wholesale centre. MRF released a notification on 27 November 2020.

Beyond China, other foreign countries are also purchasing Myanmar's rice. The low-quality rice, mainly designated for exports, is fetching high price

in the domestic market on the back of strong demand from external markets amid the production slump in the 2020 monsoon paddy season. The rice price is likely to remain high before the 2021 harvest season of summer paddy, traders said.

Additionally, Myanmar regained rice market shares from certain countries on account of high quality, said U Ye Min Aung, chairman of Myanmar Rice Federation.

Myanmar shipped over 648,158 metric tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade

partners between 1 October and 1 January this FY, generating an income of over US\$245.096 million, as per MRF's data.

ASEAN countries constitute 9.61 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports with over 62,265 tonnes. In comparison, 11.62 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to European Union countries with over 75,341 tonnes, followed by African countries with over 2,940 tonnes. Over 5,914 tonnes of rice were shipped to other countries.

Myanmar has exported

rice to 31 foreign markets so far. China is the leading buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by the Philippines and Poland. Malaysia is the fourth-largest buyer and Viet Nam, the fifth-largest buyer of Myanmar rice. Meanwhile, Myanmar sent broken rice mostly to China, followed by Belgium, Thailand, Netherlands and Viet Nam. Broken rice was placed in 15 foreign markets.

The export price of Myanmar's rice is relatively lower than the rates of Thailand and Viet Nam. Yet, the prices are higher than those of India and Pakistan's market prices, MRF's data showed.

Last FY, the country surpassed the export target of 2.4 million tonnes, sending over 426,611 tonnes to neighbouring countries through border trade and over 2.15 million tonnes of rice and broken to foreign trade partners via maritime trade, totalling over 2.58 million tonnes.

Next, Myanmar yearly produces 13 million tonnes of rice. There is self-sufficiency in the domestic market, and rice reserves have been stored in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the FY2017-2018, an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.3 million tonnes, in the FY2018-2019. — Ko Khant (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic fuel oil price rises to nine-month high on vaccine optimism



(FILE) A man fills a car with fuel at a petrol station in Yangon before coronavirus outbreak occurred in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

THE domestic fuel oil price has now risen to 30-50 per cent per litre compared to April 2019, as the vaccine optimism grew, and some businesses resume their operations, the market data indicated.

At present, the domestic

oil market has recovered a bit as the COVID-19 heightened measures have eased a bit. The fuel oil was pegged at around K655 per litre for Octane 92, K765 for Octane 95, K695 for diesel and K705 for premium diesel on 24 January 2021 in the

domestic retail market, according to the local fuel oil market.

Domestic oil price is positively related to the global market. Oil price inched higher in the worldwide market in August. In the global markets, oil prices stood at around \$39.9 per barrel for WTI crude oil on 3 August 2020. In late January 2021, the price slightly gained to \$52.27 per barrel.

The domestic oil prices have declined from 10 January 2020 owing to a fall in global oil prices. On 8 January 2020, oil prices were pegged at around K905 per litre for Octane 92, K995 for Octane 95, and K985 for diesel and premium diesel. Following the global market crashing, the domestic oil price plunged to more than 50 per cent in April against January's prices.

In late April 2020, the oil prices touched a low of K290-330

per litre for Octane 92, K430-455 for Octane 95, K435-465 for diesel and K445-475 for premium diesel, according to the domestic oil market.

Ninety per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. In the Q1 of the current financial year 2020-2021, about \$600 million worth petroleum products were imported. The figure plunged by half compared to a year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Usually, Myanmar imports fuel oil primarily from Singapore, with monthly volumes touching 200,000 tonnes for gasoline and 400,000 tonnes for diesel. There are about 2,000 fuel stations and 50 oil importer companies in Myanmar. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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BEHIND SCHEDULE

Tears and fears as India's huge coronavirus vaccine push falters

India's huge coronavirus vaccination drive is behind schedule, with a third of recipients not showing up for appointments because of safety fears, technical glitches and a belief that the pandemic is ending.

After one week, India has vaccinated 1.4 million people, or 200,000 people per day. It had initially hoped to process 300,000 per day before ramping up the rollout and inoculating 300 million by July.

At the Sharda Hospital in Greater Noida near New Delhi, pharma student Khushi Dhingra, 17, hugged a friend and wept as she waited to get her shot.

"I am very afraid. I hate needles and I am worried about side effects," she told AFP.

"My papa is very worried too. He is calling me again and again to make sure I am okay."

"There are about 80 students in my batch but only two have opted to get the shot," said nursing student Sakshi Sharma, 21, in Greater Noida.

"My friends are saying there will be side effects, that you can even get paralysis."

India is using two shots for its drive.

One is Covishield, a locally produced version of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which

has been approved and safely used in a number of other countries after completing Phase 3 human trials.

The other -- Covaxin -- was developed locally by Bharat Biotech and has not yet completed Phase 3 trials, though the government has insisted it is "100 percent safe".

WhatsApp worries

Side effects are a common fear, with a few cases of severe reactions -- and even deaths -- reported widely in the media and circulating wildly on Facebook and WhatsApp.

SOURCE: AFP



India's huge coronavirus vaccination drive is behind schedule, hampered by technical glitches and safety fears. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

95% SUCCESS RATE

Czech trainers teach dogs to sniff out Covid

In a dog training centre built inside a shipping container located in a Czech mountain village, Renda, Cap and Laky are being put to the test.

They sniff at six vessels, each containing a piece of cloth with scent from patients with Covid-19, negative donors, or fake samples.

"Good boy!" exclaims Lenka Vlachova, a trainer working at Prague's fire brigade, as jagdterrier Renda sits down by one sample, wagging his tail.

The team of dog trainers are working in their own time and report a 95-percent success rate in Covid-19 detection in samples of human scent.

"The study is designed to verify dogs' ability to detect Covid-19 and generate a method enabling the use of trained dogs in combatting the pandemic," project head Gustav Hotovy told AFP.

"The method should also work with other diseases, even more lethal than Covid-19," Ho-



Lenka Vlachova, a trainer who works at Prague's fire brigade, plays with jagdterrier Laky in front of the training centre for Covid-19 sniffing dogs. PHOTO: AFP

tovy said.

"In the end, we should be able to detect a huge number of people in a very short time with a trained dog," he said, speaking in the snowy village of Kliny near the German border.

Vlachova told AFP the first study confirming dogs are able to detect tissue attacked by a virus was conducted in the United

States about a decade ago.

"The virus changes the human tissue, affecting the scent signature of the person," she said.

Hotovy, a retired cynologist whose team started training the dogs last August, said that the signature changes "so much that it is immediately discernible for the dogs".

SOURCE: AFP

REVELLERS

Riot police storms 300-strong illegal rave in east London for breaching lockdown rules

THE British riot police have stormed an illegal rave attended by around 300 people in east London for breaking the COVID-19 lockdown rules after the doors were padlocked to stop them getting in, the Evening Standard newspaper reported Sunday.

When the event on Saturday was broken up, dozens of revellers scaled fences at the rear and others forced open a gate to avoid a fine of 200 pounds (about 274.59 U.S. dollars) for breaching COVID-19 lockdown rules, according to the London-based newspaper.

The Met Police on Sunday released body-

cam footage of the moment officers stormed the illegal party being held in a railway arch in Nursery Road, Hackney in east London.

Police officers had received intelligence the event would take place. They heard loud rave music coming from inside as they approached the venue just after 1:30 a.m. (0130 GMT) on Saturday, according to the newspaper.

On Thursday, police also broke up a 400-guest wedding party in north London, one of the largest breaches of restrictions police have discovered in London.

SOURCE: Xinhua

IN MIDST OF SECOND WAVE

Brazil's late and rocky start on vaccinations fuels public ire

BRAZIL'S newly launched vaccination campaign against Covid-19 has gotten off to a late and rocky start -- as the country is hammered by a second wave of the disease, it is already close to running out of vaccine, syringes and other vital equipment, according to scientists who blame the government of Jair Bolsonaro.

The campaign only began on Monday in the country of 212 million, weeks after the United States and European countries launched their vaccination programs.

The late rollout, hampered by short supplies, has sparked growing public ire, with widespread complaints about people being vaccinated out of turn. Thousands of people in several cities mounted protests this weekend demanding Bolsonaro's ouster. The inoculation drive so far involves six million doses of the CoronaVac vaccine from China's Sinovac, and two million of the British AstraZeneca-Oxford jab, which arrived Friday after several delays from India where they are made.

The Butantan Institute in Sao Paulo, associated with Sinovac, has also received authorization for another 4.8 million doses of CoronaVac.

Warnings of delays

But no sooner had the vaccination program begun than professionals sounded the alarm about delays.

This comes at a time when the pandemic has been surging, claiming more than 1,000 lives a day and more than 215,000 to date, second only to the US total of over 415,000.

SOURCE: AFP



A health worker is inoculated with a COVID vaccine at the Clinicas Hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Jan. 18, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

€2000 PER DOSE

Germany to use corona meds that helped Trump

GERMANY will become the first European Union country to start using the same experimental antibodies treatment credited with helping Donald Trump recover from Covid-19, health minister Jens Spahn said Sunday.

“The government has bought 200,000 doses for 400 million euros (\$486 million),” Spahn told the Bild am Sonntag newspaper, working out at 2,000 euros per dose.

The so-called monoclonal antibody cocktails will be deployed to university hospitals in the coming week, he said, adding that Germany was “the first country in the EU” to use them in the fight against the



German Health Minister Jens Spahn. PHOTO: AFP ARCHIVES

pandemic.

Spahn did not name the manufacturer that will be supplying the drugs but confirmed it

was the same medicine given to then-US president Trump when he fell ill with Covid last October. “They work like a passive

vaccination. Administering these antibodies in the early stages can help high-risk patients avoid a more serious progression,” Spahn said.

Trump, who was briefly hospitalised with the coronavirus, was given the antibody therapy developed by US firm Regeneron, known as REGN-COV2, even before the treatment had won regulatory approval.

He later said the medicine did “a fantastic job”.

US company Eli Lilly has developed a similar therapy.

The novel treatment is a combination or “cocktail” of two lab-made antibodies: infection-fighting proteins that were

developed to bind to the part of the new coronavirus that it uses to invade human cells.

The antibodies attach themselves to different parts of the virus’s spike protein, distorting its structure -- similar in a way to knocking a key out of shape so it no longer fits its lock.

Germany’s order comes at a time of growing frustration in the EU over a slower-than-expected rollout of vaccines.

Vaccine makers Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca have both said they would be delivering fewer doses to Europe than anticipated in the short term because of production problems.

SOURCE: AFP

EVIDENCE AVAILABLE

No Europe deaths directly tied to COVID-19 jabs



Despite dozens of deaths of people shortly after they were vaccinated against coronavirus, scientists say the evidence available so far does not incriminate the new anti-COVID vaccines. PHOTO: AFP

DESPITE dozens of deaths of people shortly after they were vaccinated against coronavirus, scientists say the evidence available so far does not incriminate the new anti-COVID vaccines.

Health agencies stress however that the vast majority of post-vaccination fatalities were elderly, already vulnerable and often sick. Here’s a review of the situation:

Elderly, vulnerable

Norway sparked alarm last week when it reported the deaths of 33 of some 20,000 retirement home residents who had received a first shot of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

At least 13 of the fatalities were not only very elderly but also considered frail with serious ailments, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health said.

While it noted that no analysis had yet been carried out on the causes of the deaths, it suggested that with the aged and vulnerable the normal side effects of vaccination such as fever or

nausea could have contributed.

Outside Norway the news raised widespread concern and fed anti-vaccine scepticism, prompting the authorities to stress that no link had been established between the vaccine and post-jab deaths.

In France, of 800,000 people vaccinated, nine deaths of chronically ill residents of care and retirement homes were recorded by Friday.

The national medicines agency ANSM said that based on available evidence, “Nothing leads to the conclusion that the reported deaths were linked to vaccination.” Other examples include 13 deaths of elderly people recorded in Sweden and seven in Iceland, all with no link established.

In Portugal, a care worker died two days after being inoculated but the justice ministry said a post-mortem found no direct link. France’s interior ministry on January 18 listed 71 “observations of death” in Europe of

people who had the inoculation, but offered no further details.

Continued monitoring

The European Medicines Agency said that despite the deaths, “to date no specific concerns have been identified with Comirnaty”, the commercial name for the Pfizer shot.

The EMA noted that the authorities investigate fatalities to determine whether the vaccine was responsible.

National and European agencies check any problems with vaccinations reported by health professionals, pharmaceutical firms and patients themselves.

For the moment, the number and type of deaths among those vaccinated are not considered abnormal, with no cause-and-effect relationship identified.

In many countries - such as France, Norway, Britain and Spain - the frail and elderly are first in line for vaccinations.

“It is not unexpected that some of these people may naturally fall ill due to their age or underlying conditions shortly after being vaccinated, without the vaccine playing any role in that,” the UK medicines regulator MHRA said.

Transparency, reassurance

The deaths are a highly sensitive issue, and approaches to informing the public vary.

France and some Nordic countries have reported post-vaccination deaths and detailed the potential side effects of the jabs even if no link has been established.

SOURCE: AFP

URGENT CONTACT TRACING

New Zealand detects first community virus case in two months

NEW ZEALAND health officials on Sunday confirmed the first case of Covid-19 in the community for more than two months, sparking urgent contract-tracing efforts north of Auckland.

A 56-year-old woman who recently returned from Europe tested positive 10 days after completing a compulsory two weeks in managed isolation, although she had noticed symptoms several days before getting tested.

Contact tracing was underway after it was revealed the woman and her husband spent several days travelling around the Northland region while she was potentially infectious, visiting about 30 different locations.

Health Minister Chris Hipkins said it was too soon to decide whether a full or partial lockdown would be re-introduced.

“We don’t know the origin

or the strain of the infection,” he told a press conference.

The woman returned to New Zealand on December 30 after spending four months in Europe -- mainly in Spain and the Netherlands -- and was released from an Auckland quarantine hotel on January 13.

New Zealand director-general of health Ashley Bloomfield said she had returned two negative tests while in isolation, and her husband had not shown any symptoms.

It marks the first known case of community transmission in New Zealand since November 18.

Authorities were reviewing closed-circuit television footage to see if the woman contracted the virus while in the managed isolation facility.

More than 600 people who had spent time in the hotel have been asked to self-isolate and be re-tested for Covid-19.

SOURCE: AFP



A commuter train pulls into a station in Wellington, New Zealand, June 9, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

Safe start a must for recovery of travel industry

WITH vaccination against the coronavirus, the world is preparing to revive the travel, tourism and hospitality industry which has been decimated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recovery process for the travel industry will be complicated and lengthy.

As we look to recover from this profound crisis, the safe restart of tourism is essential.

In the post COVID-19 period, every country would try to attract visitors because international travel is a lucrative business that earns huge amounts of money for a country.

With the arrival of the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines from India recently, our people, like other people in the world, are in a wait-and-watch mode to start travel and to resume their business.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism held a meeting with stakeholders in the travel and hospitality industry recently in preparation for revitalizing our tourism industry with safe and responsible COVID-19 services.

Safety is at the top of the mind for travellers and services when travel services resume and travel destinations are reopened with the Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocol (HSP).

To revitalize our tourism industry which has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Myanmar Tourism Strategic Recovery Roadmap (2021-2025) also focus on development community-based tourism with new destinations.

The media reports on uninhabited places in regions and states following the Hotel and Tourism Ministry's alert for community-based tourism have reflected that the ministry also focus on tourism's importance for rural communities.

While providing opportunities for people, we must ensure that tourism play an important role in preserving our unique and cultures, protecting the biodiversity and the ecosystems that sustain us.

When it comes to revitalizing our tourism industry with new destinations, we have an unprecedented opportunity to transform the relationship of the tourism sector with people, nature, the climate and the economy.

Besides, the Myanmar Tourism Strategic Recovery Roadmap are also designed to revitalize the hospitality sector on which our people in rural and urban areas are relying for income, especially women and young people.

As societies and industries are now also looking to rebuild and reemerge from the crisis, we must ensure that our region-wise master plans safe and responsible, and it must be a shared responsibility between visitors, local communities, business owners, employees and local governments.

UNESCO Global Geoparks and Conservation Scientists towards Sustainable Development

Than Htun (Myanmar Geosciences Society)

Geoparks

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our Earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing the impact of natural disasters. By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as new sources of revenue are generated through geotourism, while the geological resources of the area are protected.

History of Geoparks

The philosophy behind the Geoparks concept was first introduced at the Digne Convention in 1991 as a mean to protect and promote geological heritage and sustainable local development through a global network of territories containing geology of outstanding value.

In 1997, in direct response to the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Memory of the Earth', the Division of Earth Sciences of UNESCO introduced the concept of a UNESCO Geoparks Programme to support national and international endeavours in Earth heritage conservation.

In 2000, representatives from four European territories met together to address regional economic development through the protection of geological heritage and the promotion of geotourism. The result of this meeting was the signing of

a convention declaring the creation of the European Geoparks Network (EGN).

At the moment, there are 161 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 44 countries; 81 UNESCO Global Geoparks in Europe, 65 Geoparks in Asia and Pacific, 8 Geoparks in Latin America and Caribbean, 5 Geoparks in North America (Canada) and 2 Geoparks in Africa.

Planet Earth and Homo Sapiens

About 13.5 billion years ago, matter, energy, time and space came into being in what is known as the Big Bang. The story of these fundamental features of our universe is called Physics.

About 300,000 years after their appearance, matter and energy started to coalesce into complex structures, called atoms, which then combined into molecules. The story of atoms, molecules and their interactions is called Chemistry. About 3.8 billion years on a planet called Earth, certain molecules combined to form particularly large and intricate structures called organisms. The story of organism is called Biology. About 70,000 years ago, organisms belonging to the species Homo sapiens started to form even more elaborate structures called cultures. The subsequent development of these human cultures is called History.

Like it or not, we are members of a large and particularly noisy family called the great apes. Our closest living relatives include Chimpanzees, gorillas and Orang-Utans. The chimpanzees are the closest. Just 6 million years ago, a single female ape had two daughters. One became the ancestor of all chimpanzees, the other is our own grandmother. (Y.N. Harari, 2015)

Man was the last to come but the first to use his brain for the purpose of conquering the forces of nature. It was a world where you must either eat or be eaten, and life was very unhappy because it was full of fear and misery (H.W. Van Loon, 1967).

In using brain and intelligence, there appear social and



Monywa Twintaung Geopark. PHOTO:CHIT SAN MAUNG

environmentally friendly positive outlook and opposite destructive negative outlook. Hence, we must encourage and endeavour to respect and restore the values of social, environmental, cultural, national and archaeological heritage and equitably share the fruits of our concerted efforts. Those two opposite outlooks are also based on mainly their respective genes and environment. It must be properly managed for the systematic utilisation, conservation and propagation of know-how and expertise concerning invaluable natural resources of the Mother Earth with sustainable development and exploitation in the long run. To improve the studies, conservation sustainable development of the aforesaid interrelationship between Men and the Mother Earth, it is imperative to establish UNESCO Global Geoparks as many as possible here in Myanmar.

Our Future

There is a fear today that our planet, an isolated island in space, is facing limitations of our resources in a variety of areas, including soils, fresh water, forests, rangelands, and ocean fisheries. The primary question from above environmental perspective and in terms of history of humans on Earth is: Will we

recognize the limits of Earth's resources before it too late to avoid the collapse of human society on a global scale? Today there are no more frontiers on Earth, and we have a nearly fully integrated global economy. With our modern technology, we have the ability to extract resources and transform our environment at rates much faster than any people before us. We need to choose the two ways: Develop a sustainable global economy that ensures the survival of our resource base and other living things on Earth, or suffer the consequences.

Environment

In the early 1970s, we were just becoming conscious of environmental problems and were more concerned with identifying the problems rather than dealing with solutions.

Since then, the field of environmental geology has grown substantially, and there are many practicing professional environmental geologists. The focus has also shifted to finding solutions to environmental problems. This requires increased understanding of the application of geologic processes to the environment. As a result, we need to know more about how the earth works and how the subject of geology inter-

relates with other disciplines, such as biology, chemistry, physics, and geography.

Environmental geology, however, is more than just science. Our science may provide potential solutions to environmental problems and outline the risks of such processes as earthquakes and flooding. However, what we actually decide to do about our environmental problems is more related to our value systems. As a result, subjects such as psychology, social anthropology, history, human geography, political science, law and society, and economics come to the forefront. However, many of these subjects are difficult, and considerable study is necessary to understand them thoroughly. Finally, more advanced courses in areas such as hydrogeology, geochemistry, and seismology are suggested for those students who wish to pursue these subjects further.

Conservation

In 1892, in United States of America, Muir founded the famous Sierra Club in California and it is still an influential NGO over a century later. But it was not until 1908 that US President Theodore Roosevelt used the name "conservation" to describe the activities and the movement.

Roosevelt's home was in New York but he went to North Dakota in 1883 and decided to develop his interest in cattle ranching. He was brought to the west by the prospect of big game hunting, but when he arrived, the last large buffalo herds were gone as a result of overhunting and disease. Throughout his time in North Dakota, Roosevelt became more and more concerned about the disappearance of some species. Roosevelt therefore developed a keen interest in conservation and what would nowadays be called "sustainable land use".

Conservation Science

The Conservation Science (cultural heritage) means the interdisciplinary study of care and protection of art, architecture, and other cultural works. The Environmental Science means interdisciplinary study of protection of environment and natural resources. In helping our planet Earth we can play our part as environmental conservation, animal conservation, marine conservation and human conservation. There are various type of conservation such as biodiversity conservation, water conservation, ocean conservation, soil conservation, grazing lands conservation, forest conservation, mineral conservation, energy conservation and urban conservation. Each kind of conservation has different problems and solutions.

There are also 12 types of conservation career for young generation to serve their country. Those are ecological consultancy career, get your hands dirty conservation career, big NGO conservation career, little NGO conservation career, big famous TV star conservation career, conservation photographer/filmmaker career, academic conservation career, disappear off half way around the world conservation career, technology/ start-up conservation career, corporate social responsibility career, wildlife vet career option, supporting conservation work at zoos, philanthropic conservation career.

SEE PAGE-10



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 24 January, 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 25 January, 2021: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Northern Shan States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperatures in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 January, 2021: Generally fair weather.

Advertisement for 'The Global New Light of Myanmar' magazine, featuring a 'NOW Available' banner and images of the magazine cover.

Advertisement for 'The Global New Light of Myanmar' magazine, listing subscription rates and contact information.

Advertisement for 'The Global New Light of Myanmar' magazine, providing contact details for advertising and a hotline number.

CURBING VIRUS SPREAD

France imposes border controls in scramble to avoid lockdown

NEW border controls went into force in France on Sunday as part of a massive effort to contain the spread of Covid-19 and avoid another nationwide lockdown.

After a slow start to vaccinations, French health authorities reported that a million people had received coronavirus inoculations by Saturday.

But stubbornly high new rates for infections, hospitalisations and Covid deaths fuelled fears France may need another full lockdown, which would be the third, inflicting yet more devastation on businesses and daily lives. Starting Sunday, arrivals to France from European Union countries by air or sea must be



The port of Calais, the main ferry crossing point between England and France. PHOTO: FRANCOIS LO PRESTI / AFP

able to produce a negative PCR test result obtained in the previous 72 hours.

The requirement had already applied to non-EU arrivals

since mid-January. EU travellers entering France by land, including cross-border workers, will not need a negative test.

SOURCE: AFP

REFERENDUM

Scottish leader vows to hold 'legal' independence vote

SCOTLAND'S First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on Sunday said she planned to hold a legal referendum on independence from Britain despite Westminster's opposition, as an opinion poll showed a majority would vote yes.

If her Scottish National Party (SNP) wins a strong showing in regional elections in May, Sturgeon said she would seek a fresh referendum even though Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said such a vote should only be held once in a generation.

"I want to have a legal referendum, that is what I am going to seek the authority of the Scottish people for in May and if they give me that authority, that's what I intend to do," she told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

Johnson "will flatly refuse the demand," The Sunday Times quoted senior government sources as saying.

Sturgeon cited the fact that "the polls now show that a majority of people in Scotland want independence".

A Sunday Times poll found 50% of Scottish voters wanted another referendum in the next five years and 49% would vote for independence, while 44% would reject it.

SOURCE: AFP

"MASSIVELY DIVISIVE"

Once ski-mad Austria split on pistes open in lockdown

ON the surface, the Austrian ski resort of Semmering looks to have adapted well to the coronavirus pandemic. Loudspeakers exhort skiers lining up in orderly queues to wear FFP2 masks and respect distancing measures.

But whatever the precautions, the fact that some Austrians are skiing at all has prompted the ire of others stuck indoors during the country's third coronavirus lockdown, despite the country's reputation as a "ski nation".

Among those hitting the pistes is businessman Robert Buchmeyer, an avid skier since he was six.

With hotels still shut to all but business travellers, he had to scrap his annual week-long ski vacation.

He has instead turned to day trips to some of the country's 250 ski resorts, always equipped with the FFP2 mask now mandatory on lifts.

SOURCE: AFP



Skiers have to wear masks and keep their distance. PHOTO: AFP

UNESCO Global Geoparks and Conservation Scientists ...

FROM PAGE-9

Conservation Practice

Conservation practice should be founded on good science and researchers play a leading role. Conservation is done by different stakeholders; government staff, private sector. On the other hand Conservation NGOs can help bridge the gap between science and conservation implementation.

The way forward for conservation in the rapidly changing areas of tropical Southeast Asia will increasingly involve inputs not just from ecologists but also from business leaders, social scientists, activists, and policy makers. In the interest of biodiversity, conservation scientists should take the lead in such multidisciplinary problem-solving teams (Lynam et al., 2016).

The conservation scientists will obtain following opportunities in conservation practice. i. Conduct academic research and exploration, ii. Join a government agency, iii. Participate in collaborations with communities, park managers, security professionals, tour operators, iv. Join advocacy groups, v. Join UN and International group, vi. Join a conservation NGO, foundation of think-tank.

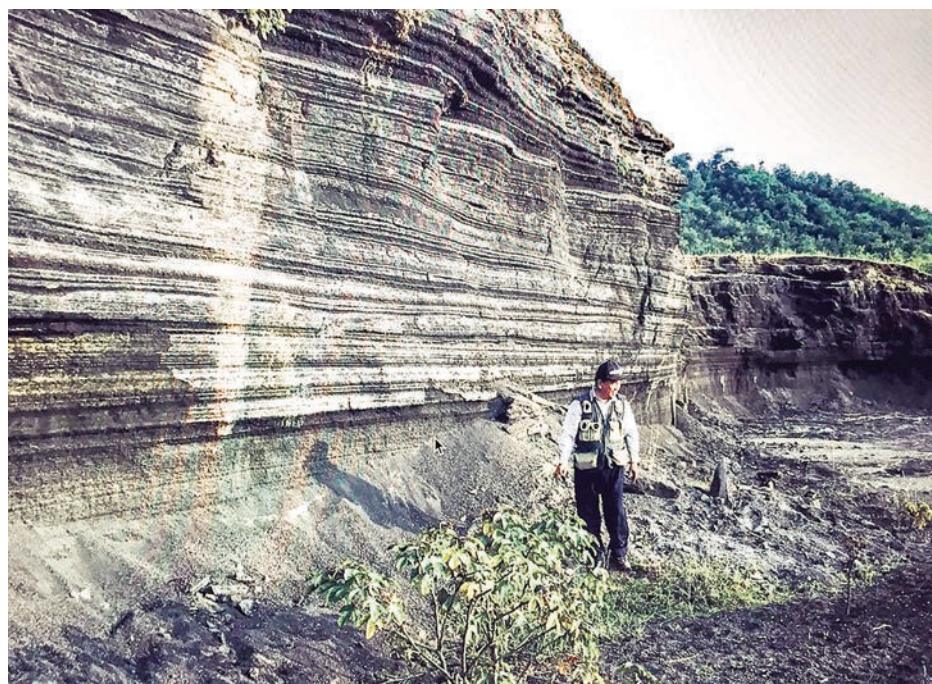


PHOTO: CHIT SAN MAUNG

Sustainability

One definition is that sustainability is development that ensure that future generations will have equal access to the resources that our planet offers. Sustainability also refers to types of development that are economically viable, do not harm the environment, and are socially just. Sustainability is a long-term concept, some-

thing that happens over decades or even over hundreds of years. It is important to acknowledge that sustainability, with respect to use of resources, is possible for renewable resources such as air and water. Sustainable development with respect to nonrenewable resources such as fossil fuels and minerals is possible by, first, extending their availability through

conservation and recycling; and, second, rather than focusing on when a particular nonrenewable resource is depleted, focusing on how that resource is used and developing substitutes for those uses.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defines 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be universally applied in all countries. Many of these goals will demand proper management of the nature, including both geodiversity and biodiversity. Geoconservation may help to: increase quality of education, have clean water, promote decent work and economic growth, organize sustainable cities and communities, understand climate change, protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, combat desertification, and halt biodiversity loss.

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2. Yuval Noah Harari, 2011. Sapiens a brief history of humankind
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‘TURNING THE PAGE’

Venezuela’s Maduro says willing to establish ‘new path’ with US

VENEZUELAN President Nicolas Maduro said Saturday he was willing to “turn the page” with the US under President Joe Biden, calling for a “new path” after years of tension with Donald Trump’s White House.

“We are willing to walk a new path in our relations with Joe Biden’s government based on mutual respect, dialogue, communication and understanding,” the leftist leader told supporters, adding that he “is willing to turn the page” with the new US administration.

Trump’s government had slapped multiple economic sanctions on Venezuela, including an oil embargo in place since 2019, in an attempt to overthrow the socialist regime of Madu-

ro, whom the US has labeled a dictator.

After years of a frosty relationship Caracas and Washington fully broke diplomatic ties on January 23, 2019, when the US government recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as Venezuela’s interim president.

After Biden won the US presidential election in November, Maduro congratulated the longtime politician, saying Venezuela was “ready for dialogue and good understanding with the people and government of the United States,” repeating those sentiments again in December.

Analysts believe the Biden administration will take a more moderate stance on Venezuela and will support international



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, pictured here delivering a speech on January 22, 2021, says he “is willing to turn the page” with the new US administration of President Joe Biden. **PHOTO: AFP**

mediation for the transition towards a new government.

That said, Biden’s nominee for secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, has already described

Maduro as a “brutal dictator,” and during his Senate confirmation hearing said he supported Trump’s policy of backing Guaido. **SOURCE: AFP**

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Russia police violence under review after 3,300 protesters held

MORE than 3,300 protesters were arrested at demonstrations in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, a monitor reported Sunday, as prosecutors probed possible violence “on the part of law enforcement”. Police clashed with demonstrators in Moscow as tens of thousands took to the streets across the country on Saturday following Navalny’s call to protest against President Vladimir Putin’s rule. Putin’s most charismatic critic was detained at a Moscow airport on arrival a week ago from Germany, where he had been recovering from a near-fatal poisoning with a nerve agent. **SOURCE: AFP**

SQUABBLING OVER LEGACY

Ghana prepares to bury ex-leader Rawlings as parties vie over legacy



Former Ghana President Jerry Rawlings will be buried, finally, on Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

AS Ghana prepares for the funeral of former president Jerry Rawlings, the two main political parties are squabbling over his legacy.

Rawlings held sway for two decades, first as military ruler and later as elected president.

He died in November at the age of 73 and his funeral was initially scheduled for December 23 but was postponed, because of what the foreign ministry called “unforeseen circumstances”.

It will now take place in the capital Accra on Wednesday.

Behind the scenes, Rawlings’ family, traditional chiefs and political figures have been at odds over the legacy of the former air force flight lieutenant, who twice overthrew governments but was widely seen by the poor as their champion.

Rawlings got his first taste of power in 1979 when he banded together with other junior officers frustrated over widespread corruption to take control.

He quickly handed the reins to an elected president but was soon back at the top following another coup on December 31, 1981.

The son of a Scottish father and Ghanaian mother, he became a national icon as he headed Ghana for 20 years until 2001, being voted in as president at the ballot box in 1992 and ushering in democracy. **SOURCE: AFP**

PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN

Portuguese brave lockdown for presidential polls

PORTUGUESE voters have been asked to venture out despite the country’s pandemic lockdown Sunday for a presidential election widely expected to see centre-right incumbent Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa win another term.

Polls point to a first-round win for Rebelo de Sousa, a former political commentator turned approachable head of state known for candid moments like queueing at the supermarket in shorts, plunging into the

sea to help girls whose canoe had capsized or sharing a meal with homeless people.

But observers have their eye on how a far-right challenger will perform -- and whether a plunge in turnout could produce an upset.

At stake is a post with the power to dissolve parliament and call fresh elections -- a pivotal constitutional role with a minority government in power.

Portugal has been under a second national lockdown for the

past 10 days aimed at braking a surge in coronavirus cases.

The country recorded its worst daily coronavirus death toll and number of new infections on Saturday bringing fatalities to over 10,000.

More than 80,000 infections were reported in the past week to Friday, the highest rate worldwide in proportion to its 10.8 million people, according to an AFP tally based on government figures. **SOURCE: AFP**



Lisbon streets have been almost empty during a second coronavirus lockdown ahead of the presidential election. **PHOTO: AFP**

'WE'RE GOING TO MIAMI'

Miami's successful pitch to tech firms: How can we help?



This file photo from May 22, 2019, shows an aerial view of Miami; the Florida metropolis, already a financial hub, is striving to become a leading technology hub as well. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

THE city of Miami, with a growing reputation as a financial services center enhanced by its balmy climate and low taxes, is now making a concerted and increasingly successful push to attract hi-tech firms from Silicon Valley and New York.

Goldman Sachs and other financial firms already have a presence in the southern Florida metropolis.

The latest arrival is New York firm Blackstone, which earlier this month rented a building for a technology unit.

And now "techies" are starting to arrive in increasing num-

bers -- investors, designers and engineers -- attracted by a thriving technological ecosystem, by word of mouth from their earlier-arriving peers, and by pandemic conditions in some ways more favorable than in hotspots like California and New York.

Also arriving this month was PayPal co-founder Bill Harris, who in his LinkedIn profile has announced he is "building a new fintech in Miami" -- a digital consumer financial services firm.

Viral tweet

One of those responsible for the surge in tech arrivals is

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who has become a star of the tech Twittersphere.

His popularity on that social media platform was instantly confirmed in December when Delian Asparouhov, director of the venture capital firm Founders Fund, asked rhetorically, "what if we move Silicon Valley to Miami?" and the Republican mayor immediately responded, "How can I help?"

That tweet went viral and attracted 15,000 new followers to Suarez's account, including even Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey.

SOURCE: AFP

London stock market facing blockbuster IPO year

LONDON will enjoy a very strong year for stock market flotations, analysts say, arguing that both Brexit and coronavirus offer firms a unique opportunity to expand. Various big-name businesses that have seen booming online demand from home-bound customers during Covid-19 lockdowns have revealed eye-catching plans for initial public offerings (IPOs) in recent weeks.

Clarity over Britain's final departure from the European Union on January 1 acted as a catalyst for many companies to raise funds, according to special-

ists, while the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines also soothed investor concerns over the deadly pandemic. So far this year, the celebrated shoemaker Dr Martens, app-driven meals delivery service Deliveroo and online greetings card seller Moonpig have all outlined plans.

Confidence continues to build

"Looking to the year ahead, we can expect 2021 to be a very strong year for the UK IPO market," said Scott McCubbin at London-based financial services giant EY.— SOURCE: AFP

GAMING BOOM

Pandemic boosts variety of video games

You're stuck in lockdown but that doesn't mean you can't visit a tropical island, a space station or have games night with your friends -- certain video games have filled the need of the world's confined for a bit of distraction, adventure and socialising and achieved unexpected success during the pandemic.

Animal Crossing

No adversaries or competition in "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" which came out in March for Nintendo's Switch console. Instead players ex-



Gamers streaming their play on the Twitch platform helped boost the popularity of Among Us. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

plore an island, collecting fruit and making tools and furniture, trading with others, as the seasons slowly change.—AFP

Invitation For Open tender No.(2/2021)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (5008.574) Metric Tons, (21) Lots of Cathode Copper by United States Dollar as follow,
 - (a) Cathode Copper (108.574) MT (1) Lot, Yangon, Eden Warehouse
 - (b) Cathode Copper (100) MT (5) Lots, Yangon, Eden Warehouse
 - (c) Cathode Copper (200) MT (5) Lots, Yangon, Eden Warehouse
 - (d) Cathode Copper (200) MT (7) Lots, Monywa, Mine Site
 - (e) Cathode Copper (500) MT (2) Lots, Monywa, Mine Site
 - (f) Cathode Copper (1000) MT (1) Lot, Monywa, Mine Site
2. Base price of Cathode Copper (Eden Warehouse, Yangon) shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount shall be winning tender.
3. Base price of Cathode Copper (Mine Site, Monywa) shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the LME price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses) shall be winning tender.
3. Tender Closing Date and Time is 23-2-2021 (14:00) PM and Opening Tender is (15:00) PM.
4. Tender documents are available from the Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw and details can be asked to (+95) 067 3409378 and 067 3409372 within the Office hours.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Invitation For Open tender No.(1/2021)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (3041.638) Metric Tons, average metal content (Ni- 35.94 %, Fe-62.19 %) (17) Lots of Ferro Nickel by United States Dollar as follow,
 - (a) Ferro Nickel (500) MT (2) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
 - (b) Ferro Nickel (200) MT (5) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
 - (c) Ferro Nickel (100) MT (10) Lots, Tagaung Taung, Mine Site
2. Base price of Ferro Nickel shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Nickel average price in the month prior to the month of tender opening and the iron ore price 300 U.S. dollar per metric ton. The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the LME price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses) shall be winning tender.
3. Tender Closing Date and Time is 23-2-2021, (14:00) PM and Opening Tender is (15:00) PM.
4. Tender documents are available from the Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No. (19), Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. If you need detailed information, please can be inquired at telephone no. (+95) 67- 3409378, 67- 3409372 within the Office hours.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May,
09251022355,09974424848

NEW YEAR, NEW ADMINISTRATION

US Fed holds first policy meeting of Biden administration

WITH a new year and a new administration in the White House, the US central bank nonetheless faces an unprecedented challenge in guiding the post-pandemic economic recovery.

One thing Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is unlikely to face from President Joe Biden is the barrage of Twitter attacks he was subject to, sometimes daily, under former president Donald Trump.

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki last week said Biden "clearly has a great deal of respect and value for the Federal Reserve and role they play."

But even absent



Former US president Donald Trump used to regularly attack Fed Chair Jerome Powell (pictured) on Twitter, but those days are likely over. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

political pressures, the outlook is daunting. The initial rollout of Covid-19 vaccines has raised hopes companies will be able to

open for business and shoppers will open their wallets, improving the economy's prospects.

SOURCE: AFP

RISING PRODUCTION

Libya oil output makes high-stake but fragile return



Oil refinery in Libya's northern town of Ras Lanuf. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

OIL cartel OPEC saw production rise in December, as Libya's energy sector sprang back to life following a ceasefire deal in the war-torn country.

Libya, sitting atop Africa's largest proven crude oil reserves, has been ravaged by conflict since a 2011 NATO-backed

uprising that toppled and killed long-time dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

As global oil prices remain volatile in the midst of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has rattled the world economy, and further rounds of UN-backed peace talks to build on the October ceasefire

and resolve Libya's long conflict, what are the prospects for the country's production?

- Will Libya return to full output? -

Libya is now producing 1.224 million barrels per day (bpd) -- a tenfold increase from an average of 121,000 bpd in the third quarter of 2020, before the ceasefire deal.

But that is still below the levels of the Kadhafi era, said Francis Perrin, head of research at the Paris-based Institute for International and Strategic Affairs.

Libya was then producing between 1.5 million and 1.6 million barrels per day, he told AFP.

SOURCE: AFP

A RAPID GROWTH

China's natural gas output tops 188 bln cubic meters in 2020

CHINA produced 188.8 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2020, representing a growth of 9.8 percent year on year, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed.

China has seen its annual natural gas output increase by more than 10 billion cubic meters for four consecutive years, according to the NBS.

Production in natural gas sustained a rapid growth in December, surging 13.7 percent to reach 18.7 billion cubic meters. The growth rate was 1.9 percentage points faster than that in November.

China imported 102 million tonnes of natural gas in 2020, up 5.3 percent year on year, according to the NBS data.

SOURCE: Xinhua

**EMBASSY OF JAPAN
YANGON**

Vacancy Announcement

The Embassy of Japan is recruiting qualified individuals for the following three positions:
- Employment Type: full-time (08:30 - 17:15 from Monday to Friday)
- Starting Date: 1 April 2021 (TBD)
- Salary: Monthly payment (Amount TBD)

Position	(Position 1) CLERK at Political Affairs Section	(Position 2) CLERK at Consular Section	(Position 3) Secretary
Main Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and maintaining a network of key contacts across government, political parties, academia, civil society and diplomatic corps etc. Drafting and editing documents and papers such as Ambassador's speech, statement, public message from the Embassy etc. Conducting ad-hoc research and analysis on country's current topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consular support for Japanese nationals in Myanmar Administrative and secretarial support in the Embassy Assistance for coordination with the Myanmar Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretarial and administrative support in the Embassy Support for organizing events and functions of the Embassy
Language Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burmese : Native level English : Native level (at least a few years working experience using English) Japanese proficiency is desirable but not a prerequisite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burmese : Native level English : Fluent level Japanese : Fluent level (in speaking, reading and writing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burmese : Native level English : Fluent level Japanese proficiency is desirable but not a prerequisite

Common Requirements

- Bachelor's degree
- Competency in using Microsoft Office applications and the Internet
- Interpersonal communication ability to work collaboratively with colleagues

How to Apply

Please submit your application to com@yn.mofa.go.jp by email with the below attachments (applications by other measures such as postal service will not be accepted.). The email subject must be noted using the following format: 'Which position you are applying to (Full Name)'. For example: 'Position 1 (John Smith)'.

- Cover letter outlining 1) which position you are applying, 2) reasons for applying, 3) motivation for the position, 4) your relevant work experience, and 5) how you are able to meet the requirement for the position. The letter should be written in either English or Japanese of your choice within 2 pages of A4 size paper. **Note: You can apply to multiple positions, but please make separate applications for each position, and submit each application in a separate email, with the position number noted in the email subject as per the above instruction.**
- Detailed CV written in English with a photo, describing your academic and professional background, family structure, and your contact information (cellphone number)
- Copy of your bachelor's degree certificate
- Copy of your National Registration Card
- Other supporting documents if any (e.g. result of language test such as Japanese Language Proficiency Test result, essay, dissertation or certificates)

Application closing date is **22 February 2021**

(The Embassy will contact only shortlisted candidates by 26 February)

Announcement For Changing Distributor Name Of Pesticide

Shandong Binnong Technology Co.,Ltd (No. 518, Yongxin Road, Binbei Town, Binzhou, Shandong, China) would like to announce that: the following our product will be transferred to Aventine Limited, No. 126 (A), Kabaraye Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar as a new distributor.

And we would like to invite any objection for the above changing distributor, please contact PRB section, Plant Protection Division, Yangon within 14 days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No
1.	BNS Ame A	Ametryn 80% WDG	Provisional	P2020-4342

MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISIE EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTEMNT INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY ONLINE SYSTEM FEBRUARY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (A) DATE & TIME - **(9-2-2021) (09:00) A.M**
- (EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT) YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/HARDWOOD (LOG)
- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1214) TONS
2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR - HARDWOOD LOGS KANYIN ABOUT (5000) TONS
- (B) DATE & TIME - **(25-2-2021) (09:00) A.M**
- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1281) TONS
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (176) TONS (249) CBM
2019-2020 EXTRACTION YEAR - HARDWOOD LOGS KANYIN ABOUT (5000) TONS
- (C) PLACE - TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEBSITE (www.mte.com.mm).

Contacts; Office Ph; 09-5148901, 09-5053865, 09-5129148
dgmmarketing.exprot@gmail.com

OPEN TENDER COMMITTEE
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE

Longtail boat trailing boats.



Kawthoung with Sea Gypsies or Men of the Sea

By Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)
TRANSLATED BY
KHINE THAZIN HAN

TANINTHAYI Region, the southern tip of Myanmar, abounds with water, forest and mineral resources. Kawthoung in Taninthayi Region is also well known for the minority Salon (or) Mawken (or) Sea Gypsies living on the islands.

They were believed to have inhabited Malay Peninsula and now are living on the islands in Myeik, Bokpyin and Kawthoung townships. The Malay people once called them Oranbesin while the Thais called them Chaunan in Thai language but the Salon

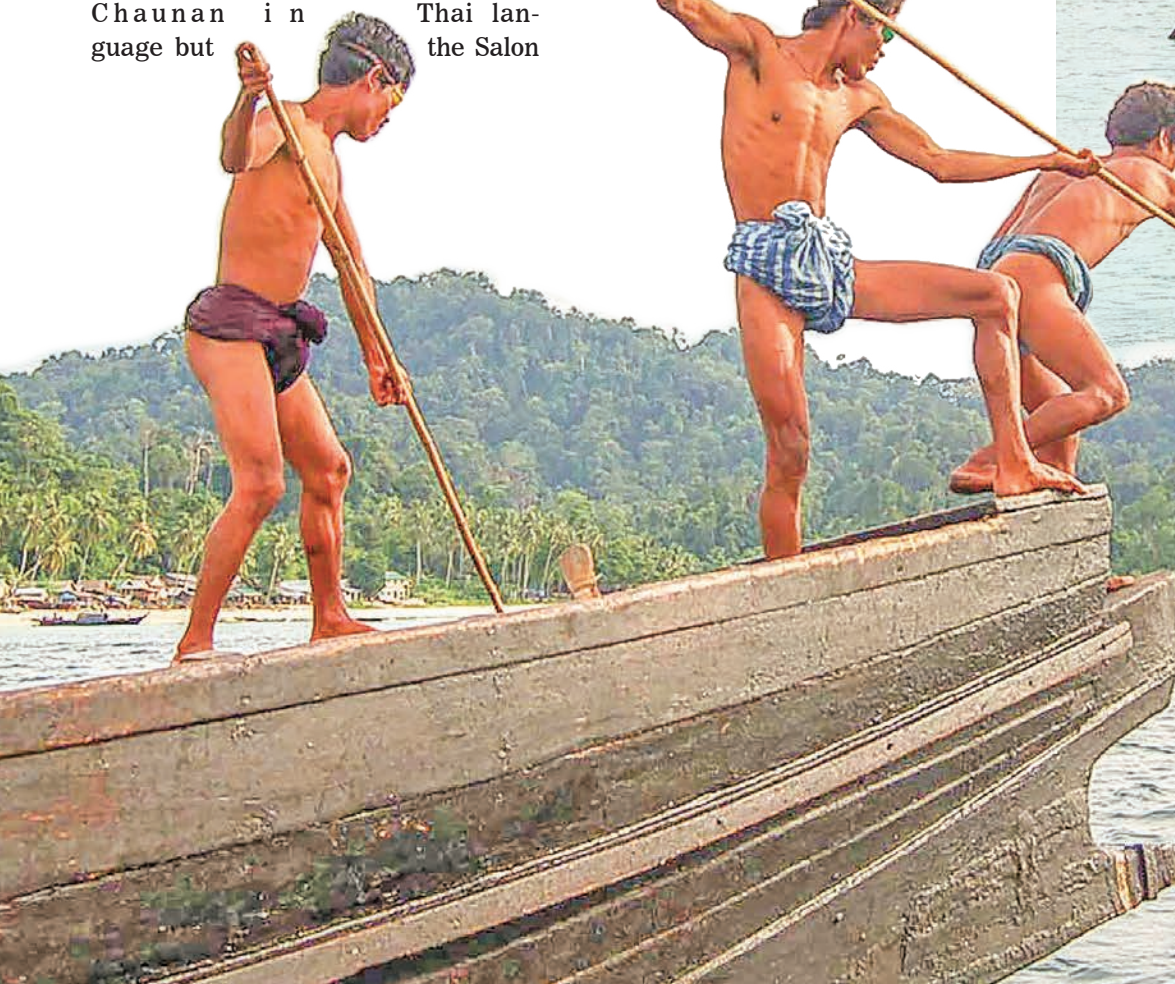
called themselves as Mawken.

The Salons do not live in a place permanently and they live just on the waves with their kabang, boat-houses, hunting the fisheries.

Their lives were mostly spent on the waves and constructed temporary tents on the shore only if they had to shelter from the storm in the rainy season. Now, they concentratedly settle in a certain village. The Salon are adept at swimming and diving and they can dive up to 80 ft for 15 minutes without any scuba gears.

Their religious faith is nat (spirit) worship. Dutar-nat is a noble one to them and Katoy-nat is evil spir-

it.



They usually hold nat pwe (spirit festival) for Katoy-nat yearly after Thingyan festival to call on good fortune. The nat mentor plays a key role in holding the festivals. The Salon offer paddy, corn, alcohol, honey, betel quid, duck blood, chicken, dolphin and sea turtle to the nats according to the instruction of nat mentors whenever someone is sick or dead in addition to the festival.

The qualification of Salon man is determined based on his ability in making kabang boats, exploration of underwater resources and prediction in the flow of sea water and oceanography while the Salon woman is based on the search of fork, mat

The Salon people go and search fish, squid, snail, oyster, pearl, sea cucumber, hard corals, Ambergris, turtle eggs, bird nest and honey in the fine weather especially in winter and then they dry them to sell for their keeps.

The Salon people do not accept to make love affairs before the marriage. If the boy and girl are in love, they let their parents know and seek permission to allow their marriage. The bridegroom has to secure the permission of the parents of their bride-to-be fronting presents or clothings. Then, they hold wedding ceremony successfully. Some elope when the parents do not agree their relationship.



A villager making a dugout, traditional wooden boat or log boat.

ancient Salon people, the island will suffer misfortune if someone die and so all the people leave from the island after the funeral occasion.

There is no specific literacy of Salon people and they usually play drums made of the stem of tree and skin of monitor lizard. Currently, they use the water barrels and aluminium as drums. They like signing and dancing although they do not have their own traditional dance. But their melody is similar to the songs of Malays.

They do not like strict orders and regulations. If they are forced to do something, they quickly move out of that area. But now, they understand social harmony and can live well in the society.

The Salon people can be found only on the Zar Det Kyi Island, Lampi Island, Nyaung Wee Island, Jalun Island, Kyone Kalat village of Bo Cho Island and Done Island of Kyunsu township and La Ngan Island of Bokpyin township.

Currently, other nationalities reside in such villages for business purposes and so the living standard of Salon people becomes high and they can live well in society.

Some people persuade them to use drugs to buy their catch (fisheries) unfairly to their own advantage. So, many Salon people die while some become addicted to drugs. The race of Salon is nearly to be extinct as the Salon women marry to other national race.

Only the Salon people can dive for a long time without any external breathing apparatus and they also know the sea and marine animals well without using modern technology in the world. They never think to leave the sea and they are such simple guys with no greeds.

So, everybody should pay a visit to Taninthayi as not to miss the Salon (or) Mawken (or) Sea Gypsies when the officials revive the tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 period.

weaving and amelioration in marriage.

The Salon people have no specific clothes and they usually wrap longyi and htamein around their waist. In the cold season, they just put another longyi and htamein on their body.

The Salon women used to leave their upper bodies bare in the past and now they wear the clothes in accordance with the trend. They prop their child on the hip while they are working. They like wearing the shells of sea snails.

The eloping culture is also strange. If the boy goes and takes the girl from a boat docked at the beach or the boy can run over the stern of girl's boat, the parents do not separate them anymore. It is such a strange culture.

The tradition of their funeral is also unique. If someone dies, the family members cry only for a while and then they

dance and sing drinking alcohol. They believe that such doing will ease the attachment of the dead person. If the dead person is man, the body is burnt when the tide rises while the body of woman when the tide falls.

In the past, the dead body was put on the shelf together with their possessions on the beach. According to the beliefs of



Children playing on dugouts.



FA Cup holders Arsenal eliminated, Man City survive scare

LONDON—Last season's FA Cup winners Arsenal were eliminated from the competition in the fourth round thanks to Gabriel's own-goal in a 1-0 loss to Southampton, while Manchester City survived a scare to beat fourth-tier Cheltenham 3-1.

In an otherwise close game, Gabriel's decision to try to block a shot from Kyle Walker-Peters proved decisive for Arsenal losing their hold on the cup.

Right-back Walker-Peters was allowed plenty of space to overlap the Arsenal defence, but his shot looked to be heading narrowly wide of the far post before Gabriel's failed attempt deflected the ball off the post and in. It was the first goal Arsenal had conceded since December 26 after five consecutive shutouts.

"I'm very disappointed because we wanted to continue

in the competition, we had a dream to do it again like last year and the dream today is over," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said.

"I am as well disappointed with the way we conceded the goal in an area where we know we shouldn't be doing that," he added. "At the same time, I cannot fault the effort of the players, how they tried and how they went to get a goal in the second half."

Arsenal has won the FA Cup a record 14 times and Arteta before kickoff called it "our favorite competition." Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored both of the team's goals in the 2-1 win over Chelsea in last year's final, but he wasn't available for the fourth-round clash due to what Arteta called "a personal matter". Arteta said he couldn't yet predict when Aubameyang might return.—AFP ■



Manchester City midfielder Phil Foden (left) scores against Cheltenham in the FA Cup fourth round. **PHOTO: AFP**

Australian Open tweaks lead-in events for players in virus lockdown

MELBOURNE—Australian Open organisers on Sunday released a revised schedule for lead-in events to the tennis Grand Slam, saying it would give players more time to prepare after a 14-day quarantine lockdown. More than a quarter of the tournament's players have been confined to their hotel rooms after coronavirus cases were detected on charter flights carrying them into the largely virus-free country.

The positive cases, on three of 17 flights carrying more than 1,000 people, threw preparations for the tournament into disarray as players complained they would struggle to be ready to hit the court.

Tennis Australia said in a statement the tournament build-up had been revamped after "extensive consultation" to help give the 72 affected players "the best possible preparation and training opportunities". —AFP ■



Myanmar's Esport Team, Burmese Ghouls seen after securing the 1st Runner Up title of the M2 World Championship in Singapore on 24 January, 2021. **PHOTO: BURMESE GHOULS FACEBOOK PAGE**

M2 World Championship: Burmese Ghouls bag 1st Runner Up with 3-4 loss to Bren Esports

Myanmar's Mobile Legends team, Burmese Ghouls secured the second prize (1st Runner Up) of the M2 Mobile Legends: Bang Bang World Championship 2021 after facing a narrow 3-4 loss to Filipino Bren Esports team in the Grand Final of the Esports championship which was held yesterday at Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore.

Five Burmese Ghouls players: Ace, Dee, Maybe, Kid, and Ruby DD joined the battle game for the World Championship Grand Final.

The final game between the two teams was fierce and both teams' gamers handled colourful heroes draft.

The Filipino team took advantage of off-lane and tower control errors of Burmese Ghouls players in the middle of the Game 7 to secure their win of the championship.

In the Group Stages, Burmese Ghouls beat Unique Devu 2-0 and RSG 2-1 to enter the Upper Bracket Playoffs together with Bren Esports, RRQ Roshii and Omega Esports.

In the Upper Bracket Play-

off stage, the Burmese Ghouls defeated Bren Esports 2-0 and in the Upper Bracket Final, the Myanmar team defeated RRQ Roshii 3-2 to advance to the Grand Final.

The best 12 teams from nine countries competed in the M2 World Championship.

Remarkably, the Grand Final Game between Burmese Ghouls vs Bren Esports was watched by almost one million of Myanmar fans on the free-to-air livestream page of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Myanmar.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Hurt and heartbroken McGregor ponders future after knockout shock

ABU DHABI—Conor McGregor admitted he was "heartbroken" Sunday after a shock UFC knockout by underdog Dustin Poirier left the superstar's future in the cage uncertain.

"It's hard to take," Irishman McGregor told a post-fight news conference.

"(It's) the highest highs and the lowest lows in this game. I don't know where I'm at, at the minute, to be honest," said the biggest drawcard in mixed martial arts.

The 32-year-old McGregor had been an overwhelming favourite to register a winning return after a year away from the octagon.

But Poirier (27-6), who lost in 109 seconds to McGregor in their first fight in 2014, used a

lower leg kicking strategy to negate his opponent's stand-up style. The American then launched a sustained barrage of blows to the head culminating in

a straight right dropping McGregor to the floor moments before the fight was stopped at 2min 32sec of the second round.—AFP ■



A rematch between Khabib Nurmagomedov of Russia (right) and Conor McGregor looks remote after the Irishman's shock defeat in Abu Dhabi on Sunday to Dustin Poirier. **PHOTO: AFP**