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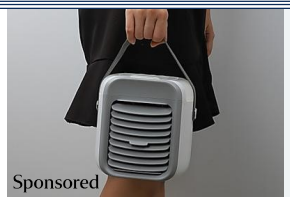

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Myanmar confirms first two coronavirus cases

People wear face masks as a preventive measure against the Covid-19 coronavirus while waiting for a ride at the central railway station in Yangon, Myanmar, on March 19, 2020. PHOTO: AFP

PUBLISHED MAR 24, 2020, 3:54 AM SGT

YANGON (AFP) - Myanmar confirmed its first cases of coronavirus late Monday (March 23) after weeks of increasing scepticism over the under-developed South-east Asian nation's claims to be free of the disease.

The country of 54 million people had been the world's largest country by population not to report a single case of the Covid-19 pandemic that has confined more than 1.7 billion to their homes.

With only 214 people tested by Monday evening, medical experts and rights groups have urged Myanmar to stand up and face the pending crisis.

Myanmar's health ministry late Monday confirmed a 36-year-old Myanmar man travelling back from the US and a 26-year-old Myanmar man returning from the UK had both tested positive.

"We will investigate all the people who were in close contact with these two men," the statement said.

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