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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Announcement of Union Election Commission

23 May 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of Mongnai, Hsenwi, Kyaukme, Nawnghkio, Mongmit, Mabein and Metmung townships of Shan State.
2. According to the inspection, the previous election commission released 383,520 eligible voters in these seven townships of Shan State. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 314,635 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 41,697 citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 1,928 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 31,052 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.

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Inwa ancient cultural area being shaped as one-day visit of travellers

A PLAN is underway to shape cultural heritage stupas and buildings in Inwa ancient cultural area as a one-day package tour for international travellers in TadaU Township of Mandalay Region, said a Mandalay branch official from the Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

Ancient cultural temples and stupas mushroom in Inwa area. Local and foreign travellers take a half-day in visiting prominent sites in ancient city-state Inwa such as Bagaya monastery, Mei Nu brick monastery, the royal palace wall, the Nanmyint tower, and the Hsinkyon fortress.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism created further destinations at the six-series of the pagoda, the nine-series of the pagoda, the cluster of Daw Gyan pagodas, Myintmotaung Pagoda and Wingapa Pagoda, for travellers at ancient stupas and temples in the Inwa, Nyaungyan and Amarapura eras. A meeting will be held to negotiate with the Tour Guides Associations to be able to arrange the one-day package tour to these new attractive sites.

Ancient city-state Inwa was established by Khing Thadoeminphya in 1364 AD. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

"Currently, travellers bound to Inwa area pay a half-day visit to destinations. So, we set more destinations to arrange the one-day trip for travellers with the construction of roads to ensure travellers' convenience.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Over 210,000 patients reach military hospitals to date

MILITARY hospitals and temporary hospitals in the townships of regions and states provide medical treatments to the people to solve their difficulties in healthcare services. A total of 217,412 outpatients and 65,878 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date. Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 10,155 major operations and 5,187 minor operations. The senior doctors treat serious cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 12,859 babies, while 12,859 pregnant women were taken to the respective military hospitals.

It is reported that Tatmadaw will continue to accelerate the cooperation to develop the public healthcare sector. — MNA

Inwa ancient cultural area being shaped ...

FROM PAGE-1

"We will make more efforts to renovate ancient stupas and temples and ensure smooth transportation. If tourism services resurge in future, the ministry will coordinate with the tour guide association in order to insert the Inwa area as a one-day trip for travellers into the ancient cultural lists," the official said.

At present, efforts are being made to put the MraukU area into the World Heritage Lists. Moreover, arrangements are being made to enlist the Inwa ancient area to be recognized by UNESCO as the World Heritage Site. Hence, the area is under preservation to mitigate the loss and waste of ancient heritage and improve the living standard of the local people.

Ancient city-state Inwa was established by King Thadoeminphya in 1364 AD. During the four-hundred-year period until King Bagyidaw in 1821 AD, successive kings, queens, royal families, and people donated 624 stupas, temples, tunnels, and buildings. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/ GNLM

Public information

Yangon Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses.

Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01 830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

Teachers emphasize teaching to the students at basic education level

ONLY when basic education schools give good teaching will students have the skills to learn higher education. So, teachers emphasize teaching to the students at the basic education level.

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 11 May 2021)

Country-wide religious buildings peacefully alive with prayers

BUDDHIST pagodas, Hindu temples, mosques, churches and other religious buildings across the country are bustling and peaceful with prayers since the reopening on 8 February.

The country's religious buildings and prayer halls were temporarily closed to contain the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar. They have reopened since 8 February.

Parks, playgrounds in cities, including Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, have reopened, and markets, hospitals, flights, railways, waterways and bus lines are regularly operated. – MNA

Military corps provide healthcare services in MDY township hospitals

Tatmadaw medical corps has been providing necessary medical treatment to the patients in the respective areas according to the request of the residents and staff.

The Tatmadaw medical teams continued providing healthcare services -- surgery, dental and oral healthcare, osteoporosis, obstetrics, gynaecology, hypertension and heart disease -- to the patients in Thazi Township Hospital, Hanza hospital, Yinmabin hospital, Nyaungyan hospital in Meiktila District, Pintale hospital in Wundwin Township, Tagaung hospital in Thabeikkyin Township, Madaya Township Hospital, Singaing Township Hospital, Myittha Township Hospital, Kume hospital, Taungtha Township Hospital, Welaung hospital, Kyaukpadaung Township Hospital and NyaungU District Hospital in Mandalay Region.

It is reported that residents are satisfied with the medical supports of Tatmadaw. – MNA

6 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 May, total figure rises to 143,234

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **143,234 after 6 new cases** were reported on 23 May 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,194** have been discharged from hospitals. —MNA

State Administration Council
Press Release
Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who arrive in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries with worries because of incitement and intimidation of NLD members, the extremists who support that party, CRPH unlawful association, incitement of CDM and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since after 1 February 2021 when the Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibility.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of CRPH unlawful association and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in their areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. As those who evaded from their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from evaded areas to various regions of Myanmar.
4. Information was released that if those who evaded to various areas except the persons who committed any kinds of crime wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord, the citizens abroad are to contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates without facing action taken in accord with the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Daily Newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper, www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Preliminary draft, regulations regarding inclusion of MraukU cultural heritage site in UNESCO list revealed

AN explicit initial draft, rules and regulations in seeking the inclusion of MraukU Cultural Heritage Site on the UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list were unveiled at the meeting hall of MraukU District General Administration Department on 22 May in order to call for suggestions from the district-level departments concerned.

At the meeting, Chairman U Kaung Myat Naing of MraukU District Administration Body gave an opening remark. Afterwards, U Soe Soe Lin, director of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (MraukU branch), elaborated the intangible cultural heritage and old monuments, including long walls and city moat, jetties, shipyard, dam, floodgates, fort, barn, city gates, Buddhist temples and Buddha statues, Pitakat chamber (library of Buddhist Scriptures) and votive tablets in MraukU.

Later, deputy director Daw Yin San Nwe from the MraukU branch also explained drafting the rules and regulations for constructing the buildings located in the MraukU cultural heritage site. The officials from the related departments also commented on legislations.

MraukU District Administration Body chairman, township administration chairman, directors and deputy director from the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (MraukU branch) and other district-level officials concerned attended the meeting. – Khin Maung Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Police killed, some missing in Pekhon after terrorist attacks

THE insurgents target small police stations to attack to affect the administrative machinery and community peace. About 70 terrorists attacked the Moebye police outpost in Pekhon Township with heavy and small weapons yesterday. Moreover, further 30 terrorists arrived at the place from Moebye dam with the use of three boats in a synchronized attack.

When the security members of Pekhon and Loikaw townships came to provide the needed security measures for the police outpost, the insurgents blocked them at Kone Thar and Khaung Hmine villages. But they retraced after the clash. The convoy of security forces arrived at Moebye police station and combined with the police.

Some of the security members were killed in the attack, and some were still missing. Tatmadaw troops and Myanmar police jointly conducted operations to search the missing members and eliminate the terrorists. — MNA

Education staff commit incitements to cause public panic on social networks

INCITEMENTS based on CDM activities in some regions and states were committed in order to cause riots leading to the terror acts with the attempt to undermine the peace, tranquillity and the rule of law. So, administration bodies and security forces are joining hands in controlling the terrorist acts under the law.

Education staff Daw Aye Aye Seint from Kanphya Ward of Myeik, Soe Thi from Waibargi Road in Myitnge Ward, Daw Thet Su Wai of Shwepay Village in Sandawut Village-tract of Myeik and Pyaw Zaw Phyo from Sabei Road in Annawa Ward of Kawthoung were arrested at their houses on 22 May. They have committed incitements to cause public panic on the social network page, organizing government service personnel to join CDM activities and writing fake news to tarnish the State and Tatmadaw images.

Files of lawsuits against them were opened at respective Myoma police stations under Section 505-A of the Penal Code. —MNA

Weapons and materials to be used in terrorist attacks seized in Yekyi, Pyinmana

ACCORDING to the report, security forces searched the house of U Mya Oo in the ward (5), Athote town, Yekyi Township, Ayeyawady Region on 22 May.

They arrested Daw Myat Mon Kyu, wife of U Mya Oo, together with three anti-State logans, one sword, one crossbow made of iron rod and 25 arrows.

Similarly, on the same day, Nay Htut Khaung San, owner of "Shwe San" teashop, was arrested together with materials to be used in terrorist acts and a written paper used in buying

explosives in Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory.

It is reported that those who were arrested will be taken action according to the law. – MNA

Two men injured during homemade mine testing in Pathein

TWO men were wounded during homemade mine testing in Pathein Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 22 May.

According to the report of the blast, security forces went and investigated the area where the mine was exploded at the furniture factory owned by U Win Kyi on Tawya Kyaung road, No (3) ward, Pathein.

Daw Thida Htwe, wife of U Win Kyi, and Myo Myint Khine were found and detained at the scene. Pieces of exploded homemade remote mine and related items were confiscated.

While investigating the incident, the remote mine was reportedly exploded while Myo Myint Khine, Kaung Htet, Lin Htet and Zaw Zaw were activating it.

Three of them, including Kaung Htet, fled away the scene, and two of them were arrested with bruises and finger cuts. It is reported that efforts are being made to capture Kaung Htet, who is on the run and take legal action against him under the law. – MNA

Announcement of Union Election Commission

FROM PAGE-1

3. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on voter liss in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Township sub-commission	List from Immigration department	Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards	Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC	Those involved in voter list more than two times holding one CSC
1	Mongnai	31	28,817	29,000	1,698	72	1,582
2	Hsenwi	60	38,719	35,381	4,779	174	2,968
3	Kyaukme	99	118,095	86,164	14,779	726	10,724
4	Nawnghkio	81	105,426	89,650	7,753	782	10,554
5	Mongmit	68	47,937	37,147	5,873	57	2,648
6	Mabein	44	32,918	24,352	3,609	58	1,720
7	Metmung	43	11,608	12,941	3,206	59	856
	Total	426	383,520	314,635	41,697	1,928	31,052

4. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Mongnai, Hsenwi, Kyaukme, Nawnghkio, Mongmit, Mabein and Metmung townships of Shan State together with the respective township election sub-commissions, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrators in accordance with Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law.
5. According to the inspection, a total of 426 polling stations in these seven townships took out 441,295 ballots and used 271,517 ballots. It left 167,724 ballots instead of 169,778 ballots. The difference was 5,420 ballots and it found 3,366 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Mongnai	31	31,383	22,445	8,938	8,915	51	28
2	Hsenwi	60	43,724	27,155	16,569	16,138	1,730	1,299
3	Kyaukme	99	144,822	70,464	74,358	74,105	1,207	954
4	Nawnghkio	81	114,014	79,132	34,882	34,442	650	210
5	Mongmit	68	55,670	35,338	20,332	19,655	982	305
6	Mabein	44	37,071	27,552	9,519	9,536	357	374
7	Metmung	43	14,611	9,431	5,180	4,933	443	196
	Total	426	441,295	271,517	169,778	167,724	5,420	3,366

6. According to the inspections on voter lists of these seven townships of Shan State, the numbers of eligible voters are more 68,885 than the voter lists according to the lists of citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens who had turned 18 in 2020 of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and Hluttaw Election Law Section 6 (a).
7. There are 41,697 non-identity voters. Moreover, Hluttaw Election Law Section (15) (c) in Chapter VI, "Preparation of Voting Roll" stated, "Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time." But, there were 1,928 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 31,052 persons repeated on the voter lists two times in these seven townships of Shan State.
8. The date of birth of Daw Nan Nway, voting No (687) on voter lists of No (2) polling station in Nar Khan Village-tract of Mongnai Township is 19-12-2002 and she was on the voter lists although she was under 18. She cast vote on election day.
9. It did not found the names of voters, voting numbers, polling station numbers and signatures on township advance ballot receipts used by election sub commission of Hsenwi township.
10. The ballot receipts and remaining ballots of No (2) polling station of Lone Wal Village-tract of Nawnghkio Township were returned on 6-5-2021 to the township election sub-commission when the inspection was conducted. Some ward/village-tract election sub-commissions and polling stations failed to follow the law, rules and procedures and they returned the ballot receipts and remaining ballots after the election.
11. The Hluttaw Election Law Rules 15 (a) stated, "Every citizen, associate citizen, naturalized citizen and holder of temporary certificate, whose name is included in the voting roll of a constituency shall have the right to vote only in the said constituency". It did not find the signatures of ward/village-tract election sub-commission chairman and secretary in Form (1) of 21 village-tracts in Mongmit township and 4 village-tracts of Mabein Township.
12. U Dar Yay Hla and U Yar Bo on voter lists of No (1) polling station of Wan Salaung Village-tract of Metmung Township and U Aik Kyant on voter lists of No (3) polling station of Soot Wow Village-tract were found on voter list although they were under 18 on the election day and they cast their votes.
13. The officials did not put the three additional voters of No (1) polling station of No (2) Ward of Metmung Township in additional lists and allowed them to cast vote by registering with handwriting on Form (1).
14. Findings in seven townships of Shan State were as follows:

(a) There were 272,425 voters and they used 271,517 ballots out of all withdrawals, which was 908 less than the numbers of voters.
(b) It found 5,420 missing ballots in withdrawals and used ballots.
(c) It found 3,366 extra ballots at some polling stations.
(d) They did not follow the Hluttaw Election Law Rules 66 (h) and separately returned the ballot receipts/remaining ballots to the township election sub-commission only after the election.
(e) The people under 18 were found on the voter lists of ward/village-tract and they were allowed to cast votes.
(f) In every page of Form (1) book, it did not found the signatures of the chairman and secretaries of ward/village-tract election sub-commission according to the Hluttaw Election Rules 15 (a).
(g) It did not find the names of voters, voting numbers, polling station numbers, ward/village-tracts, signatures or fingerprints on the ballot receipts used in some polling stations.
(h) Some of the ward/village-tract election commission failed to return the ballot receipts and extra ballots in accordance with the law and so the ballots were found missing.
(i) The non-identity voters were on the voter lists and the voters cast votes just with the certificates without any national identity cards.
(j) They conducted measures that violate the law when they started collecting advance ballot.
(k) They released the COVID-19 related instructions, which were not conformity with the law, to collect voter lists and advance votes when the election drew near.

15. It found voting frauds in Mongnai, Hsenwi, Kyaukme, Nawnghkio, Mongmit, Mabein and Metmung townships of Shan State. The excess/shortage ballots were found in the inspection. They failed to follow the stipulations of the Hluttaw Election Law and Rules.

Union Election Commission

Files opened against nurses who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following nurses have been charged under Section 505-a of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and health staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH and NUG unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Hospital	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Daw Khin Hnin Mu (Senior Nurse)	Pyinmana Hospital	Taungdwingyi Township, Magway Region	505-a	
2	Daw Soe Soe Hnin (Senior Nurse)	Kawtkat Station Hospital	Zalun Township, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
3	Daw Aye Myat Yadana Moe (Senior Nurse)	Myeik Hospital	Thayetchaung, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
4	Daw Ei Phyo Thanda Hlaing (Nurse)	Waw Hospital	Waw, Bago Region	505-a	
5	Daw Aye Thida Kyaw (Nurse)	Myitkyo Station Hospital	DaikU, Bago Region	505-a	
6	Daw Soe Soe Thet (Nurse)	Myeik Hospital	Launglon Township, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
7	U L Hsan Aung (Nurse)	Namsang Hospital	Namsang, Shan State (South)	505-a	
8	Daw Ei Mon Nyein (Nurse)	Kawthoung Hospital	Kawthoung, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
9	Daw Ei Ei Shan (Nurse)	Myeik Hospital	Dawei, Taninthayi Region	505-a	
10	Daw Ohnmar Khaing (Nurse)	Paunglaung Station Hospital	Loikaw, Kayah State	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those nurses charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those persons, and action will be taken against the persons who admitted them under the law. —MNA

Files opened against education staff who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following teachers have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and education staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH and NUG unlawful associations with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Occupation	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Dr Aung Aung Min	Rector, Yadanapon University, Amarapura Township	Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region	505-a	
2	Dr Kyi Thu Myint	Professor, Technological University (Hmawby), Hmawby Township	Magway, Magway Region	505-a	
3	Dr Yin Yin Win	Professor, Yangon University, Kamayut Township	Mayangon Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
4	U Hla Myo	Lecturer, Dagon University, Dagon Myothit (East) Township	Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
5	U Aung Kyaw Soe	Lecturer, West Yangon University, Htantabin Township	Mayangon Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
6	Daw Thi Thi Than Myint	Lecturer, Monywa Education Degree College, Monywa	Monywa, Sagaing Region	505-a	
7	Dr San Shwin	Lecturer, Pakokku University, Pakokku	Pakokku, Magway Region	505-a	
8	Dr Phway Phway Aung	Lecturer, Monywa University of Economics, Monywa	Monywa, Sagaing Region	505-a	
9	U Pyae Phyo Han	Assistant Lecturer, West Yangon University, Htantabin Township	Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
10	Daw Thanda Lwin	Assistant Lecturer, Government Technical Institute, Dagon Myothit (South) Township	Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region	505-a	

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those education staff charged, people are urged to inform nearby police stations about those education staff, and action will be taken against the persons under the law for admitting those education staff. — MNA

High rubber price boosts profit in Homalin Township

THE rubber farmers from Homalin Township, Sagaing Region make handsome profits on account of the price increases, according to Homalin Township Agriculture Department.

Rubber earlier fetched K700 per pound. The price of rubber has risen to K900 per pound at present. Rubber price fluctuates each month. An acre produces typically 800-1,000 pounds, and the growers receive profits of K400,000-500,000.

Rubber sheets from Homalin Township are delivered to Monywa and Mandalay cities.

Rubber cultivation started in Homalin in 2005. The acres grew year over year, and the number of rubber acres reached 8,187 in 2021. This year, 531 of the acres can be tapped. About 300,000 pounds of natural rubber are yearly produced.

Moreover, a mixed cropping system is practised in the township. The coffee plants are also grown under rubber trees. The coffee seeds also raised the income of the farmers, according to the township Agriculture Department. — Hmway Kyu Zin/GNLM

Rubber cultivation started in Homalin in 2005. The acres grew year over year, and the number of rubber acres reached 8,187 in 2021.

CMP garment exports top $1.4 bln in five months

The garment sector is among the prioritized sectors driving up exports. The CMP garment industry emerged as a promising one, with preferential trade from Western countries.

MYANMAR'S garment export exceeded US$1.4 billion in the first five months (Oct-Feb) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The factories are facing cancellation of order and slump in output, new orders. However, the Swedish fashion retailer H&M is gradually placing orders from Myanmar again after it paused in March. Then, more international fashion retailers such as Primark and Bestseller starts to resume new orders.

The garment sector is among the prioritized sectors driving up exports. The CMP garment industry emerged as a promising one, with preferential trade from Western countries. Nevertheless, we cannot still expect normalcy for now due to the possible disruption in the logistics and supply sector and other serious consequences amid the political instabilities and the COVID-19 impacts, traders stressed.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector recorded an accelerated downturn in the previous months as political changes led to factory closures. The layoff is extended, and some workers were forced to return to their hometowns. Turning to prices, higher material costs and unfavourable exchange rate movements contributed to a sharp increase in cost burdens, the HIS Markit stated.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector is concentrated mainly in garment and textiles produced on the Cutting, Making, and Packaging basis. It contributes to the country's GDP to a certain extent.

At present, Myanmar's garment export drastically dropped on the slump in demand by the European Union market. Consequently, some CMP garment factories permanently and temporarily shut down and left thousands of workers unemployed.

Myanmar mainly exports CMP garments to markets in Japan and Europe along with the Republic of Korea, China, and the US.

The export value of CMP garments was only $850 million in the 2015-2016FY, but it has tripled over the past two FYs. In the 2016-2017FY, about $2 billion was earned from exports of CMP garments. The figure increased to an estimated $2.5 billion in the 2017-2018FY and $2.2 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period (from April to September). According to the Commerce Ministry, it tremendously grew to $4.6 billion in the 2018-2019FY and $4.8 billion in the 2019-2020FY. — KK/GNLM

Infection turns live cattle trade to black market

CHAIRPERSON U Soe Naing of the Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association said that Chinese traders are constantly purchasing about 1,000 cattle on the black market across Myanmar and China.

At present, the black market has been more robust. The legitimate market has halted since late 2020.

"The illegal market is happening. At present, the border trade was illegally carried out like the trade four years ago," U Soe Naing stressed.

Following about 10,000 cattle stranded in Muse last year, traders embarked on illegal sales.

For legitimate trade, China permits live cattle import only after ensuring the cattle is free from 20 diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease, along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. Those import criteria do not matter on the black market.

Myanmar's live cattle export is heavily relying on Chinese market due to a good price. However, Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

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

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

Myanmar shipped US$360 million worth of animal products, including cattle, to the external markets in the financial year 2018-2019. The value of animal product exports dropped by $100 million in the 2019-2020FY as against a year ago, following the negative impacts of the COVID-19. — NN/GNLM

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm
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09 454 237 515
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01 860 4530

Rural roads stretching across the nation for benefiting rural people

THE government has been implementing the rural road development strategic long-term plan till 2030. Various kinds of roads included in the transport infrastructures are directly and indirectly benefiting the entire national people.

In fact, rural roads are linkages among the villages, which are infrastructures of the country. Thanks to the rural roads, the national people residing in rural areas will enjoy the fruits of smooth travelling, sending domestic products to the markets in time and consequences in the improvement of health, education, social and development affairs.

> Hence, allotment of budgets should flow into the construction and maintenance of rural roads for their long-term existence to bring a great benefit to the rural people.

Up to 2021-2022 financial year, rural roads with more than 56,000 miles in total length are passing through 52,329 villages across the nation. Among them, over 12,800 miles long rural roads can be used all the year-round, accounting for 23 per cent, whereas more than 43,000 miles long rural roads can be used in just a dry season, accounting for 77 per cent.

Various forms of roads such as earthen roads, gravel roads, laterite roads, asphalt roads, asphalt concrete roads and concrete roads are under the title of the rural road. These kinds of rural roads are currently stretching not only into the remote areas but also into the villages close to the cities.

Relevant departments are striving for upgrading the rural roads step by step, depending on the allotment of budgets and contributions of local people and well-wishers. As such, concerted efforts of relevant departments and local people will achieve success in the improvement of the rural roads.

The rural roads do not represent the facilities for just rural people. These symbolize the landmarks as well as arteries of respective areas. The rural roads stretching as networks create chances for both rural and urban people to meet their souls. These facilities help bump the hearts of the entire national people into each other.

Construction of new rural roads is of importance for rural people. Likewise, maintenance of existing roads is more important. Just the list of rural roads cannot actually benefit the local people. Hence, allotment of budgets should flow into the construction and maintenance of rural roads for their long-term existence to bring a great benefit to the rural people.

■ ■ ■

Strengthening health and agri-food systems must go hand-in-hand

Health and agri-food systems must be strengthened and improved to counter the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to avoid a global food crisis, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, said on 21 May.

"BEYOND jeopardizing human health, the pandemic is also disrupting our agri-food systems that are the core to our health and life," the FAO Director-General told world leaders at the virtual Global Health Summit of the G20. "We need to take immediate action, to avoid a global food crisis with long-term impacts."

The Summit was co-hosted by the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, and Italian Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, as Italy holds the current chair of the G20. In addition, the leaders of the G20 countries, heads of international and regional organizations, private enterprise and global health bodies were invited to share lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Summit endorsed the 'Rome Declaration' calling for urgent action to scale up equitable vaccine distribution and access for the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

"The pandemic will only be over once everyone is safe," stressed the FAO Director-General. "Sharing lessons learned, strengthening multilateral cooperation and developing joint actions, such as adopting the Rome Declaration, will pave the way to this common goal."

Qu said that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been critically compromised by the pandemic, noting that about 150 million people are currently projected to fall into extreme poverty and food insecurity.

Planting rice in Gebangsari Village, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia. **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

He highlighted FAO's action through its flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which focuses on vulnerable countries (SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs), and drew attention to the organization's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, which FAO established to address the pandemic's socio-economic impacts.

Italy's Draghi said the pandemic showed no sign of abating and noted that only 0.3 per cent of the world's 1.5 billion vaccine doses had been administered in low-income countries.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, expressed concern about a "two-speed response" to the pandemic, noting the inequality of vaccine distribution and recent COVID-19 surges in India, South America and other regions.

"Vaccinating quickly and thoroughly around the world, together with continued public health measures, are the only way to end the pandemic and prevent more dangerous variants from gaining a foothold," Guterres said.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, also noted the inequities of the current vaccine rollout and warned the Summit that COVID-19 would not be the last pandemic.

He said that bold leadership and commitments are needed to ensure a safer future for everyone on the planet.

One Health Approach

Underscoring the importance of collaboration, FAO's Director-General pointed to the newly created One Health High-Level Expert Panel, launched earlier in the week. "The Tripartite of FAO, WHO and OIE together with UNEP, IAEA, World Bank Group and others, join the G20 and other Members in the different initiatives to enhance the One Health approach. Global promotion through the Global Action Plan on One Health and its High-Level Expert Panel are important steps," he said.

The One Health Approach recognizes the links between the health of people, animals, and the environment and highlights the need for specialists in multiple sectors to address any health threats and prevent disruption to agri-food systems.

"Global health security and food security must be for all – with no-one left behind," the Director-General said.

The Rome Declaration highlighted the importance of investing in early warning information, surveillance and trigger systems, in line with the One Health Approach, as well as in research and innovation. It also underlined the urgent need to scale up efforts, supporting synergies between the public and private sectors, to ensure timely, global and equitable access to safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccines and other tools.

SOURCE : FAO

India tells social media firms to take down 'Indian variant' posts

India's government has ordered social media platforms to take down content that refers to the "Indian variant" of the coronavirus.

THE B.1.617 variant was first detected in India last year and has been blamed for much of a devastating Covid-19 wave that has battered South Asian nations in recent weeks.

It has spread to Britain and at least 43 other countries, where "Indian variant" has become a widely used term.

The government order, sent Friday by the electronics and information technology ministry, highlighted government sensitivity to accusations that it has mishandled the new surge.

In it, the ministry told social media companies to "remove all the content" that refers to the "Indian variant".

"It has come to our knowledge that a false statement is being circulated online which implies that an 'Indian variant' of coronavirus is spreading across the countries. This is completely FALSE," read the letter, obtained by AFP.

The ministry cited previous calls to curb "false news and misinformation" about the pandemic on social media as a basis for the order.

It argued that the World Health Organization did not link any country to the B.1.617 variant.

The WHO declared the strain a "global concern" last week as it spread around the world.

Several countries have banned or put severe restrictions on passengers from India since the variant emerged.

Many health experts and governments have used country names to describe new coronavirus variants that have emerged in Britain, Brazil and South Africa.

Indian government officials have regularly used the term "UK variant" since the mutant British strain started spreading in India.

The right-wing government has been criticised for its efforts to contain the new pandemic wave. India has faced severe shortages of oxygen, vaccines, hospital beds and life-saving drugs.

The government last month ordered Twitter and Facebook to remove dozens of posts critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handling of the crisis.

India on Saturday reported another 257,000 cases and 4,194 deaths in 24 hours, taking its total to 26.2 million infections and 295,525 deaths.

Almost half of the deaths have been recorded since late March when the new surge started battering the nation of 1.3 billion people.

The capital, New Delhi, meanwhile stopped vaccine shots for people aged under 45 because it has run out of jabs.

SOURCE: AFP

A health worker takes a swab sample from passengers for coronavirus screening at a railway station in New Delhi on Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Head of Service Organization appointed

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Htein Win, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Population under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population as Director-General of the National Registration and Citizenship Department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

MYANMAR DAILY WEATHER REPORT

(Issued at 4:00 pm Sunday 23 May 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (15:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over the Eastcentral Bay of Bengal has intensified into a depression. Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay of Bengal. Weather is partly cloudy over the North Bay and cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 24 May 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Mon State, fairly widespread in Bago Region, and Rakhine and Kayin states, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah states and isolated in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavyfalls in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)mph. Wave height will be about (9-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of advancement of Southwest Monsoon into the Deltaic areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 May 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 May 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 May 2021: Partly cloudy.

Depression News
23 May 2021 19:00 MST Today

DEPRESSION

ACCORDING to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the depression over the Eastcentral Bay of Bengal has moved North-Northwestwards. It is centered at about (235) Nautical miles Northwest of Coco Island, about (275) Nautical miles West-Southwest of Pathein (Myanmar), about (305) Nautical miles Southeast of Paradip, about (345) Nautical miles South-Southeast of Digha (India).

It is not moving towards Myanmar coasts, the present stage of the depression is coded yellow stage.

Position of depression, center pressure and wind

Depression is located at Latitude (16.3) degree North and Longitude (90.0) degree East, centre pressure of depression is (1000) hPa and maximum wind speed near the center is (35) miles per hour at (18:30) hrs MST today.

During next (24) hrs Forecast

The depression is likely to move North-Northwestwards and forecast to intensify into a Deep Depression during next (12)hrs and Cyclonic Storm during next (24) hrs.

General caution

Due to the depression, rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespread in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Rakhine States with isolated heavy falls in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Rakhine State during next (48)hrs commencing tonight. Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) mph. Wave height will be about (9-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

Advisory

Due to the depression, people should be aware rain or thundershowers with strong wind and lightning and domastic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships off and along Myanmar Coasts.

Vietnam holds parliamentary election amid coronavirus case surge

VIETNAM on Sunday held its one-in-five-years parliamentary election, while taking precautions to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus amid a spike in new cases.

In the election, more than 69 million voters across the country are electing 500 deputies to the National Assembly from among 866 pre-screened candidates. The results will be announced by mid-June.

Even in Vietnam, regarded as an "honour student" for its success in controlling the spread of the coronavirus, the number of infections has been increasing due to the influx of mutant strains.

President Nguyen Xuan Phuc (C) has his body temperature checked and his hands disinfected prior to the voting process in Ho Chi Minh City on May 23, 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Of the more than 5,000 infections confirmed since the start of the pandemic, 2,000 have been recorded since the beginning of May. Polling stations have taken strict precautions such as temperature checks, social distancing and wearing of masks.

While the National Assembly has been called a rubber-stamp legislature that confirms the policies of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the government, it nevertheless provides a certain amount of administrative oversight and there have been active, substantial discussions among its deputies in recent years.

The Vietnamese Communist Party rules the country as a one-party state. Therefore, there is a strict vetting process to filter out undesirable candidates.

This time, a self-nominated candidate who is openly gay is running in the election from Hanoi, hoping to expand the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Meanwhile, 3,726 deputies will be selected among 6,199 candidates to provincial-level Peoples Councils, 22,952 deputies to district-level Peoples Councils among 37,468 candidates, and 242,312 deputies to communal-level Peoples Councils among 405,244 candidates, according to the Vietnam News Agency. — Kyodo News ■

Malaysia decides against lockdown despite surge in COVID-19 cases

MALAYSIA on Saturday decided against a nationwide lockdown despite daily COVID-19 cases hitting more than 6,000 this week.

Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who coordinates the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions in the country, said in a press conference other measures will be implemented, including shortened business hours and requiring millions of more people to work from home.

Malaysia recorded 6,320 new cases in the past 24 hours with 50 fatalities on Saturday, the fourth consecutive day where daily cases in the country of 32 million people notched above 6,000.

The surge in infections has prompted calls for a total lockdown like the one in March last year when coronavirus infections topped 100 cases. However, industry groups who met with Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Friday opposed a complete lockdown, citing concerns over the impact on the economy.

In a joint press conference Saturday with Director-General of Health Noor Hisham Abdullah, Ismail said the government decided against a total lockdown because "we want to balance health interest and people's livelihoods. During the first lockdown, the country's economy suffered 2.4 billion ringgit ($580 million) in losses a day".

He added that 800,000 people lost their jobs last year.— Kyodo News ■

Mumbai teacher converts auto-rickshaw into free service

RESIDENTS in India's financial capital Mumbai are assisting their neighbours during the epidemic by turning their personal vehicles into makeshift ambulances, as the country is facing a second wave of COVID-19 with inundated hospitals and shortages of ambulances.

Willpower and dedication have driven some people in India to make a positive impact in the fight against the pandemic.

Dattatraya Sawant is a part-time English teacher at the Dnyansagar Vidya Mandir School.

A health worker drives an auto-rickshaw decorated as a coronavirus model to raise awareness about the pandemic in India. **PHOTO: AFP**

As the COVID-19 epidemic has forced many schools to temporarily close down, Sawant has converted his auto-rickshaw into a makeshift ambulance to help patients reach hospitals for free.

Sawant has shuttled several people to the emergency ward, ensured several others make it on time for their weekly treatments, and returned a number of residents back home after they recovered from the illness.

"As India reeled from the second wave and after the lockdown was announced in Maharashtra in April, classes were already closed or went online. It was then that I thought the very rickshaw I use to earn a living could also be used to help COVID patients," he said. — AFP ■

Over 50% of nurses at COVID hospital wards in Japan consider quitting

Photo shows two nurses providing medical care to a COVID-19 patient with severe symptoms at a hospital in Osaka on April 8, 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

OVER half of nurses working at coronavirus hospital wards have thought about quitting their jobs, a recent survey has found, highlighting the increasing strain on the country's medical system due to an alarming rise in the number of COVID-19 patients.

A total of 118 nurses, or 51.3 percent of the 230 respondents, said they had either "always" or "sometimes" considered leaving, citing too-high levels of stress and concerns about possible infections, a survey conducted in January and February by the Japan National Hospital Workers' Union showed. January was when a second state of emergency was declared for Tokyo and several other prefectures. A third state of emergency is currently in place again in areas including the capital. Of the respondents to the survey who are thinking about quitting, some mentioned fatigue, continued overtime and low income.

One was concerned that only nurses may bear the brunt of criticism in the event of any incident. According to the survey, 79 nurses, or 34.3 per cent of the respondents, said they had experienced discrimination and harassment due to their work in treating COVID-19 patients at hospitals, with one saying a "family member was told to telework because I am a nurse".

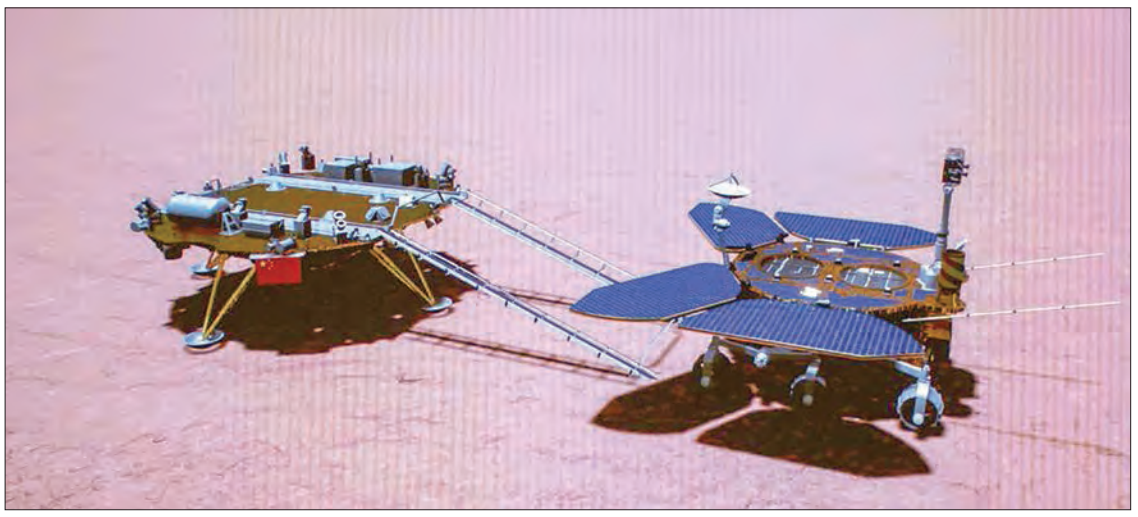
The survey also found that 128 nurses, or 55.7 per cent, had experienced irregularities in their physical or psychological conditions such as being "stressed and tired all the time" and "dehydrated from wearing protective gear against the virus". As the country grapples with a fourth wave of infections triggered by highly contagious variants of the virus, hospitals across Japan have been witnessing a high bed occupancy rate for COVID-19 patients with severe symptoms. — Kyodo News ■

China's Mars rover starts roaming the Red Planet

CHINA'S Mars rover drove from its landing platform and began exploring the surface on Saturday, state-run Xinhua news agency said, making the country only the second nation to land and operate a rover on the Red Planet.

The launch last July of the Tianwen-1 Mars probe, which carried the Zhurong rover, marked a major milestone in China's space programme.

Tianwen-1 touched down on a vast northern lava plain known as the Utopia Planitia a week ago and beamed back its first photos of the surface a few days later.



The simulated image captured at the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre on May 22, 2021 shows China's first Mars rover, Zhurong, driving down from its landing platform to the Martian surface, Beijing, capital of China. **PHOTO : XINHUA**

The Mars probe and rover are expected to spend around three months taking photos, harvesting geographical data, and collecting and analyzing rock samples.

The six-wheeled, solar-powered, 240-kilogramme (530-pound) Zhurong is named after a Chinese mythical fire god.

China has now sent astronauts into space, powered probes to the Moon and landed a rover on Mars -- the most prestigious of all prizes in the competition for dominion of space.

The United States and Russia are the only other countries to have reached Mars, and only the former has operated a rover on the surface.

Several US, Russian and European attempts to land rovers on Mars have failed in the past, most recently in 2016 with the crash-landing of the Schiaparelli joint Russian-European spacecraft.

The latest successful arrival came in February, when US space agency NASA landed its rover Perseverance, which has since been exploring the planet.

The US rover launched a small robotic helicopter on Mars which was the first-ever powered flight on another planet. — AFP ■

NASA says there are probably organic salts on Mars

This low-angle self-portrait of NASA's Curiosity Mars rover shows the vehicle at the site from which it reached down to drill into a rock target called "Buckskin" on lower Mount Sharp. **PHOTO: NASA**

A NASA team has found that organic salts are likely present on Mars. Like shards of ancient pottery, these salts are the chemical remnants of organic compounds, such as those previously detected by NASA's Curiosity rover. Organic compounds and salts on Mars could have formed by geologic processes or be remnants of ancient microbial life.

Besides adding more evidence to the idea that there once was organic matter on Mars, directly detecting organic salts would also support modern-day Martian habitability, given that on Earth, some organisms can use organic salts, such as oxalates and acetates, for energy.

"If we determine that there are organic salts concentrated anywhere on Mars, we'll want to investigate those regions further, and ideally drill deeper below the surface where organic matter could be better preserved," said James M. T. Lewis, an organic geochemist who led the research, published on March 30 in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets. Lewis is based at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Lewis's lab experiments and analysis of data from the Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM), a portable chemistry lab inside Curiosity's belly, indirectly point to the presence of organic salts. But directly identifying them on Mars is hard to do with instruments like SAM, which heats Martian soil and rocks to release gases that reveal the composition of these samples. The challenge is that heating organic salts produces only simple gases that could be released by other ingredients in Martian soil. — NASA/AFP ■

Too thirsty? France's Volvic blamed as streams run dry

THE lush volcanic hills surrounding Volvic in central France have long been a source of mineral water prized worldwide, but locals and geologists warn that too much is now being pumped out, putting the entire region at risk.

"We used to have water up to our knees and the stream could turn two mills," said Pierre Grodecoeur, 69, pointing out the flow outside the house where he was born in Les Moulins Blancs.

The mills are long gone, Grodecoeur said, and these days the stream bed is often dry.

His village in the Auvergne region is just down the road from the hulking Volvic bottling plant owned by French food and beverage giant Danone.

Since 2014, the government has allowed Danone to bottle up to 2.8 million cubic metres a year -- or 2.8 billion one-litre bottles.

That translates into an extraction of nearly 89 litres per second from the Volvic water table, compared with just 15.6 litres when bottling operations first began in 1965.

But at the nearby fish hatchery of Saint-Genest-l'Enfant, a registered landmark dating from the 17th century where the Volvic source naturally emerges, there are now some months when no water flows at all.— AFP ■

Greta Thunberg wants changes in farming and food consumption

CLIMATE campaigner Greta Thunberg launched an appeal on Saturday for a change in food production and consumption in the face of repeated crises threatening the world.

"The climate crisis, ecological crisis and health crisis -- they are all interlinked," Thunberg said in a video posted on social media for international biodiversity day. "Millions have died from Covid-19, Zika, Ebola, West Nile fever, SARS, MERS, HIV-AIDS," as viruses jump from animals to humans, she added.

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg wants people to rethink the way the world produces its food. **PHOTO: AFP**

"The way we farm and treat nature cutting down forests and destroying habitats, we are creating the perfect conditions for diseases to spill over from one animal to another — and to us," the 18-year-old said. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is likely that an animal transmitted the coronavirus to man. Zoonoses — diseases that have jumped from animals to humans — comprise a large percentage of all newly identified infectious diseases, as well as many existing ones.

"If we keep making food the way we do we will also destroy the habitats of most wild plants and animals driving countless species to extinction," Thunberg added. — AFP ■

21 runners dead as extreme weather hits China ultramarathon

TWENTY-ONE people were killed after hail, freezing rain and high winds hit runners taking part in a 100-kilometre (62-mile) cross-country mountain race in China, state media said Sunday.

The extreme weather struck a high-altitude section of the race held in the scenic Yellow River Stone Forest near Baiyin city in northwestern Gansu province Saturday afternoon.

Among the dead were elite Chinese long-distance runners, local media reported.

Official news agency Xinhua confirmed the death toll had risen to 21, citing the local rescue command headquarters. State broadcaster CCTV also reported the final missing competitor had been found dead.

Baiyin city mayor Zhang Xuchen said that at around midday Saturday a section of the rugged ultramarathon course — between kilometres 20 and 31 — was "suddenly affected by disastrous weather".

"In a short period of time, hailstones and ice rain suddenly fell in the local area, and there were strong winds. The temperature sharply dropped," Zhang said.

Shortly after receiving messages seeking help from some participants, marathon organizers dispatched a rescue team that managed to save 18 of the 172 participants.

At around 2pm, weather conditions worsened and the race was immediately called off as local authorities sent more rescuers to help, Zhang said.

Rescuers managed to save 18 participants. **PHOTO: AFP**

The victims included top domestic marathon runners Liang Jing and Huang Guanjun, local media reported, citing a friend of Huang's and Wei Pulong, Liang's coach.

Liang had won multiple Chinese ultramarathons in recent years.

Huang, who was deaf-mute, won the men's hearing-impaired marathon at the 2019 National Paralympic Games held in Tianjin.

Marathon organizers confirmed his death to a friend, who was cited in local media. — AFP ■

Italian rockers Maneskin win pandemic-defying Eurovision

The high-kicking lederhosen and eyeliner-wearing Italians, who were favourites for victory, beat off stiff competition from France and Switzerland. **PHOTO: AFP**

ITALIAN rock foursome Maneskin won the Eurovision Song Contest in Rotterdam on Saturday in a glammed-up message of hope for a world emerging from the coronavirus pandemic.

As the tournament returned after a year off because of the virus, the high-kicking, lederhosen-wearing Italians beat off stiff competition from France and Switzerland with their song "Zitti e Buoni".

Italy's third Eurovision win and its first since 1990 came after a nailbiting end to the kitschy competition, which went ahead amid strict protocols including mass testing and an audience limited to 3,500 people.

The theme of this year's Eurovision was "Open Up", and the Dutch government-backed coronavirus restrictions could be a model for mass events such as Euro 2020 and the Tokyo Olympics.

Maneskin, featuring three men and one woman, said the whole evening of stomping songs and flamboyant costumes would bring cheer after more than a year of Covid-19.

"We think that the whole event was a relief", singer Damiano David said after showering his bandmates with champagne during a press conference.

"It was really incredible, the whole event, this Eurovision is going to be a lighthouse."

Bassist Victoria De Angelis said their victory "could be a message of hope" to Italy, which was one of the countries in Europe hardest hit by the virus.

"We're honoured to be bringing it back after 31 years," she said of the Eurovision title, which means Italy is due to host next year.

'Rock and roll never dies'

But there was heartbreak for French singer Barbara Pravi, who came agonizingly close to ending her country's 44 years of hurt since its last Eurovision win with her moody number "Voila". — AFP ■

Thousands flee Goma city in DR Congo after volcano erupts

THOUSANDS have fled a volcanic eruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo with lava from Mount Nyiragongo reaching Goma city early Sunday.

Even before the official announcement, people had started filling the streets and carrying what they could as they headed out of the city, where the last major eruption killed 100 people.

"The sky has turned red," one resident, Carine Mbala, told AFP.

"There is a smell of sulphur. In the distance you can see giant flames coming out of the mountain," she said.

Officials said the lava had reached Goma city airport -- located on the outskirts of the metropolis on the shores of Lake Kivu -- although residents said it had stopped at the edge of the facility.

"The situation is deteriorating," an official from Virunga National Park, where the volcano is located, told his staff in a memo.

Communications Minister Patrick Muyaya confirmed on Saturday an evacuation plan had been activated, adding: "The government is discussing the urgent measures to take at present." Meanwhile, Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi said he would "interrupt his stay in Europe to return home this Sunday to supervise the coordination of aid".

By early Sunday at least 3,000 people had arrived in neighbouring Rwanda, according to the country's national broadcaster.

The Rwanda Broadcast Agency tweeted photos of those arriving in Rubavu district, adding they would be "accommodated in schools and places of worship that have been made ready". — AFP ■

Rat killers of New York: dogs, volunteers hunt brazen rodents

LATE on a Friday night, eight dog enthusiasts and their pet pooches prowl several dark alleys in New York's Lower East Side with one mission: to hunt and kill as many rats as possible.

The dogs, mostly terriers, pant and strain at their leashes before diving into trash bags and emerging seconds later with a convulsing rodent between their teeth.

"They're bred for the job. They're wired for the job. They live for the job," explained Richard Reynolds, organizer of the Ryders Alley Trencher-fed Society, or R.A.T.S. for short.

New York's furry rodents are notorious. Legend has it there are as many rats in the city as humans (some eight million), with public-health officials regularly testing new techniques to control the population, including placing dry ice in rat burrows to asphyxiate them.

Shortly into the coronavirus crisis, America's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention warned of "unusual or aggressive rodent behaviour" after restaurants and offices closed, disrupting food sources.

That hasn't deterred the men and women volunteers of R.A.T.S. and their dogs. They have been chasing vermin for about 30 years and have maintained their nocturnal meets during the pandemic, albeit slightly less regularly.

Superpowers

Shorter-legged dogs such as Jagdterriers flush out rodents from piles of garbage, construction debris and bushes while faster, longer-legged dogs like Bedlingtons stand back, ready to pounce.

"It's a bit like X-Men," says Alex Middleton, a 36-year-old dog trainer. "Each dog has its own superpower." — AFP ■

Foreign students in Japan job hunt online amid pandemic

WITH the coronavirus pandemic adding to the challenge of finding work in a foreign country, overseas students in Japan have taken to visiting online job-information fairs, events that also allow companies in rural areas access to a more diverse range of candidates.

A virtual job fair on Saturday featuring nine companies was attended by over 1,100 students from 24 countries and territories such as Indonesia and Thailand. In addition to sessions run by the participating firms, the event also included seminars on job hunting in Japan and a personal consultation corner.

Screenshot image shows Kompyang Supartini of The Monogatari Corp. talking about the company at an online job-information fair on May 22, 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Sessions by the firms, which included Nitori Holdings Co., a Tokyo-based home furnishings retailer, and Marukyo Co., a confectionery maker based in Tottori Prefecture, western Japan, lasted 45 minutes each. Some firms used English and Chinese during their presentations.

Questions from the job seekers included wanting to know what the companies expect from foreign students to the level of Japanese ability required and how much overtime there would be per month.

Kompyang Supartini, an Indonesian employee at The Monogatari Corp. who participated in one session, cited difficulties in communicating with her Japanese colleagues but said the company offers Japanese-language lessons and training in business manners for its international staff.

Kompyang works as a manager at one of about 500 restaurants the Aichi Prefecture-based companies operates in Japan and has an eye on Monogatari's plans to expand the number of restaurants it runs in Southeast Asia.

"I want to gain more knowledge and experience in Japan and be ready to be deployed as manager of an outlet in my home country," she said. — Kyodo News ■

Unmanned supermarkets to the rescue in Sweden's rural areas

ONE after another, grocery stores are shutting down in rural Sweden, leaving villagers to travel miles to buy food. But a new type of shop has sprung up in their wake: unmanned supermarkets in mobile containers.

In Veckholm, a village of a few hundred people 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Stockholm, the last grocery store closed more than a decade ago. Then, a year-and-a-half ago, even the little convenience store at the only petrol station locked its doors.

Villagers were left with no choice but to travel a half-hour by car to the closest supermarket. But in July 2020, an automated, unmanned grocery store came to town.

In a container dropped in the middle of a field, open 24 hours a day, the 20-square-metre (215-square-foot) supermarket sells hundreds of items -- and there's no cashier in sight.

"Since a while back, there has been nothing in this area and I think most of us living here have really missed that," said Giulia Ray, a beekeeper in Veckholm.

"It's so convenient to have this in the area," she told AFP, doing her own shopping and restocking the shop's shelves with her honey at the same time.

Shoppers unlock the supermarket's door with an app on their smartphone.

"We come here three times a week and buy stuff we need," Lucas Edman, a technician working in the region for a few weeks, told AFP. "It's a little bit more expensive but it's fine. It's a price I can pay to not go to another store."

He scanned his pizzas and soda on the app on his phone, which is linked to his bank account and a national identification system — an added anti-theft security, according to the store.

And it's all done under the watchful eye of a single security camera.

Keeping costs down

In Sweden, the number of grocery stores — everything from superstores to small convenience stores — has dropped from 7,169 in 1996 to 5,180 in 2020, according to official statistics.

While the number of superstores has almost tripled in 24 years, many rural shops have closed down, often due, like elsewhere in Europe, to a lack of profitability. —AFP ■

Germany serves up Covid jabs in the company canteen

IT'S well before midday but chemical technician trainer Ralf Scharf is already heading to the company canteen. And lunch is the last thing on his mind.

He's here to get a Covid-19 jab, as his German employer Evonik Industries joins a push to ramp up the country's immunization drive by including company doctors in the effort.

"You can get vaccinated without hardly any waiting time, it's great," Scharf, 58, told AFP after making the short walk from his work station to the dining area.

The makeshift vaccination centre at chemicals group Evonik's Hanau site, near Frankfurt, is one of several pilot projects in Germany. **PHOTO: AFP**

The usual tables have been removed to make way for rows of small booths manned by medical staff.

Each section is dedicated to a different step in the process, from signing consent forms and getting a pre-jab consultation to the actual injection and recovery room.

Hungry workers can still grab food-to-go in an adjacent room.

The makeshift vaccination centre at chemicals group Evonik's Hanau site, near Frankfurt, is one of several such pilot projects in Germany. —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (101N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (101N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-5-2021** 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
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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION ENTERPRISE

Date. 24th May 2021

Invitation to Bid for implementation of Ground Mounted Solar Power Plant Projects on Independent Power Producer and Build–Operate-Own Basis

1. Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) seeks to invite tender for the purchasing of electricity at Designated Connection Points from the Ground Mounted Solar Power Plant Projects on Independent Power Producer (IPP) and Build Operate Own (BOO) Basis.
2. The Concession Period shall be 20 (twenty) years from Commercial Operation Date (COD).
3. The Tender Form can be purchased within office hour from the tender announced date at following office either;
   (1) Procurement Department,
   Electric Power Generation Enterprise,
   Building 27, Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
   (or)
   (2) No. 39, Kanner Road, Ahlone Power Station, Ahlone Township, Yangon, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
4. The Tender Form fee is Myanmar Kyat three hundred thousand (Kyat 300,000) only.
5. The bid submission date is 11th August 2021 at (10:00) hr, Myanmar Standard Time.
6. Bidders shall prepare the proposals in accordance with the Invitation for Bid and Request for Proposal (RFP). Bidder's Proposals must be submitted on time. Any late proposal shall be rejected.
7. The necessary information of this tender can be inquired within office hour via calling phone numbers or sending Email;

Electric Power Generation Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Building 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Ph: +95 9 89330333, + 95 9 420722181
epgesolartender21@gmail.com

India start-ups eye pandemic profits

Food delivery firms have seen growing demand for their services during the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFTER dealing with two coronavirus funerals in two weeks, Raj Sharma was too grief-stricken to negotiate a third with profiteering hearse drivers and crematoriums, so he turned to one of the many new businesses that have sprung up around India helping struggling people while also turning a tidy profit.

Sharma -- not his real name -- was reeling from the loss of a third friend when he heard of Anthyesti Funeral Services, which provides "end-to-end" coronavirus funerals in four cities.

"They pick up the body from the hospital and take care of everything," the 48-year-old New Delhi professor told AFP.

Anthyesti's Covid package cost about 30,000 rupees ($400) -- a bargain compared with the prices charged by hearse services that can be up to five times higher. It brought him "mental peace that is worth any price".

The company is one example of how entrepreneurs are discovering opportunities as India grapples with a worsening coronavirus crisis, offering a range of new services from funerals to Bollywood film set cleaners to budget deliveries.

Anthyesti -- which means "last sacrifice" in Sanskrit -- was founded in 2016 by former software engineer Shruthi Reddy Sethi, who wanted to clean up India's unregulated funeral industry.

But the 36-year-old never anticipated the dystopian impact of Covid-19, with shortages of space in morgues, ambulances and even wood for funeral pyres.

In many cases, relatives have had to wait days to bury or cremate their loved ones. — AFP ■

Big US companies pushed to tally progress on racial justice

THE killing of George Floyd prompted a wave of promises from corporate America to advance racial equity. Nearly a year later, large US companies are under pressure to show progress on fulfilling those promises.

Shareholders will vote in the coming weeks on some of those initiatives, including whether Walmart should report on the fairness of its pay scale and whether Facebook and Google/Alphabet should appoint a civil rights specialist to their boards.

Another frequently proposed option is a racial equity audit that compares a company's record with statements made in its glossy marketing materials. Proponents characterize this report as a risk-management tool that can help protect brands.

"There are a good number of shareholders that recognize that this is an issue that could cause some reputational damage on a significant level," said Tejal Patel, corporate governance director at CtW Investment Group, an activist group that organized the drive at several leading companies. — AFP ■

Growing pains: post-Brexit 'protocol' stunts N.Irish business

FIVE months after the UK cut ties with the European Union, the post-Brexit "protocol" governing Northern Irish trade is sowing discontent in the province.

"Traditionally a box of seeds would take us four days to get from England to Northern Ireland," said Robin Mercer, owner of Hillmount Garden Centre in Belfast.

"It's taking four weeks now because of the paperwork involved," he told AFP. "And it costs £140 ($200) for a box of seeds whether there's £400 (worth) in the box or £600."

Britain officially left the EU in January 2020, but under the terms of the divorce, relations remained unchanged until the start of 2021.

Since then, London and Brussels have been trading on new terms, effectively keeping Northern Ireland in the EU customs union and single market for goods.

The tailored arrangements are designed to sustain Northern Ireland's fragile peace but for Mercer — who operates three garden centres east of Belfast — it has undermined business.

"The protocol, it needs to be abolished," he said

.

Troubled ground

Some 3,500 people were killed in violence over British rule in Northern Ireland, including at the border with the Republic of Ireland.

A 1998 peace deal ended the unrest between pro-UK unionists and pro-Ireland republicans, and border infrastructure was removed as British troops withdrew.

But the 310-mile (500-kilometre) frontier with EU member Ireland posed a problem as Brexit approached, as it is the UK's only land border with the EU.

The border was easy enough to keep open with both sides inside the EU. — AFP ■

Mercer must now buy certificates costing hundreds of pounds in order to import seeds from England. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pandemic offers southern Italians chance to return home

SIPPING a craft beer on a warm spring evening in Catania, Sicily, Corrado Paterno Castello spares a thought for friends and colleagues he left behind in Milan, 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) north.

"Today, between meetings, I had a swim at the beach," the 29-year-old entrepreneur told AFP, with a beaming smile.

"The quality of life you have here is very different from what you experience up north, and it is priceless."

The pandemic has been a change for people like Corrado Paterno Castello, 29, to return to their roots in southern Italy. **PHOTO: AFP**

Workers across the world have taken advantage of enforced home-working during the coronavirus pandemic to move to warmer climes, requiring only a plug for their laptop and a decent internet connection.

But in Italy, where for generations those from the relatively poorer south have sought work in the north, it has been a chance for people like Paterno Castello to go home -- perhaps for good.

'Free to return'

Italy has an old history of regional disparities, driving internal migration from rural or underdeveloped areas, mostly in the south, to wealthier urban centres in the north like Milan, a business, fashion and finance hub.

"Out of my high school class, nearly everybody left ... at least 15 out of 20 people," said Elena Militello, a PhD student from Palermo.

"But now some have come back, there's a group of three that has returned to Sicily and found work." — AFP ■

Bolsonaro fined for breaking COVID-19 restrictions in Brazil

PRESIDENT Jair Bolsonaro must pay a fine for failing to adhere to state health safety regulations at a public event, the governor of Maranhao state said, as Brazil struggles to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Health authorities filed the case against Bolsonaro "for the promotion in Maranhao of gatherings with no sanitary safeguards. The law applies to everyone," the governor of the northeastern state, leftist Flavio Dino, tweeted late Friday. Dino reminded the public that gatherings of more than 100 people are banned in his state, and the use of face masks is mandatory.

Bolsonaro's office has 15 days to appeal, after which the amount of the fine will be set. The office did not answer requests for comment from AFP.

On Friday, Bolsonaro handed out rural property titles in Acailandia, some 500 kilometers (310 miles) from Sao Luis, capital of Maranhao state. At the event the maskless Bolsonaro blasted Governor Dino as a "chubby dictator." The far-right Brazilian president opposes Covid confinement rules, and has attacked state governors who impose local health restrictions as "dictators."

Brazil has the world's second highest coronavirus death toll, after the United States. — AFP ■

President Jair Bolsonaro must pay a fine for failing to adhere to state health safety regulations at a public event, the governor of Maranhao state said, as Brazil struggles to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

Iran's polls set to split divided conservatives in two

Iran's former parliament speaker Ali Larijani registers his candidacy for Iran's presidential elections. **PHOTO: AFP**

A presidential election in Iran next month could provide the final straw to split an already long-divided conservative political camp, after years of growing divisions.

While the list of approved candidates has yet to be released, the June 18 poll is already widely expected to be a showdown between conservative Ali Larijani, a former parliament speaker, and ultraconservative judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi.

According to the elections committee, close to 600 hopefuls -- including 40 women -- have registered to be candidates to succeed moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who is constitutionally barred from running for a third consecutive term.

But only a handful will be allowed to run after vetting by the Guardian Council, a conservative-dominated, unelected body in charge of overseeing elections.

The first fractures within the conservatives date back to the "Green Movement", which emerged in 2009 during protests against the disputed re-election of populist president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

But it was the 2015 nuclear deal in Vienna that deepened the cracks.

Left and right

In Iran, the word "conservatives" -- "mohafezekaran" in Persian -- is rarely used, a term that appeared in media only in 1997.

Until then, only the "right" and the "left" were known within the "Followers of the Line of the Imam", the supporters of the Islamic republic's late founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The other forces -- from Marxists to liberals and nationalists -- who took part in the 1979 revolution that toppled the shah were ejected. — AFP ■

New Yorkers ready to party again — just not indoors

AFTER 14 months of lockdown and restrictions, New Yorkers can now enjoy a city where most of these limitations have been lifted.

But many have retained the cautious approach they adopted at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and are hesitant about partying and returning to the social life they enjoyed "before".

Yesenia Herra, 33, who organizes dinners and special events for tourists and who "loves to go out", last weekend had her first party since March 2020, inviting around twenty friends and family to celebrate her daughter's first birthday.

For the safety of her guests, almost all of whom are fully vaccinated, she organized the get-together outdoors in Central Park, with folding tables and chairs, balloons tied to tree branches, and enough food to feed an army.

"I didn't celebrate or do a baby shower. I didn't do like a welcome home when we got out of the hospital unfortunately because of the pandemic," she told AFP.

"And so this is my first celebration for her and I really wanted to do it with my family and friends and you know, I know she might not remember it but I want her to know that this did happen," she said.

While her guests seemed delighted to be together, many pointed out that they did not want to invite people to their homes yet — except for very close friends who they would be sure have been vaccinated.

"I don't know if we'll ever go back to complete comfort with that... not in the immediate future," said Merry Mathes, 58. — AFP ■

Yesenia Herra celebrates her daughter's first birthday outdoors in Central Park . **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden: two-state solution is 'the only answer' to Israel-Palestine conflict

PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Friday pledged to help organize efforts to rebuild Gaza and said creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel is the "only answer" to the conflict. Biden also said he had told the Israelis to stop "intercommunal fighting" in the flashpoint city of Jerusalem.

However he stressed "there is no shift in my commitment, commitment to the security of Israel" and added that until the region "unequivocally" acknowledges Israel's existence "there will be no peace."

The idea of a two-state solution – with a sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel and Jerusalem as their shared capital – has been the cornerstone of decades of international diplomacy aimed at ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

US policy under Donald Trump was criticiszd as being blatantly pro-Israel and ignoring the Palestinians. — AFP ■

Floyd family emerges as powerful voices against police brutality

WITH their tears, rage, dignity and solidarity, George Floyd's loved ones have become respected leaders of the fight against police brutality in the United States.

"This just fell on my lap to take on and be his voice because he's no longer here," Bridgett Floyd said of her role since her brother died. Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was killed on May 25, 2020 by a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, who kneeled on his neck for over nine minutes.

Chauvin was convicted by a jury in Minneapolis, Minnesota, of murder and manslaughter on April 20 and is to be sentenced on June 25. The Floyd family received $27 million in a settlement with the city. Captured on video by a bystander, Floyd's death sparked protests against racial injustice across the United States and around the world. — AFP ■

Myanmar football squad to get Covid tests before world cup qualifiers

NATIONAL football teams, including Myanmar, will receive the COVID-19 test ahead of the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers (2nd round), said the tourneys' organizers. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will hold the remaining 60 group matches of the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers from 28 May to 15 June. Footballers will be tested before each game to prevent the spread of the disease. The second round of the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup is being held in eight groups.

Teams will be tested for the virus before arriving from their respective countries. They will be screened at the airport upon arrival in the host country.

The Myanmar national team also has to live up to its medical standards and be tested for the virus before leaving Myanmar and arriving in Japan.

Group F matches involving the Myanmar team will be held in Japan.

The Covid test for the Myanmar team will be performed before the remaining three games against Japan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan teams.

The 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup second round qualifiers have been pushed back for more than a year due to the global outbreak of the pandemic.

The third round of the 2022 World Cup (Asia Zone) and the third round of the 2023 Asian Cup will be held in mid-June. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Myanmar traditional boat rowers prepare for international competitions

THE Myanmar Rowing and Canoeing Federation is recruiting and training Myanmar traditional boat rowers to compete in international competitions, said federation authorities.

The 31st SEA Games to be hosted by Viet Nam does not include a traditional boat race. So the Myanmar Rowing and Canoeing Federation is preparing for next year's international games.

The rowing federation officials said around 40 traditional boat rowers, including newcomers, are under training by local coaches.

Next year's Asian Games and the Asian Beach Games will feature traditional boat races. The Myanmar rowing team is preparing for the event. The team is also training for the World Dragon Boat Race, scheduled for November this year. The Myanmar Traditional Boat Team has won every traditional boat races in South East Asian Games and has won one gold medal, one silver medal, and two bronze medals at the 2019 SEA Games in the Philippines. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Liverpool and Chelsea seal Champions League places

Liverpool players applauds the fans following during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Crystal Palace at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on 23 May 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIVERPOOL and Chelsea seized the final two Champions League places in a dramatic end to the Premier League season on Sunday, leaving Leicester heartbroken for the second consecutive campaign.

With Manchester City already guaranteed a third title in four years and Manchester United certain to finish second, the focus was on the battle for the final two places in the top four.

Heading into the 38th and last round of fixtures, just one point separated Chelsea in third place from Leicester in fifth.

Two Sadio Mane goals gave Liverpool a 2-0 win at home to Crystal Palace while Thomas Tuchel's side were indebted to a late Leicester collapse against Tottenham at the King Power Stadium.

Chelsea lost 2-1 at Aston Villa but were saved by the 4-2 defeat for Brendan Rodgers' FA Cup winners.

Jamie Vardy ramped up the pressure on deposed champions Liverpool and Chelsea early on a see-saw afternoon, putting Leicester ahead from the penalty spot.

That meant, as it stood, Liverpool, playing in front of the biggest crowd at Anfield since they became English champions least season, dropped out of the Champions League qualification places.

But after an uncertain start, Mane calmed nerves in the 36th minute and minutes later Harry Kane, possibly playing his final game for Spurs, levelled for the visitors at the King Power.

Chelsea were rocked when Bertrand Traore fired Villa ahead just before the break when he met Matt Targett's corner and his shot looped over Edouard Mendy and in off the bar.

Vardy then scored again from the penalty spot shortly after half time and minutes later Villa doubled their lead when Anwar El Ghazi beat substitute goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga from the penalty spot. At that stage it looked as though Chelsea, playing Manchester City in next week's Champions League final, would miss out on the top four. — AFP ■

Badosa wins maiden title as Konjuh injury curse strikes again

SPAIN'S Paula Badosa claimed her maiden WTA title on Saturday in Belgrade after opponent Ana Konjuh's injury curse returned and forced her retirement from the final.

Fourth seed Badosa, ranked at 44 in the world, was leading 6-2, 2-0 when her Croatian opponent called it quits.

Badosa, whose clay court season has seen her notch up a win over world number one Ashleigh Barty in Charleston, has now won 13 of her last 15 matches on tour. She is projected to make her top 40 debut on Monday. For 2016 US Open quarter-finalist Konjuh, it was another tale of heartbreak.

Now ranked 188 in the world, former top 20 player Konjuh has undergone four surgeries on her right elbow.

She even fell out of the top 1,000 in 2019. — AFP ■

Atletico upset the odds to beat Real Madrid and Barca again

ATLETICO Madrid's players ran through the stadium and out into the car park Saturday to celebrate with fans they had not seen all season after their La Liga title was finally secured.

Three thousand supporters had gathered outside Jose Zorilla Stadium on Saturday, cordoned off and surrounded by police.

They watched on their phones while Atletico fell behind to 19th-placed Real Valladolid, only to come back to claim a 2-1 win and the championship thanks to Luis Suarez's 58th-minute winner.

Atletico's goalkeeper Jan Oblak was hoisted onto shoulders and a scarf was draped round the neck of the 20-year-old Joao Felix.

Central defender Jose Gimenez formed a conga and long after the crowds had dispersed, left winger Yannick Carrasco returned to check on one fan who had been hurt and had to stay lying on the concrete.

Almost an hour earlier, the final whistle had blown to leave Atletico two points ahead of Real Madrid, whose last-gasp victory over Villarreal proved irrelevant.

Some Atleti players piled onto each other and others fell to the ground with exhaustion and relief. After being top since December and after almost throwing away a 10-point lead in February, the title was finally theirs.— AFP ■

Atletico Madrid's players celebrate after winning the Spanish league. **PHOTO: CESAR MANSO/ AFP**