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State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party visit Rosoboronexport Company, Ostankino Tower in Moscow



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party are visiting the Rosoboronexport Company in Moscow on 22 June 2021.

THE delegation led by State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, currently in the Russian Federation, visited Rosoboronexport Company and Ostankino Tower in the Russian Federation, yesterday morning.

The Senior General and party were welcomed by Deputy Director-General Mr Alexander Shcherbinin and members of Rosoboronexport Company. At the meeting hall, Assistant Director-General Mr Andrew Chekmarew and the party explained measures to be taken for cooperation in military technologies. The Senior General

and party asked for further information.

On arrival at Ostankino Tower in Moscow of the Russian Federation, the Senior General and party were conducted around by Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air) Commodore Kyaw Soe Moe and officials from the Ministry of Defence of the Rus-

sian Federation. They took the photos on overview scenes of Moscow.

The Ostankino Tower was built by Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Network in 1963 and completed in 1967. At that time, the tower was the highest in the world. The tower from the base to the antenna is some 540 metres high and the

top floor is about 360 metres high. The tower was built in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. The top floor of the tower is decorated with glass doors and LED boards displayed on day and night scenes of Moscow. Souvenir shops are opened there, crowded with local and foreign visitors. — MNA

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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.

Press Release

THE 109th session of the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution entitled “Resolution for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Myanmar” on 19 June 2021. The resolution was drafted and adopted with the absence of the country concerned. It is no surprise to learn that the text is one-sided and the elements contained therein are distorted. It regrets to see that the International Labour Conference was used to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

Myanmar has transformed to the democratic system in a peaceful manner and the process was led by the Tatmadaw. Myanmar’s democratization process was hampered by the electoral irregularities of the 2020 general election. The resolution failed to distinguish between the peaceful protestors and the violent mobs and refer to the numbers from the unreliable sources which exacerbate the figure to further incite the general public to commit violence. From 14 March to 7 April 2021, a total of 25 factories in the Yangon Region were burnt down which affected the lives of 14,494 workers. In addition, over 170 innocent civilians and civil servants were brutally killed due to their political beliefs and refusal to join the so-called civil disobedience movement. It is in fact an attempt to keep silent the different political views and a threat to freedom of opinion and expression. Over eighty police personnel lost their lives. Though the information is publicly available, the writers of the resolution turned a blind eye to it and ignored the reality. The resolution further includes the elements which are under the purview of other fora and particularly, the term “Rohingya” on which Myanmar categorically rejects it as the people and the government of Myanmar do not recognize the invented term with wider political agenda.

In light of the above-mentioned reasons, Myanmar strongly objects and rejects the said resolution.

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

Health and Sports Ministry opens COVID-19 call centre

THE Ministry of Health and Sports opens the COVID-19 call centre at its office in Nay Pyi Taw as of 8 am on 22 June for the reply to queries on health awareness about COVID-19 and facts for abiding by the restrictions to the people on time.

The people can dial the following telephone numbers from 8 am to 9 pm on a daily basis for facts about the COVID-19 disease.

Contact numbers: (1) 067-3411508, (2) 067-3411509, (3) 067-3411144, (4) 09-882557991, (5) 09-882557992, (6) 09-882557993

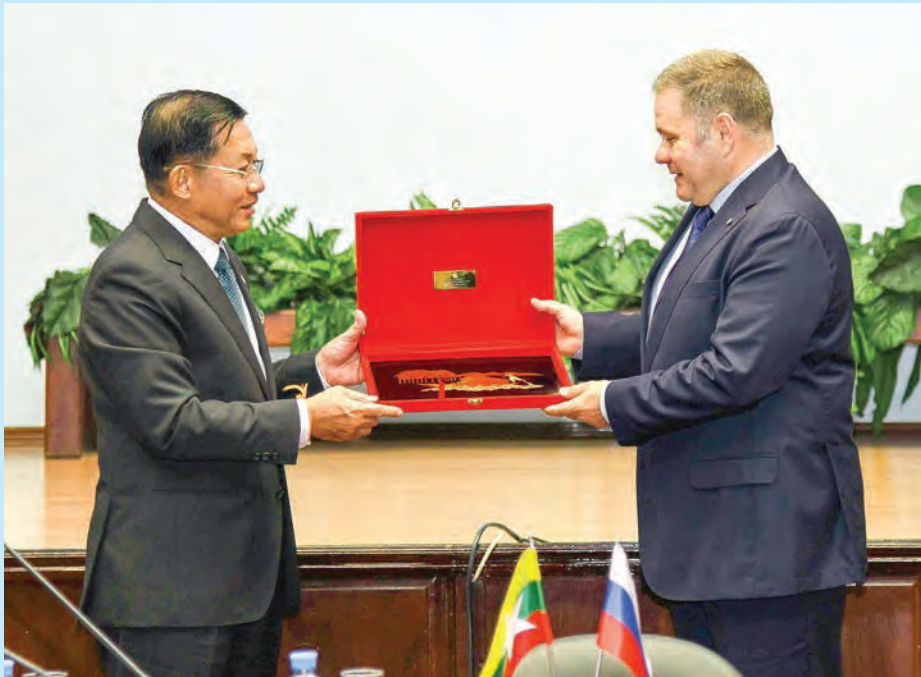
Gentlemen agreements were sought from ethnic armed organizations

SINCE the country started walking on the path to the multiparty democracy in 2011, it has not yet restored the cent per cent peace in its democratization process amid armed conflicts. Hence, the invitation was extended to hold dialogues on peace in 2011, and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA was signed in 2015. Before signing the NCA, gentlemen agreements were sought from ethnic armed organizations.

(Excerpt from the speech to the State Administration Council meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 25 May 2021)

State Administration Council
Chairman Commander-in-
Chief of Defence Services
Senior General Min Aung
Hlaing and party visit
Rosoboronexport Company,
Ostankino Tower in Moscow

NEWS ON PAGE-1



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing accepts interview of Russia 24 TV news agency

S TATE Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, currently in the Russian Federation, gave an interview to regular presenter Mr Fedor Lukyanov of the International Review programme of Russia 24 TV news agency of the Russian Federation at Metropol Hotel yesterday

morning and replied to queries.

At the interview, the regular presenter asked about progress in Russia-Myanmar military-technological cooperation and future plans, political changes in Myanmar, prevention, treatment and control of COVID-19 and other matters. The Senior General gave full answers. — MNA



English proficiency course wraps up

THE graduation ceremony of the English proficiency course jointly conducted by the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Education was held yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the ceremony, MoI Union Minister U Chitt Naing stressed the need to adopt continuous learning and apply the knowledge effectively in the work fields.

Then, Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Myint discussed correct usages of the Myanmar and English languages,

including accurate pronunciation.

The officials presented the certificates to the trainees.

The MoI Union Minister provided 10,000 copies of record books of press conferences conducted by the Information Team of the State Administration Council while Deputy Minister Dr Zaw Myint presented books and journals published by the Myanmar Language Commission.

A total of 30 MoI staff joined the 8-week English proficiency course with two sessions per week. —MNA



Delegations arriving in Russian Federation visit significant places of Russia



Myanmar delegation are looking around the Public Museum of the Moscow Metro yesterday.

THE delegations which accompanied the State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services visited the significant places in Moscow of Russia and viewed around transport facilities, historical culture and development of Moscow on 21 and 22 June.

The delegation led by Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Mayor Dr Maung Maung Naing, the delegation led by

Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw, delegation members from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russia-Myanmar Friendship Association and outstanding award-winning officers from the Myanmar Tatmadaw paid a visit to the Red Square in Moscow in the Russian Feder-

ation on 21 June. Officials from the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation conducted them around the square.

Yesterday, the group of outstanding award-winning officers visited the Public Museum of the Moscow Metro, the Moscow Central Diameter Rail Lines Project Museum, and VDNH Park. The delegation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture toured the Atanami world's cultural city in Kaluga Region, near Moscow. Moreover, the delegation led by Deputy Minister for Investment

and Foreign Economic Relation U Than Aung Kyaw received the director of PSB Bank while the delegation of the Ministry of Health and Sports received the RDIF to talk about the improvement of banking services and cooperation in the health sector.

At night, the group of outstanding award-winning officers visited the Ostankino Tower in Moscow of the Russian Federation. They also enjoyed night scenes of Moscow and took documentary photos. —MNA



Myanmar delegation are observing the MCD Rail Lines Project in Moscow yesterday.

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

MoC coordinates checkpoint opening on Myanmar-China border

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San attended the coordination meeting on the opening of the Namsang-Kokang BP-125 temporary crossing on the Myanmar-China border and the opening of a new second checkpoint on the Chinshwehaw-Mountain (Minton) border yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, the Union Minister urged them to discuss further activities on the opening of the Chinshwehaw-Mountain (Minton) crossing to accelerate trade between Myanmar and China and to carry out immigration and entry/exit checks. The Ministry of Commerce will act as the Focal Ministry and will proceed as per the directives

of the leaders of State regarding the opening of the new land border crossing.

He added the need to coordinate with the relevant departments to open the former industrial zone near BP-125 as a temporary checkpoint while repairing the Myanmar-China border bridge, the Yanlone Keng bridge.

Attended department officials presented the completion of the demarcation line, requirements for opening temporary checkpoints and new land border crossings and measures to be taken to open the temporary checkpoint as soon as possible, and the Union Minister coordinated the meeting. — MNA



Deputy Information Minister inspects IPRDs, retransmission stations in Sagaing, Mandalay regions

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint inspected IPRD offices in Monywa and Sagaing districts of Sagaing Region, Monywa MRTV retransmission station and Sagaing MRTV retransmission station on 20 June. The deputy minister then met MoI staff in TadaU, Natogyi and Myingyan District of Mandalay Region on that day.

He also visited IPRD offices

in Taungtha, Mahlaing, Meiktila, Pyawbwe and Yamethin townships and Meiktila MRTV retransmission station on 21 June.

During his visits, the deputy minister instructed the staff to serve duties well, make efforts to meet the IPRD objectives and cooperate with regional organizations and the public for ensuring State stability and security. — MNA

630 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 22 June, total figure rises to 149,247

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **149,247** after **630 new cases** were reported on 22 June 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **133,893** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 3,267 after two died.—MNA

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.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

(Mekong-ROK Exchange Year Photo Contest)

Cash awards to be presented for the Mekong-ROK Exchange Year Photo Contest led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

First Prize - 2,000,000 Won (approximately US\$1,700)
Second Prize - 1,500,000 Won (approximately US\$1,300)
Third Prize- 1,000,000 Won (approximately US\$800)
Consolation Prize- 100,000 Won (approximately US\$80)

Time to submit photos for the contest
(7 June to 4 July 2021)

- Any Myanmar citizen is eligible to take part in the contest.
- A total of 35 prizes — one First Prize, two Second Prizes, two Third Prizes, and 30 Consolation Prizes will be awarded.
- Details for the contest can be found on the official website www.mekongphoto.com.
- The list of the contest winners will be announced via the official website in July 2021.

Division of Regional Cooperation
International Organizations and Economic Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Civil servants and village administrator attacked by terrorists



FIVE officers from the Township Electricity Supply Office were reportedly attacked by a man named Wunna Kaung Htet with a sword while distributing electricity meter bills at No (MM-26) low-cost housing between 48th and 49th streets, Myayi Nandar ward, Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region at around 10:15 am on 21 June.

Wunna Kaung Htet, who lives in the neighbourhood also tried to attack the security forces investigating the area according to the report. He was arrested with a shot in his left hand and security



forces confiscated one air gun, one soft drink bottle with a pipe used for drug abuse was confiscated.

Similarly, the village administrator of Zeetaw village,



Yasagyo Township, Magway Region, was chased and attacked by six men with two handmade guns and one sword on his way back to the village. He fought back with rubbles and escaped. Although he had wounds in the arms, feet and cheek, he managed to confiscate a homemade gun from them.

It is reported that security forces are investigating to take effective action against the terrorists who have attacked the civilians living in peace for no reason, under the law. —MNA

Two bombs exploded at BEHS in Momauk Township



TWO homemade mines planted by the insurgents exploded at the two-storey building of B.E.H.S during school hours in Khar Nan Ward of Momauk Township in Kachin State yesterday.

The blast left one cleaning staff of the school injured and some of the school materials were damaged. It was reported

the students and teachers were not injured.

The security members conducted security measures at the school and took the victim to Bhamo Township Hospital.

The security forces investigated to arrest and take action against the suspects. — MNA

Terrorists responsible for bomb explosion in front of Pathein hotel arrested



A **HOMEMADE** bomb was exploded in front of Pathein Hotel on Maha Bandoola Road, No (3) ward, Pathein, Ayeyawady Region at around 8:30 pm on 20 June.

According to the confession made by Tun Lin Aung, one of the suspects arrested during the explosion, security forces searched the house of

his friend Chit Ko Ko at his home on Strand road. Though he was escaped by the time security forces arrived at his house, one SMM KUZEY-GN-19 pistol, one magazine, 50 bullets, two homemade bombs and materials used in acts of violence were confiscated.

Further investigation led

the security forces to the houses of suspects involved in the bomb blast and arrested other 6 men together with two handmade bombs.

Efforts are being made to take effective actions against them under the law and investigations are underway to arrest those who have involved in terrorist attacks. —MNA

Eight suspects arrested together with assistance for PDF in Sagaing Region



THE POLICE arrested five men and three women together with the assistance for the PDF in Monywa Township of Sagaing Region on 21 June.

The combined security forces raided the house of U Tin Myint Soe in Ayethaya Ward of Monywa Township and arrested Zaw Myo Tun, Chit Tun, Aung

Chan Win, Han Zin Tun, Ma Ei Ei Mon, Ma Nyein Nyein Ei and Daw Kyi Kyi Win, including U Tin Myint Soe, together with the materials to support the Kani PDF.

The officials will take action against those eight suspects, including U Tin Myint Soe, under the law. — MNA

Domestic palm oil slips alongside drop in import price

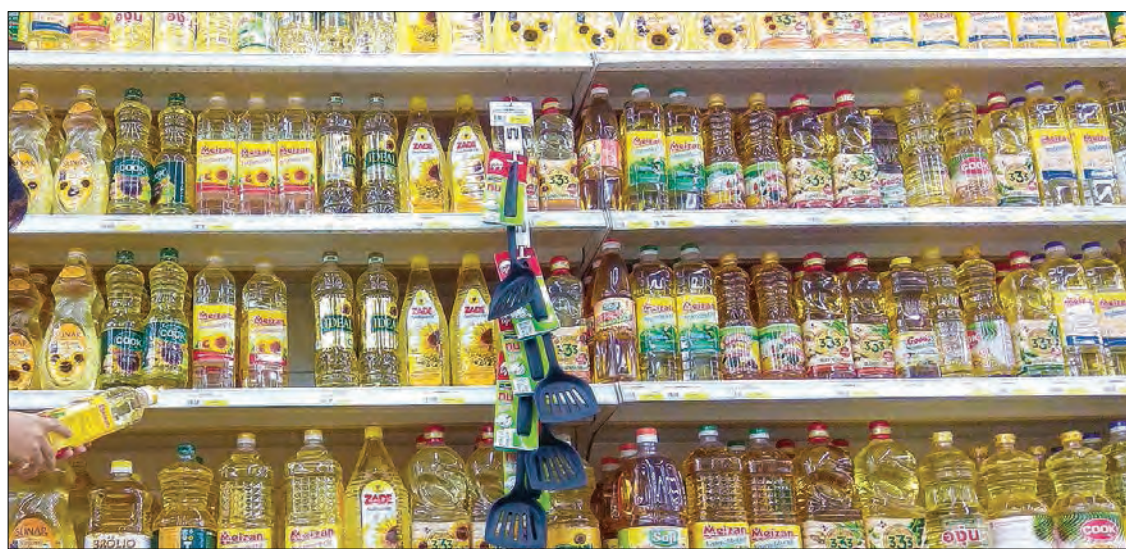
THE domestic palm oil has slightly declined, tracking the import price retreat, said U San Lin, chair of Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association.

The palm oil fell to US\$995 per tonne in the international market. Consequently, it ranges K2,800-2,900 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the domestic wholesale market.

The oil palm plants produce fruits in abundance this time. The price is likely to extend its drop up to October if any trade barrier will not occur, U San Lin said.

"Normally, oil palm plants are plentiful in Malaysia this time. They produce the fruits from June to October," U San Lin added.

In early January 2021,



The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported.

production slump in importing countries Malaysia and Indonesia, caused by erratic weather conditions and the

COVID-19 impacts, high imports by certain countries under tax reduction, a tax hike on exports in producing countries

and the short storage of palm oil in those countries contributed to the rise in edible oil price. The palm oil price stood

at \$1,055-1,200 per tonne in the foreign market.

Last 7 January, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association issued a notice to import the palm oil from foreign countries sustainably for self-sufficiency, distribute the edible oil at a fair price to the consumers and ensure that there will be no edible oil shortage in regions and state when there is a rise in imported oil price.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar attracts \$3.7 bln FDI as of May-end

MYANMAR has drawn foreign direct investment of more than US\$3.7 billion in the past eight months of the 2020-2021 financial year, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises and investments in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations has been inviting responsible businesses to benefit the country.

Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) ensures to approve the responsible businesses by assessing environmental and social impacts. The commission is working together with the relevant departments to screen the projects.

Last month, the UK-listed enterprise brought in large investments of \$2.5 billion and became the top source of FDI in Myanmar in the past eight months, DICA's statistics indicated.

Japan stood as the second-largest investors this FY with an estimated capital of \$518.76 million from three projects, followed by Singapore investing \$428.336 million in Myanmar.

Those enterprises listed from Brunei, China, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Republic of

Korea, Viet Nam, Marshall Island, Samoa, Hong Kong (SAR) and China (Taipei) also made investments this year.

Of 44 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by MIC and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 31 May of the current FY, 23 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector. The power sector received six large projects and the livestock and Fisheries sector attracted six projects. Other service sector drew five projects while the agriculture sector pulled two projects and one foreign enterprise each entered industrial estate and the hotels and tourism sectors.

The FDIs stood at \$6.9 million from 158 enterprises in the FY2016-2017, \$6.119 billion from 234 businesses in the FY2017-2018, \$1.94 billion from 89 projects in the 2018 mini-budget year, \$4.5 billion from 298 businesses in the FY2018-2019 and \$5.689 billion from 253 businesses in the FY2019-2020 respectively, the DICA's data indicated.

Those enterprises have created over 96,000 jobs in the FY2016-2017, 110,000 jobs in the FY2017-2018, over 53,000 jobs in the 2018 mini-budget period, over 180,000 jobs in the FY2018-2019 and 210,000 jobs in the FY2019-2020, respectively. — MM/GNLM

Sesame prices up by K20,000 in three weeks

CHINESE buyers eye newly harvested black sesame seeds (Samone variety) due to high quality, and the high demand raised the price to K160,000 per 45-viss bag, which shows a significant increase of K20,000 per bag in three weeks, according to Mandalay wholesale market.

In early June, the black sesame seeds (Samone variety) fetched only K130,000-143,000 per bag, whereas it sharply rose to K160,000 per bag on 21 June.

The acidic rainfall can damage yield and crops. At present, the growers are supplying acid-free sesame seeds owing to the favourable weather before the harvest time. They are highly demanded by China. Good weather led to a high yield as well. Chinese traders are buying them as much as possible for now, said a trader from Mandalay stated.

Normally, Myanmar exports about 80 per cent of sesame pro-

duction to foreign markets. China is the main buyer of Myanmar sesame, which is also shipped to markets in Japan, South Korea, China (Taipei), the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, and Poland among the EU countries.

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

Japan prefers Myanmar black sesame seeds, cultivated under good agricultural practices (GAP), and purchases them after a quality assessment. This year, Japan has not purchased Myanmar's sesame yet. Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil pot of Myanmar, is the main producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Of the cooking oil crops

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

Myanmar's sesame seeds export has earned US\$284.47 million in H1 (October-March) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to data released by Myanmar Customs Department.

The volume of sesame exports was registered at over 96,000 metric tonnes, worth \$130 million, in the 2015-2016FY; \$100,000 tonnes, worth \$145 million, in the 2016-2017FY; 120,000 tonnes, worth \$147 million, in the 2017-2018FY; 33,900 tonnes valued \$43.8 million in the 2018 mini-budget period, 125,800 tonnes, worth \$212.5 million in the 2018-2019FY and over 150,000 tonnes of sesame, worth \$240 million in the previous 2019-2020FY, the trade data of Central Statistical Organization indicated. — KK/GNLM



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

Honour brave volunteers from rescue teams in encountering natural disasters

GLOBAL countries including Myanmar may face various kinds of disasters in all seasons at any time. Disasters can be classified as natural disasters and disasters based on the wrongdoings of humans.

Whatever it may be, both disasters can affect all the global countries. The disasters may bring calamities to the people in severely causing damage along their routes by leaving debris, broken pieces, ashes, losses of property and casualties of humans.

As such, the government and authorities should fulfil the needs of those volunteers to be able to steadfastly focus on rescue works without burdens and worries about their families.

namely face the impacts of disasters apart from victims. However, they are eager to encounter such kinds of impacts in the fields because they are brave and active for all.

Hence, the government and local authorities need to honour the volunteers from the rescue teams. While working in the rescue teams, those volunteers set aside their interests and family issues. Anyone persuade them to join the voluntary teams but those volunteers are always smart in operations without wishing to seek any opportunities. As such, the government and authorities should fulfil the needs of those volunteers to be able to steadfastly focus on rescue works without burdens and worries about their families.

■ ■ ■

As such, authorities concerned should form the rescue teams so as to be ready to immediately perform rescue works in the emergency areas.

Hence, the rescue teams want to recruit healthy and fit volunteers who are brave and talented in rescuing the victims in various disasters. They should have the capability to consider how to save the people, what kinds of technology can be applied in the process, which may be in trouble and how groups of humans may be dead in the incidents. They must have the sacrifice of life and blood for the people and the State in performing the rescue works with relentless efforts to serve their jobs.

In fact, those who accept themselves as volunteers never focus on self-interest with keenness to serve the victim people. They are active to always think about how they can serve the people and how they can solve the problems of victims. It is the noblest spirit.

Unfortunately, the volunteers from rescue teams had sacrificed their lives and limbs in operations. But they did not move back from the frontline. Their smiles never disappear. It is because those from rescue teams preliminarily

COVID-19: First mRNA vaccine tech transfer hub a ‘great step forward’

The World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting a South African consortium in establishing the first COVID-19 mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub, the UN agency announced on Monday

The facility will allow manufacturers from developing countries to receive training in how to produce vaccines, and the relevant licenses to do so, as part of global efforts to scale-up access to lifesaving treatments.

The development follows WHO’s call in April for public and private companies to express their interest in creating technology transfer hubs so that low and middle-income countries could meet their urgent need for vaccines, amid critical shortages.

‘A key moment’

“Today’s announcement is a great step forward for South Africa, and for the world. I hope this will be a key moment for increasing production capacity in Africa for COVID-19 vaccines, but also for future vaccines”, said WHO chief Tedros Adhamon Ghebreyesus, speaking during his bi-weekly media briefing from Geneva.

Messenger RNA, or mRNA technology, instructs cells to make a protein that generates an immune response in the body, thus producing the antibodies that provide protection against a disease.

It is the basis for the Pfizer/



Travellers get their COVID-19 PCR test results checked at the South African side of the Beitbridge border between South Africa and Zimbabwe near Musina, on Jan. 8, 2021. PHOTO: GUILLEM SARTORIO/AFP

BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines being used by governments worldwide, and in the UN-supported COVAX global vaccine solidarity initiative.

“It’s potentially easier to scale than other vaccine technologies and could be faster and easier to adapt to variants of concern”, Tedros said.

The South African consortium involves a biotech company called Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines, which will act as the hub by manufacturing mRNA vaccines and providing training to another manufacturer called Biovac.

WHO’s role includes establishing the criteria for the technology transfer, assessing appli-

cations and developing standards, while the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, will provide guidance through the Partnership for African Vaccines Manufacturing.

Changing the narrative

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa underlined the im-

portance of the hub for the continent.

“The ability to manufacture vaccines, medicines and other health-related commodities will help put Africa on a path to self-determination”, he said, speaking via video link.

“Through this initiative and others, we will change the narrative of an Africa that is a centre of disease and poor development. We will create a narrative that celebrates our successes in reducing the burden of disease, in advancing self-reliance, and also advancing sustainable development.”

Highs and lows

The announcement of the hub, with others in the pipeline, comes as COVID-19 cases worldwide decline for an eighth week in a row, and as deaths have dropped over the past seven weeks, consecutively.

While welcoming the good news, Tedros said new infections and deaths remain high globally, with more than 2.5 million cases and 64,000 deaths reported last week.

The rate of decline has slowed in most regions, and every region

has countries that are witnessing a rapid increase in caseloads and deaths. In Africa, cases and deaths increased by almost 40 per cent in the past week, while some countries have seen their numbers tripled or quadrupled.

“While a handful of countries have high vaccination rates and are now seeing lower numbers of hospitalisations and deaths, other countries in Africa, the Americas and Asia are now facing steep epidemics”, Tedros said, adding that these cases and deaths are largely avoidable.

Several factors are driving increases, including increased spread of virus variants of concern, more socializing, ineffective use of public health and social measures, and vaccine inequity.

“The inequitable access to vaccines has demonstrated that in a crisis, low-income countries cannot rely on vaccine-producing countries to supply their needs”, he said.

WHO continues to push for greater sharing of knowledge, technology and licences to boost vaccine manufacturing, and for the waiver of related intellectual property rights.

SOURCE: UN

Australian scientists to trial mRNA vaccine against COVID-19

AUSTRALIAN scientists expect to run clinical trials for a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine within the coming months, in a project aimed at ensuring the nation can ultimately produce its own version of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

Acting Premier for the state of Victoria James Merlino announced this week that the government was allocating 5 million Australian dollars (about 3.76 million U.S. dollars) to help the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Melbourne to manufacture vaccine doses for the trials.

“This is an incredibly important, incredibly exciting step that we are making in our

nation,” Merlino said of the project, as until now Australia has only been able to produce the AstraZeneca version of the vaccine, which currently is administered to people aged over 60.

Health experts believe that the public’s concerns about AstraZeneca, due to its links to cases of blood clots, is one of the reasons for the nation’s comparatively slow vaccine rollout.

The mRNA vaccines use a genetic code (RNA) to induce production of the coronavirus’s specific spike protein and, once a patient is given the jab, the body’s immune cells build a response against the disease.

Monash University’s Col-

in Pouton, who is leading the research, said mRNA technology’s advantages were it was simpler to engineer and easier to adapt than protein vaccines.

Pouton said if commercial agreements were negotiated with Pfizer or Moderna, it was possible Australia could start manufacturing those vaccines at CSL, a biotechnology company based in Melbourne.

Victoria is not the only state striving to do so, with New South Wales (NSW) also keen to start production.

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said in May that the state was “well placed to provide the advanced manufacturing workforce training, the scien-

tific expertise and the physical location of a future RNA-based manufacturing hub.”

The federal government is supportive of such proposals having announced in its May budget that it would provide funding for the establishment of mRNA manufacturing but did not disclose how much due to business confidentiality reasons.

Meanwhile, the Melbourne researchers expect about 150 participants will take part in Phase 1 of the mRNA trials which are expected to begin around October with the results to be published in the first half of 2022.

SOURCE: XINHUA



Volunteers are given the Moderna mRNA-1273 Coronavirus Efficacy (COVE), in Detroit on Aug. 5, 2020. PHOTO: HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM/AFP/FILE

New ambassador of Saudi Arabia agreed on

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr Saud bin Abdullah AISubaie as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in succession to Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous.

Mr Saud bin Abdullah AISubaie joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1993 and has served in various capacities at home and abroad. In 2013, he became Assistant Director of the General Assembly, Security Council and Candidacy Department and from 2017 to 2018, he served as Director of the United Nations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2018, he was promoted to the position of Director-General of Specialized Issues. Since 2019, he has been serving as Director-General of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He is fluent in Arabic and English.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 22 June 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 23 June 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region and (Northern and Eastern) Shan State, scattered in Mandalay, Magway regions and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Southern Shan, Kayin states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Rakhine State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 June 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 June 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23 June 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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NEWS
IN BRIEFFed chief offers
more assurances
on economy
despite inflation

THE US economy remains on a positive trajectory even as it contends with higher inflation, according to congressional testimony released Monday by the head of the Federal Reserve.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, in prepared remarks ahead of a House hearing Tuesday, reiterated that the central bank will continue its supportive stance to ensure that the “sustained improvement” since the depths of Covid-19 pandemic is extended.

The labor market has improved, but progress has been “uneven,” said Powell, in remarks consistent with his response to questions at a news conference last week.

“We at the Fed will do everything we can to support the economy for as long as it takes to complete the recovery,” Powell said in the testimony. Powell acknowledged that inflation has “increased notably in recent months” due in part to higher oil prices and the hit from supply chain disruptions.

But he restated that higher prices are due to “transitory” factors, adding that “inflation is expected to drop back toward our longer-run goal.”— AFP ■

Migrants’ boat
flips, 4 drown

At least four people died, including a woman thought to be pregnant and a child, and another four were missing after a migrant boat overturned off Lanzarote in the Canary Islands, rescuers said on Friday. The vessel was carrying 49 people when it hit a rocky area just off the island’s northern shores with rescuers pulling 41 people to safety, emergency services said. “Three people died, among them two women, one of whom we believe was pregnant,” Enrique Espinosa, head of Lanzarote’s emergency services, told Agence France-Presse.— AFP ■

Vatican wants Italy to stop anti-homophobia law - report

THE Vatican has made an “unprecedented” formal diplomatic objection to a draft Italian law against homophobia, a news report said Tuesday.

The so-called Zan law, which is currently being debated in Italy’s parliament, seeks to punish acts of discrimination and incitement to violence against gay, lesbian, transgender and disabled people.

According to the Corriere della Sera newspaper, the Vatican argued in a formal note that the bill violates the Concordat, the bilateral treaty between Italy and the Holy See.

“It is an unprecedented act in the history of relations



Pope Francis waves as he addresses the crowd from the window of the apostolic palace overlooking St. Peter’s square during his Sunday Angelus prayer at the Vatican on June 20, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

between the two states - or at least, there are no public precedents,” the daily said.

Pope Francis’ de facto foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, delivered a letter, or “note verbal,” to the Italian embassy to the Holy See on June 17, the paper said.

The letter suggested that the Zan law would breach the Concordat by curtailing Catholic freedom of belief and expression.

This is because Catholic schools would not be exempted from an obligation to take part in a newly created national day against homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia.— AFP ■

Covid eases but US won’t join EU in opening borders

AS the Covid pandemic recedes dramatically in the West, Europe

is opening its doors to Americans – but the reverse is not holding

true, with the United States not budging on restrictions imposed 15 months ago.

President Joe Biden has hailed progress on vaccination, with a goal of reaching 70 per cent of Americans with at least one dose by 4 July, and health authorities have eased recommendations on masks, but the language on travel restrictions has remained constant. “We look forward to the resumption of transatlantic travel as soon as the science permits,” State Department spokesman Ned Price said Monday.

“I’m not able to put a specific timeframe on it, only because it will depend in large part on the course of the epidemiology, on the

response to the virus around the world, and developments, including the impact and the presence of variants,” he said.

Biden has vowed to restore alliances after Donald Trump’s turbulent presidency, last week courting European allies on his first foreign trip. But he has made clear he is not in a hurry on travel, with his administration again renewing through 21 July the closing of the land borders with Canada and Mexico. The United States during the pandemic has also banned travel on most visitors coming from the European Union as well as Britain, along with Brazil, China, India, Iran and South Africa.— AFP ■



Passengers wait in line at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York on 28 May, 2021 as travel resumes following the Covid pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Saudi braces for US military aid cut

A downsizing of US military assets in Saudi Arabia will not affect its defence capabilities, the Riyadh-led coalition said, after it intercepted the largest number of Yemeni rebel drones in a single day.

Washington on Friday said it was cutting the number of troops and air defense units deployed to the Middle East, including Patriot batteries and an anti-missile system, called Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (Thaad), from Saudi Arabia.

“This will not affect the Saudi air defences,” coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki told reporters. “We have a strong understanding with... our allies about the threat in the region. We do have the capability to defend

our country.”

The US drawdown comes as President Joe Biden’s administration seeks to ease tensions with Iran, Saudi Arabia’s arch-foe, after they heated up in 2019 under his predecessor Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign on Tehran.

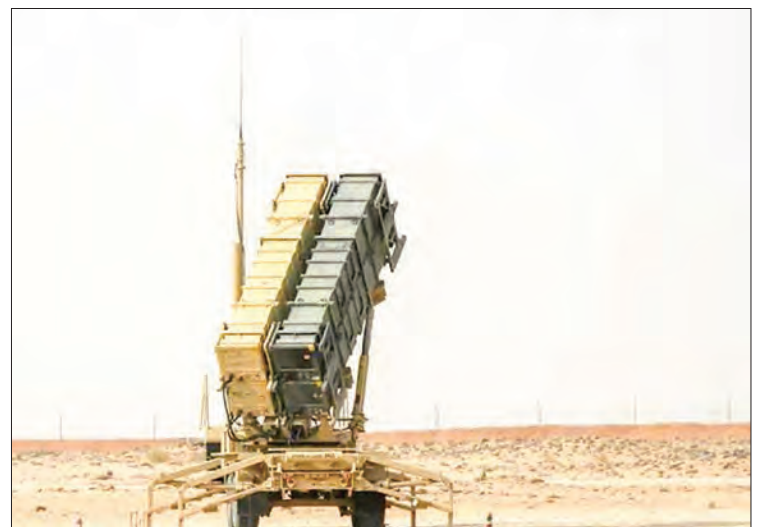
Maliki did not disclose how many Patriots the kingdom currently has. In April, Greece said it will lend a Patriot battery to Saudi Arabia to protect its critical energy infrastructure.

Saudi Arabia, which has led a military coalition against Yemen’s Huthis since 2015, relies heavily on US-made Patriots to intercept missiles and drones fired at the kingdom on a near daily basis by the

Iran-aligned rebels.

Saudi air defences intercepted a total of 17 Huthi drones on

Saturday, the highest in a single day since the conflict began, Maliki said.— AFP ■



Washington on Friday said it was cutting the number of troops and air defence units deployed to the Middle East, including Patriot batteries and an anti-missile system, called THAAD, from Saudi Arabia. **PHOTO: ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS POOL/AFP**

New Australian deputy PM adds uncertainty to 2050 net zero target

THE Australian government says net zero emissions by 2050 remains its preference, but the new Deputy Prime Minister (PM) Barnaby Joyce as a climate change skeptic casts a shadow over the issue.

Joyce was on Monday returned as deputy PM after defeating incumbent Michael McCormack in a ballot for the leadership of the National Party, which forms the governing Coalition with PM Scott Morrison's Liberal Party.

As a leader of the Nationals, Joyce - a strong advocate for coal-fired power generation - will enter negotiations with Morri-

son on the terms of the Coalition agreement, with climate policy expected to be the centerpiece.

Morrison, who had refused to commit to a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, softened his position in recent months.

On Tuesday morning, Environment Minister Sussan Ley said "net zero is not dead in the water".

"Net zero will happen as soon as possible and the prime minister has made that very clear," she told Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television. "That's a government position." — Xinhua ■



The Australian government says net zero emissions by 2050 remains its preference, but the new Deputy Prime Minister (PM) Barnaby Joyce as a climate change skeptic casts a shadow over the issue. PHOTO: ABC GIPPSLAND: JARROD WHITTAKER/AFP

Volvo, Northvolt team up for electric battery factory



The Volvo-Northvolt battery factory could allow the automaker to make some 800,000 electric cars per year. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

VOLVO and Sweden's Northvolt have joined forces to build a new battery factory in Europe as the automaker aims to sell only fully electric cars by 2030, the companies said Monday.

Swedish automaker Volvo and the battery start-up said that, through a joint venture, they will build a gigafactory with a potential capacity of 50 gigawatt hours (GWh) per year, with production

expected to start in 2026. This would allow Volvo, which is owned by Chinese automaker Geely, to equip around 800,000 vehicles per year. Europe has been ramping up efforts to become more autonomous in the battery sector, as it is still very dependent on production from Asia.

Europe has projects to build nearly 40 gigafactories with a combined annual output of 1,000 GWh and an estimated cost of 40 billion euros (\$48 billion), according to a report by Transport & Environment, a non-government organisation. Volvo and Northvolt also plan to open a research and development centre in Sweden next year that will develop "next-generation, state-of-the-art battery cells and vehicle integration technologies", according to their joint statement.—AFP ■

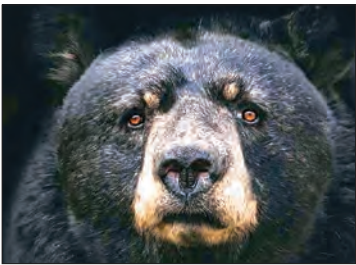
Bear behind series of US car break-ins

A large black bear is behind a series of car break-ins in New Hampshire, US police said, after it was caught red-pawed on home security cameras clambering into a pick-up truck.

Police in the town of Thornton released a video showing the animal loitering by the parked vehicle, before standing up on its hind legs, using its paws to open the door, and then climbing nonchalantly into the driver's seat.

Officers said they suspect the bear is a serial offender.

"Over the last few weeks we have taken reports of a bear... getting into vehicles to get food or trash left inside and causing



A large black bear is behind a series of car break-ins in New Hampshire, US police said, after it was caught red-pawed on home security cameras clambering into a pick-up truck. PHOTO: AFP

considerable damage," the force said in a Facebook post.

"We've had it where they've gotten into vehicles, but not quite like this," police chief Kenneth

Miller told the Boston Globe. "This is unique."

Miller told local TV station WMUR9 that the bear had damaged the bumper on one vehicle, the truck bed cover on another and the front seat interior of a third vehicle.

Even without the incriminating footage, there were clues that pointed to the furry miscreant -- a bear print was discovered at the scene of one ransacking, according to the Boston Globe.

The bear remains at large, with local media saying it has not been causing trouble other than its penchant for rifling through cars.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey's Lake Mogan faces rising threat from urban development

LAKE Mogan is the most popular recreational area in Turkey's capital of Ankara, where residents enjoy observing its natural beauty and abundance of wildlife. But environmental activists are ringing the alarm bell for the rising threat it faces from urban development.

On weekends and holidays, Ankara's residents love visiting the restaurants, cafes and camping facilities built on the shoreline of Lake Mogan, home to around 240 species of birds, some endangered, at various times of year. In winter, one can see sea birds migrating from northern countries to Turkey, while in summer, birds such as ferruginous ducks and red-crested pochards incubate their eggs at the lake area.

Lake Mogan is interconnected hydrologically with another small and shallow lake called Eymir, both located about 20 km south of Ankara. They constitute significant ecological resources for the capital.

"Lake Mogan is a wetland located right in the centre of Anatolia and on bird migration routes, and as other wetlands in this region are drying out, it has grown in importance," Melih Ozbek, a wildlife photographer as well as a passionate bird-watcher and activist, told Xinhua.— Xinhua ■

Ballooning spiders leave Australian region covered in webs

An arachnid invasion left swathes of Australia's Gippsland region covered in webs as the spiders sought higher ground to escape flooding.

A sea of silk engulfed an area in Australia's southeast hit by flooding earlier in June, caused by sheet web spiders that normally live on the ground looking for shelter according to ecologist Dieter Hochuli.

"When we get these types of very heavy rains and flooding, these animals who spend their lives cryptically on the ground can't live there anymore, and do exactly what we try to do -- they move to the higher ground," Hochuli, from the University of Sydney, told local broadcaster Channel 7.

Spiders are known to release webs to create makeshift parachutes and ride the wind to change location, a phenomenon known as ballooning. At least two people died when the storms hit Victoria earlier this month, with authorities finding both bodies in separate partially submerged vehicles.—AFP ■

**NEWS
IN BRIEF****Germany opens
antitrust probe
against Apple**

GERMANY on Monday opened an investigation against Apple over anti-competition practices, making the iPhone maker the fourth US tech giant to be hit by such probes.

The antitrust authority had in recent weeks opened similar investigations against Amazon, Google and Facebook under a new law that took effect in January giving regulators more powers to rein in big tech companies.

The watchdog said it has initiated the first stage of the probe to determine if Apple has "cross-market significance". "An ecosystem extending across different markets can be one indication of such a position held by a company," said the authority. "Such positions of power can make it very hard for other companies to counter it."—AFP ■

**Brazilian analysts
upgrade 2021
economic growth
forecast to 5 pct**

BRAZIL'S financial market upgraded its economic growth forecast for 2021 from 4.85 to 5 per cent, the Central Bank of Brazil said on Monday.

According to the bank's weekly survey of the country's leading financial institutions, analysts adjusted their growth projections for 2022 from 2.2 to 2.1 per cent expansion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

If this year's estimate is confirmed, it would easily reverse the downturn in Latin America's largest economy last year, when GDP fell 4.1 per cent.

Regarding inflation, analysts modified their projection from 5.82 to 5.9 per cent for 2021 and maintained it at 3.78 per cent for 2022.

The projection for 2021 by far exceeds the government's target inflation rate of 3.75 per cent, with a margin of tolerance of 1.5 percentage points, which places the inflation ceiling at 5.25 per cent.

Foreign direct investment in Brazil is estimated to reach 58.15 billion U.S. dollars in 2021 and 66.99 billion U.S. dollars in 2022.—Xinhua ■

Britain to launch formal talks on joining TPP

BRITAIN will officially launch negotiations Tuesday to join the 11-member Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade pact seen as a promising market, the government said in a statement.

Britain filed a request in February to join the trading bloc which spans the Asia-Pacific region. The free trade bloc, currently chaired by Japan, agreed to start negotiations on the matter earlier this month.

London is keen to boost trade with the region following its decision to leave the European Union, and sees the free trade area -- estimated to be worth 9 trillion pounds (\$12.5 trillion), according to the government -- as a source of growth in the coming years.

The nations in the bloc, officially called the Comprehensive and Progressive



Undated supplied photo shows Britain's International Trade Secretary Trade Liz Truss. **PHOTO: BRITAIN'S DEPARTMENT OF TRADE / KYODO**

Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, have a combined population of some 500 million people.

"Membership (in the pact) would open up unparalleled opportunities for British businesses and consumers in the

fast-growing Indo-Pacific," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in the statement released Monday.—Kyodo News ■

**Singapore's economy to rebound strongly in 2021:
research body**

Shoppers walk past fresh vegetable shelves at a supermarket in Singapore on 17 March, 2020. **PHOTO: THEN CHIH WEY/XINHUA**

SINGAPORE'S economy is expected to rebound strongly in 2021 after a sharp contraction

in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office

(AMRO) announced on Monday.

According to the preliminary assessment by AMRO after its virtual annual consultation with the Singaporean authorities, the government's skillful crisis management and effective policy measures supported Singapore's economy and labour market, minimizing economic scarring.

The Singapore economy is expected to turn around and grow by 6.1 per cent in 2021, following a 5.4 per cent contraction in 2020, said AMRO's Lead Economist Chaipat Poonpatpibul.

"The swift, sizeable, and more targeted policy measures have effectively cushioned the

impact of the pandemic and supported the recovery," he said. "Further support would be needed if the recovery falters due to a resurgence in local and overseas infections."

AMRO said that despite a strong rebound, Singapore's economic outlook is uncertain, with an uneven recovery across sectors. Its manufacturing sector is expected to grow strongly, thanks to the global recovery and robust electronics demand.

Meanwhile, the recovery in tourism-related sectors will remain slow due to the ongoing pandemic containment measures and slow pace of vaccination in most countries. —Xinhua ■

'World's happiest country' seeks migrants

REPEATEDLY dubbed the happiest nation on the planet with world-beating living standards, Finland should be deluged by people wanting to relocate, but in fact it faces an acute workforce shortage.

"It's now widely acknowledged that we need a spectacular number of people to come to the country," recruiter Saku Tihverainen from agency Talented Solutions told AFP.

Workers are needed "to help cover the cost of the grey-

ing generation", the recruiter explained.

While many Western countries are battling weak population growth, few are feeling the effects as sharply as Finland.

With 39.2 over-65s per 100 working-age people, it is second only to Japan in the extent of its ageing population, according to the UN, which forecasts that by 2030 the "old age dependency ratio" will rise to 47.5.

The government has warned that the nation of 5.5

million needs to practically double immigration levels to 20,000-30,000 a year to maintain public services and plug a looming pensions deficit.

Finland might seem like an attractive destination on paper, scoring high in international comparisons for quality of life, freedom and gender equality, with little corruption, crime and pollution.

But anti-immigrant sentiment and a reluctance to employ outsiders are also wide-

spread in Western Europe's most homogenous society, and the opposition far-right Finns Party regularly draws substantial support during elections.

Tipping point

After years of inertia, businesses and government "are now at the tipping point and are recognising the problem" posed by a greying population, said Charles Mathies, a research fellow at the Academy of Finland.—AFP ■

U.S. businesses urge Biden administration to remove tariffs amid rising costs, inflation concerns

THE U.S. business groups have urged the Biden administration to remove punitive tariffs on U.S. imports imposed by the previous administration, as tariffs continue to hit American businesses and consumers while pushing up inflation pressures.

HIGHER PRICES FOR CONSUMERS

“Due in part to these tariffs, the U.S. is now an island of high metal prices, where manufacturers pay 40 per cent more for steel compared to their global competitors,” several industry associations representing hundreds of U.S. manufacturers of home appliances, elec-

trical and foodservice equipment, wrote in a recent letter to U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai.

“These higher costs mean that finished goods produced by U.S. companies cannot compete with cheaper, imported versions, putting American manufacturing jobs at risk,” the letter said, urging the Biden administration to lift the Section 232 steel and aluminum tariffs that were initiated three years ago under the administration of former president Donald Trump.

“These companies are suffering from prolonged and impactful

shortages of steel, aluminum, and other key components, which has resulted in record high prices and long manufacturing lead times,” the letter said. The letter came after a group of over 300 U.S. manufacturing companies last month urged President Joe Biden to immediately terminate the restrictive steel and aluminum tariffs.

IMPACT OF TARIFF

While vowing to advance a new worker-centric trade policy, the Biden administration’s officials have been reviewing the tariffs since coming into office five months ago.

“A key element of



The U.S. business groups have urged the Biden administration to remove punitive tariffs on U.S. imports imposed by the previous administration, as tariffs continue to hit American businesses and consumers while pushing up inflation pressures. **PHOTO: AFP**

re-examining past trade policy will be to take into consideration the nega-

tive impact of tariffs on jobs, investment, and the American worker,” said

Americans for Free Trade spokesperson Jonathan Gold. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Marubeni to invest in Philippines e-money venture for seafarers

MAJOR trading house Marubeni Corp. is acquiring a stake in an e-money platform joint venture for seafarers between shipping firm NYK Line and Philippine-based conglomerate Transnational Diversified Group.

Marubeni has agreed with NYK Line and TDG to engage in the business of the Manila-based startup, MarCoPay Inc., for seamen who are heavily dependent on cash while on duty, as are their families.

Details of the deal were not disclosed, including how much the investment costs and how much stake the trader is acquiring.

Marubeni is making its first foray into the e-money business for ocean-vessel crew members with its stake in MarCoPay, the operator of the namesake platform for such functions as salary receipt, remittances, loan applications and insurance product purchases via a smartphone application. — Kyodo News ■

McDonald’s looks to expand in UK, Ireland with 50 new restaurants in a year

US fast-food giant McDonald’s has announced plans to create 20,000 jobs in Britain and Ireland to help meet an expected boom in post-pandemic demand.

McDonald’s said in a statement published on Sunday that it will open 50 restaurants over the next 12 months as COVID restrictions ease.

The US group currently employs more than 130,000 people at 1,400 restaurants in Britain and Ireland.

“It’s fantastic to be able to offer an additional 20,000 people an opportunity to work with us,” said Paul Pomroy, chief executive of McDonald’s UK & Ireland. “There is no doubt the pandemic has had a huge impact on many people’s employment opportunities and threatened the future of high streets up and down the country.” However, Pomroy also cautioned over the weekend that McDonald’s faced recruitment difficulties, in line with the broader sector. It is “getting harder and harder to recruit” staff, he told the Sunday Telegraph newspaper. — AFP ■

Skyrocketing house prices leave many South Koreans struggling to buy

SKYROCKETING property prices in South Korea are leaving ordinary

people struggling to find affordable housing, especially in the capital Seoul



High-rise apartment buildings in Seoul are pictured on April 30, 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

and surrounding areas.

According to KB Kookmin Bank, the average price of a condominium in Seoul in April rose to some 1.11 billion won (\$1 million). A survey by civic group Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice showed that the price has come close to doubling during the four years since 2017.

With interest rates reduced as part of measures against the coronavirus pandemic, cheap money

has flowed into an already overheated real estate market, and with no end in sight to the run-up in prices, concerns are simmering over the eventual bursting of the bubble.

Homeownership has been a dream for many South Koreans. Lee Hyo Sook, a 40-year-old office worker, purchased a 25-year-old condominium of about 60 square metres for 220 million won in Siheung, Gyeonggi Province, in January. — Kyodo News ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (227N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (227N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **23-6-2021** 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
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

ADV

09 251 022 355

Invitation For Open tender No.(3/2021)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (5008.574) Metric Tons, (21) Lots of Cathode Copper by United States Dollar as follow,

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Cathode Copper (108.574) MT | (1) Lot, Yangon, Eden Warehouse |
| b) Cathode Copper (100) MT | (5) Lots, Yangon, Eden Warehouse |
| c) Cathode Copper (200) MT | (5) Lots, Yangon, Eden Warehouse |
| d) Cathode Copper (200) MT | (7) Lots, Monywa, Mine Site |
| e) Cathode Copper (500) MT | (2) Lots, Monywa, Mine Site |
| f) Cathode Copper (1000) MT | (1) Lot, Monywa, Mine Site |

2. Base price of Cathode Copper (Eden Warehouse, Yangon) shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount shall be winning tender.

3. Base price of Monywa, Mine Site Cathode Copper shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the LME price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses) shall be winning tender.

4. Tender Closing Date and Time is 21.7.2021 (14:00)PM and Opening Tender is (15:00) PM.

5. Tender documents are available from the Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw and details can be asked to (+95) 067 3409378 and 067 3409372 within the Office hours.

Tender Committee

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Spielberg signs major streaming deal with Netflix

STEVEN Spielberg will produce multiple new films for Netflix every year, the company said Monday, in a major deal that highlights how fully Hollywood has embraced streaming platforms.

The partnership with arguably Tinseltown's top director is a coup for Netflix at a time when competition with streaming rivals including Disney+ and HBO Max is heating up.

It also follows reports that Spielberg had been skeptical about streaming in recent years, and had even moved to bar Netflix films from Oscars eligibility -- claims that the legendary "Jaws" and "Schindler's List" director has since dismissed as false.

In a joint statement about the Netflix deal, Spielberg praised "this new avenue for our films" as an "amazing opportunity to tell new stories together and reach audiences in new ways". — AFP ■

World Bank urges educational reforms in Lebanon to benefit children

THE World Bank released on Monday a report calling on the Lebanese authorities to quickly reform the education sector and increase investment for better children's education.

Dubbed Foundations for Building Forward Better: An Education Reform Path for Lebanon, the report said "change can be brought only through a comprehensive reform agenda that rests on political will and stakeholder commitment."

Lebanon's years of crises, ongoing political and social unrest, and recent events have led to a largely inefficient education sector that provides low levels of learning and skills, according to the report. The report cited a survey conducted among 231 finance ministry officials, central bank officials, and other economists from 53 countries, including all G20 members, on their perspectives on COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages. — Xinhua ■

Judge rejects request to detain Peruvian presidential hopeful Fujimori



Peruvian Presidential candidate of the Fuerza Popular party, Keiko Fujimori, speaks to the press upon her arrival at a court hearing that will evaluate a preventive detention request against her for suspected money laundering, in Lima on 21 June, 2021, as the result of 6 June election remains undefined. **PHOTO: AFP**

A Peruvian judge on Monday dismissed a prosecutor's request for corruption-accused presidential hopeful Keiko Fujimori to be returned to preventive detention, even as the country awaits the outcome of 6 June elections in which she is vying for the top job.

Judge Victor Zuniga ruled "unfounded" a request by prosecutor Jose Domingo Perez for Fujimori's parole to be rescinded after she allegedly met a witness in her trial in violation of the conditions for her provisional freedom.

Fujimori, who narrowly trails leftist rival Pedro Castillo

according to the unconfirmed vote count, risks an imminent corruption trial if she loses the race.

She has already spent 16 months in pre-trial detention, and was freed in May last year due to the coronavirus outbreak. She was barred from leaving Peru or communicating with co-defendants or witnesses in the case.

On June 11, prosecutor Jose Domingo Perez asked an organised crime court to order Fujimori's return to custody for allegedly having met a witness, so violating the conditions of her provisional freedom. — AFP ■

Nearly 800 stolen archeological discoveries returned to Italy

ITALY said Monday it had recovered from a Belgian collector hundreds of illegally gathered archeological finds dating as far back as the sixth century BC, worth 11 million euros.

The nearly 800 pieces "of exceptional rarity and inestimable value", including stelae, amphorae and other works, came from clandestine excavations in Apulia in Italy's southeastern tip, according to the Carabinieri police in charge of cultural herit-

age. The investigation began in 2017 after a state archaeology lab in Apulia noticed in European art catalogues that decorative elements from a Daunian funerary stele belonging to a "wealthy Belgian collector" resembled those found within a fragment in a southern Italian museum.

That flat stone slab from Daunian – a historical region of Apulia – in the collection of the Belgian collector was missing a

piece in its centre.

An official within the restoration lab noticed that the piece in the museum's collection completed the design of a shield and a warrior on horseback that was missing on the stele.

"During the course of the search, a veritable 'archaeological treasure' was recovered, consisting of hundreds of Apulian figurative ceramic finds and other Daunian stelae, all illegally exported from Italy,

which were then seized in Belgium," read a statement from police.

Italy was able to repatriate the works after all the legal appeals of the collector were dismissed, police said. Besides stelae, the collection includes vases painted with red figures, amphorae, black glazed ceramics, and numerous terracotta figurines. The pieces date back to between the sixth and third centuries BC. — AFP ■

Australia to challenge UNESCO downgrade of Great Barrier Reef

AUSTRALIA will strongly oppose a UNESCO plan to list the Great Barrier Reef as "in danger" over its deterioration caused by climate change, the government said Tuesday.

The UN body released a draft report on Monday recommending the reef's World Heritage status be downgraded because of its dramatic coral decline.

Environmental campaigners said the decision highlighted Australia's lack of action to curb emissions and brought "shame" on the government.

Environment Minister Susan Ley said Australia would mount a challenge after the "back-flip on previous assurances from UN officials", ahead of the World Heritage Committee's 44th session hosted by China next month.

Ley said the decision did not consider the billions of dollars spent attempting to protect the world's largest coral reef.

"This sends a poor signal

to those nations who are not making the investments in reef protection that we are making," she said in a statement.

Australia has resisted calls to commit to a target of net-zero

emissions by 2050, with Prime Minister Scott Morrison saying the country hoped to reach carbon neutral "as soon as possible" without harming its commodity-dependent economy.

The plan to add the reef to the World Heritage "in danger" list prompted environmental groups to highlight Canberra's reluctance to take stronger climate action. — AFP ■



A scuba-diving tourist on the Ocean Freedom dive boat helped into the water by a crew member on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. **PHOTO: AFP**

Bolsonaro lashes out at Brazilian press

BRAZILIAN President Jair Bolsonaro on Monday told a journalist who questioned his frequent refusal to wear a mask to “shut up” and called Globo Group, the country’s largest media conglomerate, “shitty”.

“Shut your mouth! You are creeps! You practise rogue journalism, which doesn’t help at all. You destroy the Brazilian family, destroy the Brazilian religion!” Bolsonaro lashed out at the reporter after a military ceremony in Guaratingueta, in the state of Sao Paulo.

The journalist from TV Vanguarda, a station from the Globo network, had just reminded the far-right former army officer that he had been fined in several



Supporters of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro pray during a protest against the commercial closure due to the covid-19 pandemic, in Brasilia, Brazil, 29 March 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

states for refusing to wear a mask in meetings with his supporters.

When the reporter pointed

out that Bolsonaro had arrived at the ceremony without a face covering, Bolsonaro snapped

back: “I arrive as I want, when I want. I take care of my own life.”

Immediately afterwards, he took off the black mask that he was wearing at the time, and declared: “Now you can put it on the Jornal Nacional (Globo’s popular nightly newscast): ‘I am not wearing a mask in Guaratingueta. Are you happy now?’”

Since coming to power in January 2019, Bolsonaro has repeatedly attacked journalists and the media. On Monday, he continued his harangue by declaring that “Globo is a shitty press. You are a crap press... if you watch Globo, you get misinformation. You should be ashamed of yourself for doing such a lousy job,” he said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Judge tosses most claims against Trump over police charge outside WHouse

A US federal judge on Monday dismissed most of the claims filed in a case suing former president Donald Trump after security officers forcefully cleared peaceful demonstrators outside the White House last summer.

The American Civil Liberties Union and other US civil rights groups accused the then-president and top officials in June 2020 of violating the constitutional rights of Black Lives Matters campaigners and individual protesters.

US District Judge Dabney L. Friedrich of Washington dismissed the majority of the claims filed against Trump, explaining in a 51-page opinion that accusations that the ex-president and several of his top officials had conspired to clear a path for a photo opportunity were too speculative. — AFP ■

El Salvador orders probe into people who disappeared in civil war

El Salvador’s Supreme Court on Monday ordered the attorney-general’s office to investigate the forced disappearance of three people during the 12-year civil war (1980-1992) and to punish those responsible.

The decision by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court came after a writ of habeas corpus was filed in November 2017 by a plaintiff “against the actions of members” of the now-defunct National Police (PN) and the Armed Forces.

The missing include the brother, father and mother of the plaintiff, who was not identified but who asked that the whereabouts of their relatives and what happened around them be investigated.

“It is declared that the plaintiff’s relatives were victims of forced disappearance, committed by members of the (defunct) National Police and the Armed Forces,” the court said. — AFP ■

Israel says it is testing an ‘airborne laser’ that can shoot down drones



Israel says it has used a laser mounted on an aircraft to shoot down drones at a distance of 3ft, but hope the weapon can be upgraded to fire over a distance of 12 miles. **PHOTO: AFP**

ISRAEL has used an airborne laser to shoot down drones in a series of tests, officials said

Monday, calling it a “milestone” to update its already powerful defence systems.

During the tests, which took place “over the last week,” a prototype of the high-power laser system carried on a small civilian plane “successfully intercepted several UAVs”, said Yaniv Rotem, head of the defence ministry’s research and development unit, using the acronym for unmanned aerial vehicles.

The system could down any flying object, including “drones, mortars, rockets, ballistic missiles,” Rotem said, adding they hoped to have a working prototype in “three to four years”.

It was not possible to verify the military’s claims.

A video released by the Is-

raelis showed the laser system on the back of the small plane, directing a beam of energy towards a test drone, apparently burning a hole and setting it on fire.

The tests saw the airborne lasers intercept drones from a range of one kilometre (3,280 feet), but once operational, developers claimed it could reach targets as far as 20 kilometres (12 miles) away, Rotem said.

The laser, Rotem said, uses existing Israeli aerial defence technologies to track and lock its target, before firing a 100-kilowatt laser beam that would down it, Rotem told reporters. — AFP ■

Swedish PM ousted in historic no-confidence vote

SWEDISH Prime Minister Stefan Lofven lost a no-confidence vote on Monday after the very same issue that brought him to power led to him being the first sitting prime minister in the country’s history to be ousted.

The no-confidence motion, which required 175 votes in the 349-seat parliament to pass, was supported by 181 lawmakers. Also, 109 parliamentarians voted against the motion and 51 abstained after the COVID-19 limit on the number of parliamentarians present in the chamber was temporarily lifted due to the extraordinary circumstances.

“We will now ponder which route to take,” Lofven said in a press conference following his historic loss, which due to the

nature of the Swedish constitution also means the entire government was ousted.

According to the same constitution, Lofven now has one week to decide whether to call a snap election, which has to be held within three months. Should he decide not to, the parliament speaker will be tasked with finding a new government based on the election results of 2018 -- the last time he tried it took 134 days.

REASONS BEHIND

As a result of the inconclusive 2018 election outcome, the leader of the Social Democrats had to strike a deal with two minor liberal parties to secure his second consecutive term.

After four months and sev-

eral attempts to form a government, the 73-point deal enabled him to form a government together with the Greens. Al-

though a minority government, it could pass bills with the help of these minor supporting parties. — AFP ■



Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is the first Swedish prime minister to lose a vote of confidence. **PHOTO: AFP**

FIFA Ranking: Myanmar team stands fourth in ASEAN after Asian Qualifiers

THE Myanmar men's national football team is currently standing fourth in the ASEAN region and ranked 145th in the world with 1,057 points, according to the FIFA rankings released after the second round Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Thailand has dropped 16 places while Myanmar down-

graded to sixth from the previous point of 139th, according to the data released by FIFA.

Team Viet Nam is still standing first in ASEAN with a world ranking of 92nd and 1,261 points earned.

Meanwhile, Thailand's national football team is placed second in ASEAN with a FIFA

ranking of 122nd and 1,149 points.

The Philippines squad is third with a world ranking of 128th and 1,132 points.

Next, Malaysia national team is fifth after Myanmar in ASEAN and the team is standing as 153rd in the world ranking with 1,041 points earned.

In the meantime, Singapore is next with a FIFA world ranking of 161st and 1,000 points.

Indonesia and Cambodia are in seventh and eighth place in ASEAN with FIFA ranking of 175th and 179th.

Laos is next in ninth place with a FIFA world ranking of

186th. Brunei and Timor Leste are in the tenth and eleventh place with FIFA ranking of 190th and 195th separately.

Myanmar had the highest records of FIFA ranks as 97th in April 1996 and lowest as 182nd in August 2012, according to FIFA. — GNLM

Denmark 'unit' rides wave of emotion into Wales last-16 clash



Denmark's win over Russia and passage into the Euro 2020 last 16 was celebrated wildly by the country's passionate support. **PHOTO: AFP**

DENMARK is a nation united behind its football team after they charged into the Euro 2020 knockouts on a cathartic night in Copenhagen which sets them up well for the rest of the tournament.

Considered by many a dark horse before the Euro started thanks to a squad packed with talent, Denmark will face Wales in the last 16 and on the eve-

dence of Monday's thrilling 4-1 thumping of Russia will be favourites to make the last eight. Before the tournament started, coach Kasper Hjulmand said he wanted his side to "dare to dream" of going all the way as in 1992, and on Monday their resolve shone through after a rough fortnight in which the players had to deal with seeing teammate Christian Eriksen

nearly die on the pitch.

Asked how he managed to hold things together for the team after they secured a spot in the next round, Hjulmand said: "I have a great team around me, great staff, great people around me, great players."

"I think the only way I can tell it is we are a unit. It's not one person, it's not me or anything else, it's a unit," he added.

"We're backing each other up and that is the best within Denmark I think, the best values we can show that we stand united, we are helping each other."

Having lost their first two matches in the aftermath of Eriksen's sudden cardiac arrest midway through their opener against Finland, the Danes came into Monday's match with their tournament status in danger.

They needed eventual Group B winners Belgium to beat Finland and a win by two goals or more -- or a single-goal win by any other score than 1-0 -- over the Russians. — AFP ■

WHO concerned about eased virus curbs around Euro 2020

THE World Health Organization on Tuesday said it was concerned about the easing of Covid-19 restrictions by nations hosting Euro 2020 matches, noting that some were already seeing rising cases.

"WHO is concerned about easing of restrictions in some of the host countries," Robb Butler, an executive director at WHO's Regional Office for Europe, said in an emailed statement to AFP.

"A few of the stadiums hosting the tournament are now increasing the number of spectators allowed," Butler said.

The UN health agency did not single out any cities, but Britain announced Tuesday that more than 60,000 spectators will be allowed at the Wembley stadium in London for the semi-finals and final of the tournament.

Originally, it was intended to limit the crowd to 40,000.

UEFA has also been in talks with the UK government to ease virus-related travel restrictions to allow up to 2,500

VIPs to attend the final on July 11.

In some "host cities, Covid-19 cases are already on the rise in the area where matches will be held," said Butler.

In areas where infection rates are on the rise, WHO Europe called on the cities concerned to act quickly.

"Learning from experience, we must act fast on signals showing increasing cases.

"Expanding testing and sequencing; stepping up contact tracing; and building very high vaccine uptake fast among those vulnerable and most at risk," he added.

In Denmark, 29 cases have been detected in connection with the Euro games taking place in Copenhagen.

The reported infections involved people who were either already ill during the match or were infected during the game, Anette Lykke Petri, a health authority official, told a Tuesday press briefing. "In theory, there could be more people infected," she added. — AFP ■

Clinical Belgium put Finland on brink of exit

BELGIUM scored two late goals to see off a valiant Finland 2-0 on Monday, pushing their opponents to the brink of a group-stage exit from Euro 2020 and sending Denmark through to the last 16.

Finnish goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's 74th-minute own goal and Romelu Lukaku's third strike of the tournament ensured Roberto Martinez's Belgium finished top of Group B.

The world's number-one-ranked side will face a third-placed team in the next round on Sunday in Seville.

Finland finish third in the

group, but appear unlikely to be one of the four best third-placed teams.

The other game saw Denmark thrash Russia 4-1 in Copenhagen to snatch second place and book a ticket to the last 16.

Finland knew they would only need a point to go through if the Danes won, but despite holding off Belgium for more than 70 minutes, they couldn't keep it up in the Saint Petersburg heat.

This was arguably the strongest XI Belgium have fielded in the tournament so far, with captain Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne and Axel Witsel all

starting after recent struggles with injury. They did not take long to find their stride, with De Bruyne releasing Lukaku, who fired wide, before seeing a low cross hacked away by a panicking Finland defence.

The first half was largely played at a slow pace, but Belgium always looked dangerous when they moved the ball more quickly, with two such moves ending in Witsel and Hazard blasting over the crossbar.

The Red Devils showed what they are capable of shortly before half-time with a wonderful counter-attack led by Hazard,



Two late goals all but sent Finland out of Euro 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

but Hradecky denied teenager Jeremy Doku with a diving, one-handed save.

Hazard tried to win a penal-

ty by falling near Finland defender Daniel O'Shaughnessy, but his appeals for a spot-kick were waved away. — AFP ■