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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 84, 4th Waxing of Waso 1383 ME www.gnlm.com.mm Monday, 12 July 2021

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.

Taninthayi Region sees development of sound foundations

LOCATED in the southern part of Myanmar, Taninthayi Region has plenty of mountains and hills. It is bordered by the Andaman Sea to the west and the Taninthayi mountain ranges to the east, narrowing the coastal plain.

Taninthayi Region is constituted with 18 towns including Dawei District, Myeik District and Kawthoung District. Of a total of 1,240 villages in 2017, when the department was formed, 494 villages were accessible in any season and 746 villages were accessible only in the dry season.

Due to the implementation of the Taninthayi Region Department of Rural Road Development, Ministry of Construction, a total of 706 villages can be reachable in any season in 2021.

The Region Department of Rural Road Development has been undertaking upgrade works on earthen roads to

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The 7/4-mile-long Kyaynyantine-Katharai-Nandawya road in Myeik District.

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Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health and Sports

Order No 285/2021
3rd Waxing of Waso 1383 ME
11 July 2021

The Ministry of Health and Sports hereby announced the order by exercising the authority stipulated in Sub-Section (b) of Section 21 of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports has taken preventive measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in real-time. Therefore, people from some townships of Magway Region, Mon State and Yangon Region need to stay at home due to the number of confirmed patients on the rise in these townships.

2. Hence, the people residing in the following townships in Bago Region and Yangon Region are involved in the Stay-at-Home Programme.
   (a) Bago Region
      (1) Ottwin Township
      (2) Kawa Township
      (3) Kyaukdaga Township
      (4) DaikU Township
      (5) Waw Township
      (6) Okpo Township
   (b) Yangon Region
      (1) Taikkyi Township
      (2) Tamway Township
      (3) Dagon Myothit (North) Township
      (4) Yankin Township
      (5) Thakayta Township
      (6) Thingangyun Township
      (7) Kayan Township
      (8) Kamayut Township
      (9) Kyimyindine Township
      (10) Sangyoung Township
      (11) Dagon Township
      (12) Hline Township
3. The people inclusive of the Stay-at-Home programme of the townships need to abide by the following disciplines:
   (a) Reside at their homes only
      (1) except for service personnel serving at government department;
      (2) except for those serving at private firms such as banks and monetary services, filling stations, foodstuffs and livestock and fishery, cold storage, medicine and medical equipment production and distribution, purified water production and sales, factories of manufacturing daily personal goods and related industries;
      (3) except for staff from airlines, such as relief flights, cargo flights and specially chartered flights, general aviation transport services, ground services, fuel services, aviation export and import services, international freight forwarder companies, customer service companies and agencies, boarding foodstuff production and transport services and aircraft maintenance;
      (4) except for staff from private ports, shipping agencies offices, international freight forwarder companies, customer service companies and agencies, container truck services, port export and import cargo trucks and watercraft, inland container depot and dry ports;
      (5) except for staff from communication service providers such as post services, line phones and mobile phone communication services, internet services (exclusive of sales of telephone and data at shops), tower and fibre maintenance services;
   (b) relevant region and state administration councils to issue necessary orders and directives and supervision for the prevention of COVID-19 infection at CMP factories and workplaces;
   (c) organizations and companies to perform their works from homes;
   (d) one person from each house to go out shopping;
   (e) only two persons per house to go to hospitals and clinics;
   (f) wear masks if they go outside the houses;
   (g) allow ferries and registered vehicles only to transport returnees from workplaces to pass the wards;
   (h) allow one person only in addition to the driver in a vehicle for shopping in the ward and two persons except for the driver to go to hospitals or clinics;
   (i) abide by the standard operating procedures (SOP) for trucks to ensure smooth flow of commodities in the township;
4. People need to inform relevant ward/village administration bodies about seeking approvals to go outside the houses if they have reasons to raise the limited number of participants in the measures and other emergency issues mentioned in subparagraphs (d), (e) and (h) of Paragraph 3. The relevant administrative bodies need not allow ingoing and outgoing persons, except for officials and those returnees from duty.
5. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the order under the existing laws.
6. The order came into force at 4 am on 12-7-2021.

Dr Thet Khaing Win
Union Minister

State Administration Council Information Team to hold press conference 7/2021

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council will hold a press conference on 7/2021 at the assembly hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 10:00 am on 12 July. Local and foreign media personnel are invited to the press conference. — MNA

Press Conference 7/2021 of Information Team to be broadcast live

THE press conference 7/2021 of the Information Team of the State Administration Council will be broadcast live on MRTV, MITV, MOI Website and MOI YouTube and aired live on Myanma Radio starting from 10:00 am on 12 July, at the assembly hall of the Ministry of Information. — MNA

3,461 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 July, total figure rises to 192,213

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **192,213 after 3,461 new cases** were reported on 11 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **146,358** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **3,838** after **82** died. —MNA

Unity in its real essence

Unity must have a common interests, a common sense of working together and a common objective, for the independence of the whole country and the interests of the whole populace. Unity must work for the people so that they can enjoy shared well-being and shared cause in working together. It is not enough just to say that we want to be united. Labour must be shared, and interests must be shared. Our objective must be the same. Only this kind of effort is worth calling "Unity".

(Excerpt from the speech addressed by Bogyoke Aung San at the AFPFL Conference on 23rd January 1946)

Public Announcement

11 July 2021

1. The Ministry of Commerce cooperates with the ministry concerned to facilitate the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures, and allows the imports of medicines and other related equipment via sea route/border checkpoints in a timely manner.
2. The imports of Oxygen Concentrators, the current essentials for the treatment of COVID-19, were exempted from paying 3 per cent tax and applying for FDA approval and import licences.
3. It has now reported that some unscrupulous persons post the false information on social media to raise the prices in the market and public awareness by making a fake office letter that bans on importation of medicines and medical supplies.
4. It is here announced that the spreading office letter is just a fake one and actions will be taken against those who spread fake information under existing law, and the certain restrictions on the import of medicines and medical equipment are eased and allowed in a timely manner.

Ministry of Commerce

Thanakha, symbol of Myanmar's cultural heritage in the world

THE young courtiers used Thanakha during the reign of ancient Myanmar kings. Nowadays, the Myanmar women like to decorate themselves with Thanakha. Even with the arrivals of modern beauty products, Thanakha remains the reigning cosmetic of choice.

Features

Thanakha can cool the skin, provide protection from the sunray, and its fragrance makes the people fresh. The courtiers and female farmers used Thanakha. Most of the Myanmar girls apply Thanakha after bathing, or they wear it whenever they go to pagodas or religious occasions.

Thanakha plants in a row are thriving in the farm.

Potency of Thanakha

Thanakha can protect the human body from heat-related problems. Those working under direct sunlight can use Thanakha as sun protection. The fragrance of Thanakha can also cure the headache, dull pain, neck pain and nasal congestion. If the women suffer from the menses, they can apply Thanakha with the turmeric. If they have high body temperature, they can take liquid Thanakha with the nectar of Mesua Ferrea. If the men suffer from the headache, dull pain, toothache and blurred vision due to urinary disease, they can take liquid Thanakha by grinding the root of Thanakha.

Donation to the Lord Buddha

Although Myanmar girls grind Thanakha in longitudinal, the courtiers grind in a vertical way to get the smoother Thanakha paste. Moreover, the girls dry Thanakha to make powder. There is a tradition in the central Myanmar like offering the Thanakha to the Buddha at the bonfire. Such culture emerged in the Bagan era.

Usefulness of Thanakha

Thanakha is hard and in yellow colour. The dried Thanakha weighs 61 pound per cubic foot. Therefore, the Thanakha is used as a driving lever in grinding oil or paddy, in carving industry and as measuring tools.

Mixed-cropping plants

The Thanakha is called Limonia acidissima in the botanical term, in Rutaceae Family and is in the same group with Aegle marmelos, orange, lemon, lime and clausena. Thanakha trees can grow together with Terminalia oliveri, Tectona Hamiltonian, Acacia leucophloea, Eastern gooseberry, Acacia catechu, Diospyros burmanica and so on. The stem of the tree is about 3ft.

Thanakha Plantation

Although Thanakha plants can be seen across the nation, they are mostly grown in the country's central dry zone. The plants are grown in Ayadaw township with more than 100,000 acres and the township boasts 75 per cent of Thanakha plantation of the country. The Thanakha plantation is also expanded in Pakokku, Yesagyo, Myaing, Shwebo, Budalin, Yinmabin, Monywa, Myinmu and Pauk townships. There are now more than 300,000 acres of Thanakha plantation.

Public participation

Therefore, the people should work together to ensure that Myanmar's Thanakha, which has been conserved as a traditional culture since the time of the ancient Myanmar kings, exists as a gift and a symbol of Myanmar and remains a part of Myanmar's cultural heritage in the world.—Zeyar Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

Taninthayi Region sees development ...

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concrete ones, asphalt roads, gravel roads and reinforced roads as well as bamboo and wooden bridges to concrete and bailey bridges with the Union/ Region Funds.

Living standards improvement activities

In upgrading rural roads to reduce the disparity between rural and urban living standards and to develop harmoniously in line with the Rural Development Strategic Framework, a total of 1968/6.71 miles long roads—367/2.706 concrete roads, 162/5.035 miles of asphalt road, 403/3.36 miles of gravel road, 392/2.05 miles of reinforced road, 643/1.554 miles of dirt road—have been under the upgrade scheme and it has been upgraded from 39% into 67% of the all-season-round accessible road.

The Taninthayi Region Rural Road Development Department has made efforts to upgrade a total of 789/5 miles long roads—234/1 miles of concrete road, 49/7 miles of asphalt road, 146/6 miles of gravel road and 358/7 miles of reinforced road—for the rural people to travel any season.

In terms of rural bridges, a total of 183 concrete bridges including 10 concrete bridges over 180 feet, 19 wooden bridges, 15 bailey bridges including two over 180 feet, and 494 box culverts, totalling 711 bridges have been upgraded to make it easier to cross economic, social and educational barriers and to quickly and easily access rural products to market.

The Sonsin-Gonnyinseik Road in Thayetchaung Township, which has been upgraded by the Taninthayi Region Rural Road Development Department to be a 9/3-mile-long village-to-village concrete road in Dawei District, connects the Dawei-Myeik Union Highway, benefiting nine villages and 6,775 people.

The 7/4-mile-long Kyaynyantine-Katharai-Nandawya road, 14/6-mile-long East Banlaw-Kawtaw-Thameehla-Koin-Kyauksarit-Titekan Road and the 13/4-mile-long West Banlaw-Yaypaw-Thameehla road upgraded as village-to-village roads in Myeik District will benefit 29 villages and a population of 25,221.

The 29/4-mile-long Shankoeywa Border Ring Road in Kawthoung District which was upgraded to 16/5-mile concrete road and 12/7-mile gravel road has provided 18,161 people in 9 villages who are using the road in day-to-day life.

As the department is making continuous efforts to provide convenient transportation for the rural people in Taninthayi Region, the 420-foot Pitat bailey bridge on the Pulaw-Laku-Myadaung-To Road was completed, benefiting five villages and 4,956 people. In Myeik Township, the Taungshay Bridge on the Kyaynantine-Kathari-Nandawya Road has been completed from the original wooden bridge and is now a 295-foot reinforced concrete bridge, benefiting 17 villages and 17,960 villagers. In Kawthoung Township, the 350-foot Phaungseik Bridge on the Shankoeywa Border Ring Road was built as a reinforced concrete bridge, benefiting nine villages and a population of 17,960 people.

In addition, 900-foot Payitaung-Wunpho Bailey Bridge is under construction that is expected to complete in the current fiscal year and when completed, it will benefit six villages and 6,400 people, as well as up to 33 tonnes of vehicle/cargo, will be able to pass on it. The 1,200-foot Ohntawkan reinforced concrete bridge is being built on the Bokpyin-Ohntawkan Road in Bokpyin Township that will benefit 8 villages, 1,720 households and a population of 7,834 when it is completed in the current fiscal year. The Minthan-Maunghlaw river bridge that connects Myeik Township and Kyunsu Township is under construction to benefit 18 villages and 25,430 people.

The department is making efforts to build the rural roads sustainably for the socio-economic development of the rural people so that they could transport their products to markets and travel for education, healthcare and social matters, as well as to support the national transport project.

It is also a goal of the Rural Road Development Department to make annual improvements for 80% of villages and 90% of rural people to be able to use the roads that are accessible all year round by 2030. The Ministry of Construction expanded the Department of Rural Road Development from its previous four departments on 21 July 2017 to implement these goals for the people.

The Department's Activities

From the 2017-2018 financial year to the 2019-2020 financial year when the Department of Rural Road Development was established, 1237/4.6 miles of concrete roads, 995/5.0 miles of asphalt road, 1619/1.1 miles of gravel road, 3674/5.7 miles of reinforced road and 3957/1.6 miles of earthen road, a total of 114484/2 miles were upgraded.

Rural bridges include 1873 concrete bridges; 80 wooden bridges; 185 cable-stayed bridges/bailey bridges; 379 floodplain bridges; 5,048 box culverts totalling 7,565 bridges were upgraded.

The strategic goal of the department is to have 80% of the villages and 90% of the rural population in Myanmar by 2030 have access to rural roads, all villages with a population of 1,000 or more will be able to access rural roads by 2020; by 2025, 95% of all villages with a population of 500 or more.; by 2030, 75% of all villages with a population of more than 250 and 50% of all villages with a population of less than 250 will be accessible to all-season-round village roads.

Improvement to be continued

As the department in Taninthayi Region will continue to upgrade the roads leading to villages in the region to be accessible in any season and the work of the department becomes more successful, the production/flow of rural goods in Taninthayi Region will increase as well as socio-economic life will inevitably develop rapidly. — Cham Myae MaungGNLM

A straight and smooth road is stretching in Taninthayi Region.

The 350-foot Phaungseik Bridge on the Shankoeywa Border Ring Road in Kawthoung Township,.

The 420-foot Pitat bailey bridge on the Pulaw-Laku-Myadaung Road.

To benefit the State

THE teachers who joined the CDM due to misunderstanding based on the weakness in administrative measures and political attacks need to report back to the respective schools. The requirements of teachers will be fulfilled during the school opening period. In performing State responsibilities, Council Members need to consider from different perspectives so as to benefit the State.

(Excerpt from the speech of the meeting 10/2021 of the State Administration Council by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 10 May 2021)

Myanma Railways operates rail transportation services normally

Train of Myanma Railways.

MYANMA Railways (MR) under the Ministry of Transports and Communications operates rail transportation services from Yangon as usual during the third wave of COVID-19 as per the stipulated health rules, according to Yangon Railway Station.

Resumed service as normal

"During the third wave of COVID-19, we, MR runs the trains as usual for the people. We do not change any train schedules of Yangon railway station during this period but change the dates for some schedules. It depends on the number of passengers. If the infection rate declines and people normally go out, the train services will be the same like before. However, the 1-up and 2-down trains running along Yangon-Mandalay railway are being operated daily as before. Similarly, the Bago-Yangon train and Insein-Okkan train offer service daily," said an official of Yangon railway station.

Train of Myanma Railways.

Train services

The 63-up and 64-down trains on Yangon-Pyay route run once two days, and also the 89-up and 90-down trains on Yangon-Mawlamyine route. Moreover, the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw and Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon trains run every other day. The Yangon-Mandalay and Mandalay-Yangon trains operate daily.

Saving costs

"The train services are more convenient for the basic level people like us during this period. The charges are not so high. Although the buses run currently, we have to pay for two seats. So, it is not convenient for us. Although the duration of taking trains and bus are different, I prefer taking trains for normal trips. We can get fresh air and save the cost. So, the train services are good for us," said a passenger from Yangon to Pyay.

The trains from the Yangon railway station operate the services normally and they will not suspend even in early July (COVID-19 third wave).

Therefore, the MR offers safe train services to the passengers as per the COVID-19 health rules, according to MR.—Myint Mo/GNLM

Seventy per cent of rural water supply projects completed in Leshi Township

SAGAING Region rural water supply works are being carried out to create easy access of drinking water for the rural people in Leshi Township, Naga Self-Administered Zone. At present, 70% of these works have been completed, said officials.

The construction of dams in six villages in Leshi Township was completed in the fiscal year 2020-2021, and the construction of springs and reservoirs began the last week of February 2021.

At present, water supply is sufficient in the villages.

"As our area is mountainous, access to water is also difficult. The water supply was inconvenient, so we had to carry out exploration work. In doing so, the water from the spring will be connected to PVC pipes with a capacity of 5,000 gallons. The water is supplied to the village only after the water is stored in 3,000-gallon tanks.

This fiscal year, water supply will be provided to six villages. So far, water supply works have been completed in four villages. Water supply to the remaining villages will be completed as soon as possible," said U Khaung Po, township head of the Rural Development Department in Leshi Township.

Constructions works for dams, springs and reservoirs in six villages of Leshi Township were started from the fiscal year 2020-2021.

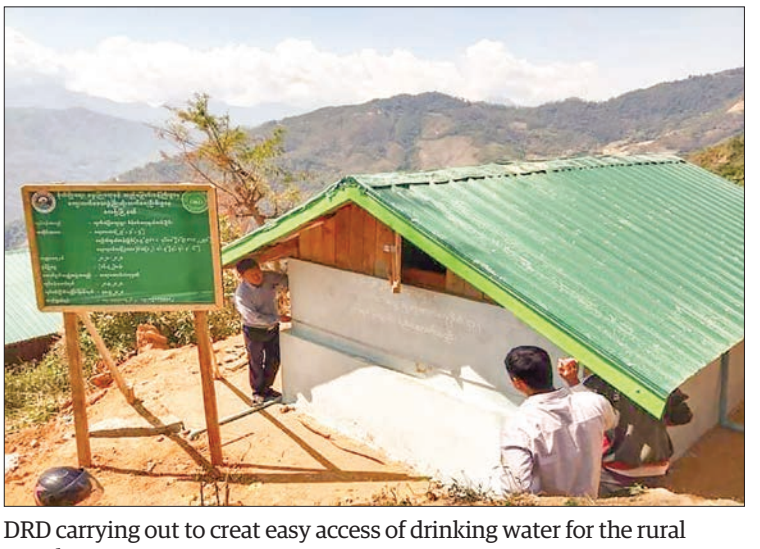
Water supply works have been fully completed in four villages: Cheya, Myenigon, Kukki Sanpya and Shwepyiaye.

"As our Naga area is hilly, we are skillful to use bamboo to connect water to the villages. With the help of the government, enough water can be used in the villages."

"In addition, we have formed water management committees in each village to raise awareness of the benefits of using clean water in the villages," U Khaung Po added.

Leshi Township, Naga Self-Administered Zone of Sagaing Region consists of 69 villages in 19 village-tracts, which are home to 3,321 households and 3,412 houses.

With a population of 18,800 in the region, the Department of Rural Development (DRD) is working to provide clean water to the rural population each fiscal year, according to the Leshi Township Rural Development Department.—Lu Lay/GNLM


DRD carrying out to creat easy access of drinking water for the rural people.

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

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Public cooperates to arrest gold shop robbers in Yangon

Arrestee Wai Yan, his pistol, Hla Thida gold shop and vehicle used by fugitives.

SECURITY forces and the public cooperated to arrest one of five men trying to rob a gold shop with a gun yesterday morning in Mayangon Township, Yangon Region.

A total of five men came in front of the "Hla Thida" gold shop in Mayangon Township by Toyota Crown YGN 7D-8630 and attempted to rob the jewellery in the shop by threatening with a gun.

The staff and security personnel surrounded and tried to arrest them. Four men escaped by the same car and one was arrested with a pistol and 8 rounds of ammunition.

Wai Yan, who was arrested due to the cooperation of the people, will be investigated and effective action will be taken in accordance with the law, and the security forces have accelerate the search to arrest the fugitives who attempted to rob the gold jewellery by threatening with a gun.—MNA

Terrorist bombers arrested with homemade mines in Thanapin Township

ACCORDING to the report of the dutiful citizens, five terrorist bombers were arrested with homemade mines yesterday afternoon in Thanatpin Township in Bago Region.

The bombers were arrested with materials used in terrorist acts including 23 homemade mines in the Kyaikasi paddy field in Auksupine ward, Thanatpin Township on 11 July.

Security forces were investigating the armed attack that happened in the "Apyogyi" teashop which resulted in two men dead and two men injured, and due to the responsible citizens who reported the location of the terrorists, the bombers were arrested. It is reported that investigations are underway to take effective action against them in accordance with the law.—MNA

6 police CDMers and one financial supporter arrested with firearms in Mandalay

A total of six police members who have participated in the CDM campaign and one woman financial supporter were arrested together with firearms and related materials in Patheingyi Township and Aungmyethazan Township in Mandalay Region on 10 July.

According to the report, security forces searched the house of Daw Win Thi who was supporting financially the CDMers and arrested her on the morning of July 10.

Following her confession, security forces went to U Khani Monastery at the foot of Mandalay Hill and arrested three members of the police force who have joined the CDM campaign.

Similarly, security forces arrested three other members of the police force staying in Kyikon village in Patheingyi Township, together with six homemade mines and 2 I-Cons.

While being arrested, one of them was shot and died of a bullet wound at the scene.

It is reported that the arrested suspects will be taken action under the existing laws. —MNA

Suspects (from L) police lance corporal Ye Lin, constables Nyi Nyi Min Htet and Win Naing Ko.
Suspects (from L) police lance corporal Pho Pyae (injured), constables Kyaw Min Htet and Khant Ko Ko Maung (dead).

Myanmar-India border trade up by $111.94 mln as of 2 July

File photo shows Myanmar - India friendship bridge between Myanmar and India. **PHOTO IPRD**

THE value of border trade between Myanmar and India climbed up to US$193.2 million between 1 October and 2 July of the current financial year 2020-2021 although India stepped up the border security. The figures reflected an increase of $111.94 million as against a-year ago period.

India tightened the border control in wake of the coronavirus pandemic, and the traders suffered the negative impact of the outbreak. The cross-border trade between Myanmar and India has become sluggish.

Myanmar conducts border trade with neighboring India through Tamu, Reed, and Thantlang border posts.

Over the past nine months, trade values were registered at over $32.39 million via Tamu border and $160.8 million via Reed. There was no trade recorded at the Thantlang post.

Myanmar conveys mung beans, pigeon peas, green grams, areca nuts, ginger, saffron, turmeric, bay leaves, fishery products, fruits, and vegetables to India, while it imports pharmaceuticals, oil cakes, electronic appliances, motorbikes, steel and other construction machines and building materials from the neighboring country.—KK/GNLM

External trade dramatically plummets by $6 bln as of 2 July

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 18 June in the current financial year 2020-2021 indicated a drastic plunge to US$22.6 billion, a sharp drop of over $6 billion compared with the corresponding period of the FY 2019-2020, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period in the previous FY, the trade stood at $28.6 billion, according to data released by the ministry.

Over the past nine months, Myanmar's export was worth over $11.19 billion, which plunged from $13.6 billion registered a year-ago period. Meanwhile, the country's import was valued $11.4 billion, showing a significant decrease of $3.6 billion compared with the last FY.

Both maritime trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts. The neighbouring countries tightened the border security and the border posts came to abrupt stop amid the COVID-19 surging in Myanmar.

At the present time, the traders have transaction problem triggered by the restriction of the private banks. Furthermore, the pandemic triggered the cargo shipping crisis, a market observer shared his opinion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies much on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. However, the suspended trade in the border checkpoints and the order cancel from the western countries amid the political changes exacerbate the export sector for now.

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing trade deficit, export promotion and market diversification.

The external trade stood at $36.73 billion in the 2019-2020 FY, $35.147 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, $18.728 billion in the 2018 six-month mini budget period, $33.578 billion in the 2017-2018 FY and $29.209 billion in the 2016-2017 FY respectively, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics.—KK/GNLM

Natural gas export tops US$1.32 bln in seven months from Oct to Apr

MYANMAR'S exports of natural gas in the seven months (Oct-Apr) of the current financial year 2020-2021 exceeded US$1.32 billion, the Commerce Ministry's data showed.

The figures indicated a sharp drop of over $880 million compared to the year-ago period.

Natural gas is included in the list of major export items of Myanmar. About six per cent of the country's total export earnings come from the sales of natural gas.

There are 53 onshore blocks and 51 offshore blocks, totalling 104 blocks. A total of 25 onshore blocks and 31 offshore blocks are under operation with the foreign investment. Natural gas extraction is being made at the Yadana, the Yedagun, the Shwe, and the Zawtika offshore blocks as well as onshore drilling blocks. Yearly extraction is elevated to cubic feet in 670.36 billion from 600 billion last year, according to the statement of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

The Shwe natural gas field, located offshore from Rakhine State, was discovered in 2014. Natural gas extracted from the field is exported to China.

The Yadana natural gas project is being carried out by the TOTAL Company, with its pipeline supplying natural gas to Thailand. Natural gas is also extracted in Yedagun, located offshore from Taninthayi and discovered in 1992. The Zawtika Project in the Gulf of Mottama mainly supplies natural gas to neighboring Thailand.

Production at Yadana and Yedagun is declining, and those projects will be halted in the coming years.

Myanmar's exports of natural gas stood at $3.5 billion in the 2019-2020 FY, $3.9 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, $3.5 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, $3.116 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, and $3.445 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, as per Commerce Ministry data.— KH/GNLM

12 JULY 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Establish mangrove forests to contribute much to prevention of natural disasters

MYANMAR possessing long coastal areas faces possibilities on dangers in natural disasters such as strong winds, tidal waves, landslides, tsunami and so on triggered by cyclonic storms in the Indian Ocean, the Andaman Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Mottama Gulf.

Mangrove forests are invaluable barriers against the natural disasters, especially tsunami, tidal waves, landslides and storms. In fact, these mangrove forests are natural retaining walls to bar the calamities.

Recently, the good news was released that the Department of Forest decided to establish the protected public mangrove forests in Yangon Region's Southern District involved in the Mottama Golf area for prevention of natural disasters. Among 10 townships in the southern district, the department prioritizes the cultivation of mangrove plants in Kungyangon, Kyauktan and Kayan townships.

> This fiscal year, six more forests will be set up on 40,167 acres of land in the district.

Yangon Region's Southern District has reclaimed five protected public mangrove forests on 6,089 acres of land. These are Kanhlyashay and Myaseinthaung protected public mangrove forests in Kungyangon Township, Aungchantha mangrove forest in Kyauktan Township, Yekyaw Bogalay and extended Kanhlyashay mangrove forests in Kayan Township.

This fiscal year, six more forests will be set up on 40,167 acres of land in the district. Two mangrove forests each will be established in the southern district. The newly-planned mangrove forests are Shwepyi Ayechanphoh and extended Aungchantha mangrove forests in Kyauktan Township, Minywa Athin and Beiktheik Maha Thatha mangrove forests in Thongwa Township and green wall and Aleywa mangrove forests in Kawhmu Township.

A plan is underway to raise the awareness for conservation of mangrove forest plantations to the local people in open season. If so, the local authorities can mobilize the local people for active participation in conservation of the mangrove plants to be able to prevent impacts of landslides and tidal waves whenever natural disasters fall.

Mangrove plants can thrive in muddy area sharing border with the water area such as creeks, rivers and seaside. Naturally, mangrove plants stronghold the muddy plains with their complicated roots to protect the areas against landslides. Along the banks of rivers and creeks, the mangrove plants prevent silting in the water. As such, all the people should protect the mangrove plants valuable for the society.

■■■

Delta puts brakes on return to post-COVID normality

EU claims it has delivered enough shots for 70 per cent of its population.

NATIONS across the globe hit new pandemic highs and reimposed COVID-19 restrictions on Saturday as the highly contagious Delta variant forced governments to put the brakes on plans to return to normality.

The highly transmissible Delta variant, first detected in India, is sweeping the globe as countries race to inoculate their populations to ward off fresh outbreaks and allow for economies and daily life to recover.

The European Union — lambasted early on in the pandemic response for a botched vaccine acquisition programme — said on Saturday it has delivered enough shots to cover 70 per cent of the bloc's population.

"By tomorrow, some 500 million doses will have been distributed to all regions of Europe," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

But according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the proportion of adults aged 18 years or over fully vaccinated in the EU and European Economic Area is still only 44.1 per cent.

Slow going

Supply shortages in South Korea have meant only about 11 per cent of the country's 52 million population is fully vaccinated, according to health authorities.

The nation, held up as a model of how to combat the pandemic, reported 1,378 new coronavirus cases on Saturday, a third straight record high.

From Monday, gatherings of more than two people will be banned after 6:00pm, schools, bars and clubs will be closed.

In Pakistan, where less than 8 per cent of the population has been vaccinated, the government said only those who had received jabs would be allowed to fly.

"We could face dangerous consequences if we do not take steps to control the Delta variant," the National Command and Operation Centre said in a statement.

The country of around 215 million people has largely escaped the worst of the pandemic, with under a million recorded infections and around 23,000 deaths — although cases are on the rise again.

Party's over before starting

After an "exponential" rise in cases in recent days, officials in the autonomous north eastern Spanish region of Catalan said they had no choice but to reimpose restrictions.

Nightclubs will close and a negative COVID-19 test or proof of vaccination will be needed to take part in outdoor activities involving more than 500 people.

"The pandemic has not ended, the new variants are very contagious and we still have significant segments of the population that are not vaccinated," Patricia Plaja, a spokeswoman for the regional government told a news conference.

Russia also announced on Saturday that cases continued to surge and it had a new record number of daily deaths, the fifth since the beginning of the month.

The 752 new deaths bring Russia's total toll to 142,253. The country also recorded 25,082 new infections, meaning there have been more than 5.7 million cases.

People check in for their COVID-19 vaccine at a mobile clinic on Friday in an East Los Angeles neighbourhood which has shown lower vaccination rates especially among the young. PHOTO: AFP

State statistics agency Rosstat, which defines coronavirus-related deaths more broadly, put the figure at 270,000 by the end of April.

Less than 20 per cent of Russians have received a single dose, despite shots of locally developed vaccines being readily available.

Despite the rising infections and deaths, 54 per cent of a deeply sceptical Russian public don't plan to get vaccinated, according to a survey by the independent Levada-Centre published this week.

Third shot

While vaccines have been successful in mitigating the worst effects of infections, concerns have been raised about how well some of them will cope with more virulent strains.

In Indonesia, which is fighting a ferocious wave of infections, more than a dozen fully inoculated frontline health workers have died, according to the country's medical association.

Authorities said on Friday that medics would be given a third booster jab using the vaccine made by US company Moderna, to provide them extra protection.

The southeast Asian nation has been depending heavily on China's Sinovax shots amid the global shortage of alternatives that have been mostly supplied to rich nations.

The rapid spread of the Delta variant across Asia, Africa and Latin America is exposing crucial vaccine supply shortages for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Senegal, the EU, the United States, several European governments and other partners, signed an accord in Dakar on Friday to finance vaccine production in the west African state.

And Cuba approved its homegrown Abdala vaccine for emergency use, the first Latin American coronavirus jab to get the green light and a possible lifeline for a region trying to battle a killer pandemic with modest means.

SOURCE: AFP

90-year-old infected with 'two virus variants at once'

A 90-year-old woman who died after falling ill with Covid-19 was infected with both the Alpha and Beta variants of the coronavirus at the same time, researchers in Belgium said Sunday, adding that the rare phenomenon may be underestimated.

THE unvaccinated woman, who lived alone and received at-home nursing care, was admitted to the OLV Hospital in the Belgian city of Aalst after a spate of falls in March and tested positive for Covid-19 the same day.

While her oxygen levels were initially good, her condition deteriorated rapidly and she died five days later.

When medical staff tested for the presence of any variants of concern they found that she was carrying both the Alpha strain, which originated in Britain, and the Beta variant first detected in South Africa.

"Both these variants were circulating in Belgium at the time, so it is likely that the lady was co-infected with different viruses from two different people," said molecular biologist Anne Vankeerberghen from the OLV Hospital who led the research.

"Unfortunately, we don't know how she became infected."

A member of the medical staff takes care of a patient infected by COVID-19 at the Intensive Care Unit of the Etterbeek-Ixelles Hospital on 6 April, 2021, in Brussels. **PHOTO: AFP**

Vankeerberghen said it was difficult to say whether the co-infection played a role in the fast deterioration of the patient.

The research, which has not yet been submitted to a medical journal for publication, is being presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

While Vankeerberghen said in a press release that there had been "no other published cases" of similar co-infections, she added that the "phenomenon is probably underestimated".

This is because of limited testing for variants of concern, she said, calling for an increase in the use of fast PCR testing to detect known variant mutations.

In January, scientists in Brazil reported that two people had been simultaneously infected with two different strains of the coronavirus, but the study has yet to be published in a scientific journal.

In comments reacting to the research, Lawrence Young, a virologist and Professor of Molecular Oncology at the University of Warwick, said it was not a surprise to find an individual infected with more than one strain.

"This study does highlight the need for more studies to determine whether infection with multiple variants of concern affects the clinical course of Covid-19 and whether this in any way compromises the efficacy of vaccination," he added.

SOURCE: AFP

■■■

Personal preventive practices against COVID-19 infection

(1) Wear the mask systematically when going out in public.

(2) Keep a proper physical distance.

(3) Avoid the crowd.

(4) Wash your hands for 20 seconds frequently.

(5) Avoid entering unventilated closed spaces as much as possible.

Warning for visitors to Martyr Beikman

THE people wishing to visit the Martyr Beikman on the 74th Anniversary of Martyr Day are urged to strictly abide by the following points not to suffer from infection of Coronavirus Disease-COVID-19 due to the high infection rate at present.

(a) Systematically wear the mask on the mouth and the nose and if necessary, and wear a face shield during the period of departure from the house to arrival.
(b) Take six feet distance to each other.
(c) Systematically wash hands with soap for at least 20 seconds or use hand gel for cleaning the hands, and not to touch eyes, nose and face without cleaning the hands.
(d) If everybody wishes to sneeze or cough, cover the nose and mouth with a handkerchief or tissue or bunt elbow, after moving to the site in a far distance from the crowds.
(e) Not to take a long time for viewing round there if not necessary.
(f) If anyone suffers from symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, body pain, tiredness, coughing, defecating, neck pain, headache, suffocation and exhaustion or currently contacts any confirmed patient, they should reside at home and present reports to the relevant township health department.

Health Subcommittee
74th Anniversary of Martyr Day Organizing Work Committee

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 11th July, 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over Westcentral Bay and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal still persists. Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 12th July, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin, Northern Shan States, fairly widespread in Naypyitaw, Magway, Bago Regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Rakhine, Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Lower Sagaing, Magway, Ayeyarwady, Taninthayi Regions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (8-11)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and (6-8)feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak to moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 12th July, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Air defences installed at Afghanistan's Kabul airport as Taliban gain ground

Washington and its allies are due to end their mission in Afghanistan at the end of next month, even as the insurgents say they now control 85 percent of the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFGHANISTAN'S Kabul airport has been fitted with an air defence system to counter incoming rockets, officials said Sunday, as the Taliban pressed on with a blistering offensive across the country.

Washington and its allies are due to end their military mission in Afghanistan at the end of next month, even as the insurgents say they now control 85 percent of the country -- a claim impossible to independently verify and disputed by the government.

The Islamic fundamentalist group's rapid gains in recent weeks have raised fears about the security of the capital and its airport, with NATO keen to secure a vital exit route to the outside world for foreign diplomats and aid workers.

"The newly installed air defence system has been operational in Kabul since 2:00 am Sunday," the interior ministry said in a statement. "The system has proven useful in the world in repelling rocket and missile attacks." Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told AFP it had been installed at the airport, though officials did not offer details about the type of system or who had installed it.

The Taliban have regularly launched rockets and mortars at government forces across the countryside, with the jihadist Islamic State group (IS) carrying out similar strikes on the capital in 2020. IS also claimed responsibility for a rocket attack this year at Bagram Air base, the biggest US military facility in the country, which was recently handed over to Afghan forces. Over the years the US military installed several C-RAMs (Counter Rocket, Artillery and Mortar Systems) across its bases, including at Bagram, to destroy incoming rockets targeting the facilities, a foreign security official and media reports said.—AFP ■

Six years a slave: Indian farm workers exploited in Italy

Activists say between 25,000 and 30,000 Indians live in the Agro Pontino, mostly Sikhs from the Punjab region. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

WHEN Balbir Singh refers to his ordeal, he uses the Italian word "macello", which roughly translates as "mess" -- but it is hardly enough to convey what the migrant Indian farm worker has endured.

For six years, he lived in what can only be described as slave-like conditions tending cattle in the province of Latina, a rural area south of Rome that is home to tens of thousands of Indian migrant workers like him.

"I was working 12-13 hours a day, including Sundays, with no holidays, no rest," Singh told AFP. The farm owner paid him 100 to 150 euros ($120 to $175) a month, he said, which amounts to less than 50 cents an hour.

The legal minimum for farm workers is around 10 euros an hour.

Singh was rescued by a police raid on March 17, 2017 after appealing for help via Facebook and WhatsApp to local Indian community leaders and an Italian rights activist.

Officers found him living in a caravan, with no gas, hot water or electricity, and eating the leftovers that his boss either threw in the bin or gave to chickens and pigs.

Singh had to wash in the stables, with the same hosepipe he used to clean cattle, and it was made clear to him he should not complain.

"When I found a lawyer ready to help me, (the owner) told me... 'I'll kill you, I'll dig a hole, throw you in it, and fill it up'... he had a gun, I saw it," he recalled.

Singh said he was beaten up a couple of times, and had his identity papers taken away.

His former employer is now on trial for labour exploitation, while Singh is living in a secret location for fear of retribution.

Brutal exploitation

Singh's story is extreme, but it fits into a wider picture of brutal exploitation of migrant farm labourers in the Agro Pontino -- the Pontine Marshes, the plain around Latina -- and elsewhere in Italy.

The UN's special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery estimated in 2018 that more than 400,000 agricultural workers in Italy risk being exploited and almost 100,000 likely face "inhumane conditions".

Last month, a 27-year-old from Mali collapsed and died in the southeastern Apulia region after working a day in the fields in temperatures of up to 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

In the Agro Pontino, a major hub for greenhouse farming, floriculture and buffalo mozzarella production, Indians have been a presence since the mid-1980s.

They work on land drained from marshes in the 1930s, one of the biggest public works projects enacted under dictator Benito Mussolini.

Sociologist Marco Omizzolo, the rights activist who helped free Singh, says between 25,000 and 30,000 Indians live in the Agro Pontino, mostly Sikhs from the Punjab region.

Under an illegal but well-established system, they live under the thumb of "caporali", the gangmasters who recruit farm labourers on behalf of land owners.

Typically, they are offered contracts but then are paid for only a fraction of their work.

"You may work 28 days, but they'll mark only four on your pay slip, so at the end of the month you may get 200, 300 euros," Omizzolo told AFP.

The reality is far grimmer, as shown by a recent police investigation that offered fresh evidence of widespread opioid abuse among the Indian community. That operation led to the arrest of a doctor in the beach town of Sabaudia. He was accused of illegally prescribing more than 1,500 boxes of Depalgos, a powerful painkiller containing Oxycodone and given to cancer patients, to 222 Indian farm workers.—AFP ■

Thai beauty pageant investigated after coronavirus cluster

Photos on the event's Facebook page show finalists in gowns and sashes, not wearing masks and not socially distancing. **PHOTO: MISS GRAND THAILAND/AFP**

THAI beauty queens who took part in a pageant last month could face criminal charges for not wearing masks, police warned Sunday, after a cluster of 22 infections emerged from the event.

Thirteen contestants and nine others associated with the Miss Grand Samut Sakhon pageant, which was held at a Bangkok venue late June, have tested positive for the virus, officers said.

Thailand is grappling with a deadly third wave of infections with 9,539 new cases announced Saturday and 86 deaths. "There are likely to be many people involved in the pageant including contestants who violated rules and regulations," Piya Tawichai, deputy commissioner of the metropolitan police told reporters in Bangkok on Sunday. Organisers had got permission to hold the event, but had to comply with 20 specific rules, including mask wearing, police said. "People who attended the pageant and did not wear masks also (breached) the emergency decree and diseases control laws," Piya said.

Organisers and participants in the province-level pageant were being investigated and could face possible criminal charges, the force added.—AFP ■

Hokkaido region bans fans at Olympic football matches

Japan's northern Hokkaido region has decided to ban spectators at the Olympic football matches hosted in the area, expanding unprecedented steps to hold the Games mostly behind closed doors due to the pandemic.

Local governor Naomichi Suzuki announced the move late Friday night, reversing a decision a day earlier by Olympic organisers to ban spectators from events in the greater Tokyo region but allow some fans at competitions held elsewhere. "All events to be held in Sapporo will take place with no spectators," Suzuki said in a written statement, referring to the five matches the regional capital is hosting.

Sapporo Dome stadium will be hosting five Olympic football matches but without spectators. **PHOTO: JAWOC/AFP/FILE**

The announcement came only a day after Tokyo 2020 and government officials said they would ban fans from events in the capital and surrounding areas, which will be under a virus emergency throughout the Games.

The pandemic-postponed Games will be the first to take place largely behind closed doors.

A handful of competitions will take place outside the capital, including Sapporo, which will also host marathon and race walk events. Olympic and local officials have already asked the public not to come out to watch the races live.

Suzuki said he made the latest call about the football matches after assessing that anti-pandemic measures proposed by the organisers were insufficient and would not limit flows of people from Tokyo, which is seeing a rapidly increasing wave of infections.

Organisers had pushed to allow up to 50 per cent capacity audience or fewer than 10,000 people in Sapporo Dome.—AFP ■

Australia records first death in Sydney virus outbreak

Sydney is now in its third week of lockdown, but the number of new cases continues to grow among a population that is overwhelmingly unvaccinated. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AUSTRALIA announced its first coronavirus-related death in the current Sydney virus outbreak on Sunday, as the country's biggest city struggles to bring the Delta variant under control.

The woman in her 90s died Saturday, hours after testing positive for Covid-19, and was also the first death from a locally-acquired infection in Australia this year.

It came as authorities announced a record 77 new cases, and warned that numbers were expected to spike above 100 on Monday.

"Tomorrow and the few days afterwards will be worse, much worse than we've seen today," New South Wales state premier Gladys Berejiklian said.

Sydney is now in its third week of lockdown, but the number of new cases continues to grow among a population that is overwhelmingly unvaccinated.

Lockdown rules were tightened Friday and Berejiklian warned that stay-at-home orders were expected to remain in place unless there was a dramatic turnaround.

"Given where we're at and given the lockdown was supposed to be lifted on Friday, everybody can tell it's highly unlikely at this stage, given where the numbers are," she said.

Sydney has recorded 566 new infections since the beginning of the outbreak mid-June.

While that is low compared to most global cities, Australia has taken a zero-tolerance approach to widespread community transmission throughout the pandemic. Authorities have been quick to impose restrictions in an attempt to stamp out clusters early, and the country's borders remain largely shut with only about 10 percent of Australians fully vaccinated.—AFP ■

Cuba approves emergency use of home-grown Covid vaccine, Latin America's first

CUBA on Friday approved its home-grown Abdala vaccine for emergency use, the first Latin American coronavirus jab to reach this stage and a possible lifeline for a region trying to battle a killer pandemic with modest means.

The country's CECMED health regulator gave the go-ahead after Abdala's makers last month announced the vaccine candidate was more than 92 percent effective at preventing Covid-19 disease after three doses.

Cuba is working on five coronavirus vaccines, and in May started immunizing its population using two of them -- Abdala and Soberana 2 -- even before they received approval.

By this week, 6.8 million of Cuba's 11.2 million people have received at least one dose of either vaccine, while 1.6 million have the required three doses.

The country has not bought or sought vaccines from elsewhere, and aims to immunize its population before the end of the year.

In June, the state-run BioCubaFarma laboratory said Abdala "shows efficacy of 92.28 percent in its three-dose scheme."

A sticker of the Cuban coronavirus vaccine Abdala on the windshield of a car in Havana on July 9, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

The World Health Organization has set a 50-percent efficacy threshold for coronavirus vaccines to qualify for approved global roll-out, though individual countries can green-light jabs without the UN stamp for domestic use.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Netherlands, Catalonia reimpose virus rules as Delta strain wreaks global havoc

THE Spanish region of Catalonia was on Saturday set to reimpose virus restrictions in the face of rising coronavirus infections, as the highly contagious Delta strain forced nations worldwide to put the brakes on a long-awaited return to normalcy.

The highly transmissible Delta variant, first detected in India, is sweeping the globe as countries race to inoculate their populations to ward off fresh outbreaks that are increasingly affecting the unvaccinated young. After an "exponential" rise in cases in recent days, officials in the autonomous region in the northeast of Spain said they had no choice but to reimpose restrictions.

Nightclubs will be closed as of this weekend and a negative Covid-19 test or proof of vaccination will be needed to take part in outdoor activities involving more than 500 people. "The pandemic has not ended, the new variants are very contagious and we still have significant segments of the population that are not vaccinated," Patricia Plaja, a spokeswoman for the regional government told a news conference.—AFP ■

Argentina: Restrictions extended due to Delta variant

ARGENTINA is extending the pandemic-related restrictions until August 6. "The Delta variant has been detected in 86 countries and is 50 to 70 percent more contagious than the Alpha variant," said a government decree published on Friday. Since the beginning of the pandemic, around 4.6 million Covid infections have been registered in Argentina, a country with some 45 million inhabitants. The extension of the restrictions means that the border closings will be maintained for the time being. Also, no more than ten people are allowed to gather in public. On the other hand, shops and educational institutions are not affected by the restrictions.—AFP ■

Atami mudslide evacuees take comfort from hotel accommodations

MORE than 500 people continue to take shelter following a massive mudslide a week ago in central Japan, but not in school gymnasiums as is usually the case for evacuees from natural disasters in the country.

As the disaster occurred in Atami, a famed spa resort with plenty of hotels less than an hour from Tokyo by bullet train, local hotel operators have offered to accept those affected by the mudslide, which claimed at least nine lives with 20 people still missing.

New WelCity Yugawara took in about 90 people on July 3, the day of the disaster.

"I could rest in a clean tatami room," said Kenji Aikawa, a 51-year-old chef. "In addition, I could soak in a hot spring and relax."

A hotel with a hot spring is a world apart from a gymnasium, which is where evacuees usually end up, sleeping on the floor in large numbers with little or no privacy.

Hotel New Akao told the city government the morning following the disaster that it was ready to accommodate evacuees.

After receiving a formal request from city officials to accept a group of elderly people who needed to evacuate from a care facility near the disaster zone, the hotel spread futons over a large tatami room usually used for banquets.

It also provided rice balls accompanied by pork and vegetable soup to others affected by the disaster.

Photo taken July 5, 2021, shows a hotel in Atami, where mudslide evacuees are taking shelter. **PHOTO: KYODO**

"We thought about what we could do as a hotel," said Shinobu Kamei, a spokeswoman. "All of the hotel staff got fired up in preparations" for helping out, she said.— Kyodo

New June record for deforestation of Brazilian Amazon

Aerial view of burnt areas of the Amazon rainforest, near Porto Velho, Rondonia state, Brazil. **PHOTO: AFP**

DEFORESTATION of the Brazilian Amazon reached a record in June for the fourth consecutive month, according to official data released Saturday.

A total of 1,062 square kilometers of forest was destroyed -- an area almost the size of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

This was up from 1,043 km2 in the same month last year, said the INPE research institute, which uses satellite images to measure forest cover.

In total, 3,609 km2 of Amazon was lost in the first quarter of 2021, up 17 percent from the same period last year.

The figure was the highest for a month of June since the INPE started gathering data in 2015. Since coming to power in 2019, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has promoted the commercialization of the Amazon and described NGOs trying to protect the jungle as a "cancer."

However, he recently pledged to eliminate Brazil's illegal deforestation by 2030, some 10 years ahead of target, though environmentalists say he is insincere. Last month, vice president Hamilton Mourao announced a military operation against Amazonian deforestation. Two weeks ago, Brazilian Environment Minister Ricardo Salles resigned after the Supreme Court ordered an investigation into allegations he was involved in a timber trafficking scheme. He was replaced by Joaquim Alvaro Pereira Leite, allied to one of the country's largest agricultural lobby groups. The Brazilian Amazon also marked its worst June for forest fires since 2007 this year, with some 2,308 fires detected -- an increase of 2.3 percent from the same month last year.—AFP ■

Rwanda to deploy 1,000 troops to insurgency-hit Mozambique

RWANDA said on Sunday it will send a thousand troops to Mozambique to help the country battle extremist militants wreaking havoc in the north of the gas-rich nation.

Islamic State-linked jihadists have been terrorising the impoverished Cabo Delgado province since late 2017, stoking fears that the violence could spill over into neighbouring countries.

"The government of Rwanda, at the request of the government of Mozambique, will today start the deployment of a 1,000-person contingent of the Rwanda Defence Force and the Rwanda National Police to Cabo Delgado Province," Kigali said in a statement.

The forces will "support efforts to restore Mozambican state authority by conducting combat and security operations, as well as stabilisation and security-sector reform", it added.

Rwanda's deployment follows last month's decision by regional bloc the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to send forces to help quell the insurgency. Daily newsletterReceive essential international news every morning.

The Rwandan contingent will work with the Mozambique Armed Defence Forces and those from SADC "in designated sectors of responsibility", said the statement from Kigali. —AFP ■

Cannes falls for 'The Worst Person in the World'

THE Cannes film festival has fallen head over heels for a Norwegian film about a young woman trying to find herself and the unknown actress who plays her.

"A star is born," declared The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw.

Renate Reinsve "takes off like a rocket and deserves star status to rival Lily James or Alicia Vikander," he added, giving "The Worst Person in the World" a five-star review -- one of several it has already garnered.

In her first big screen lead, Reinsve plays a twenty-something trying and failing to define herself through her pinballing relationships with men until she finally strikes out on her own path. Variety predicted it would become a "touchstone" movie for millennials, Britain's Daily Telegraph called it "wondrous", while Xan Brooks of The Observer said it was "simply gorgeous".

Bradshaw -- one of several critics to admit wiping away a tear or two during the premiere -- credited the director Joachim Trier with inventing a whole new genre.

"Trier has taken on one of the most difficult genres imaginable, the romantic drama, and combined it with another very tricky style -- the coming-of-ager — to craft something gloriously sweet and beguiling," he said.

The French media were equally bewitched.

And everyone wondered why the world has never heard of 33-year-old Reinsve before.

Trier told AFP that "there is an awful lot of her in the character. She has had a big, big impact on this film.

"I wrote it specifically for her," he said knowing her gift for improvisation. "I could cut four of five different versions of any scene with her in this film.

"I always wondered why the hell is Norwegian film so messed up that she hasn't had a lead role yet?" Trier added.

Love in the time of #MeToo -

Reinsve told AFP that she had "been through the same" labyrinth of self-doubt and indecision as her character.

And she too would often think of herself as the worst person in the world as she saw others around fly.—AFP ■

Hugely praised: Norwegian actress Renate Reinsve. **PHOTO: AFP**

G20 finance ministers back 'historic' tax deal

G20 finance ministers on Saturday gave their backing to a historic deal to overhaul the way multinational companies are taxed, and urged hold-out countries to get on board.

Some 132 countries, including Malta, have already signed up to a framework for international tax reform, including a minimum corporate rate of 15 per cent, struck earlier this month.

But the endorsement by the 19 biggest economies plus the European Union will help ensure it becomes a reality following years of negotiations.

"We have achieved a historic agreement on a more stable and fairer international tax architecture," the ministers said in a final statement following two days of talks in Venice, hosted by G20 president Italy.

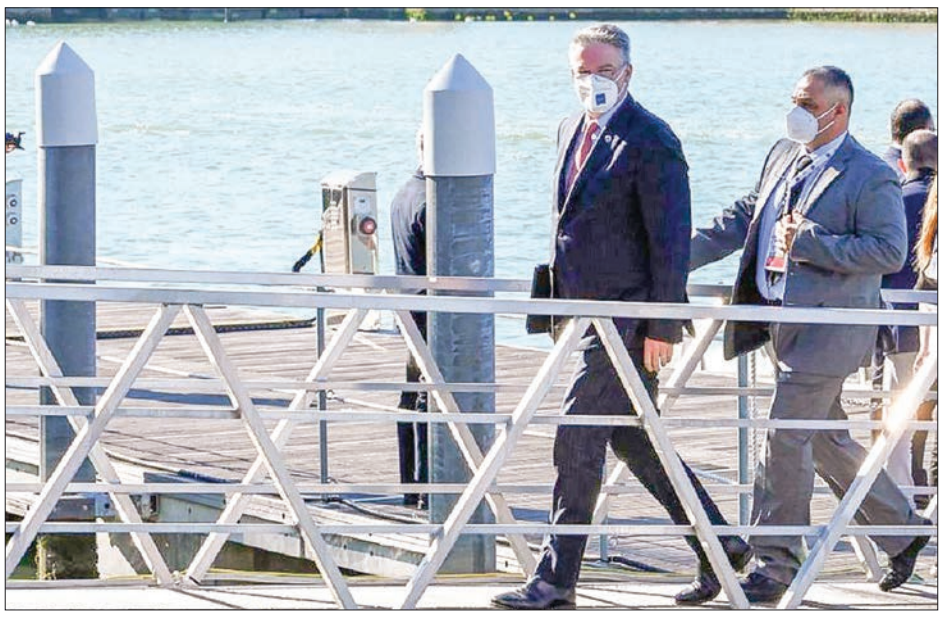
"We endorse the key components of the two pillars on the reallocation of profits of multinational enterprises and an effective global minimum tax."

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, among those attending the grouping's first face-to-face meeting since February 2020, said the reform must now be implemented.

"The world is ready to end the global race to the bottom on corporate taxation, and there's broad consensus about how to do it -- with a global minimum tax of at least 15 per cent," she said in a statement.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said it was a once-in-a-century opportunity to change the global tax system, adding: "There is no turning back."

The reforms aim to prevent countries competing to offer the lowest tax rates to attract investment, which has often resulted in multinationals paying derisory levels of tax. Final agreement is expected in the run-up to the G20 leaders' summit in Rome in October, with hopes the reforms can be in place by 2023.



Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Mathias Cormann of Australia (L) arrives for the G20 finance ministers and central bankers meeting in Venice on July 9, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pressure on hold-outs

Countries including the United States, France and Germany, along with aid agencies such as Oxfam, have been pressing for a higher rate. But some nations are opposed even to this, including Ireland, which lured Apple and Google to Dublin with low tax rates. Without the agreement of Ireland and other EU hold-outs Hungary and Estonia, the European Union cannot implement the deal.—AFP ■

High-tech startups breaking into disaster prevention field

Photo taken on March 30, 2021, in Tokyo shows Yosuke Maeda, president of Wota Corp., next to the Wota Box, a portable recycled water treatment device used in disasters. **PHOTO: KYODO**

STARTUP companies are acquiring a growing presence in the field of disaster prevention and reduction, leveraging their strength in technology and their ability to quickly develop goods and services responding to actual needs in afflicted areas. Wota Corp. released a portable recycled water treatment device in 2019. Called Wota Box, it is capable of making 98 percent of the water that is discharged after showers, handwashing and laundry reusable. With the quality of water managed by artificial intelligence technology, Wota Box makes drinkable water available when the supply of water is cut off. More than 20 local governments have introduced the device for use at times of disaster. When a series of earthquakes hit Kumamoto and Oita Prefectures in southwestern Japan in 2016, the startup, spun off from the University of Tokyo, volunteered to bring a prototype of Wota Box for use in providing showers at evacuation centers.

Encouraged by evacuees' favorable reaction, Wota set up similar shower facilities at shelters when western Japan was deluged by heavy rains in 2018. Nevertheless, a problem arose: the device needed someone well versed in how it worked to be on hand to operate it. Wota thus improved the AI system to make it friendlier to users. During a series of floods brought on in July 2020 by heavy rains in the prefectures of Kumamoto and Kagoshima, staff members at shelters were able to use Wota Box after receiving instructions from the company.—Kyodo ■

China's banking sector expected to see 3 pct profit growth in Q2, Q3: report

CHINESE commercial banks are likely to see their profits grow by around 3 percent in both the second and third quarters of 2021, forecast the Bank of China Research Institute in a recent report.

In the first half of the year, obvious signs of improvement were seen in the profitability of China's banking sector, while the asset quality was stable, said the report. Net profits of Chinese commercial banks in the first quarter rose 2.4 percent year on year to total 614.3 billion yuan (about 95.07 billion U.S. dollars), earlier data from the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission showed. The research institute also predicted that the sector will present a better growth trend in profits and strong risk offset ability in the third quarter.—Xinhua ■

LA restaurants boost pay to lure wary workers

BUSINESSES have reopened in Los Angeles and elsewhere in the United States, with "We're hiring" signs everywhere. But if life has a pre-Covid feel, a new challenge has arisen for restaurants: workers are not willing to return at any cost. "We are dealing with a staffing shortage that I have not experienced in my career," said Skyler Gamble, a manager at Acme Hospitality, which oversees several restaurants in Santa Barbara around two hours' drive north of Los Angeles.

"Our experience in the last six to nine months as business levels have rebounded, is that fewer and fewer candidates respond to job postings." The hospitality industry was slammed by coronavirus and pandemic-related restrictions, shedding millions of jobs.

But any restaurateurs counting on a return to normal have experienced a rude awakening.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TS SYMPHONY VOY.NO. (49W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TS SYMPHONY VOY.NO. (49W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** 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.

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Who will lead Haiti after president's killing?

THREE days after the assassination of Haitian leader Jovenel Moise, questions are mounting about how the power vacuum left by his sudden death will be filled, in a violence-wracked country with no working parliament and no workable succession process.

The following is a look at what could happen next in the impoverished Caribbean nation, which was already mired in a deep political and security crisis when the slaying -- its motive still unclear -- took place early Wednesday:

Haiti's Senate leader Joseph Lambert (C) -- seen here in 2018 -- could be the country's provisional president, but it is unclear if the resolution naming him is valid and can be enforced. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Three weakened branches of power

With Haiti's executive branch brutally shaken by the murder of the president, the two other branches -- the legislative and the judiciary -- face enormous pressures in a country crippled by a grave institutional crisis for more than a year.

Moise had organized no elections since arriving in power in 2017, leaving Haiti with only 10 elected lawmakers, just one-third of the Senate, since January 2020.

His administration had also not nominated any replacements for members of the Superior Council of the Judiciary when their three-year terms ended -- or after the council's president died last month of Covid-19.

"As concerns the constitution, there is no possibility of finding a solution, for Jovenel Moise and his team had made sure to dismantle all the institutions," said Marie Rosy Auguste Ducena, a lawyer with the National Network for the Defense of Human Rights.

"Whether you turn to the parliament or to the judiciary, there is nothing."—AFP ■

US city removes flashpoint statues including Confederate generals

THE southern US city of Charlottesville on Saturday took down controversial statues including two honoring Civil War pro-slavery generals which had become the focus of protests. The statues of generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson are among hundreds of Confederate monuments in the United States now widely considered symbols of racism, even if their supporters argue they are a historical legacy.

Workers in the Virginia city used a crane to remove the statues -- which depicted Lee and Jackson in uniform mounted on horses -- as a crowd watched and cheered. No violence was immediately reported.

"Taking down this statue is one small step closer to the goal of helping Charlottesville, Virginia, and America, grapple with the sin of being willing to destroy Black people for economic gain," Charlottesville Mayor Nikuyah Walker, who is African American, told reporters before the monuments' removal. Tensions over the fate of the Lee statue led to violence in August 2017, when a white nationalist drove his car into a crowd of demonstrators in Charlottesville, killing a woman. The protesters had gathered in opposition to white supremacists who staged a "Unite the Right" rally against plans to remove the statue of Lee. Then-president Donald Trump came under fire when he said afterward that there were "very fine people on both sides" of the protests.—AFP ■

Workers remove the statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee from a park in the southern US city of Charlottesville, where it had been the focal point of protests. **PHOTO: AFP**

Expat pill couriers: Lifeline in medicine-starved Lebanon

Lebanese pharmacies have staged a nationwide strike to protest the severe shortage of medicine. **PHOTO: AFP**

BARELY two hours after Lydia landed from Marseille in France, friends and relatives flocked to her apartment to collect drugs that have vanished from Lebanese pharmacies because of crippling shortages.

They started knocking on her door as early as 7:30 am -- before she even had a chance to unpack two suitcases and a backpack stuffed with medicine she had purchased from France for more than $1,000.

"I didn't even have a chance to sleep, but I understand because there's nothing worse than running out of medicine," especially if you have a chronic illness, the woman in her sixties said from her home in Baabdat, north of Beirut.

Lydia, like many other Lebanese expats, has become a courier for family and friends grappling with a raft of shortages due to what the World Bank has termed one of the world's worst financial crises since the 1850s.

As pharmacies run out of hundreds of medicines, including over-the-counter pain killers, the suitcase of a Lebanese expat, once teeming with gifts and duty-free purchases, now resembles a portable pharmacy.

"I brought everything: antibiotics, medicine for hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes, Parkinson's and cancer as well as many antidepressants," Lydia told AFP.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Abiy hails 'historic' Ethiopia election after landslide win

Ethiopia's ruling party won a landslide in a landmark parliamentary poll, results showed Saturday, ensuring a new five-year term for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed despite a brutal war in the northern region of Tigray.

Abiy hailed the outcome of what he described as a "historic" election -- the first time he faced voters since being appointed prime minister in 2018 following several years of anti-government protests.

The winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize had hoped to frame victory at the ballot box as a mandate for political and economic reforms and military operations. But the poll was held in the midst of the gruelling conflict in Tigray that has battered Abiy's global reputation and raised fears of widespread famine.—AFP ■

Widow of Haiti's slain leader speaks as political intrigue swirls

The widow of slain Haitian leader Jovenel Moise, who was critically wounded in the attack that claimed his life, on Saturday issued her first public remarks since the assault, calling on the nation not to "lose its way."

Martine Moise's comments came three days after she was airlifted to a Miami hospital for treatment of grave wounds suffered early Wednesday when gunmen stormed the family home in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince.

They also come as the impoverished Caribbean nation reels from the slaying of its leader, with no clear succession plan on the horizon.

"I am alive, thanks to God," Martine Moise said in an audio message in Creole that was posted on her official Twitter account, and verified as authentic to AFP by Haiti's minister of culture and communications, Pradel Henriquez. "In the blink of an eye, the mercenaries entered my home and riddled my husband with bullets ... without even giving him a chance to say a word," she said. —AFP ■

Leaders of China and North Korea vow to strengthen ties: KCNA

Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in the Chinese city of Dalian in May, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP/AFP/FILE**

CHINESE President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have vowed to bring their relations to a "new stage" as the two countries mark the 60th anniversary of a friendship pact, Pyongyang's state media reported Sunday.

China is North Korea's long-time ally and economic benefactor, their relationship forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War, when Mao Zedong sent millions of "volunteers" to fight US-led United Nations forces to a standstill.

The two countries signed a treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance in the event of an armed attack on July 11, 1961, with Mao describing the allies as close as "lips and teeth".

Relations have fluctuated over the years due to Pyongyang's growing nuclear ambitions, but with negotiations between North Korea and the US at a standstill, both sides have moved to strengthen their alliance.

"Despite the unprecedentedly complicated international situation in recent years the comradely trust and militant friendship between the DPRK and China get stronger day by day," Kim wrote in his message to Xi, referring to the North by its official name.

In the message carried by the KCNA news agency, Kim highlighted the role of the pact in "ensuring peace and stability in Asia and the rest of the world now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves". Xi wrote he planned to bring "greater happiness" to the two countries and their people "by steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage," KCNA said.—AFP ■

US alarmed as Saudi lawsuits threaten to expose secrets

TWO lawsuits pitting Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler against a former intelligence czar threaten to expose highly sensitive US government secrets, prompting Washington to consider a rare judicial intervention, documents show. The cases in US and Canadian courts centre on corruption allegations levelled by state-owned Saudi companies against Saad Aljabri, a former spymaster who long worked closely with American officials on covert counterterrorism operations.

That marks the latest twist in a long-running feud between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and Aljabri.

Aljabri's patron, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef (MBN), is currently in Saudi detention after being deposed as heir to the throne in a 2017 palace coup.

The legal drama sheds light on Shakespearean rivalries in the top echelons of the Saudi royal family, but Washington fears that a bitter courtroom showdown risks exposing sensitive information related to its covert operations. A rare US Justice Department filing in a Massachusetts court in April noted Aljabri's intention to "describe information concerning alleged national security activities". "The (US) government is considering whether and how to participate in this action, including if necessary and applicable, through an assertion of appropriate governmental privileges," the filing said, without elaborating.—AFP ■

That marks the latest twist in a long-running feud between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (left) and former spymaster Saad Aljabri. **PHOTOS: AFP, AFP/ALJABRI FAMILY**

Polls open in Moldova's snap election set to weaken Russia's influence

The Kremlin-backed ex-president Igor Dodon has urged supporters to be ready to protest to "defend" his bloc's victory. **PHOTO: AFP**

POLLING stations in Moldova opened Sunday morning with voters eager to choose the new parliament after the previous one was dissolved by new President Maia Sandu to shore up her position against pro-Russia forces. Sandu, who wants to bring Moldova into the European Union, in November defeated Kremlin-backed incumbent Igor Dodon on a pledge to fight corruption in one of Europe's poorest countries.

Wedged between Ukraine and EU member Romania, Moldova has long been divided over closer ties with Brussels or maintaining Soviet-era relations with Moscow. With lawmakers loyal to Dodon blocking Sandu's promises of reform, the former World Bank economist dissolved parliament in April and scheduled the snap vote. Polls opened shortly after 7 am (0400 GMT) and will close at 9 pm.

"We have a chance to get rid of thieves and choose a holistic and good government," Sandu said in a video address Thursday, speaking in Moldova's main language Romanian. In another speech in Russian -- the ex-Soviet country's second language -- she said: "The time for change is coming in Moldova."

The slogans resonate with many Moldovans, who in recent years have seen their country rocked by political crises, including a $1 billion bank fraud scheme equivalent to nearly 15 percent of the country's GDP.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bulgaria votes again in a bid to end political deadlock

Bulgarians went to the polls for a second time in three months on Sunday, hoping the political parties can this time agree on a stable government coalition.

After almost a decade in power, the conservative GERB party of three-time Prime Minister Boyko Borisov came out first in the last election in April with 26 percent of ballots.

But badly damaged after massive anti-corruption protests in summer 2020, GERB was isolated in a fragmented legislature and failed to find partners to govern.

Since then, the 62-year-old Borisov -- a former bodyguard with a black belt in karate -- has suffered a series of further blows from revelations by the interim cabinet about bad governance and allegations of corruption under his watch.

On top of that came unprecedented US sanctions against Bulgarian oligarchs who, according to Borisov's critics, were favoured during his time running the European Union's poorest and most graft-ridden member state.—AFP ■

Spanish PM Sanchez reshuffles government

SPANISH Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Saturday reshuffled his government for the first time since the left-wing coalition came to power in January 2020.

Sanchez said it represented "a generational renewal" because the mean age of the ministers was now 50 instead of 55.

And women now make up 63 per cent, over 54 per cent in the previous government.

"This will make our country once again the reference for women-men equality," Sanchez said. His minority coalition is composed of Socialists and the radical-left Podemos party.

Podemos kept their five portfolios in the 22-member cabinet. Foreign Affairs Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya was replaced by Jose Manuel Albares, who was Spain's ambassador to France. Socialist Carmen Calvo, who was number two in the government, has also left the cabinet.—AFP ■

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.

Popov to coach team Myanmar for U-23 Asian Qualifiers

VELIZAR Popov, a Bulgarian national, will handle the Myanmar U-23 men's national football team ahead of 2022 U-23 Asian Qualifiers to be held in October, said Myanmar Football Federation officials.

The Myanmar Football Federation appointed Popov as a head coach of the Myanmar U-22 team in early 2019 and the football federation extended his contract after winning a bronze medal at the 2019 SEA Games in the Philippines.

This is Popov's second time in charge of the tourney as the first time was in March 2019.

Myanmar U-23 men's national football team head coach Velizar Popov. **PHOTO: MFF**

During the 2019 tournament, Myanmar beat Macau and Timor-Leste, but finished second with a big loss to Japan and failed to qualify for the quarter-finals.

The 2022 U-23 Asian Cup Championship Qualifiers will be held from 27 to 31 October.

Myanmar team is placing in Group I together with Viet Nam, Hong Kong and China Taipei.

The 2022 U-23 Asian Cup Championship Qualifiers will be divided into 11 groups. A total of 15 teams will qualify for the next stage.

In 2019, Popov handled the Myanmar U-22 team in three international tournaments, winning eight bronze medals, despite the poor results of the ASEAN U-22 Championship and the Asian Cup U-23 Championship.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Mancini and Vialli – the 'goal twins' eyeing Wembley glory with Italy

WHEN Roberto Mancini leads out Italy for Sunday's Euro 2020 final at Wembley with his cherished friend Gianluca Vialli in close proximity, both men will inevitably think back to their most crushing disappointment as players on the same ground. The two were born just a few months apart and they were known as 'I gemelli del gol', the goal twins, during eight glorious years together at Sampdoria. Mancini and Vialli played together in a Samp side that won the Cup Winners' Cup and lifted the Coppa Italia trophy three times before their crowning glory, the Scudetto in 1991, the club's only Serie A title to this day.

It could have been even more glorious, but Sampdoria lost the 1992 European Cup final to Barcelona thanks to Ronald Koeman's extra-time free-kick at Wembley. After that Vialli — the top scorer in Serie A in that title-winning season — left for Juventus and their prolific partnership was broken up. Both men went on to finish their playing careers in England and have managed in the Premier League. — AFP ■

Messi ends trophy drought as Argentina beat Brazil to win Copa

Argentina's Lionel Messi kisses the trophy after winning the Copa America for the first time following a 1-0 win over Brazil. **PHOTO: AFP**

SUPERSTAR Lionel Messi won his first trophy with his national team as Angel Di Maria's goal gave Argentina a 1-0 win over hosts Brazil in the Copa America final on Saturday.

The victory at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium ended Argentina's 28-year wait for a major trophy, and also ended Brazil's unbeaten home record that stretched back more than 2,500 days.

Argentina had last tasted success at a major tournament in 1993 when the great Gabriel Batistuta's brace gave them a 2-1 win over Mexico in the Copa final in Ecuador.

It was the first time in six editions playing at home that Brazil had failed to lift the trophy.

And while 34-year-old Messi's odyssey has come to an end, Brazil's Neymar, five years his junior, is still without a major title at international level having missed the Selecao's win on home soil two years ago through injury.

Argentina edged a brutal and fractious affair thanks to Di Maria's goal on 22 minutes.

The 33-year-old winger ran onto Rodrigo De Paul's sumptuous through ball to lob Brazil goalkeeper Ederson with a first time finish.

Messi could have wrapped up the win two minutes from time but slipped when clean through with only Ederson to beat.—AFP