

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.

World biggest pagoda made of bamboo strips, Khemarahta Mayeik stupa to be constructed in Myeik

MISSIONARY Sayadaw of Kaba Lone Monastery led the construction works of the world biggest bamboo strip pagoda and Khemarahta Mayeik stupa in the compound of Takaba Lone Aye Mya Chan Thar pagoda located in Sanda Wutt Village in Myeik Township of Taninthayi Region.

The Takabar Lone Aye Mya Chan Thar pagoda is constructed on Shwe Nan Taung hill beside Myeik-Kywalku road section in Sanda Wutt Village by Sayadaw Baddhanta Khemasara of Kaba Lone monastery including well-wishers.

“We construct the pagoda in order to bring peace and prosperity to the whole world. The special chamber of Khemarahta Mayeik stupa where the bamboo strip pagoda will be built is 108 feet in height and there will be 108 combination stupas. The lower part of the bamboo strip pagoda is curved with the artworks of the Bagan era and the upper part is with the arts of the Pyu era,” said Dhamma Cariya Sayadaw Baddhanta Khemasara of Kaba Lone monastery.

There are Kaba Lone pago-



Missionary Sayadaw of Kaba Lone Monastery led the construction works of the world biggest bamboo strip pagoda and Khemarahta Mayeik stupa in the compound of Takaba Lone Aye Mya Chan Thar pagoda located in Sanda Wutt Village in Myeik Township of Taninthayi Region.

da with 18 feet in height, 27 feet standing pagoda and Yan Aung Myin Aung Theikdhi Kat Kyaw pagoda in Takabar Lone Aye Mya Chan Thar pagoda including religious buildings like Kaba Lone monastery, Kaba Lone Buddhist ordination hall, religious hall and refectory.

Moreover, the construction works of 108 feet Khemarahta Mayeik stupa, 9 feet 108 combination stupas, 36 feet Nagayon pagoda with nine Nagas and Arahan Theikdhi pagoda are under construction. Similarly, 24 buildings for one monk each and Kaba Aeka Yaza Dhamma Beikman with 200 feet in width and 100 feet in height are also being built.

“The 32 feet bamboo strip pagoda is weaved in Aungban Township. The Buddha statue is made in sitting posture. The weaving craftwork started in 2017 and is slated to complete by the end of 2021.

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World biggest pagoda made of bamboo strips ...

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The bamboo strip pagoda will show the Myanmar traditional artworks. We build such pagoda as we want the people to know about Myanmar artworks and there is no bamboo strip pagoda in Myeik,” Sayadaw said.

Sayadaw has managed the construction of the religious buildings and halls such as a standing pagoda, Kaba Lone Buddhist ordination hall, 70 feet lake, six Sasana flag poles, the world biggest bamboo strip pagoda, waterfalls and other Buddha statues in 2016 and 2017.

Moreover, Sayadaw kept

carrying out religious-related missions such as constructing two gongs on Naga, 108 combination stupas, Arahan Theikdhi pagoda and paving platforms on Kaba Lone pagoda in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Kaba Lone Sayadaw leads the construction works of the world biggest bamboo strip pagoda and Khemarahta Mayeik stupa with devotees and well-wishers. Therefore, people can donate and pay visits to Takaba Lone Aye Mya Chan Thar pagoda. — Khine Htoo (Myeik/IPRD)/GNLM



COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures

ALL people are urged to abide by the following ways of prevention against COVID-19 without fail in line with the motto: “COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures” not to violently infect COVID-19 as next wave and not to be infected of variant COVID-19 virus.

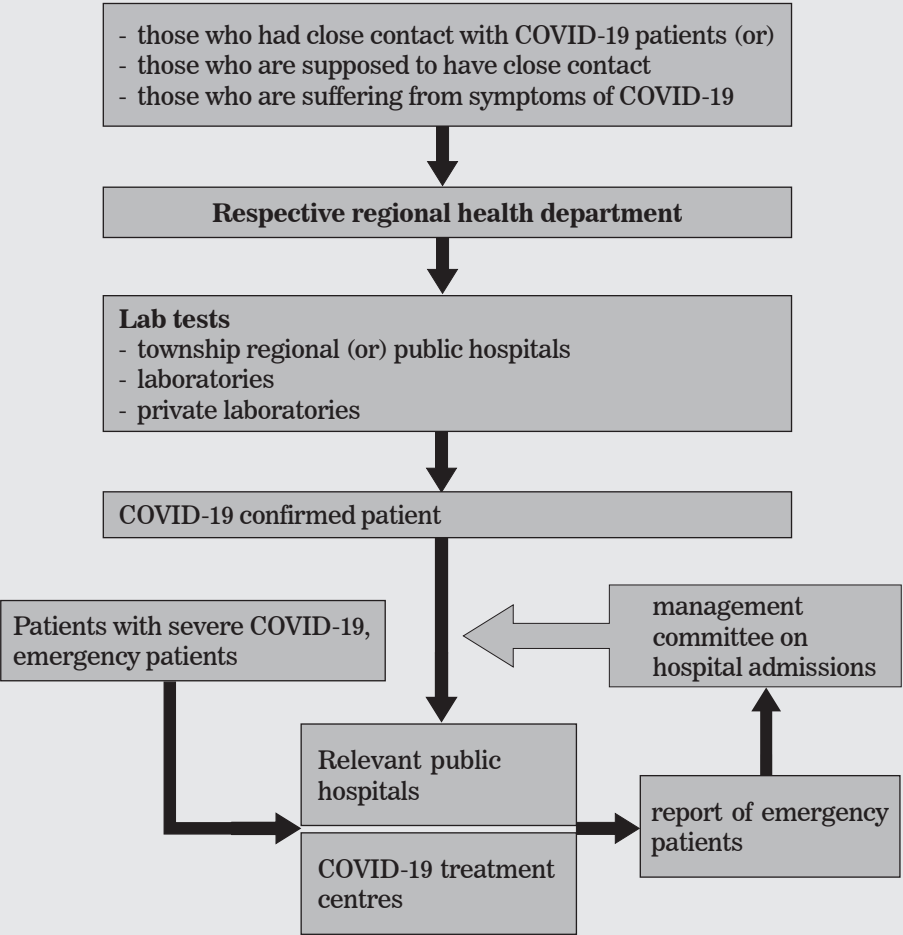
- (1) Systematically wear masks whenever go outside and also wear face shields whenever associate with many people.
- (2) Take adequate distance from each other as much as they can.
- (3) Avoid the crowds.
- (4) Take 20 seconds in systematically washing hands many times.
- (5) Avoid the visits to the closed chambers, air-conditioned rooms and the lesser ventilated rooms as much as possible.
- (6) Those who need to go outside houses should avoid acts close to and eat meals together with older persons above 60 years and those with diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases.
- (7) Fully cooperate in quarantine processes.
- (8) Don't buy something from the vendors who do not wear masks.
- (9) Exchange information to each other.
- (10) Cooperate in vaccination of COVID-19 pandemic. Continuously follow the preventive measures although they have received the vaccinations.
- (11) Strictly follow the work guidelines for preventing the COVID-19 pandemic issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.
- (12) If somebody suffers from symptoms of higher body temperature, coughing, suffocation, tiredness and sudden loss of smell and flavour, they need to immediately contact nearby health units to receive medical treatment.
- (13) If those who do not wear the masks when they go outside, and if those who conduct mass gatherings will face legal actions under the existing laws.

Health Knowledge Awareness Promoting Department
Ministry of Health and Sports

4,188 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 July, total figure rises to 212,545

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 212,545 after 4,188 new cases were reported on 15 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 153,609 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 4,346 after 165 died. —MNA

Healthcare system for secondary COVID-19 contacts, suspected COVID-19 patients



Upon the symptoms of COVID-19 patients, decision will be made for treatment at respective centres.

Healthcare system for secondary COVID-19 contacts, suspected COVID-19 patients

- 1. Those who have had close contact or have been in contact with COVID-19 confirmed patients and those with COVID-19 symptoms must first inform the respective township health departments or hospitals.
 - 2. Then, the swab tests will be conducted at township regional (or) public laboratories and private laboratories.
 - 3. The confirmed COVID-19 patients must report to their respective township/region/state health committees and they will be sent to the relevant public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres under the arrangement of the management committee on hospital admissions.
 - 4. However, patients with severe COVID-19 and emergency patients can directly go to the relevant public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres for medical treatment.
 - 5. The public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres must report the emergency cases to the management committee on hospital admissions.
- Ministry of Health and Sports

Only working in unison can benefit all

If you wish for the country to be developed and prosperous, all of the country's resources – financial, natural and human – have to be used together for the equal development of all races.

If the Bamar does what it wants, if the Kachin does what it wants, if the Shan, Kachin and Chin do not all cooperate, there will be no benefits for anyone. Only when you try working in unison will you know its benefits.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Bogyoke Aung San at the Panglong Dinner on 11 February 1947)



Public Notification
15 July 2021

- 1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is issuing orders for the prevention and control of COVID-19 disease exercising the authority under the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.
- 2. The orders, issued in 2021, including the announcements of a Stay-at-Home programme for the public, did not include any ban on the production and distribution of medicines and medical equipment.
- 3. The notice number (211/2021) announcing that the two days in between linked to the public holidays are designated as public holidays for the effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 infection issued by the State Administration Council did not mention the closure of the production and distribution of medicines and medical equipment. The announcement stated that the public must abide by the terms of reference (c) to open shops selling medicines and medical equipment and (e) to continue to provide healthcare services (government hospitals, private hospitals and clinics).
- 4. In addition, there is a growing demand for eggs in the market due to misinformation, and therefore, the nutritional value of the egg-substitute food when the price goes up is attached here.

Nutritional value of foods that can be eaten as an egg-substitute

No	Name of food	Quantity	Nutritional value (Calories)	Protein Content (gram)	Vitamin and Mineral Content
1	Egg	1	72	6.3	Vit D, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
2	Lentil	10 Ticals	200	16	Vit C, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
3	Chickpea	11 Ticals	231	16	Vit C, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
4	Muthira	8 Ticals	200	14	Vit C, Iron, Calcium
5	Peanuts	9 Ticals	828	38	Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
6	Bean curd	20 Ticals	200	24	Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
7	Banana	1	105	1.3	Vit C, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
8	Potato	14 Ticals	200	4.3	Vit C, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
9	Milk	30 Ticals	298	15	Vit D, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
10	Sweet potato	8 Ticals	114	2.1	Vit C, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
11	Chicken	17 Ticals	326	61	Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus
12	Variety of fish	9 Ticals	149	29	Vit D, Iron, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus

Ministry of Health and Sports

Discussions held for distribution of imported oxygen to hospitals, COVID-19 treatment centres

DISCUSSIONS on the distribution of imported oxygen for public hospitals and COVID-19 treatment centres in Yangon Region were held at 3 pm yesterday at the meeting hall of Yangon Region Administration Council.

Chairman U Hla Soe of the Yangon Region Administration Council first said that Tatmadaw, the Ministry of Health and Sports and Regional Administration Council should work together in order to provide timely distribution of oxygen. Donors' support is

being co-sponsored with humanitarian aid. The chairman urged officials to consult with the centres to create smoother solutions.

Then, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Aye Tun said that the current situation of COVID-19 infection is increasing day by day. Currently, COVID-19 patients are being treated at Yangon General Hospital, New Yangon General Hospital, North Okkalapa Hospital, Waibargi Hospital, Thingangyun Hospital, South Okkalapa Hospital and Hline-

thaya Hospitals.

The deputy minister discussed the need to give priority to the aforementioned hospitals, Insein Hospital; Yangon East Hospital Yangon Western Hospital and Inya Center as a matter of priority and to make it easier for the people to fill their oxygen tanks.

Next, the attendees discussed plans to provide oxygen tanks to the COVID-19 Medical Center and the public.

After that, the Chairman of the Region Administration Council made concluding remarks.



In the evening, two trucks carrying 20 metric tons of Liquid Oxygen imported from abroad arrived in Yangon, officials said. —San Kyaw Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

All must place emphasis on ecosystem restoration

INCLUDING the Covid-19 global pandemic. With the continued outbreak of the pandemic this year, all must place emphasis on ecosystem restoration as a priority to solve the problems of depleting natural resources, environmental pollution and climate change.

(Excerpt from the speech to the State Administration Council meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 6 June 2021)

Export, import to operate as usual during public holidays

THE State Administration Council has declared the public holidays from 17 to 25 July in order to conduct COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities effectively.

During these public holidays, the Customs Department will continue offering services for the importation of medicine and medical equipment for COVID-19 treatment via sea, air and land borders, according to the department.

Myanma Port Authority and jetties will also keep running their operations not to occur delays in international trade flows. The allocation of berth for vessels will be made every other

day starting 18 July. The Delivery Order (DO) will be granted on 20 and 22 July, and the people can contact the respective Shipping Agency Department, if necessary, said Myanma Port Authority.

The border trade camps will operate the import and export procedures as usual without suspending the operations during these public holidays. The Ministry of Commerce cooperates with the department concerned to facilitate the importation of COVID-19 preventive gears and other medical supplies in line with the SOP, according to the ministry. — Myo Min Thura/GNLM



YRTC suspends Yangon city taxis, freight vehicles registration services

THE Yangon Region Transport Committee (YRTC) has temporarily suspended the city taxis and freight vehicles registration services since 15 July due to a recent third wave of COVID-19 disease, according to the YRTC.

It had been only two weeks that the services were resumed as per the COVID-19 guidelines on 1 July, after being suspended since 16 March 2020.

The registration services of YRTC is reportedly suspended since the Department of Road Transport and The Department of Transport Planning have suspended public services, according to the Joint Secretary of the YRTC.

The resumption date will be announced in advance. However, it is difficult to say for sure



because of the temporary suspension of services, he added.

During the resumption of services for two weeks, the YRTC provided 825 city taxis registration services at No.297, Thanthumar Road, South Okkalapa Township and 1,943 freight vehicles registration services near the office of the Transport

Planning Department on Strand Road.

At present, the total number of city taxi registered vehicles in the Yangon Region is over 65,000, with more than 20,000 taxi licences from other regions and states. A total of around 50,000 freight vehicles are registered, according to YRTC. —Myint Mo/GNLM

Public Announcement

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

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.

More than 170,000 acres of
2020-2021 monsoon crops
cultivated in Yinmabin



A TOTAL of 170,506 acres of monsoon paddy and other monsoon crops will be planted in 2020-2021 in Yinmabin Township, Yinmabin District, Sagaing Region, according to the Township Agriculture Department.

It is reported that local farmers are carrying out cultivation activities such as ploughing and sowing seeds in their farm-

land to grow monsoon paddy in time.

The department stated that the previous year yielded 167,979 acres of monsoon crops, and a total of 100,550 acres have been cultivated this year. Of 170,506 acres of monsoon crops, 30,700 acres of monsoon paddy; 22667 acres of various peas; 59624 acres of oilseeds; 2,233 acres of

cotton; 473 acres of food crops; and 87,481 acres of other sorts of crops will be cultivated this year.

The Department of Agriculture in Yinmabin Township supervises agricultural techniques, pest control measures and awareness activities to improve crop yields of the monsoon crops. – Soe Moe (Yinmabin)/GNLM

Tatmadaw provides treatments
to over 270,000 outpatients

TATMADAW keeps providing healthcare services for patients at the military hospitals and temporary treatment hospitals in the townships of regions and states.

Tatmadaw medical teams, which comprise Tatmadaw doctors, specialists, medical assistants and nurses, have given medical treatments to the people to solve their difficulties in healthcare services. A total of 271,399 outpatients and 78,871 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date.

Senior medical experts, medics, medical assistants and

nurses have conducted 12,576 major operations and 9,043 minor operations. The senior doctors gave intensive treatments to the severe cases.

These hospitals managed for the birth of 15,426 babies to date. Of those, 6,413 cases are done in the caesarean section and 9,023 cases in ordinary delivery.

In addition to providing medical care to patients in need of hospitalization, Tatmadaw is making arrangements for the well-being of hospitalized patients and caregivers. — MNA

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.

India stock limit on pulses impacts Myanmar market

MYANMAR pulses market sees the price drop after India set the stock limit for processors, millers, importers, wholesalers and retailers in early July.

The prices of black gram (urad) showed a decrease of K14,500-29,500 within a week (8-15 July). Similarly, the price of pigeon pea is also down by K10,000, as per data of Ba Yint Naung Wholesale Centre.

In the first week of July, the Department of Consumer Affairs of India issued an order to impose stock holding limits on all pulses for a period up to 31 October 2021. This limit impacted Myanmar's pulses market, driving the price down. Furthermore, the commodity depots are closed amid the COVID-19 surge.

The black bean touched a high of K1,144,500-1,284,500 per tonne on 8 July, whereas the price dipped to K1,115,000-1,270,000 per tonne. Also, the price of pigeon peas declined from K1,130,000 to K1,120,000 per tonne within



Myanmar can export 250,000 tonnes of black gram (urad) and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas under the G-to-G (government to government) pact during the April-March period between the 2021-2022 financial year and the 2025-2026FY.

a week.

Black gram fetched only K880,000 per tonne in April-end, Bayintnaung Wholesale Market data showed.

Myanmar can export 250,000 tonnes of black gram (urad) and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas under the G-to-G (government to government) pact during the

April-March period between the 2021-2022 financial year and the 2025-2026FY. The bilateral negotiations for the G-to-G pact started in 2016, and the two countries signed an MoU on 18 June 2021.

Additionally, this G-to-G pact will not relate to India's yearly quota on bean import. Therefore, Myanmar exporters can ship

them under the yearly quota as well.

In May 2021, India's Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare approved not only black gram but also other pulses being imported from Myanmar that have the bill of lading up to October-end 2021, with relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment.

Following the policy change of India's pulses import, the prices of black gram and pigeon peas have risen in the domestic market in late June and the first week of July.

India experienced some damages to their farms due to erratic weather, resulting in a yield drop. Consequently, India's ministry gave the green light to the relaxations of conditions for imports of pulses from Myanmar. Nonetheless, India's stock limit on pulses affects the Myanmar bean market somehow at present.

The number of bean acreage

is expected to increase in the coming season following the relaxations, said a market observer.

India has set an import quota on beans, including black gram and pigeon peas, since 2017. Myanmar earlier had to export black bean and pigeon peas under the quota system and limit period. The local growers were battered by quota and price manipulation in the previous years.

Myanmar exported over 431,264 tonnes of the black gram to foreign countries as of 18 June, generating an income of US\$335.67 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar shipped over 1.6 million tonnes of different varieties of pulses, especially mung beans, with an estimated worth of US\$1 billion, to other countries in the FY2018-2019. During the last FY2019-2020 ended 30 September, the country delivered 1.6 million tonnes with an estimated value of \$1.195 billion. — MM/GNLM

Imports down by \$3.6 bln as of 2 July, MoC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 October and 2 July in the current financial year 2020-2021 stood at US\$11.4 billion, a sharp drop of \$3.6 billion from \$15 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses groups declined in the current FY. The drop in foreign direct investment this year negatively affected the trade. Moreover, the increase in shipping rate and transportation difficulties pose hurdles for exporters and importers.

Over the past nine months of the current FY, capital goods such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and aeroplane parts, were brought into the country. Their import value was estimated at \$3.88 billion. The figure was over \$1.84 billion lower than those values registered in the same period of the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$2.4 billion, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight decrease of \$148 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make up the second-largest share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year, imports of raw materials plunged to \$3.89 billion from \$5 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth over \$1.16 billion were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector, showing a decrease of \$517.6 million compared with the last financial year.

At present, the CMP garment sector which contributes to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector is struggling due to the cancellation of the order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western countries amid the COVID-19. Therefore, import values of raw materials by CMP businesses have been dropping.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data of the Ministry of Commerce. — KH/GNLM

CBM sells \$18 million so far in July

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US\$18 million in the half of the month of July at an auction market rate.

The CBM reportedly sold \$3 million each on 5, 6, 7 and 14 July and \$6 million on 8 July at an auction rate within July. The CBM's move is aimed at governing the market volatility.

The bullish hard currency gained in the local forex market, reaching the peak of K1,730 on 12 May from K1,330 in January-end. In a bid to control the sharp daily gains of the US dollar, the CBM reportedly sold about 6.8 million dollars on 3 February 2021, 6 million dollars each on 22 and 27 April, \$24 million in May and \$12 million in June in the auction market. Consequently, the exchange rate stands at K1,650 at present.

The CBM sold 12 million dollars at an auction market in June as well. Consequently, Kyat value against a US dollar slightly increases in a week, with the exchange rate of K1,660 on 7 July and 1,646 on 15 July.

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The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) building in Yangon.

\$24 million in May. Consequently, the exchange rate slightly fell to K1,585 in May. Nevertheless, it touches a high of K1,646 for now.

The CBM trades the foreign currency with the authorized private banks under the rules and regulations of the FX auction market.

The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May, and it moved to the maximum of

K1,595-1,620 last month.

In 2020, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August, K1,310-1,355 in September, K1,282-1,315 in October, K1,303-1,330 in November and K1,324-1,403 in December.

In 2019, the rates are pegged at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit an all-time high of K1,650 in the local currency market. — NN/GNLM

Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro in hospital, may need surgery

BRAZIL'S President Jair Bolsonaro is suffering from an "intestinal obstruction", the government said on Wednesday, after the far-right leader was admitted to hospital due to persistent hiccups.

The 66-year-old far-right leader had been complaining publicly since last week about suffering from the hiccups following a July 3 surgery on a dental implant.

Bolsonaro was first taken to a military hospital in the capital Brasilia but was then flown in a Brazilian Air Force plane to

Sao Paulo where he was admitted to the Vila Nova Star private hospital.

There he underwent clinical, laboratory and imaging tests and was being kept in the hospital for the time being, doctors said.

"He is in good spirits and feels well," the presidency had said earlier in the day.

Bolsonaro was examined in Brasilia by Antonio Macedo, who has operated on the president several times since he was stabbed in the abdomen in 2018



An ambulance transporting Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro arrives at the Vila Nova Star Hospital, in Sao Paulo. **PHOTO: AFP**

while on the campaign trail.

The hospital said he would "initially" be given a "conservative clinical treatment."

If it is confirmed he needs an operation, it would be the president's seventh surgery since he was stabbed by a former member of the Socialist and Freedom Party (PSOL), a group that broke away from the Workers' Party (PT) of former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is eyeing a run against Bolsonaro next year. — AFP ■

Covid hits Britain's flagship after Cyprus port call



The Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, is managing a Covid outbreak after more than 100 crew were infected during a port call in Cyprus earlier this month, officials said Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, is managing a Covid outbreak after more than 100 crew were infected during a port call in Cyprus earlier this month, officials said Wednesday.

The first cases were identified on or around July 4 when the state-of-the-art aircraft carrier was docked at Limassol port on the island's south coast.

Britain's largest warship docked in Limassol from June 30 until July 5, spearheading the largest UK peacetime deployment in a generation, Carrier Strike Group 21.

"As part of routine testing, a small number of crew from the Carrier Strike Group have tested positive for Covid-19," a Royal Navy spokesperson said. "All personnel deployed

have received both doses of the Covid vaccine, and there are a number of mitigation measures onboard, including masks, social distancing, and a track and trace system.

"The Carrier Strike Group will continue to deliver their operational tasks, and there are no effects on the deployment."

According to UK newspaper The Sun, almost half the warships in the carrier strike group have been hit by positive cases.

It said they include at least 100 crew of the HMS Queen Elizabeth after sailors "were given a run ashore in Limassol".

During her five-day call at Limassol port, HMS Queen Elizabeth welcomed on board

dignitaries including Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades.

UK defence minister Ben Wallace said the outbreak had prompted no rethink of the carrier group's planned 40-country tour.

There are 3,700 personnel across the entire carrier group, including the 1,600 on the HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Wallace told a press briefing on Tuesday: "Our crew are double vaccinated, so you'll be glad to know there is no serious effects on any of the crew, and we will manage it."

HMS Queen Elizabeth is leading nine United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group (UKCSG) ships on a 26,000-mile deployment across the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and East Asia. — AFP ■

Athlete tests positive as Tokyo Olympics opening nears

AN athlete in Japan and five Olympic workers, mostly contractors, have tested positive for coronavirus, Tokyo 2020 organizers said Thursday, just over a week before the opening ceremony.

The news came as eight staff at a Japanese hotel hosting Brazil's Olympic judo team tested positive, and a staff member from Russia's rugby sevens team was hospitalized after a positive test.

The cases underscore the challenges ahead for organizers, although they note that only a handful of cases have been detected so far among more than 8,000 people who have entered Japan since July 1.

Tokyo 2020 said six people, including an athlete, several contractors and a Games staffer had tested positive for the virus on July 13 and 14.

They gave no further details on the identity of the six people.

Elsewhere, officials said eight staff at a Japanese hotel hosting Brazil's Olympic judo team had tested positive for coronavirus.

The hotel cluster was found in Hamamatsu city, west of Tokyo, during virus screenings carried out before around 30 members of Brazil's judo delegation arrived on Saturday.

None of the infected staff came into contact with the athletes, local health and sports officials said.

A family member of one of the infected hotel workers also tested positive, Hamamatsu officials added.

Separately, a staff member with the Russian rugby sevens team was hospitalized after testing positive, an official in their host town Munakata in western Japan told AFP.

The team of 16 athletes and 10 staff members landed at a Tokyo airport on July 10, and has had no close contact with local officials or residents since then, he said.

The rest of the team is now quarantined in their accommodation, but if they test negative on Thursday, they will be able to resume training as early as Friday, the official added. — AFP ■



Tokyo 2020 said six people, including an athlete, several contractors and a Games staffer had tested positive for the virus on July 13 and 14. **PHOTO: AFP**

Expand greening area with the establishment of village-owned firewood plantations

ALTHOUGH Myanmar was covered with more than 50 per cent of forests in the past, today's country is striving for the prevention of deforestation and greening of barren areas.

Myanmar people, most of those from the rural area, have been using a large volume of firewood and charcoal as fuel in cooking, making charcoal and baking pieces of limestone since the time of their forefathers. The statistics of the Forest Department proves the people use 76.41 per cent of the total energy consumption of the country. Hence, the Forest Department adopted a 10-year plan to grow the rural firewood plantations starting from 2017-18 financial year.

Gradual expansion of forests' greening area will narrow the barren ones of the nation to improve the socio-economic development of the entire people.

The plan will last for 10 years from 2017-18 financial year to 2026-27 one with the target of growing 104,563 acres of firewood plantations across the nation. Up to June in the 2020-21 financial year, a total of 21,436 acres of land has been placed under firewood plantations.

Thanks to the 10-year plan, local people from all parts of the country can avoid cutting trees from forests to be used as firewood for their families. They have the opportunity to set up village-owned firewood plantations as part of efforts to prevent forest depletion.

As such, relevant region and state administration councils are responsible for supervising the local people to grow the village-owned firewood plantations as a national duty.

Currently, the supply of electricity is not sufficient for most rural people. Hence, firewood and charcoal are still useful for people in their daily life.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation adopted the six-point policies: to protect land, water, wildlife and natural plants, to ensure the sustainability of forest resources, to fulfil the basic needs of the people, to improve the capability to secure business profits from forest resources, to organize the people to cooperate in forest management and conservation of biodiversity, and to broaden the scope of the people on the important role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of the State.

While reducing the use of trees from forests as firewood, the establishment of village-owned firewood plantations will contribute a great deal to reforestation as greening the motherland. Gradual expansion of forests' greening area will narrow the barren ones of the nation to improve the socio-economic development of the entire people.



'Early stages' of COVID third wave, amid Delta surge: WHO chief

The variant's spread, along with increased social mobility and the inconsistent use of proven public health measures, is driving an increase in both case numbers and deaths, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday.

TEDROS Adhanom Ghebreyesus described the recent data in an address to the Emergency Committee on COVID-19, established under the International Health Regulations (IHR), a treaty that guides global response to public health risks.

Recalling the sustained decline in COVID-19 cases and deaths that was being driven, in recent months, by increasing vaccination rates in Europe and North America, he sounded alarms over the fresh reversal of that positive trend.

"Unfortunately...we are now in the early stages of a third wave", he said.

Delta variant dominates

Last week marked the fourth consecutive week of rising cases of COVID-19 globally, with increases recorded in all but one of WHO's six regions. Deaths are also rising again, after 10 weeks of steady decline.

Meanwhile, said Tedros, the virus is continuing to evolve, resulting in more transmissible variants.

"The Delta variant is now



Food delivery worker rides in the central business district of Sydney on 27 June, 2021 as Australia's largest city entered a two-week lockdown to contain an outbreak of the highly contagious Delta variant. PHOTO: AFP

in more than 111 countries and we expect it to soon be the dominant COVID-19 strain circulating worldwide, if it isn't already," he said.

The spread of the Delta variant – one of the main drivers of the current increase in transmission – is also being fuelled by increased social mobility and the inconsistent use of proven public health and social measures.

'Shocking disparity'

Tedros drew the Committee's attention to the ongoing "shocking disparity" in the global distribution of vaccines, as well as unequal access to life-saving tools.

He reiterated his concern that inequity has created a two-track pandemic – namely, one track for countries with the greatest access to vaccines, who are

lifting restrictions and reopening their societies, and a second track for those without vaccine access who are left "at the mercy of the virus". Many countries still have not received any vaccines, and most have not received enough.

In that context, Tedros reiterated WHO's appeal for a massive push to vaccinate at least 10 percent of the population of every country by September, at least 40

per cent by the end of 2021, and at least 70 per cent by mid-2022.

Consistent, risk-based approaches

Emphasizing that vaccines alone will not stop the pandemic, he called upon countries to persist with a "tailored and consistent approach." That means using the full array of available public health and social measures and taking a comprehensive risk management approach to mass gatherings.

"So many countries around the world have shown that this virus can be stopped and contained with these measures," he stressed. To provide support, WHO recently issued updated guidance to facilitate a risk-based approach for opening.

The Agency is also reviewing options to digitalize the International Certificate for Vaccination and Prophylaxis, to support a harmonized approach for recording vaccination status.

What is the Delta variant?

The Delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2, can spread more eas-

ily, according to the CDC. The strain has mutations on the spike protein that make it easier for it to infect human cells. That means people may be more contagious if they contract the virus and more easily spread it to others. It is now the dominant strain in the U.S.

In fact, researchers have said that the Delta variant is about 50% more contagious than the Alpha variant, which was first identified in the U.K., according to The Washington Post. Alpha, also known as B.1.1.7, was already 50% more contagious than the original coronavirus first identified in China in 2019.

Public health experts estimate that the average person who gets infected with Delta spreads it to three or four other people, as compared with one or two other people through the original coronavirus strain, according to Yale Medicine. The Delta variant may also be able to escape protection from vaccines and some COVID-19 treatments, though studies are still ongoing.

SOURCE: UN/WEBMD



Indonesia New COVID 'Epicentre Of Asia'

"Indonesia could become the epicentre of the pandemic, but it's already the epicentre of Asia," said Dicky Budiman, an Indonesian epidemiologist at Australia's Griffith University.

VIRUS-WRACKED Indonesia posted record daily infections topping 54,000 on Wednesday as the highly infectious Delta variant rips across the archipelago, catapulting it ahead of India as Asia's COVID-19 epicentre.

The Southeast Asian nation has been battered by a virus explosion that overwhelmed hospitals, leaving scores to die at home, while desperate relatives hunt for oxygen tanks to treat the sick.

On Wednesday, Indonesia's health ministry posted its highest-ever 54,517 new cases and 991 deaths in 24 hours – recent daily mortality rates are as high as 10 times the numbers in early June.

But the official data is widely believed to be a severe undercount due

to low testing rates and poor contact tracing. "Indonesia could become the epicentre of the pandemic, but it's already the epicentre of Asia," said Dicky Budiman, an Indonesian epidemiologist at Australia's Griffith University.

"If you look at the population difference between India and Indonesia... then the pandemic is far more serious than in India." Indonesia's real number of daily cases could be topping 100,000 a day and threatened to double by the end of the month with as many as 2,000 daily virus deaths, Budiman warned.

India, which was battered by an eye-watering COVID wave earlier this year, was now reporting an average of about 44,000 daily cases and 1,028 deaths.

But its population is almost five

times that of the nearly 270 million people in Indonesia, which has about 141 cases per million people compared with around 29 cases per million in India, according to the website ourworldindata.org.

On a cumulative basis, India has tallied more than 30 million infections and over 400,000 deaths since the pandemic started, well ahead of Indonesia's official 2.6 million cases and 69,210 deaths.

Eid Fears

Last week, the world's fourth most populous nation rolled out tighter curbs – including shutting down shopping malls, restaurants and offices – in its hard-hit capital Jakarta, across densely populated Java and on holiday island Bali.

SOURCE: AFP



This aerial picture shows streets partly deserted in Jakarta on July 3, 2021, as Indonesia imposed a partial lockdown in the capital due to the COVID-19 coronavirus Delta variant. PHOTO: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Thursday 15 July 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 16 July, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Magway, Ayeyawady Regions and Chin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon Regions and Northern Shan, Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Taninthayi Region and Kachin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30- 35)m.p h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7 -9)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon- Taninthayi coasts and about (5- 7) feet off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon over the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 July, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Airlines to put on flights for Japanese from virus-hit Indonesia

Japanese airlines plan to put on special flights to allow Japanese residents in Indonesia to return home amid a surge of infections of the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta said Wednesday night.

The embassy has started contacting residents to see if they want to take the Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways flight to return to Japan, it said.

An increasing number of Japanese expatriates and family members in Indonesia are returning home amid the surge and a shortage of hospital beds in Indonesia. But many have found it difficult to reserve flights to Japan.

About 50 expatriates working for Japanese major general contractor Shimizu Corp. and their family members were repatriated Wednesday from Indonesia on a chartered plane.—Kyodo News ■

Japan, U.S., Australia, Britain begin joint exercise

SEVEN countries including the United States, Japan, Australia and Britain began a joint exercise in eastern Australia with an opening ceremony on Wednesday.

The “Talisman Saber” exercise, which also involves Canada, New Zealand and South Korea, will continue until July 31, taking place across the state of Queensland and off the east coast of Australia.

The biennial training exercise aims to strengthen the Australia-U.S. alliance, with a further goal of developing broader interoperability with their allies in the region.

A total of more than 17,000 defence personnel mainly from the United States and Australia are participating in the drill, with Australia-based personnel from India, Indonesia, France and Germany involved as observers. The Japanese ground force's remote-island defence unit Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade will use Australian ships in a joint amphibious training exercise with the U.S. Marine Corps, the Australian Army and Britain's Royal Marines.—AFP ■

China, India agree to work to maintain peace in disputed border areas

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi has agreed with his Indian counterpart that the two Asian countries should make joint efforts to maintain peace and stability in their contested border areas, his ministry said Thursday.

Their agreement came as relations between the two nations have been strained, particularly since their troops clashed in a disputed Himalayan border area in June 2020 and Indian soldiers were killed by Chinese troops for the first time in about

45 years. During his talks with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Wednesday in Tajikistan, Wang said the responsibility for the border issues last year did not lie with China, according to the ministry. Wang, however, was quoted by the ministry as telling Jaishankar that China has been willing to negotiate with India to seek a solution acceptable to both countries.

Earlier this year, China and India reached an agreement on disengagement in part of their



An Indian general greets a Chinese soldier in the “Hand-in-Hand” Sino-Indian joint exercise in Belgaum, southwest India, in December 2008. PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE

border areas. Wang said the situation on the Sino-Indian border has generally eased, but bilateral relations have remained at a standstill, which is not in the in-

terests of both sides. Jaishankar told Wang that India hopes the border issues will be resolved through dialogue and consultation.—Kyodo News ■

A greener Games? Tokyo 2020's environmental impact

OLYMPICS organizers have pledged to prioritize sustainability at the Tokyo Games in an attempt to demonstrate how countries such as Japan — a top carbon emitter — can work towards a greener future. Their initiatives include furnishing the Olympic Village with recyclable cardboard beds, using electricity from renewable sources and minimising waste at competitions.

But like all big global events, Tokyo 2020 will leave an inevitable imprint on the planet. Here are some key points to know about its environmental impact:

2.73 million tonnes of CO2-

The most recent official estimate of the Tokyo Games' carbon footprint — more than some coun-



Like all big global events, Tokyo 2020 will leave an inevitable imprint on the planet. PHOTO: AFP

tries such as Montenegro emit in a year. It includes 1.5 million tonnes of CO2 generated through the construction or renovation of venues and other infrastructure.

But it does not account for

a ban on overseas spectators to limit coronavirus infection risks.

When their air travel and accommodation emissions are excluded, the total footprint should come down by around 340,000

tonnes of CO2, organizers say.

They will publish a final evaluation after the Games are over.

Carbon offsetting

The figure is already lower than that of the Rio and London Olympics, and Paris has set an even more ambitious target of 1.5 million tonnes as host of the 2024 Games. Tokyo 2020 also says it plans to “offset” its footprint by purchasing carbon credits, which finance local projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to around 4.38 million tonnes of CO2. But such programmes are controversial. Activists accuse big business of paying for a quick fix rather than seeking to overhaul their operations, and some offset projects have failed to deliver.—AFP ■

Foe to friend: Fishermen join fight to save endangered Pakistan dolphin



Local legend has it that the first Indus River dolphin was once a woman, transformed by a curse from a holy man angry that she forgot to feed him one day. PHOTO: AFP

FRESHWATER dolphins are flourishing in a stretch of Paki-

stan's main river after a helping hand from fishermen mobilized

to defend a rare species driven to near-extinction.

Identifiable by their saw-like beaks, Indus River dolphins once swam from the Himalayas to the Arabian sea, but now mostly cluster in a 180-kilometre (110-mile) length of the waterway in southern Sindh province.

A glimpse of a dolphin cutting through muddy water to gasp for air is a regular sight along the mighty river, but most villagers nearby were unaware their neighbours were on the brink of extinction.

“We had to explain that it was a unique species only found

in the Indus and nowhere else,” Abdul Jabbar, who gave up fishing for a job on the dolphin rescue team, told AFP on the banks of Dadu Canal, which he patrols by motorbike.

Decades of uncontrolled fishing and habitat loss caused by pollution and man-made dams saw the dolphin population plummet to around 1,200 at the turn of the century.

They are classed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which says their numbers have fallen by more than 50 percent since the 1940s.—AFP ■

Developing nations demand climate funding before COP26

NATIONS most vulnerable to the impacts of global warming on Thursday called for rich countries to live up to their promise to finance the fight against climate change, ahead of a crunch UN summit.

Highlighting a “worrying lack of urgency” from recent G7 and G20 summits, dozens of countries said the COP26 talks in Glasgow later this year needed to deliver help to communities already impacted by climate-driven extreme weather.

With growing warnings from scientists and climate change gaining international attention,

the pressure on delegates to achieve meaningful results is huge.

The Glasgow to-do list is similarly daunting.

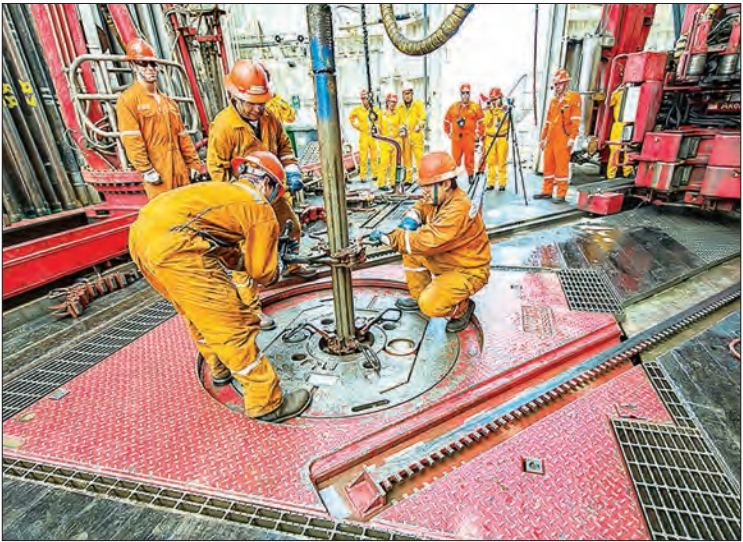
As well as finalizing the rule-book implementing the 2015 Paris agreement, nations are also expected to make good on a 2009 promise to give climate-vulnerable nations \$100 billion annually to draw down their emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

“At least \$100bn per year was promised by 2020 with increased annual sums from 2025,” the countries wrote in their five-point plan for COP26.

These include Kenya, Ethiopia, Gabon, Somalia, the Philippines, Bhutan, Tanzania and Bolivia.

“However, this target has been missed and needs fixing urgently if developing countries can trust richer nations at COP26 to keep to what they negotiate.”

They also called for at least 50 percent of funding to be allocated to future climate adaptation, as well as separate allocation for the “loss and damage” already inflicted upon poorer nations by the historical emissions of rich economies.—AFP ■



The plan called for richer nations to do their “fair share” of emissions cuts. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russia races to build giant ice-breakers for Arctic dominance



Russia's nuclear-powered icebreaker Sibir is one of four aimed at ensuring Moscow's dominance over the melting Arctic. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

At Saint Petersburg's historic Baltic Shipyard, cranes hover over the shining Neva River as hundreds of workers build four nuclear-powered ice-breakers.

Fronted by a Russian flag and named after the country's northern regions, the giant vessels are meant to ensure Moscow's dominance over the melting Arctic.

Russia has scrambled to become a leading power in the region, where receding ice cover has allowed Moscow to develop a new shipping route.

President Vladimir Putin has made the warming region a priority, heavily investing in the so-called Northern Sea Route that allows ships to reach Asian ports up to 15 days faster than via the traditional Suez Canal route.

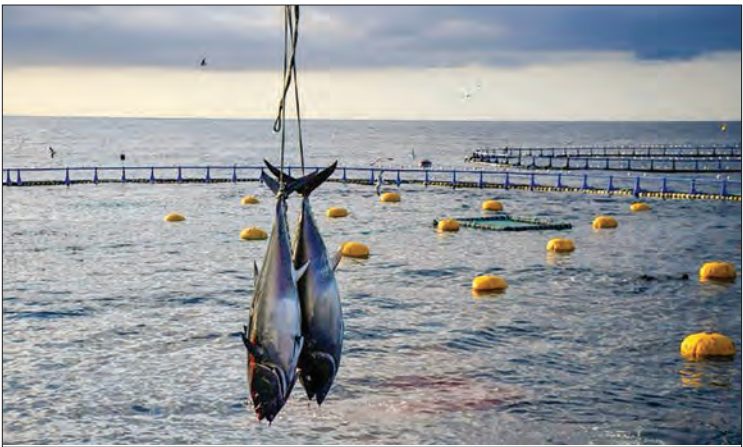
Transit in the eastern Arctic usually ends in November but Moscow is hoping the ice-breakers will help it make use of the route -- becoming more accessible due to climate change -- year-round.—AFP ■

WTO convenes trade ministers to net fisheries deal

THE World Trade Organization will host a ministerial meeting this week aimed at breathing life into drawn-out negotiations towards banning subsidies that favour overfishing, but numerous sticking points remain.

Before Thursday's meeting, WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala voiced hope that trade ministers from the organisation's 164 member states could finally move towards clinching a “historic” agreement. “The health of our oceans and our planet is at stake,” she warned in a video address last week. “We simply cannot afford to miss this opportunity.”

The talks aim to ban subsidies that contribute to illegal and



There appears to be consensus around excluding fish-farming and continental fishing from WTO subsidy constraints. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

unregulated fishing, as well as to overfishing, threatening the industry's sustainability. While fishing should in theory be held in check by the environment, with low fish stocks pushing up costs, subsidies can keep unprofitable fleets at sea.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sci-tech innovation promotes China's cultivated land protection

CHINA has made achievements in boosting the protection and utilization of cultivated land through innovations in science and technology during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) period, said the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

The CAAS has made efforts in promoting basic theoretical innovation, key technology research and major product research and development during the period.

By studying and promoting suitable planting techniques and norms, CAAS researchers have been able to increase the organic content of the black soil in northeast China by 12 to 16 per cent, where the grain output currently accounts for one-quarter of the country.

Besides, Chinese researchers made improvements in key technologies for low-yielding rice in southern China, and increased the average yield by more than 1.5 tonnes per hectare, according to the CAAS.

They also introduced new methods of recommended fertilization for major grain crops, as well as new technologies for efficient utilization of nutrient resources, thus reducing the fertilization of chemical nitrogen by 10 to 30 per cent. The CAAS has developed key technologies of big data analysis and expression for soil. It has also built a high-precision digital soil system covering the entire country for the first time, which is so far the most complete and detailed soil resource and quality data in China.—Xinhua ■

BOJ begins 2-day meeting to ponder pandemic, climate change

The Bank of Japan on Thursday began a two-day policy meeting to assess economic risks from resurging coronavirus cases in Japan and map out its funding programme in support of tackling climate change.

The BOJ is widely expected to maintain its ultraloose monetary policy as the Japanese economy remains on shaky ground with a fourth state of emergency over COVID-19 declared for Tokyo and the Olympics from July 23 set to take place under it.

A week after the European Central Bank said it will factor climate change considerations into monetary policy, the BOJ is scheduled to announce an outline of its new program to provide funds to financial institutions for their loans and investments related to climate change.

To varying degrees, major central banks including the Bank of England and the U.S. Federal Reserve are focusing more on climate change as momentum is building globally toward decarbonization to fight global warming.

BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda has warned that climate change will have an “extremely large” impact on the economy over the longer term.—Kyodo News ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU prepares to send petrol cars to the scrap heap

THE European Commission wants to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2035, under a huge plan to fight climate change unveiled Wednesday.

According to one of a dozen ambitious climate draft laws revealed in Brussels, emissions from motor vehicles must fall by 55 percent by 2030 and drop to zero by 2035.

"As a result, all new cars registered as of 2035 will be zero-emission," the statement announcing the plan said.

This would in practice mean that all cars and light vans sold from that date would be battery-powered electric cars, which currently represent less than a tenth of new registrations in the EU.

But the move will be fiercely opposed by some in the industry lobby as it makes its way through an intense negotiating and drafting process and scrutiny in the European parliament.—AFP ■

New Zealand's Ardern to host emergency APEC virus summit

New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern will host an emergency meeting of APEC leaders Friday aimed at bolstering vaccine rollouts to contain the fast-spreading coronavirus variants now fuelling the pandemic. The virtual meeting, called with less than five days' notice, would also examine the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group's response to its biggest economic crisis since World War II, the prime minister said.

"It's a unique opportunity to get APEC leaders together to discuss how we get our region through the health crisis and accelerate economic recovery," she told reporters. New Zealand is scheduled to host an online summit of APEC leaders in November but Ardern said the extraordinary circumstances created by Covid-19 warranted an additional urgent meeting.

She said US President Joe Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin would attend the virtual meeting, while China's foreign ministry confirmed President Xi Jinping's participation.—AFP ■

China to rectify problems discovered in central budget implementation audit

CHINA will fix problems discovered in audits on central budget implementation, and other financial revenues and expenditures, according to a State Council executive meeting held on Wednesday.

The meeting, chaired by Premier Li Keqiang, also specified measures to improve the rural delivery and logistics system to better meet farmers' needs in life and production.

The meeting urged related government departments and local authorities to implement solid rectification. Efforts should be made to severely punish major violations of laws and regulations, such as illegal scalping of bulk commodities and tax



A worker is busy on the production line at the weaving workshop in an economy development zone in Lianyungang, east China's Jiangsu Province, Oct. 19, 2020. PHOTO: GENG YUHE/XINHUA

evasion. Typical cases should be publicly exposed. Governments at all levels should continue to

tighten their belts in the interests of the people. Efforts should not be relaxed on reducing spend-

ing on official overseas visits, government-procured vehicles, and official receptions. Violations that increase the costs of administrative operations will not be allowed, the meeting decided. More work should be done to fully implement policies and measures benefiting businesses and the people, such as cutting taxes and fees, stabilizing jobs, expanding employment, and providing financial support to the real economy, especially micro and small businesses.

The meeting also urged proper management and use of funds for elderly care, education, medical care, and housing and strictly prevent embezzlement.—Xinhua ■

Hollywood flurry lifts Greek film industry hopes

A burly man in a buzz-cut crosses a busy street, nearly running into a passing cab. Nearby, two Miami police officers monitor a bustling crowd beside their squad car.

The man is Spanish actor Antonio Banderas and standing in for the Magic City is Greece's northern metropolis Thessaloniki where Millennium Media, producers of "The Expendables" series, are shooting their latest action flick.

Banderas' new outing, "The Enforcer", is one of several high-profile shoots taking shape in the midst of an uncharacteristic flurry for Greece's film industry, which reopened from a pandemic lockdown just in May.

The busy summer schedule includes Bond star Dan-

iel Craig in the sequel to the surprise 2019 murder mystery hit "Knives Out" under director Rian Johnson, and David Cronenberg's sci-fi whodunit "Crimes of the Future", starring Viggo Mortensen.

Disney+ had earlier shot scenes in Athens for "Greek Freak", a biopic about Giannis Antetokounmpo's early years as the son of poor Nigerian immigrants before catapulting to NBA basketball stardom, while Netflix wrapped "Beckett", an action thriller starring Denzel Washington's son John David.

'Crash test'

Veteran Greek producer Panos Papahadzis said this season's film wave is a "crash test" for the local industry after



Spanish star Antonio Banderas (centre) and a New York cab in Thessaloniki are just two visible signs of the flurry in filmmaking in Greece. PHOTO: AFP

years in the doldrums.

"For 20 years we have been calling on the state... to turn Greece into a film-friendly

country," Papahadzis, whose company Argonauts is co-producing "Crimes of the Future", told AFP.—AFP ■

Strengthening economy boosts US bank earnings



Citigroup was among the large banks to see earnings lifted by funds that had been set aside in case of bad loans. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

A trio of US banks reported strong profits Wednesday, boost-

ed by the improved credit quality outlook despite headwinds

from lower interest rates and tepid trading revenues.

Results from Bank of America, Citigroup and Wells Fargo followed similarly positive earnings released Tuesday from Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase, with the bottom line surging in comparison to the year-ago period when the industry set aside billions of dollars in case of loan defaults during the coronavirus pandemic.

Banks note that the pandemic, along with rising inflation, remains a source of economic uncertainty.

But the doomsday scenario of a deluge of client defaults has not happened, thanks in large part to the reopening of the US economy brought on by the widespread availability of coronavirus vaccines.

"The pace of the global recovery is exceeding earlier expectations and with it, consumer and corporate confidence is rising," said Citi Chief Executive Jane Fraser. "While we have to be mindful of the unevenness in the recovery globally, we are optimistic about the momentum ahead."—AFP ■

Mastercard banned from issuing new cards in India

INDIA'S central bank Wednesday banned global payments giant Mastercard from adding new customers starting next week, in an escalation of a long-standing dispute on local data storage rules.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) found Mastercard to be in violation of its April 2018 circular that directed all payments data be stored exclusively in India, allowing the regulator "unfettered supervisory access" to transaction details.

Global payments service providers like Mas-



India's central bank banned global payments giant Mastercard from adding new customers starting next week. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

tercard, Visa and American Express have lobbied against data localization, citing increased costs. "Notwithstanding

(the) lapse of considerable time and adequate opportunities being given, the entity (Mastercard) has been found to

be non-compliant with the directions of Storage Payment System Data," the RBI said in a notification.

Mastercard will be indefinitely blocked from issuing debit, credit or prepaid cards to customers in India from July 22.

The central bank said existing Mastercard customers would not be affected. Mastercard did not immediately respond to queries from AFP.

Last year, Mastercard accounted for 33 per cent of all card payments in India according to London-based payments startup PPRO.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

India's Infosys posts highest revenues in decade on strong demand

INDIAN software giant Infosys reported a 22.7-per cent increase in quarterly net profit Wednesday after its revenues soared to their highest in a decade as global demand for digital services boomed during the pandemic.

The company increased its full-year revenue guidance by two per cent to 14 to 16 per cent on the back of expectations of strong demand, particularly for its digital services.

The country's software services industry has been a bright spot in the economy, which has been badly hit by the virus and lockdowns, rebounding in recent months as companies like Infosys secured new orders.

Net profit at India's second-largest IT company rose to 51.95 billion rupees (\$698 million) in the quarter ending June 30 compared to 42 billion rupees a year ago, just below analysts' expectations.—AFP ■

GM warns Bolt owners after two cars catch fire

GENERAL Motors on Wednesday warned owners of its Chevrolet Bolt to park the electric vehicle outside and not leave them plugged in overnight after two of the cars caught fire.

The incidents involved vehicles that had been fixed following a November recall of nearly 51,000 Bolts in the United States due to a fire risk, the automaker said.

"Out of an abundance of caution, we are asking owners of 2017-2019 Chevrolet Bolt EVs who were part of the recall population to park their vehicles outdoors immediately after charging and not leave their vehicles charging overnight while we investigate these incidents," GM said in a statement.

"At GM, safety is our highest priority, and we are moving as quickly as we can to investigate this issue."—AFP ■

Delta reports first quarterly profit since pandemic



Delta Air Lines reported its first quarterly profit since the coronavirus pandemic, a sign of improving travel demand. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

DELTA Air Lines posted its first quarterly profit since the coronavirus pandemic Wednesday, propelled by improving travel

demand and an infusion of federal funds for airline workers.

The big US carrier said domestic leisure

voyages had recovered to pre-pandemic levels, while corporate travel volumes have begun to come back, doubling from 20 per cent recovered in March to 40 per cent recovered in June.

"Domestic leisure travel is fully recovered to 2019 levels and there are encouraging signs of improvement in business and international travel," said Delta Chief Executive Ed Bastian.

"With the recovery picking up steam, we are making investments to support our industry-leading operation."

Delta reported a profit of \$652 million for the quarter, compared with a loss of \$5.7 billion in the year-ago period. Results in the 2021 period were boosted by \$1.5 billion in federal payroll support funds approved by Congress. Revenues were \$7.1 billion, more than four times the level in the year-ago period, but down 43 per cent from the 2019 quarter. Coming into Wednesday's report, Delta had suffered five straight quarterly losses during an historically brutal industry downturn in consumer travel due to Covid-19.—AFP ■

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Department of Mines

Amendment to the Open Tender No 3/2021

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines announced the invitation for open tender regarding the sale of 5008.574 Metric Tons, (21) Lots of Cathode Copper by the United States Dollar on 23.6.2021, 25.6.2021, 27.6.2021 and 29.6.2021 in the Myanma Alinn newspaper, on 24.6.2021, 26.6.2021 and 28.6.2021 in the Mirror Daily, and from 23.6.2021 to 29.6.2021 in The Global New Light of Myanmar English newspaper, respectively.

2. Tender Closing Date and Time and Opening Tender in those advertisements have now coincided with the public holidays and reschedules are as follows:—

Sr	Subject	Rescheduled Time & Date
1	Tender Closing Date and Time	30.7.2021 (14:00 PM)
2	Opening Tender Date and Time	30.7.2021 (15:00 PM)

3. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone numbers: 067-3409376 and 067-3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee

Department of Mines

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 17th to 25th July 2021, being public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DANU BHUM VOY.NO. (454N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DANU BHUM VOY.NO. (454N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

NEWS IN
BRIEFSaudi hosts
vaccinated pilgrims
for 2nd downsized hajj

SAUDI Arabia will host another downsized hajj from Saturday, with only residents fully vaccinated against the coronavirus permitted and overseas Muslim pilgrims barred for a second year.

The kingdom seeks to repeat last year's success that saw no virus outbreak during the five-day Muslim ritual.

It is allowing 60,000 residents of Saudi Arabia to participate, higher than in 2020 but drastically lower than in normal times. People will begin to arrive on Saturday, a day before the start of rites.

In 2019, some 2.5 million Muslims from around the world participated in the annual hajj -- a key pillar of Islam that is a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime. Earlier this month, the hajj ministry said it was working on the "highest levels of health precautions" in light of the pandemic and the emergence of new variants.—AFP ■

Bangladesh Nobel
laureate Yunus to
receive Olympic
Laurel

BANGLADESHI Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus will receive the Olympic Laurel at the Tokyo Games, the second time the trophy has been awarded, the IOC said Thursday.

Yunus, whose pioneering micro-lender has been hailed for cutting poverty across the globe, will be honoured for "his extensive work in sport for development", the International Olympic Committee said in a statement.

The 81-year-old economist turned globe-trotting celebrity speaker won the Nobel in 2006. He will be given the award at the Tokyo 2020 opening ceremony on 23 July.

The Olympic Laurel was created five years ago to recognize endeavours in culture, education, peace and development through sport, according to the IOC.

It was given for the first time at the 2016 Rio Games to Kenyan former Olympian Kip Keino, who opened a children's home, a school and an athletes' training centre in his home country.—AFP ■

Three more Thai islands open to
vaccinated travellers

Thailand is expanding its vaccinated tourist scheme to Samui, Tao and Phangan islands. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

THREE more Thai islands

opened to vaccinated foreign tourists on Thursday despite a nationwide surge in Covid-19 cases propelled by the Delta

variant.

The islands — Samui, Tao and Phangan — welcomed visitors as part of the kingdom's push to revive its battered tour-

ism industry.

Thailand launched its "sandbox" scheme on 1 July, allowing vaccinated travellers to visit Phuket island. Tourists do not have to quarantine in a hotel but cannot leave Phuket for two weeks.

Under Thursday's expansion, tourists must stay at an approved hotel on Samui for a week and can leave their accommodation on day four.

They will have to produce a negative Covid-19 test before being allowed to venture to Tao or Phangan after their first week.

The rest of the country is struggling to rein in infections from the Delta variant, which authorities say now makes up

nearly 80 per cent of its case-load.

Virus hotspot Bangkok and nine provinces are under tightened restrictions, including a night-time curfew and a ban on gatherings of more than five people.

Thailand recorded almost 9,200 new infections and a record daily high of 98 deaths on Thursday.

'Don't want to rush'

Phuket has received 5,000 foreign tourists since its reopening, 10 of whom have tested positive for Covid-19.

Authorities are not expecting a big influx of tourists immediately to Samui and the other two islands.—AFP ■

Singapore unveils one of world's biggest
floating solar farms

SINGAPORE on Wednesday unveiled one of the world's biggest floating solar power farms, covering an area the size of 45 football pitches, as part of the city-state's push to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The project is the country's most ambitious yet, comprising 122,000 panels on Tengeh Reservoir that will produce enough electricity to run its five water treatment plants.

Singapore is among the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in Asia and its land scarcity makes boosting renewable energy sources a challenge.

The prosperous financial hub has turned to setting up



An aerial view of Sembcorp's new floating solar power farm at Tengeh reservoir in Singapore, which will lead to carbon emissions reductions equivalent to removing 7,000 cars from roads. PHOTO: SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL WATER AGENCY - PUB / AFP

plants off its coasts and in reservoirs, and aims to quadruple

solar energy production by 2025.

The new farm can produce

up to 60 megawatts of electricity, and will lead to carbon emissions reductions equivalent to removing 7,000 cars from roads, according to Sembcorp Industries and national water agency PUB. Sembcorp built the project, which covers about 45 hectares (110 acres), with backing from the agency.

"Solar energy is plentiful, clean and green, and is key to reducing PUB's and also Singapore's carbon footprint," said the water agency's chief executive Ng Joo Hee. Singapore has also built a solar farm in the Johor Strait, which separates the island state from Malaysia, as well as plants on land.—AFP ■

US capital gets its own, petite Statue of Liberty

SOME 135 years after the arrival of its big sister in New York, a relatively diminutive replica Statue of Liberty was unveiled Wednesday in the US capital as a token of American-French friendship. The replica, standing at around 10 feet (three metres) tall — compared to the famed 300-foot-tall New York version — was inaugurated by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and his US counterpart, Antony Blinken.

The bronze statue was

erected in the garden of the residence of France's ambassador in Washington.

On its journey from Paris, it travelled via Liberty Island, south of Manhattan, home of the iconic "Liberty Enlightening the World" statue presented by France to the United States in the late 19th century.

"The little sister has arrived," said Philippe Etienne, France's envoy in Washington.

"She spent a week in New York for the American national

holiday — Independence Day — she was on Ellis Island, she looked at her big sister. And now she is in place for July 14," he added, referring to the French Bastille Day holiday.—AFP ■

The bronze statue stands at around 10 feet tall, diminutive compared to the renowned statue by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi on Liberty Island in New York City. PHOTO: AFP



Putin says Russia, US have 'common interests' on climate change

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin told US climate envoy John Kerry that Moscow and Washington have a shared interest in battling climate change, the Kremlin said Wednesday, in a rare area of common ground between the rivals.

"The climate problem is one of the areas where Russia and the United States have common interests and similar approaches," Putin said in a phone call with Kerry who is visiting Moscow, the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin told the former secretary of state that Moscow "attaches great importance" to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and "advocates de-politicizing" dialogue on climate change.

The State Department gave a similar description, saying Putin and Kerry "underscored the importance of the United States and Russia working together across a range of climate issues".

Kerry pointed to Russia's role in addressing climate change in the Arctic Council and efforts to end emissions from coal, a State Department statement said.

The comments on a rare point of cooperation between the two countries come after Putin met US President Joe Biden for talks in Geneva last month.

Moscow has welcomed Kerry's visit and called it a positive step to improve relations.

For years Putin was notorious for his scepticism about man-made global warming and saying Russia stands to benefit



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov welcomes US climate envoy John Kerry for a meeting in Moscow. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

from it. But in recent months he has also made statements to the effect that climate change is not just a boon to Moscow.

Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday that climate change and decarbonization are "top of the agenda" for

the Russian leader.

He said the climate issue is "where dialogue between Russia and America is possible and necessary".

Putin has made the development of Russia's Arctic region a strategic priority as its ice cover melts, opening up new shipping routes for Moscow.

Earlier this week, Kerry met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov -- whom he met many times when he served as secretary of state -- with the pair agreeing to cooperate on climate issues.

At his annual state of the nation address in April, Putin said Russia must adapt to climate change and called on the country to create an industry for utilising carbon emissions. — AFP ■

French police fire tear gas as thousands protest against virus rules

POLICE in Paris fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators on Wednesday, as 19,000 people protested throughout France over new coronavirus restrictions.

Some of the protests began in the morning in Paris as the annual military parade for the traditional Bastille Day parade, watched by President Emmanuel Macron, was taking place along the famous Champs-Élysées. The demonstrators are unhappy at the decision announced on Monday to oblige health workers to get vaccinated and bring in a vaccine health pass for most public places.

Unvaccinated people would require, for example, a negative test result to enter restaurants.

Since the announcement a record number of French people booked appointments for Cov-

id-19 jabs.

"This is in the name of freedom" was the message from some of the protesters.

In one area of the French capital police fired teargas to disperse the crowd.

Police said the declared protest route had not been respected and deplored the "throwing of projectiles" and The declared route was not respected, the prefecture of police said in a tweet, deploring the "throwing of projectiles" and lighting of fires by the protesters.

Throughout Paris some 2,250 people protested, while other demonstrations took place in Toulouse, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nantes and elsewhere. The French authorities put the total number of protesters at 19,000. — AFP ■



The demonstrators are unhappy at new rules obliging health workers to get vaccinated and a vaccine pass for most public places. **PHOTO: AFP**

EU mission meets with Venezuela defence minister, supreme court

EUROPEAN Union election experts met on Wednesday with Venezuela's defence minister and Supreme Court president, at a time when the opposition is demanding the release of a top leader accused of terrorism and treason.

The EU representatives arrived in Venezuela a week ago to study the possibility of sending a mission to observe mayoral and gubernatorial elections in November, following an invitation from President Nicolas Maduro.

"Enjoyable meeting with the European Union's Electoral Exploratory Mission, on the eve of the next mega-elections that will take place in Venezuela," Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino tweeted.

"We reiterated our democratic calling and the fundamental role the (armed forces) play in guaranteeing peace."



Venezuela's Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino is one of the most powerful people in the country. **PHOTO: VENEZUELAN PRESIDENCY/AFP/FILE**

Venezuela's armed forces are the main authority backing Maduro's continued hold on power, despite pressure from the opposition and international sanctions. Earlier, the EU delegation met with the Supreme

Court leadership.

"Our goal is peace and respect for the will of the people," said court president Maikel Moreno in a statement released by the body, which is dominated by Maduro loyalists. — AFP ■

Reshaped Turkey marks five years since failed coup

A radically reshaped Turkey on Thursday marks five years since a failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unleashed a sweeping political crackdown and mass arrests.

On a balmy night on 15 July 2016, a rogue faction in the military tried to take over the coun-

try, using warplanes and tanks to attack government buildings.

Some 250 people -- in addition to at least 24 plotters -- died and more than 2,000 were injured in the ensuing chaos as Erdogan rallied his supporters out on the street.

Since then, the fateful night's impact has been felt in

almost every aspect of Turkish life, including education, the judiciary and the leadership.

The crackdown on alleged coup-plotters, activists, human rights defenders and political opponents has helped Erdogan further cement the control he has amassed over Turkey since rising to power in 2003. — 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.

‘No sign’ Ronaldo wants to leave Juventus

CRISTIANO RONALDO has given no indication he wants to leave Juventus and is expected back in Turin later this month, club director Pavel Nedved said on Wednesday (Jul 14).

“Cristiano is on holiday. We

have no signal from his entourage that he wants to leave. We’re waiting for him and he will return around July 25 as scheduled,” Nedved said at the unveiling of the calendar for the 2021-2022 season.



Cristiano Ronaldo has a year left in his Juventus contract. **PHOTO: AFP**

The 36-year-old Portuguese international has one year left in his contract. His future had been in doubt after a difficult campaign during which Juventus lost their Serie A crown after nine years, exited the Champions League in the last 16 and only sealed fourth place and elite European football on the final day.

Juventus open next season at Udinese with Massimiliano Allegri fired up as he returns as coach two years after being sacked despite winning five consecutive league titles with the Turin club. “There was a certain routine with (Allegri) for five years,” said Nedved. “Then he went for two years to take a little holiday but now he’s back with great motivation.” — AFP ■

Wimbledon matches probed over potential irregular betting patterns

TWO matches at this year’s Wimbledon are being investigated by the International Tennis Integrity Agency over potential irregular betting patterns.

The ITIA, which is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of professional tennis worldwide, received two alerts from the betting industry during the grass-court Grand Slam in south London. The matches were reported by German newspaper Die Welt to be an early-round singles tie and a men’s doubles contest.

On the singles match, a five-figure sum was reportedly placed at the end of the second set

on the exact result.

During the doubles match, a winning bet was placed as the favourites, who eventually lost, took the first set.

Alerts can be for match-fixing, but also incorrect odds-setting, well-informed betting, player fitness, fatigue or form as well as playing conditions and personal circumstances. “Any alert reported to the ITIA is recorded, assessed and followed up as an indicator that something inappropriate may have happened,” an ITIA spokesman said.

“It is important to note that an alert on its own is not evidence

of match-fixing. Where analysis of a match alert does suggest corrupt activity, the ITIA conducts a full and confidential investigation.” The ITIA said it was not able to provide more details on the matches being investigated.

“The integrity of the sport is of the utmost importance to everyone at Wimbledon,” an All England Club spokesperson said.

“We continue to invest in additional measures to support the integrity operation onsite during the Championships and we work closely with the ITIA both at the Championships and throughout the year.” — AFP ■

Lionel Messi agrees to 50% pay-cut to stay at Barcelona – reports



Barcelona’s Argentinian forward Lionel Messi looks on during the Spanish League football match between FC Barcelona and Real Valladolid FC at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIONEL Messi has agreed a significant pay cut in order to remain at Barcelona and will sign a five-year contract in the coming days, according to reports.

Messi, 34, has been a free agent since his previous four-year deal expired on June 30, but though the Argentinian was widely linked with Manchester City and Paris St Germain last summer, it had been anticipated that a deal would be reached for him to extend his 20-year association with Barca.

Messi’s relationship with former Barcelona president

Josep Maria Bartomeu had become strained after the club’s 8-2 Champions League defeat to Bayern Munich last season, but he has been happier since the re-election of Joan Laporta in March.

Finding a solution has not been straightforward, however, given Barca’s crippling debts and need to cut costs in order to meet LaLiga’s Financial Fair Play rules.

But according to reports in Spain and beyond, Messi has agreed to take a 50 per cent pay cut compared to his previous contract, which was worth more

than 125 million euros (£105million) per season, while continuing his playing career until 2026 at least.

The contract will allow Messi to extend a Barcelona career which began when he joined the academy in 2000. He has made 778 appearances and scored 672 goals – both club records – while winning 10 LaLiga titles and four Champions League crowns.

Last weekend, Messi helped Argentina to victory over Brazil in the Copa America final to win his first major international trophy. — AFP ■