

NATIONAL

Civil servants in Nay Pyi Taw receive Covid-19 vaccines

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Announcement on annulment of Nov 8 Multiparty General Election results

PAGE-6

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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.

Vaccines must be given to people as fast as possible: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing chairs and addresses the fifth coordination meeting on the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 July 2021.

ARRIVING vaccines must be injected to patients on priority as quickly as possible, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Senior

General Min Aung Hlaing at the fifth coordination meeting of the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment at the hall of Bayinnaung Villa, Nay Pyi Taw, yes-

terday morning.

In his address, the Senior General noted there are more than 194 million infected people across the world and over

260,000 people in Myanmar up to 25 July. The Senior General urged all to strive for the soonest implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination at home.

It is necessary to supervise sales of medicines for prevention, control and treatment of the disease and other household

SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Anti-COVID-19 equipment imported during public holidays

PAGE-5

LOCAL BUSINESS

200 companies struck off register due to AR absence in July: DICA

PAGE-7

LOCAL BUSINESS

Pulses trade grinds to a halt amid COVID-19 surge

PAGE-7



LOCAL NEWS

450 houses flooded in Kyaikmaraw Township

PAGE-10

Request to volunteers to take part in COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities

1. Health workers of the Ministry of Health and Sports are making their utmost efforts on the public health services as the numbers of COVID-19 suspected patients and confirmed cases are on the rise in regions/states during the Third Wave of COVID-19.
2. However, some health workers are absent and so, due to the lack of manpower and for the highly contagious disease, the workload and manpower become unbalanced and difficulties arise in prevention and control activities.
3. Therefore, those who want to volunteer in the under-mentioned sectors at the Public Hospitals, COVID-19 treatment centres and the places under travel restrictions are welcomed to participate: -
 - (a) COVID-19 treatment activities – doctors, nurses, experts;
 - (b) Medical equipment maintenance – Medical Engineering;
 - (c) Management of patient information – IT experts;
 - (d) Transfer of patients;
 - (e) COVID-19 vaccination – Computer experts and Data Assistants to register the data of persons who receive the vaccines;
4. The organizations or individuals who want to volunteer can contact the Call Centre (067-3411508, 067-3411509, 067-3411144) of the Ministry of Health and Sports. The officials will then connect with the Nay Pyi Taw, regions/states Public Health and Medical Services Departments and Superintendents. The government will provide accommodations, COVID-19 preventive activities and fuel used in transporting the patients for the volunteers.
5. Those who are providing medical services to families and friends are also requested here to participate in volunteer programmes.

Ministry of Health and Sports

Health and Sports Ministry opens COVID-19 call centre

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

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

Contact numbers:

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

Public Notification

THE Ministry of Health and Sports is striving for the effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 and only with the participation of the people can these activities be effective in the short term and the third wave of disease can be overcome with minimal damages. Therefore, the people are kindly requested to follow the following points and cooperate with us.

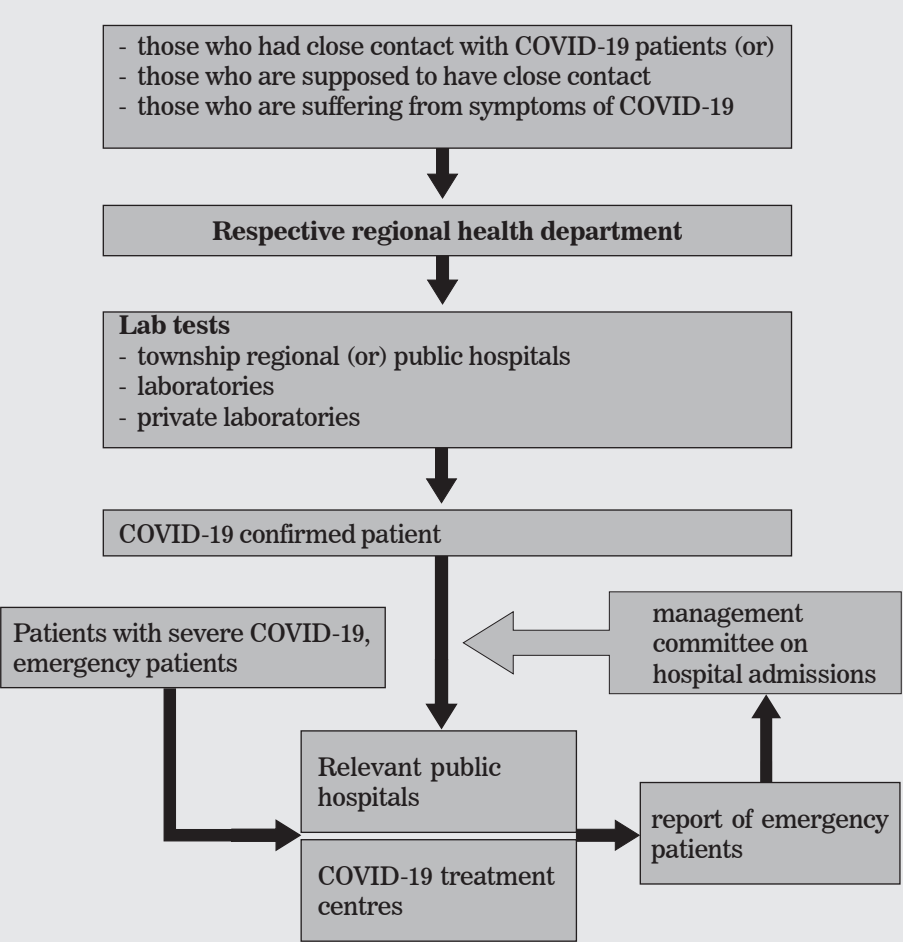
1. Stay indoors as much as possible; Staying at home protects your family members from the risk of infection, breaking down the disease chain in a short matter of time and resulting in the immediate control of the infection in the region.
2. Do not accept any guest at home as well as do not be a guest at all.
3. If you have to go outside, please wear a mask, wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, stay 6 feet away from others and avoid going to poorly ventilated rooms.
4. Avoid the crowd.
5. If possible, do shopping once a week and avoid buying from sellers who do not wear masks properly.
6. When you return home, be careful not to bring germs home. Dispose of used masks and disposables properly outside the home and avoid close contact with others at home before changing clothes and washing hands.
7. Please systematically participate in the disease prevention, control and treatment activities, as much as possible, and support with manpower, financial assistance and skills.

Ministry of Health and Sports

4,630 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 26 July, total figure rises to 274,155

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **274,155** after **4,630 new cases** were reported on 26 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **4,327** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **7,507** after **396** 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

We need cooperation

THE volunteers are also welcomed and some volunteers report. However, some do not dare to volunteer due to the threats. Some cannot do as they are away from here. I have already been told that I welcome such volunteering and that shows we need cooperation.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 3rd coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 18 July 2021)

Vaccines must be given to people as fast as possible ...

FROM PAGE-1

medicines in regions and states because some shops sell the stocks at higher prices and close the sales with storage of medicines to be shortages. The government allows the import of necessary medicines without any restrictions. Medicines must be distributed to the people as quickly as possible.

It is necessary to decide whether the patients who arrive at the hospitals are needed to be admitted depending on their health conditions. Treatment must be given to needy persons without fail. Systematic arrangements must be made for oxygen production, importation and supply.

With regard to vaccination, easing tension and preparedness for natural disasters, the Senior General said: “Infection rate is down but it is not to rest assured. Vaccines must be given to people as quickly as possible. It is necessary to help the assigned persons for vaccination. Furthermore, as the pharmacy shops close the sales due to fear and the authorities are to organize them to open the sales of medicines at fair prices under the management with a conscience. In addition, preparations must

be made for natural disasters. If natural disasters happened in a place in the past, preparatory tasks should be undertaken to reduce loss and damage when the disaster actually happens. In fact, disasters cannot be banned, so we need to consider the best way to have the least loss and damage.”

The participants discussed

plans to transport patients to respective centres depending on the medical tests, the extension of confirmed patient centres, the start of vaccination, smooth import of medicines and oxygen, issuance of pension and salaries, and soonest taking out of medicines from the ports to distribute them to the people at fair prices.

In his address, the Senior General said it is necessary to contact India to soonest get the imported vaccines and continue further import of vaccines from other countries. At present, officials are to supervise the prevention of power outages for continuously supplying oxygen to the patients.

In his additional speech, the Senior General said, “I’d like to emphasize Yangon Region where the death rate is the highest. Its population density is the highest. The statistics in our hand showed the second-largest death rate was in Mandalay Region. But you all do not need to be worried but you

all need to take more care of the disease. As the density is high, oxygen must be given to the patients. So, people say the hospitals such as Yangon General Hospital and Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital are crowded. So, we open the quarantine centres, positive patient centres and treatment centres where medical doctors must be assigned. If necessary, treatment centres must be extended in Yangon and Mandalay regions. On the other hand, medical staff must be assigned there in real-time. It is necessary to immedi-

ately make decisions for the extension of centres and the assignment of staff.

Regarding the import of medicines, it is necessary to produce the basic household medicines at home. Encouragement must be given to the production of quality and high potent medicines at industrial zones and factories.

The Senior General stressed the need to avoid interruption of commodity flow and trading among the townships while taking preventive measures of possible natural disasters. — MNA



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Civil servants in Nay Pyi Taw receive Covid-19 vaccines

UNION-LEVEL department staff and Nay Pyi Taw-level staff in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday received Covid-19 vaccines named Sinopharm at No. (3) Basic Education High School, Pobbathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Covid-19 vaccination started in the morning and was carried out by healthcare workers from 1000-bed Military Hospital No. 2, Nay Pyi Taw and five groups of 500 Union-level staff and 1,000 Nay Pyi Taw-level staff received vaccinations.

“I’m just happy to be vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus at a time when the outbreak is on the rise. People who have not been vaccinated are also encouraged to get vaccinated.

If we want to protect ourselves and our families, we

need to be vaccinated. Once the disease is decreased, it will be able to improve the health, education and socio-economic life of people. We also hope that more Covid-19 vaccines will arrive in Myanmar soon,” said a staff member who came to inject the vaccination.

“We have been happy to hear that the Covid-19 vaccine will be given to us. I also reminded the staff around me to get vaccinated regularly. When the vaccine started today, everyone was brought in. I hope my family will get vaccinated soon. I hope the remaining people could get the vaccines as soon as possible. I plan to travel with my family one day when the world is free of epidemics. I think getting vaccinated today is a step in the right direction



for my dream. We urge all people to be vaccinated as soon as possible,” said Daw Swe Win, a staff member.

Before being administered with the Covid-19 vaccines (Sinopharm), healthcare workers

took body temperature measurements and blood pressure measurements. Vaccines were given only when the blood and body pressure plus health condition is normal, healthcare officials said.

Next, staff from the administration departments, healthcare departments and education departments carried out cleaning works throughout the school compound. —Aung Thant/GNLM



Virtual coord meeting held to make voices of volunteers heard

A virtual coordination meeting to discuss Covid-19 disease prevention and control was held yesterday to identify the requirements of volunteers involved in the response process.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine, Deputy Minister U Aung Tun Khaing, Permanent Secretary and Director-General, Deputy Directors-General, volunteers working on the frontlines amid pandemic in Yangon Region and representatives from 14 charitable organizations attended the online meeting.

First, the Union Minister said that Yangon Region is densely populated and difficult to travel and thus thanked the charitable organizations for

taking care of the public health at the risk of their lives.

“Mainly in the relevant townships, we would like to know the current situation of the charitable organizations on the ground as we want to know what is going on in the communities and what problems they are facing. Reporting to the relevant authorities and providing immediate assistance is also crucial,” the Union Minister added.

The Deputy Minister also called on the people to participate in the upcoming vaccination programmes as the charitable organizations are in contact with the people.

“We must work together to prevent and respond to the epidemics. In doing so, we want

a network to be formed more effectively. We will take note of the submissions from the charitable representatives and submit them to the higher authorities,” the Deputy Minister continued.

Next, requirements for the volunteers including the role of volunteers plus accommodation and assistance for healthcare workers were also discussed.

Having identity cards for the volunteers, arranging PPE suits and food, solving transportation issues by having sufficient fuel for ambulances, having oxygen tanks in ambulances and providing vehicles for bringing liquid oxygen for covid-19 centres were also discussed.

Officials also focused on the volunteering network and suggestions on how to work as a team on the ground to solve the human resources problem especially for healthcare workers.

After that the Union Minister said that the presentations were very similar to the discussions between the charitable organizations and volunteers on 2 and 21 July.

“We will cooperate with the relevant departments after submitting guidance to the relevant committees regarding the requirements.

“At the national level, the Central Committee for Protection, Control and Health Care is chaired by the Chairman of the State Administration Council

while the Control and Emergency Response Committee is headed by the Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council.

“Medical reports are focal points for the Ministry of Health and Sports. To listen to the voices of volunteers and to present and integrate their needs is important.

“General Administration Departments are implementing ground security, censorship cards, foodstuffs, PPEs, health protection equipment, and motor oil in each township.

“Therefore, I wish the philanthropic brothers and sisters to cooperate closely with their respective General Administration Departments,” the Union Minister added. —MNA

Anti-COVID-19 equipment imported during public holidays

THE government allows the import of liquid oxygen, gas oxygen, home oxygen concentrators, medicine and medical equipment via Yangon International Airport, seaports and border trade camps to ensure adequate medical supplies for COVID-19 during the public holidays.

The medical-related materials are prioritized to import starting 21 July. The relevant departmental officials are also working together to facilitate the importation processes in line with the SOP.

A total of 3,182 oxygen concentrators and 5,000 test kits arrived at Yangon International Airport yesterday. A bowser carrying 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 45 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 4,205 home oxygen concentrators, 5,000 test kits, 28 tonnes of masks and 10,340 PPEs were also imported via Myawady, Chinshwehaw, Kawthoung and Tachilek trade camps on the same day. These materials were imported by 39 vehicles of 27 companies.

From 12 to 16 July, 533 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 430 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 104 tonnes of oxygen gas, 35,087 home oxygen concentrators, 250,868 test kits, 694 tonnes of masks, four oxygen plants and 14 oxygen generators were allowed to be imported by 464 vehicles, while officials are now giving priority to disease control of Covid-19. The Trade Department also operates as usual for online registration for import licences during long public holidays from 26 July and 1 August.

The entrepreneurs do not need to apply for import



licences for three months starting 12 July, according to Notification No 12/2021. Moreover, the government released Notification No 13/2021 for HS Code to facilitate importation processes according to the 2017 Customs Tariff of Myanmar on 26 July.

The Ministry of Commerce is also cooperating with the ministry concerned to import the medical supplies. It also releases contact persons of relevant departments and website address –Commerce.gov.mm for people to know updated news. — MNA



Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Union Election Commission Notification No (2/2021)

3rd Waning of Waso 1383 ME
26 July 2021

Announcement on annulment of Nov 8 Multiparty General Election results

1. The Union Election Commission assigned by the State Administration Council with order no 7/2021 according to Section 419 of the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar inspected the voter lists of 315 townships where the Multiparty General Election was held on 8 November 2021 in detail in order to conduct the needed measures in accord with Section 402 of the Constitution, Section 11 of the Union Election Law and Section 53 of respective

Hluttaws Election Law including the checking of voter lists in line with the future work plans of the State Administration Council. Moreover, the UEC inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes in each polling station of respective townships together with the respective UEC members, former township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population, administrators and representatives of political parties, and interviewed the election

sub-commissions, poll heads and members.
2. According to the findings on voter lists of respective townships, there were 11,305,390 voter lists irregularities across the nation. Although the exact numbers of ballots were issued to the poll stations, it found missing and illegal ballots at every polling station during the inspection. Therefore, the missing and extra ballots were found due to illegal activities. Findings were as follows: —

Voting frauds and ballots in each region or state

Sr	State/ Region	Townships	Polling stations	Finding on voter lists							On-the-ground finding on ballot papers					
				Non-IDs	Thrice & above	Twice	States/ Regions crosscheck	Above 100-year-old	Under 18	Total Voting fraud	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Loss	Extra
1	Kachin	18	919	92,452	7,633	102,876	60,590	679	497	264727	1301094	761,324	539,770	536,889	9,449	6,568
2	Kayah	7	233	5,552	930	16,680	5,912	238	44	29356	238805	162,849	75,956	75,276	2,468	1,788
3	Kayin	7	852	241,953	15,258	128,230	15,294	917	822	402474	1366222	641,848	724,374	654,029	72,272	1,927
4	Chin	9	957	15,580	2,981	34,248	1,954	366	185	55,314	427,455	218,595	208,860	196,673	16,746	4,559
5	Sagaing	37	4,107	337,484	39,220	460,916	71,872	1,897	1,466	912,855	483,4052	3,358,659	1,475,393	1,410,220	129,545	64,372
6	Taninthayi	10	1,205	193,991	8,120	112,756	28,958	708	366	344,899	1,299,972	787,976	511,996	495,219	24,098	7,321
7	Bago	28	4,144	858,611	37,162	382,058	61,008	1,985	877	1,341,701	4,421,820	2,801,883	1,619,937	1,536,132	151,867	68,062
8	Magway	25	4,548	172,976	33,956	397,504	45,242	1,567	650	651,895	3,820,561	2,551,681	1,268,880	1,190,533	86,872	8,525
9	Mandalay	28	5447	388,282	38,090	516,776	217,668	3,151	1,239	1,165,206	5,467,884	3,792,347	1,675,537	1,507,778	221,546	53,787
10	Mon	10	973	305,987	13,002	174,268	26,828	902	485	521,472	2,023,776	1,039,295	984,481	950,625	45,568	11,712
11	Rakhine	8	784	77,573	4,101	47,712	3,598	341	223	133,548	857,321	328,918	528,403	522,502	9,738	3,837
12	Yangon	45	5,809	747,138	11,070	269,412	405,366	2,222	1,909	1,437,117	6,689,270	4,085,686	2,603,584	2,337,150	357,937	91,503
13	Shan	49	3,591	616,531	22,697	309,248	69,054	2,597	1,996	1,022,123	4,023,194	2,399,225	1,623,969	1,574,907	96,666	47,604
14	Ayeyawady	26	5,748	706,984	54,285	567,300	39,742	2707	3,339	1,374,357	5,238,205	3,479,869	1,758,336	1,641,341	182719	65,724
15	Union Terriotry	8	646	108,333	6,900	76,222	38,690	289	314	230,748	994,751	687,903	306,848	291,509	16,900	1,561
	Total	315	39,963	4,869,427	295,405	3,596,206	1,091,776	20,566	14,412	9,887,792	43,004,382	27,098,058	15,906,324	14,920,783	1,424,391	438,850
	Whole country crosscheck						1,417,598			1,417,598						
	Total	315	39,963	4869427	295,405	3,596,206	2,509,374	20,566	14,412	11,305,390	43,004,382	27,098,058	15,906,324	14,920,783	1,424,391	438,850

3. In addition, voter lists in each township, scrutiny of the ballot papers and the voting conditions were as follows: -

(a) The former Union Election Commission (UEC) appointed those who wish to be appointed by the region or state chief ministers as chairpersons and members of the sub-commissions.

(b) Under the directives of the Union Government Office, a support group was formed and led by the region or state chief ministers to complete the voter lists and due to the group, there were two- or three-times duplication of voter lists.

(c) There was mass inclusion of people without citizenship cards in the voter lists as well as there were voters in the voter lists two or three times with the same national identification card.

(d) Following the directive issued by the former UEC to allow advance voting for voters aged 60

and above since 29-10-2020 prior to the election day, members of the NLD party victory team visited the houses during the advance voting.

(e) Duplication of voter lists and mass inclusion of voters without a national identification card occurred because the previous UEC announced the advancing of those who couldn't return home due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 8-10-2020 and 11-10-2020.

(f) Voters who do not have a citizenship card were allowed to cast their ballots at the polling stations with the voter IDs after the previous UEC issued a directive to enable voters who do not have a citizenship card to cast their ballots, which did not comply with the respective Hluttaw Election Laws.

(g) With regard to the ballot papers used in polling stations used on the election day, ballots without the UEC logo were considered valid.

(h) A large number of voter list errors in polling stations was not accidental but deliberate acts.

(i) The NLD party also interfered in each election process including collecting voter lists, election campaigns, advance voting process and voting processes on the election day with their power.

(j) The NLD party misused administrative power and the COVID-19 rules and regulations in electoral activities, including the campaigning of other political parties and Hluttaw Representatives to grab the State Power.

(k) As the Multiparty Democracy General Election held on 8 November 2020 was not in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Union Election Commission Law and respective Hluttaw Election Law, in addition to the fact that it was found that the election was not free and fair, the results of the 8 November election was annulled.

Thein Soe
Chairman
Union Election Commission

200 companies struck off register due to AR absence in July: DICA

A total of 200 companies has been struck off the register as they fail to submit an annual return (AR) on the online registry system, MyCO, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) stated.

The DICA has notified any registered company which fails to submit its AR on MyCO are to be suspended. The DICA found that in July, 200 companies failed to restore their status within six months of suspension under 430 (F) of Myanmar Companies Law. The companies were struck off the register starting from 5 and 9 July respectively, according to the DICA's notification.

All registered companies need to file AR on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the law.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies

must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

As per DICA's report, more than 16,000 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the register, and



The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018 in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. The number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, topped more than 2,000 in the first half of this year.

K100,000 for late filing of documents, totalling K250,000.

According to the DICA notice, if a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register.

The registration and re-reg-

istration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018 in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. The number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, topped more than 2,000 in the first half of this year.

Earlier, MyCO received more than 1,000 applications from new companies every month.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to data provided by the DICA. – GNLM

Pulses trade grinds to a halt amid COVID-19 surge



Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy and it contributes to over 30 per cent of Gross Domestic Products.

FOLLOWING the closure of warehouses and commodity depots in each township triggered by the COVID-19 threat, the pulses trade is on the verge of suspension.

The domestic bean market is positively related to the law of supply and demand. The price depends on the buyers and sellers. There is no official set price, the traders stressed.

Some traders do price negotiation over the call as the warehouses and the wholesale

centres are temporarily closed. Sometimes, they experience difficulties, said a trader.

As the COVID-19 infections are spiking in Myanmar, agricultural exports to China through border posts also came to an abrupt stop, resulting in the price slip in green gram, sesame and peanut.

Nonetheless, the prices of black beans and pigeon beans remain high on the back of strong demand by India. However, the pulses trading in the domestic

market is nearly halted in the meantime.

More than 1.66 million tonnes of various pulses and beans were exported to foreign markets between 1 October and 9 July of the current financial year 2020-2021, with the estimated value of US\$1.29 billion, the Commerce Ministry's data indicated.

Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy and it contributes to over 30 per cent of Gross Domestic Products. The country primarily cultivates paddy, corn, cotton, sugarcane, various pulses and beans. Its second-largest production is the pulses and beans, counting for 33 per cent of agricultural products and covering 20 per cent of growing acres. Among them, black gram, pigeon peas and green grams constitute 72 per cent of bean acreage. Other beans including peanut, chickpea, soybean, black-eyed beans, butter bean and rice bean are also grown in the country. – Mon Mon/GNLM

Sino-Myanmar bilateral trade exceeds US\$6 bln in seven months

THE value of Myanmar's trade with China through maritime and sea trade channels amounted to over US\$6.13 billion in the seven months (October-April) of the 2020-2021 Financial Year, including \$3.18 billion worth of exports and \$2.95 billion for import, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar primarily exports agro products to China through land borders. However, trading in agricultural products is frequently halted on account of China clamping down on illegal trade in border crossings. Furthermore, China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 since April-end, hindering the border trade. At present, China has banned all the border posts in wake of the COVID surge in Myanmar.

In a bid to lower trade barriers and offer relief to Myanmar traders through the border trade channel, the Ministry of Commerce, the related departments and the stakeholders have been negotiating with China counterparts.

The value of bilateral trade with China stood at \$12 billion in the 2019-2020FY, \$11.36 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, \$6 billion in the past mini-budget period, \$11.78 billion in the 2017-2018 financial year and \$10.8 billion in the 2016-2017 FY respectively.

Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar. – KH/GNLM

Everybody lives in conscience in COVID-19 infectious world

THE variant COVID-19 pandemic is still imposing threats on the global people while killing one after another. At present, some 200 million global people are infected by the disease, and more than four million people lost their lives. The infection rate is ten more times than in the past, and the death rate, three more per cent. Hence, all Myanmar people need to take special care of the infection.

Among Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia is top with infection rate. The remaining countries also face increasing infection and death rates. In fact, the infection rate and death rate are still high in developing countries because vaccination coverage reached just one per cent. The countries with declining infection rates are based on high vaccination coverage. Although vaccines can affect disease prevention to some extent, primarily, individuals need to have preventive measures with a conscience.

That is why everybody needs to protect their mouths, noses and eyes, which are the entrance of the disease. They all have to wash their hands often. Take an adequate distance among them. Take care of your health conditions, too.

Everyone should take care of scentlessness, body pain and headache, which are symptoms of COVID-19. If so, not only patients but also family members need to use protective equipment, wash hands several times, fully eat meals, sleep soundly and do breathing exercises as part of health-supporting movements without fail.

Anyone suffering from scentlessness, weakness and diarrhoea need to receive a medical checkup at nearby health units. As COVID-19 is a disease affecting the respiratory tracks, patients can suffer from suffocation. Normally, everybody must have 92-95 points of oxygen. If they face declining oxygen under 90 points, it is necessary to take care of it specially.

■ ■ ■

AstraZeneca Scouring For Vaccines To Supply To SEA

Drugmaker AstraZeneca said Saturday it was searching its supply chain to find more doses of its COVID-19 vaccine for Southeast Asia, which is facing its most serious outbreak yet of the virus.

THE statement from the Anglo-Swedish company – which produces its vaccine in Thailand for use domestically and in neighbouring countries – comes in the wake of a supply shortage which has sparked heavy criticism of Thai Premier Prayut Chan-o-cha’s administration.

Under the terms of AstraZeneca’s agreement with Thai authorities, 180 million doses are due for production, one-third destined for the Thai market and the rest to be exported.

By the end of July AstraZeneca will have delivered 11.3 million doses for Thailand, according to James Teague, AstraZeneca’s representative in the country.

Exports have still not begun, even as the region faces

a particularly virulent wave of COVID-19.

“We are delivering in the fastest possible timeframe, however, given the gravity of the Delta variant, we are leaving no stone unturned to accelerate supply further still,” Teague said in an “open letter to the people of Thailand”.

“We are also scouring the 20+ supply chains in our worldwide manufacturing network to find additional vaccines for Southeast Asia, including Thailand.”

But “a global supply crunch” for COVID-19 vaccines and a shortage of the materials required to make them made it difficult to provide a specific timeframe, he added.

The AstraZeneca contract was awarded last year to Siam



People queue up for walk-in COVID-19 coronavirus vaccinations at Bang Sue Central Railway Station in Bangkok on 22 July 2021, as Thailand struggles to inoculate its population due to nationwide shortages. PHOTO: AFP

Bioscience, a firm owned by King Maha Vajiralongkorn that has no track record of producing

vaccines.

It set out to produce vaccines for nine countries includ-

ing Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, as well as Thailand. Mounting Anger

Siam Bioscience has not commented on reports of insufficient production or late delivery.

But Thailand has been forced to change its vaccine strategy by importing millions of doses of Chinese vaccines.

Anger is mounting, with just five per cent of Thailand’s 70 million residents fully vaccinated.

Most Thais avoid talking about it openly because of harsh lese majeste laws that make it illegal to criticize the monarch. Those that do face between three and 15 years in prison.

Former opposition leader and billionaire Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit has already been accused under the law after he said the vaccination policy was too dependent on Siam Bioscience.

SOURCE: AFP

Do vaccinated people need to go back to masking?

With the Delta variant pushing US Covid cases back up, fully vaccinated people are wondering whether they need to start masking indoors again.

COVID vaccines remain extremely effective against the worst outcomes of the disease -- hospitalization and death -- and breakthrough infections remain uncommon.

But experts told AFP that one size doesn’t fit all, and people should consider factors like community transmission, personal risk levels, and their own risk tolerance to help decide what’s right for them.

Risk low for vaccinated

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention dropped its mask guidance for vaccinated people in May.

At the time, cases were plummeting and the administration of President Joe Biden was keen to declare a return to normal on the back of a vaccination campaign that was still going strong.

On Thursday the country registered more than 50,000 cases, a surge driven by the now overwhelmingly dominant Delta variant, the most contagious strain to date, and centred in low-vaccination regions.

Crucially, however, the rise in cases has been largely decoupled from hospitalizations and deaths.

With 80 per cent of seniors fully vaccinated, average daily deaths remain in the 200s — much lower than the more than 3,500 deaths per day seen in the worst wave over winter.

More than 97 per cent of hospitalizations are among the unvaccinated, CDC director Rochelle Walensky said last week, while 99.5 per cent of people dying were unvaccinated, Surgeon

General Vivek Murthy said last weekend.

Walensky defended the unchanged mask guidance Thursday, stressing the agency has always said communities and individuals should consider local conditions.

“If you’re in an area that has a high case rate and low rates of vaccination where Delta cases are rising, you should certainly be wearing a mask if you are unvaccinated,” she said.

“If you are vaccinated, you

get exceptional protection from the vaccines. But you have the opportunity to make the personal choice to add extra layers of protection if you so choose.”

Why local conditions matter

Joseph Allen, an associate professor at Harvard’s TH Chan School of Public Health, said he supported the CDC’s view.

While the World Health Organization has urged fully vaccinated people to continue to wear masks, that is in light of the global situation where just 13.4 per cent of the world population is fully vaccinated.

“I just don’t think we’re at the phase in the US and other highly vaccinated countries where this top-down blanket guidance makes sense anymore,” he told AFP.

“For me, the goal is and has always been with all the vaccines to prevent severe disease, and death, and that’s exactly what they do really well.”

As far as breakthrough infections go, a recent study of a US prison found 27 positive cases from 2,380 vaccinated individuals,

or 1.1 per cent. All were asymptomatic and detected through routine screening.

Research shows that asymptomatic people are less likely to transmit, while people who develop symptoms are supposed to self-isolate.

Still, the greater the community prevalence of the virus, the more likely such breakthroughs become.

People’s personal risk levels vary by their age and underlying conditions, some people may have high risk people at home they want to protect, while some just have lower risk tolerance.

On and off ramps

The divergence in case levels across the country closely correlates with vaccination rates, and parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Florida are currently experiencing the worst spikes.

Celine Gounder, an infectious disease physician and epidemiologist, compared the situation prior to Delta surges to driving your car in your own neighbourhood, while the current scenario is closer to

driving on a race car track.

“When you’re driving around in your neighbourhood, a seatbelt is enough,” she told AFP, with the seatbelt representing a vaccine.

“But if you’re driving on a NASCAR race track, in addition to seatbelts, those drivers also have helmets, they have airbags,” she added, emphasizing that masks add an additional layer of protection.

Even without the CDC, some parts of the country, like Los Angeles County and Philadelphia, have reinstituted mask guidance.

Monica Gandhi, an infectious disease doctor at UC San Francisco told AFP she has been advocating for statistical benchmarks, “as the back and forth is very frustrating for people.”

She suggests tying mask mandates to the local hospitalization rate — a more reliable measure of disease prevalence than cases — and, along with other experts, has proposed fewer than five cases per 100,000 as the threshold for resuming normal activity.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 26 July 2021)

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 27 July 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Chin, Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Rakhine, Kayin, Mon States and isolated heavyfalls in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin and Chin States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (9 -12)feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 July 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at: 15:00 hrs M.S.T on 26-7-2021)

Flood condition of Thaungyin River

According to the (14:00) hrs M.T.S observation today, the water level of Thaungyin River at Myawady has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue rise from the present water level by about (2½) feet during the next (1) day and may above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying area in Myawady Township, to take precaution measure

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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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

450 houses flooded in Kyaikmaraw Township

A total of 450 houses in low-lying wards of Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State were submerged as the water level of Attaran River has risen due to the continuous heavy rainfall starting from the second week of July.

The elders, children and animals were evacuated by the natural disaster management committee and moved to safer

places. The flood hazards occurred and wreaked havoc on transport in Mon State these days. The communities join the safety precaution measures for flood risks. The committee is raising awareness of floods in the wards and ensuring the safety of the people. — Cho Myat Myat Htwe (IPRD)/GNLM



The elders, children and animals were evacuated by the natural disaster management committee and moved to safer places.

Markets in NyaungU Tsp closes for seven days starting from 26 July



The anti-COVID-19 campaign is held in NyaungU Township.

IN a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19 in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, all the markets are tempo-

rarily closed down for seven days starting from 26 July, according to the meeting outcome of the COVID-19 con-

trol and emergency response committee.

Myanmar sees spiking of the COVID-19 infections in the third wave. NyaungU Township is also battling against the COVID-19 and daily COVID-19 cases and death are rising. As a result of this, the committee set decisions that all the markets including Manisithu market, Bagan Myothit market, Singyu market, Myinkabar market, Phonesing market, and the flea markets are to shut down for seven days.

During the closure of the markets, sanitizing the market will be effectively undertaken. This move is aim to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among the local residents, Nyaung U Township Administrator said. – KPD/GNLM

Shade perennials planted in Pan Khauk Woe Village

TO prevent water shortage in spring and make the natural environment green during the summer in Pan Khauk Woe village, Chief Officer and staff from the Township Rural Development Department, together with the villagers, planted perennial trees at Pan Khauk Woe Village, Loi Lim Township, Southern Shan yesterday.

U Aung Kyaw Hein, chief technical officer of the Rural Development Department in Loi Lim Township, and his staff

together with villagers planted various kinds of perennial shade trees in Pan Khauk Woe village yesterday morning.

The Department of Rural Development in Loi Lim Township is implementing the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project, Village Development Project, and Green Rural Development Project to increase the family income of the rural people and the sustainable development of the rural socio-economic life. Rural development activities such as

rural drinking water supply and construction of rural roads are also being carried out, department officials said.

Aung Kyaw Hein, chief officer of the Rural Development Department in Loi Lim Township, said that the villagers are planting perennial trees in collaboration with department officials to preserve the weather, prevent water shortage in spring wells and make the natural environment green.—Nyein Thu/GNLM



The Department of Rural Development in Loi Lim Township is implementing the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project, Village Development Project, and Green Rural Development Project to increase the family income of the rural people and the sustainable development of the rural socio-economic life.

Big protests mark global anger at Covid restrictions

MORE than 100,000 people protested in Australia, France, Italy and Greece on Saturday, sparking clashes with police as they railed against Covid-19 measures and government sanctions against the unvaccinated aimed at prodding more people into getting jabs.

Dozens of protesters were arrested after an unauthorized march in Sydney, with the city's police minister branding those who took part as "morons".

Organizers had dubbed the protest a "freedom" rally. Attendees carried signs and banners reading "Wake up Australia" and "Drain the Swamp".

In France, where police de-

ployed teargas and water cannon against some protesters, an estimated 160,000 took to the streets in nationwide protests against President Emmanuel Macron's health pass that will drastically curtail access to restaurants and public spaces for unvaccinated people.

'Don't touch our children'

"Freedom, freedom", chanted demonstrators in France, carrying placards denouncing "Macron, Tyrant", "Big Pharma shackles freedom" or saying "No to the pass of shame".

The demonstrations highlight the conflict globally between people caught between the advice of the World Health Organization

and other public health agencies and the need to earn a living -- or simply to return to a pre-pandemic lifestyle.

In Indonesia and the UK, governments have pressed ahead with easing of restrictions even in the face of surging.

Meanwhile, around 5,000 people demonstrated in Athens, carrying placards touting slogans such as, "Don't touch our children", according to an AFP journalist at the scene.

And in Italy protesters gathered in Rome to demonstrate against a mandatory "green pass" for indoor dining and entertainment. Earlier in Sydney, demonstrators pelted officers



Police in Sydney detained some protesters. **PHOTO: AFP**

with pot plants and bottles of water as they defied a month-long stay-at-home order, a day after authorities suggested the restrictions could remain in place until October.— AFP ■

Indian capital allows further relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions



Police personnel stop vehicles at a checkpoint during a weekend lockdown imposed by the government amidst rising COVID-19 coronavirus cases, in New Delhi on 18 April, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUTHORITIES in Delhi Saturday allowed further relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions across the Indian capital region, saying that from July 26 metro and buses will run at full capacity, while cinemas will reopen at half capacity.

The order issued by Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said bars will also be allowed to reopen with 50 per cent of the seating capacity from noon to 10:00 pm.

As per the order, all shops will be permitted to function

on all days of the week without any distinction of essential and non-essential goods and services between 10:00 am and 8:00 pm.

The gathering limit at wedding ceremonies and funerals has also been increased from 50 to 100.

"It has been observed that the number of COVID-19 patients and the positivity rate has declined considerably and the overall situation has improved," the DDMA order said, adding that due caution, however, has to be maintained for "consolidating the whole process of COVID-19 management".

The relaxations in restrictions have come amid a dip in the COVID-19 cases in the national capital. The city recorded 58 fresh COVID-19 cases and one death due to the disease during the past 24 hours, officials said Saturday morning. — Xinhua ■

Donations seek to save Tunisia from Covid catastrophe

WITH Tunisia's health system close to collapse after being overwhelmed by a surge of Covid-19 cases, other countries and even individuals have stepped in to stem the crisis.

European and Gulf nations, Tunisians abroad and ordinary citizens have organized equipment and vaccine donations that are now helping to battle the pandemic.

The small North African nation of 12 million people had been struggling to come up with the necessary vaccine doses even before Covid-19 really began to hit hard.

Now more than three million doses, most of them donated, have been sent, with the number set to reach five million by mid-August, the health ministry says.

China and the United Arab Emirates have each supplied 500,000 doses, while neighbouring Algeria gave 250,000.

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne at the French ministry for Europe and foreign affairs told AFP that France this week alone sent more than one million AstraZeneca and Janssen doses, enough to vaccinate "a tenth of the adult population".

But either because of sluggish diplomatic efforts by Tunisia or the global shortage of doses, vaccines have arrived late.

Tunisia has received just a sixth of the number of doses promised under the Covax programme, set up to ensure a fairer distribution of Covid-19 vaccines to lower-income countries.

It now has one of the world's highest coronavirus death rates.

According to an AFP count on Wednesday based on official reports, Tunisia recorded 1.4 daily deaths per 100,000 population over the previous seven days, placing it second-worst globally on this metric after Namibia. — AFP ■

COVID-19 vaccination for children likely to start by September

DIRECTOR of India's premier health institute All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, Randeep Guleria, Saturday said the country is likely to start vaccinating children by September.

Guleria made the remarks during an interview with a local television news channel NDTV, saying it will be an important move to break the chain of transmission.

"I think Zydus has already

done the trials in children and they're waiting for the emergency authorization. The Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials should be over by August or September, and by that time we should get the approval. Pfizer vaccine has been already approved by the FDA. Hopefully, by September, we should start vaccinating children, and that will be a big boost as far as breaking the chain of transmission is concerned," Guleria told the news channel.

According to India's federal health ministry, so far 427 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered across the country.

The ministry, however, does not give the population-wise break up of how many have received a single dose and how many were given the required two doses.

At present India is vaccinating population above 18 years of age. — AFP ■



Tunisians wearing protective masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic walk by on a street in the Kram area of the capital Tunis on 8 May 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS
IN BRIEFMeans of
production prices
rise in China

MORE than half of capital goods monitored by the government reported higher prices in mid-July compared with early July, official data showed Monday.

Of the 50 major goods monitored by the government, including seamless steel tubes, gasoline, coal, fertilizer and some chemicals, 35 registered rising prices during the period, 14 posted price declines and one saw its price remain unchanged, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Hog prices went down 2.5 per cent in mid-July compared with early July.

The readings, released every 10 days, are based on a survey of nearly 2,000 wholesalers and distributors in 31 provincial-level regions. — Xinhua ■

Israel freezes
UAE oil deal over
environmental
concerns

ISRAEL'S environmental protection ministry has announced its decision to delay implementation of a draft oil transport deal with the United Arab Emirates, freezing a project that has angered environmentalists.

The deal, which followed the establishment of diplomatic ties between the UAE and Israel last year, would see Gulf oil shipped by tanker to the Red Sea port of Eilat, then piped through Israel, mainland to the Mediterranean port of Ashkelon, from where it would be shipped. in Europe.

The oil deal, involving the Israeli state-owned Europe-Asia Pipeline Company (EAPC) and an Israeli-UAE company called MED-RED Land Bridge Ltd, has not been launched.

But activists have sounded the alarm on potential threats to corals in the northern Red Sea off the coast of Eilat. — AFP ■

Portugal's economic recovery must have
“an eye to the future”: PM

People at Chiado area in Lisbon. PHOTO: PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/AFP

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa said on Sunday that the country's economic recovery after the pandemic crisis will be

done “with an eye to the future.”

“For this reason, the two great engines of this recovery are to face two major challenges that lie ahead — the climate transition and the digital transition,” he said in a speech in the city of Coimbra, central Portugal.

What's more, he said, the country has an “ambitious programme” to ensure decent housing for the poorest, as well as “affordable housing for the middle class, in particular the new generations and students who need to move to attend university”.

The Portuguese head of gov-

ernment referred to an expected investment of 2.75 billion euros (3.24 billion US dollar) foreseen in the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) for the “immediate revival of the economy,” as well as “solving a structural problem in the country,” which is housing.

“If we want to keep the new generations among us, we have to ensure conditions so that the new generations can have autonomy in life and live among us. We have to create conditions for the new generations to become autonomous and to be able to build the family they want to build,” Costa said. — Xinhua ■

Israel launches direct flights to Morocco after normalization

THE first direct commercial flights between Israel and Morocco landed in Marrakesh on Sunday, more than seven months after the countries normalized diplomatic relations in a US-brokered deal.

Passengers from Tel Aviv arrived on an Israir flight early on Sunday afternoon to be met with dates, cakes and mint tea at a welcoming ceremony organized in their honour.

“I am originally from Marrakesh. I've come back here around 30 times but this time, the trip has a special flavour — it's as if it were the first time!” an emotional Pinhas Moyal told AFP from the tarmac, his mask and bag in the colours of the

Moroccan flag.

“This is a historic moment, this flight can only strengthen the bridge between Israel and Morocco,” said Benjamin Ron, a tour guide hoping to bring in other Israelis in the future.

Israir spokeswoman Tali Leibovitz told AFP that two to three flights per week were planned on the route.

A second flight, by the Israeli national carrier El Al, landed in Marrakesh later in the day.

El Al said it plans five flights per week to Marrakesh and Casablanca.

At a ceremony sending off the El Al flight attended by Moroccan envoy Abderrahim



Israeli tourists arrive in Marrakesh; Morocco was one of four regional states to agree to normalize ties with Israel last year. PHOTO: AFP

Beyroudh, Israel's Tourism Minister Yoel Razvozov said the service would boost “trade, tourism

and economic cooperation between the countries”, according to an El Al statement. — AFP ■

Iceland, home to world's most expensive feather treasure

ON a remote island in Breidafjörður Bay off the west coast of Iceland, a thousand-year-old harvest takes place — the hunt for elusive eiderdown, used to make some of the world's best duvets and quilts.

The handpicked down sells for thousands of euros (dollars) a kilo, catering to those looking for exclusive products.

Every summer, nearly 400 Icelandic farmers comb through hollow surfaces in the rock, on the sand or in the tall grass to unearth a few handfuls of the grey feathers of this polar duck.

From May onwards, the eider comes to nest in sparsely populated marine landscapes around much of Iceland's coast where there is seaweed to feed its ducklings.

“When there are eggs, we



Once harvested, the down is dried in the open air. PHOTO: AFP

only take a part of the down. And when the eider has already left the nest, we take everything,” Erla Fridriksdottir, head of King Eider, one of the country's main exporters, told AFP.

The eider, a sea duck from

the subarctic oceans, leaves a trail behind consisting of a natural treasure: one of the warmest natural fibres on the planet, both light and highly insulating.

The female, with her dark brown plumage with black

stripes — similar to that of a mallard but slightly larger — releases the down from her breast and lines her nest with it to insulate it during incubation.

Meticulous cleaning

About 60 nests are needed to produce one kilo of down — a quilt needs between 600 and 1,600 grams, depending on the quality chosen.

Worldwide, the annual harvest of eiderdown is no more than four tonnes, three quarters of which comes from Iceland, by far the world's largest producer, ahead of Canada and other countries bordering the Arctic. There are five Icelandic companies exporting eiderdown, according to the Eider Farming Association, but around 15 companies in total involved in some capacity in its production. — AFP ■

Yuan becomes No.3 global currency: report

THE internationalization of Chinese yuan accelerated in 2020 despite the ravaging global pandemic and the US government's containment of China's growth. Experts predict there exists great room for the currency's further internationalization, calling for convenient flows of the yuan and expansion of cross border investment avenues.

The yuan internationalization index reached 5.02 at the end of 2020, a sharp increase of 54.2 per cent from the previous year,

making it No.3 among international currencies. The rate exceeded the internationalization levels of the yen and pound, according to the 2021 RMB Internationalization Report released by the International Monetary Institute (IMI) under Renmin University of China on Saturday.

The growth was mainly driven by the steady recovery of the Chinese economy, opening-up of the financial sector, stable monetary policy and stepped-up international currency cooperation, said



Photo taken on 13 March 2018 shows the headquarters of the People's Bank of China in Beijing, capital of China. PHOTO: XINHUA/CAI YANG

the report.

Since the Chinese au-

thorities allowed yuan access to more foreign finan-

cial institutions, overseas investors are rushing to

make inroads into China, seeking potentially higher returns, experts say. After scrapping quota restrictions on investment via the Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor and the yuan-denominated Renminbi Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor programmes, Chinese financial regulators further lowered entry requirements and broadened the investment scope of these programmes to facilitate foreign investment.—AFP ■

Gaza suffers from stagnation in car trading amid Israel's import ban



A Palestinian man looks at a new car at a car show place in Gaza City, on July 25, 2021. PHOTO: RIZEK ABDELJAWAD/XINHUA

PALESTINIAN traders and citizens of the besieged Gaza Strip complain of a "fatal stagnation" in the car trading amid an import ban.

The Israeli authorities have prevented the entry of

imported cars into the strip for nearly three months and show no prospect of lifting the ban. Munib Abu Sido, an owner of a car import and export company in Gaza City, told Xinhua that he has never experienced

such bad conditions during his 30 years in the business. "I used to import at least 20 or 30 cars per day through the Erez crossing (like other auto traders), and most of them have been sold to customers before arriving," the 54-year-old father of five said.

"As you can see, my showroom now contains only 10 cars. I have failed to sell any of them for months," he added. What's worse, he has been forced to pay storage fees to the Israeli authorities for 40 cars, with approximately 5 U.S. dollars for each of them per day.

Meanwhile, vehicle prices have been witnessing a significant increase

since imported cars were not allowed to enter the coastal enclave, which makes demand far exceed supply. The price of modern type cars in Gaza has on average hiked between 3,000 to 15,000 dollars, according to the traders. Alaa Badwan, an owner of another car import and export company in Gaza, told Xinhua that the COVID-19 pandemic was another reason for the rapid rise in car prices in Gaza. "Many car manufacturers, especially the Korean ones, stopped the production for more than a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said, adding that the cost of transportation has also gone up.—Xinhua ■

News IN BRIEF

Tokyo stocks rise sharply in morning on record-high Dow

TOKYO stocks rose sharply Monday morning after the Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed to a record high late last week on the back of positive U.S. earnings reports.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average rose 383.78 points, or 1.39 per cent, from Wednesday to 27,931.78. Japanese markets were closed Thursday and Friday for national holidays.

The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange was up 26.63 points, or 1.40 per cent, at 1,931.04. — Kyodo News ■

China releases negative list for cross-border services trade in Hainan

CHINA'S commerce ministry has released a negative list for cross-border trade in services in its southern island province of Hainan, the first negative list for services trade in the country.

The list outlined 70 special management measures in 11 categories for overseas services providers, according to a statement on the website of the Ministry of Commerce.

For areas not included in the list, domestic and overseas services providers shall have a level playing field and enjoy equal market access in Hainan free trade port, the statement said. — Xinhua ■

Most Asian markets fall as traders struggle to track Wall St record

MARKETS in Asia mostly fell Monday morning, led by Hong Kong after Beijing at the weekend further cracked down on China's tech firms, while education companies were hammered as the government unveiled sweeping reforms of the sector.

The broad losses across the region came as traders continued to fret over the fast spread of the Delta coronavirus variant, which has sent infections spiking and forced some governments to reimpose economically painful lock-

downs or other containment measures. The selling extended from Friday, despite a strong lead from Wall Street, where all three main indexes ended at record highs with the Dow ending above 35,000 for the first time.

Investors have a packed agenda of possible market-moving events this week including the Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting, US economic growth data, and earnings from some of the world's biggest firms such as Apple and Amazon. — AFP ■

Amendment to the Open Tender No 3/2021

1. 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 was advertised in state-owned newspapers with the announcement that it would be sold in US dollars and an open tender would be opened on 21.7.2021. However, the open tender will be postponed to 30.7.2021 as the tender opening date is part of the government holidays. The announcement was made in the state-owned newspapers from 16.7.2021 to 18.7.2021.
2. The tender has been rescheduled to open on 30.7.2021, which is now included in the extended public holidays, so the tender opening date will be rescheduled as follows:
(A) Closing date and time: 20.8.2021 (14:00)
(B) opening date and time: 20.8.2021 (15:00)
3. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone numbers: 067-3409378 and 067-3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OSLO TRADER VOY.NO. (127S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OSLO TRADER VOY.NO. (127S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Moldova's lavender flourishes after post-Soviet decline

YOUNG couples and families pose for glamour shots as the sun lowers over Alexei Cazac's sprawling field of lavender outside the capital of Moldova.

"Once, in the first year the lavender was blooming, we came and the entire field was just filled with people," the 40-year-old farmer tells AFP on a recent visit.

"It's like the set of a photo shoot. We didn't plan it this way," he says.

Cazac, who planted his first bushels in 2015, is among a growing cohort of farmers in Moldova fuelling a resurgence in the aromatic herb, whose cultivation collapsed along with the Soviet Union.

The comeback in the small country bordering Romania has garnered attention not just from locals hungry for likes on social media, but also from global cosmetic firms headquartered in western Europe. — AFP ■

A month after Florida Surfside building collapse, recovery mission nears end

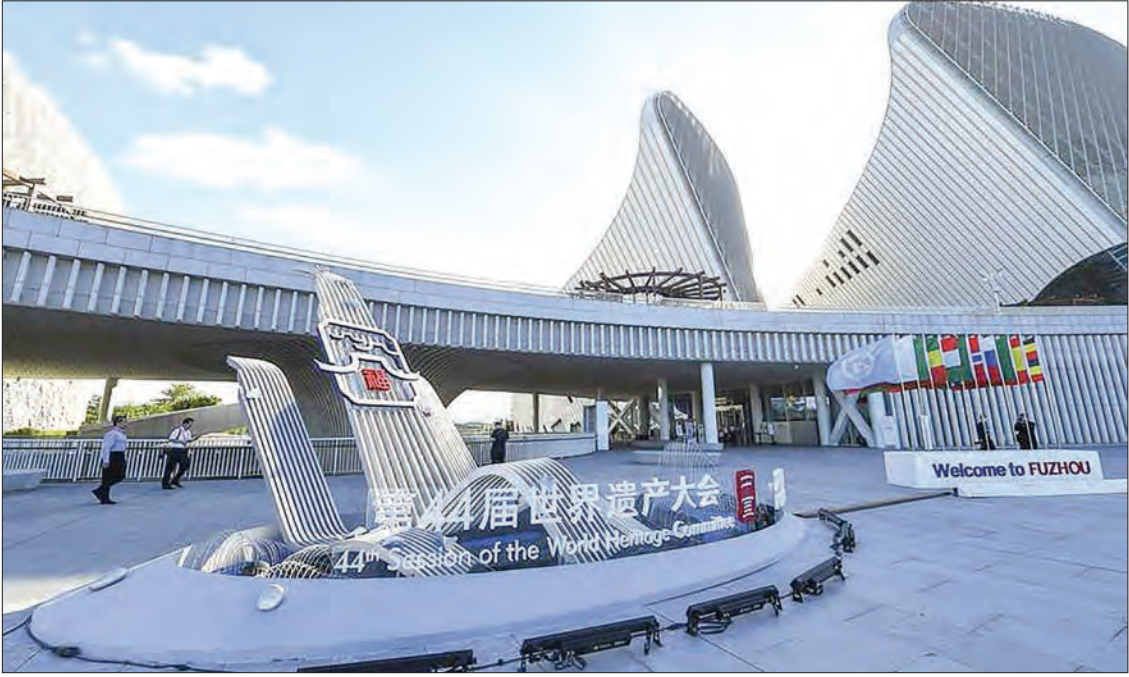
THE search for victims of the Florida apartment building collapse a month ago Saturday is drawing to a close, as rescue teams halted work at the site of the disaster that killed at least 97 people.

"It's hard to believe that a month has now passed since perhaps the greatest tragedy in our community's history," Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said on Twitter on Saturday.

"While the site of the collapse was confined to the size of just one block in a close-knit city, its reverberation has been felt far beyond our county, touching lives all over the world," she added in a video posted on social media.

Rescue workers ended their search on Friday for victims at the site of the Champ-lain Towers South, a 12-stoery beachfront building that partially collapsed overnight on June 24. — AFP ■

Five cultural sites in Saudi Arabia, Europe inscribed on UNESCO's world heritage list



Aerial photo taken on 16 July 2021 shows the Fuzhou Strait International Conference & Exhibition Centre, the main venue for the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO, in Fuzhou, capital of southeast China's Fujian Province. PHOTO: XINHUA/SONG WEIWEI

FIVE cultural sites in Saudi Arabia and Europe have been inscribed on the world heritage list, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced on Saturday.

The decision was made during the UNESCO World Heritage

Committee's 44th session held online and chaired from Fuzhou, China.

Hima Cultural Area in an arid, mountainous area of south-west Saudi Arabia won the status as it contains a substantial collection of rock art images depicting hunting, fauna, flora and lifestyles in a cultural continuity of 7,000 years, said UNESCO in a press release.

Travellers and armies camping on the site left a wealth of rock inscriptions and petroglyphs through the ages and until the late 20th century, most of which are preserved in pristine condition. The trans-national site, "The Great Spa Towns of Europe," comprises 11 towns located in seven European countries — Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. — Xinhua ■

Greece's first underwater museum opens ancient world to dive tourists

EMERGING from the crystal-clear turquoise waters of the Aegean Sea, Hans-Juergen Fercher has just returned from his fourth dive to where mounds of 2,500-year-old wine pots mark the site of an ancient shipwreck — and Greece's first underwater museum.

"This is a combination of diving and archaeological diving. It's diving into history," says

the 48-year-old psychiatrist after pulling himself onto the deck of the Triton dive boat.

"It makes it special and unique."

The museum beneath the waves at Peristera, a rocky outcrop off the island of Alonissos, opened in 2020, though the site has been largely mothballed until now due to Covid-19 restrictions.

As Greece opens up its vital

tourism industry, the site offers an example of a new and more sustainable source of revenue.

Divers like Fercher and Danish wine-cellar maker, Lisette Fredelund, are willing to pay 95 euros (\$110) a dive — about 50 per cent more than the cost of a regular recreational scuba outing — for a guided tour of a site once the preserve of professional archaeologists.

"It was just amazing," said Fredelund. "I was just, while we were down there, trying to imagine what it had been like being on a vessel transporting wine."

More to come

More wrecks have been discovered in the area — the middle of the country's largest marine reserve — holding out the prospect that more such museums will open. — AFP ■

Frenchman's Tokyo hunger strike over 'abducted' kids in third week

A Frenchman on hunger strike in Tokyo seeking access to his children said an appeal from President Emmanuel Macron to Japan's leader had "changed nothing", as his protest entered its third week.

Vincent Fichot, 39, says his two children were abducted by their Japanese mother, and he has been on hunger strike since July 10 in a bid to be reunited with his family.

For two weeks, the former finance worker — who has lived in Japan for 15 years — has sat night and day outside a train station near the Olympic Stadium, where the opening ceremony for the virus-post-

poned Tokyo Games was held on Friday.

Macron, who attended the ceremony with Paris set to host the next Olympics in 2024, held talks Saturday with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

During their meeting, Macron brought up Fichot's "extremely tragic situation", according to the French president's office, which called the issue a "priority".

Joint custody of children in cases of divorce or separation does not exist legally in Japan, where parental abductions are common and often tolerated by local authorities.

Fichot's wife accused him



Vincent Fichot, 39, says his two children were abducted by their Japanese mother. PHOTO: AFP

in court of domestic violence but later retracted the claim, he said. His wife's lawyer re-

fused to comment to AFP, but denounced "biased" media reports. — AFP ■

Beijing urges Washington to stop 'demonizing' China as US official visits

BEIJING urged Washington to stop "demonizing" China on Monday as rancour marked the start of talks with the highest-level US envoy to visit under President Joe Biden's administration.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman's visit to the northern city of Tianjin is the first major meeting between the world's leading economies since March discussions in Anchorage between the countries' top diplomats collapsed into mudslinging.

Sherman's trip aims to seek "guardrails" as ties continue to deteriorate on a range of issues from cybersecurity and tech supremacy to human rights in



A screenshot of Wendy Sherman during her Senate confirmation hearing for deputy US secretary of state on 3 March 2021. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

"The hope may be that by demonizing China, the US could somehow... blame China for its own structural problems," Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Xie Feng told Sherman, in a readout issued by China's foreign ministry early Monday.

"We urge the United States to change its highly misguided mindset and dangerous policy," the statement quoted Xie as saying, adding that Washington views China as an "imagined enemy".

Xie also described relations as at a "stalemate" and facing "serious difficulties". — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Democrats tap Republican Trump critic for US Capitol riot probe

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday named an outspoken Republican critic of former president Donald Trump to join the committee probing the January 6 US Capitol insurrection, two days ahead of its first hearings.

The top Democrat in Congress announced the appointment of Representative Adam Kinzinger, who voted to impeach Trump over the riot, in a statement hailing the "great patriotism" he would bring to the panel's mission "to find the facts and protect our democracy".

Hundreds of Trump's supporters, many associated with ultra-nationalist and white supremacist groups, stormed the US legislature six months ago to halt President Joe Biden's confirmation.

They had been egged on by Trump, whose fiery speech earlier that day falsely claiming election fraud was the culmination of months of baseless claims about a contest he lost fairly to Biden. — AFP ■

Man accused of trying to kill Mali president dies in custody

A man accused of trying to kill Mali's military strongman Assimi Goita, the figure behind two coups in less than a year, has died in custody, the government said on Sunday.

The suspect, whose identity has not been revealed, had been taken into custody following the assassination attempt at Bamako's Grand Mosque on Tuesday.

"During investigations... his health deteriorated" and he was then hospitalised, but "unfortunately, he has died," the government said in a statement.

It added that an autopsy had been immediately ordered to determine the cause of death. A man armed with a knife lunged at Goita after prayers for Eid al-Adha on Tuesday, according to an AFP reporter at the scene. — AFP ■

French parliament adopts vaccine passports law despite protests



Over 160,000 people protested on Saturday against the health pass, with demonstrators brandishing slogans including "vaccines: fake freedom". PHOTO: AFP

FRANCE'S parliament voted to make vaccine passports a key part of daily life in the bat-

tle against Covid-19 on Sunday, after a compromise between lawmakers from the upper and

lower houses.

The breakthrough in talks came a day after France was again shaken by protests against the rules that saw over 160,000 rally and dozens arrested.

President Emmanuel Macron last week ordered that the health pass -- proof of full vaccination or a negative test -- would be required for the French to visit venues such as cinemas or nightclubs.

The announcement was a move by Macron to make vaccinations the top weapon against Covid-19 as new variants emerge, essentially requiring people to become vaccinated if they want to continue daily routines.

Those changes were im-

plemented by decree, but parliament has been engaged in a marathon session since Tuesday debating whether to extend them.

Vaccine passports have encountered fierce opposition from some, who believe they erode civil liberties.

The ruling party has faced a tough task pushing the legislation through parliament. Pro-Macron MPs control the National Assembly, but the Senate -- the upper house -- is dominated by the opposition right.

The Senate had approved the legislation but added numerous amendments that the government feared risked limiting its impact. — AFP ■

Tunisian president suspends parliament, dismisses PM

TUNISIAN President Kais Saied announced Sunday the suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi following a day of protests against the ruling party, which condemned the move as a "coup d'etat".

Earlier Sunday, thousands of Tunisians had marched in several cities protesting against the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party, criticizing what they said were government failures in the North African nation and a crippling coronavirus surge.

After Saied announced parliament's suspension following an emergency meeting at his palace, the sounds of car horns and fireworks filled the streets.

In Tunis, hundreds defied a coronavirus curfew to congregate on the capital's roads.

"Finally some good decisions!" Maher, celebrating in the city's northwest, told AFP.

Thirty-something Nahla, brandishing a Tunisian flag, was jubilant. "These are courageous decisions — Saied is unblocking Tunisia," she told AFP. "This is the president we love!"

Since Saied was elected president in 2019, he has been locked in a showdown with Mechichi and parliament speaker Rached Ghannouchi, a rivalry that has blocked ministerial appointments and diverted resources from tackling Tunisia's many economic and social problems.



A Tunisian protester waves the national flag at an anti-government rally in front of parliament in Tunis on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

'Imminent danger'

"We are navigating the most delicate moments in the history of Tunisia," Saied said Sunday. He said the constitution did not

allow for the dissolution of parliament, but did allow him to suspend it, citing Article 80 which permits it in case of "imminent danger". — AFP ■

Myanmar team to take training depending on Suzuki Cup's fixtures



Myanmar national men's football team formed in the middle of this year. PHOTO: MFF

MYANMAR squad will make preparations depending on the fixtures of the ASEAN Suzuki Cup scheduled for later this year.

The ASEAN Football Federation will hold the 2020 ASEAN Suzuki Cup, which was postponed last year due to its inability to host it, from 5 December 2021 to 1 January 2022.

The group stage draw ceremony for the tournament is scheduled for 10 August, but the ASEAN Football Federation is renegotiating with its members to postpone the event as the Covid-19 epidemic continues to rise

in Southeast Asia.

The ASEAN Football Confederation (AFC) has recently announced that the 2018 format of the tournament will be played in four groups of two teams each. Group matches, semi-finals and finals will be played at home and abroad. The tourney will be held in the form of Centralized Venues, with one or two host countries selected amidst the pandemic situation, officials said. The ASEAN Football Federation is planning to cancel most of the competitions scheduled for this year due to the pandemic but

it's trying to host the ASEAN Suzuki Cup.

The Myanmar national team has paused training after the remnants of the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Second Round qualifiers in the middle of the year and will be able to set the training date only after the match date for the Suzuki Cup is confirmed, according to the football officials.

Head coach Antoine Hey, a German national, will handle the Myanmar men's national football team ahead of the Suzuki Cup. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

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.

'Immortal' Peaty makes British history by defending Olympic swimming crown

ADAM Peaty labelled his achievement in becoming the first British swimmer to defend an Olympic title an "immortal moment" after claiming gold in the 100m breaststroke on Monday.

Peaty lived up to his billing as the overwhelming favourite by powering to the line in 57.37 seconds, ahead of Dutchman Arno Kamminga (58.00), the only other swimmer besides Peaty to ever go under 58 seconds. Italy's Nicolò Martinenghi took bronze in 58.33.

It is now seven years since Peaty was last beaten in the event, a run that includes his gold medal in Rio in 2016, when he broke the world record in the

heats and then again in the final.

"It doesn't matter what happens, these moments are immortal," Peaty said after his latest Olympic triumph. "I will take these moments for the rest of my life." Peaty has broken the world record five times in total and also won the 100m breaststroke at the past three world championships.

"I believe I've been given a gift and that's why in the last 25 metres I can find something no one else has got," he said. "I don't want this gift to be wasted."

The unstoppable Peaty turned at the halfway mark in 26.73 and was never threatened, finishing 0.63 second clear of Kamminga. — AFP ■



Adam Peaty labelled his achievement in becoming the first British swimmer to defend an Olympic title an "immortal moment" after claiming gold in the 100m breaststroke on Monday. PHOTO: AFP