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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.

Statement on national cause for peace process and prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19

1. NUG declared as a terrorist group that leads the terrorist acts issued an announcement "Announcement on the State of Emergency" on 7 September 2021 with attempts of violent incitement to undermine the socio-economic life of the people and peace and stability of the State.

2. Depending on the terror incitement, it was found that so-called PDF terrorist groups and some elements

of some EAOs committed issuance of statements and talks supporting that violent incitement, which is posing threats to the people. It was seen that they chose the terror way against the democracy without trying to solve the political problem in line with the political way under the law.

3. The Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) meeting formed with NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations

(EAOs) held the meeting 19/2021 on 7 September 2021 with an attendance of 35 participants from nine organizations. In his opening speech, Leader of PPST NMSF (Mon) Chairman Nai Aung Min said the PPST has explicitly declared it would try to solve the current political crisis through inclusive dialogues with the participation of relevant organizations based on the essence of the NCA. He said that

efforts are being made to vaccinate the entire people as quickly as possible for carrying out the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19.

4. At the meeting, meeting participants discussed that the trend of political confrontation between the government and NUG brings loss to the country and the people.

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Uru Bridge upgrade set to be completed in 2022

THE Bridge Department of the Ministry of Construction implemented the Uru Bridge upgrade project in Sagaing Region. It is scheduled to complete by the end of March 2022, according to the ministry.

The Uru Bridge located on Thekkekyin-Phaungpyin-Hkamti road of Hkamti District of Sagaing Region was constructed across the Uru River using K4 billion of Union budget. Currently, the Bridge Construction Task Force (2) of the Bridge Department conducts the upgrade work with eight experienced engineers including the Director of Bridge Construction Task Force (2), and more than 80 workers.

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Upgrading works of Uru Bridge is underway. The new Uru Bridge is 1,090 feet long and 26 feet wide and has a 3-foot-wide pedestrian on each side. The waterway clearance of the bridge is 135 feet in width and 22 feet in height. It can withstand 60-tonne loads.

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NUG is making attempts to cut off the government from the international community at the UN General Assembly to be held in September. They also discussed that KNU/KNLA (PC) would continuously stand on the NCA for their stance.

5. The State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, since the time when it has taken the State responsibility, adopted and has been implementing the Five-Point Road Map and Nine Objectives. The road map and the objectives have straightforwardly declared **“Emphasis will be placed on achieving durable peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)”**, and all the work processes are undertaken accordingly.

6. The Tatmadaw has announced statements on ceasefire and perpetual peace 20 times from 21 December 2018 to date. During the over two years and eight months period, the ceasefire and perpetual peace were built.

7. The formation of the Tatmadaw’s Peace Negotiation Committee

on Ethnic Armed Organizations was amended on 1 February 2021 to open the way of dialogue forever for holding continuous talks if the ethnic armed organizations wish to talk with the Tatmadaw, if necessary, until the perpetual peace process was accomplished.

8. Now is the time of the whole world suffering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic starting from early 2020 to date. During the period, the State Administration Council is striving for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 with vigorous efforts as much possible as it can for the whole country and the entire people by holding the policy **“No one is important than the life of the people”**. Among the people undergone the medical examination for the COVID-19 virus in the third week of July during the third wave period of the pandemic, 41 per cent of them were found positive results in Myanmar. As the government is striving for prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19, the infection rate reached just 10.37 per cent in early September, mitigating some 30 per cent.

9. It was found that as COVID-19

is an infectious disease based on the virus with a high genetically development rate, it will not totally disappear. The global countries, including Myanmar, need to take adequate time for monitoring, preventing and controlling such diseases.

10. The vaccination process against COVID-19 is being undertaken for the people residing in the EAOs areas, those from IDP camps and Bengalis from Rakhine State. The Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provision Government of Myanmar often said that emphasis is being placed on the upgrade of hospitals and dispensaries across the nation and providing treatment for the COVID-19 patients without leaving any region, race and organization in the COVID-19 vaccination and prevention, control and treatment activities.

11. In this situation, it was regrettably found that terrorist NUG committed release of incited announcements to undermine the peace and stability of the State and NLD party extremists and so-called NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorists blew up the bombs and committed attacks and firing to

the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19. All the international organizations need to know the above-mentioned incidents, killings and atrocities over innocent people by these terrorist groups.

12. Health, Education and Literacy Project-HELP and several organizations, which are performing health, education and development of the people residing along the Thai-Myanmar border in KNU Dupalaya District and Kayin State objected to the violently incited announcement of NUG.

13. The government has decided to continue the effective coverage of prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 in the entire nation, the progress of the peace process, the security and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people and the peace and stability of the State. The information was released that all organizations and entire ethnic people emphasizing the national cause are requested to cooperate with the government.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Uru Bridge upgrade set to be completed in 2022

FROM PAGE-1

“Our aim is to facilitate the transportation, and we conducted the bored pile foundation using new technology next to the old bridge so that the vehicles can pass the old suspension bridge. The vehicles can use the old bridge till today. We will start the deck construction process and replacement of the plate girder in early October. We estimated to complete the operation in March 2022 mini-budget. Currently, we complete 70 per cent of operation,” said Director U Aung Thiha of Bridge Department.

The new Uru Bridge is 1,090 feet long and 26 feet wide and has a 3-foot-wide pedestrian on each side. The waterway clearance of the bridge is 135 feet in width and 22 feet in height. It can withstand 60-tonne loads.

The steel trusses will be

used for the bottom portion and approach. The bored piles with a diameter of 1.8 metres will be also drilled. Moreover, it will contain four 135 feet long plate girder spans, according to the Bridge Construction Task Force (2).

The old bailey bridge has weight restrictions due to ageing and allows only 13-tonne trucks.

Currently, the government starts the upgrade of the bridge, which will withstand 60-tonne vehicles, to provide the trade flows of the Sagaing Region with a proper transport system.

The upgrade works were operated in January 2021. When the operation is finished, it will be good for the trade flows of the region and it will be also easy for the locals to travel to the upper part of the Sagaing Region, according to the Construction Ministry. — Pwint Thitsar/GNLM

Elderly people receive 2nd COVID jabs at Kyauktalone IDP camp

HEALTHCARE officials gave the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines to internally displaced persons over the age of 65 at the Kyauktalone IDP camp in Kyaukpuyu, Rakhine State yesterday.

During the vaccination, staff from the General Administration Department made records for the vaccinated people.

Next, staff from the Kyaukpuyu Township Public Health Department measured the body temperature before vaccination.

Vaccines were given systematically, and only those with normal conditions are vaccinated, officials said.

“For the first time, we vaccinated 12 people in the IDPs Camp on 4 August 2021. We want to vaccinate people over the age of 65, as well as those over the age of 18 in this camp.

“I would like to say thanks to the volunteers who assisted in the vaccination works. I would also like to thank the Head of State for providing us



A health worker examines the body temperature of an IDP before inoculation.

with these vaccines to prevent COVID-19 disease,” said U Ko Ko Aung, the second leader of the Kyauktalone IDPs camp. “I am a volunteer at the camp helping people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 disease. There was no dizziness during the first vaccination.

“The second dose of vaccination gives me more self-confidence. I would like to thank the health department staff who came to our IDPs camp and the

government officials who arranged for the vaccination,” said Ma Yamin Thu, who is working as a volunteer at the IDP camp.

A total of 24 people have been vaccinated for the first time in the camp.

For the second time, a total of 21 people, 12 on 2 September and nine on 8 September were vaccinated, according to an official from the township public health department. — July Kyel (IPRD)/GNLM

Infection rate of COVID-19 in the third wave has declined to some extent

THE infection rate of COVID-19 in the third wave has declined to some extent thanks to the utmost efforts of the government and systematic restrictions with examining the contact persons and managing the stay-at-home programme. The government set an aim to decline a half down of infection rate. It was found that the declining rate had registered by 24.17 per cent since 3,180 patients tested positive on 1 August and a total of 2,173 patients tested positive out of 8,991 on 22 August. The good supervision and well control of the authorities concerned as well as the collaborative efforts of the people could help drop the infection rate.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 9th coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 23-8-2021)

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in Eleventh Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting via Video Conferencing

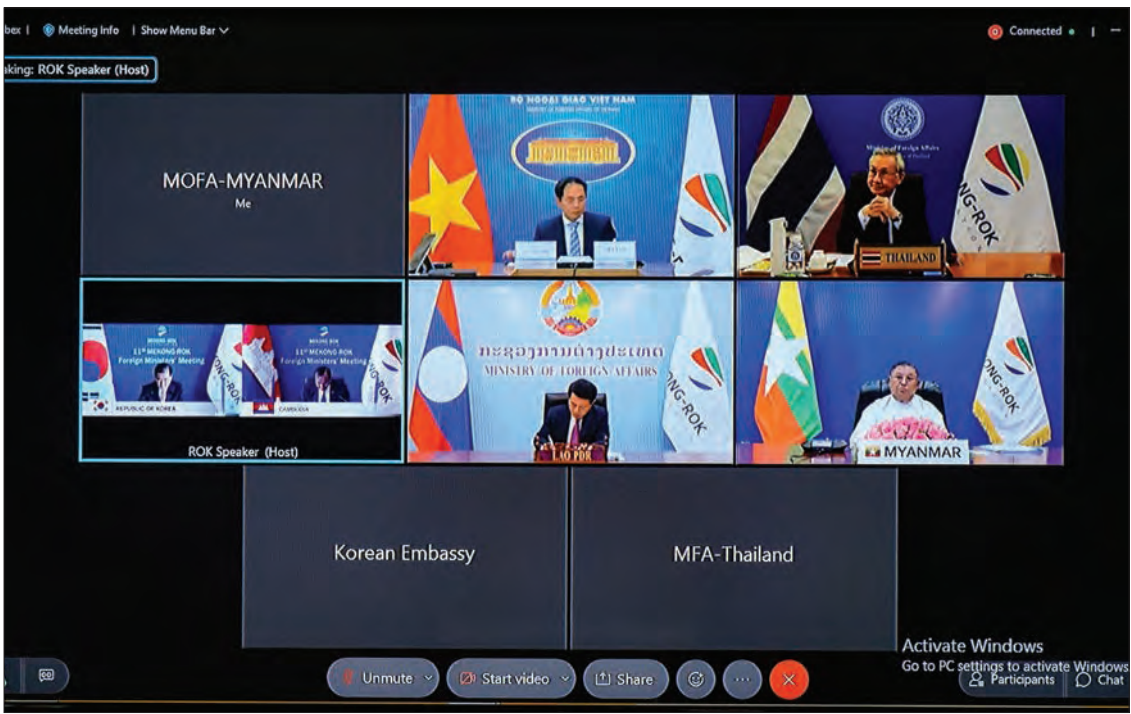
U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, attended the 11th Mekong-Korea Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting via video conference in the afternoon of 8 September 2021, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Cambodia and Mr Chung Eui-yong, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea with the participation of Foreign Ministers of the member countries; Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam.

At the meeting, the Foreign Ministers reviewed the progress of Mekong-Korea Cooperation and exchanged views on the future plan of cooperation under the framework.

In the Statement, Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin expressed special thanks to the Republic of Korea and Mekong countries for the assistance including provisions of medical supplies and financial assistance to Myanmar in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

He commended the Re-



public of Korea's active role in vaccine multilateralism to ensure safe, effective and accessible COVID-19 vaccine and appreciated the ROK for providing Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support the efforts of Mekong countries to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Union Minister further appreciated ROK's annual contribution to Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund (MKCF) to

implement projects in each Mekong country, and the contribution of 4 million USD to the Fund this year. He also welcomed the approval of the 5th Batch of MKCF projects for 2021 to be implemented in member countries, including Myanmar, this meeting.

Moreover, the Union Minister supported the extension of "Mekong-ROK Exchange Year 2021" to the year 2022 for celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Mekong-ROK Cooperation. He

also expressed his confidence in the planned establishment of Mekong-ROK Biodiversity Centre in Myanmar as a catalyst to boost cooperation in the conservation of biodiversity in the Mekong region.

With regard to the future cooperation, the Union Minister stressed the requirement to intensify cooperation on health security sector for prevention, control and treatment of emerging and reemerging communicable diseases includ-

ing new variants of COVID-19, to upgrade the Mekong-ROK cooperation mechanism for supporting the economic resilience of member countries and, to enhance cooperation in higher education as well as technical and vocational education training for the youths.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also present at the meeting.

The meeting adopted the "Co-Chairs' Statement of the Eleventh Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting", and endorsed the Fifth Batch of 7 projects which includes a project for Myanmar worth 0.2 million USD. The project will be implemented by Mawlamyine University on the impact of migration on rural development with special emphasis on agriculture of Mon State.

Mekong-Korea Cooperation was established between Mekong countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea in 2011 with the intention to promote friendship and cooperation between the Mekong region countries and the ROK and to narrow the development gap among Mekong countries. —MNA

2,702 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 8 September, total figure rises to 423,104

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 423,104 after 2,702 new cases were reported on 8 September 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 370,599 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 16,173 after 91 died.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 7-9-2021, a total of 4,887,029 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 2,981,877 people have been vaccinated two times and 1,905,152 people once.—MNA

53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting, 35th ASEAN Free Trade Area Council Meeting, 24th ASEAN Investment Area Council Meeting and ASEAN Economic Ministers and ASEAN Business Advisory Council Consultations held



THE Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo participated at the 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting, the 35th ASEAN Free Trade Area Council Meeting, the 24th ASEAN Investment Area Council Meeting and Economic Ministers and ASEAN Business Advisory Council Consultations held via video conference at 8 am on 8 September 2021 from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

The Meetings were chaired by Dato Dr Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II of Brunei Darussalam and attended by ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM), ASEAN Free Trade Area Council Ministers, ASEAN Investment Area Council Ministers, Senior Economic Officials (SEOM), ASEAN Business Advisory Council Members, Secretary-General of

ASEAN Secretariat and representatives.

In the ASEAN Free Trade Area Council Meeting, the ministers noted the implementation of ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement and welcomed the status of the review of the agreement. The ministers also endorsed the list of foods and agricultural products as essential goods into the annexe of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Implementation of the Non-Tariff Measures on Essential Goods under the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The ministers encouraged ASEAN Member States to notify the trade-related measures to WTO and ASEAN Secretariat according to the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement and WTO's Agreement.

The Union minister said that Myanmar will participate actively

in regional commitment while facing the challenges by the COVID-19 and current situation. He also supported the developing of the guideline for the Tariff Reduction Schedule transposition which provide the transparency and certainty for the intra-ASEAN trade and encouraged the Coordinating Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (CCA) to finalize the guideline. The Union Minister welcomed the progress of the General Review of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and supported the ASEAN Secretariat's Paper on the proposed ways forwards for Long-Standing Issues to be incorporate in the General Review of ATIGA.

In the ASEAN Investment Area Council Meeting, the ministers noted the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. The ministers welcomed the launch of the

ASEAN Investment Report (AIR) 2020-2021 and adopted in principle for the ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework (AIFF). The ministers also noted the ASEAN Investment Surveillance Report 2021 and the report of the Senior Official to the ASEAN Investment Area Council Meeting.

The Union Minister welcomed the ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework (AIFF) to be adopted as one of the priorities economic deliverables of Brunei Chairmanship in 2021. He also exchanged views on the priority areas of the investment promotion in the post-COVID-19. The Union Minister highlighted the SMART Program which has been introducing for Myanmar's Investment Promotion and Facilitation and supported the ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework (AIFF) that contains principles and actions to facilitate the inflow of investment into ASEAN as the region gears up towards post-pandemic economic recovery and looked forward to its implementation.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister joined the ASEAN Economic Ministers and ASEAN Business Advisory Council Consultations which was attended by ASEAN Economic Ministers and the members of ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) from ASEAN Member States. ASEAN Business Advisory Council reported to the Ministers about the progress of the ABAC's 2021 activities, the preparation of ASEAN Business and Investment Summit and arrangement of the Business Award, the trade facilitation program, the digital

trade connect and the cooperation of health and tourism sectors. After hearing the report, the Ministers provided guidance for further process.

At the consultations, the Union Minister shared the experience of the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment measures with the close cooperation of the private sector and formulation of the Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan which will be implemented as the National Mid Term Plan, in line with the UN SDGs, ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and GMS work programme to recover the country economy from the reverse impact of COVID-19.

In the evening, the Union Minister attended the 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting. At the meeting, the ministers exchanged views on COVID-19 prevention, control, treatment, and vaccination programme in their respective countries. Union Minister informed that the government's vaccination programme targeting 50 % of population over the age of 18 at the end of this year, and the facilitation and liberalization of importation and distribution of COVID-19 related medicines and medical equipment.

The 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting will continue on 9 September 2021.

Deputy Minister and senior officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and the representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and Ministry of Commerce also attended the meetings.—MNA

Installation of 33kV power cable to temporarily close Twantay Canal

THE Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems issued a waterway reminder that the installation of 33kV Hlinethaya-Twantay power cable across Twantay Canal

will be undertaken between mileposts 11.5 and 12 of the canal from 8 am to 4 pm during the period from 11 to 13 September.

During the working period, the su-

pervisory team will temporarily prohibit the running of vessels upstream and downstream in the waterway of the canal.

The vessels which will drive in the

canal need to wait at a safe place from the workplace. The vessels should drive in the canal passing the workplace only if the supervisory team allows them.

—MNA

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Union Information Minister inspects central press in Yangon

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn visited the Central Press of the Printing and Publishing Department yesterday evening in Yangon.

The Union Minister firstly met with the departmental officials and addressed the meeting. He said it is learned that the central press has long been a printing and publishing place of historical records of the country, and the Prime Minister strongly encourages the print media. The civil servants need to provide the public with accurate knowledge through the print media as well as the right ideas to the young people on the path to future democracy, he continued.

The Union Minister added the importance to transform print media into a modern one, and he urged the employees to work together for the development of the print media business.

Deputy Director-General of the Printing and Publishing Department U Ko Ko Naing presented the history and operation of the Central Press, and the Union Minister inspected its operation. — MNA

The MoI Union Minister inspects around the central press in Yangon yesterday.



120 prisoners receive COVID-19 jabs at Natsingon labour camp in Palauk Tsp



Inoculation for inmates in progress.

A total of 120 prisoners were vaccinated against COVID-19 at Natsingon labour camp, Cor-

rectional Department in Palauk Township, Myeik District, Taninthayi Region yesterday.

This is the second vaccination given by public health staff, officials said.

Palauk Township Administrator U Myo Wai and officials visited the COVID-19 vaccination site and provided necessary assistance.

Those who have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are being issued with QR Code documents.

According to the township COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee, the document must be obtained as a travel document and must be stored properly to prevent damage. —Hnin Myu Lwin (Palauk)/GNLM

202 Myanmar nationals return home via Myawady border bridge

STRANDED Myanmar citizens have been safely repatriated from Thailand via Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) starting 1 August 2021, and a total of 202 Myanmar nationals returned home yesterday.

Myawady District Deputy Administrative Officer U Aung Chan Nyein and local officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

All the returnees must take COVID-19 tests and the positive ones will have to take medical treatment at Mae Kanal and Shwe Myawady



Returnees undergo reception process.

COVID-19 centres.

The latest group of returnees included 96 males and 106 females from different regions and states. — Htein Lin Aung/GNLM

Myanmar to host ASEAN ICT Awards 2021

THE ASEAN ICT Awards, an initiative and recurring project, under the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2015, ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020, ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2025, ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN) and ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM) were annually held by the ASEAN countries since 2012, and Myanmar will be the host country for ASEAN ICT Awards 2021.

The contest includes four stages and those who want to compete in the first level can apply to ADGSOM via Coun-

try Coordinator at <https://aseanictaward.org.mm>. In the second round, the judges will conduct a preliminary judging process online for the presentations of the contestant. The ASEAN Judges and the Industry Experts of ASEAN's partner countries such as China, Japan and ROK will make final judging in the third round, and as the final round, the winners will be awarded at the ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN) meeting to be hosted by Myanmar. — Myo Min Thura/GNLM

Weapons, ammunition confiscated in Mongyai of Shan State



Arrestees and seized weapons, ammunition and car.

A joint team of security forces confiscated a total of 9 guns and 54 rounds of ammunition in a car while conducting a search operation in Mongyai Township, Lashio District in Northern Shan State yesterday afternoon.

The vehicle involved in the armed trafficking was a white

colour Crown Athlete (1J-1547) and Sai Lin Aung Khaing (23 years old), the driver, his wife Nan Mo Aye (20 years old), who both live in Muse, and Sai Soe Moe Aung (21 years old) who lives in Namhkam Township, are being prosecuted under the law at the township police station. — Khin Mar Lar/GNLM

Imports of anti-COVID-19 devices, medical products continue daily

THE Ministry of Commerce is making efforts to ensure people have access to the essential medical supplies that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, arranging continuous importation on public holidays.

On 8 September (yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment and medical products, including oxygen plants and concentrators, were imported by 15 companies and transported by vehicle, including two bowsters.

A total of 41 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by two bowsters, two oxygen storage containers, 3,506 empty oxygen cylinders, one oxygen plant, one oxygen generator, 1,608 oxygen concen-

trators for home use, 7,500 sets of test kits, 31,600 sets of PPE suits, and 33 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse, Chinshwehaw, Lwejel, Myawady and Tachilek trading posts and the Yangon International Airport.

Two vehicles carrying liquid oxygen were transported to Yangon and Monywa and one oxygen plant to Yangon, officials said.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importations of essential medical supplies required in prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



Anti-Covid equipment and medical aids are daily imported through land borders. Lorries and bowsters are transporting them to the needed areas.

Second dose of COVID-19 vaccines given to local people in Mongyang Tsp



A local receives the second shot of Covid vaccine in Mongyang Township in Shan State(East).

THE second round of COVID-19 vaccination was conducted to the elderly and local people over the age of 65 at the designated vaccination centres in the villages in Monglwe village-tract, Mongyang Township, Kengtung District, Shan State (East) on 7 September.

Healthcare workers and officials from General Administra-

tion Department, departments and civil society organization performed the vaccination works in Monglwe Village, Nammok Village and Ponlong Village in Monglwe village-tract, Mongyang Township.

The second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was given to the elderly and local people over 65 years of age as per the health

guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

U Aung Zin Oo, chairman of the township administration body, and members of the committee supervised the vaccination.

From 28 August to 7 September, 1,554 people were vaccinated against COVID-19 in Mongyang Township. — Khun Ye Htwe (Hsihseng)/GNLM

IDPs receive first COVID jabs at five MraukU IDP camps

THE first dose of the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine was given to the internally displaced persons over the age of 18 living in temporary shelters of MraukU Township in MraukU District of Rakhine State at five vaccination sites yesterday.

Dr Khin Maung Than, Head of Township Public Health Department, health workers, administrators and camps' in-charges conducted the first vaccination processes under the guidance of MraukU Township Administration Body Chairman U Soe Soe Thet.

Before the vaccination, the health workers check the body temperature, blood pressure and blood oxygen level at five vaccination sites — Naratsar camp, Koe Na Win camp, Aung Zedi camp, Dine Gyi old village and Ywar Thit camps. The officials observed the people for 30 minutes after vaccination, and also conducted education programmes for them.

A total of 171 people from five IDP camps received their Sinopharm vaccines yesterday. — Khin Maung Tun (IPRD)/GNLM



The first inoculation drive in MraukU IDP camps.

Black gram price up by K50,000 per tonne within one week



Kyat weakening against the US dollar in the forex market caused the price of black grams to spike.

THE price of black gram (urad called in India) has risen by K50,000 per tonne within a week, according to Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre).

The black gram fetched only K1,400,000 per tonne in the domestic market on 2 September, whereas it touched a high of K1,451,000 per tonne (FAQ/RC) on 8 September.

Kyat weakening against the US dollar in the forex market caused the price of black grams to spike.

Moreover, the price rise is attributed to the relaxation of the bean import quota by India.

India set an import quota on beans including black gram

and pigeon peas starting from 2017. Myanmar earlier had to export black bean and pigeon peas under the quota system and limit period.

On 15 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 up to 30 November 2021.

According to this statement, the previous notifications dated 19 March 2021 and 26 March 2021 were cancelled.

Additionally, 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, as per the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Commerce and India's counterpart signed on 18 June.

Myanmar yearly produces about 400,000 tonnes of black gram and 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas.

Myanmar is the top producing country of black gram that India demands. Besides Myanmar, other beans such as pigeon peas, green grams and yellow peas, are also grown in Australia and Africa, Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association stated. — NN/GNLM

Potato from Ywangan area fetches high price

THE newly harvested fresh potato from the Ywangan area is regularly flowing into Thirimarla Vegetable Wholesale Market in Mandalay, according to potato warehouses.

About seven to eight trucks load of potatoes are daily supplied to Thirimarla Vegetable wholesale market. The prices are higher than last year. The potato was priced the highest of K700 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) last year, whereas it fetches up to K900-1,000 per viss depending on size and quality, said U Aung Moe Naing, an owner of Aung warehouse in Mandalay.

At present, the inflow of potatoes from the Ywangan area to the Mandalay market is steady. Meanwhile, the harvest time has already finished



About seven to eight trucks load of potatoes are daily supplied to Thirimarla Vegetable wholesale market. The prices are higher than last year.

in other regions and states. Last year, flooding the market resulted in a price drop.

Nevertheless, this staple food potato is highly demanded this year amid the COVID-19 consequences as raw potato can last several months, re-

sulted in the price rise, he continued.

Along with the price rise, other vegetables such as cabbage, kidney bean and cauliflower are sold at regular prices. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Stock market up in August

THE values of shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) climbed up in August 2021 compared with those registered in the last two months, with over K300 million worth of 49,191 shares traded on the exchange, the YSX's monthly report showed.

In February 2021, K442 million worth of 77,388 shares were traded on the exchange. The figures extended further drops to K110 million worth of 19,816 shares in March 2021. Then, the market slightly rose in April with K280 million worth of 42,964 shares. The stocks were maintained in the bull market in May with 78,642 shares worth K432.448 million as well. In June, 79,296 shares worth K430.285 million were traded on the exchange. Then, the volume of shares traded in the equity market plunged to 36,855 shares in July 2021 and the trading value also slipped to K198 million.

Under Section 4 of the Trading Business Regulations, the stock trading was closed from 16 to 20 August 2021 as the long public holidays for COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities. The market resumed on 23 August 2021 as usual.

Last month, the shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH), the Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd (EFR) and Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd (AMATA) were traded in the equity market. The share prices per unit were closed at K8,900 for FMI, K3,200 for MTSH, K7,800 for MCB, K20,500 for FPB, K2,700 for TMH, K3,100 for EFR and K4,800 for AMATA respectively.

The stock markets worldwide have reported their largest declines since the 2008 financial crisis. Similarly, the local equities market is also scared by the COVID-19 crash, a market observer points out.

At present, people are keeping emergency savings, rather than investing in the COVID-19 crisis and current political development, he added.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis and political changes, Myanmar's securities market has been able to continue operating without stopping trading. Additionally, the stock market also rose in August.

In 2020, the value of stocks traded on the exchange reached a peak of K1.48 billion in February, whereas trading on the exchange registered an all-time low of K552.9 million in November due to the COVID-19 resurgences in Myanmar, the exchange's monthly report showed.

A total of K12.6 billion worth of 1.87 million shares by six listed companies were traded on the exchange in 2020, a significant drop compared to 2019. Over 2.4 million shares from five listed companies, valued at K13.39 billion, were traded on the exchange in 2019, according to the annual report released by the exchange.

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

Furthermore, YSX launched a pre-listing board (PLB) on 28 September 2020 to provide unlisted public companies with fund-raising opportunities and build a bridge toward listing on YSX, YSX stated.

The YSX was launched four years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge. — KK/GNLM

Take care of your health but don't be harmful to others

EVERYBODY needs to take care of the dangers triggered by various diseases which can affect those persons with terrible impacts leading to physical and mental losses.

Nobody can evade the danger of diseases. They all will gradually fade out from society one day due to the impact of any disease. Nobody can avoid the day they pass away. It is a universal truth. However, they should not give up on the danger of disease without any reason. While being alive, everybody needs to fight against the diseases through various ways and means as much as they can.

Generally, healthy and fit persons can endure the impacts of diseases.

Those persons with powerful immunity can easily overcome the health problems because they have been taking care of health along their lifespan. In consequence, they enjoy the advantage of their good deeds for self-health care.

Nowadays, some people do not have the fear of the terrible COVID-19 pandemic. They do not use protective gear such as masks, gloves, face shields and hand washing. They put masks on their chins which cannot prevent the danger of COVID-19. At a time when most people use the COVID-19 protective gears, some persons are still overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 with carelessness.

The people using the protective gears cannot impose impacts of any impacts from the pandemic on those with carelessness. But, viruses from those careless persons may spread in the air to cause further infection to others.

As such, anyone needs to take care of their behaviours without harming other persons. Especially, the ailing persons should take more care of their behaviours. Individual care is one of the factors to overcome the challenges of diseases. Everybody expects they all would have to enjoy the full longevity.

Generally, healthy and fit persons can endure the impacts of diseases. Those persons with powerful immunity can easily overcome the health problems because they have been taking care of health along their lifespan. In consequence, they enjoy the advantage of their good deeds for self-health care.



Covid has 'devastating' impact on fight against HIV, TB, malaria: Global Fund

The Covid-19 pandemic had a "devastating" impact on the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria in 2020, according to a report released by the Global Fund on Wednesday.

“TO mark our 20th anniversary, we had hoped to focus this year’s report on the extraordinary stories of courage and resilience that made possible the progress we have achieved against HIV, TB and malaria over the last two decades,” said Peter Sands, the Global Fund’s executive director. “But the 2020 numbers force a different focus. They confirm what we feared might happen when Covid-19 struck,” he said. “The impact of Covid-19 on the fight against HIV, TB and malaria and the communities we support has been devastating. For the first time in the history of the global fund, key programmatic results have gone backwards.”

“Significant” declines in HIV testing

There were “significant” declines in HIV testing and prevention services, the fund said. Compared with 2019, the



A patient walks past an HIV testing tent in Harare, Zimbabwe in June 2019. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

number of people reached with HIV prevention and treatment dropped by 11 per cent last year, while HIV testing dropped by 22

percent, holding back new treatment in most countries. Nevertheless, the number of people who received life-saving

antiretroviral therapy for HIV in 2020, rose by 8.8 per cent to 21.9 million “despite Covid-19”. The impact of the coronavi-

rus pandemic on the fight against TB worldwide had similarly been “catastrophic”, the report said.

The number of people treated for drug-resistant TB in the countries where the Global Fund invests dropped by “a staggering” 19 per cent, with those on treatment for extensively drug-resistant TB registering an even bigger drop of 37 per cent, it said.

TB treatment

The fund calculated that around 4.7 million people were treated for TB in 2020, around one million fewer than in 2019.

Interventions to combat malaria “appear to have been less badly affected by Covid-19 than the other two diseases,” the report found. “Thanks to adaptation measures and the diligence and innovation of community health workers, prevention activities remained stable or increased compared to 2019.”

The number of mosquito nets

distributed increased by 17 per cent to 188 million and structures covered by indoor residual spraying increased by three per cent.

Nevertheless, the Global Fund – which brings together governments, multi-lateral agencies, bilateral partners, civil society groups, people affected by the diseases and the private sector – said that its “rapid and determined response to Covid-19 prevented an even worse outcome”.

Fund disbursements

In 2020, the fund disbursed \$4.2 billion to continue the fight against HIV, TB and malaria and approved an additional \$980 million in funding to respond to Covid-19. The Global Fund said that since it was set up in 2002, it has saved 44 million lives and the number of deaths caused by AIDS, TB and malaria decreased by 46 per cent in countries where it invests.

SOURCE: AFP

Africa Covid death toll tops 200,000: AFP tally

The WHO has said that if excess deaths directly or indirectly linked to Covid are taken into account, the real toll could be double or triple.

MORE than 200,000 people have died from Covid-19 in Africa since the start of the pandemic, according to an AFP tally compiled from official records as of 1700 GMT.

A total of 200,254 fatalities have been registered in Africa, home to more than 1.3 billion people, since the virus emerged in China in December 2019.

After several deadly months, including some 27,000 deaths in July and 26,000 in August, the pandemic appears to be easing on the continent, with current daily figures of 617 compared to up to 990 in late July, a record for the region.

The figures are based on tolls communicated daily by health authorities in each country or by the UN’s World Health Organization (WHO) and include the coun-

tries of North Africa.

The WHO has said that if excess deaths directly or indirectly linked to Covid are taken into account, the real toll could be double or triple.

The total number of infections is also likely to be an under-estimate, given insufficient testing capacity in Africa.

“It’s probably a lot higher than that,” said researcher Glenda Davidson of South Africa’s Cape Peninsula University of Technology. “Testing resources are very low on the continent.”

Death registration processes were often delayed and inaccurate, she added.

The current fall in the continent’s tally is a result of sharp drops in the hardest-hit countries.

South Africa has recorded

83,899 deaths so far. But last week’s daily average of 7,400 new cases and 234 deaths is significantly lower than in late July, when the daily average was up to 20,000 new cases and 420 deaths.

Vaccination key

The decrease has been even more striking in Tunisia, which has recorded a daily average of 1,680 cases and 64 deaths: 41 and 39 per cent down on the previous week. The figures are well below those of July, which were described by the government as “catastrophic”, with up to 7,900 cases and 207 deaths daily.

Tunisia’s summer was also marked by a sharp acceleration in its vaccination drive, with nearly 37 per cent of the population having received at least one dose, com-

pared to just 11 per cent on 1 July.

Africa has seen the lowest vaccination rate to date of all the continents, with only eight jabs administered per 100 inhabitants administered, according to an AFP count, compared with 102 in Europe and 116 in the United States and Canada.

According to the WHO, around three per cent of sub-Saharan Africa’s population are fully vaccinated. By comparison, 52 per cent of people are fully vaccinated in the United States of America and 57 per cent in the European Union.

“The inequity is deeply disturbing. Just two percent of the over five billion doses given globally have been administered in Africa,” WHO Africa chief Dr Matshidiso Moeti said last week.

However, inoculation in South



Soldiers escort a homeless woman to a gathering point in the Johannesburg CBD during the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown.

PHOTO: MICHELE SPATARI/AFP

Africa has been picking up after a rocky start.

“The vaccine has been our weapon,” said South African public health practitioner Shakira

Choonara.

“It is contributing to certain changes in trends we are beginning to see.”

SOURCE: AFP



MYANMAR Daily Weather Report (ISSUED at 7:00 pm Wednesday 8 September 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 9 September, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Sagaing, Magway Regions and Kachin, Chin, Rakhine States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Ayeyawady Regions and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Nay Pyi Taw and isolated heavyfalls in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Taninthayi Regions and Northern Shan, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 September, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 September, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 9 September, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FLOOD Bulletin

(ISSUED at 08:00 hrs M.S.T on 8-9-2021)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (07:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Hinthada at Ayeyawady River has exceeded by about (3) inches above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (1) day.

According to the (07:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Zalun at Ayeyawady River has exceeded by about (5) inches above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (1) day.

FLOOD condition of Ngawun River

According to the (07:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ngathaingchaung at Ngawun River has exceeded by about (2) inches above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

Advisory

IT is advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Hinthada Township, Zalun Township and Ngathaingchaung, to take precaution measure.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlim.com.mm

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Conservation meet mulls moratorium on deep sea mining



This photo taken on 30 August 2018 shows an abandoned phosphate harbour in Aiwo on the Pacific island of Nauru. **PHOTO: MIKE LEYRAL / AFP**

THE world's top conservation forum will vote this week on whether to recommend a moratorium on deep sea mining, with scientists warning that ecosystems degraded while dredging the ocean floor 5,000 metres below the waves could take decades or longer to heal. The proposed ban is among a score of measures deemed too controversial to be decided remotely ahead of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Congress, meeting through Saturday in Marseille.

A "yes" vote by IUCN mem-

bers — some 1,400 national agencies, NGOs and indigenous groups — is a commitment "to support and implement a moratorium on deep seabed mining".

The measure also recommends greater oversight of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), an intergovernmental body that regulates the extraction of precious minerals from seabeds beyond waters falling within national exclusive economic zones. Parts of the ocean floor are rich in minerals, including so-called polymetallic nodules composed mostly of copper,

manganese, cobalt and nickel — metals increasingly in demand for electric vehicle batteries. But there's a catch: these fist-sized rocks are generally found on seabeds four to six kilometres below the surface. Commercial mining at those depths does not currently exist, but there are several companies investing in the technology that would make it possible. The ISA — mandated by the UN to regulate mineral-extraction from the high seas "for the benefit of humanity as a whole" — has approved 30 licences for exploration.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

NASA confirms Perseverance Mars rover got its first piece of rock

NASA confirmed Monday that its Perseverance Mars rover succeeded in collecting its first rock sample for scientists to pore over when a future mission eventually brings it back to Earth.

"I've got it!" the space agency tweeted, alongside a photograph of a rock core slightly thicker than a pencil inside a sample tube.

The sample was collected on 1 September, but NASA was initially unsure whether the rover had successfully held onto its precious cargo, because initial images taken in poor light were unclear.

After taking a new photo so mission control could verify its contents, Perseverance transferred the tube to the rover's interior for further measurements and imaging, then hermetically sealed the container.

"This is a momentous achievement and I can't wait to see the incredible discoveries produced by Perseverance and our team," NASA administrator Bill Nelson said in a statement.

Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for science, likened the achievement to the first samples of rock taken from the Moon, which are still invaluable to researchers today.

Perseverance's sampling and caching system is the most complex mechanism ever sent to space, with over 3,000 parts.

Its first target was a briefcase-sized rock nicknamed "Rochette" from a ridgeline that is particularly interesting from a geological perspective as it contains ancient layers of exposed bedrock.—AFP ■

Armed with voting rights, native groups join conservation fray

NEWLY armed with voting rights, indigenous peoples have come to the world's leading conservation congress meeting in the French city of Marseille both hopeful and wary.

They have demands, and will not go quietly into the night, their representatives say.

"It makes no sense for consultants and companies to come to teach us how to protect what we have always successfully protected," said Jose Gregorio Diaz Mirabal of COICA, which represents more than two million indigenous people across nine Amazon nations.

Their boldest proposal is for a measure to ensure that 80 per cent of the Amazon is declared a protected area by 2025.

The reasoning is simple.

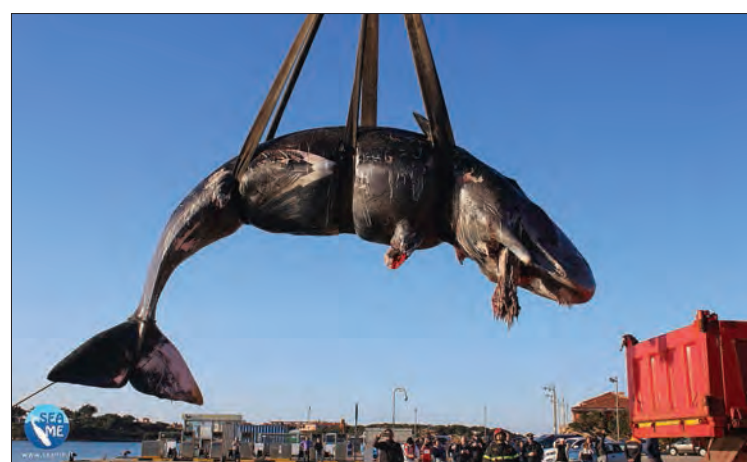
"Half of [tropical] forests, and 80 per cent of biodiversity" in the world are found in indigenous territories, said Peter Seligmann, a veteran conservationist who set up an NGO — Nia Tero (Our Land) — run in part by indigenous leaders.

Walter Quertehuani is a leader of the Wachiperi people in south-eastern Peru. His commune in the Amarakaeri reserve is recognized on the IUCN Green List for its work in protecting biodiversity.—AFP ■

Sea of plastic: Med pollution under spotlight at conservation meet

PLASTIC packaging and discarded fishing nets bob in the tranquil waters of the Mediterranean, signs of the choking pollution that has stirred strong feelings at the world conservation congress in the French port city Marseille this week.

"The Mediterranean is the most beautiful sea in the world — and one of the most polluted," said Danielle Milon, vice-president of the Calanques National Park on the edge of the city, where the International Union for Conservation of Nature is holding its congress. While the quantity of rubbish in the sea is well documented — the IUCN released a report on the issue last year entitled "Mare plasticum" — it is driving growing alarm among



Sperm Whale was found dead with 22kg of plastic in its stomach on the coast of Sardinia. **PHOTO: SEAME SARDINIA/AFP/FILE**

countries whose economies rely on tourism drawn to pristine beaches and sparkling waters. At the opening of the IUCN Congress, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and French

President Emmanuel Macron pledged to greatly increase the size of conservation areas off their Mediterranean coasts — as well as the rigour with which they are preserved.—AFP ■

On thin ice: Near North Pole, a warning on climate change



Polar bears depend on the frozen ocean to hunt for their main sources of food: seals and walrus. The bears are the bosses here, this is their home,' says Dmitry Lobusov. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

A massive icebreaker cuts its way through the frozen waters of the Arctic Ocean, clearing a path to the North Pole, all white as far as

the eye can see. But even here, the impact of climate change can be felt. Dmitry Lobusov has seen it. For 13 years he has captained

the "50 Let Pobedy" ("50 Years of Victory"), part of a growing fleet of icebreakers that Russia is using to assert its power in Arctic waters. The vast, nuclear-powered ships clear paths through the ice for commercial vessels, helping Russia to deliver its oil, gas and minerals to the rest of world, and eventually to set up an Arctic shipping route between Asia and Europe that Moscow has touted as a rival to the Suez Canal. Lobusov, a 57-year-old with a grey beard who often has a pipe in hand, stares out from the bridge as the red-and-black ship ploughs forward, so silent you can hear the ice cracking under its hull.—AFP ■

Hong Kong completes third runway as pandemic keeps city isolated

HONG Kong marked the completion of a third runway at its airport on Tuesday at a time when the once thriving international travel hub remains cut off from most of the world.

City leader Carrie Lam presided over a topping-off ceremony for the 3.9-kilometre runway, which took five years to construct on reclaimed land.

Thanks to its location and comparatively relaxed entry requirements, Hong Kong has long hosted one of the world's busiest international airports.

But it faces increasing competition from regional rival Singapore as well as rapidly expanding airports in mainland China.

The city's reputation as a travel hub was also dented by

months of political unrest in 2019, which at one point paralyzed the airport, and China's subsequent crackdown on dissent.

The business hub currently remains inaccessible to most people during the coronavirus pandemic because it maintains some of the world's strictest quarantine measures. Almost all arrivals must complete one to three weeks of mandatory hotel quarantine, a move that has hammered the travel industry and left the city isolated.

The construction of new runways often faces strong opposition from environmental groups in western nations but Hong Kong's airport expansion saw little protest.



Chief executive leader Carrie Lam (centre) at the topping-off ceremony for the 3.9km runway. **PHOTO: HONG KONG GOVT/AFP**

Before the coronavirus, the two runways were already operating well beyond their capacity of receiving and sending 420,000 flights per year.

The third runway is expected to start operations sometime in 2022.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lao health officials step up COVID-19 checks on migrant workers

Lao health officials will beef up screening and quarantine procedures for Lao nationals returning from Thailand, in a bid to stem the spread of COVID-19 infections.

As COVID-19 spread in Thailand, Laos is at greater risk of the highly infectious Delta variant, especially if people enter Laos from Thailand illegally and avoid screening, local daily Vientiane Times reported on Tuesday.

Thousands of Lao nationals are returning from Thailand during the pandemic, according to the National Taskforce Committee for COVID-19 Prevention and Control.—Xinhua ■

Rally of Japan cancelled because of pandemic



Sebastien Ogier leads the WRC standings but will not get the chance to claim the title in Japan. **PHOTO: TONY KARUMBA/AFP/FILE**

THE World Rally championship event in Japan, which was due to take place in mid-November,

has been cancelled because of continuing problems with the coronavirus pandemic, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

“Considering the characteristics of the WRC competition, which is held on public roads with the imperative co-operation of all in the local community, and the fact that in Japan the COVID-19 emergency cases continue to increase daily and alleviation of the situation remains unpredictable, together we were left with only one choice which was to, unfortunately, call off the 2021 WRC Rally Japan,” the organizers said in a statement.

It is the second successive year that organizers have had to cancel the Rally Japan which was due to appear last year for the first time since 2010.

Rally Japan was inked in as the 12th and final event of the championship calendar and the WRC said it would announce a replacement event shortly to conclude the season.

After eight rallies, Frenchman Sebastien Ogier (Toyota) leads the drivers' standings, 38 points ahead of his British teammate Elfyn Evans and Belgian Thierry Neuville (Hyundai). Among manufacturers, Toyota is 41 points ahead of Hyundai. After the Acropolis Rally in Greece which runs this week from Thursday to Sunday, two other events remain on the calendar, in Finland (1-3 October) and Spain (14-17 October).—AFP ■

Japan orders 150 million doses of Covid vaccine

JAPAN has agreed to buy 150 million doses of Novavax's coronavirus vaccine, with Japanese firm Takeda expecting to manufacture the formula for distribution early next year, the drugmaker said Tuesday.

The cost of the deal was not announced, and it is contingent on the vaccine being approved in Japan. Takeda will be in charge of carrying out local clinical trials.—AFP ■

Hong Kong: Travel restrictions ease for certain visitors

As of Wednesday, travellers arriving in Hong Kong no longer need to quarantine. The relaxing of restrictions is welcome, after summer outbreaks on the mainland made stricter travel rules necessary.

Travellers who have not been to medium or high-risk areas located on the mainland or in Macao will now be able to enter Hong Kong. However, the number of visitors will be capped at 2,000 people per day. Despite no longer being required to quarantine, all travellers still need to present a negative Covid test prior to arrival and must continue to take tests throughout the duration of their stay.— AFP ■

Thailand's new COVID-19 cases drop to lowest since July

THAILAND registered 13,821 new COVID-19 cases, the fewest since 22 July, while the number of new fatalities was still high at 241, the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration reported on Tuesday.

Out of the new infections, over 6,000 cases and more than half of the new fatalities were reported in Bangkok and its five neighbouring provinces.

More than 86 per cent of the new deaths recorded were among senior patients aged over 60 years and patients with underlying diseases.

Some 16,737 COVID-19 pa-

tients were discharged from hospitals over the last 24 hours after making a full recovering from the virus, almost 3,000 more than the newly infected, according to the CCSA. Since the pandemic started early last year, the accumulative number of COVID-19 stands at 1,308,343 with 13,283 total fatalities. Over 700,000 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered on Monday, making the total number of COVID-19 vaccination doses given in the country rose to above 36.6 million. About 15 per cent of the Thai population have been fully vaccinated against the virus so far.—Xinhua ■



Citizens wait to receive COVID-19 vaccines in Bangkok, Thailand, 9 July 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/RACHEN SAGEAMSAK**

NEWS
IN BRIEFJapan's economy
watcher sentiment
posts sharpest drop
in 18 months

BUSINESS sentiment among workers with jobs sensitive to economic trends in Japan marked the steepest fall in one and a half years in August as the nation saw record levels of COVID-19 cases, government data showed Wednesday.

The diffusion index of confidence in current conditions compared with three months earlier among "economy watchers," such as taxi drivers and restaurant staff, plunged 13.7 points from July to 34.7, the first drop in three months, according to the Cabinet Office. The decline was the biggest since a 14.0 point fall recorded in February last year, when coronavirus infections started increasing in the country and the economic outlook began to deteriorate rapidly. The latest benchmark index reading was the lowest since 31.2 logged in January this year. A reading below 50 indicates that more respondents reported worsening conditions than improving ones.

From around late July, the number of new daily infections continued to rise across Japan amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant and eventually exceeded 25,000 in mid-August, though cases have started to fall recently.—Kyodo ■

China unveils 5-year
plan for agricultural
green development

THE Chinese government on Wednesday unveiled a plan for the green development of the country's agricultural sector over the next five years.

The plan, jointly issued by six departments including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, identified resource protection, pollution control, restoration of agricultural ecology and the development of a low-carbon agricultural industrial chain as the key tasks for the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025). The plan set quantitative objectives for the agriculture sector to be achieved by 2025, which include attaining an overall pass rate of over 98 per cent in routine quality and safety tests of agricultural products.—Xinhua ■

Moscow vies for Arctic clout with nuclear icebreaker fleet

AS Arctic ice cover recedes with climate change, Russia is pinning its hopes for supremacy in the warming region on a fleet of giant nuclear-powered icebreakers.

Moscow sees the development of the Arctic as a historic mission and already has huge projects to exploit its natural resources. Its next big plan is for year-round use of the Northern Sea Route, a shipping lane through Arctic waters Russia hopes could rival the Suez Canal.

Here are some key facts about Russia's plans for the Arctic:

Historic ambitions

As an icebreaker called the "50 Years of Victory" left the port of Murmansk for the North Pole this summer, its captain told an



Russia has a fleet of five icebreakers and a container ship and is building four more nuclear-powered vessels within the next five years. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFP journalist on board that Russia has a special role to play in the Arctic.

"A third of our territory lies above the Arctic Circle. Our ancestors have long mastered

frozen waters. We are continuing this successfully," Dmitry Lobusov said.

President Vladimir Putin has made the development of the Arctic a strategic priority

and state companies such as Gazprom Neft, Norilsk Nickel and Rosneft already have major projects in the Arctic to extract oil, gas and minerals. "The Arctic region has enormous potential," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said earlier this month. "In terms of resources, we're talking about 15 billion tonnes of oil and 100 trillion cubic metres of gas. Enough for tens if not hundreds of years," he said.

Suez alternative

The Northern Sea Route links the Pacific to the Atlantic through Russian Arctic waters.

It is not currently navigable year-round without the help of icebreakers, though in summer some specialized classes of ships can pass through.—AFP ■

French builders hammer through Covid as homes go green



Logjam: More than half of French builders say they're experiencing problems with raw material supplies. **PHOTO: AFP**

FRENCH builders were as busy in the first half of this year as they were before the pandemic

as owners upgrade properties now that they spend more time at home, an industry group said

on Tuesday.

French builders were as busy in the first half of this year as they were before the pandemic as owners upgrade properties now that they spend more time at home, an industry group said on Tuesday.

Growth was driven by energy renovation, which grew by 3.3 per cent in the first half of the year from the same period in 2019. Overall, maintenance and renovation grew 2.2 per cent.

"Being confined and working from home has prompted French people to change their homes in order to live better," said Jean-Christophe Repon, president of the Confederation

of Crafts and Small Building Companies (Capeb).

Growth in energy renovation — which includes retrofitting and power-saving upgrades — is key to France meeting its climate change commitments as buildings account for 28 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions, Andreas Rudinger of think tank IDDRI wrote in an article last year. Overall activity in the sector — ranging from home building to energy upgrades — grew by 0.5 per cent from the first half of 2019.

"It's exceptional, when you consider the year we had in 2020," Repon said, adding, however, that "growth is very fragile".—AFP ■

Power cuts stall industrial revival in Syria's Aleppo

WORKSHOPS in Syria's Aleppo used to clatter on into the night before the war, but these days the machines grind to a halt at 6:00 pm sharp because of power cuts.

Fighting ended almost five years ago in the country's former economic hub, but limited electricity supply has hampered a full return to work in its manufacturing neighbourhoods that produce everything from plastic to food.

In the Karm al-Qatarji district famous for textiles, Mahmud Majkini, 31, said his business weaving medical gauze was still reeling from the effects of the decade-old conflict.

"I can't say the war has really ended as my machines haven't gone back to working around the clock," he said.

The conflict has ravaged electricity networks as well as oil and gas infrastructure across the country.

Syria's largest oilfields remain beyond the government's reach in the country's Kurdish-held northeast, and Western sanctions have hampered fuel imports from abroad.

Syrians in government-held areas have had to adapt their lives at home and work around power cuts of up to 20 hours a day.

Aleppo's industrial dis-



Syrian men work at a workshop in Aleppo. Syrians in government-held areas have had to adapt their lives at home and work around power cuts of up to 20 hours a day. **PHOTO: AFP**

tricts may receive a little more power than residential neighbourhoods, but Majkini says it

is still not enough for his business to fully get back on its feet.—AFP ■

Toyota to spend 1.5 tril. yen on battery development, supply by 2030

TOYOTA Motor Corp. said Tuesday it will spend 1.5 trillion yen (\$13.7 billion) by 2030 on the development and supply of batteries for electric and hybrid vehicles, as it pushes for carbon neutrality and competition intensifies over low emissions technology.

The world's biggest carmaker by volume is looking to nearly quadruple its global sales of electrified vehicles including hybrids to 8 million units in 2030 to meet stricter emission regulations in global markets.

Of the 1.5 trillion yen in investments, about 1 trillion yen will mainly be spent on increasing the number of production lines for the batteries to 70 or more by 2030, according to the automak-



Toyota said it has not changed its target to commercialize all solid-state batteries, which enable a longer travel distance for electrified cars per charge, by the early 2020s. PHOTO: TOKUMEIGAKARINOAOASHIMA/ WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/KYODO

er. It indicates that about 8 per cent of capital spending and nearly 5 per cent of the research and development budget will be battery related every year, given a Toyota forecast to allocate

about 1.4 trillion yen and 1.2 trillion yen in the respective fields for the business year through March 2022. "We will aim to achieve a per-vehicle cost of 50 per cent or less compared to

now" in the late 2020s, Masahiko Maeda, Toyota's chief technology officer, said in an online press briefing.

Maeda said the company aims to achieve the cost-cut goal by slashing roughly 30 per cent in the cost of manufacturing the batteries such as by developing materials that can replace cobalt and nickel, and improving power efficiency of vehicles by 30 per cent. The automaker also targets raising the endurance performance of the battery for the Toyota bZ4X, a new model of battery electric vehicles to be launched around mid-2022, to one of the highest levels in the world.—Kyodo News ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's state media tries to reassure investors over crackdown

China's recent clampdowns on a range of industries including tech firms and the education sector will not detract from its goal of opening up the economy, state media said Wednesday, as Beijing rushes to reassure rattled investors.

Sweeping regulatory changes over the past months have targeted everything from monopolistic behaviour to data security, rattling share prices and wiping billions off companies' valuations.

Authorities have ordered some of China's biggest tech firms to stop "disorderly expansion", scuppered the bumper listing of financial giant Ant group, and launched a series of antitrust and cybersecurity probes.

A fresh push by President Xi Jinping targeting the country's uber-rich and calling for "common prosperity" has added fire to public debate, as have moves to tighten oversight of pop culture.

But a widely shared article by a well-known blogger calling the clampdowns a "profound revolution" has prompted a scramble by public figures and state media to counter growing fears that the changes amount to a second Cultural Revolution. "Opening to the outside world is China's basic national policy, and this will not waver at any point," a front-page People's Daily editorial proclaimed on Wednesday.—AFP ■

Ministry of Electricity and Energy Invitation for Expression of Interest –EOI

1. The Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar hereby announced an Invitation to Expression of Interest –EOI to the local and foreign companies / organization to implement the economical size fertilizer factories for the following factories;
(a) No.1 Urea Fertilizer Factory (Sa-le)
(b) No.2 Urea Fertilizer Factory (KyunChaung)
2. The required information for EOI regarding about factories can be available in the Ministry's website <https://www.moe.gov.mm>. Please contact to following address to enquire other information:
Deputy Permanent Secretary (Energy)
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Office No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone no: 067 3410 599
3. EOI proposals shall be submitted to the following address in person or by parcel express not later than (12:00) noon at the date of 12th October 2021:
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Office No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone no: 067 3410 464

Ministry of Electricity and Energy Invitation for Expression of Interest –EOI

1. The Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar hereby announced an Invitation to Expression of Interest –EOI to the local and foreign companies / organization to operate with private public partnership for the following factories;
(a) No.4 Urea Fertilizer Factory (Myaungdaga)
(b) No.5 Urea Fertilizer Factory (Kangyidaunt)
2. The required information for EOI regarding about factories can be available in the Ministry's website <https://www.moe.gov.mm>. Please contact to following address to enquire other information:
Deputy Permanent Secretary (Energy)
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Office No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
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Office No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Phone no: 067 3410 464

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2114E/W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2114E/W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **9-9-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SEA MASTER VOY.NO. (135W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SEA MASTER VOY.NO. (135W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **9-9-2021** 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

Mexico to replace Columbus statue with indigenous woman

A statue of Christopher Columbus in the heart of Mexico City will be replaced by one of an indigenous woman, authorities said Monday, days before the country's 200th independence anniversary.

The figure of the Italian navigator, which was removed from Reforma Avenue last year as protesters vowed to topple it, will be moved to "a safe, dignified" place, the National Institute of Anthropology and History said.

It will be replaced by a sculpture of an indigenous Olmec woman made by the Mexican artist Pedro Reyes, Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said.

"It is precisely indigenous women who have perhaps had the greatest burden in the history of Mexico and to whom the least recognition has been given," she said.

The decision also represents an act of "social justice," Sheinbaum added, as well as recognition of 500 years of "indigenous resistance" since the Spanish conquest.

Activist groups last year organized a protest called "We're going to knock it down" for Monday, 12 October, the date marking Columbus' arrival in America in 1492. In Mexico, the date is commemorated as Dia de la Raza (Day of the Race), in recognition of the country's mixed indigenous and European heritage.—AFP ■

UN denies Sudan refugee camps used as bolthole for Tigray rebels

The UN on Tuesday denied claims that refugee camps in Sudan were being used by Ethiopian rebels as a bolthole after Ethiopian officials said fighters had been caught with refugee ID cards.

Tens of thousands of Ethiopian refugees have streamed across the border into Sudan since war broke out 10 months ago in Ethiopia's northernmost Tigray region, exacerbating tensions between the two Horn of Africa neighbours.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent troops into Tigray to topple the regional ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, saying the move came in response to TPLF attacks on army camps.

Although the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner vowed a swift victory, the war has dragged on and spread into the neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions.

In recent days, Ethiopian officials have said TPLF fighters recently crossed from Sudan to Ethiopia carrying IDs issued by the UN refugee agency UNHCR.

"The TPLF has tried to expand the conflict by entering Benishangul Gumuz and Amhara regions crossing the long Sudanese border," Ethiopia's foreign ministry said late Monday. "All of its attempts in these areas have proven futile but new evidence has come to the surface. Some TPLF soldiers infiltrating from the Sudanese side, have been captured carrying UNHCR ID cards."—AFP ■

Blinken says Taliban renew vow to let Afghans 'freely depart'



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (2nd-R) and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin (L) with Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani (R) and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Dr Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah (2nd-L). **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday that the Taliban had reiterated a pledge to allow Afghans to freely depart

Afghanistan following his meeting with Qatari officials on accelerating evacuations.

US President Joe Biden has

faced mounting pressure amid reports that several hundred people, also including Americans, had been prevented for a week from flying out of an airport in northern Afghanistan.

The Taliban told the United States that "they will let people with travel documents freely depart," Blinken told a news conference in Doha where he and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin met their Qatari opposite numbers.

"We will hold them to that," he added.

Qatar said that Kabul airport, largely closed since the conclusion of Washington's chaotic withdrawal from the country at the end of August, would hopefully reopen soon, potentially opening an important corridor for Afghans seeking to leave.—AFP ■

Fire at overcrowded Indonesian prison kills 41

A fire tore through an overcrowded Indonesian prison in the early hours of Wednesday when most inmates were asleep, killing 41 people and injuring dozens of others, an official said.

Firefighters extinguished the blaze — which was mostly contained within one block that housed prisoners jailed on drug charges — at around 3:00 am (2000 GMT Tuesday) and evacuated the victims. Television footage showed a massive fire raging through the prison block, with thick smoke billowing from the building as firefighters raced to put out the flames. "Forty-one inmates died, eight were badly injured and 72 others sustained minor injuries," Jakarta police chief Fadil Imran told a press



A fire at the Tangerang Penitentiary, just outside Jakarta, has killed 41 people. **PHOTO: AFP**

conference. Authorities were still investigating the cause of the incident at Tangerang Penitentiary, just outside the capital Jakarta, but suspected an electrical fault

may have been to blame. "I have checked the scene. Based on early observation, it is suspected (the fire) happened because of a short circuit," Imran said.—AFP ■

Beam, bolt flaws caused Mexico metro crash, probe finds



An altar with candles and flowers is seen near the section of an elevated track that collapsed bringing a train crashing down on 3 May in Mexico City. **PHOTO: AFP**

AN investigation into the Mexico City metro disaster that left 26 people dead concluded Tuesday that the buckling of beams and problems with bolts caused the elevated track to collapse.

The accident, in which an overpass gave way on 3 May, bringing a passenger train crashing down, has prompted angry demands for justice from relatives of the victims.

Norwegian engineering company DNV, which was hired by the authorities to investigate the causes, blamed the crash

on a structural failure in an initial report published in June.

In its final technical report released Tuesday, the firm said the collapse "occurred as a result of buckling of the north and south beams" and inadequate bolts that "caused part of the elevated section to lose its composite structure."

This led to cracks "that further reduced the structure's ability to carry the load," it added.

The investigation identified poorly welded, missing and

misplaced bolts.

Possible reasons for the collapse of the beams include mechanical and design deficiencies, according to the report.

The metro line, the city's newest, has been plagued by problems since it was opened in 2012.

An independent report with analysis of the root causes of the accident will be released at some point in the future, said Mexico City works chief Jesus Esteva.—AFP ■

Nuclear watchdog chides Iran for ‘seriously undermining’ monitoring

THE IAEA released a strong-worded report Tuesday saying monitoring tasks in Iran have been “seriously undermined” after Tehran suspended some of the UN agency’s inspections of its nuclear activities.

The latest report comes with diplomatic efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers at a standstill.

In February, Iran suspended some IAEA inspections in response to the United States’ refusal to lift sanctions on Iran and also limited IAEA access to monitoring equipment such as

cameras.

Initially Iran reached a temporary agreement with the IAEA under which it committed to preserve recordings from this equipment with a view to eventually handing them over to the IAEA.

However, that agreement between Iran and the agency ran out on 24 June and Iran “has failed to engage with the Agency at all on this matter for a number of months”, according to the report.

“Since 23 February 2021 the Agency’s verification and monitoring activities have been seri-



Outgoing President Hassan Rouhani inspecting one of Iran's nuclear plants. PHOTO: AFP

ously undermined as a result of Iran’s decision to stop the implementation of its nuclear-related commitments” under the 2015 deal, the report added.

A diplomatic source point-

ed out that the equipment was normally serviced every three months and that by now there would be a question over whether all the systems were “still operational”.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Taliban announce hardline government as protests grow

THE Taliban announced on Tuesday an interim government drawn exclusively from their own loyalist ranks, with established hardliners in all key posts and no women — despite previous promises to form an inclusive administration for all Afghans.

But as the Taliban transition from militant force to governing power, they face a growing number of protests against their rule, with two people attending a demonstration shot dead in the western city of Herat.

The government announcement was the latest step in the Taliban's bid to cement their total control over Afghanistan, following a stunning military victory that saw them oust the US-backed government on 15 August, days ahead of the chaotic pullout of American troops.—AFP ■

US embarrassed by private sector Afghan evacuations

PRESIDENT Joe Biden has promised to do everything in his power to rescue Americans stranded in Afghanistan and fearful of violent Taliban reprisals following the US military withdrawal.

But limited resources and diminished political leverage have opened the way for evacuation missions led by Republican politicians, former military personnel and private organizations that risk embarrassing the White House.

The United States managed to airlift more than 120,000 US citizens, Afghans and foreigners since the Taliban's lightning takeover on 15 August — but hundreds were left behind.

In a sign of the pitfalls ahead, the government was accused Tuesday of wrongly taking credit for, and even actively obstructing, the first mission to get Americans out since the completion of the withdrawal at the end of August.—AFP ■

Bolsonaro attacks courts, elections at Brazil rallies



A supporter of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro holds a national flag while standing on a military vehicle, outside the Alvorada Palace, during the Independence Day celebrations in Brasilia. PHOTO: AFP

PRESIDENT Jair Bolsonaro upped his attacks on perceived enemies including the Supreme Court and the electoral system

Tuesday, vowing to defend supporters’ “freedom” as Brazil marked its Independence Day with rival pro- and anti-govern-

ment rallies. Throngs of Bolsonaro supporters flooded streets with the green, yellow and blue of the national flag in Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and other cities, holding massive prayer sessions and chanting slogans in support of the embattled far-right leader.

Shouting “Get out, Bolsonaro!”, opposition protesters held their own rival rallies, an opening salvo ahead of elections in October 2022 that polls currently place the president on track to lose. Bolsonaro, whose popularity is at an all-time low, is seeking to fire up his base in the face of a flagging economy and a series of investigations targeting him and his inner circle.

Bolsonaro, a 66-year-old for-

mer army captain who is openly nostalgic for Brazil’s military dictatorship (1964-1985), warned his backers their “democracy” and “freedom” were under threat by the powers that be in Brasilia. “As of today, we’re going to start writing a new history here in Brazil,” he told the rally in the capital, where he kicked the day off with a flag-raising ceremony and Air Force flyover: With hardline backers urging a military intervention to give Bolsonaro unfettered power, there had been fears the day could turn violent, with echoes of the 6 January attack on the US Capitol by supporters of former president Donald Trump — to whom Bolsonaro is often compared.—AFP ■

Fate of Morocco’s ruling Islamists at stake in parliamentary poll

MOROCCANS head to the ballot box on Wednesday for parliamentary and local elections that will decide the fate of Islamists who have governed the kingdom since the Arab Spring uprisings.

Doors will open at polling stations at 8:00 am (0700 GMT) and close at 7:00 pm for the 18 million on the electoral roll, who will vote for 395 MPs and more than 31,000 local and regional officials.

King Mohammed VI will name a prime minister from the party that leads the parliamentary poll to govern for the next five years. The palace remains

the source of key decisions and strategic direction in the country of 36 million people. Swept to power in the wake of the 2011 uprisings around the Middle East and North Africa, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) hopes to secure a third term leading a ruling coalition. Compared with demands back then for an end to “corruption and despotism”, this year’s two-week election campaign has been mostly stable, with no large gatherings due to the coronavirus.

In the final days, however, PJD and its close rival the Nation-



Coronavirus concerns have made energetic election rallies few and far between in Morocco. PHOTO: AFP

al Rally of Independents (RNI) have exchanged heftier blows.

‘Suspicion’

Former prime minister and PJD leader Abdelilah Benkirane attacked the RNI boss, billionaire

businessman and Agriculture Minister Aziz Akhannouch, in a fiery Facebook video on Sunday.

“The head of government must be a political personality with integrity who is above suspicion,” he said.—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.

Teams to be confirmed after MNL II fixtures set for next year



Myanmar National League allows teams from the Myanmar National League II to qualify for the League I. **PHOTO: MNL**

THE Myanmar National League will only be able to confirm the participant teams after releasing the Myanmar National

League II fixtures next year.

After the 2020 season, three teams playing in MNL were disbanded, and the Myanmar National League allowed some teams from MNL-2 to qualify for the Myanmar National League I.

As a result, the number of teams in the MNL II competition has decreased and new teams will be added, but the number of teams has not been confirmed yet.

The first round of the tourney was cancelled after the 2020 Myanmar National League sea-

son due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and was cancelled again this year.

Eight teams competed in the MNL II in 2020, and the Myanmar U-19 youth team, which is formed for international competitions, is competing in the league under the name of Junior Lions.

Of the teams competing in the tournament, Chinland FC and Myawady FC will be relegated to the MNL next season, following a decision by a league committee meeting earlier this year.

Two new teams, including Dagon, are likely to be added, but the number of teams is likely to change as the tournament fails to take place this year.

The Myanmar National League II started in 2013 and has been held nine times.

Chin United won the 2013 version of the tourney, while Hanthawady United won in 2014, Southern Myanmar in 2015, Manaw Myay FC in 2016, City Yangon United in 2017, Royal Thanlyin FC in 2018, and Chin United in 2019 respectively. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Drive to succeed: golfing great Pak Se-ri

FIVE years after retiring, the woman who paved the way for South Korean golfers to dominate the ladies' game still exudes a sense of steely determination on the course.

Pak Se-ri addresses the ball before striking it straight and true with as smooth a swing as at the peak of her career.

Pak won the first of her 25 LPGA titles — the 1998 US Open — in her rookie season at the age of 20, the first Asian to win the oldest women's major. Her success inspired a generation of South Korean women to follow in her golf-shoed footsteps, dubbed the "Pak Se-ri kids". It was a moniker that weighed on her at first, giving her a "sense of burden" rather than pride, she told AFP.

And golf is perhaps the ultimate individual sport, with players having to confront their own weaknesses and team competitions such as the Solheim Cup rare exceptions rather than the rule. "I went to the US to solely pursue my personal goal," she said in her first international media interview for three years. "But at one point my dream also became someone else's."

Later she began to share her LPGA knowledge with her fellow Korean competitors, as her mindset shifted "to focus on what kind of a role model I could be". — AFP ■

Soccer: Japan defeat China for 1st win in World Cup final qualifiers

YUYA Osako netted the only goal Tuesday as Japan got their 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign back on track with a 1-0 victory over China. The win at Doha's Khalifa International Stadium earned Hajime Moriyasu's men their first points of the final Asian qualifying phase following a shock 1-0 loss at home to Oman in their opening Group B clash.

The Samurai Blue dominated the contest at one of the venues for next year's World Cup, but could only convert the one chance, when Vissel Kobe forward Osako volleyed home off a cross from winger Junya Ito in the 40th minute.

Moriyasu credited his play-



Players of Japan (blue) and China (red) stand for the national anthems prior to their World Cup qualifier match in Doha on 7 September 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ers for bouncing back with a positive attitude following last Thursday's disappointing loss to Oman at Panasonic Stadium.

"The players were deter-

mined to rebound and it created a good energy for the match against China. They won with hard work and smart play," Moriyasu said. — Kyodo News ■