THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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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.

Myanmar's sea strategically standing in the region full of living and non-living resources is an opportune entity for serving the State interests: Senior General

WITH the aim of controlling the measures on maritime security and the rule of law in the area from the onshore to the specific economic zone along Myanmar coasts, protecting the national maritime interests, conducting the tasks of search and rescue in the seas, combatting the sea-crossing crimes, exchanging the information, enhancing the diplomatic relations linking with international coast guards and contributing to the Tatmadaw (Navy) in the wars, a ceremony to constitute the Myanmar Coast Guard and commission the coast guard vessels into service yesterday took place at No 3 Naval Jetty in Yangon.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the ceremony and made a speech.

Officers and other ranks left four war vessels to be handed over by the Tatmadaw (Navy) and officers and other ranks from the Myanmar Coast Guard took the positions aboard the vessels.

The Chief of Staff (Navy) reported on the formation of the Myanmar Coast Guard. The commander of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command handed over the documents related to the vessels to the Director-General of the Coast Guard.

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State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends the ceremony to establish the Myanmar Coast Guard and commission its vessels into services at No 3 Naval Jetty in Yangon on 6 October 2021.

Pictures show the Senior General on board the Naval Vessel "Mottama" takes the salute of the Guard of Honour along with a single line formation of naval vessels led by Aung Zeya Frigate.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Law Amending the Foreign Exchange Management Law
Law No 57/2021 of the State Administration Council

1st Waxing of Thadingyut 1383 ME
6 October 2021

THE State Administration Council hereby promulgated this law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. This law shall be named "the Law Amending the Foreign Exchange Management Law".
2. Section 41 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law shall be substituted as follows: -
   "41. Anyone must not violate any prohibitions involved in the bylaws, rules, disciplines, notifications, orders, directives and procedures which were released under this law related to the foreign exchange management."
3. The word "or 41", included in Section 44 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, shall be cancelled.
4. The following section shall be inserted as Section 44-a, under Section 44 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law: -
   "44-a. If it is necessary to take action against anyone under Section 41, legal proceedings shall only be instituted with less than one year's imprisonment or fine or both."

I hereby signed it under Section 419 of the Constitution.

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Press release on updated status of cooperation with Ministry of Health and Gavi Covax Facility on COVID-19 vaccination

1. In Myanmar, the COVID-19 vaccination programme is being implemented with the objectives of reducing the morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19, preventing the further spread of disease, and reducing the country's economic impact due to the pandemic.
2. In order to obtain COVID-19 vaccines, Myanmar has coordinated with the GAVI COVAX Facility and bilaterally coordinated with the friendly countries which are producing COVID-19 vaccines. Myanmar contracted to buy 30 million doses of vaccines from India at the end of 2020. Although the GAVI COVAX Facility has delivered the COVID-19 vaccine supplies to other member states up to Round-4, there were several postponements regarding the vaccine delivery to Myanmar and any vaccine has not been yet delivered to Myanmar. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, India has temporarily suspended the export of vaccines so that only 3.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses (1.5 million doses by donation and 2 million by purchase) arrived in Myanmar.
3. As the State Administration Council guided and encouraged to get more COVID-19 vaccines and consequently to scale up the vaccination programme as per one of the prioritized tasks, 23 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines from government procurement and donation by friendly countries have been arrived in Myanmar as of 2 October 2021. Furthermore, Myanmar will receive additional 14 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines following donation and procurement from the People's Republic of China before the end of 2021. Myanmar is also working with friendly countries in order to produce COVID-19 vaccines locally. To promote private sector participation, the Ministry of Health has allowed private sector to import COVID-19 vaccines according to rules and regulations and has urged them to take part in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.
4. With the vaccines from the government procurement, donations and private sector importations, Myanmar has been implementing the COVID-19 vaccination programme according to Myanmar National COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan which was developed in line with the World Health Organization guidance. A total of 24 target groups has been designated and prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, including different age groups of people, health staff, inmates from jails and custody, persons with disabilities, members and families of ethnic armed organizations, people in IDP camps and students (12-18 years old). All the vaccination activities are recorded and reported in the Vaccine Management Information System-VMIS. Therefore, the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Myanmar is in a neutral manner without any discrimination, leaving no one behind irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, gender, socio-economic status or political affiliation. The certificates bearing QR codes has been issuing after the completion of vaccinations.
5. A total of 8.68 million people were vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines from 27 January 2021 to 4 October 2021. A total of 3.92 million people has received the full doses of two jabs and thus 10.63 per cent of the total population above 18 years old has been fully vaccinated. In addition, 4.76 million people have been vaccinated for their first dose. Therefore, a total of 12.6 million doses has been delivered accounting for 17.08 per cent of the total targeted doses. The COVID-19 vaccination programme will continue in line with the World Health Organization coverage standards for the vaccine respective to targeted groups.
6. Up to 30 September 2021, there were 16 terrorist attacks by unlawful organizations and terrorist groups at COVID-19 prevention and control sites, including COVID-19 vaccination posts, leading to deaths and injuries of the working people and people who came for vaccination.
7. Despite the mentioned terrorist attacks and other challenges, the Ministry of Health has accelerated efforts on prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing COVID-19 testing, collaborating closely with related Ministries, volunteers, donors and community-based organizations under the guidance of the State Administrative Council as well as close and continuous supervision by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Containment and Emergency Response Committee. During the third wave of COVD-19, as in countries around the world, the number of COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 positivity rate had surged due to Delta variants. However, due to strong cooperation by the community, the number of cases and deaths has decreased significantly. Consequently, Myanmar has been ranked at No. 6 in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and No. 5 in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 among the ASEAN Countries.
8. On 28 July 2021, the GAVI contacted the Ministry of Health to support Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines and UNICEF also discussed supporting cold chain readiness, ultra-cold chain refrigerators and supplying 0.5 ml AD Syringes for the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Myanmar. A series of meetings between the Ministry of Health, the GAVI, WHO and UNICEF were conducted on 3, 12, 16, and 23 August 2021 in order to discuss the GAVI COVAX Facility support on 4,048,200 doses of Pfizer vaccine as round-5 allocation and 2,242,800 doses of Sinovac vaccines as round-6 allocation to Myanmar.
9. When the COVID-19 vaccines from the GAVI COVAX Facility arrive in Myanmar, these vaccines will be delivered to Myanmar people under the current National Vaccine Deployment Plan. All the vaccination information will be registered in a Vaccine Management Information System-VMIS (vmis@mohs.gov.mm) under the supervision of Coronavirus Disease 2019(COVID-19) Containment and Emergency Response Committee and leadership from the Ministry of Health and related ministries.

The Ministry of Health

Myanmar's sea strategically standing in the region full ...

The Senior General receives the scale model naval vessel presented by the Commander-in-Chief (Navy).

FROM PAGE-1

The acting Director-General of the Department of Marine Administration handed over documents related to the Coast Guard to the Director-General of the Coast Guard who presented flags of the guard to the Commander of the Coast Guard Flotilla. The Commander-in-Chief (Navy) presented scale model naval vessels to mark the handover ceremony to the Senior General.

The procedures of the commission were conducted as the order of formation for the Coast Guard and announcement for the vessels as the commissioned vessels of the coast guard by the Chief of Staff (Navy), hoisting of the State flag and the flag of the Coast Guard, beating the bell eight times and commissioning procedure.

The Senior General and party viewed the vessels handed over by the Tatmadaw (Navy) to the Coast Guard, used in the military operations, security and the rule of law measures, war vessel sea naval exercises and naval flotilla sea exercises in the Myanmar water.

The Senior General aboard the War Vessel (Mottama) took the salute of the Guard of Honour. Meanwhile, War Vessels (Yan Taing Aung) and (Yan Gyi Aung) saluted the Senior General with 21 fires of the gun.

Frigate Hsinbyushin, Corvette Tabinshwehti and Fast Attack Vessels led by Frigate Aung Zeya saluted the Senior General in the single line formation together with the arrowhead formation salute of three transport helicopters, one transport plane and two maritime reconnaissance planes as well as the Vic formation of three fighter planes.

The Senior General presented the honorary emblem and gifts to the officers and other ranks of the war vessels and military aircraft and the coast guard vessels to officials.

The Senior General attends the event to establish and put into operation the Coast Guard of Myanmar yesterday.

In his speech, the Senior General said that Myanmar's sea strategically standing in the region full of living and non-living resources is an opportune entity for serving the State interests. The Coast Guard primarily focuses on the sea constabulary role and benign role. It should take responsibility for the protection of maritime interests, sea searching and rescue works, and environmental conservation at the sea.

Myanmar's coastal line possesses more than 1,400 islands endowed with resources and economic opportunities. Myanmar's coastal areas and water territory have sound foundations for operating marine and coastal tourism.

Moreover, the coast guard needs to take security measures for the sea lines of communication and deep-sea ports of Myanmar. The guard must arrest those who commit illegal fishing in the Myanmar Sea while protecting the Myanmar fishermen in their fishing works.

The coast guard was formed for the ocean-based economy called blue economy such as marine tourism maritime trade, deep-sea operations, offshore oil and natural gas production, and sea fishing, illegal trespass of others in Myanmar sea and rule of law in the sea.

The Tatmadaw (Navy) has rescued more than 4,000 persons from the sea from 2000 to 2021 and brought back more than 1,150 Myanmar citizens from Malaysia and India by war vessel. The coast guard needs to cooperate with the Tatmadaw (Navy) in doing so. The government formed the coast guard in line with the international rules and regulations for ensuring the peace and stability of the State and improvement of the economy, and development of the socio-economic status of the entire people. The theme of the guard was set as "Guard, Protect and Save Our Sea".

The ceremony was also attended by media personnel from local news agencies, daily newspapers, local TV channels and local-based foreign news agencies. —MNA

The newly-established Myanmar Coast Guard vessels are seen putting into operation.

It is necessary to produce natural fertilizers

EFFORTS are being made for the production of fertilizers from domestic plants. It is necessary to produce natural fertilizers through the wastes of animal breeding farms.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 1/2021 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 27-9-2021)

Systematic management is necessary to make livestock farming a role model in long-term plan: Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects the functioning of the Thilawa Multi-purpose Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Zone in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Region yesterday.

IN livestock breeding undertakings, regional self-sufficiency must be prioritized and then surpluses are to be exported as frozen meat and finished products, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in inspecting the functioning of the Thilawa Multi-purpose Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Zone located between the Yangon River and Hmawwun Creek in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

Chairman of Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Chairman of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited Lt-Gen Hsan Oo and officials reported on the functions of Thilawa Multi-purpose Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Zone, 26th-Mile Multi-purpose Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Zone and Shwemayin fish farm in Twantay Township, the previous undertakings of the zones and work progress and the implementation of the guidance of the Prime Minister.

After hearing the reports, the Senior General said the establishment and functioning of the agricultural and livestock breeding zones are aimed at ensuring sufficiency of meat, fish and seasonal fruits and vegetables in the Yangon Region. So, systematic management is necessary to make livestock farming a role model in the long-term plan. Research is also required on hatching to obtain good pedigrees in livestock breeding.

In livestock breeding undertakings, regional self-sufficiency must be prioritized and then surpluses are to be exported as frozen meat and finished products. As the country has to import milk and dairy products, local cow farms should try to manufacture dairy products successfully for import-substitute products. Good milking is the first priority and efforts must be made to manufacture value-added dairy products such as condensed milk, evaporated milk and butter.

Those operating the agricultural tasks need to understand the market and target and they need to cultivate the marketable and seasonal crops. They have to know manageable and commercial farming tasks and consider continuous production without exceeding the market demand. Local people must be urged to grow coconut plants in the coastal areas to prevent natural disasters.

In the farming tasks, techniques and quality strains must be distributed to the local people from the respective zones to emerge the modern, systematic agriculture and livestock farms. It is necessary to continuously fulfil the needs of not only military families but also the people to buy meat, fish and agricultural products at fair prices.

The Senior General and party inspected sample fish being bred at the Taiwan Multi-purpose Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Zone, duck eggs, Taiwan papaya species, jade Phigyan banana species, dairy products and coconut products and viewed round fish hatching process, fish farming and duck farming in the livestock zone where officials conducted the Senior General and party around the farm. —MNA

The Senior General pays an inspection tour around the duck farm in the livestock zone yesterday.

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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm** with your name and title.

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

Six-month National Planning Law of 2021-2022 Financial Year

Press Release

THE State Administration Council approved and issued the National Planning Law for the six months of the 2021-2022 financial year as the State Administration Council Law No 26 on 30 September 2021. The law came into effect on 1 October 2021.

2021 Union Taxation Law

Press Release

THE State Administration Council approved and issued the Union Taxation Law as the State Administration Council Law No 27 on 30 September 2021. The law came into effect on 1 October 2021.

Union Budget Law for six months from October 2021 to March 2022

Press Release

THE State Administration Council approved and issued the Union Budget Law for the six months from October 2021 to March 2022 as the State Administration Council Law No 28 on 30 September 2021. The law came into effect on 1 October 2021.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Working Committee to Address COVID-19 Economic Impact
Notification(3/2021)

6 October 2021

1. The Working Committee to Address COVID-19 Economic Impact released a statement on 11 September that the government will disburse a loan of one per cent interest rate for the one year using the COVID-19 fund to provide the livestock sector, including fish and prawn farming industries and the application forms can be taken out at UMFCCI (Yangon) and regions/states Chambers of Commerce and Industry offices during the office hours for convenience of loan applicants from regions and states between 13 to 30 September 2021.
2. It is here announced that the deadline for the submission of loans is extended to 10 October 2021 during office hours for convenience of loan applicants from regions and states, including the public holidays.

Working Committee to Address COVID-19 Economic Impact

MoTC deputy minister discusses cybersecurity at 6th Singapore int'l cyber week

DEPUTY Minister for Transport and Communications Brig-Gen Lu Mon attended the 6th Singapore International Cyber Week-SICW that is virtually held by the Singapore Cyber Security Agency from 4 to 8 October.

The Deputy Minister discussed cyber security threats and policies, implementation of cyber standards, enhancing cooperation on cyber and digital security issues, protection of important information and infrastructure and development of skilled human resources in cybersecurity with Ministers, Deputy Ministers and officials from other ASEAN nations. They also discussed regional cyber cooperation issues with representatives from the ASEAN dialogue partner countries.

The confer ence was attended by cybersecurity Ministers, Deputy Ministers from the ASEAN nations, the Secretary-General of the ASEAN and representatives from dialogue partner countries. — MNA

K800 mln to cover rural road development of Mandalay Region in 2021-2022FY

One of the rural road development sites in Mandalay Region.

IN the six months of the 2021-2022 financial year, a total of 13 rural roads will be developed in 13 townships in Mandalay Region at the cost of over K800 million, according to the Mandalay Region Rural Development Department.

The roads will be built to reduce the amount of waste in the fields planted by farmers and to be able to transport goods all year around.

"These roads are developed for the benefits of the farmers. In the past, planted crops were exposed to rain and were wasted as there was no production road in rural areas. With these roads, they can produce and transport anytime," said Director of the Rural Development Department U Soe Than. The tender process of the construction of roads is expected to be completed this month, he added.

It is reported that the rural production roads will be developed in Patheingyi Township, Madaya Township, Thabeikkyin Township, PyinOoLwin Township, Ngazun Township, Taungtha Township, Myingyan Township, Wundwin Township, Thazi Township, Pyawbwe Township, Yamethin Township, Myittha Township and Kyaukpadaung Township in Mandalay Region. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/ GNLM

Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue

A lorry is seen transporting anti-Covid equipment to the needed area.

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, by arranging continuous importation through trading posts, international airport and seaports with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

On 6 October (yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products, including oxygen plants and concentrators were imported by two companies and transported by three vehicles.

A total of 19.42 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by one bowser, two oxygen plants, 70 oxygen concentrators for home use, and 2.8 tonnes of masks were imported via Chinshwehaw and Myawady trading posts, seaports and Yangon International Airport.

One liquid oxygen tank was transported to Yangon and two oxygen plants were transported to Kume, respectively.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including online registration for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website: www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

Two Covid-positive patients deliver babies in Mongphyat Township

The caesarean section is underway for newborn babies.

THE two COVID-19 patients gave birth to babies in a caesarean section at the Mongphyat Public Hospital of Tachilek District in eastern Shan State yesterday and all were in good health, according to the township public health department.

Dr Ye Khaung and six health workers managed the birth of two baby girls of two women, who had tested positive on 4 and 5 October, in line with the health rules.

The mothers and two newborns are in good health and under the proper medical treatment at the township hospital. — Township IPRD/GNLM

Above 18-year-old people receive COVID-19 vaccines in Myitkyina

HEALTH workers have been vaccinating people over the age of 18 vaccinated at No. 9 Basic Education High School and IDP camps in Myitkyina, Kachin State since the morning of 16 September.

From 16 September to 5 October, a total of 38,274 people aged 18 and above who have not been vaccinated against the COVID-19 were inoculated.

The name of the COVID-19 vaccine is Sinopharm from the People's Republic of China.

The second batch of the vaccine will be given starting from 14 October, officials said. —Myitkyina District IPRD/GNLM

Inoculation for above 18-year-olds in progress.

Above 45-year-old people get COVID-19 jabs in Kyeintali

PEOPLE over the age of 45 received COVID-19 vaccines at a meeting hall of the General Administration Department in Kyeintali, Thandwe District, Rakhine State yesterday.

The sixth-day vaccination programme was launched from 9 am to 3 pm.

Ward and Village-tract Administrators provided serial numbers to people over the age of 45 who have arrived for the vaccination, and relevant Ward and Village-tract clerks called the individual immunization numbers for the local people at the vaccination site.

Security forces from the Kyeintali police station and members of the Fire Brigade also assisted in the vaccination work.

Health staff administers the Covid jab to a local in Kyeintali in Rakhine State.

A total of 138 people over 45 years of age from wards and village-tracts, including one religious leader, one civil servant, five family members of civil servants, 178 vendors and 26 volunteers got the COVID-19 jabs yesterday.– Khaing Moe Min (IPRD)/GNLM

1,717 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 6 October, total figure rises to 473,025

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 473,025 after 1,717 new cases were reported on 6 October 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 426,739 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 17,998 after 41 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 5 October 2021, a total of 8, 686,913 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 3,949,307 people have been vaccinated two times and 4,737,606 people once.—MNA

Myanmar artists, family members receive COVID-19 vaccines

WITH the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Ministry of Health and Yangon Region Government, artists and sculptors their family members from the Myanmar Artists and Sculptors Association (Central) received COVID-19 vaccines at No. (3) Basic Primary School in Bahan Township, at 9:30 am yesterday.

During the vaccination, healthcare workers and officials made records for the vaccinated people.

Next, healthcare officials measured the body temperatures, blood pressure and monitoring oxygen levels before the vaccination.

Vaccines were given systematically to the local people, and only those with normal health conditions are vaccinated, officials said.

The vaccines were administered to 86 elderly artists from the association and family members.

Elderly and current members of the Myanmar Artists and Sculptors Association received the COVID-19 vaccines for the first time and the second dose will be given on 3 November, officials said. — MNA

An artist receives the Covid jab.

Field inspection conducted for sea turtle conservation in Rakhine state

The Department of Fisheries in Kyeintali town, in collaboration with the Sea Turtle Conservation Group (Kisca), made a field trip to Jainggyi village to prevent the consumption of sea turtle eggs.

THE Department of Fisheries in Kyeintali town, in collaboration with the Sea Turtle Conservation Group (Kisca), made a field trip to Jainggyi village to prevent the consumption of sea turtle eggs.

According to the study of the Kisca, the number of sea turtles laying eggs in the Rakhine coastal area has been declining in recent years although many numbers of sea turtles were found in 2019. In order to prevent the extinction of these sea turtles, three zones of sea turtle banks have been developed, while the Department of Fisheries and Sea Turtle Conservation Group (Kisca) have been working together to educate the local people in these zones not to dig sea turtle eggs. Signboards were erected and the eggs laid by sea turtles were fenced. Local people were provided with information on how to protect sea turtles from extinction.

A female sea turtle usually lays eggs twice a year, laying more than 100 eggs at a time, and it takes about three hours for her to return to the sea from the shore after laying eggs. During the egg-laying season, the turtle eggs in these three zones are being monitored at dusk and dawn by fishermen in collaboration with the Kisca to prevent them from being consumed by local people. Although five species of turtles can be seen in the Rakhine coastal areas, only one species locally called 'baby' turtles are usually seen. Only with the cooperation of the local people, sea turtles can be protected from extinction, said Ko Thagyi, a member of the turtle conservation group. — Yan Nyein/GNLM

Signboards were erected and the eggs laid by sea turtles were fenced. Local people were provided with information on how to protect sea turtles from extinction.

Myawady border trade up by $705 mln in FY2020-2021

THE border trade through Myawady between Myanmar and Thailand climbed up to US$1.9 billion between 1 October and 24 September in the financial year 2020-2021, reflecting an increase of $705.47 million as against a year-ago period.

The trade through Myawady border stood at over $1.19 billion in the corresponding period of last FY2019-2020.

Myawady-Maesot border trade remains normal amid the COVID-19 restrictions, according to the Myawady Chamber of Commerce.

We have experienced trade suspension via Myawady in October 2020. The halt in trading undoubtedly harms the traders and lorry drivers from both sides. It is good that trade does not stop at the present time, said a trader from Myawady.

At present, Myawady border does not have trade barriers except for transaction problem, as per the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

Myanmar is currently shipping thousands of tonnes of corn to Thailand through the Myawady land border every day.

Myanmar is allowed for corn export between 1 February and 31 August with Form-D, under zero tariff.

Myanmar corn exports were exempted from tax between February and August. Thailand imposed 73 per cent of tax on corn import to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand, in accordance with the notification of World Trade Organization regarding corn import of Thailand.

During last budget year, Myanmar has increasingly exported corns to Thailand through the Myawady land border. Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through border crossings between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period in the FY2019-2020, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

There are seven border posts between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Hteekhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Meisei. Majority of the border trade with Thailand is conducted via Myawady.

Myanmar primarily exports corn, natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country. — KK/GNLM

Analyze ourselves whether deserved or not to live in a society

EVERYBODY needs to culture the goodwill to build themselves without committing any sins. Those persons are deserved to have the chance to build society.

Naturally, society should admit the participation of the persons who always seek chances to gossip about inappropriate measures of other persons. In fact, the community is proportionately constituted with those forging the goodwill, pessimists and those in the neutral situations without bias over both kinds of other participants.

> Whatever it may be, the society must be formed with all forms of persons holding various attitudes based on democracy. Everybody is deserved to live in society. But they should not make trouble to others and should culture the will to give a helping hand to each other.

The first type of person never benefits everybody at any time. They are so busy monitoring most of the people so as to look for the sinful acts of others and seek ways how to put blame on them. Consequently, they are always alive in bad minds flaming their hearts.

The persons in another type are peacefully living in the community without searching sinful acts of others. They always hold up an optimistic attitude. Hence, their hearts are always enjoying happiness and peace. They never respond to the physical and mental attacks of other persons but disperse the compassion to all. Indeed, they are firmly standing in the community without committing acts harmful to any others.

The third and last type of person is always analyzing the situations of past incidents for applying the advantages in their life. They are affordable to live in the neutral line without any bias over any others and they never commit sinful acts by exploiting the weaker persons for their survival.

The first one is very dangerous for society but it should be acceptable for society. They also have the right to live in a community similar to others. The second one is proper for society, and they should be prioritized in society for their better behaviours. Their acts are undangerous for all. Even if the society is in unrest, the compassion of the persons from the second type can be dispersed to calm down the temper. The third one should be inserted into society for the betterment of attitudes everybody upholds.

Whatever it may be, the society must be formed with all forms of persons holding various attitudes based on democracy. Everybody is deserved to live in society. But they should not make trouble to others and should culture the will to give a helping hand to each other.

■■■

'Not out of the woods' in battle against Covid-19: WHO

Because of the way the world had handled the crisis, Covid-19 would not be eradicated and was here to stay, WHO's Covid chief added.

THE World Health Organization's Covid-19 chief warned Tuesday "We're not out of the woods" in the fight against the pandemic, even if many people thought it was nearly over.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the technical lead for WHO's Covid-19, said last week 3.1 million known new cases were reported to the UN health agency, and 54,000 more deaths — though the true numbers would be much higher.

"The situation is still incredibly dynamic. And it's dynamic because we don't have control over this virus," she said during a live presentation on the WHO's social media channels.

"We're not out of the woods. We're very much in the middle of this pandemic. But where in the middle— we're not quite sure yet, because frankly we're not using the tools we have right now to get us closer to the end."

A street artist paints a mural depicting COVID-19 coronavirus frontline workers along a street in Hanoi on 15 June, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

She added: "What I really struggle with is in some cities we see ICUs (intensive care units) and hospitals full and people dying — yet on the streets people are acting like it's completely over.

"You can't have it both ways."

Because of the way the world had handled the crisis, Covid-19 would not be eradicated and was here to stay, she added.

Misinformation killing

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 4.8 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

Van Kerkhove said deaths now were largely happening among people who had not been vaccinated.

"From the countries that are providing that information, the rate of hospitalization and death is by far really among those who are unvaccinated," she said.

Van Kerkhove also hit out at Covid-19 misinformation and disinformation circulating on the internet.

"It is resulting in people dying. There is no way to sugar-coat that," she said.

Van Kerkhove said the WHO was having discussions about the shape of the pandemic over the next three to 18 months.

The US expert said she saw Covid-19 eventually coming under control.

"But we will still have pockets of individuals who are not vaccinated — either because they don't have access, they refuse, or they can't be vaccinated — and we can still see outbreaks," she said.

Van Kerkhove said the virus was here to stay.

"The possibility to eradicate this virus, or even eliminate this virus at a global level was lost early on," she said.

"And it was lost because we didn't, at a global level, attack this virus as strongly as we could."

SOURCE: AFP

Teachers are driving force behind 'global education recovery' from COVID-19

The educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the crucial role of teachers in maintaining learning continuity.

FOR the education system to recover from the COVID pandemic, it requires more investment in the well-being, training, professional development and working conditions of the world's 71 million educators, UN agencies chiefs said on Monday.

"Today we celebrate the exceptional dedication and courage of all teachers, their capacity to adapt and to innovate under very challenging and uncertain conditions", said UNESCO head Audrey Azoulay, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) chief Henrietta Fore, top International Labour Organization (ILO) official, Guy Ryder, and Education International's leader, David Edwards, in a joint statement.

Giving voice to teachers

World Teachers' Day, celebrated annually on 5 October, provides an important opportunity to call on Governments and the international community to spotlight teachers and their challenges, and share effective and promising policy responses.

"They are the principal actors of the global education recovery efforts and are key in accelerating progress towards inclusive and equitable quality education for every learner, in every circumstance", the statement continued.

From using technology creatively to providing socio-emotional support to their students, and reaching those most at risk of falling behind, teachers have been at the heart of the educational response to the COVID-19 crisis.

"Now is the time to recognize the exceptional role teachers play and to empower them with the training, professional development, support and working conditions they need to deploy their talent", the top officials argued.

"Education recovery will be successful if it is conducted hand-in-hand with teachers, giving them voice and space to participate in decision-making", they said.

Challenges abound

As of 27 September, schools have fully reopened in 124 countries, partially in 44 others, and remained fully closed in 16.

These figures highlight both the need for attention to teachers' health and well-being as schools reopen, and for continued professional development to integrate and deploy successful educational technology.

According to UNESCO's research, 71 per cent of countries have given some priority to vaccinating teachers, but only 19 included them in the first round of inoculations, while 59 other nations have not prioritized them in roll-out plans.

More effort is needed to support teachers where and when remote and hybrid teaching is still necessary.

Putting teachers at the heart of the education recovery – this year's focus – will require increasing the size of the workforce.

Marking the day

To celebrate 2021 World Teachers' Day, the conveners and partners, including the World Bank, the Global Education Coalition and civil society organizations, will organize global and regional events and an advocacy campaign with the participation of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

The five-day series of events will include panel discussions and online sessions to examine effective policies, evidence and innovative practices to support teachers for successful recovery, build resilience and reimagine education in the post-pandemic world, and advance the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) of inclusive and equitable education.

UNESCO/UNICEF/World Bank and OECD survey in July, reveals:

World Teachers' Day is observed every year on 5 October across the globe. It is a day, which celebrates the efforts of teachers, who play an important role in our lives. **PHOTO: DENIS CHARLET/ AFP**

Just 40 per cent of countries trained three-quarters or more of teachers on technology related to distance learning during the pandemic.

Only six out of ten countries provided teachers with professional development on psychosocial and emotional support.

58 per cent of countries provided teachers with content for remote learning, while 42 per cent provided them with ICT tools and ensured internet connectivity.

Just under a third of 103 countries surveyed recruited additional teachers for school reopening, but the global gap remains high.

69 million more teachers are needed worldwide to ensure universal primary and secondary education by 2030 (SDG target 4.1)

Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to need an additional 15 million primary and secondary teachers by 2030.

SOURCE: UN

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(ISSUED at 7:00 pm Wednesday 6 October 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the North and Eastcentral Bay of Bengal and monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7 October 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Yangon and Taninthayi regions and Mon state Fairly widespread in Ayeyawady Region and Kayin State, scattered in Bago and Mandalay regions and (Northern and Southern) Shan State, and isolated in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 October 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 October 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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Stock trading in equity market records highest in September

THE shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) rose to a record high in September 2021, with over K825 million worth of 193,353 shares of the six listed companies, the YSX's monthly report indicated.

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 into 36,855 shares in July 2021 and the trading value also slipped to K198 million. It 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.

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 K8,800 for FMI, K3,200 for MTSH, K8,000 for MCB, K22,000 for FPB, K2,700 for TMH, K2,950 for EFR and K5,000 for AMATA, respectively.

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

People like to keep emergency savings and purchase the safe-haven asset gold, rather than make investments amid the COVID-19 crisis and current political conditions. Unexpectedly, people turned to the stock market when the prices of gold remarkably gained in September, 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

Local currency revaluates these days, while gold price drops

On 28 September, the exchange rate on the US dollar hit an all-time high of over K3,000 in the black market, whereas the rate fell to over K2,000 on 6 October, showing a significant decrease of K1,000 within days.

THE value of local currency regains in recent days in the local forex market. Similarly, the prices of gold also dropped, according to the local forex market.

On 28 September, the exchange rate on the US dollar hit an all-time high of over K3,000 in the black market, whereas the rate fell to over K2,000 on 6 October, showing a significant decrease of K1,000 within days.

The prices of a pure gold metal jumped accordingly to a record high of K2.22 million per tical (0.578 ounce, or 0.016 kilogramme) on 28 September, while a yellow metal was priced at only K1,930,000 per tical on 6 October, according to the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The price is therefore down by K270,000 per tical these days.

YGEA has urged its members to regulate trade in order to deal with market volatility.

The association has curbed the amount of gold that investors can trade. It permits only 10 ticals for daily trading, as per YGEA.

In January 2021, the gold price was ranged between the minimum of K1,316,000 per tical (28 January) and the maximum of K1,336,000 per tical (6 January). It reached an all-time high of K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February and hit the minimum of K1,340,000 per tical on 2 February. In March, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The price was registered the highest of K1,455,000 (30 April) and the lowest of K1,389,000 (1 April). The price reached an all-time highest of K1,709,000 (12 May) and the lowest of K1,447,000 in May. The price moved in the maximum of K1,575,500 (11 June) and the minimum of K1,543,000 (19 June). It fluctuated between K1,562,300 (26 July) and K1,587,000 (August). The price of gold reached the lowest of K1,572,800 (3 August) and the highest of K1,698,000 (31 August). Last month, the price of pure gold metal hit a fresh peak of K2,220,000 per tical (28 September) and it was priced the lowest of K1,703,500 per tical (1 September), the gold traders said.

According to gold traders, the local gold reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,317,000 (9 November) and the lowest of K1,270,000 (30 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of 1,280,000 (1 December) and 1,332,000 (28 December).

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to over 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a high of K1,300,000 on 5 September 2019. — NN/GNLM

Bali to reopen for int'l tourists, including from Japan, from 14 October

The Indonesian government announced Monday that it will open the resort island of Bali for international tourists from certain countries, including from Japan, from 14 October. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Indonesian government announced Monday that it will open the resort island of Bali for international tourists from certain countries, including from Japan, from 14 October.

"It will be a trial project to reopen Bali for international tourists," Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Uno told a weekly media briefing, adding that the international flights will be direct ones from the countries of origin.

According to Uno, preparations including requirements for the international travellers are under way, with details expected to be finalized in the coming days.

Earlier, in a separate press conference, Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment Affairs Luhut Pandjaitan said that Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport will receive foreigners flying from China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, as well as from Abu Dhabi and Dubai of the United Arab Emirates.

Uno said there would be a focus on "high quality" tourism as measured by length of stay and expenditure.

Monday's decision was taken after Indonesia showed its lowest daily record of novel coronavirus cases of 922 on Monday since its highest record of 56,757 on 15 July. The country's daily death toll also reached the lowest record of 58 on Sunday since its highest record of 2,069 on 27 July.

Late last year, Indonesia barred all foreign visitors, except for ministerial-level government officials and long-term residents, from entering the country.

Exceptions, however, are granted for long-term residents and those who get special permission from Indonesian ministries or institutions, though they are still subject to health protocols such as eight-day quarantine.—Kyodo News ■

S.Korea reports 1,575 more COVID-19 cases, 321,352 in total

SOUTH Korea reported 1,575 more cases of COVID-19 as of midnight Monday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 321,352.

The daily caseload was down from 1,673 in the prior day, but it hovered above 1,000 for 91 straight days since 7 July. The daily average tally for the past week was 2,216.

The recent resurgence was attributable to cluster infections in the Seoul metropolitan area.

Passengers heading to Tokyo of Japan check in at Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea, 2 April 2020. **PHOTO: NEWSIS/ HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

Of the new cases, 518 were Seoul residents. The number of the newly infected people residing in Gyeonggi province and the western port city of Incheon was 496 and 105.

The virus spread also raged in the non-metropolitan region. The number of new infections in the non-capital areas was 438, or 28.1 per cent of the total local transmission. Eighteen cases were imported from overseas, lifting the combined figure to 14,563. Eleven more deaths were confirmed, leaving the death toll at 2,524. The total fatality rate stood at 0.79 per cent.

A total of 1,528 more patients were discharged from quarantine after making full recovery, pulling up the combined number to 284,197. The total recovery rate was 88.44 per cent. —Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australia orders 300,000 courses of "promising" COVID-19 treatment amid battle against 3rd wave

THE Australian government has secured access to 300,000 courses of the "promising" treatment for COVID-19 as the country continues to battle the third wave of infections.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Health Minister Greg Hunt announced on Tuesday that the government has ordered 300,000 courses of oral antiviral treatment Molnupiravir, which is currently in late stage clinical trials.

The makers of Molnupiravir, US pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, have recently announced that Molnupiravir reduced the risk of hospitalization or death from COVID-19 by 50 per cent at a planned interim analysis of the Phase 3 trial.—Xinhua ■

Greece: New health chief named as Covid deaths near 15,000

GREECE on Tuesday named a new head to the state health watchdog that oversees the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic as the country's death toll neared 15,000.

The health ministry said the new head of the Eody agency is Theoklis Zaoutis, a former chief of the division of paediatric infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

As of Monday, the virus had claimed more than 14,990 lives with an average age of 78, according to Eody.

Main opposition leader Alexis Tsipras on Tuesday said he had demanded answers from Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in parliament on the course of the pandemic.— AFP ■

Pacific islands continue to grapple with COVID-19

Health workers conduct investigation to trace chains of infection to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Suva, Fiji, 26 May 2021. **PHOTO: FIJI SUN/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

THE COVID-19 pandemic, which has ebbed and flowed in Pacific countries for more than 18 months, continues to rapidly evolve throughout much of the region with current outbreaks being more severe than previous ones. Health authorities in countries and territories such as Papua New Guinea (PNG), New Caledonia and Fiji generally share similar logistical problems such as limited medical supplies and specialized facilities. PNG reported 333 new cases on Monday, bringing its overall active cases to 2,499 which are mainly in the Eastern Highlands Province. There have been 234 related deaths since the pandemic started.

The crisis is pushing the already stretched medical system to the brink, according to the nation's leading newspaper, the PNG Post-Courier. It reported on Monday that the Port Moresby General Hospital in the capital city only had five ventilators, all of which are now being used for critically ill patients. Meanwhile, other hospitals lack essential facilities such as isolation wards for such highly infectious patients.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Zealand central bank lifts interests rate from record low

New Zealand on Wednesday became one of the first developed economies to hike interest rates since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, as the central bank bids to rein in rising inflation.

In a widely tipped move, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand lifted its base interest rate 0.25 points to 0.5 per cent Wednesday, ending an 18-month freeze aimed at keeping the economy ticking over during the Covid-19 crisis.

It signalled further increases were likely, with analysts predicting the cost of borrowing could reach 1.5 per cent by mid-2022. "It is appropriate to continue reducing the level of monetary stimulus so as to maintain low inflation and support maximum sustainable employment," the central bank said in a statement.—AFP ■

South Dakota, one of the US states to match the world's top tax havens

Far from the mountains of Switzerland or the beaches of the Caribbean, South Dakota has become a poster child for the American states that have loosened their tax laws to attract wealthy investors.

"Over the past decade, South Dakota, Nevada and more than a dozen other US states have transformed themselves into leaders in the business of peddling financial secrecy," according to the vast investigation into offshore tax havens released this week known as the "Pandora Papers".

With secrecy and systems that allow clients to evade tax or pay nothing during an inheritance, these states are locked in fierce competition to attract funds from investors at home and abroad.

"Almost half the states are in the competition," said Chuck Collins of the Institute for Policy Studies, one of the experts who provided background to journalists who worked on the Pandora Papers, told AFP. He cited, among others, "Alaska, Wyoming, and Nevada." "They tend to be small states," he said, where a service industry geared toward finance "will have a lot of power."—AFP ■

Japanese businesses to offer benefits using vaccination app

Photo taken 6 October 2021, in Tokyo, shows a presentation for a new smartphone app that shows proof of COVID-19 vaccination. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPANESE companies will collaborate to offer special benefits to customers who utilize a new smartphone app showing proof of COVID-19 vaccination when using restaurants and hotels, the app providers said Wednesday.

Some 10 companies have joined the initiative, which aims to attract customers by promoting their measures to prevent coronavirus infections while encouraging people to get vaccinated.

The smartphone app will display proof of vaccination with the user's face on the screen once they register the necessary information after being fully inoculated against COVID-19, according to app providers Medical Check Propulsion Mechanism and Tokyo-based medical venture ICheck Co.

The app called "Wakupasu" can be downloaded to smartphones free of charge and is expected to be launched following approval by Apple Inc. and others, they said.

Among companies joining the program are travel agency H.I.S. Co., the APA Group which runs a hotel chain, sushi restaurant chain Kappa Create Co. and J-League soccer team Kashima Antlers.

The companies are currently preparing special benefits for customers, with Kappa Create planning to offer a 10 per cent discount on food and drink charges.

Fumiaki Koizumi, president of Kashima, said in an online presentation, "I felt a little cheerful that the number of new infections has decreased, but I also have a sense of crisis" about managing businesses, expressing the team's willingness to utilize the vaccination app. Koizumi is also chairman of flea market app operator Mercari Inc.—Kyodo News ■

US trade gap yawns wider as imports outpace exports in August

The CMA CGM Marco Polo passes under the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge in New York port. **PHOTO: TIMOTHY A. CLARY / AFP**

THE US trade deficit rose in August with imports overwhelming exports as the US economy bounces back from last year's pandemic shock, government data said on Tuesday.

The Commerce Department reported the trade deficit climbed to $73.3 billion (€63bn) from the upwardly revised $70.3 billion the month prior, more than analysts had expected and 4.2 per cent higher than in July.

Both exports and imports increased, but fewer car and airplane sales held back the former, while consumer demand fueled the rise in the latter, according to the data. The overall deficit was a new record high and $31.7 billion larger than before the pandemic, said Mahir Rasheed of Oxford Economics, who predicted it would widen "slightly further" by the end of the year as vaccine inequality and supply snarls global growth. "Moderating domestic demand will continue to slow import volumes over the coming months, while a steady pick up in foreign consumption will drive stronger exports" in the fourth quarter, he added.—AFP ■

German industrial orders slump in August

GERMAN industrial orders fell sharply in August, after a record month in July, official data released on Wednesday showed, as global supply bottlenecks pinch the economy.

The indicator, which gives a foretaste of industrial activity, fell by 7.7 per cent on the upwardly revised figure for the previous month, according to the federal statistics agency Destatis.

Volkswagen is among manufacturers feeling the pinch of global supply chain disruption. **PHOTO: AFP**

In July, orders had reached their highest point since statistics for reunified Germany began in 1991, as demand sprung back after coronavirus restrictions were lifted in Europe's economic powerhouse.

In its latest release, Destatis revised the increase in July to 4.9 per cent from its previous estimate of 3.4 per cent.

Industrial orders failed to keep up the pace in August, despite showing a strong 11.7 per cent increase on a year earlier.

The month-on-month drop was led by a steep 11.1 per cent decline in orders of capital goods, while consumer and intermediate goods tailed off by 2.7 and 2.8 per cent, respectively.

Orders for export fell by 9.5 per cent, with those from outside the eurozone decreasing most by 15.2 per cent.

The upheaval caused by the pandemic has given rise to global shortages in components, such as semiconductors, timber and plastics, limiting production in key sectors for the German economy.

Carmakers including Volkswagen have scaled back production of their vehicles in response to the limited supply of computer chips, a crucial component in both conventional and electric vehicles.— AFP ■

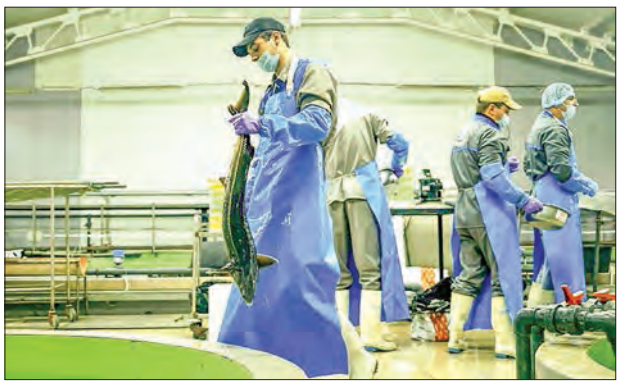
Separatist Transnistria to sell rare $20,000-a-kilo white caviar

AT a sprawling complex on the site of a former Soviet collective farm in Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria, workers are harvesting caviar — and striking it rich.

Shooting out from behemoth beluga fish are glistening obsidian orbs that the firm Aquatir exports for hundreds of dollars around the world from the tiny pro-Russian enclave. But the real treasure is in the company's rare albino belugas, which are set next year to produce a gold-tinted white caviar tasted only by the wealthiest people on the planet.

"We got very lucky," advertising manager Viorica Grimakovskaya tells AFP during a tour of the 30-acre (12-hectare) premises.

Worth some $20,000 ($17,000 euros) per kilogramme, according to Grimakovskaya, the white caviar is packaged in containers made of pure gold to match the roe's colour and sold only at auction set a year in advance. Aquatir — which was founded in 2006, 15 years after a brief civil war that saw Transnistria break away from Moldova in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse —stumbled on some 20 of the albinos when purchasing their first stocks. "They had just arrived into the world and we immediately brought them here," Grimakovskaya recalls.—AFP ■



The white caviar is packaged in containers made of pure gold to match the roe's colour. **PHOTO: AFP**

US jury orders Tesla to pay ex-employee $137 million over racism

A California verdict ordering Tesla to pay a Black former employee $137 million in damages for turning a blind eye to racism the man encountered at the firm's Silicon Valley auto plant is a resounding message to corporate America in the eyes of his attorney. "They awarded an amount that could be a wake-up call for American corporations," civil rights attorney Larry Organ told AFP on Tuesday.

"Don't engage in racist conduct and don't allow racist conduct to continue." Owen Diaz was hired through a staffing agency as an elevator operator at the electric vehicle-maker's Fremont factory between June 2015 and July 2016, where he was subjected to racist abuse and a hostile work environment, according to the court filing.

In his lawsuit filed in 2017, Diaz said African-American employees at the factory, where his son also worked, were regularly subjected to racist epithets and derogatory imagery.—AFP ■

A US jury awarded a former Tesla employee $137 million over workplace racism at the electric car maker's Fremont plant. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (043N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (043N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-10-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICTY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(2/2020-2021)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-004(21-22)	Assorted Sizes of Steel Ball Valve (3) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **23 September 2021** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **12:00 pm** on **25 October 2021**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **25-10-2021, 12:00 pm**
Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HANSA COBURG VOY.NO. (138S/139N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HANSA COBURG VOY.NO. (138S/139N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-10-2021** 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.

Specific Procurement Notice
Request for Bids
Goods
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Myanmar
Name of Project: *RURAL ELECTRIFICATION*
Contract Title: Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV Systems for Households and Public Facilities
RFB Reference No.: NCB S&I-DRD-4

1. The *Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development* now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for supply, installation and maintenance of solar PV Systems for households and public facilities in the following Regions:

Lot 1– Solar PV Packages in Rakhine (6)
Lot 2– Solar PV Packages in Shan North (7)
Lot 3– Solar PV Packages in Shan East (6)
Lot 4– Solar PV Packages in Ayeyarwaddy (11)

The Contracts will be financed by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2. For quick reference, some key qualification requirements include:

- The average annual turnover (or annual sales volume) of the last five years should be a minimum of MMK 599 million for Lot-1, MMK 1460 million for Lot-2, MMK 963 million for Lot-3 and MMK 5,763 million for Lot-4 or higher which varies by lot and is cumulative if bidding for multiple lots.
- The bidder has successfully completed at least two (2) contracts in supplying, installing, supervising, commissioning and/or maintaining off-grid solar PV systems with batteries, in any year over the last five (5) years, and total ammount of the two (2) contracts had a value equivalent to or greater than 50% of the corrected Bid Price and each of the two contracts must have a value of not less than 10% of the corrected Bid Price.

The details of the qualification requirements are in the bidding document.

3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures as specified in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar President's Office Directive No. 1/2017 dated April 10, 2017, Tender Procedures to be followed by Government Departments and Organizations in Construction, Purchase, Procurement of Services, Lease and Sale. In addition, please refer to paragraph 4 setting forth in the President's Office Directive policy on conflict of interest.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the address below and inspect the bidding document during office hours *10.00 a.m.* to *4.00 p.m.* at the address given below.

5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through e-mail only.

In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing:

Dr. Soe Soe Ohn, Director
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development.
Office No. 36, Pandita Road, Oattara Thiri Township, Naypyitaw,
Country: Myanmar
Tel./Fax +95 673 418635, 418636
Email: ksaung@gmail.com; dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com; drdnep.procurement@gmail.com

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before November 22, 2021 (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be opened at the address below on November 22, 2021 (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. All envelopes marked "SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Security*" as stated in ITB 19.1 – Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding Document.

8. The address referred to above is :

Attention: Dr. Soe Soe Ohn,
Director of Department of Rural Development,
Department of Rural Development,
Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development.
Office No. 36, Pandita Road, Oattara Thiri Township, Naypyitaw,
Country: Myanmar
Tel /Fax: +95 673 418635, 418636
ksaung@gmail.com, dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com,
drdnep.procurement@gmail.com.

9. Clarification of the bidding document will be conducted through e-mail or letter to the Purchaser as stated in ITB 7 of the bidding document.

Sri Lanka agrees to reform terror law to keep EU trade deal

Gotabaya Rajapaksa was the top defence official in 2009 when his president brother Mahinda crushed the Tamil rebel leadership and declared an end to 37 years of guerrilla war. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

SRI Lanka's president vowed "immediate steps" to amend anti-terror legislation to retain a lucrative trade status with the European Union, his office said Tuesday. The EU had warned Sri Lanka that its generalized system of preferences (GSP Plus) — a favourable trade scheme to encourage developing nations to respect human rights — could be withdrawn if Colombo did not improve its rights record.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa told a visiting EU delegation Monday that he had instructed the justice minister and the attorney-general to carry out urgent reforms to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The law allows police to arrest and detain suspects for long periods. Confessions extracted from suspects can be used against them, and many have been held for decades without charge. "Immediate steps will be taken to amend the necessary provisions of the PTA," Rajapaksa's office quoted him as saying.

"President Rajapaksa also stated that the country would abide by the agreements on human rights in the world today."

International human rights organizations have accused Rajapaksa's government, which came to power in November 2019 with the overwhelming support of the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority, of persecuting minorities and targeting rights activists.

The president told the EU on Monday that he would seek the support of civil society organizations for ethnic reconciliation in the country, which is emerging from a decades-long Tamil separatist war.—AFP ■

Marcos heir says will run for Philippines presidency

THE son and namesake of the Philippines' former dictator Ferdinand Marcos said Tuesday he will run for president in the 2022 election, as the controversial clan seeks the ultimate political revival.

Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr — who has defended President Rodrigo Duterte's controversial drug war and supported the death penalty for traffickers — declared his candidacy in a Facebook Live broadcast.

"I am today announcing my intention to run for the presidency of the Philippines in the upcoming May 2022 elections," the 64-year-old political scion said, joining a growing field of contenders seeking to replace Duterte.

"I will bring — unifying leadership back to our country."

Marcos Jr was in second place behind Duterte's daughter, Sara, in a recent PulseAsia Research survey of voter preference for president, though she has denied plans to run.

Boxing great Manny Pacquiao and celebrity mayor Francisco Domagoso have confirmed they will seek the top job.

A tilt for the country's highest office comes after Marcos Jr's failed bid for the vice presidency in 2016, which he narrowly lost to Leni Robredo. Losing the election was a blow for the Marcos family, which had gone into exile in the United States after the patriarch's humiliating downfall in 1986.—AFP ■

The son and namesake of the Philippines' former dictator Ferdinand Marcos has said he will run for president in the 2022 election. **PHOTO: NOEL CELIS /AFP**

Over 100 musicians flee Afghanistan, fearing Taliban crackdown

Ahmad Sarmast, founder of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, helped with the evacuation of 101 musicians. **PHOTO: AFP**

MORE than 100 music students and teachers have fled Afghanistan in a nail-biting flight from Kabul following the Taliban's takeover of the country, their institute's founder and principal told AFP. Fearing a crackdown on music by the country's new leaders, a total 101 members of Afghanistan's top musical institute landed in Doha on Sunday evening, Ahmad Sarmast said.

The group, about half of them women and girls, plan to fly to Portugal with the support of the government there, said Sarmast, founder of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, who now lives in Melbourne.

But the success of the operation was in doubt until the last moment, he said. With help from the Qatari embassy in Kabul, the musicians had been ferried in small groups to the city's airport, Sarmast said. In a first hurdle, Taliban militants manning Kabul airport questioned their visas. But Qatari embassy officials managed to resolve the problem.

Then the girls and women were told that they could not leave the country with their temporary "service passports", which are usually issued to officials.

'Time of many tears'

"My understanding is that it was not so much of the type of the passports but that the girls were fleeing the country," Sarmast said. Once again, Qatari officials managed to negotiate their passage.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

In Iraq vote, big blocs lurk behind 'independents'

WHEN Iraqis go to the polls Sunday, they will vote for individual candidates rather than parties for the first time under a new electoral law meant to appease a youth-led protest movement fed up with the country's old-style politics.

In theory, the changes will strengthen local voices as candidates can now run at the district level and as independents, allowing new hopefuls such as tribal leaders, business people and civil society activists to join the race.

But the shadow of Iraq's traditional political blocs, which are mostly defined by religious sect or ethnic group, still hovers over many of the candidates who claim to be non-aligned, raising questions about the impact of the reform.—AFP ■

Brussels uncovers hidden waterway

IT was only in 2007, when the first of two water purification plants was built, that the clean-up of the Senne got properly under way / © BELGA/AFP

London has the Thames, Paris the Seine, Vienna and Bratislava and Budapest are all on the Danube. And then there's Brussels, which had the Senne — until they paved over it.

Now, bit by bit, the Belgian capital is starting to uncover its long-hidden waterway to eventually "return nature to the city".

"It's a real paradigm shift," Benjamin Thiebaux, heading up the project for the regional environmental agency, told AFP.

"We can now start thinking about no longer covering up the river and giving it back to Brussels residents," he said.

The preparatory phase of the progressive unveiling of the Senne was cleaning up its waters.

The small river was cemented over in the late 19th and early 20th centuries because it had long served as a sewer and industrial dumping ground, whose turgid course stank up Brussels and posed a health hazard. The French poet Charles Baudelaire, while taking refuge in Brussels from his creditors, notably called it a "big open-air toilet".—AFP ■

Frustrated Balkans seek reassurance at EU summit

WESTERN Balkan countries can expect reassurances but no concrete progress on their stalled bids for European Union membership when EU leaders meet Wednesday.

The 27-nation club is set to talk up economic support worth billions of euros for its eastern neighbours at a summit at Brdo castle, in Slovenia, which currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Brussels is keen to show it remains the strategic region's best hope.

But there will be no breakthroughs at the meeting with the leaders of Albania, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo on the tortuous path towards membership.

And concern is growing that frustration at years of waiting in vain for the EU's doors to open could push some candidate countries closer to Russia and China.

"It's a good moment for us to be assertive, and make clear that the European Union continues to be the region's biggest donor," an EU official said.

"The European Union continues to be the region's main investor, and the European Union continues to be the closest trading partner."

'Wedding' no-show

The EU's push for enlargement — once a key policy for the bloc — has ground to a halt in recent years. Some richer member nations fear sparking a new wave of migration and some applicants are struggling with the required reforms.

France, Denmark and the Netherlands initially blocked accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia in 2019.

Bulgaria has since become the main obstacle to progress, refusing to let North Macedonia start the process because of a dispute over history and language.

During a tour of the region last week, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said she hoped to see talks open with North Macedonia and Albania this year, after elections in Bulgaria.—AFP ■

Albania, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo can expect no breakthroughs in their bids for EU membership. **PHOTO: AFP**

NATO chief criticizes support for parallel European defence group

NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg Speaks At Georgetown University. **PHOTO: AFP**

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday that support for a parallel European-only mutual defence organization risks dividing and weakening the Atlantic alliance.

In Washington for talks at the White House and Pentagon, Stoltenberg made reference to Paris's support for a European defence grouping autonomous from NATO, especially the wake of last month's shock creation of AUKUS, an Australia-Britain-US grouping focused on Indo-Pacific security that left France, and NATO as a group, out.

"I understand that France is disappointed," Stoltenberg said in a conference at Georgetown University. "What I don't believe in is any efforts to try to do something outside the NATO framework, or compete with or duplicate NATO, because NATO remains the cornerstone, the bedrock for European security and also actually of North American security," he said. The announcement last month of AUKUS, which included Canberra cancelling an order for French diesel submarines for American nuclear-powered subs, left France and some others in Europe feeling like the NATO alliance had been downgraded in Washington's priorities.—AFP

Czech Communists risk historic defeat as vote looms

A video clip tagged "farewell-comrades" has gone viral ahead of this week's Czech elections as the Communist Party faces a parliamentary wipe-out, 32 years after being toppled in the 1989 Velvet Revolution.

The clip features a queue for food reminiscent of the long lines seen during the former Communist command economy in the then Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989.

More than three decades since Czechs overthrew the regime, the party now risks crashing out of parliament for the first time since World War II.

"Their voter base is dying out or deserting them for other parties," said Otto Eibl, an analyst at Masaryk University in the second Czech city of Brno.—AFP ■

US reveals nuclear bomb numbers after Trump blackout

THE US State Department published on Tuesday the number of nuclear warheads the country stockpiles for the first time in four years, after former president Donald Trump placed a blackout on the data.

As of 30 September 2020, the US military maintained 3,750 active and inactive nuclear warheads, down by 55 from a year earlier and by 72 from the same date in 2017.

The figure was also the lowest level since the US nuclear stockpile peaked at the height of the Cold War with Russia in 1967, when the total was 31,255 warheads. The numbers were released Tuesday amid an effort by the administration of President Joe Biden to restart arms controls talks with Russia after they stalled under Trump.

"Increasing the transparency of states' nuclear stockpiles is important to nonproliferation and disarmament efforts," the State Department said in a statement. Trump, who pulled the United States from the Iran nuclear deal and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty with Russia, also left another crucial pact, the New Start Treaty on the rocks last year before its scheduled expiration on 5 February. New Start caps the number of nuclear warheads held by Washington and Moscow, and letting it expire could have sparked a reversal of warhead reductions on both sides.—AFP ■

A deactivated US Titan II nuclear ballistic missile. **PHOTO: 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.

ONE Championship: First Strike event to be launched on 15 October

ONE of the greatest events of ONE Championship named "First Strike" will be held in Singapore on 15 October, ONE Championship officials said.

"In the main event, a new king will be crowned in the most stacked division in all of the combat sports, as Giorgio Petrosyan, widely considered the greatest kickboxer of all time, takes on Thai sensation Superbon for the inaugural ONE Featherweight Kickboxing World Championship.

"It's simply the pinnacle of striking action. Mark your calendars, check your local listings, and download the ONE Super App now!", ONE Championship officials added.

In the main event or ONE Featherweight Kickboxing World Title Fight, Giorgio Petrosyan will take on Superbon.

In the World Grand Prix quarterfinal, Marat Grigorian will face Andy Souwer.

In another World Grand Prix quarterfinal, Sitthichai Sitsongpeenong will fight with Tayfun Ozcan. In the Heavyweight Kickboxing bout, Rade Opacic will fight against Patrick Schmid.

ONE: First Strike will be broadcast to more than 150 countries, and fans can watch via television, tablet, computer, or mobile device.

Fans from Myanmar could enjoy the event live on Skynet Channel at 7 pm Myanmar Standard Time (MST) on Friday, 15 October.

The full event stream will be available on ONE's YouTube channel and the ONE Super App beginning at 8:30 pm Singapore Standard Time (SST).

Also, the first two bouts will be streamed on ONE's Facebook page. — GNLM

Race for World Cup berths heats up in Europe

While a select quartet of Europe's heavyweights battle for the Nations League crown this week, Germany, England, Portugal and Denmark will train their sights on locking down a place at next year's World Cup in Qatar. **PHOTO: AFP**

WHILE a select quartet of Europe's heavyweights battle for the Nations League crown this week, Germany, England, Portugal and Denmark will train their sights on locking down a place at next year's World Cup in Qatar.

European champions Italy, Spain, France and Belgium take centre stage contesting the Final Four in Milan and Turin, but five of the 10 automatic World Cup qualifying spots could be secured come next Tuesday.

Denmark appear the most likely to complete the job, knowing wins over Moldova and Austria will secure top spot in Group F. Kasper Hjulmand's Euro 2020 semi-finalists are the only country with a 100 per cent record. Denmark have scored 22 goals in six games without reply, and thrashed Moldova 8-0 at home in the reverse fixture.

Four-time world champions Germany have bounced back from a shock loss to North Macedonia in March, surging four points clear in Group J after Hansi Flick began his reign last month with three wins from three, including a 6-0 thumping of Armenia.

"The games I've seen have been super. I was in Stuttgart for the game against Armenia, and the game, the goals and the atmosphere were all top tier," said Bayern Munich forward Thomas Mueller.

"We've got some good momentum going into these games, so we want to keep that going." Germany can avenge their defeat by the Macedonians on 11 October in Skopje, three days after the visit of Romania — one of four teams realistically still in contention.— AFP ■

Premier League scrambles to convince stars to get vaccinated

PREMIER League matches are once again being played in packed stadiums after Britain's successful coronavirus vaccine rollout — but the reluctance of many players to get jabbed is proving a headache for football authorities.

The Premier League trophy. **PHOTO: AFP**

The UK has one of the highest overall virus death tolls in the world, at more than 137,000, but more than 82 per cent of over-16s have had two doses of the vaccine, according to the latest government figures. The rapid rollout has enabled the easing of restrictions on large gatherings, with a welcome return of supporters to football grounds.

However, although no official figures have been offered by the Premier League, reports suggest only seven of England's 20 top-flight clubs have more than 50 per cent of their squad fully vaccinated.

"It's low, not just in the Premier League but in the Football League as well. It's very low," said former Manchester United captain Gary Neville, who has an ownership stake in League Two club Salford City. "We have to accept and understand why that is, but I think it is also time for the players or the PFA (Professional Footballers' Association) to come out and explain what the concerns are that the players have and why they are not taking these vaccinations."

Incentives have been discussed as an option by clubs to get more players to come forward to have the jab, including a potential relaxing of stringent coronavirus protocols.—AFP ■