THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 188, 4th Waning of Thadingyut 1383 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Sunday, 24 October 2021

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Message from Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council on 76th Anniversary of the United Nations Day
24-10-2021

ON behalf of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish to convey our heartfelt congratulations to the United Nations on the occasion of the 76th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I take this opportunity to extend our best wishes for better realization of the Organization's goals that genuinely reflect the needs of people in today's time.

Seventy-six years ago, the establishment of the United Nations made history with its noble aims for world peace and security. The organizational goals emerged from all aspects of the world's most complex issues—from poverty reduction to taking care of the environment, may vary year by year. But, the core value of the Organization remains unchanged—to gather in unity out of diversity to create a peaceful, just and prosperous world.

The deadliest virus, COVID-19, has demanded for greater strength of unity and solidarity among nations to handle the issue as a global challenge. This year's theme of the United Nations General Assembly "Building resilience through hope—to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalize the United Nations" aptly relfects today's global reality. It is timely for the United Nations to reinforce unity and solidarity among nations and to ensure more-inclusive multilateral arrangments, only by which political, ecnomic, social and environmental needs and wishes of the world population can be best served and balanced, allowing well-being and sustainable development for our children and future generations.

SEE PAGE-3

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.

Great auspicious ceremony launched to build part-1 of Yadana Throne for Maravijaya Buddha Image

A ceremony to hold the great auspicious ceremony of building the part-1 of Yadana Throne for Maravijaya Buddha Image took place at the pavilion of Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw, Union Territory yesterday morning.

Present on the occasion were members of the Sangha led by Ovadacariya Sayadaw of Uppatasanti Pagoda Presiding Nayaka of Paukmyaing Monastery in Lewe in Nay Pyi Taw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Janinda together Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Vice-Chairman of the SAC Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council members and officials.

Leading well-wisher Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing fitted the jewellery nut at Part-1 of the throne and sprinkled scented water on it.

SEE PAGE-3

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sprinkles scented water on Part-I of the throne.

Promoting and cementing Union Spirit

LIKEWISE if one is too eager to embrace the past, one may lose the road to the future. The government has decided to further promote the process of cementing the Union Spirit and peace process before the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee Union Day and Independence Day.

(Excerpt from the Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to mark Sixth Anniversary of signing Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 15-10-2021)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Public Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

3rd Waning of Thadingyut 1383 ME
23 October 2021

IN taking preventive and control measures for COVID-19 infection, under the leadership of the State Administrative Council and supervisions of Nay Pyi Taw Council, region and state governments, synchronized cooperation of various departments and philanthropic groups, active support of social organizations and systematic obedience to discipline by the people, the infection rate of the pandemic declines. But, it is necessary to further decline the infection rate, cut off the infection chain and effectively control the disease. In addition, COVID-19 vaccine is being administered nationwide to students 12 years of age and above and thus more preparations are needed for the reopening of schools. As such, all basic education schools, including private schools and monastic education schools will be temporarily closed from 25-10-2021 to 31-10-2021.

1,067 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 October, total figure rises to 493,576

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 493,576 after 1,067 new cases were reported on 23 October 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 455,176 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,511 after 20 died.

National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee holds meeting with political parties

National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee poses for documentary photo together with those from 14 political parties.

THE National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee held a meeting with political parties yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the committee Union Minister for the Union Government Office (1) Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and committee members, chairmen and vice-chairmen of 14 political parties and officials.

At the meeting, Union Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and Chairman of the Myanmar National Congress Party U Kaung Myint Htut on behalf of the political parties addressed the meeting. Afterward, Secretary of the Committee Lt-Gen Min Naung and Committee Member Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein explained the peace process and the current peace activities, and attendees discussed peace and electoral procedures.

Chairman of the Federal Union Party U Saw Than Myint on behalf of the political parties, and Union Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae concluded the meeting.—MNA

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Message from Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council on 76th Anniversary of the United Nations Day
24-10-2021

FROM PAGE-1

Myanmar has no exception for being affected by the global pandemic, especially in the third wave in July of this year. Like many other countries, the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic affects the nation's economic activities with possible long-run socio-economic consequences. Against this backdrop, the Government of Myanmar has made every endeavour to facilitate live-saving services to its population caught up in ramifications of the pandemic, while striving to maintain peace and stability to bring the country back to normalcy and its path to democracy in accordance with the 2008 Constitution amidst the challenges and hindrance imposed by certain groups and countries. As Myanmar is committed in achieving lasting peace, the Tatmadaw announced ceasefire for twenty times from 21 December 2018 to date. Accordingly, the Tatmadaw supported the Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire and suspended military operations continuously from 1 September 2020. Recently, on 27 September 2021, the Tatmadaw made another announcement to further extend the ceasefire period for five months from 1 October 2021 to 28 February 2022.

On this account, the United Nations is a symbol of hope for us to seek collective efforts in addressing challenges on the basic of mutual respect, fairness and impartiality in an open and inclusive manner. The principles of sovereign equality, impartiality and objectivity are vividly enshrined in the UN Charter. It is therefore vital for the United Nations to ensure these noble values apply to all nations without political motives in the face of growing doubts on multilateralism. It is also of necessity that the United Nations discharge its mandate and allocate scarce resources in the most effective manner.The United Nations should remain a beacon of hope for people, wherein "We the peoples" should unite our strength in supporting the UN to properly function its tasks vested by the Charter.

Myanmar firmly believes in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirms our commitment to cooperate with the United Nations and other member countries in support of constructive efforts of the Organization to build a healthy, wealthy and thriving world for all our people.

Great auspicious ceremony launched to build part-1 of Yadana Throne for Maravijaya Buddha Image

Members of the Sangha recite Jayanto Bodhiyamule gatha.

FROM PAGE-1

Ovadacariya Sayadaw of Uppatasanti Pagoda Presiding Nayaka of Paukmyaing Monastery in Lewe in Nay Pyi Taw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Janinda and laypersons sprinkled scented water on the throne. Members of the Sangha recited Jayanto Bodhiyamule Gatha.

The Senior General supplicated the construction for the image and sought the advice from members of the Sangha.

The Senior General and party inspected progress in construction of the Buddha image and gave necessary instructions.

At the briefing hall, Lt-Gen Kan Myint Than and Lt-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) reported to the Senior General on excavation of the marble rock to be carved into Maravijaya Buddha Image, conveyance of the rocks to Nay Pyi Taw, carving of the throne and body structures and linkages, and plan to carve Tri Pitakat treatises in Pali and English. The Senior General gave necessary instructions.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hears reports on conveyance of marble rocks.

The title "Maravijara Buddha Image" means the Lord Buddha Who conquered the various kinds of destruction by celestial bring Marn. The Buddha image is being built with the aim of showing the flourishing of the Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar to the world, ensuring the peace and tranquillity of the country, contributing to development of the region through the visits of local and foreign travellers and improving the State development. The Buddha image is being carved in Bhumi Phassa mudra with 32 great characteristics and 80 small characteristics of the Lord Buddha. The throne will be 18 feet high and the image, 63 feet high, totalling 81 feet. Upon completion, it will be the world's largest marble Buddha image not only in Myanmar but in the world. The throne will be carved with five parts of marble rocks. Part-1 of the throne will be 655 tonnes of weight. The main body structure of the image will be carved in four parts. At present, the construction and carving of the Buddha image are in progress.—MNA

Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win inspects vaccination processes for basic education students aged 12 and above

THE vaccination programmes play a key role in taking measures on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment, and the government also makes efforts for implementing the vaccination across the nation. Moreover, the government vaccinates the students aged over 12 against COVID-19 to continue their learning peacefully starting from 12 October if the schools are reopened.

The vaccination for the students aged over 12 was launched at Mingala Byuhar Sasana Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw and Chairman of the COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win inspected the vaccination processes together with SAC member Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Ministers Dr Nyunt Pe, Dr Thet Khaing Win, Dr Thet Thet Khaing and Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing.

Moreover, they also viewed the distribution of masks to the students free of charge and also inspected the QR Code system for those fully vaccinated.

The government made a plan to vaccinate 11,556 students over 12 against COVID-19 at Mingala Byuhar hall starting from 12 October, and 3,814 students received their vaccines until yesterday.—MNA

Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win cordially converses with students at vaccination programme.

Artistes are requested to serve the people honestly: Union MOI Minister

Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets artistes of Myoma music band in Mandalay.

NOW is time for artistes to perform entertainments with fine arts works to the people for happiness as the people are suffocated in the outbreak of COVId-19 and political changes, said Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn yesterday evening at the meeting with artistes from the Myoma Band at Pullman Hotel in Mandalay.

At the meeting, the Union Minister said that the Myoma music band was formed with the aim of forming the Myanmar orchestra so as to present entertainments with Myanmar music to meet the international standard.

The Prime Minister pays attention to the artistes from the literary, motion picture, theatretical performers and musicians with guidance often given for solving the difficulties of those artistes. The Ministry of Information cordially meets with artistes, encourages the work processes and cooperates with those artistes in solding the difficulties.

Now is time for artistes to perform entertainments with fine arts works to the people for happiness as the people are suffocated in the outbreak of COVID-19 and political changes. Artistes are requested to serve the people honestly.

The Union minister took pride of enjoying the entertainment of the band with the use of musicial instruments provided by the Prime Minister.

Chief MInister U Maung Ko of Mandalay Region government also spoke works of thanks.

They all watches dancing and singing entertainments of the artistes from the band.

The Myoma Music Band was founded in 1925 as an amateur troupe with musician youths. The band has been focusing on propagation of Myanmar classical songs, taking practices of playing the international musical instruments, and studying the musicial knowledge created with the use of music notes. Now, the band's birthday will fall the centenery in 2025. So, the band created innovation with the use of Myanmar and western musical instruments. It aims to present entertainments with the Myanmar orchestra.—MNA

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Write for us

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.

Statement on situation after Tatmadaw took State responsibilities, ASEAN Special Envoy

ASEAN Leaders' Meeting is in progress on 24 April 2021.

1. On 1 February 2021, the Tatmadaw declared the State of Emergency and took the State responsibilities in accordance with the stipulations of the 2008 Constitution. It has already issued the transparent evidences, announcements and also held press briefings to show that the root case is that there were voting frauds that were intentionally committed for political purposes and the attempts of the former government, the Union Election Commission and ruling NLD party.
2. Before the Tatmadaw took responsibilities, it conducted various ways to discuss with the UEC, the government, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and political leaders regarding with electoral frauds. If the 2020 multiparty democracy general election was free and fair, the respective ruling government had to resolve the case in line with the law, but they failed to do so.
3. After the Tatmadaw took office, it conducted "reconstitution of the Union Election Commission to scrutinize the voter lists in accordance with the law", but the relevant officials did not face in line with the law and they chose protests and armed revolutions. Although the Tatmadaw could detain the Hluttaw MPs who were in Nay Pyi Taw at that time, they were transported to their respective regions in order to build a genuine disciplined multiparty democratic nation and resolve in line with the law. They organized the terrorist group CRPH on 5 February 2021 and opposed the government. Among them, most of the former NLD MPs did not choose the legal solution but violent protests and armed protests.
4. Starting from 7 February, the protests broke out and they changed into riot, anarchic mob, insurrection and terrorism. The largest demonstration occurred on 22 February and only 4.8 million people participated in the protests. Later, they organized further terrorist groups called PDF in respective regions and killed the people who do not support them, attacked or killed the security members and government employees, conducted arson and mine attacks on schools, hospitals, clinics, government-owned buildings, roads and bridges. Therefore, the government declared the NUG and CRPH committing the sabotages as terrorist groups.
5. The terrorist groups committed 3,642 criminal cases—986 terror attacks, 2,344 bomb attacks and 312 arson attacks—across the nation until 21 October 2021. For such doings, 1,155 innocent people died and 765 people were injured. A total of 182 persons—75 military members, 93 police members and 14 government employees—died and 602 were injured. A total of 251 schools and education buildings were bombed. They also destroyed the roads and railways for 536 times and also destroyed 76 bridges. They also committed attacks on administrative buildings, religious buildings, factories, workshops, markets and urban buildings. In rare global violences, the arsons attacks and bomb attacks on 251 schools by NUG, CRPH and PDF can be clearly seen as their vicious acts. It can also raise questions about the ethics of some of the countries and organizations that support these terrorist groups.
6. The government granted pardons, dropped the hearings and charges against those who were prosecuted for participating in protests and riots to show humanitarian grounds, bring peace to the people and participate in building the nation. On significant days of Myanmar tradition such as Myanmar New Year, full moon day of Thadingyut and Union Day, the government released 51,704 prisoners—45,668 males and 6,036 females—and closed the cases. It also freed the detained EAO members and issued statements on ceasefire for the local armed conflict suspension and perpetual peace, and extended the ceasefire for five months from 1 October 2021 to the end of February 2022.
7. Although the government has carried out its utmost to consider and act as much as possible in order to prevent the escalation of violence with minimal bloodshed, NUG issued statements to increase the violence across the nation and incite the people to commit armed attacks and commit acts of violence on 7 September 2021.
8. The negotiations are being conducted with EAOs and there are 10 NCA signatories and there are still non-signatories. The negotiations will be conducted in future. Among these groups, the separate arrangements will be made to discuss with AA, TNLA and MNDAA which emerged after NCA. The National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee and government issued statement to close the hearing cases of EAO members on 15-10-2021, the 6th anniversary of signing the NCA and freed 114 members of seven EAOs. Later 1 February, discussions with EAO were conducted 15 times while six times with the political parties, and the further talks will be held. Similarly, the UEC convened discussions with the political parties two times. The negotiations with the armed terrorist groups called NUG, CRPH and PDF, which opted armed violence without choosing the legal solution for electoral frauds, cannot be accepted. The international government should notice that the negotiations regarding with the armed organizations are conducted with the ones that have been known for their tradition and history, and the action should be taken against the terrorist groups that suddenly emerge to ensure the security measures for socio-economic stability of the country and people.
9. When the Tatmadaw took over the responsibilities of the State, there was a second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar. There were a total of 142,712 people affected with the COVID-19 disease on 24 April 2021 when the ASEAN summit was held in Indonesia. Although the Government restricted gathering and protest during this period, instigators continued anarchic mobs and acts of violence. Irresponsible and unethical health workers failed to be present at work under CDM, and they also incited others to engage in immoral conduct in various ways. Due to these issues, the incidence of COVID-19 had risen to more than 10 per cent since the third week of June 2021. With the continuous rise in infection rate, more than 20 per cent of COVID-19 cases occurred in the early July, more than 30 per cent in the second week of July, and more than 40 per cent in the third week. On 23 July 2021, 5,506 people were diagnosed with COVID-19 (40.82%) and 326 of them (5.92%) died of the disease. On 26 July, a total of 396 people (8.55%) died of COVID-19. In order to effectively carry out the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, the Government had to reclose the basic education schools, announce a successive public holidays which lasted over two months from 7 July to 10 September, and a total of 113 townships have been declared as stay-at-home townships.

SEE PAGE-6

Fire breaks out at Basic Education Middle School, Zetaw village, Yesagyo Township, triggered by terrorists

Health staff give anti-COVID-19 vaccines to Bengalis.

Statement on situation after Tatmadaw took State responsibilities, ASEAN Special Envoy

FROM PAGE-5

10. The Government led by the Chairman of the State Administration Council, the Prime Minister has made great efforts to carry out COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities in the third wave of COVID-19 under the policy "Nothing is more important than human life". Oxygen and emergency medical needs caused by poor preparation in the past, human resource requirements due to the unethical health workers who failed to come to work, and the need for treatment facilities were addressed in a variety of ways. Emergency liquid oxygen supplies were urgently imported from neighbouring China and Thailand. Efforts were made to meet the need of COVID-19 vaccine which is the key factor in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19. Although the previous government conducted the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines from India, only two million doses of the vaccine arrived in Myanmar due to the outbreak situation in India. The purchase of the vaccine was restarted under the current government and due to the help of China, more than 26 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have arrived in Myanmar. By the time Myanmar was facing difficulties in accessing the COVID-19 vaccine, it was found that international organizations such as the United Nations and related organizations, and the ASEAN failed to provide COVID-19 vaccine. Only friendly nations, China, India and Russia donated the vaccines to Myanmar: 4.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China, 2.5 million from India and other from Russia. The Government is also making an effort to continue to vaccinate 50% of all eligible people by the end of this year. Although so-called NUG, CRPH and PDF terrorist organizations are disrupting the COVID-19 immunization in the form of bio-terrorism using acts of terrorism and provocative methods, an average of 250,000 people are being vaccinated every day under the collaboration of the people, the government, responsible health workers, civil society organizations and the Tatmadaw. As of 21 October 2021, 5,157,048 people have been fully vaccinated while 6,961,599 people have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine; a total of 17,275,695 vaccinations have been carried out. Currently, the incidence of COVID-19 in Myanmar is still 7.19 per cent as of October 22, and despite the low number of riots, bombings and terrorist killings still remain as a challenge.

Union Election Commission officials meet political parties.

11. Such situations reflect the current situation and the efforts of the government. In such a situation, the government is constantly striving for stability, peace and the development of a genuine multiparty democracy. The Prime Minister also openly discussed the situation in Myanmar, future plans, goals and opinions at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held on 24 April 2021. He highlighted the three facts at the meeting: "Myanmar would consider the recommendations given to our country in line with the current situation in the country,"; "Myanmar would consider ASEAN proposals and trips depending on domestic stability,"; "In terms of ASEAN's positive contribution, if it is based on the spirit of ASEAN and the ASEAN Charter, Myanmar would consider for the good of the country." Although Myanmar has focused on the appointment of the ASEAN Special Representative, various negotiations and changes have taken place. In addition to the limits in the visit of the ASEAN Special Representative, it has also experienced restrictions in requests, and interferences from non-ASEAN nations.
12. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar released a statement on 22 October on the statement of Brunei Darussalam, the current ASEAN Chair, regarding these issues. The statement of current ASEAN Chair is found to be contrary to the provisions of ASEAN Charter such as Para 20 (b) "Decision shall be made based on consultation and consensus", Para 8 (2) (a) "The ASEAN Coordination Council shall prepare the matters for the ASEAN Summit, including the invitation", Para 2 (a), (e) and (f) "To respect the sovereignty of member countries; No interference in internal affairs and no external interference in the national existence of member countries."
13. Therefore, as the State Government, the State Administration Council,
    (a) will strictly abide by the five-point roadmap of the State Administration Council, which has been in place since taking office and briefed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting.
    (b) will cooperate as much as possible in accordance with the five ASEAN agreements.
    (c) will continue to adhere to the foreign policy "The State pursues an independent, proactive and impartial foreign policy; It looks forward to world peace and friendly relations; It upholds the principle of peaceful coexistence between nations" stated in the State Constitution (2008).

Information Team
State Administration Council

IDPs in Sittway, school children in Bengali villages get COVID jabs

Health staff perform medical tests on students before vaccination against COVID-19 in Sittway.

HEALTH officials gave Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines to internally displaced persons and over 12-year-old, middle and high school students in Sittway Township and Bengali villages in Rakhine State yesterday morning.

Students aged 12 and above from basic education middle and high schools including Basic Education High School (Thekkepyingon), Primary Schools in Ohndawgyi, Bumay and Thechaung, No. 7 Basic Education High School in Padaleik, Basic Education Primary School (Shwepya), No. 6 BEMS (Sittway Station), No. 9 BEHS (Mingan), No. 4 BEHS and No.2 BEHS and Ohntawchay IDP camp received the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Health.

Health workers, officials from Sittway Station, school heads, teachers, members of the Red Cross Brigade, volunteers, staff from General Administration Department, Ward/Village administrators and officials participated in the vaccination programme.

Students were allowed to leave after waiting 30 minutes after the injection.

Vaccination for the students aged 12 and above began on 17 October in Sittway Township.

There are 15,409 middle school students and 5,661 high school students in the township who have been vaccinated against COVID-19, official said.—Tin Htun (IPRD)/GNLM

Tomato from Nyaungshwe earns good price

TOMATO from Nyaungshwe Township are sold at Thirimalar wholesale market in Aungmyaythazan Township, Mandalay and the growers are getting good prices, said tomato traders from the wholesale market.

These tomatoes are produced form Inlay area of Nyaunshwe in Shan State. Seven or eight 22-wheeled trucks loaded with packages of tomato are entering the wholesale market daily. In September, the price of 18-viss tomato carton was ranged at K6,000-K7,000. But the price rose in the market and it fetched K12,000-K18,000 per viss, said U Aung Moe Naing, owner of Aung brokerage in Mandalay.

"Currently, the tomatoes from Inlay area are entered the market mostly. This month, tomato price has risen by K ten thousands per viss compared to that of last month due to the transportation difficulties and lower supply. In addition to tomatoes, other vegetables are also being sold well and made good profit, he added.

About seven or eight trucks of tomato from Nyaungshwe Township daily entered Mandalay market. By the end of October, the tomatoes form the plain areas will be entering the market.

At present, all kinds of corps are getting good prices, and the growers are doing well by growing those crops this year.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)/GNLM

Tomato plants are bearing ripen fruits at patches.

MoC manages daily import processes for anti-COVID-19 products

THE Ministry of Commerce manages imports of accessories related to prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 through trading posts, international airport and seaports with standard operation procedures.

On 23 October, various items of anti-COVID-19 equipment were imported by a company using a bowser.

A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by bowser led to Yangon via Myawady border gate.

From 1 to 23 October, 65 companies were allowed to use 150 vehicles to transport 273 tonnes of liquid oxygen in bowsers, two oxygen storage containers, three oxygen distributors, 14,521 empty oxygen cylinders, 46 oxygen plants, four oxygen refilling machines, 16 oxygen generators, 1,699 oxygen concentrators for home use, 15,105 test kits, 168,325 PPE suits, 67 tonnes of gloves and 597 tonnes of masks.

During the same period, among 14 bowsers, 11 rolled on to Yangon and three to Mandalay.

Out of 46 oxygen plants, 32 were transported to Yangon, two to Myitkyina, two to Kume, two to Loikaw and one each to Mandalay, Homalin, Kyondoe, Sinbaungwe, Mindon, Thayet, Salin and Pwintbyu.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) 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

A bowser is carrying liquid oxygen from Myawady to Yangon.

Myanmar businesspersons invited to participate in "World Rice Noodle Expo 2021-Liuzhou"

MYANMAR businesspersons have been invited to participate in the "World Rice Noodle Expo 2021-Liuzhou, according to the Myanmar Food Processors and Exporters Association.

The World Rice Noodle Expo in 2021, one of the specialty exhibitions of China-ASEAN expo, will be launched in Liuzhou International Convention and Exhibition Centre, in the People's Republic of China, from 5 to 7 November.

The Liuzhou where the exhibition will be held is a city that produces a lot of rice noodles using lower quality rice.

It aimed to further promote the traditional Chinese food culture, dock with the world rice noodle industry, build an international exchange platform for rice noodle industry, and introduce Chinese rice noodles to the world.

Efforts are being made to expand the "Liuzhou River Snails Rice Noodle", one of the street foods of Liuzhou, to the world market as a significant local product. Therefore, the large volume of lower quality rice may need to produce rice noodle. If Myanmar can produce and export the rice noodle (dry) that highly demanded from Liuzhou, it will be able to export as a brand new export products to China. It has also the benefit of being marketed as a side dish, such as peanuts used in river snail noodles. Consequently, it is an exhibition that Myanmar's agricultural productions and exports businesses should participate to display.

Besides, China offered to hold business talk thought video calls before and during the exhibition to buy the agricultural products from Asian countries.

Thus, Myanmar-related agricultural producers and exporters who wish to participate in the discussion should fill up the prescribed form and send it back to Myanmar commercial attaché through messenger or economicattachenanning@outlook.com by 25 October.

Those who wish to receive excel format can contact to Myanmar economic attaché.—NN/GNLM

24 OCTOBER 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Produce safety foodstuff for daily consumption of the people

THE foodstuffs consumed on a daily basis by the people must be healthy and safe without any hazards to the life and body organs.

Since its establishment, the market-oriented economic system being exercised by the country has been seeing the competitive production of various personal goods and any other foodstuffs. Some of them are recommended by the Department of Food and Drug Administration but some of them are being produced without any norms and standards.

> As such, the authorities need to always supervise and examine the foodstuffs whether these are healthy and safety whereas businesspersons should produce safe foodstuffs for the emergence of healthy future generations.

Some businesspersons focus on self-interest by manufacturing the products preserved with the use of inappropriate chemicals and dyes. In this regard, the use of overdose for preservation materials would harm the consumers. Hence, the producers need to use the correct and accurate ratio of chemicals and dyes as well as techniques to prevent side effects.

Some businesspersons use quality materials for manufacturing products meeting international standards. Such products can keep abreast of other products in the international market. In fact, whatever they manufacture the products such as meat, fish and fruits, all foodstuffs must be genuine, healthy and safe ones.

Unavoidably, the raw materials will comprise residues of chemical fertilizers and pesticides due to overdose of usage in the cultivation of crops. Consequently, these residues will impact the damage of farmlands and the death of animals around the farmlands. Moreover, these residues will cause danger to the consumers.

The Ministry of Health is always examining the foodstuff being sold in the domestic market whether these are quality and safe for consumers or not. Moreover, action is taken against those who do not abide by the restrictions not to use the prohibited chemical dyes under the law as part of protecting the interests of the consumer people. So also, the ministry accepts the complaints of consumers who face various problems in the domestic market on a daily basis.

In fact, as Myanmar is an agro-based country, all the businesspersons producing the foodstuffs need to manufacture the guaranteed foodstuffs for the consumers. Only when their products are safe and healthy, will they have the chance to grasp the market shares for their products in competition with other similar products.

As such, the authorities need to always supervise and examine the foodstuffs whether these are healthy and safety whereas businesspersons should produce safe foodstuffs for the emergence of healthy future generations.

■ ■ ■

Covid-19 may have killed more than 100,000 health care workers, says WHO

The WHO said Thursday that 80,000 to 180,000 health care workers may have been killed by Covid-19 up to May this year, insisting they must be prioritised for vaccination.

THE World Health Organization said the fact that millions of health workers remain unvaccinated is an "indictment" on the countries and companies controlling the global supply of doses.

A WHO paper estimated that out of the planet's 135 million health staff, "between 80,000 to 180,000 health and care workers could have died from Covid-19 in the period between January 2020 to May 2021".

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said health care workers needed to be among the first immunised against the disease, as he slammed the global inequity in the vaccine roll-out.

"Data from 119 countries suggest that on average, two in five health and care workers globally are fully vaccinated. But of course, that average masks huge differences," he said.

"In Africa, less than in one in 10 health workers have been fully vaccinated. Meanwhile, in most high-income countries, more than 80 percent of health workers are fully vaccinated."

Health care workers inside the COVID-19 intensive care unit in North Oaks Hospital in Hammond, La., on 13 August. **PHOTO: EMILY KASK/AFP**

He added: "We call on all countries to ensure that all health and care workers in every country are prioritised for Covid-19 vaccines, alongside other at-risk groups."

Annette Kennedy, president of the International Council of Nurses, said the organisation grieved for all health care workers who had lost their lives in the pandemic -- "many needlessly; many we could have saved".

"It's a shocking indictment of governments. It's a shocking indictment of their lack of duty of care to protect health care workers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice," she said.

Kennedy warned: "They are now burnt out, they are devastated, they are physically and mentally exhausted. And there is a prediction that 10 per cent of them will leave within a very short time."

The WHO wants each country to have vaccinated 40 per cent of its population by the end of the year, but Tedros said 82 countries are at risk of missing that target, chiefly through insufficient supply.

In high-income countries, as categorised by the World Bank, 133 doses have been administered per 100 people. In the 29 lowest-income nations, the figure drops to five.

G20 risks a 'moral catastrophe'

Former British prime minister Gordon Brown, now a WHO ambassador for global health financing, said the October 30-31 G20 summit in Rome would be a critical juncture in combating the pandemic.

If the world's richest countries cannot mobilise an immediate airlift of doses to the unvaccinated in poorer nations, "an epidemiological, economic and ethical dereliction of duty will shame us all", said Brown, who hosted the 2009 G20 summit.Subscribe

He said that by February, wealthy nations could have built up an unused stockpile of one billion vaccine doses, and denying them to the unvaccinated would be "one of the greatest international public policy failures imaginable".

"It's a moral catastrophe of historic proportions that will shock future generations," he said.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 4.9 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP, while nearly 242 million cases have been registered.

Brown said that without reallocating the growing stockpile, the WHO's latest forecast was that there could be 200 million more Covid cases, with five million lives hanging in the balance.

SOURCE: AFP

■ ■ ■

Cinemas re-open in Bollywood's hometown Mumbai

Cinemas have begun re-opening in movie-mad Mumbai, the home of Bollywood.

THE pandemic torpedoed the industry worldwide but films have a special place in Indian culture, with stars enjoying almost divine status and people often queuing to watch the same movie multiple times.

Lockdowns and a devastating surge in coronavirus cases in April and May kept Indians away from the silver screen, putting dozens of small cinemas out of business and squeezing production firms hard.

Many Indians turned instead to streaming platforms such as Netflix, which saw a boom in subscribers and hosted the releases of some new Bollywood films.

On Friday, only a few cinemas took advantage of being allowed to open, showing older pictures as well as the new James Bond and US superhero caper "Venom", and punters were few and far between.

"I am an avid cinema enthusiast and I have been waiting for this day for a long time. The last movie I saw was in 2019, before the pandemic began. I am too excited to be back," said Smer Sagar, 18, fresh from seeing "No Time to Die".

The industry is hoping that a string of new big-budget flicks—some made months ago but unreleased—will bring back the good times. The massive backlog will begin screening from Diwali weekend —the festival of lights in early November —with "Sooryavanshi" starring Akshay Kumar, one of Bollywood's biggest stars.

Biryani banned

Bollywood, India's Hindi-language film industry, was worth $2.5 billion in 2019 and is the world's most prolific. Movies in other languages are also big business.

Maharashtra state and its capital Mumbai are among the last to re-open theatres, multiplexes and auditoriums, but for the industry it is "very, very important", film trade analyst Komal Nahta told AFP. "Maharashtra contributes around 20 percent of the total all-India theatrical revenue and Bombay (Mumbai) is the nerve centre of Bollywood," Nahta said.

Occupancy is being capped at 50 percent and no refreshments can be served, a far cry from pre-pandemic days when moviegoers at big multiplexes would be served biryani and ice cream in their seats. Cinema-goers must wear face masks at all times, but while staff need to be fully vaccinated, there is no vaccination requirement for members of the audience.

"The effects of the pandemic will linger but we are hopeful that 2021 will bring back the theatre-going audience," said Ajay Bijli, chairman of India's largest cinema chain PVR.

SOURCE: AFP

On Friday, only a few cinemas took advantage of being allowed to open, showing older pictures as well as the new James Bond and US superhero caper "Venom", and punters were few and far between. **PHOTO: SUJIT JAISWAL / AFP**

UN Secretary-General's Message on The United Nations Day

24 October 2021

Seventy-six years ago, the United Nations was created as a vehicle of hope for a world emerging from the shadow of catastrophic conflict.

Today, the women and men of the UN carry this hope forward around the globe.

COVID-19, conflicts, hunger, poverty and the climate emergency remind us that our world is far from perfect.

But they also make clear that solidarity is the only way forward.

We need to come together to tackle great challenges and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

By ensuring that every person, everywhere, has access to vaccines sooner rather than later.

By securing and upholding the rights and dignity of all people — especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, girls and women, and children and young people.

By seeking an end to the conflicts that scar our world.

By making bold climate commitments to save our planet — and living up to them.

And by building global governance that is more inclusive, networked and effective — as detailed in my recent report, Our Common Agenda.

The values that have powered the UN Charter for the last 76 years — peace, development, human rights, and opportunity for all — have no expiry date.

As we make UN Day, let's unite behind these ideals, and live up to the full promise, potential and hope of the United Nations.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 23 October 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 24 October 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Eastern Shan and Mon states, fairly widespread in Mandalay, Bago, and Yangon regions and Southern Shan and Kayin states, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Ayeyawady Region and Northern Shan and Kayah states and isolated in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavyfalls in Bago Region and Kayin, and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4– 7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, and Magway regions and Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHB0URING AREA FOR 24 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers.

USD 15.42 million earned from fishery exports to Ranong in October

TOTAL of USD 15.42 million was earned from fishery exports to Ranong, Thailand from 1 to 21 October 2021, starting from the 2021-2022 mini budget as Kawthoung District in the far south of Myanmar is mainly engaged in offshore fishing.

In the third week of October, 335 vessels exported more than 14,037 tonnes of the fishery products to Ranong, earning USD 15.42 million.

"The higher income of the fishery gets, the better the livelihood of the local fishermen and the income of the state as Taninthayi Region mostly operates the fishery-based business.

"And if the fishery trade is good, then all the connections are good, so it can be said that the economic chain is developing.

Officials of Kawthoung District Fisheries Department inspect trawlers before departure for offshore the coast. **PHOTO: KANU**

"At the beginning of the open season, from 1 to 21 October, we have earned USD 15.42 million from fishery exports," said U Tin Htut, deputy director of the Kawthoung District Fisheries Department.

"This is a marketable fishing season and is a lucrative month for fishermen. Fishing is done at least 22 days a month. Fishing in the dark relied on electric lighting", fishermen said.

The Ranong fish market displays large lobsters at 60 baht per kilo and small tortoises for 90 baht and larger one for 120 baht per kilo.

Fishing within two miles of Lampi Island is prohibited, and in some areas, fishing is permitted in accordance with the type of fishing nets specified by the Department of Fisheries.

Fishermen and businessmen have been earning USD 15.42 million from the export of fishery products including fishes and shrimps, from Kawthaung District to Ranong, Thailand from 1 to 21 October.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

K1.77 billion worth of drugs seized in Southern Shan State

MYANMAR Police Force seized more than K1.77 billion worth of narcotic drugs in Pinlaung Township of Southern Shan State.

The Anti-Narcotic Task Force inspected a NISSAN Light Truck driven by Si Thu Win, 30 and Khin Maung Win, 33 headed to Pinlaung from Nyaungshwe on Taunggyi-Nyaungshwe-Pinlaung road on the morning of 22 October.

Then, the police seized more than K1.77 billion worth of 66 kilos of ICE (methamphetamine), 17.5 kilos of 50 heroin blocks and 650,000 stimulant tablets.

The suspects admitted that they transported the drugs from southern Shan State to Yangon. The police open cases against them in line with the law.—MNA

Two suspects are arrested together with narcotic drugs worth K 1.77 billion.

Over 16 mln people vaccinated against COVID-19 in Myanmar as of 19 Oct

A health staff injects anti-COVID-19 vaccine into a local. **PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (DISTRICT IPRD)**

MYANMAR has vaccinated over 16 million people for COVID-19 as of 19 October, 2021, the Ministry of Health stated.

As of 19 October, there are 4.98 million people completed full doses of vaccine and about 7.01 million people received single doses of COVID-19, according to the Ministry.

Fifty percent of the total population is expected to get vaccinated at the end of this year. Besides, Myanmar has already purchased 24 million of Sinopharm vaccines from China under the contract system. As soon as vaccine arrives, Myanmar will offer it vaccine to 12 million people aged between 40 and 64.

The Ministry added that it plans to vaccinate 20 percent of the adult population by end of September, 50 percent of the adult population by the end of 2021, and 70 percent of the adult population by mid-2021. Adult population includes any persons who are 18 or older.

The World Health Organization already allows China-made Sinopharm and Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines for use of emergency case.

The WHO also recommended that above aged 18 people can get two kinds of Sinopharm and Sinovac Covid-19 vaccines.

Since January 2021, the country has been administering vaccinations, using the China-made Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, across the country.—Aye Maung/GNLM

G-20 should lead preparation for next pandemic: vaccine alliance chief

THE Group of 20 major economies should lead global efforts to prepare for the next pandemic, the head of one of the organizations co-leading a body promoting global access to COVID vaccines said, expecting their leaders to make progress to that end later this month in Rome.

Jose Manuel Barroso, chair of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, said in an interview with Kyodo News on Thursday that talks are under way regarding the establishment of a G-20 permanent body to coordinate responses to future pandemics and a fund to be deployed for countermeasures.

Such a mechanism should be linked to international agencies such as the World Health Organization, but it could take a very long time for member states to reach an agreement, said Barroso, who has served as prime minister of Portugal and president of the European Commission.

Developed countries need to waive intellectual property rights to ensure equitable access to Covid-related medicines by poorer nations. **PHOTO: SAUL LOEB /AFP**

"While I would welcome these enforcement powers at the multilateral level, I know the world sufficiently to tell it will not happen," said the chair of Gavi, a Geneva-based international partnership created in 2000 for immunization of children against infectious diseases.

Gavi also co-leads COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, also known as COVAX, an international scheme designed to ensure access to novel coronavirus vaccines around the world.

Prospects are dim for a potential new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response, likely to be at the center of discussions at the special session of the WHO's decision-making body in November, Barroso added.

Barroso thinks the G-20 is the most likely umbrella under which concrete actions can take place to prepare against future pandemics.—Kyodo ■

Canada lifts advisory against non-essential int'l travel

THE Canadian government has lifted its advisory against all non-essential international travel by Canadians outside the country which were in place since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

The new advisories for each country have now reverted to the four levels that existed prior to the pandemic: exercise normal security precautions, exercise a high degree of caution, avoid non-essential travel and avoid all travel. The advisories, put back in place on Thursday, can be seen on the government's Travel Advice and Advisory website. However, a blanket advisory against all cruise travel remains in place.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the government advised all Canadians, regardless of vaccination status, to avoid non-essential international travel.

As of Friday, Canada reported 926 new cases of the COVID-19, increasing the cumulative total to 1,694,095 cases, including 28,687 deaths, according to CTV.

Travellers wearing face masks walk through the arrivals hall at Toronto Pearson International Airport in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, on 7 September 2021. **PHOTO: ZOU ZHENG/XINHUA**

As of Oct. 21, 64,293,712 vaccine doses have been distributed in the country, 57,557,726 doses have been administered and at least 27,816,165 people have been fully vaccinated. That's about 73.2 percent of Canada's population. — Xinhua ■

Moscow to shut non-essential services as Covid cases spike

Russia reported a record 1,036 Covid-19 deaths in a single day Thursday, but officials have warned the worst is yet to come. **PHOTO: AFP**

MOSCOW, the capital of Europe's worst Covid-hit nation, will shut non-essential services between 28 October and 7 November as deaths soar and vaccination rates stall in the country, the city's mayor said Thursday.

Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced the 11-day closure a day after President Vladimir Putin ordered a nationwide paid week off at the end of the month to curb fast spreading infections.

Russia reported 1,036 Covid-19 deaths in a single day Thursday, but officials have warned the worst is yet to come, with only 35 per cent of the population fully vaccinated.

Putin will have no in-person meetings during the non-working period, the Kremlin said.

Authorities have previously gone to great lengths to protect the 69-year-old, who the Kremlin says is fully vaccinated.

In Russia's capital and the epicentre of its outbreak, Sobyanin said all non-essential retail, sporting and entertainment venues must temporarily close. Shops selling food, medicine and other essentials will remain open.

Restaurants and cafes will be able to sell take-away food, the mayor said in a statement.

Mass events will be banned and schools will be closed, with the days off coinciding with national school holidays. Theatres and museums can stay open, but entry will be allowed only with QR codes.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Zealand sets 90% vaccination target to end COVID-19 lockdowns

NEW ZEALAND will end coronavirus lockdowns once 90 percent of its eligible population is vaccinated, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced Friday.

The new target sets the path for New Zealand to begin living with the virus, marking the end of a long-standing "zero-COVID" strategy after a stubborn outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant forced officials to change tack.

"Our strategy moving forward is to minimize and protect," Ardern told a press conference.

The new "traffic light" system will involve three settings —green, orange and red—to manage rates of infection and hospitalization, centering on vaccination certificates to offer greater freedoms to those who are fully inoculated.—Kyodo ■

Ukraine: Record Covid deaths and cases for second day

UKRAINE on Friday reported record coronavirus deaths and infections for the second day in a row as the capital Kiev is set to re-impose tough restrictions.

A government tally registered 23,785 new infections and 614 deaths in the ex-Soviet nation, which has an under-resourced public health service.

Kiev on Friday was set to shutter public venues like restaurants and theatres unless all of their employees had been fully vaccinated in a bid to slow the spread of the virus.

Authorities in the country of around 41 million people initially struggled to source vaccines and convince Ukrainians to get a jab.

But new measures imposed in badly hit regions requiring vaccine certificates for entry to public places including schools have seen a wave of people getting inoculated.

Officials on Friday reported that 269,666 people had been vaccinated over 24 hours—the highest figure since the beginning of Ukraine's vaccination drive in February.—AFP ■

European nations strive to cushion energy price hikes

PRICE freezes, tax cuts, energy payments or credits, targeted aid... in the face of soaring energy prices European nations are deploying a variety of steps to cushion the blow for consumers.

Here are some of the measures taken to help consumers face the jump in petrol, natural gas and (where unregulated) electricity prices.

Price freezes, tax cuts, energy payments or credits, targeted aid... in the face of soaring energy prices European nations are deploying a variety of steps to cushion the blow for consumers. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Targeted aid to low income households

France announced Thursday a one-time, tax-free payment of 100 euros to people with revenues of less than 2,000 euros per month, which the government expects 38 million people will receive. It had already announced an exceptional, additional 100-euro payment to six million households which receive cold weather payments to help pay their energy supplier.

In Britain, the government announced several weeks ago a 500-million-pound fund to help low-income households with energy bills, in particular for heating, as well as for food and clothing. At the beginning of October, the Belgian government extended until March fixed energy rates for lower-income households, in addition to providing them an 80-euro subsidy for energy bills.

In Poland, the government plans to spend up to 1.1 billion euros next year helping retirees and large families cope with energy bills. One out of five households is eligible.

In Latvia, about 150,000 households are to receive between 15 and 20 euros per month to help cover their electricity or gas bill. The Estonian government is spending around 75 million euros to lower the electricity bills of all consumers, and another 20 million to help around 72,000 low-income families from September and March.— AFP ■

US budget deficit falls in 2021 to $2.8 tn as economy recovers

THE US budget deficit narrowed slightly in the past year as the economy recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic, falling $360 billion to $2.8 trillion, the government reported Friday.

The result for the fiscal year ended 30 September was far better than expected a few months ago, but just shy of the record set in 2020 during the worst of the health crisis that shuttered businesses nationwide and caused millions of layoffs.

The improvement reflected a more than $600 billion increase in tax revenues as the economy was able to restart following the pandemic shutdowns, according to data from the Treasury Department and White House budget office.

"Today's joint budget statement is further evidence that America's economy is in the midst of a recovery," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said, crediting the huge American Rescue Plan stimulus package approved early this year.

Government outlays increased $266 billion to $6.8 trillion in the fiscal year just ended, partly due to ongoing spending from the massive aid bills passed in 2020, when the pandemic was at its worst.

But Yellen cautioned that "while the nation's economic recovery is stronger than those of other wealthy nations, it is still fragile."

President Joe Biden's Democratic party is currently working to pass two huge legislative packages but are divided on their size and scope as well as how they will be paid for.

This file photo shows containers at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yellen said passing the social and infrastructure spending proposals "will grow the economy, help workers and families and strengthen our nation's long-term fiscal outlook." —AFP ■

Fukui nuclear unit halted after missing deadline on antiterror steps

File photo taken 23 June 2021, shows (from front) the No. 3, No. 2 and No. 1 reactors of Kansai Electric Power Co.'s Mihama nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture, central Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

A nuclear reactor in central Japan's Fukui Prefecture was halted on Saturday, just four months after its restart as it could not meet a deadline set by regulators to implement antiterrorism measures.

The suspension of Kansai Electric Power Co.'s Mihama No. 3 unit came ahead of the deadline on Monday for such measures to be completed. After undergoing safety checks, the utility aims to make the necessary changes to its facilities around September next year and restart operations in mid-October.

In June, the No. 3 unit went online for the first time in about 10 years and became the first nuclear unit to operate beyond the government-mandated 40-year service period introduced under new rules set after the 2011 Fukushima disaster.

The reactor had stopped operations after the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi plant triggered by a massive earthquake and tsunami. Regulators gave the green light to the aging No. 3 unit after screening the utility's safety measures.

The Nos. 1 and 2 units of the Mihama plant were terminated in April 2015 in line with the 40-year limit.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Revival of ancient Silk Road to strengthen regional connectivity: Pakistani envoy

THE China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the revival of the ancient Silk Road will strengthen infrastructure connectivity and develop a shared future for the peoples of the region, the permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations said Friday. In his remarks at a virtual briefing on the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) and the UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, Munir Akram commended the Chinese government for successfully convening these two important meetings.

Akram said that the development of ecological civilization, proposed by the Chinese president, "could guide us on a path of sustainable development" which benefits both man and nature.—Xinhua ■

New migration route via Belarus causes major concern among EU leaders

An emerging route where migrants enter the European Union (EU) via Belarus has aroused concerns among the bloc's heads of state and government and topped the agenda of their meeting on Friday.

"This took up quite some time which is not surprising," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel, referring to the discussion of migration on Friday morning, the second day of the autumn EU summit in Brussels. Baltic countries have reported cases of what they called "illegal migration" as well as their effort to put an end to the trend, including the establishment of physical border fences.—Xinhua ■

India's central bank releases new regulatory framework for parallel lending companies

INDIA'S central bank on Friday introduced a scale-based regulatory framework for parallel lending companies in the country, which is effective from 1 October next year.

The framework encompasses different facets of regulation for the parallel lenders, popularly called non-banking finance companies (NBFC), that will cover capital requirements, governance standards, prudential regulation, among others.

According to the RBI, the country's central bank, there are 9,651 NBFCs across 12 different categories focused on a diverse set of products, customer segments, and geographies. **PHOTO: ANI**

Speaking at an industry body conclave on NBFC earlier in the day, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) M. Rajeshwar Rao said, "The reputation of the non-banking financial sector has been dented in recent times by failure of certain entities due to idiosyncratic factors." "The challenge, therefore, is to restore trust in the sector by ensuring that a few entities or activities do not generate vulnerabilities which go undetected and create shocks and give rise to systemic risk through their interlinkages with the financial system," Rao noted. As per the new norms, the NBFCs in the lowest layer will be known as NBFC-Base Layer, while those in the middle and upper layers will be known as NBFC-Middle Layer and NBFC-Upper Layer, respectively.

Under the new framework, the RBI has tweaked the non-performing asset (NPA) classification to more than 90 days for all categories of the NBFCs.

According to the RBI, the country's central bank, there are 9,651 NBFCs across 12 different categories focused on a diverse set of products, customer segments, and geographies.—Xinhua ■

UK business leaders confident in resilience, vitality of Chinese economy

GIANT consumption driven by middle class, steady economic growth even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, big green investment collaboration under mutual desire for the planet … These are among the reasons given by British business leaders for their confidence in resilience and vitality of the Chinese economy.

To reduce the impact of the pandemic, British luxury brand Rapport London shifted its focus to digital economy, seeing a strong double-digit percentage growth in its online business across the world, especially in the booming online market of China.

"The Chinese market is set to become the largest luxury market by 2025, and we want to be a part of this growth," said Oliver Rapport, CEO of Rapport London, in a recent interview with Xinhua.

"The importance of the Chinese market is paramount," said Rapport, adding that the luxury goods market in the Chinese mainland saw a significant boost in consumer spending in 2020 and is expected to grow continuously into the year of 2025. Since his company has set up online stores on Chinese e-commerce platforms, including WeChat Mini-Programs and Alibaba, Rapport said he plans to open offline stores in collaboration with Chinese partners. Founded in 1972, a London-based market research company Mintel tracked consumer spending across 34 markets worldwide.—Xinhua

Part of Tokyo's busy Yamanote loop line to be suspended for 2 days

A section of Tokyo's Yamanote loop line was suspended Saturday due to track switching construction work slated to last through the weekend, the longest such suspension on the line since the launch of its operator JR East.

Services on the inner loop between Ikebukuro and Osaki stations, which include the busy JR Shibuya Station, were halted from the first train on Saturday and will be suspended through the last train on Sunday. The move is expected to affect a total of 540,000 passengers, or up to 865,000 people in prepandemic conditions, according to the train operator.

Photo taken 22 October 2021, shows a Yamanote Line platform at JR Shibuya Station in Tokyo. East Japan Railway Co. plans to suspend operations of part of the inner loop services of the Yamanote Line for two days from 23 October due to construction at the station. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The operator aims to widen a platform at Shibuya Station by around 5 meters, with plans on additional work on the outer loop platform in the future. It said once completed, the inner and outer platforms at the station will be connected, thereby easing passenger congestion and increasing convenience for transfers. Shibuya Station was bustling with passengers including shoppers from the morning. There were no major disturbances despite a sign in front of the ticket gates announcing the line's closure.—Kyodo ■

Dow ends at record as Evergrande worries recede

THE Dow finished at a record Friday, capping a strong week for US stocks, while European and Asian equities mostly rebounded as risks of contagion from troubled Chinese property giant Evergrande eased.

While both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq dropped Friday, all three major Wall Street indices scored weekly gains following mostly solid corporate earnings that have offset worries about inflation.

"While just about every company is talking about supply chain pressures, you're not seeing a lot of companies talking about how demand is falling," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

O'Hare said investors have been reassured by statements that companies have managed to pass on price increases to consumers, preserving profit margins. But some companies have sold off sharply after surprising investors with bad news.

Snap plunged 26.6 percent as it reported a hit from Apple's move to change its privacy settings that have made it more difficult to target advertising. Fellow social media companies Twitter and Facebook both lost about five percent.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (236N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (236N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-10-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm

သတင်းစာ မာယူလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်
09 454 237 515

သတင်းစာ ဂျာနယ် စာစောင်များကို နိုင်ငံတကာစံချိန်မီ ပုံနှိပ်လိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်
01 860 4530

ကြော်ငြာဒီဇိုင်းနှင့် ကြော်ငြာအေဂျင်စီများ ကြော်ငြာ ထည့်သွင်းလိုပါက တိုက်ရိုက်ဆက်သွယ် ဆွေးနွေးနိုင်ပါတယ်
09 974 424 848

The 'open secret' behind Austria media graft scandal

THE media corruption scandal that recently felled Austria's 35-year-old right-wing Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has given fresh urgency to calls for reform of what critics say are unhealthy links between politicians, pollsters and the press.

The scandal erupted this month when prosecutors raided locations including the chancellery and the finance ministry.

They are currently probing allegations that Kurz's inner circle used public money to pay for polls skewed to boost his image.

Prosecutors also suspect that in return for running the surveys, and other fawning coverage of Kurz, a major tabloid received lucrative public adverts.

Kurz and all those under investigation deny any wrong-doing. But the fact that government adverts are used as a means of influencing the press has long been an "open secret", says Yilmaz Gulum, a political journalist with public broadcaster ORF.

Prosecutors are probing allegations the inner circle of fallen right-wing Chancellor Sebastian Kurz used public money to pay for polls skewed to boost his image and fawning press coverage. **PHOTO: AFP**

In the small EU member state of 8.9 million people, large swathes of the press have become reliant on public money as "their economic model of print media has been destabilised by the internet", says Fritz Hausjell, deputy head of the media and communications department at the University of Vienna.

By far and away the largest source of public funds has been ad spending by regional and national government, which has grown to 220 million euros ($256 million) a year.—AFP ■

New whistleblower accuses Facebook of wrongdoing: report

A former Facebook worker reportedly told US authorities Friday the platform has put profits before stopping problematic content, weeks after another whistleblower helped stoke the firm's latest crisis with similar claims.

The unnamed new whistleblower filed a complaint with US financial regulator Securities and Exchange Commission that could add to the company's woes, said a Washington Post report.

Facebook has faced a storm of criticism over the past month after former employee Frances Haugen leaked internal studies showing the company knew of potential harm stoked by its sites, prompting US lawmakers' to renew a push for regulation.

In the SEC complaint, the new whistleblower recounts alleged statements from 2017, when the company was deciding how to handle the controversy related to Russia's interference in the 2016 US presidential election. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Canada hospitals use drones to carry lungs for transplant

In the dark of night, a drone takes off from a Toronto hospital rooftop, the hum of its rotors barely audible over the bustling sounds of the cars and pedestrians below in Canada's largest metropolis.

On its maiden flight, with a bird's-eye view of the city's glistening skyline as it glides over apartments, shops and office towers, the drone is carrying a precious cargo -- human lungs for transplant.

The 15.5-kilogram (34-pound) carbon fibre unmanned electric drone purpose-built by Quebec-based Unither Bioelectronics flew just 1.2 kilometers (0.75 miles) from Toronto Western Hospital on the city's west side to the roof of the downtown Toronto General Hospital.

The trip at the end of September took less than 10 minutes. It was automated but kept under the watchful eye of engineers and doctors.

The drone delivery of transplant lungs marked a global first, according to the company, but a similar flight in April 2019 delivered a kidney to a hospital in the US state of Maryland.—AFP ■

Energy debate heats up at EU leaders' summit

HUNGARIAN leader Viktor Orban and other eastern Europeans on Thursday poured scorn on the EU's ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions as the rising cost of energy frayed tempers at a summit in Brussels.

The right-wing leader spoke as he arrived for a meeting of EU leaders in which former communist bloc countries were also under pressure over Poland's recent defiance of EU law.

"The Hungarian position is very clear.... This plan increases energy prices,"Orban said of the EU's intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

These prices are already "barely bearable, and if it continues to rise, it will kill the European middle class," Orban said as he arrived for the talks.

Orban said the plan was "toxic" for European democracy and that it must be cancelled and "rethought completely".—AFP ■

Sudan's mass protests back civilian rule but army remains strong

MASS protests in Sudan show strong support for a civilian-led democracy, but analysts warn street demonstrations may have little impact on powerful factions pushing a return to military rule.

Under a 2019 power-sharing deal after the ouster of long-time dictator Omar al-Bashir, Sudan is ruled by a sovereign council of civilian and military representatives tasked with overseeing a transition to a full civilian government. But cracks in the leadership are growing wider.

On Thursday, tens of thousands of Sudanese marched in several cities to back the full transfer of power to civilians, and to counter a rival days-long sit-in outside the presidential palace in the capital Khartoum demanding a return to "military rule".—AFP ■

Fire kills 16 at Russian explosives factory

SIXTEEN people were killed and one person was missing after a deadly fire broke out at a Russian explosives factory southeast of Moscow on Friday, local authorities said.

The blaze took place in the village of Lesnoy, 300 kilometres (185 miles) from the capital in the region of Ryazan.

Authorities originally said 15 people had died, but later said one man who received severe burns had died in hospital.

"The fate of one more person is unknown," the local government said on its website, adding that rescuers are "looking for him".

Seventeen people were believed to have been inside the plant's workshop at the time of the fire. Images released by authorities showed firefighters working their way through the debris at the severely damaged factory building.

The plant is considered a "strategic company" by the Russian government. According to its website, it produces explosives for both the civilian and military sectors.

Russia's emergencies ministry said the fire could have broken out as a result of "violations of technological processes and safety measures" at the local PGUP Elastic factory.—AFP ■

Russia's emergencies ministry said the fire could have broken out as a result of "violations of technological processes and safety measures". **PHOTO: RUSSIAN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS MINISTRY/AFP**

US, Europeans renew call for Iran diplomacy

THE United States and three European powers agreed Friday in consultations in Paris on the need for Iran to return quickly to talks amid growing alarm over a delay.

Rob Malley, the US envoy on Iran, spoke with his counterparts from Britain, France and Germany on how diplomacy "continues to provide the most effective pathway" on Iran, State Department spokesman Ned Price said.

"We are united in the belief that negotiations should resume in Vienna as soon as possible and that they should resume precisely where they left off after the sixth round," Price told reporters in Washington.

The 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers to find a long-term solution to the now two-decade-old crisis over its controversial nuclear programme has been moribund since former US president Donald Trump walked out of the deal in May 2018.

His successor Joe Biden has said he is ready to re-enter the agreement, so long as Iran meets key preconditions including full compliance with the deal whose terms it has repeatedly violated by ramping up nuclear activities since Trump walked out.

But the Vienna-based talks through intermediaries made little headway, before being interrupted by the election of hardliner Ebrahim Raisi as Iran's president and suspended for the last four months.

Malley's trip to Paris comes after he visited the Gulf for talks with allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates which are all deeply concerned by Iran's nuclear programme.

Representatives of the European Union and Iran attend nuclear talks at the Grand Hotel Vienna in Austria on 6 April 2021. **PHOTO: EU DELEGATION IN VIENNA/AFP**

The French foreign ministry said in a statement that the talks were coming at a "critical time" when France and other world powers were still prepared to return to the Vienna talks on bringing the US back into the deal.—AFP ■

Two years after protests, Lebanon activists set sights on vote

TWO years after a now-defunct protest movement shook Lebanon, opposition activists are hoping parliamentary polls will challenge the ruling elite's stranglehold on the country.

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese took to the streets from 17 October 2019 in an unprecedented countrywide and cross-sectarian uprising.

Their demands were for basic services and the wholesale removal of a political class they accused of mismanagement and corruption since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war. But as the country sank further into economic turmoil, made worse by the coronavirus pandemic, what demonstrators called their "revolution" petered out. Many then saw a probe into the cataclysmic 2020 Beirut port blast as the best chance to bring down Lebanon's hereditary political barons, but even intense international pressure in the explosion's aftermath failed to make them change their ways.

Last week, feuding parties turned Beirut into a war zone, with heavy exchanges of fire killing seven people in a flare-up sparked by a rally against the main investigating judge.

Lawyer and activist Firas Hamdan is one of many to say that the elections, set for next year, will be a new opportunity for people to raise their voices against the authorities.—AFP ■

Protesters gather in central Beirut's Martyrs' Square on October 17, 2021 to mark two years since the start of the uprising. The small sign reads in Arabic: 'All of them, means all of them', a demand for the removal of Lebanon's political leaders. **PHOTO: AFP**

Torkham border crossing point linking Afghanistan, Pakistan reopens

THE Torkham border crossing point which links Afghanistan and Pakistan has been reopened and those having travel documents can cross it, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman for Foreign Ministry, has said.

"The Torkham gate is reopened and those Afghans have passport and Pakistan visa can cross the border," Balkhi said in his twitter account. Reopening of Torkham crossing point has been announced in the wake of the visit of Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi who visited Kabul on Thursday.

During Qureshi's one-day visit to Afghanistan capital Kabul and his meetings with officials here, matters pertaining mutual interests including reopening border crossing points and enhancing trade and economic cooperation came under discussion, according to local media reports.— Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden and Macron discuss 'stronger' European defence

PRESIDENT Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron discussed strengthening European defences in a telephone call Friday, the White House said, as Washington seeks to mend ties after a bitter row over submarine contracts.

The two leaders "discussed efforts to enable a stronger and more capable European defence while ensuring complementarity with NATO," the statement said.

Biden will meet Macron in Rome later this month, and the statement said he looked forward to the chance to "take stock of the many areas of US-France cooperation, and reinforce our shared interests."

A similar statement was issued by the French presidency.

Biden and Macron last spoke on 22 September for their first conversation since the furious spat over selling submarines to Australia severely strained relations. Specifically, Australia agreed to acquire US nuclear sub technology and in doing so scrap a huge, already existing deal with France to buy conventional submarines. The new accord infuriated the French.—AFP ■

Colombian linked to assassination of Haitian president captured in Jamaica

A former Colombian military officer wanted by Haitian authorities for the assassination of President Jovenel Moise has been captured in Jamaica, Colombian authorities announced on Friday.

Mario Palacios is accused of being one of 26 Colombian mercenaries who allegedly participated in the murder of Moise on 7 July at his home in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital, in which his wife Martine was also shot and wounded.

"We have already been informed of the capture of Mr. Palacios. What is happening now (...) is the extradition process to Haiti," Colombian police chief Jorge Vargas said in a video.

He said he was informed of the arrest by the Interpol office in Kingston, Jamaica.

No details were given of the arrest, nor how Palacios allegedly managed to reach the neighboring island of Jamaica from Haiti.

Palacios had been the subject of a red notice from Interpol.

Three Colombians were killed by the Haitian armed forces in response to the attack and 18 others were arrested, alongside two American citizens of Haitian descent.—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.

Single-elimination system to be introduced in 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers

THE Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will set the single-elimination format in the third round of the 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers which will be held next year due to the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third round was originally scheduled from February to September 2022, but postponed from 8 to 14 June, 2022 due to the pandemic.

The tournament was previously scheduled to be played at home and away system.

With new single-elimination format, tourney will be completed within a week, official said.

The third round will be divided into four groups of six teams, with the top five teams from each group and the top five runners-up will advance to the next stage.

Twenty-four teams, including Myanmar, will compete in the third round qualifiers.

Asian teams including Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, India, Tajikistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, Jordan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Yemen, Maldives, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia will compete in the tourney.

The final round of the 2023 Asian Cup will be held with a total of 24 teams.

Top eight teams in the group and the top four runners-up: Qatar, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Oman, Vietnam, UAE, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia including China, which will host the finals will be able to advance directly to the finals without having to compete in the third round.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Dybala back for Juve's trip to champions Inter

PAULO Dybala is back for Juventus' Serie A clash at fierce rivals Inter Milan after recovering from a thigh injury, coach Massimiliano Allegri said on Saturday.

The Argentinian forward has been out of action since picking up the knock in his team's win over Sampdoria a month ago.

Although Allegri did not say whether the 27-year-old would start at the San Siro on Sunday his return is a boost for Juve as they try to continue their march up the table.

"Dybala is available, he's well, he's done two training sessions with the squad so he'll be available," Allegri told reporters.

"We've almost got a fully-fit squad, which is important because we have quite a few matches between now and the next international break (8-19 November)."

Around 56,000 fans are expected at the San Siro as Inter host their first big match since maximum stadium capacities were increased to 75 per cent by the Italian government earlier this month.—AFP ■

'Never Give In' is part of United's DNA: Solskjaer

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says the spirit Manchester United displayed in coming back from 2-0 down to beat Atalanta 3-2 in the Champions League group match on Wednesday is part of their DNA. **PHOTO: AFP**

OLE Gunnar Solskjaer says the spirit Manchester United displayed in coming back from 2-0 down to beat Atalanta 3-2 in the Champions League group match on Wednesday is part of their DNA.

Victory eased the pressure slightly on United's Norwegian manager after a series of disappointing results in the Premier League.

Ahead of this weekend's games they are five points off leaders Chelsea and face a daunting clash on Sunday with in-form Liverpool.

Liverpool, the only unbeaten side in the league, could stretch their advantage over United to seven points if they win.—AFP ■

Qatar opens fifth 2022 World Cup venue

THE launch of the Al Thumama stadium, 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) south of the capital Doha, comes as the Gulf country seeks to operate arenas at 100 percent capacity during the World Cup.

The 40,000-seat ground, which will host groups matches during Qatar 2022 up to the quarter-finals, hosted the domestic Emir Cup final between local clubs Al Rayyan and Al Sadd as its inaugural match.

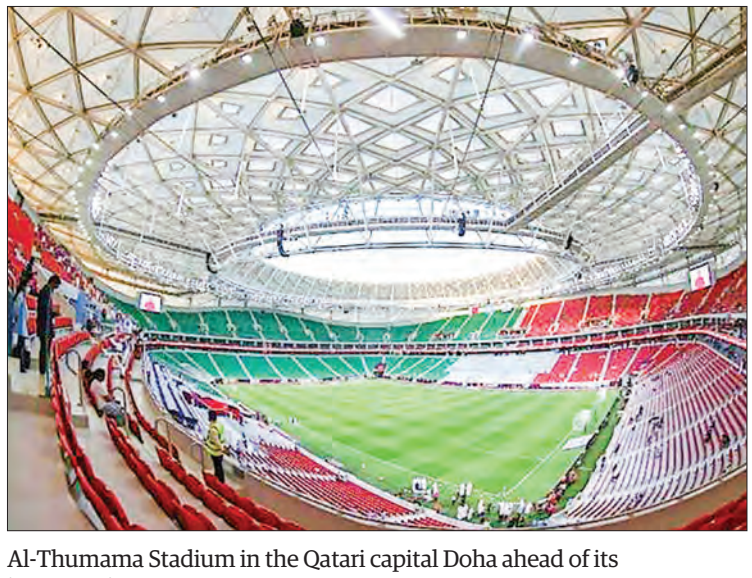
Qatar's ruler Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and FIFA president Gianni Infantino attended the opening ceremony.

It was designed by Qatari architect Ibrahim M. Jaidah to resemble the 'gahfiya' cap, traditionally worn by men in the region.

Energy-rich Qatar has so far officially inaugurated five of the eight stadiums that will lay the stage for the first World Cup in the Middle East.

In addition to Al Thumama, Qatar has so far inaugurated new-build Ahmad Bin Ali, Al-Janoub and Education City stadiums alongside the refurbished Khalifa ground in the heart of Doha's Aspire Zone. Ras Abu Aboud, Al Bayt, Lusail, which will host the final match in December 2022, remain to be opened.

Following the World Cup, Al Thumama's capacity will be reduced to 20,000, with a sports clinic and a boutique hotel set to open on site.—AFP ■



Al-Thumama Stadium in the Qatari capital Doha ahead of its inauguration. **PHOTO: AFP/KARIM JAAFAR**