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Govt steps up efforts to secure oxygen supplies in COVID-19 control operations



Two bowsers with a capacity of 20 metric tons of liquid oxygen each, the first batch of 26 similar bowsers purchased from foreign countries, arrives in Yangon yesterday.

AS the country needs oxygen supplies in COVID-19 control operations, the officials make efforts to produce oxygen from the government and Tatmadaw-owned oxygen plants, private-owned oxygen plants and import oxygen-related products with the donations of donors.

Two 20-metric ton tankers carrying liquid oxygen ordered from foreign countries for the public hospitals and COVID-19 centres in Yangon

Region arrived in Yangon at 8 pm on 15 July and at 3 am yesterday. The experts refilled the liquid oxygen into the high-pressure oxygen tanks at North Okkalapa Hospital, Waibargi Hospital and Yangon General Hospital on the evening of 15 July and yesterday.

Yangon Region Administration Council Chairman U Hla Soe, Commander of Yangon Region Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe inspected

the liquid oxygen refilling processes and instructed where necessary.

The Tatmadaw, Ministry of Health and Sports, Yangon Region Administration Council and donors worked together in ordering the liquid oxygen and they will systematically distribute oxygen to the hospitals and the patients in need of oxygen.

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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.

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Press Release

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, as a member of the “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC”, developed the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), a preliminary process of the Paris Agreement, with technical assistance from the UN-Environment and international organizations, with the input from the relevant ministries, departments and organizations and submitted to the Secretariat of UNFCCC with the approval of the Union Government on 28.9.2015.

According to the resolution of the 21st Conference of the UNFCCC Conventions, a final draft of the Nationally Determined Contribution-NDC was

compiled with the technical assistance from the international development partners and the participation of the relevant ministries, departments, organizations, experts, INGOs, NGOs, and CSOs, and by setting goals climate change mitigation and adaptation in each sector based on the Myanmar INDC submitted in 2015. Arrangements are being made to submit the final draft to the UNFCCC under the rules and regulations with the approval of the State Administration Council.

The Nationally Determined Contribution-NDC report (draft, not final report), which is being developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation was submitted to the UNFCCC on 12 July 2021 by the Ministry of Nat-

ural Resources and Environmental Conservation of the National Unity Government-NUG that has been declared as the terrorist association. It was found on the NUG’s Website and Facebook page.

Thus, an official objection letter has been sent to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC), stating that such submission of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of the terrorist association NUG (National Unity Government) is illegal.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
Nay Pyi Taw
16 July 2021

U Lwin Oo appointed as Ambassador of Myanmar to the Russian Federation

THE Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Lwin Oo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of the Philippines, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Russian Federation. —MNA

Public Notification

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

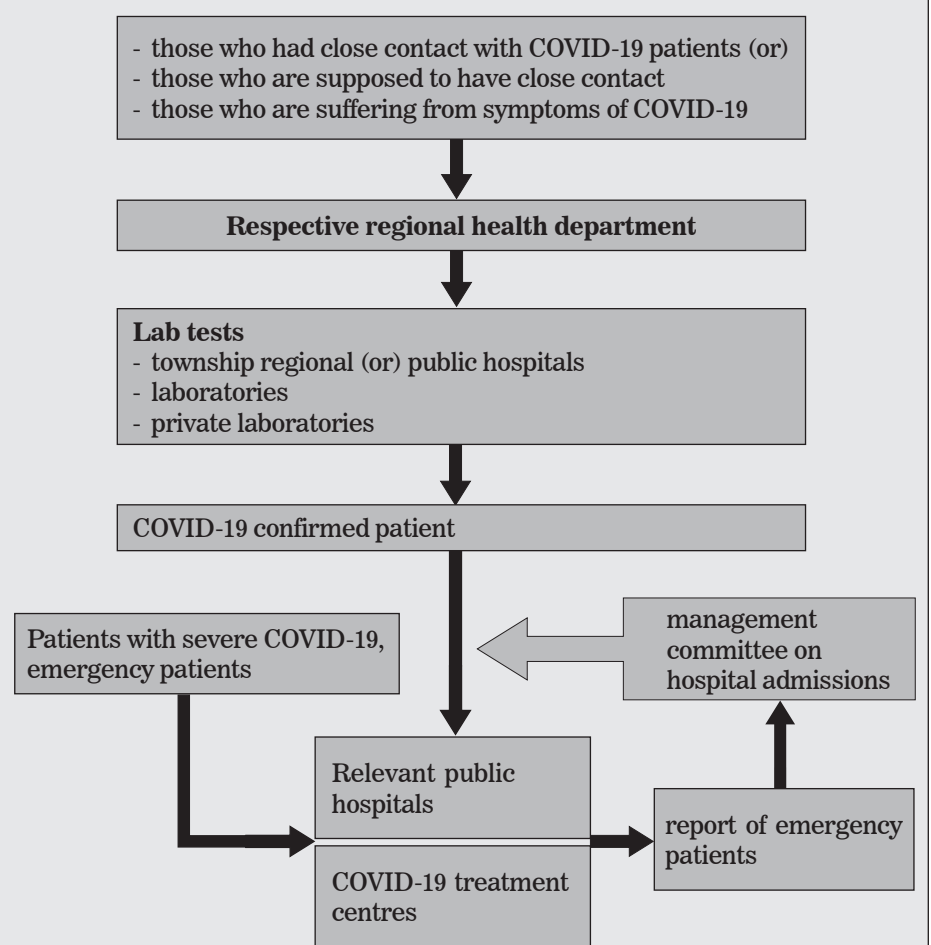
1. Stay indoors as much as possible; Staying at home protects your family members from the risk of infection, breaking down the disease chain in a short matter of time and resulting in the immediate control of the infection in the region.
2. Do not accept any guest at home as well as do not be a guest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

Ministry of Health and Sports

6,194 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 16 July, total figure rises to 218,739

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **218,739** after **6,194 new cases** were reported on 16 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **155,959** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **4,536** after **190** died. —MNA

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



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

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

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

Ministry of Health and Sports

Unity in its real essence

Unity must have a common interests, a common sense of working together and a common objective, for the independence of the whole country and the interests of the whole populace. Unity must work for the people so that they can enjoy shared well-being and shared cause in working together. It is not enough just to say that we want to be united. Labour must be shared, and interests must be shared. Our objective must be the same. Only this kind of effort is worth calling "Unity".

(Excerpt from the speech addressed by Bogyoke Aung San at the AFPFL Conference on 23rd January 1946)



Govt steps up efforts to secure oxygen supplies in COVID-19 control operations

FROM PAGE-1

Moreover, the officials purchased 26 tankers with a capacity of 20 tonnes each of liquid oxygen using the cash contribution of well-wishers and they will arrive in Yangon soon.

The Yangon Region Administration Council Chairman and Commander then checked the liquid oxygen distribution processes of Myanma Dockyards in Kamayut Township and production of various oxygen cylinders at Ywama Steel



The Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council and Commander of Yangon Command are inspecting the arrivals of two bowsters of liquid oxygen at the North Okkalapa Hospital and Yangon General Hospital, respectively.



Production of oxygen cylinders at Ywama Steel Factory, Insein.



Distribution of oxygen cylinders produced by Myanmar Economic Corporation.

Factory operated by the Myanmar Economic Corporation in Insein Township.

During their visit, they instructed the officials to produce quality oxygen concentrators.

The Min Dhamma oxygen plant of Myanmar Economic Corporation produces more than 149,000 cubic feet oxygen per day while Myaungtagar oxygen plant 120,000 cubic feet

oxygen. The oxygen is distributed to the public hospitals, military hospitals and COVID-19 centres in Yangon and Bago regions.

Similarly, the oxygen plants are being established at the 1000-beds and 300-beds public hospitals and 300-beds Tatmadaw Gynaecological and Children Hospitals in Zabuthiri, Pobbathiri and Zeyathiri townships of Nay Pyi Taw

Council Area, and they will generate oxygen withing coming days for the country's oxygen needs.

Moreover, 200 oxygen cylinders (40 litres) received via border trade camps of Laukkai and Chinshwehaw townships of northern Shan State on 15 July were distributed to the public hospitals in Lashio, Kyaukme, Nawngkhio, Mantung, Namsang, Namtu and

Hsipaw townships and the hospitals in Ayeyawady Region.

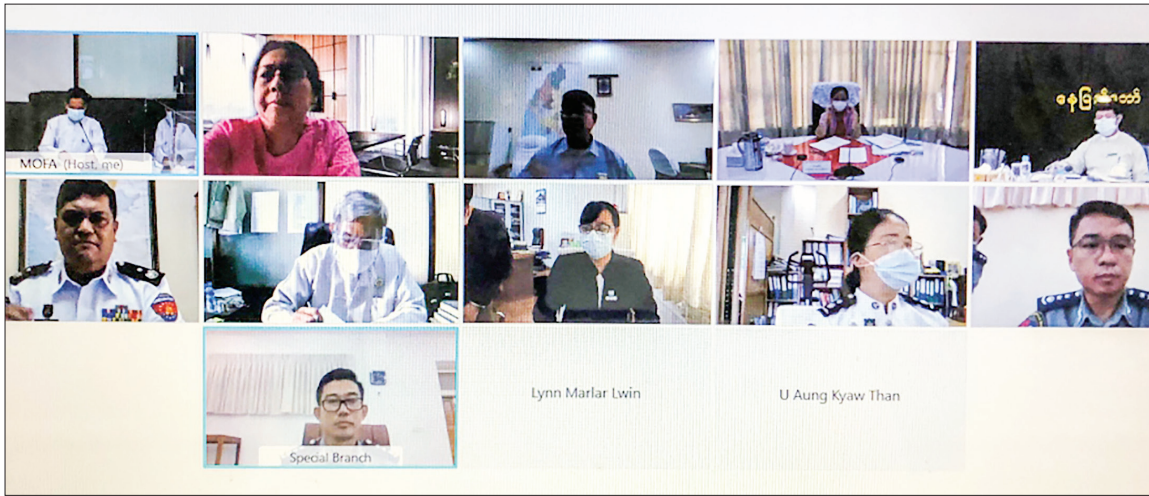
Moreover, 36 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 491 oxygen cylinders (40 litres), 40 oxygen cylinders (10 litres), 22 vacant oxygen cylinders (40 litres) and 40 units of oxygen-related equipment received via border trade camps of Myawady Township in Kayin State were also delivered to the public hospitals and COVID-19 centres in

Kayin State, Mon State and Yangon Region while another 250 oxygen cylinders were sent to public hospitals and military hospitals in Dawei Township of Taninthayi Region.

Currently, the government permits the private entrepreneurs to import protective gears for disease. Therefore, 333 oxygen cylinders (40 litres) and 333 regulators imported by a private company in Yangon Region arrived in the country through Chinshwehaw border trade camp of northern Shan State and they will be transported to Yangon Region.

The Ministry of Health and Sports accelerates the operations of oxygen plants in regions and states while Tatmadaw make efforts to set up more oxygen plants in their respective military commands. The government also makes their utmost efforts to establish more new oxygen plants in the country not to occur oxygen shortage problems. — MNA

U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation attends meeting of Working Committee on Supervision of UN Agencies and International Non-Governmental Organizations under Central Committee on Supervision of Foreigners (1/2021)



THE meeting of the Working Committee on Supervision of the United Nations Organizations and International Non-Governmental Organizations (1/2021) under the Central Committee on Supervision and Protection

of Foreigners was held in virtual format from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon.

During the Meeting, U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation, in

the capacity of Chairman of the Working Committee on supervision of the UN Agencies and International Non-Governmental Organizations, underlined the importance of coordination not only with the relevant agen-

cies but also among the Union Ministries and departments concerned from the States and Regions. He also mentioned that humanitarian assistance and development assistance were interlinked with each other and

it was therefore necessary to take into account of both perspectives in receiving assistance programme.

Subsequently, the members of the said-committee discussed current cooperation programme through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and coordination with relevant agencies in registration, reporting and evaluation process.

Furthermore, the secretary and the co-secretary of the committee, the Director-General of International Organizations and Economic Department and the Director-General of Foreign Economic Relations Department, suggested plans for more effective coordination in the future.—MNA

COVID-19 Disease Prevention, Control Coordination Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE COVID-19 Disease Prevention, Control Coordination Meeting was held yesterday morning at the Ministry of Health and Sports office in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win said that at present, the third wave of COVID-19 was occurring in the country, and relevant townships were designated “Stay at Home” to cut the chain of infection and reduce the spread of the disease.

The State Administrative Council has set 17 to 25 July as public holidays, so people can stay in their homes or dormitories without travelling during the long holidays.

Employees of the Ministries are also advised not to travel except on duty and to stay at home during this long holiday.

To comply with the duty to control the spread of the disease by not accepting visitors

unnecessarily to your home is an important fact.

Hospitals should ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in receiving patients and that emergency services are provided according to priority patients.

Private hospitals will also be able to receive COVID-19 patients. Special care must be taken to ensure that there is no shortage of important medicines and medical supplies related to the treatment of COVID-19 disease.

Arrangements are being made to meet the oxygen demand of each region and state in a timely manner.

Human resource issues are being solved by inviting skilful doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers.

Those who are absent from the workplace will be able to return to their mother ministry without any worries and will be able to work in public hospitals

and COVID-19 disease centres.

If the trainees who have been suspended from the postgraduate course want to re-attend the training, they will be accepted as a separate programme if they re-apply within the specified date, the Union Minister added.

After that, the Director-General, Deputy Directors-General and Directors briefed on the plans to expand the COVID-19 Medical Centres.

Daily supply and distribution of oxygen to public hospitals and COVID-19 clinics were also discussed and the Union Minister coordinated and ordered the necessary measures.

Dr Myat Wunna Soe, Director-General of the Department of Public Health and Medical Care, Ministry of Health and Sports and Deputy Directors-General and Directors also attended the meeting.

— MNA

No instructions announced yet to suspend pharmaceutical distribution, manufacturing industries

THE Ministry of Health and Sports issues orders for the prevention and control of COVID-19 disease but has not yet released any orders to impose a ban on the production and distribution of medicines and medical supplies.

The ministry has only released Stay-at-Home orders in 2021 for the prevention and control of COVID-19 disease exercising the authority under the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

The order of the State Administration Council declaring that the two weekdays linked to the public holidays are designated as public holidays for the effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 infection did not

mention the closure of the production and distribution of medicines and medical equipment.

The announcement stated that the public must abide by the rules (c) to open shops selling medicines and medical equipment and (e) to continue to provide healthcare services (government hospitals, private hospitals and clinics).

However, the demand for eggs is high in the market due to the spread of rumours.

Therefore, the ministry also released the public notice for the egg-substitute food such as lentil, chickpea, Muthira, peanut, bean curd, banana, potato, milk, sweet potato, chicken and variety of fish. —Htet Hlan/GNLM

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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.

To benefit the State

THE teachers who joined the CDM due to misunderstanding based on the weakness in administrative measures and political attacks need to report back to the respective schools. The requirements of teachers will be fulfilled during the school opening period. In performing State responsibilities, Council Members need to consider from different perspectives so as to benefit the State.

(Excerpt from the speech of the meeting 10/2021 of the State Administration Council by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 10 May 2021)

Working Committee to address impact of COVID-19 on country's economy meets

THE 6th meeting of the Working Committee (6/2021) was virtually held yesterday morning at Office No. (1), Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. The meeting was convened with the aims to discuss cooperation measures in the context of SOPs for the swift and smooth importation of COVID-19-related medicines and medical equipment during the upcoming public holidays, and to have price stability of consumer goods.

The meeting was chaired by U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Member of the working Committee Deputy Ministers, from Ministry of Plan-



ning and Finance and Ministry of Commerce, Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar and

representatives of the Ministries concerned attended the meeting.

In the meeting, the Chairman of Working Committee discussed the issues reported

by States/Regions Monitoring Team of the COVID-19 Fund, the implementation actions for COVID-19 hit businesses that are submitted via respective ministries and Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan (MERP) drafting process. In addition, the Working Committee stressed the importance of releasing true and reliable information in a timely manner to the public in order to cope with the impact of spreading fake news among the communities.

The meeting also discussed relief measures carried out by concerned ministries, future plan of actions and issues raised by the business community. —MNA

Tatmadaw donates medical aids, oxygen tanks to COVID-19 centres



TATMADAW is donating medical supplies, oxygen tanks and nutritious foods to relevant COVID-19 centres, said the source with the Tatmadaw.

Military doctors and nurses are taking duties at public hospitals and COVID-19 centres as the pandemic outbreak is arising, according to the Tatmadaw.

The donations were made to public hospitals in various

regions and states starting from 1 July, said Tatmadaw officials.

COVID-19 Centers, Military hospitals; Health Departments, religious schools, schools and local communities are being provided with 566 oxygen tanks, 280,162 pieces of Surgical Masks, 10 sets of Personal Protective Equipment PPE, 479 bottles of hand gel, 150 pieces of face shield, 4 gallons of water

sanitizers, 100 pieces of surgical gloves, engine oil, foodstuffs and cash, Tatmadaw officials said.

Similarly, donors are contributing necessary aids to the COVID-19 centres, which are being carried out by the Tatmadaw.

In doing so, all the donations were received by the Tatmadaw officials and the certificates were returned. —MNA

Oxygen cylinders donated by generous donors delivered to Ayeyawady Region by military plane



MILITARY and voluntary donors are providing oxygen tanks, cylinders and nutritious food to assist in the treatment and care of COVID-positive patients at public hospitals and COVID-19 centres in various regions and states, according to the statement with the Tatmadaw.

Myanmar Myo Ko Ko Company Limited from Panwar, Kachin State donated oxygen supplies to

Tatmadaw for the needs of the Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

Commander Brig-Gen Mya Thet Oo of the Northern Command received the donation.

After that, 50 oxygen tanks donated by voluntary donors and 50 oxygen tanks ordered from Western Military Command were transported from Myitkyina to Ayeyawady Region by military plane. — MNA

MoC allows smooth and fast importation of COVID-19 protective equipment



The Ministry of Commerce has permitted the import of COVID-19 protective equipment and liquid oxygen, which do not require an import licence or to apply for the licence.

THE Ministry of Commerce has permitted the import of COVID-19 protective equipment and liquid oxygen, which do not require an import licence or to apply for the licence, officials said.

With a recommendation of the Food and Drug Administration, the import of oxygen concentrators is also allowed to be imported easily and quickly with a 5% commercial tax exemption.

From 12 to 16 July, 30.869 million litres of liquid oxygen and oxygen gas, 1,100 vacant oxygen cylinders, 1,148 oxygen cylinders,

1,715 oxygen concentrators, five oxygen generators, one generator with cylinder filling; two cylinder-filling systems and 84.861 tons of face masks were imported.

For easy and fast import of COVID-19 preventive and medical supplies through the Chinese border, the Department of Foreign Economic Relations of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade is coordinating with the Office of Commerce and Industry of the People's Republic of China.

Those who want to conduct import processes can do

their businesses more smoothly by connecting with the Department of Foreign Trade for the types of goods they want to import and the vehicles to be transported, officials added.

For the quick and easy import of COVID-19 protective equipment, the Ministry of Economy and Trade will continue to carry out regular import and export activities at border trade checkpoints during the public holidays from 17 to 25 July 2021 that are designated as public holidays. — MNA

Shan State ex-chief minister, ex-government officials charged under anti-corruption law

FORMER Shan State chief minister Dr Linn Htut, former Shan State minister for Electricity, Energy and Industry U Sai Shen Tit Long, former Shan State minister for Planning and Finance and former minister for Inn Ethnic Affairs Dr Tun Hlaing were prosecuted under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law yesterday.

The Anti-Corruption Commission set up an investigation team into the allegations of corruption in the activities of former Shan State chief minister Dr Lin Htut and officials.

According to the investigation team, the former Shan State chief minister reduced the value of tender for Innlay Zone Entry Fees Collection by 50 per cent of

K300 million from a successful bidder at the Shan State Government Coordination Meeting (1/2018). Despite the reduction, the remaining K170 million could not be recovered until the time of inspection. Failure to take legal action as per the contract terms caused damage to the state's finance.

Former minister for Electricity, Energy and Industry U Sai Shen Tit Long allowed the Innlay Zone Entry Fees Collection Business on its own without setting a fixed amount of money to be paid to the state government from April to September 2018, causing the state to lose more than K1,000 million.

Former chief minister Dr Linn Htut, former minister U

Sai Shen Tit Long and former Planning and Finance minister U Soe Nyunt Lwin and former Inn Ethnic Affairs minister Dr Tun Hlaing allowed a company that was banned by the state government from bidding for the Innlay Zone Entry Fees Collection Project to operate in the 2018-2019FY without presenting the original title deeds of an immovable property equivalent to K1,400 million to be submitted as collateral, and the remaining tenders owed and fines of over K1,100 million were not recovered which caused the state funds damaged. The former ministers also allowed the same company to operate again in the 2019-2022FY, and couldn't recover more than K1400 million

from the previous FY.

U Soe Min Tun, U Aung Kyaw Naing and wife Daw Tin Tin Htway operated the business without presenting the original title deeds of immovable property for the Innlay Zone Entry Fees Collection as collateral. They have been charged under Section 55/63 of the Anti-Corruption Law due to the non-payment of over K1,100 million for the 2019-2019FY and K1,400 million for the 2019-2020FY which caused the state to lose money.

The former Shan State minister and the former Shan State Planning and Finance minister failed to comply with the 1/2017 tender rules and regulations of the President Office in purchasing primary food items from the

Shan State government's budget of over K400 million and also failed to manage to be repaid over K89 million to the state government account.

Former Shan State minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Nyunt Lwin was found to have received K10 million from two companies in connection with the construction of a hospital and a truck stop on the land owned by the Ayethaya Town Development Committee in Taunggyi Township, Shan State.

It is reported that the first complaint was lodged at the Taunggyi City Police Station yesterday to take legal action against them, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). —MNA

Offshore fishing vessels set out to sea in Myeik District this month

ABOUT 50 per cent of offshore fishing vessels will be authorized to fish in Myeik District, Taninthayi Region in July, Myeik District Fisheries Department stated.

“The businesspersons asked for shifting fishing ban season amid the economic fall-out triggered by the COVID-19 impacts. Consequently, fishing permits are to be granted this month. Only 50 per cent of fishing vessels will be considered for fishing,” said U Zaw Min Oo, head of Myeik District Fisheries Department.

The restriction period on fishing is set from 1 May to 31 July this year. The offshore fishing vessels are suspended completely.

This month, about 50 per cent of offshore fishing vessels will be allowed to go fishing, de-



This month, about 50 per cent of offshore fishing vessels will be allowed to go fishing, depending on fishing equipment.

pending on fishing equipment.

There are more than 1,400 fishing vessels in Taninthayi

Region, so over 700 will be authorized to set out to sea upon the approval of the Fisheries

Department in cooperation with Myanmar Fisheries Federation. This move aims to ease the fi-

nancial constraints during the COVID-19 crisis,” said U Zaw Min Oo.

Typically, the fishing season ban is set from June to August. Yet, about 50 per cent of offshore fishing vessels will be allowed to fish in July.

“I am happy with this exemption. It can help us allow to generate income for family living during difficult times,” said Ko Zaw Aung, a vessel operator.

There are five coastal areas (Yangon, Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Rakhine states). Of them, Taninthayi is the longest coastal area of Myanmar, having about 3,400 fishing vessels. There are 1,400 offshore fishing vessels and 9,000 inshore vessels in Taninthayi Region. Over 100,000 workers are engaged in those vessels. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/GNLM

Kitchen oil association ensures self-sufficiency in Myanmar



The association will act accordingly not to have oil shortage problems and to distribute the quality oil at an affordable price to the consumers.

THERE is no need to spark concern for the edible oil shortage in the country, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association released a statement on 15 July.

The association is working together with the related departments and organizations to ensure the safety and self-sufficiency of oil and distribute the edible oil at a fair price to the consumers, as per the statement.

Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association takes steps in order to avoid unnecessary issues regarding edible oil amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a bid to contain the spread of the COVID-19, the State Administration Council declared a period from 17 to 25 July as the official public holiday. However, only the major businesses, including fuel oil, drinking water, fish, meat and food products, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, are al-

lowed to be opened during that period, according to the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The association will act accordingly not to have oil shortage problems and to distribute the quality oil at an affordable price to the consumers. Moreover, quality oil imports from foreign countries will be allowed for self-sufficiency. And ship unloading will be implemented. The association will undertake filling oil tanks and distributing the oil to wholesalers and retailers on public holidays.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported, primarily from Malaysia and Indonesia, to meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market. — NN/GNLM

Agro exports fall to \$3.8 bln as of 2 July

THE agricultural exports plummet to US\$3.88 billion over the past nine months of the current financial year 2020-2021, along with the downward trend in other export groups amid the tightened coronavirus containment measures on the border and increase in the container shipping cost.

The figures reflect a dramatic drop of \$1.8 billion this FY. The agro exports topped \$5.7 billion in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The agricultural exports plunged after the main trade partner China shut down all the borders in wake of the COVID-19 surge in Myanmar.

The coronavirus pandemic

impacted the foreign demand for other export groups, agricultural products, fishery, livestock, mineral, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods.

In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best, accounting for 37 per cent of overall exports. The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes, the export market remains uncertain

due to unsteady global demand.

The country requires specific export plans for each agro product, as they are currently exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. The G-to-G pact also ensures a strong market for the farmers. Contract farming systems, involvement of regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups, are required in order to meet production targets, the Agriculture Department stated.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. — KK/GNLM

Sesame growers in NyaungU Tsp expecting good price

THE growers of sesame seeds in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region are expecting the price to rise during the harvest time, the growers said.

The growers broadcasted the seeds before rainfall. The flowers of sesame plants are seen in early July, said U Maung Htay, a grower from Tatma village.

The growers from NyaungU Township are mainly relying on oil crops such as peanut and sesame. The growers are expecting a good price at the harvest time.

The prices of sesame seeds are stable at around K38,000 per basket. The price remained un-

changed as against last year. The growers hope the price would not decline when the newly harvest-

ed sesame enter the market, U Maung Htay elaborated. — KPD/GNLM



The growers from NyaungU Township are mainly relying on oil crops such as peanut and sesame. The growers are expecting a good price at the harvest time.

Closely join hands between government and taxpayers in the financial sector

THE government allocates its budgets obtained from tax payments of taxpayer people and companies which earn incomes from respective businesses and services and spends it on nation-building tasks.

Actually, taxpayers dutifully pay respective kinds of tax to the Department of Internal Revenue in relevant financial years. The department is responsible for assessing the tax payments from the taxpayers in order to levy the taxes over their businesses. Hence, both taxpayers and tax collectors need to take care of their works not to cause any errors in the work process. Any error may cause loss to the taxpayers. So, the department modernizes the smooth work process for the taxpayers to submit tax declarations to the department by applying an e-filing management system.

In the current situation, the government and the taxpayers should closely be related to each other in the State's financial sector.

Taxpayers are responsible for paying respective taxes depending on their incomes and need to submit relevant quarterly tax declarations to the department. The department levies taxes at the large taxpayer offices. Local manufacturers of special commodities or exporters must submit the quarterly declarations to relevant heads of the Township Internal Revenue Department within a month after respective quarterly periods for manufacturing and selling or exporting the special commodities.

Those who have earned proceeds from sales of goods or income of services from sales deserved to be levied for commercial tax within a year need to submit the quarterly special commercial tax declaration, the quarterly commercial tax declaration, the profit declaration from goods, the annual commercial tax declaration and the income tax declaration to relevant heads of the department.

If taxpayers are difficult to submit the tax declarations during the fixed date, they have the chance to apply for extending the further fixed date for submitting the tax declaration to relevant internal revenue offices under Section 24 of the Tax Management Law.

As a family, the government is like a father leading the family. Taxpayers are family members to earn income for the family. The government, the leader of the family, is responsible for managing the family income how to spend the finance on fulfilling the needs of the family and how to develop the family. In the current situation, the government and the taxpayers should closely be related to each other in the State's financial sector.



My Initial Voyage at Sea

By U Than Zaw (RO - Mercantile Marine)

MY Sea voyage made me advantageous quite a lot. I started my first sea experience in 1969. In that year, I may express my daily financial hardship owing to the cost of living very high resulted from the Akyab Rice Crisis by rioters in 1967. I could not make efforts to spend every month with my salary as an airport in charge those days.

During that situation, I was a bit lucky to welcome the arrival of D.D.C.A (Deputy Director of Civil Aviation) of DCA (Department of Civil Aviation) at Magway Airport for necessary inspections: likewise, I forwarded my financial problems facing every month. Finally, he realized and allowed my resignation from the Department very kindly as I had already had an offer to appoint as a Radio officer onboard one of the vessels in their fleet of the Maldivian Shipping Co., Ltd, in Colombo, Ceylon, with remunerations of Sterling pound at 25 per month plus other allowances.

Finally, I received an official order regarding the allowance of my resignation with the right to enjoy three months annual leave

with full pay. I handed over all my duties to my relief and came down to Yangon.

I went straight to Ship Representative by the name of Mr Math at No 5, Merchant Street and reported for the post they offered me.

In November 1969, the company's ship, MV Ocean Master called at Pansodan Port and signed on as supernumerary R/O in presence of Yangon Port Immigration personnel.

About a week later the ship set sail for Colombo. It was my first experience as a mercantile marine Radio Officer.

On arrival there, I reported to the GM (General Manager) Mr Maniku at his H.O (Head Office) and I was accommodated at a hotel not very far from the H.O.

I was waiting for a chance to carry out a delivery voyage of a newly bought ship in Singapore from Norwegian Shipping Co., Ltd.

After about twenty days stay at the hotel, a shipping clerk came and handed over an air ticket for a flight to Singapore via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, leading a group

of (30) crew. It was the second advantage I gained leading seaman'ship in my life. We all arrived at Changi Airport, Singapore at night time and we all were put up at a hotel just before H/O and T/O (Hand over and take over) of the newly bought ship, MV Maldives Skipper which was the first ship I worked as a Mercantile Marine Radio Officer.

To write in brief, we left Singapore crossing the Indian Ocean to Colombo, Ceylon. We entered alongside at the harbour nearest to the head office to do all the necessary survey. It will take some weeks. During those occasions, I slipped to Maradana Quarter where a Burmese temple was situated. There I met Burmese monk, U Ottama and the other three monks. They all welcome me very joyously. I'm, too, so happy to meet them and paid respect.

Next morning, I prepared for lunch (swan) for all the Sangha in the temple (monastery). Then I, requested U Ottama to send me to some visiting points in Colombo. So, it was very kindly arranged to pay a visit to a Burmese Temple in Candi first.

There I met a Burmese monk who came back to Burma already. It is known as Candi monastery on the west side of Yuzana garden city in the east of Yangon. The next very interesting site was in place in Candi where the Holy "Eye-tooth of Lord Buddha" was shown under a bodhi tree.

It was another advantage I gained in my sea voyage. Another "Eye-tooth" was seen in Burma in 1950 first time. MV Maldives Skipper ran along the coastline of India right up to Karachi of west Pakistan.

In 1970, on a voyage, we called Calcutta port alongside, but unexpectedly we experienced the labourers on strike and there would be no loading/unloading for at least a week or two. It is customary for labourers in India. It was advantageous for me to make use of my time. I, therefore, asked permission from my captain to allow me for about 3 days to pay a visit to Buddha-Ga-Ya (Bodh Gaya). He allowed me very kindly to do so.

I went to the Burmese temple in Calcutta first by a lan-char (two wheels vehicle pulled by man)

paying him only one rupee out of my cash of which I sold out three packets of 555 cigarettes outside the port gate.

I paid respect to the monk and in the evening, he sent me to the Central Railway Station, bought me a round-trip train ticket to Buddha-Ga-Ya and back. It costs me only 18 rupees. In the meantime, I bought 10 big red apples paying only 5 rupees. I arrived early in the morning at Buddha-Ga-Ya. To a Burmese temple quite far away, I paid the tri-wheeler a fare of only two rupees. At the entrance gate, a European lady, covering her shoulder with a yellow rope, opened the door. I told her, "Good morning, I am a Burmese, may I see the monk, please."

She answered, "Okay, sure, you will see him, come along with me."

I said, "Thank you," and accompanied her.

In the afternoon, after having lunch, I paid visiting around Buddha-Ga-Ya accompanied by the head of the monk. After paying worship to Buddha under the bodhi tree, he showed me around

remarkable places like a stone-post marked where Ganar offered the boiled milk-rice to Godhamma; This was the former Nay-Rin-Sa-Ra River, where he floated the empty golden bowl upstream saying an oath: "If I may become Sat-bin-nyu-lord Buddha today, this golden bowl be swan - right to the mid-stream and changed direction to upstream for some distance and sunk.

He also pointed out to a place far beyond the eastern side of the Bodhi tree. There, you saw, was the Gatesoke mountain on which very famous Buddhist saints, dwelled there once. I thank the head of the monk very much that gained an abundance of knowledge.

I was so delighted with thrills every now and then. I believed it was a heaven-sent opportunity for me I had ever been to such a holy place like Buddha-Ga-Ya.

It was an unforgettable trip I had ever travelled in my life.

My first and second voyages made me valuable personal advantages.

Isn't it? ■ ■ ■

Pacific islands Wallis and Futuna branded Covid-free

The Pacific archipelago of Wallis and Futuna has declared itself Covid-free, with no cases among the French remote island's 11,500 inhabitants since 1 April, authorities said.



Residents waiting for their Covid-19 vaccine in Suva, Fiji, on July 9, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

MANY remote Pacific island nations have remained free of the virus after shutting the borders soon after the pandemic began but the risk of an outbreak remains high.

The French overseas collectivity's administrator superior said Thursday it is "unanimously ... free of circulation of the Covid-19 virus".

But mask-wearing in public spaces remains mandatory and authorities reminded residents that vaccination was "the only way to get out of the epidemic for good". So far 41 per cent of the population are fully vaccinated and over 55 per cent have received one shot.

Experts have warned that Pacific islands are vulnerable to fresh outbreaks.

Fiji, which managed 12 months without community transmission, has suffered a virus surge since April.

With daily cases exceeding 1,200 on Thursday, experts have said Fiji represents a grim case study in how quickly the Delta variant can spread among island populations.

Wallis and Futuna recorded 445 coronavirus cases between March and April with seven deaths.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 16 July 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 17 July 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Naypyitaw and Magway Region, fairly widespread in Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Ayeyawady Regions and Eastern Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Chin States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 July 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 July 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 July 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, fairly widespread in Mandalay Region and widespread in Yangon Region.

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EU agency says two jabs 'vital' to battle Delta variant

THE EU's medicines watchdog said on Wednesday two jabs by approved vaccine makers were "vital" to provide maximum protection against the highly infectious coronavirus Delta variant, urging countries to speed up their inoculation drives.

"Preliminary evidence suggests that both doses of a two-dose Covid-19 vaccine... are needed to provide adequate protection against the Delta variant," the European Medicines Agency said.

"Adherence to the recommended vaccination course is vital to benefit from the highest level of protection."

Calling it a "variant of concern", the EMA said the Delta strain, first detected in India, was "spreading fast in Europe and may seriously hamper ef-



The European Medicines Agency said that evidence suggests that "both doses of a two-dose Covid-19 vaccine... are needed to provide adequate protection against the Delta variant". PHOTO: SERGEI GAPON/ AFP

orts to control the pandemic".

By the end of August, this variant would represent 90 per cent of all coronavirus cases, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said in the same statement.

"This makes it essential

for countries to speed up vaccination programmes, including delivery of second doses where recommended and to close the gaps and opportunities for further emergence of variants as soon as possible," the EMA said.

There were good scientific

grounds that mixing different makes of jabs between a first and second inoculation was safe and effective against Covid, the EMA said.

The use of such a vaccination strategy "may allow populations to be protected more quickly and make better use of available vaccine supplies".

Currently the EMA has approved three two-dose vaccines for use in Europe: Pfizer/Bio-Tech's Comirnaty, Spikevax by Moderna and Vaxzevria made by AstraZeneca.

A fourth vaccine by Johnson & Johnson required only a single shot.

Booster shot?

The EMA however said it was too early to confirm whether a booster would be need-

ed because there was not yet enough data from vaccination campaigns and ongoing studies.

France and Greece on Monday joined countries that are reimposing tighter Covid-19 restrictions to stem the surge of Delta variant infections.

This included the Netherlands which announced a U-turn last Friday on a raft of measures which were eased last month, only to see new infections skyrocket in just over three weeks particularly among unvaccinated young people aged 18-25.

The virus has killed more than four million people since first emerging in China in late 2019, and attempts to halt its spread are being hampered by mutations creating highly contagious variants such as Delta, first seen in India. — AFP ■

Mandatory indoor mask use returns to Los Angeles

WEARING a face mask at an indoor public establishments will once again be mandatory in Los Angeles starting this weekend due to a steady increase in Covid-19 infections and hospitalizations, health authorities said Thursday.

Los Angeles is the first large US metropolis to reimpose the use of face masks — regardless of vaccination status — in shops, grocery stores, restaurants and workplaces to help contain the pandemic.

The new masking order goes into effect midnight Saturday in the county of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is "not where we need to be" in terms of numbers of vaccinated people, said county health officer Muntu Davis.

On Thursday the county reported 1,537 new cases of infection — the highest number since early March, and seventh straight day of new cases numbers topping 1,000. — AFP ■



Mandatory indoor mask use returns to Los Angeles. PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN/ AFP

One in two Covid hospital cases develop complications: study

AS many as one in every two people hospitalized with severe Covid-19 go on to develop other health complications, according to comprehensive new research



Authors of the study said their findings showed a "profound" short- and long-term health impact on Covid-19 patients as well as on health and care services. PHOTO: AFP

released on Friday.

Authors of the study said their findings showed a "profound" short- and long-term health impact on Covid-19 pa-

tients as well as on health and care services.

Data from more than 70,000 hospital patients across more than 300 British hospitals was collected for the research.

It found that the most common health complications were problems with patients' kidneys and lungs, but neurological and cardiovascular conditions were also widely reported.

The rate of complications was high even among "young, previously healthy" patients, with 27 per cent of 19-29 year olds and 37 per cent of 30-39 year olds experiencing at least one complication after being hospitalized with Covid-19. — AFP ■

China must cooperate better with Covid origin probe: WHO

The WHO chief urged China Thursday to be more cooperative in the next phase of investigations into the pandemic origins, demanding more access to raw data.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also acknowledged that a prior push to all but rule out the possibility that Covid-19 may have escaped from a lab had been "premature".

He said that the WHO was laying the groundwork for moving forward with fresh investigations into where Covid-19 came from, adding "we hope there will be better cooperation to get to the bottom of what happened".

The UN health agency has been facing intensifying pressure for a new, more in-depth investigation of Covid-19's origins.

The WHO only managed to send a team of independent, international experts to China's Wuhan in January, more than a year after Covid-19 first surfaced there in late 2019, to help their Chinese counterparts probe the pandemic origins.

Tedros acknowledged Thursday that one of the main challenges during the first phase of the investigation was "access to raw data... The raw data was not shared." — AFP ■

France says military intervention in Haiti 'not on agenda'

MILITARY intervention in Haiti "is not on the agenda", France's foreign minister has said, following a Haitian request for international help with security.

The July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, which came during a period of heightened gang violence and political instability, has plunged the nation into confusion.

Haiti asked the United States and United Nations to help secure key strategic sites following the attack, but France's Jean-Yves Le Drian on Thursday said the capital's

airport and oil installations came under "police protection, not military".

Le Drian suggested France would be prepared to supply police if needed but said "this must be done under the authority of the United Nations".

A dispatch of police officers "should be seen as part of a strengthening in the United Nations presence, which is currently insufficient, to be able to ensure the electoral process", he said outside a UN meeting on Libya and the protection of humanitarian workers.

Paris and Washington intervened militarily in Haiti in 2004 during the downfall of ex-leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

A UN peacekeeping mission followed between 2004 and 2007, comprising around 9,000 soldiers.

In October 2017 a police mission -- the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti -- took over and lasted until October 2019. Any fresh UN operation would have to be authorized by the UN Security Council, according to several diplomats. — AFP ■



A tribute to late Haitian President Jovenel Moise is seen outside his home in Port-au-Prince. PHOTO: AFP

BELGIUM: At least 12 deaths, 21,000 people without electricity



According to the federal police, dozens of road sections remained closed to traffic, as well as most of the railways in Wallonia. PHOTO: AFP

AS of Friday morning, the floods in East and South Belgium have led to the deaths of at least twelve people while five others are missing.

As a guest speaker on the

radio, the president of the Walloon region Elio Di Rupo said he feared the death toll would get worse, reminding of the hundreds of people that were still trapped in their homes on Thursday.

Wallonia, a French-speaking region in southern Belgium, was particularly hard hit. More than 21,000 people were without electricity in the region, according to the Walloon electricity and gas distribution network manager (Ores), which reported the flooding of hundreds of distribution booths.

According to the federal police, dozens of road sections remained closed to traffic, as well as most of the railways in Wallonia.

In Liege, Belgium's fourth most populous city, local authorities had called on thousands of residents of neighbourhoods along the Meuse to leave their homes in anticipation of a sharp rise in river levels on Thursday. — AFP ■

US lets Iran use frozen funds to pay back Japan, S.Korea

THE United States said Wednesday it was allowing Iran to use frozen funds to settle debts in South Korea and Japan, as talks drag on over reviving a nuclear deal that could see sanctions relief.

The United States maintains sweeping sanctions on the clerical regime, meaning that companies that deal with many bank accounts in Iran can face legal penalties in the world's largest economy.

The State Department said that it has been letting Japanese and South Korean companies receive payments from US-targeted Iranian accounts to pay for exports shipped before former president Donald Trump's

administration started enforcing its toughest sanctions in 2019.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken had signed an earlier waiver and has extended it for

90 days as "these repayment transactions can sometimes be time-consuming," a State Department spokesperson said. — AFP ■



Iranians shop for electronics from Japanese tech giant Sony at a Tehran mall in 2015 amid hopes for sanctions relief. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NEWS IN BRIEF

Facebook says \$1 bn to be spent boosting creators

FACEBOOK chief Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday said that the internet titan will pour \$1 billion into programmes for creators of popular content at the social network through 2022.

The announcement showed Facebook ramping up efforts to attract and keep creators as it competes with rival platforms such as TikTok, Clubhouse and Google-owned YouTube.

"We want to build the best platforms for millions of creators to make a living," Zuckerberg said in a post at his Facebook page.

"So, we're creating new programmes to invest over \$1 billion to reward creators for great content they create on Facebook and Instagram through 2022."

He promised more details soon.

Facebook and other online platforms provide artists and others with stages for making livelihoods from followings, while also enabling tech companies to rake in revenue from ads or e-commerce.

The move comes with Facebook and other Big Tech firms under heightened scrutiny by antitrust enforcers in the United States and elsewhere for their growing dominance of key economic sectors. — AFP ■

Two of slain Haiti leader's top guards ignore prosecutor's summons

TWO senior security officials who had been responsible for protecting Haiti's assassinated president Jovenel Moise failed to answer a summons issued by the Port-au-Prince prosecutor's office, which is leading the investigation, a judicial source told AFP Wednesday.

Dimitri Herard, head of Moise's security detail, was a no-show Wednesday, as was Jean Laguel Civil, the president's security coordinator, who had been summoned to appear in court Tuesday, according to an official in the prosecutor's office.

Herard was summoned amid suspicions surrounding the apparent ease with which the killers assassinated the head of state. He is also being investigated in Bogota for multiple trips he made to Colombia, the country of origin of most of the members of the suspected hit squad, and to other destinations in South America.

Patrick Laurent, a member of the bar of Port-au-Prince, told AFP that "the prosecution can decide to close the file without follow-up or to pass it on to an investigating judge, since it is about a crime."

He said chief prosecutor Bed-Ford Claude could order police to bring Herard to the hearing. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bank of Japan revises down GDP forecast, details green fund

THE Bank of Japan on Friday revised down its growth forecast for the current fiscal year and laid out details of its first green fund, announced last month.

The central bank kept its key monetary easing measures unchanged, and maintained its longstanding two-per-cent inflation target, which remains far off despite years of efforts.

In its quarterly report, the BoJ said Japan's economy would grow 3.8 per cent in the current fiscal year to March, trimming its previous estimate of 4.0 per cent growth "due to the impact of Covid-19."

However, it revised up the forecast for the year to March 2023 to 2.7 per cent growth from 2.4 per cent.

It raised its inflation forecast to 0.6 per cent for the current year to March from 0.1 per cent "mainly due to higher energy prices." — AFP ■

Cuban government blames Twitter for unrest

UNPRECEDENTED anti-government protests broke out in Cuba on July 11, which the single-party state leadership blames on a Twitter campaign orchestrated by the United States.

But experts AFP spoke to say that view is at best an exaggeration.

"I have irrefutable proof that the majority of those that took part in this (internet) campaign were in the United States and used automated systems to make content go viral, without being penalized by Twitter," Cuba's Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Tuesday.

Rodriguez had already denied that the island nation experienced a "social explosion" when thousands of people took to the streets chanting "Freedom!" and "Down with the dictatorship!" The minister called it a "communication and information war against Cuba." — AFP ■

Japan, Australia agree to promote regional trade deals

JAPAN and Australia agreed Thursday to promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership regional trade deals to revitalize the COVID-19 pandemic-hit regional economy.

In a meeting in Tokyo, Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama and Dan Tehan, Australia's minister for trade, tourism and investment, affirmed close cooperation in assisting Britain's accession process in the TPP, an 11-nation group formally known as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Voicing expectations for early enforcement and full implementation of the RCEP by all 15 member states, the ministers



Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama (L) and Australian Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister Dan Tehan pose in Tokyo on July 15, 2021, before the start of Japan-Australia economic dialog, also involving Australian Energy and Emission Reduction Minister Angus Taylor, who is to take part in the meeting remotely.

PHOTO: KYODO

affirmed the TPP and RCEP "are critical to post-COVID-19 economic recovery for the region,"

according to a joint statement issued after the meeting. Tokyo and Canberra are members of the

two deals, both of which do not involve the United States.

"Ministers were united in their commitment to free and fair trade as foundational principles and to the objectives and strengthening of the rules-based multilateral trading system," the statement said.

In a veiled criticism of China's trade practices and economic diplomacy, the ministers, in partnership with other countries, pledged to "address non-market practices and unfair and coercive use of economic measures in order to achieve free and fair economic architecture" in the Indo-Pacific region. China is not a party to the TPP but is a member of RCEP, which includes the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations. — Kyodo News ■

Plans drafted for another UK battery gigafactory

REGIONAL officials in central England said on Thursday that plans were being submitted for a battery gigafactory near Coventry that could create up to 6,000 jobs.

The city's council is submitting blueprints for a 5.7 million square feet (1.7 million square metre) electric car battery plant in partnership with Coventry Airport, where it would be built. Promoters say the site could be operational by 2025 and could attract £2 billion (£2.3bn) in investment.

The Japanese car manufacturer Nissan has already launched plans for a battery gigafactory in northeastern England.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street called it "mission critical that the West Midlands secures a gigafactory" to safeguard its

key industry, economy and the "future of our planet". Investment in electric cars and associated supply chains is pitched as a way to reinvigorate the car industry in central England along with a shift to more environmentally friendly technologies.

The UK's Unite union welcomed the plans and potential jobs as a "huge shot in the arm" for the West Midlands economy. "The promise of 6,000 jobs and thousands more in the supply chain is exactly what we need to bring stability to the sector during these rocky times," Unite assistant general secretary Steve Turner said. Construction of Nissan's £2.6-billion plant in Blyth was announced in December and construction is to start soon, with the potential creation of 6,200 jobs. — AFP ■



Nissan employees make final checks to cars on the production line at Nissan's plant in Sunderland, north east England on July 1, 2021.

PHOTO: AFP

Yellen 'not certain' Amazon would pay under global tax agreement



Employees of Amazon scan packages at an Amazon's Fulfillment Centres (FCs) situated in the suburban area of Bengaluru. PHOTO: AFP

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday she is "not certain" if Amazon will have to pay up under a worldwide minimum tax she is encouraging countries, including her own, to adopt.

The landmark deal implementing a minimum corporate rate of 15 per cent is supposed to help put an end to top multinationals shopping for countries with low corporate taxes in which to book their profits instead of paying where they conduct their business.

The plan would also allow countries to tax a share of profits of the most profitable countries in the world, regardless of where they're based. But that would only apply to large

international firms whose profit margins exceed 10 per cent.

Asked in an interview with CNBC if Washington would be able to levy taxes on Amazon under the deal, Yellen replied, "It depends on whether or not they will reach the threshold of profitability, and I am not certain of that."

Despite Amazon's colossal footprint and market capitalization of more than \$1 trillion, its profit margin last year amounted to just 6.3 per cent.

Amazon, which has used optimization arrangements to lower its tax bill, has been the target of levies imposed unilaterally by countries including France, Italy, Spain and Britain. — AFP ■

New Italian airline to take off on 15 October

TOUGH talks between Italy and the European Commission on a plan to replace struggling Alitalia have laid the groundwork for a new, streamlined flag carrier, the economy ministry said Thursday.

Italia Trasporto Aereo (ITA) "will be fully operational" as of October 15, after Rome reached a "constructive and balanced solution" with Brussels, it said in a statement.

The new airline had initially been expected to launch in August, during the peak tourism season, but talks with the Commission dragged on even after a preliminary deal was reached in May.

The Commission, charged with policing state aid in the EU, is examining

1.3 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in state funds provided to Alitalia in 2017 and 2019.

On Thursday, the Commission said only that it had taken note of the Italian announcement and reiterated that it had "reached a common understanding on the key parameters to ensure economic discontinuity between ITA and Alitalia."

"The Commission remains in close contact with the Italian authorities to ensure that the launch of ITA as a new and viable market player is in line with EU state aid rules," a statement added.

The Commission has already insisted that the new airline mark a rupture with Alitalia, and not only by changing the name. — AFP ■

Thai arms of 2 Japanese firms to jointly test EV use for goods delivery

MITSUBISHI Motors (Thailand) Co. has signed a memorandum of understanding with Hitachi Transport System Ltd.'s local arm to study the commercial viability of using electric vehicles to deliver goods in the Southeast Asian country.

The Mitsubishi Motors Corp. subsidiary said Thursday the Hitachi unit, Eternity Grand Logistics Public Co., will use one unit of the automaker's small battery-powered van Minicab MiEV for the pilot project for a year, collecting data such as the distance run, power charge logs and delivery routes covered to verify a better environment for

commercial EVs.

Mitsubishi Motors Corp. "has provided about 9,000 units of the Minicab MiEV to many logistics companies, retailers and local governments in Japan," Eiichi Koito, head of Mitsubishi Motors (Thailand), said in a statement. "We will continue to explore the viability of electrification in tandem with the proliferation of charging stations and support from the Thai government."

"As one of the leading players in the logistics industry, we have a responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint," said Ryuichi Honda, chairman of Eternity Grand Logistics. "At the



Photo shows Mitsubishi Motors Corp.'s battery-driven Minicab MiEV, which will be used to deliver goods in Thailand under a pilot study to be implemented by the Thai subsidiaries of the Japanese automaker and Hitachi Transport System Ltd. PHOTO: MITSUBISHI MOTORS (THAILAND) CO./NNA/KYODO

operational level, we also need to redress operational expenses. We are proud to be partnering

with one of the leading automotive companies for our green initiative." — Kyodo News ■

FAW Group reports robust vehicle exports

CHINA'S leading automaker FAW Group Co., Ltd. exported 10,500 complete vehicles in the first half of this year (H1), up 130 per cent year on year, said the company on Thursday.

The export volume of the company registered a yearly increase of 175 per cent during the period, reaching 240 million U.S. dollars.

Among the exported products, the Hongqi-branded vehicles are favored by overseas markets. So far, FAW's high-end automobiles represented by Hongqi have been ex-

ported to countries including Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

FAW is expected to export a total of 23,500 vehicles this year, with an

export value of 500 million U.S. dollars, up 102 per cent year on year, said Yu Bin, deputy manager of China FAW Group Import and Export Co., Ltd.—Xinhua ■



Workers work at the general assembly line of truck maker FAW Jiefang in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin Province, July 7, 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

Department of Mines Amendment to the Open Tender No 3/2021

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

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

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

- For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone numbers: 067-3409378 and 067-3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2111E/W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2111E/W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-7-2021 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HANSA HOMBURG VOY.NO. (124S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HANSA HOMBURG VOY.NO. (124S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-7-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (126W/127E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (126W/127E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11-7-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

NEWS
IN BRIEF

208-year jail sentence over school collapse in Mexico quake

A Mexican court has sentenced a man who approved flawed construction work at a school where 26 people died in a 2017 earthquake to 208 years in prison, prosecutors said.

Nineteen children were among those crushed to death when the private Rebsamen elementary school in the capital collapsed after the 7.1-magnitude quake. Juan Mario Velarde, described as the director responsible for works, approved the structural safety of the school without carrying out the necessary tests and despite construction irregularities, the Mexico City prosecutor's office said. He was sentenced "for his criminal responsibility in the crime of homicide" over the 26 deaths, it said in a statement on Wednesday. — AFP ■

Hungary blasts EU over LGBTQ law legal action

HUNGARY blasted the European Commission Thursday for launching legal action against Budapest over an "anti-paedophilia" law seen as discriminating against the LGBTQ community.

"If the European Union wants to interfere in matters and laws covered by the constitutions of other countries, that could shatter the entire EU," said Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's cabinet chief Gergely Gulyas in Budapest.

According to the commission's infringement procedure against Hungary over its so-called "anti-paedophilia" law, the bill breaks EU rules on rights to freedom of expression, as well as free trade and provision of services.

But Gulyas told a press briefing that the law concerned a national jurisdiction that the EU "clearly has no say in", and that its reasoning for the legal action was "more political than legal". "We don't see any infringements on freedom of trade for example, these are absurd things... absolutely fishy arguments," Gulyas told reporters. — AFP ■

Eiffel Tower to reopen after record nine-month closure



Daily capacity is set to be restricted to 13,000 people, about half of the normal level. PHOTO: AFP

THE Eiffel Tower is to reopen to visitors on Friday for the first time in nine months following its longest closure since World War II.

The lifts of the "Iron Lady"

are set to whirl back into life, transporting tourists to its 300-metre (1,000-foot) summit, ending a long period of inactivity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Daily capacity is set to be restricted to 13,000 people, however, about half of the normal level, in order to respect social distancing.

And from Wednesday next week, visitors will need to show either proof of vaccination or a negative test, in line with recent government-imposed requirements.

"Obviously it's an additional operational complication, but it's manageable," the head of the op-

erating company, Jean-François Martins, told AFP.

After a final round of safety checks by staff, he announced that the "lady is ready".

Early reservations for tickets during the summer holiday period underline how the tourism industry in Paris has changed due to travel restrictions.

Martins said there was an "almost total absence" of British ticket holders, while only 15 per cent were Americans and very few are from Asia. Half of visitors are expected to be French, while Italians and Spanish make up a higher proportion than usual. — AFP ■

Taliban see battlefield dominance as path to political, diplomatic power

WITH US forces largely gone from the battlefield, the Taliban have conducted a staggering, land-grabbing offensive that appears aimed at forcing the Afghan government to sue for peace on the insurgents' terms or suffer complete military defeat.

The scale and speed of the Taliban's campaign, and the in-

ability of government forces to stem its progress, has swept aside any hopes that on-again-off again peace talks would produce a power-sharing framework ahead of the US military's final withdrawal at the end of August.

The Taliban are largely dictating when and where they will fight the government forces with

multi-pronged thrusts that authorities are struggling to halt.

Brimming with confidence, they have besieged provincial capitals and stormed key border crossings.

Experts say it is still highly unlikely the lightly armed Taliban have the conventional strength to enter the heavily fortified capital

of Kabul, where the Afghan military's air force and heavy weapons would keep the insurgents at bay. But by choking off money and supplies to Kabul, the Taliban seem more geared to push the government to collapse after battering the morale of the security forces in the countryside. — AFP ■

Hundreds missing in Germany after huge floods

GERMAN emergency responders were on Friday still searching for hundreds of missing people after the worst floods in living memory killed at least 81 in the country's west.

"I fear that we will only see the full extent of the disaster in the coming days," Chancellor Angela Merkel said from Washington, where she met with President Joe Biden.

Catching residents of several regions unaware and leaving destruction and despair in their wake, the masses of water were dubbed the "flood of death" by top-selling daily Bild.

Neighbouring Belgium counted at least nine dead, while Luxembourg and the Netherlands were also severely affected by the torrents of water, with thousands evacuated in the city of Maastricht.

But Germany's toll was by far the highest at 81, and likely to rise with large numbers of people still missing in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhine-



Some towns in Germany were completely underwater. PHOTO: DPA/AFP

land-Palatinate, the hardest-hit states.

In the devastated Ahrweiler district of Rhineland-Palatinate around 1,300 people were unaccounted for, although local authorities told Bild the high number was likely down to damaged phone networks.

Regional interior minister

Roger Lewentz told broadcaster SWR that "we believe there are still 40, 50 or 60 people missing, and when you haven't heard for people for such a long time... you have to fear the worst."

"The number of victims will likely keep rising in the coming days," he added.

'Disaster'

What's more, continuing rain is forecast for parts of the west, where water levels in the Rhine river and its tributaries are rising dangerously.

Around 1,000 soldiers have been deployed to help with rescue operations and rubble-clearing in affected towns and villages. — AFP ■

Deadly floods overshadow Merkel's White House swan song

MERKEL, who has dealt with four US presidents and is stepping down later this year, met President Joe Biden for an official working visit.

Outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's diplomatic swan song Thursday at the White House was overshadowed by deadly flooding back home and an enduring disagreement with her US hosts over Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Despite the Biden administration's insistence that this was a "working visit", Merkel's one day stay at the White House had the hallmarks of a valedictory farewell for one of Europe's key political figures.



US President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had warm words but the visit was overshadowed by deadly floods. PHOTO: AFP

"I want to take a moment to acknowledge the historic nature of her chancellorship: first woman chancellor in German history,

the first chancellor from former East Germany," President Joe Biden at a joint press conference. "Chancellor Merkel has

been here frequently over the past 16 years. As a matter of fact, she knows the Oval Office as well as I do," Biden joked, noting that the German leader had now dealt with four US presidents.

Merkel, who will stand down in September, called her host "dear Joe".

Earlier, meeting with Biden in the Oval, she hailed her "friendship" with the United States and its contribution "to a free and democratic Germany".

But casting a chill over the encounter was news of catastrophic flooding that has killed at least 59 people in Germany and nine in Belgium, with many more missing. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

French justice minister in court for alleged conflict of interest

FRENCH Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti is due to appear in court on Friday for questioning that could lead to charges over alleged conflict of interest.

The 60-year-old star lawyer was recruited by President Emmanuel Macron just a year ago, swapping his life as one of the country's most famous criminal lawyers for a career in politics.

Now he stands accused of abusing his position as minister to settle scores with opponents from his legal career, and he will appear before the Law Court of the Republic (CJR).

The court hears cases of alleged wrongdoing by serving ministers, and he will be questioned by magistrates who will decide whether to press charges. — AFP ■

Haitian police close net in probe of president's murder

THE assassination of Jovenel Moise by armed mercenaries was planned in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, say Haitian police, who announced the detention of the slain president's chief bodyguard and three other members of his security detail.

The apparent ease with which a hit squad entered the Haitian leader's residence in Port-au-Prince and shot him dead, with no injuries to his bodyguards, has raised suspicions that the July 7 attack may have been an inside job.

A photograph circulating on social media identifies two suspects -- both later arrested -- meeting former Haitian opposition senator Joel John Joseph, who is wanted by police. According to Haitian national police director Leon Charles, the picture was taken as the trio were in the Dominican capital plotting to kill Moise, whose body was found riddled with bullets. — AFP ■

White House says 20,000 Afghan interpreters asking for US asylum



Afghan former interpreters for the US and NATO forces demonstrate in Kabul in April after US President Joe Biden announced the US withdrawal from the country. PHOTO: AFP

ABOUT 20,000 Afghans who worked as interpreters for the United States during its war in

Afghanistan and now fear retribution from Taliban insurgents have applied for evacuation, the

White House said Thursday.

"There are approximately 20,000 Afghans who have applied," Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters.

Psaki said those are all former translators for the military or other entities, whom the Taliban have targeted.

However, the United States will also consider applications by the families of the interpreters, she said, without specifying how many family members would be allowed.

According to some estimates, the number of people eligible to leave would total around 100,000.

Officials say evacuations

will start this month.

The interpreters being readied for evacuation are those who have already filed applications under the State Department programme of Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) for Iraqi and Afghan translators and interpreters.

Psaki said those who have completed security vetting could then be temporarily housed at a US military base. Those still needing to go through the vetting process, will first be sent either to a US base abroad or a third country "where they will be safely housed until their visa processing is going on," Psaki added. — AFP ■

Lebanon's PM designate Hariri says won't form govt, deepening crisis

LEBANON'S prime minister-designate Saad Hariri stepped down Thursday, saying he was unable to form a government, nine months after accepting the challenge and as the country sinks deeper into crisis.

International donors remain adamant that a government must be established before they can provide funding, but political squabbling has repeatedly stymied such efforts and sent the currency to unprecedented lows that leave imported medicine and fuel increasingly unaffordable.

Sporadic clashes between the army and protesters flared Thursday evening, leaving an unspecified number of people wounded, medics said.

Hariri's announcement -- nearly a year after a deadly



Lebanese soldiers fire rubber bullets during sporadic clashes with supporters of Lebanon's prime minister-designate Saad Hariri, who stepped down saying he was unable to form a government, in the capital Beirut on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

explosion at Beirut port forced the last government to resign

-- takes the political process back to square one and there is

a clear risk of many more months of drift. — AFP ■

Beach Soccer game to be added in next year's SEA Games

THE ASEAN Football Federation stated that a Beach Soccer game would be added as a new feature in the South-East Asian (SEA) Games that will be held in 2022 in Viet Nam.

"The game will be even more exciting with the inclusion of both Futsal and Beach Soccer alongside Football for the biennial multi-sports championship next year. Beach Soccer will only be making its

debut at the SEA Games in 2021." said an official from AFF.

Officials said that the SEA Games 2021 would be held next year depending on the COVID-19 condition, and the detailed fixture for the Beach Soccer game will be released later.

Beach soccer, also known as beach football or sand football, is a game played on a beach or a smooth ground

filled with a large amount of sand.

Each beach soccer team consist of five players, including the goalkeeper. A game lasts thirty-six minutes, and it has split up into three twelve-minute periods.

The 31st SEA Games has been postponed to next year due to the global third-wave outbreak of the pandemic. — GNLM

Dutch great Arjen Robben retires from football

DUTCH football great Arjen Robben announced his retirement from his youth club FC Groningen on Thursday (Jul 15), ending an illustrious career spanning two decades.

Considered to be one of the best wingers of his generation, Robben rejoined FC Groningen last year after stints that saw him win accolades at Chelsea, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, in later years. "I've decided to stop with my active football career," Robben said in a Tweet. "It was a difficult choice," said the 37-year-old of his decision, which was also confirmed by FC Groningen.

"Everybody around FC Groningen hoped and wished that Robben would continue for another season, he has decided to stop after much deliberation," the club said in a statement.

One of the fastest and most



PSV Dutch midfielder Pablo Rosario (L) fights for the ball against Groningen's Dutch midfielder Arjen Robben during the Dutch Eredivisie league football match between FC Groningen and PSV at the Hitachi Capital Mobility stadium on September 13, 2020 in Groningen. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

skillful dribblers in his prime, with a devastating left foot, Robben scored more than 200 goals at club level and 37 for the Netherlands, the last against Sweden in Amsterdam in October 2017.

After his debut at FC Groningen during the 2000-01 sea-

son, Robben transferred to PSV in 2002-03.

His first overseas transfer came two years later when he went to Chelsea and played an important role in helping the west London club win the English Premier League in 2005-06.— AFP ■

Thai sisters seize two-shot lead at LPGA invitational

ARIYA Jutanugarn and sister Moriya combined to shoot an 11-under 59 for a two stroke lead following the second round of the LPGA's Great Lakes Bay Invitational on Thursday.

The Jutanugarns moved to 14 under to lead the duo of India's Aditi Ashok and Thailand's Pajaree Anannarukarn in Midland, Michigan.

The tournament, which was launched in 2019 but cancelled last year due to the pandemic, follows an alternate shot or foursome format in the first and third rounds and better ball, or fourball, in the second and final round.

Playing the best-ball format on Thursday, the Thai sisters rolled in six birdies on the front nine and five more on the back, including No. 18. It was one off the tournament best, a 58 recorded in 2019.

South Koreans Hur Mi-jung and Lee6 Jeon-geun (62 Thursday) and Thai tandem Wichanee Meechai and Pavarisa Yoktuan (63) were tied for third at 11-under.— AFP ■

Australia's De Minaur to miss Olympics after positive COVID-19 test



Australian tennis player Alex de Minaur will miss the Olympics after testing positive for Covid-19, according to the country's Olympic officials. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRALIAN tennis player Alex de Minaur will miss the Olympics after testing positive for Covid-19, according to the country's Olympic officials. De Minaur, the top-ranked Australian men's player, returned a positive test for the virus in Spain — where he lives — earlier this week, according to local media. "We're very disappointed for Alex; he's said that he is shattered," Australian Olympic boss Ian Chesterman told media in Tokyo, where the pandemic-delayed Games will be held. "It's been a dream since he was a child to represent Australia at the Olympic Games." The 22-year-old was due to play singles and doubles at the Games, with organizers waiting to confirm if De Minaur's doubles partner John Peers would still be able to compete. Although the team was disappointed to lose him, the test result was a sign that the system to protect the Covid-free bubble for athletes in Tokyo was working, Chesterman said. — AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.