

NATIONAL

Price of exported low-quality rice stands at K23,000 per 108-pound bag due to bank withdrawal limit

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo inspects investment activities in Sagaing Region

PAGE-3

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Tomato price rises by over K 10,000 this year



Earlier, the price of those tomatoes ranged between K23,000 and K25,000 per box (containing 18 visses). However, those tomatoes are now priced at K 33,000 or K 35,000 per box. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

THE harvested tomatoes are entering Thiri Marlar fresh foods wholesale market. The tomato price has been on the increase this year.

This year, harvested tomato price rose by K10,000 from last year, said the tomato commodity depots.

Around eight or ten 12-wheel trucks loaded with tomatoes from Nyaung Shwe Innlay region from Shan State are entering Thiri Marlar fresh foods

wholesale market in Mandalay. Earlier, the price of those tomatoes ranged between K23,000 and K25,000 per box (containing 18 visses). However, those tomatoes are now priced at K33,000 or K35,000 per box, said U Aung Moe Naing from the Aung commodity depot in the Mandalay region.

“Currently, the tomatoes from the Innlay region are mostly arriving at the market. The prevailing price of tomatoes is

different by K10,000 this year compared to that of last year. This year, the price is unexpectedly high. The price rise can be attributed to transportation. The tomatoes from other regions are not as good as those from the Innlay region. Tomatoes from the Innlay region are sustainable and convenient to send to the other regions,” he added.

The tomatoes from the Innlay region are entering the Mandalay market daily, and they

are fetching good prices. In competition with the wholesale price, the highest price of the tomato was K1,000 per viss last year, but this year, the price ranges from K1,700 to K1,800 per viss.

Besides, other raw vegetables such as cabbages, cauliflowers, and carrots also have a reasonable price. The growers are making a good profit by cultivating them. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
Union Minister Dr Charlie Than inspects cotton ginning, textile factories in Mandalay

PAGE-3

NATIONAL
Community Centre opened in Lashio

PAGE-4

NATIONAL
Pann Khin project implemented in Meiktila, NyaungU and Yamethin

PAGE-5

NATIONAL
Kinpunchin farms provide family income in Minbu, Magway region



PAGE-5

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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.

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.

Price of exported low-quality rice stands at K23,000 per 108-pound bag due to bank withdrawal limit

THE price of exported low-quality rice cannot go up and is fixed at only K23,000 per 108-pound bag because of the bank withdrawal restriction, said Secretary U Than Oo of the Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre.

Although the rice traders have money in their savings account, they are limited in the withdrawal of cash from their accounts. Thus, they are being faced with limited trading and cannot make cash payment for their trading.

“As for our exporters, we are trading the rice with foreign currency. Then, we have exchanged foreign currency for Myanmar Kyat and have to wait to get the cash from the bank. We have cash in our saving accounts. But we cannot withdraw enough amount of cash from the bank. We have tried to connect with the Myanma Economic Bank and other private banks. Even the



About 80,000 rice and broken rice bags were earlier traded daily at the Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre. But the trade volume plummeted to about 30,000 bags at present.

connected banks are not able to pay the cash. We have to pay

for the rice here, but we cannot withdraw the money from the

bank. This is the reason why the price of the rice cannot go

up,” said U Than Oo.

Besides, there are only a few companies that buy rice to export. The companies are also buying rice to export it to Bangladesh. Therefore, the price of the exported rice is not very competitive, he added.

“The price is not competitive in the rice market. Earlier, the purchasers bought the rice through border trade. The retail sellers bought back from the traders as well. The rice exporters have different foreign markets such as the European market, Asian market and Bangladesh market. Only a competitive market makes the rice sell well, and the price has also gone up,” said U Than Oo.

About 80,000 rice and broken rice bags were earlier traded daily at the Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre. But the trade volume plummeted to about 30,000 bags at present. — NN/GNLM

Public security system

POLITICAL protests were staged after Tatmadaw had taken the State power. Although the situation of taking over the State responsibilities has been explained many times, some people understood it, but some so didn't. Now, sabotages are committed via insurgents. They attend the explosive and sabotage courses in the area of armed insurgents. They formed CRPH, NUG and PDF declared as unlawful associations to commit terrorist acts on the destruction route. Myanmar Police Force and administrative bodies are to join hands for taking security measures through the public security system.

(Excerpt from the speech to the State Administration Council meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 25 May 2021)

Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo inspects investment activities in Sagaing Region

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo met with the Chairman and members of Sagaing Region Administration Council and Sagaing Region Investment Committee members at the office of Sagaing Region Administration Council's meeting room in Monywa on the morning of 12 June 2021.

At the meeting, the Union Minister discussed the investment promotion and facilitation matters to promote the citizen and foreign investments under the Myanmar Investment Law, rules and regulations. He also urged the Region Committee to monitor and provide necessary assistance to the existing investments permitted by the Myanmar Investment Committee



Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo discusses with the Chairman and members of the Sagaing Region Administration Council and Sagaing Region Investment Committee members at the office of the Sagaing Region Administration Council's meeting room in Monywa on the morning of 12 June 2021.

(MIC) and endorsed by Region Investment Committee. He also encouraged facilitating citizen investment in manufacturing and

service sectors by creating an investor-friendly environment.

After that, Chairman of the Sagaing Region Administration

Council and Chairman of Region Investment Committee U Maung Maung Linn discussed the investment promotion ac-

tivities undertaken by the Committee and explained the future investment promotion plan and activities.

Then, the Union Minister proceeded to the NCY International Co., Ltd, manufacturer of milling machines for rice and other crops in the Monywa Industrial Zone. The Director of the company briefed the current business operation and raised the issues encountered by the company. After hearing the report, the Union Minister coordinated and facilitated the requirements of the company.

During his inspection tour, the Union Minister met with the business communities from Sagaing Region and coordinated and fulfilled the needs of the investors and traders.—MNA

Union Minister Dr Charlie Than inspects cotton ginning, textile factories in Mandalay

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than visited the cotton ginning factory in Mahlaing Township of Mandalay Region yesterday.

During his visit, the factory in charge presented the factory's processes, and the Union Minister instructed the need to repair the cotton ginning machines and make preparations to ensure the security and fire danger of the factory.

The Union Minister and party then went to No (8) garment factory of Pyawbwe Township. After an explanation by the factory's head, the Union Minister highlighted training courses for the factory workers in order to promote the production rate, increasing local production rate as import substitution and cooperation work to resume the suspended factories.

Moreover, the Union Minister inspected the cotton ginning factory in Yamethin Township and instructed the necessary things on the factory workers.—MNA



Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than inspects the cotton ginning factory in Mandalay Region yesterday.

Community Centre opened in Lashio



Union Minister for Information U Chitt Naing attended the opening ceremony of the Community Centre in Lashio yesterday.

The centre was jointly constructed by the ministry and Shan State Administration Council.

The Union Minister, Shan State Administration Council Chairman Dr Kyaw Tun and North-East Command Commander Brig-Gen Naing Naing Oo pressed the ceremonial button to unveil the Community Centre building. Then, the officials inspected the public booths, computer room, kids' reading

room, library, sports hall, multi-purpose hall, meeting hall and Sarpay Beikman bookstall.

During the second part of the event, the Union Minister made an opening remark. He said it should carry out for the sake of region and country as the Community Centre is established for the youths to support their studies, know what is right and what is wrong, and provide proper knowledge for Lashio residents.

Then, the Shan State Administration Council Chairman remarked and concluded the event. — MNA

Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine makes inspection tour to Bago Region

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine inspected the condition of the cyclone shelter built by the "Marked Panorama Co., Ltd" with 100 million kyats from the fund of National Disaster Management on 11 June in Padaung town, Bago Region.

During the inspection, Member of the Bago Region Administration Council U Aung

Min, Chairmen of the District/Township Administration Bodies and responsible persons explained the construction works. The Union Minister and party inspected the shelter.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party arrived at the Pyay Pre-Primary School, inspected the school preparations, and met the staff cordially.—MNA



Sagaing Govt releases 200,000 fingerlings into Ayeyawady River



ACCORDING to the regional department, the Department of Fisheries released 200,000 fingerlings into the Ayeyawady River of the Sagaing Region yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi, Director-General, Deputy Director-General and other officials of the department concerned joined that fish planting ceremony, said U AL Tuu Rein, deputy director of district Fisheries Department.

"The fish population declines in the rivers and creeks for many reasons. The Fisher-

ies Department adds fingerlings in Ayeyawady River to conserve the fish resources and meet the local demand yearly," he added.

The officials released 200,000 fingerlings—100,000 Labeo rohita, 50,000 Common carp and 50,000 Barbus fish into the Ayeyawady River.

The fish are annually added to the rivers and dams to support the sustainable development of fisheries, poverty alleviation, development of fishery products, proper income of marine workers and the local populace.—Khine Zaya/GNLM

166 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 June, total figure rises to 145,230

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **145,230** after **166 new cases** were reported on 12 June 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,830** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 3,241 after two died. —MNA

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Pann Khin project implemented in Meiktila, NyaungU and Yamethin

UNION Minister U Myint Kyaing of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population visited Htamonkan village in Meiktila Township in order to encourage issuing household censuses and citizenship cards to local villagers through the “Pann Khin” project. He met them warmly.

The Union Minister then addressed the handover ceremony of household censuses and citizenship scrutiny cards to locals in respective townships in Meiktila District, NyaungU District and Yamethin District. The Ministry staff completed the processes under the “Pann Khin” project.

A total of 1,946 household census and 2,700 citizenship cards were handed over to the

Chairmen of the respective Township Administration Bodies. A resident expressed words of thanks regarding the project at the ceremony.

At the coordination meeting on the successful implementation of the “Pann Khin” project in Mandalay Region, Mandalay Region Administration Council Member Col Kyaw Kyaw Min presented the ongoing process of the project, further action plans and coordination between the departments, and the Union Minister coordinated as necessary.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister met with the staff of the immigration and population staff in Meiktila, NyaungU and Yamethin districts and provided supplies for them. — MNA



SAC Information Team holds 6/2021 press conference



THE Information Team of the State Administration Council held a 6/2021 press conference at the Ministry of Information

yesterday. Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo, spokes-

persons and representatives of the departmental information team replied to the questions raised by the media.

Information Team Leader

Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, through PowerPoint presentation, explained the issues pertaining to reopening of schools across the nation, salient excerpts from the interview between Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Chinese Phoenix Media, budget year, gazette holidays, involvement of EAOs in terrorist training, statements of NUG, CRPH and PDF, and consequences of these statements, testimony of suspects who committed bomb attacks and terror acts to highlight the difference between the real situation and spreading incitements and fake news.

Then, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo clarified matters in connexion with released voting frauds found in the inspection, findings in voter lists

and ballots, illegal activities in the 2020 General Election and performance of the current UEC.

The journalists raised questions on the facts they wanted to know. Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, UEC Member U Khin Maung Oo and the departmental information team representatives answered. Then, the event was concluded.

Those attending the press conference viewed round facts about the press conference, endeavours of the current UEC, the inspection of voter lists and necessary documents.

The press conference was also attended by reporters from local news agencies, daily newspapers, local TV broadcasting stations and local-based foreign news agencies. — MNA

Over 243,000 outpatients provided with healthcare at military hospitals

MILITARY hospitals and temporary emergency hospitals in the townships of regions and states give medical treatments to the people to solve their difficulties in healthcare services. A total of 243,386 outpatients and 71,990 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date. Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 11,349 major

operations and 5,861 minor operations. Senior doctors treat severe cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 14,114 babies, while 14,114 pregnant women were taken to the respective military hospitals. It is reported that Tatmadaw will continue to accelerate the cooperation to develop the public healthcare sector. — MNA

Kinpunchin farms provide family income in Minbu, Magway region

SENEGALIA rugata farms that are planted along with traditional agricultural farming are another way of generating the family income in Kyauktan village, Minbu (Sagu) Township, Magway Region.

Three months after planting, sprouts can be picked to sell, and with good irrigation and weeding every six days, the shoots can be picked every two days and can be sold all year round.

The plants can be cultivated three feet apart from one another. It is necessary to cut off the lateral branches. Though both fruits and leaves of Senegalia



rugata are useful, the branches are cut off to pick the sprouts without letting the fruits bear.

The Senegalia rugata leaves, one of the medicinal

plants, are sold K4,500 per viss. It is suggested to cultivate the plants that provide the family income. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

Dr Htar Htar Lin under arrest for involving in CDM, assisting terrorist organization NUG

DR HTAR HTAR LIN, Director of the Expanded Vaccination Programme of the Ministry of Health and Sports, disconnected herself from the ministry and involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) without clearing the K161.198-million balance of the expanded vaccination programme. A case was filed on 20 February 2021 against her at Payagone Police Station under Section 505-A of the Penal Code. She was arrested on the roadside of Nawaday in Yaw-mingyi ward, Dagon Township, on 10 June 2021.

According to her confession, she was not only involved in the CDM and formed the CDM Core Group together with other CDM doctors but also colluded with terrorist NUG, which was declared an illegal and terrorist group.

She added that fugitive Zaw Wai Soe, appointed as Health Minister by NUG, contacted her through Signal Application to help him as much as possible. She was frequently communicated by fugitive Zaw Wai Soe via Zoom Meeting and asked her to help write an encouraging speech for CDM staff. In addition to writing encouraging speeches, she had to write programmes for NUG's healthcare activities and prepare charts and information for the Zoom Meeting.

Fugitive Zaw Wai Soe assigned Dr Htar Htar Lin to compile a list of medicines used in NUG's healthcare activities and calculate the demographic, necessary drugs, and expenses. In addition, she was reportedly instructed to calculate US\$8 million for six months' medical expenses related to terror acts nationwide. They planned to receive US\$8 million healthcare aid by a Grant Proposal from international donors.

Dr Htar Htar Lin, under fugitive Zaw Wai Soe's control, was appointed as the group leader of the Public Health Team. Twelve (12) absconded doctors, who were also involved in CDM, acted as members.

1. Dr Htar Htar Lin (Group Leader)
2. Dr Thu Zar Chit Tin (member)
3. Dr Myo Myo Mon (member)
4. Dr Aung Soe Htet (member)
5. Dr Htoo Myint Swe (member)
6. Dr Cho Cho San (member)
7. Dr Su Su Lin (member)
8. Dr Lwin Mar Hlaing (member)

9. Dr Nyein Nyein Chit (member)
10. Dr Khin Nyein Chan (member)
11. Dr Moe Kyaw Thu (member)
12. Dr San Thanda (member)

Dr Moe Kyaw Thu (Former Health Officer in Bilin Township) was reportedly appointed as group leader of State Health Admin Team (SHAT), which is under Public Health Team, along with ten members as follows:

1. Dr Moe Kyaw Thu (Group Leader)
2. Dr Naing Naing Tun (member)
3. Dr Shruk Parl (member)
4. Dr Aung Kyi (member)
5. Dr Deni Lin (member)
6. Dr Hnin Ei Phyu (member)
7. Dr Chit Ko Han (member)
8. Dr Su Su Hlaing (member)
9. Dr Zat Lwan Khaung (member)
10. Dr Kyaw Thu Swe (member)

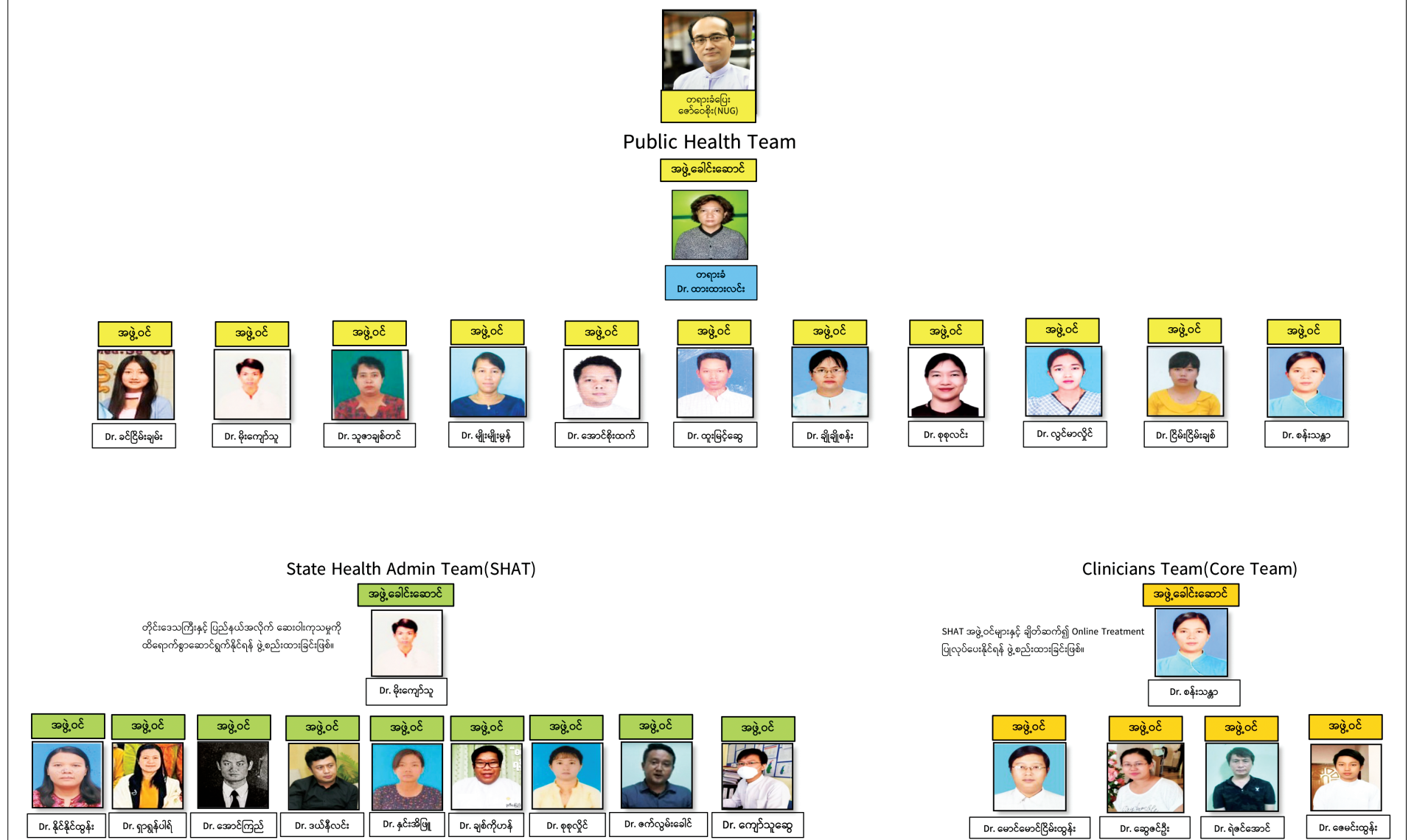
It is also learned that plans are underway to form Township Health Admin Teams (THAT) and, to link between SHAT and THAT online, the Clinicians Team was formed with five doctors, including Dr San Thanda, as follows:

1. Dr San Thanda (Group Leader)
2. Dr Maung Maung Nyein Tun (member)
3. Dr Swe Zin Oo (member)
4. Dr Ye Zin Aung (member)
5. Dr Ze Min Tun (member)

Therefore, 12 doctors, including Dr Htar Htar Lin from Public Health Team, ten doctors from SHAT and five doctors from the Clinicians Team, will be charged and prosecuted under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for acting as per the instructions of fugitive Zaw Wai Soe and terrorist organization NUG, and under Section 17 (1) for colluding with the illegal organization.

It is announced for the public to inform the nearest local battalions and police stations if the suspects are found, and those who hide them will be taken effective actions under the law.

The diagram of the link between fugitive Zaw Wai Soe and culprit Dr Htar Htar Lin and their health admin teams



Moscow sounds alarm over virus surge

THE Moscow mayor on Friday sounded the alarm over a spike in coronavirus cases saying Covid-19 was becoming more difficult to treat as city authorities posted the highest number of daily infections since January.

"We expected that the spring pandemic peak would fall on April-May just like last year," mayor Sergei Sobyenin said in televised remarks.

"But now we're seeing that it has shifted towards June-July."

Sobyenin, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, estimated that around half of Moscow residents had by now some level of immunity against the virus.

"At the same time we are seeing just how aggressive Covid is," he said, stressing that it was becoming more difficult to treat it.

"Quite a lot of Muscovites are in intensive care on ventilators," he said. "The danger is real." — AFP ■



Tourists walk along the Red Square in front of St. Basil cathedral in Moscow on November 6, 2020. PHOTO: ALEXANDER NEMENOV /AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK Covid heroes dominate Queen's honours list

QUEEN Elizabeth II will recognize those responsible for Britain's successful Covid-19 vaccine rollout in her annual Birthday Honours list, Buckingham Palace said on Friday. Sarah Gilbert, lead developer of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and Kate Bingham, the former chair of Britain's vaccine taskforce, are both to receive damehoods—one of the highest honours bestowed by the monarch.

Bingham said she was "humbled" to be recognized, paying tribute to National Health Service (NHS) workers who have "risked their health and their lives in fighting Covid." "The development of vaccines has been a triumph of scientific and industrial collaboration," she added. "Just a year ago we were assembling an unproven portfolio of vaccines for the UK. "Yet in the last six months nearly 70 million vaccine doses have provided unprecedented protection and saved thousands of lives." — AFP ■

Start-up launches India's first Covid home test kit

INDIAN start-up Mylab Discovery Solutions hopes that its inexpensive Covid-19 home test kit -- the country's first -- will help the massive South Asian nation better track the pandemic's spread among its 1.3-billion people.

CoviSelf was launched earlier this month and is the first home testing kit to be approved in India, which is slowly emerging from a brutal second wave that overwhelmed its hospitals and crematoriums, with almost 30 million infected so far and over 350,000 dead.

But many experts suspect that the real numbers are much higher, blaming insufficient testing and inaccurate recording of the cause of patient deaths. The start-up, which also makes PCR tests to detect HIV infections, says that widespread access to CoviSelf -- sold for 250 rupees (\$3.40) -- would reduce pressure on overburdened laboratories and improve infection tracking. — AFP ■

EMA chief urges worldwide vaccine access, after G7 vow



EMA chief Emer Cooke is confident current vaccines are effective against all different Covid variants, but warned that could "change quickly". PHOTO: AFP

THE head of the European Medicines Agency told AFP on Friday that all countries must have access to coronavirus vaccines, as G7 leaders were set to pledge one billion doses for poor nations.

Emer Cooke added in an interview that while the Amsterdam-based watchdog was confident current vaccines were effective against all different variants, that could "change quickly".

The comments by Ireland's Cooke -- who took over at the EMA late last year as it plunged into the scramble for a Covid

vaccine -- came as G7 leaders met in Britain to discuss how to recover from the pandemic.

"This is not within the competence of the EMA so I can only speak from a personal perspective, where I really believe we need to ensure access, availability and access throughout the world, not just in the countries that have the means to pay for them," Cooke said.

Campaigners say the G7's pledge for this year and next -- including 500 million US doses -- is far too little, too late to end a pandemic that has claimed over 3.7 million lives worldwide and

is still spawning new variants.

Despite a slow start, the EU has become one of the world's better protected regions, thanks to a stable of four vaccines approved by the EMA since December -- Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.

"To be honest, I thought we would be much further behind. The fact that we have four vaccines authorised within 15 months of the declaration of a pandemic is exceptional," said Cooke, speaking via Zoom.

'Variants are controlled'

But the emergence of new variants has presented a new challenge, particularly the Delta variant which first emerged in India. "So far we're confident that the circulating variants are controlled by the vaccines. But it can change very quickly," Cooke said.

The EMA has been working with vaccine makers to make sure they could adapt their jabs if needed, she said.

Another hurdle has been issues over the AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, particularly over rare and occasionally fatal blood clots. — AFP ■

Migrant school forced online by Covid unites children on Mexico border

STANDING in her kitchen Alma Beatriz Serrano Ramirez waves a small board in front of her phone, hoping the students watching on the other end are paying attention to the math lesson she is teaching. The 38-year-old Honduran migrant had dreamed of settling in the United States but so far has only made it to the Mexican city of Matamoros, located on the banks

of the Rio Grande River, which separates the two countries.

Her pupils -- Adalid, Kimberly, Osva and a handful of others -- are fellow migrants, many of whom are located some 90 kilometres (55 miles) away in Reynosa, another border town, where a camp of approximately 700 people has been established.

While Covid-19 has wreaked

havoc on so many aspects of life, it has been a busy time for the Sidewalk School, which was operating in-person in one migrant encampment in Matamoros and now reaches children in several cities along the border.

In its online format, the programme has welcomed students previously too embarrassed by their lack of education to set foot in a classroom. The classes, which are taught by asylum seekers who are former teachers or teaching assistants, are on everything from writing to math and even yoga, and offer rare comfort to students in cities stretching from Tijuana on the Pacific coast to Matamoros near the Gulf of Mexico.

Serrano Ramirez's students, who hail from Honduras, Guatemala and Haiti, are among the countless refugees still flocking to the US border, convinced that President Joe Biden's new administration will let them in -- if only they ask. — AFP ■



Alma Beatriz Serrano Ramirez points to a storm cloud on a chart during an online class she teaches from her home in Matamoros, Mexico on May 25, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Join hands to save environment with might and main

LIVING creatures and trees cannot be separated in the ecosystem, and each of them cannot stand tall alone in the world.

An unbalanced situation of both sides cannot build a favourable environment. Nature judges that extreme extraction of natural resources, including biodiversity, will trigger danger to living creatures, including humans.

Nowadays, extreme extraction causes the remarkable depletion of fish resources, accounting for 30 per cent in coastal areas owned by global countries, including Myanmar. In fact, more than 3,000 million of the global population relies on coastal areas and marine biodiversity for their livelihoods.

Hence, all the global people, including those of Myanmar, should participate in preventive measures against environmental deterioration in all aspects for benefiting themselves.

es long term extraction of clean fish resources, food sufficiency, plenty of marine biodiversity and health and socio-economic development of humans. As the domino effect, the collapse of one kind of natural resources will deteriorate the societies of living creatures and forests one after another. At that time, it is necessary to take adequate time for rebuilding favourable societies.

Hence, all the global people, including those of Myanmar, should participate in preventive measures against environmental deterioration in all aspects for benefiting themselves.

Currently, dirties and waste mostly discarded from inland areas are imposing threats on fish resources and ecosystems. Consequently, deficiency of fish resources and deterioration in the ecosystem will be a burden for the living creatures, especially for human beings.

Indeed, climate change does never base on a single factor. Hence, the climate change pushed by various factors severely affects the whole ecosystem formed with living creatures and plants. If so, it is difficult for humans to struggle for survival in the terrible impacts based on climate change. They have to take adequate time to recover their structures.

Currently, calamities and pandemics are imposing threats on the global populace due to their undisciplined acts undermining the environment such as logging of trees, too much tapping of underground water, changing of geographical conditions including mining, extreme storage of water in dams, unlimited extraction of fish resources and timber, and undisciplined littering.

Seawater pollution based on the leak of crude oil and frequencies of modern-sounding machines installed at ocean liners causes

G7 summit: Leaders set to announce global pandemic prevention plan

G7 leaders are on Saturday set to agree a joint declaration aimed at preventing another pandemic, as they resume wide-ranging talks at their first in-person summit in almost two years.

THE group of leading economies - Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States - will also try to showcase Western democratic cohesion against a resurgent China and recalcitrant Russia.

They will be joined by the leaders of Australia, South Africa and South Korea, along with India taking part remotely, as the agenda broadens to foreign policy issues and climate change.

The G7 is meeting face to face for the first time since 2019, at a beachside venue in Cornwall, southwest England, after the coronavirus led to the cancellation of last year's summit.

The leaders opened the three-day summit Friday with expectations of a pledge to donate one billion vaccine doses to poor countries this year and next - much too slow to end the crisis now, campaigners said.

US President Joe Biden arrived with a message of solidarity and resolve in stark contrast to the isolationist stance of his predecessor Donald Trump.

After the traditional fam-

ily photo and opening session on "building back better" from Covid-19, the leaders spent the evening at a reception hosted by Queen Elizabeth II at Cornwall's Eden Project.

A renowned attraction showcasing the world's ecological riches, the site also hosted a G7 meeting with Prince Charles and 10 international business leaders to discuss ramping up sustainable growth.

The G7 this weekend will also tackle climate change, and safeguarding global biodiversity, to lay the groundwork for the UN's pivotal COP26 environmental summit in Scotland in November.

The leaders are debating a pledge to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

NATO meeting

Most of the leaders will reconvene on Monday in Brussels for a NATO meeting, before Biden heads on to his first summit with President Vladimir Putin in Geneva, vowing to deliver a blunt message about Russian behaviour.



(L-R) President of the European Council Charles Michel, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, France's President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, US President Joe Biden, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Italy's Prime minister Mario Draghi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen attend a working session at the G7 summit in Carbis Bay, Cornwall on June 11, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

"I'll tell you (about it) after I've delivered it," Biden told reporters Friday.

The G7 is expected to finalise the "Carbis Bay Declaration" comprising a series of commitments to prevent a repeat of the devastation wreaked by the coronavirus.

"For the first time today the world's leading democracies have come together to make sure that never again will we be caught unawares," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in remarks released ahead of the summit's second day.

"That means learning les-

sons from the last 18 months and doing it differently next time around".

'Pandemic radar'

The declaration will be published Sunday alongside the G7's final communique, following a beachside barbecue on Saturday

night.

The collective steps include slashing the time taken to develop and licence vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for any future disease to under 100 days, while reinforcing global surveillance networks.

The leaders will vow to boost genomic sequencing capacity, and support reforms to strengthen the World Health Organization (WHO), according to Johnson's government, which like the US wants China to allow new access to WHO experts to determine how Covid-19 first emerged.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, criticized in some quarters for being too accommodating of China, welcomed the health pact.

And he said the UN agency would examine a British proposal to create a "Global Pandemic Radar" to send early warnings of future outbreaks.

"The world needs a stronger global surveillance system to detect new epidemic and pandemic risks," Tedros said.

SOURCE: AFP

Guterres: Vaccines should be considered 'global public goods'

Lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines should be considered "global public goods", the UN chief told journalists on Friday, covering the G7 Summit of leading industrialized nations taking place in the United Kingdom.

SPEAKING via videolink in London, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said there was no other way of defeating a virus that spreads across developing countries "like wildfire" and risks mutating, other than through equitable, mass vaccination, adding that shots need to be "available and affordable to all".

"That is not only a matter of fairness and justice but it's also a question of efficiency", he said, pointing out that mutations "abide by Darwin's laws of evolution" - meaning that the worst viruses tend to survive, multiply and eventually disable the vaccines.

Vaccination programmes so far, have been "unequal and very unfair", the UN chief said.

Reasons for hope

Mr Guterres said he was en-

couraged by the announcement made ahead of the G7, by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) together with the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO),

regarding a \$50 billion programme to support vaccination delivery in developing countries.

He was also heartened by the recent announcements of the United States and United King-



A woman receives a dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in Siaya, Kenya. PHOTO: AFP

dom to donate more than half a billion doses to nations least able to afford them.

Mr Guterres welcomed UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement that he expects the G7 to provide a billion pledged doses by the end of the summit.

At war with the virus

"We are at war" with the coronavirus, he said, that continues to cause "tremendous suffering" and destroy the global economy.

To defeat the virus, we must "boost our weapons", he added, calling for a "global vaccination plan".

The Secretary-General spoke of his proposal for vaccine-producing countries to come together in an emergency task force supported by WHO, the vaccine alliance GAVI and international financial

institutions to define and implement a plan.

"We need really those who have the power...to organize an effective response to COVID and the only way to be effective...is guaranteeing that everybody will be vaccinated sooner rather than later", he said.

G7's climate action

The UN chief said climate action was his other priority for the first in-person G7 meeting since the pandemic began, as the world's average temperature continues to rise, almost to the point where the international scientific community says is "the limit" to avoid "catastrophic developments".

"To a certain extent, we are on the verge of the abyss and... we need to make sure that the next step is in the right direc-

tion", he said calling on the G7 to create a global net zero coalition for 2050; to support adaptation for the resilience of populations and societies; and to finance developing countries so they may target mitigation and address the climate change impacts already upon them.

Paving the way forward

In closing, the Secretary-General expressed hope that the G7 meeting "will help pave the way for new and important decisions in the future".

"I think it is absolutely essential to guarantee that" through the COP 26 [UN climate conference] in Glasgow, he said, warning that it may prove to be "the last opportunity" to make the right decisions.

SOURCE: UN

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 12 June 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over the Northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining Odisha and West Bengal Coasts (India) still persists. Monsoon is strong to vigorous over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

SPECIAL FEATURE: According to the observations at (17:30) MST today, the tropical storm 'Koguma' over the Tokin Bay still persists. It is forecast to move West-Northwestwards.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 13 June 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions, fairly widespread in Kachin, Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)mph. Wave height will be about (9-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 June 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 June 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 June 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

A slight earthquake of magnitude (3.6) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about 6 miles south-southeast of Indaw), latitude 24.13°N, longitude 96.17°E, depth 4 kilometers, about 11 miles west-southwest of Katha seismological observatory was recorded at (05)hr (23)min (44)sec MST on 12th June, 2021.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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S. Korea rulings on wartime cases may reflect judges' conviction

COURT rulings have emerged lately in South Korea that upset civic group supporters of liberal President Moon Jae In's government over wartime labour compensation and "comfort women", two issues that have bedeviled relations between Japan and South Korea.

According to one judicial source, what lay behind those rulings, which dismissed Korean plaintiffs' demand for damages from Japanese government and corporations, was judges' personal "conviction" that is unrestrained by the political winds of the day.

On Monday, the Seoul Central District Court dismissed a damages lawsuit brought



Plaintiffs speak to reporters after the Seoul Central District Court's dismissal of their wartime labor compensation lawsuit on June 7, 2021.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

against 16 Japanese companies by 85 plaintiffs and their bereaved families who say they were made to work for them during Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

The ruling was contrary to South Korean Supreme Court rulings in 2018 that had ordered two Japanese companies to compensate South Korean plaintiffs for wartime forced

labour.

Presiding Judge Kim Yang Ho said that while the plaintiffs have not lost their right to claim damages as individuals under a 1965 claims settlement agreement signed alongside a treaty normalizing ties between the two countries, such a right cannot be exercised through lawsuits.

The decision was in line with the Japanese government's position that the issue of compensation was resolved "finally and completely" by the bilateral agreement, under which Japan provided South Korea with \$300 million in grants and \$200 million in loans.

The ruling said that if a

compulsory execution for compensation follows a ruling in favor of the plaintiffs, and if an international court subsequently rules against South Korea over the case, that would damage the country's relations with Japan and the United States, and its national security.

The court went so far as to say that Japan's economic cooperation provided under the 1965 accord "greatly contributed to (South Korea's) economic growth." It also cast doubt on the 2018 Supreme Court ruling's acceptance of the "illegality" of Japanese colonial rule, saying it is merely an interpretation under domestic law. — Kyodo News ■

Macron announces Sahel troop drawdown, calls for new force

PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron on Thursday announced a major drawdown of France's military presence in the Sahel where forces have been battling jihadist insurgents for nearly a decade.

At a news conference, Macron said the existing Barkhane operation would end, with France's presence becoming part of the so-called Takuba international task force in which "hundreds" of French soldiers would form the "backbone".

France currently has 5,100 troops in the arid and volatile Sahel region, which stretches across Africa under the Sahara

desert and spans half a dozen countries.

"The time has come: Our commitment in the Sahel will not continue in the same way," Macron said. "We will undertake a profound transformation of our military presence in the Sahel."

Details of the framework would be given in coming weeks, he said.

The Barkhane operation dates back to an initial deployment undertaken from January 2013 as Paris sought to respond to growing instability in the region caused by Islamist militants. — AFP ■



The anti-insurgency effort has cost the lives of 50 French soldiers, prompting calls in France for a review of Barkhane's mission.

PHOTO: AFP

Foreign businesses shocked by rollout of China's anti-sanctions law



The view of Suzhou Industrial Park.

PHOTO: VCG/XINHUA

CHINA'S quick rollout of a law against foreign sanctions has left European and American companies shocked and facing "irreconcilable" compliance issues, two top business groups said Friday, despite Beijing saying the move would unlikely impact investment.

The law came into effect on Thursday, adding to China's toolbox as it builds its defences

against US and EU pressure over trade and human rights.

The move also came just a week after US President Joe Biden expanded a blacklist of Chinese companies in which Americans are not allowed to invest — allowing Beijing to now hit back at those who formulate or comply with foreign sanctions.

"European companies in China are shocked by the lack

of transparency and speed of this process," European Chamber president Joerg Wuttke told AFP, referring to the passing of the new law. With the fresh rules prohibiting organizations from implementing what Beijing deems discriminatory and restrictive measures, "foreign firms remain very much stuck between a rock and a hard place," he said. — AFP ■

Indonesia dengue fever study offers hope in disease battle

DENGUE fever infections dropped dramatically in an Indonesian study where a bacteria was introduced into disease-carrying mosquitoes, offering hope in the battle against an illness that sickens millions annually around the world.

Results of the three-year study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine this week, found that infecting dengue-carrying mosquitoes with a harmless bacteria called Wolbachia led to a 77 per cent drop in human cases.

Infections requiring hospi-

talization also fell by 86 per cent in Wolbachia-treated areas of Yogyakarta, a city on Java island where the experiment was conducted, researchers said.

The study was conducted by the World Mosquito Program at Monash University in Australia and Indonesia's Gadjah

Mada university.

"The 77 per cent figure is honestly quite fantastic for a transmittable disease and we're very grateful with the result," said Adi Utarini, a public-health researcher from Gadjah Mada university who was a co-lead on the study.

The trial involved releasing Wolbachia into the mosquito population across specific parts of Yogyakarta to measure how it impacted the incidence of infections among three- to 45-year-olds.

It has now been expanded to other parts of the city. — AFP ■

Norway sees oil in its future despite warnings

NORWAY, Western Europe's biggest oil producer, plans to continue exploration and drilling in coming decades, the government said Friday, despite concerns about its impact on the climate.

In a white book on its energy future, Oslo said it wanted to "extend the current practice with regular concession cycles on the Norwegian continental shelf to give the industry access to new prospecting zones."

The Norwegian position contrasts sharply with that of the International Energy Agency (IEA), which recently warned that all future fossil fuel projects must be scrapped if the world is to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

"We will supply energy to the world as long as the demand exists," Petroleum and Energy



We will supply energy to the world as long as the demand exists," Norwegian Petroleum and Energy Minister Tina Bru says. PHOTO: AFP/STATOIL/SCANPIX

Minister Tina Bru told a press conference.

"The government will therefore maintain an oil policy that

facilitates profitable oil and gas production in the framework of the Norwegian climate policy and our climate goals," she said.

Keen to present itself as a role model with its efforts to fight deforestation in the tropics and being a world leader in

electric car sales, the Scandinavian country aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by between 50 and 55 per cent by 2030, and to almost nothing by 2050.

But it is regularly criticized for the CO2 emissions generated abroad by the oil it exports.

While Oslo regularly cites the need for a "green transition", it still relies heavily on oil and gas revenues for its public finances, trade balance (accounting for 42 per cent of exports of goods), employment (more than 200,000 jobs are either directly or indirectly linked to the sector) and to keep rural Norway populated. The black gold is also the reason Norway's 5.4 million inhabitants today have the world's biggest sovereign wealth fund, worth a whopping \$1.36 trillion (1.13 trillion euros). — AFP ■

US tells J&J millions of vaccine doses from troubled plant can't be used



An employee of McKesson Corp. places the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine into a transport container in Shepherdsville, Ky., on Monday. PHOTO: TIMOTHY D. EASLEY / POOL/AFP

THE US Food and Drug Administration said Friday it had told Johnson & Johnson that millions of doses of Covid vaccine produced at a troubled plant can't be used because of possible con-

tamination issues.

In a statement, the FDA said "several" batches of vaccine manufactured at the Emergent BioSolutions facility in the city of Baltimore are not suitable for

use. Each batch is known to correspond to several million doses.

Neither the agency nor J&J revealed the precise number of doses, but The New York Times placed the number at 60 million, quoting people familiar with the matter. "These actions followed an extensive review of records, including the production history of the facility and the testing performed to evaluate the quality of the product," said FDA scientist Peter Marks.

The Emergent plant was ordered to pause production in April several weeks after it was determined that batches of substance used to produce the J&J vaccine were cross-contaminated with ingredients from the AstraZeneca vaccine, ruining a reported 15 million J&J doses. — AFP ■

Mouse sperm stored on ISS produces healthy young

TURNS out the comic books were wrong.

Japanese researchers found mouse sperm exposed to high levels of cosmic radiation for nearly six years produced a large brood of healthy, unremarkable "space pups".

Their study was published Friday in Science Advances — which noted no signs so far of Mousezillas or rodent Hulks.

The sperm was stored in the International Space Station in freeze-dried form. Once brought

back to Earth and rehydrated, it resulted in the birth of 168 young, free of genetic defects.

Developmental biologist and lead author Teruhiko Wakayama told AFP on Thursday that there was little difference between mice fertilized by space sperm and sperm that had remained confined to our planet.

"All pups had normal appearance," he said, and when researchers examined their genes "no abnormalities were found."

In 2013, Wakayama and

colleagues at the University of Yamanashi in Japan launched three boxes, each containing 48 ampoules of freeze-dried sperm, to the ISS for the long-term study.

They wanted to determine whether long term exposure to radiation in space would damage DNA in reproductive cells or pass mutations along to offspring.

That could be a problem for our own species in future space exploration and colonization missions. — AFP ■

Motor neurone disease linked to 'vigorous exercise'

FREQUENT strenuous exercise increases the risk of developing motor neurone disease for those genetically predisposed to the illness, according to research published on Friday.

The findings, published in the journal EBioMedicine, "show a causal relationship between exercise and MND, with high-intensity physical activity likely to contribute to motor neurone injury, but only in individuals with a predisposing genetic profile," said the study by a team at the University of Sheffield.

High-profile sportsmen to have developed MND include Scotland rugby union international Doddie Weir, footballer Stephen Darby and late South African rugby World Cup winner Joost van der Westhuizen.

"We have suspected for

some time that exercise was a risk factor for MND, but until now this link was considered controversial," said Johnathan Cooper-Knock of the University of Sheffield.

"This study confirms that in some people, frequent strenuous exercise leads to an increase in the risk of MND.

"It is important to stress that we know that most people who undertake vigorous exercise do not develop MND."

"The next step is to identify which individuals specifically are at risk of MND if they exercise frequently and intensively, and how much exercise increases that risk," he added.

The neurodegenerative condition, which affects around 5,000 people in Britain, hinders messages sent from the brain to muscles in the body, causing them to waste away. — AFP ■



Scotland rugby union international Doddie Weir is among some high-profile sportsmen to have developed MND. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Vatican bank still profitable despite tough COVID-19 times



A priest leaves after Pope Francis' Angelus prayer delivered from the private studio window overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, June 29, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Institute of Religious Works (IOR), better known as the Vatican's bank, said on Friday its profits remained relatively stable last year despite "very challenging" coronavirus-related circumstances.

The IOR posted a 2020 net profit of €36.4 million, down from

€38 million in 2019, the bank said in a statement. It added that three-quarters of the sum, around €27 million, will be turned over to Pope Francis – who has a personal charity fund – or other targeted Holy See entities.

The IOR, which called 2020 "a very challenging year for the world economy", routinely subsidizes other Vatican bodies. Last year's contribution was over twice the size of 2019's subsidy of €12 million, an indication of the Vatican's need for cash during the coronavirus crisis.

The bank said the remaining 25 per cent of its 2020 profits will be used to increase equity, which at the end of last year stood at €645.9 million.

The bank also said it had

boosted investments in technology, including to strengthen its cybersecurity defences.

The Vatican includes a large governing machine, known as the Roman Curia, bankrolled by donations, rental income from the Church's real estate holdings, and ticket sales from the Vatican Museums. But with the coronavirus pandemic, many funding streams dried up. A high-ranking Vatican official told AFP in February that donations in 2020 fell by 25 per cent, while proceeds from the museums – which were closed for long periods during the year – collapsed by 85 per cent, or about €100 million. The Curia's deficit increased to €90 million, from €11m in 2019, the source said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK's Johnson touts solidarity at G7 but cuts overseas aid

PRIME Minister Boris Johnson is championing solidarity at the G7 summit, defying criticism of cuts to UK foreign aid by sharing millions of doses of Covid vaccines with poor countries and promoting schooling for vulnerable children.

Heads of state and government of the world's richest nations are meeting in Cornwall, southwest England, with the aim of creating a fairer, greener world post-pandemic.

At the top of their agenda is the more equitable distribution of vaccines, and an expected promise of donating one billion doses to the world's poorest countries, as well as weaning developing nations off fossil fuels to slow climate change.

The G7's focus is on recovery after the global health crisis, and also includes getting as many children as possible back into school after the disruption caused in 2020.

With this in mind, the UK government announced on Friday it would provide £430 million (\$606 million, 501 million euros) to support the worst affected by being out of school -- most of them girls -- and called on its G7 allies to follow suit. — AFP ■

South Africa agrees to privatize troubled SAA airline

SOUTH Africa's government announced Friday it would sell a majority stake in cash-strapped flag carrier SAA to a consortium that includes the operator of a local budget airline, effectively privatizing it. The airline, which is emerging from a rescue plan, will effectively be privatized as investors will hold a majority stake.

"Having evaluated the current environment, government has agreed to the (strategic equity partner) owning of 51 per cent of the shareholding and government 49 per cent," Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan said in an online media conference.

The consortium includes Harith General Partners, an investor in African infrastructure and airports, and airline management firm Global Airways, an aircraft leasing firm which recently launched local budget airline LIFT.

"With this partnership, we believe we are closer to achieving the important objective of having a sustainable national airline," Gordhan said. "The new SAA will not be dependent on" the government.

SAA, one of the continent's largest airlines, was placed under a state-approved rescue plan in December 2019 in an effort to save it from collapse. — AFP ■

British PM Johnson backs Tokyo Olympics in talks with Suga

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday expressed support for the Tokyo Olympics in a meeting with his Japanese counterpart Yoshihide Suga even as concerns linger in and outside Japan over hosting the global sporting event amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Meeting on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in southwestern England, the two leaders also affirmed their coop-

eration toward realizing rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific amid China's growing assertiveness.

Johnson, who is presiding over the three-day summit, was the first foreign leader Suga met after arriving in Britain late Thursday. The two met for the first time in person after Suga took office in September.

According to the British government, Johnson "ex-

pressed his support for the Tokyo Olympics, and welcomed Japanese efforts to ensure the games can take place safely," in reference to the July 23-Aug. 8 event.

He also conveyed to his Japanese counterpart Britain's commitment to expanding its relationship with the Asian country and the wider Indo-Pacific region across trade, technology and defense. — Kyodo News ■

UK economy strengthens recovery as virus lockdown eases

BRITAIN'S economy gathered pace in April as the government eased its coronavirus lockdown, official data showed Friday, with finance minister Rishi Sunak cautiously welcoming the 2.3 per cent growth figure as the Delta variant spreads.

It was the fastest monthly output for UK gross domestic product since July last year "as government restrictions affecting economic activity continued to ease", the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

Britain's economy had contracted 1.5 per cent overall in the first quarter, although had already begun to bounce back strongly in March with GDP of 2.1 per cent.

The UK's overall output for April remains 3.7 per cent below pre-pandemic levels seen in February last year.

"Overall, the economic recovery stepped up another gear in April and GDP is on track to return to its February level before the end of the year," noted Thomas Pugh, UK economist at Capital Economics research group. "If anything, the economy could regain its pre-crisis level even sooner."

April's growth was driven by

the service sector, which jumped 3.4 per cent as consumers once again started to visit non-essential physical stores, restaurants and bars and as more children returned to onsite lessons, the ONS said. Output in the production sector however dropped 1.3 per cent during the same month, recording the first fall since January. — AFP ■



The Delta variant, also known as the Indian variant, is now the dominant strain in the UK. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japan film event at Shanghai International Film Festival kicks off

AN event featuring Japanese films kicked off Friday at the Shanghai International Film Festival, showcasing cultural and entertainment works to Chinese audiences amid coronavirus travel restrictions.

The opening ceremony of the annual Japan Film Week in Shanghai was cancelled for the first time since its start in 2006 as China has seen a resurgence of the infections.

But one of the co-organizers, the Japan-China Film Festival Executive Committee, said, "We believe the screenings will serve as a bridge between Japan and China for promoting friendship."

The films shown at the

event include "Byplayers: What If 100 Great Supporting Actors Make a Movie" set at a film production studio at the foot of Mt. Fuji where actors and film staff struggle in shooting a movie, and "Dai-komesodo," a work themed on women-led protests against rice price hikes that actually took place in early 20th century central Japan.

At the film festival until June 20, many other Japanese films will be screened. Among them is a movie that documents the 2019 concert of Arashi, a Japanese all-male idol group that suspended activities at the end of last year.

— Kyodo News ■



Image shows the poster of Japan Film Week that started in Shanghai on June 11, 2021. (Photo courtesy of Japan-China Film Festival Executive Committee. PHOTO: KYODO)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chinese ride-hailing app Didi files for New York listing

RIDE-HAILING giant Didi Chuxing has filed to list its shares in New York, a high-profile move by a Chinese tech firm in the United States despite soaring tensions between the superpowers, with reports saying it could be one of the biggest IPOs this year.

The popular app has dominated the Chinese market ride-hailing market ever since it won a costly turf war against US titan Uber in 2016 and took over its local unit.

It filed a placeholder application for an initial public offering worth \$100 million with the US regulators on Thursday for entry to the New York Stock Exchange, with Bloomberg News saying the figure is expected to be far higher once details of the share sales are revealed. The listing, filed under the business name Xiaoju Kuaizhi Inc, could be one of the largest in the world this year with news reports suggesting as much as \$7 billion could be raised. — AFP ■

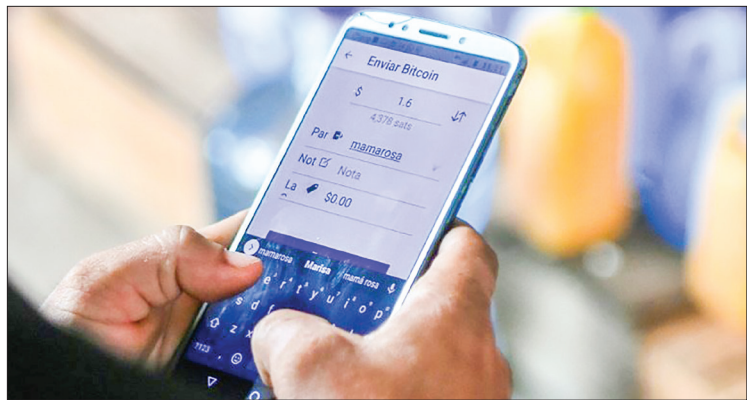
Toyota to make all global plants carbon neutral by 2035

TOYOTA Motor Corp. said Friday it will make all its global factories carbon neutral by 2035, rather than the previously planned 2050, accelerating its decarbonization efforts by tapping innovation and improving production methods.

The new goal is designed to respond to stricter environmental regulations worldwide as momentum is building toward reducing CO2 emissions to address global warming. The Japanese automaker is not only making its vehicles more eco-friendly but also decarbonizing its manufacturing process.

"We are shortening the time frame for achieving carbon neutrality by developing technologies" to reduce CO2, Chief Production Officer Masamichi Okada said during an online briefing. Aiming for carbon neutrality provides an opportunity to "fundamentally rethink" manufacturing, Okada said. — Kyodo News ■

Surf and bitcoin, El Salvador beach town rides crypto wave



People use a smartphone app to pay bills, buy groceries or have their hair cut with bitcoin, making a direct online transfer to the vendor. PHOTO: AFP

THE beach town of El Zonte on El Salvador's Pacific coast is a laid back surfer's haven with white

beaches, palm trees, and a small population of 3,000 people.

The low-income community

has no banks and only one cash machine, but a trailblazing local economy based in large part on bitcoin. Signs line the roadside urging people to "Pay here" with the cryptocurrency for anything from utilities bills to a can of soda.

The town boasts a bitcoin teller machine, the country's only one, where people deposit cash US dollars — El Salvador's official currency — into a personal bitcoin "wallet".

They then use a smartphone app to pay bills, buy groceries or have their hair cut with bitcoin, making a direct online transfer

to the vendor.

"At first, we knew nothing about this," Celina Fuentes, who works at a small eatery and shop in El Zonte, told AFP. But introducing bitcoin "has turned out super well. We profited when the currency rose in value... Now that the value is a little lower the currency is still used as we have found the experience to be good."

'Significant risks'

El Zonte set a trend that culminated Tuesday in El Salvador's parliament approving a bill to allow bitcoin to be used to pay for goods and services. — AFP ■

Germany's Lufthansa fires up 'jumbo' jet to meet Mallorca demand

GERMAN airline Lufthansa said Friday it was taking "extraordinary measures" to meet surging bookings for the Spanish holiday island of Mallorca, deploying a jumbo jet to ferry passengers from Frankfurt.

The group said it had seen a jump in reservations from German sunseekers in recent weeks, as concerns about the pandemic ease thanks to falling infection numbers and vaccination progress across Europe.

To meet demand, Lufthansa said it would swap the 215-seat Airbus A321 that usually plies the Frankfurt-Mallorca route for its Boeing 747-8 "jumbo jet".

The 747, also known as the "Queen of the Skies", can carry 364 people and is the largest

plane in Lufthansa's fleet.

The super-large planes nor-

mally fly transatlantic routes but have been mostly grounded

since the pandemic upended air travel. — AFP ■



Before the pandemic, around five million German tourists visited the island of Mallorca each year. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Interfaith march honours Muslim family killed in Canada truck attack

SEVERAL thousand people joined an interfaith march on Friday evening honouring the four members of a Muslim family who were killed in an attack that has shocked Canada.

The procession started at the site where three generations of a family out for a Sunday evening stroll -- 46-year-old Salman Afzaal, his 44-year-old wife Madiha Salman, their 15-year-old daughter Yumna Salman and her 74-year-old grandmother, Talat Afzaal -- were killed in London, southern Ontario, as they were waiting to cross the street.

The couple's nine-year-old son Fayez suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries. — AFP ■

Pulitzer Board honours teen who filmed George Floyd murder

THE Pulitzer Prize Board awarded a "special citation" on Friday to the teenager whose video of the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer sparked worldwide protests against racial injustice.

Eighteen-year-old Darnella Frazier was honoured as New York's Columbia University announced the 2021 prestigious journalism awards in a virtual ceremony.

Frazier was being recognized "for courageously recording the murder of George Floyd, a video that spurred protests against police brutality around the world, highlighting the crucial role of citizens in journalists' quest for truth and justice," the citation said.

Frazier was also among the witnesses who testified at the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who was convicted in April of Floyd's May 25, 2020 murder.

In the video taken by Frazier, Chauvin is seen kneeling for more than nine minutes on the neck of Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, as bystanders urge him repeatedly to get off and Floyd says that he can't breathe, before losing consciousness. — AFP ■

Putin hopes Biden less impulsive than Trump



Russia President Vladimir Putin (L) and US President Joe Biden. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin voiced hope Friday that Joe Biden will be less impulsive than his predecessor Donald

Trump, ahead of his first summit with the new US leader.

In an interview with NBC News, Putin described Biden

as a "career man" who spent his life in politics after the "colorful" Trump.

"It is my great hope that, yes, there are some advantages, some disadvantages, but there will not be any impulse-based movements on behalf of the sitting US president," he said, according to a translation by NBC News.

"I believe that former US president Trump is an extraordinary individual, talented individual... He is a colourful individual. You may like him or not. But he didn't come from the US establishment," Putin was quoted as saying.

Biden plans to raise a range

of US complaints, including over purported Russian election interference and hacking, in the summit with Putin on Wednesday in Geneva at the end of the new president's first foreign trip.

Putin had openly admitted that in the 2016 vote he supported Trump, who had voiced admiration for the Russian leader and notoriously at their first summit appeared to accept his denials of election interference.

Biden has said he is under no illusions about Putin and has described him as "a killer" in light of a series of high-profile deaths including of Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov. — AFP ■

EU's new top graft fighter to probe 'powerful and dangerous'

EUROPE'S new top graft fighting body will probe the "powerful", "rich" and "dangerous", its head warned Friday on her first visit to an EU member since taking up her post.

The Luxembourg-based European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), headed by Laura Codruta Kovesi, a former Romanian anti-corruption chief, started work this month.

The independent outfit has

the job of cracking down on fraudulent use of EU funds and fight cross-border VAT fraud, money laundering, and corruption.

"We will investigate all those who commit crimes that fall under our jurisdiction. Because we have to prove that the law is equal for everybody," Kovesi told reporters in the Bulgarian capital Sofia.

"Yes, we will also investigate powerful people, yes, we will in-

vestigate rich people, yes, we will investigate dangerous people."

She also warned that if anyone tried to interfere with the EPPO's work, "I will make this public."

The central office has 22 European prosecutors who will oversee cases from member states and approve the main decisions in an investigation, such as indictments.

EPPO also has a network of

140 European delegated prosecutors sitting in member states' capitals, but working for the Luxembourg office under their own criminal code.

Kovesi said she had travelled to Bulgaria to settle the appointment of ten prosecutors to the EPPO.

The body only validated four of Bulgaria's candidates, saying the six others failed to meet the required criteria. — AFP ■

No 'serious irregularities' in Peru poll, OAS says, after fraud claims

PERU'S disputed presidential vote had not shown any "serious irregularities", international election monitors said Friday, as the country's caretaker leader urged calm after five days of rising tensions without a result from the cliffhanger poll.

Right-wing candidate Keiko Fujimori risks imminent trial on corruption charges if she loses to her leftist rival Pedro Castillo, who has already cast himself as the victor.

Fujimori has claimed fraud and election authorities are reviewing her request to annul around 200,000 votes, in a process expected to take several more days.

An election observation mission from the Organization of American States said it had "observed a positive electoral process" and cast doubt on rigging claims, but called on authorities to wait until challenges to the vote had been re-

solved before calling a winner.

"The Mission has not detected serious irregularities," the OAS Electoral Observation Mission's preliminary said. Tensions have risen in the days since the vote as supporters of

both Castillo and Fujimori have rallied to call for their candidate to be anointed president.

Peru's caretaker leader Francisco Sagasti moved Friday "to keep the country calm in difficult times. In that effort I

got in touch with several people who... have contact with both candidates."

"My request was the same for both: lower the tension and wait for the official results," he tweeted. — AFP ■



Policemen load electoral material on a ferry to be transported to voting stations of Taquile and Amantani islands at Puno port, Peru on 5 June. PHOTO: AFP

G7 leaders convene summit drive for billion jobs

G7 leaders were greeted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II on Friday after opening their first in-person talks in nearly two years, touting an expected pledge to donate one billion Covid vaccine doses to poor countries in a show of revived Western democratic unity.

The club of leading economies -- Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and United States -- say a joint approach is the world's best chance for recovering from the global health crisis, and tackling climate change.

Welcomed by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to the beachside summit venue in Carbis Bay, southwest England, the leaders posed for a family photo before opening their first session of talks on "building back better" after the pandemic.



(L-R) President of the European Council Charles Michel, US President Joe Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Italy's Prime minister Mario Draghi, France's President Emmanuel Macron and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen pose for the family photo at the start of the summit. **PHOTO: AFP**

Later Friday, the queen, 95, heir to the throne Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

met the G7 leaders at a reception at Cornwall's Eden Project, an exhibition that showcases the world's ecological riches.

The three-day G7 meeting presents a "huge opportunity" for global recovery after Covid-19, Johnson told his fellow leaders in opening remarks earlier, as they sat socially distanced and without masks at a round table.

The summit will focus, he said, on "building back greener, building back fairer and building back more equal", with an emphasis on gender equality. The G7 will also agree a new joint health pact -- the Carbis Bay Declaration -- to ensure "never again will we be caught unawares", Johnson announced late Friday. Its commitments include cutting the time taken to develop and licence vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for any future disease to under 100 days. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin denies Russia preparing to give Iran advanced satellite system

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin on Friday denied a US media report that Russia is set to deliver an advanced satellite system to Iran that will vastly improve its spying capabilities.

The Washington Post reported Thursday that Moscow is preparing to give Iran a Kanopus-V satellite with a high-resolution camera, allowing Islamic republic to monitor facilities of its adversaries across the Middle East.

Putin, who is expected to hear a range of complaints from US President Joe Biden when they meet Wednesday in Geneva, dismissed the report as "garbage." "We have cooperation plans with Iran, including the military and technical cooperation," he told NBC News in an interview ahead of the summit. — AFP ■

Trump surveillance of Democrats sparks abuse of power claims



Subpoenas for the communications metadata reportedly targeted congressman Adam Schiff of California, a Donald Trump foe who was then the panel's top Democrat and now its chairman. **PHOTO: AFP**

DEMOCRATS erupted in outrage Friday over news that Donald Trump's Justice Department secretly surveilled lawmakers probing possible collusion with Russia, reaping the phone records of top political foes in what they called an unprecedented abuse of power.

Democrats Adam Schiff and Eric Swalwell said they were recently told by Apple that during 2017-2021 the company had been ordered to hand over records of their phone communications, as well as those of family members including a child, as Trump fought

a flow of damaging leaks on his 2016 election campaign's links to Russia. No proof they were the sources of leaks was ever presented, yet the probe stayed alive for as long as Trump remained in office, to January 2021.

Schiff called it "the weaponization of law enforcement by a corrupt president."

"The politicization of the department and the attacks on the rule of law are among the most dangerous assaults on our democracy carried out by the former president," he said in a statement. — AFP ■

C. Africa president names new PM after govt resigns

A new Central African Republic prime minister was named by presidential decree Friday, the day after the government resigned as the impoverished country struggles with a rebellion and a bustup with its traditional ally France.

Henri Marie Dondra was named prime minister in the decree read out on national radio, which takes effect immediately.

The appointment of the former finance minister comes after Firmin Ngrebada announced his resignation as prime minister, along with that of his government.

Reputedly close to President Faustin Archange Touadera, the new PM is also known for having a good knowledge of international finance and aid programmes, vital for the second least-developed country in the world, according to the UN. The economic and humanitarian problems facing the CAR's new prime minister are huge. The UN estimated at the end of May that nearly half of the population was "food insecure", due to the coronavirus epidemic, but also because of the security situation. — AFP ■

Algerians to elect parliament amid 'repression' of protest movement

ALGERIANS vote in parliamentary elections on Saturday as authorities seek to bolster their legitimacy and snuff out a long-running protest movement, under what activists say is a "climate of repression".

Pro-government parties have urged Algerians take an active part in what they call a "crucial vote for the country's stability", while opponents are denouncing a "sham" election.

Seven leading protest movement figures were arrested on Thursday while Friday police deployed heavily in the capital Algiers, blocking any bid by the Hirak movement to hold anti-government protests.

Around 24 million Algerians are eligible to vote to elect 407 members of the People's National Assembly for a five-year term.

Polling stations are due to open at 8:00 am (0700 GMT) and close at 7:00 pm.

Authorities are hoping for a solid voter turnout, but the Hirak has called for a boycott -- demanding a root-and-branch overhaul of the ruling system prior to any election.

Those who do vote in Africa's biggest nation must choose from more than 13,000 candidates, more than half listed as "independent".

The head of the Algeria's League for the Defence of Hu-



President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, pictured here in a photo posted on his personal Twitter account on December 13, 2020, insists he has responded to the Hirak's main demands. **PHOTO: AFP**

man Rights, Said Salhi, has denounced the crackdown that preceded the vote. The "repressive atmosphere and the restric-

tions placed on human rights and freedoms mean these elections have no democratic value", Salhi said. — AFP ■

ONE Full Blast II: Mongkolpetch beat Elias via majority decision

MONGKOLPETCH Petchyindee Academy defeats Elias Mahmoudi “The Sniper” with a majority decision in the main card or Catchweight (62.8KG) Muay Thai bout of ONE Championship: Full Blast II event at Singapore Indoor Stadium on 11 June.

Mongkolpetch Petchyindee Academy was crisp throughout the fight, and he relied on quick counter strikes.

The fighter scored the bout's lone knockdown in the second round and secured the title of Muay Thai Catchweight Champion.

Next, in the Lightweight mixed martial arts fight, Amarsanaa Tsogookhuu “Spear” beat Ben Wilhelm via unanimous decision.

Also, in the Featherweight mixed martial arts bout, Yoon Chang Min “The Big Heart”



Mongkolpetch lands the punch on Elias Mahmoudi during their Catchweight Muay Thai bout of ONE Full Blast II event at Singapore Indoor Stadium on 11 June. **PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**

made a win over Ma Jia Wen “Cannon” via submission (rear-naked choke) at 1:46 minute-mark of round one.

In the Flyweight Kickboxing fight, Taiki Naito “Silent Sniper” shaped a win against Wang Wenfeng “Metal Storm” via unani-

mous decision.

The full event of the ONE Championship – Full Blast fights were shown live on Skynet TV Channel and streamed live on the ONE Championship YouTube Channel and ONE Super Mobile application.—GNLM

Djokovic hails French Open masterpiece against ‘Everest’ Nadal

NOVAK Djokovic compared defeating Rafael Nadal at the French Open to scaling Mount Everest as he hailed Friday's epic semi-final triumph over the 13-time champion as “one of my greatest victories”.

Djokovic condemned Nadal to only his third loss in 16 years and 108 matches at Roland Garros to reach his sixth Paris final after a classic showdown which even beat the country's COVID-19 curfew.

In their 58th career clash, Djokovic triumphed 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 and stays on course to capture a 19th major and become the first man in over 50 years to win all four Slams twice.

Djokovic, the 2016 champion in Paris who had also beaten Nadal in the 2015 quarter-finals, will face Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final in what will be his 29th championship match at the Slams. Tsitsipas had earlier become the first Greek to reach a Grand Slam final with a 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Germany's Alexander Zverev. Defending champion Nadal, 35, who would have been the oldest finalist at the French Open in the modern era, remains tied on 20 majors with Roger Federer.

“It was a privilege to face Rafa in such an incredible match,” said Djokovic after four hours and 11 minutes of intense action. “Tonight it was my greatest ever match in Paris.”

It was his second win in nine meetings at Roland Garros with Nadal, a sequence which also included devastating losses in the 2012, 2014 and 2020 finals.—AFP ■

Kroos ready to prove Germany's doubters wrong against France

TONI Kroos aims to prove Germany's doubters wrong in their Euro 2020 opener against world champions France on Tuesday.

Germany have their work cut out in Group F at the European Championship with holders Portugal and Hungary to come after the mouth-watering tie against the French in Munich.

Kroos has bounced back after testing positive for Covid-19 last month and played in Germany's 7-1 thrashing of

minnows Latvia on Monday in their final friendly warm-up.

Yet the Germans have struggled to recover from the humiliation of crashing out of the group stages at the 2018 World Cup and Kroos knows they have a point to prove.

“We don't have to hide against France. Both squads are strong,” Kroos said Friday at the German's base in Bavaria.

“Before the 2018 (World Cup) tournament, we were made out to be stronger than we were, now it's different.”

The Germans are bidding to win a record fourth European Championship title on Joachim Loew's swansong after 15 years as head coach, yet confidence in the ‘Mannschaft’ remains low.

Morale among German fans was further dented this season by humbling defeats to Spain and minnows North Macedonia.

Uncharacteristically, the German defence, normally their main strength, is shaky having leaked 20 goals in their last 13 internationals.—AFP ■



Toni Kroos aims to prove Germany's doubters wrong in their Euro 2020 opener against world champions France on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Italy get Euro 2020 off to flying start as Wales, Belgium enter fray



Italy supporters celebrate after their team beat Turkey 3-0 in Rome in the opening game of Euro 2020 on Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

WALES and the world's top-ranked team Belgium begin their Euro 2020 bids on Saturday after the delayed tournament finally kicked off with victory for an impressive Italy side on an emotional night in Rome.

After a year of football played largely in empty stadiums due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Stadio Olimpico was filled to a quarter of its capacity for the opening game of the European Championship and the home fans in the crowd of 16,000 were treated to a 3-0 win

for Italy against Turkey.

Roberto Mancini's side came into the tournament on a 27-game unbeaten run and laid down a marker with a comprehensive victory, Ciro Immobile and Lorenzo Insigne scoring after Merih Demiral's own goal had put them in front.

The result capped an emotional night in the Italian capital as a spectacular sound and light show preceded kick-off and tenor Andrea Bocelli performed ‘Nesun Dorma’, popularised during

the 1990 World Cup held in Italy.

“It was a beautiful evening, I hope there are many more to come,” said Mancini after the Group A curtain-raiser.

“To win 3-0, and with the supporters in the stadium again at last, makes it all the more special.”

Rome is one of 11 cities across the continent hosting matches, the unprecedented pan-European format creating major headaches for UEFA during a pandemic.—AFP ■