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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 63, 12th Waxing of Nayon 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Monday, 21 June 2021

The delegation led by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing leaves for Russia to attend 9th Moscow Conference on International Security-2021 (MCIS-2021)



SAC members see off State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Nay Pyi Taw military airport.

A DELEGATION led by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing left the Nay Pyi Taw military airport by the special aircraft of the Myanmar Airways International (MAI) yesterday morning to attend the 9th Moscow Conference on International Security-2021 (MCIS-2021) to be held in the Russian Federation at the invitation of Minister of

Defence of the Russian Federation Army General Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu.

The goodwill delegation led by the Senior General was seen off at the airport by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council members, Union ministers, senior military officers from the Office of the Com-

mander-in-Chief (Army), the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov and officials.

The Senior General was accompanied by member of the State Administration Council Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Council Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung, senior military officers from the Of-

fice of the Commander-in-Chief, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Mayor Dr Maung Maung Nang, Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw, Military Attaché of the Russian Federation to Myanmar Colonel Sergei Kurchenko, outstanding award winner officers from the Myanmar Tatmadaw and military and civilian officials.

During the visit, the Senior General will attend the 9th Mos-

cow Conference on International Security-2021 (MCIS-2021) and hold meetings with military and civilian officials and tour significant places in the Russian Federation, universities, factories and workshops. The Tatmadaw (Navy) delegation led by Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung will attend the International Maritime Defence Show IMDS to be held in Saint Petersburg.—MNA

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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.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-Terrorism Central Committee Declaration of Terrorist Groups Notification No 2/2021

12th Waning of Tagu 1383 ME
8 May 2021

The Anti-Terrorism Central Committee has issued this order with the approval of the State Administration Council in exercising sub-section (e) of Section 6 and sub-section (b) of Section 72 of the Counter-Terrorism Law.

1. Unlawful Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH and National Unity Government-NUG formed by CRPH constantly incited Civil Disobedience Movement-CDM participants to commit violent acts. Many riots occurred in many places of the country due to their incitements. They perpetrated bombing, arson, manslaughter, and intimidation to disrupt the state administrative machinery due to the influence of the leaders of CRPH and NUG. Moreover, NUG established People Defence Force-PDF. Violent acts occurred in the name of regional defence forces instigated by NUG and PDF. It is found that their acts to join CDM, threatening non-CDMs, inciting students and teachers not to go to schools, supporting terrorist acts and perpetrating such terrorist acts violate Section 3 (b) and Sub-section 13 of the Counter-Terrorism Law – acts with the intent to cause fear in public, to force Government or any internal and external organization to do an illegitimate act or to refrain from doing a lawful act, and other acts, stipulated by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No 23 on 4 June 2014.
2. Therefore, unlawful associations – Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH, National Unity Government-NUG, People Defence Force-PDF and all their subordinates have been declared as terrorist groups.

Chairman
Anti-Terrorism Central Committee

Only when every citizen has the will to build a better country will the country have prosperity

It is necessary to turn out many educated persons and disseminate the knowledge to each other in the nation to ensure the rule of law. Only when every citizen has the will to build a better country will the country have prosperity. In order to do so, the education sector needs sound foundations.

(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 for Industry on inspection tour of No (2) steel plant (Pinpet) in Taunggyi

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than and Chairman of the Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw visited No (2) Steel Plant (Pinpet) in Taunggyi Township, Shan State on 19 June.

During the visit, the plant manager explained the status of the plant construction and management whereas the Deputy Minister and the Managing Director gave supplementary reports on the project issues.

The Union Minister said the plant must prepare for the resumption of projects, and as 98.6 per cent of the projects are completed, all staff must work together for the remaining works as soon as possible.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party conducted a detailed inspection of equipment installation in

Primary Sizing Area, Secondary Sizing Area, Lime and Dolomite Plant, Romelt Plant Area, and coordinated requirement for setting quality standards for raw materials and finished products.

When the projects at No. 2 Steel Plant (Pinpet) are completed, it will be able to produce and sell 200,000 tons of pig iron per year, providing assistance for development of large factories engaged in iron and steel-related industries and SMEs as well as the socio-economic development of local people. It is a factory that will greatly assist in the transfer of advanced technology.

The Union Minister and the Lt-Gen also inspected the operation of the horse breeding department in Heho, Shan State.—MNA



Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than and Chairman of the Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw inspect No (2) Steel Plant (Pinpet) in Taunggyi Township, Shan State on 19 June.

Domestic gold price drops to K1.54 mln per tical amid global slide

WITH the gold price sliding in the global market, the price of domestic gold has dropped to K1,540,000 per tical ((0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilogrammes), according to the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

Although the global gold price stood at US\$1,914 per ounce on 1 June, it plunged to \$1,763 per ounce on 19 June with a decrease of over \$150 in 20 days as per market data.

Likewise, the local gold price has fallen as a result of the situation in the international market. The local gold price was only around K 1,573,000 per tical on 1 June, but it spiked to K1,540,000 per tical on 19 June. Within 20 days, the domestic gold price was plunged by K33,000 per tical.

YGEA is taking necessary measures to stabilize the gold price as per the instructions of the bureau of special investigation, according to an announce-

ment of YGEA issued on 17 May.

At present, the association has closed the gold trading to be able to make steady the gold price and urged its members to run a cash-only transaction for the purchase of the gold. Moreover, those illegal importers and those who practise overtrading with negligence will face serious legal action.

In January 2021, domestic gold fetched the highest price of K1,336,000 per tical on 6 January. It reached the lowest price of K1,316,000 per tical on 28 January. It got the lowest level of K1,340,000 (2 February) and the highest level of K1,410,000 (3 February). In March, the rate fluctuated between the most elevated of K1,391,000 (25 March) the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The lowest price was K1,389,000 (1 April) and the highest was K1,455,000 (30 April). The gold price touched the lowest level of K1,447,000 on 3 May and the high-

est level of K1,709,000 on 12 May, according to the gold traders.

The local gold price reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,312,000 (16 November) and the lowest of K1,278,000 (28 November). According to the gold traders, in December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of K1,275,000 (1 December) and K1,333,000 (28 December).

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

Jengkol yield in Thantaunggyi slightly declines this year

THE yield of seasonal fruit jengkol (dog fruit) which is also known as dog fruit has slightly declined this year rather than last year. The livelihood of the local people from Thantaunggyi township, Kayin State is mostly working on the farms.

“This year, the yield of the jengkol has dropped compared to that of last year. The decline can be attributed to poor weather condition.

This year is very hot and the price of jengkol is K20,000

per box containing eight baskets in the early harvest season of May.

But, the price has dropped only to K13,000 per box currently. Those dog fruits were sent and sold them back in Toungoo township,” according to the local growers.

The jengkols are grown as perennial crop mainly in Thantaunggyi, Thantaung, Leiktho and Bawgali towns. They can yield in the second week of May.

— Township IPRD/GNLM

Daily Newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper, <https://www.moi.gov.mm/mal>, <https://www.moi.gov.mm/km> and <https://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm>.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Union Minister for Construction inspects urban development works in Mandalay

UNION Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay, along with Chairman of the Mandalay Region Administration Council U Maung Ko, made an inspection tour to the implementation of the Mandalay's Taungthaman resort project yesterday morning.

In the evening, the Union Minister attended the meeting with officials of the highway, bridge and rural road develop-

ment departments from Mandalay and Sagaing regions, and instructed officials to meet the construction deadlines and meeting of standard quality as well as abiding by the financial rules and regulations systematically.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party also inspected the road works for Mandalay urban development.—MNA



Union Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay views urban development tasks in Mandalay.

Heavy rains with strong winds destroy 24 houses in Einme Township



HEAVY rains and strong winds destroyed 24 houses in villages of Nyaungkon Chaungphya Village-tract, Einme Township, Myaungmya District, Ayeyawady Region on 20 June.

The rescue team from Township fire brigade, Myanmar Police Force, officials and villagers performed rescue operations at Akeyoe Village, Ohnbinu Village, Thekon Village, Chaungphya Village in Nyaungkon

Chaungphya Village-tract on the same day. Officials provided family members in the villages with temporary accommodation at nearby relatives' homes and cleared debris.

Due to heavy rains and strong winds, 13 trees fell on both sides of Einme-Dahka Road and blocked the road, and thus the township fire brigade carried out debris clearing operations.—Chit Thet Lei (Einme IPRD)/GNLM

Strong winds pull down large tree in affected-area in Einme Township of Ayeyawady Region.

COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures

ALL people are urged to abide by the following ways of prevention against COVID-19 without fail in line with the motto: "COVID-19: start ourselves to take preventive measures" not to violently infect COVID-19 as next wave and not to be infected of variant COVID-19 virus.

- (1) Systematically wear masks whenever go outside and also wear face shields whenever associate with many people.
- (2) Take adequate distance from each other as much as they can.
- (3) Avoid the crowds.
- (4) Take 20 seconds in systematically washing hands many times.
- (5) Avoid the visits to the closed chambers, air-conditioned rooms and the lesser ventilated rooms as much as possible.
- (6) Those who need to go outside houses should avoid acts close to and eat meals together with older persons above 60 years and those with diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases.
- (7) Fully cooperate in quarantine processes.
- (8) Don't buy something from the vendors who do not wear masks.
- (9) Exchange information to each other.
- (10) Cooperate in vaccination of COVID-19 pandemic. Continuously follow the preventive measures although they have received the vaccinations.
- (11) Strictly follow the work guidelines for preventing the COVID-19 pandemic issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.
- (12) If somebody suffers from symptoms of higher body temperature, coughing, suffocation, tiredness and sudden loss of smell and flavour, they need to immediately contact nearby health units to receive medical treatment.

Health Knowledge Awareness Promoting Department
Ministry of Health and Sports

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

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Individual trades through land border exceed K18.3 bln in eight months

TRADE conducted by Individual Trading Card (ITC) holders reached over K18.3 billion through the land border in the past eight months of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The Trade Department issued 149 cards in Oct-May period this FY. Imports exceeded over K15 billion, whereas exports were valued at just K3.29 billion.

The Myawady border trade zone recorded the highest trade value at K11 billion, according to the Commerce Ministry. Nevertheless, the figure only reflected imports as individual trading card holders did not export goods through the Myawady gate.

The value of trade engaged by individual trade card holders stood at K144 million at Tamu post, K116 million at Tachilek, K1.6 billion at Kawthoung, K5.3 billion at Mawtaung and K31 million at Kengtung, as per data from the Commerce Ministry.

At present, individual traders are no longer permitted to import the soap, detergent powder and toothpaste through border trade



Myawady Trade Zone in Kayin State, border sharing with Thailand. Photo Supplied

route with the Individual Trading Card (IRC) starting from 4 June 2020, with a view to safeguarding the interests of local SMEs and helping them survive in a highly competitive market.

Nevertheless, the restriction does not impact on the regular traders with import/export licence.

Additionally, Myanmar's Trade Department under the

Ministry of Commerce notified that four food commodities are to be temporarily restricted for import via Myanmar-Thailand border starting from 1 May, Myawady Trade Zone reported.

The restricted items include various beverages, coffee mix and tea mix, instant coffee, and condensed milk and evaporated milk. However, they can be imported through maritime trade.

Individual trades topped K737 million in the period from 21 November 2012 to 31 March 2013; exceeded K6.6 billion in the FY 2013-2014; reached K9.37 billion in the FY 2014-2015; stood at over K6.4 billion in the FY 2015-2016; rose above K18.5 billion in the FY 2016-2017; touched K45.9 billion in the FY 2017-2018; K22.5 billion during the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September); K59 billion

in the FY 2018-2019 and drastically plunged to K43.32 billion in the FY 2019-2020.

The individual traders who cannot establish their own company can carry out trading with the ITC in the border area. However, trading volume is limited. The card validity is set only one year and the card holders need to renew the cards at the respective border gates one month before expiry date.

Trading with the use of ITC is based on local currency. Hundreds of exports and imports items have been allowed for individual trading via the border gates. The traders can seek the ITC at the offices of Tamu, Muse, Myawady, Tachilek, Lwejel, Sit-tway, Maungtau, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee, Myeik, Kawthoung, Reed, Thantlang, Mawtaung, Htikhee, Kenglek, Meisei and export/import offices in Mandalay, Kengtung and Myitkyina.

Businessmen can trade goods worth K3 million per day using ITCs, and the Trade Department has permitted trade of up to K15 million per day over five days.—KH/GNLM

Trade deficit shrinks to \$166.7 mln during over eight months

MYANMAR'S trade gap has significantly narrowed to US\$166.7 million between 1 October and 4 June of the current financial year 2020-2021 from just \$1.24 billion registered in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020FY, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

The trade deficit is attributed to the drastic drop in imports this year. Between 1 October and 4 June in the current FY, Myanmar's external trade drastically plunged to \$16.7 billion, up from \$20.46 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at \$10.14 billion, imports were valued relatively high at \$10.3 billion this FY. Compared to the FY 2019-2020, exports showed a drop of over \$2.2 billion, while imports fell by \$3.39 billion.

Myanmar witnessed a slump in exports and imports triggered by the coronavirus impacts. Both maritime and border trade routes dropped amid the coronavirus impacts and political changes. The neighbouring countries tightened the border security and restricted the trading in certain border areas. For mari-

time trade, disruption in logistic sector, spikes in container rates and banking restriction dragged down the trade. Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies much on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic materials and supporting products for export promotion and the import substitution.

Myanmar's trade deficit was pegged at \$1.3 billion in the 2019-2020 FY, \$1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, \$1.3 billion in the previous mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$5.3 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, according to the statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization.—MM/GNLM

Electric sector tops FDI line-up as of May

MAJORITY of foreign enterprises primarily pumped into the electricity sector in the past eight months of the current financial year, according to the statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The quantum of investment in power is higher than in any other sectors this year.

Last month, Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) permitted one large project from the UK with capitals of US\$2.5 billion for the construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) power plant.

The electricity generated by this project will be sold domestically and is expected to support the goal of cent per cent nationwide electricity from the national grid by 2030.

During the October-May period, FDI of over \$3.758 billion, including expansion of capital and investments in the Special Economic Zones, has flowed into the country. MIC and the investment committees of states and regions gave green lights to 44 enterprises to invest in the country.

Of 44 foreign enterprises permitted and endorsed by MIC

and the respective investment committees between 1 October and 31 May of the current FY, 23 enterprises pumped FDI into the manufacturing sector with estimated capital of \$254 million. Power sector received the largest FDI of \$3.12 billion from six projects and livestock and fisheries sector attracted six projects worth \$19.2 million. Other service sector drew five projects (worth \$103 million) while agriculture sector pulled two projects (worth \$9 million) and one foreign enterprise each entered industrial estate with capital of \$81 million and the hotel and tourism sectors bringing in capital of \$28 million.

Additionally, the existing enterprises raised capitals of \$133.5 million in transport and communications sector and \$8 million in real estate sector in May.

MIC ensures to approve the responsible businesses by assessing environmental and social impacts. The commission is working together with the relevant departments to screen the projects. The Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations has been inviting responsible businesses to benefit the country.—Htet Myat/GNLM



Labours carry the bags of onion at Bayintnaung Market in Yangon.

State Administration Council

Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Armed terrorists kill two civilians in Gangaw, Magway Region



Photo shows seized M-22 rifle with magazines and rounds of ammunition.

TWO people, husband and wife from Bawpyin village, were killed by armed insurgents in Gangaw Township, Magway Region yesterday. According to the report, the security forces rushed to the scene and found them with bullet

and knife wounds.

After the dead bodies had been performed autopsy at the Gangaw Township Hospital, the security forces and the family of the deceased persons brought the bodies back for cremation

in Bawpyin village by vehicle.

When they arrived at about a mile distance to the village, a group of 15 armed insurgents opened fire at the security forces and retreated when being retaliated. Two terrorists were found dead at the scene and one percussion lock firearm was seized.

The security forces were attacked again while inspecting the retreat way of the terrorists. During the clash, two terrorists died and one M 22 rifle, 49 bullets and two magazines were seized from them.

It is reported that security forces will be deployed to arrest the terrorists.—MNA

Armed insurgents kill four innocent people in family for no reason in Kalay

FOUR of five members of a family, ranging in age from 23 to 50 years old, were shot to death by armed insurgents in Kalay, Sagaing Region on 19 June. NLD supporters and terrorists have been carrying out inhumane assassinations, bombing and destructions with the intent to intimidate the people living in peace.

According to the report, the armed insurgents raided the house of U Win Zaw Oo with gunfire who lived in Nwataungkyang street, Nyaungpintha ward, Kalay Township, Sagaing Region at around 9:15 pm on 19 June.

In the incident, U Win Zaw Oo was found dead with a shot at his chest in front of the house; his wife, son and brother-in-law were also shot in the face, back and chest. His daughter who was shot in the abdomen and right eyebrow was taken to the military hospital for medical treatment.

Security forces are investigating the case to identify and take action against the perpetrators who involved in the inhumane assassination of the civilians for no reason.—MNA

407 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 June, total figure rises to 148,022

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **148,022** after **407 new cases** were reported on 20 June 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **133,606** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 3,262 after 4 died. —MNA

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre ([phone number 2019](tel:095-2525252)) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—MNA

COVID-19: Vaccines donated next year, 'too late for those who are dying today'

MILLIONS more COVID vaccines need to be donated now to save lives and help the UN health agency reach the key global target of having 70 per cent of all national populations vaccinated, by the middle of 2022.

That was one of the main messages relayed to reporters on Friday by World Health Organization (WHO) chief, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who said if richer countries and pharmaceutical companies wait to donate and produce more shots until next year, that will be "too late for those who are dying today."

Lauding Guinea's expected announcement on Saturday that its latest Ebola virus disease outbreak has been curbed after just four months, he said it showed what could be done on a much larger scale, with the coronavirus.

Global vaccine failure

"And yet even after 18 months, the ineffective use of



Medical staff walk to the National Centre for Infectious Diseases building at Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore. PHOTO: AFP

public health and social measures, increased social mixing and vaccine inequity, continue to give COVID-19 an opportunity to mutate, spread and kill", said Tedros. "The global failure to share vaccines equitably is fueling a two-track pandemic that is

now taking its toll on some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Every region has countries that are now facing a steep increase in cases and deaths, he noted, adding that Latin American nations are in dire straits,

with cases in Africa, increasing by 52% in just the past week.

"And we expect things to only get worse. Less than one per cent of Africa's population has been vaccinated. Vaccines donated next year will be far too late for those who are dying today,

or being infected today, or at risk today."

Firm targets

WHO's global targets are to vaccinate at least 10 per cent of the population of every country by September, at least 40 per cent by the end of 2021, and 70 per cent by the middle of next year.

"These are the critical milestones we must reach together to end the pandemic" said Tedros, comparing the current 20 per cent fully vaccinated rate in more than half of richer nations, with the chilling statistic that the same can be said of only three lower and middle-income countries.

"We very much appreciate the vaccine donations announced by the G7 and others. And we thank those countries including the United States that have committed to sharing doses in June and July. We urge others to follow suit. We need vaccines to be donated now to save lives", Tedros added. — UN ■

Fever clinic and Covid kits: Tokyo 2020 shows off Olympic Village



Beds at the Village are made out of recyclable cardboard. PHOTO: AFP

TOKYO 2020 organisers threw open the doors of the Olympic Village to the media on Sunday, showcasing virus upgrades including a fever clinic just over a month before the Games begin.

Organisers are in the home stretch of preparations before the July 23 opening ceremony, and are trying to build confidence that the mega-event will be safe for athletes and the Japanese public.

On Sunday, they unveiled the dedicated virus clinic, warned that drinking in groups would be prohibited and said a mixed zone for guests had been scrapped.

Warning posters that caution residents to take anti-virus measures including room ventilation have been placed throughout the mini-city, which can sleep 18,000

athletes and team members during the Olympics and 8,000 during the Paralympics.

The fever clinic, separate from the main medical facility, will be used to test and isolate people suspected of virus infection or considered close contacts of those who test positive.

"If there is suspicion of being infected... we should be able to properly isolate this person," said Takashi Kitajima, general manager for the village.

"This is just another example of how we are stringently managing matters about possible Covid infections," he told reporters.

Other measures include reduced seating for diners, plexiglass shields between gym equipment, and a kit of hand sanitisers

and soap to be handed to village residents.

Built on reclaimed land looking out over Tokyo Bay, the village has been empty except for workers since the event was postponed last March.

Drink alone

Opening in just over a fortnight, the village will be particularly important for athletes this Games because they are barred from going anywhere else except training and competition venues.

Under strict virus rules, athletes will be tested daily and required to wear masks except during competition, eating and sleeping. And there will be no partying, officials warned.

"When you drink alcohol, in principle, you are requested to drink alone," said Kitajima.

Competitors can only enter the village shortly before their event and must leave within 48 hours of being eliminated or their competition ending.

And conditions won't exactly be luxurious, with single rooms of nine square metres (100 square feet) and doubles of 12 square metres (130 sq ft).

Beds are made from recyclable cardboard, but are tough enough to stand up to beefy weightlifters and towering basketball players, organisers say. — AFP ■

Third pandemic wave hits as Brazil surpasses half million covid deaths

BRAZIL on Saturday became the second country after the United States to surpass 500,000 Covid-19 deaths as the South American giant grapples with a third wave of the pandemic.

"500,000 lives lost due to the pandemic that affects our Brazil and the world," Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga tweeted.

The Health Ministry reported 500,800 deaths, including 2,301 in the last 24 hours, a toll that many experts say underestimate the real toll from the health crisis.

This week the average number of daily deaths surpassed 2,000 for the first time since 10 May.

"The third wave is arriving,

there's already in a change in the case and death curves," Ethel Maciel, an epidemiologist from Espirito Santo University, told AFP.

"Our vaccination (program), which could make a difference, is slow and there are no signs of restrictive measures, quite the contrary."

In large cities, life seems almost back to normal with restaurants, bars and shops open and many people in the streets not wearing face masks.

And yet the situation is critical in 19 of Brazil's 27 states with more than 80 percent occupancy of intensive care beds — in nine of those states it's over 90 percent. — AFP ■



A demonstrator takes part in a protest against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 19 June 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Take self-review on life at the third age

THE lifespan of everybody can be divided into three stages: the young age, the second age and the third age. Suppose everybody has a lifespan of some 90 years old. The third stage of the person will be aged 61 to 90.

Now, the global people have about 70 years of lifespan while Myanmar's lifespan is about 67 years. So, Myanmar people would have the third age starting from some 46 years. As an exemption, some people can have a lifespan till over 80 years old.

Hence, you all elder persons should keep their minds free from burdens of lives and look the best way for olden days.

Generally, any persons at the third age need to consider things that would be the best for the remaining lifespan, how to continuously live in the remaining days and how to overcome challenges.

In fact, the senior citizens have been working for themselves as well as for the family, the community and the State. So, they need to take retirement from the working world. They should have the chance to pass the remaining days conveniently.

Nonetheless, the remaining days for the older citizens are the most important. It is because they are weaker and weaker in daily life to overcome the challenges. They require help for their lives. Even though they are wealthy off, they require genuine friends for enjoying the remaining future shared.

That is why we all need to lend a helping hand to the elder persons in order to conveniently passing the last golden days. On the other hand, those elder persons need to set aside the unimportant things of their lives while focusing on the current events.

As the best way, they should take meditation so as to stabilize their minds. The meditated mind is the best partner for their remaining days. In Myanmar, meditation centres are open to all for helping the Yogis to take meditation. Insightful persons are sure to enjoy the taste of peaceful and tranquil Dhamma.

Hence, you all elder persons should keep their minds free from burdens of lives and look the best way for olden days.

Undeniable Facts that Led to Widespread Election Frauds

By Min Khant

JUST by reading the title of my article, please do not think I represent the newly formed Union Election Commission. Also do not think I am a pro-Tatmadaw as the article will uncover the facts of election frauds. I am just a common civilian watching curiously how the frauds occurred in 2020 General Elections.

It is said that the root cause of the current situations in Myanmar is the election frauds. So, I became curious to know the answer of the question whether there were terrible frauds in the election. From the lingering announcements of the current UEC on the findings of every single townships with statistics and figures in details which have been released daily for months, I will highlight the distinct

the pre-planned acts which clearly breached the law. Although the right to enact law for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population - MoLIP is not granted to regions and states according to the 2008 Constitution, the then NLD-led administration expended the MoLIP structure by appointing ministers for respective regions and states. The reason behind this move was the deceitful attempt of NLD-led government to narrow the gap between the voting roll of UEC and the lists of MoLIP. However, the eligible voter lists of MoLIP could not easily be adjusted as the lists of region/state level are also at the union level. That was a weak point for NLD government.

Another point is substituting the members of ward/village elec-

in the process of taking advance votes using their party banners and logos. I no more want to point out other matters in detail like appointing two unidentified computer experts at each township election sub-commission and supply of necessary computes and accessories by International Foundation of Electoral System (IFES). When the voter rolls were scrutinized by the Tatmadaw, over 10 millions of possible electoral frauds were found. According to the findings of ground inspections of 309 townships, the total number of township commission lists is 38,044,378 (over 38 millions) and lists of MoLIP for the townships is merely 31,751,759 (over 31 millions). Therefore, the number of eligible voters for the townships was bloated with over 6.2 millions extra voters. Moreover, according to the findings of the inspecting teams comprising departmental officials and the members of former and current UECs, it found out that the total number of people involved in voter lists more than two times with the same Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC) was 3,573,672 and the total number of people involved in voter lists more than three times with the same CSC was 293,960.

The above-mentioned facts show how they pre-planned with their trusted persons to make the voter lists bloated more than it should have been.

Why the voter rolls were bloated

The primary reason of making the voter rolls bloated is to print out extra ballot papers. As printing out extra ballots correlates with the number of eligible voters, the bloated voter lists will accordingly lead to extra ballots. Using the extra ballots, various attempts had been made to get more votes for NLD party to ensure their victory.

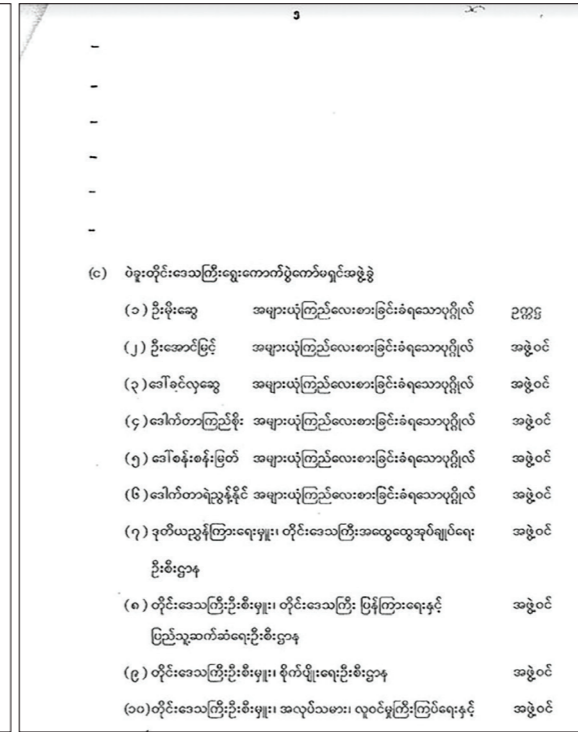
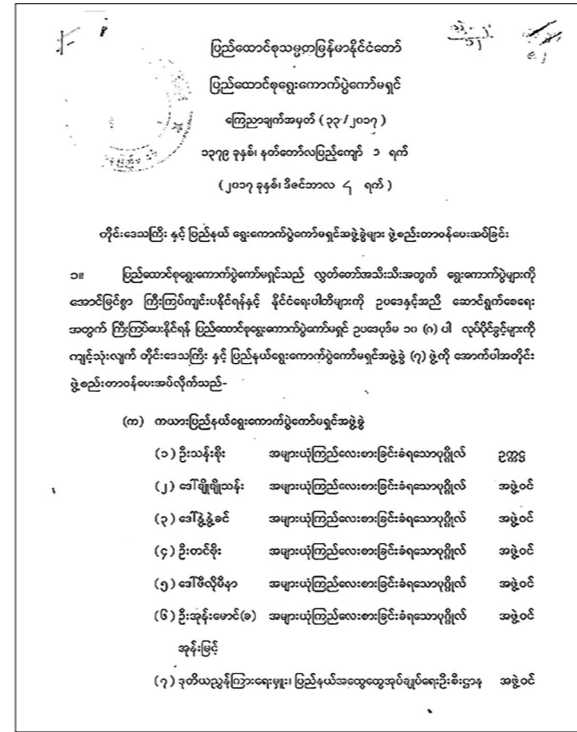


electoral frauds in a way that will help people clearly understand.

In this regard, I wrote this article with a good-will intent to share the points what I observed from the statistics announced by the UEC from 16 May to 8 June 2021. I sincerely want to admit that the contents in my articles are simply described with my personal perspective comparing the actual situations occurred in the pre-election period and election day with the UEC findings without any intention to criticize a political party.

How the preparations were made

In case a question raises whether the NLD led government actually made certain preparations to steal votes in the previous election, the answer will be 'Yes'. The most significant evidence that assures the answer is the testimonies of the members the former UEC saying that the UEC was not independent as it operated under the control of the then government. That was, no doubt, undeniable. I will also point out one of



For instance, the sacks with NLD logos containing ballot papers sent from NLD party offices were found in Magway town. Therefore, according to the findings of inspections, 4,901,043 voters without any Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC); 1,420,747 (over 1.4 million) missing ballots and 435,669 extra ballots were found. The missing ballots were certainly the votes for other political parties and the extra ballot became votes for NLD party.

Another important point is that the numbers of ballot papers in the polling boxes and the number of its receipts must be same. However, the findings of inspection shows the numbers of withdrawal, receipt, used, and remaining ballot papers were found different. In 309 townships after inspections, 42,742,783 ballots were taken out (over 42 millions), 26,961,801 (over 26 millions) ballots were used. However, 14,795,904 (over 14 millions) ballots were left instead of 15,780,982 ballots (over 15 millions). Therefore, it found the remaining ballots were vividly different after the number of

used ballots was subtracted from the ballots taken. Moreover, the number of receipts of ballots and the number of ballots in the polling boxes were also found different. Such finding are the strong evidence of electoral frauds.

Other irregular activities

As it was mentioned above, the members of ward/village election sub-commissions were hard cores of NLD party and they made



various irregular attempts in taking advance votes. Most of the elderly who casted advance votes are weak in vision. Taking the advantage of it, they dishonestly attempted to get check mark and press stamp on the place of NLD candidate on the ballot papers. In taking advance votes using NLD party banners and logos, most of the people would have simply thought they took votes for the NLD party. In order to make the ballot papers official, the statements and orders were issued stating that the ballots merely containing check marks without UEC logo and other check marks using ball pen were recognized as valid votes. The given reason was

emergence of fake stamper. There were also other irregular instructions such as allowing people to cast votes again at their nearest polling stations due to COVID-19. Therefore, the cases of repeated casting votes appeared.

There were many other evidence out-there that allowed people without sufficient data to cast votes like issuing ballots without fingerprints or signatures. Despite the various attempts to make the

extra ballots legal, in reality, the ballots were much bloated and many irregular acts at grassroot level could no more be hidden. As the distinct instances: the ballot papers from 2015 general election were used to count votes for NLD candidate Naw Pwal Sae from Kyopinkok township; the candidate in the ballot papers in Yesagyo township were mistakenly the ones from Magway township; the number of voting results posted by famous Hip-Hop singer NLD party Hluttaw representative on social media was more than the eligible number; and finding of nine new ballot books without serial number in Thegon township.

SEE PAGE-10

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 20 June 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 21 June 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Eastern Shan State, scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway regions and Northern Shan State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Ayeyawady Region. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 June 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 June 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 June 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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Undeniable Facts that Led to.....

FROM PAGE-9

There are many other endless irregularities to point out such as: not returning ballot receipts and ballots in Ngazun and Taungtha townships; allowing 11 supplementing voters to cast votes filling their data in hand-written format by ward/village election sub-commission; the incident of not returning the ballot receipts in Thabeikkyin, Nyaung-U, Mada and Mogok townships. Addition to this, before election, other political parties were prohibited to run election

campaigns on the pretext of COVID-19 pandemic while the NLD party members were celebrating election campaigns, and other activities like official as a single outlet to the suffocations of people due to the global pandemic. Moreover, the statements and video campaigns of other political parties were also censored. Everybody might have known that over 1.2 millions of citizens lost their right to cast votes since the then government did not allow to hold elections in some Rakhine and some townships from

Shan State where the NLD party was less likely to win.

According to reports from NLD party, It is observed that the NLD led administration and the party then did not want the emergence of coalition like government, and therefore, they conducted such illegal and irregular acts to ensure the complete victory and power dominance over Myanmar politics. However, the pre-planned acts and irregular attempts to steal votes mentioned-above are totally unacceptable for any country with any political

system. Such undisciplined and terrible electoral frauds have not occurred even in the ASEAN countries besides others in the regions beyond. It has not even seen in the election history of Myanmar.

Since the result of a transparent, free and fair election is critical in flourishing the genuine multi-party democracy system, I sorrowfully remark that the 2020 general elections became ugly due to the power hunger of a political party.

Drawing a conclusion, I would like to make a recom-

mendation that the breaching laws and rules, stealing votes and irregularities taken place in 2020 general election are the matters that should be systematically revealed to public step by step using video records. In doing so, it is also important to present the case with its relations in which people can easily understand. Now, let me conclude my article here by saying that the video records full of evidence and lessons to learn will surely become an infamous milestone in the history of Myanmar.



Cambodian PM in quarantine, cancels meeting with UK's Raab

CAMBODIAN Prime Minister Hun Sen said Saturday he has cancelled talks next week with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab after the Southeast Asian leader came into contact with someone infected with coronavirus.

Hun Sen wrote in a Facebook post that he had indirect contact with a Covid-19 patient and doctors required he be tested and undergo quarantine for 14 days until July 3.

"I apologise that I have to cancel all scheduled meetings... I beg for understanding from the UK Foreign Secretary," he said, adding that the pair had been scheduled to meet Wednesday morning. Raab was expected to visit Phnom Penh early next week, according to Cambodian officials.

Hun Sen's quarantine comes

as the country reported 20 deaths from the virus on Saturday, the highest number in a single day since the pandemic began.

Cambodia has seen infection numbers surge since February when an outbreak was first detected among its Chinese ex-

atriate community. The country's total number of cases has now climbed to 42,052, with 414 deaths. Seven cases of the Delta variant have been found among people returning from neighbouring Thailand, the Cambodian health ministry said Saturday. — AFP ■



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen is vaccinated against Covid-19 in Phnom Penh in March. PHOTO: AFP

China vaccine doses pass one billion mark

THE number of Covid-19 jabs administered in China has passed the one billion mark, health officials said Sunday, more than a third of the doses given worldwide.

The announcement by the National Health Commission comes after the number of shots administered globally surpassed 2.5 billion on Friday, according to an AFP count from official sources. It is unclear what percentage of China's population has now been inoculated but its vaccination drive got off to a slow start after a successful fight against the virus left little sense of urgency to get jabbed. A lack of transparency and previous vaccine scandals have also led to resistance among residents.

Authorities have set an ambitious target of fully vac-

inating 40 percent of the country's nearly 1.4 billion people by the end of this month. Some provinces are offering vaccines for free to encourage people to roll up their sleeves. Residents in central Anhui province have been given free eggs, while some living in Beijing have received shopping coupons.

A recent outbreak of the more contagious Delta variant of the virus in the southern city of Guangzhou has also served as a wake-up call for many dragging their feet. China reported 23 new coronavirus cases Sunday. The country has four conditionally approved vaccines, whose published efficacy rates remain behind rival jabs by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, which have 95 percent and 94 percent success rates respectively. — AFP ■

NASA reports trouble with Hubble Space Telescope

THE Hubble Space Telescope, which has been peering into the universe for more than 30 years, has been down for the past few days, NASA said Friday.

The problem is a payload computer that stopped working last Sunday, the US space agency said.

It insisted the telescope itself and scientific instruments that accompany it are “in good health.”

“The payload computer’s purpose is to control and coordinate the science instruments and monitor them for health and safety purposes,” NASA said.

An attempt to restart it on Monday failed.

NASA said initial evidence pointed to a degrading computer memory module as the source of the computer problem. An attempt to switch to a back-up memory module also failed.

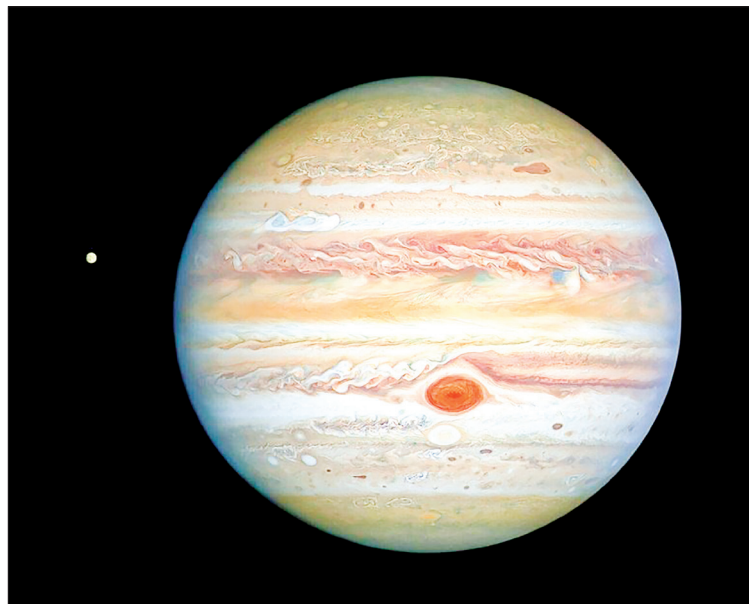
The technology for the payload computer dates back to the 1980s, and it was re-

placed during maintenance work in 2009.

Launched in 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope revolutionized the world of astronomy and changed our vision of the universe as it sent back images of the solar system, the Milky Way and distant galaxies.

A new and more powerful one, called the James Webb Space Telescope, is scheduled to be deployed late this year. It is designed to peer deeper into the cosmos than ever before.

— AFP ■



This photograph taken by the Hubble Space Telescope on August 25, 2020 shows Jupiter and its moon Europa, captured when the planet was 653 million kilometers (405 million miles) from Earth. PHOTO: NASA/ESA/HUBBLE/AFP/FILE

Mexico’s bee guardians on mission to save species



The organization carries out more than 200 bee rescues a year. PHOTO: AFP

ADRIANA Veliz whispered affectionately as she removed a colony of bees from inside a statue in a Mexican backyard — part of her mission to help save them from extinction.

“Relax babies, relax. You’ll be fine,” the 32-year-old veterinarian said as the bees swarmed around her and clung to the white suit she wore to protect against their stings.

Veliz’s bee protection organization Abeja Negra SOS carries out more than 200 such rescues a year to protect the insects from dangers such as humans and pesticides.

The five-woman team offers its services for free to help safeguard the bees, which Veliz said play a vital role including in pollination that enables crops to reproduce.

“Basically they keep an ecosystem in balance,” she said.

Despite their importance, some people kill bees they find in their homes or offices because they are afraid of being attacked, Veliz said.

Risky work

Lying on the grass, she

stretched her arm as far as she could inside the 1.5-meter (five-foot) concrete statue where the bees made their hive in Naucalpan near Mexico City.

Her partner Luz Millan puffed smoke at the insects to neutralize the pheromones they use to communicate, and sprinkled water on them to make it harder to fly.

After removing the colony, home to the *Apis mellifera* species of honey bee, the team took it to an apiary on a mountain outside the urban sprawl of Mexico City.

Moving the insects is no easy task.

Recently, Veliz and her team had to demolish the wall of a house to get to the bees inside.

“It’s dangerous because the bees defend their hive. Their queen orders them with pheromones when to attack,” Veliz said.

Abeja Negra SOS, which was founded in 2018, is not only saving bees — it is also empowering women, her colleague Millan said. — AFP ■

IMF urges top polluters to adopt carbon price floor

THE IMF on Friday issued a report calling for the world’s top polluters to adopt an international carbon price floor, arguing it offered a “realistic prospect” to combat climate change.

The multilateral agency said that carbon pricing was now widely accepted as the most important policy tool to achieve the drastic emissions cuts required to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius by 2050.

But right now, four-fifths of emissions remain unpriced and the global average carbon price is just \$3 a ton — far below the level needed to incentivize energy efficiency and redirect innovation towards green technologies.

The report modeled different scenarios and

said that a three-tier price floor of \$75, \$50, and \$25 per ton for advanced, high, and low-income emerging markets respectively could help achieve a 23 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.

That example would involve just six participants: Canada, China, the European Union, India, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The report suggested the scheme could be launched by the G20 before being expanded to others.

The initial goal would be to meet the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s target of reducing emissions between one quarter to a half by the end of this decade. — AFP ■

Researchers find biological links between red meat and colorectal cancer

EATING less red meat is standard medical advice for preventing colorectal cancer, but the way it causes cells to mutate has remained unclear, and not all experts were convinced there was a strong link.

A new paper in the journal *Cancer Discovery* has now identified specific patterns of

DNA damage triggered by diets rich in red meat — further implicating the food as a carcinogen while heralding the possibility of detecting the cancer early and designing new treatments.

Prior research establishing the connection was mainly epidemiologic, meaning that

people who developed the condition were surveyed on their eating habits, and researchers spotted associations with colorectal cancer incidence.

But a lack of clarity around the biology meant that the case wasn’t quite slam dunk, and in 2019, one team of researchers made waves when they declared they only had a “low” degree of certainty that reducing consumption would prevent cancer deaths.

“When we say red meat is carcinogenic, and that it impacts incidence of cancer, there has to be some plausible way by which it does it,” Dana-Farber Cancer Institute oncologist Marios Giannakis, who led the new study, told AFP.

After all, scientists discovered long ago which chemicals in cigarette smoke are to blame for cancer, and how certain bands of UV light penetrate the skin and trigger mutations in genes that control how cells grow and divide. — AFP ■



A new paper in the journal *Cancer Discovery* has now identified specific patterns of DNA damage triggered by diets rich in red meat — further implicating the food as a carcinogen while heralding the possibility of detecting the cancer early and designing new treatments. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Inflation could harm Democrats in lead-up to US midterms

IN the first half-year of US President Joe Biden's term in office, inflation is on the rise. Many showed concerns that the rising inflation could hurt Democrats, the party that holds the White House and leads both houses of Congress, in lead-up to midterm elections.

May saw consumer prices rise 5 per cent, the steepest uptick since August 2008, before the financial crisis hit, according to the U.S. Labor Department. This came as demand surged amid the rebound from the pandemic, which has strained supply chains.

The price of crude has surged 46 per cent so far this year. The average price for a gallon of gasoline is more than 3 US dollars, according to the American Automobile Association.

James Reed, a retired teacher in his 60s living outside Washington DC, told Xinhua that while he hasn't felt the sting of higher gas prices – his car does very well on mileage – he worries about whether that might change as more Americans hit the road for summer vacations. — Xinhua ■

Tanzania's Zanzibar welcomes investment in blue economy

TANZANIA'S Zanzibar President Hussein Mwinyi has invited businessmen from east Africa and beyond to put up heavy investment on the Islands that will help drive the blue economy.

Mwinyi said Zanzibar is open for heavy investment in diverse sectors of the blue economy, including deep-sea fishing, ports infrastructure, marine transport, petroleum and gas, and tourism, said a statement issued on Saturday by the East African Community (EAC).

President Mwinyi made the appeal during a CEO Evening Roundtable Engagement dinner on EAC regional integration organized by the East African Business Council on Friday night. — Xinhua ■

Three major challenges Iranian president-elect faces



An oil facility on Iran's Kharg Island. PHOTO: AFP

THE Iranian Interior Ministry on Saturday announced Ebrahim Raisi as the winner of the country's 13th presidential election.

The president-elect will assume office in August in face of three major challenges in boosting economy, dispelling political concerns and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

During the TV debates before the presidential voting, all the qualified candidates unanimously acknowledged uncertainty in the economic outlook of the country, with some slamming the US sanctions and COVID-19 pandemic as the major causes of the country's current poor economic condition.

Government officials pledged to curb the inflation rate and to restore economic growth after the 2015 nuclear deal was reached and major international and Western anti-Iran sanctions were lifted by then, but such a hope started to fade away following former US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw

the United States from the deal in 2018 and reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

POLITICAL CONCERNS

With Washington's abrupt withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, commonly known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and the re-imposition and intensification of sanctions against Iran, the United States challenged all parties to the deal, but it was Iran that suffered the most from the unilateral move.

UNCONTROLLED PANDEMIC

Iran's already injured economy under the U.S. sanctions has been dampened further by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the foreign sanctions, the disease has taken a heavy toll on the health sector, as well as the business of companies and households, and most importantly the pandemic has also caused social and psychological impact. — Xinhua ■

Lebanon leaders may face sanctions unless crisis solved: EU's Borrell

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Saturday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF. Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s.

A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last once resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020.

Speaking in Beirut after talks with Leba-

nese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU". "The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said. "The Lebanese leadership must take its responsibility... a government must be formed and key reforms implemented immediately."

The EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent

agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse... and there is no time to waste," he said. "You are on the edge of a financial collapse." But Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed".

"The council of the EU has been including other options, including targeted sanctions... we prefer not to go down this road... but it is in hands of the Lebanese leadership," Borrell said. — AFP ■

Olympic spectator woes prove bad news for Tokyo's souvenir sellers

WHEN Tokyo celebrated its Olympic bid win in 2013, small souvenir store owners across the country joined the party with an eye on the windfall they expected the games to bring. Eight years and one pandemic later, they are only counting the cost.

In addition to a one-year postponement of the games, the coronavirus pandemic has forced the Japanese government to bar overseas spectators from entering Japan, leaving store owners anxious to know whether anyone in the Japanese capital will want to buy their Olympic and Paralympic-themed wares.

Keiji Kojima, a souvenir wholesaler near Tokyo, said sales have fallen sharply since the outbreak of the virus more than a year ago, and he is not expecting an uptick from the Summer Games.

"Looking back a couple of years, who expected the current situation?" he asked. "I am sure that many souvenir shops and wholesalers are disappointed and struggling now."

Kojima distributes to retailers in Tokyo and other areas of Japan traditional wooden Japanese dolls, among other goods, targeted at tourists. Right now, though, his order book is empty.



Just a few people walk by closed stores on the Nakamise shopping street in Tokyo's Asakusa area on 26 May 2021. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

"I don't know if it is good to hold the Olympics in terms of the prevention of virus outbreaks, but it is still better for my business if the games are held," he said. — Kyodo News ■

‘Cooped up’ Indians throng malls and markets weeks after Covid surge

A few weeks ago, New Delhi’s crematoriums were operating around the clock dealing with Covid-19 victims. Now the Indian capital’s shopping malls and markets are buzzing again.

But doctors are worried that India is letting its guard down again, just like in January and February before a devastating coronavirus surge that led to a near-collapse of the healthcare system.

Clutching a bag of clothes as she shopped with her new husband at Delhi’s busy Select City Walk

mall, Surili Gupta said she was “fed up being cooped up inside”. “I needed this break, for how long you can remain locked up?” the 26-year-old sales executive told AFP as she waited for a table at the mall’s packed food hall. “The coronavirus is not going any time soon, so one has to learn to live with it. I am sure with the vaccinations and all, we will be fine.”

Behind her, a big weekend crowd chatted and laughed over Indian dosas and Chinese noodles, paying scant regard to public an-

nouncements reminding them about social distancing and wearing masks.

A couple queueing at a popular burger joint squabbled, masks hanging from their faces. Mall staff performed perfunctory temperature checks and reminded people to sanitise their hands.

Not far away, shoppers thronged the open-air warren of shops and stalls at Lajpat Nagar market, bargaining for scarves, bangles and cheap cosmetics. — AFP ■



Doctors are worried that India is letting its guard down again, like it did in January and February before a devastating coronavirus wave. PHOTO: AFP

Huge changes for internet and Big Tech under US antitrust proposal



Handy tech: Amazon’s palm recognition payment system Amazon One is trialled in Seattle, Washington. PHOTO: AFP

THE antitrust overhaul package unveiled in Congress targeting Big Tech, if enacted, could have far-reaching effects on how people use the internet and on America’s biggest and most successful

companies.

The five bills, due for a committee vote on Wednesday, could pave the way for a reorganization or breakup of giants such as Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon

while reshaping the entire internet ecosystem.

The measures would stop tech giants from operating a platform for third parties while offering competing services on those platforms, dealing a major blow to the likes of Apple and Amazon.

Lawmakers also are seeking to ban tech firms from prioritizing their own products or services, with Google clearly in mind.

Another measure would require data “portability” and “interoperability,” which could make it easier for people to quit

Facebook, for example, while keeping their data and contacts.

The largest tech firms additionally would be barred from acquiring competitors under the package, which would also add funds for anti-trust enforcement.

Fiona Scott Morton, a Yale University professor and former US official who has written extensively on Big Tech, said the legislation stems from the failure of anti-trust enforcement in the US and elsewhere to make a dent in the dominance of major technology firms. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Europe powers up electric car battery drive

AS electric car sales soar, Europe has started to build up its capacity to produce batteries on the continent but it remains far from reducing its dependence on Asia.

China, Japan and South Korea produce most of the world’s electric car batteries.

Europe now has projects to build 38 gigafactories with a combined annual output of 1,000 gigawatt hours (GWh) and an estimated cost of 40 billion euros (\$48 billion), according to a June report by Transport & Environment, a non-government organisation.

This annual supply could be reached by 2029-2030 and would be the equivalent to the production of 16.7 million battery electric vehicles, a T&E spokesman told AFP.

“Given the monstrous increase in demand, there is a major stake at hand for manufacturers to break the battery makers’ oligopoly,” said Eric Kirstetter, a sector analyst at consulting firm Roland Berger.

“They will also have to ensure access to materials for the electrodes (anode and cathode), which will determine the batteries’ price and availability,” he added.

In Sweden, the start-up Northvolt expects to reach annual production of 150 GWh in Europe by 2030, with one plant under construction now and two much bigger ones on the drawing board. — AFP ■

“Eco-friendly” certified bonito flakes debuts at Japan restaurants

A Japanese restaurant operator has started using dried bonito flakes certified as caught and processed in an eco-friendly way as part of efforts to maintain both the country’s culinary culture and fishery resources.

Kijima Co. based in Yokohama near Tokyo on June 8 began serving at all of its six restaurants dishes using special bonito flakes, which are a key ingredient in “washoku” traditional Japanese cuisine.

The product is made by Yamaki Co., which obtained the certification from the Marine Stew-



Supplied file photo shows bonito fishing using a pole and line method. PHOTO: YAMAKI CO./KYODO

ardship Council, a London-based nonprofit organization, in 2019 for its practice of avoiding overfishing and good management of its supply chain.

“This is an important step forward to show that caring about sustainability is compatible with running businesses,” said Hiroaki Kijima, director of the busi-

ness strategy office at the restaurant operator, in an online press conference.

Washoku, or traditional Japanese cuisine, was added to the list of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013.

With the global consumption of marine products continuing to increase, about 30 per cent of the resources were overfished as of 2017, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. — Kyodo News ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V LIBERATOR

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V LIBERATOR VOY.NO. (BS2104)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-6-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT-1** 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.

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The Great Mosque and the Mecca Tower, deserted on the first day of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan on 24 April. PHOTO: AFP

Saudi seeks religious reset as clerical power wanes

MUEZZINS issuing high-decibel calls to prayer have long been part of Saudi identity, but a crack-down on mosque loudspeakers is among contentious reforms seeking to shake off the Muslim kingdom's austere image.

Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest Muslim sites, has long been associated with a rigid strain of Islam known as Wahhabism that inspired generations of global extremists and left the oil-rich kingdom steeped in conservatism.

But the role of religion faces

the biggest reset in modern times as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, spurred by the need to diversify the oil-reliant economy, pursues a liberalisation drive in parallel with a vigorous crack-down on dissent. Chipping away at a key pillar of its Islamic identity, the government last month ordered that mosque loudspeakers limit their volume to one-third of their maximum capacity and not broadcast full sermons, citing concerns over noise pollution. In a country home to tens of thousands of mosques, the move trig-

gered an online backlash with the hashtag "We demand the return of mosque speakers" gaining traction. It also sparked calls to ban loud music in restaurants, once taboo in the kingdom but now common amid liberalisation efforts, and to fill mosques in such large numbers that authorities are forced to permit loudspeakers for those gathering outside.

But authorities are unlikely to budge, as economic reforms for a post-oil era take precedence over religion, observers say. — AFP ■

Downtown Chicago emerges from pandemic — hobbled by crime wave

BUSINESSES in downtown Chicago that survived the pandemic-related economic slump and two spasms of looting last summer should be ecstatic with Monday's reopening of America's third-largest city.

Yet, many are battling a new hardship — a surge in crime that is keeping customers, and their money, away.

"I've never felt more unsafe than I do now," said Steve Burrows, a 48-year-old attorney who has called Chicago home his entire life. "I work downtown so I'm here every day during the day but I won't come down here at night or on the weekend."

If people like Burrows, suburbanites and the millions of tourists who normally visit

the lakefront city stay away, Chicago businesses will feel the impact as many are still trying to emerge from the tumult of the last 16 months.

Roseanna Ander, founder and executive director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab, stresses that the uptick concerns gun crimes and other types of violent crime — also experienced by other cities around the United States.

"The truth is nobody knows exactly what is driving the increase," Ander said.

But it's clear the pandemic added to many existing social problems.

"It exacerbated everything, it magnified everything," she said. — AFP ■



A police officer monitors the "Magnificent Mile" commercial district in Chicago, Illinois, on 18 June 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Women migrants reduced to sex slaves in Libya 'hell'

FOR Aisha, sexual slavery was something you only heard about happening to others in television reports, until she found herself locked in a living "hell" in Libya.

"I had left a nightmare only to fall into hell," said the migrant from Guinea, lured to the North African country that criminal gangs have turned into a den of racketeering.

Aisha fled her home country after five miscarriages: for her in-laws and the neighbourhood, she was either sterile or a witch.

But the young woman was simply diabetic.

"I just wanted to disappear from my country," said Aisha, a graduate in hotel management.

She contacted a former classmate who appeared to

have made a life for herself in neighbouring Libya and who lent Aisha money to join her.

"I didn't even see the country. As soon as I arrived, I was locked up, I was a slave. She brought men to me and she got the money."

Locked in a room with a toilet, she only saw the "friend" who had duped her when she was brought in food, "like a dog".

"The men came drunk. I'd rather not remember it," said Aisha, still trembling. "I thought my life was over."

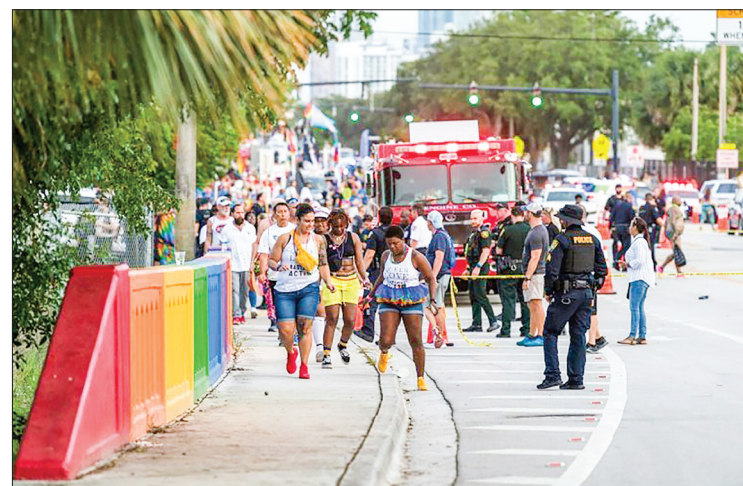
- 'Wouldn't wish that on worst enemy' -

After three months, a Libyan man took pity on her, threatened her captor and put Aisha on a bus to Tunisia with 300 Libyan dinars (\$65) in her pocket. — AFP ■

One killed as truck hits crowd at Florida Pride parade

THE driver of a pickup truck slammed into a crowd gathering for a Pride parade Saturday in south Florida, killing one man and injuring another, authorities said.

While the truck appeared to be taking part in the proces-



The driver of a pickup truck slammed into a crowd gathering for a Pride parade in Florida. PHOTO: AFP

sion, it was not immediately clear if the crash was a deliberate assault or an accident. Police detective Ali Adamson said officials were evaluating all possibilities.

The incident happened at the start of the Wilton Manors

Stonewall Pride Parade and festival, an LGBTQ celebration in a town near Fort Lauderdale.

The white pickup truck was lined up with other floats for the parade when it accelerated and ran into pedestrians before crashing into a plant nursery, Local 10 News said.

The driver was later taken into custody.

Two adult men were transported to a medical center where one later died, Adamson told reporters in a televised press briefing. The other remains hospitalized but is expected to survive, she added.

The driver and the victims are members of the Fort Lauderdale Gay Men's Chorus, according to a statement from the group's president Justin Knight, who called the incident an "unfortunate accident". — AFP ■

Post-war Armenia holds snap parliamentary election

Armenians went to the polls Sunday in early parliamentary elections which were called in an attempt to heal the country's divisions after a disastrous war with Azerbaijan, but which could spark post-vote protests.

Reformist Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who has lost much of his appeal after a military defeat last year to arch foe Azerbaijan, is hoping to renew his mandate but is in a tight race with former president Robert Kocharyan.

During a campaign marred by polarising rhetoric, Pashinyan said he expected his Civil Contract party to secure 60 per cent of the vote, even though some pollsters say those estimates are far-fetched.

The election in the South Caucasus country of three million people is being watched by Armenia's Soviet-era master Russia as well as Turkey, which backed Azerbaijan in



Polling station officials prepare vote cabins prior to the upcoming parliamentary elections in Yerevan, Armenia, 19 June 2021. PHOTO: AFP

last year's six-week war over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

As soon as voting started, Armenians began trickling into polling stations in central Ye-

revan, according to AFP correspondents.

One voter, Anahit Sargsyan, said the prime minister deserved another chance, adding that she feared the re-

turn of the old guard whom she accused of plundering the country.

"I voted against a return to the old ways," said the 63-year-old former teacher. — AFP ■

Gains seen for far-right in French regional polls

FRANCE heads to the polls for the first round of regional elections on Sunday that could see Marine Le Pen's far-right party make gains and step further into the political mainstream.

The election will see new assemblies elected for mainland France's 13 regions and 96 departments, with Le Pen's National Rally (RN) tipped to win at least one region for the first time in what would be a major coup. Le Pen is not standing as a candidate, but she has been campaigning hard ahead of presidential elections next year that surveys show could end up being a close race between her and centrist President Emma-



Electoral panels for France's upcoming regional elections in the southeastern city of Marseille, 11 June 2021. PHOTO: AFP/NICOLAS TUCAT

nuel Macron.

"What would be great for her (Le Pen), and would spark some momentum in the pre-presidential campaign,

would be if the National Rally won a region," Stephane Zumsteeg from the Ipsos polling firm told AFP.

Though far-right politicians

preside over a handful of towns, running a region with a budget of billions of euros and powers over schools, transport and economic development would lend it the sort of legitimacy that Le Pen craves, analysts say. The one most likely to tip is the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, where the RN is fronted by Thierry Mariani, a former minister who defected from the centre-right Republicans party in 2019.

The voting will be held over two consecutive Sundays, with a second run-off vote on June 27 necessary unless parties win more than 50 per cent in the first round.— AFP ■

Former UK speaker Bercow defects to Labour with attack on Johnson

THE colourful former speaker of Britain's House of Commons John Bercow said he has left the Conservatives to join the opposition Labour Party, launching a blistering attack on Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

In an interview with the Observer newspaper published on Sunday, the former MP said the Conservative Party under Johnson was "reactionary, populist, nationalistic and sometimes even xenophobic".

Bercow, who stepped down

as speaker in October 2019 after 10 years, said he joined the Labour Party a few weeks ago because he shared its values.

"I am motivated by support for equality, social justice and internationalism. That is the Labour brand," he told the Observer.

"The conclusion I have reached is that this government needs to be replaced. The reality is that the Labour Party is the only vehicle that can achieve that objective. There is

no other credible option."

Bercow described the prime minister as "a successful campaigner but a lousy governor."

"I don't think he has any vision of a more equitable society, any thirst for social mobility or any passion to better the lot of people less fortunate than he is. I think increasingly people are sick of lies, sick of empty slogans, sick of a failure to deliver," he told the newspaper. — AFP ■



The colourful former speaker of Britain's House of Commons John Bercow said he has left the Conservatives to join the opposition Labour Party, launching a blistering attack on Prime Minister Boris Johnson. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin promises Russians billions in spending ahead of polls

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin proposed Saturday at his United Russia party congress billions of rubles in spending ahead of September parliamentary polls that could see the deeply unpopular party struggle.

Addressing several hundred of his mostly mask-wearing and socially-distanced loyalists in a Moscow convention centre as the capital set a pandemic high for new Covid cases for the second straight day, Putin proposed deploying billions towards social support.

This included 50 billion rubles (\$687 million) on public transport, 30 billion rubles for repairing roads and 20 billion rubles to clean up rivers, among other spending projects on infrastructure and healthcare.

"The program of the party of the leader has to be the program of the people," the 68-year-old Kremlin chief said in a speech broadcast on state television. — AFP ■

US marks slavery's end on new 'Juneteenth' national holiday

WITH marches, music and speeches, Americans on Saturday celebrated "Juneteenth", the newly declared national holiday that marks the end of slavery and which comes a year after George Floyd's murder sparked anti-racism protests.

Hundreds of events were planned across the country, from New York to Los Angeles, and most notably in Galveston, Texas, the symbolic heart of the Juneteenth commemoration.

For on 19 June 1865, it was in that Texas coastal area that the Union army — victorious after the bitterly fought Civil War — announced to African Americans that, even if some in Texas were trying to ignore it, enslaved people were now free. — AFP ■

Myanmar to compete in U-20 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers

OVER 30 Asian teams including Myanmar have been registered to enter the 2022 AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup qualification, according to the source of the Asian Football Confederation.

The first round qualifiers are scheduled to be played on from 14 to 22 August and the second round will be held from 3 to 7 November. At present, South Korea, Japan and North Korea have automatically qualified for the 2022 AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup Tournament. There are 30 subscribed teams in the list of entries for the first round qualifiers.

The teams included in the list are women's national teams of Myanmar, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Guam, China Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mal-

dives, Mongolia, Nepal, Northern Mariana Islands, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Myanmar, China, China Taipei, Laos, Mongolia, Singapore, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan will host the First Round Qualifiers.

Further detail fixtures and venues and the rights of host nations will be confirmed according to the pandemic condition, AFC authorities said. The AFC drawing ceremony for the women's qualifiers will be held next and numbers of member nations will be updated later, AFC stated.

Head coach Daw Thet Thet Win will handle the Myanmar U-20 women's football team for the upcoming qualifiers, according to the football authorities. —GNLM



Myanmar U-20 women's team Captain San Thaw Thaw (white jersey) runs with the ball at the Group B match of the Women's Youth Championship of AFC in Chonburi, Thailand on 3 November 2019. **PHOTO: MWF**

Loew dampens German Euro 2020 euphoria after Portugal rout



Robin Gosens celebrates his goal in Germany's 4-2 impressive win over holders Portugal. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

JOACHIM Loew has attempted to dampen German fans' Euro 2020 euphoria after a thrilling 4-2 win over Portugal boosted his side's chances of reaching the knockout stages.

Germany bounced back from losing their opening Group F game to world champions France with an emphatic victory over the holders on Saturday as Kai Havertz and Robin Gosens shone.

The result in Munich blew the group wide open, but Germany need to beat Hungary, who managed a surprise 1-1 draw with France, to be sure of reaching the last 16.

"The next game will perhaps be even more dogged, because Hungary stand deeper and defend with eight or nine men," warned Loew.

On Saturday night, the streets of Munich's city centre were full of jubilant fans celebrating the victory after arguably Germany's best performance since the 2014 World Cup that they won in Brazil. — AFP ■

Japan's Inoue dominates Dasmariñas to retain titles

JAPAN'S Naoya Inoue knocked Michael Dasmariñas down three times in three rounds to easily retain his WBA and IBF belts in a bantamweight world title bout on Saturday night.

Inoue knocked the challenger down once in the second and then twice in the third, forcing the referee to halt the onslaught at the Virgin Hotels in Las Vegas.

Inoue improved to 21-0, with 18 knockouts while Dasmariñas of the Philippines dropped to 30-3-1, with 20 KOs.

It was the first loss for Dasmariñas since losing a split decision in 2014, but it was obvious he has never faced a fighter of the magnitude of Inoue, who is considered one of the top pound-for-pound fighters in the sport.

Inoue's game plan to go to the body worked perfectly on Dasmariñas, who hardly threw any punches in rounds two and three.

Elsewhere, Jermall Charlo beat challenger Juan Montiel by a unanimous decision to keep his perfect record intact and retain his WBC middleweight title. — AFP ■

Toothless Spain battling for Euro 2020 lives after Poland stalemate

NINE years after winning their third major tournament in a row, Spain are struggling to qualify for the knockout stage of Euro 2020 after only drawing their first two group matches.

Coach Luis Enrique said if Saturday's 1-1 draw with Poland had been a boxing match, his team would have won on points but his team looked like they were on the ropes and lacking a knockout punch.

After starting with a stalemate against Sweden last week, Spain now sit third in Group E and need to beat Slovakia on Wednesday to guarantee qualification for the last 16.

Placed in a group that appeared one of the kindest in the draw and cosseted by a format that allows all but the very weak-

est to go through, failing to reach the next round would be nothing less than a humiliation for Spain.

"I was expecting more," said Luis Enrique. "I was expecting

six points and zero goals conceded but this is the situation."

Luis Enrique complained last week about the state of the pitch at La Cartuja in Seville

where Spain are playing their three group games, a gripe that was repeated by Manchester City midfielder Rodri on Saturday. — AFP ■



Spain's players react to their draw in the UEFA EURO 2020 Group E football match between Spain and Poland at La Cartuja Stadium in Seville, Spain, on 19 June 2021. **PHOTO: POOL / AFP**