

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Myanmar rejects reports and dialogues that run contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

THE Interactive Dialogues with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Myanmar and with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar were organized at the Third Committee of the 76th United Nations General Assembly on 22 October 2021, based on their usual biased reports. It was preceded by the Special Envoy's press conference on Myanmar on 21 October 2021.

The present reports duplicate the preceding reports and carry the same rhetoric with full of repetition while factual account of incidents were missing. The figures of deaths described in both reports are mostly referred to the so-called Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) which is reportedly mentioned as credible source. Meanwhile, the list prepared by AAPP itself raises many questions on credibility as it does not include verifiable information of affected persons.

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Wanet Elephant Camp prepping for tourism recovery



Elephants from Wanet Elephant Camp are seen in drill. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

WANET Elephant Camp on the way to Yeywa Dam between Mandalay and PyinOoLwin is prepared for the time when the travel restriction is lifted. The camp will attract the visitors with the natural scenic beauty of the mountains and the superb facilities, said U Toe Aung, assistant manager of Wanet and Deedok elephant camps under Myanma Timber Enterprise.

The COVID-19 consequences shut down the camps temporarily. The camp is made ready for the visitors to enjoy the natural scenery with the best facility and services. When it is reopened, two routes (short trip and long trip) will be involved. The cost of elephant ride is set unchanged like the previous rate.

“The buildings are also prepared for the visitors’ accommodation, in line with the health

guidelines for the COVID-19. The greening and landscaping projects are also prioritized. The banana plant farms are also expanded to ensure the adequate feed for the elephants. There are eight elephants at Wanet Elephant Camp. When the tourism restriction is eased, it will be reopened in accordance with the health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health,” he elaborated. Despite the closure of the camp, elephant lovers donated the feed through the digital payment. It costs K30,000-K50,000 for the elephants’ once feast. The visitors can observe the natural scenery by elephant ride when it is reopened. A short trip is estimated at K3,000 while the elephant ride for a long-distance costs K5,000.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)/GNLM

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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

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Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 products continue



Large cargo trucks carrying loads of medical supplies are rolling on the roads leading to respective destinations.

THE Ministry of Commerce arranges to import the essential medical supplies for the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities through aviation, waterway and border trade camps without delay on a daily basis.

Yesterday, anti-COVID-19 products were imported by five companies using seven vehicles.

A total of 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen carried by one bowser, and 57 tonnes of masks were imported via Chinshwehaw and Myawady border trade posts.

One oxygen bowser led to Yangon via Myawady trading post, officials said.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the import process.

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

Public request by Ministry of Health

ONLY when the people cooperate will the work process achieve success in a short time for effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 among the people. As such, all the people are requested to abide by the following points: -

1. Stay at home as much as possible.
2. Don't accept the guests at the house. You don't visit other houses.
3. The older persons above 65 or those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart must be worn masks in the house. They must be placed at well-ventilated sites.
4. Wear masks if you go outside without fail. Systematically wash hands. Take a six-foot distance from others. Avoid visits to the rooms where ventilation is not good.
5. Avoid the crowds.
6. If possible, go shopping once a week. Don't buy anything from the vendors who don't systematically wear masks.
7. Take care of carrying the virus to the houses whenever return home from outside. Systematically discard the used masks and single disposable equipment outside the houses. Avoid close contact with family members before changing clothes or washing the body.
8. As the vaccines for your quota is the best, accept vaccinations for full time. Despite receiving the vaccination, you should abide by the protective ways.
9. Systematically cooperate in prevention, control and treatment of the disease with manpower, money, materials and expertise.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)

56,129 students aged 12 and above receive first dose of Sinovac vaccine in Yangon

THE government conducted a vaccination programme for a total of 68,500 basic education students aged 12 and above in Yangon Region starting from 17 October, and 56,129 students received their first jab till yesterday, according to the Ministry of Education.

Those who admitted schools for 2021-2022 academic year and

attended the schools started receiving the Sinovac vaccine on 17 October, and 348 high school students and 662 middle school students were vaccinated according to the report of 23 October.

During the one-week vaccination, a total of 15,210 high school students and 40,919 middle school students of Yangon Region received the vaccines, according

to the region education officer report.

The first jabs for the students aged 12 and above will be delivered from 17 October to 12 November while the second jabs will be from 13 November to 10 December with the permissions of their parents.—Soe Myint Aung/GNLM



A health staff vaccinates a student of aged 12 and above. PHOTO: NAING LIN KYAW (IPRD)

Emergence of the genuine democratic federal Union

THE aim is set to ensure the prosperity of the nation and emerge the genuine democratic federal Union. The country does not develop as expected due to various reasons. It is necessary to take lessons from the shameful acts in the previous elections. Efforts are being made to carry out the best works to be handed as a good legacy to new generations.

(Excerpt from the Speech made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the State Administration Council meeting 16 / 2021 on 15 October 2021)

Myanmar rejects reports and dialogues that run contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

FROM PAGE-1

The report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations is based on sweeping allegations with no clear description on what individual incident happened on which date and time. The Special Envoy also highlights a significant setback of Myanmar that fell to the Tatmadaw's dissent on the electoral process and outcome while omitting the electoral fraud which led to the current political situation with total neglect of the Tatmadaw's primal calls for settling these irregularities by NLD government and previous Union Election Commission. Furthermore, the purposes to interfere and dominate by the United Nations actors are evident as described in the observations of the Special Envoy. The report implies a head on further clash and large-scale armed uprisings between the Government and its people themselves, unnoticeably encouraging the growing unity among groups in the name of common democratic aspirations and common sufferings. It does not utterly show moral support, but only lead to further division among nation and incitement to internal violence. Thus, the questions on integrity of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and accordingly, her presence are increasingly growing.

Similarly, almost the whole context in the report of the Special Rapporteur is enriched with distressing narratives by unknown persons with no clue to authenticity and accuracy. It is observed in his report that the Special Rapporteur brings unfounded rumour to a speedy and risky conclusion. For instance, by a narrative of military officer who defected from the Tatmadaw, the Special Rapporteur presumes that the acts conducted by the military likely constitute crimes against humanity. Based on a piece of rhetoric by an individual defector without reasoning and verification, it raises many questions on how such a one-sided conclusion could easily be responded. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur makes conclusion based on exaggerated information that the Myanmar Government's mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused implication for new variants even deadlier and more contagious than Delta. It is interested to learn how the Special Rapporteur reaches such incorrect assumption based on which scientific studies. In the middle of July, a total of 7,083 persons were infected within a day, accounting for 33 per cent that is the highest figure of infection during the third wave. In cooperation with the people, the Myanmar Government has been putting its utmost efforts in containing the COVID-19 pandemic and the infection rate has significantly declined and currently it reaches less than 8 per cent at present.

It is also sceptical that just on a very weak basis of hearsay unreliable sources, how all these reports consistently made similar voice in denouncing the sovereign government while watering down the violent acts committed by the terrorist groups. Although both reports themselves superficially mentions that there are several acts of violence incited and initiated by terrorist groups, the actual numbers of deaths committed by them were even hidden. From February to late October 2021, there are altogether 3,642 terrorist acts that include 986 terror attacks, 2,344 bomb attacks and 312 arson attacks. Due to their terrorist attacks, 1,155 civilians died and 765 people were injured. Moreover, a total of 182 persons including 75 military personnel, 93 police personnel and 14 civil servants died while 602 were injured. A total of 251 schools and education buildings were torched and bombed by the terrorists. They destroyed roads and railways for 536 times and 76 bridges were also damaged. As a matter of fact, taking part in hostilities and using schools and religious buildings to attack state's security forces by the terrorist groups may constitute war crimes. However, these appalling acts of terrorism are lacking in the reports and accordingly, it amounts to possible conspiracy to denounce the legitimate government and runs contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Presence of Kyaw Moe Tun, a dismissed civil servant who has been facing the charge of high treason, at the United Nations' meetings including the aforesaid interactive dialogues also indicates the repeated failures of the United Nations in direct contravention of the principles of non-impartiality and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. Myanmar cannot accept the motives of the Organization for its target on a country and using human rights as a political tool to intervene in the internal affairs of Myanmar.

Since their conducts and reports are infringing the sovereignty of the country and their contents did not reflect the actual situation of the country, Myanmar strongly rejects the reports of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur and their interactive dialogues where participation of the country concerned is also intentionally excluded.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated: 24 October 2021*

687 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 October, total figure rises to 494,263

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 494,263 after 687 new cases were reported on 24 October 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 456,781 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,538 after 27 died.

COVID-19 vaccine is being injected to those of priority groups in regions and states for prevention and control of the disease. Up to 23-10-2021, a total of 12,387,573 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 5,701,536 people have been vaccinated two times and 6,686,037 people once.—MNA

Meiktila Plain water pumping project provides water to 2,800 acres of monsoon paddy



THE Meiktila Plain water pumping project in Wundwin Township of Meiktila District in Mandalay Region supplies water to more than 2,800 acres of monsoon paddy.

The Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (Water Resource) helps grow monsoon paddy and other crops in Wundwin Township to ensure the food sufficiency with Meiktila Plain water pumping project and estimates to cultivate 2,297 acres of monsoon paddy and 403 acres of other crops this year.

The local farmers from

Konywa, Nyaungokphee, Nyaungbintha-Hseywa, Khingyi, Myaytaingkan and Yaytwin villages of Wundwin Township grew the monsoon paddy with the irrigated water from No 2 pumping station (Konywa) of Meiktila Plain water pumping project, No 3 pumping station (Khingyi) and Low Lift starting from 15 July.

The region cultivates 2,864 acres of monsoon paddy to date and the harvest exceeds the target this year, said U Myo Min Tun, assistant director of the department.—Thein Myint Kyaw (Meiktila)/GNLM

Meiktila plain is filled with thriving paddy plantations.

More than 6,000 students vaccinated in Kyaikmaraw Township

A total of 6,050 students between the age of 12 and 18 in Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine till 23 October.

Of 7,065 students who have

enrolled at 72 basic education schools in the township, accounting for 66.63 per cent have received the first jab of the vaccine, according to the Township Education Department.

The vaccination programme for the students started in Kyaikmaraw Township on 18 October.—Cho Myat Myat Htwe (IPRD)/GNLM

Above 12-year old 4,221 students vaccinated against COVID-19 in Kanbalu Township

THE Sagaing Region government arranged the vaccination programme for the students aged 12 and above at the respective vaccination sites from

22 to 24 October, and 4,221 students received their first doses of vaccines, according to the township public health department.

Township administration body chairman U Phone Htet Naing Myint, medical superintendent of 100-bed hospital Dr Nay Moe, township education officer U Myo Win and other officials inspected the vaccination processes and the health workers, education staff, police and fire brigade members contributed to the programmes.

There are 6,688 students aged over 12 at basic education schools at different levels in Kanbalu Township and 4,221 students came to receive their vaccine till yesterday. The officials also make arrangements to vaccinate the remaining students including the ones from private schools and monastic education schools.—Aung Win Nyein (Kanbalu)/GNLM



Students are seen in a queue to receive vaccines against COVID-19 in Kanbalu Township.

COVID-19 vaccination for students aged 12 and above continues in Mudon



Basic education students aged 12 and above are waiting for receiving vaccine at the school.

THE vaccination against COVID-19 for students aged 12 and above continued in Mudon Township, Mon State yesterday and a total of 899 students were vaccinated at Basic Education High School (Kalawthaw) vaccination site.

There are reportedly 8,465 middle and high school students between aged 12 and 18 from 38 basic education schools, two monastic education schools and three private schools in Mudon Township.

As of 23 October, 4,580 students, accounting for 64.6

per cent of the students have been jabbed the first dose of the vaccine, according to the Township Education Office.

The inoculation was carried out under the supervision of the Mudon Township Administration Body, with the collaboration of the health-care workers, education officers, township officials, members of the Fire Brigade, ward/village administrators, members of the Red Cross Brigade, and civil society organizations.—Aung Myo Thu (IPRD)/GNLM

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Cotton plants thriving in more than 5,500 acres of croplands in Pakokku Township

A total of 5,550 acres of various cotton plants including long staple cotton were cultivated in Pakokku Township, Magway Region last financial year 2020-2021, Pakokku Township Agriculture Department stated.

The majority of the sown acreage is under long staple cotton plants which are high yielding variety and is also compatible with the region. About 1,981,350 viss (a viss is equal to 1.6 kg) of cotton have been harvested so far starting from September.

During the cotton season of the FY 2022-2023, a total of 3,373 acres of Mahlaing strain, 2,773 of

Wagyi strain and 5,879 acres of long staple cotton are projected in Pakokku Township, totalling 12,025 acres of cotton, said U San Lwin, head of Pakokku Township Agriculture Department.

This year, 60,962 acres of paddy, 131,738 acres of pulses and beans, 201,042 acres of edible oil crops, 19,196 acres of maize, 412 acres of kitchen crops and 5,550 acres of cotton have been cultivated.

The department's staff has been providing agricultural techniques and inputs in order to boost production and produce quality crops. — Salai Ko Kee (IPRD)/GNLM



Long staple cotton plants are bearing flowers in the farm. PHOTO: SALAI KO KEE

Dried ribbonfish marketable in Kyaukpyu



Vendors are preparing to sell dried ribbonfish. PHOTO: TIN TUN OO(IPRD)

DRIED ribbonfish in Kyaukphyu Township, Rakhine State, is attracting a large number of buyers and is sold very well, according to a dried fish trader.

"We have to buy these fish from the trawlers. At the moment, only the dried ribbonfish is in demand," said U Khin Zaw who is in the fishing business. A viss of dried ribbonfish is sold for 4,500 kyats from the fishing trawlers and the fish is resold at 5,000 kyats per viss. In addition to the distribution in the markets in Kyaukpyu Township, these fish are also sold in MyaukU, Kyauktaw, Minbya, An, Tat-

taung and Yanbye towns in Rakhine State, he added.

The trader also said he still can't distribute the dried ribbonfish to big cities such as Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay, and abroad due to the lack of contacts. Ribbonfish is a kind of sea fish and is also locally known as dried Ngathaywe in Rakhine State. It is used to make a fish paste and the dried one is cooked as a delicious dish by grilling or frying or making as a salad, as well as it is also eaten with traditional Myanmar breakfast such as hot sticky rice.—Tin Tun Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

Exchange rate on US dollar stands below K2,000

THE exchange rate on US dollar dipped below K2,000 in the local forex market when a US dollar index hovered around 93 points and the Central Bank of Myanmar sold US\$30 million to the authorized dealers at its auction rate of K1,800 last Friday (22 October).

The CBM exercised foreign exchange intervention to steer the own currency value and sold \$80 million to the private banks in October, as per money exchangers.

Last September-end, a dollar's value reached the highest of over K3,000 in history. The CBM, therefore, sold \$63 million to the banks in September.

The CBM sold the foreign currency to the prioritized sectors (palm oil, fuel oil and pharmaceuticals) at an auction rate through the authorized banks every week.

In August, the CBM reportedly sold \$28 million at its auction rate. Kyat is

weakening in the local forex market. In a bid to control the dollar gain against Kyat, the CBM sold about 6.8 million dollars on 3 February 2021, \$12 million in April, \$24 million in May, \$12 million in June and \$39 million in July in the auction market respectively.

The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-K1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May and it moved in the maximum of K1,595-K1,620 in June. The rate stood at K1,626-K1,670 in July. It hit the lowest of K1,660 and the highest of K1,682 in August. Last month, the rate edged up to K3,200 and fell to K1,696.—GNLM



Cashier is checking US dollars at the counter as exchange rate on US dollar stands below K200.

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

150 mph without a driver: Indy autonomous cars gear up for race

THERE will be cars at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Saturday but no driver in sight as racing teams mark a milestone in autonomous vehicle development.

Nine single-seaters will take part in the Indy Autonomous Challenge (IAC), a competition with a \$1 million prize that aims to prove "autonomous technology can work at extreme conditions," said Paul Mitchell, CEO of co-organizer Energy Systems Network (ESN).

Cars will not race on the "Brickyard" track at the same time but will start one after the

other – with the winner being the fastest over two full-speed laps.

Teams are made up of students from around the world. Each group was given the same Dallara IL-15 car, which looks like a small Formula One vehicle, and the same equipment, which includes sensors, cameras, GPS and radars.

On race day, it is not drivers that will make the difference – but about 40,000 lines of code programmed by each team.

The software kickstarts the engine and a powerful computer wedged in the bucket where the driver usually sits.

The MIT-PITT-RW team, the only one made up entirely of students without supervision, got their car only six weeks ago.

Engineering student Nayana Suvarna, 22, does not yet have a driving license but was nonetheless reluctantly designated as team manager.

"I didn't know anything about car racing," she said with a smile, "but I'm becoming a fan."

The MIT-PITT-RW's car hit 130 km/h (81 mph) in testing, but Suvarna believes it capable of overtaking 160 on Saturday (100 mph). — AFP ■



There will be cars racing Saturday at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, but not a driver in sight. PHOTO: ED JONES / AFP

Japan's Pasona to introduce IT talent teleworking from overseas



The recruitment agency said it aims to connect around 300 IT professionals to companies in Japan over a three-year period. Tasks such as smartphone app development and website building will be entrusted to those workers directly by firms in Japan or via Pasona's local offices, according to the company. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPANESE staffing firm Pasona Group Inc has said it will launch next month a service focused on introducing to companies in Japan overseas IT engineers who will work remotely from home amid travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On 1 November, Pasona will

begin its cross-border remote human resources service, covering those who are highly skilled in the IT field in such countries as India, South Korea and Vietnam, according to a press release last Tuesday.

The recruitment agency said it aims to connect around 300 IT professionals to compa-

nies in Japan over a three-year period. Tasks such as smartphone app development and website building will be entrusted to those workers directly by firms in Japan or via Pasona's local offices, according to the company.

By 2030, Japan is expected to face a shortage of up to 790,000 IT personnel, according to a 2019 survey conducted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

While interest in recruiting foreign talent by Japan-based companies is growing, travel restrictions under the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented domestic firms from bringing in workers from abroad, according to Pasona.

The staffing firm said it is mainly targeting IT talent in Asian markets where it already has a presence or is planning expansion, cooperating with local science universities to secure personnel. — Kyodo ■

Ethiopia launches air strikes in northern and western Tigray

ETHIOPIA'S military on Sunday launched two air strikes on what a government official said were rebel-held facilities in Tigray, the seventh and eighth bombardments in its war-torn northern region in a week.

The strikes, far from the regional capital Mekele, signalled the military was potentially widening its campaign of aerial bombardments which has drawn international rebukes and

disrupted UN flights to the famine-threatened region.

"Today the western front of (Mai Tsebri) which was serving as a training and military command post for the terrorist group TPLF has been the target of an air strike," government spokeswoman Selamawit Kassa said, referring to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Later, Selamawit said the same mission destroyed a sepa-

rate facility in the northern town of Adwa used to manufacture "military equipments" as well as fake military uniforms used by TPLF combatants.

There was no immediate response from the TPLF, which has condemned earlier strikes as evidence of the government's disregard for civilian lives. There was also no immediate information on casualties in either Mai Tsebri or Adwa. — AFP ■

Taliban offer jobs for wheat to tackle hunger and unemployment

AFGHANISTAN'S Taliban government launched a programme to tackle hunger on Sunday, offering thousands of people wheat in exchange for labour.

The scheme will be rolled out around Afghanistan's major towns and cities and employ 40,000 men in the capital alone, the Taliban's chief spokesman said at a press conference in southern Kabul.

"This is an important step for fighting unemployment," Zabihullah Mujahid said, adding the labourers must "work hard".

Afghanistan—which is already suffering from poverty, drought, electricity blackouts and a failing economic system—is now facing the onset of what may be a harsh winter.

The Taliban's food-for-work scheme will not pay labourers,

targeting those who are currently unemployed and most at risk of starvation during the winter.

The two-month programme will see 11,600 tons of wheat distributed in the capital, with about 55,000 tons for elsewhere in the country, including Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif and Pol-i-Khomri.

Work for the labourers in Kabul will include digging water channels and catchment terraces for snow in the hills to combat drought.

Mujahid and other senior officials, including agriculture minister Abdul Rahman Rashid and Kabul mayor Hamdullah Nomani, cut a pink ribbon and dug a small ditch at a ceremony in the rural Rish Khor area of the capital to launch the programme. — AFP ■



Afghanistan's Taliban government launched a programme to tackle hunger on Sunday, offering thousands of people wheat in exchange for labour. PHOTO: AFP

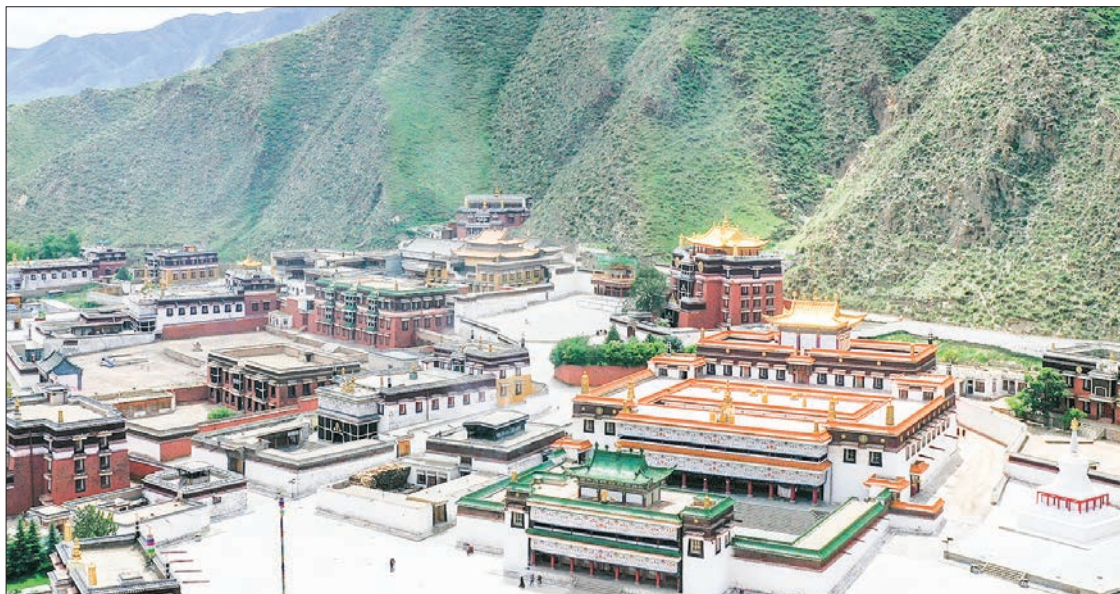
China's Gansu province suspends all tourism activities as Covid-19 cases surge in region

GANSU, China's Northwest province, has introduced the suspension of all tourism activities after a surge in the Covid-19 cases in the region, reported native media.

All vacationers in Lanzhou, the place most Covid-19 cases in the province had been reported, required to remain in wherever place they had been and be quarantined, mentioned Global Times.

Gansu registered, from 18 October to Saturday night time, a complete of 41 confirmed cases, of which 30 are from Lanzhou, seven from Zhangye, two from Jiayu Pass, one from Tianshui, and one from Longnan.

Gene sequencing revealed



Aerial photo taken on 18 June 2020 shows a view of the Labrang Monastery in Xiahe County, northwest China's Gansu Province. PHOTO: XINHUA

the cases in Gansu had been brought on by the Delta var-

iant. Infections in Beijing, Inner Mongolia, and Shaanxi

had been additionally reported brought on by the Delta

variant.

The National Health Commission on Sunday mentioned that the Chinese mainland, on Saturday, reported 26 new regionally transmitted Covid-19 cases.

Of the brand new native cases, seven had been reported in Inner Mongolia, six every in Gansu and Ningxia, 4 in Beijing, and one every in Hebei, Hunan and Shaanxi, reported Xinhua.

Also reported had been 17 new imported cases, of which eight had been reported in Zhejiang, 4 in Shanghai, and one every in Beijing, Heilongjiang, Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan. — Xinhua ■

Boxing Day Ashes Test could see 80,000 crowd as Covid rules ease



A large crowd is expected at the MCG for the Boxing Day Test between Australia and England. PHOTO: AFP

HOW many spectators, if any, would be allowed into the cavernous Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) for the third Ashes Test has long been up in the air.

But with the nation's sec-

ond-biggest city re-opening on Friday after more than 260 days under lockdown since the pandemic began, Victoria state Premier Dan Andrews was hopeful it will be jam-packed.

"I want to see 80,000-plus people at the Boxing Day Test on day one, that's what I want to see," he told reporters in flagging a further planned easing of Covid restrictions.

"We are determined to deliver that. It won't be easy. I think selling the tickets will be pretty easy. But we are very confident that we will be able to deliver that."

The crowd for last summer's Boxing Day Test against India was capped at 30,000 per day due to the pandemic.

The five-Test Ashes series will start in Brisbane on December 8 before moving to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and ending in Perth. — AFP ■

Indonesia reports 623 newly-confirmed COVID-19 cases, 29 more deaths

INDONESIA on Sunday confirmed 623 new COVID-19 cases, raising its tally of infections to 4,240,019, according to the country's Health Ministry.

The death toll from the virus in Indonesia rose by 29 to 143,205, while 1,037 more people recovered in the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of recoveries to 4,082,454.

Indonesia started mass COVID-19 vaccinations on 13 January after the authorities approved the emergency use of the Chinese Sinovac vaccine.

More than 113.03 million people have received their first doses of vaccines, while over 67.91

million have taken their second doses.

Indonesia has so far administered over 182.05 million doses

including third booster jabs.

The Indonesian government aims to vaccinate 208.2 million people in the country. — Xinhua ■



Tourists wearing face masks take a pedicab in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 24 October 2021. PHOTO: SUPRIYANTO/XINHUA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wuhan Marathon postponed after China Covid-19 surge

CHINA reported 26 new domestic Covid-19 cases on Sunday, in an outbreak that has become latest test of the country's zero-tolerance approach with just over 100 days until the start of the Games.

Authorities have been racing to contain virus infections via mass testing of residents and targeted lockdowns.

But with the rise in cases, organisers of the Wuhan Marathon said in a statement released late last week that they would postpone Sunday's event in the central Chinese city "to prevent the risk of epidemic spread".

The event was expected to have 26,000 participants, taking part in races including a full marathon and half marathon, in the city where coronavirus was first identified towards the end of 2019, state media reported.

The organising committee said it would refund the registration fees of contestants who successfully signed up.

China has wrestled down the number of infections to a trickle by deploying aggressive, mass testing and keeping its borders extremely tight. — AFP ■

Australia launches "spread freedom" COVID-19 vaccination push amid battle against 3rd wave

THE Australian government has launched the next phase of its coronavirus vaccination campaign as the country continues to battle the third wave of COVID-19 infections.

Health Minister Greg Hunt on Sunday debuted the government's new vaccine advertising campaign.

Dubbed "spread freedom," the campaign emphasizes the benefits of getting vaccinated against COVID-19 such as the freedom to travel interstate and overseas, reminding people that with increasing vaccinations they are able to return to a more normal and free life.

As of Saturday, 86.6 per cent of Australians had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 73.1 per cent were fully inoculated.

Lieutenant General John Frewen, the COVID-19 Taskforce commander, said Australia was on track to become one of the most vaccinated countries in the world.

"We've now got enough vaccines distributed around the country to double dose all Australians who want to get vaccinated," he told reporters in Canberra. — Xinhua ■

Solve crisis, overcome challenges for grasping opportunities for life

EVERYBODY, every organization, every society, every country, etc has to overcome difficulties and challenges. As such, it is necessary to take an adequate time to analyze the root cause of difficulties.

In the Myanmar society, senior citizens often say that these challenges are the way of mundane world in which gain and loss, fame and dishonour, praise and blame and happiness and suffering are the facts of life. It means that the goodness and badness which are always paralleled in the society.

Naturally, everybody face the crisis of life and challenges. Those who solve the crisis and overcome challenges can be dubbed as the persons with powerful minds. They have to foster the compassion and sympathy over others while reducing the pessimism.

Everybody needs to consider how to apply the constructive attitudes to overcome the challenges and how to manage the results in overcoming process. If they win over the difficulties, they have to consider how to continue the further process in the future. If they face loss in the efforts, they need to encourage the courage for overcoming the challenges again and again without giving up anything. Some experts found the research works, saying that everybody would make creative thinking when they face any crisis or some tightened situation. It is because, when they face such a situation, they pour out the energetic efforts for solving the crisis lonely without help of any other. In this situation, they know they must strive for overcoming the challenges on a self-reliance basis.

In fact, the critical thinking of human may affect the health and wealth of life. US medical experts said symptoms of diseases most of the patients are suffering are based on lack of capability to think the good things. Bad thoughts and pessimism may affect the heart to control the blood circulation. Abnormal operation of the heart cannot support the good blood circulation which cannot contribute to the creativities through the critical thinking. Consequently, those patients suffer from tension and depression.

Most of the humans are difficult to abandon bad thoughts from their minds. In fact, they have to culture the optimism as well as open their minds to be able to secure the good opportunities for their lives. If so, the success will be within their reach.

Naturally, everybody face the crisis of life and challenges. Those who solve the crisis and overcome challenges can be dubbed as the persons with powerful minds. They have to foster the compassion and sympathy over others while reducing the pessimism.



Vietnam to open Phu Quoc island to vaccinated tourists in November

Phu Quoc Island, is the largest Vietnam Island and is part of Kiên Giang Biosphere Conservation Area that has been inserted in 2006 by UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve. District of Phu Quoc includes 28 islands with a total area of 593 square kilometres and Phu Quoc is the largest one.

PHU QUOC, which lies around 10 kilometres (six miles) off Cambodia in the Gulf of Thailand, boasts white-sand beaches and crystal clear waters, as well as mountains and thick jungle. It attracted around 670,000 visitors and earned more than \$18 billion dollars from international arrivals in 2019, with authorities hoping to turn it into a tourist mecca in the style of Thailand's Phuket or Indonesia's Bali.

From November 20, "charter flights" for international travellers with vaccine passports will be welcomed to the island, the government said late Friday. After that, between late December and the end of March, the island aims to receive up to 5,000 foreign arrivals on similar charter flights.

Tourists will need to show vaccine certificates together with a negative Covid-19 test result before being allowed in.

According to authorities, they should come from places with "a high safety record on Covid-19 prevention, like some parts of Europe, the Middle East, North East Asia, Southeast Asia, North America and Australia".

A previous plan to open Phu Quoc to international visitors in October was abandoned due to low vaccination rates among residents.

But the Southeast Asian country is desperate to revive its economy after months of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Its borders have been shut to international visitors since early last year and there are almost no commercial flights



Phu Quoc, which lies around 10 kilometres (six miles) off Cambodia in the Gulf of Thailand, boasts white-sand beaches and crystal clear waters, as well as mountains and thick jungle. PHOTO: PHUQUOCVIETNAM.NET /AFP

entering the country.

According to state media, authorities also want to open popular destinations such as UNESCO world heritage site Ha Long Bay and the ancient town

of Hoi An to foreign travellers in November, but no clear plan has been outlined.

Vietnam has reported more than 880,000 Covid cases and around 21,500 deaths. Fewer

than 20 per cent of its 100 million people have been fully vaccinated.

The announcement comes after Thailand said vaccinated travellers from more than 40

countries will be allowed to enter the kingdom without undergoing quarantine come November 1.

SOURCE: AFP



Pandemic: Deaths Spiral In US And Europe

The pandemic had been slowing down since late August, but has gained new ground, especially in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, whose vaccination drive is less advanced than the rest of the continent.

AFTER two months of improvement, the coronavirus pandemic took a turn for the worse this week around the world, fuelled by deteriorating situations in Europe and the United States (US). Here is the global state of play based on an AFP database.

On The March Again

The number of new daily cases increased slightly by two per cent globally to 410,654, according to an AFP tally to Thursday. There were however wide disparities between regions. The pandemic had been slowing down since late August, but has gained new ground, especially in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, whose vaccination drive is less advanced than the



Russian police and National Guard (Rosgvardia) servicemen patrol Red Square in central Moscow on 20 October, 2021, amid the crisis linked with the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

rest of the continent. Cases have also soared in the United Kingdom (UK) which has lifted almost all its

health restrictions.

However, the confirmed cases only reflect a fraction of the actual

number of infections, with varying counting practices and levels of testing in different countries.

Europe Worrying

This week the situation deteriorated sharply in Europe, with a 16 per cent increase in the number of new recorded cases. Infections were up two per cent in the Middle East. But in other regions of the world the pandemic continued to slow down, with 16 per cent fewer cases in Asia, 13 per cent less in Africa, the United States (US) and Canada and four per cent less in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the real number of cases in Africa is seven times higher than official figures, due to lack of testing.

Deaths On The Rise

At a global level there was also an upturn in the number of daily

deaths, which increased by two per cent to 6,905 per day. The rise was driven by a 10 per cent spike in Europe and nine per cent increase in mortalities in the US and Canada. However, there was a 17 per cent downturn in the number of deaths in Asia. The US recorded the biggest number of deaths per day, at 1,703, followed by Russia with 1,011, with Romania coming in third place with 389.

Biggest Spikes

Syria saw the biggest spike in the number of new cases, with an increase of 153 per cent. But regionally the biggest increases this week were mainly in Europe, with a 95 per cent increase in the Czech Republic, 80 per cent in Hungary and 78 per cent in Poland.—AFP ■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 24 October 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 25 October 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in (Southern and Eastern)Shan State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region, scattered in Magway, Bago, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine, Northern Shan and Kayah states and isolated in the remaining regions and states with likelihood isolated heavyfalls in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, and Magway regions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of scattered rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, and Taninthayi regions and Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECASTD NFOR MANDALAY ANEIGHBOOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2021: Isolated thunder showers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia targets zero carbon emissions by 2060

TOP crude exporter Saudi Arabia will aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2060, its de facto ruler said on Saturday, days before the COP26 global climate summit.

The kingdom, one of the world's biggest polluters, said it would also join a global effort to cut methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. The UN says more than 130 countries have set or are considering a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, a target it says is "imperative" to safeguard a livable climate.

"I announce today Saudi

Arabia's target to reach net zero emissions by 2060 through its circular carbon economy approach," said Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a recorded statement at the "Saudi Green Initiative" forum.

"I am pleased to launch initiatives in the energy sector that will reduce carbon emissions by 278 million tonnes annually by 2030, thus voluntarily more than doubling the target announced," said Prince Mohammed.

"We also announce the kingdom's accession to the Global Methane Pledge."

A statement said Saudi Ara-

bia would "contribute to cutting global methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, as part of its commitment to deliver a cleaner, greener future".

The 2060 target would "enable us to have a smooth and viable transition, without risking economic or social impacts", Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman told the conference. The announcements come a day after UN chief Antonio Guterres said the current climate situation was "a one-way ticket for disaster", stressing the need to "avoid a failure" at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. — AFP ■



Saudi Arabia had already announced earlier this year a scheme to plant billions of trees as part of the Green Initiative. PHOTO: AFP

Changing ocean currents driving extreme winter weather: Researchers



The ocean bed in the Straits of Florida near Key Largo, Florida. The photo was taken, on 23 September 2021. PHOTO: AFP

THROUGHOUT Earth's oceans runs a conveyor belt of water. Its churning is powered by differences in the water's temperature and saltiness, and weather patterns around the world are regulated by its activity.

A pair of researchers studied the Atlantic portion of this worldwide conveyor belt called the Atlantic Meridional Over-

turning Circulation, or AMOC, and found that winter weather in the United States critically depends on this conveyor belt-like system. As the AMOC slows because of climate change, the US will experience more extreme cold winter weather.

The study, published in the journal *Communications Earth and Environment* was led by

Jianjun Yin, an associate professor in the University of Arizona Department of Geosciences and co-authored by Ming Zhao, a physical scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory.

AMOC works like this: Warm water travels north in the upper Atlantic Ocean and releases heat into the atmosphere at high latitudes. As the water cools, it becomes denser, which causes it to sink into the deep ocean where it flows back south.

"This circulation transports an enormous amount of heat northward in the ocean," Yin said. "The magnitude is on the order of 1 petawatts, or 10 to the 15 power watts. Right now, the energy consumption by the entire world is about 20 terawatts, or 10 to the 12 power watts. So, 1 petawatt is enough to run about 50 civilisations." — ANI ■

Washington, District of Cats: US capital first city to count its felines

A striped feline leaps from a rock under the shade of a tree on a late October morning.

As its front paws touch the ground, the whiskered creature looks up, eyes darting left. A wildlife camera clicks and captures the scene.

It's a cat — and the location isn't a remote rainforest, but the capital of the United States.

The photo is part of the DC Cat Count, a first of its kind, three-year effort by animal welfare advocates, conservationists

and scientists to enumerate every *Felis catus* in Washington.

The team behind the study says it provides an accurate estimate of the size of the city's indoor, outdoor and shelter population.

It found there are about 200,000 cats in the District of Columbia, with about half of them living indoors only, said Tyler Flockhart, a conservation biologist and science lead on the DC Cat Count.

The other half is a group

that includes owned cats with limited or unlimited access outdoors, stray cats, and roughly 3,000 to 4,000 feral cats who avoid interactions with humans, Flockhart said. "I don't think that you can find another wild mammal — another wild carnivore — that occurs at that density anywhere in the world," he said, of cats and urban environments.

"I think that this is really sort of an interesting idea that we can have so many cats in such a small location." — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sri Lanka bans contaminated Chinese fertiliser

Sri Lanka has barred a Chinese ship carrying desperately needed organic fertiliser that experts have found to be tainted with harmful bacteria, officials said Sunday.

The action comes as Sri Lanka battles food shortages caused by a currency crisis while farmers have said a government ban on chemical fertiliser could ruin their crops this year.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's office said the National Plant Quarantine Services had tested a sample from the unnamed Chinese vessel and "confirmed the presence of organisms, including certain types of harmful bacteria".

A Commercial High Court has banned any payment to Qingdao Seawin Biotech Group Co., Ltd for the 96,000 tonnes of fertiliser, an official statement added.

Authorities halted the \$42 million deal last month, but reports said the cargo had still been shipped and was due in Colombo. The location of the ship has not been revealed.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority said the agricultural ministry ordered them on Saturday to prevent the unloading of the fertiliser in any port and to turn away the Chinese vessel.

Sri Lanka originally ordered the organic fertiliser from China as part of its efforts to become the world's first 100 per cent organic farming nation. — AFP ■

Paris pushes vision of '100-per cent bikeable' city

Socialist mayor Anne Hidalgo, who runs Paris with support from the Green party, placed a push for more bike-friendly policies at the centre of her platform that got her re-elected by a wide margin in June of last year.

She is now also the Socialist party's candidate in next year's presidential election, hoping to unseat President Emmanuel Macron, but her campaign has got off to a woeful start with single-digit ratings.

Her policies have found wide support among the capital's urban elites with short commutes, but they are seen as a much harder sell in the rest of the country.

"Our target is to make our city 100 per cent bikeable," David Belliard, deputy mayor in charge of urban transformation and Green party member, told AFP.

Some 180 million euros of new spending is earmarked for infrastructure, including plans for major bike routes across the city and into surrounding suburbs, and additional measures to make crossings and key entry points into inner Paris safer for cyclists, Belliard said. — AFP ■

Pfizer says Covid vaccine 90% effective in younger children

THE new data were published on the website of the Food and Drug Administration, which has called an advisory panel of independent experts to meet Tuesday to decide whether to authorize the vaccine in this age group.

The analysis was based on around 2,250 trial participants with data accruing until 8 October, and most positive cases occurred when the Delta variant was dominant in the US and globally.

“VE (Vaccine Efficacy) against laboratory-confirmed symptomatic Covid-19 occurring

at least 7 days after Dose 2 in evaluable participants without evidence of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection was 90.7%,” the document said.

There were no cases of severe Covid and no cases of multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare but serious post viral condition.

There were no cases of myocarditis or pericarditis (heart inflammation or inflammation around the heart) – but there are not enough study volunteers to be able to detect highly rare side effects, and male adolescents are thought to be a higher risk

group.

This is the first time Pfizer has released an efficacy estimate for its Covid vaccine in younger children. Its earlier press statement only said the shot produced a robust immune response.

The vaccine was tested with a 10 microgram dose, while older age groups have received 30 micrograms.

The administration of President Joe Biden has said it stands ready to roll out shots for the country’s 28 million 5 to 11-year-olds as soon as the vaccine is authorized by science agencies. — AFP ■



Roberto Ortega, 16, awaits the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine administered by Registered Nurse Amy Berez-Ortega from AltaMed Health Services in Los Angeles, California on 17 August 2021. PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP

Kremlin blames Russians over slow jab drive as deaths rise



Russians have been warned the worst is yet to come, with only 35 per cent of the population fully vaccinated. PHOTO: DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP

RUSSIA has the highest official virus death toll in Europe and on Friday added 1,064 fatalities and 37,141 new infections.

“We’re in a worse situation than a whole series of European countries when it comes to vaccinations,” Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

“With the sudden rise of more aggressive variants, more people are falling ill. That’s the reality,” he said.

Officials have warned that the worst is yet to come, with only 35 per cent of the population

fully vaccinated.

“The problem is the awareness of citizens,” said Peskov, who recently admitted he was among Russians not to have been vaccinated, claiming to have high levels of antibodies after contracting the disease last May.

Authorities have repeatedly urged Russians to get vaccinated with one of several homemade jabs that have been available free for months. Peskov’s comments come a day after President Vladimir Putin praised Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine, saying people from European countries were flocking to Russia to get the jab instead of vaccines recognised by the European Medicines Agency. — AFP ■

Peru surpasses 200,000 Covid deaths: officials

THE ministry announced 25 new deaths over the previous 24 hours, taking the South American country over the symbolic threshold with 200,003 deaths since the pandemic started in March 2020.

The Andean country of 33 million has also recorded 2.2 million infections.

With 6,065 deaths per million population, Peru’s Covid mortality rate is the highest in the world, according to an AFP count based on official data. The news comes at a time of falling daily cases and deaths attributed to the increase in vaccinations, although authorities remain worried about a potential new wave of infections due to the Delta variant that is now predominant in



A passenger wearing a protective suit and face masks enters to the Jorge Chavez International Airport in Callao, Peru, in 5 October 2020, as international flights resume after more than six months due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

the country. “We’re maintaining a high level of control,” health minister Hernando Cevallos said recently. “It is probable that the first and second waves have generated immunity in part of the

population, as has vaccination.”

The fall in infections has allowed the government to relax some healthcare measures and reactivate parts of the economy. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

PM Modi lauds healthcare workers for ensuring 100 cr Covid vaccinations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday acknowledged the contribution of healthcare workers in the country as India administered more than 100 crore vaccinations.

Addressing the monthly radio programme Mann ki Baat, the Prime Minister said, “India salutes our healthcare workers. I am well aware of the capabilities of my country, the people of my country. I knew that our healthcare workers would leave no stone unturned to vaccinate countrymen.”

Prime Minister lauded India on achieving more than 100 crore Covid-19 vaccinations and said that the country moving forward with new enthusiasm and new energy in this regard.

“After administering more than 100 crore vaccines, the country is moving forward with new enthusiasm, new energy. The success of our vaccine program shows the potential of India, shows the power of the mantra of everyone’s efforts,” said PM Modi

Prime Minister interacted with Poonam Nautiyal, a healthcare worker who hails from Uttarakhand.

“Mann ki Baat” is the Prime Minister’s monthly radio address, which is broadcast on the last Sunday of every month however, this time the programme will be broadcast on the second last Sunday of the month. — ANI ■

Malaysia to reopen Langkawi resort island to foreign tourists

Malaysia said Friday fully vaccinated foreign tourists will be allowed to visit the northern resort island of Langkawi from 15 November, taking another step toward reviving its tourism sector with most of its adult population inoculated against the coronavirus.

Malaysia’s inbound tourism stopped when the country shut its borders to short-term foreign tourists in March last year due to the pandemic. Under the pilot bubble programme for the island, quarantine will not be required for fully vaccinated foreign tourists, but they must show negative COVID-19 results for tests taken 72 hours before departure for Malaysia as well as after arrival in the country.

The government has yet to release a list of applicable countries.

“This pioneer project will run for three months for the Health Ministry and the National Security Council to assess its effectiveness before extending it to other resort islands and other tourism destinations,” Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said in a statement.

Amid a shortage of workers in the agricultural sector, Ismail Sabri also said employers can bring in migrant workers to work in the sector.

The government froze the intake of migrant workers in March last year in a move designed to curb reliance on foreign labor and give employment opportunities to locals, especially after jobs were hit due to the pandemic. — Kyodo ■

China to expand property tax trial to check speculation

CHINA is set to expand pilot property tax reforms, state media reported, as the government battles real estate speculation in the world's second-biggest economy.

China's housing market took off after key 1998 reforms sparked a building boom on the back of rapid urbanisation and wealth accumulation.

But as prices soared, so did worries about wealth disparity and the resulting potential for social instability.

China's top legislature, the

National People's Congress Standing Committee, on Saturday approved the latest plan to promote "rational housing consumption", according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Under the five-year pilot scheme, Xinhua added, property tax will be levied on all types of real estate, excluding some rural homes.

Further details, such as its start date and target areas, are expected to be disclosed at a later date.

The announcement comes

with President Xi Jinping pushing for more "common prosperity" in China aimed at spreading wealth more evenly.

In 2011, authorities started trials in Shanghai and Chongqing targeting high-end private residential properties for taxation. There have been talks to expand such taxation, but localities have been reluctant, worried it will drag down property values and dampen demand for land, a key source of local government revenue, state-run tabloid Global Times said Saturday. — AFP ■



China is set to expand pilot property tax reforms, state media reported, as the government battles real estate speculation. PHOTO: XINHUA / FILE

Desperate for employees, US businesses struggle to hire



'Now Hiring' signs are posted in front of a Home Depot store in San Rafael, California. PHOTO: AFP

TO keep the taps at his recently opened beer tasting room flowing, Peter Chekijian had no choice but to ask his main employees to come in seven days per-week.

The staffing shortage has also kept Chekijian from realizing his goal of brewing beer on site, since he can't find contractors to finish installing tanks he requires.

"That's been a big issue of getting people to actually fin-

ish up the job," said Chekijian, who co-founded the small Twin Fork Beer Company in New York state.

Even as millions of Americans who lost their jobs to the Covid-19 pandemic have returned to work, companies nationwide report they're still struggling to hire employees in recent months.

More than 10 million jobs were unfilled as of the end of August, according to government

data. The labor force participation rate, which measures the US economy's active workforce, was 61.6 per cent in September, compared to 63.3 per cent before the pandemic.

The causes of the short staffing are myriad, from continued fears of contracting Covid-19, particularly among people who live with elderly family or children, to early retirements and objections over work-life balance and low wages.

And while the government throughout the pandemic offered generous unemployment benefits to keep people who lost their job financially sound, their expiration last month hasn't yet caused hiring to increase.

The employee shortages come as restaurants and entertainment venues reopen amid as more Americans get vaccinated, and ahead of the uptick in business around the holiday season. — AFP ■

Bangkok bars battle to beat booze ban battering

AS gin bottles gather dust, a Bangkok bar owner is trying to keep his joint going through a Covid booze ban with fruity mocktails seasoned with kratom, a recently decriminalised tropical herb.

The Thai capital's once-legendary nightlife has been hammered by a seven-month ban on alcohol service imposed to curb the coronavirus, leaving pub and bar owners with a major headache.

Thailand has registered around 1.7 million infections, the lion's share since April when the government called last orders after an outbreak traced to a cluster of high-end nightclubs.



Thanakorn Kuptajit, the head of the Thai Alcohol Beverage Business Association, told local media he expects a 50 per cent drop in the value of the \$9 billion sector as a result of the ban. PHOTO: AFP

With no government support, bar owners have been left with the choice of struggling to survive, flouting the prohibition rules or getting creative.

Before the pandemic hit, bar-hopping gin lovers flocked to Teens of Thailand, a lively cocktail bar on the fringe of Bangkok's Chinatown. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China seen as well positioned to lead global shipping industry

AMID global changes unseen in a century and technological transformation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, China is well positioned to lead the international shipping industry in establishing a world innovation and knowledge center for sustainable transportation, officials and industry insiders said at a forum on Wednesday. The inaugural World Maritime Merchants Forum, with the theme of "leading the trend", was hosted by China Merchants Group, the Baltic and International Maritime Council, the International Chamber of Shipping and the Hong Kong Shipowners Association. The forum aims to expand cooperation in the shipping chain, promote resource-sharing and establish a new global shipping ecology amid the great changes of digitalization and decarbonization.

"The shipping industry plays an important role in the nation's economy and global trading through supporting domestic circulation and contributing to economic globalization," Li Xiaopeng, China's minister of transportation, told the forum. "While significant achievements have been made over the years, the challenges remain."

He proposed strengthening cooperation through infrastructure construction and policy synergy within the international shipping industry to build the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. — Xinhua ■

Opposition parties take to streets across Pakistan against 'backbreaking' inflation

THE opposition Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and PPP held separate anti-government protests in different cities across the country on Friday to protest against inflation.

PDM on Wednesday kicked its 15 days nationwide protest from Rawalpindi against the continuous increase in the prices of petroleum products and food items. In the first phase, PDM will hold dharnas in major cities of the country and after that decide to hold public meetings or long marches.

Addressing a protest meeting at Maharani Bazar in Karachi, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) general secretary Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Hydari said the protest against inflation and the current government was a "referendum".

The JUI-F stood in solidarity with the poor, farmers and lawyers, he said, adding that party chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman - who is also the PDM president - had announced a nationwide protest from 20 October. "The protest against inflation will continue," he said, swore off. He alleged that the entire country has been left at the mercy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "Prime Minister Imran Khan used to say he would commit suicide before going to the IMF. He had promised 10 million jobs [but] 16,000 people were let go in Islamabad." He said that people are being evicted from their homes in Karachi in the name of encroachment. — AFP ■

Britain set for £7b transport investment

BRITAIN'S upcoming budget will invest almost £7.0 billion (\$9.6 billion, 8.3 billion euros) on transport outside London, the Treasury said on Saturday, as part of plans to cut economic inequality.

Finance minister Rishi Sunak will unveil the transport initiative during his autumn budget and spending review due on Wednesday.

Prime minister Boris Johnson's so-called "levelling up" programme is seen as vital to keeping voters in former strongholds of the main opposition Labour party who backed him in the 2019 general election.

His Conservative party won a swathe of seats in northern England on a promise to deliver Britain's Brexit divorce from the European Union, as well as boost jobs and growth.

Recipients of the transport project cash include regions in the former Labour "red wall" that turned Tory blue two years ago and will be seen as payback for their support.

According to the finance ministry, the government will invest £5.7 billion in city regions to boost productivity via train and station upgrades, and tram network expansion.



A bus is driven in central London on 16 October 2021. PHOTO: AFP

It will also inject £1.2 billion into overhauling

bus services.

The government

wants to quicken journey times, simplify fares and

increase services outside London, after repeated complaints that regions outside the British capital were ill-served by transport links, affecting business.

"Great cities need great transport and that is why we're investing billions to improve connections in our city regions as we level up opportunities across the country," said Sunak in the statement.

"This transport revolution will help redress that imbalance as we modernise our local transport networks so they are fit for our great cities and those people who live and work in them." — AFP ■

Sony unit to give real-time computer graphic soccer images to Serie A



Undated photo shows a video assisted referee center set up by Hawk-Eye Innovations near Milan, Italy, under its contract with Serie A. PHOTO: KYODO

A Sony Group Corp subsidiary has signed a contract with Italian professional soccer league Serie A to provide 3-D computer graphic videos of games recreated in real time for use in broadcast and for teams to analyze their performance, Sony said.

Under a three-year deal from the current 2021-2022 season, sports-related tech firm Hawk-Eye Innovations Ltd. will deliver the new service to the Italian premier league's 20 clubs by using data obtained from cameras installed at vari-

ous locations at stadiums.

Images will be made by Hawk-Eye's optical tracking system, which uses "advanced image processing and player recognition techniques" to quickly and precisely analyze movements of each player with up to 29 skeletal tracking points, along with the movement of referees and the ball, the Britain-based firm said in a press release earlier this month. The images can be also used by the clubs to provide content for fans and allows them to analyze performances, Sony and Hawk-Eye said. — Kyodo News ■

Supply chain woes put brakes on Europe's top cycle-makers in Portugal

EUROPE'S leading cycle makers in Portugal are riding a pandemic-driven demand boom, but a supply chain crunch linked to Asia has put the brakes on.

InCycles Bike Group, a flagship in the country's successful export-led manufacturing cluster around the northern town

of Agueda, is pushing hard to stay ahead of the peloton.

"We have orders through to mid-2023 but will we be able to meet them?", asks export manager Filipe Mota.

The coronavirus crisis saw people "fighting to get bikes, so we sold a

lot," says Mota in the middle of the four assembly lines that employ nearly 200 workers supplying 40 brands.

But, he tells AFP, the "boom in orders" has led to "a shortage of very important spare parts".

Deliveries from mainly Asian suppliers can take up to two or three years, Mota says.

When the company started assembling bicycles for Uber, under the Jump brand which has since been snapped up by Lime, turnover soared from three million euros (\$3.5 million) in 2018 to 50 million euros the following year. — AFP ■



Flagship manufacturer InCycles is pushing to stay ahead of the peloton. PHOTO: AFP

Jordanian company dives into Arabic mobile games market

ITS logo is a tomato, not an apple, but in just eight years Jordanian company Tamatem has already bitten a chunk out of the lucrative market for Arabic mobile games.

"Less than one percent of internet content is in Arabic, even though there are 400 million Arab users," said the company's founder and CEO Hussam Hammo.

"There is a very big gap in this market that we are trying to fill," added the 38-year-old entrepreneur, sitting in his elegant Amman offices.

Hammo founded Tamatem—which means tomato—in 2013 and it was the first Arab company to win investment from the "500 Startups" programme based in Sil-

icon Valley, California.

Eight years on the company has grown to about 80 staff who convert mobile phone games into Arabic, also adapting content to fit Arab culture.

"Language was a barrier to mobile games growth" in the region, said Nour Khrais, founder and chief executive of games developer May-

salward.

"The Arabic language connects (the player) emotionally."

With offices now in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Tamatem has published more than 50 mobile games, which have been downloaded more than 100 million times on Apple and Google Play stores. — AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0187N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0187N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-10-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Tsunami-hit Fukushima school opens as memorial to 2011 tragedy



File photo taken on 8 April 2011, shows the pleasure boat "Hamayuri" washed up on a rooftop of an inn by tsunami. **PHOTO: KYODO**

AN elementary school in north-eastern Japan opened on Sunday as a memorial to those impacted by the massive 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster and subsequent Fukushima nuclear crisis, with its mission to pass on lessons learned from the tragedy.

Ukedo Elementary School, run by the town of Namie in Fukushima Prefecture, is the first memorial in the prefecture that preserves buildings in their damaged state.

The two-storey school is 5 kilometers north of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power

plant that suffered meltdowns and released radioactive materials after the 11 March 2011 disaster. People across the region were forced to evacuate, some for years, and many have not returned.

Located 300 meters from the coast, the municipal school was hit by a 15-meter-high tsunami. A total of 95 students, teachers and employees who were at the school when the quake struck survived after fleeing to higher ground.

In the wake of the Fukushima crisis, Namie was subject to

a government evacuation order for six years. The school never reopened.

Mayor Kazuhiro Yoshida said in a ceremony marking the opening of the memorial that he hopes the school will be a "place to remind people about being prepared for disaster."

Wakana Yokoyama, who was a sixth-grader at the time, said she is happy to see her school, in whatever form, still exists. "While serving as a memorial museum, I hope it can also be a reason for residents to return," said Yokoyama, 23. — Kyodo ■

Trapped in 'cruel' forest, migrant regrets Belarus-EU crossing



Though "exhausted" and "devastated," Abd Alwareth said he understood that the border guards "are doing their job". **PHOTO: AFP**

EXHAUSTED and trapped in a cold, "cruel" forest, Lebanese barber Ali Abd Alwareth said he regretted his week-long bid to enter the European Union via the Belarus-Poland border.

"It's miserable. Something that you don't wish for your worst enemy... A nightmare," the soft-spoken 24-year-old with Crohn's disease told AFP.

Sitting cross-legged on a bed of pine needles and dead leaves near the border town of Kleszczele in eastern Poland, Abd Alwareth described being a ping-pong ball for the guards.

"I tried crossing like five, six times, and every time I got caught and deported back to the border" by Poland, he said in English.

The Belarusian side meanwhile refused to let him return to Minsk to fly home.

Abd Alwareth said security forces told him: "You have only two choices: either you die here or you die in Poland. That's it."

One of thousands of migrants—mostly from the Middle East—who have tried to penetrate the 400-kilometre (250-mile) border since August, Abd Alwareth said he left the financial crisis in Lebanon in search of a better life.

The whole journey from his home region of Bekaa cost \$4,000 and involved help from a Minsk-based company he found on social media.

The EU suspects Belarus is masterminding the unprecedented influx of migrants into Poland as a form of retaliation against EU sanctions, but the regime has put the blame on the West. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambodia marks 30 years since peace accord amid setback in democracy

Cambodia on Saturday marked the 30th anniversary of the Paris Peace Agreements that brought to an end nearly 13 years of civil war in the Southeast Asian country, celebrating its reintegration into the international community and economic progress since the landmark deal. Critics of the authoritarian administration of Prime Minister Hun Sen, in power since 1985, are urging it to respect the principles laid out in the 1991 agreement, calling for the creation of a free and fair democratic nation in Cambodia and the protection of human rights. At a ceremony marking the anniversary Prak Sokhonn, who serves as vice prime minister and foreign minister, said the peace accord constituted a positive turning point in the country's history. But he also said, "Democracy and human rights have been used as tools for some major powers to carry out their strategies," expressing his objection to the United States and European countries, which have condemned Cambodia for leading a sustained crackdown on forces opposing to the government. — Kyodo ■

Italian far-right leader Salvini faces court in migrant trial

ITALY'S former interior minister and far-right leader Matteo Salvini went on trial Saturday for allegedly illegally blocking over 100 migrants in dire sanitary conditions from disembarking from a rescue ship.

Salvini, the leader of the far-right League party who is known for an "Italians first" policy, is charged with kidnapping and abuse of office for using his position as interior minister to detain the 147 migrants at sea in August 2019.

On the opening day of the trial in Palermo, prosecutors asked that they be allowed to question Salvini, who was present in court, on the stand.

The hearing, which came a month after the trial was first postponed, was largely procedural and lasted less than three hours before Judge Roberto Murgia set

the next hearing for December 17.

If convicted, Salvini could face a maximum of 15 years in prison.

He has said the decision was not his alone, but agreed by the government, including by the then-prime minister, Giuseppe Conte.

Prosecutors have asked that the witness list include Conte, as well as Italy's current Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese and Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio.

Judge Murgia said US actor Richard Gere would be allowed to take the stand as a witness, as requested by civil party Open Arms, the Spanish charity that operated the rescue vessel.

The actor had boarded the ship in solidarity with the migrants before it docked at the Sicilian island of Lampedusa. — AFP ■



Matteo Salvini went on trial in Palermo on Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

UK warns of 'gaps' with EU as talks to solve N Ireland Brexit issues resume

TALKS between Britain and the European Union to resolve problems with the Brexit agreement regarding Northern Ireland will move to London next week with the UK government warning on Saturday that "substantial gaps" remained.

A negotiating team from the European Commission will travel to London on Tuesday "for several days of intensive discussions", according to a statement issued by London on Saturday.

British minister David Frost and EU Commission Vice President Sefcovic are due to meet for talks at the end of the week to "take stock and assess progress so far".

London added that talks over the previous days had been "constructive" but that "substantial gaps" remain.

Brussels has put forward a raft of proposals to try and ease tensions within the loyalist community over the Northern Ireland Protocol, the part of the Brexit deal that deals with the British province.

The proposals include reduced customs checks and paperwork on British products intended for Northern Ireland, which loyalists complain are driving a wedge between Belfast and London and building momentum for the republican push for a united Ireland.

Article 16 threat

Despite moving on cus-



The EU put forward a host of proposals, including reduced customs checks and paperwork on British products intended for Northern Ireland. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

toms checks, the European Union has said it will not ac-

cept London's demands for an alternative arbitrator to settle

post-Brexit trade disputes involving Northern Ireland.

As a result, Britain is threatening to trigger the protocol's Article 16, which provides both parties with unilateral power to take action if they believe the agreement is causing "serious economic, societal or environmental difficulties that are liable to persist".

"There's been plenty of speculation about governance this week but our position remains unchanged: the role of the European Court of Justice in resolving disputes between the UK and EU must end," a British government source said in Saturday's statement. — AFP ■

Uzbekistan holds polls with reform-touting strongman a shoo-in



Mirziyoyev faces only regime-loyal opponents plucked from parties in the rubber stamp parliament in his bid to secure a second five-year term. PHOTO: AFP

VOTING was underway in Uzbekistan's presidential election Sunday, with incumbent Shavkat Mirziyoyev facing no real opposition but plenty of challenges as

he bids to reform the ex-Soviet country while maintaining its authoritarian foundations.

Mirziyoyev has been credited for launching what he calls

a "New Uzbekistan", ending a decades-old system of forced labour and introducing limited media freedom.

He came to power in 2016 after the death of his mentor, dictator Islam Karimov, who ruled the Central Asian country for 27 years.

Mirziyoyev has presided over an unprecedented boom in foreign tourism in the country that borders Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and counts China and Russia among its partners.

But as his first term ends, the 64-year-old is struggling to counter impressions that his government is sliding back towards the habits of his long-reigning predecessor. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have also blunted his initial economic achievements, with unemployment rife amid sharp rises in living costs. — AFP ■

Under Israel's blockade, Gaza's fishermen struggle for a catch

CRASHING through the Mediterranean's waves at sunset, Palestinian fisherman Mohammed al-Nahal leads a convoy of rickety boats out for another risky night under the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Forced to stay close to shore due to Israeli restrictions on powerful engines, the men complain they must seek a catch from overfished shallow waters with declining stocks.

"If we catch 200 kilos (450 pounds) of sardines, that would be great," Nahal says. "But we can also come back empty-handed."

High prices of fuel in the enclave means that fishing operating costs are crippling, making them stay closer inshore.

"The further we go, the more we pay for fuel without guarantees about the catch," Nahal says, leading a line of five boats, the air heavy with the

stench of diesel and sardines.

For Gaza, fenced in from three sides by Israel since Hamas Islamists took power in 2007, the open sea seems to offer the promise of freedom—but it is deceptive. Israel's navy fully controls the waters off Gaza's 40-kilometre (25-mile) long coastline, and regularly restricts or expands the size of the fishing zone in response to security conditions. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pak rejects reports claiming US nearing deal to use its airspace for airstrikes

The Pakistan government on Saturday rejected media reports about the possibility of signing an agreement with the US on the use of the country's airspace for operations against terrorists in Afghanistan, clarifying that there was "no such understanding" between the two countries.

US media organisation CNN, in a report, cites "sources familiar with the details of a classified briefing" to the US Congress, and said that the Biden administration has informed US lawmakers that the country was close to striking a formal deal with Pakistan for the use of its airspace to conduct operations in Afghanistan.

The report claimed that Pakistan had expressed a desire to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in return for help in its own counterterrorism operations and assistance with managing the relationship with India. "No such understanding was in place," Pakistan Foreign Office's spokesperson said in response to queries about whether the country's airspace would be used to conduct military and intelligence operations in the neighbouring country, Dawn reported. — ANI ■

Colombia's most-wanted drug lord captured

Colombia's most-wanted drug trafficker "Otoniel" has been captured, officials said Saturday, a major victory for the government of the world's top cocaine exporter.

Dairo Antonio Usuga, who headed the country's largest narco-trafficking gang known as the Gulf Clan, was captured near one of his main outposts in Necocli, near the border with Panama.

Images released by the government showed the 50-year-old Otoniel in handcuffs and surrounded by soldiers.

"This is the hardest strike to drug trafficking in our country this century," president Ivan Duque said in a message, adding that the arrest was "only comparable to the fall of Pablo Escobar," the famed Colombian narco-trafficking kingpin.

Some 500 soldiers backed by 22 helicopters were deployed in the Necocli municipality to carry out the operation, which left one police officer dead.

It was "the biggest penetration of the jungle ever seen in the military history of our country", Duque said.

Colombia's police chief Jorge Vargas said during a press conference that authorities carried out "an important satellite operation with agencies of the United States and the United Kingdom." — AFP ■

Myanmar advance to Women's Asian Cup tourney with win over UAE

THE Myanmar women's national football team secured their place at the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022, after making a 2-0 victory over United Arab Emirates in their qualifiers at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 24 October, 2021. The Myanmar team got the opening goal even in the first four minutes of the match with a header of Khin Mo Mo Tun.

After that, the Myanmar team controlled the match and UAE team played mainly on counter-attack. In the 22nd minute, the Myanmar team scored the second goal through defender Chit Chit from a corner kick and took the lead with two goals at the end of the first half.

Team Myanmar made many substitutions in the second half.

The substituted players were not able to create goals like in the first half, as the UAE defence did not make any mistakes. As a result, Myanmar only won with goals in the first half.

"Congratulations to all the players who helped make the tournament a success. We have



Myanmar team players (red) celebrate their victory after securing 2-0 victory over UAE in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers at Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 24 October, 2021. **PHOTO: MFF**

taken the first step. We have to compete against the best teams in the Asian Cup next, so we need to try our best. I already have a plan for what to do after the tourney and I will continue to do so," said U Tin Myint Aung, head coach of the Myanmar National

Women's Football Team during the post-match press conference.

Myanmar made three straight wins over Lebanon, Guam and UAE in the previous group match to book a ticket to the Final round of the Asian Cup.—GNLM

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Milan beat nine-man Bologna to move top of Serie A

AC Milan moved top of Serie A on Saturday after winning 4-2 at nine-man Bologna after having thrown away a two-goal half-time lead with the hosts already down to 10. Ismael Bennacer put Milan ahead for the second time six minutes from the end before Zlatan Ibrahimovic sealed a hard-fought win against a Bologna team which had Adama Soumaoro and Roberto Soriano both sent off in the first hour.

Stefano Pioli's unbeaten Milan are a point ahead of Napoli, who travel to Roma on Sunday hoping to maintain their 100 per cent record so far this season, but will not be happy with their display. Sinisa Mihajlovic's Bologna meanwhile are ninth on 13 points after a defeat which will frustrate their Serb coach after they battled back to level shortly after the break.—AFP ■



AC Milan moved top of Serie A on Saturday after winning 4-2 at nine-man Bologna after having thrown away a two-goal half-time lead with the hosts already down to 10. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pele celebrates 81st birthday as tributes roll in



Brazilian football legend Pele is the only player to win three World Cups (1958, 1962, 1970). **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

PELE celebrated his 81st birthday on Saturday, apparently in good shape, despite his fragile health after a month in hospital following the discovery of a tumor in September.

"My birthday is coming! They have already prepared the cake ..." wrote the Brazilian football legend on social media on Friday, with a photo that showed him smiling, eating a

cake iced like a soccer pitch with an enormous football in the middle.

On Saturday morning, the tributes poured in.

Santos, where he played from 1956 to 1974, wished him "a long life" and "a happy birthday".

The club has also prepared a celebration for their game against America on Saturday,

with a shirt with a patch in tribute to the king of Brazilian soccer designed for the occasion and a song planned for the 10th minute. Pele traditionally wore the number 10.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento, known as "Pele", the only player to win three World Cups (1958, 1962, 1970) is undergoing chemotherapy after being admitted to hospital on 31 August for routine examinations which detected a "suspicious" tumor in his colon.

He had surgery four days later and spent about ten days in an intensive care unit, where he returned briefly a few days later because of breathing difficulties, before leaving hospital on 30 September.

The result of the tumor biopsy was never made public, but doctors said Pele will have to undergo "chemotherapy."

Pele has worried his fans often with his fragile health and has been admitted to hospital several times for various health problems.—AFP ■