

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 203, 5th Waxing of Tazaungmon 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Monday, 8 November 2021

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.

4 million doses of Sinopharm vaccine in sixth batch from China arrives in Yangon

OF 24 million doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines purchased from the People's Republic of China, the last 4 million doses arrived at the Yangon International Airport yesterday and were received by the team led by the head of Yangon Region Medical Services/Public Health Departments.

These vaccines will be distributed to regions and states based on the requirement, via road transport or with the help of the Tatmadaw (Air) and Myanmar airways by maintaining the cold chain. With the newly arrived COVID-19 vaccines and the existing ones, about 50 per cent of the target groups will be fully vaccinated twice by December 2021, and it is also reported that arrangements are being made to get more vaccines available to the remaining population.

As of 6 November 2021, 8.24 million people have been fully vaccinated while 5.65 million people have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in respective regions and states in Myanmar, making the total dose 22.15 million.

As a measure to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health is administering the COVID-19



Four million doses of Sinopharm are being unloaded from airplane at Yangon International Airport.

vaccines to the target groups. The people are urged to receive the COVID-19 vaccines,

and those who have already received the first dose are encouraged to go to the nearest

immunization centres and received the second dose on the scheduled immunization date

or near the due date, as well as to actively participate in the vaccination activities.—MNA

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
MoC facilitates importation of anti-COVID-19 devices, medicines
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
MoALI Union Minister inspects Pynmana Institute of Agriculture
PAGE-3

NATIONAL
Beautiful hand painting attracts more visitors in Bagan cultural zone
PAGE-4

NATIONAL
More than 1,800 students aged 12 and above vaccinated in Yathedaung, Rakhine state
PAGE-4



State Administration Council Press Release

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

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

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

MoC facilitates importation of anti-COVID-19 devices, medicines

THE Ministry of Commerce is working hard to ensure people have access to essential medical supplies which are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment

activities.

Yesterday, one bowser containing 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen, one oxygen plant, 80 oxygen concentrators, 1,000 PPE suits and three tonnes

of masks were imported through the Chinshwehaw and Myawady border trade centres.

20 tonnes of liquid oxygen was transported to Yangon from the Myawady border trade centre, and the oxygen plant to Danubyu town, Ayeyawady Region.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is giving priority to the import of essential medical supplies required in prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in accordance with the SOPs coordinated with the relevant departments in order to avoid delays, and announcements and notices related to the import of medicines and related products have also been made available to the public on the Ministry's website, commerce.gov.mm.—MNA



A bowser is carrying liquid oxygen from Myawady to Yangon.

Tatmadaw aircraft transports vaccines to Kengtung Township



Tatmadaw airplane carrying Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines arrives at Kengtung airport. **PHOTO : AUNG ZIN MYINT (IPRD)**

A Tatmadaw aircraft transported 14,900 units of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines and 3,008 units of Sinovac vaccines from Yangon to Kengtung in eastern Shan State yesterday.

Dr Kyaw Kyaw Linn, deputy head of Shan State (East) Medical Services and Public Health Departments and other officials received 14,900 units of Sinopharm vaccines, 3,008 units

of Sinovac vaccines, needles and two laboratory refrigerators to be used in lab tests with RT-PCR machine.

A single vial of Sinopharm vaccine can be used for five people each and the needed vaccines for 80,516 people will be allocated to the townships of eastern Shan State.—Aung Zin Myint(IPRD)/ GNLM

Public Notice

1. The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to effectively curb corruption.
2. The ACC used SMS on the mobile phone to ask the public who seek services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedbacks, including the Public Feedback Programme-PFP.
3. According to the PFP, the right replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
4. Therefore, the public should make a reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at Short Code No "1111" and such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

Answer "1111" to fight against corruption
Answer "1111" to improve services
Let's work together to eliminate corruption towards prosperity

Political maturity

POLITICAL maturity and unity of stakeholders and the entire people play a crucial role in building the Union based on democracy and federalism. It is necessary to take lessons that Myanmar could not achieve the deserved development due to requirements in political maturity in successive eras. We must try hard to overcome such challenges. We need to build political maturity and unity with wise mental faculty for ensuring the peace of the nation.

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

MoALI Union Minister inspects Pyinmana Institute of Agriculture

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo met with the principal and faculty members together with administrative staff at the golden jubilee hall of the Institute of Agriculture in Pyinmana yesterday.



Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo presents rice and foodstuffs to faculty members of Pyinmana Institute of Agriculture.

Afterwards, the Union Minister inspected the campus of the institute and observed the cleanliness of the environment and the preservation of the nearly 100-year-old ancient buildings built in 1924.

Next, the Union Minister discussed upgrading of libraries of institutes, and library network accessible of the University of Agriculture and University of Veterinary Science as well as same institutes for exchange of knowledge.

The Union Minister also focused on the need to encourage self-employment and subsistence farming in staff housing to provide nutrition and family income, and the

completion of construction meeting set standards for staff housings.

After that, the Union Minister and party inspected the livestock education classroom, and construction sites of laboratory and training facilities. They also visited the model GAP vegetable farm.

There are 15 institutes of agriculture in various regions and states in addition to University of Agriculture and University of Veterinary Science.

Those institutes extend the livestock diploma courses from the start of this academic year to provide vocational training needed in the livestock sector. A plan is underway to conduct the diploma courses in industrial agriculture. —MNA

66th Anniversary of Kayin State day celebrated in Hpa-an

THE 66th Anniversary Kayin State Day was held yesterday morning in Kayin State Government Office in Hpa-an, attended by Commander of the South-East Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko Maung, Acting State Chief Minister Colonel Myo Min Naung, State cabinet ministers, and representatives from ethnic armed peace organizations and political parties.

of Kayin State Day was read out.

After the ceremony, Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko Maung, officials of the KNU/KNLA-PC and DKBA cut the ribbon to open the façade and galleries to mark the 66th Anniversary of Kayin State Day.

Colonel Myo Min Naung inaugurated the booths.

The Acting Chief Minister and party then watched performance of the Kayin traditional don dance and the performers were presented with awards. The awarding ceremony, in commemoration of the 66th Anniversary of Kayin State Day, was held at Zweekabin Hall in Hpa-an. A total of 60 awards were presented including Agricultural Excel-



A group photo was taken in commemoration of 66th Anniversary of Kayin State Day in Hpa-an. PHOTO: SAW MYO MIN THEIN (IPRD)

lent Award, Livestock Excellent Award, Sports Excellent Awards from University Colleges, State Football Excellent Award to the winners.—Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/GNLM

818 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 7 November, total figure rises to 506,816

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 506,816 after 818 new cases were reported on 7 November 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 478,233 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,821 after 17 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 7-11-2021, a total of 13,905,795 people have been vaccinated. Of them, 8,247,188 people have been vaccinated two times and 5,658,607 people once.—MNA

Beautiful hand painting attracts more visitors in Bagan cultural zone



Hand painters create art works on hands of visitors in Bagan cultural zone. PHOTO: KO HTAIN

THE majority of the pilgrims to Bagan cultural heritage zone, NyaungU Township are having temporary hand tattoo done at the shops opened in the pagoda precinct, allowing the hand painters to earn a handsome profit, said Daw Khaing Zar Tun, a painter at Shwezigon Pagoda.

Bagan cultural heritage zone, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was eerily empty due to the tight restriction period of the COVID-19. It was reopened starting from 8 February 2021, in accordance with the health guidelines for the COVID-19, NyaungU Township Administration Body stated.

The local tourism industry is battered by COVID-19 and it was two year that those engaged in local transporta-

tion rental business (tuk-tuk, boat, horse-riding, car, e-bike, cycle, motorcycle), hotels and guesthouses, restaurants and souvenir shops suffered from this.

Starting from Thadingyut Festival this year, the number of visitors to Bagan cultural zone is gradually growing. Those pilgrimages can revive the small businesses relying on tourism in Bagan.

The maximum price of hand painting costs K5,000 per hand. It last one day to a week depending on the quality of paint.

This hand painting business is another job opportunity for local residents in NyaungU Township, Ma Pan Myat Hla, a hand painter at Shwezigon pagoda.— Ko Htain KPD/GNLM

COVID-19 vaccines arrives at Myeik Airport for Myeik District

A Tatmadaw Aircraft carrying Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines to be given for public and Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines for school children landed at Myeik Airport yesterday as COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed in Myeik District, Taninthayi Region.

A total of 82,525 doses of Sinopharm vaccines for local people and 14,600 doses of Sinovac vaccines for school children and 17,000 pieces of syringes were handed over by the authorities at Myeik Airport, and received by Dr Yin Yin Nwe, Deputy Head of District Public Health Depart-

ment, and distributed to townships in the district.

In Myeik District, a total of 80,266 people have been fully vaccinated Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines twice, and a total of 42,997 people have been vaccinated against COVID-19 once.

COVID vaccine Sinovac has been given to 16,385 students for the first time, officials said.

According to the Department of Public Health, the new vaccines will be given to the local people as a matter of priority.—Khaing Htoo (Myeik IPRD)/GNLM



Boxes containing units of COVID-19 vaccines are already unloaded at Myeik Airport. PHOTO: KHAING HTOO

More than 1,800 students aged 12 and above vaccinated in Yathedaung, Rakhine state



Students over the age of 12 are waiting for receiving COVID-19 vaccination in Yathedaung Township. PHOTO: AUNG SAN TUN (IPRD)

THE COVID-19 vaccination programme for the students over the age of 12 was implemented in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine state yesterday.

Of 1,802 students who have been vaccinated with Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine in the township, 319 were high school students and 1,483 middle school students.

The COVID-19 immunization was

carried out under the COVID-19 rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Health at 18 respective vaccination sites in Yathedaung Township, and department officials, teachers, firefighters and members of the Red Cross Society provided necessary assistance for the programme.—Aung San Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy (88 Generation Peace and Open Society), leader of terrorist attacks in Yangon Region arrested

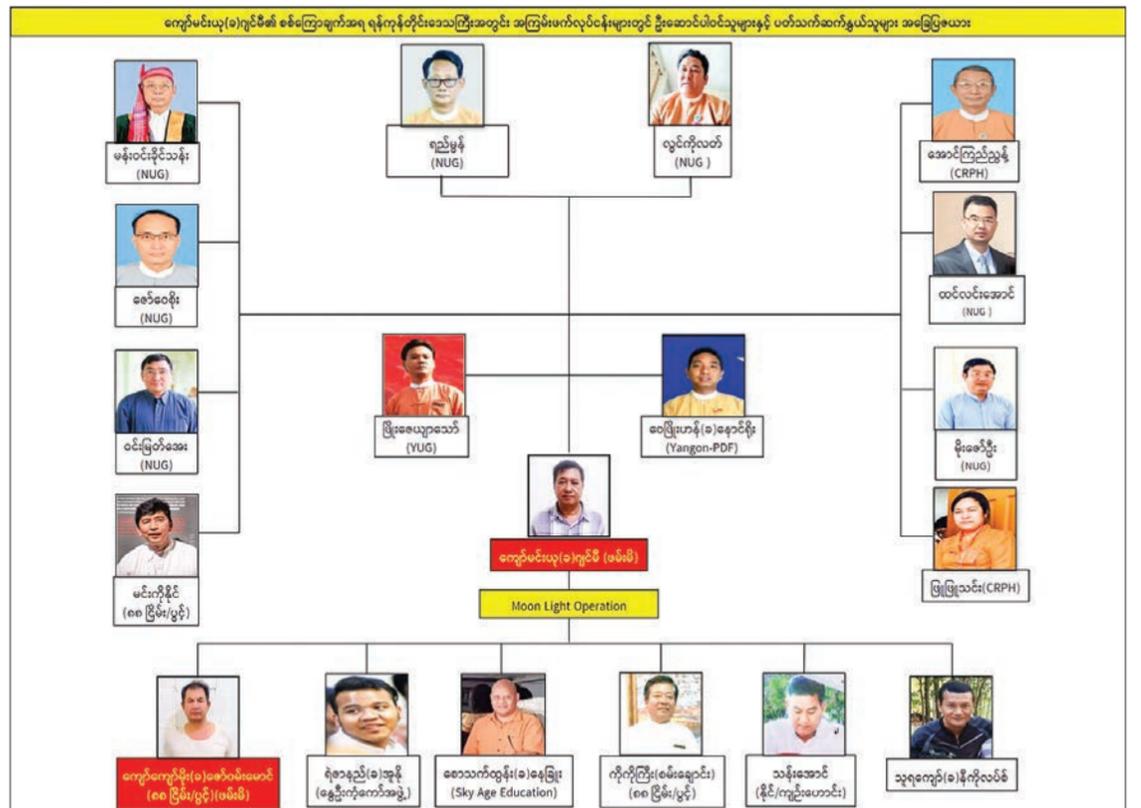
KYAW Min Yu (aka) Jimmy, advisor of political and security affairs to terrorist CRPH/NUG and Public Information Officer of 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, who conducted terrorism acts including mine attacks to undermine the State stability, was arrested at the two-storey building No (109/B) in Pinlon Housing in Dagon Myothit (North) Township on the morning of 24 October.

He was arrested together with 6 AK-47s, 8 M-16s, 2 12-bolt guns, one homemade gun and 18 magazines.

The suspect is being charged under case number 26 of the Penal Code, Section 505 (b) at Pazundaung Township Court of Yangon Region on 11 February together with the fugitive Min Ko Naing for committing incitement to occur riots and CDM movement.

Mae Sot of Thailand with his wife Daw Nilar Thein. Then, he organized the Moon Light Operation that includes Saw Thet Tun (aka) Nay Chuu (Sky Age Education), Ko Ko Gyi (Sangyoung, 88 Generation Peace and Open Society), Thura Kyaw (aka) Nicolas, Than Aung (former political prisoner), Ye Zarni (aka) Auno (Nway Oo Gangaw) and Kyaw Kyaw Moe (aka) Zaw Win Maung (88 Generation Peace and Open Society), being arrested) in April to launch bomb attacks and murder cases.

The Moon Light Operation led by Kaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy, Yangon Urban Guerilla-YUG led by Phyo Zeyar Thaw and Yangon PDF led by Wai Phyo Han launched the attacks targeting the students, teachers and schools in Yangon in May. Then, they killed



The chart on leaders in terror acts in Yangon Region based on confession of Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy.



The chart shows setup of Moon Light Operation led by Jimmy.

According to his confession, he communicated with the media outlets to occur riots and urge the government employees to join CDM while he was living in Pinlon Complex in February and March 2021. On 2 April, he moved to

the administrators, non-NLD members, other people under the topic of informers and also attacked on power stations, state-owned buildings, private banks and innocent people. To start the attacks, the fugitive Lwin Ko Latt handed

over 30 AK-47s and M-16s, 600 bullets, 90 magazines and 500 cardamoms and the terrorists launched the acts of terrorism in Yangon area.

The Moon Light Operation had made a plan to begin 8 Missions in Yangon Region

after NUG declared D-Day on 7 September.

Therefore, Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy arrived in Yangon on 22 September to supervise the 8 Missions closely living in Pinlon housing.

The Mission 1 was to launch attacks on Twantay Township while the Mission-2 on Insein Township, Mission-3 on Hlegu Township and they completed the missions in October.

The remaining Mission-4, Mission-5, Mission-6, Mission-7 and Mission-8 were planned to conduct in Yinkin, Mingaladon, Dala, Thakayta, Dagon Myothit (South) and Hlinethaya townships.

The NUG/CRPH/NUCC members fugitives Yi Mon, Zaw Wai Soe, Mahn Win Khaing Than, Aung Kyi Nyunt, Lwin Ko Latt, Win Myat Aye, Htin Linn Aung, Moe Zaw Oo, Phyu Phyu Thin, Min Ko Naing and Jimmy conducted a weekly

zoom meeting to provide the needed ammunition, magazines, C-4 cartridge, grenade, cardamom, drone, satellite cell phones, radio phone, money and techniques.

Therefore, Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy was found guilty for monitoring the acts of terrorism to brutally kill the innocent people in Yangon and communicating with terrorist groups NUG/CRPH/NUCC. He will be charged under Penal Code section 124, 2014 Counter-Terrorism Law, Unlawful Association Act, Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act in addition to Penal Code Section 505-a.

Moreover, the action will be taken against the members of NUG/CRPH/NUCC who cooperated with suspect Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy.

The people should inform the nearest security forces about the information of suspects.—MNA



Photo shows seized arms and ammunition.



Kyaw Min Yu (aka) Jimmy was arrested from No 109-B, two-storey building in Pinlon Housing of Dagon Myothit (North) Township.

ရန်ကုန်တိုင်းဒေသကြီးအတွင်း အကြမ်းဖက်လုပ်ငန်းများ ဦးဆောင်လုပ်ရှားနေသူ ကော့မင်းယု (ခ) ဂျင်မီ (စစ် ချိုးဆက်၊ ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေးနှင့် ဖွင့်လင်း လူ့အဖွဲ့အစည်း)အား ၂၀၂၁ ခုနှစ်၊ အောက်တိုဘာလ ၂၄ ရက် ၀၂၀၀ နာရီချိန်တွင် ဒဂုံမြို့သစ်(မြောက်ပိုင်း)မြို့နယ်၊ ပင်လုံအိမ်ရာဝင်းအတွင်းရှိ အမှတ်(၁၀၉/ဘီ) ၂ ထပ်တိုက်နေအိမ်၌ ဖမ်းဆီးရမိခဲ့ပါသည်။

Milestones in the State Administration Council's Eighth Month

By Kanaung

CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY

In a statement issued on 23 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar called on the international community to refrain from engaging in any way with illegal terrorist organizations and their representatives. On 25 September, the Ministry issued a statement noting that the absence of Myanmar, the country-concerned, in the three interactive dialogues against Myanmar organized by the 48th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, stating that politically motivated resolutions and unfair mandates only create mistrust and divisions within the country. Therefore, Myanmar strongly rejects and objects to the reports and deliberations made by country-specific mechanisms which do not help address the challenges the country has been facing.

The activities of the Tatmadaw

The International Army Games 2021 was held in the Russian Federation on 22 August, and the Tatmadaw participated in contests involving Tank Biathlon, Snipers' Competition, Medical Corps Competitions, Air Force Skills Competition and cultural competitions. Members of Myanmar's Tatmadaw won various prizes, including the third prize in Tank Biathlon, first prize in Traditional Costume Performance, second prize in Individual Singing in Russian, second prize in a performance highlighting the country's culture, as well as the third prize in online fan voting.

On 27 September 2021, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Tatmadaw issued a statement on the ceasefire and peace process. The statement announced that in view of the upcoming 75th anniversary of Myanmar's Union Day on 12 February 2022, the Tatmadaw would unilaterally extend the suspension of all military operations until 28 February 2022, except when other forces attack people's lives and property, transport networks, national defence and administration, and state security and governance. This would also enable more effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in the country, as well



Myanmar returnees are seen in a queue for their turn of test at checkpoint.

as the acceleration of the peace process.

Political developments

From 23 August to 24 September, the Union Election Commission examined the activities of political parties for compliance with prevailing laws and regulations, as regards party memberships, party funds and property, party finances, audits and funds liquidation.

Under an amnesty, the authorities have released a total of 5,315 detainees who had been arrested in earlier months during the riots and demonstrations but were not involved in terrorist acts. Additionally, the leniency extended to closing the cases of 702 people in hiding who had contacted the authorities for amnesty.

Social sectors

Mobile markets continued to operate in Yangon Region, to provide the public with essential medicines and primary foods at fair prices. Since 14 September, various types of rice were sold under a special programme in Yangon Region, allowing each person to buy up to 5 bags of rice. In addition, the sale of palm oil to wholesalers at K3,700 per viss was organized on 20 September, and with no more than two per cent increase in retail prices, about 5,829 tonnes of palm oil were distributed and sold within 10 days.

On 10 September, a Social Security Board-Care Well General Clinic was opened in Hline-thaya Township, Yangon Region, as part of the joint collaboration between the Ministry of Labour's Social Security Board

and the Care Well Medical Company. Social pensions continue to be provided to persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups and senior citizens. The Ministry of Labour and the Yangon region government cooperated in the vaccination of 231,298 insured workers from 2,737 departments and work units against COVID-19. Vaccination is still ongoing. The Ministry of Industry held a coordination meeting on workers' skills certification and job skills standards, as part of the plans to produce skilled workers.

The Ministry of Education worked hard throughout in preparation for the reopening of basic education schools, universities, colleges, and training schools, the COVID-19 situation permitting. The Union Minister for Education also instructed education officials to improve basic

education schools with libraries, school furniture, systematic learning in school laboratories, and school gymnasiums.

Following the instructions of the Head of the State, 17 Myanmar nationals who had been defrauded of money and stranded in Malaysia were repatriated at the expense of the state on 6 and 20 September.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs is exploring means to improve the lives of former Myanmar national team players who have been honoured by the country. On 1 September, the Ministry held discussions on the provision of pensions based on the award received, the conduct of a census of players, and additional support to athletes with disabilities.

Relief work was carried out in the flood-hit regions and states by local Tatmadaw fore-

es, the Myanmar Police Force, firefighters and local people. Residents affected by landslides and blockage of debris due to the flood have been evacuated, while reconstruction works were implemented without delay.

Efforts to revive the economy

On 3 September, the Central Bank of Myanmar issued a notification under the Foreign Exchange Management Law, stating that within four months of the receipt of export income, exporters must sell or convert to Myanmar Kyat at the prevailing exchange rate all unused export income in foreign currency, through a Myanmar bank holding an authorized dealer licence issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar. The Core Banking and Trade Finance and ERP System for the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank were introduced on 28 September.

The Department of Road Transport Administration began the initial and two-year renewal of motor vehicles and motorcycles on 13 September, as well as reduction of the suspension period for overdue fines. Renewals are being allowed without a vehicle inspection. Starting from 30 September, the Myanmar Railways launched Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw express train, two Yangon-Bago railbus engine (RBE) trains, two Insein-Okkan RBE trains, and Patheingyi-Hinthada-Kyangin passenger cargo trains to facilitate the travel of people and flow of goods.

SEE PAGE-7



A mobile market sells rice, eggs and foodstuff to local people at fair prices.

FROM PAGE-6

Myanmar participated in the 18th Sino-ASEAN Expo held in Nanning, the People's Republic of China from 11 to 13 September, with 22 exhibitions filled with Myanmar's agricultural products, cotton fabrics and lacquerwares. Union Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint San attended the opening ceremony of the Expo held online, where he expressed thanks to the People's Republic of China and the ASEAN countries for the donations and assistance related to COVID-19 control in Myanmar.

The Working Committee to Remedy the Potential Economic Impact of COVID-19 announced that businesses that took loans from the COVID-19 fund could extend the repayment period for another six months. On 11 September, the government announced that livestock businesses affected by the COVID-19 could apply for loans.

Collaboration between the Ministry of Commerce and the Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association led to the launch on 22 September of a plan to sell fuel oils at fairer prices. The name and address of gas stations that will sell fuel oils at discounted rates in each region and state have been published in newspapers.

Agriculture and Livestock Sector

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held a meeting with onion growers and entrepreneurs on 1 September and said that the government would encourage investment from the start of crop cultivation to the production and distribution of value-added products. Efforts should be made to produce 100 per cent of local agriculture products and related consumer goods on lands owned by the government, Tatmadaw and private owners in the respective regions and states. The Chief Ministers, military commanders, and officials of the respective regions and states are conducting field trips to assess the situation.

A panel discussion was also held on 18 September on the domestic production and consumption of edible oil. Work is underway to improve access to healthy cooking oil for the people and to further develop oilseed production processes in order to reduce imports of cooking oil, especially unhealthy palm oil.

The COVID-19 pandemic

In addition to the regular COVID-19 prevention and control measures, the State Administration Council has organized COVID-19 diagnostic tests in religious places and accelerated the vaccination campaign against the disease across the country, including for people in remote areas and camps for internally displaced persons. Businesses, civil society and community organizations contributed immensely to these efforts with donations of medical equipment and supplies, cash, time and voluntary labour. With such cooperation from the people, it is not surprising that the case positivity rate had dropped. Stay-at-

anmar. By 28 September 2021, 11,590,241 doses had been administered to 7,799,489 people (3,790,752 fully vaccinated people and 4,008,737 people vaccinated once).

The media

On 9 September, the Ministry of Information held a diplomatic briefing for embassies in Yangon. The briefing focused on key aspects of the current situation in Myanmar: (i) political developments, (ii) the evidence related to the massive fraud and vote-rigging of the 2020 general election, including 11.3 million so-called voters with non-existent/ ineligible/repeated or otherwise questionable identities;

declared war against the Myanmar government from its base camp on the Thai border. On 8 September, the Information Team of the State Administration Council released a statement condemning the NUG declaration as an exhortation to the public to use violence to undermine the stability and socio-economic well-being of people in the country. The statement recalled that the Peace Process Steering Team meeting (formed with representatives of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) that had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) had held a meeting (19/2021) on 7 September 2021 with 35 participants from nine organizations.

ued to incite people to violence, while PDF terrorists continued to kill civilians, commit bomb attacks and disrupt activities to control COVID-19. The government would continue to prioritize the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, the peace process, security, stability and socio-economic well-being of people. The statement further requested all organizations and all ethnic national peoples to cooperate with the government in these endeavours.

Regarding the fake news on the demonetization of K5,000 and K10,000 banknotes, the Leader of the Information Team of the State Administration Council Major-General Zaw Min Tun urged the public not to be misled. He said the State Administration Council was strictly abiding by the 2008 State Constitution and that Article 36 (e) explicitly forbade such a move. The Central Bank of Myanmar had also issued a notice to the public on 16 September stating that banknotes would not be demonetized.

On 17 September, the Ministry of Information had laid out the agenda for the reorganization of the Department of Information and Public Relations and expansion of the information sector, with a view to heightening public awareness and strengthening public relations and services. At the meeting, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn underscored the necessity for the Ministry to provide services that would satisfy the people and gain their trust.

The media conference (9/2021) of the Information Team of the State Administration Council was held on 30 September in Nay Pyi Taw. Team leader Major-General Zaw Min Tun presented the plans for the peace process, the security situation and the video testimonies from detained PDF members. The representative of the Union Election Commission (UEC) summarized the completed activities and future plans of the Union Election Commission. Following this, the officials responded to reporters' questions.

For the eighth month of the State Administrative Council, the gains in nation and state-building have been steady. The people, the government and the Tatmadaw will need to continue working together in a spirit of determination and reliance on national strengths to build on these gains and tackle the remaining challenges.



Anti-COVID-19 vaccines arrive at Yangon International Airport.

home restrictions were lifted in six townships in Sagaing, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions.

The Ministry of Health held a meeting on the potential use of traditional substances /medicines in COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, and to encourage research to this end. The Department of Medical Research and the Tatmadaw Medical Research Unit have been working together to explore the potential use of traditional medicinal plants such as Hsay Khar Gyi (Andrographis paniculate or green chiretta).

Of 24 million doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine purchased from the People's Republic of China, 4 million doses arrived in Myanmar on 24 September and 26 September respectively. As of 26 September, 2 million doses of Covishield, 10 million doses of Sinopharm, 2 million doses of Sinovac (altogether 14 million doses of vaccines) have been purchased by the Ministry of Health in My-

(iii) the evidence of violence and terrorist acts committed by the so-called NUG and People's Defence Force (PDF) against civilians; and (iv) the progress made in the fight against COVID-19 despite the NUG/PDF attempts to disrupt vaccination activities with threats and bombs, and undermine public health facilities by pressuring health staff to abandon their patients and join the civil disobedience movement.

On 30 September, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn held a meeting with local and foreign media outlets at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw. The meeting aimed to provide accurate information for the State and the people, build mutual understanding and trust between state-owned and private media, cooperate for the benefit of the State and its people, prevent rumours and misinformation, and provide timely information to the media.

On 7 September, the NUG

The meeting had focused on the efforts being made to vaccinate the people of Myanmar, including EAOs and other measures for the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19. The statement also reminded that the Tatmadaw had issued statements 20 times from 21 December 2018 to 7 September 2021, on its unilateral ceasefire with a view to achieving durable peace. To this end, the Tatmadaw's Peace Negotiation Committee on Ethnic Armed Organizations had been modified on 1 February 2021 to facilitate holding continual dialogue between the Tatmadaw and the EAOs. The statement further noted that the government was striving for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, and its vaccination programme included people without discrimination, including those living in EAO areas, those from IDP camps and the Bengalis from Rakhine State. Therefore, it was regrettable that the NUG contin-

Do you want to see the flourishing of a secure education society?

As the infection rate of the COVID-19 pandemic is on the decrease, the Ministry of Health has eased the restrictions on gathering 100 people instead of 50 persons, except for some exceptional cases at present. Consequently, the education machinery, manufacturing machinery and transport machinery which came to a halt should be considered to resume the operations.

Currently, the anti-COVID-19 vaccines are purchased to arrive in Myanmar in batches one after another. So far, a total of 35 per cent of the total population of the country has been vaccinated against COVID-19. Hence, more vaccines are being purchased from friendly countries for performing vaccination to meet the aim for vaccination of 50 per cent total population by 2021.

As the government is arranging to reopen the higher education sector. It is an effort to emphasize the turning out of human resources for the improvement of the nation. Currently, students are ready to learn whereas teachers are ready to teach. Hence, the education society will be flourishing in the near future.

Students while improving their qualifications and capacity. Only when the teachers are qualified with higher capacity and critical thinking, can they turn out the good and able students endowed with high capability. Those new generation students would become qualified human resources, capable of taking a leading role in all sectors of the country in the future. If so, they will be State builders.

As the government is arranging to reopen the higher education sector. It is an effort to emphasize the turning out of human resources for the improvement of the nation. Currently, students are ready to learn whereas teachers are ready to teach. Hence, the education society will be flourishing in the near future.



Grave Perils of Narcotic Drugs behind the Current Terrorist Acts and Riots in Myanmar

By Aung Shinn

THE successive governments have taken measures to eradicate the narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Myanmar deeming as a national duty. Despite the efforts, Myanmar still remains on the list of world's highest narcotic drug producers according to the UNODC reports and other illicit drug indexes. The UNODC Report on East and Southeast Asia for 2020 stated that despite the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and chemicals continue at record levels in the region and organized crime groups are expending the illicit drug trade. In the World Drug Report 2021, it is also stated that methamphetamine production and the synthetic drug market expand although the poppy cultivation drops in the Golden Triangle area. There are also strong and undeniable evidence showing the expending market of methamphetamine and the risks of narcotic drug provoke certain impacts on the recent riots and terrorist incidents in Myanmar.

Creating terrorist acts and riots by the use of narcotic drug was an anti-government technique in the early days after the State Administration Council assumed the State's responsibilities. The article 'Witness account of the anatomy of 100 days unfolding crisis and Meth-head Militant Mob in Myanmar' written by a Burmese-Australian observer and political analyst called M.B highlighted the emotionally-based abnormal activities of gamers and drug-addict teenagers so-called Generation Z.



Youths of drug-users brutally killed a police officer in Mandalay city on 29 March 2021

According to the ground reality besides the description of the article, some protest organizers wearing uniforms and holding same slogan boards distributed food-boxes and cash to the protesters in order to accelerate their peaceful protests in February and March. Distributing the food-boxes, the cash as daily wages wrapped in plastic bags were stuck on the cover of the boxes. By the accounts of some non-drug-use youths who involved in the protests, it found that some organizers even taped stimulant pills addition to the daily wages inside the inner cover of the food boxes on the pretext of fighting fatigue.

Such matters were not openly attempted but by the contacts of drug-users among protesters. As a result, the youths of no-drug-users were not willing to see the abnormal activities affected by illicit drugs in the protests. The youths of drug users are dealing the drugs via online platforms and they communicate each other on social networks using the signs only they understand. The profits from drug-dealing are used then to distribute free drugs to others.

It is said the intentions of providing free stimulant drugs are to support attracting the youths, fighting fatigue, yelling out the slogans, and dealing with hunger. Nevertheless, the actual intention of the drug-providers behind is to make the youths to do the activities they did not dare to do before and to commit terror acts recklessly after extreme agitation. No matter what we say, the peaceful protests in Myanmar led to the terrorism exactly as the masterminds behind want.

You might remember the case that occurred on 14th Street of Mandalay region on 29 March. A police officer on his off-duty was stabbed, chopped down by axe, placed over the pile of used tire and burnt to death. The perpetrators of youths who amusingly chopped down and burnt a man they did not know were sadly found out to

be drug users. Moreover, according to the interrogation results of the arrested terrorists, it found that most of the youths participating in protests and committing the crimes of bombing attacks, murders and terror acts are using illicit drugs. I also want to highlight some significant instances of many drug-related incidents and terror acts. You might also remember the incident in which some suspects died attempting to flee by jumping from their apartment on the third floor that occurred on 44th street, No (6) ward of Botahtaung township. According to their confession, most of the offenders in the incident are found to be drug users. The offenders and other related accomplices of bombing attacks and sabotages were also drug users and apprehended along with stimulant tablets at La Yeik Cho guesthouse located in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) township on 22 August. Likewise, a total of 7,500 YW-inscribed stimulant tablets were confiscated at the place, where the second leader of so-called Myanma National Defence Force Sithu and other related offenders were arrested on 31 August. It was an evidence of distributing the stimulant tablets rather than the level of personal use to conduct terror acts. Moreover, it was also revealed that nine criminals who violently killed three ward administrators and one hundred-house elder in Mayangon township and Dagon Myothit (North) township are the drugs users. They lost their mind after using narcotic drugs and committed the crime. Among the offenders detained for committing bombing attacks, murders, and terrorist acts, in checking some of offenders with abnormal behaviours, 80 per cent of them were found to be drug users. It can be concluded that the narcotic drug is the root cause of the reckless terrorist acts of the youths under the name of PDF and the riotous protests by the youths called General Z. Otherwise, it can also be observed that the using drugs or substance abuse significantly rise among the youths today because unscrupulous manipulators of protests and terrorist acts behind are arousing the intense emotions of the youths by using drugs. Such attempt to increase the drug use and addiction among the youths is very dangerous for them as well as a serious threat to the future of the State. Consequently, we can see that the State Administration Council is undertaking the anti-narcotic drug operations simultaneously, while conducting the Counter-terrorism and Stability Operation to ensure the community peace and stability and to combat terrorism.

be drug users.

Moreover, according to the interrogation results of the arrested terrorists, it found that most of the youths participating in protests and committing the crimes of bombing attacks, murders and terror acts are using illicit drugs. I also want to highlight some significant instances of many drug-related incidents and terror acts.

You might also remember the incident in which some suspects died attempting to flee by jumping from their apartment on the third floor that occurred on 44th street, No (6) ward of Botahtaung township. According to their confession, most of the offenders in the incident are found to be drug users.

The offenders and other related accomplices of bombing attacks and sabotages were also drug users and apprehended along with stimulant tablets at La Yeik Cho guesthouse located in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) township on 22 August.

Likewise, a total of 7,500 YW-inscribed stimulant tablets were confiscated at the place, where the second leader of so-called Myanma National Defence Force Sithu and other related offenders were arrested on 31 August. It was an evidence of distributing the stimulant tablets rather than the level of personal use to conduct terror acts.

Moreover, it was also revealed that nine criminals who violently killed three ward administrators and one hundred-house elder in Mayangon township and Dagon Myothit (North) township are the drugs users. They lost their mind after using narcotic drugs and committed the crime.

Among the offenders detained for committing bombing attacks, murders, and terrorist acts, in checking some of offenders with abnormal behaviours, 80 per cent of them were found to be drug users. It can be concluded that the narcotic drug is the root cause of the reckless terrorist acts of the youths under the name of PDF and the riotous protests by the youths called General Z. Otherwise, it can also be observed that the using drugs or substance abuse significantly rise among the youths today because unscrupulous manipulators of protests and terrorist acts behind are arousing the intense emotions of the youths by using drugs. Such attempt to increase the drug use and addiction among the youths is very dangerous for them as well as a serious threat to the future of the State.



Actions of young protesters using drugs

Consequently, we can see that the State Administration Council is undertaking the anti-narcotic drug operations simultaneously, while conducting the Counter-terrorism and Stability Operation to ensure the community peace and stability and to combat terrorism. As the successive administrations emphasized the eradication of illicit drugs, due to the effective measures of the State Administration Council during the nine months after assuming the State's responsibilities, we can see the news reports about the record-breaking seizures of stimulant tablets and crystal methamphetamines (ice). The seizures of narcotic drugs and stimulants from 1 February to 31 October 2021 are as shown in the following table:

Sr.	Drug Types	From February to October, 2021	Worth (Kyat million)
1.	Opium (kg)	1,911.32306	1,911.32306
2.	Heroin (kg)	1,811.864474	54,355.93422
3.	Stimulants (tablet)	161,845,087.5	485,535.2625
4.	Ice (crystal meth) (kg)	12,813.77608	256,275.5216
5.	Marijuana (kg)	296.7368631	89.02106
6.	Kratom (kg)	2,205.89602	220.5896
7.	Kratom powder (kg)	680.931851	102.13978
Total worth (Kyat million)			798,489.7918 (over 798.4 billion)
Total Worth (US\$)			over 469.6 million

It is found out that 5,306 drug offenders (male) and 600 drug offenders (female) were taken action from 1 February to 31 October in connection with the seizures of drugs.

If we observed the seizures of illicit drugs in any location, their origins are found out to be the areas controlled by the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs). The EAOs are depending on illicit drug dealing and trafficking for their survival. Although some EAOs are doing superficial anti-narcotic drug activities, in reality, the evidence of seizures prove that they have deeply involve in production and distribution of illicit drugs.

Moreover, it has been known and reported that drug productions and distributions are accelerated to generate more funds for EAOs for providing terrorist trainings, and arms and ammunition to the PDFs committing crimes of terrorism under the title of Spring Revolution.

Otherwise, some EAOs having relations with the terrorist group NUG are connecting with other foreign drug-related gangs to receive necessary arms and ammunition required for PDF terrorists by using the money generated from drug dealing with the aim to achieve the victory of Spring Revolution.

Furthermore, some EAOs surviving with the drug-generated incomes are not only supporting the terrorist group NUG with the money, but also creating conditions in which the youths under the title of PDF can easily use drugs when they arrived in the areas of EAOs. It is assumed that their move is to expand the local illicit drug markets with the increasing number of drug users. The truth of this assumption is supported by the confessions of the terrorists arrested after returning from the EAOs' areas.

As it was mentioned above, the contents of articles by international observers, the eye-witnesses and the confessions of the arrested offenders prove that current terrorist acts are related to the narcotic drugs. Particularly, the number of stimulant tablets seized in September 2020 was only over 5.5 million and the amount of such tablets seized in September 2021 was over 23.7 million and therefore, the difference of the two years is found to be around 18.1 million. In this year 2021, the number of stimulant tablets seized in September was over 5.7 million more than the number of seizures in August. To find the answer of the reason why the number of stimulant tablets suddenly rises, it can be concluded that the drug dealings and drug-use sharply increase along with the rise of terrorist acts across the country after the terrorist group NUG announced to accelerate terror acts on 7 September as D-Day. Similarly, the seizures of ice (crystal meth) in Kg are much more than the previous year.

SEE PAGE-10

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

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 8 November 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region, isolated in Ayeeyawady Region, (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Bago, Yangon, Ayeeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 November 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 November 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8 November 2021: Partly cloudy.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

သတင်းစာ မဟာမိတ်ပါ အက်သျှယ်နိုင်းပီတယ်
09 454 237 515

သတင်းစာ ဂျာနယ် စာစောင်များကို နိုင်ငံတကာစံချိန်ဖီ
ပုံနှိပ်ရေးပါ အက်သျှယ်နိုင်းပီတယ်
01 860 4530

Print With Us

The Global New Light of Myanmar

PLEASE



CALL



01 860 4530

Grave Perils of Narcotic Drugs behind the Current Terrorist Acts ...

FROM PAGE-9

Such incidents clear the fact that the NUG not only take the required financial assistance from the drug dealing to create terrorist acts, but also used the narcotic drugs to make the youths lose their rationalities and commit terrorist acts. It is additionally proved by the evidence of using drugs by the terrorists when they were arrested.

As a result, Tatmadaw joining hands together with Myanmar Police Force has been emphasizing the continuous measures of anti-narcotic drug to effectively control and eradicate the threats of narcotic drugs and to end the domestic armed conflicts.

In fact, the peril of narcotic drugs for Myanmar is



Four offenders arrested allowed with 860 kg of crystal meth (Ice) worth Kyat 12.9 billion in Ywangan Township

Otherwise, some EAOs having relations with the terrorist group NUG are connecting with other foreign drug-related gangs to receive necessary arms and ammunition required for PDF terrorists by using the money generated from drug dealing with the aim to achieve the victory of Spring Revolution.

the serious problem to be handled by any government as a 'National Duty'. Today, some game-addicted teenagers in Myanmar use illegal drugs as supportive substance so that they can play games day and night and they also become preys of narcotic drugs and pawns in riotous protests. Therefore, parents must take good care of their children not to end up like this. Youths are the future of the country. Accord-

ing to the current political situation, we all must prevent the exploitation of youths with the help of illicit drugs by the political extremists for achieving their political aim.

To draw a conclusion, this article highlights the problems of narcotic drugs behind the riotous protests and current terrorist acts in Myanmar at the tripartite relationship of NUG, PDF and some EAOs. Thus, people can perceive the truths behind the use of drugs not only to get funds for Spring Revolution but also to lead the youths to a wrong path. Hence, I hereby urge people to collectively fight against the narcotic drug which is the grave peril for Myanmar.

Reference

- UNDOC report : opium production drops again in Myanmar as the synthetic drug market expands (2021). Retrieved on 31th October 2021 from <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaand-pacific/en/2021/02/myanmar-opium-survey-report-launch/story.html>

- Mr. B. (2021). Witness account of the anatomy of 100 days unfolding crisis and Meth-head Militant Mob in Myanmar Retrieved from <https://npnewsmm.com/news/60c467c47677404eb7269bf5>

Organic farmers find fertile ground in North Africa

PROUDLY displaying her freshly picked pomegranates, Tunisian farmer Sarah Shili says going organic is "the future of farming"—and as demand surges in North Africa and beyond, the sector is blooming.

Shili runs Domaine Elixir Bio, a 94-hectare (230-acre) farm near Tunis that produces organic-certified vegetable, fruit and cereal crops in a way she said "respects nature".

The farm's revenues have surged thanks to strong demand and the growth of online sales, multiplying five times in as many years to hit 100,000 euros in 2020.

That is despite the higher price of organic products in a middle-income country where many people's wallets have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and years of economic crisis.

Indeed, with export demand also on the rise, Shili says the main challenges are on the supply side. — AFP ■

Indonesia walks back zero-deforestation pledge at COP26

INDONESIA on Thursday questioned the terms of a deal to end deforestation by 2030 signed by over 100 countries, including the Southeast Asian archipelago, which is home to the world's third-biggest rainforest. The nations agreed on the multi-billion-dollar plan at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow this week to stop cutting down trees on an industrial scale in under a decade. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the agreement was pivotal to the overarching goal of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius in a bid to slow global warming.

But two senior Indonesian politicians on Thursday threw Jakarta's participation into question. One said the deal did not call for a total end to deforest-



A barge filled with logged timber is pulled along the Mahakam river in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. PHOTO: AFP

ation, and another said it could not halt President Joko Widodo's development goals. Indonesia's deputy foreign affairs minister Mahendra Siregar said on Twit-

ter that describing the deal as a zero-deforestation pledge was "false and misleading".

Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Indonesia's environment minister who

attended the climate conference in Scotland, said on social media that "forcing Indonesia to zero deforestation in 2030 is clearly inappropriate and unfair". — AFP ■

Living on the Great Lakes—a dream threatened by climate change

ON a fall night in 2019, Eric Brandt was awoken by the sound of steel rods cracking inside concrete.

"I heard the pings. I know the sound because I used to drill rebar into the top of coal mines," Brandt explained. "I couldn't even imagine what was happening out there."

But Brandt, a 69-year-old former mine worker, was nowhere near a coal mine. He was in bed in his condominium on the shore of Lake Michigan, on the South Side of Chicago. Brandt, now a writer, recalled that it was the second major storm that he lived

through in four years at his building.

This time, crashing waves broke a cement wall in half, and the water washed away a beach adjacent to his 12-storey building.

"They called it a 50-year storm, but it was the second in two years," Brandt said, standing by a new shoreline of giant rocks put down by the US Army Corps of Engineers to protect against further erosion—a problem that has increased dramatically for the Great Lakes over the last decade. The five lakes that make up the Great Lakes, which account for more than 20 per cent of the

world's freshwater supply, have always risen and fallen over the decades. But climate change has now made the extremes much stronger than before, according to Drew Gronewold, a hydrologist at the University of Michigan. "You have precipitation coming in and evaporation going out," Gronewold said.

"The analogy we use now is a game of tug-of-war. If both teams are equally strong, the rope doesn't move. What happens if they are both getting stronger, and one slips—the rope swings much more quickly than it otherwise would." — AFP ■

Pfizer says Covid pill 89% effective against severe disease

PFIZER said Friday that a clinical trial of its pill to treat Covid-19 had shown it is highly effective.

Pfizer's is the second anti-Covid pill after that of Merck, which is actually an influenza medicine rebranded to fight the coronavirus. Pfizer's has been created specifically to fight Covid.

The Pfizer drug called Paxlovid achieved an 89 per cent reduction in risk of hospitalization or death among adult patients with Covid who are at high risk of progressing to severe illness, the US company said.

The results from the middle-to-late stage clinical trial were so strong that Pfizer will stop recruiting new people for the trial, the company said.

It will submit the data to the Food and Drug Administration as soon as possible as part of its "rolling submission" for Emergency Use Authorization.

"Today's news is a real game-changer in the global efforts to halt the devastation of this pandemic," said Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla.

"These data suggest that our oral antiviral candidate, if approved or authorized by regulatory authorities, has the potential to save patients' lives, reduce the severity of Covid-19 infections, and eliminate up to nine out of 10 hospitalizations," he added.

The main analysis of the data looked at numbers from 1,219 adults in North and South America, Europe, Africa and



Pfizer headquarters in New York City, on 9 November 2020. PHOTO: DAVID DEE DELGADO/ AFP

Asia.

The search for a pill

Several companies are working on so-called oral antivirals, which would mimic what the drug Tamiflu does for influenza and prevent the disease from progressing to severe.

Pfizer started developing its drug in March 2020.

Britain on Thursday became the first country to approve an anti-Covid pill, as it greenlit the use of Merck's antiviral drug called molnupiravir to treat patients suffering from mild to

moderate coronavirus.

Pfizer's product is known as a "protease inhibitor" and has been shown in lab testing to jam up the virus' replication machinery. If it works in real life, it will likely only be effective at the early stages of infection.

By the time Covid progresses to severe disease, the virus has largely stopped replicating and patients suffer from an over-active immune response.

A simple pill to treat the coronavirus has been sought since the start of the pandemic.

Until now, Covid therapeutics such as monoclonal antibodies and Gilead's remdesivir — authorized for use in the EU under the name Veklury — have been administered intravenously. — AFP ■

India Covid hospital fire kills 11



The hospital ward, which was left a charred wreck, had been newly built for coronavirus patients. PHOTO: AFP

FIRE tore through a hospital in western India on Saturday killing at least 11 coronavirus patients, officials said.

The blaze was the latest

to hit pandemic wards across India.

There were about two dozen patients at the intensive care unit in the hospital in Ahmadna-

gar district, Maharashtra state, when the fire broke out, officials said. Most of the dead were aged over 60.

The hospital ward, which was left a charred wreck, had been newly built for coronavirus patients.

Maharashtra state chief minister Udhav Thackeray ordered a formal investigation into the blaze and safety conditions at the hospital 250 kilometres (185 miles) from the regional capital Mumbai.

India's underfunded public health system was pushed to breaking point by a coronavirus surge in April-May. But a number of Covid-19 hospitals were hit by fire tragedies. — AFP ■

Romania's coronavirus death toll passes 50,000

THE number of COVID-19 related deaths in Romania has reached 50,087, including 483 deaths reported on Friday, the latest official data has shown.

This puts the eastern European country with a population of about 19 million among the countries hardest hit by the virus in the world.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases increased by 8,268 in the last 24 hours, with over 57,000 tests performed nationwide, the Strategic Communication Group (GCS), Romania's official COVID-19 communication task force, has said.

So far, 1,693,532 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed across the country, 9,020 of



A nurse carries Pfizer BioNTech vaccines against Covid-19 in the remote village of Poienita Voinii, Romania in May. PHOTO: DANIEL MIHAILESCU/AFP

whom got reinfected more than 180 days after their first infection. So far, 1,469,303 patients have been declared cured, according to the GCS.

Romania has suffered a

surge in daily COVID-19 infections and deaths since late September, hitting new records in key indicators in mid October: 18,863 daily new COVID-19 infections and 574 deaths. — Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

COVID-19 cases surge in U.S. state Colorado, causing shortage in health care

COVID-19 case in U.S. state Colorado are going up, with hospitalizations at the highest level this year, a Fox-affiliated television station has recently reported.

Health care is at its breaking point, said Dr. Richard Zane at nonprofit health system UHealth, adding that they simply don't have room for regular care "because of the huge number of COVID patients."

Scott Bookman, the state's COVID-19 incident commander, said the state's overall hospitalization capacity is hovering around 90 per cent, which translates that only "about 900 hospital beds" are available.

New modeling has estimated that 1 in 48 people in Colorado are infected with the virus, continuing a trend of worsening transmission in the state, KDVR, the virtual channel affiliated to Fox News, reported. There are more than 1,300 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Colorado daily on average, the highest number since December 2020 when the average figure was over 1,900, according to the New York Times data. — Xinhua ■

Tanzania targets daily COVID-19 vaccinations of up to 100,000 people

TANZANIAN authorities said on Saturday that between 80,000 and 100,000 people will be vaccinated daily against COVID-19 during the second phase of the inoculation campaign.

A statement by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children said the permanent secretary in the ministry, Abel Makubi, revealed the acceleration of the vaccination in a meeting with regional medical officers and COVID-19 vaccination coordinators in the capital Dodoma.

MAKUBI said the second phase of the vaccination campaign will mainly focus on rural communities.

HE said the new campaign will go in tandem with raising awareness at community levels on precaution measures issued by health authorities against the pandemic.

AT least one million Tanzanians have been vaccinated between July 28 when President Samia Suluhu Hassan launched the campaign and October 31.

CHINA has donated 1,565,600 Sinopharm vaccine doses to Tanzania to support the east African nation's drive to vaccinate its people against the virus. Tanzania intends to vaccinate at least 60 per cent of its 60 million population. — Xinhua ■

Turkey opens new consulate in Sri Lanka



Inaugurating a new office of Sri Lanka's Antalya Honorary Consulate General in the town of Alanya, Mevlut Cavusoglu said Ankara desires to promote cooperation with Sri Lanka in fields such as economy, culture, and education. **PHOTO: TWITTER/ANI**

THE Turkish foreign minister on Saturday said Turkey wants to develop holistic relations with Asia that has become the center of global economic power.

Inaugurating a new office of Sri Lanka's Antalya Honorary Consulate General in the town of Alanya, Mevlut Cavusoglu said Ankara desires to promote cooperation with Sri Lanka in fields such as economy, culture, and education.

Emphasizing that honorary consulates play an important role in diplomatic interactions, he recalled that

the first Turkish diplomatic contact with Sri Lanka was established in 1864 when the Ottoman Empire opened an honorary consulate.

Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Sri Lanka following its independence in 1948, he added.

Cavusoglu said bilateral ties have grown stronger since a tsunami rocked Sri Lanka in 2004 and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan paid a visit to the country at the time.

Commenting on financial relations, Cavusoglu said the two countries set a trade target of half a billion dollars,

but the figure stood at about \$102 million in the first half of 2021.

He suggested, however, that maintaining economic relationships based on a few specialized products would be unsustainable, and that trade ties should be more diverse.

The Turkish diplomat said health and tourism sectors should also be explored and incorporated into relations.

In a Twitter post, Cavusoglu said: "[Turkey] Will further develop our cooperation with friendly Sri Lanka in the framework of our Asia Anew Initiative." — ANI ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli PM against reopening of US consulate for Palestinians in Jerusalem

ISRAELI Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Saturday that he was against the possible reopening of a US consulate for Palestinians in Jerusalem.

Bennett spoke at a press conference in Jerusalem a day after the Israeli parliament passed the annual budget for 2022.

"There is no room for another consulate in Jerusalem," the Israeli prime minister said he told the US administration.

US State Department Spokesman Ned Price said at a news briefing on Wednesday that the United States had "been very clear" about its intentions to reopen the consulate for Palestinians.

Up until 2018, the United States had two consulates in Jerusalem, one for Palestinians and one for Israelis. After former US President Donald Trump "recognized the city as the capital of Israel," the two consulates were merged and housed in a new embassy.

Relations between the US and the Palestinians soured during the Trump administration.

After US President Joe Biden entered the White House, he made several moves to improve relations with the Palestinians. One of the steps was the decision to re-open the consulate in Jerusalem for Palestinians. Jerusalem, which hosts sites holy to Judaism, Islam and Christianity, is the most explosive subject in the decades-old Palestinian-Israeli conflict. — Xinhua ■

Out of the shadow, Egypt money-pooling apps thrive

CASH-STRAPPED Egyptians fearful of banks have long relied on a "gameya" to access money in time of need, but now tech startups are cashing in on the age-old money-pooling association.

Navigating an app with strangers is "easier and safer" than the traditional face-to-face practice, said one user, Menna Shaarawi, 31.

"I receive the money in my bank account without any delays and I don't have to chase after people to get what's owed to me. It's perfect really," the marketing manager told AFP about her use of the ElGameya (association in Arabic) app, which is quickly rising in popularity.

Dina Rabie, an economist and lecturer at the British University in Egypt, explained that the gameya is "more of a social norm" in the country where the practice dates back to at least the turn of the 20th century. The cooperative system that allows people to save and borrow money is popular in parts of the world, including Africa and Latin America.

Participants put an equal amount each month in a pot and take turns to collect the sum that has accumulated.

On average, a gameya lasts between five and 20 months and is not limited to a particular economic class, Rabie said. — AFP ■

Chinese exports solid in October as Covid eases overseas



China's exports rose by a better-than-expected clip in October 2021. File Photo taken on 16 May 2018 shows an automatic container dock in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WANG PEIKE**

CHINA'S exports rose by a better-than-expected clip in October, official data showed on Sunday, with demand strengthening in some key markets such as the United States and Covid numbers easing overseas.

The data from the world's

second-largest economy also suggested that Chinese factories had kept the goods flowing out despite power outages in recent months caused by emission reduction targets, the surging price of coal, and supply shortages.

The government said last week that the power crisis was winding down thanks to a boost in domestic coal output.

Exports rose a better-than-expected 27.1 per cent on-year in October, according to customs authorities, to \$300.2 billion. Imports came in slightly below analyst estimates, rising 20.6 per cent in October.

In recent months, several Chinese factories were forced to halt operations due to power outages, raising concerns about global supply chains.

The squeeze had worsened as China's Covid-19 border restrictions hindered shipments of raw materials from overseas while a trade tiff with Australia exacerbated the drop in coal imports. — AFP ■

Soaring prices fuel anti-ECB sentiment in Germany

AS inflation soars to its highest level in three decades in Germany, Simon and Lena Wendland, parents of newborn twins, say that their lives have become more uncertain.

Their power supplier has just announced it is doubling its electricity prices, while property prices are looking "rather scary". "We don't know where this is going to lead us," Simon Wendland told AFP.

From energy and food, to paper and rent, prices have been marching mercilessly higher both in Germany and across Europe. Latest data put inflation in Europe's biggest economy at five per cent year-on-year, a level not seen in the last 30 years.



Food prices are soaring in Germany where the inflation rate currently stands at five per cent. **PHOTO: AFP/INA FASSBENDER**

Bild, the country's biggest-selling newspaper, blames the European Central Bank for failing to rein in prices and even adding to the problem with its cheap money policy.

The Frankfurt-based ECB

has argued that its record-low interest rates and 1.85-trillion-euro (\$2.15-trillion) pandemic emergency bond-buying programme are necessary to prop up an economy ravaged by the coronavirus crisis. — AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Iran, Pakistan agree to raise mutual trade to 5 bln USD by 2023

IRAN and Pakistan have agreed to increase their mutual trade to 5 billion U.S. dollars by 2023, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Reza Fatemi Amin said Saturday. "Iran is ready to remove trade barriers with Pakistan to improve economic relations between the two countries," Fatemi Amin said at the 9th meeting of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee in the capital Tehran. He said both countries stressed the need for a precise plan that facilitates investment in Iran for Pakistani entrepreneurs. — Xinhua ■

Elon Musk asks Twitter if he should sell 10 per cent of his Tesla stock

ANOTHER zany tweet or a real question? Elon Musk polled his more than 62 million Twitter followers Saturday about whether he should sell 10 per cent of his Tesla shares, insisting he would do as voters say. The over-the-top electric car maker's query follows a proposal by Congressional Democrats to tax the super-wealthy more heavily by targeting stocks, which are usually only taxed when sold. "Much is made lately of unrealized gains being a means of tax avoidance, so I propose selling 10% of my Tesla stock," Musk wrote, asking followers whether they agree "yes" or "no." — AFP ■

Honda to start battery sharing service for tricycle taxis in India



Supplied photo shows an electric tricycle taxi used in India parked in front of a station keeping Honda Motor Co.'s portable lithium-ion batteries. PHOTO: KYODO

HONDA Motor Co. will start a battery sharing service for electric tricycle taxis in India in the first half of 2022 as the world's third-largest carbon dioxide emitter steps up efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.

The Japanese auto-maker will set up battery

stations for tricycle taxis, or so-called rickshaws, using Honda's new portable lithium-ion batteries, enabling drivers to swap their low batteries for fully charged ones.

About 8 million rickshaws are used in India and are important means

of daily transportation. Many rickshaws in urban areas are powered by compressed natural gas, which emits less CO₂ than gasoline and diesel fuel. However, an electric battery does not generate any emissions. Honda will use its latest Mobile Power

Pack Exchanger e, which allows the rickshaws to travel 1.2 times longer on a single charge compared to the previous model.

"We hope to expand the use of swappable batteries and contribute to decarbonizing the society," Minoru Kato, chief officer of life creation operations, said in a press conference in Tokyo in late October.

The move comes as India actively promotes the electrification of its transportation sector, responsible for 20 per cent of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the country, Honda said, as the nation tries to cope with worsening air pollution exacerbated by economic development and growing energy demand. — Kyodo ■

Japan Inc. still seeing uneven recovery from pandemic as services lag

THE earnings recovery from the COVID-19 fallout is still uneven, with a wide gap remaining between Japanese manufacturers and nonmanufacturers. A state of emergency was fully lifted in Japan at the start of the October-December quarter and economists say this should give a much-awaited boost to the nonmanufacturing sector, especially service providers that have lagged in a recovery led largely by exporters such as Toyota Motor Corp. Still,

Japan's major airlines are expected to stay in the red for a second year in the 12-month period through March 2022. Train operators are also predicting net losses for the fiscal year and travel agency H.I.S. Co. expects a record net loss of 53 billion yen (\$467 million) in the year that ended in October, highlighting the severity of the blow from the pandemic. "What's most important for us is to become a smaller company and emerge from the coronavirus

tunnel," Shinya Katanozaka, president and CEO of ANA Holdings Inc., said in late October. All Nippon Airways Co. operates as a unit of ANA Holdings. While both ANA and its domestic rival Japan Airlines Co. are expected to see their earnings improve from a year earlier, when travel demand evaporated amid the pandemic, they still forecast net losses of 100 billion yen and 146 billion yen, respectively, in the business year to March.— Kyodo ■

Maldives inaugurates Chinese-built apron at Velena Int'l Airport



A new expanded west apron at the Velena International Airport (VIA) in Maldives has been officially inaugurated, general contractor Beijing Urban Construction Group (BUCG) said. PHOTO: XINHUA

A new expanded west apron at the Velena International Airport (VIA) in Maldives has been officially inaugurated, general contractor Beijing Urban Construction

Group (BUCG) said. The expanded apron covers an area of 35,000 square meters and is part of the VIA development project. It was built by BUCG to international standards

and can accommodate a maximum of nine code C aircraft.

The inauguration ceremony was held on Thursday and attended by Managing Director

and CEO of the Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), the country's state-owned airport operator, Gordon Andrew, and Island Aviation Managing Director Mohamed Mihadh, and Airline Operator Committee Chairman Mahjoob Abdullah.

Gordon said that the apron was constructed close to the domestic terminal, thereby eliminating the need for buses to transport passengers to aircraft. He added that the new apron would be useful in the upcoming tourist season. "Passengers departing and arriving will see a lot of easements due to this. Moreover, our services will become speedier for sure," Gordon was quoted as saying by the Sun Online. — Xinhua ■

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

AS the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 17th NOVEMBER 2021, 18th NOVEMBER 2021 (Tazaung Taing Public Holiday) and 28th NOVEMBER 2021 (National Day), 29th NOVEMBER 2021 (Alternative Holiday of National Day) Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0188N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0188N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-11-2021 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
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Israeli parliament approves 2022 state budget after marathon voting

THE Israeli parliament passed the 2022 state budget early Friday morning, after several days of marathon voting.

Being held close to the deadline for the budget next week, the final vote passed it with a slim majority of 59 against 56, helping the government led by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett avert a political crisis, namely a snap election.

“The new budget we passed tonight is excellent!” Bennett said on his Twitter page. “We put Israel back on track.”

The approval by the parliament is the first of its kind

since 2018 when Israel entered a prolonged political crisis, during which Israel witnessed four election campaigns and had to run under an interim budget.

The budget includes major reforms such as congestion tax for the overcrowded Tel Aviv metropolitan area, increased funding for the Arab-Israeli population, a higher retirement age for women, and amended regulations on imports.

The government will also work to solve a major housing crisis amid soaring property prices and to improve public transportation. — Xinhua ■



A general view of a plenum session and vote on the state budget at the Knesset (Israeli parliament), in Jerusalem, Israel, 3 November 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Glasgow braces for climate protests on global day of action



Protesters are calling for immediate action for communities already affected by climate change. PHOTO: AFP

GLASGOW was on Saturday bracing for a second day of protests against what campaigners say is a lack of urgency to address global warming after Greta Thunberg labelled the

crunch UN climate summit there a “failure”.

From Paris to Sydney, from Nairobi to Mexico, more than 200 events are planned worldwide to demand immediate action for

communities already affected by climate change, particularly in the poorer countries in the South.

In Australia, protesters in Sydney and Melbourne dressed as lumps of coal or Prime Minister Scott Morrison, a vigorous defender of the mining industry, labelled the talks as “a sham” and their national leader “an absolute embarrassment.”

“No more blah, blah blah. Real climate action now,” read one sign at a protest in Sydney.

In Glasgow, organisers and police said they expected up to 50,000 people to parade through the streets of the Scottish city near the COP26 summit venue, which is under tight security. — AFP ■

At least 8 dead after crush at US music festival

A crush and stampede led to at least eight deaths and several injuries during a performance by rapper Travis Scott in Houston, Texas.

Houston fire chief Samuel Pena said the incident began at around 9 pm when “the crowd began to compress towards the front of the stage”.

“That caused some panic and it started causing some injuries, people began to fall out, become unconscious and it created additional panic,” Pena said at a press conference outside NRG Park. “We had at least eight confirmed fatalities tonight and scores of individuals that were injured,” he said, adding the cause of death cannot be confirmed until after medical exams are completed.



Travis Scott, 29, made his breakthrough in 2013 and has had six Grammy nominations. PHOTO: AFP

“We transported 17 patients to the hospital... 11 of those that were transported were in cardiac arrest,” he said.

Around 50,000 people were in the crowd at American rapper Travis Scott’s Astroworld Festi-

val, Pena added.

Scott was on stage when the incident occurred and stopped his act on several occasions when he saw fans in distress near the stage, the Houston Chronicle reported. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Several wounded in knife attack on German train

SEVERAL people were wounded on Saturday in a knife attack on a high-speed train in Germany’s Bavaria, local police said, adding the alleged perpetrator had been arrested.

“According to preliminary information, several people were injured,” police in Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz said in a statement, assuring that “there is now no more danger”.

The incident took place on an Intercity Express (ICE) train between the southern German cities of Regensburg and Nuremberg, reports DW News.

Three people were injured, two seriously, according to the Bild newspaper. A police spokeswoman said none of their lives were in danger. While details of the attack remain unclear, police received a call at around 9.20 am. Shortly after, the train was brought to a halt outside the town of Seubersdorf in Bavaria’s Upper Palatinate. NewS network BR24 reports that around 200 people were evacuated from the train.

Local police tweeted that a major police operation is still underway in Seubersdorf, underlining that there is no danger to the public. They confirmed that, after the train was stopped, a male was arrested.

A spokesperson for Deutsch Bahn said the railway line between Regensburg and Nuremberg is currently closed, with trains being held at stations.

There was initially no information about the background to the incident. A police spokeswoman emphasized that the investigation was still ongoing.

Germany has been facing a twin terror threat in recent years from jihadist and right-wing extremist groups. — AFP ■

Portugal’s Parliament legalizes euthanasia

LAWMAKERS in Portugal voted on Friday to legalize euthanasia by approving a revised bill that fixed objections raised earlier by the Constitutional Court.

The vote was 138 in favor, 84 against and five abstentions. The original bill was vetoed by President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa in March.

The new law specifies the conditions under which medically assisted death is not punishable, thus changing the country’s Penal Code.

The rules are quite restrictive, and only people over 18, who are Portuguese citizens or foreigners legally resident in the country, can resort to euthanasia, the practice of intentionally ending life to relieve pain and suffering.

Only patients in situations of “intolerable suffering, with severe permanent injury or incurable and fatal disease” can opt for this final procedure. Those diagnosed with mental illnesses cannot choose assisted suicide.

President de Sousa still needs to sign the bill into law. — Xinhua ■

Iraq PM calls for calm after drone attack on his residence

IRAQ'S Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi said he was unhurt and appealed for "calm and restraint" after a drone attack on his residence early Sunday as political tensions mounted in the country.

The attack in Baghdad's Green Zone was the first to target the residence of Kadhemi, who has been in power since May 2020, and came as Iraq's political parties wrangle over who will run the next government after elections last month.

That vote saw the Con-

quest (Fatah) Alliance, the political arm of the pro-Iran Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network, suffer a substantial decline in its parliamentary seats, leading the group to denounce the outcome as "fraud".

No group has yet claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack, which left two bodyguards injured, according to a security source.

In a tweet, Kadhemi called "for calm and restraint on the part of everyone for the good of Iraq".

"My residence has been the target of cowardly assault. Praise God, I am fine and so are those who work with me," he then said in a short video shared on social media.

"Cowardly missiles and drones don't build nations."

Kadhemi's office described the attack as a "failed assassination attempt".

The United States swiftly condemned the attack and said it was "relieved to learn the Prime Minister was unharmed". — AFP ■



Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi at a polling station in Baghdad's Green Zone on Election Day last month. PHOTO: IRAQI PRIME MINISTER MEDIA OFFICE/AFP

Ortega a shoo-in in 'sham' Nicaragua vote



As Ortega, 75, prepared to claim a fourth consecutive term—his fifth overall—the United States described Nicaragua as a "cautionary tale" with a regime "determined to hold on to power at any cost." PHOTO: CESAR PEREZ / NICARAGUAN PRESIDENCY / AFP

NICARAGUANS go to the polls Sunday for presidential elections dismissed as a "sham" by the international community, with all viable challengers to long-term leader Daniel Ortega locked up or in exile.

As Ortega, 75, prepared to claim a fourth consecutive term—his fifth overall—the United States described Nicaragua as a "cautionary tale" with a regime "determined to hold on to power

at any cost."

"It will be quite clear that these elections will have no credibility, that they're a sham," Patrick Ventrell, the US State Department's Central American Affairs director said Thursday.

"We are going into a scenario where you have a dictatorship, and we'll have to respond to such."

Just over three years after massive protests against his

rule and a violent crackdown that claimed more than 300 lives, Ortega is assured another five-year term with his wife and vice-president, Rosario Murillo, 70, by his side.

Seven people who had any real shot at the presidency are among 39 opposition figures detained in a brutal government clampdown that started in June.

Ortega, the leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), faces five opponents, though in name only—all are derided as regime collaborators.

The vote in Central America's poorest country will take place without international observers and with most foreign media denied access to the country.

Nicaragua's last opposition daily, La Prensa, had its director thrown in prison in August, and Facebook announced this week it had closed a government-operated troll farm spreading anti-opposition messages. — AFP ■

Deportees despair despite US-Mexico border reopening

FAMILIES separated by the pandemic are planning joyful reunions when the Mexican-US border reopens on Monday, but not Martin Figueroa, who left his "mind and soul" behind when he was deported.

He is one of a number of Mexicans who lived legally in the United States until, due to legal offenses, they were sent back to a country that no longer feels like home.

"It's sad to know that many will be able to cross, but I won't,"

Figueroa, 52, said in the simple room he rents in the border city of Tijuana after being expelled in 2018.

The deportees left behind families, friends and—in the case of war veterans—financial benefits and the comrades they fought alongside in countries including Vietnam and Iraq.

"It's hard because you could say that my mind and soul stayed on the other side.

Only my body is here," said Figueroa, who was separated

from his seven children.

"I can't say when leaving work, 'I'm going to see my children.'

No. Because there's that wall," he said, referring to the fence snaking along the more than 3,100 kilometre-long (1,900 miles) border.

Figueroa was sent back to Mexico while working in construction in Bakersfield, California, despite having steered clear of gangs for several years, he said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

France's bishops kneel in penance for decades of Church abuse

SENIOR members of France's Catholic hierarchy knelt in a show of penance at the shrine of Lourdes Saturday, a day after bishops accepted the church's responsibility for decades of child abuse.

But some of the victims of the abuse — and lay members supporting them — said they were still waiting for details of compensation and of a comprehensive reform of the church.

In Lourdes, a place of pilgrimage for Christians worldwide, some 120 archbishops, bishops and laymen gathered at the unveiling of a photo showing a sculpture representing the head of a weeping child.

At the request of the victims, the clerics did not wear their religious clothing for the ceremony.

The wall featuring the photograph will serve as a "place of memory" for the victims. The photo itself was taken by one of the victims of abuse, and the suffering he had endured was detailed in a passage read out by another survivor.

At Saturday's ceremony, Hugues de Woillemont, spokesman for the Bishops' Conference of France, said: "We want to mark this place of Lourdes for a first visual testimony that commemorates so much violence, drama and attacks." — AFP ■

Poles protest mother's death blamed on abortion law

TENS of thousands of people demonstrated Saturday in Warsaw and dozens of other Polish cities to denounce a nine-month-old abortion law blamed for claiming the life of a pregnant mother, organisers said. THE 30-year-old woman died of septicaemia in a Polish hospital after her 22-month-old foetus died in her womb, the family's lawyer Jolanta Budzowska tweeted.

She was, she added, the first victim of the near-total ban on abortion. Izabela, married for 10 years and a mother of a nine-year-old child, agonisingly described her worsening condition in text messages made public since her death in late September.

"Not one more," shouted thousands of demonstrators in the capital Warsaw who protested outside the Constitutional Court and the health ministry.

"I am here to make sure that no woman's life is put at risk any more," Ewa Pietrzyk, a 40-year-old Warsaw resident, told AFP as she held a photo of Izabela. "The current legislation is killing women."

Women's rights groups said they organised similar demonstrations in around 70 other Polish towns and cities.

Izabela's family issued a statement saying doctors at the hospital in the southern town of Pszczyna "took a wait-and-see attitude," which it attributed to "the rules in effect limiting the possibility of a legal abortion". — AFP ■

XXXI SEA Games scheduled to be held on 12 May

THE XXXI Southeast Asian (SEA) Games, which has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is scheduled to begin on 12 May 2022, according to the SEA Games organizing committee.

The tournament is scheduled to be held later this year, but has been postponed to next year due to the epidemic, and was decided to resume at mid-

May 2022 according to a the SEA Games Organizing Committee's Conference which was held last month.

According to local media reports, the Olympic Committee of Viet Nam will hold the Games from 12 to 23 May 2022, with the approval of Vietnamese government officials.

The XXXI SEA Games will feature 520 events in 40 sports,

mainly those played at the Olympic Games, Vietnamese authorities added.

Myanmar plans to compete in 18 sports events and athletes are taking training at the special training camps for the SEA Games.

This is the second time Viet Nam has hosted the SEA Games.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Tuchel urges Barkley to seize Chelsea chance



Chelsea midfielder Ross Barkley. PHOTO: AFP

THOMAS Tuchel insists Ross Barkley can make an impact on Chelsea's bid to win the Premier League title after the midfielder came in from the cold in Saturday's 1-1 draw against Burnley.

Barkley made his first Premier League start this term as Tuchel tweaked the leaders' lineup at Stamford Bridge.

The 27-year-old got his rare chance because Romelu Lukaku and Timo Werner are injured, while Mason Mount was only fit enough for a substitute's role af-

ter a tooth infection.

Barkley started in a 'false nine' role in Chelsea's three-man attack and delivered arguably the best performance of his troubled three-year spell with the Blues.

Since signing from Everton in 2018, Barkley has found it impossible to recapture the dynamic displays that made him the darling of Goodison Park. He spent last season in exile on loan at Aston Villa and looked certain to eventually leave Chelsea.

But Tuchel has kept him

around this season and in only his second start in all competitions, Barkley finally showed his quality.

Linking with the midfield and driving forward dangerously, while displaying his range of passing, Barkley was Chelsea's most influential figure against Burnley. Ironically, Barkley's last contribution before being substituted to a standing ovation was to lift a shot over the bar that would have put Chelsea two goals up after Kai Havertz's first half opener.—AFP ■

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.

Russia win Billie Jean King Cup but mood turns 'ugly'

RUSSIA edged Switzerland to win the maiden Billie Jean King Cup in Prague on Saturday, but the win turned sour as the Swiss suggested the new champions had replaced players against the rules. Daria Kasatkina beat Jil Teichmann 6-2, 6-4 and Liudmila Samsonova overpowered Olympic champion Belinda Bencic 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to bring Russia its fifth title overall in the team competition previously known as the Fed Cup. "I have too many emotions now, I'm feeling like I'm freezing and it's unbelievable really. Unbelievably happy," Samsonova said after celebrating with her team. "Today was an incredible fight, it was more than tennis," she added. Teichmann, the world number 39, demolished Storm Sanders on Friday as Switzerland beat Australia in the semi-final, but the 28th-ranked Kasatkina, who had sat out Russia's previous two ties, proved a different level.—AFP ■

Alvarez knocks out Plant to make super middleweight history



Saul Canelo Alvarez became the first Mexican and first super middleweight to hold all four belts simultaneously. PHOTO: AFP

SAUL 'Canelo' Alvarez made history Saturday, knocking out Caleb Plant in the 11th round to become the first undisputed world super middleweight champion, unifying all four major belts in less than 12 months.

The 31-year-old added the IBF belt to his WBC, WBA and WBO straps in a winner-takes-all showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas to join an exclusive club. Mexico's Alvarez knocked Plant down twice in the 11th; the first time with a stinging left hook, followed up by a thundering right uppercut.

Plant got up but the American was still wobbly and in a fog as Alvarez chased him around the ring.

Alvarez pummelled Plant with rights and lefts to drop him for good at 1:05 of the round.

The Mexican had seized the WBA and WBC titles by defeating Callum Smith in December 2020.

He defended them successfully by overpowering Avni Yildirim in February and then clobbered Billy Joe Saunders six months ago to grab the WBO belt. Alvarez came into the bout as a heavy favorite to become the first Mexican four-belt champion.

With a complete collection of 168-pound titles, he becomes just the sixth fighter since the WBO began sanctioning world title fights in 1988 to hold all four belts from the separate governing bodies at the same time.—AFP ■