



## TEA BANH: JABS SUCCESS SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR ENTIRE NATION

NATIONAL – PAGE 3



## BILATERAL TRADE WITH US SOARS 28.47% IN FIRST EIGHT MONTHS

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## MORE THAN 50% OF VIETNAMESE FIRMS KEEP STAFF PAID AMID COVID

WORLD – PAGE 10



## SOFTWARE FIRM TO GIFT 5K FREE LICENCES TO MAKE WORLD 'BETTER'

LIFESTYLE – PAGE 12

# Non-SEZ projects slide by nearly 30%

Hin Pisei

SEVENTY-FIVE private investment projects outside of special economic zones (SEZ) were approved by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) in the first eight months of 2021, down by nearly 30 per cent year-on-year, the Ministry of Economy and Finance reported.

The report presented an overall gloom picture for new investments in non-SEZ projects, with new ventures approved by the CDC in January-August involving a total capital investment valued at \$1.106 billion, tumbling by 52.5 per cent year-on-year, and expected to create 57,000 jobs, shrinking by 32.3 per cent on a yearly basis.

Cambodia Chamber of Commerce

vice-president Lim Heng accredits the decline in new such projects to Covid-prompted restrictions related to trans-border human movement.

These include considerably long quarantine periods that stymie the process of studying markets and selecting sites for potential ventures, resulting in bottlenecks in investment procedures, he said.

He told *The Post* on October 11 that Cambodia is expected to reopen its economy soon, and reduce the mandatory quarantine period for vaccinated arrivals. Prime Minister Hun Sen has suggested seven days as the new length of quarantine.

Heng said these plans "will

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## Show your papers

A vendor shows proof of inoculation to the management at Phsar Chas Market in Daun Penh district on Monday. Phnom Penh municipal governor Khuong Sreng on October 5 required all people aged 6 years and older to show vaccination cards when entering schools, markets, malls, marts, eateries and other businesses. HENG CHHOVAN

## China, India trade blame after border talks fall flat

CHINA and India on October 11 blamed each other for the failure of high-level talks to ease tensions along a disputed Himalayan border between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

The strategically important Galwan river valley between Tibet and India's Ladakh region became a high-altitude flashpoint last year after one of the deadliest troop clashes in decades.

Senior military officials from the two countries held their first round of talks in two months, but it ended without any progress.

India made "unreasonable and unrealistic demands", Chinese military spokesman Long Shaohua said in a statement issued by the People's Liberation Army's western theatre command. The statement did not say what the demands were.

In response, India's defence ministry said China was "not agreeable" to discussing "constructive suggestions ... [and] could not provide any forward-looking proposals".

India said both sides have agreed to maintain communications and stability.

China and India – whose border runs for 3,500km – fought a full-scale war in 1962 and have long accused each other of trying to seize territory along their unofficial border, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The latest talks focused on resolving "remaining issues" along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, the Indian defence ministry said.

Earlier this month, India's army chief said China was sending "considerable numbers" of troops to the border, prompting a matching deployment by New Delhi.

His comments came days after Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said Indian soldiers had made illegal incursions into Chinese territory, an accusation that New Delhi denied. AFP

# King briefed on top-job dual citizenship interdict

Voun Dara

THE Constitutional Council of Cambodia (CCC) has informed King Norodom Sihamoni that the proposed amendment to several articles of the Constitution that would mandate single citizenship for the top leadership positions does not violate the principles

of the constitutional monarchy and is in accord with the constitutional requirement that Cambodia be a multi-party liberal democracy.

The CCC reached these conclusions at their October 11 session chaired by its president Im Chhun Lim.

The session was held expressly to review the changes to articles 19, 82, 106, 119 and

137 of the Constitution and articles 3 and 4 of the Additional Constitutional Law tending to ensure the regular functioning of national institutions.

"As the result of the full session of the Constitutional Council held to submit opinions about the amendments to His Majesty ... the request to amend articles 19, 82, 106, 119 and 137 of the Constitu-

tion and articles 3 and 4 of the Additional Constitutional Law ... can be made as requested within this specific context without any impact on the viability of the multi-party liberal democratic system or the principles of the constitutional monarchy," the CCC said in a press statement.

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## JAPAN PLANS \$ REAP WATER UPGRADE WITH 200KM OF NEW PIPES

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## FINNISH FUND INVESTS \$10M IN SATHAPANA'S SME, WOMEN DRIVE

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## National

## Sar Kheng seeking problem solvers

Voun Dara

MINISTER of Interior Sar Kheng has advised provincial administrations to heed the opinions and comments of their local residents and study the experiences of other governors such as Mao Thonin – the former governor of Pursat province who recently took up the post of Kampot governor – in order to find ways to effectively solve problems outside of the courts.

Sar Kheng made the remarks on October 11 while presiding over the inauguration of the new governor of Battambang province, Sok Lou. Lou traded places with his predecessor Nguon Ratanak who now takes up the office that the former just vacated as governor of Kampong Thom province.

“I would like to make a few suggestions: Extra-judicial settlement mechanisms are one way to deal with problems that we need to pay more attention to. In the past, I created a Facebook account with an intake team to field requests and complaints from our people,” he said.

“Speaking generally, we can plainly see that the results are good. There are about 1,000 cases that we’ve opened files on and many of those have already been resolved, although we have not yet fully resolved all of them,” he added.

Sar Kheng said the reason why they needed to find effective ways to solve people’s problems outside of the courts system wasn’t out of distrust of the provincial courts administration or due to any concerns about corruption or abuses but rather a question of practicality and how to make the best use of the courts’ lim-



Minister of Interior Sar Kheng (left) hands over the stamp of office to Sok Lou, who was appointed the new Battambang provincial governor on Monday. SAR KHENG VIA FACEBOOK

ited resources by reserving their use only for the most serious matters.

“Sometimes we encounter problems that seemingly can’t be solved anywhere with an outcome that is truly fair, but if we can’t solve these problems the traditional way then we have to look for another method.

“We need to be open to taking criticism and listening to the opinions, ideas and comments of the people whom we serve. We should also consider taking a close look in the mirror at ourselves and our conduct more often when private citizens dare to speak out on important issues to us in a constructive way,” Sar Kheng explained.

Sar Kheng said that newly-appointed Kampot governor Thonin had found ways to solve problems for the

people of Pursat very effectively and that all of the provincial governors could learn valuable lessons from him by examining his experiences there.

“We don’t want to leave our people uncertain about whether their problem is actually going to be solved on site or through the regular hierarchical channels. Doubts become an open door for them to wander through to file official complaints. And sometimes they complain to [Hun Sen] and then he has to spend his time on striving for some practical solution for their problem,” he said.

Sar Kheng advised all sub-national officials that they should never attempt to cover-up problems instead of sincerely dealing with them to find ways to solve them and they must al-

ways allow people to honestly express themselves and make comments in a constructive manner.

He noted that this was an important part of the process of seeking justice for aggrieved citizens because even if they do not get their preferred solution they will at least know that they were accorded the respect of having their side of things fully heard-out by their leaders.

Rights group Adhoc’s spokesman Soeng Sen Karuna observed that the former Pursat governor’s creative methods for solving problems outside of the courts was largely an anomaly when taking into consideration the typical past practices of Cambodia’s provincial governors.

“I understand that he’s advising them to avoid double standards or the unequal administration of justice. That often is the result of the provincial administration’s wilfully ignoring the problems people are having within their jurisdictions. That’s why some cases are mired in prolonged delays that leave the victims waiting on the courts interminably,” he said.

He added that Thonin had solved small problems outside of the court system in Pursat but nothing really serious like the land disputes between the poor and the wealthy, while acknowledging that this practice could help free up the courts to deal with more serious matters when the courts actually intend to do so.

“We want to see a solution to the big civil disputes and land issues. These issues fundamentally affect the rights and welfare of the people who risk losing everything if their land is encroached on by powerful tycoons or business interests. That’s where the focus should be rather than on smaller matters,” Karuna said. ■

## Eight-year dispute on stall owner status over

Long Kimmarita

THIRTY-TWO vendors from Samaki market in Kampot province and the owner of stalls there have agreed to accept a four-point solution to end a long-running dispute over the ownership of market stalls.

Chum Sokunthea, an investor who serves as director of the market, told *The Post* on October 11 that the two sides had disputed ownership for eight years because vendors claimed the stalls they occupied belonged to them, while the owner, identified as Ly Huoy, claimed vendors rented the stalls but had not paid the rent for years.

The agreement came after provincial governor Cheav Tay lead a team on August 21 to mediate between the vendors and Huoy, who had filed a complaint in court suing them for occupying the stalls without paying a fee.

Following mediation in August, Tay handed over the work to Kampot town governor Leang Roeun Sothy to deal with the matter after both parties had agreed to accept the four conditions.

Roeun Sothy told *The Post* on October 11 that after the meeting, the two sides on October 9 agreed to accept the solution and thumbprint the conditions to end the dispute.

He added that in the four conditions, the fish vendors occupying the 32 stalls had to hand over \$5,000 per stall, a total of \$160,000, to Huoy through the Kampot town hall.

He said Huoy agreed to accept the money and unconditionally withdraw the civil complaint from the court to end the dispute.

The third condition was that Sokunthea, the stall owner, agreed to pay \$2,500 to repair the roof of the fish market.

The Kampot town hall also issued certificates of ownership to the vendors.

“We solved this dispute so people can benefit together... This has been a long-running dispute and has been mediated many times, but there was no common ground. We hope that they will be satisfied with the solution.”

Sokunthea said he was happy that both sides had resolved the issue and accepted the solution voluntarily.

“I do not want to see them file a complaint. I want to see them agree to the solution, because in the past the dispute had been mediated many times but failed.”

According to Sokunthea, the market was established about 40 years ago and sells all kinds of products. The market is one of the largest in the province and currently has more than 200 stalls. ■

## Analysts divided on proposed amendment

Continued from page 1

It said the amendment is made also during the time when there is a state of emergency.

CCC spokesperson Prom Vichet Akara told *The Post* after the session that they were

able to easily and quickly come to the decision and submit it to the King. He declined to elaborate further, referring reporters to the official press statement.

In news related to controversial reports that apparently prompted the government

to push for the amendment, Elisabeth Ribbons – the readers’ editor at the UK-based *Guardian* – wrote a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in response to its request for clarification regarding the newspaper’s initial report alleging that Prime Minister Hun Sen had acquired a Cypriot passport.

The report, which cited the Pandora Papers released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, was later retracted.

“I can reassure you that the error was notified to me by the *Guardian*’s own editorial staff yesterday and the article was amended and footnoted accordingly.

“You can see the updated version of the article in which the reference to Prime Minister Hun Sen [no longer appears] online on [the *Guardian*’s website],” Ribbons said in the letter.

“The editor regrets the concern caused to Prime Minister Hun Sen and it is hoped that our prompt action to rectify this error provides a satisfactory resolution,” she added.

The amendment of the Constitution mandating single Cambodian citizenship for the prime minister and presidents of the National Assembly, Senate and CCC drew strong support from officials from various government institutions, but outside analysts are still

at odds over the actual importance of the matter.

Political analyst Lao Mong Hay was of the view that the amendment would be of no benefit.

He said that according to the Constitution as currently established, the top leaders that the amendment is targeting have no institutional power themselves. He explained that the presidents of these institutions are just one of the members of that particular body and any power they wield is delegated to them via vote by the other members in accordance with democratic principles.

“Therefore, in order for the top national institutions to use their power to serve national interests, the amendment has to require all members of the institutions to have just a single citizenship as well. Otherwise, the current proposed amendment is useless,” he said.

Khin Phea, director of the Royal Academy of Cambodia’s International Relations Institute, said the amendment to the Constitution would not damage national or public interests.

He said that whatever its technical merits, it could serve to improve people’s confidence in their leaders by contributing to an overall impression that they are free from conflicts of interest derived from the privileges of holding multiple passports, which is unseemly in appear-

ance at best when done by the nation’s leaders.

“We have to look at the scope of it. It covers only four high offices – prime minister and the presidents of the National Assembly, Senate and Constitutional Council. So it won’t really affect other people who have two citizenships who are contributing to the development of the country.

“I just want to stress that this amendment doesn’t affect our national interests or the average person and it possibly contributes to ensuring political stability and increasing society’s level of patriotism,” he said.

He said the law may not solve any existing problem but it could eliminate the possibility of the appearance of any such problem, which can by itself improve public confidence – but it should be very clear on the matter of whether the single Cambodian citizenship for the top leadership in those four offices is only from birth or if it can be achieved through naturalisation.

Former opposition leader Sam Rainsy, who first shared the *Guardian*’s controversial reports regarding Hun Sen’s alleged acquisition of the Cypriot passport, shrugged off the proposed amendment to the Constitution.

“This is ridiculous and useless,” he briefly told *The Post* when reached for comment on October 11. ■



**Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)**

Project: Clearing for Results IV

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

(From 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with possibility of extension)

- 1) The Royal Government of Cambodia, represented by the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) now invites international qualified consultants to submit the Letter of Application and Curriculum Vitae (CV) for the position of International Consultant on South-South Cooperation.
- 2) Detailed information of the TOR with requirements can be obtained from the address given below or from CMAA website: [www.cmaa.gov.kh](http://www.cmaa.gov.kh).
- 3) The submission deadline is at 10am on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- 4) The address for obtaining the TOR and for submission is:  
Human Resource Unit, CMAA  
Street 273 Corner 516,  
Sangkat Toul Sangker, Khan Russey Keo, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel: 098 581 009 Email: [moulekahea@gmail.com](mailto:moulekahea@gmail.com)

# Covid booster-shot campaign kicks off across the Kingdom

Mom Kunthea

THE Kingdom's third-dose Covid-19 vaccination drive launched on October 11, as the campaign to vaccinate the adult population of 10 million reaches out to the remaining 0.8 per cent.

Minister of National Defence Tea Banh participated in the launch of the Covid-19 booster shot campaign, remarking at the opening ceremonies that vaccines are fundamental to Cambodia's entire pandemic containment strategy.

Tea Banh added that timely vaccinations could save the lives of many Cambodians by reducing the incidence of serious illness and deaths due to Covid-19 while also helping to reduce its spread.

"[We] are committed to vaccinating everyone who are eligible as soon as possible and achieving the plan to build herd immunity and community resilience in order to be in a position to relaunch our international and domestic tourism and socio-economic sectors as soon as possible," he said.

The minister asked all vaccination working groups to take care in the execution of their duties and to rely on the valuable experience they gained in the first round of vaccinations this year.

"In fact, so far almost no other country has been able to provide vaccinations to their people at the same rate that Cambodia has achieved. This is due to various factors like distribution and vaccination administration capacity, which are limited in different ways depending on the country," he said.

According to Tea Banh, the military medics will be responsible for giving booster shots to residents, including



Medical workers from the Ministry of National Defence ready to provide booster jabs to people in the capital on Monday. TEA BANH VIA FACEBOOK

factory workers, in six of the capital's districts and in eight other provinces.

"Cambodia has been extremely successful in vaccinating its population with campaigns completed in nearly every province. I think we can safely say that this has been great for our country and that we are so proud of our country. This is now truly one of the foremost achievements of our nation in the modern-era," he said.

Ministry of Health spokeswoman Or Vandine was also on hand for the opening day of booster shot campaign, which was first announced on August 25.

The health ministry is also providing fresh deliveries of medical equipment and personal protective equipment

along with supplies like alcohol, cotton and saline to the defence ministry's vaccination working groups for the start of this new round of jabs.

Ith Sarath, deputy commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces who oversees the military's vaccination efforts, announced that the military medics have been assigned to six districts in Phnom Penh – Kamboul, Dangkor, Meanchey, Por Sen Chey, Toul Kork and Russey Keo.

He noted that the total number of people in the six districts assigned to the military was 1,026,126. He said 3,578 medics divided into 152 medical teams will be deployed for vaccination operations.

On the same day, medical teams from the Phnom Penh municipal health department

and the Samdech Techo Voluntary Youth Doctor Association (TYDA) also began a third round of jabs for residents in Boeung Keng Kang, Chamkarmon, Chbar Ampov, Prampi Makara and Sen Sok districts.

Residents over in Daun Penh, Chroy Changvar and Prek Pnov districts will have to wait until October 30 to begin their booster shot, which are being timed loosely to four months after receiving the second dose.

According to figures from the national Covid-19 vaccination committee, as of October 10 over 13 million people aged six and older – or 84.33 per cent of Cambodia's entire population of roughly 16 million – had been vaccinated, with more than 11 million people having received their second dose.

# B Bang university to host national library branch on campus

Nov Sivutha

A LARGE national library on the campus of the National University of Battambang (NUBB) in Battambang province will be inaugurated next month to let students conduct more research on subjects and technical skills in areas such as agriculture and technology.

NUBB rector Sok Khorn told *The Post* on October 10 that the library holds more than 30,000 different books. The books are sponsored by ministries and other state institutions while some have been ordered through the Higher Education Improvement Project.

The library, which can accommodate up to 50 visitors at a time and also boasts a large swimming pool, has two floors and covers an area of 900sqm on the NUBB campus, the largest in the north west region of Cambodia.

Students and the public can study and research in this library but they need to apply for a membership card so librarians can easily manage enquiries.

According to Khorn, it will also be equipped with an additional e-library that will allow students to read and download hundreds of thousands of books stored in the e-libraries of partner countries and institutions at any time.

"When setting up this library,

we set out two major missions: first, it will be a human resource training centre and second, a research centre. It will not only be a place for studying, preparing theses and increasing knowledge but will also double as a research centre for agriculture and technology as well," he said.

He added that in the future, the library will also be a place for business training where everybody can study and research. A laboratory will be set up to test construction materials and food from Siem Reap and provinces bordering Thailand such as Banteay Meanchey, Pailin and Oddar Meanchey, as transportation infrastructure will be better in the future.

Lon Srey Mey, a freshman of the 17th generation at NUBB, said she expected that when the library is inaugurated, students can read those more than 30,000 books to increase their knowledge and to further research the subject that she is studying at the university.

She said the library not only has books but is also equipped with an e-library whereby students from outside can access its resources.

"In the past, there was no such library. I hope it will contribute to building students' reading and research to gain more knowledge as it also has an e-library," she said.



Officials visit the library at the National University of Battambang in Battambang province on October 8. BATTAMBANG EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

# Water Festival cancelled amid prolonged pandemic



Water festival celebrations in Phnom Penh back in 2019. HENG CHIVAN

Mom Kunthea

MINISTER of Interior Sar Kheng said this year's Water Festival, which falls on November 18-20, will not occur due to the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic.

Sar Kheng announced the cancellation during the appointment of the new governor of Battambang province on October 11.

"It is now October and the government has decided that this year the Water Festival will not take place due to Covid-19. But in 2022, we will have an important event for the nation, and that is the commune council election," he said.

Sar Kheng urged the general public to continue working together to prevent the spread of Covid by adjusting their lives to the new normal as the pandemic has not abated.

"Until now, no one can exactly predict when the pandemic will subside. So, if the problem persists it will continue to affect our economy, society and people's livelihoods. That's why we have to learn to live

with the disease," he said.

The Committee for Organising National and International Festivals could not be reached for comment on October 11.

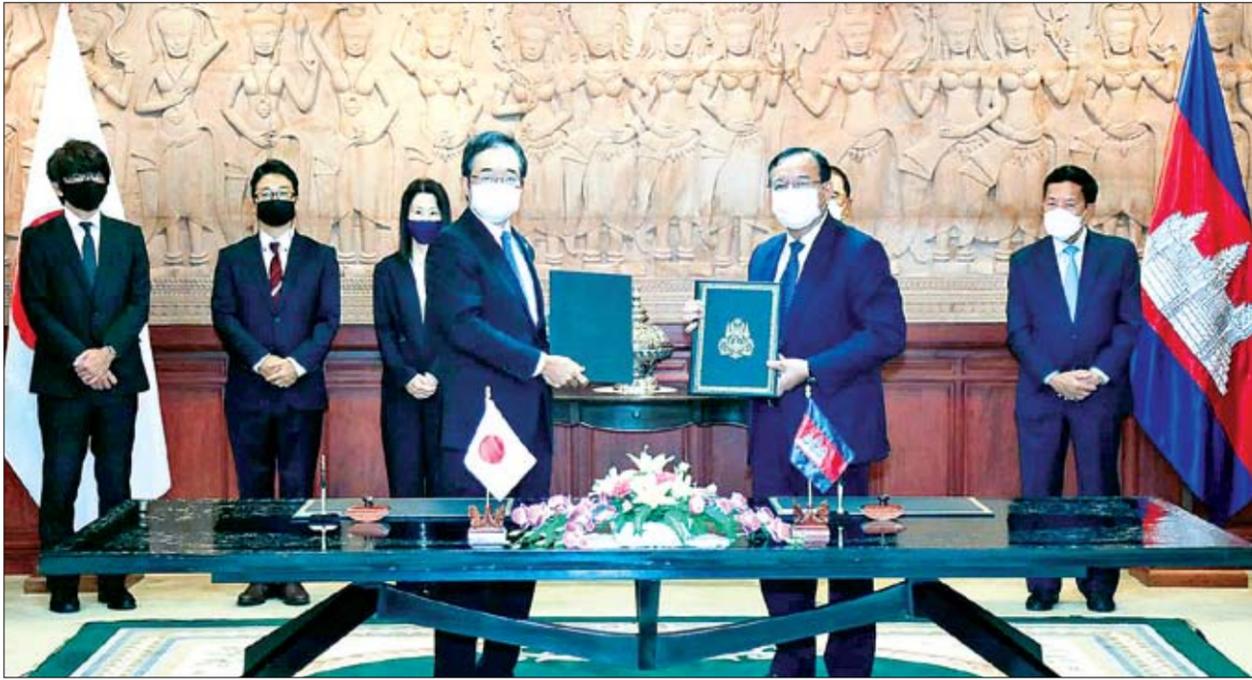
Prime Minister Hun Sen on October 6 also hinted that Water Festival celebrations would not take place this year, but the public holiday will remain for people to enjoy.

The festival — which aligns with the date of the full moon in the Khmer lunar calendar month of Kadeuk (or Kartika in Sanskrit) when the rice crops in paddy fields are ready for harvest — was also postponed last year due to the pandemic.

Construction worker Buth Ra, 25, said he supported postponing the festival because he feared the spread of the coronavirus, which could significantly surge during and after the festival.

"Everyone, including me, wants to be happy and take a break to meet family and friends. But like we all know, our country still faces an outbreak so it's better not to have this festival," he said.

# National



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn (centre right) and Japanese ambassador to Cambodia Masahiro Mikami exchange notes and documents related to development projects on Monday. FOREIGN MINISTRY

## Japan, Cambodia ink deal for socio-economic development

Ry Sochan

MINISTER of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn and Japanese ambassador to Cambodia Masahiro Mikami signed an "exchange of notes" and other documents related to the provision of Japanese grant

aid and loans worth approximately \$72 million to implement six projects. According to the foreign ministry's press statement on October 11, the six projects are in the areas of water supply, mine action, construction materials, cadastral surveys, human resource development and manufacturing. "[This assistance] is to contribute to the promotion of socio-economic development in Cambodia," the ministry said. The Siem Reap Water Supply Expansion Project Phase II takes up the bulk of the funds with a budget of \$58 million. The grant also awards \$12.49 million for the implementation of socio-economic development programmes - \$1.8 million for mine action,

\$2.27 million for construction materials, \$2.27 million for cadastral surveying, \$3.63 million for human resource development and the remaining \$4.54 million for manufacturing development. Sokhonn said at the signing ceremony that this assistance was a testament to Japan's continued support for Cambodia despite the Covid-19 pandemic. "Japan has been supporting Cambodia in the fight against Covid-19 through the provision of loans, grant aid and vaccines, and these charitable donations reflect the close ties and cooperation between our two countries. Japan has also contributed to Cambodia's nationwide vaccination campaign," he said. Sokhonn also noted that Japan was an active architect of the peace process in Cambodia and has made ongoing significant contributions over the years in rebuilding the country after decades of war and devastation. "The people of Cambodia will always treasure the generosity of the people of Japan," Sokhonn said. The Japanese embassy said a separate press release on October 11 that in response to a request from the Cambodian government - and with a view to strengthening friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries - the Japanese government has decided to extend its direct loans, also known as "ODA Yen Loans", to Cambodia. "The Siem Reap Water Supply Expansion Project Phase II with a 60,000-cubic-metre per day capacity water treatment facility and 200km of water distribution pipes will continue to be developed in Siem Reap following the success of Phase I. "It is expected that these cooperative projects will contribute to the future development of Cambodia in each respective sector and also to the mutual understanding and building of friendly relations between Japan and Cambodia," the embassy said.

While inspecting the work done by the technical team excavating the reservoirs of Dam 96 and Dam 94 on the morning of October 10, Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology Lim Kean Hor told reporters that because the drainage system utilising streams, canals and lakes had been partly filled-in from the erosion of soil used to build earthworks that were not up to the necessary technical standards, the water flow was blocked and this was causing flooding after several days in a row of heavy rains. "This flooding is not due to the floods from the Prek Tnaot River, it was flooded by rain, though it is not yet to a serious level. "The natural waterway networks such as canals, streams and connected lakes that are all flowing into the Bassac River have been blocked by soil that is to some extent due to the construction of some roads and other structures that do not comply with the proper technical standards to maintain these waterways," he explained. Kean Hor added that the work of excavating the dam reservoirs had been sped up since the night of October 9, after the floodwaters topped the canals and flowed across the roads behind the Prek Kampus dam, inundating parts of Srey Snom village of Prek Kampus commune in Dangkor district in Phnom Penh and Chhmar Puon vil-

## Heavy rainfall filling capital's drain canals as flood threat looms

Khouth Sophak Chakrya

FLASH flooding caused by extremely heavy rainfall is affecting communities in the outer-suburbs of Phnom Penh - especially people residing in Prek Kampus, Sak Sampov and Kong Noy communes in Dangkor district.

The team from the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology are cooperating with specialists from the municipal department of public works and transport to make use of excavating equipment to increase drainage canal water flow in order to siphon the rainwater into lakes, creeks and streams which then flow into the Bassac River.

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lage in Choeung Koeub commune of Kandal Stung district in Kandal province.

On the morning of October 10, Phnom Penh municipal governor Khuong Sreng was also on-site with local authorities to check out the situation in the flooded areas while distributing rice to 90 affected families in Sak Sampov and Kong Noy communes of Dangkor district.

"There are three main factors that make the western part of Phnom Penh suffer from severe flooding due to rainfall. A few days ago, the amount of rainfall reached up to 105 mm. "Former streams, canals or rice fields have all been developed into plots of land with residential buildings and the fill-in of canals by some people is making it impossible for water to flow, causing flooding in this area," he said. Sreng assigned officials to monitor the area and liaise with residents so the city can intervene in a timely manner whenever flooding is reported and to allow residents in the area improved access to help and services provided by the capital's administration.

Sam Piseth, director of the municipal department of public works and transport, said that as of the afternoon of October 10, the excavation of 37 canals along the road in Kamboul, Por Sen Chey and Prek Pnov districts - which all flow into Boeung Tamok Lake - was more than 70 per cent completed.

"According to the pace of work that has been achieved so far, the project to excavate the 37 canals along Win-Win boulevard may be completed within the week," he said. Elsewhere in the Kingdom, Chhun Buntha, director of the inter-sectoral office of the Banteay Meanchey provincial administration, told *The Post* that some towns and districts in the province had seen water levels recede but some floodwaters remained in Sisophon town and Mongkol Borei district.

"About 50 per cent of the people who were evacuated to higher ground because of the floods have now returned to their homes," he said.

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lage in Choeung Koeub commune of Kandal Stung district in Kandal province.

On the morning of October 10, Phnom Penh municipal governor Khuong Sreng was also on-site with local authorities to check out the situation in the flooded areas while distributing rice to 90 affected families in Sak Sampov and Kong Noy communes of Dangkor district.

"There are three main factors that make the western part of Phnom Penh suffer from severe flooding due to rainfall. A few days ago, the amount of rainfall reached up to 105 mm. "Former streams, canals or rice fields have all been developed into plots of land with residential buildings and the fill-in of canals by some people is making it impossible for water to flow, causing flooding in this area," he said. Sreng assigned officials to monitor the area and liaise with residents so the city can intervene in a timely manner whenever flooding is reported and to allow residents in the area improved access to help and services provided by the capital's administration.

Sam Piseth, director of the municipal department of public works and transport, said that as of the afternoon of October 10, the excavation of 37 canals along the road in Kamboul, Por Sen Chey and Prek Pnov districts - which all flow into Boeung Tamok Lake - was more than 70 per cent completed.



Phnom Penh municipal governor Khuong Sreng inspects the rising water levels at Stung Prek Tnaot in Dangkor district on Sunday. CITY HALL

**ភ្នំពេញ ប៉ស្ត** **The Phnom Penh Post**

**Job Announcement**

The Phnom Penh Post, the oldest independent media company in Cambodia, is seeking full-time candidate for the following position:

**SUB-EDITORS: 02 POSITIONS**

**Main duties and responsibilities**

- Report to Deputy Managing Editor PE/Managing Editor
- Lay out wire/National pages and manage layouts using InDesign/InCopy
- Communicate closely with reporters

**Qualifications/experience required**

- Bachelor's degree in journalism or other related fields (preferred but not a must)
- Excellent command of English is a must; proficiency in Khmer an asset
- News/business reporting experience
- At least one to two years' experience as sub-editor
- Familiar with names of state institutions
- Familiar with specific language used in court, business and politics
- Sound understanding of local politics and business atmosphere
- Cambodians preferred but foreign nationals are encouraged to apply

Interested candidates are required to submit a photo attached CV and cover letter with expected salary to the Human Resource and Administration Department at the following address no later than October 30, 2021.  
Address: The Elements Condominium(Residence 9) Level 7, Hun Sen Boulevard, Chak Angre Krom commune, Meanchey district, Phnom Penh.  
Tel: +855 (0) 23 888 161 -162  
Email: jobs@phnompenhpost.com  
www.phnompenhpost.com (http://www.phnompenhpost.com/) www.postkhmer.com (http://www.postkhmer.com/)

Post Media Co.,Ltd is an equal opportunity employer. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview. Application documents will not be returned.

**Intelligent - In-depth - Independent**

# Covid puts stress on Kingdom's mental health

Lay Samean

**O**CTOBER 10 is World Mental Health Day and the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation (WHO) have expressed concern for those whose mental health has suffered due to stress and anxiety caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Health ministry secretary of state Or Vandine said that mental health was an oft-neglected aspect of people's lives and that good mental health was strongly correlated with good physical health.

"You should learn how to take care of your mental health to improve it, such as knowing how to relieve stress and anxiety given the context of fighting Covid-19 and the limitations on social activities it has required," she said.

Vandine provided some advice to people suffering from mental illness during the Covid-19 pandemic, suggesting that they be sure to eat a healthy diet, get at least eight hours of sleep every night, get plenty of physical exercise and share their feelings and worries with family and friends.

She also said that for those people who are particularly suffering at this time it may be advisable for them to seek out help in the form of counselling by a psychologist or therapist.

Covid-19 poses an acute threat to mental health for vulnerable Cambodians such as migrant workers, said Li Ailan, the WHO representative to Cambodia.

She said that the WHO and the United Nations are working together to ensure that these vulnerable



Covid-19 positive people are seen outside the Sen Sok treatment centre in Phnom Penh's Sek Sok district in August. HONG MENEA

groups have access to mental health services and social health support, adding that there is no such thing as the enjoyment of good health without first having good mental health.

Positive thinking and a healthy lifestyle can help anyone to deal with stress and feel better, said Ailan. She noted that mental health can contribute to physical or overall health by boosting immune system functioning, for example, and is therefore an investment towards

preventing infectious diseases.

World Mental Health Day is celebrated annually on October 10. The theme for this year is "Mental Health in an Unequal World."

"We need to raise awareness of inequalities within our own workplaces to ensure that we protect our colleagues who are at higher risk for poor mental health or who may have reduced access to treatment," said UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres.

UNICEF Cambodia used the oc-

casation to warn about the effects of Covid-19 on the mental health of children and youth in Cambodia and around the world.

According to the latest global estimates, more than one in seven children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 are suffering from mental illness, it said in its report.

The report said that in Cambodia in particular, UNICEF and its partners have conducted socio-economic impact assessments in the

context of the spread of Covid-19 and monitored the psychological well-being of the Cambodian people using a number of indicators.

UNICEF said that 45 per cent of the teens surveyed between the ages of 15 and 19 said they were worried about their safety during the Covid-19 outbreak. Another 16 per cent of teens said they had been feeling stressed or depressed since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Challenges faced by teens in Cambodia include negative or hostile peer-group interactions and discrimination along with a general lack of funds that prevents most children from obtaining mental health support services of any kind, the report said.

Forough Foyouzat, UNICEF representative to Cambodia, said children in Cambodia and around the world faced many difficult challenges during the Covid-19 crisis.

"The closure of schools, the dramatic changes in social interactions and the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on Cambodian families have all come at great cost to the mental health of children and young people," she said.

The UN in Cambodia issued a statement on August 22 saying it had trained nearly 3,000 health workers across the country to provide some basic mental and social health support to vulnerable or at-risk populations.

Mental and social health support are important aspects of any response to Covid-19 and further investments in providing access to these kinds of support will contribute to a safer and healthier future for all Cambodians, the statement said. ■

## Refill of ancient pond part of tourism plans

Om Bunthoern

CHREAV commune authorities in Siem Reap town will excavate an ancient pond known as Trapeang Hae Phka in Bos Kralanh village for preservation to attract tourists and create jobs or businesses for residents.

Commune chief Ka Ob Ron said on October 11 that the pond covers about 6ha and will be dug to a depth of 3m. The soil dug from the pond will be placed around the banks.

He said the pond had dried up and the restoration is to preserve it and prevent encroachment. It will also create jobs for locals as there are recreational places to attract tourists and set up businesses.

"We want it to become a clean resort with a garden and a place for people to sell items so they can make money for their livelihoods. If we leave the pond as it is, it seems useless and there would be encroachment by people. This is my request to the Apsara National Authority [ANA]."

However, he said some residents were unhappy with the restoration work and protested to authorities about the excavation machinery. The people dissatisfied with the development were individuals who had encroached on it.

"There are ringleaders who collected fingerprints from about 300 people. They applied for intervention at the provin-



Chreav commune chief Ka Ob Ron during a community meeting last year. CHREAV COMMUNE ADMINISTRATION

cial hall. But because the provincial side was busy with the Covid-19 issue, so the complaint is yet to be resolved," he said.

The restoration of the pond was permitted by the provincial administration and the ANA, an institution tasked with managing the Angkor Archaeological Park.

Provincial deputy governor Ly Samrith said on October 11 that he was unfamiliar with the situation.

ANA spokesman Long Kosal said the authority had permitted them in principle to restore the pond, but excavation and the cost were the responsibility of commune authorities as they had made the request. The ANA only provided technical assistance and archaeological excavation work. ■

### National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) Cambodia Nutrition Project Wishes to Purchase: 115 Tablet Computers with Warranty one year on hardware and 3 years on services. REF No. NCDDS-GO-RFQ 2

- The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) has received a P162675 from the World Bank toward the cost of Cambodia Nutrition Project (CNP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Grant to payments under the Contract for Supplying and Delivery of 115 Tablet Computers with Warranty one year on hardware and 3 years on services.
- The goods are required by 12 weeks from the date of contract.
- Interested qualified eligible suppliers are invited to obtain a copy of the bidding documents free-of-charge from the address given below by submitting a written application. Except for the submission of a written application, there shall be no other conditions for obtaining the bidding documents.
- To be considered eligible and qualified a bidder must:
  - Meet the eligibility criteria of World Bank.
  - Have completed at least two contracts for supply of similar goods in the preceding 3 years of a value not less than 50% of estimate contract price.
  - Have completed contracts with a total cumulative value equal to at least two times estimated contract price in the preceding 2 years.
  - Not be under any notice of suspension or disbarment issued by the Government or World Bank.
- Quotations must be delivered to the address given below on or before 10 AM, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Late Quotations will be rejected. Quotations will be opened in public immediately thereafter at the address given below in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
- The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the Bidder whose offer has been determined to be the lowest evaluated quotation and is substantially responsive to the Bidding Documents, provided further that the Bidder is determined to be qualified to perform the Contract satisfactorily.
- All quotations must be accompanied by performance securing declaration as described in the bidding documents. Any quotation not accompanied by one will be rejected as non-compliant.
- The address where the Bidding Document may be inspected and obtained is:  
Procurement Office 1<sup>st</sup> floor of National Committee for Sub-

National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS), Building T located in the Ministry of Interior's Compound. You may contact Mr. Bith Chankhan, Chief of Procurement office on (855) 17 258 889 or E-mail to: [chankhan@ncdd.gov.kh](mailto:chankhan@ncdd.gov.kh) to obtain the Bidding Documents at no cost.

- In case of any difficulty in obtaining the Bidding Documents, interested parties may contact in writing Mr. Chey Sambatphalla, Project Manager of Cambodia Nutrition Project (CNP) of National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS), Building T in Ministry of Interior's Compound, Tel: 023 720 038/ 720 061, E-mail: [sambatphalla@ncdd.gov.kh](mailto:sambatphalla@ncdd.gov.kh) and also send a copy of the communication to:
  - Director General  
General Department of International Cooperation and Debt Management, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Street 92, Sangkat Wat Phnom, Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Fax No. (855-23) 725 341; and
  - Ziauddin Hyder, Task Team Leader of World Bank (Cambodia Office) at address: Exchange Square Building No. 19-20, Street 106, Sangkat Wat Phnom, Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Telephone No. (855) 23 261 365, E-mail: [zhyder@worldbank.org](mailto:zhyder@worldbank.org).

- The quotation must be submitted on or before 10 AM, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at the following address:  
Procurement Office 1<sup>st</sup> floor of National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS), Building T located in the Ministry of Interior's Compound. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, bidders are allowed to submit quotations in pdf file with protected password by email to [chankhan@ncdd.gov.kh](mailto:chankhan@ncdd.gov.kh). The bidders will provide password during online bid opening.

- The Government and/or the Development Partner will declare a firm ineligible either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract financed by the Government and/or the Development Partner respectively, if it at any time determines that the firm has engaged in fraud and corruption during the procurement and execution of this contract as described in ITB Clause 4.
- A complaint may be made by any party at any stage of the procurement process. The procedure is described in Instructions to Bidders, Clause 21 of the Bidding Documents.

# Business

The rates are for indicative purpose only and subject to change without prior notice. Please contact info@ababank.com or call 023 225 333 for further details.

USD / KHR	USD / CAD	USD / CNY	USD / JPY	USD / MYR	USD / SGD	USD / THB	AUD / USD	EUR / USD	GBP / USD
↑ 4,103	↓ 1.2459	↑ 6.448	↑ 112.97	↓ 4.1700	↓ 1.3544	↑ 33.90	↑ 0.7336	↓ 1.1561	↑ 1.3623

ABA NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA GROUP

## TRADING INFORMATION ON CAMBODIA SECURITIES EXCHANGE

Date: October 11, 2021

Auction Trading Method (ATM)

NO	STOCK	CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW
1	ABC	11,320	11,480	11,580	11,300
2	GTI	4,360	4,400	4,400	4,360
3	PAS	13,480	13,580	13,580	13,460
4	PEPC	3,130	3,160	3,160	3,110
5	PPAP	14,960	14,980	15,000	14,880
6	PPSP	2,040	2,050	2,050	2,020
7	PWSA	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000



## Bilateral trade with US soars 28.5% in first eight months

Hin Pisei

**B**ILATERAL trade between Cambodia and the US in the first eight months of 2021 totalled \$5.4994 billion, surging by 28.47 per cent versus \$4.2805 billion in the same period of last year, according to the US Census Bureau (USCB). Cambodia-US trade has avoided dipping into negative territory, even as SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, continues its global path, disrupting a fair share of production chains.

In January-August, Cambodian exports to the US amounted to \$5.2206 billion,

a 27.88 per cent year-on-year uptick, and imports were worth \$278.8 million, climbing by 40.59 per cent, the USCB reported. The Kingdom's trade surplus with the US widened by 27.2 per cent from \$3.884 billion to \$4.942 billion.

In August alone, the Kingdom's exports to the US were valued at \$922.1 million, up by 33 per cent year-on-year from over \$692.5 million, and imports clocked in at \$43.0 million, up by over 52 per cent from \$28.2 million in August 2020.

Hong Vanak, director of International Economics at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, told *The Post* on October 9 that the positive trade per-



In January-August, Cambodian exports to the US amounted to \$5.2206 billion, up 27.88 per cent year-on-year, and imports \$278.8 million, up 40.59 per cent. FRESH NEWS

formance between the two countries was due to a number of key ingredients, such as improvements in diplomatic ties and shifts in production conducive to meeting the needs of the US market.

He also attributed the solid trade growth momentum to "trouble" in countries that export to the US market, mainly

a reference to Myanmar.

"As the US has always wanted good relations with ASEAN countries, I remain optimistic that Cambodia's export market will be even larger in the future," Vanak said.

Bilateral trade between the Kingdom and the US amounted to \$6.9213 billion in 2020, up 17.89 per cent from 2019,

data from the American Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia (AmCham) show.

The export value of Cambodian goods was \$6.5777 billion, up 22.79 per cent from the \$5.3568 billion posted in 2019, while goods imported from the US were worth \$343.6 million, down 33.15 per cent from \$514 million. ■

## Trade deals, laws set to encourage investment

Continued from page 1

open up more opportunities for investors to come to Cambodia and enable an increase in investment applications, as well as underpin a recovery in approvals by the competent authorities".

This expected upswing in investment will be all the more pronounced starting early next year, when a number of regional and bilateral free trade agreements are set to come into force, he surmised.

However, Heng cautioned that taking too long to manage a successful economic reopening would only pose more challenges.

Hong Vanak, director of International Economics at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, emphasised that the Covid-19 crisis had damaged investor confidence in aspects related to health safety, leading to an apparent downturn in investment applications, especially in the wake of the February 20 community event.

He affirmed that health safety concerns and the uncertainty of the future market demand have delayed many investment plans, contending that Sino-US tensions have made a considerable number of people reluctant to invest anywhere in the world.

Investment in Cambodia will return to growth in the near future as "recent achievements of the Cambodian government" enter into force, Vanak said, alluding to new trade deals involving the Kingdom, as well as the recently passed investment and public-private partnership laws.

These, he said, "will be a major force in attracting large-scale international investors to invest in Cambodia, especially after the situation of Covid-19 eases".

Citing observers, Vanak said a range of sectors currently stuck in a Covid rut would soon start to grow again, offering tourism, industry, real estate and construction, and technology as examples. ■

## Finnish fund invests \$10M into Sathaphana

May Kunmakara

THE local Sathaphana Bank Plc has received \$10 million from OP Finnfund Global Impact Fund I, the first global emerging markets impact fund in Finland, allowing the bank to expand its loan portfolio to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME), and especially female entrepreneurs.

Sathaphana Bank CEO Fung Kai Jin underscored that his bank provides a host of services for SMEs and women entrepreneurs to contribute to the national economy.

"At Sathaphana, we not only focus on delivering financial services to our customers, but we also want to deliver non-financial services that provide additional value to SMEs and women entrepreneurs," he said.

"As we know, the vast majority of Cambodian businesses are SMEs, and they are very vital to the Kingdom's economy. Twenty-six per cent of SMEs are owned by women in the country, while 62 per cent of



Finland's OP Finnfund Global Impact Fund I has invested \$10 million in local lender Sathaphana Bank Plc (left). HENG CHIVOAN

micro-enterprises are women-owned, so we can't emphasise enough their importance to the Cambodian economy.

"We also ensure gender equality in our recruitment, aside from enabling and sus-

taining these entrepreneurs with our suites of products and services such as business instalment loans, flexi-lending, contactless payment and smart savings," Fung added.

OP Corporate Bank asset

management head Tuomas Virtala stressed that catalysing growth of SMEs and empowering women are at the core of OP Finnfund Global Impact Fund I's investment strategy.

"We are glad to join forces

and support Sathaphana's work both in developing their operations and gender equality within the bank as well as contributing to Cambodian financial sector and the society as a whole," he said.

Finnfund associate director and financial institutions portfolio head Antti Urvas said that "during the six years of our partnership, we have seen Sathaphana developing from a microfinance institution to a commercial bank".

"Simultaneously, their work towards gender equality and women empowerment has made Sathaphana Bank qualified under the 2x Challenge initiative.

"The ambition to develop their operations and become the leading player in the Cambodian payment ecosystem makes Sathaphana an interesting partner for Finnfund also in the future, and we are also glad to have OP Finnfund Global Impact Fund I on-board as a new investor in the company," he said. ■

# Port operator, Pestech book decent business performance

May Kunmakara

**T**WO locally-listed firms on October 8 reported recoveries in business performance this year thanks to improvements across regional and global economies as they emerge from the Covid-19 health crisis.

In a financial statement filed to the Cambodia Securities Exchange (CSX), Phnom Penh Autonomous Port (PPAP) reported 19 per cent and 4.23 per cent increases in container throughput, and cargo and fuel oil throughput, respectively, for the January-September period.

Similarly, Pestech (Cambodia) Plc (PEPC) logged 273.628 billion riel (\$67 million) in revenue for its 2021 financial year – corresponding to the period between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, up by 34.8 per cent or 70.614 billion riel from 203.014 billion riel in the equivalent interval a year prior. “The increase was mainly derived from execution of electrical infrastructure projects in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea,” the company said.

Operating profit for the year came to 31.033 billion riel, down by 33.647 billion riel or 52.0 per cent from 64.680 billion riel a year earlier, “mainly due to higher profit margin attributable to completion of two major projects” between July 2019 and June 2020.

Net profit clocked in at 5.980 billion riel, down by 23.463 billion riel or 79.7 per cent year-on-year from 29.443 billion riel. “Higher net profit in



Two firms reported recoveries in business performance in CSX filings on Friday. HEAN RANGSEY

financial year 2020 was due to higher profit margin attributable to completion of two major projects”, PEPC said.

In May, CEO Han Fatt Juan reported that PEPC “intensively performed the work” on the Okvau Gold Mine in Mondulakiri province during the quarter ended March 31.

He added that the company was actively working on a 20MW photovoltaic solar farm in Svay Rieng province’s Bavet town, with preliminary civil work progressing at a steady pace, and had placed orders in advanced for key materials and components that are to be delivered in the fourth quarter of this year and beyond.

Work on the 130km East

Siem Reap-Oddar Meanchey transmission line project is running smoothly, with a number of foundations being built in select locations, he said, adding that transmission towers and power conductors would be installed once materials arrive in the coming quarters.

“We are hopeful to continue the project-execution activities amidst this pandemic-insurgence period, and strive to work with the relevant authorities in ensuring a safe working environment for all our team members,” Han said.

He said PEPC had also been tasked to carry out certain portions of the work on the second phase of the 230kV

Phnom Penh City Transmission and Distribution System Expansion Project, which he stressed would be an important power infrastructure project in the heart of the capital.

The project involved the deployment of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) machines, which minimises disruption to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, he said.

PEPC listed on the CSX on August 12, 2020, issuing 3,945,000 shares, with a par value of 400 riel, at an offering price of 3,120 riel. Upon completion of listing, Malaysia-based Pestech International Bhd owned 97.74 per cent of PEPC’s shares, the latter reported.

# China central bank chief vows stronger fintech regulations

CHINA’S central bank governor vowed to keep strengthening regulation of financial technology (fintech) companies, focusing on areas including payment services, antitrust issues and data protection.

People’s Bank of China (PBoC) governor Yi Gang made his keynote speech, “China’s Experience with Regulating Big Tech”, at the 11th research network meeting of the Bank for International Settlements last week.

He said the continual development of fintech has brought new challenges to Chinese regulators. For instance, some leading platform companies launched personal credit information services without licences. Some even challenged deposits of traditional banks through the provision of “innovative internet financial products”.

Yi stressed in the speech that any “inappropriate connection” between the financial and business information systems in fintech companies should be cut off to prevent perceived monopolistic activities arising from the so-called closed-loop effect of “data-network effect-financial business”.

Firewalls should be built to prevent cross-sector risk contagion, and all financial services should run after receiving licences from regulators, including personal credit information service, he added.

Promoted by large tech-



People’s Bank of China (PBoC) governor Yi Gang. AFP

nology companies, China’s mobile payment sector developed fast, with a mobile payment penetration rate of 86 per cent, according to the central bank’s data.

The PBoC will work with the nation’s antitrust department to curb apparent monopolistic behaviours deemed to abuse positions of market dominance, and deal with new monopoly issues, such as algorithmic discrimination, Yi said.

He also pledged to participate in the development of international rules about digital economy and tighten coordination with the Bank for International Settlements and other countries’ regulators in terms of antitrust situations, financial regulation and data protection, and to safeguard a level playing field. CHINA DAILY/

ASIA NEWS NETWORK

# Laos hopes to develop own digital currency

LAOS hopes to issue its own digital currency in the near future as part of cooperation with a Japanese financial technology (fintech) start-up, reports *Laotian Times*.

Nikkei Asia reports that the country intends to explore issuing a digital currency with support from Tokyo-based Soramitsu, a Japanese fintech company involved in a similar effort by Cambodia.

The Japanese company and the Bank of Laos (BoL) will begin exploring the possibility of a digital currency this month after signing a memorandum of understanding with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) on studying the development of a central bank digital currency.

According to reports, Laos believes a digital currency

would assist policymakers in gathering data to better understand the economy, including the amount of money in circulation at any time.

Soramitsu, the Japanese fintech firm, has already assisted Cambodia in developing its Bakong digital payments system using blockchain technology, hoping to ease the country’s dependence on the US dollar.

With China preparing to launch a digital currency next year, countries in the region appear to be researching ways to do the same.

Meanwhile, in a surprise move, the government of Laos recently authorised six companies to trade and mine cryptocurrencies, while unauthorised trading in digital currencies remains prohibited for much of the population. VIEN-

TIANE TIMES/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

# Wider wealth gap for young Koreans

THE wealth gap among young South Koreans has widened, with data showing that familial transfer of wealth, not income differences, are aggregating the divide, a lawmaker said on October 11.

According to Statistics Korea data of two groups of Koreans between ages 20 to 30, the upper 20 per cent of young Koreans accumulated 35 times more wealth than the lower 20 per cent last year.

The wealth gap increased from 776 million won (\$650,000) in 2019 to 846 million won in 2020, according to Kim Hoe-jae, a member of the country’s ruling Democratic Party who analysed the data.

The total value of property and assets owned by the young and wealthy surged by 8.8 per cent to 874 million won while the lower class only saw a 2.6 per cent increase to 25 million won in the cited period.

Compared to Koreans in their 30s, those in their 20s exhibited a larger wealth gap of 320 million won and a lower income gap of 31 million won.

Kim pointed out that although the level of income disparity is not severe among the young Koreans, the data



Young Korean visitors use their phones as they sit next to observation deck windows that provide 360 degree city views at the top of the YTN Seoul Tower, commonly known as the Namsan Tower, in Seoul on September 3. AFP

shows the divide is widening between those who have received parents’ financial support and those who have not.

“The data indirectly shows that the wealth gap among Koreans in their 20s is widening not because of differences in income level but because of transfer of wealth,” he said.

“It is time to break the chain of an unfair lifecycle where the youth stand in different starting line according to their parents’ wealth... We should come up with measures that

can resolve the social polarisation,” Kim said.

The data comes as a scandal involving a politician and his son over alleged preferential treatment has intensified.

Former lawmaker Kwak Sang-do’s son has been facing public outcry over receiving a massive severance package worth five billion won from Hwacheon Daeyu, an asset company responsible for developing real estate in Gyeonggi province, allegedly in exchange for his

father’s political influence.

“Ordinary people, even though they die or become disabled due to occupational injuries, can’t dream of receiving five billion won as severance,” a person working at a tourist agency wrote on Blind, an anonymous social media platform.

“I feel self-loathing for not being born into such rich family. I haven’t noticed how corrupt the society is until now,” another person commented.

Kwak’s son, who said he was referred to the company by his father, has worked for approximately six years as an assistant manager in the compensation division.

Suspicion rose as Kwak’s son had received the equivalent of roughly 200 times more from the 21 to 22 million won he would have been legally entitled to in severance pay, according to industry sources.

Meanwhile, the National Tax Service, South Korea’s tax agency, has recently launched a probe into 446 people in their early 30s or younger who are suspected to be involved in tax evasion by acquiring houses, buildings and stocks from their parents. THE KOREA HERALD/ASIA NEWS NETWORK



Laos believes a digital currency would assist policymakers in gathering data to better understand the economy, including the amount of money in circulation at any time, according to reports. VIENIANE TIMES

## Business

## Laos to boost bilateral India trade, investment

**T**HE Lao Ministry of Industry and Commerce hopes to boost bilateral trade and investment with India in the years ahead by taking advantage of untapped potential and abundant resources in different fields.

The country's position was outlined on October 8 by Minister of Industry and Commerce Dr Khampheng Saysompheng while leading the Lao delegation that joined a special plenary session with ASEAN trade ministers at the Indo-ASEAN Business Summit and Expo 2021 through video conference.

The event was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in collaboration with India's foreign and commerce ministries, under the theme "Building vibrant supply chains through deeper trade and investment relations".

Dr Khampheng said Laos has large untapped potential that can be explored by Indian entrepreneurs and investors. The country has abundant natural resources such as land for agriculture, growing crops and raising livestock, he pointed out.

"In terms of laws and regulations for foreign investors, we have the Revised Investment Promotion Law and the Enterprise Law that facilitate investment and enable a friendly business environment by providing tax incentives and shorter business registration processes, as well as attractive investment opportunities in the special economic zones.

"However, it is evidenced that bilateral trade and investment between the two countries is considerably small compared to the trade potential and there is room for greater improvement," he said.

He noted that India has great potential in the areas of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment industry, machinery, textiles, information technology, agriculture and food processing.

"So, we can explore this untapped potential in areas of mutual interest to further broaden and deepen trade and investment between ASEAN, including Laos, and India," he said.

Dr Khampheng also said the ad-



Commerce minister Khampheng Saysompheng (second left) leads the Lao delegation to attend a virtual special plenary session with ASEAN trade ministers at the Indo-ASEAN Business Summit and Expo 2021 on Friday. VIENTIANE TIMES

verse impacts of the Covid-19 crisis had resulted in several problems and challenges in the region and across the globe, such as the downturn in the world economy, disruption in the flow of goods and services, restrictions on cross-border travel and movement of people, the negative impact on livelihoods of the people, and the vulnerability of supply chains.

"This is a global issue that we all are experiencing. Therefore, it is necessary for us to work hand in hand to find appropriate policies and solutions to address and overcome this crisis. One of the areas that we must work on is to build vibrant and resilient supply chains through deeper trade and investment in the region," he said.

Dr Khampheng made some sugges-

tions for moving towards vibrant supply chains through deeper trade and investment ties in the region, including the use of digital and other technologies for regional supply chains.

In addition, he recommended the reduction of trade barriers such as non-tariff and technical trade barriers to ensure the constant flow of goods and skilled labour across countries.

He also suggested that entrepreneurs and the private sector should fully utilise the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement and encourage the relevant bodies to finalise the work to make the pact more user friendly in order to increase bilateral trade.

Dr Khampheng sought further collaboration between the private sector of ASEAN and India, espe-

cially between micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSME), including steps to promote and support the private sector in accessing markets in ASEAN and India.

The ASEAN-India Business Council can help bring together key private sectors of ASEAN and India through events such as business matching via virtual and physical conferences, he suggested.

"It is important to recognise the critical role of a rules-based multilateral trading system in driving economic recovery in the post-pandemic period and to work together for a stronger multilateral trading system," Dr Khampheng added.

ASEAN is one of India's crucial trade partners. India was the seventh largest trading partner and the sev-

enth largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) among ASEAN dialogue partners in 2020.

According to the website of the Indian embassy in Vientiane, the main products exported from India to Laos are machinery, equipment, pharmaceutical products and automobiles. In recent years, the export of generic medicines and other pharmaceutical products has increased.

Laos' exports to India include bulk minerals and ores (such as copper and gold) and wood products such as veneer and plywood. There are currently 51 Indian companies registered in Laos with an investment capital of \$48 million. Most of these companies are based in the capital Vientiane. VIENTIANE TIMES/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

## Efforts ongoing to commercialise 'flying cars' by 2025

"FLYING cars" are expected to be used as a means of transportation to the site of the Osaka-Kansai Japan Expo 2025.

Yet many problems remain to be solved before the technology can come to a street – or a sky – near you. It is not yet clear when these futuristic vehicles will be integrated into everyday infrastructure.

In Japan, the Osaka prefectural and city governments signed a partnership agreement with SkyDrive Inc, a Tokyo-based start-up company, with a view to realising the operation

of flying cars at the expo.

The company, established in 2018 by former employees of Toyota Motor Corp, aims to launch a flying car operation business by 2025. It plans for the expo to be the stage for its unveiling.

In May this year, the central government decided to set up a working group to examine safety standards and other issues related to flying cars at the expo.

According to the plan, a take-off and landing site will be set up in the Tempoan area

in Minato ward, Osaka, about 5km from the expo venue at Yumeshima, also in Osaka, and a two-seater flying car is to shuttle between the two locations.

SkyDrive president Tomohiro Fukuzawa told a press conference: "We would like to open the world of flying cars with the expo as a starting point."

The company was to start a demonstration test in the Osaka Bay area this month. For the time being, the company will not carry people on the flying car. The firm will instead fly a large drone to check the flight conditions and battery consumption.

German company Volocopter GmbH, which is planning a flying taxi business, has also proposed to fly at the expo 2025.

At a government meeting held in May, Volocopter presented a concept under which it would cover the 30km from Kansai Airport to Yumeshima in about 21 minutes by flying car, and the 15km from Kobe Airport in about 11 minutes.

A wide variety of flying cars

have appeared in science fiction as symbols of futuristic worlds – from the speeder bikes of "Star Wars" to the spinners of "Blade Runner".

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism envisions an aircraft that combines electric power, autonomous operation, and vertical take-off and landing abilities.

The most common type currently under development is a larger version of the now familiar drones that use electric propellers to hover.

As they have fewer parts than helicopters, maintenance costs are lower. Autonomous operation using artificial intelligence (AI) and sensors also eliminates the need for a pilot.

They are also less noisy and can take off and land at even more locations than helicopters.

Flying cars are expected to be used for various purposes such as transporting disaster victims and doctors, as well as for leisure activities.

According to SkyDrive, about 400 development projects are underway around the world.

Morgan Stanley of the US estimates that the global market for flying cars will be worth about \$1.5 trillion by 2040.

There will be various challenges for flying cars to move about in a space without lanes and signals, unlike roads.

Seeking to lead the international competition to develop flying cars, the government established a public-private council of business operators and experts in 2018 to discuss legal and technical issues.

Flying cars are expected to be treated as airplanes, helicopters and other aircraft under the Civil Aeronautics Law.

Aircraft are not allowed to fly below the minimum safe altitude set by ministry ordinance. Presently, this means 300m above the highest buildings in urban areas and 150m above water.

Flying car manufacturers are calling for a review of the rules to allow short flights at lower altitudes.

Aircraft are required to meet strict safety standards, such as annual inspections for airworthiness that check the strength

and performance of the aircraft to prevent accidents.

There will be more discussions on how to apply such safety measures to flying cars.

A mechanism to avoid collisions with other flying objects such as helicopters and drones is also essential. The government is considering the development of control technology to manage flight operations in a unified manner.

There are many technical challenges to flying freely in the sky, so, for the time being, flying cars are likely to follow fixed routes over unpopulated areas or water.

To prepare for unforeseen circumstances, the government is considering the possibility of requiring a pilot on board instead of using a fully automated vehicle at the expo.

"The expo is a great opportunity to demonstrate the convenience of flying cars. We want to make it a reality after ensuring safety and stimulating social demand," a government official said. THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

[JAPAN]/ASIA NEWS NETWORK



SkyDrive Inc, a Toyota-backed start-up, conducts a public, manned test flight of one of its 'flying cars', the SD-03. SKYDRIVE INC

## World

## Sydney opens after 106-day lockdown

**E**LATED Sydneysiders defied grey skies and rain to celebrate the lifting of almost four months of lockdown on October 11, hoping to put behind them a period of “blood, sweat and no beers” in Australia’s largest city.

Sydney’s more than five million residents have been subjected to a 106-day lockdown, designed to limit the march of the highly transmissible Delta variant.

With new infections now falling – New South Wales state recorded 479 cases on October 11 – and more than 70 per cent of over-16s double vaccinated, Sydney was dusting off the cobwebs.

Cafes and restaurants threw open their doors to anyone who could prove they were vaccinated while shaggy haired customers lined up outside hairdressers to get their home cuts and hair dyes repaired.

“It’s a great vibe this morning,” said Hannah Simmons, owner of Gordon’s Cafe in the beachside suburb of Clovelly who survived the lockdown hit to her business by offering takeaways including dinners.

“The outside seating will be a little bit dreary but that’s ok. We are really excited to be back there and open. That’s great.”

Outside the cafe, builder Nick James said getting work had been “up and down” in the construction business during the lockdown. “It would be nicer if it was a bit more sunny but what can you do,” he said.

For many, the end of lockdown was a chance to get into the shops. At midnight, hundreds of people poured into a discount Kmart store in the western Sydney suburb of Mount Druitt, with social media images showing long queues forming inside.

Since June, shops, schools, salons and offices have been closed for non-essential workers and there have been unprecedented restrictions on personal freedom.



A security guard looks on in front of the Sydney Opera House ahead of the lifting of the lockdown. AFP

There were bans on everything from travelling more than 5km from home, visiting family, playing squash, browsing in supermarkets to attending funerals.

“Very few countries have taken as stringent or extreme an approach to managing Covid as Australia,” Tim Southommasane, an academic and former Australian race discrimination commissioner, told AFP.

There will still be limits on mass gatherings and international borders and schools will not fully reopen for a few weeks yet.

But otherwise daily life will look more like normal.

For most of the pandemic, Australia successfully suppressed infections through border closures, lockdowns

and aggressive testing and tracing.

But the Delta variant put paid to any dream of “Covid-zero”, at least in the largest cities of Melbourne and Sydney which are now pivoting to “living with Covid”.

“It’s a big day for our state,” said New South Wales’ recently appointed conservative premier Dominic Perrottet. After “100 days of blood, sweat and no beers”, he said, “you’ve earned it”.

But despite the celebratory mood, there are lingering concerns about what reopening will bring.

“There’s obviously a lot of excitement but it certainly has to be tempered by making sure we continue to look out for each other,” Perrottet told national broadcaster ABC. “That’s been our success in the past. Every-

body making enormous efforts to get vaccinated.”

There are also fears that reopening will inevitably bring a rash of new infections.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) last week pilloried Perrottet when he appeared to shift the focus away from health and onto the economic recovery.

“The AMA supports gradual opening up of the economy and the loosening of restrictions, but it is critical to observe the impact of each step on transmission and case numbers,” the doctors’ body said.

“Otherwise New South Wales may still see hospitals become completely overwhelmed despite high vaccination rates.” AFP

## US officials, Taliban in Qatar talks

US OFFICIALS have met with senior Taliban representatives in Qatar to discuss security and human rights in Afghanistan, the Department of State said on October 10.

A US interagency delegation flew to the capital Doha on October 9-10 for talks “focused on security and terrorism concerns and safe passage for US citizens, other foreign nationals and our Afghan partners”, according to department spokesman Ned Price.

Other areas of focus were “human rights, including the meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects of Afghan society”, Price said in a statement.

The two sides also discussed the US’ “provision of robust humanitarian assistance, directly to the Afghan people”.

According to the department, the discussions were “candid and professional” and US officials reiterated that “the Taliban will be judged on its actions, not only its words”.

The Taliban are seeking international recognition, as well as assistance to avoid a humanitarian disaster, after they returned to power in August following the withdrawal of US troops following 20 years of war. AFP



Taliban fighters working as a police force stand guard at the entrance gate of a police district in Afghan capital Kabul on October 3. AFP

## Bangladesh arrests 16 Rohingya in anti-militant drive

BANGLADESH police arrested at least 16 Rohingya refugees in a series of raids on camps in Dhaka after the murder of a top Rohingya community leader on September 29, officials said on October 10.

Rights advocate Mohib Ullah was gunned down by unidentified assailants outside his office at Kutupalong, the world’s largest refugee settlement in Bangladesh’s southeast.

His family and fellow community leaders have blamed the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) – a militant outfit behind a series of attacks on Myanmar security posts – saying Mohib Ullah’s growing popularity had enraged the group. Arsa has denied any involvement in the murder.

The 48-year-old had become one of the most respected moderate voices advocating for

Rohingya refugees after nearly 800,000 people fled Myanmar for Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar district following military crackdowns on their villages in 2017.

“We have arrested 16 people in the past three days as part of a special drive we have launched after the murder of Mohib Ullah,” said Naimul Huq, the police official in charge of the raids.

But Huq added that those arrested were not “involved in the murder of Mohib Ullah” and Arsa does not operate in the camps.

The arrests signal a wider law enforcement crackdown on the camps, coming a week after five others were apprehended in connection with the murder and local media reported that one of the men had confessed.

Rohingya community leaders and rights activists have repeatedly said members of the militant outfit are active in the refugee settlement and Mohib Ullah’s family had told AFP last week that they were afraid of leaving their homes.

“Arsa has created a reign of terror in the camps,” a senior leader of the slain leader’s rights group told AFP, asking to remain unnamed. “Since

Mohib Ullah’s murder, I haven’t been able to go to my home. I’ve been hiding since the murder. Arsa members are following us and threatening us. I am helpless.”

Another community leader said: “Arsa militants tried to kidnap one of my relatives and the son of one of our members. Now we are all scared of our life. They want to kill me”. AFP

## India claims to have ample coal stocks for power sector

INDIA has ample coal stocks to meet the demand of its power plants, the government said on October 10, seeking to allay fears of imminent blackouts in New Delhi and other cities.

The current fuel stock at coal-powered plants is about 7.2 million tonnes, sufficient for four days, the ministry of coal said.

Government-owned mining giant

Coal India also has a stock of more than 40 million tonnes which is being supplied to power stations.

“Any fear of disruption in power supply is entirely misplaced,” the ministry said in a statement.

The clarification came a day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal warned of a looming power crisis in the megacity which is home to over 20 million people.

Several regions across India have been hit by supply shortages in recent months, with utility providers resorting to unscheduled power cuts.

India’s coal-fired power stations had an average of four days’ stock at the end of last month, the lowest in years.

The shortage in India, the world’s second-largest coal-consuming country, follows widespread power

outages in China that have shut factories and hit production and global supply chains.

Coal accounts for nearly 70 per cent of India’s electricity generation and around three-quarters of the fossil fuel is mined domestically.

As Asia’s third-largest economy rebounds following a coronavirus wave, heavy monsoon rains have flooded coal mines and disrupted

transport networks, leading to a sharp rise in prices for coal buyers, including power stations.

International coal prices have also soared.

The ministry however sounded upbeat on October 10, saying that despite heavy monsoons and a steep hike in power demand, “domestic supplies have supported power generation in a major way”. AFP

# 50% of VN firms keep staff paid amid Covid

**M**ORE than half of Vietnamese companies in information technology (IT), finance- and banking-insurance and import-export have not laid off employees or cut salaries or benefits during the prolonged pandemic, according to a report by recruitment company VietnamWorks.

According to the report, when the outbreak is controlled, 50 per cent of enterprises plan to recruit new and inexperienced employees since they still need to meet overheads after many months without any business.

But with society and the economy gradually entering a "new normal", workers too are likely to have new requirements, the report warned.

They might not only look for attractive salaries or benefits but also consider the working mode and operating model of the employer, and so businesses need to come up with new strategies to attract talent, it said.

"Covid-19 and The Labour Market in 2021: Situations and Solutions" collected data from 400 enterprises and 1200 job seekers in August, which showed 49.9 per cent either sacked workers or cut wages.

Some 11.6 per cent continued to hire.

But three per cent stopped

operating temporarily, 7.3 per cent laid off employees but did not cut salaries or benefits and 9.4 per cent chose to both lay off employees and cut salaries.

Businesses in the food, hotel, tourism, education, construction, and architecture sectors were severely affected, leading to a high number of lay-offs and huge cut in salaries and benefits.

Employees in the administration/secretarial, sales and customer service departments were the first to be sacked.

According to the Youth Employment Service Centre of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), many companies in commercial services, delivery, accounting, banking, and IT need a large number of workers now.

The centre is carrying out a programme to help unemployed workers find jobs, rent cheap rooms and get free Covid tests.

It is also working with authorities in Ninh Thuan, Soc Trang, Dong Thap, Ben Tre, and Binh Duong provinces to help people there find jobs in HCMC.

The Employment Service Centre under the city Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs is cooperating with labour agencies in districts to organise online job fairs to bring enterprises and workers together.



The East Asia University of Technology in Vietnamese capital Hanoi. The information technology (IT) industry has had the highest demand for workers during Covid. EAST ASIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

A report by the HCMC Centre for Forecasting Manpower Needs and Labour Market Information shows city businesses will need 44,000-

57,000 workers in the year's last quarter.

The centre said this is the time when businesses increase production to meet the surg-

ing demand during the Lunar New Year (Tet) holidays in the early part of the new year.

It added that demand for labour is high in trade-com-

merce, IT, customer care, tourism, hotels and restaurants, electricity, food, and construction. VIET NAM NEWS/ASIA

NEWS NETWORK

# Indonesia gov't appeals Jakarta air pollution verdict

THE Indonesian government has filed an appeal against a recent Central Jakarta District Court ruling that found President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and other top government officials guilty of negligence for failing to tackle Jakarta's chronic air pollution.

Environment ministry expert staffer Ilyas Asaad said the president, the environment, home, and health min-

istries had filed the appeal with the Jakarta High Court on September 29.

"An appeal is just an ordinary mechanism [to be used] if we have something that we object to [in a ruling]," Ilyas told the *Jakarta Post* last week.

He said the government's decision to appeal the ruling was driven by the failure of the judges to take into

account a new regulation pertaining to air quality, namely Government Regulation (PP) No 22/2021.

The PP, a derivative regulation of the Job Creation Law, updates provisions in PP No 41/1999 on air pollution control.

The new regulation, issued on February 2, requires governors, mayors and regents to commission studies analysing the causes of air pollution in the regions they lead, among other provisions. The data from the studies is to be handed over to the central government to allow it to formulate a nationwide air pollution control policy.

State Secretariat expert staffer Faldo Maldini noted that the government remained committed to improving air quality, regardless of the ruling and the results of the ensuing appeal.

In contrast to the central government's response, hours after the verdict was read on September 16, Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan said the city administration would not appeal the ruling.

The Central Jakarta District Court ruled in partial favour of 32 residents

of Greater Jakarta grouped under the Capital City Coalition, which in 2019 sued the president, the environment, health and home ministers, as well as the governors of Jakarta, Banten and West Java, for failing to improve air quality in the capital city.

In the ruling, the court said the officials had broken the law. It ordered them to tighten the city's air quality regulations and to ensure that the Jakarta administration's efforts to tackle air pollution were supervised. The judges, however, declined to rule that the actions of the officials had constituted a violation of human rights as the petitioners had demanded.

The plaintiffs said in a recent statement that they had decided to accept the verdict, even though some of their demands had not been fully met.

Ayu Eza Tiara, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the coalition was disappointed that the central government had decided to appeal the ruling.

"We were hoping that the government would actually do what the verdict told them to do," Ayu told the *Jakarta Post*.

She added that although appealing to a higher court was a common legal procedure, doing so would likely lengthen the time that Jakarta's citizens would have to deal with unhealthy air as the appeal could affect the Jakarta administration's policies to improve air quality.

"We hope that the central government withdraws its appeal or at least immediately starts to clean up the air without waiting for the final verdict," Ayu said.

Jakarta's severe air pollution stems mostly from vehicle emissions, factories and coal-fired power plants.

In a recent report by the C40 Cities network, Jakarta was in the top three of 61 cities observed worldwide for premature deaths related to air pollution from coal-fired power plants. In 2019, more than 1,500 deaths in the city were attributed to the burning of coal.

That figure is expected to double to more than 3,000 fatalities by 2030, by which time a number of new coal-fired power plants are expected to be operational. THE JAKARTA POST/ASIA NEWS NETWORK



Smog covers the Jakarta skyline on August 9, 2019. ANTARA

# M'sia eases travel curbs as coronavirus outbreak slows

MALAYSIA eased domestic and international travel curbs on October 10 for those fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, as a fierce outbreak slows and inoculation rates rise.

The nation had faced its worst Covid-19 wave in recent months, prompting authorities to impose a tough nationwide lockdown.

But with case numbers falling and the inoculation rollout picking up speed, authorities began lifting curbs, with businesses allowed to reopen and workers slowly returning to offices.

In a televised address on October 10, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced fully inoculated people can move freely within the country,

as well as fly overseas without special permission.

"According to the ministry of health, the vaccination rate for the adult population ... has reached 90 per cent," he said to explain the move that took effect on October 11.

But Ismail Sabri warned people to continue abiding by rules such as mask-wearing to keep

the virus in check.

"Do not be complacent ... This is important in the government's efforts to reopen the economy," he said.

Malaysians had been prohibited from travelling between the country's different states since January, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

Overseas travel had only

been allowed for those who got special permission by applying through an official system.

While this requirement is being dropped, returning travellers will still need to undergo quarantine.

Malaysia largely avoided a first wave of the virus at the start of the pandemic last year after imposing restrictions and

closing its borders.

It was hit hard this year by the Delta variant, and was logging over 20,000 cases a day and hundreds of deaths in August.

But after one of Southeast Asia's fastest vaccine rollouts, infection rates have slowed.

The country of 32 million has recorded over 2.3 million cases and 27,000 deaths. AFP

# Spectre of energy inflation amid Covid, faltering global economy

Opinion

Editorial

**A** FEAR of energy inflation is sweeping the world. Prices have jumped not only for oil and natural gas, but also for coal, fanning inflation worries. To make matters worse, the global economy is showing signs of faltering. Negative factors caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, such as disruptions in transportation and logistics services, energy crises and growth slowdowns, are happening simultaneously.

The US West Texas Intermediate for November delivery rose to \$78.93 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange last Tuesday. During the session it surged to as high as \$79.48, the most in nearly seven years. Brent futures climbed to a three-year high, settling at \$82.56. The oil price surges came after the OPEC Plus group of producers decided to maintain its planned output increase that it had cut last year. Some economists expect the global energy crunch to propel oil prices above \$100 a barrel this winter, their highest since 2014.

To top it all, prices for other raw materials have soared, too. The Bloomberg Commodity Spot Index, which tracks 23 energy, metals and crop futures contracts, rose 1.1 per cent last Monday, topping a 2011 record. Natural gas contracts hit new highs in Europe. Futures contracts jumped to a 12-year high in New York. Futures for coal soared to fresh record highs this month.

Soaring international prices for energy and raw materials have great influence upon consumer prices. South Korea's consumer prices rose 2.5 per cent in September from a year earlier, according to Statistics Korea last Tuesday. Inflation stayed over two per cent on-year for a sixth straight month. Prices are expected to rise further in the fourth quarter when the electricity rate is scheduled to be raised.



Pedestrians walk past a gas station in Paris on October 2, 2021, as the price of oil increased in all Europe. Some economists expect the global energy crunch to propel oil prices above \$100 a barrel this winter, their highest since 2014. AFP

High prices are being accepted as an established fact. The Bank of Korea raised its 2021 inflation outlook to 2.1 per cent from its earlier estimate of 1.8 per cent. US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said a bout of high US inflation could be prolonged into early next year. Now a few economists are talking about stagflation, a period when sputtering economic growth coincides with rising inflation.

If growth is solid, slight inflation will be inevitable. But the current situation is fraught with unprecedented uncertainties stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. South Korea's industrial output, retail sales and facility investment all decreased in August. It is the first time in three months that all three indices representing production, consump-

tion and investment fell at the same time. Triggered by the energy crisis, economic indices point to stagflation. The best solution is to propel growth through innovation and productivity improvement, but skyrocketing property prices and the ascent of international prices for energy and

## Power shortages in China – the ‘world’s factory’ – are threatening to knock down the global ecosystem of supply chains

raw materials are in the way. The mounting household debt, fuelled by excessive liquidity pumped into the market due to Covid-19 and stimulated by soaring home prices, is one of the big obsta-

cles. In a bid to prevent a bubble from forming, financial authorities are tightening household loans. The central bank raised the benchmark interest rate in August in response to snowballing debt and surging prices. Debt is not a problem only for households. Public-sector debt is snowballing, too.

Particularly, China, South Korea's main trading partner, is a country to watch. Power shortages in China – the “world’s factory” – are threatening to knock down the global ecosystem of supply

chains. If production in China suffers a serious blow from price hikes for energy and raw materials, significant damage to South Korea's trade will be inevitable. Disruptions in transportation and logistics industries are already afflicting South Korea's exports. Hyundai Motor and its affiliate Kia are seeing their overseas sales falter due to the dearth of chips.

Government and businesses must put their heads together to repel fear of inflation looming over South Korea and overcome the economic impact of the pandemic. A thorough response to the unprecedented crisis is required. Above all, they must prevent the worst scenario where inflation turns into stagflation. THE KOREA HERALD/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

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# Lifestyle

## Free project tools platform for NGOs

Roth Sochieata

**T**HE Covid-19 pandemic has forced a lot of changes to people's lifestyles and whether they are working, studying, celebrating or just talking one of the biggest changes for everyone has been the increase in virtual gatherings via video conferencing services in place of holding in-person meet-ups.

Particularly for matters related to work or business the number of group chats everyone is involved with has proliferated to an extraordinary degree out of simple necessity whenever multiple people are collaborating on a project together.

To add to the confusion, several different video conferencing and work-collaboration tools currently have significant market-share and this sometimes leads to disorganised group efforts and added difficulties in completing essential work.

Enter local software development firm Bloo with their online project management system designed to make teamwork simple, efficient and enjoyable. It had the lucky timing to launch in 2019 – just one year prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Bloo is now working on a social project called Bloo4Good that will provide 5,000 free software licences with an annual value of \$2.5 million to various NGOs, non-profits, charities, schools and open-source software projects.

"Part of our vision is to 'make the world better together' so Bloo4Good was founded with a mission to help organisations that do good things for society. We've included open-source software projects as part of that because we leveraged open-source software to build Bloo," Bloo marketing representative Seraphin Chan told *The Post*.

Chan says the company is keen on supporting organisations and individuals that make the world a better place with the hope that the free licences to use Bloo's services will help them work together more effectively and achieve even greater positive gains.

"The idea behind this project is to give back to the community and to organisations that are helping the less fortunate. For example, teachers or professors can benefit from Bloo by doing things like delegating tasks, setting their schedules and storing



Bloo was founded by Cambodia-based Italian-British software developer Emanuele 'Manny' Faja in 2018. SUPPLIED

shared resources," Chan says.

Bloo was founded in 2018 by Italian-British software developer Emanuele "Manny" Faja who also currently serves as a managing partner at the design agency Mäd. Dong Truong – the former chief technology officer for Vietnamese steel company Ton Nam Kim – joined Bloo early on and became an owner/investor.

"Bloo was born on a trip to the US that our founder, Manny, took in July 2017 and partly in response to the challenges he faced while running [his design agency]. He had tried many different project management tools at that point and he found that most of them were difficult to use and also super-expensive – especially if you were using multiple tools – and not only was it a monetary cost but also a cost to productivity. So he pitched his idea for a better solution while on that trip and got his first investor," Chan says.

In just a few short years Bloo's suite of services has met with considerable success by providing project management tools to create a faster and more efficient workflow for over 1,500 organisations located across over 120 countries.

Bloo is available in multiple languages including English, Khmer, Vietnamese, French, Spanish, Korean, Italian, German and Indonesian. Additional language options are already in the works.

Chan says that the pandemic no doubt provided some boost to Bloo's start as a business, but she feels that the project's real strength is its flexibility, which allows it to facilitate communication and collaboration to boost remote-work productivity in every industry or organisation imaginable.

Bloo is a fully-featured service with calendar and schedule management, activity feeds, notifications and the ability to automate just about anything. Users create their projects and then add their team members and everything is ready to go, Chan says.

"The main difference between Bloo and other similar apps is that Bloo is much easier to use. We've put a huge amount of focus on creating a pain-free user experience from day one so that anyone can use Bloo without having any special training or even running a tutorial video," she says.

Chan also notes that Bloo's low price point, which compares favourably to that of similar services such as Trello, Basecamp, Asana and Click-up – is due partly because Bloo only charges per company or organisation rather than per user.

Currently, Bloo charges regular customers \$50 per month or \$500 per year for complete access to their services with an unlimited number of users, separate projects and file storage.



Bloo's team is ready to answer emails from users about their free trial or Bloo4Good's free lifetime licence for NGOs and other information. SUPPLIED

Chan says that if you're an organisation or business that is doing something interesting and innovative that you think Bloo might appreciate – even if it's for-profit – you can email them and request a discount on the licence fee with a pretty solid chance of getting a deal.

"We don't believe that software should be hugely expensive for small companies. Bloo replaces a lot of other tools that together can add up to costs of \$500+ per month for a team of 15 or 20 people to use. We think that's crazy money to spend each month so we work hard to stay efficient and keep our running costs low so we can ensure the best price for you," she says.

All it takes to get started using Bloo is an email address and you'll be up and running with their 14-day free trial in no time flat. The trial provides full access to all of Bloo's services so customers can make an informed decision after the two weeks are up as Chan says that the team at Bloo are confident they'll convert those free trials to paid subscribers more often than not just by showing them what Bloo can do.

Since the company announced their Bloo4Good initiative, applications have come in from all over the world.

One user offered up high-praise for the effort, calling the programme a "noble achievement" and offering his

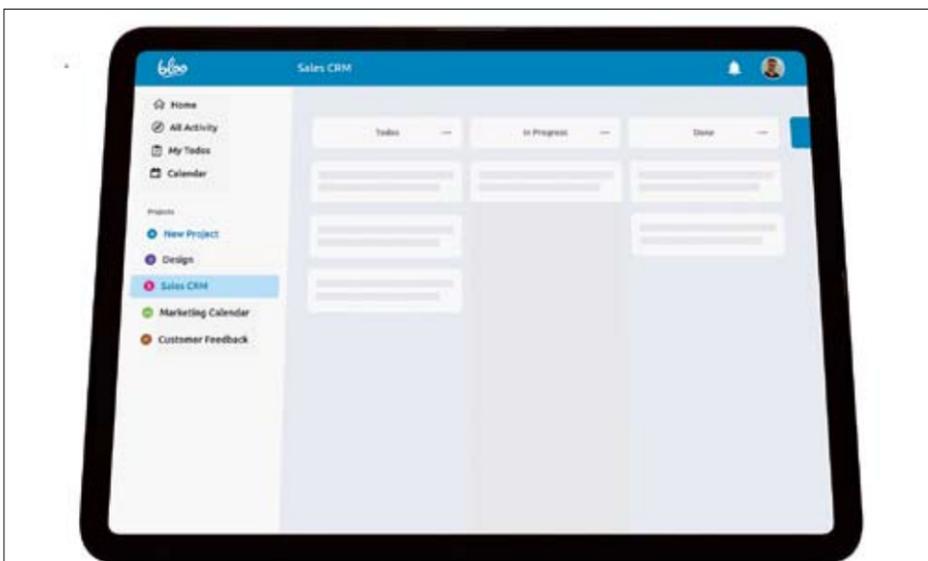
commendations. Many more have left positive comments and feedback through Bloo's website in testimony to the big boost at work Bloo is giving them.

"Bloo exceeds our expectations to the point where our organisation migrated from Click-up fully over to Bloo after doing the free trial and it's the best decision we've ever made," enthused one user, while another wrote "I tried so many different apps and Bloo is the only one that can do everything I need without confusing the heck out of my clients."

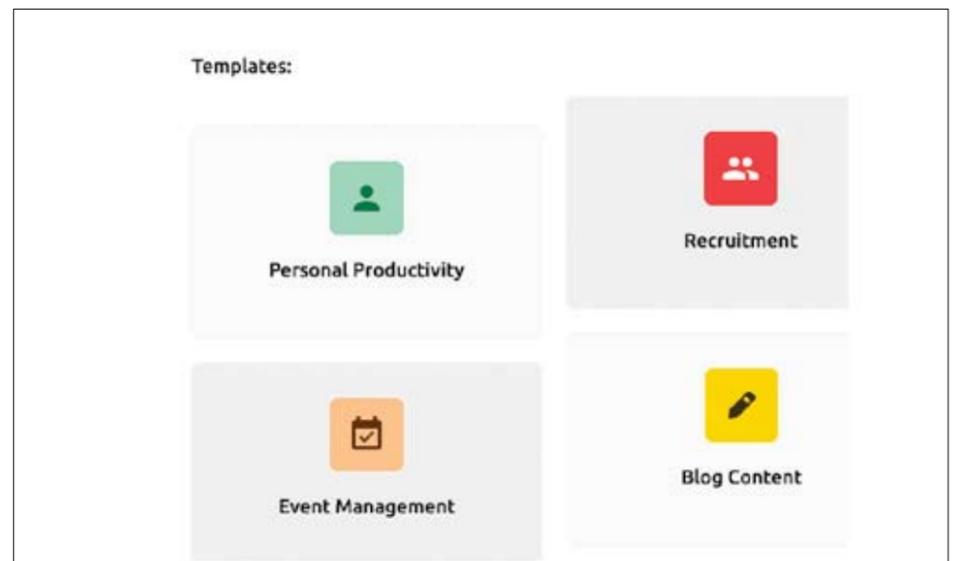
Bloo4Good is currently accepting applications for free lifetime licences but they can only afford to give these first 5,000 away for now until they grow further as a company, so Chan encourages any interested organisation to apply right away.

"If you are an NGO, non-profit, charity or educational institution and you are looking to get the free licence for Bloo, there are only a couple of steps to get started. First, create an account on Bloo.io and then submit your application online. The Bloo team will review it and within 24-48 hours – pending any necessary clarifications or detail confirmation – you will then receive a 100 per cent free lifetime licence from us," Chan concludes.

For more information and to apply for a free licence or sign-up for their free trial go to: <https://www.bloo.io>. ■



Bloo's project management platform was developed in Cambodia and over 1,500 organisations across 120-plus countries use the service to manage their workflow faster and more efficiently. SUPPLIED



Bloo's templates allow many different business or project types to quickly setup the service to remotely work, communicate and collaborate in ways that boost their team productivity. SUPPLIED

# Sweet taste of *Squid Game* success for South Korean 'dalgona' couple

**S**IMPLE, sweet, and fictionally fatal: the stallholder who makes the traditional South Korean children's treat featured in the global cultural phenomenon *Squid Game* – and once associated with post-war poverty – has hit a real-life jackpot.

The Netflix smash hit series features a group of South Korea's most marginalised and deeply in debt, who compete in children's games for the chance of 45.6 billion won (\$38 million), with lethal consequences.

In one particular challenge, the contestants try to cut out shapes including a star and an umbrella from a crisp sugar candy called a dalgona, without it cracking – and those who fail are killed.

The life-or-death game was inspired by director Hwang Dong-hyuk's experience growing up in Seoul in the 1970s: but then, the prize for a child who successfully removed the shape was another free dalgona.

Hwang was always determined to win an extra treat and remembers employing multiple tactics in his efforts, including licking the candy to loosen the shape and using a needle heated over briquettes – techniques repeated in the show's nail-biting dalgona challenge scene.

"I would make the dalgona maker extremely perplexed by succeeding on the most difficult shape of umbrella," the director recently said in a YouTube video.

But the candy was a difficult prop to manage on set as it softens easily, especially during South Korea's humid rainy season, so Hwang and artistic director Chae Kyung-sun hired "dalgona experts" to have the candy freshly made on location.

Those specialists were Lim Chang-joo and his wife Jung Jung-soon, who produced between 300 and 400 dalgonas over three days of filming.

Now, their humble roadside stall in Seoul's theatre district – little more than an umbrella, an awning and their equipment – is one of the hottest spots in the South Korean capital.

Orders for the 2,000-won (about \$1.70) sweets start piling up as soon as it opens, and before long,

customers face six-hour waits, with some giving up and leaving empty-handed.

In about 90 seconds, Lim melts an individual portion of sugar above a burner, before adding baking soda, flattening it into a circle, and punching it with the customer's preferred shape.

He offers a wider range of choices than the four forms in the show – and has a newly added "N" for Netflix.

"I never imagined it would become this popular," Lim said of the series, adding that his life has now become "super hectic".

"Of course, I'm happy because my business is doing well and how dalgona has become famous in other countries.

"I hope they make and eat their own dalgonas," he added.

## Financial crisis

Historians say dalgona first emerged in the 1960s when the South was still assailed by post-war poverty while desserts – such as ice cream or chocolates – were not widely available and prohibitively expensive.

Very sweet, with hints of nuts and bitterness, the candy was hugely popular, with many vendors setting up their stalls near schools.

Lim and Jung started their dalgona operation with 30,000 won after closing their tailoring business of 20 years around the time of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

The sweet endured throughout the South's rise to become the world's 12th-largest economy, following decades of rapid economic growth during the authoritarian rule of the post-war period.

And *Squid Game* is the latest manifestation of the ever-widening influence of the country's popular culture, epitomised by K-pop sensation BTS and the Oscar-winning movie *Parasite*.

"South Korea has always been at the nexus of the modern and pre-modern, Western tools and Eastern ways, and preserving the past while sacrificing everything for the future," said Michael Hurt, who teaches cultural theory at the Korea National University of Arts.

"Dalgona is a nexus item in a nexus culture." AFP



Street vendor Lim Chang-joo passes a dalgona for wrapping, a crisp sugar candy featured in the Netflix smash hit series *Squid Game*, for which he and his wife Jung Jung-soon were hired to be on set to make during production. AFP



Customers wait in line as street vendor Jung Jung-soon (centre) and her husband Lim Chang-joo (left) sell freshly made dalgonas, a crisp sugar candy featured in the Netflix smash hit series *Squid Game*. AFP

# Michelangelo's David not censored at Expo, officials say



The 5.2m replica of the statue of David is partially visible from two floors in the pavilion, with the head and torso appearing on the top level and the genitalia, buttocks and legs on the bottom. AFP

STANDING tall in Italy's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is an exact replica of Michelangelo's statue of David, but most visitors will see just the head. For the rest of the naked body, they'll have to lean in and peek.

The 5.2m statue, created using 3D printers, is partially visible from two floors in the pavilion, with the head and torso appearing on the top level and the genitalia, buttocks and legs on the bottom.

The public are welcome to visit the upper level, where they can clearly see the head and shoulders, while the lower level is reserved for VIPs, dignitaries and institutional visitors who can view David's lower portions.

The way the statue has been displayed has been criticised by some Italian media, who said it was a form of censorship in the Muslim United Arab Emirates that is hosting the world fair.

Considered one of the more open-minded Gulf nations, the UAE late last year revamped an array of laws in a social liberalisation drive designed to burnish its progressive brand.

Organisers have denied any censorship of David, saying that the display "was functional to allow visitors looking at the statue from the first floor of the pavilion to see the David at eye-level".

In a statement, artistic director Davide Rampello said it was a different and "more introspective perspective" than is available of the original Renaissance masterpiece at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence.

It said that the "proof that no censorship has been imposed" lies in the fact that UAE dignitaries took part in the unveiling of the full statue in April.

Organisers also said there were daily meetings on the lower floor involving high-level personalities who "are free to

observe ... the lower part of the statue that is fully exposed".

Dubai opened Expo 2020 last week with a flashy ceremony boasting fireworks and light displays in an attempt to woo visitors despite the coronavirus pandemic.

Italy commissioned the copy of the David statue to represent the country at Expo, which was delayed a year due to Covid-19.

It was made by a team of technicians at Hexagon Italia, under the curatorship of the University of Florence, who produced a high-definition physical copy finished off by master restorers.

The original was sculpted between 1501 and 1504 from a single block of marble, depicting the Biblical hero David, who killed the giant Goliath with his sling.

It was scanned and the replica created out of acrylic resin. At 550kg including the base, it is 10 times lighter than the original. AFP

Lifestyle



Abdul Rahman works at a coffee truck in Battery Park City in New York serving a fraction of former business since offices are still far from full. AFP

# NY's street vendors still waiting for Covid to end

**A**FTER his small Manhattan food stand lost its customers during the coronavirus pandemic, Abdul Rahman – an Afghan vendor who arrived in New York in 1992 – has resumed service, albeit at a fraction of former business since offices are still far from full.

Rahman and the thousands of street vendors like him, emblematic of New York's sidewalks, were hoping things would finally go back to normal in September.

But that's far from the case: "The business is like, 20, 30 per cent [less] than before the pandemic," Rahman, 44, said, standing in front of a display case of doughnuts and other pastries. On the counter is a jug of coffee, which he says he has trouble emptying.

With a wave of his arm, he points to where customers used to form long lines in front of his mobile stand.

Like yellow taxis, the metal food carts – stocked with coffee, muffins, bananas and hard boiled eggs – are part of New York's cityscape.

An estimated 20,000 vendors are on the streets of the Big Apple, and many of them are immigrants who have no other way of earning money.

A city hall permit is clearly visible on Rahman's cart, as is a photo of his three children, all born in the US.

**'Better than nothing'**

It has been 20 years since Rahman arrived in New York to escape the war back home in Afghanistan.

He set up shop on the sidewalk of Whitehall Street, in the south of Manhattan. It is a good location, at the foot of office buildings, near a subway exit and not far from the docks where ferries full of tourists leave and return for the Statue of Liberty, as well as boats transporting workers from Staten Island.

Some customers are loyal, such as Mike Reyes, a maintenance worker, who says he comes every morning.

"We need affordable [things] like donuts, coffee, because I do know in the city it's very expensive," he explained. "To me, they are really essential."

But tourists are still few and far between as a result of the Delta variant, so "people work mostly from home," said Rahman.

According to a survey conducted by the Partnership for New York City organisation, only 23 per cent of the one million office workers in Manhattan had returned to their offices by August, and employers were anticipating a rate of 41 per cent by the end of September – well below the two-thirds expected in May.

With a baseball cap on his head and black mask over his nose and mouth, Rahman hopes things will go back to normal in October... or maybe January.

"I don't know what's going on in the future," he said worriedly, noting that he relies on his wife's salary as a teacher to support the family.

For the time being, after 15 months of inactivity due to the pandemic, during which he was able to receive public aid, he prefers to go to work.

In order to get into the city from his home in Nassau County in eastern Long Island he has to get up at 2:30am, Monday through Friday.

"It's better than nothing," he said, although the times of earning \$800-\$900 in a good week are a distant memory.

"If I stay home, [there's] more pressure on me, and what should you do at home?" he said.

After 20 years on the job, Rahman is thinking of switching to another line of work. His wife tried to find him a job as a school bus driver, but it was only part-time.

Besides, "I know all the people here," he said. "It's almost 21 years, it looks like a life here." AFP



After his small Manhattan food stand lost its customers during the coronavirus pandemic, Abdul Rahman – an Afghan vendor who arrived in New York in 1992 – has resumed service. AFP

## Thinking caps

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14						15					16				
17						18					19				
		20				21					22				
23	24					25				26					
27			28	29					30						
31						32	33				34	35	36	37	
38						39					40				
41						42					43				
				44						45					
46	47	48	49				50	51				52			
53							54				55	56			
57							58				59			60	61
62							63				64				
65							66				67				

## "GOURMET KICHEN"

**ACROSS**

- 1 Maternity ward frequenters
- 6 Rice University athletes
- 10 North Atlantic food fish
- 14 Without company
- 15 He and she
- 16 Porter or Younger
- 17 Indian yogurt dish
- 18 Blue hue
- 19 Way back when
- 20 Fancy server
- 23 "And now, without further \_\_\_ ..."
- 25 Cholera
- 26 Makes different
- 27 Electronic device
- 30 \_\_\_-Wan Kenobi
- 31 "A Lesson From \_\_\_"
- 32 Type of personality or citizenship
- 34 "Cut it out!"
- 38 Have surgery
- 41 Formerly, an attachment to "white"
- 42 In \_\_\_ of (replacing)
- 43 Some wedding guests
- 44 Dancing maneuver
- 45 Young swan
- 46 On the water's surface

- 50 Former French coin
- 52 Stand-\_\_\_ (replacements)
- 53 One who had momentary success
- 57 "The Bridges of Madison County" state
- 58 Blood fluids
- 59 Make vertical
- 62 Ladder crosspiece
- 63 Nicholas I or II
- 64 Examine again, as a patient
- 65 It's heard in the Highlands
- 66 Eyelid inflammation
- 67 German industrial city

**DOWN**

- 1 Augusta score
- 2 Cookbook phrase
- 3 Like some mushrooms
- 4 One who hasn't turned pro?
- 5 Document authenticator
- 6 Aquatic mammal
- 7 Invitation heading
- 8 Emulate a leopard
- 9 One of an iamb's two
- 10 Patton portrayer
- 11 Adventurous tale
- 12 Product of stress
- 13 One's equals
- 21 Toss one's hat in the ring

- 22 Ring legend
- 23 Often-quoted saying
- 24 Extreme sorrow
- 28 Courteous chap
- 29 It's taken for trips
- 30 Diamond Head island
- 32 A washer might stop it
- 33 One for the off-road
- 34 Like a bug in a rug
- 35 Metallic flimsiness
- 36 More than occasionally
- 37 Bothersome people or animals
- 39 High-hatters
- 40 Arthurian knight
- 44 "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-\_\_\_"
- 45 Implement with which to break
- 46 Going up in smoke
- 47 Baking ingredient
- 48 Grassy yards
- 49 River in Missouri
- 50 Pound resident
- 51 Major airport
- 54 Branch structure
- 55 "As \_\_\_ as the driven snow"
- 56 Hairy primates
- 60 Separator of family names
- 61 \_\_\_ of thieves

## Sudoku Pacific

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

	6	1		9	2		4	5
4					8			9
8				6		3		
			3	2	1	6	5	
	4	2					1	3
	3	5	6	8	4			
		3		4				6
2			5					3
5	9		8	7		4	1	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

### Monday's solution

T	E	R	R	A	C	O	T	T	A										
I	D	E	O	L	O	G	I	E	S										
R	E	A	D	E	R	R	E	S	P	O	N	S	E	S					
E	N	D	S		P	E	R	T											
A	L	L	I	S															
S	H	E	A	F															
R	E	A	D	I															
I	M	P																	
T	O	P	E	R															
E	C	L	A	T															
R	E	A	D	S															
M	A	Y	O																
S	N	A	G																

### Monday's solution

9	6	3	7	4	8	2	5	1
5	1	4	9	3	2	7	8	6
2	7	8	6	1	5	4	9	3
4	8	6	3	2	9	5	1	7
3	5	9	4	7	1	8	6	2
1	2	7	5	8	6	9	3	4
6	3	2	8	9	7	1	4	5
8	4	1	2	5	3	6	7	9
7	9	5	1	6	4	3	2	8

# Italy claims third place in Nations League

ITALY claimed third place in the Nations League on Sunday after beating Belgium 2-1 to bounce back from their world record unbeaten run being brought to an end.

A superb volley from Nicolo Barella just after half-time and Domenico Berardi's 63rd-minute penalty were enough for the Azzurri to see off a Belgium team missing the injured Romelu Lukaku and Eden Hazard to win the third-place playoff.

The European champions, beaten by Spain in their semi-final on Wednesday to lose after going 37 matches without a defeat, played with verve on a gorgeous sunny day at Turin's Allianz Stadium but Belgium's poor luck continued following their last-gasp semi-final loss to France on Thursday.

Alexis Saelemaekers, who started in place of substitute Kevin De Bruyne, Michy Batshuayi and Yannick Carrasco all struck the woodwork before Charles De Ketelaere scored with four minutes remaining.

It was a positive day for Italy coach Roberto Mancini, who watched as Federico Chiesa starred up front for an experimental side.

"We played very well today ... Chiesa can play anywhere, right or left, today he played on the left and he did really well. He's an important player," Mancini said.

Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois may have called Sunday's match "pointless" but the two teams put plenty of commitment into their displays, with some players looking to carve out a place in their national teams.

Giacomo Raspadori, making his sixth Italy appearance, was put through by the impressive Chiesa in the 20th minute but couldn't get his shot away before Timothy Castagne got across to deflect his effort out for a corner.

Five minutes later AC Milan midfielder Saelemaekers struck the bar with a first-time curling shot which left Gianluigi Donnarumma, captain for the day and cheered heartily by the Turin crowd after being barracked by angry AC Milan fans on Wednesday, rooted to the spot.

## Influential Chiesa

However it was Chiesa who was at the centre of Italy's attacks and the in-form Juventus forward wasted the best chance of the match just before the break when after collecting Berardi's pin-point long pass he took too long to shoot and allowed Courtois to charge out and make a superb save.

However Barella put Italy in front almost straight after the restart when he met a high Belgian clearance from a corner with a stunning volley that flew into the bottom corner.

Batshuayi almost brought the away side level on the hour mark, his powerful shot from a tight angle fizzing past Donnarumma and striking the crossbar, but shortly afterwards Berardi doubled Italy's lead.

Chiesa was clumsily brought down by Castagne, and despite protests from the Belgians, Berardi squeezed his spot-kick under Courtois.

Carrasco crashed a shot off the



Italy's forward Domenico Berardi scores a penalty during the UEFA Nations League third place football match against Belgium at the Juventus Stadium in Turin on Sunday. AFP

base of the post before De Bruyne, who entered the field just before Berardi put Italy two ahead, laid on the goal which halved the deficit.

The Manchester City playmaker charged onto Courtois' long throw before sliding through De Ketelaere, who calmly slotted his finish between Donnarumma's legs.

However Roberto Martinez's side could not find the goal which would have taken the match to extra-time.

"The way we reacted to going 1-0 down after what happened against France I thought the team had a real strong personality to keep playing," said Martinez.

"We hit the crossbar, once the post

and with all due respects the penalty for me is a decision that's not deserved ... but we cannot concede five goals in two games and we can't concede two penalties, even if the decisions were not correct."

World champions France face Spain in the final at the San Siro in Milan later on Sunday. AFP

# Tura, Chepngetich win at 43rd Chicago Marathon

ETHIOPIA'S Seifu Tura won the men's title and reigning world champion Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya cap-

tured the women's crown in her US debut on Sunday at the 43rd Chicago Marathon.

The 26.2-mile event was

canceled by Covid-19 last year but runners were back after 728 days on a flat course through the streets of the "Windy City" in warm and breezy conditions.

Tura, who didn't qualify for his homeland's Tokyo Olympic squad, pulled away late to take the victory in 2hrs 6mins 12secs with American Galen Rupp second, 23 seconds adrift, and Kenya's Eric Kiptanui third in 2:06:51.

Tura, who was sixth at Chicago in 2019, won the 2018 Shanghai and Milan titles and was fourth at Milan in May in 2:04:29.

"I'm very happy to have won here in Chicago," Tura said. "I prepared for more than three months for this race. If it hadn't

been for the heat I was hoping to run a personal best time."

Chepngetich grabbed the lead from the start and won for the fifth time in six marathon starts in 2:22:31, defeating American runner-up Emma Bates by 1:49 with American Sara Hall third in 2:27:19.

"The race was good but it was not easy," Chepngetich said. "I pushed alone from the 10k. The weather was nice. I believed in myself and I was fortunate and I pushed myself."

By 10km, Chepngetich had stretched her lead over Kenyan Vivian Kiplagat, who finished fifth, to 27 seconds with no one else within two minutes.

She moved past a male pacer after 40 minutes, reached the midpoint in 1:07:34, 76 seconds

ahead of Kiplagat, and was comfortably ahead to the end.

"I just pushed myself," Chepngetich said. "I didn't look back. I just pushed forward to the finish line. I was feeling strong but I could feel it in my legs."

Chepngetich, 27, set a world half-marathon record of 1:04:02 in April at Istanbul and her marathon best of 2:17:08 to win at Dubai in 2019 makes her the fourth-fastest woman in history at the distance.

Spectators lined the downtown streets as a lead pack of 11 opened a quick gap in the men's race, trimming to seven after 10km.

The seven were together at the halfway mark at 1:02:29 and stayed tight until just

before mile 24 when Tura, Rupp and Kiptanui picked up the pace.

Tura surged again starting the 25th mile to open a gap on his nearest rivals and Rupp could not overtake him down the stretch.

"I just didn't quite have it at the end," Rupp said. "He ran an unbelievable race."

Chicago 2017 champion Rupp, who was third at the Rio Olympics and eighth at the Tokyo Olympics, called the result "a step in the right direction".

Daniel Romanchuk won his third consecutive Chicago Marathon men's wheelchair crown while fellow American Tatyana McFadden took the women's title for a ninth time. AFP



Ethiopia's Seifu Tura Abdiwak reacts as he wins the Elite Men's 2021 Bank of America Chicago Marathon on Sunday. AFP

# Silverwood praises Root's influence

ENGLAND head coach Chris Silverwood believes Joe Root's leadership played a key role in ensuring he could select the strongest possible squad for the Ashes tour to Australia.

For several months it seemed possible the Ashes would be cancelled due to the concerns of England's players and their families about Australia's tough coronavirus quarantine rules.

England vice-captain Jos Buttler was among the senior players to express doubts about taking part in the series, which starts in Brisbane on December 8.

But Silverwood said Test skipper Root's compassionate, diplomatic approach helped get the players to buy into the tour eventually.

When Silverwood revealed England's 17-man Ashes squad on Sunday, there were no objectors or opt-outs from the list.

"There were a lot of negotiations that went on and one thing we did see was a lot of class from our captain. He really did lead from the front," Silverwood said.

"I can't emphasise enough how classy he was within those negotiations and the

way he listened to both sides of the argument.

"He showed a lot of empathy and a lot of really good leadership skills to get the players to this point. His players have got behind him and will follow him, so will I and my staff."

"What it has done, I think, is galvanise his position as a leader. All the boys have recognised that, all my staff have recognised that and it has made us all pull in behind him."

England's star all-rounder Ben Stokes remains on an indefinite break from cricket while he prioritises his mental health and

recovers from a finger injury.

There appears to be some logistical wriggle room for Stokes to join up with the Ashes squad as a late arrival.

But, considering the sensitivity of his situation, Silverwood refused to give any indication if that could happen.

"There will be no pressure from me for him to rush back. When Ben is ready, he'll give me a call and then we'll cross that bridge when we come to it," he said.

"My first intent is to make sure he's OK from a well-being point of view." AFP



England's captain Joe Root attends a team practice session ahead of the fifth cricket Test match against India at Old Trafford in Manchester on September 8. AFP

# Sport

## Mbappe fires France to win Nations League

**K**YLIAN Mbappe fired France to Nations League glory on Sunday after netting the winner which completed a comeback from a goal down to beat Spain 2-1 in Milan.

Mbappe struck with 10 minutes remaining to win the title for world champions France after Karim Benzema had levelled just two minutes after Mikel Oyarzabal put Spain into a 64th-minute lead.

The win will ease some of the pain created by an early exit from Euro 2020 at the hands of Switzerland and highlighted just how powerful France are going forward.

"I really wanted to win a trophy with France, and now it's done," said Benzema, who returned the France fold ahead of the Euro, to M6.

"We showed strength of character, because this team is very strong, never gives up and we have proven it today.

"It is the sign of a great team not to panic, to be patient and to wait for the right opportunity."

Les Bleus came out on top of a match at the San Siro which came to life after Oyarzabal slid home the opener.

As well as the two goals from their superstar attackers, France had other opportunities to score through Mbappe before a frantic finish in which Spain launched an assault on the French goal.

Didier Deschamps can thank Hugo Lloris the match didn't go into extra-time after the France captain pulled off a fine stoppage time save to deny Yeremi Pino a late leveller.

### France ease the pain

Earlier Italy took third place after beating Belgium 2-1 in Turin through goals from Nicolo Barella and Domenico Berardi.

France started the strongest and should have been ahead with five min-



French players celebrate with the trophy at the end of the Nations League final football match against Spain at San Siro stadium in Milan on Sunday. AFP

utes on the clock when Benzema was put through perfectly by Paul Pogba.

The Real Madrid striker tried to dribble around Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon but went too far wide and ended up aimlessly hitting a low pass across goal which was easily cut out by Cesar Azpilicueta.

Two minutes later a lightning passing move led to Aymeric Laporte, playing against the country of his birth for the first time since obtaining Spanish nationality, cutting out a low cross.

There was little more in the way of goalmouth incident in the opening period as Spain held off France's attacking by keeping a stranglehold on possession – 64 per cent in the first half.

A previously niggly contest suddenly got going in the 63rd minute when a sweeping French passing move started by Benjamin Pavard ended with Theo Hernandez smashing a first-time finish against the crossbar.

Just seconds later Spain took the

lead through Oyarzabal, who swept home a precision left-foot finish to the delight of the Spanish fans gathered behind that goal.

However no sooner had those supporters stopped celebrating than France were level through Benzema, who curled home an outstanding strike after being fed by Mbappe.

Mbappe then had two chances in quick succession to put France head, first chipping way over with Simon off his line in the 68th minute and then hitting a tame shot at the

Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper after being set up by Benzema.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward had his goal with 10 minutes remaining though, outfoxing Simon with some deft footwork before slotting home after being set free by Theo Hernandez.

Spain responded by going all out for the equaliser, but Lloris first palmed away a Oyarzabal volley in the 90th minute and then got his hand to Pino's strike to ensure the trophy went to Paris. AFP

## World Cup in 2022 'will be my last', says Neymar

BRAZIL star Neymar said on Sunday that the 2022 World Cup will be his last as he "doesn't have the strength to put up with more football".

"I think it will be my last World Cup," the 29-year-old told DAZN.

"I will play it like it is the last because I don't know if I will still have the mental strength to put up with even more football."

Neymar, who has played in two World Cups and is his country's second top scorer of all time behind Pele, will be 34 when the 2026 tournament rolls around.

"I will do everything to get to the 2022 World Cup in great shape and will do everything to win for my country, to fulfill my biggest dream since I was little," added the Paris Saint-Germain star.

Neymar played in the 2014 World Cup on home soil and scored four goals.

However, he was to suffer a back injury before Brazil were humiliated 7-1 by Germany in the semi-finals.

Four years later, in Russia,

Brazil were knocked out by Belgium in the quarter-finals.

So far, his international honours have been limited to the 2013 Confederations Cup and an Olympic gold medal in Rio in 2016.

Injury ruled him out of the 2019 Copa America which Brazil won as well as the 2021 edition where Argentina triumphed in the final.

Brazil are comfortably placed to reach the 2022 World Cup in Qatar having won all nine of their qualifiers in the South American region so far. AFP



Brazil's Neymar (right) vie for the ball during the South American qualification football match for the FIFA World Cup on Sunday. AFP

## Bottas wins season's 1st Grand Prix

MERCEDES driver Valtteri Bottas claimed his first chequered flag of the season to win the Turkish Grand Prix on Sunday as Max Verstappen reclaimed the lead in the title race.

The Red Bull driver finished second to take a six-point lead in the championship ahead of Lewis Hamilton who finished fifth voicing frustration with his Mercedes' team strategy.

"From my side, probably one of the best races I've ever had," said Bottas after his 11th career win.

Sergio Perez, in the other Red Bull, took third with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in fourth.

"It wasn't easy today," said Verstappen.

"The track was very greasy, we had to manage the tyres the whole race so couldn't really push.

"Just seemed Valtteri had a bit more pace, could look after the tyres all race. Happy to finish second in these conditions, it's easy to get it wrong so you drop back."

Hamilton was quickest in qualifying but had to start the race in 11th because of a grid penalty incurred for changing his engine.

The seven-time champion gained two places on the opening lap before picking his way up to fifth where he was held up by Perez, the two of them dicing at the end of lap 35 in some classic wheel-to-wheel racing.

As the other cars came in to change their

tyres Hamilton stayed out, moving up to third and looking good for the podium.

Hamilton declined the initial call to come in for fresh tyres but finally acceded to the Mercedes team instructions, boxing eight laps from the end.

It cost Hamilton two places as Perez and Leclerc flew on ahead and the Englishman did not hide his frustration over the radio.

### 'Shouldnt have come in'

"We shouldn't have come in. Massive graining man. I told you," an angry Hamilton said to his team as he struggled to hold off Pierre Gasly in the AlphaTauri.

A disgruntled Hamilton later pointed out Alpine's Esteban Ocon made it round with one set of tyres, intimating that he could have stayed out.

"When you come in with eight laps to go you don't have time to go through the graining of that medium tyre on a drying track. So I went through this sliding phase where I nearly lost almost lost more positions."

Although the rain eased by the start of the race, the wet conditions prevailed throughout, making the tactics around tyres and the timing of pit stops all the more important.

Bottas began from pole, avoiding a tangle between Pierre Gasly and Fernando Alonso on the opening lap, and led until pitting on the 38th lap of the 58-lap race.

That gave Leclerc the lead but as his tyres faded so did his pace and the Finn soon reclaimed the lead, going on to take his 11th Grand Prix victory and his first win since Russia over a year ago.

"It's been a while. Feels good," said Bottas who is leaving Mercedes at the end of the season to join Alfa Romeo.

"It is not easy to choose the strategy here with these conditions and when to stop and which tyre but I'm glad everything went smooth for once for me.

"When only one drying line, it doesn't need much to go off. I definitely needed to focus all through the race. A difficult one, but feels like a well-earned victory."

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff, who has recruited George Russell to replace Bottas next season, was thrilled with the performance of his current number two.

"Absolute dominant drive from him from the get go," he said. "He had it absolutely under control. Ten out of ten for me."

Verstappen, who began the race two points behind Hamilton in the title race, made no attempt to challenge Bottas and focussed on a damage limitation exercise, content to ease home second knowing that Hamilton was three places further back.

There are six races left in the season with the United States Grand Prix in Texas on October 24 next on the schedule. AFP