



Special Council Meeting to be Convened on July 27, 2021



A Special CACCI Council Meeting will be convened on July 27 at 2:00 PM, Taipei time.

To be chaired by CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi and attended by key representatives of CACCI Primary Members, the special meeting is being called to primarily review and comment on the final draft of the CACCI study on “Resurrecting the World Trading System”, and more importantly, to finalize and approve the accompanying CACCI Policy Statement (based on the full study) to be signed by all Council members and the three-page media statement.

Copies of the discussion papers and other relevant information (e.g., meeting link, updates, etc.) have been sent to all CACCI Council members prior to the meeting.

Once approved, the full CACCI Study and the CACCI Policy Statement will be published and will be launched through a series of events in and outside the region.

CACCI and ICC-WCF to hold webinar on Chambers Connect platform



The International Chambers of Commerce World Chambers Federation (ICC-WCF) is set to conduct a webinar on the Chambers Connect platform scheduled on July 28, 2021, at 10 AM CEST.

To be held jointly with CACCI, the webinar is exclusively dedicated to CACCI chamber members and is primarily aimed at introducing the features of Chambers Connect, ICC WCF’s online community platform exclusively for chambers of commerce worldwide to and guide your first steps on the platform. This new tool aims to support ICC WCF in its work to unite the global chamber network.

Executives from the CACCI Secretariat will join the webinar to introduce CACCI’s chamber space and share their experience in using Chambers Connect.

Interested members can register [here](#). Once you have registered, you shall receive an automatic email containing the details and link to join the webinar.

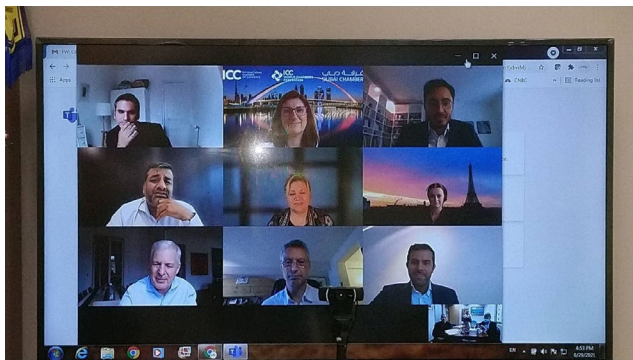
For any further questions in this regard, please contact the Chambers Connect Team at chambersconnect@iccwbo.org.

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CACCI President Meets with ICC Secretary General



CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi, along with executives of the CACCI Secretariat, on June 29 met with Mr. John Denton, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and members of ICC staff. Mr. Modi and Mr. Denton discussed possible areas of future cooperation that would further strengthen their working relationships that formally started when the two organizations signed a Memorandum of Agreement way back in 1984. Mr. Modi also took the opportunity to solicit the support of ICC in the ongoing study being undertaken by CACCI on “Resurrecting the World Trading System.” The two leaders agreed to conduct follow-up meetings in the months ahead.

CACCI Steering Committee on “Resurrecting the World Trading System” study holds seventh meeting

The Steering Committee for the CACCI Study on “Resurrecting the World Trading System” held their seventh virtual meeting on June 29, 2021, with the discussions led by CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi.

During the meeting, Dr. Andrew Stoeckel noted that the issue of mission creep has been taking place not just in the WTO but in other organizations as well; that digital trade issues are broader than commerce; and that there is a need for CACCI to ask whether we have got the right organizations to deal with the right issues and how they are addressing them.

Mr. Peter McMullin suggested the issuance of a shorter version of the CACCI Policy Statement that will be easier for the busy businessmen members of CACCI to read and comment on, or as Mr. Ken Court suggested, a two-page media release that can be disseminated to the media for easier publication.

Dr. Pedram Soltani suggested that the CACCI study should also take into consideration, if possible, the differences in the interests and concerns between less developed countries and the advanced countries, particularly with respect to the issues of Preferential Trade Agreements versus Multilateralism and the differences in parameters for the country of origin.

Ambassador Benedicto Yujuico raised some issues which he said he was hoping to see being addressed in the CACCI study. These include: (a) The dominant role of China in the world economy in the future; (b) the controversial issue of trade sanctions imposed by certain countries on other economies; and the printing of money by the United States. He said that these issues will draw the interest of businessmen.

Mr. Bryan Clark suggested the issuance of a one or two-page summary to be sent to the media and other organizations. He also discussed his proposal on the publication of the study, suggesting the need to have a digital version as well as a few hard copies.

Amb. Yujuico proposed that, in order to further raise the profile of CACCI, the possibility of organizing a hybrid Business Conference should be explored that would draw participants – businessmen, government officials, and academics – from other countries in the world. This, he said, could be done later this year

or in the near future.

Mr. Sheikh Fazle Fahim informed the meeting that his Chamber has sent copies of the CACCI study to the government ministers and research institutions in Bangladesh for comments, and to be conveyed to the WTO through the country’s mission in the WTO headquarters in Geneva. He said that he would send to Dr. Stoeckel and other Steering Committee members the feedback he would receive from these institutions. He also underscored the need for the study to officially approved by the CACCI Council so that it would be construed as an official position of the Confederation, which his Chamber can formally present to his country’s mission in the WTO.

The Steering Committee agreed to schedule the Special CACCI Council Meeting on July 27, 2021.

YEGAP Executive Committee meets for visioning workshop

The CACCI Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia Pacific (YEGAP) held the fourth virtual meeting of its Executive Committee on July 7, 2021. The session continued the visioning workshop that was kicked off during the group’s last meeting on June 16.

Chaired by YEGAP Chairman Mr. Mangesh Lal Shrestha, it aimed to provide the Executive Committee members the opportunity to finalize the initial ideas that were previously discussed, with regard to the vision, the mission, the core values, and the proposed activities of YEGAP.

Mr. Lal Shrestha kicked off the meeting by first introducing the new members of the YEGAP Executive Committee, and providing them the opportunity for self-introduction. The new members were:

- Mr. Michael Lee, CEO of CreBiz, which is engaged in education and consulting, from South Korea
- Ms. Khulan Davaadorj, Director of Lhamour LLC,

which manufactures organic skincare products, from Mongolia

Going into the main discussion, the workshop focused on the following agenda items:

- Purpose, Mission, and Core Values
- Governance and Update on YEGAP By-Laws
- Strengths, Weaknesses, and Value Proposition of YEGAP
- Proposed Activities, Programs and Events of YEGAP
- Conclusion and Action Plan

Mr. Lal Shrestha presented to the Committee the proposed Purpose, Mission, and Core Values of YEGAP, which summarizes the suggestions and inputs put forward by the Committee during Workshop One. He also listed down his proposed goals, tagline, and theme for his 2021-2023 term, and invited them to give their comments and suggestions.

On the proposed vision statement, Mr. Nimol Meng from Cambodia suggested differentiating between vision and purpose statement, pointing out that vision should be the aspired long-term achievement. He noted that the current vision statement is more of a purpose statement, with similar wording as the mission statement.

Ms. Chorwathana Chhin from Cambodia observed that the proposed theme for 2021-2023 is too broad, and suggested making it more specific.

Mr. Lal Shrestha said that amendments would be made on the Proposed Vision, Mission, Core Values, Goals, Tagline, and Theme to take into account the foregoing comments and suggestions raised by members

Mr. Lal Shrestha then presented the proposed



organizational structure of YEGAP based on the updated By-Laws, pointing out amendments and additions with regard two categories of YEGAP EC members, terms of service of EC members, and a potential code of conduct.

Following this, the Committee members discussed what they believed were the strengths and weaknesses of YEGAP, and provided several suggestions as to the value proposition of YEGAP.

Mr. Lal Mangesh then presented the Proposed Goals and Proposed Activities of YEGAP, and informed the Committee of the need to form Committees that will be in-charge of achieving the goals and implementing the activities, and the envisioned objective and key results by 2021.

Initially, Mr. Lal Shrestha proposed creating six Committees, to be chaired by each of the six Vice Chairmen of the Executive Committee. The Committees would cover the following areas of activities:

- Learning & Networking
- Engagement, Branding & Communication
- Membership & Partnership Alliance
- Strategic Planning, Governance & By Laws
- Policy Advocacy
- Programs & Events

Mr. Lal Shrestha said he would request for volunteers from among the six Vice Chairmen to chair the Committee of his/her choice. If necessary, he would also assign the Committees to appropriate Vice Chairmen, depending on their area of expertise and/or interest.

Mr. Shrestha further presented a proposed timeline for the following tasks, culminating in the formal launch of YEGAP at this year's CACCI Conference.

CACCI publishes latest editions of Product & Service Council newsletters

CACCI recently published the latest editions of two Product and Service newsletters: the CACCI Newsletter on Tourism and the Grow Newsletter.

The Tourism Newsletter is the publication of the Asian Council on Tourism. The 24th volume, released in late June, highlights the trends, the latest news and interesting reports on tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, which include airline recovery, the future of travel, post-pandemic tourism, and eco-tourism, among others.

Grow is the publication of the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council. The 23rd volume was published this month and includes features on creating opportunities for women in the post-pandemic world, modern-day female empowerment, and migrant businesswomen.



CACCI, TaiwanICDF joint webinar discusses how SMEs adapt to new normal in the post-COVID-19 era



CACCI and the International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF), jointly conducted a webinar on the adaptation of the SMEs to the post-pandemic world on July 9, 2021 which attracted more than 400 views on the live broadcasting.

As a non-governmental organization granted consultative status under the United Nations (UN), CACCI has been actively involved in UN-related activities. TaiwanICDF has been a strategic partner of CACCI for years. It is dedicated to boosting socio-economic development, enhancing human resources and promoting economic relations in a range of developing partner countries. It also offers humanitarian assistance and provides aid in the event of natural disasters or international refugee crises.

In light of the 2021 UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) held on July 6-15, 2021, CACCI and TaiwanICDF joined hands to organize a webinar entitled: “Adaptation of SMEs with Innovative and Pragmatic Strategies in the New Normal” as a side event of the 2021 UN HLPF. The one-hour webinar invited stakeholders from the regional, national, and local aspects to share their insights and innovative solutions for the sustainable development and resilience of SMEs, and to explore how to build an enabling environment for SMEs development in the post COVID-19 era.

Moderated by Mr. George Abraham, Chairman of CACCI SME Development Council, the webinar started with Opening Remarks by CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi and TaiwanICDF Secretary General Amb. Timothy Hsiang. In their Remarks, both Mr. Modi and Amb. Hsiang recognized the importance of SMEs to the socio-economic development and emphasized the need to help them cope with the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. By so doing, we can also support the SDG goals that the UN has been encouraging and promoting around the world.

The HLPF side event webinar featured four panelists who provided their valuable insights on SME adaptation from different angles: (1) Mr. Suri Kathpalia, Former Managing Director of S&P, who shared his ideas on how to design supportive policies to help SMEs rebound beyond the COVID-19 crisis; (2) Mr. Alex Shyy, Deputy Secretary General, TaiwanICDF, who elaborated on how to catalyze cross-sector resources through the Official Development Aid (ODA) network for SMEs development; (3) Mr. Robert Kraybill, Managing Director and Chief Investment Officer, Impact Investment Exchange Singapore (IIX), who explained how micro-finance institutions provide solutions to advance SMEs; and (4) Ms. Jyoti Vij, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI, who made a presentation on how and what measures FICCI takes to create opportunities for SMEs in the changing environment.

In the Panel Discussion Session, Mr. Abraham led the panelists to take questions from the floor which included the cross-



CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi welcomes delegates who join the webinar to learn more about what can be done to help SMEs at the post-pandemic era.



TaiwanICDF Secretary General Amb. Timothy Hsiang expresses his appreciation to participants at his Opening Remarks.



Panelists take questions from the floor during the Panel Discussion which is chaired by Webinar Moderator Mr. George Abraham.

sector collaboration and good practices for the Asia-Pacific region.

To watch the first CACCI-TaiwanICDF joint webinar, interested parties may find the recording [here](#).

CACCI Invited to Support “Singapore International Energy Week 2021”

CACCI has been invited by the Energy Market Authority of Singapore (EMA) to support the Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) 2021 to be held on October 25-29 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Singapore.

Organized by the EMA, SIEW 2021 is a hybrid event with both onsite and online streaming elements. Featuring the theme of “Advancing the Energy Transition,” the five-day event is an annual platform for energy professionals and policymakers to discuss and share best practices and solutions within the global energy space. It aims to foster a robust exchange of views and perspectives among thought leaders and industry professionals in the energy industry, even as we adhere to safe



REGISTER NOW



management practices.

Anchor events at SIEW include the SIEW Opening Keynote (SOK) and Singapore Energy Summit (SES) which feature high-level keynotes and panel discussions around this year's theme. Other key events include the SIEW Energy Insights, SIEW Thinktank Roundtables and In Dialogue with Youth. SIEW partner

events, the Asia Clean Energy Summit, Asian Downstream Summit, and LNG & Hydrogen Gas Markets Asia provide an opportunity to focus in on industry-specific topics.

For more information on the event and online registration, please visit the official [website](https://www.siew.gov.sg).

News Update

SMEs face supply chain breakdown due to pandemic restrictions: CCC survey



A survey recently conducted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Centre for SMEs about small and medium enterprises operating during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Northern region of Sri Lanka indicated that the main issue faced by the SMEs is evidently the breakdown of their supply chain due to lockdowns and curfew.

In addition, majority of them face working capital problem as they do not receive payments for goods supplied and other income sources have declined. The curfew and lockdowns imposed constraints on disposable income affecting the business cycle. The relief measures taken by the Government did not create a swift cash flow into the hands of these SMEs and the vulnerable groups such as the daily wage earners.

The survey, which was done in March 2021 in four districts, is part of the project funded by a grant from the CACCI Foundation. Administered by the CCC Centre for SMEs, the project on “Business Continuity Support for COVID Affected SMEs, aimed to help affected SMEs in remodeling the business to survive and face new normal in post COVID 19 period (and sustain their businesses in the long run) through mainly focusing on the following activities:

- Conduct baseline survey and focus group discussions to understand the issues faced by SMEs to discuss key recommendations for a way forward
- Conduct of workshops to ensure awareness by SMEs

of the relevant services and business remodeling to seek the right opportunities for sustaining business operations

- Provide SME related services using CCC Centre for SMEs as a central point of reference with new website

Some of the key findings of the baseline survey include the following:

1. SMEs product diversification and value addition gives the opportunity to strengthen the businesses and their access to the export market could thereby present a viable solution to reduce risks.
2. The cash flow of business enterprises needs to be accelerated and major costs reduced, SMEs business recovery could be relatively fast.
3. The SME sectors should be aware of being directly affected by weak consumer demand to solve future problems that will originate as part of declining demand.
4. The SME sectors that source local raw materials and localized operations/resources SMEs have shown a good resilience to external shocks.
5. The enterprises which had established backward linkages in raw material supply has also been able to cushion the impact
6. Considerable SMEs in rural areas are in a positive mind and have high expectations to return to normal soon. However, there are many who need coaching and alternative business solutions

Based on the survey results, the Centre for SMEs recommended a unified effort to assist SMEs to revive businesses through:

1. Overall 360-degree business outlook and business model revisit that will be helpful on SMEs business continuity strategy and operations.
2. Coordinate to avoid duplication and to achieve resource optimization of Business Development Services
3. Develop a mechanism to provide on to one coaching and guiding sessions focused to generate working capital, revive supply chain and develop marketing links.



short as economies struggle to cope with the most recent waves of infections.

If countries in the region and globally can better coordinate their fiscal and monetary policies, the impact of their efforts will be greater than the sum of the individual parts – and each will be prepared to do more once neighbors are seen to be sharing the burden.

Once it is safe to do so, countries can consider opening travel bubbles, combined with proof of vaccination and testing requirements, to revive the tourism and hospitality industries. And once the recovery is in full swing, those economies facing labor shortages could look to bringing back workers from neighboring countries, while improving health and safety conditions to avoid any further outbreaks among these communities.

Such jobs, however, will depend in part on the revival of infrastructure investments. While public investment has only dropped marginally, private participation in infrastructure projects in East Asia – which was already low compared to other regions (at 2% versus an average of 20% for developing countries globally excluding China) – plunged 75% in 2020 compared to 2019.

Going forward, strong commitment will be needed from both the public and private sectors to expand sustainable infrastructure. This can be driven by a regional push to tap pools of private capital and debt that are seeking opportunities for green infrastructure investments with reasonable and secure returns, and by improving regional connectivity and logistics to reduce supply chain costs and improve efficiencies.

In addition to hard infrastructure, there is tremendous potential in the region for expanding efforts for nature-based solutions. These are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and degraded ecosystems – such as forests, mangroves, and wetlands – that can provide climate, human well-being, and biodiversity benefits.

Three, regional integration could be deepened. Early in the pandemic, there was much talk about the disruption of global value chains, as imports were interrupted and some countries faced shortages. World Bank research, by contrast, shows that close integration into global value chains reduced the vulnerability of East Asian economies during the pandemic and that the COVID-19 shock has in fact deepened the region's trade integration.

The opportunity now is to build on this, through reforms that would open up protected goods and services sectors to domestic and international competition. Countries like Indonesia, with its structural trade and investment reforms, and the Philippines, which has enhanced tax incentives and is considering liberalizing retail and other sectors, are already paving the way.

If countries can move quickly and move together to

3 ways Asia can recover from the COVID-19 pandemic faster

For decades, East Asia and the Pacific region sustained rapid economic growth while lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty. And through much of 2020, some countries in the region were a model for how to keep Covid-19 at bay. But now, as the prospect of a quick recovery from the global pandemic recedes, the region risks losing ground.

COVID-19 continues to buffet countries, hitting business and livelihoods and subjecting communities to a roller-coaster of lockdowns and re-openings. Economic growth, while reviving from the lows of 2020, is highly uneven across countries and across sectors. And vaccination roll-outs in some cases are moving slowly, hampered by supply shortages and logistical constraints.

It doesn't have to be this way. Working together could substantially accelerate the recovery in East Asia and the Pacific. There are three clear opportunities for collaboration.

One, ending the pandemic. The region can work together on vaccine production and deployment within a global context of greater supply and cooperation. Some countries, including Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, are already looking at expanding production capacity.

Increased coordination could allow for better matching of supply and demand and targeting to where needs are greatest. And this spirit of cooperation could be extended beyond vaccines to other critical supplies, such as personal protective equipment, masks, and testing kits.

Efforts can also be made to scale up knowledge and information-sharing, with a focus on best practices for containment, testing, and tracing. Such cooperation is far from unprecedented and could build on existing regional mechanisms, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' comprehensive COVID-19 recovery framework. The broader the efforts to end the pandemic, the quicker the entire region can reopen.

Second, collaboration is also needed in reviving the economy. Poverty has spiked in East Asia and the Pacific since early 2020 as entire sectors and industries, including tourism, remain shuttered. Governments have increased fiscal stimulus and social protection schemes, but these efforts have often fallen

cooperate on the supply and distribution of vaccines and other critical health supplies, on measures to revive the economy, and on policies to deepen the integration of the region, much of the international trust lost during the pandemic can be restored. Lives will be safer, and livelihoods will be secure. And East Asia and the Pacific can maintain its rightful place as one of the world's most dynamic, innovative, and interconnected regions.

World Bank Blogs

PCCI, Israel to explore Agriculture Cooperation



The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Israel are currently exploring possible areas of cooperation in a bid to help strengthen the Philippine agriculture sector.

The PCCI and the Israel Economic and Commercial Mission to the Philippines on Wednesday conducted the Philippines-Israel AgroTech Business Forum and Business to Business Sessions to explore potential business cooperation and joint ventures with Israel's leading agrotech companies.

PCCI President Benedicto Yujuico said the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic reinforced PCCI's resolve to vigorously advance the country's agriculture sector through innovation by tapping international networks. "Israel and Philippines share a deep and solid relation share a deep and solid relation in economic, cultural, and people-to-people linkages," he said.

Yujuico said the agrotech business forum is part of the PCCI and Israel's mission to jointly undertake a series of pitching sessions on agrotech and information and communications technology sectors to broaden bilateral interactions.

The forum zeroed in on specific technologies for collation with Israeli companies which include drip irrigation for fruits, dairy farming, fisheries and aquaculture, detection of African swine fever, and dairy farming. "These are critical items most especially today, which will have a great impact on the resilience and survival of Filipino farmers and fisherfolks," said Yujuico.

Israeli Ambassador to the Philippines Rafael Harpaz, for his part, said Israel has a long history of activities in the Philippines, especially in the agriculture sector. These include providing agriculture training for thousands of Filipinos, on the job training program for Filipino students who get to spend a year working in agriculture institutions in Israel.

"Israel is the one that introduced drip irrigation to the Philippines, solar energy, greenhouses, hydroponic, a lot of

technologies were brought in by Israelis, there's a long-standing activity of Israeli companies, when it comes to the Philippines of these areas," said Harpaz.

Harpaz said that quarantine restrictions are lifted, he is hoping to see Israeli companies visiting the Philippines to discuss possible business opportunities.

The Manila Times

Online commerce industry to touch \$188 billion by 2025: FICCI



The online commerce industry is projected to reach \$188 billion in 2025 from \$64 billion last year, with growing consumer preference to buy on the digital marketplace, according to a report by FICCI.

The report "A progressive shift from transactions to trust", released on July 7, said "Now, consumers are no longer turning to online commerce as an alternative buying channel – its massive growth, projected to reach \$188 billion in 2025 from \$64 billion in 2020, is signaling to its solidification as the default, primary buying channel for many."

Addressing the inaugural session on Building Customer Trust in a Pandemic Era at the Customer Trust Summit 2021, Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan said that trust and transparency have never been more important than now.

Elaborating on how brands and companies can provide experiences that meet customers' needs during these stressful times, Nandan said the various initiatives of the BIS are focused on industry needs.

"There is a need for a continuous dialogue with the industry players and BIS and to understand what it is that they are doing in the area of creating a quality ecosystem."

Nandan also spoke about the role of government to protect the interest and changing nature of the transaction in the country. "Our goal is to continue to focus on a consumer-centric approach to developing innovative newer products and solutions," she said.

The government, Nandan noted, will fail in its task if it is unable to make an ecosystem of competition so that the right value of goods and services can be offered to the consumers.

The Consumer Protection Act has opened up avenues for consumers in such a way that it is of benefit to the industries as well, the secretary said. "Our ultimate objective is that the consumer must be able to exercise their choices and that is when the country will be able to grow, as consumption is key for the vibrant economy to be in place," she said.

"If we keep our end of the bargain, satisfy the consumer needs, and adhere to genuine grievances and respond within time, we will retain the trust of the consumers," the secretary added.

The Hindu Business Line

FPCCI welcomes joint ventures with Uzbekistan worth billions



**THE FEDERATION OF PAKISTAN
CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) welcomed the signing of business-to-business joint ventures between the private sectors of Pakistan and Uzbekistan, a statement said on July 19.

FPCCI president Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo said that the memoranda of understanding were signed in pharmaceuticals, textiles, leather, petrochemicals and agriculture sectors, it added.

Maggo thanked Sardor Umurzakov, deputy prime minister of Uzbekistan and minister for investments and foreign trade and Ikramov Adham Ilkhamovich, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan for their hospitality and their effective role in making his and other business leaders' visit a success.

Maggo acknowledged their efforts in productively connecting businessmen of the two countries. The MoUs signed with the Uzbek businesses and corporates will translate into billions of rupees of economic activity and will be a win-win situation for both sides.

Most of the MoUs have been signed in industrial and labour-intensive sectors and will create a lot of jobs, he said, adding that the entourage of the business leaders accompanying the prime minister comprised of over 100 top businessmen, traders and industrialists from Pakistan, which showed the willingness of the Pakistani businessmen to expand and cement the business relations with the brotherly country.

Maggo also discussed the upcoming preferential trade agreement (PTA), expected to be signed in September 2021 –and stressed the need to take the FPCCI onboard for being the apex representative business, industry and trade body of Pakistan.

FPCCI is looking forward to working in close coordination with the Uzbek business and industry leaders to tap the real potential of trade, investment and joint ventures between the two countries, he added.

Bol News



parcel delivery to new robot tech. The deadline for applications is on September 24.

Contest details are available on the official [website](#).

New company launches in Turkey soar in June

A total of 9,560 new companies were established in Turkey in June, up 113.4% on a monthly basis, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) said on July 16.



Some 1,226 companies went out of business last month, up 120% from the previous month, according to data released by TOBB. It said 85.8% of the new firms were limited companies and 12.9% were joint-stock companies.

The top three fields of operation among new companies were wholesale and retail trade, construction and manufacturing.

In June, 1,293 companies with foreign partners were established. A majority of the new companies, 39.7%, opened in Istanbul, followed by 9.4% in the capital Ankara, and 6.7% in the Aegean province of Izmir.

During the month, 120 cooperatives were also launched, according to the data. A total of 54,669 new companies were set up in Turkey over the first six months of this year, marking a 24.9% annual rise.

In this period, 5,433 companies were liquidated, a 5.5% decrease compared to the first six months of 2020.

Hurriyet Daily News

KCCI contest for new biz ideas gains heat upon promise of startup, equity stake

An open contest for new business ideas sponsored by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has gained heat after the business group, backed by high-tech and contents companies, promised up to 4.5% stake in a new company to be set up based on the winning ideas plus prize money of 229 million won (\$202,744).

The contest already has received over 400 bids since mid-June, with proposals for innovations ranging from eco-friendly

VCCI and KITA host business forum

The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Korea International Trade Association (KITA) hosted the Vietnam-Korea Business Forum on July 8.

The livestreamed event was held under the theme of "Korea-Vietnam Cooperation for Sustainable Future," and discussions and presentations on the cooperation of the two countries in communication, smart city, electric power, new renewable energy and educational technology were carried out.

KITA Vice Chairman Lee Gwan-seop stated in his opening speech, "Since the bilateral relationship upgraded to



a 'strategic partnership' in 2009, cooperative efforts of the two countries have been accelerating in various fields," and added, "People-to-people exchanges between the two countries reached 5 million every year before the outbreak of COVID-19, which was the most active among ASEAN countries." He also mentioned, "I hope that bilateral cooperation will further expand in the future based on the mutually complementary economic structure as well as robust trade volumes."

Vice President Hoang Quang Phong of Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry said, "South Korea is an important economic partner as it established itself as Vietnam's third-largest trading partner and second-largest importer in 2020," and added, "The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry will continue to make efforts to expand trade and investment between the two countries."

President Bark Tae-ho of Lee & Ko Global Commerce Institute stated in his keynote speech, "Since the Korea-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force in 2015, trade between the two countries has become more active, and Korean companies' investment in Vietnam has expanded significantly," and added, "Recently, the reorganization of the global supply chain caused by the US-China trade dispute and the COVID-19 pandemic is speeding up and South Korea and Vietnam need to be prepared for the change through cooperation."

Hyun Jun-woo, Vice President of Visang Edtech Company, said, "Vietnam is a market with numerous education-conscious citizens like South Korea. In particular, they are highly interested in English education and the demand for edutech service, which combines South Korea's high-quality educational content with various educational experiences, will continue to increase."

The Star



specialized committees gathered on July 4 to prepare a proposal package for the next government in which the demands of the private sector in various areas would be presented.

It was decided in this meeting that the mentioned package would be prepared and published in two sections covering macroeconomics and more detailed areas such as industry, mining, agriculture, tourism, etc.

The need to joint regional treaties, downsize the government, maintain economic security by stabilizing laws and regulations, and trying to strengthen the ICCIMA position in the economy by relying on its members were among the most important points emphasized by the heads of the mentioned committees.

In this meeting, Mohammadreza Ansari, ICCIMA deputy head, pointed to the chamber's expert views on the country's economic situation and offering specific executive strategies to solve the existing challenges as an important step and called on the heads of the ICCIMA specialized committees to take this proposal package seriously.

Further in the meeting, the attendees offered various proposals for resolving the country's current economic issues and the viewpoints were collected to be included in the mentioned proposal package to be reviewed and finalized.

Back in May, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie had stated that the private sector's expectations from the next government will be prepared in the form of a proposal package, during the 14th meeting of the ICCIMA board of directors.

According to Shafeie, from the perspective of the private sector, the first priority of the future President should be to accelerate the country's economic growth in a sustainable, stable, and comprehensive manner.

Iran's presidential elections were held on June 18, and Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi was elected as the country's next president.

Tehran Times

Heads of ICCIMA committees call on next government to focus on regional treaties

The heads of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s specialized committees have called on the next government to focus on privatization and joining regional treaties as a priority in its economic planning.

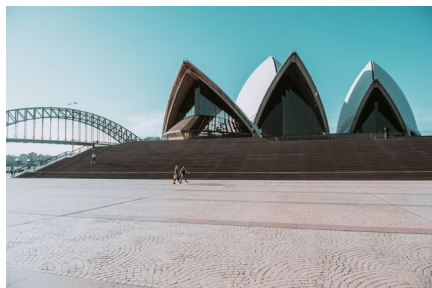
As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the head of ICCIMA's

Business support package will save jobs and livelihoods: ACCI

As the COVID crisis in Greater Sydney deepens, the Australian Federal Government's joint assistance package with the NSW Government offers a very timely lifeline to thousands of businesses forced to close their doors or significantly reduce trading in the current lockdown.

"So many SMEs who fought to stay in business in 2020 are back to square one as a result of this crisis," acting ACCI CEO Jenny Lambert said.

News Update



“Today’s additional support package, extending the national disaster payment scheme and increasing the payment for extended lockdowns, as well as providing businesses with a cashflow boost of up to \$10,000 per week, will save jobs and help protect livelihoods,” Lambert said.

“The increase of disaster payments

to \$600 for workers in an extended lockdown is vital as each week that goes by makes it harder for people to cover their essential expenses.”

“The cashflow boost provides crucial support to embattled businesses struggling to pay bills and survive the forced lockdown period. The payments are available to businesses experiencing a decrease in revenue of 30% or more.”

“Importantly, to access this support businesses are required to maintain their headcount, which offers security for workers and will enable businesses to quickly re-establish their workforce and get back to work immediately when the lockdown ends.”

ACCI’s state affiliate, Business NSW, has found revenue declined at a

greater rate for business in the first two weeks of the current lockdown compared to the first month of the initial lockdown in March 2020.

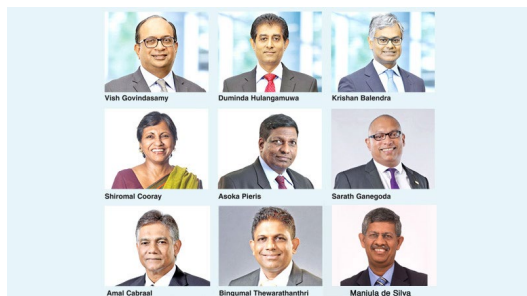
“The Federal and State Governments collaborating on an approach that deals with extended lockdowns is not just important for Sydney now, but what may still happen in any city or region across Australia until vaccination rates change the restriction choices available to government,” Lambert said.

“The Sydney outbreak, and the Melbourne outbreak before it, confirmed the need for consistent and comprehensive measures for businesses during extended lockdowns which is best delivered by joint action by State and Federal Governments.”

ACCI Media Release

Member Personalities

Vish Govindasamy elected Chairman Ceylon Chamber of Commerce



The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce elected Vish Govindasamy as its Chairman during the Chamber’s 182nd Annual General Meeting on June 29. Govindasamy succeeds Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya, who completed his 2-Year Term as Chairman at the culmination of the Annual General Meeting. He is the first Chairman to have taken over this role virtually in its 183-year history of the Chamber.

Vish Govindasamy serves in the capacity of Managing Director of Sunshine Holdings PLC, a diversified conglomerate listed in the Colombo Stock Exchange, Sri Lanka. Prior to this, he was the CEO of Watawala Plantations, where he was instrumental in turning the company around and leading it to become the highest capitalised regional plantation company in the Colombo Stock Exchange.

Newly appointed Chairman Vish Govindasamy said: “I look forward to working with the Board, Committee and Secretariat at the Chamber, members and affiliated associations of the Chamber to support and advance the causes of the private sector while adopting a nation first approach. The Chamber is

called upon to be the clarion voice of the private sector – a voice which is non-partisan, and which is raised solely in the interest of Sri Lanka. I intend to continue the approach for this great institution.”

Duminda Hulangamuwa, Senior Partner and Head of Tax at Ernst & Young and Krishan Balendra, Chairman of John Keells Holdings PLC were appointed as Vice Chairperson and Deputy Vice Chairperson respectively.

Additionally, Shiromal Cooray, Chairperson and Managing Director, Jetwing Travels and Chairperson, Jetwing Hotels, Asoka Pieris, Managing Director of Cargills Food Company Ltd and Director of Cargills (Ceylon) PLC and Mr. Manjula de Silva, Secretary General and CEO of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce were re-elected to the Board of the Ceylon Chamber.

Sarath Ganegoda - Group Executive Director, Hayleys PLC, Amal Cabraal – Chairman, Lion Brewery Ceylon PLC and Chairman, Ceylon Beverage Holdings PLC and Bingumal Thewerathanthri – CEO, Standard Chartered Bank PLC were elected as three new members to the Board.

Daily News

ACCI appoints new CEO

The President and Board of the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ACCI) are pleased to announce Andrew McKellar as ACCI’s new Chief Executive Officer, effective

Member Personalities



August 9, 2021.

“Andrew comes to ACCI with a strong background in industry associations both in Australia and globally. He is currently CEO of the Australian Trucking Association and, prior to this, he was Secretary General for Automobile Mobility and Tourism at the Federation International de l’Automobile in

Paris,” ACCI President Ray Sputore said.

“Before his departure overseas, Andrew was the CEO of the Australian Automobile Association and spent ten years with the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, first as Director of Government Policy, and then as CEO.”

“Andrew also brings to ACCI experience from a range of

policy and government appointments including as a parliamentary advisor and also from the Commonwealth public service in Treasury, PM&C and the ABARE.

“With all state and territory chambers and more than 80 national industry associations as members, ACCI is the largest representative business group in Australia. Andrew’s extensive range of skills and experiences will bring tremendous value to our organisation and ensure business is represented by a strong advocate.”

“The ACCI Board is very enthusiastic about this new appointment and looks forward to Andrew’s strong leadership taking our organisation forward.

“We also acknowledge the committed contribution made to ACCI by Jenny Lambert as its acting CEO since January, a role she will continue to perform until Andrew starts in August.”

Mirage News

Special Features

How employers can reduce the social anxiety of returning to work

By Jennifer Wild, University of Oxford

Many people are suffering social anxiety at the thought of having to go back to the office — after COVID-19 forced millions into a work-from-home lifestyle. We asked Dr. Jennifer Wild, a psychological scientist at the University of Oxford with expertise in risk and resilience, for guidance for employers as to how to handle this as employees start to return to offices.

WILD: It’s important for employers to recognize that some people may feel anxious about returning to the office because they have worries about social interactions after being in lockdown for such a long time.

Employers can normalize this feeling and encourage informal catch-ups, such as creating spaces where people can get together and start to socially mix as they did beforehand.

It may also help to include an informal catch up in meetings, such as taking a few minutes at the outset to ask team members what’s new and good with them.

Encouraging a Catchup Before Meetings

When people feel socially anxious, they have anxiety and fears about how they will come across to others. If it’s really severe, social anxiety can end up causing people to under-perform at school and work and can affect life decisions.

When people are socially anxious, their attention shifts to their feelings and fears of how they think they’ll come across to others. They may look down or avoid eye contact, all of which makes it difficult to accurately process how people are really



responding to them.

One of the things that can help is to use the awareness of feeling self-conscious as a cue to look up and around. It becomes easier to discover that people are responding in a kind and friendly way. That’s something that an individual can do to help with their social anxiety.

BRINK: *If someone feels too anxious to be in a meeting in person, should they join by Zoom instead?*

WILD: My advice is that if somebody is feeling anxious about a meeting and is feeling a pull to join by Zoom, then they actually should join in-person, because it’s only through joining in-person that they will discover that people aren’t judging them negatively and their fears don’t happen.

If you join on Zoom and you’re feeling quite self-conscious, there’s a risk your focus will shift to monitoring how you are coming across and you won’t actually process what’s on your screen, meaning you won’t get good information about how people are really responding to you.

More often than not, people are kind and friendly, but we don’t discover this when we are monitoring ourselves and how we’re coming across.

Try to Join in Person

BRINK: *So your advice is to try to re-engage if at all possible, because that will help the process of getting back.*

WILD: Yes. It’s important to be really clear about what you’re worried will happen when you see colleagues again. If you

Special Features

go into work and you have a meeting with colleagues, be really specific. What do you think will happen?

Then look up and around, drop any sort of efforts to come across well and get really lost in the conversations. Afterward, ask yourself, did your fears come true? Did people reject you? Behave in such a way to suggest they were judging you negatively? Focus on what ways they were friendly and inclusive. This idea of putting our fears to the test is really one of the best ways we can overcome social anxiety.

BRINK: Are you finding that people have lost some level of social skills after a year in lockdown?

WILD: That's really hard to answer because many of us still have a high degree of social interactions, they've just taken place online.

I don't think social skills have become worse because of lockdown. I just think that it's been easier to avoid socializing during lockdown. So if you have a propensity to social anxiety and we're in lockdown, it's much easier to avoid interacting with people because you can turn your camera off on Zoom and do many things that require interacting with others, such as shopping, by using the internet.

Fear of Returning to Public Speaking

BRINK: You have been advising the university and other organizations on the return to work. What concerns have you been encountering?

WILD: There have been three concerns. One has been anxiety about catching COVID, which obviously will be addressed with the vaccine. The other concern that's come up is a fear of public speaking. So having to do talks with people in the same room. And the third concern is about whether or not people will be able to maintain a work-life balance once they start commuting again.

When people have been doing talks by Zoom, perhaps they've been able to have more notes around them to help jog their memory of the kinds of things that they want to convey in the talk. But when they return to doing public speaking, a presentation in a meeting or in a lecture theater, they won't necessarily have those prompts stuck all over their computer or on their desk, which may increase anxiety about forgetting what they want to say.

Focus on Facts, Not Feelings

I've run through several tools with employers and employees that are covered in my book *Be Extraordinary* that can help. The first is to "Focus on Facts, Not Feelings." When we have a worry or we're anxious about something, try to focus on facts rather than how anxious we're feeling.

The next tool is called "Then Versus Now." That's really about breaking the link between the present and the past. People who have unwanted memories of past difficult social interactions perhaps experienced lockdown, for example, really focusing on what's going on in their office environment today and how this is different to their memory. This practice can help to unhook the present from the past.

The next tool is called the "Three Minute Carrot," which helps us to overcome avoidance. It's about people starting a task

that they have been avoiding and giving themselves permission to try the task or activity for three minutes and then reevaluating whether or not to carry on or stop. Three minutes of doing a task is usually enough to get started. And once you've started, this gives a breath of success — and release of dopamine, the feel-good factor — which can motivate you to keep going.

Plan Something Pleasurable

The next tool is "Planning Ahead," which involves planning your next day in half hour chunks, assigning tasks to each half hour and including an enjoyable activity at some point during the day. The research shows that this tool dramatically reduces psychological distress.

And it frees up mental energy for challenging tasks the following day. Also by planning an enjoyable activity the following day and scheduling it, it means you're more likely to do it, which can boost your well-being.

Employers could encourage staff to take one or two brief breaks during the day to catch up with each other, which could help to refamiliarize staff with informal interactions and help people feel less rusty with their social skills. If they know that the space is there, and they're being encouraged to take a break and socialize with colleagues, this may make social interactions feel less daunting.

There's one more thing that is worth saying and that is to be compassionate, to tap into self-compassion. We will have fluctuations and anxiety around returning to work, and being kind to ourselves increases our optimism and makes us better problem-solvers. Cultivating a compassionate mindset about our return to work will help us return happier and more confident.

Brink News

System migrations need to start with people

*By Konstantinos and Neil McConachie,
Oliver Wyman*

One of the most common traps that organizations fall into is treating system migrations solely as a technology question and overlooking common human pitfalls. As a result, most large-scale system migrations are fraught with unexpected issues, taking longer and costing more than anticipated. Technology itself causes many major headaches, as re-engineering business processes and moving data can bring unexpected consequences, trigger transparency and accessibility issues, and exacerbate compliance or regulatory risks.

There is a better approach. System migrations that start with three people-elements proceed much more smoothly and efficiently. These elements involve focusing early on the end customer, avoiding team fatigue and proactively upskilling teams.

People First, Tech Second

In migrations, the business is generally the final customer or end-user. Hence, there should be a clear vision, communication

Special Features



and collaboration between business and technology teams from the outset. This sounds simple, but system migrations focus largely on the technical and logistical problems of shifting platforms and transferring data, when the task should be approached through a broader lens.

Instead, managers should take a more active role in planning and execution, determining up front which functions are necessary, which data should be migrated, and who will be impacted by replacing or upgrading the systems. This avoids setting the project on a doomed trajectory. For example, one airline spent months trying to extract, transform and load historical flight information, only to scrap the code after the business deemed it unnecessary for the future system. Such moments are easily avoided with the right communication.

Business-driven, rather than technology-driven workshops are one way to prepare sufficiently by gathering the right people to ask the right questions: Which functions are necessary or nice to have? What data is priority? What data is required for business-as-usual activities? What about regulatory requirements? These types of questions require meaningful engagement and will allow leaders to commit the right resources or organize external support, such as industry or legal expertise. Likewise, they establish greater ownership and accountability.

One Fortune 500 company recently attributed the success of its migration to the business being the driving force behind all project planning, clearly defining what it needed before the migration started. This led to better adoption and higher degree of satisfaction with the final system functionality and increased engagement with frontline employees and leadership.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Alternatively, managers can use a bottom-up data-driven approach to understand the impact. Who uses the data now? Who has been accessing the data historically? Mapping these interaction points can determine which data to shift into the new systems, prioritizing essential and leaving behind “nice-to-have” data. This also reduces the chances of getting into trouble later when data is missing or unavailable.

Vacation Days as a Performance Indicator

System migrations are, in most cases, exhausting. From the initial sprint to post-deployment, meeting milestones can be highly stressful — particularly when the team is working toward a set deployment target and competing for shared resources. Long

hours are common, meaning staff have little downtime or respite and often compromise their personal time. This leads to frustration and tension. Leaders should anticipate that after the first six months of the project, teams will exhibit fatigue, lower morale and decreased responsiveness. These can all have adverse effects on the project’s progress.

One of the most common reasons for team burnout is underestimating the amount of time a migration project will take. Start from a position with reasonable expectations about timing rather than relying on rough estimates. Failing to invest enough time into developing a proper strategy and plan sets the team up for failure. Projects can also be structured to deliver milestones of success and periods of rest, to re-energize teams on a cadence matching the fatigue cycle.

In long system migration projects, one common pitfall is that teams avoid taking vacation throughout the year, only to find most people need to use accrued leave at the same time, which risks derailing timelines. One company avoided this by including vacation days as a key performance indicator, ensuring that teams spaced their time off evenly. In such cases, it’s important for leaders to support this policy through regular communication, as well as leading by example. Work sentiment surveys can also ensure that the teams feel supported and can operate in an environment of psychological safety when they do feel like they are not getting sufficient down time.

While exhaustion is unavoidable, companies can mitigate these situations, such as taking stress reduction measures, monitoring the mood of the team using weekly pulse check and encouraging teams to join wellness programs.

Cross-Training Can Protect Organizational Knowledge

Large system migration projects can take months to years to accomplish — enough time for key people to move onto new roles or leave the organization entirely. Churn is natural, as the work can be monotonous, and people need to balance tasks with their day jobs. To avoid an unexpected skills gap during or after a system deployment, companies should take a long-term approach to upskilling the team. Likewise, it’s important to have the right incentives in place to keep the team motivated and to clearly communicate that these resources have a role after the migration is completed.

Business leaders should have a contingency plan in mind for every key role, but training and developing your project’s people for multiple roles will ensure more continuity. Take the time to teach a broader cross-section of migration-literacy skills within the business, and ensure the solution vendor proactively shares system knowledge to build the team’s self-reliance post-deployment. By cross-training project resources, firms can accelerate the professional development of their people and mitigate the formation of talent “silos” within project teams.

One business experienced issues when a team of key people left just after their migration was finished, resulting in a loss of knowledge of the set up and inner workings of their new system. This forced them to rebuild and retrain a new team to extract the maximum value from their technology investment. In contrast, we’ve seen companies preempt this issue by identifying

Special Features

a key cluster of employees to become system experts before the launch, with the vendor being involved in knowledge transfer. This enabled the organization to be more self-sufficient and allowed their people to further improve the new platform without external help.

A People-Led Future

COVID-19 has taken a toll on the time, budgets and resources of many organizations. This leads to short-term thinking around system migration projects and can cause problems later. The scenario is all too familiar: Technology teams take charge without engaging in meaningful dialogue early on with business

managers, who are too busy multitasking to scrutinize what is best for users and customers. Significant time is lost on activities of low business value or wasted due to misunderstood requirements. As things don't work out as planned, teams get demoralized and exhausted, which leads to greater turnover.

Yet, all this waste is easily avoided by taking a people-led approach at the beginning of the project to improve team structures and plan for the inevitable bumps in the road. We have seen some of the largest failures, greatest successes and best turnarounds for such projects, and we're confident these are the highest leverage points for your project's success.

Brink News

Product & Service Councils

Asian Council on Food and Agriculture

Singapore cultivates 'Silicon Valley of food' in a hungry Asia



It was a warm Singapore evening and well-heeled diners at the riverside restaurant 1880 were feasting on intriguing-sounding dishes like "Forest Floor" and "Flooded Future." But the real stars of the show were two less flamboyant-sounding mains: chicken and waffle, and chicken bao.

When served, the pan-fried chicken was firm and pulled apart tenderly at the touch of a fork. This, however, was no ordinary poultry. It was made from stem cells taken from a chicken feather and grown in special bioreactors. The diners were among the first few paying customers to feast on lab-grown chicken.

Kaimana Chee -- a chef at San Francisco-based food startup Eat Just,

Singapore prioritizes food source diversification
(Selected imports by origin, 2019)



Source: Singapore Food Agency

which created the chicken -- helped whip up that night's meal. "I cried because I never thought I would see it on a consumer plate within my lifetime," he told Nikkei Asia.

With "so much regulatory red tape" and global caution surrounding lab-grown meat, Chee, 43, was convinced getting the green light would take years. He figured his mission at Eat Just, which he joined in 2016, was to concoct inspiring dishes that would "plant the seed for another generation."

So, in December, when Singapore became the only country to approve the sale of such protein, Chee was dumbstruck. Many industry observers were less surprised.

"It's no coincidence that Singapore is the world's first cultivated meat market," said Mirte Gosker of the nonprofit Good Food Institute Asia Pacific (GFI APAC). "The government has invested the

resources necessary to create a welcoming ecosystem for food innovation."

Singapore's foray into lab meat and alternative proteins -- those that come from plants, insects, algae and fungi -- is part of a concerted push to shore up its food resilience.

The city-state makes up Asia's vanguard in the battle to ensure reliable access to food. United Nations estimates suggest over 350 million people across the region are undernourished while roughly

1 billion faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2019 -- either dealing with uncertain access or actually running out of food, sometimes for days. The challenge has become more pressing since COVID-19 hit, worsening acute food insecurity in Asia and giving governments alarming glimpses of how a crisis can affect supplies.

One approach Singapore has taken is to diversify its sources. It now imports food from over 170 countries and regions, about 30 more than in 2004. It is also striving to become more self-reliant. In March 2019, it announced a "30 by 30" goal -- to produce 30% of its nutritional needs locally by 2030, up from 10%.

"Resilience means having the ability to withstand perturbations to the food supply," said Paul Teng, a food security expert at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU). When Teng and his colleagues began studying

Product & Service Councils

food resilience around 2005, the focus was on food security. "Nobody listened to us," he said.

It is a subtle but important distinction. Wealthy Singapore ranks fairly high on measures of food security -- 19th on the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2020 global ranking -- but that does not mean it can rest easy.

"The government's strategy was, 'If we increase GDP, and have the means to purchase food, then we don't have to worry because somebody will always have food to sell,'" Teng said. "This is fine and dandy if there is no disruption to [the food] production and supply chain."

But price hikes during the 2008 financial crisis, Malaysia halting fish exports in 2014 and other events have highlighted vulnerabilities. Then came the pandemic.

"Globally, COVID-19 has resulted in some disruption, as some source countries banned exports of certain food items to cater to their domestic needs or went under lockdown," said Melvin Chow, senior director of the Singapore Food Agency's Food Infrastructure Development & Management Division.

He added that increasing production under the 30 by 30 strategy would provide a buffer to mitigate disruptions from abroad. But growing more food is easier said than done in Singapore, which measures 50 km by 27 km. With the world's third-highest population density, it has set aside only 1% of its land for agriculture.

The city, which has always been deft at working around its space and resource constraints, now intends to "leverage our science and technology capabilities to develop innovative solutions," Chow said.



This is where Eat Just and similar startups come in. "Plant-based and cell-based proteins require far less space and

resources to produce the same amount of food as traditional food sources," said Bernice Tay, director of food manufacturing at Enterprise Singapore, a statutory board dedicated to the development of small and mid-size businesses.

Eager to foster food tech, the government has allocated up to 144 million Singapore dollars (\$107 million) for food-related R&D programs until 2025. Enterprise Singapore has also partnered with several global accelerators, including Big Idea Ventures, which has a \$50 million fund for alternative proteins.

In April, Singapore launched a Future Ready Food Safety Hub to study the safety of novel foods and support companies' research. And in September, NTU will begin offering undergraduates a one-semester course focused on the science and business of producing alternative proteins, in collaboration with GFI APAC.

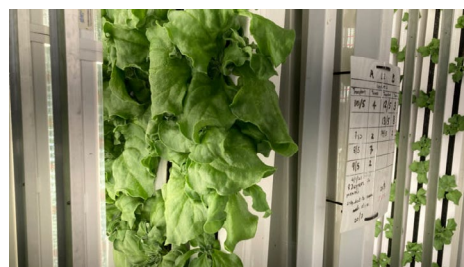
Andre Menezes, co-founder of Next Gen, a Singapore-headquartered company that introduced soy-based chicken thighs in March, called the city a "complete ecosystem in a very small, concentrated island."

More than 15 alternative protein companies have set up shop in Singapore in the past two years. In addition to Eat Just and Next Gen, these include international players such as California dairy-substitute maker Perfect Day as well as homegrown Shiok Meats and Gaia Foods, which are working to produce cultured seafood and red meat, respectively.

Another pillar of Singapore's 30 by 30 goal is high-tech, indoor urban farming. Thirty-one such farms already exist -- 28 for vegetables, three for fish.

One farm, Commonwealth Greens, can harvest up to 100 tons of vegetables annually, close to 1% of all leafy greens grown locally. In high-ceilinged rooms of a large industrial building, it grows rows of verdant mustard, chard, sorrel and various lettuces in plastic containers. Each grow rack is roughly 1 meter long and paired with its own strip of LED lights, suspended from the ceiling like a series of bright vertical blinds.

The "brains" of the system lie at the front of each room: two sensors. One controls the air temperature, relative



humidity, carbon dioxide and acidity levels. The other measures the amount and composition of liquid nutrients supplied to the greens.

The hydroponics-based system consumes 95% less water and 85% fewer fertilizers than traditional, soil-based ones.

Proponents say indoor farms and alternative proteins offer better produce and cleaner meats, with minimal or none of the pesticides, antibiotics or hormones commonly found in today's food products.

Some experts believe they can be a way forward for other Asian countries, too. Indoor farms are not new. NTU's Teng said there are more than 400 throughout Asia. But compact, high-yielding ones are especially useful in "highly urbanized cities with higher purchasing power, where real estate cost is high."

Jakarta is a good example, according to Christian Prokscha, founder of Eden Towers, which opened a vertical farm there in February. "You can grow things on the hills outside Jakarta," he said, "but the problem is that you have a very long logistics route."

When it comes to alternative proteins, high selling prices are another tall hurdle. Nevertheless, Asia is "uniquely primed to capitalize on the shift toward alternative proteins," said GFI APAC's Gosker, citing the region's "rich agricultural landscapes, expansive infrastructure and manufacturing power, world-renowned innovation hubs and unparalleled market size."

She went on: "Local producers now have the ability to source a nearly unlimited range of ingredients, process them in new and innovative ways, and manufacture the next generation of plant-based meat -- all in the same corner of the world."

Nikkei Asia

Asian Council on Health and Education

Singapore schools tackle mental health amid pandemic stress

Millions of children across the globe have dealt with months of learning from home as countries struggle with the pandemic. Now, as many begin returning to school, thoughts have turned to not only the lost education, but also the long-term impact on their mental health.

In Singapore, which has one of the world's top school systems, they are opting to tackle the issue head on.

Children around the world have suffered from feelings of stress, anxiety and isolation as the pandemic locked down communities and shut schools for months at a time over the past year.

In the UK, where schools were shut for the best part of half a year, a government report said one in six children aged five to 16 had a probable mental health disorder in 2020 - up from one in nine three years earlier. The situation is similar in the US, where hospitals saw a 31% rise in mental health emergency visits by 12- to 17-year-olds in April to October from a year earlier, according to the CDC.

In Singapore, in a reminder of last year, a recent spike in cases - including some in schools - has prompted tighter measures across the city-state. As part of efforts to keep people further apart, students went back to online learning for 10 days in late May.

But in its highly academic, competitive environment, even this short break was enough to pile extra worry onto students.

"I think a lot of us put a lot of pressure on ourselves to do well in studies, especially after the lockdown," said 14-year-old Kate Lau. "Things are a lot more under control compared to what it was. But then I am still a little bit worried."

Prior to the pandemic, mental health was rarely discussed in Singapore's academically rigorous schools - but that now appears to be changing.

The small country - which consistently ranks at or near the top of



global exam scores - is paying close attention to the lingering effects of the Covid crisis on children, which left some families struggling to cope.

This year, weekly sessions started at primary and secondary schools to encourage students to talk about their feelings and improve how they handle stress and anxiety. Sessions feature animated videos to help students identify and cope with stress, while teachers share their personal experiences to encourage the free flow of ideas and discussions.

"Some of the children felt they were isolated at home throughout the whole lockdown period," said Michael Chow, a teacher at Serangoon Secondary School. "I think these lessons are very important as it helps us to drive the point across that, hey, you're not alone here and, hey, these are real issues that you are facing."

For the children, nothing is entirely normal. They must always wear a mask and keep their distance while still ensuring they complete hours of homework every day and maintain good grades.

These new realities - combined with existing expectations - pile on the pressure, said Dr. Tazeen Jafar, a professor of health services and systems research at Duke NUS Medical School who has been studying the impact of Covid in various parts of the world.

"Children spending a lot of time doing their homework tend to spend less time doing social activities and tend to play less and sleep less," she said. "Those are risk factors for depression and anxiety so they are already pre-disposed and then any added external pressure like the pandemic makes them more and more susceptible."

These issues are reflected in other parts of Asia that also put heavy emphasis on academic excellence.

Studies in China on children's psychological distress due to the pandemic showed female adolescents have a higher

risk of depression and anxiety, Dr. Jafar said. The studies also showed senior high school students nearing college entrance exams are more depressed than younger pupils.

But dealing with the underlying anxiety is further hampered in a region where a stigma around mental health can prevent it being discussed openly.

In a number of Asian countries, having a mental health condition is sometimes viewed as "losing face", a term used to the cultural idea of being shamed and losing dignity. While some people view it as "just a phase".

In 2015, a study at the Singapore Institute of Health found that there is a "considerable" stigma towards people with a mental illness which could prevent individuals from seeking treatment.

Half of people who took part in the survey said they saw poor mental health as a sign of personal weakness and nine in 10 felt that people with mental illnesses could get better if they wanted to.

Singapore's new modules in schools - alongside awareness training for teachers, nurses and counsellors - are a "very nice mechanism" that could help to change attitudes about mental health more broadly, said Dr. Jafar. "If successful, the model will be great to emulate across the region," she said.

Listening to the students, it does seem to be working in Singapore. "The programme helped me speak out a bit more," Kate Lau tells the BBC. "I'm more open now to sharing my feelings in front of a class or telling my friends or teachers how I feel."

Muhammad Rayyaan Khan, who is 15, agrees. "If I have anxiety I would definitely speak up."

BBC

Asian Council on Tourism

Leisure travel is bouncing back in parts of Asia but risks remain, says hotelier

The darkest days for the tourism industry may soon be over, according to

Product & Service Councils



the chairman of a multinational hospitality firm.

Tourist hotspots like Phuket are now open to international tourists who don't have to quarantine, and others like Koh Samui are following suit, pointed out William Heinecke, CEO of Minor International, which runs a chain of hotels and restaurants worldwide.

The Thai government recently announced a "sandbox scheme" for Phuket, saying the popular resort island will be open, quarantine-free to vaccinated Thai and foreign travelers from July 1. Koh Samui, Thailand's second largest island also became accessible to tourists from July 15 under the same rules.

Tourists can move around both islands freely and leave for other cities in Thailand after staying in Phuket or Samui for 14 days.

"I think we're already seeing the results of that (sandbox) with people coming in ... Phuket has been doing it effectively since July 1," with a rising number of tourists each day, he told CNBC's "Street Signs."

Minor International, which runs more than 530 hotels, resorts and serviced suites worldwide, is also seeing a strong recovery in Europe, the Middle East and China, Heinecke said, pointing out that some regions have returned to pre-Covid levels or higher.

Hotels are also seeing a strong demand in room types with higher pricing room types — such as villas, suites and deluxe rooms — being taken up before regular rooms.

"In Europe, where we just reopened, we're seeing very strong demand. We've seen very steady recovery since January in the Middle East... our Middle East properties are now functioning at pre-Covid levels. We have many countries in the world that are in pre-Covid levels or higher. China is another one," he added.

Heinecke also noted the change in consumer behavior when it comes to tourism during the pandemic, and added that his company is taking advantage of it by offering more programs focused on wellness.

"One of the trends for sure that we see is much more focus on wellness and immunity, and people concerned about their health," he added.

While demand for tourism has rebounded in parts of the world and recovery has been strong, the rate of vaccine rollouts in Asia has been a concern.

"We see still slowness in many markets brought on by problems with (vaccine) production," Heinecke said, naming slow progress in Malaysia and the Philippines.

That's "partly because of the AstraZeneca manufacturing in Thailand," he added.

Thailand started producing Covid-19 vaccines for British-Swedish drugmaker AstraZeneca in June. Its local partner Siam Bioscience, owned by King Maha Vajiralongkorn, is set to produce 180 million doses this year — with more than one-third for Thailand and two-thirds

for Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia and the Philippines.

However, there were reports that Thailand may curb exports of its locally produced AstraZeneca vaccines to fight its own crisis.

According to Our World in Data, Asia is far behind North America, Europe and even behind South America when it comes to vaccine doses administered per 100 people. North America is administering about 78 doses per 100 people, while Asia trails behind at 49 doses, according to data on July 17.

Slow vaccinations are leading to rising cases, even as the highly transmissible delta variant first discovered in India has become the dominant strain in the United States, spreading to at least 104 countries.

From Singapore to Thailand and Australia, there have been restrictions and lockdowns, and travel corridors between cities and countries have been called off, putting a damper on the tourism industry's comeback in 2021. The availability of vaccines is critical, said Heinecke. "I believe in more vaccination, less lockdown," he said.

CNBC

Asian ICT Council

How to design a smart city everyone wants to live in



Throughout the world, governments have been challenged by rapid urbanization, increased citizen expectations and the need for modern infrastructure. The advent of cloud computing has accelerated the adoption of new technological solutions for improving our cities and our quality of life.

Smart cities or communities are rapidly expanding to create new economic opportunities, conserve the environment and enhance citizen services. Research suggests that there has been an increase in funding in smart cities in cities across North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Latin America. According to Smart Cities World, the market for smart cities will be over \$2 trillion by 2025.

What is a smart city or a smart community?

The main goal of smart communities is to use digital solutions to address the challenges of a city, county or region to:

1. Conserve resources in the long term.
2. Improve the well-being of citizens through the provision of efficient public utilities and services.
3. Predict potential hazards and take preventive actions

Product & Service Councils

- such as flood detection, energy shortages, sewer leaks, etc.
- 4. Use of data and digital platforms to improve citizen involvement for healthcare or social services.
- 5. Make environmentally friendly choices along with clean energy.

What is an example of a smart community?

There are many successful implementations of smart cities around the world. For example, the city of Dijon in France is considered France's first smart city. Dijon focused on improving the utility infrastructure to reduce electric costs by employing smart street lighting, smart parking, etc. Another focus area was the safety and security of citizens that was achieved by connected smart services including Wi-Fi spots, CCTVs and a centralized hub for crisis management.

Stafford County, Virginia has been planning, designing and investing in a smart community testbed for the last few years. Their efforts finally came to fruition on May 25th, 2021 with the inauguration of the smart community test center. Some of the focus areas of Stafford smart county initiatives are 1. broadband everywhere, 2. reduction of traffic congestion, 3. improved community safety along with vehicle and pedestrian safety, 4. the reduction of energy consumption and 5. making the community attractive to new businesses, startups and citizens.

What should cities be doing to get started on smart city initiatives?

To get started with smart city initiatives, understand the needs of the region, speak to residents and businesses to gather feedback and prioritize use cases. Next, think about funding options — partnerships, alliances and grants are typical funding sources. For example, Athens created a successful smart city project due to its collaboration with partners such as Microsoft. Lastly, think of a pilot program to launch your initiative in order to test the use cases before scaling up.

How can smart cities handle cyber

threats?

IoT devices used in smart cities expose vulnerabilities that can be exploited by cyberattacks. Hence, it's important to focus on methodologies to reduce the cybersecurity risk. Some of these methods include — foundational measures of authentication, encryption and access control. Add to that ongoing security monitoring and end-to-end security lifecycle management to include vendors and third-party devices.

What are the challenges when implementing smart cities?

Apart from the challenges of dealing with funding issues and cybersecurity, the following are some of the challenges to consider when implementing smart city solutions:

1. Infrastructure. Technology infrastructure is at the core of a smart city (network, IoT devices, etc.) and challenges can include power supply, connectivity and seamless integration. Buenos Aires, Argentina is an excellent example of establishing infrastructure that connects various IT systems and streamlined information flow. They were able to connect citizen problems reported via a mobile app to the local government, who in turn

- assigned it to the nearest vendor to solve the problem.
2. Building inclusive smart cities. Ensure that considerations of all sectors of residents are included, especially the protected classes, even those who don't have connectivity.
3. Privacy. Providing assurance to residents about the privacy of the data collected with clear communication and transparency.
4. Community engagement. In order for smart cities to be effective, it's important to get involved with residents. Organizing town-halls, email newsletters and online education can help with keeping the citizens engaged and get up-to-date information.

Smart communities have become an essential expectation from citizens as they're looking toward improved quality of life and creating a sustainable environment for future generations. However, a smart community is not about implementing high-tech digital solutions but about creating solutions with citizen engagement, community-first initiatives and measuring the impact on the lives of people in the community.

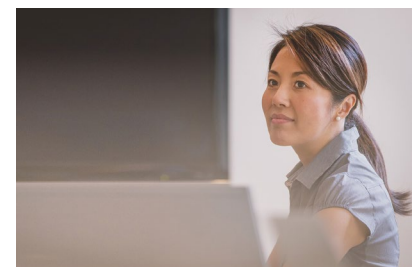
Forbes

CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council

Female entrepreneurs can add US\$280b to the SEA e-commerce market

Hillary Clinton once said, "Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world", and she went on stating a stark truth that none can avoid: "It is past time for women to take their rightful place, side by side with men." Indeed, financial market experts believe so too.

A new report from the International Finance Corporation found that Southeast



Asia's e-commerce market could grow by more than US\$280 billion by 2030 if major online shopping marketplaces do more to encourage and enable women entrepreneurs.

Undeniably, women entrepreneurs are already active participants in the region's burgeoning online marketplace. However, IFC's Senior VP Stephanie von

Product & Service Councils

Friedeburg said however, widespread differences between men and women in digital and financial inclusion continue to hold back women entrepreneurs. “The pandemic has also hit hard. In the first year of the pandemic, women-owned businesses faced a drop of 39% in sales, compared to a 28% drop for men-owned businesses.”

She believes e-commerce firms are well-positioned to reverse this trend and to set women entrepreneurs up for success in an industry that will increasingly define business in the region and around the world. They can do so by targeting women-owned businesses for training, by increasing women’s participation in high-value segments such as electronics, and by encouraging better uptake of emerging fintech offerings to close gaps in financing and start-up capitalization.

The report also highlighted that women comprise half of all active e-commerce vendors in Southeast Asia.

That being said, they tend to run smaller-scale businesses and feature prominently in high-competition, low-value segments. If the status quo remains, the value of the Southeast Asia e-commerce market is expected to reach US\$491 billion in 2030. Women’s sales have been more severely impacted by the pandemic than those of men.

“However, if women’s gross merchandise value were to reach parity with men in 2025, then US\$280 billion of additional market value would accrue between 2025 and 2030. In other words, for every year that gender gaps remain unaddressed, the sector loses over US\$46 billion of potential value.”

The report showed that on the Lazada platform, about a third of businesses in Indonesia and two-thirds of businesses in the Philippines are women-owned. This itself is noteworthy, indicating that e-commerce is supporting women’s entry

to and success in the digital economy as well as helping women-owned businesses compete in sectors like electronics, where they are typically underrepresented.

In Indonesia, the proportion of women’s business on Lazada compared favorably with women’s entrepreneurship in the national economy, where women businesses made up only 22% of formally registered firms. The relatively high proportion of women in e-commerce indicates that women may be leveraging Lazada and other platforms to take previously informal businesses into the formal economy. In contrast, in the Philippines, women were widely found to be in ownership roles, both in the national economy and on Lazada. This is in line with the country’s relatively high enabling environment for women’s participation in business activities.

Techwire Asia

Investment & Joint Ventures

Kraft Heinz Acquires Turkish Assan Foods



Kraft Heinz announced it has agreed to buy Turkish sauce company Assan Foods from Kibar Holding in a deal for around USD 100 million.

Assan Foods, manufacturing a varied range of sauce products including ketchup, mayonnaise, pasta sauces, and more at its plants in Turkey’s Izmir and Balikesir, has been a Kraft Heinz certified production partner since 2019.

“This is a great opportunity to speed up our international growth strategy. We believe Assan Foods is a high-performance organization that brings best-in-class local innovation and production

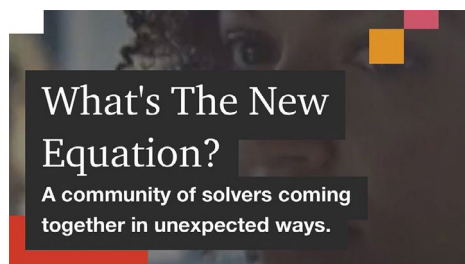
of sauces and tomato products, as well as a significant distribution network in the fast-growing foodservice channel, enabling us to further build our scale and agility by expanding the Heinz brand in Turkey, as well as our International Taste Elevation platform more broadly,” President of Kraft

Heinz International Zone Rafael Oliveira said.

Headquartered in Istanbul, Assan Foods employs approximately 400 workers and exports its products to around 50 countries.

Turkey Investment Office

PwC to double Asia Pacific business with \$3 billion investment



PwC has announced a \$12 billion five-year global investment into a variety of strategic initiatives, including \$3 billion slated for doubling its Asia Pacific business

over the period.

The commitment is part of a newly launched strategy dubbed ‘The New Equation’, with one quarter of the \$12 billion sum to be funnelled into Asia Pacific. As well as enhancing the skills of its existing employees, the firm aims to hire 100,000 additional professionals through its latest strategic investment, a more than one third increase on its existing headcount of 285,000 in just the space of five years.

While promoted as a new strategy, PwC continues to emphasise “building trust in society” as a key component of its focus, arguing that with growing societal expectations it has never been more important, or difficult, for businesses to gain and maintain trust across a variety

Investment & Joint Ventures

of contemporary issues important to stakeholders. The second, interconnected pillar is to deliver sustained outcomes in an era where competition and the risk of disruption are also more intense than ever.

The \$12 billion injection is a sharp increase on the \$7.4 billion invested over the five years since 2016 (according to figures from the Financial Times), incidentally the year when rival Deloitte overtook PwC as the world's biggest professional services firm. Since then, Deloitte has continued to edge further ahead, stretching out to a \$4.6 billion gap on PwC's 2020 revenues of \$43

billion, with the fast-growing Asia Pacific proving a major battle ground.

Still presently contributing less than a fifth of the firm's revenues – or around \$8 billion last year – PwC intends to pump \$3 billion into APAC with the stated aim of doubling the size of its regional business by 2026, with the focus on significantly scaling in strategic areas such as ESG, digital transformation, and mergers & acquisition. As part of the investment, PwC will also establish an Asia Pacific Leadership Institute to foster increasingly needed soft skills.

As to audit, PwC will invest \$1 billion towards accelerating audit technology and developing models to meet an evolving audit landscape. Along with Leadership Institutes in other regions, a good chunk will also be put toward establishing a global ESG Academy and expanding its Centres of Excellence for ESG specialists, while funds will be put toward rapidly extending the firm's use of cloud, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other emerging technologies.

Consultancy.asia

Arçelik and Hitachi Global Life Solutions launch new joint venture



Arçelik A.Ş. and Hitachi Global Life Solutions, Inc. have announced the launch of a new joint venture company, Arçelik Hitachi Home Appliances B.V. The new joint venture, established by transferring 11 subsidiaries of Hitachi

GLS (two manufacturing and nine sales companies) outside Japan, is operationally based in Bangkok, Thailand. Arçelik Hitachi Home Appliances provides manufacturing, sales, and after-sales service for Hitachi branded home appliances (refrigerators, washing machines and vacuum cleaners, etc.) outside Japan.

Arçelik has consistently expanded its home appliance business to 150 countries around the world. The company has grown significantly in Europe and achieved strong growth in South Asia over the last decade. Hitachi GLS has been operating its home appliance business mainly in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, where it enjoys a high-end brand image.

Arçelik Hitachi Home Appliances, the result of the collaboration between the two companies, will leverage their strengths such as supply chain and technological capabilities to build a competitive and innovative offer to market.

The newly assigned CEO will be Zafer Üstüner, former Regional Head of APAC and General Manager of Thailand at Beko. Under his leadership, the new joint venture will combine the sales networks of both companies to expand the sales regions of Hitachi brand products to Europe, North Africa and other regions, as well as to integrate business bases such as production systems and procurement to strengthen our competitiveness. In the field of R&D, Arçelik and Hitachi GLS will also integrate the knowledge of both parties to create new value such as connected home appliances.

Sustainability is at the core of both Arçelik's and Hitachi GLS's strategies. Through their combined leadership in energy efficiency and sustainable solutions related to the home, the partnership will increase competitiveness around these key issues in the broader market.

PR Newswire

Singapore-based vegan chicken startup bags additional \$20M to launch in U.S.

Following its \$10 million seed round in February, Singapore based startup Next Gen has announced an extension of \$20 million to make a total of \$30 million, which will be invested to launch TiNDLE, its new plant-based chicken brand, into the US.

Founded by Timo Recker of LikeMeat, and Andre Menezes, Next Gen's



chicken product TiNDLE is currently sold in over 70 restaurants in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Macau, including ADDA by four-time Michelin Star Chef Manjunath

Mural and two Michelin Star Bo Innovation by Chef Alvin Leung in Hong Kong.

The company will use the fresh funds to hire more than 50 employees across research and development, sales, supply chain, finance and marketing. Employees will primarily be based in the Bay Area. The company will also use the extended funding for continued international expansion in APAC and the Middle East, developing its technology, establishing a research and development center in Singapore and product diversification.

New investors in this latest

Investment & Joint Ventures

round include Global Fund GGV Capital, making its first investment in plant-based chicken; China-based agriculture and food tech venture fund Bits x Bites, investing actively in the alternative protein space; Yeo Hiap Seng; and Chris Yeh, co-author of Blitzscaling. Existing investors include Temasek, and Asia-based venture capital fund K3 Ventures.

"The United States is the world's biggest market for plant-based foods. We are already putting our foundations in place to be in-market within the next 12 months as we accelerate our goal of becoming the world's number one plant-based chicken," said Co-Founder and CEO Andre Menezes.

"Following our March 2021 TiNDLE launch, we have expanded to three

key markets, and we expect to be in more than five by end-2021, a mark that some leading brands do not cross after years of existence. We are scaling at this incredibly fast pace with our asset-lite business model, distribution network, talent, and collaborations with great chefs and hot restaurants," added Jean Madden, Next Gen CMO.

Vegconomist

Taiwan to invest \$300m in grad schools to stem chip brain drain



Taiwanese authorities and major chipmakers are investing at least \$300 million to create graduate programs for the semiconductor industry over the next decade, in a move aimed at protecting the island's chip economy as the U.S. and China seek to cultivate their own talent and bring production onshore.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC), the world's biggest chipmaker, and local peers such as MediaTek and Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. told Nikkei Asia they would endorse the campaign to build additional high-end chip schools. The companies said that talented employees are key to keeping the chip industry competitive -- a sector directly linked to national security.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and Vice Premier Shen Jong-chin pushed the talent cultivation plan when major companies requested state assistance to solve the talent shortage around May last year, a person with direct knowledge told Nikkei Asia.

"More than a dozen chip companies -- from design, manufacturing to packaging and testing -- actively participated in the discussions for chip schools, as they foresee that demand for high-skilled chip talent will be even higher in the coming years, and that

this is an imminent problem that needs to be solved soon," the person told Nikkei Asia.

Taiwan's move comes as the U.S. and China -- the world's two largest economies, slugging it out to gain control of the global tech industry -- are also accelerating their own semiconductor talent cultivation plans.

Taiwan's semiconductor industry -- second globally to the U.S. -- has been suffering from insufficient talent for years as the sector continues to pursue cutting-edge technologies. The number of Ph.D. students majoring in tech-related fields dropped from 23,261 in 2010 to 16,950 in 2020, Ministry of Education data shows.

China also aggressively lures highly skilled, experienced chip engineers. Two Chinese government-backed chip projects in 2019 and 2020 have together hired more than 100 veteran engineers and managers from TSMC. As of 2019, more than 3,000 people had left the island for China over the years. The Tsai administration in April asked local and foreign recruitment platform operators and headhunters to remove all listings for jobs in China, in an aggressive move to prevent the outflow of talent to the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

Chip companies in Taiwan have been calling on the Tsai administration to address the talent shortage. Legislators this year passed a bipartisan law relaxing rigid education-related laws and allowing universities to set up graduate schools that can be run independently and bring in financing from leading tech groups and the National Development Fund -- Taiwan's top industry funding vehicle -- specifically for vital areas such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

But the law specifies that the new schools "cannot work with Chinese

companies or take funding from China-based entities." The new schools also need to monitor students' employment paths upon graduation and "should guide them to pursue a career in Taiwan as their priority," the law says.

Chu Chun-chang, director-general of Department of Higher Education with Taiwan's Ministry of Education, told Nikkei Asia in an interview that the ministry has received applications from four top Taiwanese universities to establish new schools that are set to nurture future high-end talent on semiconductors and artificial intelligence and receive ongoing support from industry players

Based on the current planning, each new chip college requires at least 200 million New Taiwan dollars (\$7 million) in annual funding, while the outside commitment needs to last for at least eight to 12 years, Chu said. That will total at least \$300 million for the first four chip schools over the next 12 years, and the investment will increase once more schools and programs are on board.

TSMC, for one, will commit at least NT\$100 million a year to the four schools for at least the next 10 years, sources told Nikkei Asia. Powerchip Chairman Frank Huang told Nikkei Asia that his company will invest NT\$100 million annually.

All these chip schools will need to look for financing on their own from private companies, while Taiwan's National Development Fund will match the funds that each college secures, the Education Ministry's Chu said. Besides semiconductors, Taiwan is looking to increase talent in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and future fintech, the official said.

Nikkei Asia

Economic Cooperation

Turkey Investment Office Signs MoU with SOMINVEST

The Turkey Investment Office and the Somalia Investment Promotion Agency (SOMINVEST) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) within the scope of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, held on June 18-20 in Antalya.



The agreement was signed by Turkey Investment Office President Burak

Dağlıoğlu and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Somalia Mohamed Abdirizak Mohamud.

The MoU covers topics such as boosting cooperation on investments, promoting collaborative ventures, and providing technology transfer between the two countries.

Third Bhutan-India Development Cooperation Talks for the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) held virtually



The Third Bhutan-India Development Cooperation Talks for the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) was held virtually on June 28, 2021. The Bhutanese delegation was led by Mr. Kinga Singye, Foreign Secretary, and included senior

officials from Ministries of Finance, Works & Human Settlement, Education, Labor, Health, Information and Communications, Home and Culture Affairs, Foreign Ministry, and Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, and the Royal Bhutanese Embassy, Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Shri Rahul Chhabra, Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs, and included the Ambassador of India to Bhutan, Joint Secretary (North), and other officials of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

During the talks, the two sides reviewed the progress of the projects supported by the Government of India under the 12th FYP and approved some new projects and reprioritization of some others

whose implementations have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting also discussed the progress of important projects that are being implemented outside the 12th FYP.

The Bhutanese side expressed appreciation to the people and the Government of India for their unstinted support and cooperation extended to Bhutan during the difficult time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The two sides agreed to hold the next Development Cooperation Talks in Thimphu at a mutually convenient date.

The Talks were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere in keeping with the excellent bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The Policy Times

Taiwan, Australia economic and trade ministers find areas for cooperation: AU envoy

Australia's Trade Minister Dan Tehan held an online meeting with Taiwan's Economics Minister Wang Mei-hua, Australia's top envoy in Taiwan confirmed on July 5.

"We welcome the successful virtual meeting between the trade and economic ministers of Australia and Taiwan," Jenny Bloomfield, Australia's representative to Taiwan, tweeted in Mandarin.

"Taiwan is Australia's important partner in economic cooperation and investment. We hope that both sides can continue to deepen their close cooperation in the fields of energy (including natural gas and hydrogen energy), biotechnology,



finance and education," she said.

The virtual meeting came after the resumption of the Taiwan-United States trade talks under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) on June 30 after a nearly five-year hiatus.

A recent report from Bloomberg said the two ministers held the meeting on July 1, during which Tehan invited his Taiwan counterpart to participate in a video forum on hydrogen energy on July 29.

CAN

Bangladesh may soon have its own smart city with Japan's help

Smart City development has long been a priority for many nations – and Bangladesh may soon join their ranks.

In a bilateral meeting with Bangladeshi State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Japanese ambassador Ito Naoki expressed that Japan is interested in building smart cities in the country, reported Dhaka-based The Business Standard.

According to Naoki, Japan has contributed in many areas including infrastructure development in Bangladesh. There are currently over 300 Japanese companies operating in the country – triple the number 10 years ago.

Japan is the largest Asian export market for Bangladesh with shipments

Economic Cooperation



amounting to about \$1.3 billion. As such, Japanese companies are ready to expand their business there, in spite of challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Naoki emphasized the importance of collaboration to further expand cooperation between the two countries through the development of strategic partnerships between Japan and Bangladesh.

“ICT is now the main driving force of the economy. The Japan International Co-operative Agency (JICA) can further develop and enrich the master plan for Bangladesh 2041 by assisting in technology-based human resource

development.”, he added.

Palak presented some proposals to the ambassador for collaboration to boost the country’s IT sector. Some areas Bangladesh is exploring include cybersecurity, e-Waste management, and e-Governance.

“We have already sent a proposal to ERD to set up a Bangladesh-Japan ICT University to meet the requirements for performing Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0,” added Palak.

Techwire Asia

APEC leaders list to-dos in ensuring economic recovery

The economic leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) stressed the need to redouble vaccine efforts, ensure job generation, further digitalization and enhance regional supply chain in supporting rebound for business activities.

In a joint statement, the APEC members expressed the urgency of having equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines in order to survive the ongoing pandemic, which has severely impacted economies.

“We recognize the role of extensive immunization against Covid-19 as a global public good. To that end, we will redouble our efforts to expand vaccine manufacture and supply, support global vaccine sharing efforts, and encourage the voluntary transfer of vaccine production technologies on mutually agreed terms,” the regional bloc said.

In addition, the APEC leaders said the health systems in place should be resilient enough to address the current and future related events.

To ensure inclusive growth, the APEC ministers vowed to implement macroeconomic and structural policies aimed at accelerating rebound. These include measures boosting job creation and initiatives enabling women to participate in the economic recovery.

The regional bloc underscored the importance of promoting sustainable financing and recovery as well. “In designing a sustainable recovery, and aligned with global efforts, we reiterate

the importance of economic policies, cooperation and growth that contribute to tackling climate change and other serious environmental challenges,” the APEC members said.

“Given the significant and diverse impact of Covid-19 on our people and businesses, now is a crucial time to pursue sound economic policies to sustain jobs, increase economic productivity, and advance innovation,” they explained.

As such, the APEC member-countries said they will continue to support the digitalization, especially for the micro, small and medium enterprises.

The regional bloc noted the need to establish cooperation on facilitating the flow of data and instilling consumer confidence in digital transactions. “We will support measures designed to foster digital transformation and contribute to bridging the digital divide, including digital literacy and skills,” the organization added.

Meanwhile, the APEC ministers

are also working on ensuring that regional supply chains allow “safe and efficient distribution of Covid-19 vaccines and related goods.” They expressed commitment on cooperating to facilitate the flow of goods and services.

“We must pave the way for the safe resumption of cross-border travel, without undermining efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19,” the APEC members stressed. “We acknowledge the importance of a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment, which can help combat the far-reaching impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

In an event last month, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez urged the MSMEs to maximize the opportunities for international trade in the APEC region. He noted that the MSMEs in the APEC bloc account for only 35 percent or less of direct exports.

Business Mirror

Technology

New material could mean lightweight armor, protective coatings

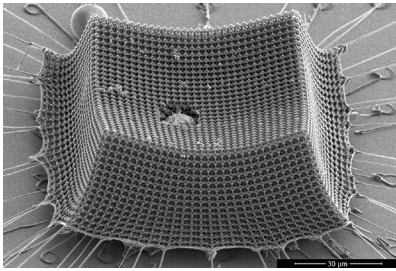
Army-funded research identified a new material that may lead to lightweight armor, protective coatings, blast shields and other impact-resistant structures.

Researchers at the U.S. Army's Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies at

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Caltech and ETH Zürich found that materials formed from precisely patterned nanoscale trusses are tougher than Kevlar and steel.

In experiments, the ultralight structures, called nanoarchitected materials, absorbed the impact of microscopic projectiles accelerated to supersonic speeds.

The research, published in Nature



Materials, found that the material prevented the projectiles from tearing through it.

"The same amount of mass of our material would be much more efficient at stopping a projectile than the same amount of mass of Kevlar," said Dr. Carlos Portela, assistant professor of mechanical engineering at MIT, the study's lead author.

The researchers calculate that the new material absorbs impacts more efficiently than steel, Kevlar, aluminum and other impact-resistant materials of comparable weight.

"The knowledge from this work... could provide design principles for ultra-lightweight impact resistant materials [for use in] efficient armor materials, protective coatings, and blast-resistant shields desirable in defense and space applications," said co-author Dr. Julia R. Greer, a professor of materials science, mechanics, and medical engineering at Caltech, whose lab fabricated the material.

Nanoarchitected materials are

known to feature impressive properties like exceptional lightness and resilience; however, until now, the potential for additional applications has largely been untested.

"We only know about its response in a slow-deformation regime, whereas a lot of their practical use is hypothesized to be in real-world applications where nothing deforms slowly," Portela said.

To help fill this vital knowledge gap, the research team set out to study nanoarchitected materials undergoing fast deformation, such as that caused by high-velocity impacts. At Caltech, researchers first fabricated a repeating pattern known as a tetrakaidecahedron--a lattice configuration composed of microscopic struts--using two-photo lithography, a technique that uses a high-powered laser to solidify microscopic structures in photosensitive resin.

To test the tetrakaidecahedron's resilience to extreme, rapid deformation, the team performed experiments at MIT using the ISN-developed laser-induced particle impact array. This device aims an ultrafast laser through a glass slide. As the laser passes through the slide, it generates a plasma, an immediate expansion of gas that launches the particles toward the target.

By adjusting the laser's power to control the speed of the microparticle projectiles, the researchers tested

microparticle velocities within the supersonic range.

Using a high-speed camera, the researchers captured videos of the microparticles impacting the nanoarchitected material. They had fabricated material of two different densities. A comparison of the two materials' impact response, found the denser one to be more resilient, and microparticles tended to embed in the material rather than tear through it.

To get a closer look, the researchers carefully sliced through the embedded microparticles and nanoarchitected target. They found that the struts below the embedded particle had crumpled and compacted in response to the impact, but the surrounding struts remained intact.

"We show the material can absorb a lot of energy because of this shock compaction mechanism of struts at the nanoscale, versus something that's fully dense and monolithic, not nanoarchitected," Portela said.

Going forward, Portela plans to explore various nanostructured configurations other than carbon, and ways to scale up the production of these nanostructures, all with the goal of designing tougher, lighter materials.

EurekAlert

Finger sweat can power wearable medical sensors 24 hours a day

Small biofuel cells can harvest enough energy from the sweat on a person's fingertips to power wearable medical sensors that track health and nutrition -- and because our fingertips are one of the sweatiest parts of the body, the sensors could be powered all day.

Lu Yin at the University of California, San Diego, and his colleagues created a device that breaks down a dissolved compound in sweat called lactate. It comprises biofuel cells that fit into thin pads that are stuck to the fingertips. They soak up sweat into a thin layer of foam, where an enzyme oxidises lactate in the sweat to create an electrical charge.



Each finger pad can generate 20 to 40 microwatts of power and harvest 300 millijoules of energy per square centimetre during 10 hours of sleep. This isn't enough to run power-hungry devices like smartwatches or mobile phones, but more than enough for lightweight sensors that detect a range of metrics such as heart rate, vitamin deficiencies and glucose levels.

Researchers have created devices that are powered by sweat before, but they needed large volumes of the liquid, such as

when a subject was jogging. The fingertips have the highest concentration of sweat glands on the body and produce continuous charge even if the wearer isn't exercising.

"Even with the minute amount of sweat compared to the sweat you got from a really intense workout, this power is still very sizeable," says Yin. "No matter how clean your hand is, it's very easy to leave your fingerprint everywhere. That's basically the residue of your sweat, with a lot of metabolites. What we did is to take advantage of this."

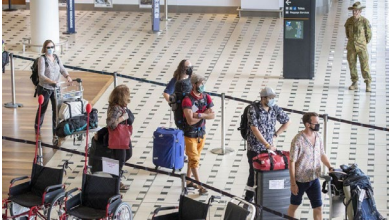
Currently, the enzyme that is key to the reaction begins to break down and become ineffective after two weeks. Yin says that further research is needed to create a stable enzyme that can be used in permanent sensors.

New Scientist

Policy Updates

Australia

Australia to halve arrivals and trial home quarantine



Australia will halve the number of international arrivals it accepts after COVID outbreaks put half the population in lockdown this week.

The country's strict border rules have only allowed Australians and people

with exemptions to enter. From July 14, Australia will accept just over 3,000 people a week - a measure likely to last until next year.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the measure would reduce pressure on the country's quarantine system. Virus leaks from hotel quarantine - which is mandatory for all arrivals - have been the source of numerous outbreaks across the country.

Australia is maintaining a COVID-elimination strategy until it can get the majority of its population vaccinated next year. Just 8% have been vaccinated so far.

Morrison's government has faced criticism for its border policies over the past year, which have extended family separations and made it difficult for many Australians to return.

In April, the government also temporarily blocked its citizens in India from returning during the height of a deadly wave in the South Asian nation. About 37,000 Australians remain stranded overseas.

To mitigate some of the cuts, Morrison said the number of repatriation flights for Australians wanting to fly home would be increased.

Australia will also begin trialing home quarantine arrangements for vaccinated travelers.

Morrison said arrival limits would not be lifted again until most Australians get vaccinated - a goal that will not be achieved until next year due to the country's limited supply of jobs.

BBC

Cambodia

New investment law draft ready to make Cambodia more attractive

Cambodia's Council of the Ministers have approved a new investment law draft in order to attract increased investment flow to the Kingdom and enhance the nation's economic diversification and competitiveness.

The new draft law, which replaces the Investment Law of Cambodia enacted

in 1994, consists of 12 chapters and 42 articles, and was approved by the Council of the Ministers at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Hun Sen on July 9. It will provide incentives to prioritized sectors to foster development in science and technology, job creation, skills training, research, innovation and small and medium enterprises.

The draft law shortens the period of certificate issuing from 31 to 20 working days for business registrations made via the single portal, Single Window Service.

The statement released stated that the draft law sets the strengthening procedures on monitoring and checking

from relevant ministries and institutions through joint one-time inspection as well as sets incentives to qualified investment projects, both tax and non-tax preference, to attract flow-in investment to sectors that Cambodia needs specifically in the context of economic diversification and increasing competitiveness.

The draft law also includes international obligations undertaken by Cambodia to show investors the commitment of the government to protecting investment and providing assurances in accordance with international law.

Khmer Times

Hong Kong

Hong Kong delays plan to ease rules on vaccinated arrivals

The government has postponed its controversial plan to allow fully vaccinated people from places at high risk of Covid-19 into Hong Kong, fearing the move could jeopardise reopening the border with mainland China.

Sources said Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor told her top advisers on July 20 the easing slated to take

effect this week had been put on hold and resuming quarantine-free travel between Hong Kong and the mainland would remain the top priority.

"The chief executive thinks it is still very risky to allow vaccinated residents to return from these 'high-risk' places at the moment, as there were cases with variants from time to time," one insider said. "These imported cases would also affect the border reopening plan with the mainland."

Neither would the city move immediately ahead with a long-awaited travel bubble with Singapore. After pledging in June that the idea would be reviewed this month, authorities said the recent surge in

cases in the country remained a concern and the plan would be revisited again in late August.

The city currently bans arrivals from eight countries - Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa and Britain. Travellers must first stay in another country for at least three weeks before being allowed to enter.

But as the Post reported previously, officials intended to allow in fully inoculated residents and workers from the eight nations provided their jab certification was reliable, as well as unvaccinated students stranded in Britain.

Policy Updates

India

India to provide subsidies for local shippers to win government tenders

India will give financial support to local shippers to help them match the lowest bids offered by foreign carriers in

global import tenders floated by Indian state agencies, an official statement said on July 14.

The move to provide 16.24 billion rupees (\$218.08 million) support over five years is aimed at increasing the number of Indian-flagged vessels and saving outgoing foreign exchange.

The Indian fleet comprises a meagre 1.2% of the world fleet in terms

of capacity, the statement said, adding the share of Indian ships carrying the country's foreign trade had dropped from 40.7% in 1987-88 to about 7.8% in 2018-19.

Higher local taxes and cost of capital add to the operating cost of Indian vessels, making them uncompetitive. The subsidy scheme will not be applicable for vessels older than 20 years.

Reuters

Japan

Japan retracts controversial policy over alcohol-serving restaurants



The Japanese government said on July 9 it will retract its plan to ask financial institutions to ensure restaurants follow the ban on serving alcohol during the latest state of emergency, only a day after it put

forward the initiative as a way to strengthen its anti-coronavirus response.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, the minister in charge of Japan's coronavirus response, unveiled the controversial policy the previous day, drawing criticism that the government was attempting to use lenders to pressure such establishments.

He said the government will share with financial institutions information about their client restaurants that are not complying with the alcohol ban request and want such institutions to ask them to follow the request.

"The request (by the financial institutions) would not be based on law. It is not aimed at restricting financing" to the restaurants, the minister said. Nishimura also said that day that the government will ask alcohol beverage companies to stop

selling drinks to restaurants during the state of emergency.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato, who received complaints about Nishimura's remarks from senior members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, told reporters the government no longer intends to seek the support of financial institutions. Nishimura told him he will retract the policy as it had failed to secure the understanding of the public, Kato said.

Before retracting the policy, Kato had said at a regular press conference, "The point is that we want financial institutions to call for thorough implementation of anti-coronavirus measures," adding, "We would like financial institutions to support (restaurants) in terms of financing."

Kyodo

Korea

South Korea bars fast exercise music

Many people who exercise need good music to get themselves through their workout. But in South Korea, their choice of music had been reduced under new COVID-19 rules.

The country has increased social distancing and travel restrictions to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Now, South Korea has added a requirement that gyms must not play music that is too fast. The government set a limit of 120 beats per minute. Gyms will not be able to play faster music during group exercises.

Health officials say the measure is meant to prevent breathing too quickly or getting sweat on other people. They



wanted to avoid having to close businesses completely, as they have done earlier during the coronavirus health crisis.

The new rules also limit running on gym equipment to no faster than six kilometers an hour. They ban the use of showers at gyms. And they restrict the popular sport, table tennis, to two people on a table, among other measures.

A health official said the government came up with the new rules after considering many different options.

Voice of America

Nepal

Proposed policy to ban small importers sparks individual rights concerns

A government panel has suggested allowing only traders with strong financial credentials to engage in import trade, raising questions if such a policy to weed out small importers would violate their right to do business.

Firms need to state their paid-up, issued and authorised capital while registering with the Office of the Company Registrar, but the Nepal Revenue Advisory Board has suggested issuing import licences only to those individuals or firms that can import goods valued over a certain threshold annually.

Policy Updates



According to the board's report, this provision will limit the number of importers and make it easier to identify them and track their transactions. If only a few resourceful people or firms are involved in the import business, it will be easier to screen their imports, it says.

The report states that when a limited

number of firms import specific products in large volumes, the cost of goods will also come down. With the reduced cost, the tendency among importers of undervaluing the prices of the goods deliberately to pay less tax will also decrease, it says.

In order to address these issues, the report calls for amending the existing commerce policy and other relevant laws. The budget for the fiscal year 2021-22 presented by the outgoing KP Sharma Oli-led government, however, has made no such announcement as suggested by the board.

Experts and officials admit that despite the report's good intentions to ensure proper monitoring of the transactions of importers, the recommendations may infringe on the constitutional rights of individuals to engage in trade. Article 17 of the constitution ensures that Nepali citizens have the freedom to practise any profession, carry on any occupation, and establish and operate any industry, trade and business in any part of Nepal.

Kathmandu Post

Philippines

Philippines relaxes quarantine rules for fully vaccinated travelers

The Philippine government's coronavirus task force has announced new quarantine rules for fully vaccinated individuals entering the Philippines from select countries abroad.

In a press briefing on June 29, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that inbound travelers who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in the Philippines or other countries will now be required to undergo seven days of facility-based quarantine upon arrival, with testing to be done on the fifth day.

The new rules, effective July 1, will cover individuals who were fully



vaccinated in the Philippines regardless of their travel history, and people fully vaccinated abroad who "stayed exclusively" in "green countries" in the past 14 days before arrival.

Roque described "green countries" as those classified by the Philippine health department as low-risk for COVID-19 based on disease incidence rate.

Before this, shortened quarantine protocols announced on June 4 were supposed to cover only people fully vaccinated in the Philippines. But this

had not been implemented because the government was still figuring out how to verify an individual's vaccination status.

A person is considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if it has been two or more weeks since they received a dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine or the second dose of a two-dose vaccine, said Roque.

The individual's vaccine should also be among those granted an emergency approval by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration or included in the World Health Organization's (WHO) emergency use listing.

For individuals allowed to enter the Philippines but are not yet fully vaccinated, current quarantine protocols include 10 days of facility-based quarantine, RT-PCR testing on the seventh day, and four days of home quarantine after leaving the facility.

Rappler

Russia

Russia set to enforce new rules for seizing digital currency

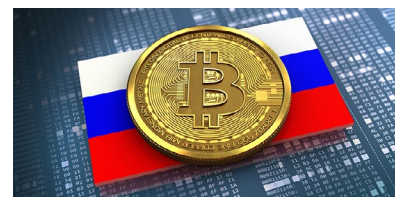
Russia is preparing a new set of rules that would define when law enforcement authorities in the country can confiscate digital currencies, in a move designed to shore up the powers of regulators there.

According to reports in Russian news agency TASS, prosecutors are preparing to enforce powers which could

see them taking control of digital currency found to have been obtained illegally or in connection with crime, in a bid to stem the rising tide of ill-gotten digital currency gains in the country.

At a conference held in St. Petersburg, Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov said the use of digital currency by criminal elements in Russia was a significant issue for law enforcement, and that the authorities required more powers for dealing with those who were using digital currency illegally.

Russia passed its first legislation regulating digital assets last year. Now, the new measures are expected to see overhauls



to both the criminal and penal codes in the country, which will give law enforcement the powers to "apply restrictive measures and confiscation to the virtual assets."

According to Krasnov, a particular problem has emerged around the alleged use of digital currencies for bribes, which is harder to detect than more traditional means of corruption via fiat currency. It comes

Policy Updates

as a spokesperson for Rosfinmonitoring, Russia's financial surveillance authority, suggested there were plans to trace digital currency cash-outs, and to introduce a new classification for code for suspicious digital currency transactions.

Digital currency has also been seen as a tool for raising funds for political and civil activists in Russia, with the crackdown also likely to affect how they use digital currencies to raise funds.

The rules will give the regulator

greater powers for tackling digital currencies in the country, at a time of increasing pressure from regulators across the world intent on introducing stronger regulation to the sector.

Coin Geek

Taiwan

Taiwan extends visa-free entry for Philippines, three other countries

The visa-free treatment of tourists from Thailand, Brunei, the Philippines and Russia will be extended for another year, from Aug. 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced on July 20.

The decision to extend the visa-free treatment of the four countries was made following a review by relevant agencies at a meeting on April 12, MOFA said in a press statement.

The decision was also taken in preparation for the resumption of international travel in the post-pandemic



era, MOFA said.

However, the ministry clarified that the policy is separate from Taiwan's ongoing ban on the entry of foreign tourists due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been in effect since March 19, 2020.

MOFA said it will decide when to reopen the country's borders to foreign travelers for tourism purposes based on the recommendations of the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC).

Under the government's "New

Southbound Policy," which seeks to promote closer exchanges with neighboring countries, the ministry first granted visa-free treatment to tourists from Thailand and Brunei on Aug. 1, 2016.

The privilege has since been extended each year, with the Philippines and Russia added to the list.

Another decision reached after the April 12 meeting was to extend the Project for Simplifying Visa Regulations for High-end Group Tourists from Southeast Asian Countries until Dec. 31, 2022, MOFA said.

Under the project, which was first introduced in 2015, tourists from India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos are allowed to visit Taiwan using electronic visas if they are in a group of at least five and travel via an accredited travel agency.

CNA

Turkey

Turkey lifts restrictions as normalization phase begins

Turkey has entered a new normalization phase, relaxing most of the COVID-19-related restrictions, including nighttime curfews and nationwide lockdowns on Sundays.

The new episode in the country's fight against the pandemic began on July 1 after the government decided to remove the curbs amid the decline in daily virus cases and fast-track vaccinations.

In the normalization phase, all curfews, which had been in effect for

months, will be fully scrapped, and there will be no intercity travel restrictions.

Cafes and restaurants are now allowed to serve people with no limitation on guest numbers in indoor and outdoor areas.

All workplaces and cinemas, which have suspended their activities as part of coronavirus measures, will reopen while restrictions and measures in accommodation facilities will end, although hygiene, mask, and social distancing rules must still be followed.

Concerts, festivals, and youth camps will also be allowed.

Moreover, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca signaled on June 29 that sports matches can be held with a limited



number of fans and in line with COVID-19 safety measures.

In March 2020, Turkey barred fans from all nationwide sporting events to stem the virus' spread. In the 2020-21 season, no fans were allowed to watch sports matches in the venues.

Hurriyet Daily News

Vietnam

Vietnam sets Covid-19 vaccination targets as new curbs unrolled



Vietnam aims to vaccinate 50% of people aged 18 or older by the end of this year and 70% by the end of March, 2022, the health ministry said on July 9, as tighter coronavirus curbs were imposed in more

cities including the country's commercial hub.

After successfully containing the virus for much of the pandemic, Vietnam has since late April faced a more stubborn outbreak that has prompted calls for the government to accelerate its vaccination programme.

The government's latest targets come after it had previously said it aimed to vaccinate 70% to 75% of the country's 98 million population by the end of this year or early next year.

The ministry said on July 9 that it has clinched deals and commitments for 105 million coronavirus vaccine doses, which is lower than the 150 million figure it had stated previously.

Vietnam has so far received around 6 million vaccine doses, mostly under the Covax sharing facility. Nearly 4

million doses have been administered and only around 250,000 people have been fully vaccinated with two shots.

Vietnam's economic hub Ho Chi Minh City began a two-week lockdown on July 9 in the hope of containing the country's worst Covid-19 virus outbreak. Ho Chi Minh City residents are now barred from gathering in groups larger than pairs in public, and people are allowed to leave home only to buy food, medicine and in case of emergencies.

Police have set up checkpoints at city borders and only those with negative test results can get in.

Airlines can carry a maximum of 1,700 passengers to the capital Hanoi per day, the aviation authorities said, while trains between Vietnam's two major destinations have been suspended.

The Straits Times

About CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization (NGO) serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since

its establishment in 1966, CACCI has grown into a network of national chambers of commerce with a total now of 27 Primary Members from 25 countries in the region. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

As an NGO, CACCI is granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations. It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.