



# CACCI Profile

**Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry**

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## 35th CACCI Conference to be held virtually on November 2



The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is holding the 35th CACCI Conference on November 2, 2021, 2:00-4:30 PM Taipei time. The event is co-organized by its Primary Members from Taiwan, the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) and the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC).

With the theme "Sustained and Resilient Growth Through a Robust World Trade", the conference will provide participants the opportunity to virtually meet with international and regional experts who will share their views on how to address the challenges and grasp the opportunities presented by the ongoing transformation in the regional and global trade and investment environment. Speakers and sessions include:

**Dr. Chen Chien-Jen**, Former Vice President of the Republic of China (Taiwan); Academician of Academia Sinica (Taiwan); and Academician of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Vatican), will be giving a Special Presentation on "*Lessons Learned from the Covid-19 Pandemic*"; to share his perspectives on the effectiveness of the measures and other mitigation responses of many countries and what factors may have contributed to the success – or have hampered – their implementation.

**Ms. Priyanka Kishore**, Head of India and South East Asia Macro Services at Oxford Economics, will conduct a session on "*Achieving Sustainable Growth Amidst Challenges and Disruptions in a Changing Global Environment*", focusing on the challenges and disruptions brought about by the pandemic on countries in the region, and their efforts to find innovative solutions to adapt in the so-called new normal that has emerged from the health crisis, and what businesses should do as part of their post-pandemic strategies to assure future growth and competitiveness.

**Dr. Oriol Caudevilla**, FinTech Advisor and Management and Strategy Consultant, will conduct a session on *Digital Currency* and how it is revolutionizing the global trading system

and reshaping the way business is done, and how in general it could fundamentally change the way people use money.

**Dr. Andrew Stoeckel**, Honorary Professor, Centre for Applied Macroeconomic Analysis, Australian National University, will deliver a presentation on the results of the CACCI study on "*Achieving a Successful World Trading System*", which aims to examine the operations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to stress the need for the business community to recommend what reforms are necessary in the WTO and how to achieve them.

Lastly, **Ms. Angela Paolini Ellard**, Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), will be making a Special Presentation on "*Making the WTO More Adaptable to the Economic and Trade Realities of Today*." Ms. Ellard will share her views on how WTO members can work together to address the economic and health consequences brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, what policy responses are needed to get the global economy going again, what challenges are currently faced by the WTO, and what should be done to make the WTO stronger, more agile, and more adaptable to the economic and trade realities of today.

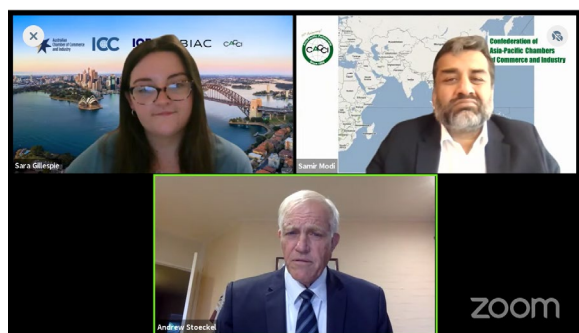
CACCI Vice President Peter McMullin will be moderating the event, while CACCI President Samir Modi will deliver the Welcome Remarks.

To join the Conference for free, please register [HERE](#).

### **In this Issue**

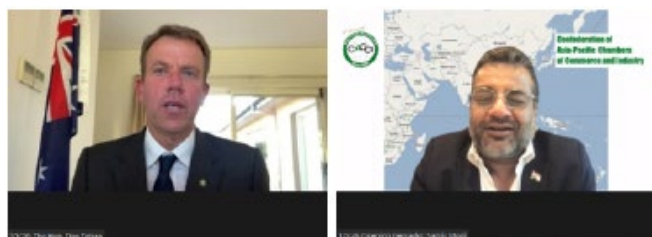
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## CACCI Study on “Achieving a Successful World Trading System” Discussed at the ICC ITPW 2021



This year's ICC International Trade and Prosperity Week (ICC ITPW 2021), which was organized virtually by the ICC United Kingdom on October 18-22, 2021, included a session on the CACCI study on “Achieving a Successful World Trading System”. Held on October 22 at 09:00 AM, London time, the special session was conducted in a fireside chat format and featured CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi; Dr. Andrew Stoeckel from the Australian National University who was commissioned by CACCI to undertake the study; and Ms. Sara Gillespie from ICC Australia.

## CACCI holds webinar on WTO and WTO reforms with Australian Minister of Trade, Tourism & Investment



President Mr. Samir Modi, followed by Minister Tehan's presentation on the topic: “How does Australia see the WTO of the future and what reforms are needed to get there?”

Afterwards, Australian Chamber of Commerce (ACCI) Director for Trade and International Affairs Bryan Clark and Moderator and CACCI Vice President Peter McMullin, led a Q & A session with pre-compiled questions from across the Asia-Pacific region. The session ended with closing remarks by moderator Mr. McMullin.

The October 26 webinar is the first of a series of webinars that CACCI is organizing to provide members the opportunity to understand and have a clear idea of what trade officials in CACCI member countries think of what the WTO should achieve and how to go about it.

Please click [here](#) for the recording of the webinar.

On October 26, CACCI organized a webinar with the Hon. Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment of Australia, on WTO and WTO Reforms.

During the one-hour session, Minister Tehan elaborated on the views and position of his Ministry on the current operation of the WTO, what reforms are necessary, and how to achieve them.

The program began with opening remarks by CACCI

## CACCI holds webinar on “Incoterms® 2020 – Newly Revised ICC Rules for international trade terms”

CACCI organized a one-day webinar on October 6, 2021 on Incoterms 2020, the ICC flagship rulebook which defines the obligations and responsibilities of contract parties in relation to delivery of goods.

ICC Registered Trainer and well-known international trade finance expert Mr. Pavel Andrie, conducted the full-day webinar. A total of 67 registered participants plus other interested persons from Mongolia, Iran, Vietnam and Philippines closely followed the presentation, which focused on the role of Incoterms in sale and other relevant contracts, new changes to Incoterms 2020 from the previous Incoterms 2010, and the practical aspects of using each of the 11 trade (delivery) terms of Incoterms 2020.

Mr. Andrie explained the risks related to each delivery term in depth, both from the seller's and buyer's perspective. Many participants were from banks, trade finance and customer service departments.

The Participants appreciated the practical advice given by Mr. Andrie, who is a trade finance practitioner himself, regarding the documents to evidence the seller's fulfilment of its contractual obligations, related to the delivery of goods. Such knowledge is necessary to properly link the delivery terms to the payment terms, especially when the documentary credit or documentary collection is chosen by the contract parties as the payment method.

Through this webinar, the participants - mainly exporters, importers, traders, specialists in logistics, cargo insurance, bankers and many other interested business people - learned how to keep themselves and their customers safe by being informed on solutions to specific needs, and therefore being protected against technical risks and ambiguities which frequently arise when using Incoterms in daily practice.

# CACCI launches study on “Achieving a Successful World Trading System”



## Eminent speakers at the event



**Samir Modi – CACCI President**

- Executive Director of K. K. Modi Group
- Executive Director of Godfrey Phillips India Limited
- Director of Indoil Industries Limited
- President of Twenty Four Seven Convenience Stores
- Managing Director of Colorbar Cosmetics Pvt. Ltd.
- Executive Vice Chairman of Modicare Private Limited



**Dr. Andrew Stoeckel**

- Honorary Professor, CAMA, Australian National University
- Chief Economist, Centre for Economic and Regional Development, NSW

The world is still reeling under the burden created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The recession has brought the deterioration in world trading arrangements to head, so the G7 noted how existing rules failed to prevent the spread of protectionism, including unfair subsidies, oligopolistic market structures, overcapacities, and export restrictions, it described how ‘the gains from liberalization have accrued disproportionately to the top while leaving many communities and regions behind it.’ It called for ‘root-and-branch reform of the WTO to support open and rules-based trade.’ The world needs economic recovery.

With the WTO system now described as being in “crisis,”

CACCI has investigated to fix the problems within the WTO and commissioned Honorary Professor Andrew Stoeckel from the Australian National University to undertake this work. The resulting study identifies four core problems in the current trading system, and suggests fifteen recommendations aimed at making a material difference to the performance of the world trading system.

These will all be presented and discussed by Dr. Stoeckel, CACCI officers, and other invited experts – including WTO Deputy Director-General Anabel Gonzalez - during a webinar to officially launch the study on October 29, 3:00 PM Taipei time.

Register for free at <https://webinar365.in/cacci>.

## YEGAP Executive Committee meets CACCI President Samir Modi, YEGAP Founder Anna Periquet

Members of the YEGAP Executive Committee met virtually with CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi and YEGAP Founder and Former Chairperson Ms. Anna Marie Periquet on October 18, 2021.

The meeting aimed to provide the YEGAP Executive Committee to brief Mr. Modi and Ms. Periquet on its efforts over the past six months to restructure YEGAP with the aim of making it a stronger, stable, and sustainable in the years ahead and make the Group in a position to pursue its objective of promoting entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific countries.

YEGAP Chairman Mr. Mangesh Lal Shrestha in his Opening Remarks expressed his hopes that, through the meeting, he would hear from Ms. Periquet what her aspirations were when YEGAP was first formed in 2004, and to listen from Mr. Modi on what his vision is for YEGAP and the role it can play in helping CACCI achieve its objectives.

He proceeded to introduce the members of the YEGAP Executive Committee, mentioning first the six Vice Chairmen, with each one representing one of the major geographical regions covered by the CACCI membership (e.g., East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, and Oceania). He also noted that 14 of the 25 CACCI member countries are represented among the 23 current total members the Committee.

Mr. Mangesh informed Mr. Modi and Ms. Periquet that



the YEGAP Executive Committee met five times over the past six months to discuss the restructuring of YEGAP and then presented the new vision mission, core values, 2021-2023 theme and tagline approved by the Executive Committee members, as well as the six committees and their respective chairs.

YEGAP Founder and Former Chairperson Ms. Periquet said that she first broached the idea of forming a Young Entrepreneurs Group in 2004 to then CACCI President Mr. K. K. Modi, the late father of Mr. Samir Modi, during a CACCI meeting in Malaysia. She explained that she was always the youngest delegate in all the CACCI meetings that she attended before (along with her father the late Dr. Aurelio Periquet, one of the founders of CACCI). Hence, as an entrepreneur herself then, she thought of setting up a group of young entrepreneurs from CACCI member countries and bring them together during CACCI gatherings. To her surprise, Mr. Modi endorsed her proposal. Thus, the Committee on Youth Entrepreneurship – as YEGAP was called originally – was formally set up later in 2004 during the CACCI Council Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and its inaugural breakout session was held in February 2005 during the CACCI Council Meeting in New Delhi, India.

After having chaired YEGAP for many years, Ms. Periquet said she then considered resigning from the chairmanship



of the Group to give way to the younger business leaders who were active in CACCI. She met Mangesh Lal Shrestha during the CACCI meeting in Kathmandu and saw his potential, and is therefore very happy that he took the initiative of restructuring YEGAP to make it an even stronger organization. She said that with Mangesh as Chairman and with the new members of the YEGAP Executive Committee, she is confident that YEGAP is in good hands and is definitely on the right track to successfully achieve its objective of promoting entrepreneurship in

the region.

CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi thanked the Officers and Members of the YEGAP Executive Committee for convening the meeting and giving him and Ms. Periquet the opportunity to meet each one of them and to be updated on what the Committee has done to restructure YEGAP and to be briefed on what its plans to do in the next year or so.

Mr. Modi said he looked forward to working closely with the YEGAP Executive Committee to further the success of CACCI

and the business community of the region as a whole, especially the budding young entrepreneurs who have bright business ideas that need to be nurtured, cultivated, fostered and developed. He expressed confidence that - with their continued support and cooperation - CACCI will be able to accomplish a lot over the years ahead, and that CACCI will be relying on YEGAP and its officers in promoting a pro-enterprise spirit among CACCI's younger members whom the Executive Committee members ably represent.

## News Update

### 6th ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Carnival to be held on November 18-21

In conjunction with the Brunei ASEAN Chairmanship 2021, the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Brunei (YEAB) as the Chair of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council (AYEC) 2021 will host the 6th

ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs (AYE) Carnival in Brunei Darussalam in November.

Themed "Reimagining Business in the New Paradigm", the 6th AYE Carnival calls for businesses and young entrepreneurs to overcome the disruptions brought by COVID-19 through digitalization, leadership, collaboration, and inclusive involvement of women in addressing the grand challenges of our times as we adapt to this new normal.

The breakdown of activities during the 6th AYE Carnival are as follows:

- AYE-ABAC Policy Dialogue Forum on Friday,



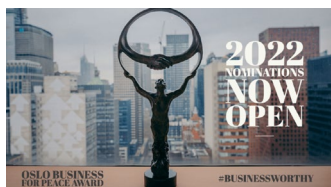
19 November 2021 [for ABAC, AYEC Council Members & invited guests]

- 6th AYE Carnival Forum on Saturday, 20 November 2021 [open to public] - to register you may click: [bit.ly/6thAYECarnival2021](https://bit.ly/6thAYECarnival2021)
- AYE Carnival Virtual Expo on 18 to 20 November 2021 - to notify your interest you may reach out to us via email at [ayec.carnival@gmail.com](mailto:ayec.carnival@gmail.com). Minimal registration fee applies for the booth. Slots are limited and will be on first come first serve basis.

As we are adapting to the new normal, the sessions and expo shall be hosted via an online platform where the link shall be shared closer to the date.

Should you require any clarification, please email [ayec.carnival@gmail.com](mailto:ayec.carnival@gmail.com).

### Nominations Sought for 2022 Oslo Business for Peace Award



Business for Peace Foundation is seeking candidates for the 2022 Oslo Business for Peace Award.

Business for Peace is an international foundation based in Oslo, Norway. Founded in 2007, the Foundation was established with the intention that all business leaders see improving society as their core purpose.

First conferred in 2009, the Award aims to highlight ethical and responsible business practices, and is the highest distinction given to a business leader who exemplifies outstanding

businessworthy behaviour and accomplishments, creating value both for business and society.

There are three evaluation criteria:

#### 1. Being a role model to society and their peers

The Nominee is acting as a role model to the general public and the business community by showing how to achieve long term success by being businessworthy.

#### 2. Standing out as an advocate

The Nominee is an outspoken advocate for the importance of ethical and responsible business, seeking to solve problems and create value for both business and society

#### 3. Having earned trust by stakeholders

The Nominee has earned recognition and appreciation as a business leader by stakeholders in the communities within which the business is developed and cultivated over time.

Following the nomination process, honourees will

be selected by an independent committee consisting of Nobel Laureates in peace and economics.

Candidates can be nominated through the Foundation's global partners: International Chamber of Commerce, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Global Compact and Principles for Responsible Investment. They assist in the global nomination process for the Oslo Business for Peace

Award by searching for outstanding business people who have been able to achieve business success while acting in an ethically responsible way.

For those wishing to submit independent nominations for the 2022 Business for Peace Award, the deadline is 1 November 2021. You may wish to visit [Business for Peace](#) or [ICC](#) for more information and registration for the award.

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### ***COVID-19: East Asia, Pacific face drop in GDP***



The East Asia and Pacific region's recovery has been undermined by the spread of the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, which is likely slowing economic growth and increasing inequality in the region, according to the World Bank.

Economic activity began to slow in the second quarter of this year, and growth forecasts have been downgraded for most countries in the region, the World Bank's East Asia and Pacific Fall 2021 Economic Update said.

While China's economy is projected to expand 8.5%, the rest of the region is forecast to grow at 2.5%, nearly 2 percentage points less than forecast in April, the World Bank said.

"The economic recovery of developing East Asia and Pacific faces a reversal of fortune," World Bank vice president for East Asia and Pacific Manuela Ferro said.

"Whereas in 2020 the region contained COVID-19 while other regions of the world struggled, the rise in COVID-19 cases in 2021 has decreased growth prospects for 2021," Ferro said.

The economies of several Pacific island countries and Myanmar have been hit the hardest, with Myanmar expected to contract 18 percent while Pacific island countries as a group are anticipated to shrink 2.9%, the World Bank said.

Myanmar would experience the biggest contraction in employment in the region and the number of poor people in the country would rise, it added.

"There is no doubt the military takeover [in Myanmar] has led to a disruption of economic activity combined with the civil disobedience movement, which means fewer people are going to work," World Bank chief economist for East Asia and Pacific Aaditya Mattoo said.

The report estimates that most countries in the region, including Indonesia and the Philippines, can vaccinate more than 60% of their populations by the first half of next year.

While that would not eliminate COVID-19 infections, it would significantly reduce mortality, allowing a resumption of

economic activity.

The damage done by the resurgence and persistence of COVID-19 would likely hurt growth and increase inequality in the longer term, the World Bank said.

"Accelerated vaccination and testing to control COVID-19 infections could revive economic activity in struggling countries as early as the first half of 2022, and double their growth rate next year, but in the longer term, only deeper reforms can prevent slower growth and increasing inequality, an impoverishing combination the region has not seen this century," Mattoo said.

The World Bank said the region would need to make a serious effort on four fronts to deal with the rise in COVID-19 cases by addressing vaccine hesitancy and limitations to distribution capacity, enhancing testing and tracing, increasing regional production of vaccines and improving local health systems.

*Reuters*

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### ***Southeast Asian Startup Deals Hit Record Number in First Half***

Venture backers made a record number of investments in Southeast Asian startups in the first half of this year, though the value of those deals declined as investors focus on early stage deals in the region's burgeoning internet scene.

There were 393 investments across the region in the first half, topping the previous record of 375 in the first half of 2019, research from Singapore's Cento Ventures showed. Total capital raised was \$4.4 billion, down from \$5.8 billion a year earlier. The fall is mainly attributable to less outsized fundraising by unicorns such as Grab Holdings Inc. that dominated the region's capital raising in the past as they are now seeking to go public.

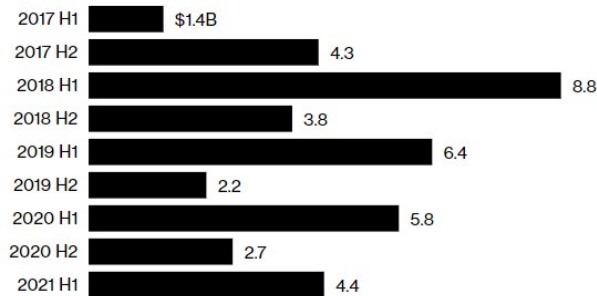
The average deal size fell to \$11.2 million from \$17.7 million a year earlier as investors focused on early-stage investments. Less than 10% of the deals were series C rounds or later, while the vast majority were series B, series A or pre-series A.

In September, a handful of startups announced sizable fundraising rounds. They include Ninja Van, which raised \$578 million and Advance Intelligence Group, which received an investment of more than \$400 million.

India remained the most-funded among emerging markets

## Startup Funding

Southeast Asian tech startups drew \$4.4 billion of investment in the first half of 2021



in the first half with startups there raising \$10.8 billion during the period. Latin America followed suit, raising \$6.2 billion, according to the latest biannual report by the venture capital firm.

Indonesia was the top destination for investment in Southeast Asia, accounting for half of all the capital raised in the first half, followed by Singapore, which attracted 32% of capital raised.

*Bloomberg*

enter the supply chains and export markets and extend that online customer base.”

He was speaking at a forum organized by the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines on October 5.

He said e-commerce in the region has been vibrant with \$2.5 trillion spent via online platforms in 2020, accounting for 64% of the world’s retail digital commerce revenue.

E-commerce provides small businesses, which have been mostly left out in traditional markets, an effective platform to grow their businesses, he said.

The Philippines is among the economies projected to establish a solid pool of consumers and businesses adopting digital channels, along with India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

He said women-owned businesses that are going digital can also boost Southeast Asia’s e-commerce market by \$250 billion, citing World Bank estimates.

Mr. Susantono said wider adoption of financial technology (fintech) in the region will play a major role in expanding financial inclusion, which will also boost the e-commerce sector.

“ADB supports expanding digital finance with a particular focus on reaching the underserved. In the Philippines, we supported cloud-based core banking system with Cantilan Bank to offer financial services in rural Mindanao. This has benefitted small businesses, farmers, women and youth.

The market is starting to accept this emerging technology, he said, with more than 200 digital banks established worldwide since 2010.

However, Mr. Susantono said the region has to adopt reforms to support the fast-growing e-commerce and fintech industries, by increasing investment in cybersecurity, bridging the digital divide, and aligning of regulatory regimes across the region.

The expected 21st century boom in Asia is “undeniable” with China becoming the world’s second biggest economy, coupled with the growing potential of India, Jose Isidro N. Camacho, the vice-chairman for Credit Suisse Asia Pacific, said at the forum.

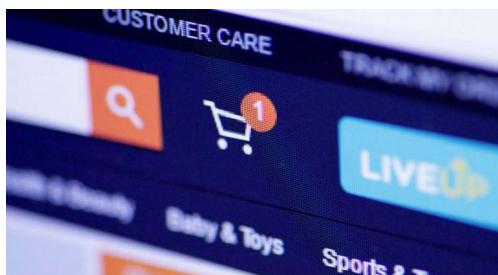
Despite optimism on the digital future of the region, Mr. Camacho, a former Philippine cabinet member overseeing the Departments of Energy and Finance, warned that Asia might struggle in terms of regional integration due to intensifying geopolitical tensions between the US and China.

“I’m afraid and I believe that this conflict will be this generation’s cold war. It will profoundly influence regional and global developments, including the aspiration for an integrated Asia Pacific,” Mr. Camacho said.

“Asian economies like the Philippines will be under continuing pressure from both superpowers to choose sides, whether on trade issues, the choice of technology to adapt, or policymaking in international institutions. The rest of Asia will be confronted, having to make a choice and there will be consequences,” he added.

*Business World*

## Asia-Pacific e-commerce seen integrating region with global supply chains



The high level of development of digital commerce in the Asia Pacific is expected to help businesses more easily integrate with global supply chains and expand their pool of potential customers, according to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) official.

Bambang Susantono, vice-president for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development at the ADB, said: “The business potential for Asia’s e-commerce, integrating regionally and globally is enormous. Businesses will be able to more easily



## ICC UK Organizes International Trade and Prosperity Week 2021



The ICC International Trade and Prosperity Week 2021 (ICC ITPW) will be taking place virtually on October 18-22, 2021 and to be organized by the ICC United Kingdom and supported by over 35 ICC offices worldwide.

Carrying the theme “Resetting the Global Economy”, the five-day event will focus on practical global case studies and initiatives and will share international best practices whilst drawing upon corporate experiences with the aim of providing a set of practical policy takeaways. These will then be promoted widely and fed into the policy forums at the UN, WTO and G20.

CACCI members will be interested to know that this year’s ICC ITPW will include a session on the CACCI study on “Resurrecting the World Trading System” scheduled on October 22, 09:00 AM, London Time. To be held in a “fireside chat” format, the session will feature CACCI President Mr. Samir Modi, Dr. Andrew Stoeckel from the Australian National University, and Mr. Bryan Clark from the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The complete program of the ICC ITPW 2021 is as follows;

### October 18 – Trade Priorities, Trends and Analysis:

The morning session looks at Global Business Priorities, Macro-Economic Trends and the Boardroom Perspective. Featuring C-level corporate speakers, the panel will discuss how boardrooms are looking to reset the international trading landscape and identifying key priorities to build back better.

In the afternoon, the second webinar “Building Back Better: The Covid Challenge” looks at how countries and businesses are operating on a global level in a mixed economy to keep international trade moving.

### October 19 – Climate Action & Sustainable Growth:

In light of the UK presiding the 26th annual UN Conference of Parties (COP26), day 2 of the ITPW Conference focuses on “Climate Action and Sustainable Growth”. It will bring together high-level international speakers from corporates, SME’s and institutions such as Volvo, HSBC, JP Morgan, Yoghurt Barn, BT, International Energy Agency, JTI and many more.

### October 20 – Digital Trade:

Digital transformation is at the forefront of most corporate



boards and breaking down barriers to digital trade is a core focus for the ICC.

The first webinar on day 3 is on “Digital Trade within Africa” and discusses infrastructural challenges, regulatory issues, development of quality manufacturing, and the role of digital trade.

Webinar 2 on “Connecting the Trade System” shall tackle the digital divide, the role of the Digital Standards Initiative and the need of ensuring a standardised international approach.

### October 21 – Human Rights, Tackling the Trade Finance Gap & Cybersecurity

Day 4 tackles three main policy areas, namely:

“**Human Rights – Review of the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights**”, including challenges and opportunities for the next decade of implementation of the UNGPs. Speakers from Walmart, Unilever, Vodafone and more...

“**Enabling SMEs to Access Finance – Removing Barriers to Short-Term Working Capital**”, focusing on opportunity to disentangle the red tape, de-couple trade finance from other forms of high-risk finance and make the case for regulatory reform and unlock fresh economic growth.

“**Establishing a Cyber-Secure Environment**”, addressing industry needs from governments, how industry can collaborate with governments on solutions that are actually effective in daily business operations. Speakers include Google, Microsoft and Anglo American.

### October 22 – ICC Global Alliance Day

The last day will tackle different topics including;

- CACCI Study on “Resurrecting the World Trading System” - To be hosted by ICC Australia in a fireside chat format
- Chambers of Commerce and ICC at Local Level: Allies for the Benefit of Business and Society – To be hosted by ICC Belgium
- Climate Action & Sustainable Growth: Focus on Latin America – To be hosted by ICC Argentina

Please visit [ICC](https://www.iccwbo.org/conferences/icc-international-trade-and-prosperity-week-2021/) for more information and registration (for free).

### ***ASEAN NZ Business Council Reports Key Findings of 2021 ASEAN Trade Survey***



The ASEAN New Zealand Business Council (ANZBC) has issued the key findings of the survey it recently conducted on trading to and within ASEAN.

According to the ANZBC, the survey shows that:

- Respondents have a desire to get more support in building a network of local contacts – When asked what additional support they would like from the government, many respondents mention wanting help in building connections within the region. Additionally, some wish to have assistance on the particulars of the various FTAs and business matters such as tax advice.
- Respondents find it difficult to export to the ASEAN region – Twice as many respondents find exporting to the ASEAN region difficult than easy (56% say exporting to the region is difficult, 25% find it easy). The New Zealand ‘brand’, as well as support from the ASEAN Business Alliance and NZTE, are seen as the best facilitators of trade with the region. However, the level of transparency and the different regulatory and legal systems across ASEAN make it more difficult.
- COVID-19 has had a negative impact on respondents’ experiences trading with ASEAN – Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on respondents’ trade with the ASEAN region. 75% say it had a negative impact, compared to 19% who say it had a positive impact. Being harder to build and maintain client relationships and the lack of travel are the main negative impacts. However, some opportunities have arisen, such as finding new ways of working and in some cases new business opportunities and clients.
- There is scope to improve awareness and understanding of FTAs – The majority of respondents (66%) are aware of AANZFTA, and 50% say they have at least a basic understanding of it. However, there is definite scope to improve awareness and understanding. Currently, only 19% of respondents utilise AANZFTA when trading with ASEAN. Those who do not use it mention that they’re unsure how to and there is the perception amongst some services exporters that the agreement is not relevant to them.

The ANZBC is a member-based business council connecting New Zealand businesses with ASEAN trading partners. It is an organisation which advocates their concerns and provides a network to seek contacts, learn about the markets and be assisted

in many other ways in its members’ ASEAN business efforts.

The ANZBC is a member of the Joint Business Councils of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC). Launched in April 2003, ASEAN-BAC was set up with the mandate to provide private sector feedback and guidance to boost ASEAN’s efforts towards economic integration. Aside from providing private sector feedback on the implementation of ASEAN economic cooperation, the Council also identifies priority areas for consideration of the ASEAN Leaders. Accordingly, ASEAN-BAC’s activities are primarily focused on reviewing and identifying issues to facilitate and promote economic cooperation and integration.

### ***AFBA and FIA Call for Expanded List of Essential Goods***



The ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance (AFBA) and Food Industry Asia (FIA), while welcoming the decision made by the 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers’ (AEM) meeting held on September 8-9, 2021 to cover certain food and agricultural products, is calling for a further expansion of the list to include “parts of essential goods”. This, according to AFBA and FIA, will result in a list of essential goods that would encompass all food, ingredients, raw materials, packaging materials, chemicals and feeds which are critical to keep the food supply chains opened.

The two associations explain that It is important to treat all food as essential, including the inputs and outputs since, considering the complexity of the food supply chain, any disruption to the supply chain could result in domino effect, e.g., food loss, increase in food price and food security risk. Therefore, types of food that are deemed as ‘essential’ should not be limited to complete goods, such as milk, rice, etc., and consideration should also be given to the inputs to the food production, such as ingredients and packaging materials that make up these goods in order to keep up with demands from market, they added

The AFBA and FIA, which are regional associations representing ASEAN’s and Asia’s food and beverage industries, say that it is critical for ASEAN member states, especially during this unprecedented time, to remain focused on advancing trade facilitation by ensuring a smooth flow along the food supply chain and non-tariff measures are non-detrimental in achieving this objective.



### *Lub-rref Bangladesh goes digital with SAP*



Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing or SAP- a Centralized Data Management System Software, was inaugurated at its head office of Lub-rref (Bangladesh) Ltd. on October 10, 2021. Henceforth, all the activities of Lub-rref

(Bangladesh) Ltd. will be performed in a completely digital manner through SAP.

Mohammad Yusuf, Managing Director of Lub-rref (Bangladesh) said, "As per the directives of Hon'ble Prime Minister and Leader of the People Sheikh Hasina, we have gone one step further in managing the digital system in day to day office maintenance. We hope that we will be able to contribute more to the country's economy as a domestic lubricant brand BNO."

On this auspicious occasion Mr. Salauddin Yusuf, Director-Marketing, Dr. Ishrat Jahan, Director, Real Estate and Asset Management and Suhail Ahmed, Head of Corporate Finance and Management, Dr. Khandaker Jakir Hossain, General Manager-Technical & Md. Moshior Rahman, ACS, Head of HR & Admin and Company Secretary were also present.

### *FBCCI to businesses: No excess profit on essential items*



Amid soaring prices of essentials, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Md Jasim Uddin urged businesses not to make excessive profit on essential goods considering the situation.

He said the Covid-19 pandemic has hit the earnings of almost all people, triggering the price hike of essentials, which ultimately added to the woes of ordinary people.

The FBCCI president said this at a views-exchange meeting with importers, wholesalers and traders at the FBCCI office.

He expressed concerns at the discrepancies in pricing of similar goods based on areas and markets. "Suppose a 1kg cucumber is sold for Tk10 at Karwan Bazar while it sells for Tk50 in Gulshan area," Jasim said urging business people to stop this practice.

He said that blame is often passed on to the business community as a whole but every businessman is not a profit monger. "There are some dishonest businesses who always try to cash in on the situation," the FBCCI president added.

The consumers of the country have been suffering from

the soaring prices of essentials, such as sugar, edible oil, and vegetables amid the onslaught of the coronavirus pandemic.

Besides, he said, the price hike of energy and commodities and depreciation of local currency have been fuelling the inflationary pressure on consumers.

*Dhaka Tribune*

### *ACCI calls for renewed generation of reform*



The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry released its own initiative to enhance our nation's standing: Better Australia – Securing the foundations for a stronger and smarter future.

The strategy outlines ACCI's five long-term visions for Australia in the coming decades, focusing on themes of innovation, fairness, sustainability, economic scale and resilience. Further, 10 specific goals are proposed, providing a revitalised agenda that places our nation on the path to future prosperity.

"The challenges that confront Australia will necessitate a renewed generation of economic reform that will look very different from the prescriptions of the past," ACCI chief executive Andrew McKellar said.

"Better Australia is ACCI's contribution to drive public

debate, to propose an ambitious vision for this nation's future, and to outline the specific proposals needed to get us there.

"As the country begins to emerge from the most challenging health and economic crisis in decades, we now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to pursue landmark reform. With the world changing around us, these issues demand strong leadership, or we risk falling behind our competitors.

"Addressing long-delayed tax reform, implementing a plan to decarbonise the Australian economy, creating flexible and fair workplaces with secure jobs, and boosting productivity towards the next industrial revolution will be fundamental issues future governments must contend with."

"The realisation of these ambitions, or the failure to act, will not only determine the strength of our recovery

from the pandemic, but will have immense consequences for generations to come."

"The choice is clear. We can continue to do things the way we always have, at the risk of lowering our standard of living and future prosperity, or we can adopt an ambitious reform agenda, underpinning a stronger and smarter Australia."

*ACCI Media Release*

### ***GCCI President participates in "Caspian Europe Forum" in Berlin***

Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) President Giorgi Pertaia spoke about the special investment potential and opportunities of the Caspian Sea region, including Georgia. The investment environment, challenges and important factors of the region were also reviewed.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce stressed the importance of close cooperation across the region and the role of the EU and German governments in this process.

The forum was attended by German, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Uzbek companies and business support organizations - Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ADB, EBRD, Deutsche Bahn AG, Aktau International



Commercial Sea Port, Alat Free Economic Zone Authority (AFEZA), GTAI - Germany Trade & Invest, Schneired Group, German Agnribusiness Alliance, etc.

The forum was also attended by Catarina Bjorlin Hansen, Caucasus Regional Director for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Susanna Hargitay, Managing Director for Central Asia, Eugene Zhukov, Director General for the Asian Development Bank, The Minister of Transport of Uzbekistan Ilkhom Makhkamov, the Deputy Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan Elnur Soltanov and the Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan Rovshan Najaf.

*GCCI*

### ***Kadin encourages private sector's contribution to Indonesia's NDC***



The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) has encouraged the private sector to contribute to achieve Indonesia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 29% from 2020 to 2030.

Kadin asserted its commitment to involving the private sector to become the agent for applying this policy and plans to integrate it into the cycle of economic activity to support the decarbonization effort.

"Kadin has observed that several domestic, regional, and international parties have conducted the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practice and are keen to partake in the development of renewable energy in Indonesia," Indonesian Kadin's Chairman, Arsjad Rasjid, noted in a written statement.

Rasjid lauded the government's commitment to facilitating the decarbonization effort, such as through the issuance of the Electricity Provision Effort Plan (RUPTL) by the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry and state-owned electricity company PT PLN.

Kadin also observed that several private enterprises were interested in installing solar energy panels as part of the decarbonization efforts, he noted.

He is optimistic that Kadin would encourage greater investment in the solar rooftop value chain in the form of solar panel shapes, power electronics, energy storage, and Engineering-Procurement-Construction (EPC) service.

This is due to the increasingly maturing business model

and payment scheme around the solar energy panel industry.

"This will create a positive feedback cycle that would allow the creation of a green economy or green industry," Rasjid explained.

The role of private sector in the development of renewable energy or decarbonization effort is not only limited to the greenhouse gas mitigation endeavor alone, he noted.

With the right strategy, this effort

can fuel the growth of a new industry and can have a multiplier effect in terms of the benefits to be reaped by Indonesia, according to Rasjid.

*Antara News*

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### ***ICCIMA board of representatives hold talks with industry minister***

The 17th meeting of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) board of representatives was held in the presence of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin, the ICCIMA portal reported.

At this meeting, which was chaired by the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the representatives of the country's private sector raised concerns and problems related to the industry, mining, and trade sectors and offered some solutions in order for the Industry Ministry to consider.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie enumerated some of the



country's economic problems, and said: "The private sector expects the new government to reduce the costs that are imposed on this sector in various ways."

"Preventing unprofessional decisions which are made without consulting experts and considering the private sector views, and facilitating production by reducing transaction costs are some of the

main issues that the private sector expects to be considered in this government," Shafeie stressed.

*Tehran Times*

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### ***Japan Chamber of Commerce supports Taiwan's CPTPP bid***



The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Taipei (JCCIT) supported Taiwan's bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade group, but it also wanted an end to a ban on food imports from areas affected by the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, reports said on Oct. 8.

In the wake of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident which hit northeast Japan in March 2011, Taiwan imposed restrictions on the import of food products from five prefectures in the region, namely Fukushima, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi and Ibaraki.

Presenting its annual White Paper, the JCCIT said that as on previous occasions, it backed Taiwan joining regional trade blocs such as the CPTPP, while also advocating the signing of an economic partnership agreement (EPA) and a free trade agreement (FTA) with Japan, CNA reported.

The conclusion of trade agreements should play an important role in stabilizing Taiwan's economy amid growing threats from China, the business group said. Now that Japan chairs the CPTPP for 2021, Taiwan should not let this opportunity go to fully strive for membership.

The JCCIT also encouraged Taiwan's government to build more power stations in order to meet the growing need for energy resulting from foreign investment in the country.

*Taiwan News*

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### ***Technical regulations biggest challenge for foreign-invested firms: KCCI***

Foreign-invested firms say technical regulations along with fair trade and labor laws are some of the biggest management challenges, the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry said.

Nearly 1 in 2 foreign-invested firms based in South Korea said technical regulations such as certification, tests and inspection were the biggest challenge facing their business, according to a survey conducted by the KCCI with 252 foreign-invested companies.

Technical regulations refer to administrative requirements



designed to test safety and quality of products.

Nearly 1 in 5 firms said the country's commercial and fair-trade laws were one of the biggest challenges while others cited rigid labor laws and the Personal Information Protection Act.

For instance, one foreign-invested company seeking to launch a fashion brand store in Korea has asked to ease the certification process after finding out a decision to ship lighting equipment for its physical store could cost up to billions of won during the certification process, the KCCI said.

As the lights are not sold in the country, they are subject to local technical regulations.

Over 1 in 2 foreign-invested firms said they have invested in Korea to enter the local market, while 15.5% said they see Korea as a strategic point to branch out into neighboring markets.

When asked about the business conditions in the country, 60% responded positively. A similar number of firms also said



they believed the conditions will remain similar in the future, while over 29% were hopeful for an improvement. Some 7% said the conditions could get worse.

On growing US-China tensions, over 8 in 10 companies said they have not been affected. The figure was higher among EU companies -- 90.4% -- compared to Chinese and US firms, 73.3 and 68.8%

respectively.

Citing government data, the KCCI said that investment from EU companies in the country saw a 173.2% year-on-year increase during the third quarter. Investment from US was up 8.6% while investment from Chinese companies was down 15.2%.

Nearly 1 in 2 foreign-invested companies said they want the South Korean government to ease regulations while 23.4% want the government to ease immigration rules, such as COVID-19 quarantine requirements.

*The Korea Herald*

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## ***Businesses urge bilateral trade agreements between Taiwan and US***



At the "Taiwan-U.S. Business Roundtable" held on Sept. 30, representatives from business associations, entities, and the government reviewed implications for the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) negotiations and potential ways of reinforcing Taiwan-U.S. collaborations.

The event was co-organized by the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce, Taiwan (CNAIC) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan (AmCham Taiwan). They issued a joint statement in 2020 urging the governments of Taiwan and the U.S. to begin bilateral trade agreement (BTA) negotiations.

Since then, the relationship between both countries has improved, which proves the importance of the joint statement, AmCham cited CNAIC Chair Lin Por-fong as saying. He added that as Taiwan's second largest trading partner, the U.S. is also

an important source of foreign investment — yet the lack of tax agreements may affect investments for both Taiwan and the U.S., UDN reported.

Specifically, Lin said the tax rate for Taiwan businesses to invest in the U.S. is as high as 30%. Meanwhile, businesses that invest in the U.K. enjoy a 5% tax rate, and in Japan, 0%, per UDN.

AmCham Taiwan Chair C.W. Chin said Taiwan-U.S. relations have entered a special moment, during which the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened the two countries' friendship through reciprocal donations of face masks and vaccines between both sides.

Business executives discussed the potential for collaboration between Taiwan and the U.S. in several fields. These included semiconductors, communication and information, 5G technology, medical technology, electric vehicle, power, and chemistry.

AmCham reported that Senior Director of the Institute of Information Industry (III) Chen Tzu-ang said Taiwan's industries complement those in the U.S., especially in the semiconductor field. Taiwan's advantage lies in manufacturing, packaging, and testing, while the U.S. has always led design and market development.

*Taiwan News*

## Member Personalities

### *KCC Elects Ernest Yuen as Its New Chairman*



The Kowloon Chamber of Commerce (KCC) has elected Mr. Ernest Yuen as its new Chairman for 2021-23 during its recent election.

Mr. Yuen is a seasoned law practitioner with major areas of practice on civil litigation, commercial litigation, commercial law and conveyancing.

He has also been devoted to the local community by holding different key positions, including the Life Member, Supervisor and Vice Chairman of KCC, Vice President and Legal Consultant of The Yuen Clansmen's Association and

Council Member of Kowloon City District Civil Education Campaign Organising Committee.

Mr. Yuen graduated from University of Toronto, Canada with the Bachelor of Commerce in 1985 and obtained the Bachelor Degree of Laws from China University of Political Science and Law in 1999.

In his capacity as CACCI Honorary Treasurer from 2018 to the present, Mr. Yuen had been actively supportive of CACCI by joining various CACCI Conferences and Presidential Visits. Under the leadership of Mr. Yuen, CACCI looks forward to more opportunities of cooperation and exchanges with KCC in the future.

## Special Features

### *Global Food Supply Chains Are Being Overwhelmed*

*By Richard Wilding and Emel Aktas, Cranfield School of Management*

Strawberries at Christmas: an image that epitomizes consumer fantasies from the global food supply chain. Hidden behind the haze of food supply “magic” is the reality of increasingly pressured resources relying on global flows of container shipping and air freight. A fraught and sometimes fragile system that brings us Chilean blueberries, Mexican avocados, Argentinian blackberries, sugar snap peas from Zambia and roses from Kenya.

Food retailers and consumers have become used to a settled landscape, a global network that has kept moving, based on predictable demand and familiarity when it comes to the direction of flows of goods. We've become confident that we'll always find what we're looking for on the store shelves.

#### **The Huge Dislocation in Food Supplies**

The biggest shock and the biggest lessons for food supply chains have obviously come from the COVID-19 pandemic. The global crisis resulted in a huge dislocation of the system and an ongoing legacy of disruption, displacement and uncertainty. The foundations of that settled picture of supply chains have been moved around or have fallen apart.

During the height of COVID-19, societies around the world were limited by lockdowns in their spending on foods, in restaurants and other food outlets. There was lower demand for foods combined with a decline in availability because of affected logistics and lack of staff. In turn, farms and producers were limiting their operations and cutting back on unnecessary costs. There were even campaigns to encourage people to eat crops that



would otherwise go to waste — Belgians were encouraged to eat more fries to tackle the potato mountain.

Now, we're experiencing the other end of the tsunami as the ocean of renewed demand rolls in, overwhelming the food supply system.

The latest figures for European imports of food suggest increases of more than 130% compared with December 2020.

Restaurants have opened up; events are taking place. Freed from distancing restrictions and curfews, people want to be out and spending money to make up for lost time.

Container shipping is out of sync and struggling to cope with renewed demands.

Pre-pandemic, the costs to send goods to China were almost nothing, because otherwise, firms were sending back empty containers, generating bizarre anomalies, such as how it would be cheaper for French mineral water to be sent to China rather than the short hop across the channel to the U.K.

But now, the extraordinary breaks in demand have meant containers are not following conventional flow patterns and not always returned to the locations where most goods have typically been produced. They are like supermarket trolleys scattered around the extremities of the car park.

We're seeing spikes in container shipping prices due to renewed demand and messy distribution, particularly for the food sector and its need for specialist temperature-controlled containers.

Container costs between China and North America now average \$17,970, up 1,250%. Prices are also up 850% from China to Northern Europe. Similarly, costs of air freight were kept to

## Special Features

a reasonable level because goods were transported along with passengers — people up top, goods below. Costs rocketed while flights were limited, and they continue to be affected by the slow return to more “normal” levels of travel.

### Climate Change Will Create Further Disruption

Climate change and the more regular occurrence of extreme weather events are going to disrupt this kind of stability, as a matter of course, in terms of ruined crops, water supplies and impact on livestock. A Chatham House report suggests yields of staple food crops will decline by almost a third by 2050. This year, for example, there have been lower yields of coffee beans, meaning higher prices and lower-quality products are coming.

The world’s largest producers of durum wheat, Canadian farmers, saw their usual yields reduced by half this year and pasta prices are expected to rise steeply. More farmers and other producers will be looking to focus their business around where they can find the greatest financial security, shifting to more resilient foodstuffs, meaning some types of produce will become scarce, and some regions will potentially move away from agriculture entirely.

### What Does a Better Food Supply Chain Look Like?

We’re heading from a “pre-new normal” stage into a “new normal,” or what should most constructively be seen as a “new better.”

There are obvious lessons from the demand tsunami that can help members of the food supply chain internationally to focus on resilience and adaptability. The challenge is making the transition and navigating the ways in which the necessary changes to the system will impact everyone, meaning new attitudes and approaches in producers, manufacturers, distributors and consumers.

There will always be a level of reliance on global flows of food products — just in terms of reflecting the reality of where different types of produce can be grown. But there will also need to be more near-shoring, on-shoring and multi-shoring to reduce exposure to risks.

Lower transport costs, smaller carbon footprint, fewer touch points, more control. But just because a country wants to onshore, of course, doesn’t mean it can. There will be difficult issues around infrastructure, skills, labor and know-how, as well as climate and soils. Where there is strong market demand and investment for localized food production, ingenuity and innovation will follow.

### Touchless Agriculture is on the Horizon

The food sector will need to think cleverly to find ways to minimize waste in logistics, to get more from every food mile. For example, in Australia, that might mean a product like wine is transported in large boxes for local bottling. More distributed manufacturing rather than large factories; more 3D printed food. Smarter collaborations between businesses and across sectors to share the best use of logistics operations.

New technologies being trialed mean a “touchless” agriculture from farm to fork — foods planted, monitored and picked via AI and robotics — is on the horizon.

Any radical new model of food supplies has to be based on holistic decision-making. As societies, we can’t keep insisting on, and benefiting from, supply chains structured solely around issues of efficiency and cost. There needs to be attention to the trade-offs between planet and people.

We can easily stop buying roses from Kenya, but that will mean lost jobs and livelihoods. Sustainability in the system doesn’t only mean net zero carbon dioxide, but what is workable in terms of the bigger social context. We can live with fewer food choices, but not without jobs. The poverty created by the collapse of food-related economies is only ever likely to lead to more production and supply disruption as a result of extremism and civil unrest.

### Building Resilience as Consumers

For consumers to want to contribute toward sustainability and security, we need to be more resilient as consumers. That means learning to be more realistic about seasonal availability.

Do we really need strawberries and asparagus at Christmas in the northern hemisphere?

If we do, then we should expect them to come with a heavy price tag to reflect supply chain truths. And we need to become used to having fewer choices, just six types of pasta rather than the usual 20. Fewer exotic, specialized food treats.

The greatest risk to this post-pandemic, climate-conscious world would be for consumers to expect a return to the old normal, to fall back into old habits. The spiral toward more supply chain fragility and supply shocks would only intensify again.

*Brink News*

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## 3 Ways for Companies to Achieve Net Zero – and Stay Profitable

*By Mike Peirce of Climate Group and  
Simon Glynn of Oliver Wyman*



Transitioning to net zero is such a daunting task that companies often assume it is impossible to achieve while maintaining their profit margins. This leads many to focus on low-hanging fruit and short-term solutions: they offload emissions onto others by divesting high-carbon emitting businesses like mining minerals, processing meat or financing oil companies, or they create “islands of green” within their company — for example, sourcing all electricity from renewables.

It can be beneficial for businesses to start off by focusing



## Special Features

on here-and-now emissions reductions. In the long term, however, it's not enough. Switching to renewables-sourced electricity is a good way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. But according to calculations we have made across 12 regions and 22 industries, it will amount to less than a third of what will be required to reach net zero. Ultimately, companies will have to redesign their business models to reduce emissions.

The good news is that we found mounting evidence that it is possible for corporations to transition to net-zero business models profitably, especially when compared with a future of inaction. Companies that ignore or put off these opportunities may be caught unprepared as customers, investors and policy makers increasingly require them to reduce carbon emissions.

We spoke with representatives of 27 major corporations across a broad range of industries and regions, and found that many are already discovering ways to resolve the perpetual trade-offs between commercial and climate agendas. Our report "Getting Real" shows that companies are making progress when they approach this issue with the more ambitious goal of reducing emissions across the full range of activities needed to create their product or service. Here are three of many practices we identified that help:

### 1. Reduce Emissions Across the Whole Value Chain

For many businesses, most emissions — and the potential for climate action — lie in "scope 3 assets". These are not owned or controlled by the reporting organization, but contribute indirectly to the company's value chain. To truly reduce emissions successfully, companies have to take action on these scope 3 emissions. One food and drink processor we interviewed, for example, is investing in thousands of net-zero dairy farms. A mining company supplies steelmakers with ore blends that demand less energy in the blast furnace. One fiber optic cable manufacturer has actually invested in extending the scope of its business from cable-making to the whole value chain of electrification.

### 2. Tackle the Root Causes

The places where the big emissions happen are often not the most effective places for action. We found that companies are tracking emissions to find their root causes, either within their own business or along the value chain. One parcel delivery company, for example, reduces emissions in package delivery through fleet electrification and routing optimization — but it also provides better information and control to the people receiving packages, so that they can anticipate and redirect a delivery, reducing the number of delivery attempts. Big Tech companies measure power efficiency down to the code level in their AI and Cloud deployments and work with chip manufacturers to minimize energy consumption in the use of their products.

### 3. Don't Automatically Defund High-Carbon Business

Investors are often tempted to increase their portfolio of low-carbon activities by simply rebalancing their allocation of capital. However, a more effective approach when it comes to actually incentivizing reduction is to invest in activities that currently cause high carbon emissions, while setting out a clear and urgent pathway to change. Our research found that of the

more than \$100 trillion investment the transition will require, 70-80% needs to go into some of the hardest-to-abate sectors. Some activists also now recognize this logic and are shifting from demanding divestment to demanding a managed transition of high-carbon businesses.

We found an example of this in the mortgage sector. Selling mortgages for homes that are already energy efficient improves the carbon metrics of a bank's mortgage book, but "green mortgages" don't reduce emissions. They are a first step that may draw consumers' attention to energy efficiency. The next step is to finance home retrofits, which will have a much greater decarbonization impact.

Similarly, lending can be used to finance effective transition plans. Some banks are continuing to lend to fossil fuel companies with the view that they will transition with their clients, and that transition will require capital. It will of course be vital for the credibility of these initiatives that the path of change delivers the pace and scale required by the science.

The lesson is that the easiest, most-obvious ways to reduce a company's carbon footprint will not lead all the way to net zero. Too much focus on this low-hanging fruit might distract from more fundamental measures. To get to a net-zero world, companies need to engineer emissions out of their entire business system, including their supply chain and customers' use of their products.

*Brink News*

## Product & Service Councils

### *Asian Council on Tourism*

#### How tourism players can navigate the new norm



*Thien Kwee Eng, chief executive, Sentosa Development Corporation recounts key lessons gleaned from the pandemic*

To many of us in the travel industry, it sometimes feels like it was a lifetime ago when the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Covid-19 outbreak a pandemic in 2020. For almost two years now, the tourism industry has had to make stark choices: adapt or become irrelevant.

Even though we now see countries and cities reopening their borders cautiously, the realm of travel has changed significantly. Here in Singapore, the evolution of safe management measures also illustrates that the leisure sector and businesses in general will have to continue to stay agile.

While challenging, we need to look beyond today's

situation and push forward. As we journey towards a new future of travel and live with Covid-19 as an endemic disease, it is timely for organisations to reassess and take stock before looking ahead to tap on new areas of opportunities. I offer some examples from Sentosa.

### **The need for sustainability**

A critical area to be addressed by our industry is sustainability. In many ways, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call for more action to build a sustainable future, and is set to catalyse a shift in travel desires and leisure preferences.

For instance, Booking.com's 2021 Sustainable Travel Report has highlighted the increasing emphasis that travellers are placing on sustainable travel, with 83 per cent of respondents indicating that sustainable travel is vital, and 61 per cent sharing that the pandemic has influenced them to want to travel more sustainably. This means we can expect sustainable leisure offerings to become increasingly important to our guests, and that sustainability is essential – from both an environmental and business perspective.

Already, at Sentosa, we have seen a stronger spotlight on health and wellness, as well as an increasing demand for sustainable and responsible leisure options. For instance, we see our guests increasingly being drawn to our island's heritage and nature offerings, from where they can better understand the importance of conservation. Elsewhere, Google has also begun to offer information on eco-certified hotels and carbon emissions of flights.

This higher consciousness of sustainability is a welcome shift. With the multiple guest touchpoints in the leisure industry, we are in a great position to tap on this consciousness, to lead and inspire the global community to take action. To tap on this demand, we will also progressively launch a series of new sustainability-themed tours by the end of this year, where guests can immerse themselves in the unique heritage, biodiversity and nature in our surroundings, and gain a deeper appreciation of conservation and sustainability.

### **Collaboration elevates the industry**

Another important factor in the

industry's growth is collaboration, as the old notion of "competition" may no longer be valid today. The pandemic has shown how it is important for our industry to collectively leverage on each other's strengths and expertise to navigate these uncertain times.

The Sentosa community, for instance, has come together to launch unique insider experiences and curate various bundles and deals across dining establishments, attractions and hotels, which could also be adapted for tourists and MICE audiences at a later stage. We have also teamed up with like-minded brands, such as Brewerkz to launch four destination-inspired carbon-neutral beers, bolstering our decarbonisation efforts and extending our reach to the retail audience on mainland Singapore.

Collaboration goes beyond such leisure offerings too. As part of our Sustainable Sentosa strategic roadmap, Sentosa Development Corporation and diverse business establishments in Sentosa have collectively launched the Sentosa Carbon Neutral Network, harnessing each other's networks and knowledge as we transform Sentosa into a carbon neutral destination and a globally recognised sustainable tourism destination.

### **Continue to invest in understanding consumers**

Ultimately, with the ups and downs in the trajectory of the pandemic, consumer perceptions and expectations will change. Businesses therefore need to continue adapting and investing in understanding consumers even better, so as to develop well-informed, insights-driven solutions. Such consumer insights provide a basis for businesses to rethink and redefine products and services, while identifying growth opportunities.

With mass international travel resuming in fits and starts, it is also timely for leisure and tourism players to innovate, experiment, and seize new opportunities, to drive repeat visits and consumption among locals.

Apart from pushing ahead with new developments on the island, Sentosa, for one, has rolled out an array of smaller-scale programmes – in view of restrictions on large-scale events – at more frequent

intervals throughout the year. These range from intertidal walks and heritage tours, to a series of archery, yoga and Muay Thai by the beach experiences – which were fully booked within days. Among business establishments on the island, the Royal Albatross tall ship has also launched a cruise specially designed for dogs and their fur-parents, complete with customised meals, making it a world's first. We have also seen the advent of "daycations" all across Singapore.

Extending such new and refreshed experiences can help boost consumers' curiosity, to entice more to venture out and explore what Sentosa and Singapore have to offer.

If there is anything the pandemic has shown the tourism industry, it is that adaptability and being agile are fundamental to our sector's survival. The recent challenges in Singapore's reopening has signalled to us that the road to recovery will be a long and winding one. We must therefore continue to collaborate, innovate, and keep up with evolving consumer behaviours as we reimagine the future of travel and leisure together.

*TTG Asia*

### ***Asian Council on Food and Agriculture***

#### **Singapore advances agritech yet again with newest NUS facility**

Singapore and agritech may sound like a strange combination of words to some, but there's a good reason for this — the nation is (pre-emptively) addressing food security and a lack of self-sufficiency.

The densely-populated Southeast Asian nation only has 1% of land dedicated to agriculture. However, it does have a surprisingly thriving agricultural sector, despite the lack of land — much less arable land — for farming crops.

Tech advancements coupled with sensible strategies to develop the agricultural sector are poised to bear fruit over time.

Specifically, the government

wants the republic to become Asia's "urban agrifood tech hub", and also aims to achieve its "30 by 30" goal — which is to produce 30% of the population's nutritional needs locally, by 2030.

To achieve this, the government has been investing in intensive research and development (R&D) into agritech and high-productivity innovation.

As expected of a cosmopolitan, technologically advanced nation, the growing agritech industry in Singapore is taking a cutting-edge twist to food production.

According to the UNDP, the application of modern technologies aims to increase production yield, improve food quality, and promote sustainability in the agri-food value chain in Singapore.

### Efforts to boost agritech in Singapore

Last month, the NUS Agritech Centre was established by the Singapore Science Park. Powered by NUS Enterprise, it is the latest in its slew of innovation and incubation facilities

The NUS (National University of Singapore) Agritech Centre, housed in the Cavendish building, is a place where researchers and entrepreneurs, among others, can work on challenges, experiments, and market-based solutions to develop Singapore's agricultural sector.

The NUS Agritech center is designed to support start-ups from growth to post-harvest, building capabilities in serving up urban farming food options from lab to table.

The center is one of the first in NUS to offer specialized support for agritech startups focused on using technology and tools to develop and create a conducive infrastructure and environment that promotes urban farming innovation and production.

Another NUS Enterprise incubation facility, the NUS Enterprise@Singapore Science Park, will further support Singapore's agritech dreams through supporting agritech startups and enterprises with specific foci.

These include food technology, connected devices, and environmental and health solutions, with a "demo deck" to accommodate prototyping.

### The NUS Agritech Center

The 800 square meter center comprises five "Grow Zones" in various sizes; two "Precision Climate Zones", a "Multipurpose Zone" that can be converted in-situ to recycle wastewater or as a cultivation area; a "Technical Zone" with germination chambers and specialized lab equipment for high-accuracy analysis, as well as "Wet and Dry Washing Zones".

Its features are aimed at accelerating competitive research and technology translation by startups, and include:

- A combination of support for applied plant science, IoT, data analytics, and engineering
- Facilities for multispectral imaging
- Sustainability in urban agriculture

- Enablement of wastewater recycling

Parameters such as temperature, humidity, CO<sub>2</sub>, oxygen, pH, plant nutrients, and lighting can all be precisely controlled and monitored from anywhere with an internet connection. Real-time quantitative description of a plant's physiological, anatomical, biochemical, and ontogenetic properties may also be accessed.

The center will also facilitate the collection and monitoring of power consumption data for individual subsystems. This is especially important for machine learning — for example, to detect opportunities for energy savings and training AI to detect early failure warnings in the subsystems.

Its enablement of wastewater recycling will also promote water conservation for the validation and translation of filtration technology.

*Techwire Asia*

## Asian Council on Health and Education

### APAC leaders underscore importance of data, new tech in future-proofing health systems

The first keynote panel discussion at the HIMSS21 APAC Conference centred on building future-proof health systems.

Dr. Hyeoun-Ae Park, emeritus dean of the Systems Biomedical Informatics Research Center at Seoul National University in South Korea, and Bruce Liang, CEO of Singapore-based Integrated Health Information Systems, shared immediate term priorities for their respective health systems around digital and population health.

HIMSS President and CEO Hal Wolf and Axel Baur, senior partner at McKinsey Hong Kong, also joined the panel and offered recommendations on how Asia-Pacific health systems can start becoming sustainable.

For a sustainable health system, a data-driven approach with the support of new technologies is crucial, Dr Park said.

Real-world evidence derived from the deployment of advanced technologies, such as AI and cloud-based computing, can help care providers and policymakers create informed decisions when responding to the needs of their population in the future.

According to Wolf, these new technologies, especially AI and machine learning, enable health organisations to perform predictive modelling to know what anomalies or abnormalities could occur from an individual patient level to an aggregated level.

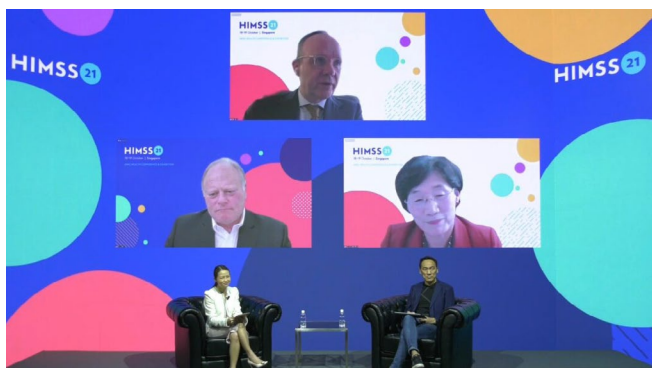
He emphasised: "We [need] to have the information [and] background at a population health level and down to the individual level to.. identify these anomalies when they occur, and preferably in predictive modeling to get ahead."

Liang also stressed the importance of putting in place foundational blocks for a sustainable health system, one of which is around data and technology. Health systems must be allowed to integrate and share data with one another, which then empowers them to provide care based on a patient's unique needs.

South Korea is currently dealing with data interoperability issues. Several national health IT initiatives by the government involve data sharing, such



## Product & Service Councils



as health information exchange, personal health records, EMR certification and "data-driven hospitals". In these projects, Dr Park said data standards are needed to enable interoperability.

Moreover, for a lasting health system, Liang said, there must be solutions for holistic team-based care which "goes beyond the classic EMR" for all population health actors. "Because the future of health

is about actually improving health outcomes and managing wider determinants of health," he explained.

Singapore has built a "solid" foundation for health digitisation through its EHR that cuts across public and private healthcare, as well as care settings. "It helps in [the] continuity of care; very essential to the team-based care concept."

Reflecting on the situation of

APAC health systems, Baur mentioned that the region is still tackling very basic problems of access and financing.

In order to create care access for millions of people, he suggested that organisations set up intelligent omni-channels. They could also look at population data to systematically predict and prevent the onset of major diseases, another big health challenge for the region.

In South Korea, another immediate-term priority is to improve patient experience at hospitals by introducing a "smart and connected system," Dr Park shared.

The HIMSS21 APAC Conference took place on 18 and 19 October. All sessions can be accessed on-demand by registering here.

*Healthcare IT News*

### CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council

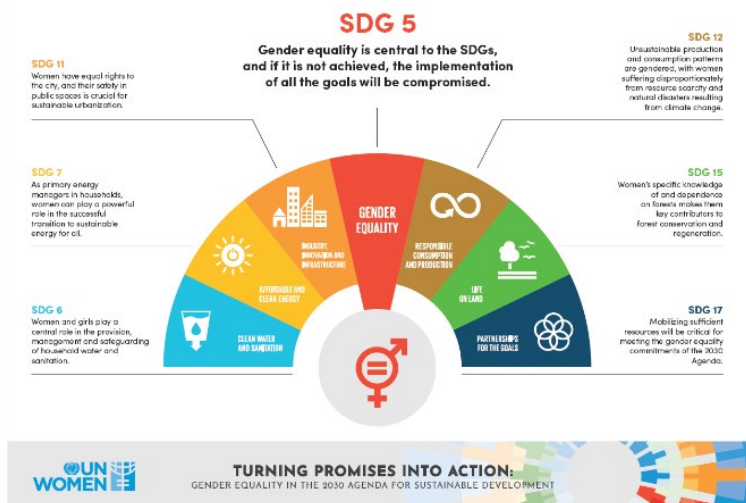
#### Why the world needs to invest in female climate entrepreneurs

In the fight against climate change, entrepreneurship and innovation – known as "greentech" – are essential. Women are more affected by climate change than men, and yet greentech is currently a male-dominated field; in Canada, only 1 in 10 greentech business founders are women and only 19% of greentech startups have at least one female founder. When it comes to creating climate solutions, the female perspective is sorely lacking.

Investing in female entrepreneurs would generate higher returns for society as a whole, as women invest more of their income in their families compared to men. And as female-founded businesses tend to employ 2.5 times more women than male-founded businesses, empowering female entrepreneurs would also mean that more women could access job opportunities.

Female entrepreneurs are more likely than their male counterparts to

innovate to address social needs, and women also score better than men in key skills such as leadership, problem-solving and innovation. Venture capital funding in climate tech is currently growing five times faster than the overall venture capital funding, indicating the high level of demand for this area of innovation. If women were able to access positions of leadership in this field, it would help to create wealth and reduce the gender wealth gap.



*A female perspective is necessary when coming up with climate solutions (UN Women)*

#### Challenges faced by female entrepreneurs

Access to capital is a key challenge faced by female entrepreneurs, with evidence showing that they are discriminated against by banks. In 2017, only 2% of venture capital funding in the US went to all-female-founded startups. A study by Harvard, MIT and Wharton School showed this gender bias: when the same idea was pitched by a male and a female voice, two-thirds of investors picked the

## Product & Service Councils



male voice. This bias could be a product of the fact that 88% of decision-makers in venture capital firms are men.

Women face other disadvantages, too. In Asia and the Pacific, studies have shown that women do almost four times more unpaid care work than men, which means they have less time and energy to reskill, work extra hours and network. Greentech is also STEM-oriented and the STEM sectors are dominated by men with only 5% of leadership positions in the UK tech sector held by women. The problem

starts at the education level, with only 3% of women in the UK saying a career in tech is their first choice. The lack of female role models is also an obstacle for young greentech entrepreneurs.

### How can we address the gender disparity in climate entrepreneurship?

#### 1. Incubators and accelerators

Many startups fail at the initial stages. Incubators and accelerators can provide mentoring, resources, space, networking opportunities and access to capital. Women often lack networking opportunities and joining accelerator programmes can allow them to meet key stakeholders. Climate startups can face unique challenges, such as the return on investment being long term, and changing government regulations and policies. Accelerator programs can help female entrepreneurs secure valuable advice and support to overcome these challenges.

#### 2. A drive to recruit women in the tech and green sectors

Many entrepreneurs begin by

working in a company, and later start a business based on their experience. If the greentech sector employs more women, they will build experience and confidence to start their own businesses. In the US, only 24% of workers in the tech sector are female. At the greentech giant Tesla, 83% of leadership positions are held by men.

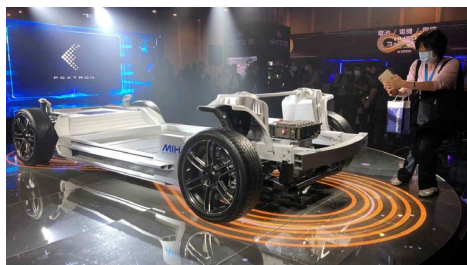
#### 3. A drive to appoint more women to the boards of venture capital firms and banks

Only 9% of the venture capitalists investing in tech startups are women, less than 2% of bank CEOs are women, and only 5.3% of board chairs globally are held by women. Having more women in these positions would help to minimize unconscious gender bias. Deloitte's Board Ready Women is a commendable initiative that looks to support women who aspire to serve on boards of public companies. Female participants get advice from experienced board members, help in developing their board profiles and important networking opportunities.

*World Economic Forum*

## Investment & Joint Ventures

### Foxconn and Thailand's PTT aim to rule EV market in Southeast Asia



Thai oil and gas group PTT signed a joint venture deal with leading contract electronics producer Foxconn to make electric vehicles, propelling Bangkok's strategy to turn Southeast Asia's second-largest economy into the region's top manufacturer and exporter of EVs.

The state-owned PTT and the

Taiwanese manufacturer look to produce EVs and related parts as early as 2023.

PTT President and CEO Auttapol Rerkpiboon anticipates production will begin in two to three years with 50,000 vehicles annually, as the partners look to reach 150,000 units per year. The venture will invest \$1 billion to \$2 billion over five to six years for a plant in Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor special zone, with a research and development facility as part of the project.

According to a statement, PTT's wholly-owned subsidiary Arun Plus will hold a 60% stake in the venture company, while Foxconn's wholly-owned affiliate Lin Yin takes up the rest. The company is expected to complete the registration process by the fourth quarter of 2021. Registered capital will not exceed 3.22 billion baht (\$98 million).

*Nikkei Asia*

### Japan's JERA to invest \$1.58bn in Philippine utility Aboitiz



Japanese power generator JERA is investing \$1.58 billion in the leading utility company in the Philippines, Aboitiz Power, as it hopes to benefit from growing electricity demand in the country while making a transition from coal to cleaner energy.

JERA, a joint venture between Tokyo Electric Power and Chubu Electric Power, has signed an agreement to purchase shares from Aboitiz Power's parent

## Investment & Joint Ventures

company Aboitiz Equity Ventures and its affiliate companies. JERA will own about a 27% stake in Aboitiz Power.

The Japanese company hopes to benefit from growing energy demand in the Philippines. Aboitiz Power has a target to increase power generation from its current 4.6 gigawatt, including facilities under construction, to 9.2 gigawatt by 2030, of which 50% would be renewable energy. It wants to reduce the share of coal-fired power plants, which make up more than

60% of its current capacity, with renewable energy and liquefied natural gas.

As demand for LNG power grows in the Philippines, JERA hopes to share its LNG procurement know-how with Aboitiz. JERA will also consider offering its technologies in thermal power plants, as well as working with Aboitiz on renewable energy projects.

In Japan, JERA is working on technologies to use carbon-free alternatives such as ammonia and hydrogen in thermal

power plants. In the long term, JERA will consider introducing such technologies in Aboitiz's power plants.

According to JERA President Satoshi Onoda, "We need to be involved because LNG alone or renewable energy alone cannot drive decarbonization effectively" in the Philippines, if the country also hoped to grow its economy, he said. JERA has been expanding its renewable energy portfolio, being involved in wind energy projects in Japan and in Taiwan.

*Nikkei Asia*

### Bezos Bets on Indonesia's Mom-And-Pop Shops with Investment in Ula



Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has joined the latest funding round for Indonesian startup Ula, the first such investment in Southeast Asia for the world's second-richest person.

Bezos participated in Ula's Series

B funding through Bezos Expedition, the billionaire's family office that manages his personal investments including aerospace company Blue Origin.

Ula's latest round, which raised \$87 million, was led by Prosus Ventures, Tencent and B-Capital. The latest investment values the company at \$490 million, according to Venture Capital Insight.

Investors have been pouring money into Indonesian tech companies that aim to modernize the country's traditional mom-and-pop shops, known as warungs, by bringing them online. Ula previously managed to secure a \$10.5 million seed round in June 2020 and a \$20 million Series A round in January.

"We launched in 2020, with a single-minded mission to empower small,

neighborhood retailers with technology to increase their income. We take a long-term approach to solve the underlying problems of traditional retailers by investing in technology, supply chain and data-enabled credit offering," said Nipun Mehra, Ula's cofounder and CEO.

In the twenty months since Ula launched, the company has grown to now offer over 6,000 products and serves more than 70,000 traditional retail stores on its platform.

Ula said it plans to use the new funding to expand its presence across Indonesia and explore international expansion across Southeast Asia. It also plans to expand its buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) offering, as well as build local supply chain and logistics infrastructure.

*Forbes*

### Pakistan's QisstPay Raises Funds Ahead of South Asia Expansion

Pakistan and Kazakhstan agreed to enhance the trade and economic ties for promoting the concept of regional connectivity and economic integration in the region.

Kazakhstan Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin called on the Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan to discuss bilateral economic cooperation in the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Both sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and discussed key regional issues, said a press release issued here.



The Minister expressed that regional cooperation and economic integration were effective ways to unleash economic opportunities, and further highlighted that there was huge potential for enhancing bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.

He particularly emphasized the importance of regional connectivity and Pakistan's pivotal position in providing the shortest access between the land-locked

Central Asian States and the Arabian Sea.

The Minister highlighted that Pakistan would be a regional hub for transit trade and investment opportunism in the near future. He also stressed on establishing direct air linkages between the two countries.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Islamabad, Yerzhan Kistafin underlined the importance of regional integration and connectivity with Central Asia and Pakistan which would help to unleash economic opportunities in the region through enhanced trade, investment and tourism.

He said that presently, the level of economic cooperation is below the potential of both countries and stressed on enhancing business-to-business contacts through the



## Investment & Joint Ventures

private sector.

He also said that the President of Kazakhstan has accepted the invitation to visit Pakistan next year. In order to enhance bilateral economic cooperation, he also proposed to hold the next meeting

of the Kaz-Pak Inter-governmental Joint Commission on 23rd November, 2021 in Almaty.

He apprised that three working groups on economic cooperation, energy and transportation have already been

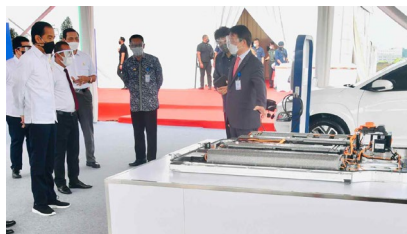
established to prepare the proposals for the upcoming Kaz-Pak Inter-governmental Joint Commission.

*Daily Times*

### Hyundai and LG start building \$1.1bn EV battery plant in Indonesia

South Korea's Hyundai Motor Group and LG Energy Solution kicked off the construction of a \$1.1 billion electric vehicle battery plant in Indonesia, which President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo hailed as marking the country's shift away from resources toward technology.

LG Energy CEO Kim Jong-hyun said the factory will churn out "next generation" lithium-ion battery cells using the company's new NCMA technology, with production expected to start in 2024 and output to be exclusively used by Hyundai and its affiliate, Kia. NCMA refers



to nickel, cobalt, manganese and aluminum-based battery cells containing 90% nickel, which LG said offer a competitive edge in performance and price by using less cobalt and adding aluminum.

The factory will sit on a 330,000 square-meter plot of land, about a two-hour drive from Jakarta. It is expected to produce 10 GWh worth of lithium-ion battery cells annually when fully operational, or enough for more than 150,000 EV batteries.

Hyundai, meanwhile, is building an automobile factory nearby, with production slated to commence next year.

Indonesia's investment minister and the head of the Investment Coordinating Board, Bahlil Lahadalia, said the battery plant is part of a \$9.8 billion plan signed with LG Energy last December to develop an integrated battery industry in Southeast Asia's largest economy through partnerships with several state-owned enterprises.

The plan includes the ongoing construction of a nickel smelter in North Maluku Province in eastern Indonesia and a project to build a cathode precursor and recycling facility in Central Java Province that might break ground near the end of this year.

*Nikkei Asia*

## Economic Cooperation

### Paraguay holds leather, shoe expo with Taipei aid



Paraguay last month held its first footwear and leather goods exposition as part of Taipei's plans to help stimulate growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the diplomatic ally, the International Cooperation and Development Fund said.

Paraguay is one of Taiwan's 15

diplomatic allies.

SMEs make up 50% of Paraguay's GDP, fund Deputy Secretary-General Alex Shyy told a news conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei.

About 99.7% of the businesses in Paraguay are SMEs, including 97% of micro-enterprises with 10 or fewer employees, he said.

The government in 2019 launched a program to improve the Paraguayan government's capacity to assist SMEs and foster 14 key industries, including leather, dairy, textiles and ready-made clothing, and mate drinks, Shyy said.

Paraguay is known for its animal husbandry, and its beef products are available in Taiwan, he said.

However, it imports about 80% of the leather shoes sold in the country, indicating problems in the manufacture and supply chain of footwear, Shyy said.

The fund worked with the

Paraguayan government to organize the expo to promote the country's leather industry, which is the focus of this year's efforts, he said.

The expo on Aug. 27 was attended by Ambassador to Paraguay Jose Han, Paraguayan Minister of Industry and Commerce Luis Castiglioni and other officials, he added.

For the show, the fund asked emerging Paraguayan designers to create 200 products made of leather to make the expo more appealing to retailers, Shyy said, adding that 19 firms obtained purchase orders at the exhibition.

To boost Paraguay's footwear industry, the fund helped local designers improve the quality and design of their products, encouraging them to blend traditional culture into their designs and cater to young consumers, he said.

Out-of-fashion models was one of the reasons Paraguayan consumers did not

## Economic Cooperation

buy locally made shoes, he added, citing a survey conducted by the fund.

To boost online shoe sales amid

the COVID-19 pandemic, the fund also introduced digital marketing tools to Paraguay and joined forces with local

unions to improve the resilience and competitiveness of local firms, Shyy said.

*Taipei Times*

### Pakistan, Kazakhstan agree to enhance trade



Pakistan's buy-now, pay-later startup QisstPay has raised \$15 million in early stage investment, ahead of expanding to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

MSA Capital led the round

with participation including from Global Founders Capital, Fox Ventures and First Check Ventures. The Islamabad-based company wants to enter other South Asian markets within six months.

The company that serves retailers including the local units of Samsung Electronics Co. and Xiaomi Corp. plans to have 1,000 merchants by next month and a million customers by next year using its service.

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer Jordan Olivas, 32, moved to Pakistan after finding a large population that hadn't been transformed by technology. "We want to be in all the places where people think it's a tough place to start a business," Olivas said in an interview.

QisstPay's investors include

strategic angel investments from Simone Mancini and Johnny Mitrevski, founders of Scalapay, and Pakistan's third-largest lender United Bank Ltd. The startup has done two fund-raising rounds, including equity and debt, since starting in April.

"Pakistan is one of the most often overlooked countries when it comes to fintech investments," said Tim Chen, general partner at MSA Capital. "However, it's also one of the countries with the most potential."

The world's fifth-most populous nation is seeing record money flow into its startups with more than \$268 million this year, higher than the past six years combined, according to Crunchbase and Invest2Innovate data.

*Bloomberg*

### UAE, India look to double trade to at least \$100B over five years

The United Arab Emirates and India are seeking to more than double non-oil trade to at least \$100 billion over five years as the Gulf Arab state works to deepen ties with fast-growing economies beyond the Middle East.

The two governments are set to start talks on an economic pact aimed at boosting business, investment and jobs, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani Al Zeyoudi said on a visit to New Delhi for talks with Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

"Both sides have drawn up a very aggressive and ambitious time-frame and aim to conclude negotiations by December 2021," Goyal said at a press conference on Wednesday. "We hope to sign formal agreements in early 2022."

Zeyoudi said representatives from the UAE's sovereign wealth funds — some of the world's biggest — will be part of a delegation set to meet with Goyal next week. An executive of Abu Dhabi's state oil company, Adnoc, is part of the delegation

currently in India.

Earlier, Goyal said the countries will focus on sectors including petrochemicals, textiles, jewellery, medical equipment and fintech. Investments between the two countries are already flowing. With an eye on food security, groups from the UAE, a desert country that relies heavily on imports, committed \$7 billion in 2019 to set up a "food corridor"

and invest in Indian agriculture.

Abu Dhabi wealth fund Mubadala invested \$1.2 billion in India's telecommunications provider Jio Platforms in June 2020, and India's Reliance recently announced an investment of \$2 billion in Abu Dhabi's TA'ZIZ Industrial Chemical Zone.

*Al Jazeera*

### UK-Taiwan trade meeting focuses on cooperation in energy and technology

The 24th annual U.K.-Taiwan Trade Talks were held on Oct. 18 with the aim of further deepening bilateral trade partnerships in fields such as energy, agriculture, financial services, and technology, according to the British Office Taipei.

The virtual conference was co-held by Taiwan Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs Chen Chern-Chyi and U.K. Minister of State at the Department for International Trade Penny Mordaunt.

Mordaunt, who took office in September, noted that the two sides had constructive discussions on several issues, including agriculture, offshore wind power, pharmaceuticals, and financial services.

She said the U.K. has a strong trade relationship with Taiwan, which is one of the U.K.'s key markets in Asia, and business opportunities continue to grow in the East Asian country.

The British government is pleased to see British companies continue to share their expertise in the offshore wind energy sector to support Taiwan's energy transition, Mordaunt said. She added that the annual Taiwan-U.K. Energy Dialogue this July has also led to collaboration on floating wind

## Economic Cooperation



turbines for offshore wind power.  
Chen said that the U.K. has been

an important economic and trade partner for Taiwan in Europe and that the two nations have made significant progress in discussing bilateral cooperation and related issues through trade talks over the years.

The deputy minister emphasized that both countries should seize the opportunity to further enhance their trade relations.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the U.K. is Taiwan's third-largest

trading partner in Europe, with trade between the two sides reaching US\$4.7 billion (NT\$169 billion) from January to September this year. In terms of investment, Taiwanese businesses invested US\$3.3 billion in the U.K. through August this year, while British businesses invested US\$10.7 billion in Taiwan, ranking second among European countries after the Netherlands.

*Taiwan News*

### APEC finance meeting reflects region's delicate lean forward

APEC finance ministers have agreed to use all available policy tools to address recovery from Covid-19 and support equitable access to the Covid-19 vaccine.

New Zealand Finance Minister Grant Robertson chaired the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation virtual meeting from Wellington on October 22.

He said economic activity in the Asia-Pacific region has begun to rebound and vaccination rates are rising, but the recovery from the pandemic had been uneven. In particular, tourism, businesses, women and indigenous peoples continue to be disproportionately impacted.

In a collective statement, the group noted that the spread of new variants of Covid-19 posed risks to the region, including the risk that containment measures that had ended could be reintroduced. This was combined with "insufficient rates of vaccination", inflation pressures and supply chain problems.

On the plus side, the region's GDP was expected to grow by more than 6 percent this year, and there had been "accelerated adoption of digital technology" that was opening up more accessible financial services.

But the group warned: "We will only overcome this health and economic emergency by accelerating equitable access to safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable Covid-19 vaccines".

"We recognise the role of extensive immunisation against Covid-19 as a global public good. ...We will step up 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."

Robertson said the meeting reinforced the fact APEC countries have the strategies and tools to drive economic recovery from Covid-19 while also tackling climate change and improving lives.

"As we work to bring the pandemic to an end, we must not lose sight of the broader challenges affecting our region, including climate change and inequality."



The group discussed policy tools that could be used to make resources available to transition towards a more economically sustainable and lower carbon, as well as aligning wider spending and tax policies with aspirational policy objectives.

Despite the complexity of the region's economies, overarching gains and stability could be fostered by comparing policies, actions and outcomes, and encouraging coordinated cooperation in key areas, the ministers said.

*Radio New Zealand*

## Technology

### Plant-based jet fuel could reduce carbon emissions by nearly 70%

Currently, the global aviation industry produces around 2-3% of all human-induced carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and is responsible for 3.5% of global warming. In order to reduce the carbon footprint of the aviation sector, researchers around the world

are increasingly looking for sustainable alternatives to traditional aircraft fuel.

One of the latest alternatives comes from University of Georgia researchers. The team has developed sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) from a type of mustard plant that can replace petroleum-based aviation fuel and reduce carbon emissions by up to 68%.

The team, led by University of Georgia scientist Puneet Dwivedi, estimated the break-even price and life cycle carbon

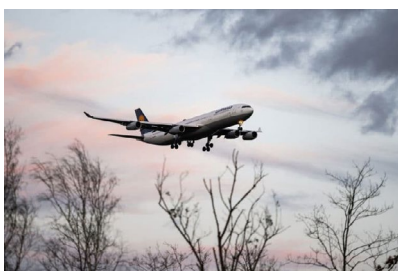


## Technology

emissions of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) derived from oil obtained from Brassica Carinata, a non-edible oilseed crop.

The latest growing number of SAF studies are aimed at providing a less demanding alternative to aviation fuel. For example, Rolls Royce conducted its first tests of 100% sustainable aviation fuel in a business jet engine earlier this year. Then, there are other alternatives such as liquid hydrogen and ammonia fuel; researchers also developed technology to convert waste plastics into jet fuel ingredients.

The new aviation fuel study comes after U.S. President Joe Biden proposed a sustainable fuel tax credit as part of the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge, which brings federal agencies together to



scale up the production of SAF nationwide. With his new proposal, Biden set the goal of a 20% drop in aviation emissions by 2030 and achieving a fully zero-carbon aviation sector by 2050. The proposed tax credit requires a 50% reduction in life cycle carbon emissions, which the University of Georgia's aviation fuel exceeds.

In addition, the price for

producing Carinata-based SAF ranges from \$0.12 per liter on the low end to \$1.28 per liter, which is lower than the petroleum-based aviation fuel of \$0.50 per liter when current economic incentives are included in the analysis. Carinata can also be grown in the 'off' season, which means it does not trigger food versus fuel issues. Additionally, according to Puneet Dwivedi, growing Carinata provides all the cover-crop benefits related to water quality, soil health, biodiversity, and pollination. His current research focuses on modeling the economic and environmental feasibility of producing and consuming Carinata-based SAF across Georgia, Alabama, and Florida by taking a supply-chain perspective.

*Inceptive Mind*

## Policy Updates

### Australia

#### Australia, PNG to end asylum seeker offshore processing



A longstanding deal that saw Australia detain asylum seekers in an offshore camp in Papua New Guinea will be scrapped, the two countries announced.

Under Australia's hardline immigration policies, migrants attempting to reach the country by boat have for years been sent to detention centres on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island and the Pacific nation of Nauru.

Australia and PNG announced their so-called "regional resettlement arrangement" would officially end on December 31. But it does not spell an end to Canberra's much-criticised approach to migrants who arrive by sea, after Nauru previously committed to continuing to accept Australia's asylum seekers.

Manus Island was quietly emptied of detainees in late 2019 but Refugee Action Coalition says about 100 people remain in Port Moresby.

In a joint statement, Australia and PNG said that finalising their deal would realise "a long-shared objective". "From 1 January 2022, the PNG government will assume full management of regional processing services in PNG and full responsibility for those who remain," the statement said.

"PNG will provide a permanent migration pathway for those wishing to remain in PNG — including access to citizenship, long-term support, settlement packages and family reunification."

Those who want to leave PNG will be transferred to Nauru or resettled in a third country, it added.

Australia's policy of turning away women, children and men fleeing war zones and detaining them in Pacific camps has been widely condemned by refugee advocates, rights groups and the United Nations.

Hundreds of others are believed to have been resettled in the United States under a deal between Australia and then-US president Barack Obama.

*AFP*

### Bangladesh

#### Bangladesh releases draft air pollution control rules



The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change recently shared the draft of the Air Pollution Control Rules, 2021. The Rules have been drafted as per the power conferred upon the Government under Section 20 of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995. As stated in the Preamble of the draft Rules, they have been formulated with the objective of preventing, controlling and reducing air pollution in order to protect the environment and public health.

The draft Rules lay down certain functions to be carried out by the Department of Environment (DoE) in order to address air pollution.

The DoE is directed to conduct countrywide air-quality observation in order to ensure that the standards and measures

set under the Rules are implemented and based on its observations shall issue warnings and encourage the people to take protective measures against pollution.

The draft Rules also direct the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority or the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation or other licensing authorities to ensure, during granting or renewal of license – such conditions of emission as has been set by the DoE. The role of the local government institutions has also been highlighted in the draft Rules.

A National Executive Council is to be established, directing and supervising all relevant governmental bodies in relation to their functions under the Rules.

Failure to comply with the directions under the Rules, failure to comply with the standards laid down under the Rule, willful con-compliance with the directions made pursuant to the Rules are all deemed punishable offences

The draft Rules do a good job of laying down the range of functions to be undertaken by the DoE. It envisions

collaboration across different public authorities which may require more detailed rules of procedure to be translated to practice. The draft Rules also highlight some of the gaps in the primary Act – many of the functions of the DoE or its DG are subject to government approval. The Rules also repeat the same redress mechanisms of the 1995 Act which leave in the hands of the DG the absolute discretion to provide compensation or allows for the institution of criminal proceedings.

*The Daily Star*

## Cambodia

### Cambodia lifts ban on flights from three Asian countries



Cambodia has lifted the ban on direct incoming flights from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines as it prepares to reopen the economy in phases with the Covid-19 situation largely under control.

A Health Ministry statement said the decision followed a directive from Prime Minister Hun Sen to all relevant ministries and institutions requesting a review of the possibility of resuming flights with some countries from ASEAN. The ban on international flights was first imposed on Aug. 11, 2020, to contain the pandemic.

The decision came as the daily number of Covid-19 cases continued to fall, and as the country continues reopening in the wake of a successful rollout of its vaccination program ensuring most of the population have been inoculated against the virus.

Quarantine measures for Cambodian or international travelers have also been relaxed. Cambodian and foreign investors, technical staff, officers in charge

of official development projects, diplomats and government officials including their families will need to quarantine for three days.

Cambodian and foreign travelers, in general, will need to quarantine for seven days and those who are not yet fully vaccinated against the disease will have to quarantine for 14 days.

The government has also resumed issuing tourist visas, while Thailand and Vietnam have announced that Cambodians would be allowed to enter their respective countries by air with a new vaccine passport. However, issues remain in regards to the number of scheduled flights.

*UCA News*

## India

### Government sets up expert panel on tobacco tax policy



The government has set up an expert group led by a senior official in the health ministry to prepare a comprehensive tax policy proposal covering all tobacco products from a public health perspective.

The nine-member panel is led by Vikas Sheel, additional secretary in the

health ministry and includes representatives of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, NITI Aayog, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), revenue department's Tax Research Unit, WHO country office for India, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP).

The mandate of the group includes analyzing current tax structure of all forms of tobacco, including smokeless tobacco, and suggesting various tax rate models for consideration in the preparation of FY23 and future Union budgets. The idea is to have a road map for reducing tobacco demand as per World Health Organization's (WHO's) plans.

There has not been any major increase in tobacco taxes since the introduction of GST in July 2017 and all tobacco products have become more affordable over the past three years. The total tax burden (taxes as a percentage of final tax inclusive retail price) is only about 52.7% for cigarettes, 22% for bidis and 63.8% for smokeless tobacco.

This is much lower than the WHO recommended tax burden of at least 75% of retail price for all tobacco products. According to the WHO, raising the price of tobacco products through tax increases is the most effective policy to reduce tobacco use. Higher tobacco prices decrease affordability, encourage quitting among users, prevent initiation among non-users, and reduce the quantity consumed among continuing users.

*Mint*

## Indonesia

### Indonesia passes major tax overhaul bill, VAT to rise next year

Indonesia's parliament approved a law for one of the country's most ambitious tax overhauls, including raising VAT next year, a new carbon levy and cancelling a planned corporate tax cut.

The law is aimed at optimising revenue collection and improving tax

compliance, after state coffers took a big hit this year and in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said the new fiscal measures will increase next year's tax revenue by around 139.3 trillion rupiah (\$9.80 billion), taking the tax ratio of Southeast Asia's biggest economy to 9.22% of GDP, from 8.44% without the new law.

The law calls for the value-added tax (VAT) rate for sales of nearly all goods and services to be raised from 10% now

to 11% next April and to 12% by 2025. It also scraps a planned corporate tax cut and introduces a higher income tax rate for wealthy individuals, a new carbon tax and a new tax amnesty programme.

All political parties but one in parliament approved the legislation.

The new tax measures would add less than 0.5 percentage point to headline inflation and have little impact on economic growth, the minister said.

*Reuters*

## Japan

### Japan OKs plan to push clean energy, nuclear to cut carbon



Japan adopted a new energy policy that promotes nuclear and renewables as sources of clean energy to achieve the country's pledge of reaching carbon neutrality in 2050.

The new basic energy plan, adopted by the Cabinet just in time for the climate summit in early November, calls for drastically increasing use of renewable

energy to cut fossil fuel consumption over the next decade as Japan pushes to meet its ambitious emissions reduction target.

Japan has been undecided over what to do about its nuclear power industry since the 2011 Fukushima plant disaster. It now says reactor restarts are key to meeting emissions targets as Japan tries to step up in the global effort against climate change.

The 128-page plan compiled by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry says Japan should set ambitious targets for hydrogen and ammonia energy, carbon recycling and nuclear energy. It also calls for promoting offshore wind power and use of rechargeable batteries that have potential for growth.

The changes in the plan are meant to achieve the carbon emissions reduction target announced in April by former Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. His successor, Fumio Kishida, a backer of nuclear plant restarts, took office this month.

Japan has pledged to reduce its emissions by 46% from 2013 levels, up from an earlier target of 26%, to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Japan says it would try to push the reduction as high as 50% to be in line with the European Union's commitment.

The energy plan says renewables should account for 36-38% of the power supply in 2030, up from the current target of 22-24%, and that newly introduced fuels such as hydrogen and ammonia should comprise 1%.

The target for fossil fuel use was slashed to 41% in 2030 from 56%. The plan said Japan will reduce dependence on fossil fuel without setting a timeline. It said Japan will abide by a Group of Seven pledge earlier this year to stop providing overseas assistance for coal-fired generation projects that lack emissions reduction measures.

*Associated Press*

## Korea

### South Korea plots course to scrapping COVID curbs by early 2022

South Korea unveiled on October 25 a three-phase strategy to get back to normal from the coronavirus with all limits on gatherings and distancing gone by February, after it achieved a goal of vaccinating 70% of its people on the weekend.

The scheme begins on November



1 and is due to run until Feb. 20, by when all distancing curbs will be scrapped except for mask-wearing mandates, a government health panel said.

South Korea has been largely successful in managing the pandemic

without the lockdowns and death rates seen in many other parts of the world, largely through intensive testing, tracing, distancing and masks.

In the first phase of the plan, all operating-hour curbs on restaurants, cafes and other businesses will be dropped, though nightclubs will still have to close by midnight.

Visitors to high-risk venues, such as indoor gyms, saunas and karaoke bars will have to be fully vaccinated, while private gatherings in the capital, Seoul, and surrounding areas can include up to 10



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people regardless of vaccination status.

Currently, gatherings of up to eight people are allowed if a group includes four fully vaccinated people.

Authorities will focus on weekly

hospitalisation and mortality rates rather than on daily new COVID-19 cases and people with only mild symptoms will be allowed to treat themselves at home.

South Korea's latest wave of

infections has brought far fewer serious infections than earlier outbreaks, with many older and more vulnerable people now vaccinated.

*Reuters*

### Philippines

#### Government cuts quarantine time for fully vaccinated inbound travelers



The Philippine government has shortened the quarantine period for inbound travelers who are fully vaccinated against

COVID-19.

From Oct. 8, fully vaccinated travelers from “green” or “yellow” list countries need only to undergo facility-based quarantine until the release of their negative COVID-19 swab test results which will be taken on their fifth day, Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said.

After which they will be required to undergo home quarantine until their 10th day of isolation.

Meanwhile, unvaccinated, partially vaccinated individuals or those whose vaccination status cannot be verified or confirmed will be required to undergo facility-based quarantine until the release of their swab test taken on their 7th day.

If the tests turn negative, they will then be required to undergo home

quarantine until their 14th day.

According to previous guidelines of the IATF, inbound travelers from countries classified under the “green list” qualify for seven-day facility-based quarantine instead of 10 days.

Those coming from countries considered as “yellow risk” must undergo a 14-day quarantine of which 10 days will be spent at a quarantine facility and four days at home.

For foreign nationals, Roque said they shall be required to secure their own pre-booked accommodations of at least six days for the fully vaccinated; and at least eight days for the unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, and those with unverified and unconfirmed vaccination.

*Philippine Daily Inquirer*

### Taiwan

#### Taiwan relaxes mask policy

The Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) announced on Oct. 17 that Level 2 restrictions will be extended until Nov. 1, but beginning Oct. 19 people taking pictures indoors or out, or taking part in outdoor sports, can go mask less — but should carry a mask.

Although Level 2 restrictions will remain in place, CECC head Chen Shih-chung said that certain mask policies will be relaxed, CNA reported.

People should still wear a mask at all times when outside, but those who



engage in outdoor sports, take personal or group photos indoors or outdoors, or work in open areas such as fields, fish farms, mountain forests, and the beach for the agriculture, forestry, fishery, and animal husbandry industries.

Despite this new policy, Chen said that people who meet these stipulations

should still carry a mask on them. This is in case they experience COVID symptoms or if social distancing cannot be maintained.

For indoor gatherings, including conferences, exhibitions, and wedding banquets, the maximum number of people is 80. However, if there is a social distance of at least 1.5 meters between each person, there can be more than 80 people, CNA cited Chen as saying.

Meanwhile, the maximum capacity for outdoor gatherings is 300 people, he added. Chen said that venues such as karaoke bars, dance halls, nightclubs, clubs, bars, and “barbershops” offering sexual services will stay closed for now.

*Taiwan News*