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Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Sessions with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and 11th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 108, 13th Waning of Waso 1383 ME

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Thursday, 5 August 2021

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Govt fully operates import processes of medical supplies



THE Ministry of Commerce currently imposes temporary import licence exemptions for medical supplies to control the COVID-19 and offers services to import the materials via the border trade camps daily.

Moreover, the ministry is working with the relevant departmental officials to facilitate the importation processes during public holidays as per the notifications and SOP.

A total of 3,357 oxygen concentrators arrived at Yangon International Airport while 211 oxygen concentrators at International Jetty yesterday. The three bowsers carrying 58 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 8 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders),

9 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 4,751 empty cylinders, 4,326 home oxygen concentrators, 35,168 PPEs and 55 tonnes of masks were also imported via Muse, Myawady, Chinchwehew, Kengtung and Kawthoung trade camps on the same day. These materials were imported by 55 vehicles of 32 companies.

In August, 191 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 39 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 47 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 24,349 empty cylinders, five generators, 27,139 home oxygen concentrators, 135,942 test kits, 143,622 PPEs, 8 tonnes of gloves and 238 tonnes of masks were allowed to be imported by 201 vehicles.

In July, 717 tonnes of



The MoC exempts medical suppliers from temporary import licence through land borders daily.

liquid oxygen, 567 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 114 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 69,146 home oxygen concentrators, 8 oxygen plants, 11 oxygen generators, 4 oxygen concentrators, 322,878 test kits, 1,104 tonnes of masks and 182,975 PPEs were allowed to be imported by 749 ve-

hicles. The Ministry of Commerce is also cooperating with the ministries concerned to import the medical supplies. It releases contact persons of the relevant departments and website address – Commerce.gov.mm for people to know updated news.—MNA

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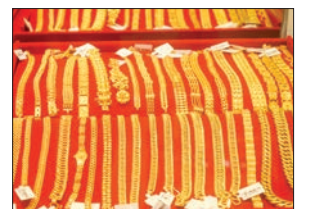
More than 34,000 acres of monsoon paddy to develop in Kyunhla

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council

Order No 168/2021

12th Waning of Waso 1383 ME

4 August 2021

Appointment of Deputy Ministers

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned the duties of the following Deputy Ministers as shown against the ministries under Section 419 of the Constitution.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| (1) U Htay Hlaing | Ministry of Immigration and Population |
| (2) U Win Shane | Ministry of Labour |
| (3) Dr Aye Tun | Ministry of Health |
| (4) U Myo Hlaing | Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs |

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant - General
Secretary

Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof,
Brunei Foreign Affairs
Minister (II) appointed
as the special envoy of
ASEAN alternate chairman
to Myanmar



THE 54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting took place on 2 August, focusing on the appointment of a special envoy of the Alternate Chairman of ASEAN mentioned in the five common agreements adopted by the ASEAN Leaders Meeting held on 24 April.

At the meeting, ASEAN alternate chairmanship country Brunei withdrew the previous nominations for the special envoy and amended its proposal for Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Brunei Foreign Affairs Minister (II) as the special envoy of the ASEAN alternate chairman in line with the guidance of the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, who is the ASEAN alternate chairman.

Myanmar approved to agree on Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Brunei Foreign Affairs Minister (II) as the special envoy to Myanmar, proposed by Brunei, the alternate chairmanship of ASEAN, at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting held yesterday morning. — MNA

3-day training on promotion procedures conducted

THE Ministry of Industry conducted a virtual training on promotion procedures for the ministry and organizations on 2 August.

The opening ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than, Deputy Minister U Ko Ko Lwin, Permanent Secretary of UCSB U Khin Maung Win and other departmental officials.

Firstly, the Union Minister briefed the aim of the training course to conduct qualifying processes in accordance with the Civil Service Personnel Law, Rules and procedures to select or promote the qualified staff for the ministry.

He also said an accurate assessment can be made only by knowing the promotion rules and procedures of the Civil Service Personnel Law. It needs to emphasize the promotion related matters of the staff without harming the staff and conduct transparently for staff affairs regardless of who the person may be.

Then, the Permanent Secretary U Khin Maung Win explained the promotion processes of staff and replied to the questions raised by the trainees.

A total of 50 staff officers of the Ministry of Industry joined the three-day course from 2 to 4 August. — MNA



Terrorists blow up 100 kVA transformer used for water supply in Pekhon



Ravaged transformer is seen after terrorist blew up with a remote-controlled homemade mine in Pekhon.

INSURGENT terrorists are committing destructive acts of violence with the intent to endanger the lives and properties of the people across the country.

On the afternoon of 3 August, following the report, security forces

inspected the explosion that happened in the water supply compound in Pekhon Township, Shan State (South) and found a 100 kVA transformer, used in the water supply plant, blew up with a remote-controlled homemade mine. The explosion

also damaged the surrounding materials, including the roof and doors of the building.

Security forces are reportedly investigating to take effective action against the perpetrators under the existing laws. — MNA

4,051 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 August, total figure rises to 315,118

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 315,118 after 4,051 new cases were reported on 4 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 225,849 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 10,695 after 322 died. —MNA

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Vaccination programmes undertaken

IT is aimed to vaccinate 50 per cent of the population, however, efforts need to be made to vaccinate up to 70 per cent of the population.

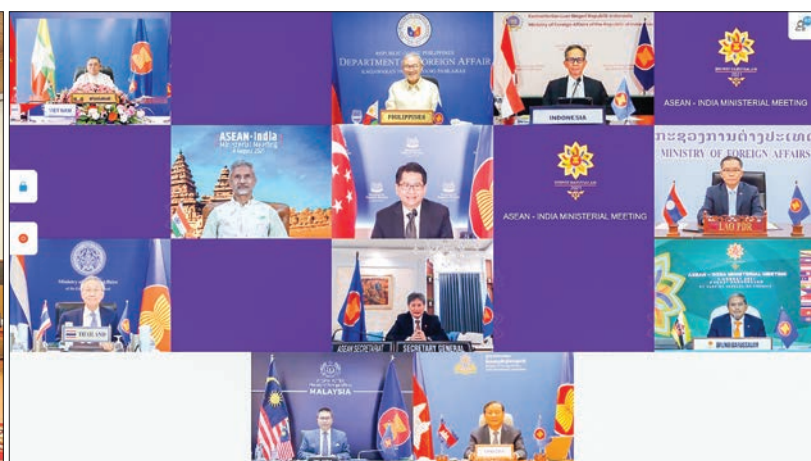
(Excerpt from the speech of Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the coordination meeting on the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 on 24-7-2021)

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Sessions with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and 11th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin participated in the ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-Australia Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting and 11th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting which were held via videoconference yesterday beginning 07:30 am from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR and Antony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States. The Meeting reviewed the ASEAN-U.S. cooperation, discussed its future direction and exchanged views on regional and international issues. Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin underscored that he was happy to see the continued progress in the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations and hoped that the partnership will thrive further in the coming years since next year will mark the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations. He also said that the United States was an important partner of ASEAN and appreciated the United States continued support to ASEAN centrality and for active participation in the ASEAN-lead mechanisms and hoped that this partnership would bring more tangible results and mutual benefits with no one left behind. In response to a comment made by a member state on the situation in Rakhine State, he responded that Myanmar was committed to working with ASEAN in the implementation of the recommendations made under the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA).

As for the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State, the bilateral agreements



The MoFA Union Minister joins the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Sessions with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and 11th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting via videoconference yesterday.

signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh will remain in force. He also said that successful repatriation also needs close cooperation from Bangladesh and requested the Meeting to also encourage Bangladesh to work with Myanmar on the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State.

The ASEAN-Australia Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by Dato Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Foreign Minister of Malaysia and Marise Payne, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia. Union Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted the importance of enhancing digital connectivity in mitigating COVID-19, inclusive implementation of the IAI action lines in narrowing the development so that no one is left behind. On RCEP, he welcomed countries that have ratified the RCEP Agreement and informed that Myanmar had deposited its instrument of ratification on 4 May 2021 under Article 20.5 and Article 20.6 of the RCEP Agreement.

Afterwards, ASEAN Foreign Ministers separately discussed the appointment of a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair pertaining to the Five Point Consensus as agreed upon by the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. During the 54th ASE-

AN Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on 2 August 2021, Brunei Darussalam informed that the previous nomination submitted by Brunei Darussalam was no longer in consideration and therefore, proposed that Brunei Darussalam, as the ASEAN Chair, has appointed the Minister for Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam as the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair.

Myanmar also informed the Meeting that Myanmar was also agreeable to the proposed appointment of H.E. Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam as the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair at the Meeting held on 4 August 2021.

The ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by Don Pramudwini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India. At the meeting, Union Minister underscored that he was happy to see the continued progress in the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations and hoped to work closely with India in promoting partnership for peace, progress and shared prosperity covering all possible aspects of social, economic and cultural dimensions.

On education, he highlight-

ed that it was crucial for CLMV countries and appreciated India's support for students from CLMV countries to pursue graduate studies at the Nalanda University and the establishment of IT Training Centres in CLMV countries. He also hoped that a milestone would be set for the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations by celebrating 2022 as "Friendship Year". Union Minister also stressed the need to strengthen our efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 because another wave of infection was on the rise again in the region and appreciated India for contributing 1 million dollars to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, as well as for the donation COVID Shield vaccine to Myanmar.

Later in the evening, the 11th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held and was chaired by Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam and was attended by Foreign Ministers and a representative from the ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States. The Secretary-General of ASEAN also attended the Meeting. During the meeting, they re-

viewed and exchanged views on the future direction of East Asia Summit Cooperation, and further exchanged views on regional and international issues. Union Minister for Foreign Affairs underscored that Myanmar was happy to see that EAS cooperation has been progressing for the past 16 years and hoped that all EAS participating countries would have the opportunity to promote cooperation, especially in health sectors.

The ASEAN-Russia Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by Mahendra Siregar, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Igor Morgulov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation. The meeting was attended by U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.

He highlighted that he was happy to see the continued progress in the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations and expressed his support on Russia's proposal to convene the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit and hopes that it would further promote and maintain the momentum of ASEAN-Russia cooperation.

Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended these meetings.—MNA

Announcement released for those in past activities to contact as planned to close and withdraw files of lawsuits under the law

SOME students, youths, public service personnel and citizens evaded from the scenes with worries to face action taken due to participation in the protests and anti-government movements such as CDM activities incited and threatened by NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful and terrorist groups CRPH and NUG, persons and organizations from local and foreign countries who did not wish to see peace and stability of the State after 1 February 2021 when the Tatmadaw took the State duty.

At present, they wish to return home with trust in the endeavours of the State Administration Council and with anticipation to enjoy peace and stability by returning to the legal fold. However, they are in difficulty with facing worries and they do not know how to contact.

If service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, persons from various arenas and citizens who fled from the scenes, except for those who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosion and intentionally attacking security troops, some public service personnel and some people, destroying government-owned and private buildings, deeply participating in CDM activities with monetary and other measures, wish to return to the legal fold, opening the files of lawsuits against those persons will be withdrawn under the law. As such, they can trustfully contact the following telephone numbers.

If they contact, directives will be given on how to further do, and officials concerned will close and withdraw the cases under the law.

Hence, those wishing to return home of their own accord, except for those in the criminal cases mentioned in paragraph 3, may trustfully contact the following telephone numbers or nearby police stations, district and township administration bodies. — MNA

Contact phone numbers, Viber numbers and Email addresses for each region and state

No	Region / State	Phone number	Email addresses	Remark
1	Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory	067-550251, 067-550252, 067-550253, 067-550254, 067-550255, 09425283334 (Viber- Ottarathiri Township) 09450840888 (Viber- Dekkhinathiri Township)	mpf-naypyitaw@e-moha.gov.mm	
2	Kachin State	074-2526671, 074-2526672, 09794611351 (Viber- Myitkyina District), 0943042071 (Viber- Bhamo District) 09403739163 (Mohnyin District), 09250344219 (Viber- Putao District)	mpf-kachin@e-moha.gov.mm	
3	Kayah State	083-2224315, 083-2224316, 09777741980 (Viber- Loikaw District) 095194521 (Viber- Bawlake District)	mpf-kayar@e-moha.gov.mm	
4	Kayin State	058-2021096, 058-2021009, 09457777074 (Viber- Hpa-an), 09446735209 (Viber- Kawkareik District) 095132511 (Viber- Myawady District), 09400455156 (Viber- Papun District)	mpf-kayin@e-moha.gov.mm	
5	Chin State	070-2022111, 070-2022333, 095311693 (Viber- Mindat District), 09796436133 (Viber- Matupi District) 092300817 (Viber- Falam), 095262373 (Viber- Haka District)	mpf-chin@e-moha.gov.mm	
6	Sagaing Region	071-2026253, 071-2026254, 09420736827 (Viber- Sagaing District), 09258466668 (Viber- Shwebo District) 09675685156 (Viber- Kanbablu District), 09401557656 (Viber-Monywa District), 09951495409 (Yinmabin District), 09894437224 (Viber- Katha District), 09402508468 (Viber- Kalay District), 09880087340 (Viber-Khamti District), 095190481 (Viber- Mawlaik District), 09256596889 (Viber- Tamu District)	mpf-sagaing@e-moha.gov.mm	
7	Taninthayi Region	059-2024029, 059-2024030, 09251138577 (Dawei District), 09256445424 (Viber- Myeik District) 09895912169 (Viber- Kawthoung District)	mpf-tanintharyi@e-moha.gov.mm	
8	Bago Region	052-2201920, 052-2201921, 09400540140 (Bago District), 09250132656 (Toungoo District), 09443135520 (Viber-Pyay District), 09421723547 (Viber- Thayawady District)	mpf-bago@e-moha.gov.mm	
9	Magway Region	063-2028855, 063-2028856, 09954206061 (Magway District), 09400311110 (Minbu District), 09794447280 (Thayat District), 09257080098 (Pakokku District), 09451506026 (Viber- Gangaw District)	mpf-magway@e-moha.gov.mm	
10	Mandalay Region	02-4035891, 02-4035892, 02-4035893, 02-4035894, 02-4035895, 09969956472 (Viber-Mandalay District), 09-420760246 (Viber-PyinOoLwin District), 09-264628313 (Viber-Myingyan District), 09-885555090 (Viber-Meiktila District), 09-52157779 (Viber-Yamethin District), 09-5082615 (Viber-Kyaukse District), 09-250111838 (Viber-NyaungU District)	mpf-mandalay@e-moha.gov.mm	
11	Mon State	057-2027880, 057-2027884, 09-252839764 (Viber-Mawlamyine District) 09-451455526 (Viber-Thaton District)	mpf-mon@e-moha.gov.mm	
12	Rakhine State	043-2024557, 043-2021020, 09-421004218, (Viber-Sittway District) 09-789978373 (Viber-MraukU District), 09-402547244 (Viber-Maungtau District) 09-401582236 (Viber-Kyaukpyu District), 09-254315299 (Viber-Thandwe District)	mpf-rakhine@e-moha.gov.mm	
13	Yangon Region	01-8300011, 01-8300012, 01-8300013, 01-8300014, 01-8300015, 09-421128951 (Viber-Eastern District), 09-43137729 (Viber-Western District), 09-5194223 (Viber-Southern District) 09-786281456 (Viber-Northern District)	mpf-yangon@e-moha.gov.mm	
14	Shan State	081-202241, 081-202242, 09-459716155 (Viber-Lashio District), 09-450540034 (Viber-Kyaukme District) 09-260199434 (Viber-Taunggyi District), 09-420027076 (Viber-Langkho District), 09-784021521 (Viber-Loilem District), 09-5127882 (Viber-Kengtung District), 09-506818 (Viber-Tachilek District), 09-440268441 (Viber-Monghsat District), 09-454864734 (Viber-Muse District), 09-403747132 (Viber-Hopan District), 09-265295076 (Viber-Mongmit District)	mpf-shan@e-moha.gov.mm	
15	Ayeyawady Region	042-2023103, 042-2023106 09-43046443 (Viber-Pathein District) 09-259042330 (Viber-Hinthada District) 09-4544666667 (Viber-Myaungmya District) 09-950977376 (Viber-Labutta District) 09-2019953 (Viber-Maubin District) 09-254436414 (Viber-Pyapon District)	mpf-ayeyawaddy@e-moha.gov.mm	



The prices of onions sharply dropped owing to the closure of the western border following the coronavirus impacts. Additionally, the sluggish trade amid the current political conditions and shutdown of the restaurants, hotels, factories and donation events exacerbate the onion market.

Onion market remains sluggish due to lack of foreign demand

THE onion market remains inactive as the foreign demand has dried up, stated onion traders.

The price stays on the low side. The price of onions stood at K500-700 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) in the retail market, whereas the onions fetched K200-250 per viss in the wholesale market, said a grower from Ba Yint Naung wholesale market.

The closure of border posts resulted in the drastic price drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, making the growers suffer loss.

To tackle this problem, the Ministry of Commerce is implementing to set the basis price, according to the meeting result of the leading group on the protection of the farmer rights and enhancement of their benefits.

The onion growers have been facing extreme losses on a downward trend due to the lack of foreign demand. They cannot cover the cultivation cost as well as afford the harvesting cost for

now.

Consequently, the prolonged price declines led some growers in Magway Region to leave their onions unharvested last year as they cannot cover the labour wages and transportation charges.

In early 2020, the onion fetched K1,200-1,300 per viss. Then, the price drastically fell in the COVID-19 crisis and the growers cannot even cover the input cost. At present, the price slightly rose in the retail market, said a trader.

The prices of onions sharply dropped owing to the closure of the western border following the coronavirus impacts. Additionally, the sluggish trade amid the current political conditions and shutdown of the restaurants, hotels, factories and donation events exacerbate the onion market.

Earlier, onions were highly demanded by Bangladesh and India. The trade with Bangladesh and India has been halted to contain the spread of the coronavi-

rus. Having said that, the price remained low.

The onion growers, as well as traders, have been experiencing market fallouts due to the COVID-19 impacts last year, said the onion wholesale dealer from Mandalay.

Next, Bangladesh's demand for Myanmar's onions coupled with high demand in the local market hiked up prices, soaring up to K4,000 per viss on 15 November 2019, according to the Mandalay commodity depot.

The high demand by foreign markets and a remarkable price rise prompted the growers to expand the onion cultivation in 2020. Unfortunately, the market is getting worse amidst the COVID-19 negative consequences. The prices of domestic onions exceeded K3,000 per viss in 2015, 2018, and 2019.

The onions are primarily grown in Mandalay, Magway and Yangon regions, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State. — Ko Htet/GNLM

Myanmar-ROK trade reaches nearly \$450 mln in seven months

THE value of bilateral trade between Myanmar and the Republic of Korea in the past seven months (October-April) of the 2020-2021 financial year stood at US\$449.98 million, according to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce. Imports surpassed export in Myanmar's trade with South Korea, with exports registered at \$183.95 million and imports valued at \$266 million.

Myanmar exports rice and broken rice, coffee, mangoes, pulses, apparel produced on the cut-make-pack basis, shrimp, and sesame oil, among other things, to South Korea, while it imports capital goods such as machinery and equipment, raw industrial goods such as fertilizers and garment materials, and consumer goods such as cosmetics.

The values of bilateral trade between the two countries stood at over \$1 billion in the last FY2019-2020, \$976 million in the FY2018-2019, \$424.7 million

in the 2018 mini-budget period, \$798.4 million in the 2017-2018FY, \$866 million in the 2016-2017FY, \$657 million in the 2015-2016FY, \$862 million in the 2014-2015FY, \$1.57 billion in the 2013-2014FY, \$623 million in the 2012-2013FY, and \$667 million in the 2011-2012FY. Two South Korea-listed enterprises have brought in the capital of \$12.6 million into the country in the current FY. South Korea is Myanmar's sixth-largest investor. Multinational corporations from South Korea, such as Posco, Daewoo, Samsung, and Hyundai, have already grabbed the market share in Myanmar.

In addition, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has provided grant aid for sustainable rural development and capacity building in public service, technology, education, and the establishment of fundamental infrastructure. — Htet Myat/GNLM

Stock market declines in July

THE number of shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) plunged to 36,855 shares in July 2021 and the trading value also slipped to K198 million, the YSX's monthly report indicated.

Under Section 4 of the Trading Business Regulations, the stock trading was closed from 17 to 25 July 2021 as the long public holidays for COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities. The market resumed on 26 July 2021 as usual.

In June, 79,296 shares worth of K430.285 million were traded on the exchange. Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd. (AMATA) was newly listed on the exchange on 3 June, with the basic price of K4,500.

Last month, the shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH), the Ever Flow River Group Public Co., Ltd (EFR) and AMATA were traded in equity market. The share prices per unit were closed at K8,900 for FMI, K3,300 for MTSH, K7,700 for MCB, K20,000 for FPB, K2,650 for TMH, K3,100 for EFR and K5,000 for AMATA, respectively.

In February 2021, K442 million worth of 77,388 shares were traded on the exchange. The figures extended further drops to K110 million worth of 19,816 shares in March 2021. Then, the market slightly rose in April with K280 million worth of 42,964 shares. The stocks maintained in the bull market in May with 78,642 shares worth of K432.448 million as well.

The stock markets worldwide have reported their largest declines since the 2008 financial crisis. Similarly, the local equities market is also scared by the COVID-19 crash, a market observer points out.

At present, people are

keeping emergency savings, rather than investing the COVID-19 crisis and current political conditions, he added.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis and political changes, Myanmar's securities market has been able to continue operating without stopping trading.

In 2020, the value of stocks traded on the exchange reached a peak of K1.48 billion in February, whereas trading on the exchange registered an all-time low of K552.9 million in November due to the COVID-19 resurgences in Myanmar, the exchange's monthly report showed.

A total of K12.6 billion worth of 1.87 million shares by six listed companies were traded on the exchange in 2020, a significant drop compared to 2019. Over 2.4 million shares from five listed companies, valued K13.39 billion, were traded on the exchange in 2019, according to the annual report released by the exchange.

Next, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) has allowed foreigners to invest in the local equity market from 20 March 2020.

Furthermore, YSX launched pre-listing board (PLB) on 28 September 2020 to provide unlisted public companies with fund-raising opportunities and build a bridge toward listing on YSX, YSX stated.

The YSX was launched four years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars. The stock exchange has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.

— KK/GNLM

More than 34,000 acres of monsoon paddy to develop in Kyunhla



KYUNHLA Township has targeted to develop over 34,000 acres of monsoon paddy this year, said Daw Myint Myint Yee, the head of Kyunhla Agriculture Department.

In order to achieve a

In the 2020-2021 Financial Year in Kyunhla township, a total of 74,624 acres of monsoon crops, including 34,895 acres of monsoon paddy, 14,458 acres of variety of pulses, 2,539 acres of sugarcane crop, 5,824 acres of edible oil crops, 15,359 acres of other crops and 1,549 acres of perennial crops will be cultivated in the township.

high yield of monsoon paddy, the township Agriculture Department is conducting field awareness on agricultural techniques, distribution of good quality seeds and inputs, carrying out pest prevention activities, never using pesticides unnecessarily, ensuring natural fertilizer to get a GAP certificate.

“Kyunhla Township is mainly engaged in agricultural business. This year, the township is targeted to grow over 34,000 acres of monsoon paddy. Despite the good rains on the fields of local

farmers, they are being prepared to grow the monsoon paddy in time, said Daw Myint Myint Yee.

In the 2020-2021 Financial Year in Kyunhla township, a total of 74,624 acres of monsoon crops, including 34,895 acres of monsoon paddy, 14,458 acres of variety of pulses, 2,539 acres of sugarcane crop, 5,824 acres of edible oil crops, 15,359 acres of other crops and 1,549 acres of perennial crops will be cultivated in the township, according to Township Agriculture Department. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Domestic gold price gains on global cues

THE current rally in the domestic market comes from the strength of the bullish international market and Kyat weakening against the US dollar, according to Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The global gold price stood at above US\$1,813 per ounce, while the Central Bank of Myanmar set a US dollar exchange rate at an auction rate of K1,664, resulting in the gold price gain in the domestic market.

The price of precious pure yellow metal is possible to stay in the bull market tracking the dollar gain and increase in the international gold market. It touches a high of K1,572,000 per

tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilogrammes).

The price is possible to continue rising as the global rally happens yearly in the coming months, U Myo Myint elaborated.

In January 2021, the gold price was ranged between the minimum of K1,316,000 per tical (28 January) and the maximum of K1,336,000 per tical (6 January). It reached an all-time high of K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February and hit the minimum of K1,340,000 per tical on 2 February. In March, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The price had registered the highest of K1,455,000 (30

April) and the lowest of K1,389,000 (1 April). The price reached an all-time highest of K1,709,000 (12 May) and the lowest of K1,447,000 in May. The price moved in the maximum of K1,575,500 (11 June) and the minimum of K1,543,000 (19 June). Last month, it fluctuated between K1,562,300 (26 Jul) and K1,587,000 (K1,587,000), the gold traders said.

According to gold traders, the local gold reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,317,000 (9 November) and the lowest



The global gold price stood at above US\$1,813 per ounce, while the Central Bank of Myanmar set a US dollar exchange rate at an auction rate of K1,664, resulting in the gold price gain in the domestic market.

of K1,270,000 (30 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of 1,280,000 (1 December) and 1,332,000 (28 December).

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching

K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to over 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a record high of K1,300,000 on 5 September 2019. — NN/GNLM

Myeik district reports over 1,200 COVID-19 cases

MYEIK district is reporting over 1,200 cases of COVID-19 in the last six months of 2021, with the highest spike and death toll since the third wave of the virus.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases jumped to over 1,200 in the last six months at Myeik district in the Taninthayi region. Those townships in Myeik district are Myeik, Kyungsu, Palaw and Taninthayi.

Of the four townships in Myeik district, Myeik registered the highest infected rate with 780 cases, followed by Kyungsu with 170 incidences.

With the rising number of COVID-19, the COVID-19 preventive health checkpoints to screen the travellers are opened

at the entrance gate of some townships in the Myeik district.

“From 30 July to 2 August, over 20 people have died in Myeik township during the current outbreak. The charity organizations immediately offered cremation on behalf of family members. Currently, the COVID-19 infected patients are being provided treatment at Myeik public hospital, children hospital and Tatmadaw hospital. The fever clinics are also opened, said a volunteer from the Myeik charity organization.

As of 1 August, ten townships from the Taninthayi region have reported over 4,700 infections and over 100 deaths from COVID-19. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Stay-at-home orders issued for one additional township each in Mandalay region, Mon State

AUTHORITIES issued additional stay-at-home orders for Myingyan township in the Mandalay region and Bilin township in Mon State on 3 August, following a rise in COVID-19 cases, according to the announcement of the Ministry of Health.

With COVID-19 confirmed cases on the rise in Myingyan township in the Mandalay region and Bilin township in Mon State, stay-at-home orders were issued in those townships.

Employees in most industries are required to work from home, except for certain industries deemed essential, such as finance, food, water, and petrol distribution, and medical.

Besides, the relevant region and state administration council should carry out the necessary supervision and essential announcement to prevent the spreading of COVID-19 disease in factories and workplaces, including CMP.

Only one member of each household may leave the house to purchase supplies, and only two may leave to seek medical care. Face masks must be worn at all times in public places.

Further, those who want to travel for emergencies must report to the relevant administration members. Those who fail to comply with this order will face serious legal action under existing laws, which will be affected from 4 August. — ACM/GNLM

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Malaysian PM digs in, wants parliament to decide his fate



Opposition lawmakers marched towards the parliament building on Monday, but were stopped by police in riot gear. **PHOTO: AFP**

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, defying pressure to resign amid a revolt in the ruling coalition, said Wednesday that the parliament will vote on a motion of confidence to determine his legitimacy when it meets in September.

“That way, my position as the prime minister and the National Alliance as the government, can be determined according to the law and Constitution,” Muhyiddin said in a televised speech after meeting with King Abdullah Ri’ayatuddin.

He said the king consented to his proposal. The move came a day after at least a dozen legislators from the United Malays National Organization, the dominant party in the National Alliance coalition government,

withdrew their support for Muhyiddin, while an UMNO minister tendered his resignation from the government.

UMNO, with its 38 lawmakers, represents the biggest bloc in the ruling coalition.

Before its lawmakers’ revolt, Muhyiddin controlled at most 115 seats in the 222-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament.

Two seats are currently vacant. The opposition has 105. The parliament is scheduled to meet for 15 days beginning 6 Sept. Muhyiddin faces intense criticism over his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic that has seen cases surging and the death toll rising, with businesses shut and unemployment rising. —Kyodo ■

Hiroshima Day: When “Most Cruel Bomb” killed tens of thousands

ON August 6, 1945, an American B-29 bomber dropped an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Japan. The bombing killed nearly 80,000 people instantly and tens of thousands more died later of radiation exposure. This was the first time an atomic bomb was used. Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasa-

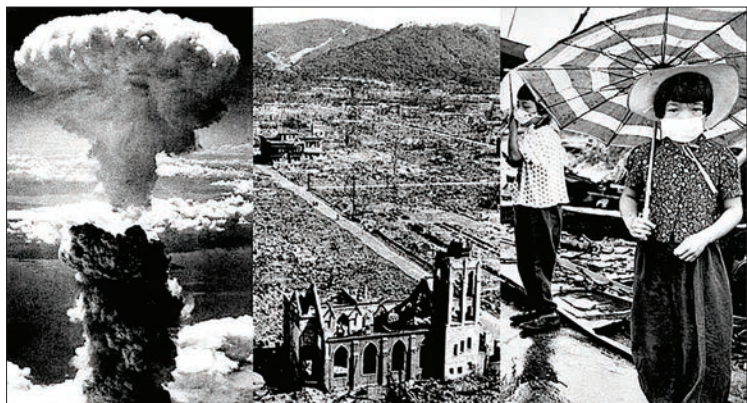
ki. This killed another 40,000 people. These two bombings forced Japan to announce on August 15 that it was surrendering unconditionally during World War II.

Japan marks Hiroshima Day on August 6 to raise awareness about the devastating power of what its emperor Hirohito described as “a new and most cruel

bomb”. The day also reminds the world about the need for “peace politics” to avoid any more world wars and destruction.

What Happened On August 6, 1945?

On the morning of August 6, the “Enola Gay” B-29 bomber dropped the atomic bomb, called “Little Boy”, with a force of 12-15 kilotonnes of TNT on Hiroshima, a manufacturing hub of more than 350,000 people about 500 miles from Tokyo. This blast destroyed five square miles of the city immediately. The plane dropped the bomb by parachute at 8:15 am local time and it exploded 2,000 feet above the city. This was the time when most industrial workers had reported to work or were in transit. Children were en route to school and some had even arrived there.—AFP ■



A combination of images showing Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic bombs were dropped by a U.S. Air Force. **PHOTO: AFP**

S. Korean ex-auditor enters presidential race from opposition

THE former chief of South Korea’s state audit agency declared his presidential bid on Wednesday, joining the race to determine the candidate from the main opposition party along with his far more popular rival, former Prosecutor General Yoon Suk Yeol.

Choe Jae Hyeong is reportedly a “Plan B” candidate for the conservative People Power Party should Yoon face difficulties

running in the March election due to some scandal. The party plans to decide on its candidate in November.

Choe’s announcement came after he stepped down as chairman of the Board of Audit and Inspection in June following a clash with the government and ruling camp over nuclear power policy.

“As a South Korean, I just could not watch our nation col-

lapse,” the former judge told an online press conference, saying that as president, he would re-examine the nation’s energy policy, including planned transition away from nuclear power.

Choe also emphasized the need to strengthen national security based on a firm alliance with the United States, while expressing willingness to work on improving frayed ties with Japan.—Kyodo ■

Afghan forces stop Taliban attack on India-made Salma Dam

THE Afghan government thwarted a Taliban attack on the India-built Salma Dam in Herat province, with the Afghan government saying the militant group “has suffered heavy casualties and fled the area as a result of retaliatory strikes”.

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said in a tweet that Taliban militants attempted an attack on Salma Dama, known as the India-Afghanistan Dosti Dam, on Tuesday night.

Fawad said, “The Taliban attack on the Salma Dam failed! The militant Taliban launched an attack last night to destroy the Salma Dam in Herat province. But, fortunately, they have suffered heavy casualties and retaliatory strikes by the

ANDSF resulted in the area.” Aman tweeted.

Last month also the Salma Dam was hit by Taliban rockets and rockets and artillery shells have landed close to the dam, which has not been damaged yet.

The Salma Dam in the Cheshte Sharif district of Herat is one of the largest dams in Afghanistan and provides irrigation water and electricity to thousands of families in the province.

The water storage capacity of the Salma Dam is 640 million cubic meters and the irrigation potential of 2,00,000 acres of farmland from the Chishti Sharif district of Herat to the Zulfikar area on the Iran border.—AFP



This photograph taken on December 2, 2015, shows a general view of the Salma hydroelectric dam in Chishti Sharif, in the eastern part of Herat Province. **PHOTO: AREF KARIMI/AFP/FILE**

Take care of infectious seasonal flu in monsoon

DEPENDING on geographical conditions, Myanmar faces impacts of climate change every season, especially with over hotness in the summer and flooding in the monsoon.

It is due to the fact that Myanmar is teeming with various forms of water areas such as rivers and creeks, wetlands and lakes. Hence, many species of mosquitos can regenerate in the water and swamp areas. Then, these mosquitos give health troubles on infectious diseases to the people.

Moreover, the monsoon mostly brings various kinds of natural disasters such as landslides, heavy rains, cyclonic storms, erosions and flooding to the country in the monsoon.

Hence, they all should follow the health guidelines for all infectious diseases issued by the Ministry of Health.

Virus of flu spreads in the air the people breathe elsewhere. The virus which strongholds bases at the respiratory tracts of humans can speedily infect one another, especially children, pregnant women and patients with chronic diseases whenever they cough and sneeze in addition to unsystematic use of personal goods such as handkerchiefs, spoons, plates and other food carriers.

Those suffering from the seasonal flu need to prevent the infection of the virus to some extent with the use of wearing handkerchiefs ad masks. Even the persons who do not suffer from the seasonal flu should wear masks to the prevention of the virus to be infected by other persons.

In the monsoon, everybody needs to take systematically behaviours and have the foodstuffs with cleanliness as part of prevention not only of the infectious diseases but also of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, they all should follow the health guidelines for all infectious diseases issued by the Ministry of Health.



India's economy continues to tumble amid COVID-19 pandemic

As the threat of a third wave of COVID-19 looms large over India, an increasing uncertainty has reduced business and consumer confidence in the country.

APPREHENSION of a severe third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with the emergence of new and more transmissible variants might necessitate the reimposition of lockdowns, which would lead to a further reduction in growth estimates and further dampen demand.

INFLATIONARY PRESSURE

Retail price inflation in India remained high at 6.23 per cent in June, after its May surge of 6.3 per cent. This is the second consecutive month when inflation remained above the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s comfort zone of 2-6 per cent.

The food group, which is the largest component of the Consumer Price Index, reported price inflation of 5.2 per cent in June.

"The June 2021 inflation was largely imported. Prices of commodities, particularly crude oil, steel and cotton have been rising globally for some time, putting an upward pressure on the domestic prices," the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said.

"Unwilling to absorb this additional cost pressure, producers of consumer goods and service pro-



A man walks past a mural of frontline workers. PHOTO: SAJJAD HUSSAIN/AFP

viders in India have hiked prices of their offerings," the CMIE added.

In June, prices of goods like clothes, footwear, cars, motorcycles and scooters, washing machine, stoves, pressure cookers and utensils recorded inflation exceeding 6 per cent.

According to the CMIE, there are fears that inflation may remain above 6 per cent or even rise higher due to the further rise in

commodity prices.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB LOSSES

As many as 40 per cent of people in India who lost their jobs last year after the imposition of a nationwide lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic had been unable to find a job, a survey-based report said.

The situation is dire, especial-

ly for younger workers in urban India, according to the report titled "City of dreams no more, a year on: worklessness and active labour market policies in urban India" and published in the Center for Economic Performance at London School of Economics and Political Science.

The report is based on a survey of nearly 4,800 individuals across 150 urban ward clus-

ters in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand.

"A year after the pandemic hit India, urban individuals are facing worklessness, work without pay and long spells of unemployment. 40 per cent had no work or pay for ten months on, and average unemployment spells among the unemployed were six months before the second wave of the pandemic hit," said the report.

The unemployment rate in India in June stood at 9.17 per cent.

Mahesh Vyas, managing director of CMIE, said that there is no doubt that the recovery from the first COVID-19 shock in early-to-mid 2020 was V-shaped.

"There were reasons to celebrate," he said, "but, it is now becoming increasingly clear that the recovery from that serious setback will not get India's real GDP to where it was before the shock even by the end of March 2022."

"The loss from where the earlier growth trajectory could have taken India has also widened compared to earlier expectations," Vyas said, adding that the labor participation rate remains 2.7 percentage points lower than pre-COVID levels while the em-

ployment rate remains 3.3 percentage points lower.

GROWTH PROJECTIONS DOWNGRADED

Last week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered India's growth projection from 12.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent for fiscal year 2021-22, down by 3 percentage points. Of all the countries listed in the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook, India has seen the largest drop in growth projections, even as the global economic growth rate remains the same at 6 per cent.

Earlier in April, the IMF projected India's growth at 12.5 per cent. Experts say these projections could mean that India lost over 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the two COVID-19 years.

"We have an upgrade for advanced economies which is being offset almost entirely by a downgrade for emerging markets or developing economies. The main sources of this divide are unequal access to vaccinations, fiscal support being withdrawn in many developing economies," said IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath.

SOURCE: Xinhua

Global current account balances widened by COVID-19 pandemic: IMF

GLOBAL reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic further widened global current account balances, which would have continued to decline if not for the crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Monday.

Global current account balances - the sum of absolute deficits and surpluses among all countries - increased from 2.8 percent of world gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 to 3.2 percent of GDP in 2020, according to IMF's newly released annual External Sector Report.

Fueling trade tensions

"While external deficits and surpluses are not necessarily a

cause for concern, excessive imbalances - larger than warranted by the economy's fundamentals and appropriate economic policies - can have destabilizing effects on economies by fueling trade tensions and increasing the likelihood of disruptive asset price adjustments," Martin Kaufman, assistant director in the IMF's Strategy, Policy and Review Department, and Daniel Leigh, Division Chief in the IMF's Research Department, wrote in a blog.

Despite the shock of the crisis and possibly due to its worldwide impact, excessive current account deficits and surpluses were broadly unchanged in 2020, representing about 1.2 per cent

of world GDP, according to the blog.

The IMF officials laid out four major pandemic-fueled trends that resulted in the dramatic fluctuations in current account deficits and surpluses in 2020: Travel declined; Oil demand collapsed; Medical products trade boomed; Households shifted their consumption away from services toward consumer goods.

All of these factors contributed to some countries seeing a wider current account deficit, meaning they bought more than they sold, or a larger current account surplus, meaning they sold more than they bought, according to the report.



Coronavirus pandemic caused an unprecedented decrease in international travel. Passengers undergo Covid-safe travel protocols at Charles de Gaulle airport in Roissy, near Paris, on 26 April 2021. PHOTO: IAN LANGSDON / AFP

A sharp decrease in tourism

For example, the pandemic led to a sharp decrease in tour-

ism and travel, which had a significant negative impact on the account balances of countries

that rely on tourism revenue, such as Spain, Thailand, Turkey, and even larger consequences for smaller tourism-dependent economies.

On top of these external factors, the pandemic led to massive government borrowing to finance healthcare and provide economic support to households and firms, creating large uneven effects on trade balances, the report noted. Looking ahead, global current account balances are set to widen even further in 2021 but this trend is not expected to last, as the latest IMF staff forecasts indicate that global current account balances will narrow in the coming years.

SOURCE: Xinhua

MYANMAR GAZETTE Head of Service Organization transferred

THE State Administration Council has transferred Dr Thi Thi Myint, Director-General of Legal Advice Department under the Union Attorney-General Office, as Director-General of Administration Department under the Union Attorney-General Office from the date she assumes charge of her duties.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 4 August 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 5 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) mph. Wave height will be about (8-11) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Bulletin (Issued at 11:00 hrs M.S.T on 4-8-2021)

Flood condition of ThaungyinRiver
According to the (10:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Thaungyin River at Myawaddy has exceeded by about (1½) feet above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (2) feet during the next (1) day and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory
It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Myawaddy Township, to take precaution measure.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Difference in Three Waves of COVID-19 Pandemic in Myanmar

By Aung Shinn

THE guileful nature of COVID-19's third wave is now apparently at its peak. The world is also facing high rate of infection and death. Since the mid of July, the death rate of the pandemic has increased to 30 per cent and the average death rate of COVID-19 in Indonesia is reportedly around 1,300 per day. The primary reason of having high rate of infection and death is found out to be the new variants of virus. The neighbours and regional countries are also being severely impacted by the new variants of virus.

In Myanmar, the COVID-19's third wave started to strike the country in the final week of May 2021. As we all know, Myanmar is now in the time of facing political unrests, and sabotages of anti-government activists. Against the backdrop of this situation along with facing the guileful mutation of virus variant, the efforts to repel the third wave and prevention, containment and treatment activities are seemly more being intensified than of first and second waves.

There are many facts in the COVID-19's third wave which are different from the first and second waves. The distinct ones are the nature of mutations in the virus, the weak of health awareness in public, the risks of saboteurs, the weak measures of previous government and the effective responses of the current administration.

The nature of the virus and the third wave

The medical experts have repeatedly explained about the nature of the new variants of the virus till there is no more to find out. The certain thing is that the new variant of virus with high infection and death rate does not break out only in Myanmar. By comparison with other regional countries, Myanmar can be found out to be not even in the list of countries with very high infection rate and fatalities according to the statistics. Nevertheless, comparing with the COVID-19's first and second waves occurred in the State, the third wave is undoubtedly more infectious in a short time with higher rate of death. Particularly, the ones with serious health problems, elders and the people who have not vaccinated become the most vulnerable ones. Due to the guileful

nature of the new variant of virus such as the asymptomatic virus transmission, and the multiple infection rate, the situations come to this end.

According to the recent findings of some medical experts, the reasons of high infection and death rate in a short time during the COVID-19's third wave in Myanmar are as follows:

- The weak COVID-19 containment and treatment measures and protective equipment prepared in the first and second waves.
- The rallies of hundreds of thousands of people without COVID-19 protective gears took place in the second wave of January and February 2021.
- The beginning of COVID-19's third wave with the highly-infected virus variant coincided with the time of people unaware of the health risks and the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) campaign weakening the related healthcare activities.

For the reasons mentioned above, the people are facing difficulties in the time of the wave in gaining momentum.

The risks of saboteurs

Moreover, it can be observed that the consequences of the CDM campaign of health community and the incitements of saboteurs not to take part in the vaccination process, and closures of the COVID-19 treatment centres considerably accelerated the COVID-19's third wave in a short time. Despite their intentions to disrupt the administrative mechanism of the State Administration Council, the outcome is deadly to the public.

The risk of COVID-19 can impact on all national people regardless of social classes and political colours. However, certain anti-government activists are harassing the current COVID-19 control, prevention and treatment activities using political scandals in order to attack the incumbent government. It is totally unthinkable why they are doing such nefarious and cunning acts. It is obvious that the State Administration Council is now simultaneously taking the law enforcement measures for community peace and stability as well as the task of repelling the COVID-19 pan-

dem. The destructive acts of the inhumane and unsympathetic saboteurs for their political gain by using the COVID-19's third wave are totally unacceptable.

The root cause of occurring such unwanted phenomena in such critical time is due to the reckless acts of previous administration or the NLD party. They premediated to secure the election victory using the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic at its peak as well as doing obvious voting riggings to ensure forming the government by a single party. Political observers remarked that the political unrests occurred due to the NLD-led government and the party which ignored the peaceful means of solving the problem via dialogue on table in line with law. Moreover, it is also seen that they also dragged the people on the path of utter devastation by spreading wrong ideologies and misinformation among people. Such moves are advantageous to no one. It is appearing that they used the second wave of COVID-19 for ensuring their election victory and also the third wave for regaining their power. At least, they should consider the interests of people.

Recommendations of medical experts

The experts suggested to assume the confronting the COVID-19 pandemic as a world war trying to defeat the invading enemy of virus. The world experts have warned the countries to make necessary preparations for waging the war since April 2020 which include the following six points:

- (1) Maintain essential capabilities.
- (2) Develop global and local surveillance networks.
- (3) Build and maintain a network of alliances
- (4) Build emergency response capacity
- (5) Forward-deployed personnel and weaponry.
- (6) Invest in the defensive weapons of the future.

Failures of NLD-led government

Reviewing the above-mentioned points, the NLD government was supposed to make necessary preparations since the beginning of the pandemic by formulating a strategy. However, everyone who properly review the ground truth will see

the answer whether the previous administration actually took appropriate measures for above points or not. Nevertheless, the NLD government totally ignore the risks and minded only to grab the State power for the next term. It is amazed to found out that the responsible person of NLD information U Aung Shin from Monywa town said in an interview with Akonhi media that 'the COVID-19 pandemic was quite advantageous to the victory of NLD party in the election'.

Although Daw Aung San Su Kyi who led the previous government modelled in washing her hands, as an attempt of party election campaign using social network and government-run medias, in reality, she did not lay down or implement any effective strategies and tactics for COVID-19 control, prevention and treatment measures. The Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htway of previous administration said to public, 'you might even fall ill with astonishment if you see the preparations for COVID-19'. However, there was no preparation in reality except for the contributions of some generous donors. Having said that, it is not to blame on the previous administration led by NLD party but only to point out the root causes of the ground conditions.

If we look the current emergency requirements of oxygen, the failure of NLD government to make necessary preparations would become obvious. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, a government had to anticipate the potential infections and calculate the possible requirement of oxygen that would meet the needs of people. Hence, necessary preparations will be required to build or reserve oxygen plants as well as to formulate plans for preparing necessary hospitals, clinics, quarantine centres. In spite of that, besides having neither prepared plans nor actions, it was sadly to see that the infrastructures and measures for COVID-19 prevention came to the end along with the CDM campaigns when they have no more power.

The vivid point is that the previous NLD-led government used the pandemic as a tool for their political gain without having any long-term anticipation and preparation. Besides the failure to reinforce the health workers

and making necessary preparations, they even instigated the health workers to participate in the utter devastation in the name of CDM, and not to go work places breaching their medical ethics and civil service personnel laws, rules and regulations in the mid of the pandemic. Quite apart from fulfilling the above-mentioned six important points stressed by the experts, the existing preventive measures were also destroyed. The medical doctors and health workers are the virtuous professional jobs providing healthcare services to people regardless of friend or foe even in the wars. It seemed NLD intentionally chose the path to the plights of people. We can see now the State Administration Council is simultaneously taking the responsibilities of restoring the community peace and stability, and repelling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emergency responses to the pandemic by the State Administration Council

Despite the absence of preparations by the previous NLD-led government, insufficient number of health workers, all-round challenges of political, economic and security, we can see the State Administration Council is devoting utmost efforts to control the COVID-19's third wave in a short time.

In a month of July, the Coordination Meeting on COVID-19 Control, Prevention and Treatment chaired by the State Administration Council chairman was held for five times. Observing the meetings, the required policies are promptly made to speed up the pandemic control, prevention and treatment activities as well as the policy to cooperate with the international community has already been adopted and implemented.

Regarding the policies, they are practical and made by reviewing the ground conditions putting the townships necessary for pandemic prevention under Stay-at-Home programmes, issuing instructions and orders in timely manner, purchasing vaccines promptly from China and Russia due to the delays from India, conducting continuous COVID-19 awareness programmes, and coordinating and cooperating with social volunteer groups in preventive measures.

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Difference in Three Waves of COVID-19.....

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For the sector of pandemic prevention and treatment, effective and efficient policies are being practically implemented such as modifying the quarantine system like other countries; expanding the number of quarantine centres, Community-COVID-positive centres and treatment centres at soonest; re-assignments of health staff to meet the ground requirements; appointing staff by contract system; easing the import restrictions to ensure the smooth flow of necessary equipment and medications for the COVID-19 prevention and treatments; taking measures to increase the production capacity of existing oxygen plants and building urgently more plants to fulfil the current oxygen needs; importing oxygen from abroad as a special plan to secure the oxygen sufficiency in COVID-19 treatment hospitals and centres; transporting the required oxygens to remote areas in time. For the entire country, the measures are being taken amid of difficulties. In order to carry out prompt actions depending on the pandemic outbreaks, we can gladly see that the state/region administration councils are joining hands and working together with the respective Commanders of the Military Regional Commands.

Almost all of the quarantine and treatment centres opened in the time of NLD government were already closed down due to the CDM doctors and health workers. Now at the time of the State Administration Council, many necessary infrastructures of treatment centres and quarantine centres, which were once weak in the past, have been expanded and opened in a short time. Tatmadaw have prepared 1,278 places for treating 39,000 COVID-19 patients and the civic administrations have also prepared 1,453 places for 71,500 patients. We can also see daily the efforts to open more Community-COVID-positive centres as necessary.

Particularly, during the third wave of COVID-19, with an intent to distribute the oxygen sufficiently, which is now at high demand, the existing oxygen plants are being repaired to run its full capacity and more new plants are also being built as well. In July, the Government managed to run a total of 144 oxygen plants in respective regions and states which can produce 1,278,970 litres of oxygen and 58 tonnes of liquid oxygen per day.

Regarding the construction of oxygen plants, despite having 119 existing plants, the plants in the public hospital were reportedly not in operation due

to the health workers in CDM. When the COVID-19's third wave surges with the high demand of oxygen in the time of the State Administration Council, necessary measures have been urgently carried out to run the oxygen plants which were not in operation. Moreover, 25 more oxygen plants have also been constructed in respective regions and states. Such measures of adding more oxygen plants, increasing the production capacity of industrial-used oxygen plants and the attempts to run the plants at public hospital into full operation are collectively taken by the integrated efforts of the Tatmadaw, departmental staffs, and generous national people.

Moreover, in order to facilitate import of oxygen-related materials from abroad, the import restrictions of departmental rules and regulations are also eased to certain extent. The private imports and purchase of oxygen-related equipment and items have been permitted in timely manner. In this regard, the daily news says, **from February to the end of July, 32,072 oxygen cylinders (various sizes), 10,190 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 113,705 oxygen concentrators, 13 oxygen plants, 26,735 oxygen regulators, and 46 oxygen generators have been imported**

from abroad. Likewise, we can also see the contributions of generous donors are very gratifying.

In order to meet the oxygen requirements, the Government is intensifying the home production capacities, and the Tatmadaw and generous national people are heartily donating oxygen and treatment equipment as well.

From 1 July to 2 August, Tatmadaw personnel from respective Military Regional Command donated 7,170 oxygen tanks, 374,032 face masks, 2,020 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), other protective equipment, medications, fuel for vehicles, nutrition foods and donation cash to public hospitals, military hospitals, COVID centres, township health departments and civil philanthropic associations in respective regions and states. Likewise, generous national people from respective regions and states also heartily donated a total of 2,430 oxygen tanks, other protective items and donation cash. The collective efforts of the people are tremendous and delightful. As a common citizen, I have a considerate sentiment towards the SAC government making its all-out efforts to resolve the crisis resulted by the weak preparations of the previous government at the critical times of surging infection rate and low international support.

To sum up, during the first and second waves of COVID-19, people were highly aware of the pandemic, the infection rate was not high due to the nature of virus and also there were no saboteurs. However, at the current third wave, there are only minus signs of the said facts and the failures of the NLD-led government in necessary preparations are being urgently remedied in the time of the State Administration Council. As a common citizen, I believe that the State Administration Council is exerting its utmost efforts to repel and defeat the third wave of COVID-19 amid the various challenges including domestic/foreign political instigations and sabotages. I wish and expect that we could properly prepare for the future COVID-19's waves and other pandemics in accord with the above-mentioned six points suggested by the world experts.

Ref: 'The next pandemic could be even worse' by Jamie Metzl, Andrew Hessel and Hansa Bhargava, CNN, 29 April, 2020.

Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/29/opinions/military-approach-coronavirus-opinion-metzl-hessel-bhargava/index.html>

■ ■ ■

Faster, higher, older: pensioners defy virus fears to keep Tokyo Olympics running

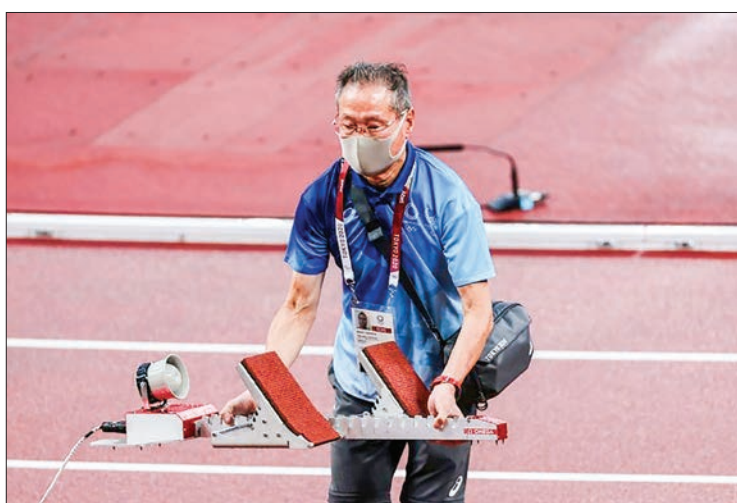
JAPAN has tapped into its famously ageing population to help run the Tokyo Olympics, with pensioner volunteers -- some into their 90s -- shrugging off fears about the coronavirus to do their bit.

Takashi Kato's eyes fill with tears as he recalls how, when he was just a small boy, his mother cried when they watched the opening ceremony together the last time the Japanese capital staged the Summer Games, in 1964.

His parents had lived through World War II and Japan hosting those Olympics two decades later signified something for his mother that went beyond sport.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I cannot help tearing up when I talk about this," he said, struggling to regain his composure.

"It was my first time to see her crying." That memory never



A volunteer sets up a starting block during the athletics at Tokyo 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

left him and sowed the seed for him to become a volunteer at the Games currently taking place in Japan.

Now 62, the retired mathematics teacher is almost a spring chicken compared with some of those who have volunteered.

Of the 71,000 volunteers at the Olympics and Paralympics,

nearly 15,000 are aged 60 or over, according to organisers.

There are 139 people in their 80s and even three in their 90s.

The presence of so many older volunteers is striking because the army of unpaid workers that is a feature of any Olympics usually has a younger age profile.— AFP ■

Schools in US state offer \$1,000 bonus to vaccinated staff

SCHOOLS in a county in the southeastern US state of Georgia will pay \$1,000 bonuses to staff who are vaccinated against Covid-19 in a bid to protect themselves from the resurgent pandemic, authorities said.

With that incentive county officials said they hope to avoid the "numerous disruptions that were encountered in public education over the past two school years due to a global pandemic."

"Last year was a challenge like no other for our students and our staff members as we were constantly having to adjust to the presence and possibilities of Covid-19 on our campuses," Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis said in a statement.

"Our students and our families deserve and expect predictability and stability in

their learning, and keeping our buildings open and supporting our employees' health are paramount to these efforts," she added.

The Henry county school district, southeast of the city of Atlanta, will make a \$1,000 payment to those of its nearly 6,000 employees who are fully vaccinated now or who will be vaccinated by September 30 with one dose of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine or both doses from Pfizer or Moderna.

The money will come from a federal program to curb the coronavirus in elementary and secondary schools, education officials said.

"We know that vaccines are still the number one defence and preventative measure to help mitigate and stop the spread of this community-crippling virus," Davis said.— AFP ■

Egypt's strategic economic zone to bring more success with more foreign investment



The SCZone is made up of six ports and four industrial zones scattered along the waterway, through which passes almost 10% of world trade, or 18,000 ships a year. **PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/AFP**

Egypt's strategic Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) is poised to see more success as more foreign investment pours in, experts said.

"The industrial and specialized investment parks are one of the mech-

anisms for luring foreign investment, especially in the industrial field, an essential factor for improving the competitiveness in Egypt," said Waleed Gaballah, professor of financial and economic jurisdictions at Cairo University.

Allocating industrial parks for certain countries will encourage them to pump investment and create win-win integrated industrial societies, Gaballah, a member of the Egyptian Association for Political Economy, told Xinhua. He said that Egypt will use foreign investment to create jobs, increase domestic production, and meet its

markets' demands. Recently, Egypt's SCZone and the Russian authorities signed a preliminary agreement to expand the Russian industrial park in the zone.

Under the new agreement, the Russian park will be extended, and the first phase of the project will cover an area of 1 million square meters in East Port Said and 500,000 square meters in Ain Sokhna.

The deal with Russia came after SCZone signed on 20 June a framework agreement with a Polish partner to establish a Polish industrial park in Ain Sokhna.

The two deals will bring

more to the SCZone, where the Chinese industrial zone TEDA in Ain Sokhna has already yielded fruitful results and is "a model to learn from," said Gaballah. Presence in Egypt will also benefit the foreign partners because Egypt is a market of 100 million consumers and a gate for Africa, the professor said.

Also, moving the production process into the SCZone will lower the wages, logistics costs for reaching the consumers and enjoy many other incentives that Egypt could present for investors based on its investment law, he added.—AFP ■

Chip stocks at a 'historic low', says Germany's Infineon

GERMAN chipmaker Infineon revealed on Tuesday its chip inventories are at an "historic low" with shortages due to last into 2022. "The market is faced with an extremely tight supply situation," CEO of Infineon Reinhard Ploss said in a press release. "Our chips are being shipped from our fabs straight into the end applications."

At its facilities in Melaka, Malaysia, where 8,000 people are employed, production stopped for 20 days in June over re-

strictions imposed due to an increase in coronavirus cases. The shortfall in production at the factory, where the chips are tested and wrapped, rose to between "400 and 500 million", Ploss said in a conference call. Infineon's site in Austin, Texas, is only just returning to full capacity after winter storms ravaged the state in February this year. Recent floods in several parts of western Germany also had an impact on the supply chain, Ploss said.—AFP ■

US aerospace tech group to buy UK peer for £6.3 billion

Parker-Hannifin Corporation, a US company specialised in aerospace technologies, has agreed to buy British peer Meggitt for £6.3 billion, the pair announced Monday.

Parker said it would offer a number of legally binding commitments to the UK government regarding the \$8.8-billion cash deal, such as ensuring that Meggitt meets current contractual obligations to the state.

It comes as the UK government monitors the takeover of UK defence technology firm Ultra Electronics by US-owned Cobham amid security con-



Parker-Hannifin Corporation, a US company specialized in aerospace technologies, has agreed to buy British peer Meggitt for £6.3 billion, the pair announced Monday. **PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/AFP**

cerns. The Parker-Meggitt transaction is meanwhile subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals.

"The boards of directors of Parker-Hannifin Corporation and Meggitt PLC are pleased to an-

nounce that they have reached agreement on the terms of a recommended cash acquisition," a statement said.

Tom Williams, chairman and chief executive officer of Parker, said that together the companies could better serve customers via innovation, accelerated research and development plus a complementary portfolio of aerospace and defence technologies.

"We are committed to being a responsible steward of Meggitt and are pleased our acquisition has the full support of Meggitt's board," he added.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NARVIK VOY.NO. (130W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NARVIK VOY.NO. (130W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0239-690N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0239-690N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AFRICA PRIDE

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AFRICA PRIDE** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIPL** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD



Ibaraki Gov. Kazuhiko Oigawa (L) attends a joint press conference with Chinese battery maker Envision AESC Group Ltd. at the Ibaraki prefectural government on 4 Aug 2021. PHOTO: KYODO

China firm to build 50 bil. yen battery plant for Nissan EVs in Japan

CHINESE battery maker Envision AESC Japan Ltd. said Wednesday it will build a lithium-ion battery factory for Nissan Motor Co.'s electric vehicles in Ibaraki Prefecture, north-east of Tokyo, with an initial investment of 50 billion yen (\$459 million). The battery firm owned by Envision AESC Group Ltd. said the factory is expected to be

one of the largest EV battery plants in Japan with an annual production capacity of 6 gigawatt hours, roughly enough to power 150,000 Nissan Leaf electric vehicles. With demand for EV battery projected to rise amid global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the company plans to spend over 100 billion yen in total and expand the ca-

capacity of the Ibaraki plant, which is expected to start mass production in 2024, to 18 gigawatt hours.

The factory in the town of Ibaraki will initially hire some 400 workers, with the number expected to reach about 1,000 later. The construction work for the plant is scheduled to begin in October, according to the company based in Zama,

Kanagawa Prefecture near Tokyo.

Envision AESC Group said it has decided to build the battery plant in the eastern Japan region, which hosts a number of production sites for automotive equipment makers, as it can receive a 2 billion yen subsidy from the Ibaraki prefectural government.—Kyodo ■

New York is first US city to mandate vaccines for restaurants, gyms

NEW YORK will become the first major US city to require proof of vaccination for people attending indoor venues such as restaurants, gyms and shows, under a plan announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio Tuesday.

The announcement comes as public bodies and private businesses in the United States step up vaccine requirements as the country battles the

highly infectious Delta variant.

"If you're vaccinated... you have the key, you can open the door. But if you're unvaccinated, unfortunately, you will not be able to participate in many things," de Blasio told a press conference. With coronavirus cases again surging in the United States, de Blasio said the policy, dubbed the "Key to NYC", would be launched

on 16 August followed by a transition period before enforcement a month later.

There will not be a specific pass, rather residents will just have to show proof of vaccination, such as through their vaccine card or a pre-existing state app "It's time for people to see vaccination as literally necessary to living a good, and full and healthy life," said de Blasio.—AFP ■



New York will become the first major US city to require proof of vaccination for people attending indoor venues such as restaurants, gyms and shows, under a plan announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Sony upgrades annual profit outlook on strong Q1 performance

Sony upgraded its full-year profit forecast Wednesday on the back of a strong quarterly performance, although the pandemic boom enjoyed by the gaming sector is slowing.

The Japanese entertainment and consumer electronics giant now predicts a net profit of 700 billion yen (\$6.4 billion) for the fiscal year to March 2022, up from its earlier estimate of 660 billion yen.

The conglomerate said solid earnings in its music and electronic products businesses offset a decline in operating profit in the gaming sector in the first quarter.

For the three months till June, net profit rose 9.4 per cent on-year to 211.8 billion yen.

Sony left its annual sales forecast unchanged at 9.7 trillion yen after first-quarter sales gained 15.0 per cent to 2.26 trillion yen.—AFP ■

TRADEMARK CAUTION

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RYDE

The above Trademark is used in respect of "Pharmaceutical preparations; dietary and nutritional supplements; hemp extract products; CBD oil; dietary preparations containing CBD oil; gum containing nicotine; pouches containing nicotine; patches containing nicotine; food supplements; vitamin, mineral and nutritional supplements; homeopathic supplements; herbal supplements; vitamin and mineral drinks; medicated drinks; medicated chewing gum; vitamin and mineral fortified preparations for oral use sold in pouch form; vitamin and mineral fortified lozenges; nutritional supplement meal replacement products for boosting energy; calcium fortified candy; tobacco-free cigarettes for medical purposes; tobacco substitutes for medical purposes; herbs for medicinal purposes including dried herbs, liquid herbal extracts and herbal capsules; herbal formulations; herbal creams; herbal teas for medicinal purposes; nicotine preparations for medical purposes, including loose and pre-packaged powder tobacco (snus); transdermal patches" in **Class 5**; "Chewing gums; natural and herbal flavourings (other than essential oils); lozenges; candy; candy mints; gummy candy; hemp and derivative based or infused edible products" in **Class 30**; "Energy drinks" in **Class 32**; and "Cigarettes; tobacco, raw or manufactured; tobacco products; tobacco substitutes (not for medical purposes); cigars; cigarillos; lighters; matches; smokers' articles; cigarette paper; cigarette tubes; cigarette filters; pocket apparatus for rolling cigarettes; hand held machines for injecting tobacco into paper tubes; electronic cigarettes; accessories for electronic cigarettes; liquids for electronic cigarettes; tobacco products for the purpose of being heated; devices and parts for devices for heating tobacco; accessories for devices for heating tobacco; tobacco substitutes for the purpose of inhalation; cigarettes containing tobacco substitutes; cigarette cases; cigarette boxes; snus with tobacco; snuff with tobacco; snus without tobacco; snuff without tobacco; tobacco free oral nicotine pouches (not for medical use)" in **Class 34**.

VELO

The above Trademark is used in respect of "Cigarettes; tobacco, raw or manufactured; tobacco free oral nicotine pouches (not for medical use); snuff with tobacco; snus with tobacco; snuff without tobacco; snus without tobacco; roll your own tobacco; pipe tobacco; tobacco products; tobacco substitutes (not for medical purposes); cigars; cigarillos; lighters; matches; smokers' articles; cigarette paper, cigarette tubes, cigarette filters; pocket apparatus for rolling cigarettes; hand held machines for injecting tobacco into paper tubes; electronic cigarettes; liquids for electronic cigarettes; tobacco products for the purpose of being heated" in **Class 34**.

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Daw Yee Mon Aung, (Advocate)

For British American Tobacco (Brands) Limited

c/o Baker & McKenzie Limited

Level 18, Unit 18-03, Sule Square,

221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township,

Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated: 5 August 2021

US vows 'collective response' on tanker attack as Iran warns



A handout image released by the US Central Command on August 13, 2020 reportedly shows Iranian forces boarding a tanker in international waters in the Gulf of Oman, one of a series of incidents in the tense waters. **PHOTO: US CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTCOM)/AFP/FILE**

THE United States on Monday promised to lead a "collective response" against Iran in retaliation for a deadly attack on

an Israeli-linked tanker, as Tehran denied blame and warned against "adventurism."

The United States and Is-

rael have both said that their intelligence concluded that an Iranian drone on Thursday attacked the MT Mercer Street,

managed by prominent Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, as it sailed off Oman.

A British security guard and a Romanian crew member were killed in what analysts said bore all the hallmarks of the "shadow war" between enemies Iran and Israel, which have included attacks in waters around the Gulf. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the MT Mercer Street incident "a direct threat to freedom of navigation and commerce."

"We are in very close contact, in coordination, with the United Kingdom, Israel, Romania and other countries. And there will be a collective response," Blinken told reporters, the second straight day he

has threatened retaliation.

Britain summoned the Iranian ambassador and demanded that vessels navigate freely in the oil-rich region.

"I think that Iran should face up to the consequences of what they've done," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told reporters, condemning the "unacceptable and outrageous attack" on the ship.

Iran summons envoys

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that Israel "must stop such baseless accusations" and called on the United States and Britain to provide evidence if any to support claims of Tehran's responsibility.—AFP ■

A year after exile, legal woes haunt Spain's ex-king

A year after Spain's former King Juan Carlos went into self-imposed exile in the face of mounting questions over his finances, he remains under a cloud of suspicion that complicates his return home.

He announced on August 3, 2020 he was moving abroad to prevent his personal affairs from undermining his son King Felipe VI's reign and sully the monarchy. But his choice of new home -- the United Arab Emirates, where some of his business affairs triggered the scandals

that tainted his reputation in the first place -- only raised Spaniards' eyebrows further.

Juan Carlos has told his son that he would like to return to Spain "but he won't come back without the approval" of the royal household, said Jose Apezarena, the author of several books on Felipe. And the position of the royals is that "until his legal problems end, he should not return", Apezarena told AFP.

The 83-year-old former king is the target of three separate investigations over his financial

dealings, including those linked to a high-speed rail contract in Saudi Arabia that was awarded to a Spanish consortium.

Prosecutors in Spain and Switzerland are looking into suspicions he received kickbacks for facilitating the deal.

The suspicions centre on \$100 million (85 million euros) that Saudi Arabia's late King Abdullah allegedly deposited in 2008 into a Swiss bank account to which Juan Carlos had access.

The other two investigations concern the alleged existence



A year after Spain's former King Juan Carlos went into self-imposed exile in the face of mounting questions over his finances, he remains under a cloud of suspicion that complicates his return home. **PHOTO: AFP**

of a trust fund in Jersey linked to Juan Carlos and the undeclared use of credit cards linked

to accounts not registered in his name, a possible money-laundering offence.—AFP ■

Sixteen more killed, dozens rescued in India's monsoon deluge



Flooding in West Bengal has displaced a quarter of a million people and killed over two dozen people. **PHOTO: AFP**

At least 16 people have been killed and a quarter of a million people displaced from their homes after heavy monsoon

rains lashed eastern India, officials said Tuesday, as the air force joined rescue efforts.

The latest deaths in West

Bengal came a few days after 11 people were also killed in the state as the torrent of water swept away homes and triggered landslides.

Flooding and landslides are common during India's treacherous monsoon season from June to September and causes widespread devastation. The annual downpours have been worsened by climate change, experts say. Two river banks were breached and flooding affected at least half a million people in six districts in West Bengal over the past two days, the state's disaster management minister Javed Ahmed Khan told AFP.—AFP ■

China gaming shares dive after 'spiritual opium' warning

SHARES of Tencent and other major Chinese gaming companies plummeted on Tuesday after a state-run media article described online games as "spiritual opium".

The criticism triggered fears among investors that online gaming was the next target for China's communist rulers as they crackdown on Big Tech and other powerful sectors deemed to be out of control.

The Economic Information Daily, an arm of the government's Xinhua news agency, complained about "widespread" online gaming addiction among children. "The harmfulness of games has been increasingly recognised by society, and they are often referred to as 'spiritual opium' and 'electronic drugs'," it said.

The article cited views that "no industry or sport should develop in a way that wrecks a generation".

Shares in Tencent, one of China's biggest tech firms that is behind 'Honor of Kings' and other global blockbuster games, dived more than 10 per cent in Hong Kong shortly after the publication of the article. Rivals NetEase and XD Inc also tumbled, falling more than 11 per cent in Hong Kong. The fallout spread to Japanese gaming stocks, with shares of online game company Nexon sliding more than nine per cent in Tokyo.—AFP ■

'Potential hijack' of ship off UAE coast ends

AN INCIDENT where a ship may have been hijacked off the coast of the United Arab Emirates has ended and the vessel is safe, a UK maritime security agency said on Wednesday.

"Boarders have left the vessel. Vessel is safe. Incident complete," United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations tweeted, referring to an incident that came five days after an attack on an Israeli-linked tanker bound for the UAE, which the United States and its allies have blamed on Iran.

Late on Tuesday the agency had said that a ship - the Panama-flagged Asphalt Princess - may have been hijacked.

The ship was heading towards Iran under the control of armed men, industry intelligence



The Israeli-linked Japanese-owned tanker MT Mercer Street is seen off the port of the Gulf Emirate of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, Aug. 3, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

site Lloyd's List had said.

The incident at the opening of the Strait of Hormuz - one of the world's busiest waterways

- came days after an attack on an Israeli-linked tanker bound for the UAE, which the United States and its allies blamed on Iran.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Tuesday that "reported 'incidents' in the Persian Gulf and broader region appear utterly suspicious".

"Reaffirming our strong commitment to regional stability and maritime security, Iran stands ready to offer assistance in case of any maritime accidents," Khatibzadeh wrote on Twitter.

'Deeply concerning' incident

The United States stopped short of assigning blame for the latest episode but State Department spokesman Ned Price said there had been "a very disturbing pattern of belligerence from Iran.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US Senate backs highest honour for police in Capitol riot

THE United States Senate unanimously agreed Tuesday to award Congress's highest honour to law enforcement officials who tried to protect the Capitol during the violent assault by Donald Trump supporters on January 6.

Speaking before the upper chamber vote, Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer hailed the "bravery, sacrifice, and selflessness" of the Capitol and Metropolitan police forces.

President Joe Biden will sign the legislation awarding the congressional gold medal.

The award has represented the "highest expression of national appreciation" by US lawmakers since 1776, when it was awarded to George Washington.

The lower House of Representatives had already approved the proposal in June by a vote of 406 to 21.—AFP ■

Belarus Olympic athlete leaves Japan after Poland visa offer

BELARUSIAN Olympic athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya flew out of Japan on Wednesday and was expected to take refuge in Poland after saying she feared for her life if she was forced to return home.

The 24-year-old sprinter has been at the centre of a diplomatic drama in the middle of the Games since seeking protection from Tokyo 2020 staff on Sunday, saying her team was trying to bundle her onto a plane after she publicly criticised her coaches.

And there was another unexpected twist on Wednesday, when the athlete made a last-minute switch and decided not to board her flight to Poland, which has offered her a humanitarian visa, instead taking a plane bound for Vienna.

Wearing a yellow face-mask and with the pink ends of her hair visible in a bun, Tsimanouskaya entered the airport surrounded by a phalanx of security.

She declined to speak to media gathered at her gate, but waved as she rounded the corner towards her plane.—AFP ■

Police officer killed in incident outside Pentagon

A POLICE officer was killed at the Pentagon's mass transit terminal Tuesday in an incident that forced the lockdown of the US military headquarters, the Defense Department said.

Employees in the Pentagon building in Arlington, a suburb of Washington, were ordered to shelter in place for more than an hour after gunfire erupted in the bus and subway station just yards (meters) from the entrance.

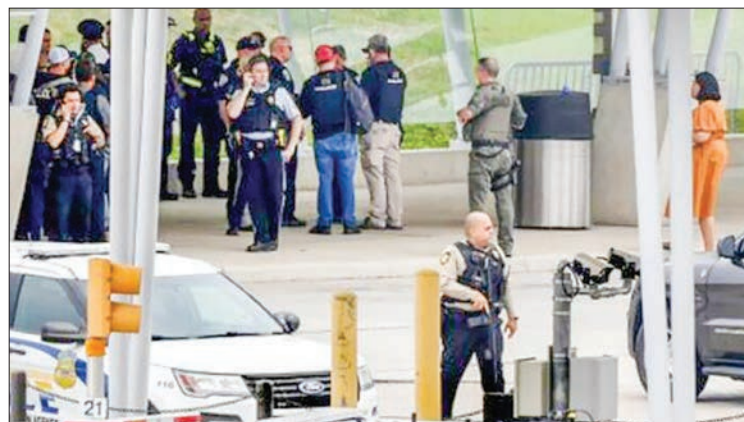
Officials said the site was secure 90 minutes after the incident but declined to explain what happened. "The incident is over, the scene is secure, and most importantly there's no continuing

threat to our community," said Woodrow Kusse, chief of the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, which patrols the iconic five-sided building.

Kusse said there were "several injuries" but would not provide details or confirm reports that the officer was stabbed and died from his injuries, and that the attacker was shot dead.

"This fallen officer died in the line of duty, helping protect the tens of thousands of people who work in - and who visit - the Pentagon on a daily basis," Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said in a statement.

"He and his fellow officers



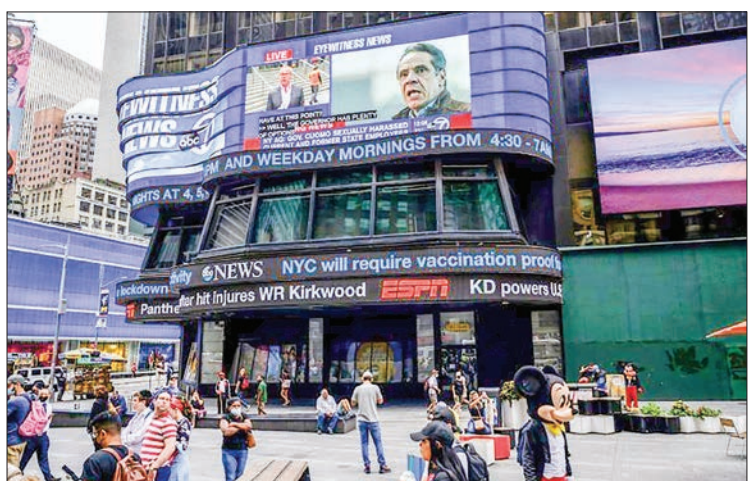
Law enforcement officers near the entrance of the Pentagon after a shooting incident. PHOTO: OLIVIER DOULIERY/ AFP

are members of the Pentagon family, and known to us all as professional, skilled and brave."

Austin said the investigation

into the incident is continuing and said it should "proceed unimpeded and without speculation."—AFP ■

New York governor urged to quit after damning harassment report



A screen shows news coverage of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo following revelations over allegations of sexual harassment, in Times Square on August 3, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

US President Joe Biden joined leading Democrats Tuesday in

calling on powerful New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to

resign after an independent investigation concluded that he sexually harassed multiple women.

Cuomo, who drew praise nationwide for his early pandemic response, denied inappropriate conduct and resisted immediate calls to quit after the probe found he harassed current and former New York state employees.

But his position was looking increasingly untenable late Tuesday after Biden and House speaker Nancy Pelosi said the three-term governor should step down and state lawmakers moved to impeach him.

"I think he should resign," Biden told reporters in Washington.

The explosive report detailed allegations by 11 women that paint a "deeply disturbing yet clear" picture of a pattern of abusive behavior by Cuomo and his senior staff, state Attorney General Letitia James said, announcing the findings. It was not clear if the governor would face criminal prosecution, with James saying the investigation was "civil in nature," but US media reported that the district attorney's office in state capital Albany had opened an investigation.—AFP ■

Myanmar MMA fighter Tial Thang to take on Song Min Jong on 27 Aug



Myanmar MMA fighter Tial Thang. PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

MYANMAR MMA fighter Tial Thang will fight against Song Min Jong of South Korea in their Bantamweight clash of the ONE Championship Battleground III event to be held at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore on 27 August.

The ONE Championship resumes from the last week of July and will be held twice this month.

Tial Thang joined ONE

Championship in 2019 for the fourth time in a row.

The Myanmar MMA star has won three straight wins in the ONE history with no loss record.

Thierry Thang beat Saroth, a Cambodian national in March 2019, Kim, a South Korean national in December 2019, and also won Paul Lumini in February 2021, respectively.

Tial Thang lives and trains

in the United States with famous MMA superstar Burmese Python Aung La N Sang.

The ONE: Battleground III event to be held on 27 August will feature bouts of world-class fighters including featherweight Muay Thai fighters Sitthichai vs Tawanchai and Women's Atomweight bout of Bi Nguyen of Viet Nam vs Jenelyn Olsim of the Philippines. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Cuba win boxing gold again as distraught Briton refuses to wear silver

CUBA'S Arlen Lopez won his second Olympic gold medal on Wednesday as he taught Ben Whittaker a boxing lesson in Tokyo – the disconsolate Briton refusing to wear his silver medal and putting it instead in his pocket.

The 28-year-old Lopez was the aggressor throughout but he was surprisingly only a split-

points winner in the final of the men's light-heavyweight.

Lopez, who won middleweight gold at the Rio 2016 Olympics, fell to his knees and banged on the floor when he was named the victor, while Whittaker quickly left the ring with his hands over his face.—AFP ■

Superb Asensio puts Spain into Olympic football final against Brazil

SPAIN will play reigning champions Brazil in the Olympic men's football final after Marco Asensio's superb extra-time winner Tuesday secured a 1-0 victory over host nation Japan in Saitama.

The Real Madrid winger came off the bench as a substitute and curled in a terrific strike in the 115th minute, sending Spain through to a first Olympic final since they finished runners-up at the 2000 Games in Sydney.

"We knew it was going to be difficult against a good

team that was having a great tournament. We knew what we had to do and with patience, effort and hard work the reward had to come." Japan will take on Mexico in Friday's bronze medal match. Mexico lost 4-1 on penalties to Brazil in Kashima following 120 goalless minutes.

Having needed a last-gasp equalizer against Ivory Coast in the previous round before prevailing 5-2 after extra time, Spain created the better chances over the 90 minutes against Japan without making



Spain will play reigning champions Brazil in the Olympic men's football final after Marco Asensio's superb extra-time winner Tuesday secured a 1-0 victory over host nation Japan in Saitama. PHOTO: AFP

the breakthrough.

Japan goalkeeper Kosei Tani produced a key save to deny Rafa Mir in the first half, while VAR intervened to overturn a penalty awarded to Spain after a tackle by Maya Yoshida on Mikel Merino.

Takefusa Kubo had a shot batted away by Unai Simon before Japan withstood a late siege, as Kou Itakura threw himself in the way of Martin Zubimendi's strike before Mir fired against the legs of Tani.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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