

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Friday, 6 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.

COVID-19 vaccines distributed nationwide by Tatmadaw aircraft



The Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines from China are loaded onboard the Tatmadaw aircraft to transport them to remote areas.

THE Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines from China are distributed to the regions and states from Yangon by the cold chain delivery logistics vehicles, Tatmadaw aircraft and helicopters.

The officials allocated 7,812 vaccines and 15,624 needles to Sittway of Rakhine State, 4,488 vaccines and 8,976 needles to Thandwe, 4,700 vac-

cines and 9,400 needles to Sittway military command, 3,000 vaccines and 6,000 needles to the military hospital of An Township, 1,622 vaccines and 3,244 needles to Paletwa of Chin State, 7,930 vaccines and 15,860 needles to Kengtung of Shan State (East), 700 vaccines and 1,400 needles to Dawei of Taninthayi Region,

3,200 vaccines and 6,400 needles to Myeik and 5,000 vaccines and 10,000 needles to the military command of Myeik. The allocated medical supplies will be distributed to other places by Tatmadaw planes and vehicles.

Tatmadaw (Air) and MNA will help distribute the vaccines to the remote areas. — MNA

May Yu radios distributed to Bengali speakers in Rakhine State

BENGALI-LANGUAGE speakers in Buthidaung, Maungtaw and Yathedaung townships in Rakhine State were provided with May Yu FM Radios under the ASEAN-ROK Fund on the Repatriation of Displaced Persons in Rakhine State yesterday morning.

The Ministry of Information makes efforts for providing Bengali-language users in Rakhine State with access to the May Yu FM Radio programmes, which is one of seven priority projects of the readmission process of displaced persons, according to the initial report by the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Group.

At the ceremony, Daw Phyu Phyu Win, Buthidaung Township Head of Information and Public Relations Department, spoke about the work being done to get real-time information, the current situation and the broadcasting status of May Yu FM radio programmes, and department staff distributed leaflets.

A total of 28,400 May Yu FM Radios were distributed for the Bengali-language users in a total of 62 ward/village tracts in Buthidaung Township yesterday. It is reported that a total of 45,000 May Yu FM radios has been provided in Maungtaw, Buthidaung and Yathedaung townships in Rakhine State. — IPRD/GNLM



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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council

Order No 169/2021

13th Waning of Waso 1383 ME
5 August 2021

Appointment and assignment of
Union Minister

THE State Administration Council appointed and assigned Dr Htay Aung as Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council

Order No 170/2021

13th Waning of Waso 1383 ME
5 August 2021

Retirement from the duty allowed

THE State Administration Council allowed the retirement of U Tin Myint, member of the Anti-Corruption Commission, from his duties, under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council

Order No 171/2021

13th Waning of Waso 1383 ME
5 August 2021

Transfer and assignment of duties

THE State Administration Council transferred and assigned the duty of member of Anti-Corruption Commission Thura U Bo Ni as member of the Union Civil Service Board under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Personal preventive practices
against COVID-19 infection

- (1) Wear the mask systematically when going out in public.
- (2) Keep a proper physical distance.
- (3) Avoid the crowd.
- (4) Wash your hands for 20 seconds frequently.
- (5) Avoid entering unventilated closed spaces as much as possible.

State Administration Council

Press Release

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

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

*Information Team
State Administration Council*

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

Need to participate with Parahita spirit

POLITICAL parties and civil society organizations are required to take part with Parahita (welfare of others) spirit in an effective way in control and response to the COVID-19 pandemic

(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 co-chairs ASEAN-Canada Ministerial Meeting and participates in ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting

THE ASEAN-Canada Ministerial Meeting was held yesterday morning at 7:30 am via videoconference. The meeting was Co-Chaired by Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada Honorable Marc Garneau. Foreign Ministers and their representative from the ASEAN Member States and the Secretary-General of ASEAN also attended the Meeting.

At the opening remarks, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs noted the progress made in the ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations and that ASEAN hoped to deepen cooperation in many other areas to strengthen partnership with Canada. He also said that both ASEAN and Canada struggled against COVID-19 and thanked Canada for supporting the ASEAN's COVID-19 Response Initiatives, especially for supporting the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. He hoped that Canada will deepen cooperation not only across the three community pillars but also in other important areas such as health care and digital technology which were important for ASEAN and Canada, especially for the CLMV countries. He also delivered the ASEAN Common Statement on behalf of ASEAN Member States.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN also made their remarks at the Meeting.

The meeting concluded



with closing remarks by Foreign Ministers of Canada, Myanmar and Malaysia as the new country coordinator for ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations for 2021 to 2024. Union Minister in his closing remarks said that the candid discussions they have had would continue to pave the way to step up ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relation and that the Meeting looked forward to working closely with Canada for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond with shared interests and possible areas of collaboration. He also said that Myanmar and Canada have had a very long-standing relationship and hoped that Canada will also work with Myanmar in Myanmar's efforts. On five-point con-

sensus, Union Minister informed that Myanmar had welcomed the proposal of Brunei Darussalam, as the ASEAN Chair, to appoint Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam as the special envoy and that he looked forward to working closely with him as Minister of Foreign Affairs II as well as in his capacity as the special envoy.

Union Minister also attended the ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting which was held shortly after the ASEAN-Canada Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting was co-chaired by Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and Nanaia Mahuta,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand. During the meeting, Union Minister appreciated New Zealand's consistent support to narrowing the development gaps within ASEAN, particularly through Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), encouraged ASEAN and New Zealand to enhance cooperation for the promotion of people to people exchange, capacity building and human capacity development in post-pandemic. The Minister acknowledged New Zealand's contribution in response to COVID-19 and reiterated to enhance the regional economic recovery.

At 3:00 pm, Union Minister attended the conferment ceremony on accepting the United Kingdom as ASEAN Dialogue

Partner held via videoconference.

U Chan Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in the 1st Friends of the Mekong Ministerial Meeting held in the evening today. The meeting was chaired by the United States with the participation of Representatives of FOM members; Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union (EU), Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRC), World Bank (WB), and ASEAN Secretary-General. India and United Kingdom also participated as observers. In the statement, Permanent Secretary U Chan Aye recalled the objectives of the FOM mechanism which is to make coordination in assisting in the development of the Mekong Region and pointed out to respect rules in the implementation process of cooperation based on the principles of Mekong-US Partnership such as the principle of mutual respect and non-interference. He also suggested the importance to produce tangible benefits from the FOM mechanism in particular of promoting equitable access to COVID-19 vaccine for countries that are facing a spike in the cases, post-pandemic economic recovery and addressing non-traditional challenges.

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

4,132 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 5 August, total figure rises to 319,250

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **319,250** after **4,132 new cases** were reported on 5 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **230,308** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **10,988** after **293** died. —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- Bawlakhe 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	

MoC is working daily to facilitate import of medical supplies

THE Ministry of Commerce is making continuous efforts to ensure anti-COVID-19 medicines, equipment, and necessary medical supplies are being shipped from overseas, loosening restrictions to facilitate imports, in collaboration with relevant ministries and providing continuous import on a daily basis.

The Ministry is also reportedly making diplomatic arrangements with China, Thailand, Bangladesh and India to import the medicines and equipment from the border trade checkpoints.

The People's Republic of China made an announcement on August 5, stating China is cooperating with Myanmar in facilitating the importation of medicines through border trade posts due to fault rumors spread by unscrupulous people to raise people's concern for



The Ministry of Commerce is making continuous efforts to ensure anti-COVID-19 medicines, equipment, and necessary medical supplies are being shipped from overseas, loosening restrictions to facilitate imports, in collaboration with relevant ministries and providing continuous import on a daily basis.

their political gain, and to manipulate the market.

Yesterday, a total of 5,874 oxygen concentrators were imported through the Yangon International Airport, while

38.47 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 5 tonnes of oxygen cylinders, 9,117 oxygen containers, 4 oxygen plants, 6,501 oxygen concentrators, 51,400 PPEs, 30 tonnes of gloves and 210

tonnes of masks were imported through Muse, Myawady, Chinshwehaw, Tachilek and Kawthoung border trade points.

A total of 269 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 52 tonnes of oxy-

gen cylinders, 33,466 oxygen containers, 4 oxygen plants, 5 oxygen generators, 33,640 oxygen concentrators, 141,642 test kits, 195,022 PPEs, 38 tonnes of gloves and 448 masks have been imported thus far in August.

In July, a total of 1,294 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 114 tonnes of oxygen cylinder, 40,491 oxygen containers, 69,146 oxygen concentrators, 8 oxygen plants, 11 oxygen generators, 4 oxygen filling machines, 322,878 test kits, 1,104 tonnes of mask and 182,975 PPEs were imported.

In addition to the cooperation with relevant ministries, the Ministry of Commerce has posted contact persons and department announcements on the Ministry's website, Commerce.gov.mm, to access direct contact with relevant authorities if assistance is needed. — MNA

U Ye Min Oo, ex-chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank, ex-vice-chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee charged under Anti-Corruption Law

THE inspection team of the Anti-Corruption Commission has inspected the corruption case against ex-deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo, ex-chair of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank and ex-vice-chair of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee regarding his activities and construction of media centre at Nay Pyi Taw Myoma Market.

According to the inspection, the ex-chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank U Ye Min Oo did not follow the terms and conditions of tender mentioned in notification no 1/2017 of the President's Office in conducting Digital Marketing Services Facebook advertising service to change the name of Nay Pyi Taw Development Bank and for public services, he also broke the finance management regulations as he permitted more than K28million for advertising service to his one partner company which was paid more than other companies and did not exist in the real situation on 3-8-2020.

He also granted a K170-million loan to his two partners just with the documents like expired land grants and the ones that need to be changed name by violating the loan policy and procedures of the bank on 16-3-2020.

Moreover, he made his one partner's

house and land as collateral in taking a loan from the bank. He neglected the suggestion of the loan risk management committee to grant only K4,250 million and he permitted K4,500 million on 28-9-2020, including an additional loan of K450 million.

He also granted more than 81 million than the approved amount of K4,719 by the committee -- K4,800 million to a company, that changed the name in taking a loan with the houses and land as collateral on 28-9-2020. His doing was not in conformity with the loan policy of the bank.

He did not invite tender for the construction of the Information Centre at Nay Pyi Taw Myoma Market in accordance with the directive no 1/2017 of the President's Office and made an agreement with a construction company at more than K169 million on 6-1-2021. He then approved when the company took more than a K59 million loan from the bank describing it as a tender project. His doings resulted in financial and property losses for the country.

Therefore, a case was opened against him under Section 55 of Anti-Corruption Law at No (1) and No (5) Myoma police stations of Nay Pyi Taw Council yesterday, according to the ACC.—MNA

Terrorists dressed in PPE assassinate two people in Hline township, Yangon

A man was killed in an assassination attempt by two terrorists dressed in PPE in Hline Township, Yangon Region yesterday afternoon.

Terrorist extremists are targeting areas that are under the COVID-19 disease control, ignoring the humanitarian acts and the pandemic. In addition, they are approaching innocent civilians by pretending to be volunteers in relief work, wearing a PPE and carrying out brutal assassinations.

Yesterday afternoon at around 1:05 pm, two men dressed in PPE came to the shop of U San Lin and wife Daw Thida on Otekyin Butayon street, (16) ward, Hline Township, pretending to be buying cold drinks, and shot them. U San Lin was shot in



U San Lin (dead).

the left chest, right arm and left thigh, and Daw Thida shot in the left arm and the left chest, respectively.

U San Lin has died of his injuries while being taken to a Tatmadaw hospital by security forces. It is reported that security forces are conducting a detailed investigation to take action against the terrorists.—MNA



Shan State Chief Minister visits Shan Yoma livestock zone, Htonpo agricultural research farm



CHIEF Minister of Shan State Government Dr Kyaw Tun and party visited Shan Yoma livestock zone in Ayethaya and agricultural research farm in Htonpo of Taunggyi Township yesterday.

At Shan Yoma livestock zone, the director of Shan State Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department presented reports on the breeding of layers in battery cage system, operation of 182 poultry farms by 84 farmers, production of some 633,000 eggs per day and sending of chicken and eggs from the zone to Shan State (East), Kayah and Mon states, Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions. The Chief Minister and party

also viewed the maize dryer and SKF swine GGP farm in the zone.

They also visited Htonpo agricultural research farm where the research officer explained applying the tissue culture system for conducting research to expose the quality vegetables and flowery plants with the resilience of climate change, solving the agricultural problems of local farmers and distribution of new species of crops to farmers.

The Chief Minister and party viewed the production of tissue banana saplings, marketable anthurium, strawberry and potato plants on the farm. — Maung Maung Than (Taunggyi)/GNLM

USD Vs MMK exchange rate hit K1,665 per dollar despite CBM constantly selling dollar to control rising rate

THE US dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat has risen to K1,665 per dollar in the local exchange market despite the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) is constantly selling dollars to control the value of the currency.

So far, the CBM sold eight million dollars in the first week of this month in three instalments.

In July, the central bank reportedly sold \$39 million at an auction rate. Besides, the bank sold \$12 million at an auction rate as well.

The CBM is conducting an auction for foreign exchange to reduce the instability of foreign exchange rates in a short-term period and fulfil the needs of foreign exchange reserves.

The dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat stood at around K1,330 per dollar at the end-January. Then, the rate jumped to K1,730 per dollar on 12 May.

With the rising US dollar exchange rate, the CBM has been constantly selling the US dollar at an auction exchange rate since 12 May. Consequently, the exchange rate dips to around K1,580 in the local foreign exchange market this month. But the rate does not touch the rate that hit a high of K1,730 per dollar in May.

In the first six months of 2021, the highest and lowest exchange rate is currently fixed around K1,327-1,345 in January, K1,335-1,465 in February, K1,420-1,550 in March, K1,550-1,610 in April, K1,585-1,730 in May, K1,595-1,620 in June and K1,626-1,670 in July.

In 2020, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August, K1,310-1,355 in September, K1,282-1,315 in October, K1,303-1,330 in November and K1,324-1,403 in December.

In 2019, the rates are pegged at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit an all-time high of K1,650 in the local currency market.—NN/GNLM

Over 90 people die from COVID-19 in Pantanaw



OVER 90 people have died of COVID-19 in Pantanaw township, Maubin district in Ayeyawady region as the country struggles with a third wave of the COVID-19, said U Hsan Bo, the chairman of Pantanaw Township Administration Body.

From the first week of June to 4 August, Pantanaw township registered 529 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 340 recoveries and 98 total deaths. Currently, about 91 patients are undergoing coronavirus treatment, according to the COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee in

Pantanaw Township.

“In Pantanaw township, there have been 529 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 98 deaths. Most of the COVID-19 deaths have been people who are over 50 years old. The patients come to the hospital, but it was too late to start efficient treatment. That is the reason why the death rate is rising. Some of the positive patients who are currently infected need oxygen,” said U Hsan Bo.

Those confirmed patients are currently undergoing medical treatment at the COVID-19 treatment centres – Pantanaw township public hospital and

temporary quarantine centre of sports ground, religious temple and related station hospitals.

Under the supervision of the COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response Committee in Pantanaw Township, the COVID-19 vaccination is being administered to people aged 65 and above. So far, a total of 2,822 vaccine doses have been administered.

All residents from Pantanaw township must wear masks, use hand gels and undergo body temperature checks. They must also keep a social distance from each other, according to the Ministry of Health. — Lu Lay/GNLM

UMFCCI, affiliated associations discuss trade facilitation, price stability

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce (UMFCCI) met with its affiliated associations on 4 August at the UMFCCI headquarters regarding the price stability of the commodity and smooth freight flow in the country.

Yangon Region Minister for Commerce U Aung Than Oo, officials from the Consumer Affairs Department and UMFCCI, Dr Ngwe San, a member of Yangon City Development Committee and UMFCCI's secretary-general U Aye Win and chairpersons of the affiliated associations attended the meeting.

First of all, U Aung Than Oo gave a remark that all the stakeholders are needed to control the pandemic-induced price hike in the commercial hub Yangon, ensure the supply chain in the difficult time and maintain the market equilibrium for the staple food including rice, pulses, eggs, vegetables and meat. The related department has also relaxed the import licence or cut tax on



The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce (UMFCCI) meets with its affiliated associations on 4 August at the UMFCCI headquarters regarding the price stability of the commodity and smooth freight flow in the country.

the imported fuel oil, edible oil and pharmaceuticals and medical device via maritime trade, air carrier and border posts. This move aims to control the exorbitant price and lessen the

concerns of the people during the pandemic. The wholesalers and retailers are also encouraged to sell the products with a reasonable profit. Those who store large stockpiles and at-

tempt to make price gouging on food commodities, pharmaceuticals and medical devices will face legal actions under special goods tax law.

He also urged the officials

of the YCDC's markets department, Special the Consumer Affairs Department and Myanmar Inspection and Testing Services Ltd (MITS), a recognized agency by the Ministry of Commerce to inspect the price hike causes. Yangon Region government also tackles the real-time problem that companies and traders are facing. The regional minister encouraged them to look forward to the benefits of the consumers rather than self-interest.

Afterwards, officials of Myanmar Edible Oil Millers Association, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Livestock Federation, Myanmar Chamber of Pharmaceutical and Medical Device, Rice wholesale centres (Wahdan and Bayintnaung) and Yangon Region Chamber of Commerce engaged in the price commodity and trade facilitation matters.

Then, the regional minister U Aung Than Oo made the ending remark and instructed the needs. —San Kyaw Oo (IPRD)/GNLM

Myanmar exports dramatically plummet to \$12.3 bln as of 23 Jul

THE value of Myanmar's exports in nearly ten months touched a low of US\$12.3 billion owing to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The figures reflected a sharp decline of over \$2.124 billion compared with a year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

During the corresponding period in the previous FY, exports stood at \$14.43 billion, according to data released by the ministry.

The pandemic deals a severe blow to the manufacturing, livestock, fishery, forest, mineral and other service sectors as it disrupted the transport, supply chain and logistics sectors and shut down the events. Additionally, most people demand only staple food and pharmaceuticals. As a result of this, the export sees the growth in the agriculture sector only this year.

Drop in the exports of natural gas, gems and jewellery and CMP garments are contributing factors to the big slump in exports, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Both sea trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts. The neighbouring countries restricted the border posts to contain the spread of the virus. Pandemic-induced container shortage pushed up the freight rates in Myanmar as well, causing delays for exporters.

Of the seven export groups, agricultural exports showed an increase of \$941 million against a year-ago period, whereas, exports of livestock, forest products, minerals, fishery products and finished industrial goods drastically declined.

Between 1 October and 23 July of the current FY, export values were registered at \$4.19 billion for agro products, \$17.7 million for livestock, \$629.59 million for fishery products, \$753 million for minerals, \$106 million for forest products, over \$6 billion for manufactured goods, and \$447 million for other goods.

This year, Myanmar's top export countries are listed China, Thailand, Japan, India, the USA, Spain, Germany, the UK, ROK and the Netherlands.—KK/GNLM

Myanmar trade with Malaysia tops \$631 mln in seven months



Malaysia is placed as the ninth-largest foreign investor in Myanmar, according to the data of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

THE value of bilateral trade between Myanmar and Malaysia in the past seven months (October-April) of the current financial year 2020-2021 touched about US\$631.217 million, according to the data of the Ministry of Commerce.

Imports outperformed exports in trade with Malaysia, with imports valued at \$511.74 million and exports worth \$119.47 million.

Myanmar's export items

to Malaysia are rice, broken rice, rubber, pulses, garment, base metal, fishery product, electronic goods, onion, timber, prawn, footwear, woven fabric roll, turmeric, tamarind and timber. In return, it imported fuel oil, edible oil, plastic, fertilizer, electrical machinery and apparatus, chemical elements and compounds, paper, paperboard, dyeing tanning and colouring material, transport equipment, glass and glass-

ware, soap, wheat, pharmaceutical, cement, dairy product and cotton fabric, and other products.

Bilateral trade values with Malaysia had registered at over \$1 billion in the previous years.

Malaysia is placed as the ninth-largest foreign investor in Myanmar, according to the data of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA). —Htet Myat/GNLM

Don't absolutely accept all interferences in internal affairs

THE internal affairs of a house can be solved by its family members. They have a chance to share the future of the family together. Even good neighbours and good friends give necessary advice for the family problems but they don't meddle in the family affairs. If one attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of another house, one will have the dishonest moves to disintegrate such a house.

In reviewing Myanmar history, colonialists and their associates interfered in the internal affairs of the country. Such events were committed by big countries in the before and post-independence periods of Myanmar. They have been relying on their followers in meddling in the internal affairs of the country.

Currently, they attempt to utilize their followers in shaping Myanmar as they like. Recently, an informal meeting on Myanmar affairs hosted by Britain took place in New York, focusing on discussions on fabricated information. They arranged the meeting to misunderstanding among the global countries with the clarification presented by those who cannot correctly view the ground situations. Hence, Myanmar strongly objected to their attendance and discussions at the meeting.

The meeting was held with dishonest attempts, focusing on imposing pressure on the country and the people to face troubles. Their attempt did not be a help Myanmar but brought problems and difficulties to the people.

For the time being, Myanmar is striving to smoothly change the political situation while trying to inject anti-COVID-19 vaccines to at least 50 per cent of the total population at the end of this year. During the period from 27 January to 21 July 2021, public service personnel were vaccinated. The people were divided into 12 targeted groups in the vaccination programme. The government opens the door to those wishing to cooperate in combatting the COVID-19.

While Myanmar people are joining hands with each other for prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 pandemic similar to those from other global countries, some unscrupulous persons are attempting to seize the State power for a group without humanitarian spirit. As such, the entire ethnic national people do not totally accept the committing of suspicions and hatred in the country and interference of any countries in internal affairs of sovereign Republic of the Union of Myanmar.



WHO calls for moratorium on booster shots as China curbs travel

THE WHO called Wednesday for a moratorium on Covid-19 vaccine booster shots as China tightened overseas travel curbs after recording its highest number of infections in months, while Tokyo reported the Olympic Games' first cluster.

The World Health Organization said halting booster shots until at least the end of September would help ease the drastic inequity in dose distribution between rich and poor nations.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the move would help towards the goal of enabling "at least 10 per cent of the population of every country to be vaccinated".

The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,247,231 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The worst-affected country
The US is the worst-affected country with 614,295 deaths, followed by Brazil with 558,432 and India with 425,757.

The Olympic Games, which



A volunteer (R) checks personal information of a resident before COVID-19 nucleic acid testing in Zhangjiajie, central China's Hunan Province, 4 Aug 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/CHEN SIHAN

went ahead despite a rise in cases in Japan, reported that all 12 members of the Greek artistic swimming team had entered isolation after five tested positive for coronavirus.

The team have withdrawn from remaining competition and the seven members who have so far tested negative have agreed to move to a facility for "close contacts" of positive cases, Tokyo 2020

spokesman Masa Takaya said. "We pray for their swift recovery," Takaya said, adding that it was the first "cluster" discovered at the Games. So far, Tokyo 2020 has reported 322 positive virus

cases among its "stakeholders" including athletes, officials and media. Most of the positive cases have been among Japanese residents working as employees or contractors.

The movement of people is coming under more restrictions inside China - with localized transport closures and stay-at-home orders in places in some cities - as well as beyond China's borders.

China's immigration authority on Wednesday announced it would stop issuing ordinary passports and other documents needed for exiting the country in "non-essential and non-emergency" cases.

However the authorities have pulled back from issuing a blanket ban on overseas travel.

Immigration official Liu Haitao told a press briefing that those who "have real needs for studying abroad, employment and business" will still have their documents issued upon verification.

China had previously boasted of its success in crushing Covid-19, with hard lockdowns in the early stages mixed with tight controls of its borders, but mass testing cam-

paigns have uncovered Delta variant infections across the country. The latest outbreak is threatening to undo the country's economic rebound and return to normal life, with nearly 500 domestic cases reported since mid-July.

Covid infections

Covid infections in Iran have surged, hitting a new one-day record for a third straight day Wednesday and taking total cases to more than four million.

Iran registered 39,357 new cases in the 24 hours, taking it total to 4,019,084, the health ministry said. It recorded 409 deaths over the same period, taking the country's total to 92,194.

The official figures are widely believed to underestimate the real toll but even they make Iran the Middle East country worst hit by the pandemic. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday ordered that "necessary measures" be taken to contain what the government warns is a "fifth wave" of the country's outbreak.

SOURCE: AFP

Latest COVID-19 data confirms infections have risen globally for four consecutive weeks

COVERID-19 infections have continued to rise globally for more than a month now, with over four million cases reported in the past week alone, the UN health agency said on Wednesday.

In its latest update, the World Health Organization (WHO) attributed the uptick to "substantial" caseload increases of 33 per cent in the Western Pacific and 37 per cent in the Eastern Mediterranean - where coronavirus fatalities also rose 48 and 31 per cent, respectively.

The number of deaths in the four remaining WHO regions of Africa, Americas, Europe and South-East Asia was in keeping with previous weeks, apart from the Americas, which dropped 29 per cent. Africa and Europe witnessed a two per cent decrease in COVID-19 deaths, while South-

East Asia registered a three per cent increase, according to WHO's COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update. Overall, the total number of reported cases is around 197 million and with 4.2 million deaths worldwide.

Country file

Ranked by country, the United States topped the number of new infections over the past week, with 543,420 new cases, a nine per cent jump, followed by India, which had 283,923 new cases and a seven per cent increase. Indonesia had 273,891 new cases, followed by Brazil's 247,830 and Iran's 206,722 new infections.

While Alpha variant infections have been reported in 182 countries, the Delta variant has been confirmed in three new countries, infecting a total of 135 nations.

Spotlighting Africa

By region, WHO said that Africa - now in the grip of its third coronavirus wave - had reported similar numbers of weekly cases and deaths as the previous seven-day period, with just over 182,000 new cases and more than 4,800 new deaths.

Nonetheless, the UN agency explained that the overall regional decrease in confirmed weekly infections and deaths on the continent since the middle of July is still being driven by falling numbers in South Africa, which dwarfed the 13,268 new cases in Mozambique over the past seven-day period.

Americas

In the Americas, where there have been more than 1.2 million new infections and over 20,000 COVID-19 deaths in the past week

and WHO noted an increase in Mexico, which had 80.1 new cases per 100,000. Brazil experienced 7,120 fatalities, making it the highest number of deaths in the region, followed by Mexico with 2,502 deaths and 2,455 in the United States.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, an increase in cases and deaths were mainly driven by Iran, where new infections were rose to more than 206,000; Iraq with 83,098 cases; and Morocco, which witnessed 48,366 new cases.

European trends

After more than a month of increases in COVID-19 infections and deaths, Europe saw a drop in weekly cases - driven by decreases in Spain and the UK.

However, at just over 8,000, the death toll in Europe was sim-

ilar to the previous week, driven by 5,478 new fatalities in Russia, 524 in the UK and 453 in Turkey. With 187,268 confirmed cases, UK ranked highest in new infections

followed by Russia, with 162,136, and Turkey, which registered 139,667 new COVID-19 infections.

SOURCE: UN



Thailand registered more than 118,000 new infections. People receive doses of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac in Bangkok, Thailand. PHOTO: XINHUA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 5 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 6 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Kachin, Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Magway, Ayeyawady, Taninthayyi Regions and Chin, 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: Moderate to strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 August 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Warning

(Issued at 13:00 hrs MST on 5-8-2021)

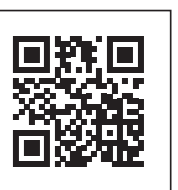
According to the (12:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River at Hpa-an is observed as about (1/2) foot below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Hpa-an Township to take precaution measure.

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Biden to set target of half of US car sales to be zero-emission by 2030



Electric car sales account for only two percentage of the overall US market, compared with 10 percent in Europe. **PHOTO: AFP**

PRESIDENT Joe Biden will set a target on Thursday that half of all cars sold in the United States by 2030 will be zero-emission vehicles, the White House announced.

Biden's plan follows the dramatic loosening of many environmental regulations and climate protections under the Donald Trump administration.

"The President will sign an Executive Order that sets an ambitious new target to make half of all new vehicles sold in 2030 zero-emissions vehicles, including battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, or fuel cell electric vehi-

cles," a White House statement said. The order, due to be signed on Thursday, will position "America to drive the electric vehicle future forward, outcompete China, and tackle the climate crisis," it added.

The three big American auto manufacturers -- Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis -- expressed their "shared aspiration to achieve sales of 40-50%" of electric vehicles including battery electric, fuel cell and plug-in hybrid vehicles by 2030.

In another statement, the manufacturers BMW, Honda,

Volkswagon and Volvo -- whose electric vehicles are often considered more advanced than their US competitors -- applauded the initiative.

Union support

One of America's largest unions, United Auto Workers (UAW), rallied behind the move.

"The members of the UAW, current and future, are ready to build these electric cars and trucks and the batteries that go in them," President Ray Curry said in a statement released through the White House.—AFP ■

Pig farms accused of defiling Mexico's 'sacred wells'

LONG revered by the Maya people as sacred and today a magnet for tourists, local indigenous communities fear the water-filled sinkholes of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula are under threat from industrial pig farms.

Known as cenotes, the thousands of cavities are part of a vast labyrinth of caves connected to a giant aquifer under the lush jungle of a region known as the "Riviera Maya."

For the indigenous people who inhabit the area in south-

east Mexico, they are a source of drinking water that their ancestors called "sacred wells."

"The area where we have our gift from God is like a sieve -- the water from all around goes down into the cenotes," said Doroteo Hau, an indigenous resident and tour guide.

Now the 62-year-old fears that the purity of the cenotes is being put at risk to satisfy burgeoning Asian demand for pork.

"They're going to destroy what we're taking care of," said

Hau, who teamed up with other residents to form an organization called the Guardians of the Cenotes.

In May they managed to get Mexico's Supreme Court to ratify a suspension order for a farm with more than 45,000 pigs in Homun, home to 7,500 people. The case is under appeal.

If the complex reopens, Doroteo said that he is willing to "take up machetes" to defend the cenotes.

There are about 257 pig



The pig farm owners insist that their waste management meets the necessary standards. **PHOTO: AFP**

farms in the region, of which only 22 have submitted environmental impact studies, according to

a report released by environmental group Greenpeace last year.—AFP ■

No animal left behind: Kenya holds first national wildlife census



The numbers of African savanna elephants have plunged by at least 60 percent during the last half-century, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE flimsy planes tethered to metal drums to prevent them from accidentally becoming airborne are unlikely weapons in Kenya's fight to protect threatened species as it conducts its first national wildlife census.

Decades of unbridled

poaching, expanding human settlements and climate change have taken a heavy toll on the global wildlife population -- and central Kenya is no exception.

African savanna elephants have been particularly hard-hit, with their numbers plunging

by at least 60 percent during the last half-century, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

So the pilots preparing their aircraft at the tiny airport at Isiolo know they are on the frontlines of a battle with far-reaching consequences.

"Elephants are the key animals, but when you are able to locate (any) endangered species, you feel like the census is on the right track," pilot Chris Cheruiyot tells AFP as he fastens the safety belt of his passenger, Julius Kabete.

A camera and audio recorder dangling from his neck, Kabete will spend the next few hours counting Somali giraffes, Grevy's zebras, oryxes and other animals as the pair cruise the windy skies and refuel their two-seater Aviat Husky aircraft at specially set up stations in the forest.—AFP ■

'Our homeland is burning': Volunteers join Siberia wildfire fight

THE father and son stood in the forest burning around them, the elder with a shovel in hand, the younger with a plastic bottle filled with gasoline.

As the son poured the fuel onto the forest floor, watching as the rising flames rendered white birch trunks black, his father shovelled dirt onto embers that popped across the other side of a trench marked for a controlled burn.

Ivan Fyodorov, 65, and his 42-year-old son Pyotr were helping firefighters on an afternoon in late July to prevent a wildfire from reaching their land in the Siberian region of Yakutia.

While large wildfires are an annual occurrence in Siberia, the blazes have hit Yakutia with an increasingly ferocious intensity the past three years, scorching its legendary vast northern forests known as the taiga.

With firefighters and emergency services struggling, hundreds of volunteers have joined the efforts to contain the blazes, which experts have linked to climate change.

Fyodorov said the first fire had come close to his farmland around the village of Byas-Kyuel in June, but they were able to beat it back.

Then came the second. Then the third.

"At that point we didn't have the strength. It's good these guys came," he said of the dozen firefighters working nearby.

Citing government inaction, Fyodorov said that he and his family have taken the fight into their own hands.—AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

France's Sanofi expands mRNA drive with US firm purchase

FRANCE'S pharmaceutical giant Sanofi, which has lagged behind rivals in developing new generation mRNA Covid-19 vaccines, on Tuesday said it has purchased a US firm specializing in the technology.

Sanofi will buy Translate Bio, with which it has been working to develop an mRNA Covid jab, for \$3.2 billion (2.7 billion euros), the company said in a statement. Sanofi was left trailing in the race to break out a Covid-19 vaccine in 2020, as rivals Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna used pioneering mRNA technology to develop jabs in record time. In late June, it said it would invest two billion euros in the technology by setting up a "centre of excellence" employing 400 people at its laboratories in the US city of Cambridge and Marcy-L'Etoile near the French city of Lyon. Messenger RNA technology works by providing human cells with the genetic instructions to make a surface protein of the coronavirus, which trains the immune system to recognize the real virus.—AFP ■

Australia records one of its youngest COVID-19 deaths amid Sydney outbreak

AN Australian man in his 20s died at home of COVID-19 in Sydney, authorities said on Wednesday (August 4), one of the country's youngest coronavirus deaths. The man, who was unvaccinated, was 13 days into home isolation after testing positive when his health deteriorated rapidly, authorities said, adding that he lived with one person who had been hospitalized with the virus. The death highlighted the risk from the virus and the importance of getting vaccinated, said health leaders, who have set a target of having half of Sydney's population inoculated before lifting the city's lockdown by a target date of 28 August. Sydney reported 233 new cases, up from 199 a day earlier.—AFP ■

Israel reimposes more restrictions



Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Wednesday that vaccinations and renewed restrictions could spare Israel another lockdown, even as coronavirus infections soar. PHOTO: UNSPLASH/AFP

PRIME Minister Naftali Bennett said Wednesday that vaccinations and renewed restrictions could spare Israel another lockdown, even as coronavirus

infections soar.

"Our goal is to keep Israel open but not reach a situation where hospitals will say we're full," he said on a tour of a new

vaccination centre in Jerusalem.

"We're seeking to avoid that, and know when to hit the brakes," Bennett said.

"To refrain from harsher restrictions, we'll get vaccinated, wear masks and maintain distancing."

Bennett's government had announced a package of new restrictions Tuesday, including requiring vaccine certificates or negative tests for entry to venues holding fewer than 100 people, and mandatory mask wearing in open spaces holding more than 100.

Announcing the new restrictions, the cabinet's Covid committee warned the highly infectious Delta variant of the coronavirus was spreading fast and called on Israelis to "stop shaking hands, embracing and kissing."

The health ministry has also expanded the list of countries from which arrivals are required to quarantine, regardless of their vaccination or testing status, to include France, Italy and the United States, among other countries.—AFP ■

Greek Olympic artistic swimmers isolated over virus cluster

All 12 members of the Greek artistic swimming team are in isolation after five tested positive for coronavirus in the first cluster detected at the Games, Olympic officials said Wednesday.

The team have withdrawn from remaining competition and the seven members who have so far tested negative have agreed to move to a facility for "close contacts" of positive cases, said Tokyo 2020 spokesman Masa Takaya. None of those who test-

ed positive so far require hospital care, Takaya added.

The team did not participate in the duet competition on Tuesday and have now withdrawn from the team competition, which will start later this week.

"It pains us to imagine the feelings of the athletes who have done a great deal to prepare for the Games and came all the way to Tokyo in this difficult situation," Takaya told a briefing. "We pray for their swift recovery,"



The entire Greek artistic swimming team at the Olympics is in isolation after several members tested positive. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Takaya said, adding that it was the first "cluster" discovered at the Games. So far, Tokyo 2020 has reported 322 positive virus cases among its "stakeholders"

including athletes, officials and media. Most of the positive cases have been among Japanese residents working as employees or contractors.—AFP ■



Macau ordered compulsory coronavirus testing for all residents on Wednesday after a family of four was found to be carrying the Delta variant, breaking the city's record of over 16 months virus-free. PHOTO: AFP

Macau: Citywide Covid testing ordered after first cases in 16 months

MACAU ordered compulsory coronavirus testing for all residents on Wednesday after a family of four was found to be carrying the Delta variant, breaking the city's record of over 16 months virus-free. Over the next three days authorities plan to test all 680,000 residents at 41 testing centres, the government said.

The testing is one of a host of new measures announced after the gambling hub recorded 491 days without a single local

infection.

Authorities are investigating whether the daughter of the family contracted the virus on a flight from Zhuhai to Xi'an in mainland China in July, Macau's leader Ho Iat-seng said on Wednesday.

The same flight carried two other infected people from Nanjing, the centre of a Delta-variant outbreak in China that has led to more than 300 new cases across 15 provinces and cities in two weeks.—AFP ■

**NEWS
IN BRIEF****Bank of England mulls inflation threat**

THE Bank of England updates on its monetary policy and forecasts Thursday with eyes on the inflation outlook as surging prices worldwide pose a threat to economic recovery.

While the BoE is widely expected to keep its main interest rate at a UK record-low of 0.1 per cent, it could detail how the central bank plans to begin tapering its emergency cash stimulus programme, or quantitative easing (QE), according to economists.

This is because Britain has lifted most lockdown restrictions, enabling its economy to press on with recovery despite worries over the fast-spreading Delta variant of the coronavirus.

At the same time, analysts said the BoE will be mindful of an expected jump in British unemployment after the UK government next month ends its furlough scheme that has kept millions of Britons in private-sector jobs during the pandemic.—AFP

Pent-up travel demand helps Lufthansa halve losses

GERMAN airline Lufthansa said Thursday it halved its losses in the second quarter compared to a year ago, as pent-up demand for travel fuelled uptake and travel restrictions eased over the coronavirus pandemic.

Europe's largest airline group said its net loss between April and June came in at 756 million euros (\$890 million) compared with 1.493 billion euros last year, when travel worldwide was halted by Covid-19.

Increased bookings saw the company record a positive cash flow in the second quarter for the first time since the start of the health crisis. "We have been able to stop the outflow of funds in the current phase of reviving our business and generate a positive cash flow for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic," said chief executive Carsten Spohr.—AFP

Indonesian economy grows for first time in five quarters

Central Jakarta commercial and business hub. PHOTO: NADIA VETTA HAMID FOR COCONUTS MEDIA/AFP

INDONESIA'S economy bounced back in the second quarter to post its first growth in more than a year, but analysts warned the recovery might be short-lived as Covid-19 surges.

Southeast Asia's largest economy grew by 7.07 per cent in the April-to-June quarter compared with the same period last year, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) said Thursday.

The figure is higher than a projection by the Central Bank of Indonesia, which predicted growth of 6.75 per cent.

The expansion, the first positive figure in five quarters, was

driven by a pick-up in exports and imports as Indonesia's trading partners also saw greater activity.

"For the economy to keep growing, the key is how we manage the health sector, comply with health protocols and vaccinate people to reach herd immunity," BPS head Margo Yuwono told a press conference.

Domestic consumption also contributed to the comeback with motorcycle and car sales jumping 2.5 and 7.5 per cent respectively compared with the first quarter. Greater business activity and more public mobility as a result of pandemic restrictions being relaxed also contributed to the recovery, Yuwono added. But analysts believe Indonesia will struggle to record continued growth as a virus surge triggered by the Delta variant wracks the country.—AFP ■

Beyond roads and bridges: inside the \$1 trillion US infrastructure plan

LAWMAKERS in Washington are closing in on doing what has eluded administrations for years: passing a bill to revitalize the country's neglected infrastructure.

The Senate's \$1 trillion proposal -- backed by Democratic President Joe Biden -- would channel money towards everything from fixing roads to expanding broadband and clean energy, though passage through is not assured in either chamber of the US Congress.

Here's what's in the bipartisan plan:

-Repairs to traditional infra-



People walk across the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

structure-

The country's road infra-

structure gets \$110 billion, one

of the largest single allocations

in the bill.

That money will go to renovations "with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians," according to a White House summary.

Of that money, \$40 billion will be specifically directed towards repairing or replacing old bridges, the largest share for that purpose since the US interstate highway system was built decades ago, the Biden administration said.

Another \$16 billion would go towards unspecified "major projects."—AFP ■

New York Auto Show cancelled due to Covid-19

THE New York auto show pulled the plug on its 2021 edition on Wednesday, citing the uptick in Covid-19 cases and new government measures to limit the outbreak. The gathering, scheduled for late August, was to be one of the first major trade shows at New York's Javits Centre and now becomes among the first to fall victim to the fast-spreading Delta variant of the coronavirus.

"It is with great disappointment that the upcoming 2021 New York International Automobile Show at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center has

been cancelled due to the growing incidences of the Covid-19 Delta variant and the increased measures announced recently by State and local officials to stop its spread," Mark Schienberg, the event's president, said in a statement. The 121-year-old show, which is normally held in the spring, was pushed back due to the pandemic and rescheduled for August 20-29.

Schienberg cited developments on Covid-19 "over the past few weeks, and especially within the last few days" as the impetus for the cancellation.—AFP ■



The New York International Auto Show cancelled its 2021 show, citing the latest Covid-19 trends. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Shares of Vodafone's India arm in free-fall

SHARES in telecoms giant Vodafone's debt-ridden Indian unit fell sharply for a second day on Wednesday following reports that its billionaire chairman thought the firm was on the brink of collapse and wanted to sell his stake.

Vodafone Idea and other operators have been squeezed hard since Jio, owned by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, entered the market in 2016 with dirt-cheap internet and free calls.

In a June 7 letter to a cabinet secretary that emerged in news reports

this week, Vi's Kumar Mangalam Birla offered to "hand over" his 27.66 per cent stake to the government, saying the firm was at an "irretrievable point of collapse".

The firm's shares tanked more than 10 per cent on Tuesday, the day after details of the letter emerged, and fell a further 18.5 per cent on Wednesday. While it has pared Wednesday's drop, the sell-off has wiped about 54 billion rupees (€615 million) off its market capitalisation. Total debt stood at 1.86 trillion rupees at the

end of March and it has been struggling to raise funds from investors.

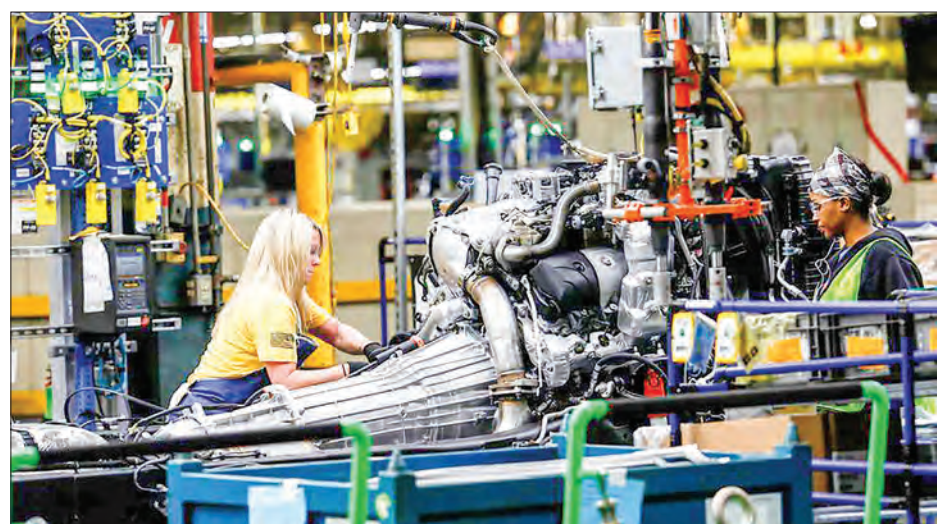
Vodafone Group CEO Nick Read last month ruled out the prospect of providing extra support. "We, as a group, try to provide them as much practical support as we can.

But I want to make it very clear, we are not putting any additional equity into India," Read told an analyst call. Vi is a joint venture between Indian conglomerate Aditya Birla and Vodafone, which holds a 44.39 per cent stake. —AFP ■



Vodafone Idea's Kumar Mangalam Birla (left) pictured in 2017 with then Vodafone Group CEO Vittorio Colao. In a letter last June, Birla offered to "hand over" his 27.66 per cent stake in the company to the government, saying the firm was at an "irretrievable point of collapse". PHOTO: PUNIT PARANJPE / AFP

GM lifts profit outlook on strong pricing despite chip shortage



GM has sought to protect its most in-demand North American truck and sport utility vehicle products from the semiconductor shortages. PHOTO: AFP

GENERAL Motors lifted its 2021 profit forecast on Wednesday on strong vehicle pricing amid limited car inventories due to the semiconductor chip shortage.

The big US carmaker now expects full-income of between \$7.7 billion and \$9.2 billion (€6.5-7.7bn), up from the prior range of between \$6.8 billion and

\$7.6 billion. Second-quarter revenues more than doubled compared with the prior-year period to \$34.2 billion. Profits came in at \$2.8 billion, compared

with a loss of \$806 million in the 2020 period that was marred by COVID-19 restrictions.

GM has sought to protect its most in-demand North American truck and sport utility vehicle products from the semiconductor shortages, which has curtailed production at some of its factories. GM said the semiconductor shortage "remains fluid and supply chain challenges continue in H2". The company in June significantly boosted its electric vehicle and autonomous vehicle investment push, lifting spending plans by 30 per cent to \$35 billion through 2025.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wine from Germany's flood zone gives hope for future

In the Ahr valley, mud-smeared bottles rescued from flooded cellars represent hope for a new beginning after the deadly catastrophe that hit Germany three weeks ago.

"I told myself we couldn't just throw it all away," recalls Linda Kleber, the founder of the "Flutwein" ("Flood wine") initiative.

Kleber came up with the idea as she was retrieving bottle after bottle from the store of her flood-ravaged restaurant.

The vintages that could be saved are now being offered for delivery in the condition they were found: covered in silt, a singular reminder of the devastation the floods wreaked.

The money raised, more than two million euros to date, is "a source of hope for all the winegrowers and also for the hospitality sector," says Peter Kriechel, 38, himself a wine producer and president of the local professional growers' association.

In his cellar, about 200,000 bottles of wine were submerged on the night of June 14. "I think we're at the start of a long marathon," he says. "An initiative like 'Flutwein' could give us a kickstart." — AFP ■

Facebook sparks row by cutting off researchers

FACEBOOK has cut off some academic researchers for "scraping" data from the platform, sparking a fresh controversy about the leading social network's transparency to outside experts studying misinformation and abusive content.

The California tech giant acted late Tuesday to block the research from New York University's Ad Observatory Project, citing privacy concerns.

Facebook product management director



A giant digital sign is seen at Facebook's corporate headquarters campus in Menlo Park, California, on 23 October 2019. PHOTO: JOSH EDELSON/AFP

Mike Clark said the accounts from the project were disabled "to stop unauthorized scraping and protect people's privacy in

line with our privacy program."

The NYU project had been at loggerheads for months with Facebook

over the programme, which used a browser tool to collect data on ads spreading political hoaxes, violence and Covid-19 misinformation.

"Research cannot be the justification for compromising people's privacy," Clark said in a blog post, arguing that the researchers were collecting user names, ads, and links to user profiles even for people who did not install the browser tool or consent to the collection. —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (039N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GUANG PING VOY.NO. (039N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

Turkey saves power plant from ‘unprecedented’ wildfires

RESCUERS used helicopters and water cannon Wednesday to beat back fires encircling a Turkish power plant in the second week of deadly blazes testing the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

More than 170 wildfires have scorched swathes of Turkey’s southern coast and killed eight people since breaking out east of the Mediterranean vacation hotspot Antalya last Wednesday and then spreading west.

The blazes have destroyed pristine forests and thousands of cattle.

Their location around Turkey’s main vacation destinations have also dented government hopes of a tourist-driven revival of the fragile economy.

The European Union’s satellite monitoring service said their “radiative power” – a measure of the fires’ intensity – “has reached unprecedented values in the entire dataset, which goes back to 2003”.

The Turkish government appears to have been rattled by the scale and ferocity of the flames.



Local people watch the fires from the relative safety of the beach in the Aegean coast city of Oren, near Milas. **PHOTO: AFP**

Its media watchdog on Tuesday warned broadcasters that they may be fined if they continue showing live footage of the blazes or air images of screaming people running for their lives. Erdogan himself has been subjected to days of ridicule on social media for tossing out bags of tea while touring one of the affected regions under heavy police escort.

The opposition further accuses the powerful Turkish leader of being too slow to accept offers of foreign assistance – including from regional rival Greece – and failing to properly maintain firefighting planes.

Erdogan prepared to mount a political counterattack in a national television interview scheduled for Wednesday night. — AFP ■

Three decades on, Saddam’s ‘human shields’ want answers

MORE than three decades may have passed since they were held as human shields by Saddam Hussein in Iraq, but those caught up in the ordeal still want answers.

Passengers who were taken off British Airways Flight 149 in Kuwait on 2 August 1990 want the UK government to admit liability, apologise and release a secret report about what really happened.

A new book, “Operation Trojan Horse”, claims the authorities in London used the flight to deploy nine military intelligence officials in Kuwait and knew the civilians risked capture.

Author Stephen Davis said the plane landed despite Britain receiving US intelligence announcing the Iraqi invasion three hours and 45 minutes beforehand and the control tower in Kuwait turning away all other flights that night.

Shortly afterwards, Iraqi jets pounded the runway with

bombs before tanks and troops surrounded the airport as Kuwaiti defences capitulated.

Some of the 367 passengers and crew who were taken off the Kuala Lumpur-bound jet spent more than four months in captivity.

They were placed at sites throughout Iraq thought likely to be targeted by a Western military coalition.

One of them, Barry Manners, 55, was travelling with his then-boyfriend to Malaysia at the time.

He said in London this week that the “conspiracy of silence” about what happened had destroyed his faith in authority.

“It’s the antithesis of every value you were taught, the whole essence of Western society,” he told AFP.

Another, Margaret Hearn, 65, said: “I trusted British Airways. It makes you very angry. Luckily, I came out of it, but no thanks to them.”—AFP ■

South Sudan’s VP Machar deposed by party: rival leaders

SOUTH Sudan’s vice-president Riek Machar has been ousted as head of his party and its armed forces, say rival leaders who accused the rebel-turned-politician of no longer representing their interests.

Machar, a pivotal figure in South Sudan’s bloody road to independence and subsequent civil war, was deposed following

a three-day gathering of senior SPLM/A-IO leaders in the country’s far north, the party’s military wing said. Its chief of staff, First Lieutenant General Simon Gatwech Dual, was declared interim leader of the opposition movement that governs the troubled country in a shaky alliance with former enemies.

It is unclear what the putsch

means for Machar, a wily leader who survived years of bush warfare, close attempts on his life and stretches in exile.

The military wing said Machar had “completely failed” to show leadership and greatly weakened the party’s position in the post-war coalition government formed between the warring sides in early 2020.—AFP ■



Stephen Davis’ new book claims the UK government knew passengers on board a British Airways flight to Kuwait in 1990 were at risk of capture as Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi forces invaded. **PHOTO: AFP**

After historic floods, Germany grapples with mountains of debris



The waste site in Niederzissen sits about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the Ahr valley, where, on the night of 14 July the river burst its banks. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEAR the villages devastated by historic floods in Germany last month, waste centres are struggling to sort a pile equivalent to a whole year’s worth of refuse.

“There’s not been anything like it in Germany,” Sascha Hurtenbach, director of the waste management centre in Niederzissen, tells AFP, while behind him diggers work to reduce the size of the mounds of debris.

“At the moment, we have about 35,000 tonnes of waste taken from the disaster zone

here, and we’ve already taken the same amount to a landfill,” Hurtenbach says.

“There’s still a lot of debris sitting there.”

The waste site in Niederzissen sits about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the Ahr valley, where, on the night of 14 July the river burst its banks and the waters turned into a torrent.

The villages along the Ahr, a tributary of the Rhine, were ravaged by the high waters and dozens of residents died.

Along the roads that lead to the valley, the mud has turned to dust and convoys of dump trucks have replaced the tourists that used to come here to enjoy the once picturesque surroundings.

The remains of a broken life – washing machines, dishwashers, sofas, fridges, chairs – are piled one on top of another in the centre at Niederzissen. They bear witness to the size of the catastrophe that left at least 186 people dead in the west of Germany.—AFP ■

New Iranian president to take oath before parliament



US sanctions have choked Iran and its vital oil exports, and the economy contracted by more than six percent in both 2018 and 2019. PHOTO: AFP

NEW President Ebrahim Raisi takes the oath before parliament Thursday, with Iran facing an economy battered by US sanctions, a grinding health crisis and thorny negotiations on the 2015 nuclear deal.

The ultraconservative for-

mer judiciary chief officially began his four-year mandate on Tuesday after he was inaugurated by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Raisi takes over from moderate Hassan Rouhani, whose landmark achievement during

his two-term presidency was the 2015 agreement between the Islamic republic and six world powers.

The country has been grappling with a deep economic and social crisis following former president Donald Trump's decision to unilaterally withdraw the United States from the deal in 2018 and reimpose crushing sanctions.

"We believe the people's economic position is unfavourable, both because of the hostility of our enemies and because of the shortcomings and problems inside the country," Raisi said on Tuesday.

His new government would seek to lift "oppressive" sanctions, but would "not tie the nation's standard of living to the will of foreigners", he added. — AFP ■

Indonesia, US hold largest joint military drills

THOUSANDS of military personnel from Indonesia and the United States are participating for two weeks in joint drills described as the largest ever between the two countries.

The exercises, focused on island defence, are being held in three locations - Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi - from Aug 1 to 14, the Indonesian military said on Wednesday (Aug 4).

More than 2,100 Indonesian military personnel and 1,500 from the US army are involved in the drills, part of the yearly Garuda Shield exercises organised since 2009, it added.

The American soldiers landed in coronavirus-racked Indonesia in late July and were tested for Covid-19 on arrival.



Indonesia Army shows Major General Heri Wiranto (left) meets US Captain David Moats during a rollcall with Indonesian and US Army soldiers. PHOTO: AFP

Indonesian army chief of staff Andika Perkasa said the drills were aimed at improving relations between the countries

and upgrading the skills of both militaries. They include field training, live fire, aviation and medical exercises.—AFP ■

27-year-old Georgia native identified as Pentagon attacker; motive still unclear

THE FBI identified Wednesday the attacker who killed a police officer on a bus platform at the Pentagon and forced the US Defence Department into lockdown, but gave no motive for the attack.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation said 27-year-old Georgia native Austin William Lanz got off a bus on Tuesday morning and "immediately, with-

out provocation" stabbed Pentagon Force Protection Agency officer George Gonzalez with a knife, just yards (metres) from entrance of the highly secure military headquarters.

"A struggle ensued, in which the subject mortally wounded Officer Gonzalez and then shot himself with the officer's service weapon," the FBI said in a statement.

Other officers then got involved, and Lanz died at the scene, the FBI said. It did not say if the officers also shot Lanz, but witnesses said there was a volley of gunfire in the incident.

Gonzalez was rushed to the hospital but did not survive.

A bystander was also injured but taken to hospital with minor injuries and later released, the FBI said.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brazil high court orders Bolsonaro investigated for 'vote fraud' claims

A Supreme Court justice ruled Wednesday President Jair Bolsonaro should be investigated for unproven claims Brazil's voting system is riddled with fraud, adding the far-right leader to an ongoing probe on the spread of fake news by his government.

The ruling by Justice Alexandre de Moraes came after Bolsonaro stepped up his longtime attacks on Brazil's electronic voting system, claiming -- without evidence -- that it is fraud-plagued and insisting there will be no elections next year as scheduled if it is not overhauled.

The Superior Electoral Court had asked the Supreme Court to issue the ruling, after itself putting the president under investigation for his campaign against Brazil's voting system.

The Supreme Court agreed, finding Bolsonaro should face investigation for slander and inciting criminal acts for his undocumented claims of massive vote fraud.

The electoral court's own probe will investigate the president for abuse of office, improper use of official communication channels, corruption, fraud and other potential crimes.

Bolsonaro has long criticized electronic voting, introduced in Brazil in 1996. He has stepped up his attacks in the build-up to the October 2022 elections, insisting on "printable and auditable" paper ballots as a backstop to the electronic system.

Opinion polls place the 66-year-old leader well behind leftist ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the presidential race.

Bolsonaro's popularity numbers have been sliding, and he is under fire on various fronts, including a Senate investigation into his government's widely criticized handling of Covid-19.

There are fears Bolsonaro could try to use fraud claims to undermine next year's election if he loses, following in the footsteps of former US president Donald Trump, with whom he is often compared.—AFP ■

US govt probing missing \$5,800 whiskey bottle Japan gave to Pompeo

THE US government is looking into what happened to a \$5,800 bottle of whiskey given by Japan to former secretary of state Mike Pompeo but which is now apparently missing, US media reported Wednesday.

Japanese officials gave the bottle to the State Department on 24 June, 2019, the New York Times said, noting that Pompeo was on a visit to Saudi Arabia at the time and it was not clear if he had ever received the gift himself.

US government officials are entitled to keep gifts worth less than \$390, but must buy anything above that value. The Times quoted unnamed officials as saying the government was never paid for the missing bottle of liquor.

The newspaper added that it was unusual for the State Department to declare publicly that the whereabouts of an item are unknown.

A lawyer for Pompeo said the former secretary of state, who had also served as CIA chief, had no knowledge about the fate of the missing bottle.— AFP ■



Emergency first responders investigate the scene at a mass transit station outside the Pentagon on 3 Aug, 2021, in Arlington, PHOTO: VIRGINIA.PHOTO/ AFP

Host confirmed for Myanmar team's 2022 AFC Women's Cup Group D

LEBANON will host upcoming 2022 AFC Women's Cup Group D matches in which the Myanmar team included. The group matches will be played at Fouad Chehab Stadium in Jounieh, Lebanon.

Myanmar women's national football team is playing in the Group D of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 Qualifiers together with United Arab Emirates (UAE) team, following a draw result, announced recently at the AFC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Myanmar will also face Lebanon and Guam in the same Group. A total of 26 Asian women teams are participating in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022

Qualifiers.

Defending champions Japan, 2018 runners-up Australia and third-placed China PR and hosts India have already qualified for the final stages of the tourney.

Group A will have three-time champions Chinese Taipei, Bahrain, Turkmenistan and Laos, while Group B will see Viet Nam, Tajikistan, Maldives and Afghanistan.

Group C consists of three-time winners DPR Korea, Singapore, Iraq and Indonesia with Myanmar; the United Arab Emirates, Guam and Lebanon is running for Group D.

Group E will see 2003 runners-up Korea Republic, Uzbek-

istan and Mongolia, while the Philippines,

Hong Kong and Nepal are placed in Group F.

In Group G, Jordan - the 2018 hosts, Iran and Bangladesh will play for further steps while ASEAN star

Thailand, Palestine and Malaysia are dreaming for the next stage in Group H. The group stages will be played from 13 to 25 September, with the top eight teams from each group winning the tournament.

Head coach U Tin Myint Aung will handle the Myanmar women's football team ahead of the AFC tourney. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Germany's Wellbrock doubles up to win Olympic marathon swim

GERMAN world champion Florian Wellbrock added Olympic marathon swimming gold to his 1500m bronze with a dominant performance in hot conditions in Tokyo Bay on Thursday. Wellbrock swam the 10 kilometres (six miles) in 1hr 48min 33.7sec, more than 25 seconds clear of Hungary's Kristof Rasovszky (1:48:59.0). Italy's Gregorio Paltrinieri took the bronze in 1:49:01.1. Wellbrock and Paltrinieri became just the second and third athletes to win pool and open-water medals at the same Olympics, after Tunisia's Oussama Mellouli grabbed marathon gold and 1500m bronze at London 2012. "The first seven kilometres was really easy," said Wellbrock. "The water wasn't really warm, so then I keep up the pace and the last leg was horrible. "The temperature today was the biggest competitor. I beat it and I beat everything in this race." The double by Italy's Paltrinieri, who took silver in the 800m freestyle, is all the more remarkable after his build-up to the Games was hampered by a bout of glandular fever.—AFP ■



German world champion Florian Wellbrock added Olympic marathon swimming gold to his 1500m bronze with a dominant performance in hot conditions in Tokyo Bay on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

China's Quan, 14, wins Olympic gold with three perfect dives

CHINESE teenager Quan Hongchan produced three perfect-10 dives in a dazzling display to win the Olympic women's 10m platform gold medal on Thursday. Quan, at 14 years old the youngest Chinese athlete in Tokyo, beat teammate Chen Yuxi into second with a remarkable overall score of 466.20 points.

But Quan insisted that she should not be considered a prodigy, as she does not enjoy the same success at school.

"I don't think I'm a prodigy. I'm not very bright," she said. "I don't do well in my studies. You

ask me all these questions and there's only a blank in my mind."

The 15-year-old Chen, the reigning world champion who had already won gold in the 10m synchronised event, finished 39.80 points adrift. Australia's Melissa Wu was a distant third with 371.40 points.

Quan was awarded perfect-10 scores from all seven judges for her second and fourth dives. For her fifth effort, six judges gave her 10 and one 9.5, but that was still enough for a maximum mark of 96.00 points.—AFP ■

Olympics: Yosozumi's special skateboard bond paved way to gold

JAPAN'S Sakura Yosozumi, the gold medalist in the women's Olympic park skateboarding at the Tokyo Games, said Thursday she treats the sport like it is her "boyfriend" to whom she is committed 24 hours a day. Yosozumi told a press conference in Tokyo, held along with fellow park medalist Kokona Hiraki, just what the sport means to her. "I like skateboarding so much that I want to do it 24 hours (a day)," the 19-year-old said. "It still feels like a dream. It hasn't sunk in that I won gold." For silver winner Hiraki, the youngest Japanese to compete in the Summer Olympics at age 12, skateboarding is a "treasure" she values more than anything, she said. With Japan confirming its place atop the skateboarding world, both Yosozumi and Hiraki, who won their medals a day before on the bowls, copings and hips of Ariake Urban Sports Park, said nerves were no issue on their Olympic debut. Britain's Sky Brown, 13, won bronze, making it the first time that all three Olympic medalists in a single women's event were born in Japan.—Kyodo ■

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.



Sakura Yosozumi of Japan competes en route to winning the women's park skateboarding final at the Tokyo Olympics on 4 Aug 2021, at Ariake Urban Sports Park in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO