

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 14 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.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 Announcement 6th Waxing of Wagaung 1383 ME 13 August 2021

1. The State Administration Council issued Notification No 226/2021 dated 12-8-2021 declaring from 16 to 22 August 2021 as successive public holidays.
2. To effectively prevent the spread of COVID-19 during these public holidays, the people must obey the following disciplines:-
 - (a) to reside at homes or dormitories, and not to travel at all except for duty and funeral services;
 - (b) not to decrease productivity, operate the factories and industries under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Nay Pyi Taw Council and region/state governments in line with the COVID-19 health rules of the Ministry of Health;

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Non-stop imports of essential medical supplies distributed daily

THE Ministry of Commerce is working hard to ensure people have access to essential medical supplies which are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, arranging the continuous importation on public holidays.

Yesterday, a total of 2,205 oxygen concentrators were imported via airways at the Yangon International Airport. In addition, 46 tonnes of liquid oxygen, five tonnes of oxygen cylinders, four liquid oxygen containers, 6 liquid oxygen distributors, 6,154 oxygen containers, 2 oxygen plants, 331 oxygen concentrators, 31,680 PPE suits, 12 tonnes of gloves and 39 tonnes of masks were imported through border trade points.

A total of 780 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 71 tonnes of oxygen cylinders, 4 oxygen containers, 6 oxygen distributors, 89,833 tonnes of empty oxygen containers, 22 oxygen plants, 10 oxygen generators, 67,385 oxygen concentrators, 150,268 test kits, 432,332 PPE suits,

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Medicines and medical equipment are being unloaded from truck.

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 174/2021

6th Waxing of Wagaung 1383 ME
13 August 2021

Appointment of Deputy Minister

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Aung Myaing as Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications in accordance with Section 419 of the Constitution.

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

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Subcommittee

FROM 9-8-2021 to 13-8-2021, local / foreign donors contributed 6.920 million Kyats to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 opened at the Myanmar Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account till 13-8-2021 is as follows:

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List		Kyat
Account opening balance on 9-8-2021		31,159,264,615.39
Received amount of money from State from (9-8-2021 to 13-8-2021)	(+)	214,774,877,888.52
Received amount of money from (9-8-2021 to 13-8-2021)	(+)	6,920,000.00
Closed balance on 13-8-2021		245,941,062,503.91

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List		USD
Account opening balance on 9-8-2021		150,162,149.53
Received amount of money from (9-8-2021 to 13-8-2021)		-
Closed balance on 13-8-2021		150,162,149.53

Non-stop imports of essential medical supplies distributed daily

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72 tonnes of gloves and 946 tonnes of masks have been imported by far in August.

Of 67 liquid oxygen bowsers imported between July and 12 August, 50 of them were distributed to Yangon, 11 to Mandalay, 2 to Bago, 3 to Mawlamyine and 1 to Thantong respectively. Among 30 oxygen plants, 4 were transported to Yangon, 5 to Lashio, 4 to Bago, 2 to Pakokku, 3 to Mandalay, 2 to Hpa-an, 2 to Mawlamyine, one each to Taunggyi, Thanbyuzayat, Mag-



Cargo trucks carrying medical supplies are ready to distribute them to regions and states.



Medical equipment and oxygen are being transported to major cities across the nation.

way, Dawei, Wakema, Myittha, Kyaukpadaung and Mogaung respectively.

The Ministry on 8 August

announced that the border trade points will not be suspended from work on declared public holidays, from 9 to 15

August, and import operations will be conducted as usual. The importation of COVID-19 devices will be allowed in ac-

cordance with the SOP priority, negotiated by relevant departments, and online import licence application will also be

allowed as usual during the office hours.—MNA

3,456 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 August, total figure rises to 348,186

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 348,186 after 3,456 new cases were reported on 13 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 263,172 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 12,879 after 212 died. —MNA

Emphasis must be placed on development tasks while prioritizing peace and stability, especially political stability

THEY are carrying out the government tasks in a smooth process. It is necessary to consider extension of new sectors. The unrests and terror acts based on vote-rigging in the 2020 election are being combated. Emphasis must be placed on development tasks while prioritizing the peace and stability, especially political stability. The provisional government temporarily takes the responsibility of the country, and when the emergency period runs out, the election will be held under the law. Undertakings will be carried out to hand over the State duty to the government emerged by the election in accord with the Constitution.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 13/2021 of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 8 August 2021)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 Announcement 6th Waxing of Wagaung 1383 ME 13 August 2021

FROM PAGE-1

- (c) to adopt the work-from-home system or other proper ways for important office work of the relevant departments;
 - (d) to open the shops selling basic essential things like fuel, purified drinking water, livestock, fish and foodstuffs;
 - (e) to open the pharmacy shops and medical companies;
 - (f) to realize the take away system at restaurants;
 - (g) to continue healthcare services (government hospitals/private hospitals and clinics);
 - (h) to wear protective gears, including masks, if you go outside without fail;
 - (i) to operate the land, sea and aviation services for those wishing to travel without fail under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw Council, and region/ state governments;
 - (j) to comply the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) of trucks to facilitate the flow of goods;
 - (k) to continue opening of freight handling ports;
 - (l) to strictly follow the COVID-19 health rules of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 and the Ministry of Health without fail.
3. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the above-mentioned disciplines under the existing laws.

Current political progress, policy matters clarified to heads of Myanmar missions to foreign countries

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing co-hosted a virtual coordination meeting with Myanmar Ambassadors and permanent representatives from the Middle East and Africa Zone, Europe Zone and America Zone on 13 August 2021, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the Meeting, Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing briefed them on current political situations and developments and highlighted the policy matters. Subsequently, Myanmar Ambassadors and perma-



Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing meet Myanmar ambassadors and permanent representatives to clarify current political progress.



nent representatives discussed and presented ongoing missions work plans and Union Ministers gave guidelines on work plans

and explained the necessary measures.

The meeting was also attended by the deputy minister,

permanent secretary and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was learnt that the similar virtual coordi-

nation meeting with the heads of Myanmar Missions from Asia and Pacific Zone was held on 11 August 2021.—MNA

Union Minister for IFER chairs 8th AEC Committees Meeting for Implementation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2025

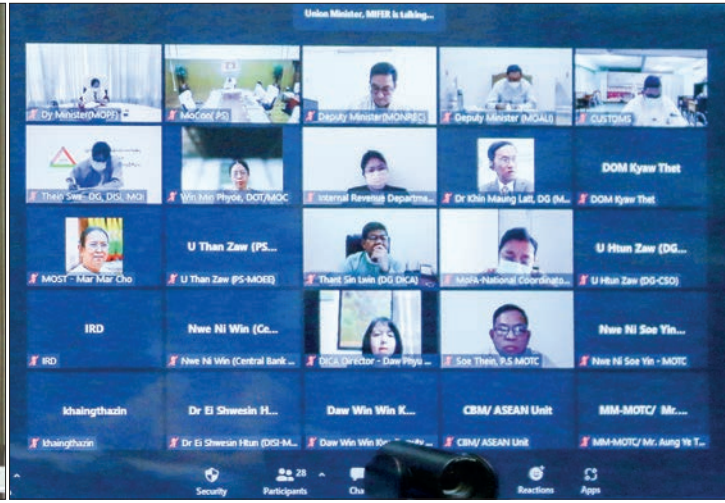
UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Naing Oo chaired the 8th AEC Committees Meeting for the Implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2025 via video conference yesterday together with attendance of deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors general and representatives from 22 AEC working committees.

The Union Minister explained the objective of the meeting as preparations for the 53rd ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting and related meetings which will be held in September. He said that the committees needed the pragmatic approach for the AEC 2025 implementation activities, streamlining the process of committees and developing specific terms of reference for the focal departments and members.

He stated that 148 Annual Economic Priorities are set out to implement ASEAN Economic Community as a whole and out



Union Minister for IFER U Aung Naing Oo joins 8th AEC Committees Meeting for Implementation of ASEAN Economic Community 2025.



of them, 67 annual Priorities are completed. Myanmar implemented the most of annual priorities, and the rest are mostly ongoing regional activities. He urged them to expedite utmost effort for ensuring the implementation of the remaining annual priorities in a timely manner.

He also highlighted that the plan of Myanmar will undergo its mid-term review based on AEC Mid-term Review for the effective

implementation and the national scorecard of sectoral implementation will also be conducted. The necessary preparation will be done for the rest of the implementation period and Myanmar mid-term review will be supported for further AEC implementation activities and also point out where Myanmar position in the implementation of AEC.

The Union Minister explained the importance of the

completion of domestic procedures for the signing of the agreements and ratification of the signed agreements in time, and he also mentioned that the coordination mechanism is essential for sectoral bodies in order to receive the policy decision in a timely manner.

Deputy Minister U Than Aung Kyaw explained the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its im-

plementation plan which aimed to remedy the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the region. The framework was adopted by the leaders at the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020, and included the activities under the five broad strategies. He also explained the implementation status of the framework under purview of AEM. He also expressed the drafting of Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan in line with the ACRF. He informed the participants that the ministry will explore to receive the technical and financial support for the implementation of activities.

According to the agenda, Director General Dr. Wah Wah Maung from Foreign Economic Relations Department clarified the outcomes of the Third Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials for the Fifty Second Economic Ministers' Meeting.

Then, participants reported on the progress and status of the relevant sectoral bodies.—MNA

H&T Union Minister inspects Ngalaik Sakhantha Elephant Camp



Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung and officials visit Ngalaik Sakhantha elephant camp.

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Htay Aung visited the Ngalaik Kantha Resort yesterday.

During the visit, he instructed the hotel managers and staff to make efforts to grab national level certificates as they were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and completed the regional level training courses.

He then went to Ngalaik Sakhantha Elephant Camp developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. The officials of the elephant

camp clarified the work plans and the Union Minister inspected the elephant museum and enjoyed the elephant show. He also provided cash assistance for the elephants.

There are 19 elephants at the 573-acre elephant camp where the visitors can observe the nature of elephants and ride them in the jungle enjoying the nature.

The Union Minister also held a meeting with the officials of Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Entrepreneurs Association and general managers of quarantined hotels at Hotel Amara in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 August.—MNA

Daily newspapers available online

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Artistes as professionals urged to analyze dos and don'ts based on current situations for serving interests of their arena, the State and the people: Union Information Minister

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn met with officials and musicians from music organizations in Yangon through video conferencing system yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister said the Prime Minister of the State emphasizes not only the fine arts arena and the role of media but also artistes, intellectuals and intelligentsia with the concept that the fine arts is for the sake of the people. As such, the government provided necessary assistance for emergence of the fine arts centres in Yangon and Mandalay. Everybody knows the government recognizes that the artistes are taking part in the important role in nation-building tasks.

The Ministry of Information met with those artistes to join



Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets artistes from music arena to solve their difficulties in COVID-19 infection.

hands with the government in undertaking the tasks beneficial to the State and the nationals.

He expressed his belief that artistes would be ideal persons through artistic creativity winning the hearts of the people with-

out any political colours and they can motivate the people to have correct concepts to participate in the reconstruction of the country.

In response to reports of artistes on difficulties, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint and departmental

heads gave discussions.

In his response, the Union Minister said the Ministry of Information will solve the problems in coordination with relevant departments. He pledged to give a helping hand to those of musi-

cal world to revitalize the musical arena, solve the problems in prevention and treatment of COVID-19, and coordinate with relevant departments for taking out money from the banks.

The government shows its genuine goodwill for the artistes taken action under Section 505 (a) of the Penal Code for many reasons. Full assistance will be given under the existing laws to the artistes who contact the authorities in line with the press release.

The Union Minister urged the artistes as professionals to analyze dos and don'ts based on the current situations for serving the interests of their arena, the State and the people. On 10 August, the Union Minister for Information cordially conserved with film artistes.—MNA

Myanmar's foreign trade brings more than \$24.71 billion in 2020-2021 financial year (till July)

ACCORDING to temporary inventory of Myanmar's foreign trade volume till July for 2020-2021 financial year, exports hit \$12.45 billion, while imports have reached \$12.25 billion, with trade volume of \$24.71 billion. The exports volume was \$14.79 billion and imports hit \$16.29 billion, with \$31.08 billion of foreign trade volume compared to the same period of 2020-2021 FY. The export volume is 16pc less than that of last year and import is down 25pc as well, with lower 21pc of total trade volume.

Export volumes compared to the same period of last year are as follows:-

Value: USD million

Sr	Export Group	2020-2021 financial year (up to July) (temporary)	2019-2020 financial year (up to July)	Comparison on increase (+)/ decrease (-)
1	Agricultural product	4225.576	3312.070	(+)913.506
2	Animal product	17.793	67.027	(-)49.234
3	Marine product	640.170	750.234	(-)110.064
4	Minerals	776.737	1553.654	(-)776.917
5	Forest product	106.401	125.289	(-)18.888
6	Industrial finished goods	6,236.182	8120.510	(-)1884.328
7	Other products	451.449	865.096	(-)413.647
	Total	12,454.308	14793.880	(-)2339.572

Import volumes compared to the same period of last year are as follows:- Value: USD million

	Export group	2020-2021 financial year (up to July) (temporary)	2019-2020 financial year (up to July)	Compare increase (+)/ decrease (-)
1	Capital goods	4115.964	6281.988	(-) 2166.024
2	Intermediate goods	4536.402	5906.627	(-) 1370.225
3	Consumer goods	3601.505	4100.194	(-) 498.689
	Total	12253.871	16288.809	(-)4034.938

Public request by Ministry of Health

ONLY when the people cooperate will the work process achieve success in a short time for effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 among the people. As such, all the people are requested to abide by the following points:-

1. Stay at home as much as possible.
2. Don't accept the guests at the house. You don't visit other houses.
3. The older persons above 65 or those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart must be worn masks in the house. They must be placed at well-ventilated sites.
4. Wear masks if you go outside without fail. Systematically wash hands. Take a six-foot distance from others. Avoid visits to the rooms where ventilation is not good.
5. Avoid the crowds.
6. If possible, go shopping once a week. Don't buy anything from the vendors who don't systematically wear masks.
7. Take care of carrying the virus to the houses whenever return home from outside. Systematically discard the used masks and single disposable equipment outside the houses. Avoid close contact with family members before changing clothes or washing the body.
8. As the vaccines for your quota is the best, accept vaccinations for full time. Despite receiving the vaccination, you should abide by the protective ways.
9. Systematically cooperate in prevention, control and treatment of the disease with manpower, money, materials and expertise.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)

Domestic pure gold price rises to over K1.6 mln per tical

THE price of domestic pure gold has risen to over K1.6 million per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms), according to the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

Although the local prices for gold reached K1,574,500 per tical (roughly 16.33 grams) on 1 August, the price dramatically jumped to K1,626,000 per tical on 13 August. As a result, the price rose by over K5,000 per tical within a half month.

The domestic gold price has increased due to dollar appreciation. The current dollar exchange rate exceeded over K1,700 in the market, according to the foreign exchange counter.

The local gold market rose a new high of K1,709,000 per tical on 12 May, which hit the highest record in the domestic gold history.

In January 2021, domestic gold fetched the highest price of K1,336,000 per tical on 6 January. It reached the lowest price of K1,316,000 per tical on 28 Jan-



Gold shops display gold ornaments and gold wares at the market.

uary. It got the lowest level of K1,340,000 (2 February) and the highest level of K1,410,000 (3 February). In March, the rate fluctuated between the most elevated of K1,391,000 (25 March) the

lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The lowest price was K1,389,000 (1 April) and the highest was K1,455,000 (30 April). The gold price touched the lowest level of K1,447,000 (3 May) and the high-

est level of K1,709,000 (12 May). In June, the rate hit the lowest level of K 1,543,000 (19 June) and the highest level of K 1,575,500 (11 June). In July, it priced the lowest level of K

1,562,300 (26 July) and the highest level of K 1,587,000 (9 July), gold traders said.

The local gold price reached the lowest level of K 1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K 1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K 1,307,800 (30 October) and K 1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K 1,317,000 (9 November) and the lowest of K 1,270,000 (30 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of K 1,280,000 (1 December) and K 1,332,000 (28 December).

With the global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K 1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K 1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to K 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a fresh peak of K 1,300,000 on 5 September, according to the gold traders.—NN/GNLM

Myanmar's border trade reaches over \$8.6 bln in first 10 months of FY 2020-21



Freight handling tasks are being undertaken.

MYANMAR'S trade with foreign countries through border checkpoints reached over US\$ 8.6 billion as of 30 July in present financial year 2020-21 which started in October, according to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

During the period, the country's export via border checkpoints amounted \$ 5.7 billion while its import shared \$2.87 billion.

This FY's border trade decreased by over \$554 million, compares with the same period of last FY 2019-2020 when it

amounted to \$9.16 billion, the ministry's figures said.

The country conducts border trade with neighbouring China through Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinashwehaw and Kengtung with Thailand via Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Meisei gates, with Bangladesh via Sittway and Maungtaw and with India through Tamu and Reed border gates, respectively.

Muse topped the list of border checkpoints with the most trade value of \$ 3.55 billion, followed by Myawady with \$1.52

billion.

Border trade with Bangladesh, India, Thailand and China has dropped compared to the last FY. Including the maritime routes, total trade so far this year is over \$24.7 billion. That's about \$6.37 billion less than the same period last year. Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and others while capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported to the country.—ACM/GNLM

Two mln doses of China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine to arrive this month

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Health, two million doses of China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine will arrive in Myanmar this month.

"We have already received the four million doses of COVID-19 vaccine. A new batch of two million doses of Sinopharm (Beijing) vaccine will also arrive this month. Myanmar is set to receive six million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China to inoculate three million people," said an official from the Ministry of Health.

Currently, about 150,000 people of targeted groups are being vaccinated daily in Myanmar. Those who are not listed in targeted groups need to wait, said the Ministry's official.

The second batch of one

million Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine being bought from China arrived at the Yangon International Airport on 8 August. The country has already received four million doses of vaccine in total which are China donated two million Sinopharm vaccine and Myanmar bought two million doses of Sinovac vaccine.

Both vaccines have been approved from the World Health Organization (WHO) for emergency use. The vaccine has been recommended for over 18 years old, according to the WHO's guidance.

Myanmar already delivered the vaccines to across the country. Authorities are started administering the vaccine to the targeted groups, it is learnt.—

Aye Maung/GNLM

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Myanmar corn export exceeds \$447 million in eight months

MYANMAR'S corn exports to foreign countries generated revenue of more than US\$447.24 million in the past eight months (Oct-April) of the current financial year 2020-2021, Myanmar Customs Department's statistics showed.

The prices of Myanmar's corn are climbing up in Mandalay market on the back of strong demand by Thailand, coupled with the growing demand in domestic market, traders from Mandalay depot said.

Prior to Thingyan Festival in April, the corn fetched only K28,000 per three-basket bag. Both the foreign demand and domestic demand prompted the sellers raise the prices starting from first week of May. Following a gradual upward trend, the corn was priced above K32,900 per bag in early June and the price surged to above K36,700 per bag in early August, Soe Win Myint depot from Mandalay stated.

Myanmar has been delivering corns to the neighbouring countries Thailand and China



Photo shows storage of corns in warehouse with natural breezing.

via land border. The shipment to Singapore, Malaysia and Viet Nam abruptly stopped owing to zero demand, he added.

At the present time, Myanmar is conveying corns to Thailand through land border, with a tonne of corn fetching up about 8,000 baht.

Thailand gives green light to corn imports through Mae Sot under zero tariff (with Form-D),

between 1 February and 31 August.

Thailand has granted tax exemption on corn imports between February and August. However, Thailand imposed the maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn import to protect the rights of their growers if the corns are imported during the corn season of Thailand, in accordance with the notification

of World Trade Organization regarding corn import of Thailand, said a corn exporter.

With the local corn consumption growing, Myanmar's corn export to foreign markets is expected to reach 1.6 million tonnes this year, the association stated.

Myanmar is the second largest exporter of corn among regional countries. At pres-

ent, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corns.

The corn is mostly demanded by feedstuff processing business. This being so, it is potential business for both domestic and external markets, said an official of the Ministry of Commerce.

During last FY 2019-2020 ended 30 September, the country exported 2.2 million tonnes of corns to external market, with an estimated value of \$360 million, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed.

As per data from the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar exported 1.5 million tonnes valued at \$270 million in the 2018-2019 FY, 1.4 million tonnes of corn worth over \$290 million in the 2017-2018 FY, 1.2 million tonnes of corn worth \$250 million in the 2016-2017 FY, and 1.1 million tonnes of corn worth \$300 million in the 2015-2016 FY.—MM/GNLM

Myanmar ships over 618,700 tonnes of green gram in ten months

MYANMAR conveyed more than 618,763 tonnes of green gram to foreign trade partners between 1 October and 30 July in the current financial year 2020-2021, according to the Ministry of Commerce's trade data.

The country generated an income of US\$481.73 million from the exports of green grams over the past ten months.

The price of green gram is over K120,000 per three-basket bag depending on the varieties and quality.

China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union, India, Thailand and Viet Nam also purchase green gram from Myanmar. China prefers green gram (golden) variety. At present, the demand slips due to border trade restrictions amid the COVID-19, traders said.

China makes value-add-

ed products from green gram and send them to foreign markets. Moreover, it produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over 330,000 tons in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, over 400,000 tons in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tons in the 2017-2018FY and over 300,000 in the 2018-2019FY. Green grams are mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses' exports, green gram accounted for more than 26 per cent of the exports in the previous years.

As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country. Green grams are primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states.—KK/GNLM

CBM sells \$13 million in August

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) has sold US\$13 million at its FX auction rate as of mid-August.

In August, the CBM reportedly sold \$3 million on 2 August, \$2 million on 3 August, \$3 million on 4 August, and \$2.5 million each on 9 and 12 August in the auction market.

Kyat is depreciating against US dollar at K1,650 in the local forex market. The CBM's move is aimed at governing the market volatility and strengthening the local currency value, the CBM stated.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US\$93.8 million at its FX auction rate in the past six months (Feb-July), according to the auction results released by the CBM.

The bullish hard currency gained in local forex market, reaching the peak of K1,730 on 12 May from K1,330 in January-end. In a bid to strengthen the local currency, the CBM reportedly sold about 6.8 million dollars on 3 February 2021, \$12 million in April, \$24 million in May, \$12 million in June and \$39 million in July in the auction market.

The CBM trades the foreign currency with the authorized

private banks under the rules and regulations of the FX auction market.

The dollar gain will benefit the exporters. Yet, it will hike up the local food prices. The currency intervention is required to steer the own currency value. The current political changes in Myanmar and the COVID-19 impacts affect the currency market. As some people want to hold the hard currency during the difficult time, a market observer shared his opinion.

The local forex market's

data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-K1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May and it moved in the maximum of K1,595-K1,620 in June. The rate stood at K1,625-K1,645 last month.—KK/GNLM



The photo depicts US and Myanmar currency notes.

Willingly learn education to emerge educated citizens in future

MYANMAR is a nation which strives for turning out a large number of educated people while alleviating the poverty rate of the country. Amid these difficulties, the country decides to encourage the education of all citizens to have better skills and knowledge to be applied in the academic and vocational arenas in their lives.

Section 28 (c) of the Constitution (2008) mentions that the Union shall implement free, compulsory primary education system and Section 28 (d), the Union shall implement a modern education system that will promote all-round correct thinking and a good moral character contributing towards the building of the nation.

But, the educated persons are always emphasizing the modernity of the nation with their vigorous efforts in creation, innovation, production and distribution of their better knowledge and skills to benefit the society.

On one hand, local people from regions and states need to set aims for completion of the middle school education through the literacy campaigns. Only when they have completed at least middle school education, will they have a wider knowledge based on experiences than the lowest level to guide to their children how to pursue education for meeting their great goal in the future.

The Provisional Government of Myanmar accepts that the plan to turn out a large number of educated persons in the nation is its first prioritized task. If the country has plentiful of educated persons, they can turn out intellectuals and intelligentsia, technologists, law experts, agriculturists, economists and so on to participate in the nation-building tasks for improvement of the nation and the people.

Governments will hand over State duties to one another at an opportune time. It is a political nature of the country. But, the educated persons are always emphasizing the modernity of the nation with their vigorous efforts in creation, innovation, production and distribution of their better knowledge and skills to benefit the society.

That is why the people need to learn education without fail for the sake of their families as well as the nation.



Peace Boat goes virtual with A-bomb survivors' stories amid pandemic

Japanese nongovernmental organization Peace Boat has brought more than 170 survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki around the world to date, telling people across the globe of their experiences and calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

WHILE the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic forced a halt to ocean voyages in early 2020, reducing the chances for atomic bomb survivors, known as hibakusha, to interact with others directly, it has also brought about opportunities for them to reach previously inaccessible areas virtually.

"Every second counts for the survivors," also known as "Orizuru Project Online," was launched last October with the aim of reaching 190 countries. In the 10 months since its launch, online testimonies have already been held 37 times, reaching over 30 countries and 2,400 live viewers in total worldwide.

76th anniversary

In the latest session held Aug. 9, the 76th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, Shizuko Mitamura presented her testimony online with Peace Boat for the first time, sharing her story to an audience in France.

When the bomb dropped, Mitamura, then 3 years old, was having a meal with her brother and two sisters at their home around



Hibakusha participants and staff of an Orizuru Project voyage made on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings return to Yokohama port in July 2015. PHOTO: PEACE BOAT / KYODO

4 kilometers away from the hypocenter. White ash believed to have been radioactive fallout from the blast had fallen on their rice, but not knowing what it was, Mitamura and her siblings continued eating.

The effects of that radioactive exposure have rippled down the generations, with not only Mitamura and her sisters suffering from various types of cancer, but their daughters also. A number of them subsequently died from the illness,

but the turning point came when cancer also took Mitamura's own daughter around 10 years ago.

"That was when I really felt war is not right," Mitamura said, adding that it became a catalyst for her to become more active as

a storyteller. She joined Peace Boat's inaugural Orizuru project voyage in 2008 and again in 2015, the year of the 70th anniversary of the bombings.

Now 79, Mitamura regularly volunteers as a guide with her husband around sites related to the bombing, such as the Shiroyama Elementary School ruins and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum.

"Global Voyages for a Nuclear-free World"

Officially known as "Global Voyages for a Nuclear-free World" in English, the project was launched as a one-time event, but its huge impact on the 103 atomic bomb survivors who participated made organizers decide to continue it annually.

"We felt that we shouldn't stop with just one event, but since we couldn't have 103 or 100 people each time, we decided to make it sustainable by having a group of about 10 or 20 people each year," said Peace Boat International Coordinator Rika Watanabe.

Over 18 voyages have been made as part of the project to date,

with hibakusha bringing their message to all corners of the globe. But while the hibakusha often go with the intent of sharing their experiences of suffering, they often find themselves being touched instead, according to Watanabe.

She described the feelings of solidarity hibakusha share when they meet other victims of war, such as those of Agent Orange in Vietnam, and survivors of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. Although nothing can quite compare to meeting and interacting with locals in various countries, Watanabe says that on-line events, which usually last up to two hours, bring their own advantages. "If you can communicate in a language, you can cross borders and get people together in one place," she said, describing a time when listeners from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan tuned in for a session held in Russian.

The virtual events have also enabled Peace Boat to reach out to inland countries such as Mongolia, which were previously inaccessible due to their lack of ports.

SOURCE: Kyodo

China rejects need for further WHO coronavirus origins probe

CHINA on Friday rejected the World Health Organization's calls for a renewed probe into the origins of Covid-19, saying it supported "scientific" or "political" efforts to find out how the virus started.

Pressure is once more mounting on Beijing to consider a fresh probe into the origins of a pandemic which has killed more than four million people and paralysed economies worldwide since it first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

A delayed and heavily politicised visit by a WHO team of international experts went to Wuhan in January 2021 to produce a first phase report, which was written in conjunction with their Chinese counterparts. It failed to conclude

how the virus began.

On Thursday the WHO urged China to share raw data from the earliest Covid-19 cases to revive its probe into the origins of the disease.

China hit back, repeating its position that the initial investigation was enough and that calls for further data were motivated by politics instead of scientific inquiry.

"We oppose political tracing ... and abandoning the joint report" issued after the WHO expert team's Wuhan visit in January, vice foreign minister Ma Zhaoxu told reporters. "We support scientific tracing."

Most probable scenario

That report said the virus

jumping from bats to humans via an intermediate animal was the most probable scenario, while a leak from Wuhan's virology labs was "extremely unlikely".

Ma rejected suggestions of new lines of investigation.

"The conclusions and recommendations of WHO and China joint report were recognised by the international community and the scientific community," he said.

"Future global traceability work should and can only be further carried out on the basis of this report, rather than starting a new one."

Lab leak theory

In the face of China's reluctance to open up to outside investigators, experts are increasingly

open to considering the theory that the virus might have leaked out of a lab, once dismissed as a conspiracy propagated by the US far-right.

Even WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that the initial probe into Wuhan's virology labs had not gone far enough, while President Joe Biden in May ordered a separate investigation into the virus origins from the US intelligence community. A WHO call last month for the investigation's second stage to include audits of the Wuhan labs infuriated Beijing, with vice health minister Zeng Yixun saying the plan showed "disrespect for common sense and arrogance towards science".

Meanwhile, Danish scientist



People have their information registered before COVID-19 nucleic acid testing in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, Aug. 3, 2021.

PHOTO: WU ZHIZUN/XINHUA

Peter Ben Embarek, who led the international mission to Wuhan, said a lab employee infected while taking samples in the field falls

under one of the likely hypotheses as to how the virus passed from bats to humans.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 13 August 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak to moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 14 August, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Bago Region and Southern Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthatyi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthatyi Coasts and about (5-7) feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 August, 2021: One or tworain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region and widespread in Yangon Region.

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Jonathan Geifman (C), CEO of Israeli space startup Helios Project Ltd., poses for a photo with Israel Space Agency Director General Avi Blasberger (L) and Japanese Ambassador to Israel Koichi Mizushima at a signing ceremony of Helios's agreement with Japanese space startup Ispace Inc., held at the Japanese Embassy in Tel Aviv on July 19, 2021, which Ispace CEO Takeshi Hakamada joined online from Tokyo. **PHOTO: ISPACE/KYODO**

Japan, Israel startups to team up to make oxygen on Moon

JAPANESE and Israeli startups recently agreed to cooperate on an experimental project to generate oxygen on the Moon, a potential technology that could make possible long-term lunar missions independent of Earth in the future.

Under the project, Israel's Helios Project Ltd. will undertake demonstration tests to extract oxygen by melting lunar soil at a high temperature and electrolyzing it. Japan's Ispace Inc. will deliver equipment for the experiments twice between 2023 and 2025.

"We are very excited by their technology and we believe this effort will stimulate more players to enter this market," Ispace CEO Takeshi Hakamada told a ceremony to sign memoranda of understanding held at the Japanese Embassy in Tel Aviv last month, which he joined online from Tokyo.

"We hope there will be many more opportunities to collaborate on the shared interest in lunar exploration together," Hakamada added. After attending the ceremony, Helios CEO Jonathan Geifman said that extracting ox-

xygen from lunar soil is vital for humans to engage in activities on the Moon in the future.

The accord marks the first Japan-Israel collaboration by private companies in the field of space development, according to the Israeli space authority.

Helios has been developing a reactor that can process lunar soil to extract oxygen and metals such as iron, aluminum and silicon, in order to allow Moon colonists to "live off the land," it said on its website. The reactor is also being developed to process Martian soil.—Kyodo ■

Dutch lead charge for electric car stations

THEY are best known for bike-riding, but the climate-vulnerable Dutch are leading the way for electric cars with the largest number of charging stations in Europe.

Teslas and other vehicles can be seen plugged in on practically every street corner thanks to a network of some 75,000 stations – nearly a third of the entire EU total.

Investing to put enough charging stations in the reach

of drivers is crucial for countries that have set targets for an all-electric car future.

For Nienke Bergsma, the lightbulb moment when she decided to buy an electric car came when four charging posts were installed at the bottom of her Rotterdam road.

Bergsma, a 37-year-old mature student living in the centre of the port city, said she had wanted to "contribute to the protection of the environment".

While it was a headache at first to get used to the rhythm of charging, she said she was now "very happy" to have taken the leap. Around one in every five of the 400,000 new cars sold annually in the Netherlands is now electric, due partly to tax breaks and other incentives during the last decade. But the Dutch government has also ensured that drivers have the infrastructure to support efforts to kick the addiction to fossil fuels.



Almost a third of Europe's network of charging stations is in the Netherlands. **PHOTO: ANP/AFP/FILE**

With one-third of the Netherlands lying below sea-level, the country is particularly at risk

from climate change, which UN experts this week warned was at "code red".—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey's flash floods death toll soars to 27

THE death toll from Turkey's flash floods soared to 27 on Friday as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan prepared to inspect one of the hardest-hit regions and lend his moral support.

The devastations across Turkey's northern Black Sea regions came just as the disaster-hit country was winning control over hundreds of wildfires that killed eight people and destroyed swathes of forest along its scenic southern coast.

Turkey also suffered another bout of flooding in the northeastern province of Rize last month that killed six.

World scientists believe that natural disasters like those in Turkey are becoming more intense and frequent because of global warming and climate change.—AFP ■

Tens of thousands urged to evacuate as heavy rain hits Japan

TENS of thousands of people were urged to evacuate on Friday as "unprecedented" levels of torrential rain hit western Japan, raising the risk of floods and landslides, the weather agency said.

The downpours are forecast to continue for several days over a large swathe of the country, from the northern Tohoku region to Kyushu in the south. "There is a possibility that a grave disaster will occur" in the coming days, a Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) official told an emergency news conference shown live on public broadcaster NHK. In Unzen city in southern Nagasaki prefecture, two houses were hit by a landslide with one woman in her 50s feared dead, a local official told AFP.—AFP ■

In the footsteps of a woolly mammoth, 17,000 years ago



Mat Wooller, director of the Alaska Stable Isotope Facility, kneels among mammoth tusks at the University of Alaska Museum of the North. **PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS/AFP**

WALKING the equivalent of twice around the world during a life lasting 28 years, one woolly mammoth whose steps have been traced by researchers has proven the huge beast was a long-distance wanderer.

The findings, published Thursday in the prestigious

journal *Science*, could shed light on theories about why the mammoth, whose teeth were bigger than the human fist, became extinct. "In all popular culture – for example if you watch (the cartoon) 'Ice Age' – there are always mammoths who move around a lot," said Clement Bat-

aille, assistant professor at the University of Ottawa and one of the lead authors of the study.

But there is no clear reason why mammoths should have trekked great distances "because it is such an enormous animal that moving around uses a lot of energy," he told AFP.—AFP ■

China partly shuts world's third busiest cargo port over virus case

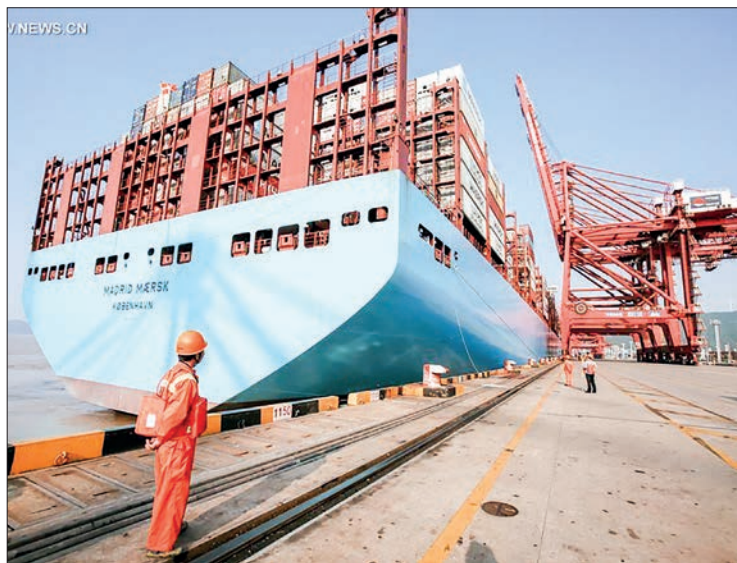
AUTHORITIES in China have suspended operations at a terminal in the world's third busiest cargo port after a worker was infected with the coronavirus.

The closure of a key terminal at the Ningbo-Zhoushan port on the east coast, which handled almost 1.2 billion tons in 2020, reflects China's determination to squash its worst coronavirus outbreak in months no matter the economic costs. The worker at the port's Meishan terminal tested positive for coronavirus Wednesday, Ningbo city officials said. The company "immediately stopped production work and closed the port area," as soon as the infection was detected,

Jiang Yipeng, the CEO of Meidong Container Terminal, which operates the Meishan zone, said. The worker had been fully vaccinated and it remains unclear how they became infected.

Meishan terminal is a newly built area of the expanded port and is its second mega-terminal, with capacity for 10 million containers, state media reported.

Almost 2,000 front-line workers at Ningbo-Zhoushan port have been placed under "closed management" – effectively unable to leave the port – as a result of the infection, Chinese media reported. Chinese port workers are routinely tested for Covid. — AFP ■



A cargo vessel to Denmark is anchored at the container terminal of Zhoushan Port in Ningbo City, east China's Zhejiang Province, May 9, 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHANG CHENG

NEWS IN BRIEF

France urges better protection of vaccine centres after vandalism

THE French government on Wednesday urged better protection of vaccine centres after some two dozen acts of vandalism were recorded against Covid-19 related facilities over the last month alone.

The warning comes after high tensions over recent weeks as tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets to rally against President Emmanuel Macron's health pass policy which aims to encourage vaccination.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin sent a letter to senior local authority officials at the request of Macron seen by AFP in which he urged French police to mobilise to ensure better protection for vaccine centres across the country. According to the interior ministry, some 22 acts of vandalism against testing and vaccination centres as well as pharmacies have been recorded since July 12 alone. Almost 60 threats have also been recorded. — AFP ■

US health authorities urge pregnant women to get Covid vaccine

US health authorities urged pregnant women on Wednesday to get inoculated against Covid-19, arguing that the data demonstrates they do not increase the risk of miscarriage.

Rochelle Walensky, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the agency "encourages all pregnant people or people who are thinking about becoming pregnant and those breastfeeding to get vaccinated to protect themselves from Covid-19."

"The vaccines are safe and effective, and it has never been more urgent to increase vaccinations as we face the highly transmissible Delta variant and see severe outcomes from Covid-19 among unvaccinated pregnant people," Walensky said.

According to a recent study, only one in four pregnant women has received at least a first dose of a Covid vaccine. — AFP ■

New restrictions in Finland as Covid cases hit record



Passengers ask for instructions at the COVID-19 health information point of the Helsinki-Vantaa airport in Vantaa, Finland, August 3, 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

LIMITS on public gatherings will be tightened in the Finnish capital as the country's infection rates hit a new daily high, health

chiefs said on Thursday.

Despite enjoying some of Europe's lowest incidence rates during much of the pandem-

ic, cases in Finland have been surging in recent weeks, with a record 1,024 new infections on Wednesday, public health agency THL said.

The Nordic nation of 5.5 million has so far recorded over 115,000 infections and 995 Covid-related deaths, with the Delta variant behind 90 percent of new infections, THL said.

"In a situation where vaccine coverage is still incomplete and many people have only had one dose or none at all, the risk of serious infection is still there," health ministry official Pasi Pohjola told a press conference. "That is why restrictions are continuing."

As of 20 August, indoor events will be limited to 25 peo-

ple and outdoor gatherings to 50 in Helsinki and the surrounding areas, southern Finland's regional administrative agency announced on Thursday.

Finland's vaccination drive currently lags behind many other EU states, with only 40 percent of the population fully vaccinated, in part because officials decided on a longer, three-month gap between doses to prioritise giving a first jab to as many as possible.

New cases were overwhelmingly among younger, unvaccinated people, the THL said, and added that although hospitalisations are down compared to previous waves, "the burden on healthcare services remains difficult." — AFP ■

Delta variant crimps oil demand outlook: IEA

GLOBAL oil demand is expected to grow slower than previously forecast this year as the spread of Covid's Delta variant has prompted lockdowns in major consuming countries, the International Energy Agency said Thursday.

Demand surged in June as mobility increased in North America and Europe.

But it "abruptly reversed course" in July as the Delta variant undermined deliveries in China, Indonesia and other parts of Asia, the IEA said in a monthly report.

"The outlook for the remainder of the year has also been appreciably downgraded due to the

worsening of the pandemic and revisions to historical data," the report said.

"New Covid-19 restrictions imposed in several major oil consuming countries, particularly in Asia, look set to reduce mobility and oil use."

The agency now forecasts demand rising by 5.3 million barrels per day in 2021 to 96.2 mbd. That is down 300,000 bpd from its previous estimations.

Global output, meanwhile, is expected to rise further after the OPEC group of major oil producers and its allies agreed to boost production, the IEA said.

With US petrol prices rising,



Global oil demand is expected to grow slower than previously forecast this year as the spread of Covid's Delta variant has prompted lockdowns in major consuming countries, the International Energy Agency said Thursday. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

the White House complained on Wednesday that the production increase by the OPEC+ group

was "simply not enough" to fuel the global economic recovery from the pandemic. — AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Fewer American workers applying for jobless benefits

THE number of US workers filing applications for unemployment benefits continues to trend downward, with another sharp drop last week, according to government data released Thursday.

While the early end of special federal pandemic benefits in many states was expected to impact the data, applications for that type of aid actually rose in the week ended August 7, the Labor Department said.

Initial jobless claims fell by 12,000 last week to 375,000 seasonally adjusted, the third consecutive week of declines, according to the report.

The reopening of the world's largest economy amid widespread Covid-19 vaccinations has led to strong job growth and a steady downward trend in the need for unemployment aid since May.—AFP ■

The curious case of the \$600 million crypto heist

CRYPTOCURRENCY investors have been transfixed over the past few days by the antics of a mysterious hacker who stole more than \$600 million -- before gradually giving it back.

But was the thief a good samaritan who stole the money to expose a dangerous security flaw, or did they simply realise they were about to be caught?

The hacker struck Poly Network, a company that handles cryptocurrency transfers, on Tuesday in one of the biggest thefts of digital monies in history. But by Thursday the perpetrator had given back almost all of the stolen funds in a slow trickle of transactions.

In messages embedded in the transfers, the thief insisted the money had been stolen with good intentions.

"I am not very interested in money!" the hacker wrote, adding it was "always the plan" to return the funds.

- Digital sleuths -

Despite their volatility and concerns over the huge waste of electricity they generate, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum have soared in popularity in recent years.—AFP ■

90% of firms see Japan economy growing in 2022 COVID recovery hopes



Ninety percent of major Japanese companies expect the country's economy to expand in 2022 on hopes that the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic will subside, a Kyodo News survey showed Thursday.

PHOTO: KYODO

NINETY percent of major Japanese companies expect the country's economy to expand in 2022 on hopes that the fallout from

the coronavirus pandemic will subside, a Kyodo News survey showed Thursday.

The survey on 111 compa-

nies, including Toyota Motor Corp. and Sony Group Corp., also showed companies increasingly joining global efforts to curb

greenhouse gases and striving to ensure economic security amid an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, with a focus on supply chains for chips and energy resources.

The survey found 75 percent of the firms expect moderate economic growth next year, followed by 15 percent that said the world's third-largest economy will expand in 2022.

Five percent said they expect economic conditions to remain unchanged, while no company projected a moderate decline or contraction.

With multiple answers allowed, 93 percent of the firms foreseeing economic expansion said they believe so due to the progress in coronavirus vaccinations, while 83 percent cited the recovery in private consumption and 72 percent pinned hopes on an easing of coronavirus restrictions on economic activities.—Kyodo ■

UN experts urge moratorium on surveillance tech sales

UN experts called Thursday for an international moratorium on the sale of surveillance technology until regulations are implemented to protect human rights following an Israeli spyware scandal.

An international media investigation reported last month that several governments used the Pegasus malware, created by Israeli firm NSO Group, to spy on activists, journalists and politicians.

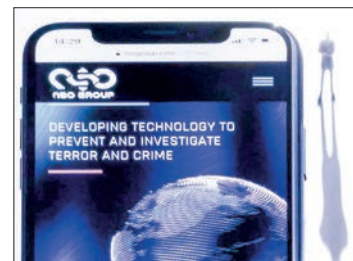
Pegasus can switch on a phone's camera or microphone

and harvest its data.

"It is highly dangerous and irresponsible to allow the surveillance technology and trade sector to operate as a human rights-free zone," the United Nations human rights experts said in a statement.

The statement is signed by three special rapporteurs on rights and a working group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other businesses.

"We urge the international community to develop a robust



A photographic illustration shows a smartphone with the website of Israel's NSO Group which features 'Pegasus' spyware PHOTO: AFP

regulatory framework to prevent, mitigate and redress the negative human rights impact of surveillance technology and pending that, to adopt a moratorium on its sale and transfer," they said. The experts urged Israel to "disclose fully what measures it took to review NSO export transactions in light of its own human rights obligations".

Israel's defence establishment has set up a committee to review NSO's business, including the process through which export licences are granted.

Pegasus's list of alleged targets includes at least 600 politicians, 180 journalists, 85 human rights activists and 65 business leaders.— AFP ■

Dubai airport passenger volumes slump 40% in first half of 2021



The number of passengers that passed through the world's largest airport for international travel fell to 10.6 million in the first six months of 2021, according to a statement from the Dubai Media Office.

PHOTO: AFP

DUBAI International Airport reported on Wednesday a 41 per

cent drop in traffic in the first half of 2021, but said it anticipates

"robust growth" after the easing of travel restrictions.

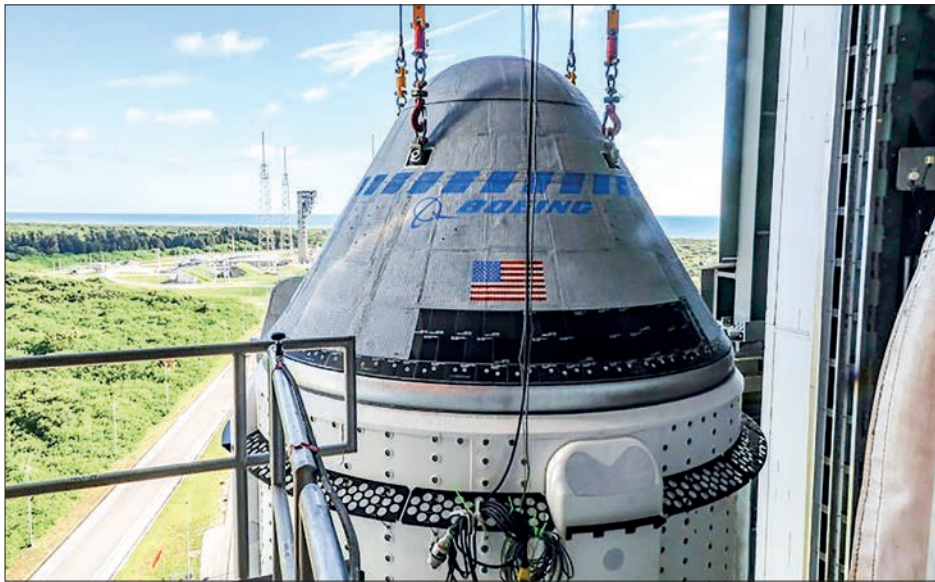
The number of passengers that passed through the world's largest airport for international travel fell to 10.6 million in the first six months of 2021, according to a statement from the Dubai Media Office.

In the first quarter of last year, the airport had welcomed 17.8 million passengers before it temporarily suspended commercial flights in the second quarter to curb the spread of the coronavirus. "Dubai Airports is projecting robust growth for Dubai International in the second half

of the year," the statement said.

The emirate, one of the seven that make up the UAE, was one of the first destinations to reopen to tourism in July last year. It became a magnet for visitors escaping dreary winter weather and stringent COVID-19 restrictions. The UAE launched a vaccination campaign in December and has inoculated 72 per cent of its nearly 10 million population. Last year, Dubai International Airport reported a 70 per cent drop in traffic, with the number of travellers falling from more than 86 million in 2019 to 25.9 million in 2020.— AFP ■

Boeing Starliner launch faces further delays



The Boeing CST-100 Starliner spacecraft's latest launch date on August 4 was cancelled over propulsion issues. PHOTO: NASA/BOEING/AFP/FILE

BOEING'S troubled Starliner spaceship could be set for further delays after the company said Thursday it was working to solve problems with the propulsion system.

The spaceship's latest launch date on August 4 was cancelled over propulsion issues, and it remains unclear when the next test flight will be scheduled.

"Over the past couple of days, our team has taken the necessary time to safely access and test the affected valves, and not let the launch window dictate

our pace," said John Vollmer, Starliner vice president and program manager.

The glitch is the latest to delay development of the capsule, which Boeing built under contract with NASA to ferry astronauts to low Earth orbit following the end of the Space Shuttle program.

Boeing needs to succeed with an uncrewed test flight before flying humans.

SpaceX, the other company given a multi-billion-dollar contract by NASA for taxi rides to

the International Space Station (ISS), has now undertaken three crewed missions.

Boeing said in a statement it would work with NASA to confirm a new launch date when the spacecraft is ready.

During an initial uncrewed test flight in December 2019, the Starliner capsule experienced glitches with its thrusters.

It did not have enough fuel to reach the International Space Station and had to return to Earth prematurely.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Credit Suisse to pick risk experts after fund fiasco

CREDIT Suisse said Friday it will name two risk management veterans to its board of directors after the Swiss banking giant was rocked by meltdowns at financial firms Greensill and Archegos.

The bank's new chairman, Antonio Horta-Osorio, has vowed to make risk management a priority since he took over in April in the wake of the financial fiascos.

Credit Suisse said it was proposing Axel Lehmann, a former executive at Swiss rival UBS, as chair of the risk committee. The Swiss is an adjunct professor at the University of St. Gallen. He would take over for Richard Meddings, who has been interim chairman of the risk committee since his predecessor abruptly resigned in April.

It also nominated Juan Colombas, a non-executive director and member of the audit and risk committees at Dutch bank ING, to serve on its board. The Spaniard is also a former executive at Lloyds Banking Group. Credit Suisse will hold an extraordinary general meeting of its board on October 1 to elect the two new members.—AFP ■

China's Tesla rival Li Auto makes HK debut after \$1.5bn IPO

SHARES in Chinese electric carmaker Li Auto fell on its Hong Kong debut on Thursday, with investors increasingly jittery over Beijing's regulatory clampdown on tech companies and other industries.

Regarded as a mainland rival to US titan Tesla, the listing makes it the latest mainland firm already traded on Wall Street to seek exposure in Hong Kong as a hedge against

regulatory risks amid China-US tensions.

Li Auto is the second Chinese electric vehicle company to announce a secondary listing, following rival XPeng's initial public offering last month. The firms are among a number flocking to the financial hub over the past year as firms guard against the risk of being removed from US exchanges over the standoff.

The firm raised \$1.5 billion in the IPO but on Thursday its shares slipped to HK\$116.80 in early trade, down from its IPO price of HK\$118. The offering also comes during a turbulent period for stocks in the city as investors grow increasingly jittery over Beijing's tightening grip there, including the imposition of a sweeping national security law last year.—AFP ■



A worker at a Chinese factory making lithium batteries for electric cars in Nanjing, China. PHOTO: STR / AFP



An Emirates airplane with the Expo 2020 livery. PHOTO: AFP

Emirates offering clients complimentary day pass to Expo 2020 Dubai

EMIRATES, the premier partner and official airline of Expo 2020 Dubai, has launched an exclusive offer for customers to experience the excitement of the world expo, the largest-of-its-kind event in the region.

Emirates customers visiting Dubai, and travelling through Dubai anytime during the much-awaited mega event running from October 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022, will be eligible to receive a free Emirates Expo Day Pass for every

flight ticket booked with Emirates. The special offer is valid on all return tickets that include a flight to or through Dubai, for travel dates between October 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (1053W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (1053W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-8-2021 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.

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Amendment to the Open Tender No 3/2021

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines announced the invitation for open tender regarding the sale of 5008.574 Metric Tons, (21) Lots of Cathode Copper by US dollars. The tender opening date was on 21.7.2021 and 30.7.2021, which is part of the public holidays and so, the tender opening date was postponed to 20.8.2021 by advertising in the state-owned newspapers.

2. However, the tender has been rescheduled to open on 20.8.2021, which is now included in the extended public holidays, so the tender opening date will be re-schedules as follows:
(a) Closing date and time of tender: 22.8.2021 (14:00)
(b) Opening date and time of tender: 22.8.2021 (15:00)

3. For any further detailed information, it is requested to contact the telephone numbers: 067-3409378 and 067-3409372, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines

Polish MPs approve controversial media law



Thousands of protesters took to the streets across Poland in anger over the proposals **PHOTO: AFP**

POLISH MPs have voted in favour of a new law that critics say will curb media freedom and hit ties with the United States, but the ruling coalition also lost several key votes, putting its long-term future in doubt.

The media law, passed on Wednesday, would prevent companies from outside the European Economic Area from holding a controlling stake in Polish media companies. That would force US group Discovery to sell its majority stake in TVN, one of Poland's biggest private TV networks whose news channel

TVN24 is often highly critical of the government. The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party says the law is needed to stop hostile foreign powers from taking control of powerful broadcasters and is in line with rules in other European countries. But critics say it opens a path for a state-controlled company to take control of TVN, following a takeover of the regional newspaper group Polska Press by state energy giant PKN Orlen.

TVN urged the Senate and the president to reject the law, labelling the vote "an unprecedented

attack on freedom of expression and media independence".

The vote came during a stormy session of parliament that at one point was interrupted when MPs approved an opposition motion to suspend proceedings to delay the media law vote

In the end, the session resumed and the media law passed by 228 votes in favour and 216 against in the 460-seat lower house of parliament.

Thousands of people took to the streets in rallies across Poland on Tuesday over the draft law.—AFP ■

Oil spills from freighter that ran aground at northeast Japan port

A cargo ship that ran aground at a port in northeastern Japan before being refloated and anchored off the coast was found Thursday to have broken apart and was spilling oil, the coast guard said.

The freighter, the Panamanian-flagged 39,910-ton Crimson Polaris, ran aground Wednesday morning at Hachinohe port in Aomori Prefecture. All 21 crew members -- eight Chinese and 13 Filipino nationals -- had been rescued without notable injuries, the coast guard said.

Leaked oil was confirmed floating in an area of about 24 kilo-

meters in length and up to about 800 meters in width as of 5 p.m. Thursday, reaching the coastline of Misawa in the prefecture. The coast guard said its officials have been engaging in cleanup work.

About 1,600 tons of heavy oil still remained inside the cargo ship.

The vessel was on course to enter the port on Wednesday morning but ran aground in shallow water as it was carried away by strong winds, according to Nippon Yusen K.K., which is responsible for the operation of the ship. The crew initially managed to



Photo shows the stern section of the Panamanian-flagged cargo ship Crimson Polaris split apart and the vessel spilling oil off Hachinohe port in Aomori Prefecture on Aug. 12, 2021. **PHOTO: 2ND REGIONAL COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS/ KYODO**

refloat the ship, which was carrying wooden chips from Thailand, but it soon became impossible

to navigate leading them to drop anchor around 4 km off the coast. On Thursday morning, the stern

section of the ship had broken apart and the ship was leaking oil, the coast guard said.—Kyodo ■

21 dead as torrential rainfall batters central China

At least 21 people died as heavy downpours struck central China's Hubei province, authorities said Friday, weeks after record floods wreaked havoc and killed hundreds in a neighbouring

province.

China has been battered by unprecedented rains in recent months, extreme weather that experts say is increasingly common due to global warming.



In Suizhou, torrential rains have forced families to evacuate. **PHOTO: CNS/AFP**

In Hubei, torrential rains caused power cuts and landslides, destroying hundreds of homes and forcing the evacuation of nearly 6,000 people, the province's Emergency Management Bureau said, as reservoirs reach dangerous levels.

"Twenty-one people were killed and four others are missing as heavy rain lashed townships from Wednesday," state broadcaster Xinhua reported Friday. Footage showed families wading in water that had risen to almost hip level and carrying essentials in plastic bags in Yicheng, which saw a record 480 millimetres (around 19 inches) of rain on Thursday. Rescuers carried people to safety on bulldozers.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US population identifying as 'white' drops for first time

THE number of US residents who identify as "white" has fallen for the first time, according to the latest 2020 census data released Thursday.

The United States has grown "more racially and ethnically diverse" and more urban over the past 10 years, according to the Census Bureau.

The "white" population decreased by 8.6 percent between 2010 and 2020, a first since the earliest such data was taken in 1790.

It remains the largest group in the country, last year representing 204 million residents, or 61.6 percent of the population. A decade earlier people identifying as white comprised 72.4 percent.

Nicholas Jones, an official working in the bureau's population division, said that "improvements" on census questionnaires along with a new methodology compared to the 2010 report had "largely" influenced the results, along with "some demographic changes."

The category "white and some other race" -- African- or Asian-Americans, for example -- spiked 316 percent over the past decade to account for 235 million people.

In the United States it is common to define oneself according to ethnic origins, and the census questionnaire specifically asks for "race" identification.—AFP ■

Trudeau expected to call Canada snap elections Sunday

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to pull the plug on his minority Liberal government and call snap elections on Sunday despite a nationwide uptick in Covid infections that is worrying voters.

Trudeau is to visit the governor general to ask her to dissolve parliament and announce voting will be held on September 20, according to public broadcaster CBC and other local media, citing unnamed sources.

He and opposition leaders have been criss-crossing the country in recent weeks making election-style announcements as talk of a possible fall ballot has heated up.

In power for six years, Trudeau was reelected in 2019 but lost his majority in his second term amid scandals.

Despite rolling out



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to call snap elections on Sunday, according to local media. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

massive pandemic aid, passing a federal budget and other key legislation with opposition backing over the past year, he has lamented that parliament in recent months has become dysfunctional, with a “level of obstructionism and toxicity in the House that is of real concern.”

Opposition leaders have pushed back on the move, with one urging

Governor General Mary Simon to rebuff Trudeau, informing her in a letter that his party was prepared to continue propping up the minority Liberal government to pass key legislation until the pandemic ends.

“While Justin Trudeau wants to act like (the pandemic) is over... it’s not over and people are still worried,” New Democratic

Party leader Jagmeet Singh told reporters, echoing public health warnings of a looming Covid surge despite rising vaccination rates.

Erin O’Toole, who has struggled to make himself known to voters since becoming head of the main opposition Tories last year, said earlier this week: “We shouldn’t be rushing to an election.”—AFP ■

US, UK to launch evacuation flights as Taliban advance across Afghanistan



The Taliban are pressing a lightning offensive that has seen them wrest much of Afghanistan from government hands in just over a week. PHOTO: AFP

THE United States and Britain ordered Friday the deployment of thousands of troops to Afghanistan to evacuate their nationals, as the Taliban overran more key regional cities in an offensive that has left the capital dangerously exposed. The orders came as the Taliban took control of Kandahar, the nation’s second biggest city in the insurgency’s heartland, leaving only Kabul and pockets of other territory

in government hands.

“Kandahar is completely conquered. The Mujahideen reached Martyrs’ Square,” a Taliban spokesman tweeted on an officially recognised account, referring to a city landmark.

The claim was backed up by officials and a resident, who told AFP government forces had withdrawn en masse to a military facility outside the southern city.—AFP ■

Clashes in Syria’s Daraa: what is the fighting about?

THREE years after Syria’s government retook control of the flashpoint southern province of Daraa, regime forces have clashed with rebels again, trapping thousands of civilians in the crossfire.

Nearly half of the population of the rebel-held Daraa al-Balad district

have fled heavy shelling and ground battles, but the United Nations warns that remaining civilians are cut off with dwindling supplies.

On Thursday, the UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen said civilians were suffering from “acute shortages” of food, fuel, water and medicines

in a “near siege-like” situation.

“The situation is alarming,” Pedersen said. Here is what you need to know about the conflict.

Why is Daraa important?

Daraa, which borders Jordan and is close to the Israeli-occupied Golan

Heights, is widely seen as the cradle of the 2011 uprising in Syria, which sparked a decade-long civil war that has killed almost half a million people. In 2011, young boys who had scrawled graffiti against President Bashar al-Assad were detained in Daraa, sparking nationwide protests.—AFP ■

Obituary

Khatija Bi Bi Yacoob Attia wife of Late Dr. Yacoob Mohamed Hassanjee has expired on the 12th of August 2021 at No. 94, Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road, Pabedan Township, Yangon. Leaving behind Two (2) daughters and one (1) son, namely (1) Mariam Bi Bi Yacoob Hassanjee, (2) Mohamed Yacoob Hassanjee, and (3) Sara Bi Bi Yacoob Hassanjee. She was buried at Yayway Sunni Muslim Burial Gournds, Yangon.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel to okay 2,000 new settler homes

ISRAEL is to approve 2,000 new homes for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, defence sources said Thursday, despite opposition from dovish members of the governing coalition.

The Palestinians swiftly condemned the latest settlement expansion plans, the first of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s administration.

A security source told AFP the permits for Jewish settlements would come alongside approvals for hundreds of Palestinian homes in the large swathe of the West Bank known as Area C, where Israel exercises military and planning control.

“There is an expectation to approve about 1,000 housing units for Palestinians in Area C next week and 2,000 housing units in the Jewish communities,” the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The office of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas expressed its “strong rejection and condemnation” of the new settler homes, saying they contradicted “the clear American position” President Joe Biden expressed in a call with Abbas. Biden is reportedly to meet with Bennett in the near future, although his office did not specify a date.

Bennett, a former director of the Yesha Council settler lobby, faced criticism from dovish partners in his coalition, as well as from Israeli settler advocates in the opposition.—AFP ■

Six dead including suspected gunman in UK shooting

Six people, including the suspected gunman, died Thursday following a “serious firearms incident” in the southwestern English city of Plymouth, police said, with reports one victim was a child aged under 10.

Devon and Cornwall Police declared a “critical incident” in the Keyham area of Plymouth early Thursday evening after the shooting, but later said it was not being considered terrorism related.

Officers responded alongside other emergency services, including air ambulance staff, to reports of gunshots in the residential neighbourhood near some of the city’s docks.

“Two females and two males were deceased at the scene,” Devon and Cornwall Police said in an update early Friday after hours of uncertainty around the incident.

Police added another male -- believed to be the gunman -- was also found dead nearby while another female treated at the scene died a short time later in hospital. “All are believed to have died from gunshot wounds,” the force said.

Shortly after police confirmed the death toll, local lawmaker Luke Pollard reported one of those killed “was a child under ten years old”. “More people are being treated for their injuries in hospital,” the Labour MP tweeted.—AFP ■

Myanmar U-23 team falls into Group I with Viet Nam, China (Taipei)



Myanmar U-23 football squad pose for a group photo at an international football match. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE Asian Football Confederation (AFC) decided to host the 2022 U-23 Asian Cup in October, with participation of Myanmar squad.

The Myanmar U-23 squad is in Group I together with Viet Nam and host China (Taipei).

The AFC U-23 Championship will be held with 11 groups of Under-23 Asian teams. The

winners from each group and four best runners-up will have the chance to sail into the next stage. The final round of the tournament will be held in 2022 with 16 teams including host Uzbekistan.

Velizar Popov, who helped the Myanmar U-23 team win a bronze medal at the last SEA Games, will serve as a head

coach.

The team Myanmar is made up of old players who have competed in the previous SEA Games and newcomers from the U-18 team. The team has been reformed for the 2022 Asian Games and the Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) as well, officials said.—GNLM

Medvedev, Tsitsipas power into Toronto ATP quarter-finals

TOP seed Daniil Medvedev powered through a rough patch to beat James Duckworth 6-2, 6-4 on Thursday and reach the quarter-finals of the ATP Toronto Masters. Russia's Medvedev was in cruise control, up a set and 5-1 in the third-round match, when he was broken by his 85th-ranked Australian opponent. But the 2019 Canada finalist regained his edge to close out the win in 69 minutes on a second match point. "When your back is against the wall,

you play much better," Medvedev said of Duckworth. "He came closer at the end and put pressure on me.

"I handled it. I'm really happy with this win. I had never trained with him or played him, so I didn't exactly know what to expect.

"Sometimes, you need to find out things during the match." Medvedev finished with 10 aces as he reached his eighth quarter-final at the Masters level - all achieved since 2019.—AFP ■

Boost for Liverpool as talisman van Dijk signs new contract

VIRGIL van Dijk gave a timely boost to Liverpool on the eve of their first Premier League match of the season with newly-promoted Norwich City by signing a new long-term contract, the club announced on Friday.

The 30-year-old Dutch international central defender's new deal is reported to tie him to the club till 2025.

Van Dijk's absence due to a knee injury suffered in the Merseyside Derby with Everton last October cost Liverpool

dear in their defence of the title last season and also saw him miss Euro 2020.

"Virgil van Dijk has today signed a new long-term contract with Liverpool Football Club," read the club statement.

He is the fourth senior Liverpool player to extend his contract in the last couple of weeks after England defender Trent Alexander-Arnold and Brazilian duo Fabinho and Alisson Becker.

Van Dijk signed from Southampton in 2018 for a



Dutch international defender Virgil van Dijk gave Liverpool a timely boost in signing a new long term contract on the eve of their opening Premier League match with Norwich. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

reported £75 million (\$104 million) and was pivotal in Liverpool winning the 2019 Champions League and the Premier League the following season.

"Amazing. It is something to be very proud of, that I am very proud of, that my wife and my kids are very proud of," he told Liverpool.com.

"All the hard work we've put in so far continues and I am looking forward to what the future brings together with Liverpool.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council 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.