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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Friday, 22 October 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.

Visitors flock to Sittway Beach, Point Resort during Thadingyut Holidays

VISITORS across the country thronged to the Sittway Beach and Point Resort in Rakhine State during the Thadingyut Festival public holidays.

“Local and foreign tourists are fascinated by the beauty of Point Resort and Sittway Beach. It is found on Facebook and attracts tourists from all over the country during the dry season. Many local people are also visiting the beaches,” said



Travellers are seen on the Sittway Beach in the holiday period.



a local tour operator. In addition, traffic police are working to ensure that tourists can rest in peace and avoid traffic jams.—Win Min Soe (IPRD)/GNLM

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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.



Health officials to conduct vaccination roll-out in KhinU Township

HEALTHCARE officials will give the first dose of COVID-19 vaccination to over 18-year-old school students who have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 virus at Township People's Hospital (Maternal and Child Health Department) and KhinU Basic Education High School in KhinU Town-

ship, Sagaing Region at 9 am on 22 October (today).

A total of 3,000 vaccines against the COVID-19 arrived in KhinU Township and a total of 960 doses of the vaccines will be given for over 12-year-old school students and local people who have already received the first dose of the vaccines,

officials said.

To date, 150 people have been fully vaccinated against the virus in the township, according to the COVID-19 Disease Control and Emergency Response Committee. — Soe Wai Aung (KhinU IPRD)/GNLM

2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination begins in Thandwe Township

THE second dose of COVID-19 vaccination is given to the 18-year-olds and 55-year-olds at No. 1 Basic Education High School and 10 health centres in Thandwe Township from 8 am to 4:30 pm on 21 October.

Vaccinations were administered to above 65-year-old people, volunteers, monks and nuns, people over the age of 18, including civil servants and private healthcare workers, bank employees, industrialists and workers, hotels, motels, and guesthouses business employers and staff, workers in the transport industry, vendors, waiters and waitresses and handicapped persons, officials from the District Health Department said.

Healthcare workers are closely monitoring the vaccination programme and members of the Red Cross, Fire Brigade and the Myanmar Police Force cooperated in compiling the census and registration for the vaccinated.—Thandwe IPRD/GNLM

Inoculation roll-out in Thandwe Township.



Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals
Enterprise

683 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 21 October, total figure rises to 491,584

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 491,584 after 683 new cases were reported on 21 October 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 444,740 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,465 after 21 died.

Promoting and cementing Union Spirit

LIKEWISE if one is too eager to embrace the past, one may lose the road to the future". The government has decided to further promote the process of cementing the Union Spirit and peace process before the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee Union Day and Independence Day.

(Excerpt from the Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to mark Sixth Anniversary of signing Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 15-10-2021)

16th ASEAN ministerial meeting on environment, its related meeting held online

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi and officials attended the 16th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment and its Related Meeting chaired by Indonesia through videoconferencing yesterday morning.

During the discussion, Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi said he is very proud of the long-term partnership as a milestone in the success of the ASEAN Community 2025 with the vision of "One vision, One identity, One community". Along with industrial and economic development, climate change and environmental degradation are challenges that also affect livelihoods and sustainability.

He highlighted the importance of regional cooperation to prevent the degradation of the natural resources and eco-



The MNREC Union Minister joins the 16th ASEAN ministerial meeting and its related meeting online yesterday.

system which include native plans, minerals, wetlands and marine resources, to develop sustainably and to achieve the ASEAN Goal "Clean and Green ASEAN".

He said environmental sustainability is a key pillar of Myanmar's sustainable development agenda; Myanmar's National Environmental Policy, Climate

Change Policy and Strategy, National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan and Myanmar National Waste Management Strategy are being formulated and implemented. A green economic approach to boosting environmentally friendly investment will provide opportunities for post-COVID-19 rehabilitation in the region, and Myanmar will

work more closely to enhance environmental cooperation in the ASEAN region, he added.

Myanmar officials also presented reports on biodiversity conservation, coastal conservation, water resources conservation, climate change mitigation, sustainable cities, education on chemical wastes and environment, production

and consumption issues. This was followed by the ASEAN Joint Declaration on Climate Change, ASEAN-China Green and Sustainable Development Joint Declaration, ASEAN Joint Declaration on Chemical and Waste Management, ASEAN Joint Declaration on Biodiversity, Plastic Pollution Eradication Plan. The meeting submitted reports on climate change in the ASEAN region and ratified the Sustainable Consumption and Production Agreement.

The Union Minister also attended the 5th Environmentally Sustainable Cities Award-ESC award ceremony where Nyaung U from Myanmar received the award. It is reported that the 16th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment and its Related Meeting and ASEAN+3 Ministerial Meetings will continue to be held on 22 October. —MNA

ASEAN+3 Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting virtually held

THE ASEAN+3 Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting (AFCDM+3) was convened via videoconferencing yesterday.

Deputy Governor Daw Than Than Swe of the Central Bank of Myanmar joined the online meeting.

First, regarding the Global and Regional Macroeconomic Outlook, MMF discussed under the topic "World and Asia Economic Developments", while AMRO under "Transitioning Smoothly from Pandemic to Endemic New Normal" and ADB under the topic of "Transforming Agriculture in Asia", and the Central Bank Deputies



The online ASEAN plus 3 Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting in progress.

exchanged views.

Then, the officials discussed the implementation of Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization-CMIM, including the new reference interest rate, domes-

tic financial integration, financial assistance for economic purposes and technical supports, work plans, budget and appointment of employees for the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic

Research Office – AMRO in 2022, mid-term implementation work plan (2022-2026), management level selection programmes of AMRO, ASEAN+3 Future Initiatives and Asia Bond Markets

Initiatives. They also focused on the use of LIBOR for the CMIM Reference Rate and the use of Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), the Overnight Transaction Rate of the US Treasury Repo Rate.

Moreover, they discussed the controls of Japan and China despite the high inflation, law enactment after the polity recommendation, continuous supports in line with Monetary Policy to achieve medium-term Financial Framework and the GDP growth of ASEAN+3 which was 6.1 per cent in 2021 and estimated 5.0 per cent in 2022. —MNA

Myanmar attends ASEAN+3 finance, central bank deputy governors meeting

DEPUTY Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win attended the meeting of ASEAN+3 Countries Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors virtually chaired by Brunei Darussalam yesterday morning.

During the Informal Session of the meeting in the morning, officials from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) discussed the global and Asian economic situations.

Officials discussed the effects on the global economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the rise of inflation due to temporary interruptions in production; the increase in food and fuel prices which is also driving up inflation, and a significant rise in public debt and private debt as a result. They also discussed that although the vaccination against the COVID-19 has started in respective countries, the



pandemic is still retarding the economic recovery, and the vaccination is a key factor in reviving the economy. The meeting also discussed that climate change, natural disasters, cyber-attacks and geopolitics remain challenges in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore, each country should develop appropriate policies for national economic recovery.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win said Myanmar is also affected by COVID-19 as other

nations, and the World Bank, IMF, ADB, and AMRO have stated Myanmar's significant drop in economic development in Macroeconomic Outlook Reports. However, Myanmar is expected to achieve an economic growth rate of 3.8 per cent in the 2021-2022 financial year, he said.

Vaccination against COVID-19 has started to the target priority groups in the country, aiming to reach 50 per cent of all eligible vaccinations by the end of this year, he continued. Myanmar has implemented

the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) since April 2020 and now preparing to launch the Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan (MERP), both of which are the stimulus packages that include providing loans to businesses hardest hit by the COVID-19, support to low-income citizens, public health system expansion, immunization coverage, and supports to quarantine centres, he said.

The Deputy Minister also added that Myanmar is currently in a state of emer-

gency, and the State Administration Council is setting and implementing the Five-Point Roadmap and Nine Objectives, improving production based on agriculture and livestock with modern methods, as well as including the development of other economic sectors as an economic goal.

He expressed words of thanks to AMRO and ADB for their policy recommendations and adoption of policies for agricultural transformation in Asia. He also said these recommendations and approaches will help in reviving the economy in the region.

Myanmar also participated in the formal session held in the afternoon which discussed the implementations and policies of the ASEAN+3 countries and further steps.

It is reported that the discussions from this meeting will be submitted to be approved to the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting to be held in April 2022. — MNA

Yangon Mayor joins Lancang-Mekong Mayors' Forum on Culture, Tourism



THE Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China organized the Lancang-Mekong Tourist

Cities Cooperation Alliance Conference in Chongqing from 20 to 22 October.

The Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor U Bo Htay, Nay Pyi Taw

Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing and administrative officials and mayors of Myanmar, China, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Thailand joined the Lancang-Mekong Mayors' Forum online yesterday.

During the meeting, the Yangon Mayor discussed the cooperation works among the regional countries to adopt the safe system to revive the tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 period, difficulties of World Bank in reviewing the situation as the tourism industry halted in every country due to the pandemic and the world economists could not set the future plans, further cooperation to overcome the challenges, duties of YCDC and Yangon Region government

for sector-wise development, including tourism sector of Yangon, the international gateway under the guidance of the State Administration Council.

He continued that Yangon was once the capital city of Myanmar and is now a commercial centre of the country. The city boasts of the historic Shwedagon Pagoda, National Museum, Bogyoke Aung San Market, China town with colonial buildings, crowded stalls, independence monument, Supreme Court, City Hall and Sule pagoda. He then highlighted tourist destinations of Yangon, including Shwedagon Pagoda, and urged the regional countries to work together to recover the tourism industry. — MNA

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Pilgrims visit Pyidawaye Pagoda in Kawthoung on Thadingyut holidays

PILGRIMS paid homage to Pyidawaye Pagoda in Kawthoung, Taninthayi Region on fullmoon of Thadingyut (Abhidhamma Day).

Local people donated oil lamps on the oil lamp tray structures around the precinct of the Pyidawaye Pagoda and donated alms, water, scented candles and flowers to the Buddha images of the

pagoda.

People also visited food, clothe and toy shops at the pagoda market after making worship at the pagoda.

The board of trustees of the pagoda delivered masks to the pilgrims who enter it accordingly to the directives issued by the Ministry of Health. — Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)/GNLM



Pyidawaye Pagoda in Kawthoung.

Ancient pagodas packed with large numbers of visitors in MraukU Township



Thadingyut celebration at one of the ancient pagodas in MraukU.

THE people organized the oil lamps donation ceremony at the ancient pagodas on the fullmoon of Thadingyut in MraukU Township of MraukU District in Rakhine State.

The residents donated 1,000

oil lamps and 1,000 flowers at Yan Aung Zaya (aka) Shitthaung Pagoda, Htukkan Thein and Yadanabon pagodas and also lofted hot-air balloons into the sky on Abhidhamma Day and the visitors to Shitthaung pagodas

donated waters and candles. Moreover, homes, streets, monasteries and departmental offices throughout the township are decorated with colourful lights. — Khin Maung Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Increasing number of Thadingyut holidaymakers visits Palin Kanthaya elephant camp

THE number of visitors to Palin Kanthaya Elephant Camp has increased, according to Daw Naing Naing Aya, Head of the Forestry Department. Palin Kanthaya Elephant Camp has been opened near the West Palin Village in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region under the Myanmar Timber Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

As the elephant camp is located on the NyaungU-Pakko-Myingyan route, about five miles from NyaungU Town, it is a place to relax for travellers to the Bagan-NyaungU Archaeological Zone. A small garden for children has been created in Palin Kanthaya Elephant Camp to make them love trees and flowers from a young age. A variety of exhibitions is also shown in the Elephant Museum and officials from the camp offer guided tours to the museum, explaining Myanmar is the only country in the world that owns most of the domestic elephants; Asian elephants, also called Myanmar elephants, are more powerful than African elephants; how they played an

important role in the Myanmar timber industry; the ways to take care of the elephants; the variety of ivory and the elephant staff' houses; ways of life of elephants in the camp, and the mealtime of the elephants.

On the fullmoon of Thadingyut, the elephant camp was crowded with elephant buffet providers, and visitors also rested in tanks built along the

Ayeyawady River.

Daw Naing Naing Aya further explained that the visit to the elephant camps gives strength to the conservation of Myanmar elephants. It is reported that the number of visits to Palin Kanthaya Elephant Camp in NyaungU Township increased from the fullmoon day of Thadingyut to the next day. — Ko Htein (KPD)/GNLM



Palin Kanthaya elephant camp.

Hlay Khwin Taung Pagoda and Paung Laung River in Nay Pyi Taw crowded in Thadingyut festival



Paung Laung River.

THE Hlay Khwin Taung Pagoda and the banks of the Paung Laung River in Zeyathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory were thronged with people celebrating the Thadingyut festival.

With the decrease in COVID-19 cases, restaurants along the river and pagodas in the township have reopened under the COVID-19 rules and regulations. The Hlay Khwin Taung Pagoda is believed to be the mightiest pagoda in the township, and as the river bank is also very calm, pilgrims come

and rest on the riverbank after their prayers at the pagoda. The riverbank is the busiest place with people from various regions not only during the Thadingyut festival but also during the water festival, a resident stated.

It is reported that the Township Fire Brigade and the Village Administration Committee worked together to patrol the river in speedboats to prevent visitors from drowning in the water.—U Aye Lin Tun-Zeyathiri Township (IPRD)/GNLM

Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 products continue



THE Ministry of Commerce is making efforts to ensure people have access to the essential medical supplies that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, by arranging continuous importation through trading posts, international airports and seaports with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

On 21 October (yesterday), anti-COVID-19 products were imported by one company and transported using three vehicles.

A total of 18 tonnes of masks were imported via the Chinshwehaw trading zone.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website—www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA

A lorry is seen transporting the imported Covid-related medical aids to the needed areas.

Above 18-year-old receive 2nd dose of COVID vaccines in Shan Ywathit

LOCAL people aged over 18-year-old received the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines at Township People's Hospital in Shan Ywathit, Hpa-an District, Kayin State yesterday morning.

Township healthcare workers and volunteers assisted in the vaccination works.

Healthcare officials measured the body temperature and blood pressure and monitored

oxygen level before the vaccination.

Vaccines were given systematically to the local people, and only those with normal conditions are vaccinated.

After resting for about 15 minutes after being vaccinated, people were given healthcare education and then allowed to leave, officials said. —Shan Ywathit (IPRD)/GNLM



Immunization drive is underway in Shan Ywathit in Hpa-an.

Over-12s middle, high school students get jabbed against COVID-19 in states, regions



Mongkhok Town, Monghsat District, Shan State (East)



Tanai Township, Myitkyina District, Kachin State.



Palauk Town, Myeik District, Taninthayi Region.



Htantabin, Yangon District, Yangon Region.



Mabein Township, Mongmit District, Shan State(North).

Monsoon paddy price fetches K620,000 per 100 baskets

THE price for 100 baskets (one basket is equivalent to 46 pounds) of monsoon paddy fetched K620,000 in early harvest time, said U Zaw Khaing, the CEC of Myanmar Rice Federation.

“Currently, the price of freshly harvested wet paddy ranges from K580,000 to K620,000 per 100 baskets,” said U Zaw Khaing.

As a result, the prevailing price of paddy in the market is much higher than the floor price of 100 baskets set by the government.

The floor price for paddy has been set at K540,000 for every 100 baskets of monsoon paddy grown in 2021 and summer paddy cultivated in 2022, according to an announcement released by the Committee for Farmers Rights Protection and Interests Promotion on 6 October.



Nearly 18 million acres are put under monsoon and summer paddy in Myanmar yearly, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Under the provision of the Law of Protection of the Farmer Right and Enhancement of their Benefits, the Leading Committee for Farmers Rights,

Protection and Interests Promotion has fixed the minimum price of paddy at K540,000 per 100 baskets if the paddy meets the prescribed criteria — 14-per-

cent moisture content and a fixed percentage of impurities such as sand, weed, and small stones — to create fair markets for farmers.

Besides, if the market price is above the set price, the merchants have to purchase the paddy at the prevailing market price. Farmers facing difficulties selling their produce at the basic price can contact the township agents of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) and MRF office’s contact 012301128, 01-2301129 and 01-218266.

Nearly 18 million acres are put under monsoon and summer paddy in Myanmar yearly, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Myanmar yearly cultivated 17.82 million of summer and monsoon paddy in 2015-2016FY, 17.70 million of paddy in 2016-2017FY, and 17.93 million of paddy in 2017-2018FY, 17.86 million of paddy in 2018-2019FY and 17.31 million of paddy in 2019-2020FY. — NN/GNLM

200 companies struck off register due to AR absence in mid-Oct: DICA

A total of 200 companies was struck off the register in mid-October as they fail to submit an annual return (AR) on the online registry system, MyCO, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The DICA has notified any registered company which fails to submit its AR on MyCO are to be suspended. The DICA found that 200 companies failed to restore their status within six months of suspension under 430 (F) of Myanmar Companies Law in September. The companies were struck off the register starting from 11 and 15 October respectively. Also, 900 companies were struck off in July, August and September, according to the DICA’s notification.

All registered companies need to file AR on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the law.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

As per DICA’s report, more than

16,000 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company’s status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for AR fee, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents, totalling K250,000.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. The number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, topped more than 2,000 in the first half of this year. Earlier, MyCO received more than 1,000 applications from new companies every month.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to data provided by the DICA. — GNLM

Myanmar ships over 160,700 tonnes of peanut to international markets in 2020-2021FY

MYANMAR has exported US\$190.7 million worth more than 160,776 tonnes of peanuts to the foreign trade partners in the financial year 2020-2021, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar’s peanuts are mostly exported to China. At present, it is highly demanded in the domestic market rather than the Chinese market as the price of imported palm oil edged up to above K5,000 per viss this month, following Kyat depreciation. Consumers’ behaviour has changed and the demand for peanut oil has risen these days. The peanut oil was priced at

about K6,500 per viss (a viss is equal to 1.6 kg), whereas the price of palm oil was around K4,500 per viss in October.

Following the high demand of the local millers, the prices of peanuts moved in the range of K2,700-2,950 per viss, according to Mandalay wholesale market.

Myanmar oil body has been planning to export peanut oil produced in line with Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

There are about 300 oil millers in Mandalay, of

whom only 50 hold FDA certification, while the rest have been unable to meet the FDA criteria.

The Myanmar Edible Oil Millers Association plans to help millers in the entire supply chain get approved by the Food and Drug Administration, to eradicate illegal sales in the market and ensure a firm market for producers.

It also helps millers earn the trust of consumers and place them in a better position to compete with other oil brands being sold in the domestic market, said Mandalay oil millers. — KK/GNLM



Myanmar oil body has been planning to export peanut oil produced in line with Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

Assist in reducing natural disaster risks in Myanmar

GLOBAL countries including Myanmar face various natural disasters triggered by climate change. Till last year, Myanmar has suffered from impacts of flash flooding, landslides, thunderstorms and strong winds but such impacts are lesser than that of the previous year.

Nargis, the cyclonic storm in 2008, was the most destructive one in the natural disaster history of Myanmar, and it was the worst disaster in the entire Asian Continent. The higher Richter scale of strong earth, as well as the outbreak of COVID-19, is also one of the natural disasters.

Most of the global countries are focusing on concerted efforts for easing the natural disaster risks but the impacts did not remarkably decline. In 1994, the first global conference took place in Yokohama city of Japan to declare the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action concerning the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters. Likewise, the second conference was held in Hyogo of Japan in 2015 when the conference adopted and implements the Hyogo Framework for Action and the third conference implemented the drawing of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Myanmar is implementing the action plans in conformity with existing natural conditions in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework Disaster Risk Reduction. Global countries mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction yearly. In fact, all countries, organizations and individuals need to join hands in reducing the natural disaster risks to meet the respective goals.

Myanmar is implementing the frameworks adopted by the United Nations as well as international organizations over the reduction of the risks in the various disasters related to the globe. Myanmar firmly believes that the international community upholding the humanitarian outlook understands the efforts of Myanmar in implementing the frameworks. They have to foster more consideration over efforts of developing countries in disaster risk reduction for living beings and non-living beings.

Relevant organizations in Myanmar, striving for the reduction of natural disaster risks, need to create strong inter-linkages in order to operate the machinery for natural disaster management in continuation so as to achieve the goal. That is why all the citizens of Myanmar need to cooperate with each other in building the nation to have the improvement of socio-economic life of the people in conformity with climate change.

Families, groups seek seclusion in renovated villas amid COVID-19

Japanese lodging businesses struggling to recover from the damage wrought by the coronavirus pandemic have been offering exclusive use of vacation homes and other facilities to those looking for a safe home-away-from-home experience amid COVID-19.

MANY properties are remodelled homes or company dormitories that had been left vacant or become dilapidated, and with bookings accepted from only one party for the entire facility per day, they make unique retreats for people seeking seclusion.

The facilities are quietly gaining popularity, mainly among families making steady requests for reservations, with users able to enjoy their privacy and avoid physical contact with strangers in these pandemic-hit times.

Tabino Recipe Co., a travel agency based in Sendai, operates about 20 mountain villas -- all stand-alone houses, many of which were built decades ago -- in Zao, Miyagi Prefecture, an area of northeastern Japan considered one of the country's leading summer retreats.

The company boasts of facilities furnished with "onsen" hot spring baths in villas that are thoroughly cleaned for their guests, adding to the sense of special treatment.

Development of onsen vacation resorts in the town of Zao flourished during the mid-1970s to 1980s. But because of the economic downturn and aging of the property owners that followed, many



This photo taken on 3 Sept 2021, shows a rental vacation home in Zao, Miyagi Prefecture, being introduced by an employee of operator Tabino Recipe Co. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

of the buildings fell into disuse.

From 2014, Tabino Recipe began a house rental business, leasing and buying up villas, after considering the recent trend in the market to utilize vacant homes.

Guests prepare their own meals, and stays, including for single users, cost around 15,000 yen (\$130) to 50,000 yen for a

building. There is a limit on the number of people each facility can accommodate.

Initially, the houses were popular destinations for foreign tourists fond of skiing and other outdoor activities, but nearly all reservations dried up amid the coronavirus pandemic.

However, starting in the summer of 2020, based largely

on word-of-mouth, the company began getting a fresh stream of domestic reservations, mainly from guests bringing their families for overnight stays or longer getaways.

Some of the campaign ads for the rental homes in Miyagi are limited to and specifically target prefectural residents in vacation plans, touting them as places to avoid the three Cs -- closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings -- a phrase widely used in Japan to prevent COVID-19 infections.

A 41-year-old female company employee from the city of Yamagata who stayed at the Zao resort with five family members said she had refrained from travelling because of the pandemic for over a year but felt refreshed after finally getting away from home. "We had a luxurious time together," she said.

Tabino Recipe currently operates about 60 of the buildings, including cottages and apartments, in four prefectures -- Miyagi, Kanagawa, Kyoto, and Okinawa. Property owners benefit from the extra income as well as the reduced burden of having to manage their homes.

"People's needs are increasing as they want to make sure they feel secure when they travel," said Masahiko Hosoya, a senior official of the company. "We've also had a favorable reception from homeowners who appreciate the efficient use of houses they are unable to fully maintain themselves."

A three-story building that had been used as a company dormitory was remodeled by a

separate rental housing operator and opened in March last year in Toba, Mie Prefecture, a coastal city in central Japan renowned as a mecca for oyster farming and seafood.

The facility, called "Anchor -- Fisherman's Hideout," has seven bedrooms, each with a balcony oceanside view, and accepts only one reservation per day for the entire facility with a capacity of 29 guests.

It temporarily shut immediately after opening due to the pandemic but has seen a recent surge in guests, particularly reservations from families and groups of friends or coworkers, after gaining a reputation for being a haven from contact with unfamiliar people. Guests booked the facility for the entire summer.

For up to five guests, there is a flat fee of 60,500 yen and 5,500 yen per person for any additional guests to use the facility, including an 85-square-metre living room, featuring a large wood-burning stove, and another area for barbecues.

"Even under the pandemic, there are many people who wish to create memories together with their friends," said Shimpei Yukino, 35, the owner of the facility.

SOURCE: Kyodo News

COVID: Singapore's healthcare system 'overwhelmed'

Singapore extends restrictions after reporting highest single-day Covid-19 deaths.

SINGAPORE'S healthcare system is at risk of being "overwhelmed" by surging coronavirus infections, government officials warned Wednesday, a day after the city-state expanded quarantine-free travel as it shifts its approach to dealing with the pandemic.

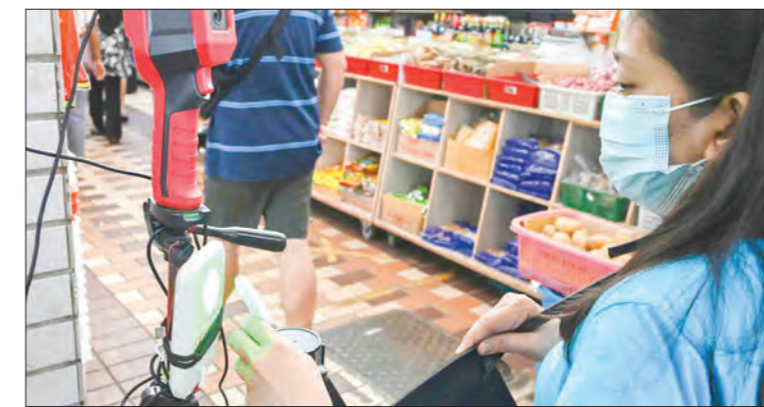
The health ministry reported 18 deaths on Wednesday -- Singapore's highest toll in a single day -- and 3,862 more cases, just shy of the record 3,994 tallied the

day before. "At the current situation, we face considerable risk of the healthcare system being overwhelmed," Lawrence Wong, co-chair of a government task force fighting COVID-19, said before the new figures were released.

Wong, who is also the finance minister, said nearly 90 per cent of isolation beds in hospitals have been filled and more than two-thirds of intensive care unit beds are occupied. His comments come

a day after the city-state expanded its quarantine-free travel to fully vaccinated passengers from eight countries, including key trading partners the United States (US), Britain and France. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has said the global business hub cannot remain closed indefinitely, and the city-state has shifted from a zero-tolerance strategy with lockdowns and closed borders to taking the approach of living with COVID-19. Analysts said the travel lane

scheme, which started with Brunei and Germany last month, could provide a shot in the arm for the pandemic-hammered airline and tourism industries. But it nevertheless stirred fears among some ordinary Singaporeans as the city grapples with its latest outbreak. Most of Singapore's cases are mild or asymptomatic with patients recovering at home, allowing hospitals to focus on seriously sick COVID patients. "We are trying to add capac-



A resident scans the TraceTogether token, used to aid contact tracing efforts relating to the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus situation, to enter a market in Singapore on 9 October 2021. PHOTO: AFP

ity, but it's not simply a matter of having extra beds or purchasing new equipment because... our

medical personnel are stretched and fatigued," Wong said.

SOURCE: AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 21 October 2021) BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Central Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy over the Andaman sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 22 October, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Magway Regions and Mon State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon Taninthayi Regions and Chin, Kayah, Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Mandalay Region and isolated heavy falls in Lower Sagaing, Yangon Ayeyawady, Kachin, (North and South) Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered rain or thundershowers in Mandalay, Taninthayi Regions and Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2021: Some rain or thundershowers which may be heavy at times. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 22 October, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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NEWS IN
BRIEFHybrid rice
demonstration has
record harvest

The rice plantation demonstration base in Hengnan county in Hengyang, Hunan province, reaped an average of more than 23,938 kilogrammes per hectare this year, a record, experts said.

The 2-hectare base harvested early rice in July, the second generation, followed by late rice in mid-October, the third generation. Late rice reached 13,971 kilogrammes per hectare on average.

Li Xinqi, a researcher from the Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Centre, said the third generation combines male and female parents better, allowing the hybrid's superiority to stand out. Its percentage of ear-bearing tillers reached 85 per cent.

The early growth period had minimal waste, laying the foundation for high production, Li said. The plants were strong, and the stalks were resistant to lodging—collapsing under the weight of the heads — until the late growth period.—Xinhua ■

'Becoming Cousteau'
plumbs depths
of French ocean
explorer

Explorer, inventor, filmmaker, environmentalist and once even an oil prospector: the complicated journey of Jacques Cousteau is laid bare in a new film about one of the world's most famous Frenchmen.

"Becoming Cousteau," which hits theaters in the United States this Friday, traces the extraordinary life of the man through archive footage and interviews, and was compiled by double-Oscar nominee Liz Garbus. "I grew up on Cousteau, and I grew up watching his shows... And my feeling was as I revisited this childhood hero of mine, that there were aspects in his life that I certainly did not know," Garbus told AFP in Los Angeles. Garbus trawled through hundreds of hours of footage—much of it never released publicly—to capture a flavor of a life lived underwater. "Cousteau was a filmmaker and because his imagery was so groundbreaking, I wanted our viewer today to be immersed in that imagery," she said.—AFP ■

South Korea seeks space
race entry with first
homegrown rocket

SOUTH Korea is aiming to join the ranks of advanced spacefaring nations on Thursday when it attempts to put a one-tonne payload into orbit using its first fully homegrown rocket.

The country has risen to become the world's 12th-largest economy and a technologically advanced nation, home to the planet's biggest smartphone and memory chip maker, Samsung Electronics.

But it has lagged in the headline-making world of spaceflight, where the Soviet Union led the way with the first satellite launch in 1957, closely followed by the United States.

In Asia, China, Japan and India all have advanced space programmes, and the South's nuclear-armed neighbour North Korea was the most recent entrant to the club of countries with their own satellite launch capability.

Ballistic missiles and space rockets use similar technology and Pyongyang put a 300-kilogramme (660-pound) satellite into orbit in 2012 in what Western countries condemned as a disguised missile test.

Even now, only six nations — not including North Korea — have successfully launched a one-tonne payload on their own



Nuri is South Korea's first fully homegrown space rocket. **PHOTO: LEE HYO-KYUN KOREA AEROSPACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE/AFP**

rockets.

The South will become the seventh if the Korean Satellite Launch Vehicle II, informally called Nuri, succeeds in putting its 1.5-tonne dummy cargo into orbit from the launch site in Goheung, with an altitude of 600 to

800 kilometres being targeted.

The three-stage rocket has been a decade in development at a cost of 2 trillion won (\$1.6 billion). It weighs 200 tonnes and is 47.2 metres (155 feet) long, fitted with a total of six liquid-fuelled engines.—AFP ■

Pig kidney works in human patient in 'potential miracle'

A US medical team has succeeded in temporarily attaching a pig's kidney to a person, a transplant breakthrough hailed as a "potential miracle" by the surgeon who led the procedure.

The surgery, carried out on 25 September, involved a genetically modified donor animal and a brain dead patient on a ventilator whose family had given permission for the two-day experiment, for the sake of advancing science.

"It did what it's supposed to do, which is remove waste and make urine," Robert Montgomery, director of the transplant institute at New York University (NYU) Langone, told AFP in an interview.

Critically, the organ was



In this 25 September 2021, image courtesy of NYU Langone Health, the surgical team examines the genetically engineered pig kidney for signs of rejection. **PHOTO: NYU LANGONE HEALTH/AFP**

able to reduce the level of the molecule creatinine, a key indi-

cator of kidney health that was elevated in the patient prior to

the transplant.

Montgomery carried out the surgery with several colleagues over the course of around two hours.

They joined the kidney to blood vessels on the top of one of the patient's legs, so that they could observe it and take biopsy samples.

The patient had wanted to be an organ donor and their family was initially disappointed when told their loved one's organs were not suitable, said Montgomery.

But "they felt a sense of relief that this was another opportunity for donation," he said. The patient was taken off the ventilator and passed away following the 54-hour test.—AFP ■

Curators squeezed out by high dino bones price tag



'Big John' was discovered in South Dakota in 2014. **PHOTO: AFP**

THIS week the largest triceratops skeleton ever unearthed goes up

for auction in Paris—but museum curators like Francis Duranthon

can only dream of getting their hands on such a prize.

With an estimated price tag of up to 1.5 million euros (\$1.7 million), Duranthon, who directs the Toulouse Museum of Natural History, told AFP the skeleton would cost 20 to 25 years of his acquisitions budget. "We can't compete," he said.

The triceratops is among the most distinctive of dinosaurs due to the three horns on its head — one at the nose and two on the forehead — that give the dinosaur its Latin name.

"Big John" is the largest known surviving example, 66 mil-

lion years old and with a skeleton some eight metres long.

It was discovered in South Dakota in 2014 and flown to Italy where it was assembled by specialists. It is only the latest dinosaur to be sold by the Drouot auction house which, according to its website, handled an allosaurus and a diplodocus each worth 1.4 million euros in 2018.

Last year, they sold a second allosaurus for three million.

That these and other skeletons could adorn the private mansions of the ultra-wealthy rather than museum halls is a common source of frustration.—AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Philippines cancels All Saints' Day festivities again due to pandemic

FILIPINOS in this predominantly Catholic country will not be celebrating All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, near the graves or ashes of their loved ones in cemeteries and columbarium again this year due to the pandemic.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said Wednesday that all cemeteries will be closed from 29 Oct to 2 Nov to prevent COVID-19 infection.

Año reported to President Rodrigo Duterte in a taped meeting aired in the wee hours of Wednesday the interagency coronavirus task force ordered the closure of "all private or public cemeteries and memorial parks, including columbarium" across the country during these dates.

Año said that people can visit the cemeteries and columbarium before and after these dates to avoid the crowd. However, only 30 per cent of the capacity is allowed.—Xinhua ■

Flights cancelled, schools closed as China fights virus outbreak

AUTHORITIES in China cancelled hundreds of flights, closed schools and ramped up mass testing on Thursday to try and stamp out a new Covid-19 outbreak linked to a group of tourists.

Domestic outbreaks have largely been eliminated, but as China logged a fifth straight day of new cases—mostly in northern and north-western areas—authorities beefed up coronavirus controls.

The latest outbreak was linked to an elderly couple who were in a group of several tourists. They started in Shanghai before flying to Xi'an, Gansu province and Inner Mongolia.

Dozens of cases have since been linked to their travel, with close contacts in at least five provinces and regions, including the capital Beijing.—AFP ■

Canada makes Covid vaccines mandatory in House of Commons



A view of the west block of the Canadian Houses of Parliament in Ottawa, 2019. PHOTO: MICHEL COMTE/AFP

CANADIAN parliamentarians will need to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to serve in the House of Commons starting in late November, Speaker Anthony Rota said Tuesday night.

The new requirement will apply to members of the House and their staff, but also to office workers, journalists, contractors and consultants. The directive comes about a month after an election campaign in which mandatory vaccinations were

hotly debated. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who announced last week that his cabinet will be unveiled on 26 October and that Parliament will reconvene on 22 November, had spoken out in favour of a vaccine mandate for Liberal candidates. Other political parties have followed suit, but Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole has not made vaccination a criterion for candidate selection and refuses to say how many candidates are vaccinated.

In the 20 September election, his party won 119 of the 338 seats in the House of Commons.

Rota's statement said that people who cannot receive the Covid vaccine for medical reasons will have the option of submitting a "recent negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result".

In addition, the Canadian Parliament remains closed to visitors, and the requirement to wear a mask has been extended until January 2022.—AFP ■

Beijing rolls out Covid-19 booster shots ahead of Olympics



After arriving in Beijing, the Olympic flame was transferred to a cauldron by the city's Communist Party secretary Cai Qi. PHOTO: AFP

BEIJING is starting to offer residents booster jabs for Covid-19, local media said Wednesday, as the Chinese capital gears up to host a tightly controlled Winter Olympics in February.

China has fully vaccinated more than one billion people—more than 78 per cent of the population—as of mid-September, according to the National Health Commission.

But there are concerns over the efficacy of Chinese vaccines

against the Delta variant of the coronavirus.

Covid was first detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019 and has since swept the globe, but strict border controls have mostly reduced the number of daily cases in China to a trickle.

Boosters will be offered to residents aged over 18 who have been fully vaccinated for at least six months, according to a report in the state-run Beijing News.

The move comes as Beijing is set to host the Winter Olympics under strict rules that will see athletes live and compete in a "closed loop" and only Chinese spectators allowed to watch events.

Athletes must be vaccinated or face 21-day quarantine upon entry to China.

Chinese health experts have said the country needs to reach around 85 per cent vaccination coverage to achieve herd immunity—a goal that authorities are trying to achieve by the end of this year. Booster shot programmes have been announced in at least 10 other Chinese provinces in recent weeks, including cities in Fujian province and the Xinjiang region, where local outbreaks have been reported in the past month. Authorities show no sign of loosening their zero-tolerance approach in the run-up to the international sporting event.

A fresh outbreak involving a tour group has spread to at least five provinces—as well as one case in the capital.—AFP ■

UK health leaders call for Covid curbs as infections rise

HEALTHCARE leaders urged the British government Wednesday to reinstate some coronavirus restrictions to ease pressures on hospitals because of spiralling case numbers.

But ministers remain opposed to reintroducing any curbs, arguing the situation is still far better than earlier this year and the country is learning to "live with the virus".

A total of 223 deaths from Covid-19 were registered on Tuesday—the highest 24-hour toll since March -- while there

is mounting concern at daily case rates.

The country is averaging more than 40,000 new cases a day for the first time since the summer, and the number of patients admitted to hospital is increasing.

Matthew Taylor, head of the NHS Confederation representing the state-run health service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said hospitals were feeling severe pressure and action was needed as the busier winter period approaches.—AFP ■



Commuters wearing a face mask or covering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, walk past a London underground tube train at Victoria station, during the evening 'rush hour' in central London on 23 September 2020. PHOTO: TOLGA AKMEN/AFP



A shortage of truck drivers and other workers is contributing to supply bottlenecks that in turn are sending US prices higher, according to a Federal Reserve report. A container truck driver passes containers stacked high at the Port of Los Angeles on 26 March 2020.

PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN / AFP

Supply bottlenecks, labour shortages slowed US growth, says Fed

SUPPLY bottlenecks and labour shortages have slowed US economic growth and contributed to a sharp rise in prices, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday.

The constraints and shortage of goods caused “significantly elevated prices” in most areas of the country, the Fed said in its “beige book” report on economic conditions, which noted rising uncertainty about the outlook.

While economic activity increased at a “modest to moderate” rate over the last several weeks, in much of the country “the pace of growth slowed... constrained by supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, and uncertainty around the Delta variant of Covid-19,”

the report said.

The analysis, based on discussions with business and community contacts in the central bank’s 12 regions, was prepared in advance of the Fed’s next policy meeting November 2-3. Despite again reporting the the US pandemic recovery was losing steam, Fed officials are expected to announce plans to start to pull back on stimulus measures amid concerns about rising inflation.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has been saying for some time that the price spikes are expected to be transitory and retreat as pandemic-related disruptions are resolved, but economists increasingly are warning that they could become a lasting issue.—AFP ■

US to curb hacking tool exports to Russia, China

US authorities unveiled Wednesday long-delayed new rules aimed at clamping down on export to nations like Russia and China of hacking technology amid a sharp uptick in cyberattacks globally.

The rules, which are set to go into force in 90 days, would prevent the sale of certain software or devices to a list of countries unless approved by a bureau of the Commerce Department.

“The United States opposes the misuse of technology to abuse human rights or conduct other malicious cyber activities, and these new rules will help ensure that US companies are not fueling authoritarian practices,” a Commerce statement said.

The news comes days after US government data showed \$590 million in ransomware-related payments were reported to Washington in the first half of 2021 alone, setting a pace to beat totals for the whole previous decade.

The figure was also 42 per cent higher than the amount divulged by financial institutions for all of 2020, the US Treasury report said, and there are strong indicators the true cost could be in the billions. Although Moscow denies any responsibility, most recent ransomware attacks against the United States have been blamed on Russian-speaking hacker groups or those operating from Russian territory.—AFP ■

Britain, New Zealand agree trade deal, including haka clause

BRITAIN and New Zealand have unveiled a comprehensive free trade deal, including a commitment aimed at preventing the revered Maori cultural tradition of the haka, famously performed by the All Blacks, from being misused.

The in-principle deal was sealed in a video call between British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern, following 16 months of talks.

Johnson said it was a “big moment” that strengthened Britain’s friendship with New Zealand and cemented London’s ties in the Indo-Pacific.

He likened negotiations for Britain’s latest post-Brexit trade deal to a rugby match.

“I’m absolutely thrilled that we seem to have driven for the line, we’ve scrummed down, we’ve packed tight and together we’ve got the ball over the line,” he said.

Ardern continued the sporting analogy, saying Thursday that “unlike a rugby match, I think we can literally both come off the field feeling like winners”.

London said the deal ends tariffs on British exports such as clothing, footwear, ships and bull-



Tariffs on New Zealand goods such as wine, kiwifruit and meat, will be axed under the deal. PHOTO: AFP

dozers. It estimated that trade between the two countries last year was worth £2.3 billion (\$3.2 billion, 2.7 billion euros).

Tariffs on goods coming the other way, such as wine, kiwifruit and meat, will also be axed.

“It’s one of our best deals

ever and secured at a crucial time in our Covid recovery,” Ardern said. The New Zealand leader praised provisions in the agreement aimed at promoting Maori participation in trade and addressing indigenous concerns.—AFP ■

Weak yen morphs into new threat to Japan with surging energy costs



A financial board in Tokyo shows the U.S. dollar rising to the 113 yen level on 12 Oct 2021. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

A weak yen typically serves as a boon to the export-driven Japanese economy. But when combined with surging crude oil and raw material prices, it leaves the economy facing a double-whammy that is set to crimp the economic recovery from the pandemic.

The yen’s recent slip to a

nearly four-year low against the U.S. dollar coupled with a surge in U.S. oil prices to a seven-year high threatens to cut into household spending even as it still feels the impact of COVID-19.

The combination is also set to make even more apparent the divergence between companies that have enjoyed a recovery

from the pandemic fallout and those that have not, economists say.

The yen’s weakening raises prices of imported products such as oil, putting Japan at serious risk at a time when the resource-scarce county saw import prices rising at the fastest pace in four decades last month.

Wholesale prices have also been gaining sharply, testing the tolerance of Japanese companies that have opted to absorb higher costs rather than pass them on to consumers. Some food and gasoline prices are already beginning to tick up to put pressure on consumer spending.

“The weak yen may not be wholly negative for companies but it is of little benefit for households when wages aren’t rising much,” said Shunsuke Kobayashi, chief economist at Mizuho Securities Co.—Kyodo News ■

China to bring coal prices back to appropriate range

CHINA'S top economic planner has said it will use all necessary means provided by the price law to bring coal prices back to an appropriate range and ensure a secure and stable energy supply.

The recent coal price hike has completely deviated from the fundamentals of supply and demand, and prices are still showing further irrational rises, said the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). The NDRC made the comments after holding symposiums with major coal companies, the coal industry association and the China Electricity Council.

Coal is a pivotal energy source for China. It is closely related to the national economy and people's livelihood, the NDRC said, adding that it will come up with measures to control coal prices per the law.

When the prices of important commodities and services rise significantly or are likely to rise significantly, relative authorities may take intervention measures like limiting profit



Workers unload coke from a train at a logistics yard in Qian'an City, north China's Hebei Province, 16 Sept 2021. PHOTO: MU YU/XINHUA

margins, stipulating price limits, and implementing a price increase filing system, according to the country's price law.

Market regulators will step up enforcement and inspection, clamp down on illegal activities such as spreading false information, price gouging, and hoarding, and effectively maintain market order.

The country has made progress in ensuring energy supply and stabilizing energy prices,

said the NDRC.

Since the end of September, a batch of coal mines has been approved and put into operation. On 18 Oct, the country's daily coal output exceeded 11.6 million tonnes, setting a new high this year, the NDRC said.

The NDRC last week announced an improved pricing mechanism for coal-fired power to deepen market-oriented pricing reform in the sector.—Xinhua ■

Trump announces plans to launch new social network 'TRUTH Social'

FORMER US president Donald Trump on Wednesday announced plans to launch his own social network, in the latest push to reclaim his internet dominance after he was banned from Twitter and Facebook in the wake of the Capitol insurrection.

The move is likely to further strengthen speculation that Trump is gearing up for another presidential run in 2024.

"TRUTH Social" will be owned by Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG), and is expected to begin its beta launch for "invited guests" next month. It is already available for pre-order in Apple's App Store, the group said in a statement.

TMTG also intends to launch a subscription video on-demand service that will feature "non-woke" entertainment programming and will be led by Scott St. John, an executive producer from "America's Got Talent", the statement said.

For years, Trump, who wielded Twitter in particular as a rhetorical weapon during his presidency, has battled tech gi-



Former US president Donald Trump has announced the launch of his own social network, called 'TRUTH Social'. PHOTO: AFP

ants that he argues have wrongfully censored him.

"I created TRUTH Social and TMTG to stand up to the tyranny of Big Tech," Trump, banned from Twitter and Facebook for stoking the 6 January US Capitol attack, was quoted as saying in the statement.

"We live in a world where the Taliban has a huge presence on Twitter, yet your favourite American President has been silenced. This is unacceptable."

US Congressional investigators are examining the Janu-

ary 6 attack, when thousands of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol nine months ago in an effort to overturn President Joe Biden's election victory.

They had been egged on by Trump, whose fiery speech earlier that day falsely claiming election fraud was the culmination of months of baseless claims about a contest he lost fairly to Joe Biden.

The investigative committee has charged that Trump was "personally involved" in organizing the attack.—AFP ■

New Zealand to make banks report climate impact

NEW Zealand passed a law Thursday forcing banks to reveal the impact of their investments on climate change, describing it as a world-first move to make the financial sector's environmental record more transparent.

Climate Change Minister James Shaw said the law meant banks, insurance companies and investment firms would make mandatory disclosures about their portfolios' global warming record from next year.

Shaw, who will head to Glasgow later this month for

crunch climate talks hosted by the United Nations, said the disclosures would outline the real-world consequences of investment choices.

"It will encourage entities to become more sustainable by factoring the short, medium, and long-term effects of climate change into their business decisions," he said in a statement.

"New Zealand is a world leader in this area and the first country in the world to introduce mandatory climate-related reporting for the financial sector," he added.—AFP ■



New Zealand's farm-reliant economy means agricultural emissions account for around half of its greenhouse gases. Fonterra's dairy plant in Kauri, New Zealand. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

New name for Facebook? Critics cry smoke and mirrors

FACEBOOK critics pounced Wednesday on a report the leading social network plans to rename itself, arguing it may be seeking to distract from recent scandals and controversy.

The report from website The Verge, which Facebook refused to confirm, said the embattled company was aiming to show its ambition to be more than a social media site.

But an activist group calling itself The Real Facebook Oversight Board, warned major industries like oil and tobacco had rebranded to "deflect attention" from their problems.

"Facebook thinks that a rebrand can help them change the subject," said the group's statement, adding the "real issue" was the need for oversight and regulation.

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone told AFP: "We don't have any comment and aren't confirming The Verge's report."—AFP ■

United Airlines scores 3Q profit as more travel returns

US carrier United Airlines said third-quarter capacity was down 23 per cent compared with the 2019 period. That is up from the second quarter, when capacity was down 46 per cent from the level two years ago.

Net income for the quarter ending September 30 was \$473 million, compared with a loss of \$1.8 billion in the year-ago period.

Revenues came in at \$7.7 billion, more than triple the level in the year-ago period.

United pointed to returning business travel and the reopening of travel between the United States and Europe as bullish factors for 2022 and beyond.—AFP ■

Chile fishermen protest to demand return to Port of Valparaiso



Maritime police shoot tear gas at a fishing boat protesting in the Port of Valparaiso, Chile.
PHOTO: ATON CHILE/AFP

CHILEAN fishing boats clashed Wednesday with navy officials at the Port of Valparaiso as they demanded to return to work at one of the country's major seaports.

More than 200 fishermen, in boats of different sizes, protested in the port. They set fire to at least five huge tires hanging on the walls of the pier, according to AFP images.

The tires are there to prevent ships from colliding when they dock. Uniformed Chilean Navy officers on patrol boats, who are in charge of port security, tried to put out the fires with jets of water from hoses that they also aimed at the fishing boats in an attempt to move them away.

"Naval personnel made

use of rubber bullets with compressed air and fired them at the different boats that were in the sector," said Valparaiso's maritime governor Nelson Saavedra.

He said that fishermen responded with "stones, benzene, accelerant, paint bombs and also ran into the Navy boats."

The protesters said at least three of their numbers were injured. The fishermen are demanding the government fulfill an agreement to build a new dock at the port for their use.

The workers expect to be "compensated for the next four years during which they will be without a cove where they will not be able to work," the fishermen's lawyer, Felipe Olea, told local media.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trial over killing of HIV activist begins in Greece

Three years after a prominent Greek-American HIV activist was beaten to death in Athens, six people will appear in court on Wednesday in what Greece's LGBTQ community sees as an important trial for gay rights in the country.

The six defendants - including four police officers - face up to 10 years in prison for the violent death of 33-year-old Zacharias Kostopoulos on 21 September 2018 in a rundown part of central Athens.

The long-awaited trial had barely started in October 2020 when it was interrupted by procedural issues related to anti-coronavirus measures. Kostopoulos, known by his artistic name "Zak / Zackie Oh", was an HIV-positive drag queen and advocate for the rights of LGBTQ and other HIV-positive people.—AFP ■

Pentagon chief urges more Black Sea security cooperation

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin urged more defence cooperation among Black Sea allies Wednesday ahead of a NATO ministers summit.

Following talks in Bucharest with Romanian Defence Minister Nicolae Ciuca, Austin said action was needed by littoral states of the Black Sea amid Russia "militarization" of the region. "The security and stability of the Black Sea are in the US's national interest and critical for the security of NATO's eastern flank," he said. "The region is vulnerable to Russian aggression and we've seen evidence of that by ongoing actions in eastern Ukraine (and) the occupations of parts of Georgia," he told reporters. Austin was in Bucharest on the third stop of a tour of the region to build confidence among allies, including Georgia and Ukraine, both of which hoping to join NATO, and to promote greater cooperation among military forces.—AFP ■

New Caledonia separatists call for referendum boycott

SEPARATIST leaders in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia called Thursday for a boycott of a December independence referendum, urging the government to focus on the Covid crisis.

Members of the pro-independence FLNKS group issued the statement a day after they called on France's minister for overseas territories Sebastien Lecornu to postpone the poll during his visit there.

The government should prioritize fighting the Covid pandemic in the territory, which has claimed 245 lives since September.—AFP ■

Canton Fair closed with 600,000 visits in person and 27.92 million online

CHINA'S landmark trade event, the China Import and Export Fair, commonly known as the Canton Fair, closed on Tuesday with 600,000 visits in person and 27.92 million online.

The 130th session, held simultaneously on-site and online for the first time after COVID-19 hit, remained as the world's largest on-site exhibition in terms of scale amid the pandemic.

About 26,000 Chinese and foreign enterprises participated in the exhibition showcasing over 2.8 million articles, 113,600 more than in the previous session, Xu Bing, spokesperson of the Canton Fair and Deputy Director-General of the China Foreign



Visitors experience VR products at the 130th China Import and Export Fair on 18 October 2021 PHOTO: CFP/XINHUA

Trade Centre, announced during a press conference on Tuesday.

Among all the exhibits, 898,200 were new products,

with 112,700 smart products and 248,600 products with independent intellectual property, Xu remarked.—Xinhua ■

Philippine drug war review doubts police 'self-defence' claims: official



Filipino President Duterte's drug war takes place largely in urban slums like this one in Manila. PHOTO: AFP

THE Philippine government's review of dozens of deadly drug war

operations has cast doubt on police claims they acted in "self-defence", a top official said Wednesday.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra announced this month that around 154 officers had been identified for "possible criminal liability" over police operations carried out during President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war.

Most of the 52 cases reviewed by the Justice Department and made public Wednesday were drug war operations that ended in the fatal shooting of the suspect. "Most... indicate circumstances that do not support the police officers' claim of self-defense," Guevarra told AFP in a text message.—AFP ■

Poland rule-of-law row to dominate EU summit

AN explosive EU row with Poland over its rejection of some of the bloc's laws is set to overshadow a two-day summit of European Union leaders starting Thursday, officials said.

The issue will eclipse the original theme for the Brussels gathering: examining how Europe can cope with the global energy crunch while sticking by ambitious green policies it will brandish at the COP26 climate summit in two weeks' time.

EU officials speaking on condition of anonymity said the rule-of-law issue is so "funda-

mental" that battle lines being drawn around it have the potential to split the 27-nation bloc.

The high stakes involved were on display earlier this week when EU chief Ursula von der Leyen and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki duelled fiercely at a podium in the European Parliament.

Von der Leyen warned her European Commission would use "all instruments at our disposal" to rein in Warsaw, while Mateusz shot back: "I will not have EU politicians blackmail

Poland."

EU officials and diplomats said that the matter would now be discussed at the summit, alongside energy, Covid-19, Europe's transition to a digital and low-carbon future, migration, trade and external relations.

Several EU officials insisted that there would be no ganging-up against Poland.

A German government official in Berlin said that dialogue would be prioritized because "it's not about making this summit a confrontation".—AFP ■



Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen clashed in the European parliament this week. PHOTO: POOL/AFP

Mirziyoyev: Uzbek reformer with autocratic tendencies

UZBEKISTAN'S President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is credited with leading Central Asia's most populous country out of isolation, but his appetite for change may be waning now that he has consolidated power.

The 64-year-old is expected to sail past four token candidates on Sunday for a second five-year term in the ex-Soviet country whose neighbourhood includes a rising China, resurgent Russia and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

Mirziyoyev's reforms—including ending infamous forced



Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is expected to sail past four token candidates for a second five-year term. PHOTO: AFP

labour in the cotton industry —have been hailed both by long-suffering citizens and for-

ign observers. His hardline mentor and predecessor Islam Karimov, who

died in 2016 after ruling for more than a quarter of a century, set a low bar, having gained a reputation for torturing opponents, including by boiling and freezing them.

Despite changes since Karimov's death unthinkable under his tenure, Mirziyoyev's critics say some recent moves carry echoes of the country's despotic past.

"Uzbekistan's political system is still deeply authoritarian," Human Rights Watch said this month ahead of the vote.

"Since the start of the year,

promised human rights reforms have stalled, and in particular in the months leading up to the presidential election, there has been clear backtracking in some areas".

Mirziyoyev, an energetic grey-haired man, loosened the straitjacketed economy to trade, tourism and foreign investment after taking over power in the 34-million strong republic.

Ties with neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan — countries Karimov once threatened with war over hydropower projects — have improved.—AFP ■

Ecuador president refuses to testify over Pandora Papers leaks



Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso gestures to supporters who gathered outside the Carondelet presidential palace in Quito, on 20 October 2021. Lasso has refused to go to the opposition-dominated Congress to give his version of the scandal involving him in the "Pandora Papers". PHOTO: AFP

ECUADOR'S President Guillermo Lasso on Wednesday refused to testify to a parliamentary committee that is investigating revelations about the 65-year-old in the Pandora Papers leaks.

The committee was convened by the opposition-dominated congress to investigate ex-banker Lasso's activities in tax havens.

Earlier this month, the In-

ternational Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) leaked a trove of documents exposing the secret offshore accounts of a host of world leaders, including Lasso.

The leaks claimed Lasso, who assumed office in May, controlled 14 offshore companies, mostly in Panama, and closed them after former leftist president Rafael Correa (2007-17) barred presidential hopefuls from owning firms in tax havens.

Out of 137 lawmakers, 105 had voted in favor of an investigation to "clarify" whether or not Lasso had broken Ecuadoran law or committed an "ethical" offence. Lasso issued a statement saying he would not go to parliament but was available to speak to lawmakers at the seat of government "once all the programmed testimonies have been given".—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

North Korea accuses US of 'double standards' over SLBM test

NORTH Korea accused the United States of "double standards" over weapons testing, state media reported Thursday after an emergency UN Security Council meeting on the issue.

Pyeongyang fired a new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on Tuesday, the latest in a series of tests in recent weeks, prompting the US and Britain to call the diplomatic meeting in New York. But a spokesperson from the North's foreign ministry said the test was not aimed at the United States and was carried out "purely for the defence of the country".—AFP ■

Panama, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic want US to curb Haitian migration

THE presidents of Panama, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic called on the United States Wednesday to take "concrete measures" to curb the migration of Haitians across Latin America headed for the US border. Panama's President Laurentino Cortizo said the movement of large numbers of Haitians across Central America is an "unsustainable problem." "This is a regional problem, the solutions must be regional and we expect the United States to participate much more effectively," he said, after a meeting with his Costa Rican and Dominican counterparts—Carlos Alvarado and Luis Abinader, respectively — in Panama City.—AFP ■



Myanmar women player July Kyaw (No 8) dribbled past the Guam defender during AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 Qualifiers at Spartak Stadium in Kyrgyzstan on 21 October. **PHOTO: MFF**

Myanmar beat Guam 8-0 in AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers

MYANMAR women's national football team is nearly advancing to a place at the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 thanks to an 8-0 win over Guam in the Qualifiers played yesterday at Spartak Stadium in Kyrgyzstan.

Myanmar shining striker Win Theingi Tun scored double goals in the match to show up the team is stronger than ever in Asia.

Myanmar head coach U Tin Myint Aung prepared his squad well for the match with a mixed lineup of veteran players and youth stars.

A previous 4-0 win over Lebanon on Monday makes higher team spirit shape a big victory over Team Guam.

Myanmar striker Win Theingi Tun scored an icebreaker at the 4-minute mark.

Next, Khin Mar Lar Tun scored the second goal at 14 minutes and Win Theingi Tun made the third goal for her team at 37 minutes.

Myanmar collected three straight goals at the end of the first half.

The second half saw a better and energetic play of team

Myanmar.

Khin Mo Mo Tun scored the fourth goal at 50 minutes and youth star San Thaw Thaw scored fifth and sixth at 54 and 81 minutes.

Pont Pont Pyae Maung made the seventh goal at 90 minutes and the eighth and final goal was scored by youth player July Kyaw at 90+4 minutes (injury time).

With the big win, team Myanmar is currently in a good shape to go in the final stage of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022. —GNLM

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.

UEFA estimates 3 billion euro shortfall with biennial World Cup

A report commissioned by UEFA estimates a shortfall of between 2.5 and 3 billion euros (\$2.9 to 3.5 billion) over four years for European federations if FIFA adopts its controversial plan to switch to a biennial World Cup, AFP has learned.

European football's governing body presented the findings of the study to the leaders of its 55 member federations on Tuesday. The report does not take into account the possible additional shortfall for each of the national championships, say French newspapers *Le Monde* and *L'Equipe*, who revealed the contents of the document.

UEFA has already opposed FIFA's proposed change

to the international calendar which is looking to hold the World Cup every two years from 2028, instead of the usual quadrennial rhythm. UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said last month that the change would "lead to more randomization, less legitimacy, and it will unfortunately dilute the World Cup itself".

His sentiments have been echoed by leagues, federations and supporters around the world. FIFA president Gianni Infantino, however, insists the change would benefit federations and is determined to plough ahead with the idea, saying this week that a final decision will be made "before December". —AFP ■

Ronaldo again rides to Man Utd's Champions League rescue



Cristiano Ronaldo (right) scored a late Manchester United winner for the second consecutive Champions League game. **PHOTO: AFP**

MANCHESTER United needed another Champions League fightback finished off by Cristiano Ronaldo as they came from two goals down to beat Atalanta 3-2 at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Goals from Mario Pasalic and Merih Demiral had Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men on course for a fifth defeat in eight games.

However, United's attacking arsenal blew the Italians

away after the break as Marcus Rashford and Harry Maguire drew them level before Ronaldo powered home a header nine minutes from time. "We have a habit of doing this at this club," said Solskjaer, who famously completed a late comeback to win the Champions League as a player in 1999. "I thought in the first half we played some good stuff, created chances, we just couldn't take them. The difference was the quality of finishing was much better in the second half." Ronaldo also scored a 96th-minute winner against Villarreal in United's previous Champions League game to mask an otherwise unconvincing performance. — AFP ■