

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## 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.

## Foreign exchange earned from exportation will be spent on the import of agricultural inputs and other necessary goods: Senior General

THE Ministry of Planning and Finance set up a separate fund of K400 billion from the National Natural Disaster Management Fund in order to spend it on measures of developing State economy, with the aim of striving for rising socio-economic life of the people from regions and states as well as promoting their economy, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to hand over the fund from the State economic promotion fund at Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents the fund from the State economic promotion fund.

### Plan to raise State economy

In his speech, the Senior General said that setting up the separate fund was considered for the enhancement of the agricultural economy and economy of regions and states as well as self-administered zones.

### Difficulties in delivering investment funds in previous years

The SAC in its early assumption period was attacked politically and economically. Hence, banking services and their circulation collapsed. Internal and

external disturbances intended to collapse of State economy. On one hand, the outbreak of Covid-19 was also one of the hindrances to the government in its work. Hence, the government faced the delivery of capital for businesses.

### Economy and politics

It can be seen that the country has an increasing GDP year after year, based on changes in the currency and increasing volume of products. Region and state chief ministers need to

inspect the actual progress of regions and states. It is necessary to balance the supply and demand of production. If not, people will face high prices of commodities.

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## Press Release

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar made strong objections to the remarks made by Malaysian Foreign Minister Mr Saifuddin Abdullah at the press conference in Bangkok on 10 August 2022 and at the ASEAN Day event held in Kuala Lumpur on 8 August 2022.

The Ministry strongly objects to irresponsible remarks by the Malaysian Foreign Minister encouraging the ASEAN Member States to engage with unlawful entities that are committing terrorist activities in Myanmar. Such reckless comments are a blatant attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of an ASEAN Member State by encouraging instability and acts of terrorism in the country, and those remarks are also in violation of the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 2(e) and (f) of the ASEAN Charter and Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter of the United Nations.

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## Announcement for opening reception centres to receive CDM staff, students and youths

THE State Administration Council has been striving for the all-round development of the country including economic, social, education and health sectors. In addition, security forces are performing their duties day and night so that the entire mass of national people in various regions across the Union should be able to lead their lives and earn their living in the peace of mind. The State Administration Council gives priority to achieving genuine and perpetual peace, building up the united strength of the national brethren.

In order to prevent the unnecessary loss of human resources, the State Administration Council has publicly invited the basic education staff who are absent from duty to resume their duties and those who take part in armed resistance under various names of groups,

including PDFs, to return to the legal fold if they wish to, and is systematically receiving the returnees.

It is found that, due to the persuasion, instigation and coercion of CRPH and NUG terrorist groups, some CDM staff, students and youths went to the strongholds of some ethnic armed organizations and received training in arms, ammunition and explosives.

It is known that some of those who have completed the training no longer want to be involved in terrorist attacks and so they fled to the regions within and without the country and are working there for their living. When they see terrorist attacks with their own eyes, they cannot accept such terrible acts at all. On the other hand, they have come to believe in the government's five-point roadmap and its endeavour for

endurable peace. Moreover, they want to live peacefully in their hometowns again with their parents and relatives. Nevertheless, they cannot do so because of the coercion and intimidation by CRPH and NUG terrorist groups and their subordinates, it is learnt.

Therefore, the government is taking measures to be able to open reception centres in border areas for those who would like to return home to their respective regions. Moreover, those wishing to return home can contact Tatmadaw units and police stations. It is guaranteed that they will be able to lead their daily lives peacefully.

*Information Team  
State Administration Council*

### Press Release

#### FROM PAGE-1

Malaysian Foreign Minister's remark on bringing in non-ASEAN countries to the process of the implementation of the ASEAN five-point consensus is also inappropriate as it could undermine ASEAN centrality and can derail the works of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair.

The Ministry strongly protests the remarks by the Malaysian Foreign Minister on the alleged lack of cooperation by Myanmar in the provision of humanitarian assistance by ASEAN which is in total ignorance of noticeable progress made by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre on Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA centre) in Myanmar and which also fail to recognize sincere efforts of the Myanmar government in facilitating the works of AHA Centre.

Any ASEAN Member State with a genuine intention to see the prevalence of peace and stability in Myanmar should avoid these kinds of remarks adversely affecting the national reconciliation in the country. In this regard, the Ministry strongly protests and objects to the irresponsible and repeated remarks of interference in the internal affairs of an ASEAN Member State by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has sent a strong protest note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia on this matter.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

*Nay Pyi Taw*

*Date, 12 August 2022*

### Objectives of 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions 2022

- To uplift national prestige and integrity and to preserve the cultural heritage and national characteristics
- To discover, preserve and uplift the traditional cultural heritage of performing arts of ethnic nationals and national cultural characteristics
- To preserve traditional cultural performing arts in order to further revitalize adoration of the State and hand it down to new generation youths
- To contribute much to the restoration of perpetual peace

### 38 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 August, total figure rises to 614,335

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **614,335** after **38** new cases were reported on 12 August 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **593,081** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **19,435** without more casualties.—MNA

## Mahabodhi Pagoda in Bagan Archaeological Zone opens for pilgrims



The Mahabodhi Pagoda.

PEOPLE can visit the Mahabodhi Pagoda in the Bagan-Nyaung-U Ancient Cultural Zone of old Bagan and explore the architectural works of Buddha images, Inwa-era mural plaques and the structure of the pagoda, according to the Mahabodhi Pagoda Trustees Board.

The pagoda was built by King Nataungmya in 1215 AD and modelled after the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, India, the place where the Buddha attained supreme enlightenment some 25 centuries ago. Its lower structure

was erected as a square block neither low nor high and above it is the square pyramidal shape tower. The Buddha image inside the Mahabodhi Temple is known as the restoration model after the earthquake disaster. One can see a ladder to go up and the mural plaques on the east wall of the upper arch gate.

The Mahabodhi Pagoda is a two-storey structure about 240 feet high. Each size of its square-shaped base structure is a smaller version of the stupa. Both the base and tower consist of numer-

ous niches, in which 645 Buddha images in different postures reside, stated the Board of Trustees from Mahabodhi Pagoda.

Pilgrims can stop by at the Mahabodhi Pagoda while traveling in the Bagan Archaeological Zone. From the pagoda, explorers can see the Bagan Lacquerware College in the north, the Bu Pagoda in the west, the Aungmyaytha Palace of King Anawrahta and King Kyansittha in the south and the Information Centre in the east. — Ko Kyemon/GNLM

## We will have to continue to consolidate the strength of the national unity in the future also

AS for the country which is a heterogeneous society, historical lessons have taught us that only the national unity can ensure the non-disintegration of the Union and the perpetuation of sovereignty. We will have to continue to consolidate the strength of the national unity in the future also.

*(Excerpt from the message sent by Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing on the occasion of 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Union Day which fell on 12 February 2021)*

## Foreign exchange earned from exportation will be spent on the import of agricultural inputs and other necessary goods: Senior General

### FROM PAGE-1

#### Increasing production plays a crucial role in the economic sector

The fund was set up for the cultivation of summer rice and green gram which are the main export items of the nation, creating job opportunities for people. Likewise, farmers can spend their money on other businesses. Consequently, job opportunities will contribute to raising the domestic demand and supply as a proper operation of businesses. Foreign exchange earned from exportation will be spent on the import of agricultural inputs and other necessary goods. It is necessary to ensure proper operating of rice mill, oil mill, bean grinding machine and SME industries.

#### Enhancement of domestic tourism services

If efforts are made for the



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing provides the fund from the State economic promotion fund.



Efforts must be made for upgrading machinery and raw materials for the improvement of textile industries and weaving industries to produce import-substitute products. It is necessary to strive for increasing the handed-over fund through various plans such as the emerald green project so as to develop the regions.

implementation of systematic tourism services, all-round development can be seen soon. Transport facilities and security measures must be improved in respective areas to operate tourism services. Secure and smooth transport facilities will improve the regional economy.

#### Textile industry at home

Efforts must be made for upgrading machinery and raw materials for the improvement of textile industries and weaving industries to produce import-substitute products. It is necessary to strive for increasing the handed-over fund through various plans such as the emerald

green project so as to develop the regions.

The Senior General presented cash assistance from the fund to Union ministers, regions and states, and self-administered zones respectively.

The 400 billion State economic promotion fund was provided — K170 billion to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, K60 billion to the Cooperatives and Rural Development, K10 billion each to Kayah, Chin and Rakhine states for implementing the emerald green project, K8 billion each to Kachin, Kayin, Mon and Shan states and Taninthayi Region and K5 billion each to Naga, Danu, Pa-O, Palaung and Kokang self-administered zones and Wa self-administered division respectively, totalling K330 billion. — MNA

# SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win discusses holding of 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

THE Leading Organizing Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions held its coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his speech, Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, in his capacity as patron of the leading organizing committee, said the existence and long-lasting history of a country is linked with the unity in addition to its security, economy, education and culture that contains physical culture and mental culture.

Myanmar is home to various ethnic peoples. Therefore, there are different languages, customs and traditions. Common sense is conserving the tradition and culture of the people.

The Vice-Senior General also talked about the same five musical instruments and basic dancing techniques, the suspension of the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions in 2016, the consequences of such interruption, the relations between fine art culture and traditional customs and the side effects of disappearing these cultures and customs in daily life.



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win presides over the coordination meeting of the leading Organizing Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

He added that the SAC is making efforts in accordance with its roadmap and objectives including "To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics," in its office term. Therefore, it arranges to grandly hold the 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing made an instruction regarding the arts competition

during the Union Government meeting held on 5 May 2022.

Therefore, it arranges to add three categories in the singing competition, eight categories in the dancing competition, one category in song composing competition and 13 categories in the music competition in this 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competition.

The Vice-Senior General then highlighted the proper tradition of competition while competing for the set ethnic traditional dances of different ethnic peoples,

holding of narrative structure competition called "Kwatsate", a traditional puppet competition that produces puppeteers, luring international interests and earning foreign income to a certain extent, and the Ramayana drama competition.

The Vice-Senior General also stressed the need to hold the 23<sup>rd</sup> competition meeting the dignity of the country including the opening ceremony and closing ceremony, and award-giving ceremony and called on relevant officials and organizations to par-

ticipate in holding the ceremony.

Then, Committee Chairman Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko explained the objectives of holding the 23<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competition, organizing the steering committee, working committee and subcommittees including financial status.

Afterwards, the meeting attendees coordinated the discussion and the Vice-Senior General concluded the meeting. — MNA



Some chicken and duck eggs were seen being sold in the market.

## Egg price surges in early August

THE prices of chicken eggs and duck eggs rise in early August. The price of a chicken egg is only K200 in the previous month, but it became K230-K240 an egg these days. Similarly, the price of a duck egg goes up from K200 to K250-K260 for big ones.

During this month, the prices of chicken and duck eggs surged as much as rice, oil and other kitchen goods which were bought by people on a daily basis.

Although egg prices soar up in market stalls in Lanmadaw Township where sellers come from Kyaiklat, the price of the eggs at shopping centres remains unchanged. "One can still buy K2,000-K2,150 per 10-egg pack weighing 60 grammes per egg based on brand names at regular price," said a

customer.

Usually, the price at shopping centres goes up only after a few days of price changes in outdoor markets have occurred. Likewise, the rate of some palm oil bottles from centres was lesser than the ones from outdoor markets. Thus, competitive items from shopping centres were often out of stock owing to the increased demand. Some brands of five-litre bottles of edible oil are being sold at a bargain price of K2,600 per bottle.

It is learnt that the rising prices of livestock feed and high transport costs caused an increase in egg prices. According to a grocery store owner from Mahlaing Township, prices hiked by about K20-K30 per egg in Yangon in addition to in upper regions. — TWA/GNLM



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# SAC members attend ISR Judo competition 2022 opening ceremony

TO emerge next-generation athletes and to advance the standard of Myanmar Judo sports, the opening ceremony of the Inter-State/Region Judo competition was held at Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium A at 9 am yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by SAC members Daw Aye Nu Sein, Jeng Phang Naw Taung, U Moug Har, U Saw Daniel and Dr Banyar Aung Moe, Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Min Thein Zan, deputy ministers, the Myanmar Judo Federation president and officials, administrators, coaches and athletes from competing teams.

Firstly, the Union minister expressed Judo is a Japanese traditional martial art and young people from Myanmar can catch



The 2022 Inter-State/Region Judo Tournament opens in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

with interest of youths. Judo sports awarded Myanmar with 25 golds, 62 silvers and 74 bronzes

from the 3<sup>rd</sup> SEA Games 1965 to the 30<sup>th</sup> SEA Games 2019. It also received two silvers and two

bronzes in Judo and one gold, one silver and two bronzes in Kurash in the 31<sup>st</sup> SEA Games.

It is necessary for the Myanmar Judo Federation to maintain the good tradition of success by systematically training next-generation athletes from ISR competitions, he elaborated.

Followed by the opening ceremony, athletes recited four oaths of sports and SAC members, Union ministers and officials warmly greeted athletes. They watched the demonstration of the Judo competition (Man).

The 2022 ISR Judo Competition was held with 12 men's teams and 13 women's teams from ISR, with administrators and coaches from each team totalling 237. The tournament will be held at Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium A from 12 to 16 August and anyone can watch the competition for free. — MNA

# Tree falls on YBS bus in Ahlon Township

A tree has fallen and struck a YBS bus in Kayinchan Ward of Ahlon Township, Yangon Region, said the Fire Services Department on 12 August.

On the day of the accident, Ahlon Township Fire Station members and auxiliary fire brigade members got information

about a tree from the roadside has fallen on a YBS bus in Kayinchan Ward, located at the corner of Lower Kyimyindine Road and Ahlon Road at 8:03 am.

Thus, the team rushed to and cleared up the scene. A person named 'Myat Ma Naw' also commented on social

media regarding the incident "It's raining hard all night long and the wind also got stronger around 3 am. It's definitely not a rain shower."

The Fire Services Department declared that no one was getting hurt in the incident. — TWA/GNLM



Responsible personnel are seen removing the fallen tree from the YBS bus.

# Imports up by \$1.09 bln as of 5 August, MoC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 October and 5 August of the current financial year 2022-2023 increased to US\$5.79 billion, which reflects a drop of \$1.093 billion compared to the year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The import value stood at US\$4.696 billion in the year-ago period.

The imports of capital goods declined last month, while the other import groups (consumer, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses) witnessed a slight increase.

Last month, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and airplane parts were brought into the country. Their import value was estimated at \$1.049 billion. The figure was over \$266 million lower than those values registered in the same period of the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$1.11 billion, including

pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight decrease of \$21.3 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make up the largest share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year, imports of raw materials climbed up to \$2.6 billion from \$1.75 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth over \$1.028 billion were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector, showing an increase of \$537.53 million compared with last FY.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data from the Ministry of Commerce. — KK/GNLM

## Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

The following telephone numbers, fax and email address can be reached to safely report information in connection with illegal trade.

- Auto telephone number - 067 409 883
- Mobile phone - 09 404339969
- Fax - 067 409 886
- Email address - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

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# CRIME NEWS

## Over 152 tonnes of illegal timbers caught in Nay Pyi Taw, regions/states

THE Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation is implementing various ways and methods including the community monitoring and reporting system (CMRS) to control illegal timber and forest products.

According to data collected by relevant forest departments, a total of 152.9236 tonnes of illegal timbers – 54.4870 tonnes of teak, 24.1132 tonnes of hardwood and 74.3234 tonnes of other woods — were caught in regions/states and Nay Pyi Taw between 1 and 7 August, and the department stated that they arrested 27 suspects along with 15 vehicles. — MNA



Officials check seized illegal timbers.

## 4.42 mln stimulant tablets worth K6.63 bln seized in Kachin State, Mandalay Region

A total of 4.42 million stimulant tablets worth K6.63 billion were confiscated in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State and Thazi Township, Mandalay Region, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising of

Anti-Drugs Squad members investigated a Foton six-wheel vehicle driven by Aung Swe Oo accompanied by Min Min Than from Mandalay to Mohnyin at the Nangsiaung joint checkpoint in Mohnyin Township of Kachin State on 9 August and confiscated 2 million stimulant

tablets worth K3 billion hidden in corn bags on the vehicle. After the investigation, the seized stimulant tablets were carried from Mandalay Region to Kachin State.

Similarly, a combined team including members of the Anti-Drug Squad found three suspicious motorcycles loaded with 13 polypropylene (PP) bags, which stopped near a creek in a village of Thazi Township in the Mandalay Region.

The police checked polypropylene (PP) bags and seized 2.42 million stimulant tablets worth K3.63 billion. The police have taken legal action against the suspects, and an investigation is underway to identify the perpetrators of the crime chain. — MNA



Seized stimulant tablets and motorbikes.

## Drugs seized in some townships across Myanmar

DRUGS were seized in Dawei, Kyaikhto and Mingaladon townships, Myanmar Police Force stated.

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and examined a motorbike driven by Zaw Lwin Lay at the bridge checkpoint in Pauktaine village of Dawei township and captured 51,480 stimulant tablets, 0.06 kilogramme of Ice with K105,000 at 7 am on 11 August.

In addition, Myanmar Police Force stopped and searched a Toyota Avanza car driven by Sai Aung Hla (aka) Sai Aung Latt and seized 200,000 stimulant tablets at the Mayanchaung Checkpoint of Kyaikhto township at 2 pm on the same day.

Similarly, at 10 am on the same day, Myanmar Police Force examined suspect Zin Min Htun at the Aungmingala Express Bus Terminal in Mingaladon township and impounded 10,000 stimulant tablets.

The suspects are prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA



An arrestee is seen along with seized drugs and a saloon.

## 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](http://www.moi.gov.mm/mal), [www.moi.gov.mm/km](http://www.moi.gov.mm/km), [www.moi.gov.mm/nlm](http://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm) and [www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper](http://www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper).

News and Periodicals Enterprise

## Illegal timbers, raw chemicals, consumer goods, foodstuffs, auto parts and vehicles confiscated

SUPERVISED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law.

An inspection team under the instructions of the Mandalay Region Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force conducted inspections near the 21<sup>st</sup> Milepost on the Mandalay-PyinOoLwin

Road on 9 August.

Officials confiscated K51,480,500 worth of car parts, battery bicycles, raw chemicals, clothes and sandals without official documents from three Hino Profia trucks (approximately K54 million). The action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Similarly, an on-duty com-

combined team under the supervision of the Sagaing Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force carried out inspections at the Yadanabon Bridge Combined Checkpoint on 11 August.

They captured 199 bags of lentils (produced by India) worth K11,940,000 without official documents. The action was taken under the Export

and Import Law.

In addition, a total of 1.9858 tonnes of illegal sawn teak and other timbers worth K1,053,168 were confiscated in the Ngalaik forest reserve between the 227/5 milepost and 227/60 milepost on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Afterwards, on 12 August,

a total of 0.5382 tonne of illegal sawn ironwood worth K269,100 in Phu township of Toungoo district and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 10 arrests (approximately K118,742,768) were made on 9, 11 and 12 August, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Black gram price shoots up to over K1.82 mln per tonne

THE prices of black gram increased rapidly to over K1,820,000 per tonne in the domestic pulses market.

As the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) raised the reference exchange rate from K1,850 to K2,100 on 5 August, the prices of pulses surged significantly.

On 5 August, the black gram fetched only K1,667,500 per tonne. On 12 August, the prices skyrocketed to K1,822,500 per tonne. The figures showed an increase of over K150,000 per tonne within one week.

Similarly, pigeon pea prices jumped from K1,612,500 to K1,930,000 per tonne on 12 August, showing a significant rise of K310,000 per tonne within one week.

Despite the prices shooting up in the market, black gram transactions are rarely seen. Furthermore, there is a shortage of pigeon peas stock in the market.

According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from the 2021-2022 financial year to the 2025-2026FY.

The prices of black gram in Myanmar are correlated with India's demand, fuel price hike, forex rate and export and import policies.

Last September 2021, the prices hit a record high of K2 million per tonne when the US dollar exchange rate with Myanmar currency hit over K3,000 in the local forex market.

Myanmar conveyed \$1.57 billion worth of over 2,029,695 tonnes of various beans and pulses to foreign trade partners between 1 April and 5 August 2022 in the current financial year 2022-2023. The country shipped \$347.957 million worth of over 436,833 tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and \$94 million worth of over 139,579

tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar exported US\$1.57 billion worth of over two million tonnes of various pulses to foreign trade partners last financial year 2020-2021. The country shipped 1.24



The prices of black gram increased rapidly to over K1,820,000 per tonne in the domestic pulses market... Various pulses and beans are pictured in the market.

million tonnes of pulses and beans worth \$966.4 million to foreign markets through the sea route, and \$604.3 million worth of 786,920 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through land borders.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes

of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram which is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/GNLM

## Fuel price remains upward trend, soaring to over K2,200 per litre of Octane 92

THE fuel prices are moving onwards in the domestic markets and touching a high of over K2,200 per litre of Octane 92.

At present, fuel stations in some regions and states are short of supply. The market sees price spikes every day.

On 7 August, oil prices stood at K1,615 per litre for Octane 92, K1,665 for Octane 95, K2,025 for premium diesel and K1,970 for diesel. The prices inflated to K2,245 for Octane 92, K2,310 for Octane 95, K2,625 for premium diesel and K2,550 for diesel on 12 August, showing an increase of K580-K645 per litre within five days. The fuel price hike is tracking the price set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia. Singapore MOPS price surged, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

Furthermore, the Central Bank of Myanmar's recent foreign exchange policy is a contributing factor to the price rise.



The fuel prices are moving onwards in the domestic markets and touching a high of over K2,200 per litre of Octane 92.

The CBM raised the reference exchange rate for a US dollar from K1,850 to K2,100 on 5 August, traders guessed.

The committee is governing the fuel oil storage and distribution sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and ensuring price stabil-

ity for energy consumers.

The Petroleum Products Supervision and Inspection Department, under the guidance of the committee, is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate in Yangon Region is set on the

MOPS' price assessment, shipping cost, premium insurance, tax, other general cost and health profit per cent.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily cover on the

state-run newspapers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department on a daily basis starting from 4 May.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also poses only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/GNLM

# OPINION

## Seek ways for the emergence of society with a favourable environment

**C**URRENTLY, global countries are placing an emphasis on using the nature-based solution concerned with environmental problems and food sufficiency with the aim of easing global warming and climate change.

In this regard, favourable weather can help produce agricultural produce for ensuring food sufficiency of countries. Mix-cropping of trees which can help fertilize the soil, control watershed forests, proper utilization of land plots and use of climate-smart agriculture and better agriculture and livestock techniques are nature-based solutions contributing to food sufficiency.

Among the various techniques so as to ensure food sufficiency which is very important for the nation and the people, the agroforestry method is of great importance for proper land utilization in order to

secure the most benefit in the long run from the utilized land area and to produce the largest volume of a product among forest products, agricultural produce and livestock product. Agroforestry is based on the growth of trees together with perennial and annual crops or feedstuff plants in addition to mangrove plants. But, agroforestry is based on the cultivation of seasonal crops and trees, farming of cattle, poultry and pigs in the growing of trees, nurturing of seasonal crops together with cattle and poultry farming process, and integrated farming for trees and beekeeping as well as fishery farm. The agroforestry business can be operated by families as individuals or in groups. Depending on location, climatic conditions, market and keenness of local people, agroforestry can help develop the socio-economic status of the rural people as well as food sufficiency.

The authorities and relevant departments have been allowing the establishment of community forests owned by local people since 1995 with the aim of contributing to forest conservation as much as possible, supplying forest products to rural people for daily usage and improving the socio-economy of the people.

As such, people have the chance to implement agroforestry measures in their regions, land plots and residences on a manageable or commercial scale. Thanks to their efforts, trees, vegetables and livestock farms will help ease the impacts of the climatic conditions to some extent and provide food for society.

No one can discard the advantages of climatic conditions and the environment. Indeed, climatic conditions and environment manipulate the life of living beings including humans. Reciprocally, humans have the chance to control the climate and environment so some degree by easing climate change and global warming. Hence, global peoples need to set an aim for the emergence of a proper society in a favourable environment with food sufficiency.

# Lessons learned from Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Appeals from HIBAKUSHA raised the hurdles for the use of atomic bombs

By Suzuka YOSHIDA

**J**APAN is the only country on the earth to have suffered atomic bombs. On 6 August 1945, the United States Army dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. On August 9, it next dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Peace Memorial Ceremonies are held each year in these areas after the Second World War, and the Japanese people and government appeal to the International Society for a world without nuclear weapons. Especially this year, since Prime Minister Mr Kishida is from Hiroshima, he was especially impressed at the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Operational Conference held in New York on 31 July and 1 August. He made a speech about creating a world without nuclear weapons.

### Prime Minister Kishida from Hiroshima

Prime Minister Mr Kishida announced the "Hiroshima Action Plan" with the intention of linking the nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed states. Japan, which knows first-hand what kind of consequences nuclear weapons bring, will initiate countries who do not know the reality and will be able to provide an opportunity to share information. UN Secretary-General Mr Antonio Guterres, who agreed with that

intention, visited Hiroshima on 6 August and answered in a media interview that nuclear disarmament is important. Representatives from 83 countries attended the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Nagasaki.

In reality, the divide between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states is deepening as the possibility of Russia's use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine is becoming a reality. Moreover, even among countries that do not recognize the possession of nuclear weapons under the NPT, there are some that are trying to switch to their policy that places nuclear weapons at the core of their defence. As you can see, there is a considerable gap in understanding between the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and the benefits/expectation of nuclear weapons. Both the people and the government recognize that Japan's role is to reduce this gap.

### Uranium atomic bomb on Hiroshima, plutonium atomic bomb on Nagasaki

It is widely known that the United States made the Manhattan Project to drop atomic bombs on Japan in consort with Britain and Canada, and used different types of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In order to measure the characteristics of the



"Gembaku Dome (Atomic Bomb Dome)" was the building affected by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. Hiroshima City decided to leave the Atomic Bomb Dome as an atomic bomb site.

new type of bombs, those were tested both in terms of damage to buildings and damage to human life. By March 1945, the US Air force had bombed most of Japan's cities including Tokyo with B-29s, leaving only about three cities that had never been bombed. Of these, two virgin cities were selected, and after giving sufficient special training to the aircrews in advance, a uranium model named "Little Boy" was dropped on Hiroshima, and a plutonium-type atomic bomb named "Fatman" was dropped on Nagasaki.

On 6 August, a team of six air-

craft was formed: three weather observation aircraft, the Enola Gay carrying the MK-1 nuclear bomb, two scientific observation aircraft to record the power of the atomic bomb, and a B-29 recording movie of those affections by the camera.

As a result, the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb reached 16,000 metres above the ground, killing nearly 90,000 to 170,000 of Hiroshima's population of 350,000 in two months. Among them were 6,000 children at the age of 12-13 who had been mobilized in factories to make up for labour

shortages.

In Nagasaki, 74,000 out of a population of 240,000 died. Since the bombs were dropped on the assumption that ordinary citizens would die, the dropping of the atomic bombs by the US Army was undoubtedly a violation of international law.

### The HIBAKUSHA tragedy has prevented further atomic bombings

Atomic bombs extinguish people (the human body blows away and melts without a trace). It sores the bones and skin of

humans, giving constant pain to those who barely survive. Increase cancer incidence in survivors. Embed a big trauma in your heart. It continues to torment humans. People exposed to radiation from the atomic bomb are called "HIBAKUSHA." Japanese words came to be used as they are in English. Surviving HIBAKUSHA had not spoken ill of the United States and the U.S. forces that dropped atomic bombs and started a civil movement to convey the inhumanity of nuclear weapons through video and storytelling, urging them to never use atomic bombs again and to ban nuclear weapons. Hiroshima and Nagasaki hold peace memorial ceremonies each year under the initiative of the city government. On the other hand, HIBAKUSHA seems to be fostering new values by appealing to a universal philosophy and spirit of resilience beyond the tragedy of the atomic bombing.

Seventy-seven years of city governments and civil society efforts have made the fright of the atomic bomb well known to the world. It can be said that this gave rise to the reality that no atomic bombs were dropped after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Today, leaders who try to decide on wars with atomic bombs will create a bad image of themselves by themselves. The ethical hurdle for the use of nuclear weapons has been raised. Along with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nu-

clear Weapons, there have been growing calls to keep nuclear weapons away from humankind, both legally and ethically.

### What are alternative weapons to nuclear weapons?

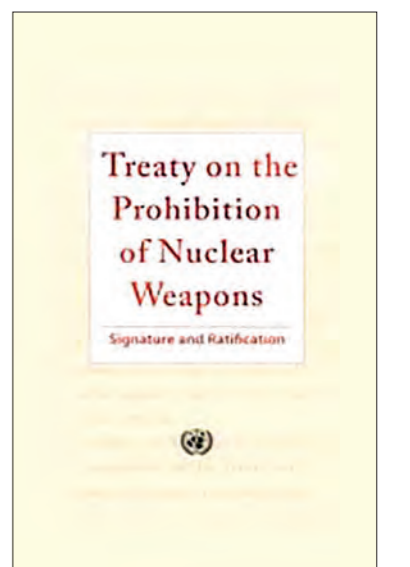
In 2016, President Obama became the first US president to visit Hiroshima and expressed his impressions of "a world without nuclear weapons." Many Japanese welcomed it favourably, saying that the day would come when the United States would also give up its nuclear weapons, and put their hopes on the abolition of nuclear weapons by the United States. At the same time, President Obama's visit to Hiroshima also stifled some public opinion in Japan that Japan should at least consider possessing nuclear weapons. Looking at it from another perspective, it is conceivable that the real intention of the United States was to prevent Japan from possessing nuclear weapons.

In reality, Japan has not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Because Japan is already protected by the US Nuclear umbrella, there is no need for it, successive prime ministers have announced.

Thinking environments with a cool head, the United States, Russia, China and North Korea who are Japan's neighbours continue to openly possess nuclear weapons. Is it really okay to not have nuclear weapons, buy

weapons ordered from the United States, and participate in operations together with the United States? At a time when it is clear that the US's economic and military power is declining, it is a hindrance to national security if the US military is given consideration for its budget and left to develop and procure weapons. They also lack autonomy.

If Japan doesn't have nuclear weapons, we must have an alternative force. The Kishida Administration must be ready to respond to the crisis the state and people are confronting and clarify what alternative military power are.



A textbook of Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons <https://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/more/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons-signature-and-ratification/>

## New US strategy to make monkeypox vaccine go further

**US** HEALTH authorities on Tuesday authorized a new procedure for injecting the monkeypox vaccine that should make it possible to inoculate more people with the same amount of the drug, at a time when doses are running short in the country.

The Food and Drug Administration also authorized giving the vaccine to people under the age of 18 who are considered to

be at high risk of infection.

For those over 18, health workers will now be able to administer the vaccine differently, via an intradermal injection -- that is, between the upper layers of the skin -- and not with a deeper, subcutaneous injection.

The new method will "increase the total number of doses available for use by up to five-fold," the FDA said in a statement.

Two injections, four weeks apart, will still be necessary.

The FDA said it was drawing on data from a 2015 clinical trial that showed a similar immune response in people given a subcutaneous injection compared to those given a fifth of the dose via an intradermal shot.

At present, some 620,000 doses of the vaccine -- manufactured by Bavarian Nordic, and marketed under the name Jynneos in

the United States -- have been distributed across the country.

Another 440,000 additional doses are still to be distributed, which could allow up to 2.2 million injections under the new strategy.

The government has also ordered an additional five million doses, which will start arriving from September and run through 2023, affording the potential to administer 25 million doses.

The decisions came after the FDA issued an emergency use authorization for the vaccine, a move that itself followed the declaration of a public health emergency last week.

For the authorization in minors, the FDA said it had reviewed safety data for the vaccine, as well as data for another vaccine given in children against smallpox.

"We feel very comfortable

with the safety of the approach," said Peter Marks of the FDA at a press conference, noting a recent increase in the number of children who have potentially been exposed to infected people.

The United States has registered nearly 9,000 cases of monkeypox, a fifth of them in New York state. The vast majority of cases involve men who have had sex with men.

SOURCE: AFP



A public health worker delivers monkeypox vaccines in a yellow cooler at a vaccination site at the Balboa Sports Centre in the Encino neighbourhood of Los Angeles, California, on 27 July 2022. PHOTO: AFP



# ENVIRON WORLD

## Poaching of 'status symbol' date mussels threatens Italy's coasts

OFF the rocky coast of south-eastern Italy, two scuba divers from the financial crimes police bob in and out of the blue waters, under the curious gaze of vacationers.

They're seeking neither buried treasure nor smuggled contraband, but evidence of the hunt for date mussels, a forbidden mollusc turned status symbol whose poaching is indelibly destroying Italy's coastlines.

The signs are unmistakable.

Just below the surface, the calcareous rock that is home to

countless organisms is gutted by hundreds of manmade holes — proof that unscrupulous poachers have chiselled, crushed and blasted the reef to extract the bivalves burrowed inside.

"These men put on their oxygen tanks and masks, go down... with hammer and chisel and start to break the rock," said Arcangelo Raffaele Gennari, commander of the Guardia di Finanza in Puglia's port city of Monopoli.

"There have been cases in which we've seized mini jackhammers," he told AFP during

a recent visit.

"Even explosives have been used."

Fuelling the trade are the soaring black-market prices for the narrow brown "Lithophaga lithophaga", said to boast a delicate oyster-like flavour, which can cost nearly 200 euros (\$205) per kilo. Poachers supply fish markets or restaurant owners who sell under the table to high rollers — including cash-rich mafiosi — flaunting their wealth at Sunday lunches with a raw seafood platter or extravagant spaghetti.— AFP



Calcareous rock is gutted by hundreds of holes chiselled by poachers to extract date mussels. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Swiss mountain pass set to lose all ice within weeks



The pass between Scex Rouge and Tsanfleuron in western Switzerland has been iced over since at least the Roman era. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE thick layer of ice that has covered a Swiss mountain pass for centuries will have melted away completely within a few weeks, a ski resort said Thursday.

Following a dry winter, the summer heatwaves hitting Europe have been catastrophic for

the Alpine glaciers, which have been melting at an accelerated rate.

The pass between Scex Rouge and Tsanfleuron has been iced over since at least the Roman era.

But as both glaciers have re-

treated, the bare rock of the ridge between the two is beginning to emerge — and will be completely ice-free before the summer is out.

"The pass will be entirely in the open air in a few weeks," the Glacier 3000 ski resort said in a statement.

While the ice measured around 15 metres (49.5 feet) thick in 2012, the ground underneath "will have completely resurfaced by the end of September".

The ridge is at an altitude of 2,800 metres in the Glacier 3000 ski domain and effectively marks the border between the Vaud and Wallis cantons in western Switzerland.

Skiers could glide over the top from one glacier to the other. But now a strip of rock between them has emerged, with just the last remaining bit of ice left.—

AFP

## Norway mulls euthanizing walrus that won hearts in Oslo fjord

NORWEGIAN authorities are considering putting down a walrus that won hearts basking in the sun of the Oslo fjord, amid fears it is putting itself and the public in danger, they said Thursday.

Despite repeated appeals to the public to keep their distance from the walrus — a young female weighing 600 kilos (1,300 pounds) that has been nicknamed

Freya — the mammal continues to attract big crowds, the Fisheries Directorate said in a statement.

Its text was accompanied by a photograph of a group of onlookers crowding near the animal.

"The public's reckless behaviour and failure to follow authorities' recommendations could put lives in danger", a spokeswoman

for the fisheries agency, Nadia Jdaini, said.

"We are now exploring other measures, and euthanasia may be a real alternative", she added.

Freya, whose name is a reference to the Norse goddess of beauty and love, has made headlines since 17 July when she was first spotted in the waters of the Norwegian capital.—AFP

## Extreme heat, price hikes impose tough choices on UK farm

PULLING up some of the sugar beet that should be about handball-size by now, Andrew Blenkiron says the parched conditions have left the root veggies stunted and dried-up.

Record-breaking temperatures — as well as skyrocketing energy prices — mean the UK farm that he manages has had to make difficult decisions about which crops to save.

"This is about four to five centimetres (just under two inches) across," Blenkiron says, holding up some undersized sugar beet in a vast and dry field at the Euston Estate farm. "By this time usually we would expect them to be at least 20 cm in diameter, the sugar beet," he adds, sounding worried.

The estate, 90 miles (130

kilometres) northeast of London, is now focused on watering its potatoes, which are in season.

But there is not enough water for its sugar beet crop, which has been left to fend for itself.

In this part of Suffolk in southeastern England, the soil is considered very fertile, as long as it receives enough nutrients and water.

But rainfall here in July was just 10 per cent of the average amount — and over the last three months, it was only half.

### Twice as much watering

The electricity bill at the Euston Estate farm is set to more than quadruple this year, Blenkiron, the estate director, tells AFP.—AFP



Soaring temperatures and energy prices are imposing tough choices about crops, says Andrew Blenkiron, of Euston Estate farm in southeastern England. **PHOTO: AFP**

# HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

## Global youth unemployment set to slip to 73 million in 2022: UN

THE total global number of unemployed youths should fall to 73 million in 2022, down by two million from the year before, the United Nations said Thursday.

However, the figure is still six million higher than the pre-pandemic level of 2019, with the recovery in youth unemployment lagging behind the bounceback in other age groups, the UN's International Labour Organization said.

Between 2019 and 2020, those aged 15 to 24 experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than the rest of the labour

market, the ILO said in a report. Their 300-page "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022" update on key youth labour market indicators and trends said the pandemic exacerbated the market challenges generally facing young people.

Many dropped out of the labour force, or failed to enter it altogether, due to the difficulty of finding a job during Covid-19 lockdowns and while businesses were closing due to the pandemic.

### Gender gap

"The Covid-19 crisis has revealed a number of shortcomings

in the way the needs of young people are addressed, especially the more vulnerable such as first-time job-seekers, school dropouts, fresh graduates with little experience and those who remain inactive not by choice," said Martha Newton, the ILO's deputy director-general for policy.

"What young people need most is well functioning labour markets with decent job opportunities for those already participating in the labour market, along with quality education and training opportunities for those yet to enter it."—AFP



A job seeker (L) interacts with a hiring official of a company during a career fair in Zhengzhou, China's Henan province on 25 July 2020. PHOTO: WANG ZHAO / AFP/FILE



Vehicles to be shipped to Europe are moved onto a ship at a port in east China's Shanghai, 20 Oct 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

## Shanghai's auto exports pick up as COVID-19 wanes

SHANGHAI'S automobile exports have picked up as the COVID-19 epidemic wanes and local car manufacturing rebounds, statistics showed.

China's exports of passenger cars reached 226,000 units in July, up 76 per cent from the same period last year, according to an analysis report released by the China Passenger Car Association on Tuesday.

Shanghai automakers' ex-

ports account for some 20 per cent of the national total, the association noted, adding that the city's much-improved epidemic situation has driven a significant upturn in the country's auto export.

In July, Shanghai-based major Chinese automaker SAIC Motor exported around 98,000 vehicles, up 91.3 per cent year on year and setting a monthly record. The figures highlight a trend of robust automobile ex-

ports extended from the first half in Shanghai. US automaker Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory exported 97,182 automobiles in H1, more than doubling the figure for the same period last year, according to Tesla China. Total automobile exports in Shanghai in H1 reached 556,000 units, with the value totalling 66.73 billion yuan (about 10 billion US dollars), according to customs statistics released in July.—Xinhua

### 2022 MONKEYPOX OUTBREAK

## Ecuador confirms 16 monkeypox cases

ECUADOR is facing a monkeypox outbreak with 16 cases confirmed, a health official said on Thursday.

"We have an outbreak in Ecuador due to the unusual increase in cases of a pathology that did not exist and we continue to make epidemiological fences so that the number of cases would stop increasing," said Francisco Perez, under-secretary of national health surveillance of the Ecuadoran Health Ministry at a virtual press conference.

Cases of monkeypox have been detected so far in seven of the 24 Ecuadorian provinces, with the highest incidence found in Guayas, Los Rios and El Oro in the coastal region.

Of the six new confirmed cases, two were found in children with one being a 9-year-old who came from abroad and developed the infection in Ecuador, said the Ecuadoran health official.

"This shows that the disease can occur at any age," Perez said, noting that in Ecuador the infections were initially found mostly in men aged 20-40.

Among the 16 confirmed cases, a patient died on Monday due to a "pre-existing pathology". According to the Ecuadoran official, the most common symptom is the appearance of pus-filled pimple-like vesicles on the body mainly in the genital area, palms of the hands and soles of the feet.—Xinhua

## Monkeypox cases total 770 in Portugal

PORTUGAL has registered a total of 770 confirmed monkeypox cases as of Thursday since the first case reported in May, said the Portuguese Directorate-General for Health (DGS).

The Portuguese health authorities said 60 new cases were confirmed last week, indicating "a decreasing trend in the number of new cases." Cases were detected in the Capital Lisbon and Porto, North Portugal, said the DGS. And 43 per cent of the infected belong to the 30-39 age group.

The DGS said 99.3 per cent of the patients are male, with only five cases reported in women.

Since 16 July, Portugal has started the vaccination for those who had contact with the confirmed monkeypox cases, and 70.2 per cent of the eligible contacts have been vaccinated so far.



The number of tourists visiting Portugal recovered to 5.9 million in 2021. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

The DGS said it is "aware of the epidemiological situation, monitoring and adapting, when necessary, the implementation of public health measures, namely concerning vaccination".

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox a public health emergency of in-

ternational concern on 23 July.

As of Sunday, the WHO said 27,814 cases have been reported globally. Portugal is among the 10 countries most affected by the disease, with the United States (7,510), Spain (4,577) and Germany (2,887) topping the list.—Xinhua

# ECONOMY WORLD

## Japan business leaders hail policy expertise in new Kishida Cabinet



Japan's prime minister reshuffled his cabinet Wednesday. **PHOTO: STR / JIJI PRESS / AFP**

JAPANESE business leaders hailed Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Cabinet reshuffle on Wednesday as having an experienced lineup versed in policymaking, and they expressed hope the new team will quickly and effectively respond to key challenges such as energy supply concerns and rising prices.

Masakazu Tokura, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, the country's most powerful business lobby better known as Keidanren, described the Cabinet as a "very strong

lineup," citing the presence of many policy experts among the appointments.

Kishida has said he hopes the personnel changes will pave the way for a long-term, stable administration to tackle what he says are "the biggest challenges of the postwar era," ranging from COVID-19 and inflation to Russia's war in Ukraine and heightened tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

In his statement, Tokura said the government's top priority should be to "revitalize

socioeconomic activities while overcoming the protracted coronavirus pandemic." He also expressed hope for the government to push for societal change with a focus on stable energy supplies and digital and green transformations.

Akio Mimura, chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, praised the new Cabinet as having members "with extensive legislative and administrative experience".

He also expressed hope the government will expend further energy to realizing an environment for sustainable wage growth.

Mimura said it is "essential to dispel a deflation mindset as well as anxieties about the future." Kengo Sakurada, chairman of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives, welcomed the new Cabinet and hoped it will work toward "full economic revitalization" including by responding to "an increasingly fraught international situation and unpredictable price rises."—Kyodo

## Singapore trims 2022 growth forecast on strong global headwinds

SINGAPORE on Thursday narrowed its economic growth forecast this year after the economy contracted in the second quarter compared to the previous three months due to rising inflation and tighter monetary policies, the government said.

Moves by central banks worldwide to tighten borrowing costs in order to deal with rocketing prices have weighed down on global demand for Singapore's exports, with the government painting a grim picture for the rest of the year.

Economists often see the performance of the city state's open, trade-driven economy as a barometer for global trading

activity.

Singapore's economy is now projected to expand by 3.0 to 4.0 per cent this year, trimmed from a 3.0 to 5.0 forecast earlier, the trade ministry said in a statement.

The economy grew by 4.4 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter to June, faster than the 3.8 per cent growth recorded in the previous quarter, it said. But compared to the previous three months, the economy contracted by 0.2 per cent, reversing the 0.8 per cent expansion in the first quarter.

"Since May, the global economic environment has deteriorated further," the ministry said.—AFP



People have their lunch at the Maxwell market hawker centre in Singapore on 17 December 2020, a day after Singapore's street food culture was included on a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of intangible cultural heritage. **PHOTO: ROSLAN RAHMAN / AFP**

## Israel to invest US\$6.13 mln in training Arabs for hi-tech sector

ISRAEL on Wednesday announced the investment of 20 million shekels (6.13 million US dollars) to promote training programs that will prepare the Arab population for Israel's high-tech sector. The funds will be given in grants to Arab-Israeli companies to cover at most 70 per cent of their costs in developing innovative programmes and models that will help add skilled Arab human capital to the Israeli hi-tech industry, the Ministry of Economy and Industry said in a statement.

The grants will be awarded by the ministry's Directorate General of Labour and the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA), it said.

The IIA and the directorate thus called on corporations, associations and employers to help expand the access of Arab human capital to Israel's knowledge-rich industry. Israeli Arabs comprise

about 21 per cent of the population in Israel, but the proportion of Arabs among all hi-tech workers only ranges from 2 per cent to 3 per cent, according to the IIA.

Integrating Arab professionals into hi-tech meets both the needs for economic growth and the government's employment goals for 2030, it noted.—Xinhua



A visitor uses a joystick to navigate through a virtual heart at a display by RealView Imaging, at the Israeli Expo technology exhibit at the Peres Centre for Peace and Innovation in the Israeli coastal city of Tel Aviv on 3 September 2019. **PHOTO: JACK GUEZ / AFP / FILE**

## Brazil economy minister renews spat with France over Amazon

IN decidedly undiplomatic language, Brazil's economy minister has renewed a spat with France over deforestation in the Amazon, telling the European nation it is becoming "irrelevant" and risks being told where to stick its criticism.

Following in the footsteps of his boss, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro — who mocked French First Lady Brigitte Macron's appearance amid a row with her husband, Emmanuel, over Amazon forest fires in 2019 — Economy Minister Paulo Guedes took the gloves off in comments to a business conference Tuesday.

"We had a minister visiting from France one time. 'You're burning the forest,' he said. I told him, 'You're burning Notre Dame,'" the iconic cathedral that caught fire in April 2019, Guedes said in a speech to the Brazilian Association of Bars and Restaurants in Brasilia.—AFP

# Nearly 370 mil. disposable cups used by Japan coffee chains in 2020

AN estimated 369.65 million disposable cups were used to serve drinks by nine major coffee chains in Japan in 2020 alone, highlighting limited progress in promoting reusable cups and cutting waste, according to a recent survey by an environmental conservation group.

Greenpeace Japan said the annual waste translates into 1 million single-use plastic and paper cups a day, which, if stacked on top of each other, are “equivalent to the height of more than 10,000 Mt. Fujis,” reaching an altitude of over 37,000 kilometres.

The group surveyed Starbucks, Tully’s Coffee, Pronto, Doutor, Caffe Veloce, Excelsior Caffe, Ueshima Coffee House,



Photo shows disposable plastic and paper cups used to serve drinks by nine major coffee chains in Japan. PHOTO: GREENPEACE JAPAN / KYODO

Cafe de Crie and Komeda, sending questionnaires, observing their shops and analyzing sales data and other records.

Starbucks is estimated to have consumed the largest number of disposal

cups, totaling around 231.7 million, of which some 142.1 million were plastic cups. It was followed by Tully’s Coffee at 72.5 million cups and Pronto at 35.3 million cups.

These three chains

mostly serve beverages in disposal cups even for customers drinking them at the chains’ shops, increasing their dependence on disposables as a result, according to Greenpeace.—Kyodo

# EV maker Rivian’s losses nearly triple to \$1.7 bn as production ramps up

ELECTRIC automaker Rivian on Thursday said its losses had nearly tripled to \$1.7 billion in the second quarter, but that it is on the road to meeting production goals.

The California-based maker of electric trucks, SUVs, and delivery vans said that it delivered 4,467 vehicles during the quarter, generating revenue of \$364 million compared to zero revenue in the same period a year earlier.

Rivian said it produced 6,954 vehicles in the first half of this year and is aiming to make a total of 25,000 vehicles by year’s end.

The company ended June with a backlog

of approximately 98,000 preorders from customers in Canada and the United States, according to an earnings letter to shareholders.

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives saw the rise in Rivian preorders as an encouraging sign, and felt the company was smoothing out vehicle production after a “bumpy” start.

“We believe this was another big step in the right direction for Rivian,” Ives told AFP.

“Customer demand looks strong as the Rivian team has resolved the supply chain issues that have plagued the company the last year.”—AFP

# Huawei revenue down 5.9% in first half of 2022

HUAWEI’S revenue dipped by just under six per cent in the first half of 2022, company figures showed Friday, as the Covid-19 pandemic and US-China trade rivalry hit sales.

The Chinese telecom giant brought in 301.6 billion yuan (\$44.8 billion), according to the data, a slip of

5.9 per cent on the previous year. “While our device business was heavily impacted, our ICT infrastructure business maintained steady growth,” Ken Hu, Huawei’s rotating chairman, said in a statement. Weak global demand due to the pandemic, as well as a 2019 US blacklisting that

snarled its supply chains, have hurt the company’s device business, which sells smartphones and laptops, a Huawei spokeswoman told AFP.

In the second quarter, Huawei lost its position among the top five global smartphone sellers, according to industry data

provider Canalys.

A supplier of networking equipment, phones, and other state-of-the-art gear, Huawei has struggled in the wake of a crackdown by the administration of former US president Donald Trump, which cited cybersecurity and espionage concerns.—AFP



Rivian says it has rolled out specially designed electric delivery vehicles with Amazon in more than a dozen US cities as part of an effort by the e-commerce giant to be more climate friendly. PHOTO: AFP

<p><b>The Global New Light of Myanmar</b> www.gnlm.com.mm</p> <p>သတင်းစာ ဖုန်းနံပါတ် အကူအညီ <b>09 454 237 515</b></p> <p>သတင်းစာ ဂျာနယ် စာစောင်များကို နိုင်ငံတကာစံချိန်စီ ပုံနှိပ်ပို့ပေးရန် အကူအညီ <b>01 860 4530</b></p> <p>ကြော်ငြာခွင့်များနှင့် ကြော်ငြာအခွင့်အလမ်းများ ကြော်ငြာ ထည့်သွင်းပို့ပေးရန် ထိုက်ရိုက်အကူအညီ ဆွေးနွေးနိုင်ပါသည် <b>09 974 424 848</b></p>	<p><b>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</b> M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (240N)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on <b>M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (240N)</b> are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on <b>13-8-2022</b> and cargo will be discharged into the premises of <b>MIP</b> where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: <b>2301185</b></p> <p><b>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</b></p> <p>Agent For: <b>M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES</b></p>	<p><b>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</b> M.V X-PRESS MEGHNA VOY.NO. (22014S)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on <b>M.V X-PRESS MEGHNA VOY.NO. (22014S)</b> are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on <b>13-8-2022</b> and cargo will be discharged into the premises of <b>AWPT</b> where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: <b>2301185</b></p> <p><b>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</b></p> <p>Agent For: <b>M/S X-PRESS FEEDERS LINES</b></p>
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# GLOBAL AFFAIRS

## Venezuelan delegation protests grounding of plane in Argentina

AN official Venezuelan delegation protested Thursday to Argentina's embassy in Caracas against the grounding of a plane and its crew in Buenos Aires since June.

The Boeing 747 cargo plane, owned by Venezuelan company Emtrasur, has been held in Argentina since it arrived on 8 June from Mexico with a shipment of auto parts, after having tried unsuccessfully to enter Uruguay.

Transport Minister Ramon Velasquez and pro-government lawmakers visited the embassy Thursday to protest, as a few dozen workers of state airline Conviasa gathered outside chanting:

“Return the plane and crew!”

The delegation was received by ambassador Oscar Laborde.

Back in Argentina, Judge Federico Villena on Thursday granted a request from the United States to seize the plane on the basis that laws were broken when it was sold by Iran to Venezuela — both countries under US sanctions, Telam news agency reported. Conviasa, which controls Emtrasur, is also sanctioned.

Last week, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro protested the US seizure request, which he said amounted to an attempt to “steal” the plane, and asked

Argentina for backing.

The United States' entry into the fray has given rise to street demonstrations in Venezuela.

### 'Puppet of imperialism'

The Venezuelan delegation handed a document to ambassador Laborde in which it protested the plane's continued detention.

“We gave the ambassador some communications so that the authorities, the counterparts in Argentina, can sit down and talk about the situation, find the best alternative and the best solution to this problem,” Velasquez said afterwards.—AFP



Workers of the Venezuelan airline Conviasa protest in front of the Argentine embassy in Caracas demanding the return of an Emtrasur cargo plane and its crew that were held in Argentina on 8 June under investigation, in Caracas, on 11 August 2022. PHOTO: YURI CORTEZ/AFP

### RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

## Donors pledge 1.5 billion euros more for Ukraine

A Ukraine donors' conference in Copenhagen of 26 countries pledged 1.5 billion euros (over \$1.5 billion) more aid for training and equipment for Kyiv's forces, the Danish defence minister said Thursday.

“All the participating nations here pledged for support,

for training activities, demining activities, some with concrete donations,” Morten Bodslov said.

“The 1.5 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) was brought to the table today. It's money that will be used in 2022, this year and next year,” he said during a news conference.

The exact amount promised by each of the 26 countries including France, Germany and the United States, was not published but Denmark announced a supplementary donation of \$114 million for Ukraine, bringing its total support to Kyiv to \$417 million.—AFP

## Moscow says Switzerland can't represent Kyiv in Russia



The Russian foreign ministry in downtown Moscow. PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA said on Thursday that Switzerland has lost its neutral status and cannot represent Ukraine diplomatically in Russia, blaming Bern's decision to impose sanctions on Moscow.

Switzerland said on Wednesday that Ukraine had asked Bern to represent it in Russia.

“Unfortunately, Switzerland has lost the status of a neutral state and cannot act either as a

mediator or as a representative of interests,” Russian foreign ministry spokesman Ivan Nechayev told reporters.

He confirmed that Bern had asked Russia if it would agree to Switzerland representing the interests of Ukraine in Russia and vice versa. Nechayev stressed that Switzerland had been supporting the Kyiv government and slapped sanctions on Russia.

“It is completely incomprehensible how one can offer mediation, representation or other goodwill services with such behaviour,” he added. Ever since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on 24 February, Switzerland — renowned for its neutrality — has said it stood ready to provide diplomatic assistance and to serve as a go-between.—AFP

### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

#### 'Grave hour' at Ukraine nuclear plant

THE head of the UN nuclear watchdog tells the Security Council that fighting near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant has sparked a “grave crisis”, after Kyiv and Moscow again accuse each other of shelling near the site.

“This is a serious hour, a grave hour and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) must be allowed to conduct its mission to Zaporizhzhia as soon as possible,” Rafael Grossi says.

Both the Russians and Ukrainians say radiation levels at the plant were normal. Ukraine's nuclear agency Energoatom says the latest strikes were close to one of the plant's six reactors and that radiation sensors were damaged. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urges the international community to “react immediately” to force Moscow's troops to leave the plant, denouncing “Russian nuclear blackmail” in his daily address to the nation.

#### First grain shipment to finally arrive

THE first grain ship to leave Ukraine under a UN-backed deal last week docks in Türkiye, marine traffic sites show, following a report that it has finally found a buyer for its maize.

The Sierra Leone-flagged Razoni left the Ukrainian port of Odessa on August 1 carrying 26,000 tonnes of corn and had been expected to dock in the Lebanese port of Tripoli last weekend.

But Ukrainian officials said the shipment's five-month delay caused by Russia's invasion prompted the Lebanese buyer to cancel the deal once the ship was already at sea.

An agreement signed by the warring parties with UN and Turkish officials in Istanbul last month lifted a Russian blockade of Ukraine's ports and established safe corridors through the mines laid by Kyiv to ward off any amphibious assault by Moscow.

#### Debt relief

UKRAINE'S lenders agree to a pause until 2024 for the payment of its \$20 billion debt, as its economy has been severely impacted by Russia's invasion, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal says.

A group of Western countries -- including Britain, France, Germany, Japan and the United States -- had already agreed on allowing Ukraine to postpone interest payments on its debt last month, and had called on others to join the effort. The World Bank estimated Ukraine's economy could contract by 45 per cent this year.

SOURCE: AFP

## South Korea pardons Samsung boss 'to help the economy'

THE heir and de facto leader of the Samsung group received a presidential pardon Friday, continuing South Korea's long tradition of freeing business leaders convicted of corruption on economic grounds. Billionaire Lee Jae-yong, convicted of bribery and embezzlement in January last year, will be "reinstated" to give him a chance to "contribute to overcoming the economic crisis" of the country, justice minister Han Dong-hoon said.

Lee — who has a net worth of \$7.9 billion, according to Forbes — was released on parole in August

2021, after serving 18 months in jail, just over half of his original sentence. Friday's pardon will allow him to fully return to work by lifting a post-prison employment restriction that had been set for five years. "Due to the global economic crisis, the dynamism and vitality of the national economy have deteriorated, and the economic slump is feared to be prolonged," the Justice Ministry said in a statement.

The pardon was given so that Lee — as well as other high-level executives receiving pardons Friday — could "lead the coun-

try's continuous growth engine through active investment in technology and job creation", it added. Three other high-profile businessmen were also pardoned, including Lotte Group chairman Shin Dong-bin, who was sentenced to a suspended two-and-half-year prison term in a bribery case in 2018.

A total of 1,693 people — including prisoners with terminal illnesses and those near the end of their terms — were on the pardon list, the ministry said, ahead of the annual Liberation Day anniversary Monday.—AFP



Samsung Electronics vice-chairman Lee Jae-yong, convicted of bribery and embezzlement in January 2021, was pardoned Friday. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

## Indian, Pakistani siblings reunite 75 years after Partition



Indian Sikh labourer Sika Khan (R) tearfully embraces his elder brother Sadiq Khan from Pakistan near the border at the Kartarpur corridor. **PHOTO: COURTESY OF NASIR DHILLON/AFP**

TEARS of joy rolled down his wizened cheeks when Indian Sika Khan met his Pakistani brother for the first time since being separated by Partition in 1947.

Sikh labourer Sika was just six months old when he and his elder brother Sadiq Khan were torn apart as Britain split the subcontinent at the end of colonial rule.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Partition, during which sectarian bloodshed killed possibly more than one million people, families like Sika's were cleaved apart and two independent nations — Pakistan and India — were created.

Sika's father and sister were killed in communal massacres, but Sadiq, just 10 years old, man-

aged to flee to Pakistan.

"My mother could not bear the trauma and jumped into the river and killed herself," Sika said at his simple brick house in Bhatinda, a district in the western Indian state of Punjab, which bore the brunt of Partition violence.

"I was left at the mercy of villagers and some relatives who brought me up." Ever since he was a child, Sika yearned to find out about his brother, the only surviving member of his family. But he failed to make headway until a doctor in the neighbourhood offered to help three years ago. The brothers finally met in January at Kartarpur corridor, a rare, visa-free crossing that allows Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit a temple in Pakistan.

The corridor, which opened in 2019, has become a symbol of unity and reconciliation for separated families, despite the lingering hostilities between the two nations.—AFP

## Iraq to provide Lebanon with fuel for another year: Lebanon PM

IRAQ has agreed to renew a one-year deal to provide Lebanon with fuel for its power plants in exchange for in-kind services, Lebanon's Prime Minister said in a statement Thursday.

Iraq signed an agreement in July 2021 to give cash-strapped Lebanon one million tonnes of fuel oil to help keep the lights on as the country grapples with power cuts up to 23 hours a day during an unprecedented economic crisis.

"The Iraqi government, headed by Mr Mustafa al-Kadhemi, approved in a meeting today... to extend the supply of fuel to Lebanon... for a period of one year, under the same conditions as before," Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati's office said in a statement.

For the past year, Lebanon's power plants have depended on the deal with Iraq to produce one to two hours of electricity per day.—AFP



For the past year, Lebanon's power plants have depended on the deal with Iraq to produce one to two hours of electricity per day. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Migrants to US turned into 'political pawns'

AFTER leaving Venezuela and travelling 41 days north, Gustavo Mendez is now among the migrants arriving in New York on buses chartered by Republican leaders who are vying to make a political point on US immigration policy.

The 40-year-old Mendez, a chef and programming techni-

cian, was one of hundreds of asylum seekers that the ultra-conservative Republican governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, bused north in a bid to pressure President Joe Biden's administration to crack down on border crossings.

Abbott who is seeking reelection in November's midterm vote -- has been sending mi-

grants to Washington for months and recently began pushing them to New York, two cities that lean heavily Democratic, a move dismissed by critics as a political tactic to rally conservative voters. On Wednesday, Manuel Castro, the commissioner of the New York mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, repeated that

notion as the latest buses arrived in the city, criticizing Abbott for "using human beings as political pawns" in an effort "to incite anti-immigrant sentiment." "This is a historic and unprecedented situation. Again, this is a political stunt by Governor Abbott," he said.

Castro condemned the be-

haviour and criticized a lack of communication from Texas officials, but insisted that "New York City is here to support the asylum-seekers that are arriving".

"Our priority is the wellbeing of these individuals and families. Many have arrived, thirsty, hungry and in need of medical attention."—AFP

South Korea pardons Samsung boss 'to help the economy' **PAGE-15**



# SPORT

## ISPE FC leaves for Thailand to compete in AFC Women's Club Championship 2022



THE AFC Women's Club Championship 2022 (EAST), which will be hosted by the Asian Football Confederation and Thailand, will take place in Chonburi, Thailand from 15 to 21 August.

ISPE FC Women's Football Club Leader and Director of Sports and Physical Educa-

tion Department Daw Soe Soe Myar, Team Administrator, Head Coach, Goal Coach and 23 players participated in the team.

The team left for Thailand from Yangon International Airport at 5:30 pm yesterday and officials saw off the team at the

airport. ISPE FC team will play against Taichung Blue Whale FC on 15 August, and Champion of 2022 Season THA FC on 18 August at Chonburi Stadium.

It was the first time that the Myanmar Football team had entered the competition. —Bala Soe/GNLM

## Myanmar team lose in 3<sup>rd</sup> place match of ASEAN U-16 tournament

IN the third match of the 2022 ASEAN U-16 Championship, Myanmar and Thailand played in Indonesia on 12 August, and Thailand won by three goals.

The Myanmar team, which showed good form throughout the tournament, won the group stage with first place. Having to play three games in five days between the semi-finals and the third round, the players were exhausted and did not show good form and were defeated. The Thai team won by scoring goals in the second half.

Team Myanmar did not make any major changes to the starting line-up and played with the usual players.

In the first half, the Thai team was able to play more pressingly, but both teams failed to capitalize on their opportunities, resulting in a scoreless draw in the first half. In the second half, the Myanmar team changed tactics, but



Myanmar players (red) battle for the ball against the Thai team during their 3<sup>rd</sup> place match of the AFF U-16 Championship held in Indonesia on 12 August 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

the Thai team scored more goals. The goals for the Thai team were scored by Ton Tawan in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute, Chanason in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute, and Katikan in the 90<sup>th</sup> + 3<sup>rd</sup> minute. The Myanmar team beat Australia and Cambodia in the group matches. After drawing with Malaysia and finishing first

in the group with seven points, they entered the semi-finals.

But in the semi-finals, the host Indonesia beat Myanmar in the penalty shoot-out and celebrated their victory. In the third match, Myanmar lost to Thailand and missed out on the bronze medal. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

## Late eagle lifts Kim to share of Memphis lead

SOUTH Korean Kim Si-woo holed out for eagle from the fairway at the 18th hole on Thursday to grab a share of the first-round lead alongside J.J. Spaun at the US PGA Tour St. Jude Championship.

Kim and Spaun both posted eight-under par 62 to open the tour's FedEx Cup playoffs, the three-tournament series that culminates with the Tour Championship where an \$18 million winner's prize will be on offer.—AFP

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

#### 1. Political affairs

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

#### 2. Economic affairs

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

#### 3. Social affairs

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

## Qatar's ground control on alert for World Cup disasters



Ready for lift off: The Aspire control and command centre will monitor stadiums at the World Cup. **PHOTO: AFP**

FACING a bank of screens that look like NASA mission command, technicians counting down to the World Cup in Qatar control the temperature, gates, 15,000 cameras and much more in the eight stadiums.

The Aspire control and command centre will monitor all stadiums at once, as Qatar pulls out all the technical stops to keep an eye on the anticipated one million plus visitors from the

moment they get off the plane to moment they leave.

Qatar has spent billions of dollars on building seven new stadiums and refurbishing an eighth for the first World Cup in an Arab country. It has seized on the uniquely short distance between them -- barely 70 kilometres (43 miles) separate the two most distant venues -- to set up the elaborate virtual network.—AFP