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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 45, 9th Waning of Kason 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Thursday, 3 June 2021

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to Sayadaw of Myazedi Buddhist Learning Centre, Kyaikthallan Pagoda in Mawlamyine, inspects progress of sports park in Mon State



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is supplicating the religious and health matters to Mawlamyine Dhammacariya Vinaya Pali Paragu Agga Maha Pandita Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vimalabuddhi yesterday.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Council members, Union ministers and officials, yesterday morning paid homage to Presiding Patron of Myazedi Pariyatti Buddhist Learning Centre in Maunggan Ward of Mawlamyine Dhammacariya Vinaya Pali Paragu Agga Maha Pandita Sayadaw

Bhaddanta Vimalabuddhi and supplicated religious and health measures.

The Senior General and wife, Council members, Union ministers and senior military officers from the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) donated 200 bags of rice, 300 visses of cooking oil, 300 visses of gram and cash for nine prerequisites to the Sayadaw, who returned Dhamma gifts and religious advice.

The Senior General, wife and party on 31 May paid homage to Kyaikthallan Pagoda in Mawlamyine in Mon State and viewed the placing of marble tiles on the platform and the preservation of ancient historical religious works.

Yesterday morning, the Senior General and party inspected progress in implementing the Mon State sports park project near Min Village of Mawlamyine. Chairman of Mon State Adminis-

tration Council U Zaw Lin Tun, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports U Myo Hlaing and officials reported to the Senior General on the progress of works.

In his response, the Senior General gave instructions on an extension of the road for the convenience of travellers to the sports park, construction of buildings meeting set standard, searching for the public access site to build the swimming pool, construction of the car park for

those leading to the sports competitions and other necessities.

The Senior General and party inspected preparations to upgrade the Shwenattaung Station stadium. After hearing the reports of officials, the Senior General instructed them to emphasize upgrading tasks meeting the set standards and efficient use of land plots for hosting the sports meets and friendly matches in the future. —MNA

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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.

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.

Ministry of Planning and Finance Internal Revenue Department

Announcement on applying electronic payment systems instead of cash/cheque for tax payment of taxpayer companies to the State

1. Under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Internal Revenue Department arranges easy and rapid tax payment ways for taxpayer people through electronic payment, mobile banking, mobile payment, MPU Debit Card online, and links with relevant banks.
2. The taxpayer, who has received taxpayer identification number-TIN, can pay income tax, commercial tax, special commodity tax, and gem tax to the banking accounts of relevant tax office at the branches of Myanma Economic Bank from their bank A/C opened at private banks including foreign bank branches in Myanmar with the use of CBM-NET of the Central Bank of Myanmar or <https://onlinepayment.ird.gov.mm/etax> which is the online tax payment system of using MPU Debit Card.
3. Income tax payment of staff from the companies paying tax at the Large Taxpayer Office or Medium Taxpayer Office can be paid to the banking accounts of the respective tax offices through electronic payments, mobile banking and mobile payments or MPU Debit Cards.
4. Relevant private banks will issue the initial documents for payment as evidence of paying tax from the banking accounts of companies through electronic payment methods, mobile banking and mobile payment or payment from MPU Debit Card. After receiving the tax payment in the accounts, the Internal Revenue Department will send the e-payment to the taxpayers on completion of paying the tax.
5. The taxpayers who have opened the banking accounts at the State-owned banks can pay tax through cash/cheque and account transfer.
6. Hence, Income tax payment for staff of the taxpayers and the companies which pay tax at the Large Taxpayer Office and the medium taxpayer offices in Yangon, except for the taxpayers who opened bank accounts at the State-owned banks, will apply easier and smoother electronic payment systems instead of cash/cheque payment system as of 1 July in 2020-21 financial year. So, the department requested the taxpayers to cooperate in the process.
7. For further information, taxpayers may contact-
 - (a) Tax service office (Nay Pyi Taw)
Office No. 46, Internal Revenue Department, Nay Pyi Taw
Tel: 067-3430533 and 067-3430522
 - (b) Tax service office (Yangon)
No 59/61 (first floor), Pansodan Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon
Tel: 01-378370 and 01-378372
 - (c) Information and Technology Branch (e-payment section)
No 569/577, corner of Merchant Street and Baha Bandoola Park Street
Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Tel: 01-8379021.

Internal Revenue Department

72 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 June, total figure rises to 143,823

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **143,823** after **72 new cases** were reported on 2 June 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,388** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 3,218 after one died. —MNA

Tatmadaw values democracy

THE Union ministers need to explain voting frauds and the situation of voter lists in the 2020 general election to the service personnel. All State service personnel need to understand the political crises based on the dishonesty of democracy in the previous general election, although the Tatmadaw values democracy.

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 21 May 2021)

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to Sayadaw of Myazedi Buddhist Learning Centre, Kyaikthallan Pagoda in Mawlamyine, inspects progress of sports park in Mon State

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Cash donations to the Kyaikthallan Pagoda.



At the navy base.



At the sports park.



At the military station playground.

Union Minister meets KSEZ Management Committee in Nay Pyi Taw

DR PWINT HSAN, Union Minister for Commerce, received Chairman U Myint Thein of Management Committee of Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (KSEZ) and party at the meeting hall of the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the chairman and officials reported on the current progress of the KSEZ and its future plans.

The Union minister pointed out the need to conduct with

care of the implementation of the agreement on Kyaukpyu Deep-Sea Port's project and carry out Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

The Union minister urged them to emphasize not harming the local people's interests, raising the living standards, getting the tax for the State, and avoiding losses. He also affirmed that the Ministry would provide necessary assistance in order to undertake the project successfully.—MNA



Announcement of Union Election Commission

2 June 2021



1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes in Kunhing, Mongshu, Maukmai, Mongpan, Namtu, Namhsan and Mantung townships in Shan State.
2. According to the inspection, the previous election commission released 232,182 eligible voters in these seven townships in Shan State. The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population list in November 2020 showed 195,470 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 46,594 citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 694 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times, and 13,858 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
3. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on voter lists in each township							
Sr	Township	Total polling station	Township sub-com-mission	List from Immigration department	Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards	Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC	Those involved in voter list more than two times hold-ing one CSC
1	Kunhing	44	45,750	25,699	15,522	106	2,658
2	Mongshu	45	52,444	29,296	17,016	104	2,060
3	Maukmai	32	22,203	19,888	1,450	73	1,550
4	Mongpan	26	13,346	17,499	1,072	24	572
5	Namtu	48	33,658	32,936	2,572	163	2,736
6	Namhsan	51	40,388	47,931	4,077	127	2,546
7	Mantung	37	24,393	22,221	4,885	97	1,736
	Total	283	232,182	195,470	46,594	694	13,858

4. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Kunhing, Mongshu, Maukmai, Mongpan, Namtu, Namhsan and Mantung townships in Shan State together with the respective township election sub-commissions, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrators in accordance with Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law.
5. According to the inspection, a total of 283 polling stations in these seven townships took out 264,392 ballots and used 140,648 ballots. It left 123,667 ballots instead of 123,744 ballots. The difference was 1,436 ballots, and it found 1,359 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township								
Sr	Township	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Kunhing	44	50,546	22,078	28,468	28,603	86	221
2	Mongshu	45	57,015	25,385	31,630	31,842	822	1,034
3	Maukmai	32	25,989	18,381	7,608	7,524	87	3
4	Mongpan	26	15,664	11,239	4,425	4,426		1
5	Namtu	48	35,878	24,389	11,489	11,398	191	100
6	Namhsan	51	51,000	25,238	25,762	25,562	200	
7	Mantung	37	28,300	13,938	14,362	14,312	50	
	Total	283	264,392	140,648	123,744	123,667	1,436	1,359

6. According to the inspections on voter lists of these seven townships of Shan State, the numbers of eligible voters are more 36,712 than the voter lists according to the lists of citizens, associate citizens and, naturalized citizens who had turned 18 in November 2020 of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and Hluttaw Election Law Section 6 (a).
7. There are 46,594 non-identity voters. Moreover, Hluttaw Election Law Section (15) (c) in Chapter VI, “Preparation of Voting Roll”, stated, “Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time.” However, there were 694 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 13,858 persons repeated on the voter lists two times in these seven townships of Shan State.
8. Findings from the inspection of voter lists and casting of votes in Kunhing, Mongshu, Maukmai, Mongpan, Namtu, Namhsan and Mantung townships in Shan State are as follows:
- (a) There were 141,330 voters, and they used 140,648 ballots out of all withdrawals, which was 682 less than the numbers of voters.
- (b) A total of 1,436 ballot papers were missing.
- (c) 1,359 extra ballot papers were found in some polling stations.
- (d) Voters were allowed to vote without the permanent signature or the fingerprint of the voter in the voter list Form (1).
- (e) In some polling stations, voters were allowed to vote without filling the voter name, voter list number, polling station number, ward/village name, signature or fingerprint in the receipt ballot paper.
- (f) Ward/village tract election sub-commission failed to return the receipt ballot papers and extra ballot papers under the law.
- (g) Voters without national identification card were included in the voter list and they were allowed to vote just with the voter IDs.
- (h) Advance voting was conducted illegally.
- (i) They released the COVID-19 related instructions, which were not in conformity with the law, to collect voter lists and advance votes when the election drew near.
9. It found voting frauds in Kunhing, Mongshu, Maukmai, Mongpan, Namtu, Namhsan and Mantung townships in Shan State. The excess/shortage ballots were found in the inspection. They failed to follow the stipulations of the Hluttaw Election Law and Rules.

Union Election Commission

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health and Sports
Order No 124/2021

8th Waning of Kason 1383 ME
2 June 2021

The Ministry of Health and Sports hereby announced the order by exercising the authority stipulated in Sub-Section (b) of Section 21 of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports has taken preventive measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in real-time. Therefore, people from Kalay Township of Sagaing Region need to stay at home due to the number of confirmed patients on the rise in the township.
2. Hence, the people residing in Kalay Township of the Sagaing Region are involved in the Stay-at-Home programme.
3. The people inclusive of the Stay-at-Home programme of the township need to abide by the following disciplines:
 - (a) Reside at their homes only (except for the persons going to government departments, organizations, companies, factories and workshops for serving duties);
 - (b) Arrange only one person from each house to go out shopping;
 - (c) Arrange only two persons per house to go to hospitals and clinics;
 - (d) Wear masks if they go outside the houses;
 - (e) Allow ferries and registered vehicles to transport returnees from workplaces to pass the wards;
 - (f) Allow one person only in addition to the driver in a vehicle for shopping in the ward and two persons except for the driver to go to hospitals or clinics.
4. People need to inform the relevant ward administration bodies about seeking approvals to go outside the houses if they have reasons in order to raise the limited number of participants in the measures and other emergency issues mentioned in sub-paragraph (b), (c) and (f) of Paragraph 3. The relevant administrative bodies need not allow ingoing and outgoing persons, except officials and those returnees from duty.
5. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the order under the existing laws.
6. The order came into force at 4 am on 3-6-2021.

Dr Thet Khaing Win
Union Minister

National committee on prevention and response to sexual violence in conflict holds meeting (2/2021)



THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held the second meeting of the National Committee for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw. At the meeting, Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine said

the national-level action plan was discussed in the committee's first meeting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has submitted suggestions on it. At the same time, it was further disseminated to the members of the National Committee for comment. The meeting aimed to approve the discussions on the suggestions, and the national action plan will be submitted to the State Administration Council for approval. The Vice-Chair of the committee, Deputy Minister for Defence, said the Myanmar Tatmadaw is abiding by military laws and regulations to prevent sexual violence during the conflict as well as by international laws such as international humanitarian law or war law. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed his ministry's suggestions on the national action plan on prevention and response of sexual violence in conflict. The members of the National Committee participated in the discussion. All National Committee members agreed on the discussion of the National Action Plan and decided to seek further approval. — MNA

Myanmar attends ASEAN disaster management workshop

THE ASEAN Disaster Management Workshop between ASEAN Sectoral Organizations and Related Organizations was held yesterday morning in Jakarta, Indonesia, through video-conferencing. A delegation led by Deputy-Attorney-General U San Lwin, Chairman of the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM), attended the workshop. The workshop discussed situations and outcomes related to disaster management in the ASEAN region, the role of the Joint Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (JTF HADR), implementation of disaster management activities and the need to strengthen the JTF-HADR's future plans. — MNA



Over 250,000 students learning on 2nd day of school in Yangon Region



OF 384,268 student enrolments in Yangon Region, a total of 256,818 students attended basic education schools, monastic education schools and private schools, on 2 June, according to the Region Education Department.

The Ministry of Education set the school enrolment date from 24 to 31 May, and schools reopened on 1 June nationwide. Schools are prepared following the 33 COVID-19 guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports, making

students 6 feet apart from one another in the classroom.

Despite the entire preparation to reopen the schools, parents are still considering sending their kids to school.

“I didn’t send my child to school because I was worried

yesterday due to the rumour on Facebook. But when I sent my child today, the school looks normal, and officials are waiting at school,” said a student’s parent living in South Okkalapa Township.

Including four practising

high schools of the University of Education, 17 2758 basic education schools, 230 monastic education schools and 273 private schools are opening currently in Yangon Region.—MNA

Schools continue accepting enrolment while students study peacefully in Nay Pyi Taw

AFTER the nationwide reopening of schools since 1 June, students are returning to classrooms and studying in peace, and schools continue to accept the application for the 2021-2022 academic year in Nay Pyi Taw.

Many applicants have enrolled during the enrolment week to attend high schools, middle schools, and primary schools in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. Schools are still open of applications of students who have not yet enrolled due to various reasons, Headmaster U Win Khine of the Basic Education Middle School (3), Nay Pyi Taw said.

“Our school had a 69% attendance rate as of 1 June,



ucation High School said, “The enrolment rate of our school is about 80%, and we continue to accept new applications.”

Due to cooperation among the Government, ward/village administration bodies and parents, school reopening was smooth with the arrangement of school buses and classrooms in line with the COVID-19 guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Students are provided with textbooks, learning materials, and COVID-19 preventive gears by the Government. Myanmar Police Force, township administration bodies, and community-based security groups provide security for the safety of students and



and we also continue to accept enrolment for students during the school opening hours. It is

the student’s right to attend school,” he added.

The school accepted 34

new students yesterday, and a total of 530 students at various level attended the schools

in two shifts.

The Headmistress in-charge of the No (6) Basic Ed-

teachers at schools. – Ye Ko Ko/GNLM

Children happily go to schools nationwide



Dawei Town, Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD



Ingapu Township



Pakokku, Magway Region. PHOTO: THU RA (PONTAUNG)



Myinmu Town, Sagaing. PHOTO: AUNG SOE PHAY (MYINMU)



Kyaukdaga Town, Bago Region. PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD



Kyaikmaraw Town, Mon State. PHOTO: CHO MYAT MYAT HTWE (IPRD)



Kyunhla Town, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MYO WIN NYO(KYUNHLA)



Thayetchaung, Dawei District, Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: THAYETCHAUNG (IPRD)



Ngaphe Town, Magway Region. PHOTO: MA YU (NGAPHE)



Wundwin Town, Mandalay Region. PHOTO: WUNDWIN (IPRD)

People need to change mindset in democratization

PEOPLE from various countries that start walking along the path of democracy need to carefully exercise the prescribed laws, rules, and disciplines. Hence, it is sure that democratic people have to enjoy rights and liability.

Democratic people don't have to bully any others whose concepts differ from theirs'. Especially, they have to approve the sentiments the majority aspire, but they need to emphasize the wishes of the minority. So, if necessary, the majority needs to approve the wishes

Democratization should be implemented to change the mindset of the people in conformity with the rights and liability. Only when the people change their mindset, can they march toward the goal of democracy successfully.

Actually, democracy is a good ethic concerned with all the people exercising political doctrines. Anyone should not tarnish the image of democracy to be manipulated as they like. The colourful democracy never achieves success. Likewise, the democracy exercised by the persons under the colours will never achieve success.

Democratization should be implemented to change the mindset of the people in conformity with the rights and liability. Only when the people change their mindset, can they march toward the goal of democracy successfully.

That is why anyone loving democracy should keep dos and don'ts in their souls for shaping the progress and prosperous country.

■ ■ ■

WHO approves China's Sinovac Covid jab

THE World Health Organization on Tuesday approved the Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use -- the second Chinese jab to receive the WHO's green light.

The UN health agency signed off on the Beijing-based firm Sinovac's two-dose vaccine CoronaVac, which is already being deployed in several countries around the world.

"I'm happy to announce that the Sinovac-CoronaVac vaccine has been given WHO emergency use listing after being found to be safe, effective, and quality-assured," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference.

"The easy storage requirements of CoronaVac make it very suitable for low-resource settings," he added.

"It's now crucial to get these life-saving tools to the people that need them quickly."

The WHO said the emergency use listing (EUL) gives countries, funders, procuring agencies and communities assurance that the vaccine has met international standards.



Workers arrange vaccine packages at a Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine workshop in Beijing on 18 January, 2021.

PHOTO: ZHANG YUWEI/XINHUA

Last month Sinopharm became the first Chinese vaccine to be approved by the WHO.

The organization has also given EUL status to vaccines being made by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and the AstraZeneca jab being produced in India, South Korea

and the EU, which it counts separately.

WHO's listing paves the way for countries worldwide to approve and import a vaccine for distribution quickly, especially those states without an international-standard regulator of their own.

It also opens the door for the jabs to enter the Covax global vaccine-sharing facility, which aims to provide equitable access to doses around the world, particularly in poorer countries.

Currently only AstraZeneca and some Pfizer jabs are flowing through the scheme.

"The world desperately needs multiple Covid-19 vaccines to address the huge access inequity across the globe," said Mariangela Simao, the WHO's assistant director general for access to health products.

"We urge manufacturers to participate in the Covax facility, share their know-how and data and contribute to bringing the pandemic under control."

Efficacy rate

"WHO recommends the vaccine for use in adults 18 years and older, in a two-dose schedule with a spacing of two to four weeks," the agency said in a statement.

"Vaccine efficacy results showed that the vaccine prevented symptomatic disease in 51 per cent of those vaccinated and prevented severe Covid-19 and hospitalization in 100 per cent of the studied population."

The Sinovac vaccine contains an inactivated form of coronavirus that cannot cause the disease. It also has a substance that helps strengthen the immune response to the vaccine.

When given the shot, the im-

mune system identifies the inactivated virus as foreign and makes antibodies against it, which will then recognise the active virus and defend the body against it.

Few people aged over 60 took part in the clinical trial of Sinovac's jab.

However, the WHO said there should be no upper age limit on the vaccine as there is "no reason to believe it has a different safety profile" in older generations.

The Sinovac jab is already in use in 22 territories around the world, according to an AFP count.

Apart from China, the countries using Sinovac include Chile, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand and Turkey.

Chen Xu, China's ambassador in Geneva, said CoronaVac's EUL status expanded the number of global tools to fight the pandemic.

"China will continue to work with the international community to promote the accessibility and affordability of Covid-19 vaccines especially in (the) developing world," he said in a tweet.

SOURCE: AFP

IMF, World Bank prioritize vaccine access to end pandemic

AFTER kicking their massive lending powers into overdrive to help the nations hardest hit by Covid-19 last year, the IMF and the World Bank are now focusing on getting vaccines to poor countries to keep the pandemic from derailing the global economic recovery.

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva is spearheading a \$50 billion joint effort with the World Health Organization to expand vaccine access, particularly for impoverished nations that have struggled to get the crucial jabs.

Georgieva will on Friday present the proposal, which was unveiled late last month and backed by the World Bank and World Trade Organization, to finance ministers from the G7 wealthiest nations during a meeting in London.

Early in the Covid-19 crisis, the IMF and World Bank warned the pandemic would set back poor countries' progress, causing increased inequality and a resurgence of poverty.

Now the Washington-based lenders are sounding the alarm that unequal access to vaccines

will prolong a pandemic that has already killed more than 3.5 million people worldwide.

Low-income countries have received less than one per cent of the doses administered to date, resulting in a "dangerous divergence" in economic fortunes, Georgieva warned.

As a result, it will take years for some countries to claw their way back to pre-pandemic levels. Economies in Latin America and the Caribbean will not regain their previous per-capita income until 2024, the IMF projected.

'All the firepower'

The IMF and the World Bank "early on understood that the crisis and the economic recession... would be very broad and very deep," said Homi Kharas, an economist at the Brookings Institution.

They pushed the G20 and private creditors to suspend debt payments for dozens of low-income countries.

"That was the first major step in ensuring that the pandemic didn't trigger a debt crisis that could have longer term consequences," Kharas said in an

interview.

The IMF itself extended direct debt relief to 29 of its "poorest and most vulnerable members", doubled its emergency funding limits and tripled its concessional resources.

"The IMF stepped up as never before, lending some \$110 billion in the first year of the pandemic," fund spokesman Gerry Rice told AFP.

"Lending to sub-Saharan Africa in the first year of the pandemic was 13 times the annual average." Meanwhile, the World Bank has committed over \$108 billion during the pandemic in more than 100 countries to respond to "the fastest and largest crisis" in the institution's history, the bank's chief of operations Axel van Trotsenburg said.

"We are using all the firepower we have," he said in an email.

However, critics note that help for middle-income countries has lagged.

"These countries, including many in Latin America, had really been almost left to themselves, to their own devices," since they are not eligible for the debt service

suspension initiative nor the low-cost loans available to the poorest countries, Kharas said.

On the table

Georgieva herself recently recognized the need to review lending criteria to reach these economies, but the priority now has moved to the effort to immunize at least 40 per cent of the world's population by the end of



The reintroduction of lockdown measures across Europe is fuelling concerns that the region could suffer another disappointing summer tourism season if vaccinations do not speed up enough to allow travel restrictions to be eased. PHOTO: APA/AFP/ANDREA PATTARO

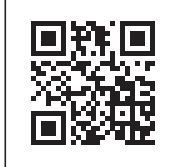
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Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 2 June 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea, South Bay, Eastcentral Bay and Northeast Bay of Bengal. Weather is a few cloud to partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 3 June 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin, and Northern Shan states, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, scattered in Lower Sagaing and Mandalay regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Rakhine, and Mon states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of advancement of Southwest Monsoon into the Northern Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 June 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 June 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 June 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Panmawady bridge connecting Myaungmya-Pathein to be upgraded



THE Panmawady Bridge, the main connecting bridge between Myaungmya and Pathein in Ayeyawady Region, will be upgraded to Steel Box Girder bridge to withstand a load capacity of 60 tonnes.

The bridge used to be able to carry up to 35 tonnes before, but only 16 tonnes can pass through

the bridge now. It is reported that ferry boats are arranged to make it easy for the travellers during the upgrading works.

It is expected to complete the construction by 31 May 2022, and the project will be implemented by the Bridge Special Task Force (15) with K6,600 million. — Maung Maung Myint (IPRD)/GNLM

It is expected to complete the construction by 31 May 2022, and the project will be implemented by the Bridge Special Task Force (15) with K6,600 million.

About 1,500 trucks stuck along Muse-Kyinsankyawt road with 20 days delay amid COVID-19

THE heightened security measures during the COVID-19 caused major delays to 20 days along Muse 105th-mile Road and Kyinsankyawt post. About 1,500 trucks are stuck on the road, said U Min Thein, vice-chair of Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

Kyinsankyawt border checkpoint is only 7 miles away from Muse 105th-mile trade zone of Myanmar.

“The goods are delivered through Kyinsankyawt post. The traffic congestion is getting worse. Although the road part is only 7 miles away, 1,500 trucks have queued on the road. Normally, it took only a day for freight transport. At present, truck drivers have to wait for 20 days,” said U Min Thein.

Consequently, it takes about a month for rice export to China via Yangon. However, the traders

benefit from it owing to the gain in yuan value. A yuan is worth K242 for now.

According to Muse Rice Wholesale Centre, the broken rice fetched 117 Yuan per bag. The low-quality rice was priced at 126-135 Yuan per bag depending on varieties (Ngasein, Yadanartoe and Shindong).

China Customs granted licences to 47 Myanmar companies on 26 February 2021 to legally export the rice to China through Muse land border this year,

The authorized companies for rice export to China increased this year as against last year. However, the permitted volume of rice for exports has not been confirmed yet. Myanmar traders are shipping rice to China through the Muse border under new permits at present. — NN/ GNLM

Exceptional twinning teak plants found in Sagaing Region

ACCORDING to the Department of Forest, two teak trees under the age of 100 are growing together near Shwe Kyaung village, on the way to Kanan Sait area in Bamauk Township, Sagaing Region.

Though the trees are not yet a hundred-year-old according to their size, it is exceptional to find the twinning teak trees. The Department will cooperate with the locals to conserve the trees.

A chief monk from the Kanan Sait area said mature teak trees growing naturally in the same size and height as one another are reportedly hard to find due to the illegal loggers and natural disaster.

He added that conservation would be made to them as this type of valuable trees will less likely to find in the



Kyaukkyi Town.



Bamauk Township.

future.

Similarly, the Forest Department will also make an effort to continue to maintain

two twinning teak trees growing in the Muslim cemetery in Kyaukkyi Town, in Bago Region. — Ngwe Oh (Katha)/GNLM

YIA extends suspension of all incoming international flights till 30 June



Bird's Eye View of Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: YIA

YANGON International Airport (YIA) has extended the suspension of all incoming international flights until 30 June 2021, announced the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

During the suspension of all international commercial passenger flights because of the COVID-19 period, YIA gave its services to other cargo planes or flights and relief flights.

IndiGo airline has completed 100 trips to

transport cargo in the suspension period of COVID-19.

Department of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Health and Sports announced that scheduled international passenger services had been suspended in Myanmar since 30 March 2020 due to the pandemic.

However, for those who will come to Myanmar by relief flights over an emergency government duty or an emergency reason, foreigners, in-

cluding diplomats and the officers and staff from UN agencies, need to contact Myanmar embassies in foreign countries or consulates in Myanmar to lift the visa restrictions.

Furthermore, Myanmar Airways International (MAI) and Air KBZ have suspended their domestic flight operations to Tachilek, Kalay, Kengtung, Dawei, Myeik and Kawthoung Townships from 29 May to 8 June during the pandemic period. — ZYA/GNLM

Amata Holding Public Company debuts on YSX today (3 June)

THE Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd (AMATA) is listed on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) on 3 June 2021 at the base price of K4,500 per unit. Its share trading is made on the same day, according to the recent notice released by YSX.

The upper limit price is set at K5,500, while the lower is at K3,500. If investors place a market order, it can be matched between the upper and lower limit price based on the balance of supply and demand.

After scrutinizing submitted application documents and a deliberate listing examination, YSX approved the Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd. (AMATA) to be listed on YSX under Section 41 (c) of the Securities Exchange Law and Section 7 and 8 of the Securities Listing Business Regulations, on 28 December 2020. Earlier, it was earlier scheduled to debut on the exchange on 12 March.

YSX has postponed the scheduled date of listing of the



The Yangon bourse is trading the shares of seven companies, including Amata, to date.

Amata Holding Public Co., Ltd. (AMATA) for a certain period, according to the YSX notification dated 26 February 2021.

AMATA is the very first hotel and tourism business to be listed in

the equity market. The base price of AMATA will be announced on the YSX website one working day prior to the listing date.

On 18 July 2018, the company issued a prospectus in which 596

investors held 497,598 shares at an offering price of K5,000 per unit.

AMATA would be the seventh public company to list on the exchange. AMATA is a public

holding company as per the company's profile. It operates resorts in Ngapali Beach, Inlay Lake and Bagan, and a hot air ballooning business with 15 balloons in six cities.

AMATA owns 99.99% share from United International Group Co., Ltd and 51% shares from Myanmar Ballooning Co., Ltd.

At present, shares of six listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH) and the Ever Flow River Group Public Co. Ltd (EFR) are traded on the exchange.

On 2 June 2021, the share prices of FMI were closed at K9,000 per unit, MTSH at K3,500, MCB at K7,800, FPB at K19,000, TMH at K2,750 and EFR at K2,950, respectively. Usually, over K60 million worth of shares were traded on the exchange every day. The COVID-19 impacts cooled down the market. —KH/GNLM

Corn price hikes up in Mandalay market due to strong demand

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

Prior to Thingyan Festival in April, the corn fetched K28,000 per three-basket bag. Both the foreign demand and domestic demand prompted the sellers to raise the prices starting from the first week of May. Following a gradual upward trend, the corn was priced at K31,000 per bag on 27 May, Soe Win Myint depot from Mandalay stated.

"The mills resume their businesses and start buying the corn to be used as raw material. The increased demand dove the price up in the market. The growers, as well as the traders, are satisfied with the current price. The growers need to manage fall armyworm that can threaten corn production in rainy season", the owner of Soe Win Myint depot stressed.

Myanmar's corn exports to foreign countries generated more than US\$246.9 million in the first five months (Oct-Feb) of the cur-

rent financial year 2020-2021, Myanmar Customs Department's statistics showed.

Myanmar's corn exports by sea have come to an end due to the lack of demand, said Chair U Min Khaing of Myanmar Corn Industrial Association said.

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

Thailand gives the green light to corn imports through Maesot under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August.

Thailand has granted tax exemption on corn imports between February and August. However, Thailand imposed a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn import in order to protect the rights of their growers if the corns are imported during the corn season of Thailand, as per the notification of the World Trade Organization regarding corn import of Thailand, said a corn exporter.

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

Myanmar is the second-largest exporter of corn among regional countries. Corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons- winter, summer and monsoon. The country yearly produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corns.

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

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

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

YGEA strives for gold market stability

MYANMAR gold market has risen along with the dollar gain in the local forex market. Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) reportedly decided not to sell the gold to those who influence and manipulate the gold market.

The decision was made at the monthly meeting of the YGEA held May-end.

"The main point is not to sell those traders who practise market manipulation. Only gold retailers and gold shops from regions and states are available to buy the gold. It's an attempt to control the price as well," U Win Myint, general secretary of YGEA, pointed out.

The precious yellow metal fetched K1,568,000 per tical (0.578 ounces or 0.016 kilograms) in May-end. The price of pure gold slightly increased to K1,573,000

per tical on 1 June. The price will not fluctuate widely on account of the concerted efforts.

The domestic gold market was bullish, tracking the dollar gains in the local forex market. The price reached an all-time high of K1,706,000 per tical on 12 May, while the dollar exchange rate against Kyat strengthened up to K1,760. The rate is recorded as the highest in history.

At the monthly meeting, U Myo Myint, chair of YGEA, delivered an opening remark, and the patron U San Lwin also remarked. Secretary U Win Myint discussed ways to stabilize the gold price with the members of the YGEA. The association concluded to avoid bulk sale with gold shops and stop selling them to those traders who purposely manipulate the market. —Myint Maung/GNLM



NEWS
IN BRIEF

Italians aghast as notorious mafia killer Brusca released

ITALIANS were outraged Tuesday after a notorious mob boss was released from prison, where he served 25 years for a string of grim crimes, including assassinating a famous prosecutor and dissolving a boy's body in acid.

Giovanni Brusca, 64, was released Monday from Rome's Rebibbia prison after serving a 25-year sentence, during which he became a state's witness. He will now serve four years of probation.

"Brusca freed -- the cruellest boss," wrote La Repubblica daily.

But while some politicians and relatives of his victims denounced his release, others defended it given his cooperation with the authorities.

Brusca was a key figure within the Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian mafia group. — AFP ■

Austria far-right party head resigns after infighting

NORBERT Hofer, the leader of Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), announced his resignation Tuesday after weeks of infighting and tension with party colleague and former Interior Minister Herbert Kickl.

"My own journey at the helm of the FPÖ is ending today," Hofer said in an FPÖ press release but clarified that he will keep his position as one of the deputy presidents of parliament until the next general election, currently scheduled for 2024.

Hofer has a mild-mannered public image and was seen as representing a more moderate wing within the anti-migration FPÖ, which has been known to use Islamophobic rhetoric and imagery.

Hofer had for months been at loggerheads with Kickl, the party's longterm ideologue who has been behind some of the FPÖ's most trenchant campaigns. — AFP ■

11 TPP members to start talks concerning Britain's entry



Screenshot image shows ministers from the 11-member Trans-Pacific Partnership countries holding an online meeting of the Commission, the TPP's highest decision-making body, on June 2, 2021. PHOTO: KYODO

THE 11 members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership decided Wednesday to start negotiations for Britain's entry into the regional free trade agreement, a Japanese minister said.

The members made the decision in a virtual meeting of the TPP Commission, the group's top decision-making body chaired by Japan this year, Yasutoshi Nishimura, Japan's

minister in charge of TPP negotiations, told reporters.

Britain filed a request in February to join what is formally called the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP, in a push to expand the country's trade links with the Asia-Pacific region after leaving the European Union last year.

London was the first accession applicant by a member outside the participating countries. China, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand have also expressed interest in joining the free-trade bloc.

The TPP members wel-

comed London's entry negotiations, saying in a joint statement the start of the accession process "provides an opportunity to advance the CPTPP's high-standard rules for the 21st century and further promote free trade, open and competitive markets and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond."

The TPP member countries and Britain are expected to set up a working group within several months to discuss tariffs as well as trade and investment rules, but a decision on whether Britain will join the framework could come next year or later.

— Kyodo News ■

Iran navy ship sinks after fire in Gulf of Oman, crew safe

AN Iranian naval vessel sank in the Gulf of Oman Wednesday after efforts to put out a fire failed, but the crew safely disembarked, the navy said.

The fleet replenishment tanker Kharg had caught fire on Tuesday near the port of Jask on the Gulf of Oman.

The fire broke out in "one of the systems" of the vessel, a navy statement said without elaborating.

Firefighting efforts continued "for 20 hours" before the ship went down, it said.

"Considering the spread of the fire, the mission to save the Kharg failed and it sank in waters off Jask."

It added that the vessel had left for a "training mission" in international waters days ago.

Last year, an Iranian war-



In this photo the Iranian Kharg 431 supply navy ship is seen docked in the Red Sea Sudanese town of Port Sudan PHOTO: ASHRAF SHAZLY/ AFP/FILE

ship was hit by friendly fire during a naval exercise off Jask, killing the 19 sailors onboard.

The port lies close to the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic chokepoint at the head of the

Gulf through which a fifth of world oil output passes.

Jask is also important to Iran's economy as the site where the government plans to build the country's second-largest oil

export terminal.

A 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) pipeline from Bushehr province on the Gulf to Jask was put into service just days ago, the government said. — AFP ■

World's 1st case of human infected with H10N3 bird flu found in China



China's National Health Commission (NHC) confirmed Tuesday the first human case of a rare strain of bird flu known as H10N3. A 41-year-old man was diagnosed with H10N3 in China's eastern province of Jiangsu. PHOTO: CTN NEWS/XINHUA

THE world's first case of a human infected with H10N3 avian influenza was detected in China,

but the country's health authorities said Tuesday that rampant spread is "extremely" unlikely,

the Global Times reported.

A 41-year-old man from a city in Jiangsu Province had such symptoms as fever and was admitted to a local medical institute for treatment in late April, the tabloid affiliated with the ruling Communist Party said, citing China's National Health Commission.

The commission was quoted as saying, "No human cases of H10N3 have been reported in the world, and the H10N3 virus among poultry is low pathogenic."

"This case is an occasional poultry-to-human cross-species transmission, and the risk of a large-scale spread is extremely

low," it said, while instructing the city to carry out measures to prevent an outbreak of the virus, according to the Global Times.

The newspaper reported it is unknown how the man became infected, but the virus may have been transmitted via respiratory droplets of poultry or direct contact with sick live poultry.

Regarding avian influenza, also known as bird flu, Russia said in February that a case of human infection with the H5N8 virus was confirmed for the first time in the world and it has been spreading across the globe. — Kyodo News ■

US Supreme Court rejects Johnson & Johnson talc fine appeal

THE US Supreme Court refused Tuesday to accept drugmaker Johnson & Johnson's appeal of a \$2.1 billion fine for selling baby powder containing cancer-causing asbestos. The decision kept in place a 2018 jury award against the company after a class action law suit, originally set at \$4.7 billion but later slashed on appeal. As is common, the high court did not explain its decision, but left in place a federal appeals court judgment from last year supporting the fine. The company's shares were down 1.8 per cent at \$166.16 after the decision. Two conservative judges on the court, Samuel Alito and Brett Kavanaugh, recused themselves from the decision. Alito has owned shares in the company and Kavanaugh's father was a lobbyist for it. Johnson & Johnson had been punished for knowingly selling popular consumer products that contained asbestos, particularly its hugely popular baby powder. The company has faced thousands of lawsuits across the United States alleging it failed to warn consumers of the risk of cancer from asbestos in its talc-based products. Last year the firm announced it was discontinuing production of its talc-based baby powder in the US and Canada, in part due to the "constant barrage of litigation advertising" over the product. — AFP ■

US winds down small business aid programme that gave \$800 bn

THE US government on Tuesday closed the books on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that extended a nearly \$800-billion lifeline to small businesses to keep them afloat amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Created by the CARES Act rescue package in March 2020, the PPP emergency aid measure offered low-cost loans to small businesses which did not have to be repaid if certain conditions were met. In a statement announcing its May 31 closure, Small Business Administration chief Isabella Casillas Guzman said the program provided \$798 billion to 8.5 million small firms and nonprofits across the country. "I've heard story after story from small business owners across the country about how PPP funds helped them keep the lights on, pay their employees -- and gave them hope," Guzman said. The programme was part of Washington's response to the mass unemployment and business disruptions caused by the pandemic, which also included cash payments to individuals and expanded unemployment benefits, in three massive relief measures. — AFP ■



The Paycheck Protection Programme was part of the US government's response to the massive downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan's KDDI invests in smart city platform startup in Indonesia

JAPANESE telecom giant KDDI Corp. has invested in smart city platform provider PT. Qlue Performa Indonesia, aiming to help promote digital transformation in Southeast Asia, beginning from Indonesia. KDDI did not disclose the amount of the investment. The startup, established in 2016, offers a smart city platform using such technologies as internet of things and artificial intelligence to detect, analyze and solve problems in urban infrastructures in Indonesia, KDDI said in a news release Tuesday. Qlue has helped raise city performances through cooperation with a number of authorities and companies in Jakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia where urban infrastructures still need to be improved, according to the news release. — Kyodo News ■

Japanese farmers turning to technology to overcome pandemic, aging

JAPANESE farmers are turning to digital technologies to grow and sell their products as the coronavirus pandemic depresses sales to restaurants and the graying of Japan's population complicates the drive to raise productivity in the labor-intensive sector.



A drone developed by Japanese IT firm Optim Corp. flies over rice paddies. PHOTO: OPTIM/KYODO

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 last year, an increasing number of farmers and fishermen have drawn attention to their plight through Pocket Marche, an online service that brings together farmers, fishermen and consumers. "A substantial number of farmers lost their sales to restaurants due to the pandemic and flocked to our app to sell their products," said Pocket Marche Inc. CEO Hiroyuki Takahashi. In February last year when Japan was reporting a slow growth rate of coronavirus infections, around 2,000 farmers and fishermen were selling their products to 52,000 registered customers via Pocket Marche's app. As the coronavirus situation worsened, the number of producers using the service grew to around 5,100, with customers rising to 300,000. The app, launched in 2016, allows farmers and buyers to exchange messages. "The surge in the use of our app could slow after the pandemic subsides, but I expect many consumers to keep buying via the app as they trust the farmers they bought from after communicating with them," said Takahashi. Farmers are also embracing new digital technologies to increase crop output and income without additional human labor. — Kyodo News ■

Changing Distributor for Registered Pesticide

Distribution of pesticide registered by Shandong Weifang Rainbow Chemical Co., Ltd is changing from RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD to CHAROEN PORPHAND PRODUCE MYANMAR COMPANY LIMITED. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within 2 weeks.

No.	Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type and No
1.	Raintap 50 SP	Cartap 50% SP	Full / F2020 – 2528
2.	Riceup 300 EC	Pretilachlor 300 g/l EC	Full / F2020 – 2484
3.	Carwin 85 WP	Carbaryl 85% WP	Provisional / 2016 – 3122

RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V EASTGATE V.202103

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EASTGATE V.202103 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-6-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of WILMAR where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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

UK carbon market targets emissions post-Brexit



For the British authorities, leaving the European carbon trading market makes it easier to monitor companies and their activities. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRITAIN recently launched its own carbon trading market, more than five months after Brexit, as the government targets lower emissions before this year's vital UN climate change summit.

The UK's Emissions Trading Scheme went live two weeks ago, replacing the country's involvement in the European Union's system after it left the bloc at the start of the year.

Carbon trading, a key way to prevent climate change, involves companies buying the right to pollute from others who have a lower carbon footprint.

The UK scheme's initial price of about £50 (58 euros, \$71) per tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

was slightly higher than the European price.

By contrast, the average selling price was around \$20 (16.4 euros, £14) per tonne in the Californian market, the world's third largest.

'On front foot'

The higher prices in Britain and Europe show they are "on the front foot when it comes to climate action", said Adam Berman, European Policy Director at the International Emissions Trading Association.

"If you look at the EU and the UK, the emissions trading scheme -- in both cases -- is the single most important mechanism" to cut carbon, he told AFP.

The UK carbon trading mar-

ket is however just a tenth of the size of the EU-wide equivalent.

Britain, which also hosts the G7 summit this month, is urging the world's richest nations to nurture a green and global economic recovery from the pandemic.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's administration, which targets zero net carbon emissions by 2050 to help meet commitments under the Paris accord, will also host the next climate summit, COP26 in Glasgow in November.

The government has stated that the new carbon trading scheme will make a "significant contribution" to meeting the 2050 goal. — AFP ■

Eurozone inflation hits near three-year high in May

INFLATION in the eurozone jumped to its highest level since October 2018 as COVID restrictions across Europe were scaled back, boosting the economy and stoking energy prices, official data showed on Tuesday.

Consumer prices in the 19 countries that use the euro rose 2.0 per cent year-on-year, beyond the target of the European Central Bank, the EU's Eurostat agency said.

Price gains were mainly driven by a hike of 13.1 per cent in energy prices, Eurostat said, hugely outpacing other consumer items as inflation's main driver. The agency said that core inflation, which strips out energy and other more volatile items, only

inched up in May to 0.9 per cent, from 0.7 per cent a month earlier.

Eurozone inflation has been on an upward trend after sinking into negative territory for several months during the first wave of the pandemic. Economists had predicted that inflation would leap ahead for the coming months, and expectations were that it would eventually exceed the ECB's long-out-of-reach inflation target of "close to, but below" 2.0 per cent.

The price rises are attributed to temporary factors linked to exiting coronavirus lockdowns and the ECB is expected to carry on with its "loose money" policy to further boost growth and inflation. — AFP ■

Oil majors vow energy transition at their own pace

OIL majors are under growing pressure to stop drilling for crude to help curb climate change, but companies say they will wean themselves off fossil fuels at their own pace.

The demand for change is coming from many sides: lawsuits, shareholders and the International Energy Agency have all turned up the heat on firms recently.

Last week alone, a Dutch court ordered Shell to slash its greenhouse gas emissions, and investors used shareholder meetings to install activist board members at US oil giant ExxonMobil and demand deeper emissions cuts at rival Chevron.

The IEA sent shockwaves through the industry last month when it declared that no fossil fuel exploration or new oil and natural gas fields are needed, thanks to the "rapid drop" in demand.

The intergovernmental organization made the suggestion in a report warning that all future fossil fuel projects must be scrapped if the world is to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The agency, which advises developed countries, has been criticized by environmentalists in the past for being too timid while calling for oil investments to ensure supply.

BP chief executive Ber-

nard Looney told the Columbia Global Energy Summit that the report was "very much in line" with the British energy company's strategy.

But Looney also noted that while the report sees much lower investment in fossil fuels, it is "still investment in oil and gas".

"At the end of the day," he said, the report "is a scenario on a piece of paper and what the world needs more than anything is maybe less scenarios and maybe less debate ... and more action."

BP plans to reduce oil and gas production by 40 per cent within the next decade, Looney said. — AFP ■

Brazil economy returns to pre-pandemic level with strong Q1

BRAZIL'S economy, the largest in Latin America, returned to its pre-pandemic level with stronger-than-expected growth of 1.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2021, the government said Tuesday.

The upbeat figure boosted hopes for a strong economic recovery this year in Brazil, which has been hit hard by Covid-19.

But there is lingering uncertainty: epidemiologists warn a new surge of the virus is likely.

"The result is far higher than expected. There was no fiscal stimulus (against the pandemic) in the first quarter of 2021, and

some analysts were saying we would have a big contraction in GDP," said economist Margarida Gutierrez of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).

"Now the GDP forecast for 2021 should increase from 3.5 percent to something around five percent. If (Covid-19) vaccinations go quickly, it could be even more."

The news helped push the Sao Paulo stock exchange to a record close, up 1.63 percent. It was the third straight record close for the Ibovespa index, which had not hit a record since January. — AFP ■



Handout picture released by Greenpeace on November 22, 2010 showing the Centenario deepwater oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, where Greenpeace activists arrived to display banners against the drilling of oil. Representatives from 194 countries are to meet in the Mexican resort city of Cancun from November 29 to December 10, 2010 in a UN climate summit. **PHOTO: AFP / GREENPEACE / FILE**

Israeli parties in final sprint to build anti-Netanyahu coalition

ISRAELI politicians battling to unseat veteran Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have until just before midnight Wednesday to make their “change” coalition, composed of bitter ideological rivals, viable.

They only have until the end of the day -- 2059 GMT -- to cobble together an administration that would end 12 straight years of rule by the hawkish heavy-weight, Israel’s longest-ruling premier. The high-stakes push is led by former TV presenter Yair Lapid, a secular centrist, who on Sunday won the crucial support of hardline religious nationalist Naftali Bennett, a tech multi-millionaire.

“The coalition negotiation team sat all night and made progress toward creating a unity government,” a Bennett spokesman said in a statement.

But to reach a 61-seat majority in the 120-seat Knesset, their unlikely alliance would also have to include other left and right-wing parties -- and would probably need the support of Arab-Israeli politicians.

That would result in a government riven by deep ideological differences on flashpoint issues such as Jewish settlements in the Israel-occupied West Bank and the role of religion in politics.

Lapid, leader of the Yesh Atid party, was tasked with form-



The leader of the Israeli Yemina party, Naftali Bennett, has agreed to join the anti-Netanyahu bloc. PHOTO: POOL/AFP

ing a government by President Reuven Rivlin after Netanyahu again failed to put together his

own coalition following Israel’s fourth inconclusive election in less than two years. — AFP ■

Blinken in Costa Rica to discuss Central American migrants



For Honduran migrants, leaving home is an uphill battle. PHOTO: AFP

THE US Secretary of State on Tuesday called on Central American countries to defend democracy and fight corrup-

tion to address the root causes of undocumented migration to the United States.

Antony Blinken, who is mak-

ing his first visit to Latin America, was due to meet with foreign ministers from the member countries of the Central American Integration System (Sica): Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

He is also due to meet with Mexican officials.

Upon arrival in the Costa Rican capital San Jose, Blinken headed to a meeting with President Carlos Alvarado and Foreign Minister Rodolfo Solano.

“What we want to hear from our partners is a shared commitment with us to address those

root causes” that cause people to emigrate, Blinken said at a joint press conference with President Alvarado.

Those causes “that compel people to leave everything they know, to leave their homes, their families, their communities, their culture, their language, because they feel they have no other choice,” Blinken said.

The trip aims to put into practice President Joe Biden’s desire to tackle issues driving migrant arrivals to the southern border of the United States, said Julie Chung, the acting assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden honours victims of ‘forgotten’ Tulsa race massacre, 100 years on

PRESIDENT Joe Biden led emotional commemorations on Tuesday to honour victims of the 1921 race massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma, saying the United States must learn from one of the worst episodes of racist violence in the country’s history.

The Democratic leader marked the centenary of the massacre by meeting survivors in the city, after the White House announced new initiatives including billions of dollars in grants to address racial disparities in wealth, home ownership and small business ownership.

“This was not a riot, this was a massacre,” Biden said to loud applause. “(It was) among the worst in our history -- but not the only one and, for too long, forgotten by our history. — AFP ■

Chad and CAR agree to joint investigation of border attack

AN attack that killed six Chadian soldiers at a border post with the Central African Republic will be jointly investigated by the two countries, after a high-level meeting Tuesday appeared to ease tensions.

Chad has blamed the CAR army for the attack, and says five of the soldiers were abducted then executed in the incident on Sunday, which it labelled a “war crime” that would “not go unpunished”.

CAR had put the blame on rebels it said its soldiers had been pursuing.

At the meeting between the two states’ foreign ministers, “the CAR side, after expressing surprise at the attack, firmly condemned it and expressed its profound sympathy to the government and people of Chad”, a joint statement released afterwards said.

The two parties “underlined the urgency of clarifying the circumstances in which this attack took place” and agreed to set up an independent international commission of inquiry. — AFP ■

US to hand Bagram base to Afghan forces in 20 days, says official

THE US military will hand over its main Bagram Air Base to Afghan forces in about 20 days, an official said Tuesday, as Washington carries out its final withdrawal after nearly two decades of war.

The vast base, built by the Soviets in the 1980s, is the biggest military facility used by US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, with tens of thousands of troops stationed there during the peak of America’s military involvement in the violence-wracked country.

“I can confirm we will hand over Bagram Air Base,” a US defence official told AFP without specifying when the transfer would take place.

An Afghan security official said the handover was expected



The US military will hand over its main Bagram Air Base to Afghan forces in about 20 days, an official said Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

in about 20 days, and the defence ministry had set up special committees to manage it.

In Washington, the Pentagon indicated that the pace of the

withdrawal was picking up. As of Monday, US Central Command estimated it had completed 30-44 per cent of the so-called “retrograde” process.

It has shipped the equivalent of 300 loaded C-17 transport planes out of the country.

In April, President Joe Biden set a target of September to remove all the 2,500 US troops and some 16,000 civilian contractors out of the country, aiming to end the US military’s two-decade-old presence.

Handing over bases

Bagram base was the centre for nationwide command and air operations for the past two decades.

It also houses a prison that held thousands of Taliban and jihadist inmates over the years. Washington had already handed over six military bases to Afghan forces before May 1, when it began accelerating the final withdrawal of troops. — AFP ■

Myanmar team falls in AFC Women's Club Championship Group A

MYANMAR women's football team is included in the Group A of the AFC Women's Club Championship 2021, according to the Asian Football Confederation source.

"AFC Women's Club Championship 2021, a pilot tournament by the Asian Football Confederation, will feature eight teams from eight different nations. It will be played between 30 October to 14 November 2021," AFC authorities said.

The 2021 AFC Women's Club Championship, also known as the 2021 FIFA-AFC Pilot Women's Club Championship, will be the second edition of the Asian women's club football competition organized by the Asian Football Confederation.

The tourney will be held between 30 October and 14 November 2021, with eight clubs from eight football associations comprising.



PHOTO: ASEAN Football

Group A (East) will consist of national women football teams from Myanmar, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Vietnam. At the

same time, Group B (West) will represent national teams from India, Iran, Jordan and Uzbekistan. —GNLM

Hamsik to spearhead Slovakia at Euro 2020

MIDFIELDER Marek Hamsik and his distinctive mohawk hairstyle will feature at Euro 2020 as he was included in Slovakia coach Stefan Tarkovic's 26-man squad on Wednesday.

It will be a third performance at a major tournament for Slovakia and Hamsik -- the 33-year-old former Napoli player who has been the standout Slovak player of the last decade -- after the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2016.

In Group E, Slovakia face Poland on June 14 and Sweden on June 18, both in St Petersburg, before moving to Seville to take on Spain on June 23.

Tarkovic's squad will be captained by Hertha Berlin defender Peter Pekarik.

It also comprises Inter Milan defender Milan Skriniar and midfielder Stanislav

Lobotka of Napoli, a team where Hamsik himself spent most of his career.

"I think this is the best team we have, considering the current situation and our opponents," Tarkovic said at a press conference broadcast on Facebook.

The team is at a training camp in Austria where it drew 1-1 in a friendly with Bulgaria on Tuesday. There was a blow for the Slovaks when they lost 20-year-old striker David Strelec of Slovan Bratislava to a hamstring injury.

"The training camp and the game have shown us an awful lot," said Tarkovic.

Slovakia face Austria in their last pre-Euro friendly in Vienna on June 6.

The team will then spend two days in Slovakia before moving to St Petersburg. — AFP ■



Barcelona president Joan Laporta repeated on Tuesday that negotiations with Lionel Messi "are going well", less than a month before the Argentine star's club contract expires. PHOTO: AFP

Messi negotiations 'going well', says Barcelona president

BARCELONA president Joan Laporta repeated on Tuesday that negotiations with Lionel Messi "are going well", less than a month before the Argentine star's club contract expires.

"We are in talks with Leo's representatives," Laporta said at the official presentation of centre-back Eric Garcia, who has joined from Manchester City, as a Barcelona player.

"I said it the other day, it's going well and we hope they continue to make progress." "We want to agree a new contract with Leo. It's going well, but it's not done."

Messi's contract with Barcelona expires on June 30.

Laporta said signing Messi to a new contract did not depend on the outcome of an audit the club is carrying out to find out the exact state of its finances. "We more or less already have the results for this year under control. This audit, when we finish it in July, will give us more data, but for this deal in particular, we had already made a provision, we had prepared a strategy," Laporta said.

"I have always said that the Leo issue is not a money issue for his part," said Laporta. "He is showing a lot of understanding, and it is not a question of money, he wants to continue with this process and wants to have a competitive team with which to win Champions League and league titles." — AFP ■

Alexander-Arnold makes England's Euro 2020 squad, Lingard axed

LIVERPOOL defender Trent Alexander-Arnold was named in the England squad for Euro 2020 on Tuesday, while in-form Jesse Lingard missed out on a place in Gareth Southgate's 26-man group. Alexander-Arnold had to endure a nervous wait before learning he had made the cut after spending much of the season out of favour with Southgate.

The 22-year-old was left out of Southgate's England squad for their World Cup qualifiers in

March. But Alexander-Arnold's strong end to the season with Liverpool convinced the England manager to restore the right-back to his squad for Euro 2020, which starts on June 11.

Manchester United forward Lingard, who had a superb loan spell with West Ham, was the highest profile casualty as Southgate axed six players from his provisional squad.

The 28-year-old was recalled to the England squad in March

after a long exile.

His brilliant form, including nine goals in 16 games, earned the Hammers a place in the Europa League, but it wasn't enough to convince Southgate of his worth. The others to miss out were Sheffield United keeper Aaron Ramsdale, Southampton midfielder James Ward-Prowse, Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins and uncapped centre-backs Ben Godfrey and Ben White.

'A lot of talent'

One selection decision was taken for Southgate on Tuesday morning when Manchester United forward Mason Greenwood pulled out with what his club said was an "underlying injury".

"I think every squad is difficult because we have a lot of talented players in this country," Southgate said.

"The most difficult thing is to not be able to take players who've been with us in previous matches and who are such good professionals." Alexander-Arnold faces intense competition, with Kyle Walker, Kieran Trippier and Reece James among four right-backs included in the squad. — AFP ■



Liverpool defender Trent Alexander-Arnold was named in the England squad for Euro 2020 on Tuesday, while in-form Jesse Lingard missed out on a place in Gareth Southgate's 26-man group. PHOTO: AFP