

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.

State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win arrives in Russian Federation, donates alms and day-meals to members of the Sangha at Myanmar Theravada Buddha Vihara (Moscow)



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Vice-Senior General Soe Win supplicates the propagation of Buddhism to the Sitagu Sayadaw at the Myanmar Theravada Buddha Vihara in Moscow on 2 September 2021.

ON behalf of State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the delegation led by State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win left Nay Pyi Taw Tatmadaw Airport on 1 September

morning to attend the closing ceremony of the International Army Games-2021 being held in the Russian Federation at the invitation of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Army General Kuzhugetovich Shoigu and arrived at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow of the Russian Federation at night. The Vice-Senior General and party were welcomed at the airport by Deputy Minis-

ter of Defense of the Russian Federation Colonel-General Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin, Minister Counsellor U Zaw Lin Oo of the Myanmar Embassy to Russia, Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air) Commodore Kyaw Soe Moe and officials, and the delegation proceeded to the hotel. Yesterday morning, the Vice-Senior General and delegation members went to the My-

anmar Theravada Buddha Vihara (Moscow) in Moscow where they paid homage to Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Maha Dhammakathika Bahujanahitadhara Upukkatha of Shwegyin Nikaya Joint Shwegyin Sangharaja Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara residing at the monastery and abbot of

the monastery Dr Bhaddanta Acchariya and offered alms and day-meals. First, the Vice-Senior General supplicated the propagation of Buddhism and donated alms and cash for nine prerequisites. They then shared merits gained. The Vice-Senior General and party offered day-meals to members of the Sangha led by Sitagu Sayadaw. — MNA

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Public Announcement of Ministry of Health

2 September 2021

1. The Ministry of Health has categorized the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a disease of swift spread or the case to be reported with the Order No. 19/2020 on 28 February 2020 by exercising the authority stipulated in Sub-Section (b) of Section 21 of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law for effectively taking the preventive and response measures not to cause the spreading of COVID-19 in Myanmar.
2. The Ministry of Health is striving much for the control of COVID-19 by releasing necessary restrictions for the containment of infection in Myanmar, declaring stay-at-home programmes in the infected townships, adopting necessary health restrictions for the townships not involved in the stay-at-home programmes and taking action against the offenders under the existing laws if they failed to abide by the restrictions.
3. At present, persons with the variant virus of COVID-19 are found in Myanmar. The variant virus of COVID-19 is the variant of concern Delta. According to the press releases of the World Health Organization, as it is necessary to take care of (Variants of Concern) Delta with high infection and severe impacts, it is reviewed that the virus may cause a high death rate. Such a virus may lessen the potency of some anti-COVID vaccines.
4. As such, the order issued by the Ministry of Health for the disease recognized as a disease of swift spread or the case to be reported for disinfection shall be approved during the period before revocation. Hence, the people are requested to strictly follow the released orders, notifications, directives and work guidelines.

Ministry of Health

Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons



Myanmar Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day

13th September



2021 Anti-Trafficking Persons in Days' Objectives

- ❖ To mobilize the participation of all citizens in combating human trafficking as a national duty;
- ❖ To have the public instilled with awareness about and knowledge of trafficking in persons;
- ❖ To protect and care trafficked victims with empathy; and
- ❖ To strengthen cooperation and coordination among all counter trafficking stakeholders government agencies, civil society organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and general public.

Immunization programmes begin at 11 IDP camps of Myebon Township

THE officials launched the vaccination process of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine at 11 IDP camps in Myebon Township of MraukU District of Rakhine State yesterday.

The IDPs between the aged 18 and 65 received the first dose of vaccines at respective vaccination locations of the camps.

Township administration body Chairman U Min Oo, Head of Public Health Department Dr Than Tun Oo, health



workers, staff of the General Administration Department, members of the Red Cross Society, the ward administrators and the in-charge of the camps jointly conducted the vaccination programmes as per the COVID-19 health rules. — Tin Win (Myebon IPRD)/GNLM

(photos top and left) Health workers are seen administering the vaccines to the IDPs in Myebon Township in Rakhine State.

5,000 Myanmar sailors receive first dose of COVID-19 vaccines

THE Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Mee Pya Tike Social Welfare Organization jointly launched the first COVID-19 vaccination campaign for 5,000 Myanmar seamen at the designated places starting 1 September.

There are more than 100,000 registered seamen in the country. The vaccination operation was launched as the recruitment agencies prioritized those to get vaccinated, create job opportunities for international ships and control the spread of disease via vaccination.

"We purchased the vaccines for 5,000 sailors. Beginning 1 September, we vaccinated 2,500 at the vaccination sites for the first time. They must have two doses of vaccines and it costs K60,000 per person.

"Currently, of nearly 30,000 seamen, over 20,000 haven't received the vaccines so far. The companies prioritize those to receive vaccines and if the seamen are fully vaccinated, they will be safe when they communicate at international ports. So, we started the operations," said Captain U Sein Than from Mee Pya Tike Social Welfare Organization.

Arrangements will be also made to vaccinate 20,000 more seamen after the vaccination operations using the Sinopharm (Beijing) vaccines for 5,000 seamen. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/GNLM

People should have a proper immune system and do exercise

ELDERLY people have a higher mortality rate, accounting for 80 per cent of all deaths is over the age of 50. Therefore, elderly people are prioritized for vaccines. Currently, the country receives 8 million vaccines and uses 6 million while 2 million are for second doses. On the other hand, people should have a proper immune system and do exercise.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 9th coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities made by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 23-8-2021)

MoALI coordinates thrice-yearly crop production using Kintar irrigation water

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo and officials inspected the irrigation system of Kintar Reservoir and Kintar Diversion Weir built on Panlaung river in Myittha Township, Kyaukse District, Mandalay Region on 1 September.

During the inspection tour, the Union Minister said the Ministry is supporting the production of cotton, paddy and various crops to be able to produce three times per year and improve crop yields. He added the need to systematically use natural fertilizer and green manures, to increase the efficiency of lakes and dams, to ensure the efficient use of water, and to accelerate the natural disaster preventive measures.

More than 150,000 acres of paddy, cotton, oilseeds and pulses are annually cultivated with the irrigation water from Kintar Reservoir and Kintar Diversion Weir. The Union Minister and officials of the Ministry of Ag-



MoALI Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo and party inspects the irrigation system of Kintar Reservoir and Kintar Diversion Weir in Myittha Township in Mandalay Region on 1 September 2021.

riculture, Livestock and Irrigation made the inspection tour to coordinate the needs to be met in upgrading irrigation system, water supply and water management technology so that a variety of crops, including paddy, can be

produced three times a year by transforming the paddy-based crops into the new marketable crops, which need low water demand.

The Union Minister and party also inspected the cotton crop

research and technology development activities; demonstration of cotton seed hair removal to improve germination of seedlings and for machine planting; spraying of cotton plantation using modern equipment and

cottonseed production field in Wundwin Township.

During the meeting with cotton growers and officials from the Cotton Entrepreneur Association in Wundwin Township, Mandalay Region, the Union Minister said it is necessary for farmers and entrepreneurs to work together in a joint venture farming system to increase the cultivation of good and pure varieties of cotton and to increase the per acre yield, adding that coordination is being made to obtain timely loans for the cultivation of crops, to increase the yield of loans for the cultivation of cotton, to import and use of high-quality varieties with higher yields.

It is reported that the Union Minister and the cotton farmers and entrepreneurs cordially discussed the requirement to use the modern agricultural machinery in cotton production, agricultural management, and seedling and input requirements. – MNA

IDPs receive 2nd COVID jabs at Kyauktalone IDP camp

HEALTH officials gave the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines to internally displaced persons at the Kyauktalone IDP camp in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State yesterday.

During the vaccination, staff from the General Administration Department made records for the vaccinated people.

Next, staff from the Kyaukphyu Township Public Health Department measured the body temperature before vaccination.

Vaccines were given systematically, and only those with normal conditions are vaccinated, officials said.

The first dose of COVID-19 vaccines was given to the peo-

ple in the shelter in Kyaukphyu Township on 4 August, and the second vaccination was given on 2 September (yesterday).

An official from the township Public Health Department said that 12 people had been vaccinated, and the remaining persons to be vaccinated for the second time in the camp would continue to get jabs on the scheduled dates. —Tin Tun Oo/ Pyoe Wai Lin (IPRD)/GNLM

Medical examination is carried out prior to inoculation for the second time at the Kyauktalone IDP camp.



Imports of anti-COVID-19 devices, medical aids continue

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

On 2 September (Yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products including oxygen plants and concentrators were imported by 13 companies with the use of 22 vehicles, including two bowser.

A total of 38 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by two bowser vehicles by bowser, 10 tonnes of liquid oxygen in cylinder, 1,740 empty oxygen cylinders, six oxygen plants, two oxygen generators, 457 oxygen concentrators for home use, 760 sets of PPE suits, 12 tonnes of gloves and 37 tonnes of masks



The lorries and bowser are seen carrying and transporting the Covid protective devices and medical supplies to the needed areas.

were imported via Muse, Chinshwehaw, and Myawady trading posts and Yangon International Airport.

Two vehicles carrying liquid oxygen were transported

to Yangon and Mawlamyine officials said.

Out of six oxygen plants, four to Yangon and one each to Myinmu and Mandalay were transported successfully.



It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importations of essential medical supplies required in the prevention, con-

trol and treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries that can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



Anti-Covid equipment and medical aids are imported daily through border trade zones.

3,459 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 September, total figure rises to 406,099

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 406,099 after 3,459 new cases were reported on 2 September 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 355,764 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 15,600 after 110 died.—MNA

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State Administration Council
Press Release

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

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

Information Team
State Administration Council

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

Tatmadaw cultural troupe wins one first prize, two second prizes and one third prize in Int’l Army Games-2021 held in Russia

THE members of the Myanmar Armed Forces Cultural Troupe competed in various competitions with traditional cultural teams from 15 countries in the Creative Competition, which is the related competition of International Army Games-2021 in the Russian Federation, and won the first prize in Traditional Cos-

tume Performance, second prize in Individual Singing in Russia, second prize in a performance highlighting the country’s culture, as well as the third prize in online fan voting.

The Myanmar Tatmadaw Cultural Troupe has been taking part annually in the Creative Competition since 2018 and won the best dual dance award, the



best dual music award, the best traditional costume award in 2018; the best singing, dancing and music awards in 2019; the third prize in dancing event and the best Russian singing perfor-

mance award in 2020.

In addition to the participation in the Creative Competition, Myanmar Tatmadaw is also competing with countries across the world in competitions

related to the armed forces such as Tank Biathlon, Aviadarts in International Army Games-2021 which is being held in the Russian Federation since 22 August. — MNA



2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination continues in Htantabin

VACCINATION is being carried out in Htantabin Township, North Yangon District to prevent and control COVID-19 pandemic disease.

Yesterday morning, the second vaccination continued at Hleseik Station Hospital and affiliated Basic Education High School in Okpo Kyaungsu Quarter.

The vaccination works were carried out by health workers and volunteers.

Before getting the vaccines, healthcare workers measured body temperature, blood pressure and blood oxygenation and conducted tests for allergies.

A total of 265 people, including 31 monks, 188 older people



A health worker injects the COVID-19 vaccine to a local in Htantabin for the second time.

over 65 years of age, and 17 civil servants, one family member of

the civil servant and 28 volunteers received the vaccines for

the second time at Hleseik Station Hospital and the affiliated

Basic Education High School in Okpo Kyaungsu Quarter respectively.

The second vaccination in Htantabin Township is being carried out by township officials in priority groups according to the designated areas.

From 29 August to 2 September, a total of 2,678 people were vaccinated for the second time at Htantabin Township Sports Complex, the affiliated Basic Education High School in Kyutawsu Quarter, Tatthit Station Hospital, Hleseik Station Hospital and the affiliated Basic Education High School in Okpo Kyaungsu Quarter, officials said. —Zin Min Htike (Htantabin)/ GNLM

COVID-19 infection rate drops in Thanbyuzayet

THE COVID-19 infection rate is decreasing in Thanbyuzayet township, but people from the township are still undergoing medical treatment at their houses, according to the COVID-19 volunteer organization.

There were 1,088 COVID-19 patients in the township from 28 June to 31 July. The number dropped to only 321 COVID-19 confirmed patients from 1 August to 29 August, according to the report of the Ministry of Health. But many infected people and suspected patients are having medical treatment themselves at their houses, said a volunteer from Thanbyuzayet township.

“The infection and death rates have dropped. But it is not declined significantly. Some are treating themselves at their home covertly. Earlier, the hospital in Thanbyuzayet township was overcrowded and there is no space for the COVID-19 new

patients. So, the hospital didn't admit the patients with mild symptoms,” he added.

Some death cases were not registered by the Department of Public Health because they were undergoing treatment themselves at their houses. Most of the people had died of COVID-19 due to a lack of oxygen, he explained.

The medical teams have been formed, and they are providing health treatment for those who are getting ill and having a loss of smell in the township and nearest villages.

The new COVID-19 infection in the township dropped significantly. The Health Ministry reported 49 deaths from laboratory-confirmed patients from 28 June to 31 July and 61 deaths from 1 August to 29 August.

Mon state reported 11,329 COVID-19 cases with 1,032 deaths from 28 June to 29 August. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Domestic gold price gains up to over K1.7 mln



The price of domestic gold is high right now due to a shortage of raw precious metals and the rising global gold prices.

THE price of domestic gold bar gained up to 1,708,000 kyats per tical (roughly 16.33 grammes), according to Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA).

The price of domestic gold is high right now due to a shortage of raw precious metals and the rising global gold prices. Additionally, Kyat is depreciating in the local forex market, which is another cause of price gain in the domestic gold market.

Currently, the global gold prices stood at US\$1,814 per ounce, while a US dollar exchange rate scaled up to the peak of around K1,800 in the local foreign market.

On 12 May, domestic gold hit an all-time high of K1,709,000 per tical in history.

Thus, YGEA urges its members to regulate trade to be able to stabilize the domestic gold prices.

Besides, the shops are urged to sell only small pieces of gold bar. The association

is also monitoring to stop accepting orders without raw gold material and to stop distance trading.

In January 2021, the gold price was ranged between the minimum of K1,316,000 per tical (28 January) and the maximum of K1,336,000 per tical (6 January). It reached an all-time high of K1,410,000 per tical on 3 February and hit the minimum of K1,340,000 per tical on 2 February. In March, the rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,391,000 (25 March) and the lowest of K1,302,000 (4 March). The price has registered the highest of K1,455,000 (30 April) and the lowest of K1,389,000 (1 April). The price reached an all-time highest of K1,709,000 (12 May) and the lowest of K1,447,000 in May. The price moved in the maximum of K1,575,500 (11 June) and the minimum of K1,543,000 (19 June). The rate hit the lowest level of K1,562,300 (26 July) and the highest level of K1,587,000 (9 July). Last month, it fluctuated

between K1,572,800 (3 August) and K1,698,000 (31 August), the gold traders said.

According to gold traders, the local gold reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,317,000 (9 November) and the lowest of K1,270,000 (30 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of 1,280,000 (1 December) and 1,332,000 (28 December).

With global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to over 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a record high of K1,300,000 on 5 September 2019. — NN/GNLM

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Heirloom bean price doubles on strong domestic, foreign demand

THE price of heirloom beans has risen twice on the back of strong domestic and foreign demand on recent days, Mandalay bean traders said.

Earlier, the market of those beans was cool in the early outbreak of COVID-19. On recent days, the market raises its head again on account of China's strong demand on butter bean and heirloom bean, added Mandalay traders.

During the early harvest time in March 2021, the opening price of the heirloom bean is K55,000 per three-basket bag. Chinese market's demand raised the price to double, and the beans are highly traded at K110,000 per bag, the Soe Win Myint warehouse reported.

"The heirloom bean started

penetrating the Chinese market in five years ago. It has grasped a firm market share. It can be easily cultivated and they yield splendid in alluvial soil. As the bean is a lucrative crop, the residents considered, and called it luck. Both the growers and the traders will receive a handsome profit with the price double this year. Therefore, I suggest that the growers expand the sowing acreage next year," an owner of the Soe Win Myint warehouse said.

That cold season crop has an export market potential and it is commonly found in Ayeyawady and Chindwin delta regions; Pakokku, Yesagyo, Monywa, Myingyan, NyaungU and Sinbyukyun townships. They are usually harvested in early March, he



As the bean is a lucrative crop, the residents considered, and called it luck. Both the growers and the traders will receive a handsome profit with the price double this year.

continued.

At present, the rice beans, which are shipped to India, is also actively traded. The prices of rice beans also climbed up from K65,000 in early March to K100,000 per three-basket bag in early September. It is the five-year record high.

The rice beans are primarily cultivated in Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay. Pakokku, Myitichay and Madaya. – Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

Palm oil price edges up following Kyat depreciation



Myanmar brought in US\$620 million worth of palm oil in the past nine months (October-June) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to Myanmar Customs Department.

KYAT weakening in the local forex market adversely impacted the edible palm oil market, coupled with the shipment problem amid the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore, the prices of imported edible palm oil remained upward trend, the edible oil traders stated.

The price soared to US\$1,160-1,180 per 18-litre can at the present time. The price may vary depending on the local currency value. Consequently, the domestic market also saw a price gap of over K1,800 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the past nine months. The palm oil is priced over K3,800 per viss in the retail market, Bayintnaung whole-

sale market's data indicated.

In early January 2021, production slump in importing countries Malaysia and Indonesia, caused by erratic weather conditions and the COVID-19 impacts, high imports by certain countries under tax reduction, a tax hike on exports in producing countries and the short storage of palm oil in those countries contributed to the rise in edible oil price. The palm oil price stood at \$1,055-1,200 per tonne in the foreign market then.

Myanmar brought in US\$620 million worth of palm oil in the past nine months (October-June) of the current financial year 2020-2021, accord-

ing to Myanmar Customs Department.

"The oil palm trees produce fruits in abundance this time. The price is likely to be in the bull market up to October if any trade barrier will not occur," Chair U San Lin of Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association said.

"Normally, oil palm trees are plentiful in Malaysia this time. They produce the fruits from June to October," U San Lin added.

Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association is attempting to maintain price stability, prevent market manipulation, import the palm oil from foreign countries sustainably for self-sufficiency, distribute the edible oil at a fair price to the consumers and ensure that there will be no edible oil shortage in regions and state when there is a rise in imported oil price.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the self-sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported. – KK/GNLM

Myanmar black-eyed pea exports earn \$26.7 mln as of 20 Aug

MYANMAR has shipped more than 48,336 tonnes of black-eyed pea to international trade partners as of 20 August in the current financial year 2020-2021 since October 2020, generating a revenue of US\$26.7 million, Myanmar Customs Department's statistics showed.

At present, black-eyed peas are fetching a good price on the back of strong demand by European countries. The foreign trade partners prefer Myanmar's black-eyed peas due to the low content of chemical residues. The prevailing price is over \$1,000 per tonne, according to a depot owner from the Bayintnaung Market.

Following uncertainty in markets of black bean and pigeon peas last year, Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association suggested, in October-end 2020,

that the growers cultivate more black-eyed beans. It is primarily cultivated in Ayeyawady, Mandalay, Bago and Magway regions and Kayin State.

Myanmar's agriculture sector is the backbone of the country's economy as it contributes to over 30 per cent of Gross Domestic Products. The country primarily cultivates paddy, corn, cotton, sugarcane, various pulses and beans. Its second-largest production is the pulses and beans, counting for 33 per cent of agro-products and covering 20 per cent of growing acres. Among them, black gram, pigeon pea and green gram constitute 72 per cent of bean acreage. Other beans, including peanut, chickpea, soy pea, black-eyed beans, butter beans and rice beans, are also grown in the country. — KK/GNLM



At present, black-eyed peas are fetching a good price on the back of strong demand by European countries. The foreign trade partners prefer Myanmar's black-eyed peas due to the low content of chemical residues.

Systematically dispose of the waste for avoiding water pollution

WATER is of crucial source for the world which is home to the global peoples as well as all kinds of living beings and trees. As such, global peoples need to strive for the prevention of water pollution to make better changes in the environment as part of paying back gratitude to the host planet Earth.

It is necessary to urge owners of industries that are draining out wastewater into the creeks, rivers and other water sources so that impacts of toxic in the water must be mitigated. Local authorities should persuade owners of these industries into understanding the value of water sources without pollution and

It is an easy way to avoid the outbreak of water pollution with the daily practices of the people. So, everybody should dispose of any waste at the set sites to cut off the subsequences of bad events causing water pollution.

discard waste at the designated sites. If not, solutions from the waste can flow into the water sources which will be harmful to the living things.

Naturally, the water located in various areas is able to digest the chemical elements from waste. But it cannot completely destroy a larger volume of chemical elements, leaving some residues which cause toxins upon living beings, including humans. Hence, systematic disposing can prevent the consequences of toxicity to the living beings in the environs through water pollution.

It is an easy way to avoid the outbreak of water pollution with the daily practices of the people. So, everybody should dispose of any waste at the set sites to cut off the subsequences of bad events causing water pollution.



What would Prof. Hla Myint say to the current economic situation of Myanmar?

By Hikari Ishido
(Professor, Chiba University, Japan)

ACCORDING to the World Bank (in “Myanmar Economic Monitor July 2021”), the growth rate of GDP of Myanmar in the financial year October 2020 – September 2021 is estimated to be minus 18%. The Bank also estimates that with the contraction of GDP, some 1 million workers face the risk of unemployment, and the share of those citizens living under the “poverty line” of 1.9 dollars a day in 2022 will be double that of the 2019 level. This is a really worrisome situation at least from an economic perspective.

As an economics professor studying ASEAN economies, I have been intrigued by the Burmese and world-famous economist Prof. Hla Myint (1920–2017), who was born in Burma (Myanmar), got an education at the University of Rangoon (now Yangon) and London School of Economics (LSE) in the UK, and also taught at the LSE ((from 1966 to 1985). He was among the pioneering development economists who focused on the importance of export-orientated policy as the most useful “engine of growth.” Utilizing the foreign capital coming from exporting, development is expedited. Symbolically (or “macro-economically”), the process can be depicted as follows. Y= C+I+G+X-M, where Y (meaning Yield, that is, Gross Domestic Product or GDP) will expand when C (Consumption), I (Investment), G (Government expenditure) and X (export) increases through establishing linkages with international markets. What we should note is the fact that while M (import) seems to reduce Y because of the negative sign before M, it (import) actually stimulates domestic suppliers to improve their products and services over a medium to long period. Further, domestic market size is only limited, hence a limited policy impact of reducing M (import) for the purpose of promoting domestic production. In his The Economics of Developing Countries (London: Hutchinson, 1964), he emphasized the positive role of open-trade policy: according to Prof. Myint, the market opening of both importing and exporting will bring about the wealth of nations in the end.

What would Prof. Myint say to the current economic situation of Myanmar? The Table below shows Myanmar’s trade partners in 2020. The total volume of trade (export and import) saw a negative growth from the 2019 records (18,106 million dollars of export and 18,611 million dollars of import, based on the UN COMTRADE database). This is worrisome since export-oriented growth cannot be achieved. The Table reveals that ASEAN and China are comparable in the volume of export and import with Myanmar; the US and UK have limited trade volumes in their transactions with Myanmar. Japan alone would not make a big trade partner for Myanmar; yet technological cooperation between the two countries might lead to higher value-added activities of Myanmar’s domestic economy, which currently seems to have a comparative advantage in agricultural products, natural resources, fishery products and clothes, all still with limited economic value

added. Myanmar could potentially become an important hub of an East Asian global value chain (GVC). For this to happen, the country’s open-economic policy would need to be sustained.

Table. Myanmar’s trade partners (2020, US million dollars)

Country	Myanmar’s export to:	Myanmar’s import from:
Brunei	0.4	0.0
Cambodia	31	3
Indonesia	165	1,072
Laos	0.3	1
Malaysia	196	1,011
Philippines	111	45
Singapore	697	2,454
Thailand	3,008	1,927
Vietnam	177	588
ASEAN total (excl. Myanmar)	4,385	7,100
China	5,376	6,528
Japan	1,241	552
Bangladesh	64	49
India	696	682
US	869	398
UK	488	60
World	17,964	16,929

Source: United Nations’ UN COMTRADE database (<https://comtrade.un.org/>).

In connection to trade, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed in November 2020, among 10 the ASEAN member states (including Myanmar) and their five dialogue partners (Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand). But at the level of RCEP which is expected to take effect in the not distant future, would bring down unnecessary trade costs through “institutional harmonization” (e.g., common custom rules with lower import tariffs and service trade regulations). This would surely bring about Myanmar’s productivity enhancement. The RCEP was enabled with the concept of ASEAN centrality, i.e., ASEAN on the whole serving as the driver of this East-Asia wide plurilateral trade agreement, which includes 3 billion people (45% of the world population) in its single market. Myanmar, as an important member of ASEAN, would

surely benefit from this trade agreement when its domestic economy regains its boost.

Looking back to history, Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997 with the invitation and approval from Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore. Since then, ASEAN has constructively been engaged in Myanmar’s integration into the single southeast Asian economy, known as the ASEAN Economic Community or AEC (which was completed in 2015). A “SWOT” analysis for Myanmar is as follows. S (Strengths): Myanmar’s strategic geographical location connecting China and India (a short-cut trade route in a sense); Myanmar as an integrated part of the AEC; affordable (and especially youth) workforce. W (Weaknesses): physical, legal and institutional infrastructures remain to be developed; the current political and economic situations. O (Opportunities): RCEP as a large-scale trade area, will take effect in the not distant future among all ten ASEAN members (including Myanmar) and Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. Although Myanmar is not a member of another large-scale trade agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), its membership in RCEP is an opportunity to bring in foreign investment from these countries. T (Threats): the negative impact of COVID-19, as well as the current political turmoil turning into a larger-scale deterrent against Myanmar’s economic growth.

Japan, on its part, has been implementing its growth strategy, which formed an important part of the former prime minister Abe’s economic policy, known as “Abenomics.” With the ageing domestic population, needs Myanmar’s productive-age youth population as a collaborative workforce in Japan, in almost all its industrial sectors. More historically, the so-called Fukuda Doctrine (released in 1977) of Japan establishing a “heart-to-heart relationship” with ASEAN countries remains valid: Japan, as an equal partner of the countries of Southeast Asia, will do its best for consolidating its relationship with Myanmar. As for broader development planning (in addition to trade and investment), Prof. Myint mentioned the introduction of the market mechanism, utilization of foreign aid and improvement of domestic education as equally important components of a nation’s economic growth.

As mentioned above, Prof. Myint stressed the importance of export orientation as the most useful “engine of growth”. And his thesis on economic policymaking is much relevant today. Japan needs ASEAN with Myanmar as an important member; and Myanmar might also need partners in trade, investment and other fronts. And at its grassroots (non-governmental) level, at the very least, Japan stands ready to collaborate with Myanmar’s growth strategy.

(The opinions and views in this article are those of the author only.) – Ed.



Moderna says tainted Covid vaccines sent to Japan contained steel

MODERNA said Wednesday that tainted batches of its Covid-19 vaccine sent to Japan were contaminated with stainless steel particles, but the company did not expect it posed “an undue risk to patient safety”. The US biotech firm is facing major setbacks in Japan, with hundreds of thousands of doses suspended following reports of foreign substances detected in vials.

Authorities are also inves-

tigating the deaths of two men who received doses from a tainted batch, but the cause of their deaths is so far unknown.

In a joint statement with its Japanese partner Takeda, Moderna said the contamination in one of three suspended lots had been traced back to production line flaws at a factory run by its Spanish contractor, ROVI Pharma Industrial Services.

“The rare presence of stainless steel particles in the Mod-

erna Covid-19 vaccine does not pose an undue risk to patient safety and it does not adversely affect the benefit/risk profile of the product,” the statement said.

Metallic particles of this size injected into a muscle may cause a site reaction, but are unlikely to go beyond that, it added.

“Stainless steel is routinely used in heart valves, joint replacements and metal sutures and staples. As such, it is not expected that injection of the par-

ticles identified in these lots in Japan would result in increased medical risk.”

Moderna added that for the time being, there was no evidence that the two deaths were related to administration of the vaccine and “the relationship is currently considered to be coincidental”. An investigation is ongoing.

Last week, Japan suspended 1.63 million Moderna doses across the country.

SOURCE: AFP



Photo taken on 17 June 2021, shows a COVID-19 mass vaccination center in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of Service Organizations transferred, appointed and confirmed

1. THE State Administration Council has transferred and appointed Dr Mie Mie Khin, Rector of University of Computer Studies (Meiktila) of the Ministry of Science and Technology, as the Rector of Yangon University of Computer Studies from the date she assumes charge of her duties.

2. The State Administration Council has confirmed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names after the one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
(a) Dr Aung Swe Tun	Director-General Bureau of Study and Assessment (Education) Ministry of Education
(b) Dr Thet Lwin	Rector Pyay University Department of Higher Education Ministry of Education



Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 09:00 hrs M.S.T on 2-9-2021)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

ACCORDING to the (08:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Seiktha has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (08:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Hinthada has reached its danger level and it may continue to rise from the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (08:30)hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun has reached its danger level and it may continue to rise from the present water level by about (½) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Seiktha, Hinthada Township and ZalunTownship, to take precaution measure.

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**NEWS
IN BRIEF****Twitter tests Safety Mode to block internet trolls**

TWITTER on Wednesday announced it is testing a new feature that automatically blocks hateful messages, as the US site comes under increasing pressure to protect its users from online abuse.

Users who activate the new Safety Mode will see their “mentions” filtered for seven days so that they don’t see messages flagged as likely to contain hate speech or insults.

The feature will initially be tested by a small number of English-speaking users, Twitter said, with priority given to “marginalised communities and female journalists” who often find themselves targets of abuse. “We want to do more to reduce the burden on people dealing with unwelcome interactions,” Twitter said in a statement, adding that the platform is committed to hosting “healthy conversations”. —AFP ■

August Amazon fires remain near highs under Bolsonaro

THE number of fires in the Brazilian Amazon as the burning season opened in August fell slightly from 2020, but remained close to the near-decade highs seen under President Jair Bolsonaro, new data showed Wednesday.

Brazil’s space agency, INPE, recorded 28,060 fires in the Brazilian Amazon last month — down 4.3 per cent from August 2020, but well above the average of 18,000 for the decade before Bolsonaro took office in 2019. The far-right president, who has pushed to open protected lands to agribusiness and mining, has presided over a surge of deforestation in the Amazon.

Under his administration, Brazil’s share of the Amazon has lost around 10,000 square kilometres (3,860 square miles) of forest cover a year — an area nearly the size of Lebanon.

That is up from around 6,500 square kilometres per year during the previous decade. —AFP ■

Facebook invests in new partnerships with Argentine press

SOCIAL media giant Facebook will invest \$1.5 million in Argentine media to train journalists and promote online development, a first in Latin America.

The agreement signed last week with almost 150 media outlets will allow 3,000 journalists to be trained, while also helping Facebook develop commercial agreements.

It’s part of the “Facebook Journalism Project” that involves collaboration with media all over the world.

The three-year Argentine investment aims “to support almost 150 media of every size and region in the country,” Julieta Shamma, Facebook’s head of strategic media partnerships in Latin America, told AFP.



Facebook is creating training and commercial partnerships with media all over the world. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The agreement involves commercial commitments with around 30 Argentine outlets including Clarin, La Nacion, Pagina12 and Infobae to attract more

links to the Facebook platform.

“We’re collaborating with media to try different forms of helping people find news on Facebook and connect with

them,” said Shamma.

Facebook will offer training in themes such as product development, format experimentation and using statistics, amongst others.

“We believe the digital transformation will create new opportunities for the news ecosystem, offering different possibilities to expand the audience through social and interactive formats, and to monetize content,” said Shamma.

Facebook has already invested \$600 million worldwide since 2018 to support digital development in the news industry. The Silicon Valley-based company plans to invest another \$1 billion in the next three years. —AFP ■

Uphill battle: Spain’s wine growers adapt to climate change

FOR over a century, Joaquin Gay de Montella Estany’s family produced wine in Spain’s Mediterranean region of Catalonia but the effects of climate change have pushed them to seek higher ground.

Now their Torre del Veguer winery also has vineyards at the foot of the Pyrenees mountains — at an altitude of nearly 1,200 metres (3,900 feet) — where temperatures are cooler.

It’s one of the ways in which Spain’s wine producers are trying to adapt, as a warmer climate advances the harvest season and makes the need for more heat-tolerant grape varieties greater.

In searing August heat, farm

workers pick the white grapes by hand at a vineyard with sea views in Penedes, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the city of Barcelona. Higher temperatures have brought the grape harvest forward by 10 to 15 days over the past decade, said Gay de Montella Estany, who owns the ecological winery. “We have to harvest at the start of August when the heat is the most intense,” he told AFP.

So in 2008, the company moved part of its production to Bolvir, a village in the Pyrenees near the French border.

Speedy ripening

With a total of 961,000 hectares (2.4 million acres) of vines,



Among the ways that producers are trying to adapt to a warming climate is by reviving grape strains that perform well at high altitudes. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Spain has the largest area of vineyards in the world, the International Organization of Vine

and Wine says. It is the third biggest wine producer behind Italy and France. —AFP ■

Storm Ida brings heavy rain, flash flooding to New York City

The Bronx borough of New York City has been inundated with rain. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW YORKERS were inundated by heavy rain and flash flood-

ing early Thursday as Storm Ida wreaked havoc on the northeast

United States, forcing flight cancellations and state of emergency declarations.

Ida slammed into the southern state of Louisiana over the weekend, bringing severe flooding and tornadoes as it blazed a trail of destruction north.

New York governor Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency as the remnants of the storm caused massive flooding in the country’s financial and cultural capital, leaving the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens badly hit. “We’re enduring an historic weather event tonight with record-breaking rain across

the city, brutal flooding and dangerous conditions on our roads,” Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a tweet as he declared a state of emergency in the city.

Hundreds of flights have been cancelled at nearby Newark, LaGuardia and JFK airports and flooding has closed major roads across multiple boroughs including Manhattan, The Bronx and Queens. Streets were transformed into rivers while the city’s subway stations were also flooded, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority reported service would be effectively shut down. —AFP ■

WHO monitoring new coronavirus variant named ‘Mu’



The ‘Mu’ coronavirus variant, first identified in Colombia, has mutations indicating a risk of vaccine resistance, the WHO says. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE World Health Organization has said it is monitoring a new coronavirus variant known as “Mu”, which was first identified in Colombia in January.

Mu, known scientifically as B.1.621, has been classified as a “variant of interest”, the global health body said Tuesday in its weekly pandemic bulletin.

The WHO said the variant has mutations that indicate a risk of resistance to vaccines and stressed that further studies were needed to better understand it.

“The Mu variant has a con-

stellation of mutations that indicate potential properties of immune escape,” the bulletin said.

There is widespread concern over the emergence of new virus mutations as infection rates are ticking up globally again, with the highly transmissible Delta variant taking hold — especially among the unvaccinated — and in regions where anti-virus measures have been relaxed. All viruses, including SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19, mutate over time and most mutations have little or no effect on the properties of the virus. But certain mutations

can impact the properties of a virus and influence how easily it spreads, the severity of the disease it causes, and its resistance to vaccines, drugs and other countermeasures. The WHO currently identifies four Covid-19 variants of concern, including Alpha, which is present in 193 countries, and Delta, present in 170 countries. Five variants, including Mu, are to be monitored.

After being detected in Colombia, Mu has since been reported in other South American countries and in Europe. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Moderna submits application to US regulator for Covid booster shot

MODERNA on Wednesday announced it had begun submitting an application to the US Food and Drug Administration to authorize a booster of its Covid vaccine after trial data showed a significant increase in antibodies against variants.

The third shot of the vaccine, known as mRNA-1273, was given to 344 participants in a study six months after their second dose.

The first two doses were 100 micrograms, while the booster was half that at 50 micrograms. An analysis showed the booster increased neutralizing antibody levels against variants of concern, including Delta by more than 42.3-fold, Gamma by 43.6-fold, and Beta by 32-fold, with similar gains seen across age groups including over-65s.—AFP ■

Cuba’s vaunted health system straining under Covid cases

CUBA’S vaunted public health system, which boasts more doctors per capita than any other country, has been pushed to the brink in recent months by the arrival of the coronavirus Delta variant.

In a country long left relatively unscathed by the global pandemic, doctors are now battling to get their hands on oxygen and drugs, and patients can wait up to 24 hours for a hospital bed.

Despite having rolled out its own, home-grown Covid-19 vaccines — Latin America’s first — Cuba has seen infections sky-rocket since July, especially in remote parts of the country, and deaths have soared too.

Of the 5,300 coronavirus deaths recorded on the communist island of 11.2 million inhabitants since the outbreak started, nearly half were in the last month alone, as were almost a third of all reported cases.—AFP ■

Philippines hits 2 million virus cases as Delta drives surge

THE Philippines topped two million coronavirus cases Wednesday as the country battles a record surge in infections that the World Health Organization confirmed is being driven by the hyper-contagious Delta strain.

In recent weeks, daily case rates have hit the highest levels since the start of the pandemic and the health department warned the trend could continue.

Wednesday’s official data show the country recorded 14,216 new infections, taking the total caseload to just over two million, with 33,533 deaths in the country of 110 million people.

“It is possible the number of Covid-19 cases will rise some more in the coming days,” the health department said Wednesday.

Daily cases exceeded 22,000 for the first time on Monday — more than double the number on August 6 when the sprawling national capital region went back into lockdown.



Health workers have been staging protests outside hospitals to demand the hiring of more staff. **PHOTO: AFP**

WHO representative in the Philippines Rabindra Abeyasinghe said Tuesday the latest resurgence was being driven by the Delta variant, which has ripped through neighbouring countries.

“More than 70 per cent of the current transmission is at-

tributable to the Delta variant,” Abeyasinghe told reporters, citing the results of genome sequencing.

The lockdown in the capital and nearby provinces has been extended until next week as authorities battle to slow the spread of the virus.—AFP ■



Ireland on Tuesday announced that it will fully reopen on 22 October after 18 months of rolling lockdowns introduced to limit coronavirus infections. **PHOTO: UNSPLASH/ AFP**

Ireland: Covid lockdown to be lifted on 22 October

IRELAND on Tuesday announced that it will fully reopen on 22 October after 18 months of rolling lockdowns introduced to limit coronavirus infections.

“The time is now right to begin the move from regulation and widespread restrictions on people’s personal freedom, to an approach primarily defined by public health advice, personal behaviour, judgement and responsibility,” prime minister Micheal Martin said in a televised broadcast.

From 6 September, there will be an easing of restrictions on organized indoor and outdoor events and mass gatherings.

Theatre, music and live events will at that point go ahead for vaccinated people at 60-per cent capacity indoors and 75-per cent capacity outdoors.

Restrictions on indoor and outdoor group activities will then be eased further from 20 September.

The government hopes that by 22 October it will be able to

remove the legal requirement to prove immunity in order to access indoor hospitality or other events.

It wants to be able to lift all remaining restrictions on indoor and outdoor events, along with the legal requirements for mask wearing outdoors and in indoor private settings.

“We’ve had to accept restrictions on our personal freedoms that would have been unthinkable just a couple of years ago,” said Martin.—AFP ■

What can central banks do to address climate risks?



Central banks have faced increasing public pressure to take action on climate risks. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE world's main central banks were seen as saviors of the global economy in the wake of the

2008 financial crisis and when the coronavirus pandemic hit last year, but they are less than uni-

fied when it comes to addressing climate change.

Why are they involved?

The start of central bank involvement in climate action is sometimes attributed to a 2015 speech by the Bank of England's (BOE) then-governor Mark Carney entitled "Breaking the tragedy of the horizon – climate change and financial stability".

While not directly involved in addressing global warming, central banks do have to be alert to its impact on the economy and the financial system.

Amid increasing public concern, the institutions are factoring considerations about climate into their policies and watching for threats to their main mandate for price stability, implications for banking supervision and economic growth more broadly.

What can they do?

One tool at their disposal are bank stress tests, which can gauge how financial institutions

would hold up in the face of climate shocks.

While the European Central Bank (ECB) has only just launched a climate stress test initiative, the Bank of France by May had already examined nine banking groups and 15 insurance companies, revealing a moderate risk for these establishments.

The ECB also could take climate risk into consideration when buying corporate bonds or accepting those used for collateral, giving preference to assets of firms not involved in polluting activities.

The People's Bank of China also is considering climate stress tests, while the BOE started in June, reviewing banks such as HSBC and Barclays. It also should announce before the end of the year its program of greening its asset buybacks.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan's economy heading in right direction: president

PAKISTANI President Arif Alvi on Wednesday expressed satisfaction over the economic performance of the country, saying the economy of his country is heading in the right direction.

The economic development reflected the confidence of the business community in the economic policies of the incumbent government, Alvi said at a meeting with members of the business community here, adding that steps are being taken to further improve the business environment of the country by providing various incentives and facilities.

"Business community played a significant role in the economic development of the country and a number of steps have been taken to facilitate them, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic," the president said.

The government has been focusing on creating an optimum business environment and due to its efforts, Pakistan's rank in the Ease of Doing Business Index have improved from 136th to 108th position, he said.—Xinhua ■

Brazil's economy contracts 0.1% in Q2

BRAZIL'S economy performed worse than expected in the second quarter of 2021, contracting 0.1 per cent in the latest sign the Latin American giant's pandemic recovery has lost steam.

Analysts had forecast growth of around 0.2 per cent, but the economy appeared to take a hit from high unemployment, surging inflation and a bad drought that is raising concerns about electricity supply from crucial hydropower plants.

The reversal from the first quarter's surprisingly strong 1.2 per cent growth is bad news for President Jair Bolsonaro as he battles slumping popularity in the build-up to elections in

October next year.

Hit hard by the drought in the south and central-west, the agribusiness sector registered the worst output contraction for the April-June period, shrinking 2.8 per cent, said the national statistics institute, IBGE.

Industry retreated 0.2 per cent, while the service sector expanded 0.7 per cent, it said.

Analysts had been upbeat on Latin America's biggest economy after Brazil's better-than-expected first quarter.

But the outlook has recently turned bleaker, with unemployment stubbornly high at 14.1 per cent, inflation soaring to 8.99 percent — well above the



Unemployment has soared in Brazil due to the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

central bank's target ceiling of 5.25 per cent — and the worst drought in nearly a century

fuelling fears that electricity shortages could be on the horizon.—AFP ■

Tourists back in Spain but far fewer than before Covid



In the first seven months of 2021, 9.8 million tourists arrived in Spain compared with 47.9 million in the same period in 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE arrival of foreign tourists in Spain shot up in July compared with a year earlier although the numbers remain far from the lev-

els reached in the same month in 2019, before the pandemic, official figures showed Wednesday. During the month, 4.4 million foreign tourists visited Spain, an increase of 78.3 per cent on the year earlier when the country was reeling from the Covid pandemic, National Institute of Statistics (INE) figures showed.

The largest number of visitors were French with 874,000 arrivals, a year-on-year increase of 46.6 per cent, followed by 707,000 arrivals from Germany (up 64.5 per cent) and 555,000 from Britain (up 46.5 per cent).

The top destination was the Balearic Islands, which ac-

counted for 30 per cent of all visits, followed by the northeastern Catalonia region with 18.5 per cent. Tourist spending reached 5.2 billion euros (\$6.1 billion), a 112 per cent increase on the same month in 2020.

Before the pandemic hit in spring 2020, Spain was the world's second-most popular tourist destination after France, and the sector accounted for around 12 per cent of the economy.

Although the figures show an improvement in Spain's key tourism sector, the figures are far from pre-pandemic levels, raising doubts over its ability to fully recover.—AFP ■

Sea freight sector grapples with shortage of container ships



The shortage of container ships cannot be quickly remedied as cargo vessels take years to build. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

GLOBAL sea freight was severely disrupted by the Covid crisis but is now recovering and prompting a boom new container ship orders as the industry grapples with a shortage of vessels.

Shipping companies, buoyed by soaring freight prices, are splashing out cash on expanding their fleets.

New shipping capaci-

ty is now forecast to hit a record-matching level by 2023, steaming ahead as the post-pandemic recovery gathers speed.

“The container ship order book is booming,” said Italian maritime brokerage Banchero Costa.

Orders have been placed for at least 276 new vessels in the first seven months of this year which would add slightly more than 10 per cent capacity to the large global container fleet as of 2020, according to data it provided.

However, it takes at least two years to build a new ship, so the market

will remain overheated in the short term.

Banchero Costa expects only modest 3 per cent year-on-year growth in shipping capacity in 2021 and 2022.

Freight price surge

Freight prices have meanwhile surged in recent months, sparking a major shortage of vessels to meet runaway demand.

The Freightos Baltic Index of international shipping prices shows that rates for the route from China to the West Coast of North America have gone up by more than five times in one year.—AFP ■

SAS narrows loss as air travel remains muted

SCANDINAVIAN airline SAS said Wednesday it sees encouraging signs of travel increasing that it still faces “headwinds” from the global pandemic as it reported a narrower net loss.

The carrier reported a net loss of 1.36 billion (\$157 million, 133 million euros) Swedish kronor for the period of May to July, down from a net loss of 2.37 billion for the same period a year earlier.

“We noted encouraging signs during the sum-

mer season with demand slowly increasing,” CEO Anko van der Werff, who took over the reins in July, said in a statement.

“Vaccination rates are also rising, but significant challenges remain ahead as new cases of the Delta variant are multiplying and delaying ramp-up,” van der Werff added, noting that “imposed travel restrictions remain in force.”

Revenue rose to 3.98 billion kronor, from 2.5 billion a year earlier,



Flight technicians prepare the last of 25 SAS aircraft for long-term parking at Oslo Airport. PHOTO: HAKON MOSVOLD LARSEN/NTB SCANPIX/AFP

the company said, driven mainly by increased demand, but the company noted this was still 70

per cent below the same quarter of 2019, which was unaffected by Covid-19.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China orders ride-hailing firms Didi, Meituan to stop ‘disorderly expansion’

CHINESE regulators have summoned ride-hailing giant Didi Chuxing and ten other car platforms to demand they cease “disorderly expansion” and “vicious competition” tactics, the government said Thursday, amid a national crackdown on the tech industry.

China has in recent months tightened its scrutiny of its largest tech firms in sectors ranging from e-commerce to entertainment, launching antitrust probes and rolling out strict regulation.

The companies, including the ride-hailing arm of major services app Meituan, were told by regulators Wednesday that the industry suffered from poor behaviour including recruiting unqualified drivers and “shifting the risks of operations onto drivers”, according to the transport ministry statement.

The companies were ordered to investigate internal problems and “immediately rectify” poor behaviour, with regulators stressing that ride-hailing platforms must also reduce the cut they take from transactions and protect passengers’ personal data.—AFP ■

US aiming new lawsuit at Google over ads: report

US officials are preparing a new antitrust lawsuit against Google over its power in the online advertising market, Bloomberg reported Wednesday.

Bloomberg cited an unnamed person familiar with the matter as saying the Justice Department could file the litigation by the end of the year.

The internet titan reiterated its position on Wednesday, saying it competes fairly in an online market where people have many options.

“Our advertising technologies help websites and apps fund their content, enable small businesses to grow, and protect users from exploitative privacy practices and bad ad experiences,” Google said in response to an AFP inquiry.

“There is enormous competition in advertising tools, which has made online ads more relevant, reduced fees, and expanded options for publishers and advertisers.” —AFP ■

Uber Eats Japan halts hiring of foreign students for food delivery

THE operator of the Uber Eats food delivery service in Japan has stopped hiring new overseas students, a company official said Thursday, after facing allegations that it illegally employed overstayers last year.

The hiring freeze, effective 25 Aug., will likely affect many foreign students looking for jobs amid the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. A decline in the number of employees could also reduce service quality, despite growing demand for food deliveries amid government stay-at-home requests.

An Uber Eats Japan Inc. official told Kyodo News it has stopped recruiting new foreign students because checking their visa status every half year in person and confirming their attendance at schools “requires a lot of human resources,” making it difficult for the company to ensure compliance. In June, police referred Uber Japan Co. and two of its former employees to prosecutors for allegedly hiring two Vietnamese overstayers as food delivery staff in violation of the country’s immigration control law.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NORDBORG MAERSK VOY.NO. (132S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NORDBORG MAERSK VOY.NO. (132S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-9-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township,
Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated: **3 September 2021**

NEWS
IN BRIEFJapan's Princess
Mako, boyfriend to
marry by yr-end,
with no ceremony

PRINCESS Mako, a niece of Japanese Emperor Naruhito, and her boyfriend Kei Komuro will marry by the year-end and may start a new life in the United States, but in a rare decision will not hold the usual related ritual ceremonies, a government source said Wednesday.

Amid public unease about their marriage due to a money dispute between Komuro's mother and her former fiancée, the princess will likely decline a lump-sum payment of up to about 150 million yen (\$1.36 million) usually given to female royal family members upon their departure from the household, the source said.

Under the current rules, female imperial family members lose their royal status upon marrying a commoner.

The marriage of the princess and Komuro, both 29, has been postponed for over two years due to the dispute over 4 million yen that the former fiancée claims the mother owes him. The sum includes money spent on Komuro's educational expenses.—Kyodo ■

German man
tried for spying
on parliament for
Russians

THE German employee of a security company went on trial Wednesday for allegedly passing on floor plans of parliament buildings to Russian secret services, a case that has further frayed ties between Berlin and Moscow. The suspect named only as Jens F., 56, is accused of handing over a CD-Rom with more than 300 files of floor plans of buildings used by the German Bundestag to the military attaché of the Russian embassy in 2017.

The military attaché in post at that time is believed to be an employee of Russia's GRU military intelligence service. The suspect meanwhile worked for a security company contracted by the Bundestag. Reading out the charge sheet before a court in Berlin, prosecutor Frank Stuppi accused the man of espionage.—AFP ■

Pope to visit Greece, Cyprus, Malta

POPE Francis announced plans to visit Greece, Cyprus and Malta and confirmed he hopes to attend the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

The 84-year-old has already scheduled a visit to Slovakia September 12-15 after a brief stop in Hungary to celebrate a mass in the capital Budapest.

Asked by Spain's Cope radio whether he may also travel to Spain to coincide with the Holy Year in the northwestern city of Santiago de Compostela, the pontiff said he could not rule it out.

"But my choice so far of travel to Europe is the small countries. First it was Albania and then all the countries that were

small," he said.

"Now Slovakia is on the programme, then Cyprus, Greece and Malta. I wanted to take that option: first to the smaller countries..."

"And if I go to Santiago, I go to Santiago but not to Spain, let's be clear," ruling out an official trip to the country.

The pope, who has been outspoken on the need to tackle climate change, also confirmed he hoped to attend the COP26 conference in Scotland in November — and urged participants to aim high.

"It all depends on how I feel at the time. But in fact, my speech is already being prepared, and the plan is to be there," he said. It is the biggest climate sum-



The pope, who has been outspoken on the need to tackle climate change, also confirmed he hoped to attend the COP26 conference in Scotland in November. **PHOTO: AFP**

mit since the 2015 Paris negotiation, which Francis said "was the summum (pinnacle) in becoming globally aware".—AFP ■

Japan, Pacific nations vow
to tighten defence ties for
maritime order

Japan's Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi (L) attends an online meeting with Pacific island nations' representatives in Tokyo on 2 Sept. 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

MINISTERIAL-LEVEL defence representatives from Japan and 13 Pacific island countries vowed on Thursday in an online meeting to tighten cooperation to maintain maritime order amid China's increasing military activity in the region.

The participants in the first such gathering affirmed the importance of promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, their joint statement said. The concept is an initiative by the United States and Japan, apparently aimed at countering Beijing's rising assertiveness in the nearby waters and its growing economic influence in the region.

The representatives agreed on the need for their "mutual understanding and trust-building to address challenges for regional security", the statement said.

Japan's Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi noted during the meeting that the Pacific region faces new challenges, including defending against authoritarianism, according to the Japanese ministry, in a veiled reference to China. "We need to strengthen our ties," said Kishi, who chaired the meeting called the "Japan Pacific Islands Defence Dialogue."

The gathering follows a meeting of Japan and Pacific island countries' leaders in July when they also agreed on cooperation under the free and open Indo-Pacific initiative.

China's military activities are expanding in the East and South China seas, conducting more exercises with fighter jets and naval vessels, including its aircraft carrier Liaoning, in the region.—Kyodo ■

Mongolian pupils go back
to school and end long
education exile

GUIDING her younger brother from their yurt on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, 15-year-old Urangoo Basandorj could barely contain her excitement for Wednesday's return to school, as Mongolia's children mark the end of grinding months of exile from education.

The country of three million has taken some of the world's toughest and most enduring measures against the Covid-19 pandemic, shutting schools and kindergartens since January 2020 and plunging children into a purgatory of remote learning with patchy access to technology.

Nearly two-thirds of the population has been fully vaccinated yet Mongolia reported 3,726 new virus cases on Wednesday — the highest daily increase since the pandemic hit the country, the health ministry said.

Still, masked students in blazers filed into a primary school in the capital Ulaanbaatar, where classrooms were kitted out with temperature monitors, hand sanitizer and social distancing stickers.

"I heard the news about reopening schools and I was super excited — I was so happy and I dreamt (of) my classmates all night," Urangoo Basandorj told AFP.

"It was so difficult not (being) able to meet my friends... the online class wasn't nice."

Parents across Mongolia — a landlocked country where nearly a third of people live below the poverty line — have complained of varying access to education since the pandemic first emerged in neighbouring China, with televised classes condemned as limited and on-line learning restricted to those with internet access.—AFP ■



Mongolian children have returned to the classroom after a long Covid-shutout. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ukraine’s Zelensky seeks Biden’s support on NATO

PRESIDENT Joe Biden assured Ukraine’s leader Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday that the United States opposes “Russian aggression” but he showed no sign of moving on requests to open NATO to the eastern European country.

“The United States remains firmly committed to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression and our support for Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations,” Biden told the Ukrainian president in the Oval Office.

Zelensky, who spent Tuesday at the Pentagon pressing for military assistance to combat Russia and Russian-backed separatists, is only the second European leader to get a White House meeting so far under Biden.

The coronavirus pandemic and a hectic first seven months of the administration mean Biden has had few foreign visitors. Even Zelensky’s meeting was delayed by two days due to the



US President Joe Biden assures Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky of support against Russian “aggression”. **PHOTO: AFP**

tense US withdrawal from Afghanistan, completed Monday.

“President Zelensky and Ukraine have gotten as much, if not more, attention from this administration than any other European country,” a senior Biden administration official told reporters, asking not to be identified.

The White House visit was undoubtedly a triumph for Zelen-

sky, who has been trying to line one up since he took office in 2019.

A former comedian virtually unknown in the West, he found himself caught in a US domestic political firestorm when then-president Donald Trump asked him to launch a spurious corruption probe into Biden’s family ahead of the 2020 US presidential election. — AFP ■

Marseille’s drug crime in spotlight as Macron visits



Macron met residents of the rundown district of Bassens on the first day of a three-day visit to Marseille. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

RESIDENTS in some of Marseille’s poorest crime-ridden districts pleaded with French President Emmanuel Macron for help on Wednesday as he visited the Mediterranean port following a spate of drugs-related murders.

France’s second-biggest city has long been known for its run-down streets and desolate housing estates, as well as its gritty charm and fierce local pride.

But with the April 2021 presidential elections approaching, a surge in deadly shootings has put its long-standing social problems on the political agenda.

“I’ve suffered so much, I can’t put it into words. I want to leave,” one woman on the verge of tears told Macron as he met residents of the Bassens estate in northern Marseille at the start of his visit.

Others asked for more

police, public investment and better housing as they described their daily encounters with drug dealers, as well as the decrepit local schools and high-rise blocks.

“We’re scared on this estate,” one 63-year-old social worker from Bassens told AFP ahead of Macron’s arrival. “When I get back from work at 10 pm, it’s deserted and sometimes you hear shooting like it’s a Western film.”—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Danish minister faces trial for separating migrant couples

A former Danish immigration minister goes on trial on Thursday in a rarely used impeachment court accused of illegally separating couples who arrived in the country to claim asylum.

The 26 judges of the special court, which only convenes to try former or current members of government, will determine whether Inger Stojberg violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

Law professor Frederik Waage pointed out that it was only the third such case in more than a century, calling it “historic”. Stojberg ordered the separation of 23 couples in 2016 where the woman was under 18 – though the age differences were mostly small – without examining the cases individually.—AFP ■

Police and paramedics charged over death of Black man in Colorado

COLORADO handed down criminal charges including manslaughter to three police officers and two paramedics over the 2019 death of a young Black man put in a police chokehold and injected with ketamine, prosecutors said Wednesday.

A grand jury returned a 32-count indictment over the death of Elijah McClain, after the western US state’s governor opened a special investigation last year amid a groundswell of public outrage including a celebrity-backed online petition calling for justice.

“Each of the five defendants face one count of manslaughter and one count of criminally negligent homicide,” said Colorado attorney general Phil Weiser, who headed the investigation.—AFP ■

Most Afghan allies left behind as US describes haunting choices

MOST Afghan allies seeking to flee with the US withdrawal were unable to do so, an official acknowledged Wednesday, as the United States began to wrestle with painful choices in the chaotic final days of the war.

President Joe Biden’s administration says the victorious Taliban have promised to keep letting Afghans leave – but many who worked for the United States over its 20-year mission fear retribution.

“These have been incredibly emotional and trying days,

and indeed years,” said General Mark Milley, the top US military officer.

“We are all conflicted with feelings of pain and anger, sorrow and sadness, combined with pride and resilience,” he said.

A senior State Department official vowed to keep working to help everyone leave.

“Everybody who lived it is haunted by the choices we had to make and by the people we were not able to help depart,” he said on customary condition of anonymity.—AFP ■



Afghans crowd the tarmac of the Kabul airport on 16 August 2021, to flee the country as the Taliban took control. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

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.

ASEAN's pride: Thailand beat France 3-2 in Paralympic football event

ONE of the ASEAN power-houses, the Thailand Blind Football team defeated France Blind Football team 3-2 in the Tokyo Paralympic football event yesterday.

The win for Thailand lifts their team ranking to seventh place.

In their historic first win at the Paralympics, Kittikorn

Baodee scored the first-ever Thai football-5-a-side goal, followed by two more goals from Panyawut Kupan.

Football 5-a-side is played by athletes with vision impairment.

They must pass, tackle and shoot by relying on the sound of the ball and the voice of their guide.

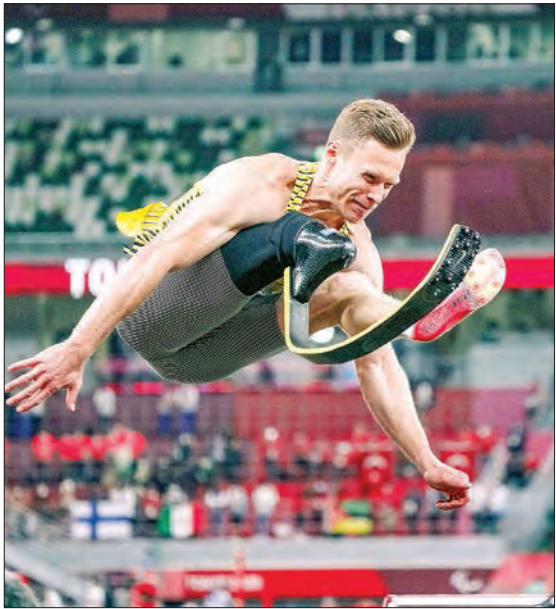
The two most prominent versions of Paralympic football are 5-a-side football for athletes with visual impairments and 7-a-side football for athletes with cerebral palsy.

The sport, governed by the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), is played with modified FIFA rules.—GNLM ■



Thailand blind footballers (red) are seen battling for the ball against the French counterparts during their Tokyo Paralympic football event yesterday. PHOTO: ASEAN FOOTBALL

Paralympics: “Blade Jumper” Rehm repeats as long jump champion



Markus Rehm of Germany competes in the men's T64 long jump final at the Tokyo Paralympics on 1 Sept. 2021, at the National Stadium in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO

GERMANY’S “Blade Jumper” Markus Rehm won gold in the men’s long jump T64 event at the Tokyo Paralympics on Wednesday, despite falling short of extending his own world record. Rehm recorded his best leap of 8.18 metres at the National Stadium for his fourth Paralympic gold medal. He won long jump events at the 2012 London Games and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

“I feel great. It was all about winning the gold medal. My third Paralympic Games, my third (long jump) gold medal,” Rehm said. “It’s great to be able to bring it back and celebrate with my beloved people back home.” France’s Dimitri Pavade took silver with a jump of 7.39 and American Trenten Merrill bronze with 7.08.

The 33-year-old Rehm, whose right leg was amputated below the knee, came into these Paralympics as one of the biggest stars in the world of Para sports. Rehm, whose nickname comes from the bladed prosthetic leg that he springs off, set a world record for his category of 8.62 in June. — Kyodo News ■

History man Ronaldo saves Portugal as France held in World Cup qualifying

CRISTIANO RONALDO became the all-time top scorer in men’s international football with two late goals as Portugal beat the Republic of Ireland 2-1, while holders France drew 1-1 with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2022 World Cup qualifying on Wednesday.

A day after completing his return to Manchester United, Ronaldo had an early penalty saved by teenage goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu in Faro before Ireland took the lead on the stroke of half-time.

John Egan’s glancing header put Stephen Kenny’s side on course for a famous win, but Ronaldo broke Irish

hearts with an 89th-minute equalizer — a goal that took him past the Iranian Ali Daei’s record of 109.

The 36-year-old Ronaldo then snatched all three points for Portugal in the sixth minute of injury time, rising highest to power in a header from Joao Mario’s right-wing cross.

“This record is mine and it is unique. I’m extremely happy and it’s another one for my career,” Ronaldo told RTP public television. The five-time Ballon d’Or winner also equalled Sergio Ramos’s European mark of 180 caps.—AFP ■