

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 and party visit Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy

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, who is currently in the Russian Federation, visited the booths at the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy in Moscow in the afternoon on 2 September.

Officials from the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation welcomed the Vice-Senior General and party and conducted them around the museum of the scale model of Moscow, the museum of the scale model of Smart City and the Planetarium.

In the afternoon, the Vice-Senior General met with scholarship trainees at the parlour of the hotel where the Vice-Senior General and party are being put up.

At the meeting, the Vice-Senior General explained the current political changes, needs for lending a helping hand to each other while discharging the duty of the State abroad,



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party view around the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy in Moscow on 2 September 2021.

serving as good State service political, economic and economic interests, and needs to uplift the Vice-Senior General presented gifts to the trainees.—MNA

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Central Bank of Myanmar
Notification No 33/2021
12th Waning of Wagaung 1383 ME
3 September 2021

- 1. The Central Bank of Myanmar exercises the authority in sub-section (a) of Section 49 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law to issue this notification.
- 2. According to Section 38-b, Section 42-a of the Foreign Exchange Management Law and paragraph 35 of the Foreign Exchange Management Regulation, exporters shall not fail to deposit all their export incomes in foreign exchange, during the stipulated period, in their bank accounts in the State.
- 3. Exporters must sell their remaining export incomes in foreign exchange of their bank accounts to the authorized bank-AD licences within four months of the transfers without fail.
- 4. This notification shall come into effect from the date of issue.

Than Nyein
Governor

Upgrade of Uru river bridge to reinforced concrete bridge completed 70%

A total of 70 per cent of the cable-stayed bridge connecting between Naung Po Aung Model Village and Thaphan Gone Village in Homalin Township has been upgraded to a reinforced concrete bridge, said U Aung Thiha, Director of Bridges Department (Civil), Ministry of Construction.

It is estimated to cost K5 billion for upgrading the Uru River Bridge as a reinforced concrete bridge.

With K2 billion of Union budget from the 2021-22 financial year, the bridge construction started on 22 January this year and is now 70 per cent complete.

"In our advanced section, we will replace the existing cable-stayed bridge and install a steel frame. We have already bought the steel frames. This year, we have to build three piers to install the steel frames.

"The three piers are 100 per cent complete and will be replaced by an existing cable-stayed bridge in an open season of next year. It is expected to be completed in March next year. It is now 70 per cent complete,"



said U Aung Thiha.

It has been more than ten years since the construction of the cable-stayed bridge across the Uru River.

The withstanding capacity

of the cable-stayed bridge is 13 tonnes of loads, making it impossible for trucks to pass over. The cable-stayed bridge was upgraded to a reinforced concrete bridge due to delays in the

flow of goods in the area due to crossings.

"It used to be an important bridge in Upper Sagaing Region, so it is under construction," U Aung Thiha added.

The bridge will be 1,090 feet long and 26 feet wide. This year, 1.8-metre-diameter reinforced concrete pipes will be erected, and steel frames have been purchased for the bridge.

During the construction of the bridge, the old cable-stayed bridge will be demolished and replaced with a reinforced concrete floor. There will be a 40-foot-high water clearance and a 3-foot-wide sidewalk on each side, including four 135-foot long Plate Girder spans and ten 55-foot long R.C Girder spans.

In addition to upgrading the Uru River Bridge in Homalin Township, the Chindwin Bridge (Htamanthi) is also under construction this financial year, officials said.

Once the bridges are completed, trucks will be able to reach the upper regions of the Uru River, Naga Self-Administered Zone, and Tamu Township.

On the other hand, it will be able to travel to India, which will improve the flow of trade and develop the region. — Lulay/GNLM

Sinovac COVID-19 vaccination continues in IDP camps in Myebon Tsp

SINOVAC COVID-19 vaccination continued in IDP camps in Myebon Township, MraukU District, Rakhine State, at 10 am yesterday.

Under the leadership of U Min Oo, Chairman of Township Administration Body, and led by Dr Than Tun, head of Township Public Health Department, vaccination works were conducted by healthcare

workers, departmental staff and village administrators at Pauk Tu Taung IDP camp, Yayshin IDP camp and Kyee Gaung Taung IDP camp, respectively.

The Sinovac vaccines are given to people in the IDP camps between the aged 18 and 65 in line with the COVID-19 immunization guidelines, officials said. — Tin Win (IPRD)/ GNLM



Goodwill for the country

HE urged to run the manufacturing, agriculture and livestock industries to ensure food security. It should make efforts for the better economic system of people and country. If the individuals have goodwill for the country, they can accomplish their works and it can also provide the development of the country and living standards of the public.

(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)

State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party visit Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

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 who is currently in the Russian Federation visited the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces of the Russian Federation at the Patriot Park in

Kubinka, southwest of Moscow, yesterday morning at the local standard time. The Vice-Senior General and party were welcomed by officials. They viewed round arms, ammunition, equipment and utensils used in the Second World War, equipment of the medical corps, signal accessories, and show of wars through

programmes at the museum near the cathedral and asked for further information. They also viewed the historical and documentary records in the cathedral. The Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was built in honour of the Diamond Jubilee Victory Day of the Great Patriot-



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win makes a tour around the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Kubinka, southwest of Moscow, on 2 September 2021.



Vice-Senior General Soe Win offers the light at the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces yesterday.

ic War which fell on 9 May 2020. It aims to emerge as the Centre of Military Glory of the Russian Federation. The main building is 96 metres high together with a 75 metres high bell tower, three small buildings, four museums and parks were constructed by more than 4,000 renowned architects and artists day and night within six months. More

than 10 million photos displayed in the museum illustrate the 1,418-day war launched by the Russian Armed Forces during the Second World War. Environs of the cathedral and the walls were decorated with portraits of battlefields and mural paintings using the damaged vehicles and heavy machinery and equipment. —MNA

China donates 1 million vaccines, 2-million-yuan worth of medical supplies

A ceremony of China-donated 1 million COVID-19 vaccines and 2-million-yuan worth of medical supplies to Myanmar was held virtually yesterday. During the event, Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Mr Deng Boqing made an opening speech. Then, Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win expressed words of thanks to China for providing the vaccines and medical equipment, which were transported via Yunnan provisional govern-

ment, to vaccinate the people living along the border area of Kachin and Shan states. The ministry is conducting the vaccination programme to vaccinate the entire population of the country, including border areas under the leadership of the Provisional Government of Myanmar. He also said as the mutations of the COVID-19 virus are currently occurring around the world, effective preventive measures play a key role and vaccine-producing countries should provide

developing countries to be able to produce vaccines. Scientific research should be done in searching the source of the virus and it should not blame or give political pressure on other countries. He then expressed words of thanks for the donations on behalf of the Provisional Government and people. Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, Vice-Governor of Yunnan Province Ms Li Malin, Governor of Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yun-



The MoH Union Minister attends the virtual event to receive one million vaccines and two-million-yuan worth of medical aids donated by China on 2 September 2021.

nan Province, China Mr Wei Gang and the Secretary-General of ASEAN delivered the video messages. — MNA

Myanmar Tank Squad secures third award in Tank Biathlon (Division-2) of Int'l Army Games-2021 among eight contestant squads



THE Myanmar Tank Squad standing in the second position in the group deservedly advanced to the semifinals in the Tank Biathlon (Division-2) of the International Army Games-2021, which started in the Russian Federation on 22 August, by passing the different group events.

In the second semifinal of Division-2, the Myanmar Tank Squad entered the finishing line in the first position with 2 hours, 28 minutes and 20 seconds. It could stand in the second position of the group in Division-2 as the best shot team, and it deservedly sailed into

the final. The Tank Biathlon (Division)'s final event took place yesterday with the participation of Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, South Ossetia and Tajikistan. Despite setting the lower records on the early lanes, the Myanmar Tank Squad poured out the relentless efforts in the

competition. So, it entered the finishing line in the third position with a competing record of two hours, 28 minutes and 05 seconds with eight shots to the target behind Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Hence, the Myanmar Tank Squad showed off its brilliant skills by securing the third position in the Division-2 among eight contestant tank squads from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, South Ossetia, Laos, Abkhazia, Qatar and Mali. The Myanmar Tank Squad has competed in the Tank Biathlon event of the International Army Games for the fourth time. It took the 16th position among 22 contestant squads in 2018, the 13th position among 23 squads in 2019, the 9th position among 16 squads in 2020 respectively. The Myanmar Tank Squad could possess the experiences in the competition of the international military organizations and technical experiences and enhance the friendly relations among them. — MNA



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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue daily

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 3 September (Yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products including oxygen plants and concentrators were imported by 13 companies with the use of 34 vehicles, including one bowser.

A total of 19 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by two bowser three tonnes of liquid oxygen, 2,252 empty oxygen cylinders, one oxygen plant, 218 oxygen concentrators,

3,150 sets of PPE suits, and 80 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti, Myawady, Tachilek and Hteekhee trading posts and Yangon International Airport.

One vehicle carrying liquid oxygen was transported to Yangon and one oxygen plant was transported to Lashio respectively.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importations of essential medical supplies required in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



Myawady.



Muse.



Kampaiti.

Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Subcommittee

FROM 30-8-2021 to 3-9-2021, local/foreign donors contributed 0.501 million Kyats to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 and foreign currency account EDC 600012 opened at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account as of 3-9-2021 is as follows:

COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List	
	Kyat
Account opening balance on 27-8-2021	245,949,968,503.91
Received amount of money from (+) 30-8-2021 to 3-9-2021	510,000.00
Closed balance on 3-9-2021	245,950,478,503.91
COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List	
	USD
Account opening balance on 27-8-2021	150,162,149.53
Received amount of money from (+) 30-8-2021 to 3-9-2021	
Total amount of payments to Sinopharm Company of China for purchasing COVID-19 vaccines on 31-8-2021	66,500,000.00
Closed balance on 3-9-2021	83,662,149.53

Armed robbers run away with K100 million from KBZ bank in Kyaukme

THREE armed bank robbers ran away with about K100 million kyats from the KBZ bank (Branch 106) in Kyaukme Township, northern Shan State, yesterday afternoon.

Bank employees were forced to hand over the money when one of three armed robbers came into the bank and threatened with a gun. The robber, along with his two other partners waiting in a car, escaped with the money, and security forces are conducting a detailed investigation to arrest them under the law. — MNA

သတင်းစာ ဖတ်ရှုလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်

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Discussion with Ba Gyi Hman

BY Maung Aye Chan

IN my Ywar Tha Yar village, Ba Gyi Hman has a wealth of knowledge. He weighs the words and thinks very carefully before he speaks. Although he is over 70, he is still active and alert. He can read well and is well versed in foreign and Myanmar affairs.

We, youths go and ask him if we want to know about political affairs. We call him Ba Gyi Hman as he is a blunt person wearing thick glasses.

He appreciates the youths and is a mentor for us as well. He always welcomes the visitors with the crispy mixed beans and yay nway gyan (plain hot water). Currently, the youths are concerned about the current political affairs of the country especially the responsibility grab of Tatmadaw according to the Constitution for election frauds in the 2020 election. We can see the poll heads denies the accuse of conducting voting fraud. So, we should ask how is the opinion of Ba Gyi Hman regarding this case.

Maung Aye Chan: Ba Gyi Hman, the people criticize the electoral frauds after the 2020 election results are annulled. But the people who served as poll heads posted on social media that there was no election fraud at the polling stations. How do you think about that case?

Ba Gyi Hman: If I say openly, not every poll head committed the voting frauds. Although there might be some poll heads, who are the supporters of NLD, who committed such cases, most of them served the duties honestly. So, we cannot say every poll head conducted electoral irregularities. The people also did not do such doings. The NLD government and previous UEC jointly committed electoral frauds. Now,

they denied the cases manipulating the poll heads as stepping-stones. Most people think the vote-rigging is the repeated voting. But it means inflating the voter rolls and printing extra ballots and doesn't mean repeat voting. So, there are an extra and shortage of ballots at a poll station. They could not cover up the case and Tatmadaw inspected the lists.

MAC: The Chairmen and members of ward/village-tract election sub-commission jointly compiled the voter lists. If so, how did they commit voter fraud?

BGM: NLD government substituted their supporters as Chairmen and members of ward/village-tract sub-commissions in advance, didn't they? Let's look at the case of your village. Where is the unruly chairman who is favoured by the party? It is the basic preparation. The region/state chief ministers lead such cases. You know that they formed a group to check the voter lists, don't you? In reality, they organized the group to manipulate the voter list collecting processes. The NLD supporters were satisfied as they were selected as chairmen of ward/village-tracts and members of townships/wards election sub-commissions. For example, Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein selected his niece San San Myat in the previous UEC.

MAC: What is the difference between the inflation of voting lists and voter fraud? We, the citizen cast the vote just for one time.

BGM: Most of the people look confused about this case. If they create the situation to inflate the voting lists, they can print extra ballots. The ballots must be printed depending on the num-

ber of voters. They made a trick to add more extra ballots using many ways or in advance voting processes, and printed the extra ballots. In some places, the NLD offices communicated and sent the ballots, especially for their party. When the basic level members could not serve well, the officials found the bags with party logo tags containing ballot receipts. The poll heads did not know about it. They saw just the voting lists of a polling station. They did not know what happened to their voting lists.

MAC: I nearly see the plot. Please go on, Ba Gyi Hman.

BGM: The heads of wards/village-tracts cooperated with the township election sub-commissions and granted the recommendation letters. The poll heads didn't know these cases too. The used ballots must conform with the numbers of ballot receipts. They granted more than 43 million ballots and used only more than 27 million, and so there might be more than 15 millions of extra ballots. There are more than 1.4 million used ballots that are now missing at the polling stations. They seemed to remove the ballots voted for other parties from the lists. There are more than 400,000 extra ballots without any lists. They added the extra ballots to get votes for NLD. For example, the voting results, which are more than the numbers of eligible voters, posted on Facebook by NLD MP Zeya Thaw, PPP's Maung Kyaw Zaya didn't get the votes of his family members and more than 30 people with the same address of one unoccupied house from his constituency cast the votes and seizures of nine new ballot books in Thegon. The NLD government wanted to commit electoral fraud and was even ri-

diculous. Therefore, they could not manage well to cover up their doings.

MAC: It's true. Such cases are spreading on Facebook. We know the NLD supporters and members interfere in election-related matters together with the heads of ward/village-tracts. They conducted advance voting processes with the party's flag and seal. The elderly people who cast the advance vote have poor eyesight. They just how to use the voting stamp on the place of the NLD candidate. During the advance voting process of our village, most of the villagers thought that the NLD party collects the votes.

BGM: Besides these cases, they issued the instructions to count the ballots without any UEC symbols and just with a tick as valid votes. It means all the votes for NLD become valid votes. But they gave reasons like the fake seal. They just create the situation that they want. They also gave instructions for the advance voters to vote again due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The people who are not at their constituencies can cast votes at their current places. But they changed the rule again. These people must cast vote at their townships. Some did not notice it. They tried the extra ballots to be legal ones rather than repeat voting.

They also allowed the casting of advance votes without any solid documents. For example, granting the ballots without any fingerprints/signatures. They tried to be conformed with the numbers of ballots and extra ballots.

But as there are plenty of ballots and they failed to do so. Then, they counted the votes of the 2015 election for NLD MP Naw Pwal Say of Gyobin-

gauk Township. The numbers of Yesagyo Township MPs and Magway MPs are also incorrect. They tried to inflate the voting lists and seemed to issue the extra ballots accidentally. They appointed computer experts to compile the voter lists in each township of the country. I do not want to talk about foreign interference.

MAC: If so, we, the citizens did not commit any voting frauds and the poll heads honestly served their duties. The NLD government and party are dishonest. The case occurred as they were eager to win the election. If they had the thought to accept the votes of people honestly, our country would not face the current situation. Tatmadaw requested to dissolve the issue peacefully many times.

BGM: The story happened like this, Mg Aye Chan. The current political affairs that we face today are the consequences of the doings of the NLD party as they chose the wrong way to form a government just with one party without negotiating with any political parties. They misused the democracy and wishes of voters even they repeatedly highlighted the word —democracy. In conclusion, the honest poll heads and voters are not involved in the cases like the shortage/illegal extra ballots and the difference between the numbers of eligible voters and ballots. The authorities will investigate the cases and carry them out under the law.

MAC: Thank you, Ba Gyi Hman. I now understand the whole case. We have to face all the situations. I think we need to make the right choice next time. I want our country to be peaceful as quickly as possible.

(Translated)

3,410 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 3 September, total figure rises to 409,509

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 409,509 after 3,410 new cases were reported on 3 September 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 358,074 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 15,693 after 93 died.—MNA

Minbu keen on welcoming tourists in post-COVID-19 era

SITUATED in the middle part of Myanmar, Minbu is a town surrounded by the Ayeyawady River in the east, the longest and the most important artery for the people in the country, and Ngaphe, Magway, Minhla and Pwintbyu townships on the other sides.

Minbu is also known as Sagu where a total of 150 villages are located with numerous cultural heritages and tourist attractions. The town is accessible all-year-round and tourists from across the world usually come and visit its preserved archaeological remains and natural rural landscapes.

Homegrown tourists annually go on a pilgrimage to the Upper Settawya and the Lower Settawya, the two footprints of the Buddha, located right beside the Mann creek. Tourist attractions of Minbu also include Mann Chaung Resort which offers elephant-ride; the beauty of Ayeyawady River and its shore; Shinpin Sakkeinte Pagoda on the top of Kaylarthaba Mountain which was believed that the Buddha rested; and the Nagapwat Mountain (Mud Volcano) which was believed



to have formed from the death of two dragon (Mythical creature) siblings on their way to the Buddha by a hawk.

In the Lekine area in Minbu, Sandaku Natha Pagoda; 100-year-old Saku Yote Sone monastery and other famous stupas and pagodas are situated. In Ye Pote Kalay Village, Shwe Myin Tin Pagoda where Maha Punna Thera had his first meditation and in the east of the town, Thamuda Giri Emerald Pagoda, the second-med-

itation-place of the Monk.

Anywhere inside and outside of Minbu, including the cultural tourist attractions such as Shin Minbu Pagoda, Kyaung Lane Pagoda and Dat Taw Kone Pagoda can be reached by horse cart, motorbike and tuk-tuk vehicles (Three-wheel-motorbike).

It is reported that Minbu is keen to welcome tourists in the post-COVID-19 period. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM



Some aerial views of sightseeing in Minbu.

Build pleasant and progressive workplaces for employees

ALL THE employees in a single workplace are the closest friends of each other. They all need to realize the good relations among them inside and outside the workplace.

A workplace is formed with employees at different ranks to supervise the work process, to achieve success, to enjoy the goal as well as to meet the set standard. As such, the products will meet the quality of set standards.

In fact, supervisors are also employees under the same boss. Due to duty assignments, supervisors are responsible to organize, mobilize and supervise the lower-level employees

in their work processes but both supervisors and lower-level employees need to culture the brotherly spirit, the family spirit and the workmate spirit based on unity in doing all things.

The responsibilities of supervisors are to supervise the work process and enforce the worksite disciplines for all including themselves. Hence, other employees should not blame them and must look at them as the functioning of the duty assignments. Actually, worksite restrictions are not done by the supervisors, and it is just their responsibility to supervise the workplace.

On the other hand, supervisors need to avoid abuse of the entrusted empowerment in supervising the workplace. They need to keep a concept that they are employees like others in their minds. They have to serve the duty with fairness, sympathy and compassion over their workmates.

Only when supervisors and lower-level employees are in unison, will products

of the workplace increase. In fact, those persons at both levels are working together under the same boss to earn income for their families each. Hence, they should understand that they cannot taste benefit from the disunity, and if they build a united society in the workplace, they all will have to enjoy the fruits of unity as the creation of a pleasant environment.

Hence, all employees need to abide by the prescribed workplace disciplines in addition to the instructions and guidelines of the boss. They have to implement the assigned work projects together without shirking. If so, they can sustain their friendly relations based on attachment, nondiscrimination and the workmate spirit till their final days.

That is why all employees in a single workplace must be in unison without bullying, discrimination and exploitation over each other so as to establish a happy society.

■ ■ ■

COVID-19: New Mu variant could be more vaccine-resistant

A new coronavirus “variant of interest” named Mu - also known by its scientific name as B.1.621 - is being closely monitored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the agency has said.

IN its weekly epidemiological update, published on Tuesday, WHO warned it was becoming increasingly prevalent in Colombia and Ecuador, and showed signs of possible resistance to vaccines.

Mu was first identified in Colombia in January 2021, and since then, there have been “sporadic reports” of cases and outbreaks in South America and Europe, WHO said.

While the global prevalence of Mu among sequenced COVID-19 cases is below 0.1%, its prevalence has “consistently increased” in Colombia and Ecuador, where it is now responsible for around 39% and 13% of infections, respectively.

Reports on the variant’s prevalence should be “interpreted with due consideration” given the low sequencing capacity of most countries, the agency said.

More resistant to vaccines

Mu is the fifth variant of interest to be monitored by the WHO



Since first emerging in Colombia in January, the variant has popped up in at least 39 countries, including in the US. A lab technician sorts blood samples inside a lab for a COVID-19 vaccine study at the Research Centres of America (RCA) in Hollywood, Florida, U.S., 13 Aug 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

since March. It has a number of mutations that suggest it could be more resistant to vaccines,

the health agency warned, but stressed that further research would be needed to confirm this.

Preliminary data show a reduced effectiveness of vaccines “similar to that seen for the Beta

variant”. The WHO said it would be monitoring “the epidemiology of the Mu variant in South America, particularly with the co-circulation of the Delta variant...for changes”

More infections

As of 29 August, over 4,500 sequences (3,794 B.1.621 sequences and 856 B.1.621.1 sequences), genome sequences, analysed samples of the virus taken from patients, have been designated as Mu in the past four weeks. The sequences are used to track how it moves through the population, on an open-source genome repository, known as GISAI.

Most of these have been reported in the U.S (2,065) and Colombia (852), Mexico (357) and Spain (473).

Although this figure will be affected by both sequencing capacity, surveillance and the total number of cases in an area.

The novel coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 124,811 people in Colombia, according

to a WHO report on Wednesday.

More than 4,905,258 confirmed cases have been officially diagnosed across the country since the start of the epidemic. As of August 27, a total of 34,247,170 doses of vaccine had been administered.

C.1.2, not currently a concern

South African scientists are closely monitoring the development of another new variant there, according to news reports in the country.

However, C.1.2, is not yet a variant to follow, nor a variant of concern, according to the classification of the World Health Organization.

“It does not appear that its circulation is increasing”, said Dr. Margaret Harris, a spokesperson for the WHO, during a UN press briefing in Geneva on Tuesday.

SOURCE: UN

■ ■ ■

Thailand working to help small businesses survive COVID-19

Since the pandemic began early last year, the tourism and hospitality sectors have been put to a standstill. SMEs’ contribution to the country’s GDP continued to drop, creating a larger gap away from the ambitious 45 per cent target set by the government.

THE ongoing pandemic has been tough to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Thailand, many of which have shutdown, and the country’s Ministry of Commerce is working to help them get through the hardship.

About 3 million SMEs

According to Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), the country currently has about 3 million SMEs, employing up to 12 million people or around 82 per cent of total employment. About half of those businesses are in tourism and related sectors, one of the hardest-hit sectors by the pandemic.

Since the pandemic began early last year, the tourism and hospitality sectors have been put to a standstill. SMEs’ contribution to the country’s GDP continued to drop, creating a larger gap away from the ambitious 45 per cent target set by the government.

The absence of foreign visitors, restrictions on domestic travel, limited oper-

ations of retails and restaurants, together with many other situations to name, have caused countless businesses to shut down temporarily and permanently for some.

Several cost-cutting measures have been employed to safeguard financial liquidity and the survival of the business. However, many still could not adjust their day-to-day operations to cope with the pandemic, especially when income stops rolling in but operating costs and expenses still keep bleeding out.

Initiatives for SMEs

Thai Ministry of Commerce has set up several initiatives to help SMEs adjust their businesses for the new normal during and post COVID-19.

“SMEs play a vital role in driving the country’s economic activities. We have set up a Joint Steering Committee between the government and the private sectors to work together in assisting this group of workforces,” Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit

said during a business conference earlier this week.

Jurin said the ministry has been working to help Thai SMEs get themselves equipped with the new normal of business operations, whereby many activities will be digitalized and happening online.

He said to survive in the future, SMEs must realize the importance of e-commerce platforms, innovation, technologies and intellectual properties. Learning how to effectively operate in the new business setting has become very essential.

Additionally, commerce ministry recently launched a program to help young generation become successful business owners and entrepreneurs.

The programme is run by the government bodies in cooperation with 93 organizations from various fields such as academic institutions, colleges, universities and leading technology companies in the country.

Courses, which cover all aspects of



According to Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), the country currently has about 3 million SMEs, employing up to 12 million people or around 82 per cent of total employment. A small clothing shop in Bangkok. On the surface, the signs of a looming crisis are not clearly visible. **PHOTO: THE ASIA FOUNDATION/XINHUA**

digital skills for building and expanding business in the future business landscape, will be offered to participating members.

The Ministry of Commerce has set a target to train 12,000 people in this campaign. **SOURCE: XINHUA**

Myanmar Gazette

Duty Assignment of Permanent Secretary

The State Administration Council has assigned U Khant Zaw, Director-General of the Union Minister’s Office of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, to the duties of Permanent Secretary of the same ministry.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 3 September 2021)

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady Regions and Rakhine State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 September, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 September, 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 September, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 08:00 hrs M.S.T on 3-9-2021)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (07:30) 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 (3) inches during the next (3) days.

According to the (07:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Hinthada has exceeded by about (3) inches above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (4) inches during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

According to the (07:30)hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalunhas exceeded by about (3) inches above its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about (4) inches 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, HinthadaTownship and ZalunTownship, to take precaution measure.

Flood Alert Warning

(Issued at 08:00 hrs M.S.T on 3-9-2021)

According to the (07:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of NgawunRiver is observed as about (½) foot at Ngathiangchaung below its danger level. It may reach near to its danger level during the next (3) days. It is alerted to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Ngathiangchaung, to take precaution measure.

Myanmar rice body sells food commodities at fairer prices for second time in Twantay Tsp



The food commodities were sold at K5,000 per five-pyi sack of low-quality rice, K8,500 per sack of high-quality rice, K1,850 per oil bottle (60 visses) and K1,300 per 10-pcs tray.

MYANMAR Rice Federation in coordination with Twantay Township Development Affairs Committee sold staple food, including rice, egg, fish and oil at fairer prices with the mobile market trucks in front of the BEHS 1 on Shwesantaw Pagoda Road in Ohnpinsu Quarter, at the Shwenyaungpin junction and Kyauktine traffic point at 9 am on 2 September.

The move is aimed at offering to purchase the food commodities at fairer prices for the locals in the difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic, under the guidance of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Indus-

try and the directive of the Yangon Region government.

The food commodities were sold at K5,000 per five-pyi sack of low-quality rice, K8,500 per sack of high-quality rice, K1,850 per oil bottle (60 visses) and K1,300 per 10-pcs tray. Fish prices per viss stood at K3,500 for tilapia, K9,000 for seabass, K6,500 for carp, K3,800 for rohu, K3,200 for catfish and K7,500 for minced rohu, respectively.

U Kyaw Myint, chairman of the township administration body and its members and the officials concerned assisted in implementing the mobile market scheme. — Township IPRD/GNLM

Myanmar embassy in Seoul arranges relief flight for citizens once per week

THE Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, arranges the relief flight for the citizens who are waiting for the return to Myanmar during the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with the health guidelines of the Central Committee on the Prevention, Control and Treatment of the COVID-19.

A total of 56 Myanmar citizens have been permitted to fly with the relief flight on 7 September.

This 73rd relief flight is operated by Myanmar Airways International (MAI). One Myanmar citizen from Brazil, one from Cambodia, one from Canada, six from France, 36 from the ROK, one from South Africa and 10 from the US are permitted to return by the relief flight, totalling 56 Myanmar

citizens.

Those who have been permitted to go back home can purchase the tickets by sending an email or calling 02 3197676 of the MAI's ticket counter in Korea.

That scheduled relief flight from Incheon to Yangon will depart at 4:30 pm KST and the passengers need to arrive at the airport two and a half hours in advance before the departure time, Myanmar's embassy in Seoul notified.

The returnees must quarantine 14 days at a hotel or community-based facility and another seven days separately at home.

The 21-day quarantine is mandatory for all the returnees according to the instructions issued by the Ministry of Health. — Soe Myint Aung/GNLM

Sagaing region grows over 770,000 acres of oil crops this year

MORE than 770,000 acres of oil crops have been cultivated in the Sagaing region this year, said a regional officer from the Sagaing region Department of Agriculture U Win Hlaing Oo.

It is estimated to cultivate 825,600 acres of oil crops in the region in the 2021-22 financial year. The oil crops have been cultivated since May this year and a total of 775,614 acres of oil crops have been grown in the region to date, according to the official data of the Sagaing region department.

"We have targeted to grow over 800,000 acres of oil crops in the Sagaing region. Over 700,000 acres of oil crops cultivation have been completed so far.

"This year, we have cultivated more peanut acres than expected because of heavy rain. Thus, the oil crops cultivation has been successful. The remaining acres of oil crops will be cultivated within this FY," said U Win Hlaing Oo. This year, the department grew a total of 775,614 acres of oil



This year, we have cultivated more peanut acres than expected because of heavy rain. Thus, the oil crops cultivation has been successful.

crops, including 387,165 acres of the summer crop, 352,909 acres of peanut crop, 35,196 acres of sunflower crop and 344 acres of baheda crop. The oil crops cultivated 99,842 acres of oil crops in Sagaing district, 13,718 acres in Monywa district, 225,134 acres in Yinmabin district, 201,746 acres in Shwebo district, 58,772 acres

in Kanbalu district, 1,533 acres in Katha district, 141 acres in Kawlin district, 50,900 acres in Kalay district, 80 acres in Mawlaik district, 1,500 acres in Hkamti district and 598 acres in Naga Self-Administered Zone, according to the Department of Agriculture in Sagaing Region. — Lulay/GNLM

Myanmar extends one more month entry restriction on travellers

MYANMAR has extended temporary entry restrictions for travellers from all countries until end-September, according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the ministry's announcement, the entry

of all travellers, the issuance of all types of visas and visa exemption services will be suspended till 30 September.

All of these restrictions were extended up to 31 August 2021 earlier, but the restriction has now been extended until 30

September.

Just like the previous announcements, foreign nationals, including diplomats and UN officials, who wish to travel to Myanmar by relief or special flights due to urgent official missions or compelling rea-

sons, are asked to contact the nearest Myanmar mission for possible exceptions to certain visa restrictions.

Myanmar has reported a total of 406,099 COVID-19 infections, with 15,600 deaths as of 3 September.

At the same time, a total of 355,764 patients have been discharged from hospitals and recovered from the virus.

Myanmar reported its first cases of COVID-19 on 23 March last year. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Number of companies registered on MyCO exceeds 4,230 in eight months: DICA

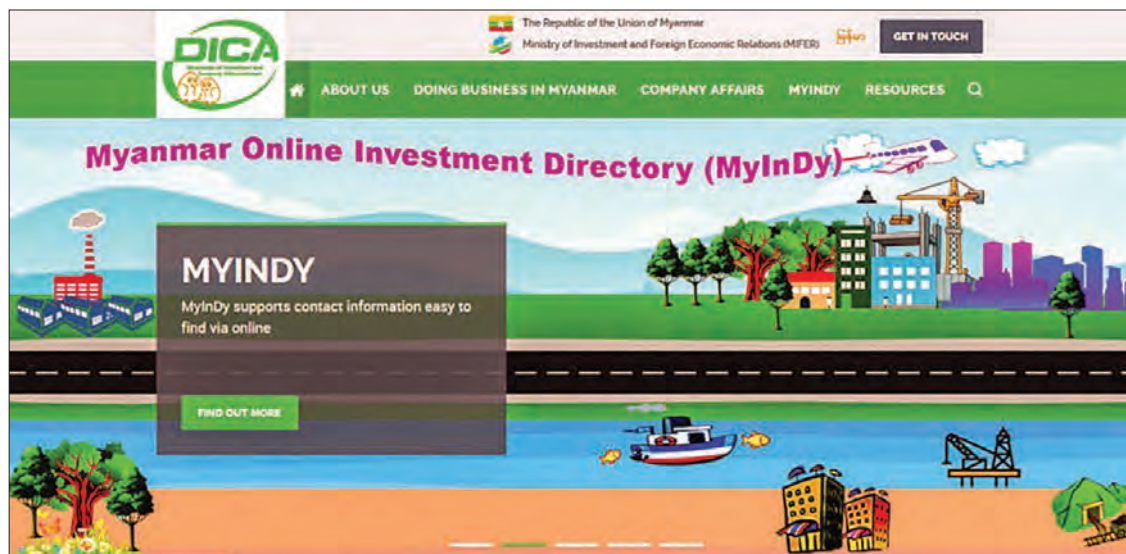
The number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, reached over 4,230 in the past eight months this year, the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) indicated.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

During the January-August period, the number of registered companies on MyCO was 1,373 in January, 188 in February, 163 in March, 254 in April, 686 in May, 775 in June, 433 in July and 360 in August, the DICA's statistics showed.

At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, the DICA stated.

Last year, the figures of registered companies stood at 1,415 in January, 1,298 in February and 1,015 in March, only 348 companies in April, 798 in May, 1,314 in June, 1,650 in July, 1,551 in August, 1,378 in September, 1,693



The MyCO online registry system of DICA.

in October, 1,099 in November and 1,521 in December, as per statistics of the DICA.

In 2019, the figure stood at 1,733 in January 2019, 1,419 in February, 1,108 in March, and over 1,045 in April, 1,411 in May, 1,307 in June, 1,428 in July, 1,302 in August and 1,181 in September. The figures reached a fresh new peak of 2,059 in October 2019. Then, 1,615 new companies in November and 1,772 in December were recorded,

data of the DICA showed.

When the online registry was launched in August 2018, 1,816 new companies registered on MyCO. The figure stood at 2,218 in September 2018, 1,671 in October, 1,431 in November and 1,364 in December 2018.

In addition, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once

every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

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

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within

28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

As per DICA's report, more than 16,000 companies were suspended as of September-end 2020 for failing to submit AR forms within the due date.

Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for late filing returns.

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

Domestic black bean price hits record high of K1.4 mln per tonne

BLACK bean prices in the domestic market have spiked up to K1.4 million per tonne, according to the Yangon Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung Brokerage).

Although the black bean price on 1 May was K888,500 per tonne. The price jumped to about K1,400,000 per tonne on 3 September. It's an increase of around K510,000 per tonne in only over four months, according to the bean market data. The price of black beans has risen when India, the primary buyer of Myanmar pulses, has redefined black bean, green gram and pigeon pea from a restricted commodity to a free import commodity.

Since 2017, India has been setting import quota on beans, including black beans and pigeon peas, under the Indian government plus foreign trade policy for 2015-2020.

Presently, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India issued proclamation S.O.1858 (E) on 15 May 2021 that the three pulses have been changed from a restricted commodity to a free import commodity as of 31 October 2021. The issuance of a bill of lading to import pigeon pea, green gram and black bean needs to be completed by 31 Oc-

tober 2021. The port clearance of imported cargos should be completed by 30 November, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India notified. A memorandum of understanding was signed on 18 June to export a total of 350,000 tonnes of Myanmar pulses, including 250,000 tonnes of black bean and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon pea, to India in five consecutive years (from the 2021-22FY to the 2025-26FY), according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The black bean plantations yielded around 400,000 tonnes annually in Myanmar, and the bean is mainly exported to India. Similarly, Myanmar has produced about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon pea yearly and exported them chiefly to India. At the same time, Myanmar is also exporting beans and pulses to the UAE, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. With demand rising, farmers are now rushing to grow more black beans. The black bean that is mainly bought from India is grown primarily in Myanmar. Other pulses, including green gram and pigeon pea, are produced in Africa and Australia in addition to Myanmar, according to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. — NN/GNLM

Maritime trade tops \$17.3 bln as of 20 Aug

The value of Myanmar's maritime trade over the ten months (1 October-20 August) of the current financial year 2020-2021 sank to US\$17.3 billion, which is a 25 per cent drop compared with the same corresponding period of last year.

The figures plunged from \$23.37 billion during the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

While maritime exports were valued at \$7.2 billion, imports had registered at \$10 billion. Compared to the same period in the 2019-2020 financial year, imports fell by \$4 billion, while exports decreased to \$2 billion. The maritime trade fell by \$6.05 billion as of 20 August as against last year.

Meanwhile, the value of land border trade this FY was estimated at \$8.79 billion, a decrease of \$933 million as against a year-ago period.

Myanmar witnessed a slump in exports and imports triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. Both sea trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts and the political changes. For maritime trade, disruption in the logistics sector and COVID-19 impact on global shipping scaled down Myanmar's maritime

trading somehow.

The country's total external trade over the past ten months touched a low of \$26.1 billion, which plunged from \$33 billion recorded in a year-ago period.

Myanmar's sea trade generated \$26 billion out of an overall trade value of \$36 billion in the last FY2019-2020, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated. Myanmar exports agricultural products, fishery products, minerals, livestock, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other products, while it imports capital goods, consumer goods, and raw industrial materials.

The country currently has

nine ports involved in sea trade. Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar's maritime trade and includes the Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port.

Yangon inner terminal and the outer Thilawa Port received over 152 larger ships of above 30,000 DWT (Deadweight tonnage) in the past five months (February-June) this year after the draft limit is extended up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing to inner Yangon River. Myanmar Port Authority is ensuring smooth freight flow with non-stop operation during the public holidays. — KK/GNLM



Yangon inner terminal and the outer Thilawa Port received over 152 larger ships of above 30,000 DWT (Deadweight tonnage) in the past five months (February-June) this year after the draft limit is extended up to 10 metres with the new navigation channel accessing to inner Yangon River.

Creditors call back loans to China's indebted Evergrande: report



Evergrande has warned it has total liabilities of \$305 billion and it faced 'risks of defaults on borrowings'. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOME creditors of heavily indebted Chinese real estate giant Evergrande Group are demanding immediate payback of loans, a report said Friday, days after the company acknowledged it may default on some of its massive borrowings.

Fear of a potential meltdown at Evergrande -- and the potential impact on the world's second-largest economy -- have increasingly weighed on investors and regulators after the company went on a debt-fuelled expansion binge.

Evergrande said earlier

this week that total liabilities had swelled to 1.97 trillion yuan (\$305 billion) and that the group faced mounting legal challenges and "risks of defaults on borrowings".

Two trust companies -- among Evergrande's largest non-bank creditors -- have demanded immediate repayment on some loans, Bloomberg News reported Friday, citing unidentified people familiar with the matter.

The trusts sent repayment notices to Evergrande over the past two months after becoming

concerned about the company's stability, Bloomberg said.

The amount of loans affected was not given.

Evergrande is one of the largest private companies in China and a leading real estate developer, with a presence nationwide.

Chinese regulators have moved aggressively in recent years to rein in runaway debt at giant conglomerates, such as real estate giant Wanda and tourism conglomerate Fosun, forcing them to sell off assets and slim down. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

APEC senior officials lean in together on trade as uncertainties loom large

APEC senior officials are convening Friday to push bold and practical trade policies, seeking to secure recovery as the uncertainty of the pandemic looms large over efforts to prepare for future shocks.

"APEC is at a critical juncture as we grapple with the prolonged economic and health crisis. APEC has a responsibility to chart the way forward in order to achieve strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth across the region," noted Vangelis Vitalis, the 2021 New Zealand Chair of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Senior Officials.

"In the midst of these uncertainties, member economies are joining and working together based on our shared belief that more trade and more openness, together with structural reform and enhanced collaboration represent the best response to the pandemic," added Vitalis, who is also the Deputy Secretary for Trade and Economic Affairs of New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Officials have been mandated by ministers to consider how trade can help address the immediate crisis and help drive economic recovery across the region. This includes work on how to ensure vaccine manufacturing, supply and distribution, supporting global vaccine-sharing efforts, and addressing barriers to the flow of essential goods and services that can help address the pandemic, in a bid to ensure that the region's health systems cover all people. —Xinhua ■

Senegalese onion farmers in tears over glut

IN a satellite town of Senegal's capital Dakar, 25-kilo sacks of onions are piled up on pavements, ignored by passers-by.

The West African country is in the middle of a supply glut, with prices plummeting and heaps of the pungent vegetables left to rot by the roadside. Farmers are in despair.

"I'm going to give some to the local women," says farmer Diougue Masseye, 71, gazing despondently at his onions.

He is standing inside a 450 square metre (5,000 square foot) warehouse in Bambilor, an onion-producing town about 30 kilometres (20 miles) northeast of the capital Dakar, where his unsold produce has started to sprout.

Gloomy farmers -- who produce about 450,000 tonnes of onions a year -- blame the problem on increased foreign competition and a lack of storage capacity.

But the government also argues that farmers have overproduced this year, flooding the market with onions and depressing prices. — AFP ■

California law seeks 'gender neutral' toy aisles

GENDER neutral toy aisles could become compulsory in California department stores, under rules being considered in the state's legislature.

The bill will not ban separate areas aimed at girls and boys, but will mandate there must also be a place where dolls and toy soldiers sit side-by-side without being recommended for a particular gender.

The regulations would also apply to pacifiers and feeding equipment, according to California assembly member Evan Low, who drafted the bill. "We need to stop stigmatizing kids and putting them in a box by dictating what they should like based on outdated gender stereotypes," Low told AFP. Low said he was inspired to frame the legislation by the daughter of a woman who worked in his office. "Britten



Toys and teething products will have to be displayed in a gender neutral way -- as well as in traditional fashion -- in large California department stores, under a bill passing through the state's legislature. **PHOTO: AFP**

asked her mom while shopping why certain things in a store were 'off limits' to her because she was a girl, but would be fine if she was a boy." Supporters of the bill, which would only apply to department stores that employ more than 500 people throughout

the state, say it would also help to address an unjustified price differential.

They note that products marketed to girls are often more expensive than those aimed at boys, even if the items themselves are identical. —AFP ■

Western Union, MoneyGram restart money transfers to Afghanistan



Remittances are vital for Afghanistan's economy, which was disrupted when the Taliban took over in August. **PHOTO: AFP**

WESTERN Union and MoneyGram announced on Thursday that they would resume money transfer services to Afghanistan, allowing vital remittances into a

country that faces huge economic hurdles following the Taliban's takeover last month. "Western Union is pleased to share that it is resuming its money trans-

fer services into Afghanistan, starting 2 September, so that our customers can once again send money and support their loved ones at this time," a spokesperson said. "We understand the urgent needs of our customers and their families and are committed to supporting them," the spokesperson said, adding that Western Union would waive transfer fees from 3 September through 17.

The service offers payments in Afghanistan in both afghanis and United States dollars via seven banks, according to the spokesperson, and transfers were suspended "because the banking network was closed, essentially, and there were obviously liquidity issues." —AFP ■

Sri Lanka imposes price controls to tackle food shortages



Only government stores have been opening because of a nationwide coronavirus lockdown. PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka imposed price controls on key foods Friday as the government stepped up the use of emergency powers to counter shortages.

Queues formed outside state-run supermarkets even before they opened to sell sugar seized from private dealers at new prices less than half of what was being charged on the open market on Thursday.

“There is no sugar available elsewhere,” moaned K. Perumal, 62, at the Sathosa store in Colombo’s Maligawatte area where he waited for his two

kilogramme (2.2 pound) quota.

“There are small children in my family, we need about six kilos of sugar a month,” he told AFP. “I have not been able to find milk at all.”

Another shopper, N. Wijeratne said two kilos was not enough but added: “Rationing is good because it will let others also a chance to get some supplies.”

The government, which declared a state of emergency this week, imposed a maximum price of 125 rupees (62 US cents) for a kilo of sugar and 95 rupees for a kilo of white rice.

There have also been sharp price rises for rice, onions and potatoes. Long queues have also formed because of shortages of milk powder, kerosene oil and cooking gas.

Only government stores have been opening because of a nationwide coronavirus lockdown. Most other shops have only been engaged in online sales. Experts have blamed the food crisis on a shortage of foreign exchange to import and maintain stocks.—AFP ■

Apple bends, aiming to avoid Big Tech regulation

Apple has unveiled major changes to its app store after years of criticism, as the Silicon Valley colossus tries to stave off a deeper, swelling effort to regulate Big Tech, experts said Thursday.

In a matter of days the company has announced long-demanded concessions after seeing investigations, lawsuits and rules pile up against what critics call an abuse of global dominance by Apple and other big firms.

“Looks like a preemptive move - getting out in front of possible DOJ (US government) action”, tweeted CNBC contributor Lawrence McDonald, after news Wednesday that certain companies would

be allowed to bypass some App Store control and charges.

Experts see the changes from Apple as proof that Big Tech companies have succumbed to pressure and decided to give an inch to try to

avoid a collision with government rules that they would not control.

Apple’s concessions were rare and “extraordinary”, but calculated, Joshua Davis, a University of San Francisco law professor, told AFP. —AFP ■



Apple is bending strategically to growing anti-monopoly pressure, analysts say. PHOTO: APPLE INC./AFP

YouTube Music tops 50 million subscribers

YouTube’s music streaming service reported Thursday it now has more than 50 million subscribers, saying it is growing quickly as it tries to close the gap with market-leader Spotify.

YouTube Music trails rivals Spotify, Amazon and Apple but has been gaining ground, according to market tracker Midia Research. YouTube is a subsidiary of Google.

“Google’s YouTube Music has been the standout story of the music subscriber market for the last couple of years, resonating both in many emerging markets and with younger audiences across the globe,” Midia analyst Mark Mulligan



YouTube’s music streaming service says it is growing quickly as it tries to catch up with rivals like Spotify. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

said in a post.

“The early signs are that YouTube Music is becoming to Gen Z what Spotify was to Millennials half a decade ago.”

Spotify had 32 per cent of the global music streaming market in the first quarter of this year, while Apple Music accounted for 16 per cent and Amazon had 13 per cent, according to Midia.

YouTube Music accounted for eight percent, behind China-based Tencent with its 13 per cent share, Midia reported. —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IMKE SCHEPERS VOY.NO. (12W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IMKE SCHEPERS VOY.NO. (12W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-9-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S GOLD STAR SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OSLO TRADER VOY.NO. (133S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OSLO TRADER VOY.NO. (133S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-9-2021** 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.

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0242-693N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0242-693N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-9-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

NEWS IN
BRIEFPhilippine military
aircraft crashed
after 'unrecoverable
stall': armed forces

A Philippine aircraft carrying soldiers crashed in July after an "unrecoverable stall", killing more than 50 people in one of the country's worst military air disasters, the armed forces said Thursday.

The C-130 Hercules transport plane was loaded with nearly a hundred people, most of them fresh army graduates, when it overshot the runway while trying to land on the southern island of Jolo in Sulu province.

Most of the dead were soldiers being deployed to the island — a haven for Islamist militants — as part of a counter-insurgency effort. Dozens were injured.

"Based on the investigating team's report, no single factor can be attributed to have exclusively caused the accident," the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said in a statement.—AFP ■

Swedish superstars
ABBA set to unveil
'sensational' musical
comeback

They famously vowed never to reform, to the disappointment of their legions of fans. But nearly four decades after disbanding, Swedish superstars ABBA were on Thursday expected to announce a "sensational comeback" collaboration.

Almost as famous for their over-the-top sparkly outfits as their music, the group notched up over 400 million album sales over 50 years.

They enjoyed phenomenal success with a string of chart hits in the 1970s and early 1980s after winning Eurovision in 1974 with "Waterloo".

Since parting ways in 1982 they have steadfastly resisted all offers to work together as a foursome again.

But later on Thursday they are expected to delight fans with news on a fresh collaboration.

The now septuagenarian stars of pop classics such as "Dancing Queen", "The Winner Takes It All" and "Take a Chance on Me", said they will make an "historic" announcement at 5.45 pm UK time (16:45 GMT).—AFP ■

Trudeau's first Canada election debate a slugfest



L to R: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L), Bloc Quebecois leader Yves-Francois Blanchet (2L), NDP leader Jagmeet Singh (C), Conservative leader Erin O'Toole (2R) and Canadian journalist Pierre Bruneau (R) at the TVA studios in Montreal on 2 Sept 2021. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came out onto a debate stage Thursday with

guns blazing, needing to turn around his Liberals' faltering re-election campaign.

The French-language dust-up hosted by broadcaster TVA is the first of several leaders debates ahead of the September 20 ballot.

It saw the one-time golden boy of Canadian politics square off against his principal rival, rookie Conservative leader Erin O'Toole, whom he now trails in public opinion polls, as well as New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh and Yves-Francois Blanchet at the reins of the separatist Bloc Quebecois.

They sparred over mandatory Covid vaccines, child care, taxation and the economy, oil and climate change, gun violence, the #MeToo movement and racism.

"You do not know the issues, Mr O'Toole!", Trudeau said. "You have not costed any of your policy proposals. It is not a serious plan."

He also accused the front-runner of supporting "two-tier" private and public healthcare, which a majority of Canadians reject.

Alternately, Trudeau found himself on the back foot for having called the snap election only 18 months after the last general election, which he defended by saying a new mandate was needed to steer the nation out of the pandemic.

"We must give Canadians the choice," he shot back at challengers.—AFP ■

Taliban may announce new government after
Friday afternoon prayers: Reports

The Taliban were expected to form a government as early as Friday with the new regime under intense international scrutiny over its vow to rule Afghanistan with greater tolerance, especially on women's rights.

The announcement of a new administration could be made after Friday afternoon prayers, two Taliban sources told AFP, as the Islamists shift gears from insurgent group to governing power, days after the United States fully withdrew its troops and ended two decades of war.

While the West has adopted a wait-and-see approach to the Taliban, there were some signs of engagement with the

new leaders gathering pace.

The United Nations said it had restarted humanitarian flights to parts of the country, linking the Pakistani capital Islamabad with Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan and Kandahar in the south.

A Taliban spokesman tweeted early Friday that China's foreign ministry had promised to keep its embassy in Afghanistan open and to "beef up" relations and humanitarian assistance.

Western Union and Moneygram said they were resuming money transfers, which many Afghans rely on from relatives abroad to survive, and Qatar said it was working to reopen the airport in Kabul — a lifeline



Taliban fighters wave as they patrol in a convoy along a street in Kabul on 2 September 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

for aid.

The British and Italian foreign ministers were meanwhile both headed to Afghanistan's

neighbours in the coming days to discuss the plight of refugees still hoping to escape the Taliban.—AFP ■

Volunteer army rebuilds Germany's flood-stricken towns



The station has been turned into a supplies shop called 'Tante Emma'. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

INSTEAD of the shouts of noisy children, the halls of the primary school in the German town of

Dernau are filled with the deafening sound of a dozen drills.

The workers on site are an

army of unpaid volunteers who have taken on the colossal task of rebuilding towns that were devastated by deadly floods in western Germany seven weeks ago that washed away homes, offices and infrastructure.

Some are locals, or helpers at public organisations like the Red Cross or the fire brigade, but many others have travelled in from across the country, helping to clear up debris by day and sleeping in makeshift camps by night.

Although the government has pledged 30 billion euros (\$35 billion) to fund the reconstruction work, residents say most

of the help they receive comes from private people like the volunteers in Dernau.

With less than a month to go before general elections, politicians are "having a mud fight, but the real mud fight is here — and they're not", says one volunteer, Christine Jahn.

Before the floods, Dernau was a picturesque town, framed by steep valley slopes covered in vineyards. Today, entire streets in the worst-hit areas are no longer inhabitable.

The school can no longer be used either: its pupils are now taking their classes elsewhere.—AFP ■

Suga to resign amid criticism over running of LDP, COVID response

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga expressed his intention to resign Friday amid mounting criticism over his management of the governing Liberal Democratic Party and his response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suga told reporters he will not seek re-election as LDP leader when the party holds its presidential election on 29 Sept, with campaigning starting on 17 Sept. The LDP leader effectively becomes Japan's prime minister since the LDP controls the House of Representatives, the powerful lower chamber of parliament.

"I had planned to run, but dealing with both COVID-19 and the election would require an enormous amount of energy. I decided that there was no way



Suga announced his intention to resign at an emergency meeting of senior members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

PHOTO: KYODO

to do both, that I had to choose," Suga said.

"I decided to focus on coronavirus measures," he said.

The development came just under a year after Suga took office following Shinzo Abe's abrupt departure for health

reasons. Suga has been serving Abe's remaining one year of his term. Suga said at an extraordinary meeting of LDP executives earlier Friday that he will serve out his term as LDP president through 30 Sept, according to a participant.

A source at the prime minister's office said Suga hit a snag in his plans to reshuffle the party's executives, which he hoped to carry out on Monday.

Suga had been planning to replace LDP Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai, the party's No. 2 leader of five years, and other party executives and also change his Cabinet lineup ahead of the party contest.

Nikai said Suga has not named a successor and the LDP leadership race will be held as scheduled.—Kyodo ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qatar working with Taliban to reopen Kabul airport 'as soon as possible'

Qatar is working with the Taliban to reopen Kabul's airport as soon as possible, its foreign minister said on Thursday, urging the hardline Islamists to allow Afghans to leave the country.

The airport, the scene of a frenzied evacuation which ended with the US troop withdrawal on Tuesday, is out of operation with much of its infrastructure destroyed or degraded.

"We are working very hard (and) we remain hopeful that we will be able to operate it as soon as possible," said Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani.

"Hopefully in the next few days we will hear some good news," added Sheikh Mohammed.

"It's very important... that the Taliban demonstrate their commitment to provide safe passage and freedom of movement for the people of Afghanistan," he told a news conference in Doha.

A Qatari technical team flew into Kabul on Wednesday to discuss reopening the airport, the first plane to land there since the evacuations.—AFP ■

EU mulls reaction force after Kabul evacuation



Slovenia's Foreign Minister Anze Logar (front-L) and European foreign policy chief Josep Borrell start an EU meeting in Slovenia's Brdo Castle. PHOTO: AFP

EU defence ministers on Thursday weighed proposals for a European rapid reaction force after

the bloc was sidelined during the US-led evacuation from Afghanistan. Calls have grown for the

27-nation group to develop its own joint military capability to respond quickly to crises in the wake of the chaotic scenes at Kabul airport after the Taliban seized power. "Afghanistan has shown that deficiencies in our strategic autonomy come with a price and that the only way forward is to combine our forces and strengthen not only our capacity but also our will to act," EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell told journalists after the meeting in Slovenia. "If we want to be able to act autonomously and not be dependent on the choices made by others, even if these others are our friends and allies, then we have to develop

our own capacities." Among the propositions is a plan, first aired in May, to set up a 5,000-strong force as part of a review of the EU's overall strategy due to be presented in draft form in November. But the proposal is yet to gain EU-wide support, and there are major doubts over whether there is the political will to engage such a force. The bloc, for instance, never used a system of so-called battlegroups it set up in 2007. "The EU and its Member States must carry greater weight in the world -- to defend our interests and values and to protect our citizens," European Council President Charles Michel wrote in an online post.—AFP ■

Shadow of Syria's exiled hangs over revived Aleppo souk

The historic Khan al-Harir souk in war-torn Syria's erstwhile economic capital of Aleppo has reopened following restoration work, but much of the former workforce that energized it remains exiled.

"Reconstruction works are done and this is great, but it's not enough," said Ahmed al-Shib, a 55-year-old textile merchant who had hoped to pass his business onto his sons.

"What we want is for our sons to return to these stores," he told AFP during the reopening of the covered market this week, showing pictures he had sent to his eldest who moved to Algeria three years ago to join his brother.

Khan al-Harir (silk souk) -- one of 37 markets surrounding Aleppo's famed citadel -- attracted thousands of tourists and merchants before the onset of Syria's conflict in 2011.—AFP ■

Man shot dead by police after New Zealand supermarket rampage

NEW ZEALAND police on Friday shot dead an Islamic State-inspired attacker after he injured six people in a supermarket knife rampage, despite round-the-clock surveillance by undercover officers.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she was "gutted" the man, a Sri Lankan national, had managed to carry out his "hateful" assault even though he was on a terror watchlist.

She said the man, who arrived in New Zealand in 2011, entered a shopping mall in suburban Auckland, seized a knife

from a display before going on a stabbing spree.

Six people were wounded, three critically, in the 60 seconds before surveillance officers opened fire.

Terrified shoppers fled for the exits and video footage shot by bystanders showed men running toward the incident before a barrage of shots rang out.

The attack has stirred painful memories of the Christchurch mosques shootings in March 2019, New Zealand's worst terror atrocity, when a white supremacist gunman murdered



A file photo of an armed New Zealand police officer. PHOTO: AFP

51 Muslim worshippers and severely wounded another 40.

"What happened today was

despicable, it was hateful, it was wrong," Ardern said after the latest attack.—AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Paralympics: Sugiura wins C1-3 cycling road race for 2nd Tokyo gold

JAPANESE 50-year-old Keiko Sugiura won her second gold medal of the Tokyo Paralympics on Friday, claiming the women's C1-3 cycling road race title in wet and challenging conditions at Fuji International Speedway.

With a winning time of 1 hour, 12 minutes, 55 seconds, Sugiura added the road race gold to the one she won in the time trial at the same venue on Tuesday. Anna Beck of Sweden claimed silver and Australia's Paige Greco finished in the bronze position.

"After I reached the finish line I couldn't believe it. It feels amazing. I renewed my record (for oldest Paralympic gold medalist) again," said Sugiura.

"I think I used up all my luck. In the toughest final stretch, I heard my coach shouting 'go,



Keiko Sugiura (front) of Japan competes in the women's C1-3 cycling road race of the Tokyo Paralympics at Fuji International Speedway on 3 Sept 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

go'." The other Japanese, Miho Fujii, finished last of the 15 competitors in the race that featured three 13.2-kilometre laps of the motor racing circuit at the foot

of Mt. Fuji.

It is the first time a Japanese athlete has won multiple cycling gold medals at a single Paralympics.—Kyodo

Argentina cruise against Venezuela as Brazil stay perfect

ARGENTINA maintained their unbeaten start to their World Cup qualifying campaign, cruising to a 3-1 victory at 10-man Venezuela on Thursday night.

But Brazil continued their perfect start to qualifying with a seventh win out of seven as Everton Ribeiro scored the only goal in a 1-0 away victory over Chile.

In his first match for his country since moving to Paris Saint-Germain, Lionel Messi struggled to stamp his authority on the match in Caracas, but it mattered little.

Lautaro Martinez opened the scoring in first half injury time after Venezuela had been reduced to 10 men by Luis

Adrian Martinez's red card for a reckless challenge on Messi.

Argentina did not impress but the extra man told in the final quarter when substitutes Joaquin Correa and Angel Correa broke through.

Venezuela did not go home empty handed, though, as Yeferson Soteldo scored a cheeky "Panenka" penalty deep into injury time at the end of the game.

Argentina travel to Brazil on Sunday in a repeat of July's Copa America final, which they won 1-0 to end a 28-year wait for a major trophy.

"It will be a great, important match after the final we played," said Lautaro Martinez.—AFP



Venezuelan Luis Adrian Martinez's rash challenge on Argentina's Lionel Messi (left) earned him a straight red card. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

US held by El Salvador in World Cup qualifying opener

THE United States kicked off their road to World Cup redemption with a 0-0 draw against El Salvador on Thursday as the final round of CONCACAF qualifiers for Qatar 2022 got under way.

The US, aiming to bounce back from the shock of failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, were frustrated for long periods by a battling El Salvador side and failed to make the most of a handful of chances that came their way.

"It was hostile to say the

least, the pitch obviously isn't great -- we can make a lot of excuses about the game," US captain Tyler Adams said afterwards.

"But at the end of the day there's some positives to take away. We got a clean sheet, we'll take the point, now we focus on the next game."

US coach Gregg Berhalter's young side started brightly, shrugging off the intimidating atmosphere at San Salvador's Estadio Cuscatlan to carve

out early chances for Borussia Dortmund's Gio Reyna before Brenden Aaronson also saw a deflected effort go over the bar.

Atlanta United defender Miles Robinson saw a golden chance go begging in the ninth minute when he met Reyna's floated free kick in space but was unable to get a diving free header on target. El Salvador worked their way into the contest with some energetic pressing that knocked the US team out of their stride.—AFP