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Friday, 15 October 2021

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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

15 October 2021

10th Waxing of Thadingyut 1383 ME

Esteemed national brethren,
The day 15th October 2021 is the Sixth Anniversary of signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA to ensure national unity and peace between the gov-

ernment of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and ethnic armed organizations. I'd like to pray for all national brethren including members of the Sangha and ethnic nationals to enjoy fruitful results

of peaceful and tranquil lives and to further strive for restoring the perpetual peace for the State and the Union interests.

SEE PAGE-3

Over 380,000 acres of mangrove forests conserved in Rakhine State

THE Rakhine Coast, which borders the western sea of Myanmar, is the country's largest fishery producer even though it is also an area prone to natural disasters each year. As the mangroves are important for the prevention of natural disasters and the development of marine species in the area, the Department of Forestry in Rakhine State has established mangrove forest reserves in protected areas, conserving more than 380,000 acres of mangroves.

Mangrove forest reserves are being protected by state-owned forests and community-owned forests, and the mangrove plantation starts annually in June to increase the conservation of the natural forest.

SEE PAGE-2



Mangrove growing in progress in Rakhine State.

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
7th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters held virtually
PAGE-4

NATIONAL
Union Minister for Electricity and Energy attends Russian Energy Week International Forum
PAGE-5

NATIONAL
One million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China arrive at Yangon Int'l Airport
PAGE-6

NATIONAL
YBS drivers get jabbed with Sinopharm first shot
PAGE-10

LOCAL BUSINESS
Mahaaungmye gems and jade market reopened
PAGE-11



It is necessary to produce natural fertilizers

EFFORTS are being made for the production of fertilizers from domestic plants. It is necessary to produce natural fertilizers through the wastes of animal breeding farms.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 1/2021 of the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 27-9-2021)

Press Release on the visit of Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar

MYANMAR is committed to constructively co-operate in the implementation of the five-point consensus agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 24 April 2021. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs released the Statement on Myanmar's Position on the five-point consensus on 26 April 2021.

The appointment of special envoy, as part of the five-point consensus, was discussed during the 54th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held on 4 August 2021 and Myanmar accepted the appointment of Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam as special envoy of the ASEAN Chair in order to demonstrate Myanmar's constructive cooperation.

Furthermore, in implementation of the five-point consensus, Myanmar has been cooperating in receiving and distribution of the humanitarian assistance delivered through ASEAN to those in need in Myanmar.

Since his appointment on 4 August 2021, Myanmar has been regularly communicating with special envoy.

On 2 October 2021, Myanmar received a letter from the special envoy, proposing his visit to Myanmar from 11 to 14 October 2021 along with a proposed list of names of individuals with whom he wishes to meet and other actions required from Myanmar for his visit.

In response to his proposed programme, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar conveyed the revised programme to special envoy on 7 October 2021, indicating the programme of activities Myanmar side can accommodate and facilitate. Special Envoy made the same proposal again on his note of 8 October 2021. Therefore, Myanmar consented to proposed meetings with some individuals and the revised programme with additional arrangements was communicated to him on 9 October 2021. However, in his note of 11 October 2021, special envoy insisted on his initial proposal of meetings with some specific individuals. Therefore, the Ministry responded, in its letter of 11 October 2021, that Myanmar has already accommodated its best to the proposals of special envoy to enable his visit to Myanmar.

As the special envoy insisted on same requests on his note of 12 October 2021, Myanmar's explanations on its exercise of maximum flexibilities in accommodating his visit was communicated on the same date.

On 12 October 2021, special envoy issued the press statement and he reiterated his commitment to visit Myanmar and to have access to all parties concerned.

Myanmar has demonstrated flexibility in any possible ways and means to facilitate the special

envoy's visit to Myanmar.

As Myanmar has been prioritizing peace and tranquility in the country, some requests which go beyond the permission of existing laws will be difficult to be accommodated. In this respect, special envoy and international community need to show some understanding on such situation.

As Myanmar has made arrangements for special envoy to meet with Government officials, including members from legally existing political parties, the special envoy should prioritize in his the very first trip to meet with these relevant parties and build trust and confidence between special envoy and the country concerned.

Therefore, Myanmar looks forward to the confirmation by the special envoy on his visit to Myanmar at an early date.

Myanmar welcomes the special envoy's position that he will carry out in neutral and impartial manner in accordance with the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and based on ASEAN Spirit. Myanmar hopes that he will be able to avoid actions from anyone with the intention of putting politically, motivated actions and pressures on Myanmar.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Date, 14 October 2021

More than 380,000 acres of mangrove ...



Mangrove growing in progress in Rakhine State.

FROM PAGE-1

There are 381,036 acres of mangrove forest in Rakhine State, and six protected areas that cover 87,219 acres are state-owned.

A total of 125 acres of mangrove were planted in the Wan Bai area in Yanbye Island last year, according to U Aung Min,-

head of Rakhine State Forestry Department.

These mangroves are an essential ecosystem for marine life, as they provide a breeding ground for fish, shrimps and aquatic animals, as well as, encourage sediment deposits that reduce coastal erosion.

Destroying these mangroves can affect up to 50 per cent of fish and shrimp resource conservation, according to U Thet Oo, head of the Rakhine State Fisheries Department. He made a call for mangrove conservations as a national duty as it can control the global greenhouse problem, as well as prevents natural disaster and develops water resources.

In Rakhine State, where there are many fish and shrimp farms, these mangroves were cut down in the past for farming. Now, efforts are being made to make the mangroves more viable by implementing environmentally friendly systems. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/GNLM

Video Message of State Administration Council Chairman, Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at 6th Anniversary of NCA signing to be broadcast live

A video Message of the Chairman of the State Administration Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Central Committee for National Unity and Peacemaking, Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the 6th Anniversary of the signing of the NCA, will be broadcast live on free-to-air channels: MRTV, MRTV NRC, Radio Myanmar, MRTV Live Stream, MWD, MWD Variety, MWD Movies, MWD Education, Knowledge and Sport, MWD Family, MWD Documentary, MWD Shopping and Thazin FM starting from 9 am on 15 October. — MNA

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Chairman of National
Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General
Min Aung Hlaing to mark Sixth Anniversary of signing Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA

FROM PAGE-1

In line with a saying goes: “when one has been saying nothing, it would be easier to think nothing”, it is impossible to stop the peace process primarily essential for the country. Only when relevant organizations are always talking about something and holding negotiation will they always have critical thinking and ideas on how to do improvement.

The day 12th February 2022 is the Diamond Jubilee Union Day of our country. Likewise, the day 4th January 2023 is the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day of our country. Two important historical events and two big days for a country are nearly to reach the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. If it calculates the term of these jubilees based on the lifespan of Myanmar people, it would be a life span of a person. Everybody needs to notice a saying that “If one does not know the past, one may commit mistakes again. Likewise if one is too eager to embrace the past, one may lose the road to the future”. The government has decided to further promote the process of cementing the Union Spirit and peace process before the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee Union Day and Independence Day.

The government will implement three steps to adopt the further strengthening and sharpening the Union Spirit, forming the implementation bodies formed with ethnic people and carrying out the practical tasks. In this regard, suggestions will be taken from ethnic national people and relevant bodies in addition to informing and educating them.

The Tatmadaw has so far declared 20 statements on suspending the military operations from 21 December 2018 to 30 September 2021 for practically raising the peace process. As a gesture of hailing the Diamond Jubilee Union Day, a statement was declared to further suspend the five-month suspension of military operations from 1 October 2021 to 28 February 2022 to further accelerate the tasks of the peace process and national unity. In raising the peace process-

- (1) Relevant ethnic nationals and stakeholders participate in leveraging up the peace process.
- (2) The national unity and peace coordination committees at different levels, the Tatmadaw peace talk committee and ethnic armed organizations directly hold the dialogues and meet with the peace process enhancement bodies.
- (3) The processes are being undertaken for further strengthening the peace with NCA signatories and efforts are being made to mitigate the firing attacks and to reach the bilateral agreements for non-NCA signatories to sign the NCA.

Some ethnic armed organizations need to practically review the concepts without fictional thoughts that it does not need to talk with the current government as the latter is not the elected one and that the current government cannot fully implement the peace process. Evidence indicates the successes in the peace process in the term of the Tatmadaw government after 1988, declining of attacks and development undertakings in ethnic areas. Among these organizations, it proved that the majority of ethnic armed organizations could sign the NCA. Although governments took the office

one after another, the country is the Union of Myanmar. It is necessary to systematically identify the government and the State. We all need to be loyal to the Union of Myanmar and forge an honest and genuine will to restore peace for the State rather than the government. All need to hold up the spirit “We are Myanmar”. Hence, NCA signatories are invited again to further cement the NCA and non-NCA signatories to join the step of the ceasefire and peace process rather than the existing step and sign the NCA. All are urged to carry out the tasks with the vow of the Diamond Jubilee Union Day.

The government on its part has expressed, “Emphasis is being placed primarily on two points in building the nation, and the first point is to firmly implement the democracy in accord with the aspirations of the people as the political vision, and the second point is to prioritize the prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency.” These are the prioritized political policy of the government for future plans. These two points are interrelated. Peace is essential for our country in undertaking the tasks for prosperity.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar was revitalized in the multiparty democracy in 2011. In its term, the first government offered the ethnic armed organizations on 18 August 2011 to initiate the peace process essential for building the firm multiparty democracy in accord with the aspiration of the people. Up to now, 10 ethnic armed organizations have signed the NCA. These organizations and peace negotiators are further recognized for their efforts, spirit and endeavours for the peace process.

Today is a period when the Tatmadaw has taken the State responsibilities in accord with the Constitution (2008) and the State Administration Council leads the country as the Tatmadaw and political parties strived for negotiations through various ways and means over the vote-rigging of NLD in the 2020 election but the mission failed. Since the time of taking the State responsibilities, the State Administration Council has laid down and is implementing the five-point road map and nine objectives, emphasizing the agreements involved in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement—NCA for restoring the perpetual peace. The Tatmadaw Peace Talk Committee was reconstituted on 1 February 2021 and the National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee, the Work Committee and the Negotiation Committee on 1 February. Currently, the negotiation committee held meetings with NCA signatories and non-NCA signatories 21 times for implementing the peace process with momentum.

Although the government is leveraging up the peace process, terror acts of destructionist local and foreign organizations which do not wish to serve the interests of the country, media and extremist NLD members wishing to grasp the power of the State through terror ways harm the peace and stability and rule of law in some areas of the country and hamper the peace process to some extent. As the government is controlling all measures as much as possible with compassion not to harm the peace process, ethnic armed organi-

zations need to take special care of not derailing from the NCA route due to terror acts, destructive acts and instigations of local and foreign elements and media.

Our government is implementing the political processes to strengthen the multiparty democracy and building of the Union based on democracy and federalism. The government has firmly guaranteed it. Hence, ethnic armed organizations need to faithfully and firmly walk along the NCA route to be able to contribute much to hold the free and fair multiparty democracy general election on schedules in line with the current aim of the government and emerge new democratic government the people elected.

At present, the whole globe is suffering from the COVID-19 starting from late 2019. The State Administration Council adopted the policies “No one is important than the life of the people” and “Not only the citizens residing in the Union but all human beings regardless of race and religion shall have the equal term of rights to enjoy the healthcare services” and is striving for prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 for the entire people across the nation with might and main. As the vaccination programme is being implemented not only for members of NCA signatories, non-NCA signatories and people from the areas of ethnic armed organizations but also the people from the internally displaced person camps, infection rate and mortality rate are remarkably declining at present. All ethnic armed organizations are urged to cooperate with the government in effectively assisting in the prevention, control and treatment activities of COVID-19 across the nation.

Our government has openly declared that it would continue the implementation of the NCA for restoring the perpetual peace and that the door would always be opened for dialogues. As the Tatmadaw is taking the responsibilities of the government, it can carry out all parts of peace dialogues except the approval at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Although it can seem that political dialogues cannot be held due to lack of elected government, Hluttaws and MPs, representatives from the political parties would become elected MPs and the cabinet members upon completion of the election. Hence, our efforts to continuously emphasize the political dialogues and peacemaking process together with stakeholders may achieve further progress.

Political maturity and unity of stakeholders and the entire people play a crucial role in building the Union based on democracy and federalism. It is necessary to take lessons that Myanmar could not achieve the deserved development due to requirements in political maturity in successive eras. We must try hard to overcome such challenges. We need to build political maturity and unity with wise mental faculty for ensuring the peace of the nation. I sent a message to the esteemed entire ethnic people to participate in the nation-building tasks.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Chairman
National Unity and Peacemaking Central Committee

7th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters held virtually

THE 7th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) was organized via videoconference on 14 October 2021 under the chair of Cambodia.

A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Lieutenant-General Than Hlaing joined the event.

At the meeting, the Myanmar delegation leader Lieutenant-General Than Hlaing said the member countries were cooperating on drug control despite the challenges caused by COVID-19. The transnational gangs adopt the techniques in illegal drugs transportation and trade to change the routes and so not only ASEAN countries but also the world countries need to accelerate the cooperation. The government of Myanmar sets as a national duty to fight against drugs and



currently implements the new five facts of the National Drug Control Policy.

In opium poppy cultivation, due to the cooperation of government and local people, and international organizations, the poppy production rate de-

clines year by year. The cultivation rate in 2020 was 11 per cent, while the production rate dropped to 20 per cent. The country conducted 32 special anti-drug operations from 2003 to September 2021. The officials uncovered 5,087 drug cases and

arrested 7,337 suspects together with the drugs from 1 January to 30 September 2021.

The Deputy Minister then highlighted the high illegal trade of precursors via border areas despite the effective crackdowns of Myanmar and solid

cooperation of ASEAN member countries in controlling the precursor chemicals.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of ASEAN member countries and it discussed the matters of 41st and 42nd AMMDs, approved the mid-term reports of ASEAN Work Plan in Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (2016-2025) and ASEAN Cooperation Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle 2020 – 2022, CND related matters and other ASEAN related matters.

Before the ministerial meeting, Police Brig-Gen Win Naing, Joint Secretary of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control and Commander of Drug Enforcement Division joined the pre-coordination meeting held on 13 October. — MNA

World standards day 2021 celebrated through videoconferencing

THE Department of Research and Innovation under the Ministry of Science and Technology held a ceremony to celebrate the 9th World Standards Day 2021 yesterday morning through videoconferencing.

At the ceremony, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Kyaw clarified the formation of the World Standard Day. The World Standard Day was firstly held on 14 October in 1970 to highlight the importance of the international standards published by the organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization-ISO, the International Electro Technical Commission-IEC, and the International Telecommunication Union-ITU; to recognize the key role of the international stand-

ards in promoting trade, health, agriculture, science and technology exchange, and innovation; to recognize the efforts of professionals and experts in the field of global and international standardization; to commend the efforts of the scholars in facilitating trades and producing goods and services as per the standards.

The theme chosen for this year's World Standards Day is "Shared Vision for a Better World", aiming to build a better, just, and sustainable and prosperous world that protects future generations.

At the ceremony, Representatives of the Research and Innovation Department, the National Standards and Quality Department and the Technology



Sub-Committee discussed the national quality infrastructure, domestic and foreign cooperation on standard development and the subcommittees activities on standard development.

The ceremony was also attended by members of the National Standards Council, the Chairman and members of the Technical Subcommittee for Drafting Standards, repre-

sentatives from the Myanmar Engineer Council, the UMFCCL, Myanmar Computer Federation, Myanmar Engineer Federation, and experts from relevant organizations. — MNA

1,514 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 October, total figure rises to 484,317

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 484,317 after 1,514 new cases were reported on 14 October 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 436,640 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 18,255 after 33 died. —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.

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy attends Russian Energy Week International Forum

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Aung Than Oo and party, who are in Moscow to attend the Russian Energy Week International Forum (REW 2021) in Moscow, Russia, met the CEO (Chairman of the Management Board) of ROSGEO (Russian State Geological Holding) Company Mr Sergey N. Gorkov and party on 13 October.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on oil and gas exploration.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party visited the Plenary Session held at Manege Central Exhibition Hall

at 1:30 pm local time at the Russian Energy Week International Forum (REW 2021).

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, addressed the event.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party met Deputy Director-General Mr Sergey Machekhin of Rushvdro at 5.30 pm local time.

During the meeting, the Union Minister discussed the possibility of building and implementing hydropower plants and future prospects, and attended a dinner to mark the opening of REW 2021. —MNA



MoSWRR attends ASEAN disaster management and related meetings



UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine, Deputy Minister U Aung Tun Khaing, and officials attended the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and its Related Meetings held from 8 to 14 October.

At the 9th ASEAN Min-

isterial Meeting on Disaster Management, Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine discussed the status of the inoculation against the COVID-19 disease in Myanmar, which is crucial in the prevention, control and treatment of the pandemic. She said Myanmar is speeding up the vaccina-

tion programme by identifying priority groups, which include ethnic armed groups, internally displaced persons living in temporary camps. As of October 2021, the rate of the COVID-19 infection has dropped to seven per cent while more than 10.6 million people have been

vaccinated which is over 12 per cent of the vaccine coverage in the country, she added.

She expressed words of thanks for the humanitarian assistance and the anti-COVID-19 devices and medicines delivered to Myanmar under the consensus of ASEAN leaders. Afterwards, the ASEAN Secretary-General explained the ASEAN member states on the status of humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, and the member states participated in the discussion.

During the discussion, the Union Minister said Myanmar, as an ASEAN member state, will cooperate closely with the AHA Centre and the ASEAN Secretariat for ongoing humanitarian assistance, adding that Myanmar is continuously carrying out humanitarian assistance and social protection work that cannot be stopped for any reason, based on basic international humanitarian assistance policies. The Ministry makes sure that no one is harmed by the assistance, no one is left out,

that support is provided to all those in need, regardless of their citizenship, races, religions and beliefs, she continued.

The Union Minister also discussed natural disaster management action plans that will be implemented with the cooperation among the ASEAN countries, China, and Japan.

It is also reported that the Director-General of the Disaster Management Department Dr Ko Ko Naing and party also participated in the 15th Board of Directors Meeting of the ASEAN Humanitarian Centre held on 8 October; 39th Meeting of the ASEAN Natural Disaster Management Committee held on 11 October, the Meeting of the ASEAN Natural Disaster Management Committee + China, the 2nd Meeting of the ASEAN Natural Disaster Management Committee + Japan, the 1st Meeting of the ASEAN Natural Disaster Management Committee + South Korea and the 16th Meetings of the Joint Working Group on Humanitarian and Disaster Management. — MNA

Mobile library team visits Myataung IDP camp weekly

TO increase knowledge, habit of reading and studying literature for young people in their spare time, staff of the Township Information and Public Relations Department jointly conducted a weekly Mobile Library field visit at Myataung IDP, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State at 1 pm yes-

terday.

Officials borrowed readers' favourite books of agriculture, livestock, general knowledge, fiction, cartoon, magazines, and journals, etc. to the youths and literary enthusiasts from Myataung IDP camp who also participated in the reading programme.

The Buthidaung Township Information and Public Relations Department will conduct a Mobile Library field visit every Wednesday, and yesterday's field visit was carried out in line with the COVID-19 directives, officials said. — Hla Kyaw (IPRD)/GNLM



Deputy Information Minister meets staff officers of affiliated departments



The meeting between the MoI deputy minister and officials in progress.

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint met the staff officers of the Copyrights and Registration Division in Winkabar road of Bahan Township in Yangon yesterday.

Then, he visited the Sarpay Beikman and cordially greeted the members of the national literary award selection committee. During the visit, he appreciated the efforts of committee members and urged them to keep working together to share knowledge with the public and youths like other media.

He then met the staff of officers and employees of affiliated departments of the ministry at the Printing and Publishing Department office.

During the meeting, he stressed the need to serve duties for the country, work hard in the media sector, while the government is making efforts with roadmap and objectives during the emergency period, conduct knowledge sharing programmes for the youths. He also talked about the vaccination programmes for the students, educating programmes and cooperation work in issuing CSC cards under the Pan Khinn project and other matters. — MNA

One million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China arrive at Yangon Int’l Airport

THE Ministry of Health is delivering the COVID-19 vaccine in targeted regions and states to control the COVID-19 disease.

The first batch of one million Sinovac brand vaccines donated by the People’s Republic of China for vaccination arrived at Yangon International Airport on 13 October.

Also, the second batch of one million Sinovac doses and 1,001,600 needles arrived at Yangon International Airport on 14 October (yesterday) and was received by a team led by the Head of Yangon Region Public Health Department.

These vaccines will be delivered to respective states and regions with the help of the Tatmadaw (Air) and Myanmar Airways, via a cold chain system, officials said.

As of 14 October, a total of 18 million doses of COVID vaccines were purchased by the Ministry of Health including 2 million Covishield vaccines, 14 million Sinopharm vaccines and 2 million Sinovac vaccines have already arrived.

Over 8 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine donated by India, Russia and the People’s Republic of China have also been received.

To control COVID-19 disease, the COVID-19 vaccine is being given in targeted groups in respective regions and states.

As of 13 October, a total of 10,751,760 people have been vaccinated, and 4,266,484 have been fully vaccinated twice and 6,485,274 have been vaccinated for the first time.

Therefore, to date, a total of 15,018,246 vaccines of COVID-19 have been given in Myanmar.



One million Sinovac vaccines arrive at Yangon International Airport.

“People should not miss a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine given to them. Those who have received their first dose of vaccines are also encouraged to actively participate in second dose vaccination activities by visiting the nearest vaccination group in time,” officials said. — MNA

Thailand International Cooperation Agency donates lab commodities, protective equipment for Myanmar’s COVID-19 response



THE TICA (Thailand International Cooperation Agency) donated 2 RT-PCR, medical laboratory equipment, Negative Pressure Isolation Room (5) rooms and Positive Pressure Isolation Chamber—Swab Units (10) units to the National Health Laboratory of Myanmar yesterday.

Thai Ambassador Mrs Suphatra Srimaitreephithak, Permanent Secretary. Chana Sindhvananda and 1st Secretary Mr Wuthikiat Chaicharna of the Royal Thai Embassy of Myanmar attended the donation ceremony together with Professor Dr Htay Htay Tin, Rector of the University of Medical Technology and other Professors/Superintendent and director-generals of the relevant departments.

First, Professor Dr Daw Htay Htay Tin of NHL made an opening remark and the Thai Ambassador talked about the contribution of liquid oxygen, including the current donations of TICA, long-term and short-term medical training of Thailand and plans to provide Generators for 50 to 500 bedded hospitals along with Taninthayi Region and future cooperation works.

Then, the officials inspected the Negative Pressure Isolation Room (5) rooms and Positive Pressure Isolation Chamber – Swab Units (10) units which arrived in Yangon on 3 October and were kept at Central Medical Store Depot. After that, NHL presented the certificate of honour to the Thai Ambassador to Myanmar on behalf of the Ministry of Health. — MNA

Over-12s middle, high school students get jabbed against COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw

Above 12-year-old students receive vaccination in Tatkon, Lewe, Pyinmana and Zeyathiri townships in Nay Pyi Taw.



Ease workloads, burdens, tensions of child labour

CHILD labour is triggered by the neo-slavery system because it is one of the different forms of labour exploitation over the premature workers. Actually, child labour should not be allowed in any country so as to protect the rights of the child.

The General Assembly of the United Nations held in 2019 designated the year 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. The United Nations set every 12 June as the World Day Against Child Labour.

The United Nations adopted seventeen sustainable development goals which all the global nations need to implement.

As such, employers from developed or underdeveloped countries should take sympathy over child labour with reduction of workloads and burdens as part of easing their tensions without labour exploitation to build a prosperous society.

of the workplaces are a single way for passing their lifetime.

Some children are working at the light works such as waiters at the teashops, restaurants and helpers at workshops. Although they cannot get a full charge of salaries similar to the adult ones, they can console themselves for less tiredness in light works and lesser working hours.

The 5th Global Conference on Child Labour will take place in South Africa in 2022. Participant countries will discuss the nature of child labours in the worksites and seek ways how to ease the burdens of those child labours.

As such, employers from developed or underdeveloped countries should take sympathy over child labour with reduction of workloads and burdens as part of easing their tensions without labour exploitation to build a prosperous society.



WHO unveils new team to investigate pandemic

Permanent advisory group will also investigate future outbreaks and epidemics.

THE World Health Organization unveiled Wednesday a team of scientists it wants to investigate new pathogens and preventing future pandemics — plus reviving the stalled probe into Covid-19's origins.

The group of 26 experts will be charged with producing a new global framework for studies into the origins of emerging pathogens of epidemic and pandemic potential — and their remit includes SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19 disease.

Besides the Covid-19 crisis, a growing number of high-risk pathogens have appeared or reappeared in recent years, including MERS, bird flu viruses, Lassa, Marburg and Ebola.

The WHO announced earlier this year that it would set up a Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO).

“The emergence of new viruses with the potential to spark epidemics and pandemics is a fact of nature, and while SARS-CoV-2 is the latest such virus, it will not be the last,” said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

“Understanding where new



Representation picture: The World Health Organization unveiled Wednesday a team of scientists it wants to investigate new pathogens and preventing future pandemics — plus reviving the stalled probe into Covid-19's origins. PHOTO: ANTON GRASSL FOR HGA/AFP

pathogens come from is essential for preventing future outbreaks.”

‘Rapid advice’

The 26 members that the WHO has put forward were chosen from a field of more than 700 applications and are drawn from a range of scientific disciplines.

And the team the WHO has named is subject to a two-week public consultation.

They include Christian Drotten, the head of Berlin's Institute of Virology; Yungui Yang of the Beijing Institute of Genomics; Jean-Claude Manuguerra of France's Institut Pasteur; and Inger Damon from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Several of the experts were on the joint WHO-China scientific mission investigating the origins

of Covid-19: Vladimir Dedkov, Farag Elmoubasher, Thea Fischer, Marion Koopmans, Hung Nguyen and John Watson.

The terms of reference say the group must give the WHO an independent evaluation of all available scientific and technical findings from global studies on the origins of Covid-19.

It must also advise the UN health agency on developing,

monitoring and supporting the next series of studies into the origins of the virus. That could include “rapid advice” on the WHO's operational plans to implement the next series of studies into the pandemic's origins, and advice on additional studies.

Lab leak theory

The pandemic has killed more than 4.85 million people and battered the global economy since the virus was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019.

After much delay, a WHO team of international experts went to Wuhan in January 2021 to produce a first phase report, written in conjunction with their Chinese counterparts.

Their March report drew no firm conclusions, but ranked four hypotheses.

Most probable was that the virus jumped from bats to humans via an intermediate animal, it said. It judged a leak from the Wuhan virology laboratories was “extremely unlikely”.

However, the investigation faced criticism for lacking transparency and access, and for not

evaluating the lab-leak theory more deeply.

In August, China rejected the WHO's calls for a renewed probe on the ground into the origins of Covid-19.

No time to waste

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on Covid-19, said SAGO would urgently assess what was now known, what still remained unknown, and what rapidly needed to be done.

“I anticipate that the SAGO... will recommend further studies in China and potentially elsewhere,” she told journalists.

“There's no time to waste in this.”

Michael Ryan, the WHO's emergencies director, said it may be the “last chance to understand the origins of this virus” in a collegiate manner.

Earlier Wednesday, Chen Xu, China's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, told the UN correspondents' association that SAGO's work should not be “politicized”.

SOURCE: AFP



Charges for virus tests across Europe

WITH France set to join Germany in charging for Covid tests in a bid to ramp up vaccinations, we look at how much they cost across Europe.

While some countries are keeping tests free, others are ramping up the price.

Denmark, Austria

Tests are free for all in both countries.

Ireland, Sweden, Netherlands

Tests are free for all, apart from those needing tests to travel.

People making trips out of the Netherlands have to fork out 34 to 45 euros for an antigen test and 74 to 100 euros for a PCR test.

In Sweden the costs for antigen tests are between 30 and 70 euros, and PCR tests are between 150 and 200 euros.

In Ireland the cost of travel tests is variable.

France, Germany

Both countries had until this week

allowed people to get free tests, with a limit of one per week.

Since Monday antigen tests now cost between 12 and 15 euros in Germany and PCR tests between 60 and 120 euros, according to prices in Berlin and Brandenburg.

They are still free, however, for children under 12, people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and for those who need a test to be released from quarantine after having Covid.

Teenagers and pregnant women, who have until December 31 to get vaccinated, are also allowed free tests till the end of the year.

In France tests will no longer be free from Friday. Nevertheless, tests will be reimbursed if taken for medical reasons and they remain free for minors.

Non-vaccinated adults will have to pay around 44 euros for a PCR test and 25 euros for an antigen one.

Greece

Free testing ended in Greece mid-September in a bid to speed up vaccinations. The price of rapid tests

is set at 10 euros. Primary and secondary school pupils are entitled to free self-testing kits.

Britain

PCR tests from the National Health Service are free for people with symptoms, for those who have had a positive antigen test result, or have been in contact with someone who has the virus.

Antigen tests in the country are free in pharmacies and test centres, and it is also possible to have them delivered by courier at no cost.

But for those who do not qualify, the cost of tests has come down to 79 pounds (93 euros) at pharmacies compared with the 120 pounds it cost last December.

Italy

Except for some Red Cross centres where tests are free, antigen tests cost between 15 and 50 euros with PCR tests costing up to 100 euros.

Only those people who are exempt for health reasons from the vaccine pass, which all workers must have from Friday, are entitled to free tests.



Researchers at Aalborg University screen and analyze positive coronavirus samples for the virus variant cluster B117 from the United Kingdom, in Aalborg, Denmark, 15 January 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Croatia, Spain

Both countries offer free PCR tests when a medical prescription is provided.

Without a prescription. PCR tests in Croatia cost from 52 to 93 euros and 13 to 27 euros for an antigen test.

In Spain a PCR test costs 60 to 180 euros and 25 to 50 euros for an antigen test. Free antigen tests without prescription are available in test centres in some Spanish regions.

SOURCE: AFP

ကမ္ဘာ့စားနပ်ရိက္ခာနေ့

WORLD FOOD DAY 2021

Our actions are our future. Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ လုပ်ဆောင်ချက်များသည် ကျွန်ုပ်တို့၏ အနာဂတ်၊ ပိုမိုကောင်းမွန်သော ထုတ်လုပ်မှု၊ အာဟာရ၊ သဘာဝပတ်ဝန်းကျင်နှင့် လူနေမှုဘဝ ၂၀၂၁ ခုနှစ်၊ အောက်တိုဘာလ (၁၆)ရက်

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 14 October 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the lowpressure area over the Central Bay of Bengal still persist. Weather is partly cloudy over the North Bay and East central Bay and monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

SPECIAL FEATURES: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the tropical storm “Kompasu” which is crossing the Upper Viet Nam coast near Hoang Mai continue to move west wards and it is forecast to weak into a land depression.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 15 October 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, fairly widespread in Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway Region and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Chin, Kayah States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7– 9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (5-7) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR Mandalay and NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 October 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Low Pressure Area Condition

Issued at (19:00) hours M.S.T on 14-10-2021

ACCORDING to the observations at (18:30) hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over Central Bay of Bengal still persists.

Daily imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue



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

On 14 October (yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products including oxygen plants and concentrators were imported by five companies us-

ing 12 vehicles.

A total of 75 tonnes of oxygen liquid carried by four bowsters, 1,800 empty oxygen cylinders, five oxygen plants, three oxygen generators, 155 oxygen concentrators for home use, 5,000 test kits, and 33 tonnes of gloves and 33 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse, Myawady and Chinshwehaw trading posts, seaports, and Yangon International Airport.

Out of four oxygen (liquid) bowsters vehicles, three were transported from Muse to Mandalay, one from Myawady to Yan-

gon and five Oxygen Plants were also transported from the port to Yangon respectively.

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

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

YBS drivers get jabbed with Sinopharm first shot

IN a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19 across the country and reduce the death caused by the COVID-19, the government offered COVID-19 vaccinations under the priority programme in the regions and states. The drivers of Yangon Bus Service (YBS) and the staff of Yangon Region Transport Committee got Sinopharm shot in the morning of 14 October accordingly to the guidelines for the COVID-19.

"With the approval of Yangon Region Government, the Region Public Health Department in coordination with the Township Administration Body plans to administer the COVID-19 vaccinations to 1,000

people per day between 13 and 16 October. This vaccination programme will cover the bus drivers and staff from 19 YBS bus line public companies, four private companies, said U Lian Qingman, joint secretary of YRTC.

"YRTC has been conducting the awareness campaign of COVID-19 since the early outbreak in Myanmar, including handing out free face masks. The passengers are mandatory to wear the mask on the bus and they are advised to practice social distancing. All the drivers are ordered to wear the face mask. Moreover, the buses are disinfected after each route,"

he continued.

The team, including health staff, Tamadaw nurses, staff of township general administration department and the authorities concerned, help check blood pressure, blood oxygen, pulse, temperature before the COVID jab and ensure social distancing in the queue.

"YBS drivers are at high risk of infections. I am so glad that the drivers got the COVID-19 shot. The vaccination programs help reduce the risks and infection. Awareness programs for both the drivers and the passengers are required regarding the COVID-19 guidelines to contain the spread of the



A health staff jabs the first dose for one of the YBS drivers.

COVID-19," said a bus driver.

About 200 YBS bus lines under the guidance of YRTC is daily providing service for 230,000 commuters. A total of 33 staff of YRTC, 3,999 staff and drivers of YBS companies will get vaccinated, according to YRTC. — Naing Lin Aung (IPRD)/GNLM

Over 45-year-old people in Hsenwi receive 1st dose of COVID vaccine



Inoculation campaign in progress in Hsenwi.

HEALTHCARE officials gave the first dose (third batch) of COVID-19 vaccines to over 45-year-old at Sasana Beikman in Hsenwi Township, Lashio District, northern Shan State on 14 October (yesterday).

Healthcare workers,

members of the fire brigade, and volunteers assisted in the vaccination programme and transportation for the vaccinated people were arranged after the vaccination.

During the vaccination, healthcare workers and officials

made records for the vaccinated people.

Next health officials measured the body temperature, blood pressure and monitoring oxygen level before the vaccination.

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

In Hsenwi Township, the COVID-19 vaccine is being vaccinated in designated areas, and those remaining for various reasons will be vaccinated next in urban areas for the first time in the third batch.

Hsenwi Township has received 573 doses of COVID-19 vaccines, according to an official from the township health department. — Hsenwi IPRD/GNLM

Over 700 fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in Ngapali

A total of 764 people in Ngapali have been fully vaccinated after the Ministry of Health conducted the second batch of COVID-19 vaccination starting from 13 October.

Of 1,985 people who have received the first jab of the vaccine in Ngapali, 408 people over the age of 55 were vaccinated

for the second jab yesterday. The immunization process was carried out under the COVID-19 rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Health.

People were examined by the health care professional to make sure they are in good health to receive the vaccine, it is reported. — Yan Nyein/GNLM



Mahaaungmye gems and jade market reopened

MAHAAUNGMYE gems and jade market, which is a major gem market in Mandalay, has been reopened from 12 October and the trading activity is seen in the market, according to Mandalay City Development Committee.

“This market was closed down during the COVID-19 surge in Myanmar. At present, gems shops, gems cutting services and gemstone suppliers are seen in the market. Some traders transact using WeChat. Before the closure of the market, gems shops were selling them at nearby streets. The sellers are happy with the reopening of the gems market in line with the health guidelines. Everyone in the market compound must wear the mask, the handwashing basins are installed and the awareness of the COVID-19 is also conducted,” said U Aye Lwin, head of tax division under MCDC.

The market was temporarily shut down on 16 July 2021 to contain the rapid spread of the COVID-19. At present, the death rate and infection rate significantly fell in Mandalay District. Consequently, the market was reopened and trading was resumed in line with the health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

“Around 50,000 people are daily seen in the market, including foreigners and local buyers. The number of local sellers is around four-digit numbers for now. Those people living nearby Mandalay come to trade at Mahaaungmye Market between 6 am and 2 pm,” U Aye Lwin elaborated.

This market was opened on 26 February 2000. Earlier, the vendors were found on 34 St, between 84 St and 85 St, 86 St, 38 St, 48 St, 42 St, 86 St, 87 St, 39 St and 88 St in the flea market, causing traffic congestion. The

gem traders and brokers are satisfied with the one-stop service of the Mahaaungmye market, allowing them to earn livings for the family.

There are 1,117 shops in the market, including cutting, refineries and gemstone warehouses. Additionally, steel structure 616 stalls were also constructed in 2018 for the vendors.

The jade and gems are sold briskly on this market. This is also a central point to generate revenue. – Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/GNLM



Gems and Jade market is reopened beginning 12 October 2021.

Myanmar ships over 673,000 tonnes of green gram in 2020-2021FY



China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union, India, Thailand and Viet Nam also purchase green grams from Myanmar.

MYANMAR conveyed more than 673,122 tonnes of green gram to foreign trade partners during the financial year 2020-2021, according to the Ministry of Commerce's trade data.

The country generated an income of US\$525.38 million from the exports of green gram over the past ten months.

At present, the price of green gram is over K125,000 per three-basket bag depending on the varieties and quality.

China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union, India, Thailand and Viet Nam also purchase green grams from Myanmar. China prefers green grams (Shwe Wah) variety. At present, the demand slips due to border trade restrictions amid the COVID-19, traders said.

China makes value-added

products from green grams and sends them to foreign markets. Moreover, it produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over 330,000 tons in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, over 400,000 tons in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tons in the 2017-2018FY and over 300,000 in the 2018-2019FY. Green grams are mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses' exports, green gram accounted for more than 26 per cent of the exports in the previous years.

As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country. Green gram are primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states. — KK/GNLM

Sagaing fresh, dried tea leaves to be available in Mandalay market

THE growers from the Sagaing region are distributing their fresh and dried tea leaves primarily to the Mandalay market, it is learnt.

“We are sending the fresh and dried tea leaves from Homalin township mainly to Mandalay market. We are also sending them to the Monywa market. The price of fresh tea leaves is quite lower this year compared with a year earlier. The growers are blaming the pandemic for fresh tea leaves price drop. However, the price of dried tea leaves has risen somewhat,”

said Daw Su Su Htway, the head of the agriculture department from Homalin Township.

Last year, the fresh tea leaves prices were fetched K1,500 per viss while the dried tea leaves were K4,500 per viss. This year, the price of fresh tea leaves are sold for K1,300 per viss whereas the dried leave is priced at K5,500 per viss.

Myanmar tea leaves are naturally grown without using any chemicals. Tea leaves in the Sagaing region are cultivated mostly in Homalin Township. The agriculture department is

carrying out to be able to control the high yield of the tea leaves production and to stand a marketable product in cooperating with the growers, said U Win Hlaing Oo, the head of the Sagaing region agriculture department.

There are some 8,900 hectares of tea planted across Myanmar and most of them were exported to China market. Although local tea is exported to Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and Singapore, the largest market remains China. — Lulay/GNLM



Myanmar tea leaves are naturally grown without using any chemicals. Tea leaves in the Sagaing region are cultivated mostly in Homalin Township.

IMF, G20 fret over supply chain bottlenecks, inflation fears



Supply chain bottlenecks that threaten to hobble the global recovery will be a focus of discussion at the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF. **PHOTO: AFP**

GLOBAL finance officials gathered in Washington on Wednesday were focused on finding a way to alleviate supply chain bottlenecks that are driving prices higher and threatening to derail the economic recovery.

As demand has spiked, suppliers have not been able to keep up: Ships are lined up outside American ports waiting to offload goods, US consumer inflation remained elevated in September, global oil prices have jumped over \$80 a barrel, the highest in years, and British families may be forced to do without turkeys

for Christmas dinner.

The global supply challenges are a key focus of meetings of the International Monetary Fund, the Group of 20 advanced economies and the smaller gathering of finance ministers from the Group of Seven.

Pandemic restrictions shuttered manufacturing and trade routes while suppliers, who are facing shortages of workers and truck drivers, have not been able to keep up with the sudden surge in demand for goods as economies began to reopen.

The disruptions, which

some policymakers fear may be long lasting, have hobbled the recovery momentum, prompting the IMF to cut growth forecasts for major economies like the United States and Germany.

G7 officials agreed to work together to monitor the difficulties. "Supply chain issues are being felt globally — and finance leaders from around the globe must collaborate to address our shared challenges," said UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak, who chaired the meeting of the world's richest nations.—AFP ■

EU holds world's largest 'green bond' sale

THE EU drew massive demand on Tuesday for its first "green bonds", raising 12 billion euros (\$14 billion) in the world's biggest issuance of sustainable debt, the European Commission said.

"This marks the largest green bond order book ever in global capital markets, and the largest green bond ever issued, not just in Europe but in the world," EU budget commissioner Johannes Hahn told reporters.

The money raised by the EU commission is to be handed out

to member states to be spent on cleaner energy, energy efficiency and other ways to achieve the EU goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The so-called green bond however came before the EU has finalised its own list of what investments should be considered environmentally friendly, with countries very divided on the role of nuclear energy.

Instead, the EU said it was adhering to the principles of the International Capital Market Association and other standards.

The EU sale "attracted mas-

sive demand" which augured well for global issuance of similar green debt, said Johann Ple, of AXA Investment Managers.

"This supports our view that total green bond issuance in 2021 should double from 2020, reaching 400 billion euros," he said.

The sale of the 15-year debt was the first in the EU's goal of raising 250 billion euros in sustainable debt by 2026 that will make the European Union the biggest emitter of green debt.

It makes up about one-third of the 800 billion euros agreed by

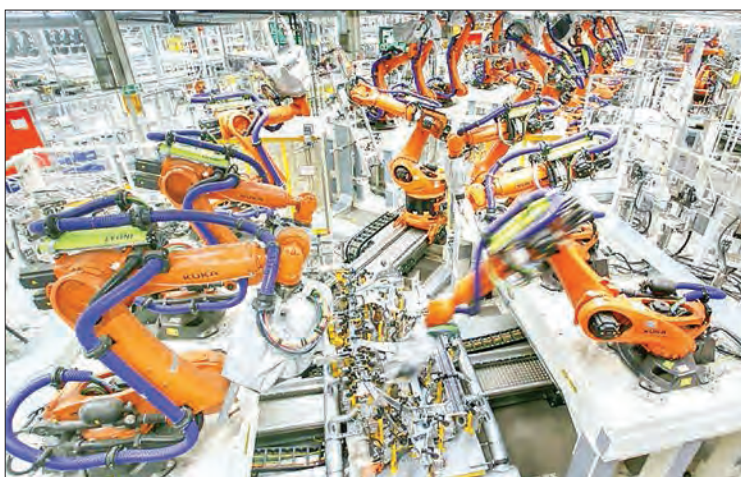


Wind energy is the technology expected to provide the largest contribution to the EU renewable energy targets. Wind power is already competitive with other sources of electricity in a number of countries. **PHOTO: AFP**

EU member states for Europe's pandemic recovery plan that re-

lies on shared borrowing by the EU executive.—AFP ■

Global shortages cloud outlook for powerhouse Germany



Germany's key automotive sector is suffering from a shortage of semiconductors, a component in both conventional and electric vehicles. **PHOTO: AFP**

GLOBAL shortages in industrial components and raw materials are weighing on Germany's export-driven economy, threatening to brake the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The country's leading economic institutes (DIW, Ifo, IfW, IWH and RWI) are expected to revise down their growth expectations for Europe's biggest

economy on Thursday.

When the think tanks last published their biannual forecasts in April, they predicted that gross domestic product would grow by 3.7 per cent in 2021, after the pandemic caused the economy to shrink by 4.9 per cent in 2020.

Since then, shortfalls in materials and logistic logjams have

taken the wind out of Germany's sails.

Earlier this week, the International Monetary Fund downgraded its own global economic forecasts, pointing the finger at supply chain disruptions.

Businesses have to prepare for a "difficult autumn", Joachim Lang, the head of Germany's influential industrial lobby, the BDI, said last week in response to sinking export figures.

Ralph Wiechers, chief economist at the mechanical engineering industry group VDMA, told AFP: "Whether it's wood for pallets, packing materials, steel — an important input for our industry — or computer chips, semiconductors", businesses were being confronted with shortages across the board. Orders from customers have also begun to drop among the companies Wiechers represents due to an inability to lay their hands on materials.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's factory inflation hit 25-year high in September

China's factory inflation hit its highest level in a quarter of a century on surging commodity costs last month, with Thursday's figures fanning concerns that higher prices could filter through supply chains and into the global economy.

The reopening from lockdowns around the world has ramped up demand for energy just as stockpiles are low, made worse by China's drive to meet environmental goals by slashing emissions targets. The producer price index (PPI), which measures the cost of goods at the factory gate, hit 10.7 per cent, the National Bureau of Statistics said, marking the biggest jump in its data going back to October 1996.—AFP ■

EU offers border 'express lane' to solve N.Ireland Brexit row

THE EU on Wednesday offered to reduce customs checks and paperwork on British products intended for Northern Ireland in the hope of averting a new Brexit-related spat. The EU put forward a host of proposals in a bid to solve problems in post-Brexit trading arrangements in Northern Ireland that London says are reigniting inter-community tensions. A team of EU negotiators on Wednesday delivered the plans to London a day after the UK's Brexit minister David Frost said the current deal — known as the Northern Ireland Protocol — should be ripped up. "I have listened to and engaged with Northern Irish stakeholders. Today's proposals are our genuine response to their concerns," said European Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic.—AFP ■

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing posts record net profit

THE operator of Japanese casualwear giant Uniqlo reported a record annual net profit on Thursday and predicted an even better performance this year as pandemic-related restrictions ease further worldwide.

Fast Retailing said business had “recovered markedly” as infections were contained around the world, including a sharp recovery in sales in Europe and North America after virus lockdowns were lifted.

In the 12 months to August 2021, the firm posted a better-than-expected net profit of 169.8 billion yen (\$1.5 billion), up 88 per cent on-year.

A surge in demand for casual clothing and cost-cutting fuelled the bumper results, with



Recovery of demand in key overseas markets should compensate for expected falls in domestic Uniqlo operations in the current financial year, the firm says. **PHOTO: AFP**

sales up 6.2 per cent to 2.13 trillion yen, the company said.

Recovery of demand in key overseas markets across Asia,

North America and Europe should compensate for expected falls in domestic Uniqlo operations in the current financial

year, the company said.

“In the second half, we expect restrictions to ease and normal business operations to resume,” chief financial officer Takeshi Okazaki said at a press conference.

“Therefore we forecast increasing sales and a significant increase in profit.”

The firm predicted net profit of 175 billion yen for the current year to August 2022 on expected annual sales of 2.2 trillion yen.

However, the firm’s mainstay Uniqlo operations in Japan are expected to experience a drop from the strong demand seen a year ago, when lounge-wear and other “stay-home” items were snapped up en masse, he added.

“There was also a high demand for masks. Those factors are expected to disappear during this fiscal year,” Okazaki said.

Going forward, chief executive officer Tadashi Yanai said the company would put renewed focus on building stores near residential areas, in addition to urban shopping districts.

He voiced concerns about rising raw-material prices, the ongoing pandemic and on-and-off local lockdowns in some countries. “For (the past) year, I believe everyone in the company worked hard in this difficult environment,” Yanai said.

“But the coronavirus pandemic has not ended. We just cannot tell what will happen when.” — AFP ■

Food and rent prices drive US inflation spike in September

THE US inflation spike is not over, according to government data released Wednesday that showed prices for food and rents increasing in the world’s largest economy last month, underscoring the complications Washington policymakers face as they guide the country’s bounceback from the pandemic.

The Labour Department’s consumer price index (CPI) rose 5.4 per cent, seasonally adjusted, in September compared to the same month a year ago. From August, it rose just above analysts’ forecasts to 0.4 per cent.

Food and housing prices accounted for more than half of the overall gain, the Labour Department said, while the impact of rising global energy prices

was also apparent in the data that some economists warned could indicate inflation is on track to overstay its welcome.

“The pick up in shelter costs is something to watch as it could offset some of the slowdown in inflation that occurs as current supply chain disruptions are resolved,” Diane Swonk of Grant Thornton said on Twitter.

The United States has dealt with price increases throughout this year as businesses reopen from Covid-19 shutdowns in 2020 and supply chains deal with shortages and delays.

The inflation presents a challenge to President Joe Biden, whose opponents have also used it to argue his spending plans are excessive.—AFP ■



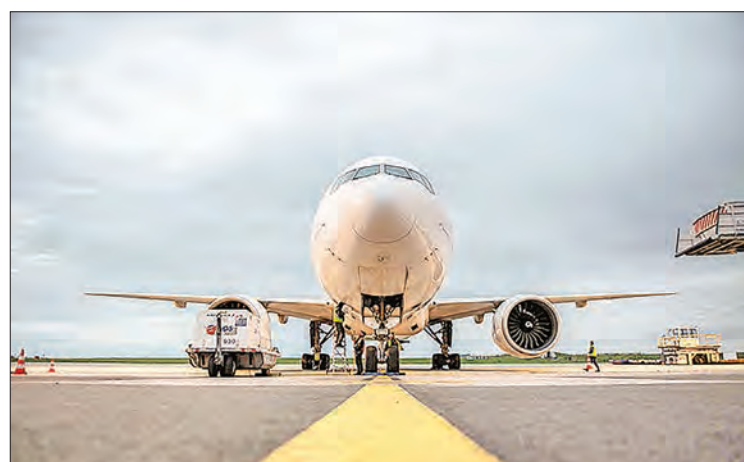
An increase in food prices played a large role in the overall rise in the US consumer price index in September. **PHOTO: AFP**

Europe airlines call for US date for flight resumption

EUROPE’S airlines on Wednesday urged the US authorities to provide a date for the reopening of its borders to vaccinated passengers and for an agreed list of recognised vaccines. US President Joe Biden announced last month that the US would reopen its borders to passengers vaccinated against Covid from November, in particular from the European Union.

But Airlines for Europe (A4E) said in a statement they were still waiting for a date, in a statement issued following a meeting of industry leaders in Brussels. “A clear date for the reopening is urgently needed, together with an alignment of transatlantic travel rules,” said the statement.

Washington also needed to recognise the Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) developed by the European Union, a system that had become the “de facto global standard”, the



This 29 October 2019 file photo shows a Boeing 777 from Air France Cargo at Roissy Charles de Gaulle airport, near Paris, France.

PHOTO: AFP

statement added.

“A common approach between the EU and the US is paramount to provide clarity and ensure passenger confidence,” said Thomas Reynaert, A4E’s managing director.

The group called on US officials to agree a list of approved vaccines, urging them to take the WHO-approved vaccine list as

the working basis for future talks.

One sticking point is that the US authorities have not yet cleared the AstraZeneca vaccine, widely used in European countries. European airlines such as Air France, KLM and Lufthansa have been deprived of a large part of their business because of the 18-month shutdown in transatlantic flights.—AFP ■

Afghan pomegranate pickers jobless as fruits rot at shuttered border

AFGHANISTAN’S festive pomegranate season has begun, but this year thousands of tonnes of the juicy red fruit risk rotting on trucks blocked at Pakistan’s frequently shuttered border — leaving thousands of farm workers unemployed.

With its tart and crunchy,

ruby-red seeds locked inside a leathery red rind, the pomegranate is renowned for its health benefits, and is one of the most important crops in the country’s south.

But the fruit is ripening as Afghanistan finds itself engulfed in a multitude of crises that have

metastasised since the Taliban seized control two months ago.

“We have 15,000 farm workers in this region who have been laid off because the trade has been paralysed and the fruit is rotting,” Haji Nani Agha, who heads the Fresh Fruits Union in Kandahar, told AFP.—AFP ■

NEWS
IN BRIEF

US calls ransomware summit - without Russia

WASHINGTON has called about 30 nations together Wednesday and Thursday to boost the international fight against ransomware, a senior White House official said, noting that Russia was not invited.

The United States has been hit, especially in the first half of 2021, by a series of ransomware attacks that have seen cyber-extortionists seize data or networks in exchange for cryptocurrency payments.

While Moscow denies responsibility, ransomware attacks have been often blamed on Russian-speaking hacker groups or those operating from Russian territory.—AFP ■

Defectors sue N. Korea's Kim Jong Un in Tokyo over repatriations

NORTH Korean defectors in Tokyo symbolically summoned Kim Jong Un to court on Thursday over a repatriation programme they describe as "state kidnapping".

The unusual case is a bid to hold Pyongyang responsible for a scheme that saw more than 90,000 people move to North Korea from Japan between 1959 and 1984. The programme mainly targeted ethnic Koreans but also their Japanese spouses, lured by fantastical propaganda promising a "paradise on Earth".—AFP ■

Man arrested after killing several people with bow and arrow in Norway

A man armed with a bow and arrows killed several people and wounded others in south-eastern Norway on Wednesday, police said, adding they had arrested the suspect.

"We can unfortunately confirm that there are several injured and also unfortunately several killed in this episode," local police official Oyvind Aas told a news conference.

"The man who committed this act has been arrested by the police and, according to our information, there is only one person involved."—AFP ■

Sri Lanka drops charges against admiral over killings

SRI Lankan authorities have dropped charges, including conspiracy to murder, against a former navy chief linked to 11 killings that drew international condemnation, the country's attorney general announced Wednesday.

The investigation against Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda was part of a case that cast a spotlight on extrajudicial killings during Sri Lanka's 37-year ethnic war that ended in 2009.

Attorney General Sanjay Rajaratnam told the Court of Appeal that the state will not pursue charges against Karannagoda, who was first indicted in 2019.

A court official told AFP that a lower court would soon



Sri Lankan Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda (R) with the country's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. **PHOTO: AFP**

discharge Karannagoda, one of 14 people accused of abducting the teenaged children of wealthy

families in 2008 and 2009 and killing them after extorting money. Four charges had been laid

against Karannagoda, including conspiracy to murder, which carries the death penalty.

Rights watchdog Amnesty International urged Sri Lankan authorities to explain why they dropped the case.

The killing of the 11 youths has been raised at the UN Human Rights Council which has called for independent investigations into atrocities during the separatist war. Police told a court in 2019 that the 11 victims were killed while in the illegal custody of the navy, although their bodies have never been found.

Investigators believe the true number of victims from the abductions and killings to be at least three times higher.—AFP ■

Fresh fighting in Ethiopia's Afar as army mounts 'offensive'

FIGHTING has resumed in northern Ethiopia's Afar region after a month-long lull, humanitarian and rebel sources told AFP Wednesday, as the government appeared to be pressing a new offensive.

There were reports of an armed clash Tuesday in the town of Awra, in Afar's Fenti zone, including use of heavy weapons by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) that killed multiple civilians, the humanitarian sources said.

The reports could not be independently verified and officials in Afar could not be reached for comment.

TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda denied claims the

rebels had used heavy weapons against civilians but confirmed there had been fresh hostilities in Afar. "Enemy forces are crumbling and in disarray in parts of Afar," he said, describing fighting along the border between Afar and Amhara regions.

"We do not target civilians and the alleged artillery attack is yet another [fictitious] accusation to tarnish our forces' reputation."

For nearly a week humanitarian and rebel sources have been reporting signs of a government offensive that could potentially mark a new phase of the 11-month-old war in northern Ethiopia.

Officials have not explic-



Soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defence Force held a training session in the Amhara region in September. **PHOTO: AFP**

itly confirmed the offensive is under way, though Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's office said this week the government had

"a responsibility to protect its citizens in all parts of the country from any acts of terrorism".—AFP ■

Afghan evacuees in S. Korea discuss life, future in new country



Afghan children learn taekwondo at a temporary housing facility in Jincheon, central South Korea, on 13 October 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

A group of Afghans, including adults and children, who were evacuated from Afghanistan in August, discussed their new life in South Korea on Wednesday, expressing their determination to settle in a new country thousands of kilometers from home.

They are part of the 391 Afghans evacuated to South Korea in the so-called Operation Miracle in the frantic days following the Taliban takeover of the war-torn country. The Afghans include those who worked at South Korea's embassy in Kabul and their family members.

The interviews with the Afghan evacuees were organized by the Justice Ministry for foreign media to show how they

are adjusting to life in markedly different surroundings while staying at temporary housing facilities in Jincheon, a rural county about 90 kilometres southeast of Seoul.

The evacuees have begun learning Korean language and culture through a programme designed to last half a year, with young children also offered soccer and taekwondo lessons. Upon completing the programme, they are expected to move into local communities.

"I'm really enjoying learning taekwondo here. I really like it. Back in my country, girls are not allowed to freely enjoy sports, but I'm free to do so here in South Korea," a 13-year-old girl said.—Kyodo News ■

Japan PM Kishida dissolves lower house for 31 October election

JAPAN'S new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida dissolved the House of Representatives on Thursday for a general election at the end of the month as he seeks a public mandate for his government launched just last week.

The election, with the coronavirus response and economic policies of the various parties to the fore, will be held on 31 October after the four-year term of lower house members expires on 21 October. The Liberal Democratic Party headed by Kishida is hoping to capitalize on a recent decline in COVID-19 cases, while opposition leaders are still scrambling to create a united front.



Photo taken on 14 October 2021, shows the chamber of the House of Representatives in the parliament building in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

It is the first time in Japan's postwar history that a general election will be held after the lawmakers' term has expired,

and the period between the dissolution of the lower house and voting day will be the shortest.

House of Representatives Speaker Tadamori Oshima announced the dissolution in a plenary session, prompting lawmakers of the lower chamber to stand up and shout "banzai" as they lost their seats.

Official campaigning for the election is set to start on Tuesday.

Kishida asked for the support of his fellow LDP members after the dissolution, saying, "We are expecting a tough battle and we are fighting it out together."

Yukio Edano, the leader of the main opposition Constitu-

tional Democratic Party of Japan, criticized the ruling party's coronavirus response as "always running behind."

"The LDP cannot change. We need to change the government itself," Edano said. For Kishida, who won the LDP leadership race on 29 September and was chosen as prime minister on 4 October by parliament, which is controlled by the LDP-led coalition, the general election will be a chance to secure wider public support for his policies focusing on enhancing the coronavirus response and reviving the world's third-largest economy hit by the pandemic.—Kyodo News ■

Chile opposition moves to impeach Pinera over Pandora Papers claims

CHILE'S opposition on Wednesday moved to impeach the country's president, Sebastian Pinera, for the controversial sale of a mining company through a firm owned by his children, which appeared in the Pandora Papers leaks.

Pinera used "his office for personal business," said congressman Tomas Hirsch when presenting the accusation in the lower house of Congress, the first step in the impeachment

process that could last for several weeks.

The move comes after the Chilean public prosecutor's office opened an investigation on October 8 into the claims surrounding the sale in 2010, during Pinera's first term in office, of the Dominga mining company.

That investigation was prompted by the Pandora Papers leaks, a vast trove of reports on the hidden wealth of world leaders researched by

the International Consortium of Journalists (ICIJ).

One of the richest men in Chile, Pinera has denied the claims and said that he was absolved of the charges in a 2017 investigation.

When the new investigation was opened last week, Pinera said he had "full confidence that the courts, as they have already done, will confirm there were no irregularities and also my total innocence."—AFP ■



Photo released by Aton of Chilean Deputy Gabriel Ascencio (C) of the Christian Democracy party gesturing during a press conference during the signing of a constitutional accusation against Chilean President Sebastian Pinera in Valparaiso, Chile, on 13 October 2021. PHOTO: RAUL ZAMORA / ATON CHILE / AFP

US rules out normalizing with Syria's Assad



Syrians walk in front of a poster of President Bashar al-Assad near the Grand Umayyad Mosque in Damascus on 23 September 2021. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken renewed US opposition Wednesday to normalization with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has seen growing acceptance from Arab nations that have concluded he won the brutal civil war. Meeting with his Israeli and UAE counterparts, Blinken said that President Joe Biden's

administration's policy on Syria was largely focused on humanitarian relief. "What we have not done, and what we do not intend to do, is to express any support for efforts to normalize relations or rehabilitate Mr Assad," Blinken told a joint news conference, not referring to Assad as president.

The United States has not

"lifted a single sanction on Syria or changed our position to oppose the reconstruction of Syria until there is irreversible progress toward a political solution, which we believe is necessary and vital," Blinken said.

A US law known as the Caesar Act came into force last year that punishes any companies that work with Assad as he seeks to rebuild after a decade of war.

The Caesar Act, accompanied by a slew of US sanctions on Syrians close to Assad, aims to force accountability for human rights abuses and to encourage a political solution in Syria.

The United Arab Emirates has earlier said that the Caesar Act made it difficult for Syria to return to the Arab League.

But individual Arab states have been warming to Assad, with Jordanian King Abdullah II, a key US ally, earlier this month speaking to the Syrian leader by phone for the first time since the war.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ex-top cop takes stand at high-profile trial in Spain

A notorious former police chief whose revelations have shaken Spain's elite to the core, said Wednesday he had been treated like public enemy number one as he went on trial for blackmail and corruption.

"They haven't treated me like a suspected criminal, they've treated me like an enemy that needs to be destroyed," complained Jose Manuel Villarejo in remarks to the press before taking the stand on the first day of a massive espionage trial involving 27 people.

"In this country, when someone is a nuisance, they annihilate and destroy them, unfortunately making use of institutions as serious as the justice system," said Villarejo, turned up to Spain's top criminal court wearing a dark beret and sunglasses.—AFP ■

Italian court tries Egyptian officers over student's murder

FOUR Egyptian security officers will go on trial in absentia in Italy Thursday for the brutal killing in Cairo five years ago of Italian student Giulio Regeni. The officers stand accused of kidnapping, conspiracy to murder and grievous bodily harm in the case, which sparked outrage in Italy and has strained diplomatic relations with Egypt. Regeni, 28, who was doing research for a doctorate at Cambridge University, was abducted in January 2016. His body, bearing extensive signs of torture, was eventually found dumped on the outskirts of Cairo.—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.

ONE Championship: First Strike Fights to be launched today

ONE of the greatest events of ONE Championship named "First Strike" will be held at Singapore Indoor Stadium on 15 October (today).

In the main event or ONE Featherweight Kickboxing World

Title Fight, Giorgio Petrosyan will take on Superbon. In the World Grand Prix quarterfinal, Marat Grigorian will face Andy Souwer.

In another World Grand Prix quarterfinal, Sitthichai Sitsongpeenong will fight with Tay-

fun Ozcan. In the Heavyweight Kickboxing bout, Rade Opacic will fight against Patrick Schmid.

ONE: First Strike will be broadcast to more than 150 countries, and fans can watch via television, tablet, computer,

or mobile device.

Fans from Myanmar could enjoy the event live on Skynet Channel at 7 pm Myanmar Time (MMT) tonight.

The full event stream will be available on ONE's YouTube

channel and the ONE Super App beginning at 8:30 pm Singapore Standard Time (SGT).

Also, the first two bouts will be streamed on ONE's Facebook page, ONE Championship officials said. — GNLM

Golf's men and women's Australian Open cancelled

THE men's and women's Australian Open golf tournaments fell victim to the coronavirus pandemic Thursday, with both cancelled due to travel restrictions.

Golf Australia had already pushed back this year's men's event in Sydney from November to late January or February, but it has now been called off entirely. The women's 2022 tournament was due to be played in Adelaide in February, but that too has been canned.

"The decision has not been made lightly but we believe it to be the right outcome under the current circumstances," said Golf Australia chief James Sutherland.

"The international element means shifting quarantine and travel restrictions wreak havoc on planning and, with our marquee players living abroad, the challenge is even greater."

It is the second year in a row that the men's Australian Open has not been played.

Won previously by the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman and Rory McIlroy, it was cancelled in 2020 for the first time



Local hero Matt Jones won the Australian Open in 2019, the last time it was played. PHOTO: AFP

since 1945.

But Golf Australia said it still intended to run the innovative Vic Open from February 10-13, although without international sanctioning. The tournament, the only one on the world's professional golf tours where men and women tee off in alternate groups on the same course, is usually joint-sanctioned by the men's European Tour and women's LPGA Tour.

The Australian PGA Championship is also set to go ahead in Queensland from January 13-16. —AFP ■

FIFA chief raises prospect of Israeli World Cup bid

FIFA has raised the prospect of Israel co-hosting a future World Cup, with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office mentioning the possibility of bidding for the men's 2030 tournament.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino completed a two-day visit to Israel on Tuesday by meeting Bennett and President Isaac Herzog.

The head of world football's governing body was asked during his Israel trip about the possibility for the country to host a major FIFA event. "You need to have vision, dreams and ambitions," Infantino said, according to a FIFA statement. "In recent months, I was in Dubai where the UAE Football Association and the Israel Football Association have signed an historic agreement. "I think that co-hosting is the future, so why not dreaming and thinking

about it — be it at youth or senior level, men or women — because the FIFA World Cup has this unique magic in bringing people together and in uniting people." In a statement, Bennett's office said that in his talks with Infantino, "the FIFA president raised the idea that Israel would host the World Cup in 2030, together with other countries in the region, led by the United Arab Emirates".

The brief statement said Steven Mnuchin, former Secretary of the Treasury under US

president Donald Trump, was present at the meeting, along with the US ambassador to Israel, David Friedman. —AFP ■

The Trump administration initiated the 2020 "Abraham Accords", which saw several Arab countries, namely the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, normalise their relations with Israel.

The Middle East region is set to host the 2022 men's World Cup in Qatar, in November and December next year. —AFP ■



FIFA president Gianni Infantino completed a two-day visit to Israel on Tuesday by meeting Bennett and President Isaac Herzog. PHOTO: AFP