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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

“Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal”

Speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
on the Occasion of the Eighteenth Month of the Assumption of State Duties
by the State Administration Council

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 August 2022
(Translation from the Myanmar original)

Esteemed National People,

Eighteen months ago today, our State Administration Council government assumed the duties of the state. I would first like to wish good health and well-being to all our national people. Yesterday, the National Defence and Security Council held a meeting where a comprehensive presentation was made of the situation of the nation. In accordance with Section 425 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the term of the State Administration Council has been extended by six more months.

Today, I would like to share some information on the political and security measures taken by our government, the initiatives in the social arena, the implementation of two national visions and two economic visions, and our future plans.

Esteemed National People,

Allow me to first touch on political and security measures.

Unavoidably, the Tatmadaw had to assume the duties and responsibilities of the state in accordance with the Constitution. This was because despite the clear evidence of voting fraud in the 2020 elections and requests by the Tatmadaw to resolve this matter, the responsible officials not



only failed to resolve the matter but also tried to forcibly take over the state power.

From the time we assumed the duties of the state, we have tried our utmost to discharge our responsibilities. However, terrorists based inside and outside the country and the people and organizations supporting them are committed to the

utter devastation of Myanmar, instead of trying to nurture democracy in Myanmar.

Peace and tranquillity at home are important for the development of our country. To this end, the Tatmadaw has issued ceasefire statements 21 times from 20 December 2018, covering the period to the end of 2022.

Over the past 18 months, I met personally with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) nine times, and the negotiation committee met with EAOs, political parties and peace-seeking organizations 75 times, for the purpose of securing peace and for the best interests of our country and every region.

Esteemed National People,

We declared 2022 as the Year of Peace. Consequently, to move forward pragmatically with the peace process, I invited the leaders of ethnic armed organizations for peace talks on 22 April 2022. Seven ethnic armed organizations among the NCA signatories and three NCA non-signatories – a total of 10 groups – responded positively. We have held discussions on peace with nine organizations. We will hold talks with the remaining organizations soon. We will also meet a second time with the organizations that we have already met in the first round. In all these discussions, we were able to talk frankly and cordially on exercising multiparty democracy in line with people’s wishes, building the Union based on democracy and federalism, and on actual needs and relevant issues for the regions and the country.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Information Team
State Administration Council*

Efforts made to develop livestock, meat production sector of Mandalay Region

A meeting with district level officials from Mandalay Region was held on 30 July at the Mandalay Region Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

At the meeting, officials discussed goals of the department and completion of work for the 2022-2023 financial year, farming of animals and production of animal products, cattle disease vaccination activities and artificial insemination activities, establishment of livestock breeding zones, inspection of animal feed, medicines and animal products, farming demonstration and research farms and health inspection conditions to export animals abroad.

The deputy minister gave a speech.

After that, lab tasks of Mandalay Region Department were inspected.

At the Institute of Agriculture in Patheingyi, the teaching aid farms of the institute were inspected.

The deputy minister discussed the conservation of fish resources, development of value-added finished product production based on agricultural and livestock products, increasing private sector's investment and systematic use of irrigation water without wastage.

It is reported that the need to calculate the life of the crops and the need for water and irrigation systems were also discussed.—MNA



The deputy minister inspects the lab tasks.

MoHT Union Minister welcomes TBAM delegation



The meeting between the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism and the Thai Business Association of Myanmar is underway in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister Dr Htay Aung of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism met with President Mr Nuttaphong Visitkitchakarn of the Thai Business Association of Myanmar-TBAM and his delegation at the Nilar Meeting Hall of the MoHT yesterday.

During the conference, the Union minister said that Thailand is already operating its flights to Myanmar (Thailand-Yangon-Thailand) and comprising the sectors of economy, trade and investment between the two countries actively, for the purpose of mutual cooperation. As Thailand is the second largest investor in Myanmar in the hotels and tourism sector, he is looking forward to more investments from Thailand, the Union minister stated.

Afterwards, the TBAM

openly discussed the action of the cooperation works for trade and investment of both sides, the issues about the accessibility of more Thai tourists and investors to Myanmar, the travel status of Thai tourists in Myanmar and the conditions for promoting economic cooperation between the two countries, with the Union minister.—MNA

21 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 1 August, total figure rises to 614,113

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **614,113** after **21** new cases were reported on 1 August 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **592,910** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at **19,434** without more casualties.—MNA

Union spirit is the resolve to build a Union through mutual amity between all the nationalities

UNION spirit is the foundation of the historic independence struggle, and it will also be the cornerstone of the future democratic country. In fact, the Union spirit is the resolve to build a Union through mutual amity between all the nationalities. As a peaceful and stable democratic State will be built only with the Union spirit, we must nurture a highly qualified new general possessing a strong Union spirit.

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

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Moreover, both sides were able to discuss the Union Accord Part I, II and III and Table 2 of Part III, and we were able to sign agreements. On 14 June 2022, we extended invitations again to the leaders of ethnic armed organizations who had not attended the talks on the first invitation. Our government has kept the door wide open to peace. I would urge them to enter the door with trust. I would also like to say that if they want to serve the interests of the Union and the interests of the ethnic national people, attending these peace talks would be best.

Working against this government formed under the Constitution, the illegal committee, parallel government and terrorist organizations are using various means to destroy the security, peace and stability of the country. Over the past 18 months, from 1 February 2021 to 23 July 2022, there have been 7,246 attacks conducted with bombs/grenades/mines, 6,567 assaults and murders, and 1,094 arson attacks, altogether a total of 14,907 violent incidents across the country. These incidents left a death toll of 3,483 monks, nuns, public service personnel, administrative officials, children and other innocent civilians, injured 3,065 people and resulted in 41 missing persons. I am greatly saddened by these deaths and injuries and assure you that effective action will be taken against terrorists. There were 4,026 violent incidents in Sagaing Region, 2,442 incidents in Yangon Region, 2,194 incidents in Mandalay, and 1,395 incidents in Magway Region. These were the worse regions, and as such, we will continue to impose security measures, and restore peace, stability, and the rule of law until normalcy is achieved in these regions. I did not exercise the option of imposing martial law, except in some very crucial townships. No matter that full executive, judicial and legislative powers were entrusted to us, the measures we took were in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and existing laws. Over the past 18 months, large numbers of weapons and ammunition made their way into the country. The weapons and ammunition seized from terrorist groups include 6,311 assorted arms, 335,184 rounds of ammunition, and 11,715 grenades and mines. A total of 6,236 terrorists have been arrested.



From February 2021 to May 2022, during the period of this government, the trade surplus reached US\$1.14 billion. Priority is being given to export of finished goods rather than raw materials to international markets, to increase state revenue.

Our government has kept to the basic principles of our foreign policy in relations with the international community. Our country is an ASEAN member state and as such, we respect and value the ASEAN Charter, its treaties and conventions. As a result of the political events in 2020, I attended the ASEAN Summit held on 24 April 2021 when the Five-Point Consensus was adopted. In adopting the Consensus, Myanmar declared that it would implement the Consensus under the ASEAN Way, ASEAN Practice and ASEAN Spirit. During the previous year, Myanmar was severely affected by the second and third waves of COVID-19. At that time, our country was forced to make strenuous efforts to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while dealing with violent riots and terrorism. With the lack of stability in the country, implementing the ASEAN Consensus at the time was challenging. This year, as the situation has improved on all fronts, we are implementing the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus to the extent we can within the ASEAN framework. We are also striving to prevent any encroachment upon our internal affairs, our judicial, legislative, executive powers, and the sovereignty of the State. As the country begins to achieve normalcy, we will be able to make progress.

From 10 to 16 July 2022, I paid good-will visits to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan. During the visit, I attended the ceremony hoisting the gem and diamond orb, pennant-shaped vane and golden umbrella atop the Shwezigon replica pagoda, as well as the consecration ceremony in Ethnomir World Culture City, Kaluga in the Russian Federation.

I also held meetings with military and civilian officials and visited significant landmarks, universities and factories. During that short trip, I was able to hold meetings beneficial to the country.

Esteemed National People,

I would like to continue with issues related to the economy.

Three economic objectives have been adopted and are being implemented as a priority for the economic development of the nation. The aim is to develop the socio-economic status of rural people who are primarily engaged in agriculture and livestock in regions and states, as well as in self-administered zones. To this end, we have set up a separate fund of K400 billion out of the K491.18 billion remaining from the National Fund for Natural Disaster Management fund, which was being used for COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment under the stewardship of the COVID-19 National Central Committee. We are also accelerating the remaining economic tasks.

In previous years, loans had been disbursed to help businesses recover from losses sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to various reasons, progress has not been perceptible. Therefore, priority will be given to improving the economy as follows. The first priority will be given to agriculture and livestock, which will lead to quick wins. Subsidies will be provided for both summer and winter crops, such as pulses and beans, edible oil crops, maize, as well as for chicken, pig, fish and prawn farming. The next priority will be to support and upgrade factories that turn out finished products from agricultural produce, and to support

factories linked to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Consideration will then be given to the remaining factories and workshops. Separate arrangements will also be made for individual projects as necessary. I expect progress to be seen in six months. First, many job opportunities will be generated. Second, all workers will have the chance to earn income. Third, demand will increase. Fourth, as the volume of goods sold increases, national income will rise. The strength of our country lies within the country. We must use this strength to make the country progress.

From February 2021 to May 2022, during the period of this government, the trade surplus reached US\$1.14 billion. Priority is being given to export of finished goods rather than raw materials to international markets, to increase state revenue.

With population rising in the country, edible oil consumption is also increasing. We are making efforts to extend the cultivation of sunflower in all parts of the country, a crop which produces some 140 viss of oil per acre for local consumption. Plans are underway to grow sunflower crops on 1.5 million acres in the country in the 2022-2023 financial year. From the COVID-19 special fund, under existing rules and regulations, the government has allowed the disbursement of K100.248 billion in agricultural loans for 690,017 acres of cultivable lands. While imports of fuel oil cannot be reduced, I urge people to reduce their consumption of edible oil. I also urge the ethnic national people to help put this in practice. In our country, it is only groundnut that meets production targets. The other pulses, beans and edible oil crops are yet to reach their production targets. Farmers can earn increased income if they increase crop yield per acre, without the need to expand the cultivable land they have. The government is stepping up efforts to supply fertilizers, pesticides and access to water for agriculture. Moreover, efforts are being made to supply diesel fuel for farming.

Esteemed National People,

According to the current political situation, CNG prices have increased sharply. Our country lacks sufficient natural gas. We are having to repair gas-fired power stations as well as deal with

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sabotage of the national grid by terrorists. The country does not have a sufficient supply of electricity. Thus, 29 hydropower stations, one coal-fired power station, 28 natural gas-fired power plants and 610 diesel generators as well as two solar-powered stations are generating 7,121 megawatts of electricity. Some 50 per cent of total generating capacity for electricity is from hydropower. A total of 60 renewable energy projects, including hydropower, wind power and solar power projects, will be implemented to generate 6,287 megawatts of electricity. Hydropower plants cannot generate electricity quickly, as these projects need at least five years for completion. The quickest generation of electricity is from solar power plants, and even these take about one and a half years to complete.

Efforts are being made to supply the national grid with 442 megawatts of electricity from Upper Yeywa Hydropower Project, Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project and Thahtay Hydropower Project. Arrangements are also ongoing to implement other hydropower projects.

Esteemed National People,

Regarding the social sectors,

All our citizens can practise their faith freely. Some 87 per cent of the people are Buddhists. However, the new generation of youth have been subject to propaganda, brainwashing and indoctrination by some politicians and are brutally destroying race, language, religion and culture. Already, 52 members of the Sangha and one nun have been brutally killed and nine members of the Sangha have been injured; eight Sangha are missing.

Moreover, in the second term of the democratically elected government, teaching-learning materials aimed at undermining Myanmar's traditions and culture were inserted into the basic education curriculum. Young people lost respect for teachers. Consequently, 47 education staff were murdered, 21 injured and 25 missing, meaning a total of 93 education staff. Surprisingly, Sagaing and Magway regions had a high number of murdered Sangha and education staff. Work is ongoing to arrest the perpetrators of these brutal killings, prosecute and sentence them under the law, with severe punishment. They will all need to face justice and receive appropriate sentences if found guilty, since no one is above the law.

Myanmar culture is being abused and misused by youth through online media. Consequently, youths are weak in their capacity to preserve their respective ethnic cultures and customs. Hence, during this short time, we have taken steps to promote and revitalize Myanmar's traditional cultures as much as we can. The 23rd Performing Arts National Competition will take place in October 2022.

Our government is accelerating efforts to eradicating narcotic drugs which can destroy our human capital. During the tenure of our government, narcotic drugs and related accessories worth K1,546,705.6365 million (US\$836.06 million) have been seized. Drug eradication actions will be accelerated. As we have evidence that these narcotic drugs came from Shan State, more efforts will be focused on searching, exposing and eradicating drug production, drug trafficking and drug dealing.

Esteemed National People,

With COVID-19 coming under control and stability being restored in the 2021-2022 academic year, a total of 39,242 basic education schools were opened, and 4,225,887 students enrolled. A total of 281,751 students sat for the matriculation examination in March 2022 and 123,877 students passed this examination. The government is making efforts for all school-age children to complete the KG+9 (middle school level). Basic education schools were reopened on 2 June, and more than 7.2 million students are attending. As our country still has a long way to go in education, basic education has to be compulsory. In order to support rural businesses and SMEs, one basic education high school in each of 50 selected districts will teach agriculture, livestock and mechanical subjects to students in grade 10 to grade 12 in the coming academic year. Students having completed Grade 12 will have the chance to continue learning at three-year courses at agriculture, veterinary science and technical institutes. Outstanding students will have the chance to continue at universities and pursue higher education. Students from the regular basic education high school will be able to choose the university they like after completion of Grade-12. We will need to build a modern nation by uplifting education.

COVID-19 was found on 23 March 2020 in Myanmar, and there were 614,083 patients with positive results until 30 July 2020. COVID-19 vaccination has been administered to 35,981,535 people up to 23 July 2022. The country has obtained more than 76 million doses of vaccines including donated ones. So far, Myanmar itself has produced 4,091,625 doses of vaccines locally.

In the sports sector, a total of 287 athletes from our country participated in the 31st SEA Games and secured nine golds, 18 silvers and 35 bronzes, totalling 62 medals. The achievement in medal tally is 2.25 times more than that in the 30th SEA Games. The number of Myanmar athletes in the 31st SEA Games was less than those in the 29th and 30th games but these Myanmar athletes won a larger number of gold medals. Consequently, the government has recognized the success of these athletes who brought honour to



Our government is implementing the national vision of prosperity by ensuring community peace and tranquillity and the rule of law with the least possible impact and using a patient approach. Continuous efforts are being made to extend the rule of law and ensure peace in both rural and urban areas.

the State. Preparations are being made for Myanmar to compete in the coming 32nd SEA Games.

Esteemed National People,

I would now like to turn to the prosperity of the nation and food security, which are our two national visions.

The prosperity of the nation means that peace must be achieved, jobs must be generated, and the country set on a democratic path. In our country, endowed with abundant natural resources, the quicker we can achieve peace, the quicker we will achieve stability as well as development and growth.

Our government is implementing the national vision of prosperity by ensuring community peace and tranquillity and the rule of law with the least possible impact and using a patient approach. Continuous efforts are being made to extend the rule of law and ensure peace in both rural and urban areas.

Food security is essential for the survival of all citizens. Our country has some 33 million acres of cultivable lands on which rice, beans and pulses, maize, sesame and cotton are primarily cultivated. In some places, crops are cultivated through mono-cropping and in some places double-cropping. Across the country, each person's rice consumption rate is 155 kilogrammes (97 pyi) per year, and arrangements are being made to increase the per-acre yield of crops. In order to ensure food sufficiency for people, priority is being given to the extended cultivation of rice and wheat. Additionally, the respective regions are emphasizing the expanded cultivation of other crops for supplementary foods.

Some 70 per cent of the country's population are residing in rural areas of the country. They are engaged in livelihoods based on agriculture and livestock farming. Hence, it is necessary to develop production procedures based on modern techniques, to enhance the living standards of rural people, which in turn will raise the living standards in the country as a whole.

Esteemed National People,

Our two political visions are strength-

ening genuine disciplined multiparty democracy and building the Union based on democracy and federalism.

Every person and organization need to support the establishment and strengthening of a genuine disciplined multiparty democracy to make such a system successful. In so doing, the first basic requirement will be to avoid any derailment from the path to democracy. All persons and organizations need to follow the Constitution and laws. Holding a free and fair general election successfully is crucial for strengthening multiparty democracy.

The election is a national duty linked to the prestige of the State. Only when the election is free and fair, will multiparty democracy desired by the people flourish and only then will the nation have higher prestige in political history and among the international community. Committing electoral fraud and using unscrupulous ways to fix the election will tarnish the image of the State and delay the democratic process of the country. The voting fraud in the 2020 multiparty democracy general election tarnished the image of the State's efforts to achieve a democratic culture.

In order to ensure the strengthening of genuine, disciplined multiparty democracy, it is crucial to have correct voting lists in the multiparty democratic general elections. Relevant organizations cooperate with each other in compiling the basic voting list. When completed, relevant township-based political parties participate in checking the voter lists for correctness.

The Union Election Commission joined hands with combined inspection teams to inspect political parties and collect the list of political parties, including the compilation of voter lists under Section 18 of the Political Parties Registration Law and Rule 23 as of August 2021. Up to the end of July 2022, 85 parties have been inspected, and plans are underway to inspect the remaining parties.

Esteemed National People,

Democracy is a governance system where people choose their representative to represent them. Federalism is a system of power-sharing among different regions

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and states, ethnicities and races. Thus, a Union system based on democracy and federalism means that ethnic national people across the nation live together under a governance system of their own choice, with each state or region having the right to legislate. Only then will a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system emerge.

Our country gained independence through the Panglong Agreement with Union spirit. The essence of the Panglong Agreement is the Panglong Spirit, which is also called the Union Spirit. The Union Spirit is based on building a future Union rooted in democracy and federalism. Therefore, holding meetings with ethnic armed organizations must be based on the Union Spirit to be able to discuss the actual requirements of the regions and the country.

Esteemed National People,

I would like to share some of the future plans of our government regarding state duties.

In order to hold a free and fair election, the nation must be peaceful and stable. The entire people will need to cast their vote as they wish without being exposed to threats, coercion and pressures in any form. The coming election must be held in all parts of the nation freely and fairly. To ensure there is no unfairness, threats or coercion in the coming election, armed conflicts must cease. To be able to hold the elections, our public security system will accelerate efforts to stabilize the politics and security of the country.

Within the past six months, KIA and KNU insurgents have been providing large numbers of manpower and military equipment, including arms and ammunition, to some areas of the Sagaing region, some parts of the Magway Region (North), and some parts of Kayah and Kayin states. These areas, therefore, are now subject to terror attacks and destruction. It will be imperative to restore normalcy to these the regions by imposing the rule of law, and peace and stability measures. Some captured weapons and ammunition were produced by KIA and flowed from the KNU controlled areas such as the Myanmar-Thai border regions. Emphasis will be placed on preventing the production, the purchase and trafficking of illegal weapons and ammunition.

The 4th of January 2023 will be the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day of Myanmar. We will continue to prioritize the cessation of armed conflicts. As 2022 has been set as the year of peace, it is necessary to implement the peace process in a pragmatic way. Thus, I myself invited the leaders of ethnic armed organizations-EAOs to join the peace talks. These talks brought good results for the regions and the nation, so, if the ethnic armed organizations come to the peace

talks, the future politics of the nation will be assured.

In order to ensure completion of the basic voter lists for the next elections, the population and voter list were checked in 298 townships, with the process underway in 14 townships and 13 more townships to be undertaken to meet the cent per cent completion.

Many persons broke the law by casting votes without citizenship scrutiny cards in the 2020 general election. To address this, the Pankhinn project is being implemented from 3 March 2021 to issue citizenship scrutiny cards (CSC) to 3.4 million people. So far, we have been able to issue the cards to 3.3 million people. Work processes were delayed due to threats from terrorist groups in some areas. But the government will strive for a 100 per cent completion of the project. The CSC will be issued to 1,748,575 estimated people (more than 1.7 million) so that all eligible voters have the right to cast votes

long-term existence. All ethnic national people must have equal rights under democracy. To ensure a strengthened and stable state and enjoy equal democratic rights, it is necessary to undertake two reforms. These are political reform and ethnic affairs reform.

Despite seeming to be separate, these two points are interrelated with each other. With regard to political reform, three general elections have been held since the country shifted into a multiparty democratic system. There are 330 townships in the country. The 2010 election was held in 325 townships, the 2015 election in 323 townships and the 2020 election in 315 townships. It can be seen that the number of townships where elections were held have declined progressively with each election. The majority of the townships where the election could not be held are located in ethnic areas. Thus, it was during the period of governments elected by democracy that the number

minority representatives to be elected, and less chance for their voices to be heard on the official political platform of the Hluttaw.

Please observe the political parties in our country. Basically, they can be divided into three types. First, they are political parties based on political doctrine. Second, the parties representing the regions, and third, the parties representing ethnic groups. All have the support from their respective groups. What is needed for them to all participate on the political platform (Hluttaw)? We need to reform the electoral system. It can be seen that it is necessary to implement not only the FPTP system, but also implement PR – the Proportional Representation system. In so doing, the government, the Union Election Commission and relevant organizations as well as political parties need to reform the systems. It will be vital to take adequate time for the reform process.

We have to implement such a system for ensuring the long-term existence of the Union and the country and for ending the armed conflict between ethnic nationals. Only then will the people and the democratic system be in harmony. To bring this about, we will have to raise public awareness about such a system, adopt plans for the work processes and organize all to participate in such a system.

When I personally held talks with the ethnic armed organizations, we agreed on all the matters discussed. The Constitution can be amended by the Hluttaw under Chapter XII. These were what we discussed. To make amendments at the Hluttaw, the parties representing the ethnic national people and regions need to enter the Hluttaws. We are trying to make this happen. I would like to urge EAOs to cooperate with the government. I will hold meetings with ethnic armed organizations for the second time. At the same time, I invite other EAOs that have yet to hold talks to participate. If they actually want to serve the interests of their regions and ethnic people, hold discussions, make requests, and join the official political platform, we have kept the door wide open. I would like to invite them to bravely walk in.

Serving the interests of the State and ethnic people, our government will build a better State and improve socio-economic life.

In line with the theme “Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal” our government will build a better nation and improve the socio-economic conditions to serve the interests of the State and ethnic national people. In line with the theme “The Strength of the Nation Lies Within”, I would like to conclude by calling for unity and cooperation.

Again, I wish all national people and citizens good health and well-being.

Thank you all.

When I personally held talks with the ethnic armed organizations, we agreed on all the matters discussed. The Constitution can be amended by the Hluttaw under Chapter XII. These were what we discussed. To make amendments at the Hluttaw, the parties representing the ethnic national people and regions need to enter the Hluttaws. We are trying to make this happen. I would like to urge EAOs to cooperate with the government.

in the coming election.

As 46 more districts were formed for ensuring a smooth process of political, administrative, economic and social matters of the State, efforts will be continued for ensuring a smooth work process in regional development and administrative measures.

Esteemed National People,

Our country is a nation where ethnic people have been residing for many years. From before losing independence, the whole country was under the administrative system of centralization, although the types of administration were different in regions and areas. Thus, when we gained independence, the whole nation, the whole Union collectively gained independence.

Hence, our country, which had been formed through the Union system since historical times, must now build a stronger Union system for ensuring its

of ethnic areas that have lost their democratic right to vote has increased. This is a fact that we should all heed.

In the townships where elections could not be held, the reasons were a lack of peace and stability. No matter what the underlying causes were, as the saying goes, “The strength of the nation lies within”, the only answer is to ensure equal opportunities to ethnic national people and ethnic areas. Opportunities must be given to ethnic national people to demand their rights and address their grievances on an official political platform. To do so, Hluttaws are of importance under the Constitution. It is crucial that ethnic national people and people from all walks of life are represented in the Hluttaws. Our country’s current election system is Winner takes All or FPTP–First Past The Post. Due to powerful political parties, other political parties representing ethnic nationals and other groups are weak. Thus, there is less chance for these

People individuals are to take responsibility for the prevention of flooding in and out the residences while relevant authorities are to take responsibility for the prevention of flooding on roads, bridges, creeks and drains: Vice-Senior General

THE State Administration Council coordinated necessary management for the prevention of flash flooding at Gelaung Creek due to reports of officials at different levels, said Vice-Senior General Soe Win, SAC Vice-Chairman Chairman of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army), in meeting with flood victims in PyinOoLwin Township on 31 July.

At the station hall, Station Commander Brig-Gen Zaw Min Latt and Mayor U Kyaw Hsan reported on heavy rains in the township, flooding of Gelaung Creek, loss and damage, and rescue and relief tasks.

In responding to the report, the Vice-Senior General discussed efforts to minimize damage and loss in flash flooding in Gelaung Creek, the soonest clearing of debris in nine of 21 wards in PyinOoLwin in ebbing, proper flow of the seven-mile drain undertaken by Tatmadaw members from the station, rescue and repairing tasks at damaged school, hospital, fences and some houses, plans to provide aid to flood victims, needs to give health care services to the people after the natural disasters, proper flow of water in the drains for pre-



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Vice-Senior General Soe Win, in his capacity as the National Natural Disaster Management Committee Chairman, meets flood victims in PyinOoLwin.

vention of coming flooding and situations to help PyinOoLwin return to normalcy as soon as possible.

The Vice-Senior General viewed damaged parts at Pwekauk Waterfall (BE Fall) in flooding, Kandawlay outlet, sluice gate, Kandawgyi No 4 tank and urban residences.

At the gymnasium of the

township, the Vice-Senior General met with some 250 flood victims and delivered a speech. He said: the heavy rainfall reached 10.47 inches of the rainfall within eight hours in PyinOoLwin as a record in 30 years. The State Administration Council coordinated necessary management for the prevention of flash flooding at

Gelaung Creek due to reports from officials at different levels.

Slash and burn to farms, extreme extraction of timber and carbon dioxide emission from industries may cause global warming which triggers unexpected natural disasters. On the early morning of 31 July, flooding of Gelaung Creek caused damage to some houses, and administrative and school fences and more than 400 local people were evacuated to the relief camps. Prevention of flash floods could be taken within nine hours on 1 August thanks to concerted efforts of authorities and departmental officials in the systematic management of dams and drains with the clearing of debris in rains and creeks by Tatmadaw members and local people. People are to take individual responsibility for the prevention of flooding in and out the residences while relevant authorities are to take responsibility for the prevention of flooding on roads, bridges, creeks and drains. Officials from the township level to the regional level need to carry out follow-up relief tasks and healthcare services for the peo-

ple immediately and submit the difficulties to the SAC.

The Vice-Senior General presented cash assistance for flood victims and the region chief minister, and relief supplies through officials.

Heavy rain from 2 am to 10 am on 31 July set a 30-year record of 10.47 inches of rainfall in PyinOoLwin Township. Due to the heavy rain, a flash flood occurred in Gelaung Creek, overflowing nine of 21 wards. The 2.5 miles long banks of seven miles long Gelaung Creek were filled with gravel as the retaining walls. The Kandawlay Dam is facilitated with seven feet wide spillways and three two-foot valves. The valves were developed as seven feet wide and five feet deep. So, the heavy rain could not damage them. Due to repairing the sluice gate, the dam can store more volume of water and help control the water flowed into four Kandawgyi Dams.

Local people, authorities, security troops and departmental personnel are still carrying out sanitation and beautifying tasks in flood-hit residential wards. — MNA



The Vice-Senior General inspects the rescue and relief tasks.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Palm oil wholesale reference rate set at K3,525 per viss

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil in the Yangon market for this week ended on 7 August is set at K3,525 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes), according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia including transport costs, tariffs and banking services and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil on a weekly basis.

The reference rate of palm oil in the Yangon market for a week from 25 to 31 July is set at K3,665 per viss. Therefore, the reference rate is down by K140 compared to last week's rate.

However, the market price is higher than the reference rate.



Vendors are seen preparing to sell palm oil at the cooking oil outlet.

Mobile market trucks operated by 11 companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships

starting from 17 July in order to offer palm oil at the subsidized rate of K3,800 per viss to the consumers. However, there are limited sources of supply although

they directly sell the palm oil at a reference rate depending on the volume quota.

If those retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging,

storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Special Goods Tax Law, MoC released a statement.

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for the consumers not to worry over the supply of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer a reasonable price to the consumers, maintain price stability and prevent market manipulation.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported from Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/GNLM

Importers restricted access to purchase dollar at regulated reference rate, Trade Dept notifies



In the past four months, exports were valued at US\$5.2 billion, while import value hit \$5.25 billion, indicating a trade deficit of over \$46 million.

IMPORTERS are excluded from access to buy hard foreign currency at the regulated reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce released a notification on 1 August.

Importers involved in cross-border trade with dollar settlement are barred from buying the dollars through Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee when an import licence is granted.

Pharmaceutical companies can seek import licences if they can purchase the dollars on the over-the-counter market in their own ways, according to a noti-

cation released by the Trade Department on 22 July.

Pharmaceutical importing companies must submit a report to the Health Department through Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturer Association to seek import licences. After scrutinizing them, the ministry will forward them to Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee.

To cut possible delays and ensure decent stocks for consumers, they can also use the black-market dollar for payment instead of buying from formal markets at the regulated reference rate. A letter of commitment

signed by a company director has to be submitted to Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturer Association and then, it will proceed to the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee. The committee will make a list of those companies that do not buy dollars through official exchanges and send the list to the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce so that the department can grant import licences to those companies, without a Delivery Order. However, those entitled companies that can purchase dollars at the reference rate have to go with normal work procedures.

At present, despite the governance on the outflow of foreign exchange, imports surpassed exports in the past four months of the current financial year 2022-2023, the Commerce Ministry's statistics showed.

In the past four months, exports were valued at US\$5.2 billion, while import value hit \$5.25 billion, indicating a trade deficit of over \$46 million. — NN/GNLM

MRF, its affiliates sell high-grade Shwebo Pawsan rice at K75,000 per bag

CHEAP-RATE of high-grade Shwebo Pawsan rice at K75,000 per bag will be offered at the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre starting from 3 August.

Shwebo Pawsan rice variety is priced at K90,000 per bag in the domestic market. Myanmar Rice Federation and its affiliates will offer reasonable prices for Shwebo Pawsan and other rice varieties to the consumers when the rice price inflates in the market.

Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Rice Producers and Planters Association, Myanmar Rice Millers Association, and traders and brokers engaged in the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre and Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre are working together on this scheme.

The prices will stand at K75,000-K77,000 per bag of Shwebo Pawsan, K52,000-55,000

per bag of Ayeyawady Pawsan, K55,000-K60,000 per bag of Kyapyan, and K35,000-K37,000 per bag of short-matured rice varieties (90 days) at the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre.

Sales volume is limited to one bag per household. Those traders and retailers are not entitled to buy them.

On 1 August, rice prices stood at K87,000 per bag of Pawsan variety produced in the Shwebo area, K60,000 for the one in Dedaye and Pyapon areas, and K61,000 for the one in Myaungmya and Pathein areas, while the prices of other Pawsan varieties are estimated at K57,000-K60,000 per bag. Kyapyan variety is valued at K66,000 per bag, whereas the short-matured rice variety (90 days) is worth K40,000 per bag respectively. — NN/GNLM

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OPINION

Continue following restrictions on the prevention of infectious diseases

WHO Director-General on 23 July 2022 declared the ongoing monkeypox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. The World Health Organization declared a state of emergency at a time when control and preventive measures should be taken against polio disease and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Monkeypox which started infection from Africa to Europe has spread to many global countries beyond the prediction of medical experts, according to the WHO. Now, Myanmar should take caution that a person bearing monkeypox disease was recently found in its neighbouring country.

Actually, no one can accept the severe infection of diseases in society. An outbreak of any disease hampers the socio-economic status of the people and blocks the economic growth of the country. But, the collaborative efforts between the government and the people to battle the diseases are the best way to overcome these challenges.

BA4 and BA5 variants of Covid-19 are spreading in other countries. New variants cause less severe without death but their infection rate is high. Hence, all the people should cooperate with the authorities in taking preventive and control measures and searching for new variants with momentum.

New diseases such as variants of Covid-19 and monkeypox which emerge one after another throughout the world are attacking the global people, bringing disadvantages to them. To be able to conquer these diseases, people from all global countries including those from Myanmar need to strictly follow the health rules and regulations issued by the relevant ministries.

Actually, no one can accept the severe infection of diseases in society. An outbreak of any disease hampers the socio-economic status of the people and blocks the economic growth of the country. But, the collaborative efforts between the government and the people to battle the diseases are the best way to overcome these challenges.

Actually, no one can accept the severe infection of diseases in society. An outbreak of any disease hampers the socio-economic status of the people and blocks the economic growth of the country. But, the collaborative efforts between the government and the people to battle the diseases are the best way to overcome these challenges.

India able to limit COVID spread but no scope of complacency, rise in cases after March this year: Sources

INDIA has been able to limit the spread of COVID-19 compared to several other countries of the world but there can be no complacency as there are six states which are reporting more than 1,000 daily cases of COVID-19 and 181 districts in the country reported a weekly positivity of more than 10 per cent in the week that ended on 25 July, official sources said on Tuesday.

The sources said 107 districts reported weekly positivity between 5 per cent to 10 per cent in the week that ended on 25 July and noted that the threat of COVID-19 is not over yet.

Same virus floating around in the world

“If we do not remain aware, do not take required precaution, because it is the same virus floating around in the world, chances are that it can again come back to India. This is the challenge before us,” a source said.

Officials said that post-March, India has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases with the average daily cases standing at 19,627 cases in the past week and the case positivity rate at 4.53 per cent.

Kerala reported 2,234 average daily cases between 20 and 26 July and contributed 11.38 per cent of the total cases in the country. It was followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha.

All these states have reported more than 1,000 COVID-19 cases in the week that ended on 26 July.

Gujarat, Assam, Telangana, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have reported between 500 to 1,000 average daily cases in the period.

Assam has 26 districts which reported a weekly positivity of more than 10 per cent followed by West Bengal with 16 for the week that ended on 25 July.

The sources said that if the trajectory of cases is increasing,

“we need to be more cautious” and emphasized the strategy of “test, track, treat, vaccination and adherence of COVID appropriate behaviour”

They said adult vaccination was taken in a mission mode and at a scale unheard of.

Vaccination milestone

The sources said it took 202 days to reach the milestone of 50 crore doses from the launch of COVID-19 vaccination on 16 January 2021 and 77 days to reach 100 crore vaccination milestone.

The next 50 crore doses were administered in 79 days and India reached the milestone of 200 crore doses on 17 July after 192 days.

Sources said 96 per cent of the 12-plus population has been given the first dose of COVID-19, 88 per cent have received the second dose and 7.58 crore precaution doses have been administered.

The government has embarked on COVID Vaccine Amrit

Mahotsava to provide free precaution dose at government facilities with an aim to increase the uptake of the precautionary dose by all eligible population.

Persons aged 18 years and above with a sufficient gap from the previous dose are eligible and the initiative, which started 15 July will continue till 30 September.

Sources said there has been an increase in both total doses and precaution doses administered since 15 July.

They said India has made substantial gains so far in COVID management with a ‘whole of government and whole of society approach’.

Managing any infectious disease

They said Prime Minister Narendra Modi facilitated Jan-Anudolan’ & Jan-Bhagidari’ which is crucial in managing any infectious disease.

While 31,193 COVID-19 cases



A staff member checks the temperature of a student as schools reopened after a gap of nearly one year due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic in Srinagar on 2 March 2022. PHOTO: TAUSEEF MUSTAFA / AFP

have been reported per million population in India, it is 72,091 globally. The figure is much higher in France (4,96,500) UK (3,46,304) Italy (3,48,750), Spain (2,78,074), USA (2,68,282).

India has reported 374 deaths per million population while glob-

ally it is 807. The number is 3,047 for the USA, 2,719 for UK and 2,246 for France.

Sources said 1.01 billion eligible beneficiaries received the first dose in India which is three times the population of the USA and 6.9 times the population of Russia.

They said 929.9 million eligible beneficiaries have been fully vaccinated in India which is 4.3 times the population of Brazil and 13.4 times the population of the UK.

They also noted that 2.5 crore vaccine doses were administered

in a single day on the birthday of PM Modi, which is equivalent to the population of Australia.

Sources said there is a need to overcome any sense of complacency and fatigue in the fight against COVID-19.

SOURCE : ANI

Long-lasting loss of smell, taste in 5% of Covid cases: study



A health worker carries out an olfactory test -to monitor smell loss- to a resident in Altos de San Lorenzo neighbourhood, near the city of La Plata, 65 km from Buenos Aires city, on 24 May 2020, amid the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: ALEJANDRO PAGNI / AFP/FILE

AROUND five per cent of people who have had Covid-19 develop long-lasting problems with their sense of smell or taste, a large study said Thursday, potentially contributing to the burden of long Covid.

A lost sense of smell has been a hallmark of contracting coronavirus since the early days of the pandemic, but it has not been clear how often symptoms like this occur — or how long they can last.

Seeking to find out, researchers analysed the findings of 18 previous studies involving 3,700 patients.

In a new study published in the BMJ, they found that six months after contracting the virus, four per cent of patients had not recovered their sense of smell, while two per cent had not recovered their sense of taste.

It was unclear if this repre-

sented a full or partial recovery, however.

The researchers estimated that loss of smell may persist in 5.6 per cent of patients, while 4.4 per cent may not fully recover their sense of taste.

One woman told the researchers that she had not recovered her sense of smell more than two years after contracting Covid.

The researchers said that while most patients should recover their sense of smell and taste within the first three months of getting Covid, “a major group of patients might develop long-lasting dysfunction that requires timely identification, personalised treatment, and long-term follow-up”.

A “strong and important study”

Danny Altmann, an immunologist at Imperial College London not involved in the re-

search, said it was a “strong and important study”.

“Studies such as this alert us to the hidden burden out there of people suffering with persistent symptoms, but perhaps not having thought it worth contacting the GP on the assumption there wouldn’t be much to be done,” he said.

The research also found that women were less likely to recover these senses than men.

The cause of the disparity is not clear, but the researchers suggested women tend to have better senses of smell and taste in the first place, meaning they have more to lose.

The data did not include which Covid variant the patients contracted. Previous research has indicated that more recent Omicron variants are less likely to lead to smell loss.

SOURCE : AFP

MYANMAR Daily Weather Report

(ISSUED at 7:00pm Monday 1 August 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 2 August 2022: Rain or thundershowers will bescattered in Lower Sagaing, and Magway regions and Rakhine and Kayah states, fairly widespread in Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, and Ayeyawady regions and Eastern Shan and Chin states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay, and Taninthayi regions and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squall with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Tanin-thayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squall may reach (30-35) mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar Waters. Wave height will be about (6-9) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and (5-7) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions and Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 August 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Two dead in California’s largest blaze this year



Flames burn to the Klamath River during the McKinney Fire in the Klamath National Forest northwest of Yreka, California, on 31 July 2022. The largest fire in California this year is forcing thousands of people to evacuate as it destroys homes and rips through the state’s dry terrain, whipped up by strong winds and lightning storms. **PHOTO: DAVID MCNEW / AFP**

FIREFIGHTERS in northern California were battling Monday to gain control over the state’s largest wildfire this year, which claimed two lives after exploding in size over the weekend and forcing thousands to evacuate

their homes. Whipped up by strong winds and lightning storms, the McKinney Fire ripped through the state’s dry terrain Sunday to spread over some 52,500 acres of Klamath National Forest near

the town of Yreka — and was zero per cent contained as of Sunday night according to CalFire.

California and other parts of the western United States have been ravaged by huge and fast-moving wildfires in recent years, driven by years of drought and exacerbated by a warming climate.

The McKinney fire, which broke out Friday near the border with Oregon, is California’s largest wildfire so far this year — though it remains much smaller than last year’s Dixie Fire, which burned nearly one million acres.

According to the Siskiyou County Sheriff’s Office, firefighters on Sunday found two people dead inside a burned-out car on the driveway of a home in the community of Klamath River — in the fire’s path.

Speaking on ABC News, Sheriff Jeremiah LaRue said firefighters suspected the pair were caught in the fast-moving

fire as they tried to flee.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency, saying the fire threatens “critical infrastructure”.

More than 2,000 residents of rural neighbourhoods in the area were under evacuation orders, according to the California Office of Emergency Services, mostly in Siskiyou County.

Yreka resident Larry Castle told the Sacramento Bee newspaper that he and his wife had packed up a few possessions and their three dogs to leave for the night, as other fires in recent years had taught them the situation could turn “very, very serious”.

A spokeswoman for the Siskiyou County Sheriff’s Office, quoted by US media, said the fire had destroyed more than 100 structures — including homes, a grocery store and a community centre — in the area surrounding Yreka, though it had not en-

croached upon the town of about 7,800 people.

“Surrounding areas should be ready to leave if needed. Please don’t hesitate to evacuate,” the county sheriff tweeted.

Highway 96 and McKinney Creed Road southwest of the Klamath River were closed to the public, CalFire said. Nearly 650 people were working to douse the blaze as of Sunday, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group said.

Search and rescue teams evacuated 60 people who had been hiking the area’s popular Pacific Crest Trail, according to the sheriff’s department in Jackson County, Oregon.

CalFire said the cause of the McKinney fire was still under investigation.

The US Forest Service said thick smoke had helped to limit the growth of the fire on Sunday, but also meant that firefighters’ aircraft were “mostly grounded”. —AFP

UK’s Waitrose to scrap ‘best before’ date on fresh products

BRITISH retailer Waitrose said on Monday it was removing “best before” dates from almost 500 fresh products in its supermarkets, in a bit to curb food waste.

“Best before” dates tells customers food is at its optimal before this date, but is still fine to eat for a time afterwards.

From September the up-market chain will remove the label from a range of packaged fresh fruit, herbs and vegetables.

“UK households throw away 4.5 millions tonnes of edible food every year, meaning that all the energy and resources used in food production is wasted,” said Marija Rompani, director of sustainability and ethics at the John Lewis Partnership, which owns Waitrose.

“Wasting food feeds climate change and it costs people money,” added Catherine David, from NGO WRAP, which promotes sustainable living.

“Best before” dates on fruit and veg are unnecessary

and create food waste because they get in the way of people using their judgement when food is still good to eat.”

Waitrose, which has 332 outlets in the UK, said “use by” dates would remain in place on products for safety reasons.

“Eating food after its ‘use by’ date — unless it has been frozen on or before its use by date — could result in food poisoning,” it warned.

The decision by Waitrose follows a similar move by other retailers, including top-end UK group Marks and Spencer and Tesco, the world’s third-biggest supermarket group.

Tesco rival Morrisons said in January it was scrapping the “use by” date on 90 per cent of its own brand milk in a bid to prevent 490 million pints being wasted in the UK every year. It encouraged customers to use a sniff test to decide if the milk was still OK to use.

“Unlike some other fresh products, drinking milk after a ‘best before’ date is not a food safety issue,” it said. —AFP



A photo shows the Mer de Glace glacier on the Mont-Blanc massif, seen at night from Chamonix, French Alps, on 9 July 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

ROCKS the size of fridges have been tumbling from Mont Blanc as summer temperatures soar, scaring away many hikers from Western Europe’s highest mountain.

The heatwaves and drought-like conditions that have recently scorched much of the continent have exposed giant cracks and triggered rockfall, making the ascent to the summit more difficult and dangerous.

None of the seven paths leading to the top of the mountain, which dominates the Alps at 4,807 metres (15,771 feet) tall, is officially closed. But conditions have deteriorated so much that only the most experienced climbers are able to reach it in late July, according to experts.

A lack of snow during winter has left glaciers at high altitude exposed and riddled with cracks, with large sections acquiring a

grey or yellow tinge caused by the accumulation of sand particles from the Sahara. Heat has done the rest of the damage, melting the fragile blankets of snow that made crossing crevasses feasible and sending gigantic boulders crashing down slopes.

In the southern French resort town of Chamonix, which lies by the foothills of Mont Blanc, the tourist season is in full swing. —AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE WORLDWIDE

‘Good to be back’: Hugs and tears as Tonga reopens borders

FAMILIES embraced and cried tears of joy Monday as they reunited at Tonga’s airport — the inaugural arrivals to the Pacific nation after it lifted Covid restrictions for the first time since the pandemic struck.

After Tonga shut its borders in March 2020, the government had tightly controlled a select list of people who were approved to fly into the kingdom — leaving over 3,000 Tongans stuck overseas.

But with restrictions lifted, Monday’s first batch of tourists and returning Tongans — greeted with colourful garlands and serenaded by a band at the Fua’amotu International Airport — will not have to undergo quarantine.

The first plane to land was an Air New Zealand flight from Auckland carrying around 200 passengers. “It’s good to be back,” said ‘Etu Palu, eager to see family again with his mother Finau Palu, who said it was “good to visit the motherland!”

Another passenger, Siosaia Filikitonga, said this was his first visit to Tonga in more than two years because of the pandemic. “I am happy and emotional. Once Tonga announced the border re-opening, I booked to come,” Filikitonga told AFP.

Amid the reunions, Sione Moala Mafi, CEO of Tonga’s Ministry of Tourism, said the visitors bring an important boost to the Pacific Kingdom’s economy. —AFP



An international visitor (L) is welcomed with a kaho (garlands) by Tonga Ministry of Tourism staff (C) upon arriving in Tonga from Auckland, New Zealand, on the first flight under the new open border policy at Fua’amotu International Airport on 1 August 2022. PHOTO: AFP

60 pct Singapore residents likely infected with COVID-19 before: health minister

SINGAPORE’S Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said in parliament on Monday that the city-state government estimates about 60 per cent of local residents are likely to have been infected with COVID-19, Singapore-based Asian news network CNA reported.

Ong added that it does not mean Singapore now has “herd immunity”, as scientists

around the world do not think herd immunity is achievable because the virus will continue to mutate, escape the protection of vaccines and infect people.

The minister said that Singapore is still in the middle of an infection wave driven by the Omicron variant BA.5, but over the last 10 days, infection numbers have been falling. —Xinhua

Scientists design two-in-one antibodies against COVID-19 variants

CHINESE scientists and their US counterparts have developed two cocktail antibodies against COVID-19 that may deliver a one-two punch to infections caused by the prevalent Omicron variant.

Researchers from the University of Science and Technology of China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the University of Texas Health

Science Centre at San Antonio designed bivalent nanobodies that can provide broad-spectrum protection against SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern including Omicron.

These variants with adaptive mutations have caused fresh outbreaks even amongst vaccinated populations.

In the two new experimental medicines, the researchers fused

an antibody called aRBD-2 with another two aRBD-5 and aRBD-7, respectively, according to the study published recently in the journal Cell Research.

The detection of their crystal structures reveals that those three nanobodies can neutralize the coronavirus by binding with a highly-conserved place in the virus’s spike protein, according to the study. —Xinhua

2022 MONKEYPOX OUTBREAK

India reports Asia’s first possible monkeypox death



Technicians wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) suits are seen inside a molecular laboratory facility set up to test for the monkeypox disease during its inauguration at the King Institute in Chennai on 28 July 2022. PHOTO: AFP

INDIAN authorities reported on Monday Asia’s first possible monkeypox fatality after a man who recently returned from United Arab Emirates died after testing positive.

Kerala state’s health ministry said tests on the 22-year-old “showed that the man had monkeypox”.

Three monkeypox-related fatalities have so far been reported outside Africa in an outbreak that the World Health Organization has declared a global health emergency.

The Indian man died in Kerala on 30 July around a week after returning from the UAE and

being taken to hospital.

It was unclear however whether monkeypox was the cause of death.

“The youth had no symptoms of monkeypox. He had been admitted to a hospital with symptoms of encephalitis and fatigue,” the Indian Express daily quoted Kerala’s health minister Veena George as saying on Sunday.

Twenty people identified as being at high risk were being kept under observation, she added, including family members, friends and medical staff who might have come into contact with the victim.

According to the WHO, more than 18,000 monkeypox cases

have been detected throughout the world outside Africa since the beginning of May, most of them in Europe.

Spain last week recorded two monkeypox-related deaths and Brazil one.

It is however unclear if monkeypox actually caused the three fatalities, with Spanish authorities as of Sunday still carrying out autopsies and Brazilian authorities saying its deceased patient had other serious conditions.

India has reported at least four cases, with the first recorded on 15 July in another man who returned to Kerala from the UAE. —AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

European equities drift higher after Asian gains



A worker produces miniature tillers at a factory in China's southwestern Chongqing on 29 July 2022. **PHOTO: STR / AFP**

EUROPEAN equities drifted higher Monday after Asian gains, as investors tracked the latest corporate and geopolitical news.

Markets brushed off weak

Chinese data and comments indicating the Federal Reserve is wedded to its anti-inflation rate-hike campaign.

Investors in Europe were

“happy to drift higher”, Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson told AFP.

He added that sentiment was partly “lifted” by news that the first shipment of Ukrainian grain since the Russian invasion had left the port of Odessa.

Asia-focused lender HSBC provided another boost with a “bullish” outlook, alongside its intention to revert to quarterly shareholder dividends next year.

HSBC shares jumped 7.1 per cent to 550.30 pence in the British capital.

London stocks also rose despite expectations that the Bank of England would deliver a bumper 0.50-percentage-point interest rate hike this Thursday to combat rocketing inflation.

“Sharp hikes by the US Federal Reserve and European

Central Bank in July make it all the more likely that it will pull the trigger on an outsize rate hike,” Wilson noted.

Global central banks are ramping up borrowing costs in an attempt to get a handle on runaway consumer price inflation.

Weak China data

Asian stock markets climbed, regardless of another disappointing reading on the health of the Chinese economy.

The closely watched Purchasing Managers’ Index of manufacturing activity shrank in July on the back of weak demand and the strict zero-Covid measures imposed in parts of the country.

While sweeping curbs have eased in major hubs such as

Shanghai and Beijing, sporadic lockdowns in other cities and towns have kept businesses and consumers worried with few signs of the policy easing.

The China data sent oil prices sharply lower on revived demand concerns ahead of Wednesday’s OPEC scheduled output meeting.

Last week, strong earnings from US titans Amazon and Apple sparked healthy Wall Street gains and eased concerns about the economic impact of surging inflation and rising rates.

That came after investors took Fed chief Jerome Powell’s comments Wednesday to indicate the US central bank could start slowing down its monetary tightening, providing a much-needed boost to stocks.—AFP

Cambodia’s garment, footwear, travel goods exports up 40% in H1 of 2022

CAMBODIA’S garment, footwear and travel goods industry has seen a 40-per-cent rise in exports in the first half of this year, according to a report from the General Department of Customs and Excise.

The Southeast Asian nation exported the products totally worth 6.6 billion US dollars during the January-June period this year, up 40 per cent from 4.72 billion dollars over the same period last year, the report said.

Ministry of Commerce’s undersecretary of state and spokesman Penn Sovicheat attributed the growth to the full resumption of socio-economic activities in Cambodia, trade preferences, and a rise in global demand.

“The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement, which entered into force in January, has also contributed to this growth,” he told Xinhua on Monday.

RCEP comprises 15 Asia-Pacific countries including 10 ASEAN member states, namely Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, and their five trading partners - China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

“I believe that the growth will continue throughout this year as the global COVID-19 pandemic has waned,” Sovicheat added.

Garment, footwear and travel goods industry is the largest foreign exchange earner for Cambodia. The sector consists of roughly 1,100 factories and branches, employing approximately 750,000 workers, mostly female.

“The garment sector has played an important role in boosting Cambodia’s exports as other garment producing countries are still suffering from the impact of COVID-19,” senior economist Ky Sereyvath, director general of the Institute of China Studies at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, told Xinhua. —Xinhua



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 9 May 2022 beer bottles on a conveyor belt are pictured in a bottling plant of a brewery in Grevenstein, western Germany. **PHOTO: INA FASSBENDER / AFP**

German brewers fear business going flat as gas crisis looms

THE soaring cost of energy and the threat that Russia could cut gas supplies to Germany risks worsening beer makers’ post-coronavirus hangover, the German Brewers Federation said Monday.

Having limped through the pandemic, the “German beer industry is still working in crisis mode”, brewing federation boss Holger Eichele said.

German brewers sold 157.2 million litres of the amber liquid over the first six months of

the year, a 3.8 per cent annual increase, according to figures published by the federal statistics office Destatis on Monday. But despite the improvement, the first-half figure was still 5.5 per cent below its pre-crisis level of 2019.

A looming energy crisis in Germany left little hope of a further improvement in sales in the second half of the year, according to the German Brewers Federation.

Energy prices have soared

as Russia has dwindled supplies of natural gas to Germany and prompted fears of an acute shortage were it to cut off supplies completely. “Without gas the shelves will be empty,” Eichele said. The scale of the energy crisis and its impact “can only be guessed at”, he added.

Brewers had endeavoured in recent years to reduce their energy usage, but it was currently “impossible” to replace gas as the most important source for the industry, Eichele said.—AFP

ANA sees profit in April-June for 1st time in 3 yrs on demand pickup



File photo taken in October 2020 shows All Nippon Airways planes parked at Haneda airport in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ANA Holdings Inc on Monday reported a profit in the three months ended June for the first time in three years as travel demand began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The major Japanese

airline said it returned to the black for the April-June quarter with a net profit of 1.0 billion yen (\$7.54 million), a reversal from a net loss of 51.16 billion yen it logged a year ago. Sales rose 76.2 per cent to 350.42 billion yen. Japan Airlines Co the same day also reported improved results for the three months, with its net loss shrinking to 19.56 billion yen from 57.92 billion yen a year earlier. Sales more than doubled to 268.90 billion yen. Both companies maintained their earnings forecasts for the current business year through March. —Kyodo

S Korea's online shopping logs double-digit growth in Q2

SOUTH Korea's online shopping logged a double-digit growth in the second quarter owing to soaring demand for the travel and leisure services, statistical office data showed Monday. Shopping in the cyberspace came in at 50.59 trillion won (38.7 billion US dollars) in the April-June quarter, up 11.1 per cent from the same quarter of last year, according to Statistics Korea. The double-digit increase came as the lifting of all measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, except for an indoor mask mandate, encouraged people to do more outside activities, such as travel and recreation. Online transactions in the travel and transport services doubled to 4.61 trillion won (3.5 billion US dollars) for the second quarter compared to a year earlier. The culture and leisure services transactions more than doubled to 706.8 billion won (540.9 million US dollars). Online demand for food and beverage, and clothing increased in double digits, but cosmetics demand declined in double figures in the cited quarter. —Xinhua

Alibaba shares extend losses on US delisting fear

CHINESE e-commerce giant Alibaba led technology stocks lower in Hong Kong on Monday after US authorities put it on a watchlist that could see it delisted in New York if it does not comply with disclosure orders. The market heavyweight sank more than five per cent in early trade, pushing it to its lowest level since May and dragging the Hang Seng Tech Index with it. The US securities watchdog on Friday said it added the Chinese firm to a list of more than 250 others that could be booted from Wall Street — where it listed in 2014 — if strict auditing requirements were not met for three consecutive years.



A general view shows Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's headquarters in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province on 27 May 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

The announcement comes as tensions between Washington and Beijing are dragged lower by a range of issues including technology, human rights and Taiwan. —AFP

China unveils plan to push green growth in industrial sector

CHINA on Monday unveiled a plan to promote green growth in the industrial sector in a bid to help the country meet its carbon peak goal. By 2025, the energy consumption per unit added value of industrial

enterprises with an annual business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (about 2.96 million US dollars) will decrease by 13.5 per cent compared with 2020, according to a plan released by the country's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, National Development and Reform Commission and Ministry of Ecology and Environment. Efforts will be made to promote the optimization and upgrading

of industrial structures, curb the blind development of low-level projects with high energy consumption and high emissions, and develop green and low-carbon industries, the plan noted. —Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2211S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2211S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB232R)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB232R)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-8-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

GLOBAL
AFFAIRS

Pelosi's Asia tour kicks off under Taiwan cloud



This handout picture taken and released by Singapore's Ministry of Communications and Information on 1 August 2022, shows Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (R) shaking hands with US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi at the Istana Presidential Palace in Singapore during a visit to the Asia-Pacific region. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / SINGAPORE'S MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION / AFP**

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Monday kicked off an Asia tour that has been shrouded in secrecy following an escalation in tensions with China over Taiwan.

With no word if Pelosi will visit the island, she stopped first in Singapore, where Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong urged her at a meeting to strive for "stable" ties with Beijing.

Her itinerary also includes

Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, but a possible Taiwan visit has dominated attention in the run-up.

Reports about a plan to visit the island have enraged Beijing and caused unease in the White House with President Joe Biden trying to lower the temperature.

Beijing considers self-ruled Taiwan its territory — to be seized one day, by force if necessary — and said it would

regard a Pelosi visit as a major provocation.

Pelosi's office confirmed her Asia trip in a statement Sunday once her plane was in the air, following days of US media speculation and the speaker refusing to confirm her itinerary.

"The trip will focus on mutual security, economic partnership and democratic governance in the Indo-Pacific region," it said, referring to the Asia-Pacific.

The statement did not mention Taiwan. But visits by US officials there are usually kept secret until delegations land.

'Powder keg'

The Global Times, China's state-run tabloid, suggested that Pelosi might use "emergency excuses like an aircraft fault or refuelling" to land at a Taiwanese airport.

"If she dares to stop in Taiwan, it will be the moment to ignite the powder keg of the situation in the Taiwan Straits," Hu Xijin, a former Global Times editor and now commentator, tweeted.

Beijing's foreign ministry on Monday, warned a visit would "seriously threaten the peace and stability" of the Taiwan Strait if it goes ahead. —AFP

OPEC+ walks 'fine line' between US and Russia

THE OPEC+ group of oil exporters are set to hammer out a new strategy at their meeting Wednesday, with all eyes on how they will react to soaring crude prices.

The 13 core members of OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, and the 10 further states in OPEC+ — chief among them Russia — find themselves at a crossroads.

After the drastic output cuts they agreed to in spring 2020 in reaction to the plunge in demand caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the member states of the alliance are once again producing at pre-virus levels — at least on paper.

In normal times they would perhaps have stopped at that but faced with runaway prices and pressure from Washington, this scenario is viewed as unlikely.

Biden's controversial voyage

US President Joe Biden travelled to Saudi Arabia in mid-July despite his promise to make the country a "pariah" in the wake of the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Part of the reason for the controversial trip was to

convince Riyadh to continue loosening the production taps to stabilize the market and curb rampant inflation.

Wednesday's meeting will reveal whether his efforts were successful.

"The US administration appears to be anticipating some good news but it's hard to know whether that's based on assurances during Biden's trip or not," Craig Erlam, analyst at Oanda, told AFP.

"It wouldn't be a surprise to see the Saudis announce something that Biden could tout as a win to voters at home," according to Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

Sceptical market

According to the London-based research institute Energy Aspects, OPEC+ could adjust its current agreement in order to keep raising crude production volumes.

However, analysts warn against expecting any drastic increases.

OPEC+ has to take into account the fact that the interests of Russia — a key player in the alliance — are diametrically opposed to those of Washington. —AFP

RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT

First shipment of Ukrainian grain has left Odessa: Türkiye

THE first shipment of Ukrainian grain left the port of Odessa on Monday under a deal aimed at relieving a global food crisis following Russia's invasion of its neighbour, the Turkish defence ministry said.

"The ship Razoni has left the port of Odessa bound for Tripoli in Lebanon. It is expected in Istanbul on 2 August. It will then continue its journey after it has been inspected in Istanbul," the ministry said.

The vessel was carrying 26,000 tonnes of corn, according to Ukraine's infrastructure minister Oleksandr Kubrakov.

It was expected to reach the mouth of the Bosphorus on Tuesday at around midday, according to Yoruk Isik, an expert on ship movements on the Bos-

phorus Strait and in the region.

Other convoys would follow, respecting the maritime corridor and the agreed formalities in line with the agreement reached with Russia on 22 July, Türkiye said.

Built in 1996 and measuring 186 metres (610 feet) in length and 25 metres in width, the Razoni, which is flying under the Sierra Leone flag, has capacity of 30,000 tonnes.

On 22 July, Ukraine and Russia signed a landmark deal with Türkiye and the United Nations aimed at easing a global food crisis caused by blocked Black Sea grain deliveries.

Türkiye formally opened a special joint coordination centre in Istanbul last Wednesday to oversee the exports. The centre

is being staffed by civilian and military officials from the two warring parties and delegates from Türkiye and the UN.

Their primary assignment involves monitoring the safe passage of Ukrainian grain ships along established routes and overseeing their inspection for banned weapons on the way into and out of the Black Sea.

The blockage of deliveries from two of the world's biggest grain exporters has contributed to a spike in prices that has made food imports prohibitively expensive for some of the world's poorest countries.

UN estimates say nearly 50 million people began to face "acute hunger" around the world as a direct consequence of the war. —AFP



This handout picture taken and released by the Turkish Defence ministry press office on 1 August 2022, shows the Sierra Leone-flagged dry cargo ship Razoni, carrying a cargo of 26,000 tonnes of corn, departing from the Black Sea port of Odesa, amid Russia's military invasion launched on Ukraine. **PHOTO: TURKISH DEFENCE MINISTRY / AFP**

Truss wins UK cabinet backing as voting begins in PM contest



Contender to become the country’s next Prime minister and leader of the Conservative party British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss cheers prior to the UEFA Women’s Euro 2022 final football match between England and Germany at the Wembley stadium, in London, on 31 July 2022. PHOTO : JUSTIN TALLIS / AFP

BRITISH Conservative frontrunner Liz Truss won another heavyweight endorsement Monday as Tory members began a month of voting to decide the next occupant of 10 Downing Street.

Truss’s lagging rival Rishi Sunak vied to make up lost ground with a plan for future tax cuts — and potentially to fund a future women’s football World Cup in Britain after England’s “Lionesses” won the European championship.

Truss attended Sunday’s final against Germany, and the first victory by any England football team in a major tournament since 1966 wiped Sunak’s long-term tax slashing plan off

all the front pages except The Daily Telegraph.

The Conservative party contenders were going head to head later Monday in a members’ hustings, in the southwestern city of Exeter — the second of 12 such events before the winner is announced on 5 September.

Sunak, a polished debater, needs to recapture momentum after Truss steamed into a strong polling lead on a platform of immediate tax cuts to address Britain’s worst cost-of-living crisis in generations.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Nadhim Zahawi joined other luminaries of Boris Johnson’s cabinet in backing the foreign

secretary against Sunak, his predecessor in the Treasury.

“Liz understands that the status quo isn’t an option in times of crisis,” Zahawi wrote in the Telegraph, attacking Sunak’s plan to prioritise fighting inflation now, before cutting taxes later.

“We need a ‘booster’ attitude to the economy, not a ‘doomster’ one, in order to address cost-of-living woes and the challenges on the world stage,” the new chancellor said.

Sunak’s resignation from the scandal-tainted Johnson’s cabinet helped spark a ministerial exodus that forced the prime minister out last month. —AFP

Mali hits out at Macron over ‘neocolonial’ attitude

MALI’S army-led government on Sunday urged French President Emmanuel Macron to abandon his “neocolonial and patronising” attitude as relations break down further between Paris and Bamako.

France is reconfiguring its posture in the Sahel after falling out with the military junta in Mali, the epicentre of a bloody 10-year-old jihadist campaign in the region.

Mali underwent coups in August 2020 and May 2021, creating a political crisis that coincides with an ongoing security crisis.

France first intervened in Mali in 2013 to combat a jihadist insurgency that emerged one year prior but earlier this year, Paris said it would withdraw its forces.

“The transitional government demands President Macron permanently abandon his neocolonial, paternalistic and patronizing posture to understand that no one can love Mali better than Malians,” spokesman Colonel Abdoulaye Maiga said on public television.

Maiga was responding on behalf of the junta after Macron’s remarks during a three-day visit to Benin, Cameroon and Guinea-Bissau last week.

Referring to the current situation in Mali, Macron said West African nations had the responsibility to work to ensure the Malian people can “express the sovereignty of the people” and “build a framework of stability” to allow the “effective fight against terrorist groups”.

Macron also referred to a suspected deal between the Malian regime and Russian private security firm Wagner that was a crucial factor pushing Paris to withdraw its 2,400 troops.

Bamako denies any deployment by the controversial Wagner group.

During his visit to Benin on Wednesday, Macron branded Russia “one of the last imperial colonial powers” for its invasion of Ukraine.

Mali has since 2012 been rocked by an insurgency by groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State group.

Violence that began in the north has spread to the centre and neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger. —AFP

Philippines’ ex-leader Fidel Ramos dies at 94

FORMER Philippine President Fidel Ramos, who played a key role in a 1986 pro-democracy protest that toppled the government of Ferdinand Marcos when Ramos headed the national police force, died at a hospital in Manila on Sunday. He was 94.

Ramos, a native of Lingayen in the northern Philippine province of Pangasinan, graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point and fought with Philippine troops in the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

Defecting from the dictatorship of Marcos, father of the current president, Ferdinand

Marcos Jr, Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile, then defence chief, supported the “People Power” protest led by Corazon Aquino that ended the rule of Marcos.

Under the administration of Aquino, who succeeded Marcos, Ramos served as the military chief of staff and later defence secretary.

In 1992, Ramos won the presidential election to replace Aquino. During his term until 1998, he worked to privatize state companies and invite in foreign investment.

After Ramos’s family an-



Fidel Ramos. PHOTO: KYODO

nounced his passing on Sunday, President Marcos said in a statement that he extended his condolences to the family, mourning a figure he said had “lived a full life as a military officer and public servant”. —Kyodo

Indonesia, US begin ‘Super Garuda Shield’ military exercise

THOUSANDS of Indonesian and American troops began a two-week joint military exercise on Monday that Washington said aims to advance “regional cooperation in support of a free and open” Asia-Pacific region.

The US and its Asian allies have expressed growing concern about China’s increasing assertiveness in the Pacific, but Washington said the drills were not aimed at any country even though they would be significantly larger than previous exercises.

At least 4,000 US and Indonesian soldiers will be joined by forces from Australia and Singapore — as well as Japan, which is participating for the first time in the annual drills, known as “Super Garuda Shield”.

The exercise is taking place on the western Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Riau islands, an Indonesian province of islets scattered near Singapore and Malaysia.

“This is really an exercise to build trust, build togetherness, mutual understanding,

increase capability and other related matters,” Major General Stephen Smith, commander of the participating US troops, told reporters in Jakarta on Friday.

“So this is really a military exercise and not a threat to any party.”

The exercise comes as US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi prepares to lead a congressional delegation to the region in the shadow of diplomatic tensions with China. —AFP



Myanmar to play Viet Nam today in AFF U-18 Women's Championship semi-finals

MYANMAR U-19 Women's Football Team will play against the Viet Nam team today in the semi-finals of the AFF U-18 Women's Championship.

Myanmar vs Viet Nam match will begin at 3 pm Myanmar Standard Time and Thailand will take on Australia at 7:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time.

The Myanmar team finished in second place after the group stage and the team is meeting Viet Nam in the semi-finals.

Team Viet Nam won every group matches with a 9-0 win over Singapore, 2-1 over Indonesia, 7-0 over Cambodia, and 1-0 over Thailand.

Myanmar beat Malaysia 2-0, the Philippines 3-1 but lost to Australia by 1-2.

Since the Myanmar team qualified for the semi-finals after defeating the Philippines, the group's final match against Australia left out most of its core players and played with mostly reserve players.

This is the second time the



Myanmar team players celebrate their victory after beating the Philippines in the previous AFF U-18 Women's Championship group match. **PHOTO: MFF**

ASEAN Football Federation has held the tournament, eight years after the first in 2014.

The Myanmar team did not play an international warm-up match before this tournament,

but their performance has stabilized from match to match, and they will certainly play the best response against Viet Nam in today's semi-finals.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

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.

Shan United wins six games in row in MNL 2022

THE third day of the 2022 season of Myanmar National League Week 6 continued yesterday at the Thuwunna stadium, where the defending champion Shan United beat Rakhine United by two goals.

Defending Champion Shan United, took a five-point lead at the top of the table with a six-game winning streak.

Due to the struggle of the Rakhine United team from the bottom of the table, who have not yet won, the Shan United team had to play hard, but they won with the second-half goals.

Shan United did not make major changes to the starting line-up and started with key players, while the Rakhine United

team also started with a full set of core players. In the first half, the Shan United team was able to play with more pressure and the Rakhine team played defensively to prevent them from scoring.

Due to the Rakhine team's defensive play, it was difficult for the Shan United team to score a goal, and as the attacking midfielder Mark Saki was sent off, there were weaknesses in the Shan United team's connection with the midfield. Shan United made a change of players at the beginning of the second half and the deadlock was broken in the 56th minute.

Shan United's substitute Ti Nyein Min scored a header from right-back Kyaw Zin Lwin's cross. After that, the Shan United team was able to control the game and the second goal that would ensure the victory was scored by the defender Ye Min Thu in the 83rd minute. Rakhine United team has yet to get out of the relegation zone with six consecutive defeats and no points. Next, Maha United will take on Yadanabon on 3 August and Myawady will face Hanthawady on 4 August. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Myanmar teams win medals in 11th ASEAN Para Games

THE Myanmar Paralympic Team, which is competing in the 11th ASEAN Para Games in Indonesia, won one gold medal, two silver medals and two bronze medals in athletics and swimming on the first day of the competition yesterday.

The Myanmar sports team participated in the athletics competition held at Manahan Ground and the swimming competition held at Jaditari Swimming Pool yesterday. Htet Htet Aye won a gold medal in discus event. In the women's 100m race, Laura Win won the silver medals and Aung Myint Myat won one bronze medal in the men's 100m race.

Similarly, Aung Bhone won one gold medal in the 100m backstroke swimming competition. Soe Win won another third bronze medal in the 400m freestyle and Kyaw Htoo won the silver medal in the 50m backstroke, respectively. The 11th Asian Paralympic Games are being held with a variety of sports, and the Myanmar sports teams are participating in athletics, archery, goal ball, swimming, football, sitting volleyball and weightlifting competitions.—Bala Soe/GNLM



A Shan United player (red) attempts to kick the ball through the Rakhine's keeper during their Myanmar National League Week 6 match played at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 1 August. **PHOTO: MNL**