

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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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.



Foreign tourists are pictured visiting temples in Bagan. PHOTO: AFP

Over 3,000 tourists visit Myanmar from 25 May to 12 Aug

MORE than 3,000 foreign tourists with tourist visas visited Myanmar between 25 May and 12 August, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

The tourists were from Thailand, Korea, India, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, the US, Chinese Taipei, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, data showed.

Myanmar allowed the entry of foreign visitors on 20 May and the tourists entered starting that day and the visitors from Thailand made day trips.

Moreover, over 20,000 foreign tourists with business visas entered the country within four months, according to data from the Yangon International Airport and Mandalay International Airport.

Although the entry of tourists is allowed, over 400 local agencies has not renewed their licences.

A total of 475 travel agencies including 43 outbound companies will be removed from the company registration lists if they fail to renew their licences, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. — TWA/GNLM

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Those wishing to enter the legal fold can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in addition to reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council has released the statement inviting CDM staff, students and youths, who are in border areas and ethnic armed groups, they can contact the nearest reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations if they want to enter the legal fold and the government will guarantee their lives following the rules and regulations.

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. Meanwhile, 3,156 education workers, who were absent from their duties, another 1,009 people, who want to withdraw the cases that were opened against them, and 231 PDF members have contacted and returned to the legal fold. Then, they were given back to their parents systematically and the numbers of people who enter the legal fold and those who wish to are rising. Therefore, the government is making efforts to accept more numbers of those people.

The government opens reception centres in bor-

der areas for those who would like to return to the legal fold. Moreover, those wishing to return home can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. It is guaranteed that they will be able to lead their daily lives peacefully.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Myanma Tatmadaw wins 8th place in 3rd CISM World Cadet Games



The gold medal is awarded to a Myanmar cadet.

THE cadets who represented the Myanmar Army at the third CISM World Cadet Games held from 4 to 12 August in the Russian Federation participated in three of the seven types of sports. Tatmadaw won a gold medal in the rifle shooting individual

rapid-fire competition, a silver medal in the rifle shooting team rapid-fire competition, a bronze medal in the pistol shooting competition and another bronze medal in the pistol shooting team competition, respectively, and ranked eighth among 20 participating countries.

The cadets who participated in the third CISM World Cadet Games and the administrative coaching officers returned to Yangon International Airport yesterday morning. It was reported that officials met them at the airport. — MNA



A Myanmar cadet is pictured competing in one event.

Notice about petrol stations

1. The Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods makes crucial efforts for people to use fuel oil at reasonable prices through the Supervisory Committee on Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil and to avoid local fuel oil shortages.
2. However, some petrol stations spread rumours that there are fuel oil shortages in the country or the leftover amount becomes lower, and they suspend the sale or sell the limited amount on purpose to raise the anxiety of people and change fuel prices for their interests.
3. The committee has distributed the fuel oil in full covering end-August 2022. It also works together with the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association to ensure the fuel oil supply for local demand.
4. Therefore, if the fuel filling stations are found suspending their sale or selling limited amounts, people can contact the phone numbers of respective regional areas.

Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth
Flow of Trade and Goods

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18 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 15 August, total figure rises to 614,407

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 614,407 after 18 new cases were reported on 15 August 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 593,099 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at 19,435 without more casualties.—MNA

Free and fair multiparty democratic general election

THE basis for strengthening a genuine multiparty democratic system is a “free and fair multiparty democratic general election”. According to the results obtained through the election, the respective Hluttaws and the government can be structured and run the state apparatus. Therefore, I would like to present that it is necessary to be able to hold elections across the country in order for those who represent various classes of people in the regions and across the country to be elected.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting (2/2022) of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 31 July 2022.)

MoFA Union Minister opens Course in Diplomacy for Junior Officials (7/2022)

THE Opening Ceremony of the Course in Diplomacy (7/2022) for junior officials, conducted by the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was held at the Lawkanat Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm yesterday. On the occasion, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin delivered the opening address.

Present at the ceremony were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo Htut, the permanent secretary, the directors-general,

the deputy directors-general and responsible officials of the departments.

During the 12-week-course for new recruits, subjects related to Foreign Policy, Current international relations issues, United Nations and International Laws, Protection of the Myanmar Nationals in abroad, Economic-related issues and practical English proficiency skills etc., will be taught for the progress of the various skills of junior diplomats. Altogether 34 new junior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the course organized in Nay Pyi Taw. — MNA



The MoFA's Course in Diplomacy for Junior Officials (7/2022) is in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Yangon Mayor inspects water drainage improvement work



Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and party views the drainage improvement works yesterday.

YANGON Mayor U Bo Htay, in his capacity as chairman of the Yangon City Development Committee, the vice-mayor, the secretary, committee members and officials observed the cleaning work of garbage and sandy soil within the creek and bushes along its bank, at the Kamayut Creek between Ward 12 of the Insein Street, Kamayut Township and Ward 10 of

Hline Township. Then, the mayor gave necessary instructions on the cleaning process.

Afterwards, Yangon Mayor and party paid a visit to the Ward 12 of Hline Township Municipal Administration Office and viewed staff housing, office buildings and office rooms in the office compound. The mayor urged officials to carry out continuous cleaning

of the office premises, ensure the strength of office buildings and tighten the security.

Then, they continued an inspection on the process of removing dirt, silt and sandy soil with the use of an excavator from the Kathwe Creek at the Mingyi Street of Ywama (East) Ward in Insein Township at 8 am, and fulfilled the needs. — MNA

State Administration Council's Information Team to hold 19th Press Conference

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council will hold the 19th press conference at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 17 August. Local and foreign media personnel are invited to the press conference. — MNA

MRTV to broadcast 19th Press Conference of SAC Information Team live

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council will hold a press conference 19/2022 at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 17 August.

The conference will be broadcast live on MRTV-HD, MRTV News Channel, MWD, MWD Variety, MITV, MOI Website, MOI YouTube, MRTV Website and aired live on Radio Myanmar, Thazin FM, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Padamyar FM, FM Bagan, Cherry FM and Star FM. — MNA

Processing course on production of value-added dried fruit products opened

THE opening ceremony of the Food Innovation Centre under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund (2020) and the processing course on the production of value-added dried fruit products was held at 9 am yesterday morning at the Food Innovation Centre (FIC), Ministry of Science and Technology in Yangon.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Myanmar Mr Zheng Zhihang and Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Win Zeya Tun gave speeches.

Then the Union minister, the Yangon Region chief minister, the minister counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Myanmar, and the director-general of the Research and Innovation Department cut the ribbon to inaugurate the Food Innovation Centre and inspected the food



The inauguration ceremony of the Food Innovation Centre is underway.

production machines being produced.

Embassy officials, directors-general, rectors and professors from the six Mekong-Lancang countries: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and entrepreneurs from the Union of

Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry attended the ceremony.

A total of 55 participants from Myanmar will participate in the course on the method of producing value-added dried fruit products, and experts from the People's Republic of

China will teach online (virtual mode) for four days from 15 to 18 August.

Similarly, experts from the Research and Innovation Department will teach microwave technology, practices of advanced drying with hot air and advanced drying with cold air

will also be taught. In the future, the Food Innovation Centre will pilot the advanced drying of fruits on a small scale, and small and medium business owners and researchers from universities will receive good support, officials said.

As the development of new products from agricultural products will be supported, MSMEs will also have the opportunity to pilot scale test production at the Food Innovation Centre to release their new products to the market, they added.

The Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund Project will enable regional countries to share project results to enjoy equal opportunities.

In order to deal with economic, social and environmental challenges, Myanmar will continue to participate in the Mekong-Lancang cooperation to strengthen mutual benefit and mutual trust among the member countries of the Mekong region. — MNA

Court jails ex-State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ex-mayor Dr Myo Aung, former deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo, former committee member U Min Thu on corruption charges

THE Anti-Corruption Commission has inspected corruption cases against ex-State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

According to the inspection, it was found that there were over K19 billion losses in State funds as she failed to follow the procedures and paid the payment lower than the proper amount using her power in applying for 101.33 acres of land in Ottarithiri and 23.855 acres of land in Pobbathiri townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area

to establish the Layaungdaw Horticulture Vocational School of the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, misused her power and authority to use K1.6 billion of public donations to build a house for her.

She misused her authority in renting the 1.86 acres of land and building at No 60 of the University Avenue Road in Bahan Township to open the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation headquarters

where she served as chairperson and it caused over K5,200 million losses to the State funds.

The ex-chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and ex-mayor Dr Myo Aung, former deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo and former committee member U Min Thu were also found guilty of granting land use permit and land grant by violating the procedures of No 7/2020 meeting held on 18-2-2020 for 101.33 acres of land in Ottarithiri Township and 23.855 acres

of land in Pobbathiri Township to implement the Layaungdaw Horticulture Vocational School of the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.

Therefore, ex-State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was charged under the Anti-Corruption Law Section 55 and ex-chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and ex-mayor Dr Myo Aung, former deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo and former committee member U Min Thu under the Anti-Corruption Law Sections 55 and 63

and opened cases against them at the Mandalay Region High Court on 8 July 2021 and trials were conducted at the separate court (Nay Pyi Taw).

On 15 August 2022, the court sentenced Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to six years in prison for four cases, Dr Myo Aung to three years imprisonment for two cases, U Ye Min Oo to three years imprisonment for one case and U Min Thu to three years imprisonment for one case. — MNA

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

SAC Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun responds to widespread rumours about fuel oil

STARTING on 13 August, we found rumours of fuel oil shortages in the country on social media, especially in Mandalay. There was panic buying sparked by spreading rumours at the fuel stations of great companies on the morning and evening of 14 August in Mandalay. Some stations limited the sale of fuel and some said they ran out of fuel. Therefore, we found panic buying at some stations of great companies. Such doings seem to cause fuel shortages. The country has fuel oil reserves. We refill them in a timely manner. There is a shortage for a little while after the spread of rumours. There is no need for people to worry about fuel oil. On 14 August, the one fuel vessel arrived at the Thilawa Port Terminal and unloaded the oil and another



Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, Leader of the SAC Information Team.

four tankers on 15 August. About 60,000 tonnes of Octane 92 and 95, Diesel and Premium Diesel are unloaded on 15 August. It is about 1.3 million gallons.

We unload over 27,000 tonnes of 92, over 3,000 tonnes of 95, 6,000 tonnes of Diesel and 22,000 tonnes of Premium Diesel at the port on 15 August.

We will receive further 20,000 tonnes of fuel on 18 August and 23,000 tonnes on 19 August. Later, more than 12 fuel vessels will arrive here. Cur-

rently, it unloads a total of 1.3 million gallons of fuel oil at the port and so people don't need to worry about it. After the spread of rumours, people will feel worried and buy fuel more than the amount that can be stored at the stations. The fuel prices are high in the world. We cannot control it. The government reduces the tax rate on fuel oil. Moreover, it arranges to sell foreign currencies to import fuel. The fuel prices of ASEAN regions are higher than ours. We unload about 60,000 tonnes of fuel at the Thilawa Port Terminal on 15 August. It is about 1.3 million gallons. The country has fuel oil reserves and will receive more oil tankers. The government is working hard for public transport, for comfortable living of the people. — MNA

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, consumer goods, electronics and vehicles confiscated



Seized consumer goods in Magway Region.

SUPERVISED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law. Under the instructions of the Magway Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force, a combined team made inspections on 13 August. Officials confiscated 200 bottles of edible oil worth K12 million without official documents from a Nissan Condor (approximately K18 million) at the Magway bus stop. The action was taken under the Customs Procedures. Similarly, on 14 August,

an inspection team led by the Myanmar Police Force nabbed an unregistered Toyota Mark II car (approximately K2.5 million) in Taegyí village of Shwebo township and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law. In addition, combined inspection teams conducted inspections at the Thanlwin Bridge Combined Checkpoint under the management of the Kayin State Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force. They captured K180,000 worth of four old TVs and K735,000 worth of 27 soundboxes without official docu-

ments from a Toyota Succeed car (approximately K20 million) heading from Myawady to Thaton township. The action was taken under the Customs Procedures. On 15 August, a total of 15.1778 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K4,937,228 were seized in Toungoo and Thayawady districts. The action was taken under the Forest Law. Therefore, seven arrests estimated at K58,352,228 were made on three consecutive days from 13 to 15 August, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

Myanmar workers depart for Thailand under MoU system

ACCORDING to the process of sending Myanmar workers to Thailand under the MoU system, of the Department of Labour under the Ministry of Labour, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, a total of 100 Myanmar workers: 20 men and 80 women, had left for work in Thailand under the MoU system yesterday afternoon. Those Myanmar workers were arranged by the Golden Royal Mandalay Co Ltd which is an overseas employment agency (Thailand), a licenced agency, to work for the Thailand company SEWT Kanchanaburi Co Ltd under a

two-year contract. They were recruited by flight to Kawthoung city via Yangon and planned to send to Thailand by sea through Kawthoung International Border Gate. Thus, the Kawthoung District Department of Labour, Department of Immigration and Population of Kawthoung District Office and responsible organizations carried out the necessary tests for them and the officials of the employment company properly transported them to the company where they will work in Thailand, it is learnt. — Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)/GNLM



MoU workers are pictured lining up for leaving for Thailand via the border crossing.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Palm oil wholesale reference price up by K615, market price soaring

THE wholesale reference price of palm oil in the Yangon market for a week ended 21 August 2022 is set at K4,140 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes), according to the statement released by Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association on 15 August. The wholesale reference price was set only at K3,525 per viss in the past two weeks (1 to 14 August). The figures showed a sharp increase of K615 per viss this week. Prior to the price hike, palm oil prices rose by K200 per viss in the markets, said Ko Myo, a trader who delivers commodities to the regions outside Yangon.

On 15 August, the wholesale palm oil price was offered K9,400 per viss in the markets. The number of sellers decreased, Ko Aung from the Nyaungpinlay market said. In early August, the consumers can buy palm oil at the retail reference price of K3,700 per viss through mobile markets.

However, there is a mismatch between supply and demand. Consequently, the consumers are forced to purchase the palm oil at K10,000 per viss in the market, said a housewife Ma Myint Myint, a resident of Hlinethaya Township.

I have to buy vegetable oil at K10,000 per 1.8-litre bottle, said Ma Khaing who is working in Lanmadaw Township.

Both the retail and wholesale prices are moving onwards. The wholesale price on 13 August soared to K9,000-9,100 per viss from K8,600 recorded on 11 August.

On the morning of 15 August, palm oil transactions had not been made, said Daw Hlaing Win, a trader from My-

ingyan.

Similarly, the palm oil price was estimated at K91,000 per 10-viss jerry can, indicating an increase of K2,000 per jerry can vis-à-vis the previous day. On 15 August, the price jumped to K10,000 per jerry can, she added. Companies are found to suspend the distribution of vegetable oil with different brands starting from early August. So, I just have to sell the remaining inventory, said Ko Maung Naing, a shopkeeper near the Sinmalaik Market in Kyimyindine Township.

Likewise, different brands of vegetable and palm oil are not on display at the shopping centre in Lanmadaw Township, unlike previous months' store display. Ma Aye Aye from Lanmadaw muttered that I could not buy them accordingly. Only sesame, soybean, peanut and sesame oil are witnessed on the shelves of the centre.

The price tags are K14,500 per viss of peanut, K12,000 for sesame oil, K10,000 for soybean oil, Ma Aye Aye continued.

On 13 August, the wholesale prices of edible oil stood at K13,000-15,000 per viss for peanut oil, K9,500-10,000 each for sesame oil and sunflower oil and K7,000-7,500 for soybean oil, according to daily trade data released by the Mandalay Commodity Exchange.

Before mid-August when the wholesale reference price was not that high, the wholesale price remained on an upward trend in the markets. Nevertheless, a hike in wholesale reference price this week posed difficulties to the buyers due to the skyrocketing edible oil prices. — TWA/GNLM

Myanmar pharmacy body seeks prevention of medicine shortages



Officials are seen inspecting drug stores in Tarle Township in Tachilek District on 27 May 2022.

AS the medicines and essential drugs prices become high in the market, arrangements are being made not to cause medicine shortages, according to the statement of the Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturer Association released on 13 August.

It said the association has imported the required medical supplies and urged the pharmaceutical companies, wholesalers and retailers to sell the medicines as usual.

As the prices of medicines become high continuously, the wholesale centres in the Mingala Market shut down as they cannot run properly, according to the sellers.

With the changes in the exchange rate and import policy, medicine prices were on the rise starting in early August. The wholesale centres suspend sales and so the retailers face hardships, said Ko Min Min, a medicine dealer.

"The prices are drastically

high and they suspend the sale temporarily. If we now sell the medicines we bought before the prices were high, we face losses. The more we sell, the more we lose. We don't get the amount that we want," he said.

The demand for pain killers and drugs for diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and for kids is on the rise and some medicines are out of stock.

"The prices of medicine for diabetes and heart disease are higher about K1,000/1,500 than before per capsule card. We can't predict how much the prices will go up. Some hospitals face shortages of medicine stocks," said Daw Tin Win from North Okkalapa Township.

The association also urged the entrepreneurs to import the required medicines and medical supplies as quickly as possible as the officials negotiated the proper medicine import policies.

— TWA/GNLM

Prices of onion, Kyukok garlic variety rise

THE prices of onion and Kyukok garlic variety increased by K250 per viss on 15 August 2022, said U Kyaw Myint, onion and potato merchant from the Nyaungpinlay market.

On 13 August 2022, the onion price hit the highest during the corresponding period of the past three years. The current market price is more than five times of the rate recorded in the same period last year. Similarly, Kyukok garlic price on 13 August 2022 also doubled compared to the price registered in the year-ago period. Yet, the current price is 50 per cent lower than the price recorded in 2020, said Ko Thein Myint working in the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre.

Approximately 72,000 visses of onions from various regions and states entered the Yangon market on 15 August. The wholesale opening prices at the depots moved in the range between K1,750 and K2,350 per viss of onions from Seikpyu Township and between K1,050 and K2,550 per viss of onions from Monywa Township depending on size and varieties, U Kyaw Myint said.

The prices of onions were



Onions are seen being transported by a cart to a commodity warehouse in the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre.

just K1,550-2,150 for onions from Seikpyu Township and K1,700-2,300 from Monywa Township on 13 August, respectively. Therefore, the price is up by K250 per viss on 15 August 2022.

Large onions fetched K2,000 per viss on 1 August 2022, whereas the price climbed to K2,300 per viss on 13 August, showing a gap of K300 per viss.

Onions were priced at K2,250 in Seikpyu Township and K2,400 in Pakokku Township on 15 August. The onion prices were up by K400-500 in those two townships within three days. However, the Bayintnaung wholesale

market sees an increase of K250 per viss within three days, said Ko Aung from the Nyaungpinlay market.

Kyukok garlic variety was priced at K3,600 in Mandalay. The wholesale price in Yangon is K3,750 owing to the transport rate of K100 per viss, said Ko Than Myint from the onion and potato depot on Yetama Street. The price of Kyukok garlic is up by K250 per viss. Meanwhile, the wholesale prices of onions produced in Aungban, Shan State remain unchanged at K2,200-3,700 per viss depending on sizes and quality. — TWA/GNLM



Edible oil displayed at one shopping centre.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Fuel prices stable on high side

FUEL prices continued to spike in recent days and it is stable on the high side, according to the fuel price market.

Fuel prices started to spiral on 8 August 2022. Between 13 and 15 August, the prices remained unchanged on the high side.

The prevailing fuel prices stood at K2,320 per litre for Octane 92, K2,390 for Octane 95, K2,730 for premium diesel and K2,655 for diesel.

The upward spiral of the fuel prices is attributed to the continuous depreciation of the Kyat against the US dollar. Despite the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference exchange rate of K2,100, a dollar is valued at K2,900 in the grey market.

The Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil stated that surging fuel price is following an increase in the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in south-east Asia.

The committee is governing the fuel oil storage and distribution sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and ensuring price stability for energy consumers.

Some fuel stations in regions and states are facing short supply and the fuel price skyrocketed.

The Petroleum Products Regulatory Department, under the guidance of the committee, is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate in Yangon Region is set on the MOPS' price assessment, shipping cost, premium insurance, tax, other general cost and health profit per cent.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily cover on the state-run newspapers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department on a daily basis starting from 4 May.



Fuel prices started to spiral on 8 August 2022. Between 13 and 15 August, the prices remained unchanged on the high side.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy

consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries. Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives govern-

ment subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also poses only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/GNLM

Kyat extends slump against Thai Baht

MYANMAR Kyat continues to spiral and the exchange rate against the Thai Baht touched a high of K80 in the local forex market, forex price data indicated.

In early July, the exchange rate for a Thai Baht was valued only at K60, and 1,670 Baht was exchanged for K100,000. On 15 August, the Baht-Kyat exchange rate was 1/80 and 1,300 Baht was worth K100,000.

The plunge in exports at the Myawady border post is a contributing factor to the slumping Kyat value. Thai Baht shortage in the border areas resulted in Kyat depreciation, traders on the Myawady border were quoted as saying.

Of the primary export items at the Myawady border post,



In early July, the exchange rate for a Thai Baht was valued only at K60, and 1,670 Baht was exchanged for K100,000. On 15 August, the Baht-Kyat exchange rate was 1/80 and 1,300 Baht was worth K100,000.

PHOTO: THAI EMBASSY

corn exports drastically dropped. Although Myanmar earlier exported 150,000 tonnes of corn per month, only 30 per cent of that volume was delivered in July, said U Aye Chan Aung, chair of

the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

The directive released on 30 June said that transactions for the exports of agricultural products including corn, rice,

bean and oil crops are to be made in dollars instead of Yuan-Kyat/Baht-Kyat.

Additionally, foreign currency earnings are set to be converted into local currency at the reference exchange rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar. However, there is a large gap between the regulated rate and the unauthorized rate. This action affected exports of agricultural products and trade dropped.

Moreover, Myanmar's imports on the Myanmar-Thailand border also nearly came to a halt due to the large capital input.

Starting 13 August, the authorities concerned have been inspecting and interrogating some money changers accordingly.

Under the guidance of the

Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the Monitoring and Steering Committee on the Gold and Currency Market was formed on 17 December 2021 as gold and currency market stability play a crucial role in trade facilitation.

The objectives of the committee are inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation, checking if there is compliance with payment rules in the domestic market, proceeding against those unscrupulous traders who intend to interfere with the free and fair operation of the market under the existing laws, by-laws and regulations in line with official directives, illegal foreign currency holding, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators. — NN/GNLM

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

OPINION

Work in concert to prevent natural disasters as much as possible

MYANMAR'S governments in successive eras have been emphasizing the growing of saplings in pre-monsoon, early monsoon and mid-monsoon seasons in order to sustain forest resources, conserve biodiversity and green the environment through collaborative efforts of the people.

While Myanmar is striving for responding to global warming by growing trees so as to rejuvenate the forests and green the environment through green campaigns participated by people from all walks of life, regional countries such as Pakistan, Vietnam and the Philippines are also raising the green campaigns in various plans to green their environments.

The Myanmar government has set a plan to grow 30.57 million saplings in the whole monsoon through public participation. As such, relevant ministries have accomplished the plan of growing saplings against the target at the end of July this year. This being so, it is necessary to emphasize nurturing the saplings to have full growth with successful flourishing.

Currently, the role of forests is very crucial in responding to climate change across the world. It is because a hectare of forest can store 53.2 metric tons of carbon. The findings of research work showed that whole forests across the world can store more than 200 billion metric tons of carbon, absorbing more than 16.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Truly, humans and forests are interrelated with each other. Human nurtures and establishes forests to have benefits from forests such as extracting forest products, shade, greening environs and natural resources. On the other hand, forests rely on humans for their sustainability. The efforts of humans are very beneficial for nurturing and growing forests.

impacts of climate change. As consequence, the climate change on irregular arrival and departure of monsoon may affect the agricultural sector of the nation.

As such, Myanmar has prepared many measures to be taken against natural disasters. It is necessary to organize the rescue and relief teams for the victims of natural disasters. Hence, all strata of the people need to participate in the rehearsals of relief and rescue measures before the disasters.

Disasters may fall on the world at any time. The peoples residing throughout the world may face disasters in all seasons. It is unavoidable. But they have to make concerted efforts for preventing disasters as much as possible to be able to survive.

Study: Fatigue, headache most common lasting symptoms months after COVID-19



People wait in line to get their Covid-19 vaccination at an outdoor walk-up vaccination site within Franklin Park in Washington, DC, on 29 November, 2021. PHOTO: JIM WATSON /AFP/FILE

AN average of more than four months after having COVID-19, participants most frequently reported experiencing fatigue and headaches, according to researchers.

The subsequent symptoms

in the long list of persistent symptoms included muscle aches, coughing, changes in taste and smell, fever, chills, and nasal congestion.

The Medical College of Georgia researchers reports their find-

ings in the journal 'Science Direct'. "Our results confirm the emerging evidence that there are chronic neuropsychiatric effects following COVID-19 infections," they write.

"There are many symptoms that we did not know what to make

of early in the epidemic," says Dr Elizabeth Rutkowski, an MCG neurologist and the study's corresponding author. "But now it's evident there is a lengthy COVID condition and that a lot of people are afflicted."

The 200 patients in the first visit of the CONGA, or COVID-19 Neurological and Molecular Prospective Cohort Study in Georgia, were recruited on average about 125 days after testing positive for the COVID-19 virus. The published study presents preliminary findings from the first visit of these patients.

Severity and prognosis of neurological issues

Aiming to enrol 500 people over a five-year period, CONGA was developed at MCG early in the pandemic in 2020 to investigate the severity and prognosis of neurological issues.

Eighty per cent of the initial 200 individuals reported neurological symptoms, with fatigue leading the way at 80.5 per cent, followed closely by a headache at 68.5 per cent. A little more than half of the participants (54.5 per cent) and tasters (54 per cent) reported changes, and 47 per cent of them met the standards for mild cognitive impairment, with 30 per cent showing poor vocabulary and 32 per cent having impaired working memory.

In addition to their experience with COVID-19, 21 per cent of individuals also reported disorien-

tation, and hypertension was the most prevalent medical condition.

Although no participants reported having had a stroke, coordination issues, muscle weakness, or an inability to regulate speaking muscles, these were some of the less often reported symptoms.

Twenty-five per cent of the participants fit the criteria for depression, and those who did were more likely to have diabetes, obesity, sleep apnea, and a history of depression.

Although the results to date are not shocking and are in line with what other researchers are discovering, according to Rutkowski, it was interesting that participant symptoms frequently did not match what objective testing revealed. Additionally, it was reciprocal. The majority of subjects, for instance, claimed changes in taste and smell, but results of empirical tests of these senses did not always support their claims. According to objective measurements, a higher percentage of people who did not report the changes actually showed signs of reduced function, the researchers wrote.

SOURCE : ANI

LNJP study finds Omicron sub-variant BA 2.75 is the dominant strain in Delhi

LOK Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital Medical Director Dr Suresh Kumar on Saturday said that Omicron sub-variant BA 2.75 is the dominant variant in Delhi having been found in a majority of cases. "We did a study where we wanted to know which sub-variant is having the highest transmission. We analysed data from 90 samples in August and found that more than half of the patients were infected with BA 2.75.

It is the leading cause of transmission and it spreads faster," Dr Kumar told ANI. LNJP MD men-

tioned that usual symptoms are sore throat, running nose, low-grade fever, headache and body ache.

"We have also noticed viral pneumonia and low oxygen in some cases," he added. Dr Kumar highlighted that reinfection has also increased as BA 2.75 sub-variant can escape the immunity and can infect people who took the vaccine earlier. "I would suggest people to take the third dose soon as due to prior vaccine, the severity of the disease can be reduced. Recovery time is usually 5-7 days," he said.

Talking about the recent surge in COVID cases in Delhi, Kumar said, "Positivity in the national capital is around 15 per cent and those who have chronic disease are getting hospitalized.

Only six per cent hospitalization is there, the infection rate is high but hospitalization is less if we compare with the earlier wave." India reported 15,815 new COVID cases in the last 24 hours with a daily case positivity rate of 4.36 per cent, stated the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Saturday.

Source : ANI



A housekeeping staff wearing a face shield cleans and sanitizes a lobby of the Taj Palace hotel in New Delhi on 28 August 2020. PHOTO: PRAKASH SINGH/AFP /FILE

MYANMAR Daily Weather Report

(ISSUED at 7:00 pm Monday 15 August 2022)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16 August 2022: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, and Magway regions and Kachin, Northern Shan, Chin and Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay, Magway, and Taninthayi regions and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6 - 8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon over the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August 2022: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16 August 2022: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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SCI/ENVIRON WORLD



A mural is displayed next to the command centre above the pool at the NASA Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory in Houston, Texas, on 5 August 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

All systems go in Houston as NASA prepares return to Moon

RICK LaBrode has worked at NASA for 37 years, but he says the American quest to return to the Moon is by far the crowning moment of his career.

LaBrode is the lead flight director for Artemis 1, set to take off later this month — the first time a capsule that can carry humans will be sent to the Moon since the last Apollo mission in 1972.

“This is more exciting than really anything I’ve ever been a part of,” LaBrode told journalists at the US space agency’s Mission Control Centre in Houston, Texas.

The 60-year-old confided to AFP that the eve of the launch is likely to be a long night of anticipation — and little rest.

“I’m going to be so excited. I won’t be able to sleep too much, I’m sure of that,” he said, in front of Mission Control’s iconic giant bank of screens.

Artemis 1, an uncrewed test flight, will feature the first blast-off of the massive Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, which will be the most powerful in the world when it goes into operation.

It will propel the Orion crew capsule into orbit around the Moon. The spacecraft will remain in space for 42 days before returning to Earth.

From 2024, astronauts will travel aboard Orion for the same trip, and the following year, at the earliest, Americans will once again step foot on the Moon.

For the duration of Artemis

1, a team of about a dozen NASA personnel will remain in Mission Control 24 hours a day. The centre has been renovated and updated for the occasion.

Teams have been rehearsing for this moment for three years.

“This is a whole new deal — a whole new rocket, a whole new spacecraft, a whole new control centre,” explained Brian Perry, the flight dynamics officer, who will be in charge of Orion’s trajectory immediately following the launch.

“I can tell you, my heart is going to be tum tum, tum tum. But I’ll work hard to keep focused,” Perry, who worked on numerous space shuttle flights over the years, told AFP, tapping his chest. — AFP

Spain fights fierce fire fanned by winds

FIREFIGHTERS were battling strong winds Monday as a huge forest fire burnt out of control in southeastern Spain while another blaze in the north was stabilized, officials said Saturday.

Both fires broke out late Saturday, with more than 350 firefighters engaged against the wildfire in the northern Aragon region that has so far devastated an area of 6,000 hectares forcing at least 1,500 people from their homes. But as they managed to steady the Aragon blaze after successfully preventing it from entering a protected nature reserve, the wildfire in the southeastern Valencia region continued to spread.

Hundreds of firefighters backed by 25 planes and helicopters were tackling the flames in the Vall de Ebo, 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of the coastal resort of Benidorm.

So far, more than 6,500 hectares of land have been destroyed and more than 1,200 fled from their homes, with fire-fighting efforts complicated by strong winds in terrain that is difficult to access, the regional administration said.

“It is a very complex fire and very complicated terrain. We evacuated more than 1,000 people yesterday and last night, we had to evacuate 70 or 80 more homes,” regional emergency chief Jose Maria Angel told Cadena SER radio saying the fire’s perimeter was “progressively increasing”.

In the Aragon blaze, officials had feared the flames could reach the Moncayo nature reserve some 80 kilometres west of Zaragoza but that had been successfully headed off, with official saying Monday the situation was “evolving favourably”. —AFP



A helicopter of the Forest Fires Reinforcement Brigades (BRIF) descends to load water to put out a wildfire in the Moncayo Natural Park, near the village of Borja, in the northern region of Aragon on 15 August 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

UN resuming talks on high-seas treaty amid growing concerns

AFTER four inconclusive sessions, UN member states on Monday resume talks aimed at finally completing a treaty to protect the world’s high seas, a vital yet fragile resource that covers nearly half the planet.

A host of NGOs and affected countries say the pact is urgently needed to improve environmental stewardship over the vast, yet largely unregulated, area as it faces growing challenges.

But the Covid-19 pandemic slowed negotiations for two years, and a session in March

that was supposed to have been conclusive made progress but ran out of time.

The new round of talks opening Monday is set to run through 26 August at United Nations headquarters in New York.

Whether it will really be the last round remains uncertain, according to those close to the talks.

Negotiators are “cautiously optimistic,” said a source with the High Ambition Coalition, which groups some 50 countries led by the European Union.

The source told AFP that participants need to find a compromise between two “grand ideas”: protecting the environment and regulating human activities on the one hand, while also guarding freedoms on the high seas.

The high seas begin at the border of nations’ exclusive economic zones (EEZs), which by international law reach no more than 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from each country’s coast, and are under no state’s jurisdiction.

Even if the high seas represent more than 60 per cent of the oceans — and nearly half the planet — they have long been largely ignored in favour of coastal zones, with protections extended only to a few vulnerable species. Only one per cent of the high seas enjoys legal protection.

Yet, scientists have proved the importance of protecting oceanic ecosystems in their entirety. They produce half the oxygen humans breathe and help limit global warming by absorb-

ing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activity.

They are seriously at risk, however, from the continuing rise in levels of carbon dioxide (which intensifies warming and makes ocean waters more acid), pollution and overfishing.

That adds to the urgency of finally completing the global pact on the “Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction,” say NGOs and the High Ambition Coalition. —AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

UK clears new Moderna vaccine targeting Omicron variant



A medical workers holds a vial of the new Moderna child Covid-19 vaccine before filling syringes with it at Temple Beth Shalom in Needham, Massachusetts on 21 June 2022. **PHOTO : AFP**

THE UK's drug regulator said Monday it had approved an updated Moderna vaccine against the coronavirus that targets the Omicron variant as well as the original form.

The Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said in a statement said it had approved the vaccine for adult booster doses "after it was found to meet the UK regulator's standards of safety, quality and effectiveness".

It was the first such "bivalent" Covid-19 vaccine to be approved by the British regulator.

The MHRA's chief executive

June Raine said data from a clinical trial had shown it prompted a "strong immune response" against the original virus and Omicron and would provide a "sharpened tool in our armoury" as the virus kept evolving.

While vaccines have helped lower hospitalisations and deaths from Covid, which first emerged in China in late 2019, the current jabs are mainly aimed at the earlier strains of the disease.

The World Health Organization warned in July that the pandemic was "nowhere near over", due to the spread of Omicron subvariants and to the lifting

of control measures.

Half of the Moderna vaccine, called Spikevax bivalent Original/Omicron, targets the original 2020 virus and half the Omicron variant (BA.1).

'Bivalent' vaccines

The MHRA said the vaccine was also found to generate a "good response" against two Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, which have partly driven a wave of new cases of the disease in Europe and the United States.

It also said the vaccine had the same "typically mild" side effects as the original Moderna jab. —AFP

'Like Wildfire': Covid cases skyrocket on Marshall Islands

A health disaster has been declared on the Marshall Islands after the fast-spreading Covid variant Omicron infected more than a tenth of residents in the capital Majuro in one week.

Since a handful of positive community cases were confirmed on 8 August, the numbers have skyrocketed to 2,800 in a city of 22,500.

"We're gearing up for the hardest part of the outbreak right now in Majuro," Health Secretary Jack Niedenthal said Monday.

Thanks to strict quarantine rules, the Marshalls Islands was one of the last countries to stay Covid-free.

"The good thing about having all these other countries go before us is we really understand epidemiologically how this variant of the virus spreads: like wildfire," Niedenthal added.

On Friday, the Marshalls' President David Kabua signed a "State of Health Disaster" to give the government access to emergency funding.

So far, there have been 3,000 positive cases in a population of around 42,000 across the islands and atolls that comprise the Marshalls. Niedenthal warned the outbreak was continuing "to gain strength" in Majuro, as the number of cases doubled from Saturday to Sunday.

"About 75 per cent of the people we test are positive, which is an incredibly high rate," he added

So far, three deaths have been reported.

Three "Alternative Care Sites" set up in Majuro have been swamped by people seeking treatment for symptoms and testing.

Local health officials initially struggled to cope with demand as thousands of islanders clamoured for help even as 200 doctors and nurses across the country tested positive for Covid. The outbreak has since spread from the capital to Ebeye, the densely populated community next door to the US military's Reagan Test Site at Kwajalein Atoll.

The tiny island, home to about 1,000 people, would likely see a surge in cases, Niedenthal warned Monday. "They are about a week behind Majuro," he said. Domestic flights by national carrier Air Marshall Islands and travel by government ships to remote islands have been suspended since last Tuesday in an effort to contain the spread.

A special flight intended to take a health team to some of the country's remote islands was grounded Sunday as all Air Marshall pilots had reportedly tested positive.

A relaxing of the quarantine rules in recent weeks coupled with unprecedented numbers of people coming in through the managed quarantine process is the outbreak's suspected cause. —AFP

Beijing's pet lovers turn to acupuncture to treat their furry friends

STRAPPED in tight, the prone poodle nervously eyes the vet as he gently sticks fine needles into its back and paws, summoning the ancient art of acupuncture to treat the pet's aches and pains.

Duniu is just one of a growing number of animals being signed up for traditional medicine in China — care their masters say is less invasive and comes with fewer side effects than conventional treatments.

In one Beijing practice, pets of all shapes and sizes come for treatments.

"The advantage of traditional Chinese medicine is that there is no surgery," 38-year-old Zhai Chunyu tells AFP, accompanied by Duniu, his poodle.

"So the animal's suffering is reduced."

At just three years old, Duniu suffers from Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, which affects the thigh bone and can lead to painful osteoarthritis.



This picture taken on 12 April 2022 shows a dog receiving acupuncture and physiotherapy at an animal clinic in Beijing. A growing number of animals are being signed up for traditional medicine in China — care their masters say is less invasive and comes with fewer side effects than conventional treatments. **PHOTO : WANG ZHAO / AFP**

"He was in so much pain that he could no longer put his paw on the ground" and "had no appetite", says Zhai, who works in finance.

"A doctor advised me to have the head of the femur removed.

But I didn't want to because I have another poodle who has been there and he suffered a lot from the operation and the after-effects."

But then a friend advised him to try acupuncture. — AFP

Southern hemisphere to get first mRNA vaccine facility

COVID-19 vaccine maker Moderna announced Monday that it will open an mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility in the Australian city of Melbourne, a first for the southern hemisphere.

The project will be based at one of Australia's largest univer-

sities, Monash, and will produce 100 million vaccine doses a year for Covid-19, influenza and other diseases.

Moderna's Spikevax was one of a new class of inoculations developed during the coronavirus pandemic that uses a cutting-edge technology called

messenger RNA (mRNA).

These vaccines can be quickly developed and use a molecule to teach the body to identify and fight a pathogen, such as Covid-19, unlike traditional jabs, which contain a small piece of bacteria or virus. —AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Japan April-June GDP grows annualized 2.2% with lack of COVID curbs



A woman walks past a clothing store in an underground shopping mall in Tokyo on 15 August 2022. Japan's economy expanded in the three months to June, official data showed on 15 August after the government lifted Covid-19 curbs on businesses. **PHOTO: AFP**

JAPAN'S economy in the April-June period grew a real 0.5 per cent from the previous quarter, or an annualized 2.2 per cent, on the back of recovering private consumption following the removal of coronavirus restrictions in March, government data showed Monday.

Real gross domestic product, the total value of goods and services produced in a country adjusted for inflation, expanded for the third consecutive quarter following nearly flat growth in the January-March quarter, according to the preliminary report released by the Cabinet Office.

Private consumption, which

accounts for more than half of the country's GDP, rose 1.1 per cent, increasing for the third straight quarter, as more people dined out and travelled after Japan lifted COVID-19 restrictions in late March in all areas covered, including Tokyo and Osaka, amid a downward trend in the number of new infections.

Capital investment, another key pillar of domestic demand, grew 1.4 per cent, following a 0.3 per cent contraction in the previous quarter, propelled by software investment, according to the data.

Annualized real GDP in the latest quarter totalled 542 trillion yen (\$4.1 trillion), exceeding the

540 trillion yen logged in the October-December period of 2019 before the pandemic hit Japan. Despite the third consecutive quarterly increase in real GDP, some economists said the outlook remains unclear due to a resurgence of COVID-19 infections and higher prices that could dampen consumer spending.

Saisuke Sakai, senior economist at Mizuho Research & Technologies, pointed out that GDP in the reporting period was still lower than the average of the four quarters in 2019, as personal spending in its last quarter was dented by a consumption tax hike in October that year. — Kyodo

Germans face big energy levy as government vows aid

GERMAN households face an energy surcharge reaching hundreds of euros in the wake of the Ukraine war, according to the rate published Monday, prompting the government to promise relief measures.

The charge has been set at 2.419 cents per kilowatt hour, Trading Hub Europe, a non-profit company of energy network operators in Germany, said.

For a family of four with an annual average energy usage of 20,000 kwh, this would come to about 483.80 euros (\$493.70) before goods and services taxes.

The surcharge is aimed at sharing out the soaring costs borne by energy importers after Russia drastically curtailed gas supplies to Germany after the invasion of Ukraine.

Gas importers have so far taken on the additional costs themselves, but a new rule agreed by the government allows them to pass on ballooning costs via the levy to households from 1 October.

"It is by no means an easy step to take, but it is necessary to maintain the heating and energy supply in households and the economy," said Economy Minister Robert Habeck.

He promised that the "levy will be accompanied by another relief package", details of which are still being discussed.

The state has had to inject billions of euros in energy giant Uniper to prevent it from going under after it was hit by Russia's energy cuts.

Major energy group RWE has however said that as a "financially strong and robust company", it will waive the surcharge and continue to bear the additional import costs itself. The group last week reported profits reaching 1.57 billion euros for the first half of the year. — AFP

Iran's top automaker sets sights on Russian market



Technicians work on Peugeot 207 and 206 car production lines at the Iran Khodro auto plant, west of the Iranian capital Tehran, on 14 August 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

IRAN'S leading automaker is seeking to prioritize exports to Russia, its CEO said Sunday, as both countries reel under Western economic sanctions.

Iran Khodro unveiled the latest model of its crossover Rira vehicle at its factory west of Tehran, where CEO Mehdi Khatibi announced the manufacturer's ambitions for the Russian market.

"We are going to pay special attention to the Russian market, and we are also think-

ing of partnering with Russian investors," he said.

"We have held good negotiations with Moscow. The Russian market, with its capacities, will be one of our important markets," Khatibi added. "We will begin exporting this year" to Russia, he said.

Iran Khodro had previously exported vehicles to Russia, notably between 2007 and 2009, Iranian media said.

Sunday's announcement

comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Tehran in July and met his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi and supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Russia has come under increasingly tough sanctions since its February invasion of Ukraine, while Iran has faced stringent sanctions reimposed in 2018 when the United States unilaterally pulled out of a nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers. — AFP

Stuttering China recovery weighs on Asian markets

ASIAN markets mostly rose Monday as investors cheered signs of cooling US inflation but optimism was dampened by data showing China's economic recovery stuttering under Covid-19 restrictions and a slumping property sector.

China's central bank slashed key interest rates in a surprise move Monday as a raft of data showed weakness in the world's second-largest economy.

The figures showed China's industrial production and retail sales growth for July came in lower than expected. Industrial production was up 3.8 per cent year-on-year, but down from 3.9 per cent in June and well below analysts' forecasts.

"The risk of stagflation in the world economy is rising, and the foundation for domestic economic recovery is not yet solid," China's National Bureau of Statistics warned.

Beijing's rigid adherence to a zero-Covid strategy has held back economic recovery as snap lockdowns and long quarantines batter business activity and a recovery in consumption.

"July's economic data is very alarming," Raymond Yeung, Greater China economist at Australia & New Zealand Banking Group, told Bloomberg. "The Covid-zero policy continues to hit the service sector and dampen household consumption." July's retail figures con-

firmed how fragile consumer confidence still is, said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

"This weakness in the Chinese economy comes against the struggle to adapt to a zero-Covid policy, which the government shows little sign of relaxing, against a backdrop of rising cases," Hewson said.

"Problems in the property sector also aren't helping, where many home buyers are halting mortgage payments in protest at delays to the completion of new homes."

Hong Kong was down 0.5 per cent and Shanghai ended marginally lower to erase early gains after a mixed session. —AFP



(FILES) This file photo taken on 20 July 2022 shows employees working on a smartphone assembly line at the Oppo factory in Dongguan, China's southern Guangdong province. Factory output and retail sales in China edged up in July but were weaker than analysts' expectations, official data showed on 15 August 2022, as a Covid-19 resurgence and property market jitters cast a pall over hopes for a stronger economic recovery. PHOTO: AFP

Malaysia Airlines to buy 20 Airbus A330neo jets

MALAYSIA Airlines has agreed to acquire 20 Airbus A330neo planes to update its fleet of widebody jets, the European aircraft-maker said Monday.

Under the deal, the Southeast Asian airline will buy 10 planes from Airbus and lease the 10 others from Avolon, a Dublin-based aircraft leasing company.

No figures were released for the

transaction, but the plane was worth \$296.4 million according to the last published catalogue prices in 2018. Airlines usually pay less than the listed prices.

The more fuel-efficient A330neo will gradually replace 21 older-generation A330neo planes in the Malaysia Airlines fleet. The A330neo is powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 7000 engines. —AFP

Thai economy sees stunted growth despite tourists' return

THAILAND'S economy grew 2.5 per cent in the second quarter as returning foreign tourists failed to offset high inflation and concerns over regional tensions, the country's main economic agency said Monday. Southeast Asia's second-largest economy was hit hard during the pandemic, though visitor numbers are slowly improving with the relaxation of travel rules since May.

But the Ukraine war and now tension over Taiwan could put any economic recovery at risk, Thailand's National



Visitors buy Thai SIM cards upon arrival at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok on 1 July 2022. PHOTO: AFP

Economic and Social Development Council (NES-DC) warned. "We have to continue monitoring to see how long counteraction from China over Taiwan will last," NES-

DC Secretary-General Danucha Pichayanon said. "The relaxing of our Covid controls, the recovery of tourism are factors that support the growth." —AFP

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2. The open Tender forms including Description of Materials /Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 15 August 2022 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested bidder should submit the Technical Specifications and Commercial Quotation with Original Bid Bond in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than 12:00 pm on 29, August 2022.

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GLOBAL
AFFAIRSMechanical elephants, homemade
howitzers as India turns 75

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (C) greets the participants after addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort during the celebrations to mark country's Independence Day in New Delhi on 15 August 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDIA marked the 75th anniversary of independence on Monday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi giving a speech from Delhi's historic Red Fort, which was decorated with portraits of freedom fighters and guarded by mechanical elephants.

Following a 21-gun salute, reportedly executed using howitzers made domestically for the first time under Modi's "Make In India" industrial strategy, the prime minister said Indians should shed "colonialism in our minds and habits".

"Hundreds of years of colo-

nialism has restricted our sentiments, distorted our thoughts. When we see even the smallest thing related to colonialism in us or around us, we have to be rid of it," Modi said in a 90-minute speech from the ramparts of the fort in the Indian capital.

Wearing a cream-coloured turban speckled with the colours of the Indian flag, Modi also said India should crush the "termite" of corruption and nepotism, follow an "India First" mantra and ensure that "in speech and conduct, we do nothing that lowers a woman's

dignity".

"Self-reliant India is the responsibility of every citizen, every government, every unit of society," he said.

The "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire became independent in 1947 after two centuries of colonial occupation and exploitation.

With Britain in dire financial straits at the end of World War II — in which about 90,000 Indian soldiers died — the country was hurriedly split in two: Muslim-majority Pakistan and a mostly Hindu India. —AFP

2 Cabinet members visit
war-linked Yasukuni
shrine, PM sends offering

TWO Cabinet ministers visited Tokyo's war-linked Yasukuni shrine on Monday, the 77th anniversary of the end of World War II, but Prime Minister Fumio Kishida chose to send a ritual offering to the shrine seen by Asian neighbours as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

The visits by hawkish economic security minister Sanae Takaichi and reconstruction minister Kenya Akiba, both handpicked for their posts by Kishida last week, marked the third straight year that Cabinet members have visited the Shinto shrine on 15 August. Yasukuni honours convicted war criminals along with more than

2.4 million war dead.

Kishida, who leads the conservative Liberal Democratic Party, sent the offering as the party's president. He has not visited the shrine, often a source of diplomatic friction, since becoming prime minister last October and also sent ritual offerings for its autumn and spring festivals.

Koichi Hagiuda, the chairman of the LDP's Policy Research Council, also visited the shrine. He is a member of the LDP faction previously led by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was killed by a gunman during a campaign speech last month. —Kyodo



Koichi Hagiuda (2nd from L), chairman of the Policy Research Council of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, speaks to reporters during his visit to Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine on 15 August 2022. **PHOTO: KYODO**

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukraine nuclear plant risks increasing 'every day'

THE risk of disaster at Europe's largest nuclear plant is "increasing every day", the mayor of the city where it is located told AFP on Sunday, after Ukraine and Russia exchanged blame for fresh shelling around the facility.

The Zaporizhzhia plant in southeastern Ukraine has been occupied by Russian forces since March, and Kyiv has accused Moscow of basing hundreds of soldiers and storing arms there.

The facility has come under fire repeatedly in the past week, raising the spectre of a nuclear catastrophe. "What is happening there is outright nuclear terror-



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 27 April 2022 shows a general view of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, situated in the Russian-controlled area of Enerhodar, seen from Nikopol. Russian occupation authorities at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant said on 7 August 2022, a strike by Ukrainian forces damaged administrative buildings inside the complex. **PHOTO: ED JONES / AFP**

ism, and it can end unpredictably at any moment," said Dmytro Orlov, the mayor of Energodar city where the plant is based. "The risks are increasing every day," he told AFP by telephone from the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia.

He said there was mortar shelling on the plant "every day and night". "The situation is hazardous, and what causes the most concern is that there is no de-escalation process," he added. **'Blackmail'**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky previously accused Russia of nuclear "blackmail" and

using the plant to "intimidate people in an extremely cynical way".

He has also said Russian troops were "hiding" behind the plant to stage bombings on the Ukrainian-controlled towns of Nikopol and Marganets. But pro-Moscow officials in the occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia blamed the shelling on Ukrainian forces.

Missiles fell "in the areas located on the banks of the Dni-pro river and in the plant", said Vladimir Rogov, a member of the Moscow-installed administration, without reporting any casualties or damage. —AFP

South Korea offering large-scale aid package for North’s nukes



South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife Kim Keon-hee pay a silent tribute during a ceremony to celebrate Korean Liberation Day from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, at the presidential office square in Seoul on 15 August 2022. **PHOTO: AHN YOUNG-JOON / POOL / AFP**

SOUTH Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said Monday he will offer a wide-ranging aid package to the North in return for denuclearization, a deal long seen as a non-starter for Pyongyang.

The proposal comes days after the North threatened to “wipe out” Seoul authorities over a recent Covid-19 outbreak and less than a month after leader Kim Jong Un said his country was “ready to mobilize” its nuclear capability in any war with the United States and the South.

But calling denuclearization “essential” for lasting peace on the peninsula, Yoon on Mon-

day detailed a large-scale aid plan that would include food and energy as well as help in modernizing infrastructure such as ports, airports and hospitals.

“The audacious initiative that I envision will significantly improve North Korea’s economy and its people’s livelihoods in stages if the North ceases the development of its nuclear programme and embarks on a genuine and substantive process for denuclearization,” Yoon said in a speech marking the anniversary of liberation from Japan’s colonial rule in 1945.

Analysts say the chances of Pyongyang accepting such

an offer — first floated during Yoon’s inaugural speech — are vanishingly slim, as the North, which invests a vast chunk of its GDP into weapons programmes, has long made it clear it will not make that trade.

North Korea has conducted a record-breaking blitz of weapons tests this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

Washington and South Korean officials have repeatedly warned that the North is preparing to carry out what would be its seventh nuclear test. —AFP

Mass cello ensemble to play for disaster-hit Fukushima in 2023

A concert bringing together 800 cellists from Japan and around the world will be held in May next year in Fukushima Prefecture to play and pray for those impacted by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that devastated the northeastern Japan area.

The organizing committee of the 2023 Fukushima Cello Concert is soliciting interest from cello players, both amateur and professional, to take part in the event, where they will play as an ensemble on 21 May at a gymnasium in the city of Fukushima. A cello caravan transporting them to perform in other parts of the prefecture is also planned.

In the five weeks since applications have begun, more than 200 have expressed interest. Among them are cello teachers in Australia of the so-called “Suzuki method”, an education philosophy that emerged in Japan with the aim of nurturing talent mainly through music.

Knowing from personal experience the difficulty of moving

around as a cellist, Mikio Shin, head of the committee, said the large string instruments will be available to rent locally for those who cannot bring their own.

Shin was also in the disaster-hit areas just five weeks after the 11 March 2011, catastrophe and last year saw the progress of infrastructure repairs. Still, many residents are unable to return to their homes due to the nuclear fallout. “I felt people are still half-way down the road in terms of ‘re-

building of hearts,’” he said. With that in mind, the project aims to produce a “healing effect”, tapping into the unique characteristics of cello as a stringed instrument that is “rather close (in timbre) to the human voice”.

The idea is for cellists nationwide and abroad to hold official practices from February in-person and online, with a repertoire ranging from classical pieces to folk songs of the Tohoku region in Japan’s northeast. —Kyodo



A concert with 150 cellists is held in Sapporo, northern Japan, on 24 May 2018. **(PHOTO COURTESY OF 2023 FUKUSHIMA CELLO CONCERT) PHOTO: KYODO**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Two rescued as Norway bridge collapses: police

A wood and steel bridge over a river collapsed in southern Norway on Monday as a car and a truck were crossing, but police said they had rescued both drivers.

Police had first reported that the Tretten bridge collapse had seen the car and truck plunge into the Gudbrandsdalslagen river but later said both drivers were in good health.

“One cannot say with certainty if there were other people on the bridge but at this stage we have no information about any people who could have fallen in the water,” police official Terje Krogsad told TV2 channel.

The two-lane bridge was inaugurated in 2018 and is 148 metres (485 feet) long and 10 metres wide. It also has a pedestrian sidewalk. —AFP

Israeli police kill Palestinian in east Jerusalem raid

ISRAELI security forces said they had killed a Palestinian man who had tried to stab their officers during a home raid in east Jerusalem early Monday.

“A suspect who tried to stab our fighters was neutralized,” police said, adding that the man, identified by the official Palestinian news agency WAFA as Mohammed al-Shaham, 21, had died in an Israeli military hospital. Jerusalem Border Police had launched the raid to locate weapons in Kafr Aqab village, which is part of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem but located on the West Bank side of the security barrier. —AFP

Dutch court to rule in November on MH17 downing

DUTCH judges will deliver their verdict on 17 November in the trial of four suspects accused of downing Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine in 2014, a court said Monday.

Three Russians and a

Ukrainian, who all remain at large, are accused of supplying the missile that intercepted the jet as it flew from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, killing all 298 people on board.

The trial began in March

2020 at a high-security court near Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport, from where the doomed Boeing 777 had taken off. Prosecutors have demanded life sentences.

“November 17, 2022 has

been chosen as the provisional ruling date in the MH17 criminal trial,” the court said in a statement.

The decision “will take a part of the day and will probably take place in the after-

noon.” Prosecutors say the plane was shot down on 17 July 2014, by a Russian-made BUK missile, fired from territory in eastern Ukraine occupied by pro-Moscow separatists. —AFP

Mechanical elephants, homemade howitzers as India turns 75

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SPORT

Myanmar women's striker Win Theingi Tun moves to another Indian club



Myanmar women football star Win Theingi Tun. PHOTO: MFF

MYANMAR national women's striker Win Theingi Tun has moved to the Indian club Lords FA, according to the football authorities.

She was the first Myanmar female footballer to play abroad and joined Lords FA as a second foreign club on a three-month contract.

Lords FA, who are competing in the Kerala Women's League 2022-2023, played against Bosco FA in their season opener on 11 August.

Lords FA won the match 12-2, with Win Theingi Tun coming on as a starter and scoring four goals.

The team that wins the Kerala Women's League 2022-2023 will be eligible to compete in the Indian Women's League.

Win Theingi Tun played for the Indian women's club Gokulam from October 2021 to May 2022. — 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.

Nadal missing from Spain's Davis Cup squad, Zverev to play for Germany

RAFAEL Nadal will sit out the group stage of the Davis Cup finals next month after not being named in the Spain team on Monday, while Alexander Zverev will lead the German side.

The 36-year-old Nadal won the Australian Open and French Open titles earlier this year to take his men's record tally of Grand Slam singles triumphs to 22.

But he was forced to withdraw from Wimbledon with an abdominal injury before his scheduled semi-final against Nick Kyrgios.

Nadal is making his return this week at the Cincinnati Masters as he prepares for the US Open, but will not make a first Davis Cup appearance since winning the tournament for the fifth time with Spain in 2019. Spain will instead be looking to teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz for inspiration. —AFP

Alaba free-kick gives Real Madrid win to start title defence

DAVID Alaba scored with a stunning free-kick immediately after coming on as a substitute as reigning champions Real Madrid came from behind to beat Almeria 2-1 in their opening game of the season in La Liga on Sunday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side trailed to an early goal by Largie Ramazani away against their promoted opponents, but Lucas Vazquez equalized just after the hour mark.

The winner arrived with 15 minutes remaining at Almeria's Power Horse Stadium, as Alaba strode onto the pitch and curled a free-kick in off the upright after Luka Modric had been fouled just outside the box.

Real were made to work hard for the points against an Almeria side who won last season's second-tier title to return to La Liga after a seven-year absence.

"We had lots of shots on goal but once we got the first goal it made things much easier for us," said Ancelotti.

"I am happy with the way the game went. We were not spectacular but there were lots of things to take into account, like the game on Wednesday and the heat."

At one point it looked like Madrid might suffer a defeat in their opening league game of the season for the first time since 2008, with Ancelotti's decision to rotate his squad not initially paying off. —AFP

Real Madrid's Austrian defender David Alaba (L) celebrates scoring this team's second goal during the Spanish league football match between UD Almeria and Real Madrid CF at the Municipal Stadium of the Mediterranean Games in Almeria on 14 August 2022. PHOTO: AFP

