DON'T BE LATE IN THE RESTORATION OF PERPETUAL PEACE PAGE-8 (OPINION)

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.

All need to strive for flourishing traditional culture and fine arts in the hearts of a new generation of youths: Vice-Senior General

State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the second coordination meeting of the Leading Committee on Organizing the 23rd Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions in Nay Pyi Taw on 20 September 2022.

APPLYING a network of social media can benefit education and health sectors as well as tarnish images of political, economic, security, social and cultural affairs of the country, said the Patron of the Leading Committee on Organizing the 23rd Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win at the second coordination meeting of the leading committee at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Social media brings extreme attitudes and behaviours under the disguise of fine arts against the actual social life to the new generation of youths who are keen to shoulder the State duty with creativity and adventurous spirit.

In fact, the fine arts are charming and subtle with the prowess of changing rudeness to politeness and vice versa. As such, officials are striving for organizing the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions to unveil the fine arts in accord with the guidance of the Head of State.

Media reports of the performing arts competitions being held in regions and states catch the attention of the people. As holding for the central level competitions is getting nearer, the working committee and subcommittees are to beef up their assignments for the competitions.

The Vice-Senior General stressed the need for all to report the progress of preparation to hold the competitions on schedules and seek the decisions for remaining assignments.

Chairman of the leading committee Union Minister U Ko Ko reported on arrangements for the competitions and plans of awarding. The secretary of the leading committee reported on the progress of preparations.

Members of the leading committee Union ministers and officials from subcommittees participated in the discussions.

In his concluding remarks, the Vice-Senior General said all need to strive for flourishing traditional culture and fine arts in the hearts of a new generation youths and to hand over the legacy to new generations. — MNA

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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 statements 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 border 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

399 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 20 September, total figure rises to 619,566

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **619,566** after **399** new cases were reported on 20 September 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **595,848** have been recovered from disease. Death toll reaches **19,450** with **two** deaths.

Myanmar reported 138 COVID-19 deaths between 28-1-2022 and 19-9-2022. Of them, 97 deaths (70 per cent) had underlying chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, liver, kidney, lung and cancer.

According to the analysis of the COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases, 79.4 per cent have received no vaccination at all and have not been fully inoculated, 18.6 per cent have received full vaccination and two per cent has received booster shots.

COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases

Out of COVID-19 deaths with underlying chronic disease		
79.4 per cent	18.6 per cent	2 per cent
have not been vaccinated at all and have not been fully vaccinated	**have been fully vaccinated**	**have received booster shots**

Therefore, according to the analysis of the COVID-19 vaccination rate of deaths with underlying chronic diseases, it causes fewer deaths obviously among those who are fully vaccinated and those who receive the booster shots. The people who are suffering from chronic diseases should follow the COVID-19 health rules, wear face masks and contact the nearest health departments, and village/ward administrative offices to receive the vaccines and booster shots.

More detailed information about COVID-19 can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health: moh.gov.mm. — MNA

Legal action to be taken for discrepancies in household demographics

Officials are seen carrying out fieldwork under the Pankhinn Project in villages near Kawkareik, Kayin State, to issue citizenship scrutiny cards.

THE Ministry of Immigration and Population has announced the importance of making a citizenship scrutiny card (CSC) and that legal action will be taken if discrepancies are found in household demographics.

It has been announced that if there is any difficulty in making the citizenship scrutiny cards, household population census form 66/6 (AHtaSa), anyone can go to the relevant township immigration offices to solve them.

If you have reached ten years of age, but have not yet made a citizenship scrutiny card, you can go to the relevant township's immigration office under the project named Pankhinn, officials said.

In addition, the statement informed that if there is a discrepancy in the information in the process of exchange for those who have completed the ten-year-old CSC card, they need to be corrected.

If you do not hold more than one citizenship scrutiny card, and if you are holding it, anyone need to go to the relevant township immigration office and submit it, officials added.

Those who do not have a household population census form 66/6 (AHtaSa) can also send information to the nearest township immigration offices according to the Pankhinn Project.

The ministry has registered more than 52 million citizens, associate citizens, naturalized persons and holders of other types of recognition cards.

Officials urged people to resolve discrepancies in the list of citizenship scrutiny cards and additional cardholders at the nearest township immigration offices during the specified period. If the specified period is exceeded, it has been notified that action will be taken under the law. —TWA/GNLM

Need to encourage manufacturing products based on agriculture and livestock farms

LOCAL food sufficiency is crucial in regions and states, stressing that priority must be given to paddy cultivation so as to increase per-acre yield. It is necessary to encourage the manufacturing of products based on agriculture and livestock farms. As the Ministry of Planning and Finance set up a separate fund of K400 billion allotted from the National Natural Disaster Management Fund for the economic development of the nation, the government will arrange to spend the fund on the supply of fertilizers, quality seeds of crops and fuel for the farmers for the cultivation of summer paddy and green gram this year on the first priority.

The Senior General stressed the need to export rice and green gram from these farmlands under the leadership of the government. Depending on the yield of paddy and beans, farmers will have a chance to gain proper benefits.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the coordination meeting held on 8 August 2022 in regard to matters relating to the activities being carried out by the Union Government)

MoHA Union Minister inspects agriculture, livestock farms of prison/detention camps

IT needs to emphasize the security measures, food, health and vocational sectors of prisoners and should arrange COVID-19 vaccination for all prisoners, said State Administration Council member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut during his inspection tour of prisons.

The Union minister inspected the DaikU Prison, new Bago Prison construction site, Nyaungkhashay inspection camp, Toungoo Prison, Yamethin Prison, security, administration, discipline enforcement and multi-purpose agriculture and livestock farming projects of Nay Pyi Taw multi-purpose agriculture and livestock farm together with Director-General U Zaw Min of the Prisons Department between 17 and 19 September.

During the visits, the Union Minister stressed the detailed facts regarding the COVID-19 tests when accepting the new inmates, 24-hour patrol, food and supervision to follow the existing law, order and directives.

On arrival at the new Bago Prison construction site, the Union minister left instructions to complete the operation in time.

Then, he inspected the X-Ray installed at Nyaungkhashay inspection camp in Waw Township of Bago Region.

He then went to Nay Pyi Taw multi-purpose agriculture and livestock farm and inspected the plantation areas and operation processes of the camp.

During that visit, the Union minister talked about the waste of prison labour force, effective use in State's project sites, support for the country, food security, income and acceleration of agriculture and livestock farm using modern techniques, consumption of meat and fish that they breed and sale of surplus meat and fish with a view to the welfare of the staff.

Union Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut makes the inspection tour of prisons.

The prison and detention camp under the Prisons Department and Nay Pyi Taw multi-purpose agriculture and livestock farm are running the agriculture and livestock farming widely to support the country by distributing the products to the prisoners, staff and families of departments/units under the ministry and by selling to the public at fairer prices.

Currently, they farm the layer, beef and dairy cattle, pig, goat and fish successfully just like the farming sector. — MNA

CMP business meeting held for economic growth and job creation

A meeting with CMP business investors was held yesterday morning at the meeting hall of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Yangon to help CMP businesses develop and overcome current difficulties for economic development and job creation.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister Dr Wah Wah Maung of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations discussed the issues that need to be addressed for CMP investors to operate their businesses smoothly.

The MIFER deputy minister meets CMP business investors.

He said to discuss issues related to enhancing cooperation between the government and the private sector for the development of the CMP business group and had a friendly and open discussion with the attendees.

Officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Ministry of Commerce, Central Bank of Myanmar, and Department of Labour made discussions and Deputy Minister Dr Wah Wah Maung delivered the closing speech.

The MoC deputy minister, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, the secretary of the Work Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, officials from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, the Department of Labour, the UMFCCI, representatives from the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, representatives of the Myanmar Industrial Manufacturers Association and foreign CMP business investors attended the meeting. — MNA

Ad-hoc Coordination Meeting of Task Force to facilitate provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through AHA Centre

THE Ad-hoc Coordination Meeting of the Task Force to facilitate the provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through the AHA Centre was held at 10 am on 20 September 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting was attended by Chair of the Task Force Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing of the Ministry of International Cooperation, Vice-Chair 1 of the Task Force Dr Thet Khaing Win, Union Minister of the Ministry of Health, Vice-Chair 2 of the Task Force Dr Thet Thet Khine, Union Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and members of the Task Force.

The meeting discussed the necessary preparation for the Joint Vaccination Programme between two Health Ministries of Myanmar and Cambodia as well as for the Joint Needs Assessment for the provision of broader humanitarian assistance to Myanmar. Myanmar aims for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need without discrimination. — MNA

SAC Information Team holds 20th Press Conference

THE 20/2022 Press Conference of the Information Team of the State Administration Council took place at the Ministry of Information yesterday afternoon. Leader of the Information Team Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, member of the Union Election Commission U Khin Maung Oo, spokespersons of relevant departments and representatives of departmental information teams replied to queries raised by the media.

First, the Leader of the Information Team explained attendance of the Myanmar high-level delegation led by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the Eastern Economic Forum-EEF at the invitation of the government of the Russian Federation, their discussions to promote cooperation between Myanmar and Russian Federation in various sectors including holding discussions with President of the Russian Federation

The 20th Press Conference of the SAC Information Team is in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Mr Vladimir Putin, efforts of the SAC in applying practical ways and means for improvement of socio-economic life of the State and citizens including businesspersons facing loss in the Covid-19 amid various kinds of difficulties, its endeavours of monitoring and sustaining the monetary affairs, peacemaking efforts of the SAC, assistance given by the Disaster Management Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement for those suffering the current conflicts during the 18-month period when the SAC assumed State responsibilities, resurgence of Covid-19 infection, progress of vaccination, terror acts of so-called NUG and PDF terrorist groups in the nation and notices to the people not to commit contribution to the terrorist groups, through PowerPoint Presentation and video clips.

The UEC member clarified inspection at political parties by the Union Election Commission, checking the voter lists with the ground population to be correct, scrutiny over the population already compiled under the pilot project, and functions of the commission through Power-Point presentations.

Then, the Leader of the Information Team, the UEC member and representatives of the departmental information team replied to queries raised by media personnel and the press conference came to a close.

The press conference was also attended by SAC's information team members, representatives of relevant ministries, officials from the Tatmadaw Information Team, guests, and reporters from local news agencies, daily newspapers, local TV stations, and local-based foreign news agencies. — MNA

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

State sells 455.75 ticals of gold coins

THE State sold 455.75 ticals of gold coins to the people up till 16 September. Gold coins are sold at K2.8 million per tical, which is based on the world gold price, according to the SAC Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun in the 20th press conference.

Gold coins are in different weights such as one tical, 0.5 tical, and 0.25 tical.

He also expressed there are no plans for other regions and states except for Nay Pyi Taw. Those who want to buy gold coins, need to show their CSC and have the right to buy cash down for one time only.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation are trading gold coins at K2.95 million per tical at the Gems Museum in Nay Pyi Taw beginning 5 September. —TWA/GNLM

A sample of the gold coin.

Supporters of NUG, CRPH and PDFs on Facebook to get 3 to 10 years of imprisonment

LEADER of the SAC Information Team Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun notified at the 20th press conference of the State Administration Council that those who support the NUG, CRPH and PDFs on social media Facebook will be imprisoned for three to ten years.

"Clicking 'Like' or 'Share' of the posts, pictures and videos of NUG, CRPH, PDFs or their supporters are infringing Section 124 (b) of the Penal Code. The punishment will be three to ten years of imprisonment or a fine," clarified the SAC Information Team Leader.

The public conversations (comments) and shares on Facebook, which is the most used social platform in Myanmar, are monitored by the Tatmadaw.

In addition, news about account owners who support NUG, CRPH and PDFs being identified and arrested were also reported in State-owned newspapers. — TWA/GNLM

SIM card registered name, CSC number to be checked with immigration information

THE Department of Communications announced on 19 September that the citizenship scrutiny card number and phone SIM card registered name will be checked against the information in the Immigration Department, and if it is not identical, the SIM card will be deactivated.

According to the verifications of the Directorate of Posts and Telecommunications, Ministry of Transport and Communications, some SIM card users have changed their names, and it has been found that information such as the citizenship scrutiny card number is used without filling it in correctly.

Now, the name filled in for SIM card registration, and citizenship scrutiny card number will be checked against the e-ID Database information from the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

Users should use their registered name (original) when purchasing and using SIM cards, and use the citizenship scrutiny card numbers only if they can be correctly filled in and properly registered.

In addition, if it is found that the information is not correctly filled in the currently used SIM cards, these SIM cards will be closed.

Therefore, telecommunication operators and SIM card sellers should correctly revise and register information and systematically follow instructions, and if the instructions are not followed, action will be taken according to the rules and regulations.

Consumers should register and purchase SIM cards by filling in their information correctly and re-check whether the currently used SIM cards are correctly registered. To ensure that the SIM cards they are using are not blocked if they are incorrect, they should obtain the online service of the respective mobile operators.

Mobile Shops are also notified in the announcement to register and use the correct information in time. — TWA/GNLM

People are pictured registering SIM cards to use mobile phones.

Myanmar to use Russian MIR card for Russia-Myanmar direct payments in Nov

MYANMAR plans to use the Russian MIR card for the direct payments between the Russian rouble and Myanmar kyat, said Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, SAC Information Team Leader at the 20th press conference.

He stated that authorities are working to use the Russian MIR card as a payment system for business and trade activities in Russia-Myanmar direct payments. Russia's MIR card will be connected to start using before the third Inter-Governmental Russia-Myanmar Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation meeting that will be held in upcoming November.

SAC Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun also declared in the press conference that if direct payments are made between Russia and Myanmar, banks in Myanmar have to open accounts in Russian banks, and a memorandum of understanding-MoU will be signed between the two central banks. — TWA/GNLM

Kawthoung, Myeik Archipelago eye more visitors in October

THE open season for travel is drawing near, and preparations are being made for local and foreign visitors to the islands in the Kawthoung and Myeik districts of the Taninthayi Region, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Nay Pyi Taw).

The local and foreign travellers start visiting the islands of Kawthoung and Myeik districts in the peak season. The tourism industry faced a decline in the COVID-19 outbreak and the government resumed domestic/international flights on 17 April 2022 to remedy the tourism sector.

Currently, the local visitors pay a visit to the islands of Kawthoung and Myeik and arrangements are being made for the foreign visitors. The tours to Kawthoung and Myeik Archipelago are prepared to reopen as per the COVID-19 preventive measures.

There are over 800 islands in Taninthayi Region and over 200 islands in Myeik Archipelago and is an island where Myanmar's only Marine National Park, Lampi Island, is located. According to the research of marine experts, there are 195 evergreen forests, 63 flora on mangrove and sand-dune forests and 19 types of mammals and cold- and warm-blooded animals on the coral reefs.

The well-known islands in Kawthoung District are Lampi Island, Bocho Island, Hlainggu Island, Saturn Island, Kophawt Island, Taunglapoh Island, NyaungU Phee Island, Natthamee Yaytwin Island, Done Island, Done Yetagun Island, Ngaman Islands, 254 and 256 Islands, Myanmar Bam Island, Auknee Island, Tawwin (South) Island, Tawwin (North) Island, Macleod Island, Kyunn Phila Island and Nanathee Island.

The picture shows an aerial view of Heart Island in Taninthayi Region.

The Myeik Archipelago boasts perfect islands like Thameehla Island, Taungpangyi Island, Bailey Island, King Island or Marcus Island, Smart Island or Parpa Island, Cock Comb Island, 115 Island and Waale Island.

The Myeik Archipelago tourism Industry was implemented in 2014 and the Taninthayi Region's tourism industry was well developed hosting between 200 and 300 travellers per day during long holidays. The officials arrange speed boats and vessel services for transportation and the tour guides follow the instructions of departments concerned for the safety of travellers and not affecting the natural environment by cooperating with the residents.

"We have high expectations this open season. We make preparations to start with local travellers. The hotels are reopened and some make preparations. There is information provided on the website and media for travel in cooperation with the regional government. The main point is that arrangements are being made to provide services in accordance with the COVID-19 health rules at the hotels and the hotels are also granted HSP certificates. The department conducts training courses for tourist guides regarding COVID-19 preventive measures. Therefore, we are making efforts for the travellers to be able to take good rest during their trip. Kawthoung and Myeik archipelago are indeed the best places for travelling and excursion," said U Zeyar Myo, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Nay Pyi Taw).

The department was invited to the International Tourism Fair in Seoul in August 2022 and International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City (ITE HCMC 2022) and will promote the tourism industry of the country in 2023.

The travellers to these islands can study the lifestyle of Salon people who are described as Sea Gipsy, the natural beauty of the sea and islands, coral reefs and fish species by diving, and can go fishing, study the whales, dolphins, sea turtles, seals, Hornbills, sea butterfly, Mali bird, Grey-rumped Swiftlet and other bird species.

The community-based tourism, hoteliers, tourist guides, boat drivers and locals are expecting a large volume of travellers to Kawthoung and Myeik archipelago where the world's best golden pearls are produced. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/ GNLM

PHOTOS : KANU

LOCAL BUSINESS

Pure gold price slides again to K2.8 mln per tical

PURE gold spot price fell again to K2.8 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the domestic market, tracking the slide in the Kyat- US dollar exchange rate in the local forex market. The US dollar is exchanged for around K3,100 against the local currency.

In August, the dollar hit a tremendous high of over K4,500 in the unofficial markets. Following the depreciation of Kyat, the pure gold price reached a record-high of K3.7 million per tical.

The gold price is approximately K2,830,000 per tical in the domestic market.

The governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) and officials of the Monitoring and Steering Committee on the Gold and Currency Market discussed matters regarding the stability of the gold and currency market on the afternoon of 14 September in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, the governor of the CBM remarked the further coordination of the departments concerned, gold bar transactions to be made with the banking system and operations of the banks, further support of the ministries concerned and the CBM to achieve price stability, and further cooperation between gold businesspersons and the officials.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation declared the sales of gold coins weighing one tical, 0.5 tical and 0.25 tical through state-run media on 2 September. The gold coins are available every day except during office holidays.

In September 2021, a dollar value hit a peak of over K3,000 in the black market, pushing the pure gold up to K2.22 million per tical.

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 plays 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, and 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 the official directives, illegal foreign currency holding, illegal trade and taking legal actions against price manipulators.

Furthermore, the officials concerned will crack down on people involved in charging a percentage for money withdrawals at the banks as shadow money. — NN/GNLM

Pure gold spot price fell again to K2.8 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the domestic market, tracking the slide in the Kyat- US dollar exchange rate in the local forex market.

Myanmar to ship over 60,000 tonnes of sugar to Viet Nam in upcoming season

MYANMAR will export more than 60,000 tonnes of sugar to Viet Nam in the upcoming 2022-2023 season, according to Myanmar Sugar and Sugarcane Products Association.

Than Taung Oo and Ngwe Yee Pale sugar mills have been authorized to export Myanmar's sugar to Viet Nam. Those two mills annually send 60,000 tonnes of sugar to foreign markets.

Last season, Than Taung Oo sugar mill had a production capacity of over 50,000 tonnes while Ngwe Yee Pale sugar mill produced approximately 140,000 tonnes.

In the 2023-2024 season, new advanced machines will be installed. Moreover, sugarcane expansion is also expected on account of soaring sugar prices. That is why sugar export will grow for sure, the association stated.

Myanmar's annual sugar production is estimated at 450,000 tonnes. Myanmar earlier sent sugar to China through a cross-border channel beyond self-sufficiency. At present, it is delivered to Viet Nam only, said U Win Htay, vice chair of the association.

The export was conducted under the state-level Memorandum of Understanding. However, sugar export to China came to a halt suddenly due to the COVID-19 policy of China. Therefore, the sugar industry called for a government-to-government agreement to legally export sugar to China under quota, he continued.

In recent days, one Chinese company located in Hebei province sent a proposal through the Foreign Ministry to buy Myanmar's refined sugar, syrup, and white and brown sugar. They like to purchase 30,000-50,000 tonnes of sugar every year (about 3,000 tonnes per month), as per the proposal.

When the two parties can agree on the price, the trade will happen, according to the association.

Following the soaring sugar price, some local companies offered the sugarcane price at K90,000 per tonne for the upcoming 2022-2023 sugarcane season. The prevailing sugar price hit a high of K2,550 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes).

Furthermore, Ngwe Yee Pale Sugar Company planned to contribute K200,000 per acre in advance for those new sugarcane growers for the 2023-2024 season.

Sugarcane is commonly grown in the upper Sagaing Region, followed by northern Shan State. It is also cultivated in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

The sugarcane is grown in December-January. It can be harvested from November to February of the following years. The sugarcane growing rotation cycle lasts four years in Myanmar. — NN/GNLM

Myanmar will export more than 60,000 tonnes of sugar to Viet Nam in the upcoming 2022-2023 season, according to Myanmar Sugar and Sugarcane Products Association.

Fertilizer prices on the rise

FARMERS said that the price of fertilizers has reached K190,000 per bag.

A farmer in southern Shan State said that due to the current increase in fertilizer prices, it is difficult to cultivate.

Before the Thingyan Festival in 2022, the fertilizer price was around K100,000 per bag, then it rose to K150,000 in August, and in mid-September, it reached almost K190,000 per bag.

Most fertilizers are imported from China and Thailand, which is expected to affect the agricultural input market due to higher exchange rates and increases in transport costs and other additional costs.

As the winter period is about to arrive, the importation of fertilizers will be increased, and more than 100,000 tonnes of fertilizers were imported from abroad in August, according to the Ministry of Commerce. — Chin Lay/GNLM

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OPINION

Don't be late in the restoration of perpetual peace

IT is necessary to implement the theme 2022 "End racism. Build peace." for covering the whole nation as part of marking the International Day of Peace observed around the world on 21 September every year.

In fact, everybody aspires to enjoy the fruits of peace. As such, the Myanmar government is striving for the restoration of perpetual peace in all parts of the nation by joining hands with ethnic armed organizations as well as ethnic organizations in line with the provisions of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

> Now is the time to restore perpetual peace while all the global countries are trying to achieve peace in various forms in their relevant ways. Hence, it is important not to be late in the restoration of peace similar to other countries. All Myanmar people must see the fruits of peace whereas all global countries are trying to restore peace.

To do so, all ethnic national people need to build trust, understanding and respect among them by setting aside racism, religion and discrimination. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: Racism continues to poison institutions, social structures, and everyday life in every society. It continues to be a driver of persistent inequality. And it continues to deny people their fundamental human rights. It destabilizes societies, undermines democracies, erodes the legitimacy of governments, and… the linkages between racism and gender inequality are unmistakable.

Everybody needs to flourish empathy, compassion and sympathy in order to foster perpetual peace. The persons keeping perpetual peace in their minds can build a more pleasant and prosperous world to create happiness for all. If so, they can stay away from plights, crises, conflicts and social problems.

Now, the peoples across the world as well as in entire Myanmar hear the ring of the peace bell. Peace can stop the disadvantages of uprisings, riots and chaos. Only when the country restores perpetual peace will the government fulfil the needs of ethnic national people and carry out development tasks of all parts of the nation. Consequently, ethnic youths can save their lives due to the ceasefire and they will make vigorous efforts in the production of agricultural and livestock sectors not only for themselves but for their national brethren.

As such, all ethnic people need to take the shortest time for restoring peace across the nation to have the betterment of society. It is because peace is able to develop overall sectors of the nation. Importantly, if the people end racism and build peace, a new generation of youths will have a brighter future.

Now is the time to restore perpetual peace while all the global countries are trying to achieve peace in various forms in their relevant ways. Hence, it is important not to be late in the restoration of peace similar to other countries. All Myanmar people must see the fruits of peace whereas all global countries are trying to restore peace.

■

ARTICLE

Covid-19 reduces placenta's immune response: Study

ACCORDING to a study, if a woman catches COVID-19 during her pregnancy, the infection, no matter how slight, affects the placenta's immune response to further infections. The study was published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. "This is the largest study to date of placentas from women who had COVID-19 during their pregnancies," said Dr Kristina Adams Waldorf, senior author and professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Washington School of Medicine. "We were surprised to find that women who had COVID-19 during their pregnancies had placentas with an impaired immune response to new infection."

The tip of the iceberg

This finding, Adams Waldorf added, "was the tip of the iceberg" in how COVID-19 might affect fetal or placental development. Early in the pandemic, many thought that COVID-19 did not appear to harm the developing fetus because there were so few babies born with COVID-19 infection, she noted. "But what we're seeing now is that the placenta is vulnerable to COVID-19, and the infection changes the way the placenta works and that in turn is likely to impact the development of the fetus," Adams Waldorf said. "To date, the studies about how COVID-19 might affect fetal or child development are very limited as the children are still very young," noted co-author Dr Helen Feltovich, professor and associate medical director for maternal-fetal medicine imaging at Intermountain Healthcare in Utah.

"Our study suggests that babies born to mothers infected with COVID-19 at any point during their pregnancy will need to be monitored as they grow up," she said.

Immune protection for the fetus

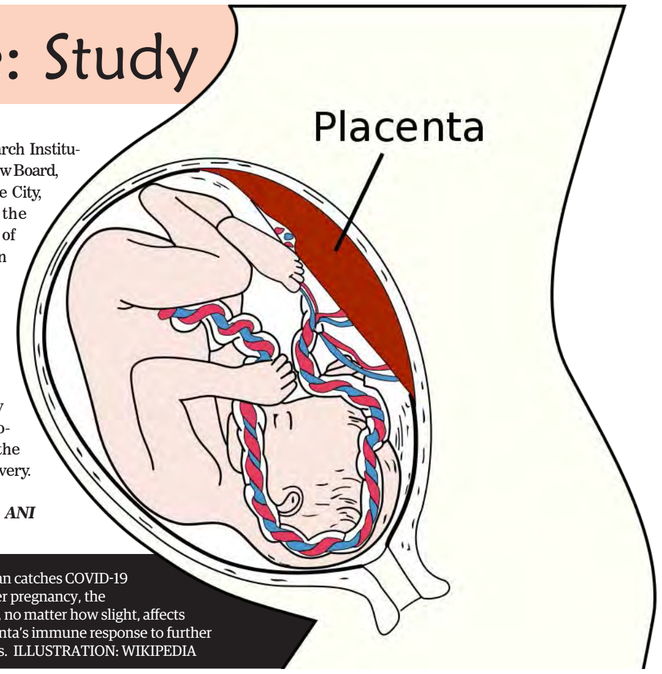
The placenta provides nourishment, oxygen, and immune protection for the fetus until the time of birth. Studies led by Adams Waldorf have shown that women who contract COVID-19 have a significantly higher mortality rate than do women who do not contract COVID-19. Other studies have found that pregnant women are more likely to risk hospitalizations or preterm birth, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's unknown how different COVID-19 variants may affect the mother or fetus, Adams Waldorf and Feltovich agree.

"Studying each of the variants in real-time is really challenging," Adams Waldorf said, "because they just keep coming so fast, we can't keep up. We do know that the COVID-19 Delta variant was worse for pregnant individuals because there was a spike in stillbirths, maternal deaths and hospitalizations at that time." Regardless of the variant, Adams Waldorf stressed it's important that women not catch COVID-19. Women who are pregnant should first get vaccinated and boosted, and continue to mask and stay within a strict bubble of individuals who are also vaccinated and boosted. She acknowledges that may mean isolating for the duration of the pregnancy.

Still seeing these abnormal effects

"The disease may be mild, or it may be severe, but we're still seeing these abnormal effects on the placenta," she said. "It seems that after contracting COVID-19 in pregnancy, the placenta is exhausted by the infection, and can't recover its immune function." In this study, a total of 164 pregnant individuals were studied, consisting of 24 uninfected healthy patients as a control group and 140 individuals who contracted COVID-19. Both groups delivered at about the same time, 37 to 38 weeks. Preterm birth occurred at almost 3 times the rate with the patients with COVID-19 when compared with those without. About 75 per cent of the patients with COVID-19 were either asymptomatic or had mild symptoms, according to the study. Placental tissues were obtained with patient approval through either the Intermountain Healthcare Research Institutional Review Board, in Salt Lake City, Utah, or the University of Washington Human Subjects Division. Placental tissues were collected by medical providers at the time of delivery.

SOURCE: ANI



If a woman catches COVID-19 during her pregnancy, the infection, no matter how slight, affects the placenta's immune response to further infections. ILLUSTRATION: WIKIPEDIA

Children with primary immunodeficiency may be at higher risk of serious Covid-19 complications

ACCORDING to a new study, children with specific immunodeficiency illnesses have abnormalities in genes that regulate the body's immune system against viral infections and have a higher death risk owing to COVID-19. The study was published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. Most children infected with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus develop a mild illness or show no symptoms at all. But for a small percentage, serious complications may develop.

Most children infected with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus develop a mild illness or show no symptoms at all. But for a small percentage, serious complications may develop **PHOTO: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/AFP**

Children with primary immunodeficiency

"Mortality is much higher among children with primary immunodeficiency diseases infected with SARS-CoV-2. Our results indicate that basic immunological examination and genetic analysis should be conducted in children with severe COVID-19 or multi-inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C). The clinicians will then be able to help these children with more precise therapies based on their genetic changes,"says Qiang Pan-Hammarstrom, professor at the Department of Biosciences and Nutrition, Karolinska Institutet, who led the study. How the infection affects patients with primary immunodeficiency diseases, i.e. hereditary and congenital diseases of the immune system, is controversial. Even among these patients, some suffer from severe COVID-19 while others experience mild or no symptoms. To investigate this more closely, and try to find genetic explanations for severe forms of COVID-19, researchers from Karolinska Institutet have studied young patients with primary immunodeficiency diseases (also called inborn errors of immunity, IEI) who developed severe or critical SARS-CoV-2 infection. Genetic and immunological analyses were performed.

Molecular mechanism

"Our results clarify the molecular mechanism of these immune diseases, which opens up the possibility of developing a more targeted therapy. The knowledge acquired from the study also allows us to develop better strategies for the treatment and prevention of severe COVID-19 disease in these patients," says Qiang Pan-Hammarstrom.

The study included 31 children aged five months to 19 years. All children had some type of primary immunodeficiency disease without a molecular diagnosis and suffered from severe or critical COVID-19. Participants were recruited from August to September 2020 in Iran. None of the children were vaccinated against COVID-19. Eleven of the children, more than one-third, died of complications from the infection. Five children, 16 per cent, met the criteria for multi-inflammatory syndrome, MIS-C. Some of the children lacked antibodies to the coronavirus. "This suggests that many children with this type of immune disease cannot produce antiviral antibodies and therefore would not have the full benefit of vaccination," says Hassan Abolhassani, assistant professor at the Department of Biosciences and Nutrition, Karolinska Institutet, and the study's first author.

Mutations in genes

Genetic analyses showed that more than 90 per cent of the participants, 28 children, had mutations in genes that are important for our immune defense, and that could explain their immunodeficiency. An important mechanism was mutations that affect proteins that regulate the immune system during virus infection, known as interferons. The analyses of the patients' immune responses showed that children with MIS-C had immunological profiles that differ from the profiles of children with primary immunodeficiency but without MIS-C. The study also includes a literature review, where the researchers globally found reports of approximately 1,210 patients with primary immunodeficiency disease and COVID-19.

About 30 per cent of them were children. The mortality rate among children with primary immunodeficiency disease and COVID-19 was more than eight per cent, compared with about 0.01 per cent among children in the general population. The study is limited to severe cases of COVID-19, infected with the original strain of the virus, and non-vaccinated children. Further studies are needed to evaluate the importance of different virus variants and vaccines in this patient group.

Crucial for the implementation of the study

The study was conducted within the research consortium ATAC, funded by the European Commission in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinated by Karolinska Institutet. Collaboration with Uppsala University, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Iran University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences (Iran), North Khorasan University of Medical Sciences (Iran), Howard Hughes Medical Institute (USA), Rockefeller University (USA) and Necker Hospital for Sick Children (France) were also crucial for the implementation of the study. The study was also funded by the Swedish Research Council and the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation.

SOURCE: ANI

TECH/ENVIRON
WORLD

Drought decimates Texas' key cotton crop

ON Sutton Page's ravaged cotton fields, there is almost nothing left to pick. The Texas farmer managed to salvage maybe a fifth of his crop, but the rest was lost to the severe drought that has taken a steep toll across the region.

This year, his harvest is "not well", he says, but in reality, the drought in northern Texas has proven to be a disaster, with most of Page's neighbours not even bothering to harvest their crop, leaving "bare, bare fields."

Texas produces almost half of America's cotton, and the United States is the world's third largest supplier, behind India and China.

This year, national production will hit its lowest level since 2015, down 21 per cent year-on-year, and Texas will suffer a 58 per cent drop, the US Department of Agriculture estimates.

In the northwest of the state, where cotton is the lifeline of the local economy and water is scarce, the 2022 harvest "could be one of the worst in 30 years", worries Darren Hudson, professor of agricultural economics at Texas Tech University.

With the cascading consequences for the global textile industry, in an economy already reeling from the pandemic, Hudson put the likely economic impact for the region at $2 billion.

Landon Orman, 30, works on 2,000 acres of cotton near Abilene, three hours west of Dallas.

His non-irrigated cotton did not even sprout, while his partially watered crop grew but its yield will be slashed by half.

In total, he predicts an 85 per cent drop in production compared to a normal year. Like so many others, he has crop insurance, so "financially we're not really doing that bad. But as a farmer, it sucks pretty bad that we can't grow stuff sometimes."—AFP

Farmers harvest cotton from a 140-acre field in Ellis County, near Waxahatchie, Texas, on 19 September 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

China phases out 504,000 tonnes of ozone-depleting substances

Over the last 35 years, more than 99 per cent of ozone-depleting substances have been phased out globally. **PHOTO: TOBIAS SCHWARZ/AFP**

CHINA has phased out a total of 504,000 tonnes of ozone-depleting substances since its accession to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, according to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

Zhao Yingmin, vice-minister of ecology and environment, made the remarks during a meeting commemorating this year's International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, held via video link on Friday.

Over the last 35 years, more than 99 per cent of ozone-depleting substances have been phased out globally, the vice-minister said.

China signed the protocol in 1991, and the Kigali Amendment to the protocol came into effect in the country in 2021. China will continue to improve its legal and policy systems, honor its commitments and deepen international cooperation, to contribute to the preservation of life on Earth, Zhao said.— Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

SpaceX wants to bring satellite internet to Iran: Musk

SPACEX will apply for an exemption from US sanctions against Iran in a bid to offer its satellite internet service to the country, owner Elon Musk said on Monday.

"Starlink will apply for an exemption from sanctions against Iran," Musk said in response to a tweet from a science reporter.

Musk had initially announced that the Starlink satellite internet service had been made available on every continent — "including Antarctica" — with the company planning to launch up to 42,000 satellites to boost connectivity.—AFP

Brazil reports more Amazon fires so far this year than all of 2021

THE number of forest fires in the Brazilian Amazon so far this year has already surpassed that for all of 2021, according to official figures released Monday that triggered new alarm for the world's biggest rainforest. Satellite monitoring has detected 75,592 fires from 1 January to 18 September, already higher than the 75,090 detected for all of last year, according to the Brazilian space agency, INPE.—AFP

Twilight of the Tigris: Iraq's mighty river drying up

IT was the river that is said to have watered the biblical Garden of Eden and helped give birth to civilization itself.

But today the Tigris is dying.

Human activity and climate change have choked its once mighty flow through Iraq, where — with its twin river the Euphrates — it made Mesopotamia a cradle of civilisation thousands of years ago. Iraq may be oil-rich but the country is plagued by poverty after decades of war and by droughts and desertification.

Battered by one natural disaster after another, it is one of the five countries most exposed to climate change, according to the UN. From April on, temperatures exceed 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) and intense sandstorms often turn the sky orange, covering the country in a film of dust. Hellish summers see the mercury top a blistering 50 degrees Celsius — near the limit of human endurance — with frequent power cuts shutting down air-conditioning for millions.

The Tigris, the lifeline connecting the storied cities of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, has been choked by dams, most of them upstream in Türkiye, and falling rainfall.—AFP

Iraq is known in Arabic as the Land of the Two Rivers, but it has seen water levels on the once mighty Tigris and Euphrates plummet. Dry marsh of Chibayish, near the city of Nasiriyah, in southern Iraq. **PHOTO: HAIDAR HAMDANI/AFP WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CANDID FOUNDATION**

Pakistan kicks off COVID-19 vaccination campaign to inoculate children

PAKISTAN launched a COVID-19 vaccination campaign on Monday for children aged five to 11 in order to inoculate a maximum number of individuals to control the spread of the disease, the country's health ministry said.

In the first phase of the campaign, children will be vaccinated in the selected districts of the country's southern Sindh and eastern Punjab provinces along with the federal capital Islamabad, according to a statement released by the ministry.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony here, Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said that vaccinators would be going door to door in communities to vaccinate a maximum number of children in the country.

Patel said that children will be vaccinated after approval from their parents.—Xinhua

A teacher attends a class at a school on World Teachers' Day in Rawalpindi of Pakistan's Punjab province on 5 Oct 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/AHM/FILE**

Jordan on health, power grid alerts as heatwave lingers

JORDAN'S Health Ministry on Sunday warned of high temperatures as a dry heatwave will continue to affect the country for at least two days, advising the public to avoid sunlight exposure.

The elderly, children, and those with chronic diseases should be particularly careful about the health risks posed by the boiling heat, it warned in a statement. Meanwhile, Jordan Meteorological Department said the ongoing heatwave is rising temperatures by seven to eight degrees Celsius above the averages and is forecasted not to ease before Wednesday, state-run Petra news agency reported.

On Sunday, temperatures in the capital Amman are estimated to peak at 40 degrees, while in the Jordan Valley area at 45 degrees, according to the meteorological department.

People cool off in a spray of water from a water truck during a heatwave in Amman, Jordan, on 28 Aug 2022. Jordan's Health Ministry on Sunday warned of high temperatures as a dry heatwave will continue to affect the country for at least two days, advising the public to avoid sunlight exposure. **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ABU GHOSH/XINHUA**

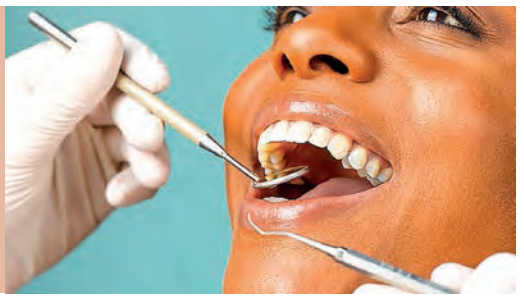
Meanwhile, the power grid in Jordan was burdened by surging demand, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said Sunday.

It noted that the electrical load on Saturday peaked at 3,580 megawatts, beating the previous load record of 3,400 megawatts during the current summer. — Xinhua

Poor periodontal health linked to risk of dementia: study

POOR periodontal health and tooth loss appear to increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia, according to a recent study conducted by the University of Eastern Finland.

In a press release issued on Monday, the university said that as the aging population increases, the disease burden caused by memory disorders is expected to surge. With no widely available disease-modifying drugs, prevention of cognitive decline and dementia by targeting modifiable factors, such as lifestyle choices, is critically important.



Maintaining good periodontal health is particularly important for people who already have some cognitive impairment. **PHOTO: MEDSCAPE**

The university's researchers in dentistry and neurology investigated the association of periodontal health with cognitive decline and dementia through a comprehensive systematic review consisting of meta-analyses and qualitative assessments of longitudinal studies.— Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mental health stigma major concern among youths in Fiji: experts

MENTAL health stigma is deeply rooted and has become a major concern amongst the youths in Fiji, said mental health and disability advocate Rosie Catherine on Tuesday.

During the Youth Mental Health Forum 2022, Catherine said some of the contributing factors of mental health issues are due to financial problems, depression, stress, gender based violence and trauma, according to reports by the Fijivillage news website on Tuesday.

She said there are some youths and students who do not speak about their problems and issues as they feel shy or scared of being judged. Therefore, to overcome and deal with these issues, there are university policies on students' well-being and creative safe spaces where students can express themselves through art, music and talk sessions to de-stress themselves.

Catherine said it is important that students do not give up hope and should always reach out to someone for help or seek a counsellor when feeling down.

President of the Fiji National University (FNU) Students Association Ketan Lal said FNU has a child protection policy, bully and harassment policy, counsellors and peer mentors in place for students who need counselling and support.—Xinhua

Dengue fever cases continue to rise in Pakistan

THE dengue fever cases in Pakistan continue to increase as a significant number of patients were reported in parts of the country during the last 24 hours, health authorities said on Monday.

One person died and a total of 276 patients were diagnosed with the disease in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in the last 24 hours, the provincial health department reported on Monday night. The number of active cases in KP is 1,610 and the total number of cases this year has reached 4,980.

Moreover, 152 new cases of dengue were reported in eastern Punjab province in the last 24 hours, the provincial health department said on Monday. Punjab's Rawalpindi city reported 71 patients while 47 people were diagnosed in its capital Lahore.

The total number of patients in Punjab throughout the year has moved up to 3,437.

The Pakistani government has launched an anti-dengue campaign including raising public awareness in response to the alarmingly high level of cases in the country, and has taken special measures at the dengue hotspots in order to curb the spread of the disease.—Xinhua

ECONOMY
WORLD

Hungary's anti-graft measures to get blocked EU funds

THE government of Hungarian nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban is proposing a raft of anti-graft measures to unlock billions of euros in blocked EU funds as the country confronts an economic downturn.

Here are key questions regarding the issue:

What to expect from the reforms?

The government tabled amendments in parliament on Monday with more to follow on Friday for a total of 17 key changes, which are expected to be waved through.

The measures aim to create independent anti-corruption watchdogs to monitor the use of EU funds and make the legislative process more transparent.

They follow a proposal on Sunday by the European Union's executive arm to suspend 7.5 billion euros ($7.5 billion) in financing for Hungary.

The government of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is under EU pressure to reform or lose funds. **PHOTO: APA/AFP/FILE**

The proposed suspension is over concerns that Orban, who has ruled Hungary since 2010, is undercutting the rule of law and using EU money to enrich cronies.

On Thursday, the European Parliament declared that Hungary was no longer a "full democracy" — a symbolic vote that infuriated Budapest.

Miklos Ligeti, head of legal affairs at the NGO Transparency International Hungary, said under Orban checks and balances had been dismantled and "a highly dysfunctional rules system" put in place.—AFP

Japan inflation at highest level since 2014

Soaring prices for consumer goods are hurting households around the globe, including in Japan. Items such as bread, corn, oil, gas, and noodles are costing more. A gas station in Nagano, Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

INFLATION in Japan hit 2.8 per cent in August, the highest level since 2014, government data showed Tuesday, as soaring energy prices bite.

The last time such figures were seen, prices had been artificially bolstered by an increase in VAT. Excluding years when tax hikes impacted the rate, August's inflation was the fastest pace in nearly 31 years.

Data from the internal affairs ministry showed electricity, gas and petrol were among the key contributors to rising prices.

The figure for August was slightly above the 2.7 per cent consensus forecast by experts, and comes on the heels of a 2.4 per cent rise in July.

It comes ahead of this week's meeting of the Bank of Japan, which has bucked the trend of peers elsewhere and stuck with its ultra-loose monetary policy.

Other central banks have opted to hike interest rates to fight soaring inflation, but the BoJ views the current price increases as temporary and linked to exceptional events such as the war in Ukraine.

The growing gulf between the bank's policy and rate hikes elsewhere has caused the yen to slump, reaching a decades-low level against the dollar.

The BoJ's longstanding target is for sustained two per cent inflation, which it views as necessary to turbocharge the world's third-largest economy.—AFP

China's construction sector makes great strides in past decade: report

CHINA'S construction sector has made marked headway in scale and structure in the past decade, official data showed Monday. In 2021, the total output value of construction enterprises nationwide reached 29.3 trillion yuan (about 4.22 trillion US dollars), up 1.14 times from 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics said in a report.

By the end of 2021, China had 2.26 million construction enterprises. From 2013 to 2021, the number of enterprises increased at an average annual rate of 6.1 per cent, achieving a leapfrog development in terms of the scale of the industry.

The construction sector also saw an improving structure. In 2021, the number of top-notch, first-class construction firms in China reached 16,000, up 84.3 per cent from 2012.

The industry has grown to become a major contributor to employment. In 2021, 81.8 million people were working in construction firms, ranking second only to the manufacturing sector in the capability of creating jobs, according to the report.—Xinhua

The construction sector saw an improving structure. In 2021, the number of top-notch, first-class construction firms in China reached 16,000, up 84.3 per cent from 2012. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran to soon import 9 mln-cubic metre Russian gas daily: ministry

THE Iranian Oil Ministry said on Monday the country will soon purchase nine million cubic metres per day of gas from Russia through Azerbaijan, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

The ministry announced the plan in a report providing details of a 40-billion-US dollar deal between the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Russia's state-owned gas producer Gazprom reached in July. The ministry added it will soon receive six million cubic metres per day of gas from Russia under a swap deal to export them in LNG (liquefied natural gas) to other countries from southern Iran.– Xinhua

World Bank asks Sahel nations to diversify economies

THE World Bank on Monday urged five West African countries to diversify their economies to adapt to climate change, warning they are extremely vulnerable to extreme weather patterns.

A report said Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger – all in the arid Sahel region – are among the least developed countries in the world and therefore the most vulnerable to extreme droughts, floods and heatwaves. It warned that millions were at risk or already experiencing food insecurity due to low agricultural production from extreme weather, rising insecurity and high food prices.–AFP

Toho Gas renews deal to buy Russian LNG for stable energy supply

TOHO Gas Co. has renewed its contract to purchase liquefied natural gas from the Sakhalin 2 oil and gas project in Russia, a company official said Tuesday, amid energy security concerns in resource-scarce Japan.

Toho Gas is the latest to join several other Japanese companies in continuing their investments in the Sakhalin 2 project. Its decision came after Russia established a new operator for the project in the Russian Far East following Western energy firms' investment withdrawals due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

An offshore drilling rig is seen near the northeast Sakhalin coast. Sakhalin is Russia's largest island. It's a 1,000-kilometre-long strip of land off the east coast of Russia and just north of Japan. **PHOTO: AFP**

Toho Gas has agreed with the new operator, established on 5 Aug under a decree by Russian President Vladimir Putin, on the same contract terms as the previous operator. Under the new deal, Toho Gas will still procure about 500,000 tons of LNG per year until 2033.

Nagoya-based Toho Gas, which depends on Sakhalin 2 for around 20 percent of its total LNG procurement, assured its customers that it will continue to strive for stable procurement of gas.

The contract with Toho Gas is the latest such agreement between the new operator and a Japanese energy company, following a string of firms that include Jera Co., a joint venture between Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. and Chubu Electric Power Co., as well as Kyushu Electric Power Co. and Hiroshima Gas Co. —Kyodo

Facebook parent Meta in EU setback against German rules

FACEBOOK'S parent company Meta on Tuesday suffered a setback in its challenge against German antitrust rules as a top adviser to the EU Court of Justice backed the regulator.

Meta's challenge came after it was banned by the German authority from collecting data from its various services including Instagram and WhatsApp, and linking the information to the Facebook account of the user for advertising purposes.

The German Federal Competition Authority had prohibited Meta from the data processing practice after finding that it constituted an abuse of the company's dominant position on the social network market.

Facebook had challenged the German decision at a court in Duesseldorf, which had sent the case on to the European court. On Tuesday, the EU court's advocate general said that while the antitrust authority does not have the jurisdiction to rule on an infringement of data protection rules, compliance with such rules could be taken as an "important indicator" in ascertaining if an entity has breached competition rules.—AFP

China EV builder Leapmotor chasing $1 bln Hong Kong IPO

CHINESE electric vehicle manufacturer Zhejiang Leapmotor Technology is hoping to raise more than $1 billion with an initial public offering in what would be the largest debut so far this year for Hong Kong.

The Hangzhou-headquartered company is offering around 131 million shares priced at HK$48-HK$62 ($6.10-$7.90), according to a prospectus filed with the Hong Kong stock exchange on Tuesday. The listing will be a test for investor appetite in China's EV sector, which has shown huge growth in recent years.

It has also so far avoided the kind of sudden scrutiny from mainland regulators that have bedevilled other tech sectors and hobbled profits in recent years.

China's electric car market is particularly competitive, with manufacturers jostling to take advantage of an industry boosted in recent months by generous purchase subsidies from local governments.

The Chinese government introduced a string of measures, including a tax break extension, in July to stimulate sales of electric cars against the backdrop of an economic slowdown. The measures are supposed to support the economy at a time when sporadic Covid-19 lockdowns around the country have dampened consumer enthusiasm and business confidence.

Founded in 2015, Leapmotor focuses on the mid to high-end EV market with a price range of 150,000 to 300,000 yuan ($21,400-$42,800).

Chinese manufacturers are also looking to build an overseas presence and raise capital to fund that expansion. Hong Kong is a popular listing destination given its proximity to China at a time when Washington and Beijing have clashed over the audit transparency of Chinese companies, some of which have delisted in the United States.—AFP

McDonald's re-opens in war-torn Ukraine, but for delivery only

MCDONALD'S in Kyiv reopened on Tuesday for the first time since Russia's invasion, a sign life was returning to normal in the capital after nearly seven months of war.

The US burger chain said in a statement earlier that after talks with Ukrainian officials, security specialists and suppliers" it would re-open at first for delivery only.

AFP reporters on Tuesday saw a queue of delivery company employees outside one of restaurants waiting to collect orders.

"In October, these three restaurants will fully re-open along with McDrive and express windows," McDonald's said in the statement."As part of the phased reopening programme, seven more stores in Kyiv will open, followed by additional restaurants in the capital and other cities in the west of the country," it added. McDonald's suspended operations in Ukraine on 24 February after Russia invaded. The highly-anticipated relaunch was seen by many Ukrainians as a symbolic show of support, with the chain shuttered in Russia.—AFP

Delivery workers gather at a McDonald restaurant to pick up orders in Kyiv. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2213S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2213S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-9-2022** 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 PROGRESS VOY.NO. (N029)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PROGRESS VOY.NO. (N029)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-9-2022** 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 INTER ASIA LINES

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukraine faces Russian resistance in frontline Kupiansk

UKRAINE'S troops retook almost all of the Kharkiv region in their lightning counter-offensive, but in the city of Kupiansk — split in two by the Oskil River — Russian forces are fighting to hold on.

So recent is the Ukrainian victory in Kupiansk, a rail hub, that billboards erected by President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party still loom over smashed shop fronts, while shells whistle overhead.

The Kharkiv region in northeast Ukraine was an early target of Russia's invasion in February this year, and Kyiv's counterattack this month was hailed as a potential turning point in the war.

In the past two weeks, Ukraine has pushed the Russians back from the fields around the regional capital Kharkiv and has liberated a string of villages — along with most of Kupiansk.

They have still not quite completed the symbolic feat of forcing Russia out of the entire Kharkiv region, and back into Donetsk, the eastern region the Kremlin insists was its main target all along.

On Monday, a steady stream of civilians were seeking transport out of Kupiansk, fleeing the shellfire and what locals said was the week-long failure of water and electricity supplies.—AFP

People walk past a destroyed building in Kupiansk, Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

UN summit returns in divided world

A general view shows the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City on 19 September 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE United Nations' massive annual summit returns in person Tuesday to a world divided by multiple crises starting with Ukraine.

After two years of pandemic restrictions and video addresses, the UN General Assembly is again asking leaders to come in person if they wish to speak — with a sole exception made for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. But the death of Queen Elizabeth II disrupted the summit anew. President Joe Biden of the United States, by tradition the second speaker on the first day, will instead speak on Wednesday.

The first day will feature French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the leaders of the two largest economies of the European Union, which has mobilized to impose tough sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"This year, Ukraine will be very high on the agenda. It will be unavoidable," top EU diplomat Josep Borrell told reporters in New York. "There are many other problems, we know. But the war in Ukraine has been sending shock waves around the world."

But UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been urging leaders not to forget other priorities such as education, the topic of a special summit on Monday.

"Education is in a deep crisis. Instead of being the great enabler, education is fast becoming the great divide," Guterres told the summit. He warned that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on learning, with poor students lacking technology at a particular disadvantage, and conflicts further disrupting schools. In a report earlier this month, the UN Development Programme said Covid has set back humanity's progress by five years.—AFP

Ukrainian strike in Donetsk kills 13: Kremlin-backed authorities

KREMLIN-BACKED authorities in the east Ukrainian city of Donetsk said Monday that a strike by Ukraine's forces in the Russian-controlled city had left more than a dozen people dead.

"Initial information shows that as a result of punitive shelling… in the Kuibyshevskyi district (of Donetsk), 13 civilians died. The number of people injured is being determined," the Moscow-backed mayor of the city wrote in a social media statement carried by Russian news agencies.

Donetsk, with a pre-war population of around one million people, has been partially controlled by Moscow-backed separatists since 2014. —AFP

WORLD: TOP STORIES

Canadians say goodbye to queen with horseback parade, Corgi gathering

THOUSANDS of Canadians braved cold and rain to say goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II on Monday, bringing out Corgis and fancy brooches as they lined the streets of the capital for a parade.

People stood solemnly beneath a sea of umbrellas in Ottawa to watch Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on horseback and a military brass band march past Parliament – a few hours after her London funeral.–AFP

Tonga volcano erupts eight times in two days

A volcano north of Tonga's main island has erupted eight times in the past 48 hours, according to the Pacific nation's geological service, which has warned mariners to keep their distance Tuesday.

The Home Reef volcano has been erupting for the past 10 days, oozing molten lava and shooting steam and ash at least three kilometres (almost two miles) into the air.

Home Reef's eruption currently poses a low risk to "residents of Vava'u and Ha'apai" — two of Tonga's most populated islands — the geological service's Volcano Watch Team said in a statement.

Seismic activity is fairly common around Tonga, a small archipelago nation with about 100,000 people spread across 171 islands. **PHOTO: TWITTER/1NEWSNZ/AFP**

But warning levels were raised by one notch Tuesday as the pace of eruptions quickened.

Pilots have been warned to take caution when flying through airspace near the volcano after the aviation alert level for the Home Reef was raised to orange, one step below an emergency.

Mariners have been told not to sail closer than four kilometres from Home Reef and to look out for falling ash.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Japan, S. Korea agree to seek early resolution of wartime labour issue

Protesters rally in front of the Seoul District Court in June 2021 after the court dismissed a wartime labour compensation lawsuit. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

THE foreign ministers of Japan and South Korea agreed Monday that the two nations will continue discussions toward an early resolution of the issue of wartime labour compensation.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters that he and his South Korean counterpart Park Jin welcomed working-level talks on the issue when they met in New York on the fringes of the UN General Assembly's annual gathering.

As for a possible summit between Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol when they are both in New York, Hayashi said, "Nothing has yet been decided," stopping short of clarifying whether the matter was brought up during their talks.

Seoul had said the two leaders were arranging a meeting on Tuesday or Wednesday in the US city. The foreign ministerial meeting came as South Korea is exploring how to deal with the issue of court orders to liquidate assets in the country seized from two Japanese companies that had been sued over alleged forced labour during Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

The companies have not complied with the compensation orders as Tokyo maintains that all claims stemming from its colonial rule, including compensation for Koreans forced to work, were settled "completely and finally" under a bilateral agreement signed in 1965.

A public-private consultative body was set up in July, with Yoon's government seeking to prevent the liquidation of Japanese corporate assets in the hope of avoiding a further deterioration in bilateral relations.— Kyodo

Anti-terror probe of Tunisia opposition chief delayed

THE leader of Tunisia's Islamist-inspired opposition party Ennahdha is set to be questioned Tuesday by an anti-terrorism unit, his lawyer said, after another senior party member faced hours of interrogation.

Ennahdha categorically denies the claims that its leader, Rached Ghannouchi, and Tunisia's former prime minister Ali Laarayedh were involved in sending jihadist militants to Syria and Iraq. The accusations have resurfaced after President Kais Saied tightened his grip on the judiciary, following the suspension of the Ennahdha-dominated parliament last year.

Ghannouchi had arrived at the headquarters of the anti-terrorism centre on Monday afternoon for questioning, according to an AFP reporter in the capital Tunis, several hours after his deputy Laarayedh.—AFP

Rached Ghannouchi, head of Tunisia's Islamist Ennahda party, arrives for questioning in July 2022 in a separate anti-terrorist unit probe. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Matteo and Giorgia: Italy's far-right rivals set for power

MATTEO Salvini was once the poster boy of Italy's far-right but the popularity of Giorgia Meloni has reduced him to a junior — and potentially disruptive — partner in their election coalition.

Final opinion polls last week put Meloni's post-fascist Brothers of Italy at more than 24 per cent ahead of Sunday's election, around twice that of Salvini's anti-immigration League. Such a result on election day would allow her to claim the post of prime minister and decide the direction of their coalition, which also includes former premier Silvio Berlusconi's more moderate right-wing Forza Italia.

It would be a disappointing turnout for Salvini, who was propelled to power after winning 17 per cent of the vote in 2018 general elections, and securing a stunning 34 per cent in the vote for the European Parliament the following year.

A key question will be whether the League leader can accept this diminished position or make trouble on issues — notably the Ukraine war — on which he disagrees with Meloni.

Fratelli D'Italia party leader Giorgia Meloni attends a rally for the elections in Piazza Roma on 30 May 2022 in Monza, Italy **PHOTO: ALESSANDRO BREMEC/AFP**

Arrogance

From his blunt criticism of the European Union, Muslims and Roma, his overt Catholicism — brandishing a rosary on the campaign trail — to his bare-chested partying by the sea, Salvini, 49, has cultivated an image as a man of the people.—AFP

French leader to meet Iran's Raisi to urge revival of deal

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron will meet Tuesday with his Iranian counterpart as Paris warns the clerical state that it will not get a better proposal to revive a nuclear accord.

The Elysee Palace said Macron will meet President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York and with US President Joe Biden the next day.

"We'll see what this week brings," French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna told reporters earlier Monday. "The window of opportunity seems ready to close again."

"We are repeatedly saying... there is no better offer for Iran," she said. "It's up to them to make a decision." Raisi, in an interview with CBS News' "60 Minutes," said he was open to a "good" deal but pressed for guarantees from Biden that the United States will not again leave the accord under a future leader -- a promise that the US administration considers impossible. Former president Donald Trump pulled out of the 2015 deal under which Iran drastically scaled back nuclear work in return for promises of sanctions relief.—AFP

SPORT

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Myanmar National Team players take their special training ahead of the international friendly match against host Hong Kong. **PHOTO: MFF**

Myanmar team to play friendly matches against Hong Kong on 21 and 24 September

THE Myanmar national team and the Hong Kong national team will play warm-up matches in the September international week designated by the World Football Federation (FIFA).

The friendly matches will be held on 21 and 24 September.

The first match will be played behind closed doors at 6:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time on 21 September, the second match will be played on 24 September and fans will be allowed to watch.

The Myanmar national team started preparing for the friendly match against the Hong Kong national team on the morning of 16 September with 25 preliminary players, 21 players of whom were selected.

The Myanmar national team left Yangon on the morning of 18 September, with head coach Anthony Haye taking 21 players including goalkeeper Kyaw Zin Phyo, Defender David Htan, Midfielder Hlaing Bo Bo, and Striker Win Naing Tun.

Team Myanmar and the Hong Kong national team are playing for the second time this year. In May, they played a training match in Thailand to a goalless draw. — 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.

RECOVERING BARCA PREDICT 1.3 BILLION EURO REVENUE

Robert Lewandowski speaks at his unveiling as a Barcelona player in August. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

BARCELONA have forecast revenue of 1.255 billion euros ($1.254 billion) for the 2022-23 season, with a predicted profit of 274 million euros.

THE Spanish side have been under great economic stress in recent years but gained financial leverage this summer with a string of operations which allowed them to strengthen the team.

Barca signed Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski, Sevilla defender Jules Kounde, Leeds United winger Raphinha and various other players on free transfers.

They were able to do this after selling 25 per cent of their television rights to investment firm Sixth Street for the next 25 years, raising over 500 million euros. Barcelona also sold 24.5 per cent of their Barca Studios production company to fan token firm Socios.com and the same amount again to Orpheus Media, for around 100 million euros each.—AFP

Nations League games offer last chance to prepare for World Cup

A hectic schedule of club football ahead of the World Cup is interrupted this week as national teams get a last chance to finetune their preparations before travelling to Qatar for the start of the tournament on 20 November.

Holding the World Cup in the middle of the European season is having major consequences for clubs but also for coaches of national teams.

While domestic competitions bear the brunt of the upheaval to the calendar as they are forced to halt a week before the opening game in Qatar, that also means there will be next to no time for squads to work together before beginning their World Cup campaigns.

Extra importance is therefore placed on events over the next week, as European sides complete the UEFA Nations League group stage while other contenders play friendly matches, including back-to-back games for Brazil on French soil against Ghana and Tunisia. —AFP