THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IX, No. 210, 5th Waning of Tazaungmone 1384 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Saturday, 12 November 2022

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.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Director of Fund RC-Investments from Russian Federation and party

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Director Mr Shatirov Alexander Sergeevich of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation at the parlour of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They discussed cooperation in the finance and monetary system between the two countries, trade promotion measures, plans to put investments from Russia in Myanmar, export of value-added products made of agriculture and livestock, minerals and natural resources from Myanmar to Russia, further promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation and future plans.

After the meeting, the Senior General and the Director of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation exchanged commemorative gifts and posed for documentary photos together with those present.

Also present at the meeting were Union ministers U Win Shein, U Tin Htut Oo, U Hla Moe and U Khin Maung Yi, Chairman of the Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw and officials. The Director of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation was accompanied by delegation members. — MNA

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents the commemorative gift to the director of Fund RC-Investments.

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MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Aung Kyaw Soe from the Ministry of Defence as Director-General of the Department of Urban and Housing Development under the Ministry of Construction on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

65 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 11 November, total figure rises to 632,587

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 632,587 after 65 new cases were reported on 11 November 2022 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 606,858 including 67 new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at 19,486 on Thursday with no new deaths reported from the pandemic.

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with Covid. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive Covid-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways.

Covid-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health.—MNA

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Myanmar rejects ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on Implementation of five-point consensus which was issued after 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs learnt the issuance of the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the five-point consensus at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits which were held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 11 November 2022.

The current Chair of ASEAN invited a non-political representative from Myanmar to attend the said meetings due to the demand made by some ASEAN member states. Such action of unequal representation contradicts Article 5 of the ASEAN Charter on "Rights and Obligations". Since Myanmar fully adheres to the basic principles and provisions enshrined in the ASEAN Charter while actively participating in ASEAN as a responsible member state, Myanmar did not accept the invitation which discriminates the level of representation among the Member States.

The Ministry learnt that the ASEAN Leaders' review and decision on the implementation of the five-point consensus did not factually reflect the on-ground situation and did not include any constructive efforts made by the Myanmar government in the implementation of the five-point consensus. Some expressions in the document amount to interference in the internal affairs of one member state and were contrary to the basic principles and provisions in the ASEAN Charter. Therefore, Myanmar categorically rejects and dissociates itself from the said review and decision made by the nine ASEAN leaders.

As a responsible member state of ASEAN, Myanmar has been constructively cooperating with the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair in implementing the ASEAN five-point consensus. To achieve ever-lasting peace and stability in every corner of the country, the Government has already declared a unilateral ceasefire and the Head of State himself is holding several rounds of dialogues with Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) including in facilitating the delivery of broader humanitarian assistance to the population, without any discrimination, in cooperation with the AHA Centre. Therefore, Myanmar is disappointed that ASEAN ignores the notable progress made by Myanmar in the implementation of the five-point consensus.

The ministry also strongly objects to the inappropriate usage to refer Myanmar government and Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) that take responsibility for the State under the Constitution.

The Ministry regrettably observed that the Statement calls for the engagement with all parties concerned which is referring to the groups who have been committing terrorist acts to disturb the government's efforts. Such calls for engagements with the said unlawful and terrorist organizations could encourage terrorist activities while violating Article 2 of the ASEAN Charter as well as the ASEAN and International Conventions on counter terrorisms. Therefore, Myanmar strongly objects to and condemns the attempts by ASEAN member states to engage with those unlawful and terrorist organizations through any means and forms.

Since implementing the five-point consensus is a process, inserting additional pressure by setting a timeframe will create more negative implications than positive ones.

Indeed, a one-sided and malicious approach towards Myanmar, including blocking Myanmar from further participation in the ASEAN meetings by giving inappropriate reasons such as lack of improvement in the implementation of the five-point consensus, could provoke the disturbance of ASEAN Community building, ASEAN Unity, Centrality and ASEAN spirit. Such attempts totally neglect Myanmar's active participation in the work of ASEAN since its joining of ASEAN in 1997 as well as the Myanmar government's ongoing efforts to reinstate a multiparty democracy.

The Ministry reaffirms that Myanmar will continue to adhere to Article 20 of the ASEAN Charter on decision-making by "consultation and consensus" by all ten ASEAN member states. Myanmar objects to any discussion or decisions without the involvement of the country concerned.

The Ministry reiterates its call to the ASEAN Member States to follow the provisions and fundamental principles of the ASEAN Charter, especially non-interference in the internal affairs of the member states. The Ministry reminds us that failure to do so would be counterproductive and creates negative impacts on the ASEAN Centrality and Unity. – MNA

APF Virtual Dialogue on Climate Change and Human Rights: Role of NHRIs meeting held

THE "APF Virtual Dialogue on Climate Change and Human Rights: Role of National Human Rights Institutions" meeting, jointly organized by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Organizations Forum (APF), was held via zoom platform yesterday afternoon.

Representatives of national human rights organizations that are APF member countries, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman U Hla Myint, Vice-Chair Dr Nanda Hmun, members U Paw Lwin Sein, Dr Than Myint and Dr Tin Maung Maung Than and officials also attended the meeting.

APF Secretariat Principal Advisor Ms Pip Dargan moderated the discussion and gave an opening speech.

In the panel session, the MNHRC chairperson spoke about the country's actions related to climate change and discusses the commission's cooperation in climate change and the roles of women as a vulnerable group due to climate change.

Director Dr Renante Basas at the National Human Rights Commission of the Philippines, Maldives Human Rights Commission Chair Ms Mariyam Muna, Human Rights Commission of India Chair Mr Justice Arun Mishra and APF Counsel Mr Romulo Nayacalevu discussed national climate change impacts and climate change actions, climate change law, policy-making issues, cooperation issues involving civil society organizations and national human rights organizations.

Finally, participants held the panellists' discussions and presentations. — MNA

It is beneficial for restoring peace of the nation and development of all regions

UNDERSTANDING the armed conflicts and disagreements which cannot shape development of the nation, and plans to restore peace for undertaking development tasks, plans to discuss shaping the peace progress beneficial for restoring peace of the nation and development of all regions,

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the peace talk with the peace delegations led by Chair of the Pa-O National Liberation Organization-PNLO Khun Thurein, Chair of the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU Kyar Solomon and Vice-Chair of the Arakan Liberation Party-ALP Saw Mra Razar Lin on 22 August 2022)

The government pledged to strive for successfully holding a free, fair and transparent election: Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the SAC meeting 9/2022 in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 November 2022.

ONLY when the correct election and public-accepted election can be held in all areas will the forthcoming government successfully carry out the tasks, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the SAC meeting 9/2022 at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his speech, the Senior General said ethnic armed organizations were invited to talk about the peace for restoration of internal peace. The talks based on the Constitution (2008) and the nationwide ceasefire agreement-NCA was participated by 10 ethnic armed organizations. The government explained the measures to be taken under the law at the talks. To do so, it is necessary to submit it to the Hluttaw which is the highest political platform. The Hluttaw must comprise ethnic representatives who are capable of discussing ethnic affairs and regional affairs. Some organizations accepted the PR system for the participation of ethnic nationals in the Hluttaw. Further talks are being held with EAOs. The Senior General disclosed to reach an agreement in December. Remarkable progress can be seen in the peace talks. The forthcoming general elections are sure to cover all ethnic areas left in the previous elections.

Encouraging MSMEs to improve State economy

Operation of manufacturing based on local raw materials is the best business. The government aims to operate manufacturing activities to improve the internal economy, ensure import substitutes and increase export goods. Relevant ministries conduct training courses to turn out human resources while private businesses also open training courses to contribute much to the MSME industries. Region and state authorities need to establish agricultural and livestock zones to encourage MSMEs to manufacture basic products.

Trading to improve State economy

Every country is striving for booming the State economy. The trade sector is being implemented through 25 per cent of land borders and 75 per cent of shipping routes. In the border trade measure, agriculture and livestock products are mainly exported to neighbouring China and Thailand. Hence, it is necessary to further strive for the State economy.

Efforts of Tatmadaw to non-disintegrate unity of the nation

Tatmadaw is a part of the nation and the people. The Tatmadaw made the best cooperation with previous democratic governments in two terms. Friendly relations between the people and Tatmadaw are the best for the nation. Tatmadaw will stand forever and the people as well. Unity is the strength of the nation. Tatmadaw is carrying out the non-disintegration of the unity of the nation.

Efforts for holding the election

Efforts are being made to hold the election on schedule. The multiparty democratic general election must be free and fair. Only when the correct election and public-accepted election can be held in all areas will the forthcoming government successfully carry out the tasks. Political parties and elected representatives must be reliable for the people.

The SAC members discussed preparation for successfully exercising the PR system, taking action for illegal mining of jade stones, reviewing the tax levying over gem trading, amendment for long-term assignment of the Union Election Commission, the assistance of the Union government for development of MSMEs in Rakhine State, preventive measures against terror acts to the electoral process, and celebrating the Xmas festival in Nay Pyi Taw in 2022.

The SAC Secretary reported on amendments and supplements to the Political Parties Registration Law with the discussions of meeting participants.

In conclusion, the Senior General pledged to take effective action against terror acts through the judicial estate. The term of the Union Election Commission can be amended at the Hluttaw. Preventive measures will be taken against illegal jade mining and excavation of rare earth elements. The government in its term has paid back US$1,495 million of the State income to the foreign debts through trade incomes, income from foreign investment and taxes. For the prestige of the State, the current government yearly pays back the foreign loans of the previous government. Efforts will be made for developing the internal economy and increasing domestic production and export commodities. The government pledged to strive for successfully holding a free, fair and transparent election.
— MNA

Committee on Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers holds 2/2022 meeting

MoD Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo presides over the meeting 2/2022 of the Committee on Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, Chairman of the Committee on the Prevention of Recruitment of Child Soldiers, presided over the committee's 2/2022 meeting yesterday.

Speaking at the event, the Union minister said Tatmadaw discharged 597 child soldiers till 27 June 2012 before signing the Plan of Action with CTFMR (Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting).

The government and CTFMR signed the Plan of Action for the prevention of child soldier recruitment on 27 June 2012 to remove Tatmadaw (army) from the list of the UN Secretary-General.

According to the action plan, Tatmadaw released wrongly recruited 1,029 child soldiers to reunite with their parents by cooperating with CTFMR and also sent 28 confirmed child soldiers back to their parents on 13 May 2022, totalling 1,057 to date.

It was also systematically scrutinizing the recruitment programmes of Tatmadaw. Moreover, Tatmadaw is recruiting newcomers in line with the prescriptions, laws, rules and regulations of the committee and CTFMR.

Education programmes are launched by cooperating with the ministries concerned and the work progress will be reported to CTFMR, he added.

Then, attendees coordinated discussions before the committee chairman concluded the meeting. — MNA

Work Committee on Reception & Dinner for Diamond Jubilee Independence Day holds first coordination meeting

THE Work Committee on Organizing the Reception and Dinner of the 75th Anniversary of Independence Day, Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, held the first coordination meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was chaired by Work Committee on Diamond Jubilee Independence Day Reception and Dinner Chairman Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Committee members, chairpersons of subcommittees and officials from relevant departments also attended the meeting.

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin delivered an opening address and chairpersons and officials from subcommittees discussed the progress of their assignments.

Afterwards, the Union minister gave the necessary instructions before concluding the meeting. — MNA

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin chairs the first coordination meeting yesterday.

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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MoI concludes training course 2/2022 on documentary video editing, photo shooting and news writing

THE Ministry of Information held the closing ceremony of the training course 2/2022 on documentary video editing, photo shooting and news writing at the ministry's assembly hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn highlighted the understanding of the importance, significance and depth of media by the trainees during the three-week training course, activities of the department along with the advancement of technology amid the fast information flow on social media, quality news video presentations and systematic records in reporting the news to the public via the media sector.

He also talked about the spreading of misinformation and false news by some media outlets for psychological warfare using media without any ethics.

He then urged trainees to apply knowledge, skills and experiences in providing proper news presentations with precise and accurate news, news photos and videos to the public.

Next, the Union minister and the deputy minister presented training certificates to trainees.

The three-week training course was attended by 46 trainees from 12 ministries and taught camera function, photo shooting steps, news video production, documentary video recording, news editing, news writing, online news writing style and do's and don'ts for online news writers. — MNA

MoI Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn poses for the documentary photo together with attendees at the event yesterday.

MIFER Union Minister attends 21st ASEAN AECC Meeting and related meetings

THE delegation led by Myanmar AECC Lead, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw participated in the 21st ASEAN Economic Community Council (AECC) Meeting and related meetings which were held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 9-10 November 2022.

The Union minister attended the opening ceremony of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit which was held at 8:30 am local time in Cambodia on 10 November 2022. Prime Minister Mr Hun Sen of Cambodia addressed the keynote speech.

Afterwards, the Union minister joined the 21st AECC meeting which was held from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. At the meeting, the ministers discussed matters pertaining to the implementation status of 19 priority economic deliverables under Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022, the progress of cross-sectoral/pillar work which covers the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, Fourth Industrial Revolution, ASEAN digital transformation initiatives and ASEAN sustainability agenda, follow-up action to the AEC mid-term review (MTR) recommendations and the status of development of the AEC core elements for ASEAN's post-2025 vision. During the meeting, the ministers endorsed the 21st AECC report to the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits and 2022 AECC outcome documents and considered the draft text of the AEC section of the ASEAN's Chairman Statement.

MIFER Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw takes the group photo at the 21st ASEAN Economic Community Council (AECC) Meeting in Cambodia.

The Union Minister discussed the matters relating to intensifying the efforts of relevant AEC sectoral bodies for completing the remaining PEDs in a targeted timeline and incorporating the review of the implementation of ongoing ASEAN digital transformation initiatives and the analysis of the digital readiness level of ASEAN member states when ASEAN conducts the study for the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement.

At the Special AEM-CER Consultations held from 1:30 pm to 6:30 pm, the ministers provided the necessary guidance on the remaining issues towards the substantial conclusion of the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) upgrade negotiations.

The second AEM-UK Consultation was conducted from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The ministers exchanged views on regional and global economic developments and noted the progress of economic cooperation activities between ASEAN and the UK (2021-2022). In addition, the ministers endorsed the work plan to implement the ASEAN-UK Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation.

The meetings were chaired by Mr Pan Sorasak, Minister for Commerce of Cambodia and attended by ASEAN Economic Community Council Ministers, senior economic officials (SEOM), the deputy secretary-general of the ASEAN Secretariat and representatives. The meetings were joined by U Thit Linn Ohn, Ambassador of Myanmar to Cambodia, Dr Marlar Myo Nyunt, Myanmar SEOM Lead, Director General of the Foreign Economic Relations Department and responsible persons together with the Union minister.

During the meetings, the Union minister signed the Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Agreement on the Movement of Natural Persons. In addition, Union Minister attended the gala dinner and ASEAN business awards ceremony, hosted by the chairman of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council 2022 which was held from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm on 9 November. The Union minister also attended the opening ceremony of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits on the morning of 11 November. — MNA

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increasing of death rate based on the disease.

Announcement of Basic Reference Rice Price No 1/2022

11 November 2022

UNDER the provisions of the Law on the Protection of Farmers' Rights and the Promotion of Interests, the basic reference price for the rice crop to be produced in order to create a fair price and market for the farmers who grow rice crops has been announced as follows.

The basic reference price of 100 baskets of paddy, each basket weighing 46 pounds, will be K630,000 if the grains have a moisture content of 14 per cent, are free of dust, sand, and gravel, and meet the set standards.

If the market price is above the basic reference rice price, then have to buy according to the market price, and if the market price is below the basic reference rice price, have to buy according to the basic price. The current basic reference rice price is intended for 2022 monsoon rice and 2023 summer rice.

Farmers who have inconvenience selling at the basic price can contact the township agents of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) and 01-2301128, 01-2301129 and 01-218266 of MRF head office.

Protection of Peasant Rights
Interest Promotion Leading Body

Myanmar imports over 3,500 tonnes of cement via sea route in Oct

Cement bags for sale are seen in the market.

MYANMAR imported over 3,500 tonnes of cement worth US$0.360 million from foreign countries through maritime trade in October, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The country brought in over 3,000 tonnes from Thailand, over 400 from China and about 150 from Malaysia. The seaborne import of cement saw an increase of 900 tonnes compared to the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, the country imported over 25,000 tonnes of cement worth $2.034 million from the neighbouring country Thailand through the cross-border trade posts in October. The cross-border import indicated an increase of 2,800 tonnes from the year-ago period.

The cement prices were stable in the domestic market in the second week of November, ranging from K10,200 to K14,000 per bag depending on different brands.— TWA/GNLM

An oil tanker is seen unloading fuel oil at a fuel station.

Local fuel oil prices decline slightly

THE fuel oil prices are falling in the market according to the market prices on 9 November, the data of the Supervisory Committee on Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil showed.

Starting in early November, the petroleum price was over K2,000 per litre and now it is over K2,100 per litre.

In the Yangon market, it was K2,095 per litre of 92 Octane, K2,210 per litre of 95 Octane, K2,640 per litre of diesel and K2,715 per litre of premium diesel on 9 November.

On 8 November, the prices stood at K2,135 per litre of 92 Octane, K2,250 per litre for 95 Octane, K2,655 per litre for diesel and K2,725 per litre for premium diesel.

On 7 November, 92 Octane was priced at K2,115 per litre while K2,230 for 95 Octane, K2,650 for diesel and K2,720 for premium diesel. Therefore, fuel prices are increasing.

The prices show a decline when compared to the prices of 8 and 9 November.

Over four million gallons of fuel oil are unloaded at Thilawa Port and further about seven million gallons will be unloaded soon and so the county has sufficient quantities of fuel, according to Supervisory Committee on Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil. — TWA/GNLM

Illegal timbers, consumer goods, raw chemicals and vehicles confiscated

SUPERVISED by the Mandalay Region Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force, an on-duty team conducted inspections at the Latpanhla-Singu Temporary Checkpoint on 9 November.

Officials confiscated 4.929 tonnes of illegal teak doors, windows, and sawn teak worth K5,871,520 from two Nissan Diesel vehicles (estimated value of K70 million). The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, officials led by the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force of Yangon International Ports nabbed K1,155,000 worth of consumer goods that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal Container Checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs Procedures.

On 10 November, an on-duty team made inspections at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) Combined Checkpoint and captured K19,818,750 worth of flowerpots, plastic resins and car engines without official documents from a Mitsubishi Fuso car with a trailer (estimated value of K80 million). The action was taken under Customs Procedures.

Therefore, nine arrests (at an estimated value of K176,845,270) were made on 9 and 10 November, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. — MNA

Confiscated illegal goods in Kayin State (top and above photos).

Drugs seized in Ywangan and Loilem townships of Shan State

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched an AD Van at the Myogyi village checkpoint of Ywangan township at 11 am on 9 November. A total of 11.1 kilogrammes of raw opium were found in the car.

At 1:35 pm on 10 November, Myanmar Police Force searched an express bus and arrested a passenger, Ko Than Than Aung, with 10 kilogrammes of Ice worth K140 million on the Loilem-Taunggyi Road in Loilem township.

The suspects are prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, the Myanmar Police Force stated. — MNA

LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar ships over 177,000 tonnes of corn in Oct

MYANMAR'S corn exports to foreign countries generated revenue of more than US$53 million from over 177,000 tonnes in October, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar delivered 174,970 tonnes of corn worth $52.377 million to foreign countries by sea, while 2,870 tonnes of corn worth $0.855 million were sent to neighbouring countries via the cross-border routes.

Myanmar shipped corn to the Philippines (85,860 tonnes), Viet Nam (71,110 tonnes), Bangladesh (over 13,500 tonnes), 3,000 tonnes (Sri Lanka), China (780 tonnes), Malaysia (over 600 tonnes) and Hong Kong (nearly 100 tonnes) by sea.

The FOB price of corn was $290-310 per metric ton, according to the Bayintnaung Commodity Depot.

The prices of corn move in the range between K1,110 and K1,130 per viss.

Myanmar shipped corn to Viet Nam and the Philippines by sea, according to Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

A container vessel is pictured loading and unloading at Yangon Port.

A total of 112 companies have been given the go-ahead for maize export and some companies commence exporting, said U Aye Chan Aung, chair of the association.

Thailand gives green light to corn imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposed a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn imports to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand.

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.

Therefore, the export earnings of the corn have to be exchanged for US dollars according to the reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar (K2,100), making the traders tough financially.

Nonetheless, there is a large gap between the regulated rate and the unauthorized rate of the US dollar (over K3,000).

Myanmar exported 2.3 million tonnes of corn to foreign trade partners in the 2020-2021 financial year. The majority of them were sent to Thailand and the remaining went to China, India and Viet Nam.

At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons winter, summer and monsoon. The country produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn every year. — NN/GNLM

Price of peanut seed for planting stable; peanut price for oil drops

Farm workers are seen collecting peanuts.

THE price of peanut seed for planting is stable, while the price of peanut for consumption or oil extraction is declining, according to the Mandalay market.

Some growers are preparing for peanut planting in some regions. Consequently, peanut seeds were priced up to K6,000 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes).

Nevertheless, peanuts were harvested in some areas and entered the markets in large volumes. Therefore, the prices of peanuts for oil and consumption dropped.

On 1 September, the peanut prices moved in the range between K6,800 and K7,200 per viss depending on varieties, whereas the prices declined to K4,800-5,700 per viss on 10 November. The figures reflected a sharp decrease of K1,800 per viss within two months.

Meanwhile, peanut oil prices decreased to K11,000 per viss in the Mandalay market. Early last September, the peanut price peaked at K14,500 per viss in the markets.

Last April, the world's top palm oil exporter Indonesia, which is one of the main oil suppliers to Myanmar, declared an export ban on cooking oil export to reduce the domestic shortage. Consequently, Myanmar's Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce temporarily suspended exports of oil crops (peanut and sesame) from 9 May to have oil self-sufficiency

Exports of Myanmar's edible oil crops resumed as the world's top palm oil exporters returned to normalcy, according to a notification dated 5 July 2022 released by the Trade Department. — NN/GNLM

Rubber price slides to K1,300 per pound

THE price of rubber went down to K1,300 per pound, according to the rubber market in Mon State.

The price of rubber hit K1,600 per pound in the third week of September. The prices gradually declined to K1,250 per pound of sundried local 3 and K1,290 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3.

Global demand for rubber, rubber production of the Southeast Asian nations and the market supply are contributing factors to the rubber price condition of Myanmar.

The rubber price in Mon State, a major rubber production state in Myanmar, is positively related to those facts as well, the traders elaborated.

Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres. About 300,000 tonnes of rubber is produced annually across the country.

Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

Myanmar bagged more than US$449 million in revenue in rubber exports in the previous financial year 2020-2021.—NN/GNLM

Latex runs out and collects in a cup.

OPINION

Naypyitaw State Academy, a unique higher education institution

NAY Pyi Taw Capital is the administrative city of the Union territory where government offices open. These offices are operated with the recruitment of local people residing around the Nay Pyi Taw Capital.

Offspring of staff from government departments and organizations and local people from Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory need to learn higher education for their further studies. As such, the government established the Naypyitaw State Academy in the Zabuthiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

> To be a reliable higher education institution in Nay Pyi Taw, the academy will be facilitated with modern teaching techniques, curricula and teaching aid, modern laboratory accessories and libraries for meeting set standards. The academy must more focus on the qualification of students than quantity. In the future, it is necessary to turn out a large number of qualified scholars.

The newly-inaugurated Naypyitaw State Academy creates learning opportunities for the youths from Nay Pyi Taw Capital to continue their further learning. It was reported that the academy will admit third and fourth years' students this academic year for day classes. Year after year, the academy will extend its academic plan to admit first and second years' students.

As part of providing facilities, students will have the ferries for attending the classes of the academy this academic year. In the future, plans are underway to admit university students to stay in hostels for convenient pursuing education. In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, the academy was established to turn out qualified educated youths to be leaders of the nation in the future.

Currently, the academy is formed with lecture buildings and halls, the assembly hall, academic and administrative offices, laboratories, practical rooms and a library for students. Hostels for faculty members are under construction on the campus of the academy. These physical infrastructures will contribute much to turning out the well-versed human resources for the State.

The academy is slated to conduct master's courses and doctoral courses to uplift the education qualification so as to keep abreast of Yangon University and Mandalay University. Hence, it is necessary to set up faculties such as arts, science, law, economic, medical, social and sports arenas. In addition to the strengths of the academy's subject-wise faculty members, highly qualified experts from relevant government departments in Nay Pyi Taw will be recruited to share their invaluable experiences with the students so as to widen their scope.

To be a reliable higher education institution in Nay Pyi Taw, the academy will be facilitated with modern teaching techniques, curricula and teaching aid, modern laboratory accessories and libraries for meeting set standards. The academy must more focus on the qualification of students than quantity. In the future, it is necessary to turn out a large number of qualified scholars. ■

ARTICLE

Setting Civil Service Standards

By U AC

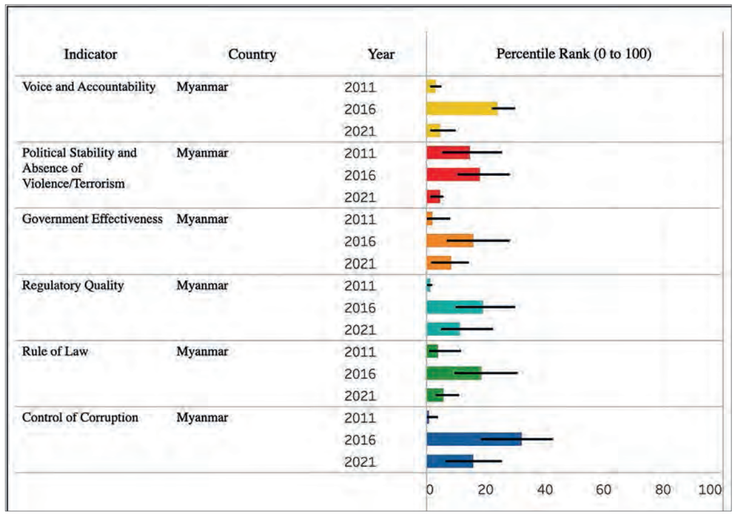
MYANMAR has consistently been treated as a pariah state by the West in the recent past and now ASEAN is, unfortunately, following the same path. Maybe the government is genuinely misunderstood or grossly incompetent in global communications, yet we were treated as if the government as well as the country is a danger to the world. Quite on the contrary, in fact.

Let's look at one of the statistics that made the world determine that we are short on governance and ways to overcome this sentiment through improvement in civil service standards.

Through looking at the World Governance Indicators, we can see that Myanmar is at around the 20 percentile mark, indicating the percentage of the country in the world with a lower ranking than Myanmar. It has improved significantly between 2011 to 2016, during the boom years of President Thein Sein's administration, yet the numbers dropped by more than 50 per cent at the end of the Su Kyi rule.

Indicator	Country	Year	Number of Sources	Governance (-2.5 to +2.5)	Percentile Rank	Standard Error
Voice and Accountability	Myanmar	2011	11	-1.85	3.29	0.12
		2016	10	-0.80	24.14	0.13
		2021	9	-1.66	4.83	0.13
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	Myanmar	2011	5	-1.11	14.69	0.26
		2016	7	-0.80	18.10	0.21
		2021	6	-2.07	4.72	0.24
Government Effectiveness	Myanmar	2011	6	-1.60	2.37	0.24
		2016	9	-0.99	15.87	0.21
		2021	7	-1.41	8.65	0.27
Regulatory Quality	Myanmar	2011	6	-2.10	1.42	0.21
		2016	10	-0.87	19.23	0.19
		2021	8	-1.13	11.54	0.21
Rule of Law	Myanmar	2011	11	-1.44	4.23	0.17
		2016	12	-0.89	18.75	0.17
		2021	10	-1.46	5.77	0.17
Control of Corruption	Myanmar	2011	7	-1.59	0.95	0.19
		2016	12	-0.62	32.21	0.14
		2021	10	-1.03	15.87	0.17

One way to push the indicators back up again would be to improve civil service performance.



The thin black lines just indicate a 90 per cent confidence interval.

Looking further into the measures, in the table below, it was quite obvious that every single indicator that has improved during the 2011-2016 administration has gone downhill under the so-called democratically elected government under Su Kyi. What a performance!

This critical issue has to be addressed sooner rather than later. Civil service is distinctly different from the private sector. Measures such as profits and returns on capital do not exist. The government monopolies on the provision of merit and public goods, that the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide at nil or affordable prices. Here all the unacceptable characteristics of monopolies come up onto the surface, including bad customer service, very low efficiency and quality and lack of innovation.

Especially in Myanmar, having better civil service standards would do everyone good. It would have resolved the majority of the current issues between the public and the government. The issue that we all encounter at one time or another, e.g., in areas of permit and license applications, is that there is no standard time horizon to get a reply. The approval or even a reply may take a week, a month, a year or forever (no reply from the government). The applicants have to call the government department or civil servant many times during these waiting periods, wasting everyone's time and resources.

By setting standards, e.g., the standard waiting times, they won't be bothering one another, till the end of the processing period. This would undoubtedly increase trust in government and civil service. Without standards, there would be no improvement in efficiency and productivity in civil service.

What standards do we set?

Most of the standards for civil service would be non-financial standards, such as productivity, waiting time, customer service, etc. Typically all over the world, civil service performance is measured by the three 'E's, namely, Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. We all know that this cheap, fast and good combination is close to impossible to achieve, but the process has to start somewhere by someone. Otherwise, Myanmar would forever be left behind, in the world of governance rankings.

All we need is a belief that we can be better. With the push from the top and the will to drive through, we can set our minds and hearts on incremental improvements in civil service quality standards. A small step for the civil service, but a giant step for the country and its governance!

A Fledgling Exchange?

YSX (Yangon Stock Exchange) is trying to get out of the 'fledgling exchange' moniker sooner rather than later. Yet based on its latest yearly report, it would still take a long while to achieve that.

As of 31 March 2022, there were nearly 45,000 trading accounts being held by investors and traders. In a country with a population of 55 million in an exchange allowing foreign ownership of listed local companies up to 15 per cent of the capital, these account holders represented less than 0.1 per cent of the entire population. Just for comparison, there are 33,000 trading accounts in Cambodia, with 17 million population, representing 0.2 per cent of the population. And, 2.5 million stock trading accounts vs. 70 million population in neighbouring Thailand, representing 3.6 per cent of the population.

Trading statistics does not board very well either. With a number of listed companies of just seven, YSX's market capitalization was at a miserly $304 million. Cambodia got nine listed entities with a market cap of approximately $4 billion. The Thais got a well-developed market with a capitalization of $500 billion, represented by 800 listed companies. Daily trading volumes were at $30,000, $0.25 million and $2 billion in the three countries, respectively.

SECM (Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar) is facing an uphill task to even catch up with the second poorest country within ASEAN. Myanmar took the honour of being the poorest ASEAN country since 2017 (World Bank data, based on GDP per capita).

From educating the population to changing the investors' mindset, introducing the second board (similar to Thailand's MAI) to encouraging six licenced security companies to trade on their own accounts, allowing the trading of T Bonds/T Bills to ensure compliance, SECM is pushing hard, within limited resources and a lacklustre economy, to play the inevitable catchup game. It needs to seriously stimulate the market, or else, Myanmar will be at the tail end of ASEAN forever.

Stock exchanges are extremely important in a capitalist economy, for the economic development of the nation. From the economics perspective, capital matching and allocation, investments and FDI, all become much easier with an exchange. From the businesses' perspectives, raising money to expand, grow and internationalize, is best done via an exchange. An exchange gives a listed company power akin to printing money, through the selling of its shares (papers) to investors and the public.

Myanmar's population in general as well as local businesses are not familiar with the mechanisms of the YSX (Yangon Stock Exchange). With all its announcements and reports being kept solely on its website, instead of national or private media, the push branding approach is missing at present. Even the senior civil servants from government-owned media channels do not know what YSX is.

In terms of mindset, most investors have not used the capital appreciation concept yet in Myanmar. They look forward to dividends from their investments every year. 'Bird in the Hand' theory of dividend policy would be of significant use in the country. YSX seriously needs awareness and branding campaigns to be well-known, attract investors and change the mindsets of existing traders.

The introduction of the second board and asking security companies to trade on their own investment accounts seem to be both very good approaches. At the same time, a change in trading rules from a prepayment system to a credit system, to implement the genuine T+3 settlement concept would be more welcoming and fruitful. At present, in order to buy shares, potential investors have to deposit money into their own accounts with the security companies first (earning no holding interest) or have money in the bank account linked with the security company. This is not in line with the trading environment overseas. Considering the top two markets within ASEAN, Singapore and Thailand, the investors are given a credit limit on their trading accounts. These investors can call up their brokers or get online, without having to deposit a cent, to buy shares. When it comes to settlement day, if the investor does not have funds to settle, the security company can simply sell the shares in the market, requiring the investor to pay up the trading loss only, if any. The credit limit system also allows investors to do the CONTRA – buying and selling prior to settlement – easily, without getting the fund movement involved.

According to SECM, they also did the identification and selection of potential companies to be listed on the exchange. It is also appropriate since most of the local businesses might not approach the exchange or security companies on their own initiatives. SECM's reach also expands to public companies with at least 100 shareholders, now nearing 50. All in all, among these public companies (not yet listed), approximately 75 per cent of them have an 'Insufficient' compliance rating by the SECM. The companies themselves have a long way to go.

The sole purpose of SECM is stated on its website, "structuring, developing and promoting Myanmar Capital Market". SECM has its work cut out. Even catching up with Cambodia would be an extremely tough row to hoe!

Neighbourhood Watch	Trading Accounts ('000)	Market Cap ($mil)	Daily Volume ($000)
Myanmar	45	304	30
Cambodia	33	4,000	250
Thailand	2,500	500,000	2,000,000

Uproar in Mobile Financial Services

There are about 24 million mobile wallet accounts in Myanmar. These accounts come from non-bank wallet providers, as well as, banks, both requiring to hold Mobile Financial Services (MFS) licences. The non-bank providers are Wave Money, OK$, M-Pitesan, My Money, MPT Money, etc. A third of 35 or so licensed banks also have wallets or are in the process of applying for wallet licences.

These wallet accounts are typically divided into two tiers: Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1 is given without ID verification and Level 2 is for those with their ID already verified.

As recent as last month, there has been an uproar, at least on Facebook, over CBM's (Central Bank of Myanmar) plan for mandatory conversion of all Level 1 wallet accounts to Level 2, within a period of three months. Given that Level 1 accounts for 18 million, it seems to be an enormous task for everyone, to complete before the year-end.

A lot of people ended up interpreting the signals from CBM negatively; some thought it has something to do with terrorism funding to NNCP terrorist groups, some speculated the government just needed the money from dormant accounts, some created the rumours that CBM is creating revenues for government through the confiscation of Level 1 accounts, some promoting anti-government statements of trying to harm small businesses. Nothing can be further from the truth.

FATF Blacklist

CBM has been trying hard to address the AML (Anti Money Laundering)/ CFT (Combating Financing of Terrorism) issues and accusations internally to address the findings and recommendations of FATF (Financial Action Task Force) for quite some time. During the third week of October, it was learnt that Myanmar has been moved to the blacklist by the FATF from the previous brown list. There was some panic in social media, some speculators exploiting the news to push up the $ exchange rate to K6,000, yet if truth be told, no buyers. Once most people realise the lack of impact of this blacklisting on the domestic economy, the $ fall back to the original pre-news price of around K2,500.

TO BE CONTINUED

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Emergency repairs in Yadana offshore natural gas pipeline cause temporary power outage in Yangon

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) announced that a temporary power outage in Yangon was the consequence of repairs in the natural gas pipelines of the Yadana offshore block.

Fifty million cubic feet of natural gas from the Yadana oil and natural gas production project are being delivered to Kanpauk-Myaingkalay daily by a 20-inch-diameter pipeline for use by factories in Myanmar. For domestic use, 200 million cubic feet of natural gas are being sent to Kanpauk-Myaingkalay-Yangon and Yadana-Yangon per day through 20-inch-diameter and 24-inch-diameter pipelines respectively.

The picture shows a part of the natural gas pipeline from Yadana offshore natural gas production.

It is mentioned in the statement that the power generation and transmission capacity into the power system is decreasing by about 433 MW due to the leak in the pipelines.

During the repair of the Yadana offshore natural gas pipeline, a total of 433 MW of power generation and transmission into the power system is decreased as follows — 45 MW from No 1 and 2 Ahlon Power Stations, 115 MW from Tyotothai Power Station, 17 MW from Thakayta Power Station, 45 MW from UPP (Ywama) Power Station, 45 MW from Max Power (Thakayta) Power Station, 60 MW from Hlawga Power Station and 106 MW from U Energy Power Station. According to the statement, there are load reductions in some areas due to reduced power production.

The YESC also declared that emergency load reduction and regulation must be carried out on a part-time basis for the stability of the power system. As such, emphasis is placed on ensuring that there are no shortages in important places, though there will be temporary power failures in some places and townships.

There was also a power outage in most townships in the Yangon region for several hours last week, owing to the leakage of the Zawtika natural gas pipeline and the damage in No 110 and 111 towers of 132 kV Baluchaung-Tikyit power line. — TWA/GNLM

Mobile app to be launched for YPS card top-up in early 2023

A passenger is seen paying bus fares with a YPS card.

COMMUTERS will be able to recharge YPS cards via an online application to pay YBS bus fares. The implementation of the application programme will start in early 2023.

The programme is implemented by the Asia Starmar Transport Intelligent Company which won the YPS tender in 2018. One hundred and twenty locations have been arranged for YPS card top-up in Yangon. YPS card users claimed that it will be more convenient for them if they can do online top-ups.

Currently, 2,300 buses from 56 bus lines of the YBS have been installed in the YPS card system.

Officials from the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee are making all-round arrangements to facilitate passengers in the Yangon region. In four bus lines owned by YUPT company, Yutong and Ankai new buses replaced old ones. They resumed their services on 11 November.

YBS bus lines 15, 17, 26 and 114 under YUPT were stopped on 9 and 10 November to be replaced by new vehicles.

The running Hyundai city buses (yellow, green and red) were stopped and have been changed into new 40 Yutong and Ankai vehicles, 10 vehicles per bus line. Bus lines will be extended depending on users, it is learnt. — TWA/GNLM

Chinese onions, garlic, potato grasp strong market share in Yangon markets

IT is around two decades that Chinese garlic (Kyukok) has earned a strong market share against the local garlic from Shan State.

It has been only a few years since Chinese potatoes entered the Yangon market. Yet the price is higher than local potatoes from Shan State (Aungban area). On 9 November, the supply of Chinese potatoes (54,000 visses) was seen in the Yangon markets.

The wholesale price of Chinese potatoes is K2,200-2,250 per viss. On 10 November, the prices of Shan potatoes were K1,650-1,900 per viss, while Chinese potatoes fetched K2,200-2,300 per viss.

Chinese garlic (Kyukok) started to enter Yangon markets in 2000. It has grasped a strong market share in the competitive market with Shan garlic for years. Kyukok garlic does not meet the quality of Shan garlic. But it has a strong point for its large size and it is easy to peel. It is widely used in restaurants. That way, it captured a market share.

Newly harvested garlic from Shan State usually flows into the market in the early month of the year. Meanwhile, Kyukok garlic entered the Yangon market in mid-year via the cross-border markets.

The price gap cannot be calculated. On 4 April 2022, Shan garlic was priced at K1,400-3,000 per viss depending on size, whereas the price of Kyukok garlic peaked at K5,300 per viss. When the new Kyukok garlic flooded the market on 1 June 2022, it fetched K2,700-2,800 per viss. Shan garlic was worth K1,800-3,500 per viss then. Nevertheless, Shan garlic prices moved in the range of K2,400-4,200 per viss while the Kyukok garlic price climbed up to K5,000 per viss on 1 September 2022.

On 10 November, the wholesale price of Kyukok was K3,450 per viss, while Shan garlic was valued at K3,000-4,100 per viss.

Last year, Kyukok's price hit the maximum of 6,100 per viss on 10 December and Shan garlic price ranged from K1,500-3,000 per viss. On 11 June 2021, the prices of garlic were K1,800 for Kyukok and K1,200-1,800 for Shan garlic.

Chinese potatoes and garlic shared a market share in Yangon markets. Chinese onions usually enter Yangon markets when the prices of locally produced onions surge, making some traders raise complaints and comments (bad quality, not fit for health and easy for the curry to turn bad). Nevertheless, there is no complaint about Chinese onions at present after their onions were sold out. On 10 November, a truckload of Chinese onions entered the markets at K3,000 per viss. The size is the same as the local one. The price of Chinese onions is K1,500 lower than local ones.

The low-income family and restaurants primarily use Chinese onions. Chinese onions cannot compete against the local ones in the market when local onions are highly demanded by foreign markets. Yet it penetrated Yangon markets while the prices of local onions were exorbitantly high.

A market observer pointed out the entry of kitchen groceries (onions, garlic, potatoes) from China and captured the market share in the domestic market. — TWA/GNLM

HEALTH: TOP HEADLINES

Half mln more Britons not working due to long-term illness since 2019: ONS

THE number of working-age adults in the UK who are currently unemployed has increased by half a million since 2019, the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows. This has mainly been caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Around 2.5 million people were economically inactive due to long-term sickness in the summer of 2022, compared to around two million people in the spring of 2019, said the ONS on Thursday.

An ONS spokesperson told Xinhua that this was the highest rate of inactivity among the long-term sick since records began in 1993. "It was generally falling, from shortly before the turn of the millennium, but started to rise again in 2019, and has now gone past its late 90s peak."

Among the half a million more people who are economically inactive due to ill health, 363,000 have left the workforce since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020.

Hugh Stickland, ONS senior statistician, said: "The largest increase came from people with 'other health problems or disabilities'. While this category includes people affected by long COVID, we think that's only one of several contributing factors. The next highest rise was among people with back or neck problems; it's possible that increased home working has given rise to these kinds of conditions."—Xinhua

Japan drafts policy bracing for 8th wave of COVID-19 infections

THE Japanese government on Thursday decided on a policy to allow each prefectural government to declare stepped-up coronavirus measures, amid growing concerns about the possible arrival of the eighth infection wave.

Japan's health ministry also decided at a meeting to revise the current five-scale alert of infection status to a four-scale one. A level similar to the seventh wave or higher will be rated as Level 3, which means infections continue to expand.

The country logged 78,268 new infections nationwide on the same day, up more than 10,000 from a week ago, with 84 new fatalities among COVID-19 patients.

Tokyo confirmed 7,969 daily cases, with Hokkaido reporting 8,457 and Kanagawa Prefecture 5,190. According to the health ministry, Hokkaido, the northernmost main island, saw the highest rise among the 47 prefectures with 850 cases per 100,000 people in the most recent week, adding that in areas with colder weather, infections could spread faster due to the difficulty in implementing ventilation.—Xinhua

Hong Kong holds Asia Summit on Global Health

THE second Asia Summit on Global Health, co-organized by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), kicked off here Thursday.

Under the theme of "Charting a New Course in Healthcare through Collaboration", the two-day summit has brought together experts and industry people from around the world to discuss the latest trends and developments in the healthcare and medical fields in person or online. John Lee, chief executive of the HKSAR, said at the opening ceremony that innovation and technology are at the heart of Hong Kong's policy priorities. They are also Hong Kong's drive to build collaborative programs and initiatives with the country and the larger world in order to tackle healthcare and other challenges.—Xinhua

WHO donates medical supplies to Nigeria over severe flooding

THE World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Thursday it has donated emergency medical supplies to south Nigeria's Anambra state, in response to flood disasters during this rainy season that has affected over 600,000 people in the state.

People attempt to pull out a car washed away by flood water on a street affected by floods following a heavy downpour at Trademoore Estate, Lugbe, Abuja, Nigeria. **PHOTO: AFP**

In a statement reaching Xinhua, the WHO said the Anambra state in the south region is one of the worst-affected state in floods hitting more than 30 states in Nigeria, many houses and health facilities have been submerged, wreaking havoc on people's psychological and mental health.

The WHO's coordinator in Anambra, Adamu Abdulnasir said in the statement the global health organization is working with health officials in the state to provide medical services and strengthen disease surveillance to make sure that if a disease breaks out, help can be given quickly.

Abdulnasir said the donations including medicines and rapid test kits for various diseases will make sure that people in the affected areas get the care they need to deal with their immediate health problems. —Xinhua

China eases Covid measures, cutting quarantine and scrapping flight bans

Temple of Heaven is a popular tourist site in Beijing, also a world famous heritage site. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINA announced the relaxation of some of its Covid-19 restrictions on Friday, for inbound travellers reducing quarantine on arrival from seven days down to five, followed by three days of isolation at home and scrapping snap closures of flight routes.

In a further sign of easing, the National Health Commission said it was abolishing the requirement to identify and isolate "secondary close contacts".

In a notice published on CCTV, the government said the powerful seven-man Politburo Standing Committee met Thursday to approve the measures.

Inbound arrivals will still be required to undergo six nucleic acid tests and will not be allowed to freely set foot outside during those eight days, the notice said.

It added that travellers will only be required to show one negative Covid test within 48 hours of boarding flights to China, a reduction from the current two tests.

The new rules single out "important business personnel" and "sports groups" as examples of privileged groups permitted to skip quarantine as long as they remain in a virus-secure "closed loop" for the duration of their stays.

A "circuit breaker" mechanism on inbound flights would be abolished, the notice added, bringing an end to a policy that saw the snap closures of flight routes if a certain proportion of passengers tested positive for the virus.— AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

China's digital economy hits 45 trln yuan: report

Photo taken on 28 July 2022 shows an intelligent quality testing all-in-one machine during the Global Digital Economy Conference 2022 at the China National Convention Centre in Beijing, capital of China. **PHOTO: XINHUA/CHEN ZHONGHAO**

THE value of China's digital economy reached 45.5 trillion yuan (about 6.3 trillion US dollars) in 2021, accounting for 39.8 per cent of the country's GDP, according to a report released by the Chinese Academy of Cyberspace Studies on Wednesday.

The digital economy has become an important cornerstone of China's stable economic development, said the China Internet Development Report 2022, which was released during the 2022 World Internet Conference (WIC) Wuzhen Summit, held in the water-town of Wuzhen, in east China's Zhejiang Province.

In addition to the above report, the summit also released another report titled "World Internet Development Report 2022".

It says the added value of the digital economy in 47 countries around the world reached 38.1 trillion US dollars in 2021, with an increase of 15.6 per cent year on year.

The digital economy has become an important engine driving global economic recovery, said the report.— Xinhua

Philippines beats growth forecast despite soaring inflation

PHILIPPINE economic growth beat expectations in the third quarter despite soaring inflation, officials said Thursday, spurred by an increase in household spending as people get back to "pre-pandemic life".

Gross domestic product rose 7.6 per cent, beating expectations of 6.3 per cent as well as the seven per cent growth seen in the same quarter last year, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said at a briefing.

The surprising performance was driven by increased spending on restaurants, hotels and travel, as well as investment, as schools restarted face-to-face classes and Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

"This turnout signifies that Filipino families are close to returning to pre-pandemic life," Balisacan said.

"Having been deprived of mobility for two years, you just want to go out and see the world again."

But he warned the country faced a "considerable burden" from high inflation and the impact of recent tropical storms that badly damaged crops.

Inflation hit 7.7 per cent in October, the highest in nearly 14 years, due to surging food prices.

Like central banks around the world, Philippine monetary policymakers have flagged further interest rates were needed to tame inflation.—AFP

People shop at a supermarket in Manila, the Philippines. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Latest London Underground strike paralyzes network

MILLIONS of Londoners faced travel misery on Thursday as another strike by Underground staff shut down most of the network, including almost all lines and city centre stations.

The latest industrial action, by members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) and Unite unions, follows several prior walkouts this year amid a long-running dispute over job cuts, pensions and working conditions.

It mirrors strife across numerous UK sectors as pay fails to keep up with inflation at the highest level in decades, with the main nurses' union announcing Wednesday that it will stage the first strike in its 106-year history.

The RMT said a conditional offer to suspend the strike failed amid disagreements over planned job cuts. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thursday's walkout on the so-called London "tube" network left travellers struggling to catch buses or find alternative ways to get to work in the city of around nine million people.—AFP

Brief clashes at Greek price hike protests

PROTESTERS in Greece briefly clashed with riot police Wednesday amid a general strike and demonstrations over price hikes and spiralling inflation.

Hooded youths in Athens and Thessaloniki threw firebombs at police, who fired back with tear gas, an AFP photographer said.

Firebombs were also thrown at a car in front of the Finance Ministry in Athens and red paint was splashed at the entrance of the Greek central bank's headquarters.

Eight people were held for questioning in Thessaloniki after the protest, local police said.

Some 20,000 protesters had earlier marched in the capital, double the number of people who participated in the last general strike in April, police said.

Another 8,000 people demonstrated in Thessaloniki, the authorities said.

"We choose life, not survival," read a banner in the northern Greek port city.

Athens' normally busy roads were all but empty, with the walkout affecting bus, underground, tram and suburban train services as well as taxis. Boat services from the mainland to the Ionian Islands and those in the Aegean Sea were also halted by the industrial action.—AFP

SoftBank Q2 net profit boosted by sales of Alibaba shares

A woman walks past a logo of the SoftBank Group in Tokyo on 12 May 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

JAPAN'S SoftBank Group on Friday posted a net profit in the second quarter, partly thanks to gains from the recent reduction of its stake in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

But falling share prices for many of its tech start-up ventures continue to hurt the company's balance sheet.

The investment behemoth has made huge bets to find and grow new tech companies around the world — making its earnings vulnerable to fickle market forces.

SoftBank's results have lurched between dizzying highs and lows in recent years, while China's crackdown on its tech sector has also taken a toll on the company.

In August, the group announced it would sell down some of its shares in Alibaba, reducing its stake in the Chinese tech giant to around 15 per cent from 24 per cent.

This helped boost SoftBank's earnings in the second quarter for a net profit of 3.03 trillion yen ($21.4 billion).

Over the first half of this financial year, however, it suffered a net loss of 129 billion yen, brought down by its record net loss in the first quarter.

SoftBank's performance in the April-to-June quarter was dragged down by a global tech share rout, triggered by interest-rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve and other central banks to tackle inflation.

The bleak investment climate caused losses in SoftBank's investments in ventures from US food delivery app DoorDash to South Korean e-commerce brand Coupang.— AFP

Seven & i to sell Sogo & Seibu dept. stores to Fortress Investment

SEVEN & i Holdings Co said Friday it plans to sell its struggling department store unit Sogo & Seibu Co to US-based investment fund Fortress Investment Group LLC for around 250 billion yen ($1.73 billion).

Fortress said it will revamp the operator of Sogo and Seibu department stores by teaming up with electrical appliances retailer Yodobashi Camera Co. A plan is under consideration to make Yodobashi a major tenant for the department stores, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Sogo & Seibu, which runs a total of 10 stores in the Tokyo metropolitan area and a few other regions, has been mired in red ink for the past three fiscal years as the rise of online shopping and the coronavirus pandemic battered its business.— Kyodo

Strikes flare in Europe as cost of living spirals

EUROPEAN workers squeezed by the soaring cost of living went on strike in Belgium and Greece on Wednesday, with stoppages threatening to paralyze parts of Britain, France and Spain in coming days.

Spreading industrial unrest poses a problem for governments which are already spending billions trying to blunt the worst effects of rising prices, at least for the most vulnerable. Europe is acutely affected by the fall-out of the war in Ukraine, which is exacerbating a global energy crisis, inflation and a scarcity of some food products. The onset of winter, when energy bills spike, and repeated predictions of a looming, continent-wide recession are souring the labour mood even further.

Belgium and Greece saw general strikes on Wednesday, disrupting transport in their respective capitals, impacting businesses. In Brussels, home to the European Commission and other EU institutions, workers were protesting inflation running higher than 12 per cent — well above the 10.7 per cent average across the eurozone.— AFP

E-cig giant Juul secures funds to avoid bankruptcy

Juul has become synonymous with vaping. **PHOTO: AFP**

AMERICAN e-cigarette firm Juul Labs has secured financing to stay afloat but confirmed job cuts, it said in a statement Thursday, while dealing with a dispute on whether its products can remain on market.

The vaping giant has challenged a June action by the US Food and Drug Administration ordering all products it made to be off the market in the United States, after finding that it failed to address certain safety concerns.

The FDA order has been put on hold after an appeal by Juul, which argues that its products are safe for adult smokers.

"Today, Juul Labs has identified a path forward, enabled by an investment of capital from some of our earliest investors," a Juul spokesperson told AFP in a statement.

This investment will help Juul Labs to maintain business operations and "continue advancing its administrative appeal of the FDA's marketing denial order," among other needs, the firm added.

But it is undertaking a reorganization "including the difficult but necessary step of separating from many valued colleagues," the spokesperson said, without providing further details.

Juul told staff on Thursday that it has halted bankruptcy preparations with the new injection of funds, The Wall Street Journal reported.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0279-734N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0279-734N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-11-2022** 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 EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V VENUS C VOY.NO. (2228S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VENUS C VOY.NO. (2228S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-11-2022** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

White House says Biden, Xi to meet at G20 summit

Chinese President Xi Jinping met US President Joe Biden on 16 Nov 2021 morning (Beijing time), the first face-to-face meeting virtually since Biden took office. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

JOE Biden will meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on 14 November on the sidelines of the G20 summit, the White House said Thursday, in their first face-to-face talks since the US leader became president.

The two met prior to Biden taking office and have spoken by phone a number of times over the past 22 months, but the Covid-19 pandemic and Xi's aversion to foreign travel has prevented them from meeting in person.

"The leaders will discuss efforts to maintain and deepen lines of communication," as well as how to "responsibly manage competition and work together where our interests align," White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Their meeting during the summit in Bali comes after Xi last month was awarded a landmark third term as Chinese Communist Party General Secretary.

Biden, meanwhile, could have a tougher road ahead for the next two years after Tuesday's midterm elections likely left opposition Republicans in control of one, if not both, of the chambers of the US Congress.

Still, Biden is headed into the trip "with the wind at his back," White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Thursday, with "an excellent opportunity both to deal with competitors from a strong position and to rally allies".

The United States and China have a massive investment and trade relationship but are also challenging each other's military and diplomatic influence, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.—AFP

UK police bail student arrested for egging Charles III

A British university student who was arrested for throwing eggs at King Charles III on Thursday said he had been banned from carrying eggs in public as part of his bail conditions.

Patrick Thelwell, 23, was released from custody after Wednesday's incident in York, northern England, during a visit by the monarch.

North Yorkshire Police said he was arrested on suspicion of a public order offence.

None of the eggs hit Charles, 73, and he was ushered away by minders.

Shouts of "not my king" were heard in the crowd and claims that Britain was "built on the blood of slaves", prompting boos from other onlookers. Police then moved in to detain a man, who was restrained and bundled into the back of a van, television images of the incident showed. Thelwell told the Daily Mirror newspaper that people were "literally screaming and wailing with pure rage".—AFP

Japan govt backs major firms in next-gen chip project

THE Japanese government will pour half a billion dollars into a new project to develop and make next-generation microchips, chief cabinet secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Friday.

Eight major companies including Sony, SoftBank, Toyota and telecoms giant NTT have joined forces for the venture, Japanese media reports said.

The new firm, named Rapidus, will develop and mass produce next-generation semiconductors by 2027, according to major media outlets including national broadcaster NHK and the Mainichi Shimbun.

The pandemic has fuelled a global shortage of memory chips, with governments scrambling to secure supplies as carmakers and tech companies have been forced to make production cuts.

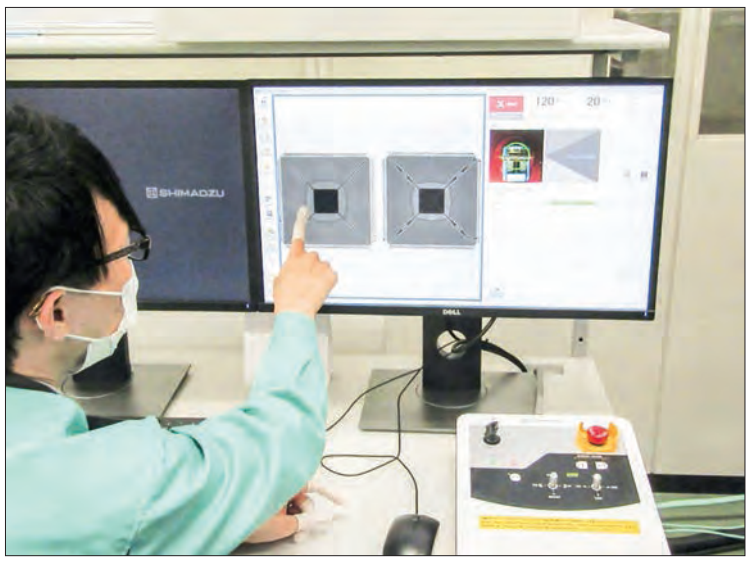
Each company has invested around one billion yen ($7 million), with MUFG Bank investing 300 million yen, according to the industry ministry.

The investor companies are expected to officially announce the project later on Friday.

The ministry will grant 70 billion yen to Rapidus to lead a research and development project for next-generation semiconductors, Matsuno said without elaborating.

"Semiconductors are a key technology that supports digitalization and decarbonization," Matsuno said at a regular briefing.

The chip shortage has prompted calls for the government and businesses to secure semiconductor supplies for Japan's economic security, as geopolitics become increasingly volatile — especially concerning Taiwan, which has a huge chip-producing capacity.—AFP



An Oki Engineering Co worker conducts an X-ray examination on a semiconductor in Tokyo on 18 Aug 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Ukrainian artillerymen sit on a self-propelled cannon near the front line in the Kherson region. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Seoul denies report of arms deal with US for Ukrainian forces

SOUTH Korea on Friday denied a report that it would sell artillery shells for use by Ukrainian forces, claiming the munitions — if the ongoing deal negotiation is finalized — will be for US forces only.

The United States was nearing an agreement to purchase 100,000 rounds of 155 mm artillery from Seoul which would be delivered to Ukraine, The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing "US officials familiar with the deal". Washington is Seoul's key security ally, and stations some 27,000 US troops in the South to help protect it from the nuclear-armed North.

South Korea said Friday that while the arms deal with the US is ongoing, the shells are not meant to be delivered to Ukraine.

"In order to make up for the shortage of 155 mm ammunition inventories in the US, negotiations are ongoing between the US and a (South Korean) company to export ammunition," Seoul's defence ministry said in a statement.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

East Timor gets nod to join ASEAN grouping

SOUTHEAST Asian leaders agreed on Friday to allow East Timor to join the 10-nation ASEAN regional bloc, according to a statement released by summit host Cambodia.

"We the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations… agreed in principle to admit Timor-Leste to be the 11th member of ASEAN," the statement said.

East Timor is the youngest country in Southeast Asia, having gained independence from Indonesia in 2002 after 24 years of occupation.

During their gathering in Phnom Penh, regional leaders agreed to grant East Timor observer status and the right to attend ASEAN meetings and summit sessions, according to the statement.

The bloc will now draw up a roadmap setting out the criteria East Timor must hit before being granted full membership.

The former Portuguese colony is one of the poorest countries in the world and is grappling with high levels of inequality, malnourishment and unemployment. President Jose Ramos-Horta has long campaigned for ASEAN membership and an application was first submitted in 2011.—AFP

Timor Leste President Jose Ramos Horta (right on stage) attends a flag raising ceremony in Dili on 20 May to commemorate the 20th anniversary of East Timor's independence from Indonesia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tunisia's Ghannouchi in court over 'money-laundering'

THE speaker of Tunisia's dissolved parliament and arch-rival of President Kais Saied appeared in court on Thursday as part of a case involving money-laundering and "incitement to violence".

Rached Ghannouchi, who also heads the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party that dominated Tunisian politics for a decade until Saied staged a power grab in mid-2021, was previously questioned on the case in July.

Other Ennahdha members are also facing prosecution over suspicious transactions involving Instalingo, a digital content production firm.

The company has been under investigation since last year for allegedly "plotting against state security" and inciting violence. After a 14-hour hearing, the investigating judge released Ghannouchi, his lawyer Sami Triki said.

Ghannouchi has harshly criticized Saied's July 2021 power grab. **PHOTO: AFP**

He added that the Ghannouchi will still be prosecuted in this case, but that no date for the next hearing has been set yet. Earlier in the day, the 81-year-old arrived at court in the coastal city of Sousse, where he told journalists the case was an "empty file" and an "invented problem".

"This is trumped-up and aimed at distracting the Tunisian people from the real problems we're facing," he said.—AFP

Argentina VP demands removal of judge in assassination attempt probe

ARGENTINA Vice-President Cristina Kirchner on Thursday demanded the reclusion of a judge overseeing the investigation into an alleged attempt to murder her.

The former president, 69, accused judge Maria Eugenia Capuchetti of failing to investigate her attackers' political connections.

Kirchner survived the assassination attempt on 1 September as she mingled with supporters outside her home in Buenos Aires when the gun brandished by her alleged assailant failed to fire.

She posted on Twitter stating she had asked her lawyers to push for the removal of Capuchetti. In a video accompanying the post, a woman's voice accuses the judge of failing to interview an opposition politician the video attempts to link to the presumed assassination attempt.

"It is clear that the 'judicial party' does not want Cristina as a victim. It wants her imprisoned or dead," said the narrator.—AFP

Foreign tourists in Japan in Oct up 15-fold from Sept to 288,900

THE number of foreign tourists that arrived in Japan in October increased more than 15-fold from the previous month to 288,909, government data showed Friday, as the country removed almost all COVID-19 entry restrictions on 11 October.

From 1 to 10 Oct, the daily tally of foreign tourists entering Japan was around 1,900 but it jumped to about 12,900 after the government removed its cap on daily arrivals and its ban on individuals and non-prearranged trips, according to the Japan Tourism Agency.

The agency has compiled the preliminary figures based on data from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, revealing them at a meeting of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

As of Monday, the number of foreign tourists to Japan in November was 140,315, the agency said.

"Many tourist destinations are crowded with more travellers than the same period last year," Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Minister Tetsuo Saito said at a press conference.

In October 2019, before the pandemic, the number of foreign tourists to Japan was over two million.

The government lifted entry restrictions that required foreign tourists to travel on package tours and to obtain a visa if they are citizens of one of 68 countries and regions with which Japan had a waiver agreement before the pandemic, according to the Foreign Ministry.— Kyodo

Many tourist destinations are crowded with more travellers than the same period last year. As of Monday, the number of foreign tourists to Japan in November was 140,315, the agency said. **PHOTO: KYODO**

East Timor gets nod to join ASEAN grouping

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12 NOVEMBER 2022
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

SPORT

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.

Myanmar team players (white) attempt to block the Thai's attack during the 2020 Suzuki Cup group match. **PHOTO: ESPN**

FAT says Myanmar and Thailand will play friendly match

THE Football Association of Thailand (FAT) announced that the Myanmar national team and the Thai national team will play a friendly match before the 2022 AFF Cup to be held at the end of this year.

The FAT has said that the match will be a preparation plan for the Thai team ahead of the 2022 AFF Cup, and the friendly match will be held in Thailand on 11 December. Myanmar and Thailand have not played a friendly match for a few years, and it is only now that they play again.

However, the Myanmar and Thailand teams met in the group stage of the ASEAN Suzuki Cup held at the end of last year as an international competition, and the Thai team won by four goals.

The Myanmar team and the Thai team are in different groups in the upcoming 2022 AFF Cup.

Thailand team is falling in Group A with Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Brunei while team Myanmar is placed in Group B with Viet Nam, Malaysia, Singapore and Laos.

The Myanmar team will start training for this tournament after the end of the Myanmar National League, a domestic league competition, and will play friendly matches against other teams, including Thailand. — Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

Holders Liverpool face Manchester City in League Cup fourth round

Holders Liverpool face Man. City in League Cup. **PHOTO: AFP**

EFL Cup holders Liverpool were handed the toughest of fourth-round draws on Thursday with a trip to Premier League champions Manchester City.

Liverpool have struggled domestically this season, needing a penalty shootout to dispose of second-tier Derby County on Wednesday after they were held to a 0-0 draw at Anfield.

City, who have won four of the last five EFL Cups, were made to work hard for their third-round victory over Chelsea.

City's only defeat in all competitions this season was against Liverpool, however, with Mohamed Salah's late strike giving them a 1-0 Premier League win last month.

Manchester United, who twice came from behind to beat Aston Villa 4-2 at Old Trafford on Thursday, host second-tier Burnley in the fourth round and there is another all Premier League clash as Newcastle United entertain Bournemouth.

The ties will be played in the week commencing 19 Dec, just after the World Cup final in Qatar.—AFP

Direct Israel-Qatar flights open to Palestinians for World Cup: FIFA

QATAR has agreed to allow special direct flights from Israel that will be open to both Israeli and Palestinian fans for the World Cup, FIFA announced on Thursday.

But the accord gave few details on how decades of hostility would be overcome so that Palestinians and Israelis can travel on the same charter jets to the first World Cup in an Arab nation.

"Today's historic announcement provides a platform to improve relations across the Middle East," said Gianni Infantino, president of FIFA, world football's governing body.

"With this deal, Israelis and Palestinians will be able to fly together and enjoy football together."

Israeli caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid at Ben Gurion Airport in July 2022. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE**

A FIFA statement said the flights would be subject to "Israel's security requirements and operational capabilities" and comments made by Israel and Qatar, which do not have diplomatic relations, made clear their divisions.

Israel's outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid welcomed the deal without mentioning Palestinian access to the tournament that starts 20 November.

A Qatari government official told AFP: "Qatar conveyed to the Israelis that any escalation in Jerusalem, Gaza, or the West Bank during this time will risk the cancellation of the agreement including the direct flights." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the flights a "historic step" that promises "to bolster people-to-people ties".—AFP