

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 97, 1st Waning of Waso 1383 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Saturday, 24 July 2021

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

SAC Chairman calls for entire people participation in response to COVID-19



State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is addressing the fourth coordination meeting on the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 July 2021. PHOTO: MNA

THE fourth coordination meeting on the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 was held in Nay Pyi Taw and Chairman of the State Administration Council, Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addressed the meeting.

The Chairman of the State Administration Council said the COVID-19 disease prevention, control and treatment activities

are undertaken from the central level as well as in the respective states and regions while the rate of infection is found to be four to eight times faster with two to three variants at present.

He added the need to release daily information on the actual disease control and treatment activities to reduce the public concerns and urged the public to go to hospitals, clinics and quarantine centres instead of coping

with the disease on their own at home. He said it is necessary to do researches on the disease and to develop a vaccine in Myanmar as the vaccines for Hepatitis B and Malaria, which were also manufactured in the country.

Regarding medical workers who have been absent from hospitals, he said some of the medical workers who have been participated in the CDM campaign are

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The Chairman of the State Administration Council said the COVID-19 disease prevention, control and treatment activities are undertaken from the central level as well as in the respective states and regions while the rate of infection is found to be four to eight times faster with two to three variants at present.

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Myanmar imports over \$486 mln worth of machinery, spare parts in 7 months

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Trade with Bangladesh declines by 16.84 mln

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Order No 217/2021

15th Waxing of Waso 1383 ME

23 July 2021

EXTENSION OF PUBLIC HOLIDAYS FOR EFFECTIVE COVID-19 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND TREATMENT ACTIVITIES

IN order to break the chain of COVID-19 infection by adhering to the rules and regulations during the public holidays, the State Administration Council has issued Notification No (211/2021) to designate the successive public holidays. To contain the COVID-19 infection and return to normality as soon as possible, the public holidays are extended to 1 August from 26 July 2021 (except for the Central Bank of Myanmar and its subsidiaries – government banks and private banks) under Section 25 of the Offices Holidays and Transferable Contracts Act.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant - General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19 Notification

15th Waxing of Waso 1383 ME

23 July 2021

1. The State Administration Council issued a Notification No 217/2021 dated 23-7-2021 declaring from 26 July to 1 August 2021 as successive public holidays.
 - (a) Reside at homes or dormitory, and not to travel at all except for duty and funeral services
 - (b) Central Bank of Myanmar, its subsidiaries—government banks, private banks to open as usual
 - (c) Not to affect the production rate, the factories and industries must operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Regions/States Administration Councils in line with the COVID-19 health rules of the Ministry of health and Sports.
 - (d) To adopt work from home system or other proper methods for important office work of the relevant department
 - (e) Shops selling basic essential things like fuel, drinking water, meat, fish and foodstuffs to open
 - (f) Shops selling medicines and medical supplies to open
 - (g) Restaurants to adopt take-away system
 - (h) To continue healthcare services (government hospitals/private hospitals and clinics)
 - (i) To wear protective gears including masks if you go outside
 - (j) To operate the land, sea and air services under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Regions/States Administration Councils
 - (k) To comply the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) of trucks to facilitate the flow of goods
 - (l) To continue to open cargo ports
 - (m) To follow the COVID-19 health rules of the Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment for COVID-19 and the Ministry of Health and Sports without fail.
3. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the above-mentioned orders under the existing laws.

Personal preventive practices against COVID-19 infection

- (1) Wear the mask systematically when going out in public.
- (2) Keep a proper physical distance.
- (3) Avoid the crowd.
- (4) Wash your hands for 20 seconds frequently.
- (5) Avoid entering unventilated closed spaces as much as possible.

Customs Department gives permit for anti-COVID-19 supplies on 23 July

CUSTOMS Department grants daily permission for importation processes of COVID-19 protective equipment and medical products through airports, harbours and land borders during the current public holidays, officials said.

On 23 July (yesterday), the Customs Department issued import process permissions for 66 companies at Yangon International Airport and 45 companies at other border checkpoints.

The department has already issued import permissions for 2,689 oxygen concentrators, 9,198

oximeters, five oxygen regulators, 12,350 test kits, 2,640 items of KIT, XPRESS, SARS-COV-2, 10 TEST, 150 sets of flow meters, 150 gas outlets, 10,000 gloves, 200 cannulae, 2,000 KN95 masks and 50 oxygen filters at the Yangon International Airport.

Next, 73,397 kg of masks and surgical gloves, 15395.5 cubic metres and 19.44 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 3,875 sets of oxygen concentrators were also given permits at land border crossings of Muse, Chinshwehaw, Myawady and Tachilek, respectively. —MNA



5,506 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 July, total figure rises to 258,870

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **258,870** after **5,506** new cases were reported on 23 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **177,021** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **6,459** after **326** died. —MNA

Development of the State

IT is necessary to have sufficiency of electricity, good transport, good communication system and human resources for proper health and education systems in order to ensure development of a country. Health and education sectors must be encouraged for having good human resources. Hence, the education sector must be encouraged to be able to turn out the educated new generations for emergence of human resources.

(Excerpt from the speech of Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with Mandalay Region Administration Council members and departmental personnel on 17-5-2021)

SAC Chairman calls for entire people participation in response to COVID-19

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urged several times to return to work as the COVID-19 crisis has become a national matter, and some have returned and some do not for various reasons. He added, "I urged all the medical workers again to work together with the Ministry of Health and Sports at hospitals."

He also said the efforts are being made to supply required oxygen, adding the need to conduct the disease awareness campaign while suppressing the spreading of rumours amongst the public; the plans that are underway to vaccinate people with four million doses that will arrive in the first week of August. He stressed the need for the first dose of the vaccine to be administered to the people as much as possible and to make sure the patients are provided necessary medication, masks, and food and to

let them know that there is no restriction on having healthcare services.

Afterwards, the Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council and council members, Union Ministers, Tatmadaw officials and those who were present at the meeting online presented the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities that are under implementation at present with the cooperation of healthcare workers and volunteers; COVID-19 vaccination programmes; expansion of quarantine centres, adequate oxygen supplies and oxygen plants; importation of the necessary anti-COVID-19 equipment and medical supplies; cooperation with the Russia Federation to develop the vaccine.

The Chairman of the State Administration Council the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services added that it is aimed to vaccinate 50 per cent of the

... it is aimed to vaccinate 50 per cent of the population, however, efforts need to be made to vaccinate up to 70 per cent of the population. Political parties and civil society organizations are required to take part with Parahita (welfare of others) spirit in an effective way in control and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ...

population, however, efforts need to be made to vaccinate up to 70 per cent of the population. Political parties and civil society organizations are required to take part with Parahita (welfare of others) spirit in an effective way in control and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he stressed. Officials should see to it that people in need of help can contact the phone numbers of some hospitals, clinics and treatment centres.

also be systematically undertaken, he continued.

The Senior General also pointed out that there might be a shortage of doctors at certain hospitals so states/regions health officials are necessary to coordinate with one hospital and another for the assignment or secondment of doctors, under a good management system, to the hospitals that have already been in shortage of doctors. He called for collective consultation and performance in such management as one cannot work alone. All parties concerned need to participate and perform 'functions' effectively in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, he stressed in conclusion.

Since the first wave to date, there have been more than 250,000 COVID-19 incidences and over 6,100 people have died of the disease in Myanmar.—MNA

Myanmar receives one million COVID-19 vaccines order; China donates over 500,000

THE aircraft of Air China carrying the COVID-19 vaccines purchased by Myanmar and donated by the People's Republic of China arrived in Yangon yesterday.

The flight carried one million Sinovac vaccines purchased by Myanmar and 528,000 Sinopharm, and 608,000 needles donated to Myanmar by PRC.

Vaccines and medical supplies will be effectively used depending on the infection rate of regions/states by the Ministry of Health and Sports in line with



the National Development Plan. Of two million vaccines donated by China, Myanmar received 736,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines and other related

materials manufactured by Sinopharm Company on 22 July. The remaining vaccines will arrive on 24 July, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. – MNA

MoC allow import process of liquid, gas, concentrators for oxygen



via Kawthoung seaport.

oxygen concentrators, 12,350 test kits, 75 tonnes of masks from Muse, Myawaddy, Tachilek, Hteekhee, Chinshwehaw and Kawthoung border trade posts were successfully imported.

The aforementioned items were imported by 52 vehicles from 33 companies.

From 12 to 23 July, 268 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 62 tonnes of oxygen gas, 25,277 home oxygen generators, 146,850 test kits, 617 tonnes of masks have been allowed to be imported as officials are giving priority to disease control of the Covid-19.

The Ministry of Commerce is cooperating with relevant departments to facilitate the importation of Covid-19 disease prevention and control equipment by arranging direct contact with officials from relevant trade centres if assistance is needed.

— MNA

FOR the quick and easy import of anti-COVID-19 equipment including liquid oxygen, oxygen gas, and oxygen concentrators, the Ministry of Commerce is allowing regular import activities at international airports, seaports and land borders including Muse, Myawady, Tachilek, and Chinshwehaw during the public holidays.

Starting from 12 July, officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures during the long public holidays.

On 23 July, 2,689 oxygen concentrators from Yangon International Airport and 48 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 21 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 4,103 home



via Tachilek land border.



via Myawady.



via Myawady land border.



via Chinshwehaw.

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kye 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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Oxygen containers installed at Tatmadaw hospitals, Covid-19 centres

TATMADAW and its donors have donated oxygen cylinders to Tatmadaw hospitals, public hospitals, clinics and Covid-19 centres in various regions and states in order to help meet the oxygen needs of the Covid-19 laboratory-confirmed patients, Tatmadaw officials said.

Yesterday, Tatmadaw officials from Nay Pyi Taw Command donated 51 sets of 40-litre oxygen containers to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (300-beds), Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, 15 sets of 40-litre oxygen cylinders to Mya Wai Thaw Latt Charitable Association in Nay Pyi Taw, and ten sets of 40-litre oxygen cylinders to Doe Leway Charitable Association.

Five oxygen containers to Maungtaw People's Hospital and five oxygen containers to Buthidaung People's Hospital in Rakhine State were also donated

by officials from the Western Command.

U Maung Maung Lin, Chairman of the Sagaing Region Administrative Council, donated 64 oxygen containers to Monywa People's Hospital and 50 oxygen cylinders to Sagaing People's Hospital in Sagaing Region.

Twenty oxygen cylinders were also donated to Moe Nyo People's Hospital and 40 oxygen cylinders to Letpadan People's Hospital in Bago Region, respectively, by officials from the Southern Command.

It is reported that the Ministry of Health and Sports is having a greater number of oxygen plants in each region and state to reduce the need for oxygen, and the Tatmadaw is also installing oxygen plants in various areas of the Regional Military Headquarters. — MNA



Oxygen cylinders are donated to the Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (300-bedded).

Medical equipment, oxygen cylinders nationwide provided



The Sagaing Administration Council Chairman presents COVID protective supplies and foodstuffs to the civil society organizations.

TATMADAW members, medical, health workers and social welfare teams work together in order to offer medical treatment to positive patients and isolated patients at military hospitals, public hospitals, health departments and COVID-19 treatment centres during the third wave of COVID-19.

Tatmadaw also provided the needed COVID-19 protective gears, oxygen cylinders and food aids to them.

From 1 July to date, respective military commands and officials donated 4,691 oxygen cylinders, 324,482 masks, 1,800 PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment), 703 bottles of

hand gel, 200 face shields, four buckets of liquid handwash, 2,050 surgical gloves, 2,900 surgical caps, medicines, fuel, food aids and cash assistance to the public hospitals, military hospitals, health departments, Covid centres, religious buildings and schools across the nation. — MNA

Deputy Director of the Department of Prison U Chan Aye Kyaw responded to media inquiries about the riot in Insein Prison on the morning of 23 July

Q: We would like to ask about the riot that broke out in Insein Prison on 23 July.

A: There was a riot by detainees at around 7:20 am on 23 July 2021. At the time of the riot, the Yangon Region Department Chief and the Director in charge went and met detainees and asked their wishes and demands. Everything went calm after coordination.

It was an act of protest by those who were not included when the government released detainees after scrutiny. For the first time in June, the detainees who had to be released after being examined were released. In fact, some detainees were released now as their cases are the same as the time of imprisonment, although they could not be investigated due to the COVID-19. Thus, the riot broke out by those who were not included in the release.

Regarding prison visits, it was suspended since the COVID-19 outbreak because of the rapid spread of the disease and high incidence of the outbreak. However, detainees can be given parcels by their parents and relatives outside. It is still accepted. In addition, arrangements have been made for communications through letters. Also, there is a prison health check for any inmate since the imprisonment. They must have to be checked whether they are injured, whether they are in good health or not, and if they need medical care, they are sent to the hospital for necessary treatment. — MNA

Union Election Commission

Announcement of election results in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region, Mon State
23 July 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of 9 townships in Chin State, 37 townships in Sagaing Region and 10 townships in Taninthayi Region and 10 Townships in Mon State in detail together with the respective UEC members, former township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population, administrators and representatives of political parties in accordance with Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law, and interviewed the election sub-commissions, poll heads and members.
2. In 2020 Multiparty General Election, the candidates/voters ran/voted in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region and Mon State as follows;
 - (a) The candidates of 11 political parties and independent candidates competed in 9 townships of Chin State. Of 286,308 voters, 222,905 cast votes at 957 polling stations, and it shows 77.85 per cent of votes.
 - (b) The candidates of 16 political parties and independent candidates competed in 37 townships of Sagaing Region. Of 4,305,403 voters, 3,383,183 cast votes at 4,107 polling stations, and it shows 78.58 per cent of votes.
 - (c) The candidates of 13 political parties and independent candidates competed in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region. Of 1,191,890 voters, 792,725 cast votes at 1,205 polling stations, and it shows 66.51 per cent of votes.
 - (d) The candidates of 16 political parties and independent candidates competed in 10 townships of Mon State. Of 1,847,780 voters, 1,068,525 cast votes at 973 polling stations, and it shows 57.83 per cent of votes.
3. The previous election commission released 286,308 eligible voters in 9 townships of Chin State. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 297,785 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 15,580 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 2,981 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 34,248 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 1,954 persons repeated on the voter lists while 366 people over the age of 100 and 185 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
4. A total of 957 polling stations of 9 townships in Chin State took out 427,455 ballots and used 218,595. It left 196,673 ballots instead of 208,860. The difference was 16,746 ballots and it found 4,559 extra ballots.
5. The previous election commission released 4,305,403 eligible voters in 37 townships of Sagaing Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 3,456,429 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 337,484 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 39,220 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 460,916 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 71,872 persons repeated on the voter lists while 1,897 people over the age of 100 and 1,466 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
6. A total of 4,107 polling stations of 37 townships in Sagaing Region took out 4,834,052 ballots and used 3,358,659. It left 1,410,220 ballots instead of 1,475,393. The difference was 129,545 ballots and it found 64,372 extra ballots.
7. The previous election commission released 1,191,890 eligible voters in 10 townships in Taninthayi Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 778,5 citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 8,120 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 112,756 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 28,958 persons repeated on the voter lists while 708 people over the age of 100 and 366 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
8. A total of 1,205 polling stations of 10 townships in Taninthayi Region took out 1,299,972 ballots and used 787,976. It left 495,219 ballots instead of 511,996. The difference was 24,098 ballots and it found 7,321 extra ballots.
9. The previous election commission released 1,847,780 eligible voters in 10 townships in Mon State. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 1,602,960 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 305,987 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 13,002 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 174,268 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 26,828 persons repeated on the voter lists while 902 people over the age of 100 and 485 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
10. A total of 973 polling stations of 10 townships in Mon State took out 2,023,776 ballots and used 1,039,295. It left 950,625 ballots instead of 984,481. The difference was 45,568 ballots and it found 11,712 extra ballots.
11. The findings on voter lists and ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Chin State, Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region and Mon State were as follows;

Sr	State/ Region	Pyithu Hluttaw		Amyotha Hluttaw		Region/ State Hluttaw		Ethnic Nationals		Number of Township	Polling station	Township Election Commission	List from Immigration	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
		constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates									loss	extra
1	Chin	9	40	12	52	18	80	-	-	9	957	286,308	297,785	427,455	218,595	208,860	196,673	16,746	4,559
2	Sagaing	37	162	12	49	74	332	2	16	37	4107	4,305,403	3,456,429	4,834,052	3,358,659	1,475,393	1,410,220	129,545	64,372
3	Taninthayi	10	45	12	56	20	80	1	6	10	1205	1,191,890	778,506	1,299,972	787,976	511,996	495,219	24,098	7,321
4	Mon	10	55	12	66	20	116	3	20	10	973	1,847,780	1,602,960	2,023,776	1,039,295	984,481	950,625	45,568	11,712

12. The previous UEC has released the (32/2017) statement for the formation of regions/states election sub-commissions dated on 17 November 2017. Then, they also released Notification No (33/2017) on 4 December 2017 and Notification No (34/2017) on 6 December 2017 for the formation of election sub-commissions with NLD supporters. These statements stated that they appointed the ones nominated by the regions/states chief ministers as chairman and members.
13. Under the directives by the letter number 7/464 general/A Pha Ra (2020) dated 4-8-2020 of the Union Government Office, a support group was formed for the completion of voter list, led by the state chief minister and it was found that there were two- or three-times duplication of voter lists due to the group. Under the instruction of the group, the township sub-election commission added the census lists submitted by the township general administration department into the voter lists. It was found that the voter lists inflated and the duplication occurred due to the addition of people who were already on the lists since the relevant ward/village tract general administration departments failed to examine the census lists before submitting it.
14. The ward/village-tract administrators served as chairpersons in collecting the numbers of the population to compile the voter lists of Chin State, Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region and Mon State. In this process, the ward/village-tract administrators appointed by the NLD government and some NLD members jointly collected the numbers of the population. They did not inspect whether the people live in their ward/village tract, whether they are eligible voters in accordance with Hluttaw Election Law. Therefore, there were many non-identity voters on the voter lists and some repeated on the voter lists two times or over three times with just one NRC card. The Hluttaw Election Law Section (15) (c) in Chapter VI "Preparation of Voting Roll" stated, "Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time." And, it found activities that violate the law. According to Section 19 (b), the names not eligible are included in the voting roll, delete such names from the voting roll. But they did not remove the names.
15. The former UEC also released instructions that the advance voting process for people over 60 can be conducted starting 29-10-2020 before the election day. But some NLD members conducted door-to-door service in collecting advance votes in some places and it caused voting fraud. According to COVID-19 health rules, the announcement and instruction for voters who were unable to return to their constituencies were released on 8-10-2020 and 11-10-2020 respectively by the former UEC. Due to such directives, the voters were found repeated on the voter lists and non-identity voters were also on the lists and were allowed to cast votes.

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16. The former UEC also released a statement for voters without any ID cards to cast their vote on 19-8-2020. The non-identity voters cast votes just with voter certificates at the polling stations. Therefore, the non-identity voters, those who repeated on voter lists two times or over three times were allowed to cast vote without complying with the Hluttaw Election Law Section 59. Regarding the voting stamps, the instruction that the ballots with a tick without a UEC label will be recognized as valid votes also caused the complicated situations in counting the votes.

17. The voting frauds were supposed to be intentionally committed. Moreover, the NLD party members also interfere in collecting voter lists, election campaign, advance voting process and voting processes even on election day with their power. In addition, all electoral activities, including the campaigns of other political parties and parliamentary candidates misused the COVID-19 restrictions and conspired to seize the state power as well as the former UEC also found misused their authorities and violated the Law and rules.

18. According to the findings in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region and Mon State, the 2020 Multiparty General Election was found to be inconsistent with the relevant Hluttaw Election Laws/Rules and was not free and fair. Therefore, regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, it is here announced that measures will be conducted to annul the election results for the Hluttaw candidates of Pyithu, Amyotha and State/Region Hluttaws and ethnic representatives in 9 townships in Chin State, 37 townships in Sagaing Region and 10 townships in Taninthayi Region and 10 Townships in Mon State in accordance with the law.

Union Election Commission

Extended two-storeyed hospital building in Mongnai town completes 95%



The extended building is a two-storeyed RC building and it is 143 feet in length and 98 feet in width.

THE construction of an extended two-storeyed building in Mongnai Township, southern Shan State has been completed 95 per cent, it is learnt.

The extended building was constructed by Cherry King Construction Company with K475.03 million funded by the Ministry of Health and Sports. The construction of the extended building is aimed to provide better healthcare services to local people.

The project was started in February 2020 and was completed 95 per cent so far. The extended two-storeyed hospital started its construction with spending of K193.60 million from the regional government's fund

of the 2019-2020 financial year and K281.43 million fund of the 2020-21 financial year.

The extended building is a two-storeyed RC building and it is 143 feet in length and 98 feet in width. The extended building was nearly completed 100 per cent, said an official from the Cherry King Construction Company.

The construction of the hospital is being monitored by the township construction committee. Upon completion of the whole project, the hospital will be more convenient to deal with emergency cases occurring within the townships. —Myo Nyunt Shwe (Mongnai)/GNLM

Healthcare centres give medical services to Covid-19 confirmed patients

MILITARY hospitals in various areas of the Regional Military Headquarters is setting up to give healthcare services to Covid-19 confirmed patients, according to the Tatmadaw.

Preparations are underway at station training schools, military accommodation camps, and healthcare services are provided at the completed sites.

In addition, quarantine centres are being prepared in relevant townships in collaboration with responsible officials from the Ministry of Health and Sports and other departments and charitable organizations.

Yesterday, officials from respective Regional Military Headquarters inspected the preparations and provided medical equipment and supplies at the healthcare centres. Donations of nutritious food and cash assistance were provided as needed, officials said.

Till 7 pm yesterday, 93 men and 92 women had tested positive with Covid-19 at Nay Pyi

Taw Interrogation and Accommodation Centre.

Next, 15 men and six women at the station battalion in Ottarathiri Township, and 218 men and 194 women from Hline Township Interrogation and Accommodation Centre, Yangon Region were diagnosed with the virus.

At the station battalion in Ye Mon Tat Township on the same day, 58 men and 16 women had tested positive for the virus.

Next, 12 men and 14 women were diagnosed with the virus at a station training school in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region.

Yesterday, a total of 76 people: 56 male and 15 female have been discharged from respective hospitals. Local medical teams and officials at respective military bases are providing healthcare services and accommodation for the Covid-19 confirmed patients, Tatmadaw stated. — MNA

Schools to close for 2 more weeks amid COVID-19 upsurge

THE Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 announced that the basic education schools would remain closed for two more weeks to control the spread of COVID-19.

The basic education schools,

including private schools and monastic schools, will be temporarily closed for two more weeks from 26 July to 8 August. The government needs to tighten measures to control a new third wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The basic education schools, private schools and monastic schools were closed from 9 July to 23 July.

Myanmar has reported 253,364 cases with 6,133 deaths and 173,926 recoveries as of 23 July 2021. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Heavy rainfall wreaks havoc in Kya-In-Seikkyi town

THE flash flood happened after continuous heavy rainfalls on 18 July and wreaked havoc on road transport, including a bridge in Kya-In-Seikkyi town of Kawka-reik District, Kayin State.

The creek bridge on Kya-In-Seikkyi -Phayathonesu Road was flooded. Over 300 feet long bridge was submerged. This creek bridge is situated near the mouth of the Zami River.

The water depth on the creek bridge is about 3 feet, and it is not safe for the vehicles to pass. The hazards pose difficulties for the commuters at present. — Myo Min Oo/GNLM



The water depth on the creek bridge is about 3 feet, and it is not safe for the vehicles to pass. The hazards pose difficulties for the commuters at present.

Beware of COVID-19 in third wave without losing sight

“PRIMARILY, preventive measure is of great importance. If we cannot prevent the pandemic, we will face a heavy burden in the treatment sector. So, prevention is the most important. I'd like to point out that priority should be given to preventive measures. It will be the best. So, the entire people need to deeply abide by the prescribed disciplines. On the other hand, it is necessary to carry out cooperation and coordination,” said the Chairman of the State Administration Council at the coordination meeting of COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment meeting held on 9 July.

COVID-19 pandemic broke out across the global countries from the end of 2019 and early 2020 and it started on 23 March in Myanmar. The infection rate was down in the first and second waves. The third wave which started in late May and early June rose the infection rate in Myanmar. All the people should not be too worried about the surging infection rate but actively join hands among them in taking preventive measures.

To prevent COVID-19, preventive measures and treatment are very important. But, giving treatment to the infected patients may be a heavy workload for health personnel as well as the patients. That is why the preventive measure is the best. A total of 296 of 330 townships are infected by the disease in Myanmar. As the infection rate is very high, the people need to strictly abide by orders and announcements issued for COVID-19 and avoid the crowds.

If the measures must be taken compulsorily, it is necessary to use the protective equipment as much as possible. At present, basic education schools are temporarily closed not to cause crowds. And, infection of the disease is under monitoring across the nation.

Anyone should discriminate the infected patients. Importantly, it is necessary to hold up the noble mindset of whoever must be treated. Treatment must be given to all, and officials should take care of those patients as much as possible.

Participation of volunteers is of importance to take prevention, control and treatment measures of COVID-19, it is necessary to invite those with basic health knowledge. As there are many volunteers with noble charity spirit in Myanmar, they are taking a leading role.

WHO's Tedros backs Tokyo Olympic Games 'power to inspire'

The head of the UN World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has welcomed the start of the Olympic and Paralympic Games as a chance to spread "hope to the world".

SPEAKING in the Japanese capital Tokyo, he said the world must unite with "determination, dedication and discipline" to triumph over the COVID-19 pandemic.

"More than any other event (the Games) have the power to bring the world together; to inspire; to show what is possible," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) told the International Olympic Committee, with the Olympic flame in his hand.

He warned that the world was now in the early stages of another wave of infections and deaths, urging all countries to embark on a "massive global push" to vaccinate at least 10 per cent of their populations by September.

Today, 75 per cent of vaccines have been administered in just 10 countries, Tedros said, while in low income countries, "only one per cent of people have received at least one dose".

Two-track pandemic

The WHO chief said that the world's failure to share vaccines, tests, and treatments, including



Tokyo Olympic torch relay participants prepare to attend the Olympic flame arrival ceremony in the Japanese capital on 23 July 2021, ahead of the opening ceremony of the Summer Games. PHOTO: KYODO

oxygen, is fuelling "a two-track pandemic" between the haves who are opening up, and the have-nots who are locking down.

"This is not just a moral outrage; it's also epidemiologically and economically self-defeating",

he said, warning that the longer the inequity persists, the slower the recovery will be. More transmissions will lead to more potentially dangerous mutations, even greater than the devastating Delta variant, he cautioned.

"And the more variants, the higher the likelihood that one of them will evade vaccines and take us all back to square one", signalled the WHO official, reiterating that "none of us is safe until all of us are".

'Sick and tired'

Tedros called the pandemic a test in which "the world is failing" and reminded that we are not in a race against each other, but against the virus.

"In the time it takes me to make these remarks, more than 100 people will lose their lives to COVID-19", he said. "And by the time the Olympic flame is extinguished on the 8th of August, more than 100,000 more people will perish".

COVID has already taken more than four million lives, and the toll continues to rise as the number of deaths this year, has already more than double last year's total, according to the WHO chief.

"The people of the world are sick and tired", he said, "sick of the virus...the lives and livelihoods it has taken...the suffering it has caused... the restrictions and disruptions to their lives... the turmoil it has caused to economies and societies...[and] the dark clouds it has cast over our futures".

Important lessons

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught many painful but impor-

tant lessons, including that when health is at risk, everything is at risk, said the UN official.

"That's why WHO's top priority is universal health coverage", he explained, sharing the vision of a world in which all people can access health services where and when they need them, without facing financial hardship.

When asked when the pandemic will end, Tedros answers "when the world chooses to end it".

"We have the tools to prevent transmission and save lives. Our common goal must be to vaccinate 70 per cent of the population of every country by the middle of next year", he concluded.

Tracking the virus

Meanwhile WHO on Wednesday reported a 12 per cent increase in new cases globally last week, compared to the previous one, a total of 3.4 million new cases.

Since the start of the pandemic 19 months ago, there have been more than 190 million confirmed infections and more than 4,109,000 deaths.

SOURCE: UN

Delta Variant To Dominate Within Months: WHO

THE highly contagious Delta variant of COVID-19 is expected to become the dominant strain of the virus over the coming months, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Wednesday.

Delta, which was first detected in India, has now been recorded in 124 territories - 13 more than last week - and already accounts for more than three-quarters of sequenced specimens in many major countries, the WHO said.

"It is expected that it will rapidly out-compete other variants and become the dominant circulating lineage over the coming months," the United Nations (UN) health agency said in its weekly epidemiological update. Of the three other coronavirus variants of concern (VOCs), Alpha, first detected in Britain, has been reported in 180 territories (up six from

last week), Beta, first detected in South Africa, in 130 (up seven) and Gamma, first detected in Brazil, in 78 (up three).

According to SARS-CoV-2 sequences submitted to the GISAID global science initiative over the four weeks to 20 July, the prevalence of Delta exceeded 75 per cent in several countries.

Those included Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Britain, China, Denmark, India, Indonesia, Israel, Portugal, Russia, Singapore and South Africa.

"Growing evidence supports the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant as compared to non-VOCs. However, the exact mechanism for the increase in transmissibility remains unclear," said the WHO.

Cases Up 12 Per cent

The Geneva-based organization said

overall, 3.4 million new COVID-19 cases were reported in the week to 18 July - up 12 per cent on the week before.

"At this rate, it is expected that the cumulative number of cases reported globally could exceed 200 million in the next three weeks," said the WHO.

The organization said the global increases in transmission appeared to be driven by four factors: more transmissible variants; the relaxation of public health measures; increased social mixing and large numbers of unvaccinated people.

Cases were up 30 per cent in the WHO's Western Pacific region and up 21 per cent in its European region.

The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Indonesia (350,273 new cases; up 44 per cent), Britain (296,447 new cases; up 41 per cent), and Brazil (287,610 new cases; down 14 per cent).



Police and military officers work at a check point to restrict traffic flow as motorists head downtown in Jakarta on 15 July 2021, as the highly infectious Delta variant rips across the archipelago, catapulting it ahead of India as Asia's COVID-19 epicentre. PHOTO: AFP

The number of weekly deaths, however, remained steady at 57,000, similar to the previous week and following a steady decline for more than two months.

SOURCE: AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Friday 23 July 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observation at (13:30)hrs MST today, the low pressure area over Northwest Bay of Bengal now lies over Northwest Bay of Bengal (off north Odisha-West Bengal coasts) still persists. Monsoon is strong to vigorous over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 24 July, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Taninthayi Region and Chin, Kayah, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8-13) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region and Kayah, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 July, 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 July, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Naypyitaw and Yangon Region, fairly widespread in Mandalay Region.

FLOOD BULLETIN

(Issued at: 09:00 hrs M.S.T on 23-7-2021)

Flood condition of Thaungyin River

According to the (08:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Thaungyin River at Myawady has exceeded by about (1/2) foot above its danger level, it may fall below its danger during the next (1) day.

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Myanmar imports over \$486 mln worth of machinery, spare parts in 7 months

THE import value of Myanmar's machinery and spare parts are estimated at US\$486.5 million in the first five months (October-April) of the current financial year 2020-2021, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

Similarly, the country imported \$513.7 million worth of vehicles and spare parts.

Imports of commercial vehicles and machinery have been permitted through sea ports and three land borders — Muse, Myawady, and Tachilek.

"Starting from 1 January, imports of commercial vehicles on a company licence are not allowed. Importers are required to operate a car showroom in line with the prescribed rules and regulations. However, the new policy can pose difficulties for traders conducting business on a manageable scale," said importers.

At present, the market for those vehicles which have been registered and second-hand cars are leading to a downward



Heavy equipment that cannot be driven on public roads: excavators, bulldozers, wheel loaders, vibratory roller, clamp loader, motor grader, road roller compactor, bridge crane, gantry crane, tower crane, pilling machine, crawler drill/crane, mobile crane, rough-terrain crane, forklift, boom lift and asphalt finisher are allowed to be brought into the country as long as they are 15 years old or less.

trend amid the financial hard times and the global pandemic.

Additionally, the importers are facing a hard time in the meantime. Importing the vehicles will cost a lot owing to the Kyat depreciation, double

shipping rate and price volatility with tax. The prices of those cars are likely to rise 20 to 30 per cent depending on vehicle brand and specifications.

Under the 2021 vehicle import policy, 2019 will be the

oldest model to be issued an import permit for private cars with non-commercial purposes, according to a press release of the Commerce Ministry.

Except for machinery, all import vehicles must be left-

hand drive under the 2021 vehicle import policy.

When vehicles with engines under 1,350 CC are individually imported, the model year must be 2019 and later. Passengers' vehicles such as mini-bus, city buses, express bus and commercial trucks were manufactured in 2017 and later can be imported.

Under FOC (Free-of-Charge) licence system, fire trucks, ambulances and hearse vehicles manufactured in 2012 or later are allowed for import.

Heavy equipment that cannot be driven on public roads: excavators, bulldozers, wheel loaders, vibratory roller, clamp loader, motor grader, road roller compactor, bridge crane, gantry crane, tower crane, pilling machine, crawler drill/crane, mobile crane, rough-terrain crane, forklift, boom lift and asphalt finisher are allowed to be brought into the country as long as they are 15 years old or less. — KH/GNLM

Peanut growers expecting good price in NyaungU

THE peanut growers are delighted with a high yield on account of good rainfall in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region. Consequently, the growers are expecting a good price, they stated.

Those peanut seeds were broadcast in May. Good rainfall ensures a good yield for the farmers during the harvest time, said U Than Htike,

a peanut grower.

The peanut cultivation commenced in the fourth week of May. The continuous rainfall benefits crops.

Last year, the peanut production declined in NyaungU Township as it did not receive precipitation evenly. Some acres were ruined due to drought situations, U Aung Soe explained.

The peanut seeds for cultivation costs K55,000 per basket. Last year, some growers did not even cover the input cost including peanut seeds, land treatment, rent for farmer ploughing machines, labour wages, fertilizer and pesticides. This year, high yield raises hopes for peanut growers to receive a good price. — KPD/GNLM



Those peanut seeds were broadcast in May. Good rainfall ensures a good yield for the farmers during the harvest time.

Trade with Bangladesh declines by 16.84 mln



Myanmar-Bangladesh trade has registered US\$34.48 million in ten months of the financial year 2020-21, declining by \$16.84 million as against the corresponding period last year, reported the Ministry of Commerce.

MYANMAR-Bangladesh trade has registered US\$34.48 million in ten months of the financial year 2020-21, declining by \$16.84 million as against the corresponding period last year, reported the Ministry of Commerce.

The total bilateral trade figures for the first ten months includes \$16.06 million in exports and \$18.43 million in imports.

For the same period last year, the total trade between the two countries was valued at \$51.33 million, with \$26.52 million in exports and \$24.81 million in imports.

Usually, Myanmar's exports exceed imports in bilateral trade with Bangladesh, conducted by sea or land. In bilateral border trade, goods move mainly through the Sitway and Maungtau trade stations.

The marketable products between the two countries include bamboo, ginger, peanuts, saltwater prawns and fish, dried plums, garlic, rice, mung beans, blankets, candy, plum jams, footwear, frozen foods, chemicals, leather, jute products, tobacco, plastics, wood, knitwear, and beverages. — ACM/GNLM

Troubled Tokyo Olympics set to open under Covid cloud

THE most troubled Olympics in modern history finally open in Tokyo on Friday, struggling to shake off lingering virus fears after a one-year postponement and a build-up marred by scandal and controversy.

Eight years after Japanese newscasters shed tears as Tokyo celebrated winning the right to stage the Games, Friday's opening ceremony will take place before empty stands and with the city in a state of emergency.

Fears that the global gathering of 11,000 athletes could trigger a super-spreader event have prompted organizers to

clamp the Games in a biosecure straitjacket.

Overseas fans are banned for the first time ever, and domestic spectators will be kept out of all but a handful of venues.

Athletes, support staff and media are subject to strict Covid-19 protocols, including regular testing and daily health checks.

Polls have consistently found a majority of Japanese are against the games, with opinion ranging from weary indifference to outright hostility.

But in the hours before the opening ceremony, there were

glimmers of excitement building, with thousands turning out in Tokyo to watch an aerial display by the Japanese air force's Blue Impulse team.

"Before the Olympics began I expected the atmosphere to be a little sad," said Maki Hasumoto, 25, as she waited for the display.

"But now it's very atmospheric and now I'm looking forward to it." Friday is a national holiday in Japan and families set up picnic blankets in Tokyo parks to watch the jets draw the Olympic rings in coloured smoke.—AFP ■



A competitor from Thailand heads out on her windsurfer board to practise ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games sailing competition at Enoshima Yacht Harbour in Fujisawa, Kanagawa Prefecture. PHOTO: AFP

China says WHO plan to audit labs in Covid origins probe 'arrogant'

CHINA on Thursday said a WHO proposal to audit Chinese labs as part of further investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic showed "disrespect" and "arrogance towards science". Last week, the World Health Organization said a second stage of the international probe should include audits of Chinese labs, amid increasing pressure from the United States for an investigation into a biotech lab in Wuhan.

The proposal outlined by WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus included "audits of relevant laboratories and research institutions operating in the area of the initial human cases identified in December 2019" -- referring to the Chinese city of Wuhan.

But China's vice health minister Zeng Yixin told reporters Thursday that he was "extremely surprised" by the plan, which he said showed "disrespect for common sense and arrogance towards science".

Long derided as a right-wing conspiracy theory and vehemently rejected by Beijing, the idea that Covid-19 may have emerged from a lab leak has been gaining momentum.

Beijing has repeatedly insisted that a leak would have been "extremely unlikely", citing the conclusion reached by a joint WHO-Chinese mission to Wuhan in January. At the same time, Chinese officials and state media have pushed an alternate theory that the virus could have escaped from the US military research lab at Fort Detrick, Maryland.—AFP ■

As Covid surges, more US Republicans urging vaccinations



An anti-vaccine protester dressed up as Joe Biden in June 2021 promoted one of several conspiracies that have contributed to low vaccination rates, particularly among US Republicans. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

WITH Delta variant infections spiking across the United States, growing numbers of Republican officials and lawmakers have joined the chorus of support for coronavirus vaccinations, swatting aside conspiracies that have left millions of Americans unprotected. Covid-19 deaths and hospitalization rates are rising

nationwide, with the vast majority of new fatalities and serious cases among the unvaccinated.

With the political rift over pandemic response running deep, conservative messaging about masks, social distancing, vaccines and lockdowns has remained controversial.

And with polls showing

that far more Democrats than Republicans are vaccinated, inoculations have become the newest coronavirus battle line. For months conservatives suspicious of government and adamant about maintaining personal freedoms have held anti-vaccination protests in New Hampshire, California and elsewhere. The anti-vax positions embraced by many Republicans are particularly curious given it was ex-president Donald Trump himself, still the party flagbearer, who claims credit for launching Operation Warp Speed to develop and distribute the vaccines in record time.

But with distrust of government churning, and stubbornly high vaccine hesitancy in states like Arkansas, Florida and Missouri fueling transmission of the virus, Republican leaders are redoubling efforts to win over skeptics.—AFP ■

Half of Europeans vaccinated as Germany warns on rising virus cases



Shoppers walk past a sign advertising the sale of protective face masks outside a shoe shop in Berlin on 13 February 2020, as the coronavirus "COVID-19" epidemic has many people using the masks to prevent the spread of the virus, resulting in stocks running low. PHOTO: AFP

MORE than half of all European adults are now fully vaccinated, the EU said on Thursday, as countries across Europe and Asia battled fresh outbreaks blamed on the fast-spreading Delta variant.

The European Central Bank said uncertainty over the wave of infections meant it was keeping the cash taps open to ensure the nascent economic recovery isn't snuffed out.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said cases in her country were rising "exponentially", while in Japan the delayed Olympic

Games were set to open with almost no spectators and with a blanket of Covid rules in place.

The spotlight, meanwhile, once again turned on the origins of the virus after the WHO called for an audit of the Chinese lab at the heart of speculation about where it first emerged, sparking a fiery response from Beijing.

More than four million people have died from the virus since December 2019, and though rates of vaccination are picking up globally, Delta is fuelling a rise in infections and prompting gov-

ernments to re-impose anti-virus measures. The EU said on Thursday that 200 million Europeans had been fully vaccinated, more than half of the adult population but still short of a 70 per cent target set for the summer. The fresh data came as Merkel urged more Germans to get jabs, sounding the alarm over a fresh spike in cases in Germany. "We are seeing exponential growth," she told a news conference in Berlin, adding that "every vaccination... is a small step towards a return to normality".—AFP ■

Japan may attain fiscal health in FY 2027 due to tax revenue rise



Bank of Japan head office in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

JAPAN may achieve fiscal consolidation in fiscal 2027, two years earlier than previously estimated, as tax revenue has been rising despite the coronavirus pandemic, the government said Wednesday.

Japan's primary balance -- tax revenue minus expenses other than debt-servicing costs -- is expected to turn black in fiscal 2027 with a surplus of about 1.8 trillion yen (\$16.4 billion) under the most optimistic scenario, the

Cabinet Office said in its biannual projection.

The previous forecast released in January said the balance would still be in the red with a 2.8 trillion yen deficit in the fiscal year through March 2028, and turn black in fiscal 2029.

However, the latest projection suggests Japan will miss its goal of achieving fiscal health in fiscal 2025.

The office said meeting the target in fiscal 2025 would

"come into sight" if the world's third-largest economy can improve the balance by around 1.3 trillion yen per year through efforts to streamline its expenditure. The upwardly revised fiscal outlook was due partly to the government's large-scale stimulus that has "protected the domestic economy" amid the pandemic and helped the tax revenue grow more than expected, a government official told reporters. Kyodo News ■

Taxis and tuk-tuks come to a standstill after Thai virus surge

TUKTUKS and garishly coloured taxis that once weaved through chaotic Bangkok traffic are sitting idle in storage as a fresh coronavirus surge scuttles hopes of relief for Thailand's tourism-dependent economy.

The kingdom is currently undergoing its worst-ever stretch of the pandemic after largely keeping Covid contained when the illness first emerged last year.

Bangkok is subject to a night-time curfew and a ban on gatherings as authorities advise residents of the capital to stay home.

"Tourists, people going to work, shopping, hanging out with friends -- these are our customers but they've all vanished," said taxi driver Anuchit Surasit.

The 47-year-old had just dropped off his vehicle at a garage in western Bangkok, parking it among hundreds of other cabs on forced sabbatical.

While he loves being a cabie, Anuchit said he has watched his income drop to just 300 baht (\$9) a day. He is also weighing the added risk of catching the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus that is now sweeping through the country its Southeast Asian neighbours.

"I need to stop driving for

now and find something else to do because this occupation is too risky at the moment," he said.

A lot attendant sprayed his taxi down with disinfectant and collected his keys. Tourism accounts for a fifth of Thailand's economy, which is suffering its worst crash since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.—AFP ■



Thailand's government has faced an avalanche of criticism for its management of the pandemic and the slow roll-out of vaccines. PHOTO: AFP

UK 'pingdemic' prompts warnings of supermarket shortages

BRITISH supermarkets and suppliers warned Thursday of possible food shortages due to staff self-isolating, as rising coronavirus cases threaten chaos after the government controversially eased all restrictions earlier this week.

With millions of workers and school children currently forced to stay home under Covid-19 tracing rules -- in what has been dubbed a "pingdemic" after the phone app used to contact, or ping, people who need to self-isolate -- various industries are starting to suffer.

Newspapers showed photographs of empty supermarket shelves, as missing staff at stores and in supply chains hit retailer's operations -- with some even closing outlets.

"We've kept all of our shops open throughout the pandemic, but now we have

had to close one or two shops and reduce hours in others," Richard Walker, managing director of frozen food retailer Iceland, told BBC radio.

"That could get a lot worse a lot quicker, unless the country's system is sorted out."

Rod McKenzie, managing director of policy at the Road Haulage Association (RHA), said the UK was already struggling with a shortage of lorry drivers due to Brexit and that isolation issues were now "a recipe for chaos".

'Grinding to a halt'

The government on Monday eased all virus curbs, including the legal requirement to wear a mask in certain settings and social distancing rules, just as new cases are surging towards levels not seen since peaks in January.—

AFP ■



Newspapers ran photos of empty supermarket shelves as missing staff at stores and in supply chains hit retailer's operations. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pegasus spy claims probed as Macron switches phone

HUNGARY, Israel and Algeria on Thursday probed allegations that Israeli-made spyware was used on journalists, rights activists and 14 heads of state, as French leader Emmanuel Macron ordered tighter security and changed his phone over espionage concerns.

President Macron -- whose name was on a list of alleged targets -- ordered "a strengthening of all security protocols" following a specially convened meeting of the nation's Defence Council, his office said.

Macron "has himself changed his phone and number for certain exchanges", it said.

The NSO Group's Pegasus software -- able to switch on a phone's camera or microphone and harvest its data -- is at the centre of a growing storm after a list of about 50,000 potential surveillance targets was leaked to rights groups.

Amnesty International and French media nonprofit Forbidden Stories collaborated with a clutch of media companies, including the Washington Post, the Guardian and Le Monde, to analyse and publish the list. The widening scandal is drawing in countries from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to Morocco, India and a host of other mostly emerging economies.— AFP

Suzuki, Daihatsu join Toyota-led electric, green drive for minicars

SUZUKI Motor Corp. and Daihatsu Motor Co. said Wednesday they will join an initiative led by Toyota Motor Corp. to accelerate electrification and carbon neutrality in commercial vehicles.

Suzuki and Daihatsu will each acquire a 10 per cent stake in Commercial Japan Partnership Technologies Corp., a joint company funded by Toyota and smaller manufacturers Isuzu Motors Ltd. and Hino Motors Ltd. The envisaged

partnership is designed to promote more connected, autonomous, shared and electrified vehicles for commercial use.

Daihatsu and Suzuki are major makers of minicars with engines of up to 660 cc. Such smaller and low-cost vehicles are popular in Japan, accounting for about 40 per cent of cars sold. "Minicars serve as Japan's practical and sustainable lifelines. Now CASE and carbon neutrality are calling for a major

change," Toyota President Akio Toyoda said during an online press briefing.

Daihatsu is a wholly owned subsidiary of Toyota. Toyota has a 4.9 per cent stake in Suzuki, expanding their partnership in such fields as electrification.

Toyota, Isuzu and Hino are seeking to promote eco-friendly and autonomous driving trucks via Commercial Japan Partnership Technologies launched in April.—Kyodo News ■



Daihatsu's vehicle assembly plant. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Frenzied appetite for India food delivery giant Zomato's IPO

SHARES of Indian food delivery giant Zomato soared on its market debut Friday, following a 93.75 billion rupee (\$1.3 billion) IPO, the country's biggest this year.

Around 30 Indian companies have announced plans to list shares this year, with start-ups attracting billions of dollars in investment even though many are yet to make a profit.

Zomato, which counts subsidiaries of Chinese tycoon Jack Ma's Ant Group and Uber among its shareholders, dominates India's booming app-based

food-delivery space alongside rival Swiggy.

Its shares debuted at 115 rupees on the Bombay Stock Exchange's Sensex Index, 51 per cent higher than its issue price after its IPO was subscribed 40.38 times at the end of last week.

The stock then rocketed up 80 per cent in the opening 10 minutes, taking Zomato's market capitalization across the one trillion rupee mark.

India's economy has taken a battering during the pandemic, recording its worst annual recession

since independence in 1947. But its start-up sector has been a rare bright spot. This year alone, around 20 "unicorns" --

firms valued at more than a billion dollars -- have been created, including half a dozen in four days in April.—AFP ■



Zomato dominates India's booming app-based food-delivery space alongside rival Swiggy. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Unilever profits fall as inflation bites

BRITISH consumer goods group Unilever on Thursday announced a drop in first-half net profits on rising costs.

Profit after tax



The results come after Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett last week warned Unilever that its subsidiary Ben and Jerry's decision to stop selling ice cream in the occupied Palestinian territories would have "severe consequences". PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/AFP

dropped five per cent to €3.12 billion in the first six months of the year compared with the corresponding period in 2020, Unilever said in a statement. Revenue

was flattened at around €26 billion for the company making food, cleaning and beauty products, including Magnum ice-cream, Cif surface cleaner and Dove soap. Unilever was impacted by exchange rate movements, in addition to inflation strengthening as virus-battered economies emerge from lockdowns.

"We have seen further cost inflation emerge through the second quarter," noted chief executive Alan Jope. The company, which experienced keen demand for hand cleaners and household clean-

ing products last year as the coronavirus outbreak spread, said it continued to be impacted by the pandemic. "The operating environment across our markets has seen some improvements but remains volatile," Unilever added in the statement.

The results update comes after Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett last week warned Unilever that its subsidiary Ben and Jerry's decision to stop selling ice cream in the occupied Palestinian territories would have "severe consequences".—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (229N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY.NO. (229N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-7-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (128W/129E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK NESNA VOY.NO. (128W/129E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-7-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

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NEWS IN
BRIEFDozen Thai student
activists charged with
royal defamation

A dozen Thai pro-democracy student activists were charged with royal defamation and sedition on Thursday, their lawyers said, over a rally last year that demanded reforms to Thailand's unassailable monarchy.

The pro-democracy movement, which has been largely led by student activists, kicked off a year ago due to public discontent over Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's administration.

One key protest demand that emerged was monarchy reforms, a once-taboo issue that spilled into public discussion due to the student-led rallies that drew tens of thousands at their peak.

At one such protest in October last year, thousands marched to the German embassy in defiance of the king, who has spent long periods of time in Germany.

"All 12 have been charged with 112 (lese majeste) and 116 (sedition), with the youngest being 20 years old," said the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights group (TLHR), which represents the students.

"The main reason for the charges is the rally and speeches delivered in front of the German embassy."—AFP ■

Hong Kong debates
controversial anti-
doxing bill

Hong Kong's Legislative Council on Wednesday began debates over a controversial new law that would criminalize doxing activities.

Under the proposal, anyone who discloses someone's personal data with the intent to "threaten, intimidate or harass" them will be in violation of the law.

Once passed, the bill will allow the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data to conduct criminal investigations and initiate prosecutions for doxing, according to an official statement.

Under the first tier of offences, those found guilty of doxing would face a maximum penalty of two years in jail and a fine of HK\$100,000 (\$12,900) for each conviction. Under the second tier, the maximum penalty would rise to five years in jail and a fine of HK\$1 million.—Kyodo ■

Madagascar prosecutors say foiled
assassination bid on president

PROSECUTORS in Madagascar said Thursday they had foiled an attempt to assassinate President Andry Rajoelina and made several arrests.

"Several foreign and Madagascar nationals were arrested on Tuesday, 20 July, as part of an investigation into an attack on state security," prosecutor Berthine Razafiarivony said in a statement released overnight.

There was "a plan to eliminate and neutralize various Madagascan figures, including the head of state," Razafiarivony said.

"At this stage of the investigation, which is ongoing, the prosecutor-general's office assures we will shed light in on

this case," she added.

Two French nationals are among those who were arrested on Tuesday, diplomatic sources told AFP.

The two are reputedly retired military officers, according to the Taratra, a local news agency operation to the communications ministry.

During the country's Independence Day celebrations on 26 June, the gendarmerie announced they had foiled an assassination attempt on their boss, General Richard Ravalomanana, who is also Rajoelina's right-hand man.

Rajoelina, 47, first seized power in March 2009 from Marc Ravalomanana with the backing



Rajoelina inspects the troops on Madagascar's Independence Day last month. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

of the military.

He won the last vote in December 2018, beating his main

rival and predecessor Ravalomanana in an election beset by allegations of fraud.—AFP ■

Security clampdown in Indian capital for
new farmers' protest

Indian farmers are renewing a campaign against government agriculture reforms. PHOTO: AFP

THOUSANDS of security forces deployed across New Delhi on Thursday for protests by

farmers who are renewing a campaign against government agriculture reforms.

After an earlier rally turned into a riot, authorities allowed only 200 farmers to enter the centre of the capital.

Police manned barricades and roadblocks around Delhi as the farmers were ferried to the protest site in buses.

The farmers have vowed to stage a demonstration every day during a parliament session that ends on 13 August.

"As long as parliament is on, we will protest here. Wherever we are stopped and there are barricades, we will sit there and have our own 'farmer's parliament'," said Devinder Singh, one of the farmers.

Sonia Mann, a Punjabi ac-

tor and activist, was also among the 200. She shouted a message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi: "You must think about the plight of the farmers and you must repeal the three farm laws."

In parliament, opposition MPs staged their own protest calling for the repeal of the laws which have divided the country of 1.3 billion people.

The farmers and opposition parties say the changes will give control of the agriculture industry, which dominates the Indian economy, to private conglomerates and put many small farms out of business.—AFP ■

Venice dodges UNESCO
endangered listing after big ship ban

VENICE avoided being named a world heritage site in danger by UNESCO on Thursday, just weeks after Italy moved to ban large cruise ships from sailing into the city centre.

The city has been on UNESCO's heritage list since 1987, but the UN body warned last month of the need for "more sustainable tourism management", recommending that Venice be added to its endangered list.

The World Heritage Committee meeting in Fuzhou, Chi-

na, cited Italy's recent ban and gave Italian authorities until next December to report back on efforts to preserve the city's ecosystem and heritage.

Italy's Culture Minister Dario Franceschini welcomed the decision, but said "attention on Venice must remain high", underlying the need to identify a "sustainable development path".

Prime Minister Mario Draghi expressed "great satisfaction" at the decision. For



Venice avoided being named a world heritage site in danger by UNESCO on Thursday, just weeks after Italy moved to ban large cruise ships from sailing into the city centre. PHOTO: AFP

years, campaigners have been calling for an end to cruise ships sailing past St Mark's Square.

They say the giant floating

hotels cause large waves that undermine the city's foundations and harm the fragile ecosystem of its lagoon.—AFP ■

China's Xi makes rare trip to Tibet: state media

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping is on a rare trip to China's politically sensitive region of Tibet, state media reported Friday, the first such visit by the country's top leader in more than three decades.

Tibet has alternated over the centuries between independence and control by China, which says it "peacefully liberated" the rugged plateau in 1951 and brought infrastructure and education to the previously underdeveloped region.

But many exiled Tibetans accuse the central government of religious repression and eroding their culture. In 2008, the region exploded in deadly rioting after rising anger over the perceived dilution of its ancient culture by rapid Chinese-fuelled development. In footage released Friday

by state broadcaster CCTV, Xi was seen greeting a crowd wearing ethnic costumes and waving Chinese flags as he left his plane, in a red carpet welcome as dancers performed around him.

Although he arrived on Wednesday at the Nyingchi Mainling Airport in the southeast of Tibet, there was no mention of his visit in official media until two days later. After a "warm welcome by cadres and masses of all ethnic groups", Xi went to the Nyang River Bridge to learn about ecological and environmental protection of the Yarlung Tsangpo river and the Nyang River, CCTV said.

Xi has visited Tibet twice, once in 1998 as Fujian province's party chief and another time in 2011 as vice-president.—AFP



Beijing sees development as an antidote to discontent in Tibet, where many still revere the Dalai Lama -- the region's exiled spiritual leader -- and resent an influx of Chinese tourists and settlers. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Like Trump, Bolsonaro attacks voting system ahead of poll



People in Brazil cast their ballots electronically at voting stations, and Bolsonaro has long been arguing for a paper printout to be made of each vote cast, suggesting the absence of a paper trail makes cheating easier. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PRESIDENT Jair Bolsonaro has ramped up his attacks on Brazil's long-established electronic voting system, suggesting he is bracing for defeat in elections next year -- and to fight back, analysts say.

In rhetoric that could have been taken from the playbook of his ally, Donald Trump, Bolsonaro has been sniping at electronic

voting, introduced in Brazil in 1996, and advocating instead for the use of "printable and audible" paper ballots in the 2022 presidential race.

People in Brazil cast their ballots electronically at voting stations, and Bolsonaro has for years been arguing for a paper printout to be made of each vote cast, suggesting the absence of

a paper trail makes cheating easier.

The far-right leader, 66, is under fire from several quarters; facing an investigation into his handling of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than half-a-million Brazilians, and with his popularity at a record low.

Thousands of Brazilians have taken to the streets to protest his leadership.

Facing a potential ouster at the ballot box, Bolsonaro has recently upped the ante, stating this month: "Either there are clean elections or there are no elections," and insisting he would part with the presidential sash only for a rival "who wins with a verifiable and reliable vote."

Worst moment

This week, he suggested that if Congress does not approve a constitutional amendment to make it compulsory to print out electronic votes, he might not run.—AFP

US launched recent air strikes in Afghanistan: Pentagon

THE United States recently carried out air strikes as it backed the Afghan army's bid to repel a Taliban offensive, the Pentagon said Thursday, with the withdrawal of international forces from the country all but complete.

"In the last several days, we have acted through air strikes to support to the ANDSF," said Pentagon spokesman John Kirby, referring to Afghan government forces.

"We continue to... conduct

airstrikes in support of the ANDSF," he told reporters at a press briefing, adding that head of the US Army Central Command (Centcom), General Kenneth McKenzie, had authorized the strike. Kirby said he could not provide details on the air strikes, but reiterated Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin's Wednesday statement that the United States remains "committed to helping the Afghan security forces and the Afghan government going forward."—AFP



In this handout photo taken on 16 June 2021 and released on 29 June 2021 by the US Defence Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) Aerial porters work with maintainers to load a UH-60L Blackhawk helicopter into a C-17 Globemaster III in support of the Resolute Support retrograde mission in Bagram. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Colombia says attack on president was planned from Venezuela

THE Colombian government claimed Thursday that a recent attack on President Ivan Duque's helicopter was planned from neighbouring Venezuela by dissident FARC guerillas and a former Colombian army officer.

Three of the alleged perpetrators have been arrested, defence minister Diego Molano told reporters, adding: "It is clear that this attack against the president... was planned from Venezuela."

Duque's helicopter was approaching Cucuta airport on a flight from Sardinata on 25 June when several shots -- apparently from rifles -- were fired at it.—AFP

Ecuador declares emergency after 22 killed in prison riots

ECUADOR on Thursday declared a state of emergency in its penitentiary system after riots at two prisons left 22 dead and 57 wounded.

President Guillermo Lasso issued the order "to mobilize all necessary human and economic resources to re-establish order" in Ecuador's prisons. Lasso said the military would be in charge of controlling the prison perimeter and entry, while police officers would control the inside. Until now civilians trained as prison guards were in charge of indoor security. Prison authorities earlier suspended all activities "that could put the penitentiary population and administrative personnel at risk."—AFP

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

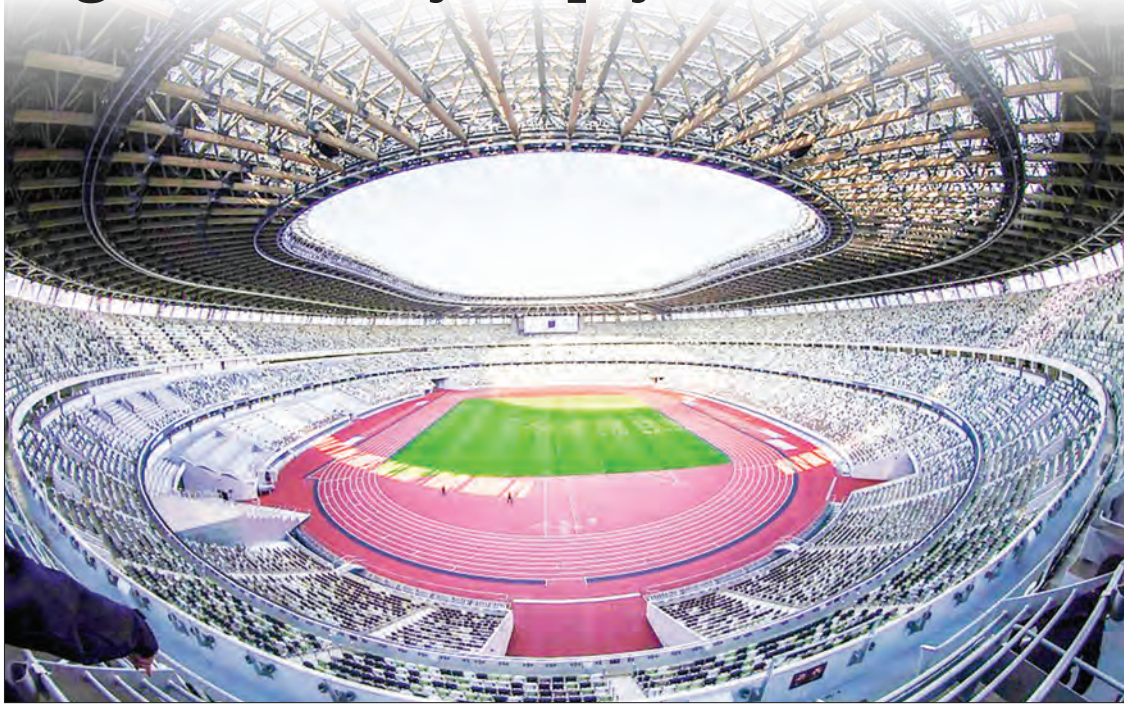
- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics begins in nearly empty stadium



The opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics began Friday night in a nearly empty National Stadium, with many questioning the value of holding the games at a time of unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic while still craving inspirational moments from the world's greatest athletes. **PHOTO: KYODO**

THE opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics began Friday night in a nearly empty National Stadium, with many questioning the value of holding the games at a time of unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic while still craving inspirational moments from the world's greatest athletes. The ceremony raised the curtain on the biggest sporting spectacle held since the virus took hold early last year and following a one-year postponement. Involving about 11,000 athletes from over 200 countries and regions, venues will be without spectators for the

first Olympics in history. Although organizers hope the Olympics will symbolize global solidarity and victory over the virus, the games will be staged with the host city seemingly losing the fight. Tokyo has been wrestling with COVID-19 infection numbers at their highest in six months with the city under its fourth state of emergency. Emperor Naruhito is set to declare the games of the 32nd Olympiad open in the ceremony at the newly built stadium which only a limited number of VIPs such as International Olympic Committee officials and foreign dignitaries were allowed to enter.

To the sound of popular Japanese video game tunes, including from the title "Dragon Quest", played by an orchestra, athletes entered a stadium full of empty seats. They waved to cameras rather than a crowd while led by manga-themed country name placards carried by people from across Japan. The ceremony mixed Japanese tradition, highlighting fine craftsmanship with modern culture, while also celebrating athletes who have trained for the Olympics through the global health crisis, giving special mention to a female boxer who also worked as a nurse. — AFP ■

'Happy' Son signs new four-year deal at Tottenham

SOUTH KOREAN forward Son Heung-min has signed a new four-year contract with Tottenham Hotspur, the English Premier League club announced on Friday.

The 29-year-old, who joined from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015, will now stay at the north London club until 2025 after earning a significant pay rise.

"It was already a big honour to play here for six years, the club have showed me massive, massive respect and obviously I'm very happy to be here," Son said in a statement.

"It's like home, especially with the fans, the players, the staff. There was no decision. It was easy. I'm so happy to be here and will be so glad to see the fans again soon." — AFP ■

Smith Rowe signs new long-term deal with Arsenal

ARSENAL youngster Emile Smith Rowe has signed a new long-term contract, the Premier League club announced on Thursday.

The 20-year-old youth product, who joined the club at the age of nine, made 33 first-team appearances during a breakthrough campaign last season. The length of the new contract has not been made public but is reported in the English media as a five-year deal. Recent reports had suggested Aston Villa were bidding to sign the England Under-21 international, who has had loan spells at Huddersfield and Leipzig since making his senior debut in 2018.

"As we all saw last season, Emile is an intelligent player with excellent ability," said Gunners manager Mikel Arteta who has handed Smith Rowe the number 10 shirt. — AFP ■



Arsenal youngster Emile Smith Rowe has signed a new long-term contract, the Premier League club announced on Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP**