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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

All the people need to emphasize national interests by forging the Union spirit: Senior General



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the SAC 14/ 2021 meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

ETHNIC armed organizations need to take care of avoiding the acts harmful to national unity and peace, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the 14/2021 meeting of the State Administration Council at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw

yesterday afternoon.

In his address, the Senior General said the findings of the Union Election Commission related to the election has been released, and in the near future, the summarized findings will be expressed to the people and the State. Although any person or any organization has the right to criticize something, they must have firm evidence and reasons. The talks without any evidence

will not reflect the essence of democracy.

As the Nay Pyi Taw is the capital of the nation, the development of Nay Pyi Taw must be symbolized for regions and states.

The infection rate of COVID-19 in the third wave has declined to some extent thanks to the utmost efforts of the government and systematic restrictions

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The Senior General stressed the need to strive for the resurgence of the internal economy as a short-term plan and encouraging the people in line with the motto: The strength of the nation lies within.

All the people need to emphasize national interests by ...

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with examining the contact persons and managing the stay at home programme. The government set an aim to decline a half down of infection rate.

At present, the vaccine is being given to people above aged 18, and international medical experts approved that people above 12 can receive the vaccine. Myanmar has about 36.9 million people above 18 years and some six million above 12, totalling some 43 million. As Myanmar contacted the friend countries for having the COVID-19 vaccines, China, India, Cambodia and Thailand provided vaccines and accessories to Myanmar. It is necessary to strive for the prevention of COVID-19 through the cooperation of the people. As global countries are facing a

have been reduced and suspended for the resurgence of businesses, but it is necessary to provide more aid to them. As garment industries are being operated in Myanmar, workers get jobs. Necessary assistance will be given to these industries. And, the economic development project will be implemented.

Some attacks on Myanmar are based on the economic sector through the banking system. The banking system is the life of a country. Some countries which became victims of the 1997 financial crisis banned entry visas for George Soros.

Plans are underway to vaccinate all ethnic armed organizations and the people from their areas. So far, more than six million vaccines have

democracy the people inspire. The right to recall law cannot be enacted. If the decisions of Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw are different, it will be a problem. As such, it is necessary to consider the Proportional Representation-PR system with all participants. It is necessary to amend the elected representatives and election system. During its tenure, the government will amend them through coordination with all.

The emergence of some ethnic armed organizations was based on ethnic affairs and some on the rights of democracy. Ethnic affairs are based on federalism and democracy. Relevant groups and regions must have to exercise the practice of democracy. All citizens and ethnic people need to abide by the practice of democracy. Ethnic armed organizations need to follow the practice of democracy such as abiding by the laws, disciplines and human values in addition to the behaviours and talks in conformity with the democracy.

The Senior General stressed the need to strive for the resurgence of the internal economy as a short-term plan and encouraging the people in line with the motto: The strength of the nation lies within.

Members of the State Administration Council discussed taking action against those who provide money and equipment to CRPH, NUG and subordinate terrorist organizations and terrorists, rewarding the people who inform the authorities about the terrorists, taking action against USD manipulators, effective hindering the ethnic armed organizations which give training, arms and equipment to terror-

Plans are underway to vaccinate all ethnic armed organizations and the people from their areas. So far, more than six million vaccines have been given to people. Vaccines that arrived from abroad will be distributed to regions and states by the Tatmadaw and the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The infection rate of COVID-19 in the third wave has declined to some extent thanks to the utmost efforts of the government and systematic restrictions with examining the contact persons and managing the stay-at-home programme. The government set an aim to decline a half down of infection rate.

pandemic, foreign aid is under limitation. As such, Myanmar must rely on its strength.

Instructions have been given to region and state chief ministers to strive for the resurgence of businesses triggered by COVID-19. Taxes

been given to people. Vaccines that arrived from abroad will be distributed to regions and states by the Tatmadaw and the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The government is walking on the path of multiparty

ists, use of AMI digital meters across the nation, measures of Kyaukpyu special economic zone, systematic formation of village people's militia troops, the building of oxygen plant in Namhsam, prohibition for gold mining not to harm natural environment, and opening of an agricultural bank branch in Mabein.

In his response to the discussions, the Senior General said effective action will be taken against CRPH and NUG and their subordinate terrorist organizations under the law. The Anti-Corruption Commission scrutinizes the tasks in the past government not in conformity with the law. Ethnic armed organizations need to take care of avoiding acts harmful to national unity and peace. Necessary energy for factories will take out from natural gas and coal through modern technologies. In the future, natural gas produced at home will be used for local factories. AMI modern digital meters are being installed in Yangon and Mandalay Region for the prevention of loss and

illegal use of electricity.

An oxygen plant will be built in Namhsam. Machinery to generate oxygen is being installed at region and state, district and township level hospitals, and all hospitals will be formed with COVID-19 ICU. The meeting is in progress to build a COVID-19 vaccine factory in Yangon in cooperation with the Russian Federation.

Relevant officials will arrange the tasks for damage caused by the natural disasters in some townships of the Palaung Self-Administered Zone. Arrangements are being made to open institutes of livestock breeding in all regions and states for the interests of the local people.

It is necessary to consider serving the interests of the State based on national interest. In this regard, past history cannot be ignored, and lessons should be taken from past events. Laws cannot be drawn for solving the current problems. All the people need to emphasize the national interests by forging the Union spirit.—MNA ■

**2,186 new cases of COVID-19 reported on
23 August, total figure rises to 375,871**

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 375,871 after 2,186 new cases were reported on 23 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 302,447 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 14,499 after 125 died.

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Consider how to develop the country

SINCE 1948 when the country regained her independence, the armed conflicts of ethnics have been long-lasting for some 75 years. Due to immigration problems related to some neighbouring countries, citizenship problems came out. It was scrutinized that there are some four million of citizens who do not have citizenship scrutiny cards after turning 18. These are actual situations of Myanmar. Depending on these facts, the government needs to consider how to develop the country.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting 1/2021 of the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar made by Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the State Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 11 August 2021)

Supervision of the relevant authorities and good cooperation of the people help drop disease infection to an extent: Senior General



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing makes the address at the ninth coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Myanmar Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addressed the 9th coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was also attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, members of the Council, Union Ministers, Tatmadaw Officials, and the Region/State Chief Ministers joined the meeting through videoconferencing.

Firstly, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Provisional Government Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said the rate of COVID-19 disease infection has

dropped due to the supervision of the relevant authorities and the good cooperation of the people, adding the need to diagnose the

there are people trading foods and essential medicines with greed. Due to systematic inspections, the high prices of medicines

He continued that the Ministry of Information is conducting education programmes and the respective regions and states should accelerate the educative campaigns, especially in ethnic areas.

contact persons of the COVID-19 positive patients in order to continue to reduce the infection and to be cautious despite the decline rate in virus infection.

He said the COVID-19 outbreak has caused travel problems and affected production, and amid the striving for living,

have returned to normal in recent months in Yangon and Mandalay.

The Government has been making a concerted effort to get the COVID-19 vaccines during the difficult time to provide the people with the vaccines as soon as possible, as vaccinated people are more resistant to the dis-

ease infection, he continued. The Prime Minister stressed the need to effectively take action against the traders of counterfeit COVID-19 vaccines.

Afterwards, those present at the meeting discussed the preventive measures of variant viruses spreading in the neighbouring countries; the need to use oxygen cylinders with SOP guidelines; disaster preparedness in various hospitals; healthcare service to be provided to healthcare workers; posting of immunization status on WHO and ASEAN Websites; vaccine arrival and status of re-orders and coordination to re-purchase; status of plans to develop COVID-19 vaccine locally; international humanitarian assistant of COVID-19 vaccines and related equipment; importation status of essential medical supplies; education programmes on

healthcare and entertainment programmes on newspapers, television and radio; primary foods being sold in mobile carts to avoid food shortages; services in quarantine centres and construction of oxygen plants, production of essential medical supplies locally; operation of garment factories under the COVID-19 guidelines; COVID-19 vaccines plantation of more than 80,000 factories workers as of 22 August and further plans.

Union Ministers for the respective regions and states briefed on the COVID-19 vaccinations in the regions of ethnic armed forces; implementation to vaccinate more than 5 million IDPs in Kachin State, Shan State, Kayin State and Rakhine State in this week, and the systematic record of vaccinated people in regions and states.

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The Chairman of the State Administration Council said to encourage the operation of garment factories under the COVID-19 guidelines and to coordinate as necessary.

In his concluding speech, the SAC Chairman Prime Minister said that it needs to conduct healthcare services including prevention, control and treatment activities continuously as the mutation of COVID-19 is occurring. The WHO and other health organizations set the norms and all should follow them. The relevant organizations and heads of respective regions/states also should strictly control the public in order to follow the health rules.

He then stressed the need to upgrade the hospitals, establish the township, station and district hospitals by observing the figures

of international hospitals and set up the ICU for other diseases. He also pleaded that the government will provide cash assistance in implementing these operations. The hospital staff, Tatmadaw and social organizations need to cooperate for these processes including the upgrade of hospitals and cleansing operations.

Regarding the need for oxygen, he said, "What I want to say now is oxygen-related matters. The oxygen demand rose in June and July. Meanwhile, all strived to get oxygen. The highest demand was 31,298 cylinders on 18 July according to the global monitoring indicator. We found the demand was 18,667 on 20 July. We can produce more than 40,000 currently. I mean we can produce more than the highest demands. However, I want the oxygen in the hospital to be clean and systematically produced. I've already highlighted



The Senior General and the Chief Ministers of the States/Regions attend the 9th COVID coordination meeting online.

it in previous meetings. Please produce even the oxygen cylinders systematically and try to be clean oxygen. Then, all speak out about oxygen especially in townships like in remote areas. For example, Nanyun township. The Kachin and Chin states and the Sagaing region are just like Nanyun township. It is a little difficult to get there. It is easier to get to Lahe via Khamti. I mention just for an example. For another example, Manaung where we can reach by aircraft and by ship if the weather is fine. There is no road transportation. Manaung Kyun must obtain the chance (for oxygen). They can survive in their own ways. For the remote areas in states and regions, all should try hard regardless of the areas even for the electricity. For example, the small-scale hydro-power project. If it can generate 500kW, 1000kW or 200kW, 300kW, they should contact them for the

oxygen plants. There is nothing more important than human beings and lives."

He also gave instructions regarding the importation processes of anti-COVID-19-related materials and equipment via border trade camps, air and sea without any delays, and inspections on the illegal trade of restricted drugs and counterfeit medicines.

He continued that the Ministry of Information is conducting education programmes and the respective regions and states should accelerate the educative campaigns, especially in ethnic areas.

He said that the frontline healthcare workers and other employees of manufacturing organizations, transport services, defence services and security members and their family members need to be in good health and so, it should conduct vaccination programmes as per the priority

groups. The Tatmadaw (air) provides the needed assistance in transporting the vaccines across the nation. Elderly people have a higher mortality rate, accounting for 80 per cent of all deaths is over the age of 50. Therefore, elderly people are prioritized for vaccines.

Currently, the country receives 8 million vaccines and uses 6 million while 2 million are for second doses. On the other hand, people should have a proper immune system and do exercise.

In conclusion, he urged to run the manufacturing, agriculture and livestock industries to ensure food security. It should make efforts for the better economic system of people and country. If the individuals have good-wills for the country, they can accomplish their works and it can also provide the development of the country and living standards of the public. — MNA

The Tatmadaw (air) provides the needed assistance in transporting the vaccines across the nation. Elderly people have a higher mortality rate, accounting for 80 per cent of all deaths is over the age of 50. Therefore, elderly people are prioritized for vaccines.

Public request by Ministry of Health

Only when the people cooperate will the work process achieve success in a short time for effective prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 among the people. As such, all the people are requested to abide by the following points: -

1. Stay at home as much as possible.
2. Don't accept the guests at the house. You don't visit other houses.
3. The older persons above 65 or those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart must be worn masks in the house. They must be placed at well-ventilated sites.
4. Wear masks if you go outside without fail. Systematically wash hands. Take a six-foot distance from others. Avoid visits to the rooms where ventilation is not good.
5. Avoid the crowds.
6. If possible, go shopping once a week. Don't buy anything from the vendors who don't systematically wear masks.
7. Take care of carrying the virus to the houses whenever return home from outside. Systematically discard the used masks and single disposable equipment outside the houses. Avoid close contact with family members before changing clothes or washing the body.
8. As the vaccines for your quota is the best, accept vaccinations for full time. Despite receiving the vaccination, you should abide by the protective ways.
9. Systematically cooperate in prevention, control and treatment of the disease with manpower, money, materials and expertise.

Ministry of Health (2-8-2021)



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Union Attorney-General attends AIPA-42

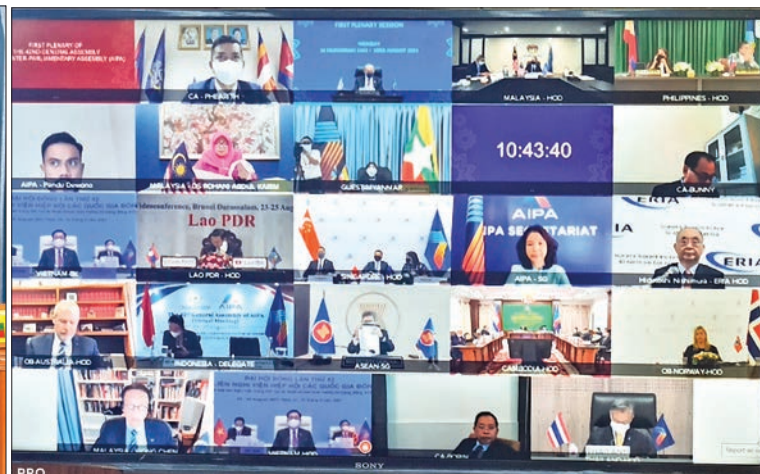
MYANMAR delegation led by Union Attorney-General Dr Thida Oo joined the virtual 42nd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly hosted by Brunei yesterday.

During the meeting, the Attorney-General said that being an ASEAN member country, Myanmar is cooperating with other member countries in building the ASEAN community to achieve regional integration. Moreover, the country will keep maintaining the proper relationship with the world countries and participating in AIPA's activities.

The AIPA-42, themed

“Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025”, is taking place from 23 to 25 August. The theme highlighted women's empowerment, boosting of cyber security and information, ASEAN parliamentary cooperation, digitalization for SMEs, collaboration in the tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 period and to respond the challenges of climate change.

The meeting was also attended by officials from Union Attorney-General office and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office. — MNA



Myanmar delegation led by Union Attorney-General Dr Thida Oo joined the virtual 42nd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly hosted by Brunei yesterday.

CBM sells \$23 million in August



Central Bank of Myanmar.

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US\$23 million at its FX auction rate in August so far.

This month, the CBM reportedly sold \$3 million on 2 August, \$2 million on 3 August, \$3 million on 4 August, \$2.5 million each on 9 and 12 August and \$10 million on 23 August in the auction market.

Kyat is weakening against the US dollar at K1,660 in the local forex market. The CBM's move is aimed at governing the market volatility and strength-

ening the local currency value, the CBM stated.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US\$93.8 million at its FX auction rate in the past six months (February-July), according to the auction results released by the CBM.

The bullish hard currency gained in the local forex market, reaching the peak of K1,730 on 12 May from K1,330 in January-end. In a bid to strengthen the local currency, the CBM re-

portedly sold about 6.8 million dollars on 3 February 2021, \$12 million in April, \$24 million in May, \$12 million in June and \$39 million in July in the auction market.

The CBM trades the foreign currency with the authorized private banks under the rules and regulations of the FX auction market.

The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-1,465 in February. It reached the lowest of K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March. The rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May and it moved to the maximum of K1,595-1,620 in June. The rate stood at K1,625-1,645 last month. — KK/GNLM

Curfew imposed in Homalin township amid fear of COVID-19 spread

HOMALIN township has been placed under an 11 am to 3 pm curfew as part of the efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, it is learnt.

Homalin Township General Administrative Department released the announcement on 22 August. During the pandemic, Homalin township has recorded 1,601 cases of COVID-19 and 73 deaths. There is no sign of decline yet.

Those living in the stay-at-

home areas must follow rules issued by the authority. Apart from the civil servant, company staff and factory workers, only one person must go outside for shopping. If they have to go to clinics or hospitals, two people per household are permitted. For buying food using a vehicle, a driver and another one are permitted. To go to clinics using a vehicle, a driver plus two are permitted.

Action can be taken against

violators under the Penal Code or the natural disaster management law or other existing laws, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The statement of curfew orders is effective until 31 August. Homalin township was declared under stay-at-home rules starting from 3 July, according to the announcement of the Ministry of Health. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Kachin State ex-chief minister Dr Khet Aung and ministers charged under anti-corruption law

FORMER Chief Minister for Kachin State Dr Khet Aung and former Ministers U Ne Win, U Zaw Win, U Wai Lin, U Win Nyunt, U La Sai (a) U Dashee La Sai, U Naw Le (a) Za Khaung Kham Ye, U Zaw Win, U Ne Win and former Director of the Kachin State Development Committee U Soe Naing have been charged under the Anti-Corruption Law yesterday, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

According to the investigation, former Kachin State chief minister Dr Khet Aung, former Kachin State Finance, Taxes, Planning and Economic minister U Wai Lin and former Kachin State minister for Transport, Electricity and Industry U Win Nyunt, during their tenures as ministers, granted permission a private company to pave 23 miles of AC asphalt Myitkyina-Bamo road, which was not included in the original plan in the 2017-2018 financial year, without calling for tender as per the directive of the President's Office (1/2017). The company was able to operate with 11,007,009 million kyats to be handed over to the state. According to the QC team, the road needed to be repaired and due to non-compliance with the terms of the contract, the state's property was damaged.

Former chief minister Dr Khet Aung, former minister U Wai Lin and former minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U La Sai (a) U Dashee La Sai auctioned

10,000 tonnes of quartz seized in 2020 and sold 5,000 tonnes each to two companies with K36,000 per tonne by the time the local price set by the Department of Mines is K60,000 per tonne, causing loss of K240 million in the state budget for 10,000 tonnes. Due to the non-payment of K72 million, which is 20% of revenue from the sale to the Union Budget, it caused a loss to the state fund.

The former chief minister and minister U Wai Lin spent K1,492.400 million from the General Reserve Fund-GRF of the 2018-2019 financial year to build a two-storey building in the State Government Office, although the State Finance Department presented such act was not following the financial regulation.

During their tenures as ministers, they reportedly failed to comply with the tender rules and regulations for bridge construction and road paving works in Kachin State, causing loss to the state fund, as well as they, received bribery numerous times from business persons.

In addition, Kachin State former Development and Social minister U Ne Win, U Nawl Le (a) Zakhaung Kham Ye, and Director of the Kachin State Development Committee U Soe Naing, were found to have spent more than K219 million for fuel and vehicle repair works of 23 unlicensed vehicles from the 2018-2019FY to 2019-2020FY, which caused damage to the state. — MNA

Indonesia hosts 4th International Maritime Security Symposium (2021)

INDONESIA hosted the 4th International Maritime Security Symposium (2021) via Hybrid Symposium Online and Offline system under the topic of "international maritime cooperation for security, peace and prosperity."

The senior officials of Tatmadaw (Navy) led by Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and Myanmar military attaché (Army, Navy, Air) to Indonesia, joined the meeting.

The Navy Chiefs from 54 countries, including international delegations and international maritime organizations, also attended the event.

First, the chief of staff of the Indonesian Navy, Admiral

Yudo Margono made an opening remark and launched the traditional dances of Indonesia.

On the first day of the meeting, the leaders exchanged views on the promotion of maritime cooperation, the collaboration of military and civilians to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 and delays, cargo ships and impacts on ports, the establishment of Asia sailing training and competitions, efforts for natural disasters and rescue works in Indo-Pacific area during the decade and plans to change disaster diplomacy in ASEAN regions as part of Indonesia's foreign policy.

The officials of the Navy made a PowerPoint presentation under three panels during



the seminar.

The 2nd day of 4th IMSS 2021 will convene today and discuss rules and regulations

for military operations and intelligence activities in special economic zones, enhancing maritime security through

information sharing and perspectives on maritime law for the use of unmanned vessels. — MNA

Imports of COVID-19 devices and essential medical supplies continued



gloves and masks were imported via airways and border trade points.

Two vehicles carrying 40 tonnes of liquid oxygen were transported to Yangon and one oxygen plant each in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, respectively.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importations of essential medical supplies required in prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, as well as contact persons for inquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



THE Ministry of Commerce is making efforts to ensure people have access to the essential medical supplies that are critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, including liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders, arranging continuous importation on public holidays.

Yesterday, a total of 45 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 4,967 liquid oxygen storage containers, 2 oxygen plants, 2 oxygen generators, 1,156 oxygen concentrators, 11,340 PPE suits,



COVID-19 devices and medical supplies are imported as usual through land borders and transported to the needed places by lorries.

Shwe Pyi Tan express boat service resumes today

SHWE Pyi Tan express boats in Rakhine State that were suspended due to COVID-19 resumed on 24 August as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, it is learnt.

The express boat lines will run the Minbya-Sittway and Sittway-Minbya route daily as usual.

The express boat lines have been instructed to require staff and passengers to wear masks and wash their hands, as well as taking temperatures and arranging seating for passen-

gers that allows for social distancing on board.

The Shwe Pyi Tan express boat, the main water route of Minbya township, has been temporarily halted due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Minbya Township, Rakhine State.

Now, the number of COVID-19 cases has dropped and the Shwe Pyi Tan launched its express boat service today (24 August) at 6 am and 11 am to ensure the safety and convenience of travellers. — Thein Nu Aung/GNLM



Now, the number of COVID-19 cases has dropped and the Shwe Pyi Tan launched its express boat service today (24 August) at 6 am and 11 am to ensure the safety and convenience of travellers.



Pinkerton avocado farm acreage targeted to expand next year

THE marketable Pinkerton avocado farm acreage is planned to expand in the coming year, U Myo Nyunt, vice-president of Myanmar Avocado Producers and Exporters Association said.

That Pinkerton avocado will be planted on the areas at 2,500-3,000 feet above sea level. That variety is resistant to pests and extreme climate. Most importantly, it is highly demanded both in the domestic market and the external market, growers highlighted.

“The cultivation of Pink-

erton avocado on a trial basis reaped success this year. As a result of this, the farm acreage will increase next year. Some regions braced for scorching temperature and resulted in low production of Hass avocado. We will choose Pinkerton avocado in those regions. It will be grown 3,000 feet above sea level.

The Pinkerton is popular in the export market rather than Myanmar origins. About 85 per cent of avocado demanded in the international market are Hass

variety. That is why it has more potential in the export market, making the growers lucrative”, U Myo Nyunt elaborated.

That avocado will be grown in the PyinOoLwin area and the northern Shan State. Earlier, Myanmar’s avocado was shipped to Thailand, India, China, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR. This year, the avocado export halted amidst the COVID-19 impacts. It is heavily reliant on the domestic market only. – Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM

That avocado will be grown in the PyinOoLwin area and the northern Shan State. Earlier, Myanmar’s avocado was shipped to Thailand, India, China, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR. This year, the avocado export halted amidst the COVID-19 impacts. It is heavily reliant on the domestic market only.

Over 1.75 mln tonnes of various pulses shipped in ten months (Oct-July)

MORE than 1.759 tonnes of various pulses and beans were exported to foreign markets between 1 October and 30 July of the current financial year 2020-2021, with an estimated value of US\$1.357 billion, the Commerce Ministry’s data indicated.

During the past ten months, the country shipped \$760.7 million worth 982,276 tonnes of pulses and beans to foreign markets through the sea route, and \$597.28 million valued at 777,631 tonnes were sent to the neighbouring countries through the land borders.

India is the main buyer of Myanmar beans, especially black beans, green grams and pigeon peas. Besides India, Myanmar’s beans are purchased by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Dubai, Malaysia, Indonesia, China (Taipei), Japan, and European countries. But, the volume of demand by those countries is small, according to the domestic

beans market.

Following the policy change of India’s pulses import, the prices of black gram and pigeon peas have risen in the domestic market, according to the traders from Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre.

At present, black beans touched a high of K1.34 million

per tonne. Similarly, the price of pigeon peas is relatively high at K1.33 million per tonne. The price rise is attributed to the relaxation of the bean import quota by India.

India set an import quota on beans including black gram and pigeon peas starting from 2017. Myanmar earlier had to

export black bean and pigeon peas under the quota system and limit period.

On 15 May 2021, India’s Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare approved not only black gram but also other pulses being imported from Myanmar that have a bill of lading up to October-end 2021, with relaxations of conditions regarding clearance consignment up to 30 November 2021.

According to this statement, the previous notifications dated 19 March 2021 and 26 March 2021 were cancelled.

Additionally, Myanmar can export 250,000 tonnes of black gram (urad) and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas under the G to G (government to government) pact during the April-March period between the 2021-2022 financial year and the 2025-2026FY, as per the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Commerce and

India’s counterpart signed on 18 June.

At present, the demand for green gram slips due to border trade restrictions amid the COVID-19, with an estimated value of around K100,000 per three-basket bag.

Myanmar’s agriculture sector is the backbone of the country’s economy and it contributes to over 30 per cent of Gross Domestic Products. The country primarily cultivates paddy, corn, cotton, sugarcane, various pulses and beans. Its second-largest production is pulses and beans, counting for 33 per cent of agro products and covering 20 per cent of growing acres. Among them, black beans, pigeon peas and green grams constitute 72 per cent of bean acreage. Other beans including peanut, chickpea, soybean, black-eyed beans, butter bean and rice bean are also grown in the country. – Mon Mon/GNLM



India is the main buyer of Myanmar beans, especially black beans, green grams and pigeon peas. Besides India, Myanmar’s beans are purchased by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Dubai, Malaysia, Indonesia, China (Taipei), Japan, and European countries.

Potato price jumps in retail market

THE price of the potato remains in the bull market, as per the price data of the retail market.

Normally, the price of potatoes rises in the monsoon season. This year, potato prices keep rising as well.

On 1 July, the potato was priced at K820 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the wholesale market, whereas it dramatically rose to K1,270 per viss at the end of July.

On 23 August, the price of potato stood at K950 per viss in the wholesale market and touched a high of K1,600 per viss in the retail market.

Additionally, tracking the strict restriction measures to contain the COVID-19, the prices of commodity price fluctuates in the domestic market.

The prices of kitchen crops such as onion and garlic stay on the upward trend.

The prices of garlic move

in the range of K2,600-4,800 per viss depending on varieties. Lately, the garlic (Kyukok variety) imported by China was a lack of supply owing to the closure of border posts between Myanmar and China.

Therefore, the exorbitant price occurred in the retail market, a trader stated.

Next, onions from the Myingyan area fetch K480-520 depending on size. – NN/GNLM



On 1 July, the potato was priced at K820 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the wholesale market, whereas it dramatically rose to K1,270 per viss at the end of July. On 23 August, the price of potato stood at K950 per viss in the wholesale market and touched a high of K1,600 per viss in the retail market.

Ease tensions for ensuring better health and fitness

THE tensions bring mental sufferings to some persons who are working hard with vigorous efforts in the workplaces such as schools, workshops, factories and so on, analyzing something with critical thinking, making decisions in the management sector, and operating important machinery for the public with restricted calculation and estimation.

The persons under tension lose the capabilities to work and decide regularly. They suffer to pack the burdens of tensions on their backs. At that time, their lives are in misery.

In this regard, many persons may face two kinds of tensions — one is self-made tension and another is imposed tension. The self-made tension is based on their own thoughts that they themselves gradually exaggerate a single topic. A simple topic becomes the terrible one based on the thoughts of the host person. Another kind of tension is imposed by someone. Such kind of tension is based on many reasons with a personal attack, personal dissatisfaction, grudge and hatred also suppress the victims. In fact, both kinds of tensions are never useful for the sufferers.

Gradually, the opponents will understand the nature and attitudes of the sufferers who respond to them with compassion and loving-kindness. If so, it is sure that they can be free from the lives of sufferers at an appropriate time.

response to the attackers.

Gradually, the opponents will understand the nature and attitudes of the sufferers who respond to them with compassion and loving-kindness. If so, it is sure that they can be free from the lives of sufferers at an appropriate time.



New Zealand queries virus approach as Delta outbreak grows

New Zealand's widely praised Covid-19 response — which has resulted in just 26 deaths in a population of five million — centres on eliminating the virus from the community. It has relied on strict border controls backed by hard lockdowns when any cases do slip through, but Hipkins said Delta may force a rethink.

NEW Zealand conceded its ambitious "Covid zero" elimination strategy may no longer be viable Sunday, as an outbreak of the virulent Delta variant continued to spread.

Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins reported a further 21 cases in a virus cluster that emerged in Auckland last week, ending a six-month run of no local cases and sparking a national lockdown.

Hipkins said Delta's highly transmissible nature was making this outbreak more difficult to contain than others, raising "big questions" about the elimination strategy.

"The scale of infectiousness and the speed at which the virus has spread is something that, despite all the best preparations in the world, has put our system under strain," he told TVNZ.

New Zealand's widely praised



The New Zealand outbreak has underlined the country's slow vaccination rollout and prompted accusations the government became lax after its early success dealing with the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Covid-19 response — which has resulted in just 26 deaths in a population of five million — centres on eliminating the virus from the community.

It has relied on strict border controls backed by hard lockdowns when any cases do slip through, but Hipkins said Delta may force a rethink.

"(Delta's) like nothing we've dealt with before in this pandemic," he said.

"It does change everything, it means that all of our existing

preparations begin to look less adequate and raises some pretty big questions about the future of our long-term plans."

Neighbouring Australia has also pursued a "Covid zero" strategy and been similarly frustrated as its Delta cases continue to spike.

The New Zealand outbreak has underlined the country's slow vaccination rollout and prompted accusations the government became lax after its early success dealing with the pandemic.

Only about 20 per cent of the population is fully inoculated, one of the lowest rates in the developed world.

Opposition National Party spokesman Chris Bishop said the outbreak had exposed a lack of urgency in Wellington's vaccine plans.

"The government's complacency and inability to ensure supply and delivery of the vaccine

has made us all sitting ducks, completely vulnerable to the Delta variant when it inevitably got into the community," he said.

Another opposition figure, ACT Party leader David Seymour, said Hipkins could not use the Delta variant as an excuse for current failures.

"We've known about Delta since December; what's he been doing in the meantime?" he asked.

Hipkins said elimination remained top priority for the ongoing Delta outbreak, which now totals 71 active cases — 65 of them in Auckland and six in Wellington.

The national lockdown is due to expire late Tuesday, although Hipkins indicated Auckland could face further restrictions even if they were lifted elsewhere.

"If I was an Aucklander, I'd certainly be preparing to be at home for a bit longer," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

Israel launches Covid antibody tests for children as young as 3

Those children with sufficient antibodies will not be forced to quarantine when exposed to a Covid patient, a move aimed at limiting school-year disruptions.

ISRAEL on Sunday launched antibody testing for children aged as young as three, seeking information on the number of unvaccinated youths who have developed protection against coronavirus ahead of the new school year.

Despite surging daily infections caused by the highly transmissible Delta variant, Israel's government insists it wants to avoid the hardships and developmental setbacks caused by school closures.

Israel has already begun vaccinating children aged 12 and above.

The national serological survey is focused on pupils between the ages of three and 12 who are not yet eligible for the job, nearly 1.5 million children.

It is aimed at discovering how many children developed strong antibody protection against coronavirus after having an unrecorded or latent case, according to the education ministry.

istry.

Those children with sufficient antibodies will not be forced to quarantine when exposed to a Covid patient, a move aimed at limiting school-year disruptions.

In a statement Sunday from the Jerusalem municipality announcing Israel's "largest serological operation," Mayor Moshe Leon urged parents to bring their children for the free 15-minute test done by finger-prick.

The survey is being conducted jointly by the health and education ministries and by the army's Home Front command, which told AFP Sunday that its antibody testing operation had begun.

'Emotional damage'

A pilot programme conducted last week focused in mainly ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities found that roughly a fifth of children had developed antibodies, army radio reported Sunday.

Education ministry director-general Yigal Slovik said in a statement last month that last year's school closures caused "emotional and social damage" to students.

"The lockdowns and remote learning caused a 44 per cent increase in referrals for suicidal risk diagnosis," among other impacts, he said.

Israel was one of the first countries to launch a vaccination drive in mid-December via an agreement with Pfizer to obtain millions of paid vaccine doses in exchange for sharing data on their effectiveness.

The inoculation campaign was hailed as a success story that helped drastically reduce infections, but Israel is again registering thousands of daily cases.

As it launches the serological survey, Israel is also pushing forward with vaccinations, offering a third, or booster, shot to everyone over 40 while urging the unvaccinated to get the jab.

More than 5.4 million of Is-

rael's roughly 9.3 million people have received two doses of the vaccine, while 1.2 million have had

a third jab.

Israel has recorded nearly 980,000 coronavirus infections

since the pandemic started early last year, and over 6,700 deaths.

SOURCE: AFP



The Israeli survey is focused on pupils between the ages three and 12 who are not yet eligible for the job, nearly 1.5 million children. PHOTO: AFP/FILE



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 23 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 24 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, Eastern Shan, Kayin, Mon State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Northern Shan, Chin, Rakhine States, scattered in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady Regions and Southern Shan State and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Kachin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 08:00 hrs MST on 23-8-2021)

Flood condition of Chindwin River

According to the (07:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Homalin has exceeded by about (4) inches above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (1) day.

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 15:00 hrs MST on 23-8-2021)

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River at Hpa-an has exceeded by about (1) inch above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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Indian capital opens first 'smog tower'

INDIA'S capital New Delhi opened its first "smog tower" on Monday aimed at reducing the air pollution blamed for thousands of premature deaths every year, but experts were sceptical.

Concentrations of tiny deadly particles in Delhi's air regularly exceed safe limits by up to 20 times, particularly in winter when its 20 million people are enveloped in a noxious grey blanket of smog.

Forty giant fans on the 25-metre (82-foot) tower will pump 1,000 cubic metres of air per second through filters that halve the amount of harmful particulates in a radius of one square kilometre (0.4 square miles), according to engineers.

"Today is a big day for Delhi in its fight for clean air against pollution," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said after the inauguration near the busy shopping area of Connaught Place.

The installation "is being



Workers climb a ladder at the 25-metre (82-foot) high smog tower, built to purify the air during pollution season, in New Delhi on 23 August 2021. PHOTO: MONEY SHARMA / AFP

looked at in an experimental way. We will analyse the data and if it's effective, more towers will be built across Delhi," Kejriwal added.

The tower cost \$2 million and critics say erecting a sufficient number to clean the air substantially across the city would cost huge amounts of

public money, and that efforts would be better directed at the sources of the smog.

These include vehicle exhaust, heavy and small-scale

industry, construction activity, the combustion of waste and fuel, and in winter the burning of crops in neighbouring regions.

"Let's just be clear that this is futile, an absolute waste," Karthik Ganesan from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water told AFP.

"Now that taxpayers' money has been spent, let Delhi be the test case for all other Indian cities... to ensure no other city spends on such ideas which we can't afford," he added.

India has 14 of the world's 15 most polluted cities, according to the World Health Organization.

A 2020 study in the *Lancet* found there were 1.67 million deaths in the country attributable to air pollution in 2019 including almost 17,500 in Delhi.

In 2018 China built a much larger 60-metre smog tower in the polluted city of Xian, but the experiment has not spread to other cities so far. — AFP ■

UK to urge extension of Kabul evacuations at G7 talks

BRITAIN said Monday it would urge the United States at a virtual G7 summit to extend an end-of-the-month deadline to complete evacuations of Western citizens and Afghan colleagues from Kabul.

US President Joe Biden has set an 31 August deadline for the chaotic airlift organized by thousands of temporarily deployed US troops but has left the door open to an extension if needed.

Armed forces minister James Heappey and other UK officials told British media that they would push for an extension at Tuesday's online leaders meeting of the G7 group of wealthy nations while acknowledging that the Taliban would have a crucial say now that they control Afghanistan.

Heappey said it is a "hard reality" that the evacuations from Afghanistan's capital could only be maintained beyond 31 August if led by the United States.

"Whether or not the US can be persuaded to stay is a matter for the prime minister (Boris Johnson) tomorrow in the G7 meeting," Heappey told Sky News, referring to an extension of the deadline.

Britain currently chairs the G7, also comprising Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

"I think everybody has to be clear that this is not just a discussion that happens between G7 leaders tomorrow, it is a discussion which happens with the Taliban," he added.

"The Taliban will have a choice, they can either seek to engage with the international community and show that they want to be a part of the international system.

"Or they can turn around and say there is no opportunity for an extension."

Foreign Office minister James Cleverly told BBC Radio Sunday night that his government would appeal for the extension at the G7.

"Obviously the more time that we've got, the more people we can evacuate and that's what we're pushing for," Cleverly said.

Britain, which has deployed 1,000 soldiers to aid its airlift efforts, is pushing for longer to get everybody out who qualifies, with the trans-Atlantic allies' defence ministers speaking by phone Sunday.

London has so far evacuated 5,725 people from Kabul since August 13, including more than 3,100 Afghans and their families, according to the Ministry of Defence. — AFP ■

Malaysia's new PM pleads for unity to fix virus-hit economy

MALAYSIA'S new prime minister called on his colleagues Sunday to end a months-long political crisis and come together to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, in his first speech as the country's fourth premier in as many years.

Just days after the previous government collapsed in a storm of political infighting, Ismail Sabri Yaakob urged lawmakers to unite to help the country recover from the pandemic.

"The political crisis that has hit the country is causing unrest among the people," the 61-year-old said in a televised

address Sunday evening.

"Let us move forward. Let us stem this grab for political power."

Malaysia has been enveloped in a political crisis for months amid growing public anger over the government's handling of the pandemic.

Thousands have lost their jobs as businesses nationwide have been forced to close due to a series of lockdowns put in place to halt the spread of Covid-19.

Those measures are widely seen as having failed to mitigate the pandemic, and Malaysia's healthcare

infrastructure is now overwhelmed as it records an average of 20,000 new infections and hundreds of deaths every day.

Ismail said Sunday his government aimed to help the economy by focusing on raising people's purchasing power and aid the country's embattled private sector.

"Our focus will be on Malaysians who have lost their jobs and their livelihood," he said.

"I will also make sure that no Malaysian, regardless of race, religion or ethnicity, will be left behind." — AFP ■

Ukraine blocks access to popular Russian news sites

UKRAINE on Monday blocked the websites of several prominent Russian media outlets in its latest round of sanctions against neighbouring Russia which it has accused of spreading propaganda.

Ties between the ex-Soviet countries have deteriorated sharply since Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula in 2014 and threw its weight behind armed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine and its Western allies have accused the Kremlin of sending troops and weapons to reinforce the separatists and also say Russia is leveraging media as a propaganda tool to stoke the conflict.

A decree from President Volodymyr Zelensky published Sunday ordered the websites of 12 Russian media organizations to be blocked in Ukraine.

They include the *Vedomosti* business daily, which

was recently taken over by Kremlin-friendly editors, and the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper, among others.

The decree also ordered the organizations' local bank accounts to be frozen.

The Kremlin criticised the move, describing Ukraine as being on a path towards "strangling freedom of speech" and limiting "unwanted and uncomfortable" information. — AFP ■

Rare tropical storm lashes northeastern United States

TROPICAL Storm Henri slammed into Rhode Island on the US east coast Sunday, knocking out power to thousands of Americans, uprooting trees and bringing record rainfall before weakening as it moved across New England.

The storm — earlier downgraded from a Category 1 Hurricane — hit land near the town of Westerly at approximately 12:15 PM (1615 GMT), the National Weather Service said.

Henri is a rare tropical storm to strike America's northeastern seaboard and comes as the surface layer of oceans warms due to climate change.

The warming is causing cyclones to become more powerful and carry more water, posing an increasing threat to the world's coastal communities, scientists say.

Millions of residents in



Doug Luongo(L), looks on after evacuating with family members following a flash flood, as Tropical Storm Henri makes landfall, in Helmetta, New Jersey, on 22 August 2021. PHOTO: TOM BRENNER / AFP

New England and New York's Long Island had been told to prepare for violent winds, days without electricity and storm surges of up to five feet.

The US National Hurricane Centre (NHC) said Henri brought maximum sustained gusts of 60 mph, lower than the 75 mph gusts predicted earlier.

Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee said there was "significant flooding" in areas. There were no immediate reports of any casualties. — AFP ■

Prices at pump soar in Lebanon after new subsidy cut



Lebanese wait in a queue outside a closed petrol station in Beirut's Hamra district on 20 August 2021. Lebanon's energy crisis is dragging people to unlikely places in their desperate quest for daily life's essentials, be it fresh air, lighting, a working fridge or petrol for their cars. Power cuts lasting more than 22 hours a day have become the new norm in a bankrupt country running out of literally everything, from fuel and gas to medicine and bread. Photo: ANWAR AMRO / AFP

LEBANESE fuel prices soared by up to 70 per cent Sunday after yet another subsidy cut, official figures showed, heaping more pressure on people struggling to make ends meet in the cash-strapped country.

The cost of hydrocarbons in Lebanon has now roughly tripled in the two months since the central bank started decreasing its support for imports.

The latest cut, which is expected to cause price hikes for other key commodities, hits a Mediterranean country mired in one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s.

Dire shortages have seen Lebanon's people struggle to find enough fuel to drive to

work or power back-up generators during near round-the-clock electricity cuts.

Motorists have become caught up in long lines outside the petrol stations that have remained open.

The refusal of many petrol stations to sell what they do have saw the army deploy this month to seize hoarded fuel and distribute it to the needy.

Frustrations have boiled over in recent weeks, with scuffles repeatedly breaking out over scarce fuel, leaving at least three people dead.

Last weekend the explosion of a fuel tank in the north of the country killed at least 30 people. — AFP ■

Hezbollah chief pledges more Iranian fuel for Lebanon

THE head of Hezbollah in Lebanon on Sunday promised that deliveries of Iranian fuel would arrive "in the days to come" to help solve the beleaguered country's dire shortages.

For the second time in four days, Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised address that fuel shipments would leave the Islamic republic for Lebanon.

Nasrallah also dismissed as "illusions" a reported US-backed initiative to ease Lebanon's en-

ergy crisis.

On Sunday alone, fuel prices soared by up to 70 per cent after yet another subsidy cut, piling more pressure on people struggling to make ends meet.

The cost of hydrocarbons in Lebanon has now roughly tripled in the two months since the central bank started cutting its support for imports.

The latest cut, which is expected to cause knock-on price hikes on other key commodities,

adds to the Mediterranean country's economic crisis, one of the world's worst since the 1850s.

Fuel shortages have forced businesses and government offices to close, even threatening blackouts at hospitals.

In his first televised address on Thursday, Nasrallah announced the departure "in the coming hours" of a shipload of fuel for Lebanon in defiance of US sanctions on Iran.

On Sunday, Nasrallah said

the first Iranian ship loaded with fuel was "at sea".

"A second ship will set sail in the next few days, and it will be followed by others," he said.

Hezbollah, a close ally of Iran designated as a terrorist group by much of the West, is a major political force in Lebanon but its leaders are under US sanctions.

"We will continue this process as long as Lebanon needs it," Nasrallah said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey can't bear Afghan refugee burden for EU: Erdogan

TURKEY cannot bail out the EU by taking in Afghans who worked for Western countries in Afghanistan as the Taliban take power there, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday.

"We have received a request to welcome local employees of a European Union mission in Afghanistan," a government statement quoted Erdogan as saying to European Council President Charles Michel in a telephone call.

"The member states only open their doors to a tiny portion of the people who served them and who are in difficulty," the statement quoted him as saying. "You cannot expect Turkey to take on the responsibility of third countries," he said. The head of state reiterated, the day after similar remarks during a conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, that Turkey was already hosting around five million refugees and "cannot support an additional migratory burden". — AFP ■

Egypt closing Rafah crossing with Gaza: Palestinians

EGYPT has told Gaza authorities it will close the Rafah border crossing from Monday, a spokesman for the Palestinian enclave's Hamas government said.

"We were informed by the Egyptian authorities that the Rafah crossing will be closed tomorrow, Monday, in both directions," Iyad al-Bozom, a spokesman for the Gaza interior ministry, said in a statement Sunday evening. Security sources in Egypt confirmed the move, saying the crossing would be closed until further notice, without offering details or saying why.

Egypt had ordered the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt — the enclave's only border point not controlled by Israel — to open in May to allow wounded Gazans to be treated in Egyptian hospitals and to deliver aid. — AFP ■

Graft and security issues feed the trade in Iraq's past



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 6 March 2017, archeological findings are pictured inside an underground tunnel dug by the Islamic State (IS) group to carry out archaeological excavations in the heart of the hill that houses the tomb of the Prophet Jonah (Nabi Younes) in east Mosul. Sumerians, Assyrians and Babylonians have all trod on the ancient land that is now Iraq, and that makes it a land of choice for smugglers, turning the boom in looted objects from antiquity into a real problem in a country where corruption is prevalent and archaeological sites are poorly protected. **PHOTO: ARIS MESSINIS / AFP**

DO you want to buy a more than 3,000-year-old Sumerian tablet, listed as the property of a gentleman from Sussex in England and passed down as a family heirloom?

On auction site liveauctioneers.com, bidding for the "Sumerian clay tablet" starts at 550 pounds (\$750).

The item weighs just 70 grams (2.5 ounces) but bears traces of cuneiform writing — the oldest recorded in the world — and is listed as "Property of a West Sussex, UK, gentleman".

This example comes with letters of provenance by experts.

But the ownership history of some such objects can be harder to prove.

They may not have been

handed down but handed on, via smugglers and middlemen.

The boom in looted objects from antiquity is a real problem in Iraq, where corruption is prevalent and archaeological sites are poorly protected.

For some objects, it can be hard to prove that it was not in fact stolen from lands where the Sumerian empire stood in the fourth millennium BC.

Chris Wren, from the British firm TimeLine Auctions, parent company of liveauctioneers.com, says they are aware "of the potential for looted, smuggled or other stolen materials" to come onto the market. "We spend a great deal of effort and money in seeking to weed such possibilities out," he said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Eurozone business activity remains strong despite supply pressures

BUSINESS activity in the eurozone is hovering near a 15-year high despite slightly cooling in August due to supply pressures, a closely-watched survey by IHS Markit showed on Monday.

The PMI Composite reading measuring corporate confidence slipped to 59.5 in August, just under the strong 60.2 figure given in July. A figure above 50 indicates growth.

The dip was explained in part by some business concern over the effects of the Delta variant of the coronavirus, but especially by demand outstripping supply as activity bounced back vigorously in the 19-nation eurozone. "Supply chain delays continue to wreak havoc," IHS Markit's chief business economist, Chris Williamson, said. — AFP ■

Japan to oblige businesses to reduce 12 disposable plastic items

JAPAN will oblige business operators to reduce the provision of 12 disposable plastic items such as spoons and straws from next April to promote recycling and tackle marine pollution, the government said Monday.

The move is based on legislation that was enacted in June to cut down on plastic waste at

restaurants and retail stores. Business operators can choose from among measures including charging for the items and switching to recyclable products.

Targeted plastic items also include forks, knives, combs, toothbrushes, shower caps and clothes hangers. Businesses that provide these items in large quan-

tities such as convenience stores, hotels, laundries, and pizza delivery companies will be affected by the measure.

The Environment Ministry and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will draft ordinances this fall after hearing public opinion on the measure. Operators will be asked to adopt

new practices such as giving points to customers who decline to take the items, introducing reusable products, and making it standard practice to ask customers whether they need the plastic items at all. Businesses that fail to meet the new requirement will be advised or ordered to improve their practices. — Kyodo News ■

Anger as Covid-sceptic church flouts Sydney lockdown

AUSTRALIAN police on Monday criticized a Sydney church for flouting the city's Covid-19 lockdown by holding a service for 60 people in a pandemic hotspot.

The church is part of Christ Embassy, an international religious group headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, which has a record of spreading Covid-19 conspiracy theories.

After being tipped off by residents on Sunday, police moved in on the Christ Embassy Sydney church, issuing a fine of 5,000 Australian dollars (\$3,600) to the organization and Aus\$1,000 fines to 30 parishioners.

Australian media quoted a Facebook-streamed sermon on Sunday from the church in the western Sydney region's Blacktown as saying: "In the name of Jesus we refuse every lockdown in our cities. We declare the lockdowns are over in the name of Jesus."

The Sydney church did not immediately respond to a request to comment.

"It is always disheartening and disappointing when you see



This picture taken on 21 August 2021 shows workers walking along the quiet George Street in Sydney as the city extended its two-month-old lockdown and introduced a partial curfew to contain a fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak. **PHOTO: DAVID GRAY / AFP**

people blatantly take it upon themselves to contradict what we know works, to contradict what we know is keeping people out of hospital," Gladys Berejiklian, premier of New South Wales state — of which Sydney is the capital — told a news conference.

"That is the key: to keep people out of hospital, to make sure that we keep people as safe and as healthy as possible. And we know the vaccine is having such a huge impact on that." The whole of greater Sydney is currently under stay-at-home orders, as Aus-

tralia's largest city struggles to contain a Delta variant outbreak that now tops 800 new cases a day. Residents are only allowed to leave home to shop for essential items, exercise, in health emergencies or for a handful of other reasons. — AFP ■

Israel to offer Covid jabs in schools to avoid closures

ISRAEL said Monday it would offer Covid-19 vaccinations to students on school grounds as it announced the school year would open on time next week, despite surging coronavirus cases.

"Pupils— will be vaccinated on school grounds during school hours, subject to parental approval," a government statement said, confirming classes would begin on 1 September.

Israeli leaders say they are trying to avoid repeating disruptive school closures amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The country has seen a steep rise in coronavirus infections after months when its world-beating vaccine campaign drove down cases.

The health ministry said Monday that 6,467 new Covid cases were recorded in Israel a day prior, with 1,142 people hospitalized. About 30 per cent of children aged 12-15 have received two vaccine doses in Israel, far less than any other age group.—AFP ■

Bitcoin jumps above \$50,000 for first time since May

BITCOIN broke back above \$50,000 on Monday for the first time in three months as investors piled back into the cryptocurrency on bargain-buying.

The unit climbed around two per cent to \$50,249.15, its highest since mid-May, when it began tumbling on a range of issues including China's crack-down on cryptocurrencies and Tesla boss Elon Musk's decision to stop accepting it on concerns about the environmental impact of mining.

The electric car giant has since indicated its support for bitcoin, while several other high-profile investors including Twitter founder Jack Dorsey have also flagged their interest.

It has now risen more than 70 per cent from the six-month lows below \$29,000 touched in June, and speculation is swirl-



(FILES) This file photo taken on 17 December 2020 shows a physical imitation of a Bitcoin at a cryptocurrency "Bitcoin Change" shop in Istanbul. Bitcoin broke back above 50,000 USD on 23 August 2021 for the first time in three months as investors piled back into the cryptocurrency on bargain-buying. PHOTO: OZAN KOSE / AFP

ing that it could begin its push towards \$100,000.

Rick Bensignor, at Bensignor Investment Strategies, said Monday that it was "getting nearer the higher end of what I

expect as a new trading range in the low-\$40,000s to low-\$50,000s".

Bitcoin is still for now a long way off its record just below \$65,000 that it achieved in April. — AFP ■

Asian markets and oil bounce after last week's tumble

STOCKS and oil rallied Monday on bargain-buying after last week's blow-out, with traders tracking a healthy Wall Street performance fuelled by comments from a top Federal Reserve official that the spread of the Delta variant could cause him reconsider plans to taper monetary policy.

Fears about the Covid mutation have rattled world markets as it forces some governments to reimpose containment measures, while sentiment was jolted further last week by minutes from the Fed's July meeting indicating it could start withdrawing its vast financial support by year's end.

The colossal bond-buying programme and record low interest rates have been a key pillar of the global recovery for more than a year, and the prospect of the cash being withdrawn has seen that ad-

vance stall.

However, Dallas Federal Reserve boss Bob Kaplan, who is considered a policy hawk, suggested he could rethink his view to taper soon in light of the Delta variant's spread, which is showing signs of hobbling economic growth.

"The thing that I am going to be watching very carefully over the next month, before the next (Fed) meeting, is (whether) it is having a more material impact on slowing demand and slowing GDP growth," he said.

"I'm going to keep an open mind on that, and if it is having a more negative effect that might cause me to adjust my views somewhat from ones that I've stated."

Observers said the general consensus is that even when the Fed finishes winding back support, it is unlikely to immediately start hiking interest rates.— AFP ■

Japanese packaging maker Rengo buys shares in Indonesian peers

JAPANESE packaging maker Rengo Co. has bought shares in three Indonesian corrugated container producers through its Thai affiliate, Thai Containers Group Co., for 822 billion rupiah (\$57 million).

The acquisitions involve 75 per cent each of PT Indonesia Dirtajaya Aneka Industri Box, PT Bahana Buana Box and PT

Rapipack Asritama, collectively called the Intan Group. The deal was carried out by Thai Containers Group's wholly owned TCG Solutions Pte. Ltd., according to Rengo.

The investment amount may rise up to 859 billion rupiah depending on Intan Group's incremental financial performance for fiscal 2022 and 2023

under the earn out clause of the agreement, a Rengo official told NNA.

The share purchases give Rengo control of four additional corrugated packaging factories, bringing to 11 the total number of plants the Osaka-based company operates in Indonesia.

The plants of the group are located in Bekasi in West Java

near Jakarta, in the suburbs of Surabaya in East Java, near Semarang in Central Java and Manado in North Sulawesi. The Rengo official declined to disclose the group's production capacity.

Elsewhere in the country, Rengo has four corrugated packaging factories under its wing through PT Surya Rengo

Containers, a joint venture between Rengo and Indonesian food business Indofood Group, and three via Thai Containers Group.

Thai Containers Group is owned 30 per cent by Rengo and 70 per cent by SCG Packaging Public Co, a subsidiary of Thai material giant Siam Cement Public Co. — Kyodo News ■

PayPal to let UK users buy, hold and sell cryptocurrency

PAYPAL on Monday said it will this week begin to allow users in Britain to buy, hold and sell cryptocurrency through the online payment platform for the first time. The expansion into the hot digital money trend follows similar moves by the payments giant in the United States earlier this year.

The US firm said its new service would allow UK-based customers to choose from four types of cryptocurrency: Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin and Bitcoin Cash. They will be available both via the PayPal app and its website, with the expansion set to start this week and be available to all eligible customers within the next few weeks.

A new cryptocurrency tab

will be added to its platform, showing real-time currency prices, PayPal said. "The pandemic has accelerated digital change and innovation across all aspects of our lives, including the digitization of money and greater consumer adoption of digital financial services," said Jose Fernandez da Ponte, of PayPal. He added the firm hoped the new offering would "help people in the UK to explore cryptocurrency".

"We are committed to continue working closely with regulators in the UK, and around the world, to offer our support and meaningfully contribute to shaping the role digital currencies will play in the future of global finance and commerce."— AFP ■

Tokyo stocks end higher on dip-buying, speculation over stimulus

TOKYO stocks ended higher Monday on dip-buying after the Nikkei's lowest finish for this year late last week and growing speculation that the defeat of a close ally of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga in a high-profile local election may prompt his government to draw up measures, such as an additional stimulus package, in the hope of propping up his falling popularity.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended up 480.99 points, or 1.78 per cent, from Friday at 27,494.24. The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange finished 34.46 points, or 1.83 per cent, higher at 1,915.14.

Gainers were led by ma-

rine transportation, transportation equipment and electric appliance issues.

The U.S. dollar edged up near the 110 yen line, as the unit was bought on expectations of a wider interest rate gap between the United States and Japan after a rise in US Treasury yields late last week, dealers said.

Stocks rebounded as investors scooped up battered shares after the Nikkei benchmark fell about 2 per cent in the two days through Friday to its lowest level since 28 December 2020.

Dip-buying kicked in as recent falls triggered by Toyota Motor Corp.'s announcement that it was cutting global output

by some 40 per cent next month compared to its initial plan was deemed overdone, brokers said.

Also contributing to stocks' gains was the loss of Hachiro Okonogi, who received support from Suga and some other members of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party in the Yokohama mayoral election on Sunday, they said.

The election outcome, seen as a gauge for Suga's popularity, fuelled speculation that his Cabinet may come up with an additional economic measure against the coronavirus pandemic fallout in a bid to shore up his approval ratings and win the House of Representatives election due in the fall, the brokers said.— Kyodo News ■

NEWS
IN BRIEFPeople evacuated
as new wildfire hits
Greek island

SCORES of firefighters backed by water-dropping aircraft battled a forest fire that broke out early Monday on the southern part of Greece's Evia island, less than two weeks after an inferno decimated its northern part.

The fire was burning near the village of Fygia where two neighbourhoods have been evacuated and was moving towards the coastal tourist village of Marmari, where authorities were preparing boats to evacuate people if needed, according to Athens News Agency. Forty-six firefighters were battling flames fanned by high winds — assisted by 20 fire engines, three water-dropping airplanes and two helicopters, the Greek fire brigade said. — AFP ■

Indonesian ex-
minister jailed for 12
years in virus graft
case

INDONESIA'S ex-social affairs minister was jailed for 12 years on Monday after being convicted of taking \$1.2 million in bribes linked to food aid for poor families hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

A Jakarta court handed out the stiff sentence to Juliar Batubara following his December arrest and a sting operation that turned up suitcases, backpacks and envelopes stuffed with cash.

"The court sentences the defendant to 12 years in prison and orders him to pay 500 million rupiah (\$35,000) in fines or serve six more months in prison," presiding judge Muhammad Damis told the hearing, which was held virtually for virus safety reasons.

The former politician was also ordered to pay the equivalent of about \$1 million in restitution, or face an additional two years in prison, the court said.

Batubara would take cash from two contractors hired to supply basic food packages for Indonesians hit hard by the health crisis, the court heard earlier. — AFP ■

US, S Korea nuclear envoys vow work
to resume talks with N Korea

THE top nuclear envoys of South Korea and the United States pledged Monday to work towards an early resumption of dialogue with North Korea amid tensions with Pyongyang over ongoing military exercises between the allies.

During their meeting in Seoul, Sung Kim, the US special representative for North Korea, and his South Korean counterpart Noh Kyu Duk also discussed possible humanitarian assistance to Pyongyang, including measures against infectious diseases, Noh told reporters afterwards.

Kim told reporters that the United States supports inter-Korean humanitarian projects.

With North Korea suggesting countermeasures over the US-South Korea exercises, the US envoy stressed that Washington does not have a "hostile intent" toward Pyongyang. He added that such drills are "long-standing, routine and purely defensive in nature."

Though US-North Korean talks on denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and sanctions relief have stalled since 2019, Kim said, "I'll continue to stand ready

to meet with my North Korean counterparts anywhere, at any time."

During his previous trip to South Korea in June, the envoy had made a similar remark, offering to meet with the North Korean side "anywhere, anytime, without preconditions."

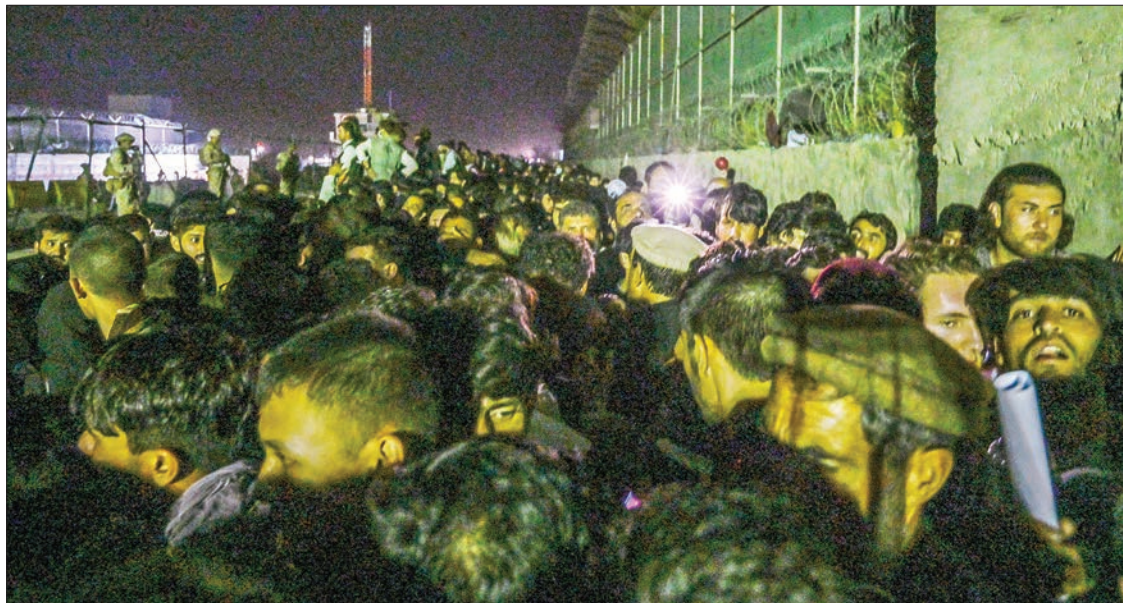
Noh said he and Kim pledged to work together to resume North-South and US-North Korea dialogue "as soon as possible" while monitoring the situation surrounding North Korea, including its response to the ongoing military exercise.

Kim, who arrived in South Korea on Saturday, also held talks with visiting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov on Monday, according to Yonhap News Agency.

A Noh-Morgulov meeting is scheduled for Tuesday.

In late July, North and South Korea restored their communications lines that had been left disconnected for about a year. But North Korea has since hardened its stance as the United States and South Korea moved to hold regular joint military exercises. — Kyodo News ■

Deadly firefight at Kabul airport as US boosts airlift



In this picture taken in the late hours on 22 August 2021 Afghans wait outside the foreign military-controlled part of the airport in Kabul, hoping to flee the country following the Taliban's military takeover of Afghanistan. PHOTO: WAKIL KOHSAR / AFP

WESTERN security forces were involved in an exchange of fire with unidentified gunmen Monday at Kabul airport, as US President Joe Biden sought to speed

up the chaotic evacuation of tens of thousands of people from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

One Afghan was killed and three others were injured in a

dawn firefight that according to the German military erupted between Afghan guards and unknown assailants.

German and American

troops "participated in further exchange of fire", the German army said in a statement.

This was the latest episode in a chaotic operation overseen by the US army that has seen about 30,000 people evacuated from Afghanistan since the Taliban marched into Kabul on 15 August, taking effective control of the country.

The Taliban, infamous for an ultra-strict interpretation of sharia law during their initial 1996-2001 rule, have repeatedly vowed a softer version this time.

But terrified Afghans continue to try and flee, overwhelming the operation at Kabul airport and leading to tragic scenes in which at least eight people have died. The Taliban's victory ended two decades of war as they took advantage of Biden's decision to withdraw nearly all US troops from the country. — AFP ■

Japan to send SDF planes to Afghanistan for evacuations

JAPAN will dispatch a total of three Self-Defence Forces planes to Afghanistan to evacuate Japanese nationals and local staff who worked for the Japanese Embassy there and other organizations amid the worsening security situation in the country, the top government spokesman said Monday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said the government will send one C-2 transport aircraft on Monday and two C-130s on Tuesday.

"Securing the safety of Japanese people (in Afghanistan) is our top priority, and we also

deem it important to secure the safety of local staff of the embassy and JICA remaining there as they include those who wish to leave the country," Kato said.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will join a Group of Seven nations' online summit to be held on Tuesday over the situation in Afghanistan, he added. Japanese diplomats were evacuated to Dubai last Tuesday after the embassy in the capital Kabul was shut on 15 August, with the Taliban regaining control of the country 20 years after it was ousted



Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato speaks at a press conference in Tokyo on 23 August 2021. PHOTO: KYODO

from power by U.S.-led forces, but some Japanese working

for international organizations remain there. — Kyodo News ■

Tokyo opens oxygen station for COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms

A facility to provide oxygen support to COVID-19 patients with relatively mild symptoms started operating Monday in Tokyo to relieve the strain on the capital's medical system as infections surge.

The oxygen station set up by the metropolitan government in the capital's Shibuya Ward will run around the clock. It has 130 beds and is staffed by three doctors and 25 nurses.

It is designed to treat patients who have been asked to recuperate at home but who experience concerns over breathing. Stays are likely to be short-term, such as one or two nights.

Those who feel better after receiving oxygen support will be sent back home, while patients

whose symptoms become severe will be considered for admission to hospital.

The station was opened in the former site of the National Children's Castle, a complex that contained play and educational facilities for children.

As of Sunday, more than 39,000 patients in Tokyo are recovering at home or elsewhere without hospital admission, underscoring the urgent need to expand the support system in the capital.

The metropolitan government plans to add another 110 beds in oxygen-station capacity within hospitals it runs by the end of this month.

Meanwhile, a site opened to provide AstraZeneca Plc's COV-



Photo taken on 21 August 2021, in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward shows an "oxygen station" for use by COVID-19 patients who have been recuperating at home. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

ID-19 vaccine at Shiromi Hall, a multipurpose hall in Osaka Castle Park in Osaka city. The move came as Osaka Prefecture has

seen daily infections top 2,000 since 18 August with Osaka city accounting for some 40 per cent of the cases.

The site, with some 60 staff, is aiming to inoculate 540 people per day. Registration for the shots began on 16 August, with slots already filled up until 29 August.

While the city said it still expects to complete inoculation of its residents wishing to receive shots using mainly the vaccines developed by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. within November, it hopes the AstraZeneca shots will speed up the process.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare approved the AstraZeneca vaccine in May, but the government initially withheld supplying the doses, taking into consideration reported rare cases of blood clots among young people overseas.— Kyodo News ■

New Zealand to stay in lockdown, outbreak 'yet to peak'



This picture shows empty streets during a nationwide covid-19 lockdown in Wellington on 18 August 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW Zealand extended a national Covid-19 lockdown Monday, with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saying a Delta variant outbreak has yet to peak.

Ardern said the rapid spread

of the highly transmissible variant meant it was too early to lift restrictions imposed last week after a virus cluster emerged in Auckland, ending a six-month run of no local cases.

"Delta had a head start on us and we've needed to catch up as quickly as we could — we don't think we have reached the peak of this outbreak," she said.

Ardern said 35 new cases had been detected, taking the total to 107, with more than 13,000 close contacts undergoing testing.

New Zealand's lockdown was due to expire late Tuesday but Ardern said it would continue through to Friday nationwide and until the evening of 31 August in Auckland.

"The safest option for all of us right now is to hold the course for longer," she said.

"This will allow us to have additional data and see if the virus has spread."— AFP ■

China reports zero local virus cases as Delta outbreak retreats

CHINA reported no new domestic coronavirus cases Monday, and Beijing appears poised to bring to heel the pandemic's most serious resurgence in months — driven by the highly contagious Delta variant — with mass testing and targeted lockdowns.

The latest outbreak, which began in mid-July when cleaners at a Nanjing airport tested positive, is the most severe since Covid-19 first surfaced in the central city of Wuhan.

Over a thousand people have been infected across dozens of cities.

But Communist authorities reacted with swift localized lockdowns, travel restrictions and mass testing of neighbourhoods

with infections as part of their "zero case" approach to the pandemic, which has virtually sealed off China's borders but allowed the economy to rebound.

New domestic infections have been falling for over two weeks.

On Monday, National Health Commission data showed local infections returned to zero after a five-week battle.

Meanwhile health experts are attempting to shore up confidence in the country's vaccination drive with leading virologist Zhong Nanshan saying "effective herd immunity" is on the horizon once over 80 per cent of the population is vaccinated — a target likely achieved by year-end.— AFP ■

US VP Harris vows 'enduring engagement' in Asia

VICE-President Kamala Harris vowed "enduring engagement" in Asia on Monday, offering reassurances of Washington's commitment to the region following the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover.

The hardline Islamists' swift return to power a week ago, and desperate scenes of thousands trying to flee, have cast a shadow over the United States' status as a global superpower.

But on a visit to Singapore, her first stop on a trip that will

also include Vietnam, Harris repeatedly insisted that the United States could be depended on.

"Our administration is committed to enduring engagement in Singapore, into Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific," Harris told a press conference alongside Singapore's leader.

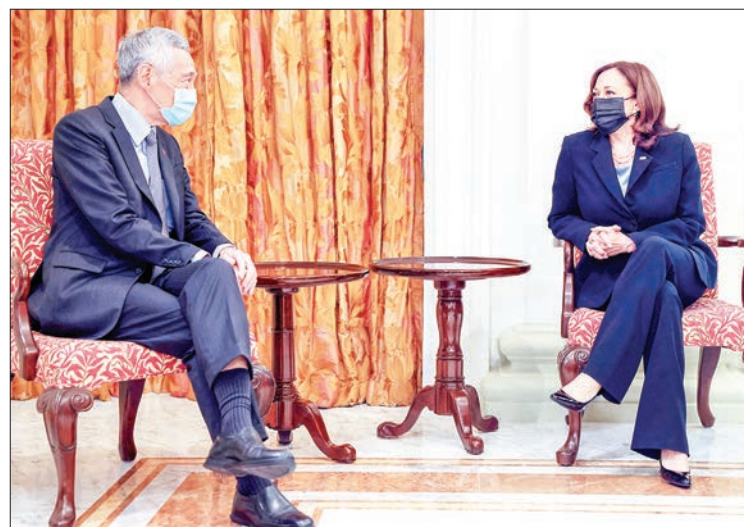
"The reason I am here is because the United States is a global leader, and we take that role seriously."

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said he welcomed the vice president's

"reassurances on American intentions in the region, and in the world".

US President Joe Biden's administration is seeking to reset relationships in Asia after the turbulent Trump era, and project Washington as a stabilizing force in the face of growing Chinese aggression.

But analysts say the Taliban's seizure of power and rapid collapse of US-trained Afghan forces have caused fresh concerns about US dependability.— AFP ■



US Vice-President Kamala Harris (R) and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong attend a meeting in Singapore on 23 August 2021. **PHOTO: EVELYN HOCKSTEIN / POOL / AFP**

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

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

Myanmar player Hein Htet renews contract with Selangor FC



Myanmar youth player Hein Htet seen at physical training session of the Selangor FC. **PHOTO: SELANGOR FC**

HEIN HTET AUNG, a Myanmar player in the Malaysian Super League, assisted Selangor FC winning 4-1 over Penang FC last week.

Thus, an agreement was

reached between the agent and the player and a new contract was signed after the match.

“I’m very happy for the opportunity to play. I want to do more. So I try my best and

give it my all every day”, Myanmar shining star said upon his renewal of the contract.

Hein Htet Aung was originally offered by Selangor FC until the end of 2023, but will now be able to see the Myanmar youth player in the Malaysian Super League until the end of the 2024 season.

In addition, gratuity plans will be added to the player’s salary, which will be increased from year to year, and if a player is sold before the contract end, a percentage of the sale amount will be returned to the player.

The Selangor FC board, authorities and coaches are particularly impressed with the Myanmar youngster’s ability to adapt quickly to the team, officials said. —GNLM ■

Bale scores but Real need Vinicius to earn draw

GARETH BALE scored his first Liga goal since 2019 but took two late goals from his replacement, Vinicius, to earn Real Madrid a 3-3 draw at Levante on Sunday. That result allowed champions Atletico Madrid, who beat Elche 1-0 earlier in the evening, to take top spot in La Liga.

In the late game in Valencia, Bale gave Real Madrid the lead after five minutes. Karim Benzema ran in on goal but when the ball was held up by water on the pitch cut it back to Bale who side-footed the ball home.

It was the Welshman’s first goal in La Liga since his second goal, an 86th minute equalizer, in a 2-2 draw against Villarreal at the start of September in 2019, a match which he ended by collecting a red card.

Real dominated the first half but could not find

a second. Instead, Levante levelled 28 seconds into the second half. The ball broke to unmarked Roger who beat Thibaut Courtois with a hard low shot.

Levante took the lead in the 57th minute when Jose Campana met a deep cross with a sweet volley into the top corner. Real manager Carlo Ancelotti promptly yanked off Bale, Isco and Eden Hazard in a triple substitution. One of the subs, Vinicius repaid his coach in the 73rd minute, accelerating onto a pass from Casimiro, shrugging off a defender and rolling a shot into the corner of the net.

Seven minutes later, David Alaba nodded a Levante free kick down into his own six yard box and Rober Pier gleefully thumped the ball home from close range. With five minutes left, Vinicius again equalised. — AFP ■

Tokyo Games chief Hashimoto vows to guard Paralympians from pandemic



International Paralympic Committee chief Andrew Parsons (C) and Seiko Hashimoto (L), head of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic organizing committee, attend a press conference in Tokyo on 23 August 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

THE president of the Tokyo Games organizing committee on Monday pledged to take all possible measures against the coronavirus to hold a safe Paralympics for participants and the Japanese public, on the eve of the opening of the largest global event for athletes with disabilities. “We will protect the games that will open tomorrow until the very end and guide them to success,” Seiko Hashimoto told a press conference.

Hashimoto said the committee will strengthen coronavirus countermeasures from those of the Olympics, since many Paralympians have un-

derlying health conditions.

The number of daily infections has roughly tripled in Tokyo since the start of the Olympics on 23 July, and the Japanese public remains worried about going ahead with the Paralympics during a global health crisis.

Andrew Parsons, president of the International Paralympic Committee, expressed confidence that safety rules will be followed by athletes and officials, and stressed that the games can be held without risking their health or that of the public.

“One of the questions I have

been asked quite often is, can we have safe games? And the answer is yes,” he said at the press conference. “We would not be here if we did not believe that we could deliver a safe games.”

The Tokyo Paralympics, delayed for one year due to the coronavirus pandemic, will feature about 4,400 athletes, while competitions will be held without spectators as part of efforts to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

The IPC said 161 countries and regions, in addition to the refugee team, will compete in the 13-day games through 5 September. — Kyodo News ■