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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.

MFF striving to achieve export target this FY

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) is striving for earning the income generated from fisheries export this financial year 2020-2021 to keep up with US\$715.337 million registered in the previous FY2019-2020.

The value of Myanmar's aquaculture exports as of 8 August in the current FY dropped dramatically to \$650.36 million, whereas Myanmar exported \$715.337 million worth of fishery products to the external market in the corresponding period of last FY. This year's export from the fisheries sector falls short of \$64.501 million to reach the value recorded the last FY. Consequently, MFF is beefing up the exports of both freshwater and saltwater fish to meet the goal.

"The disruption in container shipment wreak havoc on aquaculture export. To tackle this, the State authorities fulfil the requirements, and the One-Stop Service (OSS) was established. Myanma Port Authority processed to facilitate the transportation. The container shipment has become smooth



The disruption in container shipment wreak havoc on aquaculture export. To tackle this, the State authorities fulfil the requirements, and the One-Stop Service (OSS) was established. Myanma Port Authority processed to facilitate the transportation. The container shipment has become smooth in June. **PHOTO: KANU**

in June. Furthermore, the Provisional Government of Myanmar will make those stakeholders engaged in the fisheries sector get vaccinated for the COVID-19. This move ensures the trade partners for seafood safety," said Dr Toe Nanda Tin, senior

vice-president of MFF.

"Keeping the businesses going and growing is a pivotal role in the country's economy. All the sectors including agriculture and livestock need to commit this. MFF is conducting the business on a regular basis.

Those enterprises in the fisheries sector are truly appreciated. The federation is trying to meet the last year's export earnings in the last two months of the current FY (August-September)," she added.

Of 175 various aquaculture

products, marketable fish products, especially fish, shrimp, eel and crab are primarily exported to foreign markets.

In the past ten months, a monthly income from the fisheries sector is worth \$65 million.

— Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

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State Administration Council Press Release

Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

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Imports of anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products continue

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.

On 26 August (Yesterday), anti-COVID-19 equipment, medical products including oxygen plants and concentrators were imported by 25 companies and transported by 50 vehicles, including four bowsers.

A total of 69 tonnes of oxygen (liquid) carried by four bowsers, 21 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 13,173 empty oxygen cylinders, seven oxygen plants, 919 home oxygen concentrators, 4,104 sets of Covid-19 test kits, 4,800 sets of PPE suits, and 25 tonnes of masks were imported via Muse, Chinchwehaw, Kampaiti, Myawady, Tachilek, and Hteekhee trading posts and Yangon International Airport.

Four vehicles carrying liquid oxygen were transported to Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, and

Nay Pyi Taw and three oxygen plants to Yangon, two oxygen plants to Mandalay and one oxygen plant to Sittway were also transported respectively.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments, facilitating the importation 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



Lorries are seen carrying the imported liquid oxygen tanks and transporting them to the needed areas.

The first priority of current government

Efforts must be made to increase number of agriculturists and breeders under the proper plans similar to economists, legal experts, technologists, engineers, medical doctors and nurses. Region and state chief ministers need to turn out the educated persons. Ensuring plentiful of educated persons is the first priority of current government.

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

Union Minister for Industry inspects DaikU starch plant, Thagara industrial region in Bago

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than inspected DaikU Starch Plant and Thagara Industrial Region in Bago Region yesterday morning.

During the inspection tour in DaikU Starch Plant, the Union Minister said the State Administration Council has given instructions to encourage agricultural-based industries and production of agricultural-based products, by supporting local SMEs based on agriculture and livestock.

He instructed officials to cultivate climate-friendly industrial crops and livestock farming in the vacant land owned by the factory; to strictly adhere to GMP guidelines for the current

production of methyl alcohol in the factory; to manage to produce more methyl alcohol that are used in the COVID-19 prevention activities; to enhance the capacity of employees to produce high quality and standard products; to pay attention to the management of fixed assets such as factory land, building and machinery, and to inspect the production of methyl alcohol with the machinery used to produce starch powder and sweeteners before.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister arrived in Thagara Industrial region and inspected No (14), No (15) and No (26) Heavy Factories, coordinating business requirements. — MNA



The MoI Union Minister is inspecting the methyl alcohol production process at the DaikU Starch Plant.

Myanmar attends 24th ASEAN DGICM through videoconferencing to discuss initial steps of Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC)



THE 24th meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) and related meetings were held through videoconferencing yesterday morning in Manila, the Philippines.

Director-General of the Immigration Department U Aung Kyaw Soe, who was the Chairman of the 23rd DGICM in 2019, handed over the DGICM Chairman-in-Office statue to Mr Jaime H Morante, the Chairman-to-be of the 24th DGICM from the Philippines by videoconferencing.

Afterwards, the 24th DGICM

Chairman addressed the meeting and representatives and senior officials from the ASEAN countries discussed the activities related to immigration and the initial steps of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) by the country and coordinated to hold the 25th DGICM to be hosted by Singapore.

The 24th DGICM and its related meetings: the 4th ASEAN Heads of Major Immigration Checkpoints Forum (AMICF) and the 16th ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum (AIIF), and the 16th DGICM and Australia Meeting were also held on 25 August. — MNA

2,635 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 26 August, total figure rises to 383,514

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 383,514 after 2,635 new cases were reported on 26 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 311,952 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached 14,850 after 113 died.—MNA

MNHRC joins 2nd SEANF meeting, side event

THE Human Rights Commission of Malaysia hosted the 2nd Working Group Meeting of Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) on 25 and 26 August and the Dialogue Between the Asia Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)/Asian NGO Network on NHRIs (ANNI) and the Southeast Asia NHRIs Forum (SEANF) on 24 August via a virtual online platform.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman U Hla Myint and Vice-Chairperson Dr Nanda Hmun joined the meeting together with the other delegations of FORUM member countries.

During the working committee meeting, the officials discussed and shared the signs of progress and challenges of human rights organizations after



the 1st meeting of FORUM held in April 2021, the establishment of website and creation of a logo for FORUM, the host country for 2022, the draft of 2022-2026

Strategic Plan, suggestions for economic rights of COVID-hit communities in the post-COVID-19 period, the collaboration of FORUM and AICHR,

establishment of Permanent Secretariat of FORUM, rights for elderly persons and rights issues, including the convening of the 18th Annual Meeting of the

FORUM.

Then, MNHRC Chairman discussed the activities and challenges for human rights while commission member Dr Tin Maung Maung Than presented promising economic status in the post-COVID-19 and other matters.

The delegations of human right commissions of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste, Chairman, Vice-Chairperson and members of MNHRC also joined the Dialogue Between the Asia Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)/Asian NGO Network on NHRIs (ANNI) and the Southeast Asia NHRIs Forum (SEANF) held on 24 August. They discussed human rights-related matters jointly conducted by SEANF and FORUM-ASIA/ANNI. — MNA

Second COVID vaccination of prisoners begins at Insein prison

THE inmates of Insein Prison in Yangon Region got their second COVID jobs yesterday, according to the prison officials.

“The prisoners of Insein Prison are vaccinated against COVID-19 as the second injection today. This is the first day of the second COVID vaccination. It will take about three days as there were 7,200 inmates who

received the first jab. We will vaccinate all the inmates,” said the prison official.

The prison officials conducted the vaccination programme for 2,417 inmates in accordance with the COVID-19 health rules. Those who received the second jab completed their first one on 28 July. There were 7,190 prisoners for the first injection.

Yangon Region Director U Myo Oo of Prison Department and other officials, including the Insein prison in-charge inspected the vaccination processes. The medics and nurses of the prison hospital will continue to vaccinate the inmates in the coming days. — Myint Mo/GNLM



An inmate at Insein prison receives the second jab against COVID-19. PHOTO: MIN HTET

Price list of medicines commonly used against COVID-19 as of 6 pm on 26 August

No	Product Name	Price in Kyats (Retail)	Company Name
Anti-inflammatory			
1	PO Dexamethasone	1,450	JDS
2	PO Prednisolone	2,000	Aorta
3	Injection - Dexamethasone	160	Aorta
Antiviral			
4	PO Favipiravir 400 mg	50,000	AA Medical
5	Injection - Remdesivir	70,000	GHI
Anti thrombosis			
6	Injection Enoxaprim 40 mg	7,000	Nyi Lay Naing
7	Injection Enoxaprim 60 mg	9,000	Nyi Lay Naing
Symptomatic			
8	PO Paracetamol 500 mg	1,500	AA Medical
9	PO Dextromethophan	1,450	AA Medical
10	PO Bromhexine	1,000	Medi Myanmar

Please visit the Website page www.mccpmd.org and Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/323302521392189/posts/1720802588308835/?d=n> to know the prices of other medicines.



Pigeon pea price remains on upward trend

THE pigeon pea (red gram) price continues rising from early April 2021 and it surged to above over K1,320,000 per metric ton in the last week of August.

The pigeon pea price was on the rise in March-end 2021 amid the low yield and the Kyat weakening in the local forex market. The pigeon pea market is bullish along with the Kyat depreciation, according to the domestic market.

The gram fetched up only K837,500 per tonne in early February. The price in April-end showed a remarkable increase of K1,000,000 per tonne as against February's rate. On 26 August, it touched a high of K1,322,500 per tonne. The majority of the traders accept only immediate cash payment, a trader from Mandalay market stated.

Myanmar's pigeon pea is primarily shipped to India and also exported to Singapore, the US, Canada, Pakistan, the UK, and Malaysia. But, the export volume to other countries rather than to India is extremely small.



Myanmar's pigeon peas are primarily shipped to India and also exported to Singapore, the US, Canada, Pakistan, the UK, and Malaysia. But, the export volume to other countries rather than to India is extremely small.

More than 1.8 million tonnes of various pulses and beans were exported to foreign markets between 1 October and 13 August of the current financial year 2020-2021, with an estimated value of US\$1.4 billion. Of them, the pigeon pea export accounted for 183,507 tonnes, generating an income of \$122.38 million, the Commerce Ministry's data indicated.

The domestic bean market is positively related to the law of supply and demand, said an official of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

India set an import quota on beans, including black gram and pigeon pea, starting from 2017. Myanmar earlier had to export black bean and pigeon pea 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 the 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 pea 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.

Myanmar yearly produces about 400,000 tonnes of black gram and 50,000 tonnes of pigeon pea.

Myanmar shipped over 1.6 million tonnes of different varieties of pulses, especially black gram, with an estimated worth of US\$1 billion, to other countries in the FY2018-2019. During the last FY2019-2020 ended September 30, the country delivered 1.6 million tonnes to the external market, generating an export value of \$1.195 billion. — MM/GNLM

USD Vs MMK exchange rate hits K1,700 per dollar despite CBM continuously selling dollars at auction-rate to control instability



The CBM sold US\$28 million in seven times at its auction rate in August so far, with the average exchange rate for the auction ranging from a minimum of K1,646 to a maximum of K1,663 per dollar.

KYAT is depreciating against the US dollar at K1,700 per dollar in the local foreign exchange market although the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) is selling the dollar at auction-rate constantly to control the value of the currency.

The CBM sold US\$28 million in seven times at its auction rate in August so far, with the average exchange rate for the auction ranging from a minimum of K1,646 to a maximum of K1,663 per dollar.

In July, the bank reportedly sold \$39 million at an auction rate. Besides, the bank also sold \$12 million at an auction rate in June.

The CBM is conducting an auction for foreign exchange to reduce the fluctuation of foreign exchange rates in a short-term period.

The dollar exchange rate against Myanmar Kyat stood at around K1,330 per dollar at the end-January. Then, the rate jumped to around K1,700 per

dollar on 26 August with a rise of over K300 in over six months.

In the first seven months of 2021, the highest and lowest exchange rate is currently fixed around K1,327-1,345 in January, K1,335-1,465 in February, K1,420-1,550 in March, K1,550-1,610 in April, K1,585-1,730 in May, K1,595-1,620 in June and K1,626-1,670 in July. In 2020, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August, K1,310-1,355 in September, K1,282-1,315 in October, K1,303-1,330 in November and K1,324-1,403 in December.

In 2019, the rates are pegged at K1,508-1,517 in July, K1,510-1,526 in August, K1,527-1,565 in September, K1,528-1,537 in October, K1,510-1,524 in November and K1,485-1,513 in December.

On 20 September 2018, the dollar exchange rate hit an all-time high of K1,650 in the local currency market. — NN/GNLM

Mandalay Agriculture Dept to cover 150,000 acres of cotton regionwide

MANDALAY Agriculture Department projected to plant over 150,000 acres of extra-long-staple cotton in the region to boost production of quality cotton seeds for the local growers.

This project is aimed to distribute the pedigree seeds to the growers, enhance cotton quality, reduce the production input cost and bolster the production rate. More than 20,000 acres of cotton have been planted, for now, constituting 13.66 per cent of projected acres, said Daw Aye Aye Mon, head of Mandalay Region Agriculture Department.

"The department is making efforts to increase the income of the local growers and produce the quality crop. The extra-long staple cotton farming is mostly seen in Mandalay Region. The

farming commenced in July-August. This variety is marketable with high potentials. The growers can also receive the seed of pedigree quality. The irrigation system can also supply adequate water to the farms. The department will disseminate technology to improve the yield," she stated.

The projected acres include 328 in Mandalay District, 1,734 in PyinOoLwin District, 33,138 in Kyaukse District, 365,652 in Meiktila District, 20,388 in Myingyan District, 877 in NyaungU District and 58,900 in Yamethin District.

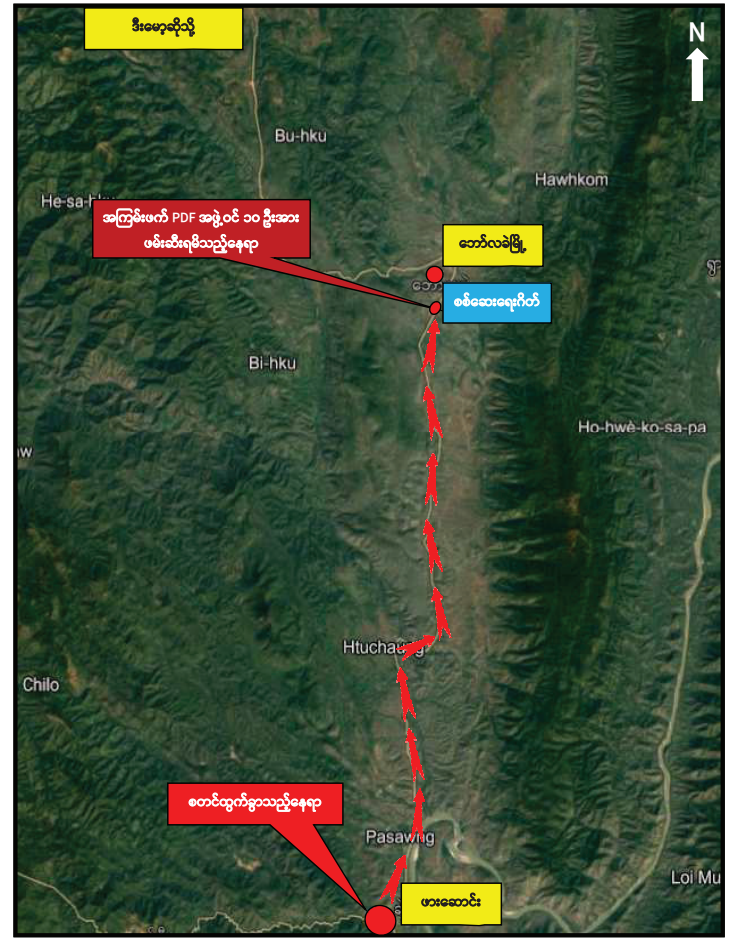
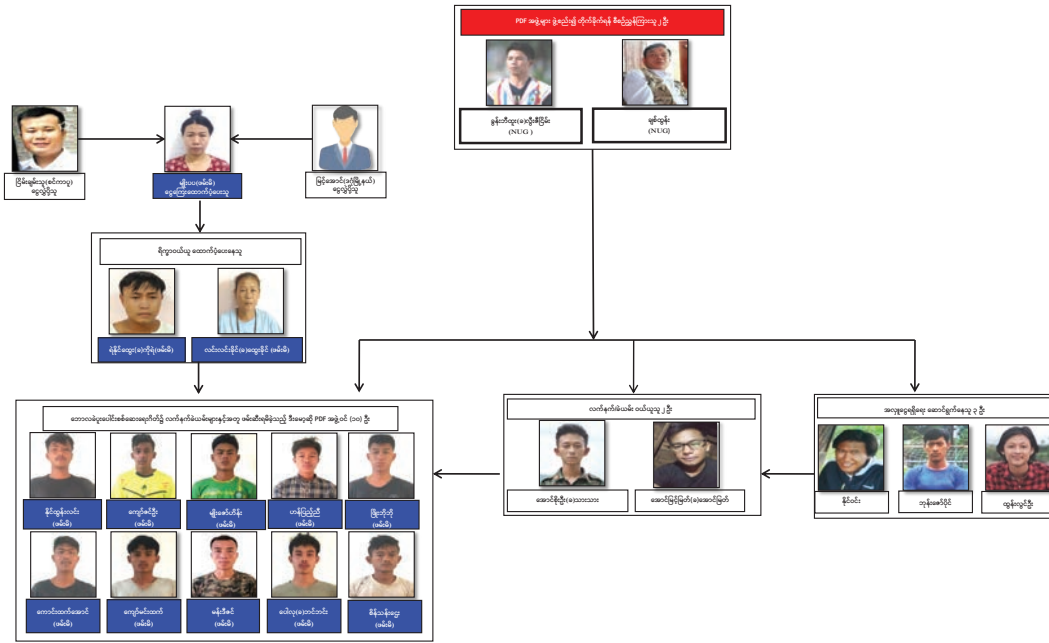
Among them, over 20,000 acres of cotton sowing have been completed. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/GNLM



This project is aimed to distribute the pedigree seeds to the growers, enhance cotton quality, reduce the production input cost and bolster the production rate.

Three supporters of PDFs, ten PDF members of Kayah State arrested

ကယားပြည်နယ်အတွင်းရှိ အကြမ်းဖက် PDF အဖွဲ့များအား ထောက်ပံ့ပေးနေသူ ၃ ဦးနှင့် အကြမ်းဖက် PDF အဖွဲ့ဝင် ၁၀ ဦးအား ဖမ်းဆီးရမိမှု Diagram



THE security forces arrested Myo Pa Pa, who provided the cash, uniforms, rations and medicines to the PDF members in Kayah State, at Star City housing in Thanlyin Township of Yangon on 12 August.

According to her confession, she received K22,369,850 —K15,727,500 in July and K6,642,350 in August from Together Myanmar organization of Myanmar people living in Singapore in her KBZ pay account through Nyein Chan Thu from Singapore and K500,000 from U Myint Aung from Dagon Township to support the PDFs.

She then used the cash assistance to buy the weapons, uniforms, rations and medicines for 20 times for Loikaw PDF, Dimawhso PDF and KNDF (Karen Nationalities Defence Force) of Kayah State. The other two suspects Lin Lin Khaing (aka) Htwe Khaing and Ye Naing Htwe (aka) Ko Ye (who

completed the PDF training course) who transported the materials to the PDFs in Kayah State were arrested in Shan Pine Ward of Loikaw Township on 15 August. These two suspects used the cash assistance provided by Myo Pa Pa to buy equipment and medicines for PDFs in Dimawhso Township.

According to the confessions of these two suspects and report of a dutiful citizen, the police arrested the 10 Dimawhso PDF members —Mahn Di Zin (aka) Nga Man, Naing Tun Lin (aka) Seik Kalar, Myo Zaw Hein (aka) Myo Gyi, Han Pyae Nyi (aka) Ngar Kalay, Kyaw Min Htet (aka) Byatta, Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Arnoe, Phyo Bo Bo (aka) Phyu Phway, Paw Lu (aka) Bin Bin, Kaung Htet Aung (aka) Kaung Htet and Sein Than Htay (aka) Than Chaung who wore the uniforms of Karen Nationalities People's Liberation Front in transporting the firearms from Pasawng to



Seized explosives and firearms.

Dimawhso together with the guns and bullets at Bawlake inspection point on 18 August.

These 10 suspects said that they participated in attacks in Dimawhso during May and June. The absconders Khun Bi Htoo (aka) Lwee Zi Nyein and Chit Tun of unlawful asso-



ciation NUG gave instructions to the PDFs to launch attacks in Kayah State. Moreover, Dimawhso PDF members Naing Win, Phone Zaw Paing and Tun Lwin Oo collected cash contributions from local and foreign countries. Other members Aung Soe Oo (aka) Thar Thar and Aung Myint Myat (aka) Aung Myat purchased the firearms with this cash assistance.

Moreover, those 10 PDF members participated in attacks on the Dimawhso police station and security members near Kyauk Sal Kan of Dimawhso Township in May and also near Church in Daw Ngan Khar Ward in June.

Therefore, the security troops arrested 13 suspects including PDF members and supporters and will take action against them. — MNA

Myeik oxygen plant to run in three days

AN OXYGEN plant with the capacity to generate about ten 40-litre oxygen containers per hour has arrived in Myeik. And it is almost ready for operation within three days.

The plant that can produce about ten 40-litre oxygen cylinders per hour arrived at the Myeik general hospital on 25 August. The NZO-60 NM machines started to be installed, and the plant will be in full function within three days

to fulfil oxygen requirements in Myeik township.

“The plant will generate ten 40-litre oxygen cylinders per hour. The oxygen cylinders will be given priority to patients who are under treatment at the hospital. The building for the oxygen plant is completed. We can run the oxygen plant by the end of this month,” said an official.

Oxygen is the key to saving lives. Some people have died

because they were struggling to breathe as no oxygen was available, he added.

People in Myeik township need oxygen due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Now, the plant is completed. It can produce oxygen cylinders to meet their daily oxygen needs. Besides, another oxygen plant is being constructed in Botechaung village in the township and will be completed next month. — Aye Maung/GNLM



Terrorist supporters, PDF catering officers, CDM support in-charge arrested with explosives, rations in Yangon

A total of five suspects including a former NLD's Pyithu Hluttaw Representative were arrested together with explosives and rations in Yangon on 21 and 22 August.

According to a report, security forces searched the house on Tayayone road in Mingala ward, Taikkyi Township and arrested Htein Win, Aye Min Soe, Aye Thuzar, Zaw Lin and Khin Myat Thu (Former NLD's Pyithu Hluttaw Representative) on 21 August.

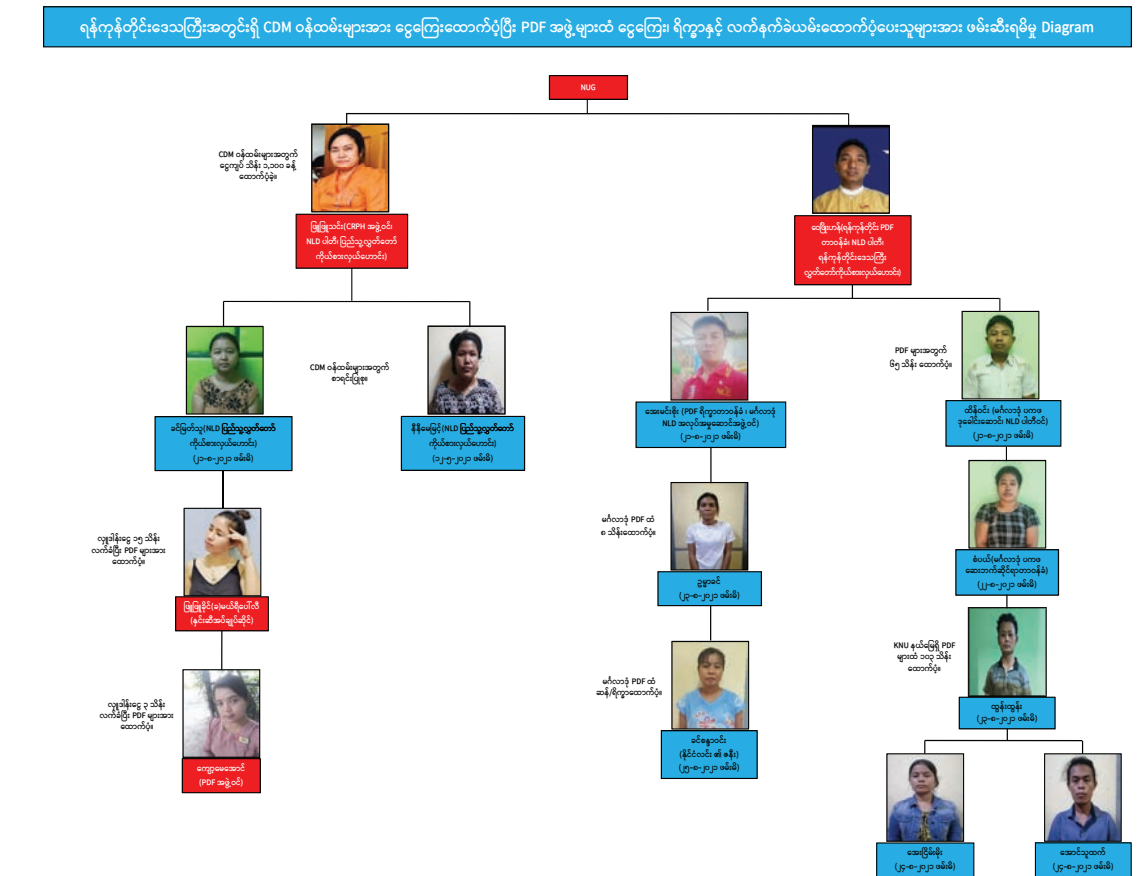
Following the confession made by Htein Win, 35 sound bombs, 28 smoke bombs, and related materials used in homemade mines were found and seized at No (330/B) Minye Kyaw Swar road, Kyeepwayay ward, Thingangyun Township on 22 August. A total of seven related suspects were also arrested in townships in Yangon on 22 and 23 August.

Khin Myat Thu claimed that she was in charge of Yangon Region in the CDM Sup-

porting Group formed by most NLD former Hluttaw Representatives, under the guidance of Phyu Phyu Thin, a member of illegal CRPH. She received financial aids for CDMers from Phyu Phyu Thin and distributed them to a total of 1,000 CDMers.

Htein Win (former member of the Information Department of Yangon Region government) confessed that he was the Deputy Chief of the People's Defence Force for Mingaladon Township, under the instruction of Wai Phyo Han (former Yangon Region Hluttaw Representative, NLD member). He supported Nyi Nyi Min and Min Min (a) Ba Sai with 6.5 million kyats to purchase arms for PDF and prepared to open PDF training courses in Taikkyi Township, Yangon.

According to the confession of Aye Min Soe (Former Mingaladon Township NLD executive member), he was the Ration Officer for PDF under



the instruction of Wai Phyo Han. Since March, Khin Sandar Win (Wife of Former Yangon

Region Social Affairs Minister) provided rice and cooking oil to PDF groups, and he de-

livered foods to PDF training courses in Thanlyin, Hlegu, Taikkyi Townships under the instruction of Nyi Nyi Min. It is also learned that Tun Tun also provided 10,300,000 kyats to PDF in KNU area.

It is reported that action will be taken against those who support and provide PDF groups with financial assistant, food and arms. The people are also requested to secretly report any information about them and related suspects to the relevant authorities and to work together for immediate peace and stability in towns and villages. — MNA



Seized explosives in Thingangyun Township.



Arrestees and confiscated rations in Taikkyi Township.

Rising price makes Kawlin pineapple retailers convenient

THE retailers from Kawlin township say that they reaped a healthy profit from the sale of pineapples as the price has gone up again.

Annually, abundant pineapples from Bhamo town and Mezar areas are being sold at the Kawlin market by car and three-wheel motorbikes.

Earlier in July, the pineapples were priced at K500 for a small one and K1,500 for two big fruits in the Kawlin market. However, the Kawlin market was temporarily closed from 11 to 17 August to prevent the spreading of COVID-19. When

the market reopened, the prices rose to K1,000 for a small one and K2,000 for the big one. Compared to those, the price has almost doubled, said a buyer from the Kawlin market.

Pineapples are mainly sold to farmers from rural areas. A pineapple is currently offered from K1,000 to K3,000, depending on the size and freshness of the fruits, said a retailer. Yearly, the pineapple traders from Kawlin township go to the pineapple plantation in Bhamo and Mezar areas and buy all the pineapple to sell them back in the market. — Myat Tun Min (Kawlin)/GNLM



When the market reopened, the prices rose to K1,000 for a small one and K2,000 for the big one. Compared to those, the price has almost doubled.

Don't give up in responding to COVID-19 pandemic

CURRENTLY, the Provisional Government of Myanmar set an aim to decline a half down of infection rate in August 2021. It decided to vaccinate 50 per cent of the total population this year, and if possible, vaccination will be extended for the people of more than half the population of the country.

The first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic brought lesser losses to Myanmar but the third wave of the pandemic makes an attempt to leave a great loss in the country. However, not only the government but the entire people are defying the attacks of the pandemic in the third wave through the emergency meetings to take preventive, control and treatment measures for the disease, medical examination over the patients and contact persons, and the practice of the stay-at-home programme. At an opportune time, the result will come out who will win over the crisis.

An act of those who give up for any problem is called surrender. In encountering the COVID-19 pandemic, the government and the people need to accept the concept "never surrender, ever conquer".

factories are booming in Myanmar with the creation of job opportunities for the local people. Meanwhile, the government will resume the development projects in all parts of the country.

An act of those who give up for any problem is called surrender. In encountering the COVID-19 pandemic, the government and the people need to accept the concept "never surrender, ever conquer".



Are the neighbours of Myanmar listening?

By Kyaw Myint Htun (Paris)

ANARCHY unfolding in Afghanistan. After 20 years, there are five keywords for the people of Afghanistan: "you are on your own". Where are the brightest people from the UN? Where are all these righteous people from the UN who usually shout from their ivory towers in places like New York and Geneva? Are Myanmar's neighbours listening?

Afghanistan has been the game of adults. In English football terms, it is a Premier League game. No place for clubs in the fourth division! When adults play the game, the UN is shoved aside, powerless, marginalized, with no way to get in the game, nor be allowed to get in the game. They are, however, prolific at putting out statements just to be seen as doing something.

When a small developing country like Myanmar faces a crisis, all these brightest minds from the UN usually bully their way in. Throw all kinds of mud. Threats! impose resolutions in the UN. It's either you do as you are told according to what we think and like or else! Second-guessing is not allowed and is no practice of democracy. But when these small countries direct criticism at the UN and its righteous mind-

ed UN officials, it is labelled as "uncivilized". But nothing should be deterred from pointing out to the brightest minds in the UN who they really are. When they smell blood, they stop at nothing anyway!

People are questioning who is the brilliant military mind behind the Taliban's swift advance. Within days, they are on the outskirts of Kabul. The capital is surrounded. But wasn't it that some of the world's mightiest militaries with the most advanced weaponry have been training the Afghan forces for the last 20 years? Where are they? What happened? Are Myanmar's neighbours listening?

The UN envoy to Myanmar made some comments last week from her native Switzerland. It must be nice up there in the Alps! Let us be reminded that the Envoy has no prior experience in managing the political crisis. She may not have experience in managing any major crisis, let alone a political crisis so complicated as Myanmar. The situation is so unprecedented that it would be impossible for the Envoy to refer to the lessons she studied in school. It is doubtful that anyone has done a dissertation on such a scenario either. So, what would she do? She will continue to talk to everyone under

the sun and make statements to justify her position. Nothing more. Are Myanmar's neighbours listening? Weren't South Sudan the newest "baby" of the UN ten years ago? Are Myanmar's neighbours watching what is happening in South Sudan? South Sudan was supposed to be the UN's bright shining star. Where are all these righteous brightest officials from the UN? Are they still in their ivory towers shouting good sounding liberal slogans while South Sudan descends into further darkness and no future in sight for the South Sudanese children?

The list of failures doesn't stop there. 13 billion in foreign aid poured in for the purpose of "nation-building" for Haiti. Haiti is labelled as an "aid state". Are Myanmar's neighbours watching what is happening in Haiti?

Oh, how about the sex abuse cases on the helpless, hapless and vulnerable Haitians by the UN peacekeepers? How about the cholera outbreak? Apart from the expression of sorrow, has anyone from the UN has been held accountable? Expression of sorrow and everyone moved on as nothing happened? Have there been any statements from the Human

Rights Commissioner in Geneva about human rights abuses of her own UN colleagues? She shouts about all kinds of things under the sun from the ivory tower in Geneva except when it comes to her own colleagues. Is it too "inconvenience" for her to criticize her own colleagues? Has there been any attempt to have really truly independent investigations about the abuses of the UN officials inflicted upon the Haitian people? How about Truth Finding Commission? Are Myanmar's neighbours listening?

What is the UN doing in Ethiopia? Is what happening in Ethiopia suddenly beyond their "mandate" for the time being?

That's just all recent. We are not even digging deeper back into what happened in Rwanda.

Strong leaders emerged in some Asian countries in the region to steer their countries on the right path. There is a country that ended decades of guerrilla war. For three decades citizens of this country were living in fear of suicide attacked and bombings. A strong determined leader ended this. In doing so, the people began to live in a peaceful environment. Yet, the brightest minds from the

UN continue to push for an international investigation into the actions of the local authorities. They can come up with all kinds of good-sounding names such as, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission", "Blue Ribbon Commission". All will serve as covers for the UN and its usual suspects to continue to interfere with their meddling in the internal affairs of the sovereign state.

Now that criticism is being directed where it should be, are we being viewed as "uncivilized". These powers that be are not supposed to be criticized, especially by lowly people from third world countries.

In the height of the tensions in Myanmar in February and March, outside elements intensely launched a campaign to misinform the Myanmar public that "white knights" will descend from the sky.

If the fate of Myanmar and its people are to be dependent on these "white knights" go look no further than the stories above. There is no need to look deeper back into history.

Twenty somewhat years ago, foreign elements, including the UN and its masters created the situation that people could not sit down to have meaningful discussions because they differ on how

to call the country. Just because people differ on the name of the country, matters of vital interest to the ordinary citizens of Myanmar could not be discussed. History is repeating itself again. In recent years, foreign forces have tried to impose how certain minority groups in Myanmar should be called. Not the terms that have been used by the local Myanmar people for decades but it has to be the term favourable and imposed by foreign elements.

It's all about not solving the country's problems once and for all doing things that are in the interest of the Myanmar people. It is all aimed at how to create lasting problems under the "divide and conquer" strategy.

The mightiest military alliances can force into any small country in the world at any time and impose their will as long as they want. But nation-building and lasting peace cannot be forced upon by outsiders. Nation-building has to come from within respecting and putting into context the country's traditions and cultures.

Are Myanmar's neighbours listening?

(The views and opinions in this article are those of the author only.) - Ed.



Japan halts use of 1.63 mil. Moderna vaccine doses over contamination

JAPAN'S health ministry said Thursday that foreign materials were found in some unused doses of Moderna Inc.'s COVID-19 vaccine and the use of around 1.63 million doses manufactured on the same production line has been suspended as a precaution.

Both Moderna and Japanese drugmaker Takeda Pharmaceutical Co., which is in charge of the sale and distribution of the vaccine in the country, said they had not received any reports regarding safety issues. Some of the 1.63 million doses distributed to 863 vaccination centres have already been administered.

"To date, no safety or efficacy issues have been identified," Moderna told Kyodo News, adding it is "carefully assessing this matter

and at this point does not have further comments on root causes."

Regarding possible problems in other countries, the U.S. company said, "On an ongoing basis, Moderna monitors and expeditiously assesses questions we receive about our products from global markets."

"Local authorities will make their own decisions about disclosure of information following these assessments," the company said.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters, "I have been briefed by the health ministry that it will not have a significant impact," when asked about the possibility of the suspension disrupting Japan's vaccination programme.

The 1.63 million doses of Moderna vaccine were produced on the same production line at the same

time in Spain, and fall under three lot numbers - 3004667, 3004734 and 3004956, the health ministry said.

The Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry said it would ask each facility that received the doses not to use them.

The composition of the foreign materials, a few millimetres in size, has not been determined.

Foreign substances have been confirmed since Aug. 16 at vaccination sites in Tokyo and some other prefectures. The ministry said it received a report from Takeda on Wednesday.

The sites include the mass vaccination center operated by the Self-Defence Forces in Osaka, the Defence Ministry said.

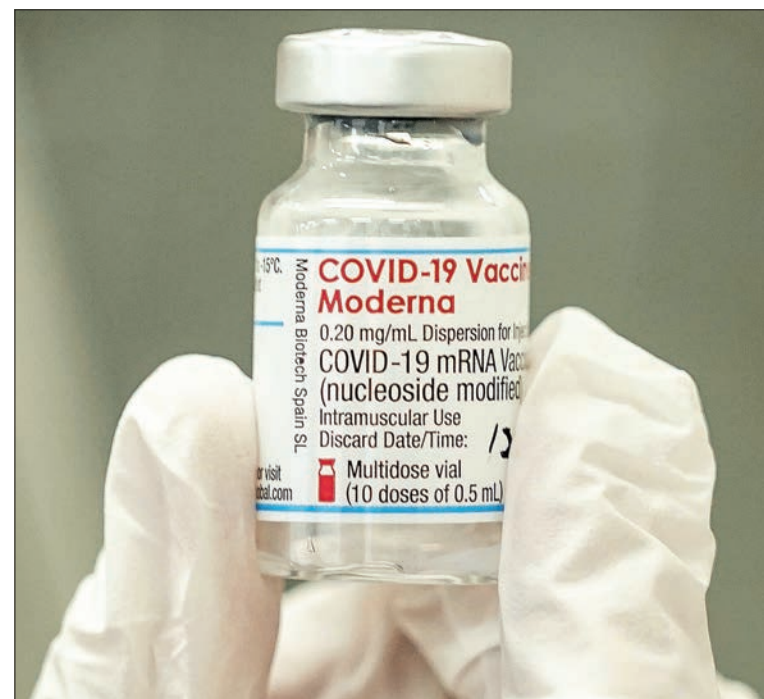
Takeda has requested an emergency probe by Moderna, while urging medical institutions

and other entities not to administer any of the vaccine showing abnormalities, even doses not subject to the suspension.

The Japanese company added it will make efforts to prevent the suspension from affecting the availability of coronavirus vaccine doses in the country.

The problem came to light at a time when Japan is struggling to contain a spike in coronavirus infections, with the government announcing a plan Wednesday to place eight more prefectures under its COVID-19 state of emergency. While vaccinations against COVID-19 are under way in Japan, the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus has sent daily reported cases surging in many parts of the country.

SOURCE: Kyodo



This file photo shows a vial of COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc., taken on 24 May 2021, in Aichi Prefecture, central Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Thursday 26 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 27 August, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Magway Region, scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay Regions, fairly widespread in Ayeyawady Region and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7 - 9) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (4-7) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of increase of rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 August, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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LED streetlights contribute to insect population declines: study

STREETLIGHTS — particularly those that use white light-emitting diodes (LEDs) — not only disrupt insect behaviour but are also a culprit behind their declining numbers, a new study carried out in southern England showed Wednesday.

Artificial lights at night had been identified as a possible factor behind falling insect populations around the world, but the topic had been under-researched.

To address the question, scientists compared 26 roadside sites consisting of either hedges or grass verges that were lit by streetlights, against an equal number of nearly identical sites

that were unlit.

They also examined a site with one unlit and two lit sections, all of which were similar in their vegetation.

The team chose moth caterpillars as a proxy for nocturnal insects more broadly, because they remain within a few metres of where they hatched during the larval stage of their lives, before they acquire the ability to fly.

The team either struck the hedges with sticks so that the caterpillars fell out, or swept the grass with nets to pick them up.

The results were eye-opening, with a 47 per cent reduction in insect population at the hedge-row sites and 37 per cent reduc-

tion at the roadside grassy areas.

“We were really quite taken aback by just how stark it was,” lead author Douglas Boyes, of the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, told AFP, adding the team had expected a more modest decline of around 10 per cent.

“We consider it most likely that it’s due to females, mums, not laying eggs in these areas,” he said.

The lighting also disturbed their feeding behaviour: when the team weighed the caterpillars, they found that those in the lighted areas were heavier.

Boyes said the team interpreted that as the caterpillars not knowing how to respond to



Artificial lights at night had been identified as a possible factor behind falling insect populations around the world, but the topic had been under-researched. **PHOTO: WWW.DOUGLASBOYES.CO.UK/AFP**

the unfamiliar situation that runs counter to the conditions they evolved in over millions of years, and feeding more as a result to rush through their development. — AFP ■

Spain’s Mar Menor lagoon ‘paradise’ spits out tonnes of dead fish



‘Politicians you let the Mar Menor die’ proclaims a banner on the beach. **PHOTO: AFP**

FIVE tonnes of fish and crustaceans have washed ashore over the past 10 days at Spain’s Mar Menor, once a lagoon paradise that is slowly dying from agricultural pollution.

The sparkling saltwaters have spat out millions of dead or dying sea creatures on to sandy beaches which have long drawn

tourists to the southeast.

Images of dying fish forcing their heads above the surface, gasping for oxygen alongside baskets piled high with countless dead creatures have traumatized the Murcia region, raising urgent questions about the Mar Menor’s future.

On Monday, regional offi-

cialists said they had removed 4.5-5.0 tonnes of remains but huge numbers of sea creatures are still dying.

“The worst-ever wildlife death toll in the Mar Menor is not yet over,” the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) tweeted on Wednesday.

“It’s a terrible situation,” said Pedro Garcia, director of regional conservation organization ANSE, who feared the death toll could be twice that given by the authorities. Beneath the calm of one of Europe’s largest saltwater lagoons — 135 square kilometres (52 square miles) separated from the Mediterranean by a 22-kilometre sandbar — a toxic storm has been brewing as a result of years of nutrient pollution from intensive agriculture.

“I haven’t been able to swim here for three years with this horrible stench,” a woman on the beach told Spain’s RTVE public television.—AFP ■

Shellfish! How men hogged seafood in ancient Roman city hit by Vesuvius

A team of archeologists examining the remains of victims from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD have discovered coastal people of the time ate far more fish than modern Italians, with men getting more of the high-status food than women.

The researchers, led by a team at the University of York, analyzed amino acids — the building blocks of proteins — in 17 adult skeletons excavated from the city of Herculaneum, a popular seaside resort that remained buried under volcanic ash until the 18th century.

By studying the ratio of carbon and nitrogen isotopes of the amino acids and applying a statistical model, they were able to differentiate between food groups with a new level of precision, the team wrote in the journal *Science Advances* on Wednesday.

Lead author and PhD stu-

dent Silvia Soncin told AFP that Herculaneum provided an “extraordinary population” to study historic diets because the natural disaster gives archeologists a snapshot in time.

“Cemeteries are usually used over a certain period, we’re talking about hundreds of years, and the food sources may have changed because of changing climate or different trade routes,” she said.

Though Herculaneum and nearby Pompeii were destroyed by the volcano, most inhabitants managed to escape in time, senior author Oliver Craig, a professor of bioarcheology told AFP. The 11 men and six women studied by the team were picked at random from 340 people who died on the beach and from nine adjacent fornici — stone chambers for boats — where they had sought shelter from the pyroclastic flow.— AFP ■

From the shadows: the secret, threatened lives of bats

It could be a scene from a bad horror movie: Torchlights slice through the darkness inside a church in western France as the building echoes with the shrieks of hundreds of bats.

But these creatures of the night are scaring no one.

They are having their annual check-up, as scientists try to unravel the secrets of an animal whose fiendish reputation

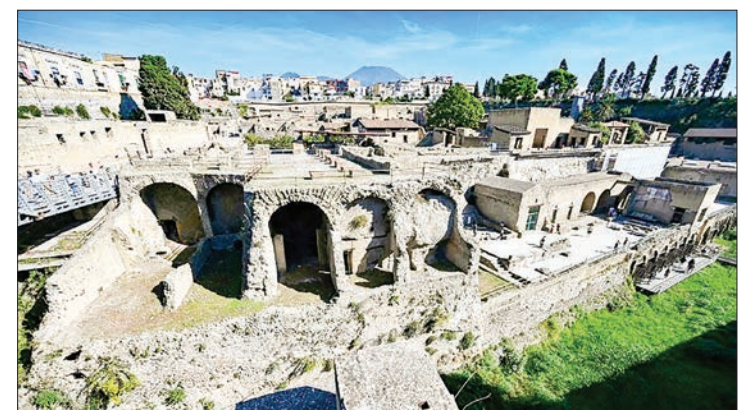
has eclipsed its many gifts to the world.

Dozens of Greater Mouse-eared bats are passed from hand to hand — gloved to avoid a bite — by volunteers and scientists in Saint Martin’s church at Noyal-Muzillac, in Brittany.

Each bat is painstakingly examined, its sex, height and weight noted, its blood taken, teeth checked for wear, trans-

lucent wings stretched out and inspected.

A male pup, born just a few weeks ago in the church rafters, is hanging upside down by its claws in a tube placed on a weighing scale: 19.7 grammes (0.7 ounces). Once the physical assessment is finished, the latest addition to the colony is implanted with a tag, no bigger than a grain of rice.—AFP ■



A general view shows the archaeological site of Herculaneum in Ercolano, near Naples, with the Mount Vesuvius volcano in the background. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Scars of Papua conflict weigh on Indonesia's vaccine drive

"WILLIAM" is refusing to take a coronavirus vaccine because he fears Indonesia's military will use the country's inoculation programme to poison him and wipe out his fellow Papuans.

Decades of conflict, racism and human rights abuses are fuelling Covid conspiracy theories among his neighbours at a time when their breakaway region is facing a renewed threat from the pandemic.

"I won't take a vaccine if it's brought here by Indonesia," William, who asked not to use his real name, told AFP.

He said that he would gladly sign up for any dose administered directly by the World Health Organization.

"But (many people) here are worried that if the jabs come through Indonesia they'll be re-

placed with some other chemical substance that will kill us," he added.

There is no evidence of a genocidal plan by Indonesia, which has drafted the armed forces to help run a nationwide vaccination drive, including in Papua.

But a widespread hatred of the military runs deep in the region, located on the eastern edge of the Southeast Asian archipelago nation and just north of Australia.

Security forces have been accused of committing atrocities against Papuan civilians during decades of fighting between a rebel independence movement and government troops.

Much of this conflict has centred around William's hometown of Timika, near the world's big-



Decades of conflict, racism and human rights abuses are fuelling Covid vaccine conspiracy theories in Papua at a time when the breakaway region is facing a renewed threat from the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

gest gold mine -- a potent symbol for Papuans of the region's exploitation and environmental devastation.

'Trauma of violence'

Indonesia, as with many

countries, has found its efforts to fight the pandemic hamstrung by both limited vaccine supplies and hesitancy driven by the spread of online disinformation.

The spread of unfounded

rumours in Papua mirrors a similar phenomenon across the border in Papua New Guinea, an independent nation with stronger cultural and historical ties to Papua than the rest of Indonesia.

Social media posts there falsely claimed to show evidence of locals being forcibly vaccinated in a mass medical trial, and even suggested that the vaccine campaign as part of a racial genocide plot.

Papua's long history of conflict and mistrust has created a wide audience for fearful rumours.

"The conflict has been going on for so long (that)... whatever the central government is doing will appear suspicious," said Adriana Elisabeth, a Papua expert at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences.—AFP ■

New Australian virus cases soar over 1,000 for first time



More than half of Australia's 25 million people are stuck in lockdown as a fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak continues to surge. PHOTO: AFP

AUSTRALIA on Thursday reported more than 1,000 new local coronavirus cases for the first time during the pandemic, as a Delta variant outbreak surged in Sydney. New South Wales

state, which includes the country's most populous city Sydney, announced a record 1,029 cases of Covid-19 for the previous 24 hours. An outbreak that began in the city in mid-June has reached

over 15,000 cases and spread to smaller towns and cities, prompting the return of lockdowns and travel restrictions across Australia's populated southeast.

Despite the soaring figures

and growing pressure on hospitals, state premier Gladys Berejiklian announced a modest easing of restrictions for vaccinated people from mid-September. Up to five fully vaccinated people will be allowed to gather outdoors in non-hotspot areas after New South Wales hit a target of six million jabs in a population of about eight million. "That was the option that met the mental health and wellbeing of our community but also provided the lowest risk setting," Berejiklian said. She said the health system was able to cope with the added strain after capacity was boosted, pledging that "everybody who needs help will get that help".

It came as authorities extended stay-at-home orders for the rest of New South Wales to September 10, as concerns grew over rising cases in regional areas that deputy premier John Barilaro described as "a tinderbox ready to explode".—AFP ■

Rising infections in Norway

Covid-19 infections are rising rapidly in Norway, with over 1,000 new cases in the last 24 hours. Bergen reported 94 new infected individuals on Wednesday and more than half of those infected are young people aged 18-23. 18 cases in Bergen cannot be traced back, while 74 are close contacts and two are infections following stays abroad.

Asked whether he feared the first week of school may be a reason for the high numbers, Egil Bovim, Chief physician for infection prevention said: "We see that a not insignificant proportion of those infected are from the first week of school."

"I have to say I'm worried now, yes, I am. We need to see what we can do to bring these numbers down and to bring in the right measures that can do it", he added.— AFP ■

Ardern defends virus elimination policy

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern defended her "Covid zero" elimination strategy Thursday amid fears an outbreak of the highly transmissible Delta variant has rendered the previously successful policy ineffective.

A Delta case emerged in Auckland last week, ending a six-month run without local transmission in New Zealand,

one of the world's last Covid-free zones.

That infection has since ballooned into the largest cluster the country has recorded throughout the entire pandemic, with 277 cases.

Ardern said she believed even the Delta strain could again be stamped out in the community and health experts were advising her to stick with

the elimination approach.

"In their view, it's not only possible, it remains the best strategy and I totally agree," she said Thursday after announcing 68 new community cases.

Her Australian counterpart Scott Morrison this week said it was "just absurd" to try to eliminate Delta, adding: "New Zealand can't do that."—AFP ■



A public health information sign on a beach in Auckland. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/STEVETODD/AFP

Biden and tech bosses talk cybersecurity after ransomware attacks

PRESIDENT Joe Biden gathered Wednesday with business and government leaders to discuss improving cybersecurity following high-profile attacks that raised questions about the vulnerability of so-called critical infrastructure.

Biden and key cabinet officials hosted chief executives of Apple, Google, Amazon and Microsoft, along with leaders from the finance and utilities sectors.

The gathering comes after hacks and data breaches that have targeted a major US oil pipeline, a meatpacking company and the Microsoft Exchange email system, as well as ransomware attacks hitting various sectors. "I've invited you all here today because you have the power and the capacity and responsibility, I believe, to raise the bar on cybersecurity," Biden said.

After the talks, major tech companies, including three global leaders in cloud computing, announced training programmes and investments in cybersecurity.

Microsoft, for example, plans to inject \$20 billion into its



Apple CEO Tim Cook attends a meeting with US President Joe Biden on how to improve cybersecurity. **PHOTO: AFP**

cybersecurity efforts over five years, as well as "\$150 million to help US government agencies upgrade protections", according to a tweet from CEO Satya Nadella. Amazon promised in a statement to make its security training for employees available to the general public, and Google said it will invest \$10 billion over five years to help "secure the software supply chain".

The latest attacks, which affected Microsoft email servers and the widely deployed SolarWinds security software, raise

questions about protecting 16 "critical infrastructure" sectors including energy, utilities, defence, food and manufacturing.

Some analysts have called for tougher sanctions against Russia and other countries accused of harbouring cybercriminals. Others have suggested more scrutiny of cryptocurrency, which is used by hackers to collect ransomware.

A senior administration official told journalists the meeting would focus on "concrete" measures to improve security.—AFP

US manufactured goods orders dip in July



US manufacturing orders slipped in July but spending on motor vehicles and parts rose. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SPENDING on big-ticket US manufactured goods dipped slightly in July, but was held up by a surge in demand from the defence sector, according to government data released Wednesday.

After two months of increases, durable goods orders slipped 0.1 per cent compared to June to \$257.2 billion, the Commerce

Department reported, a smaller decline than analysts were projecting.

Orders from the military prevented a much bigger drop in the total, with a 20.5 per cent increase in defense capital goods orders and a smaller rise in aircraft.

Without the defence sector, total new orders fell 1.2 per cent,

the report said.

Meanwhile, the transportation sector retreated as nondefence aircraft orders plunged, though spending on motor vehicles and parts rose.

Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics noted that the data "were hit by a sharp drop in net orders for Boeing aircraft — which are trending higher but are wildly volatile".

But, he said, "Businesses are sitting on record cash piles, so we expect capital goods orders to run hot for some time yet."

Excluding aircraft and other transportation, which tend to swing wildly, orders actually increased 0.7 per cent — far more than the consensus forecast.

"Supply side headwinds are showing some tentative signs of easing, but it'll take a long time to return to pre-Covid conditions," said Oren Klachkin of Oxford Economics.—AFP

S. Korea hikes interest rates for first time since before pandemic

SOUTH Korea on Thursday became one of the first major economies to hike interest rates following the coronavirus pandemic, as authorities try to rein in growing household debt and a frenzied housing market.

The central Bank of Korea raised its key rate to 0.75 per cent from a record low 0.5 per cent — where it had been since May 2020 — with officials asserting the economy was experiencing a "sound recovery".

A few countries have begun to lift borrowing costs, among them Brazil, Russia, Chile and Mexico, and investors around the world are watching closely for when the US Federal Reserve will start to taper its huge stimulus programmes.

It was its first rate rise since November 2018 and came

as authorities in the world's 12th-largest economy grapple with surging household debt and an overheated housing market, which analysts warn could threaten economic stability.

South Korea's household debt rose 41.2 trillion won (\$35.3 billion) during the April-June period to a record high 1,806 trillion won, roughly equivalent to the country's GDP.

"Household loan growth has accelerated and housing prices have continued to increase rapidly in all parts of the country," the BOK said in a statement.

The country has continued "sound recovery", it said, adding that "exports have sustained their buoyancy and facilities investment has shown a robust trend".—AFP



South Korea has raised interest rates for the first time since the start of the pandemic as it tries to rein in growing household debt. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Asian markets struggle as traders turn focus to Powell speech

ASIAN markets mostly fell Thursday as hopes for the global recovery and signs of a possible slowdown in new virus infections play off against China's regulatory clampdown and the prospect of an end to Federal Reserve largesse.

Equities and oil have by and large enjoyed a positive week, helped by full US approval of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine and speculation the Fed will take its time in removing its ultra-loose monetary policy whenever it begins to do so.

However, while Wall Street continued to chalk up new records, Asian investors shifted a little more cautiously as they assessed the outlook.

Top of the agenda this week is Fed boss Jerome Powell's speech Friday to the Jackson Hole symposium of central

bankers and economists, which will be closely followed for any indication about its policy plans in light of rising inflation and the economic rebound.

The bank is widely expected to begin easing back on its vast bond-buying programme by the end of the year, though the spread of the Delta variant and its impact on growth has some observers and even hawkish Fed members rethinking the wisdom of doing so.

Analysts said the speed and timing of a pullback could be crucial.

"When the Fed actually announces the taper, it will likely also give some degree of information on what pace it will take and how flexible or inflexible they want to be with the process," Guneet Dhingra, at Morgan Stanley, said.—AFP

Malaysia's business confidence weakens in Q3 due to pandemic

MALAYSIA'S businesses are more pessimistic towards their business condition in the third quarter of 2021 due to the severe and prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, an official survey showed Thursday. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) said in its Business Tendency Report that the confidence indicator further dipped to minus 21.3 per cent in the reference quarter as against minus 3.1 per cent in the preceding quarter. "Within the sectors covered, all sectors anticipate unfavorable business conditions for the third

quarter of 2021 in light of severe and prolonged COVID-19 pandemic in this country," it said. According to DOSM, the confidence indicator of the wholesale and retail trade sector plunged to a negative trajectory with minus 39.4 per cent as compared to 5.6 per cent in the second quarter of 2021. Meanwhile, the industry and services sectors indicated more pessimism with confidence indicators dropping to minus 11.0 per cent and minus 22.8 per cent respectively in the third quarter, from minus



The industry and services sectors of Malaysia indicated more pessimism with confidence indicators dropping to minus 11.0 per cent and minus 22.8 per cent respectively in the third quarter, from minus 1.5 per cent and minus 6.1 per cent recorded in the previous quarter. PHOTO: WORLD BANK/XINHUA

1.5 per cent and minus 6.1 per cent recorded in the previous quarter.

Concurrently, the construction sector also anticipates their busi-

ness situation to recede in this reference quarter with minus 45.0 per cent

as against minus 30.5 per cent recorded in the past quarter.—Xinhua ■

Hankyu Hanshin Properties engaged in 3 housing projects in Thailand



Photo shows townhouses under construction as part of the Thepharak project in Samut Prakan Province in Thailand. PHOTO: HANKYU HANSHIN PROPERTIES CORP./ NNA/KYODO

HANKYU Hanshin Properties Corp. is engaged in three housing projects for condominiums and townhouses in Thailand jointly with local developer Sena

Development Public Co. The projects involve building 1,140 units in the Ladkrabang district and 500 units in the Sai Mai district, both in Bangkok,

and 630 units in Samut Prakan Province in the capital's eastern suburbs, according to Hankyu Hanshin Properties. The Osaka-based company said the housing complexes, all for sale, are scheduled to be completed by 2023. The construction of townhouses will be finished in stages from later this year. The Ladkrabang complex is located near the Ladkrabang Industrial Estate, east of Bangkok city centre, where demand is expected from employees at the industrial park. The project in the Sai Mai district is under way at a site close to Don Mueang

International Airport. Its location is northeast of central Bangkok and a 10-minute walk from Sai Yud station on the Bangkok mass transit system's Sukhumvit Line. Hankyu Hanshin Properties counts airport employees as among potential buyers for the units, which are made up solely of condos, and which are being developed as the "Saphanmai" project. The Thepharak project in Samut Prakan Province is anticipated to arouse interest from those who work at the nearby Bangplee Industrial Estate.—Kyodo ■

FAA opens Boeing safety review amid reports of pressure

US air safety regulators will open a review of operations at Boeing after feedback from inspectors assigned to provide oversight for the government showed many feel unable to share their concerns.

The findings have echoes of the issues surrounding the aviation giant's 737 MAX, which suffered two crashes in 2018 and 2019 that claimed 346 lives and led to a 20-month grounding of the aircraft.

In the wake of the tragedies, Boeing and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) came under intense scrutiny from Congress and the public for their close relationship during the airplane manufacturing process that some viewed as undermining safety oversight.—AFP ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
 ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION ENTERPRISE
 GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR POWER PROJECTS
 IN MYANMAR

(Tender No. EPGE PV 02/2021-2022)

In accordance with section 8 2 "AMENDMENTS" of Request for Proposals RFP of **EPGE PV 02/2021-2022**, EPGE herewith would like to announce that Bid Submission Date shall be amended as **1st October 2021** and the Addendum No.2 shall be issued.

Australia's Qantas posts fresh losses after 'diabolical' year

AUSTRALIAN airline Qantas on Thursday posted more than US\$1 billion in annual losses, after what it described as a "diabolical" year caused by pandemic travel restrictions.

The national flag carrier reported Aus\$1.83 billion (US\$1.33 billion) in underlying pre-tax losses for the 12 months to 30 June, rising to Aus\$2.35 billion (US\$1.7 billion) when including one-off costs such as redundancy payouts and mothballing aircraft.

It comes on top of almost US\$2 billion in statutory pre-tax losses reported in the previous financial year; when airlines globally were hit with the initial impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Qantas CEO Alan Joyce predicted the airline's revenues will have plunged more than Aus\$20 billion (US\$14.5 billion) by the end of 2021 as a result of Covid-19.

"This loss shows the impact that a full year of



Qantas, like airlines around the world, has been hard hit by travel restrictions due to the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

closed international borders and more than 330 days of domestic travel

restrictions had on the national carrier," he said in a statement.—AFP ■

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Mysterious 'Havana' syndrome imperils US diplomats



US Vice-President Kamala Harris delayed her arrival in Hanoi after reports that US diplomats in the Viet Nam capital may have experienced the mysterious illness dubbed "Havana Syndrome". **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

A mysterious affliction dubbed "Havana Syndrome" that has brought severe headaches, nausea and possible brain damage to US diplomats has many officials convinced they are under sustained attack using electronic weapons.

On Tuesday, US Vice-President Kamala Harris delayed for several hours a trip to Viet Nam after the US embassy in Hanoi reported a possible case involving "acoustic incidents" there, raising concern she could be a target.

Ultimately Harris did go to Hanoi, and the State Department said it was investigating a case of what the US government officially dubs an "anomalous health incident" or AHI.

It was the most recent of dozens of such cases reported by US diplomats and intelligence officers since 2016, first in Cuba, then in China, Germany, Australia, Taiwan and in Washington itself.

In July, the New Yorker magazine reported there have been dozens of cases among US officials in Vienna, Austria since the beginning of 2021.

Amid concerns a powerful rival, possibly Russia, is mounting the attacks, the State Department has warned its thousands of diplomats of the threat while also carrying out extensive medical checks on those heading abroad so as to better measure any effects of future attacks. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia critic Navalny gives first interview from jail

JAILED Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny has given his first interview from prison, comparing it to a Chinese labour camp and saying he is forced to watch eight hours of state television a day.

Navalny, who built his political career on exposing corruption in Russia, is being held in a maximum security prison colony in Pokrov, 100 kilometres (60 miles) east of Moscow.

He told The New York Times the days of heavy labour in Soviet gulags were over -- replaced by what he called the "psychological violence" of brainwashing and propaganda.

"You might imagine tattooed muscle men with steel teeth carrying on with knife fights to take the best cot by the window," Navalny was quoted as saying in the interview, published Wednesday.

"You need to imagine something like a Chinese labour camp, where everybody marches in a line and where video cameras are hung everywhere. There is constant control and a culture of snitching."

He said guards monitored them as they watched hours of state propaganda, not allowing them to read or write and waking inmates up if they fell asleep.—AFP ■

What is the Islamic State threat in Afghanistan?

AS desperate Afghans crowd Kabul airport trying to get on any evacuation flights to flee the Taliban, officials have warned of another jihadist threat: the Islamic State group. President Joe Biden said there is "an acute and growing risk" of an attack at the airport by the group's regional chapter, called Islamic State-Khorasan or ISIS-K. The United States, Britain and Australia have told people to leave the area for safer locations. When asked directly about the threat, a Taliban spokesman acknowledged a risk of "nuisances" causing trouble in a chaotic situation they blamed entirely on the US-led evacuation.

What is Islamic State-Khorasan?

Months after the Islamic State declared a caliphate in Iraq and Syria in 2014, breakaway fighters from the Pakistani Taliban joined militants in Afghanistan to form a regional chapter, pledging allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The group was formally acknowledged by the central Islamic State leadership the next year as it sunk roots in northeastern Afghanistan, particularly Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan provinces.—AFP ■

The New York landfill site home to 9/11 debris, human remains

FOR some, the hill represents New York's resilience; for others it's a gaping wound. Beneath it lies debris, mixed with human remains, from the 9/11 attacks.

The site at Fresh Kills on Staten Island was the largest open-air dump in the world until it closed in March 2001. Today it's a source of consternation for some victims' families.

After al-Qaeda hijackers reduced the Twin Towers to piles of steel and concrete, the site was reopened so that rubble from the World Trade Centre could be sent there.

The first trucks arrived the night of 11 September 2001 itself and for ten months, Dennis Diggins led efforts to sift through



Diane and Kurt Horning, who lost their son Matthew in the 9/11 attacks, are seen at the Empty Sky 9/11 Memorial in Jersey City, New Jersey. **PHOTO: AFP**

600,000 tonnes of debris from "Ground Zero".

"I don't know what it would be like if I had a family member.

But I can tell you that the material has been treated with the utmost respect," he recalls 20 years later.—AFP ■

Western nations warn of terror threat at Kabul airport

WESTERN nations warned their citizens Thursday to immediately leave the surrounds of Kabul airport over a terrorist threat, as thousands of people try to reach a dwindling number of evacuation flights.

Nearly 90,000 Afghans and foreigners have fled Afghanistan via the US-led airlift since the hardline Islamist Taliban movement took control of the country on 15 August. Huge crowds are



Over 80,000 people have been evacuated since 14 August, but huge crowds remain outside Kabul airport hoping to flee the threat of reprisals and repression in Taliban-led Afghanistan. **PHOTO: US AIR FORCE/AFP/FILE**

gathered in and around the airport, becoming increasingly desperate as some foreign nations cease flights ahead of Tuesday's

deadline by President Joe Biden to end the evacuations and withdraw the US troops overseeing it.—AFP ■

Post-Merkel German election a nailbiter in final stretch

THE race to choose German Chancellor Angela Merkel's successor has shaped up as the most suspenseful since her rise to power 16 years ago, signalling a potentially turbulent new political era in Europe's top economy.

With a month to go until the 26 September vote, Merkel's conservative CDU-CSU bloc and their current junior partners in government, the Social Democrats, are running neck-and-neck, with the ecologist Greens close behind.

That leaves wide open the question of who will steer the EU's most populous nation after the widely trusted Merkel retires

from politics.

With the Afghanistan debacle triggering a crisis of confidence in the West and the climate emergency demanding urgent action, Germany may well be tied up for months to come with a messy struggle to form a coalition government under a new chancellor.

"It is only now dawning on many people that Merkel is leaving the stage," Ursula Muench, director of the Academy for Political Education, near Munich, told AFP.

"Of course the candidates are being judged in comparison to her -- they're big shoes to fill."

'Tide has turned'

The frontrunner by a whisker according to most polls remains Armin Laschet, the affable but gaffe-prone premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, and head of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union. The veteran leader sought to lend some of her enduring star power to Laschet at a joint campaign event in Berlin last weekend, calling him a "bridge-builder" and saying she was "deeply convinced" of his abilities. Voters, however, do not appear to share her confidence.

After Laschet emerged from a bare-knuckle battle within the



Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union leader Armin Laschet is the frontrunner to succeed Angela Merkel as Chancellor. PHOTO: AFP

conservative bloc as the candidate in April, many Germans reacted sceptically to what they

saw as his inconsistent strategy to confront the pandemic. —AFP ■

Israeli PM promises 'new spirit' in Biden meeting



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett says Iran will be focus of his visit. PHOTO: POOL/AFP

ISRAELI Prime Minister Naftali Bennett meets Thursday with President Joe Biden at the White House to urge pressure on Iran's

nuclear programme and to shore up bipartisan support for Israel. Bennett told reporters ahead of his first state visit that Biden

was "an old and true friend of the State of Israel".

The 49-year-old leader took office in June as head of an ideologically divided coalition in which his hawkish party holds only a handful of seats.

"There is a new administration in the US and a new government in Israel, and I am bringing with me from Jerusalem a new spirit of cooperation," Bennett said. Dan Kurtzer, former US ambassador to Israel, told AFP that Bennett's visit would set a new tone after 12 straight years of Benjamin Netanyahu, a close ally of Biden's tempestuous predecessor Donald Trump. "Netanyahu believed that he knew better than the president with whom

he was dealing, what the United States should do," Kurtzer said. By contrast, with Bennett, "even if there are differences on policy, which there will be, the two will be able to talk without this overlay of disrespect."

Resuming nuclear deal 'mistake'

Bennett says Iran will be the focus of his visit.

Speaking to Secretary of State Antony Blinken Wednesday, Bennett said he hoped for "cooperation and goodwill" with Americans, primarily in "how do we fend off and curtail Iran's pursuit to dominate the region and its race to a nuclear weapon."

Israel fiercely opposes Bid-

en's attempt to reverse Trump's withdrawal from a 2015 nuclear deal that lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme. Since Trump's move, Iran has itself withdrawn from key commitments including on uranium enrichment. On Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz told diplomats he was also sure Iran directly attacked an oil tanker managed by a company owned by an Israeli businessman in late July, killing two crew members. Bennett has said he will present Biden with "an orderly plan" to restrain the Iranians, hinting Israel could leverage its new ties with Arab nations thanks to the US-brokered Abraham Accords.—AFP ■

Shell-shocked survivors describe brutal Tigray rebel advance

AFTER seizing the farming village in northern Ethiopia, the rebels roamed the streets searching for young, able-bodied men who had fought alongside government forces.

Anyone with a militia ID was a suspect. So were men with marks on their shoulders left by rifle straps, even though it is common for farmers in Ethiopia's Amhara region -- militia fighters or not -- to carry Kalashnikovs.

Before the day was over, the rebels had fatally shot two men in their homes and marched a third to a nearby river where they fired rounds into his back, according to 49-year-old Adisse Wonde, who

told AFP he buried all three.

"They want to suppress and rule us. Their deed is ethnic cleansing," Adisse said of the rebels who hail from Ethiopia's northernmost region of Tigray.

The alleged killings earlier this month in the village of Hara are just one example of gruesome abuses described by witnesses of Ethiopia's widening war.

Long confined to Tigray, the conflict has recently spread to two neighbouring regions, Afar and Amhara, with heavy weapons fire killing an untold number of civilians and displacing hundreds of thousands more.—AFP ■

Many didn't make it': Haitian migrants' traumatic journey to Panama

WHEN Moise Cliff Raymond arrives at the Tuquesa River, he plunges in to wash off the filth from trekking five days through the perilous Darien Gap jungle in order to cross the Colombian border into Panama.

The Haitian and his companions, who have just arrived at Bajo Chiquito -- the first community on the Panama side -- are covered in mud after the previous night's heavy rain.

"The journey was very hard because it's a long walk," said the 29-year-old, wearing a rastacap.

"There are many dead, people who didn't make it this far."

While Raymond walked, other migrants who had spare cash or children chose to hire a canoe



Migrants queue up to register their official entry into Panama at the village of Bajo Chiquito, close to the border with Colombia. PHOTO: AFP

taxi to take them to the village's small port.

Another Haitian, Peter,

struggled into one of the canoes while holding onto his three-year-old daughter.—AFP ■

Myanmar fighter Tial Thang promises his fight going to end with a finish



Tial Thang is ready to fight against South Korean fighter Song Min Jong at ONE: BATTLEGROUND III event in Singapore tonight. **PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**

UNDEFEATED Myanmar MMA bantamweight fighter Tial Thang has promised that his fight for tonight would end with a finish, during a recent interview with ONE Championship.

Tial Thang will return for his next challenge against South Korean fighter Song Min Jong at ONE: BATTLEGROUND III, which will launch at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore tonight.

“I worked really, real-

ly hard for this camp, and I’ve been in a fight camp since February. So, if you think about it, how long did it take? You know, I sacrificed a lot, and I have not seen my kids or my wife since February.

I sacrificed a lot for this fight, and it’s going to show. It’s going to show on fight night, and it’s going to be fireworks. I promise you guys – it’s going to end with a finish”, Tial Thang said.

“I believe he was a

Road FC Flyweight Champion. So, of course, if you went to a five-round fight, and you’re a champion of some organization, I give you respect. I respect that a lot.

“I think he has good striking. He’s fast, and his grappling is also decent. I don’t see his weaknesses so much, so I cannot wait to find out my skill set with this type of opponent.

“I’ve been looking forward to this type of fight. He’s coming forward. I’m coming forward. In my past three fights, I feel like [my opponents] were running away a little bit, so I had to chase them down. And I don’t see that going into this fight. I think he’s going to come forward, I’m going to go forward, and we’re going to collide in the middle of that Circle. “I’m going to pressure. I’m going to go in there and block his shots, hit him back with three-pieces, four-pieces, whatever, take him down, ground-and-pound. Whatever it takes,” Tial Thang added. — GNLM

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.

Ugandan teen Kukundakwe looks to change attitudes after Paralympic debut

TEENAGE Ugandan swimmer Husnah Kukundakwe said she felt like she could “touch the clouds” after making her Paralympic debut Thursday -- and hopes it could change attitudes towards disability in Africa.

Fourteen-year-old Kukundakwe, the youngest athlete at the Tokyo Games, swam in the women’s SB8 100m breaststroke, finishing sixth in her heat. The Games are being shown on free-to-air broadcast in 49 African territories thanks to an International Paralympic Committee initiative, and Kukundakwe hopes her race could have a transformative effect.

“Africa in general will learn that people with disabilities are just like normal people, and they need to do whatever they

want to do,” she said.

“I feel like I could even touch the clouds because I’m the youngest here, and just seeing how the others are doing and swimming with them is such an amazing experience.”

Kukundakwe said babies born with disabilities in Uganda are often abandoned by their parents, and she hoped the Paralympics would make them realize “the choice they made was really bad”. “Maybe giving these kids a chance, when they see that they’re different from other people and they realize that they want to do something, sport can help them raise their confidence,” she said.

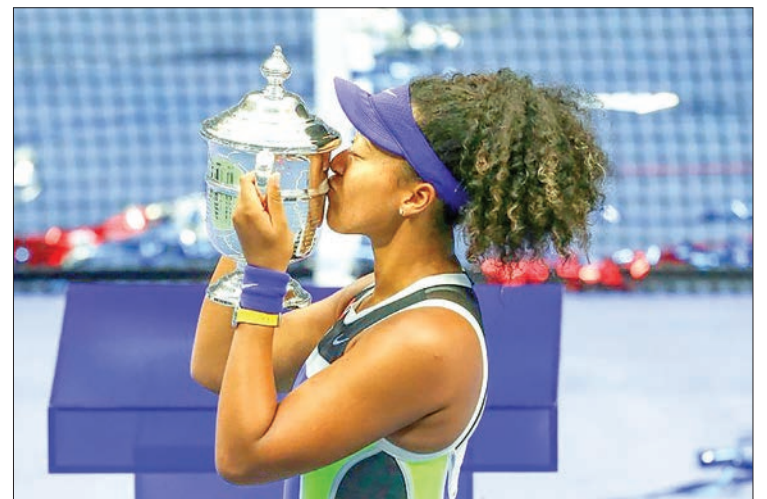
Kukundakwe was born without her right forearm and also has an impairment to her left hand.— AFP ■

Osaka defends US Open crown with Barty leading top rivals

DEFENDING champion Naomi Osaka seeks her third US Open title in four tries as the year’s final Grand Slam begins Monday with top-ranked Wimbledon winner Ashleigh Barty leading a host of rivals. What’s uncertain is whether New York will see Osaka rediscover the dominant form that saw her win the past two Grand Slam events she played to the finish. The 23-year-old Japanese star lit the flame in the Olympic cauldron at the Tokyo Games, but has played only two matches since Japan ahead of the Open.

“I know there are a lot of things I need to fix within my game, so in a weird way I’m kind of glad that I lost, because there are so many things that I want to fix before New York,” Osaka said.

“I feel like my level is not that far off... if I want to keep being more positive with myself, I



Japan’s Naomi Osaka hopes to celebrate her third title in four attempts at this year’s US Open, which starts Monday in New York. **PHOTO: AFP**

need to think about the things that I could improve on. There are definitely a lot of things.” Osaka pulled out of the French Open after being fined for not talking to reporters after her first match, saying it hurt her mental health. She then skipped

Wimbledon but spoke with the media after matches in her US Open tuneup at Cincinnati. “I felt like it was something I needed to do for myself,” Osaka said. “I’m proud of what I did and I think it was something that needed to be done.—AFP ■