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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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MoC allows import process of anti-COVID-19 equipment during public holidays

A lorry carrying liquid oxygen, imported through the Myawady land border, is seen as part of the efforts to fulfil the oxygen requirement. **PHOTO: MNA**

FOR quick and easy import of anti-COVID-19 equipment, including liquid oxygen, oxygen gas, and oxygen concentrators, medicines and related medical equipment, the Ministry of Commerce allows is allowing regular import activities at the international airport, seaport and border trade posts, including Muse, Myawady, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and Kawthoung from 26 July to 1 August that are designated as public holidays.

Officials from the relevant departments are cooperating to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures including online registration for the import process during the long public holidays.

On 25 July, 2,671 oxygen concentrators, 5 oxygen Generators and 47,293 test kits from Yangon International Airport and 3 liquid oxygen bowsers containing 58 tonnes of oxygen, 16 tonnes of the liquid oxygen (cylinders), 2,785 home oxygen concentrators, 31 tonnes of masks from Muse, Myawady, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti and Kawthoung land borders were successfully imported.

The aforementioned items were imported by 37 vehicles from 25 companies.

From 12 to 25 July, 533 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 405 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 102 tonnes of oxygen gas, 30,877 home oxygen concentrators, 245,868 test kits, 655 tonnes of masks, 4 oxygen plants and 14 oxygen Generators have been allowed to be imported by 425 vehicles as officials are giving priority to disease control of the Covid-19.

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

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.

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Chinshwehaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health and Sports
Order No 295/2021

2nd Waning of Waso 1383 ME
25 July 2021

THE Ministry of Health and Sports is exercising the rights in Article 21-(b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law to issue this order.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is continuously working on prevention measures for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and amid a surge of COVID-19 positive cases and the rapid increase of cases in Union Territory – Nay Pyi Taw, Magway Region and Shan State, stay-at-home measures are necessary for the people in some townships in Union Territory – Nay Pyi Taw, Magway Region and Shan State.
2. Therefore, people living in the following townships in Union Territory—Nay Pyi Taw, Magway Region and Shan State are included in the Stay-at-Home Programme.
   (a) Union Territory – Nay Pyi Taw
      (1) Lewe Township

   (b) Magway Region
      (1)Pwintphyu Township
      (2)Minbu Township
      (3)Aunglan Township

   (c) Shan State
      (1) Nyaungshwe Township
      (2) Taunggyi Township
      (3) Yatsauk Township

3. All people living in these Stay-at-Home townships are required to adhere to the following rules: -
   (a) Stay at home.
      (1) Employees under the governmental departments are not included.
      (2) Those in the private sector concerning banks and financial services, fuel refilling stations, food businesses and cold warehouses, pharmaceutical and medical equipment businesses, drinking water businesses, and factories producing daily hygiene products are not included.
      (3) Those in the airline industry who provide services in relief flights/cargo flights and charter flights, ground services, aircraft refueling, import/export of goods by air, international freight forwarder companies, companies and agencies that provide customs services, aircraft food production and export and aircraft maintenance.
      (4) Those who work in the private ports to provide services for cargo ships, shipping line resident representative offices, international freight forwarders, companies and agents that provide customs services/ Customs Clearance Agencies), container trucking, freight vehicles of export/import goods, shipping companies, inland container depot and dry ports are not included.
      (5) Those who work in the telecommunication service providers such as post office services, land and mobile telephony services, internet services (excluding the shops that sell telephone and data) and tower and fiber repair services are not included.
   (b) The respective state/region administration councils shall issue necessary orders and regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the raw material and cut-make-pack (CMP) factories and workplaces.
   (c) Organizations and companies to operate work from home.
   (d) Only one person per household to go outside to purchase essentials.
   (e) Only two persons per household may go outside for hospital or clinical visits.
   (f) Always wear facemasks/masks when going outside.
   (g) Allow only vehicles transporting working people and permitted vehicles may enter any township.
   (h) Within the ward, only the driver and one other person are permitted to go shopping and only the driver and two other persons are permitted to go to the hospital.
   (i) Comply with Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the smooth movement of goods from those townships.
4. If the number of people exceed the limitations mentioned in Paragraph 3-(d), (e) and (h), or for any other emergency reasons, prior notice should be given to the relevant ward administrator and they in turn must only permit the people going from and returning to the ward and not allow people from outside the ward to enter or other people within the ward to leave.
5. Failure to comply with this order will have action taken in accordance with existing laws.
6. This order takes effect as of 4 am on 26-7-2021.

Dr Thet Khaing Win
Union Minister

Suggestion of health officials needed for use of oxygen

THE Senior General highlighted the anxieties of the people upon rumours related to oxygen like some save the oxygen while some resell, the use of oxygen with the suggestion of hospitals and health officials, oxygen production rate from the oxygen plants established at public hospitals, military hospitals and factories, importation of liquid oxygen and oxygen cylinders from Thailand and China via border trade camps.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 3rd coordination meeting on COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 18 July 2021)

Oxygen Tank Station built to meet Yangon's oxygen needs

AN Oxygen Tank Station, which can produce 1,440 oxygen cylinders of 40-litre capacity per day, is under construction at the 1,000-bedded Military Hospital in Mingaladon Township of Yangon Region. It was slated for completion by the end of July.

The oxygen production process of that Oxygen Tank Station involves the storage of liquid oxygen into the oxygen tank station to produce gas oxygen.

The station can hold 50 tonnes and produce 7,500 gas oxygen cylinders (40 litres) and 60 cylinders (40 litres) per hour. It can also produce 1,440 cylinders (40 litres) during 24 hours.

The work is underway day and night to complete the construction of a 30x30 feet plinth for the Oxygen Tank and 60x40 feet Filling Station by the end of this month.

The oxygen tank foundation will be 10 feet below the ground level together with 3 feet of the plinth level. — MNA

The work is underway day and night to complete the construction of a 30x30 feet plinth for the Oxygen Tank and 60x40 feet Filling Station by the end of this month.

Covid-19 immunization programme to be continued with targeted groups

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Health and Sports, the vaccine is effective in many countries around the world to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and the vaccine programmes will soon be intensified in Myanmar.

"The previous vaccination plan will be slightly modified to keep up with the times. The number one target group is health workers, civil servants, people working in the private health sector. Among the priority groups are staff from (transport, banking, hotel and tourism), which are essential for the economic development of the country," said Dr Than Naing Soe, Director of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Depending on the availability of vaccines in high-risk areas, vaccinations will be given priority to those over the age of 60 and those with a life-threatening illness.

"All target groups will be vaccinated depending on the availability of the vaccine. All the programmes will run step by step. This year, 50 per cent of the target groups will be vaccinated as per the guidelines.

That is good news about the vaccine. We urge the public to participate in the immunization programme," Director Dr Than Naing Soe added. —Htet Lyan/GNLM

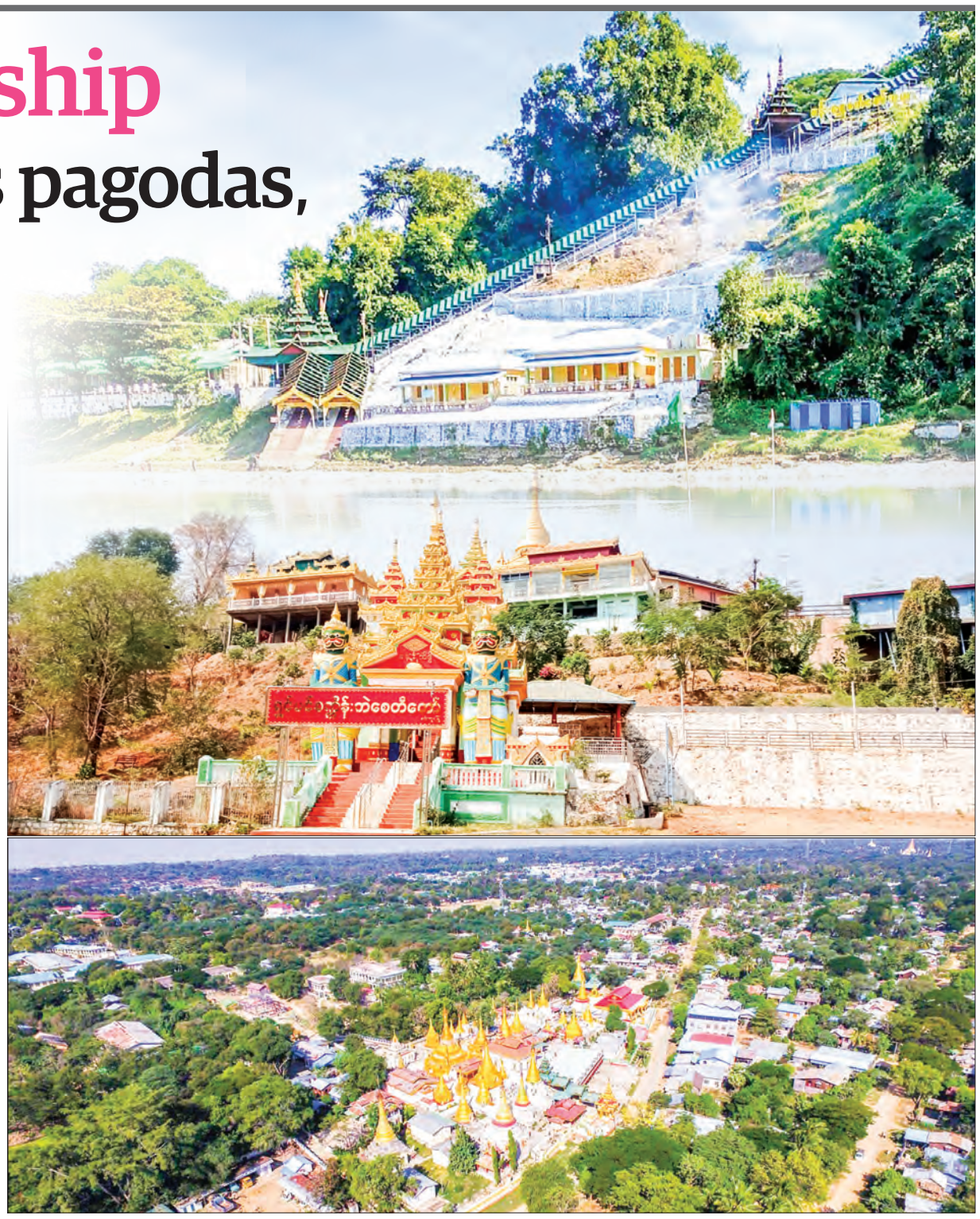
Minbu Township rich with famous pagodas, cultural heritage

MINBU Township is located in the central part of Myanmar and bounded by Ngaphe Township to the west, Ayeyawady River and Magway Township to the east, Minhla Township to the south and Pwintbyu Township to the north.

Minbu (Sagu) Township covers an area of 642.7 square miles and 68 village-tracts with 150 villages are located there. The township boasts of many cultural heritage sites and interesting places. Travellers all around the world can visit there for its good transport services.

The Shwe Set Taw pagoda beside the Mann Creek — Ahtat Set Taw Yar and Auk Set Taw Yar pagodas are located in the west of the Minbu Township while Ayeyawady River in the east, Shin Pin Sat Kein Te Pagoda in the south and Naga Pwat Taung in the west.

Similarly, Sanaku Nant Tha Kyaung Taw Yar and Kyaung Taw Yar pagoda, over 100-year-old Sagu Yoke Sone Monastery are situated in Lal Kine. Moreover, there is Shwe Myin Tin pagoda on Ajju Hata Taung in Yay Poke village where Maha Punna Monk sat in meditation for the first time and Thamudda Mya pagoda in the northeast of township where the Monk sat in meditation for the second time and Pauk Chaung and cave where the Weizza Sayadaws meditated. In the northwest of the township, we can see Shin Pin Ni cave pagodas near Pan Hlwar village where the Monk meditated for the third time in addition to Shin Minbu pagoda, Kaung Lain pagoda and Dat Taw Gon pagodas. The people can go to the famous pagodas and places of Thunan Paranta or Minbu Township by the horse cart, three-wheeled motorcycles, Oway and Hijet.
—Zeya Htet (Minbu)/GNLM



4,998 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 25 July, total figure rises to 269,525

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **269,525 after 4,998 new cases** were reported on 25 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **185,402** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **7,111** after **355** died. —MNA

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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm** with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

State Administration Council

Press Release

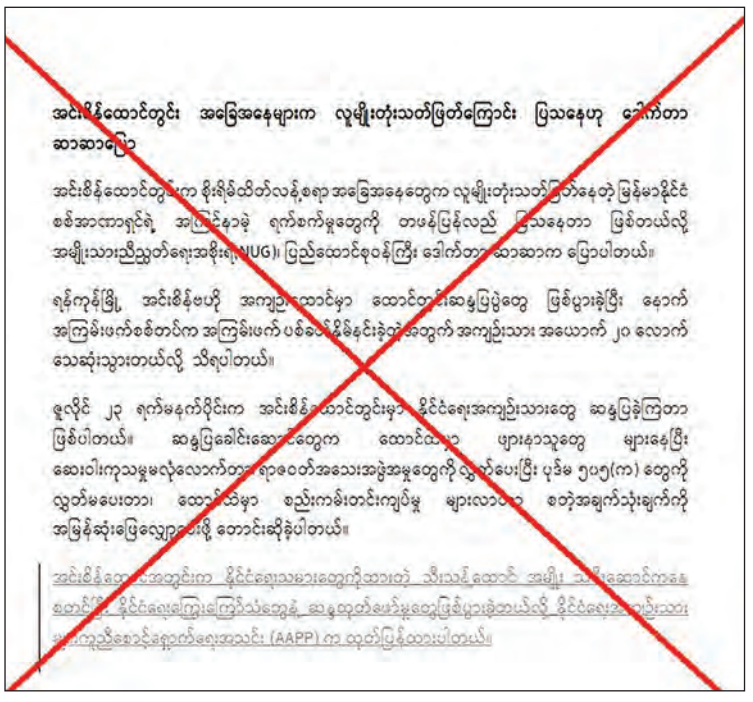
Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

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

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.

Prisons department deputy director denies alleged genocide in Insein Prison with facts



DEPUTY Director of the Department of Prisons U Chan Aye Kyaw was interviewed by MRTV (Myanmar Radio and Television) yesterday in connection with the DVB's coverage of Dr Sasa's allegations of genocide in Insein Prison.

U Chan Aye Kyaw: There were reports of unjust beatings of protesters, following the negotiations. I would like to say it is not true at all because only those in charge of the prison can enter the prison following the prison rules. In saying so, some staff are assigned outside of the prison and some on the inside. Those, who are assigned to the jail, could enter the jail. However, those on the outside are not allowed to enter the prison without responsibility. **Even our staff are not allowed to enter the jail without being on duty. Other organizations, including the Myanmar Police Force and Tatmadaw, cannot enter the prison.** In addition, no one can enter the jail with a weapon, according to the law.

In fact, after the riot inside the prison had ended, the prisoners were locked in their respective cells, and prison staff had to wait outside the closed cells. I would like to explain that it is impossible to beat them.

There are roads in the front and back of the prison. There is also a road beside the reserved prison and CID compound.

Since the prison is surrounded by roads, I assume that this kind of rumours came out to create unwanted problems that were stoked by the people who were circulating misinformation based on their own opinion.

The closure of prison cells is stated in the prison manual. We called out the leaders of the riot groups and negotiated how their demand can be legally resolved. There is no such thing as an unjust closure or beating. The rumours also said there were 20 or 8 prisoners who died of beatings. **In reality, there is no death at all, and if there was, we have to report it immediately. The prison activities were carried out on 25 July in line with the prison manual. We provide food, accommodation and healthcare services are also provided as usual, and there is no such thing as punishment for the riot.** However, every prisoner has to abide by the set rules and regulations of the prison, and action is taken under the law against those who violate them. — Aung Myo/GNLM

Union Election Commission
Announcement of election results in Mandalay Region, Union Territory, Rakhine State, Yangon Region
25 July 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of 28 townships in Mandalay Region, 8 townships in Union Territory, 8 townships in Rakhine State and 45 Townships in Yangon Region in detail together with the respective UEC members, former township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population, administrators and representatives of political parties in accordance with Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law, and interviewed the election sub-commissions, poll heads and members.
2. In 2020 Multiparty General Election, the candidates/voters ran/voted in Mandalay Region, Union Territory, Rakhine State and Yangon Region as follows: -
   (a) The candidates of 19 political parties and independent candidates competed in 28 townships of Mandalay Region. Of 4,941,471 voters, 3,870,334 cast votes at 5,447 polling stations, and it shows 78.32 per cent of votes.
   (b) The candidates of 11 political parties and independent candidates competed in 8 townships of Union Territory. Of 906,226 voters, 691,054 cast votes at 646 polling stations, and it shows 76.26 per cent of votes.
   (c) The candidates of 11 political parties and independent candidates competed in 8 townships of Rakhine State. Of 477,957 voters, 329,264 cast votes at 784 polling stations, and it shows 68.89 per cent of votes.
   (d) The candidates of 42 political parties and independent candidates competed in 45 townships of Yangon Region. Of 6,137,047 voters, 4,188,249 cast votes at 5,809 polling stations, and it shows 68.25 per cent of votes.
3. The previous election commission released 4,941,471 eligible voters in 28 townships in Mandalay Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 4,287,609 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 388,282 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 38,090 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 516,776 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the cross-check, 217,668 persons repeated on the voter lists while 3,151 people over the age of 100, and 1,239 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
4. A total of 5,447 polling stations of 28 townships in Mandalay Region took out 5,467,884 ballots and used 3,792,347. It left 1,507,778 ballots instead of 1,675,537. The difference was 221,546 ballots and it found 53,787 extra ballots.
5. The previous election commission released 906,226 eligible voters in 8 townships in the Union Territory. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 703,546 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 108,333 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 6,900 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 76,222 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 38,690 persons repeated on the voter lists while 289 people over the age of 100, and 314 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
6. A total of 646 polling stations of 8 townships in the Union Territory took out 994,751 ballots and used 687,903. It left 291,509 ballots instead of 306,848. The difference was 16,900 ballots and it found 1,561 extra ballots.
7. The previous election commission released 477,957 eligible voters in 8 townships in Rakhine State. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 630,052 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 77,573 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 4,101 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 47,712 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 3,598 persons repeated on the voter lists while 341 people over the age of 100, and 223 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
8. A total of 784 polling stations of 8 townships in Rakhine State took out 857,321 ballots and used 328,918. It left 522,502 ballots instead of 528,403. The difference was 9,738 ballots and it found 3,837 extra ballots.
9. The previous election commission released 6,137,047 eligible voters in 45 townships in Yangon Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 3,979,635 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 747,138 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 11,070 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 269,412 persons repeated on the voter lists two times. According to the crosscheck, 405,366 persons repeated on the voter lists while 2,222 people over the age of 100, and 1,909 people under the age of 18 on the election day were also found on the lists.
10. A total of 5,809 polling stations of 45 townships in Yangon Region took out 6,689,270 ballots and used 4,085,686. It left 2,337,150 ballots instead of 2,603,584. The difference was 357,937 ballots and it found 91,503 extra ballots.
11. The findings on voter lists and ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Mandalay Region, Union Territory, Rakhine State and Yangon Region were as follows: -

Sr	State/ Region	Pyithu Hluttaw		Amyotha Hluttaw		Region/ State Hluttaw		Ethnic Nationals		Number of Township	Polling station	Township Election Commision	List from Immigration	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
		constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates	constituency	candidates									loss	extra
1	Mandalay	28	138	10	41	56	263	1	4	28	5447	4,941,471	4,287,609	5,467,884	3,792,347	1,675,537	1,507,778	221,546	53,787
2	Union Territory	8	55	2	11	-	-	-	-	8	646	906,226	703,546	994,751	687,903	306,848	291,509	16,900	1,561
3	Rakhine	8	43	5	24	14	79	1	8	8	784	477,957	630,052	857,321	328,918	528,403	522,502	9,738	3,837
4	Yangon	45	249	12	58	90	481	2	11	45	5809	6,137,047	3,979,695	6,689,270	4,085,686	2,603,584	2,337,150	357,937	91,503

12. The previous UEC has released the (32/2017) statement for the formation of regions/states election sub-commissions dated on 17 November 2017. Then, they also released Notification No (33/2017) on 4 December 2017 and Notification No (34/2017) on 6 December 2017 for the formation of election sub-commissions with NLD supporters. These statements stated that they appointed the ones nominated by the regions/states chief ministers as chairman and members.
13. Under the directives by the letter number 7/464 general/A Pha Ra (2020) dated 4-8-2020 of the Union Government Office, a support group was formed for the completion of voter list, led by the state chief minister and it was found that there were two- or three-times duplication of voter lists due to the group. Under the instruction of the group, the township sub-election commission added the census lists submitted by the township general administration department into the voter lists. It was found that the voter lists inflated and the duplication occurred due to the addition of people who were already on the lists since the relevant ward/village-tract general administration departments failed to examine the census lists before submitting it.
14. The ward/village-tract administrators served as chairpersons in collecting the numbers of the population to compile the voter lists of Bago Region, Magway Region, Shan State and Ayeyawady Region. In this process, the ward/village-tract administrators appointed by the NLD government and some NLD members jointly collected the numbers of the population. They did not inspect whether the people live in their ward/village tract, whether they are eligible voters in accordance with Hluttaw Election Law. Therefore, there were many non-identity voters on the voter lists and some repeated on the voter lists two times or over three times with just one NRC card. Hluttaw Election Law Section (15) (c) in Chapter VI "Preparation of Voting Roll" stated, "Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time." And, it found activities that violate the law. According to Section 19 (b), the names not eligible are included in the voting roll, delete such names from the voting roll. But they did not remove the names.
15. The former UEC also released instructions that the advance voting process for people over 60 can be conducted starting 29-10-2020 before the election day. But some NLD members conducted door-to-door service in collecting advance votes in some places and it caused voting fraud. According to COVID-19 health rules, the announcement and instruction for voters who were unable to return to their constituencies were released on 8-10-2020 and 11-10-2020 respectively by the former UEC. Due to such directives, the voters were found repeated on the voter lists and non-identity voters were also on the lists and were allowed to cast votes.
16. The former UEC also released a statement for voters without any ID cards to cast their vote on 19-8-2020. The non-identity voters cast votes just with voter certificates at the polling stations. Therefore, the non-identity voters, those who repeated on voter lists two times or over three times were allowed to cast vote without complying with the Hluttaw Election Law Section 59. Regarding the voting stamps, the instruction that the ballots with a tick without a UEC label will be recognized as valid votes also caused the complicated situations in counting the votes.
17. The voting frauds were supposed to be intentionally committed. Moreover, the NLD party members also interfere in collecting voter lists, election campaign, advance voting process and voting processes even on election day with their power. In addition, all electoral activities, including the campaigns of other political parties and parliamentary candidates misused the COVID-19 restrictions and conspired to seize the state power as well as the former UEC also found misused their authorities and violated the Law and rules.
18. According to the findings in Mandalay Region, Union Territory, Rakhine State and Yangon Region, the 2020 Multiparty General Election was found to be inconsistent with the relevant Hluttaw Election Laws/Rules and was not free and fair. Therefore, regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, it is here announced that measures will be conducted to annul the election results for the Hluttaw candidates of Pyithu, Amyotha and State Hluttaws and ethnic representatives of 28 townships in Mandalay Region, 8 townships in Union Territory, 8 townships in Rakhine State and 45 Townships in Yangon Region in accordance with the law.

Union Election Commission

Myanmar ships over 41,000 tonnes of butter beans as of 9 July

THE exports of butter beans exceeded 41,819 tonnes between 1 October and 9 July in the current financial year 2020-2021, generating a revenue of US$23.9 million, as per the Ministry of Commerce's data.

A basket of butter beans is worth K14,000 this year, indicating K1,000 lower than last year's rate, the growers said.

In 2019, the beans touched a high of K37,000 per basket. In April 2020, butter beans fetched about K17,000 per basket. This year, it plunged to K14,000 per basket.

The price is possible to extend the drop as the foreign demand is extremely weak amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the political changes, the traders said.

Normally, Myanmar exports about 75 per cent of butter bean production to foreign markets -- Japan, China, Denmark, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan (China Taipei) and Viet Nam, with an export volume of 15,000-30,000 tonnes per year.

When the butter beans flooded the market in April, the prices fell owing to weak demand.

At present, the prices of butter beans move in the range of K65,000-74,000 per bag depending on the size in the Mandalay market.

Butter beans' export to China, Japan and European markets has been falling. Now, it is relying only on the domestic market, said a trader from Mandalay market.

Normally, Myanmar exports about 75 per cent of butter bean production to foreign markets — Japan, China, Denmark, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan (China Taipei) and Viet Nam— with an export volume of 15,000-30,000 tonnes per year.

There are over 160,000 acres of butter bean plantations both in winter and monsoon crop seasons. The butter beans are grown in June and July for the monsoon growing season and harvested in October and November. The winter season is in October/November, and harvest time is from January to March.

The butter beans are primarily cultivated in Sagaing, Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and northern Shan states. Magway Region produces good-quality butter beans, and Japan buyers prefer them. – Mon Mon/GNLM

Myawady border trade up by US$445.7 mln as of 9 July

THE border trade through Myawady between Myanmar and Thailand climbed up to US$1.39 billion between 1 October and 9 July in the current financial year 2020-2021, reflecting an increase of $445.7 million as against a year ago period.

The trade through the Myawady border stood at $952.84 million in the corresponding period of the last FY2019-2020.

Myawady-Maesot border trade remained normal although Thailand ordered restrictions in Maesot, according to the Myawady Chamber of Commerce.

Myawady border trade did not halt owing to the restriction orders by Thailand. Myanmar trucks cannot enter Maesot, but trucks from Thailand come and pick up the goods at Myawady post, the chamber stated.

We have experienced trade suspension via Myawady in October 2020. The halt in trading undoubtedly harms the traders and truck drivers from both sides. It is good that trade does not stop at present, said a trader from Myawady.

At the present time, the Myawady border does not have trade barriers except transaction problems, as per Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

"Trade is regularly flowing in and out of the country. What a problem is that we cannot claim income through a legitimate financial market during the meantime. Now, the trade is carried out through hundi operators. The restriction of formal financial markets renders the cash flow difficulties," an official of the association said.

Hundi business is weak to protect transactions and less secure. Additionally, they charge too much for services, he stressed.

Myanmar is currently shipping thousands of tonnes of corn to Thailand through the Myawady border every day.

Myanmar is allowed for corn export between 1 February and 31 August with Form-D, under zero tariff.

Myanmar corn exports were exempted from tax between February and August. Thailand imposed a 73 per cent of tax on corn import to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand, in accordance with the notification of the World Trade Organization regarding corn import of Thailand.

During the last budget year, Myanmar has increasingly exported corns to Thailand through the Myawady land border. Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through border crossings between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period in the FY2019-2020, an official of the Ministry of Commerce said.

There are seven border posts between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Hteekhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Maese. The majority of the border trade with Thailand is conducted via Myawady.

Myanmar primarily exports corn, natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country. — KK/GNLM

Myanmar mineral exports fall by 46% amid COVID-19 pandemic

MYANMAR sees a 46-per-cent drop in mineral exports over the past nine months due to the mining activity hit by the COVID-19 restrictions to contain the infections.

The value of Myanmar's mineral exports has drastically slumped to US$750 million as of 9 July in the current financial year 2020-2021 since 1 October. It reflects a severe drop of $639.85 million against a year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce's data indicated.

The mineral exports hit over $1.38 billion in the corresponding period of last FY.

The coronavirus-related disruptions led to the slump in mineral exports this FY. The heightened COVID-19 measures also shut down the events like gem emporium and expo last year, a trader said.

So far, excavation of over 1,250 mining blocks has been permitted on a manageable, small, medium, and large scale, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Due to the limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals had dropped significantly in the previous years. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016. However, after two years, Myanmar's mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the ministry.

Within two years of implementing the Myanmar Mines Law, the Mines Department has approved more than 140 out of 3,000 proposed mining blocks. Many more blocks are to be granted the permit.

The Myanmar Mines Law was enacted on 24 December 2015. But the law came into force when the rules were issued on 13 February 2018.

Under the new regulations, foreign firms can invest in large blocks that cover up to 500,000 acres (about 202,000 hectares), while local firms can invest in all kinds of blocks. Investors can seek a permit to mine for minerals such as gold, copper, lead and tin. The permits cover prospecting, exploration, and production.

Myanmar's mineral exports have shown a marked increase in the previous FY2019-2020, touching $1.87 billion, an increase of $405.48 million compared with the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the FY2018-2019, mineral exports were pegged at just $1.465 billion.

Oil and natural gas are included in the list of major export items of Myanmar. About six per cent of the country's total export earnings come from the sale of natural gas. About 80 per cent of mineral products are shipped to external markets through sea trade, while 20 of them are sent to neighbouring countries through border trade channels. — Ko Htet/GNLM

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Take care of oxygen supply with easing tension

Recently, oxygen demand was high among the people, so they bought oxygen as much as they can. As prevention of COVID-19 demands oxygen, State- and Tatmadaw-owned oxygen plants and private ones are striving for increasing the production of oxygen to meet the demand.

Moreover, as oxygen and related accessories are imported with contributions of well-wishers, the government and organizations, oxygen concentrators arrived in Myanmar one after another and are distributed to needy people. Oxygen demand is high among the people, so, private shops sell oxygen in townships and awards. Hence, not only oxygen but oxygen cylinder is higher. It can be seen that number of those who actually need oxygen directed by physicians as well as those wishing to store oxygen under their own plans are on the rise.

In fact, everybody needs to avoid the lives of the people and take care of the danger of greedy businesspersons. When oxygen demand was high among the people, oxygen cylinder problems occurred. When the oxygen cylinder was not sufficient, other gas cylinders were cleaned and used as oxygen cylinders. The ethnic national people who unexpectedly used the other gas cylinders as oxygen cylinders faced side effects and lost lives.

> As such, the entire national people should emphasize following the dos and don'ts of health restrictions during the period of COVID-19, focusing on the prevention of the disease.

Oxygen is plentiful in the atmosphere. Generally, nobody needs oxygen from the cylinders. Patients with weak health conditions only need to use the oxygen from cylinders. Oxygen from the uncleaned cylinders may cause side effects along respiratory tracks and lungs.

The government, the Tatmadaw and the private sector are urgently fulfilling the needs of oxygen from their plants in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19.

At the same time, hospitals across the nation are providing oxygen to patients facing difficulty breathing. If one faces symptoms of declining oxygen, all the ethnic-national people need to perform emergency breathing procedures directed by physicians and send those patients to nearby public health departments.

As such, the entire national people should emphasize following the dos and don'ts of health restrictions during the period of COVID-19, focusing on the prevention of the disease. That is why they all have to abide by the guidelines of health officials by considering the oxygen problem which is more concerned than the outbreak of COVID-19.

■ ■ ■

'Lack of global solidarity', slow vaccination rates put Indonesia in COVID glare

A "lack of global solidarity" including the hoarding of vaccines by richer nations as well as slow vaccination rate has contributed to Indonesia becoming the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak in Asia, according to the UN's top official in the country.

Volunteers prepare to disinfect public areas in Jakarta, Indonesia, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **PHOTO: ASIAN DEVELOMENT BANK/AFRIADI HIKMAL**

UN News asked Resident Coordinator, Valerie Julliand, *about the situation in the country and what the rest of the world could learn from Indonesia's experience.*

What is the current situation in Indonesia?

Indonesia, like many of countries in South East Asia, had until recently been successful in mitigating the worst health impacts of COVID-19; some form of physical distancing measures have long been in place.

Since taking up my post here in October 2020, I've only met most of my colleagues on screen and have almost entirely avoided Jakarta's notorious traffic jams. Still, the non-health impacts of the pandemic are stark. Indonesia has made remarkable progress in alleviating poverty over the past decade, but COVID-19 has set back some of those vital gains. As elsewhere, COVID-19's economic burden has fallen disproportionately on women, and other marginalized groups. Since May, however, the health crisis has become increasingly urgent. New COVID-19 cases have risen five-fold over the past month.

On July 17, Indonesia reported more new daily infections than both India and Brazil, causing multiple news outlets to dub it Asia's new COVID-epicentre. And on 21 July, the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) said there had been more than 77,500 deaths in the country.

Indonesia's total of some 3 million confirmed cases is still far below the more than 31 million India has recorded since the start of the pandemic.

But comparisons have inevitably been made with India's tragic spring surge. In some areas, overflowing hospitals have been forced to turn away patients and volunteer groups have mobilized to locate oxygen tanks and build coffins.

How did things get so bad so quickly?

It's down to several factors. The surge is being driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant and we're also seeing rising case numbers across the region and in many other countries. But on a deeper level, there just hasn't been a sense of collective wisdom during the pandemic.

The same oversights that occurred in one country were repeated in another. Global experience has demonstrated that strict enforcement of public health measures is critical to containing outbreaks, and that these measures must be guided by accurate surveillance of the transmission of the virus. That didn't happen in India. What we are seeing here in Indonesia is also in part a result of mass gatherings and travel when the rate of infection was still high.

On top of that, vaccinations haven't been rolled out quickly enough. As of July 17, six out of every hundred people among Indonesia's population of 270 million had received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, with low coverage among the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

Indonesia has secured a relatively good supply of vaccinations, including from the COVAX facility—which is supported by organizations such as WHO and UNICEF—and is ahead of other countries in the region.

But there has been a global lack of solidarity despite the UN Secretary-General's calls for equitable vaccine access.

Rich countries hoarded vaccines. As sad as it is, Indonesia is certainly not the worst off; only 1.1 per cent of people in low-income countries have received at least one vaccination dose.

Is Indonesia's outbreak at its peak or could things get worse?

It's an alarming situation. After India implemented a total nationwide lockdown in response to the pandemic, it took approximately two weeks before we saw a reduction in cases.

Indonesia introduced strict curbs on movement in Java and Bali at the beginning of July, and has since expanded those curbs, but it has not yet implemented a stringent movement restriction or lockdown at a national level, as other countries in a similar situation have done. It is difficult to say when we will reach the peak, but the numbers are still rising.

Indonesia's government has committed to vaccinating one-million people per day. It is also converting 40 per cent of non-COVID hospital beds into COVID beds. Among other interventions, the government is going to distribute medical support packages to some of the country's poorest people, so those with milder symptoms do not have to go to hospital.

These measures are all important. But experience in other countries proves that total restrictions on movement, vaccination, contact tracing/testing and treatment are the best ways to contain the virus.

How is the UN supporting Indonesia's COVID-19 response?

On the health side, the UN has been providing technical and operational support. The UN puts a lot of emphasis on prevention, so we help with testing capacity, both in terms of equipment, protocols and training. We've facilitated the arrival of 16.2 million vaccine doses through the COVAX facility to date and we're helping with their dissemination, because cold chain logistics are complex across an archipelago of 17,000 islands. We also put a lot of energy in communications, including on health protocols and vaccines, and on combatting misinformation and busting hoaxes. Then there's the work we are doing to support people who are affected by COVID-19 beyond the health sphere.

SOURCE: UN NEWS

COVID-19 source tracing should be science-based: S. African leading scientist

COVID-19 source-tracing should be science-based, objective and fair, well-known South African epidemiologist Salim Abdool Karim said.

It is very important to identify sources of new viruses because it gives clues as to what people can expect in the future, Karim, also former chairman of the country's Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19, said in a recent interview with Hong Kong-based broadcaster Phoenix TV.

He called on the international community to treat the issue of COVID-19 source-tracing in a science-based, objective and fair manner, and to oppose any politicized attempts.

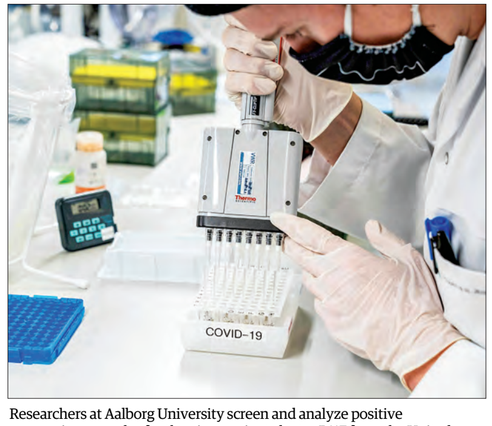
"We must do that in a scientifically rigorous way. This is not a time for political posturing and finger pointing," Karim said. "This is a time for cool heads to make sure we collect the scientific evidence."

"We need all the authorities to cooperate. We need to do so in a transparent way so that all the different possibilities are explored. The evidence is collected and the answers are obtained. It's in everyone's interest to get an answer that is scientifically credible," he added.

Karim welcomed the decision by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to authorize the use in South Africa of the CoronaVac vaccine, developed by Chinese drugmaker Sinovac, saying the SAHPRA has ensured that the medications are high-quality, safe and effective.

Facing the emergence of more variants of the SARS-CoV-2 around the world, the epidemiologist said the world must remain vigilant and monitor every new variant. "It is no time for complacency," he added.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Researchers at Aalborg University screen and analyze positive coronavirus samples for the virus variant cluster B117 from the United Kingdom, in Aalborg, Denmark, Jan. 15, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

Appointment of Ambassador of the UK and Northern Ireland to Myanmar agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr Peter Vowles as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in succession to Mr Daniel Patrick Brendon Chugg.

Mr Peter Vowles was born in January 1974. He earned a Master Degree in General Arts from the University of Edinburgh in 1996 and Master of Science in Health Care Management from the University of Birmingham in 2002. From 1996 to 2003, he served in various international development NGOs, the UK's National Health Service, the World Bank and the private sector. Since 2003, he has served in various capacities at DFID, Embassies of Her Britannic Majesty in Kabul, Kinshasa and Nairobi, British High Commission in Dhaka and New Delhi. He is currently serving as Director of Asia, Caribbean and Overseas Territories at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

He is married with two children.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 25th July, 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong to vigorous over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 26 July, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions, fairly widespread in Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Kayin, Mon States and isolated heavyfalls in Naypyitaw,Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady Regions and Kachin, Eastern Shan, Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8 -11)feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady, Taninthayi Regions and Rakhine, Kayin, Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26 July, 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 26 July, 2021: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25thJuly, 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Iran's new oil terminal aims to bypass Gulf chokepoint, say analysts

A new Iranian oil terminal that opened this week is a strategic move that enables the major crude exporter to bypass a global chokepoint and boost sales if punishing US sanctions are lifted, analysts say.

Tehran inaugurated Thursday the terminal in Jask, on the Gulf of Oman, allowing tankers to avoid the Strait of Hormuz -- a passage less than 40 kilometres (25 miles) wide at its narrowest point, and where US and Iranian naval vessels have faced off in the past.

Commentators contend the move might not curb global price volatility but could help Tehran ramp up exports if damaging US sanctions are lifted, a move that depends on the future of a 2015 nuclear deal that currently hangs by a thread.

A Panamanian tanker docking at the platform of the oil facility in the Khark Island on the Iranian coast. **PHOTO: AFP**

Simmering tensions in the Strait -- a vital shipping lane for about one fifth of world oil -- sparked surging prices early last year before the coronavirus pandemic crushed the market.

Prices then crashed and even briefly turned negative, before rebounding sharply on resurgent demand as economic activity recovered.

If Iran can export oil via Jask it will reduce the number of tankers that pass through "the world's most important chokepoint for waterborne crude," Rystad Energy analyst Bjornar Tonhaugen told AFP.

"This (new terminal) may reduce the risk premium of crude prices," noted Tonhaugen.

"Iran has now a strategic ability to keep some of its oil exports to the world market running in... an extreme event."

But, he cautioned, this in itself will not dampen disruption to the world oil market, as most of the other countries in the Gulf export via oil from terminals located on the inside of the Strait.

Iran is the fourth biggest crude producer within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). — AFP ■

Baby orca dies in New Zealand after fruitless search for mother

TOA, the baby orca who captured hearts after he was found stranded in New Zealand waters, has lost his fight for survival, conservationists confirmed Saturday.

The killer whale, less than 2.5 metres (eight feet) long and believed to be four to six months old, became front-page news when he washed ashore near the capital Wellington after becoming separated from his pod nearly two weeks ago.

He was unweaned, and hundreds of people volunteered to assist with round-the-clock care as he was unable to survive alone in the ocean.

Conservationists, who named the orca Toa -- Maori for "warrior" -- housed him in a makeshift pen at the seaside suburb of Plimmerton, where he was fed via a special teat every four hours while an air and sea search was mounted to find his mother.

Whale Rescue, an organisation that had been helping care for Toa, posted on social media that his condition rapidly deteriorated on Friday night.

"Vets on site rushed to his aid but were unable to save him," the statement said.

Department of Conservation marine species manager Ian Angus said they were aware that the longer Toa was in captivity and away from his mother, the more likely it was his health would deteriorate. — AFP ■

Conservationists urge Congo to reverse pay-to-poach decision

Salonga National Park in Democratic Republic of the Congo has been removed from Unesco's list of World Heritage sites in danger. **PHOTO: AFP**

ENVIRONMENTALISTS in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Thursday urged the government to reverse a move to tax rather than forbid poaching, saying the move endangered millions in conservation funds.

"With this measure to maximise revenues, the Congolese Institute for Conservation of Nature (ICCN) won't be able to do its work of preserving species in danger of dying out," the organization's chief Cosma Wilungula told reporters at a news conference.

In a joint decision this month, the DRC's environment and finance ministries said killing, owning or selling protected species would be allowed on payment of a tax.

It now costs $2,885 to kill a forest elephant, while the amount to kill, eat or sell a mountain gorilla is $1,925.

"This decree does away with (the crime of) illegal trafficking of protected species," Wilunga said, warning that backers would not pay out around $32 million used for conservation each year if the rule stands. — AFP ■

Hair today, green tomorrow: UK stylists join eco-drive

The waste produced by the hairdressing industry in the UK each year could fill 50 football stadiums, the collective says. **PHOTO: AFP**

HAIRDRESSERS across Britain are being urged to do their bit for the environment by recycling snipped-off hair to help clean up oil spills, make compost or generate energy.

At an east London salon, Fry Taylor, one of the founders of the Green Salon Collective, demonstrates spare hair being used in depolluting filters.

He shows how a cotton net stuffed with hair, swept across the surface of a tank of water contaminated with motor oil, instantly cleans up the pollutant.

"The hair just naturally will absorb the oil and hold on to the oil, that's the important factor," Taylor, a former hairdresser, told AFP.

A kilo of hair can absorb up to eight litres (two gallons) of oil, according to experts.

The idea of using hair filters originated in the United States and has already been tested in real disasters, such as when a Japanese tanker sank off the coast of Mauritius a year ago.

Britain was lagging behind in recycling unwanted hair when the collective formed last summer, according to Taylor.

"There are, in other countries around the world, recycling systems for hairdressing salons," he said.

"In the UK and Ireland, they just don't have the infrastructure.

"We're not going to wait another five or 10 years for governments and councils to have these systems in place, let's just do it ourselves," he added.

Green tax

The waste produced by the hairdressing industry in the UK each year could fill 50 football stadiums, the collective said.

Most rubbish, including aluminium foil, coloured tubes and 99 per cent of cut hair, is sent to a landfill site, it added. — AFP ■

Hanoi goes into lockdown as virus cases soar

VIETNAM locked down eight million people in Hanoi on Saturday, the latest attempt to curb a serious coronavirus outbreak that has already forced a third of the country to stay home.

Authorities reported more than 7,000 new infections across the nation on Friday -- the third record number of daily infections in a week.

The centre of the normally bustling capital was empty and shops were shuttered as the lockdown came into force, although people could still be seen on the streets in the outskirts of the city.

"I think people in Hanoi as myself agree with the city's sudden decision of locking down the city," said local resident Nguyen Van Chien. "We have to take economic risks to fight the pandemic," he added.

Hanoi's normally bustling capital was empty and shops were shuttered as a coronavirus lockdown came into force in Vietnam's capital. **PHOTO: AFP**

After successfully containing limited coronavirus outbreaks last year, Vietnam has seen cases skyrocket since late April. About a third of Vietnam's 100 million people are already subject to lockdown orders.

But the outbreak has showed few signs of slowing and southern commercial hub Ho Chi Minh City -- which has recorded the majority of recent cases -- extended its stay at home order on Friday.

"I have been indoors for a month. The situation in our city is scary," resident Le Bich Thanh told AFP.

Authorities began a campaign to disinfect the entire city, which they say will take a week.

Vietnam was one of the few economies that expanded last year due to its success in containing the virus during the first wave of the pandemic.

But the Southeast Asian country has been slow to procure and administer vaccines, with just almost 4.5 million doses given so far. — AFP ■

New COVID-19 variant 'probable' this year: top French expert

A medical worker stands in a vaccination booth in a temporary COVID-19 vaccination centre in the Bacalan neighbourhood in Bordeaux, southwestern France, on 26 May, 2021 after nearly 50 people tested positive for a "very rare" variant of coronavirus. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE French government's top advisor on COVID-19 warned Friday that a new variant of the disease would "probably" emerge in the winter months this year.

The country is currently battling an unprecedented spike in new cases caused by the more infectious Delta variant, which was first recorded in India.

"We will probably have another variant arrive during the winter," Jean-Francois Delfraissy, head of the French government's scientific council, told the BFM news channel.

He said that he could not predict the consequences, or whether it would be more dangerous, adding that COVID-19 had "relatively limited" capacities to mutate.

The infectious diseases specialist urged French people to return to social distancing and mask-wearing, and said a "return to normal" would probably be in 2022 or 2023.

"The big challenge for the next couple of years will be how are we going to co-exist, with two worlds: countries that are vaccinated and those that are not," he said.

The government's strategy to contain the current fourth wave of cases is based on the introduction of a "health pass" system that requires people to show proof of vaccination or a negative test when entering public venues.

Since Wednesday, cinemas, museums, swimming pools and sports venues have been required to ask patrons for their health credentials, leading to criticism from some that it restricts the freedoms of the non-vaccinated. — AFP ■

Anti-lockdown protesters clash with police in coronavirus-weary Australia

THOUSANDS of anti-lockdown protesters gathered in Australia's two largest cities on Saturday (24 July), with several arrested in Sydney after violent clashes with police.

Some demonstrators in Sydney were seen hurling bottles and plants – torn from the sidewalk – at police officers, while others chanted "Freedom, freedom" as they marched along Broadway in the city's central business district. A major rally also took place in Melbourne and other protests were being held nationwide.

More than 50 people were charged with offences in Sydney, David Elliott, police and emergency services minister for New South Wales, told reporters.

"What we saw today were 3,500 very selfish boofheads," he said, using local slang for fools.

"These are the sort of people who are going to prolong this lockdown." In Melbourne, local media said thousands of protesters had thronged the streets after gathering outside the state parliament in the early afternoon.

Maskless demonstrators flouted rules on non-essential travel and public gatherings a day after authorities suggested restrictions could remain in place until October.

Organizers had dubbed the protest a "freedom" rally and publicized it on social media pages frequently used to spread vaccine disinformation and conspiracy theories. Attendees carried signs and banners reading "Wake up Australia" and "Drain the Swamp" - echoing messages seen in similar demonstrations overseas.— AFP ■

Several people were arrested at an anti-lockdown rally in Sydney which also saw violent clashes with police. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon can't handle next Covid wave: hospital chief

LEBANON'S deepening economic crisis has piled pressure on hospitals, leaving them ill-equipped to face any new wave of the coronavirus, a top hospital director has warned.

Already struggling with shortages of medicine and an exodus of staff abroad, the country's health facilities are now also having to contend with almost round-the-clock power cuts.

"All hospitals... are now less prepared than they were during the wave at the start of the year," said Firass Abiad, the manager of the largest public hospital in the country battling Covid. "Medical and nursing staff have left, medicine that was once available has run out," and ever lengthening cuts to the mains power supply have left hospitals under constant threat. — AFP ■

Jordan to lower age limit for COVID-19 vaccination

JORDAN will lower the age bar for getting the COVID-19 vaccine to 12 as of July 25.

Jordan's Health Minister Feras Al Hawari said that the vaccination will be optional to those aged between 12 and 18 based on their parents' approval, the state-owned Al Mamlaka TV reported on Saturday. Meanwhile, the National Centre for Security and Crises Management said the implementation of a new order obliging public sector employees to take the vaccine will start from 5 August, Al Mamlaka TV reported. — Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU policy tools should avoid discriminatory impact on foreign firms: Chinese chamber

ANY policy tools introduced and adopted by the European Union (EU) institutions shall "ensure legal certainty for the business community, and openness and fairness in the market," the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) has said. "They should avoid having a discriminatory impact on foreign companies, or leading to new distortions by offering privileges to EU locally owned companies, for instance in acquisition transactions or procurement processes," said Xu Haifeng, Chairman of CCCEU, in a statement. He added the chamber's members "would appreciate that the European market could remain open, competitive and fair."

The chamber released the statement after submitting on Tuesday its feedback to the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation on foreign subsidies that was unveiled in May this year. — Xinhua ■

U.S. rising coal shipment to China shadows Australia's mining

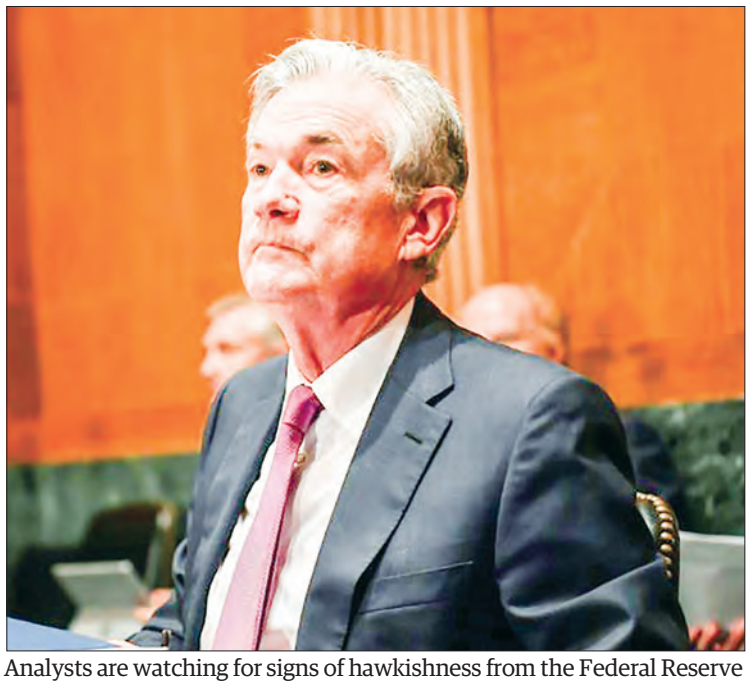
THE U.S. mines have experienced a stark turnaround and boost in exports to China to the highest since 2013, Bloomberg News reported on Thursday.

According to miner Coronado Global Resources Inc., the Frontier Unity bulk vessel left the port of Newport News, Virginia with a 136,400-tonne cargo bound for steelmakers in China, which was the biggest shipment of its kind from a U.S. east coast port, the report said.

"Our U.S. operations continue to successfully move met coal into China at record levels," Gerry Spindler, Coronado's chief executive officer, said in a statement.

He noted that the diplomatic tensions between Australia and China have reduced coal imports of the Asian nation from Australia, which may remain in place for a number of years. — Xinhua ■

Fed to meet as inflation, virus variants complicate US recovery



Analysts are watching for signs of hawkishness from the Federal Reserve and its chair Jerome Powell. **PHOTO: AFP**

AS rising prices and the spread of new Covid-19 variants increase risks to the US economy, Federal Reserve officials are expected to maintain their easy money policies intended to help American companies and workers survive the pandemic damage.

But as the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) begins its two-day policy meeting Tuesday, markets and traders will be watching for hints of when it will begin tapering its massive monthly debt purchases.

The bond buying programme aimed to ease lending conditions during the crisis, but has come under scrutiny recently as inflation has soared to record levels as businesses reopen and consumers spend the savings built up during the worst months of the pandemic.

And focus also will be on any sign the Fed is rethinking its pledge to keep the benchmark lending rate at zero until the economy achieves maximum employment.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has repeatedly said the rise in inflation is a temporary effect of the economy getting back to normal, and that the Fed has tools to respond if the surge goes on too long.

But Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA Research said the swiftness of the price spike likely has surprised the central bank.

"I think they're still saying it's transitory but they're squirming in their seats, feeling a bit anxious that the numbers have come in higher than expected," he said.

However, the Fed is not expected to alter its stimulative policies this week or at any point this year. — AFP ■

Boeing set to face investor scrutiny as problems plague jets

THE aviation industry appears to finally be past the worst of the coronavirus downturn, but Boeing's to-do list remains extensive following a messy start to 2021.

The problems this year include electrical issues with the 737 MAX jet, fuselage troubles on the 787 and yet another delay in the timeframe for the 777X.

The myriad challenges reflect the changed regulatory climate facing Boeing in the wake of a pair of 737 MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019 that claimed 346 lives and led to a 20-month grounding of the aircraft.

"Unfortunately for Boeing right now, the added scrutiny is justified," said Ken Herbert, an aviation analyst at Canaccord Genuity.

Chief Executive Dave Calhoun on Wednesday will update investors on its latest set of challenges when the company reports second-quarter results. He will likely discuss the prospects for the 787 Dreamliner following Boeing's move earlier this month to cut production after identifying another issue with the aircraft.

Production of 737 MAX planes, shown here in a Boeing factory in March 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

In May, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) formally notified Boeing that the 777X would need more than two years of additional testing and analysis before it could be certified, saying the jet was "not yet ready" to advance to the next stage of evaluation.

In April, Boeing notified 16 airlines flying its 737 MAX planes of an electrical issue, leading to the immediate grounding of more than 100 jets. Carriers resumed service on the jets in May after regulators approved Boeing's proposed fix. — AFP ■

Extension of Hainan pipeline to spur FTP

THE 289-kilometre-long eastern part of the Hainan Island's loop natural gas pipeline was put into operation on Friday, and will further facilitate the rapid development of the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP), said China Oil & Gas Pipeline Network Corp, the pipeline's operator.

Running from Hainan's Sanya to Wenchang, the eastern part of the loop natural gas pipeline is now connected with the pipeline's western part that passes Dongfang, Yangpu and Haikou. The western part was put into operation earlier, said the company, which is China's largest energy infrastructure owner and is also known as PipeChina.

Deep Sea No 1, a semi-submersible oil production and storage facility, is located in the waters off South China's Hainan province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The eastern part of the pipeline, which passes Wenchang, Qionghai, Wanning, Lingshui and Sanya, sees a designed annual natural gas transportation capacity of 1.5 billion cubic metres, equivalent of 18.12 million tonnes of standard coal that would have otherwise become necessary to use, potentially causing pollution.

The eastern part will not only meet the gas demand of the industrial customers in the island, but also play a key role in the region's environmental protection. — Xinhua ■

Going electric: Carmakers make the switch

LEADING automakers have signalled their intention to scrap internal combustion engines by 2030 or cut back sharply on their production as the sector turns towards electric vehicles.

The latest to unveil plans was German group Daimler, maker of Mercedes Benz and smart cars, which aims to be fully electric before 2030 -- five years ahead of a deadline proposed by the European Commission.

Here is a look at who wants to do what.

Daimler

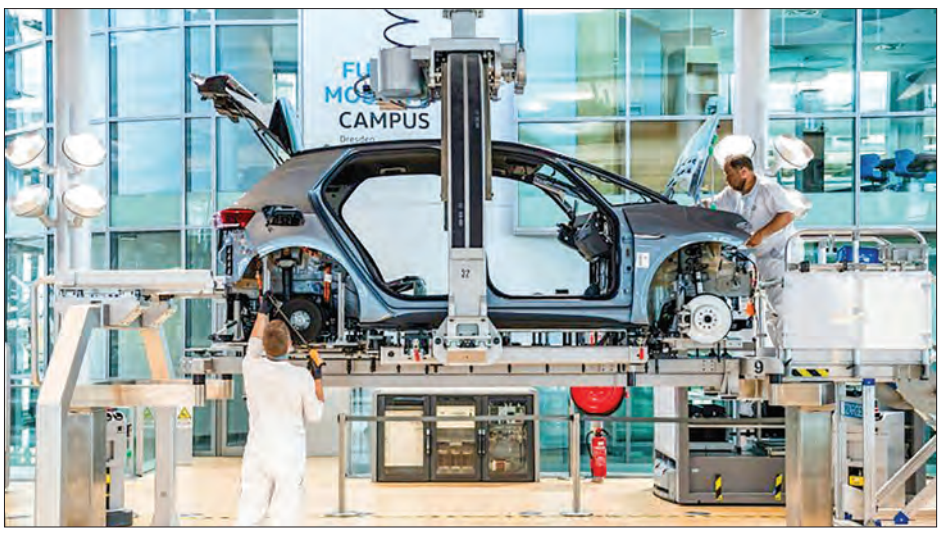
Plans to invest more than 40 billion euros ($47 billion) to be able to electrify all of its cars by the end of the decade.

From 2025, all Mercedes "architectures" -- the chassis, motor and wheels -- are to be 100-per cent electric.

Daimler also plans to build eight factories to produce the batteries that are the vehicles' key component.

Stellantis

The Stellantis group, which owns brands Fiat, Chrysler, Jeep and Peugeot amongst others, has ditched development of internal combustion engines and plans to invest 30 billion euros to electrify its models by 2025.



Volkswagen has earmarked 73 billion euros in investments and plans to create a global network of charging stations. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Opel division says it will be 100-per cent electric in Europe by 2028.

Fiat will be, as well, once the price of electric cars is comparable to those with petrol engines, currently estimated to occur between 2025-2030.

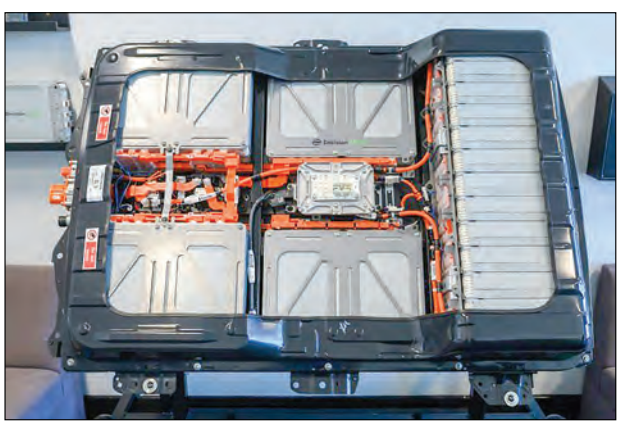
In the United States, the group's Dodge division plans to roll out an electric "muscle car" in 2024, and its Ram line of pickups will launch an electric version of the popular 1500 model that year as well.

Volkswagen

The German giant wants to be the global leader in electric vehicles.

Its ID3 model, which was launched in late 2020, is battling Tesla for top spot in the European electric market. — AFP ■

Europe to boost battery production as electric shift accelerates



Batteries have become the key component of tomorrow's vehicles. **PHOTO: AFP**

As electric car sales take off and petrol engines face being phased out by 2035, Europe is looking to develop its own battery production base.

Far from being autonomous, Europe needs to accelerate domestic battery output as a national security issue as well as a boost for businesses and jobs.

Batteries that power electric cars and which weigh up to 600 kilogrammes (1,300 pounds), represent a considerable part of the vehicle's value.

At the moment, they are mostly produced in Asia, with China, South Korea and Japan the leading manufacturers.

With a mid-July announcement that it intends to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035, the European Commission has set a timetable for the bloc's shift to electric cars.

Many carmakers, having sensed which way the wind is blowing with governments, have now announced plans to shift towards electric vehicles.

Germany's Daimler was the latest, announcing last week that from 2025 it will launch only electric vehicle platforms as it gears up for a full shift to electric cars from 2030. — AFP ■

Coffee froths to new highs as Brazil frost hits crops

COFFEE prices surged this week to multi-year peaks, extending stellar gains this year after frost damaged crops in the world's biggest producer Brazil.

The futures price for arabica coffee, one of the South American nation's top commodity exports, soared Friday to just over $2 a pound, the highest level since 2014. The commodity has rocketed by a blistering 60 per cent since January.

Lower quality robusta coffee, mainly grown in Asia, leapt to an October 2017 peak of $1,993 per tonne, capping a near 40-per cent gain so far this year.

"Several reasons explain the astronomical gains for coffee prices," Rabobank analyst Carlos Mera told AFP, citing mainly the devastating weather conditions in Brazil.

Mera also blamed soaring transportation costs and political unrest in number-three producer, Colombia. Brazil suffered a historic drought earlier this year. That was followed by damaging frosts this week at key plantations in Minas Gerais -- a southeastern inland state that produces 70 per cent of the nation's arabica beans.

Sub-zero temperatures have "sparked defoliation of crops and even kill the youngest plants" that are crucial for future harvests, Mera said.

Arabica coffee soared to its highest level since 2014. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Arabica has also been heavily impacted because the crop has a biennial plant cycle, whereby low-yield production one year is followed by bumper output the following year.

'Long price crisis'

The market rallied "on freezing temperatures in Brazil growing areas last night", added Price Futures Group analyst Jack Scoville on Friday. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli company works on lab made milk

ISRAELI food-tech company BioMilk says it is developing the first-ever milk and dairy products secreted using cultured mammalian cells in a lab.

Nathaniel Benchemhoun, BioMilk's vice president of business development, told Xinhua that the "dairy industry is forecasted to grow to over 1 trillion U.S. dollars a year in 2024" and it can't continue to operate in the same way.

He said that BioMilk strives to team up with leading traditional dairy companies around the globe to market a new kind of future milk that will be much more environmentally friendly. — Xinhua ■

Amnesty urges moratorium on surveillance technology in Pegasus scandal

Allegations that governments used phone malware supplied by an Israeli firm to spy on journalists, activists and heads of state have "exposed a global human rights crisis," Amnesty International said, asking for a moratorium on the sale and use of surveillance technology.

In a Friday statement, the NGO warned of "the devastating impact of the poorly regulated spyware industry on human rights worldwide." — AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (128S/129N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (128S/129N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-7-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Italy's Padua celebrates inclusion on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites

A complex of eight historic clusters of buildings in the northern Italian walled city of Padua was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of World Heritage sites on Saturday.

The decision was made during the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's 44th session held online and chaired from Fuzhou, China.

The UNESCO recognized a group of eight religious and secular complexes called "Padua Urbs Picta" within the walls of Padua (the city is called "Padova" in Italian).

The buildings are home to what UNESCO called "a selection of fresco cycles painted between 1302 and 1397 by different artists for different types of patrons and within buildings of diverse functions."

The development, highly anticipated in Italy, was a cause for celebration around the country. — Xinhua ■

60 Cubans prosecuted so far over protests: official

ABOUT 60 Cubans have been prosecuted so far for participating in unprecedented demonstrations against the government earlier this month, a senior official said Saturday.

The cases were over minor charges, and the total number of people detained has not been released amid complaints from relatives seeking information about loved ones."Until yesterday, 19 judicial processes had reached the municipal courts of the country -- cases involving 59 people accused of committing alleged crimes (during) these disturbances," Ruben Remigio Ferro, president of the Supreme Court, told reporters.

On July 11 and 12, thousands of Cubans took to the streets, shouting "Freedom," "Down with the dictatorship" and "We're hungry" in the biggest protests since the revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959. — AFP ■

'Purified': Japan's hikers return to Mount Fuji

The active volcano's symmetrical slopes were closed to the public in 2020 due to the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

FOR a year, the peak of Japan's iconic Mount Fuji has been off-limits because of coronavirus, but now hikers are flocking back to catch the spectacular sunrise above the clouds.

The active volcano's symmetrical slopes were closed to the public last summer due to the pandemic, and only reopened this month.

In the early hours of a recent morning, more than 100 people were gathered at the summit of the sacred mountain, which is capped with treacherous ice and snow for most of the year.

"Fuji has always been revered. It is a mountain that is an object of worship," said Takeo Tokunari, a 34-year-old hiker.

"Even though I am not particularly religious, I do feel purified by coming here, somehow."

Fuji-san, as it is known in Japanese, is the quintessential symbol of the country currently hosting the virus-postponed Tokyo Olympics.

Cycling events are taking place on and around its slopes, with the steep climbs of the long-distance road race challenging even the fittest athletes in Japan's sweltering summer heat.

The 3,776-metre (12,388 foot) mountain is about two hours from central Tokyo by train.

But it can be seen for miles around, and has been immortalised in countless Japanese artworks, including Hokusai's world-famous "Great Wave".

Just after 4:30 am, after a long night of climbing and a short rest on the mountainside, hikers were treated to the majestic sight of the sunrise.

Climbers at the summit can watch it breaking through the clouds behind a traditional "torii" gate on the mountainside. — AFP ■

6 detained over fatal tunnel flooding in south China

A total of six people have been detained by local police in connection with a tunnel flooding accident that killed 14 in the city of Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, the municipal government said on Saturday.

The construction site of the Shijingshan tunnel, part of Zhuhai's Xingye expressway, flooded on 15 July, trapping 14 workers.

More than 2,400 rescue workers and over 200 rescue vehicles were dispatched to the scene. The narrowness of the tunnel and complicated hydrological, geological and meteorological conditions complicated rescue work, according to sources from the on-site rescue headquarters.

All those trapped were confirmed dead after a week of rescue efforts. — Xinhua ■

Rescuers build embankments to pump out water from a flooded tunnel in Zhuhai city in south China's Guangdong province Friday, 16 July. 2021. Divers have been dispatched in the search for 14 workers missing since water flooded a tunnel under construction in southern China three days ago, authorities said Sunday, 18 July, 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Afghan govt imposes night curfew to stem Taliban advance

Afghan authorities on Saturday imposed a night-time curfew across 31 of the country's 34 provinces to curb surging violence unleashed by a sweeping Taliban offensive in recent months, the interior ministry said. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFGHAN authorities on Saturday imposed a night-time curfew across 31 of the country's 34 provinces to curb surging violence unleashed by a sweeping Taliban offensive in recent months, the interior ministry said.

The widespread Taliban assault has seen the insurgents capture key border crossings, dozens of districts and encircle several provincial capitals since early May when the US-led foreign forces began their final withdrawal.

"To curb violence and limit the Taliban movements a night curfew has been imposed in 31 provinces across the country," except in Kabul, Panjshir and Nangarhar, the interior ministry said in a statement.

The curfew will be effective between 10:00 pm and 4:00 am local time, Ahmad Zia Zia, deputy interior ministry spokesman said in a separate audio statement to reporters.

With the withdrawal of American-led foreign forces all but complete, the resurgent Taliban now controls about half of Afghanistan's roughly 400 districts.

After a brief lull in violence during this week's Muslim holidays of Eid al-Adha, fighting resumed with the authorities claiming to have killed more than 260 Taliban fighters in the past 24 hours across several provinces.

Both the authorities and the Taliban exaggerate their claims which cannot be independently verified.

As the fighting raged in recent weeks, the US military was forced to carry out air strikes "to support" Afghan troops to repel Taliban offensives even as its overall withdrawal continues, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said on Thursday. — AFP ■

Macron to discuss legacy of nuclear tests in French Polynesia

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron was greeted with flower garlands and Tahitian dancers on the tarmac as he touched down Saturday night for his first official trip to French Polynesia.

While in the South Pacific territory, he plans to discuss its strategic role, the legacy of nuclear tests and the existential risk of rising seas posed by global warming.

Residents in the sprawling archipelago of more than 100 islands located midway between Mexico and Australia are hoping Macron confirms compensation for radiation victims following decades of nuclear testing as France pursued atomic weapons. The tests remain a source of deep resentment, seen as evidence of racist colonial attitudes that disregarded the lives of islanders.

"During this visit, the president intends to establish a strong and transparent dialogue by encouraging several concrete steps, on the history with the opening of state archives as well as individual compensation," said a French presidential official, who asked not to be named.

French officials denied any cover-up of radiation exposure at a meeting earlier this month with delegates from the semi-autonomous territory led by President Edouard Fritch.

The meeting came after the investigative website Disclose reported in March that the impact from the fallout was far more extensive than authorities had acknowledged, citing declassified French military documents on the nearly 200 tests. — AFP ■

President Emmanuel Macron (C) is making his first official trip to French Polynesia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Anti-graft investigator flees Guatemala to 'safeguard his life'

Guatemalan anti-graft investigator Juan Francisco Sandoval was from his post as head of the country's Prosecutor Against Corruption and Impunity (FECI) on Friday by the attorney general. **PHOTO: AFP**

GUATEMALA'S top anti-graft investigator, Juan Francisco Sandoval, fled the country Saturday to "safeguard his life", hours after he was sacked in a move that sparked international backlash, a human rights official said.

Guatemalan Ombudsman Jordan Rodas accompanied Sandoval to the Salvadoran border "in light of the difficult decision to leave the country to safeguard his life and integrity due to recent events," according to the Central American country's human rights body.

Sandoval had been fired from his post as head of Guatemala's Prosecutor Against Corruption and Impunity (FECI) on Friday by Attorney General Consuelo Porras.

Sandoval said he had encountered many obstacles in his work at FECI and that he was told not to investigate President Alejandro Giammattei without the attorney general's consent, saying this request went "against the autonomy and independence" of FECI.

The Attorney General's Office said he had been let go due to "constant abuses and frequent violations" of the institution and that attempts had been made to "undermine" the "work, integrity and dignity" of Porras.

His firing sparked criticism from the US State Department, which has called him an "anti-corruption champion", as well as outcry from humanitarian groups, civil society and businesses.

Acting Assistant Secretary for the US State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Julie Chung, condemned Sandoval's sacking in a tweet on Friday, saying it "is a significant setback to the rule of law." — AFP ■

Iraq arrests 'cell' over deadly bombing claimed by IS

IRAQI Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi announced Saturday the arrest of a "terror cell" behind a Baghdad market bombing that killed dozens and was claimed by the Islamic State group.

The attack sparked revulsion and renewed fears about the reach of IS, which lost its last territory in Iraq after a gruelling campaign that ended in late 2017, but retains sleeper cells in remote desert and mountain areas.

The bombing took place on Monday at Al-Woheilat market in Sadr City, a Shiite suburb in the capital, and officially killed 30 people, excluding the direct perpetrator.

"We have arrested all the members of the cowardly terrorist cell that planned and perpetrated the attack," Kadhemi said on Twitter, "and they will be put before a judge today."

The prime minister did not specify the number of people arrested, but a source at the interior ministry said the suspects were anticipated to make televised "confessions", a common occurence for major crimes in Iraq.

Deadly attacks were common in Baghdad during the sectarian bloodletting that followed the US-led invasion of 2003, and later on as IS swept across much of Iraq in a lightning 2014 offensive.

Iraq declared IS defeated in late 2017 after a fierce three-year campaign and attacks became relatively rare in the capital -- until January this year when a twin IS-claimed suicide bombing killed 32 people in another market.

The US-led coalition that supported Iraq's campaign against IS has significantly drawn down its troop levels over the past year, citing increased capabilities of Iraqi forces. — AFP ■

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (R) and Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein are pictured together after a press conference at the US State Department on Friday. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Historic Vatican fraud trial to expose London secrets

A once-powerful Catholic cardinal and nine others stand trial at the Vatican this week in an embezzlement scandal that allegedly saw charity funds used in a ruinous London property venture.

Ex-cardinal Angelo Becciu, who served as the equivalent of a papal chief of staff for Pope Francis before being fired last year, has been charged with crimes including embezzlement and abuse of office. – AFP ■

Another presidential hopeful arrested in Nicaragua

ANOTHER presidential candidate was arrested in Nicaragua on Saturday, police said -- the seventh detained by Daniel Ortega's government in the lead-up to elections on 7 November.

Noel Vidaurre was put under house arrest, accused of "undermining the sovereignty" of the country, in the latest of a series of arrests condemned by the United States and European Union. Long-term Nicaraguan leader Ortega is expected to seek a fourth consecutive presidential term in the elections. Ortega, 75, will be the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front's candidate for the presidential vote, Gustavo Porras, the speaker of Nicaragua's assembly, confirmed last week. – AFP ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.

(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

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

(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.

(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Myanmar rowing team to compete in major int'l tourneys next year

MYANMAR rowing team will not be competing in international competitions this year due to the Covid-19 epidemic. But they will compete in major international competitions next year.

Due to the epidemic, international sporting events, including this year's SEA Games, have been postponed to next year.

Myanmar Rowing Federation Preliminary players are selected for the canoe and international boat races. A training camp is also underway, the federation authorities said.

The Myanmar rowing team will compete in the Asian Beach Games, XXXI South-East Asian Games and other international tourneys in 2022.

The Viet Nam SEA Games will only feature canoeing and international boat races, and traditional boat races will not include this time.

The Asian Games and the Asian Beach Games will feature all three types of rowing events. Myanmar rowing team is preparing to compete and win major international competitions.

The Asian Games will be held in September 2022, but no dates have been announced for the SEA Games and the Asian Beach Games.

Myanmar rowing team is training with more than 50 preliminary players. Canoe players are also training abroad in preparation for next year SEA Games.

The Myanmar rowing team has not competed in international competitions since the 2019 Philippines SEA Games due to the global outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. — Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Home boy Horigome crowned first Olympic skateboarding champion

JAPANESE world champion Yuto Horigome held his nerve to be crowned skateboarding's first Olympic gold medallist after winning a tense street competition in Tokyo on Sunday.

The 22-year-old, who grew up just a stone's throw from the Olympic venue, landed three huge tricks in a row to eclipse American favourite Nyjah Huston, who imploded to finish seventh.

In searing heat at Ariake Urban Sports Centre, Horigome finished with scores of 9.35, 9.50 and 9.30 for a total of 37.18, with Brazil's Kelvin Hoefler second and US skater Jagger Eaton third. "This is special because it was held in Koto City, where I was born," said Horigome. "For me it's very meaningful, very inspiring."

But there was disappointment for Huston, the much-hyped multiple world champion, who ended with four straight falls in the tricks section as he wound up second-last in the final. Competition took place in front of rows of empty blue seats at the purpose-built arena, with fans barred from most Olympic events over the coronavirus.

Japan's Yuto Horigome competes in the men's skateboarding street final at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. **PHOTO: AFP**

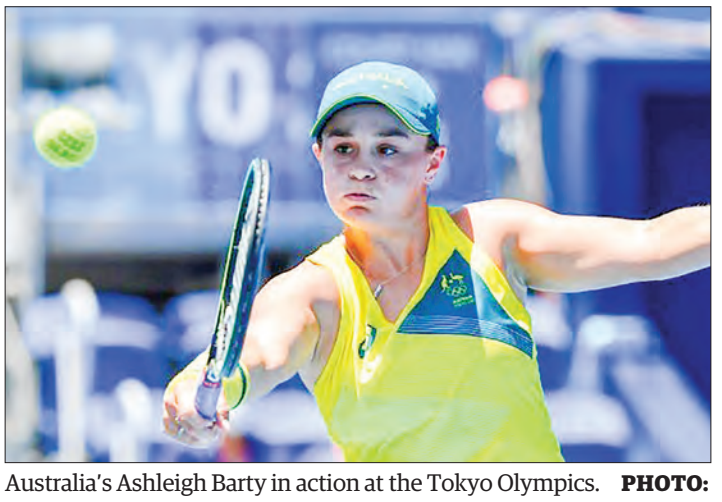
It was the first of four gold medals to be handed out in skateboarding's Olympic debut, with women's street to be contested on Monday followed by the men's and women's park competitions.

"There's an extra pressure here," Huston said. "I've been skating pro-contests for 15 years now but there's Street League, X Games, but if you compare that to the Olympics there's no comparison."

Head in his hands

Huston flirted with disaster in the heats, when he fell on his first run and botched his first two of five attempts at a one-off trick. But he fought back with a 9.13 and 8.96 to make the final in third place, with Horigome sixth. — AFP ■

World No.1 Barty suffers shock defeat in first round of Olympics



Australia's Ashleigh Barty in action at the Tokyo Olympics. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLD number one Ashleigh Barty crashed out of the Olympics women's singles tennis tournament in the opening round on Sunday, losing 6-4, 6-3 to Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo.

Barty, the reigning Wimbledon champion, dropped serve twice in each set and made 55 unforced errors compared to just 13 for her opponent.

"I'm disappointed I wasn't able to get through today, it just wasn't my day. Credit to Sara though, she is always a tough competitor," said Barty, the first women's top seed to lose in the first round at the Olympics.

"I never really felt comfortable out there and wasn't able to play the match on my terms. The key to my game is serving well and I wasn't able to do that today. I was a bit erratic and made too many errors." "I felt like I had to be aggressive today and she made me press and overplay," she added.

Sorribes Tormo, ranked 48th, will go on to face France's Fiona Ferro in the second round. — AFP ■