THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VIII, No. 104, 9th Waning of Waso 1383 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Sunday, 1 August 2021

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Volunteers invited to join Covid-19 disease prevention, control activities

Inoculation programmes are stepped up in Mandalay.

DUE to the increasing number of Covid-19 virus cases in the Mandalay Region, Covid-19 disease treatment centres and clinics have been set up in Mandalay District for prevention and treatment of the pandemic, an official said.

Volunteers who wish to assist in the quarantine centres can contact the District General Administration Department and relevant township management teams, officials continued.

"Charity is a priority for the common good. It is more important at this time. The virus is threatening peoples' lives. Some people want to work for the common good, regardless of the risk of infection at any time.

If you want to participate voluntarily, you can do it at any age. The clinic and quarantine centres will be set up as needed. Volunteers will be given the necessary medical check-ups before and after taking duties," said U Tin Win Shwe, chairman of the Mandalay District Administration.

In areas where mobility is restricted, all philanthropists, individually or as a group, are warmly welcomed to work together to prevent the Covid-19 disease, officials said.

SEE PAGE-2

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Statement on Ceasefire and Perpetual Peace

8th Waning of Waso 1383 ME
31 July 2021

1. The Tatmadaw after forming the State Administration Council has adopted the Five-Point Road Map and Nine Objectives for multiple developments such as political, economic and social affairs of the State with might and main. Moreover, as the accomplishment of the perpetual peace for the State is a must, the Tatmadaw suspends military operations in order to implement the peace process together with ethnic armed organizations.
2. Efforts are being made for enabling ethnic armed organizations to continue dialogues for successfully restoring the enduring peace and to smoothly undertake the peace process while timely preventing and controlling the infection of COVID-19 as the number of infected people rises due to the spreading of the variant COVID-19 pandemic in Myanmar at present. The State Administration Council is striving for cooperation with international organizations and local social organizations in addition to the United Nations for prevention, control and treatment of the disease. To be able to successfully implement these work processes, the Tatmadaw further suspended its military operations from 1 August to 30 September, except for encroaching and attacks on the security and administrative machinery of the government in addition to defence and administration measures across the nation.
3. It was hereby announced that during the period when the Tatmadaw further suspended its military operations, all relevant organizations should strive for restoring perpetual peace through negotiations.

Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

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Vaccinations to be conducted in eight townships in Nay Pyi Taw

Inoculation programmes are in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

VACCINATIONS will be carried out in eight townships in Nay Pyi Taw, the Union Territory, from 1 to 6 August to control the Covid-19 disease.

The vaccinations will be given twice a day: once from 9 am to 12 noon and another time from 1 pm to 5 pm.

People aged sixty and above, unvaccinated healthcare workers and volunteers who are giving services at the forefront to control and combat the Covid-19 pandemic, elderly people in old people's homes, religious persons, including monks and nuns, and civil servants, who have not been vaccinated, are included in the six priority groups to get vaccinated.

The vaccination works will be launched separately at BEHS No (1) in Tatkon Township, BEHS (Pyae San Aung) in Zeyathiri Township, Pobbathiri BEHS (20) in Pobbathiri Township, BEHS (Minkon) in Ottarathiri Township, Pyinmana BEHS (3) in Pyinmana Township, Lewei BEHS (1) in Lewei Township, Zabuthiri BEHS (7) in Zabuthiri Township, and Dekkhina BEHS (18) in Dekkhina Township.

The name of the vaccine to be injected is Sinopharm, and the first batch of the 38,000 vaccines will be distributed to all townships, according to the Nay Pyi Taw Council. — MNA

THE speech on the six-month term of office given by State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing will be broadcast live on MRTV, MITV, MRTV NRC, MWD HD, MWD Variety, MWD Documentary, Channel 7, Skynet Up to Date, One News, Channel 9, MNTV, radios and FM channels at 9 am on 1 August 2021.

Nearly 40,000 more Covid-19 vaccines administered across country

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Health and Sports, nearly 40,000 more Covid-19 vaccines have been administered from 26 to 30 July.

"According to yesterday's figures, there are more than 20,000 people over the age of 65 have been inoculated. Other groups include over 2,000 volunteers, over 4,000 civil servants and, more than 3,000 prisoners who have also received vaccine jabs as of yesterday.

Nearly 40,000 people have been injected with the Covid-19 vaccines," said Dr Kyaw Kan Kaung, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Health and Sports.

To reduce the incidence and mortality of the Covid-19 disease, vaccination efforts are being carried out across Myanmar to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus and the economic impact due to the pandemic affect and reviving the country's economy, officials said.

Covid-19 vaccination started in Myanmar on 27 January 2021.

More than 1.7 million people have been vaccinated, and donations have been made to ensure that the entire population is fully vaccinated, officials added.

The government of the People's Republic of China donated two million Sinopharm vaccines recently.

Myanmar has purchased two million Sinovac vaccines and one million vaccines have already arrived.

Thus, a total of three million vaccines will be given to three million people, officials continued. —Htet Lyan/ GNLM

Senior citizens, service personnel and prison inmates receive COVID-19 vaccines across country

THE COVID-19 vaccination has been administered to civil service personnel, prison inmates and people over the age of 65, including monks and nuns, in regions and states.

As of yesterday from 30 July, a total of 219 senior citizens in northern Shan State; 3,266 people including monks in southern Shan State; 1,757 people in eastern Shan State; 8,200 people in Mon State and Kayin State; 1,396 people in Taninthayi Region; 500 people in Yangon Region; 6,637 people in Ayeyawady Region; 7,371 people in Mandalay Region; 8,650 people in Bago Region were vaccinated.

The vaccination was undertaken by the Tatmadaw medical teams, in collaboration with doctors and medical workers from the public hospitals and volunteers, and officials encouraged and coordinated with them where necessary. — MNA

Volunteers invited to join Covid-19 disease prevention, control activities

FROM PAGE-1

"Volunteers have been recruited to help out voluntarily. The relevant authorities and experts will also teach them what they need to know about the disease and what to do next. I urge all those who wish to actively and wholeheartedly cooperate in the prevention and treatment of Covid-19 disease, which poses a threat to the health and life of the people," U Tin Win Shwe added.

In Mandalay Region, prevention and treatment of Covid-19 disease is being intensified, and quarantine centres are being set up, officials said.

The Covid-19 vaccines have been given to volunteers from respective Covid-19 centres and people aged 65 and over in seven townships of Mandalay District starting from 25 July. — Maung Aye Chan/GNLM

4,725 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 31 July, total figure rises to 299,185

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **299,185 after 4,725 new cases** were reported on 31 July 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **209,512** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **9,334** after **392** died. —MNA

We need cooperation

THE volunteers are also welcomed and some volunteers report. However, some do not dare to volunteer due to the threats. Some cannot do as they are away from here. I have already been told that I welcome such volunteering and that shows we need cooperation.

(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)

Detained Myanmar citizens in Thailand repatriated

A total of 61 Myanmar nationals who were charged and punished for petty crimes in Thailand returned to the country via the Thailand-Myanmar No 2 Friendship Bridge at Tachilek Township of eastern Shan State yesterday morning.

The group of returnees included 30 males and 31 females. The township officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies. They all were tested negative for COVID-19.

The eastern Shan State Administration body chairman U Ye Naing and other respective officials provided vehicles, food aids, sets of personal protective equipment and cash assistance to the returnees under the supervision of Wasibake Sayadaw of Kengtung Township. — MNA

The eastern Shan State Administration body chairman U Ye Naing and other respective officials provided vehicles, food aids, sets of personal protective equipment and cash assistance to the returnees under the supervision of Wasibake Sayadaw of Kengtung Township.

Readmission of Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand through Myawady resumes

READMISSION of Myanmar migrant workers from Thailand through the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge, which has been suspended, will resume again starting from 1 August.

A total of 200 people per day will be allowed to return from Thailand through the bridge, and arrangements are being made to facilitate the reception of the returnees systematically following the COVID-19 rules and regulations.

Officials from the Myawady District Administration Council and the Township Administration Council inspected the preparation BCF zone at the bridge yesterday morning and provided necessary assistance. – Htein Lin Aung/GNLM

Official are inspection preparation work to receive returnees from Thailand effective today.

Import processes of anti-COVID-19 equipment run as usual

Via Chinshwehaw.

THE Ministry of Commerce currently imposes temporary import licence exemptions for medical supplies to control the COVID-19 and offers services to import the materials via the border trade camps daily. Moreover, the ministry is working with the relevant departmental officials to facilitate the importation processes during public holidays in accordance with the notifications and SOP.

A total of 4,778 oxygen concentrators and 15,900 test kits arrived at Yangon International Airport yesterday. A bowser carrying 40 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 11 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 9,872 home oxygen concentrators, and 2 oxygen plants and 141 tonnes of masks were also imported via Muse, Myawady, Chinshwehaw and Kampaiti trade camps on the same day. These materials were imported by 57 vehicles of 36 companies.

From 12 to 31 July, 727 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 567 tonnes of liquid oxygen tank, 69,146 home oxygen concentrators, 322,878 test kits, 1,104 tonnes of mask, 8 oxygen tank, 11 oxygen generators and 4 oxygen concentrators were allowed to be imported by 749 vehicles.

The Ministry of Commerce is also cooperating with the ministry concerned to import the medical supplies. It also releases contact persons of relevant border trade checkpoints. — MNA

Via Chinshwehaw.

Muse

Muse

SINOPHARM, SINOVAC Covid-19 vaccines distributed to cities by ground-road vehicles

THE Department of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Sports, under the guidance of the State Administration Council, distributed two Covid-19 vaccines named Sinopharm and Sinovac yesterday via ground transport from the government medical warehouse on Min Dhamma Road, Mayangone Township, Yangon Region.

The vaccines were arrived from the People's Republic of China and are being distributed under the Central Vaccine Expansion Project title.

The distribution includes 44,000 doses to Yangon Region, 44,000 doses to Mandalay Region, 10,000 vaccines for Nay Pyi Taw council area, 12,000 vaccines to Bago Region, 13601 vaccines to Taunggyi, Shan State. All the vaccines were carried by Cold Chain Delivery Logistics vehicles.

The Covid-19 vaccine will be distributed to the public as soon as possible as per the target population groups.

The vaccines are being distributed in a timely manner according to the specified cold route standards, officials said.

The vaccines will also be distributed to remote areas by air with the help of Myanma Airlines and the military (Air Force), officials added. — MNA

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

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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.

Thaphan Seik Dam not affected amidst closest earthquake epicentre

THE Department of Irrigation and Water Resources Management (DWRM) has launched an immediate field inspection to check the condition of Thaphan Seik Dam and associated hydropower structures as 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck at a depth of 10 kilometres, which is 42 miles southeast distant from the Kanbalu seismic centre, at 3 pm on 29 July.

Although the epicentre was reported near Kanbalu area, Sagaing Region, Magway Region, Mandalay Region and Shan State (South) did not show any damage to dams or hydropower structures.

In particular, the Thaphan Seik Dam, which is closest to the quake, was carefully inspected including the dam wall, drain pipe, water diversion and hydropower plants and no hydropower structures were found to be affected, officials said.

Thaphan Seik Dam is seen intact after the 6.3-mgnitude earthquake whose epicentre is closest to it.

Thaphan Seik Dam is 108 feet high and 22,587 feet in length. It is the longest dam in Southeast Asia, with a total storage capacity of 2.8 million units, irrigating 500,000 acres of farmland and generating 30 megawatts of electricity.

The Department of Irrigation and Water Resources Management (MWRD) is prioritizing the dam safety work and has set up four dam inspection teams in the run-up to the rainy season to properly inspect the dams and fix any deficiencies found promptly.

In addition, in the event of an emergency, an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) has been drawn up for each dam to help reduce the impact on the livelihoods of the people living in urban areas below the dam, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. — MNA

Personal preventive practices against COVID-19 infection

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

Myanmar govt extends entry restrictions for all travellers until 31 Aug

THE Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 has announced that Myanmar has extended the restriction on entry of travellers until 31 August to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The announcement was made by Myanmar's Foreign Ministry. The Ministry has further extended the entry restrictions for all travellers to the end of August amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

All of these restrictions were extended till 31 July 2021 earlier, but the restriction has now been extended until 31 August.

Just like the previous announcements, foreign nationals, including diplomats and UN officials, who wish to travel to Myanmar by relief or special flights due to urgent official missions or compelling reasons, are asked to contact the nearest Myanmar mission for possible exceptions to certain visa restrictions.

To prevent the blowout of COVID-19 in Myanmar through air travel, the Ministry of Transport and Communication also issued a further extension of the suspension period of international commercial flights till 31 August.

Myanmar has received US$69.2 million as revenue from e-Visa and over 1.7 million tourists applied for e-Visa from 2016 to August 2020, according to the official data of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

Myanmar National Airlines, which is a state-owned airline, is planning to fly its relief flights to Manila, Singapore and Bangkok in August. On 3 August, MAN will fly Yangon-Manila-Yangon relief flight for its passengers going to Manila, Philippines and Myanmar citizens who want to return to Myanmar.

Besides, the Yangon-Singapore-Yangon relief flight will operate every Monday and Saturday in August while Yangon-Bangkok-Yangon special relief flight will run every Wednesday.

Myanmar has reported a total of 294,460 COVID-19 infections, with 8942 deaths as of 31 July. At the same time, a total of 205,677 patients have been discharged from hospitals and recovered from the virus.

The government authorities have also imposed a stay home order in 108 townships across the country as part of the measures to control the spreading of COVID-19 infections. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Mon State receives 90,000 COVID-19 vaccinations

ABOUT 90,000 people from Mon State are being vaccinated against COVID-19 starting from 28 July.

Those COVID-19 vaccines were donated by China and the vaccines are being administered to the elders from "Home for the Aged" in Mawlamyine town starting from 28 July, said an official from the State Health Department.

He also added that about 90,000 COVID-19 vaccines are being provided in Mon State. The current vaccination programme will give priority to those aged 65 and above and employees.

Under the government's vaccination plan, the priority groups will be health care staff, private healthcare staff, volunteers, Sangha, nuns, religious buildings and religious staff, civil staff and bank employees.

In addition, private factory workers, hotel and hostel staff, prisoners, staff from the transport industry and supermarket's employees will also be given priority for the vaccination.

"We have received vaccine quotas for 9,500 people from Thanbyuzayat township. Beginning from 29 July, those over the age of 65 are being started vaccinating. The vaccination is being provided in three locations: Thanbyuzayat town, Kyaikkhami town and Kyaikkadat village," said an official from Thanbyuzayat.

Around 1.75 million people have so far been vaccinated in the country of 54 million, according to authorities.

Myanmar reported 294,460 COVID-19 cases with 8,942 deaths since the first cases were reported in March last year. — ACM/GNLM

Health and Sports Ministry opens COVID-19 call centre

THE Ministry of Health and Sports opens the COVID-19 call centre at its office in Nay Pyi Taw as of 8 am on 22 June for the reply to queries on health awareness about COVID-19 and facts for abiding by the restrictions to the people on time.

The people can dial the following telephone numbers from 8 am to 9 pm on a daily basis for facts about the COVID-19 disease.

Contact numbers:
(1) 067-3411508
(2) 067-3411509
(3) 067-3411144
(4) 09-882557991
(5) 09-882557992
(6) 09-882557993

Japan rice field work marks Tokyo Olympics

FROM the ground, there's not much to distinguish the rice stalks in a field in Japan's Gyoda. It's only seen from above that a massive artwork marking the Olympics emerges.

The huge, living installation features iconic Japanese images: the famous wave and Mount Fuji of Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print and a Kabuki actor in striking facepaint, similar to one that featured at the Olympic opening ceremony.

The images are part of a yearly tradition started by the town of Gyoda in Saitama, north of Tokyo, in 2008 in a bid to bring in tourists.

In 2015, they even scooped a Guinness World Record for creating the world's largest rice field artwork: 28,000 square metres.

Each year, a committee comes up with a new design and hundreds of volunteers plant differently coloured varieties of rice to produce spectacular images that can be viewed from a nearby observatory.

A design is selected early in the year, with planting happening around May. In 2019, the theme honoured the Rugby World Cup, hosted by Japan.

This year's image was intended to highlight Japan's cultural heritage, on the assumption that crowds of foreign visitors would be in the country for the Games.

The rice field artwork is intended to highlight Japan's cultural heritage. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We wanted to show the Japanese arts of Ukiyoe (woodblock prints) and Kabuki (theatre) in a rice paddy field, which itself is also an important part of Japan's culture," Gyoda city official Shuhei Tagashira told AFP.

"We wanted to present Japan to the world."

It hasn't worked out that way, with foreign spectators barred and most Games events happening without even domestic fans allowed in the stands. — AFP ■

EU ready to impose sanctions over Lebanon crisis

Destroyed silos at Beirut's port following the 4 August massive chemical explosion. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE European Union said on Friday it was ready to impose sanctions on Lebanon's ruling elite over the political crisis wracking the country, after adopting a legal framework for such measures.

The crisis has left Lebanon without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020.

The country has plunged into what the World Bank described as one of the worst economic crises since the 1850s, and political players continue to squabble.

"This framework provides for the possibility of imposing sanctions against persons and entities who are responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon," the EU said in a statement.

The bloc's 27 member states must still vote unanimously for the list of people and entities to be sanctioned.

On Monday, Lebanese lawmakers tasked ex-premier and billionaire Najib Mikati with forming a government, days after fellow veteran politician Saad Hariri threw in the towel.

EU sanctions would target people obstructing this process, the statement read.

They "consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for persons, and an asset freeze for entities," it said. "In addition, EU persons and entities are forbidden from making funds available to those listed."

The EU could also sanction people "obstructing or undermining the implementation of plans approved by Lebanese authorities and supported by relevant international actors, including the EU, to improve accountability and good governance in the public sector or the implementation of critical economic reforms." — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

80 Kg blue sapphire unearthed from Sri Lanka's gem mine

A blue sapphire weighing approximately 80 kilogrammes was discovered in a gem mine in Rakwana, Ratnapura in Sri Lanka on Friday, local media reported.

The owner of the mine, Earl Gunasekara, was quoted by the local News First as saying that the gemstone will be put up for auction in China and it has been handed over to the National Gem and Jewellery Authority.

This gemstone is worth approximately 50 million U.S. dollars, the owner said after its valuation was done. The National Gem and Jewellery Authority have informed Gunasekara that 3,000 carats could be obtained after cutting the blue sapphire. – Xinhua ■

Taliban and Afghan forces clash again outside Herat city

AFGHANISTAN: Afghan and Taliban forces clashed again on the outskirts of Herat Saturday, a day after a police guard was killed when a United Nations compound in the western city came under attack.

Violence has surged across the country since early May, when the Taliban launched a sweeping offensive as US-led foreign forces began a final withdrawal that is now almost complete.

The militants have seized scores of districts across Afghanistan, including in Herat province, where the group has also captured two border crossings adjoining Iran and Turkmenistan.

Officials and residents reported renewed fighting on the outskirts of Herat Saturday, with hundreds fleeing their homes to seek shelter closer to the heart of the city.

Herat governor Abdul Saboor Qani said most of the fighting was in Injil and Guzara district – where the airport is located. – AFP ■

Super cruise ship sets sail from Saudi for first time

A super cruise ship has departed Saudi Arabia for the first time, setting sail for regional waters as the kingdom seeks to expand its tourism industry and diversify its oil-dependant economy.

The MSC Bellissima, a vessel longer than three football fields, departed for the first in a series of voyages from Jeddah Islamic Port to Aqaba in Jordan and Safaga in Egypt.

The launch of the service on Friday comes two days after Saudi Arabia opened its first cruise ship terminal at the port in Jeddah, on the kingdom's west coast.

"The inauguration of the first cruise ship port represents an important step... to support the growth of the tourism sector in the kingdom," Cruise Saudi managing director Fawaz Farooqi said, quoted by Saudi Press Agency.

Developing the tourism and leisure sector is one of the foundations of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's "Vision 2030" plan to prepare the Arab world's largest economy for the post-oil era.

The Gulf country enacted a landmark decision in 2019 to offer tourist visas, relaxing rules that had largely restricted visits to business travellers and Muslim pilgrims.

Citizens from 49 countries -- mostly European -- had become eligible to apply to visit the kingdom, which has a population of around 35 million.

Constructed in France, the MSC Bellissima is 315 metres (345 yards) long and has a capacity of 4,500 passengers, making it one of the world's largest cruise ships.

First launched in 2019 and operated by Swiss-based MSC Cruises, it will embark on 21 trips up until October 30. — AFP ■

1 AUGUST 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Wipe out terrorism for ensuring the life safety of the people

SOME people commit terrorism by holding arms across the world to kill others for their belief in political, religious, dogmatism and economic reasons. Terrorism is of atrocity, imposing frightening on the people so as to establish power. In fact, the terrors are holding the work plans to seize the power by short-cut.

Any country throughout the world does not accept terrorism. If one country encounters terrorism, the country wipes out the terrorism. However, terrorism is booming in the countries with the interference of foreign countries in internal affairs and the deterioration of national unity. At present, the results of terrorism can be seen in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. In fact, terrorism is like cancer. If the disease cannot be cured in time, it will be an uncontrollable disease.

> Only when terrorism ceases will the people live in peace and safety. If not, Myanmar will become the trend of Afghanistan in the future. That is why all people need to combat terrorism at any time.

Nowadays, the powerful country which does not accept terrorism gives a compromise with those of terrorism in a long run. Such a country has been combatting terrorism for a decade. Due to higher military expenses, its troops retreated from terrorist stronghold countries. Now, the people from these countries are in misery due to the unlawful activities of terrorists. More than 5,000 civilians including more than 1,600 children were dead in Afghanistan this year due to acts of terrorists.

The United Nations waned both sides for their clashes and conflicts which left casualties of civilians. The terrorist acts were committed in Myanmar based on the political changes this early year. Terrorists killed hundreds of innocent people while hundreds of terrorists were combatted.

It can be seen that some politicians committed the utter devastation programmes for seizing the State power in Myanmar. Such kind of utter devastation leads to hatred among the people and causes attacks among the people instead of fighting the existing government. So, their acts are more atrocious than the Taliban. Hence, it is necessary to join hands with the security troops to wipe out the terrorists.

Only when terrorism ceases will the people live in peace and safety. If not, Myanmar will become the trend of Afghanistan in the future. That is why all people need to combat terrorism at any time.

■ ■ ■

Food systems transformation a 'silver lining' in COVID crisis

A sustainable and prosperous planet can only be achieved through working together and in solidarity, the UN Deputy Secretary-General said on Wednesday at the end of a major global food security meeting.

AMINA Mohammed was speaking during her closing press conference at the Food Systems Pre-Summit in Rome, Italy.

Farmer with his cattle is crossing rice terraces in Indonesia. **PHOTO: FAO**

'A silver lining'

More than 500 delegates from 108 countries attended in-person, while thousands more joined virtually. Participants included government officials, smallholder farmers, producers, indigenous people, women and youth.

"This meeting has shown us that there's a silver lining to this COVID crisis: Food systems are a priority area for transformative investments, that can lead the transitions that we need to make," said Ms Mohammed.

"Only by working together – as one people, in solidarity – can we have a sustainable and prosperous planet for all."

The Rome gathering paves the path to the UN Food Systems Summit in September, where countries will underline the need to transform how the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

On 'fertile ground'

It is part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to deliver a more just future for all people and the planet by 2030.

The Pre-Summit has provided "fertile ground" for a strong outcome in September, according to Ms. Mohammed.

"We are united in our belief that within food systems lies the potential to achieve all of the goals for people, planet, and prosperity. There is tremendous energy bhind this belief," she said.

"There is recognition that our challenges are urgent and must be addressed at scale. There is also an incredible desire to break down the silos that exist between government Ministries and thematic sectors and communities."

Hope and solutions

In her remarks to the closing plenary, the UN deputy chief described the summit process as "a reason of hope" during the pandemic.

Even as the crisis has kept people physically apart, the process has actually brought them together.

"The Pre-Summit has shown me that we can deliver on the right to food, while securing the future of our planet," she said.

"Just as food brings us together as cultures and communities, it can also bring us together around solutions."

SOURCE: UN

■ ■ ■

Coronavirus threat rises as Japan cheers Olympic gold medal rush

A WEEK since the opening of the Tokyo Olympics, fraught with many difficulties, the gold medal rush of Japanese athletes has lifted the spirits of a public that remains largely worried about staging the multinational sporting event amid a once-in-a-century pandemic.

Behind the festive mood, however, the number of daily coronavirus cases is rising at an alarming rate in Japan, where only around 30 per cent of the eligible population were fully vaccinated as of Thursday, when the host city confirmed 3,865 new infections, hitting a record for the third straight day, and the nationwide single-day count topped 10,000 for the first time.

State of emergency

Medical experts say the state of emergency declared for Tokyo on 12 July, asking restaurants not to serve alcohol, has hardly yielded the desired effect in curbing the rising trend, warning that hospitals are already under increased strain.

"There is no doubt that cancelling the Olympics is the most effective way in bringing down the number of infections, including its psychological impact," said Kazuhiro Tateda, an infectious disease expert who sits on a government subcommittee on the COVID-19 response.

"But if that can't happen due to an international commitment and trust issues, the government needs to take stronger action before it is too late," said the Toho University professor.

Although the recent COVID-19 cases were not caused by the beginning of the Olympics, the celebratory atmosphere that followed after they finally began following a one-year postponement, the four-day holiday through 25 July and the arrival of the summer vacation season, could further spread the virus, he said.

The public has been excited by the strong performances of Japanese athletes, who have already racked up more gold medals than the 12 earned at the previous Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Golds won by judoka siblings Uta and Hifumi Abe in the women's under 52-kilogrammes and men's under 66-kg, by swimmer Yui Ohashi in the women's 400-metre and 200-metre individual medleys and by Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito in the inaugural table tennis mixed doubles competition, are a few examples of victories that made headlines across the country.

Yuto Horigome, 22, and Momiji Nishiya, 13, also became the first Olympic champions in men's and women's street skateboarding.

Olympic enthusiasm among young and old alike

The successful run and the broad media coverage have helped build Olympic enthusiasm among young and old alike.

"Once the Olympics started, I was moved by how athletes were doing their best. I also noticed how hard the organizers had worked to make these Olympics happen," said Ritsuko Kakeuchi, who lives in Tokyo's Koto Ward, where the highest number of venues is located.

Kakeuchi, who is in her 70s, said she used to think the Olympics should be cancelled or postponed because of the pandemic, but now she is glad that the athletes' training did not go to waste.

"By taking basic measures like wearing masks, I think it's possible to prevent infections, so I think the Olympics will be OK."

On a hot afternoon near the National Stadium, the main venue of the games, over 60 people were in line to snap a photo with a monument of the five Olympic rings. Some were wearing Japan uniforms, while others held towels with the Olympic logo.

Among them, a 53-year-old man drove for over an hour to see the stadium even though he is still unsure whether having the Olympics was the right choice.

"I'm not sure if I can be 100 per cent happy when an athlete wins a gold medal because I know that there are people who are having a difficult time because of the coronavirus," he said, adding that he is also worried that the Olympics may trigger a surge in COVID-19 cases, especially because he has not yet been vaccinated.

Olympic organizers have so far stressed that the games are being carried out in a "safe and secure" way with measures installed to make sure athletes and stakeholders are kept at a distance from the general public.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has ruled out the possibility of cancelling the Olympics, saying "there is no worry" as people are expected to move around less.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike said earlier this week she and Suga shared the view that the Olympics are being held "very smoothly" owing to various COVID-19 countermeasures.

Sense of crisis

Such an attitude by the political leaders contrasts with the sense of crisis expressed by those in the medical and healthcare spheres.

"I suspect the government is not proactively moving to suppress the number of infections because it is afraid it will be criticized if it calls for anti-infection steps during the Olympics," said Haruo Ozaki, head of the Tokyo Medical Association.

SOURCE: Kyodo

■ ■ ■

Uta Abe of Japan (blue) defeats the women's judo 52-kilogramme final against Amandine Buchard of France at the Tokyo Olympics at Nippon Budokan in Tokyo on 25 July 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Head of Service Organization Appointed

THE State Administration Council has appointed Daw Saw Thi Thin, Pro-Rector of Mandalay University, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, as Rector of Taunggyi University, Department of Higher Education, on probation from the date she assumes charge of her duties.

I say what I see:

By Oung Moung Moung

After reading the news article titled "Flawed scientific papers fuelling Covid-19 misinformation" in The Global New Light of Myanmar English newspaper the other day, I couldn't help considering that plenty of false news items and inaccurate contents are viral online, especially amongst a social media audience of million people, as rapidly as the Coronavirus infection, nowadays. We all need to be vigilant, at all times, against the dangers of misinformation and disinformation in the global Covid-19 crisis.

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines "misinformation" as "the act of wrong information about something". The nearly similar word "disinformation" means "false information that is given deliberately; especially by government organizations. Plausible or implausible, both misinformation and disinformation can be absolutely detrimental to the lives of people at high risk amidst the deadly coronavirus era at present the whole world is tackling. They can intentionally mislead all of us into doing wrong things or going wrong ways even albeit we all have been on the right track.

Myanmar national peoples should be more and more careful not to be prone to losses of our precious lives in this very time of fatal Coronavirus threat on the rise not only in Myanmar and its neighbouring countries but the whole world over as well. Since Covid-19 can mercilessly kill the people, whoever they are rich or poor and wherever they are living in any developed or developing country or any less developed or underdeveloped country, we all need to discard any online perilous pieces of misinformation or disinformation and just conscientiously heed the simple directives and useful instructions released both by the WHO and our health bureau: the Ministry of Health and Sports.

I do wish you all good health and wealth!

■ ■ ■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Saturday 31 July 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 1 August, 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region, scattered in (Southern and Eastern) Shan State, fairly widespread in Magway Region and Northern Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (7 -10)feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate to strong monsoon.

G20 hails culture as key driver of sustainable economic growth in post-pandemic world

Participants attend the Group of 20 (G20) ministerial meeting at the Colosseum in Rome, Italy, on 29 July 2021. Ministers from the Group of 20 countries on Friday concluded two days of talks on the role of culture in the world, saying that investing in cultural initiatives can be a driver of sustainable economic growth and that they should be a part of future G20 negotiations. **PHOTO: G20 ITALY/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

MINISTERS from the Group of 20 countries on Friday concluded two days of talks on the role of culture in the world, saying that investing in cultural initiatives can be a driver of sustainable economic growth and that they should be a part of future G20 negotiations.

The member states agreed to make culture-related negotiations a permanent part of the G20 going forward, starting with next year's presidency of Indonesia. Member states also agreed to develop national entities to protect cultural sites within their borders and to cooperate to protect vulnerable sites.

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi opened the talks Thursday evening at a special event at Rome's Colosseum, telling representatives from the G20 that he was proud that Italy was able to host the culture meeting as part of its presidency of the group of the world's largest economies.

"We know that support for culture is a crucial part of relaunching our economy," Draghi said, referring to the global economic slowdown sparked by the coronavirus pandemic. "When the world looks at us, they see art, music, and literature above all else."

That is a line taken up in discussions among member states and high-level delegations from 40 cultural delegations in Rome's historic Barberini Palace Friday.

According to a statement from the G20, the talks centred on five main areas: the need to protect and promote creativity and culture as an engine of economic growth; safeguarding historical and cultural sites against the risk of natural disasters, environmental degradation, and looting; promoting the use of new technologies to provide more access to the world's cultural riches; building more capacity to navigate cultural sector challenges through specialized training, especially for young people; and developing ways to use cultural heritage to help mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change.— Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

First flight of Afghan interpreters fleeing Taliban arrives in US

THE first flight carrying Afghans who worked as interpreters for American troops and diplomats has arrived in the United States, President Joe Biden said Friday, the start of an operation to evacuate thousands from possible Taliban retaliation.

Around 20,000 Afghans worked for the United States following the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and have applied for evacuation under the State Department's Special Immigrant Visas programme.

Some estimates suggest the total number of prospective evacuees under what has been dubbed "Operation Allies Refuge" could be as high as 100,000 once relatives are included.

Many of them fear retaliation from the Taliban, which has secured a vast swath of the country since foreign troops began the last stage of a withdrawal due to be complete by late August.—AFP ■

Fire destroys Brazil film archive

A film warehouse in Sao Paulo was partially destroyed by a fire Thursday just months after employees of the Cinemateca Brasileira had warned of such a disaster, accusing the government of deliberately neglecting the cultural institution.

Fifteen fire trucks and more than 50 firefighters battled the flames for over two hours, but were unable to save all of the cinematheque's warehouse, according to local television footage. The fire started around 6 pm during maintenance work on the air conditioning system, the fire department said, adding that at least two rooms containing films and other files had been destroyed. Fuelled by the highly flammable acetate film material, the fire spread rapidly through the building housing over 2,000 film copies, according to local reports. The warehouse that went up in flames was a secondary site and not the headquarters of the Cinemateca Brasileira, which boasts South America's largest film archive but has -- like many of Brazil's prized cultural collections -- been mired in allegations of poor government oversight.—AFP ■

Chinese coastguard ships depart for North Pacific on law enforcement mission

TWO coastguard ships despatched by the China Coast Guard (CCG) departed from Shanghai on Friday for the North Pacific Ocean to enforce fisheries law.

The two vessels will cruise on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean during a 31-day patrol, according to the CCG.

The mission aims to strengthen supervision over the fishing boats operating on the seas of the North Pacific Ocean, in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolution and the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, said the CCG.

The coast guard ships will also crack down on illegal fishing and board to inspect fishing vessels suspected of violations, the CCG noted.—Xinhua ■

A China Coast Guard ship on a fisheries law enforcement mission in the North Pacific Ocean sets sail from Shanghai, east China, on 30 July 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

British ex-adviser to Malaysia's Najib has graft charges dropped

A controversial British former media adviser to Malaysian ex-leader Najib Razak has had money-laundering charges dropped after agreeing to pay $1.7 million to scandal-hit sovereign wealth fund 1MDB, officials said Friday.

Paul Stadlen is believed to have left the country shortly after his boss, former prime minister Najib, suffered a shock election defeat in 2018.

Najib and many of his confidants faced corruption charges after the polls for their roles in a massive scandal involving the fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). Billions of dollars were looted from 1MDB in a fraud that spanned the globe, with the money spent on everything from a super-yacht to art.

Stadlen, whose whereabouts remain unknown, was charged in absentia in 2019 with laundering more than 14 million ringgit ($3.3 million).—AFP ■

Japan to expand virus emergency one week into Olympics

JAPAN'S government will extend a virus state of emergency in Tokyo and impose the measure in four more regions on Friday, as cases surge a week into the pandemic-postponed Olympics.

The Japanese capital reported a record number of new infections on Thursday as daily cases nationwide topped 10,000 for the first time.

On Friday, Tokyo 2020 organizers reported 27 new cases related to the event -- the highest daily figure yet -- although they insist there is nothing to suggest a link to rising infections in Japan.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said the government is acting "with a sense of urgency" and would announce a decision Friday on widening anti-infection measures.

Japan is set to expand and extend a virus state of emergency one week into the Olympics. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tokyo's current virus emergency, which shortens restaurant and bar opening hours and bans them from selling alcohol, is due to end August 22, but the government plans to extend it until the end of the month.

The extension will also apply to the emergency in southern Okinawa, and the restrictions will be expanded to three more regions around the capital and the western hub of Osaka, government spokesman Katsunobu Kato told reporters on Friday.

"We need to send a strong message," said Japan's Health Minister Norihisa Tamura.

He noted infections are still rising in Tokyo and Okinawa despite the virus emergency, with the more contagious Delta variant accounting for around half of new cases in the capital.

"We are very concerned," he added.

The Tokyo Games, which kicked off on 23 July, are being held under strict virus rules, including a spectator ban at almost all events and regular testing for participants. — AFP ■

China virus success under threat as Delta variant spreads

A coronavirus cluster that emerged in the Chinese city of Nanjing has now reached five provinces and Beijing, forcing lockdowns on hundreds of thousands of people as authorities scramble to stamp out the worst outbreak in months. China has previously boasted of its success in snuffing out the pandemic within its borders after imposing the world's first virus lockdown in early 2020 as Covid-19 seeped out of Wuhan in the centre of the country. But an outbreak this month driven by the fast-spreading Delta variant has thrown that record into jeopardy since it broke out at Nanjing airport in eastern Jiangsu province.

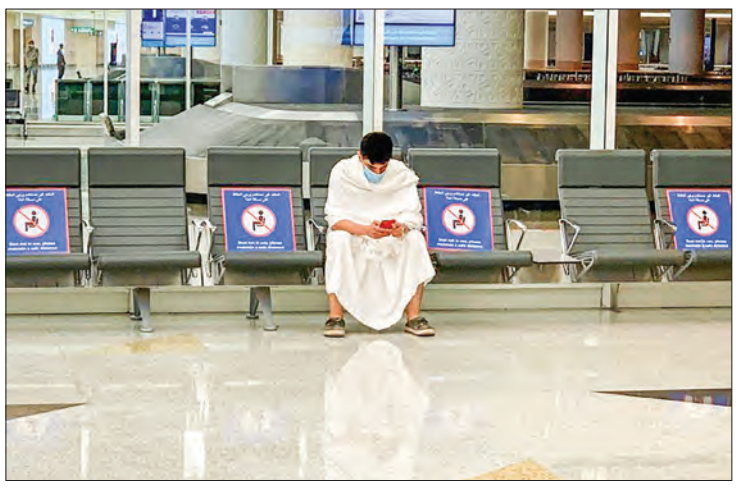
The city reported a total of 184 local coronavirus cases Friday, after nine cleaners at Nanjing Lukou International Airport tested positive on 20 July.

At least 206 infections nationwide have been linked to the Nanjing cluster, which officials have confirmed as the highly transmissible Delta variant.

The tourist city of Zhangjiajie in Hunan province has become another focal point of the latest outbreak after at least 18 cases were traced to the city, including infections picked up at a theatre, reported the state tabloid Global Times. — AFP ■

Ice blocks are placed to help cool off as people wait to receive COVID-19 tests outside a testing site at the Hexi compound of the Nanjing First Hospital in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province, 22 July 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/YANG SHAOGONG**

Saudi Arabia to reopen to vaccinated tourists after 17-month Covid closure



Saudi Arabia has said vaccinated tourists can enter the kingdom again, but has not announced a lifting of restrictions on the Islamic umrah pilgrimage. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SAUDI Arabia announced Friday it would reopen its borders to fully vaccinated foreign tourists after a 17-month closure due to the coronavirus pandemic, the state news agency said.

However, Riyadh did not announce any lifting of restrictions on the umrah, a pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time, which usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year.

"The Ministry of Tourism announced that the Kingdom will open its doors to foreign tourists, and lift... the suspension of entry for tourist visa holders, starting from August 1," the Saudi Press Agency reported.

It said travellers fully vaccinated with Saudi-approved jabs -- Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson -- will be able to enter the kingdom "without the need for an institutional quarantine period", provided they also have proof of a negative PCR Covid-19 test taken within the last 72 hours and register their details with health authorities. Riyadh has spent billions trying to build a tourism industry from scratch, as part of efforts to diversify its oil-reliant economy. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

France's La Reunion faces partial lockdown as Covid surges

FRANCE'S Indian Ocean territory of La Reunion will go into a partial lockdown due to a surge in Covid-19 cases, as Britain said the island was behind tight restrictions on travel from France.

There is growing concern among officials in Paris over the infection rates in France's overseas territories in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and the Pacific where vaccination uptake is far lower than the nationwide average.

The French military meanwhile said it was sending 40-50 doctors and nurses to the French Caribbean island of Martinique to fight a surge in cases.

A three-week partial lockdown was imposed in Martinique from last Friday.— AFP ■

Israel launches Covid booster shot campaign for over 60s

ISRAEL launched a campaign Friday to give the elderly Covid-19 booster shots, at a time when the rest of the world is still struggling to complete the standard course.

Kicking off the campaign, Israel's President Isaac Herzog, 60, received a third dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine at a hospital in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv.

"We are beginning the booster vaccination" so that life in Israel can return to "normal" as soon as possible, Herzog said after getting the injection.

"With this new step of the Israeli government... I believe that it's also a lesson to the entire humankind that we have to protect each other and take the necessary steps."

Israel was quick to roll out its vaccination campaign and had dropped many restrictions on public gatherings in June, but infections soared, and masks are once again mandatory in enclosed public places. About 55 per cent of its nine million population has been double vaccinated, most with the Pfizer-BioNTech jab, thanks to a massive campaign launched in late December after an agreement with its developers. Israel's digitised medical databases allowed for rapid large-scale studies, and its initial vaccine rollout of the jab was among the world's fastest.—AFP ■

Japan's 1st commercial-use quantum computer starts operations

THE University of Tokyo and International Business Machines Corp. have started operations of Japan's first commercial-use quantum computer, making a foray into a fiercely competitive field led by the United States and China.

The next-generation system, developed by the U.S. technology company with the university holding exclusive access rights to use it, was set up at Kawasaki Business Incubation Centre in Kanagawa Prefecture, southwest of Tokyo.

Photo taken on 26 July 2021, shows a quantum computer set up by the University of Tokyo and International Business Machines Corp. at Kawasaki Business Incubation Centre in Kanagawa Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

An industry-academia consortium, launched in 2020, including Toyota Motor Corp., Sony Group Corp. and Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings Corp. as members, has access to the computer for joint research. It will explore the practical applications of quantum computing and nurture human resources.

The IBM Quantum System One computer system is the second of its kind that IBM has built outside the United States, following one in Germany.

"Fields where quantum computers are put into practical use are expanding widely. I want to convey the achievements to the world," university's President Teruo Fujii said at a ceremony Tuesday to mark the start of the computer's operations.

Quantum computers use quanta, such as particles of light, which have the characteristics of both waves and particles, and can calculate scores of combinations at once, rather than one by one as in conventional computers.

Its ability to solve complex problems at faster speeds than supercomputers is expected to be used for developing new drugs and materials, creating financial models, optimizing logistics and in cryptography, which has become essential for the internet and digital currency.

"It is very significant that a base (for a quantum computer) has been set up in Japan as it will help nurture personnel who will be adept at actually operating it," said Hideyuki Mase, senior researcher at the Japan Research Institute.—Kyodo ■

Eurozone economy expands as restrictions recede

THE eurozone economy grew by a strong two per cent in the second quarter, according to official data released on Friday, as reopened businesses lifted activity out of the worst of the pandemic doldrums.

The expansion in Europe was stronger than in the United States, where the economy grew by 1.6 per cent compared to the previous quarter, and China, which saw a 1.3 per cent expansion in the period.

Some of the biggest rates of growth were seen in Italy and Spain, the countries worst hit by the first wave of the crisis in 2020.

Bottlenecks in the supply of components helped slow growth in Germany's economy. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

But the 19 countries that use the euro are still trying to catch up ground lost during the COVID-19 pandemic in which its economy suffered the most in the developed world.

All eyes are now on whether the momentum can hold, with the Delta variant of the virus seeing countries consider new orders to limit activity that could put a brake on the economy's growth dynamic.

Eurostat, the EU's official data agency, also said that inflation rose to 2.2 per cent, above the European Central Bank's target of near, but below, two per cent. Higher consumer prices, brought on by energy costs and clogged supply chains, are becoming a political hot potato.— AFP ■

Hong Kong GDP up 7.5% in Q2 as post recession recovery continues

HONG KONG'S economy is continuing to recover, advanced figures showed Friday, albeit at a slightly slower than expected pace with little sign that the international finance hub's coronavirus pandemic isolation will end any time soon.

Gross-domestic product rose 7.5 per cent from a year earlier in the second quarter according to data released by the government.

That compares to a revised 8 per cent growth in the previous quarter and is below a median estimate of 7.8 per cent by a Bloomberg survey of economists.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, GDP shrank one per cent compared with Bloomberg's forecast contraction of 0.8 per cent.

Hong Kong entered the coronavirus pandemic in the midst of a deep recession, battered by the US-China trade war and then several months of social unrest in 2019.

It emerged from six consecutive quarters of negative growth at the start of the year, finally ending a more prolonged downturn than during both the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2007-08 global crash.

The city has kept coronavirus infections low by effectively closing itself off to tourists and imposing strict social distancing and quarantine rules for any locals or business figures coming to the city.

The measures have kept the disease largely at bay but imposed an economic cost, especially on the travel and retail sectors with the city shuttered to the outside world -- and mainland China -- for the last 17 months.— AFP ■

Hong Kong has kept coronavirus infections low by effectively closing itself off to tourists and imposing strict social distancing and quarantine rules for any locals or business figures coming to the city. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

EU banks can weather 'harsh' crises but with big losses

EUROPEAN banks can weather a severe economic crisis with a sharp drop in their financial reserves, according to results from an extensive stress test published on Friday.

In the worst-case scenario, described as "very severe" and covering a period of three years, the European banking sector would suffer a capital loss of 265 billion euros ($314 billion) by 2023, the European Banking Authority said in a statement.

While erosion of core capital -- which regulators use to gauge a bank's financial soundness -- was within acceptable limits, shareholders in major lenders including PNB Paribas and Deutsche Bank would be looking at big losses, driven by bad loans.

"The assumptions made were unbelievably harsh," grumbled one bank boss, who declined to be identified.

"This test has a somewhat artificial side, where we pretend, for example, that in a 100-year crisis we would continue to extend credit as if nothing had happened." The worst-case scenario imagines starting from an already weak economic environment in 2020 and is based on an extended pandemic, a strong drop in confidence and prolonged low-interest rate environment.— AFP ■

World's first commercial re-programmable satellite blasts into space

THE world's first commercial fully re-programmable satellite lifted off from French Guiana on Friday on board an Ariane 5 rocket, ushering in a new era of more flexible communications. Unlike conventional models that are designed and "hard-wired" on Earth and cannot be repurposed once in orbit, the Eutelsat Quantum allows users to tailor the communications to their needs -- almost in real-time.

The satellite will be placed in orbit some 36 minutes after the launch.

Because it can be reprogrammed while orbiting in a fixed position 35,000 kilometres (22,000 miles) above the Earth, the Quantum can respond to changing demands for data transmission and secure communications during its 15-year lifetime, according to the European Space Agency.

Ariane 5 rocket carrying two telecommunications satellites, Eutelsat Konnect and GSAT-30, lifting off from its launchpad in Kourou, at the European Space Centre in French Guiana, on 16 January 2020. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The 3.5 tonne Quantum model has eight communications beams, each of which can be modified to change its area of coverage and also the power of the telecommunications signal it emits.

Using software made available to the customer, these changes can be made "in a matter of minutes", according to Eutelsat. This means the satellite can be used to provide mobile coverage for moving objects such as aircraft or oceangoing vessels, or to provide coverage after a natural disaster or for one-off events.

And at a time of growing concern over digital security -- as well as the possible weaponising of space -- Quantum is able to pinpoint the origin of signals emitted with or without malicious intent and take action to remedy the interference.— AFP ■

Kitchen robot in Riga cooks up new future for fast food

A PASTA order comes in and the robotic arm springs into action at the Roboeatz eatery in Riga. After five minutes of gyrations, a piping hot plate is ready. The Riga cafe, located under a crumbling concrete bridge, is designed in such a way that customers can observe the robotic arm at work. It also has a seating area, although most customers prefer take away since vaccination certificates are required to be able to eat indoors in Latvia.

A Roboeatz app allows customers to order and pay for their dish before picking it up at the cafe.

"The food tasted better than I expected!" said customer Iveta Ratinika, a teacher and a member of the Latvian capital's education board. Ratinika said she would encourage schoolchildren to come and observe the robotic arm in action and mused that there could be robots working at the school cafeteria within "a few years".—AFP ■

The Riga cafe, located under a crumbling concrete bridge, is designed in such a way that customers can observe the robotic arm at work. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

China factory activity slows in July, hit by extreme weather

CHINESE factory activity weakened in July to its lowest level since the start of the pandemic, data showed Saturday, as manufacturing was impacted by slowing demand, weak exports and extreme weather.

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of manufacturing activity in the world's second-largest economy, dropped to 50.4 in July from June's 50.9, the National Bureau of Statistics said. A PMI reading of over 50 indicates expansion, while below that figure suggests contraction.

The reading appeared to be levelling out between April and June, and July shows the first marked decline, making it the lowest PMI figure since February 2020, analysts said.—AFP ■

US oil giants to keep a lid on spending even as profits surge

US oil giants ExxonMobil and Chevron reported strong profits Friday riding a wave of higher prices amid recovering demand, but pledged to keep a lid on spending.

The results marked a 180-degree reversal from this time last year when the companies suffered hefty losses amid heavy pandemic restrictions that crimped economic activity and halted travel. "Positive momentum continued during the second quarter across all of our businesses as the global economic recovery increased demand for our product," said Exxon Chief Executive Darren Woods.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0180N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HALUS VOY.NO. (KHLU0180N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BLPL TRUST VOY.NO. (2158S/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL TRUST VOY.NO. (2158S/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V HADDOCK VOY.NO. (128N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HADDOCK VOY.NO. (128N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (215N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY.NO. (215N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES

NEWS IN BRIEF

US VP Harris to visit Vietnam, Singapore: White House

US Vice-President Kamala Harris will visit Vietnam and Singapore next month to discuss regional security issues and the global Covid-19 pandemic response, the White House announced Friday.

Harris heads to the Southeast Asian nations "to strengthen relationships and expand economic cooperation with two critical Indo-Pacific partners of the United States," senior advisor Symone Sanders said in a statement.

Harris, an Asian-American whose mother was of Indian origin, will be the first US vice president to visit Vietnam.

A schedule for the August trip has yet to be released.

It comes with Beijing adopting an increasingly assertive posture in the South China Sea, where it has made expansive and controversial territorial claims.

Neighbour Vietnam also has competing claims in the resource rich sea, one of the world's main shipping and trade routes.—AFP ■

Mountaineer dies on Mont Blanc despite rescue attempts

A French mountaineer died close to the summit of Mont Blanc on Friday (30 July) after rescuers made several attempts to get to him in a violent storm.

The man, in his forties, was climbing Europe's highest peak when he lost his way and got stuck at 4,800 metres, assailed by "the storm, the wind, the cold," rescuer Andre-Vianney Espinasse told AFP.

He called for help on Thursday evening.

Several helicopters attempted to rescue him but couldn't get to him due to the weather, Espinasse said.

As a result, one helicopter dropped rescuers off lower down, at 3,200 metres, forcing them to climb the rest of the way at night.

At two in the morning, after reaching a refuge and waiting for the weather to ease, they climbed further into heavy winds.

They found the man some two hours later, suffering from severe hypothermia.

But "at 5.30, in awful wind, the mountaineer suffered cardiac arrest," said Espinasse.—AFP ■

US says Moscow forcing it to fire Russian embassy employees

The US embassy in Moscow is now forbidden to hire Russian nationals. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE US State Department said Friday that Moscow is forcing it to lay off nearly 200 Russian employees in its Russia diplomatic missions, saying the move will constrict diplomatic efforts and embassy operations.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said 182 Russian employees and dozens of contractors in Moscow, Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg would be let go after a Russian government order in April in retaliation for US actions against Russia.

"Starting in August, the Russian government is prohibiting the United States from retaining, hiring, or contracting Russian or third-country staff, except our guard force," Blinken said in a statement.

"These unfortunate measures will severely impact the US mission to Russia's operations, potentially including the safety of our personnel as well as our ability to engage in diplomacy with the Russian government," he said.

In April, Washington expelled 10 Russian diplomats, expanded restrictions on Russian banks and blacklisted 32 Russians over the Kremlin's US election interference, a massive cyberattack and other hostile activity.

In retaliation, Russia expelled 10 US diplomats and forbid the US mission from hiring non-US nationals, starting on 1 August.—AFP ■

Police guard killed at UN compound as fighting rages for Afghan city

AN Afghan police guard was killed Friday when a United Nations compound came under attack in Herat, officials said, as fighting raged between government forces and the Taliban on the outskirts of the western city.

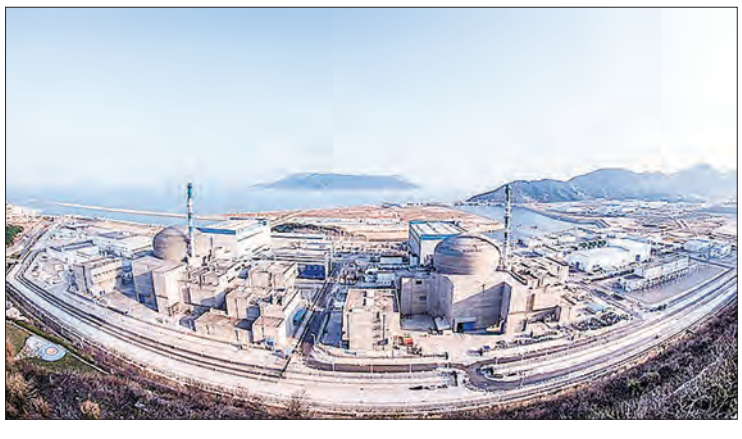
Violence has surged across the country since early May, when the Taliban launched a sweeping offensive as the US-led foreign forces began a final withdrawal that is now almost complete. The militants have seized scores of districts across the country, including in Herat province, where the group has also captured two border crossings adjoining Iran and Turkmenistan. On Friday, the Taliban clashed with government forces on the outskirts of Herat city, the provincial capital, forcing scores of families to flee, residents said, as the insurgents tightened their noose.

During the fighting, the UN's main compound in Herat came under attack by rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire, a statement issued by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said.

"This attack against the United Nations is deplorable and we condemn it in the strongest terms," said Deborah Lyons, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.—AFP ■

Afghan forces have been deployed around the western city of Herat in recent days. **PHOTO: AFP**

China nuclear reactor shut down for maintenance after damage



Chinese authorities last month blamed minor fuel rod damage for a build-up of radioactive gases at the Taishan plant in Guangdong province, describing it as a "common phenomenon" with no need for concern. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/AFP**

A reactor at a nuclear plant in southern China has been shut down because it is damaged, the operator said on Friday (Jul 30), but it insisted there were no major safety issues.

Chinese authorities last month blamed minor fuel rod damage for a build-up of radioactive gases at the Taishan plant in Guangdong province, describing it as a "common phenomenon" with no need for concern.

French nuclear firm Framatome, which helps operate the plant, last month reported a "performance issue" which caused the US government to look into the possibility of a leak.

"After lengthy conversations between French and Chinese technical personnel, Taishan Nuclear Power Plant ... decided to shut down Unit 1 for maintenance," China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) said on Friday in an online statement.

The company added that "a small amount of fuel damage" had occurred.

CGN said both reactors at the plant have "maintained safe and stable operations throughout" and that the faulty unit is "completely under control".

Engineers will now "find the cause of fuel damage and replace the damaged fuel", the statement added.—AFP ■

US seizes tanker used to deliver oil to N.Korea

THE United States on Friday seized a Singapore-owned oil tanker that was used to make illegal oil deliveries to North Korea, the Justice Department said.

A New York federal judge issued a judgment of forfeiture authorizing the United States to take ownership of the M/T Courageous, which is currently in Cambodia.

The ship, which has a capacity of 2,734 tonnes, was purchased by Singaporean national Kwek Kee Seng, who remains at large, according to a Justice Department statement.

"Kwek and his co-conspirators engaged in an extensive scheme to evade... US and UN sanctions by using vessels under their control to covertly transport fuel to North Korea," the statement said. From August to December 2019, the Courageous would illegally stop transmitting its location information. Satellite imagery showed that during that time, the tanker engaged in ship-to-ship transfers of more than $1.5 million worth of oil to a North Korean ship.

The oil tanker M/T Courageous has been seized by US authorities over illegal oil deliveries to North Korea. **PHOTO: US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/AFP**

The Department has accused Kwek of trying to hide the scheme by using shell companies, lying to international shipping authorities and falsely identifying the Courageous to avoid detection.

Kwek has been charged with conspiracy to evade economic sanctions on North Korea and money laundering conspiracy.—AFP ■

Israel blames Iran over lethal attack on oil tanker off Oman

TWO crew members of an oil tanker managed by a prominent Israeli businessman's company were killed off Oman in what appears to be a drone attack, the vessel's London-based operator and the US military said Friday, with Israel blaming Iran.

Tehran is "sowing violence and destruction," an Israeli official said.

The Islamic Republic "is not only Israel's problem, but it is the world's problem. Its behaviour threatens the freedom of navigation and global commerce", the official added.

US Navy forces came to the aid of the crew in response to an emergency distress call and saw evidence of the attack, said an American military statement.

It added that initial indications "clearly point" to a drone-style attack, and that US Navy ships were now escorting the vessel with US personnel aboard to help.

Analysts said the attack bore all the hallmarks of tit-for-tat exchanges in the "shadow war" between Israel and Iran, in which vessels linked to each nation have been targeted in waters around the Gulf.

The Israeli official warned that "our campaign against them (Iran) will continue".

Zodiac Maritime, owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, said the incident on board the MT Mercer Street on Thursday killed one Romanian and a UK national, who was a guard for British maritime security firm Ambrey. The vessel was in the northern Indian Ocean, travelling from Dar es Salaam to Fujairah with no cargo onboard when the attack occurred, it said.—AFP ■

A U.S. Navy crewmember looks through binoculars from aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh during a Strait of Hormuz transit earlier this month. A Japanese-owned oil tanker that came under attack off the coast of Oman is back sailing under her crew's control, its Israeli operator said on Friday. **PHOTO: US NAVY/AFP/FILE**

UK slammed over 'shocking conditions' for asylum seekers

A demonstration calling for the closure of an immigration centre in the UK in 2018. **PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/AFP/FILE**

THE UK government was accused Friday of holding asylum seekers and other migrants, including women with babies and children, in "shocking conditions" after they have crossed the Channel in small boats.

Opposition Labour lawmaker Yvette Cooper, who chairs parliament's home affairs scrutiny committee, raised her "serious concerns" about the situation following a visit to the port town of Dover where most are initially detained. The criticism comes as the government grapples with record numbers of asylum seekers and other migrants crossing the Channel to reach Britain, and pledges a crackdown. Immigration and control of Britain's borders was a major issue in Brexit, before the country left the European Union last year. Last week saw an unprecedented 430 people intercepted in a single day in the world's busiest shipping channel or picked up on the shores of southeast England after crossing from France.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US sanctions top Cuban police for suppressing protests

THE US slapped fresh sanctions Friday on Cuban police for suppressing anti-government demonstrations this month, with President Joe Biden warning additional punitive measures were in store if the communist-ruled nation does not undertake sweeping reforms.

"There will be more unless there is some drastic change in Cuba, which I don't anticipate," Biden told reporters before hosting a group of Cuban-American leaders at the White House. Earlier in the day the US Treasury named National Revolutionary Police Director Oscar Callejas Valcarce and Deputy Director Eddy Sierra Arias to its sanctions blacklist, which freezes any property they might have in the United States and bars US transactions with them. "The Treasury Department will continue to designate and call out by name those who facilitate the Cuban regime's involvement in serious human rights abuse," said Andrea Gacki, director of the Treasury's main sanctions unit, the Office of Foreign Assets Control.– AFP ■

Wife of slain Haiti leader says killers left her for dead

The wife of Haiti's murdered president, seriously wounded in the very attack that killed her husband, listened in terror as the gunmen ransacked their home, she said in her first interview since the assassination. The killers eventually found what they were looking for in president Jovenel Moise's residence, and made cursory efforts on their way out to see if first lady Martine Moise was still alive.

"When they left, they thought I was dead," she told the New York Times in an interview published Friday, weeks after the July 7 assassination that heaped a fresh crisis on the fragile Caribbean nation.

She survived and was rushed for emergency treatment to the United States, where she spoke to the newspaper while flanked by security guards, diplomats and family. Martine is left wondering what happened to the 30 to 50 men usually posted to guard her husband at the house. None of those guards were killed, or even wounded.–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.

Olympics: Britain wins, Japan 13th in triathlon mixed relay debut

British team for triathlon mixed relay celebrates after winning the gold medal on 31 July 2021, at Tokyo's Odaiba Marine Park. **PHOTO: KYODO**

GREAT Britain made history on Saturday by winning the first-ever Olympic gold in the triathlon mixed relay, with the United States securing silver and France bronze. The Japanese team of Yuko Takahashi, Kenji Nener, Niina Kishimoto and Makoto Odakura finished 13th out of 16 teams that completed the fast-paced race, a four-person event featuring two men and two women from each country.

"Racing a new event was fulfilling and fun. We didn't get the result we hoped for, but we all did our best. I have no regrets. There's joy in being a part of a relay team and I was motivated to do well," said Odakura. In a high-octane Olympic debut for triathlon mixed relay at Tokyo's Odaiba Marine Park, each athlete completed a supersprint distance consisting of a 300-metre swim, draft-legal 6.8-kilometre bike and 2-km run before tagging off to the next teammate. The British team of Jessica Learmonth, Jonathan Brownlee, Georgia Taylor-Brown and Tokyo Games men's silver medalist Alex Yee finished with a time of 1 hour, 23 minutes, 41 seconds. Brownlee won his first Olympic gold medal in Tokyo after claiming men's silver in Rio and bronze in London. The air temperature was 27.0 C, relative humidity was 66.8 per cent and water temperature was 28.0 C at the start. Japan, who finished 3:21 behind Great Britain, received a costly penalty after Nener and Kishimoto tagged off outside the exchange zone in the second transition. The 10-second penalty was served in the fourth leg and potentially cost them one place in the race.—Kyodo ■

History-chasing Ledecky hungry for more as she eyes Olympic record

KATIE Ledecky is in rarefied company on the all-time list of female Olympic swimmers after claiming two more golds in Tokyo but her hunger for glory shows no sign of abating.

The American came to Japan with five gold medals under her belt and triumphed in the 800m and 1500m freestyle after the disappointment of conceding her 200m and 400m titles to Australian rival Ariarne Titmus.

Only American Jenny Thompson is ahead of the 24-year-old on the all-time list of female Olympic gold medallists in swimming, with eight.

"I'm really happy, that's the best way to put it," an exhausted Ledecky said after outpacing Titmus by more than a second to claim her third straight 800m gold medal on Saturday.

"I still love this sport, I love it more every year. I'm going to give every ounce I have to this sport. I love the training, the day to day, so I'll keep doing it until I think it's time."—AFP ■

Angry Djokovic loses to Carreno Busta in Olympics bronze-medal match

NOVAK Djokovic hurled his racquet into the empty stands and smashed another on a net post as he lost his cool on his way to defeat against Pablo Carreno Busta in the Olympics bronze-medal match on Saturday.

The 20-time major champion, whose Golden Grand Slam hopes were dashed by Alexander Zverev on Friday, lost 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 as Spain's Carreno Busta won on his sixth match point. Djokovic and his mixed-doubles partner Nina Stojanovic then withdrew before their bronze-medal match against Australians Ashleigh Barty and John Peers, according to organizers. It was not immediately clear why. It means that the men's world number one will leave Tokyo without a medal. It is the first time top seed Djokovic has lost two straight singles matches since defeats by Dominic Thiem and Roger Federer at the 2019 ATP Tour Finals. The match with Carreno Busta was a gripping encounter played over two hours and 47 minutes in the suffocating Tokyo heat, with both men desperate to secure a medal.

Novak Djokovic cut a frustrated figure during his loss to Pablo Carreno Busta at the Olympics on Saturday. **PHOTÖ:**

Djokovic, who will bid to win the final leg of the calendar Grand Slam at the US Open, which starts next month, saved match point in the second-set tie-break to force a decider, and then four more late in the third set.—AFP ■