THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

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

Announcement released for those in past activities to contact as planned to close and withdraw files of lawsuits under the law

SOME students, youths, public service personnel and citizens evaded from the scenes with worries to face action taken due to participation in the protests and anti-government movements such as CDM activities incited and threatened by NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful and terrorist groups CRPH and NUG, persons and organizations from local and foreign countries who did not wish to see peace and stability of the State after 1 February 2021 when the Tatmadaw took the State duty.

At present, they wish to return home with trust in the endeavours of the State Administration Council and with anticipation to enjoy peace and stability by returning to the legal fold. However, they are in difficulty with facing worries and they do not know how to contact.

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Mandalay Central Prison vaccinates 600 inmates against COVID-19

MANDALAY Central Prison in Ohbo Ward of Aungmyethazan Township of Mandalay vaccinated the inmates against COVID-19 yesterday.

A total of 600 inmates—350 males and 250 females were vaccinated against COVID-19 by the health workers in line with the COVID-19 health rules.

Regarding the vaccination processes, U Ye Yint Naing, deputy director of the prison said, "We will give vaccines to all inmates. Some received the vaccine twice and so we would not vaccinate such people and positive patients. They cannot receive the vaccines for six months. On the first day, we give priority to the people over 60 years of age. We will vaccinate the inmates at each prison building. The prison medics and health workers vaccinate the inmates. The vaccination process is being conducted outside. And we also give vaccines to the inmates just like that. I would like to say thank you to the leaders of the country and officials of the Prisons Department for such vaccination processes."

An inmate said," I am happy for receiving vaccines. I believe in vaccines. I want to thank the country's leaders, prison heads and officials including health workers. They check our body temperature and blood pressure before the vaccination. I have no fear of getting vaccinated. When I saw the vaccination programmes on TV, I wish I would get the vaccines. But I think it will take time to get the vaccine here but I am so happy that I get the vaccine so fast."

Another female inmate also said," I am glad that we are in priority groups for vaccination. I wish may all the people who arrange the vaccination processes for us be peaceful and healthy. I also thank them."

An inoculation process is underway in the Mandalay Central Prison on 3 August 2021.

Before the vaccination, the health workers check the body temperature, blood pressure and blood oxygen level and vaccinate those who are in normal condition.

Moreover, the officials arrange the halls for the people to take a rest for 30 minutes after vaccination and prepare the necessary health care services in case of sudden illness.

— Maung Aye Chan/GNLM

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UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin participated in the ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting and the 22nd ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting which were held via videoconference yesterday at 8:00 am from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The Ministerial Meetings were participated by Foreign Ministers from ASEAN and Dialogue Partners and their representatives and discussed the future directions of cooperation between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners and exchanged views on regional and international issues. The Secretary-General of ASEAN also attended these Meetings.

The ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam, and Mr Chung Eui-yong, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. At the Meeting, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin underscored the three areas where ASEAN and ROK could advance cooperation namely: to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccine; to quickly recover from economic impact with a view to bringing mutual benefits and sustainable trade and investment based on RCEP and AKFTA. Union Minister, while welcoming countries that have ratified the RCEP Agreement also updated the meeting of Myanmar's completion under Article 20.5 and 20.6 of the RCEP Agreement.

The ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting was subsequently held and it was co-chaired by Teodoro Locsin Jr, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and Mr Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. Union Minister Foreign Affairs highlighted that Myanmar was pleased to see the continued progress in the ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations and emphasized that over the past 30-year's journey, ASEAN and China have had enjoyed good neighbourliness, mutual trust, mutual support and mutual benefit. Union Minister, while looking forward to the Commemorative Summit, also welcomed China's proposal to maintain the theme for 2022 as "Sustainable Development Cooperation", appreciated China's support to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and contribution to the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund to fund projects relevant to addressing public health emergencies. Union Minister also thanked China for the donation of COVID-19 vaccines and related materials. After the Meeting, while congratulating Secretary Locsin for the successful country coordinatorship for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations said that Myanmar, as the new country coordinator for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, is committed to maintain the positive momentum and look forward to working closely with ASEAN and China for mutually beneficial cooperation for peoples.

The ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting was held in the afternoon and was co-chaired by Mr Bui Thanh Son, Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Mr Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan. At the Meeting, Union Minister stressed the need to further strengthen COVID-19 joint responses; enhance cooperation on disaster management and humanitarian assistance, and looked forward to Japan's continued support of IAI Work Plan IV.

The 22nd ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held and the Meeting was chaired by Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam, and was attended by Foreign Ministers from the ASEAN Member States Plus Three countries (China, Japan and Korea). The Secretary-General of ASEAN also attended the Meeting. At the Meeting, Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries exchanged views on regional and international issues and reviewed the areas of cooperation under the framework of ASEAN Plus Three and exchanged views on ways to move forward. Union Minister underscored the importance to effectively combat COVID-19 and equitable access to the vaccine; to develop the digital economy further to mitigate productivity loss and raise the supply chain management regionally and globally.

Together with the Union Minister, Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended the meetings.—MNA

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health
Order No 299/2021

11th Waning of Waso 1383 ME

3 August 2021

THE Ministry of Health hereby announced the order by exercising the authority stipulated in Sub-Section (b) of Section 21 of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. The Ministry of Health has taken preventive measures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in real-time. Therefore, people from some townships of the Mandalay Region and Mon State need to stay at home due to the number of confirmed patients on the rise in these townships.
2. Hence, the people residing in the following townships in Mandalay Region and Mon State are involved in the Stay-at-Home programme.
   (a) Mandalay Region
      (1) Myingyan Township
   (b) Mon State
      (1) Bilin Township
3. The people inclusive of the Stay-at-Home programme of the township need to abide by the following disciplines: -
   (a) Reside at their homes only
      (1) except for service personnel serving at government department;
      (2) except for those serving at private firms such as banks and monetary services, filling stations, foodstuffs and livestock and fishery, cold storage, medicine and medical equipment production and distribution, purified water production and sales, factories of manufacturing daily personal goods and related industries;
      (3) except for staff from private ports, shipping agencies offices, international freight forwarder companies, customer service companies and agencies, con¬tainer truck services, port export and import cargo trucks and watercraft, inland container depot and dry ports;
      (4) except for staff from communication service providers such as post services, line phones and mobile phone communication services, internet services (exclusive of sales of telephone and data at shops), tower and fibre maintenance services;
   (b) relevant region and state governments to issue necessary orders and directives and supervision for prevention of COVID-19 infection at CMP factories and workshops;
   (c) organizations and companies to perform their works from homes;
   (d) one person from each house to go out shopping;
   (e) only two persons per house to go to hospitals and clinics;
   (f) wear masks if they go outside the houses;
   (g) allow ferries and registered vehicles only to transport returnees from workplaces to pass the wards;
   (h) allow one person only in addition to the driver in a vehicle for shopping in the ward and two persons except for the driver to go to hospitals or clinics;
   (i) abide by the standard operating procedures (SOP) for trucks to ensure smooth flow of commodities in the township;
4. People need to inform relevant ward/village administration bodies about seeking approvals to go outside the houses if they have reasons to raise the limited number of participants in the measures and other emergency issues mentioned in subparagraphs (d), (e) and (h) of Paragraph 3. The relevant administrative bodies need not allow ingoing and outgoing persons, except for officials and those returnees from duty.
5. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the order under the existing laws.
6. The order came into force at 4 am on 4-8-2021.

Dr Thet Khaing Win
Union Minister

Participation of the whole country needed

REGARDING medical workers who have been absent from hospitals, he said some of the medical workers who have been participated in the CDM campaign are urged several times to return to work as the COVID-19 crisis has become a national matter, and some have returned and some do not for various reasons. He added, "I urged all the medical workers again to work together with the Ministry of Health at hospitals."

(Excerption from the speech of Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the coordination meeting on the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 on 24-7-2021)

Policies of Ministry of Information will not be changed during the period of Provisional Government: Union Information Minister

A CEREMONY to present reports on work progress in respective departments of the Ministry of Information to Union Minister for Information and for Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Ohn took place at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his speech, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn stressed the need to continue the existing works under the prevention and control plans of COVID-19 with momentum despite setting the long office holidays due to severe infection of the disease. The policies of the Ministry of Information will not be changed during the period of Provisional Government but a new presentation must be created. Hence, the Union Minister urged all to discuss the presentation and undertakings in accord with the current situation in addition to the existing performances.

The Union Minister said that as the Ministry is media, it cannot take any delay for the work process. Some measures must be taken in a speedy and correct manner. The Ministry of Information, a State-level department, will be carried out for staff affairs and policies as usual but necessary measures must be changed. While holding up the policies, the works must be shaped in entertainment.

The Ministry of Information must present the firmed and correct news as a media to secure the success of the State goal. Likewise, it is necessary to coordinate with those from motion pictures, dramatic performers and musicians to contribute to the future State. As such, the Union Minister urged all to give suggestions for better creativities and changes.

Deputy Minister U Ye Tint discussed efforts of media under the Ministry of Information to further raise public awareness.

Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, directors-general and managing directors reported on the work progress of respective departments.

The Union Minister gave a remark after coordinating their reports. —MNA

Anti-COVID-19 equipment normally imported as planned

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 as per the notifications and SOP.

A total of 10,801 oxygen concentrators and 33,942 test kits arrived at Yangon International Airport yesterday. A bowser carrying 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 20 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 33 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 5 oxygen generators, 12,248 home oxygen concentrators, 63,942 test kits and 21 tonnes of masks were also imported via Muse, Myawady, Chinshwehaw, Tachilek, Kampaiti and Kawthoung trade camps on the same day. These materials were imported by 69 vehicles of 38 companies.

In August, 133 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 32 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 38 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 5 generators, 22,813 home oxygen concentrators, 135,942 test kits, 183 tonnes of masks and 108,454 PPEs were allowed to be imported by 146 vehicles.

In July, 717 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 567 tonnes of the liquid oxygen tank, 114 tonnes of liquid oxygen (cylinders), 69,146home oxygen concentrators, 8 oxygen plants, 11 oxygen generators, 4 oxygen concentrators, 322,878 test kits, 1,104tonnes of masks and 182,975 PPE were allowed to be imported by 749 vehicles.

The Ministry of Commerce is also cooperating with the ministry concerned to import the medical supplies and it releases contact persons of the relevant departments and website address: Commerce.gov.mm for the people to know updated news.—MNA

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

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin participates in Second Mekong-US Partnership Ministerial Meeting via Videoconferencing

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the Second Mekong-US Partnership Ministerial Meeting, which was held via videoconferencing on the morning of 3 August 2021, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Mr Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and Mr Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States with the attendance of Foreign Ministers from the Mekong member countries; Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam. ASEAN Secretary-General also participated in the meeting.

The MoFA Union Minister joins the second Mekong-US Partnership Ministerial Meeting via videoconferencing from Nay Pyi Taw on 3 August 2021.

At the meeting, the Foreign Ministers and the Secretary of State reviewed the progress of one-year collaboration between Mekong countries and the United States under the Partnership. Moreover, they exchanged views on the matters of how the Mekong-US Partnership can contribute to the sustainable development and prosperity of the Mekong sub-region in future.

In the statement, Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin expressed his appreciation to the United States for its COVID-19 assistance to the Mekong countries and made the request to provide more assistance including the COVID-19 vaccine to Myanmar to save the lives of the peoples.

The Union Minister stated the "Mekong-US Partnership" should better assist the peoples of the Mekong region towards sustainable inclusive development based on its principles of consensus, equality and non-intervention. He also welcomed the adoption of the "MUSP Plan of Action (2021-2023)" which includes cooperation programmes in the areas of education, youth, empowerment, energy and environmental conservation.

Moreover, the Union Minister underscored the importance of information sharing in the implementation of the new Plan of Action for better efficiency and effectiveness and suggested giving dedicated attention to the cooperation on MSMEs, service sector, and trade and investment for post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

He also acknowledged the United States' proposals to have "MUSP Policy Small Group" for establishing direct communication between government officials of Mekong countries and the United States, and "MUSP Gender Equality Policy Dialogue" for gender equality and women empowerment.

The meeting adopted the "Mekong-US Partnership Plan of Action (2021-2023)" which was designed to generate tangible benefits to member countries.

Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also present at the meeting.

"Mekong-US Partnership" was established in 2020 based upon the legacy of former "Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI)" between Mekong Countries and the United States in response to current and future needs, and to address the challenges of Mekong Region for sustainable inclusive development. — MNA

Central Committee on Management of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands holds 2nd coordination meeting

IT is necessary to pay attention to not only food security but also nutrition by using different climate conditions of each region and state to effectively produce a wide range of agricultural products, said Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Tin Htut Oo at the 2nd coordination meeting of the Central Committee for Management of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands, held yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Than Aung Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi, the Permanent Secretary and officials. And members of the committee joined the meeting via videoconferencing.

The meeting discussed matters pertaining to the licence applications for vacant, fallow and virgin lands, comments from the respective ministries, work progress submitted by the committees in states and regions, feedback on land tax exemption period and the tax rate, and the land tax payment of those who have been granted the right to use and the status of land tax arrears.

The Central Committee on Management of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands held its second meeting under the State Administration Council in order to enable agriculture and livestock farming to be carried out before the season and to implement regional development, religious and social activities for the benefit of the people without delay. – MNA

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www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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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.

Announcement released for those in past activities to contact as planned to close and withdraw files of lawsuits under the law

FROM PAGE-1

If service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, persons from various arenas and citizens who fled from the scenes, except for those who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosion and intentionally attacking security troops, some public service personnel and some people, destroying government-owned and private buildings, deeply participating in CDM activities with monetary and other measures, wish to return to the legal fold, opening the files of lawsuits against those persons will be withdrawn under the law. As such, they can trustfully contact the following telephone numbers.

If they contact, directives will be given on how to further do, and officials concerned will close and withdraw the cases under the law.

Hence, those wishing to return home of their own accord, except for those in the criminal cases mentioned in paragraph 3, may trustfully contact the following telephone numbers or nearby police stations, district and township administration bodies. — MNA

Contact phone numbers, Viber numbers and Email addresses for each region and state

No	Region/State	Phone number	Email addresses	Remark
1	Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory	067-550251, 067-550252, 067-550253, 067-550254, 067-550255, 09425283334 (Viber- Ottarathiri Township) 09450840888 (Viber- Dekkhinathiri Township)	mpf-naypyitaw@e-moha.gov.mm	
2	Kachin State	074-2526671, 074-2526672, 09794611351 (Viber- Myitkyina District), 0943042071 (Viber- Bhamo District) 09403739163 (Mohnyin District), 09250344219 (Viber- Putao District)	mpf-kachin@e-moha.gov.mm	
3	Kayah State	083-2224315, 083-2224316, 09777741980 (Viber- Loikaw District) 095194521 (Viber- Bawlakhe District)	mpf-kayar@e-moha.gov.mm	
4	Kayin State	058-2021096, 058-2021009, 09457777074 (Viber- Hpa-an), 09446735209 (Viber- Kawkareik District) 095132511 (Viber- Myawady District), 09400455156 (Viber- Papun District)	mpf-kayin@e-moha.gov.mm	
5	Chin State	070-2022111, 070-2022333, 095311693 (Viber- Mindat District), 09796436133 (Viber- Matupi District) 092300817 (Viber- Falam), 095262373 (Viber- Haka District)	mpf-chin@e-moha.gov.mm	
6	Sagaing Region	071-2026253, 071-2026254, 09420736827 (Viber- Sagaing District), 09258466668 (Viber- Shwebo District) 09675685156 (Viber- Kanbablu District), 09401557656 (Viber-Monywa District), 09951495409 (Yinmabin District), 09894437224(Viber- Katha District), 09402508468 (Viber- Kalay District), 09880087340 (Viber-Khamti District), 095190481 (Viber- Mawlaik District), 09256596889 (Viber- Tamu District)	mpf-sagaing@e-moha.gov.mm	
7	Taninthayi Region	059-2024029, 059-2024030, 09251138577 (Dawei District), 09256445424 (Viber- Myeik District) 09895912169 (Viber- Kawthoung District)	mpf-tanintharyi@e-moha.gov.mm	
8	Bago Region	052-2201920, 052-2201921, 09400540140 (Bago District), 09250132656 (Toungoo District), 09443135520 (Viber-Pyay District), 09421723547 (Viber- Thayawady District)	mpf-bago@e-moha.gov.mm	
9	Magway Region	063-2028855, 063-2028856, 09954206061 (Magway District), 09400311110 (Minbu District), 09794447280 (Thayat District), 09257080098 (Pakokku District), 09451506026 (Viber- Gangaw District)	mpf-magway@e-moha.gov.mm	
10	Mandalay Region	02-4035891, 02-4035892, 02-4035893, 02-4035894, 02-4035895, 09969956472 (Viber-Mandalay District), 09-420760246 (Viber-PyinOoLwin District), 09-264628313 (Viber-Myingyan District), 09-885555090 (Viber-Meiktila District), 09-52157779 (Viber-Yamethin District), 09-5082615 (Viber-Kyaukse District), 09-250111838 (Viber-NyaungU District)	mpf-mandalay@e-moha.gov.mm	
11	Mon State	057-2027880, 057-2027884, 09-252839764 (Viber-Mawlamyine District) 09-451455526 (Viber-Thaton District)	mpf-mon@e-moha.gov.mm	
12	Rakhine State	043-2024557, 043-2021020, 09-421004218 , (Viber-Sittway District) 09-789978373 (Viber-MraukU District), 09-402547244 (Viber-Maungtaw District) 09-401582236 (Viber-Kyaukpyu District), 09-254315299 (Viber-Thandwe District)	mpf-rakhine@e-moha.gov.mm	
13	Yangon Region	01-8300011, 01-8300012, 01-8300013, 01-8300014, 01-8300015, 09-421128951 (Viber-Eastern District), 09-43137729 (Viber-Western District), 09-5194223 (Viber-Southern District) 09-786281456 (Viber-Northern District)	mpf-yangon@e-moha.gov.mm	
14	Shan State	081-202241, 081-202242, 09-459716155 (Viber-Lashio District), 09-450540034 (Viber-Kyaukme District) 09-260199434 (Viber-Taunggyi District), 09-420027076 (Viber-Langkho District), 09-784021521 (Viber-Loilem District), 09-5127882 (Viber-Kengtung District), 09-506818 (Viber-Tachilek District), 09-440268441 (Viber-Monghsat District), 09-454864734 (Viber-Muse District), 09-403747132 (Viber-Hopan District), 09-265295076 (Viber-Mongmit District)	mpf-shan@e-moha.gov.mm	
15	Ayeyawady Region	042-2023103, 042-2023106 09-43046443 (Viber-Pathein District) 09-259042330 (Viber-Hinthada District) 09-4544666667 (Viber-Myaungmya District) 09-950977376 (Viber-Labutta District) 09-2019953 (Viber-Maubin District) 09-254436414 (Viber-Pyapon District)	mpf-ayeyarwaddy@e-moha.gov.mm	

4,713 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 3 August, total figure rises to 311,067

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **311,067 after 4,713 new cases** were reported on 3 August 2021 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **220,887** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll reached **10,373** after **312** died. —MNA

MoSWRR discusses ASEAN Secretariat's draft proposal on humanitarian assistance to Myanmar

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held the coordination meeting on the ASEAN Secretariat's draft proposal for humanitarian assistance to Myanmar yesterday morning via an online system.

Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine said humanitarian assistance would be provided to Myanmar through the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance and Coordination Centre for Disaster Management (AHA Centre), which is one of the five points agreed upon by the ASEAN leaders.

She said the draft proposal submitted by the ASEAN Secretariat, which includes COVID-19 vaccines, medical supplies and humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, is a proposal that will benefit the country. It is important to implement it as per the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry as well as with the coordination of the relevant ministries and departments.

She added the need to form a technical working group for the effective implementation; to receive the timely information on natural disasters in each region/state so that it can be delivered humanitarian supplies to the affected people as soon as possible.

The Deputy Director-General of the Disaster Management Department briefed on the draft humanitarian action plan drawn up by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Permanent Secretary added necessary matters.

Upon the discussion, the Union Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary and Directors-General provided the necessary guidance and procedures for the development of better and effective cooperation, points that need to be further adjusted and matters to be submitted to the relevant departments to obtain policy guidance. — MNA

COVID-19 vaccination continues in regions/states

A healthcare worker inoculates an elder woman with a dose of the vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Toungoo on 3 August 2021.

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

As of yesterday from 2 August, a total of 4,786 people including senior citizens, department officials in the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory; 2,476 people including prison inmates in Kachin State; 769 people in Kyaukme Township in northern Shan State; 13,938 people, including religious persons, in 11 townships in southern Shan State; 2,315 people in 7 townships in eastern Shan State; 11,300 people in Mon State and Kayin State; 5,286 people in Taninthayi Region; 7,960 people including prison inmates in Ayeyawady Region; 10,469 people in Rakhine State; 7,413 people in Sagaing Region; 5,815 people in Mandalay Region; 5,595 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

Terrorists' bomb attack targeting COVID-19 vaccination site occurs in southern Shan State

THE government is accelerating the COVID-19 prevention and control activities and conducting COVID-19 vaccination programmes across the nation.

Terrorist groups like NUG, CRPH and their supporters intentionally disturb the COVID-19 vaccination.

On 3 August, a homemade remote mine planted by the extremists exploded at the city hall in Nyaung Gone (4) Ward of Pekhon township of southern Shan State where the vaccination was conducted.

Due to the bomb blast, Police Constable Tun Lin Zaw died on the spot and Police Constable Aung Lwin Phyo and Police Lance-Corporal Aung Myo were injured.

Then, Police Constable Aung Lwin Phyo died on the way to the hospital.

Moreover, Daw Mu Rein who received the vaccine and U Nanda Wai Yan, volunteers were also injured in the mine blast and were taken to the hospital.

On 3 August, a homemade remote mine planted by the extremists exploded at the city hall in Nyaung Gone (4) Ward of Pekhon township of southern Shan State where the vaccination was conducted.
Due to the bomb blast, Police Constable Tun Lin Zaw died on the spot and Police Constable Aung Lwin Phyo and Police Lance-Corporal Aung Myo were injured.

The security forces investigate to arrest the suspects who disturb the vaccination programmes and the people are also urged to inform the officials if they find some movements of the terrorists. — MNA

COVID-19 vaccination continues in regions/states

A monk receives a dose of the coronavirus vaccine at Basic Eduction High School (Pyisanaung), which was turned into a vaccination centre in Zeyathiri Tsp on 3 August 2021.

Nuns queue to receive the COVID-19 vaccines at an inoculation centre in Taunggyi on 3 August 2021.

A healthcare worker inoculates an elder woman with a dose of the vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus at a post primary school in Bahan on 3 August 2021.

An elder women receives a dose of the coronavirus vaccine in Dagon Myothit Township (Seikkan), Yangon Region on 3 August 2021.

A healthcare worker inoculates a man with a dose of the vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Pwintbyu on 3 August 2021.

A man receives a dose of the coronavirus vaccine in Momeik on 3 August 2021.

A healthcare worker inoculates a man with a dose of the vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Thandwe Township, Rakhine State on 3 August 2021.

A woman receives a dose of the coronavirus vaccine in Nyaungshwe on 3 August 2021.

A healthcare worker inoculates a man with a dose of the vaccine against the Covid-19 coronavirus in Taunggup on 3 August 2021.

People queue to receive COVID-19 vaccines at No 20 Basic Eduction High School, in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 August 2021.

People queue to receive the COVID-19 vaccines at an inoculation centre in Kyaikto on 3 August 2021.

Helping conserve the natural environment benefit entire people

THE natural environment is constituted of living beings and forests. As such, living beings or forests cannot stand alone in the natural environment. If only one group stands along, the environment will face unbalanced events.

Myanmar, the agro-based country, has been holding the rainy season tree-growing ceremonies since 2017 as part of greening the environment. During the period from 2017 to 2020, more than 80 per cent of saplings have been thriving, according to the Department of Forest.

> Reciprocally, the efforts of the people in nurturing the forests can contribute to the conservation of the natural environment so as to create the safe life of living beings and trees.

The saplings were grown on both sides of large and small roads across the nation, in housing communities, schools, offices and government buildings as well as outside the public areas such as the places close to forest reserves and protected public forests.

Aimed at extending the greening areas, more than 72 million saplings such as teak, ironwood, gum-kino, sal, star-flower, neem and other hardwoods were grown in 2017 with 59.02 per cent of thriving. Likewise, more than 62.32 million out of 73 million saplings thrived in 2018, over 58 million out of 68.79 million saplings have been gaining growth since 2019 and over 57 million out of more than 68 million saplings thrived in 2020.

In 2021, a target was set to grow 36.26 million saplings across the nation in the monsoon tree-growing ceremony, with a systematic arrangement for the thriving of the saplings.

Naturally, the thriving of trees can prevent landslides and erosions, while mitigating the outbreak of natural disasters. Forests adjust to the hotness of the sun every season with their emission of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Oxygen from the forest can save ozone depletion in the sky, barring the falls of ultraviolet from the sunray. Likewise, forests can prevent strong winds, flooding, silting, change of waterways and cleaning the air for the people while giving forest products to the local people.

On the other hand, the people need to nurture the forests and trees for long-term thriving so as to extract necessary forest products under the limitation. As such, the thriving of trees in the environment will benefit people's daily life. Reciprocally, the efforts of the people in nurturing the forests can contribute to the conservation of the natural environment so as to create the safe life of living beings and trees.

■■■

Developing An Oral COVID Vaccine

Imagine a COVID-19 vaccine that came as a pill: no needles, no medical professionals required to administer it, potentially delivered directly to people's homes.

ISRAELI pharmaceutical Oramed is attempting to accomplish just that, and is poised to start its first clinical trial in early August, CEO Nadav Kidron said in an interview.

With just 15 per cent of the world's population fully vaccinated, the global fight to end the pandemic is far from over.

Oral vaccines are particularly attractive for the developing world, because they reduce the logistical burden of immunization campaigns, said Kidron.

But they could also increase uptake in wealthy countries where needle aversion is an often-missed factor in hesitancy.

A recent survey found nearly 19 million Americans who decline vaccines would take them if they had a pill option.

"In order for the vaccine to really work well, we need as many people to take it as possible," said Kidron.

A man receives an oral cholera vaccine from a health worker during a vaccination campaign in Dhaka on 19 February, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

Other benefits include reduced syringe and plastic waste, and potentially fewer side effects.

Challenges For Oral Delivery

Despite many theoretical advantages, there have been few successful oral vaccines because the active ingredients tend not to survive the journey through the gastro-intestinal tract.

Exceptions include vaccines for diseases that are themselves transmitted through the mouth and digestive system – for example there is an effective oral polio vaccine.

Oramed, which was founded in 2006, believes it has overcome the technical hurdles by designing a capsule that survives the highly acidic environment of the gut.

It invented its technology for a previous product, an experimental oral form of insulin, the lifesaving drug required by diabetics that has until now been only administered by injection.

Developed with Nobel Prize winning biochemist Avram Hershko who is on Oramed's scientific advisory board, the company's capsule has a highly protective coating that makes it slow to degrade.

It also releases molecules called protease inhibitors that stop enzymes in the small intestine from breaking down the insulin, and an absorption enhancer to help the insulin cross into the bloodstream.

This drug has been dosed in hundreds of patients in late-stage clinical trials in the United States (US), with results expected in September 2022.

Oramed has now launched a new majority-owned company called Oravax, which takes the capsule technology from the oral insulin product and uses it for an oral COVID-19 vaccine.

Virus-Like Particle

To evoke an immune response, the company's scientists have designed synthetic coronavirus-like particles.

These mimic three key structures of the pathogen: the spike protein, the envelope protein and the membrane protein.

Most currently authorised vaccines, like Pfizer or AstraZeneca, are based on the spike protein alone, making them less protective over time as the spike protein of the coronavirus mutates.

By targeting multiple parts of the virus, including structures that mutate less, the Oravax vaccine could be more variant-proof, Kidron said.

The company has applied to begin trials in multiple countries and expects to begin its first in Israel within weeks, pending approval from the health ministry.

Kidron said he foresaw a role for the vaccine initially in developing countries which haven't yet bought up enough supply of current vaccines – before eventually developed markets.

A vaccine pill could become especially attractive if ongoing boosters are required.

If it's successful, it would also represent a proof of concept for future orally administered vaccines, he added.

"Imagine... the flu vaccine comes to you in the mail, you take it, you're done."

SOURCE: AFP

University of Auckland leads project to combat RSV, flu by applying COVID-19 lessons

New Zealand's expertise in tracking COVID-19 is being applied to influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in a 9.8-million-New Zealand dollar (6.86 million U.S. dollar) project to learn how to stop the spread of respiratory viruses, the University of Auckland announced on Monday.

THE two-year project, Southern Hemisphere Influenza and Vaccine Effectiveness Research and Surveillance V (SHIVERS-V), is led by the University of Auckland in collaboration with the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) and features genomic testing of viruses, the detective work which became routine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researchers will analyze thousands of swabs from patients with respiratory illnesses to discover how respiratory viruses enter and spread within New Zealand.

This will help scientists model outbreaks and, most importantly, help design strategies to prevent them.

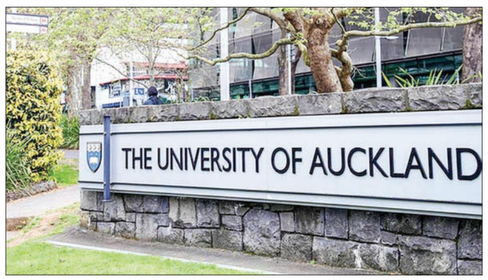
The success of New Zealand's COVID-19 measures

New Zealand is uniquely suited to examine the re-introduction and transmission of respiratory viruses like influenza and RSV. The success of New Zealand's COVID-19 measures has created a novel environment for this ambitious project, and its well-developed systems for tracking health data facilitate population-level research.

The current RSV epidemic is part of a respiratory-disease environment unlike any New Zealand has seen before. Sick children are filling hospital wards after COVID-19 social distancing and lockdown restrictions blocked the development of natural immunity to RSV. Scientists are also watching to see what happens next with influenza after COVID restrictions virtually eliminated the disease.

"As border restrictions are likely eased over the next two years, we will face a resurgence of respiratory viruses," said Professor Nikki Turner, medical director of the University of Auckland's Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC). "Understanding the viruses' patterns will help us predict and mitigate outbreaks to help protect whānau and communities in this new post-COVID world."

South Auckland is a focus of the research because of the social deprivation that exacerbates the spread of disease and the risk that the international airport will serve as a vector for disease transmission. Swabs of children at kohanga reo and early childhood learning centres will help to establish baseline rates of respiratory diseases.



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Swab tests will also occur at doctors' offices in Wellington and Auckland and the emergency department of Middlemore Hospital. People in managed isolation facilities will be tested for respiratory diseases additional to COVID-19.

Expanding the SHIVERS programme

Professor Turner and Professor Peter McIntyre, who is affiliated with both Otago and Auckland universities, will helm the study. After leading previous SHIVERS projects starting in 2012 in Auckland and Wellington, virologist Sue Huang of ESR will play a key role. "Expanding the SHIVERS programme with information from the impact of closed borders is an important next step in helping tackle the viruses in a post-COVID world," said Huang.

SOURCE: Xinhua

■■■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 3 August 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 4 August 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Magway Regions and Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Northern Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine, Kayin, Mon States and isolated heavyfalls in Nay Pyi Taw, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Southern Shan State. 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)mph. Wave height will be about (8 -11) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate to strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 August 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4 August 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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First COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in Rikhawdar

AS the country's roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines accelerates, the first COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Rikhawdar town began on 2 August at Rikhawdar station hospital, said Dr San Mar, in charge of Rikhawdar station hospital.

The 26 departmental staff received the vaccines against COVID-19 as the first dose at Rikhawdar station hospital on 2 August from 9:30 am to 11 am.

"The COVID-19 vaccines are being administered from 9:30 am to 11 am. We have received vaccine quotas for 26 people from Rikhawdar town. Currently, the departmental staff, bank employees who interact with the public are given priority for the vaccination. The 26 departmental staff received the first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine supplied by China," said Dr San Mar.

Each person of 26 staff must receive two doses of the vaccine. The second dose will be administered on 30 August 2021.

"People should receive the COVID-19 vaccines. And, these vaccines are safe. According to the research in other countries, there is no guarantee that the vaccine is actually going to be effective and the virus will not be returned after vaccination," she added.

As the country's roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines accelerates, the first COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Rikhawdar town began on 2 August at Rikhawdar station hospital, said Dr San Mar, in charge of Rikhawdar station hospital.

As of 2 August, Rikhawdar registered 310 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 303 recoveries and four total deaths, according to the Ministry of Health. Those confirmed COVID-19 patients are put in home quarantine while some are currently undergoing medical treatment at the Rikhawdar station hospital. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

TEACHERS are honoured as part of the Five Infinite Venerables, and the manner of paying respect to the teachers can be only seen in Myanmar as a tradition. The teachers teach their pupils based on their goodwill like their own children and dutifully serve a teacher's duties. They must train their pupils and students in the best discipline. They see that they grasp their lessons well. They instruct them in the arts and sciences, they provide for their safety in every quarter, and they introduce them to their friends and associates.

As the COVID-19 infection rate is controlled to a certain extent, the basic education high, middle and primary schools under the Department of Basic Education have reopened across nation for the 2021-2022 academic year starting 1 June.

Those who want to seek good sake of one party, political extremist NLD members and supporters, NUG, CRPH and PDF committed arson attacks at the schools using mines, homemade bombs and grenades to fail the teaching processes, and threatened the teachers in addition to the incitements, social punishment and threats against education staff to join CDM while the officials made preparations for the reopening of schools and during the current teaching period. Their doings left some causalities, and the State Administration Council has expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims' families.

The SAC also appreciates the concerted efforts of teachers, who understand two virtues, Hiri -- shame at doing evil —and Otappa—fear of the results of doing evil —for teaching the new generations of the country amid such difficulties and challenges.

The security forces will take extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of teachers who are making efforts in the academic sector for the next generations in order to promote the education qualification. The people should keep security awareness and cooperate with the security members in community peace and peaceful learning of children.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Lashio markets reclosed to reduce COVID-19 infection

THE shops from Lashio markets, which were permitted to reopen starting from 1 August, were closed again on 3 August to prevent the spread of the pandemic COVID-19 virus.

The markets that allowed reopening were Myoma Market in Lashio town, Mansu Market and Lashio Gyi Market. Only the basic food shops and the drug stores from those markets were permitted to open. All other shops, including clothing, electronics, other grocery shops, have not been allowed to reopen.

Due to the reopening of markets in Lashio, the people are being crowded in the market to buy their staff. That is the reason why the markets have been temporarily reclosed to prevent further spread.

Starting from 1 August, the basic food shops from Myoma Market in Lashio town, Mansu Market and Lashio Gyi Market have reopened their doors in line with current COVID-19 rules and regulations. Now, the shops were closed again to avoid crowding.

As of 1 August, about 1,812 patients from Lashio were found infected with the COVID-19 virus, resulting in 92 deaths while there were hospitalized, it is learnt. — ZYA/GNLM

Suspension of all international flights extended until 31 Aug

ACCORDING to the notice from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, earlier restriction for all international airlines operating air services to and from the Yangon International Airport has further been extended up to 31 August 2021.

During the suspension of all international commercial passenger flights because of the COVID-19 period, Yangon International Airport (YIA) gave its services to other cargo planes or flights and relief flights.

International passenger flights were suspended in YIA from 30 March last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the announcement of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Department of Civil Aviation.

Myanmar has extended the restriction on entry of travellers until 31 August to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All of these restrictions were extended till 31 July 2021 earlier, but the restriction has now been extended until 31 August.

However, those who will come to Myanmar by relief flights over emergency government duties or emergencies, foreigners including diplomats and the officers and staff from UN agencies need to contact Myanmar embassies in foreign countries or consulates in Myanmar to lift the visa restrictions.

Myanmar has so far reported 306,354 COVID-19 cases and 10,061 deaths in the country. — Aye Maung/GNLM

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Seed processing plants in Shwebo District expected to run for monsoon rice crop this year

THE seed processing plants and warehouses are constructed in Shwebo District, Sagaing Region under the Seed Project of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). They are expected to run during the harvest time of the monsoon rice crops this year, said U Tin Maung Swe, head of Shwebo District Agriculture Department.

In a bid to promote the utilization of pedigree seed for rice crop cultivation on the project areas in Shwebo District, the construction of seed processing plants and warehouses started in the first week of October 2019 and finished in December 2020.

The plants and warehouses are located in Wetlet, Shwebo and KhinU townships, categorizing Type A, B and C. Type A includes two dryers while type B has only one dryer. However, Type C does not have a dryer. A seed dryer can process 750 rice baskets within 12 hours.

"The plant still cannot run as the foreign experts were not able to come last year. This plant is designated for seed purification and it can start operation when the fresh rice crop is harvested. After processing the seeds, they will be transferred to the department. The department will hand over them to the related organization. The plant is scheduled to run the trial in December", U Tin Maung Swe elaborated.

The plants and warehouses are located in Wetlet, Shwebo and KhinU townships, categorizing Type A, B and C. Type A includes two dryers while type B has only one dryer. However, Type C does not have a dryer. A seed dryer can process 750 rice baskets within 12 hours.

"The Seed Project aims to disseminate the classification and grading of pedigree seeds, including the seed size, colour and pest-free quality. This project will benefit the farmers and create more market opportunities for traders", U Win Hlaing U, an officer of Sagaing Region Agriculture Department stated.

The Seed Project covers Shwebo, Wetlet, KhinU, Dabayin and Tantse townships in the Sagaing Region with the help of JICA's loan.

The Agriculture Department, the growers, pedigree seed processing bodies and companies are working together to extract pedigree rice seed for the growers. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Sagaing Region sees 30 per cent of projected monsoon crop acres so far

OVER 30 per cent of the projected monsoon crops cultivation have been totally completed in Sagaing Region, the regional Agriculture Department stated.

In the current financial year 2020-2021, over 5.3 million acres of monsoon crops have been projected for Sagaing Region. The cultivation commenced in May and over 30 per cent of the project acres have been developed so far.

"Over 30 per cent of 5.3 million acres have been planted in Sagaing Region. The cultivation will be continued and the projected acres will be implemented by the end of monsoon season," said U Aung Kyi Win, deputy head of Sagaing Region Agriculture Department.

Sagaing Region will cover 1.825 million acres of rice crops, 1.144 acres of various pulses, 832,043 acres of edible oil crops, 81,360 acres of jute, 241,491 acres of industrial crops, 7,828 acres of betel, 10,391 acres of spices, 292,831 acres of other edible crops, 3,610 acres of herb and 525,700 acres of non-food crops, totalling over 5.358 million acres of monsoon crops, as per the data of the department.

Sagaing Region possesses 9.6 million acres of monsoon and winter crops. The region is the third-largest producer of rice crops and the main producer of pulses and oil crops.

There were over 5.3 million acres of monsoon crops in Sagaing Region in the last FY, including 1.7 million acres of rice crop, 1.1 million of pulses, over 825,000 acres of oil crops, over 170,000 acres of sugarcane, 79,000 acres of cotton, 8,500 acres of kitchen crops and 126,000 acres of other crops.

Sagaing Region saw over 5.245 million acres of monsoon crops in the FY2018-2019, with 1.78 million acres of rice crops, 1.1 million of pulses, over 800,000 acres of oil crops, over 150,000 acres of sugarcane, 80,000 acres of cotton, 8,000 acres of kitchen crops and 129,000 acres of other crops.

Sagaing Region possesses 9.6 million acres of monsoon and winter crops. The region is the third-largest producer of rice crops and the main producer of pulses and oil crops. — Lu Lay/GNLM

CBM sells $5 million in two days

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold US$5 million in two days this month at its FX auction rate, according to the auction results released by the CBM.

It sold $3 million at its FX auction rate of K1,647 on 2 August and $2 million at K1,650 on 3 August.

In addition, the CBM made six-month record sales of $39 million in July. In June, it reportedly sold $12 million. The CBM's move is to steer the own currency value and govern the market volatility.

The bullish hard currency gained in the local forex market, reaching the peak of K1,730 on 12 May from K1,330 in January-end. At present, the rate is set at K1,665, although it has not reached the record rate in May.

The local forex market's data showed that the dollar exchange rate touched the maximum of K1,345 and the minimum of K1,327 in January 2021. The rate moved in the range of K1,335-1,465 in February.

It reached the lowest at K1,420 and the highest of K1,550 in March, while the rate fluctuated between K1,550 and K1,610 in April. The rate fluctuated between K1,585 and K1,730 in May, and it moved to the maximum of K1,595-1,620 in June.

Last month, the rate stood at the maximum of K1,670 and the minimum of K1,626 in July.

In 2020, the exchange rate moved in the range of K1,465-1,493 in January, K1,436-1,465 in February, K1,320-1,445 in March, K1,395-1,440 in April, K1,406-1,426 in May, K1,385-1,412 in June, K1,367-1,410 in July, K1,335-1,390 in August, K1,310-1,355 in September, K1,282-1,315 in October, K1,303-1,330 in November and K1,324-1,403 in December.

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

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australian telecom giant makes public pay phones free

AUSTRALIA'S largest telecommunications company Telstra Corp. announced Tuesday that people are now able to make free calls across the country using its network of more than 15,000 public pay phones.

The traditionally coin-operated phones will no longer require payment to send texts or make calls of up to six hours to fixed-line and mobile numbers as long as they are within Australia, in a move the telecommunications giant hopes will benefit the country's most vulnerable people. Despite the decline of pay phones since the introduction of mobile devices, publicly available phones remain a critical piece of social and community infrastructure, particularly in regional and remote communities, and during times of crisis, according to Telstra.—Kyodo ■

Huawei exec due back in Canada court over US extradition request

THE chief financial officer of Chinese tech giant Huawei will be back in a Canadian court on Wednesday for a final round of hearings on her possible extradition to the United States, after nearly three years of court battles and diplomatic sparring. Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of company founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei, is fighting extradition to the United States, which wants to try her for bank fraud and conspiracy for allegedly concealing her company's business dealings, through a subsidiary, in Iran. If transferred to the United States for trial and subsequently convicted, she could face more than 30 years in a US prison.

Her arrest on a US warrant during a Vancouver stopover in December 2018 -- and China's subsequent detention of two Canadians -- caused a major diplomatic rift between Ottawa and Beijing. Meng is due to appear before the Supreme Court of British Columbia on Wednesday for more than two weeks of hearings. The 49-year-old has denied any wrongdoing, and her defence team says abuses by Canadian and US officials have denied her due process, and therefore the US extradition request should be quashed.—AFP ■

North Korea wants sanctions eased to restart talks with US: South Korean lawmakers

NORTH Korea wants international sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities lifted in order to restart denuclearization talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers said on Tuesday.

The North has also demanded the easing of sanctions on its imports of luxury goods to be able to bring in fine liquors and suits, the lawmakers said after being briefed by South Korea's main intelligence agency.

The briefing came a week after the two Koreas restored hotlines that North Korea suspended a year ago.

North Korea's state-run media made no mention on Tuesday of any new request for the lifting sanctions to restart talks. The South Korea legislators said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in had both expressed a willingness to rebuild trust and improve ties since April, and Kim had asked to reconnect the hotlines.

Cargo ships docked at the Rason port in North Korea **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

They also said North Korea was in need of some 1 million tonnes of rice, as its economy was battered by the coronavirus pandemic and bad weather last year.

South Korea's central bank said last week North Korea's economy suffered its biggest contraction in 23 years in 2020 as it was battered by U.N. sanctions, COVID-19 lockdown measures and the weather.

Moon has made improving diplomatic and economic relations with North Korea a top priority, while the United States has long insisted relations with North Korea can not improve until it gives up its nuclear and missile programmes.—AFP ■

IMF officially approves increased lending capacity

THE board of governors of the International Monetary Fund on Monday greenlit increasing the institution's lending capacity by $650 billion, the last step in approving an initiative to boost aid to the most vulnerable countries.

"This is a historic decision – the largest SDR (Special Drawing Rights) allocation in the history of the IMF and a shot in the arm for the global economy at a time of unprecedented crisis," IMF head Kristalina Georgieva said in a statement. "It will particularly help our most vulnerable countries struggling to cope with the impact of the Covid-19 crisis," she said.

The programme, which had already been approved by the IMF's executive board in mid-July, will be implemented on 23 August. Newly issued SDRs will be allocated to member countries in proportion to their IMF quota, the lender said. Emerging and developing nations are to receive around $275 billion in total. But "we will also continue to engage actively with our membership to identify viable options for voluntary channeling of SDRs from wealthier to poorer and more vulnerable member countries to support their pandemic recovery and achieve resilient and sustainable growth," Georgieva said. Wealthy countries could, for example, transfer their SDRs by using those attributed to them to finance the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust Fund, which would increase the supply of loans to low-income countries.

The International Monetary Fund has greenlit increasing lending capacity by $650 billion, the last step in approving an initiative to boost aid to the most vulnerable countries. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The NGO Oxfam welcomed the IMF's decision.—AFP ■

BP returns to profit as oil prices recover

A section of the BP ETAP (Eastern Trough Area Project) oil platform in the North Sea, around 100 miles east of Aberdeen, Scotland. **PHOTO: AFP**

BP returned to profit in the second quarter, the British energy giant announced Tuesday, having posted a hefty loss one year earlier as the pandemic crushed oil prices.

Net profit for April-June hit $3.1 billion (2.6 billion euros). That compared with a loss after tax of $16.8 billion in the second quarter of 2020.

With demand for crude crashing as the coronavirus pandemic took hold early last year, oil prices plunged into negative territory.

They have since recovered with a bang, currently trading above $70 per barrel.

Oil demand was recovering on "a bright macroeconomic outlook, increasing vaccination roll-out and gradual lifting of Covid-19 restrictions around the world", BP said in its results statement Tuesday.

"The expectation is that demand reaches pre-Covid levels sometime in the second half of 2022."

In the wake of the pandemic, BP decided to axe about 10,000 jobs, or 15 per cent of its global workforce, while it embarked upon major asset disposals. BP on Tuesday said it had completed deals on divestments totalling $14.9 billion out of a target of $25 billion.

It comes as Bernard Looney, who became BP chief executive when the coronavirus began taking hold worldwide, wants the company to achieve "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050.—AFP ■

Honda to end production of NSX luxury sports car at end of 2022

HONDA Motor Co. said Tuesday that it will end production of its NSX luxury sports car in December 2022, as part of efforts to review its less profitable products and focus on the development of electric vehicles.

The current model, with a starting price of 24.2 million yen ($222,000) and produced in the United States, was revived in 2016 as a hybrid vehicle 10 years after the retirement of the first model.

The Japanese automaker sold 2,558 units of the vehicle worldwide, but sales shrank to 183 units in 2020, compared with 1,004 units in 2017 and 418 units in 2019. Later this month, Honda will release a special NSX model with its sales limited to 350 vehicles, including 30 units in Japan, and will consider introducing an EV sports car in the future.

The first generation of the NSX was launched in 1990 and drew popularity as a full-fledged sports car. The company ended its production in 2005 after selling 18,507 units.

The move comes as Honda plans to gradually increase the proportion of electric and fuel cell vehicles in its total sales in major markets such as Japan, the United States, Europe and China, aiming for 40 per cent in 2030 and 80 per cent in 2035.—Kyodo ■

Supplied photo shows Honda Motor Co.'s first generation NSX luxury sports car launched in 1990. **PHOTO: HONDA MOTOR CO./KYODO**

Amazon to launch 'Lord of the Rings' series in September 2022

AMAZON announced Monday that its big-budget The Lord of The Rings series, based on the fantasy saga by J.R.R. Tolkien, will premiere worldwide in September 2022.

The streaming service hopes that the yet-to-be-titled series will rival the success of Game of Thrones.

The first episode will be available on 2 September 2022. Amazon, which acquired the television rights to the cult classic in 2017 for an estimated $250 million, said in a statement that "filming of Season One completed today (Monday) in New Zealand". Situated in Middle Earth and featuring some of the epic's most iconic characters, the series begins with new adventures "beginning in a time of relative peace, thousands of years before the events of J.R.R. Tolkien's 'The Hobbit' and The Lord of the Rings' books, the statement said.

The first season's episodes will be released on a weekly basis, according to Amazon, which also posted the first images from the show on social media Monday.

The cast includes Cynthia Addai-Robinson, known for her role in the series Spartacus, and Robert Aramayo, who played a young Eddard Stark in Game of Thrones, which became a behemoth of the fantasy genre over the course of its eight seasons.

With the multi-season adaptation of Tolkien's literary work already turned into a successful movie franchise in the early 2000s, Amazon hopes to score points for its streaming platform Amazon Prime Video against competitors such as Netflix and Disney Plus.—AFP ■

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Myanma Port Authority "Notice of High Tide"

Exceptionally high spring from 20.21 feet to 20.73 feet high above the chart datum are expected to occur in Yangon River during the period of August 9th to August 14th 2021. Please be noted that it is not serious level of tide because the highest tide level have reached up to 22 feet above the chart datum in year 2014 and 2015, and this notice is normally issued whenever high tide of Yangon River is expected to reach over 20 feet high above the chart datum in order to take precautionary measures to the public living near river foreshore area of Yangon City.

Zoom to settle US privacy lawsuit for $85m

ZOOM, the videoconferencing firm, has agreed to settle a class-action US privacy lawsuit for $85 million (€72m), it said on Sunday.

The suit charged that Zoom's sharing of users' personal data with Facebook, Google and LinkedIn was a breach of privacy for millions. While Zoom denied wrongdoing, it did agree to improve its security practices. The settlement needs to be approved by US District Judge Lucy Koh in San Jose, California. A Zoom spokesman told AFP: "The privacy and security of our users are top priorities for Zoom, and we take seriously the trust our users place in us.

"We are proud of the advancements we have made to our platform, and look forward to continuing to innovate with privacy and security at the forefront."–AFP ■

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Daw Yee Mon Aung, *(Advocate)*
For **British American Tobacco (Brands) Inc.**
c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
Level 18, Unit 18-03, Sule Square,
221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township,
Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated: **4 August 2021**

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Daw Yee Mon Aung, *(Advocate)*
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c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
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Dated: **4 August 2021**

Lebanon PM says no cabinet for blast anniversary

This picture taken on 28 July 2021 shows a view of a 25-metre-tall steel sculpture dubbed "The Gesture" by Lebanese artist Nadim Karam, made from debris resulting from the aftermath of the blast at the port of Lebanon's capital Beirut. **PHOTO: AFP**

LEBANON'S newly designated prime minister Najib Mikati said on Monday that a cabinet line-up would not be announced by mid-week to coincide with the anniversary of the deadly Beirut port blast. "Frankly, with regard to the government, I was hoping the pace would be faster," he said after meeting President Michel Aoun, whom he said he would now see again on Thursday.

The government of Hassan Diab, who is still caretaker prime minister, resigned en masse days after the August 4 explosion that killed more than 200 people last year. Mikati, who has already been prime minister twice in the past and is also the country's richest man, was designated on July 26 to form a government after Saad Hariri threw in the towel.

He said he had hoped to clinch a deal before the anniversary of the explosion, but media reports said Lebanon's political parties are still bickering over portfolios in much the same way that has blocked a new government over the past year. The institutional vacuum is holding up a potential financial rescue plan for Lebanon, which defaulted on its debt last year and has since sunk into what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst crises since the mid-19th century. A conference this week needs to gather $357 million in aid to meet the most urgent needs of the battered country's population, France said Monday. Co-hosted by President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations chief Antonio Guterres, the conference coincides with the first anniversary of the blast on Wednesday.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gang violence forces MSF to close Haiti hospital

MEDICAL charity Doctors Without Borders has permanently closed its hospital in an impoverished neighbourhood of Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince due to gang violence, it said in a statement Monday.

The hospital in Martissant, in the south of Port-au-Prince, offered free medical treatment to roughly 300,000 people in the poorest country in the Americas, and had been operated by the charity -- known by its French acronym MSF -- since 2006.

But for the last two months, armed gangs have been fighting for control of Martissant, with the area effectively under siege.

Police had already abandoned the neighbourhood after the local station was attacked by the gangs when the violence broke out in early June. Several thousand residents have already fled, while banks and businesses have been looted by the armed groups.

MSF's hospital was hit by gunfire at the end of June, though no one was wounded and the charity did not appear to have been deliberately targeted– AFP ■

US ready to take in thousands more Afghans as violence worsens

THE United States said Monday it will take in thousands more Afghan refugees, fearing for the safety of people with US associations as America ends its longest war. The United States said Monday it was ready to take in thousands more Afghans whose US links put them at growing risk but acknowledged an arduous path ahead for its allies as Taliban insurgents make gains. Less than a month before the United States is set to end its longest-ever war, the State Department broadened refugee admissions beyond the roughly 20,000 Afghans who have applied under a program for interpreters who assisted US forces and diplomats. The State Department said that greater priority will now also go to Afghans employed by US-based media organizations or non-governmental organizations or on projects backed by US funding.

"Afghans who worked with the United States or the International Security Assistance Force at some point since 2001 are facing acute fears of persecution or retribution that will likely grow as coalition forces leave the country," Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters.—AFP ■

Venezuelan refugee orchestra back together after Argentine lockdown

AFTER a year and a half of silence due to the coronavirus pandemic, the sounds of the Latin Vox Machine orchestra have returned to a house in Buenos Aires.

The group -- made up of Venezuelans who fled their country's economic crisis to Argentina -- is preparing for a performance of the Symphonic Little Prince, a symphony they created during the lockdown, and that they released on disc at the end of July.

The violas are rehearsing in the living room, while the violins are in the kitchen. Later, the keyboards and choir will take their places to practise.

Rehearsing during the pandemic gave members of the Latin Vox Machine orchestra a purpose and objective. **PHOTO: AFP**

They hope to play their symphony in public for the first time in November.

The orchestra's director Enmanuel Gonzalez can hardly wait.—AFP ■

Boeing attempts uncrewed test flight to ISS a second time

This NASA photo shows A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket with Boeing's CST-100 Starliner spacecraft on top. **PHOTO: JOEL KOWSKY NASA/AFP/FILE**

BOEING will be aiming to get its spaceflight programme back on track Tuesday with an uncrewed flight of its Starliner capsule to the International Space Station (ISS), after its last such test in 2019 ended in failure. The spaceship is due to launch on an Atlas V rocket built by the United Launch Alliance from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida at 1:20 pm Eastern time (1720 GMT). A livestream of the mission, Orbital Flight Test-2 (OFT-2), will be up on NASA's website. About 30 minutes after launch, the Starliner capsule will fire its thrusters to enter orbit and begin a daylong trip to the space station, with docking set for 1:37 pm on Wednesday.—AFP ■

Demonstrators take part in a rally in support of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and calling for a printed vote model at Esplanade of Ministries in Brasilia, Brazil on 1 August, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

Brazil's electoral court to probe Bolsonaro for attacking voting system

BRAZIL'S Superior Electoral Court announced Monday it will investigate far-right President Jair Bolsonaro for his constant and baseless attacks on the country's electronic voting system.

The country's highest electoral body also agreed to ask the Supreme Federal Court to investigate the president for spreading misinformation during a Facebook Live event last Thursday, in which Bolsonaro spoke for more than two hours about his conviction that there had been fraud in the last two presidential elections, saying he should have won in the first round in 2018.

The Electoral Court investigation will determine whether Bolsonaro committed "abuse of economic and political power, improper use of the media, corruption, fraud, conduct banned for public agents and extemporaneous propaganda in his attacks against the electronic voting system and the legitimacy of the 2022 general elections." Bolsonaro has long been sniping at electronic voting, introduced in Brazil in 1996, and advocating instead for the use of "printable and auditable" paper ballots to be introduced for the 2022 presidential race. People in Brazil cast their ballots electronically at voting stations, and Bolsonaro has for years been arguing for a paper printout to be made of each vote cast, suggesting the absence of a paper trail makes cheating easier. He has not provided evidence of such fraud, and the Superior Electoral Court insists the system is transparent and has never been tainted by irregularities. On Sunday, thousands of Brazilians took to the streets in several cities, including Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, to support Bolsonaro in protest against electronic voting. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US, Russia clash over embassy staffing despite talks

THE United States and Russia clashed Monday over the staffing allowed at their respective embassies despite the latest talks aimed at bringing more stability to a turbulent relationship.

In an interview, the Russian ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Antonov, deplored what he called "expulsions" of Moscow's diplomats, saying the United States had become "persistent and creative in this business" by uniquely limiting Russians to three-year visas.

"We received a list of 24 diplomats who are expected to leave the country before 3 September 2021. Almost all of them will leave without replacements because Washington has abruptly tightened visa-issuing procedures," he told US monthly international affairs magazine The National Interest.

State Department spokesman Ned Price described the ambassador's remarks as "inaccurate," saying the Russians knew their visas would expire after three years and that they were free to apply for extensions. —AFP ■

Belarusian activist goes missing in Ukraine: NGO

A Belarusian activist who heads an NGO helping his compatriots flee repression in Belarus has disappeared in Kiev, his organization said on Telegram. Vitali Shishov, head of the Belarusian House in Ukraine, went jogging in Kiev on Monday morning but did not return and could not be reached on his mobile phone, the organization said.

Friends of Shishov said he had been followed by "strangers" while jogging recently, human rights organization Vyasna said on Telegram.

Police and volunteers had mounted a search of the area where he went running but had failed to locate him, Belarusian House said.

Many Belarusians have fled, often to neighbouring Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, as President Alexander Lukashenko's regime has cracked down on any form of dissent since mass protests erupted after disputed elections last year.

Lukashenko has ruled the former Soviet republic with an iron fist since 1994.—AFP ■

Commandos deployed as Afghan forces defend cities from Taliban attacks

An Afghan National Army commando stands guard on top of a vehicle along the road in Enjil district of Herat province. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFGHAN forces battled Monday to stop a first major city from falling to the Taliban following weekend offensives by the insurgents on urban centres in a sharp escalation.

Taliban fighters assaulted at least three provincial capitals overnight -- Lashkar Gah, Kandahar and Herat -- after a weekend of heavy fighting that saw thousands of civilians flee the advancing militants.

Fighting raged in Helmand's provincial capital Lashkar Gah, where the Taliban launched coordinated attacks on the city centre and its prison -- just hours after the government announced the deployment of hundreds of commandos to the area.—AFP ■

Nicaragua President Ortega to stand for reelection

NICARAGUAN President Daniel Ortega is to stand for a fourth consecutive term in November's general election, his Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party said on Monday.

"We have our formula, our candidates were elected unanimously," said Gustavo Porras, an FSLN legislator, during the party congress. Ortega's wife, Vice-President Rosario Murillo, will again be his running mate.

The presidential power couple's election ticket was ratified by all 2,932 members present at the FSLN virtual congress just hours before the enrolment deadline for candidates. Former leftist guerrilla Ortega, 75, who is accused by his opponents of authoritarianism, has been in power since 2007. His 70-year-old wife has been his vice-president since the last election in 2017. "We are here to continue the fight against poverty," said Murillo. The government has been accused of repression after detaining more than 30 opposition figures during the last two months, including seven presidential hopefuls. —AFP ■

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega (R) and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, still command a lot of support despite accusations of repression and a mounting death toll. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

'Maniac' Warholm wins 400m hurdles gold, smashes world record

Karsten Warholm of Norway competes in the men's 400-meter hurdles final at the Tokyo Olympics on 3 Aug 2021, en route to winning gold in world record time at the National Stadium in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

NORWAY'S Karsten Warholm produced a devastating performance to smash his own world record and win the Olympic men's 400 metres hurdles gold on Tuesday, saying he dreamed about the medal "like a maniac".

Touted as one of the standout events of the 10-day track and field programme at the Olympic Stadium, the cream of a fine hurdling crop did not fail to deliver in a thrilling race despite stifling midday heat and humidity in Tokyo. Warholm clocked a remarkable 45.94 seconds, pulverising his previous world best of 46.70sec -- only four runners in history have clocked sub-47sec times, let alone sub-46.

American arch-rival Rai Benjamin won silver in 46.17sec, with Brazil's Alison dos Santos claiming bronze in 46.72, both regional records that also smashed their previous personal bests.

Warholm described his gold medal as defining everything he does.

"I dream about it like a maniac," he said. "I sleep all night on it. I spend all my time thinking about this, so just getting this last medal into my collection, it's complete."

Warholm added: "I didn't touch one hurdle. I was even able to find another gear coming home, so 'wow'. It's just so big. It's almost like history here. — AFP ■

US power past Spain to make Olympic basketball semis

THE United States kept their basketball gold medal dreams on track Tuesday by grinding past world champions Spain 95-81 and into the semi-finals, while Slovenia crushed Germany to make the last four on their Olympic debut.

Sharp-shooting Brooklyn Nets star Kevin Durant poured in 29 points and four assists while Boston's Jayson Tatum chipped in 13 in a battle between the world's top two teams, nullifying Ricky Rubio's 38-point spree for Spain. The three-time defending champions will now face either a Patty Mills-led Australia or a dangerous Argentina to decide who plays the final on Saturday.

Slovenia progressed on the back of 27 points from Zoran Dragic and another 20 off Dallas Mavericks star Luka Doncic in their 94-70 rout of Germany and will next meet either France or Italy. Gregg Popovich's US team came to Tokyo with two shock defeats in exhibition games and then crashed in their opener against eventual Group A winners France—their first defeat at an Olympics since 2004.—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: Japan's Irie wins women's featherweight boxing gold in Tokyo

SENA Irie won her country's first women's boxing medal and then said she plans to call it quits, her win over world champion Nesthy Petecio of the Philippines at the Tokyo Games on Tuesday allowing the Japanese the opportunity to finish on the highest of highs.

"I want to end my career with success, so I will retire after graduation from college." said Irie, a student at Nippon Sport Science University.

Irie's unanimous victory at Kokugikan Arena was also the inaugural gold in the newly added women's 54 to 57-kilogramme division, another first for the 20-year-old from Tokyo.

"By winning this medal, I hope the media gives more coverage to women's boxing and the sport expands," said Irie, adding she also hopes it changes the perception of women in the sport.

"People may think women who box are violent and have a rough temper, but I think I proved today that is not the case. I think I was able to show Japanese women that if we keep putting the work in, we can achieve something."

On Tuesday, she put in her work early and it paid off in the end.

The Japanese got off to a fast start, her left jab landing often and effectively. The judges read it that way, too, handing her the first round unanimously 10-9. —Kyodo ■

Japan's Sena Irie (blue) and Nesthy Petecio of the Philippines fight in the women's boxing featherweight final of the Tokyo Olympics on Aug. 3, 2021, at Kokugikan Arena. **PHOTO: KYODO**